

# Legionnaire

Volume C

Number 4



## “Be The One” Proclamation



Several Legionnaires witnessed Governor Jim Pillen signing the Proclamation for the “BE THE ONE” Year initiative. Proclamation reads as follows:

WHEREAS, The American Legion was chartered by Congress on September 16, 1919, as a wartime veterans organization based on the four pillars of veteran’s affairs and rehabilitation, national security, Americanism, and children & youth; and WHEREAS, The American Legion has existed for more than 100 years to enhance the well-being of America’s veterans and their families; and WHEREAS The American Legion in Nebraska is comprised of four areas further divided into 14 districts with 351 community posts consisting of 27,000 proud Nebraska Legionnaires; and WHEREAS, The number one issue today facing those who served is veteran suicide; and WHEREAS, The American Legion launched its

“Be the One” Campaign to encourage American Legion family members, veterans, servicemembers, and others to act when they believe a veteran is at risk of suicide; and WHEREAS, The “Be the One campaign destigmatizes asking for mental health support by 1.) creating opportunities for those with mental health issues to speak freely and get the support they need, 2.) providing peer-to-peer support and resources in local communities, and 3.) deploying FDA-approved therapeutics for veterans to identify issues and find resources for support; and WHEREAS, The stigma associated with mental health issues is a barrier to veterans seeking assistance which must be eradicated; and WHEREAS The American Legion urges veterans and patriotic Americans to reach out to a veteran in order to ‘Be the One’ and save a life.

NOW THEREFORE, I Jim Pillen, Governor of the State of Nebraska, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM, January 1 through December 31, 2024, as “BE THE ONE” Year in Nebraska, and I do hereby urge all citizens to take due note of the observance. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand, and cause the Great Seal of the State of Nebraska to be affixed this twelfth day of February, in the year of our Lord Two Thousand twenty-four.” Signed by Secretary of State, Robert B. Evnen and Governor Jim Pillen.

### 2024 Department Convention Location Change Make your reservations now

The 2024 Department Convention will be held June 20 - 23 at the Holiday Inn in Kearney. This is a change in location from the information previously sent out. The DEC will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 20 and at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, June 21. The Joint Session will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, June 21 and the Legion Convention will begin at 4:00 p.m. and go through Sunday, June 23.

The Holiday Inn is located at 110 Second Avenue. Rooms are \$149.95 a night. Call the hotel at 308-237-5971 to make your reservation. Do not book your room online or use the toll free number, or you will not get the Legion rate.

The Convention registration fee is \$10. Delegate and Alternate cards will be mailed to the Post Adjutant in May. Be sure to bring the signed card for registration. Contact Adjutant Salak with any questions about the Convention.

### From the Desk of the Department Adjutant

#### DUES INCREASE!

At the 2023 National Convention in Charlotte, the convention body voted for a \$5.00 National dues increase that will go into effect on July 1, 2024. The last National dues increase was back in 2016. At our Department Convention in Kearney in June of 2024, it is highly likely a Department dues increase resolution is going to be voted on as well. This should not be a surprise to anyone as the Finance Officer briefed it to the convention body at our 2023 Department Convention in Kearney. The last Department dues increase came in 2018.

I understand no one likes dues increases but these minor increases are needed from time-to-time.

### FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

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

### THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

2024 MEMBERSHIP GOAL: 23,418 MARCH 15 TH TOTAL: 21,280 – 90.87%

DISTRICT 1 - 99.20%	DISTRICT 15 - 94.31%	DISTRICT 8 - 92.68%	DISTRICT 7 - 92.09%	DISTRICT 5 - 90.78%
DISTRICT 12 - 90.77%	DISTRICT 2 - 90.47%	DISTRICT 3 - 90.40%	DISTRICT 13 - 89.24%	DISTRICT 6 - 89.10%
DISTRICT 11 - 88.89%	DISTRICT 10 - 87.06%	DISTRICT 4 - 85.95%	DISTRICT 9 - 82.89%	





## Commander's Corner

**John-Henry Percy**  
**Department Commander**



I have finished up nine months of duty as your Department Commander. I have enjoyed it tremendously. I will continue providing the best leadership over the last three months of my tenure. I want to thank all the Legionnaires, Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion members that made the trip to the Washington D.C. Conference in February. I want to especially thank our National Executive Committeeman Fred Craigie for doing a great job informing our Senators what our legislative priorities are.

I was personally unable to make it due to an accident. Now for the real story about my accident that has put me down for 10 weeks. I am sure most of you learned in elementary school how to chew gum and walk at the same time. Well, I must have been out of class that day. For my knee gave out on the way home from a trip and I fell ... not once; but twice, breaking my left ankle in two places. So, please do not offer me any gum.

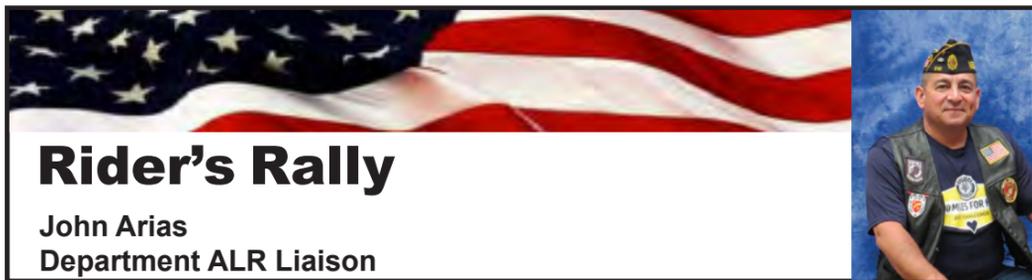
Our National Commander Daniel Seehafer visited our state in March. We enjoyed escorting him around to various locations. We traveled to Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home, Omaha National Cemetery, SAC Museum, Offutt AFB (DPAA), District 12 Convention, had a wonderful banquet dinner at South Omaha Post 331, and on his final day he viewed the Boys Town National Hotline center (988 #1). The national commander enjoyed himself and was impressed with his trip to Nebraska.

Now is the time to remind all posts to ensure they are ready for the new dues increase by national of \$5 plus a dues increase by the state of \$5. Please ensure as Post Commanders your membership has voted to raise your dues sufficiently to cover the new dues increase and get that information into the Department HQ. Unfortunately, due to inflation you will probably expect a dues increase about every 5-7 years. So, now is the time if you are not a paid-up-for-life member (PUFL) to consider getting one. In addition, this year national has offered a three (3) year membership at current cost. That should save one up to \$10 per year. You can buy in for 2024 - 2026 or 2025 - 2027. This new three-year membership is a great deal and can only be done on-line by the individual or you can contact Headquarters for help.

All posts should be filling out their Consolidate Post Reports and get them into Department HQ by June. In addition, ensure you provide the Department HQ with your new officer list (even if it remains the same) send in a new list with correct information. I tried calling some post commanders/adjutants this year and was unable to make contact due to bad information ... this is very crucial for our communication.

We have so many posts that need less than ten members to reach 100%. Now is the time to call or make personal visits to these members for renewals. Please be proactive getting your memberships in for the year. Membership makes The American Legion stronger at all levels.

*"Lead by Mentoring"*



## Rider's Rally

**John Arias**  
**Department ALR Liaison**



Mid-Winter was held on Saturday, January 20th, at the Holiday Inn in Kearney. The meeting started at 4:00 pm with colors in place and Avis Morrison opening the meeting with a prayer.

The Department Commander, John-Henry Percy discussed the Department Liaison rule and what the National Judge Advocate had ruled. He then explained the Legacy Run change.

Senior Vice Commander, Boyd Yochum, discussed the Department Liaison position and how to fix it by allowing veteran Legionnaires to be Department Liaisons. A discussion followed. Roll Call was conducted. Twenty members from eleven Chapters were present. The Fallen Riders included, one from the Central Sandhills, one from Clay Center and one from Gordon. Avis said a prayer for the fallen.

Under New Business, the Department Liaison was discussed in detail. The Western Region Assistant Liaison, Danny Stefka reported all activities in the Western Region including the work done by the new Chapters. Danny Stefka helped form three new Chapters in Bayard, Cozad and Crawford and we commended him for all his work. Assistant Liaisons were discussed, and Danny will remain as the Western Region Liaison, Marty Timberlake will become the Southeast Region Liaison. Deb Sonnichsen volunteered herself and Rod as the South-Central Region Liaisons.

Rider of the Year was discussed and what the deadline will be for submitting names. The 2024 Legacy Run Across Nebraska begins on July 12, 13 and 14, 2024 in Lincoln at the HQ parking lot. Anyone can donate, join the ride, or drive behind us in their vehicles. This year I'm asking a minimum of \$50.00 donation per rider plus \$50.00 for passenger. There is a registration form to fill out.

The next meeting will be held on June 22, 2024, at 4:00 pm at the Holiday Inn in Kearney. We have received \$1,150.00 towards the Veterans and Children Foundation. I've received three registrations and hope to see many more.

I will post more details on the start times of the 2024 Legacy Run Across Nebraska. I am waiting on warmer weather to make the run; check fuel stops and learn what roads will be under construction. I'll have more at our Summer Convention meeting on June 22nd.

The 2024 ALR State Romp will be held in Chadron on June 29, 2024, with registration beginning at 8 am MT. The Facebook post did not mention patches or rockers. We still need a Chapter(s) to host the 2024 ALR State Romp. I attended the District 6 Convention and saw a handful of Riders present. It was a good convention but did not have a quorum to conduct business. Contact me at johnpaularias32@gmail.com or 308-352-6824 for any questions.

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 E-Mail Address.....dsalak@nebraskalegion.net  
 Editor.....cfoutz@nebraskalegion.net

### Department Officers

Commander.....John-Henry Percy, 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.....Kelly 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



The NEBRASKA  
**Legionnaire**

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 The American Legion Department of Nebraska.

**Carol Foutz, Editor**  
**Dave Salak, Publisher's Representative**

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 www.nebraskalegion.net?**

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

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Member ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to The American Legion, 150 NW 40th Street, Unit A,  
 Lincoln, NE 68528, or you can email the information to  
 cfoutz@nebraskalegion.net



## It's History

Jennifer Laux  
Department Historian




## Straight Talk

Levi Bennett  
Department Service Officer



### American Legion Department of Nebraska Word Search

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

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

#### May 1924 (100 years ago)

- A small national **CONVENTION!** That is the unanimous opinion of the Department Officers who attended the big "**PEP**" meet of the first Congressional District Legionnaires held at **AUBURN** on May 2. Over 600 Legionnaires registered, some posts having every member present.
- The civic program of the **SCOTTSBLUFF** Legion is now planning to beautify the arid wastes of their community by planting **PINE** trees. They expect to secure over one thousand trees from the US Department of Agriculture. 500 **TREES** will be planted on the Hulsey reservation in the Lake Alice vicinity and 500 on the Scottsbluff monument.

#### April/May 1934 (90 years ago)

- PLANTINGS** of at least three million trees for the statewide observance of **ARBOR** Day being sponsored by The American Legion in Nebraska this year are assured from reports which have come in to headquarters at Lincoln to date.
- GENERAL** John J. **PERSHING**, wartime boss of the American vets, was to have been the guest of honor at the regular noon luncheon of the 40&8 in Lincoln on April 9, and 125 veterans were on hand to greet him. At the least minute, his doctor ordered him to stay home because of a cold, so a combined radio and telephone hookup was arranged whereby "Black Jack" could hear the program and by which he could send his own greetings over the phone, being introduced just as though he were present in person.

#### April/May 1943 (80 years ago)

- Brent **BOZELL** of Omaha, twice winner of the American Legion Nebraska state **ORATORICAL** contest, attained the highest honors in the country when he won the national contest held last Monday at Boonville, MO. This is the first time a Nebraska contestant has ever taken away honors in the national contest.
- It is gratifying to Department Headquarters that posts of the American Legion in Nebraska did their full share in **SUPPORTING** the "G.I. Bill of Rights" **LEGISLATION** which has been adopted by the U.S. Senate and is scheduled for early enactment by the House.

Who can I contact to learn about Veteran Benefits and who is authorized to assist/represent me in submitting claims to the VA?

Understanding what veteran benefits you may be entitled to and how to make application or enroll for such benefits can be very confusing and initially discouraging, having an advocate to guide one is essential to receiving appropriate earned benefits.

With all the acronyms with "VA" in them, just understanding which entity provides which benefit can be confusing for most anyone who does not work day-to-day with veteran benefits. At the federal level there is the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) which has three administrations, Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA).

However, if you were to search the internet for the VA in Nebraska, you most often end up locating the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs, which is a state agency that advocates for veterans with the USDVA, and administers state veteran benefits to include operating four state veteran homes (located in Scottsbluff, Kearney, Norfolk, and Bellevue) and a state veteran cemetery in Alliance (with another being currently under construction in Grand Island). Veterans may also be eligible for local veteran benefits at the county level or through veteran service organizations.

With all the different entities involved it is often hard to know where to start. This is where an American Legion Post Service Officer (PSO) can be of assistance initially to determine who best to contact. Here in Nebraska, we as veterans are very fortunate as we have a vast network of resources to learn about federal, state, and county/local benefits. The first being your PSO. A PSO serves as a link between the veteran or dependent and a representative holding American Legion accreditation (in Nebraska this will be County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) or State Veteran Service Officer (SVSO)). An effective PSO has a general understanding of benefits afforded to veterans and dependents; however, in Nebraska the PSO is not authorized to file disability compensation or pension claims on behalf of the claimant, unless they are an accredited (CVSO) or (SVSO).

Your PSO has access to both the local CVSO and American Legion accredited representatives across the state who may represent veterans and or dependents in submitting disability compensation and pension claims to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). Accredited representatives are also able to assist veterans with enrolling in USDVA Healthcare through the Veterans Health Administration. If you are currently a post service officer, I encourage you to engage your local CVSO(s), possibly have one of them attend a post meeting or have an event in which you invite your local CVSO or a SVSO to attend and present on veteran benefits.

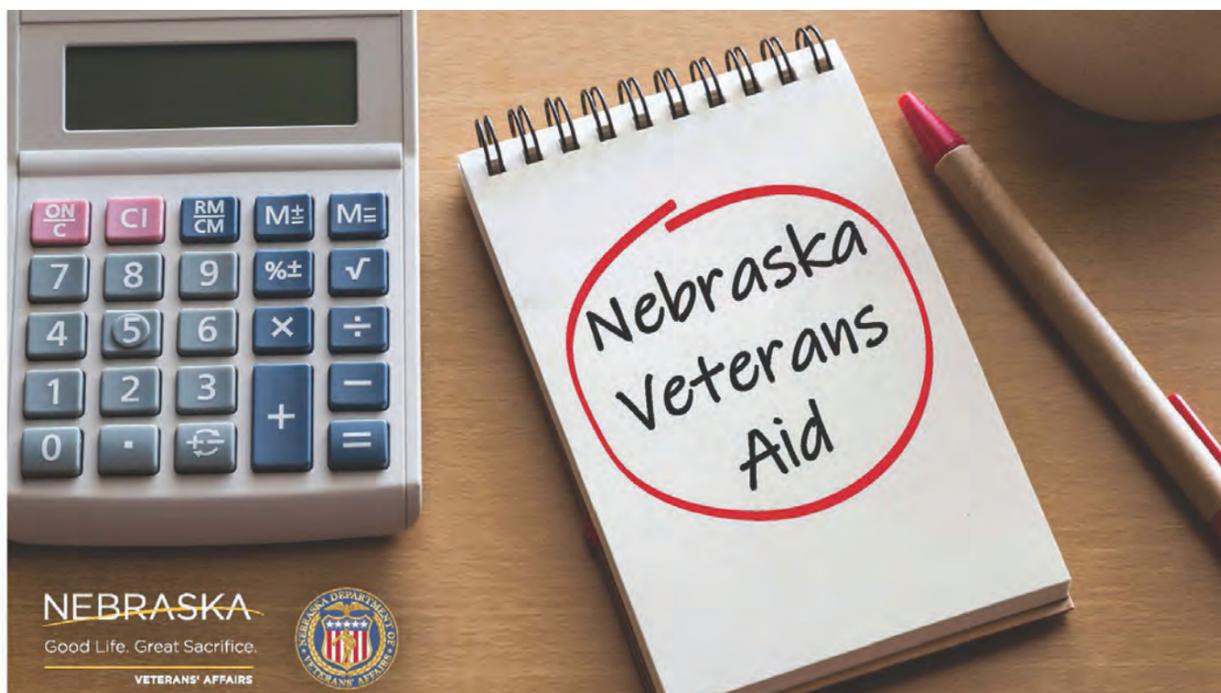
In short, the PSO can connect you with an accredited representative that is authorized to prepare and submit claims to the USDVA on your behalf. All accredited service officers provide representation at no cost (FREE!).

## FACING A FINANCIAL HARDSHIP?

THE NEBRASKA VETERANS AID FUND COULD HELP COVER A NUMBER OF EXPENSES, INCLUDING:

- FOOD
- FUEL
- SHELTER
- TRANSPORTATION
- MEDICAL ITEMS
- AND MORE

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FUND AND HOW TO APPLY AT [VETERANS.NEBRASKA.GOV/NVA](http://VETERANS.NEBRASKA.GOV/NVA)

NEBRASKA  
Good Life. Great Sacrifice.



VETERANS' AFFAIRS



## POW/MIA

**Boyd Yochum**  
POW/MIA Liaison



I was able to join National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer, Department Commander John-Henry Percy, NEC Fred Cragie and ANEC Jim Costello, and visit the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) facility at Offutt AFB. Our visit was led by Deputy Lab Director Franklin Damann who stressed the importance of DPAA's mission. This was a somber yet exciting visit. We couldn't actually get in the lab, but we were able to look through windows and watch anthropologist's work. No photos of course, showing respect and integrity while dealing with remains is a core value of the DPAA.

While we love to have our articles in the Legionnaire flow and be easy to read, sometimes there is so much information that just hitting high lights is the easiest way to describe DPAA.

From October 2022 to September 2023 DPAA accounted for 158 remains of Americans from World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War.

Research, Recover, Identify is the simple way to describe case progression within DPAA. It starts with case initiation; case review and assessment; mission planning; field operations; evidence analysis; and data integration. Data is integrated along every step of the process from research to identification. The process is of course more detailed than this, but it gives you an idea of the case progression.

One of the major accounting projects DPAA has begun is the "Hell Ship" accounting project. This is a multi-year endeavor trying to identify the unknowns associated with the Enoura Maru, a WWII cargo vessel employed by the Imperial Japanese Navy for transporting POWs.

The Enoura Maru was anchored at the Takao Harbor in Formosa and was sharing its mooring buoy with the Japanese tanker Kuroshio Maru, making it a prime target for attack. A bomb hit the forward hold of the Enoura, leading to the tragic loss of approximately 300 POWs on board.

The historical context of the Enoura Maru incident reveals the grim plight of over 20,000 allied POWs transported by Japanese "Hell Ships" in 1944. These vessels subjected POWs to horrendous conditions, including crowding, malnutrition, illness, poor sanitation, and maltreatment by Japanese. POWs also faced death as they were abandoned at sea or ordered to swim towards land under Japanese gunfire.

Several hundred who managed to survive embarked on a harrowing cruise aboard the Enoura Maru. The ship was not marked as a POW transport and was targeted by U.S. aircraft, leading to a devastating explosion and the loss of more than 300 lives. Survivors endured additional hardship, with a few eventually reaching Japan aboard the Brazil Maru. Lead historian for the project, Dr Greg Kupsy said, "These guys held out for months against pretty tough odds and they did a lot of heroic acts in the process."

Given the complexity of the project, the analyses and DNA testing are projected to take several years. DPAA's mission is to provide answers to the remaining families of the loved ones lost in the Enoura Maru.

Fortunately, DPAA's experience from previous projects like the USS Oklahoma have proven invaluable.



## Chaplain's Thoughts

**Father Alexander Borzych**  
Department Chaplain



I came across this story about King Frederick II of Prussia, and it made me chuckle. It's beneficial to take some time to ask ourselves how we would look at ourselves and how we would act when King Frederick II of Prussia came to visit the prison. Would we be the ones who had claimed their innocence or the ones who took responsibility for his actions.

King Frederick II, an eighteenth-century king of Prussia, visited a prison in Berlin one day. The inmates jumped at the opportunity to plead their innocence directly to the king. All except one. One prisoner sat quietly in the corner. This prisoner's action peaked the king's curiosity. The king quieted the other inmates and approached the man in the corner. "What are you in for?" he asked. "Armed robbery, your honor," replied the inmate. The king asked, "Are you guilty?" He then stated to that query: "Release this guilty man. I don't want him corrupting all these innocent people!"

How ironic! Only when we see and admit our guilt to ourselves, can we repent and return to God to receive the forgiveness and so wash that guilt away. One of the greatest promises of Scripture is this one from 1 John 1:8-9 "If we confess our sins, God faithful and just to forgive our sins." Recognition of our sin and repentance for it are the first steps toward the new birth. Think for a moment, is there some failing in your life that you have never admitted to yourself or to God?

John 3:16 states that "God so loved the world that he gave his only son. So that whoever believes will not perish but might have eternal life." He came into the world to show his love and that we should follow his example in caring and love the people in the world just as the Savior did.

We need to reciprocate God's love by loving Him in others. God's love is unconditional, universal, forgiving, and merciful. Let us try to make an earnest attempt to include these qualities in sharing our love with others. Our rebirth by water and the Spirit must be an ongoing process. That is, we must lead a life of repentance and conversion which will bring us, with the help of the Holy Spirit living within us, to an ongoing renewal of life through prayer, Bible reading, and performing corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Which includes feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, ransoming captives, burying the dead, sheltering the stranger, comforting the sick and clothing the naked. These acts of kindness may appear to be lofty goals, but if we are willing to show others the unconditional love that Christ shows to us, we must do the same.

As the old saying goes, if we want to be forgiven, we must forgive.



## S.A.L. Notes

**Eldon Kramer**  
Detachment Commander



Membership report as of March 10, 2024: Nebraska Squadrons are 4th in the Midwest Region, with a total of 6,052 members. Gentlemen, we are short 940 members from reaching 100%. We have 9 zero squadrons and have 12 squadrons with less than 10 members. Legionnaires, please reach out to your Squadron Adjutants to make sure that they're turning in renewals. Remember to recruit and retain membership. Remember that our Constitution and Bylaws require 10 members in a Squadron. I'm reaching out to The American Legion Family, with their help, we may have a chance at the Triple Nickel Award. A gift certificate from the American Legion Flag & Emblem for \$555 will be awarded to any Detachment that achieves the following by July 1 of each year: 105% overall membership, five new (not re-activated) Squadron charters with membership transmitted, and 85% renewal rate. The award has never been won by the Detachment of Nebraska.

The following events in April are a good time to emphasize leadership as required for Point 4 of the Five Point Program of Service. For Flying Flags For Heroes, be sure to log your placement of flags [www.flyingflagsforheroes.com](http://www.flyingflagsforheroes.com). The mission of The American Legion's "Be the One" initiative is to reduce the rate of veteran suicide. (Dial 988 and Press 1). Annual Squadron Data Reports (SDR) are due by April 15, 2024. Throughout the year, it is necessary for National to contact Squadrons regarding membership renewals, awards, and general communications. Remember the sacrifice that was paid for your membership and to represent as a proud possessor of a priceless heritage. Visit [mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org), it has a lot of information to help you with your job as an officer in your Squadron. The Squadron could be an active participant in its sponsoring Post's Memorial Day ceremonies.

It was an honor for my Asst. Sgt.-At-Arms Kolton Kramer and I to represent Nebraska at the Washington D.C. Conference. Kolton and I presented two wreaths at the Vietnam and World War II Memorials. On Tuesday, we visited all the Congressman and Senator's offices and took a tour of the Capital. It was a trip that will never be forgotten.

Welcome our newly chartered Squadron 138 in Crawford who already has 15 members. I am challenging every Squadron in Nebraska to host one fundraiser to raise money for a delegate from your Squadron to attend the Detachment Convention this summer. It would be good to see new faces. Gentlemen, have a safe and happy April and May and remember if you have any problems call the office or call one of the officers, we will not let you fail. Please don't forget my Commander's project. Donations for Gifts for Yanks and planting trees at the Western Nebraska Veterans Home. Keep marching forward, Be The One, and remember "**Representing More Than Me.**"

Please contact me at 308-631-5233 or [erktrucking@yahoo.com](mailto:erktrucking@yahoo.com) with any questions.

## 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, financial records, and your good name. Plus, our no-obligation money-back guarantee allows you a full 30-day examination period in case you change your mind about this identity resolution.

## Candidate Announcements

### Boyd Yochum Department of Nebraska Commander



Yes, I was in Vietnam. We were winning when I left. I was raised on a small farm near Ashland but grew up in the Army. I graduated from Ashland High School, and while in the Army I attended the University of South Vietnam, Vinh Long Campus with a dual major in Counter Insurgency and Air Cavalry Operations. After my time in the Army, I received degrees from the Lincoln School of Commerce and Doane College.

I enlisted in the US Army in January 1967. After training I was assigned to what was at the time a bold new concept, a stand-alone Air Cavalry Squadron; the 7<sup>th</sup> Armored Squadron 1<sup>st</sup> Air Cavalry (Blackhawks). We were regimental, and not assigned to a division. As an early arrival, I was able to help organize, train and deploy our Blackhawk Squadron to Vietnam. We were the first unit in Vietnam to be issued to AH1C Cobra Assault Helicopters. After returning to the world, I was assigned to Department of the Army. Later I served in several assignments in the Nebraska National Guard, including five years as an Army Master Instructor where I taught Air Land Battle Doctrine, Army Leadership Doctrine, Counter Terrorism Foreign and Domestic, Land Navigation, and several other courses as needed.

I am married with three sons, a step-son, step-daughter, and eight grandchildren ranging in age from 24 to 4. I currently serve as Secretary of Living Hope Ministries in Lincoln. I was on the planning board, and currently on the Board of Directors for the Saunders County Veterans Memorial.

Offices held in the American Legion include: Post 129 Commander, Saunders County Commander, District 7 Adjutant working with four District Commanders, Area B Vice Commander, and presently Department Senior Vice Commander.

### Judy Walters Department Senior Vice Commander



Judy "Mo" Walters has announced her candidacy for the high office of Department Senior Vice Commander for 2024-2025. She is eligible for membership in the American Legion through her service in the United States Navy from 1973 to 1977. She joined the American Legion in 1981 and is a current member of Post 79 in Ainsworth. She currently serves as the Post 79 Commander and Brown County Commander. She served as the District One Vice Commander and Commander from 2019 to 2023. She is currently serving as the Area D Vice Commander.

She graduated from the American Legion College in November 2023 and completed the Basic Training Course in 2018. She has attended three national conventions and currently serves on the National Americanism Commission. She has also attended the Washington Conference in 2023 and plans to attend again in 2024.

Judy is now retired and has time to devote serving the legionnaires of Nebraska as the Senior Vice Commander. Judy would appreciate the support of her fellow legionnaire's to be elected to the high office of Department Senior Vice Commander.

### John Arias Area B Vice Commander



John Arias has announced his candidacy for Area B Vice Commander 2024-2025. He is currently a member of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Council from 2016 to present. At the Department level John has held positions with the Veterans Rehab & Employment Committee 2023, Nebraska American Legion Riders Liaison 2021-2023, the Nebraska ALR as assistant Liaison 2019-2021 and the District 6 Vice Commander 2013-2015. At the Post level he has held positions including, the Post Commander, Post Vice Commander, Post Adjutant, and a Post ALR member. He would appreciate your support and vote at the 2024 Department Convention on June 23, 2024.

## Department Convention Program



It's time to start putting together our Department Convention Program. This year we will be holding a contest for the front of the program. We want to highlight the different veterans memorials in your communities. Please send a picture along with the location of the memorial and your post name to Carol at [cfoutz@nebraskalegion.net](mailto:cfoutz@nebraskalegion.net). These need to be received by June 8. We have received one from Crofton Post 128 and have included it as an example.

In addition, the Department is selling space in the program for individuals or businesses to advertise. Please ask around your community to garner support. All ads and payments must be received before June 7, 2024. The program is 8.5 x 5.5 in size. Please contact Carol at Headquarters.

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

## National Commander Visit



National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer visited Department Headquarters as the first stop on his Nebraska visit. Pictured (L to R) Carol Foutz, Fred Craigie, National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer, Eric Martin and Amanda Washburn.



South Omaha Post 331 and Bellevue Post 339 co-hosted a banquet for National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer on the last day of his visit to Nebraska.



Weeping Water Post 237 hosted the District 12 Convention. Pictured (L to R) District 12 Chaplain Vern Barton, National Executive Committeeman Fred Craigie, Department Commander John-Henry Percy, National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer, District 12 President Lois Johnson, District 12 Commander Martin Neal, District 12 Vice Commander David Stander, Post 237 Commander Wayne Nielsen, District 12 ALA Chaplain Cathy Day, and Unit 237 President Nancy Bose.

### Photos! Photos! Photos!

We need more pictures of activities from Posts. It is important for the photo to have good framing, contrast, color, and creativity. Send the Post information and names of the people in the photo from left to right. Email photos as an attachment, to [cfoutz@nebraskalegion.net](mailto:cfoutz@nebraskalegion.net).

## Ralston's American Legion Veteran's Organization Recognized Papillion Post 32



**Papillion Post 32 Pictured (L to R) Commander Ted Pafford and Mayor Don Groesser.**

On January 16, 2024, Ralston Mayor Don Groesser and the city council proclaimed Post 32 is now recognized as Ralston's American Legion Veterans organization. Ralston has been without an American Legion Post since 2022 when Post 373 turned in its Charter. Post 32 Commander Ted Pafford coordinated this effort with the Ralston Mayor's office as well as a number of city organizations prior to the January 16, 2024 Proclamation.

Upon receiving the Proclamation at Ralston City Hall, Post 32 Commander Pafford said, "This is a great opportunity for both the city of Ralston and Post

32. The American Legion is the nation's largest veterans service organization and Post 32 is both proud and thrilled to be able to bring the American Legion back to Ralston. Post 32 was founded in 1919 and the Post continues to serve both Papillion and La Vista. We look forward to providing Ralston veterans and their families with a new Post home. Also, we're excited to show the citizens of Ralston all the great things Post 32 does for the community. We'll be providing a high school scholarship to Ralston, sponsoring Boys State representatives from Ralston, as well as sponsoring Ralston American Legion Baseball starting in 2025.

Post 32 also sponsors a Teacher of the Year award, a Firefighter/EMS annual award, and a Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award. And of course, the Post 32 Color Guard will be participating in the famous Ralston Independence Day Parade. Serving our community veterans is our number one priority! Post 32 has a tremendous Veterans Service Officer who is ready and able to assist our community veterans. If a vet has a need, he or she need only contact our Post Veterans Service Officer or Post Chaplain and we'll engage. A recently declared Legion mission is 'Be The One!' So many veterans are in need psychologically, financially, etc. The suicide rate among veterans is beyond alarming. Post 32 is stepping up to this mission!

We look forward to working with Mayor Groesser, the city council, the Ralston schools, city departments, and the citizens of Ralston. We're excited to show what Post 32 offers to Ralston, along with Papillion and La Vista. If you were a Legion member of Ralston Post 373, we ask that you look at Post 32 and consider joining. We're quite an active Post and could use your Ralston experience to make Post 32 even better. Also, if you're a veteran and haven't yet joined the American Legion, Post 32 invites you to check out our Post."

Learn more about Post 32 by visiting their webpage at [americanlegionpost32.com](http://americanlegionpost32.com) or by visiting their Facebook page, Papillion American Legion.

## NATIONAL "POPPY DAY" MAY 24, 2024



Poppy Day is celebrated in countries all around the world. The American Legion brought National Poppy Day® to the United States by asking Congress to designate the Friday before Memorial Day, as National Poppy Day. The use of the poppy is symbolical and comes from the poem "In Flanders Fields," which movingly begins, "In Flanders Fields the poppies blow, between the crosses, row on row," referring to the poppies that sprang up in the churned-up earth of newly dug soldiers' graves over parts of Belgium and France. The poem was written by Lt. Col. John McCrae in 1915

after witnessing the death of his friend, a fellow Soldier. After World War I, the red poppy became the symbol of the blood that was shed during the battle. On September 27, 1920, it became the official flower of The American Legion Family. On May 24, wear a red poppy to honor the fallen and support the living who have worn our nation's uniform. Anyone can participate in National Poppy Day®. Here are a few simple ways:

- Download the Communications Toolkit from [www.legion.org/poppyday](http://www.legion.org/poppyday), which is full of great information.
- Ask your local government to sign a Poppy Day Proclamation.
- Wear a red poppy all day and tell everyone why.
- Distribute poppies to friends, co-workers and family and tell everyone why.
- Collect donations at your workplace to give to Poppy Program.
- Tell the story on Facebook of who you are wearing your poppy to remember or support on National Poppy Day. Don't forget to tag us! #PoppyDay #LegionFamily
- Accept a poppy and make a donation if you see a member of The American Legion Family in your neighborhood distributing poppies.

Let's share the word about this very important day with our friends and families and continue to find ways to promote the American Legion Family's Poppy Program.

## Washington Conference 2024



**Members presented a check for \$1,000 to Leading Candidate for National Commander, Jim LaCoursiere, at the Washington Conference.**



**Nebraska American Legion delegation to the Washington Conference. Pictured Senator Deb Fischer (in the center).**

## Membership Minute Steve Bartos, Membership Chairman

It's only April, but the 2024 membership campaign is heading into the home stretch. The actual crossing of the finish line won't occur until December, but we need to keep galloping now and clean up our remaining renewals.

Nationally, membership numbers appear to be better this year in just about every department. Nebraska met and exceeded the 90% target date goal established for March 13th with days to spare and we can be proud of that. The next target date occurs on April 10th, and we need to be at 95% of the goal by then. This will be a tougher task.

Unfortunately, membership turn-ins have slowed to a trickle. If we are going to achieve 95% by April 10th, every post needs to put forth a little extra effort to renew our remaining delinquent members or enlist new members. We need both.

I've said before that extra effort almost always yields some extra positive results and that you get nothing extra when you do nothing extra. It's not too late. Phone calls. Emails. Personal contact. I urge every Post to contact its delinquent members now even if you've already done so before. And, don't give up on trying to "renew and transfer" some delinquent members of Post 500 into your Posts. There are plenty there but they probably won't come looking for you. It has to be the other way around!! You can identify those potential transfers by using the "Find Members in My Area" function in MyLegion.org.

Anything you can do will help the cause.

Don't lose sight of the dues increase that will take effect with the first dues notices for the 2025 membership year. The increase will be \$5.00 for sure (national dues increase) and probably \$10.00 if the Department of Nebraska raises its dues by \$5.00 at the department convention. Posts may want to raise their dues, also. When asking members to renew for 2024, be sure to let them know that if (and only if) they renew online, they can take advantage of the new 3-year renewal option and renew for 2024, 2025, and 2026 all at the current dues rate for 2024.

Also, members other than Department Life or PUFL members who have already paid their 2024 dues can take advantage of the 3-year renewal option and renew online for 2025, 2026, and 2027. All three years at the 2024 dues rate. Do the math; save some money.

I want to remind every post to think about the 2025 dues rate that you reported to department headquarters. Did it include the new national dues per capita of \$23.50? Did it include the likely department dues per capita of \$21.50 (the department dues increase to be voted upon at the department convention is \$5.00, but it could be something less)? Did it include your local dues per capita amount?

Have a nice April!







Rushville Post 161 presented a certificate for 50 years of continuous membership. Pictured (L to R) Commander Roxanne Sones and Gary Sones.



The Convention Committee man the registration desk at Mid-Year. Pictured (L to R) Rod Rose, Kenneth Schmid, Dennis Kennedy and Fred Craigie.



Lieutenant Governor Joe Kelly and Department Adjutant Dave Salak attended the Nebraska Legislative Day event at the Capitol.



"Be The One" early birds to the Proclamation signing at the Capitol. Pictured (L to R) Department Adjutant Dave Salak, Michael Landkamer, Fred Craigie, Jerry Landkamer and Eric Martin.



Butte Post 51 presented certificates of continuous membership. Pictured (L to R) Harold Reiser, 60 years and Leo Shulte, 50 years. Not pictured, Wayne Lubert, 50 years.



Fairbury Post 24 presented a Quilt of Valor to Father Alex Borzych. Pictured (L to R) Doug Kapke, Linday Kapke and Father Borzych.



Crofton Post 128 helped celebrate Gerald Schumacher on his 100th birthday. Pictured (L to R) Jim Hames, Gerald Schumacher, Bob Haberer and Ed Kleinschmit.



The Children & Youth committee met at Mid-Year. Pictured (L to R) Julie Schnitzler, Greg Smolik, Auxiliary Vicki Colson, and Don Nelsen.



Orchard Post 136 presented Quilts of Valor at the Orchard Community Center. Pictured (L to R) Bill Mitteis, Curt Mitteis, Randy Robertson, Galen Gibbs and John Ferguson. Not pictured Jim Meyer and Hoyt Sirek.



Daykin Post 198 presented Quilts of Valor at the Meridian Public School's Veterans Day Program. Pictured (L to R) Jan Holtmeier, Lance Hamm, Robert Eyer, Eric Eyer, James Hinzman, Lauren Drees and Randall Nolte.



Chadron Post 12 members participated in the Honor Flight and send off.



Papillion Post 32 participated in La Vista's "Salute to Veterans". Pictured (L to R) Suzanne Glover, Mike Alvarez, Sherri Bejvancesky, Anne Ream and Commander Ted Pafford.



Sargent Post 104 presented Quilts of Valor. Pictured (L to R) Jack Steinbach, Tina Johnson, Dan Sasek, Marlene Sasek, and Orville Mankle.



Humphrey Post 80 presented Quilts of Valor. Pictured top (L to R), Jerry Sander, Paul Eisenmenger, Robert Ternus, Fritz Jaixen. Pictured bottom (L to R), Kenneth Backes, Robert Gronenthal, Jamel Engel and Donald Wemhoff. Not pictured Bill Babel (deceased).



Greenwood Post 173 Commander Gary Krings presented member Leon Fiala with his 60 year continuous membership pin and certificate.



The American Legion Auxiliary  
Department of Nebraska

**The Star**



April - May 2024

## DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT - LISA MOORE



Holy Cow! What a fast couple of months.

District Conventions are over, and I have enjoyed meeting all of you. Thank you for your hospitality. Thank you for having me. And, for those invitations I couldn't attend, I appreciate those, too.

I celebrated the American Legion Birthday in Wilber. They did a great job, and I enjoyed seeing all of the members of the Auxiliary who I hadn't seen for a while. They even signed up a new member.

We judged scholarships, and what a great experience that was! The cream of the crop always comes out in force for our scholarships.

Year-end reporting sheets went out. Yes, they are blank. You only need to send in sheets for programs

that you worked on. No more sending in "N/A" on any paper. I know that you have all been busy supporting our veterans.

Girls Staters have been selected, and what a great turnout for the first week of June.

If you haven't seen what I am raffling off at the Department Convention, never fear. I will be sending out a flyer in the next newsletter.

Mission Training in Lincoln was fun, and I know we all left with some great ideas to take back and share with our units.

The Junior Northwestern Regional Conference was a huge success. Nebraska had 19 girls attend. Thank you to all the adults who brought them.

The Junior Conference in St. Paul was amazing. What a great way to recharge and find the thrill of the American Legion Auxiliary all over again.

Department Convention should be a great time for reconnecting and giving all the kudos due to our amazing Department. June 21st

through the 23rd in Kearney. The Holiday Inn rolled out the red carpet for us in January, and I'm sure they will do the same for the Department Convention.

Don't forget that the National President will be here August 3-5. We will all be working at BINGO, serving hamburgers, and riding in the parades. On Sunday night, there will be a meet and greet in Kearney. On Monday, we will show her the amazing memorials that are in the little towns on the way to Omaha to present gift cards to the Fisher House.

I'll see ya on the road. Keep Serving Veterans Always.

Lisa Moore  
Department President



## CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Recognizing kids who go above and beyond is a great way to support positive behaviors and recognize those who display values that reflect kindness and compassion.

Do you have children or youth who have performed a heroic act or have done a good deed for your community? Nominate them for a Youth Hero/Good Deed award on the ALA national website [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)

April is Children and Youth Month. What are you doing to promote Children and Youth programs? On April 15, we are

honoring Military Children. Wear purple for Purple Up Day. Have you used the Military Child Table Set program?

Have you donated to the Children's Welfare Foundation?

The Children and Youth Luncheon plans are in the works. Please plan to attend on June 22, 2024. Tickets are \$10.00.

April is also the Year-end Report time. Report all the great things you do. Thanks for all you do.

Vicki Colson  
Children & Youth Chair

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH LUNCHEON

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 2024

NOON - 1:30 PM

Kearney American Legion Hall (Bingo Room)

Hamburgers, Salad, Chips, Drinks, etc.

\$ 10.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Total Reservations \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to the Children and Youth Chairman before June 15, 2024

Vicki Colson

PO Box 61

Paxton, NE 69155

## 2023-2024 ALA MISSION TRAINING

Mission Training! Sounds like Mission Impossible for those who remember that show, but ALA Mission Training was better. And ALA members had the opportunity to participate in the nationally presented training right here in Nebraska!

The training was on Saturday, February 3, 2024, at the Cornhusker Marriott in downtown Lincoln.

A very interesting, informative, and fun program was presented. Nebraska was represented by 24 ALA Senior members. Offered the same day was National Junior Training. 18 Junior members attended their special training.

Session Part I consisted of programs on "Be the One" and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation and Military. Several videos were

shared, including a message from National President Lisa Williamson.

During Session Part II in the afternoon, we learned about The Impact of Membership, Understanding ALA Branding, and Community & Members - Youth Programs. Group participation was encouraged throughout the PowerPoint presentation.

The "fun" consisted of making bracelets out of beads with an ALA theme. The bracelets were then exchanged with someone from a different table. We also made "Hero" pins with a picture of our favorite veteran. Both projects were easy and provided time to make new friends with others at your table.



Nebraska Strong at the National Mission Training in Lincoln on February 3. Smiling Juniors (left picture) enjoyed their variety of training just for them. Senior members (above) filled the room to reinvigorate themselves in the various ALA programs that were shared during the day.



## DEPARTMENT CONVENTION HOTEL REGISTRATION INFO

The entire Holiday Inn is reserved for the Legion Family Convention

**Kearney Holiday Inn**

110 2nd Avenue

Kearney, NE 68847

For reservations call (308) 237-5871

**Room Rate**

\$149.94 nightly plus tax

**DO NOT CALL THE TOLL FREE NUMBER FOR RESERVATIONS AS THE RATE COULD BE DIFFERENT**

## APRIL IS NOT FOR FOOLING AROUND!

Remember our Military Kids and Purple Up (April 15th).

GET SERIOUS ABOUT REPORTING YOUR HISTORY, NARRATIVE AND SCRAPBOOK.

### REMINDERS:

May 1, 2024 – JUNIOR NARRATIVE DEADLINE  
May 15, 2024 – SENIOR NARRATIVE DEADLINE

CALL, TEXT, OR EMAIL ME!

I will try to help you however I can, or I will get the answers for you with your narrative and/or scrapbook.

Ruth Hietbrink, Department Historian

Call or Text 402-239-6371  
rhietbri@gmail.com Email

Ruth Hietbrink  
735 Washington Street  
Sterling, NE 68443

## SENIOR UNIT NARRATIVE HISTORY RULES

(History --- April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024)

Submissions must be sent to the Department Historian by May 15.

Title Page (30 points): Listed on the first page should be Unit name, Unit number, Unit town, District number, name of the Unit Historian, and Narrative History Year 2023 to 2024.

Content (60 points): The history narrative needs to be a minimum of five paragraphs and should start with the installation of officers and end

with the close of your administrative year in chronological order. Within the narrative should be the unit officers, chairman, and other events or activities. Any font can be used, and it can be typed or handwritten.

Unit Historian Signature (10 points): Please have the Unit Historian sign the last page of the narrative.

Ruth Hietbrink  
Department Historian

## 2024 LEGISLATIVE DAY

Legislative Day at the Nebraska State Capitol was held on February 2, 2024. The Warner Legislative Chamber was filled with members of the Nebraska Veterans Council (NVC), including American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary members. A welcome was given by Greg Holloway, the NVC Chair, and also by John Hilgert, Director of the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs. After the welcomes, Lt. Governor Joe Kelly addressed the group.

Senators Tom Brewer, Mike Jacobsen, and Jen Day each spoke emphasizing their priority bills.

Senator Jacobsen talked about two bills, LB-853 – Homestead Exemptions and LB-869 – Veterans Services. LB-869, introduced by Senators Bostar/Jacobson, is a bill for an act relating to county veterans service committees and to change provisions relating to the provision of veterans aid and burial services.

Senator Brewer is sponsoring LB-1037 relating to veterans to

prohibit unethical conduct and improper collection of fees relating to assistance or referrals in veterans benefits matters and to provide ethical standards. This would address claim sharks going after VA benefits.

Senator Day also spoke on LB-853, a bill to change provisions relating to homestead exemptions for certain disabled veterans and surviving spouses. Currently, the Homestead Exemption is only for residents aged 65 and older and 100 percent disabled veterans. The Senators are introducing a graduated scale based on the percentage of disability of the veteran. As this bill affects state revenues, it will be addressed by the revenue committee.

An interesting thing I learned was that anyone can lead the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of any legislative session. You just need to ask your representative!

Vicky Thompson  
Legislative Chair



Pictured (L-R) are the newly-installed officers of District 13 for 2024-2025: President Michelle Tegtmeier, Vice-President Bobbi Albers, Secretary-Treasurer Doris DeJonge, Chaplain Linda Patchen, and Historian Jean Burns.

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

### 2024-2025 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
Apr.	#225 Eddyville	#288 Farnam	#371 Valparaiso	#62 Newcastle			#264 Dorchester
May	#250 Oconto	#52 Kearney	#264 Dorchester	#240 Milligan	#200 Bayard	#200 Bayard	District 11 Jrs.
June				#127 Craig	#312 Broadwater	#312 Broadwater	
July	#310 Gibbon	#209 Franklin	#154 Blair	#283 Platte Center	#7 Alliance	#133 Culbertson	#222 Shubert
Aug.		#52 Kearney		#176 Jackson	#17 Sidney	#17 Sidney	
Sept.		#218 Exeter		#283 Platte Center	#200 Bayard	#200 Bayard	
Oct.	#288 Farnum	#141 Hampton	#222 Shubert	#307 S Sioux City	#10 Morrill	#12 Chadron	
Nov.	#335 Davenport		#243 Plymouth		#10 Morrill	#364 Naponee	#222 Shubert
Dec.	#141 Hampton	#209 Franklin	#222 Shubert	#357 Brunswick	#7 Alliance	#7 Alliance	#240 Milligan
Jan.							
Feb.		#288 Farnam					
Mar.							

Please read the ABC book under "Service to Veterans." Some facilities have restrictions as to what you can use for decorations. If you have any questions, please contact the facilities contact person.

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

## NATIONAL SECURITY

As your National Security Chair, I had the opportunity to attend The American Legion Legislative Conference by invitation of National President Lisa Williamson. It was a whirlwind four days in our nation's capital, flying in on Sunday, February 25, and back home on Wednesday, February 28.

Early Monday morning had us preparing for achieving the objectives of gaining knowledge from The American Legion Commission Meetings and to present The American Legion Family Legislative Agenda on Capitol Hill in a manner that our Congressional Representatives have a clear understanding of the Legion's position. The four commission meetings were Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Veterans Employment & Education, National Security, and Legislative. I was appointed to the Legislative Commission meeting.

A few highlights from the ALA meeting included hearing about the Be The One training that is being developed (the four key pillars of destigmatize, training, research, and grassroots; resources that will be promoted on the betheone.org website along with "How to Videos" to work with individuals, groups, and states); learning that if you are taking care of a Veteran in your home, you can report ten hours or five hours a week if you are taking care of a Veteran outside the home; and most importantly to volunteer and report to make a difference.

Patricia A Harris, North Carolina, led the Legislative Commission meeting. A quick PowerPoint review of the bills on health policy, caregivers and providers, education, economic opportunity, and access to care was presented. Points from the many speakers included: eliminating sexual harassment within the VA; the Four Corners package; Elizabeth Dole Act allowing Veterans to stay home versus nursing homes; PACT Act; Veterans Health Act; BASE; the need to update/upgrade the HR program; the difference in government health care and private billing format; and Diana Harshbarger sharing office visit best practices.

Everyone was encouraged to visit the Grassroots Action Center on the legislative website and utilize the advocacy toolkit. My takeaway was the common thread—our Veterans/Military need legislation for many aspects of their lives. A new fact I learned was about the Elizabeth Dole Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act to expand community-based services for aging and homebound veterans.

Monday concluded with the Commander's Call. Pearls of wisdom were shared from National Commander Seehafer (we have military in 170 countries), National President Williamson (70% Veterans who first think of harming themselves do so within one hour, 48% within 40 minutes, and some

within 5 minutes), and National SAL Commander Hall (remember our "why"). The other speakers resonated with the same theme—what we needed to do on the Hill the next day.

Tuesday morning the Commander's Rally was the final push for getting us pumped for visiting The Hill. With the Nebraska Delegation, I visited Senator Fisher, her Legislative aide, and Senator Rickett's aid (the Senator was scheduled but had to return to Nebraska for a funeral). Senator Fischer has always been a staunch supporter of our Veterans and military.

As the ALA selected representative, I visited Nebraska's three Representatives' (Bacon, Flood, Smith) offices to leave The Legion's Agenda and the two items provided by National—the ALA magazine and a membership brochure. Joining me were Legionnaire Doug Frahm, member of National Security Council, Nebraska SAL Commander Eldon Kramer, and his grandson, SAL Kolten Kramer.

It was great to represent Nebraska ALA in Washington, DC. It confirms every Auxiliary member's importance in advocating for our Veterans, military, their families, and our communities.

Vicki Ozenbaugh  
National Security



The 2024-2025 officers of ALA District 8 were recently elected at the annual District 8 Convention. Pictured (L-R) are Chaplain Becky Saathoff, Secretary-Treasurer Kathy Mazur, Vice President Melissa Steinle, and President Lindsay Brown. They are being sworn in by Department Vice President Amanda Washburn.



### 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 MAY 10, 2024.

## CANDIDATES FOR DEPARTMENT OFFICES — 2024 - 2025

**VICKI OZENBAUGH**  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE



**AMANDA WASHBURN**  
PRESIDENT



**RUTH HIETBRINK**  
VICE PRESIDENT



**VICKI CYBORON**  
HISTORIAN



**LORI REIMERS**  
CHAPLAIN



### VICKI OZENBAUGH BIO

ALA greetings to my fellow Auxiliary members! I have announced my intention to seek a second term as the 2024-2025 National Executive Committee person for Nebraska. During my first term, I served as a member of the Minutes Approval Committee in addition to being appointed to a Special Appeals Committee.

My Auxiliary background:

- Proud 47-year ALA member
  - Membership with Franklin Unit No. 193 in Ohioa, Nebraska
  - Eligible through the service of my former husband
  - Unit President, Vice-President, Chaplain, Membership Chair, and various program chairs usually associated with Education and Children & Youth
  - Fillmore County President and Vice-President.
  - District 11 President (twice) and Vice-President
  - Department Americanism (twice), Education (twice), Leadership (twice), and Children and Youth
  - Department Historian, Department Vice-President, Department President
- My personal background:
- Native of Nebraska
  - Graduate of the University of Nebraska and high school teacher for eight years
  - Self-employed career in “making a house a home” for 20 years (for those who might remember Home Interiors and Gifts)
  - Twenty-five years as a postmaster with the United States Postal Service (plus nine years as a non-career USPS employee)
  - Member of St. John Lutheran Church, Ohioa
  - Current St. John’s administrative secretary, Sunday School

superintendent and teacher.

- Member and officer of the Ohioa Rescue as an EMT
- Member and officer of the Ohioa Chamber of Commerce
- Member Fillmore County Foundation
- Mother of three sons and proud grandmother of ten (five boys and five girls)

It would be my honor to represent you as Nebraska’s NEC, working together in serving our Veterans, their families, as well as our communities and youth..

### AMANDA WASHBURN BIO

Amanda Washburn is a candidate for the high office of Department President. She is a 31-year member of Bickel-Nelson Unit 360 in Cook. She is eligible for membership in the Auxiliary through the service of both of her grandfathers in World War II.

Amanda has been an active member at the Unit, District, Department, and National levels. She has also held offices during her years as a junior member, including Department Junior President, Northwestern Division National Vice President, and Honorary National Junior President. As a senior member, she has served as Department Junior Activities Chairman, a member of the County Government Committee, a member of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Department Historian and Vice President, a member of the Girls Nation Committee, the Northwestern Division Junior Activities Chairman, a member of the National Education Committee, and Northwestern Division VA&R Chairman. She is currently serving as Department Vice President and the Vice Chairman of the National Membership Committee.

Amanda graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a degree in History. She currently works as the Executive Assistant at the Nebraska American Legion. She is also a member of the VFW, United Commercial Travelers, and American Lutheran Church in Ashland.

Amanda looks forward to serving the Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary and appreciates your support in her future endeavors.

### RUTH HIETBRINK BIO

My name is Ruth Hietbrink, and I am running for the office of Department Vice President for 2024-2025. I look forward to supporting the ALA Department President throughout Nebraska.

I have been a member of the ALA for 51 years in Sterling, Nebraska Unit 140. My eligibility is through my father, Paul Straube, who was a WWII veteran. Even though he passed several years ago, his passion for our country has kept me engaged in continuing to be an active member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Currently, I serve as the President of Sterling Unit 140. I have also held the position of Department Chaplain 2022-2023. Past positions within the ALA include: Past Legislative Chairperson, Past District 13 President, Past District 13 Vice President, Past District 13 Chaplain, and Johnson County President.

Positions outside of the ALA include: Past Executive Board of Directors for Energy Solution Center - Washington DC, Past board member of Home Builders of Lincoln, and Past board member for Friendship Home of Lincoln.

I graduated from Sterling High School and have an AAS degree in Business and an AAS degree in

Event Planning. I am a member of Hope Lutheran Church in Burr, Nebraska. I retired from Black Hills Energy last year, where I was employed for 26 years.

### VICKI CYBORON BIO

Vicki Cyboron is a candidate for the high office of Department Historian. She is a PUFL (Paid Up for Life) 42-year member of Shipmann Mogensen Unit #201 in Boelus. She is eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary through the military service of her dad.

Her membership began as a Junior member. Vicki has been an active member at the Unit, County, District, and Department levels. She is currently serving as Unit President. In addition, she currently serves as the Department Chaplain and the Grand Island VA Medical Center Representative.

In the past, she served as District Six President for two years and District Six Historian for two years. On the Department level, Vicki served five years on the Finance Committee, including three years as Chairperson of that committee.

Vicki has served a three-year term as President of the Nebraska American Legion Press Association (NE-ALPA) and as National Vice-President of the National American Legion Press Association (NALPA).

Vicki graduated from Midland Lutheran College with a degree in Business Administration. She has been employed at Pitney Bowes Presort Services as a Collection Specialist for sixteen years. She is also a member of the Custer County DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Auxiliary Unit and currently serves as Senior Vice-President of the Department of Nebraska DAV

Auxiliary. She attends Faith Lutheran Church in Nysted.

Vicki has been endorsed by Shipmann Mogensen Unit #201 in Boelus, and she is also endorsed by Howard County Unit. She also has the support and endorsement of District 6.

Vicki would appreciate your support and looks forward to serving as Nebraska American Legion Auxiliary Department Historian. She says the best part of being part of this amazing organization is the honor and privilege she has to spread the word about our support for our Veterans, Active Military Personnel, and our Children and Youth.

### LORI REIMERS BIO

Lori Reimers is a proud member of Lester Harder American Legion Post 42 Auxiliary in Aurora. She has been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 42 since 2010 and is eligible through her husband, Mike, who served in the Air National Guard for 26 ½ years.

She has been married to Mike for 14 years and is a mother of 3 children --- and a Nana for 7 grandchildren. She belongs to Christ Lutheran Church in Aurora and is employed as a Flex District Manager for Driveline Retail Merchandising.

At the unit level, Lori has served as President. She has also been the District 6 Vice President and President. She is currently serving as Department Poppy Chair.

Lori has been endorsed by American Legion Auxiliary Unit 42 and District 6 for Department Chaplain and is asking for your support for running for Department Chaplain.

## MEMBERSHIP

For several years now, I’ve heard the phrase, “Practice your elevator speech!” because you just never know when a chance meeting might gain a new member(s) for the Legion Family. This has never worked really well for me – not because it isn’t a brilliant idea – but rather, because my implementation leaves much to be desired. First, I’m an introvert, so having a confident conversation with a stranger is not exactly my forte; and second, brevity has never been my strong suit. Since an elevator speech is only supposed to last the length of a typically brief ride in an elevator, well, you can see my problem.

But recently, I did have some fun conversations with people regarding American Legion Family membership. The first was with a father in a neighboring town who was asking about Boys State. He said, “I told my boy he needs to go if for no other reason than to honor his great grandfather and five (5) brothers who all served.” The light

bulb came on in my head, and we had a great conversation about him and his three sons all joining the Sons of the American Legion.

Another conversation occurred when the owner of a local business asked our Auxiliary Unit to provide her with some fliers for a fundraiser she had seen that we are hosting in April. She then offered to bake a casserole for the event in order to help us out. I was aware that her grandfather was a veteran, so her offer allowed me to encourage both her and her mother to join our Auxiliary Unit since, clearly, she’s very interested in serving America’s veterans.

Then, just last week, I was speaking with an Auxiliary member from South Dakota who told me that one of their units had a booth at an event where they were asking folks if they would be willing to donate \$32 to help out veterans. For those who said yes and donated the \$32, the unit member working the booth handed them an application and

said, “That’s how much it costs to be a member of our Auxiliary unit. Would you be interested in continuing to serve America’s veterans? If so, please join us.” This unit recruited more than 20 new members that day.

In closing, never forget how wonderful the conversations are that we have every day with people – both near and far. And may we never overlook that every conversation might lead us to an opportunity to do or create something greater. If you’ve had one of these conversations with your friends and neighbors – or even a complete stranger – please share it with the rest of us, as we can all benefit by learning what works. In addition, these efforts will help keep “Nebraska Strong and Faithful by Serving Veterans Always!”

*Loree Hendrickson  
Membership Chair*

## NORFOLK UNIT 16

Norfolk ALA Unit 16 presented an American Flag to the Norfolk YMCA Aquatics Pool Room. Those pictured are Americanism Chairman Karen Deets, YMCA Administrator Randy Hagedorn,

Aquatics Director Dylan Moore, and Auxiliary President LaRee Kubes.

Karen presents a flag every month from ALA Unit 16 to schools, police / fire personnel, and others.



## HUMBLE PIE

Those of you who know me may be surprised to know of my tendency for disabling social anxiety. If I am in front of an audience, no problem. I can sing or yap my way into perpetuity. But, if I have a crowd of people standing behind me --- or if I am behind a crowd of people who can hear me without seeing me --- the panic overwhelms me. I hide a lot.

Recently, I had the misfortune to fall on the ice and break a bone in my right hand. Thank God for talk-to-text, or I would not be able to work --- much less write this. This event has changed my life in ways I never imagined. I always considered myself to be somewhat ambidextrous and a fast healer. Whether it be age, weakness, or both, I have learned this is to be no more. This life with an index finger and thumb has been a lesson I'll never forget.

My work as a hospice nurse has been frustrating in the least. My work is clumsy at best.

One of my joys is playing the piano for my local church. I knew

they had a CD collection to replace me, but they assured me it would be fine if I just corded and poked a melody with my one finger. My heart was racing, and my hand shook so. I could hardly find the melody. But, they were right, it was fine.

I was recently in a bowling tournament for a fundraiser which I had committed to long before my injury. I found myself barely finding a pin throughout my three games, throwing a crappy house ball with my left hand. I was surrounded by exceptional bowlers, mostly strangers, and the anxiety was crippling. By the end of the day, the humiliation I felt was exhausting. But, it was a fundraiser for a cancer victim; and my money was as good as anyone's; of this, I needed to focus.

I couldn't sleep that night and thought it was from my pity party of poor work, poor piano playing, poor bowling, and poor, poor me. But. it was more than that. As I tried to say my evening prayers, all I could say

was "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry..."

My great big ego, God has shown me, means nothing in front of Him. If I'm not doing all for His glory, as the Book says, everything I do is of filthy rags. It became clear that if I cannot give a bed bath, I can still love. If I cannot perform, I can still lead a song. If I cannot throw a strike, I can still show up and support a great cause. And I will regain my hand, unlike those we know too well who have sacrificed theirs for us.

Long story short, my friends, is this: please remember we are commanded to love one another and to use all that God has given us for His Glory. Whether you sing like a bullfrog or bowl like a klutzy one-handed blonde, you are bringing joy to your Father. Don't wait until you are good enough to serve. Get out into that arena and share the joy. And keep singing!

*Jean Vackiner*  
Music Chair

## CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

This is a reminder for those of you who may have either amendments or resolutions to be discussed at the Department Convention in June.

Standing Rules, Section P – Conferences and Conventions, Item 1 States: All amendments to the governing documents and one-time resolutions shall be submitted to the Department Secretary to record

by the later of April 15th or two (2) weeks following the last District Convention. Amendments shall be forwarded to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee by May 1st. One-time resolutions shall be forwarded to the Resolutions Committee by May 1st for appropriate action.

The last District Convention is scheduled for April 6th. Amendments

and resolutions should be to Department by Friday, April 19th to be forwarded for review. They will be distributed to the units by 20 days prior to June's Department Convention.

*Kathy Mazur*  
Constitution & Bylaws Chair

## POPPY

The unit-level Poppy Poster submission deadline is approaching. They need to be postmarked by April 15. Also, starting this year, they need to have a cover sheet (see the March/April Newsletter). Make sure there is a physical address included in the cover sheet.

The Poppy Posters need to be mailed to Lori Reimers, 2011 24th

Street, Central City, NE 68826. The rules for the Poppy Poster Contest are in the ABC Book.

National Poppy Day is May 24. Donation labels to fit on a Pringles can be printed off at ALAforVeterans.org/Programs/Poppy.

All units can participate in the Poppy Centerpiece Contest at the District level. Then, the winner from

each district will be judged at State Convention in June.

*Lori Reimers*  
Poppy Chair

Remember the Poppy Poster Cover Sheet with your entries!



## CHAPLAINS CORNER

**Do what Makes You Happy!**

**Psalm 37:4:** "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

**Be with those who make you smile!**

**Proverbs 15:30** "A cheerful look brings joy to the heart; good news makes for good health."

**Laugh as much as you breathe!**

**Genesis 21:6** Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me."

**Love as long as you Live!**

**Ecclesiastes 9:9-18** Enjoy life with the one you love, as long as you live the useless life that God has given you in this world.

*Vicki Cyboron*  
Department Chaplain



## OCONTO

On Tuesday, March 12, the Oconto American Legion Auxiliary hosted a "Birthday Party" to celebrate the 105th birthday of the American Legion and to honor their local members. Lavern Knispel was recognized for his 70 continuous years, and Maynard Conroy for his 50 continuous years as an American Legion member.

Honored guests for the evening

were County Commander Bill Shad, County President Linnea Eggleston, Post Commander Darrel Johnson, and Unit President Judy Struempler.

Linda Bomberger presented a very informative program on how the American Legion was started 105 years ago. Supper was served before the program by the Auxiliary. The evening closed with cake and ice cream.



Pictured, L-R, are: Maynard Struempler, Tony Curie, Bill Shad, Linda Bomberger, Mike Tierney, and Darrel Johnson

## In Memoriam

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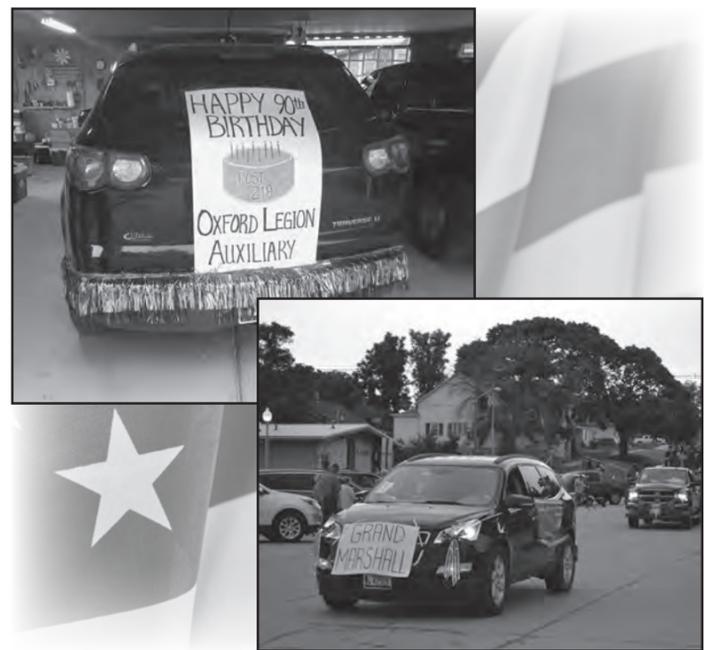
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## OXFORD POST 219 TURNS 90

The Oxford American Legion Post 219 and Auxiliary Unit 219 were surprised to be selected as the Grand Marshal of the Oxford Turkey

the car were President Geri Amen, Thelma Eman, and Lexy Eman, our only Junior member.

We are celebrating our 90th birthday as a unit this year.



## DATES TO REMEMBER

### APRIL

- 14 Virtual Girls State Orientation 7 p.m. CT
- 15 Military Kids Day - Wear Purple
- 15 Poppy Posters due to Chairman (Postmarked)
- 25 Virtual Girls State Orientation 7:30 p.m. CT
- 27 American Legion Family Day

### MAY

- 7 Virtual Girls State Orientation 8:30 p.m. CT
- 10 Articles due for the June/July issue of "The Star"
- 12 Mother's Day
- 15 Narratives due to Historian
- 24 National Poppy Day
- 27 Memorial Day - Department Headquarters closed

### FOR YOUR ADVANCED PLANNING

- June 2-8, 2024 ALA Cornhusker Girls State - Lincoln, NE
- June 20-23, 2024 Department Convention, Kearney, NE
- Aug 23 - Aug 29, 2024 National Convention, New Orleans, LA