

April 5, 2024

Greetings,

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

From the Office of the Adjutant General

We have kicked off the Return the Favor peer to peer fundraising campaign along with Country Music Star John Rich. This campaign is designed to bring awareness to and financial support of National and Department Service Officers through the VFW National Veterans Service Program.

Using technology of today in a peer-to-peer networking we are asking that you donate to support veteran service officers and join a team to ask others in donating by sharing your story or create your own team and ask others to join and donate by going to VFWReturntheFavor.org.

Please donate, join, or create your own team and ask your network of friends and family to donate and if you are comfortable in sharing, share your story of how the VFW National Veterans Service has impacted your life.

In addition to John's time, he is also donating funds from the sale of his signature brand Redneck Riveria Whiskey.

Also, we have started test sampling VFW awareness and Donation ads on our Social Media channels, more details about that in the message below from Development.

Please share this within your Department.

Comrades, we are less than 62,000 members away from attaining the 102% goal set by Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento. This goal was not just a number that was pulled out of a hat. It is a goal designed to help our organization make up for the loss of members over the year and add to what we had last year so that we as an organization can get back to over 1 million members. I am hearing several complaints about how 102% is too hard. Most of you tell me how tough your service was and how hard it was and that younger veterans today like me are coddled because in your day you were made of iron and could handle anything thrown at you. We have a mission that is a very realistic mission that is very attainable, the Chief did not say it was going to be easy, but he also did not say it would be impossible. He said it was a realistic goal for the leaders and members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as they know the true cost of freedom and who better to set an example than those who have earned their place in the front ranks of America. Let's not forget that our heritage comes from comrades who faced much tougher odds with life-or-death consequences dating back to the Spanish-American War and even further. Not a one of us took an oath to be a leader in the VFW, but only if it was easy. We took an oath to do our best and to

continue to do our best for the entire year. Comrades, the year is not over, the finish line is in sight. Dig in and push forward.

Dan West
Adjutant General

Development

March was another strong month for fundraising. We surpassed our projected revenue goal of \$3.8M by \$1.4M. Our projected revenue goal for April is \$3.5M.

To take the VFW's online fundraising program to the next level, we felt that we needed to look at our online ads in a very different way than we have in the past. When previously tested, the ads were generally focused on a specific campaign for a brief period. However, we all know that the for-profit world runs ads 24/7, 365 days a year to keep their brand top of mind. We have recently launched a three-month test.

Always On is a 24/7, digital media program constantly optimized to attract and engage prospects and active and lapsed donors to deepen their support of VFW through financial conversion. Through this testing, the ads will be consistently tested and tweaked and our best content and offers will be optimized to match the right message to the right audience at the right time on the right platform.

Always On is active across several platforms – social, display, video and search – each with its own objectives to find, develop and convert audiences. We will target the following audiences ages: 26-65 with the following interests:

- Veterans
- Patriotism
- Navy
- Air Force
- Marines
- Army
- Coast Guard
- Education
- Social Services
- Human Rights
- Economic Empowerment
- Civil Rights and Social Action

As we launch this strategy, we will be targeting the following audiences:

1. VFW nonmembers
2. Look-alikes of nonmembers audience

Stay tuned for results of this testing once completed and evaluated.

This week's Development Campaigns are listed below:

- April 2 Appeal:
 - o April eNews to all nonmember Friends of Freedom.
- April 4 Appeal:
 - o Dormant reengagement email #1 to all Friends of Freedom.
- April 5 Appeal:
 - o Partners in Patriotism quarterly statements to nonmember donors.
- April 6 Appeal:
 - o April/spring Patriot Circle annual appeal to member and nonmember donors.

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

Human Resources

- New Hire:
 - o Wilma Smith is a new Member Services Advisor in the Member Services Department in the K.C. Office.
- Positions Actively Recruiting For:
 - o National Pre-Discharge Claims Rep – Norfolk, Virginia.
 - o National Pre-Discharge Rep – Joint Base Andrews, Maryland.

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

Programs

- VFW Combat Tested Gaming Update:

Season 3 registration is now open! For more information about Combat Tested Gaming leagues or to register, visit <https://vfwgaming.com/>.

One option is to sign up as a team if you have a full team ready to roll. The other is to sign up individually on one of our free-agent teams. If you go the free-agent route, we monitor those teams and will set the team as private once it's full. From there, we will email everyone and ask for an email response to confirm you are in to play. If we do not get a response, you will be removed from the team to open up the spot for a new player.

We are nearly 1,000 veteran gamers strong. Please share this and help us continue to grow.

- VFW National Convention 2nd Annual Cornhole Tournament:

Please support the 2nd annual VFW Cornhole Tournament taking place at the 125th VFW National Convention in Louisville!

The series will take place on Sunday, July 28, and Monday, July 29, 2024. All proceeds from the competition go to VFW PACT Act benefit assistance. For more information and to sign up for this event, which was an instant hit last year in Phoenix, visit <https://kccrew.com/leagues/vfwcornholetournament/>.

We need board sponsors and tons of teams from our membership. Please share this far and wide and support our amazing NVS PACT Act initiatives.

Contact: VFW Programs Director Lynn W. Rolf, III, LRolf@vfw.org.

Administrative Operations:

- There are currently 50 Posts under suspension, three of which are new. There is one pending Post consolidation pursuant to Section 209 of the National Bylaws. The organization has 5,647 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 17 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 12 Administrative Removals/Actions and 11 membership eligibility challenges.
- Currently Administrative Operations has 117 Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review, 14 of which are new; current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately 45-60 days.

Disciplinary Action Guide:

There have been recent updates to the Disciplinary Action Guide that outlines the process to successfully complete a disciplinary action. We have included information to the guide that encompasses sentencing guidelines which is located as an appendix at the end of the guide and outlines sentencing/penalty considerations, clarifications, and examples.

The guide is available on the Document Repository in the "Guide to Disciplinary Action" folder or on the VFW website behind the login under My VFW/Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates/ Training/Training Guides & Standard Operating Procedures.

Department Inspections:

At the beginning of the 2023-2024 term, we planned for a total of (10) Department inspections. At this time a total of nine Department inspections have been completed with one scheduled and

pending. All Inspections will be completed by the end of April, at which time we will compile an updated list of common issues and best practices.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Quentin Carroll at QCarroll@vfw.org.

Election Reports:

2024-2025 Election reports have been mailed out. Per the Bylaws and Manual of Procedures, Posts should have opened nominations for the upcoming year in March and close the nominations and electing the Post Officers in April. To access the election report online; sign in to VFW.org and proceed to My VFW. Select Online Membership System (OMS), then press the drop-down menu on the left side of the screen for Election Report and select Post Election Report Filing.

The 2024-25 Election Report is now available in OMS as of April 1, 2024. Please ensure when you file your Election Report for the new term that you have selected 2024-25 from the drop-down option as OMS will typically default to the current term.

NOTE: The National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure require a properly completed Election Report for the ensuing year to be submitted to Department and National Headquarters by June 1, 2024.

Contact: VFW Administrative Operations Director Quentin Carroll, QCarroll@vfw.org.

Membership

- As of April 1, there are **32** Departments projected to break 100%. There are **15** Departments projected to make 102% or higher at the current rate of recruiting and renewals. Membership Chairs, NOW is the time to work your unpaids! District Commanders, use your knowledge/experience to mentor those struggling Posts.
- The number of members it takes to charter a new Post is 25. Of those 25, 10 must be new members to the VFW. If you have questions regarding a Post charter, give us a call at 888.564.6839.
- Pro tip of the Week – RETENTION! Looking for a pro tip to use in your discussions around membership? The #1 reason members do not renew at the Post level is because they never heard from the Post. Newsletters, a Facebook page, community projects, and buddy checks are all great ways to keep your membership engaged and retained.
- How familiar are you with OMS? Are you able to answer common questions from your Districts such as: “Where do I find my Post’s MEMSTATS?” or “How do I check a Post’s All-American Dashboard?” Do you know how to view and use your KPI Tools? If these are questions you cannot answer, chances are good there are leaders in your Districts that can’t either. If you need help in this arena, call us! We will help you!
- Need recruiting training/resources?! If you have a topic for training, we would love to hear from you! Contact us by emailing, Membership@vfw.org. Follow our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/VFWmembership>.

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

Meetings and Events

- Ongoing, exhibitor requests processed into eShow for Louisville 2024.
- Contracts for 2025-26 being reviewed for Washington Conference, making notes of items to be reviewed and revised.
- Ongoing, convention housing, Departments with sold-out blocks are being asked to proceed with reservations and waitlist. Moving forward as rooms become available, waitlisted reservations will be satisfied before new reservations are confirmed. The goal is to fill all blocks before moving to additional hotels (overflow).
- Memo to Department Adjutants/Quartermasters under signature of Adjutant General advising of housing process and to include the following paragraph:

We continue to face the problem of Departments reserving multiple rooms that end up being canceled. This results in a financial loss to the National Organization. As a result, and consistent with Section 709 of the National Bylaws, the National Organization will charge any Department that reserved rooms that it does not use. Changes to the room block can be made up to the cut-off date of June 10, 2024. After that, the Department is responsible for the payment of the rooms in the room block.

- Ongoing, working with Taylor on processes within department.
- Finalizing hotel reservations for April 14-17, 2024, National Officer Implementation.
- Finalizing details for April 18-21, 2024, Senior Vice AQ training.
- Confirmed dates for fall Adjutant/Quartermaster training/Kansas City – Sept. 12-15, 2024.
- Date change for 2024 Junior Vice Commanders – Oct.10-13, 2024.
- Finalizing 2025 Columbus convention hotel and convention center contracts reflecting new agenda – one day shorter.

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

National Legislative Service

- Congressional Watchdog Calls for DOD to Improve Transition: The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has released a report titled *Service Members Transitioning to Civilian Life: Agencies Can Improve Warm Handovers for Additional Assistance*. During a review of DOD's warm handover process, GAO found that from April 2021 to March 2023, it did not provide needed transition assistance to 4,300 at-risk service members who were facing challenges with employment, housing, or medical care. The VFW continues to advocate for legislation to improve [transition from service](#), including H.R. 3933 / S. 2888, TAP Promotion Act, to require accredited representatives from national, state, and local organizations to be included in Transition Assistance Program classes. [Read the GAO report](#).

- April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month: Military sexual trauma (MST) relates to sexual assault or harassment that occurred during military service. Although VA is spotlighting MST education and treatment this month, it works year-round to raise awareness of its resources to address this issue. According to its website, “Healing after MST can take time. But no matter how long it’s been, VA is here to help.” Learn more and explore VA’s [MST resources](#).
- VA Direct Deposit Consolidation Deadline: As of April 20, 2024, VA will no longer send benefit payments for veterans or family members to more than one bank account. This is due to an IT modernization effort by VA for its GI Bill payment system. This change will impact approximately 50,000 students who receive the GI Bill and other VA benefits in separate direct deposit accounts. VA is sending weekly emails and text messages to this group of veterans and beneficiaries informing them of the upcoming change and asking them to select one bank account going forward. If students do not consolidate their bank accounts by April 20, VA will continue to send payments but will designate the non-education benefit payment account as the primary bank account. [Read more](#) for details on how to choose a single bank account for direct deposit.
- Vet Our Democracy: VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Joe Grassi attended a conference call hosted by the nonpartisan, nonprofit organization We the Veterans. During the meeting, the organization introduced its first civics education program, the Vet our Democracy podcast. This podcast focuses on the rights and responsibilities that veterans, active-duty military, and military families have as citizens, and suggestions on how veterans can support their local polling stations. [Listen to the podcast](#).

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 military facilities across the country.
- NVS health team attended the National Health Warfighter Brain Health Awareness meeting.
- NVS health team participated in the VA Office of Healthcare Transformation Access Sprint Initiative briefing.
- NVS health leadership participated in the Federal EHRM update.
- NVS BDD leadership briefed 200 U.S. Public Health service officers about the VA claims process.
- NVS health team participated in the ATLAS biweekly meeting.

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

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