

“Be Part Of The Solution”



Bowen and his wife, Jackie, have two sons and four grandchildren, all members of The American Legion Family.

National Auxiliary President Dr. Coral May Grout is a member of Winchendon Unit 193 in Massachusetts. She is eligible for ALA membership through her late father, Charles E. Grout who served in WWII. She retired from being a school superintendent in 2006 and has been volunteering and working in her local community since.

National Sons Commander Thom Skelley is a 21 year member of Squadron 208 in Kerrville, Texas. He is eligible for SAL membership through the service of his father, William Skelly Sr, in WWII. Skelley’s project for his year as commander is focused on POW/MIA recovery and recognition. Thom and his wife, Amy, have two sons, Evan and Kieran.

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.

Ways to Renew Your Membership Dues

Pay by check or money order to your Post or the Department

Call Department at 402-464-6338 to renew with a credit or debit card

Pay online with a credit or debit card at legion.org/renew



Homecoming Banquet

Department Commander

Douglas L. Frahm

Chambers Post 320 – Chambers, NE

Saturday, October 31, 2026

Chambers American Legion Post 320

103 N Norvell Street – Chambers, NE 68725

Come join Department Commander Doug Frahm for dinner.

Social Hour is 5:30 p.m. and Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Price: \$12.50 per plate

Contact Doug Frahm for more details at 402-336-6088 or mail checks to:

Doug Frahm

85627 Iris Street

Amelia, NE 68711

Make checks out to “Doug Frahm” and indicate how many tickets are desired and all the names of those attending. Please RSVP by October 16.

Reminder: There will be a cash bar for all to enjoy during dinner.

Dress is Business Casual

Number of tickets: _____

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

The Nebraska Legionnaire

150 NW 40th St, Unit A

Lincoln, NE 68528

“FAMILY AIMING HIGH”

2027 MEMBERSHIP GOAL: 19,840 SEPTEMBER 30TH TOTAL: 12,103 – 61.00%

DISTRICT 2 - 69.23%

DISTRICT 15 - 66.18%

DISTRICT 13 - 63.64%

DISTRICT 6 - 63.30%

DISTRICT 12 - 62.46%

DISTRICT 11 - 61.65%

DISTRICT 7 - 60.47%

DISTRICT 10 - 59.92%

DISTRICT 1 - 59.27%

DISTRICT 8 - 58.16%

DISTRICT 4 - 57.84%

DISTRICT 9 - 57.64%

DISTRICT 5 - 56.57%

DISTRICT 3 - 54.60%



Commander's Corner

Douglas L. Frahm
Department Commander



It's hard to believe that it is already that time of year. Membership renewal notices have been sent out by National. Membership cards have been sent to our Post Adjutants and the renewal process for the 2026-2027 year has begun. Four Department members, Adjutant Martin, Membership Chairman Steve Bartos, Membership Committee member Jeff Conrad, and I attended the Membership Conference in Indianapolis where we attended four separate training sessions. We also met with leading National Commander Candidate Jay Bowen to negotiate our Department



Commander Doug with Nebraska JSSP competitor Makenna Quick at the finals in Hillsdale, Michigan. Quick took home 3rd place in the Sporter competition.

membership percentage for this year. After discussions back and forth and our success report from last year we settled on .9 percent, a very good number compared to past years. Membership Chairman Steve Bartos has reported that Departments first membership goal has come and gone, we hoped for 60 percent but did make our goal of 50 percent. With my motto, "Family Aiming Higher", we all need to work hard to achieve our final goals of 100 percent.

Many of our American Legion programs are fast approaching including registration for the Junior Shooting Sports first round postal match that began September 1st.

As your Department Commander I have been busy with many functions so far including the District 1 Tour, Department open house, 4th of July and 250-year celebrations, Junior Sooting Sports National Championship Competition at Hillsdale College, Membership Workshop in Indianapolis, Legion Riders Legacy Run kickoff for the National Convention, National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, the Nebraska State Fair, and Committee and Zoom meetings.

I would like to congratulate our American Legion Baseball team, the Carpetland Post 500 of Lincoln for winning the American Legion World Series Baseball Tournament in Shelby, North Carolina. They become the first National Champions from Nebraska since 1939.

"Family Aiming High"



S.A.L. Notes

Larry Einspahr Jr.
Detachment Commander





Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Nebraska has been busy this summer. We've seen numerous reports of participation in community celebrations and county fairs. The American Legion Family hosted an information table at the Nebraska State Fair, connecting with fairgoers who are already members of our organization and meeting potential members. "Family" was definitely the theme as State Fair attendees shared stories of either their own enlistment or that of their family members. The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders also had a terrific parade presence at the Nebraska State Fair.

Another event with profound impact for our Veterans and communities recently has been the Vietnam Wall & Cost of Freedom Traveling Memorial, hosted by the community of Crawford, NE. This 6-day event offered memorial programs, featured speakers and time for Veterans to come together and share stories. Daily, people could be seen searching for a name on The Wall. Each day of the program featured a specific group such as Veterans, Gold Star Families and POW/MIA Families. Senior Vice-Commander Robert Lawrence and I were two of the speakers and followed their presentations by placing a floral wreath at the memorial.

The time is upon us for the Fall Roundup meetings in our Districts. Attendance at these one-day sessions can be a valuable investment of a few hours in exchange for updated information about The American Legion Family programs.

As we become inundated with holiday advertisements closing this calendar year, please keep Veterans' needs at the forefront of your planning. Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Nebraska Commander's Project for 2026-2027 is the Norfolk Veterans Home. Donations may be sent to The American Legion Nebraska Headquarters in Lincoln.

By the time you receive your next issue of Legionnaire, it will already be time for Dollar Days and Gifts for Yanks Who Gave celebrations with our Veterans. Please consider donating to these programs now, rather than waiting for final call to action. Having handed one of these gifts to a Veteran, I assure you that your contribution is appreciated. They gave so much for us. Let's give something back for them.

NEBRASKA AMERICAN LEGION

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Editor.....awashburn@nebraskalegion.net

Department Officers

Commander.....	Douglas Frahm, Amelia
Senior Vice Commander.....	Richard Colson, Paxton
Area A Vice Commander.....	Gary Davis, Pender
Area B Vice Commander.....	Julie Schnitzler, Kenesaw
Area C Vice Commander.....	Don Nelson, Clay Center
Area D Vice Commander.....	Amie Moores, Elwood
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.....	Gerald Bouska, Atkinson
Assistant Sergeant-At-Arms.....	Gene vonForell, Crawford
Service Officer.....	James Foster, Lincoln
National Executive Committee.....	Jim Costello, Bellevue
Alternate NEC.....	John-Henry Percy, Papillion

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Dist. 2.....	Kent VonKampen, Norfolk
Dist. 3.....	Mike Ellis, Jackson
Dist. 4.....	Vacant
Dist. 5.....	Joe Wiezorek, North Platte
Dist. 6.....	Brian Rapp, Grand Island
Dist. 7.....	Virgil Blum, Omaha
Dist. 8.....	James Carmona, Omaha
Dist. 9.....	Brent May, Indianola
Dist. 10.....	Mike Goebel, Red Cloud
Dist. 11.....	David Bruns, Fairbury
Dist. 12.....	David Stander, Weeping Water
Dist. 13.....	Kevin McKinney, Tecumseh
Dist. 15.....	Richard Lemmerman, Lincoln



The NEBRASKA Legionnaire

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Amanda Washburn, Editor
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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.

☐ 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

Greetings fellow American Legion Riders and American Legion Family! Unfortunately, we are well past prime riding season and things will slow down; there will still be several Legion and community activities to support and Fall District Roundups to attend.

Members of the Nebraska ALR had the opportunity to attend the kickoff to the National Legacy Run in Lincoln, August 22nd and 23rd. As my first experience with this national event, it was quite something to see and be a part of. I was able to visit with ALR members from across the nation and I was amazed at how far they travel to be a part of this event; many that do so year after year. Sadly, a fellow Rider from Kansas, Michael “Mike” Haas, lost his life on Day 3 as the result of a motorcycle accident. The mission continued successfully and raised more than \$1 million dollars, a testament to all the ALR Chapters across Nebraska and the nation.

There were two major events in September, the Medal of Honor Hwy 20 Ride from South Sioux City to Chadron and the Travelling Vietnam Wall and Cost of Freedom Tribute escort and subsequent display in Crawford. We left Grand Island the morning of the 7th picking up fellow riders in Fremont, South Sioux City (with a quick stop at Freedom Park), and Valentine. On the 8th we met up with riders in Chadron and then a group from Crawford; in all around 57 riders along with several cars took part in the escort. It was quite the experience to see all the individuals both young and old at intersections along Hwy 20 and lined up along the streets in Crawford waving the American Flag paying their respects to the Wall as we made our way to the display site. I was also able to take part as a “Wall Watcher” during the afternoon of the 7th and it was a humbling experience witnessing those visiting the Wall and the wide range of emotions as they searched for and found the names of loved ones, friends, and in many cases those they had served with. All I can say is job well done to the city of Crawford, Jerry Lemmon, the rest of the area ALR members who assisted, and all who took part in bringing this Wall to Nebraska. I also want to thank all of those who joined me on the Medal of Honor Ride along Hwy 20 and with the Wall escort.

Reminder, please follow our FB page “Nebraska American Legion Riders” for the latest information on rides, events, etc. throughout the state.

Please remember to forward all your Chapter activities, i.e., updated officer list and contact information, mileage, group events, volunteer hours, and any other information you feel is noteworthy to 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 American Legion Family!



Straight Talk

James Foster
Department Service Officer

The Sacrifices of U.S. Service Members Since 9/11



Since the tragic attacks of September 11, 2001, the lives of American service members and their families have been marked by extraordinary sacrifice. In the more than two decades that followed, millions have answered the call to serve, deployed to conflict zones, and faced the profound physical, emotional, and social challenges that come with defending the nation.

Immediately after 9/11, the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom, beginning the global “War on Terror.” Over the years, U.S. forces were deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and numerous other locations worldwide. Service members faced hostile environments, unpredictable threats, and new forms of warfare. These missions demanded immense bravery and resilience, with thousands making the ultimate sacrifice—over 7,000 American service members have died in post-9/11 combat operations, and tens of thousands more have been wounded.

However, the visible wounds are only part of the story. Modern warfare has brought new awareness to the mental health struggles facing veterans and active military alike. Traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the psychological toll of multiple and extended deployments have touched countless lives. Service members and their families have often endured prolonged separations, with children growing up in the absence of a parent and spouses managing households alone.

Veterans returning home have had to navigate the challenges of transitioning to civilian life, often facing hurdles in accessing healthcare, employment, and support networks. Many have committed themselves to advocacy and mutual support, ensuring the sacrifices of their fellow service members are recognized and their needs are met.



Members of the Nebraska American Legion Family participated in Veterans Day at the Nebraska State Fair. They hosted a table to encourage new membership and walked in the parade at the fairgrounds. Pictured (L to R) Commander Doug Frahm, President Vicki Cyboron, and Sons Commander Larry Einspahr Jr.

The costs of service since 9/11 cannot be measured solely in numbers. They are found in the courage displayed every day, the families who quietly bear the weight of uncertainty, and the unbreakable bonds formed among those who serve. America owes a profound debt to service members and their families, whose sacrifices have shaped the nation’s post-9/11 era and continue to inspire the values of duty, honor, and commitment.

Given the sacrifices made by our service members and their families, veterans should not have to navigate the complexities of the VA benefits system alone. An accredited Veteran Service Officer has the training, knowledge, and authorization to help veterans understand the benefits and services available to them, gather and submit appropriate supporting evidence, and navigate the claims process. You can locate an accredited veteran service officer near you by visiting <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/cvso> or calling 402-471-2458.



Nebraska Resource Center

Serving Military Members, Veterans, and their Families





Have you stopped by our first-in-the-nation, award-winning Nebraska Resource Center in the Offutt Air Force Base Exchange?

- ★ Speak with one of our VA-accredited veteran service officers, here to assist you and your family at NO COST!
- ★ Employment services now available in partnership with Nebraska Department of Labor, including career assessment and counseling and assistance with résumés, cover letters, and interviewing skills.
- ★ Get help with transition assistance, housing, education, recreation and tourism, family services, and more!



NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Sacrifice.
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Learn about the many other ways NDVA serves Nebraska's veterans and their families

veterans.nebraska.gov





POW/MIA

Boyd Yochum
POW/MIA Liaison





was so compact that it did not need folding wings for aboard ship storage. In spite of its diminutive size, the A4 packed a devastating punch and performed well where speed and maneuverability were essential.

On July 26, 1969, LT Brenning piloted a single seat A-4C Skyhawk 147833 and was killed immediately after taking off from the Ticonderoga when his aircraft crashed into the Gulf of Tonkin about sixty miles offshore from Ha Tinh Province, North Vietnam. Search efforts and an investigation of the crash site found debris from the Skyhawk, but no sign of LT Brenning. He remains unaccounted for today.

LT Brenning did not survive the events of July 26, 1969. His family accepted the fact that he did not survive the crash, they no longer expect that he will come home someday. Hundreds of families wait expectantly and in the special agony only uncertainty can bring.

Based on all information available, DPAA assessed Brenning’s case to be in the analytical category of non-recoverable. Of the nearly 1,000 Americans still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War, hundreds are believed to be in a “non-recoverable” category, meaning after rigorous investigation, DPAA experts have determined that the individual perished but does not believe it is possible to recover the remains. On rare occasions, new leads can bring a case back to active status.

Lieutenant Brenning was declared a casualty of the Vietnam War. He served with honor in the United States Navy and is remembered by the people of Nebraska. May his positive example inspire us to work together towards peace, mutual respect, and equality for all. Today, LT Brenning is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

Lieutenant Richard David Brenning joined the U.S. Navy from Lincoln, Nebraska; and was a member of Attack Squadron 112, USS Ticonderoga (CVA 14).

The Ticonderoga had first been in Vietnam waters in 1945, when fighter planes from the Ticonderoga and USS Hancock flew strike missions against enemy vessels in Saigon Harbor. The Ticonderoga was again on station during the early years of the Vietnam War and remained throughout most of the duration of the war.

When Douglas Aircraft created the A4 Skyhawk, the intent was to provide the Navy and Marine Corps with an inexpensive, lightweight attack and ground support aircraft. The design emphasized low-speed control and stability during take-off and landing, as well as strength enough for catapult launch and carrier landings. The plane



Chaplain's Corner

Steve Witmer
Department Chaplain



When we first gave our hearts to Christ, we made a public declaration of faith, and for most of us, followed that with believers’ baptism. With the political landscape the way it is today, we will no doubt be called on at some point to publicly stand and defend our faith. Since our nation was founded on Christian moral standards, and we have a constitution that follows those same standards, we have enjoyed freedoms that are not allowed in many of the other countries of the world.

2 King 19:34 says;
For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.”

Psalms 74:22 says;
Arise, O God, defend your cause; remember how the foolish scoff at you all the day!

It is crucial that as we draw closer to these mid-term elections, we prayerfully seek God’s guidance and stand firm in our faith to defend it and our nation’s way of life. If we are going to ask God to defend our nation, our nation must first be humbled to the power and authority God has over us.

LegionCare: \$1,000.00 Accidental Death Benefit at NO COST* To You

Anyone enrolled in LegionCare will be covered for as long as they maintain their membership in the Legion Family – TAL, ALA, & SAL. The LegionCare program will continue to cover you for \$1,000 of AD&D coverage. If the accidental loss occurs when on official Legion Family Business, we will cover you for \$5,000 of AD&D coverage.

For more information, Visit www.theLIT.com or call toll-free at 1-800-235-6943.

2026 Junior Law Cadet



training from representatives of various city, county, state, and federal agencies. They participated in daily calisthenics, classroom sessions, self-defense, firearms, law enforcement driving, internet crime, and radar use. Evening classes were devoted to accident and crime investigation, fingerprinting and polygraph techniques, and other special topics.

Six young men and women were selected from the participants for performing above and beyond during the week. Outstanding Boy Cadet – Kanen Grant of Whitman; Outstanding Girl Cadet – Shelby JurJens of Eustis; Outstanding Boys Driving Ability – Aiden Tozer of Pawnee City; Outstanding Girls Driving Ability – Taylor Kinnison of Kearney; Outstanding Boys Marksmanship – Edy Costellanos-Gonzalez of Lexington; Outstanding Girls Marksmanship – Allyson Kollasch of Blair.



The Nebraska American Legion’s 57th annual Junior Law Cadet Program was held June 22 – 25, 2026, at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center in Grand Island.

30 boys and 27 girls who just finished their junior year of high school participated in this program. The students were selected from each of the 14 American Legion Districts in Nebraska.

Participants learned about law enforcement responsibilities and had

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Membership Minute
Membership Chairman Steve Bartos

Jim Hurlbert
Memorial Scholarship

The first National Membership Target Date (50% on September 10th) has passed, and Nebraska was among 44 departments that achieved or exceeded the 50% mark (51.08%). Thanks to everyone who transmitted dues to help us meet that goal.

While we were not high on the list of those 44 departments that made the first intermediate goal, we are in a good position to improve. The next Target Date (55%) occurs on October 14th. Approximately 1,320 Department Life Members were renewed in September, and that amounts to almost 7% of our goal. The next renewal notice from Indianapolis is scheduled for mailing in the October 3-9 time period. Hopefully, that mailing will generate a lot of prompt, timely renewals. Be prepared to process them!!! Let’s see if we can hit 65% instead.

Early and prompt renewals by our “regular” members are always a big help in kick-starting our membership year. The drawing for our “Early Bird” winners was held shortly after the September 10th Target Date. Congratulations to the following five members who will each receive a \$200 prize: Marvin Bohac of Valparaiso --- Valparaiso Post 371; John Combs of Superior --- Superior Post 103; Thomas Dalton II of Malcolm --- Pleasant Dale Post 354; Troy Krings of Bennington --- Bennington Post 266; and Andrew Peitzmeier of Norfolk --- Norfolk Post 16.

While it certainly is normal and appropriate to concentrate on renewals as we start a new membership year, we must spend almost equal time --- perhaps more --- acquiring new members or getting back former members who did not renew. (Using MyLegion to mine members from Post 500 is a good idea).

2026 has been a fairly good year. We achieved about 95% of our goal and ranked quite a bit higher nationally than we have in recent years. Yet, we can’t lose sight of the fact that our 2027 goal is about 550 members LESS than our 2026 goal.

As I’ve indicated before, losing members to non-renewal and the Post Everlasting is an issue that won't go away. The losses to the Post Everlasting are probably of greatest concern, and I think our membership is generally top-heavy with older veterans. We may not be able to do anything about the losses to death, but we do have the ability to be creative and resourceful in hopes of influencing veterans to join or re-connect with us. It’s our only hope if we want to stop shrinking.

I heard two things at the National Convention that are impactful on membership. The report on Finance indicated that a dues increase is not imminent --- probably for at least a couple of years. That’s a good thing. I can also report that The American Legion is developing a new membership management software program to essentially replace MyLegion. Release is anticipated in early 2027. I’m told there will be some things that look a little different than they do now. Let’s hope that it will be a good thing (but understand there will be some bugs to squash).

Renew. Reinstate. Recruit.
Have a nice October.

2026 Player of the Year



Each year, thousands of Nebraska’s youth participate in American Legion Baseball across the state. One player is then chosen as Nebraska’s American Legion Player-of-the-Year, and their name is forwarded to be considered for the George W. Rulon National Player-of-the-Year.

This year, the Nebraska American Legion selected Aaron Mack of Grand Island as the 2026 Nebraska American Legion Baseball Player-of-the-Year. Aaron is the son of Matthew and Andrea Mack, and he played for the Grand Island Senior Team sponsored by Grand Island Post 53. Aaron has shown extensive dedication to academics at Grand Island Central Catholic High School, supporting his peers, and volunteering in his community.

Mack participated in baseball, track, tennis, and power lifting and has received many awards in these activities.

Mack attends York University pursuing a degree in Media and Communications. Where he also participates in varsity baseball, the FBLA team, and the Celebration Singers.



Hooper Post 18 presented a Quilt of Valor to Gerald Bohling. Gerald was accompanied by his wife, Marilyn, and numerous family members. Pictured (L to R) District 7 ALA Vice President Judy Harms and Gerald Bohling.



Wood River Post 314 member Gary Bohnart was presented with a Quilt of Valor at the Grand Island United Veterans Club. He served in the Army from 1966 to 1968.

The Nebraska American Legion selected Ryan Rifer of Orchard as the recipient of the Jim Hurlbert Memorial Scholarship. He will receive a \$500.00 scholarship.

The Jim Hurlbert Memorial Scholarship is named in memory of Past Department Service Officer Jim Hurlbert. Hurlbert was a strong supporter of The American Legion Baseball program and gave back to the youth who participated.

The Jim Hurlbert Memorial Scholarship is awarded based on the players’ leadership, scholarship, citizenship, and financial need. Recipients are nominated by their team manager, along with additional endorsements from other community leaders.

For the 37th consecutive year, the Nebraska American Legion has done its part in helping Nebraska students with scholarship money.

Nebraska Sons Scholarship

The Nebraska Sons of The American Legion selected four recipients of the Nebraska Sons of The American Legion Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to a current Nebraska Sons member or to a direct male descendant of a veteran. The student must attend a Nebraska institution of higher education.

The recipients of \$500.00 scholarships are Reece Heineman of Thurston; Ryan Rifer of Orchard; Derek Nanke of Plattsmouth; and Tucker Bickford of Weeping Water.

Non-political Organization

This is a reminder that The American Legion Family is a non-political organization. Do not wear your cover, branded shirt, or any other branded item at any political rally or at any campaign event. Furthermore, any Post holding a political forum must extend an invitation to all those running for office and remember to remove any trademark items from view. Contact Adjutant Martin with any questions.



Morse Bluff Post 340 presented certificates for 50 years of continuous membership to its members. Pictured top (L to R) Commander Galen Johnson and Delbert Lennie. Pictured bottom (L to R) Commander Galen Johnson and Edwin Slavik. Photos courtesy of the North Bend Eagle Newspaper.

2026 National Convention - Louisville, KY



Nebraska was recognized for 100% Consolidated Post Reporting for 2025-2026. Pictured (L to R) NVC Jerry Landkamer, National Commander Dan Wiley, PDC Judy Walters, NEC Jim Costello, and Commander Doug Frahm.



The Nebraska American Legion family made several donations to the Child Wellbeing Foundation. Pictured (L to R) Commander Doug Frahm, PDC Don Suchy, National Commander Dan Wiley, PDC Judy Walters, NEC Jim Costello, and Alt. NEC John-Henry Pearcy.



National Vice Commander Jerry Landkamer of Nebraska was presented with a certificate from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains.

2026 Cornhusker Boys' State



Members of the Nebraska American Legion and Sons of The American Legion helped hand out t-shirts to the Boys' State Delegates during check-in. 284 delegates graduated the week long program.



Four young men were selected to represent our state during Boys' Nation. Pictured (L to R) Quintin Lawson (delegate), Lincoln Haussler (delegate), Lailend Duncan (alternate), and Max Mills (alternate).



For the first time since 2022, Cornhusker Boys' and Girls' State were able to have joint sessions again. TPictured (L to R) Girls State Governor Hadassah Rankin, Girls State Chair Vicki Ozenbaugh, President Ruth Hietbrink, Lt. Governor Joe Kelly, Commander Judy Walters, Boys State Chair Don Suchy, and Boys State Governor Lucas Noll.



Kap Nedunoori of Millard North High School was elected the 2026 – 27 Boys' State Governor and awarded the Bob Riddle Traveling Governor's Trophy. Pictured (L to R) Kap Nedunoori and Boys' State President Don Suchy.



The family of Cale Farquhar, a lifelong Boys' State counselor and supporter, presented a scholarship in his memory to a delegate who was outstanding in the Legislature. Pictured (L to R) Brady Karr and Jenna Farquhar.



The American Legion Samsung Scholarship Recipient was Evan Lichtenberg of Creighton Prep High School. Pictured (L to R) Evan Lichtenberg and Don Suchy.



Each town nominated an outstanding citizen. Pictured (L to R) Lincoln Haussler, Prajwal Mohan, Ben Lanham, Max Mills, Kap Nedunoori, Ryker Schroeder, Landon Drews, Dylan Layne, and Don Suchy.



Justus Kreifels was selected as the Coach Larry Frost Outstanding Athlete. Pictured (L to R) Don Suchy, Justus Kreifels, and Athletic Director Marcus Donner.



The 2026 Boys' State Outstanding Town was Belleau Wood.



- Abels, Marvin L., Miller, Korea
Ahlstrom, Gary L., Millard, Vietnam
Anderson, Clayton N., Wausa, Korea
Anderson, James R., Greeley, Vietnam
Anderson, Rich D., Fullerton, Vietnam
Andrews, Tom M., Millard, Korea
Arens, Allan, Crofton, Vietnam
Armatis, Clinton W., North Platte, WWII
Arnold, Ray, Lincoln, WWII
Ashby, Larry H., Newman Grove, Vietnam
Bailey, Carroll, West Point, Korea
Barber, Arthur L., Crete, Korea
Bartlett, Harold J., Harvard, Vietnam
Baumert, Dennis W., Scribner
Bazyn, Donald, Norfolk, Vietnam
Benitz, Paul H., Falls City, Vietnam
Bentzinger, Louis D., Cook, Korea
Betzen, Kendall J., David City, Vietnam
Bigbee, Jerry W., Broken Bow, Vietnam
Black, Jon S., Jansen, Vietnam
Blank, Ugene, Bloomington, Korea
Blunt, Marrior L., Fairbury, Vietnam
Bolin, Andrew W., Grand Island, Korea
Brauer, Calvin L., Sidney, Vietnam
Broady, Roger A., Auburn, Vietnam
Brock, Michael D., Omaha, Vietnam
Brokaw, Charles R., Boelus, Vietnam
Bruegman, Kenneth D., Neligh, Vietnam
Burt, Robert J., Herman, Vietnam
Christensen, Vernon L., Minden, Korea
Clark, Glenn A., Benkelman, Vietnam
Clark, Harold W., Crete, Korea
Conger, Ralph J., North Platte, WWII
Cook Jr, William W., Beatrice, Vietnam
Cook, Le R., Omaha, SAL
Croghan, Tom M., Omaha, Korea
Croxen, Dale D., Tilden, WWII
Cummins, William R., Fairbury, Korea
Darrington, Byron, Lincoln, WWII
Daubert, James F., Lincoln, Vietnam
Davis, Darrel A., Grand Island, Korea
Deckinger, Fred, Falls City, Vietnam
Dennis, Robert K., Lincoln, Korea
Dunse, Maynard J., Alma, Korea
Emerson, Thomas R., Hyannis, Korea
Epperson, Robert, Blair, Other
Fairchild, Kenneth, Lincoln, WWII
Falk, Willis J., Norfolk, Vietnam
Fankhauser, Arnold G., Chadron, Vietnam
Farquhar, Cale W., Elm Creek, Gulf War
Feddern, Robert, Norfolk, Vietnam
Fishler, John E., Central City, Vietnam
Flood, Charles, Newman Grove, Vietnam
Frink, Daniel D., Grand Island, Vietnam
Fuxa, Eldon M., Louisville, Korea
Gadway, Gordon, North Platte, Korea
Gahm, Harlan R., Garland, Korea
Gallagher, Jim, O'Neill, Korea
Gappa, Howard L., Ashton, Vietnam
Gies, Donald A., Lincoln, Vietnam
Gilbert, Dave, Millard, Vietnam
Glasser, Ronald D., Central City, Vietnam
Gleason, Joseph C., Millard, SAL
Goeden, William C., West Point, Korea
Graham, Brad, Ashland
Green, Ralph J. Sr., Denton, WWII
Green, Richard H., Genoa, Vietnam
- Hager, M., Wymore, Vietnam
Hagerty, Robert D., Millard, Vietnam
Hahn, John, Columbus, Korea
Hansen, Jim L., Beatrice, Vietnam
Haythorn, Howard, North Platte, Korea
Headrick, Steve, Bloomington, Vietnam
Heitmann, Lavern L., Byron, Korea
Heller, Milford, Newport, Korea
Hill, Harry A., Lincoln, Korea
Hinchman, James, Omaha, Korea
Hindmarsh, William, Valley, Vietnam
Hoffman, Darrel J., Plainview, Korea
Hohenfield, Michael D., Campbell, Vietnam
Hood, Harold E., Big Springs, Korea
Huff, Robert, North Platte, Vietnam
Hunke, William B., West Point, Korea
Hunt, George W., Havelock, Vietnam
Isernhagen, Michael, Deshler, Vietnam
Johnson, Kenneth L., Gering, Vietnam
Johnson, V. B., Beaver Crossing, Korea
Kallhoff, Allen J., Omaha
Karloff, Charles K., Yutan
Kester, Patrick, Neligh, Persian Gulf
Kieckhafer, Loren, Hooper, Vietnam
Kinberg, Crete D., Lincoln, Korea
Kinney, Dale A., Morse Bluff, Korea
Kobza, Gilbert, Dwight, Korea
Koehler, William G., Elk Creek, Vietnam
Kohl, Jerome J., Lincoln, Korea
Kowalewski, Kenneth H., Papillion, Vietnam
Kratochvil, David A., Creston, Vietnam
Krueger, Lyle H., Winside, Korea
Kubik, Donald A., Jackson, Vietnam
Larson, Gregory E., Yutan, Vietnam
Lawrence, Jason T., Millard, GW_Terrorism
Lewis, Micheal, Kearney, Vietnam
Lile, Harvey W., Nebraska City, Vietnam
Limbach, Robert J., Blair, SAL
Longe, Daniel, Papillion, Vietnam
Loseke, Dean, Schuyler, Vietnam
Mahlin, Kenneth E. Jr, Osceola, Vietnam
McElroy, James L., Grand Island, Korea
McMindes, Lyle H., Grand Island, Korea
Meister, Marion, Bellwood, Korea
Mildorfer, Joe, South Sioux City, Panama
Miller, Donald J., Lincoln, Korea
Monahan, Alvin, Papillion
Monday, James, Hemingford, SAL
Mooney, Jim, Gordon, Vietnam
Nadherny, Ron, Omaha, Korea
Nemec, Elmer, Wilber
Neyens, Charles, Tilden, Korea
Noffke, Milvern, Hampton, Korea
North, Ray, Auburn, Korea
Obermiller, Dean E., Ravenna, Korea
Obrien, Mark, Geneva, SAL
Orcutt, Stephen G., Kearney, Vietnam
Ott, Wilbur H., Morse Bluff
Parsons, Patrick G., Papillion, Vietnam
Patrick, James C., Harvard, Vietnam
Patrick, Kenneth W., Grand Island, Korea
Peters, John W., Auburn, Vietnam
Peterson, Severt, Grand Island, Korea
Pierce, Charles W., Plattsmouth, Vietnam
Placek, Roland W., Wilbur, Vietnam
Placzek, Robert, Minden, Vietnam
- Plambeck, James E., Palmer, Vietnam
Post, Steven J., Grand Island, Vietnam
Primrose, John H., Fremont, Vietnam
Ralston, Larry W., Grand Island, WWII
Ready, Daniel F., Lincoln, Vietnam
Reed, Cody R., Ord, SAL
Reeder, Russell L., Fullerton, Vietnam
Reynolds, William H., Neligh, Vietnam
Rodine, Wallace E., North Platte, Korea
Roehr, Michael H., Millard, Vietnam
Rollman, Timothy F., Humphrey
Ronkar, Jerry, Columbus, Vietnam
Rowe, Thomas B., Hemingford, Vietnam
Rudy, Robert K., Alma, Vietnam
Runge, Howard, Culbertson, Other
Schank, Richard A., Central City, Vietnam
Scheierman, Arthur R., Sutton, Korea
Schlientz, Ray D., Gordon, Vietnam
Schroeder, Dennis L., Beatrice, Vietnam
Schroeder, Herbert F., Denton
Schuler, Vern, Hooper, Vietnam
Schwager, Elmer L., Springview, Korea
Sempek, Raymond F., Millard, Vietnam
Shaw, Robert, Edgar, Korea
Sheff, Charlotte A., Lincoln, Vietnam
Sheldon, Dale C., Bartlett, WWII
Siske, Donald L., Table Rock, Korea
Sladky, Bernard F., Wahoo, Korea
Sligar, David L., Hemingford, Vietnam
Smidt, Larry D., Blue Hill, Vietnam
Smith, Norbert C., Kearney, Vietnam
Snodgrass, Jerald A., York, Vietnam
Sostad, H. D., Elwood, Korea
Spilinek, Dale A., Hastings, Korea
Spotanski, Frank, Gibbon, Vietnam
Steffen, Donald A., West Point, Vietnam
Steinberger, Robert O., Lincoln, Korea
Stephan, Ralph G., South Sioux City, Vietnam
Swenson, Ronnie G., Oakland, Vietnam
Tellgren, Warren R., Gering, Korea
Trosper, Wren L., Edison, Korea
Tyree, Gary, Chadron, Vietnam
Vogeler, Craig A., North Loup, Lebanon/Grenada
Vopalensky, Albert E., Morse Bluff, Korea
Wacheldorf, Richard W., Columbus, Korea
Wackel, Robert E., Fremont, Korea
Wagner, Ralph E., Scribner
Walters, Douglas J., Bennington, Vietnam
Warneke, Duane A., Tilden, Korea
Webber, Marvin E., Cowles
Weers, Robert, Diller, Vietnam
Weiler, Mark P., Syracuse, Vietnam
Whitney, Daniel M., Syracuse, Vietnam
Wieting, Kenneth, Pierce, Korea
Winn, Ross M., Benson, Vietnam
Wolken, Marvin, Virginia, WWII
Wurdeman Ivan D., Creston, Vietnam
Yoble, Lawrence A., DuBois, Vietnam
Young, James C., Adams, Vietnam
Zautke, Kenneth D., Norfolk, Vietnam
Zbylut, James J., Omaha, Vietnam
Zelazny, Raymond E., Silver Creek, Vietnam

Correction: Gerry Wolf and Dr. William Jackson of Lincoln and Elmer Kubicek of Wilber are alive and well.

Events Calendar

October

- 2 - 8 Fall Meetings - Indianapolis, IN
12 Columbus Day - Office Closed
31 Commander's Homecoming - Chambers, NE

November

- 11 Veteran's Day - Office Closed
15 - 20 Americanism Conference - Indianapolis, IN
26 - 27 Thanksgiving - Office Closed

December

- 24 - 25 Christmas - Office Closed
31 - Jan 1 New Year's Eve and Day - Office Closed

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



Butte Post 51 participated in the 78th Annual Butte Pancake Days Parade and 250th Birthday Celebration. This year's parade theme, "Symbols of America," was reflected in the Legion's float, which featured a horse-drawn wagon carrying Legion members beneath banners reading, "America's Greatest Symbols Are Those Who Served" and "Our Veterans Are America's Living Legacy."

Mail Call

American Legion Department of Nebraska,

Thank you for this wonderful and very special opportunity. These scholarships will allow me to pursue my education while still playing baseball, and I am grateful for that. I had a lot of fun and made lots of memories playing Legion ball in the summer. I am so grateful for American Legion Baseball.

Thank you again,

Aaron Mack
Nebraska Player of the Year

Sons of The American Legion Membership As of September 28, 2026

District	2026 Members	2027 Members
1	311	131
2	609	115
3	238	106
4	363	28
5	134	7
6	1,354	275
7	786	214
8	797	238
9	294	95
10	298	62
11	1,125	282
12	305	93
13	114	16
15	134	123
Total	6,967	1,786



The Holt County Veterans Service Office presented Korean Veteran medals to the veterans in their county. Pictured top (L to R) back row CVSO Ken Stenka, Edward Pavel, 91 of O'Neill; Bill McElvain, 91 of Grand Island; Connie Murphy, 93 of Stuart. Pictured (L to R) front row Stan Thompson, 95 of Chambers; Don Cizek, 93 of Spencer; Jim Davis, 96 of Stuart; George Mumm, 93 of O'Neill; and Ralph Sholes, 91 of O'Neill. Pictured bottom (L to R) Ed Siebert, Gary Lech Sr, CVSO Ken Stenka.



Ashland Post 129 presented a certificate for 50 years of continuous membership to John Reid, who unfortunately passed away a few weeks later. Pictured (L to R) John Reid and Lynn "Hollywood" Beason.



Brainard Post and Squadron 273 celebrated America's 250th birthday at the Brainard Park with 200 members of the local community. Pictured (L to R) Dave Kastl, Don Raskey, Cory Kudlacek, Squadron Commander Adam Miller, Squadron Adjutant Kevin Behne, Post Adjutant Tom Pesek, Post Commander LaVern Fortik.



Benson Post 112 presented Quilts of Valor to its members. Pictured (L to R) David Dohse, Randy Davis (seated), Bruce Husted, Tom Robbins, Jan Robbins, and Ken Nisley.



Liberty Post 346 presented certificates for 50 years of continuous membership to two of its members. Pictured (L to R) Richard Barnard, Roger Theye, and Commander Charles Barr.



District 7 Commander Virgil Blum installed the newly elected Dodge County Officers at their annual meeting. Pictured (L to R) District Commander Virgil Blum, County Commander Barry Wilson, and County Vice Commander Jerry Schulte.



Polk Post 160 presented Don Miller with a Korean War Medal to honor his service on the Aircraft Carrier USS Princeton (CV-37). He served in the Navy during the Korean War. Pictured (L to R) Commander Brad Sundberg and Don Miller.



PDC Judy Walters presented District 1 Commander Jerry Fullerton with a certificate for 50 years of continuous membership during the District 1 Membership Tour.



Valparaiso Post 371 member Don Suchy was recognized as the Saunders County Veteran of the month at their August ceremony. Pictured (L to R) Cathleen Bohaty, PDC Don Suchy, and Marge Suchy.



Commander Doug Frahm presented Gavin Carrizales of Scottsbluff with the Junior Shooting Sports State Champion trophy and the State Team Champion trophy for his team.



Alliance Post 7 honor guard rendered final honors to life-long Legion member and World War II veteran Robert Whitlock.

DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT - VICKI CYBORON



What kind of rewarding memories have you accomplished in the past couple of months? Have you had time to get together with family? Remember, family can be your blood family, church/community family, or the Legion Family.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you in the next couple of

months at some of the fall meetings that will be occurring. One big event that is being held in October is our Leadership Training and Homecoming Dinner in Boelus on October 24, 2026. It is another full-circle event for me, having hosted my dad's Leadership and Homecoming Dinner in 2011.

Nebraska was chosen to have a Mission Training in Omaha this year. It is always an honor to have it in our state, so please plan to attend on November 14, 2026. www.legion-aux.org/meetings/mission-training. This is a one-day training course with our fellow Auxiliary members across the nation. My friend, whom I met at the Las Vegas meeting a couple of years ago, told me she is planning to attend in Omaha --- so it will be wonderful to see her.

Omaha was also chosen to host a training for The American Legion, The Sons of the American Legion, and our Juniors. Let's go and make more rewarding memories with our Legion Family.

The Nebraska American Legion Family is hosting events in November and December at the Nebraska VA Medical Centers and VA Homes. Dollar Days are around Veterans Day and are where we provide a small token of appreciation for each Veteran. Gifts for Yanks is in December and is another time we go and show gratitude to veterans and spouses at the different facilities. I highly recommend that you take a morning or afternoon to go to these events and take time to visit our heroes. Of course,, one of my favorite projects is the Gift

Shops, which are also in December. We provide gifts to the veterans that are given to family members or themselves.

Thank you to each of you and your units for all you do for our veterans, communities, and children. We witnessed many wonderful things at the National Convention, which was held the first week of September in Louisville, Kentucky. One change that came out was the new membership eligibility criteria for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary. Please reach out to our membership chair, Justina Birkel, or me if you have questions.

I would love to come and visit your meetings or events, so please send me your invitation. We want to know about the meetings and events.

Please share them on the **Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary Facebook** Group page. If you are not a friend on this page, please follow us.

"The greatest reward of any accomplishment is the story you get to tell — and the people you get to tell it with."

Vicki Cyboron
Department President



NATIONAL CONVENTION 2026 – LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY



Nebraska's ALA delegates at the state caucus.

The 2025-2026 Auxiliary year was capped off at the National Convention in Louisville, KY August 29 - September 3, 2026. The 21 Nebraska delegates arrived ahead of the August 29 Pre-Convention meetings. Designated delegates attended the Credentials, Rules, and Resolutions meetings.

At the Credentials Committee meeting, it was reported there were 902 registered delegates to the convention. Many attended the afternoon Constitution & Bylaws meeting. This year, there were only two proposed Constitution & Bylaws amendments. The committee gave its recommendation to the proposed amendment addressing expelled members that was presented by the Department of California,

(which was later defeated by a vote of the delegates). The clarification of the rights of Junior members proposed amendment was withdrawn by the Department of Kansas.

The delegates then attended the Northwestern Division Caucus led by Northwestern Division National Vice President Shareen Johnson of the Department of Wyoming. Twenty-four members of Nebraska were in attendance with a total of 122 members present from the Division.

Two Past National NW Division VPs passed away last year. The Department of South Dakota presented Jane Benzel as their candidate for the Division Vice President. Anna Mae Warnier of South Dakota also declared her candidacy for National Chaplain. Later, 34 Nebraskans

found themselves on an evening riverboat cruise down the Ohio River.

On Sunday morning, delegates found themselves at the Nebraska Caucus meeting receiving instructions from Delegate Chair Ruth Hietbrink for the upcoming sessions beginning Monday morning. Many attended the National Memorial Service and had fun outings on tours or at the baseball game.



Ruth Hietbrink

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings found us all in our seats for the business sessions. Awards were announced, guests were introduced, committee reports were given, and National headquarters staff were introduced.

The Membership Committee

presented what came out of the pre-convention meeting on August 12. Two proposed resolutions from Arizona and Iowa were reviewed. It was also noted that the American Legion agenda included a resolution to support gender neutral eligibility language. Because this resolution contained the language of both the Arizona and Iowa proposals, the committee gave their support to TAL resolution. The delegates voted to approve the decision of the Membership Committee. It was passed in The American Legion meeting, and new eligibility rules are now out along with new application forms showing these changes.

The following awards were presented to our Department, Units, and members:

- Most Outstanding Unit Poppy Program in the Northwestern Division – Pleasant Dale Unit 354
- Most Outstanding Unit Public Relations Program in the Northwestern Division – Gretna Unit 216
- Unit Member of the Year – Alvertus Jones of Polk Unit 160
- Certificate - Department of Nebraska for the Best VA & R Program in the Northwestern Division
- Certificate - Department of

Nebraska for the Best Education Program in the Northwestern Division

- Certificate – Emma Keiser, Northwestern Division Class VI, Best Essay – Americanism Essay Contest
- Certificate – Deniel Ammon, Northwestern Division Class III Winner – Poppy Poster Contest

Monday afternoon saw those who had signed up attending breakout sessions. Tuesday evening found some at the National Commanders' banquet.

Wednesday saw the election and installation of national officers for our 2026-2027 year. Newly installed President Coral Mae Grout of the Department of Massachusetts challenged us to "Be a Beacon for our Veterans" with a Lighthouse as her symbol. National President Pam Ray closed her successful year of "Mission Driven – Family Focused" and concluded the day on Wednesday evening with family, friends, and guests at the Auxiliary States Dinner.

It was another successful year and convention. We are all looking forward to the 2027 convention in Kansas City.

Roxanne M. Hiatt
Department Secretary

In Remembrance EVELYN DVORAK



Evelyn Dvorak, 99, of St. Paul, passed away peacefully Thursday, September 10, 2026, at Matelyn Retirement Community in St. Paul. Evelyn was born June 12, 1927, on the family farm near St. Paul, the daughter of Anton and Rosie (Novotny) Blaha.

In 1949, Evelyn joined the American Legion Auxiliary and remained an active member of Unit 119 for 77 years. Throughout those years, she held numerous offices and leadership positions at the local, district, state and national levels, including Unit President, District 6 President, Department President (1982-1983) and Northwestern

Divisional National Vice President. Her theme as Department President was "Service is a Blooming Flower". She also served on numerous committees, was instrumental in organizing Nance de Paris Salon 769 of Eight & Forty, and attended more than 30 National Conventions.

One of Evelyn's proudest accomplishments came in 2017, when her dream of an Exhibition Hall at the Historical Village became a reality following many generous donations. Her dedication to preserving and sharing local history left a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Her community involvement

also included membership on the RC & D Tourism Committee, Howard County Tourism Committee and Gage Valley Extension Club, as well as serving as a 4-H leader.

She is survived by her five children and their spouses, Bob and Betty Dvorak, Sharon and Ken Zlomke, Ron and Julie Dvorak, Roger and Karol Dvorak, and Randy and Karen Dvorak; 11 grandchildren and three step-grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren and 11 step-great-grandchildren; six great-great-grandchildren; as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Evelyn was preceded in death by

her parents, Anton and Rosie Blaha; her husband, Alvin, in 1980; brother and sister-in-law, Leo and Ruth Blaha; daughter-in-law, Barbara (Holt) Dvorak; special friend, Ray Leth; and numerous aunts, uncles and friends.

Evelyn's life was centered around her family, faith, service and community. Her flowers, cards, dancing, dedication to veterans and local history, and most of all, her love for her family will be remembered for generations to come.

Evelyn was a dedicated Auxiliary member, a lovely lady and friend to all. She will be remembered and missed by many.

DAYKIN UNIT 198 CELEBRATES

The Daykin Auxiliary Unit 198 participated in the Daykin Days Celebration to honor the USA’s 250th Birthday, to recognize the 25th Anniversary of 9-11, and to honor our veterans. Three Quilts of Valor were presented. Pictured receiving



their quilts are Ray Baldwin, Gene Niederklein, and Robert Houser. Also honored was WW II Veteran, Maurice Costellow, who lives in Ohiowa and will turn 100 years old. Maurice is pictured as he shared some memories with those in attendance.



Unit 175 from Jackson took the Challenge of 250 items + another 100 and delivered them to the Norfolk Veterans Home in July. Members pictured are Jackie Weil, Rita Langhorst, Maralyn Grimoskas, Rosemary Killian, Coleen Prenger, Joni Albrecht, Ruth Greenough, Linda Bloomfield, Phyllis Birkley, and Julie Kneiff.

OPPORTUNITY TO MEET A MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT

The Department of Nebraska utilizes Morgan Stanley for financial investments. Morgan Stanley is a proud sponsor of the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation, which pays tribute to the living recipients of the Medal of Honor (MOH). On Tuesday, July 21, a MOH reception was held in Omaha, and representatives from our Department were invited. Department staffers Roxanne Hiatt and Vicki Ozenbaugh attended the event. The evening opened with appetizers and cocktails, followed by remarks on Safeguarding Your Assets. The remaining part of the evening was dedicated to MOH Recipient Leroy Petry (a true American Hero) telling his story. Sergeant First Class Petry served in eight different deployments --- two in Operation Iraqi Freedom and six rotations in Operation Enduring Freedom. During his seventh deployment, in a rare daylight mission in Pakyta Province Afghanistan on May 26, 2008, Petry’s life would change forever. Within minutes of landing at the target, they were trapped and pinned down by a Taliban ambush. Directing the placement of his comrades, Leroy was shot through both legs. Despite his wounds, he continued to fight. Shortly thereafter, a

grenade landed in their midst. Without any regard for his own life, he picked it up to throw it back at the enemy. It detonated as he released it, severing his hand and part of his arm. Applying his own tourniquet to stem the bleeding, he continued the fight. For his actions that day, he received the Medal of Honor on July 12, 2011. This is a short part of his story. Petry received an advanced prosthetic in place of his right hand. For more information about Petry, look at <https://www.arm.mil/medalofhonor/petry> or https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leroy_Petry. We thank Morgan Stanley for this opportunity to meet a living MOH recipient, and it was a privilege to represent the Department of Nebraska ALA.



Pictured are Department Treasurer Vicki Ozenbaugh, Sergeant First Class Leroy Petry, and Department Secretary Roxanne Hiatt



Pictured is the Legion float for Utica Heritage Day's parade in July with Legion and Auxiliary members riding. The float with flags led the parade. On the float is a tiered cake to recognize 250th celebration made by unit president Diana Mooney using paper covered cardboard boxes. Little rubber ducks were tossed for the kids which was a big hit.

Remember to send your assignments a couple weeks before the month they are due.							
2026 - 2027 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
Oct.	#257 Eustis	#52 Kearney	#27 Beatrice	#62 Newcastle	#10 Morrill	#377 Wilcox	#232 Malmo
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
Jan.							
Feb.	#126 Broken Bow	#141 Hampton	#371 Valparaiso		#7 Alliance	#7 Alliance	#49 Utica
Mar.	#310 Gibbon		#353 Louisville		#17 Sidney	#7 Alliance	
Apr.				#70 West Point	#312 Broadwater	#312 Broadwater	
May	#290 Elwood						District 11 Jrs.
Jun.						#133 Culbertson	
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: Mary Ann Boldt · 79006 Drive 419, Callaway, NE 68825-2556 · Phone (308) 870-4772							

FARM FUN & LEADERSHIP

Growing up in town is so different from growing up on a farm. I know! I was the town girl who enjoyed playing outside with the neighborhood kids, riding my bicycle around town, getting to go swimming daily in the summer, and getting to fish at the Boys Pond (and it still is called that today) that was within city limits. But, what I looked forward to was when I could go to my grandma’s farm or to one of my uncle and aunt’s farms. I have many fun memories from those days! It is time to re-live some of those fun times! Well, not quite like it was back then, but we will have some FARM fun at President Vicki’s Leadership Training and Homecoming Dinner. If you have not heard, it is on Saturday, October 24, in Boelus. Registration begins at 10:00 AM and the training at 10:30 AM. There will be a free-will lunch and more training in the afternoon before the Homecoming Dinner at 5:30 PM. If you can’t come for the whole event, you are welcome to come for the training. Now, for those who received the September Special Edition Newsletter (or your Unit President shared it), you can probably quit reading at this point. I am going to share that information with the many ALA members who probably have not read/heard it. Calling all “FARM-hands (members)!” It is time to gather at President Vicki’s FARM for some “down on the farm” training. There has been a “crop rotation,” and the new Farm Managers (Department Chairs) are ready to prepare the “FARM-hands” on the newest roles for tending the livestock. And, we have a farmyard full of livestock. Thirteen different animals (do you know what your District President chose?) roam our acreage. As we all know, each has a specific role in making our farm a success. So, as the farmhands, you will want to learn what you can do to make this Nebraska farm stand out. A fun afternoon of “barn-raising” activities and friendly competition is planned. Come dressed for the farm (shirt, blue jeans, boots, and farm hats are allowed) as you know you can get dirty on the farm! Don’t forget your work gloves! The “barn” is located at 614 Delaware St. in Boelus. Registration begins at 10:00 AM with ALAMIS training by Membership Farm Manager Justina, starting at 10:30 AM. You do not need to register for the training, however, you do need to RSVP for the homecoming banquet by Friday, October 9. (If you are reading this after that date, remember that you can come for just the training, but give President Vicki a call [402-740-5665] to see about the Homecoming Dinner.) As the Leadership Farm Manager, I would love to see every district represented. Two special farm awards will be given. One to the district with the highest percentage of units present and the other to the highest percentage of district membership present. Car pool with neighboring units to fill up your “wagon” and head to Boelus on October 24! You won’t regret it.

Vicki Ozenbaugh, Leadership Chair

NEBRASKA AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY VA & R 2026 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

DOLLAR DAYS—GIFT SHOPS—GIFTS FOR YANKS—STAND DOWNS—CREATIVE ARTS

STAND DOWN: Lincoln - Linda Varejcka - TBD
Omaha - Paula Pillen - TBD
CREATIVE ARTS: Omaha - Linda Varejcka - TBD
Grand Island - TBD - Items will be displayed at the State Fair Event

Please plan to arrive at all events one-half hour before the event time.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY (ALA) VETERANS DOLLAR DAY DISTRIBUTIONS

Tuesday, November 3, 2026: 10:00AM Grand Island VA Medical Ceenter - 2nd Floor Rec
2:00PM Central NE Veterans Home, Kearney
Wednesday, November 4, 2026: 10:00AM Lincoln Regional Center - Building 5
Thursday, November 5, 2026 2:00PM Norfolk Veterans Home, Norfolk
Norfolk Regional Center
Tuesday, November 10, 2026 10:00AM Omaha VA Medical Center
1:00AM Eastern NE Veterans Home, Bellevue
3:00AM Papillion Community Living Center
Sunday, November 15, 2026 2:00PM Western NE Veterans Home, Scottsbluff

ALA VETERANS MEDICAL CENTER GIFT SHOPS

Monday, December 7, 2026 9:30AM Shopping at Walmart, setup follows Grand Island VAMC
Thursday, December 8, 2026 9:00AM Gift Shop prep
10:00AM Open for Veterans
Monday, December 14, 2026 10:00AM Set up - Omaha VA Medical Center
December 15 - 16, 2026 10:00AM Delivery - Omaha VA Medical Center
Thursday, December 17, 2026 10:00AM Gift Shop - Papillion Community Living Center (PCLC)

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY GIFT FOR YANKS WHO GAVE

Tuesday, December 1, 2026 10:00AM Grand Island VA MEDical Center - 2nd Floor Rec
2:00AM Central NE Veterans Home, Kearney
Wednesday, December 2, 2026 10:00AM Lincoln Regional Center - Building 5
Sunday, December 6, 2026 2:00PM MT Western NE Veterans Home, Scottsbluff
Tuesday, December 8, 2026 10:00AM Omaha VA Medical Center
1:00PM Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home
2:30PM Papillion Community Living Center
Friday, December 11, 2026 2:00PM Norfolk Veterans Home, Norfolk
Norfolk Regional Center
Saturday, December 12, 2026 2:00PM MT Hot Springs, SD VAMC

Gift cards for Cheyenne, WY VAMC sent to Bonita Dickinson to deliver to the facility at convenience.

Vicki Cyboron
Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary
Department President

Leadership Training & Homecoming

Schedule of Events

SESSION ONE	SESSION TWO
10:00 AM – 10:30 AM Registration	12:30 PM – 1:00 PM Registration
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM Representative from the VA • Caregiving • Membership • ALAMIS Training & Eligibility	1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Leadership Training 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM Gold Nugget Social Time & Banquet Setup
12:00 PM – 12:45 PM Freewill Lunch	5:00 PM – 5:30 PM Social Hour Boelus Civic Center 5:30 PM Dinner

Boelus Civic Center
614 Delaware Street
Boelus, NE 68820

ALEXANDRIA UNIT 194 — MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM

The Alexandria American Legion Post and Auxiliary Unit 194 had an in-person Memorial Day program, the first in-person event since 2019.

American Legion Auxiliary members recognized for their years of service were:

Nancy Baden, 63 years.
Donna Durflinger, 63 years.
Heidi Durflinger, 45 years.
Sandy Kueker, 45 years.
Katherine Kueker, 22 years.
Nancy Bond, 66 years.
Sabrina Williams, 48 years.
Trinity Ferroggiaro, 22 years.
Pauline Gross, 66 years.
Megan Baroldi, 41 years.
Marisa Cook, 39 years.
Morgan Montgomer, 37 years.
Kathy Retzlaff, 66 years.
Emily Retzlaff, 35 years.
Elizabeth Retzlaff, 39 years.
JoAnne Fink, 62 years.
Rhonda Burkhart, 59 years.
Betty Bulin, 43 years.
Heather Hull, 46 years.
Cindy Lugin, 58 years.

Pictured is our Memorial Table recognizing deceased American Legion Member Dale Pletcher, Auxiliary Member Marla Jean Pletcher, and Community Member Jim Durflinger.

American Legion members recognized were:

Gary Mau, 47 years,
Army, Vietnam,
2 Bronze Stars, Purple Heart
Kathy Retzlaff, 54 years,
Army, Vietnam
Roger Retzlaff, 52 years,
Army, Vietnam
Tom Votipka, 46 years,
Army, Vietnam
Bob Summers, 28 years,
Navy, Vietnam, State side
Dave Summers, 46 years,
Navy, Vietnam
Steve Summers, 26 years,
Navy, Persian Gulf
Joe Summers, 20 years,
Army National Guard, Army,
3 tours
Tim Summers, 28 years,
Army National Guard, Army,
1 tour, Enlistment Officer



Grand Island Girls State delegates presented their report to Grand Island Unit 53 on August 5. All 3 of the girls are from Grand Island Senior High School.



Nebraska American Legion and Auxiliary members were among many who celebrated with Past National President Carol Van Kirk at the Fox Hollow Golf Course in Sutton on August 16th on the occasion of her 90th birthday.

A YEAR I WILL ALWAYS TREASURE

As I look back on my year as Department President of the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary, I find myself feeling incredibly grateful. This year has been filled with memories, challenges, accomplishments, and --- most importantly --- wonderful people who stood beside me every step of the way.

One of the greatest honors of my year was achieving the Merit Medallion. This accomplishment was not mine alone; it was made possible because of the dedication and support of so many Auxiliary members. I want to give a very special thank-you to Barb Washburn, my mentor, for her guidance, encouragement, and friendship throughout this journey. I could not have asked for a better mentor.

To each of my chairmen, thank you for the terrific job you did this year. Knowing that I could count on you to carry out your programs and responsibilities gave me confidence throughout the year. Your dedication to the American Legion Auxiliary and the veterans and families we serve is truly appreciated.

I also want to give a very special thank-you to my sister, Debra Albers, who was such an important part of my year. As our membership chair, she absolutely rocked membership! Her enthusiasm, dedication, and determination made a tremendous difference. Having my sister beside me throughout this year made it even more special, and I am so grateful for everything she did to help make my year a success.

And, I cannot forget our wonderful Department Secretary, Roxann. She did an amazing job throughout the year and was always there to help keep things running smoothly. Her knowledge, dedication, patience, and willingness to help were invaluable to me. Roxann, thank you for everything you did to support me and the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary. I truly appreciated knowing I could count on you.

There were many special moments during my year, but one that will remain in my heart forever was presenting a Quilt of Valor to a 103-year-old veteran at the Norfolk Veterans Home. Being able to honor him with that quilt was an incredibly emotional and humbling

experience. It reminded me why we do what we do and why our work for our veterans is so important.

My President’s Project, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF), was another very special part of my year. I want to thank every member who supported this project. Whether you purchased a raffle ticket, donated, helped sell tickets, or simply encouraged the project, you played a part in making it successful.

A very special thank-you goes to all the district members who donated items for the silent auction and helped create the beautiful gift baskets. The generosity and thoughtfulness that went into each basket gave them so much value and made the auction truly special. Along with the beautiful quilted items that were donated by Donna Hatfield, these contributions helped make the silent auction a wonderful success and raised additional funds for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. I am so grateful to everyone who donated, helped organize, and supported the auction. It truly shows what we can accomplish when we work together.

I am equally grateful to everyone who supported the pork raffle. Your generosity will help provide equipment for the Norfolk Veterans Home, making a difference in the lives of the veterans who call it home. Every ticket purchased and every contribution made a difference.

As my year comes to an end, I realize that the greatest accomplishment of all was not a number, an award, or a project. It was the people I met, the friendships I made, and the opportunity to serve alongside so many dedicated Auxiliary members.

To each and every one of you, I want you to know that you are special to me and you will always have a place in my heart. Thank you for believing in me, supporting me, encouraging me, and helping make this such a terrific year.

I am proud of what we accomplished together, but even more proud to have had the privilege of serving as your Department President.

Thank you for a year I will treasure always.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Ruth Hietbrink
Retiring Department President

DONATIONS TO THE ALA

Do you take the standard deduction on your taxes? You may now be able to deduct your giving, too. U.S. federal income tax law changed this year, and effective in 2026, non-itemizers can deduct up to \$1,000 (\$2,000 married filing jointly) from their taxable income for cash contributions to qualified entities --- which include the American Legion Auxiliary and Cornhusker Girls State.

Individual donations are always welcome. Donations can be made to your local unit for designated or undesignated purposes. Donations can also be received directly by the Department. If you have a favorite program that you would like to support or if you are just willing to make an undesignated donation to help keep the lights on, please consider sending a donation to:

American Legion Auxiliary
150 NW 40th Street – Unit B
Lincoln, NE 68528

The American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Nebraska is a 501(c)(19) tax-exempt veterans service organization. The Cornhusker Girls State program operates under the umbrella of the Auxiliary and is a recognized 501 (c) (3) nonprofit entity.

Consult your tax advisor with any questions about the deductibility of your contributions.

Donna Hatfield
Finance Chair



ALA Unit 301 members Shirley Melton and Chris Lind honored Regan Moore, Department Third Place poppy poster winner. She artistically created a Poppy Poster to honor our nation’s Veterans. American Legion Auxiliary Unit 301 is very proud of her!

BIG NEWS FOR ALA MEMBERSHIP!

The American Legion Family is growing — and so are we!

At the 2026 American Legion National Convention, delegates approved a major update to membership eligibility for the American Legion Auxiliary. This change opens the door for even more family members to join our mission of serving veterans, military, and their families.

This expanded, gender-neutral eligibility means more loved ones,

more helping hands, and more heart in everything we do. It also allows some individuals to be part of both the Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary — strengthening our entire Legion Family.

If you’ve ever wondered whether someone in your circle could join, now is the perfect time to check. The update is effective immediately, and new resources are already available. Get all the details straight from National

Headquarters.

Read the full blog post here:
<https://www.legion-aux.org/Blog/New-eligibility-resolution-expands-ALA-membership>

Let’s welcome new members, grow our impact, and continue showing what the ALA is all about — Service, Not Self.

Justina Birkel
Membership Chair

MEMBERSHIP!

On Labor Day, the Nebraska American Legion Family had a resource table set up at the State Fair before the Veterans Day program. This was a great idea and was well attended. I thank all of the Nebraska American Legion family that helped make it a success.

When we asked attendees if they were a member of the Legion family, a really common response was “I am, but don’t know when meetings are” or “I am, but don’t really get involved much.” I encourage unit presidents to reach out to their members and invite them to unit meetings, Fall Round Up, and Leadership Training. Sometimes, all it takes is to ask. When I first

became a unit president, we had a 96-year-old member who would call members the day of the meeting as a reminder. Those meetings had some of the best attendance!

Communication is a key factor in having a successful unit. To all members, I ask that if you are reading this, please reach out to your Unit President or Unit Membership Chair to verify your contact information is correct. National emails out a newsletter every month, so if you do not receive this by email, it may need to be updated. This would also help your unit complete The Tack Room Cleanup Challenge.

I look forward to seeing everyone

at Leadership Training on October 24th in Boelus. That morning, we are going to do some ALAMIS training. If you have been debating using this for your unit, please come check it out. If you already use it and are struggling with the new update, come and we will see if we can figure it out.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need any help or have any questions. I would love to help you! Call or Text 402-389-0537 or email me at jbirkel.ala@gmail.com

Justina Birkel
Membership Chair

CHAPLAINS CORNER

As the golden days of autumn transition into the crisp chill of late fall, October and November invite us into a sacred season of remembrance and thanksgiving.

October: A Time of Remembrance

October turns our hearts toward reflection. As leaves fall and nature prepares for rest, we remember our departed veterans, Legion family members, and Auxiliary sisters who have laid down their burdens. Their service and dedication remain a beacon for us all.

• **Prayer for Comfort:** Let us lift up those in our community who are grieving or facing health challenges this month. A simple phone call, a warm card, or a quiet prayer can bring immense comfort to a lonely heart.

• **Ongoing Care:** Reach out to fellow members. As chaplains, our mission is to offer a listening ear and a steady, compassionate presence.

November: Is A Season of Gratitude

November brings us face-to-face with Veterans Day and Thanksgiving. It is a time to pause and give profound thanks for the freedoms we enjoy because of the sacrifices of our veterans and their families.

• **Counting Blessings:** Let us give thanks for our active-duty military, our veterans, and the fellowship we share within the American Legion Auxiliary.

• **Prayer of Thanks:** Gracious God, we thank you for the hands that serve, the hearts that care, and the enduring spirit of our veteran community. Watch over our deployed troops and bring them safely home to their families.

May your autumn be filled with peace, reflection, and abundant blessings.

Lindsay Brown
Department Chaplain

BURCHARD AUXILIARY CELEBRATES

Early in 1926, a group of ladies in the Burchard/Lewiston community applied and were approved for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Nebraska. Their charter states, "The required number of persons duly qualified for membership having applied therefore and such application having been approved in due form"; hence, they were granted a charter signed by 28 ladies to establish the Burchard American Legion Auxiliary Unit #156.

On Sunday, September 9, a celebration was held to honor their 100 years of service to Veterans. A short program was held with the

reciting of the Pledge to the Flag, singing the Star-Spangled Banner, introduction of all the special guests, and reviewing the highlights of the Unit's history over the past 100 years. Esther Tegtmeier and Shirley Malone were recognized for their many years of continuous, dedicated membership with a special certificate and plant. (Esther (right) for 76 years and Shirley (left) for 68 years.

Door prizes were presented to guests, followed by singing God Bless America. The afternoon concluded with refreshments of ice cream and cake and visiting.



The Nebraska American Legion Family was well represented at the 2026 Nebraska State Fair on Monday, September 7.

OSCEOLA

The theme of the Osceola Annual Garden Tour this year was AMERICA 250. Memorabilia from Osceola Unit #91 was on display from the past to the present.

The Auxiliary's stainless steel Veteran's Bench sits proudly at the Veterans' Wall. Rosie the Riveter, Vicki Jones, an auxiliary member, displayed a book with local veterans' pictures and their names. A poem about Flanders Field gave visitors an opportunity to learn about the meaning of the poppy, give a donation, and wear a poppy throughout the day. Another display was of our Gold Star Sister who lost her brother during the war when she was 3 years old. Their picture and the telegram from the U.S. Military that stated he was killed in action were on display



Dot Hall and Shirley Melton from Dalton Unit 301 made 400 Chocolate Chip cookies for Back to School Night at Leyton Schools as a service project for families in our communities.



Members of Beatrice Unit 27 joined forces with the Salvation Army to help children in need get ready for the school year through the Ready, Set, Go backpack program. The picture included shows part of the backpacks filled by Unit members: President Trudy Spicer, Roni Mohr, Gina Weishahn, Braelyn Hibbert, Brielle Hibbert and non-member Broderick Hibbert and Salvation Army volunteers. Unit 27 also donated \$200.00 to the Ready, Set, Go Program to help purchase the school supplies.

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 NOV 10, 2026.

NEVER LOSE TOUCH

Recently, a friend wrote to me to report that she finally went to see an elderly relative in the nursing home and was touched by how many others in the facility she'd known.

When was the last time you went to a facility? The stark fact we need to remember is, no one WANTS to be so dependent on others that they must move there. We all have dreams of our later years, and they rarely include moving from our homes. The secret to those who not only survive but thrive in the world of long-term care comes down to one major component --- the Activity Department. A strong activity director keeps the building lively with special guests, games, children, pets, and --- you guessed it --- MUSIC!

So, whether you play an instrument, sing, or lead a group,

please don't forget to share the talents God gave you with those who would appreciate you the most. (As a nurse home staff veteran, I am inclined to add: if you play cribbage, pitch, have small children or baby kittens/puppies, and the like, simply contact the activity director to see if you can share!)

The nights are getting longer, and your light is needed. Just don't forget --- you may be in their shoes one day, so never lose touch with our treasured elders. And KEEP SINGING!

Jean Vackiner
Music Chair



In Memoriam

Received June 10 to September 10, 2026

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4TH OF JULY FAMILY AFFAIR!

Daughters and granddaughters of Bill and Elaine Schorn march for the American Legion Auxiliary in the 4th of July parade in Stuart. Bill was a member of the American Legion color guard, and Elaine was in the Auxiiary unit,

Pictured from back to front is Courtney Batenhorst (Las Vegas, Nevada), Justine Delancey (Longville, Louisiana, Angie Olberding (Stuart, Nebraska), and Erin Kitt (Malcolm, Nebraska).

"We thought it was fun to have 4 family members of the same family

represent the American Legion Auxiliary."

Angie Olberding

