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E60- District Food collection activity Shipley order to remove collection boxes

From: vfw [redacted]>
Sent: Thursday, October [redacted], 2018 6:17 PM
To: 'john.shipley1955[redacted]'
Cc: Quartermaster
Subject: VFW/ 12162- Jourdanton Elementary

Importance: High

Commander,

I will comply with whatever you decide is in the best interests of the VFW, however I don't think you fully understand, and I didn't until today, what is already in motion and the negative affect your order may have with any continued relationship with these entities. I elected to send this in written form- so
if you need to forward it to anyone not in this email chain you can. The dilemma we find ourselves dealing with, or any solutions we ultimately institute, could be used to benefit others in the future facing the same challenges. It is my intention we can use this as a training tool.

If I was to order my QM to collect the boxes today from the Jourdanton elementary, this could damage the VFW relationship as a whole. I would recommend that the elementary collection program (currently in progress at the Jourdanton elementary) be allowed to continue. It will conclude in the morning and I have already instructed QM Stephanie Pino to remove her boxes from that location at that point with great haste at the program's conclusion. I would request that you instruct 4853 to not interfere with the elementary food collection activity that is already in progress. Doing so at this juncture could create confusion and reflect poorly on the VFW. I will take PC Jeff Rankin & QM Patti Hewitt with me to the school and do a formal "hand over" and mend any negative relationships/ confusion that may exists between 4853 and the elementary school staff. We can do that during the Veterans Day activities that are planned. As you know, allegedly, PC Jeff Rankin was rude to the principal and/or counselor concerning a youth program in the past, resulting in their unwillingness to work with 4853 and probably contributed to them contacting our QM. Ask QM Stephanie Pino for the details on this, as she has spoken with them about it in length. I for one, have no issue with personally helping 4853 patch up their relationship- I would be happy to do it if it helps them reestablish themselves with this entity. As you know, I know everyone up there, from teachers, principals, superintendent to several of my classmates that are currently on the school board. Whatever miscommunication that took place between PC Jeff Rankin and the elementary leadership, I'm certain can be repaired with a little diplomacy.

Jourdanton Elementary Food Collection Competition
As a result of our last discussion on the matter on Monday October 1st, I specifically instructed QM Stephanie Pino NOT to put out any additional boxes within the Jourdanton AOR and to refer any requests, she receives from anyone in Jourdanton requesting to participate in the food drive, to QM Patti Hewitt at 4853. I called her immediately upon receiving your text of October 11, 2018/12:00 and confirmed she has complied with my request of October 1st. The boxes at the elementary school and the City hall of Jourdanton where requested by the elementary principal and mayor of Jourdanton, respectively, after they read an article that was published in the Pleasanton Express newspaper outlining VFW Post 12162's food collection effort. QM Stephanie Pino informed me that numerous other business entities in the Pleasanton AOR expressed interested in participating as well and were subsequently given Collection boxes/cans for this purpose. QM Stephanie Pino briefed me that the elementary principal at Jourdanton contacted her personally and requested to participate in our food drive, but had an idea that she wanted to put in action. QM Stephanie Pino assisted her in this request. The principal wanted to make a contest out of it that would run a few weeks, allowing each elementary school home classroom to compete to see who can collect the most food donations.

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But I will refer her to you to answer any questions concerning it. I want no part of that. Simply respond to this email if you wish for me to execute your previous order.

Jourdanton ISD Food Collection by 4853
QM Stephanie Pino briefed me, that 4853 QM Patti Hewitt deployed boxes at the Junior High and High School after our last discussion. QM Stephanie Pino did not interfere with that activity in any way. QM Stephanie Pino's boxes are at the elementary campus only. No one on my staff took any action to actively solicit any of these locations, the boxes were deployed only upon the request of these entities prior to our discussion on the matter on October 1st 2018.

Toys for Tots "Boxes"
I need further clarification on the "Please have your Quartermaster put Post 4853s food drive boxes back in Jourdanton schools and remove posts 12162's boxes." I think there might be confusion over the Toys for Tot boxes possibly?? Both 4853 and 12162 participate in toys for Tots each year. We both have toys for tot's boxes we are using for this food drive. (Wrapped of course for this operation). They are collapsible, reusable and easier to deploy than the issued red cans. Perhaps there is confusion on ownership? QM Stephanie Pino has informed me that our boxes are still at the elementary school and have been since the program initiation several weeks ago and that she has not been to any of the other campus to solicit. Please clarify your request.

Atascosa County AOR Agreement
As you are aware, due to our close proximity, I had anticipated the overlap of VFW operations as 12162 grew and requested a meeting to develop an AOR agreement amongst the Posts at its institution to establish specific directives regarding fundraising activities and the establishment of Posts AOR's. This meeting request was ignored. I was first confronted with this issue as Post Commander of 4853, where I found discrepancies in the By-Laws concerning "immediate geographic area or community of the Post" as outlined in Section 214 of the National By-Laws. I believe that was referenced in today's text I received from you. The legal name of the post in Jourdanton is "Atascosa County VFW Post 4853". Is the Posts "immediate geographic area or community of the Post" ALL of Atascosa County with the exception of the city limits of Lytle, Poteet and (now) Pleasanton? Or is it just Jourdanton? I contacted National for clarification over a year ago concerning this. While the By-Laws do not specifically identify "AORs", it is commonly accepted that the city limit and/or zip codes boundaries (you mentioned this) could be used for this purpose (This was National's opinion). However, they explained the By-Laws are only concerned with boundaries for "fundraising" activities. There are no other restrictions or guidelines, regarding any other Posts activities such as charitable or community service operations outside of the Posts area. The unwritten rule has always been Commander Courtesy if conducting a VFW program within another Posts AOR, if invited by an entity within the other Posts AOR. We have seen this exercised numerous times with VFW Post 6970 conducting honor guard operations from which they were invited by County, City or School entities within Jourdanton and Pleasanton AOR's. I see nothing wrong with this nor does it violate, as far as I can tell, any portion of the By-Laws. If I am in error, please direct me to the section in the By-Laws that illustrates this so I can make a note of it and explain it to my members.

I, personally, do not see separate VFW Posts in our county, state or nationally for

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E60- District Food collection activity Shipley order to remove collection boxes that matter. Never have. I see only the VFW. The Posts physical location within a specific community is nothing more than a FOB from which to conduct community service activities that promote the VFW mission initiative. Obviously some Posts will perform better and are more efficient than others. This is a direct reflection on their leadership and membership availability, training and confidence. We are lucky, because we have three Posts within 5 miles of one another. We have the option to conduct joint activities together and maximize our efforts in the community regardless of our each Posts membership size. When used in conjunction with the strategies developed at 12162, I see this as a force multiplier that can greatly enhance our awareness and presence.

I would like to meet and discuss and develop and adoption of an AOR agreement. So I now, once again, request a meeting of Posts Commanders. Each Post has specific activities they are good at that they bring to the table. Let's promote them and work collectively to promote ourselves in the community as one unit. I feel the competitive nature of our order is best kept in-house and out of the public eye. If we are in public we must look unified. Failure to do so will only erode and undo all of the advances we have made in the community. I do not wish to turn this into an us against them scenario and as Post commanders we must lead our folks to achieve the VFW mission rather than individual objectives.

Thank you for your patience.
I wanted to make sure I had all of the facts (I didn't btw) before I order her to do

something that might reflect poorly on the VFW.

Also, I have alerted you to the annual Veteran Day activity in Jourdanton. As you know I was invited and accepted to be the key note speaker this year months ago. I was advised today there are changes to the program format and the event has been expanded a bit. Given current events I have instructed QM Stephanie Pino to make sure that ALL VSOs and VFW Posts in the area are invited to this. So expect an email concerning it. I will have more direction on this
on Monday as the school organizers are meeting/ planning this weekend. I will brief you as soon as I have a firm plan, but given the response we are dealing with now concerning a food drive- I expect more drama/ objections from 4853….. I will do my best to offer an olive branch and refine my approach with them. I have instructed Stephanie to focus more on the Pleasanton AOR and if she receives requests to pass them to Patti. I will do the same for our membership. Roughly 18% of our members have kids at varies levels in the Jourdanton school system… Another 20% have them at Pleasanton. Nearly half of my current members have kids that attend both schools. So.. We will need to flexible.

I will wait for you final decision on the removal of the boxes.

Respectfully

Steve Mueller
Candidate for Department Quartermaster - 2019
Founder/ Post Commander- Pleasanton VFW Post 12162
Gold Legacy Lifetime VFW Member
2 Time All-State & All-American Post Commander
Past Post Commander- Jourdanton VFW Post 4853
Pleasanton, Texas
[redacted]

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS