

General Orders

AUGUST 2026



AUDIT REPORTS

1ST QUARTER ENDED
JUNE 30TH, 2026

Post Commanders, please ensure the Trustee Audit Reports are properly completed, signed, and turned into the Department office.

brent@vfwdeptsd.com

amy@vfwdeptsd.com

QUARTERMASTER BONDS

Quartermasters are required per Section 703, page 39 of the Bylaws to be bonded. The current bonds expire August 31, 2026. The applications and rate chart is on the Department website, vfwsd.org, under Resources, Templates And Forms.

STURGIS RALLY 7-16AUG

Volunteers needed for recruiting and at the Memorial Park & Chapel during the rally. Contact Dwight Griffiee at 605-206-1136.

SD STATE FAIR

Volunteers, please see information below from SR Vice Dale Greenfield.



COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORTING

The online website for the South Dakota Dashboard is up and running. All community service is to be reported online. Log into www.vfwsd.org > Login > Members Only
Member ID = Member number
Password = Last Name with first letter capitalized.

If you have any problems or need help, please contact Brent Jones at 605-759-7127.

VOD / PP

Commanders, please ensure you have appointed a Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Chairperson. We will be using the Scholar's App website. Any new Post/District level Chairs will need to contact Margaret & Dale Greenfield to update information on the Scholars App.

Scholarsapp.com



FALL CONFERENCE

Fall Conference is scheduled for September 25-27, 2026, at the Best Western Ramkota in Rapid City, SD. Room block rate is \$110/night +taxes. Make your room reservations as soon as possible. 1-605-343-8550.

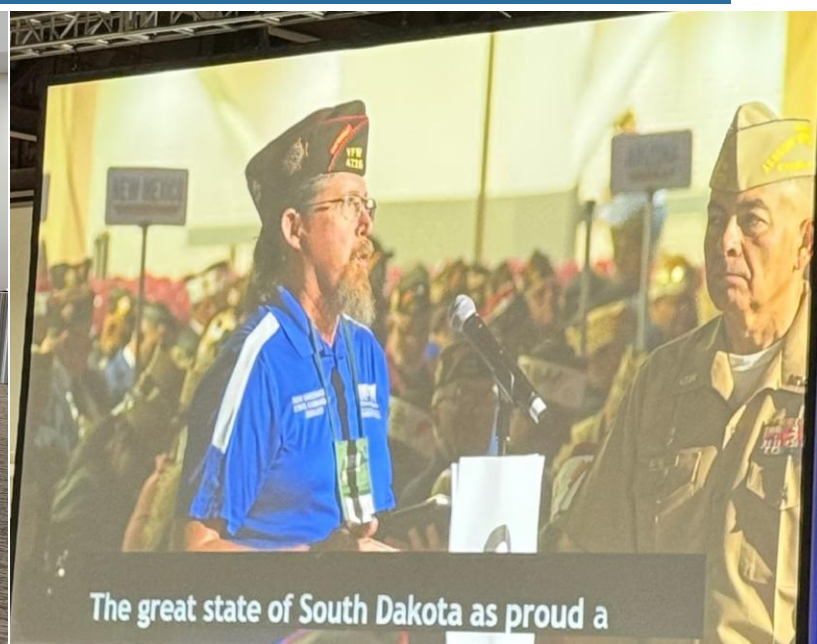
The Registration Form is attached to the back of these general orders for your convenience.

The 127th National VFW Convention concluded with record attendance numbers from South Dakota. Congratulations to PDP Sue Jones, Circle of Excellence Awardee.





Getting ready for the Patriotic Parade.



The Commander addressing the podium.

District Fall Meetings

- District 1 - November 1, 2026 at 1 pm in Beresford
- District 4 - October 11, 2026 at 2 pm in Watertown
- District 6 - September 19, 2026 at 1 pm in Aberdeen
- District 7 - October 11, 2026 at 2 pm in Scotland
- District 10 - September 13, 2026 Picnic at 1 pm, Meeting at 2 pm, bring side-dish or dessert

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

Members are reminded that the Big Ten Conference will be held in Kalamazoo, MI October 15-18, 2026. You are encouraged and welcome to attend. Reserve your travel and hotel stay now.



OFFICIAL:



Brent Jones

Adjutant/Quartermaster
Department of South Dakota
Veterans of Foreign Wars

BY ORDER OF:

Rick Vanden Hoek

Commander
Department of South Dakota
Veterans of Foreign Wars



August General Orders

Commander

What a great start to this new year. With a little over a month in this position, I have been busy. We hit the ground running. Let's keep up the momentum from the past year.

I am writing this while at the National Convention in Reno, NV. We have the biggest showing for the VFW and Auxiliary I have ever seen. It is great to see many newcomers at this convention. They have all been impressed at how things operate at this level. We have lots of voices and we are being heard. JV Vice Commander Pyka's resolution that we pushed up to national made it through committee and onto the floor. She did a great job advocating for it and it did get lots of positive support. Even with all our efforts, the resolution failed. The win out of that is that it got people thinking. The conversation has been started. Opening up eligibility for the VFW has to evolve with the evolving way we fight wars. I want to sincerely thank all those that attended.

Now is the time to get registered for Fall Council. We have lots of good things planned for this event. Get registered and get your rooms locked in. We need to stay engaged on what is going on in our department and take advantage of the trainings offered at these events.

Fair season is among us. It is time to get engaged and utilize those events to recruit. We have a good start to the year. Look at the at large list and see if we can get those members assigned to a post. It is important that they keep informed what we do in our communities and department. I would like to see that list drop down at least by half. This will help your post numbers even if it doesn't help the department. As a reminder, our membership goal for All-State is 100%+1.

Schools are also starting soon. We need to be reaching out to schools to promote VOD and PP. Try and get into the schools and find some teachers to help promote this. We listened to the National VOD winner at the National Convention. It was an amazing essay. We have that kind of talent in our state but we are not finding it. Let's do more than just email the schools with the information, let's get in the doors.

If you have any topics that you would like to know more about, please call the Department office and we can line something up. This goes for both the Post and District levels. I know we will have to do some training when the new Dashboard software drops. We are being told it will be easier but we will wait and see.

Speaking of the dashboard, let's get those reports input. Let's take credit for what we do. Find a person that is willing to do it if you are not. Don't leave it blank, we need to take credit of what we do for our veterans and communities. I know you hear this all the time, but it does matter.

Hopefully everyone is doing ok in the heat wave. Reach out to those members you haven't heard from in a while. Find the veterans that aren't getting the help they need and guide them in the right direction. Let's encourage our continuous members to upgrade to life. Let's encourage our life members to become legacy members.

Rick Vanden Hoek

Commander

"One Team, One Mission"

General Orders August 2026

SR Vice Commander

Recruiting new members and retaining our current members, is an ongoing event. The South Dakota State Fair is 2 September - 7 September 2026. The VFW will have a booth located in the Expo Center. Hours are from 9 AM - 8 PM on all days except for 7 September, the hours that day are 9 AM - 5 PM. If anyone would like to support this event, please email me at dale.greenfield@yahoo.com. If you could do an entire day, it would be great but at least 5-6 hours minimum would be preferred. We will have a max of 4 people at the booth at any time.

Schools will be getting back into session this month. Make sure that you get your Post flyers out to the schools for the Patriot Pen and Voice of Democracy. The essays have to be loaded in Scholars Application by COB 31 October 2026.

Any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me.

Dale Greenfield

State Senior Vice Commander

dale.greenfield@yahoo.com

Cell: 605-350-2319

WHAT DOES THE JUDGE ADVOCATE DO?

It is a privilege to serve as your Department Judge Advocate. Many members hear the title but are unsure what the position actually entails. The Judge Advocate serves as the legal advisor to the Department Commander, Council of Administration, and our Department, helping ensure that decisions are made in accordance with the VFW National Bylaws, Department Bylaws, and established procedures.

One of my primary goals is to help Posts avoid problems before they occur. Most issues involving elections, finances, or governance can be prevented by following our governing documents and asking questions early. Good leadership is built on transparency, accountability, and consistency.

Throughout the coming year, this column will provide practical information on common governance issues affecting Posts and Districts. If your Post has questions regarding bylaws, elections, officer duties, or parliamentary procedure, I encourage you to reach out. Working together, we can strengthen our organization and continue serving veterans with integrity.

Yours in comradeship,

Dan Klimisch

State Judge Advocate VFW - Department of South Dakota

Post 791

Greetings Comrades,

I hope that the summer is treating everyone well. As the heat is picking up, remember to stay hydrated and keep summer and water safety in mind. I wanted to share a few updates that have been happening in VA healthcare this quarter.

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has approved \$1.2 Billion infrastructure improvements across its medical facilities during the third quarter of fiscal year 2026. This allocation is part of a record-breaking \$4.8 Billion non-recurring maintenance budget for the fiscal year, funding projects in 49 states.
- John Bartrum, the Under Secretary for Health at the VA, resigned his position. Bartrum was tasked with managing a system serving over 9 million veterans and overseeing the largest healthcare reorganization in three decades, alongside the agency's electronic health record system overhaul.
- The deployment and rollout of the integrated electronic health record system have resumed.
- More than 200,000 new veterans have enrolled in a VA healthcare. Reforms have streamlined veterans' ability to access appointments outside normal hours and expanded access to community care non-VA providers at the department's expense.
- The VA and the Department of Health and Human Services signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance joint cooperation on clinical trials utilizing psychedelic drugs. This collaboration supports executive efforts aimed at accelerating alternative medical treatments for serious mental illnesses.

These are only a few of the recent updates and I will get more posted on the next General Orders. Stay safe and remember to reach out to your fellow Veterans and Battle Buddies and check up on them. No one should fight alone.

David Huntimer
Department Surgeon

Comrades,

My name is Dave Denson. I previously served as the Assistant Department Veterans Service Officer, and I am honored to now serve as the Department Veterans Service Officer following Dave Huntimer's election as State Surgeon.

I have been with the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs as a Veterans Service Officer and currently serve as a Field Veterans Service Officer. In this role, I provide training, outreach, and support to Veterans Service Officers across more than 16 counties in southeastern South Dakota.

I proudly served 20 years in the United States Marine Corps. Continuing to serve my fellow veterans and their families is not simply my job it is my passion.

I also want to make everyone aware of an important change involving Chapter 35 Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance benefits. Due to a change in federal law, the VA will no longer pay Chapter 35 benefits for High School secondary education programs, when the program begins on or after August 1, 2026. An approved term that begins before August 1, 2026, may continue to be paid even if it extends beyond that date.

Changes like this are why I encourage every veteran and eligible family member to meet with their local Veterans Service Officer at least once a year. Laws, regulations, and VA policies frequently change, and those changes may affect the benefits available to you and your family. Veterans have earned these benefits through their service, and I want to make sure they receive everything they deserve.

I look forward to serving alongside all of you and answering any questions you may have. I am here to support you and help wherever I can.

As I always say: Don't do anything I wouldn't do but if you do, do it twice.

Semper Fi!

Dave Denson

South Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs

Field Veterans Service Officer

605 940-9622

Accreditation Number 52610

Aug 2026 GO Inputs - District 7 Commander - Barb McKean

All Posts in District 7 are asked to update any Post activities on your social media website and link to the SD VFW Facebook page. If you don't have a Facebook page for your Post, please reach out to Brent in the Dept office. He has a contact who can assist you in setting up this website if needed.

If you have not submitted your 4th Qtr. Audit report, they are past due. Please scan and email them to Brent in the Dept office now (brent@vfwdeptsd.com) and please cc me (mckeanbarb@gmail.com).

Reminder, our District meeting dates are below. Please have a couple representatives from your Post at each meeting. Thanks!

2026-2027 District 7 Meetings:

Fall - Oct 11, 2026 in Scotland at 2 pm

Winter - Feb 7, 2027 in Mitchell at 2pm

Spring - Apr 11, 2027 in Wagner at 2pm

From the Adjutant/Quartermaster's Desk

Upcoming events and deadlines:

- 4th Quarter Audit Reports not turned in are now late, but are still required
- Please continue sending in Department Dues, Donations, & Obligations
- Quartermaster/club managers require updated bonding applications found on vfwsd.org website under Resources/Templates and Forms
- Register for Fall Conference. We are asking every District, and Posts that are able, to bring items for the Auction. Registration fees are low, help by participating and by finding sponsors
- Excited to see you all at the Sturgis Rally (7-17 Aug) and the State Fair (2-7 Sep)
- Any questions, please contact me at 605-759-7127 or brent@vfwdeptsd.com

For The Veterans

Brent Jones
Adjutant/Quartermaster
VFW, Department of South Dakota

**Department of South Dakota VFW
2026-2027 Bond Rates
Quartermaster and Club Manager Rates**

[illegible]



DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA

★ VFW ★

FALL Conference



24-27
SEPTEMBER
2026



**RAPID CITY,
SOUTH DAKOTA**



Join us at the



RAMKOTA
HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER



2111 N LACROSSE ST
RAPID CITY, SD 57701



WWW.RAMKOTA.COM

The South Dakota VFW proudly represents
over 7,000 members across the state.

This year (July 1 – June 30) our members have:

- ★ Donated over **\$444,000**
- ★ Provided over **36,000** hours
of community service

OUR MEMBERS ARE:

- ✓ Ensuring every Veteran has a proper internment
- ✓ Spreading cheer at VA & nursing homes
- ✓ Retiring millions of American flags with dignity
- ✓ Conducting food & clothing drives
- ✓ Providing \$1000s in scholarships
- ✓ Advocating in Pierre & Washington, DC
for our Veterans & military families



RESERVE YOUR ROOM

Scan to book your
stay at the Ramkota!



REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE

Scan to register
today!



COMRADESHIP
WITH VFW FAMILY



TRAINING
& LEADERSHIP



SERVICE
TO VETERANS



SOUTH DAKOTA
STRONG



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.®





VFW & AUX FALL COUNCIL REGISTRATION FORM

September 24-27 2026

Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center
605-343-8550
2111 North Lacrosse Street
Rapid City, SD 57707

Room Rate - \$109.99/night + tax
*Limited rooms available



**RESERVE
YOUR ROOM**

Scan to book your
stay at the Ramkota!

****YOU MUST RESERVE YOUR OWN ROOM****

Email:

Full Name:

Title: Post#:

City: State:

VFW/AUX: Gluten Free:

Guest Name:

ONE REGISTRATION FORM PER PERSON



Register Now for Fall Council 2026 - \$50

Guest Banquet Tickets - \$40



Make checks payable to: Dept of SD VFW
1600 W Russell St, Ste 135 Sioux Falls, SD 57104

Questions? Contact Brent Jones: brent@vfwdeptsd.com

Department of South Dakota

1600 W Russell St, Ste 135

Sioux Falls, SD 57104

605-759-7127

Email: brent@vfwdeptsd.com

Greetings,

The South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Auxiliary are pleased to announce that the 2026 Fall Conference will be held at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center in Rapid City, SD September 25-26 2026, at 2111 N Lacrosse St, Rapid City, SD 57701.

The VFW has long stood as a voice for veterans, military members, and their families while continuing to strengthen the communities we call home. The Department of South Dakota VFW proudly represents more than 11,000 members across our state, and our organization continues to grow each year.

This past fiscal year our members have contributed over \$444,000 in donations and more than 36,000 hours of community service throughout South Dakota. These numbers represent real people making a real difference.

Our members are out in every season and all-weather conditions to ensure veterans receive proper military honors and dignified internments. We visit VA facilities and nursing homes to bring comfort and companionship to veterans. We organize food drives, clothing drives, and community outreach events for those in need. We ensure millions of American flags are respectfully retired with honor and dignity. We also provide thousands of dollars in scholarships and youth program support to help invest in future generations.

In addition to community service, the VFW remains one of the strongest advocates for veteran rights and benefits. Our members work directly with legislators in Pierre and Washington, D.C., ensuring the voices of South Dakota veterans and military families are heard on issues that impact their lives.

The Fall Conference brings together VFW leaders and members from across South Dakota for training, networking, legislative discussion, and planning future service efforts. Sponsorships help offset our conference expenses and allow us to continue expanding programs that directly benefit veterans, their families, and local communities.

We would be honored to have your organization partner with us in supporting this important event. Any contribution, sponsorship, or donation would be greatly appreciated and will directly assist us in carrying out our mission of service.

Thank you for considering this request and for your continued support of veterans across South Dakota. If you would like additional information or would like to discuss sponsorship or partnership opportunities, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sponsorship Opportunities

Community Sponsor - \$500

- Full page recognition in conference program book
- Social Media recognition
- Verbal thank-you on all days during the event

Silver Sponsor - \$1,000

- Full page recognition in conference program book
- Social Media recognition
- Verbal thank-you on all days during the event
- Logo placement on sponsor banner
- Three months of placement on website as sponsor
- Table in vendor area

Gold Sponsor - \$5,000

- Full page recognition in conference program book
- Social Media recognition
- Verbal thank-you on all days during the event
- Logo placement on sponsor banner
- Three months of placement on website as sponsor
- Table in vendor area
- Table for eight at Saturday night banquet where organization will be brought to stage

Platinum Sponsor - \$10,000

- Full page recognition in the next two conference program books
- Social Media recognition
- Verbal thank-you on all days during the event
- Prominent logo placement on sponsor banner for the next two events
- Six months of placement on website as sponsor
- Table in vendor area
- Table for eight at Saturday night banquet where organization will be brought to stage

Presenting Sponsor - \$15,000

"All advertising for event will be Department of South Dakota VFW Fall Conference Presented by..."

- Full page recognition in the next three conference program books
- Social Media recognition
- Verbal thank-you on all days during the event
- Prominent logo placement on sponsor banner for the next three events
- Twelve months of placement on website as sponsor
- Table in vendor area
- Table for eight at Saturday night banquet where organization will be brought to stage
(Limited to one sponsor)

Vendor Tables

An 8ft table with white tablecloth, and two chairs will be provided if electricity is needed, please inquire for availability. Comes with a ½ page color add in program booklet.

Non-Profit Organization - \$100

Veteran Owned Business - \$200

All others - \$300

Advertising opportunities in the conference booklet

- Conference Program Book size is 8 ½" X 11" - Book ad rates are as follows:

<u>PAGE SIZE</u>	<u>B&W RATE</u>	<u>COLOR RATE</u>
Full Page	\$150.00	\$200.00
1/2 Page (8" X 5 1/8")	\$75.00	\$125.00
1/4 Page (3 3/4" X 5 1/8")	\$50.00	\$80.00
Business Card	\$35.00	\$45.00

**Ads should be formatted as JPEG or into a Microsoft word document to meet printer's request. All ads should be sent electronically via email to brent@vfwdeptsd.com*

**Deadline for ads for Conference Program Book is September 4, 2026, at 4:00 pm CST.*

We are also offering the opportunity for businesses to supply promotional material by September 16th, 2026, to be placed in the Conference welcome bags for attendees.

Mail payments to:

Department of South Dakota VFW
1600 W Russell St, Ste 135
Sioux Falls, SD 57104

OR

Go to the link or QR Code to send payment.

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/fall-conference-2>



Real Stories Real Songs
Two Unforgettable Nights

RED WHITE AND BOOTS

The Alliance
1600 W Russell
Sioux Falls SD

August 14
7:00 pm

August 15
8:00 pm

SCAN THE QR CODE TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS

NIGHT ONE
KENI THOMAS
3RD RANGER BATTALION
COMBAT VETERAN
MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER

NIGHT TWO
THE BLUE BIRD CAFE
EXPERIENCE WITH
JIMMY YEARY AND
FRIENDS
HEAR THE STORIES
BEHIND THE SONGS

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
CONTACT JOHN M BLISS VFW POST 628
605 338-0869

*Event is hosted by VFW Post 628.
Proceeds benefit local Veterans Support Programs*

Keni Thomas

In the summer of 1993, Staff Sergeant Keni Thomas was deployed to Mogadishu Somalia with the 3rd Ranger Battalion as part of an elite special operations package called Task Force Ranger.

On the 3rd of October, Keni and his fellow rangers distinguished themselves in an eighteen hour fire-fight that would later be recounted in the highly successful book and movie "Black Hawk Down". Nineteen Americans gave their lives and 78 were wounded in the worst urban combat seen by US troops since WWII.

Jimmy Yeary is a highly successful songwriter and his music is all around you. Jimmy Yeary was writing songs long before becoming the lead singer of the Grammy Award winning supergroup SHENANDOAH. Recently, both the CMA and ACM awarded Jimmy Yeary with "Song of the Year" for I Drive Your Truck--the inspiring song he wrote about the father of a fallen soldier and how he continues to remember his son.