



Actions Speak Louder than Words

M&M Committee Plans Service Projects for 2021-2022

By Travis Flisrand, M&M Committee Chair

The new Membership & Marketing Committee (M&M) has been developing a marketing plan to raise awareness of the contributions in South Dakota from South Dakota American Legion, the goal of this campaign is to help in recruiting new members into our organization. The committee is made up with a representative from each District along with an experienced Legionnaire for each area for a total of 10 appointments. Other members on this committee are the Dept. Membership chairman lead this committee and the Media and communications chairman as liaison to ensure the knowledge is shared between committees on promoting our organization.

We will be utilizing the “hashtag” #sdlegionserving to make it easier for the Media to find stories regarding this. Anytime a Post does a service project for their communities, they should use the hashtag in all their social media postings, along with in the newspapers. The search engines (google / yahoo as examples) do store information on hashtags that are utilized. This makes it a lot easier for our stories to be found on the internet. Please use this hashtag for everything your Post does that is a service-related project.

The M&M Committee is focusing on “Service Projects” that will benefit veterans in South Dakota and working with other organizations that already have good coverage with the media. We are starting with two highly publicized organizations initially in South Dakota, the committee is requesting all Posts to help where they can with the projects, the more participation we have from Posts the better media coverage we will receive to bring the spotlight on our organization of all the great things we do accomplish for our communities.

The first service-related event will be Commander Nelson’s “last ride” as State Commander. He is planning this on June 16-19 starting out in Spearfish, SD, and riding to all four corners of the State. They will be taking donations during this ride for Posts that wish to contribute, Commander Nelson will identify the program that will receive them.

The second service project is providing manpower to the DTOM 22/0 Ranch in Warner, SD. This ranch provides services to veterans who need assistance dealing with the effects from being deployed. DTOM is a non-profit who is in need of some extra hands to complete projects on the ranch. Volunteers are needed to help do an assortment of tasks. More details will be put out soon along with a point of contact to sign up. July 10, 2021 is the date of the service project, camping will be available for those who want to

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Lemmon Leads into the Next Century of Service



By Courtney VanZanten, DSO

There is a debt of gratitude owed to Vietnam and Vietnam-Era veterans in the South Dakota American Legion. Prior to 2019 and the passage of the LEGION Act, the American Legion was congressionally mandated to restrict its membership to recognized war eras. This all but eliminated the vast majority of Cold War Veterans from joining the ranks, and left a major generational gap: where WWII passed down to Korea, and Korea to Vietnam, there was suddenly no one there to hand off the baton. Compounding the issue, South Dakota’s veteran population is National Guard heavy: the next major group of veterans following Vietnam in most communities is Post-9/11. Meaning, in many posts across the state, Vietnam veterans have been bearing the yoke of leadership for over two and a half decades. If you have an American Legion post in your small town today, you likely have a Vietnam veteran or two you need to go thank profusely for taking on an extra few decades of work.

Thanking, however, isn’t going to be enough to bring the American Legion into its next century of service. Vietnam vets need relief pitchers to step out of the bullpen. Posts need to figure out how to bring the Cold War era veterans in after all these years, and how to get them and the Post-9/11 veterans to take the reins.

One post facing those challenges head-on is the Bratvet-Green Post #66 of Lemmon, South Dakota. Leading the meetings are two Post-9/11 veterans, Commander Adam Dauwen and First Vice Commander Brent “Hawkeye” Anderson. Amongst the members lining the room are the men these two credit with their in-

volvement: Wally Dauwen, Rod Peterson, Terry Skreteberg, Albert Colgrove and Bill Erhart.

“I first joined in 2006,” said Anderson, “but didn’t get really involved until about four years ago. The older guys have always been supportive, and when I decided to get more active they were great mentors.” Anderson credits the Vietnam veterans to being open to new ideas. “There’s a balance. Of course they had to tell us how things were done, but they also listened--and tried to understand--our thoughts on what to do and how to do it. We’re all there to help veterans and our community in the end.”

Walking around the building, photos show a proud heritage going back to the doughboys who founded the post following WWI; young men, who upon returning to Lemmon, felt an obligation to their fellow veterans and community. That desire to help lives on, and is personified by Commander Adam Dauwen. A working family man, dedicated to make time for what he feels is important: helping his hometown and honoring those who served before. His fiancée, Dani Walraven, is a veteran as well, and is supportive of the Legion efforts. “We want to give back to the community in any way we can,” said Dauwen.

Both Anderson and Dauwen encourage veterans to give being active a chance. “Just start going to meetings. You don’t have to make them all. I didn’t know how much the Legion did until I started coming to meetings,” Anderson explained, “We can and should always do more. There are so many veterans, young, old and inbetween that need Legion support, if only for fellowship.”

With strong Sons and Riders programs in place as well, the future for the American Legion at Post #66 is looking bright. Lemmon has young leadership making time in their crazy, busy lives for the mission of the American Legion because they believe in it. They believe in it because they’ve been properly mentored by older generations of veterans, who were willing to both teach and embrace evolution. Leaving Lemmon, a challenge to Post 9/11 veterans across the state: if you want your post to survive, it’s time to attend that first meeting. And to those Vietnam Veterans? Two challenges: Cold War veterans have felt their service dismissed or belittled for too long, but if there was ever a group who could relate, it is you. Reach out again.

And when new members start showing up to meetings, take the time to welcome them to the post--and prepare them to take command.

Left, Commander Adam Dauwen; Right, Vice Commander Brent Anderson



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Carry on the Legacy

Fred Nelson
Department Commander



The American Legion is hard at work in South Dakota.

I am writing this article from my hotel room in Sioux Falls, waiting for the incoming snowstorm that seems to be causing my cell phone to vibrate continuously.

Membership - With everyone helping this year, the headlines might just read, "South Dakota Comes Out on Top!" South Dakota held the first-place position out of all the departments for a week. But the Department of France pulled ahead by .02%. We still have time to pull back into the lead. Forty-four Posts have surpassed my Commander's Challenge of 103%. We also have ninety-three Posts that have reached 100%. I applaud you for achieving 100% but challenge you to continue sharing the American Legion with other veterans. Go for the 103% or more! If you are hanging onto memberships for any reason, please get them submitted.

Great news about our membership! We won the annual National Big 12 Membership Contest for our department size. Winning means that the Department of South Dakota will be receiving \$2000, and we plan to use it to update the technology at headquarters. All our members deserve a "Great Job!" and a "Thank You!" However, again don't stop now; contact those members who haven't yet renewed and recruit those veterans that you know are not yet members.

The "Legion on the Road" Adventure continues and has taken me to the following;

- Jan 13 - Pierre - SD Veterans Council Meeting and Legislative Reception
- Jan 16-17 - Columbus, NE - Nebraska Midwinter
- Jan 30 - Pierre - Department Training Meeting
- Feb 10 - Pierre - Department Legislative Meeting and Dinner
- Feb 14 - Sturgis - Four Chaplains Memorial Service
- Feb 15 - Aberdeen - Past Commanders Memorial
- Feb 20 - Oacoma - Department Executive Committee Meeting
- Feb 21 - Oacoma - Department Oratorical Scholarship Contest and Department Membership Committee Meeting
- Feb 27 - Wagner - American Legion Annual Sweepstakes
- Mar 3 - Spearfish - American Legion Birthday Celebration and Memorial Prayer
- Mar 9 - Custer - American Legion Birthday and Awards
- Mar 13 - Wakonda - District Eight Meeting
- Mar 14 - Montrose - District Seven Meeting
- Mar 14 - Sioux Falls - Post 15's annual American Legion Birthday Celebration and Awards

Spring District Meetings have started! The District Seven and Eight meetings were both well attended. Thank you, Alsen Post 44 from District Eight; thank you for hosting us at the Wakonda Post Home. On Sunday, we gathered in Montrose at Post 154 for the District Seven meeting. After the District Seven meeting, we traveled back to Sioux Falls and attended Post 15's annual American Legion Birthday Celebration. At both the Sioux Falls and Custer celebrations, I had the honor to speak.

I shared an update on our department's many accomplishments during this past year. I also reminded everyone in attendance that the American Legion is continuing to serve even at the age of 102!

Save the date - June 16-19. Along with a few American Legion Riders, I will be riding around South Dakota, visiting Posts and their Legion Families, asking for donations for the South Dakota American Legion Foundation (SDALF), which serves Veterans and Children. Last year, the SDALF issued \$2,250 in grants to help with a Children's Backpack Program and a Christmas Gift Project.

The mission of our organization can only be carried by the efforts of its members.

For God and Country, we associate together!

Fred Nelson, Your Department Commander

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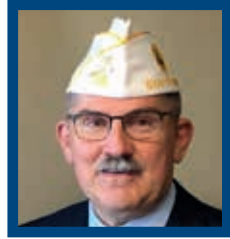
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From the Adjutant

Kevin Hempel
Department Adjutant



Legionnaires,

It is hard to believe I have been the Department Adjutant for almost a year. If I have learned anything this last year, it is, "there is always something new to learn and things often change." I have several different topics I would like to address in this issue of the News. First, let's talk membership. This always seems to be one of the topics, but by now everyone should realize how important it is. It is the life blood of our organization and it is the reason we can sponsor a lot of the programs we do. The dues pay for our programs, but more importantly, our members make it happen. On a happy note, we are doing very well on membership this year. In fact, with a bit more of a push, we could very well make our National goal for the first time in quite a few years. On the less happy note, we are almost 500 members behind where we were last year at this time. I want to share a quote with you, "Everyone knows a Veteran who is not a member, just think what the Legion would be like if everyone recruited just one member." That is a quote from our very own Department Commander Fred Nelson. I would like you to sit back and think about his quote for a moment.

Administratively, it's time again for Consolidated Post Reports and Officer Certifications. Reporting numbers, taking credit for what your post has accomplished and ensuring HQ has proper contact information is vital to our organization. Both are due to Department Headquarters by June 1st.

The other topic for this edition is MyLegion. Since November, there has been information about the updating of MyLegion in the Up To Now and on the National website. I have said it is coming soon and the initial date to go live was the end of December. Like many systems, the date was pushed back to a later date, but no date was specified. Last week we learned the new MyLegion will be going live on 1 April. Another important point to understand is the system update will have two different user components. One component will be for Posts, Counties and Districts. The other component will be for Department users such as the Headquarters staff in Watertown. Although both will use the same data bases, the displays and methods to get the data will be different. So, this means the Headquarters staff will not see the same screens as everyone else. Please keep this in mind if you call to ask questions.

Additionally, there have been several training events for the new MyLegion. The next one is to be March 30th at 6 pm central time. The others can be found at The American Legion website, Legion.org and look for Training Tuesdays. All current users of MyLegion must create a new login. To do this, go to MyLegion and instead of logging in, click the "register" link and follow the steps. After you complete the process, you will be sent a verification to your listed email account which you will be required to approve. This email could show up in your junk email. The reason I list this, if you do not approve this verification, your process of creating the new sign in will not be complete.

My last topic is not so much a talking point as an observation. We have had two spring District meetings up to the writing of this article. I will say it is a great feeling to be able to gather as an organization to conduct our business of running our American Legion. I personally have missed not meeting face to face.

Stay safe out there and remember our motto: "Veterans Strengthening America"

For God & Country,

Kevin Hempel

Top 10 Reasons You Need To Attend State Convention

1. Meet new friends

There's no shortage of interesting characters in the South Dakota American Legion. From farmers to lawyers hailing from Hot Springs to Sisseton, Convention is a great place to network and meet new people.

2. Celebrate our successes

We can all agree 2020 presented its fair share of challenges. Despite the odds, the South Dakota American Legion had a phenomenal year. Come celebrate our accomplishments with us in Huron!



3. Learn about us

The South Dakota American Legion is a multi-faceted organization. Chances are, there's a program we sponsor or committee we chair that sparks your interest.

4. Join the Legion Band Fan Club

Okay, that's not real, but it should be. The Legion Band is great, and you'll have a few opportunities to hear your favorite Sousa marches.



5. Help shape our programs

The American Legion runs on resolutions. Come learn how the process works, and arm your post with the ability for change.

6. Vote for leadership

Each post has a voice in the voting process through their delegates. Every vote matters, so show up to vote! No delegate present, no vote listed for your post.



7. Have your voice heard

Every Legionnaire has the right to the floor during general session. If you have questions or concerns for any of our speakers, take the opportunity.

8. Get into crazy bidding wars over blocks of cheese

or lose your beard/hair in an impromptu barbering. You never know what the Fun Auction will bring! All proceeds benefit the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. If you're talented and would like to donate an item for the auction, contact Foundation President Jim Kurtz at jekurtz@alliancecom.net.



9. Enjoy the evenings

Between the aforementioned Fun Auction, Go-Getters Banquet, Joint Banquet and candidate hospitality rooms, there's no shortage of socialization and fun in the evenings at State Convention.

10. Make a difference

Bringing back the information, contacts and energy to your post will have a profound impact on your mission. Make a difference at your post by attending State Convention!

The 2021 Department Convention is going to be held at the Huron Convention Center June 24-27th. For Crossroads hotel reservations, call (800) 876-5858 or e-mail reservations@crossroadshotel.com. The Best Western has overflow rooms--contact them at (605)352-2000. See the Department Calendar on Page 8 for more information.

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District Commander Updates

1



David Booze, Piedmont
www.facebook.com/SDLegion1

I've enjoyed two great rewarding years as your District 1 Commander. Together we faced exceptional challenges, especially COVID Pandemic restrictions.

My personal thanks to each member of the American Legion family for their dedication to the mission of the American Legion to leave no veteran nor family behind. The new District 1 leadership will continue to execute American Legion's 2021 Program Year upcoming events:

Boys State Orientation for attendees and parents is scheduled for Sunday, 2 May 2021, at Black Hills State University's Jonas Building, commencing at 1 PM.

Youth Trooper Academy interviews were completed 7 April, with results submitted to the selection committee.

District 1 and its Posts and Leadership in coordination with their communities are scheduled to participate and speak at multiple Memorial Day Ceremonies.

As of 11 March 2021, eleven of District 1's twenty-one Posts have achieved 100% or greater of Membership Goal. Overall, District 1 exceeded the 14 April's 95% Membership Target Date with 96.53%. As I sign out as Past District 1 Commander and onto other Legion responsibilities, Thanks and God Bless America, our American Legionnaires: Veterans, Active Duty Servicemembers, plus their families for their sacrifices and continued service. Thanks!!!

2



Eugene IronShell, Jr., Rosebud
www.facebook.com/SDLegion2

On behalf of Vice Commander Mike Ball, Adjutant Christopher Rendon, and myself, I wish all of our comrades in The American Legion a very happy 102nd birthday. Let us all remain committed to the four pillars that our forefathers founded this great organization on.

We have made great strides in our membership these past two months. There are now 16 posts that are at or above 100%. Many more are 1 or 2 away from their goal. We are committed to help Commander Nelson and the rest of the department achieve 100% by our May target date.

Legion college applications are due soon and I hope those of you that aspire to be leaders in The American Legion consider applying. If you have questions on how to make a strong application I encourage you to reach out to the state adjutant, or any of the alumni.

Make sure to take credit for what your post is doing by completing your Consolidated Post Reports and sending them off to Headquarters by June 1. It's also election time around the posts, so send in the Officer Certification to Judy so she can update rosters at Headquarters.

The District 2 spring meeting is on for April 11th in Martin at Post 240. I hope to see you all there.

3



Gene Opbroek, Gregory
www.facebook.com/SDLegion3

What a great day to be District Commander! I am really looking forward to meeting and working alongside everyone in District 3. We have some challenges that we are facing in the upcoming year, but I have every confidence that they are all attainable with some guidance, teamwork, and a little effort. We had a fantastic District meeting in Winner, thanks to Post #169 for the great hospitality.

Membership is always the most important issue with the American Legion. Posts in District 3 all have done very well, we just need that little push to get over the top and we are at 100%. Congratulations to Hoven, Onida, Burke, Vivian, and Miller Posts for 100% or more membership. Great Job!! Each Post is unique in their own special way, which brings about different challenges, but more importantly is also brings out innovative ways to reach and retain membership. If you have something that is working in your Post please email, text, or give me a call. I would love to be able to share your ideas with Posts that are struggling. Remember to check Post 500 for any members in your area and get them transferred to your Post, might get the one or two to push your post over the top. As a District we currently are at 94% with a goal of 1,589 members and 1,496 currently signed up, only 93 members in the District to go, let's do this!!

4



Bob Thomason, Selby
www.facebook.com/SDLegion4

Congratulations to everyone on membership. You all have done a great job, and the numbers we are seeing are FANTASTIC!! How many of you reading this have taken the time to look at the Veterans Memorials in our communities? I, personally, try to look for one wherever I go, and so an idea came to mind.

By now, if we have followed Commander Nelson's advice, each Post and District should now be using social media. With Memorial Day coming up, I would like to challenge each Post/District to post pictures of their respective Veterans Memorials on Facebook. Be sure to tag all 8 Districts and The Department of South Dakota in your postings so we all can see your Memorials. You could even include pictures of doing Military Honors on Memorial Day.

We are nearing what a lot of Posts consider to be the "end of the year", as they adjourn for the summer. As we get into this season, don't forget there are many opportunities to promote The American Legion. With county fairs, the State Fair and our own State Convention, we all can get involved.

What plans does your Post/Community have planned? Get it out there on Facebook. Boy's State and Youth Trooper Academy are right around the corner. Try to get to "Legion Day" at these events. I am sure you will find it worthwhile.

5



Matt Lagerstrom, White
www.facebook.com/SDLegion5

Greetings. One of the particular challenges that our organization has faced this last year has been the inability to meet. We are a social organization. What we do cannot be done from the comfort of our couch. Our mission is to help Veterans, their families, and our communities be the best that they can be. While we wear our service's uniform, we make a promise to our Nation that what we value will be protected. In keeping that promise, we subject ourselves to some very uncomfortable, and usually dangerous, circumstances which might mean we won't be home for supper. We wake up at ungodly hours and work well past bedtime doing what needs to be done so that our family, our friends, and millions of people that we will never meet can live their lives safely and free from fear. Wearing the uniform of our nation is not just an honor. It is a duty. For many of our organization's members, the days of charging off into harm's way are fortunately behind them. However, that doesn't mean that their days of being able to help others are over. Quite the contrary – For those members lucky enough to be able to say "I served", they are also able to tell their story of what it means to serve, and to share that story so that those members still in uniform will never be forgotten. While your couch may be comfortable, it isn't where the fight is won. Go tell our story.

6



Cynthia Hoffman, Plankinton
www.facebook.com/SDLegion6

Greetings from District 6,

COVID has controlled a majority of post activities (or lack thereof) for the past year. Let us hope that this finds that most of you have received your vaccinations or are scheduled to get vaccinated, if that is your choice. I know it is mine, I am scheduled for it. With that being said, I have been in contact with many Posts that are so ready to get going and to have normal meetings again.

I've heard of many Posts that have starting to plan or have already planned their event for Memorial Day. It is such a very important day to remember the lives lost. If your post is unable to have a public ceremony again this year, consider alternate ways of honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice. This brings John Kieffer of Post #96, White Lake, to mind. John took it upon himself to collect all the certificates of WWII veteran William A. Doering, who was killed February 24th, 1944, in Italy. William received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star, and John also collected numerous news articles and framed them together. If you ever get the chance, call John and go see the memorial that he put together for this Veteran. It is truly unique.

Congratulations to the 14 posts that have hit 100% or higher in the district. I am so proud of the efforts made, and encourage posts to keep pushing to help the department make their 100% goal by May 12.

7



Rodney Smith, Chester
www.facebook.com/SDLegion7

As I set here scurrying to get everything ready for the Spring Meeting, I am reminded that this is a volunteer organization and I signed up for this position. The post we have visited, fifteen so far, are doing their best to get back to normal. Pancake breakfast' are starting up again and the people are showing up to eat. Baseball is being planned and I have heard of several Post with boys signing up for Boy's State. I get to go into our school and see if I can answer any questions for the boys. By the time this is printed we will know how many boys plan to go.

District 7 Youth Trooper interviews will be held in Madison at the Police, 116 W Center St., Madison SD on Wednesday, April 7, 2021. The decision about who will get to go to the Youth Trooper Academy will be in the hands of the selection Committee. Good luck to all those boys and girls who applied for this amazing experience.

Several of the post we visited have mentioned that the have or are planning to have their feather parties/turkey bingo/fundraisers that were postponed last fall to a date sometime this spring or summer. Please watch your local announcements so you don't miss any of the fun and camaraderie. These events are a good time to invite veterans who have not yet joined the Legion. Talk to them about the programs that help the community, state and nation.

8



Jennifer VanRoekel, Marion
www.facebook.com/SDLegion8

I am slowly figuring this District Commander thing out. I am really enjoying getting to know the job, and look forward to getting to know all my post commanders more. I look forward to working with our team.

We have fun things planned for this summer in all of our posts. If you have an event planned, be sure to share the event with the district so we can let everyone else know, so the whole American Legion can have fun with us.

I want to thank all the hard working team players contributing to where we are at today in Membership, especially the 8 posts at or over 100%. Please keep working to finish the year at the very top of the list.

Unique ideas are going to help bring posts back into being active after a relatively dormant year due to COVID. Vermillion has done sand volleyball tournaments, Marion tried a rabbit hunt, and I've seen numerous other poker runs and community feeds. Don't be afraid to try something new. I encourage posts to communicate with their community so they are aware of the post's efforts to support veterans & youth.

If you hold an event, and don't have social media, please contact me and we'll figure out how to get the word out about your event. The District 8 Facebook page is a great place to find information about district happenings.

De Smet Post #138 has endorsed Gary Wolkow as candidate for Department Commander



Drafted into the Army in May of 1969, Gary Wolkow completed Basic and Advanced Infantry Training at North Fort Lewis in Washington State. From there, he was sent to NCO School in Fort Benning, Georgia, attaining the rank of Sergeant. In 1970, he was sent overseas for duty in Vietnam, where he was assigned to the 101st Airborne 327th Infantry Division in the northern hills. He was honorably discharged in April 1971.

Wolkow is currently on the National Veterans Education, Other Benefits and Homeless Committee, Department Trust Fund Committee, American Legion Foundation Committee and Department Finance Committee, of which he has served as the Chairman since 2009.

Previously, Wolkow has served as a National Security Council member, Department Membership Chairman, Department Vice Commander, District Commander, District Vice Commander, Kingsbury County Commander, De Smet #138 Commander, and Post Finance Officer.

Wolkow's awards include the Robert C. Gabrielson Leadership Award in 2010, District Legionnaire of the Year in 1993, and several District and Post membership goal awards.

Wolkow is a 34 year Paid-Up-For-Life member of the American Legion, and is also a member of Vietnam Veterans of American, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans.

A servant at heart, Wolkow is a retired De Smet volunteer firefighter of 20 years, serves on the De Smet Hospital Board, the De Smet City Council, and is currently the Mayor of De Smet, a title he has held since 2000. Prior to retirement, he was the Good Samaritan Center Environmental Services Director for 30 years.

Wolkow was born and raised in Erwin, SD, and has lived in De Smet since 1971. He is married to his wife of 50 years, Judy. Together, they have two sons: Jason, of Atlanta, Georgia; and Adam, with wife Kyra and grandchildren Oakley, Aspen, and Brecken of Fort Collins, Colorado.

Chamberlain Post #3 has endorsed Doug Feltman as candidate for Department Vice Commander Districts 3-8



Rosebud Post #125 has endorsed Eugene Iron Shell, Jr. as candidate for Department Vice Commander Districts 1-2



Greer Post #11 of Wagner has endorsed Greg Geiman as candidate for Department Sergeant-at-Arms



Piedmont Post #311 has endorsed Ken Mowrer as candidate for Department Vice Commander Districts 1-2



HATS IN THE RING



ELECTION TO BE HELD SUNDAY JUNE 27TH 2021

Friday, June 25th, 2021
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\$30 per person

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Tickets Must Be Purchased by June 9th

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2021 STATE LEGION GOLF TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH
 Glenridge Golf Course
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 12pm Shotgun Start
 Prizes & Meal to Follow

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH
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For more information, contact John Peterson at 605-660-5821 or Jim Logue at 605-359-1247

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From the Chair

Americanism Commission
Doug Harris, Rapid City

Greetings!

I hope you have all been super busy recruiting outstanding participants for our Americanism programs! We are quickly approaching a time when we will get to measure our efforts by the number and quality of those participants at Boys State and Youth Trooper Academy (YTA).

The Oratorical Contest is in the books for another year, and it went very well. We had six competitors this year (up from five last year) and the quality of the presentations was truly impressive. Fiala Herceg, from Aberdeen, took first place this year (her second year of competing) and walked away with \$6,000 in scholarship monies. For the second year in a row, National canceled their competition, but this year, they announced ahead of time that they would be presenting a \$5,000 scholarship to those individuals who won at the Department level. That was a huge improvement over the \$2,000 they awarded last year. Hopefully, the pandemic will be in the "rearview mirror" by this time next year and the National competition will be held. Thank you to all the volunteers and "voluntolds" who helped with this year's competition!

Boys State 2021 is still in the planning stages, but we intend to hold it in-person with both Juniors and Seniors being eligible. The dates for this year are May 31st - June 4th and appropriate health precautions will be taken to ensure the safety of both the boys and staff. Estimates are that by that time; the vast majority of SD citizens will have received one of the vaccines. At the date of this publication, registration for Boys State is still ongoing, so make sure you are talking to the students in your area about this incredible opportunity. Legion Day will be held on Thursday the 3rd of June, so come on up and observe Boys State in action. If you hang around late enough, you will be able to enjoy the boys compete in the Boys State Olympics - very entertaining.

Youth Trooper Academy is also moving forward for an in-person session this year. The date was changed to July 12 - 16th due to scheduling conflicts. The number of available slots remains at 24 statewide. If you know of students in your area who have an interest in law enforcement, please help them get involved in this program. Legion Day for YTA will be Thursday July 15th. It's always exciting to watch our youth in action as they dress up in padded gear to "meet" the police dog, check out the SWAT vehicles and fire police weapons.

We are quickly approaching the American Legion Baseball season and I know many of you have already started putting your teams together for this summer. Thank you to all those Posts out there who make this possible. Also a huge thank you to the members of the SDAL Athletic Commission who work tirelessly to bring it all together. Support your local teams by attending their games!

Now for the boring paperwork portion of Americanism... this will be my last reminder to finish up and submit your Americanism Reports for 2020-2021. As I've mentioned several times, there are several online reports/how-to/examples to help you in this process. They can all be found on the SDLegion.org website. Take credit for your hard work! All the forms can be found here:

<https://www.sdleion.org/post-adjutant-manual-forms/>

I've recently created a PowerPoint briefing for the SDAL Training Committee that will hopefully provide "all" the information needed to train a new Post/District/Department Americanism Officer. It is also meant to be a method to inform other Post members on what Americanism is all about and how they can help. I do not know when it will be available online, but I'm happy to share it with anyone who needs it now. Contact me via email at doughinut@gmail.com.

It has been a pleasure serving as your Department Americanism Chairman for the last two years. I hope I, and the members of the Americanism Commission have helped bring our programs into the 21st century and provided you with helpful tools to make your jobs easier. Please take advantage of those tools and feel free to offer suggestions on how we can continue to improve them. I hope to see you all at the Department Convention in Huron.

Douglas D. Harris
Americanism Commission Chairman

Aberdeen's Herceg Takes State Oratorical Title



Fiala Herceg emerged victorious as the top orator in the final round of competition of The South Dakota American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program, "A Constitutional Speech Contest" in Oacoma, this past weekend. Fiala is the Daughter of Aaron and Bridget Herceg of Aberdeen.

First, contestants were required to deliver a prepared oration of 8-10 minutes on the U.S. Constitution. Second, a constitutional topic was assigned to the contestants, and 3-5-minute extemporaneous orations were required on that topic. They were allowed five minutes of preparation time.

Each of the 6 contestants in the finals had previously won the competition at the local and district competition levels. Those eligible to compete at the finals this past weekend and their placings were: Fiala Herceg, Aberdeen - 1st place trophy and \$1000; Emily Hofer, Hartford - 2nd place trophy and \$500; Elias Grimsley, Spearfish - 3rd place trophy and \$300; and finalists Dakota Timanus, Gregory; Dorian Sikkink, Castlewood; and Emma Raisanen, Rapid City; each receiving \$100.

Fiala will also receive a plaque to be displayed in her high school's trophy case as the first-place winner of the state contest. Normally, our State winner would have the opportunity to represent The South Dakota American Legion in the National Contest, which was to be held April 9-11 in Indianapolis, Indiana. However, like last year, the National American Legion Organization has decided to cancel the event due to Covid concerns and has also decided to present each state winner with a \$5000 scholarship in lieu of participating in the National Competition. Since 1938, The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program has encouraged the nation's high school students to study the U.S. Constitution and hone their public speaking skills. For their endeavors, they are rewarded with substantial scholarships if winning at the National level.



AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA

• BOYS STATE •

MAY 31 - JUNE 4, 2021

NORTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY | ABERDEEN, S.D.



Understand the American system of government. Appreciate the responsibilities of citizenship. Learn the fundamental principles of leadership.
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Regular Session Applications Due | April 1, 2021

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SOUTHDAKOTABOYSSTATE.COM | SDLEGION.ORG/PROGRAM/BOYS-STATE
or contact your local American Legion Post.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

LETTERS TO THE CONSTITUENCY

Senator John Thune



Last year, we observed the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. Our nation's World War II veterans – the veterans of the Greatest Generation – are frequently on my mind. Sixteen million Americans served in World War II. These veterans are a fixture of our lives. So many Americans grew up with a dad or grandfather – or grand-

mother – who had served in World War II. I was one of them. My favorite veteran – my dad – was a World War II pilot who flew Grumman F6F Hellcats off the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Intrepid in the Pacific.

I came to know the values of the Greatest Generation through my dad – humility, patriotism, quiet service. These warriors who helped save the world didn't brag about their achievements. They deflected praise. If they hailed any exploits, it was those of their comrades.

My dad won the Distinguished Flying Cross, but that's not what he talked about. He did, however, talk about Cecil Harris, one of South Dakota's aces, whose advice for a deft maneuver saved his life during a dogfight. It was a move straight out of Top Gun, only decades before the movie.

My dad always talked about how South Dakota is the only state with two aces with 20 shootdowns. And he talked about the other pilots in his squadron, and praised their character and their service.

As I said, these veterans of the Greatest Generation have been a fixture in our lives for a long time. But more than 75 years on from the war, their numbers are dwindling quickly. My dad died in August 2020, at the age of 100. And we lose more and more of these veterans every day. And they will be sorely missed. But their legacy lives on in the generations of veterans that followed them.

In every age and every era, men and women have stepped forward to answer the call that the Greatest Generation answered. And in every era, those men and women – the men and women of the United States military – have embodied the values that characterized men like my dad: Humility. Courage. Love of country. Self-sacrifice. A love for freedom and for their fellow man.

Service in the military was once commonplace. But in an age when only a small percentage of the population has served or currently serves, we need to ensure that we don't forget the vital role of our armed forces, the resources they need, and the price our men and women in uniform pay to ensure that all of us can live in freedom.

It's been said 10,000 times, but it's no less true the 10,001st – we live in freedom every day because of the men and women of the United States military. We owe them a debt we cannot hope to repay.

Congressional Contact Information

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Representative Dusty Johnson (R-SD)

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Senator Mike Rounds



I have been a member of the United States Veterans' Affairs Committee since I began working in the Senate in 2015. As you've probably heard me say many times, the federal government has a responsibility to uphold the commitments we make to the men and women who serve in our military. I have used my position as a

member of this committee to make sure our government remains true to that promise. I'd like to share with you some of the top issues we've specifically worked hard on during this past year; namely, the Hot Springs decision, the Native American Direct Loan (NADL) Program and veterans' constituent services.

I know many of you are very aware of the decades-long discussions about what will happen at the Hot Springs campus. Let me start by saying that the Hot Springs Veterans Affairs (VA) facility is among the best in the country. Despite that, it has been under threat of service reductions or even possible closure for many years. Specifically, in 2017, there was a Record of Decision (ROD) entered by the Department of Veterans Affairs that directed a significant reduction of services. I thought this was the wrong path because the Hot Springs facility serves so many area veterans with high quality services. However, the ROD rightfully noted the Hot Springs structures are aging and need updated maintenance and repair.

In the spring of 2020, then-Secretary of the Veterans Affairs Robert Wilke agreed to my request to revisit the topic by making a trip to Hot Springs to meet with local VA administrators, the Congressional delegation and the Governor. While he was in Hot Springs, our group successfully demonstrated the value that this location can still provide to regional veterans. Secretary Wilke made a verbal commitment to keep incumbent services at the Hot Springs location. In the fall of 2020, the VA made the decision official by rescinding the ROD in the Federal Register. The publication of this decision means our long fight to secure Hot Springs VA campus is over; Hot Springs will continue to offer significant services to our veterans. This decision was also acknowledged by President Joe Biden's newly-confirmed Secretary Denis McDonough when I questioned him on the topic in a Senate VA Committee hearing in January 2021. Rest assured, I will continue to fight to make sure the Hot Springs campus has the resources to be among the best VA facilities in the country.

We have also spent much time in 2020 working on reforms to the Native American Direct Loan (NADL) program. South Dakota is home to more than 4,500 Native American Veterans. Various Native American advocacy groups have identified NADL as an underperforming program with a long and complex application process that results in relatively few approvals.

The creation of a federal direct loan program was intended to make homeownership more accessible to Native American veterans living on reservations, given that traditional mortgage lending is rare on trust lands due to their unique legal status. The NADL was established in law by Congress in 1992 as a pilot program for the VA to make direct loans to Native American veterans for the purchase, construction or improvement of a home on trust land. In 2006, Congress gave the VA permanent authority and appropriations to execute this program. Since NADL's inception in 1992, VA reports it has made roughly 1,078 loans, which averages to 41.5 loans per year. Even worse, over the past five fiscal years of available data (FY15-19), the VA has only approved an average of 20 loans annually across the entire United States. In South Dakota, the VA received only 24 NADL applications in FY18-19, and only four were approved. In my opinion, this clearly demonstrates that the program is not meeting the need that it was intended to address.

In an effort to improve this service, my office has spent time building relationships with Native housing authorities on South Dakota reservations, other congressional offices and managers in the VA with the hope of introducing

Continued...

Congressman Dusty Johnson



I came to Washington to make people's lives simpler – to cut regulations and red tape that don't make sense for Americans. Our nation's veterans served our country with honor, and it's important Congress return the favor when enacting policy that impacts our servicemembers.

There are two bills I'm focused on this year to

cut red tape for veterans. The first is the Vets Safe Travel Act – which would expand an existing military TSA program to disabled veterans.

Currently, Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guardsman receive free TSA PreCheck at airports, the Vets Safe Travel Act would extend this benefit to severely injured veterans. TSA PreCheck provides expedited screening that does not require the removal of shoes, belts, and light jackets – it's a game changer. There are nearly 70,000 veterans with an amputation and over 130,000 veterans who are now legally blind, traveling through airport security can be difficult with a prosthetic or in a wheelchair, my bill would lessen the hassle our disabled veterans face in the airport. This bill has the support of the Wounded Warrior Project, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Disabled American Veterans – I'm hopeful we can get this practical benefit across the finish line this year.

The Trump Administration spent a lot of time improving care across the board at the VA, it's important we keep this progress going which I why I signed onto the Improving Confidence in Veterans' Care Act. This legislation will ensure VA medical providers are properly licensed and certified. Currently, the VA does not audit medical employee licenses and there is no notification process if an employee was fired or has a suspended license. Our veterans should only be receiving care from the most qualified, licensed practitioners.

Finally, I believe it's important our veterans receive the honor they deserve – unfortunately many of our older veterans were not welcomed home with open arms after tours in Vietnam. If you or a loved one served during this time please contact my office at 605-646-6454 or visit my website (link below). I want to honor our state's heroes, which is why I partnered with the Vietnam War Commemoration to find eligible Vietnam-era veterans and honor them with a Commemorative Lapel Pin.

<https://dustyjohnson.house.gov/vietnam-commemoration>
While I did not serve in our nation's military, I'm grateful for the honor to represent South Dakota's finest in Washington, D.C.

Rounds continued...

NADL program reform this Congressional Session. This program has a lot of promise for our Native veterans if we can work through the bureaucracy to make the program efficient and effective for potential homeowners.

Finally, one of the most important parts of my job as a senator is working on behalf of South Dakotans during times of need. Whether we are the first call someone makes when dealing with a federal agency or their last call, we are here. Veterans' issues represent the largest casework portfolio my team handles. These issues range from health benefits, medal inquiries, social security benefits, spousal benefits to records requests. For more information, please contact one of our offices or visit: rounds.senate.gov

My team and I look forward to serving the people of South Dakota any way we can – especially when it comes to serving those who've served.



Member Spotlight:

Jim Minnig, Sioux Falls #15



Name: Jim Minnig
Post: Sioux Falls #15
Military Service: US Army
Military Job: Track Vehicle Repairman

About Jim: Jim Minnig grew up on a farm in Minnesota, learning how to fix things and appreciating neighbors. He went to school for diesel mechanics, got married, and started a family. He worked a while as a mechanic.

At 21 years of age, with a wife and daughter, he was drafted into the Army. In 1970 he was sent to Ft. Knox, KY where he received his basic training. He was given an MOS of 63H20 and transferred to Ft. Meade, MD, with the 508th Heavy Equipment Maintenance Co.

Jim was discharged in 1972

as a SP4, six months early as part of a program President Nixon initiated for draftees as the Vietnam war was winding down. Upon his discharge he shifted careers and worked for Xerox Corporation for 36 years as a technician repairing their equipment in the Sioux Falls area. He has had many interests over the years: photography, woodworking, stained glass, and turning pens. Travel is a great pleasure which has taken him and his wife to 47 different countries. They have also taken their children and grandchildren with them on some of their travels. Family time is treasured and gives them great happiness. They have two daughters and 5 grandchildren. Another hobby is benchrest shooting, which took him to competitions (which are now more local). He also volunteers some maintenance at a local gun range.

Why Nominated: Jim is a staple of the Post #15 Honor Guard, always volunteering. He spends an entire day each month cleaning and maintaining the post's 10 weapons, which service 4 to 5 funerals a week. He is proud to help provide final honors to those who have served their country.



From the NEC

Jim Huls National Executive Committeeman



Legionnaires,

Recently, National adopted the following Vision, Mission and Values statements:

Vision : "The American Legion : Veterans Strengthening America"

Mission : "To enhance the well being of America's veterans, their families, our military, and our communities by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

Values : A Veteran is a Veteran

Selfless Service

Family and Community Engagement

American Values and Patriotism

Advancing the Vision

Honoring Those Who Came Before Us

This Vision, Mission, and Values statement expresses the who, what and why of the American Legion, the nation's largest organization of wartime veterans.

As was noted in the last Legion News, the American Legion has entered a 2 year Sponsorship of a car for Jimmie Johnson-Chip Ganassi Racing in the NIT Indy Car Series. Both the National Marketing and Finance Commissions recommended that we sponsor this for the following reasons. 1. Business Development 2. The American Legion Brand exposure. 3. Membership. 4. Fund raising/donors. 5. Content for The American Legion Media Channels. 6. Emblem Sales. Professional marketing and sales people believe this to be a great opportunity for The American Legion and a calculated Rate of Return (ROI) very favorable for The American Legion. Hopefully this sponsorship will increase Membership in The American Legion as fans of Indy Car racing are younger eligible veterans. Since passage of the Legion Act all past and present military service members are eligible for membership in The American Legion.

The American Legion: Veterans Strengthening America

For God & Country,

Jim Huls, NEC

Department Calendar

APRIL 2021

Month of the Military Child

- 2: Good Friday, HQ Closed
- 4: Easter
- 5: Gold Star Spouses Day
- 5: Easter Monday, HQ Closed
- 9: National Former POW Recognition Day
- 10: District 1 Spring Meeting, Piedmont Post #311
10am Social, 11am Meal, 1pm Meeting
- 11: District 2 Spring Meeting, Martin Post #240
12pm Social, 12:30 Lunch, 1pm Meeting
- 14: Air Force Reserve Birthday
- 24-25: District Commander Training
- 27: Training Tuesday, www.legion.org/training/training-tuesdays

MAY 2021

Military Appreciation Month

- 1: Boys State Applications due
- 1: Educator of the Year packages due to HQ
- 1: Good Samaritan packages due to HQ
- 1: Post Americanism reports due
- 1: Department VA&R Excellence Award packages due to HQ
- 5-8: National Spring Meetings
- 9: Mother's Day
- 12: Gold & Silver Brigade Award Nominations due to HQ
- 15: Armed Forces Day
- 15: LCPL Flying Horse Memorial Bridge Dedication
10am, McIntosh Football Field, McIntosh, SD
- 25: Training Tuesday, www.legion.org/training/training-tuesdays
- 31: Memorial Day
- 31: Memorial Ceremony & Ribbon Cutting, State Veterans Cemetery, 2pm
- 31-June 4: South Dakota Boys State, Northern State University, Aberdeen

JUNE 2021

- 1: Post Officer Certification Due to HQ
- 1: Post Consolidated Reports (CPRs) Due to HQ
- 3: Go-Getter Certification Due to HQ
- 3: Legion Day, Boys State, Northern State University, Aberdeen
- 6: D-Day Anniversary
- 9: Department Convention Delegate Credentials due to HQ
- 16-19: Commander's Ride, Around the State
- 20: Father's Day
- 24: Department Convention, Huron Convention Center, Huron
 - 10:00 a.m. Finance Commission Meeting
 - 1:00 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting
 - TBD SAL Picnic
 - TBD PDC Dinner
- 25: Department Convention, Huron Convention Center, Huron
 - 9:00 a.m. Registration - Lobby
 - 10:00 a.m. Resolutions Committee Meeting
 - TBD SDALPA Luncheon
 - 1:30 p.m. Americanism Committee
 - Credentials Committee
 - Employment Committee
 - Rules Committee
 - Rehabilitation Committee
 - Next Meeting Place Committee
 - Legislative Committee
 - Internal Organization Committee
 - National Security Committee
 - 4:30 p.m. Memorial Service
 - 6:00 p.m. Joint Banquet Reception
 - 7:00 p.m. Joint Banquet
- 26: Department Convention, Huron Convention Center, Huron
 - 7:30 a.m. First-Time Convention Attendee Breakfast
 - 8:00 a.m. Registration - Lobby Pre-Function Area
 - 9:00 a.m. Convention Business Session
 - TBD Sweepstakes Drawing
 - TBD Business Session Recesses for Day
 - 6:00 p.m. Go Getter Reception
 - 7:00 p.m. Go Getter Dinner
 - 8:00 p.m. Fun Auction
- 27: Department Convention, Huron Convention Center, Huron
 - 8:00 a.m. Registration - Lobby Pre-Function Area
 - 9:00 a.m. Convention Business Session continues
 - TBD Elections
 - TBD Convention adjourns
- 29: Training Tuesday, www.legion.org/training/training-tuesdays

JULY 2021

- 4: Independence Day, HQ Closed
- 9: Department Finance Commission Meeting, Pierre
- 10: Department Executive Committee Meeting, Pierre
- 10: Sweat Equity Day at the Ranch, DTOM 22/0 Ranch, Warner
- 12-16: Youth Trooper Academy, Pierre
- 15: Legion Day, Youth Trooper Academy, Pierre
- 27: Training Tuesday, www.legion.org/training/training-tuesdays



PVT Caleb Chicoine, the newest member of Sully Buttes Post #79, takes part in an honor guard last fall. PVT Chicoine completed basic combat training at Fort Jackson last summer and will be going to 13M (Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS/HIMARS) Crewmember) school this summer. He is a Senior at Sully Buttes High School, and son of Jeremy and Val Chicoine of Onida.



Above: Department Commander Fred Nelson and WWII Veteran and 76 year member of the American Legion, Floyd Mills, cut the Custer Post #46 American Legion Birthday cake.

American Legion Around the State



February 27, 2021 was Wagner Post 11's 32nd annual Sweepstakes event. It is the biggest fund-raising event for them each year. The grand prize is \$5,000 cash, with the total of the 107 prizes valued at over \$25,000.



Charles "Rod" Meyer, South Dakota's Lead Homestake Post 31, shows off his WWII Victory Medal and certificate presented to him by District 1 Commander, Dave Booze. Rod has dual US/British citizenship and was living in England when World War II broke out. He enlisted in the US Army and was sworn in at General Eisenhower's headquarters in London. He served in the 7th Army's European Theater of Operations and saw combat action including the Battle of the Bulge. After discharge, he worked for the Department of the US Navy where he was the supervisor of the Navy Exchange complexes at 10 bases in the Southeast and Caribbean. Rod, now 94, lives with his wife Grace in Jacksonville, FL.



Polo American Legion Post #299 Annual Varmint Hunt participants pose for a picture on January 31, 2021. Congratulations to the winning team, Wilbur Jones and Kirby Vanderwerff. Took first place with 100 points--total of 8 Coyotes, 6 Jackrabbits, and 2 Racoons.

Sioux Falls Post #15 pulled out all the stops in decorating the Military Heritage Alliance Center for the American Legion Birthday Celebration on March 15, 2021.



Redfield Post #92 Color Guard presents the colors at the X-Aberdeen Wings Hockey Game on March 6, 2021.

Actions Speak Louder than Words

M&M Committee Plans Service Projects for 2021-2022

...continued from front page

stay overnight out there.

The third service project will be to raise money for "Midwest Honor Flight". They provide flights to the memorials in Washington D.C. to WWII, Korea, and Vietnam veterans in South Dakota. Posts are asked to have a fundraiser sometime during the months of August - October, proceeds raised during the event can be split 50/50 with the Post. Posts that have the fundraisers are asked to use the #sdlegionservice tag in their advertisements. Overall goal is for each Post to pay for at least one seat on the Honor Flight, it costs about \$753. We do realize not every Post will be able to fund one seat. On November 11, 2021, our State Commander will present the check to Midwest Honor Flight.

Another piece of the puzzle to successful marketing campaigns providing numbers of what we have achieved. Consolidated Post Reports (CPR) are a crucial part of our campaign. We need 100% of Posts to complete their CPR reports. We will compile the numbers from the CPR's to use in our media campaigns to let the South Dakota residents know exactly what our Posts have accomplished together. The South Dakota American Legion has been serving our State's veterans / youth and communities for over 100 years. We have a long legacy of community service and we need to tell "OUR" story, so they know we are an organization that is valued and worth being part of. Together we can continue to service our great State.

Working together on service projects will provide better visibility for the South Dakota American Legion. Veterans want to belong to organizations that are seen as an asset in their community. Publicizing your yearly achievements in newspapers / social media is highly encouraged; your CPR reports does provide good numbers to do this. Keep up the great work Legionnaires, together we can continue our Legacy.

Sweat Equity at the Ranch:

About DTOM 22/0 and the July 10th M&M Service Project



Therapy horse Max and Chris Reeder in the Ralph Baringer Memorial Equine Therapy Arena at the DTOM 22/0 Ranch in Warner, SD. Learn more about the Ranch at www.DTOM220.org

The mission of the DTOM 22/0 Foundation and Veterans Ranch is to provide a safe place for healing and recovery for military service members, veterans, and their families while encouraging engaging, and positively impacting their lives through hope, faith, and family activities, and helping them learn to live again with purpose.

Currently, the Ranch is offering the Equine Assisted Draper Sensory Method, at no cost to the veteran, active, guards, reserves and their immediate family. They are one of only five ranches in the US using this therapy method and the only one focusing mainly on veterans. Max, the therapy horse, is one of only approximately 20% of horses worldwide that can consistently perform this therapy.

Participants find that the equine treatment neutralizes the stress hormones and resets the misfiring neurons in the brain, effectively neutralizing anxiety and stress. Symptoms of PTS, TBI, chemical dependency and other neurological issues are lessened under the reduced stress, and the veteran will be more receptive to continue with traditional therapies.

The Ranch recently purchased the land it sits upon outright, and needs help getting it shipshape for veterans and their families coming in for therapy. There's big plans for future housing, a memorial garden, and more. Volunteers are needed to help make this a reality! On July 10th, the South Dakota American Legion is organizing a Legion Sweat Equity Day at the Ranch, where we will volunteer our time and services to making a physical difference on the property. There's a lot of work to be done, but there are a lot of hands in the Legion.

Projects include, but are not limited to, landscaping, fencing, demolition, painting, and more. To the left is a list of items that would be helpful for the work day--if you are able to bring some of these tools, please do! Bring a friend or a team--the more, the merrier--and let's work together to help the DTOM 22/0 Ranch realize their vision of ending veteran suicide. Pre-register today at the following link, or call Chris Reeder at 605-725-3866.

www.sdlegion.org/sdlegionserving
#SDLegionServing

SWEAT EQUITY WORK ITEMS

- SKIDSTEER
- POST-HOLE DIGGER
- CHAINSAWS
- DRILLS/DRILL BITS
- SHOVELS/RAKES
- HAMMERS/CROW BARS
- TILLER
- LADDERS

100 Miles for Hope Registration Open

100 Miles for Hope is a virtual exercise challenge starting April 1 and going through September 6, 2021. It's a way to invigorate donations for the National Veterans & Children Foundation, as well as encourage American Legion Family members to be active in this time of social distancing.

The foundation serves two primary functions. It provides critical grants for military and veteran parents in unexpected financial crises, and support for service officers in their tireless efforts to obtain care, benefits and opportunities for disabled veterans and families. The American Legion's 3,000 accredited service officers provide free assistance for any veteran in need.

HOW TO REGISTER VIA KILTER APP

- 1) Register via Kilter and join our activity challenge, donate and fundraise for The American Legion. Every participant receives a medal to celebrate their achievement. It's easy and takes less than a minute.
- 2) Download the free Kilter app in the app store
- 3) Choose Sign In (top right)
- 4) Go to the Events tab > My Events (100 Miles For Hope will automatically come up as you've already registered!)
- 5) Complete your profile and connect your devices. Don't forget to set a goal!
- 6) Share! Tell all your family members and friends you're



participating in The American Legion's 100 Miles for Hope that raises funds to support veterans and military families. Share your story on Legiontown, post to social media and send e-mails.

7) For a step-by-step approach on how to use the Kilter app, check out this video.

HOW TO REGISTER VIA EMBLEM SALES

This option is recommended for those who do not have a smartphone, are registering multiple family members such as minor children or grandchildren, or do not care about tracking their activities. They may register via this page on

Emblem Sales. From that page, regardless of which way you register, you may also purchase your choice of commemorative gear that benefits the Veterans & Children Foundation.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Complete daily wellness activities of at least a half-hour and accumulate points. You can complete up to three wellness activities each day that count toward your total. There are more than 40 different activities to choose from. And if your activity isn't represented on the app, you can create a manual activity that will count. Also, there are ways to receive bonus points! Check the app to find out how.

Click this link to learn more about how to track your efforts, see a list of activities, and how to add manual ones.

HOW TO HELP VETS & CHILDREN FOUNDATION

After registering, head over to Emblem Sales to view a collection of commemorative 100 Miles for Hope merchandise that you can purchase to support the V&CF. This year, we have new tech shirts, sweatshirts, baseball caps, a pin, a patch for Legion Riders and a challenge coin. All proceeds go directly toward the foundation.

Use the app's individual donation tool to encourage friends and family to support your personal wellness goal as well as the V&CF with a donation.

Marching On With the Legion Band

Are you a musician? We want you! We're looking for instrumental musicians who have been involved in the South Dakota American Legion Band or would like to be. While we didn't get to perform in 2020, we are on the docket for the State Convention in Huron in June 2021. This is an excellent opportunity for our Legion Family to get involved as well--Auxiliary, Sons and Riders are all welcome to participate in the Band.

We hope to rally as much participation as possible from within our normal performers and especially those who have been able to join us at some point in the past. We will have our stalwarts who never miss, joined by those who are able to play from time-to-time. As in the past, we will be heavily dependent on added musicians (usually from the convention location area) to augment the band. Many of the players who joined us for past Huron conventions have passed away, moved away or no longer play. For this year, we need to reach out to invite and encourage musicians in the Huron area we know to join our band.

If you know of any potential musicians who might be able to join our ranks, please invite them to join and get their contact info to us so they can receive subsequent convention information. At the very least, pass on names of potential players to the contacts listed below. We would love to see new instrumentalists join us to serve our veterans!

Contact Dwayne LaFave: dwayne.lafave@gmail.com, 605-690 1650 or
Marla Mosiman: mmosiman@venturecomm.net, 605-222-3313





Secretary's Message

Caregiver Support Program Expands

Caregivers play an important role in the health and well-being of veterans, and their undertakings are often a 24/7 job. We want caregivers for our heroes to know there are improved services and programs to assist them.

Caregivers can be spouses, partners, adult children, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, in-laws, grandchildren, friends, or neighbors. These caregivers are often forced to put their lives on hold to manage their veterans' healthcare needs, and if you asked them, they would tell you that taking care of their hero is one of the greatest honors they have been given.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) expanded the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC). While the specifics can be somewhat complicated, more people who provide critical care to veterans can be eligible for financial and other support through the VA.

The expansion of PCAFC includes eligible veterans that have a single or combined VA service-connected disability rating of 70 percent or higher, regardless of whether it resulted from an injury, illness, or disease. This is a notable change to the definition of serious injury from past regulations and addresses the complexity and expense of keeping veterans at home with their families who provide personalized care.

The expansion of PCAFC will occur in two phases. The first phase has begun and will include eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty in the active, military, naval, or air service on or before May 7, 1975. Phase two will go into effect in approximately two years and will include eligible veterans of all eras.

Additionally, the new program changes the stipend payment system, defines new procedures for revocation and discharge, and improves communication between the VA and the caregivers.

All veteran caregivers are encouraged to visit with their local county or tribal veterans service officer about these changes afforded by the PCAFC.

Caregivers can also contact their respective VA Medical Center (Sioux Falls 605-336-3230 – ext. 5080), or (Hot Springs – 605-347-7000 – ext. 17071), or visit:

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
Soldiers and Sailors Building
425 E. Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242 Fax: 605-773-5380
<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/>

<https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/comprehensive-assistance-for-familycaregivers/>.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

Activate Your No-Cost Legioncare Benefits Today

As a member of the Legion Family--yes, Sons, Riders and Auxiliary are included--you are eligible for up to \$5,000.00 in NO COST To You coverage. But your Confirmation is REQUIRED for activation.

Your beneficiary will receive a check for \$5,000.00 if you suffer a fatal covered accident while you are traveling to or from or participating in any covered event conducted for Legion business, or \$1,000.00 for all other fatal covered accidents. You pay nothing for this coverage.

The American Legion endorses this coverage to stand by your family with up to \$1,000.00 cash benefits paid straight to your beneficiary if you suffer a fatal covered accident at home, on the job, in your car, on vacation, while traveling, wherever you are.

Again, this is a free accidental death benefit for all members of the Legion Family. As long as your membership is kept up-to-date, you will only have to sign up once. To sign up for your free coverage:

www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare
Phone: 1-800-235-6943

If your membership has expired, lapsed, or you simply have not applied since the "lifetime registry" change, please do so as soon as possible.



South Dakota Taps

As reported to Department Headquarters, January 22, 2021-March 22, 2021

"The legacy of heroes is the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example."

Benjamin Disraeli

#2 Tyndall	Ernest Stolz	#22 Rapid City	Calvin Wiest	#88 White	Clifford Falken
#4 Mobridge	Oscar Bader	#24 Aberdeen	Delano Claymore	#102 Faulkton	Melvin Anderson
#4 Mobridge	Dennis Naasz	#24 Aberdeen	Del Griffin	#109 Gary	Thomas Keimig
#4 Mobridge	Harvey Weisgram	#24 Aberdeen	Robert Hofland	#109 Gary	Paul Pickrell
#6 Gregory	Duane Pejsta	#24 Aberdeen	George Nikolas	#109 Gary	Dale Shackelford
#6 Gregory	Richard Schmitz	#24 Aberdeen	Ralph Stevens	#115 Platte	Clarence Blunck
#7 Huron	Eugene McMillan	#25 Madison	William Koob	#115 Platte	Edwin Falor
#7 Huron	Donald Snedeker	#25 Madison	Leon Selgestad	#128 Hudson	Frank Hart
#7 Huron	Harold Wipf	#26 Stickney	Harold Howard	#131 Valley Springs	Albert Small
#8 Pierre	Glenn Marrington	#27 Kadoka	Marvin Groven	#136 Chester	Chet Leonard
#8 Pierre	Charles Sisk	#28 Burke	John Holub	#142 Tripp	Llewellyn Wormsbecker
#9 Milbank	Howard Dockter	#28 Burke	Howard Martin	#146 Colome	Ronald Veskrna
#11 Wagner	Merle Denker	#28 Burke	Dewayne Matucha	#161 Wentworth	Richard Schmidt
#11 Wagner	Tony Efta	#32 Belle Fourche	Otis Chaplin	#169 Winner	Robert Bolander
#11 Wagner	Willie Kranig	#32 Belle Fourche	Alvin Shaw	#169 Winner	William Harter
#11 Wagner	Paul Wiechmann	#33 Sturgis	Ralph Bechard	#194 Parkston	John Mechtenberg
#12 Yankton	Robert Massey	#33 Sturgis	Keith Smit	#198 Elkton	Duane Ellis
#12 Yankton	Arland Westegaard	#36 Bonesteel	Robert Peppel	#198 Elkton	Ervin Scharke
#15 Sioux Falls	Mark Berg	#46 Custer	Bradley Beaudry	#207 Stratford	Marvin Bender
#15 Sioux Falls	Charles Blank	#46 Custer	William Dohrmann	#207 Stratford	Clarence Erickson
#15 Sioux Falls	Gordon Honerman	#47 Artesian	E. Clair Lambert	#229 Big Stone City	Sylvester Kaiser
#15 Sioux Falls	Charles Niimi	#50 Sisseton	Dan Brown	#229 Big Stone City	Leonn Klug
#15 Sioux Falls	Howard Paulson	#50 Sisseton	Robert Estwick	#229 Big Stone City	Neal Noll
#15 Sioux Falls	Ronald Severtson	#52 Armour	Lee Coler	#246 Wall	Elry Hoefs
#15 Sioux Falls	Bud Theus	#53 Canton	Richard Lien	#246 Wall	Glen Lakner
#17 Codrington Co.	Stanley Ewald	#61 Canova	Dan Zelmer	#250 Castlewood	William Janssen
#18 Mitchell	Mike Hale	#65 Dell Rapids	Virginia Ellis	#250 Castlewood	Lloyd Tekrony
#18 Mitchell	Patrick Hatwan	#66 Lemmon	Virgil Otterberg	#269 Wamblee	Charles Long Soldier
#18 Mitchell	Lloyd Kucker	#66 Lemmon	Gerald Tomac	#272 Pollock	Roy Hoffman
#18 Mitchell	Robert Overbay	#71 Hot Springs	Richard Bershon	#279 Thunder Hawk	Fred Beer
#18 Mitchell	Roy Ziegler	#71 Hot Springs	Emil Valentine	#280 Iroquois	Jerry Drake
#20 Ft. Pierre	Chad Olson	#74 Brookings	Robert Lees	#302 Manderson	Lawson Iron Hawk
#22 Rapid City	Rick Darrow	#74 Brookings	Dennis Nagel	#302 Manderson	George Looks Twice
#22 Rapid City	Larry Durham	#74 Brookings	Gary Sackmann	#302 Manderson	Patrick Whitehawk
#22 Rapid City	Bruce Knauer	#82 Bullhead	Allen Archambault	#311 Piedmont	Robert Lee
#22 Rapid City	Arnold Schumacher	#82 Bullhead	Joseph Archambault	#500 South Dakota	Paul Hartmann
#22 Rapid City	Laverne Tech	#82 Bullhead	Frank Debroschbraine	#500 South Dakota	John Smith



Herreid to Host Travelling Vietnam Memorial

The Jacob A. Heinrich Post #170 of Herreid is hosting the travelling Vietnam Memorial replica June 24-27th in Herreid, SD. The post was initially awarded a \$5,084 grant to host the American Veterans Traveling Tribute Vietnam Memorial in 2020, but rescheduled due to COVID concerns. Community contributions and post family fundraisers supplemented the grant to bring the memorial visit to fruition.

The memorial, an 80% replica of the Vietnam Wall, will be at the Legion in Herreid and available for public viewing starting at noon on Thursday. It is free to view. The grant was one of nearly \$124,000 awarded in 2019 to various South Dakota entities by the Mary Chilton Daughters of the American Revolution Foundation.

In addition to the Vietnam Memorial, the Iraq & Afghanistan Memorial panels will also be on display. Featuring the names of all casualties, a timeline of events and Medal of Honor winners, it is the first time this particular memorial will be on display in South Dakota.

Further information on the displays can be found on the memorial's website: <https://www.americanveteranstraveling-tribute.com>.



**Brethorst-Burma
Post 174
American Legion
Lennox, SD**

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