



Up To Now!

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Issued Monthly from State Headquarters in Watertown, SD

Phone (605) 886-3604

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September 6, 2024

- Sep 7-8 SDAL Golf Tournament, Webster
- Sep 11 Patriot Day, Display Flag
- Sep 14 Dist 2 Fall Meeting, 9am Social, 10am Meeting, Wall Community Golf Course
- Sep 14 Veteran Suicide Awareness Walk hosted by Volga Post 114, 9am at Volga City Park
- Sep 15 Dist 1 Fall Meeting, VA Benefits Update 10:30, Lunch 11:30, Meeting 12:30, Box Elder Post Home
- Sep 17 Constitution Day, Display Flag
- Sep 18 US Airforce Birthday!!**
- Sep 20 Vets Stand Down, SD Mil Heritage Alliance, 8:30-11:30
- Sep 21 SAL Commander Homecoming, 4pm Social, 5pm Program, Meal to follow, Montrose American Legion
- Sep 21-22 & 27-29 National Americanism Conference
- Sep 21 Hot Springs Post 71 Rocky Mt Oyster Feed Meal starts at 5:30om and Live Music 6-10pm
- Sep 22 Dist 4 Fall Meeting, Redfield 1pm Meeting
- Sep 25 Midwest Honor Flight Mission 21 Welcome Home Ceremony Sioux Falls Convention Center 9:30pm
- Sep 28 Dist 6 Fall Meeting, 11 Social, 12:30 Meal, 1:45 Meeting Lake Preston
- Sep 29 Dist 3 Fall Meeting, 11:30 Social, 12 Lunch, 1 Meeting, Miller Post Home
- Oct 7-10 National Fall Meetings, Indianapolis, IN
- Oct 8 Midwest Honor Flight Mission 22 Welcome Home Ceremony Sioux Falls Convention Center 9:30pm
- Oct 14 Native American Day, **HQ Closed**, Display Flag
- Oct 15 Midwest Honor Flight Mission 23 Welcome Home Ceremony Sioux Falls Convention Center 9:30pm
- Oct 16 SD Vets Council Meeting, Brookings Post 74 11am
- Oct 20 Dist 5 Fall Meeting, 11 Social, 12 Meeting, White Post Home
- Oct 26 Dist 7 Fall Meeting, 11 Social, 12 Meal, 1 Meeting, Dell Rapids Post Home
- Oct 27 Dist 8 Fall Meeting, 11 Social, 12 Meal, 12:45 Meeting, Wagner Post Home
- Nov 5 Election Day
- Nov 9 We've Got Your Six, Sturgis 11am-2pm
- Nov 11 Veterans Day **HQ Closed**, Display Flag
- Nov 20 SD Vets Council Meeting, Sioux Falls, DAV, 1519 W. 51 St
- Nov 20 Legislative Round Table, Sioux Falls, DAV, 11am Nov 21 Legislative Round Table, Watertown, 11am
- Nov 22 Legislative Round Table, Rapid City Post 22, 11am
- Nov 23 Legislative Round Table, Pierre Post 8, 11am
- Nov 28-29 Thanksgiving **HQ Closed**, Display Flag
- Dec 3 Governor's Budget Address 1pm
- Dec 14 Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery, Sioux Falls 11am
- Dec 14 The 125th Army-Navy Football Game, Sponsored by The American Legion
- Dec 20 Department Holiday Open House, 12-4pm, at Dept HQ
- Dec 24-25 Christmas Holiday **HQ Closed**
- Dec 31-Jan 2 New Year's Holiday **HQ Closed**
- Jan 12 Dist 1 Oratory Time and location TBD, storm date Jan 19
- Jan 12 Dist 2 Oratory 10am at SD Mines, storm date Jan 19
- Jan 12 Dist 7 Oratory 1pm at Humbolt Community Center, storm date Jan 19
- Jan 14 Legislative Session starts
- Jan 15 SD Veterans Council Meeting, Pierre
- Jan 19 Dist 3 Oratory 2pm at Faith Lutheran Church in Pierre
- Jan 19 Dist 5 Oratory 3pm Brookings Post Home, storm date Jan 26
- Jan 19 Dist 7 Oratory 2pm Kimball Post Home, storm date Jan 25

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

August continued to be just as busy as July with Baseball tournaments (kudos to the Athletic commission and all hosting posts), visit to Ethan Post 261 and Hermosa Post 303 for their annual events, National Commander's visit (thanks to all hosting posts) – he was very impressed, 100th Anniversary of Bullhead Post 82 (awesome ceremony), my homecoming (big shout out to my home post 311), Dakota Fest (thanks Sue Peters Post 15 for organizing it), the National Convention in New Orleans, State Fair in Huron (thanks to Gary Wolkow Post 138 for organizing it and setting it up along with Post 7 as well as Post 25, 63, 138, 250 who helped man it); also want to thank the Auxiliary and Sons for participating in the State Fair booth as well. The month ended with visiting Winner Post 169's annual demolition derby.



Fall is just around the corner and with it are the district meetings which start this month. See this issue for current schedule/location information. I highly encourage everyone to attend your district meeting. There will be a lot of good information and most importantly great fellowship. I ask each post to continue expanding on your Legion family and engaging with the local community. I also ask each post to start doing buddy checks now. Then follow up around the Holidays.

Finally, let me know if you want me to visit your post and/or event. The calendar is still open but starting to fill up.

--Kevin Morello, Department Commander
"Legion Family Uniting Communities"



Do you have an event that you would like to share with the Department or push out to the Press? Please send requests to Department HQ and we can get it in the next Up-to-Now or push to more than 150 media outlets around the state. Please submit an Up-to-Now request no later than Monday before the first Friday of the month. For Press Releases, please allow 5 business days before the event. All requests should be sent to the adjutant@sdlegion.org.

105TH NATIONAL AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION DELEGATES AND ALTERNATE DELEGATES

The following were the Department's Delegates and Alternates to the National Convention in New Orleans, LA, August 23-29:

Department Commander Kevin Morello of Piedmont
Department Vice Commander Brian Dean of Spearfish
Department Adjutant C.P. Van Delist of Rapid City
NEC Denny Brenden of Watertown (National Call In)
ANEC Fred Nelson of Spearfish (National Call In)
PDC Paul Evenson of Garretson (National Call In)
PDC Terry Hanson of Arlington (National Call In)
PDC Hugh Holmes of Mitchell (National Call In)
PDC Tim Jurgens of Milbank (National Call In)
PDC Jim Huls of Madison (National Call In)
PDC Doug Feltman of Chamberlain (National Call In)
Travise Flisrand of Badger (National Call In)
Warren Aas of Watertown (National Call In)
Doug Harris of Rapid City (National Call In)
Noel Cummins of Milbank
Steve Stier of Onida
Vern Prickett of Stratford
Andy Lyngen of Garretson
Chris Rendon of Rapid City
Courtney Steffen of Chester
Department Vice Commander Kevin Hempel of Chester
PDC Rick McDonald of Hermosa
PDC Charemon Dunham of Iroquois
Annette Dunham of Iroquois
Patrick Branco of Sioux Falls
John Bachmeier of Sioux Falls
Bill Peters of Sioux Falls
Rod Smith of Chester
Dale Hill of Sioux Falls
Bruce Babcock of Groton
Ward Chapman of Milbank
Kate Schmidt of Wessington Springs
Derek Besler of Whitwood
Jeff Hrabanek of Winner

NEW AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL COMMANDER JAMES A. "JIM" LACOURSIERE

During the final hour of the American Legion 105th national convention in New Orleans, LA, Jim LaCoursiere of Connecticut was elected and sworn in as the new leader of The American Legion.

SOUTH DAKOTA RESOLUTIONS AT NATIONAL CONVENTION

The following resolutions were passed at the department convention and forwarded to national for consideration at the 105th National Convention. Disposition is as follows:

SUPPORT OF PROVIDING POSTSECONDARY CREDIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE- That the American Legion supports the establishment of a standardized system to recognize and appropriately award academic credit or certification for military service based on American Council on Education recommendations of evaluation of the Joint Services Transcript System standards. Passed in committee and on the convention floor.

IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLNESS CARE FOR VETERANS
"An Ounce Of Prevention Is Worth A Pound Of Cure" -call upon the Department of Veterans Affairs to prioritize and enhance health

and wellness care for veterans by including gym memberships as a covered benefit under VA healthcare service. Convention Committee referred to Standing Committee for further study.

AMERICAN LEGION SPONSORING ARMY-NAVY GAME

The American Legion is proud to announce an official partnership with the Army-Navy Football Game presented by USAA, which will be played for the 125th time on Dec. 14, 2024. The American Legion becomes the first veterans service organization (VSO) to sponsor "America's Game" in its history.

The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans service organization, has secured a multi-year deal alongside presenting sponsor USAA and participating partners Chevrolet, Exchange, Duke Cannon Supply Co. and Palantir. The American Legion will also be participating in year-round sponsorships of both Army West Point Athletics and Navy Athletics. The agreement starts with this year's game at Commanders Field in Landover, Md., and helps The American Legion raise awareness about its Be the One mission to reduce the number of veterans and servicemembers lost to suicide.

LEGION INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution of The American Legion states, "The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment." Additionally the National Charter, approved by Congress, stipulates The American Legion as an organization is nonpolitical. Therefore, The American Legion as an organization is never to help or endorse a candidate. As a private citizen and not speaking for the organization, can do whatever is legal and ethical to advance his/her candidacy. If attending a political event, The American Legion cap, or any clothing with The American Legion emblem visible, must be removed so as not to imply any endorsement by The American Legion. This includes in person or over social media.

The American Legion values its independence and effectiveness on veterans' issues. This stance is best maintained by neutrality on all individual candidates or political parties. The American Legion, by legal definition, is non-partisan and supports "or opposes as necessary" only issues which impact the Four Pillars.

!!!!!!LEGISLATIVE ACTION NEEDED!!!!!!

You can contact your representative through our campaigns located at the National Grassroots Action Center. Share The American Legion's legislative priorities using the Legislative Agenda when you contact their office. While on the Grassroots Action Center page, be sure to sign up for legislative alerts so you can stay up to date on all of The American Legion's legislative campaigns.

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home>

2024-2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues for the 2025 Membership year is \$38.50 for each membership sent to Headquarters.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Cards have been mailed!!!

Headquarters has received the 2025 membership cards. Certify your officers **NOW** to receive your cards. The form is in the Post Adjutant's Administrative and Awards Manual or you can email the information to judy@sdlegion.org or give Judy a call at Dept HQ.

Post that have not Certified their officers.

1 VERMILLION	35 HIGHMORE	36 BONESTEEL
38 MILLER	39 GROTON	41 ALEXANDRIA
59 WOLSEY	61 CANOVA	70 FLANDREAU
77 BLUNT	82 BULLHEAD	83 TIMBER LAKE
86 ALCESTER	103 ASTORIA	111 BRIDGEWATER
120 ISABEL	125 ROSEBUD	128 HUDSON

158 OLDHAM	167 WITTEN	201 PUKWANA
39 LITTLE EAGLE	251 PINE RIDGE	324 ROCK CREEK
256 NEW UNDERWOOD	265 KYLE	317 ALLEN
269 WANBLEE	269 PORCUPINE	295 PARMELEE
299 POLO	270 DRAPER	302 MANDERSON
308 EAGLE BUTTE	310 NORRIS	

FUTURE DEPARTMENT CONVENTION AND MIDWINTER DATES AND LOCATIONS

2025 MidWinter, Arrowwood Resort, Oacoma, Feb 14-16
 2025 Convention, Crossroads Hotel, Huron, June 19-22
 2026 MidWinter, Arrowwood Resort, Oacoma, Feb 20-22
 2026 Convention, Aberdeen, June 18-21

FOUNDATION UPDATE

A wonderful donation of \$10,000 was given to the SD American Legion Foundation by Deb Sundem, to honor her parents and all veterans. Her parents, both deceased, were Harlowe and LaVane Sundem of Garretson, SD. Harlowe was a Korean War veteran and a 70-year member of Post 23 in Garretson. He held every office within the Post including Post Commander, and served for decades with the Honor Guard. LaVane was a long-time auxiliary member and past President of Unit 23 in Garretson. Deb grew up on the family farm near Garretson, and was part of the Legion family's activities in the community. Deb explained how important the Legion family was to both of her parents, and that they supported every veteran cause that they could. "Because of their dedication to the Legion, and support for all veterans, a donation to the South Dakota American Legion is a wonderful way to honor not only my parents, but all veterans", said Deb as she presented the check to Foundation Board Members Paul Evenson and Jim Kurtz. Her donation will benefit the SD American Legion forever.



The \$10,000 will be sent to the SD Community Foundation, which manages the funds for the Legion Foundation. Earnings from investments will be paid back to the SD American Legion to support the programs of the SD American Legion. So far in 2024, \$16,590.00 has been granted back to the SD American Legion to support the Legion programs within the Four Pillars (Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth). Pictured are Deb Sundem presenting the donation to Board Members Paul Evenson and Jim Kurtz.

Respectfully submitted by,
 Jim Kurtz
 President of the Board
 SDAL Foundation

BASEBALL TOURNAMENTS WINNERS AND AWARDS

State A Sr
 Tournament Winner: Renner Post 307
 Tournament MVP: Sullivan Schlimgen, Renner Post 307
 Big Stick Award: Teigan Munce, Harrisburg Post 45, 7/14 - .500
 Porter T. Talcott Sportsmanship Award: Watertown Post 17

State A Jr
 Tournament Winner: Rapid City Post 22 Expos
 Tournament MVP: Travis Schlosser, Rapid City Post 22 Expos
 Big Stick Award: Jehiel Aviles, Aberdeen Post 24, 6/10 - .600
 Porter T. Talcott Sportsmanship Award: Pierre Post 8

State B Sr
 Tournament Winner: Elk Point-Jefferson Post 134

Tournament MVP: Keaton Gale, Elk Point-Jefferson Post 134
 Big Stick Award: Keaton Gale, Elk Point-Jeff Post 134, 6/12 - .500
 Porter T. Talcott Sportsmanship Award: Dell Rapids Post 65

State B Jr Baseball Tournament Award Winners
 Tournament Winner: Lennox Post 174
 Tournament MVP: Talen Eich, Lennox Post 174
 Big Stick Award: Talen Eich, Lennox Post 174, 9/14 - .643
 Porter T. Talcott Sportsmanship Award: Martin Post 40

BASEBALL BIDS DUE

Bids for the 2026 Regional and State tournaments are due to the Athletic Commission no later than December 1, 2024. If you are interested in hosting one of the tournaments contact Beau Garcia for more information. beau.garcia2@gmail.com or 605-206-0347

2024 SDAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

The SDAL annual golf tournament will be held in Webster, SD over the weekend of September 7th and 8th, 2024. Register today by calling Chad Hesla at 605-881-0007. For more information contact Athletic Commissioner Elton Blemaster 605-280-2023 or Athletic Commissioner Gene Gillen at 605-415-0885

THANK A VETERAN PHEASANT HUNT PROGRAM

HuntFishSD.com, Hills View Hunts and Guide Service, South Dakota Army National Guard, Aberdeen Elks Lodge #1046, and the Northern South Dakota Chapter of Pheasants Forever are partnering with SFC Brent Wienk to host a Thank a Veteran Pheasant Hunt for Disabled, Retired, and Active Military on Saturday, November 2, 2024, at Hills View Hunts and Guide Service in Eureka, SD.

Our goal for the event is to build relationships with Veterans and the outdoors while providing a focus on rehabilitation and habitat conservation. HuntFishSD.com, Hills View Hunts and Guide Service, South Dakota Army National Guard, Aberdeen Elks Lodge #1046, and the Northern South Dakota Pheasants Forever Chapter are all dedicated supporters of Veterans and the community of Aberdeen.

For more information on how to donate or to nominate a Veteran contact Brent Wienk at brent.t.wienk.mil@army.mil

LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST (LIT)

This Year the Department received \$38,311 for the LIT Program.
Every legionnaire who signs up for any of the LIT programs brings money right back here to our Department.

As a member of the Legion Family, you're eligible for No Cost LegionCare Insurance. \$5,000 NO COST To You Accidental Death Protection if traveling on official American Legion business. \$1,000 Accidental Death Protection for all other covered accidents. Activate your NO COST To You insurance coverage today.

<https://www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare/>
 You may also qualify for **Medicare Supplement and Medicare Advantage Plans through LIT** with a portion of your dollars spent coming right back here to the Department. <https://www.thelit.com/>

2025 MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

The Mid-Winter Conference is being hosted by Potter Post 3, and will be held at the Arrowwood Resort, in Oacoma, 14-16 February 2025. A block of rooms has been set aside, reservations can be made by calling the resort at 605-234-6376. The rate for the Standard King or Double Queen room is \$104 plus taxes. Be sure to mention you will be attending the American Legion Mid-winter Conference. Other details such as the Joint Banquet, Go-Getters, and training sessions will be coming soon.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Legion Family, times like these I think of the parable known as "Stone Soup", the meaning being that we all pitch in to help anyone in the village with what we can contribute. The South Dakota American Legion Education Scholarship is one of the few programs that

can directly give financial assistance for Educational purposes to our own or our progeny. I humbly ask that each Legion Post, each Auxiliary Unit, each SAL Squadron and each Legion Rider Club consider to dedicate at least one fund raiser event (at the local level) to add to the principal of the Scholarship Fund. From these contributions we can hopefully increase the Scholarship Amounts to higher levels and attract more attention not just to the Scholarship but all the other opportunities the American Legion can offer. If you do conduct a fundraiser for this noble cause please make funds payable to SDAL Education Scholarship Fund and send to DEPT HQ.

All for one and one for all.

Yours in Service,

Mike Pauling, Education Committee Chairman
The American Legion, Department of South Dakota
michaelpauling@ymail.com

SD DEPT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS RESOURCE BOOK

The South Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs (SDDVA) has developed a resource book to educate veterans on the benefits and resources that are available to them and their family. This is a great guide with 60 pages of useful information. You can access the guide at the SDDVA website <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/> Or directly at: [https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/Other%20Publications/2023%20Resource%20Book%20\(July\).pdf](https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/Other%20Publications/2023%20Resource%20Book%20(July).pdf)

LEGION FAMILY IN ACTION, SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

A new school year is here and volunteers from the American Legion, Sons of the American Legion, Legion Auxiliary, and VFW members from several Post in the Black Hills were present to assist with the Back-to-School Backpack Distribution event held on Ellsworth AFB on July 27th. Over 600 military children, their parents and other loved ones were interacted with while our members distributed over 400 donated backpacks by Operation Homefront.

In mid-August, Operation Homefront also asked for assistance from our Legionnaires with school supply collections from various Dollar Trees in South Dakota. Volunteers from various Posts assisted with the collection of these school supplies. Backpacks were purchased from the Children and Youth fund, the school supplies were loaded into them and distributed to various schools in Brookings and Hamlin County.

Having financial stability is important to young service member families as it can be difficult to afford the basic school supplies needed for their children. Volunteering time, resources, or funds to support the well-being of our veterans and the children of your young veterans can be the change they need for a brighter future.

Thank you to all of our volunteers for their time in supporting our youth.

Respectfully submitted by,

Harry Boner

American Legion, Department of South Dakota
2025 Children and Youth Chairperson
hb.boner@gmail.com



LEGION HISTORY

Sept 23, 1804, the Lewis and Clark Expedition made contact with the Lakota Nation for the first time.

Sept 16, 1919 Congress charters The American Legion.

Sept 1932 The Sons of The American Legion is officially recognized during the 1932 National Convention in Portland, Ore

Sept. 1, 1939 Germany invaded Poland, starting World War II.

Sept 2, 1945 Japan formally surrendered to the Allied forces on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, ending World War II.

Sept 18, 1947 The US Air Force was established.

Sept 11, 2001 Nineteen al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four airplanes, crashing two into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center and a third plane into the Pentagon. After learning about the other attacks, passengers on the fourth plane, Flight 93, fought back, and the plane crashed into an empty field in western Pennsylvania. The attacks killed 2,977 people from 90 nations: 2,753 people were killed in New York; 184 people were killed at the Pentagon; and 40 people were killed on Flight 93.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

The American Legion's recent Membership Conference has indeed been a pivotal event, underscoring the strength found in unity and collective action. The increase in membership, now standing at a remarkable 54.53%, is not just a number—it's a reflection of the dedication and commitment of the members. It's a beacon of progress, signaling that the goals set by the National are well within reach, perhaps even surpassable.

The conclusion of the 2024 National Convention marks the beginning of a new chapter, filled with potential and promise. The sponsorship of the Army/Navy game is a historic moment, showcasing the Legion's commitment to community and country. As we move forward, it's not just about increasing numbers; it's about fostering a spirit of collaboration and involvement. The call to action is clear: embody the 'Eye of the Tiger,' and work together to make this year unforgettable. With Commander Kevin and the membership committee at the helm, every member is encouraged to contribute, to be part of the team that propels the American Legion to new heights. Let's carry this momentum and make a lasting impact—one life at a time.

Thank you,

God bless you and your family.

Bill

