



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

May 27, 2015

MARK [REDACTED]

In reply, refer to:
343/SB
[REDACTED]

Dear Mark [REDACTED]

We made a decision regarding your entitlement to VA benefits.

This letter tells you about your entitlement amount, payment start date, and what we decided. It includes the evidence used and reasons for our decision. We have also included information about what to do if you disagree with our decision and who to contact if you have questions or need assistance.

Payment Summary

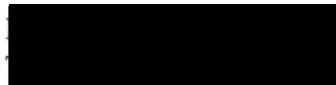
Your monthly entitlement amount is shown below:

Monthly Entitlement Amount	Payment Start Date	Reason
\$3,309.00	Mar 1, 2013	Special Monthly Compensation Adjustment
\$3,199.28	Dec 1, 2013	Cost of Living Adjustment, Change in Spouse Status
\$3,253.67	Dec 1, 2014	Cost of Living Adjustment

We are currently paying you as a single Veteran with no dependents.

You Can Expect Payment

Generally, payments begin the first day of the month following the effective date. When applicable, a retroactive payment, minus any withholdings, will be issued. Thereafter, payment will be made at the beginning of each month for the prior month. For example, benefits due for May are paid on or about June 1.



Your payment will be directed to the financial institution and account number that you specified. To confirm when your payment was deposited, please contact your financial institution.

*If this account is no longer open,
please notify us immediately.*

What We Decided

We made the following decision(s) regarding your claimed issue(s):

Issue/Contention	Percent (%) Assigned	Effective Date
fibromyalgia	40%	Feb 22, 2013
Explanation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Service connection for fibromyalgia has been established as related to the service-connected disability of hepatitis C.We have assigned a 40 percent evaluation for your fibromyalgia based on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Widespread musculoskeletal pain and tender points that are constantWidespread musculoskeletal pain and tender points that are near constantWidespread musculoskeletal pain and tender points that are refractory to therapyAdditional symptom(s) include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">FatigueHeadacheStiffnessWidespread musculoskeletal pain and tender points that require continuous medication for controlThe above symptoms:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Are constantAre near constantAre refractory to therapy.Widespread pain means pain in both the left and right sides of the body, that is both above and below the waist, and that affects both the axial skeleton (i.e., cervical spine, anterior chest, thoracic spine, or low back) and the extremities.This is the highest schedular evaluation allowed under the law for fibromyalgia.		

Issue/Contention	Percent (%) Assigned	Effective Date
diabetic peripheral neuropathy, sciatic nerve, left lower extremity	20%	Feb 22, 2013
Explanation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Service connection for diabetic peripheral neuropathy, sciatic nerve, left lower extremity has been established as related to the service-connected disability of diabetes mellitus type 2.We have assigned a 20 percent evaluation for your diabetic peripheral neuropathy, sciatic nerve, left lower extremity based on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">moderate incomplete paralysisA higher evaluation of 40 percent is not warranted for paralysis of the sciatic nerve unless the evidence shows nerve damage is moderately severe.		



Issue/Contention	Percent (%) Assigned	Effective Date
diabetic peripheral neuropathy, left upper extremity	30%	Feb 22, 2013
Explanation		

- Service connection for diabetic peripheral neuropathy, left upper extremity has been established as related to the service-connected disability of diabetes mellitus type 2.
- We have assigned a 30 percent evaluation for your median and ulnar nerves (rated as all radicular group) based on: • moderate incomplete paralysis of the minor extremity
- A higher evaluation of 60 percent is not warranted for paralysis of all radicular nerve groups unless the evidence shows nerve damage is severe.

Issue/Contention	Percent (%) Assigned	Effective Date
diabetic peripheral neuropathy, right upper extremity	40%	Feb 22, 2013
Explanation		

- Service connection for diabetic peripheral neuropathy, right upper extremity has been established as related to the service-connected disability of diabetes mellitus type 2.
- We have assigned a 40 percent evaluation for your median and ulnar nerves (rated as all radicular group) based on: • moderate incomplete paralysis of the major extremity
- A higher evaluation of 70 percent is not warranted for paralysis of all radicular nerve groups unless the evidence shows nerve damage is severe.

Issue/Contention	Percent (%) Assigned	Effective Date
diabetic peripheral neuropathy, sciatic nerve, right lower extremity	20%	Feb 22, 2013
Explanation		

- Service connection for diabetic peripheral neuropathy, sciatic nerve, right lower extremity has been established as related to the service-connected disability of diabetes mellitus type 2.
- We have assigned a 20 percent evaluation for your diabetic peripheral neuropathy, sciatic nerve, right lower extremity based on: • moderate incomplete paralysis
- A higher evaluation of 40 percent is not warranted for paralysis of the sciatic nerve unless the evidence shows nerve damage is moderately severe.



Issue/Contention	Percent (%) Assigned	Effective Date
diabetes mellitus type 2	40%	Feb 22, 2013
Explanation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Service connection for diabetes mellitus type 2 has been established as related to the service-connected disability of hepatitis C.We have assigned a 40 percent evaluation for your diabetes mellitus type 2 based on: • Insulin required • Regulation of activities • Restricted diet.A higher evaluation of 60 percent is not warranted for diabetes mellitus unless the evidence shows diabetes requiring insulin, restricted diet, and regulation of activities with episodes of ketoacidosis or hypoglycemic reactions requiring one or two hospitalizations per year or twice a month visits to a diabetic care provider, plus complications that would not be compensable if separately evaluated.		

Issue/Contention	Effective Date
Entitlement to special monthly compensation based on Housebound.	Feb 22, 2013
Explanation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Entitlement to special monthly compensation is warranted in this case because criteria regarding Housebound have been met.	

Your overall or combined rating is:

Combined Rating	Effective Date
10%	Mar 26, 1999
100%	Nov 01, 2007

Note: The percentages assigned for each of your conditions may not always add up to your combined rating evaluation. We do not add the individual percentages of each condition to determine your combined rating. Instead, we use a combined rating table that considers the effect from the most serious to the least serious conditions.

Are You Entitled to Additional Benefits?

Did you know you may be eligible for a VA guaranteed mortgage with no down payment (potentially exempt from a funding fee depending on your rating)? For more information about this benefit, or to determine and print your Loan Guaranty Certificate of Eligibility, please visit the eBenefits website at <http://www.ebenefits.va.gov>.



If you served overseas in support of a combat operation you may be eligible for mental health counseling at no cost to you at the Veteran's Resource Center. For more information on this benefit please visit <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/>.

The VA provides Blind Rehabilitation services to eligible blind, low vision, or visually impaired Veterans to help them regain their independence and quality of life. The Veteran's blindness, low vision, or vision impairment does NOT have to be related or caused by military service. If you need help with your vision loss, please contact your nearest Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinator (VIST) at the eye clinic at your nearest VA Medical Center. For more information, go to www.va.gov/blindrehab/.

You may be eligible for medical care by the VA health care system for any service-connected disability. You may apply for medical care or treatment at the nearest medical facility. If you apply in person, present a copy of this letter to the Patient Registration/Eligibility Section. If you apply by writing a letter, include your VA file number and a copy of this letter.

If you receive care at a VA medical facility, **please call our Health Benefits Call Center at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or notify your local VA Medical Center** of this change in your compensation benefits. This may reduce or eliminate your co-payments for your VA-provided medical care. You may also be eligible for a refund based on this decision. Information regarding VA health care eligibility and co-payments is available at our website <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility>.

You may be eligible for a clothing allowance or more than one clothing allowance because of your service-connected disability(ies). If you would like to apply for this benefit, please call us at 1-800-827-1000 or download VA Form 10-8678, *Application for Annual Clothing Allowance*, at <http://www.va.gov/vaforms>.

You should contact your state office of Veterans' affairs for information on any tax, license, or fee-related benefits for which you may be eligible as a Veteran (or surviving dependent of a Veteran). State offices of Veterans' affairs are available at <http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm>.

Some Veterans may be entitled to VA dental treatment. For additional information, contact your nearest VA Medical Center or outpatient clinic.

A monthly educational assistance allowance is payable to certain Veterans. If you need help with your VA education benefits, you can call toll-free 1-888-442-4551 or visit the VA national education website at <http://www.gibill.va.gov>.

You may be eligible for reimbursement for beneficial travel mileage for previous VA medical appointments due to your newly granted service-connected conditions. You must make a request

[REDACTED]

for such reimbursement **within 30 days of this letter** by contacting the Enrollment office at your Medical Center and providing a copy of this letter.

You may be eligible for VA life insurance benefits. Call the Insurance toll free number, 1-800-669-8477, or visit the Insurance website, <http://www.insurance.va.gov>, for further information.

You may be able to receive vocational rehabilitation employment services. For more information on this benefit please visit <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/> or call us at 1-800-827-1000.

Your combined evaluation is 30 percent or more disabling; therefore, you may be eligible for additional benefits based on dependency. We may be able to pay you retroactive benefits for your dependents if you submit your dependency claim within a year from the date of this letter. If you wish to notify us of your dependents, please do so through eBenefits, an electronic resource in a self-service environment. Use of these resources often helps us serve you faster! Just visit www.eBenefits.va.gov to enroll and submit your dependency information.

The Department of Education provides a program for Veterans to discharge their student loans. To be eligible, the Veteran must have a service-connected disability(ies) that is 100% disabling, or be totally disabled based on an Individual Unemployability determination. For more information concerning this benefit, please call toll-free 1-888-303-7818. Visit the website at <http://www.disabilitydischarge.com/home/>.

You may be entitled to Armed Forces Commissary and Exchange privileges. Honorably discharged veterans evaluated as 100 percent disabled due to service-connected disability; or, Medal of Honor recipients; or, military retirees and their dependents may qualify for entitlement to this additional benefit. To obtain a certification for commissary store and exchange privileges, please visit eBenefits at www.eBenefits.va.gov, or you can request a copy by visiting your local Regional Benefit Office. To locate your Regional Benefit Office, please visit following website: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp>.

Conditions That Affect Your Right to Payments

Your award of disability compensation is subject to future adjustment upon receipt of evidence showing any change in the degree of disability.

Your payments may also be affected by any of the following circumstances which you must promptly call to our attention.

- Reentrance into active service.
- Receipt of uniformed service retirement pay, unless your retirement pay has been reduced because of award of disability compensation.



- Receipt of benefits from the Office of Federal Employees Compensation.
- Receipt of active duty or drill pay as a reservist or member of the Federally recognized National Guard.

If you have a disability rating of 30% or more, you must promptly advise us of any change in the status of your dependents.

If your award includes special monthly compensation due to the need for aid and attendance, this additional allowance is generally subject to reduction from the first day of the second calendar month of admission to hospitalization, nursing home or domiciliary care at VA expense.

Benefits will be reduced upon incarceration in a Federal, State, or local penal institution in excess of 60 days for conviction of a felony. The amount not payable may be apportioned to a spouse, dependent children or parents.

Monthly payments of your award may be stopped if you fail to furnish evidence as requested, fail to cooperate or submit to a VA examination when requested, or if you furnish VA, or cause to be furnished, any false or fraudulent evidence. Information submitted is subject to verification through computer matching programs with other agencies.

The law provides severe penalties, which include fine, imprisonment, or both, for the fraudulent acceptance of any payment to which you are not entitled.

Note: Compensation payments are exempt from claims of creditors. With certain exceptions, the payments are not assignable and are not subject to attachment, levy, or seizure except as to claims of the United States.

IMPORTANT

Please notify VA *immediately* if there is a change in any condition affecting your right to continued payments. Failure to notify us of these changes immediately may result in a debt that you will have to repay.

Evidence Considered

In making our decision, we considered:

- Service treatment records received April 3, 2014
- VA Medical Center San Francisco treatment records from March 2008 to May 2014 (electronically available in Virtual VA)
- VA Medical Center Puget Sound Exams request dated April 14, 2015
- Transmittal sheet from County of Lake received March 7, 2013



- Transmittal from County of Lake received May 31, 2013
- Department of Veterans Affairs Duty to Assist letter dated March 6, 2015
- Claim received February 22, 2013
- DD-214 for service from February 1978 to February 1981 in the U.S. Army
- VA Form 21-6789, Deferred Rating Decision dated April 9, 2015
- Rating decision dated January 15, 2014 with notification dated January 28, 2014
- VA Medical Center Puget Sound treatment records from March 2014 to August 2014 (electronically available in Virtual VA)
- VA Medical Center Puget Sound Fibromyalgia Exam dated May 12, 2015
- VA Medical Center Puget Sound Peripheral Neuropathy Exam dated May 12, 2015
- VA Form 21-4138 received May 31, 2013
- VA Medical Center Puget Sound Diabetes Mellitus Exam dated May 12, 2015
- VA Form 21-6789, Deferred Rating Decision dated March 30, 2015

What You Should Do If You Disagree With Our Decision

If you do not agree with our decision, you must complete and return to us the enclosed VA Form 21-0958, *Notice of Disagreement*, in order to initiate your appeal. You have *one year from the date of this letter to appeal the decision*. The enclosed VA Form 4107, "Your Rights to Appeal Our Decision," explains your right to appeal.

What is eBenefits?

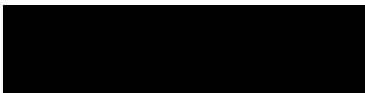
eBenefits provides electronic resources in a self-service environment to Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families. Use of these resources often helps us serve you faster! Through the eBenefits website you can:

- Submit claims for benefits and/or upload documents directly to the VA
- Request to add or change your dependents
- Update your contact and direct deposit information and view payment history
- Request a Veterans Service Officer to represent you
- Track the status of your claim or appeal
- Obtain verification of military service, civil service preference, or VA benefits
- And much more!

Enrolling in eBenefits is easy. Just visit www.eBenefits.va.gov for more information. If you submit a claim in the future, consider filing through eBenefits. Filing electronically, especially if you participate in our fully developed claim program, may result in a faster decision than if you submit your claim through the mail.

If You Have Questions or Need Assistance

If you have any questions or need assistance with this claim, you may contact us by telephone, e-mail, or letter.



If you	Here is what to do.
Telephone	Call us at 1-800-827-1000. If you use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the Federal number is 711.
Use the Internet	Send electronic inquiries through the Internet at https://iris.va.gov .
Write	VA now uses a centralized mail system. For all written communications, put your full name and VA file number on the letter. Please mail or fax all written correspondence to the appropriate address listed on the attached <i>Where to Send Your Written Correspondence</i> chart, below.

In all cases, be sure to refer to your VA file number 560378013.

If you are looking for general information about benefits and eligibility, you should visit our web site at <http://www.va.gov>, or search the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at <http://iris.va.gov>.

We sent a copy of this letter to KATRINA J EAGLE, who you have appointed as your representative. If you have questions or need assistance, you can also contact your representative.

Thank you for your service,

Regional Office Director

Enclosure(s): VA Form 4107
 VA Form 21-0958
 Where to Send Your Written Correspondence

cc: KATRINA J EAGLE