

- Go to your “My VA” dashboard. You will find the link for this dashboard in the top right corner of the page once you’re signed in.
- Scroll down to the “Track Claims” section. There, you will see a summary of the latest status information for any open claims or appeals you may have, to include open ITFs.
- Click on the “View Status” button for a specific claim. You’ll go to a page with more details about that claim’s status and supporting evidence. Evidence may include documents like doctor’s reports or medical test results.

[Is it too late to file a claim if I haven’t already?](#)

It’s never too late to file a claim or ITF for the benefits you deserve. You can file one by logging into, or creating, a [VA.gov](#) account and submitting online. You can also submit to a VA regional office near you, or work with a trained professional, [like a VA accredited representative or VSO](#), to get help filing a claim for disability compensation. Other options include calling 1-800-827-1000 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. EST or by fax using 844-531-7818.

[Will I be charged for submitting a claim or intent to file?](#)

No. Remember, VA will never charge you for assistance filing for benefits. They are your benefits, and you earned them. To protect yourself from predatory claims agents, you have the right to [verify anyone’s credentials](#) before filing a claim or providing personal information.

[If I miss the one-year deadline, what happens?](#)

You can still finish your claim anytime, and we encourage you to do so. The only thing that may change is the effective date of your benefits.

For more information about ITFs, visit <https://www.va.gov/resources/your-intent-to-file-a-va-claim/>.

[Mental health care options give Veterans many ways to heal](#)

For each Veteran, the most suitable and effective treatment for their mental health challenges and needs can differ, depending in part on their diagnosis, circumstances, and preferences. That’s why VA offers individualized care, adjusted to find what works best for each Veteran.

The experiences of Ryan, Greg, and Bridget are cases in point. The 3 Veterans are among those featured in VA’s May 2024 Mental Health Month campaign, which focuses on how Veterans live fuller lives through mental health treatment. Ryan, Greg, and Bridget attained that goal in different ways thanks to the [breadth of mental health support](#) that VA offers.

[Ryan](#) served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 2001 to 2010, which included the Battle of Fallujah in 2004. After transitioning out of the service, he faced challenges with his physical and mental health—including [traumatic brain injury](#), [chronic migraines](#), [back pain](#), and [posttraumatic stress disorder](#) (PTSD).

“There were times I was driving home and the whole forest would disappear and turn into a desert landscape. It [felt like I was back on patrol again](#),” Ryan says. He also experienced [nightmares](#) and “days I just wanted to break everything.”

[Cognitive behavioral therapy](#) helped him the most. “It felt good to talk to somebody that listened and took my story into account and actually gave me feedback on how to deal with things,” he says.

Ryan found a new job after starting therapy. He says the benefits of treatment also helped him forge a closer relationship with his son. He urges other Veterans to take that first step in exploring their mental health care options. “Took me awhile, but you know, eventually, it worked out,” he says. “You just have to do it.”

Greg: Medication, counseling, and 12-step recovery

During and after his service in the U.S. Army from 1985 to 1988, [Greg](#) faced challenges with [depression](#) and substance misuse, which got him into trouble for 2 decades. Nothing helped for the long term until he decided to visit a VA hospital in Montrose, New York. Greg got on track to recovery by starting medication for depression, following a 12-step recovery program for his [substance use disorder](#), and addressing his mental health through therapy.

One early discussion with his counselor was pivotal. Greg recalls the counselor saying to him: “You’ve been spending over 30-something years hating yourself. Let’s try liking you first. We’ll get to the love.”

“I understand what she meant,” Greg says. “She helped me.”

“Mental health for me, for this person, it wasn’t just the depression. It’s a thing where I needed to talk,” Greg says. “It felt like this overwhelming relief.” Greg maintained his abstinence from drugs, enrolled in college, met his wife there, and bought his first home.

“There’s a lot of Veterans out there that suffer from mental health, drug addiction, that need help,” Greg says. “And if I can tell them one thing: Go to the VA. It saved my life.”

During her service in the U.S. Navy from 2000 to 2005 as a helicopter crew airman, 3 situations deeply affected [Bridget’s](#) mental health: the crash of a helicopter during a flight she was originally scheduled to be on; her Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) School training; and abuse inflicted by a service member she began dating just after her SERE School training ended.

No one died in the crash, but the near miss contributed to her fear of flying. The partner abuse “destroyed my life and love and [relationships](#),” Bridget says. She estimates that, between SERE School and the abuse, she took around 100 blows to the head.

Experiencing challenges in the years after her service, Bridget began mental health treatment. She credits psychodynamic therapy, [dialectical behavioral therapy](#) (DBT), and [eye movement desensitization and reprocessing](#) (EMDR) therapy with helping her understand her PTSD symptoms and how to manage them.

“This stuff is going to live with me for my life, but I know now how to find the tools when I need them instead of burying it and feeling so much shame about it,” Bridget says. She advises other Veterans to be open to different treatment options.

“Not every therapy is for everybody, but give everything a chance,” she says. “Find the thing that is right for you.”

**“Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, being men of courage, be strong.”
1Cor 16:13**

Sincerely,

William A. Harris, Jr.

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William A. Harris, Jr., USAF Retired
President, Veterans for Christ, Inc.

www.veteransforchristinc.org

Need to contact VA?

[Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255](#) and press 1, [Chat](#), or Text 838255

[Homeless Veteran Resources: 1-877-424-3838](#) or [Chat](#)

[White House VA Hotline: 1-855-948-2311](#)

[1-800-MyVA411 \(800-698-2411\)](#) is never the wrong number