



January 7, 2016)

In order to further improve the lines of communication and to respond to the concerns between the National VA Council and you our members, I have established a National VA Council Briefing. This NVAC Briefing will bring you the latest news and developments within DVA and provide you with the current status of issues this Council is currently addressing. I believe that this NVAC Briefing will greatly enhance the way in which we communicate and the way in which we share new information, keeping you better informed.

Alma L. Lee
National VA Council, President

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**In This Briefing:** [Review of Alleged Problems With VBA's Veterans Benefits Management System and Claims Processing](#)  
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Click on link below to review findings from the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General (OIG)

[Review of Alleged Problems With VBA's Veterans Benefits Management System and Claims Processing](#)

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In July 2014, the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) Hotline received an allegation from an anonymous complainant stating that significant problems existed with claims processing and the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) at the VA Regional Office (VARO) in St. Petersburg, FL. The complainant also alleged that a VBMS claims processing tool, "Evaluation Builder," broke down often and incorrectly calculated veterans' disability claims, potentially costing the Government millions of dollars. We substantiated the allegation regarding a significant backlog of unprocessed hard copy veteran material resulting from inefficient preparation and handling of veteran provided documentation at a contractor facility. More specifically, according to VBA personnel and our observation of VBA portal metrics, the St. Petersburg VARO had more than 41,900 mail packages of veterans' claims material that were backlogged and over 1,600 boxes awaiting processing at the CACI scanning facility. We also observed a significant amount of hard copy veterans' claims evidence that was improperly stored, comingled with contractor documentation, or was disorganized and not ready for

scanning. The significant backlog of unprocessed claims evidence occurred due to a large increase in volume of veterans' claims at the end of 2014 and the VARO's inadequate preparation of hard copy veteran material for scanning at the contractor facility. Furthermore, VBA did not provide effective oversight of contractor personnel to ensure timely processing or safeguarding of veteran information at the contractor facility. We did not substantiate the allegation that "Evaluation Builder," broke down often or incorrectly calculated veterans' disability claims. We recommended that the Under Secretary for Benefits ensure the St. Petersburg VARO consistently organized and mailed hard copy veteran material to contractor scanning facilities. Additionally, we recommended that the Under Secretary for Benefits initiate onsite reviews of the contractor scanning facilities to ensure efficient scanning practices and the proper safeguarding of sensitive VA information at those facilities. The Acting Under Secretary for Benefits concurred with our findings and recommendations.