



Department of Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars

DECEMBER 2020

GENERAL ORDERS

No. 5

2020 – 2021 Series

1. **2021 Mid-Winter Conference:** The Department of Texas VFW Mid-Winter Conference will be held at the Omni Corpus Christi Hotel (January 20-24, 2021). The Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher Awards Banquet will be held on board the U.S.S. Lexington on Saturday, January 23, 2021 (currently Banquet tickets are sold out). The "tentative" Conference agenda, hotel reservation link, Awards Banquet menu, are now posted on the Department of Texas VFW website: <https://www.texasvfw.org/upcoming-events>.
2. **Department of Texas VFW Headquarters Closed to Visitors:** Due to Travis County COVID-19 restrictions, the Texas VFW Headquarters office in Austin is closed to ALL visitors until Tuesday, December 15, 2020. You may request an "in-person appointment" by calling the office at 512-834-8535.
3. **The Texas VFW Foundation:** The Texas VFW Foundation is ready for the large influx of assistance claims for individual veterans who have lost wages or been adversely affected due to COVID-19 and the 2020 Hurricane season. Refer veterans to the Texas VFW Foundation website for financial assistance: <https://www.texasvfw.org/foundation>.
4. **Candidates for Department Office 2021-2022:**
 - State Commander, Norman Macey, Post 4816, Porter, D-17
 - State Senior Vice Commander, Lynn Toomer, Post 10429, Benbrook, D-21
 - State Junior Vice Commander, Larry Levy, Post 5873, New Boston, D-12
 - State Junior Vice Commander, Larry Sanders, Post 10241, Lytle, D-20
 - State Quartermaster, Dan West, Post 3413, San Marcos, D-5
 - State Judge Advocate, Keith King, Post 3278, Brownwood, D-8
 - State Surgeon, Gerard P. "Jerry" Greene, Post 6796, Dallas, D-3
 - State Chaplain, Timothy Anderson, Post 3894, Waxahachie, D-30
 - State Chaplain, Michael "Foy" Day, Post 4709, Conroe, D-17
 - State Chaplain, Carl Lilly, Post 8878, Wichita Falls, D-15
 - State Chaplain, Angel Ramirez, Post 4443, Austin, D-28

5. Candidates for National VFW Office 2020-2021:

- VFW National Jr. Vice Commander-in-Chief, Larry Velasquez, Jr., Post 8932, D-6
- VFW National Chaplain, Allen “Al” Lowe, Post 4008, D-14

6. VFW National Commander-in-Chief’s Homecoming:

The VFW National Commander-in-Chief’s Homecoming has been rescheduled for March 24-28, 2021, in Portsmouth, Virginia.

7. State Commander Homecoming: The Homecoming for State Commander Dick Shawver is scheduled for March 11-13, 2021. Location will be in San Antonio at VFW Post 2059 and agenda will be posted on the Department of Texas VFW website soon.

8. VFW Posts with 8-Liner Vendors: In the last few years, the Department of Texas VFW Headquarters staff has had the opportunity to look at two (2) different contracts that were signed by VFW Posts with an 8-liner vendor. Both of these contracts had the following paragraph in them: “At all times, Proprietor agrees to operate the Games and conduct redemption in full compliance with all city, county, state, and federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to Chapter 47 of the Texas Penal Code.”

In layman terms, this is a complex area of State Law in Texas. The key legislation is Penal Code Section 47.01(4). Sometimes 8-liners conform to the definition of this law. However, more often they do not. As per this law, 8-liners that are strictly used for amusement are legal. This means that the players can only win novelty items or cash prizes up to a maximum value of \$5. Any 8 liner that pays out cash more than \$5 is illegal.

So basically, as a Post, you are agreeing that any prizes will be in accordance with Chapter 47 of the Texas Penal Code. Chapter 47 includes language that exempts certain electronic machines solely for bona fide amusement purposes. They meet that definition if the “contrivance rewards the player exclusively with noncash merchandise prizes, toys, or novelties, or a representation of value redeemable for those items, that have a wholesale value available from a single play of the game or device of not more than 10 times the amount charged to play the game or device once or \$5, whichever is less.”

The Vendor of the machines is washing his hands if you get busted because within his contract you, the Post Officer who signed the contract agreed to operate them in accordance with state law. Good luck getting those vendors to pay your legal costs if and when you get busted. The Vendor takes on no liability here, the Post does. All a Vendor is going to say is “I did not know they were paying cash!”

9. District Meetings for December 2020:

- District 3 December 13th Post 6796 – Dallas
- District 18 December 13th Post 9194 – Laredo
- District 20 December 12th Post 9186 – San Antonio
- District 24 December 5th Post 4146 – Victoria

10. District Commanders: As we are fast approaching the inclement weather months, if you are going to cancel a District meeting please notify not only your Posts respectively but also the State Adjutant, Dan West, so that the Department Representative can be notified. Also, notify the Department of Texas VFW Headquarters Department Secretary, Wyonda Laurence, if meeting is rescheduled. We do not want anyone to have an accident during inclement weather.

11. Carlos Sustaita retiring from Department Headquarters: Carlos Sustaita will be retiring as Department Assistant Quartermaster on January 25, 2021. If you would like to send a card or donation, send to Department of Texas VFW Headquarters (Attention: Dan West). We wish him the very best and we will certainly miss him.

12. John Jowers, Data Management Specialist, Department HQs: John Jowers is the newest staff member of the Department of Texas VFW Headquarters. He has taken over all the status sheet reporting as of October 16, 2020. His email address is: john@texasvfw.org.

13. Post & District Status Sheets: The stat sheets are used by Post and District Officers to gauge where VFW Post standings are at any given time as compared to other VFW Posts within their respective District and published VFW program and operational deadlines. Status sheets are available at: <https://www.texasvfw.org/status-sheets>.

Please be Patient: Status sheets are updated once a week at around 1400 and there is often some backlog in our data entry queue. Please allow us a few days to review any information you have submitted before calling to confirm. If you have anything you feel is not correct, email John Jowers, Data Management Specialist: john@texasvfw.org.

14. Post Audits: The (original) signed copy should be mailed or emailed to Department of Texas VFW Headquarters. For more information, email John Jowers, Data Management Specialist, at the Department of Texas VFW Headquarters: john@texasvfw.org.

Deadline dates for Post Audits for the 2020-2021 Administrative Year:

- 1st Quarter Post Audit Report was due by October 31, 2020
- 2nd Quarter Post Audit Report is due by January 31, 2021
- 3rd Quarter Post Audit Report is due by April 30, 2021

- 15.**Deadline to submit 2019 IRS form:** December 31, 2020, is the deadline to submit a copy of your Post IRS Form, 990, 990EZ, or 990N. Copies should be mailed or emailed to John Jowers, Data Management Specialist, at the Department of Texas VFW Headquarters: john@texasvfw.org.
- 16.**Post Inspections:** Post inspections will only be done by one of the following: District Commander, District Senior Vice Commander or District Junior Vice Commander.
- 17.**Deadline for all Post Inspections due by December 31, 2020:** Post Inspections should be completed and received (mailed or emailed) to the Department of Texas VFW Headquarters no later than December 31, 2020. For more information, email John Jowers, Data Management Specialist, at the Department of Texas VFW Headquarters: john@texasvfw.org.
- 18.**Deadline to receive Veteran Project Participation Report (VPR) for Veterans Day:** December 10, 2020, is the due date for the VPR for Veterans Day to be submitted to Department of Texas VFW Headquarters. For more information, email John Jowers, Data Management Specialist, at the Department of Texas VFW Headquarters: john@texasvfw.org.
- 19.**Deadline to receive Veteran Project Participation Report (VPR) for Pearl Harbor Day:** January 5, 2021, is the due date for the VPR for Pearl Harbor Day to be submitted to Department of Texas VFW Headquarters. For more information, email John Jowers, Data Management Specialist, at the Department of Texas VFW Headquarters: john@texasvfw.org.
- 20.**Deadline Dates:** Refer to the Texas VFW Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for VFW Post for a full list of 2020-2021 deadline dates for all programs and requirements, including VPR's. View the deadline dates online at: <https://www.texasvfw.org/sop-training-materials>.
- 21.**2021 Podium Edition:** The 2021 Podium Edition of the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual are now available. Copies of the revised edition are available through the VFW Store at National Headquarters: <http://www.vfwstore.org/products/22690>.
- 22.**VFW Service Officer Guide books:** The VFW Washington, D.C. office has made the determination that they will not be providing an updated print or CD version this year. There are plans to make a version available online in a month or two.
- 23.**Proof of VFW Eligibility of elected and appointed positions:** Deputy State Inspectors will be reviewing all proof of VFW eligibility for all elected and appointed positions during their scheduled visits to Posts and Districts.

24. Pearl Harbor Day, Monday, December 7, 2020: December 7th, is designated as “Pearl Harbor Day” to recognize, to remember, honor and commemorate the attack on Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii, during World II. Many American service men and women lost their lives or were injured on December 7, 1941, which led to the United States declaring war on Japan the next day and thus entering World War II.

25. Dates to Remember (Department of Texas VFW HQs will be closed):

November 11th - Veterans Day

November 26th & 27th - Thanksgiving Observance

December 24th & 25th - Christmas Observance

December 31st - New Year’s Eve Observance

26. Voice of Democracy/Patriot’s Pen/Teacher of the Year (District winners): Winning entries from Districts for the Voice of Democracy (VOD), Patriot’s Pen, and Teacher of the Year, are to be submitted by Tuesday, December 15, 2020, to the Department of Texas VFW Headquarters.

27. Closing Comments:

As part of the “Together as One” team, let us continue to work hard for our Veterans and I hope to see many of you at our Mid-Winter Conference in Corpus Christi in January 2021. I would like to wish all comrades and their families a safe and “Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.”

By order of:



Richard “Dick” Shawver
State Commander

Attested By:



Dan West
State Adjutant/Quartermaster

