**Elements of a Service Connected Claim for VA Benefits**

1. Incident, or exposure. The first element of a service connected compensation claim is to show that there was an incident or exposure in service that results in a current disability. It is important to note that the in service event has to happen coincident with service but does not have to happen as a result of doing something pertaining to the veteran’s job in service. It doesn’t matter if you were on base or off base when the incident happened.
2. A diagnosed disability.

Once you have a current diagnosed disability and an in-service incident then you have to show a link between the two.

1. A medical nexus. A nexus is the link between your current diagnosed disability and the event, injury, or illness during service. The best way to establish a nexus is through medical evidence. A statement from your treating doctor affirming that they believe your condition was “at least as likely as not” caused by military service can prove to be a powerful piece of evidence.

The opinion is written by a licensed professional practicing in an appropriate clinical

field or specialty. The opinion should be tailored to the veteran and based on his or her service and medical records, as well as personal medical history before and after service.

The opinion provides supporting rationale for the claim. In other words, the medical professional cites a medical treatise, elaborating on how they reached their conclusion.

This is very important for conditions not diagnosed or treated in military service, and shown in military records.

To assist the VA in accessing your pertinent records, please provide the date of your claimed injury or illness & enough information for the VA to seek in your records for any condition you are claiming.  Please respond to this request by providing a medical diagnosis and dates of treatment, if known (Month & Year). At minimum write a **descriptive** narrative related to each condition explaining **what happened**, **who witnessed it,** (name, rank, unit, etc. if possible) **where and when the event took place.**  Such as what job you were doing, what unit you were in, where you were treated, sick call or hospital & location, etc. Be detailed but stick to the facts.