

## Continuing the Call to Serve

### 'The rewards are in seeing the change in our veterans after they receive their awards'

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“This is the best and hardest job I have ever had. The rewards are in seeing the change in our veterans after they receive their awards.”

Wendy Griffin of Salt Lake City, Utah spends her days passionately advocating for veteran’s rights. In her role as a VFW Department Service Officer, she assists veterans and their families in filing claims and helping them obtain the benefits they have earned. As a veteran, Griffin knows just how much these benefits matter.

Griffin served in the United States Air Force from January 1983 to December 1990. In her role as a linguist and historian, Staff Sgt. Griffin was stationed in South Korea and Arizona.

Her journey with the VFW began in 2014. Griffin began volunteering by answering phones, then became an accredited claims consultant a year later. She started her role as a VFW Department Service Officer in 2017. During a typical day, she works with up to six veterans ranging from World War II veterans to those currently serving active duty.

“There are veterans who do not know they are eligible to file a claim. For some, it is a life-changing event,” said Griffin.

She recalls a memorable case with fondness. “I helped a widow file a claim for a death pension. I realized an error had been made when she originally filed a claim in 1999 after her husband passed away. The VA had denied her claim as a non-service connected death. She was awarded Dependency Indemnity Compensation based on her husband’s service backdated to the original date of claim. This led to an award of about \$250,000 for the widow in back pay.”

During the difficult days of explaining to veterans why their VA disability claims were denied, she reminds herself of the look of relief on the widow’s face as a reminder to strive to be the best for the veterans she serves.

“At the end of the day, I can go home knowing that I helped fellow veterans receive the benefits they earned,” concluded Griffin.