

‘I Can’t Even Describe All That David Did for Me’

VFW Accredited Service Officer helps a Marine Corps veteran put \$1,000 back in his pocket every month

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Veteran Edward “Ted” Boyle, 75, lives in Elkton, Maryland, with his wife, Stephanie. Boyle served just over three years in the Marines, from 1967 to 1970, and earned the rank of corporal. He was stationed around the country, including in North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama and California.

“I decided to join the Marines after coming home one night and hearing Lyndon B. Johnson talk about how the U.S. needed to help the South Vietnamese,” Boyle said. “Plus, enlisting was not a big leap for me because of my family.”

Boyle’s father served in the Marines and his mother in the Navy. Several of his uncles served as well, and his great-great-grandfather was part of the 6th U.S. Cavalry that fought in the Civil War.

“Growing up, I was taught that a couple of years of military service was the price to pay for the right to live in a free country, and that our country saved the freedom of many people around the world, which made the sacrifice worthwhile,” Boyle said.

Giving Up After ‘Another Typical Experience’

While stationed at Redstone Arsenal Army Base in Alabama, Boyle was involved in a car accident with fellow Marines, resulting in lasting health issues. Among other things, a paralyzed diaphragm left him with limited lung capacity and leg injuries that continue to cause poor circulation.

Boyle also developed tinnitus during his time in the infantry when he was regularly in close range of rifle fire and explosions. Because of his conditions, Boyle struggles to sleep and stay

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as active as he would like.

Following a bout with prostate cancer and surgery, Boyle heard about the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, where he was stationed in North Carolina. He decided to visit his local VA to apply for benefits.

Boyle received a disability rating of 10%. But when he needed additional assistance months later, Boyle could not find anyone to answer his questions. After weeks of trying, he gave up.

“Being a Vietnam-era veteran, I just wrote it off as another typical experience with the federal government,” he said.

‘One Last Try’ For Assistance

Almost a year later, Boyle came across a group of VFW members who were passing out poppies at a local restaurant. After explaining his struggles with the VA, one veteran suggested Boyle reach out to VFW Accredited Service Officer David Hilliard and shared his contact information.

“I held off calling him for a little while because of my past experiences, but I finally decided to give it one last try,” Boyle said.

Although Hilliard missed the initial call, he reached out to Boyle the next day. During that conversation, Hilliard took the time to ask questions and understand Boyle’s situation in detail.

“From the time David took over my case, my experience with the VA claims process has improved 10,000%,” Boyle said. “I can’t even describe all that David did for me.”

Hilliard emailed, called, texted and even paid Boyle a personal visit to explain all he needed to know about the VA. When it was time to file Boyle’s claim, Hilliard copied all of Boyle’s paperwork for safekeeping, in case he needs it in the future.

“Ironically, my interactions with David have given me faith in my federal government,” Boyle said.

A VFW ‘Game Changer’ for Boyle

With Hilliard’s help, Boyle’s rating increased to 20%. Additionally, Hilliard informed Boyle about new federal regulations affecting disabled veterans. As a result, Boyle now receives all his health care at the VA and has been able to cancel costly plans. Between the new benefits and savings, Boyle has about \$1,000 more in his bank account each month.

“That’s a lot of money for a Social Security recipient, and it wouldn’t have happened if it

weren't for David," he said. "It has been a complete game changer."

Boyle recalls the first time he visited the VA looking for assistance.

"The clerk was shocked to see that I was a Vietnam-era veteran. He said not many of us came to the VA because we didn't trust it. I didn't say anything back; I just agreed," Boyle said.

He is thankful for Hilliard, who has changed his perception, and encourages other veterans to contact the VFW for support.

"If a veteran is going to successfully navigate the VA claims process, he or she is going to need a [VFW Accredited] Service Officer as a guide," he said. "I have found that VFW Service Officers are the very best. I'm deeply grateful for the assistance."

Learn more about the [VFW's National Veterans Service \(NVS\) program](#).