



The 1889 Land Run

Department of Oklahoma

American Legion Newsletter

31st Edition, January 25, 2025

Fellow Legionaires,

On behalf of the Oklahoma Department, I extend my sincere gratitude to all my fellow Legionnaires for your unwavering dedication and service throughout this year. I look forward to the coming months as your Commander.

As we approach the holiday season, please remember to prioritize safety. If you choose to consume alcohol, do so responsibly. Let's uphold the values instilled in us through our military training.

I hope to see each one of you at our Midwinter Convention at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Norman OK on January 16th, 17th, and 18th. To ensure your attendance, please plan your holiday season accordingly.

As we gather with loved ones this Thanksgiving, let us express gratitude for the blessings in our lives. Let's also support one another as we navigate the upcoming holiday season and beyond.

I hope everyone has diligently completed their Buddy Checks. It's essential to look out for our fellow members, friends, and neighbors, especially those who have served alongside us.

Our primary goals for the Department remain steadfast: increasing our membership to strengthen our organization and enhancing our capabilities through rigorous training. I urge you to maintain your faith in your leadership, your officers, and one another.

Hayden Woods

Commander

Department of Oklahoma

talokcommander@gmail.com



Team Oklahoma, You're Invited! We are thrilled to invite you to the 106th Summer Convention at the Grand Casino and Hotel in Shawnee, Oklahoma!

When: July 10–13, 2025

Where: Grand Casino and Hotel, Shawnee, OK



**POST COMMANDERS:
ORDER BIG, SAVE BIG!**

YOUR POST IS ALREADY PURCHASING COFFEE

Why not switch to premium coffee at a competitive price and support your fellow veterans? Every subscription helps fund The American Legion's Be The One initiative to help end veteran suicide.

**HEAVILY DISCOUNTED
5LB BULK BAGS**

SCAN ME



JOIN OTHER POST COMMANDERS WHO'VE MADE THE SWITCH.

Use code LEGION for 15% off and free shipping!

Space Left for Submissions from:

American Legion Riders

American Legion Department Senior- Commander

Department Vice Commander – East

Department Vice Commander – West

National Executive (NEC) Committeeman



Greetings Legionnaires!

One of the most important presentations to come out of the previous National Convention in New Orleans was the Columbia Suicide Questionnaire shown in the attachment.

This is a handout you can print off and make copies of that tells you the questions to ask a fellow veteran or anyone who calls or talks personally to you about committing suicide.

You ask them the six questions on the handout. If they answer yes to the questions in red, you call 911 and get them to where they can get help.

This information can save lives and is part of the Legion's "Be the One" program.

Copies of this handout can be made and distributed to everyone in your post plus family members and acquaintances.

<https://www.columbiapsychiatry.org/news/simple-set-6-questions-screen-suicide>

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND

CHARLES S O'LEARY

National Executive Committeeman 2023-2025

Past Department Commander 2021-2022

American Legion Department of Oklahoma

Alternate National Executive (ANEC) Committeeman

Michael Taylor

Past Department Commander's Corner

Department Adjutant Rick Redden

Commissioner OK Veterans Commission

Midship Pipeline Donation

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. – (Dec. 19, 2024) Midship Pipeline announced today an \$80,000 donation to the American Legion Department of Oklahoma. Local American Legion posts in the eight counties where the pipeline operates will each receive \$10,000 to meet critical needs as the American Legion lives out its mission and advocates for every generation of veterans, service members and their families.

“The American Legion is the largest U.S. veteran’s organization, and the local posts are the heartbeat of what the Legion does,” said Commissioner Brett Martin, American Legion’s representative and chairman of the Oklahoma Veterans Commission. “The local posts across Oklahoma serve the unique needs in their communities and provide essential services and resources to our valued veterans, service members and families. A gift like this from Midship will go a long way in empowering and enabling these eight posts to deliver on the mission of the Legion as they support their communities and Oklahoma’s valued service members and veterans.”

The Midship Pipeline is a 200-mile natural gas pipeline that connects gas production from the South-Central Oklahoma Oil Province (SCOOP) and Sooner Trend, Anadarko Basin, Canadian and Kingfisher Counties (STACK) plays in the Anadarko Basin in Oklahoma to growing Gulf Coast and Southeast markets via deliveries to existing pipelines. The pipeline was placed in service in April 2020 and continues to operate safely and reliably.

Midship has now donated nearly \$900,000 to community organizations and programs across the eight counties it traverses, supporting first responders; agriculture education; science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) initiatives; rural hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic and community beautification and restoration projects.

“Midship is passionate about supporting the communities in the eight counties the pipeline operates and is honored to make this gift to the American Legion of Oklahoma as it provides vitally important services to Oklahoma veterans and service members who have sacrificed so much for our country,” said Matt Barr, representative for Midship Pipeline. “We recognize the importance of the critical work the Legion does in the communities it serves and hope this gift further empowers them to continue changing the lives of our veteran and service member heroes in Oklahoma.”

Midship worked with the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Department of Oklahoma to identify eight local Legion posts and help determine where the donations could best be utilized. The posts receiving the \$10,000 gift are Post 5 in Kingfisher, Post 34 in El Reno, Post 54 in Chickasha, Post 23 in Lindsay, Post 55 in Duncan, Post 39 in Durant, Post 164 in Tishomingo and Post 65 in Ardmore.

Rep. Dick Lowe expressed his gratitude in this season of giving.

“Midship’s many investments since its inception demonstrate its commitment to Oklahoma and communities along the pipeline. These timely and generous donations exemplify what a truly impactful community partner they are.”

“Midship has proven time and time again that they care about the communities where the pipeline operates,” said Sen. Jerry Alvard. “We appreciate their support of The American Legion Department of Oklahoma and this incredibly generous gift.”

CONTACT: Tristan Shutt- 405.596.7181 / Tristan@goodengroup.com



Sons of the American Legion News

Boys State Update - Registration is OPEN!!

Greetings Fellow Legionnaires!

I am excited to report to you all that as of today the registration portal for the 2025 Session of Oklahoma American Legion Boys State is officially open. We have spent a lot of time this offseason reworking the registration process to make it better for our Delegates and their families. The biggest change for you is that you **MUST** have your Delegate’s family complete the registration process. This is imperative for many reasons including having the appropriate communication system in place and so the families are the ones accepting all of the terms and conditions of attending Boys State. We know this is a change for some of you, but we think it will be well worth it for the ease of our families.

The 2025 version of the Post Packet is very light weight this year. In fact, we have emailed it out to most of you already, if we have an email address for your Post's Boys State Chairman. **If you still need your Post Packet**, please email our team at contact@okboysstate.com and someone will get your information to you in short order. When you receive your Packet, you will have all of the information about the program you would need, including cost, dates, Sponsorship Codes, and instructions on how to proceed. If you need help or ideas on recruiting, please let us know and we will be more than happy to do whatever we can to make your recruitment process successful. Additionally, if you have funds available for sponsorships, but don't have the ability to find delegates to use those funds, please let us know and we will try to match you up with a prospective delegate. We were very successful in that last year, but we have made some changes to make sure the shortfalls are corrected to make it even better for you!

We will be providing many more updates along the way this year, but please get started recruiting today! This is going to be one of the best sessions we have ever had, and we want to make sure to get our message to as many young men across our state as possible.

We can't thank you enough for the support you have shown the program, and we will continue to work hard to make sure you have a program you can be proud of.

For God and Country,

Sen. Corey D. Brooks, Ret.

Director,

Oklahoma American Legion Boys State

BE THE ONE

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This information can save lives and is part of the Legion's "Be the One" program.

Copies of this handout can be made and distributed to everyone in your post plus family members and acquaintances.

<https://cssrs.columbia.edu/the-columbia-scale-c-ssrs/cssrs-for-communities-and-healthcare/#filter=.healthcare.english>

AWARDS

The links below should give your Posts all the information they need to nominate deserving individuals. There are a few very important things that have to happen along the way. The nominations for the individual awards have to have an endorsement of some type from the nominee's Department Chief before the nomination can be considered. If the Fire Chief, Police Chief, City Manager or VA Department Director say no, it stops right there. Don't argue, don't alienate the Department Head. We don't have to like it, but we do have to respect their decision.

The Deadline for ALL Award Nominations is April 30th. May 1st the Awards Committee starts the selection process. May 1 Nominations cease.

If a post wants to be considered for a Pillars Award or the Post of the Year Awards a hard copy of the Post's, Consolidated Post Report (CPR), must be mailed to the Department Headquarters. The Department does not have the capability to download CPR that are filed electronically. I'm sorry but that is the way it has to be. If your Post wants to be considered for Pillars Awards and Post of the Year recognition, you have to mail a hard copy of your CPR to the Department before their suspense date.

LEO: https://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/ns_officerofyear.pdf

Firefighter: https://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/firefighter_award.pdf

Healthcare Provider:

https://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/health_care_provider_year.pdf

Physician: https://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/physician_year.pdf

Employer of Veterans:

<https://www.legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/documents/Awards%20Forms.pdf>

Legionnaire of the Year is a short narrative as to why someone who doesn't know them should vote for them.

I can be reached at any of the contact points in my signature block.

Paul Ray: Awards Committee Chair

plainoldpaul@yahoo.com

awards@mustangpost353.org

405-921-5819

Women's Veteran Counsel

Please join us at the Oklahoma City VA Health Care System 2025 Women's Health Fair on Friday, February 7, 2025, from 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM in the Gym at the Main OKC VA facility.

We will have lots of FREE FOOD and information for veterans including:

- LIVE Healthy Teaching Kitchen Demonstrations at
 - 11:00 AM and 12:00 PM
- LIVE Meditation Demonstrations at
 - 10:30 AM, 11:30 AM, 12:30 PM, and 1:30 PM
- LIVE CPR/AED Hands Only Training
- Blood Pressure Screening Information
- Breast Cancer Screening Information and Opportunities for Walk-in Mammograms
- Heart Healthy Diet Information
- Cardiac Rehab Information
- Cervical Cancer Screening Information
- Menopause Information
- Colorectal Cancer Screening Information
- Stress Management Information
- Whole Health Information
- & So Much More!

If you have any questions, please email Shirley.Eleftherakis@va.gov or call 405-465-4812 during normal business hours.

Legion News

District 1A

District 1B

The Webster Schrack American Legion Post 227 in Barnsdall Oklahoma provided the Color Guard for the Barnsdall Christmas Parade. Included in the picture are from left to right, Liam Miller, Bartlesville Boy Scout Troop; Deborah Miller, American Legion Auxiliary Post 227 member; Claud Rosendale, American Legion Post 227 Commander; Eleanor Allison, American Legion Auxiliary Post 227 member and Kent Davis, American Legion Post 227 member.



District 2A

District 2B

District 3A

District 3B

District 4

District 5A

Hanner-Sharp Post 129 American Legion
 December 14, 2024
Wreaths Across America



PHOTOS BY ALISA BOSWELL/FOR THE NEWS PRESS

Elizabeth Halcili, Cadet First Lieutenant in the Edmond North High School Junior ROTC, places the wreath honoring veterans who served in the Marine Corps.

Local residents honor America's military veterans

By Alisa Boswell
 For the News Press

In December 32 years ago, a wreath maker from Maine named Morrill Worcester decided he wanted to honor veterans with his surplus of wreaths.

Worcester arranged for the wreaths to be placed in the Arlington National Cemetery in an older section of the cemetery that had fewer visitors. According to the Wreaths Across America website, Worcester visited the Arlington cemetery when he was 12 years old, which proved to be "an experience that would follow him throughout his life and career, reminding him that his good fortune was in large part due to the veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country."

In 2005, when photos of the wreath-covered tombstones began to circulate the Internet,



During the Stillwater Wreaths Across America event, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2027 Commander Bill Jones performs the Ceremony of the Empty Chair, which honors military members who were prisoners of war or went missing in action.

Worcester's annual tradition became a national tradition overnight – a tradition that residents in Payne County,

Oklahoma partake in every year.

See **Wreaths**, Page A6

Continue Wreaths Across America

Wreaths

Continued from A1

"We are proud to join 3,700 other cemeteries across America and abroad to be part of this tradition," Floyd Branson, commander of the American Legion Post 129, told participants Saturday during the local Wreaths Across America event. "All of us have the same purpose today – to remember, to honor and to teach. Remember the freedoms we enjoy have come with a price. Honor the men and women who pledged to give their lives so we can live in freedom. Teach our children that one day, they may also have to stand against tyranny and oppression."

Carrie Wilhelm said her family learned about Wreaths Across America last year when the nonprofit organization Stillwater Chapter of DeMolay was invited to participate in the laying of the wreaths.



ALISA BOSWELL FOR THE NEWS PRESS

After placing it on its stand, Cadet Airman Ephraim Newton from the Edmond North High School Junior ROTC salutes the wreath honoring military members who were prisoners of war or went missing in action.

"After the program, I watched my son, Noah, and the other young men from DeMolay carefully lay the wreaths on the veteran's grave, kneel, say the veter-

an's name and have a moment of silence," she said. "It was incredibly touching to see how many volunteers participated. Being a part of Wreaths Across America makes me very proud, especially when I see a younger generation learning about the significance of our veterans and taking the time to honor them."

Wreaths Across America is especially meaningful to Maggie Simms.

"My husband spent almost four years in the Army Corp of Engineers. It is meaningful for me and my family to be able to honor him with a wreath at Fairlawn Cemetery," Simms said. "I lost an Uncle in WWII, and the presentation of the wreath for those missing and killed in action is significant for my family."

Wreaths Across America co-chair Carolyn Gang said it best in closing.

"We are here to remember not death but life," she said. "We are not here today to decorate graves. We are here to remember and to be grateful."

NewsPress Dec 17, 2024

Hanner-Sharp Post 129 American Legion
 January 9, 2025
Citations for Joseph B. "Ben" Miller



80th
 Anniversary
 of D-Day at
 Normandy
 American
 Cemetery

Joseph B. "Ben" Miller circled in picture at the 80th Anniversary of D-Day at Normandy American Cemetery. Ben Miller served the 307th Airborne Medical Company, 82 Airborne Division on D-Day June 6th, 1944 in the invasion of Normandy and the remainder of World War Two. Ben flew in a glider behind enemy lines to save lives.



Representative Trish Ransom presented to Ben Miller in his uniform, a Citation of Congratulations for his 100th birthday, service with the 307th Airborne Medical Company, and as a member of the Greatest Generation and Service to the United States of America.



Stillwater Mayor Will Joyce, presented a City of Stillwater Appreciation Citation to Ben Miller.



Sara Wheatley of Quilt of Valor read a list of actions in World War Two by Ben Miller of flying in a glider behind enemy lines.



Stan Witte and Pat Razook observe Sarah Wheatley presenting and reading the list of honors presented to Ben Miller as he is presented the Quilt of Valor by Sarah.



As Sarah Wheatley places the Quilt of Valor up tight as she whispers to him of our appreciation to honor f him with the Quilt of Valor for service and sacrifice to the United States of America.

District 6A



(L-R, Mason Kelly, and District 6A Commander, Grant Brower, from Anadarko) Yukon Legion: Kelley Advances to State Speech

Yukon Legion: Kelley Advances to State Speech Competition

The James Albert Wheatley American Legion Post 160 is proud to announce that Mason Kelly, a 10th grader from Yukon High School has won district level speech contest hosted by the American Legion called the Oratorical. He won at post level at the Yukon Post 160 competition and advanced to the district level and won again. He now advances to the state level for more chances to win. The Oratorical is speech contest on of the U.S. Constitution, with some emphasis on the duties and obligations of citizens to our government. Speeches are eight to 10 minutes long; three- to five-minute speeches on an assigned topic also are part of the contest.

The Mustang Post 353 December 2024 General Membership meeting was the post annual Christmas Dinner celebration. The post invited all veterans, active-duty military, reservists and their family members to join the post for the annual Christmas Dinner at the Mustang Community Center. This dinner was an opportunity for all community veterans to come out and have a meal, fellowship and have a chance to catch up with a veteran that you might not have

seen in a while. The dinner was attended by approximately 75 veterans and their families. The dinner also allowed the post a chance to relax and reflect on all the community activities and joint city of Mustang veteran support and celebrations that were accomplished during 2024. The post asked for donations of sweatpants, shirts, underwear, and personal items to be donated to the Clinton Veterans' Home. The donations far exceeded our expectations. The post also used that reflection to prepare for 2025 to continue to support veterans and be engaged in community activities in the new year. At the dinner there was a donation jar for cash donations, and we collected an additional \$950 in cash. The gifts and donations were delivered to the Clinton Veterans' Home on December 21 by our Post Chaplains.

We also want to thank Adrian Nelms, Henley Conrad, Makayla Grace, Elizabeth Montante, and Olivia Fairchild of the Mustang High School National Honor Society for their help at the dinner.

After talking to members and the post officers the dinner was very successful, and everyone had a good evening meeting friends and engaging in different conversations. Everyone enjoyed the different foods and desserts. At the conclusion of the dinner Don Kutze and his wife took the leftover food and desserts to a shelter that they knew. The shelter was very appreciative and grateful for the food. It was a good night for the post to celebrate with everyone as we kick off the holiday season. Also, the post wanted to thank the Mustang High School JROTC members that served the veterans and their families. Their efforts contributed to the success of the dinner.







Post 353 had the honor of presenting an "Ambassador for Peace" award to one of our members and Korean War veteran Harvey H. Baxter. The award and medals were given by the Minister, Patriots and Veterans affairs, Republic of Korea. The award was presented by Post Adjutant Rick Redden and John Bishop.



On Veterans Day, the City of Mustang held a reception to honor all the veterans employed by the City of Mustang, the Mustang Police Department, the Mustang Fire Department, as well as our local veterans. The event was hosted by Mustang City Manager Tim Rooney.

District 6B

Post 55 had an incredibly busy November, especially the week leading up to Veteran's Day!

- November 1st, 2024, Post 55 attended Sons of the American Legion member Devin Busby funeral and had a Celebration of Life/Post Everlasting Ceremony for him afterwards. Devin Busby had a long battle with Ewing Sarcoma, a very aggressive bone cancer, for two years. He is also the recipient of the Joe Moore Award that is given to any high school student who has overcome many obstacles. He will be greatly missed by his family and the post.
- November 7th, 2024, the remains of fellow veteran Nathan Crispin have been laid to rest at the All-Saints Episcopal Church in Duncan, OK. Post 55 performed the flag ceremony in his honor.
- Post 55 presented the colors for the Duncan Middle School Veterans Day Ceremony on November 8th, 2024.
- Post 55 participated in the Duncan Veterans Day Parade on November 9th, 2024. The post even had their own float for the event!
- On Veterans Day or November 11th, 2024, Post 55 had a Bake Sale in front of Tractor Supply in Duncan, OK. The post made \$417.00 in donations!



District 7

District 8A



Glenda Tatum and Debbie Bolay were honored at the American Legion Meeting 7 January for their continued dedication to our Veterans Day Pool Tournament. James Collins of ODVA was the speaker and delivered very useful information and helped 15 veterans with their VA journey. Also pictured Doyle Balzer and Tina Kilmer.

Clark-Perrin Post 190 in Covington would like to invite everyone for their Annual Pancake Supper Fundraiser.



[https://www.facebook.com/events/3470743603058109/?acontext=%7B%22event_action_history%22%3A\[%7B%22mechanism%22%3A%22your_upcoming_events_unit%22%2C%22surface%22%3A%22bookmark%22%7D\]%2C%22ref_notif_type%22%3Anull%7D](https://www.facebook.com/events/3470743603058109/?acontext=%7B%22event_action_history%22%3A[%7B%22mechanism%22%3A%22your_upcoming_events_unit%22%2C%22surface%22%3A%22bookmark%22%7D]%2C%22ref_notif_type%22%3Anull%7D)

District 8B

PLEASE SEND ALL SUBMISSIONS
TO TALOK1889@GMAIL.COM

POST EVERLASTING



See link below for SAL Obituary for Devin Busby.

<https://d1rjyex4ui0ya6.cloudfront.net/obituaries/photos/13424/1621712/6720e7186821a.jpg>



See link below for Obituary for Post 110 Commander Gene Roberts

<https://basentinel.com/longtime-broken-arrow-american-legion-commander-passes/#:~:text=Gene%20Roberts%2C%20a%20longtime%20professor,11%20after%20a%20brief%20illness.>



See link below for Obituary for Post 2 Commander Neil Stamper

<https://www.collinsvillefh.com/obituary/neil-stamper>