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Korean War vet denied VA benefits for 50 years, granted 5 years after his death

His widow finally received his check for retroactive benefits and her own survivor benefits.

By Ken Martin | [FOXBusiness](#)



Thomas Nielson served the U.S. military in Korea from 1950 to 1954.

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NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX (I:COMP)
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S&P 500 (SP500)
6,876.94 ▼ -99.50 (-1.43%)

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He first applied for VA disability benefits in 1960 when an autoimmune disease he developed in the service rendered him unable to pursue full time employment, according to a statement by Elite Lawyer Management.

After more than 50 years of VA bureaucracy and appeals later, his widow finally received his check for retroactive benefits and her own survivor benefits.

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"A record 50 plus years of spurious VA denials culminating in one of the largest retroactive payments in VA history is a legal victory but unfortunately also one of too many examples of the VA's deny till they die policies horrifically visible in human terms," said Nielson's attorney Eric Gang. "I'm thrilled we got this done for Thomas Nielson, albeit posthumously, and his wife, but the VA's half century of inaction is reprehensible, indefensible, and way too typical."

According to Gang, Thomas Nielson's medical problems were first evidenced by malnutrition during his service, only some years following his discharge being diagnosed as Sjögren's Syndrome which affects the kidneys, gastrointestinal system, blood vessels, lungs, liver, pancreas and nervous system.

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The VA awarded \$663,000 in retroactive pay for 20 years of back pay. Gang also won the wife's claim for her widow's benefits, 3 years after her husband's death. Nielson's wife received \$57,000 for that aspect of the claim. In total, Gang obtained over \$720,000 in retroactive VA benefits for the family.



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