

Service Officer Is ‘the Real Deal’

After 18 years of struggling with the VA, an Army veteran turns to the VFW to finally receive his benefits

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VFW Life member Randolph Freeman, 74, lives in Maplewood, Minnesota, with his wife, Michelle. He joined the Army in 1974 and served for 24 years, with tours in Korea and Germany.

He has felt the effects of various service-related conditions, including migraines, back pain and neck and shoulder injuries, for years but struggled to receive benefits.

“I tried for about 18 years to get disability for all my service-connected injuries, until one of my veteran friends told me about Ms. Lynette Bonin,” Freeman said.

When he met Bonin, a VFW Accredited Service Officer, Freeman told her how he had been denied repeatedly in his attempts to receive an accurate disability rating.

“She told me to let her try to help,” he said. “She worked endlessly on my claims.”

Within months, Bonin helped Freeman increase his rating from 60% to 80% for conditions that were previously denied. Three months later, she was able to get it increased to 90%, and finally, in 2019, Freeman received a 100% disability rating.

“I’ve thanked her over and over again,” Freeman said.

Some of Freeman’s conditions that are now approved were denied more than 20 years ago. Bonin is helping Freeman appeal those decisions to update the effective dates.

“At this point, we’re waiting on the VA,” Freeman said. “I know if they’re not correct, Lynette will apply for another review.”

Freeman knows he is not the only veteran struggling to receive the correct disability rating.

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He encourages other veterans in his community to seek out Bonin for assistance.

“I always ask veterans about their service-connected problems and if they’re receiving VA benefits,” he said. “I tell everyone that I encounter that Ms. Lynette can help them get the ratings they deserve. She is the real deal.”

Learn more about the [VFW's National Veterans Service \(NVS\) program](#).