

Did You Know?

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That when a veteran files a claim for service-connected disability (also known as compensation) they usually list the most apparent injuries and/or illnesses on their application. These would include the obvious like the loss of a foot from an IED (improvised explosive device), damage to the eyes from an incoming grenade, severe ear problems from too many dives in a submarine and bad knees from far too many parachute jumps. In listing the obvious they sometimes overlook many secondary conditions which also could be claimed. Here are some concrete examples.

1. A veteran has open heart surgery due to coronary artery disease from Agent Orange and has three bypasses. They are granted service-connection for the heart but fail to mention the scars on the chest are very tender to the touch. That could be an additional 10%.
2. A soldier loses their left leg due to an IED in Iraq. Over time, because they now favor their right leg it develops problems. That can be secondary service-connected.
3. The sailor with so many dives in a submarine has a bad hearing problem. They get service-connection for Bilateral Hearing Loss but fail to mention they also suffer from tinnitus which is a separate condition of the ear.
4. A parachutist with over 100 jumps develops knee problems which are granted as service-connected. Later they get shooting nerve pains down the legs from the knees. That's a separate claim.
5. A veteran is already getting benefits for their bum left leg. They lose their balance on the stairs and fall, causing a broken shoulder. That shoulder would be a new claim.
6. A veteran loses one eye and their vision on the left side is gone. When crossing the street they don't see a vehicle coming from their left, get hit and suffer multiple broken bones. Those would be secondary service-connected.

Above are some common examples but there are many more. These secondary conditions are most evident when a veteran receives payment for diabetes. The diabetes can lead to kidney damage, hypertension, vision problems, feet sores, peripheral neuropathy (numbness or tingling in the arms or legs) and even amputations.

And let's not forget side-effects due to medication taken for service-connected conditions. Many drugs, if used over time or in strong doses can cause stomach ulcers, strokes, rashes and many other illnesses. One very common example is ED (erectile dysfunction). Medication for diabetes and hypertension can cause this problem.

So if you feel you might have a secondary condition related to your primary service-connected condition please contact our office for assistance. Our telephone number is 312-980-4266 and we have 24/7 voicemail. You can also write us at The American Legion Rm. 106, 2122 W. Taylor St. Chicago, IL. 60612 or contact you Post or District Service Officer. Our office motto is:

When in doubt, fill it out!