

VFW Names First Post-9/11 Veteran to Lead Washington Office

The Iraq War veteran said he is optimistic about the VFW's future

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WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) made a historic move by selecting a post-9/11 veteran to head the VFW's presence on Capitol Hill.

Ryan Gallucci is now the executive director of the VFW's Washington Office. He is the first post-9/11 veteran to hold the position.

Gallucci, a member of VFW Post 3150 in Arlington, Virginia, started as a VFW employee in June 2011. His past roles with the organization were as deputy executive director to the former executive director, Bob Wallace; National Veterans Service (NVS) director; NVS deputy director; and National Legislative Service deputy director.

Gallucci, a native of North Kingstown, Rhode Island, served in the Army Reserve from June 1999 to June 2007. He served in the Iraq War from 2003 to 2004 as a civil affairs sergeant with the 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, where he received the Bronze Star for meritorious service and the Combat Action Badge. While still serving in the Army Reserves, he used his G.I. Bill benefits to attend college, interned as a public affairs specialist at the Naval War College, and earned a bachelor's degree in journalism and political science from the University of Rhode Island. He leveraged his education and experience to become deputy communications director at the American Veterans (AMVETS) National Headquarters, before landing at the VFW Washington Office.

Gallucci said he was "honored" to be selected by VFW Adjutant General Dan West, with the support of VFW Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland, for the position. Gallucci added that he knows he will play an important role in the organization and serve to "amplify" the voices of VFW members in Washington, D.C.

"With the historic signing of the Honoring Our PACT Act and the VFW's legacy of

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professional veterans' advocacy, the VFW has a unique opportunity to distinguish itself as the premier organization advocating for the interests of veterans, service members and military families in the years to come," Gallucci said. "The VFW team in our nation's capital will seize this momentum by pressing forward on veterans' issues while continuing to cultivate our relationships with Congress, VA, the Department of Defense and the White House."

During his time with the VFW, Gallucci was instrumental in the implementation of numerous veteran-focused initiatives. He has worked directly with Congress and federal agencies to craft and implement transition and education policies that benefited the veterans' community, such as in-state tuition protections for veterans and the redesign of the military Transition Assistance Program. He served as advisor, and later chairman, on the Secretary of Labor's Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach, providing feedback to the Department of Labor and Congress on the employment needs of veterans and the efficacy of federal employment programs for veterans. Gallucci also established the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program, which offers exemplary student veterans the opportunity to learn about veterans' advocacy hands-on in Washington.

Gallucci said he is excited about what the future holds for the VFW.

"This is no small task for the VFW, and as the first post-9/11 veteran to take up this position, I intend to carry forward this responsibility in a way that honors the 123-year legacy of our great American institution," Gallucci said.

He and his wife, Katie, reside in Annapolis, Maryland, with their daughters, Lily and Mia.