

Feb. 9, 2024

Greetings,

We hope you enjoy this week's National Council Weekly Update on the pertinent happenings of your VFW departments.

Development

January proved to be yet another remarkable month for fundraising at VFW. Our collective efforts resulted in surpassing our monthly goal of \$4.8M, securing a total of \$5.8M. As we navigate the conclusion of our peak mail season, we remain optimistic for sustained high performance outcomes. We are hopeful for continued positive impacts on VFW's fundraising campaigns as the economy continues to normalize.

- Feb. 6 Appeal:
 - February eNews to all nonmember Friends of Freedom.
- Feb. 10 Appeal:
 - January campaign reminder to nonmember donors.

Contact: VFW Development Director Kelly Jones, KellyJones@vfw.org.

Human Resources

- New Hires:
 - Tricia Ledbetter is a new Member Services Advisor in the Member Services Department in the K.C. Office.
 - Mariah Davis is a new Member Services Advisor in the Member Services Department in the K.C. Office.
- Positions Actively Recruiting For:
 - Shipping Receiving Clerk (FT and PT) – K.C. Office.
 - Member Services Advisor, Member Services – K.C. Office.
 - National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative – Hawaii.

- o Associate Director, Service Member Affairs – D.C. Office.
- o Assistant Director, Training & Quality Assurance – D.C. Office – Internal Posting Only.

Contact: VFW Human Resources Director Sari Maple, SMaple@vfw.org.

Administrative Operations

- There are currently 41 Posts under suspension, one of which is new. There were no processed Post consolidations pursuant to Section 209 of the National Bylaws. The organization has 5,657 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 24 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 13 Administrative Actions and 10 membership eligibility challenges.
- We have 50 Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review, 21 of which are new; current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately 45-60 days.

Disciplinary Action Guide:

There have been recent updates to the Disciplinary Action Guide that outlines the process to successfully complete a disciplinary action. We have included information to the guide that encompasses sentencing guidelines which is located as an appendix at the end of the guide and outlines sentencing/penalty considerations, clarifications, and examples.

The guide is available on the Document Repository in the “Guide to Disciplinary Action” folder or on the VFW website behind the login under My VFW/Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates/ Training/Training Guides & Standard Operating Procedures.

Department Inspections:

As the Department Inspection initiative is well underway for the 2023-2024 term, we would like to share some of the common items that have been identified by the inspection team during their visits. We are halfway through the scheduled inspections for the year so the items below may change as we are able to gather more data. Please understand the list of items below is not all-encompassing but are the most commonly identified concerns the team encounters during the inspections. Some of these items are considered deficiencies pursuant to the National Bylaws but some are simply issues that can assist a Department in their daily operations, if implemented.

Most Commonly Identified Concerns:

- Failure to have proof of eligibility for all District Commanders, Senior Vice Commanders, and Junior Vice Commanders on file at the Department (Ref. Section 416).
- Departments are not properly bonded pursuant to Section 703 of the National Bylaws.
 - o Failing to ensure **all** officers accountable for funds are bonded.
 - o Departments not securing a bond that covers the required amount of all funds.

- o Departments do not have VFW National listed as additional insureds.
- Lack of or incomplete and outdated Standard Operating Procedures (HQ's staff, Service Officers, and HQ's operations).
- Lack of defined Adjutant/Quartermaster duties specific to the Department.
 - o Lack of Employee Handbook.
- To include policies approved by the Department Council of Administration and signed by all employees and Department officers.
 - o Conflict of Interest
 - o Sexual Harassment
 - o Travel Policy
 - o Vehicle Use Policy
 - o Use of Credit Cards
 - o Code of Ethics
 - o Information Technology/Security
- The Department Council of Administration should be approving budgets, SOPs, policies, Employee Handbooks, etc., but are failing to maintain proper records or meeting minutes showing approval of any and all items.

We look forward to another successful year of inspections and if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Quentin Carroll.

Contact: VFW Administrative Operations Director Quentin Carroll, QCarroll@vfw.org.

Membership

- Currently our new member counts are 644 daily on average, which puts the current growth rate at 101.68%. We are coming out of the normal holiday slow recruiting period and new member apps are back on the rise. KEEP the press on! Encourage Post leaders to start planning their springtime recruiting events now. Mitigate challenges early to ensure success!
- 44 comrades joined this week's Membership Monday! Catch the February Membership Monday recording on the topic, "Responsibilities of Recruiting," on VFW.org under Membership Quick Links>Membership Recruiting and Retention. Each Membership Monday will be recorded and available for viewing for members who cannot attend the training live. Visit the sites below to view training topics:
 - o OMS under Membership Recruiting & Retention, VFW.org

- o The Membership Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/VFWmembership>.
- o The [VFW YouTube Channel](#).
- If you have a topic for training, we would love to hear from you! Contact us by emailing Membership@vfw.org. Follow our [Facebook Page](#).

Contact: VFW Membership Interim Director Corey Hunt, CoreyHunt@vfw.org.

VFW Foundation

- A VFW Foundation Board meeting was held on Tuesday, Feb. 6, at VFW National Headquarters. Of special interest was the Foundation's Financial Report for the period ending Dec. 31, 2023, presented by Marc Garduno, Secretary-Treasurer. Other main topics included Bylaws review and nominations for future Board members. Additionally, updates were provided for the VFW National Convention and Washington Conference sponsorships, donations, and grants.
- Of special note, Oracle Health has confirmed \$40,000 in total sponsorships for the Washington Conference, the VFW National Convention, and a specialty NVS roundtable discussion event in North Chicago on Feb. 24, in conjunction with VFW Director NVS Mike Figlioli and VFW Foundation Consultant Tony Lowe.

Contact: VFW Foundation Director of Donor Relations Richard Freiburghouse, RFreiburghouse@vfw.org.

National Legislative Service

- House Hearing on Survivor Outreach: The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held an oversight hearing on gaps in VA's outreach to survivors for benefits and services. VFW Auxiliary member Gabriella Kubinyi spoke about the VFW's concerns regarding claims processing and delivery of health care, specifically in relation to mental health. She also addressed support for an increase in Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). Kubinyi said, "Every family should be fully aware that when the veteran dies, whatever benefits they were receiving will end." She continued by sharing her own survivor experience with Vet Center services and education assistance. As a former case worker for the VFW, she assisted many spouses who were not expecting or prepared for the abrupt end to compensation once their loved ones died. "Year after year, the VFW and advocates like me ask Congress to improve on a variety of survivor issues, and legislation is drafted but never receives the needed votes to enact significant changes," Kubinyi said. "I strongly urge this committee to find pathways necessary to make sure survivor benefits are taken seriously and not pushed off again for the next Congress." [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 4:15 mark.

Contact: VFW National Legislative Service Director Patrick Murray, PMurray@vfw.org.

National Veterans Service

- NVS director and senior staff will attend a meeting with the members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee at the VFW Memorial Building.
- NVS director and executive director of the Washington Office met with Humana to discuss 2024 projects and strategies.
- NVS leadership will meet with the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to discuss C&P examiner training requirements.
- NVS staff will attend a VBA meeting to discuss electronic STR transferability and the impact for VSOs on the BDD program.
- NVS leadership will meet with the Wounded Warrior Project to discuss 2024 collaborations.
- NVS leadership will attend a VA briefing regarding veteran care in the Philippines.
- NVS health team GAO review meeting for health care issues.
- NVS leadership and health team staff participated in a VA Medical Disability Evaluation Office (MDEO) listening session.
- NVS BDD leadership briefed Special Warfare Personnel Advisory Board about VA claims and BDD.
- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge representatives briefed transitioning service members on VA benefits at Fort Campbell, Fort Bliss, Fort Riley, San Diego Navy, Fort Drum, Fort Meade, and Camp Lejeune.

Contact: VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli, MFiglioli@vfw.org.

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