

Oct. 27, 2023

Greetings,

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

### **Legal Counsel**

- Last week the VFW sent a letter to the Department of Defense and Solicitor General in support of the Supreme Court denying certiorari in the case *Atchley v. AstraZeneca UK Ltd.* That case was filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act, which imposes civil liability on companies that knowingly finance terrorist attacks. The plaintiffs, Gold Star families and veterans who were killed or injured by a Shiite terrorist group in Iraq, allege certain pharmaceutical companies, including AstraZeneca, provided funding to terrorist groups in exchange for the award of contracts. Denying cert would allow Gold Star families and wounded veterans to finally begin discovery in their lawsuit. This case has been tied up in court for the past six years. Consequently, the victims haven't even had a chance to prove their claims yet. Such a delay is unconscionable for our veterans, and denying cert would allow the case to be remanded back to the District Court where it can proceed.

Contact: VFW General Counsel John Muckelbauer, [JMuckelbauer@vfw.org](mailto:JMuckelbauer@vfw.org).

### **Development**

This week's Development Campaigns are listed below:

- Oct. 24 Appeal:
  - o Veterans Day matching gift email #2 to all Friends of Freedom.
- Oct. 25 Appeal:
  - o October acquisition reminder with nickels, coasters and check.
- Oct. 27 Appeal:
  - o November quarterly supporter newsletter #1 to member and nonmember donors.

Contact: VFW Development Director Kelly Jones, [KellyJones@vfw.org](mailto:KellyJones@vfw.org).

## Human Resources

- Positions Actively Recruiting For:
  - Member Services Advisor – K.C. Office.

Contact: VFW Human Resources Director Sari Maple, [SMaple@vfw.org](mailto:SMaple@vfw.org).

## Administrative Operations

- Department Inspections: We are moving forward with the Department Inspection initiative for the 2023-2024 term and have plans to complete ten (10) inspections this year. The hope is that we will have the first inspection scheduled for the beginning of October and have all inspections completed by May 2024, prior to the start of Department conventions. In the coming weeks we will be reaching out to the Departments that have been selected by the Commander-in-Chief as well as the inspection team members to begin working through availability and scheduling. Additionally, the inspection team will be conducting initial and refresher training in September before we start our schedule.

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](mailto:QCarroll@vfw.org).

- There are currently 51 Posts under suspension, three of which are new. We have processed four Post consolidations pursuant to Section 209 of the National Bylaws. The organization has 5,669 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 10 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, nine Administrative Actions and 11 membership eligibility challenges.
- We have 63 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](mailto:ZSchwenk@vfw.org).

## Membership

- Mentorship can look different at every Post. Sometimes it's easy to recognize efforts made by comrades to promote VFW institutional knowledge, we see it all the time. Sometimes it is smaller, less obvious efforts that enable the Post to thrive. Seek these comrades out and recognize them! We know that Posts with strong mentorship programs are successful. What are you doing to promote mentorship within your Departments?
- Another Membership Monday training webinar will happen Monday, Nov. 6, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. CST. We will be covering the topic “**New Member Application and Renewal Processing.**” Get a complete understanding of the new member application process from application submittal to new card delivery. 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](mailto:Membership@vfw.org). Follow our Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/VFWmembership>.

Contact: VFW Membership Interim Director Corey Hunt, [CoreyHunt@vfw.org](mailto:CoreyHunt@vfw.org).

### **Meetings and Events**

- Continuing to work limited hours (in-office) pending doctor's approval to return to office full-time. Anticipating full release on Nov. 6, 2023.
- Preparing for initial site for Columbus, Ohio, 2025 – Nov. 5-7, 2023, purpose of trip is to confirm hotels to be used and to get contracts for hotels and convention center started. Target date to finalize those contracts is 18 months (Jan. 31, 2024) out from convention dates – Aug. 9-14, 2025.
- Working with e-Show, a technology vendor who will provide updated support services for handling exhibitor paperwork for annual convention. Program eliminates the 'manual' processes previously used thereby providing more efficient handling of the work.
- Ongoing – working with legal on upcoming meeting contracts and addendums.

Contact: VFW Meetings and Events/Exhibits Director Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM, [VKane@vfw.org](mailto:VKane@vfw.org).

### **VFW Foundation**

- The 10th anniversary of the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" campaign will run from Oct. 8 – Nov. 11, 2023, with over 1,800 franchised stores participating. Join the campaign and donate at [vfw.org/2023HAH](https://vfw.org/2023HAH).

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations Brooke Brown, [BBrown@vfw.org](mailto:BBrown@vfw.org).

- From Oct. 23 to Nov. 30, 2023, Walmart will match donations 2:1 when customers round up to donate to any participating veteran service charitable organization at checkout on Walmart.com or in the app. Please remember to designate the VFW Foundation. If you are not already enrolled, sign up for Spark Good Round Up: <https://www.walmart.com/sparkgood>.
- The 2023-2024 VFW Foundation grant cycle opened on Oct. 1, 2023, and applications are available at [vfw.org/Grants](https://vfw.org/Grants). VFW Posts, Districts and Auxiliaries may qualify for grant funding. A total of three reimbursement-based grant opportunities will be provided:
  - #StillServing Grant (SSG) – This grant provides reimbursement of up to \$1,500 for expenses incurred while performing community service activities where Post/District/Auxiliary members engaged community members directly.

- o Post Assistance Grant (PAG) – This grant provides reimbursement of up to \$2,500 for expenses incurred from purchasing qualifying equipment or making repairs/renovating a Post owned property.
- o Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH) Grant – This grant provides reimbursement of up to \$1,500 for donations made to food insecurity organizations or for the purchase of food that supports a Post or Auxiliary ran food pantry.

Contact: VFW Foundation Director of Donor Relations Richard Freiburghouse, [RFreiburghouse@vfw.org](mailto:RFreiburghouse@vfw.org).

### **National Legislative Service**

- Joint Senate Committee Hearing on Military Transition: VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci testified at a joint hearing of the Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs and Armed Services on military to civilian transition. He explained the need to pass VFW-supported H.R. 3933/S. 2888, *TAP Promotion Act*, in addition to amending laws and policies that govern the DOD Transition Assistance Program (TAP), commonly referred to as TAP class. Gallucci stated, "A solid transition can set up veterans for success after service. Conversely, a failed transition could lead to devastating consequences like unemployment, homelessness, even suicide. The perception of veterans after service directly correlates to the next generation's propensity to serve. Failed transitions hurt military recruiting, making this a national security priority." This hearing follows a December 2022 Government Accountability Office report on TAP that indicated 70 percent of transitioning service members did not begin the class at least 365 days before separation or retirement as mandated by law. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 14:24 mark.
- Shortened Survivor Benefit Plan Deadline: Military retirees interested in enrolling in the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) must now submit their letter of intent (LOI) to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) by **Nov. 1, 2023**. Authorized by the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023*, the SBP Open Season began in December 2022 and ends on Jan. 1, 2024. The initial step in the enrollment process is to file a non-binding LOI with DFAS. Once processed, individuals will be provided personalized buy-in amounts, premiums, and estimated benefits, which can then be used to make informed decisions. [Learn more](#).

Contact: VFW National Legislative Service Director Patrick Murray, [PMurray@vfw.org](mailto:PMurray@vfw.org).

### **National Veterans Service**

- NVS Director Mike Figlioli traveled to Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to discuss VA benefits, the VFW Pre-Discharge program, and brief active-duty sailors, Marines, soldiers, and civilian employees on filing disability claims. He also assisted with the inauguration of the newly organized Guantanamo Bay VFW Post 12225.
- NVS leadership participated in the TAP Military Life Cycle Module-Community Integration Resources collaboration meeting.
- NVS Director Mike Figlioli will attend a collaboration meeting with IBM to develop to navigate technology in military to civilian transitions.

- NVS BDD team and NVS leaders will meet for an update and feedback virtual meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023.
- NVS Director Mike Figlioli and Executive Director Ryan Gallucci held an office call at the VFW Washington Office with the Chairman of the Board of Veterans Appeals.
- NVS Health leadership participated in a VHA Veteran integrated Care collaboration meeting.
- NVS Director Mike Figlioli and NVS Staff will hold the monthly VSO Update Forum at 2pm on Oct. 25, 2023, via ZOOM.
- NVS managers will meet with USAA to continue work on USAA Impact Days and provide updates on the grant process.
- NVS Health team participated in the Washington, D.C., Winter Haven planning session for homeless veterans.
- NVS BDD participated in the Army GO TAP course and provided in-person counseling for VA claims.
- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge representatives briefed transitioning service members on VA benefits at Fort Bliss Texas, NSA Bethesda, Maryland, Fort Drum, New York, Fort Cavazos, Texas, and New River, North Carolina.

Contact: VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli, [MFiglioli@vfw.org](mailto:MFiglioli@vfw.org).

