

Nov. 9, 2023

Greetings,

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

From the Adjutant General

Comrades, we will be taking a strong stand with a bold statement against Claim Sharks with a press conference at the Washington D.C. Memorial Building on Tuesday. This will be published on our social media channels and website.

Per the letter from Chief Sarmiento earlier this week please know things may get a "little messy."

If contacted by the press in your area, please feel free to reach out to our communications department for talking points.

Dan West
Adjutant General

Development

This week's Development Campaigns are listed below:

- Nov. 7 Appeals:
 - o November eNews to all nonmember Friends of Freedom.
 - o Veterans Day matching gift email #4 to all Friends of Freedom.
- Nov. 10 Appeals:
 - o October acquisition reminder package with nickel, coasters, and check.
 - o Veterans Day and Marine Corps birthday Thank you eCard to Friends of Freedom identified as Marine Corps veteran or active military.
- Nov. 11 Appeal:
 - o Veterans Day matching gift a.m. email #5 and p.m. email #6 to all Friends of Freedom.

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

Human Resources

- Positions Actively Recruiting For:
 - o Part-time Shipping/Receiving Clerk – K.C. Office.
 - o Maintenance Technician – D.C. Office.
 - o Member Services Advisor – K.C. Office.
 - o Assistant Coordinator, Fraternal Operations – K.C. Office.

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

Administrative Operations

- Department Inspections: We are moving forward with the Department Inspection initiative for the 2023-2024 term and have plans to complete ten (10) inspections this year. The hope is that we will have the first inspection scheduled for the beginning of October and have all inspections completed by May 2024, prior to the start of Department conventions. In the coming weeks we will be reaching out to the Departments that have been selected by the Commander-in-Chief as well as the inspection team members to begin working through availability and scheduling. Additionally, the inspection team will be conducting initial and refresher training in September before we start our schedule.

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.

- There are currently 50 Posts under suspension, four of which are new. We have processed one Post consolidation pursuant to Section 209 of the National Bylaws. The organization has 5,664 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 10 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 12 Administrative Actions and 10 membership eligibility challenges.
- We have 49 Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review, five of which are new; current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately 30 days.

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

Membership

- Veterans Day is upon us! As we remember those who have gone before us and honor the sacrifices so many have given, it is your continued service to the VFW that ensures, No One Does More for Veterans! Your national membership team thanks you for your support in growing, maintaining, and mentoring our membership. Please be safe this Veterans Day.

- Have you heard your Post Commanders talking about the VFW Mixer? Ask them about it, we could use your help in getting the word out to all Posts. Mixer is a fun way to get members and Posts engaged in local and national events with prizes throughout each contest. Win a Life/Legacy upgrade, or one of the mystery bags and more! Find all the information on the Membership Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/VFWmembership> and on Instagram @vfwmembership.
- 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 <https://www.facebook.com/VFWmembership>. The next Membership Monday is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 11, 2023, 2:00 p.m. CST.

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

Meetings and Events

- Nov. 5-7, 2023 – Initial site visit to Columbus, Ohio, for 2025 National Convention (Aug. 9-14, 2025). The purpose was to review and confirm hotels and convention center to get contracts started. Target date to finalize is Jan. 31, 2024.
- Finalized housing process for 2024 Legislative Conference (March 1-7, 2024). Housing opened on Nov. 7, 2023. Information for the conference is on the VFW website, including tentative meeting agenda: <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/2024-vfw-legislative-conference>.
- Nov. 15-17, 2023 – Preplanning site visit to Louisville for 2024 National Convention. The purpose is twofold; to meet with National Convention chairman and committee chairman to review duties and responsibilities, and then the review of contracted hotels and the convention center. A meeting is scheduled with Marriott (Auxiliary Headquarters hotel) to finalize contract. Will review space at convention center with all providers (food and beverage, event services, internet/electric, etc.) and finalize how space at center will be utilized.
- 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

- To celebrate the service and commitment of our nation's military, Walgreens is offering a four-day in-store discount to all veterans and active-duty military personnel, as well as their family members. The event runs from Friday, Nov. 10 through Monday, Nov. 13. Veterans, active-duty military and their families will receive 20% off regular price eligible store items at any Walgreens or Duane Reade drugstore nationwide. In addition, through the myWalgreens customer loyalty platform, members can enjoy additional benefits such as earning 1% Walgreens cash rewards storewide and 5% on Walgreens branded products.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Brooke Brown, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, at BBrown@vfw.org.

- **VFW members save money now!** As a membership benefit, you have access to the cost savings VFW PerkSpot Program. Score discounts on name-brand products and services – everything from home goods to entertainment to travel, even the latest electronic technology. [Click here](#) and register to save in 25+ categories. Any questions can be directed to Assistant Director Ben Vargas, VFW Foundation, BVargas@vfw.org.

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

National Legislative Service

- House Subcommittee Hearing on Pending Legislation: VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity regarding pending legislation related to education and other benefits. She conveyed the VFW's support to expand the monthly housing allowance to student veterans taking online courses during summer semesters. She also spoke about a bill to remove the red tape that has caused some schools to drop out of the GI Bill program. "This would modify the requirement for schools to provide personalized information about costs and financial assistance. The new language would give schools more flexibility by lessening the barrier to receiving VA education funding," Keenan said. She also stated the VFW's support for a bill to reimburse the VA Home Loan funding fee to service members who apply for VA disability but receive a rating decision after finalizing the purchase of a home. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 6:55 mark.
- Annual Military Suicide Report Released: The Department of Defense (DOD) released its *Annual Report on Suicide in the Military Calendar Year 2022*. In total, 492 service members across components lost their lives to suicide in 2022, which is a decrease from 2021. In addition, a total of 168 family members died by suicide in 2021, which is the most recent year data available. Among service members, suicide rates (deaths per 100,000) for active duty, Reserve, and National Guard components were 25.1, 19.1, and 22.2, respectively. While the rates among Reserve and National Guard personnel continue to show neither upward nor downward trends, the rate of active-duty members dying by suicide has continued to trend upward from 2011-2022. The 2021 suicide rates among family members appeared to be lower than in 2019 and 2020, though no time-based trends have been established. Importantly, the report outlines DOD's ongoing and planned actions to curb suicide numbers including implementing recommendations from the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee (SPRIRC). [Read the DOD suicide report](#). [Read the SPRIRC report](#).

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

National Veterans Service

- NVS Deputy Director Gregg Orto is attending the VA Advisory Committee meeting on the Readjustment of Veterans this week in Washington, D.C.

- NVS staff are preparing to attend and support Veterans Day events in the National Capitol Region to include the National Veterans Day observance at Arlington National Cemetery with Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento representing the VFW as the host organization.
- NVS health care team attended the White House American Possibilities Demo Day at the White House.
- NVS Assistant Director for Health James Moss, attended the VA's listening session on relationships between certain medical conditions and military environmental exposures.
- VFW leadership attended a roundtable discussion with Oracle Health Service Organization on Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023, in Arlington, Virginia.
- NCRBO service office staff provided benefits information and services at the Department of Commerce Veterans Day event on Nov. 8, 2023.
- NVS leaders will attend the monthly VBA/VSO Partnership meeting this week at VA Central Office.
- The VFW health care team will attend a VSO Prosthetic Workgroup meeting on Nov. 9, 2023.
- NVS Director Mike Figlioli and the QA/training team met with the VA OIG to discuss VA's handling of PACT Act claims and other issues.
- VFW Executive Director Ryan Gallucci and NBVS Director Mike Figlioli will attend the monthly Big 8 meeting with USB Josh Jacobs on Nov. 9, 2023.
- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge representatives provided separation and benefits briefings on Fort Bliss, Texas, Nellis AFB, Nevada, Fort Cavazos, Texas and Fort Drum, New York.

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

