



# NVLSP

NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

# INTRODUCTION AND MOA BETWEEN TDVS AND NVLSP

# PAUL WRIGHT



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM



- **Executive Director**
- **Deputy Executive Director (2/2019-7/2021)**
- **Army JAG Corps and Air Force Veteran**

# RICK SPATARO



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM



- Director of Training and Publications
- Has practiced Veterans Law since 2004 at CAVC, Federal Circuit, and BVA
- Veterans Benefits Manual Editor
- Former Managing Attorney of NVLSP's *Nehmer* Lawsuit Division
- U.S. Navy Veteran

# LOU GEORGE



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM



- **Special Counsel, focusing on matters at CAVC and Training**
- **VSO liaison**
- **Veterans Benefits Manual Editor**
- **Prior tenure at NVLSP from 1998-2015; served as Staff Attorney, Senior Staff Attorney, and Director of Training and Publications**
- **Previously worked at BCMR of the Coast Guard, BVA, and SSA**

# WHAT IS NVLSP?



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- **Nonprofit Veterans Service Organization**
- **Founded in 1981**
- **Works to ensure that the gov't delivers to our nation's 18 million Vets and active duty personnel the benefits they earned because of disabilities resulting from their military service**

# COURT REPRESENTATION



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- Individual representation at CAVC, Federal Circuit, other courts
- Class actions
  - *Including: Nehmer, Wolfe, Beaudette*
- If you would like NVLSP to consider representing an appellant at the CAVC, email the request and a copy of the BVA decision to [cavc.intake@nvlsp.org](mailto:cavc.intake@nvlsp.org)
  - **NVLSP reviews all TDVS BVA decisions**

# LITIGATION RESULTS



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- Since 1981, our successful litigation has resulted in over **\$5.4 billion** in disability, death, and medical benefits being awarded to hundreds of thousands of veterans and their survivors that had been unfairly denied
- All representation completely free!
  - **No fees taken from client's VA benefits**

# BURN PITS CLAIMS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- Dedicated to helping Vets and their survivors with burn-pit-related claims and appeals
- Provides assistance with supplemental claims, HLR requests, and BVA appeals
- Prioritizes applicants (1) who were previously denied SC for a non-presumptive burn-pit-related condition, and (2) whose claim for a presumptive condition was denied after the presumption took effect
- Self-help guides available for Vets seeking to file an initial claim or a supplemental claim for a condition that was not presumptive at the time of the prior claim
- [nvlsp.org/what-we-do/burn-pits-claims-assistance-program/](https://nvlsp.org/what-we-do/burn-pits-claims-assistance-program/)

# FAMILY CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- Assists Vets and family caregivers access VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)
- Self-help guide available for those seeking to learn more about the application process
- May be able to help challenge VA's denial of a PCAFC application or discharge from the program
- More information can be found at [nvlsp.org/what-we-do/family-caregiver-assistance-program/](https://nvlsp.org/what-we-do/family-caregiver-assistance-program/)

# LAWYERS SERVING WARRIORS



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

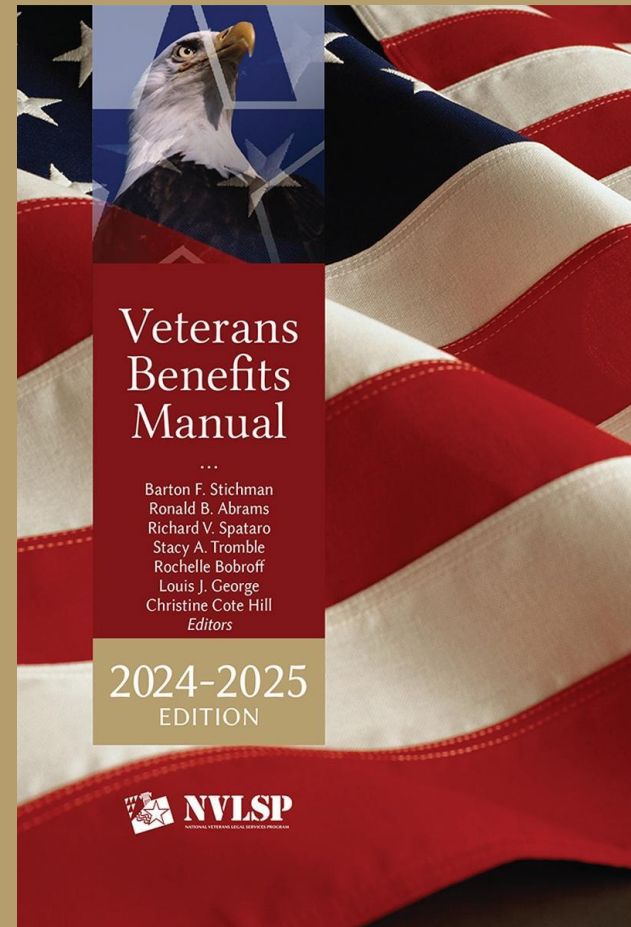
- **Lawyers Serving Warriors – free legal assistance through network of volunteer attorneys:**
  - **Discharge upgrades**
  - **Military medical retirement**
  - **CRSC applications**
  - **TSGLI applications and appeals of denied claims**
- **[nvlsp.org/what-we-do/lawyers-serving-warriors/](https://nvlsp.org/what-we-do/lawyers-serving-warriors/)**

# PUBLICATIONS



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- Veterans Benefits Manual
- Federal Veterans Laws, Rules and Regulations



# TRAINING



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- In-person trainings
- Webinars
  - 10 per year on different topics in veterans law
  - Library of past webinars
- Online Basic Training Course on Veterans Benefits
- <https://productsbynvlsp.org/>



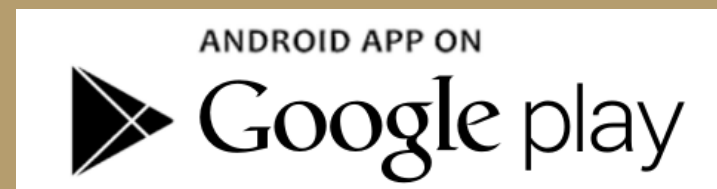
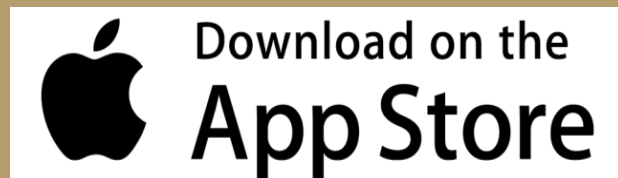
# VA BENEFIT IDENTIFIER APP



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- **NVLSP VA Benefit Identifier App**
  - **Helps Vets and VSOs figure out what VA disability benefits they might be entitled to**
  - **3 WAYS to Access:**

[app.nvlsp.org](http://app.nvlsp.org)



# LEGISLATIVE WORK



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- **Legislative Impact**
  - Works with key Congressional committees and provides testimony to advance legislative solutions for issues impacting Vets
  - Has met with Congressional staffers regarding the PACT Act, Agent Orange Act, Blue Water Vietnam Veterans Act, Caregiver Issues, etc.
  - Submitted statements for the record on hearing relating to toxic exposures and burn pits



# MOA

- **Since June 2019, NVLSP and TDVS have had an MOA**



# CAVC REPRESENTATION



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- **NVLSP provides pro bono representation at the CAVC to claimants represented by TDVS who were erroneously denied benefits by BVA**
- **VA POA stays with TDVS while case at CAVC**

# CAVC REPRESENTATION



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- NVLSP attorneys are accredited by TDVS
- NVLSP screens BVA decisions to identify BVA errors
- NVLSP offers pro bono representation to claimant
  - Letter to claimant w/TDVS letter of introduction



NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

August 29, 2025

John Smith  
605 Main Street  
Cookeville, TN 38506

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am an attorney with the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP). NVLSP is a nonprofit veterans service organization that works in association with the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services, the organization that represented you before the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board).

The Tennessee Department of Veterans Services asked us to review the Board's July 31, 2025, decision, to evaluate whether an appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (Court) is warranted. We have concluded that the Board made one or more errors in denying your claim(s) for entitlement to: service connection for a lower back disability. Therefore, we believe that you may benefit from exercising your right to appeal the Board's decision to the Court.

Since 1989, NVLSP has represented thousands of veterans, their survivors, and dependents on an appeal of their Board decision to the Court. If you appeal your Board decision to the Court, the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services has arranged for NVLSP to represent you for free.

We are available to discuss the possibility of NVLSP representing you before the Court. You will never be charged money for NVLSP's work on your appeal, and you will never have your VA benefits reduced to pay for NVLSP's work on your appeal.

If you are interested in appealing your case, please contact me by telephone at (202) 621-5672, or email me at [stacy@nvlsp.org](mailto:stacy@nvlsp.org). It is very important that you contact us as soon as possible because **the deadline to file your Notice of Appeal is October 29, 2025. In order for us to file an appeal on your behalf, you must contact me at the number above no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern time on October 29, 2025.**

Very Respectfully,

*/s/ Stacy A. Tromble*

Stacy A. Tromble  
Appellate Attorney

1100 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 900 • Arlington, VA 22209 • Tel 202.265.8305 • Fax 202.328.0063  
Email: [info@nvlsp.org](mailto:info@nvlsp.org) • [www.nvlsp.org](http://www.nvlsp.org)



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

TOMMY BAKER  
COMMISSIONER

BILL LEE  
GOVERNOR



**NVLSP**

NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

Dear Tennessee Veteran:

Thank you for allowing the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services (TDVS) to represent you in your appeal before the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA). As you know, the BVA recently denied some or all of the benefits you have requested.

To best serve you, TDVS sent a copy of your decision to the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) for their review. NVLSP is a nonprofit organization that has a great deal of experience in appealing BVA decision to the next appellate level – the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). NVLSP's lawyers have represented veterans in thousands of appeals at the CAVC. We have asked NVLSP to analyze your case and determine whether there are any errors which may be corrected by appealing your BVA decision.

NVLSP's lawyers have now finished analyzing your case and have informed us that they believe the BVA made one or more errors in denying you benefits. They recommend that you appeal your case to the CAVC. If you wish to appeal the BVA's decision, we have arranged for NVLSP to represent you – at no cost to you.

Enclosed is a letter from NVLSP with details about their offer to represent you at the CAVC for free. We want you to get the benefits you have earned through your service to our Nation and strongly encourage you to contact NVLSP for further assistance. The enclosed letter from NVLSP contains detailed information about contacting them for free representation.

Sincerely,

  
Tommy H. Baker  
Interim Commissioner

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE  
312 ROSA L. PARKS AVENUE NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243 (615) 741-1959  
WWW.TN.GOV/VETERAN

# CAVC REPRESENTATION



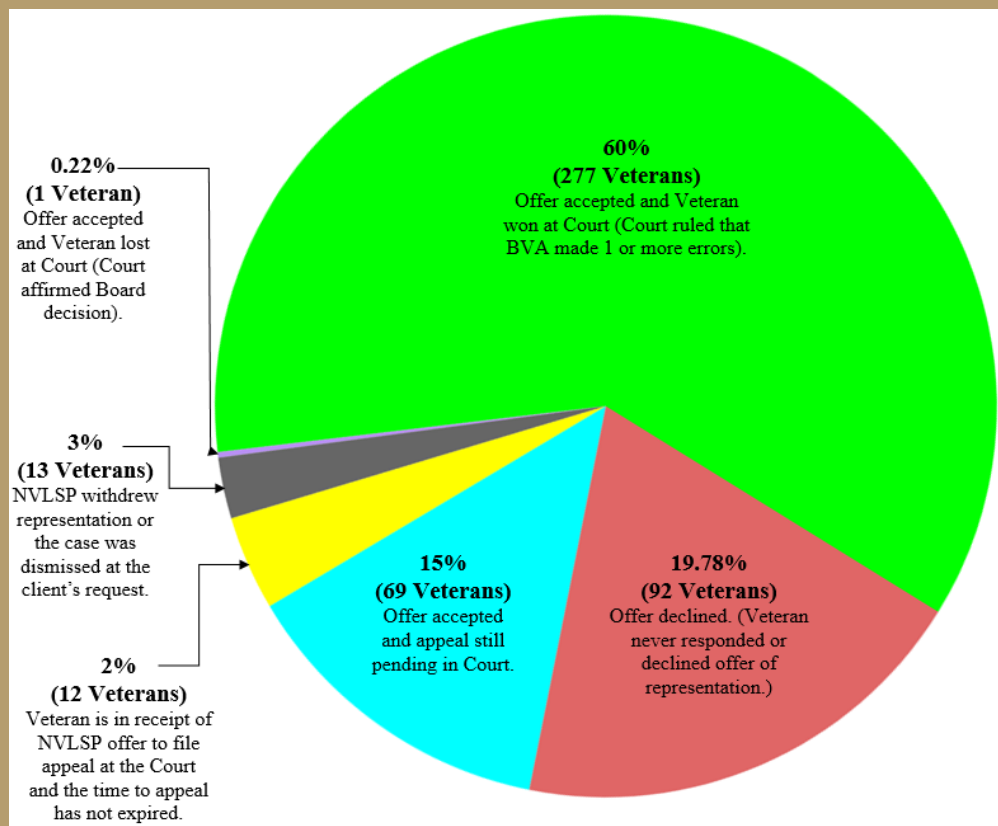
**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- After CAVC case is completed
  - Closing letter to claimant with advice for remand proceedings
  - Copy of JMR / CAVC decision
  - Copy to TDVS (Travis Murphy and Lloyd Sharp)

# CAVC REPRESENTATION



- Since 2019 NVLSP has offered to represent 464 TDVS Vets before the CAVC



# BVA REPRESENTATION



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- NVLSP will find pro bono attorney to represent appellant at BVA for some cases remanded by CAVC:
  - BVA likely to make decision without further remand
  - NVLSP-trained/VA-accredited attorney in LSW pro bono network
  - Client gives permission

# BVA REPRESENTATION



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- NVLSP will inform TDVS if claimant agrees
- TDVS keeps POA
- NVLSP will mentor pro bono attorney, who will:
  - Draft BVA brief
  - Help claimant obtain supporting lay and medical evidence, if necessary/possible

# TRAINING



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- NVLSP provides the following training to TDVS each year, at no cost:
  - Up to 8 hours of in-person training
  - 4 webinars for all TDVS-accredited VSOs

# VSO LIAISON SERVICES



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- NVLSP's Special Counsel—Lou George—leads our VSO liaison services team
- We provide free legal consultation to service officers using a TDVS POA (and TDVS leadership) on issues including:
  - Questions on laws and regulations
  - Advocacy strategy
  - Advice to on individual benefits claims
- This advice can be provided on cases anywhere in the VA claim stream. Our goal is to help you get the Vet benefits as early as possible.

# EMAIL A FRIEND: HOW TO CONTACT US



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

- For VSO Consultations email: [vsoliaison@nvlsp.org](mailto:vsoliaison@nvlsp.org)
- For Burn Pit Assistance email: [burnpits.intake@nvlsp.org](mailto:burnpits.intake@nvlsp.org)
- For Caregiver Benefits Assistance email: [CaregiverSupportProgram@nvlsp.org](mailto:CaregiverSupportProgram@nvlsp.org)
- For questions on CAVC appeals or possible appeals email: [Stacy@nvlsp.org](mailto:Stacy@nvlsp.org)
- For questions on training or our Veterans Benefits Manual email: [Richard@nvlsp.org](mailto:Richard@nvlsp.org)



# QUESTIONS



**NVLSP**  
NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

