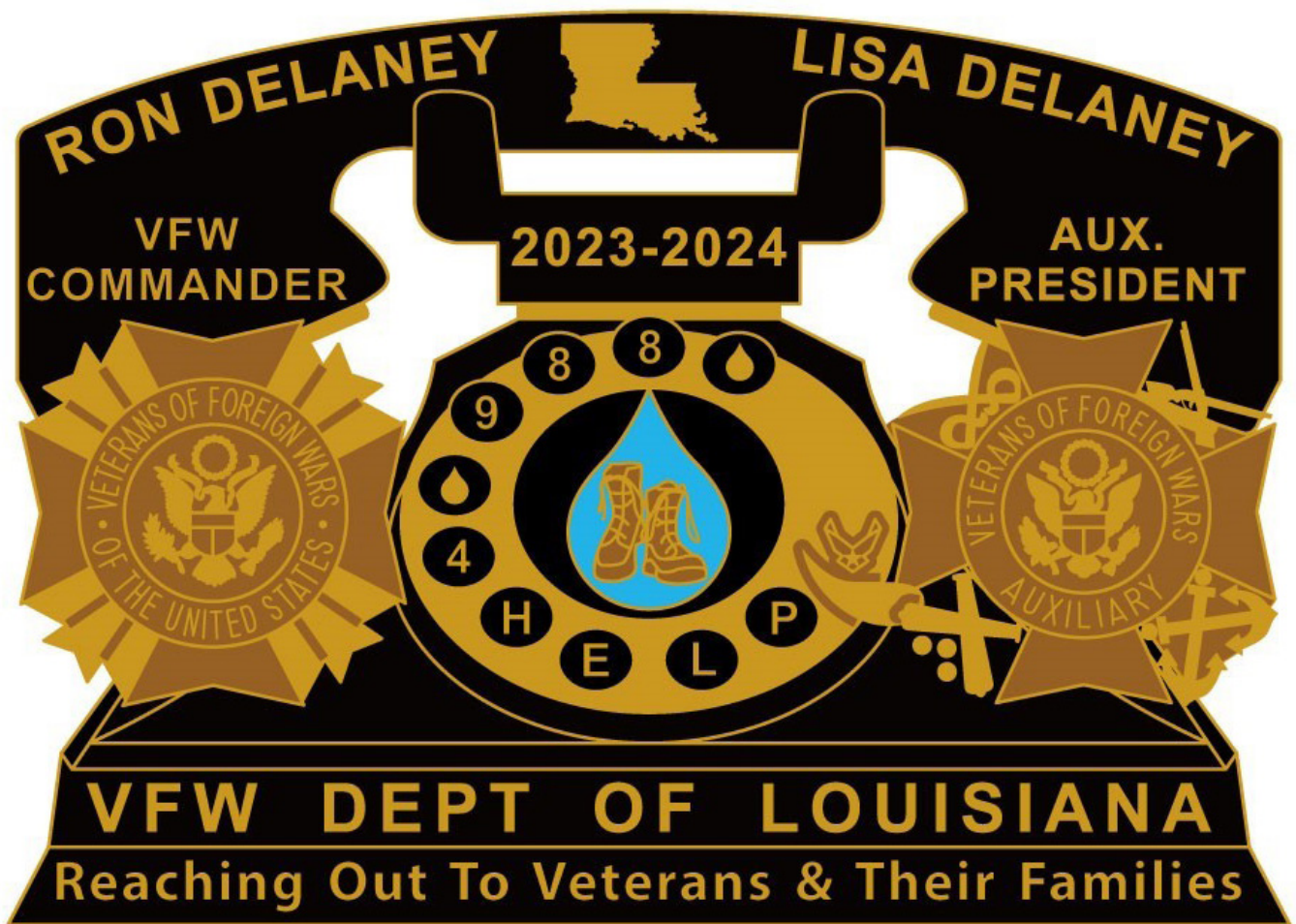


**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)
FOR
DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA**

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATE**



TO BE SUBMITTED AT THE 93RD CONVENTION JUNE 2024

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP) FOR
DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)
DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

PURPOSE

The purpose of these Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are to maintain a coherent and consistent Department organization, to establish consistent Department operations, to efficiently control Department finances and manage efforts to eliminate duplication of effort.

**SECTION 1
CONTROL AND ADMINISTRATION**

The supreme control of this Department shall be vested in its members. Each member shall have an equal right to a voice in its affairs. These rights are to be expressed under procedures outlined by National and Department By-Laws.

The Department is governed by representatives. Members are represented in the Department Convention by their own elected delegates from each Post. They are represented at the Council of Administration Meetings by their District Commander.

The primary objective of the Department Convention is to ascertain the wishes of the majority of the Department members on all questions pertaining to National requirements and Department governance. Between conventions this duty is delegated to the Council of Administration.

Department Officers are the Executives whose duty is to carry out the mandates of the Department Convention, the Council of Administration and requirements of National Headquarters. In this duty they are assisted by the various committees.

Payments may be made from the Veterans and Military Support Fund, after the need has been vetted and determined to meet the requirements specified for the fund and properly approved by the Commander, Adjutant, and Quartermaster.

**SECTION 2
DEPARTMENT**

The Department shall be governed by an annual Department Convention and the Council of Administration.

Department Convention shall consist of the officers and members designated in Article 5, Section 503 of the National By-Laws and further defined by the Department Bylaws.

The annual Department Convention shall be held in the month of June. The place, date and time shall be designated by the preceding convention.

Convention meetings shall be called to order promptly on the hour set. If a quorum is not present when the meeting is called to order, the presiding officer may declare a recess pending sufficient arrivals to make a quorum. A quorum shall consist of accredited representatives from no less than ten (10) posts in the Department.

Delegates will be elected in accordance with Section 222 of the VFW Manual of Procedure. Each Post will pay a registration fee for every delegate to which the Post is entitled. The fee will be set by the delegates at the State Convention.

The Department Quartermaster shall set up a Department Convention Fund and all registration fees received shall be placed herein. These funds will be expended only for expenses incurred in the holding of an annual Department Convention.

SECTION 3 RESOLUTIONS

Suggestions or criticisms directed at Department or National, by individual members must be forwarded through their representatives in the form of a resolution. Such resolution should be prepared in triplicate. It must be specific in nature, courteous in tone, and must be approved by the Post of which the author is a member. It should then be forwarded by the Post Adjutant to the Department Adjutant. The Department Adjutant shall forward the resolution to the Resolution Committee Chairman. The committee will review and present the resolution with recommendations at the Department Convention. Resolutions may also be originated by Department Officers or by the Department Convention itself. If the resolution is intended for consideration at a Council of Administration Meeting, it should be forwarded to the District Commander. The District Commander shall present the resolution at the next Council of Administration Meeting. All resolutions of statewide, regional or national concern must be acted upon by the Department Convention. Those resolutions approved by a Department Convention which affect matters outside state boundaries must be forwarded by the Department Adjutant to the National Convention for final disposal. Nothing herein contained shall prevent a resolution from being presented from the floor of a Convention meeting. The resolution must be submitted under the proper order of business and by an accredited delegate.

SECTION 4 PUBLICATIONS

The official publication of the Department of Louisiana shall be a newspaper entitled LOUISIANA VETERAN. This newspaper will be published three times a year.

SECTION 5 COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION

The Department Council of Administration shall consist of the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Adjutant, Quartermaster, Judge Advocate, Chief-of-Staff, Inspector, Surgeon, Chaplain, District Commanders, and immediate Past Department Commander.

The Department Council of Administration shall govern the affairs of this Department between annual Department Conventions. In the absence of the District Commander, the District Senior or Junior Vice Commander may represent their district on the Council of Administration.

The Department Council of Administration shall meet in regular sessions not less than twice each year. The first meeting shall be held immediately following the close of the Department Convention. Other meetings will be held as scheduled by the Department Commander. The Department Commander may call a special meeting of the Council of Administration when necessary for the welfare of the Department. Members of the Department Council of Administration shall be entitled to expenses as shown in the current Department Budget. Vouchers for expenses must be submitted each month. The reimbursement for official travel for in-state travel will be at the rate set by the COA per mile and out of state travel will be reimbursed at the lower

cost of the mileage rate or airfare. Food, lodging, and other expenses will be reimbursed at actual cost, but is not exceed the budget provided. No expenses will be paid unless a completed Expense Vouch-er and supporting documents have been submitted. Tolls documented on EZ Pass will be reim-bursed, total will be reimbursed by EZ Pass or receipt. Spousal travel maybe included for the out-of-state expenses, but is not to exceed the approved budget.

SECTION 6 COMMITTEES

Department activities shall be facilitated by the use of Committees. The members of committees shall be appointed by the Department Commander. They will, when authorized, make full and complete reports to the Council of Administration or to the Department Convention and such re-ports shall be subject to full and open discussion.

The Department Commander shall be an ex-officio member of all Department committees but shall not serve as Chairman.

The Department Quartermaster shall serve as the Treasurer of all Department committees which handle funds.

Members of Standing or Special committees may be removed at any time by the Department Commander.

Members of all committees shall be known to the membership of the Department by the publish-ing of the chairperson and committee member names in General Order No. 2, on August 1st of each year.

No quorum is fixed for either Standing or Special committees. It shall be the duty of every Committee Chairperson to notify all members of their committee of a scheduled meeting. The committee may proceed with business provided the Chairperson reports to the reviewing body the number of members present.

When a Standing or Special committee has been appointed, the Chairperson will prepare a budget showing the anticipated expenses of the committee for the ensuing year. The budget must be pre-pared and submit- ted to the Chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee within a period of thirty (30) days after com- mittee appointment. If this committee is promotional in nature, the chair- person will also prepare a tentative schedule of the committee's activities and forward the schedule and a copy of the budget to the Department Commander.

Members of the Department's Committees shall be entitled to expenses as shown in the current Department Budget. The reimbursement for official travel for in-state travel will be at the rate set by the COA per mile. Food, lodging, and other expenses will be reimbursed at actual cost, but is not to exceed the budget provid- ed. No expenses will be paid unless a completed Expense Voucher and supporting documents have been submitted.

The Department STANDING COMMITTEES and their composition and responsibilities are listed below:
AUDIT: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall conduct quarterly audits of the books and records of the Department Adjutant and Quar- termaster. The committee shall submit a written report to the Department Commander and Council of Administration at its regular meetings and at the Department Convention of all au- dits it has conducted together with any recommenda- tions it deems appropriate.

AWARDS and CITATIONS: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall receive, evaluate and make recommendations in writing to the Department Commander on all awards, citations and other formal recognition of Posts, Districts and/or individuals at the Departmental level. A copy of all pertinent correspondence received from other committees or individuals will be made a part of that report. The exception to the foregoing being those programs designated in writing as being the direct duty and responsibility of another committee or designated authority. It shall meet at those times designated by the Department Commander or Chair. Its evaluations and recommendations shall be in keeping with National VFW requirements and those guidelines formally established by the Department. It shall co-ordinate and assist with all awards, citations and recognition presentations with the Department Adjutant, State Convention Committee and others as appropriate.

BUDDY POPPY: This committee will consist of a minimum of two (2) members. The committee shall provide for and monitor the availability and distribution of Buddy Poppies to all units throughout the Department and shall emphasize, as necessary, the importance of the program. It shall report to the Department Commander, as necessary, and the Council of Administration at its regular meetings on those units that have participated in the program during the current year. It shall make written recommendations to the Department Commander on any unit or individual Buddy Poppy Program awards. It shall co-ordinate and assist with those awards presentations with the Department Adjutant and the State Convention Committee as appropriate.

BUDGET and FINANCE: This committee shall consist of five (5) members. The committee shall receive and review a tentative budget for the upcoming year as prepared and proposed by the Department Quartermaster. The committee shall make recommendations and present the proposed budget for approval by the Council of Administration at its first regular meeting immediately following the Department Convention. The committee shall make a detailed report at each Council of Administration meeting showing the extent of variation of the actual receipts and expenditures from the anticipated receipts and expenditures.

BY-LAWS/SOP: This committee will consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall, at a minimum, conduct an annual review of the Department By-Laws and SOP to ensure they are current and in keeping with the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and other written guidelines. It shall receive and evaluate all recommendations for changes and amendments submitted by subordinate units and the membership. It shall submit a written report of all recommended changes or amendments at the Council of Administration meetings for appropriate consideration and action. Final approval shall be consistent with the By-Laws.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: This committee will consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall provide information and assistance as deemed appropriate to subordinate units and the membership to assist them in carrying out new programs, on-going programs and programs of a special nature related to Americanism, Community Activities, Safety and Youth Activities.

The committee shall make written recommendations to the Department Commander via the Awards and Citations Committee relative to special recognition of deserving subordinate units, members or other persons for their efforts related to Americanism, Community Activities, Safety and Youth Activities. It shall co-ordinate with and assist the Department Adjutant and State Convention Committee in those award presentations as needed.

CREDENTIALS: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall accredit delegates to the Department Convention from Posts which are currently listed as being in good standing as attested by the Department Adjutant and Quartermaster.

FUNDRAISING: This committee shall consist of a minimum of two (2) members. The committee shall assist the Commander and the Council of Administration in the initiation, execution and monitoring of fundraising efforts to help defray Department expenses for administration and operations, support of normal veterans and community related programs and special unplanned programs. It shall act as the Department's liaison with other units of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in these efforts, as well as fundraising activities involving outside commercial interests that have been approved by the Commander and the Council of Administration.

LEGISLATIVE: This committee shall consist of a minimum of seven (7) members. The committee shall act as Department liaison with the National VFW Legislative Committee in order to advise the Department Commander and the membership in a timely manner of those national legislative efforts considered to be of importance and/or of general interest. It shall recommend in writing to the Department Commander and Council of Administration a prioritized listing of state and local legislative measures it feels worthy of support by the membership as a whole. To the extent of its ability, it shall assist with official VFW visits with elected officials at the national, state and local level.

MEMBERSHIP: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall provide information and assistance throughout the Department about membership eligibility, dues, programs and incentives for the recruitment, reinstatement and/or renewal of membership for all worthy comrades. The committee shall conduct membership program classes at the Department School of Instruction and, shall conduct classes and provide assistance at the District and Post level as deemed necessary by the Department Commander. The committee shall report the level of membership for each District and Post in the General Orders, at each Council of Administration meetings and to the Department Commander as required.

PATRIOT'S PEN: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall provide information and assistance throughout the Department to enable subordinate units to carry out the program. It shall publicize in a timely manner the theme for the current year together with that information necessary to ensure the proper submission of program entries. It shall provide for judging at the Department level of properly submitted program entries and shall make written recommendations to the Department Commander relative to awards and recognition. It shall coordinate and assist in those awards presentations, as necessary, with the Department Adjutant, State Convention Committee and others as appropriate.

POW/MIA: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall make itself available to the membership to provide information and assist on issues related to Prisoners of War and those listed as Missing in Action. It shall submit appropriate time sensitive

information to the Department Adjutant with a request it be included in the General Orders as necessary.

RESOLUTIONS: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall receive, consolidate, review, present and make recommendations on all resolutions that have been submitted for the membership's consideration. It shall provide advice and assistance to the Department Commander and the membership on the proper format and procedures for the submission of proposed resolutions in accordance with the By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and other official written requirements. It shall coordinate with the Department Adjutant and the State Convention Committee, as appropriate, for the presentation of proposed resolutions to the membership.

TIME and PLACE: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall solicit, evaluate and report on the availability of facilities required to carry out and conduct the Department Convention, and Winter Council of Administration meetings. The written recommendations should address

the location, timeframe, affordability and the facilities' ability to meet the needs of the Department and those in attendance. If possible, at least three locations for each evolution should be offered for consideration.

Additionally, the Committee shall assist in the execution of the event planned. Those assigned to the Committee shall ensure proper coordination of delegate registration, assist with sponsors, and any manage any additional responsibilities assigned to them by the State Commander or State Adjutant.

LOUISIANA HOUSE: This committee shall consist of a minimum of two (2) members. The committee shall, in conjunction with the VFW National Home, monitor the adequacy of the Louisiana House in helping the VFW National Home carry out its mission. It shall report in writing to the Council of Administration at its regular meetings on conditions and activities at the house deemed to be of interest to the membership. It shall advise the membership through the Department Commander of any emergent needs that might arise in regard to the Louisiana House specifically or the VFW National Home in general.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall provide information and assistance throughout the Department to enable subordinate units to carry out the program. It shall publicize in a timely manner the theme for the current year together with that information necessary to insure the proper submission of program entries. It shall provide for judging at the Department level of designated program entrants and shall make written recommendations to the Department Commander relative to awards and recognition. It shall co-ordinate and assist in those awards presentations, as necessary, with the Department Adjutant, State Convention Committee and others as appropriate.

SCOUTING COMMITTEE: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The Committee shall provide information and assistance to subordinate units and the membership relative to the National Scouting Program of the VFW as it relates to the Department. It shall receive, evaluate and make recommendations to the Department Commander and all Scouting Awards applications submitted to the Department. The committee shall coordinate and assist in those awards presentations and the promotion of all Scouting Programs.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall provide information and assistance to subordinate units and the membership relative to the VFW National Citizenship Education Teachers Award Program as it relates to the Department. It shall receive, evaluate and make recommendations to the Department Commander on all Teacher awards applications submitted to the Department. The Committee shall coordinate and assist in those awards presentations.

DISASTER PREPARATION: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members, one of which shall serve as the Chairman. The committee shall spread information related to disaster preparation for natural disasters and shall work with the Safety Committee to support activities in the state which both committees are concerned with.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES will be appointed, as required, by the current Department Commander. Special Committees may be appointed only for the current year of the current Commander.

VFW Riders

See Appendix D

SECTION 7 REPORTING

All Posts within the Department are expected to submit five required reports semi-annually: Americanism, Community Activities, Hospital, , Safety and Youth Activity Reports. Deceased Comrades can be updated directly in the OMS System. Posts will be inspected at least once year-ly, and the report will be submitted by the District Inspector/Commander to the Department Adju-tant. Districts will be inspected at least once yearly, and the report will be submitted by the De-partment representative to the Department Adjutant. A sample of each report is contained in Ap-pendix A.

The preferred method of reporting is online reporting at vfwva.org. The reports can also be mailed or faxed to the Department Headquarters. The Department will ensure the information from the reports is posted to the appropriate online reports.

SECTION 8 AWARDS

National and Department awards shall be specified in the appropriate membership plan pub-lish by either the National or Department Headquarters. This document shall contain the requirements for each Post, Dis-trict, member or citizen award selection.

SECTION 9 REGISTRAR OF DECEASED MEM-BERS

The Department Chaplain shall read aloud the number of deceased members in each District and the total number of deceased members in the Department at the annual Department Convention Memorial Services.

SECTION 10 DEPARTMENT HONOR GUARD

The Department Honor Guard shall be governed by and under the control of the Department Commander and Council of Administration.

The Department Honor Guard members may elect such officers as the members of the Honor Guard deem necessary for proper operation. The Department Honor Guard Captain will be appointed by the Command-er.

Only current members of the VFW, Department of Louisiana, shall be eligible for membership in the De-partment Honor Guard.

SECTION 11 ENDORSEMENT OF CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL OF-FICE

The Department of Louisiana may endorse a candidate for National Office with the approval of the Depart-ment Convention or Winter Council of Administration meeting.

Such endorsement shall be made no earlier than two (2) years prior to the candidate's nomination for such office. An exception to the two (2) year rule is when the candidate is from Louisiana. A Louisiana candi-date's endorsement shall be made no earlier than four (4) years prior to the nomina-tion for national office.

SECTION 12
DEPARTMENT HEADQUAR-TERS

Direct management of Department Headquarters and employees of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Louisiana will be by the Department Adjutant. The Adjutant will receive 70 % of the salary authorized by the Department Council of Administration for the Department Adju-tant/Quartermaster.

SECTION 13
RULES GOVERNING HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT, LEAVE AND OTHER
CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA, VFW

Hiring practices of the Department of Louisiana will be in keeping with Veterans Preference policies. All positions to be filled will be approved by the Council of Administration. The positions will be based on the approved position descriptions on file at State Headquarters. The positions will be advertised, and the applications reviewed by a committee of VFW members to determine the best qualified applicants. The applicants will be interviewed by the Committee and the best qualified will selected by the Adjutant.

When disciplinary action is required for a salaried employee of the Department of Louisiana, the action will be initiated by the Department Commander or the Department Adjutant. The disciplinary action may be in the form of a letter of reprimand or termination of employment. When charges are initiated, they will be investigated and the results of the investigation, with a recom-mended action, will be presented to the Department Council of Administration.

A roll call vote of the Council at a regular or special meeting or via telephone will be conducted. A majority vote will be required to complete the recommended disciplinary action.

The Department Commander shall have access to buildings, keys, security codes, files, com-puter passwords and all other assets of the Department.

See Appendix E

SECTION 14
RETIREMENT PLAN

The retirement program will be jointly invested by the employees and the Department of Louisiana. A reputable company will be selected by the Retirement Committee and the Em-ployees. The company must be approved by the Department Council of Administration.

The Department shall offer matching contributions for the retirements plan offered to employees. The amount of the matching contribution shall be equal to 3% of the employee's gross annual sala-ry and shall be transmitted to the company chosen to manage the retirement plan. Additionally, the Department shall be responsible for fees considered by the plan to be "Employee Fees" and the employee shall be responsible for fees considered by the plan to be "Employee Fees".

An employee will be fully vested in the retirement plan after a period set by the Council of Admin-istration based on the options available in the approved plan. If an employee is terminated for any reason before being vested, they will only be entitled to the portion of the matching contributions available as listed in the plan requirements.

Other requirements of the plan will be approved by the Council of Administration in accordance with the options available in the approved plan.

SECTION 15 DEPARTMENT VEHI-CLES

This committee will consist of the Current Department Commander, Current Department Senior Vice Commander, Department Junior Vice Commander and the Department Quartermaster. The committee shall be authorized to purchase and have delivered to the Junior Vice Commander each year a new vehicle in the name of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Louisiana. The vehicle may be ordered as early as April or May to have in place for State Convention in June. The Junior Vice Commander is also authorized a new laptop or Ipad not to exceed \$750.00

All tags, insurance and taxes will be paid by the VFW, Department of Louisiana, for 4 years. After which time the vehicle will be titled in the individuals name and become his or hers. If for any reason the individual drops out of the chairs and does not complete 4 years on the COA the vehicle will not become theirs and the COA will decide what to do with it.

These vehicles shall display signs stating Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Louisiana. The vehicles displaying the signs are advertising the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Louisiana and therefore all miles are considered official VFW business miles regardless of destination.

The Department Commander, Department Senior Vice Commander, Department Junior Vice Commander and the immediate Past Department Commander will be responsible for all owner's manuals, maintenance, repairs and fuel for the vehicle.

The Department will purchase a vehicle to be used by the current Department Adjutant/ Quartermaster. This vehicle should be replaced when it is no longer physically and mechanically sound.

The Department Adjutant/Quartermaster will be responsible to ensure all maintenance is performed on the vehicle. All maintenance costs to be paid by the Department of Louisiana, VFW. Only funds

spent for fuel will be taken from the Department Adjutant/Quartermaster's annual budget allowance.

All state and local laws will be observed when operating these vehicles. Any traffic violations or other violations will be charged to the licensed driver. Any damages occurring due to negligence of the licensed driver will be his/her responsibility.

SECTION 16 CREDIT CARD USAGE

The Department credit cards are issued to the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Adjutant, Quartermaster, Immediate Past Department Commander, State Headquarters and the Department Service Officer. The cards are to be used for only official business. Any points or rewards will be the property of the named card holder and the named card holder shall be responsible for any fees associated with such reward programs.

SECTION 17
ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS OF STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

The Department Council of Administration is responsible for approving changes to the SOP as deemed necessary due to new or revised requirements from National Headquarters, Department Council of Administration or the general membership. The SOP may be changed by a majority vote of the Department Council of Administration and the approved changes shall take effect immediately.

**DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)**

APPENDIX

A

REPOSTS

**DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)**

APPENDIX

B

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

**DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)**

APPENDIX

C

**PROCEDURES FOR
MEMBERSHIP**

**DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)**

APPENDIX

D

VFW RIDERS SOP

**DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)**

APPENDIX

E

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

