



“Showing Up For Our Veterans”



For years, the Black Hills VA Hospital in Hot Springs, SD has been under fire from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and they have been threatening to close it. They cite that there aren’t enough veterans who use the facility, a newer facility in a bigger city would allow for more services and providers, and that there is no proof that the serenity of the hospital increases patient outcomes. Many in Nebraska and surrounding states would argue that all of these statements are false, especially the last one. If you have ever visited the VA campus there, you have seen the wild animals walking around and have felt the calmness of the environment and can see why the facility does so much good for the veterans there.

Ground was broken for the Battle Mountain Sanitarium on August 13, 1903, and the main group of buildings was completed April 1, 1907. Medicinal water from the local Mammoth Spring was supplied to all parts of the buildings and two fine plunge baths were supplied with hot and cold water. There were over 300 beds at the facility and preference was given to those military members

who were dealing with lung and respiratory difficulties. In 1930, the facility was transferred to the VA, where it still remains today. The hospital provides primary care and specialty health services, including mental health, nutrition, addiction and substance abuse treatment, kidney dialysis, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and more for veterans in the area. Many Nebraska residents use the facility and receive services there. Additionally, there is a 100 bed domiciliary that caters to those veterans specifically dealing with addiction and substance abuse and PTSD.

Each year, the Nebraska American Legion Family hosts a Christmas party for those veterans with funds for the Gifts for Yanks program. These parties include entertainment, bingo and prizes, lots of food and cookies, and fellowship shared by all. Besides this Christmas party, volunteers from the organizations also provide meals, outings to local communities, gift cards for shopping, and other items to help these veterans through their recovery.

This year Commander Walters has chosen the Hot Springs VA as her Commander’s project. The funds that she raises will go towards these wonderful activities that are held and will help with items that the VA doesn’t provide for these veterans. If you are interested in contributing to this great cause, you can send your donations to Department Headquarters with Commander’s Project in the memo line. You can also contact Headquarters for the “wish list” of items that the facility is needing.



Thank You Historian Jennifer!



It is with great sadness that we announce that after 12 years as our Department Historian, Jennifer Laux is stepping down from her position as Historian. We all want to say thank you for your many years of hard work and dedication to this position. Your Department Yearbooks have been outstanding, and we thank you for the time and effort that you put into each of those. We congratulate you on the numerous first place accomplishments you achieved over the years.

We also want to say thank you for your years of volunteering to be the website administrator and for keeping it up to date. You will be truly missed by the Department staff, officers, and all Legion members.

Thank you for all you do!

Mid-Year Agenda

Friday, January 17, 2025

10:00 a.m. DEC Meeting

Saturday, January 18, 2025

8:00 a.m. Joint Session

1:00 p.m. Training

6:00 p.m. Oratorical Contest

Sunday, January 19, 2025

8:00 a.m. Joint Religious Service

9:00 a.m. Joint Session

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

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

COMPASSION, CHARACTER, & COMPETENCE

2026 MEMBERSHIP GOAL: 20,388 NOVEMBER 30TH TOTAL: 15,173 - 74.42%

DISTRICT 2 - 78.81%	DISTRICT 7 - 77.52%	DISTRICT 10 - 75.64%	DISTRICT 11 - 75.39%	DISTRICT 15 - 75.27%
DISTRICT 1 - 74.86%	DISTRICT 6 - 74.57%	DISTRICT 8 - 73.80%	DISTRICT 12 - 72.03%	DISTRICT 3 - 71.80%
DISTRICT 5 - 71.74%	DISTRICT 13 - 71.34%	DISTRICT 9 - 69.40%	DISTRICT 4 - 69.27%	





Commander's Corner

Judy Walters
Department Commander



Hard to believe it's December already, the year is going by so fast. Mid-Year is coming up, January 17th-18th, with the DEC meeting on the 16th. Mid-Year will be held at the Norfolk Lodge and Suites again this year. The oratorical contest will be held Saturday night, which alone is worth attending the conference. If you've never attended the Mid-Year Conference, consider making it this year. Mid-Year is about learning, fellowship, and the oratorical contest.


We need to continue discussing membership. So far, Nebraska has been doing well and meeting the national target dates. However, we can't rest on this, as this is the time of year when we tend to fall short of and miss our target goals. All Posts are aware of which members are the slowest to pay their dues. Now is the time to start personally contacting those who have not made their payment. Let's not wait until their membership has lapsed. You might have a membership night, inviting members to an evening of food and fellowship, and collecting memberships at the same time. Remember that membership is everyone's responsibility, not just the membership chair or a few members of a Post. Create events to attract attention and establish your presence in your community. Share your story. Membership thrives when a Post can be seen in the community.

I would like to thank Jennifer Laux for her outstanding work over the years as our Department Historian. Jennifer is stepping down at this time, leaving big shoes to fill, but I know we will find someone who has the same desire and compassion for keeping the history of our Department. Jennifer excelled as our Historian and represented Nebraska as the National Historian last year, doing an outstanding job. If anyone is interested in the Historian position, please don't hesitate to contact the Department Commander.

As 2025 ends, it is time to plan how you will commemorate the 250th year of this great nation by participating in the Legion's USA 250 Challenge. The American Legion is conducting a nationwide effort, the USA 250 Challenge, a yearlong effort to celebrate America. The challenge offers three categories: mental wellness, community service, and fitness activity, all while paying tribute to our great nation. Think of what you could do as an individual, Post, or community, such as provide flag-respect education programs to 250 or more children; collect and distribute 250 items or kits and distribute them to homeless veterans or those living in veteran retirement homes; raise \$250 or more and donate to the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation. You can sign up and find many more ideas at <http://legion.org/usa250>.


I would like to wish everyone a blessed and Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and thank everyone for all they do. We are better together!

“Compassion, Character, & Competence”



Rider's Rally

Dan Willets
ALR Liaison



Greetings fellow American Legion Riders and American Legion Family!
Winter is upon us and other than the scattered polar bear members, the riding season is hit and miss at least for now. Hopefully, we have those scattered unseasonably warm days over the next few months so we can at least get out and ride intermittently.

As mentioned in the previous newspaper, I want to discuss a new program that we are sharing with the Nebraska ALR Chapters called “Flags for Vets”. The local ALR Chapter in LeMars, IA created the program, and it has spread to parts of Iowa, Minnesota, and now Nebraska. The idea behind the program is this, when a veteran passes away, his or her family receives a folded American flag in remembrance of the veteran. However, since the veteran has passed away, they never get to receive or see their flag. This program is designed to recognize the veteran for their service, provide them with an American flag that they can enjoy until their passing, and let them know that their service and sacrifice is not forgotten. ALR Chapter 53, along with several members from other ALR Chapters held their first ceremony on Veterans Day at The Heritage at Sagewood in Grand Island, NE. Twelve veterans were honored during the ceremony and each received a folded American flag, a set of commemorative dog tags, and a thank you card signed by all the Riders in attendance. The program is flexible and subject to the discretion of the local ALR Chapter as to where and how often they hold these events. I have documents available for anyone interested that outline the program, fundraising, pricing, etc. Contact me if you would like electronic copies if you have any questions about the program.

Another note is, that if you are not aware, we were able to update the Nebraska American Legion Riders Facebook page, so we are now able to share information, add events, etc. A couple of reminders; first, we need a Chapter to step up and volunteer to host the ALR State Romp for 2026 and second, we need nominations for the ALR Rider of the Year Award. Please remember to forward all your Chapter activities, i.e., mileage, group events, volunteer events and hours, or any other information you feel is noteworthy to me or your Area Assistant Liaison. Also, I would like to receive a listing of all Chapter officers and contact information for the Chapters so I can compile a master list. My contact info is phone 308-550-2648, email dwillets61@gmail.com or grandislandne.alr53@gmail.com.

Hoping you all had a Wonderful Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year. See you at the Mid-Year Conference in January. As always, ride safe and God Bless America and the Legion family!


NEBRASKA AMERICAN LEGION

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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, 150 NW 40th Street, Unit A, Lincoln, NE 68528, or you can email the information to awashburn@nebraskalegion.net



Chaplain's Corner

Steve Witmer
Department Chaplain



The holidays are upon us and we are all looking forward to spending time with family and friends. In fact, by the time you read this, we all will have celebrated another Thanksgiving. I hope and pray that yours was a time of blessings and happiness. If the weather or other unforeseen problems got in the way, I pray our Lord was with you and helped you through any stress that may have come. As we approach the Christmas season, may God bless you abundantly with the happiness that this time of year brings. As we share gifts with family and friends, let's remember the greatest gift of all, the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the still the greatest gift the world has ever received. May we never forget the true reason for the season.

As the new year begins, let's remember that new leadership in our nation will be taking place in January. Remember that all the governments of all the nations of the world have been put in place by God for His purpose and His glory. We as citizens of the United States of America and Christians have an obligation to not only honor our government, but to continually be in prayer for that government. We need to pray that those that have been elected will seek God's will in all that they do. As we pray for our nation and its leaders, keep in mind 2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

May God's blessings be on us all now and in the years to come.

A Century of Service: Gretna American Legion Post 216 Celebrates 100 Years of Community and Patriotism



On Saturday, October 11th, the Gretna American Legion Post 216 marked a remarkable upcoming milestone — 100 years of service, camaraderie, and dedication to veterans and the Gretna community. The centennial celebration, held at the Legion Hall, was a night filled with pride, nostalgia, and gratitude for a century of unwavering commitment to the ideals of the American Legion.

Nearly one hundred guests attended the dinner, including veterans from multiple eras, Legion family members, and distinguished community leaders. The guest list was a testament to the strong bonds Post 216 has built over the past century. Among those in attendance were Department Commander Judy Walters, District 8 Vice Commander Les Brauer, Detachment Commander Todd Kabella, Herman Post 274 Commander Shawn Globe, and Gretna Mayor Mike Evans.

A highlight of the night was the POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony, honoring those who never returned home from battle. The empty chair stood as a powerful symbol of absence and hope, reminding everyone that freedom is never free. Following this, the traditional Grog Ceremony with ingredients of water, whiskey, coffee, hot sauce, saltine crackers, dark beer, an energy drink and lemon juice. The ceremony brought both solemnity and camaraderie, weaving together history, humor, and honor — a cherished ritual that connects members across generations of service.

Throughout the hall, history tables displayed an extraordinary collection of memorabilia chronicling Post 216's 100-year journey. Guests looked over yellowed meeting minutes from the 1920s, early photographs of Gretna's first Legionnaires, old newspaper clippings, and plaques that told stories of service, sacrifice, and resilience. Many attendees saw their own family histories through the artifacts, recognizing names and faces that have shaped the Post's identity.

District 11 SAL Membership Award

By: Nathan Deke, District 11 Sons Membership Chairman

The 11th 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, 2025.

The District 11 Convention is scheduled to be held at the Beatrice Legion Post 27, on Saturday, March 21, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. 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 letters go to the correct person.

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, and 2024, Hebron 2023, and Fairmont 2025.

We would like to thank the 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 throughout all branches of The American Legion Family. 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 The American Legion Family, pass it on to get them involved.

Please remember that members of the Sons and Auxiliary are eligible for membership starting the day they are born. It is true that the Sons and Auxiliary have members with more years of continuous membership than their age. 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, you need to get them started immediately.



Straight Talk

Levi Bennett
Department Service Officer



Overcoming the Hesitation: Why Veterans Delay Filing VA Claims and How to Get Started

Many veterans delay filing for VA disability compensation or pension benefits for a variety of reasons. Some aren't sure if they qualify, while others have heard discouraging stories that "the VA just denies everyone the first time." Others assume their condition isn't severe enough or connected to their service. Unfortunately, the VA system's reputation for bureaucracy often makes the process seem intimidating.

Another common misconception is that filing a claim might take benefits away from another veteran in greater need. This couldn't be further from the truth. VA benefits are not a limited resource. Every eligible veteran has the right to apply, and one person's approval does not reduce the benefits available to others. The cost of military service does not end when the uniform comes off; our nation's commitment to its veterans continues long after service ends.

The most important step a veteran can take is to meet with an accredited Veteran Service Officer (VSO). This appointment is one every veteran should make. VSOs are trained to assist veterans in understanding eligibility, gathering documentation, and filing claims free of charge.

Delaying this meeting only postpones your access to earned benefits, allows service-related conditions to worsen, and increases the risk of losing critical records that could help prove your case.

Steps to Getting Started:

- Schedule an appointment with an accredited VSO. A VSO can guide you through the VA process and ensure your claim is filed correctly and efficiently.
- Gather your evidence. Collect service records, private medical records, and buddy statements. The strongest claims are "fully developed," meaning they provide evidence of an in-service event (injury or illness that occurred while on active duty), a current medical diagnosis, and a nexus (a medical opinion linking the two). It is best practice to include a personal Statement in Support of Claim (VA Form 21-4138) explaining how your condition is related to service, how it impacts your daily life, and if applicable how it has worsened over time.
- Attend your appointments and exams.

Your VSO will help you complete and electronically submit your claim to the VA. Once submitted, the VA may schedule a Compensation and Pension (C&P) exam to assess your condition. Be honest and thorough during this evaluation, underreporting your symptoms can lead to a lower rating or denial.

Tips to Avoid Common Mistakes:

- Don't downplay your symptoms. The VA bases disability ratings on how conditions affect your everyday life.
- Keep copies of everything. Maintain your medical records, claim forms, and correspondence.
- Seek assistance. Working with an accredited VSO increases your chances of success and ensures the correct documentation is filed.

Filing a VA claim can seem overwhelming, but it's not a process you have to face alone. Accredited VSOs are here to help every step of the way. Taking that first step today could mean securing the benefits and support you've earned through your service—for yourself and for your family.



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POW/MIA
Boyd Yochum
POW/MIA Liaison



Thomas Edwin Scheurich and his siblings; James, Betty and Beverly, grew up on a family farm near Norfolk, Nebraska, with their late parents Edwin and Margurite Scheurich. After graduating from Norfolk Junior College in 1953, Scheurich entered pre-flight Naval Air School in Pensacola, Florida. He was later stationed in Texas and Monterey, California where he earned his bachelor’s degree.

By the time the United States became involved in the Vietnam War, Scheurich had qualified to fly the A-6 Grumman Intruder all weather night attack jet. He was 35 years old when he applied for duty in Vietnam.

Lieutenant Commander Thomas E. Scheurich was a member of Attack Squadron 35 (VA-35), Carrier Air Wing 9, USS Enterprise, Task Force 77, 7th Fleet; embarked aboard the Enterprise. On March 1, 1968, he was the pilot of an A-6A Intruder with a crew of two, along with two other aircraft; that took off from the Enterprise on a strike mission against enemy targets northeast of Haiphong, 90 miles due east of Hanoi, North Vietnam. He radioed a location report five minutes from his intended target. Soon contact with his aircraft was lost, and the Intruder went missing for unknown reasons and was presumed lost over the Gulf of Tonkin, south-southeast of Cam Pha.

The other aircraft flying the mission, jettisoned their ordinance and commenced a search of the coast and target areas, but were unable to locate the missing aircraft and its crew. A search for a crash site on land or debris in the water revealed nothing. It seemed that Lt. Cmdr. Scheurich and LTJG Richard Lannon and their Grumman A6 were simply gone.

On April 28, 1978, 10 years after his plane went down, the Navy reported Scheurich, then a Lieutenant Commander, Killed in Action. He was later posthumously promoted to the rank of Captain.

After decades of investigation into the incident, yielding no results, a Joint Field Activity recovery team found non-diagnostic aircraft wreckage, life support equipment, and possible remains at a site in Ha Long Village, Van Don District, Quang Ninh Province. Evidence from the mission was added into the DPAA laboratory system in December 2024. Based on the laboratory analysis and total circumstantial evidence, the remains were identified as those of Scheurich.

May 27, 2025, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced that U.S. Navy Captain Thomas E. Scheurich, 34, killed during the Vietnam War, was accounted for April 23, 2025. At time of writing, Scheurich’s internment is scheduled at Arlington National Cemetery November 14, 2025.

Thomas Edwin Scheurich, Captain U.S. Navy, made the ultimate sacrifice while serving his country in the Vietnam War; and was accounted for after 57 years missing. He is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. His name is inscribed along with all his fallen Comrades on the Vietnam Memorial Wall, Panel 42E, Line 24; in Washington, D.C.



S.A.L. Notes
Todd Kabella
Detachment Commander



Greetings American Legion Family!

Membership renewals need to continue to be a priority. Our "membership renewal reward program" seems to be a success at this point because we are more than 1,000 renewals ahead of where we were last year at this time. Congratulations to our \$1,000 winner, Steve Dunse of Ohiowa Squadron #193. If your squadron missed out on the October 31st drawing, there will be another drawing after December 31st for \$250 that you can still qualify for. Squadron Commanders and Adjutants have been given the details of how the program works, so reach out to them for specifics.

Veteran suicide continues to be an extremely important issue, so don’t forget about the “Be The One” initiative. You can download the “Be The One” app if you have a smartphone. If you or someone you know needs help, remember that the crisis hotline number is 988 and if you are a veteran press 1.

When I hear Legion members make statements like “the SAL is just a program of the Legion” or refer to a SAL member as “just a Son” it bothers me. As a dual member myself, I am as proud to be a member of the SAL as I am of the service to my country that granted me the privilege to become a member of The American Legion.

The Sons of The American Legion (SAL) play a vital and irreplaceable role within The American Legion Family. Their loss would have a profound and lasting impact on the mission, membership, and community service efforts of The American Legion at every level.

The SAL provides a pathway for sons, grandsons, and male descendants of veterans to remain connected to the service and sacrifice of their family members. Without the SAL, The American Legion would lose a significant avenue for family involvement and future membership growth. The SAL also serves as a vital link between generations, instilling patriotism and service-minded values in younger family members who often become Legionnaires themselves.

SAL Squadrons contribute substantial financial support to Legion programs and community initiatives. Their fundraising efforts bolster activities such as the Child Well Being Foundation, Boys State and Boys Nation, scholarships, and veterans assistance programs. The loss of these contributions would reduce the Legion’s capacity to fund and sustain many of its longstanding commitments to veterans, youth, and communities.

The SAL provides countless volunteer hours to The American Legion and its local Posts. From supporting community events and ceremonies to assisting with Post maintenance and veterans outreach, SAL members are often the manpower behind the mission. Their absence would result in fewer hands to carry out the vital work of service that defines The American Legion.

The SAL helps preserve and extend the legacy of The American Legion through family engagement and community involvement. Without the Sons, The American Legion would lose a critical connection to future generations and diminish the broader reach of its mission to serve veterans, their families, and the nation.

The Sons of The American Legion cultivate future leaders who often go on to serve in key Legion Family roles. Their participation brings fresh ideas, energy, and a sense of continuity to the organization. The loss of the SAL would not only weaken the Legion’s leadership pipeline but also reduce the collective influence and unity of The American Legion Family.

The Sons of The American Legion are not simply a supporting organization — they are an essential component of The American Legion Family. Their service, dedication, and commitment strengthen the Legion’s mission at every level. The loss of the SAL would represent not just a reduction in membership, but a loss of legacy, leadership, and the shared spirit of service that has defined The American Legion for more than a century.

Candidate Announcement

Doug Frahm
Department Commander



Doug Frahm asks for your support in his bid for Commander Department of Nebraska. Doug lives in the small town of Amelia, Nebraska where he manages the family ranch and custom bales hay for his neighbors. He has a son Joesph, four step children, Robin, Jodie, Janet, and Aaron.

Doug’s community service includes serving as a Holt County Supervisor for eight years, Chairman of the Holt County Board of Equalization, Chairman of the Wyoming Township Board, local Church Trustee, past 911 Board Member, Central Nebraska Community Action Partnership Board member and is a member on the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Board.

Doug is a Vietnam Veteran having served in the USAF and ANG for a total of 27 years. After retiring in 2005, he Joined

The American Legion and has been a continuous member for 21 years. Doug is also a dual member belonging to Chambers Squadron 320. Doug has served as Chambers Post 320 Vice Commander, Post Commander, Membership Chairman and Chaplain. Department offices he has held include Holt County Commander, District 2 Commander (where he received both the Hard Charger and Citizenship award) and Area B Vice Commander. He has attended most Department Conventions and Mid-Year Conventions since 2008, serving on the Department Executive Committee for six years. Doug has also been a Department of Nebraska delegate to the National Conventions for the past seven years and has served as a National Security Council delegate. He is also Vice Chairman of the National Legislative Council and Second Vice President of The Boys State Foundation. In 2017 Doug was appointed Junior Shooting Sports Program Liaison and recently became the Chief Range Officer for the National Junior Shooting Sports Program. Doug also attended the National American Legion College and is a graduate of the class of 2017.

Doug’s goal is to work closely with the entire Department of Nebraska American Legion Family. He knows our Legion Family strength comes through our membership in the Legion, the Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion, and the Legion Riders. He also believes that the programs we support, and sponsor, are what makes us leaders in our Communities, State and Nation.

Doug will work closely with Department Leadership and Staff, to be an effective leader. He asks for your Support and your Vote in June for Commander Department of Nebraska.

Thank you for your Support!

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

**Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD's) Via
Required Minimum Distributions (RMD's) from your IRA**
Daniel Stramel, Finance Chairman

Greetings from your Department Finance Committee. This article was printed one year ago and is a repeat, by design. Department and the Finance Committee received numerous positive comments concerning the article and we feel it is pertinent each and every year to publish it. Charitable donations could be the lifeblood of our Department for supplemental cash flow needs in the future.

A QCD is a distribution from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or any “never been taxed” retirement account directly to a qualified charity. The Department of Nebraska is a qualified charity. You must be age 70 ½ or older to make a QCD. The qualified charity distribution is not taxed, nor is it included in your taxable income. And the good news: You don’t have to itemize your tax return to take advantage of a QCD.

Using your RMD as a charitable contribution to the Nebraska American Legion will exclude that amount from your adjusted-gross income (AGI) for the year, which means that in addition to reducing your income taxes, it could also decrease the amount of Social Security that is subject to tax and potentially lower your Medicare premiums. (You may be able to take a QCD from a Roth IRA, but there is no tax advantage.)

If this sounds like a strategy that could work for you, here are some things you need to know:

1. **Each person can donate the full amount of his or her RMD, up to a maximum of \$105,000 annually.** If you’re a married couple filing jointly and you each have your own IRA, you both can use the \$105,000 QCD rule.
2. **You should work with your IRA custodian to correctly accomplish a QCD.** Be careful not to withdraw the funds or deposit the RMD into your personal account and then write a personal check. The funds must be distributed directly from the IRA custodian to the charity. (Some IRA custodians mail the check to the IRA owner; if that’s the case for you, simply give the check to the charity.)
3. **Be sure to inform your tax preparer that you did a QCD.** Your IRA custodian will send you a 1099-R showing that the distribution occurred, but the amount may not be clearly identified as a QCD. Be sure the QCD is correctly listed on your tax return or you’ll lose the tax break.
4. **It’s permissible to use less than the full RMD for the charitable distribution.** So, for example, if you have an RMD of \$6,000 and you want to give only \$4,000 to charity, you still need to withdraw the remaining \$2,000 and pay taxes on it.
5. **You can make a QCD that exceeds your RMD for a given year.** However, that extra distribution can’t be carried over to meet the RMDs for future years.
6. **You can distribute the money to multiple charities if you choose.** The \$105,000 per person limit applies to the sum of all QCDs taken from all your IRAs in the tax year. You can make one large contribution or several smaller contributions to one or more charities.
7. **Donors cannot receive any benefit for making a qualified distribution to a charity.** So, for example, you can’t use a QCD to purchase something at a charity auction or tickets to a charity event.
8. **For a QCD to count toward your minimum annual IRA distribution, it must meet the same deadline as a normal distribution.** (Usually Dec. 31.)
9. **Not every organization or cause qualifies for a QCD.** The American Legion does qualify for a QCD.

If you’re already 70½ but the QCD strategy is new to you, be sure to discuss your specific situation and any questions with your financial advisor and/or your qualified tax professional. If you haven’t turned 70½ yet, it’s still worth having a conversation about how to prepare to take advantage of this strategy in the future.

I assume you all know where I am going with this. The American Legion Department of Nebraska is always looking for charitable donations. Our dues increase this year was to cover National dues increase as well as all expenses that continually increase. Our department is not exempt from the rising costs of doing business. When taking your RMD this year, or any year, please consider making a QCD to our department or your post to help in the financial liabilities of the Nebraska American Legion.

Again, be sure to discuss your specific situation and any questions with your financial advisor and/or your qualified tax professional concerning RMD’s and QCD’s.

For God and Country.

Membership Minute
Steve Bartos, Membership Chairman

The 2026 membership year has certainly gotten off to a better start than what we experienced last year. We’ve achieved and surpassed the 65% target a week or two prior to the mid-November target date. I’m confident that we will achieve the 75% Pearl Harbor target scheduled for December 9th. Thanks to everyone who has been active in promoting membership, collecting dues, and getting them transmitted.

We can’t fall asleep, though. Traditionally, Nebraska has performed well early in the membership campaign --- but then slows to a crawl after the first of the year. Let’s not let that happen.

While we’re off to a relatively good start, please keep in mind that the trend of our final membership numbers each year is downward. If we don’t recruit new members or reinstate enough former members to replace those who elect not to renew or enter the Post Everlasting, there is no way we can grow. And, to remain the important voice for veterans that we are, we really do need to grow.

Do the math. Nebraska has about 100,000 veterans eligible for membership in The American Legion. The national organization reports that our “market penetration” (the percentage of eligible members on our rolls) is just under 20%. That means there are about 80,000 Nebraska veterans eligible to be Legionnaires --- but are not currently members. Our task is to find them --- or do something to help them find us ---- and then change their status from “non-member” to “member.”

I certainly encourage every Post to initiate some recruiting activity to bring in new members. Be creative. Try something different. And be sure to share with us the things that prove to be productive,

While individual Posts can organize some recruiting projects, keep in mind that EVERY individual Legionnaire can also be a recruiter to help in the effort. Don’t be shy. Be proactive. If you have a relative, friend, or coworker who is a veteran, be sure to ask them to join us

Reinstatements are as good as “new” when it comes to growing our numbers. The good thing is that potential reinstatements are easier to find. Post Adjutants can easily use MyLegion to search Post records according to their “last paid year” of membership and create contact lists of former members. These lists can then be used by recruiters to touch base with the former members and invite them to rejoin The American Legion.

The Post Adjutant can also use MyLegion to identify the Legionnaires in your area who joined The American Legion as new members online or responded to a solicitation from the national headquarters. Those new members are placed in Post 500 and are immediately eligible to transfer into a local Post --- and are highly encouraged to do so. Contact them. If they have already paid their 2026 dues, they can transfer at no cost. If they haven’t paid, invite them to “renew and transfer” at the same time.

On behalf of the Department Membership Committee, I wish y’all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Have a nice December.



**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!**

ID Resolve From The LIT



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

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

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

District Convention Reminders

District Conventions will kick off in February and this is a reminder of the importance of these meetings. These conventions are where business is conducted for your District, new officers are elected, resolutions are voted on, and where Post members are able to hear what other Posts are doing.

A convention call will be sent to each Post Adjutant and Commander in the January Newsletter and it should be shared at the next regular meeting with all Post members. Conventions are for all Legionnaires - not just those selected as voting delegates. A delegate from each Post should be present so that a quorum is achieved. If less than 20% of Posts in the District are in attendance, no business can be conducted. It is vitally important for your District to have a quorum and to have people to run for the District offices. The dates for the District Conventions are listed on the Department website. Contact Adjutant Eric with questions.

Custer County Annual County Government Day

The Custer County American Legion Family held their County Government Day on November 17, 2025, in Broken Bow. There were 106 students in attendance and 24 American Legion Family members who helped facilitate the event. The students asked amazing questions of their County Officials. After lunch Senator Storer, their state representative, talked to them for a little over an hour and had them ask her questions.



County Commander Bill Schaad presented military coins to Ahren Finney from Broken Bow High School and Alexander James Goodner from Anselmo Merna High School to congratulate them on joining the military.



Students from the Custer County Schools learned about patriotism, Americanism, local government, and many other programs during their County Government Day.



County Commander Bill Schaad presented Ivan Phelps of Callway Post 59 with a plaque for best Post and Unit participation.



County Commander Bill Schaad introduced Senator Tanya Storer of Nebraska Legislative District 43.

The Bayard American Legion Riders would like to thank everyone for the support we received when we hosted the 2025 State Romp! Special thanks to: Bayard Legion Family, City of Bayard Employees, Bayard Police, Morrill County Sheriff Office, Chimney Rock Pioneer Days Committee, Bayard Fire Department, Bayard Auto, Jon’s Body Shop, Bayard VFW Honor Guard, Angie Hoff, Jonathan (Boys State Rep), Mayor Scot Ouderkirk, Kacie Clark, Cindy Bekkela-Biesanz, Valley Ambulance, Kevin Fowlkes, Shelly Bowlin, Joe Edwards, Tyler and Christina Stuart, KC Heath, Tiger Paws, Eirich Farms, Chris and Julie Miller, Sterling and Paula Hopkins, Kent Andreas, Chic Thomas, Gregg Wurdeman, Danny Weinreis, the businesses that hosted us along our East and West Routes, and of course to the Riders who attended from all over Nebraska! We enjoyed our time together and it was great getting to meet many of you!

2026 Department Convention
Make Your Reservations Now

The 2026 Department Convention will be held June 25 - 28 at the Quality Inn in Columbus. The DEC will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 25 and at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, June 26. The Joint Session will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, June 26 and the Legion Convention will begin at 3:00 p.m. and go through Sunday, June 28.

Business sessions of The American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, and Riders will all be held in the Columbus Quality Inn. Reach out to the respective organization for an agenda for the Convention.

The hotel is located at 265 33rd Avenue, Columbus. Rooms are \$112.95 a night plus tax. The last date to get reservations at the Legion rate is June 1 or when the reservation block is full. Call 402-564-1492 to make your reservation. The Convention Registration fee is \$10. For more information, please contact Adjutant Eric Martin.



Omaha Post 1 presented Quilts of Valor to its members. Pictured (L to R) Steve Busche, Richard Smith, Dave Smith, Department Commander Judy Walters, John Peterson, Commander Lennie Roth, and Roy Edwards.



Verdigre Post 259 presented Quilts of Valor to its members. Pictured (L to R) Ray Paesi, Bob Walton, Joshua Kinnison, Peggy Marcelo, Paul “Skip” Dittrick, and Derek Kinnison.

SOME OF NDVA'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2025

Honored Living World War II Veterans as part of “80 Years of Victory”

Expanded our State Veterans Service Office

Dedicated the Nebraska Veterans Cemetery at Grand Island

Held 3rd Annual Veterans Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic

Hosted 4th Annual Women Veterans Symposium

veterans.nebraska.gov

WE'RE HERE TO SERVE YOU!

NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Sacrifice.

VETERANS AFFAIRS



Abler, Gerald J., Wahoo, Korea
Akins, George R., Nehawka, WWII
Allgayer, Louie, Elmwood, Korea
Anderson, Sterling O., Stromsburg, Korea
Baker, Kevin, Stromsburg, Vietnam
Barone, Louis J. Jr., Millard, Vietnam
Bartunek, Dave A., South Omaha, SAL
Bayer, William R., Hooper, Vietnam
Bentley, Roy S., Gothenburg
Bermel, Arthur J., Randolph, Korea
Boardman, Larry, Grand Island, Vietnam
Bostelman, Dwayne C., Superior, Korea
Bowman, Roger B., Pawnee City, Vietnam
Boyer, Kenneth, Newport, Vietnam
Boysen, Harold R., Omaha, Vietnam
Brand, Duane O., Fremont, Korea
Brauer, Robert L., Utica, Vietnam
Bruns, Todd E., Dorchester, SAL
Buethe, Willis L., Elk Creek, Vietnam
Burritt, David C., Osceola, SAL
Burritt, Kenneth C., Osceola, Vietnam
Buss, Walter H., Sterling
Caman, Ralph A., Ord, Vietnam
Carlson, Lynn, Shickley, SAL
Clark, Dennis R., Alliance, Vietnam
Clevenger, Thomas A., Culbertson, Vietnam
Collins, Richard, Stromsburg, Vietnam
Cotant, Douglas A., Kearney, Vietnam
Coupe, John R., Lincoln, Korea
Dahlkoetter, Gerald W., Norfolk, Vietnam
Dakan, Wilber C., Havelock, Korea
Davids, Donald, Plainview, Korea
Deawlt, Ira M. Jr., Norfolk, Korea
Dorszynski, Dean M., Saint Paul, Vietnam
Drakulich, Donald E., Omaha, Vietnam
Dressen, LeRoy J., Norfolk, Korea
Duncan, Robert E., Wisner, Vietnam
Durst, Gerald D., Beatrice, Korea
Eastburn, Lee E., Arnold, SAL
Eaton, Larry L., Lincoln, Korea
Eden, Orville, Norfolk, WWII
Elliot, Loren D., Mullen, Vietnam
Ericson, John R., Loup City, SAL
Falconer, Thomas D., South Omaha, Vietnam
Flanders, Gary D., Bristow, Vietnam
Fleck, Arnold, South Sioux City, Vietnam
Focken, John, Sterling, Vietnam
Foltz, Jerome J., Humphrey, Korea
Frederick, Bill, Gering, Vietnam
Freeouf, Leonard, Wilber, WWII
Fullerton, David L., Superior, Vietnam
Garrett, Royce E., Crofton, Korea
Gellatly, Drue R., Vietnam
Genrich, Richard L., Beatrice, Vietnam
Gilsdorf, Earl O., Columbus, WWII
Glaser, Constance E., Fullerton, Vietnam
Glenn, Roger, Geneva, SAL

Gordon, Daniel L., Omaha, Vietnam
Hain, Richard F., Lincoln, Vietnam
Heaton, John E., Greeley, Vietnam
Hemsath, Delroy L., Laurel, Vietnam
Herman, Andre, Valparaiso, Vietnam
Hess, Irvin, Farnam, Korea
Hildebrand, Dale F., Central City, Korea
Hinrichs, Robert G., Grand Island, WWII
Hixson, Norman J., Bassett, Korea
Jackson, A. W. Jr., Ainsworth, WWII
Jahrmarkt, Larry, Hooper, Korea
Janzen, Homer, York, Korea
Jelden, Greg W., Wilcox, Vietnam
Johnson, Norman L., Uehling, SAL
Johnson, Paul L., Cambridge, Korea
Johnson, Ronald H., Spencer, Vietnam
Johnson, Tedd L., Paxton, Vietnam
Jorgensen, Bruce L., Wausa, Vietnam
Kafka, Joseph F., Beemer, Korea
Kalkwarf, Jerome, Hallam, Vietnam
Knispel, La Verne, Oconto
Kraft, Robert G., South Omaha, SAL
Kral, Paul E., Campbell, Korea
Kunze, Robert R., Palmer, Persian Gulf
Kurtz, Martin, Millard, Vietnam
Lemmerman, Doug, Palmer, SAL
Lind, Maruice, Lincoln, Korea
Madsen, James, Campbell, Vietnam
Mahoney, Leo D., Saint Edward, Korea
Malone, Curtis S., Ainsworth, SAL
Malousek, Leroy F., Aurora, Vietnam
Marr, Dale L., Beatrice, Vietnam
Mathers, Daniel J., Arthur, Vietnam
McConville, Robert J. Sr., Indianola, Korea
McIntosh, Eugene L., Grand Island, Lebanon/Grenada
Mears, Grant A., South Sioux City, Vietnam
Meier, Wayne K., Petersburg
Mellick, Arnold J., Jackson, Vietnam
Meyer, Albert J., Palmer, Korea
Miller, Wilfred H., Superior, Korea
Minds, Everett C., Pilger, Korea
Minton, Larry E., O'Neill, Korea
Moeller, Albert, Grand Island, Vietnam
Morris, Jerry W., Lincoln, Vietnam
Myers, Jerry K., Gretna, Vietnam
Nelson, Roger A., Oakland, Vietnam
Nelson, Stuart C., Battle Creek, Korea
Neuhaus, Allan H., Grand Island, Vietnam
Noland, David L., Lisco
North, Loring L., Creighton, Vietnam
O'Hern, Barney, Palmer, Korea
Ohnoutka, Ronald C., Weston
Oosting, Merl H. Sr., Hickman, Korea
Osterhaus, Richard D., DeWitt, Vietnam

Ovalle, Alfredo, Hershey, Vietnam
Perina, Lambert, Leigh, WWII
Perlinger, Raymond V., Paxton, Korea
Peters, Royce, Elk Creek, Vietnam
Phillips, Kim, Pleasanton, WWII
Phillips, Larry E., Fullerton, Korea
Picard, Charles, Geneva, Korea
Powers, David J., Paxton, SAL
Prather, Michael A., Madison, SAL
Pudwill, Myron L., Lincoln, Vietnam
Rauert, Glenn, Aurora, Vietnam
Ray, Anthony H. F., South Omaha, Vietnam
Reichwein, Robert F., Omaha, Vietnam
Reinsch, Brandon W., Geneva, SAL
Renken, Rodney J., Geneva, SAL
Rico, Ruben J., Nebraska City, Vietnam
Riley, Ronald D., Grand Island, Vietnam
Rivera, John, Omaha, Vietnam
Robak, John A., Omaha, Vietnam
Rockey, Vernon C., Crawford, Korea
Rogers, Ronald C., Craig, Korea
Rona, Mark M., Holdrege, Korea
Ross, Larry R., Papillion
Schledewitz, John E. Jr., North Platte, Vietnam
Schreiner, Lauren, Bennet, Korea
Schroder, Joy W., Palmyra
Schulz, Gary L., Wisner
Seilhan, John, Utica, Vietnam
Sheets, Duane, Brewster, Korea
Smith, Bobbie D, Arnold, SAL
Snyder, Richard S., Lincoln, WWII
Steinbach, Jack, Sargent, Vietnam
Stolp, Kenneth, Verdigre, Korea
Stratman, Raymond, Clay Center, Vietnam
Sundberg, Lurette, Polk, Korea
Tullis, Edward A., Arnold, SAL
Valasek, Verden R., Lincoln, Korea
Vanamberg, David L., Campbell, Vietnam
Vang, Carl D., Palmer
Vang, Raymond L., Saint Paul, Vietnam
Vogt, Clifford D., Big Springs, Korea
Vogt, Kenneth L., Plymouth
Wallman, Leroy, Adams, Vietnam
Wamberg, Dale, Wausa
Warner, Milton, Omaha, WWII
Watts, Corey, Osceola, SAL
Webb, Duane E., Edison, WWII
Welch, Darrel G., Palmyra, Korea
Welch, Ronald L., Milford, Vietnam
White, Russel, Burwell, Korea
Wight, Donald C., Bartley, WWII
Wiley, Donald J., Gordon, Vietnam
Wilson, Woodrow T., Omaha, Korea
Wooters, Eldon W., Lincoln, Vietnam
Wurdeman, Weylin J., Bayard, Vietnam
Yost, Laverne G., Harvard, Korea
Young, Max L. Jr., Columbus, Vietnam
Zegers, David L., David City, Vietnam
Zulkoski, Edmund A., Ord, WWII

Correction: Douglas A. Smith of Carleton is alive and well.

Events Calendar

December

24 - 26 Christmas - Office Closed
31 New Years - Office Closed

January

1 - 2 New Years - Office Closed
16 - 18 Mid-Year Conference - Norfolk
19 MLK Jr Day - Office Closed

February

16 President's Day - Office Closed

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

Mail Call

Dear American Legion Department of Nebraska,

Thank you so much for choosing me to be the recipient of the Maynard Jensen Memorial Scholarship! My family has been active in our local chapter for nearly a century, so I take the granting of this scholarship with great honor. From me and all of my family here at Cedar Bluffs Post 158, thank you!

Sincerely,
Emersyn Shanahan

Dear American Legion,

Thank you so much for the scholarship! It will definitely help as I move onto college in Wayne. I am majoring in nursing and plan to work in pediatrics. The scholarship money will be put to good use.

Thank you again,
Bree Geschke

Dear American Legion,

Thank you for graciously gifting me the Maynard Jensen American Legion Scholarship! I really appreciate it.

Sincerely,
Brookly Richardson

Dear American Legion Scholarship Committee,

Thank you for selecting me to be a recipient of this scholarship. I am very blessed and honored! I am very excited to head to Northeast in the fall while pursuing my love for animals! Once again, thank you for this honor!

Sincerely,
Keila Dubas

Sons of The American Legion Membership As of November 15, 2025

District	2025 Members	2026 Members
1	299	168
2	564	267
3	237	120
4	341	66
5	138	37
6	1,317	753
7	785	396
8	856	518
9	289	132
10	303	70
11	1,005	529
12	257	113
13	126	42
15	133	127
Total	6,650	3,338



Morse Bluff Post 340 received a generous donation from the family of Norman A. Kavan, a 72-year member of The American Legion. Pictured center is Post Commander Galen Johnson.



Howells Post 155 presented certificates of continuous membership to its members. Pictured (L to R) Richard Dostal, 70 years, Dan Hegemann, 50 years, and Eugene Hegemann, 50 years.



Steele City Post 349 presented Quilts of Valor to its members. Pictured (L to R) Lori Knobel, Cindy Furrow, Travis Graff, Ed Goeking, and Donavon Fox.



Falls City Post 102 member and former Richardson County Veterans Service Officer Mona Godemann was presented a Quilt of Valor. Pictured center is Mona.



Butte Post 51 presented the Ponca Creek Living Facility Administrator Anita Mathine with a check for \$10,000 to assist in reopening the facility in their community. The Legion volunteers held a soup supper fundraiser to raise these funds. Pictured are members of the Butte American Legion Post and Anita Mathine.



The District 3 American Legion Family held their annual fundraiser on October 26th. These donations went towards the activities fund at the Norfolk Veterans Home. Pictured (L to R) District 3 Finance Officer Randy Lukken, NVH Activities Specialist Mary Swensen, NVH Activities Supervisor Stephanie Eckert, and District 3 Adjutant Ken Hanel.



The Custer County American Legion Family honored the Legion and Sons Member of the Year at their meeting. Pictured top (L to R) Legion Member of the Year Mike Harvey of Arnold Post 130 and County Commander Bill Schaad. Pictured bottom (L to R) Sons Member of the Year Wayne Belew of Callaway Squadron 59 and County Commander Bill Schaad.



Potter Post 291 presented Quilts of Valor to its members. Pictured top (L to R) Commander Jerry Steele and Dale Dedic and his family. Pictured bottom (L to R) Chad D. Steele, Ronald Bolin, and Stacey Bolin.



Hickman Post 105 presented Quilts of Valor made by Rosy Hoge to its members. Pictured (L to R) John F. Ayers Jr., Rosy Hoge, and Terrie Spohn.



The District 8 American Legion held their fourth annual Omaha Youth Academy with the Omaha Police Department. These Omaha metro students learn about the Omaha Police and what they do for the local community.



Norfolk Chapter 16 donated an upper body exerciser to the Norfolk Veterans Home. Pictured (L to R) Joe Mandl, ALR Director Dennis Bretschneider, Ron Miller, Les Kubes, NVH Physical Therapist Lizzy Ruitenber, LaRee Kubes, and Charlie Menke.



Auburn Post 23 and Unit 23 participated in a community breakfast with the local FBLA students to honor veterans on Veterans Day. Legion members shared their stories and Auxiliary members sold honor bracelets to support the county veterans aid fund. Pictured front row (L to R) Lilly Grier, Katie Harris, and Commander Kenny Holmes. Pictured back row (L to R) Anna Schlange, Karlito Holthus, Jim Kuper, Gene Mace, and VSO Jim Reed.

AMERICANISM

Hello to my American Legion Auxiliary family. Hopefully, everyone is doing well and is getting ready for the winter months.

I would like to begin with some information I gathered from the National Americanism Zoom meeting on October 28th. We were informed that some information was added to the Americanism essay. There is a second page with rules that they want the children to follow --- and how the units should judge the essays with a point system. Sorry for the inconvenience, but they just came out with this at the beginning of that week. You can find this information on the Nebraska website or the National Americanism website.

Some other things they brought up in the zoom meeting were that they would like to know somethings from each state, district, or unit about what is being planned to celebrate America's 250th Birthday --- like a picnic, parades, etc. If anyone is doing anything for the 250th, please let me know by email

because the National Chairman is curious to know how everyone is going to celebrate our Nation's Birthday.

Another thing that she was wondering is if the American Legion Auxiliary is doing something for American Legion Family Day, which is the last Saturday in April. If your unit is doing anything, please take group and action pictures so I can send them to her for use on the big screen at the National Convention. Please and Thank You.

Americanism Trivia:

Q: Who was the first person to creatively design the American Flag with 50 stars on it?

Answer: Robert G. Heft.

Q: In what year was it designed?

Answer: 1958.

Q: From which state did the design come?

Answer: Ohio.

Cie Kauth
Americanism Chair

IT'S SCHOLARSHIP TIME!

The 2026 Nebraska Scholarship applications are now available on the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary website: www.nebraskalegionaux.net. Simply click on the "Committees and Programs" tab, then on the "Education" link, and scroll down. Forms are now fillable!



- The completed application (including requested documents) must be submitted to and received by your local American Legion Auxiliary Unit by March 1, 2026.
- The local Unit scholarship selection must be submitted to the Department Headquarters on or before March 15, 2026.
- ALA Units should make certain that all requested letters and documents are enclosed and completed properly with the application to the Department Headquarters.
- Individual students are welcome to apply for multiple ALA Nebraska scholarships; however, each American Legion Auxiliary Unit may submit ONLY

ONE individual student per Department Scholarship.

- One scholarship application will be chosen from the local Unit to be submitted to the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary Department Headquarters for final judging and awarding.

ALA Department of Nebraska Scholarships:

All ALA Department of Nebraska scholarship applications and criteria can be found at www.nebraskalegionaux.net/scholarships

- **Nebraska ALA Memorial Scholarship \$500**
- **Healthcare Professional Scholarship \$500**
- **Career And Technical Education Scholarship \$500**

ALA National Scholarships:

All National scholarship applications and specific criteria to apply can be found at

www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships

- **Children Of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship \$5,000**
- **Spirit Of Youth Scholarship \$1,000**
- **Member Loyalty Scholarship \$2,500**
- **Non-Traditional Student Scholarship \$2,000**

Cindy Moore
Education Chair

EDUCATION REPORTS

Units - Please send me a report on what you have been doing for Education so I can include it in my Mid-Year Report.

Please submit before 12/31/25.

Email: GretnaALA216@gmail.com



The residents of the VA hospital in Grand Island enjoyed their Halloween-themed Bingo session. Families were invited to attend to enjoy the themed punch and to decorate graham crackers as monsters. Approximately 20 residents and six Legion Family members enjoyed celebrating the fall season.

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

2026 CENTERPIECE AND TRAY FAVOR ASSIGNMENTS

Month	Grand Island VA Med Center 10 Centerpiece	Central NE Veterans Home 215 Tray Fav	Bellevue Eastern NE VA Home 24 Centerpiece	Norfolk VA Home 20 Centerpiece	Western NE VA Home 13 Centerpiece	Western NE VA Home 90 Tray Fav	Omaha VA Med Center 75 Tray Fav
Jan.	#16 Norfolk	#285 North Loup			#57 Hyannis	#133 Culbertson	
Feb.	#250 Oconto	#209 Franklin	#27 Beatrice	#7 Humphrey	#13 Wallace	#13 Wallace	
Mar.	#335 Davenport	#290 Elwood		#70 West Point	#17 Sidney	#17 Sidney	#232 Malmo
Apr.	#251 Arcadia	#337 Wilcox			#7 Alliance	#7 Alliance	
May	#126 Broken Bow					#133 Culbertson	
June				#175 Jackson	#312 Broadwater	#312 Broadwater	
July				#283 Platte Center	#7 Alliance	#301 Dalton	
Aug					#12 Chadron	#12 Chadron	
Sep.	#288 Farnam			#283 Platte Center			#354 Pleasant Dale
Oct.	#257 Eustis	#52 Kearney	#27 Beatrice			#160 Wilcox	#232 Malmo
Nov.			#27 Beatrice		#57 Hyannis	#57 Hyannis	
Dec.		#288 Farnam	#27 Beatrice		#145 Bloomington		#27 Beatrice

Some facilities have restrictions as to what you can use for decorations.
If you have any questions, please contact the facilities contact person.

Service to Veterans Chair: Maria Atterberry, 704 Rochelle St, Elwood, NE 68937 · 308-325-2863



Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home Administrator Matt Bauman addresses the veterans and families at their Veterans Day ceremony.



Hallam Auxiliary Unit 294 members Beth Navratil and Linda Stones visited Tabitha and The Gardens in Crete on Veterans Day and presented cards to the resident veterans in both facilities.



Pictured with Unit Treasurer Beth Navratil are: Roy Jensen, who served 29 years with the Nebraska Air National Guard, and Dr. Richard Jirovec, DDS, who served in the Air Force. Both are residents of Tabitha in Crete.

LEADERSHIP

I would like a submission for each award from each unit this year. Also, plan to attend the Mid-Year Conference for examples and to learn about the members who help lead our department.

The Unit Member of the Year Award (can get national recognition). This award recognizes those serving at the unit level who exemplify the values and ideals of the Auxiliary and whose accomplishments significantly impact the program work in their units.

Requirements: Open to senior members who are not currently, nor have ever been, in an elected or appointed leadership role higher than unit president. Submit a narrative of

1,000 words or fewer. Describe the nominee's accomplishments and activities, and include the nominee's name and address.

For the other award --- the Unit Mentor of the Year (will be recognized at department level only), the submission is the same. But, for someone who has been a good mentor and has held an office higher than unit president.

The deadline for both awards to department is April 15th via email: trnelson81602@gmail.com.

Tina Nelsen
Leadership Chair

SWANTON

The Swanton American Legion Auxiliary birthday "picnic" party we held on July 13th for our Legion members. We honored all of the Legion members with continuous membership certificates.

We also honored several Auxiliary members for their continuous years of service. Elsie Woerner (20 years), Susie Homolka (40 years), Katherine Chaney (60 years) and Linda Kastanek (75 years).



Pictured (L-R) are: Judy Dittmer, Susie Homolka, Linda Kastanek, and Barb Vales. Also pictured is Linda's granddaughter, Sylvia Placek, who is a Junior member of Swanton Unit 258.

WYMORE

Wymore American Legion Auxiliary Unit 25 officers Joy Tennant, Pam Gerdes, and Gloria Henderson are shown presenting two new books --- "We Also Served: True Stories of Brave Animals in the Military" and "The Poppy Lady: Moina Belle Michael and Her Tribute to Veterans" --- to Wymore Public Librarian Austin Jackson. The books were provided as a project of the Auxiliary for American Education Week, November 17-21, 2025.



A LITTLE BIT OF THIS AND THAT

Where do I begin? AEF? Girls State? Interim Treasurer? The title of my article tells it all --- a little bit of this and that!

Remember that the **Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF)** is a year-round fundraising program for members helping members. I am repeating information I shared in the November Newsletter so that ALL members know about a way you can donate to the AEF. (You can see my complete article on the website along with the whole November Newsletter.)

On the national website (alaforveterans.org) under the AEF Committee link, there is a "DONATE" link. This allows you to donate electronically. You set up the amount and frequency. Please note there are five different donations from which you can choose. By selecting "Auxiliary Emergency Fund," your donation is credited to you, your Unit, and our Department; and it helps your fellow ALA members when they are in need. Please consider using this simple option to help build the National AEF Fund.

The **Girls State** Fall Planning Meeting was held on November 1 at Department Headquarters. We had eleven in attendance and two via ZOOM. That accounted for 153 years of Girls State experience!!

With a full agenda, the meeting lasted five hours. Some highlights included the approval of the budget based on 350 delegates; sharing a short video from the week with the schools; using the names of prominent Nebraska women for the town floor names; having the girls complete a daily survey (to help provide a more accurate evaluation

of the week), and to encourage units to send in complete applications for both a delegate and any alternates (this would allow a bank of possible delegates to be created for filling any vacancies).

That brings me to the **Interim Department Treasurer** position. It has been two months since I agreed to be the temporary treasurer. By definition, "temporary" is "lasting for only a limited period of time; not permanent." "Interim" means temporary --- signifying a temporary or transitional period.

The position has been posted in the last issue of this paper and on the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary Facebook page and website. To date, no one has applied. This concerns me. I remember how long it took us to fill the Secretary position, and it occurred only after we split the Secretary/Treasurer position.

How can we fill this position? Do you have questions about the job? We are open to any suggestions or ideas on making this position a one that someone would be interested in. Just give us a call at the office. The number is 402-466-1808. I refer you back to the title "Interim." I will do my best to keep the treasurer office running (with the help of Eileen and Julie), but I do know the time I need to complete my other chairs, especially Girls State. Therefore, help me make it a "limited period of time."

I wish everyone the blessings of the upcoming holiday season, and I hope to see you in Norfolk for the Mid-Year Conference in January.

Vicki Ozenbaugh



Gibbon ALA Unit 310 donated Pocket Constitutions to the Government class at Gibbon Public High School. President Lynelle Oliver is pictured with Government instructor Jacob Miller.



At the St. Paul Unit #119 Membership Tea, members celebrated Vange Obermiller. Unit President Char Schmid presented Vange a 60-year pin.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DONNA!

Our longtime friend and Sutton Auxiliary Unit 61 member Donna Bauer turned 100 on October 21st. So amazing.

A few Auxiliary members got together and presented Donna with her 75-year Continuous Membership Certificate to celebrate her long-term membership as part of her 100th birthday celebration.

Donna is the last surviving member of the "Trio" who sang at many American Legion Auxiliary competitions starting in 1965. In addition to Donna, members included in the "Trio" were Shirley Syring and Kay (Wach) Batt. All 3 singers were members of the Sutton American Legion Auxiliary



KEEP THIS PARTY GOING



The Good News we can all celebrate is that we have had some exciting weeks

with Nebraska at the top of the Northwestern Division and third nationally with 63.93% membership by American Legion Auxiliary Birthday of November 10th. The GOAL was 60%. THANK YOU for making this happen.

If you follow the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary Facebook page, you know this already. We currently have 176 units above 60%, and 5 units have 100% membership. They are Bloomington 121.43%, Winside 106.82%, Winnebago 103.37%, Clearwater 100%, and Colon 100%.

With the goal comes another drawing --- this time for \$60. The Wallace Unit #213 of District 5

was selected. They currently have 72.5% of their membership goal. Congratulations to you!!!

The not-so-good news is we still have five units with zero members --- and three of them thinking of packing it up. Eight units have only one membership recorded.

Just a note for units that hold dues: if memberships are not recorded by December 31, they are considered delinquent and members no longer have continuous membership status. If their dues are not recorded by December 31, members are not eligible for Auxiliary Emergency Fund grants (3 years continuous membership), Juniors are not eligible for the Spirit of Youth or for the college student Member Loyalty Scholarships (3 years continuous membership), and you are not eligible for leadership positions, membership benefits, or able to vote.

Our next Goal is 85% by March 15. We need to do this so that our Department can be considered for the Merit Medallion. We earned it last year and want to be eligible again. Thanks to every unit that made this GOAL a reality.

- 1. District 3 - Novak 73.27%,
- 2. District 2 - Janovec 69.29%,
- 3. District 11- Coffey 66.67%,
- 4. District 7 - Patras 65.85%,
- 5. District 5 - Crawford 64.92%,
- 6. District 12 - Nabor 64.55%,
- 7. District 13 - Albers 64.45%,
- 8. District 1 - Vackiner 64.20%,
- 9. District 8 - Brauer 61.37%,
- 10. District 9 - Bennett 61.10%,
- 11. District 4 - Poley 59.57%,
- 12. District 6 - Dorsey 59.41%,
- 13. District 10 - Tuttle 55.75%

Deb Albers
Membership Chairman

QUILTS OF HONOR— GRETNA

Two years ago, Gretna ALA Unit 216 created a new project to honor and serve veterans --- the "Quilts of Honor" program. The unit, in cooperation with friends, family, and church members, embarked on a mission to make lap quilts for local patriots and present them on Veterans Day. There were several different patriotic quilt designs. However, each included a special label thanking the veterans for their service, along with each veteran's name and presentation date.



On Tuesday, November 11, 2025, six members of the Gretna Auxiliary traveled to four retirement/assisted living facilities to present 21 quilts to new veterans during Veterans' Day celebrations. Many of the veterans who received quilts in the past thanked the Auxiliary for their generosity and said they use them frequently. The quilt presentations were the highlight at all of the events.



This year, employee veterans at the facilities were presented with a 3' x 5' American flag and a flag etiquette book. Everyone in attendance enjoyed receiving a poppy.

WINSIDE 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Roy Reed American Legion Auxiliary Unit 252 of Winside celebrated the unit's 100th anniversary on November 1, 2025. The unit first formed on June 25, 1925 at the request of the members of the Roy Reed American Legion Post 252. At that point, the request to Charter an ALA Unit began with the final signatures of the Department of Nebraska ALA President and Secretary being affixed to the official Charter on October 30, 1925.

There were 37 ladies who were charter members. Throughout the 100 years, the highest membership was at 74; and today the unit is operating with 49 members. LeNell Quinn, Winside, one of our new members, created poppy corsages for our unit officers.

During the celebration, a couple of certificates were awarded by Unit President Laura Novak. One such certificate went to the unit's

101-year-old member, Kathleen 'Katie' Bleich, of Norfolk, who is a 60-year member. Katie will receive her 60-year pin at the 2026 Memorial Day program. Members of Katie's family were present to celebrate her 60-year membership, including daughter Carol Swanson of Beemer, great-grandson Collin, daughter Claire Brogren, and son-in-law Rod Brogren. Katie received a poppy corsage for her 60 years.

Laura, as Third District President, awarded the unit a certificate of achievement for having reached the 100% goal and better by the time of our celebration. She will formally present the certificate at the Third District Convention on March 14, 2026 in Bancroft. The final certificate was presented to Unit Historian Beverly Neel, who compiled and displayed the records/minutes of the past 100 years.

The birthday cake was beautiful

and delicious, created by Carmie Marotz of Winside. The Winside Sons of the American Legion provided homemade ice cream, with The American Legion ordering the cake.

The attendees were able to share memorable moments and experiences as an ALA member. It was an enjoyable afternoon. Thank you to all who came out to help us celebrate. A surprise was News Channel Nebraska showing up and taking in the sights and sounds of the celebration. Thank you.



CHAPLAINS CORNER

“Look not mournfully into the past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the present. It is thine. Go forth to meeting the shadowing future without fear and with a manly heart.” — Longfellow

Here we are at the end of a year and the beginning of a year. We learn from our past and can improve on the future. New Year’s Day is a tradition of resolutions, but how can we achieve these

resolutions? Different things work for different people. Maybe at your next gathering, discuss ways others get things accomplished.

Things I have heard about include: charting – timers – support systems – self-discipline – rewards for making small targets – some sort of accountability.

As children going to school in the 50s and 60s, we worked hard for stars on our papers. It was so

exciting.

Remember gratitude and celebrating, even in the small things. WE HAVE MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR. These things can change our perspective.

Thanks to the Father who wants to give us good things to help us and sustain us. Amen.

Vicki Colson
Chaplain

CONTINUOUS MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATES

Continuous Membership Certificates were awarded after a regular meeting of Stuart Auxiliary Unit 115 on October 1, 2025. Twenty members celebrated anniversaries this year, ranging from 15 to 70 years.

Four members were in attendance to receive certificates. Pictured (L-R) are Loretta Gill - 25 years; Marilyn Miksch - 65 years; Theodora Kohle - 70 years; and

Lavonne Boes - 50 years.

Also in attendance to help with the celebration were: Back Row (L-R) Raylene Ertz, Lois Kaup, Daisha Roberts, and Kayli Dobias. Middle Row (L-R) Edith Steinhauser, Ronda Stolcpart, Loretta Gill, Judy Wallinger, Linda Minchow, and Mary Krysl. Front Row (L-R) Lavonne Beck, Marilyn Miksch, Theodora Kohle, and Lavonne Boes.



WANT TO SERVE ON A NATIONAL ALA COMMITTEE?

The application process for 2026-2027 national committee appointments is open through Jan. 1, 2026! National committee chairs and members are appointed annually and confirmed by the National Executive Committee to serve on a wide variety of ALA committees for you to explore. All members are eligible to apply. Learn more by reading the ALA blog:

<https://www.legion-aux.org/Blog/Apply-today!-2026-2027-ALA-national-committee-appl>

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 JANUARY 10, 2025.



In Memoriam

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Raise Right

The gift giving season

GIFT CARD

is upon us! Remember the Department's Fundraising program? Raise Right - where there is a wide variety of businesses that you can purchase a gift card to give (or use yourself) and the ALA receives a percentage from the business. Visit the Nebraska website to start your holiday shopping or call the office for assistance.

Luther Recognition

216 combined years of service!

Julie Schmale – 41 years
Elaine Luther – 76 years
Kathy Bloch – 50 years
Susan Luther – 49 years



Elaine became a member of the Auxiliary when her husband Jack was a member of the American Legion. They have five children, Julie, Kathy, Susan, Paul, and John. Their grandfather Howard served in WWI as well. Service runs deep in their family. The American Legion Auxiliary Unit #18 thanks your family for 216 combined years of Auxiliary service and look forward to many more.

We salute you!

We want to wish Elaine a Happy 100th Birthday!
Elaine turned 100 on September 24th, 2025. Hope you had the best day!

DATES TO REMEMBER

DECEMBER

- 7 Pearl Harbor Day
- 24-25 Christmas Holiday - Department Headquarters Closed
- 31 New Year’s Eve Holiday - Department Headquarters Closed

JANUARY

- 1 New Year’s Day - Department Headquarters closed
- 10 Articles due for the February/March issue
- 16-18 Mid-Year Education Conference – Norfolk Lodge and Suites – Norfolk
- 19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - Department Headquarters closed

FEBRUARY

- 1 Four Chaplains Sunday
- 14 Valentine’s Day
- 16 Presidents Day – Department Headquarters Closed

FOR YOUR ADVANCED PLANNING

- May 31 – June 6, 2026 ALA Cornhusker Girls State – Lincoln, NE
- June 25-28, 2026 Department Convention, Columbus, NE
- August 21-27, 2026 National Convention, Louisville, KY

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

I am a Christian woman, but I have dealt with a number of patients over the years who either don’t believe in God, or --- maybe they do --- but don’t pray. I see a higher level of anxiety in these patients, and they are reticent to share their feelings on where they go when their earthly life is over.

I have learned to share an exercise with them to help calm their minds and, eventually, their spirits. I ask them to give me a list of things for which they are grateful. Kids, pets, good memories, and friends, usually make the list. When I sense

anxiety in them, I often pull out that list and ask them to elaborate on their blessings. Immediately, I see a release of tension. Once they can tell me their blessings, they can share more of their fears.

This, my friends, is a precursor to prayer.

Music works in much the same way. The old spiritual “This Old House” is a wonderful ice breaker to talk about the memories of a house (life) and watching it crumble (death) and giving it all to God.

What are your “go-to” songs to relieve stress? Mine is Bob Seger’s

“Against the Wind.” It reminds me that what I thought was hard times 45 years ago didn’t last, and I have a 100% survival rate of bad days. A Capella hymns fill my cup when I’m sad, and my guilty mellow pleasure is John Denver.

Holidays require tender loving care. Count your blessings, my friends. And never give up on music, because it will never leave you.

Keep Singing!

Jean Vackiner
Music Chair