



2024 NATIONAL CONVENTION

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Convention Highlights

Saturday, July 27, 2024

National Council of Administration Meeting

‘It Has Been an Honor’ Chief Says

VFW Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento opened the VFW National Council of Administration meeting by thanking first-time attendees of the VFW National Convention. The Chief also commended the Council for its dedication and role as the organization’s key decision-makers.

“It has been an honor working with this Council,” the Chief concluded. “This body you see before you is VFW’s board of directors, and if someone up here is acting like a king or queen, they are doing it wrong. Every one of you gets a say.”

VFW Adjutant General Dan West noted in his remarks that a rodeo promoter based in Phoenix is looking to showcase VFW members who are “cowboys or ranchers” and interested in sharing their “VFW story.” Those interested should email West at dwest@vfw.org within the next 20 days. West also reminded convention goers they must have a convention badge to get into the convention.

VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci announced a full slate of dignitaries speaking during the convention. Speakers include Medal of Honor recipient David Bellavia, VA Secretary Denis McDonough, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear and U.S. Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.).

The Council approved a change to *Sec. 218 of VFW’s Manual of Procedure*. Post service officers will now be required to refer veterans wanting to file a VA claim to a VFW Department service officer. A VFW Post service officer will now be considered an “information or resource” officer for claimants.

Sarmiento noted the presence of two VFW members at the Council meeting: Robert Olivarez, the current commander of the Purple Heart Association, and Carder Ferguson, immediate past commander of the Purple Heart Association.

VFW Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt told Council members that, “You are not here to just sit. You are here to make decisions. We need to stand together firmly, and we’ve got to protect ourselves. We are warriors. I am so excited about the future of the VFW.”

VFW Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore reminded Council members to be firm in their convictions: “The beauty of this organization is that we can agree to disagree. Always stand up for what you believe in. We need to be transparent with what we do, and what we should do. Your dedication does not go unnoticed.”

-The End-