

Paul DeMaio

"My name is Paul DeMaio and I am a veteran of OEF/OIF. I served in 2003, and when I came home, I was diagnosed with PTSD, hearing loss and tinnitus. My life changed then--I would stay in my basement, drinking and smoking. I withdrew from my family and all social activities. I suffered a brain hemorrhage, which left me with short-and-long-term memory problems, cognitive and executive functioning deficiencies.

I should have been medically retired from the Army National Guard, but unfortunately, my superiors didn't think so. I filed claims, was denied and appealed for almost 8 years. No one should have to go through that.

I will live with my brain injury for the rest of my life. It is difficult for me to hold a job. I have a hard time remembering anything. I don't remember how I met my wife. My wife and kids have to explain almost everything to me. I am afraid in crowds and new situations. Loud places confuse me. Because of my brain injury, I cannot wear my hearing aids, so I have difficulty hearing anything.

I am still appealing my claims. Please change the policies and procedures, so no one has to spend years and years appealing.

Thank you."