

General Orders

OCTOBER 2025



BIG TEN CONFERENCE

BIG TEN

The Big Ten Conference will take place in Bettendorf, IA October 17-18, 2025. If you would like to register, contact QM/ADJ Anna for more information.

VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

OCTOBER 1-7

This is observed during the first week of October, raising awareness about mental health challenges faced by veterans and promoting access to mental health services and support.

INSPECTIONS

POST & DISTRICTS

All Posts and Districts are asked to help the Inspections by making sure all Post books, records, and minutes are available at the time of Inspection. Please instruct the Post Trustees to comply with Section 218 of the Manual of Procedure "Trustees".



COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORTING

Please report your Community Service through the Department Dashboard. This can be found online at www.vfwsd.org > Login > Members Only > Community Service Reporting. Your Members ID = VFW Member Number, and Password = Last Name with the first letter capitalized.

Americanism

All Posts should be sponsoring vigorous Americanism and Patriotic activities to make strong, direct, and Patriotic impact in our schools or the general public. Patriotic leadership in our communities is important.

Have you considered implementing a program to stop old and tattered US Flags from being flown by informing your community they can leave old Flags at your Post for proper disposal?

www.vfwsd.org



VETERANS DAY

VETERANS DAY IS NOVEMBER 11

Have you appointed your Veterans Day Chairperson yet? Have you started organizing your Veterans Day Program yet? Now is the time!

November 11, 2025, is Veterans Day. According to the Manual of Procedure, Sec. 223 - Commemorative Dates, every Post shall see that suitable arrangements are made for the observance of Veterans Day.

www.vfwsd.org

If you would like to send a submission for the General Orders, please send to Anna at anna@vfweptsd.com no later than the 25th of every month.

VOD / PP / TEACHERS AWARDS

PROGRAMS

At this time, all Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and Teacher's Awards program material should be in the possession of the Posts and schools.

Contact your local schools and make certain the contest is underway. All entries should be at the Post no later than October 31st. The Posts will make the necessary judging happen online via the Scholar's App no later than November 15th. Please watch the training videos and pass the information along to all Chairman and Judges for your VOD/PP program www.vfwsd.org

Contact Department VOD / PP / Teachers Award Chair Dale & Margaret Greenfield dale.greenfield@yahoo.com

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN TRAINING VIDEOS:

District Chairman Training Video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k4XwJqiQLYGBGFLDVhp7ZJGBzw9VJd_t/view

Post Chairman Training Video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bcW_zQG-Rtd-vZH56slj9DMtTUaEbAO7/view

VFW - How to Generate Flyers

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13AZC4wS8QL5kiZffyZMOz-zL-u5yqyIH/view>

VFW Applying for Scholarships Tutorial

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1i9-erwWKhREVfz7PQqyKcIyHWL4rOcGI>

VFW Manually Uploading Applications

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bEgKMPIFf7sKWfCb9xCxzhcfLZ141H1e>



Law Enforcement, Firefighter, and EMT of the year are due to the Department Headquarters by January 1, 2025. Please contact the Chairmen, SVC Rick VandenHoek at wepsman69@gmail.com

When sending a voucher to the Department, all receipts need to be attached in order to be reimbursed for the full amount.



OFFICIAL:



Anna Arnold

Quartermaster / Adjutant
Department of South Dakota
VFW

BY ORDER OF:

Dr. Martin Christensen

Commander
Department of South Dakota
VFW



General Orders – October, 2025

Doc Marty Christensen, Commander SD Dept VFW

1. Membership – each Post required to do a recruiting event each quarter and submit an After Action Report on the state community service dashboard under AAR-**After Action Report** Membership goal is 101% for All-State and All-American. Dale Greenfield is in charge of membership this year.
2. Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen – All posts should have flyers specific to their posts with a QR code. Deadline for entry is Oct 31. We need to start talking to schools and students about these scholarship opportunities. If you have any questions, Dale and Margaret Greenfield are the Dept chairpersons for this program.
3. I will attend CIC Whitmore's homecoming in Des Moines, IA 24-26 September 2025.
4. I will attend Big 10 conference in Davenport, IA 17-19 Oct 2025.
5. Fall District meetings:
 - a. District 1
 - i. 9/21/2025 in Brandon at 1pm
 - b. District 4
 - i. 10/12/2-25 in Watertown at 2pm
 - c. District 6
 - i. 9/28/2025 in Redfield at 1pm
 - d. District 7
 - i. 10/12/2025 in Chamberlain at 2pm
 - e. District 10
 - i. 9/7/2025 at Sturgis Memorial Park – Picnic at 1pm (bring a dish), Meeting at 2pmI will attend and inspect Districts 1, 6 and 10 meetings. Rick VandenHoek will attend and inspect District 4 and Dale Greenfield will attend and inspect District 7.
6. Legislative conference is scheduled for 25-26 Jan 2026.

V/R

Martin Christensen, Commander
SD Dept VFW

October General Orders
Sr Vice Commander

Fall is starting to show its colors. This means that we have a busy month ahead. There are many VFW events at the Post, District and Department levels. I ask that you all stay engaged to know what is going on and what is changing. We all need to keep up with new ways to enhance our Department.

I am looking forward to the Fall Conference. The new venue will be exciting and offer some things not previously available. There will be some good training at this event also. I am also looking forward to attending the District 4 meeting as the Department Representative. I am looking forward to meeting new comrades and assisting where I can. Later in October, I will be attending the Big Ten Conference. This will be another exciting event to learn more.

Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy should be in motion. Entries need to be in by the end of October. Let's ensure that we have are schools covered. Let's also make sure we are touching base with the districts that do not have a VFW post in their area. We should not forget about them.

With our new Sr Vice Commander at the National level, he has some initiatives he would like to push. I know that change is not always embraced, but it is the way forward for the VFW. The biggest push that he would like to see is an increased presence on Social Media at every level from the Post, District and Department. Our potential members look at social media for information and we need to be out there. I am not the best at this but am willing to learn and assist Posts in getting their information out there. It is free advertising for what we do and our impact in our communities. This will also help with our membership. People like being part of organizations that are engaged.

Let's hit this fall running. Let's take care of our members and the communities we serve. We are all Still Serving for a reason. Let's make this another great year.

Rick Vanden Hoek
Sr. Vice Commander

JVC GOs

Membership

Our membership goal of 101% is for all post, district, and department level.

Currently as of 22 September 2025, the goal for the department of South Dakota is:

Goal 7009, Current 6257, and we need 752 to achieve the 101%.

We currently have 6 Post that are already over 101% and 3 more that are over 100%.

Attached is the current membership numbers by post. I will have an updated roster at Fall Council.

PP / VOD

We need to continue advertising this program. If you are a chairman, make sure that you can log into the program. Let us be proactive and not reactive.

There will be a program of instruction at fall council on the scholars application.

If you have questions or need help, contact me.

Dale Greenfield

State Junior Vice Commander

Hello again, Comrades,

I'm sure many of you—like me—are in the midst of preparing for all the end-of-year events at your Posts. As we wrap up another year, I want to highlight one powerful tool that every Post should be taking full advantage of: social media. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram are free and incredibly effective for promoting your events, fundraisers, and community outreach. By simply maintaining an active presence online, your Post can reach a much larger audience—and potentially bring in new members, volunteers, and supporters. As an administrator for three different pages myself, I can tell you that I would love to share your events on our Department page. But please remember: Just because the Department follows your page doesn't mean I'll automatically see your posts. If there's something you'd like shared more broadly, send it to me directly so we can amplify your efforts across the state.

We've also started using social media to support raffle sales and other fundraisers. One great tool is Zeffy, a completely free platform for nonprofits. You can set up your raffle or fundraiser there, and it will generate a QR code for people to purchase tickets online. In today's world—where fewer people carry cash—this is an easy way to meet people where they are and increase participation.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you this weekend in Sioux Falls for the Fall Council. As we gather, I'd like each of you to take a couple questions back to your Post:

What's stopping more of our members from attending Department meetings?

What can we—at the Department level—do to help increase engagement and participation?

Recently, I've been scanning old Community Service Books from our Posts—some dating all the way back to the 1940s. One thing is clear: We used to have hundreds of people attending Department meetings.

These meetings were community-wide events, often with parades and celebrations that brought out entire towns. Yes, times have changed—but the mission, camaraderie, and community impact of our organization are just as important today as they were back then.

So the big question is:

How do we get back to that kind of energy and involvement?

We need your input. Your ideas. Your voice.

Let's work together to grow stronger, not smaller.

Kat Pyka

Department Judge Advocate

Post 1273 Rapid City

adj@vfw1273.org

(719)661-9738

Well the first quarter of the 25-26 year has gone by quickly. I have gotten a lot of the things I wanted accomplished, but I know I have more to do.

I started off attending the Gettysburg membership meeting with District 6 Past Commander Richard “Butch” Jacobsen on Tuesday July 15th. It was great to meet the members present for the meeting. We were honored with drawing names for the VFW Decorated Veterans pheasant hunt.

On Wednesday July 16th, Butch Jacobsen and I travelled to Huron and attended their membership meeting. The trip home was a bit nerve racking as for whatever reason, the deer were on the move. It was nice to have an extra set of eyes.....

Tuesday July 29th, we traveled to Eureka to attend their membership meeting. We met with District 6 Senior Vice Commander Dale Greenfield who was present to conduct their Post Inspection. While visiting with several members of the Post and it was apparent that the VFW, and their Post, are very important to them and their community.

Monday August 18th, Butch and I drove to Miller for their membership meeting. As it was prime haying time, only 1 member was there for the meeting. While there was not a meeting, we were shown the work that they have been doing on their building. They have expanded the bar and building as well as the parking lot.

I worked at the VFW booth at the State Fair on Wednesday September 27th and Saturday September 30th. I did not talk to anyone who was eligible for membership in the VFW, but I did talk to many people who were interested in the organization. Whether they had a family member who had served in the military or were simply supportive, the booth definitely had many visitors.

On Wednesday September 10th, Butch and I drove to Redfield for their membership meeting. The meeting went well, and I hope to see them again at the District meeting September 28th.

At the Pierre Post meeting on Thursday September 18th, 2 new members were voted on and approved as members of the VFW.

Tuesday September 23, VFW Auxiliary National President Lois Callahan from Little Rock, Arkansas was visiting Pierre. I attended the greeting ceremony as well as the picnic. It was a very pleasant evening.

General Orders, October 2025

The 2025-2026 membership numbers are on track across the District. We have a few Posts that are doing exceptional and exceeded the All-American requirements already. Great job Parkston, Wagner, and Lake Andes Posts. All Posts are doing well at their recruitment events and with all Community Service events. We are poised to go into the winter months ahead of the game. Great work by all of you and please continue mission.

Today's hot topic is to gain some participation at Fall Council by members of every Post. Please look at options for your Post to send at least 1 member to every Department event. If your Post is not currently doing that, please let me know what is holding you back or what can help with gaining your attendance.

I look forward to seeing you all in Sioux Falls this weekend. Just a friendly reminder, we will be doing a skills lab. Please bring your laptops and/or phones to work on Community Service reporting.

Thank you all for your time and efforts.

V/R

Brent Jones

Commander

District 7, Dept. SD VFW

Greetings VFW Members

We are entering the pumpkin spice season. That wonderful time of year to spend time with friends and family and eat way too much food. No regrets. The last few months have been extremely busy. We assisted National VFW at the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. We staffed two locations at the Rally and assisted 340 Veterans. We then rolled right into the State Fair. Over the course of the fair, we assisted another 300 Veterans. Although these two events alone took many staffing hours to fill, it was well worth it for the number of Veterans we were able to help.

After the State Fair, we conducted our Annual Training event in Sioux Falls at the Military Heritage Alliance Building. This training was for all County and Tribal Veteran Service Officers across our state. We also had attendees from other Service Organizations. We presented numerous classes during the week that covered basic claims submission, pension, health care, CHAMPVA, appeals process and many others. We also had presenters from the Veterans Administration, C&P providers, SAVE training and others. At the completion of the training, all attendees completed a skill level test to maintain their certification.

After the states annual training, I headed to Annapolis for the VFW's annual Service Officer Training. The VFW always does an excellent job on keeping us all up to date on all the new changes and trends that are going on within the VA. One of the items that were being discussed throughout are the changes that VA would like to put in place for some conditions. Some of these are not new and have been discussed over the last few years. A big one is Sleep Apnea. The current proposal would reduce the 50% rating if you are on a CPAP. They contend, if you are on a CPAP, then the condition is controlled. We have already seen that it is getting much more difficult to get this condition granted than it did a year ago. Another of the changes would be to get rid of tinnitus as a separate rating and just roll it into hearing loss. The main take-away is that we need to make sure we follow and keep up on any changes that the VA may be proposing for disability benefits. If you have any questions, always feel free to contact myself or Dave Denson or your local Service Officer.

David Huntimer

Department Service Officer
Department of South Dakota VFW
david.huntimer@va.gov
Office: 605-333-6869 Cell: 605-360-1524

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