

## VFW officer garners national honor

FRANK JULIANO [fjuliano@ctpost.com](mailto:fjuliano@ctpost.com)  
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MILFORD — Greg Smith is going on another mission.

The commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars post here, Smith has been named a deputy chief of staff, representing Connecticut combat veterans to the Kansas City-based national organization.

The selection was based on Smith's service to and involvement in VFW activities, organization spokesman Jim Goldstein said. "It is a very large honor for Greg. We are allowed to nominate only one person from each state."

Smith, a city native who has served as a Republican alderman and on the Planning and Zoning Board, was modest Friday about his latest appointment.

"I see this as more of an honor to the post, because I wouldn't be able to do what I do without the members," he said. From its Naugatuck Avenue post, the local veterans have packed and shipped 40 large boxes of items to U.S. soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, and \$2,500 in donated phone cards this holiday season.

William Donahue, a former state commander of the Disabled American Veterans, said all veterans groups go through up-and-down cycles and Smith has brought new energy to the VFW.

"What it comes down to is the national VFW is recognizing what Greg has been doing," Donahue said.

Smith served 21 years in the military, including a stint in Beirut during the 1983 civil war there. He also participated in the mission to Grenada, where the U.S. military rescued American medical students from the island during an uprising.

"There were Russian patrol boats in the harbor," he recalled. "I went back to Grenada a few years ago, and the people there were very nice to me," Smith said with a smile.

The image of Ronald Reagan, the U.S. president at the time, is on a Grenadan postage stamp, he noted.

Frank Juliano, Milford bureau chief, can be reached at 878-2130.