

Sunflower Legionnaire

The American Legion -



Today's Voice for Today's Veterans & Military

VOL LXXIX NO. 3

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

January, February, March 2026

CADET LAW

Starting June 1, up to 30 young Kansans will gather for the 57th 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 enforce 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 females, 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
(Continued Page 3)

BOYS STATE OF KANSAS



AMERICAN LEGION

The American Legion Boys State of Kansas program provides a relevant, interactive, problem-solving experience in leadership and teamwork that develops self-identity, promotes mutual respect and instills civic responsibility to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to community, state and nation. Boys State is a "learning by doing" political exercise that simulates elections, political parties and government at the state, county and local levels, providing opportunities to lead under pressure, showcasing character and working effectively within a team. It's also an opportunity to gain pride and respect for government, and the price paid by members of the military to preserve democracy.

The American Legion Boys State of Kansas is accepting applications for its 2026 session. The event is set to be held Sunday, May 31, through Saturday, June 6, at Kansas State University in Manhattan. This will be the program's 34th consecutive session at KSU and 88th overall.

Traditionally, Kansas Boys State has been for individuals who will complete their junior year of high school in the spring just prior to the start of each session. However, the ALBSK program will again expand the pool of applicants for this year's session to also include those who will complete their sophomore year of high school this spring.

The cost to attend The Boys State of Kansas program is

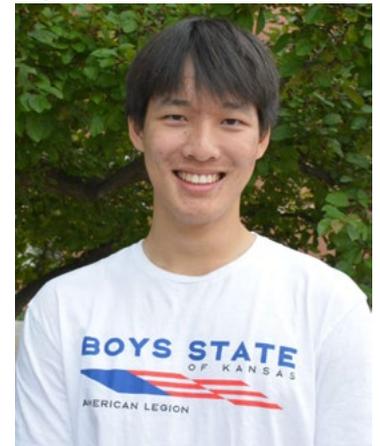
\$375; however, in many instances, sponsors pay the majority of the fees, with the delegate or his family paying \$50. Those wishing to attend the 2026 session should visit ksbstate.org to apply. The deadline to apply for the 2026 program is Thursday, April 30; applications are accepted after that date, but on a space-available basis. In addition, those who register by Saturday, Jan. 31, will receive a KBS sweatshirt or polo. Furthermore, delegates who are returning for a second year have the opportunity to attend the 2026 session for just \$50 total, provided they get at least three people from their school (or another school) to attend.

Kansas Boys State attendees are eligible to receive a three-hour course credit (Introduction to Political Science [POLSC 110-C]) through Kansas State University at a 72% discount, as well as earn merit badges to attain the

Eagle Scout rank through Boy Scouts of America. Additionally, attendees can apply to win a Samsung American Legion Scholarship. The American Legion Department of Kansas finalist is guaranteed a \$1,250 scholarship, with the opportunity to receive up to \$10,000 as a national scholar.

Potential sponsors, such as American Legion Posts, civic organizations, businesses, clubs and interested individuals should visit ksbstate.org/sponsor. Questions? Contact the ALBSK at info@ksbstate.org or (785) 550-6492. For complete information about the American Legion Boys State of Kansas program, visit ksbstate.org.

For information about the 2026 American Legion Auxiliary Sunflower Girls State, which will be held Sunday, May 31, through Friday, June 5, at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, visit ksgirlsstate.org.



Tristan Jenkins (left) and Garrett Li (right) were elected by their peers to represent Kansas as senators at the 2025 Boys Nation in Washington D.C.. Read more about them at ksbstate.org.

COMMANDER

George Honn

(913) 731-5172

departmentcommander@kansaslegion.org



VICE COMMANDER

George Pogge

(703) 597-9385

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Happy New Year to All,
Hope everyone had a great holiday season.

The start of a new year is going to be fun. We have a lot to do this year starting with the Mid-Winter Forum in Dodge City January 30th, 31st, and February 1st. Hope to see everyone there.

Membership this year is doing great! Kansas has met all of the National goals so far but we can't take our foot off the gas. Still alot of hard work to do but I know we can get it done and continue doing a great job.

The big thing we need to start working on and pushing is our Consolidated Post Reports. These are important for when The National Commander goes in front of Congress. They can be filled out online and saved so that you can keep adding information to them throughout the year. So, let's see if we can do as good a job on the CPR's as we have with

Membership.

Remember to go to legion.org/action and vote. Also, Kansas is still in 1st, but not by much. We are doing good work there also.

There is alot coming up in the first three months this year with Mid Winter, Oratorical and all the District Conventions. Make sure you have all your information in to Headquarters so it will be posted as to when and where your Conventions are so everyone can attend.

Weather permitting and don't forget about National Commander's In-State Homecoming March 28th at Post 153. It will be a fun time.

In closing, as a Department, we really appreciate all the hard work done so far this year. Keep up the great work and let's see if we can make the Great State of Kansas #1.

George Honn
Department of Kansas
Commander

CADET LAW

(Continued from Page 1)

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 5.

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.).

Visit kansaslegion.org to apply. Applications must be received by March 31. For additional information call: 785-296-6800 or email: CadetLaw@ks.gov

It has been a great fall quarter for the Kansas American Legion. We finished out all of the District Homecoming events and participated in other events around the State including the annual Neewollah parade and event in Independence Kansas with Post 139. It was a magnificent event, dampened by a few showers.

From there we moved straight into the seasonal events conducted by our great Legion Riders leadership and organization. The Big Red One Turkey Run and the North Pole events, hosted to provide much needed food and financial assistance to families of soldiers assigned to Ft. Riley, Kansas for Thanksgiving and Christmas, tremendously successful. Thanks also to our terrific SAL Squadrons and ALA Units and the State leadership of both for their tremendous work again this year. These events truly highlight how successful the American Legion Family in Kansas is and continues to be.

We participated In the Wreaths Across America kickoff ceremony at the State Capital in Topeka on 8 December, and Posts, Squadrons, and Chapters participated in the wreath laying activities and cemeteries across Kansas on Friday the 12th and Saturday the 13th. Many of our Members were able to place wreaths on relatives and loved one's graves in Public and Veteran cemeteries, making the event that much more special.

In addition to the Legion Family Christmas gatherings at Post, District, and Department level across the State we were also fortunate to host

three American Legion Family dignitaries. ALA National Vice President from West Virginia and her husband Fred came to participate in the Turkey Run and a reception sponsored by Manhattan Post 17. Thom Skelley, the SAL Leading Candidate for National Commander and Matthew Shuman, TAL Trailing Candidate for National Commander were both hosted by Manhattan Post 17 the 5th of December. Matt held a great question and answer session, enabling Members to get to know his positions and background better.

Kansas is doing well on memberships this year. We are ahead of or meeting Nationals membership goals and are currently well on track to meet the National Goal of 80% by January 14th. We are well on track to meet our Commanders' goal of 5% above Nationals Goal for January and February as well. Let us keep up the splendid work and let us make Kansas actually grow in membership this year.

We are also getting into that time of year for District Conventions, candidates announcing their intent to run for various leadership positions in the Department and Districts. Mid-Winter is coming up the 30th of Jan through the 1st of Feb hosted by Post 47 at Dodge City Kansas. I hope everyone is making plans to get into Dodge the end of Jan. In all, the 1st Quarter promises to be busy and exciting.

I pray that everyone had a safe and family focused Christmas and New Years and I am looking forward to working with all of you in 2026.

**AREA VICE COMMANDER
EAST**

Ed Boring

(620) 332-9942

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**AREA VICE COMMANDER
WEST**

Jennifer Carder

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departmentawvicecommander@kansaslegion.org



Greetings Area-East!
I hope everyone was able to gather with family and friends and able to enjoy the holidays. This time of year, is a great time to think of Members we haven't seen or heard from lately. "Be The One" contact them and just ask them how things are going. That small act of checking on them may be all it takes to make a person feel like someone does care. Let's not forget to get our membership dues turned in. The Area East has every District above 70% of their membership goal. We still have some of the Posts holding the membership dues, please get

them submitted. If your Adjutant is having trouble getting the dues and forms submitted ask someone in your Post or District to help or give me a call. I'm always available to assist. Remember to complete the Consolidated Post Reports. This allows the Members of Congress to know what Our Legion is doing. As I've stated before, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns please don't hesitate to call anytime. Thank you for all you do for The Legion Family. Hope to see you at Dodge City at the Mid-Winter Forum, and don't forget to "BE THE ONE!"

MID-WINTER FORUM

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 January 30 to February 1 will be hosted by Post 47 with Events located at 803 S. 14th Avenue in Dodge City. Friday, 30 January, will include a Department Executive Committee meeting at 4 pm. Registration will begin on Friday between 3 to 7 pm at the Post. The Post will serve a KC Strip Dinner with baked potato, green beans, and salad for \$15.00 from 5 to 8 pm.

On Saturday, January 31, Registration will continue starting at 7:00 am with Break-

fast with biscuits and gravy, eggs, sausage, hashbrowns (free to those who register as members. \$8.00 for non-members). The formal activities begin with a Joint Legion/Auxiliary/S.A.L. meeting at The Post at 8 am. After the Joint Opening the Legion, Auxiliary and the S.A.L. will meet in different rooms and other nearby locations. S.A.L. National Vice Commander Christopher Carey from the Detachment of Nebraska will address and present information to those in attendance. Lunch will be on your own (there are food trucks at each location that should be open). Concluding the day's meetings, Saturday Dinner will be brisket, pulled pork, smoked sausage, potato salad, pasta salad, baked beans, and dessert for \$15.00 at VFW Post #1714. After dinner entertainment will be at the Post. For early Registration PLEASE mail payments to: Chris Self, PO Box 359, Dodge City, Kansas 67801. DO NOT MAIL TO DEPARTMENT HEAD-

LESSONS FROM THE NATIONAL AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

In November, I had the opportunity to attend the National American Legion College alongside District 4 Vice Commander Frenchie Frye. NALC highlighted a vital truth: true leadership within The American Legion isn't about holding positions or exercising authority; it's about serving others. Throughout the program, one message resonated: servant leadership is essential for effective leadership in an organization driven by volunteers.

Servant leadership starts with the act of listening. Le-

gionnaires dedicate their time because they're passionate about our mission, and effective leaders take the time to understand their thoughts, concerns, and aspirations. Whether it's through a Buddy Check, discussions at Post Meetings, or community outreach, listening fosters trust and deeper engagement.

Empathy also emerged as a key theme. Veterans come from diverse service backgrounds and life experiences, and servant leaders must approach them with understanding and compassion. This perspective aligns perfectly with the Legion's "Be the One" initiative, promoting a culture where Veterans feel appreciated, supported, and never isolated.

Servant leaders inspire through encouragement, gratitude, and a sense of purpose, rather than control. Volunteers cannot be managed like traditional employees. By empowering members, recognizing their contributions, and providing meaningful service opportunities, we can prevent burnout and strengthen Our Posts.

A true leader's legacy isn't measured by titles or personal achievements but by the people they mentor and the culture they foster. By nurturing future leaders, embracing inclusivity, and advocating the principle that "A Veteran is a Veteran," we can ensure the ongoing vitality of The American Legion.

As Kansas Legionnaires, taking these lessons to heart means leading with humility, dedication, and a commitment to serve others. When we prioritize service, we lead effectively, making Our Posts, Districts, and Department even stronger.

QUARTERS. For Tickets and any additional information, PLEASE contact Chris Self at 620-253-2651 or the Post at 620-225-3766.

Sunday's schedule will begin at 7:00 to 8:00 am with a Community Breakfast at VFW Post #1714 for \$15.00 per person. Registration will be open from 7:00 to 8:00 am. At 8:00 am Commander Honn 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 on page 8. It is not too early to reserve your room at one of the many hotels in the Dodge City Area listed on page 9. No Block Room Rates have been negotiated. PLEASE contact your Hotel of Choice for the Best Option.

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



DETACHMENT COMMANDER

Matthew Krupco

mwksal@outlook.com



HELLO, KANSAS, AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY!!!!

Winter and 2026 have arrived! I hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday season. Santa did not disappoint at my house, that guy sure spoils Byron. The Leading Candidate for National Commander, Thom Skelley, from the Detachment of Texas visited Kansas for Operation North Pole, it was great to spend some time with and learn from him. My deepest thanks to the Hutchison Post 68 Family for doing an amazing job hosting the Holiday Party. Thank you to all that attended, it was great to see you! Marri and I have not had time to utilize our “white elephant” gifts, but we are looking forward to the relaxation! #IYKYK

In October, I wrote about the Four Pillars, specifically Children and Youth, and Americanism. I’m going to continue that conversation this quarter and write about Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation. Spoiler alert, next quarter will be National Security.

I will say this again, The Four Pillars are the heart and soul, the past, the present, and hopefully the future of The American Legion. Advocating for “Be The One” is just the tip of the iceberg, for the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Pillar. National Commander Dan Wiley was asked to participate in an Oval Office Ceremony recently where President Trump signed the Executive Order to remove

outdated barriers allowing research into the therapeutic value of cannabis. This is something The American Legion has been fighting for under the VA&R pillar since a Resolution was passed in 2016. This research could benefit many Veterans and could even play a role in reducing Veteran Suicide. Advocating for veterans benefits and quality health care on capitol hill and at the more personal level by representing veterans with VA claims are a huge part of this very important pillar. To find out even more about VA&R visit the national website at www.legion.org.

I want to make a quick reminder about the Detachment Commander’s Project, the Kansas Cadet Law program. If you’re interested in contributing to this program, please send your checks to the Detachment of Kansas write “Commander’s Project” in the memo line, and mail to the Detachment Finance Officer Mike Saindon, 312 E. Tall Tree Rd, Derby, KS 67037.

In closing, thank you for your continued service to this great nation through The American Legion. Without the Legion, the Sons would not exist, so thank you for allowing me to serve as your Detachment Commander. We can accomplish so much more when we work together, thank you for that opportunity.

For God and Country,
Matthew Krupco
Kansas Detachment Commander

ADJUTANT’S BRIEFS

By Department Adjutant Jimmie L. Foster

The Department of Kansas has been able to accomplish a lot of things this past year. Hopefully everyone reached out to a fellow Veteran and completed a “Buddy Check”. Something as simple as a phone call to see how they are doing actually may save a Veterans life. This time of year is very hard on some Veterans and this will assist them in moving forward and being positive. Keep up the great work!

Membership is a little 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 Vice Commander’s Visit of Western Kansas was a tremendous success! Many Posts had breakfasts, lunches, dinners and just a social round table meeting with Jerry Landkamer from the Department of Nebraska as he toured the State. There was a great interaction with the Members of The American Legion Family and National Vice Commander Landkamer. It was his first visit to the Department of Kansas. Jerry will also be Our Guest at the 2026 Department of Kansas Convention in Topeka from 29 to 31 May 2026.

The 2025 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 2026 Mid-Winter Conference which be held in Dodge City, Kansas from January 30 to 1 February 2026 at Dodge City Legion Post # 47 located at 801 S. 14th Avenue in Dodge City. 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 Mid-west Region Sons of The American Legion National Vice Commander Christopher Casey from the Department of Nebraska. Chris will be available to discuss issues of The Sons of The American Legion while he is visiting the Department of Kansas.

The Department American Legion Oratorical Contest is scheduled for Saturday, March 7, 2026, 9:00 A.M. at Wichita Post # 444 located at 402 S. Martinson Street, Wichita, Kansas. 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).

KANSAS DISTRICTS



Click map to enlarge.

for Boys and Girls State is 30 April 2026. BE THE ONE, because veteran suicide must stop. I encourage everyone to sign up for the on-line training. You could save a Veterans life.

The American Legion Family, a family that should always work together because without each other it will be hard to survive and keep the Post history alive.

Please make notes as to when these reports are due. Your Consolidated Post Reports can be updated daily, weekly or monthly. The 2025-2026 Consolidated Post Reports are on line at this time. Continue Buddy checks, Lets keep getting new members and renewals.

As your Vice Commander says let's continue making the 25-26 year the best it can be.

that you may need help with. We are always ready to answer the call.

For God and County, Myra Jowers

and family. The 4th District continues to lead the way—we are proudly sitting in 1st place for membership! Thank you to every Post and Member whose hard work and dedication made this possible. Let's keep the momentum strong as we move into the new year.

Our next major event is the **District Oratorical Contest on February 7th in Emporia.** Come out and support the talented young speakers who represent the future of Americanism and civic leadership.

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for our **4th District Convention on March 14th in Hillsboro.** This is an important opportunity for all Legionnaires to come together, share ideas, and prepare for the year ahead.

National Commander Dan Wiley will have his In-State **Homecoming March 28th in Olathe.** This will be a great opportunity to honor our Commander who hails from Kansas, more information will be provided.

We will then gather at the state level for the **Department Convention, May 29-31 in Topeka,** where Legionnaires from across Kansas will meet to conduct the business of our Department and celebrate accomplishments state-wide.

Before all of that, don't forget the **Mid-Winter Forum in Dodge City, January 30-February 1.** This is always a valuable week-end of training, discussion, and fellowship.

Thank you for your continued service and commitment to the 4th District and The American Legion. Together, we make a lasting impact on our veterans, our communities, and our nation.



**FIRST DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

ED GUNNELS
(913) 680-8212

Hello, 1st District. Hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. As we continue to push for a 100 percent membership from every Post within the District. The District is off to a good start with membership at this time. 1st District is at 80 percent with 3 Posts at 90 percent or higher and 9 Post at 80 percent or higher. Lets keep up the good work and keep encouraging your Members to renew. Without their membership the American Legion cannot support our Veterans, their families and the other programs provided by The American Legion.

This year as your District Commander and your Vice Commander (Mike Smith), We would like to see 1st District have a student from the many high schools and home schools within the District go to the Oratorical contest this year. If you can attend your high schools parent teacher conferences, this would be the prime opportunity to inform parents and students about Boys and Girls state as well as Cadet Law. I realize that everyone says that the counselors get this information. I encourage you to speak with the Drama, Speech, and Government teachers as well as the Counselors. The deadline



**SECOND DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

MYRA JOWERS
(417) 208-6246

Greetings, 2nd District Legionnaires.

As the new year is here, we need to work on those members that haven't yet renewed. The easy ones are done, now the hard work begins, but I know you are all up to the task. A special shout out to Dorsey-Liberty Post 14 in for already reaching 117%, great work!! District Oratorical will be held February 14th at 9:00 at Earl Collier Post 153 in Olathe. Post Adjutants need to be on the lookout in January for an email from District Adjutant Krupco about the Star Award Party that will be held in Olathe on March 7th. Due to the National Commanders In-State Homecoming, District Convention will be held earlier than usual on March 14th at LeRoy Hill Post 19 in Gardner. Remember to reach out to leadership for anything



**THIRD DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

MARK STWALLEY
(620) 704-4738

Happy New Year Third District Legion Family! I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and a safe enjoyable New Year. With the new year upon us, 2026 brings Department of Kansas Mid-Winter Forum January 30th thru February 1st at Dodge City Post 47 hosting. 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.

Hope to see you all at Dodge City end of January. Mark W. Stwalley



**FOURTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

DANNY ROUSH
(785) 640-6511

Hope everyone had a great holiday season and was able to enjoy friends



**FIFTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

JOE HULSE
(785) 906-0655

Greetings Legionaries,
First, I want to thank each of you for your military service and your continued service with The American Legion Family.

Second, I would like to invite you to attend the 5th District Convention on March 21, 2026 in McPherson. The Memorial Service starts at 9:30 and Call to Order is at 10:00.

Third, we have spent a lot of time and effort on our Oratorical Contest this year. The new Post 444 in Wichita will host the event on February 21st, at 9am. We need your help getting the best kids there to speak. We also have the honor of hosting the Department Oratorical Contest at the same place on March 7 at 10am. Scholarship for the District Contest will be awarded to the top 3 winners in the following amounts: 1st-\$900, 2nd-\$400, & 3rd-\$250.

For the Good of The American Legion, I attended the 2025 Veterans Strategy Summit at the capitol in Topeka, KS. This event was hosted by Kansas State Legislators. When we split into breakout sessions the Legislators were also Veterans. I believe that cooperation with Legislators will have the most potential impact for Veterans in Kansas. We should support this event to the best of our ability next year. Under the radar, one of their goals of the Legislators is to retain more servicemembers to Kansas after they leave their duty stations. Also brought up was that they believe the way to accomplish this can happen in many different ways. Some are: employment opportunities, income tax savings, no

primary residence property taxes if a veteran is 100% disabled, free insurance etc....

Finally, if you did not attend the District Homecoming you missed out! Mulvane, Post 136, did a wonderful job of hosting, and I had the best pumpkin bread I've ever tasted!



**SIXTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

JIMMY STRACHAN
(785) 483-1186

Greeting's Sixth District. May you all have a wonderful Christmas and New Year,

Our membership report as of 12/19/2025 is looking very good. Our District quota is 79.07% with four Posts reaching 100% or more. Those Posts are Lincoln #165 at 129.03%, Natoma #109 with 104.17%, Smith Center #220 with 100% and Tescott #255 with 100%. The rest of the Posts did show improvements. Keep up the good work with your membership renewals. For the members that have not renewed, make phone calls, knock on doors and send letters to your members that do not live close by. I do all this myself and know it works.

The next function is Mid-Winter Form in Dodge City, Kansas at Post 47. January 30th – February 1st. By attending it is a good way to stay informed to what is going on in the Kansas American Legion also to visit other Legionnaires from across the State. More information is at KansasLegion.org.

Our 107th Annual District Convention will be in Concordia at Post 76. April 25, 2026. Memorial Service to begin at 9:30 AM with the Convention at 10:00 AM. Make plans to attend. More information will be mailed to all the Posts in the District.



**SEVENTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

BILL SYKES
(918) 916-9530

Good-Day all District 7 Legionnaires:

2 January 2026 at Hutch Post 68 VA Claims assistance and Vet Breakfast, the Breakfast is the first Friday of every month.

Here is the usual list of dates to remember: 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.

As always, membership is important. The Membership Year 2026 goals are out and are VERY, VERY do-able. The District is actually doing well, were at 70% of goal, and that hasn't happened recently. Those of you whose Post has less than 15 members need to work on your Post strength; 15 is critical mass for keeping your Post viable according to National and Department. 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 loxi-sykes@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, or even just attend any event, please email us. If you have a Post event you would like us to pass on information for let us know.



**EIGHTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

HENK RIJFKOGEL
(620) 276-3611

To our Department and my District 8. My hope is you had a blessed Christmas with your family, friends and your Post. I had a blessed Christmas last week that I spent with my family and made great memories. I trust you had the same and you made great memories. I recall a time when I had to spend Christmas on the base one year and nothing hurts more, and home sickness sets in, then to spend Christmas away from home.

Any of you out there remember that time of the year?

I thank God (or try to) every day that I live in a blessed Country. The United States of America. And when I hear it, or I tried to sing it, the song, God Bless America and the grace. He sat on America. That ought to bring you to your knees and thank him that we are a blessed Country.

As I reflect back on the past year and as we come up on the new year, I asked myself what I can do better for the coming year and what stands out in my heart and mind is this: What is something I can do for someone today?

I will try to the best of my ability, and as we all can, make that a resolution for the coming year.

One guide that we can use, is our American Legion Preamble, apply it and live it out. American Legion Members, brothers, bring your members and close, your family, and that others see we live out our Preamble in our community

To my Eighth District Members: I left a note on your renewal packet wanting to get acquainted with your Post,

(Continued on Page 7)

EIGHTH DISTRICT

(Continued from Page 6)

I have not heard anything. Please call me, will set up a date and a time. I hope to hear from you soon.

For God and country
Have a great new year!
Eighth District Commander
Henk Rijfkgogel

low Legionnaire to attend with you. Hope to see you there!"

2026 is right around the corner. I encourage everyone to push for renewal of memberships in January, 2026 and strengthen our numbers. There are many members who wait until the end of the calendar year to renew, not realizing that the membership year is about half over! Continue to move forward and let's make 2026 the best year ever!

For God and Country,
Sean F. Hankin
Commander, District 9



SEAN HANKIN
(785) 443-0956

**NINTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Hello to All in the Ninth District! I hope everyone is well and enjoying the unbelievable weather of this December. It's hard to believe that we are in the midst of the holidays and Christmas is nearly here! As we enjoy these final days of preparation for one of the most holy of celebrations, let us not forget this is also season of loneliness and despair for some. This time of year can leave some feeling isolated. We need to be aware of our comrades who are experiencing difficulty and are in need of our time and friendship. Let's take the time to see how our people are doing—because no one should feel alone or forgotten. Ever.

I want to remind everyone that the Mid-Winter Forum is coming up the end of next month. Dodge City American Legion Post #47 will host the event starting January 30th, 2026 and will close on February 1.

Log on to kansaslegion.org for all the information. Here you will find agendas, a list of hotels, and meal requests for those meals being offered at the Legion and VFW Posts. "Plan to attend and ask a fel-



LARRY ROKEY
(785) 285-2492

**TENTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Merry Christmas from District 10 Legion Family

I hope your holiday was filled with family and friends.

Our Posts are busy this time of year providing support to their local communities and Veterans, by providing meals, gifts, and a warm inviting place for our Veterans and their Families.

Powhattan Post provided a Chili soup supper. Fairview Post served Christmas dinners. Sabetha Post delivered hams to local families. Greenleaf Post had Santa arrive by Firetruck to share a breakfast with local children. Santa was also seen in downtown Sabetha.

I have been traveling around the State, in addition to my District.

I visited Clay Center for their annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. Although the timing was a bit off, I thoroughly enjoyed the tree displays on the Courthouse lawn.

Finally got to stop by Greenleaf for their famous

Steak Night, along with Department Vice-Commander George Pogge. Great group of folks and the food was amazing.

I also made a trip to Linn Post for their Sunday Meal. The buffet is always full of good food and the young people who help are always ready with hot coffee.

Was able to finally attend a Department Christmas Party. This year in Hutchison. I enjoyed visiting with other District Leadership. The entertainment was very impressive.

I am continuing to travel throughout the District, next stop Hanover for their breakfast.

Some upcoming events in District 10:

District Convention is in Frankfort this next year on April 25th.

Leadership-Promoting Your Post. Training will be scheduled soon. Date and time to be announced.

The training will be focused on promoting your Post and utilizing your Volunteers' skills to the fullest, in addition to fundraising and leadership ideas.

District Oratorical will be held in Marysville, February 14th. Start time is 10am.

I encourage all to reach out to homeschooled and private school students and share the information on this important program.

I am also asking District 10 Posts to promote the Boy's State, Girls State and especially the Cadet Law Programs. All these programs can make a big difference in a young person's life.

There are many bills before the State Legislature that effect Veterans and their Families, please reach out to your Representative and ask about bills that can improve the lives of our Vets and voice your support.

Again, I hope all have a great holiday and Merry Christmas from District 10

Larry Rokey- Commander



ALAN ZEITVOGEL
(785) 410-3163

**ELEVENTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

As we step into a new year and a new legislative session, I want to talk about something that's been on my mind lately—and something I've been actively doing: engaging with our Local and State Legislators. This isn't about politics. It's about advocacy. It's about making sure the voices of veterans are heard in the halls of our state capitol and in our local government offices.

The American Legion has always been a powerful advocate for veterans. But that advocacy doesn't happen in a vacuum. It happens because Legionnaires like you and me take the time to build relationships with our elected officials, to educate them on the issues that matter to veterans, and to remind them that we are a constituency that cannot be ignored. Whether it's improving access to VA healthcare, supporting veteran employment initiatives, or ensuring our schools teach accurate American history through our Americanism programs, these issues need champions—and we need to be those champions.

I'll be honest—before I started doing this more regularly, I thought it might be intimidating or that my voice wouldn't matter. But here's what I've learned: Legislators want to hear from us. They want to know what's happening in our communities. They want to understand the challenges our veterans face. And when we show up—whether at town halls, in their offic-

(Continued on Page 8)

ELEVENTH DISTRICT

(Continued from Page 7)

es, or through well-written emails and phone calls—they listen. We have credibility because of our service. We have authority because we represent thousands of veterans across Kansas. Use that.

You don't need to be a policy expert to make a difference. You just need to care. Start simple. Find out who represents you in the Kansas Legislature. Reach out and introduce yourself as a Member of The American Legion. Invite them to visit your Post. Ask them to attend a Veterans Day Ceremony or speak at a community event. These personal connections matter more than you might think. When they put a face to the issues, when they know you by name, they're more likely to stand with us when it counts.

The 11th District has 19 Posts spread across the Flint Hills and beyond. Imagine the impact if each Post built relationships with their local representatives. Imagine if every Post Commander could pick up the phone and talk to their Legislator about a bill affecting veterans. That's the kind of grassroots advocacy that changes laws and improves lives. We don't have to do this alone—Department has resources, talking points, and legislative priorities we can rally behind. But it starts with us taking that first step.

This quarter, I challenge each of you to reach out to at least one elected official. Attend a town hall. Send an email. Make a phone call. Let them know The American Legion is watching, we're engaged, and we're here to work with them on behalf of Kansas Veterans. Our service didn't end when we took off the uniform. It continues every time we stand up for those who served.

Peace.

2026 MID-WINTER FORUM

DODGE CITY, KANSAS

Friday, January 30

3 - 7:00 pm Registration	Post # 47
4 pm Department Executive Committee Meeting	Post # 47
5 - 8 pm KC Strip Steak Dinner	Post # 47

Saturday, January 31

7:00am-4:00pm Registration	Post # 47
7:00-8:00am Biscuits & Gravy, Eggs, Sausage, Hash Browns.....	Post # 47

OPENING SESSION

8:00am Call to Order	Department Commander George Honn
Opening Ceremony	George Honn
Welcome & Introduction.....	Post Commander Chris Self
Welcome.....	Jeff Reinert, Mayor of Dodge City
S.A.L. Introductions.....	Matthew Krupco
Auxiliary Introductions.....	Anndi Bownes
Junior Auxiliary Introductions	Kylie Freeman
American Legion Introductions	George Honn

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

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

1:00pm Call to Order	Department Commander George Honn
Door Prize Drawing.....	Jimmie Foster
Legion Riders.....	Barry Maples
Membership Turn-in	George Pogge
Membership Awards & Prizes.....	George Pogge
Bowling Committee	Michael Cole
Media & Communications.....	Jason Hicks
Legislation.....	Chuck Shoemaker
Candidates for Department Offices.....	George Honn
4:00-5:30pm Reception for Visiting National Offers.....	Post # 47
5:30-7:00pm Brisket, Pulled Pork, Smoked Sausage, Potato & Pasta Salad, Baked Beans & Dessert	VFW Post # 1714

Sunday, February 1

7:00-8:00am Registration.....	Post # 47
7:00-8:00am Community Breakfast.....	VFW Post # 1714
8:00am Call to Order	Department Commander George Honn
Four Chaplains Service	Rev. Debra Muylaert
8:30 am Pledge of Allegiance	George Pogge
Legion Family Membership Turn-In	George Pogge
Child & Youth Report	Pat Culver
Americanism Programs:	
Cadet Law Enforcement Academy	Pat Hewitt
Boys State	James Snyder
Oratorical	Randy Frank
Baseball.....	Joe Durham
Scholarships	Randy Frank
School Awards & County Government Day	Joe Hulse
Eisenhower.....	Paul Sanford
Department Sweepstakes Drawing	Department Staff



CHILDREN & YOUTH

Pat Culver
childrenandyouth1@kansaslegion.org

American Legion has been actively involved with children's issues since the early 1920s. In many instances, the Legion has been the driving force on behalf of children on the federal, state, and local levels.

In 1938, April was formally designated as Child Welfare Month (now called Children and Youth Month) and has continued an annual basis. During this time, we urge each of you to show your community that The American Legion Family is dedicated to America's youth.

You should publicize your programs and activities. Have the Mayor or other local Official issue a proclamation declaring April as Children and Youth Month. Your Post Commander should issue a news release proclaiming April as Children and Youth Month and list what the Post will be doing for its annual observance.

Remember programs affecting the children and youth of your community are news!! Invite the news media to your activities and keep them informed.

The American Legion Department of Kansas has several outstanding Children and Youth programs offered:

- American Legion Baseball: A / AA / AAA , entries must be in by June.
- Kansas Boy's State: applications must be in by April 30
- Cadet Law: applications must be in by March 31.
- Oratorical Contest:

the Department Oratorical Contest is March. Check with your District Oratorical Chair member for the time and place of your District contest.

- Scouting: every Post could support a Scout Troop...check it out, many times all they need is a place to meet.

If you need additional information, please check kansaslegion.org under "programs".

Shortly after the first of the year, American Legion departments receive copies of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR). This form has been developed to track necessary information about the Legion's overall programs. It is the responsibility of the Post Children and Youth Chair member to report his/her program activities to the individual designated in the Post to complete the Consolidated Post Report. The CPR can be done online at mylegion.org by the Post Adjutant.



DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER

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

Kansas American Legion is Here To Help!

In the American Legion, the number one thing a Post Service Officer can do to support their Post is to act as the "Vital Link" (or bridge) between Veterans and the benefits they have earned.

While they aren't usually the ones filing the legal paperwork, their effectiveness is the single greatest factor in how the community perceives the Post.

The most critical task is identifying Veterans in need and referring them to an Accredited Department Service Representatives. The Post Service Officer are not accredited to file claims themselves. By knowing exactly who the accredited experts are and how to reach them, the Post Service Officer ensures the Veteran gets professional representation without the Veteran having to navigate the bureaucracy alone.

This being said it is time

to remind everyone of who are your Accredited Service Representatives to let you help the Veterans you know.

Leavenworth:

- Adam Cunningham
- Byron "Jay" Johnson
- Bonna Holiday

These dedicated individuals are stationed at the Dwight D. Eisenhower VA Medical Center and can be reached by phone at 1-800-952-8387 extension 54297 or 1-913-758-4297.

Topeka:

- Dan Bartlett
- Tanya Hayes

Located at the Colmery-O'Neil VA Medical Center, Dan and Tanya are ready to assist you. Contact them at 1-800-574-8387 extension 54489 or 1-785-350-4489.

Wichita:

- Adam Santiago
- Emily Albers
- Hazel Pagan
- Jennifer Clark
- Kathy Prue
- Tim Marlar

MID-WINTER HOTELS

La Quinta Inn & Suites by Wyndham Dodge City
2400 W Wyatt Earp Blvd
620-488-6484

Best Western Plus Country Inn & Suites
506 N. 14th Avenue
620-225-7378

Super 8 by Wyndham Dodge City
1708 W Wyatt Earp Blvd
(620) 682-4524

Hampton Inn & Suites Dodge City
4002 West Comanche
(620) 225-0000

Best Western North Edge Inn
404 W Frontview
(620) 371-6441

Quality Inn
2000 W Wyatt Earp Blvd,
(620) 471-0690

Windsor Inn & Suites
2320 W Wyatt Earp Blvd
(620) 227-5000

Comfort Suites
2700 W Wyatt Earp Blvd
(620) 801-4545

Holiday Inn Express & Suites Dodge City by IHG
201 4th Avenue
(620) 225-1000

Towne Place Suites by Marriott Dodge City
2800 W Wyatt Earp Blvd
(620) 371-7171

Regency Inn and Suites
2110 E Wyatt Earp Blvd
(620) 225-2654



CHAPLAIN

Rev. Debra Muylaert

departmentchaplain@kansaslegion.org

Happy New Year Legion Family! Hope this article finds you doing well and prospering in the new year. As I was reading an Our Daily Bread devotional the other day, entitled “Two Are Better” by Xochitl Dixon, I was reminded of National Commander Dan Wiley’s message of “Better Together.” Whether Commander Wiley realizes it or not, his message comes right out of the Old Testament in Ecclesiastes 4:9: “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.” Translation – “Better Together!”

An excerpt from the devotional reads: “In the 1997 Ironman Triathlon in Hawaii, two women fought to stay on their feet as they hobbled toward the finish line. Exhausted, the runners persevered on wobbly legs, until Sian Welch bumped into Wendy Ingraham. They both dropped to the ground. Struggling to stand, they stumbled for-

ward, only to fall again about twenty meters from the finish line. When Ingraham began to crawl, the crowd applauded. When her competitor followed suit, they cheered louder. Ingraham crossed the finish line in fourth place, and she slumped into the outstretched arms of her supporters. Then she turned and reached out to her fallen sister. Welch lunged her body forward, stretching her weary arm toward Ingraham’s hand and across the finish line. As she completed the race in fifth place, the crowd roared their approval.”

What a beautiful picture of not only “Better Together,” but also of the Legion’s mission to “Be the One!” When we help a struggling Veteran, we reach out, grab that Veteran’s hand, and pull that hero across the finish line of life. As we begin a new year, let’s make 2026 a “Be the One” year, for we are indeed “Better Together.”

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

+ TAPS +

- Bates, Wilbur (Korea) Lucas
- Bauerle, Danny (Lebanon/Grenada) Fairview
- Blaker, Donald (Korea) Topeka #400
- Bollin, Dennis (Vietnam) Gardner
- Boyd, Marvin (Korea) Arma
- Bradley, Floyd (Vietnam) Pittsburg #64
- Chleborad, C (Korea) Atwood
- Cooper, Robert (Vietnam) Topeka #400
- Crawford, Clem (Vietnam) Topeka #400
- Crist, Harvey (WWII) Syracuse
- Davis, Marvin (Vietnam) Bazine
- Duggan, Gary (Vietnam) Gardner
- Ensley, John, Sr. (Vietnam) Topeka #400
- Estes, Russell, Jr. (Vietnam) Topeka #400
- Grace, Joseph (Vietnam) Topeka #400
- Guild, Cary (Vietnam) Gardner
- Hefner, George (Vietnam) Topeka #400
- Hildebrandt, Keith (Korea) Topeka #400
- Holle, Norman (Vietnam) Gardner
- Hoofer, Ralph (Korea) Bucklin
- Jacobs, Henry (Korea) Tonganoxie
- Jacobs, Robert (Vietnam) Caney
- Ketron, Louis (Vietnam) Valley Center
- Kimmimau, Robert (Korea) Topeka #400
- Knodel, Orval (WWII) Topeka #400
- Lawrence, Ernest (Vietnam) Frontenac
- Lewis, Daryle (Vietnam) Syracuse
- Loyd, Duane (Vietnam) Powhattan
- Marrs, Alfred (WWII) Meade
- Messerly, Donald (Korea) Sublette
- Micek, Kenneth (Korea) Atwood
- Mills, James (Vietnam) Arkansas City
- Reif, Alfred (Vietnam) Osborne
- Rood, William (Korea) Fairview
- Royer, William (Vietnam) Syracuse
- Ryan, William (Vietnam) Newton
- Schneider, Richard (Korea) Arkansas City
- Smith, David (Vietnam) Mc Pherson
- Speaks, Grant Troy
- Stahl, Edward (Korea) Newton
- Wilken, Harold (Vietnam) Garden City
- Wiswell, Darrell (Vietnam) Sublette
- Yunker, Robert (Vietnam) Hays