

Convention Highlights

Saturday, July 18, 2015

National Council of Administration Meeting

President to Speak Tuesday

President Barack Obama will be the featured speaker at 11 a.m. Tuesday at the Business Session. The doors to the convention center will open at approximately 6 a.m. All attendees must enter the morning session through metal detectors. Official convention badges must be worn for admittance to the hall. Also speaking Tuesday are VA Secretary Bob McDonald and Army Lt. Gen. Michael Linnington, director of the Defense Personnel Accounting Agency, which replaced the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command.

At Monday's Joint Opening Session, retired Marine Corps Gen. James Mattis will receive the *Dwight D. Eisenhower Award*. Army Command Sergeant Major Gerald Ecker will accept the *Armed Forces Award* on behalf of all Army medics—28 of whom have earned the Medal of Honor, 15 posthumously.

According to VFW's Budget and Finance Committee, the organization projects an approximate \$3 million surplus for this fiscal year. The surplus was attributed to unexpected estate gifts, salary savings on unfilled jobs, better-than-anticipated returns on investments and lower pension-related costs.

The National Council of Administration voted to replenish the \$30,000 Charitable Contributions Fund (CCF) contingent upon a budget surplus. VFW had expended \$6,000 from the fund through May 31 for the Honor Flight program, which transports WWII veterans to the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C. Established in 1997, the CCF is used to satisfy some of the many small donation requests VFW receives annually. The Council also authorized establishing a Veterans Service Endowment Fund.

During closing remarks, Jr. Vice Commander-in-Chief Brian Duffy encouraged members to be active while in Pittsburgh by attending as many workshops as possible, particularly the Membership workshop. "Utilize your time at the convention in a productive way," he said. "Share the camaraderie and spirit."

Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief John Biedrzycki, Jr., echoed Duffy's remarks when he said, "This is the time for us to work," adding that members should "work hard and play hard." Biedrzycki noted that a representative from Pittsburgh Hires Vets will speak to delegates during Tuesday's Business Session.

Commander-in-Chief John Stroud thanked the National Council of Administration for its service and welcomed the new members of the Council. He said he looks forward to continuing his service in the organization, noting that "VFW is the greatest combat veterans service organization."

Members intending to attend the Commander-in-Chief's Reception Wednesday night must be present at the installation of national officers that morning to receive a ticket. No ticket, no admittance, Adjutant General John Hamilton said.

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