Past Department Commander William “Bill” Dolan Remembered

William “Bill” Dolan was born April 15, 1932 in Union County, South Dakota to Joseph and Elizabeth Buryanek Dolan. He died suddenly May 8, 2019 in Beresford at the age of 87 years and 23 days.

Bill was raised on the family farm where he attended country school and graduated from Beresford High School. He enlisted in the US Navy and served during the Korean War. Upon his honorable discharge, Bill returned to work with his dad on the farm.

He married Joan Hillrichs on July 13, 1957. Bill farmed his whole life. After they moved into Beresford in 2003 Bill continued to help his son Terry and his grandson Andrew on the farm.

He was life member of the VFW and American Legion where he served as State Commander from 1996 to 1997. In his earlier years he enjoyed hunting, camping and fishing; most recently he and Joan loved to go fishing as much as they could. Always enjoying a good visit, Bill and Joan could be found most mornings having coffee with friends in Beresford or Alcester.

He will be deeply missed by his wife of 62 years, Joan Dolan of Beresford; his three children, Terry (Laurie) Dolan of Sioux Falls; five grandchildren, Lindsey (Chad) Oates, Andrew Dolan, Timothy Dolan, Brittanay Gill and Trevor Gill and three step-great-grandchildren, Carter Jenness and Parker and Gracelynn Oates.

His parents, one brother, Duane Dolan and one sister, Rosamond Lind preceded him in death.


Brigadier General Marlette Named New Adjutant General

PIERRE, S.D.—South Dakota has a new Commander of its Air and Army National Guard.

Governor Kristi Noem announced that Brigadier General Jeffrey Marlette will take over as adjutant general on June 8, 2019. He will replace Major General Tim Reisch, who is retiring after heading up the Guard since 2011.

Marlette will have about 4,200 soldiers and airmen under his command and 950 full time federal and state employees that are able to respond in times of state and national emergency.

“General Marlette is a leader and a public servant,” Noem stated. “He shares my vision for our National Guard, and together we’ll work to enhance recruiting and training and ensure our troops are ready for any and all missions that come their way.”

“It’s an honor to serve our state and our governor in this role,” said Marlette. “We have the best soldiers and airmen in the country, and I intend to continue this tradition of success and look for ways to better prepare the men and women of the National Guard for the future missions we will be asked to undertake.”

Marlette began his military service when he enlisted in the South Dakota Army National Guard in 1980. He received his commission through the South Dakota Military Academy Officer Candidate School in 1982.

Marlette has commanded the 235th General Supply Company; the 2nd Battalion, 147th Field Artillery; the Joint Forces Headquarters; and the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

During his tenure as commander of the 2nd Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, the battalion was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation for its support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

In April 2007, Marlette was named the first commander of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, commanding in excess of 2,200 South Dakota Army National Guard soldiers. Marlette assumed duties as assistant adjutant general for the Army National Guard in April 2011, serving as the commanding general for 3,200 soldiers.

Since 2015, Marlette has served as West River regional director for U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, supporting the senator’s work on the Senate Armed Services and Senate Veterans Affairs committees.

In his civilian career, Marlette led Gettysburg School District as superintendent and elementary principal and later held a similar role in New Underwood School District.

General Marlette has memberships in the following organizations: School Administrators of South Dakota, Field Artillery Association of the United States, National Guard Association of South Dakota (Life Member), National Guard Association of the United States (Life Member), United States Army War College Alumni Association (Life Member), Northern State University Alumni Association as well as a Paid-Up-For-Life member of the Ralph Leui Post #135 of Gettysburg, SD. Congratulations on your new appointment, Brigadier General Marlette—we are proud to call you a fellow Legionnaire!
Four Districts Elect District Commanders

*District Vice Commanders and County Commanders Also Elected*

### District 1 Commander
- **David Booze**
- Post #311, Piedmont

### District 2 Commander
- **LeRoy Madsen**
- Post #88, White

### District 3 Commander
- **Rodney Smith**
- Post #136, Chester

### District 4 Commander
- **Matt Lagerstrom**
- Post #31, Pierre

During the 2019 Spring District Conventions, new leadership was elected in the odd-numbered Districts. Additionally, new leadership in all counties across the Department were elected. The District Commanders elected will serve a two-year term; county leadership will serve a one-year term in their positions.

Elected to serve as District Commanders and District Vice Commanders were the following individuals:

- **District 1** - David Booze of Piedmont, Commander, Jon MacDonald of Box Elder, Vice Commander.
- **District 3** - LeRoy Madsen of Pierre, Commander, Steve Steier of Onida, Vice Commander.
- **District 5** - Matt Lagerstrom of White, Commander, Krisma DeWitt of Castlewood, Vice Commander.
- **District 7** - Rod Smith of Chester, Commander, Kevin Hempel of Sioux Falls, Vice Commander.

Elected as New County Commanders were:

- **District 1** - Butte County Commander William Monohan; Vice Commander Jake Dell, Corson County Commander Don Tomac, Dewey County Commander Perry Keller, Harding County Commander Josh Klempel, Lawrence County Commander Doug Henwood; Vice Commander William Johnson, Mead County Commander Darrel Barry, Vice Commander Ken Mower, Perkins County Commander Jens Hansen; Vice Commander Bob Crow, Ziebach County Commander Harold Veit.

- **District 2** - Custer County Commander Ralph Sowder; Vice Commander Grant Serna, Ogala Lakota County Commander Patrick Yellow Hair, Pennington County Commander Don Fuller; Vice Commander Christopher Rendon, Todd County Commander Wayne Bear Shield; Vice Commander Dion Reynolds.

- **District 3** - Gregory County Commander Roland Holub; Vice Commander Dale Reber, Hughes County Commander Ollie Redden; Vice Commander Mike Mihlhafl, Lyman County Commander Wayne Monson; Vice Commander Dave Miller, Potter County Commander Francis Karst; Vice Commander Tony Larson, Stanley County Commander Larry Manke; Vice Commander Charles Marquardt, Sully County Commander Steve Sier; Vice Commander Jim Whitehurst, Tripp County Commander Jeff Habranek; Vice Commander Terry Cousins.

- **District 4** - Brown County Commander Sam Olson; Vice Commander Tom Perrizo, Campbell County Commander Steve Schaeckl; Vice Commander Dennis Huber, Edmunds County Commander Ken Vilhauer; Vice Commander Ron Hoffer, Faulk County Commander Wayne Vetter, McPherson County Commander Clifford Lilly; Vice Commander Derald Mack, Spink County Commander Ted Kimball; Vice Commander Dave Mendal, Walworth County Commander Jurein Loech; Vice Commander Jack Walth.

- **District 5** - Clark County Commander Darin Lewis; Vice Commander Robin McGraw, Codington County Commander Shellie Romeu; Vice Commander Jose Romeu, Day County Commander Paul Peterson, Dade County Commander Joe Uckert; Vice Commander Albert Backert, Grant County Commander Joel Cummings; Vice Commander Mark Sieverson, Hamlin County Commander Dave Schaefer; Vice Commander Ken Williams, Marshall County Commander Mike Krall; Vice Commander Hans Nelson, Roberts County Commander Calvin Hove; Vice Commander Bob Johnston.

- **District 6** - Aurora County Commander Robert Lucey; Vice Commander Cynthia Hoffman, Beadle County Commander Bob Brodkorb; Vice Commander Jerold Zerfoss, Brule County Commander Ken Anderson; Vice Commander LaVan Holan, Davison County Commander Virgil Schoenfelder; Vice Commander Joe Puete, Jerauld County Commander Katie Caffee; Vice Commander Melissa Schinke, Miner County Commander Jerry Adler; Vice Commander Terry Lee, Sanborn County Commander David Kogel; Vice Commander Duane Peterson.

- **District 7** - Lake County Commander Dean Hansen, Lincoln County Commander Linda Hesst; Vice Commander Jim Upshaw, McCook County Commander Bob Condle, Vice Commander Jenele Wip, Minnehaha County Commander Gary Lyngen; Vice Commander Ed Hruska, Union County Commander Lyle Saye.

- **District 8** - Bon Homme County Commander Paul Weidenbach; Vice Commander Richard Berring, Charles Mix County Commander Mark Gau; Vice Commander Arnold Horner, Clay County Commander Clinton Meadows; Vice Commander Emery Wasley, Hutchinson County Commander Robert Rennoster; Vice Commander Dan Auch, Turner County Commander VanRoekel; Vice Commander Gary Dykstra, Yankton County Commander Wayne Brandt; Vice Commander John Darcy.

Congratulations from Department Leadership to these outstanding Legimates. We wish them well on their new positions, and encourage each one to look for new ways to make our Legion better!

**EDITORIAL POLICY**
The South Dakota Legion News is published six times a year to serve its members and interested parties by informing them of Department activities and other relevant issues concerning the veterans of South Dakota. The South Dakota Legion News is also the voice of the members. We welcome articles and photos from members. The news and opinions expressed in this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of The American Legion Department of South Dakota, its Officers, Members, or the Editor. The Editor has the right to edit all articles.
Annual Report of the Department Commander

Legionnaires,

This will be my final column as your State Commander. I truly want to thank everyone for the courtesy and hospitality you showed myself and Roxy as we attended a function at your Post, District or State function this past year. I have done my best to uphold the honor and integrity of The American Legion at every function attended.

After election to State Commander in June, the year started when I attended the VFW Convention, Youth Trooper Academy and a Pow Wow at Little Eagle. The baseball championships followed where I was present at both tournaments along with the Golf State tournament. We went into Indianapolis in July and again in October for the member meeting and State Commanders seminar. I was part of a group that represented the American Legion Department of South Dakota in Groton, Connecticut, at the dedication of the Submarine USS South Dakota, the most technologically sophisticated boat in all our fleet. What an honor to be at this event.

I’ve attended the sixteen District meetings, Midwinter Conference, District Commanders Seminar, Military Order of the Purple Heart Convention, DAV Convention, Boys State, all the various Department committee and commission meetings, South Dakota American Legion Foundation Meetings, parades, Post meetings and anniversary celebrations, South Dakota Veterans Council Meetings, Washington DC Conference, National Convention in Minneapolis, Pow Wows and the National Commander’s tour across our State, including the Reservation Native American Posts. I’ve installed many Post, County, District and State Officers. I’ve been at many other functions representing the American Legion. Also, will be the Memorial Day Speaker at the Black Hills National Cemetery in Sturgis.

We started this year with a membership goal of 20,001. As I am writing this column, we are just under 18,200. We need approximately 1,800 members to achieve this goal. We have until December 31, 2019, to reach it. I urge all Legionnaires not to give up on this goal. It is achievable. This isn’t exactly where I wanted the Department to be at this time but it is a step forward from where we were at.

I need to thank our two State Vice Commanders for the job they have done. They went way beyond what I asked them to do. I asked them to sign up 3 new members and between the two of them they signed up about 150 new members. Just think where our Department would be if all Leadership would have put forth this type of effort. Both these Commanders are true leaders and believe in the American Legion.

A thank you to my Marine comrade, District 2 Commander Eugene Iron Shell. He signed up over 50 new members and took District 2 from being on the bottom of the membership standings to close to the top. He had 14 Posts in District 2 come in at or over goal. This is a fantastic job. I love seeing our Native American brothers and sisters coming back to The American Legion. We need them and they need us. We’ve had many Legionnaires and Posts do great things in membership this year and would like to thank them for all their efforts.

I would like to thank Adjutant Travis, Judy, Mary Jo and Courtney for all the work they do to keep The American Legion running smoothly. Excellent staff and we all should be proud of them.

We have the largest and most powerful veteran’s organization in the world and we need to share this with other veterans. The leadership that we had in the military is as close as signing up in The American Legion. Think of how you became a member and how much of an impact it has made on you and your life and share it with other veterans. Be proud to be a member of The American Legion. It has been an honor to be your State Commander and look forward to seeing everyone at the State Convention in Sioux Falls in June.

For God and Country,

Denny Brenden, Department Commander

Annual Report of the Employment Chairman

Gary Warne

The Employment Committee can report a so-so 2018-2019 American Legion year as we were not able to award each of the employment awards.

The Employer of Veterans Award has 2 winners. First for the small employer (50 or fewer employees) Veteran award went to Lance Trucking, Inc., of Volga, SD. The nomination was made by the Jacob A. Heinrich Post 170 of Herreid. The Large Veteran Hiring award winner (201 plus) goes to Regal Hub City Inc., of Aberdeen, SD. This nomination was submitted by Sidney L. Smith Post 24 of Aberdeen. Congratulations to each employer for hiring veterans. No nominations were received for Hiring of the Disabled nor for Older Workers.

The Employment Committee for this past year is: Patrick Steele, Aberdeen; Bob King, Hermosa; Leon Josephson, Arlington; Hugh Holmes, PDC; Haron; Kristina Dewitt, Castlewood; and myself of Aberdeen. Thank you for agreeing to serve the American Legion!

Thank you Commander for allowing me to serve as the employment chair. Hopefully each Post will resolve to seek out employers who hire Veterans, Older Workers and The Disabled. This is a excellent way to recognize and show your appreciation of their hiring practices.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Warne
Employment Chairman

Annual Report of the Trust Fund Chairman

Randy Rakness

Mr. Commander,

The Trust Fund has shown a positive growth for the year. 2018 was showing the global slowdown, but has recovered nicely in 2019. The committee met once this past year and continue to feel that the conservative balance for the portfolio is good. The fund has averaged 2.16% annual yield. In 2018, $50,000 was withdrawn for the cemetery fund to fulfill the Legion commitment.

The year end market value as of April 30, 2018 was $456,558, compared to a year end market value on April 30, 2019 of $422,095.

The current asset allocation for the trust is as follows:
- Cash Alternatives is 6% which currently yields 2.16%;
- Fixed Income 30.3% with an average yield of 3.71%;
- Equities is 44.8% with an average yield of 1.36%;
- Real Assets is 3.9% with an average yield of 2.00%;
- Alternative investments 14.8% with an average yield of 1.43%.
- Miscellaneous 2% with an average yield of 2.16%

The committee met with the new investment manager and agreed to monitor the fund as needed in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,
Randy Rakness
Chairman, Trust Committee

Annual Report of the Department Historian

Fred Lee

Commander Brenden,

It has been a privilege and an honor to serve as your Department Historian. I am working on the Department History for this year so you will have a remembrance of your year as State Commander. I will also assist those who are working to put their histories together or online for the 101st State Convention of The American Legion. Post Historians should be finalizing their Post Histories now for the History Book contest at the State Convention in Sioux Falls in June. Entries in the One-Year Post Narrative and One-Year Post Yearbook will be judged by myself and other historians at the convention. Your entry should cover this past year’s term of your Post Commanders election to the end of his or her term.

In order to judge the entries received, I need them turned in to myself or left at the Convention registration desk no later than 1 pm on Friday, June 7th, in order to be judged. Guidelines and advice can be found in the Post Officers guide.

Make sure you include a complete copy of the entry form for each entry. These forms can be found on the Legion’s home page under “FOMFS”. Look for the “Post History Forms”. Plaques will be presented to the first, second and third place winners.

I would encourage all posts to put together a post history, either in book form or online. Unfortunately, there is not a category for judging online histories yet. I thank all historians and Post members for their hard work and commitment in preparing these books. Your Post members will appreciate your hard work in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,
Fred Lee
Department Historian

Annual Report of the Employment Chairman
HRTG-VA ACTING PROGRAM
COORDINATOR MAKES PIERRE SITE VISIT

By Royce R. Loesch

Johnathon Coble Harrison, Highly Rural Transportation Grants (HRTG) Acting Program Coordinator, VHA Member Services’ Veterans Transportation Program (VTP) recently made a Site Visit at the River Cities Public Transit Bus Terminal in Pierre. The purpose of the visit was to meet with and perform an audit of the Stanley Post 20 Transportation Program for military veterans who live in Highly Rural Counties in South Dakota. Royce Loesch, Stanley Post 20 American Legion HRTG Program Director, said that during the meeting in Pierre on May 7 – 8th, Johnathon Coble Harrison announced to the group that the 10 final rural counties which are left in South Dakota will become part of the Transportation Program as soon as funding becomes available sometime in the next few months. That will bring the total number of counties serviced and administered by Stanley Post 20 American Legion, through the VHA grant program to 34. Loesch said, “The counties served in their HRTG program presently are Stanley, Dewey, Ziebach, Perkins, Harding, Butte, Haakon, Jones, Lyman, Custer, Fall River, Jackson, Bennett, Potter, Sully, Hyde, Hand, Buffalo, Spink, Clark, Kingsbury, Jerauld, Sanborn, and Miner. They will ultimately be serving Campbell, McPherson, Edmunds, Faulk, Marshall, Day, Aurora, Mellette, Tripp and Gregory counties.”

Mr. Harrison talked to the Transportation group about a software program that may be offered in the future which is called the ‘VTP VetRide Transportation Solution’ which will contain an Administrative Portal. The portal would be used for immediate request approval/denials, tracking of metrics, and alleviate up front verifications with VHA facilities. Grantees would have the option to utilize the tool using grant funds for licensing. He said if it becomes mandatory, his office would pay for the program which should be implemented within 60 days.

He also explained that VHA has been working yearly to not only extend the program but add authorities to the grant program that would aid in servicing more Veterans than currently authorized.

During the meeting, Mr. Harrison complimented Stanley Post 20 for the success of their program and their willingness to help all the veterans with their program.

Mr. Harrison also shared how studies of non-emergent medical transportation are showing the importance of transportation in healthcare. Due to these studies the health care community is beginning to take notice and discuss transportation as a part treatment plans due to its contribution to improved health outcomes and quality of life.

Royce Loesch said, “We discussed a lot of technical information and the meeting was considered a total success. Ron and Shellie Baumgart of River Cities Public Transit along with their employees did a great job of hosting the meeting along with Barb Cline and Lisa Johnson of (PHT) Prairie Hills Transit of Spearfish, S.D. who also were well represented.”

Contact for further Information: Royce R. Loesch, Stanley Post 20 American Legion, HRTG Transportation Program Director, 1732 Northstar Avenue, Pierre, S.D. 57501. Ph: 605-224-4512 home; 605-224-1231 bus; 605-220-9725 cell. Or Email: royceloesch@gmail.com.
South Dakota Humanities Council
Seeking Veterans Stories

BROOKINGS—South Dakota State University Veterans Affairs and the South Dakota Humanities Council are sponsoring a new veterans storytelling contest—called the Veterans Story Project—that will culminate with an awards ceremony at the South Dakota Festival of Books Oct. 4-6 in Deadwood.

While similar to the Veterans Writing Prize program conducted by SDHC in 2016 and 2017, the 2019 contest features a new partnership with SDSU and a dual submission format allowing participants to submit 3–5 minute oral stories recorded on video or written stories of up to 1,500 words (past contests accepted written submissions only).

Submissions will be accepted from May 10–August 15 for the Veterans Story Project, which is open to veterans or current service members of any branch of the United States military currently living in South Dakota. Submissions should consist of new, unpublished material addressing the military experience, such as recovery or lessons learned. Individuals may submit either a three-to-five-minute video or up to 1,500 written words in any format—poetry, prose, fiction, creative nonfiction, etc.

Entries will be judged on content, not the production quality of videos or the technical quality of written content. “There are many benefits for veterans to share their story through creative writing or any other humanities driven experience that can encourage healing, release or support others,” said Connie Johnson, coordinator for Veterans Affairs at SDSU. Johnson is also the lone female Purple Heart recipient in North and South Dakota.

Three finalists in each category, written and video, will be invited to the South Dakota Festival of Books in Deadwood for a reading/showing of their work by U.S. Army veteran and author Brian Turner, who will announce the winners and hold a workshop specifically for veterans. Turner is one of many award-winning veteran authors who have appeared at the Festival of Books, which in the past has featured National Book Award winner Tim O’Brien and Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Olen Butler.

The South Dakota Humanities Council, a statewide humanities organization that hosts the annual Festival, will work with the finalists to support their attendance at the Festival Oct. 5 in Deadwood. Writers do not need to attend the festival to submit work. A representative can read the author's work on the finalist’s behalf. Each category winner receives a cash prize of $500, second, $300; and third, $200. In addition, every veteran who submits a story receives one free ticket to Turner's writing workshop Oct. 4 in Deadwood.

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Stories should be submitted to: Connie Johnson Coordinator for Veterans Affairs South Dakota State University Brown Hall Room 134 Brookings, SD 57007 For more information or questions, contact Johnson at connie.johnson@sdstate.edu or (605) 688-4700.

District Commander Spotlight: District 2, Eugene Iron Shell Jr.

What a year we have had in the 2nd District. It is one of the largest, covering the following counties: Pennington, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Jackson, Oglala Lakota, Bennett, Jones, Mellette, and Todd. There are 31 posts, as well as two Reservations, the Rosebud Sioux and Oglala Sioux.

I told the Legionnaires of the 2nd District when I was elected that we would sit a little closer to the front at state convention. That we will. It was looking bleak for a while. We were 8th in the State. We got a push come mid-winter time. We are now 2nd and at 92% as of this writing.

Congratulations are in order for our District Legionnaire of the Year, Mr. Doug Harris of Post 22 in Rapid City. He is a graduate of the American Legion College and the current adjutant of his post. He does great things for the American Legion.

I want to acknowledge the Posts in 2nd District that have achieved 100% for 2019. They are: Allen Post 317, Midland Post 143, Wanblee Post 269, Murdo Post 75, Parmelee Post 295, Rosebud Post 125, Hermosa Post 303, Custer Post 46, Edgeumont Post 172, New Underwood Post 256, Batesland Post 281, Kyle Post 265, Pine Ridge Post 251, Porcupine Post 294, and Manderson Post 302. Great job comrades.

We have two gold brigaders this year in our district. State Vice-Commander Ed Thompson of Custer Post 46, and Eugene Iron Shell Jr. of Rosebud Post 125. We concentrated a lot of our efforts to revitalizing the posts on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge. There are 7 posts within the boundaries of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. They are all at 100%. Post 251 in Pine Ridge is revitalized and they have excellent leadership in Mr. Bryan Brewer, commander and Shavnee Red Bear, adjutant. They meet monthly and are starting to conduct the business of the American Legion on the reservation.

We had members that have transferred to post everlasting. Dennis Spotted Tail served as post commander for Parmelee Post 295 for 14 years. He served in the 82nd Airborne Division during the Korean War Era. He was a loyal PULF member and was at the first meeting of Post 295 in 1952. Frank Marshall was the adjutant of Post 251. He served in the United States Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. May they Rest In Peace.

I want to thank Custer Post 46 for hosting an outstanding spring district meeting. They worked hard for almost a year to plan. Comrades Hone, Sowder, Mills and Herman, and all members of Post 46, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of your support and dedication.

In closing, I want to say thank you to all of my brothers and sisters in the American Legion who have supported me, especially Commander Dennis Brenden, Vice Commander Ed Thompson, PDC Terry Hanson, State Adjutant Travis Flisrand, Rolly Quam, Leon Josephson, Ken Temnaisen, Paul Douglas, PDC Hugh Holmes, Gene Opbroek, Don Fuller, Chris (from Post 320), Mike Ball, and especially the 2nd District Vice Commander Cynthia Douglass. There are many more too numerous to list. Thank you all.

I am a third generation member of the American Legion. The best job in the American Legion is district commander. I am honored and humbled to lead you wonderful Veterans during our centennial year. Know your post’s history. Each post has a soul—a spirit—that will always be with you. Most are brave men who gave their lives in time of war. Lastly, be proud of the uniform that you wear. We are all members of the GREATEST VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH. Semper Fidelis, For God and Country,

Eugene S Iron Shell, Jr.
Chauncey Eagle Horn-Philip Iyotte Post 125 of Rosebud, South Dakota
2nd District
Commanding
Annual Report of the Legislative Committee Chairman

Rod Martens

Employment Committee Chairman

Chairman, Department Legislative Committee

The annual South Dakota American Legion Legislative Committee meeting was held November 15th, 2018 via conference call. Present at this meeting were: State Commander Denny Brenden, Chairman PDC Rod Martens, PDC Gary Watts, PDC Rick Mac Donald, Doug Feltsman, Royce Loesch and Department Adjutant Travise Flisrand.

Since there were no resolutions received at State Convention in 2018 requiring Legislative actions, the Legislative achievements of 2018

Chairman Martens invited Commander Brenden to speak. Commander Brenden welcomed the new member to the Committee, Doug Feltsman. He said there are quite a few bills out there; our policy is to speak only on bills we are supporting, and we do not have to speak on every bill. He thanked everyone for their contributions to this committee.

Chairman Martens asked Adjutant Flisrand to highlight the 2018 Legislative session and discuss the South Dakota Veterans Council agenda items. Chairman Martens thanked Adjutant Flisrand, Doug Feltsman and Kim Hallock be appointed as 2019 legislative lobbyists for the American Legion.

Three Legislative Roundtables were held in December in preparation for the 2019 legislative session. These roundtable discussions were held in Sioux Falls on December 12th, December 13th, in Watertown and December 15th, in Rapid City. Legislative Roundtables are set up each year for the members of the South Dakota Veterans Council to present their agendas to members of the legislature. All Legionnaires are invited and encouraged to attend.

Because there were no legislative issues brought forth by the American Legion, we focused on other legislation brought forth concerning Veterans.

The Department Legislative Committee met at the Pierre Post 8 home, February 6th, 2019, prior to the Legislative reception. Present at the meeting were: State Commander Denny Brenden, Committee members: Doug Feltsman, Royce Loesch and Department Adjutant Flisrand. Attending via conference call were Chairmen Rod Martens, PDC Gary Watts and PDC MacDonald. Also, in attendance were PDC Paul Evenson, PDC Hugh Holmes, PDC Terry Hanson, Assistant Adjutant Dave Manning, Leon Josephson, Royly Quinn, Chris Van Delist and Bob Blum.

Chairman Martens welcomed all in attendance and thanked them all for attending, especially with the bad road conditions due to the blizzard.

Chairman Martens invited Commander Brenden to speak. Commander Brenden welcomed everyone to another Legislative Committee meeting. He thanked the Committee for everything they do and how important the committee is because it changes lives. Chairman Martens asked Adjutant Flisrand to highlight 2019 legislative session and discuss the bills with the committee. Department Adjutant Flisrand went through each bill in the packet. Chairman Martens stated the Legislative Reception is scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. He encouraged everyone to engage with the Legislators, build rapport and speak about the items discussed during this meeting. Our hats are off to the members of Post 8 for their hospitality, and for making the legislative reception a huge success.

The following list contains the results of bills that the committee tracked and supported:

- HB 1007 - Revise certain provisions regarding the exemptions from the twelve-month residency requirement for university students. Signed by the Governor.
- HB 1043 - Require the Department of Social Services to collect and report certain information regarding the military affiliation of a parent whose child is subject to a report of abuse or neglect. Signed by the Governor.
- HB 1044 - Authorize certain children who are subject to a pending military relocation to apply for enrollment in a school district. Signed by the Governor.
- HB 1080 - Increase the property tax exemption allowed for certain veterans with a disability and the surviving spouses of certain veterans with a disability. Signed by the Governor.
- HB 1081 - Authorize certain paraplegic or amputee veterans or their surviving spouses to retain a property tax exemption without having to supply each year. Signed by the Governor.
- HB 1111 - Provide for professional or occupational licensure for certain active duty military personnel and spouses. Signed by the Governor.
- HB 1171 - Allow certain veterans to attend courses offered at postsecondary technical institutes without payment of tuition. Passed Senate & House, how ever no conference committee assigned so bill died
- HB 1201 - Revise provisions regarding group pheasant hunts for disabled veterans. Signed by the Governor.
- HB 1203 - Authorize certain poker tournaments for restricted purposes. Deferred to 41st Day
- HB 1257 - Authorize the Department of the Military to construct two storage buildings, to make an appropriation therefor, and to declare an emergency. Signed by the Governor.
- HB 1260 - Make an appropriation to continue the veteran’s bonus program and to declare an emergency. Signed by the Governor.
- HB 1263 - Revise the appropriation for the construction of a National Guard Readiness Center at the Rapid City Airport and to declare an emergency. Signed by the Governor.
- HC 1007 - Honoring Calico Ducheneaux of Mobridge, South Dakota Girls State Governor and Seamus Duffy of Sioux Falls, South Dakota Boys State Governor and commending the South Dakota American Legion and Auxiliary for their sponsorship and coordination of the Girls State and Boys State programs.
- SB 58 - Authorize the Bureau of Administration to conduct a study of the Flaming Fountain on Capitol Lake, to make an appropriation therefor, and to declare an emergency. Deferred to 41st day.
- SCR 3 - Commending, honoring, and thanking South Dakota’s numerous women veterans for their service to our country and state. Passed Senate & House.

I would like to thank members of the Legislative Committee and especially our Lobbyists – Adjutant Flisrand, Doug Feltsman and Kim Hallock who spent a lot of time representing the American Legion as advocates for veterans’ concerns. I would like to especially thank two long-term member committee members, Gerry Goetzinger and Curt Halverson for their years of dedication and service to the Legislative Committee.

Commander, thank you for allowing me to serve as your chairman and to be a part of your successful year.

Respectfully submitted,

Rod Martens
Chairman, Department Legislative Committee

Annual Report of the National Cemetery Committee Chairman

Gene Opbroek

Commander,

Greetings to Commander Brenden and all the SD American Legion family. 2018/2019 has been a great year at Black Hills National Cemetery. The legislation allowing the BLM to transfer the 100 plus acres on the north to the Nung man to attend the Administration finally passed, the President signed it and the title transfer has been completed. There was a smooth seamless transfer in the Director’s chair at BHNC so the staff there continues to maintain the National Monument status. A new Vietnam Memorial was dedicated on April 27th.

The SD Veterans’ Cemeteries Support Council (that is responsible for maintaining the Avenue of Flags, the Capitol Tower and other such amenities outside the responsibility of the Cemetery staff) expended over $7300 maintaining the Avenue of Flags in 2018 and has committed to a nearly $9000 upgrade to the Capitol Tower. This sound system is extremely important to the annual Memorial Day Program. All these expenses are paid for with donated money. Needless to say, it takes a consistent stream of generosity to pay for all these things.

As I close this report, I encourage the new Department Commander, elected at the June Convention in Sioux Falls, to seek out some new representation on the Cemetery Committee and the Support Council. I’ve served on the committee for a number of years and on the Support Council since 1992.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Lolley
National Cemetery Committee Chairman

Annual Report of the Boys State Director

Gene Opbroek

Commander,

The 2019 South Dakota American Legion Boys State Session will commence on Sunday May 26th with Staff Training. Boys State Attendees will arrive on Monday May 27th and remain until closing ceremonies on Friday May 31st.

Northern State University has completed a large share of their upgrades to facilities, but some construction will still be continuing through this years session. Some of the completed upgrades include new dormitories with air conditioning, larger rooms and more handicap accessibility. The new soccer field and practice football field is complete and will the site for the new Boys State Flagpole. A dedication ceremony for the new flagpole will be conducted on American Legion Day which is Thursday May 30th.

The staff, along with the NSU staff, have worked to provide college credits again this year for our Boys State attendees and are combining efforts on other programs to enhance the Boys State program.

Our numbers continue to decline and this years projected attendance will be around the 240 mark. We are in the process of creating an incentive program for High School Counselors along with the possibility of other incentives to increase attendance.

I would like to thank those American Legion Posts who have sponsored a young man to attend the Boys State Session. I know in some cases it has been difficult to persuade a High School Junior to attend. We do appreciate your hard work and dedication.

I would also like to thank the many staff members who volunteer their time not only during the Boys State Session but throughout the year to insure the program continues to be successful.

A special "THANK YOU" to Chief Justice David Gilbertson for his many years of volunteering. Chief Justice has an exceptional program for Boys State and I have looked to him numerous times in the last ten years for guidance. Chief Justice Gilbertson will retire after this year. We wish him well and thank him for his tremendous contribution to the Boys State Program.

Respectfully submitted:

Gene Opbroek
Director, South Dakota Boys State Program
Iowa Youth Wins National American Legion Oratorical Contest

INDIANAPOLIS (April 7, 2019) - High school junior Patrick Junker of Waukee, Iowa, won an $18,000 scholarship and The American Legion’s 82nd annual National Oratorical Contest. In the U.S. Constitutional Speech Contest, April 7 in Indianapolis. It was a significant comeback after not advancing past the quaterfinal round during last year’s contest, a loss he said that was “extremely influential.” It gave him confidence and encouragement to write a prepared oration that he was passionate about, that he believed in — “The Spread of Constitutional Apathy and How touant It.”

Throughout the weekend’s competition, the contestants presented a rehearsed eight- to 10-minute oration on an aspect of the Constitution in the front of judges, as well as a three- to five-minute speech on an assigned topic discourse — a phase of the Constitution selected from its Articles and Sections.

Second-place finish and a $16,000 scholarship was awarded to Caleb Maue of Homer Glen, Ill., a senior at St. Joseph’s High School, who was supported by Post 1080; and third-place finish and a $14,000 scholarship was awarded to Eden Carnes of Friendsville, Tenn., a freshman at The Disciple Institute who was sponsored by Post 70. Keilty Gunther of Aberdeen, South Dakota, was the South Dakota representative.

More than 6,000 high school students begin competition annually at The American Legion post-community level. More than $3 million in scholarships have been awarded over the history of the contest.

Larry Madsen
Americanism Commission Chairman

Annual Report of the Americanism Commission Chairman

Commander, Brenden;
Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Department Americanism Chairman. Your support and leadership have contributed to the success of this Vital pillar of the American Legion. I am grateful for the direction provided by the Americanism Commission members. Together we guide and monitor the Americanism Americanism programs. But, I am most proud and humbled by the Legionnaires who carry out leadership in an patriotic events in Posts across this state.

We are truly committed to our youth through programs under the umbrella of the American Legion Americanism Pillar such as the High School Oratorical Scholarship Program, American Legion Youth Baseball, American Legion Boys State, American Legion Youth Trooper Academy and Scouting. Our Posts sponsor Flag Education and Citizenship Awards in our schools. We are reaching youth in ways they are used to communicating through Facebook, emails, websites, text and other electronic communications. Registration for Boys State and the Youth Trooper Academy has been accomplished from their smart phones or computers.

The Boys State manual is now available in pdf format to anyone with a computer or smart phone. Dedicated experienced Volunteers will be on site to interact with Boys State Citizens during the week at Northern State University, May 27 – May 31. Northern State University brings students into their Media Center to experience the great potential of that facility. Boys State is celebrating its 77th year at NSU.

The Oratorical Scholarship Program continues to flourish. Our Depart- ment winner competed in the American Legion National Oratorical Contest along with 53 other Department winners.

The Youth Trooper academy Program continues to grow. We are searching for ways to let school staff in every school in the state know of the availability of American Legion programs. Twenty Four High School Junior and Senior Girls and Boys will be invited to participate in a week long experience at the SD Department of Criminal Investigation facility in Pierre in June. Thank you Larry Price for your leadership as liaison with the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

Thank you Post Americanism Officers for submitting your Post Americanism reports to the Department headquarters so the Americanism Commission could include them in their report. Sharing Post activities is a help to other Posts looking for ideas to strengthen their programs. The Commission will meet May 30 during Legionnaire Day at Boys State on the NSU campus.

The American Legion continues to collaborate with Scouting to inspire youth to achieve their goals. It is exciting to see the enthusiasm with which our youth develop competencies. Thank you Rick McDonald for your devotion to the Boy Scouts.

I look forward to seeing a good attendance at the Department convention in Sioux Falls. Let us hear how we can better service local Posts, communities and the State of South Dakota.

Thank you Commander Brenden for giving me the opportunity to repre- sent the American Legion Department of South Dakota as your Department Americanism Chairman. Thank you to the Americanism Commission and the Americanism committee for your direction and support.

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Madsen
Americanism Commission Chairman

Annual Report of the Department Adjutant

Commander,
This report is being written and read to satisfy the requirement in the By-Laws that the Depart- ment Adjutant write and present at each annual convention, a report covering all activities not covered in the annual reports of Committee Chairs and other State American Legion officials.

The American Legion is a member of the South Dakota Veterans Council, along with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Vet- erans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Order of the Purple Heart and the Vietnam Veterans of America. The council meets four times a year to discuss issues involving the Veterans of South Dakota. The council’s main goal is to stand together on Legislative bills to better improve the lives of veterans. This year’s year an endorsement for the South Dakota State Cemetery in Sioux Falls was created by the Veterans Council. The money being managed by the South Dakota Community Foundation and the current value is over $450,000, with the goal of having $3,000,000 in the endow- ment by 2023.

The American Legion Foundation is in its ninth year and has a market value of approximately $172,431. Donations continue to come in on a year- ly basis from Legionnaires and Legion Posts. The fun auction is the single biggest fundraiser for the year. The foundation is a $101.72 percent perfor- mation and can receive donations from any company and individual do- nors. The board of directors for the foundation has a goal of having $1,000,000 in the endowment in 5 years. In January the Board of Directors met with Mike Rohan of Wisconsin concerning fundraising methods and marketing ideas to raise capital for the endowment. This training laid the groundwork for moving forward with the goal of increasing our endowed monies and hopefully reaching our goal.

The website for the South Dakota American Legion was rebuilt this past year due to security flaws on the old website. The new website has added features that enable visitors to get information easily and are now able to donate money to programs the Department manages. The effects of this redesign process is our website is now at the top of list for searches on the internet. We have been very proactive using social media to communicate to our members and those who support our organization. The Facebook page for the department currently reaches over 21,000 people every month giving us a very positive exposure for “Helping Children and Veterans”.

State Headquarters Staff had a significantly better year compared to the last year. Judy Greenfield continues to be the backbone of the office and is a respected member of the team. MaryJo Boner has gotten her first year under her belt and has proved herself to be a great addition. Our search for an Assistant Adjutant was a slow process finding the right person. In the past month we have hired on our “volunteer” Dept. Service Officer to also be our Department Assistant Adjutant. She is working out of the Lake County to finalize this cooperative sharing of a Service Officer.

Mr. Commander, since most of the Committee Chairs and State Officers have filed complete reports published in the June issue of the South Dakota Legion News, most of the activities of the Department have been covered and reported on. I would like to congratulate you on a very successful year.

Respectfully submitted,
Travis Fislarnd
Annual Trooper Academy Candidates Selected

This year 111 applications were received by the South Dakota Highway Patrol to participate in the Youth Trooper Academy in Pierre.

The class size in 2019 will have 24 candidates. Below is a list of the candidates that were selected and will attend the 2019 Youth Trooper Academy:

Julyn Millhouse of Pied- mont, Brendan Anderson of Rap- id City, Joshua Lenser of Miller, Jordan Spiers of St. Lawrence, Justin Benzit of Eureka, Maria Jenkins of Forbes, ND, Tait Lo- gan of Frankfurt, Connor Unterse- her of Mobridge, Tasha Vohlken of Estelline, Brianna Jorgenson of Wahappy, Dereck Molegraaf of White, Brandle Schuster of Veh- len, Gavan Lindner of Watertown, Noah Hofer of Huron, Mason Wieman of Huron, Aaryn Harris of Brandon, Lauren Hanson of Worthing, Nadia Claussen of Sioux Falls, Colin Schnell of Sioux Falls, Tanner Gassman of Sioux Falls, Jack Harvison of Valley Springs, Trinity Johnson of Volin, Mayson Preheim of Marion, and Mitchell Slowey of Yankton.

Districts 5 & 7 each have 5 candidates selected to attend the academy, Districts 4 & 8 & 14 have 4 candidates. Districts 3 & 6 each have 2 candidates and Districts 1 & 2 & each have 1 candidate select- ed to attend the academy.

The dates of the Youth Trooper Academy are June 24-28, 2019.

The program is designed to ex- press young adults to the demands of Highway Patrol Recruit train- ing and to develop better relation- ships between the youth of our state and the Highway Patrol. Veteran South Dakota Highway Patrol Troopers will serve as mentors and chaperones during the week.

Troopers and members from other law enforcement agencies throughout the state of South Dakota will provide classroom and hands-on training in topics such as firearms safety, defensive driving, crash investigation, traf- fic stops, leadership, defensive tactics, and criminal law. Youth Academy Recruits will also get to experience demonstrations from the Highway Patrol’s special op- erations section such as aircraft operation, SWAT, and Police Service Dogs.
Mark Your Calendar

**June 2019**
4. Deadline for State Convention Resolutions to State Headquarters
4. Deadline for National Legion College Applications to State HQ's
6. D-Day
6-9: 101st Department Convention, Sioux Falls Convention Center
6: Department Finance Commission Meeting, Sioux Falls
6: Department Executive Committee Meeting, Sioux Falls
7: Convention Committee Meetings, Sioux Falls Convention Center
7: Fun Auction, Sheridan, Sioux Falls
8: Joint Legion/Auxiliary/SAL Banquet, Sioux Falls Convention Center
8-9: State Convention General Sessions, Sioux Falls Convention Center
9: Elections of Department Officers, Sioux Falls Convention Center
14: Flag Day. *This is an important membership target date.*
14: U.S. Army Birthday
16: Father’s Day
21-22: VFW State Convention, Madison
24-28: Youth Trooper Academy, Pierre

**July 2019**
1. Deadline for Consolidated Post Reports to State Headquarters
8: Deadline for National Convention Packets to State Headquarters
10: American Legion Boys Nation, Washington, D.C.
24-28: Jr. Shooting Sports National Championship, Colorado Springs
26-30: Class A Senior State Baseball Tournament, Mitchell, SD
26-30: Class A Junior State Baseball Tournament, Rapid City, SD
August 2019
2: American Legion Highway 281 Ride, ND Border
2-6: Class B Senior State Baseball Tournament, Lennox, SD
2-6: Class B Junior State Baseball Tournament, Groton, SD
4: Coast Guard Birthday
7: Purple Heart Day
8-10: Department Service Officer School — Indianapolis, IN
8-10: National Membership Workshop — Indianapolis, IN
15-20: American Legion World Series Baseball Tourney, Shelby, NC
18: Start of Legacy Run to National Convention in Lady Lake, FL
23-29: 101st Annual Legion National Convention, Indianapolis, IN
26-29: SDDVA Annual Benefit School, Ramkota, Pierre, SD
29: Veterans Day, South Dakota State Fair, Huron, SD

VA Offers Free Registry to All Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange

If you think you had contact with Agent Orange, a toxic chemical used to clear trees and plants during the Vietnam War, or other herbicides while serving in the military, you can request a VA Agent Orange Registry health exam. Even if you don’t have a known illness, the exam could alert you to illnesses that may be related to contact with herbicides. By being part of this registry, you are also helping your fellow veterans by giving us information so we can better understand and serve those affected by Agent Orange-related illnesses.

To schedule your exam, contact your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator. If you qualify, you won’t have to pay anything for this exam. It’s free for qualified veterans.

Sioux Falls VAMC Coordinator:
Mundy Jamison
(605) 336-3230 x7070
Mundy.Jamison@va.gov

Black Hills VAMC Coordinator:
Rosalinda Phares
(605) 745-2000 x2445
Rosalinda.Phares@va.gov

Annual Report of the Athletic Commission Chairman

Mr. Commander:

The SD American Legion Athletic Commission would like to thank all the Posts who hosted Athletic events this past year, for the upcoming events this year and for all the support given to the Commission by Department Commander Denny Brenden and all his staff.

Last year events went pretty with no weather issues and almost no problems at all on our 4 State tournament sites. Special thanks goes out to Redfield, Pierre, Mitchell and Winner for hosting our 2018 St Tournaments. Congratulation to our 2018 St Tournament winners who are as follows: Dell Rapids Sr B; R.C. Post 22-St A; Lennox Jr B and Watertown Jr A.

Mr. Commander, thank you for letting me be the chairman of the Education Loan Committee. Airborne!

Respectfully Submitted,
Dan Sudbeck
Athletic Commission Chairman

Annual Report of the Educational Loan Committee Chairman

Mr. Commander,

This has been a marginal year for the Educational Loan Committee. In 2018, no loans were submitted or renewed. The committee reviewed three Educator of the Year nominations during May 2019. We selected Mr. Scott Bechler, Iroquois High School, as the 2019 South Dakota American Legion Educator of the Year.

The education loans offered by the Department of South Dakota, The American Legion, are in the amount $1,500.00 each. A student is eligible for two loans with a maximum total amount of $3,000.00. The loans are for secondary education, college or technical school, for veterans, children of veterans, and grandchildren of veterans who meet the requirements as set forth in the Education Loan brochure. In all cases, the veteran must be eligible to join The American Legion. The student must attend a higher education school in the state of South Dakota unless their plan of study not taught in any South Dakota school. The interest rate is 3% if the student starts repayment with 90 days of termination of school; otherwise, the rate is 8%. The fund is self-sustaining through the built-in revolving repayment systems and donations. We are currently reviewing the brochure and application processes. No monies were added to the fund from the Department’s outside income programs. More specific details can be obtained from State Headquarters, your District Education Loan Chairperson, or a member of the state Education Loan Committee. The state committee consists of Jerry Menke, Huron; Mike Elsberry, Tyndall, and Hugh Holmes, Mitchell.

The Education Loan Committee expresses our appreciation for the various memorials and donations received this past year, totaling $305.00. We also thank the Department Executive Committee, State Headquarters, American Legion Posts, Auxiliary Units, and individuals throughout our great state.

Education Loan applications and brochures are available online at www.sdlegion.org.

Mr. Commander, thank you for letting me be the chairman of the Education Loan Committee. Airborne!

Respectfully Submitted,
Hugh W. Holmes
Chairman, Education Loan Committee

Hugh Holmes
Annual Report of the Children and Youth Chairman

Miranda Krumm
Children & Youth Chairman

As our dynamics within the American Legion continue to grow in many ways, the Children & Youth program is following suit. The Temporary Financial Assistance grants are incredibly beneficial gifts that eligible families receive in a trying time. These grants are not only the veteran families last resort, but the stepping stone to help them back on their feet.

If you have a veteran family possibly in need, please take a moment to reach out to them about the Temporary Financial Assistance grant and how to apply if warranted. Applications can be obtained through the Department Headquarters website at www.sdlegion.org/form/sd-american-legion-tfa-form/ or you can contact me at 605-695-9122. Remember the applications start at post level and with YOU! You’re the key to connecting us, and I will, with the utmost speed, continue the process of determining eligibility and granting assistance.

The Children & Youth program over the past year or so has had the pleasure of helping several families. In 2018, we had $5922.62 given out in grants, and so far no requests in 2019. I also would like to mention that we utilized the National Temporary Financial Assistance program for a maximum of $1,500 and it was approved again! Individual families may receive a grant maximum at state and national level totaling $3,000.

This last Mid-Winter Convention I focused on raising funds for Temporary Financial Assistance. Over the convention $1,500 was donated to the program that will make a difference to veteran families in need! THANK YOU! I encouraged leadership from all posts present to go back to their home posts and spread the message that the Children and Youth program (Temporary Financial Assistance program) depend on 100% donations and to consider bringing a donation to summer convention to show support from each and every post no matter how little the donation (or BIG). Togetherness is key!

This past year, as the Children & Youth Chairperson I have grown to appreciate each and every youth program, as each one highlights a child’s strengths and pushes them towards a brighter future. Encourage your community to explore all these programs as most are no cost to the children. If you need material or information on any of the programs please contact me.

Lastly, thank you for allowing me to serve as the Children and Youth Chairperson. This position has been humbling and rewarding. The satisfaction of helping our youth is priceless.

Respectfully submitted,

Miranda Krumm
Children & Youth Chairman

Annual Report of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Chairman

Warren L. Aas
Commander,

On behalf of the Department Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (V&A&R) Commission, which consists of Chairman Warren Aas of Watertown, Vice Chairman PDC Tim Jurgens of Milbank, Noel Cummins of Milbank, Jim Childers of Spearfish, Jerry Lolley of Sturgis, Dion Reynolds of Rosebud, Gary Schumacher of De Smet, and Rebecca Trygstad of Volga, it gives me great pleasure to present the following Department V&A&R Commission report.

What was known for many years as the Department VA&R Committee has now been revitalized and renamed the Department VA&R Commission to come more in line with our national organization as far as structure and purpose. Instead of a committee, we are now a commission with a goal to meet at least twice per year, once by teleconference and then a face-to-face meeting during our annual MidWinter Conference.

The purpose of the Department VA&R Commission is to #1 be more proactive in our posts and communities to help our veterans and their families that need our assistance. #2 we want to assist and formulate recommendations to our Department Executive Committee on policies, plans and programs dealing with outreach and support for our veterans. #3 we want to assist in helping with the activities and events that help assist our veterans in our communities. #4 we want to assist work alongside our South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) to ensure all eligible veterans are aware where they can go to get help and assistance with their VA claims. #5 we want to work with the family support system and assist any way we can.

The initial meeting of our Department V&A&R Commission was by teleconference call on November 14, 2018. This was our initial meeting of the commission with the intent to introduce all commission members and to set some guidelines and goals as we proceed. Much of our focus will be to work hand-in-hand with our Department Legislative Committee.

Our second meeting was a face-to-face meeting during our MidWinter Conference in Spearfish in February 2019. We had as a guest speaker, our newly appointed Secretary of Veterans Affairs in South Dakota, Secretary Greg Whitlock of Watertown. Secretary Whitlock briefed the commission on his goals and objectives as the new Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The V&A&R Commission also reviewed the legislative bills that are before the state legislature.

Our next meeting was held on May 11, 2019, at Chamberlain, SD where we discussed several issues concerning legislative bills, V&A&R resolutions, The American Legion Legislative Agenda for the 116th Congress, The VA Mission Act of 2018, and more. The VA&R Commission also drafted two resolutions to be considered at the state convention in Sioux Falls.

Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) is available for any veteran in your community that may have fallen on hard times and needs some financial assistance to get back on their feet. TFA is generally one time grant money and other requirements apply. Your post commander has more details about TFA.

If you are a veteran and would like to check into getting enrolled in the VA for healthcare, we encourage you to stop in and see your local Tribal or County Veterans Service Officer in your county or contact DSO Courtney Van Zanten for assistance.

Thank you Commander Brenden for allowing me the privilege to serve as the Chairman of the Department Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission during your year. We encourage all Legionnaires to attend their post meetings. Ask your fellow members if they need a ride to the meeting. You’ll be glad you did.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren L. Aas,
Chairman, V&A&R Commission

Department Sees Boost in Annual Legionnaires Insurance Trust Disbursement

The Department of South Dakota received a welcomed surprise this year at the Annual Legionnaires Insurance Trust meeting, when the LIT presented a check for $54,945.53. This was a significant jump from the previous year, thanks in large part to Legionnaires across the state signing up for their free accidental death policies, along with others.

To sign up, visit: https://www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare
Disability Veterans Eligible For Free National Park Service Lifetime Access Pass

Spring flowers are blooming, the summer travel season quickly approaches and Veterans are joining the 330-million yearly visitors enjoying U.S. National Parks.

Many Veterans, with a service connected disability rating, are entering Federal parks for free with the Lifetime National Parks Access Pass from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Good for entry into 400+ National Parks and over 2,000 recreation sites across the country, the Lifetime Access Pass is another way a grateful nation says thank you for the service and sacrifices of Veterans with disabilities.

The Access Pass admits disabled Veterans and any passengers in their vehicle (non-commercial) at per-vehicle fee areas; and, the pass owner plus three additional adults where per-person fees are charged. In addition to free entry at participating parks, the Access Pass includes discounts on expanded amenity fees; such as camping, swimming, boat launching and guided tours.

Veterans who have a VA disability rating, (10 percent or higher) are eligible for the Lifetime Access Pass—with two ways to apply.

First, disabled Veterans can apply in person at a participating federal recreation site. Simply present photo identification (Drivers license, State ID, Passport) and documentation proving a permanent disability (VA awards letter, VA ID with service connected annotation, VA summary of benefits, or receipt of Social Security disability income). That’s it. The Pass is free and issued at the time of entry.

Second, if applying by mail, send a completed packet and $10 processing fee to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The packet should include:
- The Access Pass application form
- Proof of residency
- VA disability award letter, VA summary of benefits, or proof of SSDI income
- Pass delivery should be expected 10-12 weeks after receipt.

Make sure to have photo ID available when using your Lifetime Access Pass and enjoy the majestic scenery and abundant recreational opportunities our National Parks provide.

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What to Expect When the VA MISSION Act Takes Effect

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Last June, President Trump signed landmark legislation, known as the VA MISSION Act of 2018, that makes dramatic improvements to how Veterans receive community care—health care provided outside of VA. VA’s goal is to give Veterans greater choice over their health care, allowing VA to deliver world-class, seamless customer service either through a VA facility or community provider.

While the law affects many other VA programs, the changes to community care are among the most complex and far-reaching in recent history. After the legislation was enacted, VA immediately began taking the steps needed to implement the vast changes required.

Understanding the enormous scale of VA health care operations and VA’s responsibility for America’s Veterans, VA has been working hard on many large, interrelated tasks to implement the new Veteran community care program by June 2019. These tasks include the following:

- Design and launch a new internal operating structure for community care, including the new urgent care/walk-in care benefit
- Propose access standards as one of the six eligibility criteria for community care
- VA’s proposed rules for the new Veterans community care program, including access standards, are currently open for public comment until March 25, 2019
- Award contracts to Third Party Administrators (TPAs) to manage regions of VA’s new Community Care Network (CCN)
- Plan to implement Veterans Care Agreements to allow VA to purchase hospital care, medical services, or extended care services in certain situations
- Define competency standards for certain conditions applicable to community providers to make sure Veterans are getting high-quality care when they receive care outside of VA
- Set up new requirements for prompt payments to community providers
- Draft regulations to implement the law

So what can Veterans expect when the new program starts this summer? Given the magnitude of the changes, VA is working hard to make sure the rollout goes smoothly. If you are a Veteran enrolled in VA health care, or a Veteran who can receive care without needing to enroll, you can expect:

- To continue to have access to community care under current programs and then transition to the new program when regulations are final and published
- To follow an improved process to receive community care under the new program, with better access to community providers and improvements to customer service, such as more streamlined eligibility requirements
- A new benefit that provides eligible Veterans with access to urgent, non-emergency care for non-life-threatening conditions in VA’s network of community providers
- Improved care coordination as VA transitions to a single information technology system that better links together VA and community providers
- Your provider to receive timely payments for bills as VA transitions to better claims processing systems

VA will be providing regular updates on community care as part of this series of articles. Community care will continue to supplement VA health care as part of VA’s broad commitment to modernize and strengthen the VA health care system, expand access, and ensure timely delivery of care to America’s Veterans. VA health care regularly outperforms the private sector, and VA staff are experienced and devoted to meeting Veterans’ specific needs. VA believes Veterans will continue to choose VA when they need timely, high-quality care.

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STATE LEGION GOLF TOURNAMENT

4 PERSON SCRAMBLE

Saturday & Sunday

September 21st & 22nd, 2019

Central Valley Golf Course, Hartford, SD

$10,000 HOLE-IN-ONE

- Sponsored by Riverview Insurance & Investments Agency

Registration Deadline: August 1st, 2019
Cost: $440 per team paid before Aug. 1st
$480 per team after Aug. 1st
Pre-Register with Fred Lee: 605-413-9451

Registration day of tournament:
9:30 AM - 10:45 AM
Start times: Saturday 12:00 PM & Sunday 9:00 AM

Sponsored by Humboldt Legion Post 62 & Hartford Legion Post 118
**Annual Report of the National Executive Committeeman**

Mark Weinmann

As the National Executive Committeeman for the Dept of South Dakota, I wish to thank all the Legionnaires across South Dakota for affording me this honor to serve you. Many resolutions come before the National Executive Committee each year, but I believe none more important then Resolution #1 that came before the Fall Meeting in 2018. This Resolution came from the Internal Affairs Committee known as "The Legion Act" extending the membership period of the American Legion to allow service members who did not serve during official periods of war to sign up for membership in the American Legion. Senate bill S504 and House Bill HR1641 are the official bills. When you visit our Senators and Congressman, please ask for them for their support of this bill.

National Commander Brett Reistad visited South Dakota last fall for 6 days. Special time was spent with our Native American Veterans on the reservations. The Native American veterans did a great job of welcoming the National Commander Bret Reistad to their Posts and presented him with many gifts, including many Star Quilts. Thanks to all the posts that welcomed him to their communities. He was very impressed with the hospitality.

I believe this to be one of the most successful visits of a National Commander to our Department.

The dream of an East River Veterans Cemetery is becoming reality. The South Dakota American Legion led all VSO's with a donation of $50,000 toward the maintenance and upkeep of this facility. This is a great accomplishment.

I congratulate National Commander Brenden on a very successful year, our 100th year, and the staff of Adjutant Travise, Assistant Adjutant Courtney, Judy and Mary Jo for all they do for the Posts and Legionnaires across South Dakota. Also to Jerry Hanson for filling in for me on occasion when I was not available.

I salute the South Dakota American Legion Foundation for its bold move in setting a goal of $1,000,000 in 5 years to assure the South Dakota American Legion will have funds to continue our programs for the next 100 years. We now begin our Second Century of "Helping Children and Veterans".

Respectfully Submitted,

James J Huls

National Executive Committeeman

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**Annual Report of the Internal Affairs Chairman**

Mark Weinmann

Mr. Commander,

I would like to thank Commander Brenden for appointing me to serve as the Chairman for the Internal Affairs Commission for 2019. The Internal Affairs Commission met on 27 April 2019 at Post 17 Watertown SD. Present at this meeting were you Commander Brenden, Department Adjutant Travise Filsrand, Chairman Mark Weinmann, PDC Byron Callies, PDC Tim Jurgens (by Conference Call), Annette Dunham of Iroquois, and Judge Advocate Gary Schumacher of DesMet. The Constitution of the American Legion, Department of South Dakota, provides in Article XV, Section 1, that “Any amendment to this constitution may be proposed by any Post, or by the Department Standing Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. Any amendment proposed by a Post shall be submitted in writing to Department Headquarters at least six weeks prior to the annual Department Convention.”

“The Department Adjutant shall present it immediately to the Department Commission on Internal Affairs. At least 30 days prior to said convention, the Department Commission on Internal Affairs shall transmit to all Posts, through Department Headquarters, a full copy of all amendments submitted by Posts, together with the favorable or unfavorable recommendation of the committee thereon, with a brief statement of reasons for such recommendation, and at the time the committee shall in like manner, distribute to all Posts, full copy of any proposed amendment originating with the committee itself.”

Any resolution pertaining to changes of the constitution and bylaws of the Department of South Dakota American Legion must be submitted to State Headquarters no later than April 26th, 2019, for consideration by the Internal Affairs Commission. The only way the American Legion is able to change and grow is with resolutions submitted by the local Posts within the Department. This year two resolutions were submitted that would change the Constitution and By-laws of the SD American Legion.

Resolution 2019-1 submitted by Iroquois Post 280. The Resolved clause of this resolution reads: The members of the Finance Commission may only hold the one position in the South Dakota American Legion at the Department level to avoid an appearance of a conflict of interest. After discussion a motion was made for a DO NOT PASS recommendation. The motion carried with a 3 to 1 vote.

Resolution 2019-2 Submitted by Watertown Post 17. The Resolved clause of resolution 2019-2 reads: Election of District Commander… Such newly elected District Commanders will take office and assume his/her duties at the same time and place that the newly elected Department Commander is installed. After discussion, a motion was made for a DO PASS recommendation. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Annual reports are welcome from the Sons of the American Legion and The Legion Riders. SAL Detachment Kerry Jorgenson was present for his report. Commander Jorgenson informed us that there are three new SAL Squadrons in South Dakota this year, however, there are several Squadrons still having membership issues. The Sons of the American Legion are a vital part of the American Legion Family and we are very fortunate to have the Sons a big part of our organization.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Weinmann

Internal Affairs Commission Chairman
Gene Oprock
Department Membership Chairman

As of this writing we are at 18,110 members, 729 members short of our National Goal of 18,839 and 1,161 short of our State Goal of 20,000. With over 70,000 registered veterans in the State there are less than 30% that are members of the South Dakota American Legion. I feel this is an unacceptable number and continuing this downhill trend will seriously affect the SDAL programs that we provide to our veterans, families and communities in South Dakota.

With the activation of the SDAL Membership team, the many conference calls and information provided to the Membership team, our goal, in my opinion, should have been met. I feel that a lot of the information provided in most cases didn’t trickle down to the post level. I think that created a lot of missed opportunities at the post level for increasing membership. I also feel a genuine lack of concern exists to a certain degree at all levels on the importance of increasing membership as compared to maintaining membership numbers.

We need to continue be a part of these units and be ready to assist them when needed. The return will be increased awareness of the SDAL in the community which will lead to increased membership. I feel we also need to become more involved with the local school systems as good community members. Most have gone to school functions whether it be a grade school concert or a high school basketball game. What a great place to showcase our programs and ask for memberships. Parents (veterans) will support the organizations that support their schools.

Diversity. The SDAL must become a diverse organization. The days are long gone of an organization made solely of white American men and women. We need to continue our program of actively pursuing Native American Warriors and female Veterans. Our numbers have not only increased in these areas, but they also have taken an active part in our programs.

I want to thank you Commander for the opportunity to work with all the great Legion Members of this great state. Thanks to the Headquarters Staff for their hard work and understanding when I needed something yesterday, that I forgot, and they got it to me immediately. To Vice Commanders Ed and Ed, the District Commanders, Vice Commanders, County Commanders and Posts who have all worked hard to get our numbers up. To the Membership team for your input, ideas and Sunday afternoons listening to me on a conference call.

Lastly, Commander Brenden, thank you, for your guidance, friendship and most of all your total dedication to this fantastic organization.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gene Oprock
Membership Chairman

In State Headquarters, May 22, 2019
State Vice / District Commanders Membership Standings

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<th>State Vice Commander</th>
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<td>Dist. 3-8 Ed Stringer</td>
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<p>| Membership Report by Post, May 22, 2019 |
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