

December 16, 2022

Greetings,

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

The Council Weekly will resume on Jan. 6, 2023. May your holidays be joyful!

Development

- Dec. 13 Appeal:
 - o Year-end campaign email #3 to all Friends of Freedom.

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

Member Service Center

- Please be advised that the Online Membership System (OMS) will be shutting down at 4:00 p.m. CST on Dec. 31, 2022. Any transactions that are submitted through OMS on Dec. 31, up to the closing time, will be posted to Memstats and Post Query later that evening and available for viewing the morning of Jan. 4, 2023.
- Mail received at National Headquarters prior to Dec. 31, 2022, will be processed and counted in the December total. Mail received after that date, regardless of the postmark date, will not be counted in the December total. We encourage you to have your Posts mail in their membership as early as possible or take advantage of the Online Membership System tools.
- The OMS system will be back online for the submittal of transactions by 4:00 p.m. CST, Jan. 1, 2023; however, membership transactions that are processed will not be posted to Memstats until Jan. 7, 2023.

Contact: VFW Member Services Director David Prohaska, DProhaska@vfw.org.

Administrative Operations

- There are currently 47 Posts under suspension; two of which are new with 13 suspensions lifted since last week. We have completed one and are working one Post consolidation pursuant to Section 209 of the National Bylaws. The organization has 5,773 chartered Posts.

- Administrative Operations is engaged in 13 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 17 administrative actions and seven membership eligibility challenges.
- Current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately three weeks. Administrative Operations is readjusting our review process as we account for a recent staff shortage – thank you for your patience.
- 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). 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.

Membership

Seasons Greetings from the Membership Department!

- We would like to remind everyone about our Membership Monday's that take place the second Monday of each month at 2 p.m. CST. This is a live Zoom training session that all members are invited and welcome to attend. We send out a reminder notice the week prior on our Membership Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/VFWmembershipHQ> as well as an OMS notification and emails to each Department. Our topics vary based on membership trends throughout the year as well as input from the field. Recently our attendance has dwindled. We are asking you to assist us in getting the word out about these informative sessions, which typically last 30 to 45 minutes and are posted to our Facebook page, VFW YouTube Channel and the VFW website. This past month we covered the PACT Act with National Veterans Service Deputy Director Mike Figlioli. If a member has a suggestion for a Membership Monday topic, please have them email us at Membership@vfw.org.
- If you need assistance from the Membership Department between Dec. 23, 2022, through Jan. 2, 2023, please reach out to Deputy Director Rick McKenna at 816.968.1138, email RMckenna@vfw.org, or Associate Director Corey Hunt at 816.968.2788, email CoreyHunt@vfw.org.

Please have a happy and safe holiday season, we'll see you in 2023!

Contact: VFW Membership Director Rick Butler, RButler@vfw.org.

Meetings and Events

- Preplanned site work in Phoenix (124th VFW National Convention) on Thursday afternoon, Dec. 8. Auxiliary National Secretary Treasurer Ann Panteleakos, and Auxiliary Events Coordinator Linda Evans attended, previewing their headquarters hotel for 2023 – Renaissance (located directly behind the Hyatt Regency, VFW Headquarters hotel).

- Met with the 124th VFW National Convention Committee in Phoenix on Thursday evening, Dec. 8. All were in attendance with the exception of the Patriotic Celebration chairman, who has resigned. Jim McCormick and Greg Harrell (co-chairmen) are working to replace and have an individual in mind and will advise once in place. Good meeting, with enthusiastic chairmen.
- Reviewed, in-depth, each chairman's duties and responsibilities. Answered any questions and advised I'd research any questions that I could not answer with input from the Adjutant General.
- Friday morning, Dec. 9, met with the event manager at Phoenix Convention Center and other vendors, center caterer – Adventura, Electrical, Smart City (phones/internet), AV (in-house rigging) and members of our production crew, TSE.Live and FERN Expo. We met together to discuss details and then walked the meeting space.
Note: Last time we were in Phoenix was 2009. We will be using some of the same space we utilized that year for the various meetings, exhibits, etc.
- Continuing to review city bid proposals for the 2027-28 national conventions. Target date is Monday, Dec. 19. If a city is a potential, will reach out to VFW Departments to confirm they would support before inviting the city to do a presentation here in Kansas City.

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

VFW Foundation

- This is the last week Posts or Auxiliaries may apply for a Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH) grant until the next round. The grant will close on Dec. 20, 2022, but will likely reopen for a second round in spring 2023. The application and guidelines can be found at www.vfw.org/UTCH. Questions about the grant may be directed to Grants Manager Jason Couch, JCouch@vfw.org.

Contact: VFW Foundation Manager Richard Freiburghouse, RFreiburghouse@vfw.org.

National Legislative Service

- VFW National Legislative Service Assistant Director Kristina Keenan provided a statement for the record for a House Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing on VA's implementation of the *Honoring our PACT Act of 2022*. She included observations made by VFW Service Officers who have been assisting veterans with their VA disability claims for toxic exposure conditions. "About one third reported that they have already seen PACT-Act-related claims adjudicated and some being granted by VA, primarily for Vietnam War veterans with hypertension and for those who served in Thailand," said Keenan. She added that while VA has reported a large increase in claims since the passage of the PACT Act, VA is also processing claims faster at nearly the same rate as the increase. She stated that the VFW recommends that VA maintains its overtime staffing in order to continue managing the increased claims workload. [Watch the hearing](#) or [read the testimony](#).

- DOD has created an exposure registry for service members, their families, and all residents affected by the Navy Water Distribution System in and around Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, to include the recent water contamination from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. Individuals are encouraged to call 1.800.984.8523 to join the Oahu Military Water Contamination Incident Report Registry. Service members should also ensure their exposure is documented in their medical records. All affected personnel are encouraged to request toxic exposure screenings from their primary care providers. [Read more.](#)
- The VFW currently [supports 175 bills; and opposes one bill](#) pending before the 117th Congress.

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

National Veterans Service

- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge representatives briefed transitioning service members on VA benefits at Fort Bliss, Texas, Joint Base Anacostia Bolling, D.C., Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, USO Fort Hood, Fort Hood, Texas, Fort Riley, Kansas.
- NVS leadership is finalizing the Wounded Warrior second quarter report for the Pre-Discharge Claims grant requirements.
- NVS health team is attending the VA ATLAS biweekly meeting with VA, VFW, American Legion and Walmart.
- NVS leadership attended the monthly SECVA leaders' breakfast for program and policy updates on Dec. 13, 2022.
- NVS attended the kickoff PACT Act Town Hall and veteran roundtable meeting with senior VA leadership on Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022, in Washington, D.C.
- NVS is attending the VBA PACT Act offsite meeting Dec. 13-14, 2022, at the VA Baltimore Regional Office.

Contact: VFW National Veterans Service Director Ryan Gallucci, RGallucci@vfw.org.

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