

General Orders

FEBRUARY 2026



AUDIT REPORTS

AUDIT REPORTS DUE

Please send in your Audit Report for this past quarter. Remember, if the Department does not receive all 4 reports, your Post will not have voting rights at the State Convention.

LOYALTY DAY

LOYALTY DAY, MAY 1ST

Loyalty Day is on Thursday, May 1, 2025, and is the day set aside for the reaffirmation of loyalty to the United States and for the recognition of the heritage of American freedom. Please appoint a chairperson and forward that information to the Department office.

BUDDY POPPY

BUDDY POPPY

Post Commanders, please appoint a 2027 Buddy Poppy Chairperson and forward that information to the Department office. Reminder, all Poppy orders need to be in the office by April 28, 2026.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWED?

Have you paid your 2025-2026 Membership Dues yet? Members are reminded that their annual membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars may have expired December 31, 2025. All Officers are encouraged to make every effort to renew the Annual Members. Let's get this state to 102% in membership!

Department VOD/PP Winners

Patriot's Pen Winners

- 5th place: Leah Walz, District 1, Canton Post 3164
- 4th place: Ciera Stevens, District 6, Huron Post 1776
- 3rd place: Tomee Veal, District 10, Lemmon Post 2969
- 2nd place: Josephine Abbas, District 4, Brookings Post 2118
- 1st place: Audrey Mudder, District 7, Scotland Post 2966

Voice of Democracy Winners

- 5th place: Audrey Mudder, District 7, Scotland Post 2966
- 4th place: Makayla Strong, District 7, Mitchell Post 2750
- 3rd place: Amelia Lott, District 6, Pierre Post 2038
- 2nd place: Jersey Johnson, District 4, Webster Post 4690
- 1st place: Dagen Mutchler — District 10, Post 5860

The VOD / PP Winners were announced at our Legislative Conference in Pierre on January 13th, 2025.

The Teacher Winners are:

Elementary: Jody Scott, Parkston #3298

Middle School: Paige Wright, Sioux Falls #628

High School: Charlotte Speidel, Mitchell #2750

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

STATE CONVENTION

The 2026 Department Convention will be held June 11th through the 14th 2026 in Mitchell, South Dakota at the Highland Conference Center. Please see the registration form at the back of these General Orders.

IRS FORM 990

Posts that have tax exemption status need to answer questions on pages 1, 2, and 3 of IRS Form 990. This MUST be filed by the 15th day of the 5th month following the close of the fiscal year. Please forward a copy of this IRS Form 990 to the Department office for tracking.

Posts should have already sent in their Special Olympics donations. However, if you have not, please get that in as soon as possible. The Special Olympics Games are being held in May and the Department wants to present our Donation to them at such time.



COMMANDER / PRESIDENT RAFFLE

COMMANDER SPECIAL PROJECT

The Commander's Special Project is to raise funds for Helping with Horsepower in Mitchell, SD and the potential purchase of supporting our own "home" at the National VFW Home in Eaton Rapids, MI.

Please send in all stubs and money to the Department as soon as possible.

SEND ALL STUBS AND MONEY FOR THE COMMANDER'S RAFFLE TO THE DEPARTMENT OFFICE:

C/O Anna Arnold
1600 W Russell St, Ste 135
Sioux Falls, SD 57104

Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance: Reminder, all unpaid members, lose all their VFW sponsored Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance. The amount depends on your membership status.



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

The WALL THAT HEALS TOUR SCHEDULE '2026'

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has announced The Wall That Heals national tour schedule for 2026. The exhibit includes a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial along with a mobile Education Center. The traveling exhibit honors the more than three million Americans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces in the Vietnam War, and it bears the names of the 58,281 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam.

City	Opening	Closing
Council Bluffs, IA	5/22/26	5/25/26
Monticello, IN	6/4/26	6/7/26
Brookings, SD	6/11/26	6/14/26
Lacey, WA	6/25/26	6/28/26
Billings, MT	7/2/26	7/5/26
Afton, WY	7/9/26	7/12/26
Manning, LA	7/23/26	7/26/26
Brooklyn, IA	7/30/26	8/2/26
White Bear Township, MN	8/6/26	8/9/26

OFFICIAL:

BY ORDER OF:



Anna Arnold
 Quartermaster / Adjutant
 Department of South Dakota
 VFW

Dr. Martin Christensen
 Commander
 Department of South Dakota
 VFW



General Orders – February 2026
Doc Marty Christensen, Commander SD Dept VFW

1. Membership remains a primary goal. As of 1/20/2026, VFW Dept SD is 95.28% with a goal of 101%. We currently need 397 members to reach our goal of 101%. District commanders should be discussing membership with each of their Posts – especially working on the renewals and also look at converting 10% of your annual members to lifetime members this year.
2. Spring District meeting
 - a. District 1 – 3/29/2026 at 2pm in Sioux Falls - Rick
 - b. District 4 – 4/12/2026 at 2pm in Watertown – Dale
 - c. District 6 – 4/19/2026 at 1pm in Huron – Dale
 - d. District 7 – 4/12/2026 at 2pm in Wagner – Marty
 - e. District 10 – 4/12/2026 at 2pm in Rapid City - Rick
3. I plan to attend the Rapid City Stock Show being held Jan 30 – Feb 7, 2026. I will be there on Jan 30-31 Jan, 2026. This is an excellent opportunity to recruit new members to Posts across South Dakota. Volunteers are appreciated. POC is Katherine Pyka.
4. I plan to attend the National VFW Legislative conference March 1-5 in Washington, DC. I will be proposing to invite the Sr Vice Commander to this year's event. Our National Legislative Representative – Rick Williamson will be guiding us and helping us with the arrangements.
5. Planning and coordination are ongoing for the Memorial Day Ceremony at Black Hills National Cemetery on May 25, 2026. We have a guest speaker confirmed. Color Guard has been contacted. The Director of the Black Hills National Cemetery is helping us to coordinate activities. Kurt Belawski, QM of Sturgis Post and Judge Advocate, Katherine Pyka from Rapid City Post are helping me coordinate a plan.
6. Nominations and elections will be in the Spring for the Posts, Districts, and the Department. It's not too early to start recruiting great candidates for the officer positions.
7. The SD VFW and Auxiliary 96th Annual Convention will be held on June 11-14, 2026, at the Highland Conference Center in Mitchell, SD. I plan to have information on registration, hotel reservations and advertising for the Program Booklet available soon.
8. Our National VFW Convention will be held in Reno, Nevada on July 25-29, 2026. We are making arrangements and plans to attend the Convention for Dept Staff. General Orders 4

February General Orders
Senior Vice Commander

Happy February. The first month flew by. It was a very productive month for the VFW.

The legislative conference was a success. It was great to spend some time talking with our legislators. I want to congratulate the VOD/PP winners also. What a great group of young people. The teachers of the year were amazing individuals with lots of drive. It is great to have them shaping our kids' futures.

We need to keep engaged with legislation on both the local, state and national level. There are many bills out there that affect our benefits that we were promised when we signed the dotted line. We need to ensure the honor the contract. If you are not part of the Action Corp, you need to sign up. They will keep you up to date on what is happening at the national level. They will also send out alerts for us to tell our congressmen what the VFW backs and is important to us.

March will be another busy month. I am looking forward to the legislative conference in DC. This will be a great way to advocate what the VFW stands for with our CODEL. Meeting with them face to face is an important thing to get our priorities across.

Post/District elections will be coming up soon. Let's make sure that we are getting the right people in the right positions. It is important that we get members that want to be engaged in these positions. It might not hurt also to designate a person to take care of the computer stuff. Not everyone likes computers but that is the way forward and we need to embrace it. Another good person to identify would someone who is good with social media. This is a great way to promote your post and the VFW. The great part about this, it is free.

With 5 months to go before the end of the year, we still need to focus on membership. The big focus now should be maintaining continuous members. If we maintain them, we will meet our goal. The second part is transitioning from continuous to life. I would encourage members to also think about a legacy membership. This will be a way to support the VFW after you pass. Both the post and department get a payment annually like they do currently for life members. There are 3 levels and each pays a little more.

Let's continue to advocate for our veterans. I appreciate your continued support as I have put my intent to run for Commander this next year.

Rick Vanden Hoek
SVC

February 2026 General Orders

A lot of this was addressed in my book or reports for Legislative.

Our State Membership as of 28 January 2026. We are at 96.38% and need 321 to make 101%. We can do this. Continue to recruit and retain our members. I will be helping at the VFW booth at the Black Hills stock show the first week of February.

Graduations to our Patriot Pen and Voice of Democracy winners. These kids do a great job. The plan is to distribute the next years flyers at the State Convention in June.

If you haven't signed up for the Day of Service, please do so. Currently there are 9 posts signed up.

We always need to encourage our members to be involved in the organization and hopefully some of them will run for and take on leadership roles.

This time of year, we never know what the weather is going to like. Stay prepared and safe in your travels.

As always, if you need help ask.

Dale Greenfield

State Junior Vice Commander

Cell: 605-350-2319

dale.greenfield@yahoo.com

Hello again, Comrades,

This month has just flown by. I am currently in the middle of the Black Hills Stock Show where we have a department table set up so if you are stopping in come check us out in the Cedar room upstairs. I think we had a great Legislative meeting and thank you to all that helped in organizing it. Sometimes we forget how much goes into organizing an event like that. With that we need everyone's feed back on how to make future events even better. Please go to the survey we have on that the link is below. These are your events what do you want to get from them? I have also attached the bylaw changes that we have seen so far. These will be voted on at the Department Convention in June. If you have any suggestions please send them to me and we will get them out there. These changes that we will be to our Department Bylaws and SOP and any National Bylaws changes that we want to see. I will need any suggestions NLT 31 May so we can get them to everyone to look at prior to the convention.

Lastly, I will be officially running for Department Junior Vice at the convention. If anyone out there is interested in running for an office this is the time to make announcements and get your name out there.

Kat Pyka

Judge Advocate

(719)661-9738

adj@vfw1273.org

Major Changes Coming to VA Health Care

By Dan Klimisch, MD

State Surgeon, South Dakota VFW

The Department of Veterans Affairs is beginning the largest reorganization of the VA health care system in more than 30 years. These changes will roll out over the coming months and are intended to streamline operations and improve how care is delivered to veterans.

VA leadership states that the reforms are designed to **reduce bureaucracy, eliminate unnecessary administrative layers, and improve accountability**, allowing decisions to be made closer to local facilities and the veterans they serve.

An important part of this effort involves **new Community Care contracts**, which will change how the VA works with non-VA providers. These contracts are intended to simplify administration, strengthen provider networks, and improve coordination of care—particularly important for veterans in rural states like South Dakota.

The VA has emphasized that these changes are **not expected to reduce clinical staffing or disrupt patient care**. While some administrative processes may change, the VA's mission remains focused on providing timely, high-quality care to veterans.

Veterans are encouraged to stay informed and contact their local VA facility or VFW service officer with any questions as these reforms move forward.

General Orders, February 2026

It was great to see you all in Pierre. We handed out some very deserving awards to our Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy, and Teachers of the Year. We also had some good discussions on our State Legislation. We must take the small victories wherever we can. But, we continue to have a very long way to go before seeing the kind of benefits you all deserve.

District 7 represented very well with providing two of the three Teachers of the Year and the winner of the Patriot's Pen essays. Great job by the members of the Mitchell, Parkston, and Scotland Posts. I look forward to attending the Commander's award presentations at the schools.

Membership numbers continue to rise. The District is down to only needing five more members to meet the 101% goal for the year. Mitchell, Lake Andes, Parkston, Plankinton, and Wagner Posts have already met the 101% All-American requirement.

Thank you all for supporting the raffle at the Conference. Because of you all, and a large donation of \$500 by Commander Christensen, we upgraded two more of the Department's members to Legacy Life. We are planning to run another raffle at the Department Convention in Mitchell.

I look forward to seeing you at our District 7 meeting in Winner, 1 February.

Thank you all for your time and efforts,

For the Veterans

Brent Jones

Commander

District 7, Dept. SD VFW

Currently, this is the only Bylaw change that has been submitted to the Department office at this time:

National

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

Proposed by the Judge Advocate Kat Pyka

ARTICLE I – MEMBERS

Sec. 101 – Eligibility.

Amend Sec. 101 - Eligibility,, Manual of Procedure, by adding the following after Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal

“Remote Combat Effects Campaign Medal Sep. 11, 2001 – Open”

Department of South Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS BYLAWS

Proposed by the Junior Vice Commander Dale Greenfield

Article 3 Authority

Section 3

Amend Article 3 Sec. 3 to remove the words Sioux Falls

“Section 3. The Department Headquarters office shall be located in South Dakota.”

If you would like to participate in a Chunky Dunk Polar Plunge to raise funds for a great organization, Contact Front, please see the information below and contact Jake at: 605-975-1970.



[Home](#) [Our Mission](#) [Jacob's Story](#)
[Chunky Dunk Polar Plunge 2026](#) [Raffle](#) [Contact Us](#)
[Annual Ruck Event](#) [Donate](#)

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Chunky Dunk Polar Plunge 2026

1545 Knox Blvd.
Jackson, NE

February 7, 2026
1:00PM

Come raise money for a great cause (Contact-Front.Org) and test your will power!

Event details:

Come with your pals or come by yourself...either way...you'll have a great time!

Jump in, sit by the fire or in our large outdoor sauna!