

VFW Announces Top Veterans Service Officer

New Mexico veteran ‘a shining example of how veterans continue serving’

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WASHINGTON – The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is proud to announce the selection of retired Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Cynthia Archuleta as its VFW Accredited Service Representative of the Year.

Archuleta, who resides in Albuquerque, N.M., is an integral part of the VFW’s nationwide network of nearly 2,000 accredited service officers who last year alone helped more than a half-million veterans recoup \$7.7 billion in earned benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Accredited means VA accreditation, which means they can assist and file VA claims on behalf of veterans, as well as represent them before the Board of Veterans Appeals if needed. The support is free to all honorably discharged veterans, and is a continuation of the VFW’s “service to others” mission that the organization began nearly a century ago after returning World War I veterans faced the same government neglect as the VFW’s forefathers did two decades earlier when they came home from the Spanish-American War and later the Philippine Insurrection.

“After a long and honorable career in the Marine Corps, Gunny Archuleta continues to work on behalf of her fellow veterans to make sure they receive the care and benefits they earned,” said Keith Harman, national commander of the 1.7-million member VFW and its Auxiliary.

“As a service officer, she helped more than 600 wounded, ill and injured veterans recoup almost \$11 million in earned compensation and pension payments last year, as well as established their eligibility to receive VA health care,” he said. “She also volunteers her time to mentor others, which is a shining example of how veterans continue serving after they leave the military. I look forward to presenting her with this national award next month at the VFW’s 119th National Convention in Kansas City, Mo.”

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Archuleta retired from the Marine Corps in 2008 after serving more than 20 years. She enlisted in the Corps after graduating from North High School in Sheboygan, Wis., and her follow-on assignments took her to California, Missouri, Florida, Wisconsin and Iraq, where she was the staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the military prison in Fallujah. She earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, and is heavily involved with the VFW at the local and state levels. Along with being a service officer, she has twice served as commander of the 500-member VFW Post 5890 in Rio Rancho, N.M., where she earned All-American honors, and just this week was elected junior vice commander of the 9,400-member VFW Department of New Mexico.

For help filing a VA claim, contact a [VFW Service Officer near you](#).