Department Mid-Winter Conference

The annual Mid-Winter Conference was held January 11-12, 2020 at the Wyndham Riverfront hotel in North Little Rock. District representatives along with Committee Chairs offered reports and conducted business as required by our Department Constitution.

Business taken by the Department Executive Committee included addressing existing Resolutions, reviewing the mid-year expenditures and accepting recommendation to close three inactive Posts within the Department.

Senator Jerome Hunt was selected both Boys State Governor and Boys Nation Senator during the 2019 Boys State encampment. He attend Lakeside High School, Lake Village, Arkansas and was sponsored by Post 7. Jerome stated that Boys State “pushed him outside of his comfort zone” He was excited to meet several U.S. Representatives and Senators along with Vice President Pence. He said he is “eternally grateful and ready to see what this next (Boys State) session will bring.”

Senator Jerome Hunt – Boys State Governor and Boys Nation Senator

Gavin Michou lives in Mabelvale, Arkansas and attends Sheridan High School. His sponsorship was provided by Sheridan Post 30. In his comments he stated that “your voice, your power can go a long way to make a difference..., we’re here to make our voices heard.” Lloyd Jackson, Arkansas Boys State Director commented that “it is always a pleasure to work with these outstanding young men and these two are no exception.”

Senator Gavin Michou – Boys Nation

Without heroes we are all plain people and don't know how far we can go.

Bernard Malamud - American Novelist

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11— Report From ALR Director
Message from the Commander

It is almost time for our 2020 Department Convention. I am totally amazed at how the time has flown. The best part of the year is having an opportunity to visit with you at your posts. You have all been so gracious in welcoming me into your home posts. You have all thanked me for taking the time to travel to your towns, yet it is I who owes you thanks for allowing me to visit. I was blessed to visit with and see so many loyal and faithful legionnaires working so hard in communities all around our state. You are the embodiment of all that The American Legion stands for. You are all still serving your fellow veterans, your communities and your nation. I am so proud of each one of you. I am so honored to have been elected to serve as your department commander for the 2019-2020 year. One of the first things that I learned as your commander is that The American Legion doesn’t exist because of me – it is you, the membership who keeps this organization going. Members who show up for post meetings, visit nursing homes and VA hospitals, work membership drives, teach flag etiquette to school children, sponsor youth programs such as American Legion Boys State and American Legion Baseball, and care for others in need – this is The American Legion – you are The American Legion. I can’t call you each out by name but I wish I could look each of you squarely in the eye, shake your hand and say “Thank you”. Thank you for all you have done and all you will do.

Shortly, a new commander will be elected to serve for the 2020-2021 year. I know that they will be just as impressed by you as I am. I also know that you will be as kind and welcoming to him or her as you have been to me. I finish my year with the knowledge that our Legion still has a bright future and that the best is yet to come. Together, we are forming the foundation for the second 100 years and I know that foundation is firm. If there is one thing I could do to make things better, it would be to encourage more of you to seek an office at the post, district, and department levels. I would encourage you get more involved and share your ideas on how we might be able to do things better. I would also promote our training program. We all received training in the military so that we all knew what needed to be done and, most importantly, the right way to do it. In the Navy, we trained the way we were going to fight so that we fought the way we trained. Training gives us all a common knowledge of how and why things are a certain way. Embrace the training program and help it grow to the point where every legionnaire in the state will have an opportunity to participate. I truly believe that our future will be much brighter when it is faced by well trained legionnaires like you. Thank you, the trainers and others involved, for the role you have in training.

Doyle Batey, Commander
Department of Arkansas

The Nicky D. Bacon Outstanding Volunteer Award

Presented to Tamera Bacon, widow of Medal of Honor winner Nickey D. Bacon, and Bob Hickingbotham.

Bob is the first recipient of this award for his 62 years of service in American Legion Baseball. This award is presented to American Legion Baseball Volunteers and Coaches in recognition of their commitment to the American Legion Baseball program.
Kevin Caldwell Candidate for Department Commander

I am Kevin Caldwell, I would like to be your next Department of Arkansas Commander.

Roughly ten years ago I stood before the Department Convention attendees and stated; “I am the youngest legionnaire in this room, but I know I’m not the youngest legionnaire in this Department. If we don’t start doing something to get the younger legionnaires to participate we will cease to exist.” Here we are a decade down the road, and there have been a few positive changes, however more can be done to engage the younger legionnaires and Veterans.

During the past ten years I have been, Post 14 Adjutant (6 years); Poinsett County Commander; District 5 Sgt-at-Arms; District 5 Commander (2 years); and the Northeast Vice Commander. I have attended and participated in every Mid-Winter Conference and Department Convention for the past ten years, and have served on the Convention Committee, for the past four years.

For the past eleven years, I have coordinated the Boys State and Girls State programs for Harrisburg High School and assisted with those programs for the Marked Tree and Trumann High School as well. Additionally, for the past 6 years I have directed the Harrisburg area and Poinsett County Veterans Day parade and events, with the assistance of the local mayor. Along with baseball coaches from two schools we have fielded an American Legion Baseball team and provided uniforms for the players.

I believe in the Four Pillars of the American Legion, and I believe that the posts and its members should be pro active in local communities.

During my time at the different commander positions, I have learned about the other posts, and the ways they conduct business and local events. This has helped me grow and expand my knowledge of the Legion, along with the experience of ‘that what works here, may not work there’.

I feel that if we don’t start working to “bridge the gap” between the senior Department Leaders and our younger Legionnaires, our cause and knowledge may be lost.

I ask for your vote and support. Let us work together for the security of the next 100 years of the American Legion.

THANK YOU, KEVIN CALDWELL

The Arkansas Legionnaire
ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Do you have an article or news announcement to share with the rest of the Department of Arkansas? If so, please follow these guidelines for submissions:

- Submit your text in Microsoft Word format (.doc, .docx) or as a text file (.txt or .rtf).
- Save your article with a proper file name so we can easily recognize it.
- Be clear who the author is, whether it’s you or if you are just forwarding it to us.
- Please attach any photos and/or artwork for articles separately (NOT embedded in your text file) as high resolution (300 dpi, or better) JPGs. Please name these files accordingly so we can track them along with your article. Let us know in your e-mail of any corresponding captions, name of the photographer, etc.
- Reprints of articles from newspapers or other publications must have a letter of permission from the original publication’s authority prior to being printed in The Arkansas Legionnaire.
- Please spell check everything! Especially people’s names, web addresses, etc. We do our best to catch typos, but sometimes they still slip by. You can help us greatly here by simply running your spell check function in your word processing software.
- E-mail to arkansaslegionnaire@earthlink.net by the posted cutoff date for it to appear in the following issue. This way we have plenty of time to work with in case we need to clarify anything with you.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and hope you continue to help us grow The Arkansas Legionnaire! Upcoming cutoff date for the May Convention edition is May 4th. Late submissions may not be included in the publication.

Department of Arkansas Child Welfare

There have been numerous questions about The American Legion Child Welfare program and how the money for the Child Welfare is spent. Here is the purpose of the American Legion Child Welfare Program: The aim is to assist the minor age children of Honorably Discharged Arkansas Veterans who are recently deceased or medically incapacitated, with little or no income. If eligible, we can assist them with rent or house payment and utilities, up to 3 months maximum in a one-year period. Additional assistance is per the Adjutants discretion. This assistance is available to any Arkansas Veteran in the State that applies for assistance and qualifies.

Robert Renner, Department Adjutant
News Stories from Around the Department

Are you new to the American Legion? Did you join online or through a mail-out solicitation? Have you not yet been contacted by a Post inviting you to a meeting? If you would like to be involved with an active Post in your area but don’t have contact information or meeting times, please call Headquarters at (501) 375-1104 to be put in touch with your local Post.

Arkansas Boys State

Arkansas American Legion Boys State will hold their 2020 encampment May 24th through May 29th at the University of Central Arkansas. Legion Night will be held on Monday, May 25th beginning at 7:00 P.M. Legionnaires and their guests are also invited to attend the free meal starting at 5:00 P.M.

On Friday, May 29th, beginning at 1:45 P.M., The American Legion Boys State program will include Hall of Fame inductions and a memorial service for Boys State alumni who lost their lives while protecting our country. Family members and members of the sponsoring American Legion Posts, Legionnaires, friends of the Hall of Fame inductees, guests and the public are invited. The program should end by 4:00 P.M. that evening.

Do you have a story to tell? Has your Post or District completed a project or made an impact in your community? Do you want to advertise an upcoming event to fellow Legionnaires?

Contact Editor of the Arkansas Legionnaire at: arkansaslegionnaire@earthlink.net and ask that your story be posted. See guidelines on page 3
Arkansas Department Legion College

The Department of Arkansas held its inaugural Department Legion College hosted at Post 58, Texarkana February 29th – March 1. 17 Legionnaires from Arkansas and two additional from Texas attended this two-day event gaining in-depth knowledge on many Legion topics including: legislative priorities, leadership, post programs, how to conduct a meeting, and how to write a resolution. Michael Westergren, Department Training Chairman said that “this training was made possible only through the determination of our Commander and the desire of our Department Executive Committee to see continued growth and development of all Arkansas Legionnaires.”

Post 58 provided the venue and two Department of Texas trainers were sponsored by Arkansas to provide the training. These trainers brought their experience and the necessary materials to help facilitate Arkansas in setting up our own Department Legion College. The 17 Arkansas students in attendance are now tasked to help in the development of our next class which is expected to be held early in 2021. Westergren said that “this level of training is now the highpoint within our Department and is meant to develop the future leaders of our organization.” Chairman Westergren stated that many comments from 2020 graduates indicates that this training opened their eyes to Legion priorities. Tom Potter of Post 123 thought that the “college was an insightful look into the complete structure of the “Four Pillars” including the setup of post meetings and a peek into Post Finances” while Jim Wilbanks of Post 29 stated that “training is the driving force of change. We will never make change without the training to get us there.”

Many saw this training as a value-added program. Kenneth Farrell of Post 28 considered it “essential to have an American Legion College in order to adequately train members in every aspect of the programs the Legion offers.” And Shawn Suiters of Post 336 suggested that “this training needs to be pushed down as far as we can.” Becky Dillon of Post 64 thought this “a great program to teach the new and upcoming members. This program will help us keep the American Legion’s traditions alive.”

All students considered this level of training long needed within our Department. Billie Suiters, Department American Legion Riders Director, stated the class provided “very useful information to help me become a more effective Legionnaire.” William Sheets of Post 71 said “we can do more to promote recruitment and retention at the Post level by Standardized Quality training to the Department than all the membership reports will ever do.” Congratulations to all the graduates of the 2020 Department of Arkansas American Legion College.
American Legion Hot Springs Village Post 123 and VA Volunteer Service

5K or 1 mile run, walk, roll  Saturday April 18, 2020 8 AM  Flat Course
Proceeds benefit hospitalized veterans and veterans in crisis
Onsite registration 7am- 7:45am  VA Campus  2200 Ft Roots Dr.  No. Little Rock, AR
Entry Donation: $20 by April 11th After April 11th and race day $25
First, Second & Third age group medals for 5K competitive run
 Drawings for door prizes for all registered for walk, run & roll
Proceeds benefit hospitalized veterans and veterans in crisis
Make checks payable to Veterans Walk, Run Roll and mail to:
Mary Erdman  28 Innovacion Ln. Hot Springs Village, AR 71909
More information contact: Mary Erdman (501)922-6287 or VA Volunteer Svc. (502)257-3288

T shirts for first 50 registrants  Check: S   M   L   XL   2X
Name___________________________ Age__________
Address_________________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip___________________________________________________________
Phone__________________email_____________________________________________

Waiver (must be signed): In consideration of accepting this entry, I, the below signed, intending to be legally bound, for myself, my heirs, my executors, and administrators, waive and release any and all claims for damages I may have against the race and sponsors and their representatives, successors, and assigns, for any and all injuries suffered by me in said event. I attest that I will participate in this event as a footrace, and that I am physically fit and sufficiently trained for the completion of this event. Furthermore, I hereby grant full permission to use my name and likeness, as well as any photographs and any record of this event for any legitimate purpose, including advertising and promotion.

Signature:_____________________________ Date_____________________

Parent or guardian if under 18_____________________________________________
The American Legion to Congress: Investigate Allegations of VA Wrongdoing

(INDIANAPOLIS -- American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford released the following statement regarding allegations that senior leadership at the Department of Veterans Affairs attempted to retaliate against a staff member for reporting a sexual assault.

“Generally, The American Legion does not comment on VA’s internal personnel matters. We invest full faith and credit in the administration, the Inspector General, and department leadership to faithfully execute their duties, serve in a manner that honors their sacred positions, and work to protect the communities they serve. We are not privileged participants in any formal investigations and learn of publicly available reports from the same sources the general public does, and we rely on these reports to inform our membership, our voice, and positions.

In cases where evidence is uncovered of malfeasance or wrongdoing, The American Legion expects that the perpetrator or perpetrators will be held accountable and either disciplined, dismissed or prosecuted accordingly. The allegations that have been reported over the past week at the Department of Veterans Affairs are extremely concerning and bring into question the ethical suitability of the leadership at VA’s highest levels.

The American Legion calls on the administration and Congress to thoroughly investigate the recent allegations of improper employee behavior and report their findings to the American people with complete transparency. We expect that any persons found to have acted outside of their authority and the scope of their duties will be held accountable and dealt with in an appropriate manner. This was one of the core tenets of Veterans Affairs accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 that The American Legion supported, and still supports today.”

The American Legion: Bayview Cross Victory result of Legion Supreme Court Decision

(INDIANAPOLIS, February 20, 2020) -- Citing The American Legion’s “historic victory” during an important Supreme Court ruling last year, the head of the nation’s largest veterans organization welcomed another court decision yesterday as a sign that veterans memorials will now have permanent legal protection.

“Last year, The American Legion easily prevailed by a 7-2 ruling protecting a veterans memorial in Bladensburg, Md.,” said American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford. “We said at the time that the ruling in The American Legion v. American Humanist Association was not simply about one cross. It was about protecting the religious freedom of those wishing to honor and memorialize veterans. Thankfully, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals used our earlier victory to reverse a previous decision that called for the removal of a World War II-era cross at a park in Pensacola. The Bayview cross in Florida will remain in place. The American Legion is grateful to our friends and allies in the veterans and legal community who have helped us in this long struggle to protect these precious memorials.”

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FROM THE DESK OF PRESIDENT NANCY

It’s hard to believe that we are heading into the eighth month of the American Legion Auxiliary’s one hundred year anniversary. The past seven months I have enjoyed visiting several district meetings, hearing what you are doing, learning new ideas, and most of all meeting members that I haven’t met before. I hope to visit several more districts before my year is up. It is also hard to believe that this is the year 2020.

As a little girl, I never thought I would live this long and certainly not this far into the 21st century. I thought my grandparents were ancient and they were only in their forties and fifties. I’ve seen so many changes in the world and in society.

Many changes have also taken place in the American Legion Auxiliary organization in the last one hundred years and there will be many more to come in the next one hundred years. Several of us have been to meetings at National Headquarters in the past few months and have seen the new building, heard of organizational changes at National, new opportunities and changes in some of the programs we administer. With this in mind, I have planned the April 4th Spring Conference as a day of training and informational session. Other things the Department office is working on are:

1. Girls State – information has been sent to Units and school districts. We have started getting information and checks for attendees.
2. National President Nicole’s visit on April 13, 14 and 15. Her schedule has changed and she will be flying out of Little Rock the morning of the 16th. Details will be in a mailing to the Units.
3. We also have an early deadline to get the Program for the State Convention to the publisher. If you plan to run for an elected office (President, Area Vice President, Chaplain, Historian, or Sergeant-At-Arms) please let the office know as soon as possible so that we can include your bio in the Program. At this time, we have one announced candidate for president and one for Northeast vice president.

Thank you for all you do for our veterans and their families.

Nancy

SAVE THE DATE

Spring Conference will be April 4, 2020 at the Veteran’s Home Community room. The time and agenda will be in the March mailout. Please remember to come in from the Fort Roots area as the back gate (from Camp Robinson) is locked on the weekend.

SUPPORT PRESIDENT NANCY’S PROJECT

BAKELESS BAKE SALE

You don’t have to bake anything and you don’t have to sell anything. All you have to do is figure out how much it would cost you and the time it would take you to shop for ingredients, prepare, and bake. Then total up the time, cost involved and make a donation to the President’s Project. All money donated will go to the Department to be used as needed.

Include with your donation, an index card with the name of the recipe you would have donated and the amount of your donation. These cards will be collected and at the State Meeting in June 2020, one card will be drawn, and the winner will receive a nice prize. In addition, President Nancy will match the donation on the card, up to $50.00.

Order your poppies from Department Headquarters today!
Ada Heath is a native Arkansan... born in Russellville, Arkansas, and grew up in Ola (Yell County). She met her husband, John Heath, while both were students at Arkansas Tech. Married in 1970 they resided in Lawton, Oklahoma, where the then 2nd Lieutenant Heath was stationed at Fort Sill. Ada was active with the “spouses” group there.

During her husbands’ time with the Arkansas Army National Guard (following his active duty) Ada was active with the Arkansas National Guard Auxiliary Association (ANGAA) whose meetings were held at Camp Robinson. She served as chairperson for the ANGAA cookbook that was published in the early 1990’s.

She has been a member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 112 in McCrory since 2012. Her eligibility for membership is through her husband, retired Arkansas National Guard Lt. Colonel John Heath. Since becoming a member of Unit 112 Ada has served as President. She has served as Vice President and Secretary of District 6 American Legion Auxiliary. She is currently the Department Finance Committee chairperson and has served as chair of the newly formed Audit Committee. Ada also served as Northeast Divisional Vice President for two years. Although not a direct descendant, her Uncle Jewel Potts served in WWII in Germany and told the family many stories about his time there including seeing General Patton.

Ada is a graduate of Arkansas State University in Jonesboro where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Education with a focus in Business Education. While she had planned to teach in high school an opportunity to work for Arkansas Department of Human Services was offered and she spent 28 years there as a Case Worker in Woodruff County DHS, Field Representative for County Operations Policy and spent the last half of her tenure traveling Arkansas as a “Computer Tech/Trainer”. She was a Board Member of Arkansas Human Services Employees Association for several years and currently serves as the “Retiree Rep” to that Board.

Ada’s life outside of Auxiliary includes being retired from Arkansas Department of Human Services where her official title was Systems Analyst II (Computer Technical Support for 13 Counties), being recently retired from serving as Secretary/Treasurer of McCrory United Methodist Church for 15 years, Chairperson of The KEN Theatre League Council (small town community theater), grandmother to four grandchildren (two in McCrory and two in Dallas), and the “canner, freezer and pickler” of the vegetables that her husband grows each year in their large garden.

The Officers and members of District 6 and Unit 112 proudly announce Denise “Dee” Smith as a 2020-2021 candidate for Northeast Divisional Vice President. Smith is eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) through her father, Daniel P. Marchese, WWII Army Signal Corps veteran and her husband, Tony K. Smith, Army Infantry and Army National Guard, Iraqi Freedom veteran.

Denise has been a member of the ALA, Department of Arkansas, since 2009 and is currently the vice-president of Unit 112, Prince-Rhodes, McCrory. She is a current member of the Department Executive Committee (DEC), District 6 President, National Security Chairwoman and appointed member of the Department Revitalization Committee. In the past, Denise has served as the Department Membership Chairwoman and is a past unit president.

As a single mother, Denise graduated summa cum laude from the University of Massachusetts earning a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree with a concentration in marketing and minors in organizational behavior and writing. She is a recipient of the prestigious American Marketing Association’s Hutchinson Award presented to her at Harvard University, School of Business. Denise sat for the LSAT exam and was accepted to law school; however, in order to support her family, she decided to forgo the legal profession in favor of beginning her career in the private sector.

She worked as a writer-for-hire for Simon and Schuster, NY, NY. During that time, Denise also became a project management facilitator and marketing consultant for two construction companies in New England. As these projects wound down, she became employed as a general manager for an AT&T affiliate, spending over a decade overseeing their corporate/commercial security division. Denise then shifted her interests from the private sector to the non-profit arena. She became a disaster relief worker for the American Red Cross (ARC) where she worked to help individuals and communities recover from the devastations of both natural and man-made disasters. Though cross-trained in many of the ARC functions, Denise worked primarily in the Staffing Function as a Staff Relations (human resource) manager. Among her many deployments is a six-month posting to the Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Operation, New Orleans, LA, where she met and later married her husband of nearly 14 years. Outside of work, Denise enjoys many hobbies including writing short stories and poetry, gardening, cooking, reading and jewelry making. She is a 9-year breast cancer survivor who understands that every day is a gift best shared with family and friends. Denise is the mother of 3 adult daughters and grandmother of one adult granddaughter and twin baby granddaughters. All are members of the ALA, Department of Arkansas. “This is a worthy cause that my family and I can engage in together...no matter how far apart we are on the map. We can help each other and our veterans and our communities. We can choose kindness; we can share kindness. We can choose to honor those who fought for our rights as human beings...as Americans.” We hope you will join with us in supporting Denise “Dee” Smith for Northeast Divisional Vice President for 2020-2021.
**American Legion Auxiliary News**

**SAVE THE DATES!**

Spring Conference (North Little Rock Veterans Home Community Center)  
April 4, 2020

National President’s Visit  
April 13 - 15, 2020

Girls State at Harding University (Searcy)  
May 24 - 29, 2020

Department Convention (Wyndham Hotel in North Little Rock)  
June 26 & 27, 2020

National Convention (Louisville Kentucky)  
August 29-September 2, 2020

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**Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**  
Iris Murray, Chairman

Coffee and cookies are served at the Little Rock VA the second and third Saturday of each month. We would love to have you come and help us serve our veterans! You need to be a certified volunteer and the process is easy. The Volunteer Service Office at the North Little Rock VA conducts training sessions on Wednesdays and the class is approximately one hour. Call the Volunteer Service Office at 501-257-3288 to schedule your training. There are many volunteer opportunities at both VAs in Central Arkansas, there is one for you! There are many opportunities for volunteering at the Fayetteville VA. Please call the Voluntary Service Office at 479-444-5060 to schedule your training to become a certified volunteer. The veterans always need our help.

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**COOKBOOKS FOR SALE**

The American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Arkansas, is selling cookbooks. The cookbooks are now on order from the publishing company and we should be receiving them in a few weeks.

The cookbook has the United States flag on a hardback cover. There are approximately 288 recipes that have been provided by our auxiliary unit members (Senior and Junior) Preorders are now being accepted. The cookbook is $15 each with an additional charge for postage if you want them mailed to you.

Proceeds from the sale of the cookbooks goes to the Department of Arkansas to support the various veterans programs of the auxiliary.

We need everyone’s help in order to make this project a successful one for our Department. Units/Member - please help us by ordering cookbooks. Contact the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Arkansas, 1415 West 7th Street, Little Rock, AR  72201, phone number 501-374-5836 to place your pre-order.

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**QUIT Raffle**

Tickets are available for the beautiful quilt made by the late Ruth Legan, an avid quilter maker. Tickets are $2.00 each or 6 for $10.00. Contact Charley McAfee at the Department if you want to purchase tickets or get some to sell. Proceeds will go to the Scholarship Fund.

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**Girls State**

Arkansas Girls State will be held May 24-29, 2020 at Harding University in Searcy. All members are invited to the opening session on Sunday, May 24 at 3:00 pm and the Inauguration Ceremony on Wednesday, May 27 at 7:00 pm. Both of these ceremonies will be held in Benson Auditorium on the Harding University Campus.

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**Constitution & Bylaws - Carol Westergren, Chairman**

It’s a busy year for Constitution & Bylaws! Due to changes adopted at our National Convention regarding membership and the passage of the Legion Act, all Unit Constitution & Bylaws must be updated this year. An updated sample Constitution & Bylaws will be posted on our website soon. Please contact me for any assistance you need. My email is cwestergren@earthlink.net. Thank you.

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**Children and Youth - Charlotte Purdy, Chairman**

Greetings all! 2020 has started off well and we are still celebrating 100 years! The month of April is Children and Youth Month and it is important that each of our Units reach out to their communities and show them that we support America’s youth! There are many ways to be active during the month of April, as well as all year! During the month of April, I am encouraging you to focus on the three primary areas of concern when it comes to our youth. Child health, Child safety and Family support.

Speak with your local health clinics or school nurses and see what you can do to ensure that the youth in your communities are up to date on their immunizations. It’s important for their health if they can stay up to date. Some may not be able to do so financially but if we partner up with the local clinics and nurses, we can ensure they are immunized against the many diseases and sicknesses.

You can also talk to your local schools to see if there is anything you can do in the cafeterias. Maybe donate some fruits or grains for snack time, or work with your local farmers market to ensure that the students will have the freshest of fruits and vegetables. Again, the children’s health is of utmost importance as they are our future! You could even check with your local extension office to see if you can get involved in their programs!

Child safety is a major concern for parents, grandparents, friends, families, and loved ones, so we need to get out there and promote ways to keep children safe! Get a group together to speak in front of students at your local elementary school or host a day on the weekend and invite the public to come and listen to your presentation. Speak on issues such as suicide prevention, drug trafficking, and child and sexual abuse. Although we don’t want to think of these things, they are real, and they are in our communities. We need to be in our communities promoting ways to keep our children safe and away from danger!

Your units could also host a day care day. Give parents a break and let them drop their children off for half a day while they go out and enjoy a date day, shop, or just rest. During the day, you could then give the children activities to do that relate to the American Legion Auxiliary.

There are many ways to promote April as Children and Youth Month and I look forward to seeing the ways each of our Units choose to recognize it! Be sure to post pictures of your events, as well as flyers for the events, on Facebook and use your hash tags!

Thank you for all that you do promoting Children and Youth Month during the month of April, as well as all year!

Sincerely,

Charlotte Purdy
Children & Youth Chairman
(870) 509-1575 | charlotte964@centurylink.net

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**National Security—Denise Smith, Chairman**

Let’s borrow a page from the American Legion and do “Buddy Checks” on the veterans in our communities and Posts. It is so important that we reach out to our veterans to see how they are doing not just during special occasions but 52 weeks a year.

Suicide is a national public health issue and veterans are among higher risk groups. We need to reach out to the veterans in our communities and let them know they are not alone and there is help. Encourage veterans to seek help at their local VA facility or other service facilities.

There is also confidential help for veterans and their families available at: 1-800-273-8255 and press 1; chat online at http://www.veteranscrisisline.net; or text to 838255.
It is truly an honor to serve as your Department Director this year. I would like to thank all of the Arkansas Legion Riders that have reached out and helped me get settled and assisting in getting our program organized so far this year. We are working on promoting and creating new chapters across the state. Several posts have already reached out to the Department for information on starting a chapter in their post. I am excited to announce that at Mid-Winter conference I was able to present a Charter to Post 91 in Beebe. With this addition, I am pleased to say we currently have 15 Charters, and we have a few more in the works. With the Legion Riders being the ONLY program within the American Legion that truly promotes the Legion Family; this is a great way to incorporate Legionnaires, Auxiliary, and SAL Members, as well as bring new members to your post. If your post is looking to add a Riders Chapter, please contact myself or our Department Adjutant Bob Renner for details. If your Chapter has not received any Charter document, please email me at arlegionriders@yahoo.com and we will have them for you at the State Convention.

As we move into the 1st Quarter of 2020, the Department Training Committee is requesting a Riders Training Program be created to ensure all posts are informed of protocol, motorcycle safety, and other areas to be focused on. If anyone is interested in helping us in creating this program, please reach out and let me know so we can schedule a meeting to get the ball rolling. We are also creating an SOP that will be presented to all Chapters at Convention. This is intended to help all of our current chapters as well as our newly formed chapters to ensure that we are all on the same page. I am asking all chapters to please submit all of your events, rides, and other accomplishments this year so that I may recognize all of you at this year's Convention. You can submit these to me via email at arlegionriders@yahoo.com no later than 31 May 2020.

Again, thank you for giving me this opportunity to be your Department ALR Director.

Billie J. Suiters
QUICK NEWS

- Arkansas Legionnaires will “Storm the Hill” March 8th through 11th meeting with our elected representatives in Washington D.C. to discuss issues important to Arkansas Veterans, military members, and their families.

- The 2020 Jr. Shooting Sports event planned for March 14th has been canceled. Please contact Americanism Chairman Ralph Sims if you have any questions.

- Application deadline for submitting the Garner and Coudret Scholarships is March 13th at Headquarters.

- Boys State Legion Night is Monday, May 25th beginning at 5:00 PM.

All American Scholarship Winner

Logan Catton was selected as the 2019 Diamond American Legion Baseball All-American Team Scholarship Winner. His team is sponsored by Bryant Post 298. Logan is a senior graduate from Bryant High School and was selected for the $500 Arkansas Legion award plus the $500 Scholarship from National and received an additional $2,500 scholarship from our 7-state regional division.

Logan Catton along with Arkansas Baseball Commissioner Jim Fink