

Feb. 2, 2024

Greetings,

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

Human Resources

- Promotion:
 - Christopher Macinkowicz has been promoted to Deputy Director, National Veterans Service in the D.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.

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 at QCarroll@vfw.org.

Contact: VFW Administrative Operations Associate Director Zach Schwenk, ZSchwenk@vfw.org.

Membership

- Now is the time to know how to find and understand your All-American Dashboard! If you have Post leaders struggling to understand Memstats, the All-American Dashboard, OMS reporting, etc., put them in touch with us to get those questions answered now!
- Another Membership Monday training webinar will happen Monday, Feb. 5, 2024, 2:00 p.m. CST. We will be covering the topic “**Responsibilities of Recruiting.**” The webinar will be recorded for future viewing as all Membership Mondays are.
- To order New Member Applications and other membership materials, see the Membership Recruiting Brochures Order Form, under Membership Quick Links, on vfw.org.
- If you have a topic for training in February, 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.

Meetings and Events

- Taylor continuing to get e-Show set-up in preparation for tutorials and going live.
- Finishing meeting resume (specifications) for Washington Conference and internal rooming list in preparation of sending to the hotel (due date Feb. 6), targeted to send out by Feb. 2, 2024.
- Finalizing details for Washington Conference reception – March 6 – Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill.
- Continuing to work on 2024 housing assignments and with Louisville housing manager.
- Reminder, **Housing opens 3/18/24.**
- Update internal convention ‘working agenda’ – sending out to Department directors with meeting setup form to confirm convention workshops.
- Ongoing, working with legal on upcoming meeting contracts and addendums.

Contact: VFW Meetings and Events/Exhibits Director Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM,
VKane@vfw.org.

VFW Foundation

- Representatives from Humana, the VFW, and the VFW Foundation convened virtually on Monday, Jan. 28, 2024, for the annual Strategic Initiatives Planning Meeting. Special emphasis was given to better organizational coordination between the VFW and Humana (at all levels) which will positively impact overall health and wellness in the veteran community. Additional joint venture opportunities were discussed to support food insecurity (Uniting to Combat Hunger), NVS training initiatives and its Don't Feed the Sharks anti-predatory claim shark campaign, the upcoming VFW National Convention activities, etc.

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

National Legislative Service

- Volunteer to Vet the Vote: National Legislative Service assisted in the promotion of Help America Vote Day. This ongoing, nonpartisan Vet the Vote program currently provides an opportunity for veterans and military family members to volunteer as poll workers for Election Day 2024. In addition to recruiting poll workers, the Vet the Vote team will be at Super Bowl LVIII educating the public on the voting process and directing voters to their polling stations around the country. Continue your service by becoming a poll worker in 2024 to help support democracy in your community. [Sign up today](#).
- Setback for Toxic Exposures Fund: The Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General investigated VA's initial spending plan for toxic exposures and found that a number of expenditures did not align with regulations. Among those were costs belonging to the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). The removal of \$1.1 million to update the Memorial Benefits Management System for the NCA will no doubt create a setback in the progress VA anticipated relating to the allocation of funds. The VFW's 2024 Priority Goals include an increase in burial allowances to account for inflation. Proper funding to facilitate benefits management for eligible veterans is a crucial step in meeting this key objective. [Read more](#).

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.
- NVS BDD reps 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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