



General Orders

OCTOBER 2026



BIG TEN CONFERENCE

The Big Ten Conference will take place in Kalamazoo, MI October 16-18, 2026. If you would like to register, contact Adjutant/Quartermaster Brent 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

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 = Your VFW Member Number, and Password = Your Last Name with the first letter capitalized.

For a fun "check on learning" from our trainings this year I am asking all Posts to send in a practice Community Service Report. I am politely requesting every Post to create a report in the system that will be in the ADDITIONAL REPORTING category. Ensure you are submitting 0 hours, 0 members, 0 miles, and 0 dollars spent/donated. Under DESCRIPTION, please put your Commander's and Quartermaster's NAMES, PHONE NUMBERS, and EMAIL ADDRESSES. This fun training opportunity will also allow me to update our contact information for the Posts. If the members do not have an email address, ensure the Post has one they use.

Americanism

All Posts should be sponsoring vigorous Americanism and Patriotic activities to make strong, direct, and patriotic impacts in our schools and local communities. Promoting patriotism is extremely important for our future.

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?
Now is the time!

November 11th 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 A/Q Brent at brent@vfwdeptsd.com no later than the 25th of every month.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY / PATRIOT'S PEN / TEACHERS AWARDS

Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and Teacher's Awards program material should be in the possession of the schools and submissions are due back to the Post NLT October 31st.

Teachers awards can be submitted by anyone. This is a great way to show our support of our local teachers. Maximize your All-State points by turning in submissions for all 3 categories.

Contact your local schools and make certain the VOD/PP contest is underway. The Posts will make the necessary judging happen online via the Scholar's App no later than November 22nd. 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 December 31st, 2026. Please contact the Chairman, SVC Dale Greenfield at dale.greenfield@yahoo.com Maximize All-State points by sending submissions for all categories.

Travel/Expense Vouchers need to be sent to the Department within 30 days from end of trip and with all receipts attached in order to be reimbursed for the full amount.

Hunting Season Is Finally Back

Encourage everyone to get out there and enjoy what this amazing country has to offer. Continue to be an example for our new and youth hunters by following your local laws and hunting regulations. Most importantly, be safe, have fun, and enjoy the food you put on the table. For more hunting and fishing information please visit gfp.sd.gov

OFFICIAL:

Brent Jones

Adjutant/Quartermaster
Department of South Dakota
VFW

BY ORDER OF:

Rick Vanden Hoek

Commander
Department of South Dakota
VFW



General Order
Commander

It is hard to believe that we are into October and fall is here. We are 3 months into this year and it has been busy. I want to thank everyone for their hard work this first quarter. I ask that we continue to push hard through the rest of the year.

We need to keep pressure on congress to fix TCAVA and get rid of the offsets. We also need to keep pressure on Representative Johnson to vote for the Major Richard Star Act. It has enough signatures to get a floor vote. We need to ensure that it doesn't keep getting kicked down the road. We have advocated for this for too many years to let it keep sliding.

Election season is here. We need to make sure that we are careful on how we approach it. As a person representing the VFW, we cannot endorse any candidate. We can go to town halls and ask questions. The VFW overall does not endorse candidates. That being said, as an individual, we can endorse a candidate but not under the VFW umbrella. Pictures with candidates when wearing VFW clothing or at a VFW post can be seen as an endorsement by the VFW. This can be a very fine line. Be aware of what you are doing in these situations.

I want to address conduct when representing the VFW. There have been a couple incidents that have come to my attention recently. We need to ensure that when we are representing the VFW we act in a professional manner. This follows some of the things talked about in the above paragraph. One bad/negative experience has more influence than ten good interactions. Remember the values of the VFW and what our mission is. It is ok to disagree, but be professional in doing so. Our communities and their residence are what helps the VFW do what they do for veterans.

October is again going to be a busy month. There are a couple District meetings and the Big Ten Conference in Michigan. I am looking forward to getting together with the other commanders and see how things are going. I will also have an opportunity to talk with CIC Cory Geisler. I am also going to attend The Dept of SD American Legion Commander's Homecoming.

I had the opportunity this past month to talk with both the Dept of SD American Legion Commander Bill Peters and the American Legion CIC John Bowen. The biggest thing we agree on is that all Veterans Organizations need to work together to take care of our veterans. Although we do not agree on everything, bottom line is veterans. This follows my motto of "One Team, One Mission". Veterans organizations and their Auxiliaries work together for one common goal.

In closing, I ask that we continue to work hard for our veterans here in SD. We made a commitment by being a member of the VFW to fight for their benefits and needs. I want to thank everyone for their hard work this first quarter of the year. Let's continue to make this a great year.

Rick Vanden Hoek
Commander

General Orders SR Vice Commander October 2026

Fall Council 2026

Fall Council was 25-27 September 2026 at the Ramkota in Rapid City. We had some fun events and JVC Kat Pyka gave very informative presentation on social media and fund raising. All the information briefs also went very well. I always encourage our members to attend these events.

Scholarships / Teacher of the Year

Patriot Pen and Voice of Democracy. The fliers have been emailed and copies were handed out at State Convention. Hopefully all post have distributed fliers. I sent the district commanders a list of who is listed for each post as their admins. One district has sent me a list of corrections. The essays have to be uploaded on Scholars App no later than midnight on 31 October 2026.

Important dates for PP/VOD:

31 October	All essays imputed and submitted on Scholars App at Post level
22 November	Post Judging done and promoted to district
6 December	District judging done and promoted to state
13 December	State Judging done and names forwarded.

Teacher of the Year Nominations 31 October 2026

Applications can be mailed or emailed. Email is preferred. Please scan and email packets to dale.greenfield@yahoo.com , please don't take pictures and text.

Public Service Awards are due to Senior Vice Commander by midnight on 31 December 2026.

These go directly from post to department. I know that we have deserving individuals out there. Law enforcement, EMT, and Firefighter. Applications can be mailed or emailed. Email is preferred. Please scan and email packets to dale.greenfield@yahoo.com , please don't take pictures and text.

Dale Greenfield, Senior Vice Commander
20539 401st Ave, Huron, SD 57350
Cell 605-350-2319

Comrades,

Thank you to everyone who attended our Department Fall Conference this past weekend. I hope you enjoyed the fellowship, learned a great deal, and returned to your Posts with new ideas and useful information.

At the bottom of this message, you will find a QR code and a link to our Fall Conference survey. Please take a few minutes to complete it. We want to hear what went well, what needs improvement, and what you would like to see at future events. Your feedback will help us make future Department events more useful and enjoyable for everyone.

This coming weekend, I will travel to Kansas City for Junior Vice Commander training. I look forward to bringing back knowledge and ideas to help me serve the Department of South Dakota as I continue learning and advancing through the chairs.

Throughout October, I will also be helping prepare for Rushmore VFW Post 1273's Boots on the Ground event and its Veterans Day celebration, which will include a parade in Rapid City and a free luncheon. These events provide opportunities to serve our community, honor our veterans, and show the public the work of the VFW.

Thank you for everything you do across South Dakota to support our veterans, strengthen our Posts, and carry our mission forward.

Fall Conference Survey:

<https://forms.gle/a9LF1Ym2fAhnikaG9>



Katherine (Kat) Pyka
Quartermaster/Adjutant
Rushmore VFW Post 1273
Junior Vice Commander, Department of South Dakota

OCTOBER – KNOW YOUR BYLAWS

The VFW Bylaws are more than a reference book to be opened when there is a problem. They provide the framework for how our Posts, Districts, and Department conduct business. Officers should be familiar with the provisions that apply to their position and responsibilities.

Post officers should make sure they are working from the current VFW National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual, and their Post's approved bylaws. When questions arise, take the time to look at the governing documents before making a decision. If the answer is unclear, seek guidance rather than relying on past practice or assumptions.

Following our bylaws protects the Post, its officers, and its members. Consistent adherence to the rules also helps ensure that every member is treated fairly and that the business of the VFW is conducted properly.

Yours in comradeship,

Dan Klimisch

**State Judge Advocate VFW – Department of South Dakota
Post 791**

Greetings Comrades,

VA healthcare has seen major expansion and modernization over the past eight months, marked by rapid enrollment growth, aggressive infrastructure upgrades, and new clinical initiatives. More than **250,000 Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare in 2026**, driven by expanded outreach and reduced wait times, alongside over **1.4 million completed or scheduled appointments** for newly enrolled Veterans, including **300,000 mental health visits**. The VA has opened **41 new clinics since 2025**, deployed the **Federal Electronic Health Record system** across multiple hospitals and clinics in Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky, and approved **\$1.2 billion in infrastructure improvements** as part of a record **\$4.8 billion** modernization effort for FY 2026. Additionally, the VA secured **over \$10 billion in pharmaceutical price reductions**, launched clinical trials for **psilocybin** to treat treatment-resistant depression and **GLP-1 medications** for alcohol use disorder, and continued reducing bureaucracy and claims backlogs, which have fallen below **70,000** for the first time since 2020.

The hot topic discussion has been the use of psilocybin treatment to help with PTSD treatment. I will say that we should keep an open mind and let's see where the research takes us. I do not have enough information at this point to give an opinion but I will say there are many hurdles that will need to be overcome. The only suggestion that I will give is, do not attempt this treatment on your own. Seek medical assistance and do it properly. Ending up on the wrong side of the law will only hurt the PTSD you are already struggling with. If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to me or the Department Service Officer.

As the holiday season approaches, please keep all of our veterans in mind. This is a difficult time of year for many veterans. Please reach out to each other and do a buddy check. A short, hey how are you doing, can go a long way.

Thank you,

David Huntimer
Department Surgeon – Department of South Dakota
Dah613613@gmail.com

Good day, Veterans

Recently, the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) issued an important precedential decision in *Hoffman v. Collins*, No. 24-7834, decided August 24, 2026. This decision provides important clarification regarding how an Intent to File (ITF) may be treated when a veteran also files a supplemental claim.

In *Hoffman*, the Court held that VA may not associate a continuously pursued supplemental claim with an ITF when doing so provides no effective-date benefit to that supplemental claim and would prevent the ITF from being applied to a later eligible claim.

For example:

A veteran submits an Intent to File on March 10, 2026.

The veteran was previously denied a condition on November 10, 2025.

On July 4, 2026, the veteran submits a supplemental claim regarding that previously denied condition. Because the supplemental claim is filed within one year of the prior decision, it may qualify as continuous pursuit of the earlier claim.

The veteran then files a VA Form 21-526EZ for separate, new conditions before March 10, 2027, within one year of the ITF.

Under *Hoffman*, the continuously pursued supplemental claim should not automatically consume the March 10, 2026 ITF when associating the supplemental claim with that ITF provides no effective-date benefit. Therefore, the ITF may remain available to establish the date of claim for the veteran's subsequent eligible new claim.

In this example, the new conditions filed on the VA Form 21-526EZ could potentially receive an effective date based on the March 10, 2026 ITF, subject to the applicable effective-date rules and the facts establishing when entitlement arose.

This is an important decision for Service Officers to be aware of when reviewing ITFs, supplemental claims, continuous pursuit, and effective dates. Do not automatically assume that a supplemental claim filed after an ITF has consumed that ITF. Review the claim history and determine whether the supplemental claim was continuously pursued and whether applying the ITF to that supplemental claim would actually provide an effective-date benefit.

VA laws, regulations, and court decisions continue to change, and those changes can directly affect your claim, your effective date, and the benefits you and your family may be entitled to receive.

Do not assume VA got your effective date right. Review your decision letters, know when your Intent to File was submitted, and understand how your previous claims may affect your current benefits.

Most importantly, you do not have to navigate the VA claims process alone. Talk with an accredited Veteran Service Officer. That is what we are here for, to answer your questions, review your claim history, explain your options, and advocate for the benefits you have earned through your service.

If something on your VA decision does not look right, ask questions. If you do not understand your effective date, have it reviewed. If you believe you may be entitled to additional benefits, reach out to your Veteran Service Officer.

You served our country. Now let us serve you.

Stay informed. Know your benefits. Review your decisions. And never hesitate to ask for assistance.

DSO

Dave Denson

[605 940 9622](tel:6059409622)

Dave.denson@state.sd.us

Hello to District 1, I am your new Commander for the year. Looking forward to seeing all of you at Post Inspections over the next few months. Please, email me what meeting nights work best for your Post. Keep working for Veterans and their families. Reach out if I can help in any way. Thanks, Matthew.

Matthew Dosdall

matthew@thedosdalls.com

712-490-4365

From the Adjutant/Quartermaster's Desk

- It was great to see you all at the Fall Conference last weekend. Thank you, Kat, for all of the efforts and coordination to make it all happen.
- Please follow the training opportunity on the first page. I have some corrections to make on our contact roster, and this is a great way to ensure you all know the basic process of reporting community service at the same time. Report, Report, Report.
- Please find ways to cut spending on your travel. District Commanders, I am asking you all to save where we can. District meetings could be used for many of the Post inspections. The van can be used for many of the Post inspections. You can also appoint an Inspector that is on the opposite side of your District to split the travel with. Please plan a few inspections per trip instead of from your house to each Post and back separately. Many simple ways to save on mileage that we have not been using so far.
- Please see the additional information attached below for your reference, and please register for Legislative Conference early.

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



A/Q Brent and newest Life Member Paul at the banquet.



Commander Rick flipping pancakes with the American Legion National and State Commanders.

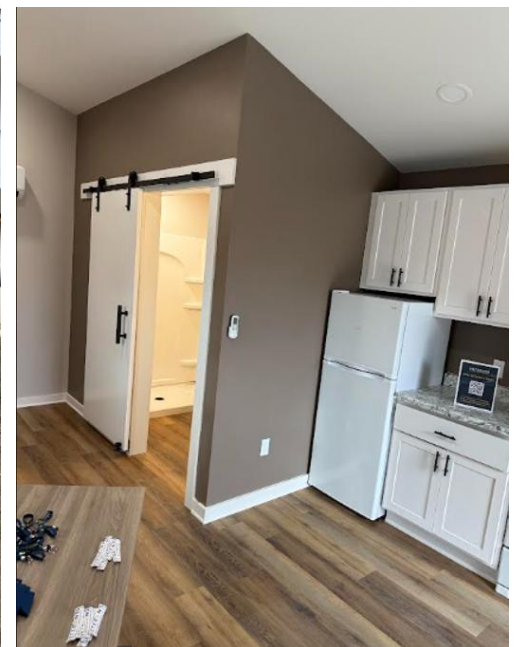


Chaplain Russel, NCOA Member Barb, Nat. Dep. Chief of Staff Charley, and Past Post Commander Mark at the Black Hills VA facility for a tour.

**Commander Rick's Special Project
Veterans Community Project of Sioux Falls
Ribbon cutting ceremony was held September 30th**



**Please help us support the tiny homes in Sioux Falls by
supporting the Commander's Raffle**



2027 SOUTH DAKOTA VFW & AUX LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

January 24 - 25, 2027



Full Name:

Email:

Telephone Number:

Title:

Post Number:

ONE REGISTRATION FORM PER PERSON

Registration Fee - \$50



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



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



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

FALL FESTIVAL EVENT SCHEDULE OCT 03

Main Street
Springfield, SD

FALL FESTIVAL 2026

BREAKFAST & COLOR RUN

9am-12pm: Pancake Feed - Start your Fall Festival morning off right at Emmanuel Reformed Church! Free-will donation! Everyone is welcome!

9:00am: Color Run - Get ready to run, laugh & get COLORFUL! Join us for a fun-filled Color Run for all ages! Registration - 8:00am at Springfield Community Center.

VENDOR FAIR & KIDS CARNIVAL

10am-3pm: Vendor Fair - Shop, browse & enjoy a variety of local vendors! There's a little something for everyone!

10am-4pm: Kids Carnival - Bring the kids along for games, prizes & fun!

11am-5pm: Live Music - Enjoy the musical stylings of various local musicians all day long!

HAPPY HOUR | 3:00-5:00PM

Chili Cook-Off - Come hungry & taste your way to a winner!

Show & Shine - Cruise on over & check out our first annual car show! Registration - 2:00pm at Springfield Community Center.

Poker Walk - A Poker Run... on your feet! Walk Main Street, collect your cards & build your best hand! All ages welcome! Register at the Springfield Historical Museum!

BLOCK PARTY

Meet us at the main stage for a fun night of dancing under the stars!

5pm: The Professionals

w/ Devon Cadwell

7pm: Joni Loves Gin

More event information on our
Springfield, SD Fall Festival
Facebook Page!