

January 13, 2023

Greetings,

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

### **Development**

- Jan. 10 Appeal:
  - January Legislative email #1 to all Friends of Freedom.

Contact: VFW Development Director Kelly Jones, [KellyJones@vfw.org](mailto:KellyJones@vfw.org).

### **Programs**

- Teacher of the Year

Thanks for all the reports that have been submitted so far this year. We have increased the number of teachers being recognized from the previous year of 1,671 teachers, to 1,757. This is due to 778 Posts that have submitted reports so far this year, compared to 593 Posts submissions last year.

Again, a huge thanks!

Contact: VFW Programs Director Lynn W. Rolf, III, [LRolf@vfw.org](mailto:LRolf@vfw.org).

### **Membership**

Greetings from the Membership Department!

- We are continuing the press to recruit new members going into the new year and just completed a Membership Monday training on "How to Recruit Effectively." A recording of the training on everything from planning big recruiting events to Post-level campaigning, can be viewed now on [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) under Membership Recruiting and Retention, along with many more training resources.
- Congratulations to all the winning Department Commanders and Quartermasters on your Department Early Bird Incentive! Enjoy your new Henry .30/30 caliber rifle or credit voucher for use with Veterans Travel Services (VTS), or the VFW Store.

- In closing this month, we want to know what training topics you think will make a positive impact in growing or retaining our membership this year. Let us know what you think, your experience and lessons learned is what we are after so we can share those successes.

Contact: VFW Membership Director Rick Butler, [RButler@vfw.org](mailto:RButler@vfw.org).

### **Administrative Operations**

- There are currently 44 Posts under suspension; seven of which are new with three suspensions lifted since last week. We are working to institute two new Posts; we have completed two and are working one Post consolidation; we have completed one charter surrender; we have completed two and are working one charter revocation pursuant to Sections 201, 209, 210 and 212 of the National Bylaws. The organization has 5,768 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 16 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 16 administrative actions and 11 membership eligibility challenges.
- In effort to reduce paper and expedite our process, Departments are encouraged to submit Post, District, and Department bylaws and Articles of Incorporation to Administrative Operations via email to our Post Records Coordinator April Ferreira ([AFerreira@vfw.org](mailto:AFerreira@vfw.org)). Additionally, submitted bylaws or articles in conflict with the National Bylaws will be returned to the unit (Departments will be cc'd) with a list of amendments and a digital copy of our template for resubmittal. For any questions regarding this change, please contact the Director below.

Contact: VFW Administrative Operations Director Johnathan Duncan, [JDuncan@vfw.org](mailto:JDuncan@vfw.org).

### **National Legislative Service**

- The 118th Congress is now in session. Although there were significant legislative victories for veterans in 2022, there is still work to be done. The VFW 2023 Priority Goals include Budget; Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs; Education, Employment, and Transition Assistance; Health Care; Military Quality of Life; and National Security, Foreign Affairs, and POW/MIA. The VFW will continue to work diligently to ensure members of the newly seated Congress improve care and benefits for veterans, service members, and their families.
- Five Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) members and Student Veterans of America (SVA) leaders have been selected to participate in the 2023 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship. The fellowship is a semester-long academic experience for which students each submit a policy proposal to address an issue related to student veteran success on campus and beyond, improving veterans' health care and benefits, transitioning from military to civilian life, or the challenges of service members and their families. The fellows will attend the VFW Legislative Conference, March 5-9, in Washington, D.C., during which they will participate with their VFW Department delegations in congressional meetings to advocate for their specific policy proposals.

The five student veterans of the 2023 class are:

- o Chet Bennetts, Marine Corps veteran, Kansas State University
  - o Meghan Fitzgerald, Army veteran, University of Denver
  - o Harry Phillips, Army veteran, Tulane University
  - o Jordan Quinones, Army veteran, Arizona State University
  - o Gregory Sanchez, Navy veteran, University of California – Riverside
- On Dec. 23, 2022, the president signed the *James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2023* into law. Notable provisions in the bill include a 4.6 percent pay raise for troops, broad improvements to personnel and family support policies and programs, expanded Basic Needs Allowance eligibility, and further Uniform Code of Military Justice reforms that aim to ensure crimes like sexual assault and sexual harassment are fairly investigated. Also included in this year’s NDAA were the *Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022*, codification of the DOD SkillBridge Program, and VFW-supported provisions that improve Vet Centers and authorize a Survivor Benefit Plan open enrollment period for select retirees. [Read the NDAA.](#)
  - Before its adjournment, the 117th Congress passed a government funding omnibus package that includes appropriations bills for fiscal year 2023, and nine VFW-supported provisions that would affect veterans. Some of the included bills were the *Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022*, *Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2021*, and the *Improving Access to the VA Home Loan Benefit Act of 2022*. The provisions will protect and safeguard many benefits earned by our veterans, process benefits and payments to survivors faster, extend education program flexibilities, and provide dignified care and support for survivors of military sexual trauma.

Contact: VFW National Legislative Service Director Patrick Murray, [PMurray@vfw.org](mailto:PMurray@vfw.org).

### **National Veterans Service**

- VFW’s NVS Pre-Discharge representatives briefed transitioning service members on VA benefits at Fort Bliss, Texas, USO Fort Hood, Texas, Fort Riley, Kansas, Fort Myer, Virginia, and Joint Base Anacostia Bolling, D.C.
- NVS Pre-Discharge leadership is briefing 25 Army general officers on the VA claims process.
- NVS leadership is meeting with Give an Hour to discuss their Veteran Mental Health in the Workplace Toolkit project.
- NVS health team will be attending the [Every-Mind.org](https://www.every-mind.org) mental health quarterly meeting.
- NVS staff is reviewing a recently received VBA letter containing PACT Act claims guidance and has distributed it to field staff.
- The VFW PACT Act website, [PACTActInfo.org](https://www.pactactinfo.org), is fully functional and generating referrals to VFW Accredited Service Officers.

- NVS Staff distributed to all VFW Accredited Service Officers a digital toolkit that contains downloadable posters, fact sheets and brochures for use as outreach tools for PACT Act claims.

Contact: VFW National Veterans Service Director Ryan Gallucci, [RGallucci@vfw.org](mailto:RGallucci@vfw.org).

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