

General Orders

JANUARY 2026



LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

LEGISLATIVE

Legislative Conference is in Pierre on January 25 & 26, 2026

LOYALTY DAY

LOYALTY DAY

Post Commanders, please appoint a 2026 Loyalty Day Chairperson and forward the name of that individual to the Department office.

BUDDY POPPY

CHAIRPERSON NEEDED

Post Commanders, please appoint a 2026 Buddy Poppy Chairperson and forward the name of that individual to the Department office. All orders should be in by May 15, 2026 in order to make All-American.



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Members are reminded that their annual membership in the VFW may have expired on December 31, 2025. All officers are encouraged to make every effort to renew the continuous members as soon as possible. "Any Officer removed for by reason of failure to pay current dues or by vote of the Post, shall not be eligible to serve in any Post Office in the same administrative year."

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Wishing you a Happy New Year full of growth, purpose, and exciting opportunities. And if opportunity doesn't knock—build the door yourself.



LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

AGENDA

Attached to the back of the General Orders is agenda for the Legislative Conference and registration. If you have any questions, please contact the Department office. 605-332-7441 or email Anna at anna@vfwdeptsd.com

IRS FORM 990:

All posts with a tax exemption status are advised that they must answer all questions on the IRS FORM 990. Submitting a copy of the Post Financial Statement in lieu of answering the questions will not be accepted. The IRS will return your form and you will be considered not in compliance. Report must be filed by the 15th day of the 5th month following the close of the fiscal year.

SKYFORCE MILITARY NIGHT

ALL VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE INVITED

We're excited to invite you to our Military Appreciation Night, a special evening dedicated to honoring and thanking the men and women who have served and continue to serve our country.

- Friday, February 6 at 7:00 PM at the Sanford Pentagon

This night is all about recognizing our military heroes, and tickets are FREE for all military members, veterans, and their families.

Tickets & more information:

<https://www.gofevo.com/event/mn7e2a9s>

We'd love for you, your family, friends, or organization to join us. Please feel free to share this link with anyone who may be interested in attending or supporting this special night.

Mid-Winter District Meetings and the Department Representative

District 1 - December 14, 2025, 2 pm, Sioux Falls - SVC Vanden Hoek

District 4 - January 5, 2026, at 2 pm, Watertown - CMDR Christensen

District 6 - Zoom meeting February 1, 2026, 1 pm - CMDR Christensen

District 7 - February 1, 2026, 2 pm, Winner - CMDR Christensen

District 10 - January 11, 2026, 2 pm, Rapid City - Surgeon Pyka

OFFICIAL:



Anna Arnold

Quartermaster / Adjutant
Department of South Dakota
VFW

BY ORDER OF:

Dr. Martin Christensen

Commander
Department of South Dakota
VFW



General Orders – January 2026

Doc Marty Christensen, Commander SD Dept VFW

1. Membership remains a primary goal. As of 12/22/2025, VFW Dept SD is 94.5% with a goal of 101%. We currently need 451 members to reach our goal of 101%. District commanders should be discussing membership with each of their Posts – especially working on the renewals.
2. Midwinter District meeting
 - a. District 4 – 1/4/2026 at 2pm in Watertown – Marty
 - b. District 6 – 2/1/2026 at 1pm viz ZOOM – Dale
 - c. District 7 – 2/1/2026 at 2pm in Winner – Marty
 - d. District 10 – 1/11/2026 at 2pm in Rapid City - Kat
3. Legislative Conference for VFW is 25-26 January in Pierre, SD. We will be awarding the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen winners as well as recognizing the Teachers of the Year. Dale and Margaret Greenfield will be announcing our State winners at the convention. We will have training on the dashboard as well as a benefits briefing by the Dept VSO. We will also discuss all 47 Posts. On Saturday night, the VFW will join the VFW Auxiliary in a contest providing soup for our evening meal. We need VFW members to volunteer to bring soup. Please, also, bring your non-perishable items for the SD VFW and SD VFW Auxiliary for our joint fundraiser. You should also contact your local legislators and plan to meet with them on Monday morning and/or invite them to the legislative mixer on Monday night.
4. I plan to attend the Rapid City Stock Show being held Jan 30 – Feb 7, 2026. This is an excellent opportunity to recruit new members to Posts across South Dakota. Volunteers are appreciated. POC is Katherine Pyka.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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 after our Department Legislative meeting in January.
9. 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.

January General Orders
Senior Vice Commander

Happy New Year. I hope everyone had some time to spend with family over the holidays. It is also a good time now to do buddy checks on our members we haven't heard from in a while. This time of year can be hard on veterans that cannot get out.

With a new year upon us. That means we are half way through the command year. We need to continue to work hard towards our goals. We have accomplished a great deal this year but there is more to get done.

I am hoping to see everyone at the Legislative Conference the end of the month. I am looking forward to meeting with our state representatives and talk about what our priorities are. We cannot get things passed without their support. Please keep an eye out on the bills that affect veterans. We need to insure that we are doing our best to maintain current benefits and push for better benefits on both the state and federal side. This is one of the biggest things that the VFW does in order to help our veterans.

Since we are half way through the command year. I want all posts to look at their goals for the next year. I am working on the All-State program and have a good idea what the All-American program will look like. I encourage anyone who has the desire to run for a District or Department level office to do so. Please reach out to me or any other COA member if you are interested. We can answer any questions that you may have.

In closing, I want to emphasize that we have a mission to take care of veterans. I encourage everyone to reach out to a veteran in need, contact a representative or senator, or get involved in community events.

Rick Vanden Hoek
Sr. Vice

Hello again, Comrades,

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday. At the end of the month, I will be working the Black Hills Stock Show January 31 – February 8 and look forward to recruiting new members. As we march into 2026 let's remember why we are here doing what we do. I hope to see everyone at the Legislative meeting at the end of month to tell everyone in Pierre that we are a force to be reckoned with.

Kat Pyka
Judge Advocate
(719)661-9738
adj@vfw1273.org

As we welcome a new year, we also enter the heart of a South Dakota winter. Both moments call for reflection. The winter season brings unique health challenges, and the turning of the calendar offers each of us an opportunity to renew our commitment to personal wellness and positive habits.

Cold weather can amplify existing health conditions and increase the risk of illness or injury. I encourage every veteran and family member to take winter health seriously. Dress in layers, protect exposed skin, and use proper footwear to prevent slips and falls on ice. Stay current with routine medical appointments, take prescribed medications as directed, and do not ignore new or worsening symptoms. Make sure your vehicle is winter-ready with an emergency kit, blankets, and essential medications in the event of breakdowns or delays. Just as importantly, take steps to support mental and emotional health—short daylight hours and isolation can be difficult, and staying socially connected within our posts and communities truly matters.

The New Year reminds us that change is possible at any stage of life. This is an excellent time to reassess habits that may not be serving us well. Small, realistic adjustments—improving nutrition, increasing physical activity within your limits, quitting tobacco, moderating alcohol, getting adequate sleep, or simply scheduling overdue checkups—can yield meaningful long-term benefits. You do not need to make every change at once; consistent progress is far more sustainable than perfection.

Dan Klimisch

Surgeon

Department of South Dakota VFW

General Orders, January 2026

Happy New Year. It was great to see all that you have accomplished in 2025, and I am excited to see what you can make happen in 2026.

District 7's membership numbers continue to be right on track with our goals. The District has hit 100% and we are set up for success to meet the 101% goal for the year. This is due to the hard work of the Posts. Great job by the seven Posts that are at or above 100%. Mitchell, Parkston, Plankinton, and Wagner Posts have already met all of the All-American requirements. Now they must wait until the Day of Service window opens to cap the year off.

The Legislative Conference is coming soon. We will have the opportunity to continue our Dashboard training and work on completing some of the All-American and All-State requirements. Let's also take advantage of any opportunities our Legislators give us to ensure they know our requests in supporting our Veterans.

District 7 will open nominations for our Elected Officer positions at our upcoming winter meeting. I will not seek reelection as the Commander due to my intentions to run for the Office of Department Quartermaster. I was informed that our District Quartermaster will also not be seeking reelection. I look forward to seeing which Comrades will step into these very important positions.

Thank you all for your time and efforts,

For the Veterans

Brent Jones

Commander

District 7, Dept. SD VFW



VFW & AUX LEGISLATIVE REGISTRATION FORM

January 25 & 26, 2026

AmericInn by Wyndham Fort Pierre
605-223-2358
312 Island Dr.
Pierre, SD 57532



Room Rate - \$129.99/night + tax

*Limited rooms available

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

Email:

Telephone Number:

Full Name:

Title:

Guest Name:

ONE REGISTRATION FORM PER PERSON

Register Before January 3, 2026 - \$125

Registration after January 3, 2026 - \$150
(Includes Luncheon meal on Monday and Mixer)
Guest Lunch on Monday - \$40



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



[Click Here to Register](#)

LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE KICKOFF



BUSINESS MEETING LOCATION:

AMERICINN

910 N Deadwood St, Fort Pierre, SD
(605) 223-9451

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

01 BUSINESS MEETINGS

10:00 am

Registration Open

10:00 am

Committee Meetings: Audit, Budget, Legislative, Membership & Bylaws
Lunch on your own

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Council of Administration Meeting
Khakis & Polos

5:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Social Hour & Soup Contest Supper
American Legion Post #8 – Cash Bar

Where Ideas and People Come to Mix:
Legislative Mixer - Monday Night at the AmericInn

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY PATRIOT'S PEN TEACHER OF THE YEAR

LUNCHEON BANQUET LOCATION:

AMERICINN

312 Island Dr., Pierre, SD
(605) 223-2358



02 MONDAY, JANUARY 25

8:00 am

Winners meet at AmericInn for a tour of the Capital Building, and meet-and-greet with active Legislators.

Suit & Tie Attire

8:00 am - 11:30 am

STORM THE CAPITOL: Schedule meetings with your hometown Legislators.
Push the Legislative Properties for the VFW!!
Suit & Tie Attire

10:30 am

South Dakota National Guard Museum Tour
301 East Dakota Avenue, Pierre, SD – (605) 773-2475
All are welcome

12:00 pm

Luncheon Banquet: VOD, PP, Toy Awards
Meet at AmericInn

Legislative Mixer Tonight - Don't Miss It!

VFW LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

03 LEGISLATIVE MIXER

Monday, January 25

5:30 pm

VFW Legislative Mixer with Politicians Commences
Business Casual Attire

5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Hors d'oeuvres Served
Included with Registration

5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Social Bar Available: Members & Legislators receive 2 drink tickets
Cash Bar

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

For the most updated legislative bills for to:

<https://sdlegislature.gov/>



LEGISLATIVE MIXER LOCATION:

AMERICINN

312 Island Dr., Pierre, SD
(605) 223-2358



LET'S DRIVE
THE MISSION
FORWARD.



HELP KEEP
THE VAN
MOVING!



VFW LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE 2026



CONFERENCE AGENDA

SUNDAY
JANUARY 25, 2026
&
MONDAY
JANUARY 26, 2026

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

