

General Orders

DECEMBER 2023



PEARL HARBOR DAY FLY FLAGS AT HALF STAFF

December 7th is National Pearl Harbor Day. All Posts should fly their flag at half staff from sunrise to sunset.

VETERANS DAY REPORTS VETERANS DAY

Veterans Day Reports are due. To send in your reports, please utilize the State Dashboard for reporting. If you need help, please contact Anna at the Department office 605-332-7441.

LEGISLATIVE HEADING 5 TEXT HERE

The Department Legislative Conference, Voice of Democracy, Patriot’s Pen, and Teacher of the Year Award winners is set for January 21 & 22, 2024 at the AmericInn in Pierre. The registration form is attached at the end of the General Orders.



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

On behalf of the Department Officers: Merry Christmas to all our Comrades, family and friends. Stay safe and wishing you the happiest of Holidays! Thank you to each Veteran that has proudly served our country. Thank you for all that you do to make this organization as great as you are.

Side note, this is a picture of the tree at the Alliance Center. The theme is the “Twelve Days of Christmas!”

Membership

Membership efforts in December should be concentrated on contacting ALL 2023 members who are not current on their membership dues. Take this opportunity to lend a caring ear to our Veterans during this Christmas season. Check on our brothers and sisters in arms. This can be a very tough time!

Your Adjutant should be able to view this information in OMS. If you need any assistance, please contact Anna at the Department office at 605-332-7441 or anna@vfwdeptsd.com for more information.

www.vfwsd.org



DEPARTMENT OFFICE CLOSED

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The Department office recognizes the same Holiday schedules as the National VFW offices.

The Department office will be closed Monday, December 25, 2023, through Monday, January 1, 2024. Employees will return on Tuesday January 2, 2024.

www.vfwsd.org

If you would like to include something in the General Orders, please have your submission to the Department office no later than the 25th of each month. Send submission via Microsoft word document to anna@vfwdeptsd.com.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

DECEMBER 17

Please help us remember, honor, and teach on December 16, 2023, at 11:00 am by sponsoring a wreath, volunteering, or inviting friends to help.

Wreaths Across America will be at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery to remember and honor our Veterans through the laying of remembrance wreaths on graves of our country's fallen heroes and the act of saying the name of each Veteran aloud.

www.vfwsd.org

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND IN YOUR RAFFLE STUBS AND MONEY FROM THE COMMANDER RAFFLE!

APPROACHING DEADLINES:

- **Voice of Democracy** - December 7, 2023 jseiner@charlesmixcounty.org
- **Patriot's Pen** - December 7, 2023 jseiner@charlesmixcounty.org
- **Teacher Award** - December 7, 2023 jseiner@charlesmixcounty.org
- **Law Enforcement / Firefighter Nomination** - To SVC Glynis Collier by January 1, 2024 dakpatriot@gmail.com

Mid-Winter District Meetings and the Department Representative

District 1 - January 28, 2024, 1:00 pm Sioux Falls, Post #628

District 4 - January 7, 2024, 2:00 pm pm Watertown Post#750

District 6 - Zoom meeting January 14, 2023

District 7 - February 18, 2024 2:00 pm, Armour #6897

District 10 - January 28, 2024 1:00 pm, Rapid City #173

The license plate stickers are still for sale! If you would like to purchase a logo, please contact Anna at the Department office. Email anna@vfwdeptsd.com or 605-332-7441. Each sticker is \$10.00.

This is what the sticker looks like:



Sticker goes here



\$10.00 per sticker

Send check to Department office at:
1600 W Russell St, Ste 135
Sioux Falls, SD 57045

****Would make a great Stocking Stuffer for Christmas****
*****Also available for motorcycles*****

Proposed Amendments to the Department Bylaws should be submitted to Department Headquarters not later than 31 December 2023 as a suggestion to allow the Resolutions & Bylaws Committee ample time to review prior to the Legislative Conference. These Proposals can be discussed at the Legislative Conference and voted on during the State Convention. Any Amendment Proposal should be in the proper format to include Article, Section and the reason and rationale for the proposal.



OFFICIAL:



Anna Arnold

Quartermaster / Adjutant
Department of South Dakota
VFW

BY ORDER OF:

Dave Baumiller

Commander
Department of South Dakota
VFW



On Thursday I went to the Newell school for their annual Veterans Day program. This year we had 44 Patriot Pen and one Voice of Democracy entries, which is not too bad for a little school of 300 so I consider it a success.

I also went to Rapid City for their Veterans Day parade. What a great program they've got put together there! Congratulations Kat and Ralph, you did a wonderful job! I had my picture taken with Miss South Dakota, Amber Hulse, who is a VOD winner. She is now enrolled in law school at Georgetown, due to graduate this spring on her VFW scholarship. After the parade, we joined Lt Governor Larry Rhoden and his wife at the Rapid City Post where we were treated to a great lunch, served by local Boy and Cub Scouts.



Later that day I went to Veterans Day at the Spearfish Post where they had a free supper for all veterans, had a really good time there as well. Good job Derek and crew!

Membership

We're at 90%+ now, and 98% by the end of December is in sight. I know it's possible, we just have to buckle down and do it. We've got a membership drive going in Sioux Falls at the pheasant expo, and at the Black Hills Stock Show in January, but you don't need to wait for an official event to get out there and bring in new members.

Legislation in Pierre

I need all COA and Post members to be there in Pierre. This is an important opportunity to meet and ask your legislators questions about laws and regulations they'll be putting on the books.

Can't close this month without acknowledging Lonnie Potts and his efforts to get Dashboard looking great, making zillions of phone calls to urge dues payment and generally making our Department stand out.

Thanks for letting me represent you,
Dave Baumiller
SD Department Commander

Greetings Fellow Veterans!

November has been a busy and enjoyable month!

I had the privilege of attending National SVC Al Lipphardt's speech at the Gettysburg Veterans Day Program. It is always an honor and pleasure to be in the presence of this amazing Leader and Purple Heart recipient! The students of Gettysburg High School did an amazing job conducting and performing throughout the event. I also had the esteemed honor of shaking the hands of the five Purple Heart recipients who were invited to this year's Veteran's Hunt. They said they were having a great time in our great state!

I visited Deadwood Post #5969 on November 11, 2023 as the Keynote Speaker and was so well received! They made me feel right at home and I had the honor of meeting the Veteran's who live at Fort Meade. The Deadwood post has them bussed from Fort Meade with their loved ones each year for their Veterans Day Program and Luncheon. The food was amazing and the VFW Auxiliary served us a delicious meal.

I will be attending and volunteering at the Day County Coyote Hunt December 6-11, 2023 and am looking forward to this mission that benefits SD deploying National Guard Soldiers and their Family Members!

***Reminder!** I am the EMT/Firefighter/Police Officer State Chairman and will be accepting nominations until January 1, 2024 at 11:59 hours central time. They **will not** be accepted after that date and time. The applications can be found on the SD VFW state website. Please be sure to email our State QM Anna Arnold the applications at the same time you email them to me. My email address is below in the signature block. If you do not have computer capability, you can mail them to me at: 105 S Euclid Ave, STE. A-1, Pierre, SD 57501. They must be stamped and posted NLT January 1, 2024.

Also, be sure to hold membership drives in your home town Christmas Festivals!

I hope our Christmas Season brings you all many blessings!

I am here for you if you need anything or have any questions concerning your needs. I am here to serve you. Thank You for Everything You Do for Veterans and their Family Members each day!

//Original Signed//
Very Respectfully,
Glynis Collier
Sr. Vice CDR
DEPT of SD VFW
dakpatriot@gmail.com
Cell #803-466-7031

December 2023 General Orders from the Jr Vice:

Recruiting new members continues to do well. We currently rank 13th in the nation. The goal for November 30, 2023 is to achieve 92% in all posts. We are presently at 89.39%. We need 917 new members to reach 102% by May 2024. Every member can be a recruiter.

Next month I plan to submit some recruiting events planned during the winter and spring. If you have an event planned, please let me know. We are successful in finding veterans or their family members when we are doing community events.

Remember, when recruiting new members to your post, a member of their family may be eligible to be a member of the Auxiliary also.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Christensen, Dept SD Jr Vice

December Surgeon General Orders

I hope that everyone had a good Thanksgiving with family and friends. The weather is getting colder and most of us have had a little taste of snow. Winter will be amongst us soon.

This month I attended the VA Stakeholder meeting. Not too much new going on. The notes were sent out by the Adjutant. Make sure that you are current on your immunizations. With colder weather coming, we will be gathered indoors. Indoors seems to be worse for spreading bugs and viruses. Make sure you are taking care of yourself if you are not feeling well.

Holiday season is also here and many people do some traveling. Make sure that you are watching the weather and be prepared for road conditions. The weather and road conditions can change rapidly this time of year. Make sure your phones are charged and you have a small survival kit in your car.

Be sure to reach out to your posts if you need assistance this winter. There is always someone willing to help if there are things you cannot do yourself. We are all here to take care of other veterans, especially veterans in need of assistance.

Rick Vanden Hoek

Department Surgeon

December General Orders

VFW Ramps Up Efforts to Combat 'Claim Sharks'

For more than a century, your VFW has been on the forefront of advocating for veterans and their earned benefits. In the last year alone, **more than 550,000** veterans received **more than \$13 billion** in benefits from VA through the diligence and professionalism of the VFW's global network of VA-accredited service officers. Not a penny of this \$13 billion went to line the pockets of the VFW. It all went to the veterans, as the law requires.

The VFW has been a vocal opponent of **predatory "Claim Sharks"** – companies who charge veterans illegal fees for sub-par VA benefit claims assistance. Make no mistake, the proliferation of these illicit organizations is a threat, not only to the VFW's cornerstone **National Veterans Service** (NVS) program, but an even greater threat to the VA benefits system as we know it.

Since their emergence, the VFW has ratcheted up the pressure on these companies by passing legislation to crack down on their practices at the state level and are working to help veterans bring litigation against them. We have trained our more than 2,300 VFW Accredited Service Officers on how to handle Claim Sharks, and we continue to seek out veterans who need help getting out of these predatory contracts.

Now these Claim Sharks are trying to normalize and legitimize their financial exploitation of our nation's disabled veterans – they even **named VSOs like the VFW** as their "threats." While we should be flattered that they recognize the threat we pose, now is the time to decisively defeat this scourge.

The Bottom line is: Predatory Claim Shark companies are engaging in illegal activities. There is no gray area here, no matter how much money they want to throw at it. Their latest collusion is a desperate attempt to avoid accountability.

Your VFW has aggressively pursued this issue in all corners of government, solidifying the veteran community's stance on this issue. You will see more from the VFW in the coming weeks, asking you to take action with your Congressional representatives, your state legislatures and your communities. We encourage you to read up on the facts and familiarize yourself with this issue, and to help we have produced a **VFW Claim Shark Fact Sheet** for you to use and distribute widely to veterans. (Download a printer-friendly version [here](#).)

Like the VFW said [last year before Congress](#), “Any group that fails to adhere to VA’s well-established standards of accreditation and fee arrangements should be greeted at the door by Capitol Police, not offered a seat at the same table as VA-accredited representatives who are held to certain professional and ethical standards.”

This fight may get a little messy in the coming weeks, but the VFW is determined to stop predatory Claim Sharks and we are eager to serve alongside you in this fight.

This article was taken off of the VFW webpage. Let’s keep a close eye on this, one veteran is one to many. Lets keep an eye out for our veterans in our community and our state, let alone in the US.

Rob Harrington

Department Judge Adv.



DON'T FEED THE SHARKS



DontFeedTheSharks.org

What is a "Claim Shark"?

- A Claim Shark is an individual or company that charges hefty fees to "assist" or "consult" veterans with filing their VA benefit claims – this practice is illegal!
- Claim Sharks are not VA accredited, meaning they aren't required to adhere to the well-established professional and ethical standards of VA accreditation, so their advice can often be misleading or even fraudulent.
- Like a "Loan Shark," once you're in, you can't get out, and may be subject to new and hidden fees whenever you get a new rating, no matter who does the work.

Some of their predatory practices are:

- Promising or guaranteeing an increased disability rating or percentage increase.
- Advertising expedited VA claims decisions.
- Requesting login credentials to access a veteran's personal information through secure VA websites like eBenefits or VA.gov.
- Using confusing tactics or ambiguous language to mislead claimants or coerce them into signing a contract.
- Telling veterans to forego VA exams and offering health consultations within their own network of doctors.

Who are the Claim Sharks?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 🦈 Trajector Medical | 🦈 Patriot Angels |
| 🦈 Vet Benefits Guide | 🦈 Veteran Care Services |
| 🦈 Veterans Guardian | 🦈 VetComm |
| 🦈 VA Claims Insider | 🦈 VA Claims Academy |
| 🦈 Telemedica | 🦈 Vet Assist |

Veterans can protect themselves by:

- Always working with VA accredited representatives.
- Attending all exams ordered by VA.
- Not signing contracts.
- Not agreeing to fees or payments from future benefits.
- Not agreeing to pay for medical consultations or opinions.
- Not providing access to Protected Health Information or Personal Identifiable Information.

Who is NOT a Claim Shark?

- VA accredited veterans service organization representatives, like the VFW
- VA accredited claims agents
- VA accredited attorneys
- Attorneys assisting with Camp Lejeune lawsuits who do not charge excessive fees



VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.