

Venturing Off the Beaten Path



On Wednesday, October 26, the Nebraska American Legion Department Adjutant Dave Salak presented a check for \$16,055.00 to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for the purchase of a new all-terrain track chair. This track chair will allow disabled veterans the mobility needed for some independent outdoor activities. Adjutant Dave has been working with National for many months to obtain this grant through the Operation Comfort Warriors program and it finally paid off. Many thanks to Doug Chace at National and Jeffrey Fields at Nebraska Game and Parks for working with the Nebraska American Legion to make this gift happen.

Operation Comfort Warriors is a National program that provides grants for wounded, injured, and ill military service members and veterans. These grants provide for items that are considered non-essential and not on government budget line items. The items provide for the rehabilitation and quality of life for these wounded warriors. Items can be for adaptive sports, physical therapy, and therapeutic recreation. Nebraska Posts have donated an untold amount of money to the OCW program since its inception. We also have one civilian donor, Nebraska Antique Farming Association, who have donated over \$50K over the past nine years to the OCW program through their Tractor Relay Across Nebraska.

Adjutant Salak stated, “We are excited to team up with Nebraska Game and Parks in this endeavor. I am a hunter and I know there are plenty of others who enjoy the outdoors as well. This track-chair is going to give disabled veterans the kind of mobility and independence they need to go out and enjoy the outdoors.”

Game and Parks currently has two of the track wheelchairs at Ponca State Park. The chairs provide people the freedom of mobility to hunt, fish, view nature and enjoy the outdoors in all types of terrain. If you would like to learn more about the project, please contact Jeffery Fields at Nebraska Games and Parks in Lincoln.

2023 Mid-Year Conference

Make Your Reservations Now



The 2023 Mid-Year Conference will be held January 13 - 15, 2023 at the Norfolk Lodge & Suites in Norfolk. The room rate is \$99.95 a night and breakfast is included with the rooms. The Norfolk Lodge is located at 4200 West Norfolk Avenue in Norfolk. Call 402-379-3833 for reservations. Make your reservations soon.

A draft agenda is listed to the right. A reminder that the lottery drawing will be held on Sunday morning during the joint session. Conference registration will be held from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, and 7:30 to 10:00 a.m. on Sunday. If you would like more information or have questions, please contact Adjutant Salak at Department Headquarters.

Mid-Year Agenda

- Friday, January 13, 2023**
10:00 a.m. DEC Meeting
- Saturday, January 14, 2023**
8:00 a.m. Joint Session
1:00 p.m. Training
5:00 p.m. Catholic Mass
6:00 p.m. Oratorical Contest
- Sunday, January 15, 2023**
8:00 a.m. Joint Religious Service
9:00 a.m. Joint Session

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

The Nebraska Legionnaire

P.O. Box 5205

Lincoln, NE 68505-0205

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

2023 Membership Goal: 24,835 October 31st Total: 16,526 – 66.54%

District 7 - 71.83%	District 2 - 70.18%	District 15 - 68.94%	District 10 - 68.20%	District 11 - 68.19%	District 6 - 66.29%
District 8 - 65.83%	District 13 - 65.16%	District 12 - 64.70%	District 3 - 64.54%	District 1 - 62.21%	District 9 - 60.78%
District 5 - 60.63%	District 4 - 58.84%				



Commander's Corner

Don Suchy
Department Commander



Happy Fall y'all, and what a busy fall it has been. It was my pleasure to attend a couple County Conventions, it is always good to see that we still have some counties hosting conventions. This is a great opportunity for the District Commanders to share important information to members that cannot attend District meetings or Department conventions.

I attended Sarpy County Government Day in Papillion and of all the County Government Days that I have attended this one was very organized, and I was impressed, thank you Sarpy County Commander David Guy for doing a great job.

October 7, we left for Indianapolis for the annual Fall Meetings, as well as National Commander Jim Troiola's Homecoming. At the Fall Meeting I was appointed National Commander Representative for Children and Youth.

After returning from the Fall Meetings in Indianapolis, Marge and I traveled to Abilene, Kansas for the 40th annual Dwight D. Eisenhower Pilgrimage and wreath laying ceremony. We enjoyed a banquet on Friday evening with great food and comradeship. On Saturday we laid wreaths for the Nebraska American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary. The guest speaker for the program was Representative Ron Estes, U.S. Congress, and Fourth District Kansas. The purpose of this event is to memorialize and pay tribute to the only United States President who claimed Kansas as his home state. A real nice luncheon followed the ceremony.

On Sunday, October 23 we attended Norfolk Post 16 dedication and ribbon cutting of their new Legion Post. Post 16 Commander Jerry Landkamer and the Norfolk American Legion Family did a great job hosting this event. I wish them much success in their new facility.

Saturday October 29 took us to Boelus for their Community Halloween Party. Boelus American Legion Family sponsored a coloring contest, and winners received prizes, treat were also given to trick or treaters after they joined Vicki Cyboron in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. We sure enjoyed attending this party.

We are starting to make plans for Mid-Year, it will be held January 13-15 in Norfolk at the Divots Conference Center. On Friday night January 13, there will be a hospitality get together, hosted by the American Legion Family at the new Norfolk Post home from 6:00-8:00 p.m., beverages and finger food will be provided. There will also be shuttle buses if you would prefer not to drive. Following this gathering there will be a "Family Affair" auction back at the hotel. Proceeds will be split between the National Emergency Fund (Legion) and Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

We made our membership goal of 65% on October 31. Keep up the good work and thank you Steve Bartos and his committee for reaching this goal. A special thank you goes out to all the Posts that are getting those memberships collected and sent into Headquarters. Keep up the good work!

The Holidays are fast approaching, my wife Marge and I would like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at Midyear.

"Serving Our Veterans on the Road to Success"



**To each and every Legionnaire,
members of the Auxiliary, Sons, Riders,
and to their families, we wish you a very
Merry Christmas and a joyous and prosperous New Year!**

NEBRASKA AMERICAN LEGION

Department Headquarters Office


Physical Location.....5600 P Street, Lincoln, NE 68505
Mailing Address.....P.O. Box 5205, Lincoln, NE 68505-0205
Phone Number.....(402) 464-6338
FAX.....(402) 464-6330
Business Hours.....8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (CST), Mon-Fri
Web site.....<http://www.nebraskalegion.net>
E-Mail Address.....dwsalak@windstream.net
Editor.....afwashburn@windstream.net

Department Officers

Commander.....Don Suchy, Valparaiso
Senior Vice Commander.....John Henry Percy, Papillion
Area A Vice Commander.....Carl Lorenzen, Blair
Area B Vice Commander.....Ken Meyer, Creighton
Area C Vice Commander.....Dick Binder, Minden
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Dist. 13.....Scott Buss, Sterling
Dist. 15.....Bruce Gubser, Lincoln



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Dave Salak, Publisher's Representative

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



Straight Talk

Levi Bennett
Department Service Officer



What do all the dates of the PACT Act mean to Veterans with regard to eligibility for VA Health Care?

Several veterans have asked me about dates regarding the VA health care “Phase in enrollment” for veterans included in the PACT Act.

The VA has provided many informational documents which speak of three categories of veterans, these three categories are specific to VA health care eligibility, not for a veteran filing a disability compensation claim (for disability claims, speak with a veteran service officer).

The categories for VA health care eligibility created by the PACT Act are as follows.

Category 1: Veterans are who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity as defined by law while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training.

Category 2: Veterans who were assigned to a duty station in certain locations during specific periods of time, to include the airspace above the identified locations. To meet the criteria for category 2, veterans must have served in Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, or the United Arab Emirates on or after August 2, 1990. Or served in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, or any other country determined relevant by VA on or after September 11, 2001.

Category 3: Veterans who deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom’s Sentinel, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Inherent Resolve, or Resolute Support Mission.

Important dates for veterans regarding PACT Act VA Health Care Eligibility.

October 1, 2022: Presumptions of service connection take effect for Veterans who served in Vietnam (1/9/62 – 5/7/75), Thailand (1/9/62 – 6/30/76), Laos (12/1/65 – 9/30/69), specific provinces in Cambodia (4/16/69 – 4/30/69), Guam or American Samoa to include territorial waters (1/9/62 – 7/31/80), or the Johnston Atoll (1/1/72 – 9/30/77). Veterans who served at any of these locations and who are terminally ill, homeless, under extreme financial hardship, or art over 85 years old also receive VA health care eligibility immediately.

October 1, 2022 – October 1, 2023: 1-year period for Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after 11/11/1998, and who were discharged or released between 9/11/2001 – 10/01/2013.

November 8, 2022: VA incorporates toxic exposure screening for veterans enrolled in VA health care.

October 1, 2024: Enrollment for health care for Categories 1 and 2 veterans who were released from service August 2, 1990 – September 11, 2001.

October 1, 2026: Enrollment for health care for Categories 1 and 2 veterans who were released from service September 12, 2001 – December 31, 2006.

Nebraska Veteran’s Programs

This is a reminder that the Gifts for Yanks Who Gave and Veterans Gift Shops will be held over the next month at the Veterans Homes and Medical Centers in Nebraska and at the Hot Springs, SD Medical Center. We hope many of you will be able to participate in the events and visit with the veterans in the homes and facilities. A calendar of dates and locations is listed below. Please contact the representatives for the facility with any questions about the events. If you wish to donate to the program or have any questions about the programs, please contact Department Headquarters.

VETERANS MEDICAL CENTER GIFT SHOPS

Set up on December 5, 2022		
Shop dates: December 6, 7, 8, 9	Omaha VA Medical Center	10:00 a.m.
Set up on December 5, 2022		
Gift Shop dates: December 6, 2022	Grand Island Medical Center	10:00 a.m.

GIFT FOR YANKS WHO GAVE

Sunday, December 4, 2022	Western NE Veterans Home, Scottsbluff	2:00 p.m.
Tuesday, December 13, 2022	Grand Island VA Medical Center	10:00 a.m.
	Central NE Veterans Home, Kearney	2:30 p.m.
Wednesday, December 7, 2022	Lincoln NE Regional Center	10:00 a.m.
Friday, December 9, 2022	Norfolk NE Veterans Home	2:00 p.m.
	Norfolk NE Regional Center	
Saturday, December 3, 2022	Hot Springs, SD, VA Medical Center	1:30 p.m.
Monday, December 12, 2022	Omaha VA Medical Center	10:00 a.m.
	Eastern NE Veterans Home, Bellevue	2:00 p.m.



POW/MIA

Boyd Yochum
POW/MIA Liaison





Frustrated by a problem in negotiating a peace settlement, pressured by Congress and the public wanting an end to American Involvement in Vietnam, President Nixon ordered the most concentrated air offensive of the war; known as Linebacker II; in December 1972.

During the offensive, sometimes called the Christmas Bombings, 40,000 tons of bombs were dropped primarily over the area between Hanoi and Haiphong. Despite press accounts to the contrary, the Christmas Bombings were the most precise the world had seen. Pilots involved in the immense series of strikes generally agree that the strikes against anti-aircraft and strategic targets was so successful that the U.S., had it desired, could have taken the entire country of Vietnam by inserting an average Boy Scout Troop in Hanoi and marching them southward.

Captain Donovan Keith Walters entered the U.S. Airforce from Lebanon, Red Willow County, Nebraska, a low population county in south west Nebraska, Red Willow County families suffered more than their share with three POW/MIAs from three towns; McCook, Lebanon, and Danbury.

Walters was a member of the 325th Bombardment Squadron. On December 21, 1972, he co-piloted a B-52G Stratofortress (tail number 58-0198, call sign Olive 1); that took off from Guam on a bombing mission over North Vietnam.

The crew consisted of James Y Nagahiro, Pilot; Lynn R Beens; Charles J Bebus, Keith R Heggen, Edward H Johnson, Robert R Lynn, and Walters. The aircraft was outfitted as were other B52 models, equipped with .50 caliber M-3 guns and 27-750 pound bombs. The aircraft had completed its mission, but was hit by a surface to air missile (SAM) in the tail section shortly after turning toward the safety of Thailand. Enemy presence in the area prevented search efforts on the ground.

The fate of the crew is varied. Nagahiro, Beens and Heggen were captured, and Heggen died in captivity. Until his release, the U.S. did not know Nagahiro had been captured. After their release in 1973, Nagahiro and Beens were able to fill in further information on the missing crew members. Nagahiro related that he saw Donovan Walters eject from the plane and heard four others go out behind him. Beens stated that he saw Walters identification card in a stack of cards on a desk at Hoa Lo (Hanoi Hilton) prison. Nagahiro saw Johnson’s name written on a pad at the prison.

Vietnamese returned the remains of Heggen in 1974, and consistently denied knowledge of any of the rest of the crew. In October 1988, Vietnamese “discovered” remains of Walters, and three members of his crew, Bebus, Johnson and Lynn; and returned them to U.S. Control. If the US had negotiated more aggressively, would Bebus, Johnson, Lynn and Walters possibly have come home alive? For 16 years, they may have been alive; but were political prisoners of a communist nation.

Captain Walters is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Cemetery of the Pacific.




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It's History

Jennifer Laux
Department Historian



American Legion Department of Nebraska History Word Search

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

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

December 1982 (40 years ago)

- It was a historic and memorable experience for the approximately 60 Nebraskans who attended the National **SALUTE** to **VIETNAM** veterans and the dedication of the new Vietnam Veterans **MEMORIAL** in Washington, DC, Nov 10-14. It became a homecoming reunion of sorts, one with spontaneous emotions of **BROTHERHOOD**, **PATRIOTISM** and **REFLECTIONS** of those who died or are missing in Vietnam.
- Considerable concern over job-related stress and heart problems is being expressed nationally by many firefighters and law enforcement people. **LINCOLN** Post 3 responded by donating \$2,116 to purchase an electro-**CARDIOGRAPH**. Trained personnel in both the Lincoln Fire and Police Departments are now using the instrument to detect hypertension and heart problems in employees.

December 1992 (30 years ago)

- Governor Ben Nelson has awarded a \$900 **GRANT** which will aid a **DRILL** team program that was formed by American Legion Post 30 in Omaha. The program will serve Omaha's inner-city youth.
- MILLARD** Legionnaires wish to thank all who made their first **FINGERPRINTING** session a great success. Sixty-one children participated in the Oct. 6 event.
- National Historian Delfo Barabani has announced the results of the 1992 National Department and Post History Contests. Among those entries receiving recognition was **NELSON** Post 187. Nelson Legionnaire Jim **MENKE** won the Department Post History and as a result, his entry was forwarded to the national competition.

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 payments must be received before January 8, 2023. The program is 8.5 x 5.5 in size. Please contact Amanda at Headquarters.

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



Rider's Rally

John Arias
Department ALR Liaison



Greetings Fellow Riders,
I attended the Commander's Homecoming event in Seward on October 1, 2022. The Leadership Training was very informative. Saw a lot of friends there and enjoyed the training.



It is time to nominate a ALR for the **Robert Swanson Memorial Nebraska ALR Rider of the Year**.

- Each Chapter gets to submit 1 candidate; Department will pay \$75.00 for the cost of the Plaque; The candidates will be judged by the current ALR Assistant Liaisons. In the case where an Asst. Liaison is submitted the State Liaison will fill his or her spot; Once a candidate receives the award, they are not eligible to win it again for 5 years.
- Even though this is a rider of the year award we are looking for what this person has achieved in their life time. Please write an essay describing their accomplishments; Letters of recommendation (At least 2.); Community service. We are looking for a person that goes above and beyond the call, no matter what size of chapter he or she belongs to or the size of the town they lives in. (Be specific); What has this person done for the good of the American Legion Riders; Must be a member in good standing with a Legion Family AND the Legion Riders at the time of the application and receipt of the award.
- The Award will be given at the Summer State Meeting in June during the Joint Session. All applications must be submitted by March 1st to John Arias or any of the 4 assistant Liaisons in your region."

The Norfolk ALR Chapter #16 attended the Lion's Club Parade on September 24, 2022. The ALR Chapter also assisted with care packages for seven deployed Soldiers during the Norfolk American Legion meeting. The Norfolk ALR also volunteered at the Norfolk Vet's Home on September 21st. The ALR Chapter was present at the Norfolk American Legion's new building ribbon cutting.

The following Chapters have past Legacy Scholarship Fund awards and I would like to present you the awards at our 2023 Mid-Winter Rider meeting on January, 14, 2023 at 4:30 pm in Norfolk. Please attend so that I may present your award during our Rider Meeting. Chapters Homer, Norfolk, Lincoln, Benson, Edgar and Columbus.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 308-352-6824 or email me johnpaularias32@gmail.com.

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



S.A.L. Notes

Chris Casey
Detachment Commander



Greetings from the Detachment of Nebraska! We continue to have Nebraska Legion Posts reaching out for information on how to start their own Sons of The American Legion Squadron. A quick reminder of the items that should be completed for a new Charter: 1. Ten new members (dual members are included) must be identified. The ten members required for the application cannot be transfer members from another Squadron. 2. A minimum of a Squadron Commander and Adjutant must be identified. 3. It is helpful to have a meeting with a member of the Detachment leadership team to provide an overview of the process and next steps. 4. The SAL Squadron Charter Application and initial Squadron Data Report (SDR) must be submitted to the Department of Nebraska. Please reach out to any member of the Detachment leadership team to inquire about starting your own Squadron today!

All Sons of The American Legion members must renew by 12/31/2022 to stay current. You are current if your membership card says 2023. We have numerous Squadrons across the state who have not reported any membership for 2023 even though the renewal period started five months ago! It is the job of the Adjutant to get membership processed as they receive it. They do a disservice to their fellow members by holding onto membership and risk costing them their benefits. We also have many Squadrons who are doing an outstanding job with membership and should be commended. Membership is the lifeblood of our organization, and it is the responsibility of the entire American Legion Family. If you are a leader in your Post, please help guide your Sons!

We will be hosting the leading candidate for Sons of The American Legion National Commander, Don “JR” Hall, at our mid-year conference in Norfolk. JR will be visiting us from the Detachment of Maryland. We look forward to his address of the joint opening and having his input available during our training seminar. Please impress on your Sons that they should make plans to attend January 13-15, 2023. The DEC plans to meet Friday night. We will have training on Saturday and continue to ask for input from our membership so that we can gear the training to their needs. An educated member makes a more effective and productive member!



District 11 SAL Squadron Membership Award

By: Nathan Deke, District 11 Sons Membership Chairman

The 8th annual District 11 Membership award will be presented at the upcoming District 11 Convention. The recipient of this award is the Squadron having the highest membership percentage on December 31, 2022 Detachment membership report for the 2023 year out of the 24 squadrons in District 11. I am honored to welcome two new Squadrons into the competition this year, they are Tobias and Fairmont.

District 11 Convention is scheduled to be held in Beatrice, on Saturday, March 25, 2023. The Squadron Commander and Adjutant should both receive a letter of notification if their Squadron is the recipient of this award in January regarding further details. We are hoping that all Squadrons have returned updated officer forms back to Detachment Headquarters, so the correct people get the letter.

The following Squadrons have received this honor in the past: Milligan 2016, Exeter 2017, 2018 & 2021, Geneva 2019, Friend 2020, and McCool Junction 2021 & 2022.

We would like to thank and very much appreciate District 11 American Legion for the financing of this membership project. Our goal of this award is to promote timely membership turn in and increase the membership of all branches of The American Legion Family as well. You must remember what the ages and capabilities of the active members of our parent organizations are. I am sure many of you are aware that when one member passes away, their shoes are not easy to fill, so if you know eligible members for one branch of the Legion Family pass it on to get them involved.

Please remember that you are eligible for membership both Sons and Junior Auxiliary Memberships on date of birth. It is a true fact that the Sons, Junior Auxiliary, and Auxiliary have members with more years of continuous membership than their age is. When your child, grandchild, niece, nephew or whatever the case may be, when they are at a young age, they are not capable to join on their own. So, if you know of a youngster, or someone, that you would like to see be awarded with a 50, 60, 70, or 80+ year Continuous-Membership Certificate someday, you need to get them started immediately. Please remember shopping does not get much easier than purchasing them a membership. The longer you wait, the less years they will accumulate.

Sons of The American Legion Membership As of October 31, 2022		
District	2022 Members	2023 Members
1	329	126
2	639	187
3	223	72
4	351	79
5	134	22
6	1,314	368
7	728	166
8	854	361
9	342	77
10	363	104
11	1,079	219
12	255	52
13	130	36
15	145	127
Total	6,868	1,996



Lincoln Chapter 3 presented a check for \$2,000.00 from their poker run to the JAVELAN Service Dog program. JAVELAN program provides funding for service dogs for military veterans and retired first responders in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa. This program enriches the lives of veterans and retired first responders, by enabling independence and giving life-changing support. Pictured (L to R) Chapter 3 Assistant Director Neil Larson, JAVELAN representative Bob Dean and his dog, Jack, JAVELAN recipient Tom Fairchild and his dog, Duke, and Chapter 3 Treasurer David Dietz.



From the Desk of the Department Adjutant:

At the 2022 Convention in Columbus, Resolution 5 “Honoring World War II Veterans” was adopted. I ask all Posts to go through their membership and identify known WWII veterans and then send me a consolidated list of their names. If their “war era” isn’t marked but you suspect they are a WWII member, please call them and verify. We want to honor all our WWII veterans.

At Department Convention in 2023, all WWII names provided to Department will be printed in our Convention Program. Department staff would greatly appreciate your time and effort and request this information not later than May 1.

This is also a great way to have your members renew their dues for the 2023 membership year!

David W. Salak
Department Adjutant

Membership Minute
By: Steve Bartos, Chairman

As we settle into the winter months, we probably face what is the more difficult part of our annual membership campaign. The PUFL and Department Life Members are all renewed, and so is that group of loyal Legionnaires who tend to pay their dues promptly upon receipt of the first --- or maybe second --- renewal notices. Those who remain unpaid sometimes seem like the toughest to renew.

The special prize we established this year for the Early Bird drawing appears to have done some good. Paid regular memberships on the Early Bird drawing dates in 2021 and 2020 were down from the previous year's number. Paid regular memberships on the drawing date this year were UP from last year. A positive and welcome trend, I hope.

Nebraska met and exceeded its 65% goal on the November 9th target date, and I'm grateful for that. We need to keep building momentum.

Another renewal notice from Indianapolis was scheduled to be mailed November 10-18, and we can look ahead to the 75% target on December 14th. With every post doing its part, I'm optimistic that we can achieve the number we need ---- and MORE. We've finally moved up into the top 10 in the national standings and want to stay there.

Keep in mind that some target dates are USUALLY, BU NOT ALWAYS followed closely by a "cut off date." That's the date when the remaining list of delinquent members is scheduled for another renewal notice. Occasionally, however, national elects to process the list before a target date. Clearly, it should be apparent that prompt and regular submittal of dues to department headquarters throughout the year is a must so that paid members don't receive an unnecessary renewal notice.

At the fall meetings in Indianapolis, Commander Suchy pledged a membership of 91.60% of goal for the Big 12 competition in March. We are competing against 17 other departments in Category 5, and Nebraska has "bid" the 5th highest pledge in that category. We can't control what the other departments do, but nothing will matter if we fail to make the 91.60%. Whatever we can get above that amount increases our chances of overtaking one of the four departments who have bid more ---- but then fail to make their pledge.

I continue promoting that each post monitors the members in Post 500 to renew and/or transfer known Legionnaires into your local posts. I recently prepared and sent out some prospect lists to a few posts and hope to hear some good feedback on the success of that effort. Every post has the capability to generate the prospect lists just as I did. Don't be afraid to contact me if you need assistance.

On behalf of myself and the Department Membership Committee, I certainly wish you the Merriest of Christmases and the Happiest of New Years! I hope to see some of you at the Mid-Year Conference.

Renew! Recruit! Reinstate!
Have a nice December!

**Department Assistant Adjutant
Brent Hagel-Pitt Retires**



So, approaching the end of my time here at the American Legion. It's time for me to say thanks to all of you who have provided so much to both the Legion and to my time here.

There are way too many to thank directly, and I hope that all of you know just how much I appreciated the help, guidance, and friendship that you gave. Some of the members have since passed but I assure you, they live on in my memory and you can add me to one that will help with them living on through those of us who do.

I sincerely wish each of you a long and happy time in the Legion and in life.

Best wishes!
Brent

**New Assistant Adjutant
Eric Martin**



The Headquarters Staff would like your help in welcoming our newest employee, Eric Martin.

Eric will be taking over for H-P in the role as Assistant Adjutant and Activity Director and is excited to get started. He is working to become familiar with the programs and all other aspects of his role within The American Legion.

Eric lives in Lincoln and has three children. He has recently retired from the Army National Guard after 22 years of service. He enjoys being outdoors, spending time with his family and catching some American Legion baseball games.

When you run into him, please send him a 'thanks' for all he is doing for the American Legion and its family.



Friend Post 183 presented a certificate and pin for 50 years of continuous membership to PDC Ron Corbett. Pictured (L to R) Membership Chair Ken Lindsey and PDC Ron Corbett.

Looking to add a companion animal to your life?

Use Vets Get Pets!

Eligible veterans can have up to \$350 in pet adoption fees covered when they use the Vets Get Pets Program

Funded by Vets Get Pets License Plate sales!

Learn more online at veterans.nebraska.gov/vetsgetpets

NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Sacrifice.
VETERANS' AFFAIRS



Abernathy, Kent S., Norfolk, Vietnam
Amedeo, Douglas, Lincoln, Korea
Anderson, John B., Ohiowa, SAL
Barent, Alvin L., Loup City, Korea
Barrientos, John, South Omaha, Vietnam
Barritt, K. E., Stuart, Korea
Barry, Glenn L., Malmo, Korea
Barry, Louis M., Valparaiso, Korea
Berney, Donald, Wolbach, Vietnam
Bettger, Robert E., Fairmont
Biegert, Thomas E., Palmer, Vietnam
Biskup, Justin L., Lincoln, Korea
Black, Jim E., Norfolk, Korea
Blauhorn, Orville D., Palmer, Korea
Block, Walter A., Newcastle, Korea
Bowman, Robert, York, Vietnam
Brock, George, Lincoln, Vietnam
Brown, Rex W., Fairmont, Korea
Burns, Thomas D., Lincoln, Vietnam
Callam, Nathan A., Beatrice, Korea
Charvat, Francis J., Millard, Korea
Chelewski, Raymond J., St. Paul, WWII
Choquette, Adrian O., Campbell, Korea
Ciesinski, Leroy J., Schuyler, Vietnam
Clausen, Duane D., Valley, WWII
Comstock, Max E., Greenwood, Korea
Cox, Kenneth R., Madrid, Vietnam
Crouse, Robert D., Bloomington, Vietnam
Cuda, Dan, Denton, Vietnam
Damico, Joseph L., Papillion, Vietnam
Deeds, Jerry, Arlington, Vietnam
Deharty, Charles C., Eustis, Vietnam
Dillman, Donald E., Gering, Vietnam
Doeden, Danny P., Cook, Vietnam
Eaton, W. B., Fremont
Egr, Richard M., Millard, Korea
Ehrke, Galen, Stamford, Vietnam
Folkerts, Le Roy, Beatrice, Korea
Foreshore, David M., Dakota City, Vietnam
Forsberg, Dennis, Laurel, Vietnam
Fuller, Donald D., Grand Island, Korea
Furrow, Robert, Maywood, WWII
Garcia, Ramon, Bloomington, Vietnam
Geist, Joseph C., Lincoln, WWII
Gilbert, Don, Ashland, Vietnam
Goertzen, Leo, Aurora, Korea
Gold, Larry L., Chadron, Vietnam
Hanner, Richard, Papillion, WWII
Heesacker, Bernard A., Rushville, WWII
Heithoff, Randall T., Petersburg, Vietnam
Henggeler, Keith A., Schuyler, SAL
Hergott, Joseph G., Hebron, Korea

Hicks, Doris H., Columbus, WWII
Hogan, Jack F., Omaha, Korea
Howell, Errol W., Greeley, Vietnam
Hubbell, James H., Lincoln, Vietnam
Hugo, Ambrose J., West Point, Korea
Iwan, Russel R., South Omaha, SAL
Jennings, Harold J. Jr., Gibbon, Korea
Jensen, Leon L., Beatrice, Korea
Johnson, Mervin, Plainview, Korea
Johnson, Timothy C., Millard, Vietnam
Jones, Lyle M., Lincoln, Korea
Jones, Thomas G., Bloomington, Vietnam
Kasal, Frank H., Schuyler, Korea
Kastens, Rolly R., Sutton, Korea
Kellough, Max, Friend, Korea
Kjeldgaard, Larry, Bancroft Korea
Korth, Warren, Lincoln, Vietnam
Kosch, Thomas H., David City, Vietnam
Kosmicki, Michael, Alliance, Vietnam
Kowalski, Robert L., Saint Paul, Korea
Krivohlavek, Raymond, Wilber, WWII
Kruger, Robert L., Fremont, Vietnam
Kucera, Valerian, Lawrence, Korea
Kurrelmeyer, Lyle D., Fremont
Ladehoff, Harold R., Schuyler, Vietnam
Lambert, George, Pawnee City, Korea
Liebrecht, Norman, David City, Korea
Loberg, Vernon, Randolph, Korea
Lovig, Richard W., Norfolk, Korea
Lukasiewicz, David L., Saint Paul, Vietnam
Martin, Wayne P. Sr., South Omaha, Vietnam
McInturf, Ed, Stamford, Vietnam
McMahon, Raymond J., Millard, Korea
Meier, Bill, Kearney, Vietnam
Mellick, David, Jackson, Vietnam
Mendicino, Thomas, Millard, Korea
Michel, Jacob, Lincoln, Vietnam
Miller, William L., Norfolk, Vietnam
Mills, Charles W., South Omaha, Korea
Moss, Earl O., Cody, Korea
Muthersbaugh, Don R., Valparaiso, Korea
Myer, Reiner A., Bayard, Vietnam
Navratil, Bernard D., Hallam, Korea
Nydahl, William, Chadron, Korea
Oldberg, Nils, Blair, WWII
Ostrander, William E., Beatrice, Vietnam
Parrott, Richard A., Pleasant Dale, Vietnam
Peetz, Delmar D., Omaha, WWII
Percell, Tom J., Wymore, SAL
Peterson, James A., Fremont, WWII
Pigotti, Joe, Bridgeport, Korea
Polivka, Ernest L., Valparaiso

Ransen, Lyle, Newman Grove, Vietnam
Reiners, James, Indianola, Korea
Rother, Fredrick P., Wolbach, Korea
Rothmeyer, Gary V., Indianola, Vietnam
Ruff, Robert J., Omaha, Korea
Ruskamp, Ron, Dodge, SAL
Ryan, James Jr., Greeley, Vietnam
Sample, Darcy A., Hemingford, Vietnam
Sarnes, Donald L., Lexington, Korea
Sasek, Joseph E., Wilber, Korea
Scheidies, Lavern W., Gibbon, WWII
Schell, Richard D., Hallam, Korea
Schlange, Eimer F., Auburn, WWII
Schneider, R. Harvey, Pawnee City, Vietnam
Schreiner, Gerald P., Fairmont, Vietnam
Schulz, Donald, Lincoln, WWII
Shaw, Carl B., Gering, SAL
Shoemaker, John, St. Paul, WWII
Shore, Carl A., Wilber, Vietnam
Sisson, Thomas W., Ewing, Vietnam
Smets, William N., Lexington, Vietnam
Smisek, Kenneth, Wilber, Korea
Smith, Dick E., Sargent, Korea
Smith, Leroy, Minden, Korea
Spier, Jeffery, Pawnee City, Vietnam
Steinman, Raymond W., Lincoln, Korea
Stentz, Norman L., Lincoln, WWII
Stern, Ivan, Omaha, WWII
Szatko, Joseph L., Columbus, Vietnam
Tams, Gayle W., Stamford, Vietnam
Tarvin, John, Barneston
Tharnish, John B., Lincoln, Korea
Thayer, Ernest J., Grand Island, Korea
Tipton, Terry T., Walthill, Vietnam
Toebben, Delmer, Arlington, Korea
Townsend, Thomas L., Millard, Vietnam
Trimbath, Galen, St. Paul, WWII
Tyma, Richard, Litchfield, Korea
Uden, George J., Juniata, Korea
Utemark, Paul, Emerson, Korea
Vencil, Frank A., Valley, Vietnam
Vincent, John R., York, Vietnam
Voss, Roger C., North Platte, Vietnam
Voss, Roger, Newcastle, Korea
Wall, Alan L., Shelby, Vietnam
Webster, Arnold, Pender, Korea
Weidner, Leo, South Omaha, Korea
Westphal, E. R., Beatrice, Korea
Weyenth, Ernest, Danbury, Vietnam
Wilson, Garry D., Lynch, Korea
Wolf, Donald G., Lincoln, Vietnam
Wright, Adam R., Tilden, SAL
Zahn, Harold L., Syracuse, Korea
Correction: Clark S. Gall of Eustis and Gerald Stalling of Wakefield are alive and well, and Norman L. Stentz of Lincoln was a WWII and Korea veteran.

Events Calendar

December

11-16 National Legion College - Indianapolis
7 75% Membership Target Date
23-26 Christmas Holiday - Office Closed
30 New Years Holiday - Office Closed

January

2 New Years Holiday - Office Closed
11 80% Membership Target Date
16 MLK Jr Day - Office Closed

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

LegionCare: \$5,000.00 Accidental Death Benefit at NO COST* To You



Did you know that starting 1/1/2015, anyone enrolled in LegionCare will be covered for as long as they maintain their membership in the Legion Family – TAL, ALA, & SAL. This new “one and done” approach will save you from needing to re-enroll every five years. 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.*

All dues-paying Department members have the opportunity to enroll in LegionCare; a complimentary, no cost to you accidental death coverage provided to members of Your Department.

Your Department of The American Legion works hard to provide the most comprehensive benefits to you and its members. As a Legionnaire in good standing, you are eligible for LegionCare. Your Department is committed to protecting Legionnaires and their families, so they’ve worked with the Legionnaire Insurance Trust (LIT) to arrange this benefit for you. Don’t pass up your opportunity to activate LegionCare! You are guaranteed this NO COST coverage with no health questions, no hidden qualifications and no reason to pass up your opportunity for this important coverage.

Although coverage is available at NO COST to you and paid for by the LIT, you must enroll to receive the coverage. Visit www.theLIT.com or call toll-free at 1-800-235-6943 today to activate up to \$5,000.00 in protection.

*For purposes of the LIT, a member of The American Legion, with current year’s dues paid, could be eligible for the \$5,000.00 Accidental Death benefit if he/she is traveling to, attending, or returning from an official function at which the Legionnaire represents their Post, District, Department, or National Organization in an official capacity.

Mail Call

To the members of The American Legion,
Thank you so much your generous contribution of \$4,424.00 to the Nebraska State Patrol K-9 Division. Your support is greatly appreciated.
Judy Janssen
Nebraska State Patrol Foundation Board President

We need pictures and stories! Tell us what your Post, Squadron, or Chapter is doing in your local community. Articles and pictures can be emailed to afwashburn@windstream.net or mailed to The American Legion – PO Box 5205 – Lincoln, NE 68505.



Curtis Post 95 and Maywood Post 272 presented a birthday card to 102 year old Legion member Robert Furrow. He is a 77 year member of The American Legion. Pictured (L to R) Maywood Post 272 Com-mander Wayne Sellers, District 9 Commander Ron Wiest, Maywood Post 272 Adjutant Dan Smith, and Curtis Post 95 Adjutant R. J. Christensen.



Hastings Post 11 held a flag retirement ceremony. With the help of Legion members, Legion Riders, Cub Scouts, and Boy Scouts they were able to retire over 1,000 flags.



Thedford Post 230 donated two cases of drinking water to the Thedford Volunteer Fire Department after the recent fire at Halsey National Forrest. Pictured (L to R) Fire Chief Spencer Burke and Post Commander Royce Brown.



Boelus Post 201 hosted their Halloween Party on October 29 for 35 local children. Pictured (L to R) Marge Suchy, David Cyboron, Department Commander Don Suchy, Marilyn Cyboron, and Vicki Cyboron.



Hyannis Post 57 was presented a check from Alex Adam, a 5th grader at Hyannis Area Schools. Alex's donation came from the sale of his 4-H cookie jar during the Grant County Fair.



Utica Post 49 member Donald Sandman was presented with a Quilt of Valor from the Nebraska South Central Piecemakers. He was a Vietnam veteran. Pictured (L to R) Donald Sandman and his wife.



Fairbury Post 24 Commander Guy Shalla was presented with a Quilt of Valor. He was a Vietnam veteran.



Wahoo Squadron 82 member Doug Washburn and other members of the Omaha area VAVS meetings presented Omaha VA Voluntary Service Specialist Kari Bealer with a cake for her many years of service to the Omaha area veterans. Pictured (L to R) Doug Washburn and Kari Bealer.



Weston Post 308 member LeRoy Ohnoutka was presented a certificate for the Saunders County Veteran of the month. He is a 70 year continuous member of The American Legion. Pictured front (L to R) LeRoy Ohnoutka and Post Commander Ken Meduna. Pictured back (L to R) Post Adjutant Tom Vasa, Larry Cejka, Eugene Kremlacek, Larry Johnson, and Saunders County CVSO Bill Bonney.



The Grand Island Veterans Honor Guard is made up of veterans from the Grand Island Legion Post 53 and VFW Post 1347. They have conducted military honors for many veterans in their community.



District 11 Commander Tom Crisman installed the newly elected Saline County Commander Roger Glenn during the Saline County meeting at Friend. Pictured (L to R) Tom Crisman and Roger Glenn.



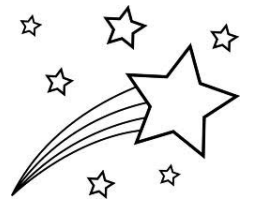
Wymore Post 25 members were presented with Quilts of Valor from the Quilt Stitches and family members. All three were Vietnam veterans. Pictured (L to R) Robert E. Allen, Richard L. Wellensiek, and Kenneth R. Wellensiek.



The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Nebraska

The Star

December 2022



AUXILIARY – 365 DAYS A YEAR!



The season of giving is upon us. “The spirit of Christmas” seems to appear once a year around the winter solstice. Our attitudes go through a change. We begin talking and singing about peace and goodwill. Families get together. People seem to go out of their way to give and forgive. Everyone is caught up in an atmosphere of “the spirit of Christmas.”

Unfortunately, “the spirit of Christmas” doesn’t last. The kindness, the generosity, the peace and goodwill, and the welcoming relationships slip away following Christmas. But I don’t see that with the American Legion Auxiliary. We truly experience the “spirit of giving and serving” 365 days a year.

Throughout the year, there

are Auxiliary members and Units promoting and working our programs. Some volunteer at the Veterans Homes or Medical Centers. Others host blood drives and/or donate blood. Are you one who delivers meals or drives a Veteran to an appointment? We support our youth and teachers with Give 10 to Education as well as recognition during American Education Week.

Generosity and kindness lie in the hearts of ALA members. However, sometimes we need to get a “booster shot” to keep us going. Your leadership team can offer that to you in January. Our Mid-Year Educational Conference will be held at the Divots Conference Center in Norfolk. The dates are January 13-15. You can find a tentative agenda elsewhere in this issue.

Mid-Year is when you can announce your desire to be a part of the Nebraska leadership team. I urge you to consider placing your name on our Convention ballot to serve as Chaplain, Historian, Vice President, President, or National Executive Committeeperson. Nebraska ALA has so many members that are true leaders. Is it time for you to share your abilities at the state level?

A few highlights at Mid-Year include a “Legion Family” social gathering on Friday evening. It will be held at the newly dedicated American Legion Post #16, which is very close to Divots. There will be some refreshments.

Another activity is an auction on Saturday evening following the Oratorical Contest. The proceeds will be divided between the National Emergency Fund (Legion) and the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Complete details will be available in the December Newsletter.

Then, of course, the fun, entertaining, and educational portion of the agenda. You won’t want to miss it! Let’s all put in a special prayer for cooperative weather, as we all know what winter in January in Nebraska can be like!

Remember that if you have not paid your dues by December 31, you are considered delinquent. Each unit should put a strong push on collecting any remaining dues (and recruiting new members) so we can be at 100 percent. And, since we are in “the spirit of Christmas,” I challenge you to show an act of kindness and generosity by either paying a member’s dues or paying to

sign up a new member. If you accept my challenge, I will contribute \$20 to our State Life Member fund.

Another exciting event for January is the visit of our National President, Vickie Koutz. She will experience three jam-packed days of seeing Nebraska from North Platte to Kearney, Grand Island, the Medal of Honor Highway, South Sioux City, and Omaha! More details will become available as they are finalized. My hope is that many ALA members, along with the American Legion Family, will be a part of her visit as we plan events at local posts as we travel across Nebraska.

One of my favorite songs is “Let There Be Peace on Earth.” It is often heard during this time of year as we approach the birth of our Lord. Yet, I feel it should be one that we hear throughout the year. A quote from Helen Steiner Rice says it best --- “Peace on earth will come to stay when we live Christmas every day.”

Take a moment and reflect on the words: *Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be. With God as our Father, brothers all are we. Let me walk with my brother, in perfect harmony.*

Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now. With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow. To take each moment and live each moment with peace eternally. Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

As 2022 comes to an end, may “the spirit of Christmas” be with you and “take each moment and live each moment with peace eternally.” May God bless you with a festive, loving, and peaceful celebration this Christmas and throughout the year. My sincere thanks for all you do in carrying out our Mission, and let us start another “365 days” of Auxiliary in 2023!

Vicki Ozenbaugh
Department President '22-'23



2023 MID-YEAR EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Basics

REGISTRATION HOURS:

Friday, January 13 – ALA - Noon – 3:30 pm
8 & 40 – 3:45 – 4:15 pm
Saturday, January 14 – 7:30 am – 2:00 pm

When: Friday, January 13 – Sunday, January 15, 2022
Where: Divots Norfolk Lodge – 4200 West Norfolk Avenue – Norfolk NE
Who: **All members** of the American Legion Auxiliary

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13

What: Department Executive Meeting – (DEC) - District Presidents and Department Officers meeting – 10:00 am
What: Lunch break – 12:00 – 1:00 pm
What: Mid-Year Opening Session – 1:30 pm
What: 8 & 40 Pouvoir – 4:15 pm
What: The American Legion Family Gathering – Norfolk Post #16 Home – 3206 Raasch Dr. Suite 200 - 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm – DEC & Chairs bring snacks/munchies

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14

What: American Legion Family Joint Session - 8:00 am – 10:00 am
What: American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) session begins - 10:30 am – 12:00 pm
What: Past President’s Parley Luncheon - 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
What: Lunch break - 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm
What: ALA Session reconvenes and includes announcement of Candidates for Department Offices - 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm
What: Catholic Mass – 5:00 pm
What: Oratorical Contest - 6:00 pm
What: American Legion Family Auction for Nebraska Emergency Fund and Auxiliary Emergency Fund – follows the Oratorical Contest

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

What: American Legion Family Joint Religious Service – 8:00 am
What: American Legion Family Session – 9:00 am – Children & Youth, VA & R

This is a tentative agenda and subject to change.

Room rates \$99.95 nightly plus tax – Call 402-379-3833 for reservations

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP DISTRICT 7 PRESIDENT



Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to introduce myself. I am Nancy Niemann and am serving as President of District 7 covering Butler, Colfax, Dodge, Platte, Polk, and Saunders Counties. I am a 49-year member of Weston Auxiliary Unit 308, being eligible through my father, Arnold Machacek, who served in the Army during the Korean War.

My mother, Rose Machacek, was a Gold Star Sister to her brother, Charles Snitily, who died in World War II. Those two connections are my personal reasons for being an Auxiliary member, as well as “to

participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion.”

I live near Raymond with my husband, Don, where we raised three children --- Brandon, Courtney, and Jack. In addition, I have a granddaughter, Myah, and a son-in-law Denton. I work for the City of Lincoln Aging Partners and the Village of Raymond.

“Behind every son or daughter killed in action, there’s a Gold Star Mother.” (emblem.legion.org). My project will be to work to identify Gold Star Mothers (GSM) and hope to ensure GSM grave markers and flags are placed at their graves in order to “Honor these women who gave up their children that we may enjoy freedom.” (emblem.legion.org).

DISTRICT 9 PRESIDENT



My name is Maria Atterberry, and I live in Elwood, Nebraska. I am District 9 President. I am also President of our Unit #290 in Elwood. I am eligible for Auxiliary through my husband, who was a Vietnam Era veteran. He is deceased.

I have 4 daughters and 11 grandchildren. They all live fairly close, so I enjoy their families and all their activities.

My hobbies include knitting, crocheting, and reading. I’m also a member of the Plum Creek Garden club and serve as the Secretary.

Therefore, I love to garden and preserve just about everything!

Currently, I am a board member of the Elwood Library and a member of St. Ann Church in Lexington.

I enjoy visiting with people and having coffee with the locals is a favorite pastime. I have been able to tell others about our work with American Legion and Auxiliary. Our village is very receptive to our mission, and I attribute the success of working the American Legion Auxiliary programs to our community!

I thank many women in this organization who encouraged me along the way or mentored me. It been a great learning experience, and I’m so proud to be an American Legion Auxiliary member!

PAST PRESIDENT’S PARLEY

This is the time of year that the chairman of the Past Presidents’ Parley (PPP) begins to plan. Plans to make the Holidays a bit brighter for our Ex-Servicewomen in the VA Homes and Medical Centers across our state. The chairman makes sure each female veteran receives a \$20 gift in their canteen fund twice a year. The female veteran will receive their first gift in Mid-December.

This is also the time of year when planning begins for the yearly PPP luncheon/meeting at our Mid-Year Conference in Norfolk. Past Department Presidents will gather for fellowship and business. The members will re-establish relationships and join in conversations that may bring new projects to the floor.

This chairman hopes that you, as a past Unit/District President, will gather as Past Presidents to make plans to mentor your members. Be there to advise. There are always questions that need to be addressed. If you do not have the answers, reach out to someone who does have those answers.

I recently watched a Facebook post from Past National SAL Commander, Danny Smith. It was one of his campfire talks. His words spoke to me. I am paraphrasing his words, but he told us we have lost our focus. We need to remember what our organization is about. We need to keep our focus on our Mission, not on the controversy. He also told us our fires have gone down. It is time to re-stoke the fires. As Past Presidents, that is our job --- to re-stoke the fires.

OK, Auxiliary members, let us go gather some wood.

Elizabeth Paes
Past President’s Parley

NORFOLK DEDICATION

On October 23rd, Norfolk Post 16 held a Dedication and Ribbon-cutting Ceremony at the location of their new post home at 3206 Raasch Drive, Suite 200.

Pictured cutting the ribbon are (Front row, L-R): Post 16 SAL Commander Thomas Landkamer, Post 16 Commander Jerry Landkamer, Unit 16 President LaRee Kubes, and, Post 16 ALR Director Dennis Bretschneider. Among others



MILLARD STAND DOWN

Auxiliary members distributed lots of snacks, hand warmers, hats, scarves, reading glasses, and other necessities at the Omaha Stand Down for Homeless Veterans held in November. Pictured (left to right) are District 8 President Paula Pillen, Melissa Steinle (Millard Unit 374), Department President



A FAMILY AFFAIR

We had barrels of fun on Friday, October 14! The Gretna Legion Family (Legion, Auxiliary, SAL, and Legion Riders) joined forces to put on its first Bratoberfest. The event was open to the public and featured German food, a polka band, and raffles.



Event staff wore German attire or an apron.
(photo by Paula Pillen)



An entire table from Omaha Post 1 came out to support the event.
(photo by Cindy Moore)

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
Dec.	#283 Platte Center	#377 Wilcox	#245 Plymouth	#302 Leigh	#7 Alliance	#7 Alliance	#183 Friend
Jan.	#305 Hostein	#199 Cambridge	#353 Louisville	#62 Newcastle	#17 Sidney	#17 Sidney	#49 Utica
Feb.	#288 Farnam	#11 Hastings	#154 Blair	#264 Dorchester	#200 Bayard	#200 Bayard	#354 Pleasant Dale
March	#310 Gibbon	#141 Hampton	#156 Burchard	#127 Craig	#301 Dalton	#218 Exeter	#146 Rising City
April	#147 Crete	#225 Eddyville		#253 Platte Center	#133 Culbertson	#133 Culbertson	Dept. Jrs.
May	#126 Broken Bow	#288 Farnam		#307 S. Souix City	#213 Wallace	#213 Wallace	#264 Dorchester Jrs.
June		#193 Ohioa		#70 West Point			#20 Fremont
July	#141 Hampton	#52 Kearney		#302 Leigh			
Aug.	#365 Davenport	#52 Kearney		#176 Jackson			
Sept.					#12 Chadron	#12 Chadron	
Oct.		#316 Elm Creek				#364 Naponee	
Nov.							
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							
NOTE: Grand Island cannot accept Centerpieces but would take 40 Door Hangers.							

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

This is a reminder that every Unit, County, and District should be reviewing their governing documents to ensure that they are up to date. It is important your C&B has the correct membership eligibility dates, membership criteria, and that your dues amount, meeting time, and other details match what your Unit, County, or District is doing.

There were quite a few changes at the past Department Convention and National Convention, and some apply to the Unit level. There were dues increases at both levels, so get started early updating your dues amounts and get them sent into Department Headquarters. It is important that the 2024 Unit Dues form reaches the office by March 1, 2023, so the 2024 dues amount gets sent out correctly. (The form will be included in the January Newsletter and be available on our website.)

If you have any questions or concerns or need help reviewing your governing documents, please reach out to me or the Department office for assistance.

Amanda Washburn
C&B Chairman



DOLLAR DAYS

The 2022 Dollar Days was held at the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home on Monday, November 7. Music was provided by Guitars for Veterans.

This program is open to veterans wishing to learn how to play the guitar, which provides an excellent way for veterans to relieve stress.



Pictured is Lea Doolen, the chair for the Eastern VA Home, who presented a \$200 check to Guitars for Veterans. This will help more veterans to participate in the program.



Department President Vicki is shown serving the veterans their drinks. Lea Doolen and Margaret Southworth had passed out mini-cupcakes.

QUILT OF VALOR UNIT 237

Vietnam veteran and lifetime member Mike Bose was presented with a Quilt of Valor at the September meeting of American Legion Post 237 in Weeping Water. The quilt was designed and created by Barbara Knott, a member of Weeping Water Auxiliary Unit 237.



FROM YOUR SECRETARY

The November Newsletter that Unit Presidents or Secretaries received had the following contents:

- President Vicki’s November News
- Secretary Jacki’s Tidbits
- Membership and Auxiliary Emergency Fund – Beverly Neel
- Form 8822B Form – Due December 31
- New 2022-2023 Department Reporting Form
- Symbols of Christmas Service – Ruth Hietbrink
- Service to Veterans – Alice Vieselmeyer
- Poppy Proceeds Reporting Form

As a member, you can visit the Nebraska ALA website (www.nebraskalegion.aux.net) for all this valuable information. You will find it (and the previous month’s newsletters) under the tab “Dept.HQ Newsletter.”

GRACE BERGER AWARDED THE GOOD DEED AWARD

Members of Plymouth ALA Unit 243 were honored to present eight-year old Grace Berger, daughter of Pastor Fred and Stephanie Berger, the Good Deed Award (a national award created in 2002 by the National Children and Youth Committee) The Good Deed Award was created to recognize girls and boys who demonstrate kind, caring acts of selflessness.

Beginning in 2018, Grace has donated 100% of the profits from

her seasonal corn and pumpkin produce stands to organizations and fundraisers in Plymouth. Her donations have added up to \$3,350 worth of caring and selflessness. The Plymouth American Legion and Auxiliary, with the help of Grace's donations, were able to purchase Christmas presents and grocery gift cards for a Lincoln veteran and her four small children.

Congratulations, Grace! You are surely an inspiration to us all.



Pictured in the front row is Grace Berger holding her award. Next to Grace is her mom, Stephanie, and sister, Hope. Members of Unit 243 are: Second row-Alverta Wells, Ila Burger, Lois Bessler, Janet McGary, Janet Waltz, Marilyn Kolman, and Dianne Ebke. Back row: Vicki Schmidt, Lois Meints, Lillian Freese, Karen Bergmeier, Lois Schmidt, LaVon Wasserman, and Melva Jurgens. Taking the picture was Marla Furrow.

NORFOLK DOLLAR DAYS

“Veterans Dollar Days” was held at the Norfolk Veterans Home on November 3, 2022. Auxiliary Members helping were, left to right: Peggy Tjaden, Kris Lueninghoener, Judy Hassler, Vicki Furhert,

Adeline Hanel, Department of Nebraska Auxiliary President Vicki Ozenbaugh, Jolene Smith, Rose Ann Kohl, Mary Swensen, and Norfolk Veterans Home Auxiliary Representative LaRee Kubes.



JUNIOR PRESIDENT

Hello again, everyone.

Where has the time gone? Volleyball season is over, and we're about to start basketball.

And Halloween is over. We Trick or Treated for Veterans Homes. Hopefully, we can visit a home and help with a special Food Day or Bingo.

We took part in the Veterans Day program at the school and helped present four Quilts of Valor. Also, we made favors for the school for Veteran's Day and Education Week. Thanksgiving cookie plates will be packed and delivered to Veterans and shut-ins.

We will present our annual Christmas program for the Legion Family on December 4th.

Now, down to business. It is time to think about entering the

Junior Contests for our Department meeting. You do a lot. Let us know in a scrapbook or History book. Make a prayer book for you to use later, and make a Poppy Centerpiece. Make the new Contest Poppy Favors. Collect all your crafts and make a craft board. Junior's Chair Lisa Moore will have the contest and rules/guidelines on the website and in the December newsletter – so get busy. We want to give lots of awards.

Last but not least – plan to attend our Junior Meeting March 11th in Dorchester. We're planning a fun day.

Always remember to work for “Games and Food to Make Happy Veterans.”

Carly Rains
Junior President

NORFOLK DEDICATION

St. James School and Crete Elementary Kindergarten and Media Center were recent recipients of 46 boxes of tissues and 15 containers of disinfecting wipes donated by Crete American Legion Auxiliary Unit #147. A project that has been on-going for several years will now be carried out twice a year --- In September and again in February. The disinfecting wipes were added this year as a defense against colds and flu.



Receiving her tissues and wipes from ALA President Gerry Johnson is Media Specialist Mrs. Moore.

MEMBERSHIP 101

ALA Members,

Nebraska can begin to celebrate. As of this writing, we are #2 in the nation and #1 in the Northwestern Division --- and the Northwestern Division is #1 in the nation. Thank you! Your commitment and dedication to the ALA is evident through the prompt payment of your unit dues for 2023. Please take caution that we cannot rely on keeping this status as there are departments who gather in dues and wait for “just the right time” to dump renewals into National. And, low and behold, that Department has passed Nebraska up.

This has been a known practice for as long as I can recall. In Nebraska, we ensure when our members pay their dues they are sent immediately into the Department and then into National. That is providing due diligence to our members. We honor our members by our prompt processing of dues from the unit to National. THANK YOU.

Our membership card is valid from January 1st through December 31st each year. However, we begin on July 1st each year to collect renewals for the next year. WHY? Because it takes that much time to get every member onboard with their dues and to have their new card on January 1st. WHY does it take that long? If you can answer that

question, please share it with us all.

TODAY is your day to get your 2023 membership card, and you will be a member in good standing on January 1, 2023. We are coming upon the holiday season; and, when that happens, our renewal of dues goes to the far back burner on the stove. We lose sight of this simple little task; and, come January 1, we can no longer participate at unit events, be an officer or program chair, or anything with the ALA as you have not paid your 2023 dues yet. Please get this done today while you finish reading through the STAR. Your Unit Membership Clerk will appreciate having this task completed by year's end 2022.

So, you have your 2023 dues paid? Then, take time to reach out to your Unit Membership Clerk and offer assistance in calling members or knocking on doors to collect the renewals. When we fail to collect all renewals, our growth begins to go in reverse. TODAY we have a difficult time getting the younger generation to join our ranks which further impedes growth.

Recall when you first signed up for the ALA. You may have been a young gal or an infant, a young college student, a young bride or mother, you just started your career, you went to the gym each day, you had tasks at your place of worship,

you served on the library board or village board. You were just BUSY. And that has not changed TODAY. We are all BUSY. But, that should not cause us to lay our renewal dues to the side as you know very well that your beloved veteran(s) were not able to lay aside their service to America. Let us not lay aside our privilege to be an ALA member. Our beloved veteran(s) earned that privilege through great sacrifice. We owe our heart and soul to their service. They would do it all over again if they could. So, please do it over again and get your dues paid TODAY.

For those units still not having sent in a Transmittal Sheet to the Department showing that their SLM, VIM, and/or PUFL members are still living and their contact information is correct, TODAY is when you need to get that task out of your way. This process is the very first task to be done when the unit receives its membership card packet in June/ July annually. Please, please, please make sure your unit is current on this one task.

Please have a Blessed and safe holiday season. Gift yourself by paying your dues TODAY.

Beverly A. Neel
Membership Chair

HISTORY SHOULDN'T BE A MYSTERY

Hi, everyone!

I wanted to do a little updating on the History Book and Narrative History contests for this year. When the ABC Book was sent out, the Narrative History contest was left out by mistake. After talking to some members who know a lot about the past history contests, they helped me get it all straightened out. Please disregard the dates listed for the contest which are shown in the ABC Book. The new information is below, and more will be sent out in

the next newsletter. The format and judging criteria will remain the same.

The Narrative History contest will include the current year Unit History from April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023. The History Book Contest will include the prior year Unit History and will go from April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022.

I hope that many of you will consider submitting a Unit Narrative History and a History Book. Narrative Histories can be sent directly to me at my address by June 1, 2023; and

History Books should be forwarded to your District. Contact your District President for the exact deadline for your contest.

Your Unit History is very important, and letting others know what you are doing is the best way to toot your own horn. Please contact me if you have any questions or need any assistance.

Amanda Washburn
Department Historian

LEGISLATIVE

The American Legion Auxiliary's (ALA) Legislative program is in place to support the public policy positions of The American Legion (TAL), which disseminates material relating to issues involving veterans' health care, program funding, and troop and family support. These materials can be found at www.legion.org/legislative.

Is following legislation even worthwhile? The Legion Family actually had a very good year on the legislative front, as victories over the past year included the:

- Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act to improve health care access and funding for veterans exposed to toxic substances during their military service;
- Protecting Moms Who Served Act to improve maternity care programs at VA facilities; and
- Deborah Sampson Act to provide gender-specific health care and benefits to the more than two million women veterans serving our country. Interestingly, this legislation was named after a woman who disguised herself as a man in order to serve during the Revolutionary War. In order to prevent detection, Sampson was forced to tend her own wounds, once even removing a pistol ball from her thigh.

Without our advocacy, it is unlikely these successes would ever

have occurred, especially for the PACT Act.

But what about going forward? In October, National TAL Commander Jim Troiola stated that the Legion Family's key legislative priority is getting Congress to pass the Major Richard Star Act to support combat-injured veterans. Major Star deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kuwait with the U.S. Army Reserves. When he contracted Stage 4 lung cancer as a result of burn pits and other damaging environmental conditions overseas, he also encountered an unexpected financial surprise. The major learned that – because he hadn't reached 20 years of military service – his disability pay from the Department of Veterans Affairs would be deducted out of his retirement pay from the Department of Defense.

TAL's position is that the Major Richard Star Act would end this unjust “tax” on medically retired veterans being subjected to an offset in their retirement pay for every dollar of VA disability received. TAL states that these medically retired veterans are the ONLY class of employees forbidden from receiving their full retirement pay and their disability compensation.

So, how can we help? Visit the website, votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/campaigns. From

here, you can find the legislation you wish to support and simply click on the “Send Message” button to send the Legion Family's position directly to Nebraska's Congressional representatives. You can also request email alerts to help you keep track of legislation important to the Legion Family. Remember that one voice may not make a difference on its own, but by joining together, ALA members can make a difference when we advocate for America's veterans. So, let's work together over the coming year to serve America's veterans well.

Loree Hendrickson
Legislative Chr.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

2 Corinthians 1:3-4
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Galatians 5:22-23
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.

Psalms 18:34
He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

Recently, at an American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Fall Roundup Convention, I was pulled aside by a veteran, also a member, and asked if God is part of our organization. The member had received material that had no mention of God in the ALA information. She was very disturbed by the solicitation. This question caught me by surprise. The first line of our Preamble to the Constitution is “For God and County.” I am positive that God is part of our organization. I am the Department Chaplain for a reason. Without God, where is our hope, our future, and our faith?

God is important, especially to those combat veterans who have suffered great losses as a direct result of serving this country in places far from home. Many soldiers have lost friends and comrades in arms. They may have lost a family member. If you are one of those veterans, I want you to know that your work was not in vain. Please know there is comfort, healing, and rest to be found in God alone. He is your rock, your shelter, and your Savior.

During difficult assignments, God helps one to depend on him as a foundation of self-confidence and character. God helped David

overcome his trial. David saw how God used military training to help him develop and grow into a strong leader. My hope is that through God veterans come to understand a little better that God values their service. He has worked through them to fill their hearts and mind with justice and peace to people everywhere. “NEVER FORGET, EVER HONOR” our warriors. God loves and cares for you!

Prayer:
*God of peace,
We pray for those who have served our nation and laid down their lives to protect and defend our freedom, asking that we remember their sacrifice and make right use of our liberty.*

We pray for those who still bear the scars of their service, asking for healing for them in mind, body, and spirit.

We pray for those who serve us now, especially for those in harm’s way, asking that you shield them from danger and bring them home in safety.

We pray for all those who govern, asking that you turn their hearts and minds to the work of proving a peace born of justice and equity.

We pray for all those who are caught up in conflict around the globe this day, civilians and peacekeepers and the poor who have no escape, asking that we have the courage to defend the defenseless, make room for those who flee for safety, and look to that day when we will train for war no more.

May the peace you gave us, the peace that passes all human understanding, be the peace that guides and sustains us. For it is in Jesus’ name that we pray. Amen.

Taken from: <https://www.davidlose.net/2018/11/a-prayer-for-veterans/>

*Ruth Hietbrink
Dept. Chaplain*

SING A SONG OF MEMORY

Recently, I suffered a bit of a mini-crisis. I say “mini” because it had little to do with life and death, but everything to do with who I am. Or was.

My husband was walking by while I was working on an article, and he nonchalantly plugged a flashlight into my laptop to charge it, snuffing out the past couple dozen years of my life – photos, articles, a book I was working on, and who knows what else.

Was anything backed up, a normal person would ask? Yeah, right.

As I settled into the mourning period, among my ponderings were the statements of house fire victims who lose everything but their lives --- and are grateful. So, I made up my mind to treat this lesson as a fire that took my words but left me intact. Intact, but inexplicably lost.

So, I bade farewell to the poems that will never be songs, and can only hope I will someday have the time to restart the book, find new recipes, and take new photos.

And then, it hit me. I deal with

many, many patients with the same frustration --- only the lost treasures were in their minds. They have little time to make a new memory, even if they could. Imagine the grief they feel in their moments of clarity that they have not only forgotten something, but will never have it back.

But there is hope. And it is through music.

Few things in this world do more to renew old memories, old events, and old feelings than the power of old songs. Occasionally, you will see a volunteer in care facilities playing the old songs that bring a tear, a smile, and a story --- all which may have been lost forever if not for this unselfish soul that brought a song back into their mundane lives. Whether it be a piano, a CD, a guitar, or a group of elementary or Sunday School kids – please, take some time to help keep the memories alive.

So, my friends, back up your computers --- and, keep singing!

*Jean Vackiner
Music Chair*

FOSTER

It was with great sadness that I resigned my position as American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Department of Nebraska Vice President and Northwestern Division Community Service Chairman on September 25 for personal reasons. I look forward to watching from the sidelines the great things Department President

Vicki Ozenbaugh has in store for you to carry on the ALA mission.

I will miss seeing my extended “family,” but please know that I will still be taking care of our veterans. It has been a pleasure working with all of you. Please remember to have fun, smile, and hug a veteran.

*Angie Foster
Past Department Vice President*

SPECIAL INVITE

The Norfolk Veterans Home has extended an invitation to tour their facility while we are in town for our Mid-Year Education Conference, January 13-15. A count is needed to schedule the tours.

If you would like to see this wonderful facility, please RSVP to President Vicki by Tuesday, December 20. You can email her (ala.ozenbaugh@gmail.com) or call (402-759-0411).

MID-YEAR PROJECTS

As you make your plans to attend Mid-Year, please remember our Veterans! There will be two different projects you, individually, or your Unit can participate in.

One is to provide necessary items for our four Veterans Homes and three Medical Centers. A “needs” list will be in the December Newsletter and posted on our website.

The second project is to help our homeless Veterans, both female and male, with “Winter Warmth and Care” kits. Items needed are gloves/mittens, scarves, stocking caps, socks, body lotion, and chap stick. We will have a special time to put together these “Winter Warmth and Care” kits during the conference. My goal is to have 103 to celebrate the American Legion Auxiliary’s 103rd Birthday!

Let us “Never Forget, Ever Honor” our Veterans throughout the year by participating in these two simple, yet meaningful, projects.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Our Public Relations will move full speed ahead with our motto to “Never Forget, Ever Honor.” You can “Ever Honor” our organization by being a Brand Ambassador. Wear your Badge and promote WHO we are and WHY we do what we do. Learn and share WHAT we do.

What better way to “Never Forget” than to document with Media. Promote WHY we matter. Promote a positive image of the American Legion Auxiliary and use the variety of public relations materials and resources available online.

Build brand loyalty to the American Legion Auxiliary through the utilization and promotion of websites, social media, and other electronic communications. For example, promote Auxiliary events on your personal social media accounts.

*Note: Look for the Public Relations Award updates and rules in the next packet that will be mailed out to each unit. Keep snapping those photos and sharing.

*Kimberly Gurley
Public Relations 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 DECEMBER 10, 2022

In Memoriam

Received September 10, 2022 to November 1, 2022

Mary A Navock.....Lincoln.....3	Ellen M Blank.....Franklin.....209
Opal Raasch.....Norfolk.....16	Mildred R. AllenFranklin.....209
Jane E ChristiansenNorfolk.....16	Henrietta E Bjerrum.....DeWitt.....212
Carol WilsonWymore.....25	Mildred Martin.....Wallace.....213
Allene Skalla.....Beatrice.....27	Lila Meyerkorth.....Shubert.....222
Jennie L Saathoff.....Beatrice.....27	Rose SchuethsElgin229
Jacqueline KlingGordon34	Helen Amick.....Weeping Water.237
Isabelle LoudenGordon34	Jean Boesiger.....Cortland.....253
Valerie PontineGering.....36	Joann R. NiemeierCortland.....253
Wilma Droge.....Dubois.....39	Helen ValentineFairfield.....256
Carol Burns.....Aurora.....42	Roma Walton.....Verdigre.....259
Loretta Leach.....Aurora.....42	Diana S SchweitzerDorchester.....264
Nona Leibhart.....Callaway.....59	Dorothy A. Moody.....Herman.....274
Florence PetersWausa63	Diana F. Linke.....North Loup.....285
Rose Duncan.....Pilger.....69	Patricia A Birt.....Elwood.....290
Jeannie Wesemann.....Pierce.....72	Gwen E Deselms.....Elwood.....290
Linda MeikleCreighton.....74	Laura Roberts.....Burwell.....298
Navonne Haake.....Ainsworth.....79	Dorothy Schneider.....Burwell.....298
Mry A KavanWahoo.....82	Eleanor L CrabbWauneta304
Mary RohdeHomer.....97	Lois Sanderson.....Chambers.....320
Marilyn WagnerMitchell.....124	Violet L HubelChambers.....320
Ruth A Peterson.....Stromsburg.....132	Ramona GuggenmosBrewster.....323
Corinne Baker.....Stromsburg.....132	Dorothea RoseberryBrewster.....323
Laura Jane Hunt.....Stromsburg.....132	Lorraine KirknerSouth Omaha...331
Doris J Erickson.....Stromsburg.....132	Florence UerlingIndianola.....344
Agnes Hatch.....Crete.....147	Elizabeth A. BudkeIndianola.....344
Sigrun Hoffman.....Burchard.....156	Ann FisherLouisville353
Carol E Barcomb.....Burchard.....156	Rita NicholsonLouisville353
Marlene M Dykes.....Rushville.....161	Patsy Sawyer.....Louisville353
Janet R VassAlbion.....163	Frieda Bailey.....Barneston.....356
Valeria DuvalCampbell169	Arlene BlobaumJansen.....358
June BoehlerOrleans.....184	Helen Fritzen.....Virginia367
Mary SchuettPalmyra.....195	Elva L Wilken.....Garland.....369

DATES TO REMEMBER

DECEMBER

- 7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- 10 Articles due for the January/February issue
- 26 Department Headquarters Closed- Christmas Holiday
- 29 Member in Good Standing Award 100%

JANUARY

- 2 Department Headquarters Closed - New Year’s Day Holiday
- 13-15 Mid-Year Education Conference - Norfolk
- 16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - Department Office closed
- 23-27 National President Vickie Koutz Visits Nebraska

FOR YOUR ADVANCED PLANNING

- June 4-10, 2022 ALA Cornhusker Girls State – UNL Campus, Lincoln, Nebraska
- June 22-25, 2023 Department Convention, Kearney, Nebraska
- August 25 - 31, 2023 National Convention, Charlotte, North Carolina



The Millard ALA Unit # 374 was happy to provide balloons and individual baggies of snacks for our SAL squadron for their 90th birthday on September 12th . We love our Legion Family!



The Dorchester American Legion Auxiliary Unit 264 and SAL members took part in the Flag Color Guard with the American Legion at a football game. Several of the older members were in the band.

“BLAST FROM THE PAST”

IN WHAT YEAR AND WHERE WAS THIS PICTURE TAKEN?



Do you remember this “blast from the past?” Submit your answer to Lorene Bartos (Lbartos1@unl.edu) by January 7, 2023; and a winner will be drawn at Mid-Year from the entries for a “sur-prize!”