

Sunflower Legionnaire

The American Legion -



Today's Voice for Today's Veterans & Military

VOL LXXIX NO. 4

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

April, May, June 2026

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION TOPEKA, MAY 29 - 31

The Ramada Hotel & Convention Center, in Topeka will serve as the site of the 107th Annual Convention of The American Legion Department of Kansas. Joining the Legion in Convention will be the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion who will hold their own independent Conventions in addition to two joint sessions involving all three groups.

Now is the time to make housing reservations by calling the Ramada at 785-234-5400. Room rates for the Convention are \$94.00 and includes a full breakfast buffet.

The Convention is expected to feature a number of speakers including American Legion National Vice Commander Jerry Landkamer from Nebraska, several of this year's Youth Champions, and Kansas' Fire and Policeman of the Year. Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion Na-

tional Guests have not been confirmed at this time.

Various awards for Americanism, Children & Youth, Post Histories, Post Service Officers will also be presented. A highlight of the Convention will be the drawing for this Spring's Sweepstakes with special prizes available should any of the nine winners be present during the drawing on Sunday.

The Convention will conclude on Sunday with a Memorial Service followed by the election of Department Officers for 2026-2027. Legionnaires are encouraged to attend the Convention as a delegate, alternate, or guest. Post Adjutants will be mailed pre-registration materials on May 1 (pre-registration is preferred, however "walk-ins" are always welcomed). To attend as a delegate or alternate contact your Post Adjutant to inform them you wish to represent your Post.

LEGION COLLEGE

This year's Kansas American Legion College will take place at Cloud County Community College in Concordia June 5-7.

This year there will a Hands-On Class dealing with mylegion.org being taught by a Member of the KALC Committee. If you are a Post Commander or Post Adjutant this is a prime opportunity to actually input and make changes to Members of your Post. PLEASE ensure you bring your laptop or iPad to get the full effect of the training.

We are working on Post Commander and Post Adju-

tant modules that hopefully be available by KALC time. We will try and incorporate them with the training that the committee will be conducting.

Hopefully, we will have another VA Roundtable or Symposium. Everyone really enjoyed being able to ask a pinpoint question to the person that is the expert of that particular Division of The Veterans Hospital/Administration out of the Dole V.A. Medical Center and Veterans Service Center in Wichita.

The American Legion, Auxiliary, and SAL Members
(Continued Page 10)

ORATORICAL CONTEST

The State Oratorical Contest sponsored by the Kansas American Legion was held on Saturday, March 7 at Post #444 in Wichita. The six finalists representing their District were required to give an 8-10 minute prepared oration on the United States Constitution. The contestants were required to give their presentation without any notes, podium, papers, or microphones. The contestants were judged on several aspects of their presentation including originality, skill in selecting examples, logic, knowledge of subject matter, voice and diction, word selection, and body action and eye contact.

After their prepared remarks the contestants were required to speak on one of four assigned topics. One topic is chosen by drawing from the four choices and each contestant speaks on the same subject. The contestants were required to speak three to five minutes on the assigned topic. All contestants recited their orations with skill and enthusiasm. The Judges had the difficult task of choosing the top contestants that would receive top honors and money for college.

Aiden Strohm from Olathe won first place representing Second District. He will receive a \$1,000 scholarship from the Department of Kansas.



Aiden Strohm - Oratorical State Champion.

The second place award of a \$500 scholarship went to Reghan Ervin from Howard, representing Third District. Reghan will represent Kansas during the National contest in Hillsdale, Michigan in May. Normally this honor would go to the State Champion, but Aiden's High School Graduation conflicted with the National Contest. Reghan will receive additional scholarship money from National depending on her performance in the National Contest.

The third place finisher was Bernadette Friedrichs from Bremen, representing Tenth District. She will receive a \$250 scholarship.

The fourth place award of a \$150 scholarship went to Khavayi Tslmonjela from Wichita, representing Fifth District.



Reghan Ervin - Oratorical 2nd Place.



Bernadette Friedrichs - Oratorical 3rd Place.



Khavayi Tslmonjela - Oratorical 4th Place.

COMMANDER

George Honn

(913) 731-5172

departmentcommander@kansaslegion.org



VICE COMMANDER

George Pogge

(703) 597-9385

departmentvicecommander@kansaslegion.org



Hope everyone is enjoying the nice weather.

Now is the time to start working on membership so we can continue reaching the national goals. The next one is 95% by the second Wednesday of April. We have not missed a goal yet this year, let's keep up the good work. Kansas is 12th nationally, and 4th in the Midwest. So let's keep the drive up and knock on some doors.

Have traveled to five District Conventions already in March. Planning on going to the last six in April. Hopefully will see everyone there really looking forward to it.

Don't forget about the CPR Reports due along with all the Department Reports that are due also. The Department Convention is just right around the corner. Hope everyone is planning on attending this year. The dates are may 29, 30, 31 in Topeka at the Ramada.

It has truly been a pleasure to have served the last nine months as your Department Commander. I am really looking forward the the last couple of months.

Thank you for your support.

George Honn
Department of Kansas
Commander

Kansas Legionnaires
The first quarter of 2026 has been a great one. We have continued to hold a place as one of the top Departments in membership, continuing to meet all the National goals through March of 2026. We came in second place in our size division and will receive a cash award for our membership accomplishments. This is a result of the hard work our District and Post staffs and members have been doing to recruit new and retain current members. Let's keep up the great work and continue to strive toward meeting our 100% membership goals.

A group of Kansas Legionnaires were privileged to attend the Washington Conference in the first week of March. Some highlights of the event were visiting with our Kansas Senate and House leadership on "The Hill." Split up into two groups we were able to meet with our Senators, Representatives, or key members of their staffs to discuss The American Legion's legislative agenda for the 119th Congress. Being in the Senate and the House Office buildings is both fascinating and humbling experience. Although we were not able to meet with Senator Moran's office we were honored to witness, the following day, National Commander Wiley's testimony to the Joint Veterans Affairs Committee, of which Senator Moran is the Chairman. A phenomenal experience and certainly the culmination of our legislative efforts.

As almost a side note to our Washington experience Kansas was awarded the top Department for 2025 for Our Advocacy efforts through Voter voice. This award was

the result of the efforts of all the Kansas Legionnaires getting on to Voter voice through legion.org and letting our legislative members in Washington DC know what legislation we are wanting past into law and how serious we are by the number of votes we submitted. Lets continue to make our voice heard through Voter voice and repeat that success next year.

We were also able to welcome back to Kansas National Commander Wiley for his In-State Homecoming at Olathe the last week of March. The event included tours of both the World War I Museum in downtown KC and historic Ft Leavenworth Kansas. Both facilities exemplary examples of our preservation and display of American military and cultural history, particularly significant as we make the final approach to the 250th Anniversary of the birth of Our Nation.

Moving into the second quarter of 2026 we have elections of new or renewed leadership at all of Our Posts and Districts. From what I have seen so far, I am excited for the direction we continue to move toward. We have excellent Members being transferred the responsibility for continuing to move the Department of Kansas forward to an even brighter future. Let's make sure the rest of the Legion know who they are by getting those Post Data Forms in to the Department. It is imperative we keep Our Post and District Data on our leadership up to date. Let's also get those Consolidated Post Reports filled out and turned in.

The 250th Anniversary of
(Continued on Page 10)

**AREA VICE COMMANDER
EAST**

Ed Boring

(620) 332-9942

departmentaevicemanager@kansaslegion.org



Hello from Area East!
I hope everyone had a great holiday season. It has been a busy past 6 months with the American Legion Leadership College, State Fair and all the different programs being held like the Oratorical Contest, Boys State, Cadet Law, Ect. Now the hard part is upon us. Our membership is looking good. For us to meet our goals we need to go out and get those members who haven't renewed. Some how we need to close that back door. We are getting some new mem-

bers, but it seems we are losing more current members. Let's work to get them back. Remember your District and Department Officers are here to help, please ask. I am looking forward to attending all the District Conventions that I can this year. Please make sure the Consolidated Post Reports are submitted as they are very important. Please attend your District Conventions and make your voice heard. I hope to see everyone at the Department Convention in May. "For God and Country".

AREA VICE COMMANDER WEST

Jennifer Carder

(785) 657-7079

departmentawvicecommander@kansaslegion.org



The Importance of Attending the Kansas American Legion College:

The Kansas American Legion College provides a vital opportunity for leadership development within the Department of Kansas American Legion Family. This program enhances leadership skills, deepens understanding of the organization, and encourages service to others, essential for cultivating future leaders in Kansas.

Participants, whether new or experienced, engage in interactive learning, discussions, and activities that highlight values like integrity and teamwork. They gain knowledge of the Legion's structure and its "four pillars": veterans affairs, national security, Americanism, and children & youth. This understanding enables members to actively contribute to the organization's future.

Attending college boosts participants' confidence, help-

ing them develop effective communication, inspiration, and initiative skills. It also fosters community, allowing individuals to connect with like-minded peers dedicated to service, creating a strong support network.

Graduates emerge ready to lead community initiatives, advocate for veterans, and mentor new members, turning ideas into actionable plans. Overall, the Kansas American Legion College offers not just training but a transformative experience, preparing individuals to lead with purpose and ensuring the organization thrives. Participation is crucial to the American Legion Family's future and to serving others well.

Consider attending this incredible opportunity for personal and professional growth from June 5-7 at Cloud County Community College in Concordia. More details will be shared soon!

BUCKLE UP, LIGHTS ON & LIVE

The Kansas American Legion, in cooperation with the Kansas Department of Transportation and the Governor's Office will make an effort to reduce traffic accidents and fatalities over the Memorial Day weekend. This year's program is scheduled for Friday, May 22.

This endeavor is in conjunction with the beginning of Memorial Day Weekend, and the theme is "Ditch the distractions, not the car! Just Drive." The goal is to remind motorists to use their seat belts and headlights throughout the weekend. Observation of all traffic laws, take plenty of rest stops on long trips, watch out for other motorists and motorcyclists, and to

drive safely are also stressed. Legion Family Members are asked to spend an hour or two at major intersections on May 22 to hand a brochure describing the reasons to drive safely to each motorist as they stop for a signal light or stop sign. Some Posts choose to place the brochures in service stations, rest areas, convenience stores, and super markets, etc. All efforts are to be coordinated with local and area law enforcement officials. Contact Department Headquarters at 785-232-9315 to request brochures. Requests must be made by a Post Commander or Adjutant, Unit President or Secretary, or Squadron Commander or Adjutant.

ADJUTANT'S BRIEFS

By Department Adjutant Jimmie L. Foster

The Membership year of 2025-2026 is coming to an end very rapidly!

WE, as a Department, are a few Members behind last year's numbers. A concerted effort to either make personal telephone calls to those Members that has not renewed or at a last resort going out and knocking on their door to find out if they are sick, down, and out, or have forgotten to renew their Membership needs to happen to remain on track.

Department First Vice Commander George Pogge and ALL Eleven District Commanders and District Vice Commanders are available to assist; all you have to do is ASK!

The 2026 Mid-Winter Forum was well attended. Dodge City Post 47 did an excellent job of hosting the venue.

The 2026 Department Oratorical Contest was held at Wichita Post 444 on 7 March 2026, and the six orators were ALL Winners!

Aiden Strohm from Olathe, Kansas representing the Second District was selected as the ultimate winner and will represent the Department of Kansas at the National Contest at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan from 15 to 17 May 2026. Hopefully, he will be able to advance to the Championship Round and win himself additional Scholarship monies. Congratulations, Aiden!

The Department Convention of Kansas American Legion will be held from 29 to 31 May 2026 in Topeka, Kansas at the Ramada Hotel and Conference Center. Our National Guests are as follows: Midwest Region National Vice Commander Jerry Landkamer from Norfolk, Nebraska will be the National Guest for the Le-

gion. Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion National Guests have not been confirmed at this time.

Kansas Boys State is also scheduled to be held from 31 May to 6 June 2026 at Kansas State University. PLEASE check the Kansas Boys State of Kansas Website for the most up-to-date information.

The 2026 American Legion Leadership College will take place in Concordia at Cloud County Community College from 5 to 7 June 2026. The cost for all meals and two nights' stay in the Dorm is \$ 100.00. To stay in the Dorm for two nights is \$50.00 total. All meals are \$50.00 total.

The Cadet Law Enforcement Academy Program is scheduled to be held from 1 to 6 June 2026 at the Kansas Highway Patrol Training Academy in Salina, Kansas. PLEASE check the Department Website for up-to-date details. I know that the Junior and Seniors are looking forward to attending this program.

Remember that the Kansas Sunflower Legionnaire is now published quarterly. If you are required to submit articles, PLEASE adjust your thought process to the quarterly mode. Articles are due on 15 March, 15 June, 15 September, and 15 December for the following quarterly edition.

If anyone has any questions pertaining to Membership or any of the fine programs within The American Legion, PLEASE do NOT hesitate to call the Department Headquarters for guidance or clarification.

Thank you for being a Member of The Greatest Veterans Organization in the Free World, The American Legion (in my opinion).

EHART FOR NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jeremy Ehart, from Lysle Rishel Hutchinson Post #68, is announcing his candidacy for the office of National Executive Committee for 2026-2028.

Jeremy earned his eligibility by service in the United States Marine Corps from 2002- 2006. He is a National Paid Up for Life Member of The American Legion, a member of the Sons of The American Legion squadron 68, and American Legion Riders chapter 68.

Jeremy has served in various positions from Post to National and is currently serving Kansas National Executive Committeeman where he also serves on the National Executive Committee Subcommittee on Resolutions, and the Finance Commission Liaison Committee. He is a graduate of the 2019

National American Legion College. He has been honored and humbled serving as your NEC, representing our Department at all National events.

Moving forward if elected, he will continue to travel and meet Legion Family Members from across our Department. Working together with you, department, and national leadership, he will continue to improve The American Legion at all levels for our current and future members.

Jeremy has the support of his wife Kristy, support and endorsement of his Post, support and endorsement of the 7th District and is asking for your support and vote at the Department Convention this in Topeka.

For God and Country,
Jeremy Ehart
620-899-0010

ZEITVOGEL FOR AREA EAST VICE COMMANDER

Alan F. Zeitvogel, Member of Pearce-Keller Post 17, Manhattan & District 11

Candidate for Area East Vice Commander

When I joined The American Legion more than twenty years ago, I didn't join for titles or recognition. I joined because I believe in what this organization stands for: Veterans helping Veterans. That simple idea has guided my service at every level of this organization and continues to drive me today.

I earned my eligibility through seven years of active duty service in the United States Air Force. I am a Paid Up For Life (PUFL) Member and also proudly belong to the Sons of the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the American Legion Riders. I firmly believe the Legion is at its strongest when the entire Legion Family works together in support of veterans, their families, and our communities.

At the Post level, I have served as Sergeant at Arms, 1st and 2nd Vice Commander, Trustee, Executive Committee-

man, ALR Director, Volunteer Bar Manager, Bingo Chairman, and Honor Guard Commander. I currently serve Post 17 as its 2nd Vice Commander, Bar Manager, and Bingo Chair.

At the District level, I have served as a District Executive Committeeman and now proudly serve as Commander of District 11, the newest District in Kansas, consisting of 19 Posts surrounding Fort Riley. At the Department level, I have served as an ALR Committeeman and as a past Bowling Committeeman.

Beyond my Legion service, I retired after more than 20 years with the United States Border Patrol, where I held several leadership positions among them included the Chief of Law Enforcement Programs and the Chief of Law Enforcement Operations for the largest geographical Sector in the Border Patrol. In those roles, accountability, communication, and mission focused leadership were not optional — they were essential. Those same principles guide my approach

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EVANS FOR ALTERNATE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Angela Evans of the Arden H. McKee Post #128 in Sterling announces her candidacy for the office of Alternate National Executive Committeeman for the 2026–2028 term.

Angela earned her eligibility through honorable service in the United States Air Force from 1986 to 2011. She is a Kansas Paid Up for Life member of The American Legion, and a member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 128.

Throughout her legion career, Angela has served in leadership roles at the Post, District, Department, and National levels. She is currently serving as the Kansas Alternate National Executive Committeeman; she also serves as the Chair for the Legislative Council and is an Ex-Officio Member of the Legislative Commission. She is a graduate of the 2022 National American Legion College and is honored to represent the Department of Kansas at national events.

If elected, Angela will continue working with the Posts, Districts, and the entire Legion Family, using her time and resources to promote the mission of The American Legion. Angela is dedicated to continuing her travels across the state, improving communication, meeting members, and listening to your ideas on improving and advancing the American Legion. She will work hard to continue promoting past improvements and advancements while working with current members on implementing new thoughts and ideas throughout the Department.

Angela is grateful for the continued support of her husband, Bryant, and respectfully asks for your support and vote at the Department Convention in Topeka.

For God and Country,
Angela Evans
Arden H. McKee Sterling Post #128

EUBANKS FOR AREA EAST VICE COMMANDER

Members of The American Legion:

I am Melvin Eubanks; I would like to announce my candidacy for Department Area East Vice Commander for the 2026-2027 membership year.

I earned my eligibility by serving 20 years in the KSARNG and 22 years as an Active Army and with the AGR program as the Units Training and Readiness NCO. I have Deployed three times and recently retired from active service with 42 years. I am a Lifetime Member of Chanute Post # 170, a Member of the Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders. I am also a Lifetime Member of the VFW, Enlisted Association, and Army Engineer Association.

I have served various positions throughout my Post including Post Commander twice. I served on the 3rd

District Executive Committee, Vice Commander twice and as 3rd District Commander for the year 2024-2025.

I have the support of my wife, (Dawn Eubanks), my Post (American Legion Post #170) and my District Executive Board (3rd District).

I have recently become a Cancer survivor for the third time. I am very committed to the American Legion Family and will always give 100%. I believe I am physically ready to except the challenges and any advancements with The American Legion of The Department of Kansas.

I respectfully ask for your support and vote for Department Area East Vice Commander.

Melvin Eubanks
Candidate for Area East Vice Commander
The Department of Kansas
The American Legion

KANSAS DISTRICTS



Click map to enlarge.

Let's keep up the good work and keep encouraging our members to renew. Without their membership The American Legion cannot support our veterans, their families and the other programs provided by The American Legion. Let's congratulate Tonganoxie Post 41, for reaching 100% before the end of 2025. Perry Post 42 for reaching 100% before the end of the 2025-2026 year.

As a reminder the deadline for Boys and Girls State is 1 May 2026.

Please make notes as to when Post Reports are due. Your Consolidated Post Reports can be updated daily, weekly or monthly. The 2025-2026 Consolidated Post Reports are online currently. Please ensure that you get your Children and Youth Reports turned in, would like to see 1st District get 100% reported. Continue doing your Buddy Checks.

Lastly, remember 1st District Convention on 11 April 2026 at Topeka Post 400, 3029 US-24, Topeka, Kansas.

Once again thank you for supporting American Legion 1st District.



**FIRST DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

ED GUNNELS
(913) 680-8212

Hello 1st District. As we prepare to close out this 2025-2026 Legion year. I would like to thank everyone for the support that you gave to the 1st District Officers and the Members of American Legion. For the first time in several years, we had a contestant for Oratorical this year. I want to thank Oskaloosa Post 36 for providing this year's contestant. We know that getting students to participate in the Legion programs, because of the other school programs and outside activities, but we must continue to encourage them.

As Posts within 1st district hold their elections, remember to submit your new or retained Commanders and Adjutants to Department the next day. Doing so should ensure that Department can provide District Officers with updated list of Commanders and Adjutants within the District.

Membership has always and will be an issue. We know that as our members are called to Post Everlasting, we should be replacing them with new members. I realize that this generation may or may not want to join, but we should encourage them, letting them know that their voice is heard in Washington and their voice is what helps keep our benefits alive.



**SECOND DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

MYRA JOWERS
(417) 208-6246

Greetings Second District Legion Family,

Thank you once again for your confidence and support during this past year.

We have been actively engaged in Legion business beginning with Our Oratorical contest in Olathe with several outstanding contestants. Our first place candidate moved on to Department Oratorical where he again took first place, positioning with an opportunity to win up to \$25,000 at the National Competition.

Following the Oratorical

Contest we celebrated Members of The American Legion, the Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion who were nominated by their Commanders for recognition of their outstanding service to their Post, not just for recruiting. The Awards Party on March seventh was again a success. Thank you everyone who participated, especially the out of District guests who made the effort to join us for this important event. Congratulations to all of the honorees!

Our Convention was held in Gardner Post on the fourteenth of March, We appreciated having 16 of our 22 Posts represented. Thank you Commander Simpson and your Post for hosting this year. Congratulations to the newly elected and reelected officers willing to again serve.

As a candidate for Master-At-Arms I have the opportunity to visit many other District Conventions and network with members, as well as officers that I am barely acquainted with, exchanging ideas and strategies for improvement, especially recruitment of members with in the Legion Family. It is certainly an honor to have this opportunity to visit and make new friends during these District Conventions.

There are still meetings to attend and reports to be completed but don't forget to exercise your opportunity to impact legislation via Voters Voice or legion.org/action. Also, continue taking care of your members and other community veterans by regularly performing your Buddy Checks, even making that personal visit that means so much.

Lets not forget the "Be The One" initiative that is proving to be successful in saving lives. On line training is available through Columbia University and is beneficial as a guide for "Being the One" who helps a fellow veteran through desperate periods, possibly saving a life.

Many opportunities exist to become more involved in your Post and District. A good starting point is our own Legion College held in Concordia. This training is beneficial for

everyone, not only Legionnaires or Officers, Members of the Auxiliary and the Sons are encouraged to attend and participate. If you haven't attended, please give it a try.

In closing, don't forget the importance of getting your reports in and attending the upcoming Department Convention in Topeka beginning, May 30th. Thank you again and again for proving you care by all that you do for our veterans and their families.

For God and Country,
Myra Jowers



**THIRD DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

MARK STWALLEY
(620) 704-4738

Dear Members of the 3rd District,

As the 2025/26 calendar year comes to a close, I have realized that serving as District Commander is a more challenging role than it appears.

Communication is a key element of our success, and we continue to make great progress on this front. Regarding membership, the 3rd District stands at 91.12% as of March 5, 2026. While maintaining membership is a collective struggle, I encourage you to remember our core initiatives: "Be The One" Buddy Checks, the "Better Together" Legion Family spirit, and the "3 C's"—Communication, Community, and Camaraderie.

I would also like to announce that our newly elected 3rd District Commander is Paul Grantham from Post 18, Arkansas City.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve. I hope to see many of you at the end of March for the National Commander's Homecoming in Olathe.

Best regards,
Mark W. Stwalley



DANNY ROUSH
(785) 640-6511

**FOURTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

I would like to thank all of you for allowing me to serve you these past five years.

I would like to thank Post 444 for hosting our District Oratorical Contest, as well as turning right around and hosting the Department Contest. Many of the volunteers who helped with the District competition also helped with Department Contest. We could not have done it without you.

Cadet Law, Boys State, and Girls State deadline for applications is coming quickly, and these Programs need your help getting those applications in. These are great Programs for the high schoolers in our communities.

Have you made plans for this year's Department Convention May 29 through May 31st? When you show up, come down stairs after the Convention on Friday and Saturday night for some refreshments, light snacks, and fellowship.

The following weekend, June 5 through June 7 is Kansas Leadership College in Concordia. The program is for all Members of the Legion Family. Friday Night they will head down to the local Pizza Hut for the greatest bonding activity in Kansas American Legion Family. Saturday Night everyone heads down to the local Post for a fantastic chicken dinner which is followed up by an auction for Our Children and Youth. You could end up with a beautiful piece for your dining room table! If you see Alan, ask him what he brought home for his wife last year.

As I am writing this, Fifth District Convention was held yesterday. New officers were elected, including a new Commander. I hope you give these officers the same great support you have given me these past five years.

Joe Hulse
Fifth District Commander
"Retired"



JIMMY STRACHAN
(785) 483-1186

**SIXTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Hello Sixth District. This year is moving very fast. Our District Convention will be the end of April and I am looking forward to it.

Membership report as of 03/20/2026. Our quota is 88.68% with 1,034 paid members, our goal is 1,166 members leaving us 132 members short from making 100%. Let's start working on those members that has not renewed their membership. Make phone calls, go knock on doors, send letter out to your members that do not live close by. Ask them to pay their dues online. Go to Legion.org and look for renew membership, they will need to submit their last name and the 9-digit membership number and pay with a credit or debit card, their renewal will be credited right away. Post Adjutants can process membership through Mylegion.org.

Our 107th Sixth District Convention will be Saturday, April 25, 2026 in Concordia hosted by Post 76, Address is 506 Washington St. Concordia, Kansas 66901. E-board Meeting at 8:30 then Memorial Service 9:30 followed with the Joint Session beginning at 10. The Convention packets were mailed to all the Posts and distinguished guest on March 13th; they should have already arrived to your mail boxes.

Stay safe and will see you at the Sixth District Convention.



BILL SYKES
(918) 916-9530

**SEVENTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Good-Day all District 7 Legionnaires:

As you know, the Seventh District Convention was 21 March, the Auxiliary Convention will be 11 April in Hutchinson. At Convention you elected Basil Peppard of Barber County Post 69 in Medicine Lodge as your District Commander and Bryant Evans of Arden McKee Post 128 in Sterling as your Vice Commander. Congratulations to them both. Also elected as your District Executive Committee was Doug Ulrich, William Sykes and Dave Krallman. The Convention also endorsed Angela Evans' petition to be National Commander.

28 March is National Commander Dan Wiley's Homecoming in Olathe. 29 May to 31 May 2026 is the Department Convention at Ramada Inn Topeka. Boys State 1-6 June 2026 at K-State Manhattan, Cadet Law 1-5 June 2026 at KHP training Center Salina, and Kansas American Legion College will be 5-7 June in Concordia. Finally AL National Membership College is 5-9 Aug in Indianapolis; National Convention is 28 August thru 3 Sep. Finally, Department Mid-Winter Conference is Feb 5-7 in Arkansas City.

As always, membership is important. The District is actually doing well, at 84.2% of goal, THAT'S GREAT, and that hasn't happened recently. There are 3 Posts over 100%. 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

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JOE HULSE
(785) 906-0655

**FIFTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

My fellow Fifth District Legionnaires,

SEVENTH DISTRICT

(Continued from Page 6)

National and Department.

If you need help with membership, or with working the Post 58 list, please get in touch with me at williammysykes@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, 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.

Once Again, CONGRATULATIONS to all new District Officers.



HENK RIJFKOGEL
(620) 276-3611

**EIGHTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Hey, my fellow Legionnaire Veterans. Boy it seemed as last year 2025 had gone by so fast and here it is 2026 1/4 of the year is gone. April is here and we're all looking forward to paying our taxes, right! Whatever you do guys don't forget to file your taxes.

I have been actively visiting my remote Posts throughout Southwest Kansas, and I found out that they are promoting their Legion Post in their small communities and making them themselves visible, that leaves an impact on their small towns.

Here in my District 8, our Honor Guard we make ourselves visible by providing a full military funeral detail for every passing veteran, and the impact that it leaves on families. The respect that we show their loved one leaves

a lasting impression on the families. We have done many veterans funeral here in District Eight and the word gets around of what we do. That's our visibility to my District and the honors that we have received from the families. I myself am part of that Honor Guard and I take great pride in what I do.

When traveling through my District, I have found out that a lot of people do not know who we are or what we do. I am encouraging you Commanders to get your Post involved in the community, schools, and churches and let them know who we are as veterans and that we are about God and Country.

Last week I had the privilege of going up in an Army helicopter representing the American Legion. What a ride! Like going back to the old days.

There are some of my remote Posts in my District where membership is small and they are merging with their neighboring Post. I'm encouraging them to remain strong and let me know what I can do to help. Election day is coming up in my District and I hope if I am elected one more year, I will help strengthen, and encourage them also help them find new members for their Post.

Make a note post throughout Kansas.

November 14 we are having a POW speaker coming to speak to Garden City, Kansas. He is Retired Air Force Pilot Brigadier General James D Lathem, who was who was shot down over North Vietnam in October 1972.

It will be RSVP only and final arrangements will be sent out in the next upcoming newsletter. If you have any questions please get in contact with Ashley Rijfkoegel at 620-276-3611 or myself at 620-272-6311.

For God and Country We still serve!

District 8 Commander
Henk Rijfkoegel



SEAN HANKIN
(785) 443-0956

**NINTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Greetings Ninth District, My hope is you all are well and enjoying this beautiful spring. Although, we are desperately in need of moisture and I pray for the blessing of rain!

I want to offer a heartfelt congratulations to Post 321 in Selden; 106.67% and Post 351 in Jennings; 100%. Thank you, so much, for all your efforts and hard work! And the good news is, there are several more Posts not very far behind. As we enter into the final months of this membership year, now is the time to reach out personally to those members who have yet to renew. Take time to give them a call, see how they are doing, let them know they are a vital part of our team and we appreciate their support. With a little bit of encouragement we can keep moving forward, meeting the needs of The American Legion Family and its members.

Two other important goals are for Children and Youth and Consolidated Post Reports. The C&Y and CPR forms have been distributed to all Posts and you can contact me with any questions you may have. The goal for completion and turn in is 100%. We can get that done!

The Ninth District Convention is just around the corner. I hope to see you all in Bird City, KS. on April 18th. We are scheduled to start at 10:30 am. In addition to the election of District Officers, there will be candidates for Department Offices, as well. This is a great opportunity to meet those people who will be instrumental in the leadership roles for the next year in the state of Kansas. I hope you can make it!

Thank you for everything you do to support our veterans and to The Kansas American Legion Family.

For God and Country,
Sean Hankin



LARRY ROKEY
(785) 285-2492

**TENTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

Hello District 10,

I hope everyone has been enjoying the really nice march weather here Kansas. On February 7th the District held our Oratorical Contest at Marysville, Bernadette Friedrich took 1st place, Isaiah Friedrich took 2nd place and Stephen Knapp took 3rd place. Bernadette represented District 10 at Department Oratorical Contest on March 7th she took 3rd place, congratulations to Bernadette for her success at District and for representing District 10 at Department Oratorical. I didnt get to visit many Posts or work much on membership due to a medical issue, but I'm somewhat better and will be back working on membership again. District 10 is doing well on membership but we still have a short way to go to make 100%. In March I got to visit a few Posts. I got to enjoy some awesome food and enjoyed visiting with the Post's Members. On March 28th I attended the Homecoming of the National Commander of the American Legion Dan Wiley in Olathe. We saw the WWI Museum and Memorial, it was a very interesting and learning experience. Then we went to Ft Leavenworth to the Frontier Army Museum, it was also very interesting and very informative. I recommend visiting them, we then went back to Olathe and enjoyed a delicious meal and listened to a great singing group. I want to remind all the Post Adjutants to fill out all your reports and send them in also make sure you send in your officer reports even if you have the same officers from last year. District 10 Conven-


(Continued on Page 8)

TENTH DISTRICT

(Continued from Page 7)

tion is April 25th at Frankfort Post 181 rsvp with Carol McKinny at 785-297-9002 by April 12th. Commanders Dinner will follow right after our Convention. I also would like to remind everyone to put your events or activities on District page, it is 10th District Kansas American Legion Family it's on Facebook.

I want to wish everyone a safe and happy and blessed Easter holiday.



ALAN ZEITVOGEL
(785) 410-3163

**ELEVENTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER**

“The Ripple Effect”

Every Post in the American Legion has its own personality, its own history, and its own challenges — but there is one truth that applies to all of them: membership is one thing, but being a member is something completely different.

A membership card keeps the doors open. Showing up is what keeps the Legion alive.

When you show up to a Post meeting, a fundraiser, a funeral detail, a community event, or even just a simple coffee hour, you create a ripple effect. Your presence encourages someone else to attend. Your participation gives energy to the room. Your willingness to be involved reminds others why they joined in the first place. One person showing up becomes two. Two become five. Five become a Post that feels alive again.

That's the ripple effect — and it starts with something as simple as walking through the door.

Across the 11th District, I've seen Posts thrive when members choose to be present. Not perfect. Not experts. Just pres-

ent. When members show up, ideas start flowing. Events get planned. Veterans get helped. The Legion Family — Legionnaires, Auxiliary, and Sons — begins to feel like a Family again. And when that happens, everything else follows: morale, participation, and yes, even membership.

But the opposite is also true. When we stop showing up, the ripples fade. Meetings shrink. Programs stall. New members walk into an empty hall and never return. A Post can have 200 members on paper and still struggle if only five ever participate.

The strength of a Post is not measured by how many cards it prints — it's measured by how many chairs are filled.

And that brings me to a challenge for Post leadership across the 11th District:

When members — especially new or younger ones — show up, welcome them. Accept them. Include them. Listen to them.

Too often, good people walk through our doors ready to help, ready to contribute, ready to bring their skills and ideas... only to be waved off, ignored, or told, “We tried that before,” or “That's not how we do things.” That mindset kills Posts.

Let them try. Let them get involved. Let them take ownership of the things that interest them.

Maybe they are the one who can make something work that didn't work in the past. Maybe their idea is exactly what your Post needs. What harm is there in helping them, mentoring them, and supporting their involvement?

After all — it is their Legion, too.

If we want people to show up, we must give them a reason to stay. If we want participation, we must create space for participation. If we want the Legion to grow, we must allow new voices to be heard.

One person showing up can change the direction of a Post. One Post showing up can change the direction of a District. And one District showing up can change the direction of the entire Department.

That's the ripple effect. Let's make it happen.

Alan F Zeitvogel



**DETACHMENT
COMMANDER**

Matthew Krupco

mwksal@outlook.com



HELLO, KANSAS, AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY!!!!

Spring is here! Well, it's Kansas so we shall see. I've always been told that kids grow fast and now I'm starting to see that firsthand, Byron had his first haircut and turned from a baby to a little boy in a matter of a few minutes. The National Mid-West Vice-Commander, Chris Casey, from the Detachment of Nebraska visited Kansas for Mid-Winter forum in Dodge City and we were able to take him to Fort Dodge Veterans Home. This was my first trip there, we had a great time listening to some of the veteran's stories. My deepest thanks to the Dodge City Post 47 family for doing an amazing job hosting, the food and hospitality were top-notch. Thank you to all that attended, it was great to see you! I attended the Second District Oratorical and watched six phenomenal candidates, unfortunately I was unable to attend Department Oratorical. Regardless these kids always renew my hope for the future generations. We are just starting District Convention season, I will not be able to attend very many this year as my work schedule currently involves a lot of Saturdays. I will be at yours if I can but won't know until the last minute if I will be able to make it. I was able to attend Second District and want to thank Commander Miller for his hospitality.

This quarter I will be writing about National Security, this will wrap up my four-pillars articles. I hope you have maybe learned a little and enjoyed the articles thus far.

To reiterate, the Four Pillars are the heart and soul, the past, the present, and hopefully the future of The American Legion. A big part of National Security centers around supporting our troops. One way we can do that is by supporting

Operation Comfort Warriors, a program designed to focus on non-essentials for troops that boost moral, rehabilitation and daily comfort, find out more at <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/operation-comfort-warriors>. In addition to supporting the troops we advocate for a strong national defense which includes adequate funding, something Congress doesn't seem to be doing a good job of currently as you can see with yet another partial government shutdown. You can contact your senators and representatives and make sure ALL of our troops are getting paid as well as advocating for all of The American Legion's Legislative Agenda items by going to [legion.org/action](https://www.legion.org/action). Under the National Security pillar The American Legion rededicates all of us to the vital endeavor of sparing no effort in recovering all POW/MIAs. You can find out more about the National Security Pillar at [legion.org](https://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 are “Better Together”, thank you for that opportunity.

For God and Country,
Matthew Krupco
Kansas Detachment Commander

ZEITVOGEL FOR AREA EAST VCDR

(Continued from Page 4)

to Legion leadership.

When I was first approached about running for Area East Vice Commander, I initially said no. In my opinion, this position has too often been treated as a placeholder — a hat with a title. That is not who I am. I cannot accept a position, leadership or otherwise, and simply occupy a seat, wear a hat, or be some name on a roster. If I take a role, I must do the job, I must try to raise the standard, and I must leave it better than I found it.

I made that clear when I was asked to run. The response I received was, “We know. That’s why we want you to run.” I am a direct, no nonsense leader who calls things as I see them. I don’t sugarcoat problems, and I don’t ignore them. And, I am not afraid to voice my opinion to anyone.

I also do not accept “that’s how we’ve always done it” as a reason to keep doing something. Tradition has value, but it is not an excuse to avoid improvement. If something isn’t working, we fix it. If something can be done better, we do it better. “No,” “it’s been tried,” or “that’s just the way it is” are not solutions — they are barriers. I believe leadership means challenging the status quo when it holds us back and being willing to explore new approaches that better serve our Veterans and our Posts.

When I ran for District Commander, my platform was simple: return to our roots as a Veterans’ Service Organization and focus on veterans helping Veterans. I have stayed true to that mission, and I intend to continue advancing it as Area East Vice Commander.

In District 11, we built programs that make a real impact — including supporting transitioning servicemembers and their families, and our District Level Legislative Outreach, ensuring Kansas Veterans’ voices are heard by lawmakers. As Area East Vice Commander, I intend to expand similar programs throughout the eastern half of Kansas wherever possible. Our Posts deserve

consistent support, clear communication, and strong leadership.

One of the greatest challenges we face across Kansas is communication. When information doesn’t flow, nothing else works the way it should. Strengthening communication throughout Area East will be one of my top priorities.

I also believe in accountability — including my own. As Area East Vice Commander, I will work directly with our District Commanders to ensure

they remain engaged, responsive, and committed to the responsibilities they accepted. I will support them, I will equip them, and I will expect them to lead. Our Posts deserve active leadership, not ceremonial titles. I also expect that same standard to be applied to me. From the youngest Veteran at our Posts to the most seasoned in the entirety of Area East. Everyone has an equal and valuable voice in my eyes and I will fight for that voice to be heard.

Moving forward, I am committed to working with Posts, Districts, and the entire Legion Family to advance the mission of The American Legion. I will continue to promote communication, collaboration, accountability, and innovation, building upon the progress we have already achieved.

I have the support of my family, my Post, and my District. I respectfully ask for your support and endorsement as I seek election to the office of Area East Vice Commander.

+ TAPS +

| | | | |
|---|---------------|---|---------------|
| Abbott, Margaret (Vietnam)..... | Manhattan | Moody, Donald (Vietnam) | Newton |
| Arnett, Harold (Vietnam)..... | St George | Mundell, Robert..... | St George |
| Barb, Bill (Vietnam)..... | Bazine | Nelson, Robert (Korea)..... | Bucklin |
| Barnard, J..... | Marysville | Nichols, Bernard (Korea) | Bazine |
| Benfer, Edwin (Vietnam) | Concordia | Noble, Tom (Vietnam)..... | Silver Lake |
| Bennett, Kenneth (Korea) | Rossville | Obrien, Lawrence (Vietnam)..... | Osage City |
| Blubaugh, Joseph (Korea) | Harper | Odette, E Richard (Korea) | Concordia |
| Booth, Larry (Korea)..... | Colby | Overmiller, John (Korea)..... | Smith Center |
| Brandt, Jan (Vietnam)..... | Frankfort | Pacha, Mike (Vietnam)..... | Hanover |
| Brite, Richard (Vietnam)..... | Gardner | Pahmahmie, Richard, Jr. (Vietnam).. | Mayetta |
| Brown, A (Korea)..... | Frontenac | Patry, Charles..... | Linn |
| Bruna, Wilber (Korea)..... | Hanover | Pecenka, Daniel (Vietnam) | Marysville |
| Card, Fred (Vietnam) | Ozawkie | Peltier, David (Vietnam)..... | Concordia |
| Carden, Dennis (Vietnam)..... | Garfield | Perry, Leland (WWII)..... | Concordia |
| Carlson, Richard (Vietnam) | Manhattan | Plummer, Richard (Vietnam)..... | Manhattan |
| Caron, Ronald (Vietnam) | Concordia | Radcliffe, Richard (Vietnam) | Concordia |
| Champlin, George | Concordia | Renken, Fred (Vietnam) | Canton |
| Claeys, James (Vietnam)..... | Marysville | Rogers, William (Vietnam) | Topeka #400 |
| Cline, Bill (Vietnam)..... | Garfield | Royer, Walter (Vietnam) | St George |
| Colwell, Donald (Vietnam) | Junction City | Salsbury, Patrick..... | McCracken |
| Cooper, Elwin..... | Bazine | Sharp, H (WWII) | Manhattan |
| Day, Dean (Korea) | Harper | Shipman, Paul (Vietnam) | Topeka #400 |
| Feld, Neil (Vietnam)..... | Garden City | Small, Herbert (Korea) | Junction City |
| Frankenfield, Thomas | Mc Pherson | Staab, Lee (Vietnam) | Hays |
| Glasgow, Willard (Vietnam)..... | Meade | Stanley, Vic (WWII) | Blue Rapids |
| Graham, James (Vietnam)..... | Lyndon | Stephens, Howard (WWII) | Hutchinson |
| Green, John (Vietnam) | Greenleaf | Stites, John (WWII) | Manhattan |
| Grissom, Dennis (Lebanon/Grenada)..... | Cherokee | Sumner, Lester (Korea)..... | Mayetta |
| | Cherokee | Swanson, Russell (Korea)..... | Lyndon |
| Haberman, Roger | Great Bend | Tholen, James (Vietnam) | Moran |
| Hagen, Fred (WWII)..... | Manhattan | Tracy, Glenn (Lebanon/Grenada)..... | |
| Hailey, Robert (Vietnam)..... | Meade | | Manhattan |
| Hartsook, Roy..... | Marysville | Tryon, Charles..... | Marysville |
| Henderson, Milton (Vietnam) | Concordia | Tudor, Michael (Vietnam)..... | Garfield |
| Henry, Larry (Vietnam) | Concordia | Turner, Randolph (Vietnam) | Attica |
| Hersh, Dwight (Korea) | Halstead | Underwood, Lowell (Korea) | Dorrance |
| Holt, Wesley (Vietnam)..... | Olsburg | Unrein, Robert (Vietnam) | Cheney |
| Horner, Charles (Persian Gulf)..... | Manhattan | Walker, Jack (Vietnam)..... | Tonganoxie |
| Johnson, Jerome..... | Concordia | Waterman, Elmer (Vietnam)..... | Oberlin |
| Jordan, Ed | Colby | Weber, Robert (Vietnam) | Colby |
| Koenke, Claude (Korea) | Arkansas City | Wentz, Shelia (Global War on Terror)..... | |
| Kudrna, Donald (Vietnam) | Marysville | | Newton |
| Lane, Gary (Vietnam) | Osage City | White, Ralph..... | Wamego |
| Linton, Richard (Vietnam) | Halstead | Williams, Kenneth..... | Harper |
| Lord, John (Vietnam)..... | Marysville | Wittman, Robert (Korea)..... | Meade |
| McClaren, Bruce (Korea)..... | Meade | Woodyard, Keith (Korea)..... | Topeka #400 |
| McClendon, Stephen (Vietnam).Tonganoxie | | | |



CHAPLAIN

Rev. Debra Muylaert
departmentchaplain@kansaslegion.org

Greetings Legion Family! I hope and pray you are doing well and in good health. It was truly a pleasure seeing many of you at the Mid-Winter Forum in Dodge City. It's always nice to spend time with the Family!

I was reading a devotional on Job 2:7-13 the other day that really spoke to me and I'd like to share it with you. The Old Testament book of Job is about the justice of God in light of human suffering. The main character in the book is Job, who has lost everything – his family, his possessions, and his health – through Satan's doing. His health is so bad, in fact, that he is almost unrecognizable. His three friends hear of his extreme suffering and come to console him. When they see him, they raise their voices and weep, tear their robes, and throw dust over their heads in mourning (verse 12). Verse 13 continues, "Then they sat down

on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great." Imagine that! For a whole week, no one spoke a word to Job! They just sat there with him!

The action of Job's three friends brought to mind the Legion's "Be the One" mission. In helping struggling and hurting veterans, there are times when words fail us and we don't know what to say to bring comfort. Often what matters most is our presence. Although silence tends to make us uncomfortable, sitting in silence with someone in their suffering may be the best thing we can do to bring comfort. The warmth and power of a silent presence can speak volumes when words fall short. Let's ask God to give us wisdom to know when to speak and when to offer the comfort of presence. See you at the Department Convention!

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

LEGION COLLEGE

(Continued from Page 1)

over the age of 21 are invited to attend the College. An enrollment coupon is provided below for your convenience. Cost of the College this year is \$100.00 per person which includes Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner at Concordia Post 76, and Sunday breakfast. In addition the enrollment fee includes air conditioned dorm housing at the College—attendees must bring their own sheets, pillow, pillow case, blanket, bath soap, towels and personal items. Those needing only meals will be \$50 total.

Check in for the College begins at 3:00 PM on Friday, June 5. Dinner will be available from 5:00 PM until 6:00 PM followed by a meeting of the Department Executive Committee. Sessions for all attendees will commence at 8:15 AM Saturday and 9:00 AM Sunday, June 6 and 7 with a break for lunch on Saturday and conclusion of the College on Sunday no later than noon.

VICE COMMANDER

(Continued from Page 2)

the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the birth of our nation is an excellent time and opportunity for our local Posts to renew their commitment to continue to be an integral and indispensable part of the local community all across Kansas. Get out and be a part of the celebration or lead the celebration. Be the synergy of the effort and be instrumental in leading our community, state, and nation into the next 250 years. And let us know what you are doing. Get the word out and promote your efforts.

The Department of Kansas convention is 29-31 May. Be a part of it by sending Delegates from your Posts and Districts to express their voice and be a part of leading Kansas into the future. I look forward to seeing and greeting all of you in Topeka at the Ramada as we continue our journey as The American Legion in Kansas and the Nation. Lets Keep Moving Forward.

LEGION COLLEGE REGISTRATION

ENCLOSED IS MY \$100 REGISTRATION FOR THE
KANSAS AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE
JUNE 5 - 7

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Member of _____
Post, Squadron, Unit (circle one)

Post Service Officer Training _____ Yes or No

YES, I will need housing at the College

NO, I will not need housing at the College

Mail to: Department Headquarters
1314 SW Topeka Blvd., Topeka, KS 66612