

Department of South Carolina Veterans of Foreign Wars

Commander's Guidebook 2025-2026

"All The Way"



Todd Haviland

2025-2026 State Commander



2025-2026 State Commanders' Schedule

DATE EVENT LOCATION

JUNE 2025

June 19–22..... State Convention DoubleTree by Hilton, Columbia, SC
June 24 @ 6:00pm CoA Budget Approval Meeting Zoom
June 28..... VFW National Home 100th Anniversary Celebration Eaton Rapids, MI

JULY 2025

July 9 @ 10:00am Staff Meeting HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC
July 19 @ 10:00am Department School of Instruction (SOI) HQ 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC

AUGUST 2025

August 6 @ 10:00am Staff Meeting HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC
August 9-13..... VFW National Convention Columbus, OH

SEPTEMBER 2025

September 5-7 Department Recruiting Event Darlington Raceway
September 10 @ 10:00am.... Staff Meeting HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC
September 8-11 Fall Legislative Committee (Tentative)..... Washington, DC
September 25-28..... Commander-in-Chief's Homecoming Des Moines, IA

OCTOBER 2025

October 2-5..... Department Adjutant/Quartermaster Training Kansas City, MO
October 8 @ 10:00am Staff Meeting HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC
October 11 @ 10:00am Council of Administration (CoA) HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC
October 16-19..... Department Junior Vice Commander Training Kansas City, MO
October 25 @ 9:00am Freedom Festival - Trunk or Treat..... HQ 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC

NOVEMBER 2025

November 6-9..... Southern Conference Montgomery, TX
November 12 @ 10:00am Staff Meeting HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC

DECEMBER 2025

December 7 Pearl Harbor Memorial USS Yorktown Patriots Point, Mt Pleasant, SC
December 10 @ 10:00am..... Staff Meeting HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC

JANUARY 2026

January 7 @ 10:00am Staff Meeting HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC
January 22-25 Mid-Winter Conference Hilton Resort Myrtle Beach, SC

2025-2026 State Commanders Schedule – Continued

DATE EVENT LOCATION

FEBRUARY 2026

February 4-10 National Presidents Mid-Year Conference TBD
February 28-March 1 Auxiliary Café Event Washington, DC
February 28-March 5 Washington Legislative Conference Washington, DC
February 11 @ 10:00am Staff Meeting HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC

MARCH 2026

February 28-March 1 (cont).. Auxiliary Café Event Washington, DC
February 28-March 5 (cont).. Washington Legislative Conference Washington, DC
March 18 @ 10:00am Staff Meeting HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC

APRIL 2026

April 8 @ 10:00am Staff Meeting Zoom
April 11 @ 10:00am Council of Administration (CoA) HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC
April 16-19 Department Senior Vice Commander Training Kansas City, MO

MAY 2026

May 12 @ 10:00am Staff Meeting HQ/Zoom 210 Glassmaster Rd. Lexington, SC

JUNE 2026

June 19–21..... State Convention DoubleTree by Hilton, Columbia, SC

AUGUST 2026

August 9-13..... VFW National Convention Salt Lake City, UT

Membership Program

"ALL THE WAY"

Todd Haviland
State Commander
2025-2026

Membership Mission

To recruit, retain and mentor a strong membership base that is all-inclusive regardless of age, race, gender, and religious beliefs.

To grow a membership well versed in the mission of the VFW including grassroots and program knowledge, members that are active at all levels of the organization to include Department activities and local communities.

Introduction

The #1 priority for South Carolina in 2025-2026 is to refocus our posts and members in the areas of active recruiting, and to work towards the goal of retaining and upgrading membership throughout the entire state.

Success starts at the Post level: each post must have a strong membership chairman, as well as a committee that coordinates with the District and Department membership chairmen. Their goals and purpose are to help coordinate recruiting events, while working with Posts to make their membership program successful.

For those who are a Post, District or Department line officer we need to focus on the following:

- Show our members how it should be done, by getting out there and leading by example
- Demonstrate how to recruit and retain members ourselves
- Use all means necessary to reach out to potential new members and retain our current comrades, using modern technology like social media, emails, calling and / or texting.

Membership Goals

1. Continue to build strong membership programs at the Post, District and Department levels, while working with the Department Membership Chairman. We need to work together to reach the goals set for membership with constant communication and participation.
2. Continue to work together and promote all of our VFW Programs. Most importantly, we need to be visible in the community: doing fund raisers; attending local community events; recruiting new members; participating in Buddy Poppy Drives.

Membership Objectives

1. Every member should recruit and mentor one new member.
2. Every Post needs to renew current members with retention being 50% or higher.
3. Increase Life and Legacy Memberships.
4. Increase and improve membership drives throughout the State.
5. Develop new Posts, and / or revitalize existing Posts.

Legacy Membership

Any post reaching 15 new legacy members or increasing their legacy life membership by 15 members in 2025-2026 will be awarded \$250.

Membership and Other Awards

NOTE: Membership Contacts

Mary Azbell
Department Membership Chairman
402-738-0084
scvfwmemteam@gmail.org

Early Bird Award

1. Any post that reaches 101% by 1/1/2026 will receive \$200.
2. Any District that reaches 101% by 4/1/2026 will receive \$300.

Recruiting Awards Individual Awards

5SCVFW Drink Koozie & 1 entry into a drawing for a life membership that can be passed on to another member

10State Commander's VFW Coin & 2 entries into a drawing for a life membership that can be passed on to another member.

25\$25 gift certificate for the VFW Store & 5 entries into a drawing for a life membership that can be passed on to another member or 1 entry into a drawing for a legacy upgrade.

50\$50 gift certificate for the VFW Store & 10 entries into a drawing for a life membership that can be passed on to another member or 3 entries into a drawing for a legacy upgrade.

100\$100 gift certificate for the VFW Store & 20 entries into a drawing for a life membership that can be passed on to another member or 5 entries into a drawing for a legacy upgrade.

Top Recruiter

The top recruiter in the Department as of 6/15/2026 will receive 3 hotel nights and their registration fee for the Department Convention.

Membership Incentives by Quarter:

1. **7/15/2025-9/30/2025** Each member that renews or reinstates a member will have their name placed in a drawing for a \$200 VFW Store Gift Card (1 entry per renewal/reinstate)
2. **10/1/2025-12/31/2025** Each post that increases their membership percentage by 2% will be placed in a drawing for \$500
3. **1/1/2026-3/31/2026** Any member that recruits 5 or more new members will have their name placed in a drawing for a \$200 VFW Store Gift Card
4. **4/1/2026-6/15/2026** Any Post that is over 101% will be placed in a drawing for \$500

Membership Notes and Contacts

- Awards given to a Post may be transferred to any member of that Post.
- No more than one stipend will be awarded to an individual for a given event.
- Posts, Districts, and Departments must reach a minimum of 101% membership to qualify for any award.
- Employees and officers of the VFW National Headquarters are excluded from receiving stipends or awards in this program unless otherwise authorized by the State Commander and the Quartermaster.

Membership Trophy

During each Counsel of Administration meeting the membership trophy will go to the district that has the highest membership percentage. It will be determined by the percentages at the end of the last quarter

1. The district with the highest membership percentage on 6/30/2026 will receive a Top District 2025-2026 trophy for the district to commemorate the accomplishment.
2. The District Commander will also receive a plaque to commemorate the accomplishment.
3. The post with the highest membership percentage on 6/30/2024 will receive a Top Post 2025-2026 trophy for the post to commemorate the accomplishment.
4. The Post Commander will also receive a plaque to commemorate the accomplishment.

New Post Development

For each new post created the department will provide \$300 toward necessary materials for that new post.

Golden Pen Award

Posts that have completed all required tasks on the All-American Dashboard, have turned their bonding paperwork and audits in correctly and on time and are at 95% membership by 12/31/2025 will have their Adjutant entered into a drawing for the Golden Pen Award.

The drawing of this award will be at the first staff meeting of 2026. This award is an engraved pen set. It will be presented at the Mid-Winter Conference in January along with a \$100 Gift Certificate to the VFW Store.

All-State Post Requirements

NOTE: Post, District, State Representatives: All Forms, Documents and Records should be submitted as follows where applicable:

VFWSC Digital Records (PDF, .DOC, .DOCX - NO PICTURES OR PHOTOS) Email:

To: Adjutant/Quartermaster aqm@vfwsc.org

Cc: Assistant Adjutant/Quartermaster aaqm@vfwsc.org

VFWSC Paper Records and / or Checks: (Will be converted to Digital Records) Mail To:

VFW Department of SC
622 Bridlewood Ln
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

The Post Commander

The Post Commander, Senior Vice Commander or JV Vice Commander must attend the following meetings/events:

- District School of Instruction
- District Meetings
- District Round Table (Only one required)
- District Convention
- Conduct 2 Post membership Drives by 4/30/2026
 - ***Records are kept by District Commanders and turned into the Department Adjutant/Quartermaster each Quarter at aqm@vfwsc.org.***

Membership 101%

1. Must make 101% in membership with 50% retention.
2. Must recruit or retain a minimum of 5 members

Posts that make All State will receive a plaque. The Post Commander and Post Quartermaster will have the option of receiving an All-State Cap and Pin or \$100 each.

Posts who make the above requirement by 6/30/2026 will be awarded at their own Post meeting.

Post Inspections

Post inspections completed by 12/31/2025

Officer Bond(s)

Post Quartermaster/Commander Bond renewed no later than 8/31/2025 to the Department Adjutant/Quartermaster at aqm@vfwsc.org.

All-State Post Requirements – Continued

Trustee Audit Reports Due

Post Trustee Audit Reports turned in correctly and on time to the Department Adjutant/Quartermaster at aqm@vfwsc.org

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|--|
| 1. | 07/30/2025 | (April-May-June, Ending 6/30/2025) |
| 2. | 10/30/2025 | (July-August-September, Ending 9/30/2025) |
| 3. | 01/30/2026 | (October-November-December, Ending 12/31/2025) |
| 4. | 04/30/2026 | (January-February-March, Ending 3/31/2026) |

Buddy Poppies

Buddy Poppies 500 ordered by 1/31/2026.

Make Donations

Make a Donation to the Following Programs. All Donations to be paid to the Department Adjutant/Quartermaster at aqm@vfwsc.org no later than 01-31-2026.

1. VFW Department of SC
 - a. Commander's Special Project (CSP) \$200 minimum (Commander Special Project is VSO)
 - b. National Home (NH) \$75 Minimum
2. VFW National OMS
 - a. Make a Donation to Veterans Military Support to National through OMS **\$100?** Minimum

Community Service Reports

Post must submit reports by 4/30/2026 (VFWSC Login > Members Only)

1. Community Service, 3 per Quarter
2. Americanism, 4
3. Youth Activities, 4
4. Safety, 12
5. Veterans and Military Support

Legislative Reports

Must submit 4 legislative report to the State Legislative Chairman by 4/30/2026.

Email responses from legislators, or automatic replies from legislators to Scott Craig II - legislative@vfwsc.org

All-State Post Requirements – Continued

Awards Submitted

- **Post Member of the Year** - Post to submit Post Member of the Year (does not hold officer position) no later than 4/30/2026.
- **Patriots Pen** - Must submit one Patriots Pen winner to the district awards chairman no later than 11/15/2025
*District Chairman will use **Scholars App** interface to Promote winner to the Department PP Chair.*
<https://scholarsapp.com/>
- **Voice of Democracy** - Must submit one Voice of Democracy winner to the district awards chairman no later than 11/15/2025
*District Chairman will use **Scholars App** interface to Promote winner to the Department VOD Chair.*
<https://scholarsapp.com/>
- **Teacher of the Year** - Must submit one of the following Smart/Maher Teachers Citizen Education Award to the district awards chairman no later than 11/15/2025 (Elementary K-5, Middle School 6-8, High School 9-12).

All-State District Requirements

NOTE: Post, District, State Representatives: All Forms, Documents and Records should be submitted as follows where applicable:

VFWSC Digital Records (PDF, .DOC, .DOCX - *NO PICTURES OR PHOTOS*) Email:

To: Adjutant/Quartermaster aqm@vfwsc.org

Cc: Assistant Adjutant/Quartermaster aaqm@vfwsc.org

VFWSC Paper Records and / or Checks: (Will be converted to Digital Records) Mail To:

VFW Department of SC
622 Bridlewood Ln
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

The District Commander

The District Commander, District SR Vice Commander or District Jr. Vice Commander **must** attend the following meetings:

1. Department Budget Approval
2. Department School of Instruction
3. Department CoA Meetings
4. Department Convention

Membership 101%

Districts that meet All State requirements by 04/30/2026 will receive All State honors at the State Convention.

Districts who meet all the above requirements by 6/30/2026 will be awarded at the Department SOI.

The District Commander and Quartermaster will have the option of receiving All State Cap and Pin or \$100 gift certificate to the VFW store

Districts Must Have Held the Following Meetings:

1. District School of Instruction
2. District Meetings
3. Two District Membership drives
4. One District Roundtable

Post Inspections

All Post inspections completed by 12/31/2025

Officer Bond(s)

The Quartermaster/Commander Bond renewed by 8/31/2025

All-State District Requirements – Continued

Trustee Audit Reports Due

District Trustee Audit Reports turned in correctly and on time

1. **07/30/2025** (April-May-June, Ending 6/30/2025)
2. **10/30/2025** (July-August-September, Ending 9/30/2025)
3. **01/30/2026** (October-November-December, Ending 12/31/2025)
4. **04/30/2026** (January-February-March, Ending 3/31/2026)

Make Donations

Make a Donation to the Following Programs. All Donations to be paid to the Department Adjutant/Quartermaster at aqm@vfwsc.org no later than 01-31-2026.

1. VFW Department of SC
 - a. Commander's Special Project (CSP) \$200 minimum (Commander Special Project is VSO)
 - b. National Home (NH) \$75 Minimum

Awards Submitted

- **Patriots Pen** - District Patriots Pen Winner no later than 12/15/2023 using the Scholars App interface to Promote to your winner to the Department. <https://scholarsapp.com/>
- **Voice of Democracy** - District Voice of Democracy Winner no later than 12/15/2025 using the Scholars App interface to Promote to your winner to the Department. <https://scholarsapp.com/>
- **Teacher of the Year** - District Teacher of the Year winner no later than 12/15/2025 Districts are encouraged to submit one Teacher of the Year winner in each of the three categories (Elementary K-5, Middle 6-8 and High School 9-12)

Employer of the Year

Submit Employer of the Year (No Government Businesses) no later than 4/30/2026