

SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION

What is a School of Instruction? The purpose of a SOI is to train/educate Post officers. With that in mind, the Department of South Carolina would like each District to provide the following information to your Posts as a School of Instruction –

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Every Post officer should have a CURRENT version of the Manual of Procedure (only the Manual of Procedure outlines the responsibility of the Post position you have been elected to and in some cases, appointed to), your Districts By-Laws (if they have any), your Post By-Laws and your Post House Committee By-Laws (if they have any). It would be nice to also have or know how to access the State By-Laws.

MEMBERSHIP

Retaining – To retain a member, especially a new member, your Post and its officers need to, (1) make a new member feel welcome (2) find out their interests and see if there is something they can do to get involved (3) listen to them for possible new ideas (4) encourage getting involved.

Recruiting – (1) Do you encourage membership to recruit, especially new members (2) do have membership drives (3) do you offer incentives to potential new members (4) do you thoroughly check that DD 214 to make sure the potential new person is eligible for membership.

OFFICER TRAINING

It is important that every new officer thoroughly understand the duties and responsibilities they have signed up for, as defined in the Manual of Procedure Sec 218 (Post) and Sec 418 (District). There will be questions, make sure you have someone knowledgeable enough to answer at least the basic questions. Take notes on those you cannot answer and find the right answer. Hopefully, outgoing officers will make themselves available to help the newly elected.

DISTRICT/STATE REPORT CARD

It is imperative that all elected Post officers understand the importance of the Report Card. How it relates to meeting the State and National goals and the Post's ability to contend for 'All , State' or 'All American' honors. Post's must complete all items on the Report Card to be eligible for any sort of State or National recognition. More important than the recognition is the Report Card tells a commander if his/her Post is doing everything necessary to support their veterans and their local community.

POST CANTEEN/HOUSE COMMITTEE

New officers should know that Post Canteens/Canteen Managers and House Committees are not part of the National VFW and no regulatory guidance for such is provided by National. These are in-house operations that should be identified in a Post By-Laws, or locally developed operating procedures pertinent to your local operations.

POST VS AUXILIARY

New officers should be aware of the difference between the two and the responsibilities of each to each other. An Auxiliary can be an integral part of a Post, its operations, and finances, if the two organizations work together for the good of the Post.

COMMUNICATIONS

Everything that comes from National or State that is intended to get down to the membership level, should be disseminated to every Post member possible. A very small percentage of the members attend the monthly business meeting. So how do you, the Commander, tell the rest of the membership what is happening? The best bet is to have the email address of as many members as possible so you can forward new information to them. A 'webpage' is a great way to promote the Post and everything that is happening. A Post Facebook page also provides a tremendous information outlet. Post newsletters are also a powerful information tool. Now, the elected leadership and all members need to know that the communications network is a two-way street. If a member has a problem that cannot be solved at the Post level, it should be elevated to the District level by the Post Commander or Adjutant. If the District cannot fix/answer the problem, District forwards to State and if need be, State to National.

MONTHLY MEETINGS, DISTRICT MEETINGS, STATE CONFERENCES/CONVENTIONS, NATIONAL CONVENTION

The importance of all elected/appointed Post officers and Post members attending the monthly business meetings cannot be over-stressed. These meetings dispense that which is the heart and soul of your Post. Attending District or State meetings/events gives attendees the 'big picture' on what is happening in the VFW beyond what transpires at your Post. These meetings are a way to see the whole of the VFW in action. They are great learning tools and sources of encouragement for members to get involved at levels beyond the Post.

APPOINTED POSITIONS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

As a Post Commander you need to choose wisely when selecting your Adjutant, Surgeon, Service Officer, Judge Advocate and Officer of the Day. These selected persons need to know their responsibility under Section 218 and be willing to follow your leadership.

In selecting Committee Chairpersons, choose those who are willing to put in the work that is necessary to make for a successful committee. Important chairperson responsibility is required when dealing with civilian projects like Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, Teacher and Awards and recognition programs.