



**February 2026**



**VFW  
AUXILIARY  
Department of  
South Dakota**

**General Orders**

## GO #7 Saluting Our Heroes for February 2026

Our year is half over and I want to thank all of you for your dedication to our fine organization.

The Legislative Conference was held and the Voice of Democracy (VOD) and Patriots Pen (PP) winners were as follows: **VOD**: 1st Dagen Mutchler District 10, Post 5860; 2nd Jersey District 4, Post 4690; 3rd Amelia Lott District 6, Post 2038; 4th Makayla Strong District 7, Post 2750; 5th Hayden Schilling District 1, Post 2975. Dagen Mutchler will now advance to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania and represent South Dakota at the national level. We wish Dagen good luck in the final competition.

**Patriots Pen** . 1st Audrey Mudder District 7, Post 2966; 2nd Josephine Abbas District 4, Post 2118; 3rd Tomee Veal District 10, Post 2969; 4th Ciera Stevens District 6, Post 1776; 5th Leah Waltz District 1, Post 3164

Congratulations to all the contestants for making it to state.

The Fort Meade VA is requesting XXL gift bags. They can use these throughout the year but especially at Christmas time. Now is a good time to stock up with the after Christmas sales.

**Department membership has hit every goal set by National so far and we want to continue that record. Chairwoman, Pam Vissia has kept us informed almost every day on our Facebook site as we continue to put up those good numbers. We are needing 34 members to meet 100%.**

**It is not to early to be thinking about April elections. Does your auxiliary have a good line of succession in place? If not, are you actively mentoring members to step into the line? Your auxiliary can not grow and thrive if you do not bring younger members along and get them started. If your officers have served for several terms, it may be time for them to step back and mentor instead of staying in office. No one is irreplaceable, let those officers step down while they are still around to help train their successors.**

Thank you for all you have done and what you will continue to do in the year to come. As we Salute our Heros our TEAM keeps rolling along

Iwant to give you something from the Bylaws, Booklet of Instruction or Ritual book to think about each month. These questions are randomly taken from the book and are not meant to be addressed to any specific auxiliary.

The question is: How can an officer resign and, if an officer resigns what is the next step?

Answer: Per Bylaws Page 67. Sec. 809-Resignations. A. All resignations of Officers should be in writing and sent to the President and Secretary of the body from which the Officer is resigning. 2. Resignations are effective when issued. 3. Verbal resignations are binding. Sec. 809A-All Levels 4. An election shall be held at the next regular meeting for ....any other office vacated. 5. Due notice of contemplated election shall be deemed given if the President announces that the election will be at the next regular meeting. 6. The vacant office shall be filled at the next stated regular meeting.

/s/ Sue Jones, President

General Orders February 2026  
Auxiliary Outreach  
Dept Chairman, Nancy Worth  
PO Box 47, Piedmont, SD 57769  
605-490-1220  
Nworth1971@gmail.com

Has your Auxiliary completed the Auxiliary Outreach National Program Award form yet?

There is no need to wait for the March 31st judging deadline to accomplish this. If the project you feel your Auxiliary did the best has already been completed, submit the form to me. Make sure you have shared the activity on social media using the #AuxiliaryOutreach hashtag.

Auxiliary Outreach National Ambassador, Sara Manke, stated in her promotion that “almost every month has a day or week recognizing volunteerism.” AND volunteerism is the key to Auxiliary Outreach! February has tons of recognition days, but not all can fall into the requirements of this program.

Basically said, this program cannot:

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- Include any funds spent (either by the Auxiliary OR the member(s) involved in the project).
- Include an event/activity that is sponsored by the Auxiliary and/or Post.
- Include a single member at their own church.
- Be considered to fall under another National Program (i.e., Americanism, Veterans & Family Support, Youth Activities).

So... here are some upcoming recognition days/weeks that you might want to incorporate into your Auxiliary's activities for February.

- o Black History Month – volunteer at local apartment setting to lead a discussion group about Black Americans who have changed our world.
- o National Spay/Neuter Awareness Month – partner with local Animal Shelter to volunteer time with their “clients.”
- o Random Acts of Kindness Week (2/15-20/2026) – partner with local grocery stores to assist folks by getting their purchases to their vehicles.
- o Student Volunteer Week (2/9-13/2026) – this is a global and national initiative to celebrate impacts students make on communities; perhaps partner with a college environmental group to clean up a section of highway.
- o Take a Child to the Library Day (2/7/2026) – partner with local library in reading at the Story Hour (this one is tricky as could also be a Youth Activities project – discuss with your Auxiliary on how to accomplish this as Outreach).
- o National Clean Out Your Bookcase Day (2/20/2026) – again a great one for partnering with your local library.

Things to remember with this particular program are:

- The project must be voted on by your Auxiliary membership before the project/event.
- Wear anything that will identify you as a VFW Auxiliary member.
- Report the projects in a creative and descriptive way.
- Post photos on social media using #AuxiliaryOutreach hashtag.

Whew! Lots of information, but I am always available if there are questions regarding this program. It is one of the most confusing and has lots of requirements connected to projects/events.



UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

South Dakota Department VFW Auxiliary

“Buddy” Poppy and National Home 2025-2026

[www.vfwauxsd.org](http://www.vfwauxsd.org)

Amy Bolduc: 606 S 3rd Street Menno, SD 57045

[dabolduc1975@gmail.com](mailto:dabolduc1975@gmail.com)

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Hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and New Year!

Now is the time to start preparing for Department and National VFW “Buddy” Poppy display contest. This contest is a great way to support and promote “Buddy” Poppies.

### **“Buddy” Poppy Display Contest**

Malta Member Resources (login to Malta and go to the Member Resource tab)

2025-2026 Program Book-page 20 (login to Malta and is found under the Member Resource tab)

VFW.org

The VFW Auxiliary National Chairperson wants to remind everyone of her goal for “Buddy” Poppy this year. The goal is to find creative ways to partner with VFW Posts for joint Poppy drives and/or fundraisers and how to split the proceeds. She would like more detailed information on any combined events that each Post and Auxiliary has done together over the past few months.

**Remember when you distribute Poppies, you are honoring the dead by helping the living.**

### **National Home**

Stock the Store is a joint project between Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore and President Lois. They are asking Post and Auxiliary from each state to send in funds to help stock the store at the VFW National Home. This is an expansion of the special project to remodel the retail space that was started in 2023-2024 by then Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento and President Carla Martinez. The retail store is almost done, just needs to be stocked. Any support is greatly appreciated.

The goals for 2025-2026 for the National Home are to create ideas from across the nation to help introduce Veterans and/or their families to the services that are offered at the National Home. You are encouraged to submit your ideas and to share ways that you used to help Veterans and/or families to know more about the National Home or to get into the National Home.

### **Reminders**

Auxiliary Award #1

Must be submitted to me by March 31st, 2026

Most Outstanding activity and/or event with their VFW Post to educate their community about the VFW

“Buddy” Poppy

Auxiliary Award #2

Must be submitted to me by March 31st, 2026

Most Outstanding activity and/or event to create awareness and education of eligibility and who qualifies for help from the VFW National Home and promoting it within their Department to help Veterans and their families.

**Remember to go to the department website and record what you have done for “Buddy” Poppy and National Home.**

Happy Valentine's Day everyone,

I hope everyone stays warm and healthy. I unfortunately caught an awful cold before our 9-day vacation in Florida. I am still fighting this cold; it can go away at any time. I thought it was better for me to stay away from people during our Legislative Conference Events this week. Thank you for sharing your pictures with me so that I can get them posted to Facebook.

I hope that all going to Fort Lauderdale, and Key West in Florida and Bimini in the Bahamas have a great time on the Mid Winter Cruise from February 9th to the 13th. Take lots of pictures, Pam and Sue!

Let's finish the year strong. Keep posting your pictures and talking to potential Auxiliary members. I look forward to seeing the pictures from all our February events this month. From bake sales to Bingo nights and more.

I had the pleasure of visiting the Iwo Jima Monument, Gulf War and Korean War Memorials in Cape Coral Florida at the Four Mile Cove and Echo Park and Pier. Fabulous place to visit the memorials, hike the nature path and walk out onto the pier!

I can always be reached for questions at [danibolte@sio.midco.net](mailto:danibolte@sio.midco.net), message me on Facebook or text to 6057591993.

Take care,

Dani Bolte



## LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

February 2026

### LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

#### **NATIONAL PRIORITY GOALS:**

**Budget** – To fully Fund relevant programs for veterans, service members, and their families.

**Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs** – To ensure veterans and their survivors have timely access to earned benefits.

**Education, Employment and Transition Assistance** – To ensure veterans succeed after leaving military service.

**Health Care** – To ensure service members and veterans receive timely access to high-quality health care without increasing cost shares.

**Military Readiness** – To maintain a strong and ready all-volunteer force capable of protecting American interests.

**National Security, Foreign Affairs and POW/MIA** – To fully support the all-volunteer force, protect our nation's citizens and defend American interests around the world.

Please contact South Dakota Senators John Thune, Mike Rounds and Rep Dusty Johnson with any questions or concerns you may have.

#### **STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA PRIORITY GOALS: (Submitted as of this date)**

**HB 1037** – Act to exempt active-duty members of armed force and veterans from paying resident fishing license fee.

**SB 12** – Act to refund property taxes for qualifying veterans and surviving spouses.

**SB 35** – Act to revise process for requesting veterans DD 214 from County Register of Deeds.

Contact your local Senators and Representatives concerning State issues.

**Updates will be available on VFW Action Corps and [sdlegislature.gov](http://sdlegislature.gov) for State Bills.**

**Please review current and future Bills that may be submitted.**

**Respectively Submitted,**

**Becky Hafner**

**605-661-4484 // [tbmhafner@santel.net](mailto:tbmhafner@santel.net)**



# Welcome

NEW MEMBERS

Membership Bulletin  
February 2026  
Pam Vissia, Chairmen

IT WAS ME  
I LET  
THE DOGS  
OUT

Greetings Auxiliary Members:

It is hard to believe the year is half over and we are on the downhill slide for the year.

We currently have three Districts with 100% or more. The other districts are so close. As a department we have reached the 95% goal and the 98% goal well before the deadline. Now we are working on the 100% goal and we are so close. We need 39 members to reach the 100% and 99 unpaid members in all. Everyone has been working very hard to achieve these goals. We have had 67 new members this year with 42 going life and 25 going annual. The number of rejoins has been 4. These are members who have lapsed in membership and have rejoined. We have also had about 15 of the at large members switch to an auxiliary. The auxiliaries are working hard to get the at large members to switch to an auxiliary. Everyone is working together to make this work.

The four Rs of membership are retain, revitalize, reinstate, and recruit.

- Also, everyone needs to start using the new membership forms that have been sent out. National will no longer accept the old applications.
- Did you know that you can now scan in your membership applications to MALTA. Log in to Malta and go to Duties-View member-search for the member and click on the name and on the right side click upload and Wala you have the membership application at your fingertips. If you have any questions on this please contact Nancy Chester or myself.

Hope to see you in Pierre at legislative. I will be happy to assist you in any way that I can regarding membership.

Loyally,

Pam

## Confused on how to read the membership reports???

### You're not alone!!

2025-2026													
Auxiliary	Life New	Life Rejoin	Life Continuous	Annual New	Annual Rejoin	Annual Continuous	Current Total	Cancelled	Deceased	Paid Total	Prior Total	Current Percent	Paid Percent
628	3	0	232	9	0	63	307	0	16	323	328	93.60%	98.48%
Total - DSD01	3	0	232	9	0	63	307	0	16	323	328	93.60%	98.48%
Total - SD	3	0	232	9	0	63	307	0	16	323	328	93.60%	98.48%
Grand Total	3	0	232	9	0	63	307	0	16	323	328	93.60%	98.48%
2026-2027													
Auxiliary	Life New	Life Rejoin	Life Continuous	Annual New	Annual Rejoin	Annual Continuous	Current Total	Cancelled	Deceased	Paid Total	Prior Total	Current Percent	Paid Percent
628	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	307	0.00%	0.00%
Total - DSD01	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	307	0.00%	0.00%
Total - SD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	307	0.00%	0.00%
Grand Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	307	0.00%	0.00%

The columns with the green highlights on the **2025-2026** graph, tell you the number of new members you have and current members that have their dues paid.

\*Add the 6 columns and you come up with the **Current Total Column** amount ( $3+0+232+9+0+63 = 307$ ). What you have for the **Current Total** at the end of the year is what your **Prior Total** will be for the next year. (See the **2026-2027** graph **Prior Total**).

The columns with the blue highlights on the **2025-2026** graph, tell you the number of members deceased or canceled membership.

\*Add the Blue columns to the 6 green columns and you come up with the **Paid Total** ( $3+0+232+9+0+63 - 0+16 = 323$ ).

Your 100% membership (**PAID PERCENT**) is based off the **PAID TOTAL** being equal to the **PRIOR TOTAL**. Therefore, this auxiliary would need 5 more paid members to reach 100% **PAID TOTAL** and **PAIDPERCENTmustequal**.

Membership Program acknowledges auxiliaries at 100% when their **PAID PERCENT** is 100%.

National Office acknowledges auxiliaries with 100% pins differently. This award is based off the auxiliary's **CURRENT TOTAL** matching your **PRIOR TOTAL**. (For this auxiliary to earn their 100% pin, they would have to have 16 additional new members to make up for the 16 deceased, ). The **CURRENT TOTAL** must equal the **PRIOR TOTAL** which would bring the **CURRENT PERCENT** to 100%.

### Where do I find these reports you ask??

- Log in to Malta
- Click on Reports
- Click on Membership Summary
- Select which Member Year you want
- Enter yourAuxiliary
- Search

**For Questions... Contact Pam Vissia, Membership Chair**

**e-news February 2026**  
**SCHOLARSHIPS 2025-2026**  
**DEPT CHAIRMAN MARGARET GREENFIELD**  
**20539 401 S T AVE**  
**HURON, SD 57350**  
**(605) 350-5254**  
**[margaret.greenfield69@outlook.com](mailto:margaret.greenfield69@outlook.com)**

Hello Members!!

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR DISTRICT VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT WINNERS!!**

**Voice of Democracy**

1st Place Dagen Mutchler District 10  
2nd Place Jersey Johnson District 4  
3rd Place Amelia Lott District 6  
4th Place Makayla Strong District 7  
5th Place Hayden Schilling District 1

**Patriot's Pen**

1st Place Audrey Mudder District 7  
2nd Place Josephine Abbas District 4  
3rd Place Tomee Veal District 10  
4th Place Cierra Stevens District 6  
5th Place Leah Walz District 1

Don't forget about our Continuing Education Scholarship. As an auxiliary member if you have your spouse, son and/or daughter that is 21 years of age that is continuing their education please have them apply for both the National and State Scholarships. The applications are available on our website <https://vfwauxsd.org> under "Programs" then "Scholarships"

Eligibility Requirements:

VFW Auxiliary member for at least one full year by the application submission deadline of February 15.

- The auxiliary member, spouse, son and/or daughter of a VFW Auxiliary member that has been a member at least one full year by the application submission deadline of February 15.
- Applicants must be 21 years of age or older by the application submission deadline of February 15.

**Continuing Education Scholarship**

Department Deadline: February 15, 2026

National Deadline: February 15, 2026

Also don't forget our Young Patriotic Art Scholarships. This scholarship is available for those in grades 9-12. Please get this out to your schools, libraries, churches, and homeschoilers. These applications are available on our website <https://vfwauxsd.org> under "Programs" then "Scholarships"

**Young American Creative Patriotic Art Scholarship**

2-Dimensional

Post/Auxiliary Deadline March 31, 2026

District Deadline: April 10, 2026

Department Deadline: April 15, 2026

National Deadline: May 5, 2026

3-Dimensional

Post/Auxiliary Deadline March 31, 2026

District Deadline: April 10, 2026

Department Deadline: April 15, 2026

National Deadline: May 5, 2026



## Program Goals

**VFW National Veterans Service**

**VFW Veterans & Military Support Programs**

**Assist Veterans, Service Members & their Families**

**Promote Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Awareness**

### **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

***February already. Now that we have January under our belt for 2026, we are settling into another year. We are revitalized with new energy and March will be here before we know it. It is time to sit down to report on all the fantastic activites that your Auxiliaries have done for Veterans so far this year (June 2025 – March 2026). Let's also remember:***

### **Is it Reportable under VFS?**



#### **✓ Donations to:**

- ✓ Cancer Grant Fund
- ✓ Safety/Drug Abuse
- ✓ Service Officer Fund
- ✓ Emergency/Disaster Fund
- ✓ MAP
- ✓ NVS
- ✓ Veterans and Military Support
- ✓ Support for homeless veterans and veterans in need
  - ✓ Food security
  - ✓ Stand Downs
- ✓ Activities for active military
  - ✓ Care packages
  - ✓ Welcome Home
  - ✓ Adopt a Troop
- ✓ Promotion and support for Suicide and Mental Health
- ✓ Providing caregiving and child care respite for families
- ✓ Promoting Veteran and Military Support programs
  - ✓ MAP
  - ✓ Help a Hero Scholarship
- ✓ Chaplain activities



- ✗ Donations to a Post
- ✗ Cleaning, cooking for a Post
- ✗ Support for Post activities/fundraisers
- ✗ Holding a fundraiser (not reportable until the money is spent on an eligible project)
- ✗ Activities that you are compensated for
- ✗ Activities outside the current reporting period
- ✗ Donations to Cancer Centers
- ✗ Fundraisers for Dept. General Fund such as 365 Days of Giving/raffles
- ✗ Hosting an event for Veterans where there is a charge
- ✗ Donations to non-veteran specific charities
- ✗ Quilts of Honor/Valor (Americanism)
- ✗ Honor Flights (Americanism)
- ✗ POW/MIA ceremony (Amer.)
- ✗ Holiday Parades/Activities (Americanism)

Keep It Local – With Valentine's Day – everyone thinks you have to great, visit, provide treats on that day. It is a busy day at most facilities – how about picking a different day to celebrate the Veterans/residents. You can still do the Valentine's theme but make it about celebrating them! We are in the slow months after the holidays so a simple hello is the best medicine.

**IDEAS:**

- Collect non-perishable food items for a local food pantry.
- Collect new blankets for your local Rescue Mission or Veterans Outreach Center.
- Send monthly birthday cards to your members.
- Send Miss You cards to your homebound members.

## #22ADAY Movement

Everyday, 22 veterans lose their battle to posttraumatic stress on American soil. That is 1 veterans every 65 minutes.

The rates for the active duty individual services per 100,000 according to the report, were 23 for the Army, 23.1 for the Marine Corps, 14.4 for the Air Force and 13.4 for the Navy.

The Veteran Administration statistics confirm 22 Veterans a day are succumbing to suicide on American soil.

The total number of those losing their battle grows larger with each day research and treatments are not able to be done.

The Military Suicide Awareness #22ADAY Movement is the advocacy action network and the natural next step to the mission of the Military Veteran Project. Military Suicide Awareness gives a voice to the vast network of volunteers, donors, and participants involved in the work of the Military Veteran Project.

Events are organized by Ambassadors and are unique in every way – from small groups of people at local malls, hundred of people uniting together at parks, schools, and even at parades in your hometown to a small awareness movement at City, County or State facilities (permission required) to help the movement grow and spread the awareness in our communities. By becoming an Ambassador you will receive photos, pamphlets, and other items to educate the community of the reality of military suicide.

Lets work together and **ROCK THIS YEAR!**

Tammy Chase 45980 SD HWY 10  
Sisseton, SD 57262 605-698-7438  
605-742-4179



SD VFW Auxiliary  
Veterans & Family Support



**General Orders February 2026**  
**Youth Activities 2025-2026**  
**Darnell Bohlander, Dept. Chairman**  
**515 21<sup>st</sup> Ave NE**  
**Aberdeen, SD 57401**  
**(605) 290-8942**  
**darnellbohlander@yahoo.com**

Hope this finds everyone well. I know we are in the middle of influenza season. If you are unable to get to your local schools to support "Youth Activities" in person, you can always reach out to school art teachers and librarians through email. I pulled up Aberdeen's schools' websites to obtain the art teachers and librarians email addresses and emailed them a message and included some attachments. I sent the Illustrating America information and Contest Entry Form to the art teachers and the Patriotism Though Literacy listing to the librarians. I have received some positive responses back. If you need any assistance with this process, please let me know. I would be more than willing to help you.

I have reached out to all Youth Activities Chairmen by email and attached Illustrating America information and Contest Entry Form along with the Year End Report. Those Chairmen without email addresses, I mailed out the information. I will follow up with another "email blast" to the Youth Activities Chairmen in the next month.

I will repeat some of the news from earlier General Orders:

Exciting news...Northern State University's Art Department will be judging our Department's "Illustrating Art" entries. Also, I did verify at Fall Council that we do not have any Districts who award a District Winner, therefore, I have removed the District Deadline for "Illustrating America". I will quote from Shannon Stanley our National Youth Advisor; "Remember, keeping the youth involved in all your programs and Auxiliary functions will only help increase our membership in the future."

"Auxiliary Youth Activities" allows our members to interact with our youth. It is my hope that our interaction with our youth will be a positive experience, not only for the youth but also for each of us. Isn't it wonderful to be involved with our youth and watch them grow (along with help from their parents, teachers and other leaders) into responsible adults?

#### **Patriotic Youth Award:**

The "Patriotic Youth Award" is designed to recognize individual youth for their patriotism and/or support to our veterans, service members and their families. A fillable, printable version of the Patriotic Youth Award is available in MALTA, Member Resources, under Youth Activities. "National Program Awards 2025-2026 Entry Form" is due to me by March 31, 2026. I will forward the Department-winning form to National Youth Activities Ambassador Shannon Stanley for judging.