



DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES

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March 30, 2020

CHAD SOLHEID
State Commander

CURT HERMANSON
Senior Vice Commander
BARRY HENRIKSEN
Junior Vice Commander
KEN SCHROEPFER
Adjutant
JERRY BRLETICH
Quartermaster
DALE HOOGEVEEN
Judge Advocate
DR. JAMES TUORILA
Surgeon
LEN GUDMUNSON
Chaplain
GARY ANDERSON
Chief of Staff
LARRY GRINDLAND
Chief Inspector
THOMAS HANSON
Past State Commander
THOMAS FRENCH
1st District Commander
PATRICK SCHIPPER
2nd District Commander
BUCK UNDERWOOD
3rd District Commander
DAVID STAEHLIN
4th District Commander
ANN HANSON
5th District Commander
ARON LAMBRECHT
6th District Commander
SCOTT HANSON
7th District Commander
ROBERT STOEHR
8th District Commander
RICHARD BUGBEE
9th District Commander

Good Afternoon All,

I hope you are all doing well. I am sure this quarantine is making everyone a little stir crazy. I actually ventured out to try and find some toilet paper. To my surprise it was not all gone and I found a scrap or two. I thought maybe I'd have to revert to my training when I was in Desert Storm, but I have the paper and am still civilized!

I have been in frequent contact with the National VFW Headquarters. I know they are getting a lot of questions and I will pass along information as I receive it. Until then, I have some news and guidance that may be helpful over the next month. At this point I cannot go out past the end of April.

Sr. Vice Commander Curt Hermanson informed me of the following: "On Monday, March 23, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) announced a Small Business Emergency Loan program to help business owners who are experiencing temporary cash flow shortages as a result of statewide orders to close restaurants, bars and other select public services."

This website will bring you to the application:

<https://mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/deed-programs/peacetime/#3>

Posts that may want to check into this should assess their needs and make sure what this loan will be for and how it will be paid back, if it needs to be paid back. The State and Federal relief stimulus packages will cover Veteran Service Organizations. Speak to your accountants to see how these loans will affect your post, get short and long term advice on how you will weather this pandemic and think about how you can help out other posts that may be struggling. Please think about making donations to the MN VFW Charitable Association, especially those posts that have hundreds of thousands of dollars sitting in your gambling accounts. By donating to the Charitable Association from your gambling account you will allow for those posts that are in need of assistance to apply.

Post and District Meetings, Elections and Conventions in April and May

The National Commander In Chief has issued Executive Order#1 on March 17th and further guidance on March 21st. These were issued due to the states that may have issued shelter in place orders. Governor Walz has issued Minnesotans to stay home until April 10th. This may be extended. I have some suggestions to alternative meetings and conventions.

Posts and Districts can keep their existing officers in place for the next year if they cannot hold a meeting or convention to complete the necessary business. If you do that you still have to submit the election report and state this.

"NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS"

Some posts are large enough to be able to hold a meeting and still adhere to the social distancing of 6 feet between people. Now, if you don't feel well please stay home. Posts and Auxiliaries can have meetings on separate dates. Posts can offer their post home to be used by those posts that do not have a post home or do not have a large enough space to hold a meeting. Obviously, some posts may have to change their meeting night and that is okay. Posts can have a meeting and just do the bare minimum to complete their business, hold an election, and swear everyone in.

Posts can set up an election committee and submit the nominated individuals to the Commander. If there are no contested positions then they can be elected as submitted. If there are contested positions then you will have to have a vote. This can be accomplished through email as long as the guidance from National is followed. All members of the post have to be notified and all votes will have to be recorded. Using some of the electronic platforms are also acceptable. You may have to be creative. If you have any questions please contact your District Commander or Department Line officers or Adjutant.

Post Quartermasters still need to complete their quarterly audits. The trustees can still review the quarterly audit in a variety of ways. The quartermaster can mail the information to their trustees to be reviewed and sent back. The trustees can come in to a post one at a time to review audits that have been laid out for them to review. Use your imagination and come up with some creative ideas. Remember, you don't have to have a post meeting to complete your post audit. Please contact the Department Quartermaster if you have any questions.

Posts that are having difficulties maintaining a quorum or see a problem in the future maintaining their responsibilities as a VFW can contact their District Commander to review a possible merger or consolidation with another post. This is not a bad thing.

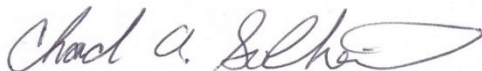
Please remember to notify Department on what you decide.

Please understand that we are going to be flexible during this time but the business of the VFW still has to be done. Improve, Adapt and Overcome.

The State Convention in Plymouth has not changed. If there are any changes we will let you know as soon as possible. The office is closed to walk in traffic. There will be modified hours on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Please do not come to the HQ office. Please email, mail or call. If you call please leave a message. The VFW Claims office at the Federal Building at Fort Snelling is closed until further notice. The claims staff will be teleworking.

Membership- Please contact your members and see how they are doing. I want to congratulate you all we are at 94.37%. We still have a lot of work to do. We have 60 posts that need less than 5 members. Most of them only need 1 or 2. We can do this.

Thank you



Chad Solheid

MN VFW Department Commander

March 21, 2020

Commanders,

As previously discussed in earlier memoranda concerning meetings and Conventions, my goal was to emphasize the flexibility that we must embrace in order to ensure the business of the organization is carried out to the extent feasible. This guidance was sent in anticipation of restrictions of state and local governments on the number of people allowed to assemble at one location. For many such locations, those restrictions make achieving a traditional quorum at meetings and Conventions difficult, if not impossible. To the extent that our bylaws do not sufficiently address how we should proceed, I believe it is crucial to offer this guidance.

The guidance outlined in the Executive Order, keeping the current officers in place until such time that elections can be held without jeopardizing the health and well-being of members, may remain the best option.

But as you consider next steps, in keeping with the requirements of the bylaws, and to ensure adherence with all applicable laws, please understand that the flexibility previously emphasized means that you can, with some creativity and ingenuity, maintain the necessary quorum and adhere to applicable laws by utilizing available technology to achieve the goal of conducting the business of the organization.

Through technology, a quorum can be established. Delegates and other Members may attend such meetings by way of video-conference or tele-conference, provided any voting be counted from only those who are attending the meeting, in person or otherwise, while it is being conducted.

Through this guidance, it is my hope that you will use your best efforts to conduct the necessary meetings and Conventions. As you do so, it will be helpful to limit the business to the most critical items, such as election of officers and voting on resolutions.

In terms of voting, it will be necessary to develop a system that allows for the proper recording of all votes. For instance, if a vote is submitted by way of email, the subject line must correspond to the subject of the discussion. The time-stamp on the email must also be recorded to ensure that the vote is taken at the time the matter is being voted on.

There is an abundance of technology available that can assist in this regard. Available services include, but are in no way limited to, the following:

- [GoToMeeting](#)
- [RingCentral](#)
- [UberConference](#)
- [Zoom](#)
- [FreeConferenceCall.com](#)
- [Google Hangouts](#)
- [Vast Conference](#)
- [Webex](#)
- [BlueJeans](#)

We recognize that there is no single approach that can be utilized at every level of the organization. We just ask that you use your best efforts to meet the challenges of today's environment. Our collective mission is far too important to not move forward.



William "Doc" Schmitz
Commander-in-Chief

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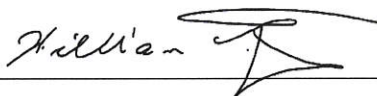
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Executive Order No. 1

March 17, 2020

Pursuant to the authority under Section 618(a)(4), effective immediately and until rescinded, we ask that Posts, Districts and Departments, if possible and within the requirements of mandated State Declarations, make the attempt to elect officers. For such Posts, Districts or Departments that are not able to elect officers as a result of COVID-19, all current officers shall continue to function within their capabilities until new officers are elected. It is further stipulated that no Post, District or Department be sanctioned as result of the inability to properly function, as mandated by state or local government declarations, as a direct cause of COVID-19.

By order of: 
William "Doc" Schmitz, Commander-in-Chief
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Official: 
Kevin C. Jones, Adjutant General
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States



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