VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Tennessee VFW Life Member Goes Above and Beyond for Local Veterans

Service officer has helped retrieve four Purple Hearts

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With over 1,700 VFW Service Officers across the globe, no one understands the frustration of the VA claims process, better than the VFW. The process can be confusing and one that service members and veterans shouldn't try to navigate alone.

Since 2007, VFW Life Member, Nathan Weinbaum (and U.S. Navy veteran) has been serving veterans and helping them obtain their earned benefits and compensation in Tennessee as a VFW Service Officer. Over the years, he has helped countless veterans not only obtain their VA benefits, but also obtain honorary high school diplomas and service medals that were never received.

VFW Service Officers are the key to success, recovering approximately $1 billion in earned benefits and compensation for veterans each year. But Weinbaum will tell you that "the job as a service officer is much more than sitting at a desk all day long. It's about impacting the lives of the veterans you serve." In 2013, he was awarded the State of Tennessee County Veterans Service Officer of the Year Award and currently serves as the Blount County, Tenn., director of Veterans Affairs/Veterans Service Officer.

Weinbaum worked a case several years ago, and noticed a Western Union telegram to the veteran's mother among the veteran's paperwork. It mentioned that he had been wounded in action. After Weinbaum asked where the veteran's Purple Heart was, the veteran responded that he never got one. Weinbaum knew he had a case with the telegram as a piece of support to retrieve the Purple Heart. Since then, Weinbaum has helped three other Purple Heart recipients obtain their medals, assisted six veterans with obtaining honorary high school diplomas, and one Bronze Star Medal for another deserving veteran.

"The process to obtain a medal or diploma takes work," explained Weinbaum. "Some of the applications have taken me weeks to complete as I am also working with veterans throughout the day with their claims. With the Purple Hearts, it can take more than a year

before the veteran receives a decision."

For Weinbaum, it's even more than claims and medals. "Blount County has the only veterans food pantry for a county Veterans Affairs office in the state of Tennessee ... Some veterans come to our office hungry, and we can offer them some food. That's rewarding!"

Without a doubt, Weinbaum is making a difference in the lives of the veterans in Blount County. With five medal applications and two honorary high school diploma applications in the works, Weinbaum is hard at work giving back to the men and women who have served our country.

While he's officially a member of VFW Post 5154, he's also active in VFW Post 10855 because of all of the good work both Posts do for the community. "[I'm] just proud to serve my veterans and the VFW," said Weinbaum.

To find a service officer near you, visit: http:http://www.vfw.org/NVS/.

To see more pictures, videos and stories of the veterans Nathan gets to help each and every day, check out their Facebook page: https:http://www.facebook.com/BlountCountyVeterans/?fref=ts.