

General Order #5

March 2024

Desk of the State Commander

Washington State Department

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

This General Order serves to remind, inform, and guide our actions and commitments as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Please review the following directives and updates, ensuring our collective efforts align with our values and organizational requirements.

1. Upholding Our Standards:

Attention is directed towards National General Order 1 and Section 901 of the National Bylaws concerning the "Discipline of Members." Acts of Sexual Harassment, Racial or Sexual Discrimination, or any conduct prejudicial to good order will not be tolerated. All members must be treated with dignity and respect. We urge anyone witnessing or experiencing such behaviors to report them according to our established bylaws & procedures, ensuring our environment remains respectful and inclusive.

2. Nomination and Election Procedures:

Commanders must adhere to National Bylaws Section 217 regarding nominations and elections. Any nominations for absentees must include the nominee's written consent, submitted to the Adjutant before nominations commence.

3. Election Reminders for Post Commanders:

Post Officers are to be elected in April. Please prepare accordingly to ensure a smooth and transparent election process.

4. Delegate Elections:

As outlined in Article II; Sec 222 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure, delegate's and alternate's elections for conventions and meetings are to occur during the regular meeting in April. Delegate strength is determined by membership report as of March 31st.

5. Key Dates for March/April:

March 30: Deadline for Department Publications Contest entries.

April 1: Scout of the Year submissions due.

April 15: Claude Owens Hospital Volunteer and Humanitarian Awards submissions due.

* APRIL REMINDER: DISTRICTS PREPARE YOUR ANNUAL MEMORIAL

*MAY 4, The third annual VFW Day of Service kicks off on the first Saturday of May.

6. Celebrations and Acknowledgments:

Congratulations to Ben Offutt, our VOD state winner from District 6, for securing the 5th Place National Award and a \$5,000 prize. Our legislative efforts in early March have also been noteworthy, thanks to our Legislative Chair's diligent planning. As we continue visiting posts and districts, let's embrace our roots and traditions, mentoring new members along the way. Our commitment has kept our membership strong, and our voice in advocacy louder than ever.

7. Membership Drive and Goals:

Our goal to maintain a membership above 1 million is critical. With a current national rank of 10th, our efforts in welcoming **1130+** new members have been commendable. Let's keep pushing towards our target of **1,200** new members to meet the Commander in Chief's goal of **102%** by the fiscal year's end.

8. Since June, we've actively visited Posts and Districts, reaffirming our core values, and revitalizing our commitment beyond the challenges of the Covid era. It's crucial we not only mentor new members in the official duties and bylaws but also imbue them with our

organization's cherished traditions and rituals. Share your knowledge and experiences widely within your Post, across Districts, and throughout the Department whenever the chance arises.

9. The Youth Essay Theme for next year will be: "How Should Our Veterans Be Treated?" As supplied by current State Judge Advocate Frank Persa. Check the National VFW.org site posting for next year's VOD & Patriots Pen themes as they have been released!!

The recent testimony of our Commander in Chief Duane Sarmiento before Congress serves as a powerful reminder of our mission's importance. It underscores the necessity of amplifying our collective voice and maintaining our membership above 1 million to effectively advocate for veterans' rights. To support the Commander in Chief's goal of achieving a 102% membership rate by the fiscal year's end, our department must reach a minimum of **1,200** new & annual members. Currently

Currently ranking 10th nationally, our department has welcomed over **1,130+** new members, despite the loss of about **500 Life members** last year. This achievement is a testament to the dedicated efforts of our Department Membership Chair and department member team.

I am immensely proud of how each Post and District contributes to our mission, pushing our department to new heights this year. Thank you for your unwavering support of Veterans, the Military, and their families, and for all that you do for our community. Let's continue this momentum, embracing our role in serving Veterans and strengthening our collective voice."

"It's Veterans We Serve" Your dedication to veterans, military personnel, and their families does not go unnoticed. Thank you for your unwavering service and commitment.

"Be Excellent to Each Other!"

Fred Green
Department Adjutant

Craig Dougherty
Department Commander