

# SUPPORTER QUARTERLY

AN UPDATE FOR PATRIOTIC SUPPORTERS ★ NOVEMBER 2019

## From Zero Benefits to Full 100% Service-Connected Disability

### *VFW Advocate Helps Veteran Ensure a Better Life*

Daniel Fletcher, National Pre-discharge Claims Representative, National Veterans Service, has worked hundreds of cases in his two years with the VFW. But one case in particular rises to the top of the list.

“I started helping Bob (not his real name), who was retiring from the Army, with his VA claim,” Fletcher explains. “At first, it seemed like an ordinary case. Bob was seeking benefits for common injuries like back and joint injuries.”

But something told Fletcher there was more to Bob’s story.

“As I began to question him, I could tell he was suffering a whole lot more than he initially let on,” Fletcher continues. “His combat tours had taken their toll on his physical and mental health. I explained to him that he needed to consider his other injuries.”

Fletcher worked with Bob to complete a detailed VA claim. His VA medical exam confirmed Fletcher’s suspicions.

“Bob got his decision in the mail — he was rated as 100% permanently and totally disabled,” Fletcher says. “This rating allows him to live a much better life, one he never imagined.”

Due to the 100% rating, Bob will



*Daniel Fletcher*

receive additional tax advantages and enhanced educational benefits for himself and children, among other benefits.

“He didn’t understand what this fully meant until I explained it to him,” Fletcher says. “He was ecstatic.”

For his part, Fletcher is humble.

“I’m just grateful I can do this work every day. I had a negative experience when I left the military. I feel we [the VFW] are good people doing good work for good people,” Fletcher concluded. ★

## FIGHTING FOR VETERANS

Around the world, the VFW is reaching out to America’s heroes — during long, dangerous deployments, during the often difficult transition back to civilian life and always in the years that follow. The VFW supports our veterans and service members with programs that make a real difference ... educational resources and support ... financial assistance during hard times ... help navigating the VA system. These programs are available at no charge to veterans and their families, thanks to the generosity of members of the VFW, VFW Auxiliary and millions of patriotic supporters.



### What’s Inside

Army Veteran Never Gives Up Through Rare Hardships.....	2
Issue in Focus .....	2
Letters from the Heart .....	3
From the Adjutant General ...	4
Veteran Takes Big Steps With VFW Scholarship.....	4



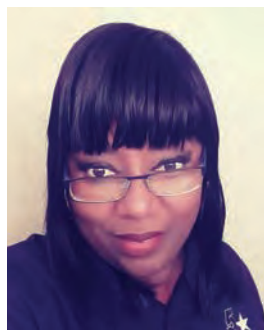
### Thank You for Your Support

We realize that much of our work would not be possible without your generous and dedicated support, and we would like to let you know how much we recognize and appreciate your continuing contributions.

# Army Veteran Never Gives Up Through Rare Hardships

When Victoria Moore was a little girl she would sit and listen to her dad's stories about his time in the Air Force and as military police. She had a dream to be just like him and joined as soon as she was of age.

Moore, from San Antonio, Texas, served in the Army for three and a half years and the start of her career was quite tumultuous. She received a couple assignments that never happened because of units deactivating. Finally she found herself at Fort Bliss where she was to be an



**Victoria Moore**

administrative specialist, but once again, a curve ball was thrown. The base was not in need of anymore specialist support so they placed

Moore in intelligence, investigating the backgrounds of new comrades and assigning clearance levels.

She thoroughly enjoyed the job, but in 1990 when an opportunity for early-out was announced Moore went ahead and exited. Given 24 hours to gather everything and sign out of base, her fast-paced journey continued.

While raising her two daughters, she engaged in the same type of work in security for the San Antonio Police Department. After going through a divorce, she had a nice amount of money in savings, and was committed to living her best life.

When she eventually remarried, her new husband suggested they open a business in his line of work, appliance repair.

Shortly after, he embezzled the money and abandoned Moore.

Her husband left her without her savings, without a vehicle and without a home. Not only did this misfortune affect Moore, but she is also responsible for her mother, sister, daughter and grandchildren.

"I couldn't see a way to get back on my feet and I got really depressed," Moore said.

A glimmer of hope came with a new, promising job offer. In March 2018 Moore became the supervisor of her own security team. However, the month of May arrived and she still had not received a paycheck. She had no money and couldn't see a way to pay her rent.

The VA directed Moore to the VFW's **Unmet Needs** program and she quickly received the funds to catch up on rent. However, as her lease was

month-to-month, as soon as Moore's landlord received the missing rent, her lease was terminated and she found herself homeless once again.

"The VFW bent over backwards to help me. It meant a lot to me and warmed my heart, finally somebody was listening to me," Moore relayed.

After a lot of hard work, Moore found an apartment and a brand-new job, then her old job paid out the money they owed her. As she gained stability for the first time in years, Moore was ready to move her family into a home that suited them properly.

She applied for a VA home loan but to complete the application they needed more information surrounding the eviction.

"The VFW provided me a letter outlining the Unmet Needs grant. Really because of that letter and the grant, the VA approved my home loan and I got the keys to a house for my family.

"I was naïve about what the VFW does. If it wasn't for these programs and all the different segments they offer ... I get emotional talking about it ... I wish I could tell more people the importance of the VFW programs and keeping them in effect," Moore said.

In sharing her difficult story, Moore has done just that. ★

## Issue in Focus: Burn Pits

The VFW is hard at work fighting for legislative issues that impact the lives of veterans. The use of open air burn pits in combat zones is among this year's key issues.

"We are advocating for the establishment of disability compensation benefits for veterans who served in areas where burn pits were used and now suffer from pulmonary health conditions associated with exposure," explains Carlos Fuentes, VFW Director, National Legislative Service.

Fuentes says dioxins — the destructive compound found in Agent Orange — and other harmful materials are

all present in burn pits and other environmental hazards throughout Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The VFW is also urging the enhancement of the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. We strongly believe the DOD has not effectively tracked the full details related to exposures, including location data, types of material burned, health assessments and medical retirements that have occurred as a result of exposures," describes Fuentes.

Watch [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) to support specific bills and initiatives that address the health effects of burn pits. ★

# Letters from the Heart

Every day, the VFW receives heartfelt letters of gratitude from America's heroes.

*I am contacting you to give my thanks for what you all did for my son. He is in Florida as I type this message. He spoke this morning at the VFW National Convention. Please know that without the help from Unmet Needs, my son might not be here today. With your very generous check, our family had food and shelter.*

*I want to thank the people who made my scholarship possible. College is expensive, but it is also a vital piece to starting a successful future. Without the people who made this scholarship possible, who knows what I would have done when I returned home.*

*I am so thankful and grateful for your patience in getting me through this process. It is one less stressful situation off of my back. The mere words of "thanks" hardly seems adequate.*

*This scholarship has been a lifesaver. It has been so helpful toward minimizing the debt I have to deal with for school and living expenses. I can focus on my education and what I really want to do without worrying about how much debt is hanging over me. Receiving this scholarship means the world to me.*



**SUPPORT  
AMERICA'S  
HEROES**

**GIVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL TO THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS**

Planned Giving Office • 816.968.1119 • [plannedgiving@vfw.org](mailto:plannedgiving@vfw.org)



"The VFW supports reauthorizing the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Grant Program (SSVF). The SSVF program is an incredibly valuable tool in helping veterans get off the streets and stay off the streets. Providing these services is an important way to make sure veterans are afforded the opportunity to maintain a healthy and productive life after service. Reauthorizing the SSVF through 2022 is a common-sense proposal that the VFW wholeheartedly endorses."

— Patrick Murray, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, in testimony before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity



"The VFW supports this legislation, which would track participation in VA health care and Transition Assistance Program (TAP) courses developed specifically for transitioning women service members. The VFW believes more information about what programs within VA are being used and where there needs more attention is vital to improving the transition process for women veterans."

— Carlos Fuentes, VFW Director, National Legislative Service, in testimony before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Veterans' Affairs related to H.R. 1647, Veterans Equal Access Act



## From the Adjutant General

As the VFW reflects on 2019 and looks ahead, I am filled with gratitude for loyal friends like you who are determined to see our veterans get the help they need and deserve.

You've kept us in position to achieve victories such as the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act in 2019. But there is much more to do for the brave men and women who have sacrificed for our country — and with your help, the VFW will not give up the fight.

In his speech at the 120th VFW National Convention in

Orlando, Fla., Commander-in-Chief William J. "Doc" Schmitz announced "Dare to Care" as the motto for the year.

He stressed the need to fight for

what we care about and persevere in difficult times. Schmitz encourages us to confront the challenges that hinder America's service members and families from living their best lives.

This is at the heart of all we do at the VFW. As Schmitz emphasized in his address, we are strong and focused. I hope you will remain steadfast and join us in this effort. Will you dare to care and make sure the concerns of veterans matter to our leaders?

I have no doubt that you will continue supporting all who served our nation. Together, we will continue to fight for veterans of every generation.

Thank you for all you do to care FOR VETERANS. ★



## Veteran Takes Big Steps With VFW Scholarship

Casey Kennedy began dreaming of a military career when she was a child. In fact, she still has a piece of paper from grade school outlining her plans to join the Navy. Kennedy ended up committing to the Nebraska Army National Guard and served for five years. Within the National Guard, Kennedy chose to honor her late great grandfather's legacy and protect fellow service members as a member of the military police force.

Remaining unscathed through a deployment to Bagram, Afghanistan, Kennedy was back home for six months when she was hit head-on by a drunk driver.

"My service was unfortunately cut short from the accident, the majority of my bones from my pelvis down were broken," she recalled.

But 27-year-old Kennedy has achieved so much since that terrible event through her GI Bill and the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship." Currently working on her master's in Human Services, Kennedy sees this as a mere stepping stone to getting her doctorate and giving back to her community in a big way.

Kennedy is grateful to the people who make the scholarship possible and feels she could not achieve her goals and provide for her family without the assistance. She and her husband Nicholas have three girls; Taylor (8), Raelynn (3) and Harper (2).

"Before starting my master's degree, I had not taken out any student loans. Now that my GI Bill is ending, this scholarship helps cover some of my courses. It makes a huge difference and takes some of the financial burden off of my family," she said.

Kennedy has faced her share of obstacles but continually puts one foot in front of the other, and she encourages other veterans to do the same.

"Just take each class one step at a time. It can be intimidating to look at a degree program and the costs, but it is possible and very doable. Nothing compares to the feeling of finally receiving your degree and knowing how hard you worked to earn it," she advised.

Kennedy is a valiant example for so many who have their sights set on higher education, and her work will impact many ... including three little girls who could go even farther witnessing such a tenacious, hardworking parent. ★

VISIT US ONLINE:

