

# General Orders

DECEMBER 2021



## NATIONAL PEARL HARBOR DAY

### FLY FLAGS AT HALF STAFF

December 7<sup>th</sup> is National Pearl Harbor Day. All posts should fly their flag at half-staff from sunrise to sunset.

## VETERANS DAY REPORTS REPORTS ARE DUE

Veterans Day Reports are due from all Posts. If you click this link, it will take you to the report on the website.

[https://vfwsd.org/uploads/Documents/Reports%20and%20Forms/Veterans\\_Day\\_Report.pdf](https://vfwsd.org/uploads/Documents/Reports%20and%20Forms/Veterans_Day_Report.pdf)

## LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

The Legislative Conference, Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and Education Teacher's Award is set for January 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. See attachment for more information about the tentative schedule.

## WORDS FROM STATE COMMANDER, BARBARA MCKEAN

The season of giving is upon us once again. For many of us, 'tis the season of joy, peace, and happiness. We gather with friends, family, and those closest to us to share in a number of cheerful festivities, grateful for the time we're able to spend together.

This time of year also brings with it unique difficulties for the countless veterans who have returned from their wars, but still bear the wounds both physically and emotionally, as well as for the families who have lost a loved one to America's wars.

We ask that each VFW member, and those who are part of our extended network, to take time over the coming weeks to reach out to a veteran or military family member you know, extend your warmest wishes to them, and thank them for all that they've sacrificed.

We wish every service member, veteran, and military family a very happy and safe holiday season. And we thank you for all that you've sacrificed to ensure we're able to freely spend time with those we love.

In that spirit, let my husband, Charles, and me wish all veterans a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah, and a great New Year.



# Membership

Membership efforts in December should be concentrated on contacting ALL 2021 members who are not current on their membership dues. Now is a good time to lend a caring ear to our Veterans during this Christmas season.

Your Adjutant should be able to view this information in OMS. If you need assistance, please call the Department office for an OMS training, or help. We would be happy to assist you.



## GENERAL ORDERS MATERIAL

### GENERAL ORDERS SUBMISSION

Did you know that anyone is authorized to submit material for the General Orders publication?

If you would like to include something for the upcoming General Orders, please have the information to the Department office no later than the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month.

Please make sure to send the information in a Microsoft Word document. You can submit this via email to [anna@vfwdeptsd.com](mailto:anna@vfwdeptsd.com)

The Department office will recognize the same office hours as the National office. Closed December 24<sup>th</sup> to January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022.

**PLEASE NO LONGER USE  
SDVFW@AOL.COM TO TURN IN  
REPORTS. ONLY USE  
VFWDEPTSD@GMAIL.COM FOR  
REPORTING!**

## WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

### WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Please help us remember, honor, and teach on December 18, 2021, at 11:00 am by sponsoring a wreath, volunteering, or inviting friends to help.

Wreaths Across America will be at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery to remember and honor our veterans through the laying of Remembrance wreaths on graves of our country's fallen heroes and the act of saying the name of each veteran aloud.

***\*\*\*\*Please remember to send in your Commander / President raffle ticket sales and money to the Department office! Thank you!!!***

A few images from the Big Ten Conference in Rapid City October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>:

**Big Ten State Commanders**



**Mike & Nancy Mullen**



**The South Dakota Group**



OFFICIAL:

**Anna Waltner**

Anna Waltner, Quartermaster / Adjutant  
Department of South Dakota  
Veterans of Foreign Wars

BY ORDER OF:

**Barbara McKean**

Barbara McKean, State Commander  
Department of South Dakota  
Veterans of Foreign Wars

**APPROACHING DEADLINES:**

1. **VOICE OF DEMOCRACY** - December 15<sup>th</sup> Districts need to send to Keith Blume
2. **PATRIOTS PEN** - December 15<sup>th</sup> Districts need to send to Keith Blume
3. **TEACHER AWARD** - December 15<sup>th</sup> Districts need to send to Keith Blume
4. **LAW ENFORCEMENT / FIREFIGHTER NOMINATION** - January 1, 2022, to SVC Tom Hafner

You can send items 1 through 3 via email to Keith Blume at [krblume@goldenwest.net](mailto:krblume@goldenwest.net) and item 4 to SVC Tom Hafner at [tbmhafner@santel.net](mailto:tbmhafner@santel.net)

Dashboard Quick Tip: Under the Partnering Events - the Post must enter **TWO** entries.

The common mistake is typing both entries in the same notes box. This does not work and will not be approved. Each post must complete **TWO SEPARATE ENTRIES**, one for each Partnering Event.

Example:

1. **Entry one** in the notes box: VFW Post XXXX partnered with the American Legion to hold a Veterans Day Program.
2. **Entry two** in the notes box: VFW Post XXXX partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to erect flags.

If you need further help or have comments, please contact the Department office and we will be happy to help!

**MID-WINTER DISTRICT MEETINGS:**

- **DISTRICT 1** - February 20, 2022, at 1:00 pm Sioux Falls Post #628 SVC Tom Hafner
- **DISTRICT 4** - TBD Commander Barbara McKean
- **DISTRICT 6** - TBD Junior Vice Commander Dave Baumiller
- **DISTRICT 7** - February 6, 2022, Armor Post #6897 at 2:00 pm Commander Barbara McKean
- **DISTRICT 10** - January 9, 2022, at 10:00 am Rapid City Post #1273 Keith Blume

**Barbara McKean, Commander**

**State Commander**

**December 2021 General Orders**

Greeting Comrades,

It's almost that time of the year yet again – the holiday season is among us. And this year we're especially excited to welcome the holiday lights and warmth that comes with it! We all had a great deal of hope riding on 2021 and though it's certainly no 2020, this last year has brought its own set of difficulties that continue to challenge many people. And that's particularly why we're so excited about the holiday season – it's the perfect time for everyone to soak up some cheer. I want to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas! May 2022 bring you all hope, joy, and happiness!

**Please plan on attending our next State Meeting** scheduled for Jan 30-31, 2022 - Legislative Conference/Councils of Administration and VOD, Patriots Pen & Teacher Awards Banquet - Fort Pierre, SD. Complete registration paperwork in these GO's, make hotel arrangements and come join your fellow veterans for some comradery, sharing of VFW practices, support of our Annual programs and winners. At a minimum, I expect participation and attendance from District and Post Commanders and their Quartermasters.

Reminder, requirements for All-American this year is:

1. Partner together with another organization in your community
2. Increase Community Service hours by 10% from last year
3. Sign up & Report in OMS Dashboard the name of 5 new members to Action Corps (this can be anyone, brother, mother, sister, friends etc. All they need to do is TEXT VFW to 50457).
4. Create & maintain Post Facebook account. Must have 2 administrators and must be active for 6-months prior to judging.
5. Donate \$100 to Veterans Military Service (VMS). This year those payments will be sent directly to the SD Department office in Sioux Falls.
6. Achieve 100% +1 in Membership

Need help with the Dashboard updates? Let us know and we will set up a training session. This year **every Post Adjutant MUST** make their own updates in the OMS Dashboard with the number of new sign-ups for the Action Corps and your VOD and Patriots Pen numbers.

The Department of South Dakota VFW office is still featuring our members on the Department of South Dakota website who have proudly worn the uniform of our country and continue that legacy of service in their communities today. Please visit [www.vfwsd.org](http://www.vfwsd.org) to access this document (Weekly Social Media (Facebook under [Department of South Dakota VFW](#)) Highlight).

If there is anything I can do to assist, please give me a call. Thanks again for your support and I look forward to hearing from you.

**Upcoming events:**

District Meetings: Mid-Winter - Jan 2022 (Dates TBD watch General Orders on State Website for meeting dates)

- District #1; #4; #6; #7 and #10

Dec 10-12, 2021 - Day County Coyote Hunt - Grenville, SD

Jan 10, 2022 - Attend POW/MIA at State Capitol at 2 p.m.

**Jan 28-31, 2022 - Legislative Conference/Councils of Administration and VOD, Patriots Pen & Teacher Awards Banquet - Fort Pierre, SD**

*Barbara K. McKean*

Barbara McKean

[Barbara.mckean@ujv.state.sd.us](mailto:Barbara.mckean@ujv.state.sd.us)

605-630-0771

## SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

### DECEMBER GENERAL ORDERS

Here is hoping each of you had a great Veterans Day and a joyful Thanksgiving. I attended an outstanding Veterans Day program at Post 3298. The speaker did an excellent job of keeping those in attendance engaged while stressing the importance of our Veterans and what the day means to them. Be sure to submit your Veterans Day report to Department Headquarters as soon as possible. By the 18<sup>th</sup> of November over 25% of the Department Posts have submitted a report. Thank you to those Posts. Also ensure your Post is participating in the Veterans in the Classroom Program. Kids are interested in your military experiences.

Public Servant Awards (Emergency Medical Technicians, Law Enforcement & Firefighters) entries are due by the end of December. Please take the time to give these local individuals the recognition they deserve. Form is on the Department website.

There has been no change since last month concerning Posts that have submitted a Memorial Day Report. The Department remains at just over 62%. Make an extra effort in getting these reports accomplished. Negative Reports are required.

Membership should be a high priority this month as numerous Continuous member's dues will be expiring in December. Gear up your membership teams and contact those members who are not current for 2021-2022 and encourage them to pay their dues. Review the Commander's guidelines and give Recruiting and Retention your best effort.

The Christmas season has arrived. Reach out to the Veterans, their families and the not so fortunate in your community and offer a helping and friendly hand this Christmas season. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Be Safe.

If I can be of any assistance contact me at the email or phone number (leave a message if no answer) listed below.

Tom Hafner

Sr. Vice Commander

Perseverance & Integrity

[tbfhafner@santel.net](mailto:tbfhafner@santel.net) // 605-661-2750



**Quartermaster / Adjutant****Department of South Dakota VFW****December General Orders 2021**

Greetings Comrades,

I have been asked over the last month by quite a few members to take the opportunity to introduce myself.

My name is Anna Waltner. I was originally born and raised in Dallas, Texas. If you happen to call the Department office and you hear a thick southern accent, don't be scared, it's just me. I joined the U.S. Army when I was 18, in 2002. I was stationed at Ft. Hood, Texas in the First Cavalry Division as a Communications Specialist. Which is where I deployed to Iraq from February 2004 to April 2005.

When I was discharged from the Army, I went to college at the University of Missouri - St. Louis. There, I received a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Marketing and a Minor in Accounting.

I moved to South Dakota in August 2011 and have lived here ever since. I love this state! Although I absolutely cannot stand the snow. If you see me huddled up during the winter, don't worry about it. I am trying to stay as warm as I can!

I live in Menno, SD with my fiancé, Josh Arnold, and our 3 boys. Their ages are Caden - 14, Ray - 13, and Rett - 8. Josh and I plan on having a Summer 2022 wedding at our dream acreage we just bought on October 22<sup>nd</sup>!

I know this state is pretty spread around, but if you happen to come into Sioux Falls, make sure to stop at the office. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you. If you can't make it to Sioux Falls, give me a call. I love getting to know our members. Call the office at 605-332-7441 or send me an email at [anna@vfwdeptsd.com](mailto:anna@vfwdeptsd.com) anytime!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to contact me. I am always willing to listen and provide help in any place that I can.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you!

## Anna Waltner

Here are a few pictures of my family, myself, and our new home:

Anna & Josh, Florida - 2021



First Day of School - 2021



Our Dream Home - 2021



Hello Comrades,

November has been a fun month. Our yearly VFW/Auxiliary Buddy Poppy Drive was very successful this year. I am honored to have had the privilege to help out. November 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> welcomed 7 little Labrador Retriever puppies to our home! We are looking forward to the Christmas Season. I wish all of you many positive blessings in the Joyous season ahead. Please remember to assist/thank a Veteran and their Family Members if you have the opportunity to do so during this holiday season.

Comrades, attached below is an appeal from the Surgeon General regarding Suicide Awareness and caring for our Veteran's and Family Members who require our assistance in facilitating change, in hopes of reducing the prevalence of suicide among our Veteran population. Please take the time to spread this message as far and wide as possible. Thank you!

**Please** ensure that your 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Hospital and Safety Reports are sent to the state office no later than **January 10, 2022**. I'm looking forward to seeing you at the Legislative Conference in Pierre in the new year.

If you need copies of any of this year's reports, please email me at [dakpatriot@gmail.com](mailto:dakpatriot@gmail.com) and I will send them to you.

Thank you for your Service and everything you do each day for Veterans and their Family Members. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Respectfully,

Glynis Collier  
State Surgeon  
Dept. of SD, VFW

## Suicide

Suicide- a very dark subject. One which a lot of people feel extremely uncomfortable speaking about it. Just like in the 1950's, 60's, and 70's speaking about breast cancer, until First Lady Betty Ford brought it out in the open. Today, many lives are being saved because we talk about breast cancer. We have walking and running fund raisers that help with awareness, as well as pink t-shirts and the media talking about it.

We need to start making suicide apart of the conversation. We need to be talking about the "Signs". Knowing the "Signs" can help save the life of a friend or even a loved one. Veterans' families especially need to know the "Signs". Veterans and active-duty military still have extremely high rates of suicide in all age groups. Veterans struggle with the experiences they had while serving our country. Ageing veterans can be dealing with the loss of a spouse and/or health issues.

We all have triggers that can affect how we manage everyday stressors. Stressors such as the Afghanistan withdrawal. How this event was handled by our military and our government affected veterans of all wars. For Vietnam veterans it reminded them of the fall of Saigon. For all post 9-11 veterans they wonder what all the sacrifice was for. Families who lost loved ones are affected.

Another big stressor for many veterans is the holidays. Those veterans that are self-isolated are particularly vulnerable. Some dates or anniversaries of trauma are hard but if they fall during the holidays, it may become more than they can bear. We need to constantly check in on our "buddies" and if they need help get them the help they need.

I recently heard a Director of a VA hospital say we are down to 17 a day from 22 a day committing suicide. I did the math; 17 a day adds up to 6,205 a year! When we were losing 22 a day that added up to 8,030 a year. To put this in perspective we lost 7,000+ in 20 years in the middle east. Better than half of all veterans have never been in the VA system. To me that means there is a lot of work to be done getting veterans connected to the programs that can help. We need to build partnerships to serve the needs of our veterans and their families, for their physical wounds as well as their invisible wounds.

The National VFW, along with other service groups, and state Veteran agencies, all provide training and resources to Veterans Service Officers (VSO's) to help veterans directly create a road map and identify resources to give hope for the future. Programs such as Unmet Needs, employment training, and scholarships for education are just a few examples. Getting every veteran set up at the VA for evaluation of medical and psychological needs is critical. Along with these programs the VSO's can obtain benefits to help stabilize the veteran's finances and give each veteran time to seek support groups. Support can be found at Vet Centers, the VA, and other non-profit groups. Support might be found in another veteran, perhaps that older vet that has managed to make it through to a productive life.

One group of veterans that is often overlooked is our National Guard units. They only meet once a month. They are sent back home after deployment. Sometimes they got out after deployment and are entirely overlooked and fall through the cracks in the system. The VFW in each state needs to make sure our National Guard troops know about and understand what is out there for them. Their families need to know what is out there for them. Too often both National Guard and Active-Duty military that wish to remain in the service do not want to ask for help as it is still a stigma, and they feel it will affect their ability to obtain promotions.

Many VFW Posts have already adopted National Guard units. Checking with the Commanding Officer, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt., as well as the family readiness person to make sure they are using the “Buddy System” can help save lives. The “Buddy System” is simply checking on and talking with those you served with. You were with them when they had good days and when things did not go so well. Talking, listening, and knowing the “Signs” can help.

So, getting back to lowering the number of suicides: It means making sure veterans, their family and friends understand the “Signs” and what to do if they see one or more of these signs is particularly important.

- 1) Thinking about hurting or killing themselves,
- 2) Looking for ways to kill themselves,
- 3) Talking about death, dying, or suicide,
- 4) Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, weapons, etc.,
- 5) Hopelessness, feeling like there is no way out,
- 6) Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, mood swings,
- 7) Feeling like there is no reason to live,
- 8) Rage or anger,
- 9) Engaging in risky activities without thinking,
- 10) Increasing alcohol and drug abuse,
- 11) Withdrawing from family and friends.

**We have a National Crisis line 1-800-273-8255, or chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net), or text to 838255.**

Some states also have a “hot line”. We need to get these out and keep pushing them. Family and friends need to use the A.C.E. system:

- A Ask directly, “are you thinking about hurting yourself?”
- C Care - comely control the situation. Listen and show concern. Talk to them and let them talk, **LISTEN**.
- E Escort- do not leave this veteran alone to take care of problems! Get help from a professional. Remove all firearms or other things from this veteran which could be used to harm himself or herself.

These are but a few of the things to look for. Veterans are incredibly good at hiding emotions and saying everything is ok. They have learned to push through to complete the mission. It is when things become so overwhelming that we as friends and family need to help. It is critical to step in and provide the support and professional help necessary at this point.

I was asked, “What should we do?” This is a very good question and I put it back to you, What can we do?

We can get involved, we can educate veterans and their families to know the “Signs”. At our VFW Post we can hand out the cards from the VA with the signs and the Crisis Line information. We can offer to speak at different civic groups. Veterans are everywhere. Just saving ONE life is a huge accomplishment!

Please call me or email me with your questions, ideas, or what has worked for you.

Thank you for all you do for our veterans.

Dennis Guthrie

Surgeon General 2021-2022

541-280-5161

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