

February 2016

## **An open letter to all Blue Eagles**

Dear Blue Eagles,

If you are reading this, I know that even with the disabilities we have due to our service in Vietnam we are still here. So thank you for your service to our country, thanks for all you do, and welcome home!

While assigned to the sea duty component of VXN8, I crewed on El Coyote and taught at the Connie School that used to be near the barracks. I also served in Vietnam twice – at Danang in 68/69 and Tan Son Nhut in 70. The experience broadened my perspective and allowed me to gain the most wonderful memories of all you shipmates that I still carry in my mind. Without this experience, I would not have had the opportunity to help so many Veterans.

I have met many Veterans that seem to have the opinion that VA Disability payments are wrong and/or will take from other Veterans. I would like to convince you that you willingly went to Vietnam and have rightfully earned any and all benefits that your country can provide for you.

I volunteered at the local VA Hospital and had the opportunity to help many Veterans. For the most part, Veterans receive excellent care at the local hospital (I asked all that I met). There were instances where I would receive a bad report and encouraged the Veteran to accompany me to go complain so that the issue could be addressed.

I was not as successful with Veterans I met at the hospital that had been denied on a VA Claim, especially when it was obvious that the Veteran deserved all considerations for his or her service.

I know that some of you have suffered infirmities and have not yet reported them to the VA so that you can obtain benefits that you richly deserve. There IS enough money for your claims, and in some years Veteran Organizations report that money has been turned back to the Treasury because it could not be used for VA benefits.

I strongly encourage you to seek the benefits that you FOUGHT FOR and that you and your family deserve. I mentioned your family because they may be able to obtain benefits after you pass on. So if you decide to submit claims please use the material I have provided, Veteran Service Officers, and of course me. If you have questions, email me and I will do my best to answer them.

Very Respectfully,  
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