

# The South Dakota Legion News



Volume 90, Issue 1

"Veterans Strengthening America"

September 2022

## Feltman Elected 2022-2023 Department Commander

Doug Feltman of Chamberlain, was elected as the State Commander of The American Legion Department of South Dakota for 2022-2023 during the closing moments of the 103rd Annual State Convention in Watertown on Sunday, June 19, 2022.

Commander Feltman is a 36 year, Paid-Up-For-Life member of Potter Post 3 in Chamberlain. He has held the following offices: Post Service Officer for 3 years, Post Adjutant for 9 years, Brule County Commander for 2 years, and District 6 Commander for 2 years. On the Department level, he was Vice Commander for 1 year, served on the Legislative Committee for 4 years (2 years as Chairman), was a Legislative Lobbyist, on the Public Safety Committee and was on the National Security Commission for 4 years.

He received the Robert C. Gabrielson Memorial Leadership Award in 2020, the highest award presented to a Legionnaire for leadership abilities. Doug attended The American Legion College in

the class of 2021.

Commander Feltman enlisted in the South Dakota National Guard in 1965 and completed basic training and advanced training at Ft. Lewis, Washington. He was a member of the 200th Engineer Company (FB) (-) in Chamberlain. He attended the South Dakota Military Academy NCO School in 1969 and was honorably discharged in 1971 at the rank of Sergeant.

Doug graduated from Chamberlain High School in 1965. He was a police officer in Mitchell, SD for over 34 years, retiring as Chief of Public Safety in 2006. He and his wife Kathy have been married for 33 years and live on the ranch where he grew up south of Chamberlain. He has two daughters and three grandchildren. Kathy is a member of The American Legion Auxiliary along with daughters Cindy and Tanya, and granddaughter Caley. Granddaughter Sidney is a member of the Jr. Auxiliary. Grandson Riley is a member of The Sons of The American Legion.



Former Commander Gary Walkow hands over the Home Post banner to Doug Feltman, the new Department Commander, at Feltman's homecoming party in Chamberlain.

## Historic PACT Act Passes

Mackenzie Wolf, National American Legion HQ

The U.S. Senate issued its final vote on the historic Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act, ensuring millions of veterans exposed to noxious fumes emanating from burn pits will have access to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) care and benefits.

The American Legion-supported legislation passed by a vote of 86-11.

"Tonight, the U.S. Senate passed historic legislation that will make a difference in the lives of millions of veterans," American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard said. "After some unusual delays for a bill that is largely identical to what passed on June 16, a bipartisan majority of senators voted in favor of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act. This act will save lives and offer health care and benefits for those exposed to the

poisons of war while serving our country."

Dillard pointed out that the Legion's grassroots advocacy helped ensure the bill's approval.

"It would not have passed without the tireless efforts of our American Legion Family and friends who contacted lawmakers and encouraged them to do right by America's veterans. We look forward to President Biden signing the PACT Act expeditiously."

The bill was previously passed in both the House and Senate before it received technical corrections and went to a procedural vote in the Senate on July 27. The 55-42 vote failed to meet the 60 votes necessary to advance the legislation when 25 senators who previously voted in favor of the bill flipped their votes citing newfound concerns with the legislation.

The PACT Act addresses the full spectrum of issues affecting toxic-exposed veterans' access to VA benefits and care, while also reforming VA's presumptive decision-making process.

The sweeping legislation provides a comprehensive framework to improve the presumptive process for burn pit veterans by streamlining access to health-care benefits for those who served in areas of known toxic exposure — regardless of disability status — and provides health care for as many as 3.5 million veterans exposed to airborne hazards and burn pits.

Toxic smoke and fumes from burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan included medical and human waste, jet fuel, chemicals, metal, munitions and unexploded ordnance, petroleum and lubricant products, plastics, Styrofoam and more.

The bill is named after Army National Guard Sgt. Heath Robinson. After deploying to Kosovo and Iraq as a combat medic with the Ohio National Guard, Robinson was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disorder and stage 4 lung cancer. He died in May 2020, leaving behind his wife and daughter, Brielle. The legislation is expected to be signed into law by President Biden in the coming days. Aspen, and Brecken of Fort Collins, Colorado.

Continued on page 3...

## Legion News Transitioning to All-Digital Platform

Courtney Steffen

Department Media & Communications

This is a difficult article to write.

Rising costs in print materials and postage have brought the end to the regular run of the Legion News in print, to include to the Posts and current subscribers. It is no longer practical or feasible to run small batch prints, and the cost of a full-run has overwhelmingly exploded (doubled, if not tripled in some spots) in the last three years. This will be the last regular issue in print.

Being at the helm of the paper for the majority of the past three years, I was a tireless advocate for it. Why? I believe in the communication to every Blue Hat in our organization. This was one guaranteed way to do so; whether or not every member read it was their choice. We at least were providing the information, which was half the battle won. As stated before, however, sometimes reality bites—and here we are, staring down a future without a paper delivered to your door.

And so, we at the Department will continue to provide information in a timely manner. However, we need your help now more than ever to make sure the word gets out. Three steps to help us do so:

1. We will continue to publish the Legion News online at [www.sdlegion.org/legion-news](http://www.sdlegion.org/legion-news). Please, subscribe to the emails for notifications.

2. Additionally, we publish a bi-weekly update called the Up-To-Now, which keeps you abreast of the latest and greatest happenings around the state. Those can be found at [www.sdlegion.com/up-to-now](http://www.sdlegion.com/up-to-now), and again, please subscribe so you can stay up to date.

3. Finally, follow us on Facebook. We do a lot of great work in this state, and try to share the fantastic work of the Posts as we see it come up too. Find us there at [www.facebook.com/sdamericanlegion](http://www.facebook.com/sdamericanlegion).

Thank you for your support over the years with the Legion News, and here's to transitioning to a new way of communication. Let's do our best to adapt--Semper Gumby!

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## New Year, New Goals

### Doug Feltman Department Commander



Greetings to Everyone:

Thank you Legionnaires for electing me Department Commander. It is humbling that you put your trust in me to lead this great organization and I am looking forward to the coming year and the challenge. I will dedicate my time and energy to "Building a Stronger Family". If we work together each organization will grow and prosper and be better able to serve our veterans and our communities. We are a team and when a team "pulls" together goals can be accomplished.

Our most important goal this year is membership. Look what we accomplished as a team working toward a goal of raising money for Honor Flight. The outcome exceeded everyone's most optimistic expectations. A team working together can do it. Your membership chairman Rod Smith, membership committee man Bill Peters, District #6 Commander Jim Pekron, Department Adjutant Kevin Hempel and I (by Zoom) worked very hard together to set the membership goal for South Dakota and each Post. After much discussion and input from each of us the decision was made. The goal for each Post was set by increasing your 2022 membership by 2%. National set South Dakotas goal at 3% of 2022 membership which is 115 members over our 2% goal. I know that if we work together "we" can do it. Again look what "we" did for Honor

Flight. Remember that each Legionnaire is a recruiter, please do not rely just on the Post, District or Department membership chairman and committee. Each and every one of us must work on membership. If every member would get just one new member think where we would be. Without members, The Legion is not sustainable. Thank you Rod and Kevin for putting together all of the numbers for us.

Another key element of a successful organization is communication. We must keep our members up to date on the things that the Legion is doing in our communities, state and nation. I ask each of you that have access to a computer to go to [sdlegion.org](http://sdlegion.org), then publications, then download the Up To Now and print a copy. I know that not everyone has the ability to do that so for us that do we need to share that information with those that do not. There is a lot of important information in the Up To Now about happenings within the Department.

Another year is upon us and I look forward to working for you and accept the challenges that come with the job. Together we will "Build a Stronger Family" and have a great year.

Doug Feltman  
Commander



Tom Henley  
Department Chaplain

What comes to mind when you think of Labor Day? Parades ... picnics ... family reunions ... camping ... giving thanks.

Aside from looking forward to a long weekend, a day off from work or a family picnic, do you know why we celebrate Labor Day? This day's origins span from a time in the late 1800s when building our country's economic growth and prosperity were of utmost importance. It was felt that celebrating the American workforce would contribute to our country's well-being and promote the nation's strength.

This Labor Day, let's celebrate the men and women who care for our Veterans. If you are a hiring manager, consider hiring Veterans whose many skills include leadership and teamwork. If you are contemplating a job change, think about a career giving back to those who gave so much for our country.

God of the continents, whose mighty acts continue to astound us: enter the celebrations of this Labor Day to bless those men and women who across this goodly land, work faithfully to provide bread for the nation and those things needful for the well-being of all the world. Help us who receive so much at their hands to honor them and to support them by every honest means toward safe working conditions, fair wages, and satisfactions in the labor undertaken and accomplished. And command us to march hand in hand toward this nation's declared purposes of liberty and justice for all. Amen.

## From the Adjutant

### Kevin Hempel Department Adjutant



Legionnaires,

It is hard to believe the summer is coming to a close already. It has been a very busy summer. I just returned from the National Membership Workshop. We had a number of excellent presentations, and I would like to highlight some of information that was presented.

1. We need to reinforce with all members, every Legion member is a recruiter. The Posts should not be leaving the recruiting to just the membership committee or Go Getters. Posts need to instill this thought into all their members. If every member recruited just one new member, think how strong the South Dakota American Legion would be.

2. Welcome and mentor new members. When an individual joins the Post, the Post needs to make sure they feel welcomed and valued. Make sure the new members get introduced and mentored at the meetings and events.

3. Posts that are active in the community attract more members. Not necessarily those doing just fundraising like pancake breakfasts or doing color guards, but those that support their community with programs like food banks, helping with meals on wheels, cleaning up parks, help with Scouting programs. Participating in events that give back to the community where the public can see the good that is being done shows off the American Legion which gives members a reason to join and renew.

4. Work as a Legion Family. Posts that do events where all the Legion Family can participate is great for the Legion Family. Legion family members should encourage people to join any part of the Family. Legion members can recruit SAL and Auxiliary. Auxiliary can recruit Legion and SAL. Riders can recruit for all. A family that works together stays together.

5. Buddy checks work. Don't forget to call the member and check up on them. Make sure they are doing alright and are not in need of something. If they are see what you can do to help them out.

6. Be The One. You have heard this a number of times but will hear it again. This is a National Campaign. Be The One can mean a number of things. Be The One that makes that call top a buddy who is having issues. Your call may make the difference in his or her life. Be The One in your Post that mentors the new member. Be The One that talks to veteran about the American Legion and encourages them to be a member and participate. If every person is the Be The One person, The American Legion can make many changes for the good.

Fall District Meetings are approaching quickly. Make plans to attend or for your Post to have representatives at that meeting.

Veterans Serving Veterans  
Kevin Hempel

## From the NEC

### Jim Huls National Executive Committeeman



Legion News

As I have mentioned previously in this article, the Ad Hoc Committee has been studying Membership Processing at the National Level. They found that the current practice of having all memberships run concurrently regardless of when an individual joined the American Legion is cumbersome and confusing, so today I received Resolution #1 to amend The American Legion constitution and by-laws to allow multiyear and rolling memberships. This resolution will be considered at the National Convention in Milwaukee between August 30-Sept 1. This change will allow dues to be paid for multiple years (3 or 5 years), but less than life, shall be paid at the rate of annual dues for the first year of the term and upon expiration, annual dues shall be immediately payable for the succeeding year (rolling renewal date).

This is a major change for The American Legion and will be discussed at length at the Convention and voted upon. Stay tuned.

Veterans Strengthening America  
Jim Huls

# PACT Act Continued

What has been added with the PACT act?

For Gulf War Veterans and Post 9/11 Veterans, these cancers are now presumptive:

Brain cancer, Gastrointestinal cancer of any type, Glioblastoma, Head cancer of any type, Kidney cancer, Lymphatic cancer of any type, Lymphoma of any type, Melanoma, Neck cancer, Pancreatic cancer, Reproductive cancer of any type, and Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type.

These illnesses are now presumptive:

Asthma that was diagnosed after service, Chronic bronchitis, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Chronic rhinitis, Chronic sinusitis, Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis, Emphysema, Granulomatous disease, Interstitial lung disease (ILD), Pleuritis, Pulmonary fibrosis, and Sarcoidosis.

For Vietnam Veterans, these illnesses are now presumptive:

High blood pressure (also called hypertension), and Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)

For those exposed to toxic waters at Camp Lejeune:

The Honoring our PACT Act also included the Camp Lejeune Justice Act, which allows those adversely impacted by living and working at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, from 1953 to 1987 exercise their constitutional right to legal action against the United States government for toxic water exposure on base.

When will this go into effect?

Leo Shane III

The next step is delivering the benefits to veterans and their families, estimated to cost around \$300 billion over the next 10 years.

White House and Veterans Affairs officials promise they have been preparing for that task for months.

“Veterans who were exposed to toxic fumes while fighting for our country are American heroes, and they deserve world-class care and benefits for their selfless service,” VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement minutes after Feal’s speech.

“Once the president signs this bill into law, we at VA will implement it quickly and effectively, delivering the care these veterans need and the benefits they deserve.”

Once the PACT Act is signed into law, those new processes will be codified, a move that veterans advocates say will be key in coming years to preventing long waits for department recognition of military injuries.

Other parts of the sweeping toxic exposure legislation will also go into effect immediately. Veterans currently get five years of medical coverage through VA after leaving the service, but will see that expanded to 10 years under the new law.

The benefits for individual illnesses will take longer to process. The law calls for VA to add 23 new conditions to the list of burn pit presumptive illnesses — including asthma, chronic bronchitis and brain cancer — but those will be phased in over the next three years.

For Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange, presumptive status for monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS) goes into effect immediately.

But new benefits for Vietnam veterans suffering from high-blood pressure (a group estimated to be around 500,000 individuals) aren’t set to go into effect until late 2026.

There are provisions in the bill to speed up benefits for individuals with deteriorating health conditions, or age 80 and older. However, as the bill is written, some veterans expecting to benefit from the PACT Act won’t see any checks in the mail for another four years. White House officials said they are hoping to speed that up.

“The law does provide discretion to the VA secretary to move more quickly than some of the dates, so we’re going to be working collaboratively to see how much we can get done as quickly as possible so that veterans can get the services they need,” said Terri Tanielian, special assistant to the president for Veterans Affairs.

“The department is focused on making sure that they can hire the staff that they need, that they have the resources in the right places. We’re mindful of needing to make sure that the workforce and the infrastructure is ready.”

Lawmakers included funding in the measure for the new hires, aware that sending millions of new benefits claims to VA in coming years has the potential to overwhelm their current systems.

In his statement on the PACT Act passage, McDonough encouraged eligible veterans to apply for benefits as soon as possible, rather than waiting on the legislation’s official start date. Depending on the case, veterans may eventually be eligible for retroactive pay if they file earlier.

To file a claim or an appeal, the South Dakota American Legion highly recommends utilizing the services of a trained Veterans Service Officer. For a list of Veteran Service Officers near you, visit

<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/>

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# District Commander Updates

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

Hello again to my District 1 family. Since our last newsletter, many great things have happened. In June, we had our State Convention in Watertown, and I was able to visit with many good friends from around the state. Congratulations to our new Department Officers who were sworn in at the convention.

In July, we had the DEC and District Commanders Training in Oacoma. The training offered many new ideas and is a valuable resource for Commanders.

We are now getting ready to attend the National Convention in Milwaukee, WI at the end of August. I'm looking forward to representing South Dakota.

The fall District 1 meeting will be held in Lemmon on Sept. 10 at their Post. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending.

We are in a new membership year and I will be having the District Membership Chair call each Post with their new goal numbers. Let's not wait until the end of the year the knock the 100% membership goals out.

Quite a few Posts have not certified their officers or turned their CPR's yet. These Post reports are due each year so please get them done ASAP and turned into the Department.

God Bless America,  
Commander Jon McDonald

2



**Christopher Rendon, Rapid City**  
[www.facebook.com/SDLegion2](http://www.facebook.com/SDLegion2)

District 2 Legionaries,

It's that time of year, where the State and National conventions are in our rear view mirror.

Summer is winding down and posts are coming back together again. Post 173 of Philip will be hosting our fall district meeting this year. The date is September 18. The time of the meeting was not available at the time this article was submitted.

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

Hello from Hot, Dry and Windy SD.

It was great watching the Senior "B" tournament here in Gregory this past week. American Legion baseball is just another example of one of the fantastic programs that the American Legion provides for the young people of South Dakota. Baseball also brings a lot of revenue into the small towns across the state that host games and especially tournaments. I know it brought quite a bit of revenue for our motels, restaurants, and the Legion Post in this small community.

As I said, Legion is a fantastic program for the youth of our communities. Just like all the other programs we have for our young people it is driven by community involvement, volunteerism, and Legion Membership. Membership is Money! Money for fighting for Veterans at the State and National level, Money for all the Youth Programs, Money to ensure our State Headquarters has the finances to support all the American Legion members and other Veterans in South Dakota, Money for advertising and marketing to help Posts spread the word about this great organization. I could fill up two pages of programs that Membership (Money) supports. I will spare you that. Last year the SD American Legion lost a lot of money due the simple fact we did not meet our membership goals. I think one of the biggest reasons is that it seemed like we were always 'behind the eight ball' and we never did get caught up.

That is going to change in District 3 this year and NOW is the time to form your membership committees. Now is the time to begin calling ALL your members and ask for their support and pay their annual dues. Our goal to reach 100% membership is TODAY, because TOMORROW is a day too late!! District 3 and The SD American Legion cannot afford to NOT make membership goals. Just ask a veteran to join, that is usually all it takes!

Stay safe, stay cool and God bless you all.  
Gene O, District 3

So please read the Up to Now or our District 2 facebook page, Yes, we have a facebook page. I am planning to spread any information that I have through social media. If your post is planning or want to share an event through our Facebook page, go ahead and post it.

Our State Commander Doug Feltman challenged the district commanders and vic commanders to see each post in our district by June's state convention. I know this is a daunting task but we are looking forward to seeing you in the future.

4



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

Greetings from District 4.

It's August, and that means it's Fair Time in South Dakota. I hope everyone is getting out to enjoy your local, or not so local Fairs, as well as the State Fair.

July 1st marked the beginning of the new membership year. As we recruit new members, remember to talk about the Legion Insurance Trust. This accidental death insurance is no cost to the Legion Member and may just be what gets your Post a new member.

Looking forward, it will soon be time for District Meetings. District 4 will have our meeting October 29th, time and place to be determined. I would encourage all American Legion members to attend these District meetings. The information provided will reach you much quicker than your District Commander can relate it to his/her Posts. District meetings are a great opportunity to meet and visit with Legion members from other Posts as well as your District and State Officers.

Autumn is the time when a lot of our Legion Posts hold their annual Fund Raisers. Please check with your local and neighboring American Legion Posts to see if they are having a Fund Raiser. Often times, these will be family-oriented events. These are just one way you can support your local Legion Post.

Bob Thomason

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**James Pekron, Mitchell**  
[www.facebook.com/SDLegion6](http://www.facebook.com/SDLegion6)

Hello from District 6. I was recently elected as the District Commander for District 6 at the Spring Meeting and sworn in at the State Convention last June. I was born and raised in South Dakota. My wife Anita and I have a blended family of five sons and 12 grandchildren and currently reside in Mitchell, SD. I have been a Legion member for the past 30 years at Post 138 in De Smet where I was Commander for 16 of those years. As part of my new duties I attended Commander Training meetings in Oacoma and also attended the 59th National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis, IN in July. My motto for the next two years is reaching membership goals for my district and I will be working with post commanders and membership chairmen to help them reach those goals. Retaining your current members is a big part of membership, so it is important that you keep your members involved in post activities. Events coming up for our District are the Oratory Contest to be held on January 15th in Huron. Your local contest must be held prior to that date. Posts should also start thinking about contacting your schools and speaking to the Junior boys about attending Boys State and the Youth Trooper Academy. In closing I am looking forward to meeting the members of my District. I hope to meet many of you at the District meeting on September 24th.

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

I am very happy to say that District 7 finished the year in First Place in many areas leading the way was membership. Our district finished at 99.417% in reaching the goal set for us. Fantastic all Posts in 7. New goals have been established and are explained in the Up to Now.

I have started visiting posts and as always been greeted with warmth and smiles which makes me feel welcome, Canistota for Sports Day and Bingo and the proceeds went to Honor Flight. Needless to say, my wife and I had a lot of fun and yes, we did not win, however the fellowship was way great. Went to Garretson for the Chicken and Corn Feed. Chicken Good Corn Good and fellowship Great. Even got a new way of making Corn on the Cob going to try this tonight at home. My Post 25 is involved in Mad Town which goes for 6 week and just finished week 3. We have found that this is a great way to spread the good word about the Legion what we do and the advantages of becoming a member. This past week we had a Legion Member from Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. He is a 31-year member now living in Madison and is thinking about moving his membership to our Post. There are many opportunities out there to generate new members

The fall meeting this year will be hosted by Post 15 Sioux Falls on Oct 22, 2022. Executive meeting and social start at 11:00 am, Meal at 12:00 and Meeting at 1:00. Let us have a great showing of Posts and Members

God Speed to all.  
Patrick Mullen

8



**Joseph Knoer, Vermillion**  
[www.facebook.com/SDLegion8](http://www.facebook.com/SDLegion8)

Hello everyone in District 8. As your new District Commander, I'm excited to see the types of things our team can accomplish. I would like to tell you a little about myself. I have been in the Army National Guard for about 13 years and I currently reside in Vermillion. While working at USD over the last couple of years, I have been finishing my Doctorate in Education and will graduate this December. In my free time I enjoy biking, hiking, and spending time with my dog, Nala. Moving forward, I believe that our district can make great strides and be a valuable asset to the state. I would like some of our main focuses this year to include reaching Membership goals at every post, increasing the attendance rate for Boys State, and sending a competitive candidate to state for the Oratorical contest. These are very achievable goals we can start with now before the Fall District meeting, where we can determine what other goals we may have. I look forward to meeting all of you at Post meetings. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions or would like assistance with any issues. Thank you, Joe Knoer.

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(Left) The South Dakota American Legion float at Aurora, SD's Gala Days on August 9. The float is manned by Post 230 Auxillary, Junior Auxillary and scout members. The Gala Days was also the first time Post 230 had a color guard during the parade.

(Below) Jacob A. Heinrich of Post 170 in Herreid, SD with Post Adjutant Lester Goehring as he receives a membership award for Post 170 attaining 117% membership.

# American Legion Around the State



(Left) The Dakota District Pipes and Drums group performed at the Parkston Celebration of Freedom event on Thursday, June 30.

(Right) Darrell Yost of Roy S. Hickman Post 78 in Leola, SD with National Commander Paul Dillard. Darrell is a 68-year member of the American Legion. He was able to get a ride from Leola to Pierre to meet Commander Dillard.



(Below) Spearfish Post 164 donated \$2,400 to the Spearfish Boy Scout Troop to assist with 14 members traveling to a National Order of the Arrow Meeting in Tennessee.

(Left) The Brookings American Legion Post 74's float in the 4th of July parade honored local World War II Veterans Robert Bartling and Ronald Peterson. Loud cheers and applause greeted the Veterans as they passed



# Children & Youth



The American Legion has a proud tradition of supporting our nation's youth. The organization was founded on the principle in 1919, when Children & Youth was declared one of the American Legion's four pillars. In South Dakota, our hallmark program for Children & Youth is Temporary Financial Assistance, which awards cash grants to minor children of current active duty or American Legion members. These grants help families in need meet the cost of shelter, food, utilities and health expenses, thereby keeping the child or children in a more stable environment. Other undertakings include Halloween Safety, Operation Military Kids, Special Olympics and additional local initiatives.



## From the Chair

Harry Boner, Castlewood

## SD Legion Partners With Dollar Tree for Operation Homefront

This year, the South Dakota American Legion is proud to be a part of Dollar Tree Operation Homefront's annual nationwide school supply collection and distribution campaign. Since inception, Operation Homefront has distributed 350,000 backpacks to military (to include Veteran) children. Operation Homefront and Dollar Tree Inc. have joined forces for 14 consecutive years to collect and distribute school supplies for military children.

Utilizing volunteers across South Dakota, the American Legion will pick up donated school supplies throughout the month of July. The donated supplies will then be brought together, organized into complete backpacks and distributed through the South Dakota National Guard Military and Family Readiness networks. Pictured right, volunteers at the Back to School Backpack Distribution Program at Ellsworth AFB on July 20th hand out 340 backpacks to school kids. Thanks to the members of Posts/Units/SALs 22, 303 and 315 for their outstanding efforts in making this possible!



Legion Family,

Greetings all from the 2022/23 State Children and Youth Chairman. In the past four to five years, the Children and Youth program within SD has worked closely with the Dollar Tree Program, in association with Operation Homefront. In the last year, this program has been reassociated with the South Dakota National Guard, helping those young Veterans families with small children at home to pick up much needed school supplies.

This year so far, some of our American Legion family members have stepped up to help pick up items from the Dollar tree in Sisseton, where currently there is no National Guard Armory, and those items will be distributed to local schools there later in August. Additionally, Operation Homefront donated backpacks full of school supplies to Air Force personnel with children at Ellsworth AFB. Around 15 members from District one and two, on short notice, volunteered to help distribute 340 of these backpacks on July 30th.

More help is needed to support our Veterans with children at home across the state. We are proposing a few fundraising efforts with proceeds from each to be split between the Children's Miracle Network (CMN) of South Dakota and the South Dakota American Legion youth programs in the State, which include TFA. Working with and making donations to CMN is not new to the American Legion, though it may be new to some who have not worked with CMN in the past. As a Veteran that had a child that needed advanced medical care and having been introduced to CMN and their services, helped to make a difficult time in my family's lives much less stressful. CMN's support to my family has led to some lifelong friendships being formed as the level of care provided is nothing more than incredible.

Children's Miracle Network helps South Dakota families with sick or injured children with:

- Specialized equipment needs for the Sanford Children's Hospital
- Child Life Specialists to help teach our children about their illness
- Travel assistance, Food Vouchers, Lodging

Veterans with children at home can file for TFA (Temporary Financial Assistance), in times of need to help cover some the immediate needs of the Veterans family. Veterans can apply for assistance through their local American Legion Post. As a Veteran with children in the home during some very difficult times in our lives, sacrifices were made as it was difficult to stretch funds when additional challenges in live came up. Knowing about the TFA program would have helped to reduce some of the stress during a difficult time. More needs to be done to help spread the word about TFA. We need to promote the following fund-raising efforts, not only to help raise funds for both organizations, but to help spread the word to the public that this program does exist and that through advertising of these fundraisers, it will help bring awareness to our Legion programs.

There are three fund raising options that will be presented to each Post in a future Up to Now, pending DEC approval at their meeting August 11th. I am asking that some or all these fund-raising options are looked at and participated in; Straight up Donations with a QR code link option to donate to, Statewide raffle for chance to win one of two Corn Hole board sets, and a local fund raiser (similar to what was held for the Midwest Honor Flight). As indicated, more information will be coming soon. We understand that each

Continued on page 20...

## SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION SCHOLARSHIP

Children and grandchildren of veterans are eligible to apply along with veterans. Scholarships will be paid to the Recipient and the post-secondary school that they attend after the completion of the 1st semester.



Applications due February 15, 2023

<https://www.sdlegion.org/scholarship-information/>



### 2021 Award Recipient, Audra West Department Educator of the Year Award

The South Dakota American Legion "Educator of the Year" Award program serves to recognize dedicated and devoted individuals who, on a constant basis, give so much of themselves on behalf of the children of South Dakota: Teachers.

The South Dakota American Legion "Educator of the Year" Award is open to any educator in grades K-12 in any public, private, or parochial school or academy in the state of South Dakota recognized by the South Dakota Department of Education.

The Department "Educator of the Year" will be selected by the Department Education Scholarship Committee from all 8 District winner nominees and will receive a plaque to be presented at a local venue.

It is suggested that each District establish a suitable certificate and/or plaque for presentation to the District "Educator of the Year" during their Spring District meeting.

Nominations from Districts must be to the Department by May 1.

Find the application and more information at:  
[www.sdlegion.org/educator-of-the-year/](https://www.sdlegion.org/educator-of-the-year/)  
POC: PDC Hugh Holmes, Mitchell

## American Legion Blood Donor Program

People have held blood drives and given blood since community service became an American value. It's only natural that The American Legion - with community service as one of its pillars - be heavily involved in blood donation efforts.

The American Legion Blood Donor Program has existed officially since 1942 to help that cause. Each year - especially since 9/11 - Legionnaires have donated in spades, and departments have coordinated efforts at the post level. The Blood Donor Program honors those departments that best participate in blood-donation efforts, recognizing departments in two areas: for post participation and individual Legionnaire participation. Post participation awards are given to departments with the highest number of participating posts. Individual participation awards are given to departments with the highest percentage of individuals giving blood to the program. Departments are separated into five categories, according to membership size, and honored.

Legionnaires participate by giving blood and reporting it to their posts, which mark the donation on their annual Consolidated Posts Reports. Similarly, posts that host blood drives mark their participation on their Consolidated Post Reports, listing number of drives held and total pints donated (for Legionnaires and non-Legionnaires). Pins and certificates are available for recognizing those who show outstanding commitment to the Program.

A healthy donor may donate red blood cells every 56 days or double red blood cells every 112 days, according to the Red Cross. Platelets can be donated as few as seven days apart but a maximum of 24 times a year. Platelets are essential for patients who are undergoing chemotherapy or kidney transplants and have weakened immune systems. Donors are given a brief, confidential health screening prior to giving blood. Often, lingering health problems such as irregular heartbeats or high blood pressure are discovered during these screenings.

<https://www.legion.org/security/blood>

## South Dakota American Legion Awards: Firefighter/EMT & Law Enforcement of the Year

We all have them: the local heroes who, day in and day out, work to keep our communities safe. The American Legion recognizes these individuals every year through the Firefighter/EMT, and Law Enforcement Officer of the Year awards. While it goes without saying that the Department wants Posts to recognize its local heroes for what they do, these awards also serve an important secondary purpose: It is firmly believed these awards serve to promote public trust and support of our law enforcement and firefighting agencies, which is more critical now than ever.

### Firefighter of the Year:

The Firefighter of the Year Award goes to a firefighter who has exceeded the requirements expected of his or her position and has shown a distinct pattern of community service and professional achievement. The award, which takes into account heroic acts, will be given annually at the Legion's Department and National Conventions.

Nominees must A: be a citizen of the United States, male or female; and B: be a certified, living, active, full-time, paid, or volunteer firefighter. Military firefighters are eligible for participation in this award provided they are state firefighter certified.

Nomination packages cover the time period of 1 July to 30 June. District Commanders are responsible for ensuring their nominees are forwarded to the Department by December 31st. It is recommended that Posts complete and forward their nominations in November. The application for Department Firefighter/EMT of the Year is the same as National.

Find the application here: <https://www.legion.org/security/firefighter>

### Law Enforcement Officer of the Year:

Each year, The American Legion gives its National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award to a well-rounded law enforcement officer who has exceeded the duty requirements expected of his or her position and has demonstrated a distinct pattern of community service coupled with professional achievement. The award, which especially takes into account heroic acts, is presented annually at the Legion's Department and National Convention.

Nominees must be U.S. citizens and living, active, full-time and paid, sworn law enforcement officers entrusted with full authority and the powers of arrest. Posthumous awards will be acceptable only if the nominee's death has occurred after the department's selection.

Nominees must be assigned to or fully recognized by municipal, county, district or state police; highway patrol; sheriff's office or as a sworn federal law enforcement officer (FBI, Secret Service agent, U.S. Marshal, National Park Police, U.S. Capitol Police, etc.) Military police officers or investigators are eligible if they are state law enforcement certified. Nominees must also reside and be assigned or attached for duty in the nominating department.

Nomination packages cover the time period of 1 July to 30 June. District Commanders are responsible for ensuring their nominees are forwarded to the Department by December 31st. It is recommended that Posts complete and forward their nominations in November. The application for Department Law Enforcement Officer of the Year is the same as National.

Find the application here: <https://www.legion.org/security/officeraward>

## American Legion Amateur Radio Club

The American Legion has formed a special entity to provide a forum for military veterans who today are engaged in a hobby that can also provide emergency communications "when all else fails." During the May 2011 Spring Meetings, the National Executive Committee authorized the establishment of The American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TA-LARC).

There are estimated to be 700,000 federally licensed amateur radio operators, or "hams," in the United States. Over the years, countless members of the U.S. military were trained as technicians or engineers, and later obtained amateur-radio licenses to continue to use their abilities at home, as both recreation and a public-service commitment.

"The beauty of amateur radio is that it attracts folks of all career interests, from doctors, Ph.D.s, engineers, rocket scientists to mechanics, housewives, construction and office workers, students and everything in between," says Robert L. Morrill, former chairman of the Legion's Public Relations Commission. "Hams provide backup communications to emergency-management agency offices across the country when 'all else fails,' and have done so with distinction in virtually every major disaster when cell towers and commercial communications have been knocked out after earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and man-made disasters."

The club has established an amateur radio station at National Headquarters with the call sign K9TAL (K9 The American Legion) in order to conduct special-event operations on The American Legion Birthday, Veterans Day, etc.; operate SKYWARN during local severe weather; and provide members an opportunity to operate the station during visits to National Headquarters. A special QSL card is provided to all amateur radio stations that work K9TAL on the air.

"The potential to serve here is limitless," Morrill says. "Legionnaires who are hams can help others get licensed, coordinate with local emergency authorities, provide counseling and assistance to schools, and a whole array of other support."

"While some people may think that ham radio is an old technology, the simple truth is that hams were working with digital transmissions long before folks had home computers, and they provided the impetus to make 'wireless' happen. They were transmitting emergency calls from their cars long before anyone had a mobile phone to do the same. Today, hams are conducting broad-spectrum experiments on ham bands that may eventually become routine ways to communicate for all of us."

Membership is free to members of The American Legion family.

<https://www.legion.org/hamradio>

# National Security



The American Legion is an organization of veterans who fought for freedoms, which they are dedicated to keeping and preserving. As one of the Four Pillars it was founded on, the American Legion believes national security is upheld by keeping a well-funded Department of Defense, a good quality of life for troops and a sensible transition between service and separation.

In South Dakota, the National Security pillar primarily serves veterans through local support aimed at helping the families of deployed Active Duty, Guard and Reserve. The Legislative Committee keeps a keen eye on legislation in Pierre, ensuring veterans voices are heard. As a Department, we recognize annually the men and women who serve in Law Enforcement and Firefighting capacities. There is an active HAM radio club who serve to provide communications when "all else fails." In addition, the American Legion Blood Donor program has an active role in several posts across the state.

# Boys State Election Results

## Governor

Jason Lenning, Sioux Falls Christian High School  
Lieutenant Governor

Evan Gran, Harrisburg High School  
State Treasurer

Jacob Lewandowski, Groton High School  
State Auditor

Shane Rist, Centerville High School  
Attorney General

Jack Hinrichs, Washington High School  
Secretary of State

James Park, Brookings High School  
Speaker of the House

Matthew Mork, Webster High School  
Senate President Pro Tempore

Zachary Wrightsman, Lincoln High School  
Federalist Chair

Isaiah Hoekman, Lincoln High School  
Nationalist Chair

Jack Hinrichs, Washington High School  
Federalist Keynote Speaker

Brody Riggs, Ethan High School  
Nationalist Keynote Speaker

Joel Tramp, Custer High School  
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Maxwell Lightfield, Milbank Valley High School  
Supreme Court Justice

Ethan Fergal, Aberdeen Central High School

Joe Osmundson, Lincoln High School

Christopher Gaikowski, Webster High School

Tice Mursu, Milbank High School

Public Utilities Commissioner

Ethan Boekelheide, Northwestern Area High School

Jacob Shelstad, Milbank High School

Aidan Foell, Milbank High School

Commissioner of School and Public Lands

Josiah Sabrowski-Johnson, RC Central High School

Outstanding Speaker

Jack Hinrichs, Washington High School

Outstanding Citizen

Preston Rosane, Bennett County High School

Chandler L. Beach "Spirit of Boys State" Award

Quenton Walls, Huron High School

Samsung American Legion Scholarship Recipient

Maxwell Lightfield, Milbank High School

Boys Nation Representative

Jason Lenning, Sioux Falls Christian High School

Dustin Hermansen, Aberdeen Central High School

Boys Nation Alternate

Ben Lust, Stevens High School

Zachary Wrightsman, Lincoln High School

Outstanding Journalist

Maxwell Kelsey, Chamberlain High School

# Boys State 2022



2022 Boys State Governor, Jason Lenning, chats with South Dakota Gov. Krisit Noem after the state officer general election on Thursday, June 2nd.

Photo: Alexandra Hardle, Aberdeen American News

The 177 high school boys, both juniors and seniors, who were delegates to the 79th Annual Session of The American Legion Boys State of South Dakota, held their general election for state officers on Thursday, June 2nd. After lunch, election results were announced by Boys State Director, Chris VanDelist, and are as follows.

Jason Lenning of Harrisburg, who will be a senior this year at Sioux Falls Christian, was elected as Governor. Elected as Lt. Governor was Evan Gran of Sioux Falls, who is a student at Harrisburg High School.

Jason Lenning of Sioux Falls and Dustin Hermansen of Aberdeen were selected as the two delegates to represent South Dakota at The American Legion Boys Nation in Washington, D.C. in July. Ben Lust of Rapid City and Zachary Wrightsman of Sioux Falls were selected as Alternate Delegates.

Maxwell Lightfield of Milbank was selected as the 2022 recipient of the Samsung, American Legion Scholarship award. Maxwell's application has been forwarded to the National American Legion Selection Committee. The committee will award ten, \$10,000 scholarships to the National Finalists.

Other election results were James Park of Brookings for Attorney General; Jack Hinrichs of Sioux Falls for Secretary of State; Shane Rist of Centerville as State Auditor; Jacob Lewandowski of Groton as State Treasurer; and Josiah Sabrowski-Johnson of Rapid City as Commissioner of School and Public Lands. Elected as members of the Public Utilities Commission were Ethan Boekelheide of Northville, Jacob Shelstad of Ortonville, MN, and Aidan Foell of Milbank.

In non-political elections, the delegates also elected four justices to serve on the Supreme Court. Elected as Supreme Court Justices were Ethan Fergal of Aberdeen, Joe Osmundson of Sioux Falls, Christopher Gaikowski of Webster, and Tice Mursu of Big Stone City. Maxell Lightfield of Milbank was elected the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Matthew Mork of Pierpont was selected as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Zachary Wrightsman of Sioux Falls was elected as the President Pro-Tem. Jack Hinrichs of Sioux Falls was selected as the Nationalist Party Chairman and Joel Tramp of Custer was the Nationalist Party Keynote Speaker. The Federalist Party chose Isaiah Hoekman of Hartford as their Party Chairman, and Brody Riggs of Mitchell as their Keynote Speaker. Jack Hinrichs of Sioux Falls captured the honors of Outstanding Speaker.

Preston Rosane of Martin was selected as the Outstanding Boys State Citizen and Quenton Walls of Huron received the Spirit of Boys State Award, which recognizes the Boys State Delegate who best exemplifies the purpose of American Legion Boys State of South Dakota. The Outstanding Journalist was Maxwell Kelsey of Oacoma.

American Legion Boys State of South Dakota was held on the campus of Northern State University in Aberdeen, May 30 - June 3, 2022. Boys State is designed as a program to help our youth understand how our form of government works. It is an all-expense-paid one-week camp at Northern State University in Aberdeen (USD in Vermillion for the Girls) paid for by the Local Post so that youth, regardless of background, have a chance to engage themselves with a program that has successfully been helping develop future leaders for over 75 years.

Proposed 2023 dates are for a 5 day session - May 29th - June 2nd, 2023.

POC: Chris VanDelist

cvandelist@gmail.com

<http://www.southdakotaboysstate.com/>



(Above) 2022 Boys State participants stayed active by doing morning physical exercises led by the Boys State counselors. (Left) Director Christopher Van Delist talking to legion members about this year's Boys State program.

Photos by: South Dakota Boys State Facebook



# Americanism

The American Legion is an organization dedicated to God and country, with a membership of military veterans who take deep pride in the U.S. Flag and all that it means. Since its inception over 100 years ago, the American Legion has been a stalwart champion of patriotic values, morals, culture and citizenship. The American Legion's pillar of Americanism embodies its devotion to law and order, the raising of wholesome youth, an educated and law-abiding citizenship, and respectful observance of patriotic holidays and remembrances. Each year, South Dakota Legionnaires sponsor an impressive number of Americanism activities throughout the state: Boys State, Legion Baseball, Youth Shooting Sports, Flag Education, Youth Trooper, Scouting, Oratorical Contests, and Voter Registration Drives.

## Baseball

The goal of American Legion Baseball is to teach courage and respect for others and to promote the principles of 100 percent Americanism. It is for youth ages 13 to 19 and is sponsored by the Local Post, often partnered with community coaches or a local Baseball Association.

### STATE TOURNAMENT RESULTS

2022 Class "A" Sr. State Champions:

Rapid City Post #22

Runners Up:

Sioux Falls East Post #15

Tournament MVP:

Marrison Good, Rapid City Post #22

Big Stick Award:

Lincoln Kienholz, Pierre Post #8, .600 Avg

Porter T. Talcott Sportsmanship Award:

Sioux Falls East Post #15

2022 Class "A" Jr. State Champions:

Sioux Falls East Post #15

Runners Up:

Brookings Post #74

Tournament MVP:

Sawyer Mindt, Sioux Falls East Post #15

Big Stick Award:

Wyatt Reeder, Rapid City Bullets Post #22, .615 Avg

Porter T. Talcott Sportsmanship Award:

Rapid City Expos Post #22

2022 Class "B" Sr. State Champions:

Vermillion Post #1

Runners Up:

Winner/Colome Post #169

Tournament MVP:

Jake Jensen, Vermillion Post #1

Big Stick Award:

Camden Osborn, Redfield Post #92, .700 Avg

Porter T. Talcott Sportsmanship Award:

Gregory Post #6

2022 Class "B" Jr. State Champions:

Lake Norden/Badger Post #260

Runners Up:

Groton Post #39

Tournament MVP:

Cristhian Rodriguez, Lake Norden/Badger Post #260

Big Stick Award: (Three-Way Tie)

Nolan Wahlfeldt, Belle Fourche Post #32, .600 Avg

Ryan Groeblichoff, Groton Post #39, .600 Avg

Landon Calhoun, Winner/Colome Post #169, .600 Avg

Porter T. Talcott Sportsmanship Award:

Clark/Willow Lake Post #60

POC: Dan Sudbeck

dsubeck@santel.net

<https://www.legion.org/baseball>

## Shooting Sports

The Youth Shooting Sports program is set up to help beginner shooters develop skills which can lead to participation at National-level shooting competitions.

Participants use 0.177 caliber air rifles to learn firearm safety, marksmanship, shooting enjoyment, and competition skills.

Shooting Sports is open to youth ages 8 to 18 and sponsored by the Local Post, often in cooperation with a local 4H shooting sports program. Youth Shooting Sports is one of the fastest growing programs in the American Legion, as it appeals to a wide range of student athletes.

Congrats to our many athletes, to include Zoe Dissing of the Humboldt Sharpshooters, who took home a National title this year!

POC: Mike Kraft

bbgunrose@gmail.com

<https://www.legion.org/shooting>

## Oratory

For High School Students Freshmen to Seniors, the Oratorical Contest helps our youth explore what it means to be an American by studying the Constitution and forming their opinion of what it means to them.

Participants will give two speeches to a audience while competing for potentially thousands of dollars of scholarship money.

2023 Post level Oratorical Contest competitions must be completed by January 10th, District level by January 31st, and Department Level being held at Midwinter on February 21st at 10:30 A.M. in Oacoma).

Congratulations to Thomas Haar, from Rapid City, for being chosen as this year's Oratory Contest winner. Thomas made the Semi-Finals of the National American Legion Oratorical Contest in Indianapolis. We're very proud of his performance!

POC: Larry Madsen

<https://www.legion.org/oratorical>

## Scouting

Scouting and The American Legion have been partners since the very first days of The American Legion as they all share the goal of helping our Nation's Youth develop strong character, physical strength, and mental acuity as members of society.

Scouting is meant for youth ages 5 to 18 – Scouts USA (formerly the Boy Scouts) accepts applicants regardless of gender, but must be in gender specific units. Girl Scouts are for female participants only. As a Post, you could be the Chartering Organization providing logistical and possibly leadership support for the unit.

Every year, the American Legion awards the Eagle Scout of the Year award at the Department Convention. Riley Murphy of Rapid City was selected as the South Dakota Eagle Scout of the year for 2022. Congrats Riley!

POC: PDC Fred Nelson

fred.nelson@live.com

<https://www.legion.org/scouting>



## Youth Trooper

The South Dakota Youth Trooper Academy is a partnership between The American Legion and the South Dakota Highway Patrol, the YTA is designed to help our youth understand what is required for a career in Law Enforcement.

The program puts the Trooper Candidate through a week long experience at the State Highway Patrol Academy in Pierre learning how to do basic law enforcement tasks; safely operate a motor vehicle in an emergency situation; and elements of firearm safety and usage in a law enforcement environment.

Congratulations to Jaydon Schmalz of Deuel High School, the 2022 Outstanding Graduate Scholarship recipient!

Scheduled 2023 dates are June 24-30, 2023. Be on the lookout for applications!

POC: PDC Larry Price

larryprice@hotmail.com

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

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# Department



This year's Department Convention was held in Watertown on June 16-19. Legionnaires elected new officers, discussed membership goals, spoke with committee leaders and discussed the upcoming year. (Above) Annette Dunham, a delegate from Post #28 salutes the flag during a meeting. (Right) The second leading candidate for American Legion National Commander, Dan Seehafer, was a guest speaker during the convention. (Below) Delegates from Custer chat at a table during a brief break between sessions.



# Convention



(Above) Gary Walkow, former Department Commander, Mary Jo Stier the Department Auxillary President and Casey Hanson, detachment communicator for Sons of American Legion pose for a picture at the 2022 South Dakota Department Conception. (Left) Dave Gutzmer receives the SD Legionnaire of the Year award from former Commander Gary Walkow. (Below) The American Legion band play for Legion members at the convention.



(Right) Cody Linneweber (center) wins Firefighter of the Year for 2022. He's pictured (from left) with former Commander Gary Walkow, Public Safety Committee Chairman Larry Price, his wife and District 7 Commander Pat Mullen. (Left) Krisma DeWitt (center) receives the Grabrielson Leadership Award from Past Department Commander Tim Jurgens and Former Commander Gary Walkow.



# Membership & Post Activities



## From the Chair

**Rodney Smith, Chester**

Commander Doug Feltman has appointed me to be the Department Membership Chairman this year. I am looking forward to working with the Post in any way that I can during the year to help as I can and to hear your ideas on membership. As I see it every Legion member is a recruiter. When I joined, both times, I was asked by a Post member to join The American Legion. I did but wasn't active for a time and eventually I came to a meeting. It was a good meeting and I have been involved ever since.

In the past one of the National Commanders had the slogan of "Just Ask", If we just ask a veteran if they would be interested and explain the programs that we support they may just join us in continuing our service for God and Country. If they don't join that day, they may join later. That happened to a young veteran in our Post. I had an information table at a basketball game, and he was interested and two years later we were posting colors at a football game, and he asked if I would get him a form and I had one with me and he signed up then and there. He is now our Post Vice Commander.

"Be the one" is our current motto and it will remain the same for three more years. This involves Buddy Checks and there may be someone who enjoys calling your Post members and other veterans in your area to see how they are

doing. Let them know we care about them. Just visit, and if you are going to ask for renewal money make it the last thing you visit about.

"Be The One" to get one. If every member did that, we would double the size of the Department. If asked, why should I join, be ready with some solid answers; To improve the strength of our voice when our National Commander goes before Congress, and our State Commander tells our State Government what we support and why. Our first youth program was the Boy Scouts, and they are still going. Boys State, Oratory, Baseball and many more. Our four Pillars are so important and if you go through the list of programs supported and promoted under each Pillar it is a long and impressive list.

The VA Medical system and the benefits that we, as veterans, have earned are now there for us. Look at the most recent success, the passing of the PACT Act. It will help a lot of the veterans with their burn pit/toxic substance issues. It took many years to get help with the Agent Orange issues, which The American Legion fought hard to get through.

Our voices matter and they are stronger together. Post, it is up to you to turn in the Consolidated Post Reports, so congress hears about everything we do for Community, State and Nation. Through our many programs and individual volunteer hours. When compiled Legion wide our voices are heard! Invite a veteran to join us and mentor them into your Post to make our voice even stronger.

Membership Chairman  
Rodney Smith

**2022 membership**  
**16,712**

**2023 total goal**  
**17,041**

Nationals set the South Dakota membership goal at 3% of our 2022 membership, so our 2023 goal for the Department is 17041. At the Department level, the goal for each post was set at 2% of their membership as of July 4th. Every Legionnaire is a recruiter and we want to make our 2% goal and try VERY hard to meet Nationals goal of 3% which would be 115 members over our 2% goal. Membership is all important as if we do not increase our membership The American Legion is not sustainable. By working together and toward our goal we can make it. If every member recruited just one new member, we would double the size of South Dakota American Legion.

Post	2022 Totals	2023 Goals	#86	20	20	#186	88	90
#1	56	57	#88	101	103	#187	12	12
#2	52	53	#89	22	22	#189	67	68
#3	86	88	#91	28	29	#193	41	42
#4	92	94	#92	156	159	#194	112	114
#5	36	37	#93	51	52	#198	46	47
#6	89	91	#94	36	37	#200	30	31
#7	260	265	#96	27	28	#201	12	12
#8	307	313	#97	15	15	#206	30	31
#9	118	120	#99	10	10	#207	43	44
#10	11	11	#100	74	75	#209	44	45
#11	168	171	#102	39	40	#210	38	39
#12	225	230	#103	20	20	#213	37	38
#13	99	101	#105	13	13	#216	202	0
#14	98	100	#106	11	11	#217	38	39
#15	1451	1480	#108	10	10	#220	34	35
#16	17	17	#109	122	124	#229	160	163
#17	457	466	#110	42	43	#230	36	37
#18	300	306	#111	16	16	#233	242	4
#19	15	15	#113	26	27	#235	43	44
#20	90	92	#114	99	101	#237	39	40
#21	33	34	#115	73	74	#238	11	11
#22	553	564	#116	22	22	#239	6	6
#23	205	209	#117	19	19	#240	88	90
#24	440	449	#118	128	131	#241	18	18
#25	160	163	#120	26	27	#242	14	14
#26	45	46	#121	34	35	#246	30	31
#27	28	29	#122	24	24	#248	15	15
#28	20	20	#124	9	9	#249	39	40
#29	50	51	#125	24	24	#250	70	71
#30	1	1	#128	88	90	#251	16	16
#31	102	104	#129	46	47	#253	26	27
#32	38	39	#130	53	54	#255	34	35
#33	288	294	#131	80	82	#256	24	24
#35	36	37	#132	63	64	#257	5	5
#36	29	30	#133	6	6	#258	9	9
#37	51	52	#134	45	46	#259	45	46
#38	45	46	#135	94	96	#260	23	23
#39	48	49	#136	93	95	#261	113	115
#40	148	151	#137	48	49	#262	36	37
#41	37	38	#138	148	151	#264	38	39
#42	222	226	#139	23	23	#265	0	0
#43	68	69	#140	93	95	#266	61	62
#44	31	32	#141	17	17	#267	29	30
#45	97	99	#142	58	59	#268	28	29
#46	91	93	#143	22	22	#269	15	15
#47	17	17	#144	4	4	#273	17	17
#48	22	22	#145	92	94	#274	46	47
#49	75	77	#146	82	84	#276	18	18
#50	213	217	#147	28	29	#278	25	26
#52	36	37	#148	62	63	#279	73	74
#53	37	38	#149	17	17	#280	636	4
#56	54	55	#150	32	33	#281	0	0
#57	28	29	#151	21	21	#282	18	18
#58	35	36	#152	94	96	#283	91	93
#59	39	40	#153	15	15	#287	7	7
#60	59	60	#154	108	110	#289	11	11
#61	30	31	#155	30	31	#292	20	20
#62	65	66	#156	13	13	#294	2	2
#63	138	141	#157	19	19	#295	2	2
#64	28	29	#158	9	9	#297	1	1
#65	180	184	#159	81	83	#298	18	18
#66	108	110	#160	27	28	#299	48	49
#67	27	28	#161	21	21	#301	13	13
#68	24	24	#162	30	31	#302	20	20
#69	26	27	#164	203	207	#303	132	135
#70	35	36	#166	14	14	#307	54	55
#71	261	266	#167	13	13	#308	53	54
#72	88	90	#169	284	290	#310	6	6
#74	154	157	#170	41	42	#311	219	223
#75	33	34	#171	17	17	#314	44	45
#76	52	53	#172	20	20	#315	104	106
#77	18	18	#173	63	64	#317	16	16
#78	81	83	#174	83	85	#318	58	59
#79	68	69	#175	53	54	#319	52	53
#80	63	64	#176	13	13	#320	85	87
#82	22	22	#177	18	18	#323	23	23
#83	16	16	#179	71	72	#324	8	8
#84	24	24	#180	60	61	#911	41	42
#85	24	24	#183	52	53			
			#184	72	73			



The Midwest Honor Flight committee receives their final check of \$50,429.76 for the October event. Pictures is Department Adjutant Kevin Hempel, MHF Volunteer Coordinator Cory Van Sloten, MHF President Aaron Van Beek and former Department Commander Gary Wolkow.

With just over a year of fundraising, the South Dakota American Legion family raised \$175,898.98 during our "Send One" Campaign. Far surpassing the initial naming goal of \$50,000, Midwest Honor Flight Mission 13 has been named the South Dakota American Legion Honor Flight, set to depart early in the morning on October 1st, 2022.

There are two events associated with this flight Legionnaires can participate in, and we would love to see as many participate as possible. On September 30th, the Honor Flight banquet will be held at the Sioux Falls Convention Center. Up

to 150 additional people can participate at the banquet. Cost is \$25 per plate. Contact 605-215-1319 or info@midwesthonorflight.org to order tickets or for additional information.

On October 1, there will be a Welcome Home Ceremony for the returning flight at the Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena at 9:30 pm. These ceremonies are huge, well-attended, and mean the world to the Veterans capping off a whirlwind day. We want to fill the Arena with Legionnaires to welcome home our Legion Honor Flight. Pass the word and wear your Legion Cap.

# DEPT. VICE COMMANDER UPDATES



## Districts 3-8

**Courtney Steffen**  
Vice Commander

Hello fellow Legionnaires!

It's been a whirlwind few months since Department Convention. I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve you in this new capacity--I've really enjoyed the role thus far! The travel is starting to pick up, and will prove to be busy through the winter. If there is a special event that you would like me to attend, please reach out: my email is cmvz1983@gmail.com, or call me at 605-270-3437. I'd love to make it if possible!

I write today not to expound on everything I've accomplished, but on what I feel you are capable of. I'm aiming this article at every Legionnaire, but particularly those who are under the age of 65. Guess what? You're young, at least in the Veteran world. And you're busy. I get it. There's a job, maybe kids, and obligations out your ears. Single, working mother of three. I promise I understand. Hear me out on this.

Since the founding of The American Legion in 1919, each generation of Veterans has had a subsequent generation to pass the baton off to--WWI handed off to WWII, who handed off to Korea, who handed off to Vietnam. Since the end of the draft in Vietnam, the number of Veterans, especially in a Guard-heavy state such as South Dakota, has declined dramatically. Not to fret; there are still plenty of Veterans in our state. About 66,000, according to the VA--and of those, about 37,000 are less than 64 years old.

In some of our communities, however, this has left a gap in mentorship and leadership at our Posts. We owe a lot to our Vietnam Veterans already, but their willingness to hold onto the reins to keep our American Legion Posts afloat for this long is worthy of acknowledgement, and more importantly, action.

It is imperative that the next generation start to step up and get active. I work with Vietnam Veterans in my office every day. The effects of Agent Orange are not kind, and while tomorrow is not guaranteed for any of us, the reality of our current leadership becomes more apparent by the year. If what The American Legion does is important to you, I challenge you to attend a Post meeting.

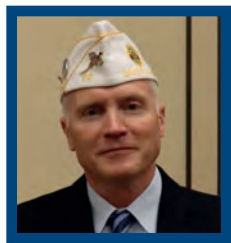
You may be surprised by everything that The American Legion encompasses: from youth programs like baseball, Boys State, Youth Trooper Academy and Oratorical Contests to Americanism programs like Flag Education and Flag Retirements, most Posts are very active in their local communities. I know the community appreciates our presence presenting the colors, and families are grateful for final honors at funerals. As a Veterans Service Officer, I admire The American Legion for their legislative advocacy both in Pierre and nationally in Congress. Your membership adds to a strong lobbying voice for your benefits.

Perhaps the most beautiful thing about the Legion, though? It is exactly the organization YOU make it. The American Legion thrives on participation. Have a new idea for a community service project? Want to start a girls softball league? Bring your ideas to your Post meeting and make a motion. Bring your friends in to support it. Vote, and shape the Post to what YOU want it to be.

My team and I will be making Post visits throughout the next year, and I truly hope to see younger faces in the crowds. Ralph Nader recently put it this way, "Right now, we're looking for one-tenth of 1%. Give us one-tenth of 1%, and you'll watch the difference. Most young people today are completely addicted to the internet. So you bypass them. You say, "Look, one out of 1,000 of you." Then it will be two out of a thousand. You start with the hardcore serious young people."

I challenge you to be that serious young person for the Veterans in your community. Spare the few hours a month for the Post meeting. Get involved and bring others along with you. In a world that is increasingly self-centered and introverted, The American Legion provides a place to give back and develop camaraderie. Check out [www.sdlegion.org](http://www.sdlegion.org) for a post map with meeting times and locations, publications with up-to-date news, or reach out to HQ at 605-886-3604 to find information.

If you're already active, thank you! We truly appreciate the energy you bring to our organization. To those who made it through this, thanks for reading! If there is anything I can help you with, feel free to reach out.



## Districts 1-2

**Doug Harris**  
Vice Commander

Greetings to my fellow Legionnaires from "West River"!

First order of business is to thank all the Posts who voted for me as their Vice Commander for 2022-2023 at this summer's South Dakota American Legion (SDAL) Convention in Watertown. I am honored to serve in this position and look forward to visiting as many Posts as possible. If there's an event/ceremony/etc., you would like me to attend, just email me at doughnut@gmail.com or call me at 970-231-8556.

Since my election I've had the honor of presenting the Educator of The Year award to Spearfish 1st grade teacher Brandy Vavruska in Spearfish S.D.; represent the SDAL during an important announcement on the status of the SD VA from Senator Rounds in Hot Springs; attend my first Department Executive Committee meeting; help round up volunteers from Districts 1 & 2 and take part in the Ellsworth AFB Operation Homefront, where school backpacks and supplies were provided to over 300 students of all ages; and most recently, represent the Department at both the 2022 State A Senior and Central Plains Regional Baseball tournaments in Rapid City, by reading the American Legion Baseball Code of Sportsmanship during the games and welcoming/addressing the attendees at the Regional Banquet.

Upcoming events include a trip to the National Convention in Milwaukee Wisconsin to represent SD on the Americanism Commission; attend District meetings in Lemmon and Phillip SD in September; escort a Rapid City Vietnam Veteran during the Midwest Honor Flight on October 1st; and attend the National Fall meeting in Indianapolis, IN., to represent the SDAL once again at the Americanism Commission meetings.

As a proud member of the Boys State Corporation, I would like to address an issue I believe is misunderstood about the process of selection for this outstanding program. I keep hearing that the Posts no longer have a say in who goes to Boys State. Nothing could be further from the truth. Since the Posts pay for the boy's tuition and transportation, you have the ultimate say in whether they attend. Here's the process: The boys apply online, then a notice goes to the Posts (someone from the Post must have an email address for this to work) for their consideration, they should interview the boy and decide whether or not they wish to send them. If they decide to send them, they send a tuition check to the SD Boys State Treasurer (me)...if not, just notify myself or the Director with the reason(s) for declination. Nuff said?

I look forward to working with the District 1 and 2 Commanders in the upcoming year to serve our veteran community and of course my passion, the Americanism programs. I encourage all of you to work hard to improve the lives of our members, the youth of our communities, and our country. Thank you for your time.

Humboldt Post #62 & Hartford Post #78 proudly host the

## 2022 STATE LEGION GOLF TOURNAMENT

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH**  
**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH**

Central Valley Golf Course  
Hartford, SD  
11am Start  
4-Person Scramble  
Register by September 1

For more information, contact  
Fred Lee at 605-413-9451

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 Richard Barthel, #31  
 David Bauder, #128  
 Joel Baumiller, #194  
 Floyd Beaudreau, #50  
 Kenneth Bechtold, #138  
 Dan Bechtold, #169  
 James Benshoof, #229  
 Robert Berg, #194  
 Billy Bieber, #83  
 Richard Bien, #76  
 Franklin Bintliff, #18  
 Jacob Bisgard, #129  
 John Blomquist, #50  
 Steve Bogenrief, #9  
 Don Borgen, #76  
 Earl Boxa, #6  
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 Robert Brink, #134  
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 Steve Bull, #109  
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 Donn Burke, #138  
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 Brian Fallon, #92  
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 James Hanna, #24  
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 Christopher Hibbs, #12  
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 John Holzhauser, #159  
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 Greg Ingemunson, #311  
 Duayne Israelson, #33  
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 Lary Jansen, #138  
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 Leroy Johnson, #109  
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 Ivar Kaardal, #15  
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 Dennis Kaus, #18  
 Steve Keller, #4

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 Jerold Kermmoade, #315  
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 Amy Kinsinger, #315  
 Eugene Kline, #24  
 Derik Knock, #138  
 Alan Knutson, #43  
 Donald Konz, #229  
 Dustin Kourt, #169  
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 Leland Lebeau, #308  
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 Frederick Mettler, #22  
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 Steven Millet, #63  
 Marlene Montague, #22  
 Lester Muehlbeier, #155  
 William Mulder, #74  
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 Robert Murphy, #88  
 Sam Nastase, #15  
 Eric Natwick, #25  
 Kelly Nebel, #250  
 Henry Nelson, #24  
 Rick Nelson, #15

Neil Nelson, #148  
 Frederick Nelson, #164  
 Del Neumeister, #32  
 Vernon Nickolauson, #229  
 Alan Nicolaisen, #18  
 Kevin Norgaard, #42  
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 Merrill Olson, #8  
 Norman Olson, #282  
 Clayton Olson, #9  
 Dale Ordorff, #103  
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 Tom Perry, #179  
 Terry Persing, #15  
 Floyd Pesicka, #115  
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 Jeff Pierce, #8  
 Lynn Pierce, #65  
 C. Platt, #88  
 Robert Podzimek, #11  
 Lyle Poppen, #184  
 Erving Potts, #135  
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 Jack Schmidt, #39  
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 Tom Schreurs, #23  
 Brett Schriock, #311  
 Larry Schulte, #303  
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 Dennis Scott, #161  
 Richard Seymour, #170  
 Roger Simmons, #74  
 David Simons, #15  
 Thomas Singer, #4  
 Terry Skretteberg, #66  
 Laura Slagel, #17  
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 S. Axtman, #8  
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 William Beckers, #28  
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 Charles Clayton, #7  
 Michael Crooks, #103  
 Lee Crooks, #103  
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 Gay Dech, #85  
 Thomas Delzer, #42  
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 James DeVaney, #161  
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 Norman Ekeland, #15  
 Lee Elward, #18  
 Darrell Espedal, #210  
 Dennis Falken, #88  
 William Feekes, #283  
 Bernard Fischer, #33  
 Dorven Fischer, #33  
 James Fischer, #121  
 Gary Fisher, #106  
 Michael Fitzmaurice, #7  
 Wayne Fogel, #24  
 Don Fuller, #22  
 Jerold Gehring, #276  
 Michael Gorman, #33  
 Elmer Greger, #264  
 William Gropper, #27

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Bruce Hart, #24  
Hugh Harty, #173  
Greg Hauglid, #65  
Wayne Heckathorn, #134  
Dean Hedge, #110  
Rodney Heiman, #15  
David Hemmestad, #114  
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Larry Hicks, #27  
Aric Hintz, #17  
Blaine Hoff, #114  
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James Houska, #18  
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Carl Johnson, #240  
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Terry Klein, #65  
Kenneth Kunde, #9  
Kenneth Kunz, #186  
Dennis Kurkowski, #40  
Darwin Kurtenbach, #261  
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Thomas Okane, #118  
Benjamin Oldenkamp, #179  
Claude Olson, #115  
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Glenn Opp, #186  
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Charles Parkinson, #27  
De Persson, #26  
Howard Peterson, #15  
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Rolland Quam, #42  
Tom Reecy, #65  
Glen Reinholt, #15  
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Darold Richards, #50  
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Patrick Roseland, #22  
Terry Rowbotham, #42  
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Daniel Schmitz, #36  
Randy Schneiders, #65  
George Schroeder, #56  
James Schultes, #303

Robert Schutte, #92  
Joseph Schwinger, #189  
Robert Shaffer, #6  
Larry Sherman, #15  
Ronald Simonson, #253  
Larry Sinkular, #91  
Kenneth Smith, #131  
Loren Speer, #15  
Lee Squires, #49  
Michael Stapleton, #50  
Richard Stearns, #25  
Thomas Sterkel, #240  
James Sternhagen, #183  
Bernie Stael, #138  
James Struck, #154  
Robert Tapken, #14  
Eugene Taylor, #140  
Tyron Taylor, #124  
William Tepley, #59  
Theodore Tesch, #17  
Leonard Thomas, #130  
Danny Thomas, #135  
Dean Thompson, #50  
Roger Tiede, #15  
Robert Torigian, #24  
Terrance Town, #129  
Ronald Turnquist, #146  
James Uhrig, #279  
Ronald Urevig, #17  
John Vandeweerd, #200  
Kenneth VanKekerix, #167  
Francis VanSambeek, #9  
Darrell Viet, #118  
Darwin Viet, #118  
Steven Volden, #72  
Terry Wagner, #253  
Melvin Wagner, #59  
Jerald Walker, #17  
Allan Waith, #4  
Gerald Wanttie, #207

Dennis Warrick, #37  
James White, #13  
Jesse Whitford, #33  
Walt Wiedmann, #33  
Carter Wiese, #52  
Curtis Wiese, #109  
Dennis Wieseler, #8  
Ron Williamson, #138  
Robert Wrage, #117  
Everett Zaugg, #75

## 60 YEARS

Leif Andol, #7  
William Arnot, #240  
Melvin Carlson, #31  
Archie Daly, #58  
Rodney Dubbelde, #23  
John Ell, #92  
Eugene Face, #207  
Harry Gossen, #235  
Norbert Grode, #40  
Raymond Hansen, #15  
Lyle Healy, #154  
Glen Jensen, #27  
Karl Johnson, #17  
Roy Kuehn, #50  
Vern Luken, #17  
Norman Meyer, #194  
Eugene Olson, #7  
Marvin Olson, #8  
Leon Robsahm, #15  
Bernard Stoesser, #143  
Russell Stone, #24  
Merlin Tebbe, #206  
John Tirrel, #88  
Creighton Wegner, #128  
James Weisbeck, #170  
Lyle Weiszhaar, #78  
Mark Williamson, #23  
Melvin Young, #317

## 65 YEARS

Verdie Bell, #17

Marvin Brown, #148  
Earl Colberg, #184  
Clyde Colson, #77  
Robert Cook, #42  
James Etzkorn, #8  
Robert Fickbohm, #233  
Delmer Haux, #78  
Elmer Hegge, #175  
Ruben Hofer, #15  
Dan Koupal, #18  
William Kutter, #180  
John Lauer, #18  
Robert McCormick, #27  
Francis Mechtenberg, #194  
John Odea, #143  
Ronald Remily, #35  
Milbert Schick, #24  
Ronald Sechser, #118  
Emil Sip, #56  
Dale Strand, #18  
Leroy Weiszhaar, #78  
Jack Wells, #32

## 70 YEARS

S. Allen, #17  
Kenneth Amundson, #40  
Arlin Anderson, #129  
Ronald Angerhofer, #24  
Norman Batterman, #194  
Lawrence Berg, #42  
Edwin Clausen, #60  
Daryl Cole, #58  
Arley Engelsgaard, #10  
Elmer Fauth, #189  
Albert Fink, #249  
Harry Fischer, #92  
Steven Goodfellow, #200  
Gene Grossenburg, #169  
Earl Hettick, #259  
Donald Jones, #67

Elmer Keller, #142  
Charles Kerkhove, #154  
Walter Kolb, #255  
Ted Liesinger, #111  
Marlyn Lindahl, #64  
Donavon List, #12  
Donald Loudner, #18  
Dean Mann, #15  
Wayne Massie, #32  
James Mateicka, #169  
Harry Melby, #109  
Richard Mergen, #65  
Ronald Mount, #150  
Charles Munger, #138  
Karl Nagel, #135  
Otto Nehlich, #186  
Milo Norwick, #15  
Charles Pahl, #17  
James Peterson, #103  
Reuben Reuer, #159  
Leroy Sauer, #259  
John Schaefer, #299  
Leroy Schneider, #85  
Richard Schooley, #250  
Gideon Schuh, #264  
Carroll Schultz, #292  
Leo Serreyn, #15  
John Sherman, #145  
John Slattery, #240  
Joseph Stedronsky, #11  
Virgil Steger, #289  
Harlowe Sundem, #23  
Norman Thompson, #93  
Stuart Ulfers, #283  
Kermit Ulmer, #189  
Eugene Warriner, #77  
Hal Westover, #8  
Owen Wiese, #23  
Max Wolf, #179

## 71 YEARS

L. Ames, #15  
Lawrence Benson, #24  
William Bielmaier, #246

Martin Bosch, #74  
Pat Curry, #134  
Leslie Eberlein, #80  
Frank Felix, #42  
Ray LaFleur, #134  
Charles Larsen, #176  
Dwane Matthies, #118  
Ordean Nelson, #109  
Norman Pudwill, #71  
R. Ray, #35  
Eugene Vavruska, #2  
Roy Winder, #80

## 72 YEARS

Virgil Christensen, #21  
C. Fostveld, #53  
Walter Gutzmer, #7  
James Irvine, #118  
Donald Jacobs, #118  
Kenneth Kayl, #6  
Lauren Lucas, #115  
Delbert Lunzman, #24  
Paul Malsom, #189  
Dale Marlow, #92  
Norbert Miles, #69

## 73 YEARS

Robert Bartling, #74  
Earle Geide, #118  
Wendell Hesla, #40  
Roger Moore, #135  
Lyle Pence, #93  
Joseph Scharzt, #118

## 74 YEARS

Gerald Dede, #37  
Gerald Hartford, #169  
Martin Mazourek, #183  
Junior Olson, #169  
Paul Vetch, #189

## 75 YEARS

Morris Johnson, #115  
Arnold Scheuren, #85  
Louis Theres, #24

## 76 YEARS

Brice Clegg, #38  
Wallace Cornelius, #50  
Robert Entwisle, #7  
John Foster, #136  
Herman Jansen, #92  
George Stroppel, #143  
James Vance, #164  
H. Vietor, #283

## 77 YEARS

Lester Clarke, #110  
Wayne Haerer, #246  
Guy Harding, #8  
Harold Hegerfeld, #198  
Orville Hill, #15  
Raymond Knodel, #120  
Duane Miller, #61  
Frank Oberle, #151  
Paul Olson, #89  
Darold, Shaffhausen, #2  
Harold Stickney, #46  
John Vondra, #111  
Robert Wherry, #102

## 78 YEARS

Harry Adams, #63  
Leo Allmendinger, #100  
James Brewer, #102  
Reid Griffith, #150  
Verlyn Hofer, #174  
Robert Huckins, #8  
Lloyd Leaders, #15  
Floyd Mills, #46  
Lowell Nelson, #2  
Cecil Wiarda, #250

## 79 YEARS

James Black, #12  
Earl Dahme, #320  
Richard Hurkes, #17

# Anniversaries

# National Veterans Golden Age Games encourages functional fitness



Veterans race during a track event on day three of the National Veterans Golden Age Games.

Gracie Terrall  
Brandon Valley Journal

Over 400 veterans from 42 states attended the 36th annual National Veterans Golden Age Games (NVGAG) in Sioux Falls July 18-23. This was the first time ever the games were held in South Dakota.

NVGAG is part of an initiative by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to keep veterans active during their golden years through their motto, "Fitness for Life". NVGAG offered 14 events for veterans to compete in, spanning from track and field, to nine ball, shuffleboard, cornhole, and air rifle and pistol. Veterans compete for a bronze, silver or gold medal in all 14 categories.

"It's really to keep them active, not only within the community, but for themselves as well," South Dakota VA Public Affairs Officer Sam Otto said. "As veterans, you're used to the team environment and being in shape, because that's what the military expects of you. It's really just to continue that process of staying fit, which prolongs your life, too, and it makes for a better life."

Along with this being the first time the event was held in South Dakota, the 2022 games are the first in-person games since 2019. 2020 and 2021 were remote and participants sent in videos and photos of their performance scores. The 2023 games will be in Des Moines, Iowa.

This year was Sioux Falls native Cyndy White's first time participating in the games. She served as an Army medic from 1974-77 and carried the torch during the NVGAG opening ceremony.

"I competed in the cornhole, and I lost, but I still had a wonderful time," she said. "I've already had several people that support me say, 'You're going to Des Moines next year,



William Smith from Elgin, Ill., stands to receive his gold medal for discus throw at the National Veterans Golden Age Games on Friday, July 22.

you're going and we're going to make sure you go."

William Smith from Elgin, Ill., trains all year for the games. The 64-year-old has competed in three games, including the 2020 and 2021 remote games. This year, he participated in cornhole, discus, javelin, shotput, 200-meter dash and table tennis. He placed third in cornhole and shotput and took home first place for his discus throw.

"It's a great way to encourage us all to participate and live a happy and healthy, very active lifestyle," Smith said. "Exercise and fitness are very important as you age and if you don't, you end up being too inclined to be on a sofa and gain weight. This allows me the opportunity to just keep myself motivated, to work out, eat healthy and at the same time look forward to these events each year."

One of the sessions available on Friday, July 22 was a Fitness for Life class led by the Adaptive Training Academy where trainers teach functional fitness education for individuals with limitations. ATA founder Alec Zirkenbach is a 10-year Navy veteran who nearly lost his leg in combat and started the training academy in 2012. He credits CrossFit and functional fitness for saving his life.

"We've been joking with a lot of the athletes that this is exercise racing," Jenna Muri-Rosenthal, ATA director of content development, said. Muri-Rosenthal is a certified brain injury specialist and ATA trainer. "We put together a combination of functional movement like today, they're doing deadlifting and squatting. We all have to pick heavy stuff up from the ground and we all have to sit and get on and off a seat."

The Fitness for Life class was introduced to NVGAG this year in hopes that it will become a medal sport in the future.

Angela Walker, a frequent participant of former games,



traveled from Waukegan, Ill., for last week's event. Walker came away with a bronze in bocchia ball, silver medals in air rifle and shuffleboard and grabbed the gold in horseshoes and table tennis. The 1985-87 Army vet also sang the National Anthem for the opening ceremony.

"It's such a special song and that's why I sing it like I do because I know what it means. I know the sacrifice that our men and women have made. That's why that song is so special to me and that's why I sing it with all my heart," Walker said.

This year's games saw everyone back on the field together and excited to get back to the NVGAG motto of fitness for life.

"We really push to accommodate all veterans and then really push them to compete in these events because it's not only about the competition, but the camaraderie, too, because all veterans have that bond of being in the military as a veteran," Otto said.



(Above) A veteran gets ready to throw a javelin during the track and field events at the National Golden Age Games in Sioux Falls. (Left) Cyndy White of Sioux Falls carries the torch during the opening ceremony to kick off the 2022 National Veterans Golden Age Games.



(Above) Jenna Muri-Rosenthal, an Adaptive Training Academy instructor and director of content development at ATA, leads Legion members through functional fitness exercises at a Friday session for the National Golden Age Games. (Right) A man warms up before participating in a pickleball session.



# SINGING LEGIONNAIRES CELEBRATE THEIR 75TH ANNIVERSARY



(Above) The 1949 co-hort for the Singing Legionnaires. (Below right) The Singing Legionnaires perform at a Veteran's Day celebration in 2021. (Below) 2018 Singing Legionnaires.

The Singing Legionnaires of American Legion Post 15 in Sioux Falls are honored to be celebrating their 75th anniversary this year. In the post-World War II era, the men's chorus was formed in Sioux Falls in 1947 and quickly grew in number to over 50 singers in the chorus. For thirty years, the chorus traveled to attend the annual American Legion National Convention, where they competed against other similar American Legion men's choruses. In those competitions, they garnered twenty first-place awards and placed either second or third-place in the remaining ten competitions.

During these seventy-five years of serving the mission of bringing honor to God and country through music, the chorus has been blessed to have the dedicated talent of 346 singers, six directors, and eight piano accompanists. Although today the Singing Legionnaires are smaller in number, the spirit of the chorus remains strong in the Sioux Falls' community. The Singing Legionnaires are currently comprised of 27 active members directed by Terry Gullickson and accompanied by Katie Thompson, who has accompanied the chorus for the past 39 years.

The chorus practices weekly on Monday nights and typically performs about 25 times during a calendar year. The chorus performs at military veteran celebratory events, funerals, senior living facilities, and churches in the Sioux Falls area. The chorus is also called on occasionally to sing the national anthem at a significant sports event.

The chorus finances its mission with fund raisers, the most significant of which is their "Avenue of Flags" program. Currently this flag program involves placing over 650 American flags in front of Sioux Falls area businesses on eight holidays each year which are significant to veterans. In exchange for placing these flags, the businesses make a set annual contribution per flag to help support the chorus activities. This program has been very successful to sustain the mission of the chorus with minimal financial burden to chorus members to participate in their avocation of choral singing that they love so much.



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# Department Calendar

Due to high printing costs, this will be the final printed edition of Legion News that will go out to all 18,000 Legionnaires in the State. The South Dakota American Legion Department Headquarters has provided an extended Department Calendar for important dates in the upcoming months. For undecided dates, check back in with the South Dakota American Legion website and bi-weekly newsletter, Up To Now, for solidified dates and locations closer to the event date.

## September 2022

Hispanic Heritage Month

- 5 Labor Day – HQ closed
- 8 Department Executive Committee Zoom meeting
- 10-11 SD Legion Golf Tournament
- 10 District 1 Fall Meeting
- 11 Patriots Day
- 14 Early Bird Membership Target date - 50%
- 18 District 2 Fall Meeting
- 24 District 6 Fall Meeting
- 25 District 3 Fall Meeting

## October 2022

- 1 SD American Legion Honor Flight
- 10 Native American Day
- 10-13 National Fall Meetings
- 13 Fall National Membership Target date - 55%
- 22 District 7 Fall Meeting
- 23 District 8 Fall Meeting
- 29 District 4 Fall Meeting
- 30 District 5 Fall Meeting

## November 2022

- 6 Day Light Savings Time ends
- 8 Election Day
- 9 Veterans Day Membership Target date - 65%
- 11 Veterans Day – HQ closed
- 15 National Employer Award nominations due to Department HQ
- 24-25 Thanksgiving Holiday – HQ closed

## December 2022

- TBD Posts hold Oratory Contests
- 14 Pearl Harbor Membership Target date - 75%
- 23,26 Christmas Holiday – HQ closed
- 31 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year nominations due to Dept HQ
- 31 Firefighter/EMT of the Year nominations due to Dept HQ

## January 2023

- 1-2 New Year's Holiday, HQ closed
- TBD District Oratory Contests
- 16 Martin Luther King Holiday, HQ closed
- 19 Mid-Winter Membership Target date - 80%
- 20 MidWinter Go-Getter certification to HQ

## February 2023

- 10-12 MidWinter Conference in Huron
- 12 Department Oratory Contest

- 15 President's Day Membership Target date - 85%
- 20 President's Day Holiday, HQ closed
- 26-28 Washington Conference

## March 2023

- 1 Washington Conference ends
- TBD Legionnaire of the Year packages to District Commanders
- TBD District Spring meetings
- 15 Legion Birthday Membership Target date – 90%

## April 2023

- TBD District Spring meetings
- TBD Youth Trooper Academy process starts with Highway Patrol
- 10 Post Data Reports completed and submitted to HQ
- 13 Dept Convention Go-Getters certification due to HQ
- 19 Children and Youth Membership Target date – 95%
- TBD Post Officer elections

## May 2023

- 1 Good Samaritan of the Year packages due to HQ from District Commanders
- 1 Educator of the Year packages due to HQ from District Commanders
- 1 Convention Committee members submitted to HQ from District Commanders
- 1 Posts submit Americanism Reports to HQ
- 8-11 National Spring meetings
- 17 Armed Forces Day Membership Target Date – 100%
- 29 Boys State starts
- 29 Memorial Day, HQ closed
- TBD Post submit Officer Certifications as soon as officers are installed

## June 2023

- 1 SDALPA Newspaper nominations due to HQ
- 1 Consolidated Post Reports due to HQ
- 4 Post submit Dept Convention Delegate and Alternat Credentials to HQ
- 8-11 Department Convention in Oacoma
- 9 History Award nominations due at registration desk at Dept Convention
- 19 Juneteenth Holiday, HQ closed
- 26-30 Youth Trooper Academy

## July 2023

- TBD Finance Commission and Dept Executive Committee meet for annual budget
- 4 Independence Day, HQ closed



If you eat today  
**THANK A FARMER.**  
 Because you eat in freedom  
**THANK A VETERAN.**

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# Legion News

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# South Dakota Taps

As reported to Department Headquarters, May 2, 2022-August 15, 2022  
 "The legacy of heroes is the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example."

Benjamin Disraeli

#7 Huron	Robert Mann	#42 Brookings	Wayne Fischer	#150 Sioux Falls	Leroy Brandt
#8 Pierre	Thomas Cline	#46 Custer	Robert Crisman	#153 Raymond	Allen Kretschmar
#8 Pierre	Ray Elenbaum	#46 Custer	Ray Asebroek	#154 Montrose	Darius Gunther
#9 Milbank	Floyd Bohn	#50 Sisseton	Arden Simonson	#164 Whitewood	Ralph Besler
#11 Wagner	Bob Breen	#50 Sisseton	Lloyd Schaunaman	#169 Woodland Hills	Robert Janssen
#11 Wagner	Harris Haar	#53 Canton	John Frislie	#169 Winner	Gene Gross
#12 Yankton	James Juffer	#53 Canton	Robert Bergren	#169 Rapid City	Melvin Harris
#12 Yankton	John Mathrole	#56 El Jebel	Charles Jaeger	#171 Watertown	Darrel Lindahl
#12 Yankton	John Brady	#57 Redfield	William Bushong	#173 Rapid City	John Kuchenbecker
#13 Wakonda	Richard Gregoire	#57 Sioux Falls	Zachary Kern	#174 Tea	Jeff Cain
#13 Wakonda	Milan Lemmenes	#58 Aberdeen	Ralph Johnson	#179 Chamberlain	Stanley Nissen
#14 Wessingto Spr	Cecil Deneke	#62 Wausau	Janice Gochanour	#183 Tyndall	James Schuch
#14 Faith	Alvin Gray	#62 Sioux Falls	Melvin Lee	#206 Dell Rapids	Loyal Amundson
#15 Sioux Falls	Wayne Langland	#63 Hermosa	Ronald Campbell	#209 Clark	Harold Hurlbert
#15 Sioux Falls	Jerry Drake	#63 Lake Preston	Robert Hauck	#209 Sioux Falls	Oscar Ewing
#15 Sioux Falls	Bruce Hagen	#68 Hecla	Allen Siefkes	#209 Watertown	Dean Bymers
#15 Sioux Falls	Gene Jorgensen	#69 Round Hill	Jerome Miles	#209 Clark	Marvin Bymers
#15 Sioux Falls	John Norberg	#72 Alcester	Larry Y oung	#209 Clark	Gene Helkenn
#15 Sioux Falls	Arlen Knutson	#74 Brookings	Lyle Allison	#209 Clark	Ronald Hinman
#15 Sioux Falls	Gary Brooks	#74 Colman	John Walker	#209 Lake Norden	James Jenkins
#15 Sioux Falls	John Marshall	#75 Pierre	Gale Richardson	#209 Lake Norden	Michael Osborne
#15 Sioux Falls	Michael Sather	#78 Wayne	Robert Brotzel	#213 Faulkton	Lloyd Bellack
#15 Sioux Falls	Michael Bus	#78 Leola	Harlan Krein	#213 Ipswich	Ronald Bierman
#17 Watertown	Leroy Schliesman	#80 Britton	Charles Wismer	#229 Ortonville	Daniel Schmiege
#17 Watertown	Edward Smith	#80 Lake City	Rudolph Scerl	#229 Loveland	Dean Skinner
#17 Watertown	James Adams	#80 Britton	Bryce Thoeke	#229 Minneapolis	David Reupke
#17 Watertown	Ray Barthel	#80 Britton	Alfred Lamee	#229 Big Stone City	Bill Voeltz
#17 Watertown	Donald Riley	#80 Park City	Lee Johnson	#240 Martin	Robert Bucholz
#17 Watertown	Marvin West	#85 Raleigh	Robert Slade	#240 Martin	Ray Bucholz
#17 Watertown	Roger York	#92 Redfield	Thomas Gallup	#240 Volga	Kenny Paige
#18 Mitchell	Anthony Zens	#92 Redfield	Gordon Muellenberg	#240 Wanblee	Ralph Porch
#18 Mitchell	Ivan Schrader	#92 Ashton	Michael Sale	#240 Tuthill	Mark Walker
#21 Mansfield	Lyle Johnson	#92 Mitchell	Robert Taylor	#240 Aurora	Harold Freouf
#22 Rapid City	James Wilson	#92 Redfield	Lyle Michels	#241 Volga	Allen Begalka
#22 Rapid City	John Anderson	#94 Farmington	Edward Mickel	#257 Marty	Herbert Hare
#22 Rapid City	Edmond Fye	#96 Plankinton	John Niles	#258 Denver	Dennis Baadt
#22 Rapid City	Norman Allison	#102 Faulkton	Jerry Kegler	#261 Sioux Falls	Vilas Hohn
#24 Aberdeen	Paul Heier	#102 Sioux Falls	Joseph Bowar	#261 Sioux Falls	Gary Haines
#24 Aberdeen	Ronald Fastenau	#102 Colorado Spgs	Linda Batson	#262 Claremont	Lyle Cutler
#24 Aberdeen	Donald Fischer	#114 Brookings	Emil Misar	#262 Claremont	James Luitjens
#28 Burke	Dale Baker	#115 Long Beach	Jeanine Hintz	#262 Shakopee	Garry Blatzheim
#29 Woonsocket	Lawrence Miller	#121 Hazel	Don Hlavinka	#274 Corsica	Benjamin Tegethoff
#31 Rapid City	La Vern Johnson	#129 Cambridge	Dean Sikkink	#283 Hurley	Harvey Berens
#31 North Platte	Con Janas	#134 Manassas	Louie Desmet	#283 Chancellor	Lloyd McKnelly
#33 Sturgis	Richard Hawley	#135 Gettysburg	Bil ICoppersmith	#289 Cresbard	Loren Heidenreich
#33 Sturgis	John Hughes	#135 Gettysburg	Joe Senyak	#289 Mellette	Richard Fischbach
#33 Sturgis	Jean Kusser	#135 Gettysburg	Jack Axsom	#292 Redfield	Rodney Binger
#33 Sturgis	Michael McAuliffe	#136 Madison	Charles Alverson	#292 Tulare	Rolla Binger
#33 Sturgis	James Trudeau	#142 Tyndall	Vernon Just	#301 Draper	Gary Sletto
#37 Aberdeen	Charles Gustafson	#142 Tripp	Lavern Schaefer	#307 Renner	James Dunlap
#40 Bristol	Edmund Dolney	#144 Mitchell	Joseph Leutenegger	#307 Lennox	Gene Delong
#40 Webster	Gerald Hanten	#146 Gilbert	John Lunne	#320 Rapid City	Edward Seljeskog
#42 Sioux Falls	James Hein	#148 Aberdeen	Earl Grandpre	#500 Rapid City	Clarence Grebner
#42 Mesa	Philip Hyink	#150 Horseshoe Bay	Jim Griffith	#911 Sioux Falls	Robert Dieren

## Children and Youth cont. from page 6

Post and associated Legion Family members will look at these programs to help how they can. Raising funds to help cover the programs each Post has is challenging enough without us asking you for one more project. All I ask is that you put yourself in the shoes of another Veteran with a family, running into difficult times or even running into having a sick child that needs the advanced care of a hospital. Having to worry about the sick child while the worries of daily life can be stressing enough. It is a very difficult spot to be in to say the least.

This is an ambitious request that I hope we all can step up to assist with. While there are three options here, each Post is asked to promote and participate with some or all these options. I have asked Doug Feltman, and our other Legion family member leaders to help promote these fundraising efforts within the Legion family groups they represent.

I will leave you with this one thought. If only some of us participate in this program and others do not, like a single pencil, we can fail and break with futile attempts to help. However, if we all come together to help strengthen and support this project, like having a hand full of many pencils, we will not break as we are supported by each other and we encourage each other to stay strong in our efforts to help to promote what the American Legion youth program, including TFA can offer our fellow Veterans. I know that together we can make a difference for both the CMN and the South Dakota American Legion youth programs. I look forward to working with you all on these efforts. Thank you.

Kind Regards,  
 Harry Boner



Former Department Commander, Fred Nelson, receives the Legionnaire Insurance Trust check in the amount of \$39,048 for the American Legion Department of South Dakota on April 26, 2022.