



## In Memoriam: Past Department Commanders Hovorka and Young Report to Post Everlasting



Richard D. Hovorka, age 89 of Tabor, South Dakota, passed away Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at Good Samaritan Society - Tyndall.

Richard Dale Hovorka was born August 27, 1931 to Ambrose and Amelia (Blahe) Hovorka in Tabor, South Dakota. He attended McCrea Country School through the 8th grade. Growing up a

country boy, he always helped on the family farm. Richard worked line construction in Tabor, Thedford, Nebraska and Wessington, SD. Richard married Sharleen Kaiser April 23, 1956. He moved his new bride to Poplar, Montana where they made their home until February 1957. That is when they moved back to his home place to farm.

Richard was very active in American Legion, where he



Donald Robert Young was born on a homestead north of Herrick, SD, on April 28, 1933, to Truman and Caroline (Haisch) Young. Don died on March 29, 2021, at Sanford Medical Center in Sioux Falls, SD, at the age of 87 years.

He grew up on a farm north of Herrick and was the oldest of three children

including brother Darrell and sister Margaret Ann. Don quit school early to help on the home place and work on the Sutton ranch. Don was drafted into the US Army in 1953, where he served two years and spent time in Germany after the Korean War. He returned home and worked for his Uncle Curley on the Mulehead Ranch which later led to a job in road construction.

Don married the love of his life, Kathryn Jons, on June 10,

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## Dedication & Honor: POST #125 CARRIES ON 101 YEAR-OLD MEMORIAL DAY TRADITION



National HQ, Indianapolis; Photos by Courtney VanZanten

Since the early 1920s at Chauncey Eagle Horn/Philip Iyotte American Legion Post 125 on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota, Memorial Day has been more than a ceremony.

It started with six cemeteries at a time when members of the post had to travel by horse-drawn wagon. The current version for members of Post 125 is a day-long event, spanning 158 miles, more than nine hours and nearly two dozen area cemeteries. Members of the post – and in the past few years escorted by American Legion Riders Chapter 125 – have provided Memorial Day honors to the veterans buried at 22 cemeteries located throughout the Rosebud Indian Reservation. Many of the cemeteries can only be accessed via dirt paths, but that doesn't stop the Legionnaires.

Post 125 Commander Carole Gregg believes the tradition spans 101 years and continues to happen each year because of the value those on the reservation place on those who have performed military service.

“A lot of people are so proud of their veterans around here,” Gregg said. “When it comes to Memorial Day and remembering these people that passed on, I think it becomes a big deal around here.”

Gregg also is an American Legion Riders and said the post's American Legion Riders chapter began providing

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## Wolkow Elected 2021-2022 Department Commander



Gary Wolkow, of De Smet, was elected as the 2021-2022 Department Commander of The American Legion Department of South Dakota during the closing moments of the 102nd Annual Department Convention in Huron, SD, on June 27th, 2021. Wolkow was nominated by Dave Gutzmer of Lake Preston, and seconded by Terry Hanson of Arlington.

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

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## L.E.T.S Let's End The Slide!

Gary Wolkow  
Department Commander



Legionnaires,

I write this article as your newly elected State Commander with all kinds of emotions, thoughts, ideas and challenges for the 2021-2022 year. First of all, thank you to everyone for giving me the great privilege and honor to serve as your South Dakota American Legion State Commander for the next year. It is a great honor and I plan to dedicate myself for the entire year to promote the South Dakota American Legion and its programs.

We have a great team in place this year and we plan to hit the ground running!! The COVID pandemic cancelled many Legion meetings and events last year, but with it being more and more under control and most of the restrictions being gradually lifted, every possible effort will be made to promote the South Dakota American Legion and its programs to help and support our veterans and their families. You will probably see a lot more of “we” “us” “team” and “family” as we will always keep our communications open and work very closely with the Auxiliary, the Sons, the Riders, and all of our American Legion Family to let everyone know who the South Dakota American Legion is and what we do. If we ALL come together as a team, our challenges and goals will be much easier accomplished. It will still take individual effort at times, so you will still see or hear “I” from time to time, but all of us working together as a team or family is much better than just “I” or one of us.

My motto this year is “Lets End The Slide” We can do it! For several years, our membership has slid backwards to less and less members every year and we must stop that trend. Our goal for this year is to have at least one or more members than we had last year. I know we can do it! We have a great Legion team in place this year. I will be working very closely with our Adjutant Kevin Hempel who will be guiding me throughout the year, and will try to make myself always available to the Legionnaires who you elected to lead the South Dakota American Legion. These are the Legionnaires that will help guide and motivate the South Dakota American Legion this year, to promote programs and to insure we have a positive and successful year. Keeping a positive attitude is very, very important. We must always think positive and try to be proactive.

Membership and marketing will be very high on our list of priorities. Our membership Chairman, Travise Flisrand, is the head of this committee. This fairly new formed committee has new ideas and plans to recruit new members, retain current members, and also ideas on how to market the South Dakota American Legion, to get our name out in every way possible to let people know who we are and what we do. The chairperson of the Media and Communications committee, Courtney VanZanten, will be working very closely with the Marketing and Membership committee to geth the South Dakota American Legion and its programs made known to everyone through all types of media, print and social. They will promote all of our wonderful programs, Boys State, Youth Trooper, Oratorical Contest, Children & Youth, Educational Scholarships, VAVS, Legion Baseball, Shooting Sports, Scouting, Flag Etiquette and all the other great programs we sponsor. We have to let people know The American Legion is well and alive and here to help veterans and their families. I look forward to all the visits and travels that we will be making this coming year. I will be asking for all of you to get involved, to join our team and make 2021-2022 an enjoyable, memorable, and most of all, successful year. Together, we ALL can do it.

I am very grateful to my Post #138 in De Smet for all the support and encouragement they have given me. My homecoming will be held Saturday, July 24th at the Event and Wellness Center in De Smet. I hope you can attend so we can enjoy that great Legion camaraderie.

For God & Country,  
Gary Wolkow  
Department Commander

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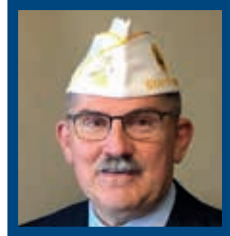
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## From the Adjutant

**Kevin Hempel  
Department Adjutant**



As I sat down to compose this article for the Legion News, I realized I am writing it before our Department Convention, but it will not be published until after the Convention. I think this is a fitting time to say “Thanks for Your Service” to our elected and appointed Department officials who served our Legion during very interesting times. I want to personally thank Commander Fred Nelson for his leadership and friendship over the last year. He was the right person to lead this organization through this most interesting year. As the new Adjutant, he was very helpful getting me on track in this new position and has certainly become a mentor. I would be remiss if I did not include Micheline, his wife, in my thanks as she was almost always with him during his many travels, and I am happy to say she has also become a good friend. To Harry Boner and Kevin Morello, our Department Vice Commanders, it has been a pleasure to work with both of you and I look forward to working with you in what ever positions you may have in the future. There will be a number of Commission and Committee chairs changing with the new leadership. Doug Harris, the Americanism Officer, and Miranda Krumm, the Children and Youth Chairman have decided to step down. They have done exceptional work at their respective positions and whoever their replacements will be, will have large shoes to fill as they say. There will be a number of other individuals who may be stepping down after the convention and I want to say thank you for your time, effort and guidance in supporting our American Legion.

Unfortunately, I don't have a crystal ball to identify who will be filling the elected positions as well as the appointed ones by name, but I wish you the best as you step up to guide the Department for the 2021 – 2022 year. I look forward to working with you as well as those who will be continuing in their positions for the next year.

One thing I have learned this past year, is what it takes to keep the headquarters functioning. I also need to recognize the two ladies who make the office a success and I am sure most are not aware of all they do for the Department. Judy and Mary Jo are certainly the backbone of the office and have kept me on the right track. A huge thanks to both of them.

The pandemic made us change the way we conducted business for the last year and half. Many Posts stopped or reduced their meetings, committees did not meet in person, the Department Convention and Mid-Winter were cancelled. Yet, despite the pandemic, we found ways to overcome, and we had a good year. The pandemic seems to be behind us now. I am happy to report Posts are meeting in person, we have had our Spring District meetings and I am looking forward to Department Convention.

We certainly have some challenges ahead. Some Posts still need to get back to normal operations. Although we had a good year, membership is still declining. We need to find new ways to invite veterans to join us as well as ensure those who are in our ranks, continue to be members of our Legion family. The new MyLegion has had growing pains, so we need to continue to work with national headquarters to get it right. We need to encourage Legionnaires to step up and take on those leadership positions at the Post, District and Department level so our programs can be the best they can be. Our founders and predecessors have built an organization that has stood the test of time. Our country needs the values and programs of the American Legion, and I am sure as we work together, we can make it happen in the Department of South Dakota.

# State Veterans Cemetery Holds Ribbon Cutting on Memorial Day

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs held a ribbon cutting and Memorial Day ceremony at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery in Sioux Falls on Memorial Day. This is the first state-owned cemetery in South Dakota.

The cemetery will serve as a shrine dedicated to the memories of the men and women who served this great country. South Dakota has been blessed with an abundance of such men and women—whose collective courage and commitment allow us to flourish as a nation and as a people united.

The 60-acre cemetery is expected to serve a population of over 28,000 veterans, their spouses and eligible children. The first-phase of the cemetery will accommodate 610 pre-placed crypts, 999 cremains gravesites, 660 columbarium niches, and 50 memorial wall markers.

“Our first celebration of Memorial Day at the cemetery was the perfect bookend to the cemetery establishment and construction,” said SDDVA Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard. “Now, we get to do what we’ve been planning for all this time. Veterans of all eras, and their eligible loved ones will call this cemetery their forever home. What this means is not lost on me nor the team that works tirelessly at the cemetery.”

Speakers for the program included U.S. Congressman Dusty Johnson, Lt. Governor Larry Rhoden, SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock, SDDVA Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard, Cemetery Director Erin Brown, SD Veterans Council President Terry Paulsen, and Andrew Motzko from Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

The American Legion Singers and the American Legion Color Guard played a role in the ceremony.

The South Dakota Veterans Cemetery is the first federally funded, state-owned, and operated, veterans cemetery in South Dakota. The cemetery will serve veterans throughout the state and around the country, as there is no state residency requirement to be interred in the cemetery.

Burial sites at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery include casket gravesites, cremation gravesites, columbarium for cremated remains and scattering garden.

Veterans interested in burial at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery are encouraged to complete the pre-registration application. The pre- registration application form can be found at: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranscemetery/SDSVC%20Pre-Application%20Form.pdf>.

Information on eligibility, pre-registration and burial arrangements can be found at: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranscemetery/default.aspx> or by calling 605-277-8094.



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# District Commander Updates

1



**Jon McDonald, Box Elder**  
[www.facebook.com/SDLegion1](http://www.facebook.com/SDLegion1)

On April 10th 2021, the District 1 Spring meeting was held in Piedmont, SD. Our new County Commander, District Commander and Vice Commander elections were held. I would like to congratulate all of the newly elected officers in the District. I am very humbled and honored to be the new District 1 Commander. I have had numerous mentors along my journey to get me to this position. I am really looking forward to the future for the District and making many new friendships.

What a run Commander Nelson has had. His "Legion on the Road" updates have allowed us to share his travels around the State. It has been my honor to serve under Commander Nelson as he has been one of my many mentors over the past 28 years.

I am looking forward to working with all the new District leadership, getting out for Post visits and meeting all the members in the District 1. Our membership is strong and we can make it stronger with everyone's help.

Last I would like to thank Past District Commander Booze for all his hard work and getting me ready for my new journey with the South Dakota American Legion family. I hope everyone has a safe and great summer. Please remember all of our Service members who are still serving and also the ones who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom during these times.

2



**Courtney VanZanten, DSO**  
[www.facebook.com/SDLegion2](http://www.facebook.com/SDLegion2)

Greetings!

Your friendly Department Service Officer sneaking into a vacant spot here, since Eugene moved up the ladder to Vice Commander.

I want to take this opportunity to talk to my National Guard folks--if you haven't heard, in 2019, the VA opened up the world of hearing loss and tinnitus claims to you in a big way. The M-21-1, the VA's Compensation and Pension manual, now states this: *M21-1. III.iv.4.D.1.c Considering National Guard and Reserve Duty for Hearing Loss and/or Tinnitus Claims* Claims for Service Connection (SC) of hearing loss and/or tinnitus due to service in the National Guard or Reserves should be considered under the same criteria as any claim for SC of hearing loss and tinnitus. The condition must be casually related to service.

- First, consider SC on the basis of potential relationship to periods of Active Duty or Active Duty for Training (ADT)

- When SC for hearing loss and/or tinnitus may not be directly related to a period of active duty or extended ADT, entitlement for SC may still be established if there has been a decrease in auditory acuity due to military duties as a member of the National Guard or Reserves.

- SC for hearing loss and/or tinnitus can be established for inactive duty for training (IADT) if the condition can be linked to an injury during IADT as shown by the nature of service, MOS, lay evidence, or other competent evidence.

NOTE: For purposes of hearing loss or tinnitus during Inactive Duty for Training, the MOS or other evidence establishing noise exposure serves as the injury during IADT required for SC eligibility

The note is important. Essentially, the VA is finally conceding that spending 6 years as a Jet Engine Mechanic in the Guards equates to 378 cumulative days next to decibels that go into the 130s, and it probably did some damage. Go into your local VSO, and file for bilateral hearing loss and tinnitus. --Courtney

3



**Gene Opbroek, Gregory**  
[www.facebook.com/SDLegion3](http://www.facebook.com/SDLegion3)

We can make a difference in the lives of our youth, in the lives of veterans and their families and in our communities! That is our goal, to inspire, to help, to be a "pillar" in our communities. All these things that YOU as a Legion Member can do in YOUR communities are driven by two things, membership, and commitment. Always be on the lookout for new members, bring them to the Post meetings, help them to become involved in the Post and community. Once they get that feeling of helping to strengthen their community they will be committed to your Post.

Congratulations to District 3 Posts, great job with Boys State attendees the District will have 23 young men attending this year.

Lot more things coming up. Don't forget American Legion Baseball starting shortly. Go out and cheer your favorite team on! Also, Youth Trooper Academy in July, lets support our young men and women who want to serve as law enforcement officers. See you there for Blue Hat day also.

Lastly, State Convention is just around the corner, June 24-27 at Huron Convention center. Post commanders really need to attend to keep abreast of what is happening in the SDAL.

Great Job to all the Posts!! I know you are all working hard, and I appreciate all your efforts. Let's keep those Pillars strong!! God bless all of you and God bless this great Nation we live in!

4



**Bob Thomason, Selby**  
[www.facebook.com/SDLegion4](http://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](http://www.facebook.com/SDLegion5)

1-Blend in. 2-Don't attract attention to yourself. 3-Never volunteer for anything. 4-You are not the center of the world. 5-If you are right, but everyone else is wrong, you are wrong. I'm sure that you learned a few other things during your time in Basic Training, but if you didn't figure these rules out in the first few moments your Drill Sergeants had several weeks encouraging reflection on them while you were in the front-leaning-rest. They are values which kept you alive throughout your time in the service and made you a better member of the team. If you didn't follow these rules, you were given clever nicknames which some wear as badges of honor, but in reality were meant to highlight your inability to blend in.

Service members are expected to be humble - it is a vital trait for a line of work that will likely result in serious mental and physical harm to one's self. However, being humble is also a serious problem if something is wrong. Not knowing how to attract attention to one's self results in the service member being forgotten about, and when humility becomes a way of life it prevents that individual from knowing how to ask for help when they really need it. Talk with your buddies honestly and let them know that sometimes it's okay to attract attention. The Legion exists so we can help each other, our families, and our communities become better places to live. Be brave.

6



**Cynthia Hoffman, Plankinton**  
[www.facebook.com/SDLegion6](http://www.facebook.com/SDLegion6)

Greetings from District 6! We have a lot to be proud of with Megan Bultsma graduating from the SD Highway Patrol, she started with the Youth Trooper program through American Legion Post 5, the Plankinton Community is so very proud of her.

What a great turn out for Boys State, what a fantastic opportunity for young men to get involved in. District 6 had 28 register.

We were so lucky to have such a beautiful day for our Memorial Day programs and the participation was so overwhelming in most areas, as we missed out in 2020 because of COVID. I attended the Plankinton service that was hosted by the Commander Kenny Payne VFW Post 6554. American Legion Post 5 Commander Whitney Bruinsma gave a very inspiring speech. One of the honored guest was Ed Krell who has been a member for 68 years. A huge thank-you to those you participated in Serving with the Honor Guards, some members participated in five different services.

I want to send a special thank you to a few Legionnaires for their support: Vilas Kurtenbach, Paul Payne, Doug Feltman, & Norm Thompson.

One favor I would like to end with is if any members of the American Legion have thoughts on the American Legion Baseball rules, please notify me at 605-770-1293.

Thank You All for what you do to keep the American Legion Strong!

7



**Patrick Mullen, Madison**  
[www.facebook.com/SDLegion7](http://www.facebook.com/SDLegion7)

Greetings from District 7!

District 7 is far-flung and diverse--we stretch from North Sioux City to Nunda, and from the largest post in the state to nearly the smallest. But just because a post is small, doesn't mean they aren't viable.

It was my pleasure to go with Post 105 of Nunda for their Memorial Day ceremonies. We visited three cemeteries, and in the three cemeteries, there were a minimum of two hundred people present. There were children present at each cemetery to lay poppy wreaths at the crosses of our fallen. Commander Rolly Wosje made a memorable address, followed by the firing squad, which I was honored to participate in. The oldest member of the honor guard was 90 years old (and no, that wasn't me.)

Following this, there was a potluck meal at Grace Lutheran in Nunda with all the good homecoming, and yes, I went for seconds. This Post is maybe thirteen strong, but they are mighty, and certainly servicing their community to the fullest.

Keep up the good work with membership, and now that we're in a new year, challenge yourself to ask someone new to join your post. The camaraderie of the American Legion is something that can benefit everybody--extend that offer out to every veteran that you know.

For God & Country  
Patrick Mullen

8



**Jennifer VanRoekel, Marion**  
[www.facebook.com/SDLegion8](http://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.

# ANNUAL REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

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### FINAL REPORT OF DEPARTMENT COMMANDER FRED NELSON

Legionnaires,

This will be my final article submitted while serving as your Department Commander. As my term winds down I thought my schedule would open up, however, my calendar is still busy to the end of the State Convention.

Two Years! It has been an "AWESOME" two years and it was an "HONOR" to serve as the Department Commander of the best Department in The American Legion. The Department of South Dakota works hard at its mission of promoting the Four Pillars. There is no doubt that our American Legion members are "Veterans Strengthening America".

Our headquarters staff are efficient and dedicated. Department Adjutant Kevin Hempel, DSO/Assistant Adjutant Courtney VanZanten, Judy Greenfield and MaryJo Boner are knowledgeable and very helpful. Each of them play a key role in the success of our Department. I would like to thank each of them for their continued dedication.

I am writing this last report from the grounds of Northern State University in Aberdeen, where I am spending the week at Boys State 2021. The Boys Staters are energized and the counselors are succeeding at directing the energy in a productive direction. Witnessing the dedication of the Boys State staff is eye opening. They have long days and thrive on the upbeat, high-energy of the Boys. It is early but I can see that Boys State 2021 will be a huge success. Thank you to the dedicated staff.

I spent Memorial Day here at Boys State and spoke at their Memorial Service. They honored thirty-six Boys Staters who lost their lives in service to our country. I see on Facebook that members and Posts across the state were out in force this Memorial Day helping to honor those that lost their lives while serving to protect our country.

After the cancelation of the Mid-Winter Convention, the 2021 Spring District Meetings were well attended and American Legion business was shared throughout the Department. It was nice to meet in person and connect with Legionnaires across the state. I encourage everyone to continue to be involved.

This year will be remembered as one that took us from a virtual world to a renewed excitement of coming together to promote the mission of The American Legion. The Department of South Dakota carried on the legacy with celebrations, parades, fundraisers, in-person meetings, oratorical scholarship programs, Boys State, Legion Baseball, shooting sports, and flag etiquette programs. Membership and Marketing Committee and the Media and Communications Committee were reorganized and are meeting their assigned missions. We are still using Zoom for some meetings and I believe this will continue when needed.

It took the effort of all our members, our Posts, and Districts to embrace the membership challenge this year. Membership Chairman Travis Flisrand worked with the leadership team to emphasize recruitment and retention. Throughout the year, we have been back and forth between first and second place with other departments. Currently, we are in second place with a 96.7% of the national goal. The new "MyLegion" seems to be working for more Posts and I am hoping with memberships being processed again that we may regain the lead. Congratulations to Districts One, Two, Four, and Seven for exceeding 100% of their membership goal. Congratulations to District Commander Eugene Ironshell Jr. for being a Race-to-the-Top Award winner. The latest reports have some accuracy issues, so I apologize if I am missing any Districts.

Looking back, some special moments are etched in my memory. I felt humbled and honored to receive two star quilts at district meetings, one by the commander and posts members in Eagle Butte and the second one by Eugene Iron Shell Jr., District Two Commander, in Martin. Posts centennial celebrations in Garretson, Custer, Milbank, as well as parades in Wagner, Arlington and a Valentines Social in Tabor are only a very few of these moments. I had the honor to participate in the ground breaking of the State Veterans Cemetery in Sioux Falls, and help at the first annual Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair - "We've Got your Six."

I would like to thank the Vice Commanders, District Commanders, all committee and commission chairs, NEC Jim Huls and alternate NEC Denny Brenden, Past Department Commanders for their advice and support. I also would like to thank the South Dakota American Legion Family and I am grateful for the support of my local American Legion Family #164 during my campaign and two years as Department Commander. You are all appreciated! To my wife Micheline, also known as the Commander's Aide, thank you for sharing the many long drives and the events over the two years.

Being your Department Commander gave me the honor to meet Legionnaires in every district, enjoy local events, help promote the four Pillars of The American Legion but most of all to carry on the legacy into a new centennial. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Department Convention in Huron.

There is little doubt in my mind that 2019-2021 will not be forgotten, as I am sure many of you will also remember these challenging times for our communities, state, and nation. We are blessed to live in South Dakota, and I am thankful for our American Legion Family.

For God and Country!

Fred Nelson, Your Department Commander

### ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Department Commander Nelson:

This report is being written and read to satisfy the requirement in the Constitution and By Laws which requires the Department Adjutant to write and present to each annual convention, a report

covering all activities not covered in the annual reports of the Committee Chairs and other State American Legion officials. As this was my first year as the Department Adjutant, it has been quite a learning curve. Adding all the challenges the pandemic it has been a very interesting year.

The American Legion Department of South Dakota is a member of the South Dakota Veterans Council (SDVC) along with five other Veterans Service Organizations. The council meets approximately four times per year. The main goal of SDVC is to address and support issues involving veterans of South Dakota. The Council continues to raise money for the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery endowment fund through the South Dakota Community Foundation. Additionally, great progress is being made in completing the State Veterans Cemetery, giving a place on the east side of South Dakota for Veterans to be honored as they are laid to rest. There is ongoing discussion on what to do with the building the SDCF owns on the South Dakota State Fair property. No decision has been made to date.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 issues, many committee meetings as well as the Midwinter Convention were cancelled for 2021. District Spring meetings for 2020 were cancelled, so elections of District Commander for the even years was held during District Fall meetings. Even though many committees did not meet in person, a number of meetings were held via Zoom to meet deadlines and to ensure business was accomplished. I am happy to report District Spring meetings for 2021 were held as scheduled.

The Department Executive Committee (DEC) received a request from the Department Assistant Adjutant and news paper editor, Courtney Van Zanten, to allow the South Dakota Legion News to be sent to all South Dakota Legion members. Courtney felt Legion information was not making it to the Legionnaires due to the cancellation of many meetings as well as many Post refraining from holding meetings due to the pandemic. Courtney proposed offsetting the cost of the paper by allowing advertisement by businesses. The DEC approved the request for a one-year test, and they would reconsider it again after the test period.

The Department usually purchases a new vehicle every three years. However, due to the increase in the price of vehicles, the amount that had previously set aside for the purchase was determined to not cover the cost of a vehicle. The decision was made to delay the purchase for one year to save additional money for the vehicle purchase.

The transition to the new MyLegion and the Personify Pgo system by national headquarters has not gone as well as expected. It has impacted the staff's ability to process memberships as well as view reports and limited the assistance we could give to Posts. I certainly hope national headquarters can correct the issues and the systems allow us to conduct business in a timely manner.

Judy Greenfield and Mary Jo Boner continue to make the headquarters office successful. They have been instrumental in ensuring our department functions and programs succeed. I certainly could not have made it through my first year as Adjutant without their help and dedication.

Since most of the Committee Chairs and State Officers have filed their reports which will be available on the Department website for review, most of the activities have been covered and reported on. Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Hempel, Department Adjutant

### ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER

Mr. Commander,

I would like to thank Commander Fred Nelson for appointing me to serve as Department Service Officer for 2020-2021.

As Department Service Officer, I have the unique privilege of directly serving Veterans and their families in helping them obtain and utilize the benefits they have earned through service to our country. The VA is undoubtedly its own mountain to climb, and I am happy to be a guide of sorts.

I started the year with big hopes for more outreach. My travels took me to Isabel, with a fantastic meeting with Veterans from several posts out there. Unfortunately, COVID hit shortly thereafter, and my outreach slowed to a stop. Since the world has slowly opened back up this spring, I have gone to Gregory, and am back in the saddle for anyone open to hear me preach the good word of the VA. It is a great reason to get Vets together.

I am thrilled to report that State, County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers around South Dakota utilizing the American Legion Power of Attorney have secured \$36,290,041 in VA benefits for South Dakota Veterans and their families in Fiscal Year 2020. These Service Officers worked hard through the pandemic, finding ways to help Veterans when "in person" was not possible, and they should be recognized for their hard work and dedication. If you have not thanked your local Veterans Service Officer lately, please do so!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Courtney VanZanten  
Department Service Officer

### AMERICANISM COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

As of May 24th, 2021

Disclaimer: This report was due prior to Boys State, and the State Convention, so some of the verbiage will be "future tense" and some "past tense". I know that's confusing but imagine trying to write it under those circumstances. The report you are given at the convention will most likely change, to reflect the latest situation.

Thank you, Commander Nelson for the opportunity to serve as your Americanism Chairman for the last two years. Greetings to my fellow Legionnaires! On behalf of the American-

ism Commission, I welcome you to the 2021 convention and encourage you to have a great time telling the other members how much fun you had

presenting the Americanism programs in your community. As someone who grew up taking part in these programs, I can tell you that the impact they have on our youth is truly amazing. I know it has been much harder to get into the schools, community events were canceled, and other youth programs such as 4-H and Scouting were limited, but you persevered. Thank you!

Since this is an annual report, I will take a few minutes to cover the different programs in a little detail. First, the Oratorical Program. This is the only program that managed to make it through the pandemic without being canceled. We had six competitors this year (up from five last year) and the quality of the presentations was impressive. For the second year in a row, National canceled their competition, but this year, they announced slightly 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. It also helps make marketing a little easier. Fiala Herceg, from Aberdeen, took first place this year (her second year of competing) and walked away with \$6,000 in scholarship monies. Thank you to all the volunteers and "volunteers" who helped with the last two years competitions! Now for a bit of a "side note": As my Post interviewed the candidates for Boys State this year, I found that several of them were members of the debate team. If you have boys and girls like this, you should actively recruit them to take part in this program next year.

Boys State 2021 moved forward after being canceled in 2020 and was held "in-person" with both Juniors and Seniors being eligible. The dates for this year were May 31st - June 4th and approximately 275 boys are expected to attend, up from about 240 in 2019. Legion Day will be held on Thursday the 3rd of June, so come on up and observe Boys State in action. Spend the day in Aberdeen and hang around to watch your boys compete in the annual Boys State Olympics that evening. Despite missing a year and losing the recruiting help of the 2019 Boys Staters to graduation, you still managed to recruit a large number of participants. There will also be an increased number of new counselors at Boys State this year as our Director attempts to build "depth" into the staff. A huge thank you to all those legionnaires and SD Army Guard members who believe in this program and volunteer their time to make it the success it is. Finally, thanks again to SDAL Foundation for the \$2,000 grant to this program!

Youth Trooper Academy is also moving forward for an in-person session this year after being canceled in 2020. The date was changed from the normal June timeframe to July 12 - 16th due to scheduling conflicts. The 24 statewide participants have been selected and notified. If you are sponsoring a participant, remember to get your tuition check (\$200) sent to Department ASAP. One of the great measures of success with this program is that there are now four past participants who wear a South Dakota Trooper uniform. 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. A special thank you to the South Dakota Troopers who helped recruit, plan and administer this program, and to Larry Price who works closely with them.

Many of you have already started the American Legion Baseball season and will be busy coaching, travelling with, and supporting your players this summer. Thank you to all those Posts out there who make this possible. While the 2020 season wasn't canceled, there were still many challenges caused by the pandemic. Things promise to be mostly "back to normal" this year with a state competition, National Regional competition and a national competition. Of special note, Post 22 Baseball in Rapid City was awarded the 2022 and 2023 National Regional tournaments; come and check out their brand-new stadium. Finally, 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!

South Dakota Scouting continues to march on. Thank you to those Posts' and individual Legionnaires who work year after year to help mentor our youth through their sponsorship/support of Scout Troops. If your post does not have a troop, but would like to help, remember that you can co-sponsor a troop in your area. Existing troops can always use financial support and volunteers. If you do sponsor or co-sponsor a troop, remember to submit your Eagle Scouts for the annual "Eagle Scout of the Year" competition. Thank you to Rick MacDonald who continues to lead by example as the SD Americanism representative to Scouting.

South Dakota's Junior Shooting Sports teams continue to be competitive. At least one of our shooters has been invited to take place in the national competition in Colorado Springs in 2021. 2020 was a successful year for the Pierre Post 8 shooters and their coach Sean Kruger, as they were awarded 3rd place in team competition at the national level. Thank you to the coaches and mentors of our teams who teach our youth gun safety and the joy of competition!

Finally, I would like to again mention the changes the Commission has made over the last two years. We've worked hard to provide the Posts with tools they can use to market our programs. The "Big 3" was created to provide posts with a simple, all-in-one information sheet that could easily be updated, posted, printed off and distributed to schools and students. We also built a "roadmap" for how, and to whom you should promote the "Big 3". We hope this helps the Post train their Americanism Officers and other members. We attempted to help the Post Americanism Officers by updating the Post Americanism Report to include explanations for the many different categories and providing them with an example of a winning report. We worked closely with the Boys State staff and Northern

# ANNUAL REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

## PAGES 5-6, 15-16

State University to create other attractive marketing materials. A very special thank you goes out to Mary Jo Boner at Department Headquarters. She was our biggest supporter and hardest worker in bringing this all together.

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

### ATHLETIC COMMISSION CHAIRMAN REPORT

Mr. Commander:

Well, here we are again to start another season and we just can't wait to get it started after a rough year in 2020. Not just for baseball but for every program that the American Legion offered. Technically we were put on hold for 1 year and we all got a break from the real world and are now ready to put all our programs on fire again. My report begins with the start of baseball registration. Registration for the 2021 season started January 1st and is going strong. The majority of our A school are already registered and are anxious to get their season rolling. Most B schools are registered also but they usually are not quite as quick. I have had many inquiries in new team formations in the state and with any luck we might be up anywhere from 2 to 5 teams this year which would be great.

As far as tournament sites go: Since the 2020 season was postponed, all 2020 sites were pushed back to 2021 and the 2021 selected sites will be pushed to 2022. So, we are good for this season and next. The next time application for State Tournament sites will need to be submitted will be by Dec 31st, 2021 for the 2023 season. Sites selected for this year are as follows: St B Jr Tournament-Redfield, Aug 6th thru 8th; St B Sr Tournament-Groton, July 30th thru Aug 3rd; St A Jr Tournament-Pierre, July 23rd thru July -27th; and St A Sr Tournament-Brandon, July 23rd thru July 27. Also, Sioux Falls will be hosting this year's National Regional Tournament. Tournament sites for 2022 are as follows: St B Jr Tournament will be hosted by Clark; St B Sr Tournament will be hosted by Gregory; St A Jr Tournament will be hosted by S.F. Post 15 and the St A Sr Tournament will be hosted by R.C. Post 22. Also R.C. Post 22 will be hosting the 2022 and 2023 National Regional Tournament.

This year's American Legion golf tournament will be hosted by Wakonda on Saturday Sept 11th at Glenridge Golf Course in Irene and Sept 12th at The Bluffs Golf Course in Vermillion. The people to contact to reserve a spot are John Peterson at 605-660-5821 and Jim Logue at 605-359-1247. Please keep this weekend open, it will be a great time to meet some new and old friends. This is truly a fun weekend and I would like you to recruit as many teams as possible.

On a matter of sending our St B champion to Wisconsin for a season ending tournament with teams from 4 or 5 other states we have decided not to do so. The reason for the decision is because the start of the high school football season is around the corner and players starting college. It is just too difficult to get teams to commit to going to this tournament. Instead, we will consider making a donation to a program within the American Legion organization. Commander Nelson, that concludes my report and on behalf of the Athletic Commission I would like to thank you for all your help and support and letting us serve on the Commission.

Sincerely,

Dan Sudbeck, Chairman

### ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOYS STATE DIRECTOR

Commander,

It is with great pleasure I can report we are a GO for the 78th Session of South Dakota American Legion Boys State, May 31 – June 4, 2021 at Northern State University.

We currently have 270 boys signed up. This year we decided to include seniors in the session to allow them an opportunity that they were robbed of due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. With the strong showing from Boys this year we will be taking into consideration continuing to allow Juniors and Seniors in future Sessions. This decision will be left to the Board to decide.

We will hold our annual meeting for the corporation on Sunday May 30th at Northern State University. Some agenda items are future incorporation of Seniors, Changes to the Bylaws to better reflect the corporation organizational structure, 2022 Session Dates, Annual Meeting date changes, and election of officer.

I thank every Legionnaire for their continued support of this great program. Additionally, I thank all the volunteers who come together to put on such an important event. Without all their dedication we could not fulfil our mission to help America's youth understand and appreciate the American system of government and way of ATHLETIC FUNDBalance, 5-1-2018,616.60\$ RECEIPTS:Entry Fees-\$ Interest1.16\$ TOTAL1.16\$ 1.16\$ 18,617.76\$ DISBURSEMENTS:To Humboldt, golf tournament200.00\$ Commission Expense, Tournament Fees1,026.20\$ TOTAL1,226.20\$ 1,226.20\$ 17,391.56\$

life including the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and to give young men a better knowledge of the fundamental principles of South Dakota State government.

Respectfully submitted,

C.P Van Delist

Director, South Dakota American Legion Boys State

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH CHAIRMAN REPORT

Zero TFA Claims!

First of all, I want to thank the SD American Legion Founda-

tion for the \$1,500.00 of Grant Funds to the Children and Youth Committee. The funds were used to procure backpacks filled with school supplies for children of all ages going into the 2020-2021 school year.

Before the Backpack Program started Operation Homefront reached out. Operation Homefront's mission is to build strong, stable, and secure military families so they can thrive — not simply struggle to get by — in the communities they have worked so hard to protect. The representative from Operation Homefront informed the Children & Youth Committee of their annual 2020 School Supply drive through Dollar Tree stores. The drive is based on donations at checkout with miscellaneous school supplies from glue sticks to paper. Children & Youth volunteers signed up at several Dollar Tree store locations to include: (3) Sioux Falls, (2) Mitchell, (1) Watertown, and (1) Aberdeen. Once a week the volunteers did a pick up at each of their designated locations of school supplies for four weeks in July during the drive. The representative of Operation Homefront encouraged us to give them to veteran children in need first and if those needs were met in the area to broaden the scope to the surrounding community children that would also benefit. Their goal was to help in any way!

In the beginning of August, all school supply donations and purchased backpacks through the South Dakota American Legion Foundation were centralized to the Chester American Legion Auxiliary, where volunteers sorted supplies, stuffed backpacks for distribution.

In total, with the Grant Funds 335 backpacks, and 24 teacher bags carrying 3,902 school supplies from the above mentioned Dollar Tree stores from the Operation Homefront 2020 drive made their way out the door to 335 deserving children from veteran children, to the reservation children, Department of Social Services children, and to school representatives handing them to their most needy within their grasp. Each and every representative could not have been more thankful especially this year!

The Backpack Program involved the following recipients from the Sioux Falls Army National Guard, and the following communities: Watertown, Mt. Vernon, Aberdeen, Rosebud, Faith, Mitchell, Brandon, Garretson, Chester, Eagle Butte, White Lake, Chamberlain, Alexandria, Wessington Springs, Huron, and Stickney/Corsica.

The next drive was the Toy Drive! We teamed up with Dollar tree, Operation Home Front and the SD AL Foundation for another great experience I was able to be apart of! Handing these bags out before Christmas filled with toys to children was a complete joy! The veteran families that received them were very thankful this season.

Total of donated items from dollar trees: 5,647. The SD AL Foundation donated \$750 for 750 gift bags for the toys to be put in. These gift bags went out to the deployed South Dakota units and the units currently going through medical in Sioux Falls during the holidays. Thank you again SD AL Foundation, this Backpack Program and holiday toy drive was a great success!

Respectfully,

Miranda Krumm

Children and Youth Chairman

CHILDREN AND YOUTH Balance, 5-1-20 \$17,659.97 RECEIPTS:Memorials and donations \$950.00 Interest \$1.64 \$951.64 \$ 951.64 TOTAL \$18,611.61 DISBURSEMENTS: Temporary Financial Assistance \$1,555.27 TOTAL \$1,555.27 \$1,555.27 Balance, 5-1-2021 \$17,056.34

### EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP CHAIRMAN REPORT

Two thousand twenty/twenty-one was another exciting period for the Educational Scholarship Committee. In 2019, we changed from a loan concept to a scholarship format. We invested \$120,000.00 with the South Dakota Community Foundation. Since our fund had been established for more than a year, we reaped the benefits of having just over \$5600.00 to award our first scholarships using the fund in March 2021.

The committee voted to award four scholarships. The winners are Allison Gross, Brookings, \$2000.00; Carter Jahng, Hurley, \$1500.00; Megan Linke, Woonsocket, \$1000.00; and Aaron Linke, Woonsocket, \$1000.00. Carter is attending Dakota State University and Allison, Megan and Aaron are attending SDSU.

We received one donation of \$100.00 in 2020 and another donation from the South Dakota Sons of The American Legion for \$1000.00 in March 2021. Thank you, Sons!

Applications and brochures are online at [www.SDlegion.org](http://www.SDlegion.org). We are currently revising the application for 2021/2022 scholarship year.

The 2021 Educator of the Year is Audra West, nominated by Post 22. She is a 4th Grade teacher at Blackhawk. She will be honored in the fall when her school is back in session.

The education scholarships offered by the Department of South Dakota are for post-secondary education, college, or technical schools, for children of veterans, grandchildren of veterans, and veterans, who meet the requirements as set forth in the Education Scholarship brochure. Please read the brochure for all the current changes. In all cases, the veteran listed on the application must be a member of the South Dakota The American Legion. The student must attend a higher education school in the state of South Dakota unless their plan of study is not taught in any South Dakota school. The fund is self-sustaining through donations.

Annually, the brochure and application processes are reviewed. No monies were added to the fund from the Department's outside income programs. More specific details can be obtained from State Headquarters, your District Education Loan Chairperson, or a member of the state Education Scholarship Committee. The state committee consists of Jerry Mencke, Huron, Paul Weidenbach,

Lesterville, Michael Pauling, Piedmont, Philip Egeberg, Brookings, Ed Hruska Jr., Sioux Falls, and Hugh Holmes, Mitchell.

The Education Scholarship Committee expresses our appreciation for the various memorials and donations received this past year, totaling \$1100.00. We also thank the Department Executive Committee, State Headquarters, American Legion Posts, Auxiliary Units, and individuals throughout our great state.

Mr. Commander, thank you for selecting me to be the chairman of the prestigious Education Scholarship Committee. It is a great honor. Up, up, and away!

Respectfully Submitted,

Hugh W. Holmes

Chairman, Education Scholarship Committee

ED LOAN REPORTBALANCE - 5-1-20 \$11,722.19 RECEIPTS:Loan Repayments \$7,008.75 Donations & Memorials \$1,025.00 \$Interest1.51 TOTAL \$8,035.26 \$8,035.26 DISBURSEMENTS: SCHOLARSHIPS \$1,500.00 TOTAL \$1,500.00 1,500.00\$ Balance, 5-1-2021 \$18,257.45

### ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Commander,

It is my sincere pleasure to submit this year's report on behalf of the Employment Committee. Among the many great things the American Legion does for veterans, promoting the employment and retention of veterans is one of them. Veterans bring unique skills to any organization. In addition to excellent technical education and training, veterans have a wealth of experience in a broad range of areas, not the least of which is leadership. These skills, along with a work ethic second to none, are hallmarks of veterans, and they bring tremendous value-added wherever they serve. The annual Employment Awards showcase some of the great organizations that support veterans and enable us to recognize them for their contributions.

For 2020-2021, we received a total of 4 nominations, in 3 categories: Olson-Reid Post #250 nominated Kones Korner of Castlewood for one award: Employer of Veterans - Small; Spearfish Post #164 nominated Prairie Hills Transit of Spearfish for three awards: Employer of Veterans - Small, Employer of Older Workers, and the Award to Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons.

The committee had hoped to receive more nominations this go-around. Nonetheless, the submissions we did receive were superb. In the end, Prairie Hills Transit performed a full sweep of the awards for which it was nominated. They have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to veterans, be they members of the public or those whom they employ. We are very proud to have such a fine organization within South Dakota, and they set a great example for others to follow.

This year's Employment Committee was composed of the following members: Oz Enderby of Lead-Deadwood, Rick Gully of Watertown, Doug Henwood of Spearfish, and Patrick Steele of Aberdeen. This is the

2nd consecutive year each committee member volunteered to serve, and I would like to thank each of the members for their dedication.

For 2021, I would like to ask for the assistance of all posts to look closely at deserving organizations in their area and take some time to submit a nomination. It is very important that we call attention to the great work these institutions do for our fellow veterans, and by formally recognizing them it can encourage others to take notice and follow in their footsteps.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory K. Dias

Employment Committee Chair

### DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN REPORT

Commander Nelson,

It has been a privilege and an honor to serve and continue to serve as your Department Historian. I am working on the Department History for the year so you will have a remembrance of your year as Department Commander. It has been a difficult past year and a challenge for historians to complete some sort of history for their posts. I will also assist those who are working to put their histories together or online for the State Convention in June.

Post Historians should be working on their Post Histories right now for the History contest at our State Convention. Winners in each category (scrapbook and narrative) can be entered into the National contest. These entries should cover the past years' term of your Post Commanders election to the end of his or her term. If you intend to participate in the History book contest, get it to me in early June or hand it in at the information desk at the convention by 3 pm Friday afternoon. I will need to judge them that evening in order to present plaques on Saturday.

Guidelines, including the point system for judging, is found in the Post Officers guide.

Plaques will be presented to the first, second and third place winners at the State Convention in Huron.

I encourage all post historians to put together a post history, either in book form or online. There could be a category for online versions soon. I thank all historians and Post members for their hard work and commitment in preparing these reports. Your Post members will appreciate your hard work in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Lee

Department Historian

### REPORT ON INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Fellow Legionnaires,

I would like to thank Commander Nelson for appointing me to serve as the Chairman for the Internal Affairs Commission for

# Boys State Election Results

- Governor**  
Joseph Gebel, Mitchell High School
- Lieutenant Governor**  
Ethan Gladue, Lincoln High School
- State Treasurer**  
Nicholas Tooley, New Technology High School
- State Auditor**  
Raven Olson, Sioux Valley High School
- Attorney General**  
James "Pierce" Sword, Custer High School
- Secretary of State**  
Joshua Park, Brookings High School
- Speaker of the House**  
Caleb McGregor, Newell High School
- Senate President Pro Tempore**  
Alexander Johnson, Lincoln High School
- Federalist Chair**  
Samyok Nepal, Brookings High School
- Nationalist Chair**  
Drake Rogers, Milbank High School
- Federalist Keynote Speaker**  
Luke Richardson, Canton High School
- Nationalist Keynote Speaker**  
Logan Decker, Gettysburg High School
- Chief Justice of the Supreme Court**  
Jeremiah Donahoe, Brandon Valley High School
- Supreme Court Justice**  
Nathan Fairholm, Vermillion High School
- Griffin Gates, T.F. Riggs High School
- Payton Lemme, Sioux Valley High School
- Max Mickelson, Lincoln High School
- Wylie Mursu, Milbank High School
- Ethan Yu, Lincoln High School
- Public Utilities Commissioner**  
Junior Berndt, Deubrook High School
- Cormac Duffy, Stanley County High School
- Grant Sternhagen, Brookings High School
- Commissioner of School and Public Lands**  
John Dekkenga, Lincoln High School
- Outstanding Speaker**  
Joseph Gebel, Mitchell High School
- Outstanding Citizen**  
Henry Haft, Lincoln High School
- Chandler L. Beach "Spirit of Boys State" Award**  
Caleb McGregor, Newell High School
- Samsung American Legion Scholarship Recipient**  
Griffin Gates, T.F. Riggs High School
- Boys Nation Representative**  
John Costello, O'Gorman High School
- Blake Stark, West Central High School
- Boys Nation Alternate**  
Quinn Bormann, Parkston High School
- Ethan Gladue, Lincoln High School

# Boys State 2021



Elisa Sand, Aberdeen News--

For Joseph Gebel of Mitchell, the past week at American Legion Boys State in Aberdeen has meant a lot, but has also been a whirlwind of activities that has included amazing speakers and lots of new people.

Joseph Gebel of Mitchell was elected governor at Boys State this week at Northern State University. He took some time to thank American Legion State Commander Fred Nelson for providing a great experience.

Of more than 250 Boys State participants who gathered on the Northern State University campus, Gebel was one of 25 who expressed an interest in running for governor. He won. But, it wasn't a simple process. Candidates started by circulating petitions with the goal of getting 15 signatures from people within their party. Boys Staters are divided into two "political parties" — Nationalists and Federalists.

"I barely scraped by with 17 signatures," he said.

Candidates then went through a primary election, gave pre-written speeches and campaigned with a debate among final candidates Thursday morning before the election.

Results were announced just a couple hours before the evening dinner with South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem.

"The past couple hours has been a lot of guys coming up and shaking hands," Gebel said Thursday evening. "I'm so thankful for Northern State University and the American Legion for a once-in-a-lifetime experience for a lot of young men."

He said his focus was to run a campaign focused on policy as opposed to other campaign tactics used by opponents.

That focus was echoed by Noem in her keynote speech in the Barnett Center where she encouraged the young men to say yes to as many opportunities as they can to get involved in their communities.

Start with internships at state agencies, volunteer on a political campaign or take an opportunity to be a legislative page, she said.

From there, Noem said, go to meetings and accept opportunities to run for office, but be genuine.

"Campaign on who you are, not who you think people want," she said. "This country is not hungry for perfect politicians. They're hungry for someone who is genuine."

Wakonda Post #13 proudly hosts

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# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE



The Urban-Hanson Post 118 of Hartford celebrated the Legion's 102nd birthday with a pot-luck and fundraiser on Saturday, April 24th. The post provided ham and pork loin with members and families bringing wonderful homemade foods for the pot-luck. The post held a monetary raffle, with member Ernie Kroeger winning the \$500 grand prize.

A very special award was given to member Earle R Geide for having served the American Legion for 72 years. Earle enlisted in the

US Army in October of 1941 and served his country during World War 2. After the war, Earle continued to fly and earned the South Dakota Flying Farmer of the Year award in 1973. Congratulations to Earle for his remarkable 72 years of service and dedication to Urban-Hanson Post 118 of Hartford, to the state of South Dakota, and to the United States! Earle is pictured here with Post 118 Commander Greg Johnson. An award was also presented to member Joe Shartz for serving 70 years of service.

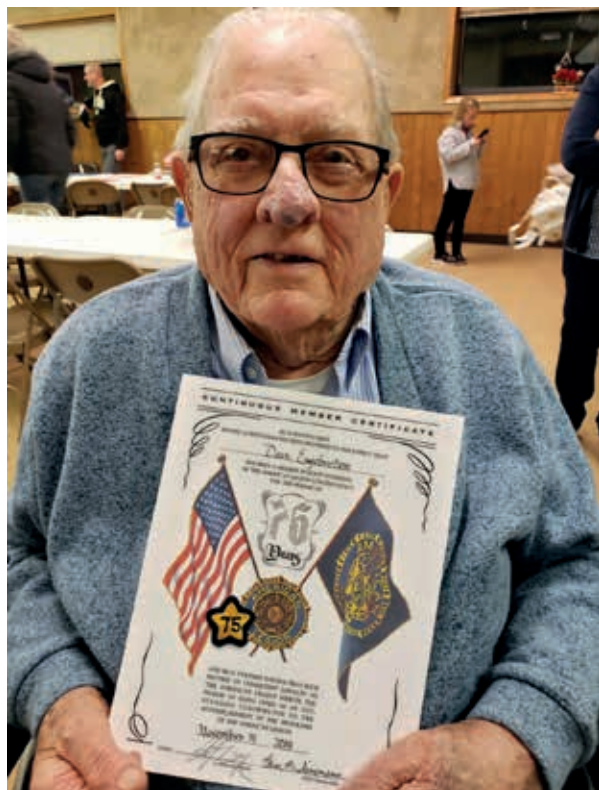


Above: Rory Streff, a Junior member of the Arlington American Legion Auxiliary Unit 42, assists with a wreath laying on Memorial Day. Below, Rockham Auxiliary Unit #57 Junior members prepare for Memorial Day.

# American Legion Around the State



The Custer American Legion and Custer VFW joined forces last Saturday morning for Peace Officers Memorial Day, a day during which local veterans thank law enforcement officers for their daily service and sacrifice in protecting the public. The event including a salute from Custer Veterans Honor Guard, and was attended by members of Custer County Sheriff's Office, South Dakota Highway Patrol and state and federal law enforcement.



Post 23 recently lost one of its dearest members. Dean Engebretson was our oldest living member of the Post. He recently marked his 75th anniversary of the American Legion and Post 23. He took great pride in his military service and his membership in the American Legion. On January 11, 1945, he entered active service with the United States Army and served in World War II with the Occupation Army in Korea. Dean was honorably discharged on December 5, 1946. Dean was a strong believer in community service. He was an active member of Zion Lutheran Church. He was a 75-year member and past Post Commander of the Garretson American Legion, and member of the 40&8. He was also active in the Garretson Commercial Club, member of the Garretson Fire Department, and served as the Mayor of Garretson.

White, SD – On Saturday, April 24, 2021, Post #88 of White, SD, hosted a Youth Shooting Safety Day that attracted 16 first-time-shooters and their parents to the Beacon Hill Rifle Range in Brookings County. During the event, the youth were given instruction on safe firearms handling and then encouraged to try several different styles of shooting with .22 caliber rifles and 20-gauge shotguns. The Post sat up four stations which allowed the youth to practice accuracy development on paper targets; work with reactive targets; try to break some clay-pigeons shooting trap; and to even experience firing a range of center-fire .223 rifles on a 100-meter range. The Veterans of Post 88 worked with the kids at these various stations and at the end of the event, several of the youth were developing shot groups enviable by some of the most experienced shooters of the group. The kids had a great time and made it a point to share what they were doing with their friends while they were out there. The number of positive complements and strong member engagement throughout the planning and execution of the event has encouraged the Post to make this an annual activity.



On 22 April 2021, American Legion Post 311, Piedmont SD, in concert with volunteers from Kiwanis Club and the Foothills Chamber of Commerce coordinated with Volunteers of America to distribute 60 boxes of food to the local community in drive-thru style at Post 311. In just under 2 hours on a beautiful afternoon 60 prepacked boxes of food sufficient for several meals per box, plus an additional 60 gallons of fresh milk were distributed to community members in need.



# LETTERS TO THE CONSTITUENCY

## Senator John Thune



In April, I went down to our southern border to see the conditions firsthand and learn the truth about the growing humanitarian crisis that the Biden administration has blocked the press from covering.

Make no mistake – despite the efforts of the administration to distract and downplay, this is a crisis. And as long as the Biden ad-

ministration continues to implement policies that give the impression of an open, porous border, people are going to keep flooding into our country.

What I saw on the border was harrowing. Border Patrol officers are overwhelmed and under-supported, smugglers who often have close ties to drug cartels are profiting massively, drugs are slipping through cracks of an overwhelmed system, and there are hundreds of kids scared and alone.

The Biden administration halfheartedly told migrants “don’t come,” but its relaxed, open-border policies say otherwise. The message received by prospective migrants is: If you can make it to the U.S. border and claim asylum, whether legitimate or not – even if you illegally cross the border – you’re in. And the stoplight is stuck on green.

One of the most heartbreaking loopholes created by the Biden administration incentivizes migrants to bring along very young children because the administration won’t deport anyone with a child who is 6 years or younger. This change sent the message that a child is an automatic passport into the United States. Caught in between are the children being taken and exploited as a “ticket” into our country. It was shocking to see hundreds of very young children packed into these border facilities, and even more horrible to hear about the traumatic journeys they’ve made from countries thousands of miles away. Talking to Border Patrol officers, there’s no doubt that migrants have been incentivized to make the dangerous trek by welcoming policies and loopholes put in place by this administration.

The administration isn’t blocking illegal border crossings, but they are blocking the press and transparency on the crisis they created. As a group of United States senators, we were told not to document what we saw and even to delete photos we took. This administration knows how bad the situation at the southern border looks – especially after downplaying and ridiculing the improvements President Trump made to discourage migrants and secure our border. President Biden should be less concerned with optics and more concerned with making common-sense changes to his immigration policies and taking this national security crisis seriously.

Perhaps the most frustrating part of this situation is that this crisis would have been totally avoidable if the administration had listened to the warnings of our border experts. The result is a humanitarian and public safety emergency.

In order to end the border crisis, the administration should support strong border security, stop asylum abuse, and crack down on the traffickers and cartels that prey on migrants. President Biden has the power to start ending this crisis today by enforcing immigration law and strongly stating that the way to come to this country is to come legally.

For the sake of the unaccompanied children and all those trying to cross our borders, and for the sake of the Americans who have been endangered by his policies, I hope the president will visit the border to see the crisis for himself and take action to secure our border.

### Senator John Thune (R-SD)

511 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510  
Phone: 202-224-2321 Fax: 202-228-5429 Toll Free: 866-850-3855  
Website: <http://www.thune.senate.gov>

### Senator Michael Rounds (R-SD)

Hart Senate Office Building, Suite 502, Washington, D.C. 20510  
Phone: 202-224-5842 Fax: 202-224-7482 Toll-Free: 202-875-5268  
Website: <http://www.rounds.senate.gov>

### Representative Dusty Johnson (R-SD)

Address: 1508 Longworth HOB Washington, D.C. 20515  
Phone: 202-225-2801  
Website: <https://dustyjohnson.house.gov>

## Senator Mike Rounds



Every day, there’s a new story about cybersecurity and the number of malware and ransomware attacks perpetrated against American citizens, financial institutions, health care systems and most recently...our pipelines. It’s not surprising that these attacks are increasing in frequency, as we’re more connect-

ever before.

As the Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, I’ve spent a significant amount of time listening to experts talk about strategies for protecting our weapons systems from cyberattacks. What doesn’t get mentioned enough, though, is that cybercriminals aren’t just after our defense systems. They are also after your personal information and they’ll do almost anything to hack into your bank account, retirement account and other monetary institutions.

According to a recent Pew Research Study, more than 75% of Americans 65 years of age and older say they regularly use the Internet. And almost 9 in 10 people in rural areas like South Dakota rely on the Internet for news, shopping, email and staying connected with family and friends. While being online provides many conveniences, there’s never been a more important time to take appropriate measures to protect yourself and your data.

The Department of Homeland Security has provided some simple tips to keep you safe:

- Choose a password that means something to you and you only; use strong passwords with eight characters or more that use a combination of numbers, letters, and symbols.
- Keep your mobile devices in your possession at all times and always be aware of your surroundings.
- If you use social networking sites such as Facebook, be sure to limit the amount of personal information you post online and use privacy settings to avoid sharing information widely.
- Most businesses or organizations don’t ask for your personal information over email. Beware of any requests to update or confirm your personal information.
- Avoid opening attachments, clicking on links, or responding to email messages from unknown senders or companies that ask for your personal information.
- Install and regularly update the security programs on your computer such as anti-virus and anti-spyware.
- Beware of “free” gifts or prizes. If something sounds too good to be true, then it probably is.

Our national defense is complicated. No longer are we preparing to defend our nation against threats via air, land and sea. We now have to consider threats in space...and cyberspace. Our national security starts at home by being vigilant and making sure we take the steps necessary to protect our systems and information.

Stay safe!

Resources:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/internet-broadband/?menuItem=6b886b10-55ec-44bc-b5a4-740f5366a404>

[www.dhs.gov/stopthinkconnect](http://www.dhs.gov/stopthinkconnect)

## Congressman Dusty Johnson



There is no doubt about it – the past year has been unimaginably challenging for many South Dakotans. As more and more Americans get vaccinated and life continues to trend towards normalcy, it’s easy to want to put the troubles of the past year behind us. However, it is important to remember groups that are still struggling – in-

cluding our veterans.

The pandemic hit veterans hard, with many reporting deteriorations of their mental and physical health, as well as their financial well-being. During the past 14 months, veterans needed access to their health services through the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (VA) more than ever.

Initially, my focus was to make sure veterans could access their care without risking their health, whenever possible, through telehealth care. I supported the VA Telehealth Expansion Act which allowed for the expansion of telehealth services to Veterans through the VA. I also introduced the COVID-19 Telehealth Program Extension Act, which was signed into law December of 2020. My bill provided an additional \$250 million to the COVID-19 Telehealth Program authorized by the CARES Act. I remain determined to not let this pandemic compromise health care services for our veterans and servicemembers.

While I was encouraged to see veterans access telehealth services at high rates, many families were left unsure as to how they would pay for their medical bills. Previously, the VA was allowing a “hold” on payments for services during the pandemic. This allowed veterans and their families to postpone payments, but it left many uncertain about their financial future.

That is why I was pleased to see the VA clarify that all payments made by veterans to the VA during the height of the pandemic were to be cancelled. If you or a loved one received a bill for services from the VA between April 6, 2020 and September 30, 2021, your bill is cancelled and you do NOT need to pay your VA copayment or Tri-Care cost share balance.

Additionally, if you made a payment for services received during that same period, the VA must refund your payment. The VA has let me know that refunds will go out automatically starting May 19, and that it may take 6-12 weeks for you to receive your refund.

I am thankful that the VA has provided veterans with this relief so they can focus on their health and the needs of their families. This brings our veteran community one step closer to full recovery from the difficulties of the past year.

## Did you know?

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

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# DEPARTMENT

*Election, continued from Page 1...*

discharged in April 1971.

Wolkow is a 35-year Paid-Up-For-Life member of the American Legion Post #138, and is also a member of Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans.

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.

Also elected to office were State Vice Commander Districts 1-2 Eugene Iron Shell, Jr. of Rosebud, State Vice Commander Districts 3-8 Doug Feltman of Chamberlain, and Department Sergeant At Arms Greg Geiman of Wagner, as seen being sworn in by Past Department Commander and Alternate National Executive Committeeman Denny Brenden, right.

Below left, the Legion Band entertains at the Go-Getters banquet held at the Huron Sportsmens Club on Saturday evening. Below right, Eagle Scout of the Year Zain Spangler and Paul Jensen of Wakonda.



Above left, Miranda Krumm of Chester receives the Commanders Award from Commander Fred Nelson for her work as Children & Youth Chairman the last four years. Krumm went above and beyond in her position, implementing initiatives such as the Backpack Program and Christmas Toy drive in coordination with Operation HomeFront. Above right, Marvin Matthews of Wessington receives recognition for being the only WWII veteran in attendance at this years convention. Right, Ed Thompson of Custer receives his Gold Brigade and South Dakota Recruiter of the Year Award from Membership Chairman Travis Flisrand and Commander Fred Nelson. Also receiving the Gold Brigade Award this year was Eugene Iron Shell, Jr. of Rosebud.

# CONVENTION



Left, Past Department Commanders Paul Evenson, Phil Anderson, Mark Weinmann, Gary Watts, Jim Huls, Terry Hanson, Fred Nelson, Denny Brenden, Tim Jurgens, Hugh Holmes and Charmane Dunham present Rodney Smith of Chester with the Robert C. Gabrielson Award for Leadership. Smith, the former District 7 Commander, is known for his positive attitude, steady demeanor, and unwavering reliability, all factors that fed into 100% post visits and membership goals.

Below left, second leading National Commander candidate Vincent James "Jim" Trioila of New York addresses the crowd at the Joint Banquet held at the convention center on Friday evening. His remarks focused largely on Suicide Prevention and what we as Legionnaires can do to help our comrades.

Below, Alternate National Executive Committeeman Denny Brenden and Commander Fred Nelson award Krisma DeWitt of Castlewood Legionnaire of the Year. DeWitt has excelled in many positions at the post, district and state levels, to include Department Training Committee Chairman, and was recently appointed Finance Chairman. Also in contention for Legionnaire of the Year were Jack French of Spearfish, Bill Kelly of Hermosa, Michael Wells of Pierre, Norman Siebrecht of Redfield, Dwight Stadler of Mitchell, Jerol Price of Hartford, and John Peterson of Vermillion.



Left, Past Department Commanders Tim Jurgens and Denny Brenden work the Fun Auction held Saturday night at the convention center. All proceeds, which totalled over \$8,000, went to the South Dakota American Legion Foundation.

Above, Commander Fred Nelson, Department Public Safety Committee Chair Larry Price of Redfield, Committee Members Doug Feltman of Chamberlain and Diane Johnson of Hartford recognize Pete Bolzer of Brookings as Firefighter of the Year. Mr. Bolzer will go on to compete at the National level.

Right, Auxiliary Second Vice President Joyce Smith receives her one-dose COVID shot. The VA was present on Friday morning, and gave the shots at no cost to any person who wanted one.



# Membership & Post Activities



## From the Chair

**Travis Flisrand, Castlewood**

For over a century, the South Dakota American Legion has been part of most communities across South Dakota. It is hard to fathom exactly how many hours of community "service", fundraisers and money returned to our communities have been given to support Veterans, their families, and our youth. The saga of our predecessors is evolutionary in caring for our communities. We continue our forefathers' story by focusing on our community "service projects" and utilizing our Posts stories to educate the residents of exactly what our organization is capable of so they will support our mission.

This fall is a combined effort from across the State to raise money to send veterans in our area on the Midwest Honor Flight (MWHF) to see our Nations memorials in Washington D.C. Initially we were requesting that Posts coordinate a fundraiser between August through October with a goal of each Post in South Dakota sponsoring a seat on the MWHF which is \$753 / veteran. Donations should be sent to state Headquarters by November 1, 2021; our Commander will present this check to the MWHF on veterans' day. But since this event was discussed at spring district meetings, we have had reports of Posts already getting started on this project with a lot of motivation, which is awesome and inspirational! If your Post completes your MWHF fundraiser before the Fall Meetings, bring the donation for turn-in. Checks should be made out to the South Dakota American Legion, with Midwest Honor Flight in the memo line. Again, we will consolidate all funds and present a total check to Midwest Honor Flight on Veterans Day.

If we raise enough money to cover at least 67 veterans, the flight will be named "The South Dakota American Legion" Midwest Honor flight and will take place in the fall of 2022. We will utilize the press coverage of this flight to highlight the achievements of our organization, a lot of the data for what we will use comes from the "Consolidated Post Reports" and is a key to providing the metrics of what we do.

Again, the main focal point of this fundraising service project is to raise money to pay for a veteran's seat and cost on the MWHF. There is no specific project or type of fundraiser Posts need to perform. This is to raise community awareness of what "WE" as the South Dakota American Legion do for our communities and for our Veterans. We are requesting that Posts utilize the hashtag "#sdlegionserving" in all the advertising and press releases to your local papers, with all Posts using this collectively the search engines of the internet will be able to easily record all the information into an easily searchable field to include stories and pictures.

The actions we do voluntarily through the South Dakota American Legion have impact not only on veterans, but their families and friends, who are the very fabric of our communities that holds all of us together. For the past century Legion members have done their service without too much fan fair, now is the time we need to start sharing our achievements within our communities. Veterans who served in Desert Storm and the Global war on terror need to see our organization as an asset to their communities, and to them as well. People join organizations that are seen as an asset. The Membership and Marketing committee will continue to develop marketing ideas that will educate the citizens in South Dakota on our achievements across the state. These ideas will support our service project related events that utilize the collaboration of all Posts. We request members and Posts who have ideas to share them with the committee. If you know of a nonprofit organization in South Dakota that directly impacts the members of the South Dakota American Legion and could use a helping hand, please share their information so we can work together to continue supporting the veterans and their families in South Dakota.

Keep up the great work Legionnaires, I am proud to be part of this organization.

Very Respectfully,

Travis Flisrand

Department Membership Chairman / USN Retired

# Flights That Heal: About Midwest Honor Flight's Mission

## 1: Tell us why/how you started Midwest Honor Flight:

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 through the Honor Flight Network. This was the first Honor Flight in the region to fly Korean and Vietnam Veterans, in addition to WWII Veterans, to DC under the care and supervision of Honor Flight Guardians. "They answered the call to serve our country and those around the globe. It's now our duty as a grateful nation to get them out to Washington, D.C. to see the memorials dedicated to their service and fellow comrades. It truly is the least we can do as the American people for our brave American heroes to visit their memorials dedicated to their service and sacrifice in our nation's capital - Washington, D.C!"

## 2: Elaborate on your Sons of the American Legion connection, and who in your family served, and why it's important for you to honor their service:

Although not having served in the military himself, his passion for Veterans comes from three of his great-grandfathers (WWII) and one grandfather (Vietnam), all who served honorably in the US Army and the US Army Air Corp. His younger sister recently joined the Iowa Army National Guard as well.

The Sons of the American Legion was created as a way to support Legion members and their Posts. I believe this is yet another way for me to give back to those that were at one point in their lives, willing to sacrifice themselves for the freedoms we enjoy today. Because of my great-grandfathers', my grandfather's, and now my sister's service, we are free today. In an effort to ensure those freedoms are not taken for granted, it is my responsibility as a grateful American to remember, honor, and teach.

## 3: Tell us about the mission of Midwest Honor Flight:

Midwest Honor Flight is a non-profit, 100% volunteer organization in Northwest Iowa, South Dakota, and Southwest Minnesota dedicated to providing Veterans with respect, honor, and closure with an all-expense-paid trip to our nation's capital. Our mission is 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. Midwest Honor Flight was created as a way to say Thank You to our WWII, Korean, and Vietnam Veterans.

## 4: Expand on how seeing the memorials can help with healing, and why that's especially important for Vietnam Veterans.

World War II veterans waited patiently for over 65 years for a memorial that recognizes their service and accomplishments. The World War II Memorial also recognizes the ultimate sacrifices of their friends who never made it home. Similarly, Korean and Vietnam Veterans have been waiting for years to see their memorial as well. They ALL deserve this one last opportunity to visit their memorials as America's "Thank You" for their service and sacrifice. Equal priority is given to any terminally ill veteran who has never visited their Memorials. If America thought it was important to build a memorial to their service and sacrifice, Midwest Honor Flight believes it's important for them to visit their memorial before it's too late.

We can never repay our Veterans for what they've done. An "Honor Flight Tour" is simply a small token of our appreciation for everything they've done. Throughout their Midwest Honor Flight tour, the Veterans are thanked, recognized, and admired for their service. They come home personally knowing how much their country loves them and respects them. Veterans will never forget this gratitude and adoration.

For those of you who were never welcomed home 50 some years ago, welcome home and thank you for your



**Midwest Honor Flight President Aaron Van Beek**

service! We have heard and seen that this day begins the healing process and puts closure on your honorable service to our country. While we cannot make up for what Americans did and said then, our hope is to start the process of healing and closure by honoring you on a flight, by seeing the memorials dedicated to your service and that of your fellow comrades, and possibly being welcomed home and thanked for the very first time. We have heard that this day finally ends that war for our Vietnam and Vietnam era Veterans.

## 5: What are the future plans for Midwest Honor Flight? How can the South Dakota American Legion help achieve those goals?

With more than 800 Veterans on our waiting list, we are racing against the clock to raise the funds needed to conduct an Honor Flight. Tours are simply not possible without public support. Prior to Honor Flight, our Veterans had given up all hope of ever seeing their Memorials. Now they have hope - but time is not on our side. Every \$753 that we receive will send one (1) veteran out to DC to see THEIR memorials. 98.9 cents of every dollar donated to Midwest Honor Flight goes directly to getting our LOCAL Veterans from NW Iowa, the State of South Dakota, and SW Minnesota to Washington, D.C. at no cost to the Veteran. No funding is sent to our national headquarters. We receive no government funding - all funds are generated from grass roots efforts through community donations and corporate sponsors. As each flight is funded, we immediately schedule the next. The cost to conduct an average Midwest Honor Flight trip out of Sioux Falls, South Dakota is now approximately \$150,000. This is the cost associated with transporting about 80 American Veterans, round-trip airfare, meals, rental of four motor coaches in the Washington, D.C. area, Park Police escort services,

t-shirts for the Veterans, insurance, etc. The Guardians that join us and our own volunteer crew make a donation to cover the cost of their own way to ensure donations go to the Veterans on flight.

We are excited to see what the South Dakota American Legion Family does as part of the "Send One" campaign taking place to raise money for future flights. We also are very excited that the South Dakota American Legion Foundation has kicked off this challenge with the first \$10,000! If your post has Veterans that are interested in taking an Honor Flight or you know of Veterans who should go, they



can apply online at [www.midwesthonorflight.org/veterans](http://www.midwesthonorflight.org/veterans) or give us a call at (605) 215-1319 to request a paper application in the mail. For what you and your comrades have given to us, please consider this a small token of appreciation from all of us at Midwest Honor Flight and the Honor Flight Network.

**6: Describe any other volunteer opportunities within your organization—tell us where you need help!**

**VOLUNTEERS:** Midwest Honor Flight is successful due to the dedicated help provided by volunteers who assist veterans at the beginning and end of their flight day, along with providing valuable assistance between flights. This enables us to accomplish our mission of sending veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit the memorials built in honor of their service and sacrifice to the United States of America during times of conflict. We are a 100% volunteer organization, from greeters to guardians to board members. We do not have normal operating hours or an office, but simply volunteer our time in any way we can, at any time we're able and by any means necessary – a lot of email, calls and texts help facilitate much of our work. If you're looking to serve those who served their country, we'd love to hear from you. You can apply to be a volunteer by visiting [www.midwesthonorflight.org/volunteers](http://www.midwesthonorflight.org/volunteers)

**GUARDIANS:** Guardians are essential to the success of the Midwest Honor Flight program. Without these volunteers we would not be able to carry out the dreams of so many veterans, enabling them to see the memorials built in their honor. Even before the veterans arrive at the airport, the guardian's responsibilities begin with flight preparation and going over their packets of material. Once the veterans start to arrive, guardians will ensure boarding passes and IDs are available, distribute Midwest Honor Flight t-shirts, get the veterans through security and to the gate, assist in boarding, etc. From the moment the veterans are in our hands until we return them to their loved ones in the evening, guardians will be asked to treat these heroes as if they



*Department Commander Fred Nelson and Membership & Marketing Chairman Travis Flisrand receive donations for the Midwest Honor Flight "Send One" Campaign. Wagner Post 11 presented their check for \$753, sending one veteran, and White Post 88 knocked it out of the park with a donation of \$6,210.*

are family and ensure that every veteran has a safe, memorable, and rewarding experience. Guardians are volunteers and are asked to make a minimum donation sent to Midwest Honor Flight or given online either two weeks after the notice or one month prior to flight - whichever comes first. Guardians may NOT be the spouse or significant other of a Veteran and must be at least of the age of 16 at the

time of the flight. Because they play such a significant role in our program, we will provide training sessions for all guardians prior to participating in one of our trips which are announced at the time of selection. If you are interested in going on flight as a Guardian, please apply by visiting [www.midwesthonorflight.org/guardians](http://www.midwesthonorflight.org/guardians).

## Listen to Your Members—Listen to Your Community

*With the Midwest Honor Flight Send One Challenge, we asked Post #154 of Montrose to share a few secrets of their success in both fundraising and as a post as a whole. The following is courtesy of Dean Kueter.*

Ruste-Waul Post 154 in Montrose, SD received its temporary charter on January 27, 1920. Like the American Legion, Post 154's mission of supporting veterans and promoting Americanism has remained constant. Other goals such as community involvement have evolved over the past 100+ years.

Like many of our facilities throughout the state, the Montrose Legion building serving our community was showing signs of age as it was originally built in 1892. This building, hosting community events from baby showers to funerals and everything in between, if not attended to would surely continue to degrade to the point it would be unusable to Legionnaires as well as the extended Montrose community.

Beginning in 2012 Post 154, then under the leadership of Commander Scott Binder took it upon themselves to lead an effort to repair and remodel the Legion. At that time Commander Binder was told he could do whatever he wanted, as long as it did not cost the Post any money. He led this effort many times begging for donated materials and labor as well as leading a multitude of fundraising event efforts that got the community involved. One of those first fundraising efforts was a letter sent to Montrose High School alumni that started with "Your first kiss, your first dance, your first beer, it most likely happened at the Legion." That letter alone went on to generate over \$20,000 and lit a fire with the community to help Legionnaires update the facility.

Additional fundraisers followed focusing on community events. We have had dart tournaments, steak feeds, shrimp boils, fish fries, and a Veteran's of Comedy show, to name a few. The idea for one of our largest fundraising and community events was not a Legion idea. The Legion was approached by a community member that had been taking part in the Canton Fire Department's Chase the Ace and thought it would be a good event for Post 154. That community member and his family along with a few Legion members loaded up a van and visited the event in Canton and decided to give it a try. Chase the Ace has been a great fundraiser for the Legion and community event for Montrose. The Legion runs the card game but different school and community organizations sign up to serve the meal as a way to help their programs. Some organizations that the Legion has partnered with for this are Legion Auxiliary, FFA, 4H, Busy Bees Community Club, youth sports teams, and several other school and community groups looking for fundraising opportunities. By working with these groups, we have been promoting that this is the commu-



*Post #154 Member Kendall Schmidt receives his post jacket. The jackets have served as an excellent recruitment and work motivator.*

nity's Legion and we have developed some great support for the Legion.

We credit community involvement and getting these non-Legion members to the Post with support for starting our Sons of the American Legion Squad 154. Men and boys visiting the Legion that have not been in the military but have parents or grandparents that served expressed an additional sense of patriotism and were looking for additional ways to be involved and support Legionnaires. On January 27, 2020, exactly 100 years after our Legion received their charter, our Squad 154 of the Sons of the American Legion received their charter and now have 62 members. The Sons have also helped us when it can be challenging at times to find Legionnaires to work events.

Not burning out members and finding workers is always a concern. For several years the bar tips have gone to the building renovation fund. Now that the renovations have slowed down (they are never really ever complete) the tips are used to purchase member jackets. For every shift that a member works at a Legion event, color guard, etc. their name is put in for a jacket drawing. This has been a good

worker recruitment motivator.

A key to our strong membership is finding the right ways to conduct recruitment. We try to welcome new members to the community, especially when we hear they are a veteran. One example of this is when Kendall Schmidt, a retired Army Colonel purchased an acreage south of town. Commander Binder pulled into his yard one day to welcome him and Kendall expressed interest in joining our Post. Kendall has gone on to become a very active member by heading up scheduling bands for our dances. Along with another community member they expressed a regional need for people looking for a place to dance. It is not uncommon for people to travel over 100 miles to come to a Legion dance. By personally welcoming new families to our community we have gained several new members. If we don't gain a member during the welcoming visit at least we get a chance to thank a veteran for their service!

Be welcoming whenever a veteran is ready to join. Jim Miles served in Korea in the Army. Previously Jim's "dates didn't match up" to be eligible to join the Legion. Jim joined Post 154 at the age of 86 when the passing of the Legion Act changed eligibility requirements. Jim "Corky" Barenklau has lived near Montrose his entire life. Corky served in the National Guard and received an honorable discharge in 1980. He has always been a supporter of the Legion and our events but never became a member. At the age of 67 Corky joined the Legion after his daughter-in-law joined and when his grandson joined our Sons squadron. Be caring, welcoming, persistent, and understanding in your recruiting. It will pay off.

It was March 14, 2020 on a gloomy and rainy Saturday morning that we had a special Legion meeting on how to proceed with scheduled events as the COVID-19 pandemic was coming down on us. We decided to pause all public events out of an abundance of caution. It was one year later, on March 12, 2021 we started back up by having a fish fry with a variety of serving options to so ensure that people felt safe. The drive through option was very popular. We then 'let 'er buck' on April 10 with a dance featuring Slack Water Jack. One Legion member's wife who was working the event said "look at them dancing, they look so happy!" The community was certainly ready to have their Legion back.

It has been almost 10 years since Commander Binder was told he could do anything as long as it didn't cost the Post any money. We have come so far with the help of old members, new members, Sons, Auxiliary, and our community.

Listen to your Legion members and listen to your community and they will look so happy!

## South Dakota Performs Well at 2021 TALMA Annual Contest

The South Dakota American Legion represented well at The American Legion Media Alliance Annual Contest, which took entries created between January 1 to December 31, 2020. Entries were required to be the original work of the entrant, and entrants had to be current members of the Alliance.

Winners of the 2021 TALMA Contest  
(publication dates: Jan. 1, 2020-Dec. 31, 2020)

Chairman's Award: Jeff Daly, Post 43, Hollywood, Calif., Post 43 website

Innovation Award: Courtney VanZanten, Department of South Dakota, SDAL Foundation Donor Guide

### PUBLICATIONS

Department: South Dakota American Legion News, Courtney VanZanten

Posts up to 249: The Feminaires, Women's Veteran Post 404, St Louis. Christine Hummel

Posts 250-749: Three Yolo Post 77, Department of California. Larry Shapiro

Posts over 750: News and Views, American Legion Post 284 Colonial Heights, Va. Dick Cole

### WEBSITES

Department: Department of Minnesota, Timothy Engstrom.

Posts up to 249: Greenlawn Post 1244, Robert Santo.

• Honorable mention: American Legion Post 1111, Jena Wilmers.

Posts 250-749: Post 178, Frisco, Texas, Eric Bonar

Posts over 750: Post 43, Hollywood, Jeff Daly.

### VISUAL MEDIA

Department: Department of California, John "Durk" Durkin

• Honorable mention: Department of Florida, Edward Lewis.

Posts up to 249: Unit 421 Clifton, Ohio, Cynthia Boehnlein

• Honorable mention: Squadron 135 White Plains, N.Y., Jack McGuirk

Posts over 750: Post 43, Hollywood, Jeff Daly.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Department: Department of South Dakota, Frederick Nelson, Legion On The Road.

Posts up to 249: Post 108, Oxford, Mich., Sarah Eisenhardt, Geocaching

Posts 250-749: Unit 374, Omaha, Neb., Melissa Steinle. Scholarship Opportunities

### EDITORIAL/NEWS

Department: Timothy Engstrom, Department of Minnesota. No Exit Wound

Posts over 750: Post 206, Chesapeake Beach, Md., Timothy Markwald. Newsletter, Editorial

### EDITORIAL/INFO

Department: Timothy Engstrom, Department of Minnesota. Masks

## Evenson Named to Lead National Marketing Commission



Paul Evenson of Garretson Post 23 was appointed as Chairman of the National Marketing Commission in April of 2021.

The Marketing Commission's primary purpose is to work in concert with all American Legion commissions and committees to build awareness and support for the mission and programs of The American Legion, and to promote the same to active duty military, Guard and Reserve components, military veterans and retirees, and the general public.

Focus includes membership: direct mail services, where members are solicited through mail and digital campaigns, direct renewals, and the Paid-Up-For-Life programs. Additionally, the Marketing Commission concentrates on fundraising efforts, to include donor acquisition, mailings, and vehicle donation.

With much visibility as of late, the Legion Racing Platform of IndyCar #48 has also been a major branding opportunity for The American Legion, and falls under the realm of the Marketing Commission. The Commission is also working with different corporations, in developing relationships for contributions toward the Veterans and Childrens Foundation.

## 2021 Wreath Ride & Rendezvous

By Buck DeWeese

Legion Riders Liaison

On 23 May, 2021 at 10:30 a.m. 19 South Dakota American Legion riders from the four corners and central areas, and family members met on the steps of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Building in Pierre South Dakota. Our purpose was to place a Memorial Wreath in celebration of the bravery and heroism displayed by all South Dakotans who have placed their lives in harm's way to preserve a lifestyle of Freedom and Liberty unmatched in the history of the world. These riders faced 35-degree temperatures, fog, thunderstorms, lightning and even a tornado to start what we hope to become an annual event to show our love and gratitude to our fallen brethren. Even with these obstacles, it was nothing compared to what the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of America's past have had to face to protect and defend our borders, our freedoms, and our children's futures in these United States of America. Please plan to join us next year. We hope to see the numbers double each year as we kick off our season of motorcycle adventures in giving thanks to all who have served in the Armed Forces of America. I would like to hear from every ALR group and will speak more on this at the Convention in Huron. Each year's ride will occur on the weekend before Memorial Day weekend. I want to thank Post 8 from Pierre and especially LeRoy and Patsy Madsen for hosting this inaugural event. Everyone agreed it was worth every bone chilling, rain soaked, harrowing minute. I look forward to at least 40 riders next year and 80 the year after that. This is how traditions are started. With the inspiration from Commander Nelson to get it going to dedication from the Riders to keep it alive! Please send me your thoughts and ideas [deweese@rushmore.com](mailto:deweese@rushmore.com) or call me at 605-641-2362.



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*Think you make a mean pot of chili?*

*Then come prove it!*

Post #24 challenges you to compete in the South Dakota State Chili Cook Off at the Brown County Fairgrounds on Aug. 21<sup>st</sup>.

Cooks must be registered with ICS prior to the contest, and must provide 2 gal of chili (any category) for the public tasting. All chili cooked on-site during the contest.

Three categories, \$40 entry fee for each (with ICS fee the total cost to do all 3 is \$130), winners in each qualify for World Champion contest:

Verde - \$250 1<sup>st</sup> prize  
Homestyle - \$300 1<sup>st</sup> prize  
Red - \$500 1<sup>st</sup> prize



Plus a trophy for Best Service Club (requires entry in the Red category).

Contact George Sullivan for details 605/ 380-1618

# ANNUAL REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

## PAGES 5-6, 15-16

2021.

The Internal Affairs Commission met 3 times by ZOOM conference to accomplish its mission. On 26 April 2021, 11 May 2021, and 20 May 2021. A quorum was present at all three of the zoom conferences.

The Constitution of the American Legion, Department of South Dakota, provides in Article XV, Section 1, that "Any amendment to this constitution may be proposed by any Post, or by the Department Standing

Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. Any amendment proposed by a Post shall be submitted in writing to Department Headquarters at least six weeks prior to the annual Department Convention."

"The Department Adjutant shall present it immediately to the Department Commission on Internal Affairs. At least 30 days prior to said convention, the Department Commission on Internal Affairs shall transmit to all Posts, through Department Headquarters, a full copy of all amendments submitted by Posts, together with the favorable or unfavorable recommendation of the committee thereon, with a brief statement of reasons for such recommendation, and at the time the committee shall in like manner, distribute to all Posts, full copy of any proposed amendment originating with the committee itself."

Any resolution pertaining to changes of the constitution and bylaws of the Department of South Dakota American Legion must be submitted to State Headquarters no later than six weeks prior to the state convention, for consideration by the Internal Affairs Commission.

The only way the American Legion is able to change, and grow is with resolutions submitted by the local Posts within the Department.

There are several resolutions that have been submitted this year to the Internal Affairs Commission for consideration.

The resolution SDAL 21-1 was submitted by Post 250 of Castlewood was to develop an Operational Readiness Era Classification and a Cold War era classification for veterans who do not fall into previously defined war eras.

THE COMMISSION VOTED TO SEND THIS RESOLUTION TO THE CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE WITH A DO NOT PASS RECOMMENDATION.

Resolution SDAL 21-2 was submitted by Post 92 of Redfield. This resolution would make the Youth Trooper Academy an official program of the South Dakota American Legion in cooperation of the South Dakota Highway Patrol, however we would request a line item in the annual budget to fund the program.

THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDED REMOVE THE 2ND RESOLVE CLAUSE AND A DO PASS FOR THIS RESOLUTION.

Resolution SDAL 21-3 was submitted by the Internal Affairs Commission that would change the name of Shannon County in the State Constitution in District 2, to read Oglala Lakota county in District 2 Department of South Dakota American Legion.

THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDED A DO PASS FOR THIS RESOLUTION.

Resolution SDAL 21-4 was submitted by the Internal Affairs Commission that would amend the constitution of the Department of South Dakota Legion to read as: For God and Country we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred Americanism to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in ALL WARS; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

THE COMMISSION VOTED A DO PASS FOR THIS RESOLUTION.

Resolution SDAL 21-5 was submitted by Post 88 in White would remove the financial limit set forth in the Constitution for the Children and Youth committee and have the Finance Commission create a line item in the annual budget for an amount not to exceed \$300.00 for the Children and Youth Committee.

THE COMMISSION MOVED TO AMEND THE RESOLVED CLAUSE TO READ, "THAT LINE ITEMS BE CREATED IN THE DEPARTMENT BUDGET, PROPOSED BY THE DEPARTMENT FINANCE COMMISSION AND APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE" AND VOTED FOR A DO PASS FOR THIS RESOLUTION.

Resolution SDAL 21-6 was submitted by Post 88 in White to allow for changes in voting procedures during the time of National pandemics or other emergencies when regular attendance at the Annual State convention is impossible due to the better interest of public health.

THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDED A DO NOT PASS FOR THIS RESOLUTION AND ALSO RECOMMENDED FURTHER STUDY ON THE CONCEPT.

Resolution SDAL 21-7 submitted by post 88 in White would set the installation date of newly elected District Commanders to coincide with the election and installation of the newly elected Department Commander at the annual State Convention.

THE COMMISSION VOTED TO RECOMMEND DO PASS OF THIS RESOLUTION.

Resolution SDAL 21-8 was submitted by Post 250 of Castlewood to establish the Training Committee as a Standing committee with a supporting budget for Five members with Three-year rotating terms.

THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED TO SEND THIS TO THE

CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE AS IT DID NOT REQUIRE A CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.

Resolution SDAL 21-9 was submitted by Post 250 in Castlewood ensure that minutes from each committee meeting are disseminate to every chartered post within 30 days of the committee meeting. THE COMMISSION VOTED A DO NOT PASS OF THIS RESOLUTION.

Resolution SDAL 21-10 was submitted by post 250 in Castlewood and would require that membership of the Membership and Marketing committee will be made up of the Committee chairman for a 1-year term, and a representative from each Department Vice Commanders areas and from each District to serve staggered three-year terms. The membership and marketing committee shall be established as a Standing Committee. Appropriate funding shall be in place to support the committee.

THE COMMITTEE VOTED TO SEND THIS RESOLUTION TO THE CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE.

Resolution SDAL 21-11 was submitted by the Internal Affairs Commission to accurately reflect in the Constitution and By-Laws the Committees, Commissions, Convention Committees, and Temporary Committees that currently exist in the American Legion, Department of South Dakota.

THE COMMISSION VOTED A DO-PASS RECOMMENDATION TO THIS RESOLUTION.

Resolution SDAL-21-12 was submitted by Post 250 of Castlewood proposes that Department Vice-Commanders have the ability to direct and make official visits to Districts, Posts and events on the behalf of the Department for the good of the American Legion without restriction or the need for an official call from the Department Commander and the allotted amount under the budget to assist with their expenses.

THE COMMISSION VOTED A DO NOT PASS RECOMMENDATION TO THIS RESOLUTION.

Resolution SDAL 21-13 submitted Post 250 of Castlewood requires replacing the eligibility dates in the constitution that read from 7 Dec 1941 to 31 December 1946, 25 June 1950 to 31 January 1955, 28 February 1961 to 7 May 1975, 20 December 1989 to 31 January 1990, and August 1990 to a date determined by the US Government to the phrase of "any time after 7 December 1941".

THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS A DO PASS FOR THIS RESOLUTION.

Annual reports are welcome from the Sons of the American Legion and The Legion Riders. Sons of the American Legion Commander Terry Hanson informed us that there are six new SAL Squadrons in South Dakota this year, however, there are a few Squadrons still having membership issues. Even so, South Dakota is extremely close to reaching an all-time high in membership. The Sons of the American Legion are a vital part of the American Legion Family and we are very fortunate to have the Sons a big part of our organization. Well done Commander Terry.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Weinmann

Chairman

Internal Affairs Commission

### LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Commander,

Here is the annual report of the South Dakota American Legion Legislative Committee. The members of the committee are Chairman Doug Feltman of Chamberlain, PDC Rod Martens of Piedmont, PDC Gary Watts of White, PDC Rick MacDonald of Hermosa and Chris "Van" Van DeList of Rapid City.

The lobbyists for this year were Doug Feltman, Adjutant Kevin Hemple, PDC Byron Callies and Chris "Van" Van DeList.

Because of Covid, the Legislative Round tables were cancelled this year. In light of that The SD Veterans Council met on the 13th of January 2021 at Post # 8 in Pierre. I attended the meeting as a guest. The Council discussed the bills that were likely to be of a concern to Veterans and set the Council's priorities. That evening the Veterans Council hosted a Legislative reception with all Legislators invited and it was well attended by the Veterans Council and Legislators.

On the 10th of February 2021 the Legislative Committee met in Pierre at Post # 8. Roll called showed the following committee members present: Chairman Doug Feltman, PDC Gary Watts, Chris "Van" Van DeList. Committee men Rick MacDonald and Rod Martens attended by Zoom. Also in attendance were State Commander Fred Nelson, Adjutant Kevin Hemple, NEC Jim Huls and Lobbyist Byron Callies,

Adjutant Hemple summarized the Veterans Council meeting. The Legislative Committee then reviewed and discussed 27 bills, and a decision was made on each on how we were going to proceed.

There were 13 House bills that were discussed and we were going to: watch 4, support 7, do not support 1, and no action on 1 as it was defeated in the House committee.

There were also 14 Senate bills that were discussed and we were going to: watch 6, support 2, lobby in support of 2 and remove 4 from the list.

There was one Senate Resolution that was placed on the watch list also.

The evening reception was hosted by Post # 8. All Legislators received a written invitation and it was well attended. This reception gave the Legislative Committee, the Legion Lobbyist, and Legionnaires an opportunity to meet the Legislators, get to know them and give them our recommendations and thoughts on particular bills that had an impact on Veterans. At both receptions while talking to the Legislators, it is very obvious that The South Dakota American Legion has a good and respected relationship with the Legislators in the State.

Post # 8 again did an excellent job in hosting the reception and served a delicious supper to all in attendance. Thank you. If anyone wants more information on a particular bill, please contact me at (605) 234- 4143. Here is the results of the bills on the Legislative Committee's list:

HB 1017 - revise the appropriation to construct cold storage building in Sioux Falls - Signed by the Governor

HB 1018 - authorize the construction of a National Guard Readiness Center in Sioux Falls - Signed by the Governor

HB 1019 - appropriation to the South Dakota Ellsworth Development - Deferred to the 41st. day

HB 1020 - appropriation to continue the veteran's bonus program - Signed by the Governor

HB 1033 - update certain provisions relating to the SD retirement system - Signed by the Governor

HB 1055 - authorize certain children eligible for registration with a state-approved distance learning - Signed by the Governor

HB 1057 - establish resident tuition requirements for veterans and armed forced personnel and family members - Signed by the Governor

HB 10-65 - adopt the emergency medical personnel licensure interstate compact - Signed by the Governor

HB 1122- require official declaration of war before the National Guard may be deployed overseas - Deferred to the 41st. day

HB 1206 - increase the allowable3 reimbursement for certain headstones for military personnel - Tabled

HB 1276 - appropriation for capital improvements to the State Veterans Home - Tabled

HB 1277 - appropriation for the installation of a sprinkler system at the State Veterans Cemetery - Tabled

SB 27 - revise off-campus tuition rates at institutions governed by the Board of Regents - Signed by the Governor

SB 33 - appropriation for certain costs related to the commissioning of the USS Pierre - Signed by the Governor

SB 65 - create an exception to the dual compensation prohibition for state employees for military service - Signed by the Governor

SB 81 - authorize certain flags and flagpoles to be located on residential property within a community improvement district - Signed by the Governor

SB 84 - appropriate finds to support Veterans Memorial Centers in South Dakota - Tabled

SB 151 - appropriation to provide for infrastructure to support Ellsworth Air Force Base - Tabled

SB 180 - revise certain provisions regarding revenues generated by and donations to the South Dakota State Veterans Cemetery - Signed by the Governor

SB 181 - make an appropriation for road improvements leading to the State Veterans Cemetery - Signed by the Governor

SB 188 - appropriation to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the South Dakota State Veterans Cemetery - Tabled

SR 701 - resolution in support of rescinding the Medals of Honor given to Unites States soldier for the involvement and participation of the soldiers in the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 - Adopt as amended

Commander Nelson I want to thank you for having faith in me and allowing me to serve as chairman of the Legislative Committee. I also want to thank the members of the Legislative Committee and the Lobbyists for the South Dakota American Legion. We had a very good year and it would not have been possible without your support, dedication and willingness to travel for the good of The American Legion.

Thank You!!

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Feltman, Chairman

Department Legislative Committee

### MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN REPORT

Mr. Commander,

I would like to thank Commander Fred Nelson for appointing me to serve as the Chairman of the newly formed Media and Communications Committee for 2020-2021.

Our new committee set out with the purpose of opening communications with our membership through both traditional and social media avenues. To accomplish this task, I have had the assistance of my team: Samantha Boshard of Eureka, Michelle Eosso of Rapid City, Patrick Merrill of Box Elder, Brian Siemonsma of Garretson, and liaison from the Membership and Marketing Committee, Travis Flisrand of Castlewood.

Through several meetings held over Zoom, the committee decided upon social media strategy, to include campaigns celebrating African American Military History and Women's Military History. Efforts to expand reach over other platforms, such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram are also underway, with various levels of success. The committee looks forward to addressing the ever-evolving world of communication in today's social media realms—a challenge necessary to thriving in the 21st century.

In traditional media, the South Dakota American Legion News was brought back to print for all membership—first as a special edition in August 2020, and fully starting in February 2021. The overall reception has been positive, and blue hats enjoy having the direct communication delivered to their door. We are working with Leader Printing of Madison, SD to run advertisements in the paper to defray costs. While it started off slower than anticipated, the advertising base is steadily growing.

I will wrap up my report with some excellent news: South Dakota performed very well at the national contest for The American Legion Media Alliance. Commander Fred Nelson won Department Social Media Campaign for his Legion on the Road Series,

# ANNUAL REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

## PAGES 5-6, 15-16

the South Dakota American Legion News won best Department publication, and the South Dakota American Legion Foundation Donor Guide won the Innovation Award for the 2020-2021 year.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Courtney VanZanten, Chairman  
Media & Communications Committee

### MEMBERSHIP AND MARKETING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN REPORT

Department Commander Nelson,  
The 2020-2021 year in the South Dakota American Legion had a few challenges that were unprecedented. The "Pandemic" of COVID-19 started our year off with our hands tied, most of our Legion Posts were restricted in their activities to include membership recruiting. My slogan for this year's membership was "Retain, Recruit and Educate". The goal with the slogan was to support National Commander Oxford's mission of retention of American Legion members within Posts.

We started off the new year with a goaling model that focused Posts on retaining the members they had at the end the 2019-2020 year. Overall, this goaling model was more successful than previous years goals. Districts 1, 2, 4 and 7 met their goals by the May 12th target date for 100%. 133 of 241 Posts reached their goal by this same date. Our Department has led the Nation for most of this year in membership numbers bringing your team many accolades from the National leadership team.

Commander, your request to restructure the Department membership council into the Membership and Marketing (M&M) Committee is starting to blossom into an asset for the Department. The committee is made up of the following members: Dist. 1 Bridget Keller, Dist. 2 Troy Falardeau, Dist. 3 Jacob Schaefer, Dist. 4 Chris Reder, Dist. 5 Phil Keller, Dist. 6 Keith Larsen, Dist. 7 Abby Bartosh, Dist. 8 Joseph Knoer, Area 1-2 Larry Zimmerman and Area 3-8 Dave Gutzmer. The committee has decided to focus on service-related projects to highlight the South Dakota American Legion utilizing our National motto of "Veterans serving American". The focus is to get Posts to work together on community service projects in either funding or volunteer hours with organizations. During these projects we will leverage the media coverage events to educate the public on what the South Dakota American Legion accomplishments are utilizing numbers reported in the Consolidated Post reports.

Thank you for this opportunity to continue serving in the South Dakota American Legion.  
Travise Flisrand  
Committee Chairman

MEMBERSHIP FUND Budget Amount 2020-2021 \$18,000.00  
Membership Award from National \$2,000.00 \$10,000.00  
DISBURSEMENTS: Committee, travel & awards \$6,150.50  
Balance, 5-1-2021 \$3,849.50

### NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN REPORT

Commander,  
I am pleased to serve as the chairman of the National Cemetery Committee, and I am honored to submit this annual report. The Black Hills National Cemetery is located just outside of Sturgis in the beautiful Black Hills. The Cemetery has over 30,000 interned and conducts over 900 funerals a year. The Bureau of Land Management recently donated an additional 180 acres. This extra space will take the facility well into the next century.

The committee I chair is small as there are only two of us; myself and Brian Dean. We make up in enthusiasm with what we lack in numbers. Our committee sits on the Black Hills National Cemetery Advisory Board, which provides the Department with a voice on the Cemetery's operations. We serve as a liaison to the Cemetery's Director. The Board conducts numerous fund-raising events throughout the year, with the monies raised going directly to the Cemetery for projects that exceed the Cemetery's funding from the VA. We are currently working on moving several trees to block the view of some newly constructed private buildings. We are also finalizing plans to upgrade the flag poles located throughout the Cemetery, including the Avenue of Flags. The upgrading of the flag poles is a long-term endeavor, with 18 planned for this year. These two projects alone will be funded by some of the \$17,000 contributed by the Advisory Board.

The South Dakota American Legion is responsible for the Memorial Day Ceremony at Black Hills National Cemetery on an every other year basis. The Department of South Dakota's National Cemetery Committee is responsible for the planning and organizing the Memorial Day Ceremony. This year we planned for a complete Memorial Day Ceremony on-site, but due to COVID and the VA restrictions, no more than 20 people will be allowed. Given these restrictions, it will be a small and relatively private ceremony with the posting of colors, the National Anthem, a volley of three, and the playing of taps. We will place a limited number of wreaths and will have a chaplain's prayer. God willing, we can get back to normal next year.

That is the long and short of what our committee has done for the National Cemetery Committee this past year. I hope we have provided you with helpful information.

Respectfully,  
John M. Kain, Chairman

### PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN REPORT

I'd like to thank Commander Nelson for having the vision to create the South Dakota American Legion Public Safety Committee. The purpose of the committee is to provide supervision of the South Dakota Youth Trooper Program, select the recipient of the YTA

Outstanding Graduate Scholarship, the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, and the Firefighter/EMT of the Year Awards. Also, like in the Military, other duties as assigned.

I'd also like to thank those who have volunteered to serve on this committee. Doug Feltman from Chamberlain is a retired Law Enforcement Officer who brings a lot of experience. Doug has excellent communications skills with Law Enforcement as well as the youth who attend our Youth Trooper Program. Next, we have Diane Johnson from Humboldt. Diane serves as the Post Adjutant for the Hartford post and is a retired Air National Guard member where she served in security. Diane is employed by the University of Augustana in Sioux Falls. West river we have Mark Sharn. Mark is retired from the Army National Guard and teaches at Western VoTech. Mark's father was the Minnehaha County Sheriff and his son is a Deputy Sheriff in Pennington County as well as an officer in the South Dakota Army National Guard. Next, we have Retired Army National Guard member Tom Forbes from Mobridge. Tom was a member of the Mobridge Police Department and worked in Administration, Recruiting and training recruits for the Army Guard. Tom works part time for the Corps of Engineers.

I have had the pleasure of serving as Department Commander, currently a member of the National Americanism Commission and serve as the Chairman of the National Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program Committee. I served for 30 years in the South Dakota Army National Guard, the last 20 as a Recruiter. Our committee will be meeting to establish short, mid and long-range goals and we will be working in our geographical areas to assist wherever we can to help improve participation in our programs.

The first duty we had as a committee was to Select the 2021 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year and the Firefighter/EMT of the Year. Unfortunately, we only had four applications each. These are National programs that need and deserve better participation from the Posts in our State, our committee will be working to improve the numbers of applicants. It is our obligation to recognize these first responders who put their lives on the line every day for you and me and to select the most outstanding applicants to represent our Department at the National level.

As I am writing this, the District Commanders or their representatives are conducting interviews for the South Dakota Youth Program. We had 62 applications this year. I am very confident that we will have 24 very good applicants accepted and several alternates as well.

A huge "THANK YOU" to all the posts and members for supporting this fantastic program. I know it's a lot of work but the rewards are priceless.

This year the YTA will be held the week of July 12-16. Because of training requirements, the SDHP asked us to move our dates for convenience of both the SDHP and The American Legion.

We would like to invite any and all Legion members to come to Pierre and visit the academy on Thursday "Blue Cap Day" at the firing range located on Range Road about two miles north of HI 14 on HI 1804 N. It's a fun day with several demonstrations and an American Legion cookout in the evening. Of course, you are welcome to stay for Graduation on Friday near the reflection pool by the Capitol building at 1P.M.

Finally, I would like to thank the South Dakota Highway Patrol for their continued support of the Youth Trooper Program. It takes a lot of work, volunteerism and financial commitment to conduct such a program. By the way, this week the SDHP will graduate our fourth State Trooper who graduated from our Youth Trooper Program.

Again, thank you for your support!!  
Larry Price  
Chairman, Public Safety Committee

### TRAINING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Commander,  
It has been a privilege to serve as the Training Committee Chair this past year along with the following members: PDC Byron Callies, Vice Commander Kevin Morello, Department Assistant Adjutant Courtney VanZanten, and Don Fuller. The Commander's vision and mission statements for the Committee have provided excellent direction for this newly formed committee. As directed by the Department Commander, the Training Committee has worked on developing training for all levels within the department from member to Department Officers.

Since the formation of the Training Committee in 2019, it has accomplished the following tasks. Classes were prepared and offered at MidWinter 2019; classes were prepared for MidWinter 2020 but were not conducted due to the cancellation of that meeting. The committee is currently developing a Training Plan for the Department which will address not only the purpose, mission, and tasks of this committee, but will also outline a plan to develop a Department Legion College, exportable training for all levels within the Department, and criteria for course development and evaluation. The committee is also looking for skilled instructors to conduct face-to-face or video training. Another initiative that the committee is considering include establishing a once-a-month video training opportunity for members similar to the National Training Tuesday events.

The Training Committee continues to encourage all Legionnaires to provide input, suggestion, and ideas for courses, delivery, methods, and instructors. Our mission is to reach all Legionnaires and we appreciate input that is helpful in doing just that.

Respectfully submitted,  
Krisma DeWitt  
Training Committee Chair

### TRUST FUND COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN REPORT

Mr. Commander,

What a year 2020 has been. What started out to be a projected bad year ended up quite the opposite. The committee met once this past year and agree that the fund keep the present account objective of mid-conservative. The fund has averaged 26.61% annual yield. The year-end market value as of April 28, 2020 was \$551,906, compared to a year end market value on April 30, 2021 of \$704,856. The current asset allocation for the trust is as follows:

Cash Alternatives is 2.1% which currently yields 0.02%;

Fixed Income 33.8% with an average yield of 2.92%;

Equities is 59.2% with an average yield of 1.06%;

Real Assets is 2.1% with an average yield of .01%;

Alternative investments 2.9% with an average yield of 5.89%.

The committee met with the investment manager and agreed to monitor the fund as needed in the coming year. We hope the fund will continue to perform

in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Rakness

Chairman, Trust Committee

### VAVS CHAIRMAN REPORT

(Financial portion only)

VAVS FUND Balance, 5-1-20 \$3,948.93 RECEIPTS: Interest \$0.45  
Donations and Memorials \$3,323.00 TOTAL \$3,323.45 \$3,323.45  
TOTAL \$7,272.38 DISBURSEMENTS: VA Facilities \$2,400.00  
\$2,400.00 \$2,400.00 Balance, 5-1-2021 \$4,872.38

### VA&R COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN REPORT

Commander,

On behalf of the Department Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Commission, which consists of Chairman Warren Aas of Watertown, Vice Chairman PDC Tim Jurgens of Milbank, Noel Cummins of Milbank, Jim Childers of Spearfish, Jerry Lolley of Sturgis, Carole Gregg of Mission, Gary Schumacher of De Smet, and Rebecca Trygstad of Volga, it gives me great pleasure to present the following Department VA&R Commission report.

The Department VA&R Commission is scheduled to meet twice per year. We try to meet once in person and the other by teleconference. However, due to the COVID pandemic and safety reasons, our commission meets by teleconference or Zoom meetings. We hope to meet in person in the near future.

Our meeting agendas are full and we discuss and act on several issues brought up by our commission members. Every commission member brings something to the meeting table whether it be a resolution, a unit homecoming, an award, a legislative bill, and the list goes on. We listen and act on all issues brought to our meetings. There are numerous awards every post in our department can win throughout the year and be recognized for their achievement either at our MidWinter Conference or on stage at our annual department convention. There are Americanism awards, Membership awards, and several individual awards Legionnaires can win, but no award to recognize a post for the good work they do for VA&R. Well, that is now changed. We now have a VA&R Award for Excellence. This award is open to every post in our department and we will recognize one post for their outstanding work and accomplishments in VA&R. All posts can apply for the award and we encourage all posts to submit for the award. The criteria for the award is on our department website under Forms or you may also contact our State Headquarters for assistance. The deadline for all applications for this award is May 1 of each year. The winning post will be recognized on stage at our next state convention.

Another award your VA&R Commission is working on is submitting our department for the national award called the William F. Lenker National Service Trophy. The VA&R Commission is working toward a goal of possibly submitting our department for this award in the future. The winner of this award is recognized on stage at each National Convention. This is one of the most prestigious awards presented at our national convention. We can only do this with your help, so we ask each post to submit their Post Consolidated Report to state headquarters. This report will reflect the information needed so our department can extract and consolidate the VA&R data from the report and submit for the award.

As a member of the National VA&R Commission, I've had the privilege the past years to attend the Washington Conference to listen and participate in the national VA&R agenda. We make a point to bring back all the information we can get our hands on from our meetings and make it available to all VA&R Commission members in our department.

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.

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 our Department Service Officer for assistance.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Warren L. Aas

Chairman, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission



# Welcome DMS: New SD Legionnaires

The following Legionnaires joined the South Dakota Legion Post #500 since April 2021. Welcome them to the family:

Joshua Adkins, Deadwood, SD  
 Matt Alvey, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Philip Alvey, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Jeff Alvey, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Kevin Beerman, Elk Point, SD  
 Robert Bryant, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Edward Buck, Flandreau, SD  
 Alan Buhler, Rapid City, SD  
 Donald Callies, Howard, SD  
 Bob Clement, Ridgeview, SD  
 Paul Clement, Box Elder, SD  
 Dayton Cook, Aberdeen, SD  
 John Davis, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Richard Domogalski, Sturgis, SD  
 Wayne Domogalski, Whitewood, SD  
 Bobbi Engel, Sioux Falls, SD  
 James Erb, Brookings, SD  
 Ralph Erickson, Humboldt, SD  
 Robert Erickson, Pierre, SD  
 Frank Fryer, Sioux Falls, SD  
 William Graney, Milbank, SD  
 Frank Gregg, Edgemont, SD  
 Larry Hermanson, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Kermit Hovaldt, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Steve Igo, Rapid City, SD

Richard Jamison, Tea, SD  
 Michael Jesse, Hartford, SD  
 Ken Johnson, Brandon, SD  
 David Johnson, Martin, SD  
 Larry Jones, Watertown, SD  
 Daniel Kayl, Belle Fourche, SD  
 Duncan King, Rapid City, SD  
 Russell Koch, Rapid City, SD  
 Luke Kochutin, Box Elder, SD  
 Martin Lambert, Rapid City, SD  
 Toni Larsen, Hartford, SD  
 Ron Lind, Renner, SD  
 Glen Lowrie, Mitchell, SD  
 E. Maisonet, Rapid City, SD  
 John Mathrole, Yankton, SD  
 Bruce Mitzel, Herreid, SD  
 Dave Moore, Custer, SD  
 Rodney Moser, Mobridge, SD  
 Darrell Newbern, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Paul Ott, Rapid City, SD  
 John Peppermeier, Deadwood, SD  
 George Picard, Box Elder, SD  
 Bob Rabine, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Glenn Rasmussen, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Craig Robbins, Spearfish, SD

Randy Roskens, Crooks, SD  
 Danny Schmeling, Watertown, SD  
 William Schmidt, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Kileyna Schniers, Rapid City, SD  
 Darryl Schock, Pierre, SD  
 David Selby, Emery, SD  
 Ronald Smith, Rapid City, SD  
 Dan Smith, Box Elder, SD  
 Joseph Stanfill, Box Elder, SD  
 Stephen Stanton, Dell Rapids, SD  
 Teri St. Pierre, Sioux Falls, SD  
 James Tatge, Sioux Falls, SD  
 William Tatum, Rapid City, SD  
 Wes Torrence, Webster, SD  
 Keith Tularaska, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Kenneth Wallenstein, Huron, SD  
 Robert Weber, Mitchell, SD  
 Caleb Weiland, Beresford, SD  
 Arthur Westendorf, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Marvin Weyand, Quinn, SD  
 Brent Wienk, Aberdeen, SD  
 Anthony Williams, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Keith Wipf, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Keith Wolfe, Sioux Falls, SD

## From the NEC

### Jim Huls National Executive Committeeman



#### Legionnaires:

It appears that the Covid Pandemic is finally passed by us. Great, now back to normal business. At the National level of the American Legion, business continued although by different means, ZOOM, the last face to face meeting was the Washington Conference in March of 2020. The 2020 Spring and Fall Meetings of the NEC and the Washington Conference of 2021 were all held virtually as well as several special meetings.

The American Legion's Legislative agenda for the 117th Congress, 1st session represents the American Legion's position based on the Four Pillars, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth. Briefly the bullet points are; Address Toxic Exposure & Burn Pits, Improve Health Care for Women Veterans, Tele-health/Rural Health, Address the Forever War, Citizenship for Honorable Service, Pay the Coast Guard, Close the 90/10 Loophole, Military Awards for Minority Veterans, Peer Support, Protect the American Flag and Global War on Terrorism Memorial. Further explanation is available on the Legion's website or in the Legion Magazine.

The NEC recently adopted a vision for the American Legion "Veterans Strengthening America" and a Mission "To enhance the well being of America's veterans, their families, our military, and our communities by our devotion to mutual helpfulness." and a Values statement "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 nations largest organization of wartime veterans.

Some of you have already watched the #48 Indy car race in several races on National Television. The Indy 500 on Memorial Day will feature the #48 American Legion Indy car. The National organization is expecting great benefits in Business Development, The American Legion Brand Exposure, Membership, and Fundraising from this sponsorship. The 2nd leading candidate for National Commander James Troiola from New York will attend our convention in Huron.

Congratulations to Paul Evenson on his appointment as Chairman of the Marketing Commission. Our Department has had very few National Chairman over the years and Paul will do us proud in this position.

Congrats to Commander Nelson, Membership Chairman Travis and all Legionnaires on the outstanding job on membership this year.

Also congrats to District 2 commander Eugene IronShell jr on his 2nd place finish in the "Race to the Top" national award.

Veterans Strengthening America,

Jim Huls, NEC

Department of South Dakota

## Department Calendar

### 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
- 24: Commander Wolkow Homecoming, De Smet Event Center, 1pm
- 26-29: Virtual Membership Workshop  
<https://www.legion.org/training/membership>
- 27: Training Tuesday, [www.legion.org/training/training-tuesdays](http://www.legion.org/training/training-tuesdays)
- 31: President Stier Homecoming, Phoenix Center, Onida, 1:30pm

### AUGUST 2021

- 1: Official Kickoff, Midwest Honor Flight "Send One" Campaign
- 14: Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication, Pvt Richard Bertram  
 Colome American Legion, 2pm CST
- 21: Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication, PFC Robert Rand  
 Parker Community Building, 2pm CST
- 23: Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication, CPT Charles Lane  
 Tabor American Legion, 2pm, CST
- 27-Sept 2: National Convention, Phoenix, AZ
- 30: Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication, Pvt Bruce Ruby  
 Scherr Howe Event Center, Mobridge, 10:30am CST

### SEPTEMBER 2021

#### Hispanic Heritage Month

- Aug 27-Sept 2: National Convention, Phoenix, AZ
- 2: V-J Day
- 2: Veterans Day, State Fair, Huron, SD
- 2-6: South Dakota State Fair, Huron, SD
- 6: Labor Day, HQ Closed
- 10-11: South Dakota American Legion Golf Tournament
- 11: Patriot Day
- 11: Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication, 1LT Herbert Lyman & TSgt James Lyman, Thunder Hawk American Legion, 10am MST
- 17: Constitution Day

# #Ride605ForVets



**Spearfish  
Post 164**

**Lemmon  
Post 66  
Thunder  
Hawk Post  
279**



**Mobridge  
Post 4**

**Eureka  
Post 186**



**Leola  
Post 78**

**Veblen  
Post 76**



**Watertown  
Post 17**



**Milbank  
Post 9**



**Watertown  
Post 17**

**Clear Lake  
Post 49**



**Castlewood  
Post 250**



The #Ride605forVets took place June 16-19, 2021, starting in Spearfish, SD and circling the state. Past Department Commander Fred Nelson documented the ride with his award-winning Legion on the Road series, which you can read here:

Legion on the Road: We were up early and gathering for the start of the "Dept. Commander Fred Nelson's #Ride605forVets". All funds raised will be given to the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. We are riding the four corners of South Dakota and stopping at Posts along the way. We had a great group for the send-off in Spearfish. Tonight we will be staying in Mobridge.

Legion on the Road: The Spearfish American Legion Family and friends were in a giving mood prior to us leaving on our road trip. Thank you to Post 164, ALR 164, and friends. Your contributions will be helping veterans and children in South Dakota.

Legion on the Road: Day One - The Lemmon and Thunder Hawk American Legion Posts and Riders provided us with a tasty barbecued burger lunch. We very much appreciate the lunch, social time, and donation. Your contribution will be helping veterans and children in South Dakota.

Legion on the Road: Day One - In Mobridge, we enjoyed dinner at Ricks with several local Legion members. We then gathered at the Post #4. District Four Commander, Bob Thomason, joined us. Thank you for the social time, the town tour, and the donation. Your contributions will be helping veterans and children in South Dakota.

Legion on the Road: Day #2 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. First stop was in Eureka. Post members met us near the lake by the Veterans Memorial. We enjoyed the social time, seeing the beautiful Memorial, and appreciate your contribution. Your donation will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota. Thank you, Post 186!

Legion on the Road: Day #2 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. Second stop was in Leola. Post members met us near the court

house and had some tasty cookies, grapes, and drinks waiting. We enjoyed the social time and very much appreciate your contribution. Your donation will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota. Thank you, Commander Marian for organizing the reception. Thank you Post 78! Legion on the Road: Day #2 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. Third stop was in Veblen. Post and Auxiliary members were waiting with a delicious lunch. We enjoyed learning about the Veblen area, the social time, and appreciate your forthcoming contribution. Your donation will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota. Thank you, Hans Nelson and the Veblen American Legion Family.

Legion on the Road: Day #2 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. Fourth stop was in Milbank, the Home of American Legion Baseball. Post members met us near the Veterans Memorial with cheese, crackers, and drinks. We enjoyed the social time, seeing the beautiful Memorial, and appreciate your contribution. Your donation will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota. Thank you, Post 9 for rolling out the red carpet. The giant US Flag hanging over our drive into town was impressive!

Legion on the Road: Day #2 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The fifth stop was in Clear Lake. Post members were waiting outside to greet us. The gathering was held at a local coffee shop and we enjoyed some great cold drinks. We enjoyed the social time and appreciate your contribution. Your donation will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota. Thank you, Post 49!

Legion on the Road: Day #3 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The first stop was Watertown Post 17 for breakfast. We enjoyed breakfast, the social time, and thank you for the donation. Thank you, Post 17!

Legion on the Road: Day #2 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The sixth stop was

# #SDLegionServing

Watertown Post 17. We enjoyed the social time and the AC after a long days ride. Bill Peters, from Sioux Falls Post 15 stopped in since he will not be at our stop at his Post. Before leaving Watertown on Day #3, we'll be stopping back for breakfast. Thank you, Post 17!

Legion on the Road: Day #3 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The second stop was in Castlewood. We enjoyed the social time and appreciate the donation! It will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota.

Legion on the Road: Day #3 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The third stop was in Arlington. We enjoyed the social time and appreciate the donation! It will all be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota. Congratulations on the beautiful Post home. Legion on the Road: Day #3 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The fourth stop was at the Madison Post with the Chester Posts joining the fun. We enjoyed the social time and appreciate the donation! It will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota.

Legion on the Road: Day #3 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The sixth stop was in Salem. We enjoyed the social time and appreciate the donation! It will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota.

Legion on the Road: Day #3 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The fifth stop was in Montrose. We enjoyed the social time and appreciate the donation! It will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota. Your Post home is looking great and your Memorial project is taking shape. Congratulations!

Legion on the Road: Day #3 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The seventh stop was in Sioux Falls. We enjoyed the barbecue, the social time and appreciate the donation! We especially appreciate the donation. It will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota.

Legion on the Road: Day #3 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The eighth stop was in Wagner. We enjoyed the social time and appreciate the donation! It will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota.

Legion on the Road: Day #4 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. It was a beautiful morning to ride and we enjoyed Hwy 18. The first stop of the day was Okreek to meet with Post/Chapter 125 members at the Chauncey Eagle Horn Memorial. Thank you District Two Commander, Eugene Iron Shell Jr. and Post Commander Carol Green for organizing the stop. Thank you American Legion Riders Chapter 125 for the donation. It will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota. A second thank you for riding with us for a few miles.

Legion on the Road: Day #3 of our ride in support of the South Dakota Legion Foundation. The ninth stop was in Winner. We enjoyed the social time and appreciate the donation! It will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota

Legion on the Road: Day #4 of our ride in support of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. Back in the Black Hills, we rode to Custer for our third stop of the day. We met members of Post 46 along with members of Chapter 22 at the Custer Veterans Memorial. Thank you Post 46 for the donation. It will be used to help veterans and children in South Dakota. A second thank you for riding with us to the next stop.

Legion on the Road: #Ride605forVets Update! Total amount collected on our ride around South Dakota ended up being \$4,790. At tonight's South Dakota American Legion Convention, I asked for the Legion Family members attending the banquet to try and bring us up to the \$5,000 amount. A hat was passed around and we collected an additional \$1,310. This brings our grand total to \$6,100 dollars for this year's ride. All donations are being turned over to the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. Thank you, South Dakota American Legion Family!!!

**Salem Post 140**



**Sioux Falls Post 15**



**Wagner Post 11**



**Rosebud Post 125**



**Winner Post 169**



**Custer Post 46**



**Arlington Post 42**



**Madison Post 25  
Chester Post 136**



**Montrose Post 154**



## PDC Hovorka, Continued

was a member all his adult life, at the local level. He also served as State District Commander, State Sergeant at Arms and State Commander. The state post attained a very high membership while Richard served the year from 1991-1992, with much help from his adjutant and membership chairman.

Richard was also active on the county weed board and served on the FSA County Committee. He actively participated with Tri-State Old Iron, Western Fraternal. He attended many army reunions with the 474th Signal Aviation Construction Company, SCARWAF which was a special category of the Army with Air Forces.

Some of Richard's many loves were restoring old tractors, going for drives in the country side, seeing all the new construction, checking on his neighbors' farming progress and going on area tractor rides. Richard was known everywhere for his infectious laugh.

Richard is survived by his wife, Sharleen; sons, Dave (Vicki) Hovorka, Roger (Audra) Hovorka and Tim (Gloriann) Hovorka; daughter Cindy (Mark) Settje; grandchildren Jackie Hovorka, Keith (Debbie) Hovorka, Kelsey Hovorka (Spencer), Cole Hovorka, Addison Hovorka, Chantelle (Jerry) Walter, Travis (Samantha) Hovorka, James (Naomi) Cuka and Jessica (Todd) Kautz; great grandchildren, Raelynn, Emeri, Isabella, Maverick, Taylee, Alex, Evan, Westin, Paisley, Devon, Allyssa, Payton and Blake; brother-in-law, Melvin Delzer; sisters-in-law, Irene Hovorka and Margie Hovorka and several nieces and nephews.

Richard was preceded in death by his parents; siblings Eleanor Kiehlbach, Lloyd, Herman, Cleadues, Lester, Willard, Alvin, Loreen Novak and Geneva Delzer; sisters-in-law Mary, Mildred, Connie and Helen; brothers-in-law Marvin Novak and Don Kiehlbach and granddaughter Kyndra Lambley.



## South Dakota Taps

As reported to Department Headquarters, March 23, 2021-June 15, 2021  
 "The legacy of heroes is the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example."

Benjamin Disraeli

#1 Vermillion	Stanley Kronaizl	#24 Aberdeen	Verlane Harr	#130 Kimball	Eugene Hamilton
#7 Huron	Dennis Moldrem	#24 Aberdeen	Palmer Heckel	#131 Valley Springs	Kenneth Schuldt
#8 Pierre	Robert Kaiser	#24 Aberdeen	Melvin Rousseau	#137 Warner	Douglas Rogers
#8 Pierre	Marvin Olson	#24 Aberdeen	Jim Yback	#149 Northville	Lyle Peterson
#10 Lake Andes	Norman Anderson	#25 Madison	Lyle Johnson	#154 Montrose	Melvin Dykstra
#10 Lake Andes	Lewis Dillon	#26 Stickney	Calvin Kluth	#162 Canistota	Duane Wrage
#12 Yankton	Daniel Engebretson	#26 Stickney	Vincent Ries	#169 Winner	Harley Furrey
#12 Yankton	Myron Vangerpen	#31 Lead	Richard Adams	#169 Winner	James Zimmerman
#13 Wakonda	Leo Bohlmann	#31 Lead	Gerald Apa	#170 Herreid	Dennis Madden
#15 Sioux Falls	Earl Angle	#39 Groton	George Alberts	#171 Strandburg	Gordon Seim
#15 Sioux Falls	Edward Erickson	#39 Groton	Dale Wolter	#175 Baltic	Henry Bender
#15 Sioux Falls	George Gannon	#46 Custer	Howard Munsell	#179 Kenn-Rel	Francis Drew
#15 Sioux Falls	Gerald Gibson	#46 Custer	Samuel Pomper	#183 Tabor	Richard Hovorka
#15 Sioux Falls	James Haas	#48 Rosholt	Neil Erdahl	#193 Irene	Don Richelieu
#15 Sioux Falls	Roger Hanson	#49 Clear Lake	Calmer Anderson	#201 Pukwana	Howard Larson
#15 Sioux Falls	Donald Malcomb	#50 Sisseton	Gordon Anderson	#207 Stratford	Gail Zimmerman
#15 Sioux Falls	Terry Opp	#50 Sisseton	Dennis Schulz	#220 Herrick	Donald Young
#15 Sioux Falls	James Rogers	#61 Canova	Dexter Wobig	#229 Big Stone City	John Dodds
#15 Sioux Falls	John Severson	#64 Wilmot	Orris Swayze	#235 Marion	Harley Thomas
#15 Sioux Falls	Jerry Sundberg	#65 Dell Rapids	Howard Shefte	#237 Gayville	Neil Heier
#15 Sioux Falls	Wayne Wehrkamp	#65 Dell Rapids	Bjarne Tonneson	#237 Gayville	Robert Oien
#17 Codington Co.	Bill Hoff	#71 Hot Springs	Carlton Anderson	#255 Bison	Donald Borowski
#17 Codington Co.	Wayne Ingalls	#74 Brookings	Duane Wilaby	#255 Bison	Lynn Davis
#17 Codington Co.	Kenneth Mohror	#75 Murdo	Orville Anderson	#280 Iroquois	Clinton Walker
#17 Codington Co.	Gordon Osthus	#89 Presho	D. Jay Dooley	#280 Iroquois	Joy Wallum
#17 Codington Co.	Russell Schreurs	#92 Redfield	Jerry Hansen	#299 Polo	Paul Schlechter
#18 Mitchell	Douglas Goehring	#100 Selby	John Holder	#303 Hermosa	Vernon Isaacs
#18 Mitchell	Zachary Heesch	#110 Wessington	Bernard Casavan	#303 Hermosa	Barney Nordstrom
#18 Mitchell	Alvin Moldrem	#110 Wessington	Stacy Mammenga	#318 Brandon	John Pierson
#22 Rapid City	Allen Bishop	#110 Wessington	Victor Woodruff	#320 RC Foothills	Emil Greiner
#22 Rapid City	Charles Ollila	#115 Platte	Clarence Boltjes	#500 South Dakota	Selmer Aklund
#22 Rapid City	Bruce Peterson	#121 McLaughlin	Steven Clarcken	#500 South Dakota	Harold Nordstrom
#22 Rapid City	Rick Lawrence	#124 Dupree	Harvey Herrman	#500 South Dakota	Adolf Walz
#23 Garretson	Ronald Bly	#124 Dupree	Frank Laurenz	#500 South Dakota	John Wilson
#22 Garretson	Dean Engebretson	#124 Dupree	Keith Willard		



## Dedication & Honor, Continued

an escort to the cemeteries shortly after it was chartered in 2018. "There's times it's raining and there are only three bikes that show up. But we still do it," Gregg said.

Often times there are family members waiting for the Legion entourage to arrive at the cemetery. "It makes us feel good to bring a little comfort that somebody remembers. A lot of people, after years have gone by, people forget. Families move away and don't come around. We're there to remember them."

The Memorial Day trek across the Rosebud Reservation wasn't the only weekend activity for Post 125, which topped the Department of South Dakota in membership increase in 2021. On Sunday, members of the post traveled to Wamblee, S.D., to assist Post 269 in providing honors at four cemeteries on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. "I thought that was humbling and honoring they wanted us to help with that," Gregg said.



## PDC Young, Continued

the many dairy farmers in the area up until the time of his retirement.

Don was a long-time member of the Herrick United Methodist Church. His love for his country continued as he was an active Paid Up For Life member of both the American Legion and VFW. In 1998, he was elected State Commander of the South Dakota American Legion. His involvement in these veterans' organizations showed his passion for helping veterans. If he wasn't busy traveling throughout the states to help other posts, he was helping with baseball tournaments, the Burke Stampede Rodeo, the Herrick Stag parties, and flipping pancakes on Sunday mornings at the Herrick Legion.

Don also had a love for his community and especially took much pride in the small town of Herrick. He was actively involved in making improvements to the town, whether mowing, planting trees, making signs, or keeping up the roads. He was a coach for the Herrick Mustangs girls softball team for many years and served as the mayor of Herrick and on the town council. After his retirement, Don and Kathryn did mowing around the community. They did this until last summer but continued to take care of mowing the entry into Herrick as well as the Methodist church property.

Don loved anything outdoors but especially camping, fishing, hunting, and gardening. At one time he was involved in ranching where he raised stock cattle and quarter horses. Don always had a story to tell and could talk your leg off. His favorite topics were his service to his country, his family, his work, and the town of Herrick. He took great pride in these things but had a special love for his country and those who served. Don leaves behind a wonderful legacy of service to others.

Don was preceded in death by his parents, Truman and Caroline Young, and a half sister Georgee Reinseth.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Kathryn of Herrick, SD, his son Jeff (Jody) Young, Burke, SD, daughter, Julie (John) Nelson of Herrick, SD, and Donna (Greg) Portiner of Cozad, NE, nine grandchildren: Chelsey (Lee) Richert of Overland Park, KS; Lucas Young of Burke, SD; Jessica (Lucas) Lemmert of Sidney, NE; Jennifer Nelson, Gothenberg, NE; Jill (Zane) Cheek, Palmer AK; Janell (Jake) Ritz, Kearney, NE; Megan Portiner, Gothenberg, NE; Joshua Portiner, Vermillion, SD; and Seth Portiner of Cozad, NE; as well as 10 great-grandchildren: Norah and Ivy Richert, Mason Young, Jackson Nelson, Percilla, Aurora, and Charlotte Cheek, Ethan, Kennedy, and Cooper Ritz; his brother, Darrell (Mary Lou) Young of Centerville, OH and his sister, Margaret Ann (Richard) Bailey of Burke, SD.



**Family Memorials by Gibson - We know Granite!!**

Sioux Falls  
605-335-0980  
Watertown  
605-884-0980  
Yankton  
605-664-0980

Chamberlain Monument Co.



605-234-0980  
Pierre Monument Co.  
605-224-4980

See us for all your  
War Memorial &  
Cemetery needs.



**SOLDIER'S PRAYER**  
 LORD, PLEASE BLESS OUR VETERANS!  
 GUARDIANS OF THIS LAND,  
 ALWAYS READY FOR BATTLE  
 WHEN ENEMY THREATS ARE AT HAND  
 GIVE THEM THE STRENGTH,  
 COURAGE & RESOLVE TO STAND  
 FIRM WHEN DUTY CALLS,  
 AND THE COMPASSION, PEACE &  
 INTEGRITY WHEN SUPPORT  
 IN THEIR MISSION FALLS.  
 AS OUR NATION'S PRAYERS GO OUT,  
 WITH THEM WE LAUGH & MOURN,  
 IT IS THROUGH THESE BRAVE &  
 SELFLESS VETERANS THAT  
 FREEDOM CAN BE BORN

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