

General Orders

MARCH 2026



MEMBERSHIP QUOTA

MARCH MEMBERSHIP

All State and District Officers are asked to assist Posts in membership. If your Post has not had a membership team working, now is the time to help organize and join in on the recruiting of members.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

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Post Donations to the Special Olympics Fund are requested to help with the 2026 Special Olympics Program. Please be generous and donate to the Department Headquarters. Thank you to those Posts who have already donated.

STATE CONVENTION

JUNE 11-14, 2026

The 2026 Department Convention will be held June 11-14, 2026, in Mitchell, SD hosted by Post #2750. Please see the registration at the back of these General Orders.



POST ELECTIONS

Attention is called to Section 217, page 72 & 73, Manual of Procedure, Nomination Election, Installation of Officers and Term of Office. Posts will conduct the Election of Officer in accordance with the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. Post Officers shall be nominated by March and shall be elected in April. Nominations shall remain open until the Post is ready to vote.

Commander/President Raffle

The Commander Project for 2025 - 2026 is a raffle to support Helping with Horsepower in Mitchell, SD. Please click the link to learn more!

<https://www.helpingwithhorsepower.com/>



PEACE OFFICER MEMORIAL DAY

MEMORIAL DAY

The Peace Officer Memorial Day will be held on Friday, May 15th, 2026. The United States Flag shall be flown at half-mast until noon on this day.

Memorial Day is on Monday May 25th, 2026. Each Post shall properly observe commemorative dates as prescribed in the Ritual and Manual of Procedure. Please plan a suitable observance in your community. Place American Flags at the gravesites of departed Comrades of your Post and Veterans of your Community. Please report this event when finished on the State Dashboard.

Any Post, District, or member can submit information to the General Orders. Please send to the Department office NLT than the 25th of the month.

Buddy Poppy: Post Commanders, Reminder, all Buddy Poppy orders need to be made by April 30, 2026, to count in All State Post ratings. Each Post must order at least 500 Legacy Poppies OR 500 Tin Tap Poppies.

SPRING DISTRICT MEETINGS

- District 1 - 3/29/2026 at 2pm in Alcester - SVC Rick
- District 4 - 4/12/2026 at 2pm in Watertown - JVC Dale
- District 6 - 4/19/2026 at 1pm in Huron - JVC Dale
- District 7 - 4/12/2026 at 2pm in Wagner - CMDR Marty
- District 10 - 4/12/2026 at 2pm in Rapid City - JVC Rick



Installation of Officers: Attention is called to Section 217, page 73, The Post Commander-elect will select the installing officer who holds or has held a rank at least as high as that of Post Commander. Post officers shall be installed in their respective offices prior to the convening of the Department Convention, but shall not assume their duties until the Department Commander is installed. The installation may be conducted publicly at an open meeting.

Side note: On the 1st of June, if you have not submitted your Election Report, you will receive a letter from the Commander-In-Chief suspending your Post. At such times, the Department Commander will issue a follow-up letter and establish a committee to oversee Post business. All Post business must be overseen by the established Committee which includes any meetings, disposition of property, financial transactions, etc. PLEASE submit your Election Reports in a timely manner. March - Nominate, April - Elections, May - Installation, June - take office when Department Commander does.

National Citations: To qualify for the National Citations that are presented at the Department Convention, Posts must have reported projects in each of the following programs: Youth, Safety, Community Service and Citizenship Education (Americanism). This information needs to be reported on the State Dashboard for National by May 1, 2025, and submitted to Department SVC Christensen by April 15, 2025.

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

1. Membership remains a primary goal. As of 2/17/2026, VFW Dept SD is 98.19% with a goal of 101%. We currently need 162 members to reach our goal of 101%
2. Spring District meeting
 - a. District 1 – 3/29/2026 at 2pm in Alcester - 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 attended the Rapid City Stock Show Jan 31 – Feb 1, 2026. We recruited 15 members during the week. Judge Advocate Kat Pyka did a good job organizing the event and setting up our booth. Will Hoffman, VSO from Rapid City assisted with explaining benefits. We also distributed poppies and received donations for the Rapid City and Spearfish Posts. Sr Vice Rick VandenHoek and Jr Vice Dale Greenfield also assisted as well as District 7 Commander, Brent Jones.
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 are looking for a guest speaker. 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.

March General Orders

Senior Vice Commander

We have made some big steps this past month. I want to thank everyone for taking care of business. We still have some work to do to finish the year strong.

On the Legislative front, things did not go as good as we were hoping. Both the House and Senate bills were defeated on the property tax relief for veterans. That does not mean that we give up. It means that we need to fight harder next year. On the National level, we are heading out to DC from March 1-5 to push our legislative priorities out there. I am looking forward to being a player on the bigger stage. I am hoping for a positive return on our time out there.

As we are ending the third quarter, please ensure that you are inputting your information on the dashboard. We need to ensure that we are getting credit for what we do. It is not only tracked at the department level but also at the national level. Our department does a great job doing things, but not good at taking credit for it.

One point of concern that I have at all levels of the VFW is that our average members age continues to rise. This is true at all levels of the VFW. As a post, district and department level, we need to come up with a sustainable plan for recruiting and engaging our younger veterans. It is not only the VFW that is seeing this trend, many other organizations are having the same issue. I do not have the exact numbers of where we are sitting, but I am going to work on that. For starters, I think we need to be more engaged with other entities such as Hero Haven and Warriors Never Give Up. They give veterans an opportunity to connect with other veterans doing some outdoor event. There are many other organizations like this out there, but we need to be looking at reaching out to them.

In closing, thank you for all you do for veterans. We continue to serve our veterans and community daily. Keep up the good work.

Rick Vanden Hoek

SVC

Hello Comrades,

Another month is done and the year is almost over. I want to take this time to thank the Post level officers. Without all of you doing the hard work at the Post level there would be no Districts or Department level officers. I feel that sometimes these officers are over looked on their true contribution. Now is the time to start thinking about upcoming elections. Have you thought about becoming an officer now is the time to make your interest known. This is true all the way up to the Department level.

We also need to ensure we are thanking all of those members that show up to every event to volunteer their time and effort but never want to take leadership positions. These people are the workhorses of our organization. To keep them in the fold sometimes at is as easy as a "Thank you". Some other easy ideas is a personal written thank you card you would be surprised how meaningful an actual card in the mail affects people. Here is another opportunity sign them up to be recognized from an outside organization (Quilts of Valor, Local Newspaper, Local Television, Helpline, or a different local organization.) There are probably so many other ways but a person who does not feel appreciated becomes a loss eventually. So, ask yourself how does you Post show your volunteers that you appreciate them?

Lastly, we are getting close to the deadline for all By-Law updates which is 1 May to ensure review and enough time to be sent out to everyone prior to the Department Convention in June.

This is the link to nominate people for Helpline. They do a big awards breakfast in both Rapid City and Sioux Falls. <https://www.helplinecenter.org/2026-spirit-of-volunteerism/>

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

A Health Reminder for South Dakota Veterans

Comrades, recent public guidance from Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, has renewed attention on a simple but powerful principle: eat real food and know what's in what you consume. That means choosing whole foods—fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains—over highly processed products loaded with additives, added sugars, and ultra-processed seed oils, AKA vegetable oil.

Take a moment to read nutrition labels. Watch for long ingredient lists and high sugar content. Diets high in processed foods and sugar are strongly linked to obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and chronic inflammation—conditions that affect many veterans.

Small, consistent changes matter. Choose water over soda, whole foods over packaged snacks, and ingredients you recognize. Good nutrition is one of the most practical steps we can take to protect our long-term health and readiness.

Yours in comradeship,

Dan Klimisch

State Surgeon VFW - Department of South Dakota

Post 791

General Orders, March 2026

Another month of abnormally great weather to travel in and our membership numbers show it with their continued growth. It was great to see the Rapid City members at their Post and working the Stock Show. Thank you for the generous hospitality.

Multiple Posts in District 7 have met their membership goals and are still gaining towards the District and Department goals. Because of their hard work District 7 is ranked in the top ten on the National Dashboard and will soon meet the 101% goal. Keep up the amazing efforts and let's finish this year as strong as we started.

The Department still has money earmarked for recruitment/membership from a generous donation. I have been asking every Post to push up their ideas through the Districts to the COA. Please continue to do so, this will make it a quick and easy discussion and vote at the Convention. So far the only ideas I have heard would use the money as incentives like handing out \$100 towards life membership.

I would like to propose that we send \$2,000 to each District and they can use it as they would like. This would leave something close to \$3,000 that can be disbursed at the Commander's first COA at the Department level as the COA sees best. Every Post has their own specific needs for the funds to best help boost their membership requirements and they don't need micromanaged on utilizing it. My recommendation would be that the Posts use some of the funds to gain participation at our District and Department recruitment events.

Thank you all for your time and efforts,

For the Veterans

Brent Jones

Commander

District 7, Dept. SD VFW



- Peer-to-Peer Workshops
- FREE Lunch
- Large Group Activities
- Door Prizes
- Resource Connection Booths

A Wellness Retreat for Women Veterans & Military Spouses

Saturday

April 11, 2026 from 9am-2pm

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Sioux Falls



Contact Information:
Erin Nosal
Erin.Nosal@sdvets.org
605-910-4045



<https://www.sdvets.org/event-details/women-vetsconnect-retreat>



Thank You for Supporting Folds of Honor – South Dakota

Dear Golfers, Businesses, and Community Supporters,

On behalf of the Folds of Honor – South Dakota Board, we extend our heartfelt thanks for your continued support of our scholarship program. Because of your generosity, last year we provided **43 scholarships totaling over \$200,000** to the spouses and children of America's fallen and disabled military service members and first responders.

We are working diligently to raise the bar even higher this year and hope we can count on your continued partnership. One of the most valuable ways you can help is by spreading awareness. Please follow our Facebook page, **Folds of Honor – South Dakota**, and like and share our posts to help us reach more families across the state.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/share/1aRVNaTgsj/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

The **2026 scholarship application window opened February 1 and will close March 31**. If you know a family who may benefit, please encourage them to apply:

Scholarships: <https://foldsofhonor.org/scholarships/#dependent>

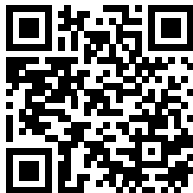
We are also selling **Folds of Honor apparel** to help fund additional scholarships and increase recognition of our mission. We would truly appreciate your support by purchasing and proudly wearing our name:

Shop: <https://bit.ly/FoldsOfHonorShop2026>

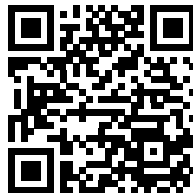
Thank you again for your continued support and for honoring the sacrifice of our heroes through education.

With gratitude,

Folds of Honor – South Dakota Board



Shop Apparel



Apply for Scholarships



Follow on Facebook

VFW & AUX STATE



CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

June 11 - 14, 2026

Convention Location:
 Highland Conference Center
 2000 Highland Way
 Mitchell, SD 57301
 Hotel Options:
 Comfort Inn & Suites @ \$189/Night
 605-990-2400
 Hampton Inn @ \$189/Night
 605-995-1575

Email:

Telephone Number:

Full Name:

Title: Post:

Location: VFW / AUX:

Gluten Free Option:

Register after May 11, 2026 - \$150

Convention Registration - \$125

**Includes: Gold Star Luncheon*



Non-Member Banquet ONLY - \$40

Non-Member Name: _____

****Disclaimer: Banquet Only is not applied to VFW/AUX members.***



Grand Total: \$ _____



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

[Click Here to Register](#)



Department of South Dakota

1600 W Russell St, Ste 135

Sioux Falls, SD 57104

605-332-7441

Email: anna@vfwdeptsd.com

Greetings,

The South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Auxiliary are pleased to announce that the annual Department Convention will be held at the Highland Conference Center in Mitchell, SD June 10-13, 2026 at 2000 Highland Way, Mitchell, SD 57301.

Our **VFW State Commander, Dr. Martin Christensen**, belongs to Corn Palace City VFW Post #2750 in Mitchell. **Auxiliary President, Sue Jones**, belongs to Charles E. Thorne VFW Post #2038 Auxiliary in Pierre.

South Dakota's VFW Members and their families are excited about offering your business an opportunity to help sponsor this event. The 2026 meeting is anticipated to bring an estimated 150+ visitors to the Mitchell area.

We are looking for area businesses who support Veterans by offering the opportunity to sponsor this event in Mitchell, SD. We have several different options in sponsorship to choose from or combine options into a package that works best for your business.

Sponsorship of meals:

- Sponsorship of Convention Banquet:
 - Saturday June 13 at Highland Conference Center:
 - \$1,000 and includes full-page color advertisement in the convention booklet along with a vendor table during Convention and 2 tickets for Banquet meals on Saturday night and lunch covered on Friday and Saturday.
- Sponsorship of Hospitality Night:
 - Friday June 12 at Mitchell VFW Post #2750:
 - \$500 and includes a full-page color advertisement in the convention booklet and 2 tickets for Banquet meals on Saturday night.
- Sponsorship of Convention Lunches:
 - Past and Present Commanders Luncheon, Gold Star Family Luncheon
Friday, Saturday June 12, 13:
 - \$300 and includes a 1/2-page color advertisement in the convention booklet.
- Sponsorship of Meeting Breaks:
 - Thursday, Friday and Saturday June 11-13:
 - \$200 and includes a 1/4-page color advertisement in the convention booklet.

Sponsorship by renting a vendor's table:

- Operate a table and display your product in the entrance/breezeway of the conference center throughout duration of the convention.
 - \$300 and includes 1/2-page color advertisement in the convention booklet.
(tables first come, first served with a limited number are available)

Sponsorship by placing an advertisement in the convention booklet:

- **Convention 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 anna@vfwdeptsd.com*

**Deadline for ads for Conference Program Book is May 30, 2026, at 4:00 pm CST.*

We are also offering the opportunity for businesses to supply promotional material by June 3rd, 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.
Update may be needed**

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/96th-annual-state-convention-sponsors-and-vendors>

