

# THE 1889 LAND RUN



DEPARTMENT  
OF  
OKLAHOMA



# American Legion Newsletter

42nd Edition, January 1, 2026

## American Legion Department Commander

Oklahoma Legion Family,

Well Legionnaires the calendar is changing and the new year is upon us. I hope you all had an amazing month of holidays and lots of time with your loved ones around Thanksgiving and Christmas. Let me be one of the first to wish you a Happy New Year full of success and dreams come true. This will be the year our Nation and our Organization celebrate our Semi-Quincentennial which for many of us will be the biggest celebration we've seen with the advancement of technology and the fact some of us were not here yet for the 200<sup>th</sup> celebration.

As the calendar turns after some time of relaxation, evaluation and self-reflection it is time to get back to business at hand. We will have a crazy busy January here in Oklahoma as we will be holding our Mid-Winter, welcoming our trailing candidate for National Commander, touring Oklahoma City with National hoping to try and sway them to award us the 2032 National Convention and some will be headed to Indianapolis. Midwinter will be here before you know it and I hope we have a packed house where we can all come together and share what's going on with the whole family and we can share comradery and ideas for success at every level and extension of the Legion Organization.

I want to send applause to all of our membership on an amazing run with getting our members involved and keeping them committed to the mission. As a Department, we have hit or surpassed every monthly National goal so far, this administrative year and January will continue that march to us hitting our first 100% membership year in over a decade. National has not sent an updated standings in a bit but we still are hovering right around that top 10 range. Let's break that wall down and push up the list. Remember the Big12 National Competition has us needing 93.12 by March 11<sup>th</sup> and if Kentucky doesn't make their 94%, we win that. Public involvement goes a long way to our mission. Stay engaged with your community events or create your own. With 2026 being the year of our semi-quincentennial as a country, I encourage you to create events based around this celebration. Events themed around 1776 or 250 will greatly help us spread our mission while we celebrate.

Steve Thomas  
Department Commander

## American Legion Department-Senior Vice Commander

Hello Legionnaires,

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and was able to celebrate with family and/or friends. I have been blessed to have two Christmas celebrations as all of our children couldn't get together at the same time, and we still have one more to go. It is always a great time to reflect on the meaning of Christmas and help the young children understand the true meaning.

I was fortunate enough to spend some time at the Clinton Veterans Center. I was able to be Ms. Claus this year and brought smiles to the Residents' faces, their families, and the staff. Several of these Veterans do not have family outside of the facility. The staff, other Residents and their families, become the Resident's families. The Residents are appreciative of the time given by those who go to see them.

We have so many Legion members who are working memberships very hard and it is definitely showing in the numbers and goals. We continue to reach the goals that have been set for you. We are staying in the top 10-15 Nationally because of the efforts you are putting forth. Our next goal is 80% by December 31st. We are less than 250 to that goal. I am sure we will meet the goal by the end of the year.

Mid-Winter Conference will be held January 16-18. I hope to see everyone there. I know that a list of classes are being put together based on responses submitted by some of our members. I will be available to help with membership and discuss ideas and options for how to increase our membership.

As we get ready to celebrate the beginning of a New Year, please remember that if you are drinking, please drink responsibly. If you know you will be with a group, have a designated driver, or an alternative way to get home. We need you in the American Legion.

Please continue to remember our Veterans who may be struggling with depression or anxiety. I know that we have recently lost two Veterans in Oklahoma, one was 20 years old, and the other was 41. The younger Veteran had been seeking help and was turned away. We must do better and listen when our fellow Veterans talk to us. Listen for the subtle hints and ask the hard questions. When we do both, we may be able to help and save a life.

"Be The One"

Respectfully,  
Shirley May  
Senior Vice Commander

## Department Vice Commander – East

**Greetings Legion Family,**

As we begin a new year, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your continued dedication to our veterans, our Posts, and our communities. Your hard work over the first half of the year has truly made a difference, and I'm excited to see what we will accomplish together in the months ahead.

Membership continues to remain a top priority. Many Posts are doing an outstanding job contacting renewals, welcoming new members, and re-engaging those who have been away for a while. Please remember—you are not alone in this work. If your Post is struggling, reach out to your District or Department leadership. We are a team, and everyone is committed to helping you succeed.

As we move through January, this is a great time to refocus on **training and leadership development**. I encourage every Post to send **at least one member** to the **Mid-Winter Conference, January 16–18 in Norman**. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn, share ideas, and strengthen your Post. Training will include:

- Post Operations Training
- Post Officers
- Post Executive Committee
- Protecting the Post with the right insurance
- Post Reporting Requirements
- Incorporation and IRS Compliance Training

• **Member Engagement**

- New Members
- Mentoring
- Buddy Checks

The more informed and prepared our officers and members are, the stronger our Posts become.

This is also the season for many of our important **youth programs**—including Oratorical, Junior Shooting Sports, and preparations for Boys State and Girls State. Supporting youth is not just one pillar of our organization; it is an investment in the future of our nation. I encourage each Post to find at least one way to get involved with Children & Youth programs this spring.

I would also like to remind Posts to begin planning upcoming events such as the **Four Chaplains Ceremony and Awards Ceremonies** recognizing individuals and groups in your communities who support veterans. These programs not only honor sacrifice and service but also strengthen the bonds between our Posts and our local communities.

I also want to continue encouraging all of us to live the message of **Be The One**—to reach out, to listen, and to stand beside those who may be struggling. A simple conversation can truly save a life. Keep promoting awareness, supporting programs, and watching out for one another.

As we step into 2025 together, let's carry forward the same spirit of recognition, excellence, and empowerment that has guided us so far this year. I am incredibly proud to serve alongside you.

## Be The One

Karen Cruice  
Vice Commander East  
Department of Oklahoma

## **Department Vice Commander – West**

Hello to all the Legion family.

The West has exceeded everyone's expectations but mine. I will tell you it is because I knew all along If we left you the posts alone you knew what to do or ask for help. We don't need to stand there chanting membership all day. We are all big grown-up people now and are members of the best veteran's organization and we all know what has to be done. Now with all this in mind the West is off to its best start in years. We will be over 80% by Jan. 1 and this is only possible because of Districts 5A, 5B, 6A, 6B, 7, 8A, and 8B. I thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart and may we finish even stronger.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have found a whole new level of respect for each and every one of you. Hopefully the holidays were everything you expected and see you at Mid-Winter.

Lance E. Larson  
Vice-Commander West

### **National Executive (NEC) Committeeman**

Greetings Legionnaires!

#### **TOWN HALL MEETING WITH FUTURE NATIONAL COMMANDER**

The National Trailing Candidate for National American Legion Commander who has been selected by American Legion Leadership [Past National Commanders] to be National Commander in 2027-28 Matthew Shuman from Arizona, will be coming to Tulsa January 24, 2026, to conduct a Town Hall Meeting with Legion Blue Caps from across the State.

This meeting will take place at Tulsa Post 1, Saturday January 24, 2026, at 1:00 PM. This is a department wide invitation for all Legion Family members. Please ensure its widest dissemination. Please RSVP using the link below.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdppbg-6BMUMxhI7Z\\_91vqGZj-YRiSHG3p93is1Wwlnk3HCsg/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=116948027234020200430](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdppbg-6BMUMxhI7Z_91vqGZj-YRiSHG3p93is1Wwlnk3HCsg/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=116948027234020200430)

This Town Hall is an opportunity for our rank-and-file members to share their questions, concerns, and ideas directly with the Trailing Candidate. Light snacks and drinks will be served.

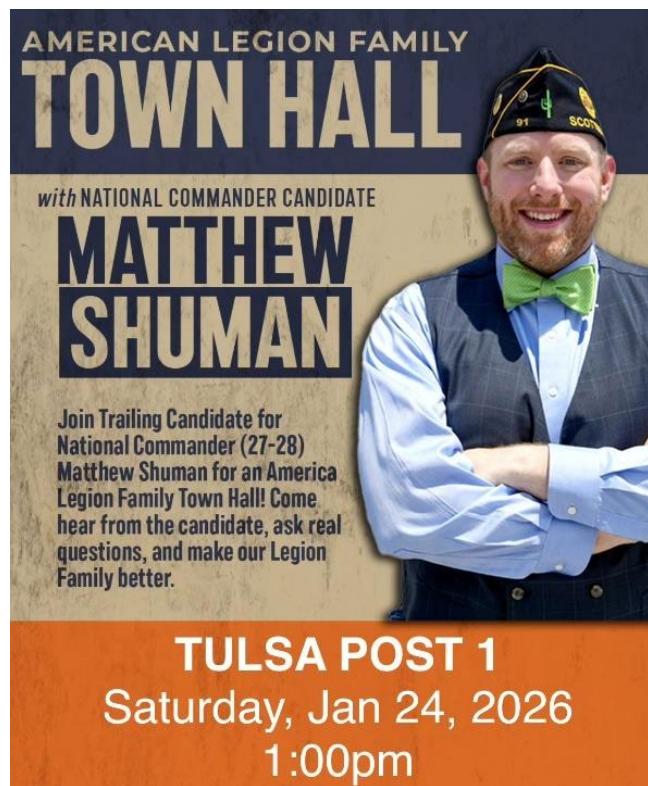
**Attendance is highly encouraged. Please RSVP NLT 14 January 2026.** We hope you'll join us and help make this a strong and well-attended event.

The purpose of this event is to talk with and listen to Blue Cap Legionnaires from across the State. We have never had this opportunity to talk directly to a future National Commander and tell him our concerns and issues with the VA, workplace opportunities, VSO access and Be the One opportunity to help.

Let's make the most of this opportunity to reach out to a future National Commander and let your ideas be heard!

Looking forward to seeing YOU at Tulsa Post, 1315 N. Utica Ave, Tulsa, OK 74110 on Saturday January 24th!

Charlie O'Leary  
NEC Department of Oklahoma 2024-26



**Alternate National Executive (ANEC) Committeeman  
American Legion Riders**

Dear Department of Oklahoma American Legion Riders Family,

As we welcome the New Year, this season invites us to pause, reflect, and give thanks for the many blessings God has placed before us. Looking back on the past year, I am deeply grateful for each of you and for the spirit of service that defines the Department of Oklahoma American Legion Riders.

God has truly watched over us and guided our path. He has given us opportunities to serve, the strength to persevere, and the wisdom to move forward together. Through our rides, our fundraising, our community outreach, and our unwavering support of veterans and their families, we have lived out the values we hold dear not for recognition, but out of selfless service.

What makes this organization special is not the miles we ride, but the hearts that ride together. Your dedication, sacrifice, and willingness to answer the call often quietly and without fanfare continue to make a meaningful difference across our great state. None of what we accomplish happens by accident, and none of it happens alone.

The New Year reminds us that our greatest gifts are not material, but spiritual faith, fellowship, compassion, and love. I encourage each of you to spend time with family and friends, to rest and recharge, and to spend time with God Almighty, giving thanks for His grace and seeking His guidance as we prepare for the year ahead.

As we look forward, I also want to remind everyone that we will hold our Department of Oklahoma American Legion Riders meeting during Midwinter on Friday, 17 January, at 1:00

p.m. I look forward to seeing you there as we continue planning, strengthening our mission, and riding forward together.

Thank you for your service, your commitment, and your brotherhood and sisterhood of the road.

It is truly an honor to serve alongside each of you.

May the New Year bring peace, health, purpose, and continued blessings to you and your families.

Happy New Year, and may God bless you all.

For God, Country, and Service,

Respectfully and gratefully,

Brett Martin

Director, Department of Oklahoma American Legion Riders

## Past Department Commander's Corner



Greetings Legionnaires!

At the Mid-Winter Conference in January in Norman, I will be formally announcing that I am running for another term as your National Executive Committeeman for the Department of Oklahoma. The NEC office is a two-year term and will end in August of 2026 when the National Convention in Louisville, KY adjourns.

The past eighteen months have been a learning journey for me, as I discovered many things I didn't know and have a new perspective on what National and Legion leadership thinks of us and expectations that I didn't know of when starting.

I have tried to get new and younger Legion leaders to step up and get involved, have had some success in that endeavor and would like to continue for another two years.

After that I will be stepping aside due to my age and the travel and involvement at National level but will still be involved actively at the Department level. I would appreciate your support in accomplishing this goal.

Remember the date: July 12, 2026, 9:00 AM at Department Summer Convention, NEC is the first vote of the day!

Respectfully,  
Charlie O'Leary, NEC 2024-26, PDC 2021-22

No One Left Behind

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### Leadership Requires Preparation, Not Just Aspiration

Leadership is not about the title you wear it is about the tools you carry and the responsibility you are prepared to shoulder.

In organizations like ours, where history, mission, and service matter, running for office should never be viewed as a résumé builder or a personal milestone. Leadership positions exist to move the mission forward, to support those doing the work, and to protect the integrity of the organization for the next generation.

Too often, we see individuals seek officer positions without the necessary tools in their tool bag. When that happens, leadership becomes reactive instead of strategic. Decisions slow. Momentum stalls. Progress becomes harder not because the mission is flawed, but because the leadership foundation is unprepared.

Experience matters. Institutional knowledge matters. Understanding policy, procedure, finances, people, and culture matters. Without those tools, even the most well-intentioned leader will struggle to guide an organization forward.

To put it plainly: appointing or electing an unprepared leader is like the mayor of New York appointing someone to oversee the New York City Fire Department who has never served in or alongside the fire service. Passion alone does not replace experience. Good intentions do not substitute for training. Leadership without preparation puts the entire organization at risk.

This is not about gatekeeping it is about stewardship. Those who aspire to lead should first commit to learning, serving, listening, and building competence. Leadership should be the result of preparation, not the starting point.

Our veterans, our members, and our communities deserve leaders who are equipped, confident, and capable. Moving the goal forward requires leaders who understand where the goal posts are, how we got here, and what it will take to advance them responsibly.

We owe it to those who came before us and those who will follow to take leadership seriously.

For God, Country, and Service,  
Brett Martin  
Past Department Commander

### **Department Adjutant - Rick Redden**

**Adjutant's Corner**

**National Emergency Fund  
Legionnaire Insurance Trust**

**VA Burial Benefit Fact Sheet, click on icon to access**



VA Burial Benefit -  
4.pdf

**Oklahoma Veterans Commission – Brett Martin**

Dear Oklahoma American Legion Family,

As we begin a new year, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your continued dedication to veterans, their families, and our communities across the great state of Oklahoma. The Department of Oklahoma American Legion remains steadfast in its mission of advocacy, service, and patriotism, ensuring that the legacy of those who have worn the uniform is honored and preserved.

The year ahead brings important work and meaningful opportunities to strengthen our programs, expand access to services, and continue serving with purpose and integrity. One such opportunity is our continued collaboration with Oklahoma Contemporary, working in coordination with the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) to support free veterans' classes that promote healing, creativity, and connection for our veteran community. These classes and initiatives came about through innovative partnerships, including the involvement of Spark Creative Lab, whose veteran-focused programming has helped make these opportunities accessible and impactful. Together, these partnerships reflect a shared commitment to innovative, meaningful engagement for Oklahoma's veterans.

Additionally, I want to recognize and commend the ODVA's ongoing commitment to training American Legion Veterans Service Officers (VSOs). This free and accessible training ensures our VSOs are equipped with the knowledge, tools, and resources necessary to effectively advocate for veterans and their families as they navigate benefits and services. Strong training leads to stronger advocacy, and that directly impacts the lives of those we serve.

I would also like to remind everyone that the next Department of Oklahoma American Legion meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 16, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., at the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA). These meetings are essential to maintaining transparency, collaboration, and effective leadership as we move forward together.

Thank you for your service, your commitment, and your continued dedication to the ideals of the American Legion. It is truly an honor to serve alongside each of you as we carry forward our shared mission.

For God, Country, and Service,

Brett Martin  
Chairman, Oklahoma Veterans Commission

## Sons of the American Legion Women Veterans Outreach

Contact Karen Ritter at [RitterK4505@gmail.com](mailto:RitterK4505@gmail.com) or Tina Kilmer at [TKilmer2003@gmail.com](mailto:TKilmer2003@gmail.com) for suggestions.

## Child Well-Being Foundation

Established in 1954, The American Legion Child Well-being Foundation is to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of children and youth; to aid progress in the field of child well-being; and to the sum total knowledge of children and youth through research, studies, surveys and projects, or in other ways, including but not limited to activities and programs benefiting the children and youth of this nation.

Banner Order Form

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FktMBOH6aSTX8TXDstlW\\_FBhUszlp3dI](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FktMBOH6aSTX8TXDstlW_FBhUszlp3dI)

2025-2026 Goal

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Cgqp7FOd6zwOIUcvG-D34KIoU72eYPBo8yk4qXXrBCM>

## American Legion Auxilliary

### **A December to Remember for the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Oklahoma**

December truly lived up to its reputation as a season of service, connection, and goodwill for the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Oklahoma. From extensive travel across our great state to hosting national leadership, the month reflected the heart of our mission and the dedication of our members. It was a busy month, filled with meaningful moments, long hours, and many miles driven in support of our veterans and military families.

Our annual Christmas Tour took place December 8–11, with Auxiliary members traveling across Oklahoma to visit every VA home in the state along with both VA hospitals. Over the course of 924 miles and approximately 14½ hours on the road, members delivered holiday cheer, encouragement, and personal connections to veterans during the Christmas season.

A highlight of the tour was attending El Reno High School's *Gifts for Yanks* assembly. The students raised more than \$11,000 to purchase gifts for veterans at the Oklahoma City VA Hospital. Following the assembly, we traveled with the students to the hospital, where they helped distribute the gifts directly to the veterans. Auxiliary members also passed out Christmas cards collected from members across Oklahoma.

The response from our units this year was outstanding. Members provided significantly more cards than were needed, giving us a strong start on next year's Christmas card collection. We truly appreciate the time and effort members put into having cards signed by students and community organizations. These cards bring comfort and joy to veterans during what can be a difficult season for many.

A special shout-out goes to the Fletcher Unit, whose members created more than 170 goodie bags for veterans at the Lawton VA Home. Each bag was distributed along with Christmas cards, adding an extra touch of care and thoughtfulness.

Despite the long hours and many miles, a great time was had by all who participated, and the impact of the tour was felt everywhere we went.

December 18–21 brought the visit of our American Legion Auxiliary National President to Oklahoma, providing a wonderful opportunity to highlight the incredible work being done throughout the department.

Her visit began at the Del City Post, where she joined local volunteers in distributing food and presents to airmen from Tinker Air Force Base. Nearly 40 families received food baskets valued at more than \$130, along with both a ham and a turkey. Local organizations also donated toys, allowing airmen to select gifts for their children. This annual event is a cornerstone of the Del City community, and participating alongside the National President made it especially meaningful.

Friday included a visit to the Oklahoma City VA Hospital, where donuts, coffee, and adorable candy cane reindeer were passed out to veterans. The reindeer were handmade with help from PDP Debbie Bertolasio and other dedicated members. After a quick lunch, the group traveled to Sallisaw to visit Oklahoma's newest VA home. While the facility currently houses only a small number of veterans, the National President was very impressed with the modern and welcoming facility.

Saturday began with a visit to the Oklahoma City National Memorial, a powerful and emotional reminder of the strength and tenacity of the people of Oklahoma. The group then traveled to POPS in Arcadia, where unit members joined for lunch. While there, Donna Snodgrass brought her patriotic car for a special photo opportunity, and the National President presented a charter to our newest Auxiliary unit.

### **Welcome to the family, Unit 1776!**

The afternoon continued with a visit to the Arcadia Round Barn and concluded with a relaxing water taxi ride through Bricktown. With beautiful weather and great company, the visit wrapped up on a high note and left a lasting impression of Oklahoma hospitality and Auxiliary pride.

December showcased what is possible when members come together with dedication, compassion, and a shared mission. The energy from this month carries us into the new year with excitement and purpose.

Our next major event will be Midwinter Conference, held in Norman, January 16–18. We hope to see you there as we continue the important work of serving veterans, military members, and their families.

**Kim McInnis  
President  
Dept of Oklahoma**

### **Veterans Service Officer**

If you have interest in being a VSO email for form.

Jack Sikes [Jsikesokamlvso@gmail.com](mailto:Jsikesokamlvso@gmail.com)  
443-271-5545

# Legion News

## **Awards**

We (The Department of Oklahoma) would like to have nominees for every award from every Post. That is what we would like to have. However, we know that isn't going to happen. You don't have to nominate someone for every award but please nominate someone for something. I know you all know someone who deserves to be recognized for the extra effort they put into serving Veterans, for that extra little bit of professionalism that goes beyond the job requirements, the things that make you feel comfortable putting your life in their hands. Filling out the form is not difficult "BUT". 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 1st Nominations cease. Don't ask for an extension, it will just make both of us mad.

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 ability to download CPRs that are filed electronically. The new software at National doesn't provide Departments with that capability. "YET." 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. The Department will set that date later.

The links below should give your Posts all the information they need to nominate deserving individuals.

LEO: <https://www.legion.org/advocacy/national-affairs/national-security/national-law-enforcement-officer-award>

Firefighter: <https://www.legion.org/advocacy/national-affairs/national-security/national-firefighter-award>

Healthcare Provider: Contact Awards Committee or Department Adjutant

Physician: Contact Awards Committee or Department Adjutant

Employer of Veterans: Contact Awards Committee or Department Adjutant

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

Paul Ray: 405-921-5819 plainoldpaul@yahoo.com [awards@mustangpost353.org](mailto:awards@mustangpost353.org)

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## DD Form 214 Assistance

A great tool and often a quick turnaround to assist a Veteran or loved one request their DD-214. Quicker than snail mail, as soon as the following day.

### Help with a Federal Agency - Senator James Lankford

Senator Lankford's reps in the Tulsa office work with the National Archives. They have been extremely helpful in requesting and following up with any documents needed.

Very self-explanatory when completing, although I will share, if you are not a direct family member, they will ask for a document from the next-of-kin; Driver's License, Birth Certificate, Marriage Certificate, etc., which is easy enough to follow-up with.



**92<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary (1935-2026)**  
**Of the**  
**Annual National American Legion Pilgrimage**  
**To the**  
**Tomb of Abraham Lincoln**  
**Post 32 – OPEN HOUSE – 4:00pm to 1:00am**  
**Wednesday, February 11, 2026**  
**Springfield Post #32, The American Legion**  
**1120 Sangamon Avenue, Springfield, Illinois – Phone 217/523-3415**  
**Home of and originator of the National American Legion Pilgrimage to the**  
**Tomb of Abraham Lincoln**

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**Our Mess Hall Restaurant presents, from 4-9pm Wednesday, Feb 11<sup>th</sup>.**  
**All you Can Eat Spaghetti or All you Can Eat Chilli Mac - \$10.95 + tax**  
**Chicken Parmesan - \$13.95**

**the following salads will also be available:**

<b>Chicken Strip Salad w/choice of dressing</b>	<b>\$9.95</b>
<b>Taco Salad</b>	<b>\$9.95</b>
<b>Chef Salad w/choice of dressing</b>	<b>\$9.95</b>

**Italian Dinner Salad or Dinner Salad w/choice of dressing**  
**By itself \$3.95 – w/dinner - \$2.50**

**Reservations suggested 217/523-3415 or email us: [spfldpost32@outlook.com](mailto:spfldpost32@outlook.com)**  
**Visit our website: [www.springfieldamericanlegion.com](http://www.springfieldamericanlegion.com)**

**--Free Juke Box 8:00pm to Midnight**  
**Video Gaming & Complete Bar Service**  
**FREE Shuttle Service to the hotel until 1:00am**

**National Shooting Sports Foundation**

**Department Blood Program Chair**

Hope your post and individual members have been doing their part to support the National Security Blood Donor Program. Critical need exists during the entire year but increases during holiday seasons. No better gift than life. See you at the Winter Convention 16-18 January.

Questions/Comments/Concerns - call or text John Bishop 405-414-2515 [jbishop22@cox.net](mailto:jbishop22@cox.net)

<https://ourbloodinstitute.org/>

JOHN G. BISHOP

405-414-2515, [jbishop22@cox.net](mailto:jbishop22@cox.net)

DEPT OF OKLAHOMA BLOOD DONOR CHAIR 2025-2026

**Post Everlasting is**  
**placed after 8B, please**  
**forward me your**  
**obituaries.**

## District 1A

### Post 178 – Grove



American Legion Post 178, [Grove American Legion Auxiliary](#), [Sons Squadron 178](#) and [Riders-Chapter 178-Grove](#), in the [City of Grove](#) Christmas Parade!

## District 1B

### Post 142 – Hominy



L-R: Jimmy Himes, John Hamilton Adjutant, Don Rainwater Vice Commander, Phil Fero, Bob Taylor, Steve Swinford Commander, Lou Hale Vice Commander, Jim Hale Sgt-at-Arms, Charlie O'Leary Vice Commander and Rex Long.

Hominy Post 142 members attended Wednesday morning breakfast at the "liars tables" at Hickory House Restaurant in Cleveland, OK where local and world events are cussed and discussed and many problems solved, but not really! This is our weekly "shoot-out" where Army and Marines pick on the Navy and Air Force because they are smarter than us, but we have more fun!

Everyone always has a good time and the food is good! We usually meet at the Hominy Doughnut Shop, but the owner went back to Cambodia for a few weeks but will be back!

## District 2A

### Post 20 – Fort Gibson



Today we performed Honors for Mr. Kenneth Tanksley. A special Thank you goes to Cliff Garrett for calling us to perform the Last Military Rites and very special Thank you goes out to the family of Mr. Kenneth Tanksley for allowing us to honor him.

## District 2B

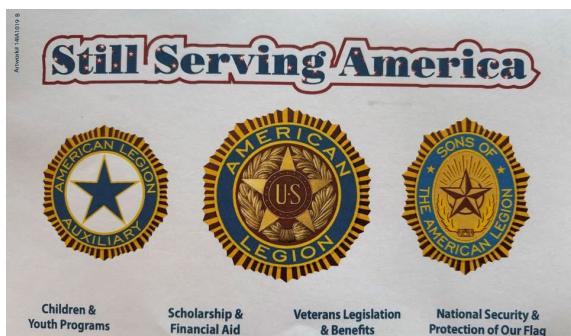
### Post 10 – Okmulgee



Post 10, Okmulgee, honored a fallen veteran member Dec 8 in Henryetta OK. George Gulley, Air Force, joined in 1954, taking basic at Lackland Air Base, San Antonio, TX. After a tour in Greenland, he got out and started as a fireman in Henryetta, OK; retiring after 23 years as Chief of the Henryetta Fire Department.

## District 3A

### Post 68 – Clayton



December dance, Saturday the 20th at 6pm. Denny Coleman will be providing the entertainment. Concession by the auxiliary. The entertainment relies on tips as well as the legion relies on donations to pay for electricity and water. Please give to both.

## District 3B

### Post 39 – Durant



American Legion Post 39, led by Lang, Cameron Jr Commander for the Son of the Legion, and Auxiliary President Morgan, is proud to offer Christmas baking services at Green Spray, with all proceeds supporting Bryan County Veterans and families.

## District 4

### Post 64 – Chandler





Thanks to all those who participated in preparing and riding in Post #64's 2025 Chandler Christmas Parade float

## District 5A

Fellow Legionaries, SAL, and Auxiliary members,

As we come to the end of 2025, let me say how proud I am of all the hard work you have done within your Posts and communities. We as a District have come together and supported each other in Post and community activities. You all have stepped up and represented the American Legion in the best way we all can. Always looking for ways to support our veterans in your local communities. Along with supporting all our veteran support programs, I am also proud of the way you support our Children and Youth, and the Americanism programs.

As we close this year and welcome the new year, I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year. My thoughts and prayers for all of us are to start our new year with a renewed effort to make our department the best it can be.

Happy New Year to all of you and your families.

For God & Country.  
Mike Harris  
Commander, District 5A

### Post 108 Cushing/Drumright



Saturday, December 6 saw Legionnaires lead the Drumright, OK, Christmas Parade.





On Saturday, December 13, the Post 108 Honor Guard shot a 3-volley salute at the annual Wreaths Across America ceremony at Fairlawn Cemetery, Stillwater, OK.





On the same evening (12/13), Post 108 presented the colors as it led the way in the Cushing, OK, Christmas Parade.



The month was rounded out by the Post 108 Christmas party on Friday night, December 19.

## District 5B

### Post 184 – Moore



American Legion Post 184 proudly hosted its annual Oratorical Contest at First United Bank in Moore, Oklahoma, bringing together community leaders, families, and talented students for an inspiring evening centered on patriotism and civic responsibility. The contest showcased the dedication and poise of young speakers who thoughtfully addressed the principles of the U.S. Constitution before a supportive local audience. We were honored to welcome Moore Mayor Mark Hamm as a guest judge, whose presence underscored the importance of youth engagement in public service and constitutional understanding. Congratulations to all participants, and especially to our outstanding winners: 1st Place – JaDince, 2nd Place – Christopher, and 3rd Place – Celine. Their hard work, confidence, and passion exemplify the values the American Legion strives to promote within our community, and Post 184 is proud to continue fostering leadership and citizenship among Moore's future leaders.



Moore American Legion Post 184 joined forces with the Battlin' Betties Oklahoma Platoon for a heartwarming volunteer event at the Norman Veterans Home in Norman, Oklahoma, where laughter, camaraderie, and friendly competition filled the room during a lively game of Bingo. Veterans and volunteers alike shared stories, smiles, and a strong sense of fellowship, creating an atmosphere that reflected the true spirit of service. With the Christmas season in full swing, the event was infused with holiday cheer, reminding everyone present that community connection and simple moments of joy can have a lasting impact.

## District 6A

### Post 353 – Mustang



### Veterans Recognition And Celebration

At 9:00am, on Veterans Day, a breakfast prepared by the Mustang Fat Boys Club was given to Mustang's veterans and their families at the town's Community Center. Approximately 75 guests attended and enjoyed a great meal.

At 11:00am, the City of Mustang hosted a celebration honoring the City's veterans and our military service members.

Mustang's American Legion Post 353 opened the gathering by posting the flags, then City Manager Tim Rooney welcomed all in attendance followed a beautiful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner by Ms. Jessica Hunt, the city's HR manager. Past 353 Commander Barry Carrington explained the POW table and how it represents all those yet to be repatriated. 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Chaplain David Jordan gave tribute to all that have come before, are serving, and will serve in the Armed Forces of this great nation.

Six cakes, each with the seal of one of our branches of the military were enjoyed by all.

At 1:00pm, American Legion Post Honor Guard members presented recognition and honors to the many veteran residents of the Laurel Springs Community.

Photos - Mustang Times, Page 1, 13 Nov 2025

All Mustang Public Schools celebrated Freedom Week 10 through 14 November with each of the 16 schools hosting assemblies with parents and all veterans invited. Post 353

furnished poppy stickers to all K through 6 classroom teachers for distribution to every student along with flyers giving the history of our Poppy Program and Flanders Field.

Post 353 will host our next blood drive December 17<sup>th</sup> from 1-6 pm at the Community Center. The December Drive is an annual competition between Mustang and Yukon. We look forward to winning with more donors than our neighbor post can muster. Again.

On December 11, Post 353 will have its annual Christmas Dinner for area veterans and families. Dinner starts at 6pm and is in lieu of a December business meeting. Regular meetings will resume on the second Thursday in January at 7 pm. This doesn't mean we rest on our laurels, lots of activities to report on next month.

Until then, I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and family and friends visiting. A merry Christmas to all!!

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December is always a busy month. Comrade John Sears represented the post ringing bells for the Salvation Army.

Comrades Sheila and Teresa Shulte, Marie Enderton and Mickey White delivered gifts to the Norman Veterans home while John Sears and son, John Traffanstedt, and George Kokendoffer delivered two truckloads of donations to Clinton Veterans Home.

Our December Blood Drive was conducted on 17 December and was well attended. We're awaiting notification of actual results from Our Blood Institute but believe we met the OBI goal. The annual December Blood Drive is a challenge between Mustang and Yukon, and we always look forward to being the champs. We'll have to buy the 160 Commander a coke if we lost....

Our annual Christmas Veterans Dinner was enjoyed by about 80 guests, and I believe we gained a couple members and had promises from other veterans to check us out at our January meeting.

The Honor Guard performed final honors for David Crow, USA, and Leonard Fry, USAF, this month.

Looking forward to seeing our Department Officers and many Oklahoma legionnaires at the Winter Convention.

## District 6B

### Post 55 – Duncan



Nov. 8th, 2025: participated in the Veterans Day Parade.

Nov. 18th, 2025: Had our Thanksgiving Potluck and a Post Everlasting Ceremony for Charles Hanson who served in the U.S. Army during Vietnam and was a Post 55 member for 4 years.



Dec. 6th, 2025: participated in the Christmas Parade.



Dobbs-Adams Post 55 in Duncan, OK has been busy keeping up with parades and Post Renovations.

Still making progress on our post renovation. We have new light fixtures installed and are starting to put up dry wall. Got a little bit of painting done too.

## District 7

### Post 146 – Sayre

Post 146 in Sayre continues to work on their building, they also hosted a breakfast with Santa on 20 December. They had about 75 kids show up for breakfast with their parents.





Post 146 received 21 names from the Angel Tree; of kids whose parent/parents are incarcerated. First Baptist Church and Post 146 worked together to make sure these kids had gifts for Christmas.



Commander Elmo May, Adjutant Shirley May and Legionnaire David Guy went shopping for gifts.





Auxiliary and Legionnaires working together putting up trees and wrapping gifts.

Thank you Post 146 for all you do for your community and The American Legion.

Every member of post #0030 in Granite graduated from a Mental Health First Aid class, in honor of Be The One project.

All posts are still working on membership. I hope everyone in District 7 had a fabulous Christmas.

## District 8A

### Post 53 – Perry



Post 53 Perry hosted their 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Small Business Market; it is always held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday and Saturday of December.

### Post 190 – Covington



## District 8B

**PLEASE SEND ALL**  
**SUBMISSIONS TO**  
**TALOK1889@GMAIL.COM**

**NO LATER THAN 1800hrs**  
**on the 28<sup>TH</sup> OF THE MONTH**

# POST EVERLASTING



## Gordon Darrell Cargill



<https://www.troutperry.com/obituaries/Gordon-Cargill?obId=46655021#/obituaryInfo>

**Paul Ray McConnell**

<https://www.lockstonefuneralhome.com/obituary/paul-mcconnell>

**Tommy Ray Lesley**



<https://www.cordellbeacon.com/obituaries/tommy-ray-lesley>

## Charles Hanson



<https://obituaries.duncanbanner.com/obituary/charles-hanson-1093070006>

**George Raymond Gulley Sr.**



<https://www.integrityfuneralservice.com/obituaries/george-gulley>

## Dean Courtright



<https://www.dightonmarler.com/obituaries/dean-courtright>

## Leonard Wiley "Len" Fly Sr.

Leonard Wiley "Len" Fly, Sr., age 77, passed away peacefully on December 6, 2025, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Born on October 11, 1948, in Longview, Texas, Leonard lived a life defined by service to his country, dedication to his family, and a contagious sense of humor that brightened the lives of those around him.

A proud graduate of Pryor High School in the Class of 1967, Leonard pursued his interest in aviation at Rose State College, where he studied aerospace engineering. That passion became the driving force behind a distinguished career in aircraft maintenance that spanned both military and civilian sectors.

Leonard began his service with the United States Air Force on May 7, 1969. Over the next decade, he served as an aircraft mechanic in locations ranging from New Jersey to Alaska. His technical expertise and commitment earned him the respect of colleagues and superiors alike. After completing his military service in 1979, Leonard continued his work overseas with Lockheed Martin in Saudi Arabia. Alongside his wife Wendy and son Lenny, he contributed to vital aerospace operations before returning stateside.

Back home in Oklahoma, Leonard brought his talents to Tinker Air Force Base as a civilian aircraft mechanic. His tenure there was marked by excellence and reliability until his well-earned retirement in March 2019. Throughout his career, Leonard remained deeply committed to aviation—never missing an opportunity to share stories about aircraft or attend air shows featuring the Thunderbirds.

Leonard's professional legacy was rivaled only by the love he had for his family. He shared 53 cherished years with his wife Wendy Fly. Together they raised their daughter Kristen and son Lenny. Leonard adored being "PAPA" to his grandchildren Garrett and his wife Savannah Fly, Kenndy Fly, Layla, Jayden, Karson, Dakota, and Dylan. He also leaves behind his sister Florence and numerous cousins who held him close to their hearts.

He was preceded in death by his parents Shelby and Margaret Fly; his beloved son Lenny Fly; Daniel; Stephanie; and many aunts and uncles whose memories remained dear to him throughout his life.

Leonard's presence was a constant source of joy at school functions, sports games, band concerts, and graduations—always cheering from the sidelines with pride. His grandchildren will forever treasure memories of his playful spirit and legendary "Dad Jokes." Known for his uncanny ability to nap anywhere at any time—a trait fondly remembered by those closest to him—Len embodied warmth and lightheartedness wherever he went.

His life was a testament to kindness, loyalty, patriotism, and an unwavering devotion to those he loved. Leonard Wiley "Len" Fly Sr.'s legacy lives on through every laugh shared over one of his jokes and every memory made under skies filled with soaring planes.

May he rest in peace—whole once again in the kingdom of heaven.

**David Lynn Crow**



<https://www.mcneilsfuneral.com/obituaries/David-Lynn-Crow?obId=46654420>

## Kenneth Byron Tanksley



[https://www.cliffordgarrettfamilyfh.com/obituaries/kenneth-  
tanksley/#!/TributeWall](https://www.cliffordgarrettfamilyfh.com/obituaries/kenneth-tanksley/#!/TributeWall)