

# ‘Helping Veterans Is My Purpose’

## **Veteran Sandy Sonju remembers watching her father struggle with VA paperwork to receive benefits after he was injured in the Korean War, and those memories drive her today**

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Veteran Sandy Sonju, 59, lives in Kalispell, Montana, with her husband, Martin. Sonju has two sons, Jarod and Justin, and three stepchildren, Marty, Stephen and Angel.

She enlisted in the U.S. Army 20 years ago and served in Karlsruhe, Germany, as a military police officer.

“Like many others at the time, I joined to afford college and mature,” she said.

In 2023, Sonju became a VFW Accredited Service Officer, working for the Veterans Affairs Division of the Montana Department of Military Affairs.

“All my life, I had jobs like teaching, foster parent training and in family support that allowed me to serve others,” Sonju said. “Each role taught me how to assist people and give them access to the information they need.”

As a VFW Accredited Service Officer, Sonju does the same for veterans seeking help filing claims, including those living in rural communities throughout the state.

“I appreciate the Montana Division’s outreach efforts so people in remote areas can receive claim support,” Sonju said. “In the 1970s, my father, who is a veteran, drove over four hours to Fort Harrison in the winter for his doctor’s appointment.”

Sonju does not want to see other veterans struggle in the same way, which is why she meets with up to 27 veterans on a typical day. However, in October 2024, she smashed that number by assisting 87 veterans in a 24-hour span.

Sonju encourages her peers to attend as much training as possible to best serve their clients.

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She credits her team with helping her do that herself.

“Because of my supervisors and the instruction I’ve received, I can ensure each case is given complete attention and has the best possible outcome,” she said.

Sonju remembers watching her father struggle with VA paperwork to receive benefits after he was injured in the Korean War. Those memories drive her today.

“Each generation of my family has had an easier time working through the VA claims process thanks to improvements,” she said. “Helping veterans is my purpose. I’m proud to be a resource for them, and I’m proud to represent the VFW and the Montana Veterans Affairs Division.”

Learn more about the [VFW's National Veterans Service \(NVS\) program](#).