# Longtime Veterans Advocate to Lead VFW National Veterans Service

## VFW Life member and VA claims subject matter expert says he's ready for the challenges the future holds

Mar 07, 2023

**WASHINGTON —** The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has selected its new National Service Officer.

Mike Figlioli, deputy director of VFW National Veterans Service (NVS), has been promoted to director of the VFW's premiere program for veterans. The 104-year-old NVS offers free service claims assistance to veterans, service members and their families. In fiscal year 2022 alone, the NVS recovered more than $11.2 billion for veterans, spouses and survivors.

"I am honored to have been chosen to lead this amazing team of dedicated professionals who every day help change the lives of veterans," said Mike Figlioli.

As NVS director, Figlioli is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program, which ensures veterans, service members and their families have access to their earned benefits through the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense and Labor. The scope of his role also includes overseeing the VFW's network of more than 1,950 VFW Accredited Service Officers located around the world and on almost two dozen military installations, to ensure they have the necessary training and resources to provide the best possible service to their veteran clients.

Figlioli got his start serving veterans, service members and their families as a senior family program specialist at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, from 2005 to 2007, where he was responsible for the welfare of the families of soldiers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and the formation and training of family support groups assigned to the 94th Regional Readiness Command, which encompassed the entire Northeast Region. He was then appointed as VFW Service Officer for the VFW Department of Massachusetts in 2008. In 2011, he was hired by the Washington Office as a pre-discharge claims representative for the

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National Capital Region. Since then, he has served in various positions with NVS to include associate director for field operations and assistant director for veterans benefits policy. He became NVS deputy director in March 2016 and has helped guide the program for the last seven years.

“I look forward to what we will accomplish together. NVS staff are an incredibly dedicated team of professionals and innovators,” said Figlioli.

As the subject matter expert for veteran service claims, benefits and compensation, many have come to rely on Figlioli’s knowledge and professionalism. In December 2016, was appointed as a special advisor to Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Robert A. McDonald to serve on the Advisory Committee for Cemeteries and Memorials. He was reappointed by Secretary Robert Wilkie for a second term from 2018 to 2020. He has also testified numerous times before Congress – experiences Figlioli will continue to use as the conduit between the veterans advocacy and veterans’ compensation, health care and benefits.

“To stand on the shoulders of giants in veterans advocacy and succeed those who laid the groundwork for the GI Bill, the Agent Orange Act, the PACT Act and other landmark benefits programs is extraordinary,” said Figlioli.

Figlioli, a native of Dedham, Massachusetts, served in the Army from 1988 to 1996. After completing Basic and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, was assigned to the 18th Field Artillery Regiment in Augsburg, Germany, as a cannon crewmember, and later, as a maintenance clerk. He would serve as a Training and Operations NCO with the 24th Infantry Division at Fort Benning, Georgia, and as the Division Ammunition NCO for the 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Casey, Republic of Korea. He returned to the United States in June 1995 to complete his Army career with the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia. His military decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, five Army Achievement Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Korean Defense Service Medal.

Not only is Figlioli a Life member of USS Jacob Jones VFW Post 2017, Dedham, Massachusetts, he was practically born into the VFW. His late father, Ralph, was a member with many years of service to the VFW Honor Guard and numerous committees. His mother, Margaret “Bella,” was a past president of the VFW Post 2017 Auxiliary chapter. Continuing the tradition, Figlioli was an active member within the same Post as his parents and the VFW Department of Massachusetts. Along with his appointment as Department service officer in 2008, he was also appointed Department legislative director and elected as VFW District 5 commander and VFW Post 2017 commander. He has served on numerous VFW committees at both state and national levels, to include Budget, Bylaws, Legislative, Veterans Service, National Security and Foreign Affairs, and POW/MIA.

Figlioli said he is ready for the challenges the future holds for the VFW Washington Office.

"I am excited to work with this devoted team of advocates to help continue to move our great organization forward and ensure our veterans, their family members and survivors always receive the benefits and entitlements they have earned," said Figlioli.

Mike's wife, Dawn Jirak, is a retired U.S. Air Force Master Sgt., a veteran of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and a past NVS deputy director. The two reside in Deale, Maryland.