

A New Beginning



Pictured (L to R) Bob Hurley, Burdette Burkhart, John Hilgert, Greg Holloway, Jerry Cummings, Governor Pete Ricketts, Ed Malk, John Arias, Randy Meyers, Jason Lybarger, Mike Tumbleson, and Robert Holbert.

In 2016 the first Veteran Treatment Court (VTC) was established in Nebraska, specifically Douglas County. This new program was brought in from Buffalo, New York to help Nebraska veterans transition back into civilian life. Judge Robert Russell started the program in Buffalo in 2008 from the cases he saw in the Drug and Mental Health courts affecting veterans. These veterans were trying to cope with no longer having the military structure that they had when they were serving our great country. After Judge Russell started his VTC Program, another similar program was created in 2010, Justice for Vets (JFV) which helps with the rollouts of VTC programs. This non-profit is dedicated to transforming the way the justice system identifies, assesses, and treats our veterans, leading the national effort to put a VTC in reach of every veteran in need. In doing so, we keep veterans out of jail and prison, preventing the loss of one of our nation’s greatest assets to our families and communities, and connect them with the benefits and treatment they have earned. JFV has over 250 VTC, trained over 3,000 court staff, and conducted over 40 volunteer veteran mentor boot camp trainings. You can read more about them at www.justiceforvets.org or follow them on Twitter, @justice4vets.

These Veteran Treatment Courts give veterans a second chance to establish a substance-free lifestyle. They receive the necessary skills to help them with their sobriety. The VTC is made up of District Judges, County Attorneys, Public Defenders, Probation Officers, the police, mental health, and substance abuse counselors. The Veterans Affairs shares their staff and fellow veterans who help mentor the VTC participants. This program lasts 18-24 months depending on each case. It is an intensive program with weekly testing and veterans must either find a job or go to college, and they must meet their financial and family responsibilities. Veterans receive Department of Veterans

Affairs and State counseling to address their physical and mental health needs, all while saving the tax-payers hundreds of dollars. In short, VTC is designed to help justice-involved veterans develop life habits and skills which enable them to live as law-abiding, productive citizens.

A fellow veteran and a Lincoln Attorney, Jim Cada, was one of the driving forces to get the VTC established in Nebraska. The Lancaster County Veteran Treatment Court (LCVTC) was established in April of 2017, followed by a VTC in Central Nebraska in 2021 with the help of Judge Ryan Carson. Jerry Cummings, an LCVTC mentor, said “These veterans are truly remarkable, it’s wonderful to see them grow as individuals and repair their relationships with family and friends as they go through the treatment process.” He added that he’s also enjoyed building personal relationships with his fellow mentors, about half of whom are Vietnam veterans.

On November 22, 2021, John Arias, Jerry Cummings, Jason Lybarger, Burdette Burkhart, and others presented Governor Pete Ricketts with a Lancaster County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coin in appreciation of his unwavering support for Nebraska veterans. Our Department American Legion Rider Liaison, John Arias, is very involved with Nebraska’s VTC, mentoring multiple veterans. When asked about his reasoning for volunteering, Arias said, “To mentor veterans and help them get back on their feet. Mentoring veterans is not a yearly or monthly commitment, it usually involves daily or weekly contact. I used to drive to Lincoln from Wood River every week to sit in court with my veteran mentee; it was at least a four-hour, weekly commitment, not to mention the hours talking on the phone or texting each day.” Arias’s reasoning sounds similar to Theodore Roosevelt Jr.’s reasoning for creating The American Legion in the first place. Every veteran and civilian benefits from having a support system.

Along with the great people involved with the program, there are also the judges that work with this program to help those in their communities. “The judges set the tone for this program and we’re lucky to have Judges Robert R. Otte and John A. Colborn. These men are fair, engaging with the vets, consistent in their application of punishments and rewards. They are patient and sincere. They treat everyone with respect,” said Cummings. The LCVTC also honored the Honorary Chief Justice Michael Heavican at a secondary coin ceremony. Heavican has helped the program and those involved with it to be able to stay on task and implement more change for our veterans. For many people, this system helps them get back on track to a more fulfilling life, maybe a new beginning.

Thank you, John Arias, Jerry Cummings, and Burdette Burkhart for assisting with the information in this article.



VTC mentor John Arias spoke about the program and how Governor Ricketts has helped it benefit. Pictured (R to L) Governor Pete Ricketts and John Arias.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

The Nebraska Legionnaire

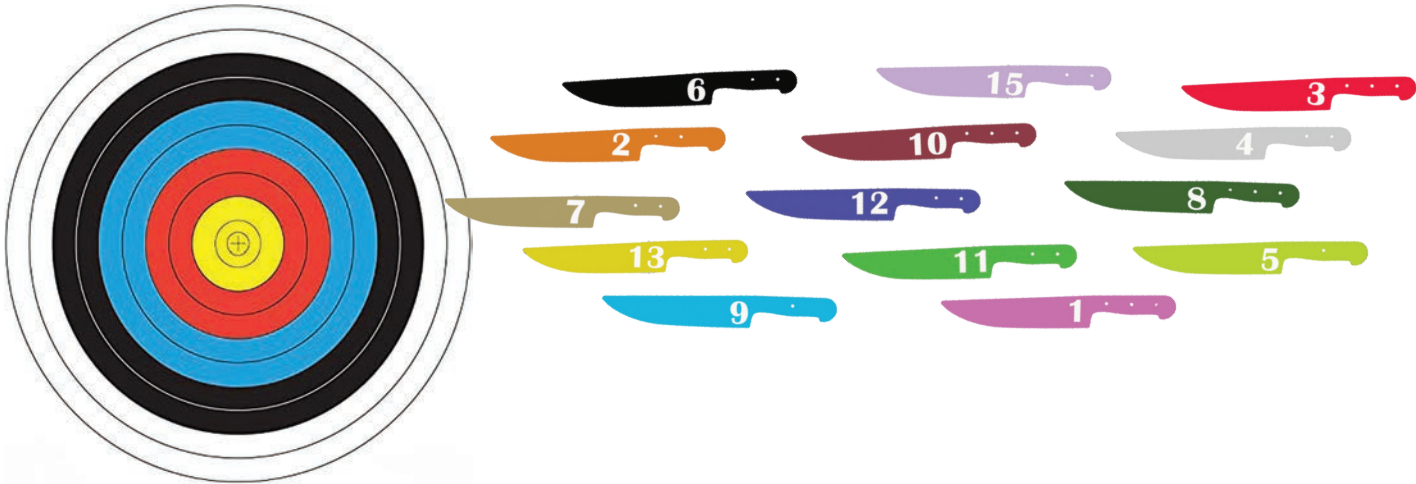
P.O. Box 5205

Lincoln, NE 68505-0205

100% FOR TARGET

2022 MEMBERSHIP GOAL: 26,097 DECEMBER 15TH TOTAL: 19,771 – 75.76%

DISTRICT 7 - 79.20%	DISTRICT 2 - 78.70%	DISTRICT 13 - 77.94%	DISTRICT 6 - 77.14%	DISTRICT 9 - 76.46%
DISTRICT 12 - 76.16%	DISTRICT 10 - 73.08%	DISTRICT 11 - 75.50%	DISTRICT 15 - 75.30%	DISTRICT 1 - 75.26%
DISTRICT 8 - 74.30%	DISTRICT 4 - 71.83%	DISTRICT 5 - 70.96%	DISTRICT 3 - 69.93%	





Commander's Corner

Dan Benes
Department Commander



The traveling highlights continue with always meeting amazing Legionnaires and seeing the great things they do. Thank you. Recently I was invited to a meet and greet with United States Congressman Don Bacon. He is also a Nebraska American Legion Member who earned his eligibility by serving in the United States Air Force for 30 years. He was visiting Saunders County and stopped in Valparaiso while traveling. He shared information on many topics and gave his perspectives. The Congressman also answered questions from the group. He is a solid supporter of the military and our veterans. We thank him for his support.



Valparaiso Post 371 had three members receive a Quilt of Valor. Pictured (L to R) Dennis Potter, Post Commander Don Kobza, and Gary Dudek.

During November I attended a breakfast at Valparaiso Post 371 and witnessed three Vietnam veterans receive their Quilts of Valor. It's a good thing to see and honor our veterans for serving our country. On November 24, my wife and I attended Weston American Legion Post 308 annual Pre-Thanksgiving Supper. The Windsor loins were delicious, and the crowd was great. This is an excellent fundraiser with good community support. A job well done. Thank you, Post 308 Legionnaires and S.A.L.

On December 7 - 9, Adjutant Dave and I attended site coordination meetings in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for our National

American Legion Convention to be held August 26 – September 1, 2022. This Convention will be informative and exciting with many sites to visit. The accommodations are great. Information about the National Convention will be shared at our Department Mid-Year Convention in Columbus on January 21 - 23, 2022. Our Mid-Year at Ramada Inn, Columbus is fast approaching. We have a great schedule that will be educational, informative, and fun. Hope to see you there.

Membership and teamwork continue to be very important at every level. Share information about our great organization. Everyone knows someone that is eligible for membership in the American Legion. Help them out – ask them to become a member! I am asking every Post to stay engaged and continue to help Nebraska meet our goals. Thank you for your dedicated support.

For God and Country



Commander Benes in front of Lake Michigan while in Milwaukee.

NEBRASKA AMERICAN LEGION

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Commander.....Dan Benes, Valparaiso
Senior Vice Commander.....Don Suchy, Valparaiso
Area A Vice Commander.....Michael Sheridan, Omaha
Area B Vice Commander.....William Berney, Spalding
Area C Vice Commander.....James Doyen, Hastings
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Judge Advocate.....William Harris, Omaha
Finance Officer.....Mark Novak, Dawson
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Dist. 10.....Roger Griffiths, Trumbull
Dist. 11.....Rodd Paul, Western
Dist. 12.....William Lawrence, Nehawka
Dist. 13.....Larry Borchert, Pawnee City
Dist. 15.....Ed Muggy, Lincoln

Mid-Year Conference Program

It's time to start putting together our Mid-Year Conference Program and the Department is selling space in the program for individuals or businesses to advertise. Please ask around your community to garner support. All ads and payment must be received before January 5, 2022. The program is 8.5 x 5.5 in size. Please contact Kylea at Headquarters.


\$10.00 page split into eight sections
\$20.00 page split into four sections
\$30.00 Page split into two sections
\$60.00 Full page

Mid-Year Agenda

Friday, January 21, 2022
10:00 a.m. DEC Meeting
12:00 – 4:00 p.m. Registration

Saturday, January 22, 2022
7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Registration
8:00 a.m. Joint Session
10:00 a.m. Breakout Sessions
6:00 p.m. Oratorical Contest

Sunday, January 23, 2022
7:30 – 11:30 a.m. Registration
8:00 a.m. Joint Religious Service
9:00 a.m. Joint Session



The NEBRASKA Legionnaire

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Kylea Pestel, Editor
Dave Salak, Publisher's Representative

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


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Mail this form to The American Legion, PO Box 5205, Lincoln, NE 68505, or you can email the information to kzpestel@windstream.net



It's History

Jennifer Laux
Department Historian





POW/MIA

Boyd Yochum
POW/MIA Liaison



American Legion Department of Nebraska History Word Search

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

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

January/February 1942 (80 years ago)

- HUBBLE Post No. 317 designated four of its members for appointments as deputy SHERIFFS under the county sheriff. The post also has a committee to cooperate with the FBI office.
- Purchase of one DEFENSE BOND each month out of the proceeds earned by the organization marks the first step in the WAR-time program established by John Farley Post No. 86 of ATKINSON.
- Post No. 43 of WAYNE has donated \$25 to the Red Cross and has pledged to buy defense STAMPS every time it meets. The post buys \$1 worth of stamps and this is offered as a prize to some members who have bought at least 25 cents in stamps.

January/February 1952 (70 years ago)

- Nearly 300 American Legion Posts and Auxiliary Units in the Department of Nebraska contributed gifts or money for the “GIFTS for YANKS Who Gave” program this year. Over 1,000 packages and over \$1,000 were sent in to make a happier CHRISTMAS for hospitalized Veterans.
- One hundred fifty members of Hay Springs Post turned out on the evening of January 16 to greet Department Commander Peter MARCHETTI and enjoy a deer BARBEQUE prepared and served by Vice Commander Don Strotheide and the members of his losing team in the 1952 membership drive.

January/February 1972 (50 years ago)

- Funeral services were held Tuesday, December 21 for Frank B. O’Connell, 79, Lincoln, who passed away after a lingering illness. Col. O’Connell was named the first Department of Nebraska ADJUTANT in 1919, a position he held for seven years. A CHARTER member of the organization, he also served as Commander of Lincoln Post 3 and later served as Department HISTORIAN for several years.
- Two bills, H.R. 11651 and 11652, relating to improving veterans’ PENSION rates and providing for a 10 percent increase in the monthly dependency and indemnity compensation rates, have been signed into law by President NIXON. The two bills are the direct result of a resolution originating in the Department Rehab and Employment Committee. The resolution was adopted at Department Convention at North Platte and sent to National Convention in Houston for further approval.

One Aircraft, Two Nebraska Marines:

Captain Doyle Robert Sprick entered the U.S. Marine Corps from Fort Calhoun and Second Lieutenant Delmar George Booze entered the U.S. Marine Corps from Omaha. Both were members of the Marine Attack Fighter Squadron 314, Marine Air Group 11, 1st Marine Air Wing. Sprick was the pilot and Booze was the bombardier/navigator aboard their McDonnell Douglas F4-B Phantom II.

The F4-B Phantom used by the Air Force, Marines, and Navy air wings served a multitude of functions, including fighter/bomber, interceptor, photo/electronic surveillance, and reconnaissance. The two-man aircraft was extremely maneuverable and handled well at low and high altitudes. Most pilots considered it one of the “hottest” planes around.

On January 24, 1966, Doyle R Sprick, pilot, and Delmar G Booze, radar intercept officer, comprised the crew of an F4-B that departed Da Nang Air Base in a flight of F4-B Phantoms on a strike mission into enemy-held territory northwest of Da Nang. The crew of another aircraft in the flight consisted of Capt. Albert Pitt of Hampstead, NY and Lawrence N. Helper of Logan, Ohio.

At 1005 hours, both F4-B Phantoms rolled in to attack an enemy target hidden in the lush, jungle-covered foothills rising out of the coastal plains. After a successful drop, they both pulled off target and were on their way back to Da Nang Air Base. That was the last radio transmission from either aircraft reported.

Extensive visual and electronic search and rescue efforts were initiated for the fighters that were believed to have been downed by enemy ground fire. Because the area of loss was under total enemy control at the time, no ground search was possible. When no wreckage was found for either aircraft and no contact with either aircrew could be established, all four men were declared Missing in Action (MIA) and are memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

In 1969 a ranking communist member provided extensive, detailed information pertaining to a specific Viet Cong ran Prisoner of War (POW) camp located near the city of Hue in which large numbers of American POWs were held. The member also reviewed photographs of POW/MIAs to assist US officials in identifying any prisoners held in that camp.

On April 11, 1969, he positively identified Albert Pitt as having been one of 22 POWs held there but was not able to provide information about Helber, Booze, or Sprick. None of the families of those men listed as possible POWs were ever told of this report until it was declassified 17 years later.

The military is called upon to fly and fight in many dangerous circumstances, and they are prepared to be wounded, killed, or captured. It probably never occurs to them that they could be abandoned by the country they so proudly serve. To quote my good friend Danny ‘Greasy’ Belcher, whom I served with at Fort Knox and Vietnam,

“Definition of G.I. – Gone Indefinitely.”

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OR CONTACT: NDVA.C.HR@NEBRASKA.GOV OR 402-471-2458



S.A.L. Notes

Chris Casey
Detachment Commander



Greetings from the Detachment of Nebraska! Happy New Year to The Nebraska American Legion Family. Thanks for all your hard work in 2021 and we look forward to another great year in 2022. If you do not have a 2022 membership card at this point, your membership is delinquent. Please contact your Adjutant or Membership Chair to get renewed today!

I hope you have made plans to attend our Mid-Year Conference at the Columbus Ramada, January 21-23, 2022. Midwest National Vice Commander Juan Torres will be our guest during the weekend. The DEC will meet on Friday evening at 6:00 PM. We have plans to visit the Andrew Jackson Higgins National Memorial during the middle of the day on Saturday. We will also have leadership training available to our members. If your time is limited, as is usually the case, please make plans to attend on Saturday. The training will be worth your time and make all of us better members!

The Detachment needs the assistance of American Legion Post Commanders/Adjutants. The Sons of The American Legion is a program of The American Legion, and your Post sponsors your individual Squadron. The Detachment leadership has called every zero report Squadron in which we have valid contact information provided. Please take the time to ask your Squadron leadership if they have provided an updated Officers Report to Detachment and stress the need to do so. We are unable to contact Commanders or Adjutants to share important information from the National and Detachment levels at many of our Squadrons. It is also imperative that your Squadron has provided a Squadron Date Report (SDR) to National. The ‘renew online’ option has become available to all Sons members to process their own membership renewals. Your Squadron may be shorted their portion of the dues if they have not provided an updated SDR. Your timely assistance is appreciated. Please contact me if you have questions or concerns.

I was honored to be invited to the Ashland Sons of The American Legion Veterans Program on November 13, 2021. They celebrated over 75 veterans and their loved ones with a steak or chicken dinner. The Ashland Boy Scouts presented the colors and helped with cleaning up. The Sons presented a \$1,000 check to the Ashland Chief of Police and Mayor. Congressman Don Bacon gave an excellent speech honoring veterans. The Nebraska American Legion was represented by Senior Vice Commander Don Suchy and NEC Fred Craigie the Ashland Sons also unveiled the new Ashland American Legion Post 129 Event Center. The Sons worked with the Ashland VFW to secure the new building. They continue to have their Post down the street, but the new building is a great banquet space. I was approached by several American Legion members who shared how much they appreciate all the Sons have done for Ashland. Please contact the Detachment if you are interested in starting a Sons Squadron in your community.

Membership Minute

Steve Bartos, Membership Chairman

Happy New Year!!

I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and is ready to embark on a new year. We haven’t achieved the “normality” I hoped for a year ago, but I think we’re making a little progress pandemic-wise. Let us hope.

I’m not sure what the real cause might be, but Nebraska is struggling to meet our target membership percentages. I’m happy to report, however, that we just snuck by and achieved the 75% target on December 15th. We made it by 198 members.

Are our Legionnaires just not so eager to maintain their memberships as they have been in the past? Or are they paying their dues and then not having them transmitted to Lincoln by the local posts? Either scenario results in us lagging behind in the race to achieve 100%.

It’s December as I write this article, and we have posts, some large posts, who have transmitted less than 25% of their memberships. I find it hard to believe that the low numbers in those posts aren’t the result of dues not being transmitted.

I’ve contacted the district commanders and asked them to contact the posts with such low numbers to see what the problem might be. I hope they’ve done it, but there hasn’t been much movement in some of the posts who are farthest behind. Perhaps a poke with a sharp stick from above wasn’t as effective as a poke from the individual post members.

Please. Do me a favor. Do Commander Benes a favor. Do the Nebraska American Legion a favor. The most recent Nebraska membership analysis is posted on the home page of the Department of Nebraska website. Let us take a look at it and see where your post stands. Every post should have been at 75% of the goal on December 8th. The next target percentage is 80% by January 20th (just prior to the Mid-Year Conference). 85% will be the goal on February 9th.

If your post is lagging, especially if they are lagging by a worrisome percentage, talk to your post adjutant or post commander. Find out if the low numbers are truly a “renewal” problem or more of an “administrative” problem. In either case, perhaps something can be done to help resolve the shortfall of paid memberships. Unfortunately for some of our loyal Legionnaires who have paid, they might be receiving unnecessary renewal notices if their memberships have not been processed.

If and when you determine that your post really does have a “renewal” problem, keep in mind that the “easy” renewals have paid. The “tougher” ones are still out there! The direct renewal notices have done some good work, but it’s now up to the membership go-getters in each post to finish the job. I’m looking forward to the Mid-Year Conference in Columbus. Let us hope that we can build some enthusiasm in our membership team, which includes all of us, and stay on track for meeting our goals.

Have a nice January!

Attention:

This will be the last issue of the Nebraska Legionnaire newspaper for any member who has not paid their 2022 dues. Contact your Post or Headquarters with questions. Once your 2022 dues are paid you will be put back on the mailing list.

Sons of The American Legion Membership As of December 13, 2021		
District	2021 Members	2022 Members
1	309	152
2	611	237
3	224	142
4	309	131
5	133	94
6	1,327	597
7	703	247
8	838	398
9	311	179
10	344	135
11	1,070	490
12	254	114
13	153	58
15	147	138
Total	6,733	3,112

Cornhusker Boys State in Need of Medic

Cornhusker Boys’ State is looking for a new medic to replace outgoing (retiring) medic; Bill Montz. Anyone interested should have formal training as a nurse, EMT, doctor, etc. The medic must be available 24/7 so the week of Boys State the medic must remain with the group for the entire week on the UNL campus. Room and meals are provided throughout the week plus a small stipend. The typical duty includes checking in all boys at registration, first-line triage of injuries, administering medications, and transporting sick and injured to Urgent Care and/or hospitals (vehicle provided).

The 2022 Boys State session starts on Sunday, June 5, and concludes on Saturday, June 11, 2022. Anyone interested should contact the Cornhusker Boys’ State Program Director, Dave Salak at 402-464-6338 or email dwsalak@windstream.net

Publications Report

Ron Riley, Public Relations Chairman

Greetings,

To start this off an introduction is in order. I am the new Chair of the Publications and Public Relations committee. I know it is tradition to start by telling you all about my military history. My mind is not on or about what I did in the military but what I have done since I got out to help other veterans improve their life. I have worked with many great people both inside and out of The American Legion. To date, I have joined with the VA and started a multi-county Suicide Coalition that will be conducting reviews of veteran suicide to battle this trend. Also, I have worked to start a monthly “22” meeting at posts to encourage both members and the community to help each other deal with the issues that arise from day-to-day.

The focus of this committee should be to get all the posts in Nebraska online. With this, I would suggest using social media sites over actual web pages. The reason behind this is that websites cost money to maintain and if the person maintaining the site leaves, you’ll have a dead page. Social media sites allow more people to be able to maintain the page and are user-friendly. Using these sites has the benefit of being able to update them quickly and often by any site admin. Encourage members to check on these sites once a day or even once a week to keep everyone informed on current events. These sites are available on all smartphones and computers. Let us work with our membership to use these tools and keep each other informed and motivated.

If any post needs help or has any input on how to start using online social media and or communications, please feel free to reach out to me or any of the members on the committee. Thank You very much for your time and support, and I look forward to serving all our great members.

Members: Ron Riley 402-301-6913 rriley346@outlook.com
Richard Colson 308-239-4347 r_colson1949@yahoo.com
David Camara 508-542-3098 dcamara967@gmail.com
Kade Bussen 949-324-4752 kadebussen@gmail.com

Candidate Announcement

Daryl Harrison - Department Senior Vice-Commander



A 28-year permanent member of The American Legion whose eligibility as a member comes from his service as a member of the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War. His love of serving was instilled in him by his father, a WW2 US Navy veteran.

Daryl presently serves Department as the Chair of the Veterans Rehabilitation and Employability Committee. He has served as Post Adjutant, District Vice-Commander, District Commander, Area 'A' Vice-Commander, and as an Assistant Sgt. of Arms at the past three National Conventions. He is an

active member of the Sons of the American Legion and American Legion Riders.

He attended New York State's American Legion College when denied entrance to National American Legion College. He had input in writing a resolution so that Vietnam veterans could independently attend the National American Legion College. Vietnam veterans can now attend the National American Legion College. He attended this past November.

At the National American Legion College, he was part of a group that developed a resolution urging training be made available from the Blue Hat up in suicide prevention. Be The One. That resolution will be before the Department Convention and will be considered by Departments nationwide.

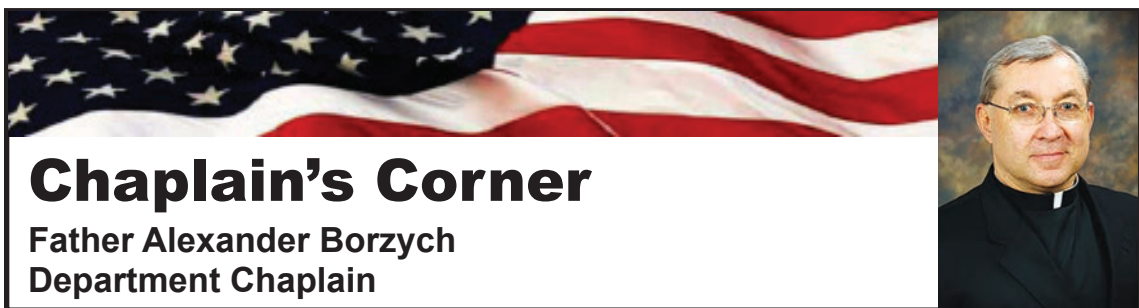
Using the GI Bill, Daryl holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska along with a Master's, and Specialist's Degrees from Wayne State College in Education Leadership.

Harrison serves as President of the Nebraska Medal of Honor Foundation and was instrumental in honoring those Nebraskans who have received the Congressional Medal of Honor by walking across Nebraska with a group of the greatest Legion Family members he will probably ever know. He doubled down on American Legion Past National Commander James W. (Bill) Oxford's, 100 Miles for Hope Challenge, by completing 200 miles in support of The Veterans and Children Foundation by Veterans Day 2020 while fighting off COVID-19.

Daryl Harrison promises to serve the Blue Hats of Nebraska's Legion Posts by promoting and supporting the Department Commander. He will stand to protect the rights of members while being available to them when called upon. Serving our great organization is his goal.

Leadership that Walks the Walk.

2022
happy new year



Chaplain's Corner

Father Alexander Borzych
Department Chaplain

This being my first article after being appointed Chaplain for the Nebraska American Legion, I must say, it was an honor to be chosen. I hope I will be able to give you some spiritual food in my column and a challenge that we may be able to continue our service to God and Country.

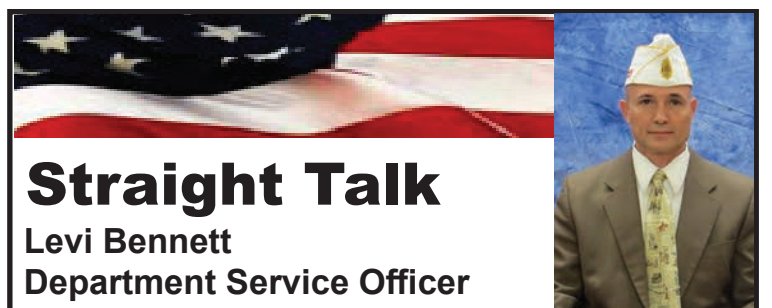
I would like to introduce myself and let you know a little about me. I was raised in Farwell, Nebraska, and was given the name Alexander, which lasted until I went to high school in Saint Paul. I don't know what happened, either Alexander was too long for some or had too many letters to fill in for the number of blocks on a standardized test, but from then on, I was always called Alex. After graduating I attended Conception Seminary College, in Conception, Missouri, and St. Thomas School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. I was ordained as a priest in 1980 for the Diocese of Grand Island, and I served for twelve years in parishes before being given permission to enter the United States Navy. I spent 20 years serving in both the Navy and Marine Corps. After retiring from the Navy, I spent eight years back in the diocese serving in parishes before retiring from active ministry in July 2020 after 40 years of ministry. I continue to supply help for parishes in the diocese.

As we began a new year, it is a good time to take a reflection on who we are and where we want to go. I'm not talking about trips, but our relationship with our God, country, and ourselves. New Year's is a time when many people make promises to themselves such as going on a diet, starting an exercise regiment, being more active in society, spending time daily in prayer, or even being more consistent with our weekend attendance at services.

In a study, one week into the new year, 77% of participants had maintained their resolutions; the number decreased to 55% after one month, 43% after three months, 40% after six months, and 19% at the two-year follow-up. Odds are not in your favor! So, I am going to be giving you challenges in my article to do something each month that will have something to do with patriotism, spirituality, community, and self. In the military each one of us was challenged daily and even several times a day. We need to continue those challenges, as a commitment to that way of life, a way of life that should never stop for a veteran.

My challenge to you for the beginning of 2022 is to spend some time visiting with an elderly veteran, listen to their stories, and let them know they are appreciated for their service to this great country of ours. This can be done in their homes, nursing homes, or Nebraska Veterans Homes, (that is if they will let you in during this time of COVID-19). Make a difference in their lives.

For God and Country



Straight Talk

Levi Bennett
Department Service Officer

VA and BVA Acknowledge Delays in Mailing Veterans Notification Letters



November 20, 2021, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) announced the extension of response periods by 90-calendar days for claimants who received letters dated between July 13, 2021, and December 31, 2021. The extension is being provided due to delays in printing

services at the vendor contracted by the Government Publishing Office (GPO). The importance of this extension is paramount to veterans in this group as veterans who do not respond to the time-limited notifications face denial for the election of benefits or services. Late arriving mail from the VBA has resulted in some veterans missing VBA scheduled compensation and pension exams, which has resulted in the VBA denying the veteran's claim for benefits due to missing the scheduled medical exam. If you are a veteran who has received a letter for a scheduled medical exam that has passed the date for the scheduled exam for compensation or pension, please reach out to your County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) as they can assist in contacting VBA to ensure the claim is not denied for failure to participate in the exam(s) as scheduled. Your CVSO can assist in rescheduling an exam if the date scheduled is conflicting with your schedule.

As the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) also uses the same mailing service through the GPO, BVA is experiencing similar delays in their letters being mailed to veterans. BVA has issued a statement that they are "closely monitoring the backlog at GPO and will continue putting new and improved processes in place to ensure Veterans are receiving notice of their Board decisions in a timely fashion." For veterans who have an upcoming hearing before a Veterans Law Judge, BVA is calling, emailing, and sending letters to every Veteran who has a hearing scheduled. If you receive notice of a hearing, please reach out to your CVSO or the State Service Office (SSO). The SSO may be contacted by calling 402-420-4021 or by email at ndva.sso@nebraska.gov. Veteran Service Officers at the SSO do have access to "Caseflow" (BVA database currently used for tracking hearings) and can confirm the status of an appeal at BVA.

Virtual Claims Clinic at Local Veterans Administration
Regional Office

December 1 – 3, 2021, the Lincoln Regional Office (VARO) in conjunction with the St. Paul VA Pension Management Center held a virtual claims clinic (VCC). A VCC allows veteran representatives (State Veteran Service Officers and Nebraska CVSOs) to submit requests to VBA regarding specific veteran claims that have exceeded 125 days for review, this allows for a rating of claims if ready as well as scheduling exams (specifics on what types of claims eligible for submission is available through your CVSO or the SSO). A total of 76 disability/pension claims were identified as meeting the criteria for submission and by the end of the clinic, Nebraska Veterans received over \$550,000 in retro payments, with some retro payments still pending.

2022 Mid-Year Conference Make Your Reservations Now

The 2022 Mid-Year Conference will be held January 21 - 23, 2022 at the Ramada Inn in Columbus. The room rate is \$99.95 a night and breakfast is included with the rooms.

Headquarters asks everyone to bring canned goods with them to Mid-Year when they register. These goods will be donated to the veterans at the Victory Park Apartments in Lincoln.

A draft agenda is listed on the bottom of page 2. If you would like more information or have questions, please contact Adjutant Salak at Department Headquarters.

The Ramada Inn is located at 265 33rd Ave in Columbus. Call 402-564-1492 for reservations. Make your reservations soon.



Rider's Rally

John Arias
Department ALR Liaison

Greetings Fellow Riders!

As the weather grows colder, it becomes easier to stay home and enjoy the warmth of the house. This is now the time to start reflecting on your skills and how you can help your Chapter and/or Post meet or exceed its goals. Every Chapter can use more leadership, more suggestions, events, and support for its members. Why not you?

I remember my hesitation in a leadership role in the Marine Corps. When I was at Camp Lejeune our Platoon Staff Sergeant gathered us in the squad bay and asked us a question. He said, “I don’t need an answer, but I want you to think about this: If you were dragged into a court of law and charged, would there be enough evidence to convict you beyond a reasonable doubt of being a Marine?” That question changed me forever. When I got to the Naval Weapon Station in Yorktown, I couldn’t get enough leadership knowledge. I studied our post orders and learned the squad leader’s responsibilities. I soon climbed the ranks and won several Sentry of the Day awards. I won three Marine of the Month boards and was meritoriously promoted to the rank of Corporal and assumed the Role of Sergeant of the Guard, responsible for 60 Marines.

Learn by doing! Help your Chapter meet its goals by considering a leadership position: committee chairman or chapter officer. Grow your leadership skills as you assist your Chapter in serving its members. You’ll develop a sense of pride and develop a camaraderie with veterans as well. Leadership is not necessarily glamorous, but it is rewarding when the mission has been completed. To borrow from the National ALR website, “for the cause, not the applause.”



On another note, I learned about a Motorcycle Hearst, when a widow of a fallen veteran in Lincoln called requesting a Motorcycle Hearst. I learned that there is one funeral home in Lincoln that owns one but does not lend it out. There are many

styles and would encourage you to look at the various designs on the internet.

Your first leadership action will be attending the Mid-Winter Convention at the Ramada Inn in Columbus on January 21 - 23, 2022. We will finalize which Chapters host the 2022 and the 2023 State Romps. The ALR meeting will start at 4:30 on Saturday during the Mid-Winter Convention. See you in Columbus!!



During the Vietnam War five brothers, all served in multiple branches, representing the Noyd family from Stromsburg and our great country. The first to serve was Larry in the Navy during 1964-67, then Perry in the Navy from 1967-71, and Terry was in the Army from 1968-70. The youngest two brothers began serving in the 1970s with John in the Army during 1972-74 and Gary in the Marines during 1973-75. Their sister, Sharon Noyd said, “Serving this nation was an honor for the brothers, yet it was a sacrifice, and without sacrifice, our nation wouldn’t be where it is today.” Pictured (L to R) Gary, John, Perry, Terry, and Larry Noyd.



Western Post 255 had multiple members receive a Quilt of Valor. Pictured (L to R) Jerry Homolka, Larry Zoubek, Dwight Nickel, James Mammen, Ed Haverluck, Steven Huls, and Laverne Schielke.



During the VTC Coin Ceremony, Governor Ricketts spoke about the benefits of the program. Pictured top (L to R) Governor Ricketts, John Arias, and Jason Lybarger. The VTC Representatives at the ceremony took a picture with Governor Ricketts holding his VTC coin. Pictured bottom (L to R) Jerry Cummings, Pete Ricketts, John Arias, and Jason Lybarger.



Campbell Post 169 member Gerhart Meyer received a pin for his 65-years of continuous membership. Pictured (L to R) Gerhart Meyer and Commander Joe Rutt.



Plattsmouth Post 56 had members participate in color guard at the burial of Civil War veteran Benton Kinkead.

Mission Blue Post Assistance Program

Last year the national organization created the Mission Blue Post Assistance Program grant to assist Posts who had been affected by the COVID-19 health crisis. Each Post who applied was eligible for up to a \$1,000 grant that could be used for the Post homes mortgage or rent, insurance premiums, and utilities. This year National is continuing this program and each Post who applies is eligible to receive up to a \$2,000 grant. Posts who received the first grant are eligible to apply again for up to an additional \$1,000 grant. Contact Adjutant Salak at Department for more information.



Allen, Benjamin F., Lincoln, Korea
Allgaier, Ralph R., Omaha, Vietnam
Anderson, Gary, North Platte, Vietnam
Anderson, Vayden R., Stromsburg, Korea
Andrew, Llyod A., Valley, Vietnam
Bashus, Paul M., Omaha, Korea
Beachamp, Charles, Pleasant Dale, Vietnam
Beal, Clark G., Ralston, Korea
Beaty, Joe, Wakefield, Vietnam
Behr, Vernon E., Stromsburg, Korea
Behrends, Howard F., Diller, Vietnam
Blackburn, Vaughn L., Mitchell, Korea
Blaser, Lee M., Columbus
Bodeen, Jerry W., North Platte, Vietnam
Bosle, Dennis D., Broken Bow, Vietnam
Bower, Glen W. Sr., Stromsburg, Korea
Boyle, Richard, York, Vietnam
Bramer, Weldon, Mason City, Korea
Bridger, Earl C., Lincoln, Korea
Brooks, Larry S., Lincoln, Vietnam
Bruha, Jack L., Dorchester, Korea
Campbell, Alfred R., Lincoln, WWII
Carlyle, Kenneth R., Lexington, Vietnam
Cavaleri, Tony Jr., Omaha, WWII
Cerny, Thomas W., Dorchester, Persian Gulf
Clark, John, Garland, Vietnam
Clem, Clifford E., Papillion, WWII
Cohn, Verlyn L., North Platte, Vietnam
Cole, Kent L., Callaway, Vietnam
Dahlquist, Donovan D., Laurel, Korea
Day, Donald L., Hebron, WWII
Dobrovolny, Stanley, Atkinson, Vietnam
Droge, Lyle I., Du Bois, WWII
Dush, Don G., Silver Creek, Vietnam
Eide, Marvin J., North Platte, Vietnam
Else, Dan, Bennington, Vietnam
Engelbart, Wayne J., Hallam, WWII
English, Larry E., Wood River, Vietnam
Evans, Larry, Loup City, Vietnam
Fauss, Gerald W., Hooper, Korea
Ficke, Richard J., Millard, Vietnam
Fletcher, Virgil, Orleans, Vietnam
Foster, Donald L., Ord Vietnam
Franzen, Richard H. Sr., Greenwood, Vietnam
Furlong, Jimmie L., Plattsmouth, Vietnam
Gautheier, Armand, Grand Island, Korea
Gerdes, Herman J., Stromsburg, Korea
Glinsmann, Calvin, St. Paul, Vietnam
Good, James D., Fullerton, Korea
Guilkey, John, Superior, Korea
Hadcock, Myrle E., Columbus
Hagemann, Jerry L., Albion, Vietnam
Hale, Donald L., Beatrice, Korea
Hayes, Jerry, Gretna, Persian Gulf
Heithoff, Melvin, Elgin, Korea

Herout, Donald L., Fremont, Korea
Hornickel, Kent E., Ord, Vietnam
Howard, Fred E., Sargent, Korea
Hultquist, Thomas J., Oakland, Korea
Jefferies, Robert E., Lincoln, Vietnam
Kaiser, Roger L., York, Korea
Kenney, Harlan L., Milford, Vietnam
Kinney, Jerry E., DeWitt, Vietnam
Knepper, Ralph E., Holdrege, Korea
Korth, Kelly, Gretna, SAL
Kotas, Edward J., Dorchester, Vietnam
Kroeger, Paul G., Schuyler, Korea
Kunzman, John P., Albion, Korea
Kusek, Jimmie, Loup City, Vietnam
Kvasnicka, Robert J., Hallam, Vietnam
Ladd, Oliver, Papillion, Vietnam
Lequieu, Kenneth D., North Platte, Persian Gulf
Little, John, Blair, Korea
Long, William H., Scottsbluff, Korea
Lueschen, Larry L., Columbus, Vietnam
Lukowski, John M., South Omaha, Vietnam
Mackey, Leland J., Bancroft, Korea
Mahlendorf, Charles L., Neligh, Vietnam
Marshall, Darrell A., Chadron, Vietnam
McWilliams, Harold H., Syracuse, WWII
Menke, Todd W., Millard, Lebanon/ Grenada
Meysenburg, Greg, Brainard, Vietnam
Mitchem, Illo G., North Platte, WWII
Morrison, Monte, Alliance, Vietnam
Mueller, Francis J., Crofton, Korea
Mullin, David L., Columbus, Korea
Murer, Geneva, Chadron, WWII
Neill, Harold A., Cozad, WWII
Nelsen, Dennis D., Valentine, SAL
Nelson, Warren, Boelus, Korea
Nielsen, Harold, W., Norfolk, Vietnam
Nielsen, Paul L., Ashland, WWII
Noonan, Don, North Platte, Korea
Nosal, Richard J., Columbus, WWII
Nunnenkamp, William F., Boelus, WWII
Obermiller, Ray, Fremont, WWII
Okamoto, Kenneth M., North Platte, Vietnam
Olsen, Christopher J., Plattsmouth, Korea
Olson, Richard A., Stromsburg, Vietnam
Pazderka, William J., Elkhorn, Korea
Pecoraro, John, Millard, Vietnam
Pelán, Milo T., Brainard, WWII
Peters, Roy F., Palmer
Peterson, Loren D., Arnold, Vietnam
Pickett, Clyde C., Arnold, Vietnam
Pittard, Roger L., Geneva, Korea
Popp, Gordon K., Curtis, SAL
Rainey, David L., Millard, Vietnam

Reed, Billie J., Hershey, Korea
Reiman, Kade, Virginia, SAL
Rieken, Richard, Fullerton, Korea
Risor, James E., Lincoln, Vietnam
Roberts, James L., St. Edward, Vietnam
Roh, James A., South Omaha, Vietnam
Roh, Robert E., South Omaha, Korea
Ronni, James A., Papillion, Vietnam
Roth, Marvin, Gordon, Korea
Rupp, Shane F., Monroe, Vietnam
Ryba, Dale M., Columbus, Vietnam
Sabalka, Leslie D., Lincoln, WWII
Sabatka, John J., Havelock, Vietnam
Schnase, Larry D., Hastings, Korea
Schnelle, Charles, Columbus, Vietnam
Schroder, Cliff D., Columbus, Korea
Schroeder, Leander H., Crofton, Vietnam
Schurman, Norman R., Wynot, Korea
Sedlacek, Richard J., North Platte, Korea
Shotkoski, Clifford F., Columbus, Korea
Sivers, Raymond F., Norfolk, WWII
Skipton, Terry L., Columbus, Vietnam
Smejkal, Darrell, Columbus, Vietnam
Smith, Buddy W., Omaha, Vietnam
Sopcich, Edward F., South Omaha, Korea
Sorenson, Darrell D., Omaha, Korea
Sparks, Clayton, Elsie, WWII
Steiner, Charles A., Gretna, Korea
Steinkamp, Wanda M., Weeping Water, WWII
Sterba, Joseph J. Jr., South Omaha, Vietnam
Stoezel, Glen, North Platte, Korea
Sutton, Dan R., Lincoln, Vietnam
Svec, M. Jr., Milligan, SAL
Svoboda, Gordon, Grand Island, Korea
Tarnick, William J., Columbus, Korea
Thompson, Bennie J., North Platte, Vietnam
Tichota, Clarence, Beemer, SAL
Tiedje, Melvin, Bennington, Korea
Timberlake, Eric J., Millard, SAL
Todd, Harlow R., Ashland, Korea
Urban, Raymond, Arcadia, Vietnam
Vaughn, Jerry J., Norfolk, Vietnam
Verdick, Dennis E., Bennington, Vietnam
Vogt, Elmer, Elmwood, Korea
Walsh, Thomas E., Omaha, Vietnam
Watkins, Kenneth E., Ponca, Vietnam
Wells, Pat M., Odell, Vietnam
Wiens, Marvin D., Lincoln, Korea
Wrigley, William, Diller, WWII
Zebert, Donald R., Ord, Vietnam

Larry McAhren of Wood River 314 is alive and well.

Events Calendar

January

3 New Years - Office Closed
17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Office Closed
21-23 Mid-Year Conference - Columbus



February

14 Valentines Day
21 Presidents Day - Office Closed

March

15 American Legion Birthday

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



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The Cooper brothers were both awarded their Quilts of Valor. Alvin of Uehling Post 196 served in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam while Bill of North Platte Post 163 served in Korea. Pictured (L to R) Bill and Alvin Cooper.

ID Resolve From The LIT



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

money, your time and your financial reputation.

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

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



Commander Benes was invited to speak in Omaha on Veterans Day. Pictured (L to R) Commander Dan Benes and Mayor Jean Stothert.



Gretna Post 216 welcomed the officers of District 8 to their Post during the Whirlwind Hat's Off Tour in September.



District 8 Oratorical Contest picked Juliana Scheopner to represent them at the Area A Oratorical Contest with Jack McNally as the runner up. Pictured (L to R) District 8 Sons Commander James Keyes, Arlington Teacher Janelle Lorsch, Juliana Scheopner, and Jack McNally.



The Annual Dignified Flag Disposal was held at South Sioux City's Freedom Park on 9/11 included multiple local Posts from Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota.



Ceresco Post 244 presented a member with 75-years of continuous membership. Pictured (L to R) Commander Lonnie Rech and Kenneth Hanke.



District 9 Oratorical contest had siblings win the Senior and Junior Division. Grace Brennemann will represent District 9 in the Area D contest. Pictured (L to R) District 9 Commander Dennis Kennedy, Grace Brennemann, and Ella Brennemann.



Past Colfax County Commander Cecil Fields of Leigh Post 302 handed off the Commander pin to present Colfax County Commander Lumir Jedlicka of Schuyler Post 47. Pictured (L to R) Cecil Fields and Lumir Jedlicka.



District 12 Oratorical Contest picked Owen Krahulik to represent them at the Area C Oratorical Contest. Pictured (L to R) District 12 Commander Mac Lawrence, Owen Krahulik, and Stephanie Krahulik.



Hershey Post 279 laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier replica in North Platte. Pictured (L to R) District 5 Commander Marvin Donnelly, Leroy Hernandez, Monica Cooper, Michael Cain, and Bill Youngmans.



Brunswick Post 357 presented a Quilt of Valor to member Brian Hoffman.



Cody Post 319 had four members receive Quilts of Valor. Pictured top standing Rhona Cherry and sitting Harold Kelly. Pictured second (L to R) Jaeden Garwood and Charlie Stoner. Pictured third in middle Dale Stolzenburg. Pictured last (L to R) Larry Johnson and Tyler Harp.



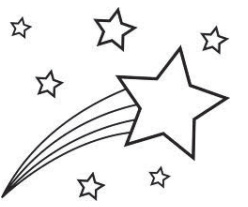
Columbus Post 84 had multiple members receive a Quilt of Valor. Pictured back row (L to R) Dan Oakley, Whitey Arlt, Myron Leffers, Dave Oppliger, Jerry Chlopek, Don Patras, Willie Henggeler, Jerry Albracht, Larry Redel, Bob Hanke, Francis Ternus, Ed Brezenski, and Don Cieloha. Pictured front row (L to R) Bill Condreay, Ray Staroscik, Leon Houdesheldt, Joe Barbaglia, Jim Baldwin, Doug Wagner, Gene Loseke, Ralph Hefti, and Mike Landkamer.



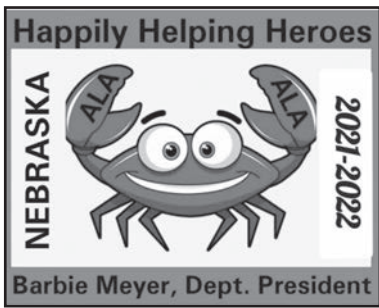
The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Nebraska

The Star

January - February 2022



FROM THE DEPT. PRESIDENT



Another year in the rearview mirror! We can cherish memories made in 2021, but we must always progress as an organization --- growing, learning, and cooperatively focusing on our heroes.

At this time in history, many of the freedoms our veterans have fought and died for have been shaken. Our nation's first president, George Washington, faced a country bloodied by a war of revolution seeking freedom from oppression. As the 16th president, Abraham Lincoln faced a country divided by the Civil War. The freedom for equality for all Americans was shaken.

On February 21st, our country honors these presidents. The American Legion Auxiliary honors the veterans who served in all wars where freedoms were shaken --- but never defeated. It's our promise to keep, from boots to burial and beyond!

Happy 100th Birthday,
Department of Nebraska ALA.

Barbie Meyer
Department President
Happily Helping Heroes!
2021-2022



2022 has arrived!

A simple question --- Are you a current member? In simpler terms, have you paid your 2022 dues or are you a delinquent member? If you do not have in your possession a 2022 membership card, you are a delinquent member. No voting rights, no benefits, and unable to hold an office at any level --- unit, county, or department. If you are one of the 3,179 unpaid members (as of December 10, 2021), please get your dues to your membership chairman. (And, on a sadder note, there are 883 unpaid for 2020.)

Here is something units might consider within the next three years. Paying your own unit's memberships online.

YIKES! IT'S 2022!!

Currently, there are three units in Nebraska trying this pilot program. They are Gering, Papillion, and St. Paul. Two basic components: a bankcard to make the payments online and a yearly fee (set by National) which includes access to ALAMIS (the American Legion Auxiliary Management Information System). Why go this route? It saves time and provides a more "real-time" accounting of your paid members.

Regular renewals can be entered immediately by your unit's membership chairman (or whomever you appoint to manage the submissions) once dues are received from your members. No need to mail the transmittal form and unit check to headquarters for entry by Lisa or Roxanne. This means no more "but we have this many paid" when checking the membership reports and finding they don't match your records because your paperwork and payments are in the mail and then must be entered when headquarters receives them.

Even with this new process, there are certain items that must be mailed to headquarters: death notifications, new members' applications, unit to unit transfers, and out-of-state transfers.

So, a new streamlining way for membership! Let's keep an open mind about this change. Also, please note that this may not be beneficial for all units, especially those with smaller membership numbers.

Another reason for "YIKES, it's 2022" is that it means my time is quickly approaching for me to be the next Department President. Part of my duties is to fill the chairmanships. This is quite a task, and I hope to have representation from all over Nebraska. Don't be surprised if I contact YOU!!

Remember, "we are family, I got all my sisters (and brothers) with me."

Vicki Ozenbaugh,
Department Vice President

FROM THE DEPT. SECRETARY



Now that the holidays are over, it is time to start the New Year's clean up!

Unit Treasurers, please make sure that you have two signers on you bank accounts. We have had several units where the lone signer has moved into a nursing facility or passed away --- and no one can

access the unit funds. Don't let that happen to your unit. Take care of the problem now.

Do you have your volunteer hours recorded? What about your Community Service time? And 10 for Education?

We are still going to have end-of-the-year reports..

Don't forget about the Department Scholarships! All of the applications are on-line. The Past Presidents' Parley scholarship will be on by the end of January.

Lisa Moore
Department Secretary/Treasurer

DISTRICT 6 GIFTS FOR VETERANS

District 6 American Legion Auxiliary members shopped for Veterans who are at the VA Medical Center in Grand Island, around 50 of them. We took gifts back to the center & gift wrapped them.



DISTRICT 12 PRESIDENT



I am Charlene Hobelman, District 12 President. I am eligible thru my husband, Lance, who is a Vietnam veteran; and we live in Lincoln. Lance and I were married May 1973 after he was home from serving our country.

I am a member of Denton Unit 355 and served as president for 10 years. I am currently Senior Vice and membership chairman and Lancaster County President. I am also a member of the VFW Auxiliary and have held the offices of president, district president, and Senior Vice.

I am a member of the Cathedral of the Risen Christ Catholic Church and also a member of Lancaster County Salon 92 8/40, having served as Salon Chapeau and Secretaire. I currently serve as President of the Denton Community Historical

Society and am in charge of the Denton Senior Dinners. I was active as a leader of Cub and Boys Scouts and held many offices over the years. And, I am a past member of a charter chapter of the American Business Women's Association, having held offices of President and Treasurer and was named woman of the year.

We are the parents of 3 children --- RJ, Ed, and Margie. We also are the grandparents of 6 --- Ali, Caleb, Noah, Jared, Isabelle, and Zoey. All the sons and grandsons are members of the Post 355 Sons of the American Legion. Margie and the grand daughters are members of the Unit 355 Auxiliary.

Lance has been an American Legion member since 1974. I would have joined back then, but no-one asked me. This is why it is so important to ask prospective members to join.



100 YEARS!



Happy 100th Birthday, Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary! In 1922, the ALA Department of Nebraska was first chartered under the leadership of Minnie Freeman Penny, the first Department President.

Besides the start of the Nebraska Auxiliary, the following events also occurred in 1922: Insulin was first used to treat diabetes, King Tutankhamun's tomb was first discovered, and construction began on the Nebraska State Capitol building in Lincoln. (On a side note: Betty White turns 100 in January 2022.)

How will you celebrate Nebraska ALA's 100 years?

Angie Foster,
Department Historian

The 2022 Mid-Year Conference

When: January 21-23, 2022

Where: Ramada Inn, 265 33rd Ave, Columbus NE

Who: All members of the American Legion Auxiliary.

This is not a "just for officers event" Bring new members and prospective new members. District Presidents or their representative are required to attend. Program chairmen are urged to attend bring your "special booth" and information.

What: DEC meeting - 1 pm Friday, Jan 21 - Ballroom
2: 30 pm - Conference begins - Ballroom
4: 30 pm - Recess
5: 00 pm - 8 and 40 meeting - Ballroom
6: 30 pm - Birthday Party - Ballroom

SATURDAY- JANUARY 22

8: 00 am - Joint Session, Legion Family - Courtyard
10:00 am - ALA Conference reconvenes - Ballroom
11:30 am - Recess
Past Presidents' Private Luncheon - Commons area
1:30 pm - Reconvene
5:00 pm - Adjourn
6:00 pm - Oratorical Contest - Courtyard

SUNDAY- JANUARY 23

8:00 - 9:00 am - Worship - Ballroom
9:00 - Noon - Joint Session Legion family - Courtyard

Call 402-564-1492 for reservations; mention Legion rate.

POST SCRIPT to Districts!!!!!! Due to January weather conditions, Districts are asked not to bring flags. Footing may be slippery hauling them in and out. Use that extra vehicle space to carpool !

Barbie Meyer
Department President
Happily Helping Heroes!!

CONSTITUTION UPDATES
PART 4- MORE TO FOLLOW

Uniform District Constitution:
Constitution, Article IV Officers

Section 1: The officers of the District shall be District President and District Vice President. The District President and the District Vice President shall be elected annually at the District Convention by the duly elected and accredited delegation attending said Convention.

The District Secretary and/or Treasurer, Parliamentarian, Chaplain and/or Historian shall be appointed by the District President.

Any member who is in good standing and present at the District Convention shall be eligible for election to office.

The District President and District Vice President may serve two (2) consecutive one year terms. After having served two (2) consecutive terms in each office, they shall be ineligible for an elective office until two (2) terms have elapsed. (6/24/2021)

Section 2: The duties of the officers of the District organization shall be such as are provided by customary parliamentary authority, additional responsibilities and guidelines of District officers shall be placed in the District Bylaws and/or Standing Rules. (6/24/2021)

Section 4: The District Executive Committee (DEC) shall be comprised of the following: District President, District Vice President, District Secretary and/or Treasurer, District Chaplain, and/or District Historian, Junior Past District President, District Parliamentarian and the County Presidents of the District.

County officers shall be elected at County Conventions. In the event a County President is not elected or is unable to serve, the District President shall have the authority to appoint a County Representative.

It shall be the duty of these officers to act as representatives of the District in all matters referred to them by the District President (6/24/2021)

Constitution Article V Conventions

Section 2: Convention: In the event a declared emergency, the District President has the authority with the approval of the District Executive Committee to convene and conduct by electronic and/or virtual media the District Fall Conference and the District Spring Convention with the endorsement of The District American Legion. (6/24/2021 Lincoln)

Section 3: District Meetings: In the event of a declared emergency, the District President shall have the authority to convene and conduct District Executive Committee meeting(s) by electronic and/or virtual media. All resulting business decisions shall be deemed valid. Other electronic or virtual media Committee meeting(s) must be approved by the District President and the District Executive Committee. (6/24/2021 Lincoln)

Section 4: The District Executive Committee, as the governing body of the District shall be notified of the emergency and date and time of said electronic and/or virtual media Conference and/or Convention, extending the notice to Department and all Units in the District. (06/25/2021 Lincoln NE)

All business decisions resulting from electronic and/or virtual media meetings shall be deemed valid. (6/24/2021 Lincoln)

Constitution Article VII Amendments

Section 2: To be in compliance with the National Organization and the Department of Nebraska governing documents the Uniform District Constitution shall automatically be amended/updated to adhere to National and Department updates; thus, no formal resolution or amendment shall be required to make said changes. Updates shall be effective immediately.

The Uniform District Constitution governing document shall be in compliance with the National Organization and the Department of Nebraska governing documents and shall not set forth any change that would be greater than that provided through the National Organization.

The Department Executive Committee shall review all automatic updated entries at the annual Department Convention to ensure revisions have been properly updated. (6/24/2021 Lincoln)

Section 3: The District Presidents shall be notified of automatic updates made to the Uniform District Constitution; in turn the District President shall communicate automatic updates to District Units, thereby instituting the necessary updates at all levels of the Department of Nebraska Auxiliary.

Notification of automatic updated entries shall be placed in The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Nebraska Star publication. (6/24/2021 Lincoln)



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

2022-23 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
Feb.	#310 Gibbon	#225 Eddyville	#264 Dorchester Sr.	#62 Newcastle	#301 Dalton	#230 Thedford	#183 Friend
March	#257 Eustis	#316 Elm Creek	#154 Blair	#127 Craig	#17 Sidney	#17 Sidney	#354 Pleasant Dale
April	#355 Davenport	#288 Farnam		#283 Platte Center	#7 Alliance	#7 Alliance	#264 Dorchester Jrs.
May	#126 Broken Bow	#316 Elm Creek	#353 Louisville	#70 West Point	#312 Broadwater	District 11 Jrs.	#49 Utica
June	#17 York	#290 Elwood		#322 Monroe	#12 Chadron	#12 Chadron	
July	#290 Elwood	#218 Exeter		#156 Howells	#7 Alliance	#312 Broadwater	
Aug.				#175 Jackson			
Sept.				#64 Columbus			
Oct.							
Nov.							
Dec.		#377 Wilcox			#7 Alliance	#7 Alliance	#183 Friend
Jan.							

Please check with your (Med Center) Assignments to see if they are accepting Items before you make or send them.

Service to Veterans Chairwoman: Alice Vieselmeyer Ph:(402)947-9001 Email: alicevies@aol.com

KEARNEY VETERANS MEMORIAL

On November 11th, after nearly two years of construction and pandemic-related delays, the Veterans Memorial at the Central Nebraska Veterans Home in Kearney was officially dedicated. The 173 foot X 103 foot memorial was constructed at a cost of about \$1.5 million, with another half-million dollars set aside in an endowment for memorial repairs and upkeep.

Pictured are the memorial and Post 52 member Bob Harpst, Chairman of the Memorial Committee



UNIT 59 JUNIORS - CHRISTMAS WREATHS FOR VETERANS



Pictured are Callaway Unit 59 Juniors ready to lay Christmas wreaths for Veterans at Rose Hill Cemetery on December 4, 2021. This is a new project that the unit had taken on this year.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Be sure to monitor your local news for children and youth who have performed a heroic act or have done a good deed for your community. Work with your unit to nominate them for a Youth Hero/ Good Deed Award.

This year’s National President is promoting a Youth Caregiver Award to recognize a youth providing care, comfort, assistance, and support to loved ones, friends, or family members without being paid. A certificate will be available for download from the ALA national website for units to present.

Our Department would like to offer a new award for a Youth who creates something that benefits a school, disabled friend, family, or community. The focus is on a helpful item or idea that they develop. Send your nominees to this chairman. Include a narrative about the youth and the creation. Pictures are welcome. At this time, this is a one year award during our current administrative year.

Look for the Poppy Coloring book. It is 8 pages of fun that you can copy and print off yourself.

Take note of Military Children in your community. There are a few books that could help children cope with being a military child. “Klinger, a Story of Honor and Hope,” a Tap publication, is one of such books. Also, “Why is My Dad so Mad,” a book about PTSD.

Wear Purple on April 15 in honor of the Purple Up! for Military Kids Day.

Remember, April is Children and Youth Month. Start your plans early.

Vicki Colson
Children & Youth Chr.

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 FEBRUARY 10, 2021

FAMILY STRONGER TOGETHER MEMBERSHIP 2022

Hello, Members!

First, we all owe a debt of gratitude to Kim Gurley, who has forged ahead and put Nebraska on the map of success in Membership. Kim has done phenomenal work in Membership the past few years. Kim has stepped down as Department Membership Chairman, so please keep Kim and her family in your thoughts.

Nebraska did it! We made the goal of 75%+ by December 7, 2021. We are at 75.23% of National goal. Nebraska will receive \$250 from National to promote Membership across the Department. As Kim did last year, a portion of this money will be used to ensure each District has access to ALAMIS. Thank you to every unit that has worked Membership from the heart and produced great results. Please continue to make strides. Focus on those units that are at zero or below 60%. Pump them up and lend a helping hand.

Set up a unit phone-a-thon and call each non-renewed member and encourage payment of dues. We can do this. I was on a Zoom meeting tonight (12/7/2021), and one Department in the Northwestern Division is holding a phone-a-thon at their Mid-Year Conference. How cool is that?. Each unit could do that on a Saturday morning over coffee and rolls. Better yet, each District

could set aside 15 minutes at their Spring Convention to host a phone-a-thon. You will be amazed how that personal phone call will get results.

By the time you read this in the “Star,” it is hoped that Nebraska was able to reach the 80% goal in Membership as National is giving gift cards to those Departments meeting the goal. At present, each District is above 68% goal. Let us make at least 85% by Valentine’s Day.

Did you know that the Department Unit 500 has members from across the state that you may want to look into to see if you can encourage any of those members to come into your unit? The annual dues for Unit 500 are \$40 per year, so if you can get them to come into your unit, there would be a few dollars saved. It never hurts to ask. Check with the Department office to get a listing.

Keep up the good work and let us make collection of 2022 dues history – get renewals completed by March 15th and then work on new members.

*Beverly A. Neel
Membership Chairman
57576 847th Road,
Wayne NE 68787-7080
402-369-0152
bbneel1912@gmail.com*

DIST	DISTRICT FAMILY NAME	DEC. 7	DEC. 15
2	The Munsters	82.62%	83.46%
9	The Cunninghams (Happy Days)	81.11%	81.82%
5	The Tanners (Full House)	79.83%	80.68%
11	The Jetsons	74.74%	78.44%
13	The Addams Family	77.39%	77.85%
10	The Cartwrights (Bonanza)	76.55%	77.67%
7	The Cleavers (Leave It to Beaver)	76.39%	77.37%
3	The Brady Bunch	75.68%	76.89%
12	The Bunkers	74.50%	76.29%
6	The Flintstones	72.35%	73.83%
4	The Waltons	72.74%	73.39%
1	The Andersons (Father Knows Best)	68.53%	73.33%
8	The Clampetts (Beverly Hillbillies)	70.42%	72.41%
	Total Department	75.23%	77.04%
	Goal from National: 16,789 Members needed for 2022 (# needed for 80% -13,432) current paid members: 12,935		
14	Department Unit 500	92.11%	92.11%



CULBERTSON WREATHS PROGRAM

An assembly was held at the Hitchcock County Elementary School December 10th to educate the students on the Wreaths Across America program. A Wreaths Across America ceremony was held December 18th at the Culbertson Cemetery. District 9 Auxiliary President Peggy Kennedy and District 9 Commander Dennis Kennedy gave the presentation at the assembly.



2022 GIRLS STATE

The 2022 Girls State planning meeting was held Saturday, November 20, 2021. At this time, the plan is to hold an in-person Girls State session on the campus of UNL. Because we were unable to get things nailed down with the University prior to this meeting, we were unable to do all the planning we wanted.

What we did do is choose two budgets to work from:

- One is for an in-person Girls State with a group of up to 325 at the cost of \$400.
- The second budget is for a virtual session with a group of up to 400 at the cost of \$200.

We will most likely be working in the beginning with the in-person budget with \$400 to be sent as the application fee. If this changes and we have to move to a virtual format, there would be a reimbursement to units like there was last year (with the probability of the unit refund arriving sooner than last year).

Please be looking for the Unit Girls State instructions, application, Girls State pledge form, and a list of suggested interview questions. When you receive it, read and follow all instructions and pay attention to the amount of the application fee and deadlines for submission and refunds.

With the pandemic, these past several years have been a challenge. We now have a contingency plan with a virtual program that we know works, but we all want the same thing – in person Girls State. Let’s hope it happens.


We are sorry for any inconvenience this creates and hope you will continue to support Girls State by sending your outstanding young women to 2022 Cornhusker Girls State for an experience of a lifetime.

*Nicole Zieg
ALA Girls State Chr.*


QUILTS OF VALOR

Lawrence “Mert” Jacobsen was honored with a Quilt of Valor at the Bennington American Legion Auxiliary’s Veterans dinner at Bennington Post 266.

Lawrence served our country in the U.S. Air Force from 1951-1954 with a rank of Airman 1st Class. His sons, Steven and Bob, presented the quilt to their father. Lawrence is a member of Post 266.



A BLANK MIND WROTE THIS



I write this article while standing at my part-time job at a hotel wondering what words of “wisdom” I can share with you. Honestly, I feel my mind is a complete blank. The ALA Poppy Program is one of it’s oldest. It was begun 100 years ago in 1921 and is STILL one of the biggest programs done each year. Units still distribute the poppy for donations for our Veterans. Schools still participate in Poppy Poster Contests. Little Miss Poppy winners are still named.

What can I say to motivate your unit or even you as a member to use poppies in new ways? Is there something I can do or a challenge I can make to inspire you to start

participating in this program if you haven’t done it before? Maybe, but I am not going to.

I am not going to try to “bribe” you with awards or prizes in hopes you will participate in this program. Instead, I am going to hope that you and your unit will take this world-wide time of resetting our priorities to make the old new again. Everyone around the world has had to reimage how we communicate, hold events, or just get our daily jobs done. Have you thought about how that could apply to how you hold your Poppy Day?

Do you have a Poppy Day? Has it been a while since trying to have your local school participate in a Poppy Poster Contest? Have you thought about having a poster contest without your school? Have you ever decorated you post home or church or another business with a poppy display? Have you ever entered the Poppy Centerpiece Contest? I did my first one just two years ago.

By now, your unit should have sent in a Poppy order to the Headquarters office. If you didn’t, get one in ASAP!!! If you did but

you can come up with other ways to use poppies, call Lisa and ask her about getting more. Remember, there are two sizes of Poppies. The small ones are the ones typically distributed for donations. The Large Poppy can be used for decorating wreaths or in arrangements.

If your unit is holding a Poppy Poster Contest, make sure to look over this year’s ABC inserts. There are additional guidelines/rules to the National rules. These have become necessary as I received posters last year with the wrong judging class on them. There were other situations that made updating the guidelines or rules necessary. Please make sure to double check them BEFORE you send your winning posters for judging. If you can’t find the ABC pages, which should be on the Department ALA website, email me and I’ll make sure you have all the information you need. My email address is proudnavysister75@gmail.com

Guess my mind wasn’t so blank after all.....

*Jody Schmale
Poppy Chair*

CULBERTSON CHRISTMAS EVENT

Unit #133 sponsored and Dennis and Peggy Kennedy manned a table for Wreaths Across America at the Christmas in Culbertson event on December 5th. This is the first year it has been done in Culbertson.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

⁸ And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Galatians 6:9 (KJV)

We have just finished last year with all its complexities and confusion. There were many disagreements on what was right or wrong, much violence, and a constant threat of sickness and death. We did our best to keep serving our veterans and their families the best we could.

The bible verse tells us not to let it wear us out, but to keep doing as much as we can. God has a reward waiting for us, so keep up the good

work. Remember to ask Him for the strength to carry on,

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us the strength to go on when we don't think we can. There are so many that need us to help them. Guide us and renew our spirits. Give us the patience and hope to carry on. Help us to be kind and understanding to each other and to those we serve. Bless us through this coming year.

In Jesus name. Amen.
*Pat Wiseman
Dept. Chaplain*

LOVE IS IN THE NEW YEAR

***“What the world needs now
Is love, sweet love;
It's the only thing that there's just
too little of.”***

This song was written the year I was born and was one of the many that shaped me. In this time of year when resolutions are made, folks seem so consumed in bettering themselves --- losing weight, learning languages, clearing clutter from their lives. The list goes on and on.

This is all well and good, but in my years of healthcare, I have learned that few of my aged patients found much joy in their own self-improvement. The key to happiness, they shared, is in stepping outside of oneself for others. It's far simpler than it sounds

You want to feel richer? Help the poor.

You want to feel stronger? Hold the hand of the weak.

You want to find joy? Sit in silence with the grieving.

Our dear Auxiliary friend and mentor, Eva Nollette, has seen her share of pain. And yet, you will never know it because she wakes up every morning and practices her ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE. Friends, attitude is a muscle that needs to be strengthened like every other muscle. I guarantee you that the stronger your gratitude muscle, the greater your joy and the stronger you become against the storms of life. Make a gratitude list and read it every night and every day.

And, please, keep singing.

*Wishing you joy in this New Year,
Jean Vackiner
Music Chair*

In Memoriam

Received November 10 to December 10, 2021

Faye Saar	Bassett	123	Hazel McDonald	Aurthur	207
Lillian Vargason	Bassett	123	Alta M Chilson	Thedford	230
Merna Hagstrom	Ashland	129	Ethelyn M Hoins	Ruskin	242
Pat Parks	Arnold	130	Bonnie Fifer	Ceresco	244
Donita L Mitchell	Springfield	143	Ruth Decker	Bartley	245
Judy K Milfs	Bloomington	145	Georgia C Williams	Elwood	290
Peggy Albin	Plainview	148	Helen Mays	Doniphan	300
Amsel L Rosenbaum	Albion	162	Isla Drinkwalter	Cody	319
Loretta B Stutz	Hebron	180	Donna W Lahoda	Omaha	331
Connie Sutton	Friend	183	Ula L Luth	Ravenna	332
Marcella Thompson	Greeley	186	Eva McKeeman	Nebraska	500
Darlene Swanson	Greeley	186			

DATES TO REMEMBER

JANUARY

- 1 New Year's Day - Department Office closed
- 17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - Department Office closed
- 21-23 Mid-Year Education Conference - Columbus

FEBRUARY

- 10 "THE STAR" articles are due. *Please submit them by the 10th.*
- 14 Valentine's Day - Legion Family Recruiter Award
- 21 President's Day – Department Headquarters closed

MARCH

- 1 Girls State Applications due to Department;
Scholarships due to Units

FOR YOUR ADVANCED PLANNING

- June 5-11, 2022 ALA Cornhusker Girls State - in person or virtual
- June 23-26, 2022 Department Convention, Columbus, NE
- Aug. 26-Sept. 1, 2022 National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

RICHARDSON COUNTY

Richardson County Government Day is sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary units in Richardson County, Shubert and Humboldt. County officials and employees also assist with the day to give high school Juniors a picture of what a day in County Government at the Courthouse, Road Department, and Law Enforcement Center is like.

Opening ceremonies are held at the Courthouse with the Oath of

Office, Invocation, and Pledge of Allegiance. Speakers were District 3 Commissioner Rick Karas and Nebraska American Legion Department Chaplain Dr. William Jackson.

A tour of the jail facility by the Sheriff and his staff was given, and a meal prepared for the inmates was also served to the students for lunch before adjourning.



TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SPRING DISTRICT CONVENTION:

- 1 — Send out a Call to Convention to members in the District at least 30 days in advance.
- 2 — Call to Convention should include: location, registration time, date, contact information
- 3 — Send invitations to all Department officers and NEC to attend your Spring Convention.
- 4 — Get volunteers for the registration table.
- 5 — Communicate with District Legion officers regarding programs/agenda of Convention.
- 6 — Enlist hosting Unit volunteers to decorate tables, make corsages, and set up tables.
- 7 — Food. Are you having meals? Who is making them? What will the meal cost be?
- 8 — Snow day? Set up an alternative date if the Spring Convention gets canceled due to weather.
- 9 — Encourage members to step up and fill officer vacancies during Spring Convention elections.
- 10 — Most importantly, plan ahead and communicate!

*Angie Foster
Dept. Historian*