



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington DC 20420

August 24, 2017

Robert Chisholm
One Turks Head Place, Ste 1100
Providence, RI 02903
rchisholm@cck-law.com

RE: FOIA Request: **17-01839-F (Appeal)**

Dear Mr. Chisholm:

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, appeal request received in Compensation Service on March 21, 2017. You appealed the response to inquiry two in the final notification dated January 5, 2017. Originally, you requested:

1. The number of disability compensation claims based on post-traumatic stress disorder ("PTSD") that VA denied between September 11, 2001, and September 30, 2016, wherein the claimant served in Operations Enduring Freedom and/or Iraqi Freedom ("OEF" and/or "OIF").
2. The total number of OEF/OIF Veterans who served in theater during OEF and/or OW that later filed disability compensation claims for PTSD, where VA denied the claim based on the Veteran not having a verified combat stressor.

Per our May 4, 2017 email discussion, I advised VBA does not have listing of all veterans for OEF/OIF population that served in theater in the VBA database. VBA also does not classify PTSD denials as 'no combat stressor'; however, an alternative would be get all veterans with post 9/11 service and obtain PTSD denials by denial codes in the rating system. On May 9, 2017, you provided us with the following request clarification:

Clarification of VA's response that VA "does not classify PTSD denials as 'no combat stressor.'" As outlined in my February 16, 2017, Appeal, VA utilizes the coded conclusion, "Not Incurred/Caused by Service," in its denials of service connection claims. This is the coded conclusion—as opposed to the "no combat stressor" code mentioned in VA's May 4, 2017, correspondence—subject to my original FOIA Request.

Response:

The attached Microsoft Excel spreadsheet contains the requested summary counts. Please note that there may be multiple claimed conditions per Veteran or rating decision since we included all rating codes associated with PTSD. The Veteran counts are unique within each month, but Veterans may also have multiple rating decisions over time. A single unique Veteran count is provided across the entire time period.

All corporate rating data promulgated after September 11, 2001, was used to identify denials of service connection for PTSD. Although rating decisions were identified as of October 16, 2001, the first promulgated rating decision meeting the criteria was from September 13, 2003. The decision month is based on the promulgation date of the rating decision.

This concludes our response to your FOIA request.

Your request was processed by the undersigned. You may appeal the determination made in this response to:

General Counsel (024)
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

If you should choose to file an appeal, your appeal must be postmarked no later than ninety (90) calendar days from the date of this letter. It must clearly identify the determination being appealed and must include any assigned request number.

The appeal should also include:

1. The name of the FOIA Officer
2. The address of the component
3. The date of the component's determination, if any
4. The precise subject matter of the appeal

If you choose to appeal only a portion of the determination, you must specify which part of the determination you are appealing.

The appeal should include a copy of the request and VA's response, if any. The appeal should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal".

In addition to filing an appeal with the Office of General Counsel regarding my determination, you may also seek assistance and/or dispute resolution services regarding your FOIA request from VA's FOIA Public Liaison and or Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) as provided below:

VA FOIA Public Liaison
vacofoiaservice@va.gov
1-877-750-3642 (Phone)

Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)
ogis@nara.gov
(202) 741-5769 (Fax)
Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road

College Park, MD 20740-6001

Point of Contact

Thank you for your interest in the Department of Veterans Affairs. Customer service is very important to us. If you have questions or concerns regarding this letter, please contact me on (202) 461-9754 and refer to the assigned case number.

Sincerely yours,

Brandi Traylor

Brandi Traylor
Veterans Benefits Administration
Compensation Service, FOIA Officer

Enclosure: Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet with PTSD Data

Month	Rated Issues	Veterans
Sum Total	99,782	98,986
Unique Veterans	NA	82,023
SEPTEMBER 2003	2	2
OCTOBER 2003	5	5
NOVEMBER 2003	16	15
DECEMBER 2003	20	20
JANUARY 2004	19	19
FEBRUARY 2004	25	25
MARCH 2004	19	19
APRIL 2004	1	1
MAY 2004	1	1
JUNE 2004	14	13
JULY 2004	32	32
AUGUST 2004	27	27
SEPTEMBER 2004	27	26
OCTOBER 2004	36	36
NOVEMBER 2004	32	32
DECEMBER 2004	47	47
JANUARY 2005	70	69
FEBRUARY 2005	72	72
MARCH 2005	70	70
APRIL 2005	69	69
MAY 2005	106	104
JUNE 2005	86	84
JULY 2005	103	103
AUGUST 2005	157	156
SEPTEMBER 2005	130	129
OCTOBER 2005	185	185
NOVEMBER 2005	237	237
DECEMBER 2005	407	405
JANUARY 2006	473	470
FEBRUARY 2006	442	438
MARCH 2006	566	565
APRIL 2006	552	550
MAY 2006	457	455
JUNE 2006	425	422
JULY 2006	372	369
AUGUST 2006	577	573
SEPTEMBER 2006	584	584
OCTOBER 2006	347	343
NOVEMBER 2006	360	355
DECEMBER 2006	389	388
JANUARY 2007	444	437
FEBRUARY 2007	523	515
MARCH 2007	574	572

APRIL 2007	551	550
MAY 2007	623	618
JUNE 2007	696	690
JULY 2007	698	692
AUGUST 2007	846	844
SEPTEMBER 2007	750	746
OCTOBER 2007	797	794
NOVEMBER 2007	780	774
DECEMBER 2007	684	683
JANUARY 2008	905	900
FEBRUARY 2008	799	790
MARCH 2008	763	754
APRIL 2008	876	869
MAY 2008	1,028	1,014
JUNE 2008	795	787
JULY 2008	885	879
AUGUST 2008	1,025	1,017
SEPTEMBER 2008	996	985
OCTOBER 2008	903	897
NOVEMBER 2008	765	762
DECEMBER 2008	957	949
JANUARY 2009	1,026	1,017
FEBRUARY 2009	999	996
MARCH 2009	1,087	1,080
APRIL 2009	985	981
MAY 2009	1,110	1,100
JUNE 2009	1,054	1,044
JULY 2009	1,073	1,065
AUGUST 2009	1,067	1,058
SEPTEMBER 2009	1,172	1,158
OCTOBER 2009	956	952
NOVEMBER 2009	913	905
DECEMBER 2009	1,088	1,073
JANUARY 2010	998	997
FEBRUARY 2010	915	907
MARCH 2010	1,051	1,043
APRIL 2010	1,024	1,017
MAY 2010	930	919
JUNE 2010	1,007	998
JULY 2010	678	674
AUGUST 2010	606	600
SEPTEMBER 2010	705	698
OCTOBER 2010	533	530
NOVEMBER 2010	363	359
DECEMBER 2010	433	430
JANUARY 2011	405	402

FEBRUARY 2011	402	396
MARCH 2011	494	493
APRIL 2011	452	449
MAY 2011	540	535
JUNE 2011	505	501
JULY 2011	437	432
AUGUST 2011	453	448
SEPTEMBER 2011	552	549
OCTOBER 2011	440	434
NOVEMBER 2011	397	394
DECEMBER 2011	440	437
JANUARY 2012	490	486
FEBRUARY 2012	482	477
MARCH 2012	517	514
APRIL 2012	498	493
MAY 2012	493	492
JUNE 2012	501	496
JULY 2012	609	592
AUGUST 2012	606	592
SEPTEMBER 2012	591	588
OCTOBER 2012	464	457
NOVEMBER 2012	407	401
DECEMBER 2012	399	396
JANUARY 2013	551	543
FEBRUARY 2013	479	476
MARCH 2013	590	585
APRIL 2013	636	624
MAY 2013	878	867
JUNE 2013	949	932
JULY 2013	746	734
AUGUST 2013	1,145	1,135
SEPTEMBER 2013	1,300	1,294
OCTOBER 2013	993	984
NOVEMBER 2013	647	646
DECEMBER 2013	674	666
JANUARY 2014	663	660
FEBRUARY 2014	630	619
MARCH 2014	776	772
APRIL 2014	687	683
MAY 2014	731	725
JUNE 2014	684	682
JULY 2014	648	643
AUGUST 2014	622	616
SEPTEMBER 2014	843	838
OCTOBER 2014	747	744
NOVEMBER 2014	610	607

DECEMBER 2014	658	651
JANUARY 2015	859	847
FEBRUARY 2015	827	816
MARCH 2015	1,001	997
APRIL 2015	939	931
MAY 2015	904	901
JUNE 2015	981	972
JULY 2015	916	913
AUGUST 2015	1,052	1,049
SEPTEMBER 2015	939	935
OCTOBER 2015	678	672
NOVEMBER 2015	715	710
DECEMBER 2015	745	741
JANUARY 2016	721	712
FEBRUARY 2016	683	679
MARCH 2016	815	809
APRIL 2016	709	703
MAY 2016	653	647
JUNE 2016	674	662
JULY 2016	627	624
AUGUST 2016	756	750
SEPTEMBER 2016	764	763
OCTOBER 2016	560	559
NOVEMBER 2016	520	518
DECEMBER 2016	615	614
JANUARY 2017	608	604
FEBRUARY 2017	570	565
MARCH 2017	742	739
APRIL 2017	679	674
MAY 2017	648	644
JUNE 2017	426	422