**Warm-up Questions - 5 minutes**

Before we look at the website, let's start with a few warm-up questions.

* Can you tell me a little about yourself or your service history?

I enlisted in 1972 and served until 1978 when I got commissioned. I served until 1995 and then retired to work in civilian aviation. I got recalled to active duty in the 2000’s before retiring for a second time.

* Have you used the VA.gov website before?

Yes

* If yes, what was the last thing you were doing or looking for on the site?

I was looking for burial benefits. We get a lot of widows at our center who don’t know anything about those benefits, so we like to help them with it.

* How was that experience?

I found the basic information, but I could not find the required amount of service to be buried in a Veteran cemetery. It was between medium to hard difficulty to find what I needed.

* Have you ever filed an appeal on a decision you received from the VA?

Yes

* If yes, how was that experience?

It was easy because I have a VSO who did everything for me. There are also two attorneys at our center that are good with filing these types of things.

* Lets take a look at the prototype now. Since this is a prototype, some buttons and features will work, some will not.

**Task 1: [Request a Board appeal]:**

Imagine that you have logged in to VA.gov and you have navigated to this page (Board Appeals Info page) because you disagree with a decision VA has made about one or more issues you have submitted a claim for.

Starting on this page, please walk me through how you would request a Board Appeal (also called Notice of disagreement). Please tell me what you see on each page, what you think the purpose of it is and what you would do on the page. (It is helpful if you think out loud, so I can follow what you are thinking, trying to do, and experiencing).

**Board Appeals info page**

* Take a look at this page and tell me what you see here, and what you would do on this page.

I think there should be something that lets people know that they need to file their appeal as soon as possible, because they only have 1 year to do it. Some people wait until the day before and that doesn’t give attorneys \*(VSO)\* time to get the materials together that they’ll need to file it.

This page doesn’t talk about the secondary conditions you can use to confirm your claim and it doesn’t include links to other pages with information, for example, a page that lists all of the ships that had asbestos.

It would be good to direct Veterans to attorneys at the VA who can help them. The attorneys can tell you if you have a valid reason to appeal.

Once you get information about what to do, you can’t sit on it – you need to talk to the VSO or attorney as soon as possible.

* Do you think any information is missing on this page?

A Veteran may want this to go to a second address, for a VSO or attorney – not sure if that would be helpful or not, but it could be something to consider.

**Veteran detail pages**

* Is anything unclear or confusing on these pages?

I would add a description of what a “VA accredited attorney” is.

* Do you think any information is missing on this page?

It could be good to also include an option for the VSO’s phone number with the name and email address.

* Any other comments?

**Issues eligible for review page**

Imagine that you see only half of the issues you have previously registered, on this page. What would you think and do?

\*clicked, “why don’t I see…” after being slightly prompted towards it\*

I don’t think the average Veteran will understand this explanation. Usually it takes a good VSO or attorney to explain this.

Imagine now that you want to make a Board Appeal for 2 issues: let's say for Tinnitus and Arthritis (in your left ankle). Let's assume you have all the info and documents at hand to make a Board Appeal.

The text by the check box is clear and is pretty upfront. I would be unsure what they mean by the new and old process – I would want a link that takes you to where you’re at in the old process for all claims that apply so that you can check their current status. That way you can choose to continue that process or to make adjustments.

**Board review option page**

* What do you see on this page and what would you do here?

Most of the VSO and attorneys would say that you don’t want a direct review because you can add more evidence beforehand. I think the other two are the best options.

Imagine that you have learned from your VSO (Veterans Service Organization) or attorney, that you need to submit new evidence, but that a hearing is not necessary. What would you do on this page?

\*Chose “submit additional evidence”\*

**Additional evidence page**

* What do you see on this page and what would you do here?

I would highlight the “90 days” and put it in bold print to make sure Veterans understand that. If you don’t get it done in 90 days, then you’ve already lost the battle.

* Is anything on this page unclear or confusing?

Is the maximum file size measured per file or totaled for all files? It should be 25mb per file/document. It would also be good if you could upload the files somewhere else to then provide a link for access – that would let Veterans submit larger files. \*Example: Dropbox\*

Imagine you have one piece of evidence you want to submit. What would you do on this page?

\*added evidence with no issue\*

**Review application page**

* Tell me what you think the purpose of this page is and what you would do here.

I think it is great to have a review page. It would be good to be able to enter a date of when you submitted this so that the VA/you can refence it to track the timeline. \*noticed “date submitted” after submitting\*

* Any other comments?

Imagine that you come to the page called Review Application. You review all the info on this page and notice that your old phone number is listed here. What would you do?

\*updated with no issue\*

**Post-Task Interview - 5-10 minutes**

* Having gone through the form, how was that experience?

I think the comments I made are good suggestions, you may find those similar comments from other Veterans too.