

The South Dakota
Legion News



Volume 90, Issue 1

"Veterans Strengthening America"

May 2022

Natl. Commander Visits SD



Dillard went to the Sioux Falls South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance to unveil the new POW MIA display.

American Legion National Commander, Paul Dillard, visited South Dakota the last week in April. His visit started in Sioux Falls where he met Legionnaires in Garretson, Sioux Falls and Montrose. He next traveled to Madison, Brookings and Arlington where he helped dedicate the Arlington new Post home. Then on to Huron, Pierre and the Rapid City area where he also spent time in Piedmont, Sturgis and Box Elder. While visiting the Posts, he discussed his No Veteran Left Behind program as well as legislative issues and Veteran and Children's Fund. During his trip across the state, he toured the new South Dakota Veterans Cemetery, met with leadership at the Sioux Falls VA, toured the Military Heritage Alliance building where he helped unveil a POW/MIA display for the main entry area. In Pierre, he visited with the South Dakota Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Greg Whitlock, toured the South Dakota Law Enforcement Training center and discussed the state's Youth Trooper Program as well as met with members of the South Dakota Boys State Board of Directors to discuss the Department's program. While in the Black Hills area, he visited Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse monuments as well as a quick stop at Legion Lake. As he was departing at the Rapid City Airport, Commander Dillard stated he had a great visit and enjoyed his time with the South Dakota American Legion.



(Above) Dillard presenting certificates for the Pierre Youth Shooting Championship. (From Left) Leroy Madson, Post 8 Commander, team coach, two team members and Dillard.

(Left) Dillard visits the South Dakota Law Enforcement Training Center to talk about the SD youth trooper academy program. Pictured (from left) Kevin Hempel, Dept. Adjutant, Lt. Manu, director of training for SD highway patrol, Dillard, his aide Walter Ivie, Gary Wolkow, Dept. Commander and Larry Price, chairman of public safety committee.



Dillard presents a \$4,000 check to oratory champion, Thomas Haar of Rapid City. Haar went to Nationals and made it to the semifinals.

South Dakota Legion News
(ISSN 0745-5801)
Vol. 90 No 1 May 2022
Official Publication of the American Legion of South Dakota
Published six times per year by
The American Legion of South Dakota
14 1st Ave SE
Watertown, SD 57201

Printed at 218 South Egan Avenue, Madison, SD 57042-0348
Subscription Price: \$5.00 a year, Send subscription request to:
South Dakota American Legion, PO Box 67, Watertown, SD 57201
Kevin Hempel, Watertown, Managing Editor
Gracie Terrall, Brookings, Designer
Send all copy for publication to:
South Dakota Legion News, PO Box 67, Watertown, SD 57201-0067
Office Phone (605) 886-3604, Fax (605) 886-2870
Email: adjutant@sdlegion.org
Home page: <https://www.sdlegion.org>

PLEASE REPORT CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO:
SD LEGION NEWS, PO BOX 67, WATERTOWN, SD 57201-0067

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

Dept. Commander — Gary Wolkow, De Smet
glwolkow@gmail.com, (605) 854-3020
Dept. Vice Commander (Dist 1-2) — Eugene Iron Shell, Jr., Rosebud
eugene.ironshell@gmail.com, (605) 319-1365
Dept. Vice Commander (Dist 3-8) — Doug Feltman, Chamberlain
dkfeltman@midstatesd.net, (605) 234-4143
National Executive Committeeman — Jim Huls, Madison
jphuls@svtv.com, (605) 421-1700
Alternate National Executive Committeeman — Denny Brenden, Watertown
dennybrenden2@gmail.com, (605) 881-3179
Dept. Adjutant — Kevin Hempel, Watertown
adjutant@sdlegion.org, (605) 886-3604
Dept. Americanism Officer — Harry Boner, Castlewood
hb.boner@yahoo.com, (605) 691-4571
Dept. Membership Chairman — Travis Flisrand, Castlewood
membership@sdlegion.org, (605) 868-8503
Dept. Service Officer — Courtney VanZanten, Chester
dso@sdlegion.org, (605) 868-8750
Dept. Chaplain — Justin Warfel, Spearfish
chaplain.warfel@gmail.com, (605) 212-7922
Dept. Finance Officer — Krisma DeWitt, Castlewood
krismadewitt@gmail.com, (605) 677-8545
Dept. Historian — Fred Lee, Sioux Falls
fotofred4u@q.com, (605) 413-9451
Dept. Judge Advocate — Jay Leibel, Madison
jay@leibellaw.com, (605) 256-3961
Dept. Sergeant-At-Arms — Greg Geiman, Scotland
ggeiman61@hotmail.com, (605) 481-1905
Dept. Children and Youth Chairman — Don Kranz, Brandon
donkranz305@gmail.com, (605) 610-7107
Sons of the American Legion Detachment Commander — Casey Hanson
casey_arlpropane@yahoo.com, (605) 530-3168
American Legion Riders Liaison — Buck DeWeese, Spearfish
deweese@rushmore.com, (605) 722-2361

DISTRICT COMMANDERS

1—Jon McDonald, Box Elder
bigmacranch@gmail.com, (605) 484-7260
2— Christopher Rendon, Rapid City
rendon.christopher@yahoo.com, (605) 431-0923
3—Gene Opbroek, Gregory
pmagent47@gmail.com, (605) 830-0012
4—Bob Thomason, Selby
bobcat@venturecomm.net, (605) 848-6357
5—Matt Lagerstrom, White
malager@itctel.com, (605) 651-9568
6—Vilas Kurtenbach
vkurt@santel.net, (605) 928-3769
7—Patrick Mullen, Madison
patrickmullen1944@gmail.com, (605) 480-0463
8- Brent Frier, Wakonda
brent_frier@yahoo.com, (605) 670-9409

Find Post Information here: <https://www.sdlegion.org/district-posts-maps/>

Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sdamericanlegion/>

Summer Update

Gary Wolkow Department Commander



This will be my final article as your State Commander. This has been a great year! It will go down as one of my most favorite and memorable ever. I want to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to the entire South Dakota American Legion Family. The Legion, Auxiliary, Sons and Riders, your friendship and hospitality has been wonderful. You are ALL the best. THANK YOU, THANK YOU TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU. I have dedicated this entire year to promoting the American Legion and it's programs and have enjoyed every minute. We set out with many goals and challenges and we have accomplished many of them. This has been a very rewarding and successful 2021-2022 year. THIS YEAR IS NOT OVER YET. I'm not signing off and saying goodbye yet. We still have challenges and goals to work on. My motto L.E.T.S.- lets end the slide- is still within reach. We began the year with a membership goal of 17,733. We are currently sitting at 16,333 members. We have until December 31, 2022 to reach it. With All of your help I know we can do it. There are veterans out there wanting to join the American Legion. Please take the time, we need to make sure every eligible veteran knows they are welcome to join the South Dakota American Legion, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK THEM.

We said after the State Convention in June we were going to hit the ground running and we did. In July, the Finance and Executive meetings were held in Chamberlain, then we attended the Youth Trooper program in Pierre. What a great program! The Highway Patrol, the mentors and these kids attending are all amazing. Then we had my homecoming in De Smet, thank you to all who attended and on to Auxiliary President Mary Jo's Homecoming in Onida.

We were able to attend some of the exciting Legion baseball tournament games and then off to the National Convention in Arizona. What a great Convention, South Dakota was seated at the very front and represented very well. Then we were at the Veterans building in Huron at the State Fair to meet and visit with many veterans. Next we travelled all over the state attending the Fall District Meetings. Thank you to all the Posts that hosted, they were well attended and the food was great. In October, we were able to attend the Fall Meetings in Indianapolis in person attending committee meetings and meeting with Paul Dillard, the National Commander. I had the honor and pleasure to go on Midwest Honor Flight #8, all Vietnam Veterans, to Washington DC in October. This is an experience words cannot describe. I encourage all eligible veterans to get signed up for this event. The South Dakota American Legion decided to make Midwest Honor Flight their main fundraiser this year and has donated over \$180,000 to fund Flight #13 in October. THANK YOU to all the South Dakota Posts and communities for their hard work and dedication to make this project so successful and enable those deserving veterans to have that one final tour with honor. In November we had the honor to decorate and display our American Legion Christmas tree in the Capitol. Thank you to all who helped decorate. The Midwinter Conference in Chamberlain was a great

success. The National Vice Commander, Angel Narvaez from Puerto Rico was our guest and many legionnaires from around the state attended. The Legislative meeting and reception was held at the Pierre Post in February. It was a great opportunity to invite our Legislators to enjoyable evening with a meal and discuss our veterans issues with them. Thank You Pierre Post #8 for the meal and hospitality. March brought the District Spring meetings and we had the pleasure of travelling the state from one end to the other. The meetings were well attended and a lot of good information was shared with the legionnaires. Thank you again to all of the Posts that hosted these events.

In April I was able to attend the DAV Convention in Rapid City and also to present the National Guard Plaques to their outstanding soldiers at their Convention. We were very honored to have our National Commander, Paul Dillard spend the last week in April with us. We showed our best South Dakota hospitality by touring him from Sioux Falls to Rapid City making stops at many Posts along the way and showing him the sites in South Dakota. He is a great leader and Legionnaire and we very much enjoyed having him here in South Dakota. These were the main events we attended. In between several trips were made across the state to attend Post meetings, County Meetings, Veterans Council meetings, Committee and Commission meetings, installing officers, speaking at events and many other functions. The hospitality and friendship shown across the state has been so amazing and very much appreciated. Thank you to all. Ahead I'm looking forward to the Boys State week in Aberdeen the first week in June, attending the VFW Convention in Mitchell and then our own State Convention in Watertown June 16-19.

It has been a pleasure and an adventure working with President Mary Jo Stier (and Steve) and the Auxiliary and meeting National Auxiliary President Kathy Daudistel at the DTOM Ranch and in Aberdeen. I am very proud of Commander Casey Hanson and the Sons for all they do. Their membership is awesome and their fundraising is very much appreciated. And it is always great to see the Riders at many of the meetings and events, also great fundraisers. Thank you ALL.

I have to thank my two Vice Commanders for their support this year. They have been there every time they were needed and did their best to promote and encourage all of our Posts to be involved. And to all the District Commanders and District Vice Commanders. Thank you for your hard work and dedication, for all your Post visits, phone calls, zoom meetings and everything else you do to promote the American Legion. Thank you to all the other Committee Chair persons, there are too many to name and I would probably forget some one, but THANK YOU to all of you for everything you do for the American Legion.

Last but not least THANK YOU to Adjutant Kevin, Judy and Mary Jo for everything they do to keep this American Legion running as smooth as possible. Most of us do not realize everything they do and I cannot

begin to list everything, but you are very much appreciated and we are very proud of the handling and the operations of the office at Headquarters in Watertown.

In closing, again I can only say it has been a great year, one I will never forget. The comradre and friendships are something I will cherish forever. The American Legion is truly a Family, The American Legion, The Auxiliary, The Sons of the American Legion and The American Legion Riders are all one big Family. We are the world's largest veterans organization and we have to pass this down to our "next generation" veterans so they can carry on the mission. We have achieved many of our goals and challenges and have had a very successful year and we should be proud of all we have accomplished, BUT we are not done, I'm not done, this year is not over yet. We have challenges and goals to achieve yet this 2021-22 year. We will always be Veterans serving veterans and Veterans Strengthening America. THANK YOU

L.E.T.S. Lets end the slide
Department Commander
Gary Wolkow

From the Adjutant

Kevin Hempel Department Adjutant



Department Commander Wolkow,

This report is being written to satisfy the Constitution and By Laws requirement for the Department Adjutant to write and present to the annual convention, a report covering activities not covered in the annual reports of the Committee and Commission Chairs and other Department officials. This is the second year filling the position of Department Adjutant and the first year we have held all meetings and conventions which were previously not held due to the pandemic.

Both Fall and Spring District meetings were held this year and elections as required by the Constitution and By Laws were held. Most committees have met as required, some face to face and others through the use of Zoom. We have seen an increase in many committee meetings using Zoom as an alternative method for communicating.

The transition by National to the new MyLegion and Personify have had their challenges. Both have been online for a little over a year. We continue to experience issues, but I believe National is making headway in correcting identified problems. National is pushing forward with the programs and we must do our best to understand and make best use of those programs.

Although last year was the year to purchase a new vehicle, the cost and availability pushed the Department to wait for an additional year. Fall of 2021, the Department traded in the Dodge Caravan for a Buick Enclave which has become the Department Commander's vehicle. With the rising cost in vehicles, the Department will need to examine the amount which is budgeted each year for new vehicles as well as what is actually needed for the transportation needs of the Department.

The American Legion Department of South Dakota is a member of the South Dakota Veterans Council (SDVC) with five other Veterans Service Organizations as members. I have the privilege of being elected as the Vice President of the SDVC and will do my best to ensure the Legion is well represented. The SDVC continues to discuss the selling of the Veteran's building at the State Fairgrounds. I have conveyed the Legion's stance that the building should remain a veteran's building, but I am afraid most of the VSO do not agree with my stance. I am sure the next year will continue to be interesting as the building continues to be a point of disagreement.

As stated last year, Judy Greenfield and Mary Jo Boner are mainstays in the office. They ensure the Department continues to function, membership is properly handled, and our various programs succeed. This office would not operate without their expertise and dedication.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Hempel, Department Adjutant

How to Make a Huge Difference

Submitted by Jim Kurtz, SD American Legion Foundation Bd. President

Since inception in 2010, the South Dakota American Legion Foundation has worked diligently to strengthen and grow well-established American Legion programs centered around Children and Youth, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Americanism, and National Security.

Our youth participate in Legion Baseball, Boys State, and the Youth Trooper Academy as well as other learning opportunities. As Legion members, we support veterans through VA programs, in times of deployment and through financial help. We teach proper flag etiquette, raise the flag at events, carry the colors in parades, etc., etc. At life's end, we provide proper military honors to our fellow veterans.

As we look at our lives and our many blessings, we may wonder if somehow, we could help the American Legion in a significant way. The answer is a definite "yes". If you feel this way, and would like to explore possibilities of what you can do now while living, or through your estate upon death, we would like to help you. Please start with a call to the SD American Legion Headquarters in Watertown (605) 886-3604 or to any member of the SD American Legion Foundation Board. We will personally help you make your wishes a reality.

Thank you for your service to our Country, your membership with the SD American Legion and your interest in helping Children and Veterans now and in the future.

2022 Department Convention Calendar

This year's Department Convention is in Watertown SD at the Ramkota Event Center June 16-19 and hosted by Post 17. The schedule is still firming up but major events are listed below. Room reservations can be made by calling 605-886-8011 or 506-886-6127. The Legion rate should be \$91.99 plus tax.

Thursday June 16

10:00 am Finance Commission meeting
1:00 pm Department Executive Committee meeting

Friday June 17

9:00 am registration
10:00 am Resolutions Committee meets
10:00 am SAL Executive Committee meets
1:30—4:00 pm Convention Committees meet
4:30 pm Memorial Service
6:00 pm Joint Banquet Reception

7:00 pm Joint Banquet

Saturday June 18

8:00 am Registration
9:00 am Convention Business Session
1:00 pm SAL Business Meeting
6:00 pm Go Getter reception
7:00 pm Go Getter Dinner
8:00 pm Foundation Fun Auction

Sunday June 19

8:00 am Registration
9:00 am Convention Business continues
12:00 pm Elections
TBD Post Convention Department Executive Committee meets

You Can Still Have Your Dream

Finish Your Degree



Encounter the Word.
Engage the world.

ILT is an online institute
of higher education
helping fulfill the dreams
for many Veterans.

Contact ILT today to complete your
Associates Degree, Bachelor Degree,
PHD Degree or your Military Chaplaincy Degree.

www.ilt.edu • (605) 692-9337
910 4th St. • PO Box 833 • Brookings, SD 57006

District Commander Updates

1



Jon McDonald, Box Elder

I hope to find you well! Recently, I had the pleasure to attend the District 2 Spring meeting. It was a pleasure to meet many friends and Legionnaires from our sister district. The next day we had our District 1 meeting in Sturgis, we had many friends and Legionnaires from around the District attend. I want to give a big shout-out to Post 33 for a great job hosting the meeting.

Our district is still behind on our Post's membership. I would ask all County Commanders, as well Post Commanders, to contact their members that haven't renewed, and to do so as soon as possible. Please remember our membership is the lifeline to keeping our department alive.

We have our state convention coming up in June and I hope many of you are able to attend.

The last week of April our department has the honor of escorting our National Commander, Mr. Paul Dillard, around our state. While many Posts had the opportunity to host Mr. Dillard, Piedmont Post 311 and Box Elder Post 315 were selected while he was in District 1.

As the summer is not far away, I hope that all District 1 members have a safe and wonderful summer. Please don't forget all of our troops deployed and keep our POW/MIAs in your prayers.

6



Vilas Kurtenbach, Plankinton

Greeting to everyone in District 6

First of all, we had a large turnout at our District 6 meeting in Ethan. Jim Pekron was elected to be our new Commander. Thank you, Jim, for taken on this new and educational adventure. We also now have two Vice Commanders to help share the duties of the district.

The end of April the State had the privilege of having the National Commander from Texas here in our State. District 6 had two post to have the honor of his presence in their home post. Arlington had their dedication of their new post home. Huron was his next stop in District 6. Thanks to these post for doing a wonderful job of hosting the commander.

At the time of me writing this short letter Boys State and Trooper Academy are

2



Christopher Rendon, Rapid City

Greetings District 2 Legionaries,

Spring is here and summer is coming, well that's what the calendar tells us. It's been a very busy time for District 2 members. Our district and state oratorical candidate, Thomas Haar competed in nationals and made it to the semi final round. He earned a total of \$6,100 in college scholarships from the post, district, state and national levels. There are two candidates for Youth Trooper Academy, one from Rapid City and the other from Philip. Come out and support them on blue hat day, June 23rd in Pierre.

I want to thank Post 46 from Custer and Post 22 from Rapid City for hosting meals for the National Commander, Paul Dillard while he traveled in our district. We had a great turn out from various posts throughout the district. The biggest take away from his visit is that we need to do a buddy check on all our vets, friends and coworkers, not just Legionaries. He stressed by doing this, we can save one life at a time.

Lastly, Commander and Adjuncts don't forget that the Consolidate Post reports are due on June 1st. District 2 legionnaires, you can make a difference by voting for your candidate at the Department Convention on June 16-19. Can't wait to see you there.

District 6 cont...

in the final days. We have three candidates from District 6 for Trooper Academy. Statewide we are short on Boy State applicates, next year every post that has a school in their area needs to try to get 1 or 2 young men to attend this outstanding event.

Membership is always something we must work hard on. Just because we are getting to the end of this year its not to soon to start working on 2023. Currently the district has 11 posts, at 100 percent or over. Great work to all posts in getting the members that you got. In being a legion member, you are a veteran helping a veteran.

State convention is June 16-19 in Watertown. Hope to see many of you there!

In closing, I would like to thank everyone in the state on helping me as your district commander. I would like to thank state headquarters for the phone calls they received from me. I would like to thank Doug Feltman, area Vice Commander for all the help he gave me in the last 4 years under his guidance. I need all of it!

I would ask all members in District 6 to help the new Commander and Vice Commanders in any way we can. Let us make this new job as easy as possible.

3



Gene Opbroek, Gregory

I hope this finds everyone in good health and enjoying summer. Summers are busy for everyone. Weekends at the lake or a campground, doing work around the house, and hopefully a vacation. With all the celebrations and such going on please remember to support your local Legion Post. They too, have a lot on their plate in the summer. Most small-town celebrations include the American Legion to some level or the other.

The American presence in our small communities is what keeps and strengthens our membership. Car shows, 4th of July celebrations, Rodeos, Baseball games and numerous other events are great times to be active in the community. And a fun time to show our support of veterans, community, and youth.

Legion baseball games are great to watch and cheer on your local talent, speak with parents and veterans. Rodeos are a wonderful place to watch young people compete with their parents and even against their parents in some events. Rodeo is South Dakota's number one sport and one of the most patriotic events you will ever attend. If you have never gone to one, take one in, they are happening every weekend somewhere in South Dakota.

Take this time to support your community, veterans, youth and have some fun. Hope to see you in a baseball cap or cowboy boots.

7



Patrick Mullen, Madison

I feel that the district 7 Spring meeting at Valley Springs Post 131 was a success. There were 77 Legion members present and 24 Auxiliary members present I was very impressed with the turn out A very big shout out for Post 131 for hosting this event and the warm welcome to all Thank You.

Membership is always a topic that is on everyone mind and this is a concern. We have numerous Posts that have reached the 100% or more that will reach this goal. There are Posts that will not reach this due to locations and the crossing over members to Post ever after. Keep asking and unders-

5



Matt Lagerstrom, White

A particular challenge that we all face is "frame of reference". To me, climbing forty feet up a tree and watching it fall down around me is perfectly normal – for you that would probably be horrifying. To me, hopping in the car and driving an hour is just getting to work – for you that might be more miles than you drive in a week. To me, hanging out in crowds of unfamiliar people is absolutely terrifying – for you noisy busy spaces full of people is the only way that you feel comfortable. Our frame of references were formed by the experiences we had growing up to where we are in life now. A particular danger to our current frame is the last two years The Virus made it okay to stay home, and for many of us that was for good reason. What makes this dangerous is that our frames have adapted to the idea that "If you go outside, you will die". Fortunately, there have been multiple advances in our understanding of The Virus and in technologies how we deal with it. Our challenge now is learning a new frame of reference that "if you go outside and are reasonably careful, you will be okay." Our organization cannot survive if we stay on the old model, we need to get our people to be engaged with each other and with our communities. By being engaged we will all get much better pictures to put in our frames.

District 7 cont...

tand for every No you get you are closer to a Yes, so keep asking. I'm very proud to be District 7 commander.

We are entering the summer months.

This is the time that we have the opportunity to become visitable in our communities. People become aware of us, take notice, and in my Post 25 people have come up to us and said I'm a veteran can I join. We carry applications with us at events. Case in point Rod Smith District 7 Americanism officer and member of Post 136 was talking with Youth 'trooper candidates and a young lady said my parents are veterans but do not belong. Rod went to his car and came back with two applications for this young lady to give to her parents. I called the Adj. from Dell Rapids Post 65 Robert Risty. Mr. Risty contacted the couple about the benefits in the Legion. The effort was made, and the seeds planted let's hope the has become successful.

Have a good Summer take care of yourself and be PROUD to be in the Legion.

ADVERTISE

in the South Dakota American Legion News

Reach 18,000 Veterans
across the State.

For rates and information, contact
david.leaderprinting.com
605-256-4444

Chapman Home Inspection Service

A Veteran Helping Veterans

\$25 discount to Veterans



Ward E. Chapman
SD Registered Home Inspector

A Proud Army Veteran
Milbank, SD • 605-949-1613

email: wardrac4@aol.com
ward@chapmanhomeinspections.com

KELLER DRILLING

(605)374-4182

Veteran owned and operated
water well drilling and servicing business.
Licensed in SD, MT and ND.

Contact Albert Keller • 701-426-4580
for all your water well drilling & servicing needs!

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Annual Report of the Legislative Committee



Doug Feltman

Commander,
Here is the annual report of the South Dakota American Legion Legislative Committee. The members of the committee are Chairman Doug Feltman, Chris "Van" Van DeList, Kevin Morello, PDC Rod Martens and PDC Gary Watts. The lobbyists for this year were Doug Feltman, Adjutant Kevin Hemple, PDC Terry Hansen and Chris "Van" Van DeList.

On Feb. 13, a Zoom meeting was held with all committee members attending. Bills that had been submitted were reviewed and the committee was given instructions to review the bills so that an informed decision could be made on each bill at the 22 February meeting in Pierre.

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 22 February 2022 the Legislative Committee met in Pierre at Post # 8. Roll called showed the following committee members present: Department Commander Gary Wolkow, Chairman Doug Feltman, Chris "Van" Van DeList and Kevin Morello. Americanism Officer Harry Boner was present as a guest. The Legislative Committee then reviewed and discussed 13 bills, and a decision was made on how we were going to proceed on each bill.

There were 4 House bills that were discussed and we were going to monitor 3, support and lobby for 1.

There were also 9 Senate bills that were discussed and we were going to monitor 8, support and lobby for 1.

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 the reception 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 Post #8.

Here are the results of the bills on the Legislative Committee's list:

HB 1001 - An act to revise the freeze on assessments for dwellings of disabled and senior citizens - Signed by the Governor

HB 1011 - An act to revise the application process for the reduction of tax on dwellings owned by paraplegics - Signed by the Governor

HB 1013 - An act to make an appropriation for certain costs related to Capitol Lake and to declare an emergency - Signed by the Governor

HB 1067 - An act to require the waiver of animal adoption fees for veterans - Deferred to 41st day

HB 1083 - Provide a partial property tax exemption for the surviving spouses of certain veterans - Signed by the Governor

SB 19 - An act to provide that health care facilities and accredited prevention and treatment facilities may establish reasonable restrictions related to the medical use of cannabis - Signed by the Governor

SB 41 - An act to revise the appropriation for the construction of a National Guard Readiness Center in Sioux Falls, for the purchase and exchange of property between the state and the Sioux Falls Development Foundation, and to declare an emergency - Signed by the Governor

SB 48 - An act to make an appropriation for the redesign and renovation of the Wagner Readiness Center and to declare an emergency - Signed by the Governor

SB 49 - An act to authorize the Department of the Military to construct a cold storage building located in Rapid City, South Dakota to make an appropriation therefor and to declare an emergency - Signed by the Governor

SB 50 - An act to make an appropriation for water, wastewater and storm water projects throughout state government and to declare an emergency - Signed by the Governor

SB 63 - An act to revise the appropriation for road improvements to the State Veterans Cemetery, to provide for ordinary operation of the cemetery, and to declare an emergency - Signed by the Governor

SB 68 - An act to revise holiday pay for state employees - Signed by the Governor

SB 75 - An act to establish certain pay provisions for state employees working shifts longer than eight hours a day - Deferred to 41st day

SB 197 - came to the committee's attention late in the session but was very important to The American Legion:

To require the POW/MIA flag be displayed in the Senate and House of Representative Chambers - Signed by the Governor

If anyone wants more information on a particular bill listed above please contact me at (605) 234- 4143 or e-mail doug202@midstatesd.net

Commander Wolkow 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 American Legion Department of South Dakota. 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!!

Annual Report of the Training Committee



Krisma D. DeWitt

Commander,
It has been a privilege to serve as the Training Committee Chair this past year along with the following members: PDC Fred Nelson, Kevin Morello Piedmont Post, Jack French Spearfish Post and Bill Peters Sioux Falls post. The Commander's vision and mission statements for the Committee continue to provide direction for the committee.

The Training Committee is now a Standing Committee of the Department of South Dakota American Legion as approved by resolution at the 2021 Department Convention in Huron, SD. 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 and 2021. The committee developed and is implementing a Training Plan for the formation of a Department Legion College. All the courses with the exception of Training the Trainer/Facilitator have been developed and offered over the past 3 years. One of the more popular and in demand courses that has been offered is the MyLegion Class which was highly attended at the past MidWinter meeting. As the committee moves forward, we continue to look 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. Training surveys were completed at all the District meetings this past spring and these will be used in determining the needs for future training. 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.

Annual Report of the Department Service Officer



Courtney VanZanten

Commander Wolkow,

Thank you for the honor of serving and appreciate your confidence in appointing me to serve as Department Service Officer for 2021-2022.

The South Dakota American Legion has incredibly tenacious State, County and Tribal Service Officers working under the American Legion Power of Attorney in South Dakota. I'm happy to report that in Fiscal Year 2021, these dedicated Service Officers secured \$37,337,300 in VA Benefits for Veterans and their families using the American Legion Power of Attorney.

We have upcoming battles on our hands with the potential VA closures in Hot Springs, Sturgis, Wagner and Sioux Falls. I am preparing a series of resolutions, loaded with data, to help us fight for what is best for our Veterans, their healthcare, their communities and more. If any Veteran has data they want to present, by all means, please reach out.

Again, thank you for the honor of this position. Helping fellow Veterans is both rewarding and humbling, and I can never get enough of it. To my fellow Vets: If you haven't gone in to see your local Service Officer yet, it's probably time to do so. And the best thing you can do for your fellow Veteran? Get them in to that same Service Officer, so they can get tied into the benefits that they've earned.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney VanZanten
Department Service Officer

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Annual Report of the Employment Committee



Greg Diaz

Commander,

It has been an honor to serve this past year as the Chair of the Employment Committee, and to provide this report on their behalf. As Legionnaires, we have a responsibility to advocate the employment and retention of veterans. There are many great organizations that recognize the fact that veterans bring unique skills to the workforce, such as excellent technical education and training, and leadership abilities. Integrity and discipline are

hallmarks of sound personal character, and although these values seem to be in short supply these days, they are common among veterans. Savvy employers recognize these very important qualities, and go the extra mile to recruit veterans that possess these traits. They also make sincere efforts to recognize veterans for their honorable and faithful service to the nation. The annual Employment Awards showcase some of the great organizations that support veterans, and enable us to recognize them for their contributions.

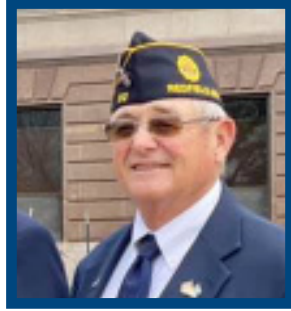
For 2021-2022, we received 2 nominations in 1 category: Sioux Falls Post #15 nominated JMJ Caseworks, and Spearfish Post #164 nominated the Spearfish Emergency Ambulance Service, each in the Employer of Veterans - Small category. Both nominations were outstanding. However, the committee determined the nomination for the Spearfish Emergency Ambulance Service was stellar, and they were chosen to receive the award.

The Spearfish Emergency Ambulance Service has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to veterans. Including the employment of veterans, they are also involved in a wide variety of community projects such as organizing blood drives, participating in emergency preparedness fairs, raising funds for Special Olympics, providing care packages for deployed military servicemembers, and much more. We are extremely fortunate to have such a fine organization within South Dakota, and they set a great example for others to follow. In addition to being selected as the sole department recipient, their nomination was sent to the national committee in January for consideration.

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 3rd consecutive year each committee member volunteered to serve, and I would like to thank each of the members for their contributions.

For 2022, I would like to again ask for the assistance of all posts to look closely at deserving organizations in their area, and take some time to submit a nomination. I am happy to assist posts in this endeavor. So many organizations go to great lengths to support veterans, and we would be remiss if we don't take the time to call attention to their efforts. Thank you for your help in this important endeavor.

Annual Report of the Public Safety Committee



Larry Price

The South Dakota Public Safety Committee is tasked with promoting and selecting the "Law Officer of the Year" and the "Firefighter of the Year" programs. We also serve as a liaison for the SD American Legion to the SD Youth Trooper Program.

In July we worked with the South Dakota Highway Patrol during our ninth week-long

SDYTA in Pierre. Twenty-four outstanding young people spent the week learning what it takes to be a Law Enforcement Officer. Several of these young people are also enlisting into the military. I know personally, that three of last years graduates are now Marines plus several others are members of the National Guard and other branches. We can all be very proud of our Youth Trooper Graduates.

We recently learned that there are 25 or more Law Enforcement Officers across the state that are graduates of the first eight academies. Those who attended the last two academies are not yet old enough to get certified. The success of this program is very rewarding to everyone involved.

SDHP Colonel, Rick Miller wrote "Our partnership with the American Legion has phenomenal program for youth in our state that are interested in law Enforcement. This last Youth Trooper Academy was filled with so many energetic, determined and team-oriented kids. On behalf of the SD Highway Patrol, I want to thank you and the rest of the American Legion of South Dakota for their continuing support in Law Enforcement. We look forward to many more years of working together!"

On Thursday of that week we were happy to see many Legionnaires visit us at the firing range for "Blue Cap Day". That evening we sponsored a cookout for the recruits, mentors and visiting legionnaires.

During the graduation ceremony on Friday, Commander Wolkow, after a few remarks, presented Wyatt Anderson from Willow Lake as the recipient of the "American Legion Outstanding Leadership" scholarship.

The District Commanders or their representatives have done a great job of getting our YTA applicants interviewed. The SDHP and our Committee will again select twenty-four outstanding recruits and alternates to attend the SDYTA on April 22. There selections are made based on their interview scores and recommendations of the SDHP and our committee.

On January 11th 2022 our committee met to select the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year and the Firefighter of the Year. We are pleased that we saw an increase in the number of applications for both of these awards. We thank the posts that took the time to recognize the great work that these first responders do for our communities. Every community has someone who deserves recognition for their service. We encourage much better participation in the future.

Our committee selected Garret Masten from Rapid City as the Law Officer of the Year. We recently learned that Officer Masten has been selected as the National Regional Law Officer of the Year. We will learn before National convention if he receives the National Law Officer Award. Congratulations to Officer Masten and we hope to see you at the National Convention.

We also selected Cody Linneweber, from Garretson, as our Firefighter of The Year. Cody has a great resume. As of this writing, we have not heard from National as to the disposition of his application.

Congratulations to Cody and good luck.

During our January meeting, we visited about the National Guidelines for the Firefighter of the Year Award. The award may be presented to a Firefighter who is also an EMT. We decided to develop a resolution to present at the Department level to separate the awards and ask National to develop an Award for EMT's and Paramedics separate from the Firefighter Award.

The resolution has been written and passed by the Chamberlain Post and will be considered at this year's convention in Watertown. We would appreciate your support!!

I would like to thank the members of our committee and everyone who has supported our goals by submitting nominations for Law Officer and Firefighter of the Year as well as helping us find applicants for and sponsoring the SDYTA recruits .

Annual Report of the Educational Scholarship Committee



Hugh Holmes

Mr. Commander,

Two thousand twenty-one/twenty-two 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. Our beginning fund balance (1/1/2021) was \$141,350.51 and ending fund balance (12/31/2022) was \$145,496.84. Recipients will be announced at the state convention.

We received one donation of \$100.00 in 2021.

Applications and brochures are online at www.SD-legion.org. We are currently revising the application for 2022/23 scholarship year.

The 2022 Educator of the Year packets were due May 1, 2022. Because the deadline for this article was May 3, 2022, the committee did not have time to review the packets. The winner will be announced at the state convention.

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 not taught in a 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, James Moore, Burke, Perry Schmidt, Redfield, Shawnee Redbear, Pine Ridge, 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 \$1000.00. 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 as chairman of the prestigious Education Scholarship Committee. It is a great honor. Where have you gone Joe DiMaggio?

Respectfully Submitted,

Hugh W. Holmes

Chairman, Education Scholarship Committee

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Annual Report of the Americanism Committee



Harry Boner

Commander Wolkow, What a busy year for the South Dakota American Legion Americanism program. Thank you for selecting me as the Americanism Chairman for the Department of South Dakota. Your leadership and willingness to direct my efforts for the year were greatly appreciated. Americanism is alive and

well in South Dakota.

Stepping into this position of State Americanism Commission Chairman, I had large shoes to fill. Anyone that knows me and my size 16 5E feet would not think that filling the shoes of our most recent Americanism Commission Chairmen, Doug Harris, and Larry Madison, would be a problem. With their help, I was quickly able to get a grasp of a program that many Posts in SD are participating in. Working with the Boys State, Youth Trooper, Educational Committee Chairmen, plus working with the Youth Program Administrator at State HQ, we made enhancements to the "Big 3" handout and wall posters by adding a QRC code (the square box with dots in it) to the front cover of each document. By seeing this code, our youth could take their cell phones out and snap a quick photo of the QRC code. When the student had time, they could open the photo and that code would automatically direct them to the web site to find out more information about these programs or even directly navigate the student straight to the registration process.

In addition to the enhancements to the "Big 3" literature, I built on the groundwork that both Doug and Larry had started regarding the 4-H program in South Dakota. Youth today are so busy with sports, Church youth groups, 4-H and FFA. These are all fine activities to be a part of. When thinking about these activities, 4-H was the best organization to match up with many of our Legion Youth activities. A letter was created for the State 4-H leadership, informing them about the Americanism programs of the American Legion and how Post members from across the state could assist their local 4-H leaders by helping with oratorical activities/public speaking and shooting sports. Students that participate in 4-H develop leadership qualities that will aid them well when participating in Boys and Girls State. The collaboration letter was submitted to the state 4-H leadership which in turn was sent to each county 4-H extension office in SD. 4-H is good for all Americanism programs and likewise the Legion is good for 4-H. Posts are encouraged to help with 4-H as often as possible and 4-H students make up a good selection pool to recruit students from for our Americanism programs.

At the time of this report, only one of the "Big 3" programs have concluded for the year. This would be the Oratorical program. I would like to once again thank all of the volunteers that helped to Judge, escort, keep time, and monitor the contestants. We had six great contestants from around the state compete on the last day of Mid-Winter Conference (February 20th) at Arrowwood Cedar Shore Resort in Oacoma, SD. The winner of the State contest, Thomas Haar, representing Post 22 in Rapid City, advanced to the National Oratory competition held April 22nd -24th in Indianapolis, IN. Thomas did well in the competition, placing 9th overall. Congratulations on a job well done Thomas!! While this year's competition has completed, now is the time to spread the word about this program to our high school 9th - 12th grade students. There are students that have the passion and drive to participate in the Oratory Contest. Please encourage them to compete in the years to come.

The 2022 Boy's State session is scheduled for May 30th - June 3rd in Aberdeen, SD. Boys from across the state will be traveling to this great event to learn about how Government works from the local township on up to the National level. Attendance is down this year significantly. This can be attributed to all the various activities and events that compete with the boy's time. Life experiences shape us all and these young men will learn about the rights and duties of a good citizen and what it takes to help promote

change. Our way of government did not just happen. It was formed by those who came before us to help form a better way of life for us all. Let's encourage our young men to attend Boy's State to preserve our way of life and to help develop new leaders for our world tomorrow. Thank you to our Posts that sponsor these young men to attend this event at a cost of \$200 each. Blue cap day, held on the Thursday of every Boy's State, is a day that Posts can come out and check out the activities the Boy's go through. I encourage all Posts to take time in the coming years to stop in and check this out. Once again let us congratulate the 2021 Boys State Governor - Joseph Gebel of Mitchell on a job well done and for representing South Dakota over the past year.

The 2022 Youth Trooper Academy will be held in Pierre June 20th to the 24th. The YTA is an intensive week of living and learning the life of a typical cadet attending law enforcement training school. To help recruit tomorrow's new law enforcement members, this course was developed to inspire your men and women who sign up and are chosen to attend this fine program. Thank you to our Posts who sponsor these young men and women to attend this event at a cost of \$200 each. Don't forget about Blue Cap Day on Thursday June 23rd at the shooting range. Watch for details in the Up to Now on how to get there. Come and watch these young men and women participate in demonstrations from the drug dogs, swat team and run through shooting courses. Once again, let's congratulate the 2021 Youth Trooper Academy Scholarship winner - Wyatt Anderson of Bryant

The American Legion and Scouting go hand in hand since the Boy Scouts was developed back in 1919. While attendance has dropped off over the years, it is important that the American Legion continues to stay involved with our local Scouting Squads, assisting them with funding, activities and even hands on training programs of the Scouting program. Our Boy Scouts will eventually grow into Eagle Scouts. The American Legion supports that program as well. The top Eagle Scout in the nation can earn a \$10,000 scholarship for college. If you know an Eagle Scout, we encourage you to have them fill out the American Legion Eagle Scout nomination form. Congratulations to our Eagle Scout of The Year - Riley Murphy - Summerset, SD. We encourage future applications to be turned in shortly after they are released for submittal by the state office. I would like to thank Rick MacDonald for his many years of leadership in the Scouting program. The current Chairman of the American Legion Scouting program in SD is Fred Nelson from Spearfish.

Another program you do not hear much about is the American Legion Junior Shooting Sports program. When you think of shooting programs, the programs of 4-H come to mind. 4-H is a great introduction to shooting sports, however there are several clubs that have been developed in many counties across the state where they come together at various sponsored events to compete against one another. All to educate and sharpen the shooting skills of these young shooters. These shooters compete in multiple events each year, such as NRA, American Legion or even in state shooting competition. Top shooters are recruited by Colleges or Military. There is one South Dakota Shooting Sport competition for the American Legion, held each year in Britton, SD in late March. Congratulations to Jenna Kruger from the Pierre Junior Shooters who is the South Dakota Sporter Champion and Jasmine Hayes from the Dakota Sharpshooters who is the South Dakota Precision Champion. Additionally, the Pierre Junior Shooters, sponsored by Post 8, is the Sporter Team State Champions and the Dakota Sharpshooters sponsored by Post 15 is the Precision Team State Champions. As a side note, Jordyn Ewine from North Dakota, but shoots with the Dakota Sharpshooters has earned the title of Precision State Champion for North Dakota. Well done to all the youth shooters.

While we have talked about many of the "Hands On" programs under Americanism, we sometimes forget about many of the other activities that our Posts take part in each year that all fall under the Americanism umbrella. Activities such as;

- Operation Comport Warriors
- Flag Education Program

- School and Student programs
- American Legion School Medal Award
- American Education Week
- Veterans in the Classroom
- Reinvigoration Veteran Awareness
- Citizenship
- Get out and Vote
- Citizenship Outreach
- Committee on Children & Youth

Our Posts capture their involvement with all these programs in their CPR and Americanism reports each year. The Americanism reports are submitted around Spring meetings each year. Winners of last years Americanism reports can be found in the 2021 proceedings book. I encourage each Post to submit their Americanism report and be proud of what you have done as a Post.

Lastly, but not least, we finish out the year with Legion Baseball. Baseball can be noted in your CPR report, however most of the games are played in June and July. If your Post supports Legion Baseball, please be sure to find ways to support their needs over their season. If help is needed to support your team, ask your SAL group to help with gate working or fundraising. Ask your Auxiliary Units for the same help if needed. If your Post wants to start a team but is low on players, reach out to other Posts in your area to help find players. Registration will be completed by the time this report is printed. Please make sure that all background checks are completed for all adults that interact with the players and please make sure that your team has insurance. Our player's protection and wellbeing should be our priority. Let us have a great 2022 Legion Baseball season!

Some Posts are very active, and others are not. Small Posts can experience frustration as they may wish to be active but Post size, number of active members and geographical location can play a major part in the decline of activity and members over the years. Whatever your Post size, large or small, don't be afraid to brag about those activities and programs that you are active with. It's best to mark down the activities you are involved with on both your Americanism and CPR report as you participate in that activity. These reports are used by National to help promote our programs with Congress to help our fellow Veterans and youth. Thank you for all that you do as a Post!

This will wrap up this years Americanism Report. A big thank you to Commander Wolkow for his direction over the past year and Thank You to all members for your continued community service and service to the American Legion.

**EAST RIVER
ELECTRIC POWER
COOPERATIVE**
DEDICATED. RELIABLE. LOCAL.

**YOUR TRUSTED, LOCAL
AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT
WHOLESALE POWER
SUPPLY COOPERATIVE
FOR 70 YEARS.**

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Annual Report of the Internal Affairs Committee



Mark Weinmann

Fellow Legionnaires,

I would like to thank Commander Wolkow for appointing me to serve as the Chairman for the Internal Affairs Commission for 2022.

The Internal Affairs Commission met on 9 May 2022. Present at this meeting were State Commander Gary Wolkow, State Adjutant Kevin Hempel, Chairman PDC Mark Weinmann, PDC Byron Callies, PDC Terry Hanson, and PDC Tim Jurgens.

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 Internal Affairs Commission. 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 Internal Affairs Commission. At least 30 days prior to said convention, the Department Internal Affairs Commission 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 Internal Affairs Commission thereon, with a brief statement of reasons for such recommendation, and at the same time the Department Internal Affairs Commission shall in like manner, distribute to all Posts, full copy of any proposed amendment originating with the Department Internal Affairs Commission itself.

No amendment shall be in order for consideration at any convention unless it shall have been so submitted or unless one day notice of proposed of a proposed amendment is given and there is then unanimous consent of all delegates to such consideration. If such unanimous is given, the Commander shall immediately and without debate, refer the resolution to the Department Internal Affairs Commission for consideration and recommendation to the proposing, Convention for final action.

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

This year, 9 resolutions have been submitted to State Headquarters from local posts, and 2 resolution have been written by the Department Internal Affairs Commission, Of these 11 resolutions, 5 resolutions are being referred to the Resolutions Committee at the State Convention,

- 2 Resolutions received DO NOT PASS RECOMMEDATIONS.
- Resolution 22-3 to change the election cycles for District Commanders,
- Resolution 22-9, to change the term limits on members of the Department Finance Commission.
- 4 resolutions received DO PASS RECOMMENDATIONS.
- Resolution 22-2 would change the elected term of County Commanders to 2 years to coincide with the term of the District Commander.
- Resolution 22-6 would allow posts in good standing with less than 15 members to have 1 delegate and 1 alternate to a vote at the State Convention.
- Resolution 22-10 would change the selection process and term limits on the Department Finance Commission.
- Resolution 22-11 would create separate committees for Membership committee and Marketing, Media and Communications committee.

Annual reports are welcome from the Sons of the American Legion and The Legion Riders; however no reports have been received at this time

Annual Report of the Legion Riders



Rodney DeWeese

Commander Wolkow

The year 2020 took a heavy toll on all forms of public gatherings. The American Legion Riders of South Dakota was no exception. However, 2021 was a year of recovery. Motorcycles were back on the road attending rallies, leading funeral processions and raising funds for Veterans and their families stat wide.

One of the earliest events in 2021 was the May "River Wreath Run" with over 20 Riders and family members gathered at Post 8 in Pierre SD. Riders faced snow, sleet, hail and tornadoes on this 2 day event to place a Memorial Wreath on the steps of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial in Pierre.

The group gathered Saturday night for a meet and greet at Post 8. A burger fry with all the fixings was also served there. At 1030 Sunday morning, all gathered on the steps of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall. A wreath was laid on the steps, the first of many as this has become an annual event for the Riders. The next one is May 22, 2022, at 1030 a.m. As in the 2021 event, Post 8 will host an ala carte reception Saturday night at 6:00. Sunday morning Riders will gather on the steps of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial to lay a symbolic wreath for all who have perished in service to our country. May they Rest in peace and never be forgotten.

Another state-wide event was the Commander's 605 Ride in June. Outgoing Commander Fred Nelson (also an American Legion Rider) led a group of 16 Legion Riders out of Post 164, Spearfish SD, on a statewide circuit of the perimeter of SD. The event took 4 days and covered over 1400 miles. Interstate travel was avoided at all costs. 20 Posts were visited along the way. Each Post provided refreshments and donations to the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. Riders dropped off and/or joined the ride each day. All together over \$4800.00 was raised from the posts visited and another \$1300.00 from the Annual Convention in Huron for a grand total of \$6100.00.

Many other SD ALR Chapters had busy summers as well. The Hot Springs Hoka Hey and Freedom Ride, Spearfish Patriot, Back the Blue and Jacket rides, Custer's Maor Ride, Lemmon's Corn Hole and Hometown Heroes Ride, Wagner's Labor Day and Viet Nam Wall Ride to Parkston, Aberdeen's Teddy Bear and POW/MIA Rides, and Watertown's DTOM Veterans Ranch Run are just a few of the annual events hosted around the state. If you would like to participate or support them they can be found on the SD American Legion web site for more information. They all support the American Legion goals,

Veterans and their families in one way or another.

Respectfully submitted,
Rodney A. "Buck" DeWeese
Liaison, American Legion Riders

Annual Report of the Foundation Committee



Jim Kurtz

Your Foundation was established as a 501(C)(3) non-profit corporation in 2010 for the purpose of accumulating an endowed body of funds that would be professionally invested, with the earning from it to come back to the SD AL to help fund the Legion Programs. Your forward-thinking leadership realized back then, that an income flow from the Foundation would be important to help fund the programs of the SD American Legion. That has proven to be more and more important as time goes by, and will continue to be essential in the future.

The seed money to start the Foundation (approx. \$40,000) came from the SD Honor Flight, when it was dissolved. Since then, the balance has grown from the contributions of individuals, Posts, businesses and events. The annual Fun Auction held at the Department Convention has been an important source of funding. Thank you for participating! Donations of property and collectables as well as cash have been donated. The Foundation being named in individual wills or as the beneficiary of life insurance are terrific ways of helping in the future.

The principal balance of your Foundation will only grow over time. Of the earnings on the invested funds, approximately 4% of the balance is paid back to the SD American Legion. The rest of the earnings go into growth. At the present balance, approximately \$10,000 per year is paid back to the SD American Legion to assist with the many programs within the four pillars of the organization, with emphasis on helping children and veterans.

It has been reported nationally, that giving from businesses and corporations has slowed since the Covid pandemic, but that donations from individuals have been strong. The experiences of your Foundation have been similar, this past year. Individuals have remained strong donors, and Legionnaires are the strongest of the group. Thank you very much!

In the past year, contributions have been just over \$18,000. The Total Net Assets of the Foundation are presently just over \$276,000. The downtrend of the stock market in recent months effects the Foundation's balances. This past year, the Foundation has granted funds to support the Midwest Honor Flight and the Youth Trooper Academy program.

Thank you for your contributions to the SD American Legion Foundation in the past, and please continue with your support! We are all proud of the work that the SD American Legion does through its many programs. You can be proud of the effects that your contributions to the Foundation are making now, and will continue to make for decades and decades to come. Thank you!

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Annual Report of the NEC



Jim Huls

First, thanks to all Posts and Legionaires who went above and beyond in welcoming National Commander Paul Dillard to Dept of South Dakota and your Posts for the great Welcome provided. I was very proud of the effort by all concerned. We have great Posts all across South Dakota.

I just returned from the Spring NEC meetings in Indianapolis. Some points of interest are the Finance Commission says no dues increase in the foreseeable future because of Fund raising and Marketing initiatives are all doing well at the National level. I think the Dept of South Dakota should consider the same thought process when the

time comes for additional revenue.

The Marketing Commission chaired by our Paul Evenson reports that innovation is the theme for the coming year. The National organization has increased emphasis on Marketing and is focused on shifting brand perception so that these objectives can be accomplished 1. Increase membership 2. raise money and 3. Continue the Legacy of being influential on Capital Hill. Please use the New Brand Mark of the American Legion as this is the Modern version of the American Legion Emblem.

A study on Membership Processing is ongoing and will change many things about membership as we know it today. A more modern approach is forth coming and some resolutions were passed at the Spring to start the ball rolling.

Resolutions involving The American Legion Legacy Scholarship and the Temporary Financial Assistance Program were approved that change many Policies and Procedures.

Annual Report of the Historian Committee



Fred Lee

Commander Wolkow,

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. I will also assist those who are working to put their histories together or online for the State Convention next year.

Post Historians should be working on their Post Histories right now for the History contest at our next 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.

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 our State Convention.

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 by next year. 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

Annual Report of the Media and Communications Committee



Courtney VanZanten

Mr. Commander,

I would like to thank Commander Gary Wolkow for appointing me to serve as the Chairman of the Media and Communications Committee for 2021-2022.

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: 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.

The Media and Communications in South Dakota has seen a major shift in the past year: with me taking a full-time job in Brookings County, the newspaper went to Gracie Terrall, a journalism major from South Dakota State University who was willing to help us out. The software knowledge that comes with the newspaper was hard to replace, but Gracie has been wonderful in stepping up!

In addition, a lot of faces have stepped up to the Facebook/Social Media game as well. Commendations to PDC Fred Nelson, Vice Commander Doug Feltman, Americanism Officer Harry Boner and Media Committeeman Michelle Eosso for helping fill in the gaps where I used to be. Communication truly can be a full-time job!

Annual Report of the Veterans Affairs and Rehab Committee



Warren Aas

Mr. 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 Rosebud, Gary Schumacher of De Smet, and Dr. Tracy Diefenbach

of Warner, it gives me great pleasure to present the following Department VA&R Commission report.

We are proud to welcome Dr. Tracy Diefenbach, member of Warner Post #137, as the newest member on our VA&R Commission. We thank Dr. Tracy (Doc T) for volunteering her time and talent to help make our VA&R program the best we can be.

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. One of the major projects our commission has been working on is making all the posts in our department aware of the Department Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R) Award for Excellence. This award is open to every post in our department that 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 and 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 all state conventions.

The Department VA&R Commission meets twice per year. We make every effort to meet face-to-face and our other meeting is by Zoom or teleconference. As a member of the National VA&R Commission, I had the privilege of attending the Washington Conference (by Zoom in March 2022) to listen and participate in the national VA&R agenda. I make a point to provide all the information I can get my hands on from our meeting 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 for assistance.

Thank you Commander Wolkow 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. Ask your fellow members if they need a ride to the meeting. You'll be glad you did.



ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Annual Report of the Membership Committee



Travis Flisrand

Department Commander Wolkow,
The 2021-2022 year in the South Dakota American Legion was started off from a great year where South Dakota was the #1 Department in membership for the 2021 year. Your Membership and Marketing (M&M) committee's service projects had support from a good number of Posts. Our two service projects for this year were the DTOM 22 Veteran Ranch "sweat equity" day and the Midwest Honor Flight fundraiser. Both events

were more successful than we had initially anticipated. Service projects coordinated at the State level are a great way to help organizations who are helping the South Dakota veterans on a daily basis and to increase media coverage of what our Four pillars are.

The DTOM 22 Veteran ranch project on July 10, 2021, had volunteers from across the state coming together to help a South Dakota non-profit. The volunteers from 6 organizations donated over 600 hours of service to include installing 1,000 feet of fence, tore down an old barn, and a significant amount of general cleanup on the ranch. Local news was there to cover the event and was showcased on the front page of 5 large city publications.

The Midwest Honor flight fundraiser campaign of "Send One" was a huge success. The initial goal was to raise \$50,000 so we could name the flight the "South Dakota American Legion Midwest Honor Flight". The South Dakota American Legion Foundation donated the initial funds of \$10,000 to encourage donations from the Posts. Post 88 of White, SD came to 2021 State convention with over \$6,000 as well to solidify a solid start to this Fundraiser. As of May 1, 2022, over \$180,000 has been raised, this enough money to cover two flights of veterans. This gives our leadership this next year to utilize the media to broadcast the South Dakota American Legion story of community service. This campaign is a huge success for the South Dakota American Legion Family.

The M&M committee this past year created a recruiting brochure specific to the South Dakota American Legion using the consolidated post reports from the past 5 years to show impact. They also created 3 sets of recruiting displays. The displays were paired with folding tables, tablecloths, a wheeled case full of brochures and a SDAL themed runner. The 3 sets of recruiting materials were given to the 2 Dept. Vice Commanders and the membership chairman to be available for loaning out to Posts for larger recruiting events. This provides a professional looking recruiting table that can help Posts have a standard display to recruit from.

Membership totals for this year were slower than the previous year. As of May 1, 2022, we are at 92.03% of our membership goal. With a historic year of inflation from varying circumstances, many have reported that they were impacted from the inflation.

Thank you for this opportunity to continue serving in the South Dakota American Legion.

Very Respectfully,
Travis Flisrand
Dept. Membership Chairman

Annual Report of the Scouting Committee



Fred Nelson

Commander:

As an Eagle Scout and Legionnaire, it has been an honor to serve as the chairman of the Department Scouting Committee this past year. Our committee consists of Matt Lagerstrom, Roger Hoyme, and Richard MacDonald. If we include our Department Adjutant, Kevin Hempel as a member, we have four Eagle Scouts and one longtime supporter of Scouting on the committee.

Boy Scouts were the first youth group that the American Legion supported. Our support for the Boy Scouts of America began at the American Legion's first national convention in 1919. Nationally the American Legion sponsors 2,500 plus units.

South Dakota has 103 Scouting units. Eighteen of these Troops and Packs are sponsored by a South Dakota American Legion Post, which leaves 85 Troops or Packs that could use a sponsor or co-sponsor.

Within South Dakota, probably the longest continued American Legion Post sponsorship of a Troop goes to Spearfish Post 164. They have sponsored Boy Scout Troop 17 for 93 years.

Contact your local Troop or Pack and have your Post check into sponsoring possibilities. Explore opportunities to help make a positive impact. Perhaps Post members could serve as merit badge counselors? Help provide transportation to an outing. If it weren't for an American Legion member that stepped forward, I likely would not have received Eagle Scout.

Each year, the Department of South Dakota awards one Eagle Scout of the Year, and this year's Eagle Scout of the Year is Riley A. Murphy from Summerset, SD. The Troop's sponsor is American Legion Post 320 in Rapid City, SD.

The American Legion annually honors the Eagle Scout of the Year at the national convention. The winner receives a \$10,000 scholarship, and the three runners-up are each awarded \$2,500 scholarships.

Our committee's goals for the upcoming year are to increase the number of scouting units sponsored by the American Legion Family and increase the number of Eagle Scout of the Year application packages.

As the scouts say, "Do a good turn daily."

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Nelson, Chairman
Department Scouting Committee

Annual Report of the Children and Youth Committee



Don Kranz

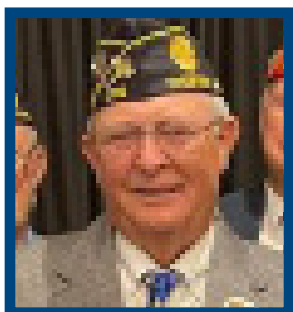
We had 5 applications for TFA money this year to investigate. We paid out zero funds on these claims due to eligibility requirement of minor children was not met on 3 claims. One claim was sent to the Department of North Dakota since the home of the veteran was Fargo ND. Then the last claim was going to be filed however the veteran managed to catch a break and didn't need our assistance.

I continued to provide "Dollar Tree" School Supplies and Toys to veterans around the state. Operation Home Front is a charity in Dollar Tree Stores where patrons can donate supplies to military families. Then volunteers across the state pick-up the donations for distribution.

I strongly encourage all veterans to visit their local "Army National Guard" armories to take advantage of these donations. The school supplies in August thru School Starting and toys in November thru Christmas. We send them out across the state with little expense and farthest reach using the armories. If you have questions about any of these donations, you can call 1-800-658-3930 for assistance locating the nearest armory.

Don Kranz
Children and Youth Chairman

Annual Report of the Veteran Affairs Volunteer Services Committee



Rodney Smith

Thank you, Commander Wolkow, for appointing me as the V.A.V.S. Committee Chairman this year. I appreciate the opportunity to serve you and the organization.

It has been a learning experience and a great and eye-opening experience spending time at the Sturgis and Hot Springs VA hospitals wrapping gifts and helping Veterans shop for gifts for their families. If you ever have the opportunity to assist at these events, I recommend you do so. There were restrictions on how many could be at these events this past year so check with the local representative or facility before showing up.

Due to Covid-19 we had one meeting over via Zoom and a proposal to increase our line item in the budget was discussed. The generosity of the post was shown at all the Spring District meetings and was greatly appreciated. Keep up the good work supporting the veterans who are in need.

Rodney Smith, VAVS Chairman

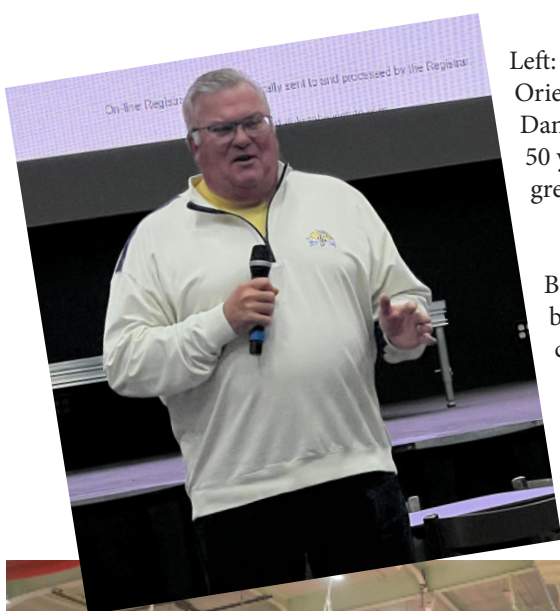


Cagley-Smith Post #60 from Clark holds a “Government Day” annually for the senior class from three high schools: Clark, Willow Lake and Henry schools. The seniors have the structure of local and county government explained to them by the post legionaries as well as government officials. Students are taken to the courthouse where they have the opportunity to tour the courthouse and visit with all of the department officers. There was a question and answer time when students can ask and hear how each office works. After being fed a lunch at hall, seniors return to the courthouse to attend a session of court and experience first hand the operation of a trial and later visit with Judge and other legal personnel. Legionnaire Dave Adam explains to students the “Charters of Freedom” located in Flat Iron Park. Standing in the background is Legionnaire Darin Lewis both from post #60.

American Legion Around the State



Several cadets from both Air Force and Army ROTC were recognized for their achievements in academics, teamwork, leadership, community service and patriotism during Governor’s Day at South Dakota State University.



Left: District Seven conducted their Boys State Orientation May 1 at Sioux Falls Post 15. Dana Dykehouse, Boys State Alumni from 50 years ago attended and helped share some great information.

Below: The Shrine Circus was in Chamberlain April 20. Pictured is an American Legion family helping to put smiles on the children that attended the circus. Doug Feltman, Dept. Vice Commander, is pictured in the center with the El Raid Shrine hat.



On April 9, the Spearfish American Legion Post #164 held their 103rd birthday and the Black Hills Chapter of the American Legion Legion Riders celebrated their 10th anniversary. Pictured is Jim Childers, Fred Nelson and Michelle Neslon who recieved awards for Legion Riders.

THANK YOU
for your service!

Quality Products & Personalized Service!

SUB-ZERO | WOLF | COVE | Thermador | CAFE | beko
 BOSCH | LG | KitchenAid | Electrolux | FRIGIDAIRE | SONY
 SAMSUNG | GE APPLIANCES | Whirlpool | MAYTAG | AMANA | Speed Queen
 TRAEGER | weber | NAPOLEON | Certi

We Service & Sell the Industry's Top Brands!

KARL'S
EMPLOYEE OWNED

"Your Servicing Dealer Since 1956."

www.karlsonline.com



If you eat today
THANK A FARMER.

Because you eat in freedom
THANK A VETERAN.

**Proud to Support
The SD Legion News**

Mueller Farms • Ethan SD

CHARLYS RESTAURANT
and Lounge Chamberlain, SD
Proud to support the American Legion



South Dakota Taps

As reported to Department Headquarters, March 10 2022- May 3, 2022
 "The legacy of heroes is the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example."

Benjamin Disraeli

#1 Vermillion	Sylvester Clifford	#50 Sisseton	Richard Evenson	#132 Lakeside	Robert Bussey
#8 Pierre	Perry Anderson	#53 Canton	William McCann	#132 Springfield	Clarence Vanderlei
#8 Pierre	Kenneth Doran	#62 Humboldt	Francis Sieverding	#146 Dallas	Roger Pochop
#8 Keystone	Thomas Piersol	#71 Hot Springs	Raymond Stoeckl	#154 Sioux Falls	Richard Zimmer
#15 Sioux Falls	William Bernard	#74 Brookings	Eugene Goodale	#159 Hoven	Myron Niemiller
#15 Sioux Falls	Roger Peterson	#83 Timber Lake	Jack Kraft	#169 Winner	Alvin Olson
#17 Watertown	Loren Holzwarth	#92 Hill City	Craig Grogan	#179 Spearfish	Paul Cooney
#18 Mitchell	William Haywood	#92 Redfield	Duane Mason	#193 Viborg	Obed Haugen
#18 Mitchell	Loren Menning	#92 Redfield	Don Strivens	#193 Mitchell	Dale Holm
#22 Rapid City	William Olsen	#93 Mount Vernon	Elmer Mickelson	#193 Irene	Damon Jorgensen
#23 Pipestone	Alan Houg	#94 White River	Charles Chamberlain	#193 Yankton	Richard Slowey
#25 Madison	Gary Callies	#94 Farmington	Edward Mickel	#207 Aberdeen	Thomas Saunders
#25 Madison	Joseph Thompson	#94 Winner	David Schmidt	#237 Yankton	Robert Kolberg
#33 Sturgis	Gary Behrmann	#94 Burke	David Steffen	#238 Oelrichs	Elmer Wheeler
#33 Sturgis	Kieth McKay	#102 Sioux Falls	Joseph Bowar	#246 Rapid City	Woodrow Shelton
#36 Bonesteel	A. Schochenmaier	#102 Faulkton	Jerry Kegler	#274 Corsica	Leonard Baanhofman
#49 Clear Lake	Arnold Severson	#114 Brookings	Howard Lee		

Department Calendar

May 2022

- TBD: Post Officer Certifications due to HQ after installation
- 6: Resolutions to be addressed by Dept Convention due to HQ
- 30: Memorial Day, HQ closed
- 30-Jun 3: Boys State, Jun 2 is Blue Hat Day at Boys State

June 2022

- 1: Applications for National American Legion College due
- 1: SDALPA Award inputs due
- 1: Consolidated Post Reports due to HQ
- 2: Delegate credentials for Dept Convention due to HQ
- 16-19: Department Convention—Watertown
- 17: Post History Award inputs due by 1 pm
- 20-24: Youth Trooper Academy, Jun 23 is Blue Hat Day

July 2022

- 15: Finance Commission meeting, Oacoma
- 16: Dept Executive Committee meeting, Oacoma
- 16-17: New District Commander training, Oacoma
- 27-31: Class "A" Senior Baseball Tournament, Rapid City
- 28-30: National Membership Workshop
- 28-31: Class "A" Junior Baseball Tournament, Sioux Falls
- 29-Aug 2: Class "B" Senior Baseball Tournament, Gregory

August 2022

- 5-7: Class "B" Junior Baseball Tournament, Clark
- 26-Sep 1: National Convention, Milwaukee WI

Future 2022

- Sep 10-11: SD Legion Golf Tournament, Hartford
- Oct 10-13: National Fall Meetings
- Dec 11-16: National American Legion College



MOLLET MEMORIALS

Monuments • Markers • Veteran Projects

For all memorial needs the experts at Mollet Memorial can create a memorial that will help you Remember, Honor and Share Your Memories of your loved ones.

Marion Mollet ~ Army Veteran
 605-334-1816 • C 605-360-9858
 Sioux Falls SD
Cal Plienis ~ Ret. Navy Veteran
 605-358-1501 • Sioux Falls SD
Stan Hegg ~ Navy Veteran
 605-350-2797 • Huron SD
Betsy Lingbeck
 605-983-4738 • C 605-270-4782
 Arlington SD