

# Legionnaire

Volume CI

Number 5



## Training Provided for New Leaders



### American Legion College

Apply to enhance your skills, deepen your understanding of the organization, and prepare for a leadership role within The American Legion.



### Training Tuesdays

60 to 90-minute sessions from American Legion National Headquarters, offering helpful information for post commanders and adjutants.

As we are nearing the end of District Conventions, we want to take time to thank everyone who not only set up and hosted these important meetings but also to those who attended, The American Legion Family. Without the entirety of everybody doing their part, the business of the American Legion does not happen. Out of these meetings flow the direction of the scholarships, resolutions, our youth programs, and our outreach to the communities we serve and to each other. So, thank you again for taking the time to participate.

Realizing that we are made up of a body of members that are both new to The American Legion and those who have been serving for years, and after conventions many will be serving in new leadership positions, we wanted to pass along some important tools for assisting Post leaders to perform their duties well.

The National website has training available online at <https://www.legion.org/information-center/training>. They offer a Basic Training course for all members as well as information on The American Legion College for those approved to attend. If you are interested in attending The American Legion College, the Department is currently seeking applications. Applications are due to Department by June 1st. Also, the last Tuesday of each month The American Legion National Headquarters staff presents 60 to 90-minute training sessions on topics aimed at assisting Post commanders and adjutants. Each session is recorded and made available for later viewing. By the time this paper has been published they will have held another training session on March 25th focused on a new, interactive approach to resolution writing. National Headquarters uses the processes of collaboration, breakout rooms, live discussions and digital tools to refine ideas in real time. The previously recorded session, "How to Run a Post", by Indiana Legionnaire Angel M. Faulkner, provided practical guidance on how to effectively manage a Post. Other training topics have included: welcoming new members; conflict resolution; WellCare Medicare Plans; and Post meetings. If you are interested in attending these sessions or watching the previous training meetings mentioned above please visit <https://www.legion.org/information-center/training/training-tuesdays>.

Here at the Department, we have guides for District and County Commanders, as well as an Adjutant's Guide, and an Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies. The new 2026 guides will be mailed out by the Department after the Convention in June. Finally, our website at [nebraskalegion.net](http://nebraskalegion.net) has many useful links for all our programs, scholarships, and important forms that are needed at the local Post and Squadron levels. As always, please reach out to the Department if you have any questions or concerns.

## Department Seeking Applications for Assistant Adjutant

Our Assistant Adjutant, Eric Martin, will be moving up to the Department Adjutant position upon the retirement of Adjutant Salak in June 2025. As such, Department is looking to get a replacement onboard in a quick manner.

The majority of time as Assistant Adjutant is spent managing Department Programs like Legion Baseball, Junior Law Cadet, Oratorical, Scholarships, and County Government Day. The Assistant Adjutant also assumes other duties as directed by the Department Adjutant. The job is full-time with very good benefits.

Please submit resume/application (and redacted DD-214) to HQ's no later than April 11th with interview(s) following shortly after. For more information please contact Adjutant Salak at HQ.



## ACTION NEEDED FROM ALL POSTS



### Attention Posts & Squadrons:

It seems there is going to be a large delay in getting "hard copy" CPR's this year due to printing issues at National HQ. I ask that Posts and Squadrons do not delay the process further by waiting. Instead, print out a copy of the 2024-2025 CPR/CSR, fill it out, and send it to me before June 1, 2025. Thank you very kindly for getting this accomplished.

-Department Adjutant, Dave Salak.

Use your phone to scan this QR Code or go to the website below for the 2024-2025 CPR/CSR forms

<http://www.nebraskalegion.net/About/Forms.html>

**FOR GOD AND COUNTRY**

The Nebraska Legionnaire  
150 NW 40th St, Unit A  
Lincoln, NE 68528

### THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

2025 MEMBERSHIP GOAL: 22,300 MARCH 13TH TOTAL: 19,050 - 85.43%

DISTRICT 2 - 88.68%	DISTRICT 1 - 88.33%	DISTRICT 11 - 87.21%	DISTRICT 7 - 86.82%	DISTRICT 10 - 86.54%
DISTRICT 12 - 86.17%	DISTRICT 5 - 86.06%	DISTRICT 9 - 85.67%	DISTRICT 13 - 85.31%	DISTRICT 8 - 85.09%
DISTRICT 15 - 84.99%	DISTRICT 4 - 84.65%	DISTRICT 6 - 84.53%	DISTRICT 3 - 76.62%	




## Commander's Corner

**Boyd Yochum**  
Department Commander

We've managed to stay pretty busy since the last Legionnaire was published.

President Amanda Washburn and I were able to attend the Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, Illinois. We were able to place a Nebraska wreath at President Lincoln's tomb and attend meetings with our national leadership. This trip was once again proof of how important the Legion Family is. While visiting with folks, an Illinois

Legionnaire approached me and talked about attending a relative's funeral at the Omaha National Cemetery. His relative was from Plattsmouth, and he talked about how impressed he was that the Honor Guard was made up of Legion and Sons (and maybe a couple VFW) members.

Recently, 21 members of the Nebraska Legion Family attended the Washington Conference (Legislative Days), in Washington D.C. During these meetings we were able to sit down with our Nebraska Congressional Delegation. NEC Jim Costello led our family members and our remarks.

Senators Deb Fischer and Pete Ricketts met with us together in the Senate Office Building and were open to our priorities. It was a comfortable discussion as they also took questions from our group.

District 3 Representative Adrian Smith greeted us, and after handshakes, left us with his assistant. We had a nice discussion. Adrian has always supported our Legion priorities.

District 1 Representative Mike Flood gave us all the time we asked for, plus extra time. Mike was more than open to our priorities and offered conversation about what we do. Flood Media has been running some Boys State PSAs for us. Mike Flood was once our Nebraska Boys State Governor, and his son attended Boys State last summer.

We were also able to sit in on some Commission meetings. I chose the National Security meeting, which was most interesting. One of the facts shared is that the Department of Defense has inadequate stockpiles, equipment and personnel.

Doug Collins, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, spoke at one of our meetings. Secretary Collins promised there would be no cuts to veterans benefits. Doug is also a Legionnaire in his home State of Georgia.

By the time this is published, we should be nearing the end of our District Conventions. Some Districts have elections this year, and hopefully every Post had a representative at their conventions. For all the newly elected District Commanders, set aside August 7-9 for the National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis. This is a great way to hear what other Department District Commanders are doing to increase membership and activity. Our Department Adjutant will send out information on this workshop after Department Convention, but for now, set aside the date. It's worth your time.

It is not too late to continue working on 2025 membership in all of our family organizations.

Always remember, we are The American Legion Family. Legionnaires, Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and our Legion Riders; we're all in this together.

“Character, Values, & Integrity”




## Chaplain's Thoughts

**Steve Witmer**  
Department Chaplain

For most of my life there has always been a dog in the house. Dogs to run and play with as a young child. Dogs to hunt with as I grew older. Dogs to have around just for company. There is something I have noticed about dogs. If you treat them with love, they will love you back. If you show them love, they can and will do things for you that are, at times, amazing. There are even stories where a dog that loves his owner, will defend that person from harm to the point of dying for them. However, if you treat them poorly, they will usually avoid you with fear but will not hesitate to take the first opportunity to retaliate.

The same can be said about people. If you show others love, they will usually return that love. When you are with the people you love, you support each other, you help each other and will even defend each other. Together, you will defend others and even defend the country that you all love. 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 says; Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Now here is where it gets hard. Jesus tells us to take it one step further. We are to love our enemies. Matthew 5: 43,44 says; “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.’” Jesus wants us to pray for those who, in our view, want to harm us and our way of life. When we meet people who are living in ways that we know to be an abomination according to God's word, we are to pray for them, and if possible, turn away from these ways.

So, when God puts someone in your path that wants to harm you, or themselves, do not hesitate to pray for them, and with them if they are willing. Never pass up the chance to see a miracle when that person does a 180 turn and seeks God.

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### Department Officers

Commander..... Boyd Yochum, Ashland  
Senior Vice Commander..... Judy Walters, Ainsworth  
Area A Vice Commander..... Michael Sheridan, Elkhorn  
Area B Vice Commander..... John Arias, Grand Island  
Area C Vice Commander..... Tom Crisman, Crete  
Area D Vice Commander..... Marvin Donnelly, Hershey  
Adjutant..... Dave Salak, Lincoln  
Programs Director..... Eric Martin, Lincoln  
Chaplain..... Steve Witmer, York  
Historian..... Jennifer Laux, Omaha  
Judge Advocate..... William Harris, Omaha  
Finance Officer..... Mark Novak, Dawson  
Public Relations Officer..... Megan Kallina, Weeping Water  
Sergeant-At-Arms..... Kenneth Schmid, Bellwood  
Assistant Sergeant-At-Arms..... Gene vonForell, Crawford  
Service Officer..... Levi Bennett, Lincoln  
National Executive Committeeman..... Jim Costello, Bellevue  
Alternate NECman..... John-Henry Pearcy, Papillion

### District Commanders

Dist. 1..... Gary Sones, Rushville  
Dist. 2..... Gerald Bouska, Atkinson  
Dist. 3..... Nick Tramp, Allen  
Dist. 4..... Kent Holmes, Scottsbluff  
Dist. 5..... Geoffrey Florom, North Platte  
Dist. 6..... Burdette Chappell, Kearney  
Dist. 7..... Adam Schweitzer, Fremont  
Dist. 8..... Rich Klinger, Omaha  
Dist. 9..... Amie Moores, Elwood  
Dist. 10..... Charles Tuttle, Nelson  
Dist. 11..... Robert Eyers, Jansen  
Dist. 12..... Martin Neal, Hickman  
Dist. 13..... Kevin McKinney, Tecumseh  
Dist. 15..... Ronnie Hindmand, Lincoln



The NEBRASKA

*Legionnaire*

Official Publication of and Owned Exclusively by  
The American Legion Department of Nebraska.

**Megan Kallina, Editor**  
**Dave Salak, Publisher's Representative**

First published in 1923, The Nebraska Legionnaire is in its 101st year of publication. It is published bi-monthly; February, April, June, August, October, and December by The American Legion, Department of Nebraska, 150 NW 40th St, Unit A, Lincoln, NE 68528. Periodicals postage is paid at Lincoln, Nebraska at additional mailing offices. The Nebraska Legionnaire is a member of the Nebraska American Legion Press Association.

**Subscription:** \$10 for non-members. Members receive the Legionnaire as part of their dues.

**Advertising Rates:** Contact Megan Kallina at 402-464-6338.

**Publications Committee:** vacant

150 NW 40th St, Unit A, Lincoln, NE 68528.

Nebraska Legionnaire, (USPS 376-180) (ISSN 0028-1875)

Did you know you can read the Nebraska Legionnaire online at  
[www.nebraskalegion.net](http://www.nebraskalegion.net)?

If you would rather receive the Nebraska Legionnaire by email or view it online, send in this form. The email and online edition of the newspaper is usually available a week or so before the paper arrives in your mailbox. All we need from you is your email address.

I no longer wish to receive a printed copy of the Nebraska Legionnaire.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_


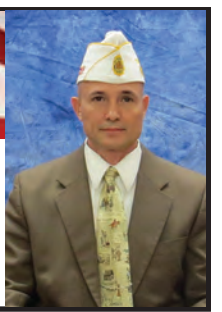
Member ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to The American Legion, 150 NW 40th Street, Unit A,  
Lincoln, NE 68528, or you can email the information to  
[mkallina@nebraskalegion.net](mailto:mkallina@nebraskalegion.net)




## It's History

**Jennifer Laux**  
Department Historian

## Straight Talk

**Levi Bennett**  
Department Service Officer

**A Look Back in Time**

**April, 1975 (50 Years Ago)**

Nebraska Department Commander Charles Singleton announced plans to implement an Americanism project to officially begin the Department's observance of April 19, 1975 as the 200th anniversary of the "shot heard 'round the world," and the beginning of this country's fight for independence. Commander Singleton suggested the observance be conducted by Blue Cap Legionnaires utilizing firing squad weapons at various locations in communities at sunrise to fire the shots so that all residents may hear the ceremonial volleys.

The annual observance of "April is Children and Youth Month" began 36 years ago with its inauguration by the 1938 National Convention. April provides an opportunity for the local Post, Unit and Squadron to inform their memberships and the citizens of their communities of their accomplishments and their concern for the children and youth. In your observance of April as Children and Youth Month, select an activity which is appropriate to the needs of your community and an activity which will benefit a large number of children. There will always be a need for a Post to render service to an individual veteran's child, but bear in mind our theme, "A Square Deal for Every Child."

The Department of Nebraska has been named the winner of the General Henri Gouraud Trophy in Membership (Category II). The trophy is awarded by The American Legion to the Department in each of the five Big Ten categories which is the first to go over its nationally assigned membership goal. The Nebraska Department surpassed its goal of 54,565 by 2,609 on February 27, 1975.

**April, 1985 (40 Years Ago)**

"A program of service to the Youth of America." Those words best describe American Legion Baseball as it celebrates its 60th anniversary season of nationwide competition in 1985. American Legion Baseball became a national program in 1925 and the first national tournament was held in 1926 with only 16 Departments represented. Today, nearly 4,000 teams in all 50 states and Puerto Rico compete for the National Championship traditionally over the Labor Day weekend.

Nebraska Vietnam veterans are planning a statewide reunion in Grand Island Aug. 9-11 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. Time will be set aside to address such issues as Agent Orange, Delayed Stress Syndrome, POW/MIAs and veterans benefits.

**May, 1995 (30 Years Ago)**

Bringing back what was once an annual tradition, this year's Department Convention in Kearney will include a parade with color guards, floats and bands. In addition to having a good time, participants in the convention parade can earn trophies and cash prizes.

April is the month The American Legion observes as the Children and Youth Month and thus it is appropriate to provide information on what benefits may be available to children of veterans.

Some of the most beneficial benefits offered to children of veterans that is often missed is the array of education benefits, be it the transfer of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) or the Fry Scholarship are some of the education benefits available to children of veterans.



The Post-9/11 GI Bill (PGIB) is also known as Chapter 33. Those individuals with remaining education months available may transfer PGIB benefits to their spouse, their children, or any combination of eligible family members. To learn more about transferring education benefits please visit the milConnect website: [https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/public/faq/Education\\_Benefits](https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/public/faq/Education_Benefits)

DEA which is also known as Chapter 35 in USDVA language and is a VA program that provides educational benefits to eligible children (spouses/surviving spouses may also be eligible) of military personnel who died while in the line of duty, are missing in action or captured in the line of duty by a hostile force, are forcibly detained in the line of duty by a foreign government or power, or have a 100% permanent and total service-connected disability rating. The Chapter 35 education program may be used in combination with the State of Nebraska Waiver of Tuition Program (NE R.S.S. 80-411), which allows spouses and children who are Nebraska residents to attend a Nebraska state college or Nebraska community college. Chapter 35 pays a monthly stipend to assist with educational tuition, fees, books, etc. By using both Chapter 35 and the Nebraska Waiver of Tuition a dependent student greatly reduces the cost of receiving a quality education.

The Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (Fry Scholarship) is another educational opportunity for children or spouses of a member of the Armed Forces or the Selected Reserve who died on or after September 11, 2001, while serving on active duty or in the line of duty or died from a service-connected disability on or after September 11, 2001.

Other benefits which children (spouses/surviving spouses may also be eligible) may be eligible are health care benefits via TRICARE (Treatment, Resources, and Insurance for Care for Active Retirees) or CHAMPVA (Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs) and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

I encourage each veteran, spouse or child of veterans to contact an accredited veteran service officer to learn more about what benefits you or your dependents may be eligible to receive. You can find your local county veteran service officer (CVSO) contact information at the following website <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/cvso> or by calling 402-471-2458 and asking who your CVSO is and requesting their phone number.

## S.A.L. Notes

**Eldon Kramer**  
Detachment Commander



Greetings "Blue Cappers" and Nebraska Legion Family, from the Detachment of Nebraska Commander Eldon Kramer. Let us remember that membership is very important in our organization. Let us not recruit members without the know-how of our organization and uphold the four pillars (Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth). As of March 6, 2025, Nebraska Squadrons are sitting 6th in the Midwest Region, 30th Nationally, with a total of 5,767, which is 81.45% membership renewed. Remember the sacrifice that was paid for your membership and to represent it as a proud possessor of a priceless heritage. Post Adjutants and Post Commanders

please give a heads up to your S. A. L. members and let's get their dues rounded up. If your card says 2024 you are not paid up. Squadron officers can use [mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org) for more information, reports, and the ability to pay your members' dues online. Don't forget about "Be The One". The Crisis Hotline number is 988 and then press 1. Legion Family, if you have a smartphone, please download the Be The One App.

My travels have taken me to the Washington Conference in D.C. The wreaths were laid by Junior Auxiliary member Lillian Casey and Sergeant-at-Arms Kolten Kramer. The two presented wreaths at WWII, Vietnam Memorials and Arlington National Cemetery. Kolten and I visited some of The National Museums. I traveled to District 6 Spring Convention and had a great time with the Legion Family. I traveled to Gering High School and interviewed two boys for Nebraska Boys State. The two Boys Staters will be sponsored by Post #36 and Squadron #36. Finally, make sure that you are promoting and assisting in the Legion programs: Legion Baseball, Boys State, Junior Shooting Sports, Oratorical Contest, Scouting, and Junior Law Cadet. Gentlemen, we need to get those Squadron Data Reports in. My Commanders project this year is to support the WNVH with raised garden beds to help them to continue their skills outside in fresh air. Remember gentlemen we are S.A.L. Strong, keep up the good work! "Participation leads to Education".

**Sons of The American Legion Membership  
As of March 13, 2025**

District	2024 Members	2025 Members
1	310	241
2	621	521
3	234	220
4	357	294
5	152	126
6	1,367	1,209
7	741	691
8	836	780
9	307	273
10	356	268
11	1,111	863
12	236	252
13	126	109
15	135	129
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,889</b>	<b>5,977</b>



## POW/MIA

**Boyd Yochum**  
POW/MIA Liaison

The information contained in a Senate Report, and in “The Gulag Study,” covering the period immediately after World War I to the eve of the Vietnam War, (World War II, the Cold War and the Korean War), prove beyond any doubt that American Military personnel were held captive in the Soviet Union over the course of over forty years, (1918 to 1960).

It comes as no surprise that this despicable conduct by the communists was repeated during both Vietnam Wars.

Most Americans erroneously believe that what we know as the “Vietnam War” was the first modern conflict on the Indochina peninsula. It was not.

French missionaries and traders began to visit the Indochina peninsula in the 1700’s. By the late 1800’s, the French had occupied Indochina and imposed colonial rule.

By the 1930’s, three forces were at work in Indochina. The French were in control, Japanese interest in the peninsula was keen, and indigenous nationalism/communism was taking root.

Nguyen Tat Thanh was educated in France, where he co-founded the French Communist Party in the 1920’s. He organized the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930. He lived in Moscow for a while, traveled to the West, and settled in China. From there, Nguyen Tat Thanh “directed the underground effort against the French and Japanese, which lead to the formation of the League for Vietnamese Independence (Viet Minh) in May 1941.

In 1943, Nguyen adopted the name which would become infamous around the world: Ho Chi Minh.

(Ho Chi Minh’s “idol” was Teddy Roosevelt, who once said, paraphrase, all countries should be sovereign and of their own, no matter how big or how small).

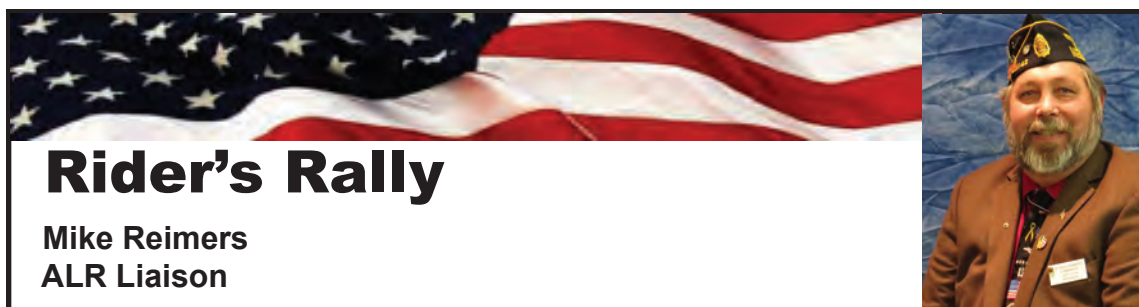
After Ho’s forces defeated the French in the mid-1950’s, his Viet Minh would emulate the Soviet Union’s longstanding tactics regarding Prisoners of War and those Missing In Action.

The Viet Minh refused to provide casualty lists to the French. The communists’ prisoner rosters were incomplete and inaccurate. They sold bones and artifacts. They introduced the prisoner of war issue in negotiations leading up to the Geneva Peace Conference, gaining Viet Minh admission to the conference as a full participant, in exchange for returning a number of French wounded. When the POW’s had served their purpose in the propaganda campaign, and bargaining chips in the peace negotiations, they continued to be used by Vietnamese Communists in the ongoing Cold War.

A detailed study of Communist Vietnamese methods in exploiting the remains issue in the aftermath of the French Indochina War, published by the Rand Corporation in January 1969, declared: Despite substantial political and economic concession the French have made to Hanoi since 1954, France has never received a full accounting for its missing and dead. The Vietnamese government has consistently circumvented and violated the terms of the 1954 agreement concerning the accounting for France’s missing servicemen.

The lengthy Rand Study is an eye opener. Its major point is that the Vietnamese communists saw POW/MIA’s as mere chattel, to be used as bargaining chips for economic and political purposes

\*\*\*Source document for this report is Archangel, 1918 to Hanoi 1972.



## Rider's Rally

**Mike Reimers**  
ALR Liaison

Hello, American Legion Riders!

As most of you know I have been going over the list of Chapters and going to the District Conventions to gain information.

I am asking Commanders of Posts to contact me if you have a Chapter and its status, please and thank you. Providing that information helps us to know what is going on and where to refer someone to, this makes both our jobs easier.

The information I need is as follows:

- What is the status of your Charter? Active/Nonactive
- How many members are in the Charter?
- When was the program Chartered?

The State Romp is going to be held in Bayard June 20-21, 2025. That is near Chimney Rock. They have several rides planned and a good time for all. Even if you don’t ride a bike you are more then welcome to the event, drive along and see what all goes on. I hope to see lots of bikes and people there.

Then, the next weekend we will be in Columbus for State Convention. I also hope to see a lot of Riders there.

My phone number is 402-631-9214 or you can email me at mgreimers58@gmail.com. Spring is around the corner so watch for bikes (motorcycles). Ride safe and have fun.

## National Convention in Tampa, Florida

The 2025 National Convention will be held August 22 - 28 at the Barrymore Hotel in Tampa, FL. Delegates should plan to arrive Saturday the 23rd and depart Thursday the 28th (late afternoon). Rooms are \$132.48 including tax. Other Departments staying at the hotel are California and Massachusetts. Legion HQ’s, Aux HQ’s and SAL HQ’s are at other hotels.

Please call the Department for more information @ 402-464-6338



## “The Veteran” Bruce Madsen, Nebraska City Post 8

Up to right now and to way  
back before  
I have been everywhere  
fighting a war

I came from here and I came  
from there  
I really just came from  
almost everywhere

From cities and towns and countryside farms  
Villages and Hamlets filled with amazing charm  
I came from all over, not one place alone  
There is not one place that I couldn’t call home

I was there when we fought the “Great War”  
Barbed wire and trenches, it was a deadly chemical war  
I was at Bella Wood and the Battle of the Marne  
And I got killed in the forest at Argonne

That was deadly, a merciless hell  
Bullets everywhere and exploding shells  
Scared to death, maybe going insane  
I was almost relieved when my death finally came

Although I was dead, I wasn’t at all through  
‘Cause now I was fighting in WWII  
This was a long war that was to protect our nation  
And, I was in it for the long haul, in for the duration

I was Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines  
The purpose was clear; never unseen  
Our country was threatened by a malicious foe  
We had to send a message back to Tokyo

Then the Germans came and got into the mix  
And then there were many more deadly conflicts  
Bataan and Guadalcanal were a killing fest  
But so was the Bulge, the bridge at Remagen and all the rest

At Hacksaw Ridge my life was saved  
By a medic whose beliefs he would not waive  
He said there was no way he would carry a gun  
But he did his part when the battle was done

And I was there for all of these  
Just call me a battle-hardened enlistee  
And yet again I met my dilemma  
‘Cause I was shot dead...on Iwo Jima

Again and again in the years that came  
I was to fight in Korea and then in Vietnam  
In places whose names were hard to pronounce  
The fighting was hard, but of what I had, I gave every ounce

Vietnam was a war like no other  
You couldn’t tell one from another  
The North, the South, from wherever they came  
Their causes were different, but they all looked the same

I’ve been around the world so many times  
Serving my country in my youthful prime  
Been to Grenada, Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran  
Spent was too many years fighting Afghanistan

Lebanon, Libya, there’s just no end  
How long will it be before I’m needed again  
But I will do my duty if my country should ask  
I just hope it’s worthwhile before decisions are cast

Sometimes I came home, sometimes I didn’t  
Wounded, maimed, and sometimes in a casket  
But I did my job, and I did it well  
Many times, from the thrones of Hell

So, I may be dead and in the ground  
But my spirit is free and is still around  
And whatever may come to this nation’s door  
The Veteran never has to ask, “What the hell did I die for?”  
-Bruce Madsen

## Membership Minute

Steve Bartos, Chairman

We find ourselves in April, and the 2025 membership campaign is winding down. However, the end of the year 2025 doesn't occur until December 31. Let's keep at it.

It has been a year not at all like 2024 and most others where we were making most of our goals and for many being 5% ahead of the target dates. We met the 90% target date with days to spare. This year we failed to achieve the 85% target and were about 5% behind the 90% goal on the March 12 target date. I don't think you'll find too many folks who disagree that two out-of-the-ordinary things impacted our membership efforts. For the year 2025, a \$5.00 dues increase was adopted by both the national organization and the Department of Nebraska. I heard more than once that because of what has occurred in the past we should anticipate the possibility of a 5-10% reduction in our numbers because of those increases. Anticipating it and being happy about it are two different things. Additionally, Nebraska did not take the first dues notice from Indianapolis in July but waited until October so that all Posts could make whatever dues adjustments they wanted and have them correct on the first notice. Our membership campaign essentially was three months behind for many members who were not permanent, PUFL, or multi-year members.

I don't think we have any good way to quantify how much impact each of these occurrences has had on our current decline. It's just an intuitive conclusion that makes sense after having such a relatively good year in 2024.

There is a third impact that is a little easier to quantify and that's the number of Legionnaires we lose each year to Post Everlasting. Since I have access to and am familiar with my own Post, I'm going to use it as an example.

My Post has a 2025 goal of 1,066 members. Between March 1, 2024, and February 28, 2025, we lost 64 members to death. Forty-two of those members had paid for 2024 and were included in the goal-setting process, but they passed away before they had a chance to renew. They represent almost 4% of our goal. Fourteen of those 64 deceased members had paid for 2025, and they will be included in the 2026 goal-setting process. A few percent leave because of the dues increase, a few percent due to death, and a few percent for reasons we know not. Do the math.

While some of the past few national commanders have promoted "renewals" as a key part of the membership process and I don't disagree with that, it is still quite clear that more emphasis must be placed on recruiting. Renewals only extend the memberships of the living members from one year to the next. Newly recruited members or reinstated members are an absolute necessity to replace deaths.

Going forward, let's work on both renewals and recruits. Our survival depends on it.

Have a nice April.

SAVE PAPER.  
SAVE POSTAGE.  
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### Teacher of The Year Nominations Due May 1st

The Nebraska American Legion Teacher of the Year program serves to recognize dedicated and devoted individuals who, on a constant basis, give so much of themselves on behalf of the youth of Nebraska. Just like veterans, teachers are the unsung heroes who build our nation's future by working with the youth of today. Each year, The American Legion, Department of Nebraska, will recognize one teacher in each of the following categories: elementary school, middle school and high school.

For information on the eligibility requirements and to download an application please visit <http://www.nebraskalegion.net/Programs/Teacher.html>. The complete application package must be submitted to Department Headquarters in Lincoln by May 1st.



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## Children and Youth

Donald E. Nelsen, Chairman

You can access many of the children and youth projects via The American Legion Family website. The American Legion has been supporting children and youth programs since 1919. In 1938 TAL initiated April as Child Welfare Month; later becoming Children and Youth Month.

As a Legionnaire in a small community, I want to tell you what has worked in our world and let you know some guidelines provided by National. Among those lessons learned are: host your project or programs in whatever month works best for you, setting it up to meet local needs. For example, for decades in the holiday season, we've done a program called "Fill an Empty Stocking", because it fills a need. We coordinate this program with all our local veterans organizations and their auxiliaries because it benefits area children. We have used our own guidelines set up over the years. Such as, the families need to be receiving social services, have legal physical custody, age limits, and live within the county. This program involves an area bank which handles the applications, county assistance to qualify applicants, chairmen, radio, newspapers, online media, as well as folks who "adopt" the families of children. It also includes numerous volunteers who donate time, talent, and money as well as, assist in the loading and unloading, delivery, and more.

One of our delivery volunteers has suited up as Santa has for the past 20 years, and says it makes his year! Everyone enjoys the smiles and big eyes on the kids. It is a feel-good project. This year we served 67 children. They received gifts valued at \$11,000 in all. The project runs about six weeks to complete all the tasks and reach all the youth. Total hours were over 300. Many volunteers of children and youth programs are just folks who do for others out of the goodness of their hearts.

My recommendation is that you need to do what works for your area. Invite and incorporate other civic groups in your community to join you. Work together to make your youth and your volunteers feel special.

Make this a better world in which to live! Every program begins with one...one person, one idea, one thought, and yes, there will always be that one naysayer. Be the one to make a difference.

## 2025 Department Convention Make Your Reservations Now

The 2025 Department Convention will be held June 26 - 29 at the Quality Inn in Columbus. The DEC will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 26 and at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, June 27. The Joint Session will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, June 27 and the Legion Convention will begin at 3:00 p.m. and go through Sunday, June 29.

Business sessions of The American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, and Riders will all be held in the Columbus Quality Inn. Reach out to the respective organization for an agenda for the Convention.

The hotel is located at 265 33rd Avenue, Columbus. Rooms are \$109.95 a night plus tax. The last date to get reservations at the Legion rate is June 1 or when the reservation block is full. Call 402-564-1492 to make your reservation. The Convention Registration fee is \$10. For more information, please contact Adjutant Dave Salak.



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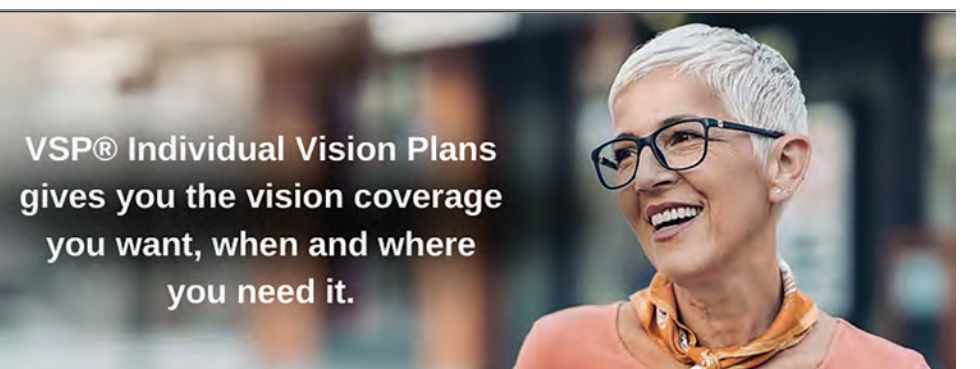
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## Candidate Announcements

### Judy “Mo” Walters Commander



Judy “Mo” Walters has announced her candidacy for the high office of Department Commander for 2025-2026. She is eligible for membership in the American Legion through her service in the United States Navy from 1973 to 1977. She joined the American Legion in 1981 and is a current PUFL member of Post 79 in Ainsworth. She currently serves as the Post 79 Commander and Brown County Commander. She served as the District One Vice Commander and Commander from 2019 to 2023. She served as Area D Vice Commander from 2023 - 24. She is currently serving as the Senior Vice Commander.

She graduated from the American Legion College in November 2023 and completed the Basic Training Course in 2018. She has attended the past four national conventions and currently serves on the National Americanism Commission. She has also attended the Washington Conference in 2023 and 2024 and plans to attend this year.

Judy worked for The Department of Health and Human Services as a Social Service Worker and Supervisor for 28 years. Judy also worked for 7 years as a County Veteran Service Officer for the three counties of Brown, Rock and Keya Paha. She is now retired and has time to devote serving the Legionnaires of Nebraska as their Department Commander. Judy would appreciate the support of her fellow Legionnaires to be

elected to the high office of Department Commander.

### Doug Frahm Senior Vice Commander



Doug Frahm has announced his candidacy for Senior Vice Commander. Doug lives in the small town of Amelia, Nebraska where he manages the family ranch and custom bales hay for his neighbors. He has a son Joseph, four step children; Robin, Jodie, Janet, and Aaron.

Doug’s community service includes being elected as a Holt County Supervisor, Chairman of the Holt County Board of Equalization, Chairman of the Wyoming Township Board, local church trustee, past 911 board member, Central Nebraska Community Action Partnership Board member and is a member on the NE Nebraska Juvenile Justice Board.

Doug is a Vietnam Veteran having served in the USAF and ANG for a total of 26 years. After retiring in 2005, he joined the American Legion and has been a continuous member for 20 years. Doug is a dual member belonging to Squadron 320. Doug has served as Chambers Post 320 Commander, Membership Chairperson and Chaplain. Department offices he has held include Holt County Commander, District 2 Commander (where he received both the Hard Charger and Citizenship award) and Area B Vice Commander. He has attended most Department Conventions and Mid-Year Conferences since 2008, serving on the Department Executive Committee for six years. Doug has also been a Department of Nebraska delegate to the National Convention for the past six years and has served as a National Security Council delegate. He is also Vice Chairman of the National Legislative Council and Second Vice President of The Boys State Corporation. In 2017 Doug was appointed Junior Shooting Sports Program Liaison and recently became the Chief Range Officer for the National Junior Shooting Sports Program. Doug also attended the National American Legion College and is a graduate of the class of 2017.

Doug’s goal is to work closely with the entire Department of Nebraska American Legion Family. He knows our Legion family strength comes through our membership in the Legion, the Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion, and the Legion Riders. He also believes that the programs we support, and sponsor, are what makes us leaders in our Communities, State and Nation.

Doug will work closely with the Department Commander and Department Staff to be an effective leader. He asks for your support and your vote for Senior Vice Commander. Thank you for your Support!

### Martin Neal Area C Vice Commander



Martin Neal has announced his candidacy for Area C Vice Commander for 2025-2026. He is eligible for membership in the American Legion through his service in the United States Army from 1988 to 2019. He has been a continuous member of the American Legion for 28 years and has served as a Post Commander, County Commander, District Vice Commander, and District Commander. In addition to serving the veteran community through the American Legion, he also serves as the Board Chairperson of the Lancaster County Veterans Service Advisory Board and is the presumptive Board President of the newly forming chapter of the Farmer Veteran Coalition in Nebraska. He has a BS in Public Administration and Political Science from Doane College, a MA in Public Administration and Public Policy from the University of Nebraska – Omaha and is a graduate of the United States Army Command and General Staff College. Martin owns a farm near Douglas Nebraska. His spouse, Melissa, is an RN at the Lincoln VA Clinic and is a member of Auxiliary Unit 105 in Hickman. His daughter, Maesa is a junior studying ecology and botany at Colorado State University in Fort Collins and is a member of Auxiliary Unit 105 in Hickman. His son, Samuel is in pre-K at Sterling Nebraska, is the Farm Boss, and is a member of the Sons Squadron 105 in Hickman. Martin will work

closely with the Department Commander, the Department Staff, and the Districts in Area C and would appreciate your support and vote to be the Area C Vice Commander.



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Adams, Leslie, F., Beatrice, SAL  
 Ahrens, Eldon, L., Tekamah, Korea  
 Almaguer, Alfred, M., Jr., Kearney, Vietnam  
 Anderson, Leland, Norfolk, Vietnam  
 Antosh, Edward, H., Yutan, Vietnam  
 Apfel, Loren, Norfolk, Korea  
 Armstrong, Greg, Lincoln, Panama  
 Atkinson, James, Albion, Korea  
 Badberg, Ronald, A., Nebraska City, Vietnam  
 Bartels, Eldon, R., Elk Creek, Vietnam  
 Beckman, Arnold, Nebraska City, Korea  
 Beckman, Phillip, D., Venango, Vietnam  
 Bell, Ronald, E., Holdrege, Korea  
 Belt, Densil, F., Havelock, Korea  
 Benac, Larry, F., Lincoln, Vietnam  
 Bialas, Walter, Silver Creek, Korea  
 Bieber, Raymond, W., Lincoln, Korea  
 Borer, Romen, J., Norfolk, Vietnam  
 Brichacek, Dean, Schuyler, Vietnam  
 Brunkhorst, Mickey, A., Wauneta, SAL  
 Brust, John, L., Nebraska City, Vietnam  
 Buethe, William, B., Elk Creek, Vietnam  
 Burchfield, Gary, F., Lincoln, Vietnam  
 Burger, Steven, A., Syracuse, Vietnam  
 Buss, Bert, D., Paxton, Persian Gulf  
 Cain, Lee, W., Utica, Korea  
 Carlstedt, Melvin, E., Nebraska City, WWII  
 Carpenter, Bob, Nebraska City, Vietnam  
 Chamberlain, Delmar, G., Tekamah, Korea  
 Chilvers, Thomas, C., Pierce, WWII  
 Christensen, Roland, St. Paul, Korea  
 Clement, Russell, Farnam, Vietnam  
 Debban, Loyle, L., Elwood, Vietnam  
 Denton, Robert, J., Beatrice, Korea  
 Dibble, Donald, Omaha, Vietnam  
 Divis, Melvin, Elwood, Korea  
 Doering, William, Scottsbluff, Vietnam  
 Doyle, Arthur, C., Jr., Papillion, Vietnam

Dunlap, Jay, Milford, Korea  
 Edwards, Steven, C., Havelock, Vietnam  
 Ericson, Marvin, H., Osceola, Korea  
 Erwin, Bob, O'Neill, Korea  
 Evans, Robert, D., Millard, Vietnam  
 Fike, Charles, Auburn, WWII  
 Fink, Bruce, Page, Vietnam  
 Finnegan, Leonard, Omaha, WWII  
 Fitch, Terry, E., Holdrege, Vietnam  
 Flaxbeard, Donald, P., Millard, Korea  
 Foster, David, L., Dwight, Vietnam  
 Fowler, Edward, R., Holdrege, Vietnam  
 Franklin, Howard, L., Crawford  
 French, James, D., Cedar Rapids, Korea  
 Frye, Ronald, P., Yutan, Vietnam  
 Fuchs, Robert, Arlington, Vietnam  
 Gangwish, Clifford, A., Gibbon, Vietnam  
 Gergen, Roger, Shickley, Korea  
 Giebenrath, Harry, Valparaiso  
 Goering, Keith, W., Syracuse, Korea  
 Grant, Roger, H., Millard, Vietnam  
 Grossnicklaus, Rex, Silver Creek  
 Grubbs, Glen, L., Grand Island, Korea  
 Hanna, Fredrick, J., Millard, Korea  
 Happ, James, Greely, Vietnam  
 Harvat, James, E., Omaha  
 Harvey, Donald, Omaha, Vietnam  
 Henderson, Elmer, Union, Vietnam  
 Henning, Scott, C., Garland, Panama  
 Himmelberg, Vernon, A., Lawrence, Korea  
 Hinirchsen, Lawayne, E., South Sioux City, Korea  
 Hoatson, Lee, Sutherland, SAL  
 Hoffman, Thomas, V., Cody, Vietnam  
 Hollibaugh, De Wayne, Chadron, WWII  
 Hollrah, Roger, L., Chadron  
 Hopkins, Alvin, R., Minden, Korea  
 Hopkins, Glen, E., Riverton, Korea  
 Horn, Jimmy, D., Fullerton  
 Hovorka, William, David City, Vietnam  
 Howell, Robert, L., Omaha, Korea  
 Hultman, Earl, Sutton, Korea  
 Hume, Dennis, L., Omaha, Vietnam  
 Hutter, Gary, Gretna, Korea

Ihrle, James, Lincoln, Vietnam  
 Jack, Gary, Tekamah, Lebanon/Grenada  
 Jipp, Steven, W., Millard, Vietnam  
 Johnson, Ernest, Bertrand, Vietnam  
 Johnson, Jess, D., Lincoln, Korea  
 Johnson, Roger, E., Randolph, Vietnam  
 Johnson, Ronald, Spencer, Vietnam  
 Johnson, Walter, B., Page, Korea  
 Jones, Arthur, R., Lincoln, Korea  
 Kabes, Leonard, Leigh, Korea  
 Karloff, Larry, D., Yutan  
 Kaup, Jerome, B., Bassett  
 Kearbey, Verdis, C., Battle Creek  
 Kehm, Glenn, R., Havelock, Vietnam  
 Kemplin, Byron, Paxton, Vietnam  
 Klitz, Francis, H., West Point, Korea  
 Knecht, Vernon, Homer, Korea  
 Knight, Dale, G., Omaha, WWII  
 Kocourek, Robert, L., Papillion, Vietnam  
 Koory, Michael, Omaha, Vietnam  
 Kosmicki, Jerome, Grand Island, Korea  
 Kovar, Victor, Garland  
 Krajewski, Andrew, B., Elwood, Korea  
 Krejci, Allan, Schuyler, Korea  
 Kupke, Marvin, E., Louisville, Vietnam  
 Kuzak, Justin, Ashton, Korea  
 Lane, Larry, R., Omaha, Korea  
 Larson, Leroy, Grand Island, Vietnam  
 Less, John, Scribner, Vietnam  
 Ligenza, Richard, Lincoln, Vietnam  
 Love, Alekzander, W., Papillion, GW\_Terrorism  
 Lynch, Richard, Palmer, Vietnam  
 Lynn, James, E., Minden, Vietnam  
 Madison, Earnest, Omaha, Vietnam  
 Maguire, Mike, Plymouth, Vietnam  
 McCaw, Harold, L., Plattsmouth, Vietnam  
 McCawley, Donald, H., Lincoln, Korea  
 McGrath, Dorothy, Shickley, Korea  
 Meyer, Frederick, Plymouth, Vietnam  
 Miller, Roger, Cortland, Vietnam  
 Miller, Stephen, A., Lincoln, WWII  
 Minturn, Joanne, Omaha, Korea  
 Misiunas, John, A., Omaha, Vietnam

Mongar, Dean, P., Valparaiso, Vietnam  
 Morgan, Gary, D., Albion, Vietnam  
 Morthole, Jeffrey, Hayes Center, Vietnam  
 Mullin, James, A., Omaha, Korea  
 Mundil, Jerry, Schuyler, Vietnam  
 Newberry, William, L., Kearney, Vietnam  
 Norris, John, E., Weeping Water, Korea  
 Novak, Frederick, J., Lincoln, Korea  
 Obermire, Dean, Atkinson, Korea  
 Oestmann, Larry, L., Lincoln, Vietnam  
 Olsberg, Galen, Millard, Korea  
 Oltmans, Louis, W., Virginia, Korea  
 Othmer, Larry, G., Elk Creek, Vietnam  
 Pearson, Robert, J., St. Paul, Vietnam  
 Peterson, Ellery, Kearney, WWII  
 Pfeifer, Richard, F., Norfolk, Korea  
 Plucker, Gerald, W., Millard, Korea  
 Pollock, Elmer, Grand Island, Vietnam  
 Puls, Dennis, Norfolk, Korea  
 Quadhamer, Dale, Minden, Vietnam  
 Quinlan, Lowell, Valparaiso, Vietnam  
 Rasmussen, David, Homer, Vietnam  
 Raybourn, Fred, L., Jr., Bellevue, Korea  
 Regan, Donald, J., Sr., Millard, WWII  
 Reinke, Orvil, Hebron, Korea  
 Reiss, Delbert, Crete, Korea  
 Renze, William, H., Omaha, Korea  
 Rezac, Allen, J., Omaha, Vietnam  
 Rhoades, Walter, L., Brewster, Korea  
 Rhodd, Louis, Falls City, Vietnam  
 Ricceri, Joseph, Omaha, Korea  
 Richman, Michael, L., Alma, Vietnam  
 Roesler, Adolph, Bennett, Vietnam  
 Rohan, Richard, Valparaiso, Korea  
 Roloff, Lorenzo, G., Louisville, Vietnam  
 Rubottom, Phillip, H., Friend, Korea  
 Sayers, Alvin, Columbus, Korea  
 Schademann, Lester, Albion WWII  
 Schawang, Earl, Falls City, Korea  
 Schechinger, Robert, W., Papillion, SAL  
 Schidler, Michael, C., Diller, Vietnam

Schildt, Virgil, Garland, Panama  
 Schleiger, Jackie, L., Lincoln, Korea  
 Schmidt, Robert, Norfolk, Vietnam  
 Schroeder, Daniel, G., Crofton, Vietnam  
 Schumacher, Gerald, A., Crofton, WWII  
 Schuster, Chris, Elk Creek, Korea  
 Shepard, Keith, W., Omaha, Korea  
 Simpson, Ivan, R., Beatrice, Korea  
 Slattery, William, Atkinson, Vietnam  
 Smith, Dean, Allen, Vietnam  
 Sohl, Gary, L., Wymore, Vietnam  
 Spelts, William, J., Lynch, Korea  
 Spenner, Arthur, J., Columbus, Vietnam  
 Stanik, Thomas, J., Morse Bluff, Vietnam  
 Stanley, Martin, A., Millard, Vietnam  
 Stephens, Wayne, L., Lincoln, Korea  
 Sterling, James, A., Lincoln, Korea  
 Stranik, Thomas, Morse Bluff, Vietnam  
 Stuart, D. M., Cozad, Korea  
 Sweet, Charles, L., Albion  
 Swendroski, William, J., Omaha, Vietnam  
 Tanner, Jacqueline, E., Talmage, Vietnam  
 Trapp, Bernard, F., Omaha, WWII  
 Trine, Eugene, I., Madison, Korea  
 Tryon, Stewart, R., Lincoln, Vietnam  
 Vogel, Edward, D., Herman, Korea  
 Wall, Sam, J., Lincoln, Korea  
 Walters, Benjamin, E., Elk Creek, Panama  
 Weidner, Fredrick, H., Hallam, Vietnam  
 Wendell, B., Harold, Omaha, Korea  
 Wentink, Gayle, R., Lincoln, Korea  
 Werkmeister, Ron, Madison, Vietnam  
 White, Clarence, J., Lincoln, WWII  
 Wieman, Bernard, A., Howells, Korea  
 Wilkie, Donald, J., Omaha  
 Winter, Robert, C., Holdrege, Vietnam  
 Wortman, Leonard, Beatrice, Korea  
 Wyant, Jack, L., Lincoln, Vietnam  
 Yakus, Leonard, F., Millard, Korea  
 Yant, Allen, R., Minden, Korea  
 Zavadil, Leroy, D., Lincoln, WWII  
 Ziegenbein, Harold, Neligh, Korea

## Need a Copy of a DD-214?

Military Discharge Request: The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214s online: <https://vetrecs.archives.gov>.

This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files. Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents.

Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site. Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time.

Please pass this information on to former military personnel you may know and their dependents.



## Events Calendar

### April

18 Good Friday - Office Closed

### May

5 - 8 Spring Meetings

16 - 18 Oratorical Contest

26 Memorial Day - Office Closed

### June

1 - 7 Boys State

19 Juneteenth - Office Closed

23 - 24 Boys Junior Law Cadet

25 - 26 Girls Junior Law Cadet

26 - 27 DEC Meeting - Columbus

27 - 29 Department Convention - Columbus

Check [www.nebraskalegion.net](http://www.nebraskalegion.net) under the meetings tab for upcoming National, State, and District events.



Crofton Post 128 presented Gerry Schumacher with a WWII Medal of Honor on his 101st birthday. Pictured top (L to R) Ed Kleinschmit, Francis Guenther, Jim Hames, Bob Haberer, Bob Suing, Commander Steve Lammers, and Gerry Schumacher. Pictured bottom: Gerry Schumacher with a plaque made by a Post 128 member and his son for his 101st birthday.



Morse Bluff Post 340 presented a certificate of 70 years of continuous membership to Norman Kavan. Pictured (L to R) Commander Galen Johnson, Norman Kavan, and Camdyn Kavan. Camdyn, the grandson of both Galen and Norman, is also a Marine veteran and member of Post 340.



Campbell Post 169 Adjutant Lee Erickson presented Gerald Poe with a 50 year pin. Pictured front (L to R) Gerald Poe, Lee Erickson, Sandy Poe, and other members of Post 169.



During Custer County Government Day, two newly enlisted military members were recognized. Pictured (L to R) Custer County Commander William Schaad, Kayley Klein; Merna, and Riley Osleger; Sargent.



Northeast Nebraska Quilts of Valor Ladies based in Allen, presented Newcastle Post 62 members Quilts of Valor on Jan 18th. Pictured top row (L to R): Mary Rastede, Cindy Kraemer, Sharon Sullivan, Marci Roeber, Becky Brennan, and Diane Peterson. Pictured seated (L to R) Rod Bauman, Don Kneifl, Paul Sherman, Perry Sherman, Chris Kneifl, Jerry Thomas. Not pictured are Richard Grosvenor, Alison Beebe, Justin Wegner, Jeff Lewon, and Shayla Davis.



Hickman Post 105 Auxiliary presented Quilts of Valor to two of its members. Pictured (L to R) Charles Craft and David Nore.



Lewis Cerv Post 122 sponsored the Wreaths Across America program for the 4th time. Twenty-four volunteers spent time remembering the Fallen by placing wreaths on over 260 veterans graves located at the area cemeteries of St. Joes, Olean, St. Wenceslaus, Bohemian, Emmanuel and Obermans Corner. Pictured (L to R) bottom: Gage Anderson, Allison, Ashtyn, Adalia Ebeling, Andy & Gus Ortmeier. Middle: Marvin Harms, Norman Fendrick, Issac Howser, Colby Anderson, Ray Harms, Linda Belsky. Top: Travis Bales, Wade & Rhonda Lindsay, Danny Kluthe, Dianna Wisnieski, Kyle Ebeling, Lenny Kempf, Duffy Peplinski, Steve Ruskamp, Billy Conant, Dean Archuleta.



Newman Grove Post 73 presented certificates of continuous membership. Pictured (L to R) Jerry Lyon (sitting) 60 years, Kenny Stone; 50 years, and Elliott Broberg; 70 years.



Elwood Post and Unit 290 presented certificates of continuous membership to Lana Bennett and Dick Tobler. Pictured top, back row (L to R) President Maria Atterberry and Commander Amie Moores. Seated (L to R) Lana Bennett; 45 years, and Dick Tobler; 35 years. Pictured bottom Elwood Post 290 Auxiliary presented Wayne Kerr and his wife Mary Ann with his quilt of Valor.



Platte Center Post 283 presented Quilts of Valor to some of its members in their Veterans Day Celebration. Pictured (L to R) Don Hartl, Larry Gronenthal, Jim Wemhoff, John Wemhoff, Tom Sliva, and Mark Westmeyer.



Weston Post 308 presented a certificate of 70 years of continuous membership to Jim Kellner. Pictured top (L to R) seated- Dan Meduna, Jim Kellner, Jarold Bartek. Standing (L to R) Larry Cejka, John Chapek, Wayne Pokorny, Byron Nordstrom, Eugene Kremlacek, Jim Vasa, Bill Kremlacek & Ervin Opp. Pictured bottom (L to R) Eugene Kremlacek and Jim Kellner.





## DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT - AMANDA WASHBURN



First, I want to thank all of the Districts and their members for their hospitality while I was traveling to your District meetings. You all had great turnouts and conducted important business, presented awards to your Units, shared comradery with all, and so much more. We have such outstanding District officers, and we all say thank you for your hard work.

April is Children and Youth Month and I want to thank our Children & Youth Chair Julie for all of her great work. Check out her article for more information and opportunities to get involved this month.

It is hard to believe that in just three months Department Convention will be upon us. I hope many of you will be able to attend. It will be held in Columbus at the Quality Inn June 26-29. The schedule will be in the June newspaper. We would love to see you at any of the sessions or the whole weekend if you are able. National President Trish Ward will be in attendance, and she will be doing a presentation that weekend. Let us know if you have any questions.

Membership is always an important topic in our organization,

and this is a reminder that members who were not paid by January 31 are delinquent. There are many programs that require three years of membership, so please don't be the reason a member is not eligible to apply. As of March 10, we are in 4th place in our Division at 82.81% of our goal. We currently have 23 Units at 100% or better, and I am so incredibly proud of them all! I am asking that all units reach out to their members to remind them to pay their dues. Sometimes all it takes is a personal contact with the member for them to remember why they joined in the first place or that they forgot to send in their check. If you need any assistance with membership or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Department Secretary Roxanne, Membership Chair Loree, or me; and we will do our best to get you

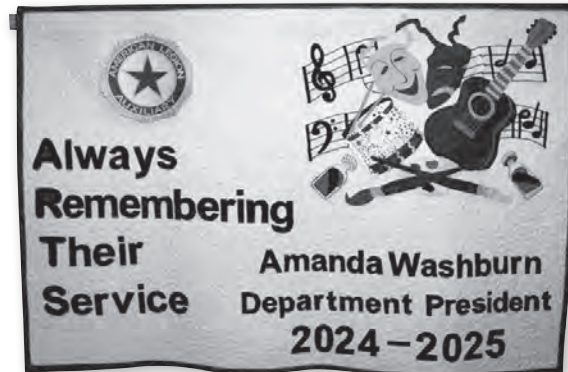
the answer.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my travels so far this year and am looking forward to the next ones! I have been able to meet so many members and hear the wonderful things that our members are doing. I know that Nebraska has a special group of members, and we are doing great things to support our veterans, active-duty military, and our children. It is really important

that we report these activities on the year-end report and let everyone know what we are doing!

I know I have said it before, but please let me know if you would like me to come to your meeting or event and I will do my best to attend. I hope you all have a great April!

*Amanda Washburn  
Department President*



## GIRLS STATE UPDATE

At the time of this writing, we have approximately 300 Girls State delegates registered, and in just two short months those young ladies will walk into Sandoz Residence Hall on the campus of the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. They will be nervous, scared, excited, anxious, and filled with mixed emotions about what they have gotten themselves into.

Oh, wow! I just described my feelings as we plan and prepare for the week. And just like the young ladies find out, the week will turn out to be one of the best experiences for them and for me.

As you recall, I invited units to "sponsor" a floor with snacks for one night. The units that I have written down are Ashland #129, Chadron #12, Grand Island #53, Milligan #240, Syracuse #100, Valparaiso #371, Weston #308, and Winside #252. If you contacted me and I do not have you listed, please contact me again.

If you do the math, we are short by 32. We need forty units to cover the week. So, we need more units to volunteer to provide snacks for 35-40 girls. If you are concerned about getting the snacks to Lincoln, you

can send a donation to Headquarters earmarked for "Girls State Snacks." Your donation will be used to purchase items for a snack night. But, of course, members from your unit can bring the items and share them with the girls during their floor's Town Hall Meeting. This will give you the opportunity to see Girls State in action.

Thank you to those units that have sponsored a 2025 Girl State delegate. Your money will be well spent. Not only will the delegates receive training in the positive processes of self-government and good citizenship, but they will also create a bond of friendship with girls from across Nebraska. Remember to ask them to come to a unit meeting to share their experiences.

This year, the Delegate Packet on Girls State Information was mailed with their "Welcome to Girls State" letter. In their letter, it provides them with the orientation process. We will provide the orientation online with twelve videos covering all aspects of their week at Girls State. Then, there are three Q & A live sessions offered. All girls are required to attend one of the Q&A sessions.

Would you like to know more about the week? You can! Visit the Girls State website ([www.cornhuskergirlsstate.com](http://www.cornhuskergirlsstate.com)), go to the "Orientation" tab, and you will see the list of videos. Simply click on what you want to watch. The videos will be available by April 15.

If you would like to help with the ballot election on Wednesday, June 4, please contact me. Prior to COVID, all elections were by ballot; and we utilized ALA members to assist with them. With our online Girls State Session during the COVID year, we moved to electronic elections. This continued when we moved back to live sessions. I chose to bring back at least one ballot election to allow the citizens to experience how they will vote when they turn 18.

A lot will be happening in the next two months, and the Girls State Staff and Counselors will be ready to greet those nervous, scared, excited, anxious, and filled with mixed emotions girls (and me) for another great week!

*Vicki Ozenbaugh  
Girls State Chair*

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH

April is the Month of the Military Child; and, more specifically, April 15 is "Purple Up!" We celebrate the 1.6 million children of the six branches (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and the Coast Guard) of our Armed Services by wearing purple. Challenge yourself, your unit, as well as your Legion Family to celebrate Children & Youth by doing more than wearing the color purple. Get a few people together and brainstorm some ideas that would involve your community to celebrate our children. Some ideas: nominate a local youth for the Good Deeds/Youth Hero award, host a Family Movie Night, or a Bike Safety event. Collaborating with other organizations (Boy/Girl Scouts, Church groups, City Councils) helps spread the work and assists in creating an annual event that everyone wants to participate in.

There are lots of resources provided on the Auxiliary website (<https://member.legion-aux.org/>)

member/committees/children-and-youth) and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services/Safe Kids may have some ideas and funds as well. Some spring events coming up in April are National Walking Day, National Volunteer Week, and Playground Safety. In May, you could host a Bike Safety, Mother's Day celebration, or Boating and Water Safety event.

For units that host an event, they will want to enter the Poster Contest to be held at Department Convention this June. The Poster will feature your event and prizes will be awarded: \$100 to 1st place and \$50 to 2nd place. The money is to be used to assist in hosting Children and Youth events.

If you'd like more information or would like a thought-partner on creating an event, please email or call me at 308.440.9218. I'd love to help.

*Julie Schnitzler  
Children and Youth Chair*

## DEPARTMENT FUNDRAISER – RAISERIGHT

You can support our fundraiser without any out-of-pocket expenses at the checkout. Just buy and use RAISERIGHT physical gift cards or e-Gift cards without using cash, credit cards, or debit cards at the checkout.

Shop online with just a few clicks and choose from a variety of department stores, theaters, dining, fast food, gas, groceries, pets, and more. If you don't shop online, I can send the RAISERIGHT list to you.

If you don't want your debit card information on the World Wide Web, contact Jacki at the Department at [nealatreas@gmail.com](mailto:nealatreas@gmail.com) or call 712-574-5070.

Purchases are great for holiday gifts and exchange gifts at meetings. They never expire. Planning to shop or dine out? Check the RAISERIGHT

list. If the venue is on the list, download an e-gift card and pay for your purchases right from your phone.

I plan to send a mass email to ALA members letting all know about this great fundraiser with a direct link to RAISERIGHT.

Click on the QR code below or go to [www.raiseright.com/enroll/SRBXQ1S3F2G5](http://www.raiseright.com/enroll/SRBXQ1S3F2G5)

Thank you in advance for your participation!



End-of-year things to be doing:

- Return the **Unit Data form** that was in the January newsletter by April 15. This has your dues amounts for 2026 and the 2026 Membership Chairman information that is reported to National for the information on the annual dues notices.
- Return the **Unit Reporting forms** that were sent in the January newsletter by the April 20 deadline. Chairmen compile this information for their NW Chairmen, and it is also used for the Department Impact report submitted by President Amanda. We noticed there is no line for your Unit, Town, and Number on the forms. If you notice it, could you please write them at the top of the first page. Sometimes mail

## SECRETARY NOTES

gets sorted and separated in our office before this is caught. Our apologies for this omission.

- The **Poppy Proceeds reporting form** will be out in the May newsletter as will the **2025-2026 Unit Leadership form** that tells us who your Unit officers will be for the next year. Please return to Department after you have elected your 2025-2026 officers and write each officer's complete information on the form – **PLEASE do not put "Same"**.
- The **Department Convention Call** will be in the May newsletter that will be mailed out by **April 26**.
- The deadline to the Department for Amendments and one-time Resolutions is **April 7**.

Department Convention is June 26-29, 2025, in Columbus. Things to consider:

- Districts need to bring their flags and the winners of their Poppy Centerpiece for onsite judging. Districts also need to get their winning Unit History, Prayer, and Publicity books to the proper person for judging prior to Convention.
- I will need Dept Officer, District President, Dept Chairman, and VA & R Facility reports for the Convention Annual by June 1.

As you can see, there are many things that need attention before we put a wrap on this year. Thanks for attending to all that needs to be done.

## AMERICANISM

Hello to my American Legion Family.

I would like to thank all the units for the Americanism essays. I really enjoyed reading them.

As part of the Americanism program, the Townsend Trophy will be awarded at the Department Convention in June. The Townsend Trophy is a traveling plaque that is awarded to the unit with the best public relations and promotion of the Americanism Essay contest as well as with the most participation in proportion to their membership and area. As an example, visiting schools, writing letters to teachers, use of media promotion (radio, newspaper, television). Units will provide a typed narrative that does not exceed 500 words telling how the unit promoted

the Americanism Essay contest. Entries must be submitted to me by May 10 (Cie Kauth, Department Americanism Chair, 205 Jackson Street, Belden, NE 68717.

Also, as you complete your year-end Americanism Report, please provide the projects that your Unit has done with youth in teaching them about Americanism, from the smallest item to the bigger ones; such as putting up a flag for special holidays, or wearing something patriotic, and everything in between. Please include pictures. It is good for our children to know what our Veterans and active military do for us.

*Cie Kauth  
Americanism Chair*



The Eddyville American Legion Auxiliary Unit 225 made and delivered Valentine table decorations for the Grand Island Medical Center. Following their meeting, they enjoyed visiting and refreshments with a member, Carol Hopkins, who currently lives in Alaska. Pictured are Jo Johnson and Carol Hopkins. Not pictured are Lawana McFarland and Sandy Watkinson.

## NEWS FROM THE LINCOLN CBOC

During the week of Valentine's Day, we honored the veterans with snacks for National Salute to Veterans Patients Week. Cookies, popcorn, coffee, and hot chocolate. Always a hit.

FYI. At this time, the "Veterans Fair" is scheduled to be held in the parking lot of the Lincoln VA CBOC on Tuesday, May 13th. The "rain date" is Thursday, May 15th.

We have been holding a major food drive for the Food Pantry at the Lincoln CBOC for the social workers and their veterans in need. It is very much used. Thank you for the donations we have received from

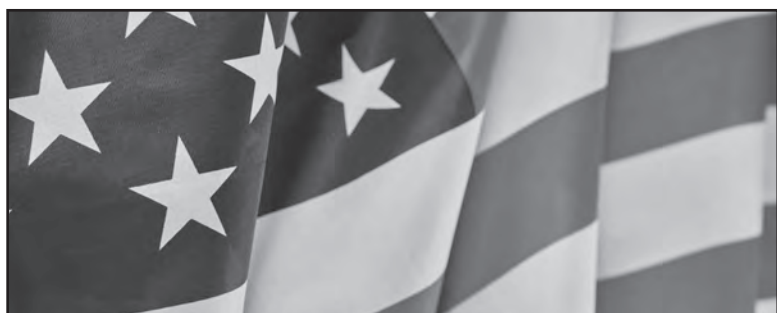
members.

The American Legion Auxiliary of District 12 held a food drive at their Fall Roundup and, once again, at their District Convention. I took several bags of much-needed protein and nonperishable items to the VA for distribution.

"Volunteering is the very core of being a human. No one has made it through life without someone else's help." Heather French Henry

Yours in Patriotism,

*Linda Varejcka  
Lincoln CBOC Rep*



## 'MAIN STREET FLAG PROJECT'

The Scribner American Legion Auxiliary Unit #121 recently had an Americanism project called the "Main Street Flag Project." The group purchased 25 new flags and new flag poles and donated them for all the Main Street businesses.

This project was made possible through a grant from the Scribner Area Foundation. American Legion members helped get the poles completed, and the flags were purchased from Flag and Emblem Sales. The project was on display in time to make its debut by Veterans Day.



Remember to send your assignments a couple weeks before the month they are due.

### 2024-2025 CENTERPIECE AND TRAY FAVOR ASSIGNMENTS

Month	Grand Island VA Med Center 10 Centerpiece	Central NE Veterans Home 215 Tray Fav	Bellevue Eastern NE VA Home 24 Centerpiece	Norfolk VA Home 20 Centerpiece	Western NE VA Home 13 Centerpiece	Western NE VA Home 90 Tray Fav	Omaha VA Med Center 75 Tray Fav
Apr.	#199 Cambridge	#377 Wilcox	#264 Dorchester	#302 Leigh	#213 Wallace	#213 Wallace	#354 Pleasant Dale
May	#240 Milligan	#316 Elm Creek	#3 Lincoln	#283 Platte Center	#200 Bayard	#200 Bayard	Dist. 11 Juniors
June	#126 Broken Bow	#95 Curtis	#222 Shubert	#175 Jackson	#312 Broadwater	#312 Broadwater	#222 Shubert
July	#95 Curtis	#209 Franklin	#283 Platte Center	#80 Humphrey	#301 Dalton	#301 Dalton	#27 Beatrice
Aug.	#251 Arcadia	#218 Exeter	#266 Bennington	#302 Leigh	#7 Alliance	#36 Gering	#266 Bennington
Sep.	#11 Hastings	#290 Elwood	#353 Louisville	#84 Columbus	#36 Gering	#36 Gering	#222 Shubert
Oct.	#147 Crete	#199 Cambridge	#27 Beatrice	#357 Brunswick	#7 Alliance	#7 Alliance	#27 Beatrice
Nov.	#257 Eustis	#209 Franklin	#243 Plymouth	Private Donor	#17 Sidney	#17 Sidney	#362 Elkhorn
Dec.	#310 Gibbon	#288 Farnam	#27 Beatrice	#327 Bellwood	#7 Alliance	#36 Gering	#27 Beatrice

Please read the ABC book under "Service to Veterans." Some facilities have restrictions as to what you can use for decorations. If you have any questions, please contact the facilities contact person.

Service to Veterans Chair: Maria Atterberry, 704 Rochelle St, Elwood, NE 68937 - 308-325-2863

Greetings, Nebraska Auxiliary members!

As Service to Veterans Chairman, I am happy to report that the chart for Tray favors and Centerpieces for ALL facilities has been filled! Thank you to all of you from west to east and north to south!

It has been my pleasure to talk with every one of you! We had a job to do, and we got it done. God bless all of you! Service not Self ---

*Maria Atterberry  
Service to Vets Chair*

## OHIOVA FRANKLIN UNIT ANSWERS REQUEST

When LaRee Kubes, the Norfolk Veterans Home Representative, indicated the need for armchair caddies, the sewing members of the Ohiova Franklin Unit 193 came through! An "Easy to Sew" pattern was adapted that would provide a caddy on the resident's chair in their room to keep items within arm's reach. The caddy has room for a cell phone, remote control, small notepad, pen, or whatever the individual would want to put in it.



The pictures show what the finished product looks like on a chair. The pattern is available on the Nebraska Auxiliary Website (nebraskalegionaux.net).

Although the Norfolk Veterans Home asked for these, you can check the other Veteran Homes and Medical Centers in Nebraska to see if they have the need for them. And don't forget your local nursing homes that have Veterans as residents.



## HISTORY

Have you enjoyed researching the reason behind the name of your Post Family name? I have heard from some that they haven't been able to find a name. I wanted to say thank you to the units that have provided me the history of their Post Family Name or researched it.

Do you have a copy of your unit charter? If you are able to find it, please send a copy to me by email. My information is found in the directory or online. If you can, please get this information to me by May 15 so I have time to put the book together before the Department Convention. This request is from National President Trish.

History is our past and let's recognize it.

Thank you for all your assistance!

*Vicki Cyboron  
Department Historian*



## VA & R REPORTING SUMMARY

Ladies & Gentlemen, you are the VA & R from where you are. Thank You!!!

It is nearly time for those beloved annual reports, and I wish to share my thoughts on what I can and cannot report on VA & R coming from where I am - the VA & R Chair.

First, every entity of the Nebraska American Legion Family should be keeping their records as events occur, donations are made, and more. It is your responsibility to report what you do from where you are.

Second, I review monthly reports (at least we try to get them monthly) and the data shared with me from the ALA Home Chairs, VAMC - PCLC - CBOC Reps. Though I receive all the related hours, volunteers, expenses, etc., I am very concerned that if I am getting this data, is it also being reported on the Post, Unit, Squadron or Chapter annual reports, too? If so, make sure you do the reporting and let me know you are taking credit for all you do locally as I do not want to

report it on the Department end and find out you are also reporting and our reporting is inaccurate.

Third, how do we get every entity of the Nebraska American Legion Family to report? If you know that answer, there are a great number of us out across Nebraska who want to know your secret.

For example, if the monthly report tells me that Unit XYZ came to a Veterans Home and played Bingo --- with prizes and refreshments provided --- and brought along some clothing protectors, on whose report does all this get recorded and sent into the Department? I would say the host unit of the event would take full credit and it should all be on their annual report sheets into Department. How will I know you took the credit? Because I will get a copy of every Unit VA & R annual report and it should provide me with dates, event, costs, volunteers, hours and more. I will then cross-reference it to the monthly reports I receive and give

you the credit.

Keep in mind even though the monthly report has your same data, you need to report on your annual report forms. I can weed through the reports and do the match-up with some effort and patience on my part.

If your American Legion Family entity does not complete reports, then what I get on the monthly reports will be included in my annual report to the Department. Again, we cannot double report. It takes both you and me to report and merge them for the Department. The merge process is my responsibility.

Thank you for all you have done this year as I know the Veterans and the facilities are eternally grateful for the kindness you share, the hugs you give, the time you spend just listening, and the fact you share your smile with them. We are so blessed.

*Beverly A. Neel  
VA&R Chair*

## CANDIDATES FOR DEPARTMENT OFFICES — 2025 - 2026

**VICKI OZENBAUGH**  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE



**RUTH HIETBRINK**  
PRESIDENT



**VICKI CYBORON**  
VICE PRESIDENT



**LORI REIMERS**  
HISTORIAN



**VICKI COLSON**  
CHAPLAIN



### **VICKI OZENBAUGH BIO** *CANDIDATE FOR NEC*

As I once again announce my intention to seek election to the 2025-2026 National Executive Committee position for Nebraska, I do so as a proud 48-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA).

For six years I have been providing you with my biography. That makes me believe you know me. But for the newest members to ALA, here is my story.

My Auxiliary background:

- My membership is with the Franklin Unit No. 193 in Ohio, Nebraska.
  - I am eligible through the service of my former husband.
  - I have served Unit 193 as President, Vice-President, Chaplain, Membership Chairman, and various program chairmen usually associated with Education and Children & Youth.
  - I have been the Fillmore County President and Vice-President and am currently the Vice-President.
  - I have the honor of serving District 11 as their President (twice) and Vice-President.
  - My Department appointments have been for Americanism (twice), Education (twice), Leadership (twice), and Children and Youth.
  - I served two years as Department Historian (remember COVID), Department Vice-President, and Department President in 2022-2023.
  - Currently I am the NEC, Northwestern Division Americanism Chair, Past Presidents Parley Chair, and ALA Cornhusker Girls State Chair.
- My personal background:
- I call Geneva, Nebraska my birth home. Ohio has been my home since 1975.
  - As a graduate of the University of Nebraska, I was a high school teacher for eight years.
  - I then began a self-employed career in "making a house a home" for 20 years (for those who might remember Home Interiors and Gifts).

• My third career (did you know that most people do change jobs at least three times?) I worked for the United States Postal Service (nine years as a non-career USPS employee and twenty-five years as a postmaster).

• As a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Ohio, I am the administrative secretary.

• In my community I serve on the Ohio Rescue as an EMT and the secretary-treasurer and am the treasurer for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

• I am a member of the Fillmore County Foundation.

• I have three sons and am a proud grandmother of ten.

It would be my honor to represent you as Nebraska's NEC, working together in serving our Veterans, their families, as well as our communities and youth.

### **RUTH HIETBRINK BIO** *CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT*

My name is Ruth Hietbrink, and I am running for the office of Department President for 2025-2026. I look forward to being the Department President of ALA throughout Nebraska.

I have been a member of the ALA for 52 years in Sterling Unit 140. My eligibility is through my father, Paul Straube, who was a WWII veteran. Even though he passed several years ago, his passion for our country has kept me engaged in continuing to be an active member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Currently, I serve as the President of Sterling Unit 140. I have also held the position of Department Vice President 2024/2025, Historian 2023/2024, and Chaplin 2022-2023. Past positions within ALA include:

- Past Legislative Chairperson
- Past District 13 President
- Past District 13 Vice President
- Past District 13 Chaplain
- Johnson County President.

Positions outside of the ALA include:

- Past Executive Board of

Directors for Energy Solution Center, Washington DC • Past Board member of Home Builders of Lincoln • Past Board member for Friendship Home of Lincoln.

I graduated from Sterling High School and have an A.A.S. in Business and an A.A.S. in Event Planning. I am a member of Hope Lutheran Church in Burr, Nebraska. I retired from Black Hills Energy, where I was employed for 26 years.

### **VICKI CYBORON BIO** *CANDIDATE FOR VICE PRESIDENT*

Vicki Cyboron is a candidate for the high office of Department Vice President. She is a 44-year PUFL (Paid Up for Life) member of Shipmann Mogensen Unit #201 in Boelus. She is eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary through the military service of her dad.

Her membership began as a Junior member. Vicki has been an active member at the Unit, County, District, and Department level. She is currently serving as Unit President. In addition, she currently serves as the Department Historian and the Grand Island VA Medical Center Representative.

In the past, she served as District Six President for two years and District Six Historian for two years. On the Department Level, Vicki served five years on the Finance Committee, including three years as Chairperson, Department Chaplain, and currently Department Historian.

She has served a three-year term as President of the Nebraska American Legion Press Association (NE-ALPA) and as National Vice-President of the National American Legion Press Association (NALPA).

Vicki graduated from Midland Lutheran College with a degree in Business Administration. She has been employed at Pitney Bowes Presort Services as a Collection Specialist for seventeen years. She is

also a member of the Custer County DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Auxiliary Unit and currently serves as Department President of the Nebraska DAV Auxiliary. She attends Faith Lutheran Church in Nysted.

Vicki was endorsed by Shipmann Mogensen Unit #201 in Boelus, and she is also endorsed by the Howard County Unit. She also has the support and endorsement of District 6.

Vicki would appreciate your support and looks forward to serving as Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary Department Vice President. She says the best part of being part of this amazing organization is the honor and privilege of spreading the word about our support for our Veterans, Active Military Personnel, and Children and Youth.

### **LORI REIMERS BIO** *CANDIDATE FOR HISTORIAN*

Lori Reimers is a proud member of the Lester Harder Unit 42 Auxiliary in Aurora. She has been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 42 since 2010 and is eligible through her husband, Mike, who served in the Air National Guard for 26 ½ years. She has been married to Mike for 15 years and is a mother of 3 children and a Nana to 7 grandchildren. She belongs to Christ Lutheran Church in Aurora. For work, she is a Flex District Manager for Driveline Retail Merchandising.

At the unit level, she has served as President. She has also been the District 6 Vice President and President. She is currently serving as Department Chaplain.

Lori has been endorsed by American Legion Auxiliary Unit 42 and District 6 for Department Historian. She is asking for your support for running for Department Historian.

### **VICKI COLSON BIO** *CANDIDATE FOR CHAPLAIN*

Please consider me, Vicki

Colson, as a candidate for Chaplain of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Nebraska.

I am eligible for the American Legion Auxiliary through my husband's service in the Coast Guard. My father served during the end of WWII and occupied Japan. My uncle served with the National Guard during high school. He then joined the Navy for four years. He joined the Army for four years and followed up with the Air Force until retirement. Two of my brothers served in the Army. My son, George, served in the Navy for eight years.

I have been a member of the Auxiliary for 45 years at Paxton (Hankins Miller) Unit 303. I have served as treasurer and membership chairman for our unit. For District 5, I have served as District President and Secretary/treasurer. For the Department of Nebraska, I have served as Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws, Children and Youth, Community Service, Education, Poppy, Service to Veterans, and VA&R committees. I have also served as a Girls State Counselor and currently serve as Cornhusker Girls State Vice Chairman.

In my community, I have participated in a County Service organization, worked as a volunteer at the Paxton Public Library, including the Library Board, Friends of the Library, Story Hour, and Summer Reading, and worked the desk. I belong to the St. Patrick's Catholic Church where I have been a member and officer in the Altar Society, a Religious Educator, and have done custodial work. I have helped as a volunteer for our town's yearly celebration on Labor Day.

My husband and I have 5 children and 5 grandchildren who are all members of the American Legion Family.

Thank you for your support.

## MEMBERSHIP

As I write this article, today's date is less than one week away from The American Legion's March 15th birthday. The 15th was also the date by which the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Department of Nebraska needed to reach 13,167 members (85%) in order to meet the membership qualification for the National President's Merit Medallion for Excellence.

When I wrote my last article for The Star in January, the Department was 1,550 members short of our goal, which translated to approximately 5 members per unit. One month later, as I wrote an article for Department President Amanda Washburn's newsletter, you all had halved that number to 729 members – which was about 3 members per unit. Another month later, as I write this particular article, Nebraska units once again halved that number to 272 members

– less than 1 member per unit.

As you are reading this column, I hope the ALA Department of Nebraska is still celebrating, that is, if we were able to reach the 85% milestone. But, even if our state came up a bit short, look what you all were able to accomplish in just two months' time – literally 4 members per unit across our entire state joined or renewed in only 60 days. And these were not the easy members to recruit – you know, those who pay immediately or respond to that first phone call or postcard. These were the members who always seemed to take more effort, yet all of you pulled together and made progress. Please pat yourselves on the back for doing so well!

It is also important to thank a few people who worked tirelessly on membership this year: **President Amanda**, who has been crisscrossing our great state and leading by example;

**Past Department President Deb Albers**, who not only worked the phones for membership but also gave great shout-outs to those units who reached 100% in 2025; and **Department Secretary Roxanne Hiatt**, who is an absolute genius as a membership clerk and had to enter all those last 1,550 members in the span of about 40 workdays. And, of course, we cannot forget the District Presidents and Vice Presidents, the County Presidents, and the Unit Presidents and Membership Chairs, who all worked to recruit these members.

Now, let's celebrate our 100% Units (27 total):

- Crawford Unit #138** (146.15%),
- Morrill Unit #10** (113.89%),
- Loup City Unit #48** (112.50%),
- Davenport Unit #335** (109.09%),
- Paxton Unit #303** (107.14%),
- Bayard Unit #200** (106.25%),
- Fairbury Unit #24** (106.25%),
- Arcadia Unit #251** (105.06%),

- North Loup Unit #285** (103.41%),
- Cook Unit #360** (103.23%),
- Shubert Unit #222** (103.13%),
- Boelus Unit #201** (102.70%),
- Dodge Unit #122** (101.69%),
- Beemer Unit #159** (101.67%),
- Callaway Unit #59** (101.35%),
- Gordon Unit #34** (100.94%),
- Broadwater Unit #312** (100.00%),
- Cortland Unit #253** (100%),
- McCool Junction Unit #341** (100%),
- Mullen Unit #109** (100%),
- Overton Unit #277** (100.00%),
- Plymouth Unit #243** (100%),
- Potter Unit #291** (100.00%),
- Sterling Unit #140** (100%),
- Union Unit #235** (100%),
- Western Unit #255** (100%), and
- Wilcox Unit #377** (100%).

Congratulations, Auxiliary Units, for "Leading the Way" – National President Trish Ward's theme for 2024-2025.

And, we absolutely must give a hearty CONGRATULATIONS to all our districts. Last year at this time,

just two districts were over 80% in membership; this year, EVERY SINGLE ONE has met this threshold! Two districts are even above 90% this year, with two more knocking on the door (statistics are as of mid-March). Here are the figures using teams from the University of Nebraska Athletic Department to cheer on and encourage our efforts:

1. **District 11** is currently in the lead with 91.57% in membership. They are represented by the Women's Volleyball team, which reached the NCAA Final Four this year.

2. **Men's Football** improved this year, coming home with their first bowl win since 2015. **District 13** is even more impressive, sporting a 91.50% membership.

3. **District 12**, with 89.42% membership, is living up to the Women's Bowling team's reputation, which as of this writing, is ranked #1 in the nation.

*Membership Cont. on Page 4...*

## CHAPLAINS CORNER

In 1919, The American Legion was founded on the four pillars: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth.

Each of these pillars encompasses a variety of programs that benefit our nation's veterans, its service members, their families, the youth of America, and ordinary citizens. Reflect on the sacrifices made by veterans and their families, acknowledging the cost of freedom and the importance of honoring their service.

"Heavenly Father,

We gather today with hearts filled with gratitude for the brave men and women who have served our nation. Guide us as we strive to live up to the ideals of the American Legion Auxiliary, to serve our Veterans and their families with compassion and dedication. May our actions reflect our commitment to 'Service Not Self.'

Amen."

**John 15:13**

"Greater love has no one than

this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

**Phillippians 2:3-4**

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

"Almighty God,

We pray for your continued blessings on our veterans and their families. Grant us the strength and wisdom to continue serving them with unwavering dedication. May our efforts bring comfort, support, and a sense of gratitude to those who have served our country.

Amen."

Please send prayers and/or devotions for Amanda's Prayer Book. You can email them to me at lljunker66@live.com or mail them to me at 2011 24th Street, Central City, NE 68826. Please have them to me by May 15th.

Lori Reimers

Department Chaplain

## LEGISLATIVE

The American Legion Legislative Commission meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM on February 24, 2025, by the Commission chair, Matt Schumann, AZ and Julia Mathis. History was made as this was the first time the meeting was held on Capitol Hill.

Representative Ro Khanna, D-Calif, asked for our support of the Veterans Home Loan Transferability Act, which would allow veterans to transfer VA Home Loan program benefits to immediate family members.

Chairman Schumann talked about the need to act and demand accountability from our elected officials. We need to remind them that legislation for Veterans Benefits takes place in this room. We are here to engage and to advocate --- and we need to know our priorities.

A variety of upcoming bills were discussed that directly impact Veterans and their families. With new ranking members and speakers, there will be the need for reconciling of bills between the Senate and House. There are several categories of veteran legislation: economic, access to healthcare, education (extend GI Bill), national security, and quality of life. With the current Republican strength in the Senate, "now could be the time to push the Flag Amendment across the line."

We were reminded to stay aware of the congressional schedule, so we know when it is in session and also know when our elected officials are in their home districts. A key date for all to remember is the presidential budget due in May.

A panel of four staff directors spoke of the need for working together with the American Legion and with civility. They gave advice on how the American Legion Family can be most effective during visits on the hill: know the Legion priorities; pick the top 2-3 to discuss; leave the drop sheet after discussing the top 2-3; make an appointment; select one spokesperson to lead the conversation; share personal stories from your district; understand your congressman's position on Veterans; know what committee(s) your congressman serves on; and encourage co-sponsorship on veteran legislation

The Nebraska delegation of Legionnaires, Auxiliary, and Sons met with our two Senators and two of our three Representatives on Tuesday, February 25. Senators Ricketts and Fisher were very engaged and anxious to hear the personal stories of several veterans' challenges with community care. They encouraged us to contact their offices to share this information and not rely solely on the VA to react. Representative Smith was called into a vote, and Representative Bacon was unavailable. Representative Flood was very interested in the priorities and about VA care issues. He is sponsoring PSAs on News Channel Nebraska (NCN) promoting Cornhusker Boys State as he served as Governor, and his son attended last year. He is very supportive of the American Legion.

Barbara Washburn

Dept. Legislative Chair



On Veterans Day, the Parry ALA Unit 283 of Platte Center honored six veterans with a Quilt of Valor. Pictured, L-R, are: Don Hartl, Larry Gronenthal, Jim Wemhoff, John Wemhoff, Tom Sliva, and Mark Westmeyer.

## POPPY



Please note the following Poppy deadlines!

If you go to the American Legion Auxiliary website, you'll note that we now have a document for the Poppy Centerpiece Contest. Please access this document to read about the rules and this year's theme!

Final reminder- the Poppy Poster deadline has been changed to April 15th!

I also want to highlight some amazing Poppy news from the Broken Bow unit. As a result of the amazing Broken Bow unit members, last year their mayor Rod Sonnichsen signed a proclamation declaring May 24th as Poppy Day! The mayor then presented the unit members with a plaque with the proclamation on it.

According to Unit President Nancy Herrold, the unit had 7 members putting in 3-4 hours on Poppy Day to collect donations for poppies. Because of the visibility of the day, within 25 hours they had collected \$800!

Great work, Broken Bow!"

Elsa Knight

Poppy Chair

(402) 762-5056

### ...Membership Cont. from Page 3

4. **District 5** is challenging District 12 for the #3 spot, with 89.03% membership. The Men's Basketball team didn't finish quite as strong, ending their season with a 17-14 record.

5. **District 3** is at 87.72% membership, showing the Men's Baseball team how it's done. Hopefully, our Huskers on the diamond will take some tips from their ALA counterparts and improve their current 7-8 record.

6. Meanwhile, the Women's Basketball team finished the regular season with a 21-11 record and are -- as of this writing -- waiting for the NCAA tournament selection process to occur. A proud **District 7** is cheering them on through their 87.64% membership.

7. The Men's Wrestling team just finished #2 in the Big Ten meet, with a couple of individual champions. **District 9's** 87.57% membership is every bit as impressive.

8. The Women's Track & Field team finished sixth at the Big Ten Indoor Championships and are about to send athletes to the NCAA Indoor Championships. **District 1** hopes their 87.47% membership number will give the team a boost.

9. Likewise, the Men's Track & Field team earned fifth place at the Big Ten Indoor Championships and are also about to send athletes to the NCAA Indoor Championships.

## CORRECTION:

Juliann Jochum from Dallas TX and Unit 229 Elgin was accidentally listed as deceased in the last issue.

## In Memoriam

Received January 10, 2025 to March 10, 2025

Jacqueline M Marshall..... Norfolk .....	16	Frances M Kamler .....	Shickley .....	164	
Diane K Brown..... Norfolk .....	16	Ruth Paulsen .....	Carroll .....	165	
Deborah J. Orlando .....	York.....	19	Vicki L Fisher .....	Carroll .....	165
Betty J VanLaningham.....	Beatrice.....	27	Carolyn Knudsen.....	Jackson.....	175
Loida Thornburg.....	Beatrice.....	27	Lucille J. Steffen.....	Bayard .....	200
Jan Arndt-Kiefer.....	Wynot.....	31	Carolyn M Halsey.....	Dannebrog.....	241
Melanie D. Bourne.....	Gordon.....	34	Eileen Bergmeier.....	Plymouth.....	243
Anna C Cheney.....	Grant.....	40	Emma Skinner.....	Edgar .....	248
Margaret Reinecke.....	Schuyler.....	47	Darlene Lorenzen.....	Cortland .....	253
Alyce I Bryant.....	Plattsmouth.....	56	Ann Berggren .....	Humboldt .....	269
Dolores Bloomquist.....	Wausa.....	63	Joan Kotouc.....	Humboldt .....	269
Joy L. Nelson.....	Wausa.....	63	Maxine Wicks .....	Bennet .....	280
Annette L Schwartz.....	Creighton.....	74	Alicia J. Deats.....	Bennet .....	280
Arvera Schueler.....	Clay Center.....	87	Patricia F. Runge.....	Bennet .....	280
Regina Brockley.....	Valentine.....	90	Dolores Niebuhr.....	Hallam.....	294
Rosemary C. Workman... ..	O'Neill .....	93	Joan Carraher.....	Spalding.....	299
Enid Worth.....	Springview .....	98	Irma Anderson.....	Paxton.....	303
Mary Kellogg.....	Nebraska City .....	100	Irene P Halbmaier.....	Holstein.....	305
Dee Antes.....	Nebraska City .....	100	Dorothy Larson.....	South Sioux City .....	307
Dorothy Lavicky.....	Dwight.....	110	Mary Zeller.....	Bellwood .....	327
Donna F Donner.....	Benson.....	112	Dolores McCawley.....	Bellwood .....	327
Alberta J. Hines.....	Coleridge .....	114	Phyllis Kalskett.....	South Omaha.....	331
Donna Campbell.....	Stuart .....	115	Virginia Roskilly.....	Steele City .....	349
Marian Potts.....	Saint Paul .....	119	Audrey Steinkamp.....	Louisville .....	353
Phyllis Stepanek.....	Saint Paul .....	199	Brenda J Jones.....	Louisville .....	353
Susan M Turner.....	Genoa.....	144	Susan Renner.....	Louisville .....	353
Delma Brester.....	Howells.....	155	Cheryl Mayfield.....	Nehawka.....	157
Phyllis Flodman.....	Polk.....	160	Phyllis Schildt.....	Pleasant Dale .....	354
Irene C Arnold.....	North Platte.....	163	Maxine Weseman.....	Juniata .....	365
Janice R Beza.....	North Platte.....	163	Lois Pietzyk.....	Elk Creek .....	370

**District 2** is cheering them on, sporting 87.37% in membership.

10. At 86.47%, **District 6** is showing the Men's Gymnastics team what a little hard work can accomplish.

11. **District 4** is proud of reaching 80.79% in membership. The Women's Soccer team didn't fare as well, struggling to a 6-10-1 record last fall. I suspect **District 4** will continue to demonstrate their leadership for the Soccer team.

12. The Women's Rifle team is about to attend the NCAA Championships after compiling a 12-6 record. **District 8** and their 80.41% membership mark will hopefully be able to cheer the team on to a strong finish.

13. **District 10's** 80.28% membership will serve as inspiration for the Husker Women's Gymnastics team to finish their season with resilience.

Thanks to all of you for your hard work on membership this year, and I urge you to keep it up so that Nebraska can boast an impressive finish to the 2025 year. Every one of you is a blessing to the veterans you serve so selflessly, and recruiting members will help us all to accomplish our goals. Remember ... our efforts lead the way!

Loree Hendrickson

Membership Chair



## ELWOOD

Elwood Auxiliary Unit 290 President Maria Atterberry and Elwood Legion Post 290 (and District 9) Commander Amie Moores presented continuous membership certificates to Lana Bennett (45 years) and Dick Tobler (35 years)



Back row: Maria Atterberry Auxiliary President and Amie Moores Legion Commander.

Front row: Lana Bennett, 45 years and Dick Tobler, 35 years.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Please send articles and pictures for future editions of "THE STAR" to Lorene Bartos, Editor at 7441 San Mateo Lane, Lincoln, NE 68516 or email to: ALATheStarNE@yahoo.com. Send photos as jpg attachments. Material for the next issue needs to be submitted by MAY 10, 2025.



## DATES TO REMEMBER

### APRIL

- 5 Dept. Juniors Convention, St. Paul.
- 15 Virtual Girls State Orientation (Available on GS website)
- 15 Military Kids Day - Wear Purple
- 15 Poppy Posters due to Chairman
- 20 Easter

### MAY

- 10 Articles due for the June/July issue of "The Star"
- 11 Mother's Day
- 15 Narrative & History Books due to Historian
- 23 National Poppy Day
- 26 Memorial Day - Department Headquarters closed

### FOR YOUR ADVANCED PLANNING

- June 1-7, 2025 ALA Cornhusker Girls State - UNL Campus - Lincoln, NE
- June 26-29, 2025 Department Convention, Columbus, NE
- August 22-28, 2025 National Convention, Tampa Bay, Florida