

Legion News



VOLUME 86, NUMBER 1

STILL SERVING AMERICA

August 2018

Legionnaires Elect Dennis Brenden 2018-2019 Department Commander



Dennis Brenden
2018 - 2019
State Commander
Department of South Dakota

Dennis Brenden, of Watertown, was elected as the 2018-2019 Department Commander of The American Legion Department of South Dakota during the closing moments of the 100th Annual Department Convention in Spearfish, SD on June 10, 2018. Brenden was nominated by Paul Evenson of Garretson, and his nomination was seconded by Larry Price of Redfield.

Denny Brenden graduated from High School in Hayti, SD, in 1968. Following graduation, at the age of 18, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and served one year in Vietnam as a

rifleman.

Denny is a 48-year continuous member of The American Legion and is currently a member of Codington County American Legion Post #17 in Watertown, SD. Denny is a life member of The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America and the Marine Corps League. He is also a member of the 40&8. Denny has been married to his wife Roxy for 46 years and they have three grown children, 16 grandchildren with 9 boys and 7 girls. Denny and Roxy reside in Watertown, SD, and are members of the Hosanna Lutheran Church in Watertown.

On Thursday, June 7, the state convention activities kicked off with a meeting of the Department Finance Commission where Department Finance Officer Gary Wolkow briefed the Department Finance Commission on the status of the current budget and following their meeting, the Department Executive Committee met in the Spearfish Convention Center. Later that same afternoon, the 5-Year Membership Council and Public Relations/Media Committee held their joint meeting.

On Friday morning, June 8, the Convention Resolutions Committee, led by committee chairman Denny Brenden of Watertown, met to assign resolutions to the various convention committees. This year, the Convention Resolutions Committee referred a total of two resolutions to the convention committees. All nine Convention Committees met early in the afternoon to act on any resolutions assigned to their respective convention committee.

The South Dakota American Legion Press Association (SDALPA) held their annual luncheon and business meeting in the Cottonwood room at the Spearfish Convention Center. Charemon Dunham of Iroquois, SD, was elected to serve as the SDALPA President in 2018-2019.

On Friday evening, the Go-Getter Smorgasbord was held at the Western Heritage Center in Spearfish and as always, the event was very well attended by the Go-Getters and everyone had a great time. The unique setting gave everyone a chance to mingle and learn a new fact or two. Again this year, a "fun auction" was held and the proceeds were \$5999.60. An auction highlight again this year, was a John Green original print featuring the Centennial Celebration that was auctioned off. Pat Huls of Madison was the top bidder for the print and is now the proud owner of four original John Green prints from the fun auction.

The convention fun auction continues to grow and gets more excit-

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Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Veterans Cemetery Opens



An Honor Guard consisting of National, State and Tribal colors, as well as Veteran Service Organizational flags, performs ceremonial duties at the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Veterans Cemetery Grand Opening.

Sisseton—The Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux tribe celebrated the grand opening of a brand new veteran's cemetery on July 12, 2018. It's the 3rd tribal burial ground in the state, but it will honor veterans of every background.

Dignitaries from Tribal and civic leadership, the National Cemetery Association, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, the South Dakota American Legion, and various other Veteran Service Organizations were in attendance for the opening ceremonies. Remarks were made by representatives from Senator John Thune and Representative Kristi Noem's office.

A \$3 million grant from the department of veteran affairs and the national cemetery association helped complete the vision of the cemetery. The cemetery is twenty acres in length and is located across the street from the Valley View Golf Course in Sisseton. The state's Dakota tribe gifted the land to the Sisseton-Wahpeton tribal community.

SD American Legion Donates Flag Pole to Boys State

ABERDEEN, S.D. – A brand new U.S. flag will fly at Northern State University's new Athletic and Recreation Fields, thanks to the South Dakota American Legion.

The Legion is donating a flag, pole and pedestal for the project on the NSU campus. Director Gene Opbroek said the gift is a testament to the great relationship the Legion has with Northern, which is home to the Boys State program.

"We just thought it was time that we put something there to honor not only the Legion but the Boys State attendees for the last 76 years," said Boys State Director Gene Opbroek.

Opbroek said the Legion planned to seek outside donations to fund the gift, but it wasn't necessary: Members stepped up at the annual convention and said they were happy to support it.

The flag pole will stand at the site of one of Northern's newest projects, currently under construction east of Jerde Hall. The Athletic and Recreation Fields will be finished by fall and will include a soccer competition field, football practice field and pavilion.

The project is part of the Educational Impact Campaign, NSU's joint effort with the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SDSBVI), which also includes a new SDSBVI facility and on-campus regional sports complex.



2018-2019 State Vice Commanders



On June 9, 2018, Legionnaires from posts all across South Dakota cast their votes and elected two new State Vice Commanders during the closing moments of that days events at the 100th State Convention in Spearfish, SD.

Pictured at left is Ed Thompson, of Custer, SD, who will represent a total of 51 Legion Posts in Districts 1 and 2 and pictured at right is Ed Stringer of Hartford, SD, who will represent a total of 189 Legion Posts in Districts 3-8. They will both serve a one-year term that will end June 8, 2019.

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South Dakota American Legion, PO Box 67, Watertown, SD 57201

Courtney VanZanten, Chester, Editor

Travise Flisrand, Watertown, Managing Editor

Send all copy for publication to:

South Dakota Legion News, PO Box 67, Watertown, SD 57201-0067

Office Phone (605) 886-3604, Fax (605) 886-2870

Email: dso@sdlegion.org

Home page: <http://www.sdlegion.org>

PLEASE REPORT CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO:

SD LEGION NEWS, PO BOX 67, WATERTOWN, SD 57201-0067

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State Chaplain — Larry Klumb, Ethan

State Finance Officer — Gary Wolkow, De Smet

State Historian — Fred Lee, Sioux Falls

State Judge Advocate — Gary Schumacher, De Smet

State Sergeant-At-Arms — Verle Whipple, Clear Lake

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DISTRICT COMMANDERS

1—Kevin Morello, Black Hawk

2—Eugene Iron Shell, Jr., Rosebud

3—LeRoy Madsen, Pierre

4—Perry Schmidt, Redfield

5—Matt Lagerstrom, White

6—Doug Feltman, Chamberlain

7—Ed Stringer, Hartford

8—Gregory Geiman, Scotland

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Congressional Contact Information

Senator John Thune, 511 Dirksen Office Bldg, Washington, DC 20510, Phone: 202-224-2321, Fax 202-228-5429, Toll Free 866-850-3855, Web site: <http://www.thune.senate.gov>

Senator Michael Rounds, Hart Senate Office Building, Suite 502, Washington, DC 20510, Phone: 202-224-5842, Fax 202-228-5765, Toll Free Phone: 1-844-875-5268, Web site: <http://www.rounds.senate.gov>

Representative Kristi Noem, 2457 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, Toll Free 855-225-2801, Phone: 202-225-2801, Fax 202-225-5823, Web site: <http://noem.house.gov>

Please send all original photos
and news materials to:
SD American Legion
PO Box 67
Watertown, SD 57201-0067
dso@sdlegion.org
or
hq@sdlegion.org

Dennis Brenden Elected State Commander

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ing each year. The items donated for the fun auction are top quality and very desirable for the bidders. Everyone attending the fun auction had a great time and the winning bidders were happy to take home their treasures.

The General Session of the Department Convention opened on Saturday morning, June 9th, following a mini-concert by the South Dakota American Legion Band.

The American Legion Riders from Black Hills Chapter #164 performed the POW/MIA Ceremony.

The South Dakota American Legion Band played the National Anthem to start the convention.

Several dignitaries brought greetings to the Convention including Watertown City Mayor Steve Thorson; Representative Kristi Noem; South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard; VFW Representative Rick Williamson; Ken Teunissen, Commander of Military Order of the Purple Heart; DAV representative Bob Hill; SAL Detachment Commander Jeff Shannon; South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Erin Bultje; Shawn Bohn representing the VA Dakotas Regional Office; Brad Richardson, Superintendent of the Michael Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home; Circuit Court Judge Robert Spears presentation on Veterans Court; Nicole Renner of the Department of Labor; and Sgt. Tony Manau of the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

Numerous Americanism, Membership, Employer, and individual awards were presented during the opening session of the convention. Convention delegates heard several commission and convention committee reports from their respective chairpersons.

Mark Sumner of American Legion Post #17, Watertown, SD, was selected as the 2018 Department Legionnaire of the Year recipient.

Fred Nelson of American Legion Post #22, Spearfish, SD, was select-



Denny Brenden, of Watertown, receives his Commander's Pin from his wife, Roxy.

ed as the recipient of the Robert C. Gabrielson Memorial Leadership Award for 2018.

The Joint Memorial Service, led by Department Chaplain Larry Klumb of Ethan, SD, was held later that afternoon in the Spearfish Event Center.

The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion Joint Banquet was held on Saturday evening, June 9th, at the Spearfish Convention Center. National Vice Commander of The American Legion, Byron Callies from the Department of South Dakota, served as the keynote speaker for the Joint Legion, Auxiliary and SAL Banquet.

Elections for department offices were held on Sunday, June 10th. Elected as the two new Department Vice Commanders for 2018-2019 were Ed Thompson of Custer, SD, who will represent Districts 1 and 2, and Ed Stringer, of Hartford, SD, who will represent Districts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Each will serve a one-year term.

Verle Whipple of Clear Lake and a member of Gary Post #109, was unopposed and re-elected as the Department Sergeant-At-Arms for a one-year term in 2018-2019.

The 2018 State Convention concluded with the election of Dennis Brenden, of Watertown, as the 2018-2019 State Commander. Brenden will serve a one-year

term as Department Commander.

Newly elected Department Commander Brenden was sworn into office and presided over the Department Post Convention Department Executive Committee which met immediately after the adjournment of the State Convention to conduct their Post-Convention business which included the appointment of Gene Opbroek, of Ft. Pierre, for a one-year term as the Membership Chairman for 2018-2019; Travise Flisrand of Castlewood appointed for a one-year term as the Department Public Relations Officer; Larry Klumb of Ethan, SD, for a one-year term as the Department Chaplain and Gary Wolkow of De Smet was appointed as the Department Finance Officer for a two-year term. Steven Houston of Milbank was elected for a 4-year term on the Department Finance Commission..

We thank everyone in District 1 for doing an outstanding job coordinating the 2018 State American Legion Convention. Everyone appreciated their hard work and hospitality. We especially thank Kevin Morello for all the hours he put in to make sure the convention goes were taken care of and that everything ran smoothly. In February 2019, the Legion Family is once again off to Spearfish, SD, who now has the very special honor to host the Midwinter Convention of the South Dakota American Legion. It promises to be a great time in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota.



National Vice Commander Byron Callies receives his gifts at the Joint Banquet

EDITORIAL POLICY

The South Dakota Legion News is published six times a year to serve its members and interested parties by informing them of about Department activities and other relevant issues concerning the veterans of South Dakota. The paper is also the voice of the members. We welcome articles from members. The news and opinions expressed in this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of The American Legion Department of South Dakota, its Officers, Members, or the Editor. The Editor reserves the right to edit all articles.

"We Will Leave No Veteran Behind"

Dennis Brenden
State Commander



I would like to thank everyone for the privilege of being your State Commander. One really doesn't realize the honor and prestige that is awarded to the position of State Commander of the South Dakota American Legion until you are serving in the position.

My motto this year is "We Will Leave No Veteran Behind". I've taken this from Commanding Officer Hal Morris in the movie "We Were Soldiers". Morris was speaking to his troops before the first major battle in Vietnam in 1965. He told them he would be the first to set foot on the field and the last one to leave the field. Morris followed with the statement "We Will Leave No Soldier Behind, Dead or Alive". This statement has stuck with me. We are leaving many veterans behind each year by not renewing their membership. Last year 1500 members did not renew their membership. We need to contact them and bring them back to our organization. I've called on leadership to step up and help in making phone calls or personal contact with them. We are coming into a time in our history where every member counts and we can't leave any veteran behind.

I have a lot of ideas on how to get our membership back to where it should be. First of all, Gene Opbroek was appointed as membership chairman. He is a seasoned veteran on membership and is going to give everything possible to accomplish our goal. Our Department goal this year is 20,001. Every member counts. I would like to bring the 20,001 member on stage, along with the recruiter, at our 101st Convention in Sioux Falls. No one individual can achieve this goal, only working as a team and everyone having the same goal will this is achieved.

I am going to be asking for assistance on membership from all the leaders of The American Legion. A goal of 3 new members has been assigned to all members of the Finance Commission, Executive Committee and all Department Officers. Everyone will be working on membership. This year the 5-year Membership Council will be used to attend every event possible in the State. The last few years this Council has not been used. Some of our best recruiters in the State serve on this council. The Department needs to use Legionnaires.

There are different areas of membership that should be concentrated on. The National Guard, female veterans, Native American veterans and the Vietnam Veterans. The members of the National Guard are vital to our future; there are approximately 7,000 female veterans in the State; our brothers on the reservations are great warriors and are a vital part of our organization; over 60% of our membership is Vietnam or Vietnam Era Veterans but we have many that have not joined us. Of course we do not want to forget those returning from service in all our military branches.

My commitment to you is that I'll represent The American Legion at all events to the best of my ability. When I am not at these events, I will be at any recruiting event that is possible. **Our 100th year, what a special time in our history.** If you have an event that you want me at or even a Post Meeting, please contact me or State Headquarters. I serve at your pleasure.

I don't want to close without saying to all Posts and members. I need your help this year on membership, we are at a crossroads in our history where we need every veteran to join us in fighting for veterans benefit and keep the benefits use deserve. Thank you and I look forward to seeing everyone down the road.

Denny Brenden
State Commander

South Dakota American Legion Band Plays for State Convention



The South Dakota American Legion Band entertains the Legion Family convention delegates with a series of patriotic musical selections during the 100th annual State American Legion Convention in Spearfish, SD. The Band performed during the Go-Getters Banquet, and before the general business sessions began.

2018 American Legion State Golf Tournament To Be Held in Irene

The 2018 American Legion State Golf Tournament will be held September 8 & 9, 2018, at the Beresford Course on Saturday and Irene Course on Sunday, hosted by: Post 13 of Wakonda. This tournament is open to all American Legion family members and will be a 4 person scramble. Contact Athletic Commissioners Elton Blemaster at 605-280- 2023 or Gene Gillen at 605-415-0885 for more information.

SD American Legion Donates \$50,000 to East River State Veterans Cemetery Endowment

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. - Keloland News reports that hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations are coming in from a variety of groups including Avera, Sanford, the American Legion and more. The money will help support a proposed state Veterans cemetery in northern Sioux Falls.

That is the beginning of a parade of donations to the state Veterans cemetery endowment fund. Veteran and Dr. Barry Martin with Avera Health says the organization is pledging \$250,000 to the fund.

Sanford Health is also pitching in \$50,000 right now. Its Director of Veteran and Military Services says the proposed cemetery means a lot for all Veterans, past and present.

The goal is to raise \$3 million in five years. The endowment fund will cover operating costs of the cemetery once it's built. A pre-application for a roughly \$6 million grant has been submitted to the National Cemetery Administration. That money would cover the construction costs of the cemetery.

"The 19,000 members of the American Legion in South Dakota are really proud to present this check for this project. There will probably be more coming. In fact we have a post very near Fort Meade and the Black Hills National Cemetery, that donated \$1,500," Jim Huls with the South Dakota American Legion.

Disabled American Veterans are also presenting a check for \$25,000 and even more funding is coming in from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Military Order of the Purple Heart and Vietnam Vets. South Dakota is one of five states in the country without a state Veterans cemetery.

Department Adjutant's Thoughts

Travise Flisrand
State Adjutant



Tomorrow's Legionnaires and war-era/generational differences. For the past 21 months I have had the unique perspective of observing interactions at meetings of all levels while still being the "new guy". I have heard the frustrations of members who say the young members just won't join. I have seen the meetings where we all sit in our cliques, you can put a label on any of them, from Post, District, branch of service, war-era to generational. By human nature we all tend to go to our "comfort zones". As we turn the focus to the future, we must be able to get out of our comfort zones, talk with those who are coming up into our organization; that by definition are "young".

There is no single answer to recruiting a new member into our organization, which makes it a challenge. In "sales" there are a few things you must always have. 1. have some sort of rapport with them (by talking with them and having something in common). 2. understand the prospect's needs. 3. know enough about our organization to be able to provide the answers on how our organization can fulfil their need(s).

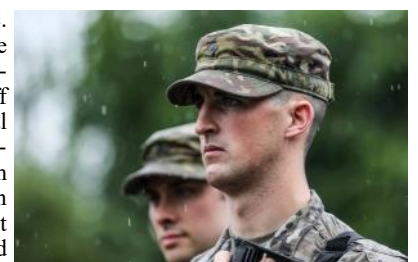
Having a conversation with the veteran is key to learning about them, without this, you will not be able to go anywhere. Questions such as: are they married, kids, what job do they do, do they have fellow veterans they are friends with, what branch of service, did they deploy? The list of questions can continue depending on the person's level of opening up. When having a conversation, each person is learning about the other. It should be a mutual conversation and not one where you overload them with an interrogation. Bring in the comradery into the mix of our meetings and how we all assist each other in our personal lives.

Collecting the dues is just the first step of having a new member. Do not forget there is a backside to those applications where the new member has a chance to "volunteer" into something they are interested in. We lose a lot of new members by not making them feel like they belong in "OUR" organization. Inviting them into meetings, coffee social hours, to events to pay respects to those who have fallen is a vital next step. Find out when they have time in their busy schedules to fit in the American Legion family, then change your schedule, if you can, to give them an opportunity to participate.

A century ago the forefathers of our organization likely didn't know how long this organization would last. What they did initially in their meetings and communities is not the same as it is now. Times change and with that so do we. The "senior" leadership of our Posts is a valuable asset that we need, the "junior" members are an asset we should embrace and mentor, so the Four Pillars of "OUR" organization will remain the common bond that makes all of us Legionnaires. I know this will be a great year for us as we step into another Century of "Veterans taking care of Veterans". Thank you for what you do in your communities.

Sturgis Guardsman Takes Home Top Honors as Army National Guard's Soldier of the Year

South Dakota National Guard's Spc. Bailey Ruff, of Sturgis, has won the 2018 Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition. On July 27th, Ruff was announced as the Army National Guard's Soldier of the Year after competing this week against Soldiers from across the country in Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Ruff is the first SDNG Soldier to win this title and advance to the Department of the Army's Best Warrior Competition at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, and the Pentagon later this fall.



Spc. Bailey Ruff (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Gregory McElwain)

The premier Army competition, 22 of the Army's finest warriors, representing 11 commands from across the Army, will compete in the 2018 Best Warrior Competition at Fort A.P. Hill, Va., and the Pentagon from Sept. 30 to Oct. 5, 2018. Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey will oversee the 17th annual competition, which names the Department of the Army's Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

Warriors selected to compete for these prestigious titles - 11 Soldiers and 11 NCOs - have already mastered a series of benchmarks throughout the year to qualify for the DA-level competition.

During the six-day competition, these elite competitors will test their knowledge, skills and abilities by conquering urban warfare simulations, demonstrating critical thinking, formal board interviews, physical fitness challenges, written exams, and warrior tasks and battle drills relevant to today's operating environment. Best of luck to Spc. Ruff!

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Courtney VanZanten
Department Service Officer



Another state convention in the books! It was wonderful seeing you all out in the Hills. A big thanks to the hospitality shown by District 1; I look forward to returning for Midwinter! Congratulations to State Commander Denny Brenden on being elected State Commander for the Department of South Dakota, as well as all others elected to leadership positions.

I've heard time and time again that posts are having trouble reaching out to younger veterans. In my experience, one of the best ways to reach out to my generation is to provide them with resources—make it clear that you have the knowledge, awareness and/or connections to help them in their everyday lives. One of the best ways to do that is to utilize the post Service Officer position: know your county service officer, know what programs are available, and know where to point a veteran when they need help. You don't need to be the expert, but you should know where the experts are. Be willing to go to an appointment or two with your County Veterans Service Officer if your veteran isn't comfortable, or doesn't know what questions to ask. Now, let's arm you with a few talking points:

For those who served near them, the smell of the burn pits is unforgettable. As it turns out, there's potentially something more sinister in that smoke—it's possible that burn pits could have caused or will cause health issues in Southwest Asia Veterans. If you or someone you know served in Southwest Asia since 1991, please take the time to complete the VA Burn Pit Registry at <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/>.

While there is not enough medical or scientific information to conclude that long-term health effects have occurred due to burn pit smoke, VA continues to study the health of deployed Veterans. Veterans and Servicemembers who were closer to burn pit smoke or exposed for longer periods may be at greater risk for health problems. Individual health effects will vary and may depend on a number of other factors, such as the type of waste being burned and wind direction. According to a 2011 Institute of Medicine report, the high level of fine dust and pollution common in Iraq and Afghanistan may pose a greater danger for respiratory illnesses than exposure to burn pits.

There are, however, already established presumptive diseases for those who have served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations since 1990. These include Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders, and Undiagnosed Illnesses with symptoms that may include but are not limited to: abnormal weight loss, fatigue, cardiovascular disease, muscle and joint pain, headache, menstrual disorders, neurological and psychological problems, skin conditions, respiratory disorders, and sleep disturbances.

Help younger veterans find the help they've earned—many are unaware that presumptives exist in the VA for Gulf War eras. Go into conversations armed with knowledge, and you might come out one member stronger.

Call with questions!
Courtney VanZanten
Department Service Officer

Doug Harris of Post 22 Selected to Attend National Legion College

This year, The American Legion Department of South Dakota had three Legionnaires that applied to attend the 2018 National Legion College in Indianapolis, Indiana.

A panel of Past Department Commanders reviewed all three applications during the state convention in Spearfish and recommended Doug Harris of Rapid City to be the Department's first choice selection to attend the National Legion College. Also, the Department submitted the application for Matt Lagerstrom of White, SD, the National American Legion College as an attendee. Both applicants qualify under the guidelines for the National Legion College and both applications will be forwarded to the National American Legion College Screening Committee for their consideration.

Each department is allowed one applicant to attend but other applications will be considered and may be accepted by the National American Legion College Screening Committee depending on the number of applicants.

The final selections will be announced by National Headquarters shortly after the conclusion of the 100th annual American Legion National Convention held in Minneapolis, MN August 24-30, 2018.

The 2018 National American Legion College will be a week long, in-depth course of instruction on The American Legion. The college is a combination of lectures, small group workshops, and practical exercises. Students will receive training in leadership, sales and marketing, communication and fundraising. Focus is on self-taught small group sessions under the supervision of graduate facilitators, national staff members and national officers.

Major emphasis is placed on core programs, management techniques and the



Department Commander Brenden Announces Appointments

Department Commander Dennis Brenden, of Watertown, SD, has announced the following appointments:

Gene Opbroek of Ft Pierre to a one-year term as Department Membership Chairman

Jim Huls of Madison to a one year term as Aeronautics Chairman

Travise Flisrand of Castlewood to a one-year term as Public Relations Officer

Larry Klumb of Ethan to a one-year term as Department Chaplain

Fred Lee of Humboldt to a one-year term as Department Historian

Hugh Holmes of Mitchell to a three year term as a member of the Education & Loan Committee Member and one year term as Chairman of the Education & Loan Committee

Larry Madsen of Gettysburg to a three year term as a member of the Americanism Committee and a one year term as Chairman of the Americanism Commission

Rod Smith of Chester to a three year term on the Americanism Committee

Miranda Krumm of Chester to a one year term as Chairman of the Children and Youth Committee

Wolfgang Migge of Watertown to a one year term as Vice Chairman of Children & Youth Special Olympics

Rod Martens of Piedmont to a one year term as Chairman of the Legislative Committee

Doug Feltman of Chamberlain to a five year term as a member of the Legislative Committee

Randy Rakness of Watertown to a three year term as a member of the Trust Fund Committee and a one year term as Chairman of the Department Trust Committee

Warren Aas of Watertown to a one year term as Chairman of the VA&R Committee

Kenneth Van Kekerix of Witten to a one year term as Chairman of the VAVS Committee

Mark Weinmann of Canton to a one year term as Chairman of the Internal Affairs Commission

Gary Warne of Aberdeen to a one year term as Chairman of the Employment Committee

Gary Wolkow of DeSmet to a two year term as Chairman of the Finance Commission

Gary Watts of White to a one year term as a member of the South Dakota Veterans Council

Brian Hambek of Spearfish to a one year term as Legion Riders Liaison

Jerry Lolley of Sturgis to a one-year term as Chairman of the National Cemetery Committee

Jerry Lolley of Sturgis to a one year term as a member of the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery Support Council

Hugh Holmes of Mitchell to a two year term as member of the Employment Committee

Patrick Steele of Aberdeen to a two year term as member of the Employment Committee

Krisma DeWitt of Watertown to a two year term as member of the Employment Committee

Kerry Jorgenson of Watertown to a one year term as the Liaison to the Sons of The American Legion

Gary Henle of Sioux Falls to a two year term as a member of the VAVS Committee

Jim Childers of Spearfish to a two year term as a member of the VAVS Committee

Daryl Yost of Leola to a two year term as a member of the VAVS Committee

Mark Mills of Custer to a one year term as Chairman of the National Security Committee

Gary Henle of Sioux Falls to a one year term as the East River Retention Chairman

PDC Tim Jurgens of Milbank as member of the PR/Media Committee

Gary Wolkow of DeSmet as a member of the 5 Year membership council

Shelly Romeu of Watertown for a two-year term as a member of the Americanism commission

Miranda Krumm of Chester as a member of the PR/Media committee

Courtney VanZanten of Chester as a member of the PR/Media committee

development of leadership skills necessary to increase visibility of programs, growth in membership and public awareness of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion.

Selection requirements include Legionnaires with military service during the Lebanon/Grenada or subsequent eligibility periods.

The National American Legion College is scheduled to run from October 28 to November 3, 2018, at the American Legion Headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Boys State Flag Pole Continued...

The new SDSBVI building will be constructed at the current site of Jerde, which is set for demolition this summer. After that point, construction will start on the new school, which has a projected completion date of fall 2019. Once SDSBVI moves to its new building, the current school will be demolished. According to Northern's campus master plan, by spring 2020, construction will begin on the sports complex. Completion is expected no later than 2022.

Opbroek praised the positive changes being made to Northern's campus, and also the university's relationship with the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

"That's an awesome thing they're doing with them as well," he said. "They're definitely looking into the future, and that's what we like to see because that's what we like to do, too."

A dedication ceremony is tentatively planned for the new flag in May 2019 during the next Boys State, involving Legion members and dignitaries.

Opbroek said the donation is a way to say thank you, and to give back – without Northern's assistance, Boys State wouldn't be possible.

"They have done so many things for our program. It's just been fantastic," he said. "We couldn't ask for a better working relationship than what we have with Northern State University."

And it's a relationship Opbroek hopes will continue for years to come.

"Without Northern, I don't know where our program would be," he said. "It's been there since its inception in 1941, and we don't ever see it changing."

Future American Legion National Convention Sites

August 24-30, 2018
Minneapolis, Minnesota
The 100th National Convention of The American Legion.
August 23-29, 2019
Indianapolis, Indiana
The 100th Birthday celebration of The American Legion.
August 28-September 3, 2020
Louisville, Kentucky
August 27-September 2, 2021
Phoenix, Arizona
August 26-September 1, 2022
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
August 25 - 31, 2023
Charlotte, North Carolina
Attending a National Convention of The American Legion is a great experience and a way for Legionnaires to participate in conducting the business of The American Legion on a national level. Listen to great well-known speakers, and attend informative meetings.

National Executive Committeeman

Jim Huls
National Executive Committeeman



Congratulations to Denny Brenden as our newly elected Department Commander for 2018-19. Commander Brenden will do a outstanding job for the Legionnaires of South Dakota. His experience and knowledge of the American Legion are unsurpassed in South Dakota. His membership goal of 20,000 plus 1 is attainable if we all get behind the Commander and work to that goal. The key is membership renewals.

The American Legion National Convention is in Minneapolis from August 24-30. Many Legionnaires from South Dakota are attending and participating in Standing Committees and Convention Committees on Saturday and Sunday. Most attendees will take part in the Convention Parade on Sunday afternoon and the South Dakota caucus on Monday morning. The Convention business sessions are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

This is good opportunity for South Dakota Legionnaires to attend a National Convention as this is as close as it will ever be. Give it your consideration.

For God and Country
Jim Huls
NEC South Dakota

Sweepstakes Winners

In early Spring 2018, Legionnaires were mailed sweepstakes tickets for an opportunity to win the grand prize of \$1,000 during the 100th annual Department Convention in Spearfish. Other cash prizes were 2nd prize of \$500; 3rd prize of \$300; 4th prize of \$200 and 5th prize of \$100.

The drawing was conducted during the 100th annual State Convention in Watertown on Saturday, June 9, 2018.

Grand Prize winner of \$1,000 was Francis Sieverding of Humboldt
2nd prize winner of \$500 was Dale Kiebach of Harrisburg
3rd prize winner of \$300 was Joe Snyder of Sioux Falls
4th prize winner of \$200 was James Thibodeau of Onida
5th prize winner of \$100 was Diane Diekmann of Sioux Falls



Post 17 has made a American Legion Birthday Cake float that Dick Vohlken is willing to drive in any parade in South Dakota. To make reservation of this float call Dick at 605-956-0391. If you wish to make a donation to him to offset fuel costs to drive to your parade and back, it would be appreciated.

State Commander Denny Brenden Cap Pin

State Commander Denny Brenden will use his special State Commander Cap Pin to award membership recruitment and participation in specific American Legion programs for 2018-2019.

State Commander Brenden will also award his special "We Will Leave No Veteran Behind" State Commander Cap Pin for the following participation in The American Legion programs (Certification is required from the Post Adjutant):

Commander's Cap Pin will be awarded to Post Legionnaires for:

Legionnaires who recruits ONE NEW 2019 member or reinstates ONE member whose membership has lapsed.

Legionnaires who participated in conducting a Local, District or Department High School Oratorical Contest.

Each Legionnaire who participates in the process of interviewing and choosing the Post's Boys State Delegates or conducts an Orientation within his/her District.

Each Legionnaire who participates in the presentation of military rites at the funeral.

Each Legionnaire who actively participates in American Legion Baseball. This Legionnaire must work the program and is not for going to the game as a spectator.

Only one "We Will Leave No Veteran Behind" commander's cap pin will be awarded per member, per year.

Any request for the special State Commander Cap Pin will need to be certified by the Post Adjutant.

The certification form and official guideline requirements for the pin can be found in the 2018-2019 Post Adjutant's Administrative & Awards Manual which has been mailed to every Post Adjutant.

Please see Page 7 for a picture of the cap pin for Commander Brenden.

\$5,999.60

Proceeds from the annual South Dakota American Legion Foundation Fun Auction held in Spearfish during the 100th Annual State Convention.

Thank you to everyone who donated and bought items for the auction.

MEMBERSHIP

Department Membership Chairman Gene Opbroek
"20,001 Plus 1"

Department of South Dakota Emergency Fund Established

The Department Executive Committee has established a Department Emergency Fund. Previously known as the Emergency Relief Fund, the renamed fund has a quick-acting team of three, consisting of the Finance Officer, Department Commander and Department Adjutant. This fund is to be used similar to the National Emergency fund—its goal is to provide temporary relief to veterans who are residents of our State or American Legion Posts when a disaster strikes. Unlike the Temporary Financial Assistance program, veterans are not required to have dependents to be eligible.

Monies expended from this fund will be limited to around \$300 per veteran in time of need. There must be money in the account before any funds can be expended. The current balance is \$1,229 and will be replenished by donations only. This would be a great program to support for any Post, Squadron, or Rider Chapter.

History Contest Winners Announced *Post Historians Encouraged to Document History

Each year, The American Legion Department of South Dakota encourages all Posts to ensure that their individual Post Historians properly document the history of their Posts.

In an attempt to stimulate additional interest in that documentation, the Department sponsors a contest where all Posts can enter their histories in a contest where Post Histories are judged in two separate categories.

Those categories are Post Yearbook and Post Narrative History. Department Historian Fred Lee of Humboldt Post #62 chairs a committee of selected volunteers who judge the histories at the Department Convention.

Department Historian Fred Lee encourages all posts to document the history of the events and happenings in their posts throughout the year.

Judged as this year's winner in the Post Yearbook:

First Place Winner, Scrapbook –

Codington County American Legion Post #17 of Watertown, SD. Post Historian is Lynn Johnson.

Second Place Winner, Scrapbook – Brandon American Legion Post #318, Brandon, SD. Post Historian is Donald Branson.

First Place Winner, Narrative-- Chester American Legion Post #136, Chester, SD. Post Historian is Courtney VanZanten.

Second Place Winner, Narrative-- Dell Rapids American Legion Post #65, Dell Rapids, SD. Post Historian is Bill Huntimer.

With the centennial coming up, The American Legion is promoting histories online on their centennial page. Please check them out and read about other post histories.



Department Commander Hugh "Homer" Holmes, Shelli Romieu of Codington County Post #17, and Department Historian Fred Lee

100th Annual Department Convention, Spearfish, SD



Newly elected State Commander Denny Brenden of Watertown, SD, addressed the convention body near the closing of the 100th Annual State Convention in Watertown on June 10, 2018.



The keynote speaker at the Joint Legion/Auxiliary/SAL Banquet on Saturday evening, June 9th was The American Legion National Vice Commander Byron Callies from Watertown, SD.



Hugh Holmes of Mitchell prepares to address the convention for the last time as the Department Commander for South Dakota. Congratulations on a great year and a lot of miles, Commander!



Jim Huls of Madison addressed the convention as the National Executive Committeeman for South Dakota. A longtime member of the Salem post, this was Jim's first Department Convention as NEC.



2018 Department Convention Activities



U.S. Congresswoman Kristi Noem addressed the American Legion Convention on Saturday, June 9th. Noem gave the convention delegates an overview of the issues that she is working in Washington, D.C. concerning the veterans and their families. We appreciate Representative Noem taking time out of her busy schedule to address our convention.



Taking the oath of office are newly elected Department Commander Dennis Brenden of Watertown, SD, Department Vice Commander Districts 3-8 Ed Stringer of Hartford, SD, Department Vice Commander Districts 1-2 Ed Thompson of Custer, SD, and Department Sergeant-At-Arms Verle Whipple of Revillo, SD.



Performing the POW/MIA ceremony at the start of the Joint Banquet on Saturday, June 9, is a team from the Black Hills Chapter of the South Dakota American Legion Riders. Pictured setting the table are Riders Fred Nelson and Jim Childers, while Mike Kain read the ceremonial script.



Saxophonists Marla Mosiman and Dwayne LaFave entertain the crowd before the business session on Sunday, June 10th. Marla is an Auxiliary member of the Onida unit, and Dwayne is a Legion member of DeSmet. Dwayne served in the SD National Guard band out of Mitchell.

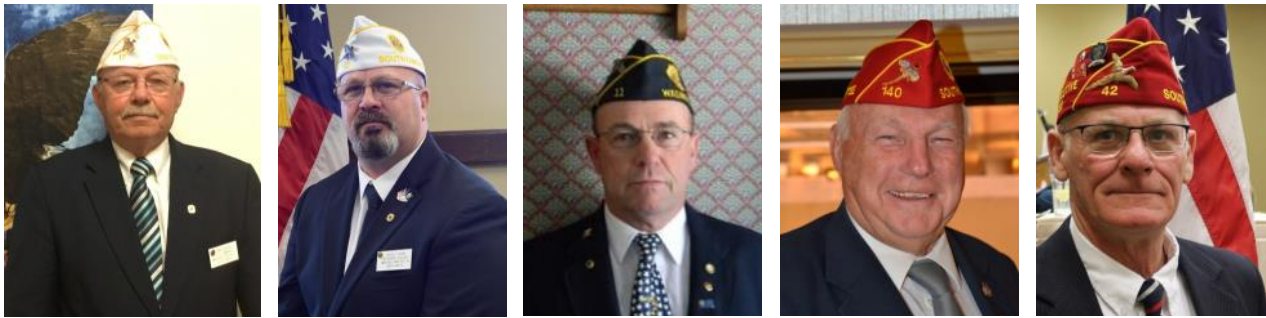


Not everything is serious business at Convention! Hudson post member Rich Ekle dons his best Magoo impersonation. Magnifying glasses borrowed from an impressive display of historical items provided by various posts in District One.



The oldest Legionnaire in attendance, WWII veteran and D-Day Survivor Mel Carlson from Lead Post #31, makes the ceremonial first cut into the cake with the youngest veteran in attendance, Iraq War veteran and Department Children & Youth Chairman Miranda Krumm, from Chester Post #136.

Department of South Dakota 2018–2019 American Legion State Officers



Dennis Brenden
Department
Commander
2018-2019

Travis Flisrand
Department
Adjutant

Gene Opbroek
Department
Membership
Chairman

Jim Huls
National
Executive
Committeeman

Terry Hanson
Alternate
National Executive
Committeeman



Ed Stringer
State Vice
Commander
(Districts 3-8)

Ed Thompson
State Vice
Commander
(Districts 1-2)

Miranda Krumm
Department
Children & Youth
Chairman

Larry Madsen
Department
Americanism
Chairman



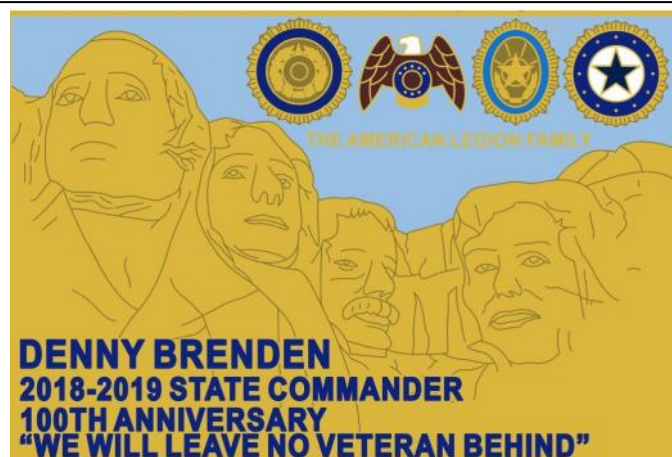
Fred Lee
Department
Historian

Larry Klumb
Department
Chaplain

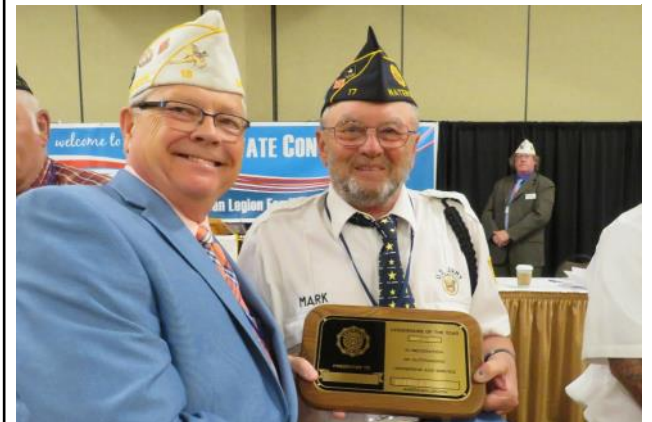
Gary Wolkow
Department
Finance Officer

Verle Whipple
Department
Sergeant-At-Arms

State Commander Denny Brenden 2018 - 2019 Cap Pin



Mark Sumner Selected as Department “Legionnaire of the Year”



Mark Sumner of Codington County American Legion Post #17 in Watertown, SD, is presented the South Dakota American Legion “Department Legionnaire of the Year” award during the 100th State Convention in Watertown.

Other finalists included Donald Mack from Lead Post #31, John Wheeler from Rapid City Post #22, Charlie Marquardt from Ft Pierre Post #20, Theodore Kimball from Redfield Post #92, Steven Small from Alpena Post #116, Gary Lyngen of Garretson Post #23, and Richard Beringer from Tyndal Post #2. The South Dakota American Legion Legionnaire of the Year is selected from the eight winners of their respective American Legion Districts in South Dakota. The district winners must be in attendance at the state convention to win the award. We congratulate all district winners.

Fred Nelson 2018 Robert C. Gabrielson Memorial Leadership Award Recipient



The Robert C. Gabrielson Memorial Leadership Award was presented to Fred Nelson, of Spearfish, SD, during the 100th Department Convention held in Spearfish, SD. This most prestigious award is presented to a Legionnaire that has demonstrated his or her leadership in the department. Fred is a member of the Spearfish American Legion Post #164 in Spearfish.

The award was created in 2004 in honor of PDC Robert C. Gabrielson of Hoven, SD, who was a great advocate for the veterans of South Dakota and very influential as a lobbyist in Pierre for many years on behalf of The American Legion.

Pictured right is Department of South Dakota Chaplain Larry Klumb, of Ethan, leading the Memorial Service held on Saturday, June 9, during the Department Convention.

Pictured at far right is the Memorial table, recognizing Philip J. Iyotte, of White River, SD. Sgt. Iyotte had been captured by Chinese forces during Operation Thunderbolt in Korea. His remains were recently identified through the work of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, and returned to South Dakota for burial on October 25, 2017.



Membership

"20,001 Plus 1"

Gene Opbroek
State Membership Chairman



I want to start with some helpful information for you.

First, banners for events. As I write this banners are being produced at Fast Signs in Pierre. There will be one per District provided by the Department. I strongly urge Posts to purchase Post Specific Banners as well. They are of high quality (buy my business signage there as well) cost is only \$65 per sign, business is SDAL member owned. I will mail the banners to District Commanders by the end of this week or on Monday of next week. Make sure if you get a banner or anything printed that you follow the regulations for the American Legion Logo. These regulations are very specific and must be followed. I strongly advise that Districts or Posts also invest in a canopy (around \$80 without sides). Most fairs we will be outside, really nice to have shade and protection from adverse weather.

I had a great talk with MG Reisch and SCSM Jim Hoekman at the Convention. They both are very supportive of our efforts to increase National Guard membership in the SD American Legion. Every year each unit has to complete a Physical Health Assessment (PHA). These are done at a Battalion or higher level. This would be a great opportunity for the SDAL to set up a table or booth and speak with South Dakota Soldiers and explain all of our benefits to them. Please stop in at your local National Guard unit, ask them when and where they will be conducting the next PHA, and if you can be a part of it. Offer to help as well if you can, sometimes they need folks to help in little ways and it goes a LONG way to interacting with soldiers and getting memberships.

We have a lot of events coming that we need to be a part of. Athletic Commissioner Dan Sudbeck invited all posts to support the upcoming baseball tournaments around the state with tables or booths at the tournaments. Thanks for your support Commissioner Sudbeck!! Here are some other events that we will in attendance. District and County Commanders take note!!

30 Jul-5 Aug-

Oglala Lakota Rodeo Fair-Pine Ridge, Barbecue Pit Row-Winner, Foothills Classic Car and Tractor show-Wessington Springs, Prairie Village Car Show-Madison, **Sioux Empire Fair-SF**

Aug 6-12

Downtown Sundown-SF, Twin Brooks Threshing Show

Aug 13-19

Brown County Fair-Aberdeen, Turner County Fair-Parker, White River Frontier Days-White River, Yankton Riverboat Days-Yankton, Downtown Riverfest-SF, Rosholt Threshing Bee.

Aug 20-26

DakotaFest-Mitchell, Kool Deadwood Nights-Deadwood

Aug 27- Sept 2

Sturgis Mustang Rally-Sturgis, Open House Crazy Horse Memorial-Custer. **SD State Fair-Huron**

These are just a few of the events that are available to recruit new members and re-connect with past members. The highlighted events are a must for the Districts to attend.

I recently attended the annual meeting for the company I work for. As always we had a motivational speaker, this year it was Gian Paul Gonzalez. Gian Paul was the inspiration behind the 2011 New York Giants Super Bowl run. Look him up on the internet and listen to his message when you can. His theme for the Giants was "ALL IN". If you look up "all in" on google it means "exhausted". He went on to explain that in his message to the NY Giants team how he asked them to be "ALL IN" or to exhaust every effort they had in their power and ability to win!! And they did win, because everyone of the NY Giants team refused to quit, refused to give less than 100% each and every time they went out on the field. They refused to let each other fail, they became a team with one goal, and one mission-to win-to be "ALL IN". We can take a lesson from this, are we "ALL IN" when it comes to our faith, our families, and the things that are really important in our lives. To reach this year's goal of 20,000 we are going to have to be "ALL IN" as well. We will have to exhaust all efforts to succeed. When we are tired of making calls, going to events, and searching out new and previous members ask yourself, am I truly "ALL IN". Will I let my fellow veterans down, because I failed to be "ALL IN"??

God bless you all, stay safe!!

Gene O

PACKAGES/LETTERS FOR DEPLOYED LEGIONNAIRE

The Past District 6 Commander is currently deployed and stated she would not be opposed to care packages or letters sent her way. For any Post or member who would like to send something, here is her address. She says it is very hot where she is at. Address: Kathren Caffee / 455 EMXS/MXMR / Unit 94124 / APO AE 09352-4124.

2018 Boys State Election Results



Boys State Director Gene Opbroek with 2018 Governor Seamus Duffy

The following is a list of the election results from the 76th Annual, 2018 American Legion Boys State that was held on the campus of Northern State University in Aberdeen from May 28-June 1, 2018.

Governor:

Seamus Duffy, Sioux Falls

Attorney General:

Henry Vanbommel, Sioux Falls

Commissioner of School and Public Lands:

Brysen Reeser, Sioux Falls

Justice of Supreme Court:

Braden Bury, Watertown

Benjamin Fairholm, Vermillion

David Park, Brookings

Austin Redwing, Sioux Falls

Jude Veerman, Sioux Falls

Public Utilities Commissioner:

Jackson Fiegen, Sioux Falls

Ty Hofer, Hitchcock

Gray Peterson, Vermillion

Secretary of State:

Tyler Hylland, Sioux Falls

State Auditor:

Bear Shipley, Madison

State Treasurer:

Benjamin Brenholt, Tea

Additionally, the following were recognized for their outstanding achievements with their respective awards:

Outstanding Speaker:

Seamus Duffy, Sioux Falls

Outstanding Citizen:

Wyatt Giese, Clear Lake

Chandler L. Beach Award:

Oliver Miner, Eagle Butte

Samsung Scholarship:

Collin Powell, Chamberlain

Boys Nation:

Oliver Miner, Eagle Butte

Tory Shafer, Sioux Falls

Boys Nation Alternates:

Henry VanBommel, Sioux Falls

Riley Niesent, Spearfish

Summary of 2018 Department Convention Resolutions

CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

Convention Resolution No. 2018-2 was drafted by Post 17, Watertown. The resolve clause states: *That the eligibility requirements for the membership in Sons of The American Legion be amended by adding:*

...and the male spouses or widowers, grandfathers, fathers, brothers, and adopted male descendants of all Veterans who are already members of The American Legion, shall be eligible for membership in Sons of The American Legion.

Motion by Bill Huntimer and seconded by Jim Hornstra to recommend DO NOT PASS.

The Motion Carried.

Convention Resolution No. 2018-5 was drafted by Post 17, Watertown. The resolve clause states: *That The American Legion Department of South Dakota change the Department Rehabilitation Committee to the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission and to reinstate a budget to allow the commission to conduct business.*

Motion by Cynthia Douglas and seconded by Jim Hornstra to forward this resolution to the Convention floor recommended as a DO PASS.

The Motion Carried.

Convention Resolution No. 2018-6 was drafted by Post 4, Mobridge. The resolve clause states: *That the American Legion shall encourage Congress to have another United States Navy ship be named "American Legion" in 2019 as it did so in 1919 in honor of the organization the year of its founding; and, be it finally RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to The National Adjutant of The American Legion for consideration at the 100th Annual National Convention of The American Legion to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 24-30, 2018.*

Motion by Annette Dunham and seconded by Jim Hornstra to refer this resolution Convention floor with a DO PASS recommendation.

The Motion Carried.



Legionnaire Hilmer Moen, of Codington County American Legion Post #17 in Watertown, SD, addresses the Convention body from the floor.

Boys & Girls Nation Representatives Meet South Dakota Delegation



Girls Nation Senators Morgan Roberts and Maycee Wiczorek, left, and Boys Nation Delegates Oliver Miner and Tory Shafer, right, meet with U.S. Congressman for South Dakota Representative John Thune.

Membership Awards Presented at 100th Annual Department Convention



Several membership incentive awards were presented during the 100th Annual State American Legion Convention held in Spearfish, SD, on June 7-10, 2018.

This year The South Dakota American Legion recognized five Posts and one District for membership achievements by The American Legion's Birthday target date on March 14, 2018. These Posts received a plaque to commemorate their achievement. The winners were as follows:

15-74 goal size group winner is Eagle Butte Post #308 at 175% of goal. Harrisburg Post #45 was the winner in the 75-124 goal size group for making 122.37% of goal. DeSmet Post #158 and Hermosa Post #303 tied as the winner in the 125-199 member goal size group for making 100% of goal, respectively. Arlington Post #42 was the winner in the 200-299 member goal size group for making 105.8% of goal. Hot Springs Post #71 was the winner in the 300 and up goal size membership group for making 95.87% of goal, and finally, a plaque was presented to District 1 for making 93.51% of goal enrolled by the Legion Birthday of March 14, 2018.

The "Pride of the Prairie" (White Buffalo) traveling membership trophies were presented to those Posts in each of the five goal size groups which have the highest percentage of membership increase on June 2, 2018, over their membership on June 2, 2016. The winners in their respective goal size groups were:

15-74 Goal Size Group – Eagle Butte American Legion Post #138 with a 84.21% increase.

75-124 Goal Size Group – Ethan American Legion Post #261 with a 14.14% increase.

125-199 Goal Size Group – Milbank American Legion Post #9 with a 2% increase.

200-299 Goal Size Group – Sturgis American Legion Post #33 with a 3.16% increase.

300 Plus Goal Size Group – Hot Springs Post #71 with a 0.62% increase.

Congratulations to all the 2018 membership award winners. All Legionnaires are membership recruiters.

Pictured: On the left, Milbank American Legion Post #9 receives their Pride of the Prairie White Buffalo. On the right, Sturgis American Legion Post #33 receives their Pride of the Prairie White Buffalo.

Calendar of Events

August 2018

- 1-5: State Championship Baseball Tournament, Pierre, SD
- 1-5: State Junior "A" Baseball Tournament, Mitchell, SD
- 3-5: State Junior "B" Baseball Tournament, Winner, SD
- 4: State Commander Denny Brenden Homecoming, Watertown
- 4: Coast Guard Birthday
- 7: Purple Heart Day
- 8-12: National Regional Tournament, Dickinson, ND
- 9-11: National Membership Workshop, Indianapolis, IN
- 15: Sioux Falls VA Show and Shine, VA Parking Lot, 5:30 p.m.
- 16-21: American Legion World Series Baseball Tourney, Shelby, NC
- 18: Veterans Health & Benefit Fair, Sioux Falls
- 19-23: Legacy Run (enroute to National Convention in Minneapolis)
- 24-30: 100th Annual Legion National Convention, Minneapolis, MN
- 24-26: Sons of the American Legion National Convention, Minneapolis, MN
- 26-29: American Legion Auxiliary National Convention, Minneapolis, MN
- 30: Salute to Veterans at South Dakota State Fair in Huron
- 30-Sept 3: Veterans Booth at State Fair, Huron

September 2018

- 3: Labor Day
- 8-9: American Legion Golf Tournament, Beresford/Irene, SD
- 11: Patriot Day
- 15: District 2 Fall Meeting, Rapid City
- 16: District 1 Fall Meeting, Lemmon
- 18: U.S. Air Force Birthday
- 21: National POW/MIA Recognition Day
- 21-23: National Children & Youth Conference, Indianapolis, IN
- 21: District 3 Fall Meeting, Gettysburg
- 22: District 5 Fall Meeting, Castlewood
- 23: District 6 Fall Meeting, Huron
- 23: District 4 Fall Meeting, Stratford
- 28-30: National Americanism Conference, Indianapolis, IN
- 29: District 8 Fall Meeting, Marion
- 30: District 7 Fall Meeting, Hudson
- 30: Gold Star Mother's Day

October 2018

- 8: Columbus Day
- 13: Navy Birthday
- 15-18: American Legion Fall Meetings, Indianapolis, IN
- 28-Nov 2: National American Legion College, Indianapolis, IN
- 31: Halloween

American Legion Happenings Around The State



The Carroll McDonald Post #246 of Wall, SD, drew for this Remington 870 12 Gauge pump shotgun during the Wall Celebration Day Parade. The winner of the raffle, Navy veteran Ken Charfauros, is pictured with Wall Post Commander Dave Olson. The profits from the raffle will be used for the post's youth programs. Submitted by Wall Post #246 Commander Dave Olson. If you have a picture or a story you would like featured in the South Dakota American Legion News, email original material to dso@sdlegion.org.

Has your post wrote their Post History yet? If not, please post it on the National American Legion Centennial website. The deadline is fast approaching and your post history will be a part of the American Legion's 100th Anniversary. <https://centennial.legion.org/>



Department Americanism Awards Presented at 2018 State Convention

Each year all Posts in the Department are encouraged to document their Americanism Program and submit an Annual Americanism Report at the Spring District Conventions.

The Americanism Commission conducts its summer meeting at Northern State University in Aberdeen during the week of Boys State. At that meeting, the members of the Americanism Commission review and judge the Americanism Reports for the purpose of picking the winners of two National Americanism Awards that are presented within each Department on an annual basis. These awards are The American Legion Certificate of Distinguished Service and The American Legion Certificate of Meritorious Service. The Certificate of Distinguished Service signifies that the Post conducted the most outstanding Americanism Program within the Department and the Certificate of Meritorious Service signifies that the Post conducted an Americanism Program that contributed significantly to the community.

The members of the Americanism Commission who met to judge the 2018 Americanism Reports were Americanism Chairman Larry Madsen of Gettysburg, members PDC Byron Callies of Watertown, Hugh Holmes of Mitchell, and Leon Josephsen of Arlington (substituted for Gary Madsen). Commission member Fred Nelson of Spearfish was absent. Also in attendance at the meeting were State Commander Dunham and State Adjutant Denny Brenden of Watertown along with other interested Legionnaires.

Americanism Chairman Larry Madsen presented the Americanism Awards at the Department Convention in Spearfish. Those chosen as the award winners for this year were:

Certificate of Distinguished Service – Custer American Legion Post #46, of Custer, SD.

Certificate of Meritorious Service – Spearfish American Legion Post #164, of Spearfish, SD.

Individual Americanism Award – Mark Mills, of Custer American Legion Post #46.

The following individual Posts were recognized for their contributions to the Americanism Program within their respective membership goal-size groups:

15-45 members – Witten American Legion Post #157

46-74 members – Castlewood American Legion Post #250

75-124 members – Custer American Legion Post #46

125-350 members – Spearfish American Legion Post #164

351 members and larger – Sioux Falls American Legion Post #15

Congratulations to all the Americanism Award Winners!

Good Samaritan of the Year

The 2018 Good Samaritan of the Year is the Spearfish Middle School Students Council. These 6th-8th grade students volunteer in various programs supported by the American Legion Family.

On Veterans day they helped prepare a school-wide program honoring local veterans. Following the Veterans Day program, the student council students served breakfast to the veterans and their families at no cost. At Christmas they collected goods to create “Buddy Baskets” for homeless veterans at the Cornerstone Mission in rapid City.

The Most important project is a monthly meal prepared, served and shared at each Legion meeting. Meals are cooked from scratch, served to the Veterans and students sit down with the veterans to eat and share stories.

The Spearfish Middle School Students Council lives by these words from William Arthur Ward: *“Do more than belong: participate; Do more than care: help; Do more than believe: practice; Do more than be fair, be kind; Do more than forgive: forget; Do more than dream: work.”* The Spearfish Middle School Student Council is an active member of the Spearfish School District and their community.



Vice Commanders Denny Brenden and Fred Nelson present members of the Spearfish Middle School Student Council with their Good Samaritan Award

South Dakota American Legion 2018 Oratorical Champion



Griffin Smith
2018 Oratorical Champion
Spearfish, SD

South Dakota American Legion Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

The 2018 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year is Eric Kimball of Sioux Falls. Officer Kimball is a School Resource Officer (SRO) who has used his training as a Army Ranger and the SWAT team to create a training plan for other SRO's in his group. Officer Kimball was instrumental in securing training locations, organizing the equipment for a safe training environment.

On top of all Officer Kimball's commitments to the Sioux Falls Police Department, he has been an active member of the US Army reserves. He recently retired as a Master Sergeant with 27 years served to our country.

South Dakota American Legion 2018 Educator of the Year

Lynn M. Thomason, Sioux Falls, has been selected by the Education Loan Committee as the 2018 South Dakota American Legion Educator of the Year. Lynn teaches Latin classes at Lincoln and O'Gorman High Schools in Sioux Falls.

Lynn received her bachelor degree at the Gettysburg College. Lynn received her masters degree in library science from Catholic University, Washington, DC. She has been teaching and advising students for 12 years. She is an avid supporter saying the Pledge of Allegiance everyday at school.

Congratulations to Lynn for receiving this honor and Post 15 of Sioux Falls for recommending Lynn for the Department Educator of the Year program.

Youth Trooper Academy Graduates 24 Recruits

Graduation ceremonies were held in Pierre, SD, on Friday, June 29, for the 2018 Youth Trooper Academy.

State Commander Denny Brenden addressed the Trooper Recruits on Wednesday, June 27th and again at the graduation ceremonies.

The group of teens from South Dakota trained the week of June 25-29, 2018, with the Highway Patrol at the Youth Trooper Academy in Pierre.

Twenty-four young adults were selected from over many applicants located all over South Dakota. 2018 Youth Trooper Academy Recruit graduates include Zakary Mau of Deadwood, Dominick Oedekoven of Sturgis, Chauncey Hauptman of Murdo, Maria Pecora of Rapid City, William Spangenberg of Ft. Pierre, Cassidy Dyer of Highmore, Barry Johnson of Highmore, Carson Kunz of Eureka, Rachel Braun of Ipswich, Bryson White of Frederick, Mathew Smith of Brookings, Austin Kurkowski of Watertown, Abby Engel of Watertown, Alec Nelson of Mitchell, Gabriel Douvier of Mitchell, Chasity Vissia of Wessington Springs, Joseph Ortiz of Mitchell, Jordan Rentschler of Sioux Falls, Jorden Johnson of Brandon, Baylee Beaner of Garretson, Ashley Hohn of Hartford, Bailey Parker of Gayville, Ryne Whisler of Vermillion, and Kara Mulheron of Vermillion.

Jordan Rentschler of Sioux Falls, was awarded the \$500 South Dakota Youth Trooper Academy Scholarship sponsored by the South Dakota Highway Patrol Foundation.

Abby Engel of Watertown, SD, was awarded the Top Shooter Marksmanship award.

The recruits undergo classroom and hands-on training in areas such as firearms safety, defensive driving, crash investigation, traffic stops, leadership, police dog handling, citizenship and criminal law.

A huge “thank you” goes out to all the South Dakota American Legion Posts that sponsored the Youth Trooper Recruits from their post as well as the Troopers from the South Dakota Highway Patrol. This is an outstanding program that is getting better each year.



6th District Commander Doug Feltman addresses recruits at the 2018 South Dakota Youth Trooper Academy, held in Pierre June 25-29th.

South Dakota American Legion 2018 EMT of the Year

The 2018 EMT of the Year is Patrick Duffy of Sioux Falls. His biggest accomplishment has been his dedication to the Fire Chaplain Committee, Peer Support Team and South Dakota Local Assistance State Team. His concern and care of his fellow team members and citizens of Sioux Falls is his legacy.

He is involved in firefighter/EMT suicide prevention, stress first aid, mental health first aid and PTSD, youth mental health first aid, fire chaplain programs, peer support and many more. He was one of the founding members of the Sioux Falls Fire Rescue peer support team. This team assists members when the stressors of the job. He often fulfills the role of Company officer in absence of his assigned Captain.

Patrick contributes significantly not only to the community, but to the citizens he helps, and to his peers he works with and leads in not only their health, but their mental health and well being as well.

South Dakota American Legion 2018 Firefighter of the Year

The 2018 Firefighter of the Year is Volunteer Fire Department Chief Elmer Goehring of Delmont.

On May 10, 2015 a tornado struck the small town of Delmont. Chief Goehring went into action. The newly completed Fire Dept. building and trucks were destroyed leaving the town to rely on one another to bring the town back. He put his town of Delmont first and foremost.

Following the tornado Chief Goehring gave over a year of his personal time helping to restore the town. This commitment affected his family life and his employment. He often was stretched between his employer and his job as fire chief, but he never faltered.

Chief Goehring continues to serve the town as fire chief and is an active member of Laib-Albrecht Post 249 activities and has been for 15 years. He served our country in the National Guard spending time in Panama.

Minneapolis, Minnesota to Host 100th Annual National Convention

Members of the South Dakota Delegation will be making their preparations to attend the 100th Annual National American Legion Convention to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota from August 24-30, 2018. The members of the South Dakota Delegation will be staying at the Hyatt Regency located four blocks from the Minneapolis Convention Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the site of the 100th Annual National American Legion Convention.

Delegates that have been elected and will represent the Department of South Dakota at the 2018 American Legion National Convention include District 1 Commander Kevin Morello of Blackhawk, PDC Rick MacDonald of Hermosa, Royce Loesch of Ft. Pierre, District 4 Commander Perry Schmidt of Redfield, Betty "Sam" Vaughn of Brookings, Annette Dunham of Iroquois, PDC Charemon Dunham of Iroquois, Gary Warne of Aberdeen, and District 6 Commander Doug Feltman of Chamberlain. National Call-ins are PDC Paul Evenson of Sioux Falls, PDC Phil Anderson of Piedmont, Alt. NEC Terry Hanson of Arlington, PDC Tim Jurgens of Milbank, Fred Nelson of Spearfish, PDC Gunner Baatrup of Virgil, Warren Aas of Watertown, PDC Rod Martens of Piedmont, PDC Mark Weinmann of Hudson, Tom Perrizo of Aberdeen, Rod Smith of Chester, and PDC Larry Price of Redfield. National Executive Committeeman Jim Huls of Madison, State Adjutant Travise Flisrand of Castlewood, State Commander Dennis Brenden of Watertown and PDC Hugh Holmes of Mitchell are also Delegates to the National Convention.

Alternate Delegates that have been elected and will represent the Department of South Dakota at the 2018 National Convention Don Ackerman, LeRoy Madsen, Verle Whipple, Kevin Josephsen, Jay Youngbluth, Noel Cummins, Ken Sabers, Wendy Flisrand, Vern Sip, Kevin Hempel, Gary Lyngen, Pat Steele, Steve Houston, Kim Hallock, Ed Hruska, Jim Preston, Bob Johnson, and Angie Koch. Several activities and a busy schedule await the members of the South Dakota Delegation in Minneapolis including Color Guard Contests, Standing Commission and Committee Meetings, Band Contest, Convention Committee Meetings, National Convention Parade, General Session meetings, and the Department of South Dakota Caucus. The annual luncheon sponsored by the Legionnaires Insurance Trust (LIT) and a Central States Caucus breakfast and meeting are on the agenda.

Tim Jurgens and Rick McDonald will serve as the Parade Chairmen for South Dakota during the National Convention Parade and will announce the South Dakota Delegation as it marches pass the national commander's reviewing stand in downtown Minneapolis. South Dakota's float is based upon the Four Pillars (an artistic rendering is pictured below.)

The National Standing Committees and Commissions meet on Saturday, August 25, and the Convention Committees meet on Sunday, August 26. The Department of South Dakota Caucus is scheduled to be held on Monday morning, August 27th, where the South Dakota Delegation will hear Convention Committee reports from the Delegates assigned to their respective Convention Committee listed above. In addition to hearing the convention committee reports, the South Dakota Delegation will also receive a visit from the 2018-2019 Leading Candidate for National Commander Brett P. Reistad from the Department of Virginia, and 2019-2020 Candidate for National Commander Bill Oxford from the Department of North Carolina, or their representatives.

The National Commander's Banquet is a ticketed event and will be held on Tuesday evening, August 28, 2018. In past years, the National Commander's Banquet serves around 2,400 Legionnaires and guests in the banquet hall.

The American Legion Convention General Sessions are held Tuesday-Thursday, August 28-30, in the Minneapolis Convention Center culminating with the election of new National Officers of The American Legion on Thursday, August 30, 2018.

Historically, approximately 10,000 Legionnaires from all 55 departments will attend the national convention. Department seating at the national convention is determined by membership as of Flag Day, June 14. The higher the department membership percentage on that cut-off date, the closer the department is seated to the main stage.



2018-2019 National Commander Denise Rohan, Dept of Wisconsin



South Dakota American Legion Commander Dennis Brenden throws out the ceremonial first pitch at the 2018 Class "B" Senior State Tournament in Redfield, SD on July 28th.

Picture courtesy of Becky Hawkins

2018 American Legion Baseball

The 2018 American Legion Baseball season is coming to a close and the tournament locations and dates are in full swing. If you get a chance, please come out to the ballpark and cheer on these fine young baseball players. They have worked hard all summer perfecting their baseball skills and by coming out to the ballpark and showing your support for their efforts will be rewarding.

The Class B Junior American Legion Baseball Tournament will be held August 3-5, 2018, in Winner, SD, hosted by Winner Legion Post #169.

The Class B Senior American Legion Baseball Tournament will be held July 27-31, 2018, in Redfield, SD, hosted by Redfield Legion Post #92.

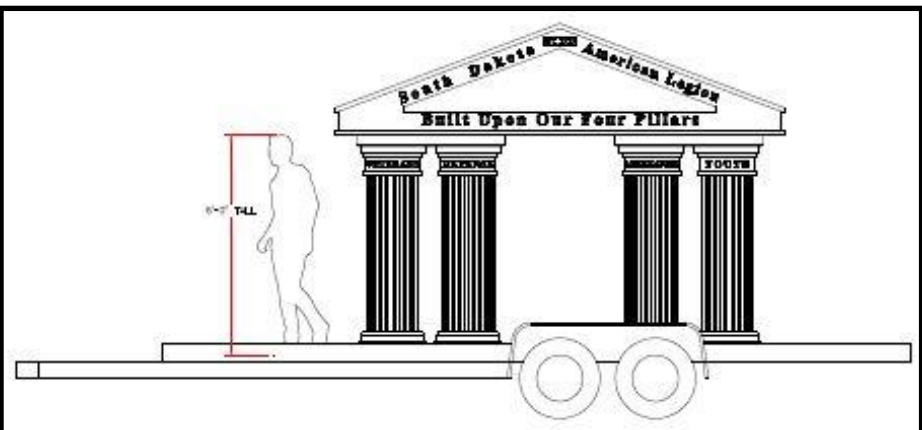
The Class A Junior American Legion State Baseball Tournament is scheduled to be held August 1-5, 2018, in Mitchell, SD, hosted by Mitchell Legion Post #18.

The Class A Senior American Legion State Baseball Tournament is scheduled to be held August 1-5, 2018, in Pierre, SD, hosted by Pierre Legion Post #8.

The National Senior Regional American Legion Baseball Tournament is scheduled to be held August 8-12, 2018, in Dickinson, ND.

The 2018 92nd Annual American Legion Baseball World Series Tournament will be held August 16-21, 2018, at Keeter Stadium in Shelby, North Carolina.

The World Series games will be broadcast live. The games on the 16th and 17th will be aired on ESPN3 and the 18th-21st will be aired on ESPNU. Please visit the American Legion Baseball website at <https://americanlegion.sportngin.com/2018alws> for broadcast times and more information.



The 2018 South Dakota American Legion Float for the 100th National Convention



An aerial view of the opening ceremonies of the 2018 Class "B" Senior State Tournament in Redfield, SD, on July 28th. Photo courtesy of Spink County Emergency Management.

2018 Department Convention Pictures Continued



Upper left: Marc Lamphere, from Hot Springs, fetches bids at the Annual Fun Auction at the 2018 Department Convention. The money raised during the Fun Auction go into the South Dakota American Legion Foundation to help fund programs. Bottom left: The Hanson family, from Arlington, at the Joint Banquet. Casey Hanson, second from left, is the 2018-2019 Detachment Commander for the South Dakota Sons of the American Legion, and Terry Hanson, far right, is Alternate National Executive Committeeman for the South Dakota American Legion. Below: Rescued from the basement of the Codington County Courthouse, delegate ribbons dating back to 1919 were displayed during the Department Convention. A special thank you to Wendy Flisrand for preserving these pieces of history for the rest of us to enjoy!



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE FAIR
“SALUTE TO VETERANS PROGRAM”
*FREE admission for Veterans and active duty personnel on Thursday, August 30, 2018
Please stop and visit the Veterans Building while at the Fair. Legionnaires will be available in the Veterans Building to assist you.

HOMECOMING CELEBRATION
Denny Brenden
2018-2019 American Legion Commander
Saturday, August 4, 2018, Watertown, SD
Registration 12:00 p.m. and Program at 1:30 p.m. with Meal following Watertown Convention Center Theater, Watertown, SD

Department Convention Brings Veterans Together From All Generations



Left: Marvin Matthews, a WWII Veteran from Wessington, attends the General Session of the Department Convention. Center: Iraq War Veterans Miranda Krumm, Chester, Kate Schmidt, Wessington Springs, and Courtney VanZanten, Chester, ready for the Joint Banquet. Right: Korean War Veteran Marvin Bertch enjoying social time at the Go-Getters Banquet.