

April 7, 2023

Greetings,

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

Quartermaster General

We have experienced a significant increased demand for "Buddy"[®] Poppies this year. The pandemic forced many of our assembly centers to close permanently, forcing us to obtain the assistance of a local nonprofit organization to meet production demands. Unfortunately, the process of outsourcing assembly forced us to pass the increased cost of assembly onto the consumer. Using average annual demand numbers, our original forecasts projected the increase would not need to occur until the start of the new program year on July 1, 2023. However, increased orders this year rapidly depleted the supply of poppies we had in stock that were manufactured by those assembly centers.

Effective April 15, 2023, the cost of the Buddy Poppy will increase to .25 cents per poppy. 500 quantity orders will be \$125 plus shipping, and 1,000 quantity orders will be \$250 plus shipping. All orders will continue to be processed as normal through the VFW Programs office buddypoppy@vfw.org. The National HQ will not derive any additional revenue from this increase. This amount reflects the cost of goods, the cost to assemble, the share mandated by the national bylaws for the VFW National Home and for National Veterans Service. Anything less would cause a financial loss to the organization.

Future way ahead:

- We've asked the Tin-Tab Buddy Poppy vendor to step up production so we can have this option available by Sept. 1, 2023, at a cost of .10 to .12 cents per poppy (exact price TBD).
- The new Tin-Tab Poppy will not immediately replace the traditional Buddy Poppy.
- Department Quartermasters will have the ability to place poppy orders through OMS effective July 1, 2023. We will communicate the process and/or changes to the process in the weeks leading up to July 1.
- Once the order process migrates to OMS:
 - Credit for purchases will be given through dashboard nightly.
 - Reconciliation of Department inventory will continue through OMS.

- o Tracking of orders will be available through the Member Service Center (MSC).
- o Orders will be processed and arrive at your address much quicker.
- VFW Programs Director Lynn Rolf will be available for Q&A at the upcoming SVC Training Conference in April.

Contact: VFW Quartermaster General Marc Garduno, MGarduno@vfw.org.

General Counsel

- The VFW joined an amicus curiae brief in *Skaar v. McDonough*, supporting a petition for writ of certiorari from the U.S. Supreme Court. The VFW, NOVA and PVA support Skaar's claim that veterans who have not received a final decision from the Board of Veterans' Appeal should be able to be included in class actions in the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims.

Contact: VFW General Counsel John Muckelbauer, JMuckelbauer@vfw.org.

Development

This week's Development campaigns are listed below:

- April 4 Appeal:
 - o April eNews to all nonmember Friends of Freedom.
- April 6 Appeal:
 - o Dormant reengagement email #1 to all Friends of Freedom.
- April 7 Appeal:
 - o Double sock and check package to lapsed nonmember donors.
- April 8 Appeal:
 - o Spring birthday card reminder with labels and check to member and nonmember donors.

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

Human Resources

- Positions actively recruiting for:
 - o Deputy Director Membership – K.C.

- o Administrative Support Assistant, VFW Store – K.C.
- o Associate Director, DAMA – D.C.
- o Member Services Advisor – K.C.
- o Major Gifts Officer – D.C.
- o Special Assistant for Veterans Health Policy – D.C.
- o Administrative Assistant & QA (internal only), Member Services – K.C.

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

Administrative Operations

- There are currently 32 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 5,744 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 15 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 19 administrative actions and six membership eligibility challenges.
- We have 70 Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review, 13 of which are new; current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately 30 days.

Contact: VFW Administrative Operations Director Johnathan Duncan, JDuncan@vfw.org.

Membership

- This week Membership is meeting with the Implementation team for the 2023-24 Membership Program year to outline next year's goals for membership growth, incentives for retaining and recruiting members and all baseline requirements for next year's All-American Program.
- We're gearing up for another monthly episode of Membership Monday on April 10, at 10:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. CST. We will host Zoom training webinars throughout the day with the Life member installment plan as the topic.
- Happening now! Results for the K.C. Spree are coming out as I write this update! Encourage winners in your Department to respond to Marvin Dotson's request for information as soon as possible at MDotson@vfw.org.
- The Sr. Vice Commander & Adjutant Conference is coming up soon on April 20-23, in Kansas City, Missouri. We are preparing for an engaging week with incoming Department leadership on everything membership.

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

Meetings and Events

- Attended the HUMANA strategy meeting on April 6, 2023, at the Kauffman Foundation.
- Working with legal to finalize hotel and convention center contracts for Louisville 2024.
- Ongoing – processing exhibitor applications for Phoenix 2023.
- Ongoing – working with VFW Phoenix housing manager to monitor housing for Phoenix to determine if we will need to add rooms for various nights that are currently waitlisted.
Note: If adjustments are made, waitlisted individuals will be confirmed before any new reservations are processed.

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

VFW Foundation

- Due to scheduling conflicts with the Burger King Foundation, the Burger King/VFW Unmet Needs fundraising campaign will be conducted in May of this year. We continue to recruit BK franchisees across the U.S. to help raise much needed funding for the Unmet Needs program which provides financial aid grants to veterans, service members, and their families that are experiencing unexpected financial difficulties. A list of participating Burger King restaurants will be available beginning the week of April 17.

If you have any questions, please contact VFW Foundation Assistant Director Ben Vargas,
BVargas@vfw.org.

- VFW Foundation fundraising update: We are currently at \$348,800 in National Convention corporate sponsorships, with an additional \$330,000 philanthropic gifts to support VFW programs.

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

National Legislative Service

- VFW National Legislative Service Director Pat Murray testified on pending legislation at a House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hearing. In regard to the importance of proper oversight of the TAP program Murray stated, "While we know it is not the role of this committee to ensure TAP is properly administered, we urge Congress as a whole to make sure it is being done." [Watch the hearing](#) or [read the testimony](#).
- VFW National Legislative Service Deputy Director Kristina Keenan testified on pending legislation at a House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs hearing. The bills included H.R. 1139, *Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding VA Benefits Act*, known as the *GUARD VA Benefits Act*, which is one of the VFW's top legislative priorities. It would reinstate penalties for charging

veterans and survivors unauthorized fees related to claims for VA benefits. "Currently, these predatory companies have no accountability, no oversight, and no penalties," said Keenan. "If they were genuine in providing veterans with more choice, they would choose accreditation and offer quality services that are transparent and legal." [Watch the hearing](#), or [read the testimony](#).

- The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on pending legislation. Representatives from VA answered questions on its policies and procedures regarding long-term health care services, increasing the number of patient advocates, and appropriate notifications for detailed positions. VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Meggan Thomas submitted a statement for the record. Regarding H.R. 542, *Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act of 2023*, Thomas commented that the VFW continues to advocate for long-term care options as stated in our legislative priority goals and resolutions, which is why we support this proposal. [Watch the hearing](#), or [read the testimony](#).

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

National Veterans Service

- NVS leadership attended a planning meeting with Humana and the VFW Foundation for future collaboration and engagement this week in Kansas City, Missouri.
- NVS Quality Assurance and Training staff are finalizing the planning and execution of the upcoming annual Proficiency Training Conference (PTC) to be held in Annapolis, Maryland, April 16-19, 2023.
- NVS leadership received an update from Oracle Cerner about Electronic Health Record (EHR) contract negotiations with VA.
- NVS leadership met virtually with Camp Humphreys ROK key staff to discuss pre-discharge support to Camp Humphreys and soldiers stationed in Korea.
- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge representatives briefed transitioning service members on VA benefits at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, Fort Riley, Kansas, Fort Hood, Texas, Fort Bliss Texas, and NSA Bethesda, Maryland.
- NVS health team participated in a VA virtual conference for LGBTQ veterans, VA Life and PACT Act information session.
- NVS health team participated in a VA Advisory committee meeting on veteran rehabilitation.

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

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