

Jan. 5, 2024

Greetings,

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

Legal Counsel

- As we begin a new year, now is a good time to remind Posts, Districts and Departments to file their IRS Form 990s. The filing deadline is the 15th day after the fifth month after the end of the organization's fiscal year. For those on a calendar year (January – December), the filing deadline is May 15, 2024.

Failure to file an IRS Form 990 for three consecutive years will automatically result in a loss of IRS tax exemption. Such loss affects Posts, Districts and Departments in many ways, including having to pay income taxes and hindering their ability to fundraise.

For those that have already lost their tax-exempt status due to automatic revocation, it may be possible to be reinstated. For 501(c)(19) organizations, use 1024, or 1024-A. There are three basic tracks: 1) streamlined retroactive reinstatement; 2) retroactive reinstatement process for those who lost it less than 15 months ago; and 3) retroactive reinstatement after 15 months. For more information, see <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/automatic-revocation-how-to-have-your-tax-exempt-status-reinstated> and [Revenue Procedure 2014-11](#).

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

Development

We just wrapped our annual year-end campaign and we finished \$117,000 ahead of last year. Below are the results for the last five years and as you can see, this year was our highest grossing year.

Year	Nov 25 thru Dec 31
2023	\$1,195,296
2022	\$1,078,118
2021	\$1,032,187
2020	\$1,057,108
2019	\$735,300

This week's Development Campaigns are listed below:

- Dec. 31 Appeals:
 - Year-end Campaign a.m. email #8 to all Friends of Freedom.
 - Year-end Campaign p.m. emails #9 and #10 to all Friends of Freedom.
- Jan. 2 Appeal:
 - Veterans Service annual appeal.
- Jan. 3 Appeal:
 - January eNews to all nonmember Friends of Freedom.
- Jan. 4 Appeal:
 - Year-end recap email to all Friends of Freedom.
- Jan. 6 Appeal:
 - Planned Giving mailing #2.

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

Human Resources

- New Hire:
 - Dustin Wyatt is a new National Pre-Discharge Claims Rep at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
- Promotions:
 - Carley Taylor was promoted to Administrative Assistant/QA in Member Services in the K.C. Office.
 - Carly Thompson was promoted to Lead Member Service Advisor in Member Services in the K.C. Office.

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

Administrative Operations

- There are currently 47 Posts under suspension, two of which are new. No Post consolidations have been processed pursuant to Section 209 of the National Bylaws. The organization has 5,660 chartered Posts.

- Administrative Operations is engaged in 26 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 16 Administrative Actions and eight membership eligibility challenges.
- We have 32 Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review, none of which are new; current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately 30 days.

Contact: VFW Administrative Operations Associate Director Zach Schwenk, ZSchwenk@vfw.org.

Department Inspections:

As the Department Inspection initiative is well underway for the 2023-2024 term, we would like to share some of the common items that have been identified by the inspection team during their visits. We are halfway through the scheduled inspections for the year so the items below may change as we are able to gather more data. Please understand the list of items below is not all-encompassing but are the most commonly identified concerns the team encounters during the inspections. Some of these items are considered deficiencies pursuant to the National Bylaws but some are simply issues that can assist a Department in their daily operations, if implemented.

Most Commonly Identified Concerns:

- Failure to have proof of eligibility for all District Commanders, Senior Vice Commanders, and Junior Vice Commanders on file at the Department (Ref. Section 416).
- Departments are not properly bonded pursuant to Section 703 of the National Bylaws.
 - o Failing to ensure **all** officers accountable for funds are bonded.
 - o Departments not securing a bond that covers the required amount of all funds.
 - o Departments do not have VFW National listed as additional insureds.
- Lack of or incomplete and outdated Standard Operating Procedures (HQ's staff, Service Officers, and HQ's operations).
- Lack of defined Adjutant/Quartermaster duties specific to the Department.
 - o Lack of Employee Handbook.
- To include policies approved by the Department Council of Administration and signed by all employees and Department officers.
 - o Conflict of Interest
 - o Sexual Harassment
 - o Travel Policy
 - o Vehicle Use Policy

- o Use of Credit Cards
- o Code of Ethics
- o Information Technology/Security
- The Department Council of Administration should be approving budgets, SOP's, policies, Employee Handbooks, etc., but are failing to maintain proper records or meeting minutes showing approval of any and all items.

We look forward to another successful year of inspections and if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Quentin Carroll at QCarroll@vfw.org.

Politics:

VFW National Headquarters has recently received multiple inquiries pertaining to politics, and we would like to address them for clarification.

The VFW is prohibited by its Congressional Charter and National Bylaws to endorse any political candidate at any level of office. Individual members are free to back their candidates of choice (which includes wearing the VFW cap), and VFW Posts are permitted to allow candidates the use of their meeting halls in order to present their positions regarding veterans, service members and their families, as well as national defense and homeland security.

It is up to each individual Post to decide how their facility is used. We always recommend a Post open their facility to all candidates to avoid the image of favoring one side over another. Town hall meetings are a great way for veterans to understand and ask questions regarding issues pertaining to veterans.

We recommend your Post reviews Section 702 of the National Bylaws (Politics) to ensure compliance with the National Bylaws and Congressional Charter.

If further guidance is needed, please reach out to your Department Headquarters for direction to ensure no local or state statutes are violated.

The VFW is one of the most respected voices in Washington, D.C., and within local governments across America. We advocate for justice for our nation's veterans, service members and military families on an array of issues and continue to be the voice for veterans everywhere. We regularly testify before Congress, meet with elected officials, and rally our national network of VFW members and patriotic supporters to ensure our lawmakers put veterans first. When those who've served their country and those that support them stand together, we cannot be ignored.

Contact: Administrative Operations Associate Director: Zach Schwenk ZSchwenk@vfw.org.

Membership

- Happy New Year! I am happy to report to you that our membership statistics (MEMSTATs) remain good coming into the new year! Halfway through our program year and there are two recruiters over 300, 13 members who have surpassed the Century mark for recruiting, and 25 Departments already above 90% in membership. Bravo Zulu! Keep the press on! Now on to Meet the Challenge of 102%!

- As you travel and visit your Posts, help remind Posts to update their membership materials. Materials such as door hangers, fact sheets and other membership materials can be ordered on vfw.org any time!
- Encourage Post leaders to start planning their springtime recruiting events now. Mitigate challenges early to ensure success!
- The Eight Weeks of Christmas concluded, and winners are being notified. Congratulations to all and thank you for participating! We have seen participation grow from 15 Posts when we started in August, to over 200 Posts nationwide in December. The Mixer platform is helpful in activating membership at the Post level. Contact us to learn more.
- Another Membership Monday will take place on Jan. 8, 2024, 2:00 p.m. CST, covering the topic, “**Membership Roles in the Post**.” Look for the Zoom invite on the Membership Facebook Page. The webinar will be recorded for future viewing as all Membership Mondays are.
- If you have a topic for training, we would love to hear from you! Contact us by emailing Membership@vfw.org. Be sure to follow our [Facebook Page](#).

Contact: VFW Membership Interim Director Corey Hunt, CoreyHunt@vfw.org.

National Veterans Service

- NVS BDD leadership briefed general officers from the Office of Security, Department of State on VA and retirement benefits.
- NVS BDD select personnel are attending the Student Veterans of America (SVA) Conference and participating in the claims clinic in Nashville, Tennessee, January 4-6, 2024.
- VFW’s NVS Pre-Discharge representatives briefed transitioning service members on VA benefits at Nellis AFB, Nevada, Fort Bliss, Texas and Fort Drum, New York.
- NVS health team engaged with VA Atlas program manager for regular program updates.

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

Veterans of Foreign Wars
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 Kansas City, Missouri 64111
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