

	Joint Military and Veterans Affairs Department	SOP #	2023-2024
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Department Director	HPIC Y. Michelle Dowleyne (210)	Approving Authority	HPIP Dr. Corey D. Thomas (103)

Standard Operating Procedure

1. *Mission*

The A.E.A.O.N.M.S. Joint Military and Veterans Affairs Department stands as the Imperial Council's and Imperial Court's support and recognition element to those Prince Hall Shrine Nobles and Daughters who serve or have served in the Uniformed Armed Services. The Department's overall purpose is to provide A.E.A.O.N.M.S. and D.O.I. Service Members, Veterans, and their families with the most current information on Benefits & Services, Claims Processing, and serve as a conduit for other vital resources provided by the Department of Veteran Affairs and other Service Advocate Organizations.

2. *Scope*

This Department is dedicated to assisting our Active Duty / Veteran members and their families with access to resources outlining a full range of benefits attained through Military Service.

This mandate is carried forward in two ways:

Year-Round:

- Assist Deserts, Temples, Courts, and their leadership with organizing and facilitating programs and activities that assist their respective membership and local community Veterans with obtaining benefits and services earned through military service.
- Serve as the Imperial Council's and Imperial Court's resource and recognition element documenting special programs, actions, and activities conducted by the constituent membership that aid, promote, and enhance the interests of local Active-Duty Service Members, Veterans, Disabled Veterans, their spouses and families, widows, widowers, and orphans.

Annually (Imperial Session): The Department will organize and host an annual Veterans Symposium and Outreach. This event will strive to provide Active-Duty Service Members, Veterans, and their families with the most current information on Benefits & Services, Claims Processing, and other vital resources provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs and other Service Advocate Organizations.

3. Prerequisites

Membership prerequisites: All members of the Department will be familiar with the Claims and Benefits provided via Service Officer training by a recognized Service Advocate Organization such as Disabled American Veterans (DAV), American Veterans (AMVETS), American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Etc. or as prescribed by the Department's Executive Leadership.

4. Reporting

Reporting: The following is a list of the Department's operational reports:

- **Deputy Report (Deserts)** – Submitted quarterly to the Chief Deputies via goggle drive. This report outlines detailed interactions between the Deputies and Deserts, Oases, Temples, and Courts in their assigned regions. **Calendar quarter reports are due by April 5, July 5, October 5, and January 5.**
- **Chief Deputy Report** – Submitted quarterly to the Imperial Director. This report summarizes all reports received from the Deputies and all other veteran-related activities conducted during the reporting period. **Due April 10, July 10, October 10, and January 10.**
- **Imperial Director Report** - Submitted quarterly or as directed by the Imperial Administrator. This report provides a detailed summation of all Department ongoing, completed, and projected activities during the reporting period. **Due April 15, July 15, October 15, and January 15.**
- **Pre-Session Report** – Submitted 120 days before the Imperial Session or as directed by the Imperial Administrator. This report details the Department's projected activities supporting the current year's Imperial Council Session. These activities may include, but are not limited to, a Veteran Symposium, Veteran Memorial or Grave Site Visitation, and One-one Claims Services.
- **Imperial Director Executive Summary** – This summary serves as a closeout report detailing all activities conducted in support of the current year's Imperial Sessions and is due on or before the close of that Session.

5. Responsibilities

Imperial Director: The Imperial Director plans and oversees all aspects of the Department's activities, ensuring that its mandated mission of support to Shrine Service Members, Veterans, and their families are carried out to the highest standards of fraternal commitment, excellence, professionalism, integrity, and accountability. The Imperial Director is also responsible for the assignment of Deputy Directors/Directress and their associated responsibilities supporting the Department's mandated mission.

Chief Deputy: Chief Deputies are in charge of oversight and coordination of domain-wide activities, Imperial Session coordination, and logistical and administrative duties associated with responsibilities supporting the Department's mandated mission.

Deputy Director/Directress: Imperial Deputies of this Department are charged with providing direct support to Deserts, Temples, Courts, and the leadership within their assigned region. They serve as an information resource on current and evolving Veteran Benefits and Services, Claims Processing, and other vital services provided by the Department of Veteran Affairs and Service Advocate Organizations. Additionally, they are to monitor and report special programs, actions, and activities conducted by the constituent membership that aid, promote, and enhance the interests of local Service Members, Veterans, Disabled Veterans, spouses, their families, widows, widowers, and orphans.

Deputy Director/Directress (Resource & Recognition): Resource & Recognition Deputies of this Department are charged with the research, analysis, and production of periodic articles and opinion pieces on relevant Veteran-centric issues of the day. Additionally, as a panel, these Deputies will review significant Veteran-centric programs, actions, and activities conducted by the constituent membership for possible award recognition.

6. Procedure

Year-Round:

- The **Imperial Director:** reviews and approves all veteran-centric information and activities requests from all Shrine constituent bodies and documents such activities in his report to the Imperial Administrator.
- The **Chief Deputy:** will maintain constant communication with each Deputy to review and assist with all veteran-centric information and activities requests. Additionally, the Chief Deputy will document such activities in his report to the Imperial Director.
- **Deputies:** will maintain frequent communication with each Shrine Leadership member in their assigned area to provide advice and assistance information and facilitate coordination with veteran-centric activities. Ensure that all information is distributed from the Resource & Recognition to their assigned Deserts. Mandatory attendance at all Department quarterly meetings.

Annually (Imperial Session):

- **The Imperial Director:** During each Imperial Session, the Director, will attend all required Imperial Staff meetings to provide an in-depth update on all finalized veteran-centric plans and activities the Department will conduct in conjunction and coordination with other convention programs. The Director will exercise general supervision of these activities and submit a detailed Executive Summary as required at the close of the Imperial Session.
- **Chief Deputy:** During the Imperial Session, the Chief Deputies will coordinate a department planning and final closeout meeting. Additionally, the Chief will oversee the daily operation of all the Department's scheduled activities. These will include but are not limited to:
 - **Logistics:** Room Setups (Department Meetings, Workshops, Symposium, and Veteran Counseling Sessions and Outreach)
 - **Communication & Advertisement:** (Symposium Public Announcements Signage)

- **Recognitions:** (Awards for guest speakers and constituent membership)
- **Deputies** – During the Imperial Session, all Imperial Deputies will be assigned to individual duties to support the finalized program activities scheduled for the Imperial Session. These will include but are not limited to:
 - Mandatory attendance at all Department meetings
 - Symposium and Veteran Counseling Session administrative support
 - All other assignments as required by the Imperial Director or Chief Deputy

7. Needs Assessment

Year-Round: Periodic correspondence "Information Letter" distributed to each Deputy of and for the Desert outlining the Department's vision, services provided, staff, and Deputy assigned to advise and assist each Desert with veteran-centric issues.

Annually (Imperial Session):

Meeting Spaces - The Department will require the following space to conduct Department Meetings, Workshops, Symposium, Veteran Counseling Sessions, and DSO Center (5-day requirement Friday-Tues):

- **Veterans Symposium**

- 100 attendees
- 100 chairs (auditorium/lecture setting)
- Podium, microphone, projector and screen
- Photography / IMR support

***Justification:** This space will be used for the Department's annual Veterans Symposium which provides veteran benefit and service information to convention attendees as well as veterans and family members from the local community not affiliated with our organization.

- **Claims Clinic & DSO Center**

- 25 attendees
- Four long tables, 25 Chairs (Room setting should provide privacy due to personal information discussed between the Veteran and Counselor)

***Justification:** This space will be used to support multiple department initiatives, including internal planning and training meetings, workshops, one-on-one claim clinics, and the DSO veteran's lounge.

1. **Claims Clinic:** Provides personal one-on-one assistance to conventioners and local veterans with filing claims and help with understanding current Veterans Administration policies and procedures.
2. **Department Service Office (DSO) Center:** Like the USO, the JMVAD DSO Center provides hospitality for Shrine service members, veterans, and their families. The center will offer a safe space featuring a continuum of support to services where Nobles and Daughters of the Military community and other veterans can collaborate on ongoing Imperial Session issues and activities. This space will build strong cohesion within our organization and our military community and build a bond between stateside Nobles and Daughters stationed aboard.

***Note:** Coordination with the Medical Department will be ongoing in the event a servicemember or Veteran requires a mental health provider. (Smaller Room)

Budgeting - Funding to support approved department initiatives/outreach, and recognition awards presented at the Imperial Session. The awards will be given to members, Desert, Temple, or Court, for outstanding initiatives conducted to aid, promote, or serve local Service Members, Veterans, Disabled Veterans, their families, spouses, widows, widowers, and orphans. Additionally, each year the Department will present the Symposium Keynote Speaker with an award for their support as these subject matter experts are generally not reimbursed by their employer for their appearance.