

Legion News



VOLUME 85, NUMBER 6

STILL SERVING AMERICA

June 2018

Past Department Commander G.D. "Hoot" Gibson Remembered



G.D. "Hoot" Gibson
Past Department Commander,
2010-11

Glenn "Hoot" Gibson Jr, 88, died on May 1, 2018 at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center in Sioux Falls, SD.

Glenn "Hoot" Gibson Jr was born on Veterans Day, November 11, 1929 in Marshall, MN to parents, Glenn and Frances (Draper) Gibson. Glenn graduat-

ed from Garretson High School and worked as a meat cutter following his education. In 1951 – 1953 he joined the United States Air Force and later worked full time at the Air National Guard and retired after 39 years of dedicated service to his country. Hoot volunteered at the VA Hospital for over 12 years and would generally spend his birthdays putting up flags around the city, then attending the community Veterans Day program, enjoying the American Legion stew and cake luncheon, and volunteering at the VA service of remembrance.

Hoot, being an Air Force Veteran, was well known at the Air National Guard Base and very active in the American Legion. He had been a member for 50 years! Hoot served as commander of the local American Legion Post 15 from 1989-1990 and as the state commander from 2010-2011. Hoot was an honored Life Member of the American Legion Post 15, Voiture, TREA, American Military Association, Disabled American Veterans, Minnehaha Masonic Lodge, and the El Riad Shriners.

The American Legion family filled most the pews of West Nidaros Church in Crooks, SD on May 10th, as Legionnaires, family and friends gathered to pay respect. Sioux Falls Post #15 hosted a lunch following the funeral.

On May 11th, Hoot was laid to rest in the Black Hills National Cemetery with full military honors. Legionnaires in attendance gave their final salute to a dedicated commander and comrade as he was transferred to the Post Everlasting.

Rest in Peace, Commander.

Lake Preston Post Honors Namesake in Homecoming Memorial Ceremony



Navy personnel escort the remains of Porter L. Rich to his final resting place in Lake Preston, SD.

On March 31st, 2018 nearly 400 people gathered in the Lake Preston High School Gymnasium to witness the memorial service for US Navy Water Tender Second Class Petty Officer Porter L. Rich, who had perished in the bombing of Pearl Harbor and was recently accounted for through the work of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. Post #63 Adjutant, Dave Gutzmer, presided over the ceremony. Notable attendees included guest speaker and Lieutenant Governor Matt Michels, Congresswoman Kristi Noem, several state legislators, as well as an impressive assembly of Legionnaires, Riders, Sons and Auxiliary from across the Department

of South Dakota.

Full Military Funeral Honors were conducted by the U.S. Navy & U.S. Air Force, which include members of the Active & Navy Reserve Funeral Detail from the Navy Operational Support Center in Sioux Falls, SD and members of the Ellsworth Air Force Base Honor Guard Team, from Rapid City, SD. Members of Lake Preston American Legion Post #63 & American Legion Auxiliary Unit #63 provided refreshments and a light lunch at the gymnasium following the cemetery honors.

Porter Leigh Rich was born March 24, 1914, in Lake Preston, SD. He was the second of four children born to his parents, Louis L. and Ora Leigh (Rewey) Rich. His siblings were the late Frances (Rich) Loomis, the late Fern Rich, and the late Alford "Ted" Rich.

Memories passed down from his brother, Ted, were of Porter being an avid reader. He also loved the outdoors, with passions for hunting and studying trees. Trees planted by Porter in his youth are still standing today around his childhood farm place. He graduated from Lake Preston High School in 1931 and joined

Continued on Page 5...

Veterans Golf Cart Program Gives State Fair Attendees a Lift

Last year, 211,843 people filed through the State Fairground gates in Huron, SD. Escorting those fairgoers from place to place across the miles of pathways, are volunteers driving one of the golf carts from the Veterans Golf Cart Program.

The program, primarily sponsored by the American Legion, VFW and their respective Auxiliaries, runs a fleet of 24 golf carts the full five days of the State Fair. Individual Posts or Units can sponsor a 4-seat golf cart for the week for \$150; the designated cart will have signage displaying the name and



Jerry and Sandy Mencke, Post #7, Veterans Golf Cart volunteers

number of the Post/Unit who provided sponsorship. Donations can be sent to the South Dakota State Fair Office, 1060 3rd St SW, Huron, SD 57350 Attn: Linda.

Additionally, Legionnaires and Auxiliary Members can volunteer their time as drivers. There are three shifts each day: 8-12, 12-4, and 4-8. That's 360 volunteer slots up for grabs! If interested in being a golf cart driver, please contact Dick or Bev Freng at 605-352-5997 or email dickorbevfreng@santel.net.



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DISTRICT COMMANDERS

1—Kevin Morello, Black Hawk

5—Matt Langstrom, White

2—Eugene Iron Shell, Jr., Rosebud

6—Doug Feltman, Chamberlain

3—LeRoy Madsen, Pierre

7—Ed Stringer, Hartford

4—Perry Schmidt, Stratford

8—Gregory Geiman, Scotland

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Five Districts Elect District Commanders

**District Vice Commanders and County Commanders Also Elected*



District 2 Commander
Eugene Iron Shell, Jr.
Post #125, Rosebud



District 4 Commander
Perry Schmidt
Post #92, Redfield



District 5 Commander
Matt Langstrom
Post #88, White



District 6 Commander
Doug Feltman
Post #3, Chamberlain



District 8 Commander
Greg Geiman
Post #155, Scotland

During the 2018 Spring District Conventions, new leadership was elected in the even-numbered Districts as well as a special election in District 5. Additionally, new leadership in all counties in the Department were elected.

Elected to serve as District Commanders and District Vice Commanders were the following individuals:

Eugene Iron Shell, Jr. of Rosebud was elected for a two-year term as the District 2 Commander and Cynthia Douglas of Rapid City was elected for a two-year term as the District 2 Vice Commander during the annual District 2 Spring Convention on March 11th in Hot Springs, SD.

Perry Schmidt was elected to a two-year term as District 4 Commander and Bob Thompson of Selby was elected to a two-year term as District 4 Vice Commander, respectively March 24th, during the annual District 4 Spring Convention in Mobridge, SD.

Matt Langstrom of White assumed duties as District 5 Commander for a one-year term and Krisma DeWitt of Castlewood was elected to a one-year term as District 5 Vice Commander, respectively March 23rd, during the annual District 5 Spring Convention in Watertown, SD.

Doug Feltman of Chamberlain was elected for a two-year term as District 6 Commander and Vilas Kurtenbach of Ethan was elected to two-year term as District 5 Vice Commander, respectively, during the annual District 6 Spring Convention in Badger, SD, on March 18th.

Greg Geiman of Scotland was elected to a two-year term as District 8 Commander and Jim Hornstra was elected to a two-year term as District 8 Vice Commander on March 16th during the annual District 8 Spring Convention in Wagner, SD.

Elected as County Commanders were:

District 1 at Piedmont on March 10, 2018 – Donald Tomac, Corson County; Tom Adams, Commander, Brian Hambek, Vice Commander Lawrence County; Darrel Barry, Meade County; Jans Hansen, Perkins County; William Monahan, Butte County; Joshua Klempel, Harding County; Perry Keller, Dewey County and Harold Viet, Jr., Ziebach County.

District 2 at Hot Springs on March 11, 2018 – Eugene Mikuska, Custer County; Josh Nelson, Fall River County; Philip Pearson, Haakon County; Melvin Young, Bennett County; Patrick Yellowhair, Oglala Lakota County; and Kip Green, Mellette County. The other county commanders within District 2 will be elected at the respective meetings of the county organizations and will be reported at a later date.

District 3 at Pierre on March 24, 2018– Jeff Hrabanek, Tripp County; Kenneth Brueggeman, Hyde County; Oliver Redden, Hughes County; Francis Karst, Commander and Art Beringer, Vice Commander Potter County; Larry

Manke, Stanley County; Wayne Monson, Lyman County. Sully and Gregory Counties elected at a later date.

District 4 at Mobridge on March 24, 2018 – James Beckrich, Spink County; Justin Loesch, Walworth County; Kenneth Vilhauer, Edmunds County; Wayne "Red" Vetter, Faulk County; Darrel Yost, McPherson County and Sam Olson, Brown County. Campbell County will be elected at a later date.

District 5 at Watertown on March 23, 2018 - Brookings County Chuck Tiltrum, Commander, Clark County Darin Lewis, Commander, Codington County Roger Papka, Commander, Deuel County Albert Bekaert, Commander, Grant County Dan Scoblic, Commander, Hamlin County Harry Boner, Commander, Marshall County Donald Jensen, Commander, Roberts County Neil Long, Commander

District 6 at Badger on March 18, 2018 – Robert Brodkorb, Beadle County; C.J. Wulff, Buffalo County; Larry Starkey, Jerauld County; Donald Moe, Sanborn County; Loren Scott, Miner County; Ken Anderson, Commander and LaVaun Holan, Vice Commander, Brule County; John Staller, Aurora County; and David Driscoll, Davison County. Kingsbury and Hanson County will be elected at a later date.

District 7 at Sioux Falls on March 17, 2018 – Rodney Smith, Commander, and Kevin Uthe, Vice Commander, Lake County; Robert Condon, McCook County; Jeff Wilkes, Minnehaha County; Linda Hessaa, Lincoln County; John Cole, Union County. Moody County election will be at a later date.

District 8 at Wagner on March 16, 2018 – Paul Weidenbach, Bon Homme County; Mark Gau, Charles Mix County; Clinton Meadows, Clay County; Albert Fink, Douglas County; Robert Rennolet, Hutchinson County; Trevor Christensen, Turner County; and Wayne Brandt, Yankton County.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

These Annual Committee Reports are submitted and printed in the South Dakota Legion News in accordance with Article IV, Section 4 of The American Legion Department of South Dakota Constitution.

Annual Report of the Department Commander



Hugh Holmes

Dear Legionnaires and The American Legion Family, Seems just like yesterday you made me your State Commander. It has been a whirlwind ride for 12 months. Fast and furious! All four corners of South Dakota and locations in between were visited. Being your State Commander is a once in a lifetime experience. I thank you all for the opportunity to serve you and the Department of South Dakota. Met new friends as well reacquainted with old friends. I tried to place, on Facebook, everyplace I visited.

Started off visiting Youth Trooper Academy in Pierre. The youth were outstanding as well as the instructors. All had a great experience. YTA is one of the best programs we offer to youth. Then off to Pierre again to give greetings at the South Dakota VFW convention.

July picked up with attending the National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis. Attended regional American Legion Baseball games and the first day of Class B tournament in Winner. Got to read The American Legion Baseball Code of Sportsmanship a few times. Met more youth and coaches. More outstanding youth in a great American Legion event.

August. Next on the list was the National Convention in Reno. Saw our first lady National Commander, Denise Rohan elected. That was a great day for The American Legion. Started to attend post meetings and post events around the state. Linda and I rode in the Hot Springs Post 71 Freedom Ride. This was our first poker run ever. We loved it. Thanks to the Post 71 family for a great time. At the State Fair, Warren Aas received the Chet Sorenson Outstanding Veteran Award. Got to visit Post 323 at my former college in Springfield. And I was not home for Linda's and my 43rd anniversary. No cake in my face!

September started the Fall District Tour. We hit all eight districts, had great times, and great food at each location. More post meetings and events. Rode in the Wagner Labor Day Parade. Spoke at the golf tournament. Just going here and there picking up the miles.

October was filled with Legion meetings and events. Went to Indianapolis for the Fall Meetings. Had a great time. I was selected by the 6th District President to be her chauffeur. Had to drive her to six locations so she could provide training to her Unit Presidents. And I walked up and down the streets meeting folks. Box Elder's Chili Cook-off was tasty. About 20 varieties.

November was exciting. Attended five Veterans Day programs. At Custer, got the seniors' attention when I told them to give each attending veteran a \$100.00 bill. Not one of the seniors moved, but the veterans had a good laugh. Popped into Parker's supper, surprising the Commander. Also attended many Turkey Bingo nights. Loved taking Hans' prizes home! We pitched the East River Cemetery proposal at Legislative Roundtables in Sioux Falls, Watertown, and Rapid City. All VSOs united together fighting for the cemetery and we WON!

December wasn't the best to travel but still made it to all events and meetings. In an 8-day period had to travel to Hot Springs three times for three different events. Enjoy attending Christmas parties in Yankton, Hot Springs, Sturgis, and Sioux Falls. Had a great time handing out presents, etc. And still made it to California to celebrate Grandson Leon's 1st birthday.

During January drove to Pierre a few times for receptions and meetings. Did many grips and grins with legislators about veteran issues. Introduced the Boys and Girls State Governors to SD Governor Daugaard. Governor Daugaard and I were in the City of Philadelphia during the 1970 Boys State. Presented him a SDAL Centennial Coin. Attended more post and county meetings. Attended WWII Navy veteran Sylvan Vigness's Purple Heart Medal Presentation. Also attended Davison County honoring WWII veterans with a special commemorative coin.

Two major events for February were Mid-Winter Conference and the Washington Conference. National Commander Rohan visited the Department at Mid-Winter. She discussed many items including why her shirt is purple and not pink. I picked her and Mike up at the airport and had an interesting one-on-one conversation with them on the way to Oacoma. At the Washington Conference, the high light was meeting with our US Congressional members. We presented the American Legion legislative priorities for the year. Had great conversations with Senator Thune and Representative Noem. Senator Rounds was back in South Dakota during our visit. Attended Aberdeen's Past Commander's Banquet. Great meal and fined only \$10.00. And, of course, visited more posts.

March was busy. Running all over the state. Visited more posts and District Spring Meetings. All meeting were fun and exciting at times. Had to postpone two district meetings due to weather, but we got them in. And I gave my white van to the State Adjutant and received in return a new black van. One night, Adjutant Travis got hit by a 30-point buck up in the Highmore area. At Lake Preston, attended WWII Navy veteran Porter Rich's memorial service.

April. Assisted the Britton folks at their air gun tournament. Got to present awards to the youth. They are good shooters!! Gave greetings to the DAV State Convention in Deadwood. Helped at the District Commanders Orientation in Watertown. More post visits. Attended AseraCare ceremonies honoring veterans in various nursing homes.

And May. A sad day was attending PDC Hoot's funeral and burial. Presented the AL School Award at Mitchell Senior High School to 4 outstanding students. Gave greetings to the Military Order of the Purple Heart convention. Attended a Bronze Star and Purple Heart presentation at the Hot Spring Veterans Home. Rode in Brandon's Loyalty Day parade. Passed out about 2000 pieces of candy. Attended 2018 Boys State in Aberdeen. And more post visits.

I like to thank the American Legion members for everything you have done this year.

To the State Headquarters Staff, thanks. You had to put up with a rookie commander this year.

To all Committee/Commission Chairs, Vice Commanders, District Commanders, a big thank you for a good year.

To Linda, thanks for being my shotgun, making traveling sandwiches, and helping wherever needed. Love ya!

To NEC Huls, ALT NEC Hanson, and Past Department Commanders, thanks for all your advice, guidance, and leadership.

To President Elvira, thanks for your support. Auxiliary, SAL, and ALR members, thanks for all you do.

Forward,
For God and Country,
Hugh "Homer" Holmes

Youth Trooper Academy Candidates Selected



This year 72 applications were received by the South Dakota Highway Patrol to participate in the Youth Trooper Academy in Pierre.

The class size in 2018 will have 24 candidates. Below is a list of the candidates that were selected and will attend the 2018 Youth Trooper Academy:

Zakary Mau of Deadwood, Dominick Oedekoven of Sturgis, Chauncey Hauptman of Murdo, Maria Pecora of Rapid City, William Spangenberg of Ft. Pierre, Kassidy 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.

Districts 6 & 7 each have 4 candidates selected to attend the academy. Districts 3,4,5 & 8 each have 3 candidates selected to attend and Districts 1 & 2 each have 2 candidates selected to attend the 2018 academy.

We congratulate all the candidates selected and we wish them the best of luck at the Youth Trooper Academy.

The dates of the Youth Trooper Academy are June 25-29, 2018. The program is designed to expose young adults to the demands of Highway Patrol Recruit training and to develop better relationships between the youth of our state and the Highway Patrol. Veteran South Dakota Highway Patrol Troopers will serve as mentors and chaperones during the week.

Troopers and members from other law enforcement agencies throughout the state of South Dakota will provide classroom and hands-on training in topics such as firearms safety, defensive driving, crash investigation, traffic stops, leadership, defensive tactics, and criminal law. Youth Academy Recruits will also get to experience demonstrations from the Highway Patrol's special operations section such as aircraft operation, SWAT, and Police Service Dogs.

Annual Report of the Department Historian



Fred Lee

Commander Holmes,

I would like to thank you for appointing me as your Department Historian this year. It has been an honor to serve you as your Department Historian. I am working on the Department History for this year so you will have a remembrance of your year as State Commander. And I will assist those who are working to put their histories online for the 100th anniversary of The American Legion.

Post Historians should be finalizing their Post Histories now for the History Book contest at the State Convention in Spearfish in June. Entries in the One-Year Post Narrative and One-Year Post Yearbook will be judged by myself and other historians at the convention. In order to get this completed, we need all books to me or to the registration desk at the convention in Spearfish by Friday afternoon, June 17, no later than 3 pm in order to be judged. Guidelines and advice can be found in the Post Officer's Guide, beginning on page 147.

Make sure you include a complete copy of the entry form for each entry. These forms can be found on the Legion's home page under "FORMS". Look for "Post History Forms". Plaques will be presented to the first, second and third place winners.

I would encourage all posts to put together a post history, either in book form or now, online through the American Legion Centennial website. I thank all historians and Post members for their hard work and commitment in preparing these books. Your Post members will long appreciate your hard work in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Lee
Department Historian



100th Annual Department Convention
The American Legion Department of South Dakota
Holiday Inn Convention Center
305 N 27th St
Spearfish, South Dakota
June 7-10, 2018

State Convention Schedule of Events

Thursday, June 7

- 10:00 a.m. Finance Commission Meeting
Willow/Aspen
- 1:00 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting
Willow/Aspen
- 4:30 p.m. 5 Year Membership Council/PR Media
Meeting—Willow/Aspen
- 6:00 p.m. PDC Dinner— 76 Room

Friday, June 8

- 8:00 a.m. Registration—Lobby
- 9:00 a.m. Sons of the American Legion—Spruce
- 10:00 a.m. Resolutions Committee Meeting—Willow
- 11:30 a.m. SDALPA Luncheon—Willow
- 1:30 p.m. Americanism Committee—Cedar
Rehabilitation Committee—Cedar
Credentials Committee—Cottonwood
Employment Committee—Cottonwood
Rules Committee—Oak
Internal Organization Committee—Oak
Next Meeting Place Committee—Aspen
Legislative Committee—Canyon
National Security Committee—Spruce
- 4:00 p.m. Legion Riders—Spruce
- 5:00 p.m. Go Getter Reception—Heritage Center
- 7:00 p.m. Go Getter Dinner—Heritage Center
- 8:00 p.m. Fun Auction—Pool area

Saturday, June 9

- 8:00 a.m. Registration—Lobby
- 9:00 a.m. Convention Business Session
Willow/Aspen/Spruce/Oak/Cedar
- 11:00 a.m. MidWinter Sweepstakes Drawing
- 3:30 p.m. Session Ends
- 4:00 p.m. Memorial Service—Cottonwood/Ponderosa
- 5:00 p.m. Joint Banquet Reception
Willow/Aspen/Spruce/Oak/Cedar
- 6:00 p.m. Joint Banquet
Willow/Aspen/Spruce/Oak/Cedar
- 8:00 p.m. Joint Dance
Willow/Aspen/Spruce/Oak/Cedar

Sunday, June 10

- 8:00 a.m. Registration—Lobby
- 9:00 a.m. Convention Business Session
Willow/Aspen/Spruce/Oak/Cedar
- 11:45 a.m. State Convention Sweepstakes Drawing
- 11:50 a.m. Foundation Pistol Raffle Drawing
- 12:00 p.m. Elections
Willow/Aspen/Spruce/Oak/Cedar
- 1:00 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting
Willow/Aspen/Spruce/Oak/Cedar



100th Annual Department Convention in Spearfish

American Legion Family members from across the state of South Dakota will gather in Spearfish, SD, June 7-10, 2018, at the Spearfish Convention Center for the 100th Annual Department Convention of The American Legion Department of South Dakota.

Highlighting the convention will be the election of the Department Commander for 2018-2019 near the end of the General Session of the Convention on Sunday, June 10. Other election activities will include the election of State Vice Commanders, Department Sergeant-At-Arms, and all Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the 100th Annual National Convention of The American Legion which is scheduled to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 24-30, 2018.

This year Denny Brenden, of Watertown, SD, is currently running unopposed for the office of Department Commander. This election will also be held on Sunday, June 18th, around 12:00 noon.

Dignitaries invited to address the convention assembly include Dennis Dugaard, Governor of South Dakota; Sen. Mike Rounds, Sen. John Thune, Rep. Kristi Noem (or representatives from their offices); MG Timothy Reisch, Adjutant General and Secretary of Military Affairs; Sarah Bierman, U.S. Department of Labor; Adriene Benton, Director, Black Hills National Cemetery; Darwin Goodspeed, Director, Sioux Falls VA Health Care System; Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Brad Richardson, Superintendent, Michael Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home; COL Craig Price, South Dakota Highway Patrol; Judge Robert Spears, Veterans Court; Stephanie Judson, SD Community Foundation; Steve Thorson, Mayor of Watertown; Sandra Horsman, Director, Black Hills VA Health Care System; and Shawn Bohn, VA Dakotas Regional Office as well as the leadership of other major veterans service organizations in South Dakota.

This year, as at recent past state conventions, the department will recognize the State Oratorical Champion, and Boys State Governor.

Winners of the South Dakota American Legion Press Association competition will be announced.

Winners of the "Pride of the

Prairie" membership awards, the "Excellence in Americanism" awards and the annual History awards will also be announced during the convention general assembly.

Additional activities will include the recognition of all District Legionnaires of the Year and the announcement of the Department Legionnaire of the Year as well as the recipient of the Robert C. Gabrielson Memorial Leadership Award.

There will also be presentations of multiple Employer of the Year and Membership Awards.

Activities planned for Thursday, June 7th, include the Department Finance Commission meeting at 10:00 a.m.; the Department Executive Committee will meet at 1:00 p.m.; and at 4:30 p.m., the 5-Year Membership Council/Public Relations Media Committee will meet. All of these meetings are scheduled to be held in the Willow/Aspen room in the Spearfish Convention Center. These are open meetings and everyone is invited to attend.

Activities for Friday, June 8th, starts off with the Resolutions Committee initial meeting at 10:00 a.m. in the Willow room. The Sons of the American Legion will hold a meeting at the same time in the Spruce room.

SDALPA will hold their annual luncheon and meeting at 11:30 a.m. in the Willow room. At 1:00 p.m. all the convention committee chairpersons will meet in the lobby area of the Spearfish Convention Center with Adjutant Flisrand where they will receive their committee packets. At 1:30 p.m., the meetings of all convention committees will take place. The Legion Riders will host their meeting at 4:00p.m. in the Spruce room.

Following the committee meetings, there will be the annual Go-Getter reception and meal. The reception will be held at the Heritage Center with a social around 6:00 p.m. and the meal served shortly after social.

Of course, you may find a few hospitality rooms at the convention hotel after the Go-Getter reception. A great way to socialize, meet and greet fellow Legion Family members, and snack on some good food to end your day's activities.

Again this year, a fun auction is planned with proceeds donated to the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The fun auction is scheduled to be held in the pool area in the Holiday Inn hotel following the Go-Getter dinner.



**Denny Brenden, Candidate for
 Department Commander
 2018-2019**

Saturday's activities include the General Assembly Session commencing at 9:00 a.m. in the Spearfish Convention Center with several dignitaries scheduled to address and bring greetings to the convention. As in all the past years, there will be no break over the lunch hour during the general session.

The business session will be followed by the Joint Memorial Service which will be held in the Cottonwood/Ponderosa room in the Spearfish Convention Center starting at 4:00 p.m.

At 6:00 p.m., the Joint American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion Banquet will be held in the Watertown Event Center. Tickets must be purchased in advance for the banquet as no tickets will be sold at the door. Following the meal, a joint dance will be held at 8:00p.m.

Sunday's final General Session will include the final various Committee reports as well as the election of delegates and alternate delegates to the 100th Annual National Convention that will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 24th-30th.

Convention delegates will also elect Department State Vice Commanders, Sergeant-At-Arms, and finally, Legionnaires will cast their votes and elect their new Department Commander that will serve during 2018-2019.

The last order of business will take place as the newly elected State Commander will hold a Post Department Executive Committee meeting immediately following adjournment of the 100th Annual State Convention in the convention hall.

Post #63 Honors Porter L. Rich

Continued from Page 1

the workforce. Porter then attempted to enlist in the US Navy but was rejected due to a heart murmur.

One year later, he tried to enlist again and was successful. His first enlistment had him serving on the USS Texas and USS Pennsylvania battleships. After re-enlisting for another 4 years in the spring of 1939, he was assigned to and served on the USS Oklahoma until his death on December 7, 1941.

After re-enlisting, Porter started planning his future. The fall before his passing, he married Margaret Lemkuhl in August 1941 in Yuma, AZ. While



Porter L. Rich

on their honeymoon, he was summoned back to the USS Oklahoma, which was anchored in San Diego, CA. The newlyweds returned to San Diego and the USS Oklahoma left for Pearl Harbor, HI in September. A son, Ronald Leigh Rich, was born to Porter and Margaret in May 1942.

On Dec. 7, 1941, Rich was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. Rich's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at an American Battle Monuments Commission site along with the others who are missing from World War II. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for. After 76 years, Porter L. Rich's remains were identified positively through family DNA-testing and will now finally be home.

Rich's son, Ronald, grew up with only shared memories and photos of his father, and treasures his father's Purple Heart. In August 1949, The American Legion Post #63 in Lake Preston was named after the first person killed in action in WWII from the town, Porter L. Rich. Post #63 was honored to have Ronald in attendance for his father's memorial service, and welcomed him into the fold as their newest Legion member.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit DPAA website www.dpaa.mil.



Ronald L. Rich holds his father's flag during the internment ceremony on March 31st, 2018 at the Lake Preston Cemetery.

Midwest Honor Flight Ramps Up For Another Flight

Aaron Van Beek is not your average 23-year-old.

A few years ago, Aaron saw a need in Northwest Iowa, South Dakota, and Southwest Minnesota: Veterans were not having the time or the funds to see their memorials in Washington, D.C. In 2017, he started the Midwest Honor Flight program through the Honor Flight Network. This was the first Honor Flight to allow South Dakota Korean and Northwest Iowa veterans to fly to DC under the care and supervision of Honor Flight Guardians.

Not only is Aaron President & Director of Midwest Honor Flight, he also teaches third grade at Kinsey Elementary in Sioux Center, Iowa. Aaron is a member of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 199 of Sioux Center and an Assistant Scoutmaster for the Sioux Center Boy Scouts. He also serves as President & Director for Sioux Center Wreaths Across America and Director for Leadership & Citizenship Focus. Aaron also holds the position of Director of Social Media and Senate Counselor for the Iowa American Legion Hawkeye Boys State program.

Midwest Honor Flight recognizes American veterans for their sacrifices and achievements by flying them to Washington, D.C. to see their memorial at no cost. Top priority is given to World War II and terminally ill veterans from all wars. Midwest Honor Flight also include Korean War and Vietnam War veterans. In order for Midwest Honor Flight to achieve this goal, guardians fly with the veterans on every flight providing assistance and helping veterans have a safe, memorable and rewarding experience. Veterans are flown on a "First to Apply, First to Fly" policy.

Of all the wars in recent memory, it was World War II that truly threatened our very existence as a nation—and as a culturally diverse, free society. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, an estimated 640 WWII Veterans die each day. The time to express our thanks to these brave men and women is running out.

ESTIMATED APPLICATION WAIT TIME:

WWII Veterans: NEXT FLIGHT

Korean Veterans: NEXT FLIGHT - 6 MONTHS

Vietnam Veterans: 1 - 2 YEARS

Not a veteran? Become a Guardian for one of the next Honor Flights! You'll see everything that these heroes will see but you will be giving back at the same time - ensuring that each veterans has a safe and enjoyable experience in our nation's capitol. Additional volunteer opportunities are available as an Honor Flight Ambassador. Ambassadors promote the Midwest Honor Flight program to veterans in your selected area, promote Midwest Honor Flight fundraising events, contact local businesses for financial support for our veterans Assist at events as much as able, and are present, if able, at the registration and especially the Welcome Home Ceremony on flight day.

Another opportunity on the horizon is Midwest Honor Flight's Essay Contest. Midwest Honor Flight's Board of Directors wanted to engage more youth in their Mission: To transport America's Veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit those memorials dedicated to honor the service and sacrifices of themselves and to fellow veterans. With this in mind, the Midwest Honor Flight Essay Contest entitled "Why Thank a Veteran" was formed as a way for youth to express the importance of this mission with their families, their communities, and to the veterans in which they will have the opportunity to meet. Students aged 16 and through college are invited to apply and write for this contest. This upcoming year's contest will open again in January 2019.

All applications and more information can be found on midwesthonorflight.org. Donations can also be made on the website through their PayPal link. Checks can be mailed to:

Midwest Honor Flight
PO Box 22
Sioux Center, IA 51250



Upcoming Mission	Flight Date	Application Deadline
Mission 3: Confirmed	25 SEP 2018	05 JUN 2018
Mission 4: Tentative	14 MAY 2019	01 FEB 2019
Mission 5: Tentative	24 SEP 2019	05 JUN 2019

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

These Annual Committee Reports are submitted and printed in the South Dakota Legion News in accordance with Article IV, Section 4 of The American Legion Department of South Dakota Constitution.



Commander,

The annual South Dakota American Legion Legislative Committee meeting was held October 21, 2017 by conference Call.

Present at this meeting were State Commander Hugh Holmes, Chairman PDC Mark Weinmann, Committee members present were Royce Loesch, PDC Rod Martens, PDC Gary Watts, and State Adjutant Travis Flisrand. PDC Rick MacDonald was not available.

Since there were no resolutions received at the State Convention in 2017 requiring Legislative action, we recapped the Legislative achievements of 2017.

At the SD Veterans Council meeting held on November 8 in Sioux Falls, all of the Veteran Service Organizations, including the American Legion, VFW, DAV, PVA, Vietnam Veterans of America and Purple Hearts of America took a united stand in the efforts to create SD Veterans Cemetery near Sioux Falls. This is the first time all of the VSO organizations have united on a single issue.

Three Legislative Roundtables were held in November in preparation for the 2018 legislative season. These round table discussions were held in Watertown on November 17th, Sioux Falls, on November 16, and Rapid City on November 18th. Legislative Roundtables are set up each year for the members of the South Dakota Veterans Council to present their agendas to members of the legislature. All Legionnaires are invited and encouraged to attend.

The Legislative Committee met again at Pierre Post 8 on January 17th, 2018 to discuss legislation being introduced in the 2018 legislative session. Present at this meeting was Chairman Mark Weinmann, PDC Rod Martens, PDC Rick MacDonald, PDC Gary Watts, Lobbyists Royce Loesch, Doug Feltman, Commander Hughes, and Department Adjutant Travis Flisrand. Also present were many leaders and members of the SD American Legion. These meetings are open to all interested Legionnaires and all are welcome and encouraged to attend.

The legislative reception was held the evening of January 17th and was well attended by Legislators and Legionnaires alike. Our caps are off to the members of Post 8 for their hospitality, and for making the legislative reception a huge success. Since there were no legislative issues brought forth by the American Legion, we set our eyes on other legislation brought forth concerning Veterans.

HB 1009—To revise certain provisions regarding the administration provided to veterans.

This bill was signed by the Governor

HB1010—Revise certain provisions regarding federal protections for National Guard members ordered to active duty

This bill was signed by the Governor

HB 1025—Revise the qualifications for county veteran service officers.

This bill was deferred to the 41st legislative day

HB 1043—Authorization the construction of a National Guard Readiness Center at the Rapid City Airport.

This bill was signed by the Governor

HB 1244—Revise certain provisions regarding the renewal of driver license by a member of the Armed Forces and their families.

This bill was signed by the Governor

SB 83—Authorize certain patriotic societies access to public schools.

This bill was signed by the Governor

SB 91—Authorize the Department of Veteran Affairs to provide for the design, construction and equipping of a state veterans cemetery in Minnehaha County, to create a veterans cemetery fund, to make an appropriation therefore, and to declare an emergency.

This bill was signed by the Governor

SB 97—To provide a special motor vehicle license plate for certain women veterans.

This bill was signed by the Governor

SC 1—This House Commemoration honors our 2017 Boys State Governor --Bridger Gordon of Whitewood and the 2017 Girls State Governor Ruhama Tereda of Sioux Falls, and commending the South Dakota American Legion and Auxiliary for their sponsorship and coordination of the Girls State and Boys State programs.

SCR 15—Making formal application to the United States Congress to lawfully change the medical enrollment criteria for the Veterans Health Administration, to include all who served in WW II and the Korean War and who received an honorable discharge or discharge under honorable conditions for their service regardless of current income status.

The Senate adopted this resolution, the House of Representatives concurred.

I would like to thank members of the Legislative committee and especially our Lobbyists- Royce Loesch, Adjutant Travis Flisrand and Doug Feltman who put in a lot of time, effort and travel to make sure the Veterans of the American Legion voice is heard.

Again I wish to extend well wishes to Gerry Goetzinger and his wife who served as a distinguished member of this Department of the American Legion, this Legislative Committee and its Chairman for many years.

Commander, thank you for allowing me to serve as your chairman and be a part of your successful year.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Weinmann
Chairman, Department Legislative Committee

State of South Dakota Offers Veteran Bonus

PIERRE, S.D.

If you served with the Armed Forces any time after Aug. 2, 1990, or are currently active duty military, the State of South Dakota and South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs want to say thank you!

The Department administers a bonus program for those who were legal residents of the state for no less than six months prior to their active duty service and who meet other qualifications.

In the past 14 years, the department has made bonus payments of up to \$500 to more than 9,400 service members for their active duty service after Jan. 1, 1993, through today. Since 2005, bonus awards have also been made to over 880 service members activated from Aug. 2, 1990, to Dec. 31, 1992.

Bonus payments cannot be paid for Active Duty for training.

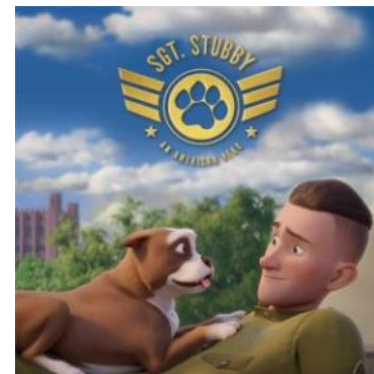
Read more about the state's Armed Forces bonus under the "Benefits" tab on the Department website at <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>, contact your local county or tribal veterans service office, or call the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs at 605-773-7251.

'Sgt. Stubby: An American Hero' Local Screenings Offered to American Legion Posts

Fun Academy Motion Pictures is offering American Legion posts nationwide opportunities to screen the critically acclaimed animated family film "Sgt. Stubby: An American Hero" beginning Memorial Day weekend (May 25) and continuing through Veterans Day (Nov. 11), with the help of veterans-outreach 501(c)(3) nonprofit VetFlicks.org.

This heartwarming story has a real American Legion connection. Sgt. Stubby, who was smuggled into France and served on the front line in World War I, became famous for warning his unit of a gas attack, saving lives on the battlefield and even capturing a German prisoner. Following the war, Stubby marched in multiple Legion national convention parades, including the inaugural one in 1919 in Minneapolis. He was an official member of Eddy-Glover American Legion Post 6 in Connecticut, the only known canine to ever become an official member of the Legion.

For more information about screenings for local American Legion posts, contact GroupSales@FunAcademyStudios.com.



Sgt. Stubby: An American Hero Promotional Poster



Commander Holmes,

The Employment Committee can report a so-so 2017-2018 American Legion year as we were not able to award each of the employment awards.

The Employer of Veterans Award has 2 winners. First for the small employer (50 or fewer employees) Veterans award went to Herreid Lumber of Herreid, SD. The nomination was made by the Jacob A. Heinrich Post 170 of Herreid. The large

Veteran Hiring award winner (201 plus) goes to 3M of Aberdeen, SD. This nomination was submitted by Sidney L. Smith Post 24 of Aberdeen.

Congratulations to each employer for hiring veterans. No nominations were received for Hiring of the Disabled nor for Older Workers.

The Employment Committee for this past year is: Earl Schultz, Aberdeen; Bob King, Hermosa; Leon Josephson, Arlington; Rick Gully, Watertown; Nicole Renner, Aberdeen. and myself of Aberdeen. Thank you for agreeing to serve the American Legion!

Thank you Commander for allowing me to serve as the employment chair. Please make a Post resolution to seek out employers who hire Veterans, Older Workers and The Disabled. This is an excellent way to recognize and show your appreciation of their hiring practices.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Warne
Employment Committee Chair

National Convention Room and Parking Rates

At this year's National Convention, the Department of South Dakota has a block of rooms reserved at the Hyatt Regency Minneapolis. Below is the room and parking information:

Room rate is \$137.00 Total Including Tax (1-2 Persons Flat Rate) \$155.02

Additional occupant in room - \$25 for each additional guest (3-4 Persons)

Rollaway Rate per Day - Not Available

Early Bird Parking - Enter between 6:00am - 8:00 am, Leave before 8:00 pm - \$7.00 Monday through Friday only

Current Self-Parking:

0-20 minutes: \$5.00

21-40 minutes: \$10.00

41-60 minutes: \$15.00

61-80 minutes: \$20.00

81 minutes-24 hours: \$24.00

Current valet parking rates:

Short Term (0-2 Hours): \$15.00

Short Term (2-4 Hours): \$20.00

Long Term (4+ Hours): \$38.00

**Valet Parking rates listed do not include 8.025% sales use tax

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

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Larry Madsen

Commander Holmes;

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Department Americanism Chairman. Your support and leadership have contributed to the success of this Vital pillar of the South Dakota American Legion.

I am grateful for the direction provided by the Americanism Commission members. Together we guide and monitor the American Legion Americanism programs. But, I am most proud and humbled by the Legionnaires who carry out leadership and patriotic events in Posts across the State.

We are truly committed to our youth through programs under the umbrella of the American Legion Americanism Pillar such as the High School Oratorical contest, American Legion Youth Baseball, American Legion Boys State, American Legion Youth Trooper Academy and Scouting. Our Posts sponsor Flag Education and Citizenship Awards in our schools. We are reaching youth in ways they are used to communicating. Registration for Boys State and the Youth Trooper Academy has been accomplished from their smart phones or computers.

The Boys State manual is now available to everyone with a computer or smart phone in pdf format. Dedicated experienced Volunteers will be on site to interact with Boys State Citizens during the week at Northern State University May 28 – June 1. Northern State University brings students into their Media Center to experience the great potential of that facility. Boys State is celebrating its 76th year at NSU.

The Oratorical Scholarship Program continues to flourish. Our Department winner competed in the American Legion National Oratorical Contest along with 53 other contestants and got into the semi-finals.

The Youth Trooper academy program continues to grow. We are searching for ways to let school staff in every school in the state know of the availability of American Legion programs. We are using social media and electronic notices to reduce postage costs. Twenty Four High School Junior and Senior Girls and Boys will be invited to participate in a week long experience at the SD Department of Criminal Investigation facility in Pierre in June. Thank you to Larry Price for your leadership as liaison with the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

Thank you Post Americanism Officers for submitting your Post Americanism reports to the Department headquarters so the Americanism Commission could include them in their report. The Commission will meet May 31 on the NSU campus.

The American Legion continues to collaborate with Scouting to inspire boys to achieve their goals. It is exciting to see the enthusiasm with which our youth develop competencies. Thank you Rick MacDonald for your devotion to the Boy Scouts.

I look forward to seeing a good attendance at the Department convention in Spearfish. Let us hear how we can better service local Posts, communities and the State of South Dakota.

Thank you Commander Holmes for giving me the opportunity to represent the Department of South Dakota as your Department Americanism Chairman. Thank you to the Americanism Commission and the Americanism Committee for your direction and support.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Madsen,
Americanism Commission Chairman

Kentucky Youth Wins National American Legion Oratorical Contest

INDIANAPOLIS (April 15, 2018) - A senior from Paducah, Kentucky, capped a busy weekend of competition in Indianapolis by earning an \$18,000 college scholarship and first place in The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – “A Constitutional Speech Contest.” Carlissa Frederich’s winning oration was titled “Limited Government: Our Right and Responsibility.”

Frederich started the weekend as one of 53 state or department champions in the 80th annual contest. She advanced to the championship through three rounds of intense competition.

Emily Parker, from Lino Lakes, Minnesota, earned a \$16,000 college scholarship with a second place finish, while Nathan York, from National City, California, earned a \$14,000 scholarship and finished third.

Griffin Smith of Spearfish, South Dakota, was one of nine top high school contestants of the 53 that advanced to the semi-final round. We congratulate Griffin for his accomplishments. This was the second year in a row that the South Dakota competitor reached the semi-finals.

More than 6,000 high school students begin competition annually at The American Legion post-community level. More than \$3 million in scholarships have been awarded over the history of the contest.



Travis Flisrand

Commander,

This report is being written and read to satisfy the requirement in the By-Laws that the Department Adjutant write and present at each annual convention, a report covering all activities not covered in the annual reports of Committee Chairs and other State American Legion officials.

The American Legion is a member of the South Dakota Veterans Council, along with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Vietnam Veterans of America. The council meets four times a year discuss issues involving the Veterans of South Dakota. The council’s main goal is to standing together on Legislative bills to better improve the lives of veterans. This year, all six organizations stood unanimously together in support of creating a State Veterans

Cemetery so veterans on the eastern side of the state have a veterans cemetery that is relatively close. Senate Bill 91 not only passed through and was signed into law, when the votes were tallied it was supported by every member of the House and senate. An endowment has been established by this bill and the South Dakota Veterans Council has oversight of this operational endowment. The goal with a minimum \$3,000,000 balance for that fund by July 1, 2023, if this minimum is not reached, no monies can be expended until the balance is above that amount. I am currently the chairman of the South Dakota Veterans Council Cemetery endowment fund and am happy to announce to you that The American Legion, Dept. of South Dakota has pledged to donate \$50,000 to this operational endowment.

The American Legion Foundation is in its eighth year and has a market value of approximately \$161,000. Donations continue to come in on a yearly basis from Legionnaires and Legion Posts. The fun auction is the single biggest fund raiser for the year. The foundation is a 501c3 tax exempt corporation and can receive donations from any companies and individual donors. This year we are raffling off the last Centennial Pistol the foundation had purchased. This Pistol is one of 100 made to celebrate The American Legion’s centennial year.

One of my challenges this year was working with Post 323 at the Springfield Prison. What initially appeared to be some concerning allegations that questioned personal integrity of a Legionnaire, ended up being an individual that has spread incorrect information to try to benefit themselves. A special thank you to Jim Hornstra who stepped up to the plate and volunteered to take a week of personal time to be qualified as volunteer with access inside the prison. Not only did he volunteer above the call of duty, but he has transferred into this Post and is an active part of the Post and a mentor to those veterans. This could have turned out quite differently, but with patience and good communication, we were able to turn this around with a positive outcome.

The American Legion is present at the Veterans Building during the State Fair and assists veterans with any issues they may have. Also, those present assist veterans in joining the American Legion and becoming part of the largest veterans’ organization in the world. Many Legionnaires give up a few hours, a day and some many days manning the booth and letting the veterans know what The American Legion is all about. The American Legion is part owner of the Veterans Building and is used primarily at the State Fair.

The Department is always looking for ways to cut costs and increase revenue. This year the Department renewed a one-year contract with Patriot Fundraising for the fundraising program that guarantees the Department \$50,000 for 6 mailings, to include 2 sweepstakes. The company is based out of Tulsa, Oklahoma, this return address has confused many of legionnaire, but I am here to report that the money donated and sent to a return address in Oklahoma is legit.

Another way the Department has been saving money is through Department Standing Committee Meetings using conference calls. The Department uses Conference call meetings through a subscription of GoToMeeting.com. Not only time for many members of the American Legion has been saved but also money on reimbursement costs for transportation and food. The VAVS Committee, South Dakota American Legion Foundation, Boys State Corporation, 100th Anniversary Committee and other committees have used this conference call meeting during this past year.

We are expanding on the technology side by adding in live streaming of events with an internet enabled camera. Not only will be able to stream events for members to tune into and get information, but our training team and our Commander can stream training to more legionnaires across the State of South Dakota and around the world. This will save a fair amount of travel expenses and increase communication within our Department. I know not every post is up to speed with watching videos on the internet, but I hope that neighboring Posts who have this ability will invite others in who do not.

State Headquarters Staff has had their hands full this year. With the retirement of the Department Service Officer Warren Aas and the untimely resignation of the Assistant Adjutant, a great deal of the work was done by my keystone of our office Judy, and myself. I must say that without Judy there assisting with everything, reminding me of what I have missed and being a great moral support to keep my spirits up with all the facets of this job and limited staff, I would probably be in an isolation ward getting some quiet time to un-stress myself. I cannot thank Judy enough for all that she has done for me in the past year. I welcome aboard Mrs. MaryJo Boner to our team, she has proven her dedication to our organization by being the Unit President of Castlewood Unit #250 for the past 8 years. I know she will quickly become another keystone to the Headquarters staff in the near future. Our Department Service Officer position has been filled on a part time basis by Courtney Van Zanten, she has been a great help to me over the past 4 months and worked well filling in with the retirement of Warren Aas.

Mr. Commander, since most of the Committee Chairs and State Officers have filed complete reports published in the June issue of the South Dakota Legion News, most of the activities of the Department have been covered and reported on. I would like to congratulate you on a very successful year. It has truly been a privilege having you as my first Commander, you have left some very big shoes for your successors to fill.

Respectfully submitted,

Travis Flisrand
State Adjutant

The Department of South Dakota has set up a YouTube Channel. This will be utilized to broadcast important events, speakers, and even sessions from Department Conventions. Search and Subscribe to the American Legion Department of South Dakota Channel on YouTube.

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

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Annual Report of the Department Membership Chairman



Rolly Quam

Commander,

As the membership year draws to a close, we find ourselves 1119 members short of our national goal and 2354 of what we need to run the state. We can, however, give ourselves a pat on the back since we won the \$2000 for computer equipment.

There are 15 posts below the 15 member limit, who run the danger of having their charter pulled. Hopefully they will turn this downhill slide around, as I am sure the charter members of those posts would hate to see that happen. Nobody at the State wants to see a post close either—the veterans in those particular areas deserve to have a home, but we do need people to step up and lead.

There again, on the plus side, there are 39 posts who reached their goal and exceeded it. Those 39 posts will be entered into the \$500 drawing. Several have reached all time highs: Hermosa reached a all time high of 145, Arlington with 224, Chester with 79, and Harrisburg with 97. Congratulations to all 4 posts—I would bet money they all use Mylegion.org.

If you are not using Mylegion.org, please get set up at post level so you won't have to depend on state for finding out about possible members (who may be your next door neighbor). Mylegion has many outstanding uses beyond the 500 list as well: when sending letters for renewals, you can use their pre-written letter. You can track your own membership, do your own transfers, send membership to national, and even be able to see who renews online. If you can't run a computer, just ask your wife, kids or grandkids to help you out. Once you get started, you will find out it's easy.

There are around 70,000 registered Veterans in South Dakota; our population runs around 870,000. That means that about 1 out of 12 individuals in our state is a veteran. Next time you find yourself in a crowd, do the math, and start having conversations about joining up. It's likely someone in the room could be your post's newest member.

We tried a new incentive for membership this year. Commander Holmes and myself felt that having a individual drawing would generate more interest into signing up more members, but that didn't seem to matter. Anytime I mentioned to a Legion member about the drawing, they had never heard about it. Once they hear that, they usually take a bunch of apps. I really think we have a very big problem with communications—I know the information was published on several mediums, but it didn't seem to get down to the general member level.

There is a true shining star for the year: Murdo Post #75 will now be at 116 percent. Jones county only has a population of 901, yet they were able to sign up and renew 21 members. Considering their goal was 18 and for 6 months of the year they only showed 2, I'd say they are doing great. It was great going out there and seeing 16-20 members at all 3 meetings we attended. How many posts can say they have that good of attendance? A great big Thank-You to Eugene Iron Shell Jr. for his assistance with rescuing this Legion post.

We had pretty good success at our recruiting tables throughout the year. Many legionnaires volunteered their time to come out and try to get new members at National Guard events, home shows, exhibitions and fairs. If you have a big event in your area and would like to set up a table, make sure you contact the next membership chairman. It is a great recruiting tool, and it helps get the Legion name out in public view in your area.

In closing, if we do not stop this downhill slide, membership dues will increase and Veterans will get harder to sign up. We definitely need to address the communication problems, all the way down to the Post level. Post commanders, if you hear news from the Commander, Adjutant, or District Commanders, pass it on to your post at your next meeting. And you'd better be having meetings, because I can tell you from my experiences over this past year that the quickest way to kill a post is to quit having meetings. Leadership, make sure you're communicating often and across different medias—some people go to meetings, some people read the news, some people go on Facebook. We need to try to reach all of those people.

I would like to thank Commander Holmes for having me as Membership Chairman. A big Thank-You to State Headquarters, and all the District Commanders for all the work they do. Also a big Thank-You to Leon Josephsen, an 88-year-old Army veteran who has been my co-pilot on many excursions. Leon is like the energizer bunny just keeps going and going.

Respectfully submitted,

Rolly Quam
Department Membership Chairman

Legacy Run 2018 Preparations Underway

The Legacy Run, a cross-country motorcycle ride organized by the Legion Riders, raises money every year for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. The Fund provides college assistance for the children of U.S. military personnel killed on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, as well as children of post-9/11 veterans with a combined VA disability rating of 50 percent or higher.

This year's Legacy Run will be held August 19th-23rd, with registration and briefings on the 18th. The Legacy Run will leave Hutchinson, Kan. – where Post 68 will host kickoff events – on Aug. 19 and arrive in Minneapolis for the 2018 National Convention. The ride will make stops in Missouri, Iowa and Wisconsin before finishing Aug. 23 at Anoka Post 102 in Minnesota.

Highlights of the trip will include the National WWI Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, MO; the American Legion Memorial Fountain, Kansas City, MO; the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library in Independence, MO; The Soldiers Field Veterans Memorial, MN; Spam Museum, MN; Hornel Historic Home, MN; Mower County Historical Society Ft. Snelling Cemetery and Veterans Home, MN; and a few other surprises.

Each day, riders will eat both lunch and dinner at an American Legion Post, and all Posts except one are 1919-1920 Chartered Posts in honor of the Centennial year. The daily Post schedule is as follows: Aug. 19 – Department Hutchinson, Kan., Post 68; lunch and dinner stops in Independence, Mo., Post 21. Aug. 20 – Lunch stop at Post 100, Maryville, MO; dinner stop at Spencer Post 1, IA. Aug. 21 – Lunch stop at Post 56, Albert Lea, MN.; dinner hog roast hosted by ALR Chapter 91, Austin, MN. Aug. 22 – Lunch at Post 92, Rochester, MN.; dinner stop at Post 336, Onalaska, WI.

This year, any American Legion Riders and supporters who cannot attend the Legacy Run can register as a "Supporter" for \$20.00. All Supporter registrants will receive a specially minted 2018- 2019 Centennial Legacy Run Pin, patch set and some other surprises.

The 2017 Legacy Run raised a record \$1,224,653 – the fourth straight year the ride raised more than \$1 million. Help make 2018 just as great, if not better. Register at www.legion.org/riders, and Ride for the Kids!

VA Pushes Forward With Move Towards Whole Health Care Sioux Falls VAMC Designated Whole Health Design Site

VA facilities are shifting from a health care system focused primarily on treating disease to one rooted in forming continuous healing relationships and partnerships that support Veterans in achieving their greatest overall well-being.

The result is a whole health approach, which is a bold redesign of health care focused on empowering and equipping Veterans to take charge of their health and well-being. Guided by a personalized health plan, VA's Whole Health System considers the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and environmental elements that work together to provide the best quality of life for each Veteran.

As we reconnect with what matters most in our lives and learn new approaches to help us live life to the fullest, VA health teams will be there each step of the way. THIS is the VA of the future.

In 2018, VA is launching the full Whole Health System in one Flagship facility in each of the 18 Veterans Integrative Service Networks (VISN). Flagship sites are expanding Veteran self-empowerment, self-healing, and self-care through the implementation of three components, The Pathway, Well-being Programs and Whole Health Clinical Care.

The Pathway is a partnership with peers where Veterans are empowered to explore their mission, aspiration, and purpose, and begin their overarching personal health plan.

Well-being Programs focus on self-care and equip each person with skill building and proactively supports one's personal health plan with complementary and integrative health (CIH) approaches such as mindfulness, yoga, tai chi, and health coaching.

Whole Health Clinical Care is provided by clinicians who utilize a whole health approach which is grounded in a healing relationship and incorporates complementary and integrative health approaches based on the Veteran's personal health plan. This care may be provided in the VA or in the community.

The Sioux Falls VA Medical Center has been selected as a Whole Health Design site for 2018. As Whole Health Design Sites, these facilities will implement elements of whole health and/or expand their existing efforts to implement a Whole Health System.

The Whole Health System



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Commander,

On behalf of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee, which consists of Chairman Warren Aas, Harry Huffman Jr. of Ethan, Loyson Carda of Lemmon, Ron Hoffer of Roscoe and Dan Scoblic of Big Stone City, it gives me great pleasure to present the following VA&R report.

The Veterans Administration (VA) continues to operate the nation's largest integrated health care system with more than 1,700 hospitals, clinics, community living centers, domiciliaries, readjustment counseling centers, and other facilities. Here in South Dakota, we are proud to have the Sioux Falls Health Care System in Sioux Falls and the Black Hills VA Health Care System in Hot Springs and Sturgis (Fort Meade).

The VA operates 131 national cemeteries in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Burial and memorial benefits are also available for eligible service members, Veterans, and family members. You are always welcome to contact your County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer to inquire about headstones, markers & medallions, or ordering presidential memorial certificates.

We are very excited that Courtney has accepted the responsibilities as our new Department Service Officer. She will do an awesome job keeping us informed on the latest news coming from the VA as well as assisting us with our needs dealing with VA claims or just getting advice. Welcome Courtney! The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System and the Black Hills VA Health Care System continue to work very hard in an effort to fill the key vacant positions with their staffs.

Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) is available for any veteran in your community that may have fallen on hard times and needs some financial assistance to get back on their feet. TFA is generally one time grant money and other requirements apply. Your post commander has more details about TFA.

The American Legion continues to be a stakeholder with the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System, Black Hills VA Health Care System, and the Sioux Falls VA Regional Office which conducts quarterly live or teleconference stakeholder meetings providing updates, Q&A and information sharing. If you are a veteran and would like to check into getting enrolled in the VA for healthcare, we encourage you to stop in and see your local Tribal or County Veterans Service Officer in your county or contact DSO Courtney Van Zanten for assistance.

Thank you Commander Holmes for allowing me the privilege to serve as the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee during your year. We encourage all Legionnaires to attend their post meetings. Ask your fellow members if they need a ride to the meeting. You'll be glad you did.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren L. Aas,
Chairman, VA&R Committee



Commander,

As our dynamics within the American Legion continue to grow in many ways, the Children & Youth program is following suit. The Temporary Financial Assistance grants are incredibly beneficial gifts that eligible families receive in a trying time. These grants are not only the veteran families last resort, but the stepping stone to help them back on their feet.

If you have a veteran family possibly in need, please take a moment to reach out to them about the Temporary Financial Assistance grant and how to apply if warranted. Applications can be obtained through the Department Headquarters website at <http://www.sdlegion.org/form/sd-american-legion-tfa-form/> or you can contact me at 605-695-9122. Remember the applications start at post level and with YOU! You're the key to connecting us, and I will, with the utmost speed, continue the process of determining eligibility and

granting assistance.

The Children & Youth program over the past year or so has had the pleasure of helping several families. In 2017, we had \$3034.83 given out in grants, and so far \$4750.27 in 2018. I also would like to mention that, for the first time in many years, we submitted a National Temporary Financial Assistance application for a maximum of \$1,500 and it was approved! That individual family received a grant maximum at state and national level totaling \$3,000.

This past fall, I decided I wanted to do something extra to spread the message of the Children & Youth programs across South Dakota. I particularly wanted to reach out to younger families, to let them know we care about the next generation. With this thought in mind, I established the backpack initiative. The American Legion Children & Youth teamed up with the Auxiliary Children & Youth to make the most of the vision. Ready to be filled are 100 backpacks that the Auxiliary will stuff with school supplies. Together, we will distribute to posts commanders that request backpacks for needy children within their post. These backpacks are meant for those that cannot afford such materials. We will be able to help at least 100 children start the 2018-2019 school year off with a smile on their face with something new just for them!

If you or your post would like to donate extra backpacks or supplies please contact me directly. I would like to have them distributed by the second week in August, as school starting dates vary from across the state. I truly believe this backpack initiative is a small act, however, it's a great step in the right direction to show our support to our youth and their education.

This past year, as the Children & Youth Chairperson I have grown to appreciate each and every youth program, as each one highlights a child's strengths and pushes them towards a brighter future. Encourage your community to explore all these programs as most are no cost to the children. If you need material or information on any of the programs please contact me.

Lastly, thank you for allowing me to serve as the Children and Youth Chairperson. This position has been humbling and rewarding. The satisfaction of helping our youth is priceless.

Respectfully submitted,

Miranda Krumm
Children & Youth Chairman



Commander,

Thank you for appointing me Chairman of the Department Internal Affairs Commission for 2017-2018. As Chairman, I have the duty to oversee any changes to the Constitution and Bylaws of the South Dakota American Legion, as well as any other issues regarding the operation of The American Legion, the SAL, and the American Legion Riders.

The Constitution and Bylaws can only be changed by resolution, proposed by individual Posts or by the Internal Affairs Commission. These proposals for change must be in the proper format and submitted to the Department Headquarters at least six weeks prior to the annual Department Convention.

Once received at Department Headquarters, the adjutant is required to submit them to the Internal Affairs Commission for disposition. The Department Internal Affairs Commission consists of the Chairman, the Commander, the Judge Advocate, and members at large. The Adjutant is also present to keep record of the meeting and to be called on for any needed information. Following action by the Internal Affairs Commission, the resolutions are distributed to the Posts with recommendations of the Commission.

In addition, a resolution may be submitted at the Department Convention, BUT must have unanimous consent of the delegation to bring the resolution to the floor for debate.

This year, the Internal Affairs Commission received eight resolutions. The Commission reviewed them and forwarded them to each Post so as to inform them of action to be taken at Convention. No reports were received from the SAL nor the Legion Riders.

Respectfully submitted,

Byron Callies
Chairman, Department Internal Affairs Commission

Operation Black Hills Cabin: A Way to Say Thank You to Veterans

When a service member is permanently injured, the whole family is injured. The entire structure of the family unit is forever changed with the wife and children often becoming the around-the-clock caregivers. Their "family time" takes a back seat to the recovery process. "TIME" is the word heard over and over that is of the utmost importance to the families. What Operation Black Hills Cabin is offering is quality time - whether it is time spent on an outing such as visiting the patriotic ambiance at Mt. Rushmore or sharing quiet times on the deck watching the abundant wildlife of the Black Hills. The one-week respite in the 1,200 square foot, 3-bedroom, 2 bathroom, fully furnished and fully handicap accessible cabin includes no television or computer; only board games, puzzles, playing cards and outdoor games that families can enjoy together. In addition, they are provided with coupons for free meals, free admission to many popular Black Hills attractions and many other recreational opportunities due to the generosity of many community partners. They are able to enjoy as many, or as few, activities as they would like or as their injuries allow. These families can not bear the burden of all the planning or expense to put together an outing such as this. The cabin offers them the opportunity to reconnect, have some "fun" and create priceless memories of their quality time together.

Operation Black Hills Cabin is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a comfortable, peaceful and supportive respite to qualified, combat-injured veterans and their families, from the Iraq/Afghanistan operations, in their rehabilitation from their traumatic and stressful experiences while serving the interests of our Nation.

Further, the program will provide an opportunity to the disabled veteran to reacquaint themselves with their family, enrich and enhance their lives and create lasting memories in a quiet, leisurely environment with little or no cost to them.

The following are eligible to apply for a stay at Operation Black Hills Cabin: Active Duty service members and Veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom; Operation Iraqi Freedom; or Operation New Dawn, who were Combat Injured at a minimum of 30% OR a Medal of Honor Recipient from OEF, OIF or OND OR Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) members. Include a copy of orders with the assignment to WTU, AND a signed statement from the applicant's primary physician on the physician's letterhead with the physician's contact information, and stating the member is pending a Statement of Disability with an anticipated rating of at least 30% due to Combat Injuries along with the type of disability. The application and other information about the program can be found at www.operationblackhillscabin.org.

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

These Annual Committee Reports are submitted and printed in the South Dakota Legion News in accordance with Article IV, Section 4 of The American Legion Department of South Dakota Constitution.



Commander,

The 2018 Session of the South Dakota American Legion Boys State program will begin Sunday May 27th with Staff Training. The Boys State attendees will arrive Monday May 28th and remain until the closing ceremony on Friday June 1st 2018.

Northern State University continues to upgrade their facilities and will do so for the next few years. As always they happily accommodate our every need.

This year's attendance numbers will be down significantly from last year. Our projected attendance currently is at 275.

This is the third year we have used online registration. It is a great benefit for the Staff as it has reduced the man hours required to register all of our attendees. We continue to have problems getting correct if any email addresses from the Legion Posts and accepting the fact that this is not the way of the future but the way of the present.

I also feel a lack of motivation within the Posts to participate in the Boys State Program. I have called school counselors that have not registered a Boys State Delegate with questions of why no student from their school has registered. The answer I get is that they have not seen a Legion representative for one, two and in some cases three years.

A good example is Central High School in Rapid City. Last year the Counselor called the neighboring Post to see if someone would come and help her with Boys State as they had no-one participate the prior year. This counselor is a former Girl Stater and tries her best to promote the program, but had no contact from the local post in three years.

The Americanism Officer from the neighboring Post and I spent a lunch period talking to High School Juniors and handing out brochures. We got four attendees. This year we left it up to the local Post and we have no-one from that school again. This is the second largest post in the state and should be sending twenty to thirty delegates each year. This is only one example, there are a few more of the same.

Posts need to understand that this is NOT a school or counselor program. It IS a Legion program. The responsibility to promote the program is not a school or counselor responsibility. It is a Post, and Post Americanism responsibility. Until Posts take ownership of this program, unfortunately I feel our attendance numbers will continue to decline to the point where the program will cease to exist.

Thursday, 31 May is American Legion day. The Staff and attendees really look forward to this day and interacting with the Legionnaires.

The Boys State Staff, the Adjutant and the Headquarters Staff continues to perform magnificently putting together a great program for our youth. Their commitment and dedication goes above and beyond any measure I could ask for. As always they will produce a positive and memorable experience for everyone.

Respectfully submitted;

Gene Opbroek
Director, South Dakota Boys State Program



Commander,

The Trust Fund has shown an overall positive growth for the year. The committee met once this past year and continue to feel that the conservative balance for the portfolio is good. The fund has averaged 3.86% since inception.

The year-end market value as of April 30, 2017 was \$432,564, compared to a year-end market value on April 20, 2018 of \$456,558.

The current asset allocation for the trust is as follows: Money Market is 3% yielding 1.45%; Domestic Fixed Income is 21% yielding 3.81%; International Fixed Income is 5% yielding 5.06%; Equities is 43% yielding .82%; Real Assets is 9% yielding 3.04%; and Alternative Investments is 19% yielding .88%.

The Trust Fund Committee has agreed to meet every 6 months to track the fund performance and make changes as needed. The portfolio has a balanced investment objective to reduce volatility with the American Legion Trust Fund.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Rakness,
Chairman, Trust Committee



Commander,

The Educational Loan Committee consist of Mike Elsbery of Tyndall, Commander Hugh Holmes of Mitchell and Jerry Mencke of Huron.

With Educational Loan Applications due December 1st we received two loan applications. Both applicants were asking for their second loan of \$1,500. We already have their high school transcripts, all we needed was their first semester transcripts and second semester schedule. By asking for first semester transcripts and second semester schedule, we are more than ensured that they will continue in higher education. Both loans were approved through the email system.

Just a couple of comments about the loan program. The loan program is self-sustaining. Loan repayment must start 90 days after graduation or drop out of school. Interest rate is 3% if payment starts within the 90 days otherwise rate changes to 8%.

I think that more students should take advantage of the program. Applications and brochures are available online at State Headquarters website, www.sdlegion.org. We should also see more teachers names being submitted. Latin teacher Lynn Marie Thomason at Sioux Falls Lincoln High School was selected as South Dakota American Educator of the Year.

The Education Loan Committee expresses our thanks for the memorials and donations. Thanks to the Department Executive Committee, State Headquarters, American Legion Posts, Auxiliary Units and many individuals. Commander Thank You for letting me be Chairman of the Education Loan Committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jerry Mencke
Chairman, Department Educational Loan Committee

Rolling Thunder: 'It was overwhelming'

South Dakota Riders Take Part in POW/MIA Awareness Ride

Steven B. Brooks
American Legion HQ

Legionnaire Felicia Rawls participated in her first Rolling Thunder last weekend. It will not be her last, thanks to both her overall experience and making a very special new friend.

Rawls, a Navy veteran and founding member of American Legion Riders Chapter 347 in Lady Lake, Fla., promised a fellow Legionnaire that while up in the D.C. area she'd visit the friend's son, who is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

"Not knowing where his grave was, I had to walk over a mile and a half to get to his gravesite," Rawls said. "It was so hot, but the whole time I was walking I was thinking, 'This is worth it. He laid down his life for me so that I can walk this far in this heat to pay my respects.' And I did. I just sat there and I talked to him. I told him, 'I don't know who you are. I know your father, but I want to thank you for giving your life for me.' It was a very, very emotional time. I felt like I met a new brother. He was there in my heart. I really feel a connection, and I will go visit him next year."

Rawls' experience was one of several emotional moments experienced by Legion Riders attending Rolling Thunder, which started 31 years ago to bring awareness to the U.S.'s prisoners of wars and missing in action; that number now stands at 82,000 since World War II. What was thought to be approaching 500,000 motorcycles rode in from all over the nation, gathering in the Pentagon parking lot and then traveling down Constitution Avenue, turning at Third Street and then finishing up along Independence Avenue. Thousands of supporters stood along the route, holding signs, waving U.S. flags and clapping as the motorcycles passed by. Seeing that kind of support stirred emotions in Rawls.

"Seeing all of these people out and waving at us and supporting the veterans, it kind of gives hope that our nation still does have people that care and respect those ... that have served," Rawls said. "It was overwhelming." The Riders also got an impressive sendoff from Fairfax, Va., where hundreds of area residents stood along Fairfax Boulevard and Nutley Street before the procession got onto I-66 East. There, every overpass also featured dozens of supporters, again waving flags and cheering.

That support wasn't lost on Henderson, Nev., Post 40 Legion Riders Phil Perlman and Kathleen Jordan, who rode 2,500 miles to participate in their first Rolling Thunder. "That was awesome," Jordan said. "All the people on the bridges – and on each bridge there was someone there."

Jordan also was impressed with the hospitality provided by Post 177 in Fairfax, which for the seventh year hosted or facilitated multiple events for the close to 200 Legion Riders and their passengers who made it to the post. "All the people at the post are so friendly and so helpful," Jordan said. "When they know that you're from out of town, they do the best they can to accommodate any needs or answer any questions we have."



Chapter 164 Legion Riders Fred & Micheline Nelson, Jim & Ginger Childers and Mike & Charlene Kain visit Arlington National Cemetery as part of Rolling Thunder.

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

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SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION EDUCATIONAL LOAN COMMITTEE FINANCIAL REPORT		
Balance, 5-1-17		\$117,081.10
RECEIPTS:		
Loan Repayments	\$11,045.20	
Interest	\$36.39	
Memorials and Donations	<u>\$488.26</u>	
	\$11,569.85	<u>\$11,569.85</u>
TOTAL		\$128,650.95
DISBURSEMENTS:		
Educational Loans	<u>\$3,000.00</u>	
TOTAL	\$3,000.00	<u>\$3000.00</u>
Balance, 5-1-18		\$125,650.95

VAVS COMMITTEE FINANCIAL REPORT		
Balance, 5-1-17		\$4,296.75
RECEIPTS:		
From General Fund	\$1,800.00	
Interest	\$1.33	
Memorials and Donations	<u>\$3600.61</u>	
	\$5,401.94	<u>\$5,401.94</u>
TOTAL		\$9,698.69
DISBURSEMENTS:		
VA Facilities	<u>\$5,600.00</u>	
TOTAL	\$5,600.00	<u>\$5,600.00</u>
Balance, 5-1-18		\$4,098.69

ATHLETIC COMMISSION FINANCIAL REPORT		
Balance, 5-1-17		\$18,300.25
RECEIPTS:		
Entry Fees	\$7,200.00	
Interest	<u>\$5.65</u>	
	\$7,205.65	<u>\$7,205.65</u>
TOTAL		\$25,505.90
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS:		
Scholarship	\$500.00	
Commission Expenses	<u>\$7,746.51</u>	
TOTAL	\$8,246.51	<u>\$8,246.51</u>
Balance, 5-1-18		\$17,259.39

CHILDREN AND YOUTH FINANCIAL REPORT		
Balance, 5-1-17		\$25,389.23
RECEIPTS:		
Interest	<u>\$7.00</u>	
TOTAL	\$7.00	<u>\$7.00</u>
		\$25,396.23
DISBURSEMENTS:		
TFAs	<u>\$5,242.83</u>	
TOTAL	\$5,242.83	<u>\$5,242.83</u>
Balance, 5-1-18		\$20,153.40

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN FINANCIAL REPORT		
Budget Amount 2017-2018		<u>\$8,000.00</u>
TOTAL		\$8,000.00
DISBURSEMENTS:		
Committee, Travel & Awards	<u>\$6,203.10</u>	
Balance in Fund, 5-1-18		\$1,796.90



Jim Huls

Commander,

It is with great pride that I make a few comments as I complete my first year as your National Executive Committeeman. First, I must thank Paul Evenson for his mentorship and help this past year. It is a great privilege to serve the legionnaires of South Dakota. Paul's vast knowledge of the American Legion and his personal contacts at the National Level were a great help to me.

The challenges being faced at the National Level are very similar to the challenges faced in the Department of South Dakota. Mainly this is the declining membership and its effect on the financial well being of the organization. The National or Department of the American Legion is a business like any other and therefore must be financially solvent and operate on a balanced budget. The main income of National and Department is membership dues, so you see the problem. Some reorganization has taken place at the National Level to be more efficient in the discharge of our many programs. Programs will not be cut. You will hear more on this as we move thru the next year.

We should all be very proud of the status your Department of South Dakota enjoys at the national level. Byron Callies has served with distinction as a National Vice Commander this year. I am looking forward to seeing all of you at the 100th Department Convention in Spearfish. Let's make it successful.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Huls
National Executive Committeeman

Mark Your Calendar

June 2018

- May 28-June 1: Boys State, Northern State University, Aberdeen
- 5: Deadline for State Convention Resolutions to State Headquarters
- 5: Deadline for National Legion College Applications to State HQ's
- 6: D-Day
- 7-10: **100th Department Convention, Spearfish Convention Center**
- 7: Department Finance Commission Meeting, Spearfish
- 7: Department Executive Committee Meeting, Spearfish
- 8: Convention Committee Meetings, Spearfish Convention Center
- 8: Fun Auction, Holiday Inn, Spearfish
- 9: Joint Legion/Auxiliary/SAL Banquet, Spearfish Convention Center
- 9-10: State Convention General Sessions, Spearfish Convention Center
- 10: Elections of Department Officers, Spearfish Convention Center
- 14: Flag Day. **This is an important membership target date.*
- 14: U.S. Army Birthday
- 14-16: VFW State Convention, Sioux Falls
- 17: Father's Day
- 25-29: Youth Trooper Academy, Pierre

July 2018

- 1. Deadline for Consolidated Post Reports to State Headquarters
- 4: **Independence Day.** State Headquarters Offices closed.
- 9: Deadline for National Convention Packets to State Headquarters
- 7: Department Finance Commission Meeting, Chamberlain, SD
- 15: Department Executive Committee Meeting, Chamberlain, SD
- 20-28: American Legion Boys Nation, Washington, D.C.
- 24-28: Jr. Shooting Sports National Championship, Colorado Springs
- 27-31: Class B Senior State Baseball Tournament, Redfield, SD

August 2018

- 1-5: Class A Senior State Baseball Tournament, Pierre, SD
- 1-5: Class A Junior State Baseball Tournament, Mitchell, SD
- 3-5: Class B Junior State Baseball Tournament, Winner, SD
- 4: Coast Guard Birthday
- 7: Purple Heart Day
- 9-11: Department Service Officer School — Indianapolis, IN
- 9-11: National Membership Workshop — Indianapolis, IN
- 16-21: American Legion World Series Baseball Tourney, Shelby, NC
- 19: Start of Legacy Run to National Convention in Reno, Nevada
- 20-24: SDDVA Annual Benefit School, Ramkota, Pierre
- 24-30: 100th Annual Legion National Convention, Minneapolis, MN

2018 American Legion Baseball Tournaments

The 2018 American Legion Baseball season is in mid-swing and the tournament locations and dates are set. 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.

Please come out and help support your local American Legion Baseball team. Your support makes this a great American Legion program.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Legion donated \$1 million to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund for construction of the Wall in Washington, becoming the largest single contributor to the project.



Rolling Thunder

Continued from page 10

"It's been great," added Perlman, Chapter 40's director. "They put out a really good event there. It's well organized. It's a good time."

While it is a lot of work to put on an event like Post 177 does each year, ALR Chapter 177 Director Bruce Mersereau said it's well worth it. "We always look forward to this," he said. "It's our biggest event. We look forward to seeing everybody coming here. It is a lot of preparation and a lot of work during the weekend. But the worst thing is that it seems like the weekend is over in the flash."

Post 177 Legion Rider Michael Nicholas Sr., led the post's Rolling Thunder committee for the previous six years before stepping away from that role this year. But he was still visible and taking on a leadership position throughout the weekend. "I was just helping out where I could help out," Nicholas said. "With all the people that show up and come here from all over the country, you try to chip in where you can. I've done it for so long, and that's why I chip in and help out."

Having hosted the event seven times, Post 177 has gotten to where mistakes don't happen often. "Guys know what to do," Nicholas said. "They step up and fill in."

While many of the Legion Riders participating in Rolling Thunder already are out of the military, they were joined again this year by current Marine Cpl. Shawn Wathen, who is stationed in Quantico and is a member of Post 28 in Triangle, Va. He was a former member of American Legion Post 136 in Arroyo Grande, Calif., where his father Bob has served as post commander.

"I just like the group, like the people," Wathen said of why he transferred his Legion membership when he moved east. "I got used to hanging around with everyone at (Post 136) and enjoyed the camaraderie. When I got out (to Virginia) I wanted to find that same thing, as well as the veterans services and stay involved in that type of thing."

While Wathen has spent two years heading from Fairfax to D.C. with a group of Legion Riders, a longtime Rolling Thunder participant was making her debut with the Riders. Sharon Sculthorpe, a member of Legion Post 325 in Danville, Va., made her sixth trip to Rolling Thunder, but it was the first time she'd rode with her fellow Legion Riders in Sunday's demonstration ride. The previous five times Sculthorpe had served as an escort for a Gold Star mom.

"It was a different experience, but different in a good way," said Sculthorpe, a longtime member of the Legacy Run's advance team. "It's always good to be with your brothers and sisters that you know and you ride with from the Legion. There's a core group here that does the Legacy Run ... who have come in for this, too. It gave me a new appreciation for it, to be in that sea of humanity (at the Pentagon) vs. being out there on the side and kind of tucked away."

"I definitely would do it again. I really enjoyed the camaraderie. I enjoyed the patriotism. And I enjoyed meeting people and talking to people. These are some of the most dedicated people I know. Who in the world would come up here and stand in that heat for hours on end to do that ride if it wasn't for love of country ... and to let these families know their fallen aren't forgotten."

It was the overall experience that brought Fred Nelson, a founding member of Legion Riders Chapter 164 in Spearfish, S.D., 1,800 miles for his second Rolling Thunder. He brought with him four other Chapter 164 Riders attending Rolling Thunder for the first time.

"There's no other experience like it," Nelson said. "The moving experience of the candlelight vigil and then actually riding in Rolling Thunder with all the other bikes in support of the veterans and those who made the ultimate sacrifice, it was beyond belief."

Membership Percentages by Posts / Districts

*As of May 14, 2018

DISTRICT 1 94.55%		
POST	NO	MBSHP
Belle Fourche	32	83.58%
Nisl., New., Vale	233	100.00%
Buffalo	147	80.00%
Lead	31	107.53%
Spearfish	164	90.38%
Box Elder	315	102.61%
Piedmont	311	93.10%
Sturgis	33	106.18%
Faith	106	53.33%
Bullhead	82	109.09%
Little Eagle	239	52.94%
McIntosh	139	77.14%
McLaughlin	121	89.80%
Thunder Hawk	279	109.52%
Eagle Butte	308	175.00%
Isabel	120	90.32%
Timber Lake	83	93.75%
Bison	255	75.00%
Lemmon	66	86.05%
Dupree	124	52.63%
DISTRICT 2 86.55%		
POST	NO	MBSHP
Allen	317	88.24%
Martin	240	70.51%
Midland	143	78.13%
Philip	173	83.33%
Belvidere	144	78.95%
Wanblee	269	84.21%
Kadoka	27	76.00%
Draper	301	78.95%
Murdo	75	88.89%
Norris	310	86.67%
White River	94	83.02%
Wood	19	76.47%
Mission	287	80.00%
Parmelee	295	20.00%
Rosebud	125	155.56%
St. Francis	297	13.33%
Custer	46	110.94%
Hermosa	303	101.40%
Edgemont	172	113.04%
Hot Springs	71	102.86%
Oelrichs	238	53.33%
Hill City	160	81.58%
New Underwood	256	20.00%
Rapid City	22	86.78%
Rapid City Foothills	320	102.20%
Wall	246	82.35%
Batesland	281	73.91%
Kyle	265	3.57%
Pine Ridge	251	6.67%
Porcupine	294	20.00%
Manderson	302	137.50%
DISTRICT 3 90.67%		
POST	NO	MBSHP
Blunt	77	88.00%
Pierre	8	87.00%
Highmore	35	87.50%
Gettysburg	135	96.24%
Hoven	159	95.10%
Fort Pierre	20	105.45%
Onida	79	77.55%
Bonesteel	36	84.09%
Burke	28	83.87%
Dallas	91	90.32%
Fairfax	187	88.24%
Gregory	6	92.59%
Herrick	220	87.27%
Kennebec-Reliance	179	87.78%
Presho	89	83.33%
Vivian	157	83.33%
Colome	146	85.59%
Winner	169	98.01%
Witten	167	65.52%
Miller	38	84.38%
Polo	299	120.00%

DISTRICT 4 86.90%		
POST	NO	MBSHP
Aberdeen	24	90.38%
Claremont	262	81.63%
Columbia	58	90.24%
Frederick	273	96.67%
Groton	39	85.92%
Hecla	68	122.73%
Stratford	207	112.20%
Warner	137	85.45%
Herreid	170	76.09%
Pollock	272	83.87%
Bowdle	264	95.74%
Hosmer	189	86.25%
Ipswich	67	102.94%
Roscoe	259	80.95%
Eureka	186	78.57%
Leola	78	88.46%
Long Lake	276	80.00%
Mobridge	4	79.10%
Selby	100	89.19%
Brentford	242	66.67%
Conde	148	89.74%
Doland	69	86.21%
Mansfield	289	82.35%
Mellette	151	66.67%
Northville	149	88.24%
Redfield	92	84.78%
Tulare	292	88.89%
Cresbard	213	81.63%
Faulkton	102	82.46%
Rockham	57	90.32%
DISTRICT 5 88.18%		
POST	NO	MBSHP
Andover	258	93.75%
Grenville	267	86.84%
Lily	156	76.47%
Pierpont	99	85.00%
Roslyn	253	86.21%
Waubay	129	72.73%
Webster	40	91.04%
Big Stone City	229	80.88%
Milbank	9	100.00%
Strandburg	171	93.75%
Britton	80	87.50%
Kidder	298	78.57%
Langford	141	86.36%
Veblen	76	91.30%
New Effington	180	86.96%
Old Agency	314	102.44%
Rosholt	48	92.31%
Sisseton	50	95.83%
Wilmot	64	88.24%
Bradley	108	77.78%
Carpenter	153	95.24%
Clark	60	89.01%
Raymond	209	87.10%
Willow Lake	113	90.63%
Watertown	17	86.07%
Astoria	103	82.14%
Clear Lake	49	97.59%
Gary	109	80.61%
Toronto	81	84.62%
Bryant	37	81.82%
Castlewood	250	95.52%
Estelline	184	82.41%
Hayti	217	82.69%
Aurora	230	94.12%
Brookings	74	87.85%
Bruce	200	95.00%
Elkton	198	93.10%
Sinai	133	90.48%
Volga	114	95.88%
White	88	88.04%
DISTRICT 6 89.29%		
POST	NO	MBSHP
Hitchcock	84	100.00%
Huron	7	82.96%
Virgil	268	89.29%
Wessington	110	80.88%
Wolsey	59	72.92%
Arlington	42	107.73%
Badger	260	82.76%
DeSmet	138	100.00%
Erwin	241	87.10%
Hetland	263	80.95%
Iroquois	280	89.13%
Lake Preston	63	104.88%
Oldham	158	31.58%

Canova	61	97.06%
Howard	145	78.36%
Plankinton	5	103.33%
Stickney	26	83.82%
White Lake	96	113.79%
Chamberlain	3	96.47%
Kimball*	130	86.30%
Pukwana*	201	85.00%
Gann Valley	16	86.96%
Ethan	261	118.95%
Mitchell	18	86.06%
Mount Vernon	210	79.63%
Alexandria	41	88.00%
Emery	166	31.03%
Ful-Frm-Epiphany	85	86.49%
Alpena	116	81.58%
Wessington Sprgs	14	88.54%
Artesian	47	75.86%
Letcher	93	86.76%
Woonsocket	29	83.33%
DISTRICT 7 88.48%		
POST	NO	MBSHP
Chester	136	127.42%
Madison	25	85.50%
Nunda	105	86.96%
Ramona	216	69.44%
Wentworth	161	82.05%
Colman	278	100.00%
Egan	97	85.00%
Flandreau	70	76.06%
Trent	122	100.00%
Bridgewater	111	65.38%
Canistota	162	126.92%
Montrose	154	102.30%
Salem	140	89.33%
Baltic	175	92.96%
Brandon	318	118.67%
Colton	206	89.74%
Dell Rapids	65	92.44%
Garretson	23	101.83%
Hartford	118	83.75%
Humboldt	62	86.67%
Renner	307	80.00%
Sioux Falls	15	83.87%
Valley Springs	131	94.62%
Alcester	86	79.31%
Beresford	72	85.00%
Elk Point	134	80.30%
North Sioux City	319	97.96%
Canton	53	94.44%
Harrisburg	45	127.63%
Hudson	128	78.42%
Lennox	174	86.81%
Tea	266	86.49%
Worthing	177	77.78%
DISTRICT 8 86.25%		
POST	NO	MBSHP
Centerville	43	97.73%
Chancellor	283	90.98%
Davis	176	100.00%
Hurley	21	92.16%
Marion	235	105.13%
Parker	30	73.68%
Viborg	117	53.57%
Avon	150	95.12%
Scotland	155	82.22%
Springfield	132	79.12%
MDSP Springfield	323	120.00%
Tabor	183	79.52%
Tyndall	2	88.89%
Geddes	56	85.92%
Greenwood	257	20.83%
Lake Andes	10	80.77%
Pickstown	282	54.55%
Platte	115	80.20%
Wagner	11	89.95%
Alsen	44	82.46%
Irene	193	86.27%
Vermillion	1	105.88%
Wakonda	13	87.61%
Armour	52	97.87%
Corsica	274	86.15%
Delmont	249	82.46%
Freeman	248	72.41%
Menno	152	92.56%
Parkston	194	85.29%
Tripp	142	72.73%
Gayville	237	71.43%
Yankton	12	94.57%

In State Headquarters, May 14, 2018

State Vice / District Commanders Membership Standings

State Vice Commander	2018 Goal	2018 Mbers	Percent	
Dist. 1-2 Fred Nelson	3,617	3,254	89.96%	
Dist. 3-8 Dennis Brenden	16,868	14,894	88.30%	
District Commander	2018 Goal	2018 Mbers	Percent	
Dist. 1 Kevin Morello	1,542	1,458	94.55%	1
Dist. 2 Eugene Iron Shell, Jr.	2,075	1,796	86.55%	8
Dist. 3 LeRoy Madsen	1,940	1,759	90.67%	3
Dist. 4 Perry Schmidt	2,175	1,890	86.90%	6
Dist. 5 Matt Langstrom	3,476	3,065	88.18%	5
Dist. 6 Doug Feltman	2,783	2,485	89.29%	2
Dist. 7 Ed Stringer	4,217	3,731	88.48%	4
Dist. 8 Greg Geiman	2,277	1,964	86.25%	7
Post 500	250	194		
State Totals	20,735	18,342	88.46%	