



NVLSP

NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

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Justice for Warriors Newsletter

January 2024

Dear Friend,

We welcome 2024 with gratitude and appreciation for all those who helped us continue our life-changing work for veterans, servicemembers and their families. We celebrate our past achievements and look forward to greater success as we work together to ensure that the government delivers to our nation's 18 million veterans and active duty personnel the benefits to which they are entitled because of disabilities resulting from their military service.

All the best,

Paul Wright
Executive Director

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

NVLSP has been relentless in assisting our nation's service members, veterans, and their families in obtaining the disability benefits they were unfairly denied. In 2023, NVLSP:

661

Filed 661 appeals before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. NVLSP averaged over a 99% win-rate at the Court.

4,000

Over 4,000 attorneys, veterans service officers, and other advocates were trained by NVLSP Training and Publications.

500

Placed approximately 500 cases of veterans and service members with Lawyers Serving Warriors® volunteer attorneys across the country and trained nationally over 1,550 attorneys,

180
\$3,500,000

veterans, service members, and advocates, including veterans service officers from Virginia, Pennsylvania and Michigan.

Held 21 virtual Lawyers Serving Warriors® clinics reaching approximately 180 veterans and service members in 2023.

In 2023, NVLSP forced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to pay more than \$3.5 million in retroactive benefits to 47 survivors of deceased Vietnam veterans who suffered from diseases the VA conceded were the result of their exposure to Agent Orange while serving in Vietnam.

BURN PITS CLAIMS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Since the Burn Pits Claims Assistance Program (BPCAP) started, NVLSP has received 247 applications and provided representation to 41 veterans. For another 114 applicants, NVLSP did not offer representation but did provide individual advice and materials about how to file a claim for service connection. NVLSP has received final decisions for 37 claims, with fully successful outcomes in 36, for a **success rate of 97.3%**. We also represent 14 veterans on an additional 20 claims currently on appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (some veterans have more than one claim). For more information on NVLSP's Burn Pits Claims Assistance Program please [click here](#).

DECORATED VETERAN SERGEANT BENJAMIN HAYHURST WINS LONG-OVERDUE DISABILITY RATING

The National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) along with Pro Bono partner Crowell & Moring LLP, took on Sgt. Benjamin J. Hayhurst's case one year ago, filing a complaint on behalf of Hayhurst in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Sgt. Benjamin J. Hayhurst, a Purple Heart recipient injured in the Iraq War, has won a ruling of combat-related PTSD that had been denied to him by the U.S. Army for 18 years. On September 27, 2023, the Army issued its remand decision granting Hayhurst "full relief". Hayhurst's corrected retirement order now reads: "The people of the United States express their thanks and gratitude for your faithful service."

NVLSP'S FIFTEENTH ANNUAL BENEFIT



On November 16, 2023, NVLSP hosted its Fifteenth Annual Benefit Event, *Honoring Service and Sacrifice by Defending Veterans Rights Since 1981*.

Thank you to all those who participated in the virtual event, including our Emcee Nick Schifrin, PBSNewsHour Foreign Affairs Correspondent, and the honorees:

Accenture, recipient of the Corporate Leadership Award; Hogan Lovells, recipient of the Pro Bono Partner of the Year Award, and Elizabeth Olien, Senior Associate at Orrick, recipient of the Lawyers Serving Warriors® Excellence Award.

Thank you to all our sponsors including our Diamond level sponsors Chevron, Davis Polk, Finnegan, Gibson Dunn and WilmerHale.

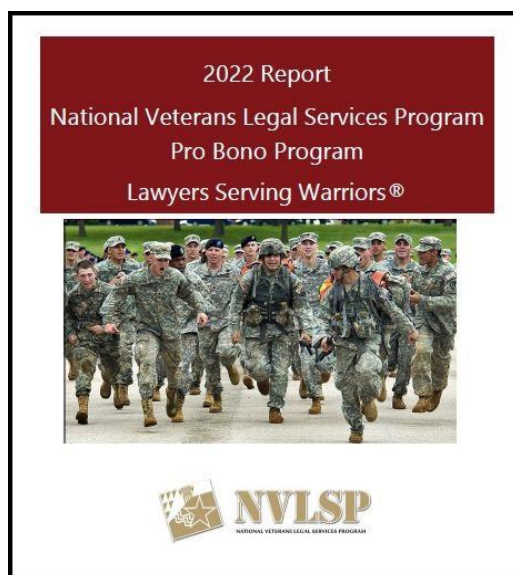
[Watch more about NVLSP's work here.](#)



Left to right:

Nick Schifrin, PBS NewsHour Foreign Affairs and Defense Correspondent; Rafael Resto-Olivo, NVLSP Director of Human Resources and Operations; Renée Burbank, Director of Litigation; Stacy Tromble, Director of CAVC Litigation; Rochelle Bobroff, Director of LSW® Pro Bono Program; Lane McCall, IT Manager; Paul Wright, Executive Director; Patty Briotta, Director of Communications; Ana Reyes, Director of Development; Rick Spataro, Director of Training and Publications; Christine Cote Hill, Special Counsel and Esther Leibfarth, Senior Managing Attorney

NVLSP'S 2022 PRO BONO REPORT



The National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) recently released its 2022 Report on its Pro Bono Program: Lawyers Serving Warriors® (LSW). The Report details the commitment and life-changing work of NVLSP's pro bono partners at law firms and corporate legal departments. In 2022, NVLSP's pro bono partners donated over 73,000 hours in pro bono time to veterans, with an approximate value of over \$58 million.

You can access the report [here](#).

NVLSP STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Cindy Johnson, a Staff Attorney in NVLSP's



Litigation Division, was honored by the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center's Saluting Service event on November 9, 2023 with their Founders Award, which is given to an individual or organization with enduring leadership in the fight for veterans rights.

Cindy Johnson (right), NVLSP Staff Attorney, with Kenneth Meador, NVLSP Appellate Attorney at the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center's 14th Annual Saluting Service event.

ALERT: TO GET REIMBURSED FOR POST-2010 EMERGENCY MEDICAL EXPENSES, VETS MUST APPLY TO VA BY FEBRUARY 22, 2024

If you are a veteran who received emergency care between February 1, 2010, and November 23, 2022, and had non-VA health insurance, you may file a reimbursement claim until **February 22, 2024**. This even applies to veterans who were denied reimbursement or did not apply for reimbursement in the past.

To file a reimbursement claim, a veteran must complete and sign VA Form 10-583 and mail or deliver it to the nearest VA medical facility to where you live.

You can get a copy of VA Form 10-583 at

www.va.gov/communitycare/programs/veterans/file-a-claim.asp or
<https://www.va.gov/resources/reimbursement-of-non-va-prescriptions-or-medical-expenses/>

VA has made clear that it will not decide whether the veteran is entitled to reimbursement unless the veteran files a reimbursement claim **on or before FEBRUARY 22, 2024**.

GET ADVICE: During the last two years, did VA deny you reimbursement for emergency medical expenses you incurred at non-VA facilities? If so, NVLSP may be able to advise you on what to do about it. Contact us at reimbursement.help@nvlsp.org with the date of the VA denial letter, and, if possible, a copy of the denial letter

[Click here for more information.](#)

WEBINARS

NVLSP continues its dedication to veteran law education by growing its webinar schedule in an effort to educate more veterans advocates on strategies for securing disability benefits for their clients. Experienced NVLSP attorneys will lead discussions on the following topics:



- [Effective Communication with Veterans to Build Better VA Claims](#) (January 24,

2024 and January 25, 2024)

- VA Benefits for Burn Pit-Related Diseases and Gulf War Illness (February 21, 2024; February 22, 2024 and February 23, 2024)
- Non-Service-Connected Disability Pension (March 19, 2024; March 20, 2024 and March 21, 2024)
- Recent Court Decisions Veterans Advocates Need to Know About (April 23, 2024; April 24, 2024 and April 25, 2024)

NVLSP also has a [comprehensive library](#) of over 20 previously recorded webinars that are available at your convenience.

Webinar topics include:

- VA Accreditation Training: Attorney and Agent Practice before the VA
- Navigating the VA's Modernized/AMA Review System
- VA Benefits Based on National Guard and Reserve Service
- How Involvement with the Criminal Justice System Impacts VA Benefits
- And many more!

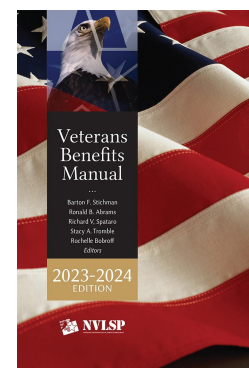
For more information on NVLSP's Training and Publications program [watch this video](#).

NVLSP's Training & Publications program also offers: [in-person training](#), the [Online Basic Training Course](#), the [Veterans Benefits Manual](#), and the [VA Benefit Identifier App](#).

2023-2024 EDITION NVLSP'S VETERANS BENEFITS MANUAL

NVLSP has released the 2023-2024 edition of its landmark *Veterans Benefits Manual*. NVLSP created the Manual in 1991. The over 2,200-page Manual is updated annually and contains essential insight and analysis from practicing lawyers at NVLSP, a group of experts at the vanguard of veterans law.

[Learn more](#) about the 2023-2024 updates to the *Veterans Benefits Manual*. To order your copy, please visit [here](#).



WAYS YOU CAN HELP

We hope this newsletter inspires you to become more active with NVLSP. If you want to help NVLSP do more for our veterans, here are a few suggestions.

1. You can follow us on [Twitter](#), connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), and like us on [Facebook](#).
2. Help us promote our free [App](#) for veterans.
3. Tell a friend about [NVLSP](#).



We look forward to connecting with you again soon!

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www.nvlsp.org

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