

# VA “BUDDY LETTER”

## 1-Understanding both types of Buddy Statements:

Sometimes, events that take place in the military are never recorded by a military unit. Veterans involved in those events may find it challenging to file a claim about a disability they believe began because of that event. Having a buddy statement from someone who experienced the event alongside you or witnessed your involvement can be very helpful. Here is a brief overview of the content differences in a statement from a co-worker and one from a friend or family member:

- Buddy statements from co-workers. When a military co-worker writes a buddy letter for you, he\she is helping to establish where your service connected disability took place and the details about the event. The co-worker writing the letter should be someone who was with you and witnessed the event that caused or aggravated your disability. They should detail as much of the event as possible.
- Buddy statement from friends and family members. Because these people didn't serve with you in the military with you, the focus of their letter should be on how the disability has impacted your life and relationships. Typically, the content will detail how the disability has negatively impacted your daily life, activities and relationships with family and friends

## 2-Tips for writing a Buddy Statement

There is no standard way to write a buddy statement, but there are guidelines that can help make the statement credible and provide support for your disability claim. This statement supports your claim and helps establish a date for your symptoms. Tips include:

- Keep it short. Keep the letter to one page and just include significant facts and details.
- Include contact information. Anyone writing a buddy letter should include their full contact information & the full name of the veteran for whom the letter is being written.
- Include a closing statement. The document needs to be signed. Form # VA-21-4138 is available for the letter. A hand written or typed letter can also be used. Be sure it is signed and dated.
- Don't spoon feed the author. If a buddy statement is being written by family or a friend, don't tell the person what to say. The author needs to use their own words and never make up or exaggerate facts or details.