

Sunflower Legionnaire

The American Legion -



Today's Voice for Today's Veterans & Military

VOL LXXVII NO. 3

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

January, February, March 2024

MID WINTER FORUM HUTCHINSON POST #68, FEBRUARY 2-4

The Mid-Winter Forum offers every Member, especially Post leaders and chairmen, the opportunity to learn more about The American Legion, its programs and the direction each program is expected to take if there are any changes being considered, including changes directed by National Headquarters. In addition, the Forum provides information about how and why The American Legion functions in the manner we do as an organization.

This year's Forum scheduled for February 2-4 will be hosted by Hutchinson Post 68 with Events located at 730 W. 4th Avenue in Hutchinson. Friday, 2 February, will include a Department Executive Committee meeting at 4 pm. Registration will begin on Friday between 3 to 7 pm at the Post.

On Saturday, February 3, Registration will continue starting at 7:00 am with biscuits and gravy, cinnamon and breakfast rolls, juice and coffee. The formal activities begin with a Joint Legion/Auxiliary/S.A.L. meeting at The Post located at 730 W. 4th Avenue at 8 am. After the Joint Opening the Legion, Auxiliary and the S.A.L. will meet in different rooms and other nearby locations. Leading Candidate for National Commander James Lacoursiere from the Department of Connecticut will address and present information to those in attendance. We will have the pleasure of having ALL Three Entities of The American Legion Family represented with Our Own National Vice Commander Ray Vail from The Legion, Our Own National Vice President Trish Ward from The Auxiliary and Our Own National Vice Commander Terry Harris from the Sons of The American Legion in attendance. Lunch will be Sandwiches with all the trimmings, potato salad, chips and dessert at a price of \$8.00. Concluding the day's meetings, the Post will serve a

Roast Beef Dinner with mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, dinner rolls and dessert for \$15.00 from 5:30 to 7 P.M. After dinner entertainment will be Karaoke at the Post. For early Registration PLEASE mail payments to: Jeremy Ehart, 730 W. 4th Avenue, Hutchinson, Kansas 67501. For Tickets and any additional information, PLEASE contact Jeremy Ehart at 620-899-0010 or Post Commander Bruce Branson at 620-664-3130.

Sunday's schedule will begin at 7:00 to 8:00 am with Biscuits and gravy, eggs, sausage, hashbrowns and breads, Orange Juice and Coffee for \$8.00. Registration will be open from 7:00 to 8:00 am. At 8:00 am Commander Frank will call the Forum back to order before turning the podium over to Department Chaplain Debra Muylaert who will conduct a Four Chaplains Memorial Service at the Post. There will be a wrap up of reports followed by the Department Sweepstakes Drawing.

The Agenda for the Forum is listed within this publication, it isn't too early to reserve your room at one of the many hotels in the Hutchinson Area. The contracted Hotels are: Holiday Inn Express located at 911 Porter Street, Telephone number: 620-259-8656, rate is \$119.00 and The Fairfield Inn and Suites located at 1111 N. Lorraine Street, Telephone number: 620-259-8787, rate is \$129.00. Be sure to tell them you are a part of the Kansas American Legion block in order to receive the reduced rates per room per night.

Failure to ask for The American Legion rate may result in your paying a higher room rate. It's always better to reserve a room you may have to cancel later than waiting until the last minute to make reservations only to find out the hotel is sold out.

Plan to attend and ask a fellow Legionnaire to attend with you. Hope to see you there!

BOYS STATE

Each year The Kansas American Legion Boys State provides hundreds of high school students a hands-on opportunity to actively participate in establishing a representative form of government from the ground up. Prior to arriving on the Kansas State University campus which serves as the site of the program, each student (known as Staters) is assigned to either the Nationalist or Federalist "political party" based upon their responses to a questionnaire.

Immediately after arriving in Manhattan and checking-in on Sunday afternoon Staters form city and county governments. The next two days are spent drafting local ordinances, and carrying out the operation of cities and counties; at the same time campaigns for state offices are launched and within days Staters elect officials to their new state; Boys State.

Hands-on activities include writing a state constitution, drafting and passing a budget, establishing a Supreme Court, and enacting laws compatible with today's society and needs. How decisions of the masses affect Staters as individuals is demonstrated by assigning each an occupation and a corresponding computerized bank account: within minutes of passing laws, license fees, taxes etc. Staters can view the "real-life" impact on themselves.

Instruction is provided by Legionnaires, at least one Member of the Kansas Highway Patrol, and former Staters who are well versed in the function of representative government. Several elected officials annually visit and address Staters throughout the week. Naturally time is

allotted for fun activities during the week such as a "talent night" and various sports.

At a minimum Boys State instills citizenship and demonstrates every individual is capable of making a difference. Thousands of lifelong friendships have been forged at Boys State and graduates often receive special consideration when applying for scholarships or employment.

Two Staters will be selected to represent Kansas as Senators during Boys' Nation held at Marymount University in Washington, DC this July. Staters who are the sons or grandsons of a veteran may apply for a Samsung scholarship.

Application and information packets for this year's June 2 to 8 session have been mailed to every Kansas high school, every Post, and to past sponsors including private individuals, and civic organizations. Fees for the week long course is \$300 per Stater to be paid by the sponsor(s) plus a \$50 fee paid by the student's parents or the Stater himself.

Applicants must be a high school Junior (will be a Senior this fall), be a self starter, involved in extracurricular activities in their school or community, and rank within the top half of their class scholastically. Completed applications must be received by April 30, 2024; Staters and sponsors are encouraged to apply early.

Legionnaires are asked to seek out potential Staters by visiting their local high schools and assist in locating sponsors and co-sponsors for each student. Additional information can be obtained of The American Legion Boys State website at ksbstate.org, or by calling (785) 550-6492.

COMMANDER

Randy Frank**(563) 419-1474**

departmentcommander@kansaslegion.org

**VICE COMMANDER**

Angela Evans**(719) 659-0837**

departmentvicecommander@kansaslegion.org



Hello Legionnaires,
The Department of Kansas American Legion is moving forward!

ATTENTION!!! I have received an email from National Commander Dan Seehafer in regards to Membership. National Commander Seehafer would like to acknowledge those Posts within the Department of Kansas that have reached 100% membership for the 2024 membership year. Each 100% Post commander will receive a personalized letter, autographed picture, and a certificate..... We already have several Posts that have accomplished this so let's make it 100%.

In 2026 there will be a lot happening around the United State and here in Kansas. This will be the 250th Birthday for the United States and the state of Kansas is gearing up for it. The Department has been invited to participate in the planning of events during the celebrations. I will be looking for some individuals

that would like to work on the planning and execution of The American Legion's events. Please reach out to me if you want to help or have any suggestions for activities. The Mid-Winter Forum is coming up soon. The Hotel and meals information is on the Department of Kansas website <https://kansaslegion.org>. See you there.

The chief condition on which life, health and vigor depend on, is action. It is by action that The American Legion develops our capabilities, increases our energy, and attains the fulfillment of our destiny.

The lines of Communications are always open. Please reach out to your Leadership Teams at the Post/District or Department.

Membership is our Strength. If your District or Post would like me to attend your event, please send me an email DepartmentCommander@kansaslegion.org or call 563-419-1474.

CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY

On June 16 up to 30 young Kansans will gather for the 55th annual Cadet Law Enforcement Academy session at the Highway Patrol Training Center in Salina. Sponsored by The American Legion, Legion Auxiliary and KS Highway Patrol, the Academy provides high school students an opportunity to learn methods employed to enforce city, county, state, and federal statutes with the goal of instilling a better appreciation for those who en-

force those laws.

The Academy is not a recruitment program for law enforcement. Students attending past sessions have had a wide variety of backgrounds, interests, and career plans. However many students considering careers in law enforcement, as attorneys, and government service have attended as a means to solidify their plans to pursue such careers.

Open to both male and fe-

(Continued on Page 9)

Greetings Kansas Legion Family. I hope everyone had a great Holiday season and an amazing New Year! What an amazing past few months... I want to take a minute to review the last few months in the Department. Most of the Districts had their District Homecomings, it was great going to the different Districts and meeting with everyone. We have some really great leaders within our Department. We had a great show of support for the ALR at both the Big Red One Turkey Run and Operation North Pole where we helped support families on Ft Riley. It was so humbling to help the families during Thanksgiving and to watch the kids with Santa.

This year's Department holiday party was held at Emporia's Post #5 in December. A huge thank you to all those who support these programs and all our programs throughout the year, we would not be successful without all the hard work and dedication from our Members. We have a full schedule moving into the next year. Our Department bowling tournament is in Topeka at Gage Bowl the first three weekends of January. Stop by and volunteer your time or just say hello if you're in the neighborhood! Mid -Winter Forum is in Hutchinson at the Post this year and no doubt it will be another great event. More information is available in this edition of the Sunflower but if you have not reserved your room, you better do so soon! Department oratorical. is March 16, 2024, in Manhattan. Hopefully, all your Dis-

trict oratorical chairmen are working hard to speak to the schools and families about the program so we can have a full slate of participants this year in Manhattan. Last year's oratorical was awesome to watch and I am looking forward to seeing what this year offers. If you have questions about the program, please don't hesitate to call and ask anytime.

District Conventions are coming soon! I plan to attend all of them and look forward to seeing everyone there. If you have an interest in serving at the District level, this is a great time to contact your District and express your interests. It is so rewarding to serve at different levels within the Department and the friendships you make are priceless. The best part is the networking and sharing of ideas; these ideas could change how you do things at your own Post. Without all your dedicated involvement, projects would not exist. So, thank you to ALL our incredible volunteers we are so fortunate to have in order to continue providing veterans, families, and communities our services in 2024. I would certainly encourage Members of The American Legion Family to join them, get involved by finding the time in our schedules, and lend a hand. It will be worth it... for everyone. As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns I am always available for you. If you would like me to attend an event at your Post or District, please let me know. As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns please do not hesitate to call anytime. Thank you for all you do for the Legion. I look forward to the opportunity to serve. For God and Country.



MIKE COLE
(913) 680-8680

**FIRST DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Greetings First District:

I hope everyone had a very safe and happy holiday season!

We held our District Christmas party and meeting at Leavenworth Post #94 on December 2, 2023. It was a well-attended meeting and party, and I would like to extend my thanks to Post #94 for sponsoring the event and helping make it a success.

Remember that if a Member has not renewed their membership by now, they are not considered to be in good standing. I encourage all Posts to contact these Members and get those renewals turned in. It may be as simple as contacting them to remind them to renew or just check on their well-being and see if there is something the Post can do to help them. BE THE ONE!!!!

The District has several events coming up to mark on your calendars. The District Oratorical Contest will be held February 24, 2024, at North Topeka Post #400 at 10:00 AM. Following the Oratorical, we will be holding the District Executive Board Meeting at Post #400. I encourage all Posts to contact their local High Schools and promote the Oratorical Contest. Remember that home schooled students are also eligible to take part. The Department Oratorical will be held March 16, 2024, at Manhattan Post #17 at 9:00 AM. The District Convention will be held on April 13, 2024, at Holton Post #41. It is not too early to start planning now on attending. Every Post should have Delegates at the Convention to represent them. I look forward to seeing you there!

Boys State will be held June

2-8, 2024, for more information go to <https://ksbstate.org>. Cadet Law is June 16-21, 2024. Cadet Law is not a recruitment device for law enforcement. Instead, it offers high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to gain knowledge regarding training and responsibilities of all law enforcement officials. Contact your High Schools and let them know about these great programs and recruit, recruit and recruit. Our goal this year should be to send at least one student from each 1st District High School to Boys State and Cadet Law.

For God and Country,
Michael Cole
District Commander



DOUG HENSLEY
(913) 314-2306

**SECOND DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Happy Holidays District 2!

Several of us attended Operation North Pole and the Turkey Run at Ft Riley. Both events were a success helping the families of our active duty soldiers have a better Holiday Season.

District is at 82% of it's membership goal for 2024. Please be working your renewal list and Post 58 report. if you have any questions, reach out to your assigned District officer.

Post Adjutants be watching for information from District Adjutant Krupco for "Invitation Only" District Awards Party and reply quickly.

District 2 Holiday party is January 13th starting at 11:30 a.m. at the Louisburg Post. Potluck luncheon with fellowship and games. This party is for the entire District 2 Legion Family.

The District 2 oratorical competition will be held at the Paola Post on February 10th

starting at 9:00 a.m., please be talking to your schools finding the youth for Boys State and Cadet Law programs this summer. Not much time left to get existing shooting clubs affiliated with your Post for those shooting clubs to compete in the American Legion Shooting Sports.

Hope everyone had a great Christmas and many blessings for a great 2024.

Your District Commander,
Doug Hensley

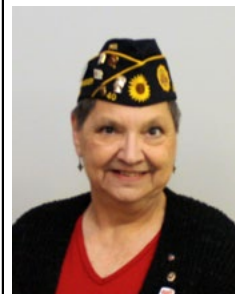


RENE CASTILLEJA
(620) 779-2476

**THIRD DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

After a very hectic Holiday Season, I just wanted to say thank you all for supporting the Third District. I hope that having another year of experience, I can continue to help every American Legion in our District. I would also like to wish all of my District Officers, past and present, all of the Members of the Third District, Post Officers, Sons of the American Legion, the Legion Riders, and the Auxiliary a very Happy Holiday. One focus I have is each Post work with the other families of their Legion to become a visible, educational, and community-based organization. I would also like to see our District 3 American Legion's create committees of Americanism, Children and Youth, and the Awards and Scholarship programs. I believe we can be successful in letting Our Communities be informed on what we do for Veterans, Active Duty Military, Retired Service Members and their families. I understand that each one of your American Legion's is unique in their own special way and if you have any questions, please feel free to call or text me at 620-779-2476 or

email me at renecastilleja71@gmail.com. I look forward to the remainder of the year and look forward to any changes in leadership in upcoming elections. Once again, thank you for your continued faith and support in me as your District 3 Commander.

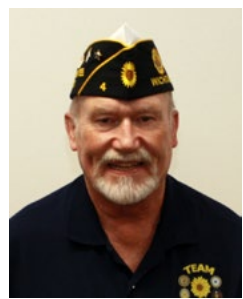


Eszter Blair
(785) 447-2577

**FOURTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Happy New Year to all of you in 4th District. We all hope that you had a good Christmas and continued Health and Happiness for 2024. Currently our District is at 79.07%, but we continue to push forward! Some dates that are coming up to remember: 2-4 February is Mid Winter Forum in Hutchinson. Registration forms can be found on the Kansas American Legion website. Then February 17th is the 4th District Oratorical at Earl Gormley Post 45 in Junction City starting at 9:00 AM, followed by Post Officers Training in the afternoon. A lunch will be offered by Post 45. This training is open to all Legion family Members and is a good chance to learn about the Legion, the officer structure, and other requirements. With the District splitting in July new District Officers will be elected for the two new Districts in April, so this is a great opportunity to see how the Legion works and how you can help. I am looking forward to seeing many of you both at the Mid Winter Forum as well as on February 17th for District Oratorical and training.

Thank you all for all you do! God Bless



JOE HICKS
(316) 295-7340

**FIFTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Greetings 5th District American Legion Family. Hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and New Years. I would like to start off by thanking all my District Officers for visiting all the 5th District Posts and assisting them with membership and the Legion programs. I would also like to thank everyone that helped at the State Fair on September 14th. To recap some things: I attended the Eisenhower Pilgrimage and Department Vice Commander Homecoming on October 14th, enjoyed the camaraderie and fellowship and had a chance to see old friends. The 5th District Homecoming was held at the Thomas Hopkins Post 4, October 21, honoring S.A.L. District Commander John Cintron, Auxiliary President Jean Kimminau and myself. My program theme this year was Honoring Women Veterans. I would like to thank Post 4 Commander Kenny White and his Legion family staff for hosting and providing a great meal and for Mike Saindon from the Derby 408 S.A.L. for being my Master of Ceremony, what a great guy. Our guest speaker was Career Navy Veteran Laurie Hickle from the Derby Post 408, she spoke about her experiences in the Military as a woman Veteran, we need to support our Women Veterans and help them get more involved in the American Legion. Now that the Holidays are over it's time to get back to work on our membership.

As of December 13th, the 5th District is in 7th place. Remember dues should be collected and submitted by the end of December so the Member does not become delinquent, if not paid by the end of January the Member becomes expired. I encourage Posts to try and put all the Officers and Members to work on a membership team and get the renewals to come in faster and shake the trees a little more to get new Members in the Legion this year. Please Be The One to reach out and call a Member of your Post to see how things are going. The Oratorical Contest will be held in the Derby Post January 27th at 09:00 a.m. Let's see how many kids we can get to the 5th District Contest, for more information on the Oratorical program and all the Legion scholarships you can look on kansaslegion.org or give me a call. I would like to thank all the Post Legion family Members that participated in the Big Red One Turkey Run on November 18th in Fort Riley and Operation North Pole on December 2. I am sure the Soldiers and families enjoyed all of it. The Mid Winter Forum is February 2-4 at the Hutchinson Post 68, a good time to learn more about the American Legion. I hope to see you there and the 5th District Convention is right around the corner on April 5th and 6th in the Derby Post 408. Now is a good time to look over and review your Post Bylaws to see if any changes are in order to better serve your membership for next year and don't forget about turning in the Post reports to document and take credit for all the good works done from your Post. If any of you are interested in running for a District office please do not hesitate in contacting me, we have many Committees and duties to perform throughout the year. Thank you and Until the next issue For God and Country.



JIMMY STRACHAN
(785) 483-1186

**SIXTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Happy New Year Sixth District! Hope everyone did have a wonderful Christmas.

Now that 2024 has started, it is time for us to get our 2024 membership in order. There are many Posts with membership renewals lagging and you need to call your Members and ask them to renew their membership. If you would like to have some help, reach out to your District Officers. We are here to help you.

I attended a Post meeting in late November. Also in attendance were Randy Frank, Department Commander, William Workman, Executive Committee and Lee Axtel, Executive Committee. The reason that this meeting was called was their Adjutant had passed away and no one knew how to process membership. There were renewals that had been received but were not processed and forwarded to the Department. I was able to assist their Commander with processing the membership renewals and forward them to the Department.

At this meeting a question came up that I feel is very important to address. A Member asked the question: "Where do we see the American Legion in 5 years?" Why this question came up is because like a lot of other Posts their Members are getting older and transferring to Post Everlasting. Residing in a small farming community

they are having a rough time with keeping their membership roster full. I find this with most of our small Posts in the District after taking a close look at their membership rosters. All of their living Members have renewed their membership. I also looked for Members in Post 58. A lot of those Members in Post 58 do not live close to the Posts that need help. They also asked about a Post that is close by to them. That Post has a small membership total. I said it would be good for them to reach out to that Post. I do feel it is best to have Posts working together to address this issue.

We did have one Post that did have a problem with low membership total. What they did to bring their membership up was to contact their family and friends that they knew had served or are currently serving in the military and recruited them into their Post. Now they are over the 100% membership quota. I do feel this is good information to pass along to all the Posts in the Department of Kansas.

27 April, 2024 will be the Sixth District Convention. The convention will be taking place in Smith Center at the VFW, 620 A Street, Smith Center, KS 66967. At this Convention we will be having a raffle for a \$100 gift card that can be used anywhere. Raffle tickets along with instructions are being mailed out to all the Posts in the District. Do not need to be present to win. If you are present you will receive another \$25 in cash. Tickets will also be available for purchase at Convention.

Always remember why the American Legion was formed: veterans coming together, putting aside their differences to help fellow veterans, their families and communities.



MIKE VONDRAČEK
(620) 285-9373

**SEVENTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**



CHRIS SELF
(620) 253-2651

**EIGHTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**



SEAN HANKIN
(785) 443-0956

**NINTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**



PAT CAFFREY
(785) 396-4531

**TENTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Hello District 7. I hope you had a great Christmas and a great start to the New Year. Speaking of the New Year, any Members that have not renewed their membership are now expired. Do not fret! There is still time. Please reach out to these Members and urge them to renew their membership to help strengthen your Post and the American Legion. Also, for those of you who have not hit 100% and even those who have, please check for Members in your area that are in Post 58. One advantage that Members have by transferring to a local Post is a savings in dues. Post 58 is \$50 a year. Also let them know that by being a Member of an actual Post, their dues will go to benefit that Post. Most Posts have dues of \$40 so the Post gets \$5 a Member. While that may not amount to much on an individual basis, a Post of 20 Members would get \$100 a year, a Post of 100 Members would get \$500, and a Post of 500 Members would get \$2500. So by transferring their membership to an actual Post, they are not only helping by increasing Post membership, they are also doing their Post to help keep a Post alive. If you need anything, please let me know at districtcommander7@kansaslegion.org. I also hope to see you at Mid-Winter Forum and District 7 Convention. Until next time, take care!

I hope that all is well. I would like to thank you for electing me as your 8th District Commander, and I will work to show that I deserve that honor. During the next few months, I will be making my way out to your Posts to introduce myself to those that I haven't met yet. This quarter, I would like to concentrate on getting our membership numbers up. The Department has set a goal of 103%, a goal that I sincerely believe that we can make if we all work for it. I look forward to working with each Post in our District to make this a reality. I look forward to seeing all of you in the coming months.

One challenge that I would like to give each Post in our District is this: have at least one contestant for the District Oratorical contest. The last two years, District 8 has had no contestants. I know that there is at least one teenager in each Post's City that could do this. We need to show them the value of this experience.

I look forward to meeting you all in the coming months. Take care of yourselves and each other, and God Bless!

KANSAS DISTRICTS



Click map to enlarge.

No article submitted.

No article submitted.



CHAPLAIN

Rev. Debra Muylaert

departmentchaplain@kansaslegion.org

Happy New Year Legion Family!

I hope you had a very Merry Christmas and/or Happy Hanukkah with your family and friends! God is good all the time, and all the time, God is good! May we always thank Him for Our blessings!

As we begin 2024, I want to issue a challenge, but first, let me give you a Scripture verse to meditate on this year. Deuteronomy 30:19 states, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have placed before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants." In this passage, Moses tells us to "choose life." Not only must we choose life for ourselves, we must also help others choose life. That's the purpose of "Be the One." National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer calls "Be the One" our primary "mission." This "mission," which aims to bring attention to mental health issues and reduce the rate of veteran suicide, helps others to "choose life."

I believe one of the best ways to do this is to be "watchmen" on the walls, as Scripture puts it. I love the

way Isaiah 62:6 says it: "On your walls, Jerusalem, I have appointed watchman; all day and night they will never keep silent. You who profess the LORD, take no rest for yourselves." In ancient times, watchmen were stationed on the walls of the city to keep watch and warn of impending harm or danger. Like these watchmen, we must pay attention and be on the lookout for Veterans and others among us who may be suicidal, those who are down or depressed, those with financial or relationship problems, and/or those who need someone to come alongside them and support them with a warm smile, a kind word, or an offer of help. We must take no rest for ourselves, never keep silent, and be ever vigilant, like a "watchman" on the walls, to prevent Veterans and others from choosing death.

God is the author of life, not death, so my challenge to you is to be a "watchman" on the wall in 2024. Pay attention and keep watch for those who need someone to care about them and provide support. You may save a life!

Have a blessed and healthy new year! See you at Mid-Winter Forum!

ADJUTANT'S BRIEFS

By Department Adjutant Jimmie L. Foster

The Department of Kansas has been able to accomplish a lot of things since the continuing Coronavirus has passed us by. I for one, am glad that 2023 is over and WE can now move into 2024, hopefully being able to pick up and continue to have Legion functions in person and NOT by Virtual means such as Zoom, Skype or by Teleconference. There is nothing like being at a function in person and getting to talk and socialize with other Members.

Membership is ahead of last year's numbers, but that does not mean we should sit around and rest on our laurels. Membership is EVERYONE'S responsibility, not just a few out of each Post, District or Department.

The National Commander's Visit of Eastern Kansas was a tremendous success! Many Posts had breakfasts, lunches, dinners and just a social round table meeting with Daniel J. "Dan" Seehafer from the Department of Wisconsin as he toured the State. There was a great interaction with the Members of The American Legion Family and National Commander Seehafer. It was his second visit to the Department of Kansas as he visited as the Leading Candidate.

The 2023 Big Red One Turkey Run and Operation North Pole held at Fort Riley, Kansas were BOTH success stories. Being able to meet and greet Soldiers, Dependents and especially the "Kids" is always a plus!

Do not forget to start making plans to attend the 2024 Mid-Winter Conference which be held in Hutchison, Kansas from 2 to 4 February 2024 at Hutchison Legion Post # 68 located at 730 W.

4th Avenue in Hutchison. Listed within this edition of the Sunflower Legionnaire is the agenda, list of hotels, meals, and other information for this Conference.

We will be fortunate to have in attendance Leading Candidate for National Commander of The American Legion James Lacoursiere from the Department of Connecticut. James is a great Legionnaire, and he represents US well. He will be available to discuss issues of The American Legion while he is visiting the Department of Kansas.

The Department American Legion Oratorical Contest is scheduled for Saturday, March 16, 2024, 9:00 A.M. at Manhattan Post # 17. PLEASE show up and support these fine District Contest winners. They will amaze you with their knowledge of Our Constitution and their enthusiasm!

I hope that you and your family had a very Merry Christmas and have a very prosperous New Year. If any of you need any assistance from myself or the Staff of the Department Headquarters, PLEASE do NOT hesitate to ask.

Until next time, continue to support the Greatest Veterans and their Families, in the Greatest Veterans Organization in The Free World, The American Legion (in my opinion).

Renew Your Membership Online at

legion.org/renew



**DETACHMENT
COMMANDER**

Jim Gallentine

(785) 865-8393

jim.gallentine@gmail.com



Greetings Kansas American Legion Family!

This holiday season can be a great time, but may be tough for some. Many of our Veterans and their families go through some tough times, and so please be doing those "Buddy Checks" and "Be The One"!

S.A.L. National Commander Donald "JR" Hall's slogan this year is "Representing More Than Me." As "Proud possessors of a priceless heritage", we represent those Veterans who earned our membership. In everything we do, we must move forward in a manner that honors those we represent.

As S.A.L. National Vice Commander Terry Harris said so well, "The one thing I have learned as a Member of this great organization is that it is not at all about me! Anything I get done is because of someone else." Everyone should bear that in attitude at all times!

The importance of mentor-

ing cannot be overstated. The future of our organization depends on the mentorship of new Members, prospective leaders, and current leaders. Those who have the experience and "been there" have a duty to help train others, as these individuals will most likely lead our great organization into the future. Please consider mentorship activities at whatever level you are at in your organization.

Concerning membership - as of 12/31/2023, any membership renewals that haven't been transmitted are considered delinquent. Adjutants, please do not sit on memberships that you have received - please turn them in!

Renewal online is available, and it is easy! Go to legion.org/sons and hit the Renew button.

For God and Country,
Jim Gallentine
Kansas Detachment
Commander

DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER

Dan Bartlett

(800) 574-8387 ext. 54489
dan.bartlett@va.gov

2200 SW Gage
Topeka, KS 66622

Most American Legion Members are aware that each Legion Post has an appointed Post Service Officer (PSO). The American Legion's Post Service Officer is a volunteer position within each Post. A PSO serves as a link between the Veteran or dependent and a representative holding American Legion accreditation. An effective PSO understands benefits afforded to Veterans and dependents; however, the PSO is not authorized to file any claims on behalf of the claimant. PSOs

serve as valuable resources to Veterans in local Posts to ensure that our Veterans and their dependents receive their earned benefits.

To learn more about veterans and dependents benefits, please join us at this year's Kansas American Legion College (KALC) scheduled for June 7th through the 9th.

Please click on the link below for information regarding our veterans and dependents' benefits.

[Fact Sheets - Veterans Benefits Administration \(va.gov\)](https://legion.org/benefits)

+ TAPS +

Appleby, Gary (Vietnam)	Concordia
Benjamin, Evel (Korea)	Bazine
Beran, George (Korea)	Derby-Haysville
Bevan, John (Korea)	Newton
Bingham, W. (WWII)	Jewell
Bishop, James (Vietnam)	Wichita #256
Brogan, Carl (Vietnam)	Arkansas City
Brown, Robert (Vietnam)	Perry
Chaffe, Gary (Vietnam)	Newton
Charles, Carmin (Korea)	Ellinwood
Charles, Engel (Persian Gulf)	Newton
Cochran, Guinn (Vietnam)	Newton
Cook, Edwin (Vietnam)	Halstead
Cooper, Gregg (Vietnam)	Hoxie
Cowan, Russell, Sr. (Vietnam)	Osage City
Davis, Eldon (Korea)	Blue Rapids
Davis, Glen	Newton
Decker, T.W. (Vietnam)	Junction City
Donald, Smith (WWII)	Cawker City
Eichman, Alfred (Korea)	Wamego
Farquer, Melvin (Vietnam)	Newton
Fisher, Norman (Vietnam)	Attica
Goodman, Fred (Korea)	Ness City
Gordon, Jay (Lebanon/Grenada)	Phillipsburg
Gould, John (Vietnam)	Rexford
Hefley, James (Korea)	Baxter Springs
Herrman, Paul (WWII)	LaCrosse
Johnston, Harry (WWII)	Blue Rapids
Kohler, Joseph (Vietnam)	Beloit
Lanzrath, Donald (Vietnam)	Newton
Leggs, Ralph, Jr. (Vietnam)	Junction City
Liggett, John (Korea)	LaCrosse
Lomax, Vincent (Vietnam)	Pittsburg
Marino, Charley, Jr. (Vietnam)	Arma
Mattal, Clarence (Vietnam)	Isabel
McIntire, Gale (Vietnam)	Derby-Haysville
McIntyre, Donald (Vietnam)	Perry
McNamara, Ron (Vietnam)	Junction City
Miller, William (Vietnam)	Valley Center
Minnich, Frederick (Vietnam)	Leavenworth
Mitchell, James (Vietnam)	Junction City
Newman, Larry (Vietnam)	Madison
Penner, Lawrence (Korea)	Newton
Ratliff, Jack, Jr. (Vietnam)	Blue Rapids
Reifschneider, Frank (Vietnam)	LaCrosse
Renken, Floyd (WWII)	Cawker City
Ringle, Francis (Korea)	Dodge City
Roberson, Daniel (Vietnam)	Olathe
Scheaffer, Harold (Vietnam)	Andover
Seib, Paul, Jr. (Korea)	Ness City
Siebert, Julian (WWII)	Westmoreland
Sis, Vincent (Korea)	McDonald
Slinkard, Robert (Vietnam)	Isabel
Slusher, Edward (Korea)	Osage City
Vawter, Clint (Vietnam)	Topeka #400
Walker, Bill (Vietnam)	Arkansas City
Wapp, William (Vietnam)	Frankfort
Weeks, Rick (Vietnam)	St George
Wenger, Alvin (WWII)	Powhattan
Whitfield, Gregory (Vietnam)	Ozawkie
Wingo, John (Vietnam)	Newton
Womack, Larry (Vietnam)	El Dorado



AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Cheryl Eastep

(620) 687-3197

deptpresident@kslegionaux.org



I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and looking forward to a very Happy New Year!

This is going to be an exciting year for Kansas! We have some great representatives this year and the upcoming year. S.A.L. National Vice Commander for Central Division Terry Harris and AL National Vice Commander Ray Vail has been doing an outstanding job. We are looking forward to our own ALA Vice President Trish Ward to become our National President this year and our own Dan Wiley to become the National Commander soon!! KANSAS IS PROUD.

What a busy month of December. VP Tracy and I attended the VA Gift Shops in Wichita, Winfield, and Topeka together: I went to Leavenworth, and Tracy went to

Ft Dodge. I must say everyone did a fantastic job!! A big shout out and thank you to all that participated. It was a big job but I know that the Veterans were very thankful! Keep up the good work!

Operation North Pole was the next event that VP Tracy, Chaplain Kristen and I went to. Santa had some great helper elves this year! A big shout out to the donations of cookies and to all the helpers. Everyone seemed to enjoy the goodies and had a good time. It was Great to see the Children's faces light up.

Now that all the holiday parties are over and a new year is beginning, time to look forward to a great 2024! Lets continue to work on membership. We want to have our numbers up and show our support for our incoming National President Trish!



HISTORIAN

Dan Stacy

departmenthistorian@kansaslegion.org

Now that the Holidays are behind us, it is time to move on to 2024. The National History books are changing. This year you will be able to submit a hard copy, but next year it will be digital. I guess we all probably knew that it would be going in that direction eventually. I have always been one to believe if it works don't fix it. I must admit that I have been a little behind the curve these past few months. I'm still work-

ing on a photo album for the Commander as well as a year in photographs for the Department. I would like to be more tech savvy than I am. Old dogs can learn new tricks but at a much slower pace. We enjoyed the Department Christmas Party at Post # 5 at Emporia. It was enjoyable visiting with everyone. The food was great, and the live entertainment was special. Looking forward to seeing everyone at Mid-Winter Forum.

DOUG HENSLEY FOR MASTER-AT-ARMS

My name is Doug Hensley, from Miami Post 156, Paola and I am announcing my candidacy for the office of Department Master at Arms for 2024-2025.

I earned my eligibility by service in the United States Army from 1990-1996. I am a current Member of The American Legion with eight continuous years of service.

I have served in various positions in the Post, from Historian to Commander and still stay active by serving Post 156 as Commander. I serve as oversight on all Committees within the Post. I have served as the 2nd District Vice-Commander, and currently serve as Commander. I am currently your Department "Be The One", S.A.L. and Shooting Sports Committee Chairman as well as serving on the K.A.L.C. and Membership Committees. I am a graduate of the 2022 National American Legion College.

Moving forward I am committed to continue working with the Posts, Districts, and the entire Legion Family, using time and resources as Master at Arms to promote the mission of the Kansas American Legion. I am dedicated to represent the Legion professionally and respectfully while keeping order at Department Meetings, remembering our POW/MIA's by honoring the missing man's chair and continue to honor Our Country and its Veterans through dedicated and enthusiastic service through The American Legion.

I have the support of my family, the support and endorsement of Post 156, and I will be seeking the support and endorsement of the 2nd District at the District Convention on March 23, 2024. I am asking for your support at the Department Convention for the Office of Department Master at Arms.

For God and Country
Carl "Doug" Hensley

2024 MID-WINTER FORUM HUTCHINSON, KANSAS

Friday, February 2

3 - 7:00 pm Registration	Post # 68
4 pm Department Executive Committee Meeting	Post # 68
5 - 8 pm Chicken Fried Steak Dinner.....	Post # 68

Saturday, February 3

7:00 am-4:00 pm Registration	Post # 68
7:00-8:00 am Biscuits & Gravy, Cinnamon & Breakfast Rolls.....	Post # 68

OPENING SESSION

8:00am Call to Order	Department Commander Randy Frank
Opening Ceremony	Randy Frank
Welcome & Introduction.....	Post Commander Bruce Branson
Welcome.....	Jon Richardson, Mayor of Hutchinson
S.A.L. Introductions.....	James Gallantine
Auxiliary Introductions	Cheryl Eastep
Junior Auxiliary Introductions	Tatum Freeman
American Legion Introductions	Randy Frank
Leading Candidate for National Commander	James Lacoursiere

S.A.L. & Auxiliary Depart for their Meetings

Director Bill Turner and Deputy Director Eric Rohleder	Veterans Services, KCV
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ADJOURN FOR LUNCH AT THE POST

1:00 pm Call to Order	Department Commander Randy Frank
Door Prize Drawing	Jimmie Foster
Legion Riders	Barry Maples
Membership Turn-in	Angela Evans
Membership Awards & Prizes.....	Angela Evans
Media & Communications.....	Michael Cole
Legislation	Chuck Shoemaker
Candidates for Department Offices.....	Randy Frank
4:00-5:30 pm Reception for Visiting National Officers.....	Post # 68
5:30-7:00 pm Roast Beef, Mashed Potatoes, Vegetable and Dessert Dinner Available ..	Post # 68
Karaoke	Post # 68

Sunday, February 4

7:00-8:00 am Registration	Post # 68
7:00-8:00 am Biscuits & Gravy, Sausage, Eggs, Hashbrowns Breakfast Available	Post # 68
8:00 am Call to Order	Department Commander Randy Frank
Four Chaplains Service	Rev. Debra Muylaert
8:30 am Pledge of Allegiance	Angela Evans
Legion Family Membership Turn-In	Angela Evans
Child & Youth Report	Leroy Matthews
Americanism Programs:	
Cadet Law Enforcement Academy	Pat Hewitt
Boys State	Tom Wierman
Oratorical	Mike Oppy
Baseball.....	Joe Durham
Scholarships	Mike Oppy
School Awards & County Government Day	Gary Foos
Eisenhower.....	Paul Sanford
Department Sweepstakes Drawing	Department Staff

CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY

(Continued from Page 2)

males, all applicants must be high school junior, or senior, or equivalent, with at least a C+ average scholastically and be physically capable of fully participating in all activities during the week long program. Instruction includes firearms and firing range safety, personal defense, law enforcement history and techniques, pursuit driving on a skid-pad under controlled conditions, practical emergency medical procedures, aircraft use in law enforcement (weather permitting), and the responsibilities of citizens regardless of age.

Primarily classes are conducted by Highway Patrol personnel however representatives of other agencies such as the FBI, KBI, Wildlife and Parks, city and county officials augment the instruction provided throughout the week. Parents and families are encouraged to attend graduation ceremonies on Friday evening, June 21.

Students are encouraged to apply early. Completed applications must include endorsements by a doctor (attesting to the applicant's physical condition), their high school principal or superintendent, their local American Legion Post Commander or Auxiliary Unit President, and a local law enforcement officer. A sponsorship fee of \$300 and application fee of \$50 includes housing, meals and supplies needed during the session must also accompany the application and can come from any source (Post, Unit, Squadron, Chapter, a local merchant, parents, etc.).

Applications must be received by March 31.



KANSAS SUNFLOWER LEGIONNAIRE

Jimmie L. Foster, Editor

Official publication of The American Legion, Department of Kansas and is owned exclusively by The Kansas Department. Published four times per year. Commander Randy Frank; Vice Commander Angela Evans; Area Vice Commander West Mike Jury; Area Vice Commander East George Honn; Adjutant, Jimmie Foster; Asst. Adjutant Jeff Bond, National Executive Committeeman Dan Wiley; Alternate NEC Jeremy Ehart; Chaplain Rev. Debra Muylaert; Judge Advocate Joe DeWoskin; Historian Dan Stacy; Masters-at-Arms Ed Boring and Gary Foos.

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News deadline is the 15th of March, June, September and December for the next issue.

THE AMERICAN LEGION VA HOSPITAL SERVICE OFFICERS

Robert J. Dole Regional VA Medical Center, Wichita

Local: 316-688-6814, Toll Free: 888-878-6881 Ext. 56814

Dwight D. Eisenhower VA Medical Center, Leavenworth

Local: 913-758-4297, Toll Free: 800-952-8387 Ext. 54297

Colmery-O'Neil VA Medical Center, Topeka

Local: 785-350-4489, Toll Free: 800-574-8387 Ext. 54489

MID-WINTER FORUM MEALS

**FEBRUARY 2-4, 2024
HUTCHINSON POST #68**

FRIDAY 2 FEB - DINNER: \$10.00
CHICKEN FRIED STEAK, GREEN BEANS, MASHED POTATOES & GRAVY, DESSERT AND SMALL SALAD BAR

SATURDAY, 3 FEB - BREAKFAST:
INCLUDED IN REGISTRATION
BISCUITS AND GRAVY, CINNAMON ROLLS, AND BREAKFAST ROLLS

SATURDAY, 3 FEB - LUNCH: \$ 8.00
SANDWICHES WITH ALL THE FIXINGS, POTATO SALAD, CHIPS, AND DESSERT

SATURDAY, 3 FEB - DINNER: \$15.00
FULL SALAD BAR, ROAST BEEF, MASHED POTATOES & GRAVY, CORN, DINNER ROLLS, AND DESSERT

SUNDAY, 4 FEB - BREAKFAST: \$ 8.00
BISCUITS AND GRAVY, EGGS, HASHBROWNS, SAUSAGE, AND BREADS

Name _____

Post/Unit/Squadron # _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Number of Friday Dinners
to be reserved at \$10.00 each: _____

Number of Saturday Lunches
to be reserved at \$8.00 each: _____

Number of Saturday Dinners
to be reserved at \$15.00 each: _____

Number of Sunday Breakfasts
to be reserved at \$8.00 each: _____

Enclosed is check in the amount of _____

**Mail to: Jeremy Ehart
730 W 4th Ave
Hutchinson, KS 67501**