



National Commander Brett Reistad Makes Official SD Visit

In what can only be described as a whirlwind tour, National American Legion Commander Brett Reistad made his way across South Dakota over the course of thirty scheduled stops from November 5th-9th. Nearly 1,500 miles later, it's safe to say the National Commander got a good glimpse of Legion life in the Mt. Rushmore State.

Starting off in Sioux Falls, Commander Reistad visited Post #15, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Claim Office, and the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center, where he met with Veterans and toured the Womens Health Clinic. Following Sioux Falls, Reistad spent time visiting posts in Badger, Clark, Watertown, Doland, Stratford, Groton, Aberdeen, Ft. Pierre and Pierre.

Venturing west, Commander Reistad met with Veterans in Little Eagle—notably, his first time being on a Native American reservation. His visits also brought him to the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations; at each, he was honored with a star quilt wrapped around his shoulders, to protect him on his journey.

The tour wrapped up with time spent visiting the Black Hills. Visits were made to posts in Hot Springs, Hermosa, Lead, Sturgis and Box Elder. Additionally, the National Commander got to visit the Crazy Horse Memorial, the Hot Springs VA, Ft Meade VA, and the Ft. Meade National Cemetery.

The Department of South Dakota thanks National Commander Brett Reistad for his leadership and dedication to the American Legion. Thank you for visiting!

Additional pictures on Page 4...



Post #251 Commander Ramps Up for Lakota Nation Invitational



Bryan Brewer, LNI Founder. Picture Courtesy of Black Hills Faces Magazine

Bryan Brewer has always put service before self.

Brewer knew service when he enlisted in the Navy during Vietnam. Starting off on a ship, he insisted upon being boots on ground. He wanted to see the country for himself, even at a time most wanted to avoid it. He transferred to a Seabee unit, and built roads and bridges across Vietnam for the majority of his tour.

He knew service when he returned and became a teacher and coach at Pine Ridge High School. Brewer began his teaching career during tumultuous times on the reservation—the American Indian Movement was holding protests at Wounded Knee, and everything felt uncertain. Brewer focused on his athletes; with the unrest, many teams wouldn't consider coming to play at Pine Ridge High School, nor did they want Pine Ridge bringing trouble to their schools.

With that, the idea of the Lakota Nation Invitational was born: fellow coach Dave Archambault and Brewer invited teams to Pine Ridge, hoping the draw of a multiple game tournament would work. It did.

42 years later, The Lakota Nation Invitational tournament has grown to host 36 basketball teams, bringing 2,500 students and their families to Rapid City. In addition to basketball, the LNI hosts athletic competitions in wrestling, volleyball, track, cross-country, golf, cheerleading, archery and hand games. Beyond sports, the LNI hosts a variety of other contests: the Lakota language bowl, spelling bee, art show, business plan competition, knowledge bowl and poetry slam.

Bryan Brewer's service continues on today. He not only still serves as the Lakota Nation Invitational Basketball Director, he has taken command of Sam White Bear Post #251 in Pine Ridge. As Post Commander, he invites all Legionnaires to the Lakota Nation Invitational's Veteran Recognition Ceremony. Join Brewer and fellow Veterans at the Rushmore Civic Center on Friday, December 14th, 2018 at 5:15pm.



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“Leave No Veteran Behind”

Dennis Brenden
State Commander



Legionnaires,

We just finished the tour of our State with National Commander Brett Reistad. We visited all the VA Hospitals, National Cemetery, many American Legion Posts and for the first time, our National Commander has visited our American Legion Posts on the Reservations. He was impressed with all the Posts he visited in our Department. It was good to have the National Commander in South Dakota. I would like to thank all the Posts we visited for their work in setting up our visits and also the respect and hospitality given to the National Commander and the traveling party. You all did a super job.

My program this year is membership. I have asked all Posts to come in one member over goal. Some Posts have come in and I would like to thank them for their work. Our goal this year is 20,001. This year our Department Leadership is taking an active role in membership. I have asked all Department Officers, State Vice Commanders, District Commanders, NEC, all Finance Commission members and members of the Department Membership Council to sign up three new members into the American Legion. Some of the Department Leadership has truly excelled in membership. Vice Commander Thompson has signed up 36 members so far and Vice Commander Stringer has signed up 31 as of today. These leaders plus a majority of the District Commanders have signed up three members or more. Every member of the Finance Commission has signed up one or more members. Children & Youth Chairman Miranda has signed up four members. As of today, the Department leadership has signed up 159 members into the American Legion. A majority of our leadership is doing a great job to help Posts make their membership goal. Members are being signed up for Posts all over the State. We are ranking high on the National Membership Standings but we are still behind last year. **Please** contact every member on your roster before the end of the year and get their renewal in our organization. This year we can't "Leave No Veteran Behind". Last year we left 1,500 Legionnaires behind.

I've been busy with Veterans Day Programs in Menno and Mitchell. Both locations had a great turnout of veterans and others. At the Mitchell program, I was visiting with an Air Force Veteran before the program. I thanked him for his service and asked if he was a member of the American Legion. He said he couldn't belong because he joined the military after the Vietnam cutoff date. He stated that he wanted to join but couldn't. I told him when I spoke that I'd have a message for him and many other veterans. When I spoke, I told everyone that the American Legion National Executive Committee had passed a resolution requesting that the United States Congress open up the dates for eligibility in The American Legion to include all veterans from December 7, 1941, to present. I noted this was the first time that The American Legion has went to Congress to get this done and felt strongly that this was going to happen. Following the program, this Air Force veteran came up to me with his granddaughter with tears in his eyes thanking me and the American Legion for our efforts in letting him and others to become part of our great organization. We have lots of veterans out there that want to be a part of our great organization. Tell them the day is getting closer when our brothers and sisters can become members.

Thank you all for all you do for The American Legion. It is truly appreciated.

Denny Brenden
State Commander

Deadline Set for 2019 Sports Bids

American Legion Posts interested in hosting the 2019 sporting events for The American Legion Department of South Dakota, have until Tuesday, January 16, 2018, to submit their bids and invitations to State Headquarters.

The mailing address to send your bid is South Dakota American Legion, PO Box 67, Watertown, SD 57201-0067. The point of contact for baseball information at State Headquarters is MaryJo Boner. Her email is maryjo@sdlegion.org or you may contact her at 605-886-3604.

Bid forms for the American Legion Baseball Tournaments can be obtained from State Headquarters in Watertown or on the department website at <http://www.sdlegion.org/program/baseball>

EDITORIAL POLICY

The South Dakota Legion News is published six times a year to serve its members and interested parties by informing them about Department activities and other relevant issues concerning the veterans of South Dakota. 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 has the right to edit all articles.

Legionnaire of the Year

Each Post is authorized and urged to select, by majority vote at a regular meeting, a member who gave outstanding service during the year 2018 as their Legionnaire of the Year. This selection pays recognition and honor to a hardworking member of your Post.

Rules governing the selection of the Post Legionnaire of the Year can be found in the 2018-2019 Post Adjutants' Administrative and Awards Manual.

Barred from this honor are: State Legion Officers, District Commanders, District Vice Commanders, District Adjutants, Immediate Past District Commanders, County Commanders, Post Commanders, and Chairmen of Standing Committees.

After the Legionnaire of the Year has been selected by the Post – the Post must forward the selection form from the Adjutants' Administrative and Awards Manual to the District Commander to enter their Post Legionnaire of the Year into the District Legionnaire of the Year competition. These forms are to be in the hands of the District Commander at least 15 days prior to the Spring District Convention.

District Legionnaires of the Year will be selected by the District Executive Committee in each District from those nominations submitted by the Posts within the respective District.

District Legionnaires of the Year will be announced at the Spring District Meetings.

Each of the eight District Legionnaire's of the Year will be eligible for competition in the Department Legionnaire of the Year selection process at the State 2019 Convention at Sheraton Convention Center in Sioux Falls, SD, on June 6-9, 2019.

District Legionnaire of the Year winners must be present at the convention to qualify.

It is truly an honor to be selected among your peers as the Legionnaire of the Year from your Post, District, and Department.



**101st Annual
American Legion
State Convention
June 6-9, 2019,
Sheraton Sioux Falls
Convention Center,
Sioux Falls, SD
Reservations:
Phone: (605) 331-0100**

National Executive Committeeman

Jim Huls
NEC



The Fall Meetings of the National Executive Committee concluded on October 18, 2018. The most important items on the agenda were Resolution 1, Unrecognized Armed Hostilities Recognition and Resolution 2, Unrecognized Armed Hostilities Membership Date Change, both from the Internal Affairs Commission.

What does this mean??

Resolution 1 Has fifty six WHEREAS clauses, I will share two with you and all four RESOLVED clauses.

WHEREAS, Membership eligibility in the American Legion is determined by the Congress of the United States of America through the establishment of specific dates of declared hostilities in which the US military personnel are activated for service;

WHEREAS, In accordance with history, tradition and purposes of the American Legion, it is fair, proper and reasonable that the privilege of membership in the American Legion should extended to all military personnel who served on active military duty during all of these mentioned armed hostile events requiring activation of U.S. military personnel; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of the American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 17-18, 2018 That all of these aforementioned previously unrecognized hostile events requiring activation of United States military personnel are acknowledged; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Legion recognizes the nearly 1,600 casualties of U.S. Armed Forces in service to the nation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Legion calls on Congress of the United States to declare that the United States of America has been continuously engaged in a state of war from December 7, 1941 to such date in the future as the United States government may determine that there has been an end to armed hostilities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the United States Congress direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to qualify as "war-time veteran" all military service personnel who served honorably under federal government Title 10 orders for at least one day during said period.

Resolution 2 Has three WHEREAS clauses and two RESOLVED clauses that state if Resolution 1 passes then the American Legion asks Congress to extend the privilege of membership in the American Legion be extended to all military personnel who served on active duty during all of these mentioned armed hostile events requiring activation of U.S. military personnel.

This action has been a long time coming as we have had resolutions annually to change the dates. These Resolutions are very well written, complete and reasonable. Hopefully Congress will act on this in the near future. This is a major move by the American Legion

For God and Country,

Jim Huls
NEC

2019 Youth Trooper Academy

Do you know of a student that is interested in applying for the 2019 Youth Trooper Academy?

The Youth Trooper Academy is a partnership between the South Dakota Highway Patrol and the South Dakota American Legion.

The Academy provides an intensive weeklong experience at the South Dakota Law Enforcement Training Center in Pierre, SD. Veteran Troopers provide mentorship and hands-on training in the following areas: firearms safety, defensive driving, crash investigation, traffic stops, leadership, defensive tactics, and criminal law.

The 2019 Youth Trooper Academy will be conducted in Pierre, SD, on June 24-28, 2019.

The Academy will be limited to 24 applicants, 2 each from the 8 American Legion Districts plus 8 others.

Applicants must be a high school junior or senior in good academic standing. The program utilizes a paramilitary approach and is therefore physically and mentally demanding.

Application deadline is March 24, 2019.

To apply, find more information and print application at

<http://www.sdlegion.org/program/sd-youth-trooper-academy>



Department Adjutant Thoughts

Travise Flisrand
Department Adjutant



During Midwinter Conference there will be a breakout session on Saturday afternoon focusing on the Post activities, obstacles and successes. We are requesting maximum participation from Posts of all sizes. We realize that not every Post will be able to attend in person, so we are including a questionnaire for Posts to fill out and send to State Headquarters prior to February 1st.

With collaboration of numerous Posts; the goal is to identify what they are experiencing. Knowing what Post are doing for: Legion Programs, Community Support, and overall activities for the membership? As every Posts knows, not all are exactly the same; based on the size of our Community and the Post, these will have an influence on what the Post can do.

The breakout session will place Posts into groups of different sizes. With similar sized Posts in groups, it will be easier to identify what things are influencing them and allow us to collaborate on ideas that will help each other. Not every solution identified will be an instant cure, however, it will help identify what we are doing well, what we need to work on and what are the biggest challenges.

Before Midwinter we request that Posts discuss and create a list of challenges they experience, solutions that have worked in their Post, programs they actively support and community events that have been successful. It can be very challenging for a single member who attends MidWinter to have all this information, having help from the Post will ensure this collaboration will benefit all Posts in the State.

The information gathered during this breakout session will be shared so every Post can have more tools available to utilize. By knowing what we do as an organization in our different communities and how it impacts our communities can inspire ideas of what you can do different in your own Posts. Let's face it, what we are doing now compared to a century ago has evolved into unique activities, yet the core principles remain the same as our Four Pillars.

I have not heard a single Legion member ever say they did not want our organization to succeed. I have heard a few members question how their Posts can continue on with the level of support from their membership or the lack of veterans in the local area. We need to come together, pool our thoughts, ideas and goals, so we can work as a team on a common purpose. I leave you with this quote to consider:

"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." – Henry Ford

I wish every Legion, SAL and Auxiliary member a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I know 2019 will be a great year for us. I look forward to seeing a lot of Legion members at MidWinter and use this time to develop ourselves and refocus our thoughts.

Post Activity Survey

This survey is meant to be anonymous, in an effort to solicit honest feedback. Please do not include names of posts, cities, or people. Continue on additional paper if more space is needed for answers.

Size of Post: _____ How often does the post meet? _____

Average number of members at meeting: _____

How would you rate your community support (1-10)? _____

What Legion Programs does your post support? _____

What are the successful programs/events at your post? _____

What are the challenges your post faces? _____

What could be done to better assist the post? _____

Complete and mail survey to:

South Dakota American Legion Headquarters

PO Box 67

Watertown, SD 57201

National Commander Brett Reistad SD Visit Photos



Top left: National Commander Brett Reistad meets with South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Staff in Sioux Falls; Top center: National Commander Brett Reistad with South Dakota Highway Patrol; Top right: Drum Circle in Little Eagle
 Mid Left: National Commander Brett Reistad with Standing Rock Veterans; Mid Right: National Commander Brett Reistad and Department Commander Denny Brenden visiting with Veterans at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center
 Lower Left: National Commander Brett Reistad with Pierre Post #8 Members; Lower Right: Drum Circle at Rosebud/Mission
 Bottom: National Commander Brett Reistad with Kingsbury County members at Badger Post #260



American Legion National Leaders to Attend MidWinter Conference



James Stephen Sweet
 American Legion
 National Vice Commander
 2018-2019

Paul E. Dillard
 Candidate for
 National Commander
 2020-2021

The South Dakota American Legion is happy to announce that National Vice Commander James Stephen Sweet and the National Commander Candidate for 2020-2021, Paul E. Dillard, will be in attendance at our MidWinter Conference at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center in Spearfish, SD, February 8-10, 2019.

National Vice Commander Sweet, a U.S. Navy veteran, was elected as The American Legion National Vice Commander during the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He represents the Department of Mississippi, and calls Greenville, Mississippi home.

National Commander Candidate Dillard, also a Vietnam Navy Veteran, hails from the Department of Texas, and lives in Whitesboro, Texas.

2019 MidWinter Conference

Holiday Inn Spearfish-Convention Center Spearfish, SD

Friday, February 8, 2019

10:00 a.m. Department Finance Commission Meeting
 12:00 p.m. Registration Desk Opens – Pre-Function Area
 1:00 p.m. Department Executive Committee Meeting
 4:30 p.m. (or earlier) Membership Council Meeting
 6:00 p.m. Go-Getter Reception
 7:00 p.m. Go-Getter Smorgasbord

Saturday, February 9, 2019

7:30 a.m. Registration Desk Opens – Pre-Function Area
 8:00 a.m. Joint Opening Session - Conference Center State
 Commander Denny Brenden / Auxiliary President Jeanine
 Loesch and SAL Detachment Commander Kerry Jorgenson
 Remarks
 8:25 a.m. James Sweet, National Vice Commander Remarks
 8:45 a.m. Auxiliary VA&R
 9:00 a.m. Auxiliary Children & Youth
 9:15 a.m. SD Department of Veterans Affairs
 9:35 a.m. Paul Dillard, Candidate for
 2020-2021 National Commander
 10:00 a.m. Recess Joint Session
 10:10 a.m. BREAKOUT SESSION:
 MyLegion (Membership processing)-TBD
 Media techniques for Posts (Social)-TBD
 Post Service Officer Training-TBD
 VA&R Commission Meeting-TBD
 12:00 p.m. Noon Lunch Break
 1:00 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSION
 Post Activities and Development discussion
 (Broke down into size groups of Posts)—TBD
 2:55 p.m. All assemble in Conference Hall
 3:00 p.m. NEC Jim Huls Remarks
 3:15 p.m. PDC Rod Martens, Department Legislative
 Chairman
 3:30 p.m. Doug Harris and Matt Lagerstrom,
 2018 National American Legion College
 3:45 p.m. Gene Opbroek – Department Membership Chairman
 Membership Report/ Awards/Turn-In
 4:15 p.m. VAVS member, Popcorn Fund Turn-In
 4:20 p.m. Announcements and Adjourn Assembly
 4:30 p.m. SD American Legion Foundation Meeting
 6:00 p.m. No-Host Cocktails – Pre-Function Area
 7:00 p.m. Joint Legion / Auxiliary / SAL Banquet
 8:00 p.m. Hospitality Rooms, Spearfish Holiday Inn rooms

Sunday, February 19, 2019

8:30 a.m. Non-Denominational Service
 10:30 a.m. SD American Legion – State Finals –
 High School Oratorical Contest

***Meeting room assignments have not been confirmed at
 this time. They will be confirmed at a later date.
 2019 MidWinter Conference agenda and times are
 subject to change**

**We wish everyone a very
 Happy and Safe Christmas
 and New Years Holiday.
 Happy 2019!**

Joint American Legion, Auxiliary, SAL Banquet
 Saturday, February 9th, 2019
 Spearfish Holiday Inn Convention Center, Spearfish, SD
 Deadline to order tickets: Friday, February 1st, 2019

Banquet Tickets \$30.00 each, # Tickets Ordered _____
 Name: _____
 Address: _____

Menu Options: (Select One)

_____ Seared Chicken Breast with Garlic Sauce

OR

_____ Slow Roasted Beef

Dietary Restriction: _____

Mail ticket order to:

Glorianne Davis
 211 Deer Path, Lead, S.D. 57754

Make checks payable to: District 1 American Legion

Tickets are pre-sold only; no tickets will be sold at Mid-Winter.

**Any ticket transfers will need to be approved through
 District 1 Commander Kevin Morello, 605-787-0619.**

Fred Nelson Candidate for 2019-2020 State Commander



Fred Nelson

2018-2019 State Commander Candidate

The Spearfish American Legion Post #164 has endorsed Fred Nelson for Department Commander 2019-2020. Nelson enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in October 1980. After completing basic training and technical training he was based at Offutt AFB, Nebraska, where he was an EC-135 aircraft crew chief supporting the Looking Glass Mission. After a year, he became an RC-135 aircraft crew chief and found himself traveling overseas including a deployment to Khartoum, Sudan. In January 1987, he was assigned as a maintenance controller with the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing. In November 1987, Nelson was transferred to Field Training Detachment 409, Ellsworth AFB, SD where he served as an Air Training Command Instructor and obtained the rating of Master Instructor. Nelson accepted a buyout and left the U.S. Air Force as a staff sergeant in 1992 during a force reduction program. Nelson is presently a member of the National Veterans Education, other Benefits & Homelessness Committee, Department Americanism Commission, Department Membership Council, Department Public Relations Committee, and the Department Centennial Committee. He is serving as the Post 164 Americanism Officer, Assistant Adjutant, as well as Road Captain with the Black Hills Chapter of the American Legion Riders.

Nelson served as Department Vice-Commander twice, Department Americanism Chairman, Department Finance Commission member, Department Parade Chairman at the National Conventions, Department Executive Committee Member, South Dakota American Legion Foundation Charter Board Member, Chairman of the 2010 State Convention, District Commander twice, District Vice Commander, County Commander, Post Commander, and Post Finance Officer.

Nelson's awards include the Robert C. Gabrielson Memorial Leadership Award 2018, National Race-to-the-Top Membership Award, District Commander Membership Award for 102.67%, District Commander Award for 100% Post Visitation, national "NALPA" award for his District Newsletter, and he was chosen as District Legionnaire of the Year 2014.

Nelson attended the 2011 National American Legion College, eight National American Legion Conventions, and five American Legion Washington D.C. Conferences.

Nelson is a Paid-Up-For-Life member of the American Legion, is member of the Sons of the American Legion, the American Legion Riders, ANAVICUS, the Disabled American Veterans, and the Air Force Sergeants Association.

Nelson's family are all members of the American Legion Family. He is married to Micheline Nelson, who is currently the Spearfish Unit 164 President, SD Department Legionette Editor, and secretary of Black Hills Chapter of the American Legion Riders. Nelson, a life-long resident of South Dakota, has worked at Black Hills State University for 23 years. He is currently serving as the Director for Network and Computer Services and as an advisor for the BHSU Veterans Club.

2019 Honor Guard Competition Announced

Commander Brenden has announced there will be an Honor Guard competition Friday morning on June 7, 2019 at the Centennial State Convention in Sioux Falls. The winner will have the honors of posting the Colors at the opening session of the State Convention on Saturday June 8th and will retain the bragging rights of having the best Honor Guard in the State for the next year. National Conventions also have an Honor Guard competition, winner in that competition also has the same privilege of posting Colors. More details will follow as the rules of the competition are drafted including any sub-categories within this competition.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Courtney VanZanten
Department Service Officer



Happy Holidays! I love this time of year: the food, family time, music...but I equally dread it. I know that our family has three Christmas parties to attend, and with three small children, that means bringing three van-fuls of toys back into my house. Every year, I stress about where I'll put the onslaught of gifts—just thinking about it gets the anxiety going. Not to mention the every-growing list of obligations, the food prep, the shopping in crowds...oi. I love the holidays, I swear.

Along those lines of thinking, I'd like to share the Mayo Clinic's 10 Tips to Beat Holiday Stress:

Acknowledge your feelings. If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.

Reach out. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.

Be realistic. The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children can't come to your house, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails or videos.

Set aside differences. Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.

Stick to a budget. Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.

Try these alternatives:

*Donate to a charity in someone's name.

*Give homemade gifts.

*Start a family gift exchange.

Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.

Learn to say no. Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.

Don't abandon healthy habits. Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Try these suggestions:

*Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks.

*Get plenty of sleep.

*Incorporate regular physical activity into each day.

Take a breather. Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm. Some options may include:

*Taking a walk at night and stargazing.

*Listening to soothing music.

*Getting a massage.

*Reading a book.

Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

We're all in this together. Reach out to your fellow veterans this holiday season and check in. Feeling remembered and keeping in touch is good for all of us.

Merry Christmas,
Courtney VanZanten
Department Service Officer



District Oratory Contest Information

District American Legion Americanism Chairs, and the counties under the jurisdiction of each are as follows:

DIST. 1 – (Butte, Corson, Dewey, Harding, Lawrence, Meade, Perkins, Ziebach counties):

Chair: Ken Sabers, (ksabers@rushmore.com) 1908 Butte View Drive Sturgis, SD 57785. District Contest to be held at Sturgis American Legion Post 33, Jan. 6, 2019, 1:00pm. Storm date, Jan. 13, same time and place.

DIST. 2 – (Bennett, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Jackson, Jones, Mellette, Pennington, Shannon, Todd counties):

Chair: Paul Douglas, 622 Auburn Dr, Rapid City, SD 57701. District Contest to be held at Rapid City American Legion Post 22, 818 E. St. Patrick St., Rapid City, January 13, 2019 2:00 p.m. Storm date, January 20, 2019 7:00 p.m. same place.

DIST. 3 – (Gregory, Hand, Hughes, Hyde, Lyman, Potter, Stanley, Sully, Tripp counties):

Chair: Larry Madsen, (larry_madsen@hotmail.com) or 906 E Commercial Ave., Gettysburg, SD 57442. District Contest to be held at the Faith Lutheran Church Christian Living Center, 714 N Grand Ave, Pierre, SD. January 20, 2019 2:00 p.m. Storm date, January 27 same time and place.

DIST. 4 – (Brown, Campbell, Edmunds, Faulk, McPherson, Spink, Walworth counties)

Chair: Dale Strom, (dale_strom@yahoo.com) 115 N. Kline St, Aberdeen, SD 57401. District Contest to be held at the Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, 431 W Melgaard Rd, Aberdeen, SD 57401 January 6, 2019, 4:00 p.m. Storm date, January 13th, same time and place.

DIST. 5 – (Brookings, Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Grant, Hamlin, Marshall, Roberts counties)

Chair: Shelli Romeu (shelli.romeu@gmail.com) PO Box 284, Watertown, SD 57201. District Contest will be held at Watertown Post home, Jan. 20, 2019, 1:30 p.m. Storm date, Jan. 27, same time and place.

DIST. 6 – (Aurora, Beadle, Brule, Buffalo, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld, Kingsbury, Miner, Sanborn counties)

Chair: Tim Thomas, (photostoday@midstatesd.net) 112 S Merrill St Chamberlain SD 57325. District Contest to be held at the Best Western Hotel 2000 Dakota Ave S, Huron, SD, January 13, 2019, 2:00 p.m. Storm date, Jan 20th, same time and place.

DIST. 7 – (Lake, Lincoln, McCook, Minnehaha, Moody, Union counties)

Chair: Kevin Hempel, (krhempel@gmail.com) 25793 470th Ave. Sioux Falls, SD 57107. District Contest to be held at Humbolt American Legion Post Home, Humbolt, SD 57035, January 13, 2019, 2:00 p.m. Storm date January 20th same time and place.

DIST. 8 – (Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Clay, Douglas, Hutchinson, Turner, Yankton counties)

Chair: Greg Geiman, (gksn_82501@hotmail.com) 410 Stafford St Scotland, SD 57059. District Contest to be held at the Yankton Public Library, 515 Walnut St, Yankton SD 57078, January 12, 2019, 10:00 a.m. Storm Date January 17, 2019, same time and place

The History Behind Four Chaplains Sunday

WWW.ARMY.MIL -- It was Feb. 3, 1943, and the U.S. Army Transport Dorchester was one of three ships in a convoy, moving across the Atlantic from Newfoundland to an American base in Greenland. A converted luxury liner, the Dorchester was crowded to capacity, carrying 902 servicemen, merchant seamen and civilian workers.

It was only 150 miles from its destination when shortly after midnight, an officer aboard the German submarine U2 spotted it. After identifying and targeting the ship, he gave orders to fire. The hit was decisive, striking the ship, far below the water line. The initial blast killed scores of men and seriously wounded many more.

Others, stunned by the explosion were groping in the darkness. Panic and chaos quickly set in! Men were screaming, others crying or frantically trying to get lifeboats off the ship.

Through the pandemonium, four men spread out among the Soldiers, calming the frightened, tending the wounded and guiding the disoriented toward safety. They were four Army chaplains, Lt. George Fox, a Methodist; Lt. Alexander Goode, a Jewish Rabbi; Lt. John Washington, a Roman Catholic Priest; and Lt. Clark Poling, a Dutch Reformed minister.

Quickly and quietly the four chaplains worked to bring calm to the men. As soldiers began to find their way to the deck of the ship, many were still in their underwear, where they were confronted by the cold winds blowing down from the arctic.

Petty Officer John J. Mahoney, reeling from the cold, headed back towards his cabin. "Where are you going?" a voice of calm in the sea of distressed asked "To get my gloves," Mahoney replied. "Here, take these," said Rabbi Goode as he handed a pair of gloves to the young officer. "I can't take those gloves," Mahoney replied. "Never mind," the Rabbi responded. "I have two pairs." It was only long after that Mahoney realized that the chaplain never intended to leave the ship.

Once topside, the chaplains opened a storage locker and began distributing life jackets. It was then that Engineer Grady Clark witnessed an astonishing sight. When there were no more lifejackets in the storage room, the chaplains simultaneously removed theirs and gave them to four frightened young men. When giving their life jackets, Rabbi Goode did not call out for a Jew; Father Washington did not call out for a Catholic; nor did Fox or Poling call out for a Protestant. They simply gave their life jackets to the next man in line. One survivor would later call it "It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven."

As the ship went down, survivors in nearby rafts could see the four chaplains -- arms linked and braced against the slanting deck. Their voices could also be heard offering prayers and singing hymns. (continued Pg. 7)



South Dakota Legionnaires Receive National Appointments

The American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad of the Department of Virginia has announced the following National 1 year appointments for South Dakota Legionnaires:

Americanism Council:

LeRoy Madsen of Post 8 Pierre - Member
PDC Richard MacDonald of Post 303 Hermosa - Member
Lawrence Madsen of Post 135 Gettysburg - Member
Kathren Caffee of Post 14 Wessington Springs - Member
PDC Gary Watts of Post 88 White - Member

American Legion Charities, Inc.

PDC Paul Evenson of Post 23 Garretson - Member

Children & Youth Committee:

PNVC Byron Callies of Post 15 Watertown - Consultant

Employment & Veterans Preference Committee:

Courtney VanZanten of Post 136 Chester - Member

IT Oversight Committee:

Paul Evenson of Post 23 Garretson - Member

National Security Council:

Gary Henle of Post 15 Sioux Falls - Member
Kenneth Teunissen of Post 15 Sioux Falls - Member
Gary Wolkow of Post 138 De Smet - Member

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Council:

Miranda Krumm of Post 136 Chester - Member
PDC Rod Martens of Post 311 Piedmont - Member
PDC Wayne Vetter of Post 213 Cresbard - Member

Veterans Employment & Education Liaison Committee:

NEC Jim Huls of Post 140 Salem - Member

Veterans Employment & Education Council:

Kevin Morello of Post 311 Piedmont - Member

Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee:

PDC Larry Price of Post 92 Redfield - Chairman

Youth Education Committee:

Hugh Holmes of Post 18 Mitchell - Consultant

Three Year appointment:

National Security Commission:

Doug Feltman of Post 3 Chamberlain - Member

All appointments were reviewed and confirmed by the National Executive Committee during its Fall Meetings at National Headquarters of The American Legion in Indianapolis, Indiana on October 11, 2018.

South Dakota American Legion Legislative Reception

Wednesday, February 6, 2019
Pierre American Legion Post #8, Pierre
5:30 p.m. — 8:30 p.m.

A Free Delicious Meal served by Pierre Post 8

A great opportunity to meet the State Legislators that represent your District and to discuss issues that concern Veterans of South Dakota. Fill your vehicle with Legionnaires & come to Pierre. Your attendance is appreciated.

Legislative Round Table Meeting Schedule Set

The South Dakota Veterans Council will be hosting the legislative roundtable meetings during the month of November. The schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, Noon on December 12, 2018 at the DAV Headquarters in Sioux Falls, SD.

Thursday, Noon on December 13, 2018 at the American Legion Post 17 in Watertown, SD.

Saturday, 10:00 A.M. on December 15, 2018 at the VFW in Rapid City, SD.

The South Dakota Veterans Council is made up of The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America and the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

A representative from each organization will inform the legislators of the legislative agenda for their respective organization.

We would like to invite all members of the American Legion family to these events and urge you to contact your representative and invite them personally.

New National Membership Incentives Announced

National Commander Brett Reistad has announced a wave of new National Membership Incentives, ranging from Post to Department Level. They are as follows:

1. Departments that hit 100% of their 2019 membership goal by the Armed Forces target date on May 8th will receive \$2,500.

2. Departments that hit 105% of their 2019 membership goal by the delegate strength date will receive \$5,000.

3. If a department does not hit 100% by the Armed Forces target date they are not excluded from being able to receive the \$5,000 for hitting 105%.

4. Post can earn \$5 for bringing back expired members from 2014, 2015 and 2016.

This will run until May 8th, 2019.

Rules for the incentives:

- Brand new members do not count.
- Renewing members into the headquarters post does not count.
- These expired members have to renew at a traditional post. It does not have to be at their previous post. These lists will include expired DMS members as well.
- These members will need to be transferred into a local post and then renewed for the post to receive credit.

Keep in mind their membership ID will need to be used for tracking purposes and to receive credit. These lists can be accessed and downloaded through myLegion.

Checks will be presented during the Spring National Executive Committee Meeting in Indianapolis.

2019 Eagle Scout of the Year

The Department Headquarters is accepting nominations for the 2019 American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year Award. The nomination forms are currently available from the Department Headquarters. Nomination forms are also available on The American Legion website at www.legion.org.

It is important to note that the State Headquarters must receive the nominations no later than March 1, 2019. The Department Eagle Scout of the Year will be selected by a panel and that nomination will be submitted to National HQ in Indianapolis, IN.

The National 2019 American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year will be announced during the 2019 Spring Meetings of The American Legion in Indianapolis.

The individual selected will join the Youth Champion delegation and participate in the 101st Annual National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 23-29, 2019.

Four Chaplains Sunday, Continued:

Of the 902 men aboard the U.S.A.T. Dorchester, only 230 survived. Before boarding the Dorchester back in January, Chaplain Poling had asked his father to pray for him, "Not for my safe return, that wouldn't be fair. Just pray that I shall do my duty...never be a coward...and have the strength, courage and understanding of men. Just pray that I shall be adequate."

Although the Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart were later awarded posthumously Congress wished to confer the Medal of Honor but was blocked by the stringent requirements which required heroism performed under fire. So a posthumous Special Medal for Heroism, The Four Chaplains' Medal, was authorized by Congress and awarded by the President on January 18, 1961.

It was never given before and will never be given again.



Mark Your Calendar

December 2018

- 1: Education Loan application due at State Headquarters
- 4: Governor's Budget Address, Pierre, 1:00 p.m.
- 7: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. Japan attacked 1941
- 8: Auxiliary Christmas Party, Hot Springs VA Hospital, 1:30 pm.
- 9: Auxiliary Christmas Party, Hot Springs State Veterans Home, 1:30 p.m.
- 10: Auxiliary Christmas Party, Fort Meade VA Hospital, Sturgis. 1:00 p.m.
- 12: Auxiliary Christmas Party, Yankton Human Service Center, 5:00 p.m.
- 13: National Guard Birthday
- 13: Auxiliary Christmas Party, Sioux Falls VA Hospital, 2:00 p.m.
- 25: Christmas Day, Legion Headquarters office closed
- 31: New Year's Eve

January 2019

- 1: American Legion Baseball registration opens
- 1: New Year's Day, Legion Headquarters office closed
- 6: District 4 Oratorical Contest, Aberdeen Plymouth UCC, 4:00 p.m.
- 6: District 1 Oratorical Contest, Sturgis Veterans Club 1:00 p.m.
- 8: Opening 93rd Legislative Session, Pierre, 12:00 p.m. Noon.
- 8: Governor's State of the State Address, Pierre, 1:00 p.m.
- 12: District 8 Oratorical Contest, Yankton Public Library, 10:00 a.m.
- 13: District 6 Oratorical Contest, Huron Best Western, 2:00 p.m.
- 13: District 7 Oratorical Contest, Humboldt Community Center, 2:00 p.m.
- 16: Deadline for Go-Getter Certification to State Headquarters
- 18: Deadline for 2019 sports bids to State Headquarters
- 20: District 3 Oratorical Contest, Pierre Faith Lutheran Church, 2:00 p.m.
- 20: District 5 Oratorical Contest, Watertown American Legion, 1:30 p.m.
- 21: Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Legion Headquarters office closed
- 21: District 2 Oratorical Contest, Rapid City Legion Post #22, 2:00 p.m.

February 2019

- 2: Groundhog Day
- 3: Four Chaplains Sunday
- 6: Department Legislative Committee Meeting, Pierre Post, 3:30 p.m.
- 6: American Legion Legislative Reception, Pierre Post, 5:30 p.m.
- 8-10: **MIDWINTER CONFERENCE** – Holiday Inn, Spearfish
- 8: Department Finance Commission Meeting, Spearfish
- 8: Department Executive Committee Meeting, Spearfish
- 9: Joint Legion/Auxiliary/SAL Banquet, Arrowwood Resort, Spearfish
- 10: American Legion State Oratorical Contest Finals, Spearfish
- 14: Valentine's Day
- 18: President's Day. State American Legion Headquarters office closed.
- 24-27: Washington Conference, Washington, D.C.
- 26-March 1: Department Officer School, Washington, D.C.

Membership

"20,001 Plus One"

Gene Opbroek
Department Membership Chairman



Great Job Team South Dakota!!!! As of last week we are NUMBER ONE IN THE NATION!! Goes to show what a little bit of hard work and determination will get you!! NOW LET'S STAY IN FRONT OF THE PACK!!

We just need to keep on doing what we are doing and do not let up until we reach 20,001. We are about 7,000 short of our goal but I am confident that with the programs we have in place and Legion members out there working hard we will make our goal.

I know Posts have been busy attending National Guard drills and signing up new members. We need to continue attending drills and creating opportunities to talk with our National Guard soldiers and Reservists. Make them aware of our involvement in the community, of all the programs for the youth in their community. They may not know that some of the programs their own children partake in are sponsored by the American Legion. They may not know of the New Forever G.I. Bill that was passed due to the support of the American Legion, or that the American Legion will be their Power of Attorney if they have a disability claim denied.

Don't forget our Vietnam era Veterans, our Women in Uniform and our Native American Warriors all who have served this nation and would make great legion members.

Remember the local schools are the center of the communities. We are in the middle of Boys and Girls Sporting events all over SD. Schools are the center of the communities. We are in the middle of Boys and Girls Sporting events all over SD. Wear your legion cap and see if you can have a table at some of the events, might be surprised how many young veterans are not legion members. Offer to help at the concession stand, what a great way to hang out with the younger generation. You might have more fun than you think. And, Mom and Dad will see that also and maybe talk to you about being a member. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE MEMBERSHIP, TRY SOMETHING NEW, THINK OUT OF THE BOX!

Great Job, South Dakota, Keep up the good work!!

Gene Opbroek
Membership Chairman

Table with 5 columns: State Vice Commanders, District Commanders, Goal, Mbers, Percent, Pos. Summary of membership statistics as of November 27, 2018.

Go-Getter Certification Deadline

All South Dakota American Legion Posts are reminded that the deadline for certifying their Go-Getters to qualify for the Early Bird Go-Getter status is Wednesday, January 16, 2019.

All Go-Getters who are certified to State Headquarters by Wednesday, January 16, 2019, will be entitled to attend the Go-Getters reception and dinner at the MidWinter Conference in Spearfish, SD, on February 16, 2019.

Post Adjutants must certify the Go-Getters from their post.

Membership Percentages by Posts / Districts

*As of November 27, 2018

Large table listing membership percentages for various posts and districts across South Dakota, including columns for Post, No, and % of Goal.