



Legionnaire

Volume C

Number 1



John-Henry Percy Elected As Nebraska State Commander



John-Henry Percy of Papillion was elected and installed as the Commander of the Nebraska American Legion during the 105th Annual Convention held June 23 - 25, 2023, in Kearney.

Percy is eligible for The American Legion through his 30 years of service in the Air Force, where he was a B-52 aircraft navigator/bombardier. He has been a member of The American Legion and Post 32 for 48 years. Percy has served as Department Senior Vice-Commander, Area A Vice Commander, Department Sons of The American Legion Liaison, District 8 Commander, County Commander, and Post Commander. He also has served at the Squadron, District, and Detachment level for the Sons.

Percy graduated from The American Legion college in 2009. He has attended 12 national conventions and has served on the Aerospace Committee for 10 years.

John and his wife, Hyo-Suk, reside in Papillion. They have one daughter, Valerie, and one son, John Henry, Jr., and two grandchildren.

Other officers elected during the convention were Department Senior Vice Commander Boyd Yochum of Ashland, Area A Vice Commander Robert Neel of Winside, Area B Vice Commander Don Patras of Columbus, Area C Vice Commander Brendan Moore of Lincoln, and Area D Vice Commander Judy Walters of Ainsworth. District 1 Commander Gary Sones, District 2 Commander Kelly Hanvey, District 3 Commander Nick Tramp, District 4 Commander Steve Stanec, District 5 Commander Scott Buss, District 6 Commander Burdette Chappell, District 7 Commander Adam Schweitzer, District 8 Commander Rich Klinger, District 9 Commander Ron Wiest, District 10 Commander Don Nelson, District 11 Commander Tom Crisman, District 12 Commander Martin Neal, District 13 Commander Scott Buss, and District 15 Commander Bruce Gubser.

From the desk of Department Adjutant Dave Salak



The Nebraska American Legion just completed its second year as just one of eight organizations to be a Team Host to the Men's College World Series. Adjutant Dave Salak and Alternate National Executive Committeeman Jim Costello take the lead in working directly with the team to ensure their time in Omaha is memorable. This year, we hosted the Virginia Cavaliers and met a lot of great coaches and talented ballplayers. Sadly, the "Hoos" didn't stay in town long but this is a talented team so there is no doubt Coach Brian O'Connor will be back.

I want to send a personal "Thank You" to the Nebraska Printing Center who donated a beautiful banner for us to use to advertise the Nebraska American Legion involvement with the Men's College World Series. The

banner was so nice, the team actually asked if they could keep as a nice memento of their stay. How do you say no to that?

Jim and I will be sure to keep all of you updated as to the 2024 season when it rolls around.

Pictured right: (L to R) Department Adjutant Dave Salak, Virginia Assistant AD Justin Armistead, Alternate NECman Jim Costello, Virginia Head Coach Brain O'Connor, and Kiwanis co-host James MacDonald.



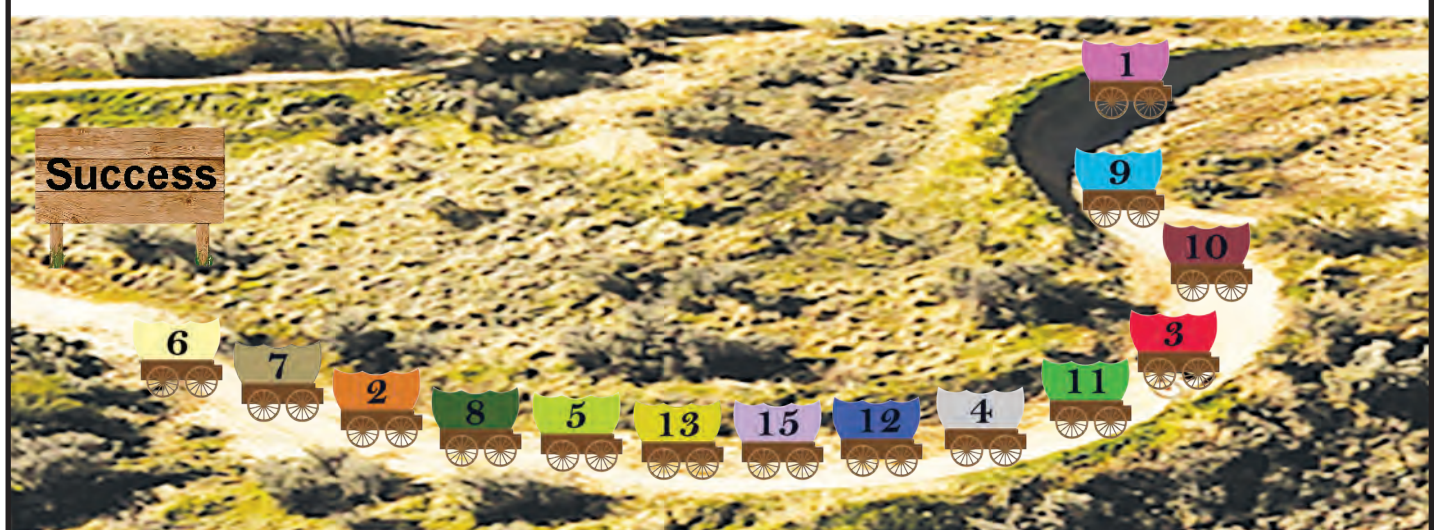
FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

The Nebraska Legionnaire
P.O. Box 5205
Lincoln, NE 68505-0205

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

2023 MEMBERSHIP GOAL: 24,835 JULY 18TH TOTAL: 22,761 - 91.65%

DISTRICT 6 - 94.17%	DISTRICT 7 - 94.06%	DISTRICT 2 - 92.68%	DISTRICT 8 - 92.48%	DISTRICT 5 - 91.31%
DISTRICT 13 - 91.12%	DISTRICT 15 - 90.63%	DISTRICT 12 - 90.52%	DISTRICT 4 - 90.09%	DISTRICT 11 - 89.81%
DISTRICT 3 - 89.68%	DISTRICT 10 - 89.15%	DISTRICT 9 - 88.89%	DISTRICT 1 - 87.00%	






Commander's Corner

John-Henry Pearcy
Department Commander

My fellow legionnaires we had an excellent Department Convention this past June. New officers were sworn in and we are ready to go to work. I want to thank all of you for supporting me to be your new Commander for the year 2023-2024. It is both an honor and privilege to be your new Commander. I promise to do my best work for the Department while representing all of you and this great organization.

My theme for this year is "Lead by Mentoring". It is very important for all of us at each level within the Nebraska American Legion to mentor our less experienced Legionnaires. This will ensure that they learn about our organization, our programs, and the things we do for our veterans and children in our communities. Mostly it will ensure we develop our future leaders who will continue to keep our organization strong and successful.

The two programs that I would like you all to support are "Operation Comfort Warriors" and "Gift for Yanks". Please ensure all donations are sent through Department Headquarters. All funds collected and sent to national for "Operation Comfort Warriors" is dedicated to meeting the needs of our wounded, injured or ill military personnel by providing them with comfort items not usually supplied by our government. "Operation Comfort Warriors" ensures that our veterans at U.S. military hospitals and warriors who are in transition units are given personal items like sweat suits, DVDs, puzzles, electronic devices, books, calling cards and more. "Operation Comfort Warriors" also provides larger items such as ping pong tables, entertainment centers, computers, kayaks and other recreational goods for use by wounded warriors in common areas at hospitals and other recovery facilities.

"Gift for Yanks" is a statewide program where we help our veterans residing in VA Hospitals and Veterans Homes in Nebraska. All donations should be sent to Department Headquarters for proper dissemination to our veterans. Every dollar that is donated to the program goes back out to our veterans. "Gifts for Yanks" was started in the 1930's by the Nebraska American Legion. Its purpose is to ensure every veteran, and/or spouse residing in either a VA medical facility or State Veteran's Home receives a monetary gift during the holiday season.

Our new membership drive for the 2024 year is underway. All Posts should have received their new membership cards last month. It is time for our organization to rebuild our membership. In order to do this all membership chairs, committee members, and each legion member should be proactive to increase our membership levels at all posts. Don't wait for National to send out dues notices; in order to reach our goals we must be proactive. I would like to see all posts to be at 100 percent by December 31 (that 20% per month from Aug - Dec); this will help keep any of our members from becoming delinquent in January 2024. We can all do it by working together to achieve our membership goals. Let's rock-n-roll!

"Lead by Mentoring"




Chaplain's Thoughts

Father Alexander Borzych
Department Chaplain

What a Unexpected Surprise

We can touch so many lives without knowing what an impact we have made on the world. Yes, I'm talking about you. Your impact can be for the better, or, in some cases, for the worse. Hopefully, we strive to make the world a better place. We can make an impact on others in multiple ways, including with our words and our actions. Recently, a movement has sprung up in which people participate in random acts of kindness. Recently, I was a recipient of one of those acts. I was eating supper, and, when I finished, I asked for the check. The waitress informed me that the people at the table on the other side of the room had already paid for my meal. I was shocked by what she said. I looked over and had no idea who they were. I walked over to the people and thanked them for their generosity. I asked why they decided to pay for my meal. They said that it was because of the cap I was wearing. I was wearing my Retired Navy cap and they wanted to thank me for my service to our country.

Random acts of kindness happen to other people all the time, but this time it happened to me. It made me think, that I needed to pay it forward. A couple of weeks later, at a different restaurant, there was a mom and several children eating. The mom appeared to have her hands full, especially with the youngest. He was giving her fits; I don't know if he was tired or didn't like what was set before him. I sensed that the mom wasn't enjoying her meal. I asked the waitress if I could pay for their meals. She said I could. I hoped it would make that mother realize that someone was thinking of her.

I was touched by a caring person who was nice to me. It felt good to receive the gift of dinner, but it was so much nicer to surprise someone else with an unexpected gift. I expect to do this more often, letting people know that there is some good in this world.

Random acts of kindness are great to receive, but the joy of helping to brighten someone's day with an unexpectedly gift can be priceless.

NEBRASKA AMERICAN LEGION

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Department Officers

Commander..... John-Henry Pearcy, Papillion
Senior Vice Commander..... Boyd Yochum, Ashland
Area A Vice Commander..... Robert Neel, Winside
Area B Vice Commander..... Don Patras, Columbus
Area C Vice Commander..... Brendan Moore, Lincoln
Area D Vice Commander..... Judy Walters, Ainsworth
Adjutant..... Dave Salak, Lincoln
Programs Director..... Eric Martin, Lincoln
Chaplain..... Fr. Alexander Borzych, St. Paul
Historian..... Jennifer Laux, Omaha
Judge Advocate..... William Harris, Omaha
Finance Officer..... Mark Novak, Dawson
Sergeant-At-Arms..... David Guy, Papillion
Service Officer..... Levi Bennett, Lincoln
National Executive Committeeman..... Fred Craigie, Lincoln
Alternate NECman..... Jim Costello, Bellevue

District Commanders

Dist. 1..... Gary Sones, Rushville
Dist. 2..... Kelley Hanvey, Center
Dist. 3..... Nick Tramp, Allen
Dist. 4..... Steve Stanec, Alliance
Dist. 5..... Scott Bell, North Platte
Dist. 6..... Burdette Chappell, Kearney
Dist. 7..... Adam Schweitzer, Fremont
Dist. 8..... Rich Klinger, Omaha
Dist. 9..... Ron Wiest, Moorefield
Dist. 10..... Don Nelson, Clay Center
Dist. 11..... Tom Crisman, Crete
Dist. 12..... Martin Neal, Hickman
Dist. 13..... Scott Buss, Sterling
Dist. 15..... Bruce Gubser, Lincoln



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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.

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

Name: _____
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 awashburn@nebraskalegion.net

Straight Talk
Levi Bennett
Department Service Officer



Rider's Rally
Michael Sheridan
Department ALR Liaison

Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors

The printed version of the “Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors” has been in short supply since 2022, the 2021 PDF version is available online at https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp. This is the booklet that has all the contact USDVA contact phone numbers, websites, eligibility information along with a wealth of education on how to navigate the USDVA to receive benefits you have earned. This is a good resource; however, is not a replacement for working with an accredited service officer. This resource will allow a veteran, spouse, or dependent to gain insight to the USDVA and what questions to ask their service officer or VA provider.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

July 16, 2023, marked the one-year anniversary of change to 988 as the suicide and crisis lifeline. We are still finding veterans who have not heard of the change from the 10-digit number, our brothers and sisters who are not associated with Veteran Service Organizations or using the VA benefits often do not receive information as timely as those of us who are engaged in the Veteran Community. Please continue to spread the word that 988 is available to anyone in crisis. In May 2023 alone 66,259 calls were routed to the Veterans Crisis Line. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide remains one of the leading causes of death in the United States. Suicide rates increased 30% between 2000-2018, declined in 2019-2020, and increased again in 2021.

Update on PACT Act Claims.

As the one-year mark approaches of the enactment of the PACT Act, 722,654 PACT Act-related claims have been submitted to VBA. Whether you have attended a PACT Act outreach event or informed others about the PACT Act, you have made a difference. I know the American Legion is filled with people who are passionate about Veterans and their families, keep up the good fight (a seasoned service officer would tell me this often, and it has settled into my way of thinking). Please continue to let veterans know that they need to speak with a service officer as soon as possible, while one can file a PACT Act claim indefinitely, those that file on or before August 9, 2023 may have their benefits backdated to August 10, 2022, the date of the law’s signing.

Reminder for Vietnam Veterans, the PACT Act, added two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions, Hypertension (High Blood Pressure) and MGUS (Monoclonal Gammopathy of Undetermined Significance).

Service Officers across Nebraska remain ready to help Veterans submit applications for PACT Act-related benefits or submit an intent to file prior to August 9, 2023, enroll in VA health care, and assist with other claims and Nebraska State

Hello, I am Michael “Irish Mike” Sheridan. I am the newly elected ALR State Liaison. I have been an active member of The American Legion for 46 years and a 17-year continuous membership of the American Legion Riders since just after its inception in 2005.

I am honored that my service to TAL and ALR has been recognized by this position. I am currently a member of Post 1 in Omaha. I have served in all Post elected and appointed positions at two other Posts up to and including Post Commander (sometimes more than once). First at the South Omaha Post 331, and then at Benson Post 112 each for 20 years plus. I have held several Department Committee positions, Past Area A Vice Commander, Past District 8 Commander, Past Post Commander several times, and all the other committee chairs. So, I’ve been around for a while. I know a few things. I had wanted to eventually lead the ALR movement and was honored to be invited to take the position at this year’s Department Convention.

I’ve been riding motorcycles since I was about 14. I have had many great adventures and a few misadventures when I have been riding motorcycles. Except for that one time when I was run off the road and broke my neck. I was partially paralyzed for about 4 years. I had to wear a body cast from my waist to my chin and had a “halo-brace” installed to my head to keep my neck and spine from moving; all before I had my neck fused. Then, after 2 more years of rehab, and when I could, I went back to that one thing I loved doing – riding motorcycles.

We’ve all had great adventures, and some misadventures when riding. We must always be aware of those unthinking car and truck drivers, those left-turners, road ragers, hog the roaders, and all the others that don’t see or hear us sharing the road. I didn’t quite believe the quote of “Loud Pipes Save Lives” until I was the victim of being run off the road and almost killed.

When riding we MUST be vigilant, make ourselves safely be seen and heard. Proudly wear your ALR colors and be seen as a safe and thoughtful rider. Advertise your membership in The American Legion Riders and encourage other riders to join us and ride along together with us, safely. I suggest you carry the pamphlet “Join The American Legion Family”. In it you will find all three applications to become a member of our American Legion Family (TAL, SAL, & ALA) make some copies and carry them with you for those opportunities to talk about and extend invitations to join.

I hope to meet and greet you at several of the upcoming rides and romps. I hope to see you at this year’s State Romp on August 18, 19 and 20 in Grand Island, Nebraska. This year’s romp is being jointly sponsored by Grand Island and Clay Center Chapters. It’s a lot of work and supports good safe fun. Keep in mind that we still need a Chapters to host the Romps in 2024 and 2025.

Thank you and safe riding.

Membership Minute
Steve Bartos, Chairman

While not officially complete until December 31st, the 2023 membership campaign is winding down --- and, unfortunately, it has pretty much run true to form. We started out hot --- and then cooled off. On the brighter side, however, I note that last year at about this time we had 40 departments that had performed better than we did. This year about 30.

Once again, Nebraska had a renewal rate of a little more than 91%; and the national organization considers 90% to be a good target number.

As of June 30th, Nebraska had achieved 91.55% of our goal, and 4 districts (8, 2, 6, and 7) exceeded that percentage.

Eight of fourteen districts exceeded 90% of their goal. District 7 (Jerry Schulte) led the way with 94.03%, followed by District 6 (Julie Schnitzler) with 93.88%. I extend my thanks and appreciation to all of the districts and all of the posts who put forth the effort this year to help keep our numbers from falling too far.

It’s time now for a fresh start for 2024. Keep working on the members who have not renewed for 2023, but get fired up for 2024. As evidenced by some online renewals starting to show up, the 2024 Direct Renewal notices from Indianapolis apparently were mailed on schedule about July 1. They help considerably in getting us off to a good start, but they do not and never will replace personal contact when it comes to finding and recruiting new members or renewing those current members who are sitting on the fence looking for an excuse not to renew.

The “Find Members in My Area” function in MyLegion remains a good source of Legionnaires who may want to transfer to a local post. They should have received dues notices, too --- and may be inclined to renew and transfer into a local post if they receive some personal contact NOW. If they have already renewed in Post 500, they still can be invited to transfer at no cost.

Once again this year, there is an enhanced “Early Bird” incentive for individual “regular” Legionnaires (those who pay their dues annually) who pays their dues early ---- \$1000 worth of incentive. Any member whose dues are paid AND transmitted (postmarked) to Department Headquarters by September 5th shall be in a drawing for \$1000. 5 NAMES WILL BE DRAWN FOR \$200 EACH!

Legionnaires, pay your dues promptly. Adjutants, make sure you send them in so they qualify for the drawing!!

On the general subject of transmitting dues, I want to encourage all posts to start processing your regular renewals as soon as you start receiving them --- and establish a regular schedule for the transmittal of dues to Department Headquarters. Don’t hold on to them forever!!

In closing, I would like to welcome Gary Kruse as the newest member of the Membership Committee. Gary is a member of Herman Post 274. He was appointed to fill a vacancy in Area A.

Have a nice August.

Sons of The American Legion Membership		
As of July 15, 2023		
District	2022 Members	2023 Members
1	329	314
2	639	603
3	224	215
4	352	367
5	144	149
6	1,316	1,335
7	732	692
8	867	839
9	343	312
10	364	354
11	1,088	1,100
12	259	236
13	130	129
15	145	143
Total	6,932	6,788



POW/MIA

Boyd Yochum
POW/MIA Liaison

Lieutenant Stanley Kutz Smiley entered the U.S. Navy from Sidney, Nebraska, and served with Attack Squadron 23, aboard the aircraft carrier USS Oriskany (CVA 34). Stanley K. Smiley graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1963.

On 20 July, 1969, Lt Smiley was the pilot of an A4E Skyhawk (serial # 154993), the lead aircraft in a flight of two that launched from the Oriskany on a road reconnaissance, bomb/strafe mission. Their target area was in extremely rugged, jungle covered mountains, approximately eight miles north of Ban Ralao and eight miles south of Tavauac, Salavan Province, Laos.

This area of eastern Laos was considered a major gateway into the infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail. When North Vietnam began to increase its military strength in South Vietnam; as the Viet Minh had done during the 1st Vietnam war with the French years before; NVA and Viet Cong troops again intruded on neutral Laos for sanctuary. This border road was used by Communists to transport weapons, supplies and troops from North Vietnam into South Vietnam.

After completing their initial mission, enroute to their carrier, Lt Smiley sighted a truck and told his wingman that he was going to confirm whether or not it was rolling stock or a hulk. As the wingman prepared to follow his flight leader in on an attack, he saw Lt Smiley's aircraft in a shallow dive about 60 degrees off the planned attack heading. The Skyhawk crashed into the dense jungle, however the aircraft did not burn or explode upon landing. Lt Smiley never radioed any malfunction. Because the area was known for its high concentration of enemy anti-aircraft artillery batteries, the Navy believed Lt Smiley was shot down by AAA fire rather than aircraft malfunction.

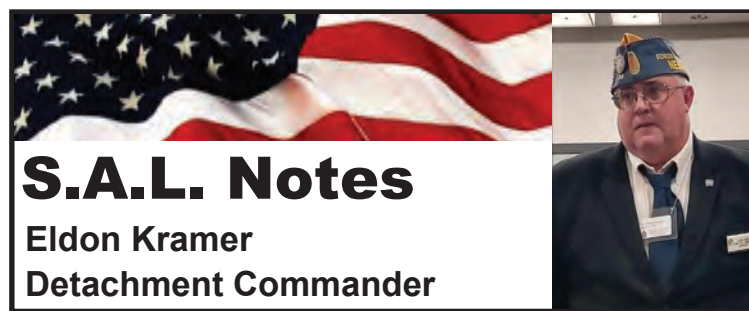
Aerial search was conducted, but because of hostile forces in the area, no ground search was possible. In spite of the loss circumstances, Lt Smiley was immediately listed as Killed in Action/Body not recovered.

In 1988, a former officer in the Royal Lao Army, Somdee Phommachanh, stated on national television that he was held captive, along with two Americans, at a prison camp in northern Laos. He and the two Americans had become friends. One day Somdee found one of the prisoners dead in his cell. Somdee identified the American positively from a photo as David Nelson. The other prisoner, Somdee said was Lt Smiley. Not long after Nelson died, the Vietnamese came and took Smiley away. Somdee does not know what happened to him.

Although Somdee had been threatened, he stuck to his story. Lt Smiley and David Nelson were held prisoner after American troops left Southeast Asia, and after the President of the United States announced that American prisoners of war had been released.

The war in Cambodia and Laos were not commanded by the Defense Department, they were run by the CIA. POWs in Cambodia and Laos were NOT negotiated for during the 1973 Paris Peace Accords.

Today, Lieutenant Smiley is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.



S.A.L. Notes

Eldon Kramer
Detachment Commander

Greetings blue cappers in the great state of Nebraska, from your newly elected Detachment Commander Eldon Kramer. On January 12, 2018, I wrote a letter to the Detachment of Nebraska stating my intention to run for the West Area Vice Commander position. Willie Foster intended to move to Detachment Commander and needed someone to take over the West Area. I joined Gering Squadron 36 under my father, Army veteran Raymond D. Kramer. My background is one of service to our great country. My grandfather, father, brothers, uncles, and cousins are all veterans.

I have been a self-employed owner/operator of my own trucking company since 1997. I am a proud husband, father, and grandpa. I am actively involved in the Sons of The American Legion Squadron 36 in Gering. I am a spokesman, event organizer, Commander of The American Legion Family Post 36 Honor Guard, member of The American Legion Riders Post 36, Squadron 36 Commander for the past 5 years, and newly elected Historian for Squadron 36. I serve as the administrator for the Gering American Legion Family Facebook pages, Area D Commander of the Nebraska American Legion Press Association (NE-ALPA), and as the Detachment of Nebraska VAVS Representative for the Western Nebraska Veterans Home in Scottsbluff. I've helped coordinate many successful events to improve our Legion Family Post 36 and to support our veterans.

I recently completed a 2-year term as the Detachment of Nebraska Senior Vice Commander. As your Senior Vice Commander, I continued to attend numerous meetings at all levels. During my time as Senior Vice Commander, I assisted chartering Hyannis Squadron 57 and Overton Squadron 277 for the Detachment of Nebraska. I served on the Legislative Committee for the Detachment of Nebraska during my time as Senior Vice Commander. I took part in quarterly conference calls that the Detachment of Nebraska hosted, as well as a few of the national calls. I was also involved in a committee for the 2023 Detachment Convention that brought about the first ever Detachment of Nebraska Children and Youth Academy. If you missed the C&Y Academy this year, make plans now to attend the 2024 Convention. The family fun night and cornhole fundraiser were also great events that provided some fun during the weekend of convention. We were able to accomplish many great things during my time as your Senior Vice Commander. I know there's a lot of blue cappers out there that do great things. We need to remember the reason why we do what we do is for our forefathers.

I would like to introduce our officers for 2023-2024.

ELECTED OFFICERS

Senior Vice Commander Tim Hecke; East Area Vice Commander James Keyes; West Area Vice Commander Casey Walton; NEC David Rippe; and Alternate NEC Robert "Bud" Neel

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Chaplain Sean Casey; Historian Adam Schmid; Sgt-At-Arms - David Kohl; Asst. Sgt-At-Arms John Lintz; Judge Advocate Harold Thompson, Jr.; Adjutant Chris Casey; Assistant Adjutant Danny Smith; Finance Officer Mark Novak; Department Liaison Mike Reimers; and Department Advisor Eric Martin.

My goals this year include ways to build the S.A.L.

In Remembrance PDC Virgil A. Hagel



Virgil Arlen Hagel was born in Havana IL on July 5, 1932, to Ernest and Hazel (Murphy) Hagel. He passed away June 10, 2023, at the Gordon Memorial Hospital. He attended school in Scottsbluff. On January 30, 1952, he married Patricia L. (Bartels) Hagel. Five children were born to this union. After Patricia's death in 1996, Virgil married Joyce Cahoy-Williamson on December 19, 1997, and became a father to Joyce's 5 children.

Early in his life he was involved in the Gering Volunteer Fire Department and EMT. He enjoyed spending time with his family and Army buddies on Sunday at Lake Minatare and gardening. During his life he received the nickname 'Snake' and to this day, no one knows the story behind it. Virgil built and managed the Morrison Livestock Sale Barn in Gering until 1967 when he became a State Meat Inspector. In 1970 he became a Federal

Meat Inspector with the USDA until his retirement in 2020. The family moved to Gordon in 1971.

Virgil joined the US Army in 1952 and was active duty for two years. He then went on to serve in the US Guards until 1975, earning a bronze star with valor device during the Korean War for his heroism against the enemy. He also earned the Korean Service Medal with 3 bronze service stars and a United Nations Service Medal. Virgil was very active in the American Legion wherever he lived and was known throughout the state for his dedication to all Veterans. Virgil served on many boards to improve veterans benefits, healthcare, access to care, etc. He was on the Nebraska Governor's Board for the Veterans for 30 years, served as the Nebraska Legion Commander in 1985-1986 and the DAV Commander 2016-2022, DAV Judge Advocate 2022, Adjutant /Finance Officer District 1 American Legion. He was instrumental in establishing the State Veteran's Cemetery in Alliance and rebuilding the Gordon American Legion Hall. He also served as a Veteran's Liaison to Secretary of Defence Chuck Hagel, in 2013-2015.

Virgil is survived by his wife of 25 years, Joyce Cahoy-Hagel, Virgil Hagel, Jr. (Diana), Linda (Kirk) Shipley, Cindy (Jim) Kime, Brenda Hagel, Wendy (David) Kilby, Donnie Williamson, Jr., Courtney (Andrew) Johnson, Torri Haytack, Katrina (Tim) Gonzales, Dominic Cahoy-Williamson (Lindsay), 29 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren and 10 great-great grandchildren.

Virgil was preceded in death by his first wife Patricia, grandsons Brian Gwynn, Christopher Kime and Travis Hagel, his 5 sisters and parents.

Memorial services were held Friday, June 16, 2023, 2:00 pm at St. Leo's Catholic Church, Gordon, Nebraska. A memorial was established and donations may be sent in care of Chamberlain-Pier Funeral Home, PO Box 366, Gordon, NE 69343.

National Convention in Charlotte

The 105th Annual National Convention will be held August 25 - August 31 at the Charlotte Convention Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. Committee meetings, the Nebraska Legion Caucus, and the Tri-Stack Party with North and South Dakota will all be held on Sunday, August 27.

The general session begins on Tuesday, August 29 and will conclude at approximately noon on Thursday, August 31.

Delegates and alternates were voted on at Department Convention. Nebraska will be staying at the Le Meridien Hotel about eight blocks from the convention center. Contact Adjutant Salak with any questions.

During National Convention, August 21 through September 5, Department Headquarters will not have anyone in the office. If you should need anything during that time, please email Dave, Eric, or Amanda and they will get back to you as soon as they can.

2023 Department Convention



The 105th Annual Convention was held in Kearney June 23 – 25. Commander Suchy presided over the Joint Session. Pictured (L to R) ALR Liaison John Arias, Detachment Commander Chris Casey, National Sons of The American Legion Commander Chris Carlton, Northwestern Division ALA National Vice President Marlene Boyer, Department President Vicki Ozenbaugh, Leading Candidate for National American Legion Commander Daniel Seehafer, National American Legion Commander Jim Troiola, and Department Commander Don Suchy.



Senior Vice Commander John-Henry Percy presented Nebraska Law Enforcement Officer-of-the-Year Audrey Arbuckle with her plaque. Officer Arbuckle was also chosen as both the Midwest and National Law Enforcement Officer-of-the-Year. Pictured (L to R) Officer Arbuckle and Senior Vice Percy.



Commander Don Suchy presented citizenship medals to outstanding Legionnaires in the different Districts. Pictured (L to R) Commander Suchy, District 15 Commander Bruce Gubser accepting for David Timmerman, District 12 recipient Stewart James, District 7 recipient Thomas Mlnarik, District 6 recipient Edith Deuel, District 1 recipient Gary Eberly, District 3 Vice Commander Nick Tramp accepting for Scott Morgan, District 9 recipient Michael Helm, District 10 recipient Vince Walton, District 11 recipient Lyle Bartels, and District 12 Vice Commander David Stander. Not present was District 8 recipient Gary Denison.



Commander Don Suchy presented Gerald Lamkin of Beatrice Post 27 with the Nebraska Membership Recruiter of the Year plaque. Pictured (L to R) Commander Suchy and Gerald Lamkin.



The Crowbar Award was presented to Jerry Schulte. Pictured (L to R) Jerry Schulte and PDC Gary Wooten.



Virgil Blum presented the Insulters Award to NECman Fred Craigie. Pictured (L to R) NECman Fred Craigie and Virgil Blum.



Senior Vice Commander John-Henry Percy presented the 2023 High School Teacher-of-the-Year Award to Paul Martin of Friend Public Schools. Pictured (L to R) Paul Martin and Senior Vice Percy.

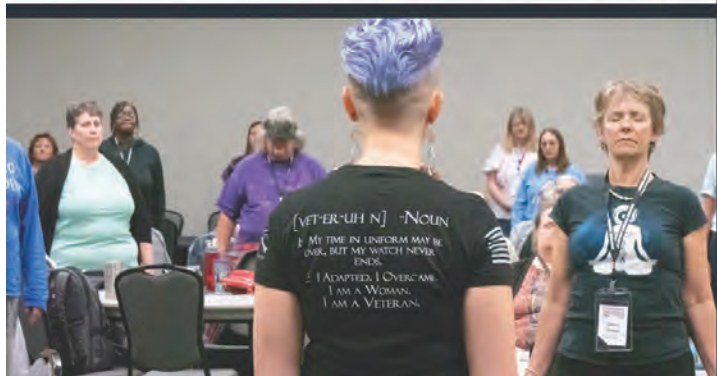


Commander Don Suchy presented past officer pins to the outgoing Area and District Commanders. Pictured top (L to R) Commander Don Suchy, Area A Carl Lorenzen, Area B Ken Meyer, Area D Gene VonForell, and Area C Dick Binder. Pictured bottom (L to R) Commander Don Suchy, District 6 Julie Schnitzler, District 1 Judy Walters, and District 7 Jerry Schulte.



Senior Vice Commander John-Henry Percy presented Nebraska Eagle Scout-of-the-Year Jack Schlickbernd with his plaque. Pictured (L to R) Jack Schlickbernd and Senior Vice Percy.

2ND ANNUAL NEBRASKA Women Veterans SYMPOSIUM



October 13-15, 2023

Holiday Inn Hotel and Convention Center - Kearney, NE

FREE, two-day event for women veterans with presentations on veteran benefits and services, networking opportunities, roundtable discussions, special activities, and more.

Learn more and register online!



veterans.nebraska.gov/womenveterans

2023 Cornhusker Boys' State



Anish Amin of Millard North was elected as the 2023 – 24 Boys' State Governor and awarded the Bob Riddle Traveling Governor's Trophy. Pictured (L to R) Commander Don Suchy, Anish Amin, and Boys' State President Doug Boldt.



Each town nominated an outstanding citizen. Pictured (L to R) Program Director Dave Salak, Clay Brandenburger, Garret Dorn, Jacob Dominguez, Porter Nelson, Charles Budell, Anish Amin, Nayan Vel, Wyatt Ozenbaugh, and Boys' State President Doug Boldt.



Four young men were selected to represent our state during Boys' Nation. Pictured (L to R) Anish Amin (alternate), Charles Yale (alternate), Nayan Vel (delegate), and Porter Nelson (delegate).



Alexander Kuehn was selected as the Coach Larry Frost Outstanding Athlete. Pictured (L to R) Athletic Director Marcus Donner, Alexander Kuehn, and Boys' State President Doug Boldt.



Valley Forge was selected as the top town during the 2023 Boys' State Session.



The American Legion Samsung Scholarship Recipient was Justin Wenzel of Arthur County High School. Pictured (L to R) Boys' State President Douglas Boldt and Justin Wenzel.

2023 Junior Law Cadet Program

The annual Junior Law Cadet Program was held June 20 – 23, 2023, at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center in Grand Island.

28 boys and 18 girls who just finished their junior year of high school participated in this program. The students were selected from each of the 14 American Legion districts in Nebraska.

Participants learned about law enforcement responsibilities and had training from representatives of various city, county, state, and federal agencies. They participated in daily calisthenics, classroom sessions, self-defense, firearms, law enforcement driving, internet crime, and much more.

Six young men and women were selected from the participants for performing above and beyond. Outstanding Cadets – Dillon Simpson of Burwell and Tessa Miller of Sutherland; Outstanding Driving Ability – Jordyn Anderson of Hay Springs and Camryn Jacobsmeier of Omaha; Outstanding Marksmanship – Kieffer Bruening of Newcastle; and Glory Naughtin of Sutherland.



Kosse Selected as Nebraska American Legion Baseball Player-of-the-Year

Each year, thousands of Nebraska's youth participate in American Legion Baseball. One young man is then chosen as the Nebraska Player-of-the-Year and his name is forwarded to National to be considered for the George W. Rulon National Player-of-the-Year for 2023.



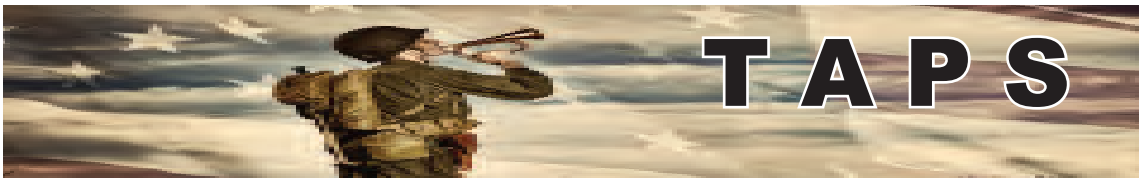
This year, the Nebraska American Legion selected Alexander Kosse of Omaha as the 2023 Nebraska American Legion Baseball Player-of-the-Year. Kosse plays for the Omaha Gross Catholic High School Legion Senior Team sponsored by Bellevue Post 339. He has shown extensive dedication to academics at Omaha Gross Catholic High School, supporting his peers, and volunteering in his community.

He participated in baseball and football and has received many awards in these activities. Kosse was involved in National Honor Society, Student Council, Student Ambassador, Knights of Columbus, Vicing in Faith, and Student Advocacy Leadership Team. Kosse has volunteered for various youth activities, at the local VA Hospital, and is known for helping youth in his community. There is no doubt that he understands the impact he can make by supporting his community. His positive outlook and leadership skills demonstrate the Code of Conduct that is sought in Legion Baseball.

Kosse will attend the University of Arkansas working towards a degree in biology and wants to become a Physician Assistant. He is the son of Alan and Marla Kosse.

Administrative Assistant Wanted

The Nebraska American Legion is still in search of a new Administrative Assistant at Department Headquarters. This is a full time position, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The starting salary is \$40,000 and also includes health insurance, retirement, and other benefits. If you are interested, or would like more information, please contact Adjutant Dave Salak.



Achtemeier, Fred H., Diller, Vietnam
 Anders, Francis E., Crawford, Korea
 Anderson, Merrill J., Millard, Korea
 Anderson, Ronnie A., Bancroft, Vietnam
 Arnold, Wayne, Shelton, Korea
 Bayer, Francis C., Dodge, Korea
 Behne, Dean A., Wilber, Korea
 Bell, Donald D., Crawford, Korea
 Bellamy, Kenneth, Farnam, Korea
 Bennett, Glenn, Nebraska City, Vietnam
 Beran, Richard J., Ord, WWII
 Binienda, Ronald, Omaha, Vietnam
 Black, James E., Millard, Korea
 Block, Walter, Newcastle, Korea
 Borges, John F., Dalton, Vietnam
 Boyer, Donald, Battle Creek
 Bridge, Merle, Tilden, Korea
 Bruner, Doug, Hooper, Vietnam
 Bullington, Jack, Columbus, Korea
 Burri, Donald G., Benson, WWII
 Buss, Ralph R., Norfolk, Korea
 Cheney, Wayne O., Bennett, WWII
 Choplin, Dennis, Kearney, Vietnam
 Clatt, John H., Ashland, Vietnam
 Coleman, Eugene T., Elgin, Korea
 Coonrod, Ivan D., Hubbell, Vietnam
 Cowden, Lyle E., Hastings, Persian Gulf
 Creger, David B., Curtis, Korea
 Davis, Robert L., Grand Island, SAL
 Day, Robert G., Plattsmouth, Vietnam
 Dennis, Grady, Sutton, Vietnam
 Dietz, Bobby D., Orleans, Korea
 Dimmitt, Kendall, Ashland, Korea
 Ebbeka, Kenneth, Geneva, WWII
 Eberhardt, Galen E., Deshler, Vietnam
 Ellis, Richard E., York, Korea
 Emmanuel, Alfred V., Omaha, Korea
 Exstrom, Arthur L., York, Korea
 Fie, Joel J., Kearney, Vietnam
 Foster, Wayne W., Lincoln, WWII
 Fowler, Douglas A., Lincoln, Vietnam
 Fralin, James L., Beatrice, Vietnam
 Frank, Robert V., Deshler
 Fredricksen, Tom M., Laurel, Vietnam
 Friesen, Maxton, Hampton, WWII
 Frisbie, L. D., Campbell, Korea
 Furrow, Robert, Maywood, WWII
 Glass, Eddie D., North Omaha, SAL
 Graham, Maurice D., Beatrice, Korea
 Grutsch, Michael J., Oxford, Vietnam
 Gutz, Arnold, Osmond, Korea
 Hagel, Virgil A., Gordon, Korea
 Hajny, Melvin J., Superior, Vietnam
 Hansen, Clyde W., Fremont, WWII
 Hosch, Dale L., Fremont, WWII
 Hardy, Bob R., Wauneta, Korea
 Harvey, Donald G., Lincoln, Vietnam
 Heiden, Gregory L., Bertrand, Vietnam
 Hinrichsen, Jay J., Kearney, Vietnam
 Hoblyn, Robert R., Ansley, Persian Gulf
 Hofeling, Herman A., Beatrice, Korea
 Hohensee, Gwendell, Lincoln, Korea

Holl, John A., Shelton
 Hoselton, Jim, Eustis, Vietnam
 Hoveling, Norman J., Elwood, Korea
 Hovendick, Richard E., Beatrice, Korea
 Huftless, Stephan M., Benson, Korea
 Huges, James, Omaha, Korea
 Hult, Alan V., Grand Island, Vietnam
 Jeardoe, Leonard R., Hebron, Vietnam
 Jernigan, Walter E., McCook, Korea
 Johnson, Richard, Wauneta, WWII
 Jordan, Frank E., Papillion, Korea
 Jorgensen, James D., Dwight, Vietnam
 Kasl, Richard L., Dorchester, Korea
 Kaspar, Alvin H., Dorchester, Vietnam
 Kastanek, Thomas A., Swanton, Vietnam
 Kelly, William O., O'Neill, WWII
 Irwin, Jerry, O'Neill, Vietnam
 Klosterman, John C., Dwight, Vietnam
 Kmiecik, John F., Millard
 Knickelbein, Gary L., Wilcox, Vietnam
 Knippelmeyer, Marvin, Lincoln, Vietnam
 Kronhorman, Glenn E., Tobias, SAL
 Krueger, Bruce D., Arlington, Korea
 Krumwiede, Harold, Atkinson, Vietnam
 Kunze, Paul R., Saint Paul, Vietnam
 Lantz, Kyle M., Pawnee City, Korea
 Lantz, Ralph L., Beatrice, Vietnam
 Lawrence, Clifford E., Hay Springs, WWII
 Menke, James A., Nelson, Vietnam
 Laycock, Jimmie D., Osceola, Vietnam
 Liska, Eugene E. Jr., Sutton, Vietnam
 Liston, Nial, Oxford, Korea
 Logemann, Marion H., Omaha, WWII
 Lokke, Henry J., Omaha, Korea
 Luedtke, C. L., Grand Island, Korea
 Lutkemeier, Loren, Campbell, Vietnam
 Mandl, Richard, Tilden, Korea
 Mann, Jack G., Chadron, Korea
 Manolidis, Paul T., Grand Island, SAL
 Marchese, Tom, Millard, Korea
 Martin, Richard L., Beaver City, Vietnam
 Maschka, Kenneth C., Ashton, Korea
 McKeever, Ernest F., Wymore, Vietnam
 McLaughlin, Larry D., Carleton
 Meyer, James T., Orchard, WWII
 Milligan, Loyal M., Beatrice, WWII
 Mitchell, Bob I., Oxford, SAL
 Momsen, Wayne, South Sioux City, Vietnam
 Morrison, Milroy, Alliance, Vietnam
 Mort, Kenneth C., Pawnee City, Korea
 Nichols, Eddie, Wauneta, Korea
 Nies, Arlen W., Beatrice, Vietnam
 Odom, John M., Benson, Vietnam
 Ott, Leslie, Beemer, Vietnam
 Pape, James D., Springfield, Vietnam
 Paulsen, Myron, Beemer, Vietnam

Petersen, Walter, Tilden
 Peterson, Steve E., Omaha, Vietnam
 Pierce, Jerry E., Dorchester, Korea
 Pillen, Tim, Millard, Vietnam
 Plock, Glen C., Milligan, Vietnam
 Plucknett, Allen C., Pleasant Dale, Korea
 Popken, Stanley G., Uehling, Korea
 Rasgorshek, Robert H. Jr., Benson, Vietnam
 Rayburn, Joe, Gibbon, Vietnam
 Real, Robert D., Grand Island, Vietnam
 Reed, Stephen D., Omaha, Vietnam
 Reyman, Claude L., Wood Lake, Vietnam
 Richter, Brian M., Norfolk, Vietnam
 Rocke, Dean, Hallam, Korea
 Rolff, Dewayne A., Tilden, Korea
 Ross, Valta A., Aurora, Korea
 Ryan, Thomas J., Columbus, Korea
 Saalfeld, Alyn, Millard, Korea
 Sabatka, Frank A., Brewster, Korea
 Sailors, Hillman D., Rosalie, Korea
 Schmid, Al J., Papillion
 Schroeder, Wayne, Beatrice, Korea
 Schuster, Eugene F., Korea
 Selzer, Otto J. Jr., Bellwood, WWII
 Semm, Dwayne A., Doniphan, Vietnam
 Sewell, Edward D., Lincoln, Vietnam
 Shandera, Dennis J., Havelock, Korea
 Shol, Vicki R., Omaha
 Sladky, Joseph L., Papillion, Korea
 Sims, John B. Sr., Grand Island, Korea
 Smith, Gary L., Shelton, Vietnam
 Smith, Kenneth, Wauneta, Vietnam
 Snyder, Gerald C., Pawnee City, WWII
 Sohl, Norbert, Beatrice, WWII
 Starman, Sylvester, Elgin, Korea
 Stearley, Lyle, Shelton, WWII
 Stevens, David M., Ord
 Stewart, Don W., Lincoln, Korea
 Stewart, William E., Chadron, WWII
 Sullivan, John L., Valley, Korea
 Taber, Lloyd E., Neligh, Vietnam
 Thomas, Lavern M., Hallam, Korea
 Toberer, Dennis K., Eustis, Vietnam
 Turner, Ralph N., Brewster, WWII
 Walker, Walter J., Hastings, Korea
 Wedergren, Jerome C., Uehling, Korea
 West, William L., Gering, Korea
 White, David S., Millard, Korea
 Whitton, Terry L., Fairbury, Vietnam
 Wiese, Robert C., Springfield, Vietnam
 Williams, Butch, Beatrice, Vietnam
 Williams, Ernest B., Naponee, Korea
 Willis, Roy, Benson, Vietnam
 Wolken, David, Tecumseh, Korea
 Wolski, Duane, Tilden, WWII
 Worth, Meredith D., Springview, Korea
 Wortman, Edward A., Lincoln, Korea
 Yakoski, Joseph Jr., Tunkhannock, Vietnam

Events Calendar

August

10 - 15 American Legion World Series - Shelby, NC
 20 - 24 American Legion Legacy Run
 25 - 31 National Convention - Charlotte, NC

September

4 Labor Day - Office Closed
 16 Leadership School and Homecoming

October

9 Columbus Day - Office Closed
 9 - 12 Fall Meetings - Indianapolis, IN

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

Mail Call

Dear American Legion,
 Thank you for awarding me the Maynard Jensen Memorial Scholarship! I really appreciate it.
 Sincerely,
 Mallorie Scott

Dear American Legion,
 Thank you for selecting me as a recipient of the Maynard Jensen American Legion Memorial Scholarship. I will be attending Hastings College this fall and I am honored to have your support.
 Sincerely,
 Ava Boldt

\$ 1000



NEBRASKA LEGIONNAIRES

BE AN EARLY BIRD FOR 2024!

The first renewal notice for the 2024 membership year should have been mailed from Indianapolis about July 1. The Department Membership Committee is again this year sponsoring an Early Bird Drawing.

All regular members (those who pay their dues annually) whose 2024 dues are paid and received in Department Headquarters by September 5, 2023 will be in a drawing for \$1000.

5 names will be drawn for a \$200 prize each this year!

HELP US BUILD MEMBERSHIP MOMENTUM!!

BE IN THE DRAWING!!




USA is proud to be the
Preferred Provider
 of Insurance and Financial Services
 to The American Legion

Inspired by your service.

As a veteran who has received an Honorable discharge, you're eligible for membership in USAA. With advice, tools and products to aid you with insurance, banking, investments and retirement, USAA is committed to stand alongside you wherever life takes you.

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Elwood Post 290 presented a certificate for 50 years of continuous membership to Bill Weismann. Pictured (L to R) Commander Herman Broom and Bill Weismann.



Bennington Post 266 was presented with an unserviceable flag collection box to place outside of their Post by the Bennington 4-H Club. Pictured (L to R) Commander Les Brauer, 4-H youth members, and Club Leaders Jamie Huntley and Erin Dunker.



Lincoln Post 3 presented certificates of continuous membership to its members. Pictured (L to R) Jerry Wilson, 50 years; Steve Bartos, 50 years; Adjutant Ed Schnabel, 50 years; and Curt Sanford.



Dannebrog Post 241 presented Harvey Finck with a certificate for 50 years of continuous membership. Pictured (L to R) Harvey Finck and Leanna Obermiller.



Several members of the Nebraska American Legion were present at the Governor's Office to receive pins for their service during the Vietnam War. Past Area A Vice Commander Carl Lorenzen took a picture of Past Department Commander Don Suchy receiving his pin. Pictured (L to R) PDC Rollie Otte, PDC Don Suchy, and Governor Jim Pillen.



Wymore Post 25 presented certificates of continuous membership to its members. Pictured (L to R) Ken Wellensiek, 50 years; Ronald Hohensee, 50 years; and Commander Don Jenkins. Not pictured were James Johnson, 50 years; Roger Jackson, 50 years; Michael Henderson, 50 years; Dennis Day, 50 years, and Lester Shalla, 60 years.



Stamford Post 233 presented a certificate for 70 years of continuous membership to Raymond Tegtman. Pictured (L to R) Commander John Ehrke and Raymond Tegtman.



Atkinson Post 86 presented certificates of continuous membership to its members at their American Legion Birthday dinner. Pictured top (L to R) Commander Gerry Bouska and Frank Schaaf, 70 years. Pictured middle (L to R) Robert Knutson, 50 years, and Commander Gerry Bouska. Pictured bottom (L to R) Craig Funk 50 years, Commander Gerry Bouska, and Larry Friedel, 50 years.



Plattsmouth Post 56 Color Guard presented the flags during the Plattsmouth American Legion Baseball tournament.



Papillion Post 32 presented awards to three Papillion La Vista Navy JROTC Cadets. Logan Pritchard received a \$500 scholarship, Wyatt McNeal received the Legion's Scholastic Excellence Award, and Elijah Sebey received the General Military Excellence Award. Pictured (L to R) Ron Dupell and Logan Pritchard.



Creston Post 306 members presented their annual Memorial Day Services in their community.



Grand Island Squadron 53 sponsored a bowling and pizza party for 14 veterans from the 4th floor of the Grand Island Veterans Hospital.



The American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Nebraska

The Star

August - September 2023



DEPT. PRESIDENT - LISA MOORE



Here I am. Thank you for the honor of being your President for the year 2023-2024. I still can't believe that I get to be a huge part of your year.

President Vicki did an amazing job with her convention. I have very large shoes to fill. But, as I step into those shoes, they may slip off once in a while. However, I will get them filled.

My theme is "Nebraska Strong and Faithful – Serving Veterans Always." It is, boiled down, who we are and what we do. We don't do it alone; we rely on each other and the wisdom of our Chairmen and Officers. So, ask the chairmen who have been put in place. That's why they are there.

Department Commander John Henry Percy, Detachment Commander Eldon Kramer, and I

are working on homecomings. John Henry and I are planning a joint homecoming with more information to follow. Eldon will be in attendance but have his own homecoming out west.

Forget Leadership School. This year, we will have ALA Programs 101. That's right! Back to basics. We need to remember what we do and how.

I have a terrific group of people as chairman and officers, and we are all looking forward to working with you. Have an amazing year!!

Lisa Moore
Department President



L to R: Chaplain Vicki Cyboron, Historian Ruth Heitbrink, President Lisa Moore, NEC Vicki Ozenbaugh and Vice President Amanda Washburn

NEBRASKA AUXILIARY – YOU ARE THE BEST!

Amazing! Outstanding! Phenomenal! Fantastic! Marvelous! Astonishing! Incredible! Wonderful! Remarkable! I do not think there are enough words to tell you how proud I am of all of you as I served as your 2022-2023 President. As I prepared Nebraska's Year-End Impact Numbers Report with only 112 Units reporting, I realized the value of each Auxiliary member and Unit in the communities across Nebraska. Thank you to those Units who took the time and effort to complete and submit the report.

Based on 37.58 percent of our Units, this is what YOU did:

- 25,175 volunteer hours and \$69,293 for our Veterans/Active Duty/Reserve Military
- 21,212 volunteer hours and \$17,547 for 3,763 Military Families
- 5,715 hours and \$117,600 for ALA Girls State
- 5,352 hours and \$19,686 for other Legion Youth activities
- 10,600 children/youth served
- 36,772 hours and \$46,259 for our communities
- 58 scholarships totaling \$26,955 at Unit, County, or District level
- \$11,045 donated to Department scholarships

We can only imagine what those numbers would be if all 298 units had reported! And speaking of numbers, my heart is humbled by your generosity for my President's Projects. A total of \$8,241.42 was received. That means that the Defense of POW/MIA Accounting Agency in Nebraska will receive \$4,120.71. The other half is being utilized for the wreaths that will be placed on the 36 Medal of Honor recipients buried in Nebraska. This exemplifies your commitment to our Veterans. Thank you!

Although my work as President

is almost complete, the Auxiliary work is never complete. I urge all to continue to excel at what you do for your Unit, as well as our Veterans, military, children, youth, and communities. As you plan what you will do for the 2023-2024 year, I challenge you to do just a little bit more. When you complete your donation sheets, consider increasing your donations by 5 or 10 percent from the previous year. If you have a community celebration, be involved. Maybe an Auxiliary float in the parade or a fundraising food stand or sponsor the kids games. Get our brand out there. And remember to get your Junior members involved. They are our future!

My last duty as your 2022-2023 Department President is serving as the Chairman of the Delegation for our National Convention in Charlotte, NC the end of August. If you are unable to attend but still want to participate, you can. The general sessions and installation of the 2023-2024 National officers will be online. You can follow along on social media @ALAforVeterans and the livestream will begin on Monday, August 28. Find the information at www.ALAforVeterans.org/convention.

You will be hearing a lot about "Be the One" as we move into the new National administrative year. I would like to share the following quote to help you remember the importance of one.

"One tree can start a forest. One smile can begin a friendship. One hand can lift a soul. One word can

frame the goal. One candle can wipe out darkness. One laugh can conquer gloom. One touch can show you care. One life can make the difference. Be that one today." -- Author Unknown

We each can "Be the One" in someone else's life. Who will be your "one"?

My last quote for you. *"Life is too short. Grudges are a waste of perfect happiness. Laugh when you can, apologize when you should and let go of what you can't change. Love deeply and forgive quickly. Take chances. Give everything and have no regrets. Life is too short to be unhappy. You have to take the good with the bad. Smile when you're sad, love what you got, and always remember what you had. Always forgive, but never forget. Learn from your mistakes but never regret them. People change, and things go wrong but always remember... life goes on!"* -- Author Unknown

Although the time has come for me to close my term, ALA life goes on. I look forward to serving as Nebraska's National Executive Committee Member with my first official meeting at the Post NEC meeting in Charlotte.

I started this article with words to describe how I feel about each of you. Now I share the words that express my appreciation for each of you. Gratitude! Admiration! Enjoyment! Gratefulness! Thankful! You have made this year the BEST!

Vicki Ozenbaugh
2022-2023 President



NEBRASKA ALA MEMBERS!
I extend my heartfelt thanks for your kindness, friendship, and hospitality throughout this year. Your generosity in contributing to my President's gift of a lap top computer (and a little extra cash) is incredible. You are the BEST!!
Never Forget Ever Honor – Vicki Ozenbaugh

FUN! FUN! 2023 IN KEARNEY



- Pre-DEC Barb Washburn & Vicki Ozenbaugh;
- 1970's Styles Jacki O'Neill, Alice Vieselmeyer, Diane Donnelly;
- PDP's Eva Nollette, Roxanne Hiatt, Luayne Weisgerber, & Gayla Schmid;
- NW Div Nat'l VP Marlene Boyer & NEC Beverly Neel;
- 2023-2024 Candidates Ruth Hietbrink, Amanda Washburn, Lisa Moore, Vicki Cyboron, Vicki Ozenbaugh, Deb Albers;
- President Lisa & husband Jim Moore;
- 1980's Styles Julie Totten, Barbie Meyer, Amanda Washburn, (modeling dress made by Deb Albers), Loree Hendrickson;
- Poppy Centerpiece Winners—1st Pleasant Dale Unit 354 held by JoAnn Sieck;
- 2nd Clay Center Unit 87 held by Tina Nelson;
- 3rd Burchard Unit 146 held by Ruth Hietbrink;
- Pie in Vicki's Face from Jacki O'Neill;
- Skit—Justina Birkel, Ruth Hietbrink, Lisa Moore, Amanda Washburn, Deb Albers, Maria Atterberry, Barbie Meyer, & Lorene Bartos;
- AEF Chair Beverly Neel receiving a donation from her granddaughters Brianna & Kaylynn Novak;
- 1970's Styles Vicki Ozenbaugh, Barb Washburn, JoAnn Sieck, Pat Wiseman, Ruth Hietbrink, Nancy Niemann, 1960's Styles Cindy Lugan, Lynne Wild; and 1950's Styles Lorene Bartos.



FINANCE UPDATE

It is with pleasure that I report to my fellow members as Finance Chairman and as a four-year member of the Finance Committee. There will always be new things to learn and challenges to overcome; but, with the support of my fellow committee members (Barb Skillman and Eileen Gentrup), we were able to work together to make it a positive year.

I especially want to thank my "go to" person, Finance Advisor Julie Totten. Without her help and assistance, I would not have been able to fulfill the responsibilities of this position.

A few months ago, the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary purchased a new Department Headquarters building.

The investment is a positive move in that we have more office space, a room large enough to host meetings, and more storage space --- with all being on one floor.

I'm happy to report that strategically invested ALA funds were able to cover our share of the purchase price without any debt.

The Finance Committee continually monitors funds and expenses, but we will be relying on our investment income and fundraising activities to bridge losses in membership and to cover expenses that provide services to our units and our members.

*Adeline Hanel,
Finance Chairman 2022-2023*

GIRLS STATE

Girls State 2023 was a great success thanks to all the help from our Volunteer Staff. They went above and beyond to bring the week to the girls and it was a great week. We had 288 girls that went through our new online registration/orientation process.

We had wonderful speakers, Megan Ross-Mental Health Professional, Senator Mike Jacobson, Former Senator Suzanne Geist, Carmen Kelle-College Advisor, Michaela Kumke-Director of Food Bank of Lincoln, a Panel of Women who work at the State Capitol, and Governor Jim Pillen.

The Girls were able to partake in various activities like touring the capital and the National Guard, Some got to see Memorial Stadium and the Nebraska History Museum. Boys State also arranged a Career fair for all boys and girls state citizens to attend.

Our Governor for the 2023 session was Ellie Broz and our Girls Nation Senators are Bella Meyer and Landry Lehan. The Samsung Scholarship winner was Hailey Rademacher.

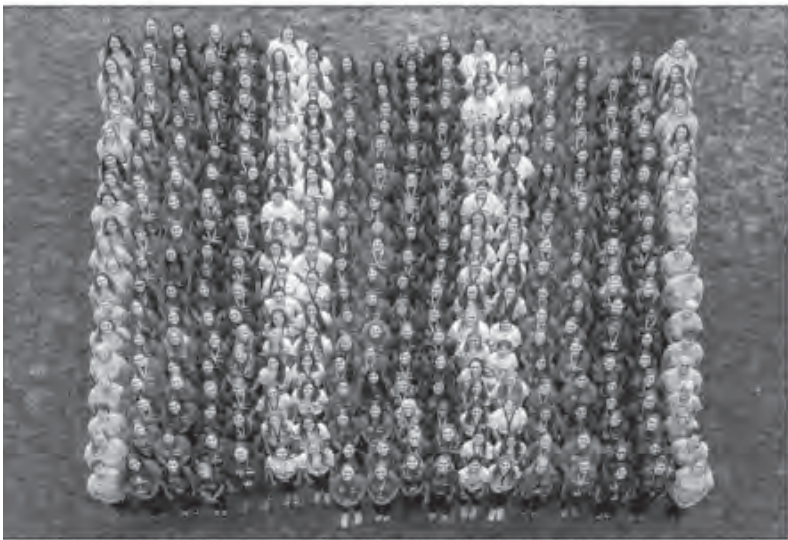
*Brittney Masek,
Girls State Chairman*



Ellie Broz



Hailey Rademacher, Landry Lehan, and Bella Meyer



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY CORNHUSKER GIRLS STATE - 2023

From Left to Right: City of Hayes, City of Garfield, City of Arthur, City of Cleveland, City of Harrison, City of McKinley, City of Roosevelt, and City of Taft.

HISTORIAN

My name is Ruth Hietbrink, and I am a member of Sterling Unit 140. Thank you for electing me as your Historian and to work with the Cavalcade of Memories for 2023-2024. I look forward to looking at the work done by the units throughout this coming year.

As I dive into this new position, stay tuned for more information coming in the ABC Book.

*Ruth Hietbrink
Historian
402.239.6371*

MILITARY DAY AT THE STATE FAIR

Once again our Veterans will be recognized at the State Fair on Labor Day, Monday, September 4. A program will be at the Heartland Event Center beginning at 10:30 am and the parade at 2:00 pm. Check statefair.org for more details. Veterans and Auxiliary members receive free admission all day with your proper identification.

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

2023 - 2024 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
Aug.	#335 Davenport	#52 Kearney	#156 Burchard	#175 Jackson	#7 Alliance	#7 Alliance	#232 Malmo
Sept.	#290 Elwood	#209 Franklin	#1 Omaha	#84 Columbus	#12 Chadron	#12 Chadron	#1 Omaha
Oct.	#290 Elwood	#316 Elm Creek	#243 Plymouth	#322 Monroe		#364 Naponee	#160 Polk
Nov.	#283 Platte Center	#218 Exeter		#357 Brunswick	#10 Morrill	#54 Laurel	#160 Polk
Dec.	#257 Eustis	#11 Hastings		#302 Leigh	#10 Morrill	#133 Culbertson	#243 Plymouth
Jan.		#377 Wilcox	2023 Girls State	#16 Norfolk	#7 Alliance	2023 Girls State	
Feb.	#251 Arcadia		#353 Louisville	#80 Humphrey	#301 Dalton		#354 Pleasant Dale
Mar.							
Apr.				#127 Craig			
May							
June							
July							

Units, please check with your (Med Center) Assignments to see if they are accepting items before you make or send them.

Service to Veterans Chair: Mary Krause, 339 N Osborne Street, Ainsworth, NE 68210

2023-2024 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS & CHAIRMEN

Department Officers

President Lisa Moore 318 N Railroad, Wilber, NE 68465
 Vice President Amanda Washburn 5230 N 148 St., Lincoln, NE 68527
 Historian Ruth Hietbrink 735 Washington St., Sterling, NE 68443
 Chaplain Vicki Cyboron 5152 N 155 Ave., Omaha, NE 68116
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 Six Justina Birkel PO Box 64, North Loup, NE 68859
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 Grand Island Vicki Cyboron 5152 N 155 Ave., Omaha, NE 68116

Veterans Administration Medical Center Associate Representatives:

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 Norfolk LaRee Kubes 205 W 1st St. Madison, NE 68748
 Eastern Nebraska Leatrice Doolen 630 S Washington St., Papillion, NE 68046
 Western Nebraska Cecil Doshier 1960 Kings Rd., Gering, NE 69341

Honorary Department Junior Officers

Honorary President Samantha Stepanek St. Paul
 Honorary Vice President Shia Rasmussen St. Paul
 Honorary Historian Erica Fuchs Arlington
 Honorary Chaplain Kendall Kasl Dorchester

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 Telephone: 402-466-1808 Email: neaux@windstream.net Web: nebraskalegionaux.net

CHILDREN AND YOUTH GOOD DEED AND HERO AWARDS

“And a Child shall lead them.”
Isaiah 11:6

A total of **five Good Deed Awards and one Hero Award** have been reported in Nebraska in 2022-2023.

GOOD DEED AWARDS

Shelby Miller of **Davenport** (PIC 1) collected \$168 to donate to the Davenport Legion Auxiliary by making bracelets to sell on Memorial Day.

A 9-year-old boy from Elkhorn, John Alolafia, was presented with a Good Deed Award by **Valparaiso** (PIC 2). John has a diaper drive every year on his birthday. This

year he collected 7,304 packages of diapers, but in the past 6 drives has collected over 21,000.

A class of 5th and 6th graders at **Shickley** (PIC 3) volunteered to sing the “Star Spangled Banner” at home volleyball and football games when the band couldn’t play and a recording wasn’t enough.

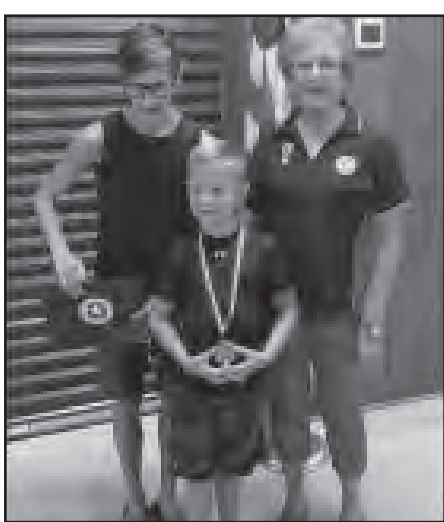
Gracie Berger of **Plymouth** (PIC 4) raised garden produce to sell and then donated the proceeds to her community. She donated \$100 to the American Legion Auxiliary in Plymouth as well as about \$900 more to other community organizations.

One young man from **Yutan**,

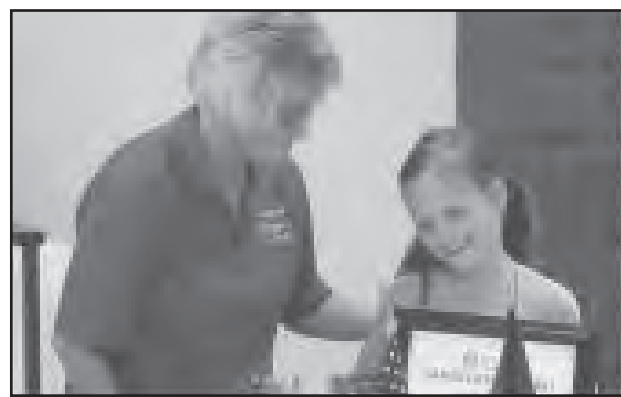
Rainan Braze has raised a total of \$4000 over three years to donate to the “Make a Wish Foundation. This year he raised money for a friend who has Battens disease.

HERO AWARD

The **Hero Award** (PIC 5) was awarded to two young men, Trapper and Chase Shied from **Cody**, who rode their snowmobiles 13 miles through a blizzard with 60 mph winds and wind chills of 40 to 50 below zero to get medication to a sick child who needed antibiotics to treat her scarlet fever.



OUR
FUTURE
IS IN
GOOD
HANDS!



AWARD WINNER

Marian Melcher and Children and Youth Committee members from Nebraska earned the Award for the Most Outstanding Children and Youth Program in Nebraska in 2023. Marian was also awarded the same distinction in 2022.

Pictured (right) with Marian are Past Department President Vicki Ozenbaugh, 2022 C & Y Chair Vicki Colson, and 2023 C&Y Chair Deb Albers.



Members of the Elk Creek Post 370 American Legion and Unit 370 American Legion Auxiliary are pictured at a cemetery on Memorial Day. Delores Othmer, Kim Crook, Ellen Koehler, and Rhonda Beethe represented the Auxiliary.

CINDY MOORE UNIT MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Leadership is strong in Nebraska. This year seven individuals were nominated by their Unit for the Unit Member of the Year award. Cindy

Moore of Gretna Unit #216 was selected. She is shown receiving her certificate from President Vicki Ozenbaugh. Congratulations, Cindy!



2023 DISTRICT FALL ROUNDUPS

DISTRICT 1 – Sunday, October 8 – 1:00 pm MT
Cody Post 319 – 100 N Walnut – Cody NE

DISTRICT 2 – Sunday, October 8 – Time unavailable
Plainview Post 148

DISTRICT 3 – Information unavailable

DISTRICT 4 – Saturday, November 4 – 1:00 pm MT
Morrill Post 10 – 117 Center Ave – Morrill NE

DISTRICT 5 – Saturday, October 14 – 1:00 pm CT
Stapleton Post 324 – 249 Main St – Stapleton NE

DISTRICT 6 – Sunday, October 8 – 10:00 am CT
Custer County Memorial Bldg. – 445 S 9th Ave – Broken Bow

DISTRICT 7 – Sunday, April 21 – 2:00 pm CT
David City Senior Center – 592 D St – David City NE

DISTRICT 8 – Sunday, October 15 – 1:00 pm CT
Gretna Post 216 – 11690 S 216th St – Gretna NE

DISTRICT 9 – Saturday, September 16 – 2:00 pm CT
Gosper County Fairgrounds – 106 Rochelle St – Elwood NE

DISTRICT 10 – Saturday, September 16 – 10:00 am CT
Sutton Post 61 – 103 East Forrest – Sutton NE

DISTRICT 11 – Sunday, October 15 – 2:00 pm
Fairmont Post 21 – 525 F Street – Fairmont NE

DISTRICT 12 – Information Unavailable

DISTRICT 13 – Information Unavailable

DEPARTING WORDS

By the time you read this my time as the Department Secretary/Treasurer will have come to an end.

This retirement is the end of another chapter in my book of life. Our friendships will live on forever.

This doesn’t mean goodbye, it means I’ll see you around.

Continue to support the hardworking employees that serve you daily from the “new” office.

God bless you all,
Jacki O’Neill
2022-2023 Dept. Secretary



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Praise & Worship Song

My Life is in You, Lord; my strength is in You, Lord;

My hope is in You, Lord; It's in You.

My life is in You, Lord; my strength is in You, Lord;

My hope is in You, Lord; in You, it's in You.

I will praise You with all of my life, I will praise You with all of my strength, With all of my life, with all of my strength.

All of my hope is in You.

The above Praise and Worship Song was sung at church a few weeks ago, and this song stood out to me that Sunday! Do you ever have a song that stays with you and calls

out? I am so thankful for the help, the strength, and the hope that the Lord provides me each day.

The past couple of months have been challenging with the death of my mom, as I have had moments of sadness about missing her. But, when we sang this song, it was uplifting to me as I know I had the strength, the hope, and the love of our Lord to help me each moment after that.

When we think of our veterans and their struggles --- which can be physical, mental, or emotional --- and knowing that they face them daily, we find the strength and comfort of faith and hope in one another.

"The Lord is my strength and my song. He had become my salvation." Exodus 15:2

Heavenly Father, we are asking for your guidance and encouragement when we have a moment of sadness or loss of strength because of physical, emotional, or mental struggles. Please encourage us to continue to reach out to get whatever help we may need. Thank you for being a constant presence to help us find the comfort and peace that we desire. Amen.

*Vicky Cyboron
Dept. Chaplain*

In Memoriam

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BRIGHTEN THE CORNER WHERE YOU ARE

As we come to the end of another year in the American Legion Family, I want to thank each and every one of you who has contributed to the goals of serving our veterans, their families, and the youth of our communities. Most of our Auxiliary units tend to be scattered members held together by a small and mighty contingent of officers who stay focused on the goal. So, meeting during the summer months can be a challenge.

In every unit, there are young members who don't come to meetings as they may be "boring" or "everything is run the exact same way by the exact same people." Summertime may be a good time to mix things up a little --- perhaps a Hawaiian theme, or a scavenger hunt, or asking the younger members to plan the next meeting to see what they come up with.

One way to loosen up the crowd is to have a song. If members seem a bit too stuffy to sing along, I want to suggest this. Have a bowl with a bunch of song titles folded up on paper and have someone pick a title out of the bowl and see if they know the words. The song can range from patriotic to silly. Try "I'm a Little Teapot," "On Top of Spaghetti," or "Buffalo Gals." If someone's phone goes off during a meeting, this could be their 'penalty' to lighten the mood of the room.

It is a JOY to serve our veterans! Don't forget that JOY when it comes to meetings! Be joyful and have fun --- and the members will come!

And Keep Singing!

*Jean Vackiner
Dept. Music Chair*

FLAG RAFFLE WINNER

President Vicki's Flag Raffle raised approximately \$1,000 for her President's Projects. The winner was drawn at the Department Convention in Kearney. Nancy Olson, Unit President of Louisville #353, was

the lucky winner. President Vicki delivered the wooden flag made by Past Department Commander Lyle Bartels to her in Louisville. The picture was taken in front of their Legion Post.



Pictured are Nancy Olson and Vicki Ozenbaugh.

LOUISVILLE

Braidy Caroline Parrill (pictured on the left) was crowned Miss Louisville on June 1, 2023 by Junior American Legion Auxiliary members Kamdyn and Ophillia Olson. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors Miss Louisville, and Braidy will also compete in August for Miss Cass County and in September for Miss Harvest Festival Queen.

Braidy is a 2023 graduate from Louisville High School and plans to major in Cybersecurity and Computer Engineering and minor in Criminal Justice and Spanish, with a planned profession or occupation in the CIA.

Braidy is the daughter of Teresa Andrews-Parrill



Lincoln Havelock Post 342 volunteers worked Armed Forces Day 2023 at the Havelock Russ's Marked distributing poppies. Pictured, left to right, are Finance / Service Officer Tom Drapac, Commander Ann Jordan, Vice-Commander Jerry Hutchison, and President Gloria Asch

DATES TO REMEMBER

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Rosewood Gavel Award Deadline
- 4 Labor Day Department Headquarters Closed
- 10 Deadline for Star Articles – October/November Issue
- 11 Patriots Day
- 17 Constitution Day
- 20 POW/MIA Recognition Day
- 29 Gold Star Family Recognition Day

OCTOBER

- 10 Columbus Day – Department Headquarters Closed
- 31 Halloween

FOR YOUR ADVANCED PLANNING

- January 19-21, 2024 Mid-Year Convention, Holiday Inn, Kearney, NE
- June 20-23, 2024 Department Convention, Ramada Inn, Kearney, NE
- August 23-29, 2024 National Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana

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: ALTheStarNE@yahoo.com. Send photos as jpg attachments.

Material for the next issue needs to be submitted by
SEPT 10, 2023