



Department of South Carolina *SENTINEL*



An official publication of the Department of South Carolina Veterans of Foreign Wars
**SPRING 2021 &
DEPARTMENT & MOC CONVENTION 2021**

HAVING PROBLEMS? NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?...The “VETERANS CRISIS LINE” is open 24/7. Just call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1. It takes an average of 8 seconds for your call to be answered. You are NOT alone!

HOT!! – The FCC has approved a new, 3 digit (988) crisis line (acts in the same principal as 911). It will connect with the National Suicide Prevention Hotline. HOWEVER, it will not become effective until sometime in 2022

VA WOMEN VETERAN HELP LINES...1-855-829-6636 or www.womenshealth.va.gov

The five signs of emotional suffering: PERSONALITY CHANGE, FEELING AGITATED, FEELING WITHDRAWN, POOR SELF-CARE AND FEELING HOPELESS.

If you are frequently in any one of those. PLEASE call one of the helplines listed above !

Want to stay current with VA & VFW issues? Go to vfwac@vfw.org and sign-up for “Action CORPS Weekly”.

Want to stay current with what is happening within the VFW in S.C.? Just go to VFWSC.org.

GET YOUR FLU SHOT !! 😊 😊 Why you are at it – Have you gotten a PNEUMONIA or SHINGLES shot. What about the COVID shot?

HOT – HOT- HOT – The VA has just added three new conditions that are presumptively associated with exposure to Agent Orange. They are; BLADDER CANCER, HYPOTHYROIDISM & PARKINSONIAN. If you previously filed for VA compensation/treatment with any of these three conditions and your claim was denied. The VA is automatically going to re-evaluate your claim. You don’t need to do anything. The VA will contact you notifying you of the re-opening of your claim.

MEMBERSHIP – Congratulations South Carolina. Thanks to YOU and the hard work of YOUR Department leadership team. SCVFW membership is at 100.11%. WELL DONE!!!

The Department of Veterans Affairs – Is comprised of three administrations:

*****The National Cemetery Administration (NCA)**

*****The Veterans Health Administration (VHA)**

*****The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)**

Each administration has its own budget and provides different services to veterans. The VBA is the largest of the three and oversees the delivery of compensation and pension benefits, the GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation, housing and business loans and the broadly defined Transition Assistance program which is shared with the Department of Labor (DOL), Defense and Homeland Security.

IT IS HURRICANE & SEVERE WEATHER SEASON! Are you prepared?

Basic Disaster Supplies Kit - To assemble your kit store items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers such as plastic bins or a duffel bag.

A basic emergency supply kit could include the following recommended items:

- * [Water](#) (one gallon per person per day for several days, for drinking and sanitation)
- * [Food](#) (at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food)
- * Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- * Flashlight, first aid kit, extra batteries, whistle (to signal for help), dust mask (to help filter contaminated air), plastic sheeting and duct tape (to [shelter in place](#)), moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties (for personal sanitation), wrench or pliers (to [turn off utilities](#)), manual can opener (for food), local maps, cell phone with chargers and a backup battery.

Additional Emergency Supplies

Since Spring of 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended people include additional items in their kits to help prevent the spread of coronavirus or other viruses and the flu.

Consider adding the following items to your emergency supply kit based on your individual needs:

- * [Masks](#) (for everyone ages 2 and above), soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes to disinfect surfaces
- * Prescription Medications
- * Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids or laxatives
- * Prescription eyeglasses and contact lens solution
- * Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- * Pet food and extra water for your pet
- * Cash or traveler's checks (cash in \$1.00 & 5.00 denominations) stores will be without power, but may let you buy things if you have small bills where they don't have to make change
- * Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container
- * Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- * Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes
- * Fire extinguisher
- * Matches in a waterproof container
- * Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- * Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- * Paper and pencil
- * Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

Maintaining Your Kit

After assembling your kit remember to maintain it so it's ready when needed:

- Keep canned [food](#) in a cool, dry place.

- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers.
 - Replace expired items as needed.
 - Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family's needs change.
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Military Personnel and Retirement – and the VA

The VFW has long argued that the Department of Defense (DoD) retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) service-connected disability compensation are fundamentally different benefits, earned for different reasons. As you know, military retired pay is earned by 20 or more years in the US Armed Forces, allowing retirees to maintain their standard of living while attempting to enter the civilian job market for the first time in the middle of their prime working years. Service-connected disability compensation is a benefit meant to supplement a veteran's lost earning potential as a result of the disabilities he or she incurred while in the service.

However; military retirees who are less than 50% service-connected disabled are required to offset their retiree pay with the amount of VA disability compensation they receive. Also Chapter 61 retirees who were medically retired with less than 20 years of military service face the same dollar-for-dollar offset. As a result, some disability retirees are separated before becoming eligible for longevity retirement, while others have completed 20 or more years of service. As of 2020 there are 575,476 Chapter 61 retirees, more than 42,000 of whom have been medically discharged due to combat-related injuries, and unjustly denied the benefits they deserve.

EXAMPLE: You are getting \$1,500 a month in retirement pay, you get a VA disability rating of 40% with a monthly payment of \$600. Your \$1,500 is reduced to \$900 plus the \$600 disability taking you back to \$1,500. The only benefit is the \$600 is non-taxable.

Here is a prime reason for veterans to be writing their Congressman and urging action to pass the Major Richard Star Act, which would enable Chapter 61 veterans discharged due to combat-related injuries to be entitled to DoD longevity payments and VA disability compensation without offset. ADDITIONALLY; You should be urging Congress to enact legislation to implement a new online comparison tool for service members, and to serve as a central information center for oversight.

BOTTOM LINE – You need to urge congress to REMOVE all disability offsets and make retired pay and disability compensation SEPARATE payments. One not effecting the other!

PS: Make sure when you send copy's of these congressional letters, that you send a copy to Dentist Harvin along with any response you receive.

VETERANS DAY 2021 – Dig out a picture of you in uniform and send it to me (by email please) with your name, branch of service and years of service. If you want, where/when picture was taken. I want to create a "Veterans Day" section in an upcoming newsletter honoring members of the SC VFW.



EX: Me in Cam Rahn Bay, RVN Air Traffic Control Tower sometime in 1970
USAF 3-66 to 11-87

Dress & Appearance – As an elected officer at Post, District, or Department level. YOU should be setting an example for the rest of the membership by dressing in a way that is respectful to your position and the VFW. When attending official meetings, you should be wearing some sort of VFW shirt and long pants, along with the appropriate VFW cap. When attending a Department level meeting, the Department Commander usually sets the uniform to be worn (generally decided by what time of year it is). Manual of Procedures, ARTICLE VIII, Section 803 outlines acceptable VFW clothing/hat wear. By wearing appropriate VFW attire, you show the rest of the membership that you are an elected leader. You set the example for respect of the VFW and what it stands for.

YOU don't have to be an officer to want to dress appropriately when attending any meeting. Have a question or doubt about what to wear? Ask any elected official what is appropriate.

Let's talk about stress. By VFW National Chaplain -Father Joseph J. Gallick

Stress is when tension builds, muscles tighten, and a migraine returns. Perhaps physical exhaustion takes over. The day seems to become endless. Sound familiar? It could be stress.

Research confirms stress can have a tremendous physical effect on a person's life. Think about the number of times you had headaches, backaches, neck aches or behavioral changes, such as yelling or screaming. Maybe you are overeating, depressed or frustrated.

Physical or emotional stress is overwhelming, but manageable. The trick is to build good defenses and coping techniques. When you feel stress building, search your defenses, and apply the best coping technique for the situation.



VFW National Chaplain – Father Joseph J. Gallick

Some good examples of coping with stress are:

EXERCISE. Medical research proves people who are physically fit are less likely to suffer stress than people who are sedentary. Make exercise a major part of your life. Exercise is work for the body, but also a holiday for the mind. Exercise releases endorphins, the body's natural mood-enhancing drug.

LEARN TO SAY NO. Know your limitations. When you are asked to add another commitment to your overburdened schedule, just say no.

BE POSITIVE. If you continually remind yourself you can't change your tension-filled life, you probably won't. By feeding yourself a constant flow of negative thoughts, you create anxiety in your life. Say to yourself, "I will try," or "I can do it."

DON'T MAJOR IN MINOR THINGS. Some things in life you can't control. Don't try to change something you can't. You only waste energy and produce tension when you become obsessed over uncontrollable things.

SHOW YOUR EMOTIONS. Don't keep your emotions locked inside yourself. You may look calm, cool, and collected on the outside, but inside you're not. Locked up emotions may bring ulcers or something worse.

TREAT YOURSELF. Without going overboard, factor in a means to reward yourself. The reward will lift your spirits, and reduce another stressor.

Are you in the Myrtle Beach area? – Maybe going to an appointment at the VA Clinic, or vacationing, or just playing tourist in the area and looking for a place to have breakfast or lunch, or just see something militarily unique? You might want to try the Veterans Café & Grille (less than 2 miles from the VA Clinic) located at 3544 Northgate Road in Myrtle Beach. It has become a 'mini-military museum' and is very popular amongst the veteran and civilian communities.



Like many small businesses, the Café has been struggling. Us veterans, especially those that live reasonably close, can help by stopping by and buying a meal, or even making a donation

It is Inevitable – I can't tell you how many people I know/have met that work crazy hours, won't retire or change jobs because "they are too valuable to the company and no one can do the job as well as they can"! I have news for you!

If you die today, you will obviously be replaced. If you retire today, you will be replaced. If the company/organization has a change in direction, or down-sizes, and you are not prepared for the change, you will be replaced! For many reasons, YOU WILL BE REPLACED!

As certain as death itself, one day you will be replaced and it DOESN'T MATTER if the person replacing you does the job as well/efficiently as you, just as long as the end results are satisfactory to the

company/organization. It DOES NOT matter how many awards, accolades, citations you, or your section, earned. Naturally, it is important to you, but not necessarily your replacement, or the people you worked for. All they usually want is satisfactory results.

You should not be basing your future life on “how much the job/company needs me”! Because the inevitability of the situation is, that someday you will be replaced!

Law expands Veteran housing benefits

WASHINGTON – Many Veterans may find themselves moving to a new address as they take advantage of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) expanded [home loan program](#), which now includes additional benefits for eligible borrowers.

VA is currently implementing [Public Law 116-315](#) containing three key loan provisions for Vietnam War era Veterans, eligible National Guard members, and service members, Veterans and certain surviving spouses with VA-guaranteed loans.

“The law, known as the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 offers new and renewed homeownership possibilities,” said Acting VA Under-Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy. “These few changes can have a significant impact on our current homeowners, especially for those who were previously ineligible but now have the opportunity to use the benefits they have earned.”

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, an estimated 35 million people will relocate this year, with most taking place between the start of the peak season for moving in May through September. It’s possible that these numbers could increase with the following expansions to the program:

****Expanded criteria for eligibility among Vietnam Era Veterans to those whose wartime service began on or after Nov. 1, 1955. The previous start date to qualify for the VA home loan benefit as a Vietnam Era Veteran was Feb. 28, 1961.**

****Enhanced access to service members and some Veterans of the National Guard. The new statutory authority extends eligibility to members of the National Guard who have been mobilized to perform full-time guard duty for at least 90 cumulative days, with 30 days of that service being consecutive.**

****Service members, Veterans and certain survivors with VA-guaranteed home loans or VA direct loans whose residences have been substantially damaged or destroyed in an area that has been declared a major disaster by the President are now eligible to be charged a first time use funding fee on a VA-guaranteed loan rather than a subsequent use funding fee. The borrower’s next VA-guaranteed loan must be for the repair of the damaged or destroyed residence or purchase or construction of a new home closed within three years of the Presidential declaration of the disaster.**

For more information go to [VA’s Loan Guaranty page](#)

Moving and Politics- Are you aware that you’re moving from one state to another has implications that effect the face of Congressional politics. Case in point; with all the people moving last and this year. For 2022 House elections, seven (7) states are going to lose a seat in the House, five (5) will gain one seat and one state, TX, will gain (2) seats. It remains to be seen how this will effect Republican/Democrat numbers.

VA Temporary Financial Relief – Have you been overpaid by the VA for any reason and you were making payments back to the VA? If so, because of COVID, the VA is allowing you to delay these payments until after September 30th. This is even if you receive notices from the VA that payment is due now.

****If you borrowed from the VA and are having trouble meeting your obligations due to COVID involved financial hardships. Just call the VA at 877-827-3702.**

****If me you are having/ making overpayment payments, or are receiving payment notices. Call the VA Debt Management Center at 800-827-0648.**

****If you are having problems meeting healthcare co-payment debts? Call the VA Health Resource Center at 866-400-1238**

Did you serve in the former Soviet Base in Karshi-Khanabad Uzbekistan (K-2)? From Post 9-11 through 2005? This base was a hotbed of dangerous chemical weapon remnants, depleted uranium and other hazardous. 15,000 US Troops occupied or transited through the base. Many have now developed symptoms and illnesses consistent with toxic exposure and radiation. In 2015 an Army study showed the risk of cancer to be 500% more likely among K2 Veterans. Studies estimate that 75% of K-2 veterans will develop some type of toxic exposure related illness. **Here's the kicker – The VA continues to deny these veterans needed benefits because Uzbekistan is not listed under Chapter 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for known toxic exposure sites.**

What can you do? Here's a prime example of your need to write your Congressman and urge them to push the VA to recognize the hazards of K-2 and help the 15,000 troops who were exposed.

QUILT of VALOR – In the last issue I had an article on the Quilt of Valor Organization and the good work they do for veterans. Pictured below is **District 7 Post 10804** during one of their **MONTHLY** Quilt of Valor presentation ceremonies. This event is well received, greatly appreciated by the recipients and their guests, greatly appreciated by the Quilt of Valor Organization and makes for a tremendous "Community Service" project for your post.

If your post is looking for a great project to take on? Contact your area Quilt of Valor Chapter and start a program that fits well with your veteran population.

PS: You don't have to do this monthly like Post 10804 does. You can do every couple of months, quarterly, semi-annually.



For the last six (6) months, Post 10804 has been hosting Quilt of Valor presentations to veterans, nominated by someone, for their military service during times of conflict. Recipients do not have to be VFW members to be eligible for this recognition. So far in 2021, over 90 veterans have received a Quilt of Valor at a Post 10804 presentation

Picture 1: Incoming Commander Mike Mishoe accepts a Quilt of Valor Certificate of Appreciation from Kathleen Williams, the Myrtle Beach Shorebirds Quilt of Valor regional organization Chairperson.

Picture 2: Are some of the 16 veterans who received a Quilt of Valor at the May 22nd ceremony.

SPECIAL THANKS to Post 10804 member JOHN BROUGH, a Veterans Welcome Home and Resource Center volunteer and a Quilt of Valor member for his work in putting together these monthly presentations that mean so much to our veterans.



Members of Lake Murray Post 6740 applaud the hard work and dedication of their Post Commander GINGER GRAHAM at a recent ceremony in her honor.

Want to leave something to the VFW in your will for after you departed for that big post in the sky? It is easy. All you have to do is add this to your will: I give, devise and bequeath to Veterans of Foreign Wars (list National HQ, Department or Post info here), their Tax ID #, _____ % of my estate, or the sum of \$ _____, or the following described property _____, or _____ % of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate.

NOTE: Most of the VFW does not have the resources to handle the bequeath of property (a house/land) personal property (car, furnishings, boat, etc). It might be a good idea to discuss with someone at the level you wish to bequeath to, your plans on what you plan on leaving something to the VFW and see if this is practical for the recipient. The BEST thing you can do is leave a monetary donation with an exact specified amount.

DID YOU KNOW....That in 2020, there were over 60,000 VFW members who did NOT renew their annual membership. We don't know the reason many did not, but many were just because "They Forgot". For all you annual members out there. End the forgetfulness involved with yearly payments!! Become a LIFE MEMBER!!!! You can even do it on the installment plan. Here's how it works..

AGE	One Time Payment	Installment Plan Initial Payment
	11 Monthly Payments of	
31-40	\$425.00	\$45
	\$38.64	
41-50	\$410.00	\$45
	\$37.27	

51-60	\$375.00	\$45
\$34.09		
61-70	\$335.00	\$45
\$30.45		
61-70	\$290.00	\$45
\$26.36		
71-80	\$225.00	\$45
\$20.45		
81 & Over	\$170.00	\$45
\$15.45		

CONTACT YOUR POST To change your Membership to a LIFE MEMBERSHIP!

*****DID YOU KNOW? – That there are 155 VA National Cemeteries and if you are eligible. You can be buried/interred at any one of your choosing!**

BEWARE of VA “CLAIM-SHARKS” – The VA wants you to know that there is an ever-increasing number of individuals and groups who are UNACCREDITED VA disability claims representatives!

These people offer to help you file for a VA claim, or file for you to get increased disability compensation. But, they charge you for their services. Sometimes up to **FIVE TIMES** more that you would receive in compensation. These “Claim-Sharks” are on the rise due to the many claims offices being shut-down because of COVID-19. These claim-suckers will promise things such as;

- *Guaranteed raise in disability compensation
- *Telling veterans they can star for free, but free doesn’t last long
- *Providing ‘coaching’ during your VA disability claims process.

The VA, the VFW, American Legion and many Veterans Resource Centers all have trained claims representatives. Even though many offices remain closed. You can still call or email that office and leave a message and someone will get back to you. All will help you file your VA disability claim, or compensation increase request **FOR FREE!** All you need to do is go to www.va.gov/org/apps/accreditation to check if a group has VA a credibility. Or, go to www.vfw.org/nvs to find a VFW accredited service officer.

When told by someone, or some group, that they can help you with your VA compensation claim. **Your first question to them should be – Are you a VA approved claims representative?**

THE NEW VA CLINIC IN NORTH CHARLESTON IS OPEN AND READY TO SERVE AMERICA’S VETERANS!!

COOTIES - “Keep em’ smilin’ in Beds of White” – Is the national motto of the Military Order of the COOTIES!. This motto has been greatly challenged since the start of 2020 with no visitors allowed in VA Hospitals, Veterans Homes, Retirement Homes or even home-care. The Cooties are renowned for their in-facility visits and their ability to cheer-up fellow veterans. Since the start of the pandemic, the Cooties have had to resort to other means of contact for their hospitalized/restricted veterans. Pup Tent (the Cootie version of a post) Cooties resorted to sending cards and flowers and phone calls. This, for now, is good, but not the way they like to operate.

The Cooties are very involved with the National Home for Children. A pandemic project they took on was to remodel the Home's Child Care Center. The Cooties collected almost \$8,000 for this project and set to work. Another motto of the 9,000+ membership is: Closer than a Sister or Brother, Busier than a Bee! If you would like more info on the Cooties or to join a local Pup-Tent. You can contact the MOC at: www.lotcs.org, or supremehqmoc@lotcs.org, or in SC at vfwsc.org/cooties.

A great time was had by all In Beaufort where the Sand Fleas of Pup Tent #1 were the host the SC MOC/MOCA Grand Convention. There was plenty of fun and frolic; a wonderful banquet on Saturday night; and there was even a bit of work accomplished. As usual -- Grand Provost Marshall Paul D. Lyles was out-n-about and substantial fines were levied and collected.

Past State Commander/Past Grand Commander Bill Havelin was the installing officer for the MOC and Past Supreme President /Fifth Supreme President Penny Cacoulidis was the installing Officer for the MOCA. It is believed that Randy Mechling is the very first male to be elected to the office of Grand MOCA President which is indeed an honor for SC.

*Grand Commander -- Lee English
Grand Senior Vice -- Erik Rothering
Grand Junior Vice -- Betty Hilliard
Grand Chaplain -- Joe Moravcik*

*Grand President -- Randy Mechling
Grand Senior Vice President -- Dana Alves
Grand Junior Vice President -- Shirley Cummings
Grand MOCA Chaplain -- Mary Cromer*



Lee English



Randy Mechling



MOC Officers



MOCA Officers

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Department of South Carolina for supporting the Cooties during this very crazy year. May the newly elected and appointed officers of the VFW and its Auxiliary as well as the MOC/MOCA have a Covid-free year and may all your goals be met or exceeded...

Yours in the L.O.T.C.S.,
James R. "Smokey" Stover
Grand Commander
Grand of South Carolina

BUDDY POPPY's – For most posts, the Poppy giveaway is the predominant means (and easiest way) to raise money for their Post Relief Funds. All it takes is a one or more giveaway locations and a couple/few members of your post giving as little as two hours of their time. Many posts have mastered the Poppy system and have sufficient funds to help a veteran or a veteran's family when they come asking. UNFORTUNATELY; there are posts out there that don't do "the Poppy thing" and therefore have little or no Relief Funds available when a veteran asks for help.

Sadly, by not participating in the Poppy purchase program. That post makes itself ineligible for any All State or All American consideration and pretty much takes itself out of any consideration for the Department Outstanding Post Award.

One thing for a post to keep in mind is that even though the Buddy Poppy program is designed to support your Post Relief Fund or your post donations to the National Home for Children. There is nothing in the Manual of Procedure that prevents your post from using part of your Poppy proceeds for your Post General Fund.



Bill La Monte Post 10804 show off a \$100.00 bill he received (not his 1st one) while distributing Poppy's at a Cherry Grove grocery store the day before Memorial Day. For five (5) hours of his time, he collected \$723.00 for his post.

IMPORTANT DATES IN THE STATE THRU DECEMBER 2021

JULY

- 7 – Staff meeting at HQ
- 17/18 – School of Instruction in Columbia
- 24 – District 2 School of Instruction

AUGUST

- 14 – National Code Talkers Day
- 18 – Staff Meeting at HQ
- 28 – District 7 School of Instruction

September

- 3/4 – Sports Clips Membership Drive at Darlington Race Course
- 8 – Staff Meeting at HQ
- 17 – POW MIA Day
- 18 – US Air Force birthday
- 23-26 Department Commander visits
- 29 – VFW Birthday (1899)**

OCTOBER

- 1-2-3 – Cootie Grand Scratch
- 9 – Council of Administration in Columbia
- 13 – US Navy Birthday
- 16 – District 2 meeting

20 – Staff Meeting at HQ
30 – Trunk-or-Treat at Department HQ

NOVEMBER

3- Staff meeting at HQ
10 – US Marine Corps Birthday
11 – Veterans Day
18-21 Southern Conference

DECEMBER

1 – Staff Meeting at HQ
7 – Pearl Harbor Day & Wreath Laying at Yorktown
13 – National Guard Birthday
18 – Wreaths Across America

You are at a regularly scheduled District or Post meeting and the Commander, Sr Vice and Jr Vice are NO SHOWS! Does the District or Post cancel the meeting and everyone goes home? **NO!**, by the requirements of the Manual of Procedure Section 218 (a)(4) and 418 (a)(4), the District or Post has to elect a temporary Commander to conduct the meeting. This commander is called a **Commander Pro-Tempore**

Greetings from Your 2021-2022 Commander – DWIGHT HORA

Comrades and Auxiliary Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of South Carolina,

I would like to first recognize our Past State Commander, Ted Tufts, and our Past Department President, Cathy Farley. I thank them for their service to our organization and congratulate them on a job well done for making over 100% in Membership. To our Auxiliary, congratulations on continuing to be at the top with keeping 1st place in membership for all departments in the National Auxiliary.



I am humbled that the Comrades of this Department have chosen me to lead the Department for the next year. I thank you for all you have done and what you will continue to do. Together we will

rejuvenate the purpose for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of South Carolina and make our Department stronger and better to serve each other, veterans, their families, widows, and orphans.

We have an exciting year ahead of us. Every 14 years we sponsor the Southern Conference. This year we will be sponsoring the Southern Conference in Hilton Head, SC in November 2021. Our Department Conference is scheduled for the 3rd weekend in February 2022, and our Department Convention is scheduled for the 3rd weekend in June 2022. We have spaced these events out to ease some of the financial strain on our members.

I ask that all members do their best to participate in the school of instruction on 17-18 July at the Double Tree in Columbia. We have a great schedule planned and the Department will be hosting a hospitality room on Saturday for individual questions and camaraderie. There will be more than just the usual briefs. We have a great plan for some practical application for getting some knowledge on the Online Membership System (OMS) and our website with the district report cards.

During the year, the VFW and Auxiliary will be visiting posts throughout the state together. This will provide members and Post leaders to ask questions and talk with the Department leaders. These schedules will be put out in advance so you will all know when we are coming and I ask that you share this with your members so they may be there so we can say hello and get to know those that work hard for our Department.

I am honored to stand before you as the State Commander and thankful that you have the trust and confidence in me to continue to move this Department forward with our Auxiliary. Thank you all for what you do, and I look forward to seeing you throughout the year.

Yours in Comradeship,

Dwight Hora
Commander

A word from your Department Senior Vice - Commander – ED STEFANAK, Jr

What a remarkable year we had for the 2020-2021 VFW year! A big congratulations goes out to all of the posts who did such tremendous community service work, and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, were also able to achieve 100% membership. Another congratulations goes out to Commander Ted Tufts, who provided strong leadership for the Department of South Carolina. It was amazing to see so many comrades and auxiliary members at our State Convention; I hope that everyone had a great time. To both of our National Representatives, Programs Director Lynn Rolf III and National Auxiliary Conductress Brenda Bryant: thank you for all of the information and knowledge you shared while visiting South Carolina, including some of our VFW posts. Last, but not least, congratulations to our State Auxiliary for having such an amazing year: number one in membership nationally is such a fantastic accomplishment! You were led by a great leader, President Cathey Farley; to all of our auxiliary members, it was a job well done. Keep up the good work and I wish our new President, Kate Brock, and our new Commander, Dwight Hora, all of the best in 2021-2022.

Our Department School of Instruction (SOI) will be held at the Doubletree Hotel on July 17th – 18th. It is highly recommended for everyone to attend, if they are able to do so. This is your opportunity to

learn what needs to be done for this upcoming year; it is also a chance to ask questions of our Department Chairmen. Additionally, it is an important way to become more knowledgeable, learn about any changes to our programs, and/or provide you with an opportunity to have your questions answered.

It was very rewarding to see all of the teamwork within Districts and Posts last year; I hope that we maintain these efforts. Even though we are in competition with one another, we have one common goal: helping veterans and our communities. It was great to see all of the innovative ideas that posts did to be able to reach out and help the veterans in their communities during pandemic restrictions. These efforts prove to our communities and our veterans that we are dedicated to serving them.

Lastly, on a personal note, thank you all for your support and kind words over the year and at the recent state convention. I would not be in the position of Senior-Vice Commander if I did not have your help and support. Thank you for trusting in me to represent the great Department of South Carolina. I am looking forward to working with Dwight, to help him reach his many goals. I wish you all the absolute best for this upcoming year!

A word from your Department Jr. Vice-Commander - JIM FOX

I would like to thank the members of this state for their support. I will continue to give my full attention to all comrades. This year there are many activities coming up. Please pay attention to the Department Web Site – VFWSC.org.

COVID is almost over and we need all posts to be meeting once a month. Get back out there in your community and support your local veterans and their families. Always feel free to contact me anytime.

MEET YOUR NEW DEPARTMENT VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER: CSM ® JOHN S. JOHNSON (JJ)

JJ was born in South Philadelphia Naval Hospital and raised in Souther California.

He graduated from Liberty University and joined the U.S. Army where he served over 32 years as an Army Engineer.

His military deployments include: Two tours in Iraq, two tours in Afghanistan, Egypt, Panama, Thailand, Korea, and Kwajalein.



Some of his military decorations include: Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Silver De Fleury Medal, Gold German Armed Forces Medal, Order of the Saint Barbara Medal, Afghanistan & Iraq Campaign Medals.

JJ has been a Life Member of the VFW since 2006, past Commander of VFW Post 4171 and past Department Services Officer for the State of Colorado. He is a member of the Veterans Motorcycle Club.

His Girlfriend is Nicole Lassman (VFW Auxiliary Life Member). Their German Sheppard is Finn Liam

You can contact JJ at 803-647-2442 or John.Johnson34@va.gov or at 6437 Garners Ferry Rd, Suite 1124, Columbia SC 29209

MEET YOUR 2021-2022 DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY PRESIDENT – KATE BROCK



I can't believe how fast last year went. I am so excited to be YOUR Department President. You may have guessed that Veterans mean the world to me, and I am counting on all of you to assist them wherever and whenever possible. Let your Auxiliary's know what you need them to do and how they can help. We must continue the fight for benefits for all our military and veteran families, assist the families dealing with the separations of deployment and be supportive of all when the veteran returns home. I am eager to work with Dwight and the VFW to make it happen. We are Family, Taking Flight for our Veterans. The Auxiliary will be embracing technology and modern methods to carry out our tradition of providing "Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes".



AROUND THE DEPARTMENT 2021 CONVENTION

A VERY SPECIAL MOMENT



The SC Auxiliary's "Special Project" this year was the VETERANS WELCOME HOME AND RESOURCE CENTER of North Myrtle Beach. Here, SC Auxiliary President Cathey Farley presents a check for **\$10,400** to Scott Dulebohn, resource center director. Looking on is State Judge Advocate Paul Lyles



A couple of our usual vendors and the registration table



COVID shots were being offered. A couple of our "brave" takers



R E S P E C T for those veterans who could not be here





Two National Officers joined S.C. for YOUR Department Convention. They were:

Brenda Bryant – VFW Auxiliary National Conductress

Lynn W. Rolf III – VFW National Director of Programs



THE TOP 7 STATE AWARDS WENT TO:

*Samuel U. Roach – Best Post Commander – **Theonis S. Brown, Post 4262***

*Best District Commander – **Jeffrey Hunter, District 4***

*Melvin L. “Mel” Elmore – Best Post Quartermaster – **Joe Simmons, Post 641***

*Best District Quartermaster – **Charles Holloway, District 2***

*James W. Cothran – Best Post – **Walter N. Brownell, Post 3137***

*Louis Thornton – Outstanding VFW Member – **Comrade, Reginald Bell**
Clyde Lindsay – Outstanding Community Service – **Gandy-Griffin Post 4262***

Pictured below are the recipients of these awards, or their stand-ins.



All State Team of Post and District Commanders:

Post 3137 – **REX A. BROWN**

Post 10420 – **TODD A. HAVILAND**

Post 8346 – **DON C. CRISCOE**

Post 6740 – **GINGER L. GRAHAM**

District 1 – **JANET CHISOLM-RICHARD**

District 2 – **ERIK ROTHERING**

District 7 – **MARGO SHERIDAN**

Post 6932 – **DWIGHT E. TALBERT**

Post 11079 – **CHRISTINE K. ROGERS**

Post 6561 – **CLENTON GILLIAM**

Post 12136 – **JAMES S. TAYLOR**

Post 10624 – **WILLIAM KING**

All State Team of District and Posts Quartermasters:

District 1 – **JOHN D. MELLERT**, Post 3433

District 2 – **CHARLES HOLLOWAY**, Post 6561

District 7 – **CAROLYN MISHOE**, Post 10804

Post 8346 – **RICHARD J. HENRY**

Post 6740 – **GARY C. LANDRY**

Post 10420 – **SCOTT E. LOFTUS**

Post 6932 – **JIMMY L. BATES**

Post 10624 – **STEVE HENDERSON**

Post 11079 – **CASSANDRA THOMPSON**

Post 6561 – **CHARLES HOLLOWAY**

Post 3137 – **DENNIS M. HAMILTON**

Post 12136 – **ROBERT M. SUZANSKY**

Commander's Membership Challenge

Membership winners – Post 445 – **John Coy**, Adjutant & Post 3181 **Micah Allen**, Quartermaster

Commander's Challenge

10-150 members – Post **10980** Eutawville – Commander – **Kurt Knouse**

151-400 members – Post **12136** Indian Land – Commander – **James Taylor**

District 7 – Commander – **Margo Sheridan**

Recruiting 5 to 9 Members:

9 members – James R. Beaty Post 6089, James M. Brooks Post 15042, Rusty L. Clark Post 15042, David L. Miller Post 3181

8 members – William R. Banister Post 1845, Christine K. Rogers Post 11079

7 members – Dwight Hora Post 8760, Michael P. Mishoe Post 10804, James C. Robinson Post 4262, Richard G. Slonim Post 445

6 members – Charles A. Holloway II Post 6740, Gerald T. Pothier Post 10256, Charlie M. Robinson Post 3746, Erik O. Rothering Post 641

5 members – Ira C. Adams Post 2889, Gilbert M. Baker Post 3096, Richard N. Bell Post 4262, Erba C. Chavis Post 9037

Recruiting 10 to 14 Members:

13 members – Edward A. Mura Post 10420

12 members – Jay G. Hart Post 4262, Reden C. Woodberry Post 9509

10 members – 10420 Hugh Gunter Jr. Post 8738, Todd A. Haviland, Gary C. Landry Post 6740

Recruiting 15 to 24 Members:

23 members – Gregory J. Miller Jr (deceased) Post 3433

17 members – Andrew L. Steanson Post 3433

Recruiting 25 to 49 Members:

25 members - Augustus Singleton Post 4262 & John Penman Post 6740

Recruiting 75 to 100 Members:

92 members – DENNIS M. HAMILTON Post 3137

District Special Recognition Award – DISTRICT 1 with 38 recruiters

Post Special Recognition Award – POST 8760 Beaufort – 11 recruiters

VFW National Citation for Post's Community Service – Nick Camera Chairman

Post 445, 3137, 3433, 5091, 7723, 8760, 9509, 10256, 10624, 12102, 641, 4262, 6561, 6740, 8346, 8738, 9037, 11079, 1845, 3354, 5208, 5932, 5934, 6087, 6734, 6830, 8131, 9273, 10058, 10330, 2889, 3746, 5936, 6381, 6732, 8990, 9138, 12136, 3096, 3181, 3609, 11251, 6091, 6444, 6500, 10319, 10420, 10804, 3447, 9349, 9539, 2779, 5877, 6304, 6932, 7607, 8166, 10595, 10601, 10729, 10980

VFW National Citation for Post's Teacher Participation – Ginger Graham

Post 445, 3137, 3433, 5091, 9509, 10256, 10624, 12102, 641, 4262, 6561, 6740, 8346, 8738, 11079, 6089, 6734, 9273, 5928, 6732, 12136, 6444, 6500, 10420, 10804, 3447, 9539, 6932

VFW National Citation for Post's Patriot's Pen Participation – Kenneth Dennings

All Posts in District 1 & 2, Posts 3354, 6089, 6734, 6830, 9273, 5928, 6732, 9138, 12136, 6444, 6500, 10420, 10804, 3447, 9349, 9539, 2779, 60932

VFW National Citation for Post's Voice of Democracy Participation – Charles Holloway

All Posts in Districts 1 & 2, Posts 1845, 6734, 6830, 9273, 9138, 12136, 3181, 3412, 6444, 6500, 10420, 10804, 3447, 9349, 9539, 2779, 6932, 10980

VFW National Citation for Post's Scouting Participation – John D. Mellert

VFW National Program Director Rolf had a few comments at the business meeting:

- *Of the 70 Posts in the state. There are still a few that do not have computer capability to judge their VOD/PP nominee submissions.
- *Because of a lack of teacher participation in the Teacher Award category. This coming year, there will be only ONE category for teacher nominations VS the usual three.
- *Posts are not required to submit a Teacher nomination in order to qualify for All American status.
- *In S.C. 158 veterans received almost \$300,000 in assistance under the "Unmet Needs" program.
- *Under the "Help-A-Hero" program, 25 S.C. veterans received scholarships totaling \$121,000
- *In S.C. there are 55 "adopted units". NONE are valid because they have not been properly reported to National. (the state VMS Chairperson must submit info to National).
- *Posts must complete tax applications to be eligible for being recognized as a private organization.
- *Does your Post NOT have a web-site. VFW National will assist you in set-up and pay for the first year of your web site operation.
- *There are various Special Recognition Citations available through VFW National
- *Know anyone with mental illness issues? They can go to vfw.org/mental-wellness for help.

A couple of notes from the business meeting:

- ***District Commanders and Adjutants** – If you see one of your posts is not keeping current with Their All American Dashboard? YOU can make post entries for them.
- *There was a drastic lack of Legislative Reporting throughout the posts in the state.
- *Almost 50% of all posts in the state were NOT eligible to vote during the elections because they had not paid their Delegate Fees. Another 10 posts who had paid their delegate fees were not present for the state elections.
- *A sad occurrence...Less than 50% of the posts attended the State Convention
- *Labor Day weekend. There will be a recruiting drive at DARLINGTON RACEWAY. If you are interested in recruiting/VFW information providing that weekend? Contact state headquarters.

The last item on a state convention agenda is the election of and swearing-in of new officers. There was only one contested position and that was for Jr. Vice-Commander.

YOUR 2021-2022 ELECTED OFFICERS ARE:

Commander – **DWIGHT HORA**
Sr. Vice-Commander – **ED STANAFK, Jr.**
Jr. Vice-Commander – **JIM FOX**
Quartermaster – **ELLA CALVERT**
Chaplain – **WILTON FOWLER**

Judge Advocate – **“Judge” PAUL LYLES**
Surgeon – **GENE BRYANT**

AUXILIARY OFFICERS:

President – **KATE BROCK**

Sr Vice-President – **BETH TUFTS**

Secretary – **LISA LEVANGIE-COLON**

Chaplain – **DONNA MARIE KING**

Guard – **SHAREN PETERSON**

Chief of Staff – **AUDREY SMITH**

Jr Vice-President – **LAURA JO SWEETSIR**

Treasurer – **JANE FOX**

Conductress – **MARIETTA HILL**

Patriotic Instructor - **BARBARA SHULER**

Historian – **CAROL LONG**



AND NOW a WORD, or TWO, FROM YOUR IMMEDIATE PAST COMMANDER – TED TUFTS

Congratulations to Commander Dwight Hora and President Kate Brock and all the incoming 2021-22 officers. I wish you well and great success and pledge my support to help you achieve your goals this coming year.

Congratulations to our Auxiliary for achieving their goal of 104%+++ in membership. It has been a pleasure to work with President Cathey Farley and all the Auxiliary this past year. Cathey is a great supporter of the Department of South Carolina VFW, and I give her my sincere thanks. Congratulations again, Cathey on your VFW Auxiliary accomplishments.

I hope everyone who attended the 86th Department of South Carolina Convention held 3-6 June had a wonderful weekend and enjoyed your stay.



It was great visiting with our National Representative Lynn W. Rolf, Director, VFW Programs and VFW Auxiliary National Conductress Brenda Bryant. We had some great conversations, and a lot of good information was passed to the department.

This has been a crazy year and one we all will not soon forget. We faced a tough crisis, but we prevailed, and the Department continued to stay on the move.

For me, it has been a great learning experience but has gone by too quickly. I am immensely proud of what the Commanders and Members have accomplished this year and what they have done for the Veterans. I have enjoyed working with all of you and thank you for your support.

We have worked hard and accomplished much this year. Some of our goals were easy and some not so much so but here are some of the highlights.

We presented twelve 75 year and one 50-year post longevity certificates from the Commander-in-Chief. Congratulations on their great accomplishments.

We have stayed ahead of last year's membership numbers which means we are continuing to increase our membership. The Department reached our goal of 100% before the June Conference and for this I say a sincere "Thank You" for your hard work.

Working with the Community Service Chairman, Nick Camera, we designed and activated online reporting for all Community Service events. Thank you for all your time and effort, Nick.

We eliminated paper report cards and went to an online report that is current and updated regularly.

We updated the headquarters computer network, increasing the projected life of the network.

Our Line officers visited numerous parts of the state presenting information at Department Roundtable gatherings.

Blood drives were held by the Department and many Posts.

Post Food Drives were numerous, and hundreds of pounds and thousands of dollars of worth of food were donated to our Veterans in need.

Again, it has been a great pleasure to have the opportunity to be your State Commander. You truly did get out there and "Talk it UP!" and it shows. It has been a great honor for me to serve you as your 2020-2021 Department Commander. I could not have wished for a better group of Comrades or Auxiliary to work with. Thank you!

Ted

Bill La Monte

Writer/Editor

4william6@gmail.com

252-308-3507

2 attachments

***Ideas for, and seeking help for, a standardized School of Instruction**

***Pictures from around the 2021 State Convention**

America without her Soldiers would be like God without his Angels !!

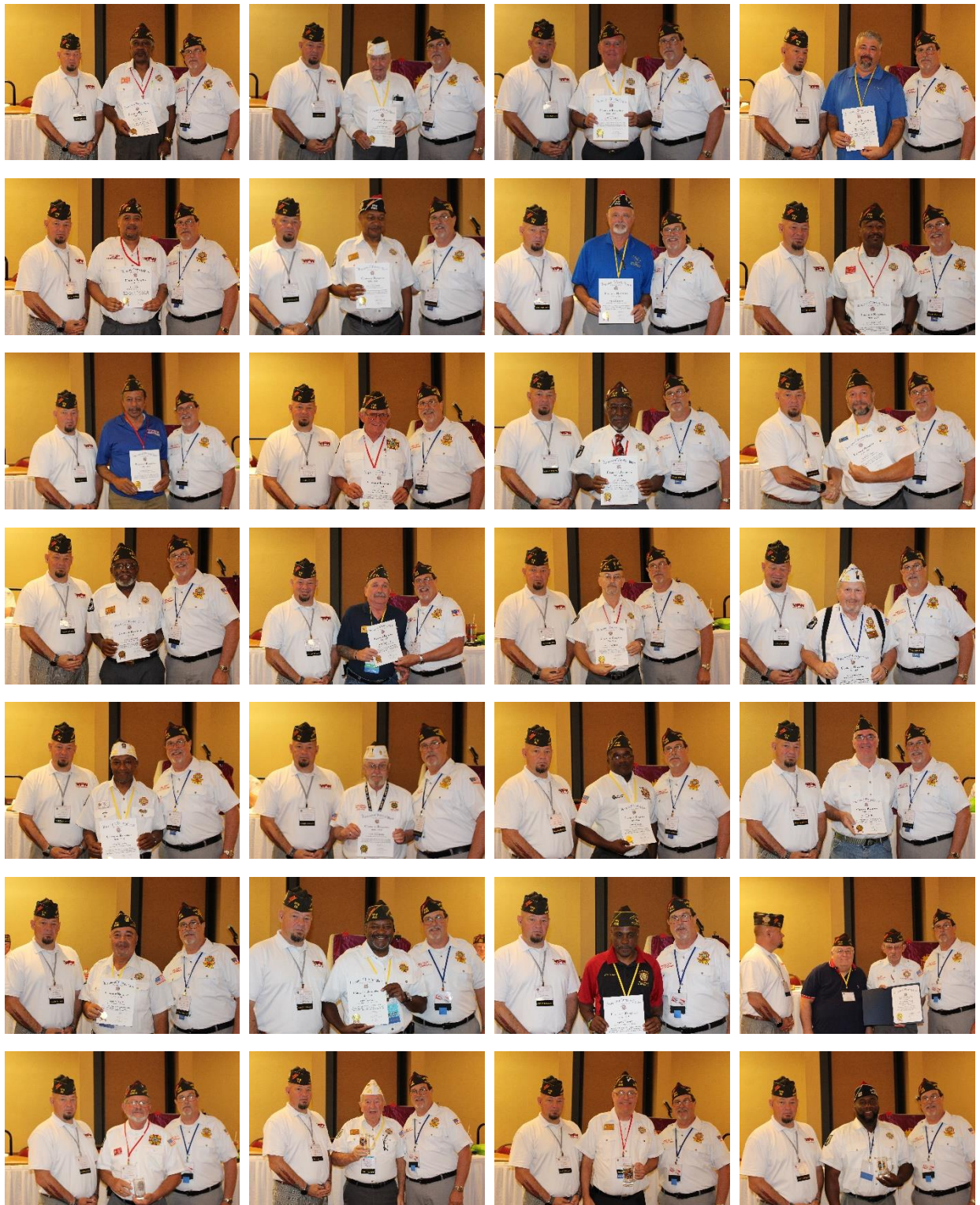
Claudia Pemberton



Commander Hora's 2021-2022 theme - "WE ARE FAMILY"

Part of the Department's way of saying THANKS to the comrades and auxiliary who did things for their Post, District or State is state recognition in the way of some sort of an award. Pictured below is everyone who received such recognition at the convention, if I was the one who took your picture. As with any State VFW event, many of the awardees were unable to attend and someone accepted an award for them.









DISTRICT / POST COMMANDER'S
Something you might consider for your
SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION
A Summary of Duties & Responsibilities

The Manual of Procedure requires District Commanders to conduct a School-of-Instruction for elected Post officers. The issue is, that the manual does not tell/suggest what is to be taught at the Sol, nor how do you address all the elected positions for training. District Commanders are left to their own resources to decide what is to be presented at the Sol. District Commanders do receive training information and help through the Department School of Instruction.

This suggested guide is provided for District Commanders who might want a standardized training format for their Sol.

COMMANDER –

- *Committees – By appointing a committee, the Commander becomes an ex-officio member (an automatic part of that committee) and is responsible for ensuring the committee chair-persons proper performance and success of that committee
- *Approves the distribution of post funds by way of an authorized payment voucher or payment order
- *Has the authority to approve/allow 'guests' to attend a post meeting.
- *Ensures the accuracy of post accomplishments on the Department Report Card

SR VICE –

- *Should be fairly informed as to all the duties and responsibilities of the Commander
- *Should be tuned into everything important happening at/with the post
- *Be ready to represent the Post should the Commander not be available for any reason
- *Stay current on the Post Report Card as documented by the Department. Keep Commander informed of any discrepancies.

JR VICE –

- *Should familiarize themselves with the Commanders duties and responsibilities
- *Be prepared to represent the Post at a District or Department meeting should the Commander and Sr Vice not be available
- *Be familiar with the importance of the Post Report Card and stay engaged with post compliance.

COMMANDER PRO-TEMPORE –

- *A person elected by the post/district meeting attendees as the Commander for a meeting not attended by Commander, Sr or Jr Vice. Applies to Post or District meetings.

QUARTERMASTER –

- *Provide to Trustees with all records, files, and statements necessary to the proper performance of a post audit
- *Must sign for the approved disbursement of all post funds.
- *Provides monthly financial accounting of the Post to the membership

ADJUTANT –

- *In today's accounting world. The Adjutant is responsible for the accuracy of all documentation pertaining to the All-American Dashboard (national report-card).
- *Is the official keeper of all books and records of the post.
- *Responsible for the taking of, the correction of, and the distribution of minutes from all post meetings.
- *Assists the Commander in keeping the state Score-Card current and accurate

CHAPLAIN –

- *At post level, tries to keep in touch with sick and injured members. Visit as possible. Send a card to the ailing member letting them know they are being thought of by the post membership

JUDGE ADVOCATE –

- *Traditionally, a ceremonial position at post level. But could be tasked to look for sources of legal assistance should the post commander so deem necessary.

SURGEON –

- *You don't have to be medically qualified for this position. But as a general rule you should provide some sort of health and safety briefing at each post meeting (EX: remind everyone to get their flu shots, be careful driving, vacationing during the 101 days of summer) (EX2: New things happening with VA health care)

OFFICER OF THE DAY –

- *Required of every District/Post meeting to ensure only VFW members present at the meeting. The exception being the commander's authority to allow guests into a meeting.

TRUSTEE –

- *You are the financial safety eyes of the post. Make sure you are aware of what is expected of you when conducting quarterly audits. Know the audit form!
- *Are required to check the receipts and expenditures of the Quartermaster – monthly. Not just the quarterly inspections.
- *Conduct a quarterly audit no-later-than-30 days after the close of a quarter

SERVICE OFFICER –

- *Should know the name, phone, email of the nearest trained Service Officer or organization who can help veterans and their families in obtaining rightful entitlements from federal and state governments. Service Officer guidance can be found in the VFW Guide for Service Officers, and under general supervision of the Department Service Officer
- *SC VFW has a trained Service Officer and Assistant

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS –

*Are appointed by the Post Commander and should use every means necessary to satisfactorily perform the responsibilities of that committee. A good source of information for a chairperson is the Department Commander's Handbook. It has a good deal of helpful information on how to properly function as a chair-person.

Composed by: Bill La Monte

PS: What do you District & Post Commanders want in a School of Instruction? If there is anyone out there that has ideas for a standardized Sol? Please send them to me. I will compile them into a recommended training document and forward them to the Department Commander & Adjutant for their consideration of creating a Department-wide formalized School of Instruction. Who knows, we might create something that becomes a VFW standard.