VFW National Commander Puts Posts on Notice

The following is a message from VFW National Commander John W. Stroud

Nov 06, 2014

I am extremely disturbed by the recurring reports from the field as well as the media's portrayal of the VFW as an organization that is comprised of old and out of touch veterans who would rather drink in a dimly lit canteen than open their doors to our younger veterans. The VFW's mission is far too important; our objectives and causes for which we work far too critical; and the current situation of the veteran population far too dire to let the negativity of a few divide us and dilute our efforts. We must empower the younger veterans to be forces of change within our organization while lending them the institutional knowledge to be effective leaders for future generations of veterans.

The fact remains that the stereotypical, dingy, dark and smoke filled VFW Post and canteen do exist, but they have no benefit to our organization, provide no aid to our mission nor to the veterans we strive to help and serve. These Posts are in the minority of our organization, but in order to shift the paradigm we must challenge every member to hold their Post accountable. It's time for our membership to be emboldened into action and to push their Posts to strive for the high ideals that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was founded upon.

Accordingly, I am charging my current Department VFW Commanders to be advocates of change and to challenge the officers of the subordinate units within their command to be more than officers — challenge them to be leaders cognizant of the current challenges today's veterans face. To do this, our VFW Posts must change their operational tactics to better reflect the modern crises younger veterans are facing on their new "battlefield" – the homefront.

For those members and Posts who would rather serve themselves than the countless veterans who are in need, remind them that this organization exists for the benefit of all veterans rather than those of an entitled few. I want to make it clear that I will willingly

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provide my complete support to any of my Department Commanders who move to shut down any Post, or remove from our leadership rolls, anyone that is not committed to the goals of the organization. They simply don't belong here. The need is too great for a dynamic and modern VFW that can continue to advocate and respond unhesitatingly to the needs of all veterans in the 21st century and beyond. To do less, would be an unconscionable betrayal of our responsibilities as Americans and as veterans.

John W. Stroud
VFW National Commander