A simple statement from the doctor stating something like the following.

Dr. Spock-Orthopedic Surgeon

Address

City and State, zip code.

Telephone.

To Whom it may concern,

I am a board certified and licensed orthopedic surgeon, with X number years experience in my field of medicine.

For Patient: Tom Jones, I've been asked to provide an Independent Medical Opinion as to the patients condition as well as to providing a nexus to the patients service connected injury or illness and their current physical issues.

I've reviewed the patients civilian as well as Military medical records (and C-file if available) and deem it in my medical opinion, that Patients right knee problem and arthritis are related to the injury patient suffered in 2000, during a training accident. Patient injured right knee, torn ligaments and had to have orthoscopic surgery to repair torn ligaments and tendons in right knee. Patient has continued to have problems with right knee and the symptoms have been constant and have worsened over the past 4yrs.

Patient suffers from the following sypmtoms at least 3 or more times a week-then name them.

In conclusion, it is in my medical and professional opinion, that the patients knee problems and arthritis are directly related to his injury and the conditions and symptoms have worsened and should be considered as primarily related to his injury from December 2000.

Please feel free to contact my office should you have any questions regarding this medical opinion or need any other assistance from my office.

Regards,

Dr. Spock 21 February 2012

Buddy letter:

Name,

Address

City & State, zip code

Telephone

I am Sgt. Lone Ranger and I served with PFC Tom Jones during the time frame of 1998 until 2002.

I have first hand knowledge of PFC Jones injury to his knee on December 2, 2000, as I witnessed his falling and twisting his right leg at an awkward angle. PFC Jones was rushed to the arm hospital on the same night. PFC Jones has had surgery on his right knee for numerous issues and to my knowledge had problems with his right knee constantly after the injury. He would complain of pain at least 3 or more times during the week and has had problems with his knee on up to current date.

The reason I have first hand knowledge of the problems on up to current date is because PFC Jones and I live in the same neighborhood and have remained in contact with each other over the years and I've personally seen his knee over the past years when it was swollen and he couldn't hardly walk. I also know that his problems get worse, when the weather is cold or rainy.

Regards.  
  
Sgt. Lone Ranger.   Signed and dated

Another Example

Now the body of the letter can be written. What I have found to work best in a buddy letter is bullet statements given in a (Arabic) numbered format. If necessary, the Roman numeral outline format can be used, but it often is not needed. Item number one always needs to explain who is writing the letter, and their address.:  
  
1. My name is John Doe, and I reside at 1313 Mockingbird Lane, NY, NY 12345. or,:  
  
1. My name is Mrs. XXXX, and I reside with my husband at 123 Lovers Lane, Hoboken, NJ 54321.  
  
Item number two always needs to explain the relationship the writer has to the veteran.  
  
2. I served with Mr. XXXX in 1969. We were both UH-1 helicopter crewchiefs assigned to the 1st Bn, 9th Cavalry in the Republic of Vietnam. or,:  
  
2. I have known my husband since March 1965, and we were married in June 1968. I have been with my husband every day since we were married, with the exception of short periods of time where his military duties kept him away, and for the extended period of his combat tour in Vietnam.  
  
All of the subsequent items need to explain what they know. This should be done in chronological order. If they knew the veteran's physical and mental condition prior to service, they should start with that, and progress through to the current time. If they have knowledge of how the veteran became disabled, even through hearsay, they should state so. If they know what condition and symptoms the veteran currently suffers from, they should state so. If they have witnessed the progression of symptoms, they should tell what they have seen. Most importantly, they should paint a accurate picture of the veteran's current level of disability. Examples of these statements look like this:  
  
3. On 8 November 1969, during a troop insertion to a LZ, our stick of 15 UH-1's came under heavy small arms fire. Mr. XXXX's aircraft took several rounds to the tailboom, and suffered a loss of tail rotor effectiveness. The aircraft crashed on the LZ, wounding everyone on board. Since there were no medical evacuation aircraft on station at this point, Mr. XXXX and the other wounded had to remain in the LZ for nearly 45 minutes. In the interest of self-preservation, all of the wounded that were able, including Mr. XXXX, actively engaged the enemy. Mr. XXXX was once again wounded by small arms fire while on the ground. Mr. XXXX was finally extracted from the LZ and was transported to a FOB where he received his first medical attention since becoming wounded. or,:  
  
3. My husband was very active and had many interests prior to his tour in Vietnam. After he returned, he was completely detached. He gave up anything that he had found interesting before, and nothing seemed to make him happy. He was depressed all the time, and became startled very easily. He hasn't slept much since returning from Vietnam, and when he does sleep, he usually awakes to nightmares. He gets angry very easily, and argues with myself and others frequently, but he has never became violent. Every year around early November, he becomes very depressed, and sometimes suicidal. I do not know exactly what happened to him while in Vietnam, because he has never told me. I do know that while in the hospital after returning to the United States, he received the Silver Star and the Purple Heart for something he did on November 8, 1969. Everyone seemed to make a big deal out of it, but I didn't truly understand it all.  
  
After all of the information has been given, the next to last statement needs to give contact information for the writer. It is rare that a rater contacts the letter writer, but it does happen sometimes. A simple statement such as, "I am available at my residence, or by phone at 123-234-3456 if you have questions or need further assistance." will do the trick.  
  
The last statement in the letter should read, "I swear that the above statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge." This statement is precisely what makes the letter a sworn statement. The writer should then sign the letter and print his or her name under the signature. Another step that can be taken is to have a notary public notarize the letter when it is signed. This just adds emphasis to the statements, but is not necessary.  
  
As we do with everything else that we are sending to a rater, number each page of this letter with 1 of X, 2 of X, etc. Also be sure to put your name and C-file number at the bottom of every page. Then attach it to any other documents that are to be sent to the VARO. As usual, send this package to the VARO via certified mail, return receipt requested.