

General Orders

MAY 2025



MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP

Congrats to all of you for your help! The Department is currently sitting at 100.81% in Membership! We only need 82 members before June 30th to reach that 102%!!! Keep pushing for those last few!

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Please send your Post financial donations to the Department office. The goal was to send \$1,500.00 to the Special Olympics in South Dakota, currently sitting at \$1,305.00 total. So close!!!

AUDIT REPORTS

NEEDED

Audit Reports are not only required by National and Department Bylaws, but also an IRS requirement. Please get your Audits turned into the Department office as soon as possible.



INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

According to Section 217, page 73 Manual of Procedure, "the Post Commander-elect will select the installing officer who holds or has held a rank at least as high as that Post Commander. Post officers shall be installed in their respective offices prior to the convening of the Department Convention, but shall not assume their duties until the Department Commander is installed. The installation may be conducted publicly at an open meeting."

Unpaid Bills & Expense Vouchers

Department Quartermaster reminds all members with unpaid bills and/or expense vouchers incurred during this Command Year are hereby requested to submit to the Department office NLT June 1, 2024 for end of fiscal year processing.

You can find the expense vouchers on the Department website at <https://vfwsd.org> >templates and forms > Department of SD VFW Expense Voucher Form



POST / DISTRICT ELECTION REPORTS

FOR COMMAND YEAR 2025-2026

National Headquarters sent an Election Report letter to all Post / District Commanders. You can send that letter in, but it is much more highly encouraged to utilize the online OMS system to send in your Election Reports. If you have problems or need help, contact Anna, QM/ADJ at the Department office, and she can help. 605-332-7441

Please have your Election Report turned in by June 1, 2025, or National will put your Post on the Suspension List immediately. Each position must be filled. Members cannot hold more than one elected position.

All-State Judging will take place on May 9, 2025. All reports need to be in the Department office by COB May 7, 2025. If you have questions, please call Anna at 605-332-7441 or email anna@vfwdeptsd.com.

DELEGATES & ALTERNATES FOR STATE CONVENTION

DELEGATES & ALTERNATES

According to National Bylaws Section 222, Page 78, Delegates and alternates for the District Convention and Meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected at a regular meeting in April. Delegate strength will be based on members in good standing as of March 31st.

Delegates and alternates of each Post shall serve as delegates throughout the year provided, they remain members in good standing in the respective Post within the District.

In the back of these General Orders, there will be a Delegate and Alternate form(s) for you to register your Post for the State Convention. If you have any questions, contact Anna at the Department office 605-332-7441 or

anna@vfwdeptsd.com

National Convention Delegates: Reference National Bylaws Section 222, Page 17, each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of \$25 which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention Information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a \$10 delegate fee.

PEACE OFFICER MEMORIAL DAY: The United States Flag shall be flown at half-mast on Wednesday May 15, 2025, until noon. All Posts are requested to comply with this order.

VFW Buddy Poppy

Distribution will be conducted under the authority of Section 711, Page 99 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and according to the rules of the National Buddy Poppy Committee. Posts are reminded to complete their arrangements for this year's Poppy distribution.

**STATE CONVENTION IS SCHEDULED JUNE 19-22, 2025, AT THE
RAMKOTA IN PIERRE, SD**

All Posts that have not done so, please contribute \$.65 cents per member of your Post as of June 30, 2024, for the Service and Rehabilitation Fund, Memorial Park Fund, and Hospital Fund. These are in-state obligation programs the Department funds annually.

National Bylaws Section 213, Page 15, any Post in arrears for any financial obligations to County Council (if applicable), District, Department and National fees, dues, poppy money, supply money, failing to have the office of QM properly bonded in accordance with Section 703, failing to submit properly completed quarterly Post Trustees Report of Audit, Post Election Report for the ensuing year, or other obligations, shall be deprived of all representation in County Council, District, Department and National Conventions.

*******THERE WILL BE NO GENERAL
ORDERS FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE*******

Any Comrade interested in placing their name in the nomination for any of these Offices should contact Department Headquarters.

HATS IN THE RING 2025-2026

- Commander – Dr. Martin Christensen, Mitchell Post 2750
 - Senior Vice Commander – Rick VandenHoek, Brandon Post 4726
 - Junior Vice Commander – Dale Greenfield, Huron Post 1776
 - Quartermaster - Anna Arnold, Yankton Post 791
 - Chaplain - Russel Dramstad, Huron Post 1776
 - Judge Advocate – Kat Pyka, Rapid City Post 1273
 - Surgeon – Daniel Klimisch, Yankton Post 791
 - Inspector - Allan Ochsner, Aberdeen Post 17
-



OFFICIAL:

Anna Arnold

Quartermaster / Adjutant
Department of South Dakota
VFW

BY ORDER OF:

Glynis Collier

Commander
Department of South Dakota
VFW



Hello Heroes,

April 2025 has been another busy month. I will keep this brief. We are preparing for the state convention June 19-22, 2025 at the Ramkota. The final walk through of the convention space has been completed this month. This newly renovated hotel is impressive!

All of the district meetings, elections and installations have been completed. I attended the District 4 & 10 meetings. Please complete all of your Post Election Reports and have them turned into the state office this ASAP.

I attended the VFW Post Meeting in Brandon and am so impressed with the way they do business.

District Commanders please contact your individual posts and ask them to send in their CDR/President raffle ticket stubs and money to ADJ/QM Arnold as soon as possible. Thank you!

Please get any Bylaw change recommendations to Kris Fenton nlt May 15, 2025. They will be published by May 19, 2025.

Please have your state convention room reservations completed by May 19, 2025 to receive the discounted room rate of \$119.00.

As always, I am honored and humbled to be working with you ALL as your Commander this year. I am always available to talk to if you need a supportive and understanding ear.

“One Team, One Fight!”

Very Respectfully,
//Original Signed//
Glynis Collier
State Commander
Department of South Dakota
Veterans of Foreign Wars
dakpatriot@gmail.com
803-466-7031

VFW Dept SD General Orders May 2025
SVC Martin Christensen

The Department is presently at 100.75%. We only need 87 more members to reach our goal of 102%! Keep up the good work.

Election reports should be submitted to National and the Department by June 1, 2025, for all posts and districts.

I visited Districts 1, 6 and 7 for their Spring District meetings. I plan to visit Aberdeen's Post in May.

If you haven't completed your Day of Service, you still have a very short time to accomplish that. It must be completed during the month of May. Make sure to put your Loyalty Day and Day of Service on the Dept Dashboard.

I attended the Sr Vice training in Kansas City April 10-13, 2025. Membership goal for next year will be 101%. I'll have further details in my membership plan which will be distributed at the State Convention. I'll also distribute handouts to the District Commanders regarding my membership plan. My command shirts are in and will be distributed to the COA along with pins to be distributed by the District Commanders.

I made plans to attend Memorial Day services at the National Cemetery in Sturgis so we can plan the services hosted by the VFW at the National Cemetery in 2026.

I look forward to seeing you at the State Convention June 19-22, 2025.

V/R

Martin Christensen, Dept SD Sr Vice Commander

May General Orders Junior Vice Commander

Spring seems to be gaining some steam. Things are greening up and farmers are in the fields. It is also time to be cautious on the roads with all the farm equipment and motorcycles.

We have had an amazing month as far as recruitment goes. We have many posts that have gone over 102% with many more getting close. As of April 30, we are at 100.81% for the state. This is awesome. We need 83 to get to 102% for the department. This number also includes our continuous members who have not paid. If each post can recruit 1 member, we are well on our way. We have 2 months to complete this.

In the month of May, Burger King is donating to the VFW. This is a great opportunity for the VFW. If you eat there, please think about donating a little extra. One this same note, it is time

to start networking within our own communities to assist us in our mission of taking care of veterans.

I am going to run for Sr. Vice this year at the Department convention. I am asking for your continued support in this venture. It has been an honor serving you in this capacity.

Rick Vanden Hoek
JVC

Thank You and Farewell to the VFW Community

As I step away from my role as your Assistant Department Service Officer (ADSO), I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude. Serving this incredible organization has truly been one of the greatest honors of my life. Your strength, service, and unwavering commitment have inspired me daily, and I am grateful for the friendships and memories we've shared.

I am transitioning to a new role as the Director of Communication and Operations for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA). Though my position is changing, my dedication to serving veterans remains as strong as ever. I carry with me the values and lessons I've learned from each of you, and I thank you for the opportunity to serve beside such an exceptional community.

It is also my great honor to introduce David Denson as the new ADSO. David retired honorably from the United States Marine Corps, where he served as an Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAV) Operator. He earned his VFW eligibility through deployments to Afghanistan in 2008 and 2013 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Since retiring from active duty, David has remained committed to public service. He has served as a Veteran Service Officer with the SDDVA at the Sioux Falls Regional Office since 2021. In addition, he serves as the Field Service Officer for the Southeastern region and is also employed with the Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office.

Please join me in welcoming David to his new role. I have no doubt he will serve this community with the same dedication and excellence he has shown throughout his career.

To locate the CVSO/TVSO nearest you, please visit:

<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>

With deepest gratitude,

Dareus (DJ) Montreal
Assistant Department Service Officer
Department of South Dakota VFW
dj.montreal@state.sd.us

Cell: 605.400.9005

David Huntimer
Department Service Officer
Department of South Dakota VFW
david.huntimer@va.gov
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David Denson
Assistant Department Service Officer
Department of South Dakota VFW
dave.denson@state.sd.us
Cell: 605.940.9622

Following are Proposed Amendments to the Department of South Dakota Bylaws submitted to the Department Resolutions & Bylaws Committee.

For reference and comparison, the current Department of South Dakota Bylaws are on the Department website (www.vfwsd.org), under the Resources, Bylaws and Department of South Dakota tabs.

This posting will serve as notification to the VFW Posts of South Dakota in accordance with Article 18 (Amendments) of the Department of South Dakota Bylaws.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO DEPARTMENT BYLAWS

ARTICLE 5 – DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

ARTICLE 5, SECTION 2 – Line 3 - Replace “at the time of election” with “as of March 31st”

ARTICLE 5, SECTION 6 – Delete the following in Lines 2 & 3 – “Voting strength of each Post in the Department shall be based upon one (1) of each for every thirty (30) members or fraction thereof in good standing at the time of election.”

ARTICLE 5, SECTION 6 – Change Lines 3 – 7 to Read – “The delegate’s fee should be submitted no later than fifteen (15) days before convening of the Department Convention. The delegate’s fee must be submitted prior to participating in any voting.”

ARTICLE 6 – ANNUAL PER CAPITA TAX AND ANNUAL DEPARTMENT DUES

ARTICLE 6, SECTION 1 – Change Eight Dollars (\$8.00) in Line 2 to read Ten Dollars (\$10.00)

ARTICLE 7 – DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

ARTICLE 7 – ADD SECTION 4

SECTION 4: All Department Officers, Council Members, Employees and Other Members in Leadership positions in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of South Dakota shall be governed by the

Department of South Dakota Code of Ethics policy. Every Department Officer, Council Member, Employee, and Other Members in Leadership positions are required to review, sign, and provide the Department Adjutant with the Code of Ethics/Policy Statements Acknowledgement. Failure to sign and provide the Department Adjutant with a copy of that Acknowledgement within thirty (30) days of accepting your assigned position will result in immediate removal from office.

2025 Refund Application

South Dakota Department of Revenue

Sales or Property Tax Refund for Senior Citizens & Citizens with Disabilities

2025 Refund Application for Income Year 2024

Find answers toll-free at **1-800-829-9188 ext. 1**

E-mail: specialt@state.sd.us

Website: <https://dor.sd.gov>



Scan the QR code
to apply online.

Submit online at <https://sddor.seamlessdocs.com/f/2050> **OR** mail this application to the Department of Revenue by July 1, 2025.

To Qualify for a Sales Tax Refund:

- Be a South Dakota resident during all of 2024;
- Be 65 years old on or before January 1, 2024, or disabled at any time during 2024; and
- Live alone and have a yearly income of \$16,566 or less **OR** live in a household whose members' combined income is \$22,484 or less.

To Qualify for a Property Tax Refund:

- Be 65 years old on or before January 1, 2024, or disabled at any time during 2024;
- Live alone and have a yearly income of \$16,566 or less **OR** live in a household whose members' combined income is \$22,484 or less; and
- Owned the house you are now living in for at least three years **OR** you have been a resident of South Dakota for five years or more.

You may only receive either the sales tax refund or the property tax refund. The Tax Refund Office will calculate the refund for each tax, and you will receive whichever refund is greater.

445 East Capitol Avenue | Pierre, SD | 57501



Find us on
Facebook

6:30-9:30pm

Honky Tonkin' Music

WG-3

Live Show at:

Saturday May 17

VFW

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

POST 791 YANKTON, SD



DAY OF SERVICE

VFW Post 2750 DAY of SERVICE

FRIDAY, MAY 2ND - 10:00 AM

UPSTAIRS VFW - 215 N MAIN STREET - MITCHELL, SD

Introduction of Guests

Opening Prayer

Proclamation by Mayor Hanson

**Presentation of Upstairs Museum
to local Veterans from assisted living,
nursing homes and the community**

Lunch

Return to Living Facilities

BE A PART OF THE MOVEMENT

We're proud of our veterans. We're proud of YOU. Let's show the world how we're #StillServing.

**Veteran-led community
service events kick off
May 2, 2025.**

GET INVOLVED NOW

vfw.org/DayofService





Saturday, May 3, 2025
1:00 P.M.

VFW POST 2750 Loyalty Day Program
Upstairs VFW

Introduction of Guests

Opening Prayer

National anthem/Pledge of Allegiance

Selection of 2 Lifetime Memberships
from Annual Members

Patriot's Pen Presentations

Voice of Democracy Presentations

Dessert

Adjourn

AMENDMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS



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PREPARING A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE NATIONAL BYLAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE OR RITUAL

Bylaws: Any member in good standing, a Post, a District, or a Department, may propose an amendment to the National Bylaws; provided, however, before consideration at the National Convention, the proposed amendment must be approved by a Department Convention. Immediately following a Department Convention, the proposed amendment(s) must be forwarded to National Headquarters.

Manual of Procedure and Ritual: Any Post, District, or Department may propose an amendment to the Manual of Procedure or Ritual; provided, however, before consideration at the National Convention, the proposed amendment must have been forwarded, through channels and have been properly approved.

In order to meet National Bylaw/Manual of Procedure Article XIV requirements, to provide fifteen (15) day notice to all Posts of all amendments, the Adjutant General requests all amendments be forwarded to National Headquarters no later than two (2) working days following the close of the Department Convention.

Bylaw, Manual of Procedure or Ritual changes not in proper form, unclear as to meaning, or concerning matters clearly not within the scope and purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars cannot be considered by the National Convention.

A proposed change to the National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual must be submitted as such, not as a resolution. Proposed amendments must be definite and specific as to the verbiage to be deleted or added. Use of the most recent amended copy of the National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual is encouraged, as proposed changes considered by Convention delegates cannot be amended on the floor.

EXAMPLE 1

Proposed Amendment to National Bylaws proposed by Department of _____.

Section 202 – Bylaws.

Amend Section 202, National Bylaws, by deleting the words “two-thirds (2/3)” in the first sentence of paragraph one, and inserting, in lieu thereof, the following:
“majority”.

EXAMPLE 2

Proposed Amendment to National Manual of Procedure proposed by Department of _____.

Section 518 – Officers: Duties and Obligations.

Amend Section 518, Manual of Procedure, by deleting paragraph (a) (1) d. in its entirety and inserting, in lieu thereof, the following:

“Plan and organize all social functions.”

EXAMPLE 3

Proposed Amendment to National Ritual proposed by Department of _____.

Amend the Ritual by deleting on page 48, in the last sentence of the Member’s Obligation, the words “and a citizen of our great republic.”

Further amend by placing a period after the word “comrade” in the same sentence.

If you require help composing a proposed change to the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual, please contact Administrative Operations at National Headquarters for advice and assistance in properly preparing a proposed amendment to be voted upon by your department convention.

PREPARING A RESOLUTION TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

The policy of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is established by resolutions adopted by the delegates attending Department and National Conventions. Most resolutions originate at the Post level and are passed through the District and Department before being acted upon at a National Convention. Many times, an otherwise worthy idea gets nowhere merely because it is not correctly presented.

A resolution contains two separate parts; a statement of the problem to be solved, and the proposed solution to the problem. The problem is outlined in the “*WHEREAS*” clauses, and the proposed solution is given in the “*RESOLVED*” section.

The “*RESOLVED*” section of a resolution should be complete in itself without depending on the “*WHEREAS*” clauses to give it meaning.

EXAMPLE

WHEREAS, the rising cost of living has created an intense hardship on those disabled veterans whose only income is a meager pension check; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we petition Congress to enact legislation which would provide a substantial increase in non-service connected pension rates.

If a resolution deals with a local problem, it needs no action on a level higher than that of the Post. If the problem concerns an area larger than that served by the Post, it should, after Post approval, be presented before the District or County Council. All resolutions of statewide, regional or national concern must be acted upon by the Department Convention. Those resolutions approved by a Department Convention, which affect persons or matters outside the state boundaries, must be forwarded to the National Convention for final disposition.

When submitting a resolution to the Department Convention, a notation on the bottom should show the previous action taken, such as, approval by Post and, if applicable, by the District. A Post or District submitting a resolution to its Department Convention must follow guidelines established by the Department, which may require submitting the resolution to the Department Adjutant prior to the convening of the convention.

Resolutions not in proper form, with unclear meaning, or concerning matters clearly not within the scope and purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars cannot be considered by the National Convention.

Resolutions approved by a Department Convention, which affect matters outside state boundaries, must be forwarded by the Department Adjutant to the National Convention for final disposition. Approved resolutions should be sent to National Headquarters at the close of the Department Convention. The Adjutant General requests all resolutions be forwarded to National Headquarters no later than two (2) working days following the close of the Department Convention. A resolution disapproved by the Department Convention or not acted upon by the Department Convention will not be considered by the National Convention.

Resolutions may also be originated by Department officers or by the Department Convention itself and acted upon by the Department Convention. A National Officer may originate a resolution concerning National affairs and submit it directly to the National Convention without Department action. Likewise, a National Convention Committee may originate a resolution and present it for approval during the National Convention.

Policy set by the National Convention is binding upon all subordinate units of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. No Post or Department is permitted to take any individual action or espouse any cause contrary to the National Bylaws or to the actions of the National Convention except that it may propose changes in policy by the preparation of a resolution for consideration as outlined herein.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 1) Any member in good standing may propose a National Bylaw, Manual of Procedure, or Ritual amendment directly to the National Convention delegates.
☐ True
☐ False
- 2) Article XIV of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure require the Adjutant General to provide ____ day notice to all Posts on any proposed amendment to be decided by the delegates of the National Convention.
A. 10
B. 15
C. 20
D. 30
- 3) National Bylaw, Manual of Procedure, or Ritual amendments are submitted to the Adjutant General in the form of a resolution.
☐ True
☐ False
- 4) A resolution adopted by the National Convention sets policy which is binding for all subordinate units of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
☐ True
☐ False
- 5) In a resolution the “WHEREAS” represents the issue and the “BE IT RESOLVE” proposes the solution.
☐ True
☐ False
- 6) Resolutions approved by a Department Convention that affect matters outside its geographical boundary must be forwarded to the National Convention for final disposition.
☐ True
☐ False

1) False – An amendment must be approved by a Department Convention (or be submitted by a National Officer) before it can be considered by the National Convention; 2) 15 days; 3) False, the amendment must be specific; 4) True; 5) True; 6) True

126th NATIONAL CONVENTION

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

By

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF & NATIONAL OFFICERS

FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

201 PERIODIC REVALIDATION OF VFW NATIONAL RESOLUTIONS

NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE NATIONAL POW/MIA SUBCOMMITTEE

401 PROTECT POW/MIA FULL ACCOUNTING MISSION FUNDING
402 ENSURE DOD COMPLIANCE WITH TAP LAW
403 RESEARCH BLAST OVERPRESSURE
404 REPATRIATE AMERICA'S FIRST FOREIGN WAR CASUALTIES

VETERANS SERVICE COMMITTEE

601 PROTECTING HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS
602 TOXIC EXPOSURES
603 MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS
604 ENSURE VETERAN SUCCESS IN EDUCATION
605 VA NURSING HOME ANNUAL INSPECTIONS
606 DENTAL CARE ELIGIBILITY
607 MEDICARE

Resolution No. 201

PERIODIC REVALIDATION OF VFW NATIONAL RESOLUTIONS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) regularly adopts resolutions to announce the position of its membership on various issues of veterans' care, national security, et cetera, that, based upon national debate, are inherently fluid; and

WHEREAS, the VFW strives to ensure that the resolutions it adopts are germane to the national discussion and reflect its current policy on such issues; and

WHEREAS, the volatility of said issues may necessitate alteration of the VFW position as the organizational or societal values, or available options, change thereby rendering previously adopted resolutions successfully accomplished, no longer necessary, or potentially embarrassing to the VFW; and

WHEREAS, the delegates of the 120th National Convention adopted Resolution 201 which became effective upon the conclusion of the 121st National Convention, that set a standard five (5) year limit on adopted resolutions maintaining an active and ongoing status before becoming null and void, unless readopted; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous untracked resolutions still active that predate the 121st National Convention, creating potential confusion and inconsistency in policy implementation and these resolutions require systematic tracking and oversight to ensure administrative accuracy, historical integrity, and procedural efficiency; and

WHEREAS, upon conclusion of the 126th National Convention, all resolutions shall be adorned with the date of adoption to facilitate tracking, re-adoption, or expiration; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that any resolution adopted by the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be considered null and void if not readopted within five (5) years of its most recent adoption date; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all resolutions adopted prior to the 121st National Convention shall be considered expired and shall no longer have effect; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Adjutant General shall be responsible for maintaining an official record made available to members for all adopted resolutions from the 121st National Convention forward that may require subsequent readoption or amendments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution will take effect at the conclusion of the 126th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Submitted by the Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Resolution No. 401

PROTECT POW/MIA FULL ACCOUNTING MISSION FUNDING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting of nearly 82,000 missing Americans that include approximately 72,000 from World War II, 7,544 from the Korean War, 1,584 from the Vietnam War, 126 from the Cold War, and 8 post-Vietnam that include Operations Eldorado Canyon (1), Desert Storm (2), Iraqi Freedom (3), Operation Prosperity Guardian (2); and

WHEREAS, Congress has in recent years acknowledged the importance of the Fullest Possible Accounting mission by increasing DPAA funding above requested amounts; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that DPAA remain adequately funded. Recovering fallen Americans from long-ago battlefields is demanding and often dangerous work for investigation and recovery teams, but it is the most sacred of missions. It is our government's fulfillment of a soldier's pledge to never leave a fallen comrade on the battlefield, which is a promise that spans all generations; and

WHEREAS, additional money enables DPAA to efficiently plan, resource and accomplish its worldwide mission to recover, identify and return to their families all missing American service members from our nation's previous conflicts; and

WHEREAS, aid provided to host nations to mitigate the legacies of war have strengthened diplomatic relationships necessary to authorize DPAA's recovery efforts in foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, Congress has adopted nine continuing resolutions in the last ten-years and caused three shutdowns since 2013, which hinder operational planning and slow recoveries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to continue to increase funding levels for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and all supporting organizations involved in the Fullest possible Accounting Mission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress must pass advanced appropriations to prevent a slowdown in recoveries and allow for budget carry-over allowing DPAA to plan multi-year operations.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs

Resolution No. 402

ENSURE DOD COMPLIANCE WITH TAP LAW

WHEREAS, transition from military service is a very stressful and time-consuming period for service members and their families, and often presents psychological, financial, and professional challenges in addition to the need to find new housing, healthcare, resources, and programs to support the unique needs of each member and family; and

WHEREAS, Congress has mandated Transition Assistance Program (TAP) pre-separation counseling for all service members to ease the difficult transition from service into civilian life by offering job-search assistance, guidance on education and healthcare programs, and information on other benefits and post-service needs; and

WHEREAS, the DOD is required to abide by TAP reforms that were included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 and directed, among other requirements, that all service members attend TAP at least 365 days prior to separation, complete a two-day career track if they are minimally prepared for transition, and be connected to resources in communities in which they plan to reside after service; and

WHEREAS, a December 2022 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report revealed that 70 percent of service members did not attend TAP on time and almost 25 percent of service members who needed to complete a two-day career track did not; and

WHEREAS, VFW surveys of transitioning service members (TSM) indicate findings that align with the GAO's report and show that nearly 34 percent of TSMs either were not or did not know if they were connected to community resources, while our accredited Benefits Delivery at Discharge program representatives hear that TSMs are not consistently getting connected to community resources; and

WHEREAS, new reforms to TAP require DOD and VA to grant accredited Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) access to and provide briefings on predischARGE services like disability claims assistance to TSMs; and

WHEREAS, establishing a leadership position within DOD is needed to drive the necessary cultural change to prioritize transition services and provide Congress with a single point of accountability; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass the TAP Promotion Act, to ensure every TSM is allowed to attend TAP classes with sufficient time to participate in the Benefits Delivery at Discharge program and require DOD and its partner agencies to continuously improve TAP and maximize access to materials and resources for TSMs, veterans, and their families.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to require the Department of Defense to establish an Under Secretary of Defense for Transition Assistance to oversee, coordinate, and modernize all transition programs to ensure service members receive timely, effective, and standardized transition assistance; and

Resolution No. 402 – continued

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon DOD to enforce existing TAP requirements, ensure full access to VSOs providing critical transition services, and implement policies that prioritize the long-term success of transitioning service members and their families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs

Resolution No. 403

RESEARCH BLAST OVERPRESSURE

WHEREAS, exposure to blast overpressure from explosions, heavy weapons fire, and other military operations has been linked to long-term neurological and physiological effects in service members; and

WHEREAS, emerging research indicates that repeated exposure to blast overpressure may contribute to cognitive impairment, psychological disorders, and neurodegenerative conditions such as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE); and

WHEREAS, service members operating in close proximity to explosive weaponry, including breachers, artillery personnel, and special operations forces, are at heightened risk for blast overpressure injuries; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has yet to fully acknowledge the cumulative effects of blast overpressure exposure and implement comprehensive protective measures for at-risk personnel; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical need for increased research, improved monitoring, and enhanced safety protocols to prevent, identify, and mitigate the impact of blast overpressure on service members' long-term health; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to direct the Department of Defense to conduct comprehensive research on the long-term health effects of blast overpressure exposure and to implement policies ensuring proper documentation, monitoring, and prevention of such injuries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Department of Defense to acknowledge the risks associated with blast overpressure exposure, develop enhanced protective equipment and training protocols, and ensure service members receive appropriate medical care, screening, and long-term support for conditions related to blast overpressure injuries.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs

Resolution No. 404

REPATRIATE AMERICA'S FIRST FOREIGN WAR CASUALTIES

WHEREAS, the United States fought its first major foreign war against the Barbary States of North Africa to reign in piracy and secure trade routes during the First Barbary War in the early 1800s; and

WHEREAS, on July 14, 1804, during a daring mission in the Second Battle of Tripoli Harbor, 13 brave American sailors and Marines lost their lives seeking to cripple the enemy's fleet aboard the captured Tripolitan vessel renamed the *USS Intrepid*; and

WHEREAS, reports indicate that these 13 American service members have been interred in a small Protestant cemetery in Tripoli that has not only fallen into disrepair but is often defaced and vandalized; and

WHEREAS, the Department of the Navy has readily acknowledged the significance of this battle and the heroics of the men who perished aboard the *USS Intrepid*, but have not sought to repatriate their remains from a territory that remains unfriendly to Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a federally chartered organization of service members who have served in this nation's wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil and in hostile waters, making our organization uniquely postured to see the return of the first brave Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice in foreign service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State to seek the disinterment and repatriation of the 13 brave American Sailors and Marines who perished aboard the *USS Intrepid* during the First Barbary War in 1804 and who are currently interred in Libya; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge our grateful nation to welcome these Americans home, ensuring their interment in a place of honor at Arlington National Cemetery so that future generations of Americans may properly honor their unique sacrifice in our nation's first major foreign war.

Submitted by Adjutant General
To Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs

Resolution No. 601

PROTECTING HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS

WHEREAS, for more than a century, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has been successful in achieving major legislative and policy changes to secure benefits and services for veterans, survivors, and families; and

WHEREAS, due to the complexities of federal law and regulation, the general public may not be aware of nor fully understand eligibility for veteran disability and medical benefits, in addition to benefits provided to service members, survivors, and families; and

WHEREAS, various news media outlets have published articles suggesting that veterans benefits are too generous; and

WHEREAS, Congressional Budget Office consistently makes unacceptable recommendations like means testing service-connected disability, cutting off temporary disability individual unemployability ratings for elderly veterans, or suspending paid ratings for minor disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the American public asked its all-volunteer force to prosecute two decades of conflict that has subjected Americans to repeated combat deployments and other hazardous conditions; and

WHEREAS, the standard enlistment contract, DD Form 4, commits our nation's leaders to furnishing benefits to those who complete their honorable service; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President, Congress, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Defense to "Honor the Contract" and protect the current suite of benefits and services for veterans, service members, survivors, and their families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 602

TOXIC EXPOSURES

WHEREAS, the PACT Act has acknowledged that veterans who have been exposed to toxic substances suffer from an array of conditions and diseases, and should not continue to have to undergo a burdensome claims process; and

WHEREAS, for decades VA was reluctant to establish a clear procedure for establishing additional presumptive conditions related to toxic exposures in service. In compliance with the PACT Act, VA has created a process to research, review, and add presumptive conditions based on association with toxic exposures; and

WHEREAS, veterans of current and past conflicts were exposed to numerous environmental hazards, including open air burn pits, the anti-malaria drug mefloquine, radioactive substances, herbicides and other hazards; and

WHEREAS, the United States military has conducted testing, monitoring, and clean-up operations related to various chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons resulting in exposure both within the borders of the United States and abroad; and

WHEREAS, veterans and family members stationed at Camp Lejeune who consumed contaminated water and now suffer from associated conditions and have recently benefited from the passage of the PACT Act and while VA acknowledged this fact. There are differences in what conditions are compensable and those which only receive reimbursement for medical care. Additionally, the requirement to be stationed on the base for 30 days is arbitrary and ignores thousands who graduated from training in less time; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to invest adequate resources to study, diagnose, and treat conditions and illnesses associated with toxic exposures and provide oversight of VA's presumptive decision process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to grant a presumption of service connection for all conditions and illnesses that are deemed by scientific evidence to be at least as likely as not associated with or caused by exposure to a toxic substance or environmental hazard, to be transparent about the presumptive decision process, and to include input from veterans on what exposures and conditions will be reviewed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress and the Department of Defense to reduce or eliminate the use of known toxins on and around military installations and disclose known and potential toxic exposures during all military operations and at facilities within the United States and abroad; and

Resolution No. 602 - continued

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress ensures that the Department of Defense expedites declassification efforts related to exposure events and that the Department of Veterans Affairs extends presumptive service connection to veterans suffering from conditions or illnesses found to be associated with exposure to toxic substances.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 603

MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has indicated that treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and providing Mental Health Care among returning war veterans is one of its highest priorities, and the VA operates a nationwide network of nearly 200 specialized PTSD outpatient treatment programs; and

WHEREAS, the early and accurate screening, diagnosis and treatment for PTSD, depression, substance use, and other mental health disorders, yields optimal patient outcomes, and statistics have shown that these conditions, left untreated or poorly treated, can lead to increases in suicide attempts or death by suicide among a host of other negative consequences; and

WHEREAS, studies conducted by VA show that social determinants of health, like financial stability, access to housing, and pathways to a quality career serve as protective factors against suicide. Each time a veteran uses a VBA economic opportunity program or benefit is an opportunity to provide resources and treatment; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for PTSD found that there are nearly 1.5 million veterans compensated for PTSD since September 2023; and

WHEREAS, available research has not sufficiently evaluated the clinical effectiveness of treatment programs for veterans diagnosed with and/or suffering from the effects of traumatic brain injuries, PTSD, or other mental health conditions, and adequate research into the brain's response to internal and external influences that could result in mental illness has yet to be undertaken; and

WHEREAS, service members and veterans are increasingly prescribed psychiatric medications, but do not need to provide informed consent on the ever-growing side effects such as withdrawal, suicidal ideation, or sexual side effects, and recent research indicates that veterans prescribed such medications may actually be at greater risk of suicide; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to adequately staff VA mental health treatment and research programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to dedicate adequate resources to address the alarming rate at which veterans die by suicide to include moving the Office of Suicide Prevention from Veterans Health Administration to the enterprise level of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to research different treatments or practices that are most effective in helping our veterans cope with their PTSD; and

Resolution No. 603 - continued

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA institute strong signatory informed consent protocols on all mental health medications, implement proper and ethical deprescribing guidelines for veterans seeking to stop medication, train prescribers on the emerging reports on psychotropic and psychiatric drugs, and publicize all data to inform the growing concern of overprescription and harm in the veteran community related to psychiatric drugs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 604

ENSURE VETERAN SUCCESS IN EDUCATION

WHEREAS, our nation has consistently supported the future success of our warfighters through robust veterans' education benefits, historically molding generations of proven leaders; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has worked to secure and preserve quality education benefits for all generations of veterans; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs enrolled nearly one million veterans across all G.I. Bill programs in the past academic year; and

WHEREAS, despite an increase in activations domestically for natural disasters, border security, and other missions, and a greater reliance on National Guard and Reserve Component service members, many veterans do not qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit; and

WHEREAS, certain schools and programs seek to circumvent benefit guidelines in order to reap significant financial benefit; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to ensure proper oversight of Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefit programs by developing quality metrics with which to demonstrate student veteran success in higher education, and close financial loopholes through which certain academic programs can exploit GI Bill reimbursement models; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress ensures veterans receive equitable access to benefits like housing payments and quality pre-enrollment educational information to ensure veterans are academically and financially prepared to succeed in higher education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to increase stipends for books, electronic devices such as laptops and tablets, instructional support applications, provide cost of living adjustments, and provide appropriate housing benefits for in-person, online and hybrid programs to give student veterans the proper resources and tools to be successful in their pursuit of higher education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we work to extend earning GI Bill benefits for every day in uniform served, including for those in the Reserve components, and preserve quality GI Bill benefits for veterans of all conflicts to ensure they have access to quality education assistance programs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 605

VA NURSING HOME ANNUAL INSPECTIONS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States views it essential to hold the Department of Veterans Affairs accountable to conduct annual inspections, per their regulations, allowing for proper oversight to ensure VA standards of care are being upheld within all VA, state veterans homes, and contracted long-term care facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs oversees all 153 state veterans homes, which provide care to about 14,500 veterans and represents the majority of veterans who receive care in nursing homes; and

WHEREAS, in FY 21, the Department of Veterans Affairs paid nearly \$1.5 billion for the care that was provided to nearly 14,500 veterans in state veterans homes; and

WHEREAS, veterans are increasing in age, as nearly 8 million veterans are over the age of 65, which represents close to half of the veteran population; and

WHEREAS, it is a requirement of the Veterans Health Administration, outlined in VHA Directive 1143.2 to undertake an annual inspection of VA Nursing Homes, and VA contracted nursing homes; and

WHEREAS, Federal law and VA policy prevent VA from making payment to state veterans homes until it determines that they meet applicable quality care and other standards; and

WHEREAS, Officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs report that they rely on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid inspections to provide feedback on inspections results and any corrective actions needed; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs only has one recourse to enforce standards, which is to withhold per diem payments to the nursing facility, which the VA has never done; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support VA's engagement to increase the quality of care and improve the physical environment provided in nursing homes and long-term care facilities, to include the creation of additional enforcement measures to require compliance with VA care standards when receiving funds for the care of a veteran; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct annual onsite inspections of all VA and contracted long-term care facilities within VA's scope to promote compliance with standards.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 606

DENTAL CARE ELIGIBILITY

WHEREAS, VA eligibility for no-cost dental care is only afforded to veterans who are service-connected with a dental disability or former prisoner of war or rated at 100 percent permanent disabled; and

WHEREAS, veterans enrolled in VA's Homeless Veterans Dental Program or Veteran Readiness and Employment Program may only receive limited VA dental care; and

WHEREAS, out of the 9.2 million veterans enrolled in VA health care, only 15%, or about 1.4 million are eligible for comprehensive dental care; and

WHEREAS, 42% of veterans eligible for VA healthcare report having gum disease, and 60% experience tooth decay; and

WHEREAS, it is reported that veterans pay 65% more in out-of-pocket dental costs, on average, compared to non-veterans; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that poor oral health has shown to be linked to other general health conditions, and some medical conditions may affect an individual's dental health; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to authorize Department of Veterans Affairs to expand eligibility for dental coverage and care to all service-connected veterans enrolled in VA health care.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 607

MEDICARE

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States views the abolishment of penalties for delayed enrollment to Medicare for veterans as essential to the veteran population; and eliminate penalties, but ultimately to eliminate the mandate for veterans enrolled in Department of Veterans Affairs health care to register for Medicare; and

WHEREAS, veterans with limited income or complex health issues may struggle to pay fines associated with delayed Medicare enrollment and these fines accumulated over time making it harder for veterans to access needed care and afford the fines; and

WHEREAS, nearly 8 million veterans are 65 years and older, and eligible for Medicare; and

WHEREAS, there is a confusion around veteran enrollment to Medicare because many veterans utilize the VA Health Care and don't realize the need to enroll in Medicare; and

WHEREAS, these penalties of 10% for each 12-month period you were eligible but did not sign up may discourage veterans from enrolling in Medicare potentially leaving the veteran without necessary health options because these penalties stay with you the remainder of their life; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the abolishment of penalties for veterans for delayed Medicare enrollment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to authorize veterans enrolled in Department of Veterans Affairs health care to be exempt from registering for Medicare if they so choose.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS