

August 26, 2022

Greetings,

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

Human Resources

- New Employees:
 - Lisa Baronio is the new Executive Director in the VFW Foundation Department in the K.C. Office.
 - Susan (Suzy) Mueller is the new HR/Payroll Specialist in the Human Resources Department in the K.C. Office.
- Promotions:
 - Amanda Gerdes was promoted to Product Development & Inventory Control Administrator in the VFW Store in the K.C. Office.
 - Cindy Noel was promoted to Assistant Director Field Operations in the Veterans Service Programs Department in the D.C. Office.

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

Administrative Operations

- There are currently 82 Posts under suspension; one of which is new with one suspension lifted since last week. We are working two and have completed two Post consolidations; we are working three and have completed one Post charter surrenders; and we are working two charter revocations pursuant to Sections 209, 210 and 212 of the National Bylaws. The organization has 5,838 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 17 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 15 administrative actions and four membership eligibility challenges.
- We have nine Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review, nine of which are new. Current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately one week.

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

Communications

- [New public service announcements and videos](#) are now available for download! From the Voice of Democracy program to joining our ranks, we offer a wide range of videos to help you spread awareness of the VFW.

We encourage you to download them and share them across your social media accounts and with your local media! Visit vfw.org/MediaRoom.

Contact: VFW Communications and Public Affairs Director Randi Law, RLaw@vfw.org.

VFW Foundation

- After an extensive nationwide search, the VFW Foundation welcomes our new Executive Director Lisa Baronio. Lisa has nearly 30 years nonprofit management in higher education, most recently as the president of the University of Missouri-Kansas City Foundation. We are confident Lisa is the right leader to work alongside our staff, board of directors, and our entire veteran service community as we enter a dynamic phase of fundraising and vision.
- Leidos (QTC) has confirmed that they will donate \$40K to support NVS trainings.
- Oracle Cerner has committed to a \$50K donation toward the Unmet Needs program.

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

National Legislative Service

- VFW National Commander Tim Borland attended the White House bill signing ceremony as President Biden signed into law S.3373, the *Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022*, known as the PACT Act. Borland commented after the event, “Too many of our brothers and sisters have succumbed to illnesses connected to toxic exposure. That is why this bill has been the VFW’s number one priority for the past few years, and we weren’t going to give up until it was passed.” Also in attendance were staff members from the VFW Washington Office and fellow veteran advocates. [Read more](#) about the PACT Act or locate an [VFW Accredited Service Officer](#) near you. [Watch the bill signing](#).
- Many veterans have reached out to the VFW regarding the Camp Lejeune provision ([Section 804](#)) of the recently passed PACT Act. Please be advised that there is an offset of VA disability benefits with any settlement that may be received through a lawsuit. Veterans are encouraged **NOT** to sign any contracts to participate in lawsuits until VA clarifies how the settlements will affect service-connected benefits and care. VA regulations on this are expected in the coming months. For clarification on the

impact to your current or future VA benefits, contact an [VFW Accredited Service Officer](#) near you.

- The application process for the 2023 class of VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows is now open. VFW members who attend an accredited institute of higher learning with an approved Student Veterans of America chapter will be chosen for the semester-long program that focuses on real policy issues faced by veterans, service members and their families. The capstone of the program is participation in the 2023 VFW Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. Alumni of the program have become more active at all levels of the VFW and have been instrumental in changing laws to improve care and benefits for veterans. [Learn more and apply for the fellowship.](#)
- The VFW currently [supports 178 bills; and opposes one bill](#) pending before the 117th Congress.

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

National Veterans Service

- The VFW is pleased to announce the VFW Service Officer Accreditation Training Scholarship for accredited service officers and claims representatives looking to attend the VFW's fall training conference in Annapolis, Maryland, this September. All applicants must be currently accredited with the VFW through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the purposes of preparation, presentation and prosecution of benefit claims before VA on behalf of VFW claimants. This scholarship will **focus heavily on cross-accredited VFW advocates and advocates who cannot regularly attend VFW training.** The VFW training offered this fall is one of the ways the VFW satisfies VA Office of the General Counsel's continuing education requirements for its global network of accredited representatives and is subject to periodic audit from OGC. This scholarship is provided through the generosity of our corporate partner Humana, and will extend the VFW's ability to reach more veterans and claimants who seek to file claims for disability compensation. All applications must be submitted by Friday, Aug. 26. Application link and terms of the program can be found [here](#).
- On Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2022, NVS provided a PACT Act briefing virtually to the K.C. Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee on both the specifics of the newly signed legislation and the impact on any claimed or existing VA Disability benefits for veterans who seek to file injury claims due to toxic exposures. VFW NVS is closely monitoring the VA and Veterans Benefits Administration as they work toward implementation of this landmark legislation.
- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge Representatives hosted a series of benefit briefings for separating service members around the country this week to include Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Bliss, Texas; Joint Base Andrews, Maryland; Joint Base Myer, Virginia; and Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, D.C.

- The NVS health team participated in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) monthly VSO meeting.
- The NVS health team met with VHA and other senior VSO leaders for a program meeting.
- NVS Field Operations participated in the bimonthly Wounded Warrior Project collaboration meeting.

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