

Feb. 16, 2024

Greetings,

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

From the Adjutant General

Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the senseless shooting at the Kansas City Super Bowl parade. While we had several staff members and VFW members in attendance, none have been reported as injured.

While we all know the world is a dangerous place it is somewhat scary when that danger comes close to home. Hug your loved ones as tomorrow is not promised.

Dan West
Adjutant General

Development

- Feb. 13 Appeal:
 - o Sustainer invite email #1 to all Friends of Freedom.
- Feb. 16 Appeal:
 - o February newsletter to member and nonmember donors.
- Feb. 17 Appeal:
 - o Nickel label with certificate reminder to member donors.

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

Programs

- VFW National Convention 2nd Annual Cornhole Tournament:

We are kicking off the call for Cornhole teams!

Join us for this instant VFW classic experience presented by veteran-owned KC Crew, the largest adult sports league in Kansas City. All proceeds from the event will go toward VFW PACT Act benefits assistance. The PACT Act expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances.

The 2nd Annual VFW Cornhole Tournament Series will consist of two tournaments over two days! Each tournament will have a different theme to help include each military faction as well as the general public. The event is all in good FUN to raise awareness and funds for VFW PACT Act benefits assistance and to support our veterans.

This is a celebration of our veterans, the people who fought for our country with the selfless spirit that defines our communities. It is a two-day event where we set aside ego and come together to raise awareness and funding for our VFW Accredited Service Officers.

VFW Cornhole information, registration and details can be found [here](#).

- **VFW Combat Tested Gaming Update:**

The 2nd league is in full swing and is live now for the Combat Tested Gaming initiative with Rocket League and Call of Duty Warzone. Meet fellow veteran gamers and join in on the action at our Discord server: <https://discord.gg/faXV2uGfum>.

We have quickly become the 2nd largest veterans-only gaming community with nearly 1,000 veteran gamers.

We have seven other games that veterans have asked us to build a community for. If you play Madden, Apex Legends, Fortnite, Rainbow Six Siege, the Finals, World of Tanks or Valorant, jump into the mayhem and connect with fellow veterans. If you just want to start gaming for the first time, we have a mentoring channel to get you going.

If you are on Twitch and want to watch the weekly live streaming of our tournament join our Combat Tested Gaming Watch Party: <https://twitch.tv/combattestedgaming!>

Go check it out!

Contact: VFW Programs Director Lynn W. Rolf, III, LRolf@vfw.org.

Human Resources

- Promotions:
 - o Brittany Dymond has been promoted to Associate Director, Communications and Public Affairs in the D.C. Office.
 - o Brad Hazell has been promoted to Assistant Director, Operations and Administration in the D.C. Office.
- Positions Actively Recruiting For:
 - o Shipping Receiving Clerk (FT and PT) – K.C. Office.

- o National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative – Hawaii.

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

Administrative Operations

- There are currently 49 Posts under suspension, 7 of which are new. There were no processed Post consolidations pursuant to Section 209 of the National Bylaws. The organization has 5,654 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 16 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 13 Administrative Removals/Actions and 17 membership eligibility challenges.
- Currently Administrative Operations has 75 Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review, 24 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 these 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 Director Quentin Carroll, QCarroll@vfw.org.

Membership

- Maintaining our membership is one of the three pillars of a strong membership program – recruiting, retention and mentorship. The Life member upgrade is one of the best ways to ensure your Posts maintain high retention. When discussing membership in your Departments, plan to include Life member drives as part of your overall recruiting and outreach plan.
- For many of our Life members, the Legacy Life member program is the next step in ensuring one's contributions as a member are recognized for generations to come. Legacy Life upgrades can be purchased with a one-time payment or purchased using the Installment Plan. See "Become or Upgrade to Legacy Life" under Membership Quick Links on the My VFW page once logged in on vfw.org.

- 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>.

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

National Legislative Service

- VFW, Senators, and Partners Support Afghan Allies: The VFW hosted Sens. Amy Klobuchar, Jerry Moran, Richard Blumenthal and Chris Coons, along with other veteran organization partners at the VFW Washington Office for a press conference addressing the need to help Afghans who assisted U.S. troops. The participants called on all lawmakers to support our wartime Afghan allies by voting in favor of an amendment to the legislation. [Watch the press conference](#).
- VFW Washington Conference App Now Available: In anticipation of the Washington Conference being held next month, the VFW has launched its mobile app to give event attendees the tools needed to make the most of their visit to our nation's capital. The app is available for download at both the [Apple App Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#). View our [VFW Events App Quick Start Guide](#) for downloading assistance.
- Senate Hearing on Vet Centers Supporting Mental Health: The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held an oversight hearing on how Vet Centers support the mental health needs of service members, veterans and their families. The witness panel consisted of two representatives from VA and one from the Government Accountability Office. "Due to recent efforts by this committee, more veterans are eligible for services at Vet Centers than ever before. That's why it's critically important the Vet Center program is delivering high-quality services to the veterans who utilize it," said Chairman Jon Tester. [Watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 15:35 mark.

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

National Veterans Service

- NVS training team held a Virtual Basic Accredited Representative Training conference for 32 newly accredited representatives.
- NVS held a virtual benefits forum for the Department of the Pacific Areas that focused on the VA Foreign Medical Program.
- NVS leadership met with Booze Allen Hamilton at the Helix building to discuss how Booze Allen Hamilton can help support NVS and VFW initiatives.
- NVS leadership met with Humana regarding future strategies and how we can continue to move forward with our partnership.
- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge representatives briefed transitioning service members on VA benefits at Fort Drum, Riley, Bliss, Campbell, Fort Meade, New River Naval, Joint Base Andrews, Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

- NVS BDD team participated in the Air Force Reserve/Guard General Officer TAP course assisting with claims support.
- NVS leadership briefed Air Force General Officers about the Pre-Discharge Claims process.
- NVS leadership participated in the VA VBA VSO update to discuss the current state of the VA and upcoming changes to regulations.
- NVS health team participated in the VA ATLAS biweekly meeting.
- NVS health team participated in the Access and Community Care Network listening session.
- NVS health team participated in the listening session for the VA Advisory council for Gulf War Illnesses.
- NVS health team collaborated with Humana at their Washington D.C. Community Care Network session.

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

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