

‘When I Help Veterans, I Feel Happy’

From a military family, a deep sense of empathy drives Linda Eshenbaugh’s dedicated service to veterans at the Pittsburgh VA

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Linda Eshenbaugh, 66, has lived in Sarver, Pennsylvania, her whole life. She has been married for 48 years and has three sons, James, Matthew and Iraq War veteran Christopher. Growing up, Eshenbaugh’s brothers were Marines, and she spent many summers in the Carolinas where they were stationed.

Today, as VFW Accredited Claims Consultant and supervisor of the Pittsburgh Veterans Affairs regional office, she takes great care in serving veterans.

“When you realize [a claim] could be me or my son or my dad or brother, it makes a big difference in my work,” she said.

Eshenbaugh oversees the hiring of VFW Accredited Service Officers and aims to run a smooth, productive office. Within a six-month period, she and her team figured out how to increase efficiencies to accommodate 100 veterans a month. Eshenbaugh provides “tailored guidance” to the individuals she helps.

“I value personalized experiences and understanding each veteran. I want to provide the right information to rate their claims correctly and get the results they deserve,” she said.

Eshenbaugh has learned how to read the ratings and the requirements from the VA to help veterans receive a positive rating. After an award or denial, she reviews the case to see if there’s anything more she can do. Sometimes, this includes providing information to veterans about state benefits they aren’t aware of. On other occasions, she represents them during a hearing.

“My biggest challenge is when the veteran can’t get a second opinion for a specific condition, such as hearing loss. That’s when I go looking for an expert who will review the case, examine the veteran and give an opinion. Not many doctors want to do that,” she said.

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Recently, Eshenbaugh assisted a widow who filed a claim with another organization. After more than a year, she still had no answers. With help from her co-worker Angela Johns, Eshenbaugh quickly helped the woman receive an award during an overwhelming time.

“This work is very rewarding, especially when clients thank me and tell me how this has changed their lives,” she said. “Plus, I get to work with wonderful people.”

In fall 2024, Eshenbaugh was nominated for Service Officer of the Year in the state of Pennsylvania. She is a life member of the VFW Auxiliary and enjoys attending VFW-sponsored events and socializing with veterans.

“When I help veterans,” she said, “I feel happy.”

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