

General Orders

FEBRUARY 2024



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 Wednesday, May 1, 2024, 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 2025 Buddy Poppy Chairperson and forward that information to the Department office. Reminder, all Poppy orders need to be in the office by April 28, 2024.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWED?

Have you paid your 2023-2024 Membership Dues yet? Members are reminded that their annual membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars may have expired December 31, 2023. 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

VOD Winners

- 1st place: Lexi Brandt, Post 3442, Custer
- 2nd place: Patience Stalwart, Post 2966, Scotland
- 3rd place: Evelyn Ernst, Post 5126, Eureka
- 4th place: Connor Wiik, post 3486, Milbank
- 5th place: Ella Merriman, post 2975, Beresford

PP Winners

- 1st Place: Benjamin Vandebark, Post 4674, Winner
- 2nd Place: Jett Reagan, Post 17, Aberdeen
- 3rd Place: Brenna Wagner, Post 2638, Madison
- 4th Place: Dante White, Post 3312, Belle Fourche
- 5th Place: Ellie Holdhusen, Post 3061, Vermillion

The VOD / PP Winners were announced at our Legislative Conference in Pierre on January 22, 2024.

The Teacher Winners are:

Elementary: Tim Heil, District 10, Lemmon, Post #2969

Middle School: Alexis Quail District 10, Spearfish, Post #5860

High School: Susan Farrell-Poncelet, District 7, Mitchell, Post #2750

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

STATE CONVENTION

The 2024 Department Convention will be held June 6th through the 9th 2024 in Spearfish, South Dakota at the Holiday Inn Convention Center. Please call 605-642-4683 to start making reservations.

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 donate money to the South Dakota Service Dogs in Rapid City. 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.®

OFFICIAL:



Anna Arnold

Quartermaster / Adjutant
Department of South Dakota
VFW

BY ORDER OF:

Dave Baumiller

Commander
Department of South Dakota
VFW



General Orders

Legislation

The hotel was a great upgrade from last year. The committee meetings at the Moose Lodge seem to go very well. The COA meeting seems to have gone very well, though I would've liked to see the district commanders pay a little bit more attention than they were. I was honored to be with the teachers and students at the banquet at Pizza Ranch. What a smart bunch. And what a great time at the Capital, the governor let people sit in her chair and let everyone take photos. Only in the great state of South Dakota would that happen!

Hotel reservations for the upcoming convention in Spearfish are available now. Call the front desk at 605/642-4683, mention that you're coming for the South Dakota VFW Conference, and they'll get you all set up.

And please help us get the gun raffle tickets sold, this helps our homeless veterans in many ways.

Dave Baumiller

State Commander

Greetings Fellow Veterans!

January 2024 has been a productive month!

I had the privilege of attending the Veterans Council Legislative meeting January 10, 2024 in Pierre, SD.

Our VFW Legislative Conference was an outstanding event in Pierre on January 21 & 22, 2024. As always, the VOD/PP Luncheon was a success. Thank you to all of our Post and Auxiliary members from across the state who were able to attend. A special thanks to all who planned the event and was part of its success.

I was also able to attend a session of the Military Legislative Council meeting on January 24, 2024 in Pierre. Watching the legislative process happen was a great learning experience.

On January 25-27, 2024, I attended the Rapid City Stock Show Membership Drive with CDR Baumiller. We raised buddy poppy money, sold raffle tickets and gained members in our great organization.

I attended the District 1 winter meeting on January 28, 2024 in Sioux Falls, SD and was very well received. Thank you District 1 for your hospitality.

The EMT/Firefighter/Law Enforcement selections have been accomplished and our state QM has published the winners in our GOs.

Loyalty Day is May 1, 2024, please be sure to update your dashboards with your Loyalty Day endeavors.

Also, be sure to hold membership drives in your hometown Winter Festivals!

I hope February 2024 brings you all many blessings, love and amazing Membership acquisitions!

I am here for you if you need anything or have any questions concerning your needs. I am here to serve you. Thank You for Everything You Do for Veterans and their Family Members each day!

//Original Signed//

Very Respectfully,

Glynis Collier

Sr. Vice CDR

DEPT of SD VFW

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Cell #803-466-7031

General Orders February 2024: Dept SD Jr Vice Commander

The Department of SD as of Jan 31, 2024 has 6051 Life members, 71 new members, 25 reinstated members and 586 continuous paid members. As of Jan 31, 2024 we are at 92%. We still have 172 unpaid members and 345 expiring members in the Department. Our goal is to reach 102% so we need 675 more paid members to reach our goal.

We did recruiting at County Fair in Mitchell in January, picking up 3 new life memberships for the VFW. We also raised \$4,500 for District 7 and the Dept SD Commander's fundraiser.

I attended the Legislative Conference in Pierre. I made contact with my local legislators who are very supportive of Veterans and Veteran's bills that our Dept supported. VFW Post 2750 from Mitchell submitted the nomination for Teacher of the Year (Susan Farrell-Poncelet) from the high school category.

I plan to assist the Commander at the Rapid City Stock Show in recruitment efforts on Feb 1, 2024. I plan to continue to assist the American Legion Post 18, DAV Chapter 27 and 40&8 service organizations in Mitchell. We were successful in having the DAV van repaired for Davison County VSO's, VA, and Dept SD DAV.

I plan to attend District 7 meeting on February 18 in Armour.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Christensen, Dept SD Jr Vice Commander

February Surgeon General Orders

I hope everyone had safe travels to the Legislative Conference in Pierre. I am not able to travel yet, but will be able to return to work soon. My little health scare is a good reason why not to wait if something isn't right. Everything is healing as it should but will not know the results for some time yet. I missed being out there for such a great event.

The VA Stakeholder's was cancelled this month due to the Veteran's Council being held at the same time. I do not have any updated information from them this month.

Winter has given us a bit of a break at the end of the month. I hope you are enjoying the better weather. Be cautious of the slick spots though in the morning. The thawing is great but freezes at night causing hazards. It is a good time to look over your homes to ensure there are no hazards before winter decides to come back.

I know I talk about this all the time, but reach out for help if you cannot do it yourself. Every post has members that are willing to help. If they cannot help, they will probably know someone who can assist.

Rick Vanden Hoek

Department Surgeon

Greetings Fellow Member,

I hope that everyone had a happy and safe holiday season. I would like to give everyone a close-out of 2023 in the claims area. The VFW currently represents 12,961 members. Those that received grants in 2023 received \$3,472,544.84 in one-time Retro Payments and \$93,157,022.82 in on-going compensation payments. These amounts are dollar payments only and do not include medical and educational benefits.

There has been a huge increase in claims due to the PACT Act along with all other claims. With the VA's system of how they handle claims now, have increased the wait time on decisions. Many new positions have been added across the country so hopefully we will see these times decrease. To better understand the process and why it takes so long to get that decision, I would like to show you the 8 Step Process to Claims procedures.

STEP 1. FILE AN INITIAL CLAIM WITH VA Submit your claim to VA Claims Intake Center by mail or fax in person, at a VA Regional Office, or through an Accredited Representative or VSO.

STEP 2. VA RECEIVES CLAIM Your claim has been received by VA. To confirm receipt of your claim, you can check eBenefits or call VA at 800-827-1000. If you submitted your claim to VA by U.S. mail, VA asks that you allow mailing time plus one week for them to process and record receipt of your claim. VA will send paper notification to confirm that your claim was received. The claim will go into the cloud awaiting someone from a Regional Office to pull the claim out.

STEP 3. UNDER REVIEW VA assigns your claim to a Veterans Service Representative for review to determine if additional evidence is needed. If VA doesn't need any additional information, your claim will move directly to the Preparation for Decision phase. If VA decides that it needs additional medical evidence to decide your claim, they will schedule a Compensation and Pension examination for you.

STEP 4. GATHERING OF EVIDENCE The Veterans Service Representative will request evidence from the required sources. Requests for evidence may be made of you, a medical professional, a government agency, or another authority. It is common for claims to return to this phase, should additional evidence be required.

STEP 5. REVIEW OF EVIDENCE Once all the requested evidence is received, a Veterans Service Representative will review the evidence. If it is determined that more evidence is required, the claim will be sent back to the Gathering of Evidence phase for additional development.

STEP 6. PREPARATION FOR DECISION The Veterans Service Representative recommends a decision and prepares documents required to detail the decision. If more evidence is required, the claim will be sent back in the process for more information or evidence.

STEP 7. PENDING DECISION APPROVAL VA reviews the recommended decision and approves the final award. If it is determined that more evidence or information is required, the claim will be sent back in the process for more information or evidence.

STEP 8. PREPARATION FOR NOTIFICATION VA prepares your entire claim decision packet for mailing.

In-between each step, the case is put back into the cloud and waits for someone to pull it out for the next step. Your case is not worked by one individual from start to finish. Some cases have had up to 12 different people touch the case before a decision was sent out. If you have any questions, reach out to me or another Veteran's Service Officer.

David Huntimer
Department Service Officer
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