

January 14, 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:
 - o Melissa Gilliam is a new NVS Pre-Discharge Claims Representative at Ft. Belvoir.
 - o Anthony Heitman is a new Claims Consultant at the National Capital Region Benefits Office (NCRBO).
 - o Stephen Lenhart is also a new Claims Consultant at the National Capital Region Benefits Office (NCRBO).

Contact: VFW Human Resources Director Danielle Owen, DOwen@vfw.org.

Development

- Jan. 11 Appeals:
 - o January legislative email #1 to all Friends of Freedom.
 - o Matching gift extension to member and nonmember donors.

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

Communications

- Episode 024 of #StillServing: [The VFW Podcast](#), *Smart Money: Exploring the VA's Financial Literacy and Home Loan Programs* posted Jan. 12 and is now available for download. The episode features guests Mr. John Bell and Mr. Shak Hill, both from the VA to discuss the VA home loan program and the VA's Wellness Wednesday Initiative.

- Communications and Public Affairs Director Rob Couture drafted and distributed a press release on behalf of the organization, announcing the naming of retired Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman (SEAC) John Wayne Troxell as the VFW's new National Ambassador.
- The C&PA director continued to coordinate with the U.S. Army for guest interviews, to include soldier athletes participating in the 2022 Winter Olympics Games and a recently awarded Medal of Honor recipient, for future episodes of the podcast.

Contact: VFW Communications and Public Affairs Director Rob Couture, RCouture@vfw.org.

Administrative Operations

- There are currently 45 Posts under suspension, eight of which are new. We are working one and have completed one Post consolidation pursuant to Section 209 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure; we are working one Post charter revocation pursuant to Section 212 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure; and we are working one new Post institution pursuant to Section 201 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. The organization has 5,914 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 23 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, six administrative actions and five membership eligibility challenges.
- We have 13 Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review; we've received four new submissions; and have completed/distributed 23 for the week. Current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately 14 days.

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

Meetings and Events

- Continuing to work on the 2022 national convention housing assignments – delayed receiving some information on internal blocks used to provide information to KC hotel housing. Received housing numbers (to protect blocks) for production crew & FERN Expo.
- Updating housing pickup Excel spreadsheet (housing history) to include 2021 housing pickup from Kansas City 2021 national convention. Document used to project assigned housing blocks for VFW Departments for convention.
- Updating documents to distribute with February election mailing (that includes housing information) to Post Quartermasters.
- Finalized contracts with legal for April Senior Vice and October Junior Vice Commander meetings – Kansas City. Set up files and noted dates for rooming lists and resumes (meeting specs) due to the hotel.

- Updating exhibitor database and documents in preparation of distribution of exhibitor applications for KC convention.

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

VFW Foundation

- On Jan. 11, 2022, Sport Clips Haircuts presented a record-breaking check to the VFW Foundation in the amount of \$1.55 million. The generous donation will provide scholarships for service members and veterans through the VFW's "Help A Hero Scholarship" program. To date, Sport Clips has donated more than \$10 million to the cause!
- The Home Depot Community Impact Grant has permanently been retired. Over the past 15 years, the grant provided millions of dollars in funding to VFW Posts (and other nonprofits) for improvement of their buildings. The company will still support veteran causes with emphasis on veteran housing grants.

Contact: VFW Foundation Administrator Richard Potter, RPotter@vfw.org.

National Legislative Service

- Five Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) members and Student Veterans of America (SVA) leaders have been selected to participate in the 2022 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship. The fellowship is a semester-long academic experience where students 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 challenges for service members and their families.

The five student veterans of the 2022 class are:

- James-Anthony Burandt, Marine Corps veteran, California State University – Fullerton
- Thomas Fischer, Army veteran, Syracuse University
- Natalie Koffarnus, Army veteran, Montana Tech of the University of Montana
- Alex Ortiz, Army veteran, Rhode Island State College
- John Randolph, Air Force veteran, Pennsylvania State University.

- The VFW issued an Action Alert on Tuesday, urging members to contact their representatives and tell them to pass [H.R. 1836](#), the *Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2021*. This bill would allow any day in uniform receiving military pay to count toward Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility, allowing activated National Guard and Reserve members to earn this education benefit and achieve upward mobility.
- The VFW Action Corps community has done it again! Thanks to your efforts, H.R. 1836, the *Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2021* has passed the House, and National Guard and Reserve members are one step closer to receiving the education benefits they deserve for their time in service.
- Not yet a member of the Action Corps? Sign up at votervoice.net/VFW/register.

- The VFW currently [supports 144 bills; and opposes one bill](#) pending before the 117th Congress.

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

National Veterans Service

- NVS met with VA Acting Undersecretary for Benefits Tom Murphy to discuss key veterans' benefit issues.
- NVS participated in the weekly VSO meeting with our partner organizations to discuss predatory claims sharks, VBA policy changes and other issues.
- NVS staff attended a briefing with the Board of Veterans Appeals for updates on BVA procedures, inventory and related topics.
- NVS VFW's Pre-Discharge Representatives hosted a series of benefit briefings for separating service members around the country this week to include Fort Hood Texas, Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, Joint Base Anacostia Bolling, Washington, D.C., and National Capital Region Hiring Our Heroes transition briefing. The VFW's Pre-Discharge program leadership also briefed at the quarterly Army General Officer Transition course.
- NVS attended the quarterly VHA Executive VSO meeting to discuss health care policy issues.

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

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