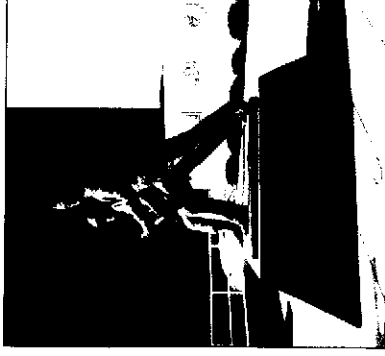




VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

## National Veterans Service

Junior Vice Commanders' Conference



Michael Figlioli, Deputy Director  
[MFiglioli@vfw.org](mailto:MFiglioli@vfw.org)  
October 12, 2019

## Objectives:

- Mission/Responsibilities/  
Structure
- PSO info
- Outreach
- Predators
- COVID Ops
- OLP
- Questions?



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.



# Mission:



## Benefits Assistance

[www.vfw.org/NVS](http://www.vfw.org/NVS)

<b>Director:</b>	<b>Deputy Director:</b>	<b>Deputy Director:</b>
<b>Ryan Gallucci</b>	<b>Mike Figlioli</b>	<b>Gregg Orto</b>
<u><a href="mailto:rgallucci@vfw.org">rgallucci@vfw.org</a></u>	<u><a href="mailto:mfiglioli@vfw.org">mfiglioli@vfw.org</a></u>	<u><a href="mailto:porto@vfw.org">porto@vfw.org</a></u>
202-608-8341	202-608-8373	202-608-8375

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## Responsibilities:



- Help veterans access earned benefits:
  - Accredit and train VFW's global network of service officers
  - Provide direct assistance to separating service members and VFW client appeals
  - Provide referral and casework services
- Work with federal agencies to ensure proper administration of veterans' benefit programs
- Manage VFW's national network of volunteers at VA hospitals (VAVS)

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## Structure:



- National Certifying Authority:
  - Director, National Veterans Service
- National Veterans Service Advisory Committee amends and approves NVS Policy & Procedure:
  - Available on: [www.vfw.org/NVS](http://www.vfw.org/NVS)
- National Veterans Service conducts required training for all accredited VFW representatives:
  - In-person training conferences
  - Quality Assurance site visits
  - Online training
- National VFW Provides Restricted Grants to assist in funding service offices

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## Structure:



- Department Commander appoints the Department Service Officer.
- Departments employ support staff:
  - Usually managed by Adjutant/Quartermaster
  - Rules usually established by Department Service Committee
  - Departments prepare and submit all accreditation paperwork to NVS
  - Departments decide whether or not to cross-accredit State or County employees with VFW

*\*We'll discuss District/Post Service Officers later ...*

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# Reality:



**VFW Service Officers are...**

**...the best PROFESSIONAL, Trained, Accredited Advocates in the nation.**

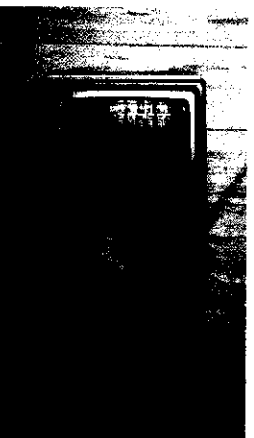
- **Professional:** Our policy is that accredited reps must be employees of the VFW or state/county
- **Trained:** Require up to 80 hours of classroom training, online training, and VA-required training each year
- **Accredited:** VA Office of the General Counsel acknowledges our reps to prepare and prosecute claims before VA
- **Advocates:** We help veterans achieve the highest rating allowable under the law.

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# Service Officer:



What VA thinks I do



What veterans think I do



What civilians think I do



What I think I do



What clients think I do



What I actually do

# Post Service Officers:



- Posts & Districts are authorized to appoint Service Officers.
- These officers are charged with assisting veterans locally in understanding and navigating benefits available to them.
- These officers are **NOT** accredited and must not represent themselves as such.

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# Post Service Officers:



**MOP Sec. 218 (12) Service Officer:** The work of a Service Officer shall be performed in accordance with the instructions contained in the VFW Guide for Service Officers under the general supervision of the Department Service Officer.

*\*Similar rules apply to District Service Officers.*

**MOP Sec. 518 (11) Service Officer.** [Department Service Officer] work shall be performed in accordance with policies established by the National Veterans Service Advisory Committee.

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# Post Service Officers:



## NVS Policy & Procedure:

- Requires the DSO to host/attend PSO training
- Post Service Officers will not be provided information by a DSO without the express written consent of a claimant.
- PSOs will not take possession of any form, record, application or evidence from a claimant.
- Explicitly states that a PSO cannot retain any PII from a claimant.

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# Post Service Officers:



## What does this mean???

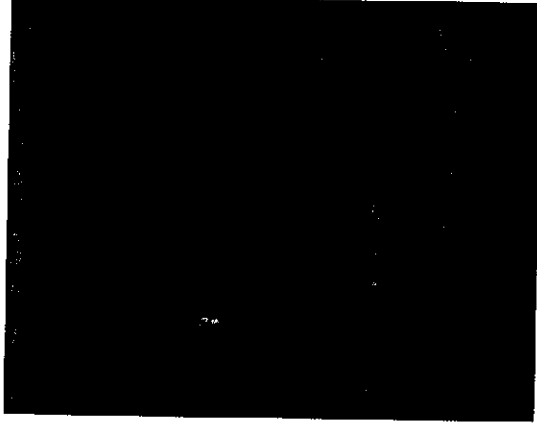
- Post/District Service Officers give general information on benefits, provide referral, serve as “scribe.”
- Cannot represent veterans because they are not accredited.
- Must not retain ANY records for the veterans they assist, as this is a violation of VFW policy and a violation of the veteran’s privacy.
- *Violating these policies can expose the Post/Department to potential liability for misfiled claims.*
- *Post/District Service Officers CAN be critical to outreach to identify veterans in need of assistance.*

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# Outreach Concepts:



- *Goal: Identify NEW veterans who need VFW's assistance*
- VFW audience is not the best audience (already customers)
- Identify community events, places where veterans frequent:
  - VA hospitals, VetCenters
  - Military installations, Guard/Reserve units
  - College campuses
  - Gun shows, outdoor shows, bike/car shows, etc.
  - Faith-based, community organizations



## Your Role:



*“VFW Accredited Service Officers lead the way”*

### Tell Veterans and their families to:

- Never file a VA claim without accredited representation.
- VFW's Accredited Service Officers are the “go-to” people for all veterans' benefits to include VA claims and VA health care issues.
- All Service Officers should be your best recruiters.
- Refer Folks to VFW DSOs for VA Assistance!

**Visit your Service Office! You'll be in charge soon!**

# URGENT!



**2021-2022**

NVS Proclaims it as the

***“YEAR OF THE REPRESENTED VETERAN”***

- We must tell our story about the good works we do, the services we provide and that no one should ever have to pay for it.
- If you aren't asked to sign a VA Form 21-22...**RUN!!!**
- If you're asked for financial information and account numbers....**RUN!**
- VFW Service Program provides a lifetime of local advocacy
- VFW Reps- Professionally trained in all aspects of VA claims and appeals
- We need you to help us spread the word about predatory claims sharks - No OGC Accreditation

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## COVID Ops



- Department Computer purchase
- March 19, 2020- Closed/March 20, 2020- Open
- NVS Training continued- OLP/ZOOM
- VFW was the **ONLY** VSO to continue operations uninterrupted due to our posture at the local and national level
- VFW BDD reps provided separation briefings one year ahead of VA

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# Success Stories:



## “Why Choose VFW?”

- More than **\$9.7 billion** in benefits in FY2020\*
- **2,000+** advocates accredited worldwide
- **Over 100,000** new awards in FY2020\*
- **80** hours of training for service officers every year
- More likely to **WIN** appeals at BVA
- **FREE** services for **ALL** clients
- **Represented veterans get more benefits\*\***

*\*According to VA Power of Attorney Summary for FY2020*

*\*\*According to VA Office of the Inspector General*

## Online Learning Portal



- 441 Total Users
- 4000 visits this month
- More than 243,000 visits since launch
- 38 total courses
- NVS Update
- 21 VFW/17 Psycharmor
- 7 training conferences
- 118 Separate Resources
- Complete Basic Training virtual

# Key NVS Links:



- Benefits Assistance: [www.vfw.org/NVS](http://www.vfw.org/NVS)
- BDD Checklist: [www.vfw.org/BDD](http://www.vfw.org/BDD)
- Health Care Advocacy:  
[www.vfw.org/VAwatch](http://www.vfw.org/VAwatch)
- VA Voluntary Service:  
[www.vfw.org/volunteerservice](http://www.vfw.org/volunteerservice)
- Tactical Assessment Center: [vfw@vfw.org](mailto:vfw@vfw.org)

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# QUESTIONS?

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