

Sunflower Legionnaire

The American Legion -



Today's Voice for Today's Veterans & Military

VOL LXXIX NO. 1

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

July, August, September 2025



George Honn, Department Commander

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY HOMECOMING

The Homecoming Celebration for Department Commander George Honn, Auxiliary President Anndi Bownes, and S.A.L. Commander Matthew Krupco will be held Saturday, August 16th at Overland Park Post #370 located at 7500 W 75th.

The festivities will begin at 12:00 AM with a Social Hour. Tickets are \$15.00 per person by 9 Au-

gust (\$17 at the door) and include lunch. Leading Candidate for National Commander, Dan Wiley is the guest speaker.

Meatloaf or chicken, mashed potatoes, corn/green beans, salad, roll, and tea/water will be served.

To RSVP, mail in the coupon on page 9. Make checks payable to Matthew Krupco, and mail to address indicated on the coupon.

SWEEPSTAKES SUPPORTS KANSAS' VETERANS, YOUTH

The Spring Sweepstakes provides much needed funding for Kansas Department's state-wide Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation programs as well as Children and Youth programs.

In a partnership with the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office, the Kansas American Legion employs seven Veterans Service Officers and their staff to assist veterans obtaining their earned veterans' benefits. Under this program, the American Legion maintains an office in each of the three VA hospitals in Kansas. This important service is available to any Veteran, free of charge.

Sweepstakes proceeds also go to the Department Children and Youth (C&Y) fund. Department C&Y pays for the State Oratorical Contest, various scholarships, and the Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program. These worthy programs could not exist without the generous support of Kansas Legionnaires.

The drawing was held in Topeka, June 1st, during the Department Convention.

CONVENTION ELECTION RESULTS

George Honn was elected Department Commander during the closing session of the 106th Annual State Convention in Topeka on June 1st.

Commander Honn served in the United States Navy from 1979-1987. He is a 16-year member currently with Post #156 in Paola. There, he served as 1st Vice Commander, and the Riders Chapter Director for eight years.

At the District level, George served as Command-

er Vice Commander, Executive Committee, and Riders Area Director.

At the Department level Commander Honn served as Vice Commander and Area East Vice Commander, and is a Graduate of the National American Legion Leadership College.

George Pogge was elected Department Vice Commander and earned his eligibility by serving in the US Army from 1975 to 2003.

Jennifer Carder was elect-

ed as Area West Vice Commander. Jennifer will be available to respond to requests for assistance from Posts in Districts V, VI, VII, VIII, and IX. She is a five-year member of Post #221 in Hoxie.

Ed Boring was elected Area East Vice Commander and will assist Posts in Districts I, II, III, IV, X and XI when called upon to do so. He is a 44-year member currently with Post #170 in Chantue.



George Pogge, Department Vice Commander



Jennifer Carder, Area West Vice Commander



Ed Boring Sr., Area East Vice Commander

COMMANDER

George Honn

(913) 731-5172

departmentcommander@kansaslegion.org



VICE COMMANDER

George Pogge

(703) 597-9385

departmentvicecommander@kansaslegion.org



Well it has been a busy first month as your Department Commander but it has been fun. I am really looking forward to this year. The new membership year will start July 1 for 2026, but let's not forget we can still renew for 2025.

There are a lot of things going on in the next two months. If you have something come up and would like me there please call or text and if I am available I will do my best to be there.

Upcoming in July Erie Bean Feed always fun time, August Membership Workshop, Department Commander, Detachment Commander and Auxiliary President Homecoming is August 16th at Post 370 in Overland Park, Kansas Information should be out.

So, starting in July let's try and get all Posts off of goose eggs as soon as possible. Thanks for all you do, it is an honor to be your Department Commander.

Thanks everyone for your support at the Department Convention. I am very humbled at the level of support, proud to have been selected out of my peers to be a part of the Kansas Leadership team and am ready to work hard and tirelessly to produce results.

I was privileged to attend Boys State and Girls State this year. They are both great programs and need our continued support. They are both producing future leaders for our communities and our nation and we cannot emphasize enough the benefit, both near and long term, of both programs. As a side note, during the AC Byrd Post 411 Lansing family dinner and 2025-2026 officer installation we discovered that State Senator Jeff Klemp of Leavenworth and State Representative Dave Buehler of Leavenworth are both Boys State alumni.

The Kansas American Legion Leadership College was a great success this year as well. The classes were well attended and well-presented and I believe everyone has a few new tools in their respective toolbox to make their Posts and Districts better and more viable. Thanks to everyone who took a leadership or instructor role in the event and stepped up to make Kansas a better Department.

I was honored to be able to attend a portion of the Cadet Law Enforcement Academy in Salina this year under the sound tutelage and escort of PDC Sanneman and Past District Cdr. Rena Castilleja. I was very impressed by the quality, motivation, attitude, and participation of the Cadets and the exceptional quality of the instruction and instructors provided by the Kansas Highway Patrol. This is definitely a program worthy of our best promotional and financial support. The Cadets are much better citizens and community

members having received instruction from and their association with the Troopers and Officers of the KHP. I also believe the KHP troopers are each in a small way better for their association with the Cadets.

After Cadet Law Graduation I was able to link up with the Kansas Riders in Manhattan and finish the second and third day of the Kansas Legacy Run. Fantastic and resilient group to put up with the strong wind and heat. Overall it was a positive event and raised a total of over \$18,000, for the National Veterans and Children's Foundation.

None of these activities and associations I am sad to report though put a single new member into our organization. We have again this year missed our membership goal as a Department overall for the year by 10%. This is absolutely not sustainable. We can do better, and we must do better if we are going to survive as an organization. I have several of the District membership plans from KALLC and I will be asking the rest of the District Commanders to send me theirs electronically. The Areas East and West Vice Commanders will be putting together a Department membership plan for review and approval by the Department Commander, which we will implement prior to Membership Workshop. We will also be publishing and distributing Department goals for the next year.

By now all the Posts should have their membership packets and be leaning forward toward implementation of their membership plan for 2025-2026. Get your Life Membership and initial turns completed early and start recruiting new members.

Lets Keep Moving Forward for God and Country...

George

DETACHMENT COMMANDER

Matthew Krupco

mwksal@outlook.com



I'm honored to be elected as the Kansas Detachment Commander for 2025-2026! I hope that I represent my grandfather well by serving humbly and leading by example. Over the last few years I have traveled the state, first following my wife while she served as a Department officer then as a Detachment officer myself. I cannot thank the Kansas Legionnaires enough for the hospitality and respect that I have been shown. Thank you for always making me feel like I belong here in Kansas. I am very excited for this year and working with not just the Sons membership but with the entire Legion Family. The "Get One for the Legion" initiative that the Detachment is launching should help all of us grow our membership. When a Sons member recruits a Legion member they earn a free neon polo shirt. Every new Legion member has the possibility of

bringing multiple Auxiliary and Sons members with them. I hope this is just the beginning of all of us working together to grow our family.

For God and Country,
Your Detachment Commander
Matthew Krupco

AMERICAN LEGION DAYS at the State Fair

Contact your District Commander if you're interested in volunteering to represent the American Legion at the State fair this September.

Fri, Sept. 5..... 8th District
Sat, Sept. 6 4th District
Sun, Sept. 7 6th District
Mon, Sept. 8.. 10th District
Tues Sept. 9..... 9th District
Wed, Sept. 10 .. 5th District
Thu, Sept. 11 ..11th District
Fri, Sept. 12.....2nd District
Sat, Sept. 13 3rd District
Sun, Sept. 14 1st District



CHAPLAIN

Rev. Debra Muylaert
departmentchaplain@kansaslegion.org

Greetings Legion Family! It brought me immense joy to see many of you at Department Convention and the Legion College. I always love seeing the Legion Family!

By now, hopefully everyone has heard about the American Legion's "Be the One" mission to reduce the rate of veteran suicide. It was launched a few years ago and is the Legion's top priority. It has steadily grown, directly leading to saving the lives of Veterans on the brink of suicide, creating more awareness about the issue, and pinpointing solutions. In addition to reducing stigma, encouraging community involvement, and leveraging resources, the mission emphasizes the importance of individual action. Anyone can "Be the One" to reach out and support a veteran in need.

One aspect of supporting veterans in need that we never talk about or mention, however, is something we can do from the privacy of our own homes – prayer! We can pray! There is tremendous power in prayer. When we seek God in prayer for struggling veterans, we

can impact the very direction of their lives. Oh, how vast are the possibilities when we pray! Just think – we can help veterans on our knees! Not only can we pray for struggling veterans, but we can also pray for the mission, for upcoming awareness events, and for the free training provided by Columbia University Lighthouse Project. Oftentimes, prayer is the last thing we do when it should be the first thing we do.

The Bible has much to say about prayer. God's Word tells us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17), be devoted to prayer (Romans 12:12), and keep alert in prayer (Colossians 4:2). And that's just for starters. So, whether you pray by yourself, with a prayer partner, or organize a prayer chain, always remember to pray for the "Be the One" mission and for those veterans who are struggling and need Divine intervention. "Be the One" in prayer!

May God bless you abundantly for all you do for the Legion and for fellow veterans and their families. See you at the Department Family Homecoming!

SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

- Denise Meno, Junction City, KS..... \$2,000.00
- Edward Gunnels, Leavenworth, KS.... \$1,000.00*
- Brian Reter, Ellsworth, KS \$500.00
- Patsy Oliverio, Kansas City, KS \$250.00
- Roger Thompson, Roeland Park, KS \$250.00
- Philip Duffy, Stilwell, KS \$200.00
- Gary Allcorn, McLouth, KS..... \$200.00
- Kenneth Geistfeld, Haysville, KS..... \$100.00
- Bryce Romine, Lyndon, KS..... \$100.00

* \$200 Bonus for being present during the drawing

ADJUTANT'S BRIEFS

By Department Adjutant Jimmie L. Foster

Now, that the 106th Department Convention is behind US, and WE have a New Slate of Department Officers to lead US into and through the 2025-2026 Membership Year it is time to keep finding Veterans that want to join Our Great Organization.

The Delegates of the Convention were given the opportunity to hear their National Leaders from ALL three Entities of The American Legion Family National Vice Commander James Kellogg from Adams, Minnesota, Our Own American Legion Auxiliary National President Trish Ward from Louisburg, Kansas, S.A.L. National Commander Joseph Navarette' from Albuquerque, New Mexico, and S.A.L. National Vice Commander Michael Monserud from Eldora, Iowa enlightened US with a vast amount of knowledge about their individual Organizations and thanked the Department of Kansas American Legion Family for their support and camaraderie.

Boys State was held from 1 to 7 June at Kansas State University. Every Stator was happy to be able to attend in person this year. They were well educated and initiative-taking young Adults representing their individual Cities and Towns across the State of Kansas very well.

The Kansas American Legion College (KALC) was held from 6 to 8 June in Concordia was also well attended and those there was eager to learn new things to help Our Organizations continue to march forward. All the presenters did a superb job of making it interesting and informational. This year it was again open to ALL entities of The American Legion Family – Legion, Auxiliary and Sons!

At the D.E.C. (Department Executive Committee) Meeting many topics were on the agenda. The biggest was the presentation and approval of the Department Budgets for the Operation Year 2025-2026 by Department Finance Committee Chairman Jim Buterbaugh.

The Information Letter has

been mailed to those that were selected as Delegates and Alternates to the 2025 National Convention in Tampa, Florida. National Staff has worked hard to ensure that those attending will be rewarded with informational and fun times for The American Legion. Make sure you pay close attention to the submission dates. These dates are non-negotiable by Department and National for contract purposes.

The Kansas Cadet Law Program was held from 15 to 20 June 2025 at the Kansas Highway Patrol Academy in Salina. They had a fair number of Cadets attend this year. Each year the Boy's State and Cadet Law Programs give me continued faith that some of our youths are on the right track for the betterment of Our Country!

The Erie Bean Feed is scheduled from 18 & 19 July 2025 in Erie, Kansas. This is the 152nd Year for the Soldiers and Sailors Ceremonies. This will be their Sesquicentennial, and they are anticipating a huge crowd. If you have never attended be sure to put it on your calendar.

The Department Commanders Homecoming Luncheon will be held on August 16 at Overland Park Post # 370. A clip out is on the last page of this Sunflower Legionnaire.

The Kansas State Fair is a go again this year. Each District is responsible for staffing the Booth for a day. PLEASE contact your District Commander or District Adjutant to assist in promoting The American Legion for those attending the State Fair. It is always a fun and rewarding experience!

The Department Vice Commanders Homecoming will be held in conjunction with The Eisenhower Pilgrimage in Abilene, Kansas on 11 October 2025. There is also a clip out on the last page of this Sunflower Legionnaire. PLEASE plan to attend.

The Big Red Turkey Run is scheduled to be held on 15 November 2025 and Operation North Pole is scheduled to be held on 6 December 2025 this year on Fort Riley. If you

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KANSAS DISTRICTS



Click map to enlarge.

ports can be updated daily, weekly or monthly.

1st District's date for the State Fair is 14 September 2025. Sign up roster will be at the 19 July meeting. Please sign up for a time slot. I plan on visiting all Posts within 1st District. Lastly, as we approach summer, please continue with Buddy Checks. Let's make sure our senior veterans are well. Let's make the 25-26 year the best we can.



**FIRST DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

ED GUNNELS
(913) 680-8212

Hello fellow Legionnaires, for those who don't know me my name is Edward Gunnels, it's an honor to be able to be your 1st District Commander. 1st District sponsored several young men and young ladies to Boys State, Girls State and Cadet Law. 1st District has a great leadership team for the 2025-2026 year. The Kansas American Legion College in Concordia was great. A lot of good information was provided.

There are several topics that are very important to the American Legion for 2025-2026. Membership being the hot topic once again, remember membership is what supports the Legion programs and provides our legislators with our needed voice. Encourage members to renew for three years or become a PUFL. Second, BE THE ONE, because veteran suicide must stop. Sign up for the on-line training.

The American Legion Family is another hot topic. We should always work together as a family; without each other it will be hard to survive and keep the Post history alive. Reports are another hot topic that needs everyone's attention. Please make notes as to when these reports are due. Your Consolidated Post Re-



**SECOND DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

MYRA JOWERS
(417) 208-6246

No article submitted.



**THIRD DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

MARK STWALLEY
(620) 704-4738

Greetings 3rd District Legion Family. First, I would like to thank all that attended

Erie, Kansas 152nd Old Soldiers and Sailors Reunion.

The folks there and Post 102 made it happen, Small Town Big Deal! Now with all Department, District and Post Officers sworn in we have one more. August 16th will be Department of Kansas Commander's Homecoming, hope to see you all there. Destination Overland Park, KS. Post 370. Following National Convention in August at Tampa Bay. The Kansas State Fair is in September. 3rd District drew the date of Saturday September 13th for our day at the Fair booth.



**FOURTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

DANNY ROUSH
(785) 640-6511

Greetings Fourth District Legion Members. I hope you all are enjoying the summer and all the activities associated with outdoor activities. We are now starting the new membership year, a District Officer should have delivered your membership packets to your Post Commander or Adjutant. If you have not received your packet please contact me and we will help you get them. In addition to starting a new membership year our Department leaders are starting their term as well. During our Department Convention George Honn was elected Commander and George Pogge was elected Vice Commander. As usual the emphasis will be on membership both in renewals and new members. In addition, this is also a good time to reach out to your Members to ensure that they are doing well. Our goal is to reach out to those veterans who are suffering from everyday problems as well as physical conditions. Don't say I thought they were ok, reach out to them BE THE ONE.



**FIFTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

JOE HULSE
(785) 906-0655

Greetings fellow Legionnaires. The new 5th District Officers are: Commander Joe Hulse, Lindsborg, Vice-

Commander Paul Sanford, Newton E-board Members: Ron Colbert, Valley Center, Raina Arnold Wichita 273, Barbra King Derby.

Our online Zoom Third Thursday Training for July 17th: Adjutants and My Legion Training for August 21, Helping Veterans, Wives and Caregivers Navigate the VA system, September 18, Fundraising, January 15, Membership. If you think there is a need for a class that many people would benefit from please let us know and we can get it on the schedule, You do not have to be a Member of 5th District to attend training it is open to everyone, please contact me at: firstks@yahoo.com if interested.

Now for the Sad news, this year 328 Veterans or 13% that were Members in 2024 did not renew in the 5th District, remember in 2024 we had growth in the District. Across the Department 1762 veterans or 9.6% did not renew their membership. This is NOT an across-the-board problem; other Departments have grown their membership this year. Using the VA numbers we have less than one in ten veterans across the state as members. If we look at the cities we only have about 3 in 100, as members. This does not account for the many veterans that are not registered in the VA. There are a lot of veterans in Kansas, The Sons of the American Legion are coming out with a Great program soon and we need to thank them. If you have an Idea to help us retain or obtain new members PLEASE let me know.

Fifth Districts day manning our booth at the Kansas State Fair is Wednesday, September 10. If you would like to volunteer please let me know. Please mark your calendars, 5th District Homecoming will be in Mulvane on 25th of October with social hour at noon and serving at one pm, Hope to see you there!

Joe Hulse
firstks@yahoo.com



JIMMY STRACHAN
(785) 483-1186

**SIXTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Greetings Sixth District. Summer is here and July 1 is only 10 days away, with that being said, the 2026 membership year will begin. As of this writing our membership renewals are still short. Our quota is at 89.18%, we are 134 renewals short of making 100%. Call your expired members to have them pay their dues and get them sent to Department ASAP. To make it faster, Post Adjutants can process your renewals online at www.mylegion.org. Members can also renew their membership online by going to www.legion.org and look for renew membership. All it takes is your 9-digit membership number and your last name. You may also pay with credit card. That makes it very easy. Post membership renewal cards have been delivered in person or by postal mail. If your Post has not received your 2026 membership card do give me call. 785-483-1186. I have a record of who is to be bringing your cards and also, I have tracking numbers for all the packets that went through the mail.

Sixth District Convention was held in Russell, April 26 2025. I like to thank everyone that attended. This year we did have 10 Posts within the District in attendance. I have not seen this many Posts for a District Convention in sometime. Thanks again for each and every Member that attended. To start the convention off, I did have two guest speakers. First was Jim Cross the Mayor of Russell. He touched on the Russell American Legion Baseball

teams and the murals that are painted on the Russell, William Roe Post 99. Next was Troy Waymaster, Kansas State Representative for the 109 District. Troy touched on the legislation that the House is working on. Troy could have not picked a better subject since Jimmie Foster did have these issues in his Adjutants newsletter prior to our Convention. For District Officers we did have a few changes. Scott Schultz was elected to Sargent-at-Arms. Scott is a member of Russell Post 99. Next, we elected Marjorie Higgins to the 3-year Executive Committee. Marjorie is with Concordia 76. The Sixth District Executive Committee did approve three appointments. They are: Vernon Christie, Salina 62, to District Chaplin, Larry Eubanks, Concordia 76, for 1-year Executive Committee and Stan Britt, Salina 62, to District Legion Rider Chairman. Congratulations go out to our new officers, committee members and chairman's. Before I end about the convention, I have to thank all the candidates that was running for Department offices. Special thanks go out to Angela Evans, Past Department Commander, George Honn, Department Commander and Jeremy Ehart, ANEC.

Sixth District, State Fair booth day is Sunday, September 7, 2025. We are needing volunteers to manage the booth. All Sixth District member are eligible, Legion, Auxiliary and SAL. We are here to recruit for the American Legion Family and answer question that they may have. You do not need to stay all-day a couple of hours will be great. There will be parking passes and gate passes available, only if you volunteer to work the booth. I will have more information about the booth a little later. Call me at 785-483-1186 if you will like to work the booth,

2026 Sixth District Convention will be held in Concordia at Post 76. I will have information to Post at a later time.



BILL SYKES
(918) 916-9530

**SEVENTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Good-Day all District 7 Legionnaires:

First off, I want to thank you all for re-electing me as your Seventh District Commander. Congratulations also go Basil Peppard, Post #68 in Medicine Lodge, on being elected to the District Executive Committee. If I haven't already, I will be getting in touch with all District 7 Posts to deliver your 2026 Membership packets; the new membership year kicked off on July 1, 2025.

Here is the usual list of dates to remember: 1 August at Hutch Post 68 VA Claims assistance and Vet Breakfast. 22-28 August, National Convention in Tampa Florida, Kansas own Dan Wiley is the leading Candidate and should be elected as National Commander. 5-14 September, State Fair, District 7 will work in the AL booth as fill-ins. 25 September, the National Commander will visit Hutch Post 68 as part of his State Tour. 11 October is the annual Eisenhower Pilgrimage and Department Vice-Commanders' Homecoming. 15 November is the annual Big Red One Turkey Run at Fort Riley. 6 December is Operation North Pole, also at Fort Riley. 13 December is the Department Christmas Party at Hutch Post 68. 30 January to 1 February at Dodge City is the Department Mid-Winter Conference. 21 March is the Seventh District Convention in Great Bend. 28 March National Commander Dan Wiley's Homecoming in Olathe. 29 May to 31 May 2026 is the Department Convention at Topeka. Somewhere in October, I plan on having my homecoming at Hutchinson, more to

follow.

As always, membership is important. Those of you whose Post is less than 15 need to work on your Post strength; 15 is critical mass for keeping your Post viable according to National and Department. If your strength is over 15, your goal will likely be about 3% over your last reported this-year's strength; we will not know for sure exact numbers until after National Membership Workshop 6-10 August in Indianapolis. If you need help with membership, or with working the Post 58 list, please get in touch with me at williammsykes@yahoo.com or 918-916-9530, or the Vice-Commander at loxisykes@yahoo.com or 620-474-4373. She is an expert at moving people out of Post 58. If you want us to come and help with a membership event please email us. If you have a Post event you would like us to pass on information on let us know, we might even show up for it.



HENK RIJFKOGEL
(620) 276-3611

**EIGHTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

In my hometown of Garden City, Kansas, we have the privilege of having two World War II Veterans still with us. Their ages are somewhere around 103 years old and are as sharp as ever. From the Vietnam and Korean Wars these veterans are slowly dwindling in numbers, and in the past current wars our country has been involved in and those who have served in our country honorably that it seems to appear there are no more veterans to recruit for membership.

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EIGHTH DISTRICT

(Continued from Page 5)

I have found out as I travel throughout Southwest Kansas, and in my hometown that there are Veterans out there who have never been recognized as a veteran or informed about the American Legion.

Let me also add this, sometimes just a veteran being recognized as a veteran makes them proud to be a veteran, that they have served their country, and I believe that those veterans would like to serve again, hopefully being an American Legion Member.

The charge for today, as you go out and about your daily lives, meeting with people, and also people that might have a family member that are veterans. ASK!, look for them and find

them and hopefully recruit them and make them new members. Legion members they're out there!

So, set a goal for yourself and your Post, make it achievable and when you have recruited, a new member, give them a sense and a purpose to become American Legion Members.

I wish you all success and keep me posted.

District 8 Commander
Henk Rijfkoel

ing their summer and has been blessed, at least a little bit, by the rain from these recent days!

My name is Sean Hankin from Colby Post 363. I am excited to be the 9th District Commander for 2025 - 2026 and am looking forward to a successful year ahead.

Communication will be critical to ensuring a successful year. I encourage you to follow the District 9 Facebook page. I will do my best to keep the District aware of important, upcoming events. You may also contact me by email at districtcommander9@kansaslegion.org.

And it is a new year! Membership packets have been delivered or mailed throughout the District. If you have not received yours, please be sure and let me know.

Our first big event will be supporting the American Legion Booth at the Kansas State Fair in September. As you hopefully know, the Districts all take a day to staff the booth, to help spread the different messages of The American Legion and enhance membership in the Department. This year the 9th District selected Tuesday, September 9th. (Yes ... the 9th drew 9-9!) Please let me know if you are able to assist on this day!

Continue to enjoy your summer and thank you for all you do for The American Legion!

Sean Hankin, Commander
District 9



ALAN ZEITVOGEL
(785) 410-3163

**ELEVENTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

As we gather this Fourth of July to celebrate our nation's birth, we're reminded of the enduring ideals that unite us—liberty, justice, and the right to self-determination. These are not just historical concepts; they are living values embodied in one of The American Legion's Four Pillars: AMERICANISM. Americanism is more than waving a flag or reciting the Pledge. It's about fostering civic pride, teaching our youth the responsibilities of citizenship, and honoring the sacrifices that secured our freedoms. It's about living the values enshrined in the Declaration of Independence—not just on July 4th, but every day.

As Legionnaires, we are called to uphold these ideals while remaining apolitical. That doesn't mean we check our beliefs at the door. On the contrary, our service earned us the right to hold and express personal political views. But within the Legion, we rise above partisanship to focus on what binds us: service, sacrifice, and a shared love of country. Still, the line between personal expression and organizational neutrality can sometimes blur. It's worth reminding ourselves that while Legionnaires have every right to participate in the political process as private citizens, it's essential we avoid partisan advocacy when wearing the Legion cap or speaking on its behalf. Doing so maintains the trust, unity, and inclusivity that are core to our mission. When in doubt, remember we represent all veterans, not just those who vote like us.

In today's digital age, it's easy for our words to carry

farther than intended. While Legionnaires are free to voice opinions as private citizens online, it's important to avoid any suggestion that our views represent the "Official Stance of The American Legion." If you're posting on social media, ask yourself: Am I speaking for myself or could this be perceived as coming from the Legion? As a rule, if you're using your own name and not identifying with the organization, you're in the clear. But once the Legion name or imagery is involved, we have a duty to uphold its apolitical character. Respectful discourse always reflects best on our legacy of service and sacrifice.

This Independence Day let's lead by example. Let's show our communities that patriotism isn't about political affiliation, it's about respect, unity, and a commitment to the common good. Let's teach the next generation that freedom includes the freedom to disagree, and that true Americanism means listening as much as speaking. In celebrating our independence, we reaffirm our dedication to the principles that make America worth serving—and worth preserving.

Peace

ADJUTANT'S BRIEFS

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have never attended one of these events, you have deeply missed out. Both Events will literally touch your heart when the Soldiers and their families hugs you and breaks down in tears when they receive their Turkey and all the fixings or a gift for their child/children during the Christmas Holidays.

I know it is a little early but plan to attend the 2026 Mid-Winter Conference in Dodge City, Kansas from 30 January to 1 February 2026. Dodge City is ready and waiting to show Everyone a Great Time. Plan to attend!

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).



SEAN HANKIN
(785) 443-0956

**NINTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Greetings Ninth District!
I hope everyone is enjoy-



LARRY ROKEY
(785) 285-2492

**TENTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

No article submitted.

DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER

Timothy Marlar
 (888) 878-6881 ext. 56814 timothy.marlar@va.gov

+ TAPS +

NAVIGATING VA HEALTHCARE

For many of our members, access to comprehensive health-care is needed. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare system stands as the largest integrated healthcare network in the United States, providing a wide array of services from routine check-ups to specialized surgeries, mental health support, and long-term care. However, understanding the intricacies of eligibility can sometimes feel like navigating a complex maze.

Eligibility for VA healthcare generally hinges on two primary factors: service history and discharge status. Most veterans who served in the active military, naval, or air service and received a discharge under conditions other than dishonorable are eligible to apply. A key component for many is the length of service; typically, veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered active duty after October 16, 1981, must have served for 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty. Exceptions exist for those discharged due to a service-connected disability, hardship, or "early out." National Guard and Reserve members may also qualify if they were called to active duty by a federal order and completed their full service period.

Beyond these foundational requirements, a veteran's eligibility is further refined through a system of "priority groups." These groups, ranging from Group 1 to Group 8, prioritize access to care based on factors like service-connected disability ratings, income levels, and specific combat service. For instance, veterans with a service-connected disability rated 50% or higher, or those receiving certain military honors like the Medal of Honor, fall into the highest priority groups, often receiving automatic enrollment and fewer, if any, co-payments. Former Prisoners of War (POWs) and Purple Heart

recipients also receive elevated priority.

Applying for VA healthcare is a straightforward process that can be done online, by phone, mail, or in person at a VA medical center or our Legion Service Officers. Necessary documents typically include discharge papers (DD Form 214), Social Security numbers for the applicant and dependents, and health insurance information.

The range of services provided by the VA is extensive, encompassing preventive care, outpatient and inpatient services, prescription drugs, mental health counseling, rehabilitation, and specialized programs for women veterans and homeless veterans. The VA also offers community care options for veterans who live far from a VA facility or when certain wait time or distance standards cannot be met by the VA itself.

For veterans residing in Kansas, comprehensive VA healthcare is readily accessible through several key facilities. The primary VA medical centers in the state include the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center in Wichita, and the VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System, which operates the Colmery-O'Neil VA Medical Center in Topeka and the Dwight D. Eisenhower VA Medical Center in Leavenworth. In addition to these main hospitals, numerous Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) and other outpatient clinics are strategically located throughout the state to provide convenient care closer to veterans' homes. These include clinics in Chanute, Dodge City, Fort Scott, Garnett, Hays, Hutchinson, Junction City, Lawrence, Paola, Parsons, Salina, Shawnee, and Kansas City, and Lenexa.

If you're interested or know of a Post Member who is interested in applying for health care reach out to one of our accredited service officers and we can help.

Aeschliman, Eldon (Korea)	.....	Perry
Andersen, Norris (Vietnam)	.....	Concordia
Avery, Rolland (Vietnam)	.....	Oberlin
Bennett, Curt (Vietnam)	.....	Arkansas City
Blackwood, Larry (Vietnam)	.....	Concordia
Blochlinger, Gene (Vietnam)	.....	Concordia
Coons, Clyde (Vietnam)	.....	Wellsville
Dorr, Charles (Korea)	.....	Augusta
Duggan, Andrew (Korea)	.....	St George
Durflinger, Don (Vietnam)	.....	Augusta
Fikefrankum, Maggie (Vietnam)	.....	Pittsburg
Fitzgerald, James (WWII)	.....	Maple Hill
Ganstrom, Gene (Korea)	.....	Concordia
Garcia, Frank (Vietnam)	.....	Tonganoxie
Gibbs, Richard (WWII)	.....	Vermillion
Goertz, Glenn (Korea)	.....	Hillsboro
Goltl, Wayne (Korea)	.....	Oberlin
Gordon, Richard (Vietnam)	.....	Caney
Harrier, Donald (Korea)	.....	Oberlin
Hood, Greg (Vietnam)	.....	Concordia
House, Bill (Vietnam)	.....	Wellsville
Johnston, Forest (Korea)	.....	Geneseo
Kaster, Franklin (WWII)	.....	El Dorado
Kearns, Charles (Korea)	.....	Agra
Koch, Ralph (Vietnam)	.....	Axtell
Krager, Jack (Korea)	.....	Concordia
Lange, Roy (Vietnam)	.....	Dorrance
Lanier, Kent (Vietnam)	.....	Augusta
Lewis, Delbert (Korea)	.....	Oberlin
Lowell, Bradley (Vietnam)	.....	Concordia
Mackie, Bill (Grenada/Lebanon)	.....	Junction City
McGowan, Samuel (Vietnam)	.....	St George
Mitchell, Stanley, Jr. (Vietnam)	.....	Derby-Haysville
Myers, Bill (Vietnam)	.....	Atchison
Obleness, James (Vietnam)	.....	Copeland
Ockomon, Tony (Vietnam)	.....	Junction City
Ogden, Richard (Korea)	.....	Tonganoxie
Pendergrass, Richard (Vietnam)	.....	Concordia
Pentico, Derry	.....	Concordia
Pinkham, Ted (Vietnam)	.....	Marysville
Sachetta, Louis (WWII)	.....	Pittsburg
Salem, Rick (Vietnam)	.....	Oberlin
Schiesser, Donald (Korea)	.....	Allen
Short, Morris (Korea)	.....	Derby-Haysville
Simonsson, John, Jr. (Vietnam)	.....	Oberlin
Simpson, Gene (Vietnam)	.....	Agra
Suther, Joseph (Korea)	.....	Waverly
Tharp, Donald (WWII)	.....	Topeka #58
Williams, Robert (Vietnam)	.....	Allen

LEGION FAMILY HOMECOMING

Saturday, August 16, 2025

11:00 AM - Social Hour

Overland Park Post #370

7500 W 75th St.

RSVP

Post//Unit/Squadron _____

Guest Name Meatloaf / Chicken

_____ M / C

_____ M / C

_____ M / C

_____ M / C

No. of Meals (\$15 each by Aug 5): _____
(\$17 each at the door)

Enclosed is my check in the amount of _____

Please Make checks Payable to: Matthew Krupco

Mail to:
510 E Main St.
Blue Mound, KS 66010

KANSAS SUNFLOWER LEGIONNAIRE

Jimmie L. Foster, Editor

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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

45th ANNUAL

EISENHOWER PILGRIMAGE

Enclosed is our payment for a rose / wreath to be placed at the Eisenhower Memorial on Saturday, October 11, 2025.

No. of Roses _____ Amount Enclosed _____
(\$10 for each rose requested)

Wreath (District Level or Higher) Amount Enclosed _____
(\$20 for each rose requested)

ORGANIZATIONS PRESENTING A ROSE / WREATH

Post # / Unit # / Squadron #, City

MAIL TO:

KANSAS AMERICAN LEGION
EISENHOWER PILGRIMAGE
1314 SW Topeka Blvd.
Topeka, KS 66612

ABSOLUTE DEADLINE: OCTOBER 1, 2025

EISENHOWER RECEPTION & DINNER

Chapman Post #240

Friday, October 10, 2025

Social Hour: 6:00 PM Dinner: 7:00 PM

No. of Dinner Reservations _____ Amount Enclosed _____
(\$25 per person)

Persons Attending Dinner

MAIL TO:

KANSAS AMERICAN LEGION
EISENHOWER PILGRIMAGE
1314 SW Topeka Blvd.
Topeka, KS 66612

ABSOLUTE DEADLINE: OCTOBER 1, 2025