



ANAVICUS IN OKLAHOMA

The select few Legionnaires donning the colorful chapeau are members of ANAVICUS, – Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada, United States – an offshoot of ANAVIC, a Canadian veterans organization first authorized by Queen Victoria in 1840. It was Queen Victoria who granted permission for the members to wear berets of Royal purple.

ANAVIC members were originally recruited from veterans of the War of 1812-14, Wellington's Army and the Royal Navy of the Napoleonic Wars. Veterans of the Indiana Mutiny and other engagements filled the ranks until those of the South African War, World Wars I and II and Korea swelled the ranks to its present total.

In 1917, the Canadian Parliament chartered the Army and Navy Veterans in Canada and in 1946 amended the Act to include the Air Force. In 1948, Sir Jack Wickens, Dominion President of ANAVIC, visited the Legion's National Convention in Miami. At the behest of National Chaplain Frank L. Harrington, Wickens presented an honorary life membership to National Commander James F. O'Neill. During the ensuing five years, 59 Legionnaires were presented Honorary Life memberships in ANAVIC, including President Harry S. Truman, a charter member of Legion Post 8 in Kansas City, Mo., and life member of Post 21 in Independence, Mo.

The honorary U.S. members began to meet informally, and during a dinner meeting at the 1952 Legion National Convention in New York, they asked the Canadian officers for permission to found a U.S. unit. Under power of the Canadian Parliament, ANAVIC presented a charter to ANAVICUS during the 1953 National Convention in Saint Louis where the first ANAVICUS convention meeting was held. Lt. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey was elected president, a post he served until his death in 1977. The first annual Washington Conference breakfast meeting was organized by then-National Commander Charles L. Bacon.

In the following years, most American Legion founders, past national commanders and other distinguished Legionnaires were inducted into ANAVICUS – a tradition that continues annually at the national convention and Washington Conference. New members are installed by the Dominion President. Today, more than 1,200 Legionnaires wear the ANAVICUS Royal purple beret or cap.

In 1982, the ANAVICUS executive committee voted to establish and fund a memorial to Past National Commander Harry W. Colmery, who authored the original GI Bill. The memorial is located at American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis. At that meeting, the committee also established its first scholarship, a cash award to a cadet at the Royal Canadian Military College.

Woody Alexander (SrVice), Marietta
John Bishop, Mustang
John Bloxom (PDC), Bristow
James “Jimmy” Ching (PDC), Fletcher
Robert Chisolm, Wilburton
Michael Devenich, Moore
Jess Foreman, Tahlequah
Ron Gott (PDC), Okemah
James Hood, Norman
Michael Kerr, Chandler
Donal Kuntze (PDC), Mustang
Patricia Mathes-Kerr (VCE), Chandler
Brett Martin (PDC), Bethany-Warr Acres
John McNeal, Lawton
Samuel McPherson, Kingfisher
Joseph Meyer, Tulsa
Charles O’Leary (PDC), Hominy
Jim Quinn (PDC), Broken Arrow

**Donald Roane (PDC), Oklahoma City

Tim Smith (PDC), Fort Gibson

Bobby Stewart, Clinton

Michael Taylor (PDC), Oklahoma City

*Roselyn Utech (PDC), Ponca City

*First Female Commander

**First African American Commander