



Legionnaire

Volume CII

Number 6



The American Legion USA 250 Challenge



The American Legion Family is honoring the nation's 250th birthday with a commitment to embracing physical activity, supporting mental health and serving its communities. The USA 250 Challenge encourages American Legion Family members, other veterans and all Americans to participate, and even raise additional money to support our disabled veterans and families in need through The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF).

American Legion National Commander Dan Wiley encourages everyone to join the challenge, which was launched by Past National Commander James LaCoursiere on July 3, 2025. The year-long initiative offers three categories — fitness, mental wellness and community service — in order to engage more American Legion Family members and others to participate.

Participants may engage in one, two or all three activities as an individual or as part of a team like an American Legion Post, American Legion Auxiliary Unit, Sons of The American Legion Squadron and/or an American Legion Riders Chapter.

For a \$30 registration fee, participants will receive their choice of a USA 250 Challenge tech shirt. Donations will go to the VCF. More information can be found at <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/usa250/challenge>

We hope that your American Legion Family is working on an event to celebrate the 250th birthday of America. Please share what you are doing on Facebook and send in pictures for the newspaper. Let's lead the charge in celebrating America's 250th birthday this 4th of July!

Eagle Scout-of-the-Year



Ian Baker, 16, of Kearney has been selected by the Nebraska American Legion as the 2026 Eagle Scout-of-the-Year and will receive a \$500 scholarship.

Baker is a sophomore at Pleasanton High School and is a member of Troop 139 in Kearney, where he achieved his Eagle Scout in January of 2024. He is a member of First Lutheran Church, and he volunteers at his church and at various community events in Kearney. Baker has held many Scout positions and is known to be a standout Scout. He is an active member of the Sons of The American Legion and wants to join the military after he graduates high school. Baker participates in FFA, FBLA, and is a member of the wrestling team.

The selection of the National American Legion Eagle Scout-of-the-Year was announced

at Springs Meetings. Alexis McCullough of Illinois was selected as the National Eagle Scout-of-the-Year and received a \$10,000.00 scholarship.

Convention Agenda

Thursday, June 25

1:00 p.m. DEC Meeting

Friday, June 26

8:30 a.m. DEC Meeting

12:00–4:00 p.m. Registration

1:00 p.m. Joint Family Session

4:00 p.m. Opening Legion Session

Saturday, June 27

7:30–4:30 p.m. Registration

9:00 a.m. Legion Session #2

1:00 p.m. Legion Reconvenes

Sunday, June 28

7:30–10:00 a.m. Registration

8:00 a.m. Joint Religious Service

9:00 a.m. Legion Session #3

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

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

COMPASSION, CHARACTER, & COMPETENCE

2026 MEMBERSHIP GOAL: 20,388 MAY 27TH TOTAL: 19,417 - 95.23%

DISTRICT 7 - 96.92% DISTRICT 3 - 96.76% DISTRICT 6 - 96.50% DISTRICT 12 - 96.48% DISTRICT 8 - 96.15%
DISTRICT 5 - 95.93% DISTRICT 1 - 95.38% DISTRICT 2 - 94.83% DISTRICT 4 - 94.75% DISTRICT 15 - 94.56%
DISTRICT 9 - 93.50% DISTRICT 11 - 92.70% DISTRICT 10 - 91.64% DISTRICT 13 - 90.17%






Commander's Corner

Judy Walters
Department Commander

Where has the year gone....I can't believe my year as Commander is coming to an end. It's been a busy year, but also a fun and rewarding year, and there's still quite a bit more to come in the last few months.

As I write this, we continue to be doing well with membership and remain #6 in the nation at 94.81%. We've been going back and forth at #5 and #6. Currently, we are also #1 for the Midwest region. A big thanks to everyone for all your hard work this past year; it has really made a difference.

On April 27, Adjutant Eric and I met with the Governor and John Hilgert of the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs to announce the Korean War Recognition Program. We are partnering with the NDVA to recognize all Korean War Veterans who served between June 27, 1950, and January 31, 1955, by presenting a special challenge coin. On July 24, 2026, the NDVA and Governor Pillen will be hosting a special ceremony at the Nebraska State Capitol to recognize Nebraska's Korean War veterans. Korean War Veterans in attendance will be presented with a special challenge coin housed in a blue velvet presentation case. More information for this event and other events with the Legion, VFW, and other veteran organizations will be shared. Go to the NDVA website for more information and the application to complete to attend the July 24 event.

There will be an open house at the Department Headquarters on Saturday, June 20, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. You can tour the museum and the rest of the building. There will be an official event at 2:30 p.m. to include a Korean War Recognition Ceremony and a USA 250 Celebration. Bring the family, it will be a fun afternoon.

Auxiliary President Ruth and I had the honor to attend the President Truman Pilgrimage in Independence, Missouri, on the President's birthday. Attending the President Truman Pilgrimage and laying a wreath is an extraordinary honor that carries deep significance. This solemn act serves as a tribute to President Truman's enduring legacy and the values he upheld throughout his presidency. Participating in such a ceremony not only reflects respect for history but also provides an opportunity to acknowledge the sacrifices and contributions made for the greater good of the nation.

I'm looking forward to attending the National Oratorical Contest to be held at Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, MI. Attending the National American Legion Oratorical contest is an exciting opportunity to witness talented students from across the country showcase their public speaking skills. The event focuses on the Constitution of the United States, challenging participants to deliver speeches that emphasize its importance and relevance. It is not only a competition, but also a celebration of civic knowledge and leadership. I am also signed up to be a volunteer, helping out where needed. They ask for help every year and never seem to get as many volunteers as they need. You get to stay for free in a beautiful new dorm, and food is provided for free in their cafeteria. There is also a night out at their local Legion Post. I encourage others to volunteer sometime in the future.

As my year as Department Commander draws to a close, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the opportunity to serve alongside so many dedicated members. This journey has been both challenging and rewarding, allowing me to witness firsthand the unwavering commitment of our Legionnaires to veterans, their families, and our communities. As my year comes to an end, I look forward to whatever new adventures are ahead.

"Compassion, Character, & Competence"




Chaplain's Corner

Steve Witmer
Department Chaplain

Who needs our prayers? Friends, family members, everyone we know, and everyone we don't know. The world needs our prayers. We have evil nations that want to either control or destroy everything, in the name of what they believe. Here at home, there are states that are passing laws that will allow actions and behaviors that the Lord our God abhors. We have family and friends who are dealing with illnesses like cancer. So how do we pray for them all?

1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 says, "16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." So, what does it mean to pray without ceasing?

The way we normally pray is to bow our heads and physically speak to God. Our ability to do this is, of course, because Jesus chose to be hung on the cross and become the perfect sacrifice for all of our sins. But we can also pray in other ways. Prayers can be as simple as a single thought. When you are told that a friend or family member has become ill, you can send a prayer to God in thought and heart. When you see someone having a bad day, you may have the opportunity to not only pray for them but pray with them. This may turn out to be the best part of the day they have had in a long time.

In any case, I urge all of you to continually be aware of your surroundings and be prepared to pray at all times.

NEBRASKA AMERICAN LEGION Department Headquarters Office


Physical/Mailing Address:
150 NW 40th Street, Unit A, Lincoln, NE 68528
Phone Number.....(402)464-6338
FAX.....(402)464-6330
Business Hours.....8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (CST), Mon-Fri
Web site.....http://www.nebraskalegion.net
E-Mail Address.....emartin@nebraskalegion.net
Editor.....awashburn@nebraskalegion.net

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**

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

Amanda Washburn, Editor
Eric Martin, Publisher's Representative

First published in 1923, The Nebraska Legionnaire is in its 102nd 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 Amanda Washburn 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?

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.

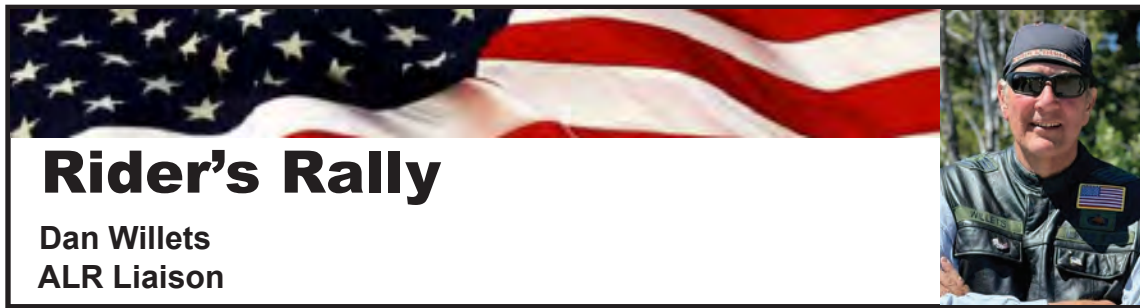
I no longer wish to receive a printed copy of the Nebraska Legionnaire.

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

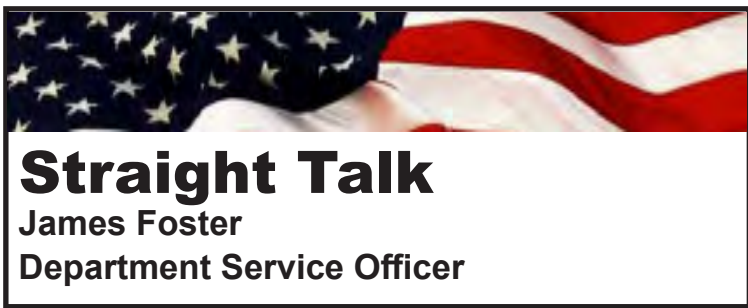
Member ID: _____

Mail this form to The American Legion, 150 NW 40th Street, Unit A, Lincoln, NE 68528, or you can email the information to 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! Riding season is hitting sixth gear with a full slate of American Legion and American Legion Riders events planned for the next several months. For a full list of known events please reference the Nebraska American Legion Riders Facebook page. I try and post an updated list at least monthly. If you happen to notice your ride/event is not listed, please let me know and I will get it added to the list. Also, please take the time to support all our Legion Family members and help raise money for our veterans, communities, and clubs.

There are what I would consider three statewide rides scheduled for the June/July timeframe. All three of these rides are great opportunities to ride with fellow Riders from across the state and to see old friends and make some new ones. For flyers and more information on these rides/events please follow the Nebraska ALR Facebook page.

The Ride for America Nebraska 250 Flag Escort will be on June 13 and 14, starting in Scottsbluff and ending in Lincoln with a ceremony at the state capital with Lieutenant Governor Joe Kelly. A special American Flag will be escorted across the state to be presented at the ceremony. You are welcome to join in anywhere along the route and to ride as long as your schedule allows. The overnight will be in Kearney; more details will be coming out soon.

The 2026 Legacy Run Across Nebraska scheduled for July 17 – 19. The ride will start and end at Headquarters in Lincoln and have overnight stops in Alma and Broken Bow. This ride helps raise funds for The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation. John Arias is the main contact point for this ride.

The ALR State Romp will be in Grand Island on July 25th with registration starting Friday evening at the Grand Island United Veterans Club from 5 – 9 p.m. and then again Saturday morning beginning at 8:15 a.m. There will be food, prizes, raffles, etc. culminating with an evening of karaoke Saturday night.

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.

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 or your area Assistant Liaison.

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

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

Availability of Certificate of Eligibility for Home Loan on VA.gov and the VA App

US Department of Veteran Affairs (USDVA) is using technology innovations to Improve a veteran's experience in receiving a Certificate of Eligibility for VA Home Loan

The USDVA is undertaking significant technological transformations to enhance the homebuying experience for Veterans, making it easier, faster, and more accessible to achieve homeownership. Two recent developments—the modernization of the VA Loan Guaranty Service (LGY) and enhancements to the VA: Health and Benefits mobile app—are key to this shift.

Modernizing the VA Loan Process with Advanced Technologies

VA's Loan Guaranty Service utilizes Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), to streamline how Veterans obtain home loans. APIs allow for real-time, automated communication between lenders and the VA, leading to important improvements:

1. Faster Processing: APIs deliver information promptly, helping Veterans avoid last-minute delays or unexpected issues in the homebuying process.

Reduced Paperwork: Automation minimizes manual forms and administrative burdens, making the experience more straightforward and less stressful for Veterans.

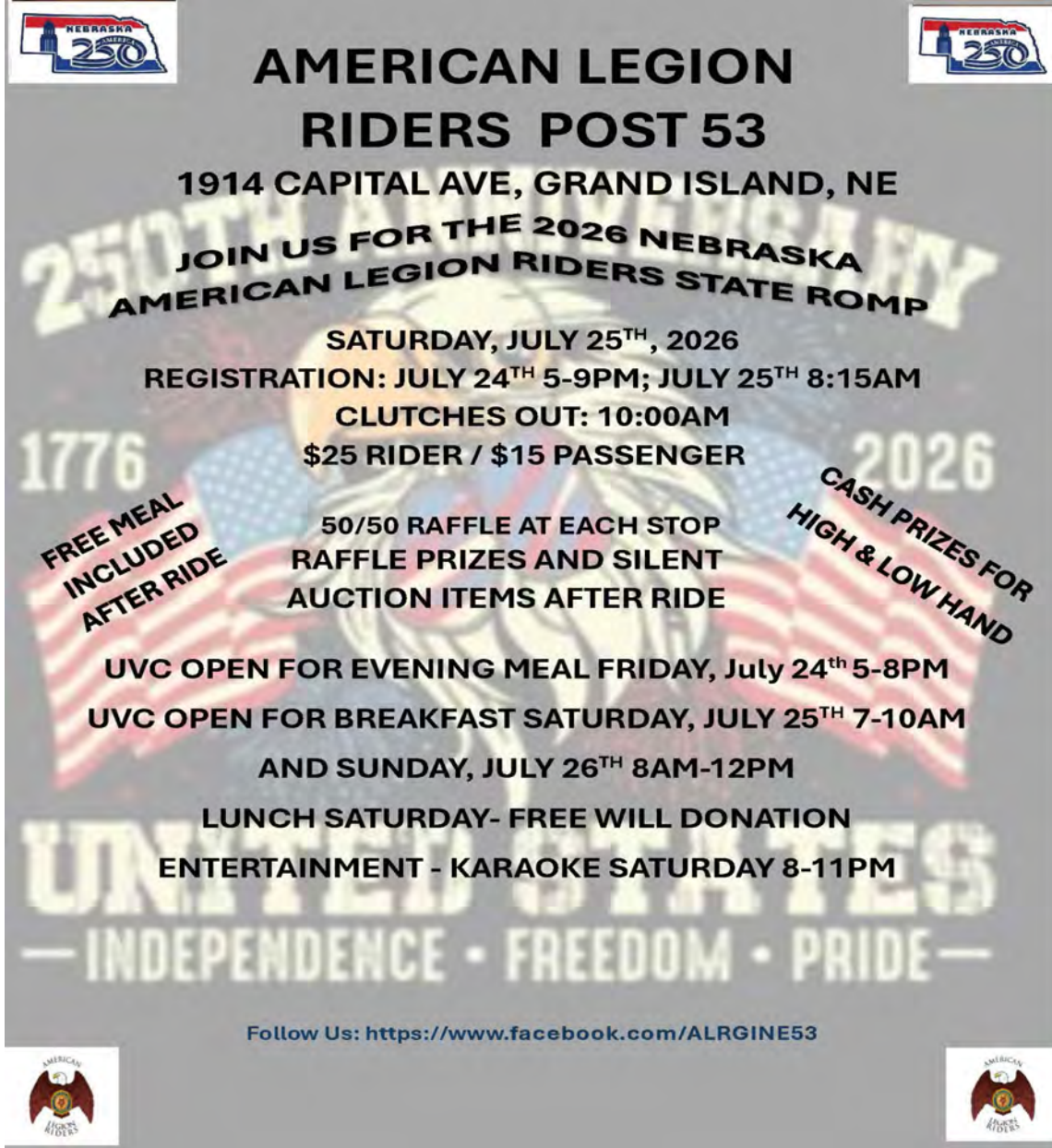
2. Making the Certificate of Eligibility Accessible via Mobile App

A crucial step in the VA home loan process is obtaining the Certificate of Eligibility (COE), which proves a Veteran's entitlement to VA-backed loan benefits. The latest enhancement to the VA: Health and Benefits app now allow Veterans to view their active COE in real time from their mobile device. This digital access streamlines the first step toward applying for a home loan, reducing wait times and empowering Veterans to act quickly and conveniently.

The phased rollout of this feature ensured a smooth launch, minimizing disruptions. If Veterans need to update or obtain a new COE, they're encouraged to work directly with lenders or through VA.gov. The app itself is designed to be a one-stop platform for a variety of VA services, giving Veterans secure and immediate access to important documents and benefit updates.

3. Impact on Veterans

These technological advancements are transforming the VA home loan process, eliminating manual paperwork, enhancing data accuracy, and simplifying access to the veteran's information. As a result, Veterans can enjoy a more seamless, efficient journey to homeownership, support in maintaining their homes, and access to life-changing benefits.



AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS POST 53
1914 CAPITAL AVE, GRAND ISLAND, NE

JOIN US FOR THE 2026 NEBRASKA AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS STATE ROMP

SATURDAY, JULY 25TH, 2026
REGISTRATION: JULY 24TH 5-9PM; JULY 25TH 8:15AM
CLUTCHES OUT: 10:00AM
\$25 RIDER / \$15 PASSENGER

FREE MEAL INCLUDED AFTER RIDE **50/50 RAFFLE AT EACH STOP**
RAFFLE PRIZES AND SILENT AUCTION ITEMS AFTER RIDE

UVC OPEN FOR EVENING MEAL FRIDAY, July 24th 5-8PM
UVC OPEN FOR BREAKFAST SATURDAY, JULY 25th 7-10AM
AND SUNDAY, JULY 26th 8AM-12PM

LUNCH SATURDAY- FREE WILL DONATION
ENTERTAINMENT - KARAOKE SATURDAY 8-11PM

UNLIMITED PRIZES — INDEPENDENCE • FREEDOM • PRIDE —

Follow Us: <https://www.facebook.com/ALRGINE53>

Sons of The American Legion Membership As of May 15, 2026

District	2025 Members	2026 Members
1	299	287
2	564	606
3	237	238
4	341	353
5	138	132
6	1,317	1,344
7	785	770
8	856	785
9	289	293
10	303	294
11	1,005	1,118
12	257	294
13	126	112
15	133	134
Total	6,650	6,761



POW/MIA
Boyd Yochum
POW/MIA Liaison



S.A.L. Notes
Todd Kabella
Detachment Commander

In different years, Lyle Borders from Blair Post 154 and I were in the same unit, the 7th Armored Squadron 1st Air Cavalry Regiment "Blackhawks." Our Blackhawk family has kept in communication over the years. During Lyle's tour, two aircraft were lost, with two men in each.

Scout Platoon Pilot CPT Ronald L. Babcock was born in Lincoln, Nebraska. Sgt. First Class Fred Mooney, the Scout Platoon Sergeant, was not required to fly, but volunteered, to show the young draftees that old lifers could be as tough as they were. February 27, 1971, with three other OH6A (Loaches), were airborne participating in a visual reconnaissance mission. After ten minutes in the area, the formation began receiving .50 caliber ground fire. Babcock made several radio transmissions saying that his observer was hit and they were going down.

A few minutes later, another aircraft in the flight observed two motionless bodies face down and appeared to have multiple gunshot wounds. A reconnaissance flight 12 days later observed that the bodies were still present and beginning to decompose. Due to heavy hostile fire, rescue and further on site investigations were prevented.

On March 6, 1971, Warrant Officer John F. Hummel, Pilot, and Warrant Officer William P. Milliner, CoPilot/Gunner, were flying an AH1G Cobra helicopter gunship as wingman in a flight of two returning from a combat mission over Laos. About 2000 Hours, the wingman notified his troop's forward operation at Khe Sanh that both gunships were planning to use ground control approach (GCA). That was the last radio contact with the aircraft.

This is a bizarre case, aircraft disappears in fog, apparently on GCA, and then is seen by the lead aircraft heading back toward Laos. Search and rescue efforts began for Hummel and Milliner, with negative results. Both men were listed as Missing in Action (MIA).

Some years later, the Defense Intelligence Agency "rated" missing persons according to the degree of suspected enemy knowledge, using a scale of 1 to 5. Hummel and Milliner were classified "Category 1," meaning the U.S. had reliable information that the enemy knew the fate of Hummel and Milliner.

Another confusing aspect of the records of Hummel and Milliner is that the Defense Department classifies their loss as "non-hostile." This information does not seem to correlate with known enemy knowledge of their fates; unless reports were received that the two survived the crash only to stumble into enemy hands at a later time. Clarifying information is CLASSIFIED and not available in public records.

Nearly 600 Americans were lost in Laos during the **SECRET WAR**. The Pathet Lao stated on several occasions that they held "tens of tens" American prisoners. The U.S. has never negotiated for the freedom of these men. Not one American held in Laos has ever been released. For Blackhawks, **THIS IS PERSONAL**.

No one saw Hummel and Milliner die after their aircraft disappeared. Missions over Laos were often classified and dangerous. Participants were undoubtedly warned that they could be killed or captured. They may never have dreamed they would be abandoned.

Greetings American Legion Family!

Membership renewals need to continue to be a priority. On the most recent membership report dated May 7th, Nebraska was just over 98% and #2 in the Midwest Region and #12 overall in the nation. We need everyone's help to continue the drive towards 100%.

Everyone should make plans to attend the Detachment Convention that will be held in Columbus, Nebraska 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.

As we continue our mission to serve veterans, their families, and our communities, I would like to encourage you to consider chartering a Sons of The American Legion (SAL) Squadron at your Post. By chartering a Squadron, your Post gains a dedicated partner in service, composed of proud descendants of veterans who are eager to honor their heritage through action. Some of the benefits of chartering a Squadron are: Boosting fundraising and support, expanding your volunteer workforce, strengthening the "Legion Family" and reinforcing the Four Pillars. Chartering a new Squadron requires a minimum of 10 eligible new members and the process is straightforward: just identify eligible members (sons, grandsons, stepsons, adopted sons of eligible veterans) and submit a charter application to Department Headquarters for approval. By chartering a Squadron, you are not just adding members; you are securing the future of your Post and ensuring our values endure for the next generation. For assistance with the application process or if you would like someone to visit your Post to answer questions, please contact Department Adjutant Eric Martin.

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 around the 4th of July to celebrate America's 250th Birthday?

The American Legion Legacy Run 2026



For 20 years, the American Legion Riders have journeyed across the nation, uniting communities behind their cause. From main streets to overpasses, the flags and cheers they pass are a reminder that this ride is bigger than any one person. This year, The Nebraska American Legion Department Headquarters is very lucky to be chosen as the kickoff spot for The American Legion Legacy Run. The 2026

Legacy Run will take place August 23 to 27, 2026 and will end in Louisville, KY for the National Convention.

Since 2006, The American Legion Legacy Run has raised \$16 million for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. These funds have provided over \$6.2 million in scholarships to support children who lost a parent in active military service on or after September 11, 2001, or whose post-9/11 parent has a VA disability rating of 50% or higher.

With the Legacy Scholarship Fund now self-sustaining for the foreseeable future, the Legacy Run expanded its mission in 2024 to begin fundraising for The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF) to continue meeting the evolving needs of veterans, service members, and their families.

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in the Legacy Run, visit www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/american-legion-riders/the-american-legion-legacy-run for the registration information. You are able to participate for just one day, for the kickoff at Headquarters, or just to be a supporter of the event. We do hope that many Nebraskans will register and take part this year.

"Legionnaire in the Spotlight" is a new article in each issue. Please send in submissions to awashburn@nebraskalegion.net or mail them to Headquarters. Please limit them to 800 words and two pictures. Please call Amanda at 402-464-6338 with any questions.

**Department Headquarters
Open House**



To celebrate the third anniversary of moving into the new Headquarters Building, we will be having an open house.

USA 250 Celebration and Korean War Recognition Ceremony

When: June 20, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
 Where: 150 NW 40th Street – Lincoln, NE 68528

There will be food and snacks available. Be sure to come and check out our museum and office building. There will be an official event at 2:30 p.m. with guest speakers and presentations.

American Legion Department of Nebraska History Word Search

F Y H L S K U F K P M F N D G
 X B I R B Y F M Z J X G T S P
 Z R A H W Y O T E C N O F U L
 Q J F E T V Y P I U D R G U B
 Q S B I C E N T E N N I A L W
 T R E M I I N T U W M L S N A
 E M L E G I O N N A I R E S L
 L H N S C R Z C B I W X K V T
 E A N K Z C V D R U M R G M H
 W S K Q H W B W I X Z N O B I
 E T O A V K Y A B W Q X C J L
 L I B M I S S I S S I P P I L
 L N T Y C W B A L X V N S J X
 E G O L C O M M E M O R A T E
 N S O C O R N H U S K E R G Y

Directions: Search up, down, forward, backward, and on the diagonal to find the bolded, underlined words described below.

50 Years Ago

- The Nebraska American Legion celebrated the United States **bicentennial** with a huge parade and fireworks during the Department Convention held in Lincoln.
- The 1976 American Legion Central Plains Regional Baseball Tournament was held in **Hastings** and they assured national "it never rains in Hastings during baseball tournaments".
- 399 young men from all over Nebraska graduated from the 36th Annual **Cornhusker** Boys' State program.

70 Years Ago


- The Garden County Convention was held in **Lewellen** and there were 80 American Legion Family members present. A banquet and musical program followed the event.
- **Walthill** Post 89 held a birthday party to celebrate the 38th anniversary of The American Legion's inception.

100 Years Ago

- The American Legion prepared for the Annual National Convention to be held in Paris, France to **commemorate** the Paris Caucus. Governor Adam McMullen granted a one month leave of absence to all **Legionnaires** who attended the convention.
- Omaha Post 1 opened up a downtown location to help the flood victims in the lower **Mississippi** Valley. They collected clothing and food for those who were affected.

Attention all former and current United States Paratroopers!

The Cornhusker Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Association membership drive is in full swing! Paratroopers from all Units of the United States military are eligible for membership. All qualified paratroopers are invited to attend our July 18, 2026 annual summer picnic meeting at the City Park in Osceola, NE at 12:00 p.m. Your membership is needed and very welcome! Spouses are welcome to attend. Please mark your calendar for July 18th! Contact Dale Cooper at 402-367-74031 with any questions.



*National Vice Commander
 Jerry Landkamer's
 Homecoming Banquet Menu*
 Columbus American Legion
 2263 3rd Avenue, Columbus, NE 68601

Saturday, June 27, 2026
5:30 p.m. Social – 6:30 p.m. Dinner

Dinner Menu:
Salad
Prime Rib
Baked Potato
Green Beans
Cheesecake Dessert

Return this form by June 10, 2026
with \$25.00 payment, to:
 Jerry Landkamer
 804 N Birch Street
 Norfolk, NE 68701

Make checks out to "Jerry Landkamer"

Number of tickets: _____ **Names of those attending and entrée preference:** _____

Reminder: There will be a cash bar for all to enjoy during dinner.
NO Refunds. NO Ticket Sales at the door.
Dress is Business Casual



Petersburg Post 334 presented a certificate for 60 years of continuous membership to George Arends. Pictured (L to R) Commander Hank Thieman and George Arends.

HONORING NEBRASKA'S KOREAN WAR VETERANS

NDVA is working to honor Nebraska's living Korean War Veterans with a special recognition coin.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ★ Must have served in the U.S. Armed Forces between June 27, 1950, to January 31, 1955;
- ★ Must be a current legal resident of Nebraska or demonstrate Nebraska residency at time of entering service; AND
- ★ Must have discharged under conditions other than dishonorable



Membership Minute

Steve Bartos, Membership Chairman

It's June --- the time for the Department Convention, a new Department Commander (and other officers), and the start of another membership year. While we look forward to what we can accomplish for 2027, please don't lose sight of the fact that the 2026 membership campaign extends through the end of December. Please keep after your remaining expired 2025 members and encourage them to renew for 2026 and 2027.

All in all, I think we had a decent year for membership. Commander Judy negotiated a reasonable 2026 goal for Nebraska at last year's National Membership Workshop --- and y'all have done a good job of responding. Last year at this time, I was asking you to keep working to get us to 90% of goal. This year, we are already over 95%. (Districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 12 are already over 95%.)

Another plus this year was the Big 12 Competition. We finished in second place in our category and earned a \$1,000 stipend from National to spend on computer/software items.

The other thing that's really noticeable is that while we start off gangbusters most years, we usually tail off to about 20th or 30th place by now. As this article is being written in mid-May, we are in 6th place nationally. I really hope we can stay on that course.

As good as things look, I would be remiss if I didn't share some reality with you. Included in the membership reports we receive from Indianapolis each week is one called the Traditional Membership Comparison Report. On that report, Nebraska was in 27th place on May 7th --- down 509 members from where we were one year ago. Only one department --- the Philippines --- was running ahead. The losses to Post Everlasting and other attrition are clearly outpacing the recruitment of new members!!

The first 2027 renewal notices from Indianapolis are scheduled for early July. Let's be ready for them --- and let's start revving up our members who pay annually to renew their memberships promptly. There are several things you can do to help the cause.

Encourage members to renew online if they are comfortable doing so. Encourage members to at least consider a Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) membership. Encourage members to consider a 3-year multi-year membership when they do renew online. Let members know that they can also sign up for an annual "auto pay" and avoid receiving a dues notice.

As a result of some recent text messages and emails sent out to remind expired members to renew, we discovered that many of them HAD PAID! Their dues were still snoozing in the hands of their Post waiting to be transmitted to Lincoln. Posts --- PLEASE transmit your members' dues when you receive them. Submit regularly and often.

In that regard, I also encourage Posts to transmit their dues electronically. It saves some work and postage costs for you, and it saves some processing time for the folks at department headquarters. And --- memberships are posted and counted almost instantaneously when you do so.

Renew. RECRUIT. Reinstate.

Have a nice June.

Training Tuesdays

Did you know the last Tuesday of each month the American Legion National Headquarters staff will present 60 to 90-minute sessions on topics aimed at assisting Post commanders and adjutants? Each session will be recorded and made available for later viewing. By the time this paper has been published they will have held another training session on March 25 focused on a new, interactive approach to resolution writing. National Headquarters uses the processes of collaboration, using breakout rooms, live discussions and digital tools to refine ideas in real time. The previously recorded session included how "How to run a post" by Indiana Legionnaire Angel M. Faulkner providing 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 www.legion.org/information-center/training/training-tuesdays

2027 Mid-Year Conference

The 2027 Mid-Year Conference will be held January 15 - 17, 2027, at the Ramada Midtown Grand Island. The Ramada Midtown Grand Island is located at 2503 S Locust St in Grand Island.

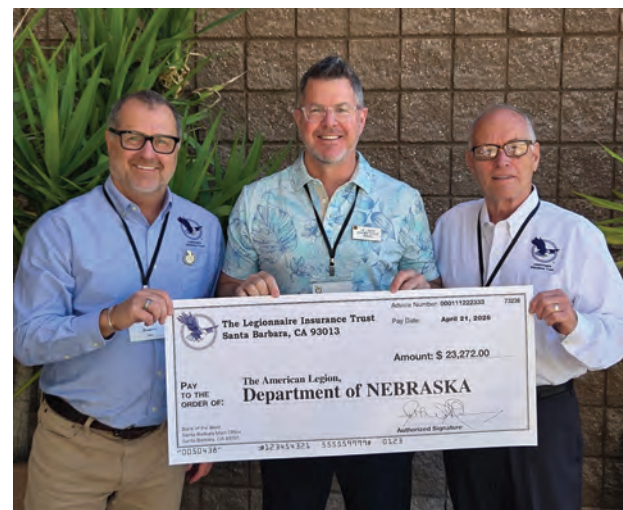
The DEC meeting will be held on Friday, January 15, at 10:00 a.m. and the Joint Session will be held on Saturday, January 16, at 8:00 a.m.. The oratorical contest will be held on Saturday, January 16, at 6:00 p.m. A reminder that the lottery drawing will be held on Sunday, January 17, during the Joint Session which starts at 9:00 a.m. Conference registration is \$10.00.

Contact the Ramada Midtown Grand Island at 308-384-1330 to make your reservations. Please contact Adjutant Eric Martin with any questions.



Cook Post 360 honor guard presented the colors and twenty-one gun salute at two local cemeteries and on main street for Memorial Day.

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust



Pictured (L to R) AGIA Senior Vice President Finance Andy Downen, Adjutant Eric Martin, and is LIT Chairman Hugh Dagley.

Nebraska's LIT Trust Director, Adjutant Eric, just returned from his Trust Directors meeting with the staff of AGIA and all the other Trust Directors throughout the Nation. This year, the Department received its allocation totaling \$23,271. So how exactly does this allocation work?

In the past, many of us heard the allocation was attributed to the amount of Legionnaires that signed up for the free Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) policy provided by AGIA. This is not true! The AD&D policy is a free benefit for all Legionnaires but you must sign up. And to spice it up a little, that free benefit is now also available to Auxiliary and Sons members.

The allocation given to each Department is based on the number of products its members sign up for. Currently, AGIA has 14 very nice products which can be found at www.thelit.com/all-products page ranging from Lifeline Medical Alert Service to Dental and Health Insurance to Vision to Cancer Care to Stolen Identity (ID Resolve).

I encourage all Nebraska Legionnaires, Auxiliary and Sons to visit thelit.com/all-products and click on products that might appeal to you to learn more about what AGIA has to offer us.

Purpose of The Member Data Form

The American Legion Member Data Form (MDF) is a multipurpose form for tracking and providing accurate information on Post members. You can download the form online on our website under the contact us tab and in the forms section. With the exception of transferring members from one Post to another, most MDF changes can be made through MyLegion.org by the Post officer.

Note: Members can be transferred online through MyLegion.org if the member is paying their dues at the time of transfer and the Post uses the online transmittal system.

The MDF can be used to report deceased members, continuous years changes, name corrections, address changes, branch of service, war era, and others.

On the MDF, always include the nine-digit member ID number, Post number, and Department name. The signature of the authorized Post officer is required at the bottom of the form. For a transfer, the member must sign the form as well. Be sure to mail part 1-3 to Department Headquarters and keep part 4 for your Post files. You can also email the form to awashburn@nebraskalegion.net for quicker processing.

Membership transfer from one post to another is handled by completing the MDF. Always ask prospective members if they currently are or have been a member. If the veteran has a current or previous nine-digit ID number, it should be reported on the transfer. If a member signs up as a new member, a duplicate record can be created, and multiple renewal notices will be received by the member.



Ackerman, Lanny, Fairmont, Vietnam	Heaston, Thomas, Elm Creek, Vietnam	Porath, Kenneth R., Danneborg, SAL
Alaniz, Reymundo, Winnebago, Korea	Helman, Martin J., Dwight, SAL	Portis, Harold E., Omaha, Vietnam
Amsberry, Milton, Valentine, Vietnam	Henery, David L., Laurel, Persian Gulf	Raiter, Ernest J., Valparaiso, Vietnam
Andreasen, John, Seward, Vietnam	Hernandez, Louis, Papillion, Vietnam	Rall, James N., Valparaiso, Korea
Arends, Michael E., Petersburg, Vietnam	Hofaker, Leonard, Lexington, Korea	Reid, John L., Ashland, Korea
Arnold, Larry D., Beatrice, Korea	Hogrefe, Raymond H., Lincoln, Korea	Richter, Paul, Bellevue, Lebanon/Grenada
Babcock, Darrel, Naponee, Persian Gulf	Hollman, Dale G., Pender, Korea	Roby, Franklin K., Scribner, Vietnam
Bailey, Siny, Papillion, Vietnam	Jacobsen, Lawrence E., Bennington, Korea	Roche, Donald J., Wymore, Vietnam
Ballinger, Larry, Pender, Vietnam	Jasper, Dennis, Stromsburg, Vietnam	Rogge, Kenneth W., Auburn, Vietnam
Bartels, Garry W., Omaha, Korea	Johnson, Deen E., Gordon, Korea	Rose, Rodney G., Lawrence, Vietnam
Bartels, Gerald, Campbell, WWII	Johnson, Steven R., Ashland, Vietnam	Saathoff, Roger E., Beatrice, Lebanon/Grenada
Blake, Richard P., Naponee, Vietnam	Johnson, Terry R., Eustis, Vietnam	Sanchez, Ted F., Lincoln, WWII
Blezek, John W III., Columbus, Vietnam	Kempkes, Richard L., Bennet, Korea	Saunders, Gerald A., Lincoln, Vietnam
Bowen, Darrell D., O'Neill, Vietnam	Kernick, Randall, Norfolk, Vietnam	Schmit, Orville L., Columbus, Korea
Brack, Dean U., Weeping Water	Kidd, Nick W., Omaha, Vietnam	Schreiber, Fredrick D., Monroe, Vietnam
Bredemeier, Edgar A., Shubert, Vietnam	King, David C., Kearney, Vietnam	Schultz, John, O'Neill, Korea
Brown, Raymond, Norfolk, Korea	Klabunde, Erwin A., Ceresco, Korea	Schulz, Marvin, Beaver Crossing, WWII
Busselman, Gerald D., Gretna, Korea	Klute, Stanley E., York, Vietnam	Scott, James, Niobrara, Vietnam
Bydalek, Jerry, Bloomington, Korea	Kluthe, Lambert J., Fremont, WWII	Siebe, Gary F., Millard, Korea
Chlup, Leonard J., Milligan, Vietnam	Knust, Neil J., Howells, Vietnam	Slattery, William, Atkinson, Vietnam
Collier, Robert C., Denton, Korea	Kohout, John F., Cortland, Vietnam	Smith, Scott H., South Sioux City, Persian Gulf
Cook, Tharan L., Barneston, Vietnam	Krause, Gary C., Benson, Vietnam	Sorgenfrei, Larry L., Doniphan, Vietnam
Cummings, Richard G., Papillion, Lebanon/Grenada	Kucera, Gerald B., Lawrence, SAL	Spangrud, Don M., Oxford, Korea
Dondlinger, Eugene, Shickley	Kuhlmann, Willard, Auburn, Korea	Spangsberg, Glenn R., Kearney, Korea
Downey, James P., Omaha, Vietnam	Kuntzelman, Rex L., Albion, Korea	Spickelmier, Sheldon, Curtis, Vietnam
Dush, Andrew A., Columbus, Vietnam	Lamere, Charles L., Winnebago, Korea	Stander, Richard E., Louisville, Vietnam
Ehle, Rolland L., Millard, Vietnam	Long, Jack D., Hubbell, Korea	Stark, Corvin D., Edison, Korea
Eichstadt, Tim J., Norfolk, Vietnam	Martin, Harold E., Neligh, Korea	Steele, Don L., Grand Island, Korea
Engel, Randy L., Friend, Lebanon/Grenada	Martin, Ted L., Arlington, WWII	Steele, Michael P., Ashland, Lebanon/Grenada
Erickson, Dean, Fremont, Korea	Maulding, Don, Clearwater, WWII	Stewart, James, Tilden, Vietnam
Erwin, Richard D., Laurel, Vietnam	Meister, Harry R., Gering, Korea	Surber, James, Friend, Vietnam
Fagan, J Pat, Omaha, Vietnam	Mertzmann, Bernard F., Lincoln, Korea	Swanson, Larry L., Wahoo, Korea
Fehring, Mark E., Bloomfield, Korea	Micek, J R Bud., Benson	Tatro, Stanley H., Fairmont, Vietnam
Fraser, Howard K., Humbolt, Vietnam	Mueller, Irvin W., Platte Center, Korea	Thielbar, Gary, Newcastle, Korea
Fullner, Artwin, Beemer, Korea	Munstermann, John, Lincoln, Vietnam	Thompson, Rex G., Lincoln, Other
Gard, Ray A., Beaver Crossing, Korea	Niebrugge, Delmer, Lincoln, Korea	Tomsicek, Joseph E., Prague, Korea
Gellerman, Le Roy, North Platte, Vietnam	Obermire, Dean, Atkinson, Korea	Trumble, Allen R., Herman, Vietnam
Gifford, Robert D., Paxton, SAL	Olsen, Donald M., Pender, Korea	Upton, Thomas L., Gretna, Vietnam
Golka, Robert J., Grand Island, Korea	Omalley, Leo J., O'Neill, Korea	Warner, Larry, Holdrege, Vietnam
Gorecki, David E., Ashton, Korea	Opp, Erhard J., Wood River, Vietnam	White, Brent, Lincoln, Lebanon/Grenada
Greer, Gary N., Brainard, Vietnam	Pieke, Leroy A., Norfolk, Korea	Wilson, Michael B., Lincoln, Vietnam
Hahlbeck, Donald D., O'Neill, Vietnam	Pierson, Lewis P., O'Neill, Korea	Wischmann, Hugo H., Papillion, Korea
Halfhide, Art, Chadron, Vietnam	Pikes, Tony, Benson, Korea	Woolery, Ken, Gering, Korea
Hall, George H., Omaha, Korea	Pinkes, Tony, Benson, Korea	Zegers, David, David City, Vietnam
Haselhorst, Norfolk, Vietnam	Pohl, Anton R., Sidney, Korea	Zimmer, Lyle, Beaver Crossing, WWII

Events Calendar

June

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

July

- 3 4th of July Holiday - Office Closed
- 14 - 18 Junior Shooting Sports Contest - Hillsdale, MI
- 18 - 25 Boys' Nation - Washington D.C.

August

- 13 - 18 American Legion World Series - Shelby, NC
- 23 - 27 Legacy Run - Kicks off from Lincoln HQ
- 29 - Sep 3 National Convention - Louisville, KY

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

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.



Elwood Post 290 held a dedication ceremony for their veterans memorial. Two members were also presented with Quilts of Honor at the event. Pictured top (L to R) Adjutant Vicki Von Loh and District 9 Commander Amie Moores. Pictured middle (L to R) Marty Kleppinger, Vicki Von Loh, and Kathy Beck. Pictured bottom (L to R) Marty Kleppinger, Amie Moores, and Kathy Beck.



South Omaha Post 331 presented District 8 Commander James Carmona with a certificate for 50 years of continuous membership. Pictured (L to R) District 8 Commander James Carmona and Commander Lynn Bergman.



Curtis Post 95, Unit 95, and Squadron 95 held a spaghetti dinner to raise money for their local volunteer fire department. They presented a check for \$3,621 to them. Pictured (L to R) Matt Wiest and Rod Miller.



Department Commander Judy Walters and Department President Ruth Hietbrink attended the annual American Legion's Truman Pilgrimage in Independence, MO for President Truman's birthday. They both laid a wreath to honor the President and his memory.



Dwight Post 110 presented certificates of continuous years of membership to its members. Pictured (L to R) Don Niemann, 50 years; Commander Ken Kotera; and John Lavicky, 70 years.



York Post 19 member Jeremy Reinke was presented with a Quilt of Valor. Pictured (L to R) Jeremy Reinke, his wife, Rachel, and their kids.



The Sheridan County American Legion Family held their annual County Government Day at their county building. Picture courtesy of Scott Bidroski of the Sheridan County Journal Star newspaper.



The Dawes County Honor Guard members were honored for all of their work and hours of volunteering with an open house event hosted by the County Auxiliary Units at the Chadron American Legion Post. Many of the members have served for many years and even decades.



The American Legion and the Department of Education has partnered together to educate youth and teachers all over the nation about the 250th Birthday of America and about the history of The American Legion. Julie Schnitzler and Adjutant Eric Martin were able to attend the event in Omaha and Schnitzler presented on behalf of The American Legion.



Ashland Post 129 performed color guard duties at a ceremony officially recognizing the Community Partnership Program, to recognize service members and veterans in the community, between the Nebraska National Guard and the city of Ashland. Pictured top is the Ashland Color Guard members. Pictured bottom (L to R) Ashland Mayor Jim Anderson, Maj. Gen. Craig Strong, and Lt. Governor Joe Kelly.



Hallam Post 294 member Pvt. Mason Eickmeier was one of four Nebraska National Guard Soldiers who provided life-saving assistance following a collision between a taxi and a moped. The team witnessed the accident and immediately secured the intersection to manage the scene. Pictured (L to R) Staff Sgt. Muhammad Al Shamkhani, Sgt. Vater Griffen, Pvt. Mason Eickmeier, and Pfc. Stone Thelen. Thanks to the Nebraska National Guard for the pictures.



Department Commander Judy Walters and Department President Ruth Hietbrink attended the annual American Legion's Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, IL for President Lincoln's birthday. They laid a wreath to honor the President and his memory.

DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT - RUTH HIETBRINK



As we step into May and June, it's hard to believe we are nearing the close of another Auxiliary year. Time truly does fly when you're surrounded by such dedicated, compassionate, and hardworking members. Serving as your President this past year has been an absolute delight and an honor I will always cherish.

As I reflect on this past year as your President, I am especially proud of all that we have accomplished together. I had the honor of attending both the Lincoln and Truman Pilgrimages, which were meaningful reminders of our history and the legacy of service we continue to uphold.

The true highlight of my year, however, was presenting a Quilt of Valor to a World War II veteran at the Norfolk Veterans Home. It was a deeply moving experience and a powerful reminder of why we do

what we do, serving those who have given so much for our country.

I am also grateful for the many opportunities we had to come together in service and fellowship. None of these achievements would have been possible without each of you. Your dedication, compassion, and willingness to serve have made this year not only successful --- but truly special.

As we move through May, how many took the time to recognize our teachers during Teacher's Appreciation Week? It is a wonderful opportunity to honor the educators in our community who help shape the future and support our youth each day. Whether it's a simple note of thanks or a small gesture of appreciation, I encourage all of you to take a moment to recognize the teachers who make such a lasting difference.

We also paused to remember our veterans on Memorial Day. This is a sacred day of reflection, a time to honor those we have lost, to cherish their memory, and to hold close the loved ones who gave so much for our freedom.

While the year may be winding down, our mission remains as strong as ever. Let's continue to stay focused on what brings us together --- serving veterans, advocating for our communities, mentoring our

youth, and promoting patriotism. The work we do matters, and every act of kindness and service leaves a lasting impact.

I am also looking forward to seeing many of you at the Department Convention in Columbus, June 25th through the 28th. It's sure to be a wonderful time of fellowship and celebration as we come together wearing our aloha shirts and proudly celebrating the 250th birthday of our country. Don't forget to check out the baskets each district has put together for the silent auction --- they are always a highlight and a lot of fun! This is shaping up to be a truly great celebration, and I can't wait to share it with all of you.

Let's finish this year strong and continue to carry forward the spirit of the American Legion Auxiliary.

With heartfelt thanks,

Ruth Hietbrink
Department President



DEPT. CONVENTION AGENDA

June 25-28 River's Edge Hotel and Convention Center, Columbus, NE

DEC AGENDA – Thursday, June 25, 2026

1:00 pm – Opening

Introductions

Minutes

NEW Business:

- o Finance Committee Report
- o Constitution & Bylaws Committee Report
- o District President End of Year Reports
- o Introduction of Candidates for Offices

Announcements – Including National Convention Info

Adjourn

GENERAL SESSION 1 – Friday, June 26, 2026

7:45 a.m. - Registration Opens

8:30 a.m. – Formal Opening and General Session

8:45 a.m. – Welcome and Introductions

- o Roll Call and Minutes

9:30 a.m.

- o Officer Reports
- o Special Committee Reports

11:00 a.m.

- o Department Chair Reports (beginning)

11:30 a.m. – Recess for Lunch

JOINT OPENING SESSION/Memorial Service

1:00 p.m.

- o Greetings from Governor Pillen, Mayor Bulkley
- o Greetings from Host Post #84 Commander and President
- o Introductions and Greetings from Legion, Auxiliary & SAL Special guests
- o Legion Family Memorial Service

GENERAL SESSION 2

4:00 p.m. – Auxiliary session resumes

- o Chairman reports (continue)
- o Introduction and Endorsement of the 2026-2027 Candidates

5:00 p.m. – District Caucus

5:30 p.m. – Recess

- o Elections Committee Meeting

SUPPER BREAK

6:00 p.m. – 250th Birthday Celebration – hosted by the American Legion Auxiliary – Area TBA

GENERAL SESSION 3 – Saturday, June 27, 2026

7:30 a.m. – Registration opens

8:00 a.m. – National President Pam Ray, Department of Indiana

10:30 a.m.

- o Gold Star Member Recognition
- o Past Department President Memorial Service

CHILDREN AND YOUTH LUNCHEON

- o 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Columbus Legion Post #84 – 2263 3rd Ave.

GENERAL SESSION 4

1:45 p.m. – Auxiliary session resumes

- o Honorary Junior President Erica Fuchs of Arlington Unit #71
- o Introductions and Endorsements of Candidates
- o VA & R Chairman Report
 - Veteran Home and Medical Center reports

Recess

4:30 p.m. Candidates Reception- TBA

GENERAL SESSION 5/INSTALLATION – Sunday, June 28, 2026

8:00 a.m. – AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY JOINT WORSHIP SERVICE

8:30 a.m. – Registration – Closes at 9:30 a.m.

9:00 a.m. – Resume Session (continue with reports if needed)

9:30 a.m.

- o Election of Department Officers
- o Election of Alternate to National Convention
- o Courtesy Resolutions

10:00 a.m. – Department President Report

10:30 a.m. – Installation of 2026-2027 Officers

11:15 a.m. – Retirement of Colors for President Ruth Hietbrink

- o Adjournment

POST DEC MEETING – 15 minutes after the close of the Convention

- Opening by President Cyboron
- There will be voting for DEC members
- All 2026-2027 Officers, District Presidents, Department Chairmen, VAMC Representatives and Home Chairmen are expected to attend
- Those attending will be filling out 2026-2027 elected/appointed position forms and returning them to the Secretary
- National Convention attendees will be able to pick up their packets

In Remembrance Bonnie Dunler



Bonnie June (Waldron) Dumler was born on January 15, 1935, in rural Nuckolls County, Nebraska, the daughter of Earl and Anna (Zikmund) Waldron. She passed away at Parkview Haven in Deshler on May 6, 2026.

Bonnie became the bride of Kenneth C. Dumler on January 20, 1956, in Germany. They raised three children: Cindy Dumler, Mark Dumler, and Jon Dumler. They were blessed with eight (8) grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, and 6 great-great-grandchildren.

Bonnie served as Nebraska's Department President 1990-1991, and her theme was "Associated Together

along the Pathway of Service" with trees/leaves being her symbols. Bonnie served as Nebraska's member of the National Executive Committee and Northwestern Division Junior Activities. Bonnie was a Partner of 8/40 Salon Bonne' Chere" #767 and was the Departmental Chapeau. She was elected as the National President of the Military Order of the Purple Heart in 2002.

Bonnie joined the American Legion Auxiliary at Davenport Unit 335 in District 11 in 1968. Bonnie has a long-time record of serving others through the ALA, including Department Chairmanships for Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF), Finance, Past Presidents Parley, Advisory; Constitution and Bylaws, Parliamentarian (for 8 Department Presidents), and Junior Activities for two Department Presidents.

Bonnie chaired many bloodmobiles in Davenport for 25 years; she enjoyed going to the VA hospitals and homes. She was a dedicated volunteer at the

Grand Island VAMC from 1994 until COVID-19. She most recently visited with veterans over the phone, which is a new program of the VA. She served many years with the Grand Island VAMC.

Bonnie shared words of wisdom: "Listen to members' needs and be friends to all." She advised that she could not remember names very well but remembered where they were from.

Bonnie held long-time memberships with 8/40; VFW; Nebraska Admirals; and the Military Order of the Purple Heart Auxiliary and its Past National President and Parliamentarian for several.

Always the mentor to others, Bonnie answered questions on Parliamentary Procedure and Constitution and Bylaws and gave advice on many Auxiliary activities. She helped work the Auxiliary Mission until the end and will be missed greatly by those who knew and loved her.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT PAM RAY



Pam Ray serves as the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary and is a dedicated leader committed to serving veterans, military families, and communities across our nation. Through her years of service and leadership within the Auxiliary, she continues to inspire members with her passion for patriotism, mentorship,

and volunteerism.

National President Pam Ray will be a special guest at the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary Department Convention in Columbus, June 25–28, where members from across the state will gather for fellowship, celebration, and honoring our mission of service.

NEW FITNESS EQUIPMENT ENHANCES WELLNESS AT NORFOLK VETERANS HOME

Residents at the Norfolk Veterans Home are already seeing the benefits of a new T6 recumbent cross trainer, recently donated by the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary. Designed to provide a low-impact, full-body workout, the machine is helping veterans strengthen both upper and lower body muscles while improving cardiovascular health.

The recumbent cross trainer

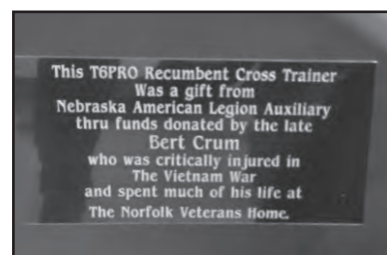


offers a comfortable, seated design that makes it accessible for individuals with varying mobility levels. Since its arrival, the equipment has been put to frequent use. Many residents incorporate it into their daily routines, with some using it for 20 minutes each day and others taking advantage of it twice daily.

"This machine has quickly become a favorite," staff members noted, emphasizing the positive impact it has had on residents' physical activity and overall well-being.

The purchase of the trainer was made possible through funds generously donated by the late Bert Crum. A critically injured veteran of the Vietnam War, Crum spent much of his life at the Norfolk Veterans Home. His legacy continues to live on through this contribution, which is already making a meaningful difference in the lives of fellow veterans.

Even after his passing, Crum's commitment to supporting other veterans remains evident. Thanks to his generosity, residents now have greater opportunities to stay active, maintain their strength, and enhance their quality of life.



WHAT A YEAR FOR AEF!

Nebraska is AEF! Absolutely, Exceptionally, Fantastic!

Department President Ruth challenged you when she selected the Auxiliary Emergency Fund as her President's Project. And then, as your AEF Department Chair, it was my task to promote the AEF program and encourage members, units, and districts to donate to the National AEF. And you all came through in an Absolutely, Exceptionally, Fantastic way!

How well did we do? President Ruth's Project is showing \$10,174.01 in donations. These are from unit donations, Fall Round Up contributions, personal donations, raffle ticket sales, and the M & M game.

The National AEF donations are \$12,307.24. The sources coming from unit donations, county donations, a generous personal donation from Pat Classen, special fundraising at unit and district levels, and the Silly Tax Assessment game.

Do your math --- that is \$22,481.25 that YOU played a role in. But, wait, there is more!

Nebraska's contribution to National is being boosted by the funds collected in the 2024-2025 year. National uses the dates of June 1 to May 31 for receiving the AEF donations. Therefore, a donation of \$8,560.91 was sent in last July. That amount will be included in Nebraska's total for the 2025-2026 year. So, a little more math tells me Nebraska will donate \$31,042.16 for AEF.

That is Absolutely, Exceptionally, Fantastic, Nebraska Auxiliary members! It means that ten members will benefit from a grant up to \$3,000 for a disaster (natural) or hardship (personal crisis) in their lives. Remember, it is Members helping Members!

So, thank you, Nebraska!

Vicki Ozenbaugh
AEF Chair



Niobrara 4th-grade students and teacher Mrs. Jenny Bauer presented a program on the Poppy to other students, parents, and guests. They handed out poppies to those attending. Sharon Scott of Niobrara Unit 224 accepted a contribution to their unit.

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
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

SHADOW BOXES BRING VETERANS' STORIES TO LIFE AT NORFOLK VETERANS HOME

Residents at the Norfolk Veterans Home now have a new and meaningful way to share their stories, thanks to the addition of handcrafted shadow boxes placed outside their rooms.

A total of 30 shadow boxes were generously donated by American Legion Auxiliary Districts 2 and 7, with the remaining boxes purchased through the Veterans Home Foundation. Each box was built and purchased from a local craftsman in the Norfolk area, adding a personal, community-centered touch to the project.

The shadow boxes are mounted in the hallway next to each resident's door, offering a space for veterans to display photographs, medals, and other mementos from their military service and personal lives. These displays have quickly become conversation starters, giving residents the opportunity to share their experiences and memories with visitors, staff, and fellow veterans.

For many residents, the boxes



represent more than just a display case; they are a source of pride. Veterans can often be seen pointing out photographs or explaining the meaning behind their medals, bringing their stories to life in a deeply personal way.

"This project helps honor the service and sacrifice of our veterans while also celebrating who they are beyond their time in uniform," said a representative of the American Legion Auxiliary. "It allows each

resident to tell their own story."

The addition of the shadow boxes has enriched the sense of community within the home, turning hallways into corridors of history, courage, and remembrance.

This project is a shining example of the American Legion Auxiliary at work --- supporting veterans not only through care and resources, but by preserving and honoring their individual stories.

SHUBERT — AMERICA'S 250TH CELEBRATION



PORK RAFFLE FUNDRAISER



The American Legion Auxiliary is giving the community an opportunity to support veterans while taking a chance on winning **100 pounds of processed pork.**

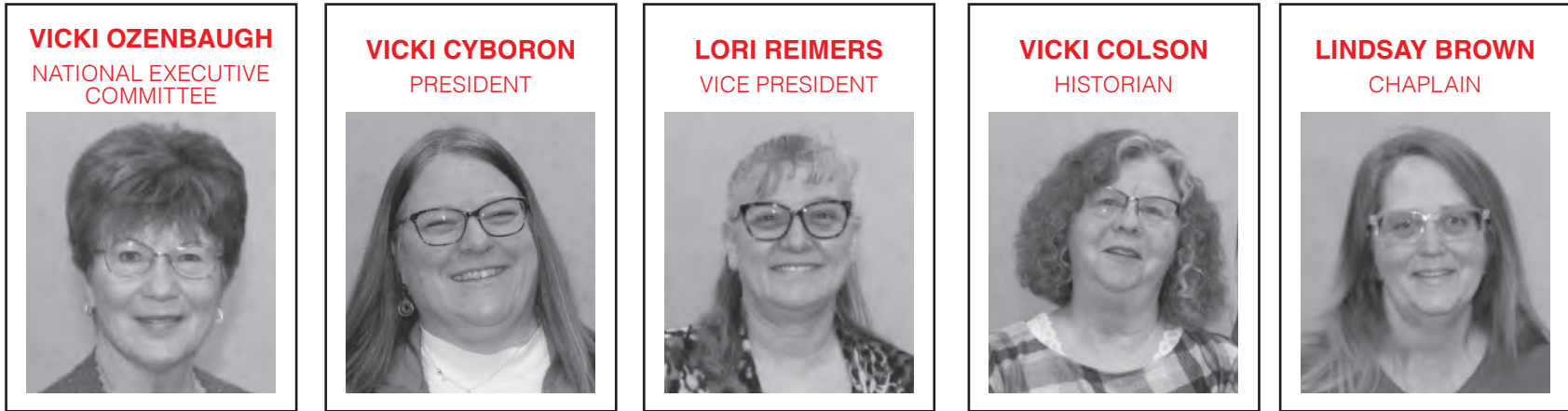
Raffle tickets are just \$5 each, with all proceeds benefiting the Norfolk Veterans Home. Only 200 tickets will be printed, giving participants excellent odds of taking home the pork package.

Community members are encouraged to purchase tickets early before they are sold out. By supporting the raffle, donors are helping improve the lives of Nebraska's veterans while also having a great chance to win big.

For tickets or more information, contact Ruth Hietbrink at 402-239-6371.



CANDIDATES FOR DEPARTMENT OFFICERS 2026 - 2027



WALLACE AUXILIARY ANNOUNCES POPPY POSTER CONTEST WINNERS



Winners of the Wallace fourth-grade Poppy Poster contest are (pictured in front, L-R) 1st Place: Samuel Smith, 2nd Place: Itzel Juarez, 3rd Place: Reinsley Lundvall. Thank you to the 4th-grade class Poppy Participants and to Art teacher Mrs. Nelms and Auxiliary Poppy Chair Lorie Artz. The class was given ice cream from the Auxiliary, and the winners and teacher received awards from The Hidden Scoop.



Elwood ALA Unit #290 had an American Legion birthday party at their March meeting and also honored the Auxiliary's continuous members. Pictured from left are: Kathy Fowler (70 years), Genia Sarr (new member), and Connie Houlden (40 years). Connie is also a dual member. Standing is Unit 290 President Maria Atterberry.



The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 27 in Beatrice honored and celebrated continuous memberships on March 29, 2026. These members had a combined 295 years: Adele Schroll (75), Norma Pike (55), Marilyn Stephens (40), Joyce Cox (35), Lela Dike (35), Elaine Waltke (30), and Brenda Johnson (25).

DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS OPEN HOUSE SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2026 1-5 P.M. *See flyer on page 4 of the Legionnaire.*

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

The 83rd Annual Department of Nebraska Junior Meeting was held on Saturday, April 11, with President Erica Fuchs calling the meeting to order with the theme "Quilting and Comforting for Our Veterans."

Erica recognized the special guests after the opening of the meeting. Special guests included Department President Ruth Heithbrink, Department Vice President Vicki Cyboron, Department Secretary Roxanne Hiatt, Department Historian Lori Reimers, Department Chaplain Vicki Colson, NEC member and Interim Department Treasurer Vicki Ozenbaugh, Department Membership Chairman Deb Albers, Department Poppy Chairman Justina Birkel, Department Legislative Chairman Lorie Hendrickson, District 3 President Laura Novak, District 11 President Mary Beth Coffey, Past Department Junior President Sarah Fuchs, and

Rachel Biar.

The Junior Historian gave a registration report which included 16 juniors, 32 seniors, 13 guests, and 16 units represented. Multiple goodie bags were handed out throughout the day, a poppy craft was completed, and songs were sung. The meal was pizza, salad, and dessert. Contest awards and participation certificates were completed following lunch.

Nominations were completed. The newly-elected 2026-2027 Junior Officers are as follows: Chaplain Melina Colson, Historian Kinleigh Jones, Vice President Cora Kankoke, and President Kendall Kasl. These officers were installed by Deb Albers. More information on the President's Project will be released later.

*KayLynn Novak
Junior Activities Chair*

CHILDREN & YOUTH POTHOLDER FUNDRAISER



Potholders made from recycled denim will be available for purchase at the Department Convention in June for \$5 each or \$10 for a matched pair. All proceeds will be donated to the Child Well-Being Foundation.

*Julie Schnitzler
Children and Youth Chair*



IT'S A BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR THE USA

What an exciting year to be Membership Chairman for Nebraska, because we have been "Stirring Up Members!"

Now we are going to treat you all to a Membership Birthday Party for the USA. On Friday evening at our Department Convention, we will be Celebrating the Birthday of the United States of America. We are kicking off the Party with Cake and a Parade of 100% Units. Get your party hats and noisemakers ready for the big event. We will be drawing for prizes for units that are above 95% by June 12.

Thank You, Membership Chairmen and Unit Presidents — for working so hard to get to where we are in Membership. At this writing, we are at 90.28% in membership. I hope by convention we can reach 95%.

Congratulations to the 100% (and above) Units in Nebraska. We have 43 units in the 100% Club. It has

been a joy to announce that number and serve as your Department Membership Chairman. We also have 36 units currently above 95% "Go For It," members. REMEMBER --- EVERY MEMBER COUNTS.

Petersburg, McCool Junction, Bloomington, Lebanon, Plattsmouth, Union, Elkhorn/Waterloo, Greely, Sterling, Wynot, Winside, Cody, South Sioux City, Elwood, Broadwater, Winnebago, Gordon, Bayard, North Loup, Table Rock, Cedar Bluffs, Beemer, Jackson, Arcadia, Bassett, Boleus, Bruning, Carleton, Clearwater, Colon, Davenport, Elsie, Franklin, Hooper, Louisville, Monroe, Nehawka, Newcastle, Potter, Shubert, Table Rock, Wilber, Wood River.

Keep Partying and Serving our Veterans!!!

*Debra Albers
Membership Chair*

CHAPLAINS CORNER

“For everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven.” Ecclesiastes 3:1.

The reports are in, and we are headed for Celebrating our Legion Family Year and the 250-Year Birthday of our country.

We have lost some Friends and made some new ones.

We have raised some funds and spent some on projects.

We have learned new things and

have travelled some old roads.

The year is turning. Life is turning and hoping we are all better for it.

Father- Thank you for the opportunities to grow and the tools to walk the path you set before us. 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
JULY 10, 2026.

In Memoriam

Received March 10 to May 10, 2026

Monica Zohner..... Lincoln3	Joan J. Clements..... Blair.....154
Virgie L Smith Lincoln3	Marilyn E Reinsch..... Shickley164
Evelyn D Wood..... Hemingford9	Avis Collar Pawnee City.....168
Marge M. Turek Hemingford9	Rose Rauner Hebron180
Eva M Brunswick..... Chadron.....12	Lyla Hahn Elsie206
Roberta Lembke..... Chadron.....12	Betty Binger..... Hay Springs239
Wanda M Hessler..... Chadron.....12	Leanne Binger..... Hay Springs239
Norma Schutte..... Auburn23	Nicolette Horn..... Hay Springs239
Ella Mae R. Deweese..... Kearney52	Betty Snyder..... Talmage246
Alice E Christiansen Pender55	Frances M Zaugg Yutan.....262
Lula Calkins..... Sutton61	Elsie Wolfe..... Clearwater267
Eileen Zierke..... Pierce.....72	Imogene Frank Table Rock.....269
Pauline J. Laubsch..... Pierce.....72	Joyce L Huggans..... Burwell298
Jeanie Barry BattleCreek.....75	JoAnn Ward..... Palisade.....318
Amelia Sudman Syracuse.....100	Sharon A Scott..... Millard374
Virginia Buchanan Hickman.....105	Janice Hughes..... Department.....500
Leona Nissen..... Plainview.....148	

EXETER SAL 10TH ANNIV.

The Exeter Sons of the American Legion squadron and American Legion Post 218 celebrated their 10th Anniversary on March 21, 2026, by hosting a free will offering Windsor loin meal to the community --- followed by an auction of donated items to go towards veterans' projects and Legion upkeep.



The Auxiliary Unit 218 served cake and a large selection of dessert items to those attending.

DEPARTMENT OF NEBRASKA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL (12) \$500 each

- Sonya Guzinski - (PPP) - Unit 127 Craig
- MaKenna Karr - (PPP) - Unit 169 Campbell
 - Jaxen Heath - Unit 164 Shockley
- Kenidee McClain - Unit 70 West Point
 - Shelby Bethune - Unit 3 Lincoln
- Chenney Dishman - Unit 59 Callaway
 - Avery Santo - Unit 222 Shubert
 - Ryan Rifer - Unit 136 Orchard
- Megan Johnston - Unit 266 Bennington
- Mikiah Witzel - Unit 354 Pleasant Dale
- Natalia Thoendel - Unit 327 Bellwood
 - Isabella Escritt - Unit 329 Carleton

ALA MEMORIAL (6) \$500 each

- Alayna Gerdes - Unit 23 Auburn
- Ashlynn Gramke - Unit 127 Craig
 - Dierck White - Unit 72 Pierce
- Kelynn Witthuhn - Unit 59 Callaway
- Aubree Overholser - Unit 377 Wilcox
- Katherine Cox - Unit 90 Valentine

CAREER & TECH ED (5) \$500 each

- Blayklee Farr - Unit 257 Eutis
 - Sarah Payne - Unit 49 Utica
- Sydney Huber - Unit 341 McCool Junction
 - Hunter Bryant - Unit 213 Wallace
 - Haden Smith - Unit 52 Kearney

*Cindy Moore,
Education Chair*



GRETNA ALA CELEBRATED 100TH ANNIV. OF CHARTER

On September 25, 1925, ten Gretna area women organized and filled out an application to begin a Gretna Unit of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA). The national organization signed the charter on January 30, 1926, and the Department of Nebraska Leonard Conley Unit 216 American Legion Auxiliary was formed.

The Gretna American Legion Auxiliary, along with the extended Legion family, celebrated this milestone on Saturday, April 25, 2026, at the Legion Post in Gretna. Organizer and Unit 216 Historian Cindy Moore said “Celebrating on National Legion Family Day made the event even more special.”

The evening began with a social hour from 5:00-6:00 PM with a

history display, followed by patriotic music from the Heartland of America Band out of Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue. Ceremonies included the POW/MIA table and the Military Child's Table, honoring April as Military Child Month.

In addition, guests were treated to a video tribute of pictures over the years, including a song specially written for the occasion. Members of the Auxiliary Unit were presented with a specially designed lapel pin to honor the milestone. A lemon chicken piccata dinner was served. The event's featured speaker was Jody Fuller, a retired U.S. Army Major and comedian. The evening concluded with the Unit Raffle Drawing.



Utica Unit #49 Chaplain Marlene Erks (left) presented a Gold Star program for Gold Star member Cenie Sackschewsky at our May meeting. It was a beautiful program enjoyed by all who attended.

READ THE ROOM

With each generation comes a new genre of music. Each generation before thinks most of the new stuff is usually flawed for some reason or another.

There are many wonderful groups we must encourage to go sing to the shut-ins and elderly in facilities – 4-H, ALA Juniors, Sunday School, and Bible School groups, to name a few. As one who has worked with music for the elderly for most of my life, I would like to offer some unsolicited advice.

This is not the time to try to teach the residents new songs. They have neither the ability nor the desire to do so. I will tell you straight – they LOVE watching the energy and innocence of children. But, that said, much of the new praise/worship songs literally soothes them to sleep. Revisions of known hymns are the exception. Pop songs designed to entertain children often confuse them. It is important that they are served the music they know and love.

I will get off my soapbox now. Thank you for all you do with music for our elderly and veterans.

Keep Singing!

*Jean Vackiner
Music Chair*

DATES TO REMEMBER

JUNE

- May 31-June 6 ALA Cornhusker Girls State UNL Campus
- 10 Deadline for articles for the July/August issue of "The Star"
- 14 Flag Day – Fly your Flag
- 20 Department HQ Open House 1pm - 5pm
- 21 Father's Day
- 25-28 Department Convention – Columbus, NE

JULY

- 4 Independence Day --- Department Headquarters Closed
- 10 Deadline for Star Articles --- August/September Issue
- 18-20 American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation – Washington, DC

AUGUST

- 21-27 National Convention, Louisville, KY



Members of the Gretna American Legion Auxiliary Unit 216 gathered to take a photo bearing their new centennial lapel pins.
Photo by Bailey Fenderson



Members of the American Legion Family joined the American Legion Auxiliary at the celebration for a group photo on National Legion Family Day.
Photo by Bailey Fenderson