



Legionnaire

Volume CII

Number 5



“Providing A Helping Hand”



The month of March was filled with some of the most devastating wildfires that the state of Nebraska has ever seen or experienced. Nebraska residents and their families have shown how resilient and caring they can be. There will be a long road back for everyone, but Nebraska Legionnaires and their families have a few options for financial assistance that they are eligible to apply for here in the state.

The American Legion’s National Emergency Fund (NEF) was established after Hurricane Hugo in 1989, the National Emergency Fund has delivered over \$11 million in aid to Legionnaires and Legion posts, helping prevent post closures and support recovery. With grants of up to \$3,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for posts, the NEF ensures rapid relief when it’s needed most. An NEF grant may be considered when the applicant has been displaced from his or her primary residence due to damage sustained during a declared natural disaster. This grant

must be applied for within 90 days of the disaster, and the member must have their membership paid when the disaster occurred. More information and the application can be found at www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/national-emergency-fund.

Members of The American Legion Auxiliary are eligible for Auxiliary Emergency Fund grants, and more information can be found on their national website at www.legion-aux.org/aef.

The Nebraska Veterans Aid Fund was established in 1921. This temporary emergency aid fund assists veterans, their spouses, and dependents when an emergency occurs disrupting their normal method of living and when other resources are not immediately available. All income from the fund is used for aid and not for administrative expenses of the fund. Aid can only be used for food, fuel, shelter, transportation, daycare, wearing apparel, funeral, medical and surgical items.

Applications can be made through a State Service Officer or County Veterans Service Officer. More information can be found on the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs website at veterans.nebraska.gov/nva.

We hope that any Legion member who is in need will reach out to one or both of these programs to assist with their rebuilding process. Department Headquarters is here to answer any questions or concerns you might have.

Facing a financial emergency?
Nebraska Veterans Aid could help.

Use NVA for

- Food
- Rent/Mortgage
- Utilities
- Eye Glasses
- Hearing Aids
- Dental Bills
- Medical Bills
- Transportation
- Daycare
- Funeral Expenses

For more information, contact your County Veteran Service Officer or visit veterans.nebraska.gov/nva

VETERANS.NEBRASKA.GOV NEBRASKA
 402-471-2458 NVA@NEBRASKA.GOV @NEVETSAFARS

2026 Department Convention Make Your Reservations Now

The 2026 Department Convention will be held June 25 - 28 at the Rivers Edge Hotel & Convention Center in Columbus. The DEC will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 25 and at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, June 26. The Joint Session will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, June 26 and the Legion Convention will begin at 3:00 p.m. and go through Sunday, June 28.

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

The hotel is located at 265 33rd Avenue, Columbus. Rooms are \$112.95 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 402-910-6682 to make your reservation. The Convention Registration fee is \$10. For more information, please contact Adjutant Eric Martin.

National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky

The 2026 National Convention will be held August 29 - September 3 at the Springhill / Fairfield Inn in Louisville, KY. Delegates should plan to arrive Saturday the 29th and depart Thursday the 3rd (late afternoon). Rooms are \$162.37 including tax. Legion HQ’s, Aux HQ’s and SAL HQ’s are at other hotels. More information will be shared during the Department Convention and packets will be available to be picked up there. Please call the Department for more information at emartin@nebraskalegion.net or 402-464-6338.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

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

COMPASSION, CHARACTER, & COMPETENCE

2026 MEMBERSHIP GOAL: 20,388 MARCH 23RD TOTAL: 18,786 - 92.14%

DISTRICT 7 - 94.90%	DISTRICT 1 - 93.48%	DISTRICT 2 - 93.36%	DISTRICT 5 - 93.29%	DISTRICT 15 - 93.07%
DISTRICT 6 - 93.04%	DISTRICT 8 - 92.74%	DISTRICT 4 - 91.75%	DISTRICT 12 - 91.44%	DISTRICT 9 - 90.94%
DISTRICT 10 - 90.30%	DISTRICT 11 - 90.12%	DISTRICT 3 - 88.35%	DISTRICT 13 - 87.87%	





Commander's Corner

Judy Walters
Department Commander



I want to thank all legionnaires for helping us reach our 90.70% goal for March 11, 2026. We not only reached it, but we also exceeded it. I think it's been a while since Nebraska ranked Number 3 in the nation in membership. We've reached that goal, but we can't slow down. Our next goals are 95% by April 8 and 100% by May 13. Let's see how close we can get to or reach the final goal. The differences in membership percentages among the top 10 states are very small, so we can't let up now. Please continue the hard work and strive to reach the top goal of 100%.

A group of the legion family attended the Washington Legislative Conference. A group of 20 met with Senators Ricketts and Fisher and Congressmen Flood, Bacon, and Smith. We reviewed The American Legion's legislative priorities. A few of the priorities were Balanced Community Care, Investing in Women Veterans, and Major Richard Star Act. You can see the full list of priorities at legion.org. National Commander Wiley spoke before Congress, and you can watch it on the Washington Conference information page at legion.org.

In February, Adjutant Eric, Auxiliary President Ruth, Auxiliary Secretary Roxanne, and I attended the Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, IL. Ruth and I had the honor of laying a wreath at Lincoln's tomb. Many speakers at the Pilgrimage gave good history lessons about Abraham Lincoln in their talks. It was inspirational to hear about all that Abraham Lincoln did during his short life.

I attended the National Regional Information Conference (NRIC) on January 31. There were two other Nebraska Legionnaires in attendance. The daylong training provided an opportunity for Legionnaires and Sons members to receive information on the Legion's mission, programs, and operations, and to connect with other Legion Family members in attendance. Legionnaires attended training on the Legion's suicide prevention mission, Be the One, legal, how to run an effective post meeting, post operations, programs, and membership retention. They also had the same training in Atlanta, GA. They plan to continue to have these training events each year.

April is Children & Youth Month. During this month of celebration, American Legion Family members are encouraged to show their local communities our dedication to young people by hosting youth activities or becoming involved in programs and organizations that support them. Does your post have anything planned in April? You can send in pictures and information about what you did during the month to be in the paper. Submit your item by the tenth of May to have it appear in the next paper.

We are currently seeking a dedicated individual to step up and volunteer for the position of Department Historian. If you have a passion for preserving our organization's history and are willing to serve in this important role, please consider putting your name forward. Your contribution will help ensure that our legacy is documented and remembered for future generations. If you are interested, contact the Department.

"Compassion, Character, & Competence"

District Convention Awards



District 9 presents the Cornerstone Award to a Legion member in their District who goes above and beyond. This year's recipient was District Commander Amie Moores. Pictured (L to R) District Chaplain Lee Carskadon and District Commander Amie Moores.

District 1 presents the Scoop Shovel Award to a Legion member in their District who goes above and beyond. This year's recipient was District Vice Commander Jerry Lemmon. Pictured (L to R) District Vice Commander Jerry Lemmon and Area D Commander Cliff Rininger.



District 4 presents the Workhorse Award to a Legion member in their District who goes above and beyond. This year's recipient was Clint Thompson. Pictured (L to R) John Sanna, Clint Thompson, and District Commander Kent Holmes.

NEBRASKA AMERICAN LEGION Department Headquarters Office

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Department Officers

Commander.....Judy Walters, Ainsworth
 Senior Vice Commander.....Doug Frahm, Amelia
 Area A Vice Commander.....Gary Davis, Pender
 Area B Vice Commander.....Kelly Hanvey, Center
 Area C Vice Commander.....Martin Neal, Hickman
 Area D Vice Commander.....Cliff Rininger, Rushville
 Adjutant.....Eric Martin, Lincoln
 Programs Director.....Vacant
 Chaplain.....Steve Witmer, York
 Historian.....Vacant
 Judge Advocate.....Joshua Stevenson, Papillion
 Finance Officer.....Mark Novak, Dawson
 Sergeant-At-Arms.....Fred Craigie, Lincoln
 Assistant Sergeant-At-Arms.....Gene vonForell, Crawford
 Service Officer.....James Foster, Lincoln
 National Executive Committee.....Jim Costello, Bellevue
 Alternate NEC.....John-Henry Percy, Papillion

District Commanders

Dist. 1.....Jerry Fullerton, Cody
 Dist. 2.....Gerald Bouska, Atkinson
 Dist. 3.....Mike Ellis, Allen
 Dist. 4.....Kent Holmes, Scottsbluff
 Dist. 5.....Geoffrey Florom, North Platte
 Dist. 6.....Brian Rapp, Grand Island
 Dist. 7.....Virgil Blum, Omaha
 Dist. 8.....James Carmona, Omaha
 Dist. 9.....Amie Moores, Elwood
 Dist. 10.....Charles Tuttle, Nelson
 Dist. 11.....Robert Eyer, Jansen
 Dist. 12.....David Stander, Weeping Water
 Dist. 13.....Kevin McKinney, Tecumseh
 Dist. 15.....Ronnie Hindmand, Lincoln



The NEBRASKA
Legionnaire

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Amanda Washburn, Editor
Eric Martin, Publisher's Representative

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Did you know you can read the Nebraska Legionnaire online at
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.

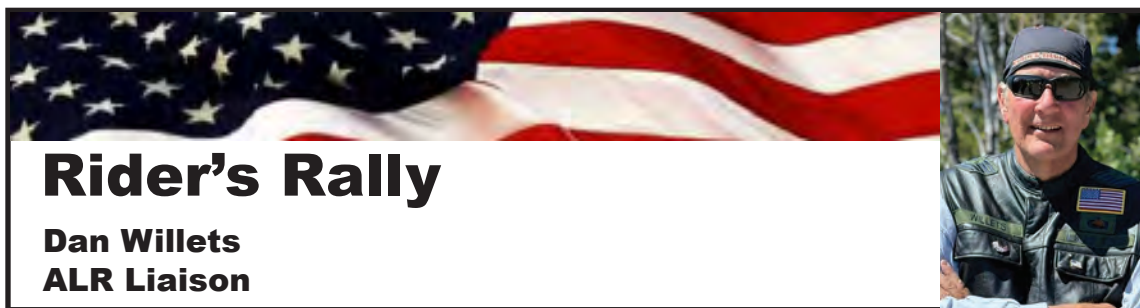
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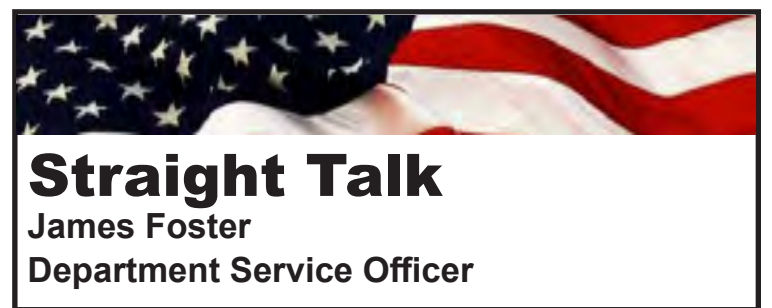
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 Lincoln, NE 68528, or you can email the information to
awashburn@nebraskalegion.net



Rider's Rally
Dan Willets
ALR Liaison



Straight Talk
James Foster
Department Service Officer

Greetings fellow American Legion Riders and American Legion Family! We are now into riding season once again which means various fund raisers, poker runs, steak feeds, pancake feeds, etc. Please take the time to support all our Legion Family Members and help raise money for our veterans, communities, and clubs.

If you are not already doing so, please consider participating in the "American Legion Family USA 250 Challenge" either individually or as a Chapter and/or in coordination with your local Post or other Legion Family organization. You can learn more and register at legion.org/usa250/challenge.

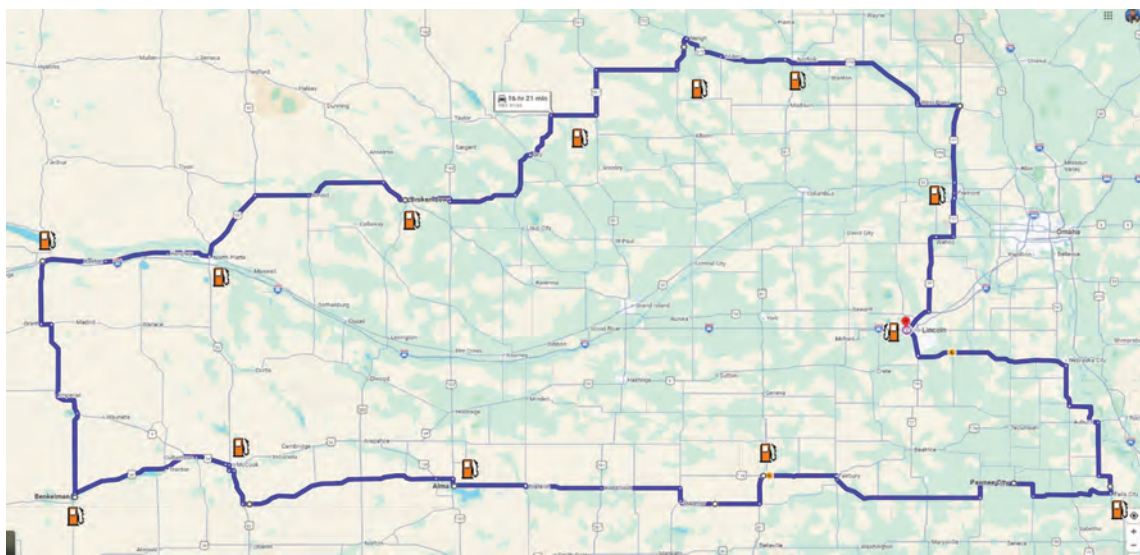
I was able to attend the Mid-Year Conference in Norfolk in January. It was a learning experience speaking at the DEC meeting on Friday and then the Joint Session on Saturday. I was able to update the DEC on our activities across the state for the second half of 2025 and I would like to thank all of you for volunteering your time and efforts to these events and representing the ALR across our great state. At the Joint Session I was able to recognize past Liaisons, my current Assistant Liaisons, and all the Rider members present. We were also able to have a Riders meeting on Saturday with several ALR Members in attendance; Department Commander Walters was kind enough to attend part of our meeting. Main topics of discussion were the State Romps for 2026 & 2027 and communication and coordination between Chapters. Grand Island Chapter 53 volunteered to host the 2026 State Romp in conjunction with their annual Freedom & Independence Ride on July 25th; more information to follow as plans develop. We are still looking ahead to the 2027 State Romp and a host Chapter. We also discussed improving the communication and coordination between Chapters to help coordinate events so we are not scheduling on top of each other; this will help to keep us from competing for participants and allow us to be more readily available to support each other's events. Chapters 1 and 3 had already initiated a coordination effort with Iowa Chapter 2 in creating a calendar to track events; they graciously granted me access so I can see scheduled events and enter our events. If you follow the Nebraska American Legion Riders Facebook Page, I will start posting a list of known events the first of each month for you to use as a reference.

Reminder, if you do not follow our Facebook page "Nebraska American Legion Riders" please do so as we are now able to share information, add events, etc. in this one centralized location.

Please remember to forward all your Chapter activities, i.e., mileage, group events, volunteer events and hours, or any other information you feel is noteworthy to myself, Danny Stefka, or your area Assistant Liaison.

My contact info: phone 308-550-2648, email: dwillets61@gmail.com, Facebook, or Messenger. My Chapter email is grandislandne.alr53@gmail.com.

As always, ride safe and God Bless America and the Legion family!



The 2026 Legacy Run Across Nebraska will take place on July 17-19, 2026. On Friday, July 17th, we will stage at the Nebraska American Legion Headquarters and ride to Nebraska City and stop for fuel in Falls City (112 miles). Then ride to Hebron, refuel and ride to Alma for the night. NDOT has informed me that the bricks will be taken out of Red Cloud Main Street (Hwy 281) so we may have to reroute around Red Cloud depending on when construction starts and finishes. We will spend the night in Alma.

Saturday, July 18th, we will Ride through Danbury get on Hwy 83 and ride to McCook (refuel) and Hwy 34 to Benkelman then up to Enders, Imperial and to Ogallala (refuel). From Ogallala we ride to North Platte (refuel) and up 83 to Arnold and stop in Broken Bow for the night.

Sunday, July 19th, we ride through Ord, Neligh and Norfolk. I will check for 91 octanes in these towns. Norfolk has 91 and so does Fremont. We will ride through Wahoo and Valparaiso on our way back to Lincoln. I will have flyers by our June Convention.

Please be sure to book your rooms in Alma and Broken Bow because the summer months hotels get booked up fast.

I invite any Post, Unit, Squadron and Chapter to donate to the 2026 Legacy Run Across Nebraska. Please send donations to Eric or Amanda in Lincoln so they can keep track of donations and so National can thank you for your donations.

VA's implementation of artificial intelligence and how veteran service officers can assist veterans.

As the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance efficiency in the processing of claims and service delivery. The integration of AI can be complex and overwhelming for many veterans. This is where Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) play an essential role. VSOs can assist veterans, surviving spouses and family in navigating the AI-enhanced VA system effectively.

AI technology is changing various aspects of the VA, moving some tasks from VA employees to automation, which limits human discretion in the different steps of a claim. VSOs can help veterans understand these AI services by breaking down the technology and its applications into simpler terms. They can explain claims adjudication, ensuring veterans are aware of what to expect and how to engage with these new services.

The VA employs AI to expedite claims processing and reduce backlogs. However, veterans may find it challenging to interact with AI-based systems. VSOs are knowledgeable about claims processing and can assist veterans in submitting their claims accurately and efficiently. They help gather the necessary documentation, ensure the information is correctly entered into the system, and monitor the progress of the claim, providing clarity on each step of the process.

VSOs facilitate smoother communication between veterans and AI systems deployed by the VA, such as the VA app and AskVA. They can educate veterans on how to interact with AI chatbots and virtual assistants for queries related to benefits, appointments, and general information. This support can ease some of the stress veterans may have interacting with AI tools to get instant assistance without the frustration of dealing with unfamiliar technology.

AI systems, despite their advanced capabilities, are not infallible and may occasionally produce errors or overlook nuances in a veteran's case. VSOs act as advocates, intervening when necessary to ensure that any discrepancies or issues arising from AI assessments are addressed. They provide a human touch, offering empathy and understanding that AI can't replicate, especially in complex situations.


Veterans' experiences and feedback are crucial for the continued improvement of AI systems. VSOs facilitate this feedback loop by collecting veterans' experiences, concerns, and suggestions regarding AI tools and communicating them to the VA. This input helps refine AI algorithms and enhances the overall effectiveness and user-friendliness of the systems.

With the VA's increasing reliance on AI to improve service delivery, the role of VSOs has never been more pivotal. By assisting veterans in understanding, navigating, and benefiting from AI technologies, VSOs ensure that the transition to a more technologically advanced VA is smooth and beneficial for all veterans. Their support and advocacy are key to bridging the gap between cutting-edge AI advancements and veterans' needs, ensuring that no veteran is left behind in this technological evolution.


**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 www.nebraskalegion.net/Programs/Teacher.html. Applications must be submitted to Department Headquarters in Lincoln by May 1st.



POW/MIA
Boyd Yochum
POW/MIA Liaison




S.A.L. Notes
Todd Kabella
Detachment Commander



Willie Ernest Stark was from Omaha, Nebraska. Willie was born 7 October 1932 and his casualty date was 2 December 1966. Willie was Army, assigned to MACV SOG, 5th Special Forces Group, B 52 Delta RT Viper. Casualty type: Died while missing in action – Body not recovered.

In late November 1966, Willie Stark and Russell Bott were inserted about 1 ½ miles into Laos, west of the DMZ, along with a number of Vietnamese Special Forces “strickers”. The team, a long range reconnaissance patrol (LRRP), was soon discovered by North Vietnamese Forces (NVA). A two day battle ensued.

The enemy attacks wounded the patrol leader Willie Stark. The assistant patrol leader, Bott, requested immediate extraction from the area, however the extraction attempt failed when enemy ground fire forced the rescue helicopter to pull away. The aircraft then crashed nearby killing the four man crew and a medic. Two gunships working the area were also hit by enemy fire. Some remains, which had been horribly mutilated by the enemy, were eventually recovered at the site. Others were not located and are still considered MIA.

Throughout the incident, a friendly forward air controller (FAC) aircraft remained in radio contact with Bott, in the vicinity of (GC) XD 634 633. Further extraction or search efforts for the men were not possible because of intense enemy fire.

Near the end, Bott radioed that he was down to one grenade and one magazine of ammunition. He also stated that several of the Vietnamese members of his team were dead or wounded. Willie was wounded in the chest and leg but was alive. Bott requested extraction at that time but refused to leave his wounded teammate. In his last radio message, Bott indicated that capture was imminent and he was going to destroy his radio.

Searches for Stark and Bott were unsuccessful. Vietnamese team members who evaded capture reported that they had heard NVA Soldiers say, “here you are, we’ve been looking for you. Tie his hands, we’ll take him this way.”

While carried in the status of Missing In Action (MIA), Willie Ernest Stark was promoted from the rank of SFC to Sergeant Major. Sergeant Major Stark is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. His name is also inscribed along with all his fallen comrades on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

Based on all information available, DPAA assessed the individual’s case to be in the analytical category of Active Pursuit.

We all benefit by authentically honoring fallen American service members. When we make the effort to honor our fallen, we heal ourselves and our country. When we take small actions for the benefit of others, it can be beneficial in easing physical and psychological pain.

Greetings American Legion Family!

Membership renewals need to continue to be a priority. On the most recent membership report dated March 11th, Nebraska was over 90%, and #1 in the Midwest Region and #9 overall in the nation. We need everyone’s help to continue the drive towards 100%.



The Detachment of Nebraska was well represented at the 2026 Washington Conference. It was an honor to be part of the delegation that laid wreaths at both the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the World War I Memorial. It was great to see

Sergeant-at-Arms Liam Casey and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Kolten Kramer place the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier along with National Commander William Clancy.

Everyone should make plans to attend the Detachment Convention that will be held in Columbus June 26-28. Remember, if your Squadron is not represented at the meetings, your voice is not being heard in the direction the Detachment moves.

Veteran suicide continues to be an extremely important issue, so don’t forget about the “Be The One” initiative. You can download the “Be The One” app if you have a smartphone. If you or someone you know needs help, remember that the crisis hotline number is 988 and if you are a veteran press 1.

When planning community events this summer, keep the Four Pillars of The American Legion in mind: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth. What is your Post/Squadron planning for American Legion Family day on April 25th? Are you planning events around the 4th of July to celebrate America’s 250th Birthday?

Maynard Jensen Memorial Scholarship



The Nebraska American Legion selected 13 recipients of the Maynard Jensen Scholarship. The Maynard Jensen scholarship began in 1989 as “The American Legion Scholarship” and it was renamed in 1992 in memory of Past Department Commander Maynard Jensen of Aurora.

Jensen was a World War II Navy Veteran who served in the invasion of Normandy and then in Southern France. He served as the Nebraska American Legion Department Commander from 1971-72. Jensen also served on numerous Department Committees within The American Legion.

For the 37th consecutive year, the Nebraska American Legion has done its part in helping Nebraska students with scholarship money. The recipients of \$500.00 scholarships Jack T. Baker of Trenton; Joslyn M. Reiff of Callaway; Tucker E. Bickford of Weeping Water; Derek W. Nanke of Plattsmouth; Jordin A. Woebbecke of Blair; Rebecca M. Wacker of Shelby; Bryson D. Gullion of Culbertson; Danielle L. Pallat of Seward; Ryan J. Rifer of Orchard;

Lane D. Fischer of Wakefield; BrieAnn M. Mellick of Waterbury; Blayklee E. Farr of Maywood and Camryn L. Engel of Doniphan.

Sons of The American Legion Membership As of March 23, 2026

District	2025 Members	2026 Members
1	299	233
2	564	560
3	237	235
4	341	323
5	138	128
6	1,317	1,298
7	785	719
8	856	747
9	289	239
10	303	229
11	1,005	1,064
12	257	266
13	126	110
15	133	134
Total	6,650	6,285

Junior Shooting Sports Program

Has your Post been wanting to get more youth involved? If so, the Junior Shooting Sports Program may be something to consider. This is a gun safety education and marksmanship program that provides the basic elements of safety, education, enjoyment, and competition. Participants of any gender, ages 14 through 20. Handicapped youth are encouraged to participate. First round postal match competition target sales and registration opens September 1 and closes December 15. Full information can be found at www.legion.org/shooting/resources. Contact our Department Liaison, Doug Frahm, if your Post is interested in pursuing this program.

Department Convention Program

It’s time to start putting together our Department Convention Program. In addition, the Department is selling space in the program for individuals or businesses to advertise. Please ask around your community to garner support. All ads and payments must be received before June 10, 2026. The program is 8.5 x 5.5 in size. Please contact at Headquarters.

- \$10 - page split into eight sections
- \$20 - page split into four sections
- \$30 - page split into two sections
- \$60 - Full page

Candidate Announcements

Doug Frahm Department Commander



Doug Frahm asks for your support in his bid for Commander of The American Legion, Department of Nebraska. 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 serving as a Holt County Supervisor for eight years, 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 Nebraska Juvenile Justice Board.

Doug is a Vietnam Veteran having served in the USAF and ANG for a total of 27 years. After retiring in 2005, he joined

The American Legion and has been a continuous member for 21 years. Doug is also a dual member belonging to Chambers Squadron 320. Doug has served as Chambers Post 320 Vice Commander, Post Commander, Membership Chairman 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 Conventions since 2008, serving on the Department Executive Committee for six years. Doug has also been a Department of Nebraska delegate to the National Conventions for the past seven 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 Foundation. 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 Department Leadership and Staff, to be an effective leader. He asks for your Support and your Vote in June for Commander Department of Nebraska.

Thank you for your Support!

Martin Neal Senior Vice Commander



Martin Neal has announced his candidacy for the American Legion Department of Nebraska Senior Vice Commander's office for 2026-2027. 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 Vice Commander and Commander, District Vice Commander and Commander, Area Vice Commander, Post Finance Officer, and National Americanism Council member.

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 Board President of the newly formed 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 a RN at the Lincoln VA Clinic and is a member of Auxiliary Unit 105 in Hickman. His daughter, Maesa is a senior studying ecology and botany at Colorado State University – Fort Collins and is a member of Auxiliary Unit 105 in Hickman. His son, Samuel is in kindergarten at Sterling, Nebraska, is the Farm Boss, and is a member of the Sons Squadron 105 in Hickman.

Martin will fulfill the constitutional duties of the office by working closely with the Department Commander, Department Staff, the various Department Committees and the Department Executive Committee, and would appreciate your support and vote to be elected as the Senior Vice Commander, Department of Nebraska.

Richard Colson Senior Vice Commander



Richard Colson has announced his candidacy for Senior Vice-Commander of the American Legion Department of Nebraska. Richard lives in Paxton, Nebraska, where he and his wife, Vicki, raised their 5 children.

Richard earned his eligibility for The American Legion by his service in the United States Coast Guard.

He is a 54 year member of Hankins-Miller American Legion Post #303 in Paxton, currently serving as adjutant. Richard has held every officer position in the Post, including being Post Commander 3 times, and served 6 years as Keith County Commander.

Richard's family members all belong to The American Legion Family. His wife, two daughters, and two grand-daughters are Auxiliary members. His three sons all belong to the Sons of the American Legion, as well as his three grand-sons. His son George is also a member of the Post, having spent eight years in the Navy.

He has been active in the Legion at all levels, having served as District 5 Commander (3 times) and as Area D Commander (twice). He has attended several National Conventions as a Delegate, and has been assigned to various committees at the National level. He is currently on the National Legislative Convention Committee, and at the latest National Convention, served on both the Legislation Committee, and the Health Administration Committee. Richard is in his third year on the Cornhusker Boys' State Committee, and is on its' Board of Directors.

Richard was the manager of a lumber yard, and hardware store, where he worked for 31 years. He then spent 7 years as the County Veteran Service Officer of Keith, Arthur, and Garden counties. His community service includes 24 years on the Village Board, and 20 years on the West-Central Nebraska Development District board, having held all positions in each. He is a member of St. Patrick's Catholic Church, in Paxton, and a member of the Sons of the American Legion, 40 & 8, Knights of Columbus, Lions Club, and Moose Club. He received the Cody-Kerr Award from the Nebraska American Legion in 2015. He is an amateur pool player and an avid coin collector.

Richard would appreciate your support to be elected to the position of Senior Vice-Commander of the Nebraska American Legion for the 2026-2027 year. If you want to get something done, give it to a busy man.

Edgar J. Boschult Memorial Scholarship



The Nebraska American Legion has selected five recipients of the 2026 Edgar J. Boschult Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to full-time students in the University of Nebraska system that are enrolled in military science courses or to honorably discharged veterans attending the University of Nebraska full-time.

The Edgar J. Boschult Scholarship was created in 1947 in memory of Edgar J. Boschult. Boschult was a veteran of World War I and Past Department Commander of the Nebraska American Legion. Boschult returned to serve his country in World War II and was killed in action on November 8, 1944.

The recipients of \$500.00 Scholarships are Rigel H. Rowe, Sacramento, CA UNMC (USAF ROTC); Lauren V. Garcia, White Plains NY, UNL (USA ROTC); Jett Hinze, Erie, CO, UNL (USA ROTC); John Fiedler, Papillion, NE, UNL (USA ROTC); and Josiah J. Wilkinson, Culbertson, NE, UNL (USA ROTC).

Department Seeking Applications for Assistant Adjutant

The Assistant Adjutant position is currently vacant and the Department is looking to get a replacement onboard quickly.

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 24th with interview(s) following shortly after. For more information please contact Adjutant Martin at HQ and he will be happy to answer them.

Membership Minute
Steve Bartos, Membership Chairman

The transition from Winter to Spring --- a good time of the year. Longer days. Warmer weather. District Conventions. And the easily recognizable northward migrations of the snow geese and sandhill cranes. It's also a time when the current membership campaign starts to wind down. However, let's not lose sight of the fact that the end of the 2026 membership year doesn't occur until December 31. Let's keep at it.

We have good reason to celebrate a little this Spring. As opposed to a year ago, when we failed to be "on target" for the 85% and 90% target dates, the Department of Nebraska achieved and surpassed those percentages this year. In fact, we have been running almost a target date ahead some of the time.

Nationally, we are making a good showing, too. Traditionally, last year notwithstanding, Nebraska has ranked in the top 10 or 15 departments at the start of the year ---- and then does its sliding routine where we end up about 30th. This year, however, we have been hovering in the top 5-10 (3rd place on the March 11th target date). That's fairly rare air for us to breathe, but it's certainly more rewarding and better than leading the pack from the rear!!! I hope we can enjoy and appreciate our success and maintain the momentum.

Everyone's hard work also led to a nice reward. The national organization annually sponsors its "Big 12 Competition." At the fall meetings, each department commander pledges a percentage of goal to be achieved by the 90% target date. Departments are broken down into 6 categories by size --- and then compete against only the departments in their category. Winners are determined by ranking the departments by the amount of their pledge.

The top two pledges are declared the winners in their category --- **but only if they achieve their pledge.** Commander Judy's pledge was the fifth highest of the eight departments in our category. BUT, three of the departments that pledged more than we did failed to achieve their pledged percentage. As a result, we finished in 2nd place in our category and will receive \$1000 from the national organization.

I extend my thanks to all who have paid their dues for 2026 --- and to everyone who has put forth some obvious extra effort to get those renewals in. We need every one --- and there are still plenty out there to capture.

It's also time to recharge and start formulating a strategy for the 2027 campaign. Statistics show that in Nebraska, we only have about 20% of our eligible veterans enrolled as members of the American Legion. If you do the math, that means there are about 80,000 eligible veterans out there who could belong. We need to find a way to attract them --- and get them to join. Our survival depends on it.

Remember the key words. Recruit. Renew. Reinstate.

Pay your dues if you haven't done so.

And, have a nice April!

Washington Conference

From February 28th to March 4th, 30 members of the Nebraska American Legion Family attended the Washington Conference in Washington D.C. They were able to attend a wreath laying at the war memorials, attend meetings about veterans issues, hear about The American Legion's legislative priorities, and meet with their state Senators and Representatives.



National Poppy Day – Friday, May 22, 2026



THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY
NATIONAL POPPY DAY®

Poppy Day is celebrated in countries all around the world. The American Legion brought National Poppy Day® to the United States by asking Congress to designate the Friday before Memorial Day, as National Poppy Day. After World War I, the red poppy became the symbol of the blood that was shed during the battle. On

September 27, 1920, it became the official flower of The American Legion Family. On May 24, wear a red poppy to honor the fallen and support the living who have worn our nation's uniform. Anyone can participate in National Poppy Day®. Here are a few simple ways:

- Download the Communications Toolkit from www.legion.org/poppyday, which is full of great information.
- Ask your local government to sign a Poppy Day Proclamation.
- Wear a red poppy all day and tell everyone why.
- Distribute poppies to friends, co-workers and family and tell everyone why.
- Collect donations at your workplace to give to Poppy Program.
- Tell the story on Facebook of who you are wearing your poppy to remember or support on National Poppy Day. Don't forget to tag us! #PoppyDay #LegionFamily
- Accept a poppy and make a donation if you see a member of The American Legion Family in your neighborhood distributing poppies.

Let's share the word about this very important day with our friends and families and continue to find ways to promote the American Legion Family's Poppy Program.





NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Sacrifice.
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Take advantage of

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Offered through Nebraska Game & Parks

Hunt/Fish/Fur Permits

- \$5 Resident Veteran Permit (64 & Older)
- \$5 Resident Deployed Military Permit
- *FREE Resident Disabled Veteran Permit

State Park Permits

- \$5 Annual Active-Duty Military Permit
- *FREE Resident Disabled Veteran Permit

*must be 50% service-connected disabled or higher

PLUS
Free Veterans Day Hunt
and Bonus Waterfowl Weekend
for Veterans!

Learn more online at

OutdoorNebraska.gov/VeteransAndMilitaryPermits





- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Addy, John R., Omaha, Vietnam
 Anderson, Ike, Genoa, Vietnam
 Anderson, Richard W., Weeping Water, Vietnam
 Andreesen, John T., Barneston, Vietnam
 Backes, Duane, Lindsay
 Backman, Dennis L., Genoa, Korea
 Bailey, Earnest G., Vietnam
 Baldwin, Donald E., Milford, Korea
 Bartels, Ivan, Barneston, Korea
 Beavers, Vernon C., Kearney, Korea
 Beezley, William R., Riverton, Korea
 Bellis, Jack L., McCool Junction, Vietnam
 Bloom, Floyd, Laurel
 Boersen, Richard A. Sr., Grand Island, Vietnam
 Brown, John G., Cambridge, Vietnam
 Brown, Richard M., Millard, Vietnam
 Buresh, Robert F., Korea
 Burritt, Kenneth C., Osceola, Vietnam
 Burton, Thomas, Falls City, WWII
 Buschelman, Joseph D., Arlington, Vietnam
 Campbell, Don S., Falls City, Korea
 Clausen, Lavern D., Schuyler, Korea
 Cole, Leroy A., Norfolk, SAL
 Conklin, Donald V., Gering, Korea
 Coster, Ray W., Weeping Water, Vietnam
 Coufal, Leander, Dwight, Korea
 Diederich, Allan D., Millard, Vietnam
 Ellis, Dwaine E., Omaha, Vietnam
 Epp, Robert L., Omaha, Vietnam
 Fakler, Roy F., Beatrice, Korea
 Feala, Cheryl A., Morse Bluff, Vietnam
 Fenster, Larry, Kearney, SAL
 Fey, Donald E., Millard, Korea
 Fredrickson, Art C., York, WWII
 Freese, Marvin D., Eustis, Korea
 Garretson, Terry, Bennington, Vietnam
 Gatzemeyer, John R., Chadron, Vietnam
 Gaunt, Daniel T., Albion, SAL
 Getzfred, William J., Elgin, Vietnam
 Glasshoff, Alvin, Gretna, Korea
 Goodhard, James, Millard, Other
 Graff, Dennis, Lincoln, Vietnam
 Gran, James E., Gordon, Korea
 Haas, Wesley L., Lincoln, Vietnam
 Halbleib, Joseph E., Bellevue, Vietnam
 Hall, Dennis, Exeter SAL
 Hamar, Darold R., Millard, Vietnam
 Hansen, Loren, Plainview, Vietnam
 Harbeson, Donald, Elsie, Vietnam
 Haselhorst, Randall M., Norfolk, Vietnam
 Hauschild, Harry P., Weeping Water, Vietnam
 Havekost, Donald G., Hooper, Vietnam
 Hays, Richard L., Valley, Vietnam
 Hecox, Hubert H., Kearney, Korea
 Heese, Terry A., Millard, Vietnam
 Henderson, Robert E., Neligh, Vietnam
 Hendrickson, Dale M., Weeping Water, WWII</p> | <p>Hendrickson, Morgan C., Lincoln, Vietnam
 Hinrichs, Lee, Lincoln, Korea
 Holmberg, Daryl G., Schuyler, Vietnam
 Holz, Carroll L., Clearwater, WWII
 Hough, James R., Bellwood, Vietnam
 Hove, Richard J., Benson, Vietnam
 Howser, Gary D. Sr., David City, Vietnam
 Hybl, Dean A., Fremont, Vietnam
 Jansen, John H., Papillion, Korea
 Jansky, Vern A., Lincoln, Korea
 Jelinek, Deroyce, Dwight, Vietnam
 Jensen, Roy F., Bennet, Korea
 Jilg, Ralph R., Silver Creek, Vietnam
 Johnsen, Robert J., Beatrice, Vietnam
 Johnson, Terry, Eustis, Vietnam
 Kallhoff, Vincent E., Elgin, Vietnam
 Kasl, Robert E., Dorchester, Korea
 Kelly, Michael, Kearney, Vietnam
 Kernick, Randall, Norfolk, Vietnam
 Klamm, Richard W., Holdrege, Korea
 Klute Donald A., York, Korea
 Knajdl, Gerald M., Miller, Vietnam
 Knott, Larry R., Weeping Water, Vietnam
 Kraenow, Eugene, Syracuse, Korea
 Kroenke, Leo B., Millard, Korea
 Kuhlmann, Willard, Auburn, Korea
 Laaker, Leroy, Arlington, Vietnam
 Lamm, John N., Lincoln, Vietnam
 Lang, David, Lincoln, Other
 Larsen, Lyle C., Creighton, Vietnam
 Larson, Jay W., Wahoo, Vietnam
 Lautenschlager, Richard C., Fairbury, Vietnam
 Lee, Jack R., Central City, Vietnam
 Lempka, Kenneth R., Dwight, Vietnam
 Lewis, Roger L., Dorchester, Vietnam
 Lewis, Thomas R., Lincoln, Vietnam
 Lewis, Wayne L., Weeping Water, Vietnam
 Lofgren, John W., Lincoln, Korea
 Louis, Allen, Genoa, Korea
 Luebbe, Kenneth, Garland, Vietnam
 Luellen, Kenneth D., Louisville, Korea
 Marcellus, Carroll D., Stuart, Korea
 Martin, Harold E., Neligh, Korea
 Matteson, Steven R., Millard, Vietnam
 McClintock, Leland, Omaha, Vietnam
 McCracken, John, Wymore, Vietnam
 McElwain, James A., Springfield, Vietnam
 McKelvie, Robert, Bennington, Vietnam
 McLaughlin, Jim, Kearney, Vietnam
 McMullen, Gailen L., Beatrice, Korea
 Meier, Robert J., South Omaha, Vietnam
 Mueller, Henry M., Louisville, Korea</p> | <p>Obermiller, Larry H., Dannebrog, Korea
 Oden, Walter H., Beatrice, WWII
 Ostler, Charles H., Omaha, Korea
 Peetz, Russell F., Wolbach, Korea
 Penner, Robert L., Pleasant Dale, Korea
 Peper, Lawrence J., Lawrence, Vietnam
 Petersen, Wayne L., Herman, Vietnam
 Polivka, Ronald L., Pleasant Dale, Vietnam
 Potter, John P., David City, WWII
 Quick, Lee R., Ceresco, Vietnam
 Reichman, Dayton, Venango, Vietnam
 Remmereid, Arthur, Tilden, Korea
 Rhoades, Robert C., Lincoln, Vietnam
 Rice, Dwayne G., Palmer, Vietnam
 Riha, Scott A., Louisville, SAL
 Russell, Robert P., Beatrice, Korea
 Ryko, Robert, Papillion, Korea
 Saale, Norman, Lincoln, Vietnam
 Schubert, Clayton H., Wilcox, Korea
 Schuller, Joe A., Odell, Korea
 Scott, James, Niobrara, Vietnam
 Self, Jerry R., Millard, Persian Gulf
 Sersland, John O., Omaha, Korea
 Sharp, Wallace B., Millard, WWII
 Shenshaw, William G., Neligh, Korea
 Sikora, Timothy A., Omaha, Vietnam
 Simmons, Ron, Aurora
 Smith, George B., North Platte, Korea
 Smith, Max E., McCool Junction, Korea
 Spellman, William, Shelton, Vietnam
 Spencer, Darwin, Gering, Vietnam
 Stark, Walter J., Holdrege
 Sterling, Roger I Sr., Denton, Vietnam
 Strobl, Joseph M., Lincoln, Vietnam
 Struve, Carl L., Lincoln, Vietnam
 Thompson, David, Waverly
 Thomsen, Lloyd J., Lincoln, Korea
 Tiemann, Orville, Garland
 Vampola, Lee, Arlington, Persian Gulf
 Vanbrocklin, William, Plainview, Korea
 VanDusen, Dale L., Pleasant Dale, Korea
 Vanhorn, Earnest E., Atkinson, Vietnam
 Veprovsky, Emil A., Dorchester, Korea
 Waage, Richard, Fremont, Vietnam
 Webb, Duane E., Edison, WWII
 Weekly, George H., Lincoln, WWII
 Weiss, Richard, Lincoln
 Wiese, James W., Lindsay, Vietnam
 Wigton, Charles I., Lincoln, Vietnam
 Wiles, Earl E., Louisville, Vietnam
 Witt, Thomas D., Thedford, Vietnam
 Wolcott, Bryan J., Atkinson, SAL
 Young, Harry Richard Jr., Omaha, Korea/Vietnam</p> |
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Events Calendar

April

3 Good Friday - Office Closed

May

2 - 7 Spring Meetings - Indianapolis, IN
 15 - 17 National Oratorical Contest - Hillsdale, MI
 25 Memorial Day - Office Closed

June

31 - 6 Boys State - UNL Campus
 19 Juneteenth - Office Closed
 22 - 23 Boys Junior Law Cadet - Grand Island
 24 - 25 Girls Junior Law Cadet - Grand Island
 26 - 28 Department Convention - Columbus

Check www.nebraskalegion.net under the meetings tab for upcoming National, State, and District events.

Mail Call

Dear Nebraska American Legion Family,

Thank you for everything during my official visit to Nebraska. Thank you for the beautiful, framed plaque. It is greatly appreciated and will hang in a prominent place.

Thank you so much,

NVC Jerry Landkamer

ID Resolve From The LIT



In today's world, identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in America. If you or your spouse fall victim to identity theft what would you do? Where would you turn? With Legionnaire ID Resolve you'll have 24-hour identity theft resolution that helps protect your money, your time and your

financial reputation.

If you haven't fallen victim to identity theft yet, don't think you're safe. Data breaches happen every day, where thieves can steal your name, date of birth, credit card information, medical records, and your Social Security number. That's why your Department of The American Legion has endorsed ID Resolve. A new program to help Legionnaires fight back instead of being a victim and not knowing where to turn.

ID Resolve helps you eliminate the uncertainty, by putting ID experts on your side to clean up the mess and help restore your name. You can be confident you're getting the protection you deserve when it comes to your money, accounts, credit cards, and financial records. Plus, our no-obligation money-back guarantee allows you a full 30-day examination period in case you change your mind about this identity resolution.



Cody Post 319 participated in their schools Veterans Day Program on November 11th. Pictured front row (L to R) District 1 Commander, Department Commander Judy Walters, LeRoy Semin, Bill Williams, Merle Ford, and Buster Hand. Pictured back row (L to R) John Markus, Dewayne Lancaster, Keith Drinkwalter, Linda Drinkwalter, Jim Heath, Russel Wobig, Monica Ford, Bill Cox, and Ken McGuiness.



Hyannis Post 57 presented Quilts of Valor to members of their Post. Pictured (L to R) Tim Lacy, Army veteran; Cal Lacy, Navy veteran; Jack Daugherty, Army veteran; and Curt Brown, Navy veteran.



Schuyler Post 47 presented a certificate for 50 years of continuous membership to Albin Moore. Pictured (L to R) Albin Moore and Commander Lumir Jedlicka.



The Delta Sigma Pi Chapter at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln created 80 handwritten thank you cards for veterans in Nebraska. These were distributed during the Vietnam Veteran War Veterans Day ceremony at the State Capitol. Pictured (L to R) NEC Jim Costello and Noah Behrens.



Valparaiso Post 371 presented Quilt of Valor to its members. It was a family affair as two sets of father/son received the quilts. Pictured (L to R) Larry Benes, Fred Benes, Nick Benes, Dan Benes, and Dan Benes Jr.



Curtis Post 95 presented a certificate for 50 years of continuous membership to Bradley G. Wood. Pictured (L to R) Adjutant R. J. Christensen and Bradley Wood.



Crete Post 147 members were presented with Quilt of Valor. Pictured top (L to R) Unit 147 President Gerry Johnson, Jim Sueper, Air Force veteran, and Paula Valenta. Pictured bottom (L to R) Gene Horky, Air National Guard veteran, and his wife Lorene Horky. Pictures taken by Crete News.



Governor Jim Pillen signed a proclamation declaring March 29 “Vietnam War Veterans Day” in the state of Nebraska. Over 75 people attended the ceremony, including 30 Vietnam veterans, family members, friends, and fellow veterans. Around 64,000 Nebraskans served during the Vietnam War, and the state is currently home to around 32,000 Vietnam-era veterans. Events are being held throughout the state, including at the four state veterans’ homes—to honor and recognize them for their service this week.



The Nebraska American Legion Riders selected Jody Buskirk of Bayard Squadron 200 as their 2025 Robert N. “Corndog” Swanson Memorial Awardee for his work as an outstanding Rider. Pictured (L to R) ALR Assistant Liaison Danny Stefka and Jody Buskirk.



District 4 American Legion Family offices and Department officers attended their annual District Convention in Sidney. Pictured (L to R) District 4 President Terri Poley, Department Auxiliary Historian Lori Reimers, ALR Assistant Liaison Danny Stefka, District 4 Commander Kent Holmes, Sidney Post 17 Commander Les Larsen, Department Commander Judy Walters, Past Detachment Commander Eldon Kramer, and Sidney Vice Mayor Brett Kerkman. Pictures taken by Adrienne LaBay with the Sidney Sun-Telegraph.



During the District 7 Convention the women veterans in attendance were recognized for Women Veterans Month. Pictured (L to R) Ceresco Post Commander Marie Leedom, Jena Wimer, Department Commander Judy Walters, Dwight Post Adjutant Brenda Fujan, Arlene Porter, and Area B Commander Kelly Hanvey.



Omaha Post 1 hosted the awards ceremony of Bravo Company, 2nd battalion, 8th Infantry, 4th Division. They recognized 24 Veterans of the Vietnam war. Of these men, from all over the United States, five members were awarded the Bronze Star with V device for courage and bravery. Nineteen members have been upgraded from the Army Commendation Medal to the Bronze Star.

DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT - RUTH HIETBRINK



Thank you to everyone who has attended district conventions over the past weeks. While I was unable to be at all of them, I truly appreciate each of you for continuing to show up, staying engaged, and representing our mission so well. I also want to extend a heartfelt thank you to the officers who stepped in during my absence — your willingness to support and lead truly reflects the strength of our Auxiliary family.

I would especially like to recognize our outstanding Children & Youth Chair, Julie. She has done exceptional work reminding us that April is Children & Youth Month.

This is a wonderful time to pause and offer meaningful recognition to those individuals who go above and beyond in supporting our children and youth. Your efforts truly make a difference, and they do not go unnoticed.

As we look ahead, please remember that Department Convention is right around the corner. The convention will be held June 25–28 in Columbus, Nebraska, with accommodations at the Quality Inn. Please be sure to make your reservations as soon as possible. While the full schedule has not yet been finalized, please stand by for upcoming updates. We are honored to welcome our National President, Pam Ray, who will be in attendance and will be giving a special presentation.

As always, membership remains at the top of our priority list. Please take time to review your rosters for any delinquencies and reach out to those members who have not yet submitted their dues. A friendly reminder about the benefits of

membership — and what being part of the Auxiliary truly means — can make all the difference. If you have any membership questions, please contact Roxanne at the Department Office or Deb Albers, our Membership Chair.

Thank you for your continued dedication, compassion, and commitment to serving our veterans, their families, and our communities. I am proud to serve alongside each of you.

Ruth Hietbrink
Department President



NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

We are heading into the end-of-year business. By this time, Essays and Scholarships have been sent and judged. Junior Convention is coming up on April 11, and Poppy Month is almost here. Year-end reports are arriving and are being tallied. There are so many things that need to be accomplished to complete another successful year. I know you can do it.

Keep up the great work on membership and show up in June to hear the chairmen's reports on all of your accomplishments. Consider volunteering to be a member of a

Convention Committee.

Soon the Convention Call will be out in the newsletter. Delegate strength will be figured towards the end of May, and then you will be asked to submit your delegates/alternates to the Convention. This will also get you a preprinted name tag.

One more thing. There have been some email scams going around. They may seem to be from our President Ruth, but they are not. She has never asked for money from anyone personally. She is not sick and abandoned anywhere and

does not need money/gift cards to get back home. Please check the email address it comes from. If it is not the one you received in the Department Directory or her articles, please delete the email. If you are unsure, call Department at 402-466-1808 and ask about it. Do not reply to emails like this and delete them as soon as possible. Please be safe in cyberspace and protect yourself.

And hey - thanks for all you do for the American Legion Auxiliary!

Roxanne Hiatt
Dept. Secretary

In Remembrance Betty Snyder



year member of Talmage Unit 246 and a 53-year partner of Lancaster County 8/40 Salon 92.

Betty was a devoted ALA member, especially loving our veterans and Junior members. She traveled to numerous state and national conventions with her juniors, ensuring they knew their role in the ALA. Betty held many offices at the unit, district, and state levels --- and several chairmanships at the division level.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband Melvin "Pee Wee" Snyder, granddaughter LuvStarr Adkins, and her sisters Jacqueline Bennett, Naomi Jean Keogh, Marijo Highland, Phyllis Owens, and Linda Hinojosa.

Betty is survived by her son Gene Snyder and fiancé Theresa of Mokena, IL; grandchildren: Jesse Snyder and wife Michelle of Brock,

NE; Crystal Snyder and significant other Andy Pursel of Nebraska City, William "Will" Snyder and wife Terza of Talmage, NE; Jeremiah Carlson and wife Ashley of Buffalo, MO; Nicholas Snyder and wife Amanda of Talmage, NE; Elijah Snyder of Vandenberg, CA; Mariah Oetting and husband Doug of Council Bluffs, IA; Preston Snyder and significant other Hannah Rovetto of Dunbar, NE; 22 great-grandchildren; 3 great-great-grandchildren; her sister Sharon Talley-Dewey of Bellefontaine, OH; sisters-in-law: Rosella Eaton of Nebraska City, NE; Patricia "Pat" Snyder of Pleasant Dale, NE; and many other nieces, nephews, cousins, relatives and friends.

Betty enjoyed her family and working the ALA mission. She was a great mentor to all and will be missed.

Betty Louise (Keogh) Snyder, 93, of rural Talmage, Nebraska, was born on October 27, 1932, in Stuart, Nebraska to James Joseph and Josephine Marie (Wahl) Koegh. Betty passed away on Sunday, December 21, 2025.

Betty served as ALA Department President in 1999-2000. Her theme was "Winds of Service," and her symbol was a windmill. One of her focuses was on member-to-member unity — letting each member know they were important. She was a 68-



YOU'RE INVITED
Guest Speaker from
Connected Forever



Children and Youth
Luncheon
2026



Saturday, June 27 • Noon
Columbus American Legion, 2263 3rd Avenue
Columbus, NE

MENU

Smoked Pork Cutlet with Raspberry Chipotle Glaze
Baked Potato, Hawaiian Bun
Chilled Cucumber Salad
New York Style Cheesecake
\$15 per plate



Send Money to
Julie Schnitzler
6355 N. Winchester Ave
Kenesaw, NE 68956
RSVP by June 9



A TISKET, A TASKET, A BEAUTIFUL AUXILIARY BASKET!

Get ready for a little fun, a little friendly competition, and maybe even a little treasure hunting at this year's Department Convention Silent Auction!

This year, we're calling it "A Tisket, A Tasket, A Beautiful Auxiliary Basket!" and we're inviting our districts to put their creativity on display. Each district is encouraged to create a themed basket to donate to the silent auction. To make things even more exciting, the district with the most eye-catching basket will win a \$25 prize, plus the bragging rights

Just because districts are competing doesn't mean everyone else can't join in. If you have items sitting around your home --- maybe an unused gift, a few fun goodies, or things tucked away in a cupboard --- why not turn them into a basket and donate them to the auction? Big or

small, serious or silly, every basket adds to the fun.

Who knows? Your basket might be the one everyone is bidding on!

Even better, every dollar raised from the silent auction will go toward the Auxiliary Emergency Fund, helping members of the American Legion Auxiliary during times when they need a little extra support.

So, start gathering those goodies, get creative, and bring your basket to the convention. Let's fill the auction tables, stir up some fun, and see just how many beautiful Auxiliary baskets we can create together!

Thank you for helping make this event both fun and meaningful.

Ruth Hietbrink
Dept. President



Members of the Dodge American Legion Auxiliary Unit 122 celebrated Christmas on Thursday, Dec. 11, 2025. They brought small items to put in bags, which were delivered to local Veterans.

Pictured (l to r) Lynn Harms, Jeri Janecek, Charlene Kucera, Phyllis Sellhorst, Ellen Konsel, Claudia Kempf, Susie Anderson holding Elly Freyermuth (a Junior member); Marissa Freyermuth (Omaha), Vlasta Roubal, Ruth Maresh, and Coletta Widhalm. Not pictured are Linda Baumert, Kathy Kauffold, and Oaklynn Freyermuth (a Junior member). This is the second year for the gift bags, which were greatly appreciated. Thanks to local businesses that also donated items for the bags.



American Legion Auxiliary Unit 326 joined the rest of the local Legion Family for a Building Capital Campaign to purchase a new American Legion location at 108 State Street in Osmond's downtown business district. The Auxiliary supported this project via ticket donations for chances on a patriotic quilt donated by member Stephanie Steuckrath of Country View Quilting. All sorts of strategies were used to reach the public, including local news articles, flyers, ads, public displays, social media, and online availability of tickets. This project helps to provide a new home for those who served and is a great way to celebrate the upcoming 250th birthday of the United States



A joint Supper at the Utica American Legion post was enjoyed before our February meeting.



Unit 262 American Legion Auxiliary thanks Yutan Elementary School students for creating heart-warming Valentines for our Vets. They were taken to the VA Hospital in Omaha and the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home in Bellevue.

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

2026 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.	#251 Arcadia	#337 Wilcox	#266 Bennington	#243 Leigh	#7 Alliance	#7 Alliance	#266 Bennington
May	#126 Broken Bow	#303 Lebanon	#95 Curtis	#16 Norfolk	#301 Dalton	#133 Culbertson	#95 Curtis
June	#352 Deshler	#11 Hastings	#222 Shubert	#175 Jackson	#312 Broadwater	#312 Broadwater	#222 Shubert
July	#59 Callaway	#109 Mullen	#243 Plymouth	#283 Platte Center	#7 Alliance	#301 Dalton	#27 Beatrice
Aug.	#236 Wolbach	#193 Ohiowa	#222 Shubert	#252 Winside	#12 Chadron	#12 Chadron	#193 Ohiowa
Sept.	#288 Farnam	#126 Broken Bow	#353 Eddyville	#283 Platte Center	#10 Morrill	#200 Bayard	#354 Pleasant Dale
Oct.	#257 Eustis	#52 Kearney	#27 Beatrice	#62 Newcastle	#10 Morrill	#160 Wilcox	#232 Malmø
Nov.	#225 Eddyville	#209 Franklin	#27 Beatrice	#322 Monroe	#57 Hyannis	#57 Hyannis	#222 Shubert
Dec.	#109 Mullen	#288 Farnam	#27 Beatrice	#327 Bellwood	#7 Alliance	#145 Bloomington	#27 Beatrice

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

AMERICANISM

Hello. I hope everyone had a good Easter and spent time with friends and family.

I had a good time reading all the essays that everyone sent to me, and they were all really good. So, thank you to the units that participated in the Americanism Essay Contest.

I would also like to remind the units that toward the end of April --- on the 20th --- the end-of-year reports are due. And, if anyone wants to participate in the Townsend Award or the Best Unit Report, they should also have them in on the 20th of April, as well. so that I can report to National all of the different and fun things we do in the great state of Nebraska. Please and thank you to you wonderful members out there.

Americanism Trivia:

1. Americanism attempts to collect a set of common icons to symbolize the American identity. Well-known national symbols of the United States include _____?

Answer: the U.S. Flag, the Great Seal, the Bald Eagle, the Star-Spangled Banner, In God We Trust, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Proponents of Americanism espouse an identity based on aspects of the traditional culture of the United States. Common cultural artifacts include _____?

Answer: The Flag of the United States, apple pie, baseball, rock and roll, blue jeans, Coca-Cola, and small towns.

3. Rather than collectivism, Americanism stresses unity based on the shared individualist liberal principle outlined in the Constitution of the United States by the Founding Fathers. Such ideology includes _____?

Answer: Republicanism, freedom, Liberty, Individualism, constitutionalism, Human Rights, and the Rules of the Law

Cie Kauth
Americanism Chair



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 11, and plan to join us for an exciting day at the Arlington VFW in Arlington, Nebraska. Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m., giving everyone time to check in, connect, and get settled. The meeting will officially begin at 10:15 a.m. We look forward to seeing everyone there and encourage you to RSVP by April 1st to help us plan accordingly.

Please RSVP to Sarah Fuchs by calling 402-641-4534 or emailing nebralajr.president2526@gmail.com. Don't miss this opportunity to come together, meet our juniors, and make a difference.

Don't forget any items for the Craft Display, Poppy Centerpiece, or Poppy Craft contests! We hope to See you on April 11!

KayLynn Novak
Junior Activities Chair



Assistant County Veterans Service Officer James Kirkendall accepts a check from Shubert American Legion Auxiliary Unit 222 Treasurer Judy Schlosser. Five hundred and forty dollars were donated to the Richardson County Veterans Aid Fund. This donation represents 100% of the proceeds from the Annual Tour of Homes in December sponsored by the Shubert ALA Unit 222. The fund is used to help veterans and their dependents in times of need. The Shubert ALA is proud to stand alongside the veterans of Richardson County.

HOST A FAMILY/CHILDREN EVENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

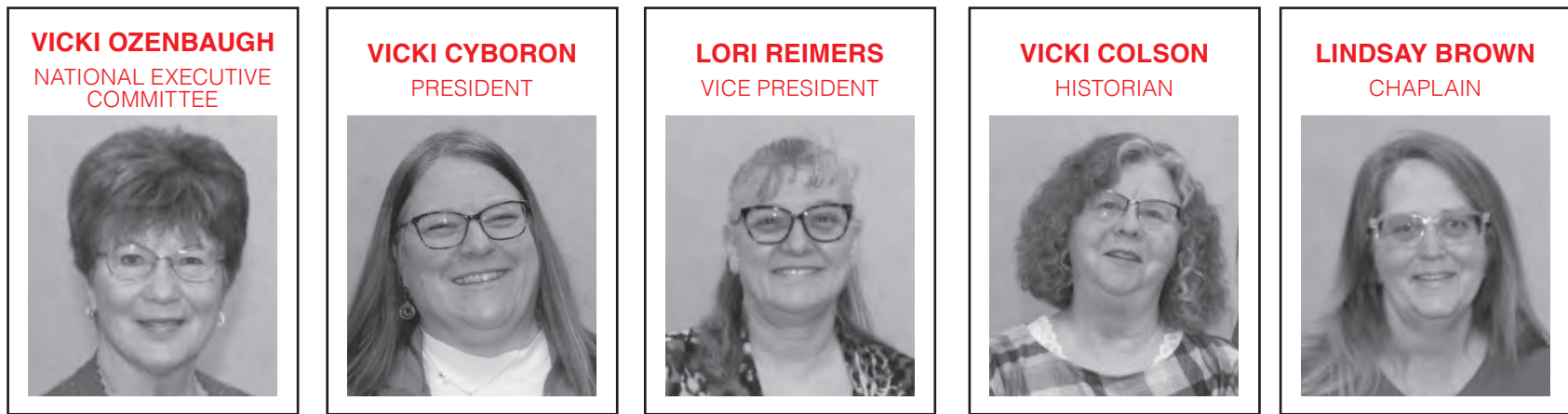
Why should you host a family/children event in your community?

- Celebrate Kids and Families
- Create Traditions and Memories
- Include your Legion Family efforts in your Consolidated Post Report

And — It only takes one caring adult in a child's life to overcome his/her challenges. Through these relationships, we can encourage our youth to attend Boys State or Girls State, play Taps, or compete in the Oratorical Contest.



CANDIDATES FOR DEPARTMENT OFFICERS 2026 - 2027



VICKI OZENBAUGH BIO *CANDIDATE FOR NEC*

Vicki Ozenbaugh is a graduate of Geneva High School and the University of NE—Lincoln. She taught high school in Ohio and Milligan before beginning a career in independent sales. She retired after 25 years with the United States Postal Service, serving as Postmaster in Ohio, Exeter, and Sutton.

She became a member of the Franklin American Legion Auxiliary Unit 193 in Ohio in 1977. Over the last 49 years, she has served as the Unit President, Vice-President, chairs of Membership, Americanism, Children & Youth, Education, and Poppy. Vicki has been Fillmore County President and is currently serving that position. She has served her District 11 as President and Vice-President for two separate terms. At the Department level, she served as Department chair for Americanism, Education, Leadership, National Security, and Past President's Parley. She was Department Historian and Vice President before serving as Department President in 2022-2023.

On the national level, she is serving as Nebraska's National Executive Committee person, currently in her third year. Last year, she was the Northwestern Division Americanism Chair and is serving this year as the Northwestern Division Children & Youth Chair.

In addition, this year she is the Department chair of Girls State, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, and Advisory Board. Currently, she is the Interim Department Treasurer.

VICKI CYBORON BIO *CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT*

Vicki Cyboron is a candidate for the high office of Department President. She is a 45-year PUF (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 Vice President and the Grand Island VA Medical Center Representative.

In the past, Vicki 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 of the committee, Department Chaplain, and 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 eighteen years. She is also a member of the Custer County DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Auxiliary Unit and currently serves her second term as Department President of Nebraska DAV Auxiliary. She attends Faith Lutheran Church in Nysted and is the current church treasurer. She volunteers to help with the organization of Boelus Days.

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 President. She says the best part of being part of this amazing organization is the honor and privilege to spread the word about our support for our Veterans, Active Military Personnel, and our Children and Youth.

LORI REIMERS BIO *CANDIDATE FOR VICE PRESIDENT*

Lori Reimers is a proud member of Lester Harder Post 42's 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 16 years, is a mother of 3 children, and Nana for 8 grandchildren. She belongs to Christ Lutheran Church in Aurora. For work, she is a District Manager for Driveline Retail Merchandising.

At the unit level, Lori has served as President. She has also been the District 6 Vice-President and President. She has served as Department Poppy Chairman and Department Chaplain. She is currently serving as Department Historian.

Lori has been endorsed by American Legion Auxiliary Unit 42 and District 6 for Department Vice President. I am asking for your support for Department Vice President.

VICKI COLSON BIO *CANDIDATE FOR HISTORIAN*

I am Vicki Colson, and I am running for the position of Historian of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Nebraska in 2026-2027.

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 during high school with the National Guard. 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 46 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 on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Children and Youth, Community Service, Education, Poppy, Service to Veterans, VA&R, and the Cornhusker Girls State Committee. I am currently serving as Department Chaplain.

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, a book club, a craft class, and an exercise class. I belong to the St. Patrick's Catholic Church where I have been a member and officer in the Altar Society, Religious Educator, and Eucharistic minister.

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

Before retiring, I worked in food service, including daycare, hospital, and school food service.

LINDSAY BROWN BIO *CANDIDATE FOR CHAPLAIN*

My name is Lindsay Brown (Mazur), and I am a candidate for Department Chaplain.

I have been a member of the Gretna American Legion Auxiliary Unit 216 for 42 years. I am eligible through my grandfather, Leonard Koch, who served in WWII. I have served a total of 5 years as our Unit 216 President, and am currently serving in my 6th year. I served 2 years as District 8 Vice-president, 2 years as District 8 President, and 2 years as Secretary/Treasurer of the Sarpy County American Legion Auxiliary.

I grew up in Millard and graduated from Gretna High School, where I was on the softball team. After high school, I went to Metro Community College in Elkhorn, Nebraska, where I studied Photography and Business. Unfortunately, I never finished.

I was raised Catholic and went to St John Vianney School in Millard. I sang in the church youth and adult choir and taught catechism for about 10 years --- and loved working with the younger kids on learning our religion. I went to a week-long Catholic retreat held at the Cathedral Church in Omaha, and then moved up to be a counselor, a position I held for 3 years.

I work full-time as the casino services manager at the Ameristar Casino.

I look forward to hopefully becoming the American Legion Auxiliary Department Chaplain.

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK: MAY 4-8, 2026



Since 1984, the National PTA has designated one week in May as a special time to honor the individuals who lend their passion and skills to educating our children. This is a great opportunity to introduce yourself. Tell teachers about the Auxiliary and what you do. You may find an event, celebration, or

activity in which the Auxiliary can participate and create awareness about our organization. Showing appreciation does not have to be complicated.

- Consider sending the school donuts or bagels from your unit, or hosting a special snack.
- Put together a note with a little care package to let teachers know you care - put it in the office lounge.
- Ask teachers if they have a "wish list" for their classroom and try to fill it
- Don't forget you can still collect for "Give 10 to Education" or donate books.
- Offer to read in the classroom or teach flag etiquette.
- Resources: Google and Pinterest cover anything from making cards to crafts to special

treats. Also, remember to utilize LEGION-AUX.ORG

Like our veterans, teachers are on the frontlines serving our most precious population. Let's bring a little joy to them during National Teacher Appreciation Week and remember to say, "THANK YOU!"

END OF THE YEAR REPORTS

Department recently mailed out Year-End Reports to unit Presidents. PLEASE fill them out and return by April 20. These are vital for the success of our organization. What your unit does matters! If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

Cindy Moore
Education Chair



SFC Keri Wilhelm, a dual member of Shubert American Legion Post 222 and ALA Unit 222, spoke to K-2nd grade at the Humboldt Table Rock Steinauer School, sharing information about leadership using coins and currency as visuals to talk about Presidents and other famous leaders.

CHAPLAINS CORNER

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit --- fruit that will last. John 15:16”

I love spring: the warmth, the promise of new life, bird sightings, the rain, digging in the earth, cleaning, and more daylight. You could use this time to put off the old and put on the new. Start new things or a new approach for something you started but did not finish.

In the Auxiliary, that means

reflection of the past year. Record it, and send in your report to the Department so Nebraska can send in their report to let Washington know that we love our veterans.

Father, Help us to stir our memories – sift out thoughts – and bake up a report of our good fruits. Amen

*Vicki Colson
Chaplain*

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, 2026.

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GIRLS STATE UPDATES

The count down is on for our 84th Cornhusker Girls State. We have 322 delegates from across the state that will be arriving in Lincoln on Sunday, May 31 for a week of learning and fun. You have been terrific in promoting Girls State this year. We have multiple Units that are sponsoring more than one or two delegates.

It is exciting that we will be able to offer band and choir again after a four-year absence. Kimball Hall is now renovated, so two joint sessions will be held with Boys State. Monday evening with the famous Dr. Jo, and Wednesday evening for special speakers and performances by the band and choir.

The Community Service projects will be the “plastic bag” plans for sleeping mats and the Mercy Meals. We have a great start on

plastic bag donations. Remember, they must be clean and empty of all items. We do need additional monetary donations for the Mercy Meals. Perhaps you know of an organization or individuals that would be willing to donate to this project. Are there any grants out there that your Unit could apply for?

If you have sponsored a delegate, please keep in touch with her as the week approaches. They have online orientation videos to view and a Q & A Zoom for answering questions. If your Unit did not pay their Activity Fee, please make them aware that they will need to bring \$25 for that fee. Also, a “Survival Kit” might be a nice gift for them. You could include lotion, candy bars, gum, small notebook, pens, etc.

Thank you for your support of this valuable ALA program

DIST. 11 JUNIOR CONVENTION



For the first time in the history of Ohioa Franklin Unit #193's history, a District 11 Junior Convention was held at the Legion Hall in Ohioa. ALA #193 Junior member Kara Hecke was elected a year ago as the Honorary District 11 Junior President. Her home Unit hosted the convention on Sunday, March 22.

Poppy Craft items, Prayer Books, and Poppy Centerpieces were judged and certificates awarded. Tray favors were made to be delivered to Omaha for use in the Therapy Department.

A fun activity of creating their own quilt from foam sheets and foam geometrical shapes supports

the Honorary Junior President's theme of Quilts of Valor. The current officers shared the Military Child's Table Setting Ceremony. And, of course, songs were sung!

Past Department President Deb Albers and District 11 President Mary Beth Coffee conducted the installation of officers. The 2026-2027 District 11 Junior Officers are President Camille Nohave, Dorchester Unit #264; Vice-President Dream Johnson, Milligan Unit #240, Historian Katelyn Bolton, Dorchester Unit #264, and Chaplain Kelsey Ellison, Shickley Unit #164.



President Penny Thompson of Louis Milan Unit 101 of Wilber presented a 70-year Continuous Membership Certificate to Susan Nagle. Also pictured is Chloe Mundil with her 80-year Continuous Membership Certificate.



START 'EM YOUNG

Anyone who knows me has to listen to the stories of my grandbabies ad nauseam. Cason is 4, Jep is almost 3, and Cora just turned 2. I would sing and sing to the boys, who tolerated it as babies. But, when they started talking, it turned into “Grandma, stop talking.”

I was crushed. Vackiner babies who don't like to sing?

Along came the little girl, who has them all singing now. It started with her singing “A- Birday to you” but is now repeating many songs, and no one tells me to shut up anymore. Well, not very often.

I guess the lesson here is that the world needs singers and people to listen.

If you are not a singer or musical

at all, remember that most patriotic songs started as poems. Take the time to read the lyrics to kids and share the backstories. Often, we get so caught up in the melodies that we forget the struggles of those who fought so bravely to weave the story. Start with all four verses of the Star-Spangled Banner. That, in and of itself, stirs the patriotic hearts of anyone.

As we pray for the recent souls lost in battle and the souls of those fighting for their freedom, remember, always, that freedom is not free.

And Keep Singing!

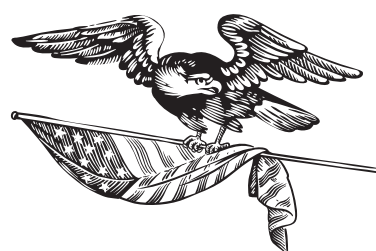
*Jean Vackiner
Music Chair*



This beautiful, patriotic quilt --- made by a member of ALA Shubert Unit 222 --- with quilting and batting donated by a community member, was raffled as a fundraiser for the unit.



Erma Naber and Diane Mooney of Utica Unit 49 presented a 60-year Continuous Membership Certificate to Kay Naber.



DATES TO REMEMBER

APRIL

- 5 Easter
- 11 Dept. Juniors Convention, Arlington.
- 15 Virtual Girls State Orientation (Available on GS website)
- 15 Military Kids Day - Wear Purple
- 20 Narrative & History Books due to Historian
- 20 Prayer Book due to Chaplain

MAY

- 4-8 Teacher Appreciation Week
- 10 Articles due for the June/July issue of “The STAR”
- 10 Mother's Day
- 22 National Poppy Day
- 25 Memorial Day - Department Headquarters closed

FOR YOUR ADVANCED PLANNING

- May 31 – June 6, 2026 ALA Cornhusker Girls State – Lincoln, NE
- June 25-28, 2026 Department Convention, Columbus, NE
- August 21-27, 2026 National Convention, Louisville, KY