

“John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2023-2024”.

The Department of PA VFW would like to nominate Linda Eshenbaugh-Claims Consultant for the Accredited Service Representative of the year.

Linda started working for the Department of PA VFW in February of 2010. At that time, Linda worked for the State of West Virginia in the Pittsburgh Regional Office. In July of 2011 Linda was approached by the Dept. of PA Service Officer who asked her to work at the Dept. of Pa VFW. Linda accepted and became a great asset to the Department of PA VFW

Linda was appointed Supervisor of the VFW Regional Office and oversaw hiring other service officers as well as running a smooth and productive office. The service officers and Linda were able to increase the service to veterans from twenty-eight veterans a month to over one hundred within a 6-month period. It was a great challenge but very well achieved.

Linda is a very personable, driven, and knowledgeable service officer with 14 years of experience in providing tailored guidance for each veteran. Linda's values regarding personalized experiences and understanding her veterans help provide the information needed to rate their claims correctly and get the results that are due to the veteran. Linda meets with over three hundred veterans a month as well as veteran appeals and outreach.

Linda's first meeting with a veteran she asks if they are registered with the VA health care system. If they are not, she encourages them to do so by telling them to take their DD-214 to the nearest VA facility and register as this will help their case as VA will have access to the medical that will be documented.

Linda always looks for locations that will provide easy access to help a veteran. Linda goes to these locations on a regular basis so the veteran can be sure to see Linda. VFW Service Officers are required to provide the best advice and guidance to the veteran so that they understand their case and know what is needed to win and Linda does an exceptional job doing so. The training she gets as a Claims Consultant is unbelievably valuable and extremely helpful.

Linda's time with the VFW she has learned how to read the ratings to respond to VA and the requirements to meet the needed information for a positive rating. She will review the case after the award or denial so she will see if she needs to do anything more for the veteran. In cases where the veteran is awarded at 100% P&T, he is eligible for PA state benefits as well. Some veterans are not aware of this benefit and Linda provides that information to the veteran.

Linda has learned to represent the veteran in hearings both with a mediator and with a Judge with exceptional results.

The key is to have all the facts of the case as far as the conditions under dispute and to have the proof to back up what is being filed for and Linda does her research and provides all necessary documentation.

Linda stated there are 3 things needed to win a case.

1. A diagnosis
2. An injury or event with time place and documentation to verify the information.
3. The nexus to put them together.



Linda explains this to the veteran so that the veteran can understand what is needed to win. Linda lets the veteran know this is their time to talk with the judge about his/her case.

Each day of the week, Linda will go to various locations in the area. Linda takes the time to listen to the veteran or the family member so that she can provide the best advice. Linda stays with each case to the end. Most times, a veteran has filed a claim, but the correct info was not provided. Linda uses a valuable data base Called TVB. It has many tools to help her with forms and information to get the claim in immediately.

Linda visits VFW Posts, Nursing homes, State representative offices and Va hospitals, and public hospitals. Linda will go to the veterans' personal address if they are not capable of coming to her.

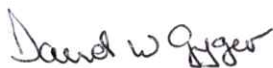
Linda also helps veterans from all over the world. The foreign veterans have a hard task of submitting and receiving needed information from the VA. Linda helps them overcome this obstacle by providing them with what is required to receive compensation for conditions caused by military service.

Linda receives many claims through email and UPS mail. Some of our veterans are older and do not have the capability to go through the internet. Linda will either drive to their home or have them mail the documents to her. Linda will print the documents to become their service officer, she will highlight the needed information and provide a stamped address envelope to herself so all they need to do is complete sign and return it to her. She makes the process quite simple for the veteran. She provides her cell number, so they have easy access when they have questions or concerns.

Linda also encourages the veterans to register as members of the VFW post and provides them with the added service that the posts provide, not to mention the fun. VFW posts are a lot of fun!

Linda has been told by her colleagues that she has a remarkably high success rate, she cannot follow that and takes her colleagues' word. Linda has helped many veterans that have helped change their lives because they now receive compensation for a condition they incurred in the service. Linda feels her position is extremely rewarding because she has helped a veteran who signed up to protect us.

She is an exemplary accredited claim consultant representative of the VFW and for many reasons, and we firmly believe she deserves to be recognized as the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year.



***Submitted by: Dept. of PA VFW State Headquarters Commander
April 23, 2024***



Spike

From: Spike <djc57@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 9, 2024 10:35 AM
To: 'Beattie, Charles, (VSOPITT)'
Cc: 'Quartermaster'; Cynthia Lewis - HQ VFW PA; Spike
Subject: RE: Nominations are Now Being Accepted for the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2023-2024

I am still awaiting the 3 submission. Please have them on my desk by 17 April 2024.
Thanks,

Spike

Cell: 717-991-1473

*Due to National
30 APR 2024*

From: Spike <djc57@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 11:56 AM
To: 'Cynthia Lewis' <clewis@vfwpahq.org>
Cc: 'Quartermaster' <Quartermaster@vfwpahq.org>; 'Chuck Beattie' <Charles.Beattie@va.gov>; Spike <djc57@verizon.net>
Subject: RE: Nominations are Now Being Accepted for the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2023-2024

Good Morning:

Lets find 3 candidates and have Chuck submit their write up's (packages) and submit it to me. I will set up a team and we will pick the winner to move forward. We have more than one in the department that do a good job.
Thanks,

Spike

Cell: 717-991-1473

From: Cynthia Lewis <clewis@vfwpahq.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 11:33 AM
To: Dave Gyger <djc57@verizon.net>
Cc: Quartermaster <Quartermaster@vfwpahq.org>; Chuck Beattie <Charles.Beattie@va.gov>
Subject: FW: Nominations are Now Being Accepted for the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2023-2024

Good Morning,

Chuck would like to nominate Emily for this award. Please see below and let me know your decision.

Thank you

Cyndi

Cynthia Lewis

Dept of PA VFW

4002 Fenton Avenue

Harrisburg, PA 17109

Tele: 717-234-7927

Cell: 609-865-6579

Fax: 717-234-1955

Email: clewis@vfwpahq.org

Website: vfwpa.org



From: Beattie, Charles, (VSOPITT) <CharlesBeattie@va.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 9:53 AM

To: Quartermaster <Quartermaster@vfwpahq.org>

Cc: Cynthia Lewis <clewis@vfwpahq.org>

Subject: FW: Nominations are Now Being Accepted for the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2023-2024

I would highly recommend Emily for this award. Any thoughts on this request

From: Theresa Aldana <taldana@vfw.org> **On Behalf Of** Michael Figlioli

Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 8:01 AM

To: Department Commanders <DepartmentCommanders@vfw.org>

Cc: Department Sr. Vice <DepartmentSr.Vice@vfw.org>; Department Jr. Vice <DepartmentJr.Vice@vfw.org>; Department Adj/QM <DeptAdjQM@vfw.org>; National Council of Administration <NationalCouncil@vfw.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Nominations are Now Being Accepted for the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2023-2024

The importance of the work done by VFW accredited service representatives cannot be overstated as they are essential to the continued well-being of our nation's veterans and their families. Even as the VFW transitioned into a hybrid remote office environment, our accredited representatives continued to counsel veterans, complete paperwork, and submit VA claims for earned entitlements and benefits. Due to modern technology, the accredited representative's mission of providing services to veterans, their family members, or survivors can be conducted at any place, at any time!

This is your opportunity as Department Commander to recognize that ongoing commitment by nominating one (1) of your Department's accredited representatives for the "***John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2023-2024***".

Every Department should strive to put forth a candidate. A nomination shows that Department leaders are aware of the significant contributions your staff and your program make in your community every day.

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible nominees include:

- Department Service Officers
- Assistant Department Service Officers
- Claims Consultants/Representative/Analysts/Reviewers
- Veterans Service Officers/Representatives

Individuals **NOT** eligible for this award are:

- VFW National Staff
- VFW Contractors
- VFW accredited representatives whose primary employer is other than the VFW or a State veterans' agency
- Previous recipients of the Accredited Representative of the Year Award
- Individuals who do not have VFW accreditation

SELECTION CRITERIA:

1. Nominees for the annual award must have demonstrated exceptional efforts in assisting veterans and their families during the 12 months preceding the April 30, deadline.
2. A brief summary of no more than 2 pages is to be submitted which explains the who, what, when, where, and how the nominee's efforts are considered exemplary. Suggested items for consideration (but not limited to)
 - Number of individuals with VFW POAs assisted.
 - Community outreach conducted.
 - Examples of excellent customer service provided.
 - Meticulous use of Tyler Veterans Benefits (TVB) or another electronic claims processing system (specify system).
 - Submission of TIMELY monthly reports (if located in a VA regional office)
 - Number of VFW members recruited.

AWARDS:

Each Department Commander may nominate one eligible individual for this prestigious award. The individual who is ultimately chosen as the recipient will be provided with round-trip travel (for the winner and one guest) and two nights' hotel accommodation to attend the VFW National Convention where the award will be presented. In addition, the award recipient will receive \$599 in recognition of their accomplishments and to offset travel expenses.

Please note that the selection committee will review NVS databases to understand how candidates served clients. Additionally, the results of test scores at NVS training, the results of any site visits, and other criteria may be considered in making the final decision.

Nominations may be sent to the Director, VFW National Veterans Service, either by email to taldana@vfw.org, by mail (200 Maryland Ave, NE, Washington, DC 20002 ATTN: Service Officer Award), or by fax to 202-547-3196 (ATTN: Service Officer Award).

Nominations must be received not later than April 30, 2024

Past winners of this award have come from the Departments of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, Washington, Minnesota, and Idaho. These service officers stood out from our worldwide cadre for not only meeting the challenge daily, but exceeding it through exemplary commitment, technical knowledge, and customer service.

Respectfully,

Mike

Michael S. Figlioli

Director, National Veterans Service (NVS)

VFW Washington Office

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.

Washington, D.C. 20002

Office: 202.608.8373

Cell: 202.285.9133

Fax: 202.547.3196

VA ACCREDITATION # 9208



Spike

From: Theresa Aldana <taldana@vfw.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 3:46 PM
To: Felisha Lippi
Cc: Commander PA, David Gyger; Quartermaster
Subject: Receipt Acknowledged: "John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award 2023-2024"

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your nomination of Linda Eshenbaugh for the VFW's John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2023-2024.

The Department of Pennsylvania's participation in this program is greatly appreciated.

Theresa

Theresa Aldana
Manager, Admin & Support Ops
VFW National Veterans Service
Office: 202-608-8347
taldana@vfw.org

From: Felisha Lippi <flippi@vfwpahq.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 2:56 PM
To: Theresa Aldana <taldana@vfw.org>
Cc: Commander PA, David Gyger <djc57@verizon.net>; Quartermaster <Quartermaster@vfwpahq.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] "John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award 2023-2024"

Good afternoon,

On behalf of the Department of Pennsylvania VFW State Commander, David Gyger, we want to submit Linda Eshenbaugh- Claims Consultant. Please look at the attached documents.

Warm regards,

Felisha M. Lippi
Mailroom Clerk & Clerical Support
Public Relations Representative
Dept of PA VFW
4002 Fenton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17109
Phone: 717-234-7927
Email: FLippi@vfwpahq.org

