

THE 1889 LAND RUN



DEPARTMENT
OF
OKLAHOMA



American Legion Newsletter

47th Edition, June 1, 2026

American Legion Department Commander

Legion Family of Oklahoma,

Fellow Legionnaires as the calendar turns to June and we only have 30 days left until the administrative membership year 2026- 2027 kicks off and we are still working mightily to finish this year off the right way. As I mentioned last month, I hope you all have your plans in place to celebrate Americas 250th Anniversary as a Nation. Most Posts held new Officer Elections, and I look forward to seeing who the new and upcoming leaders will be.

The May calendar was absolutely jammed full. The month started at the Spring NEC meetings in Indianapolis where Oklahoma was well represented. It was a jammed pack week with event by Trailing and Leading Candidates from the Legion, Sons and Auxiliary. The NEC meetings themselves of course where much business was handled. However, the highlight of the week was most definitely the bidding process to the National Convention Commission. The Commission, VisitOKC, ANEC Michael Taylor and myself toured OKC a couple months and it went amazing with the exception of a weather snafu so we went to Indy with high hopes and as you may have heard by now or saw on the Department Facebook in the video by Michael and I, Oklahoma City will host the 2032 National Convention which will also be the centennial of the Sons of the American Legion.

I would personally like to extend a great thanks to PDC and current ANEC Mr. Taylor for his dedication to this as he has been pushing for this for a couple years and saw it through to the end.

Next up was the Oklahoma In-State Legacy Ride which was amazingly planned by all our ALR leadership team. The Oklahoma ALR blew past its fundraising goal set at the beginning of this year thanks to all the teams' hard work led by Director Martin and VD Monica Poindexter. We had a large group of Riders that grew and lessened by the day as we circled the State but most importantly was that everyone made it home safe and sound with not much more than sunburns and sore backs and behinds. I extend a grateful thanks to the team that planned a great ride and to Road Captain David Stadler, our road guards and tail-gunner who made sure all of our fellow Legionnaires made it home safely after three or four days. Then came the end of the month with Boys State in Rogers and Girls State in Edmond. Both of our administrative teams for those programs planned and executed absolute perfection with these programs from everything I witnessed. I had limited time at Girls State visiting but it was awesome to see the full house of 330 some odd young ladies learning to become our future leaders.

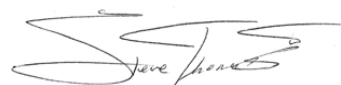
I was blessed to get to spend the better part of nine days on campus with Boys State jumping in to lend a hand anywhere needed. I personally took away a lot from that time personally watching how 436 boys showed up on Saturday and 436 young men went home the following Saturday. The transition we saw throughout the week was inspiring and certain young leaders rose to the top, but they all did amazing. The Class that our Administrative Staff put on here led by Director Brooks and Looper and their whole team is as no surprise as to why Oklahoma Boys State is the program that every other Department strives to emulate. If you missed Legion Night on Tuesday evening all I can say is I'm sorry. It was an awe-inspiring night capped off with a great aerial drone show and firework display that was made possible through the hard work of Jared Harrison and his team.

Then the month capped off with a visit from our Trailing Candidate for National Commander 2027-2028 Matthew Shuman from Arizona. He joined us at Boys State Friday after arriving and being met by NEC O'Leary and touring Post 308 with Commander Bob Coffee. Matt spent the evening being escorted around by SAL DC Sherbourne and I and introduced to the staff of Boys State. Friday evening was highlighted by the march back from the final assembly where Claremore Emergency greeted them with a garrison flag raised high above their path back to their rooms. Saturday was graduation for those young men they will be guiding us in a few short years as leaders in commerce and government. I want to thank every member of the Legion family who pitched in in one way or another for making these programs what they are. We had 120-some-odd members helping one way or another on campus at Boys State. We also had the Sons Trailing Candidate for National Commander Mike Monserud and wife Robin and current Midwest NVC Chris Casey and wife Cassie and kids on campus and unfortunately for them, we didn't get to do much entertaining, instead we just put them right to work on staff. They showed by their unwavering support and ethics why they are going to be leading the Sons Nationally into the future by rolling their sleeves up and helping right alongside all our other staff with whatever needed accomplished.

Membership in Oklahoma continues to grow, Oklahoma has is closing in on 96% National Membership percentage. We continue to lead from the front in the Midwest Region, we are neck and neck with several other Departments to lead the National rankings, within a percent separating many of us in the top 10. Our Department has had many members step up and announce intention to run for various offices for the next administrative year, I encourage you all to support these candidates putting themselves out there and invite them to your Posts so you can get to know them and what direction and how they plan to assist you and lead us in to the future.

Public involvement goes a long way toward our mission. Stay engaged with our community events or create your own. With 2026 being the year of our semi-quincentennial as a country I again 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

Campaign for Department Commander



A little bit of information about me. I have been married to Elmo for 48+ years, we have four children, 11 grandchildren, and at the present time 7 great grandchildren with two more on the way. I enjoy spending time with my family, cooking, crocheting, and working outside. I recently retired from the Clinton Veterans Center, where I was a nurse manager and the infection control nurse. I continue to visit the Veterans Center to converse with the Veterans who live there. Now that I have retired, I enjoy spending more time with family and doing some traveling.

I joined the Navy Reserves in 1988 and stayed there for one year. The Army Reserve offered me a direct commission, so I transferred in Dec 1989. I went to Officer Basic in the summer of 1990 before receiving orders to go to Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield/Operation Desert Storm. We went to Ft. Sill in November 1990 prior to leaving for Saudi Arabia the 2nd of Jan 1991. My position was an emergency nurse or critical care nurse in the 44th EVAC Hospital. I returned home in May of 1991 but stayed on active duty due to an injury. While at Ft. Sill, I was assigned to help out-process other Reserve and National Guard Soldiers. By November 1991, I was back to my Reserve Unit making plans to attend Officer Advanced in San Antonio.

I felt that I wanted to expand my career in the military and do something different. I was given the chance to move to a Drill Sergeant training Battalion, so I became the Company Commander at the 3/378th, 95th Training Division. As the Commander, I saw individuals come into the military and witnessed their transformation to becoming Soldiers. I continued with my military education throughout this time frame. After moving up in the Battalion, I eventually transferred to the Division Headquarters where I worked with the Surgeon. In 1995, I was again placed on active duty to help prepare and ensure the Soldiers that were being sent overseas from the 95th Division were medically and mentally prepared to help support ongoing operations for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. When our Soldiers returned, I then assisted the Soldiers with obtaining any medical or mental health support that they needed. I

spent 9 years on Active Duty during this time frame. In December 2015, I retired from the Military.

My civilian career of nursing started in 1988. I worked primarily in the Emergency Department or Intensive Care Unit before going into Correctional Nursing. As a nurse, it was always important to listen to the patient and their family so that I could convey their concerns to the doctor. I thoroughly enjoyed being a nurse and continue to stay current on medical innovations.

I want to work with the Legion members in Oklahoma to bring our Department to the forefront in our communities and state. As Legion members we can do so much together. I have worked with members from all over our state trying to increase membership, helping to exchange ideas among the different Posts, and just being there to listen to you when needed. My service to my country didn't stop when I retired. Now I can focus on helping other Veterans, their families, and the youth in our community.

During my time with the American Legion, I have held several positions at the Post level – Vice Commander, Commander, Historian, and am currently the Adjutant. I have also been the District Commander for District 7, Vice West Commander, and currently serve as the Senior Vice Commander. With each of these positions I diligently worked to serve Veterans when they sought assistance or guidance.

My level of understanding of the American Legion and the Four Pillars has progressed with the various positions. I was in the first Oklahoma Legion College class where I was able to learn more about Oklahoma and the Legion. Most recently, I attended the National American Legion College where we focused on servant leadership and serving others. I feel that both my military and civilian careers have been connected to servant leadership and serving/helping others.

As Senior Vice, I was able to help and assist multiple Posts across the state with membership numbers, answer questions regarding Posts concerns, and assisted Posts with training and mentorship. I am willing to continue to help throughout the state as your Commander if elected.

"Be The One"

Respectfully,

Shirley May

American Legion Department-Senior Vice Commander

Hello Legionnaires!!

May is definitely a busy month for most people. There are school graduations, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and Boys and Girls State. I appreciate all of your efforts and hard work when performing these activities.

Placing flags at cemeteries is an honor and privilege. I know that each and everyone of you perform this task with the utmost respect and honor for our Veterans. Families notice your work and are grateful for each and every one of you.

Boys State was truly remarkable during Legion night. It was exciting to see all of the young men who were there. When given the opportunity to ask questions of the speakers, the

boys had put some thought into their questions. They are an amazing group of young men, tomorrow's leaders.

Membership continues to increase. We are at 95.97%, with 11,277 members. There are still over 800 members who have not renewed. Reach out to them and see if they will renew. Ask each of them about their interests, try to get them involved in your Post activities.

There are 3 Districts who are over 100% Fantastic job by all of you. There are also 3 Districts who are over 95%. Way to go!!.

The days are going to start getting hotter as we move into summer. Please stay hydrated and check on our elderly Veterans. Also, be mindful that we can still have some severe storms move through the state.

Thanks for everything you have done and all the things you continue to do. You are a wonderful group of Veteran's and I enjoy working and visiting with you.

"Be The One"

Respectfully,
Shirley May
Senior Vice Commander

Campaign for Senior Vice Commander



Guiding Principles

People stay where they:

Feel welcome
Feel informed
Feel respected
Feel useful
Build friendships
Believe leadership listens
Key Leadership Focus

Have visibility
See consistency
Respectful communication
Personal outreach
Experience recognition
Have a shared mission

A strong American Legion culture is built more through relationships and service than through meetings and administration.

Summarized Strategic Plan

Mission

Strengthen membership retention, improve communication across the organization, and build stronger camaraderie among members through consistent engagement, leadership visibility, and shared purpose.

Leadership Principle:

Members remain engaged when they feel welcomed, informed, respected, and connected to a shared mission.

First 30 Days — Assess & Organize

Focus: Listen, evaluate, and improve communication systems.

Days 31–60 — Engage & Reconnect

Focus: Increase participation and strengthen relationships.

Days 61–90 — Build Culture & Accountability

Focus: Improve sustainable systems and teamwork.

Days 91–180 — Sustain & Grow

Focus: Build long-term organizational strength.

Psalm 133:1 (ESV) “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”

When we dwell in unity, we not only thrive as an organization, but we also thrive in quality of life.

For God and Country,

Patricia Mathes-Kerr, CPT(ret), MSW, MABC, LCSW

Matheny-Burt-Parrott Post #64 PPC, SGT-At-Arms

Oklahoma Department of The American Legion Sr. Vice Commander Candidate 2026-2027

American Legion Sr. Vice Commander Strategic Plan

Mission

Strengthen membership retention, improve communication across the organization, and build stronger camaraderie among members through consistent engagement, leadership visibility, and shared purpose.

Leadership Principle:

Members remain engaged when they feel welcomed, informed, respected, and connected to a shared mission.

First 30 Days — Assess & Organize

Focus: Listen, evaluate, and improve communication systems.

Review membership trends, renewals, attendance, and inactive member lists.

Meet with leadership, committee chairs, longtime members, and newer members to identify concerns and opportunities.

Launch consistent communication methods:

- Monthly newsletter/email
- Phone/text outreach
- Updated event calendar and social media
- Create a member welcome and retention team.
- Personally contact new, inactive, and expiring members.

- Key Outcomes
- Membership assessment completed
- Communication plan established
- Member feedback collected
- Retention outreach team formed

Days 31–60 — Engage & Reconnect

Focus: Increase participation and strengthen relationships.

Organize fellowship activities such as coffee meetups, family events, service projects, or veteran storytelling nights.

Improve meeting culture with respectful discussion, clear agendas, and member recognition.

Launch a member recognition program highlighting volunteers and service contributions. Establish a buddy/mentor system pairing active members with new or inactive members.

Increase leadership visibility through active participation and outreach.

Key Outcomes

Increased event participation

Improved member engagement

Recognition and mentorship programs active

Stronger member relationships

Days 61–90 — Build Culture & Accountability

Focus: Improve sustainable systems and teamwork.

Develop standardized retention and onboarding procedures.

Conduct leadership training on communication, conflict resolution, and member inclusion.

Launch service-oriented projects that unite members around shared goals.

Encourage intergenerational involvement between newer and longtime veterans.

Begin tracking participation, renewals, and member feedback metrics.

Key Outcomes

Retention systems documented

Communication standards improving

Greater collaboration across groups

Increased volunteer involvement

Days 91–180 — Sustain & Grow

Focus: Build long-term organizational strength.

Develop a long-term membership growth strategy.

Formalize communication and leadership expectations.

Establish annual traditions and community events that strengthen camaraderie.

Mentor and develop future leaders within the organization.

Conduct a 180-day review to measure progress and gather member feedback.

Key Outcomes

Improved retention and morale

Stronger organizational culture

Leadership development pipeline established

Long-term strategic roadmap created

Success Measures

Improved membership retention rates
 Higher meeting and event attendance
 Increased volunteer participation
 Better member communication and feedback
 Stronger camaraderie and organizational morale

Psalm 133:1 (ESV) “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”
 When we dwell in unity, we not only thrive as an organization, but we also thrive in quality of life.

For God and Country,

Patricia Mathes-Kerr, CPT(ret), MSW, MABC, LCSW

Matheny-Burt-Parrott Post #64 PPC, SGT-At-Arms

Oklahoma Department of The American Legion Sr. Vice Commander Candidate 2026-2027



Veterans serving Veterans, their Families and the Community

For GOD and Country

Campaign for Senior Vice Commander



Lance Larson

for Senior Vice Commander '26 - '27

Friends and Comrades:

I am formally announcing my candidacy for Department Senior Vice Commander for 2026-2027. My Goal is to continue and to expand **Departmental Support of Post Initiatives, Post Goals and Post Programs**. This year **the Posts in the West and their Members** have achieved great success, including reaching **83% by mid-January 2026**. A true sign of the hard work by each Post to focus on the needs of their Members and their Communities. As Senior Vice Commander I wish to reinforce Departmental Support, not interference, of this Successful Revitalization that is energized by the combined efforts of the Posts to serve their Membership and Communities.

I joined The American Legion (PUFL) after serving in the US Coast Guard. So far, my greatest pleasure in my 16 years as a Legionnaire has been working as a certified Post Service

Officer at Post 129 during the last 6 years. I was coached by some of our finest Service Officers, leaders like Past NVCDR Bobby Bryant and Post CDR Jim Hunter. This is one of the most important parts of our mission as set forth in the last sentence of The Preamble: “to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.”

I currently serve as the Department Vice Commander – West (2025-26) and VCDR of Post 129. As an Instructor at the Department’s American Legion College for 4 years, I have built many friendships with leaders across the entire state. As VCDR-West, I have met and worked with even more friends at the Post and District Levels. We have helped each other navigate the renewed focus on taking The American Legion’s missions to the streets and schools of our communities.

My additional and varied experience as District 5A DEC (2017-18), District 5A VCDR (2018-19), District 5A CDR (2020-21 & 2021-22), Department Sergeant-at-Arms (2019-20 & 2022-23) and as Acting Department Adjutant (Oct. 2023-Nov.2024) has given me the chance to discover the original flexibility incorporated in 1919 by National HQ and the Department HQ, refined over a Century, relies upon and allow Posts to successfully define and meet the needs of Veterans in their Community and the needs of their Community. Like individual jigsaw pieces, local Posts join together in expanding the results for the entire Department. As Senior Vice Commander, I seek your vote to continue to build on these successful, local initiatives and to encourage sharing of comradeship and mission fulfillment across the state.

Lance Larson

Department Vice Commander – East

Greetings Legion Family,

We are now just over a month away from our Summer Conference, and Department leadership is working hard to finish out a strong year for the Department of Oklahoma. There is a great deal of work happening behind the scenes as we continue strengthening our programs, supporting our Posts, and preparing for another successful year ahead.

One important transition currently taking place is the hiring of our new Department Adjutant, Stark Davis. As many of you know, the Department Adjutant position is critical to the daily operation and continued success of the Department. I would like to personally thank Rick Redden for the guidance, leadership, and support he has provided throughout this year—not only in helping Stark prepare for success, but also in helping me navigate my first year as a Department Officer. His knowledge and dedication to The American Legion have made a tremendous impact on many of us.

This Memorial Week I have the honor of attending Boys State for the first time. I now fully understand why Clay Ballenger has always said he is unavailable for a week after Boys State. The leadership and volunteers behind this incredible program have built something truly special. Watching them in action and seeing the impact they have on these young men is both inspiring and humbling. It is a tremendous honor to witness firsthand the future leaders being developed through one of our premier American Legion programs.

Looking ahead to the Summer Convention, we are working hard to make this an event that every Legion Family member will want to attend. On Friday, July 10, we currently have up to 32 training classes planned from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. These sessions will feature knowledgeable Legion Family members sharing their experience and expertise, along with

members of the community leading town hall-style discussions on important topics affecting veterans, Posts, and our communities.

In the upcoming weeks, Oklahoma will also have the opportunity to welcome both the trailing and leading candidates for National Commander. We encourage all Legionnaires to attend these events and take advantage of the opportunity to meet and hear from those seeking to lead our great organization at the national level.

Thank you all for your continued hard work, dedication, and commitment to serving veterans, our communities, and each other.

Be The One

Karen Cruice

Vice Commander East

Department of Oklahoma

Campaign for Vice Commander East

Dear Legion Family,

It has been an honor to serve as your **Vice Commander East** for the past year. Working alongside our Posts, District leadership, and Department team has been both humbling and inspiring, and I am grateful for the trust you have placed in me.

After much prayer, reflection, and encouragement from many of you, I am announcing my intention to **run for a second year as Vice Commander East**.

This past year has reinforced my belief in the strength of our Legion Family and the importance of recognition, training, and engagement at every level. I am proud of the progress we have made together—supporting Posts, celebrating achievements, strengthening programs, and keeping our focus on serving veterans, their families, and our communities.

If elected to continue serving, my commitment remains the same:

- to support our Posts and Districts
- to encourage leadership development and participation
- to recognize the hard work happening across the East
- to continue promoting *Be The One* in both words and action

There is still important work ahead, and I would be honored to continue serving alongside you as we move forward together.

Thank you for your continued support, dedication, and service to The American Legion.

Be The One

Karen Cruice

Department Vice Commander – West

Well ladies and gentlemen of the legion, hope everyone has had a marvelous month of May. Visited Post 1907 the first Thursday of the month and they already had the concept of running a meeting so, they are up and running well. Then it was off to Kingfisher got to see some old friends, the past Judge Advocate, Ken Tollinson, and Sam McPherson. Made some new friends as well, it was enjoyable time and learning of Kingfisher history. Use to think I could get around Tulsa pretty good being from a smaller town. Well, I go north on 75 get off on wrong exit and then the race was on. I finally make it to N. Utica and of course it is one-way headed north go to next street turn south go down far enough to get back to Utica. Post 1 is so much different now from 2.5 years ago was pleasantly surprised. Just want to say Commander Ballenger and to

all at Post 1 Tulsa job well done in keeping a post look good. Went to Post 12 got to meet some new people and talk to a long-time member Jim Thayer. That is what is good about the legion meeting up with people you haven't seen in a while.

Went to The American Legion night at boy state and may I say what a wonderful job and program they put for these boys. They were doing things in three days that took companies in boot camp to do in a week or more.

Saturday May 30th it is back to Post 1 for trailing candidate Matt Shuman a Q&A with lunch. June 6th it is back to Durant Post 39 for District Conference in 3B. See you next month and have a safe June.

Vice-Commander West

On priorities we have a good guy in N.W. now that will make VSOs successful

Lance Larson

Campaign for Vice Commander - West



Michael Harris

Candidate for Vice Commander West

2026-2027

I am running for the position of Vice Commander West. I have been a member of the American Legion for 16 years.

As a member of the American Legion Riders, Post 1340 I have served in various offices within the post. My leadership journey started when I was chosen to be the Chaplin of our riders post, from 2017-2021. I was elected Post Commander in 2021 and served in that position until 2024. I was elected as the DEC for District 5A in 2023 and then elected as District Commander for 5A in 2024.

I am a member of both the American Legion and the Sons of the American Legion. My military experience is USAF 3 years active duty and 23 years in the Oklahoma Air National Guard. I graduated from SEOSU in Durant with a degree in Aviation Management and a Minor in Business Finance. I retired from the FAA in July 2024 with 36 years and 8 months total Government work. I have an extensive background in working with various levels of government

employees. I feel this knowledge and experience will give me the experience to serve the Department of Oklahoma as your Vice Commander West for the term of 2026-2027.

I would like to represent the West in the best way possible and to assure everyone, every decision I make will be following our Constitution and By-Laws.

Campaign for Vice Commander - West

Greetings American Legion Brothers and Sisters

My name is Wayne Flowers, and I have made the decision to run for Vice Commander-West. I have been a member of Laverne Post 273 since August of 2019, eligible by honorable service in the United States Army, which I joined after a few years of traveling 2 hours from my home in Dover, Oklahoma, to assist with funeral Honor Guard duties. After joining The American Legion, I was made Commander of Post 273 in March of 2020, and have brought Post 273 from having one meeting per year, to having regular monthly meetings, along with working alongside other area American Legion Posts and other Veterans Service Organizations, to provide Honor Guard services, community events, and started an American Legion Fishing Derby, which is held on American Legion Family Day Weekend. A position which I still hold to this day.

In 2022, I was voted in as District 8B Commander, where I expanded on getting Posts in District 8B to work together. I make both random and scheduled visits to posts in the District, not to reprimand or judge the post, but to see what I can do to assist the post with membership, or any other project or event that the post may need help with. I have started associations with other Veteran Service Organizations that assist veterans in crisis, and have direct contact with VA representatives, that call me when a veteran in my area needs immediate help. I have intervened, and gotten help for multiple veterans that were suicidal, and I have gotten contacts made, and used, to get assistance with veterans with housing issues, worries about not having food, and even getting or giving rides for veterans that needed rides to VA appointments, needed to get to a military base to get retired military ID cards, and event to Social Security offices, to apply for replacement cards or benefits. I am currently working with the Governor's office, State Legislator's, and Federal Legislators, to get answers as to why a VA clinic was promised in NW Oklahoma 5 years ago, which has not happened yet.

In 2024, I became a member of and started a Sons of The American Legion Squadron at Post 273. I acted as Interim Commander, until the National Charter was received, and an official election could be held. I now hold the office of Adjutant in Squadron 273. And I am the District Commander for all of the District 8 area.

Also in 2024, I was appointed Liaison between The American Legion and The Sons of The American Legion and was appointed as Department of Oklahoma American Legion Historian.

I was a Combat Medic, during service in the Army, and retired from civilian Emergency Medical Service, with 23 years on a civilian Ambulance, mostly volunteer. I am currently not able to work a full-time job, due to injuries sustained while on active duty, which prevent me from doing many things without severe pain.

I believe that what the Department of Oklahoma American Legion needs, is to get past the infighting and bickering that has happened over the last few years. Some of us may not like each other, but we are supposed to be here for the purpose of helping our fellow veterans, without any judgment for any reason, or personal gain. We all learned in the military that there is no room for disrespect of any kind, or any reason. We all also learned that, despite our personal political beliefs, we have to keep an outward neutral position about anything political. We can

make this Department the absolute best in the country, as we have seen our Sons of The American Legion Detachment, and our Boys State programs prove. I am also of the opinion that if you don't like the way your Post, District, Department, or any of our programs are operating, you as an individual need to take the initiative to STEP UP AND BE THE CHANGE!

I would appreciate your vote at Summer Convention!

Wayne Flowers, District 8B Commander

Cdrpost273@yahoo.com

National Executive (NEC) Committeeman

Greetings Legionnaires!

Department of Oklahoma for the first time ever will be hosting a Special Official visit from the Trailing Candidate Matt Shuman who will be National Commander 2027-28.

He will be flying into Tulsa the last weekend in May and attending the final night Assembly of Oklahoma Boys State at Claremore. The next day will participate in Open Forum and Round Table Discussion hosted by Historic Post 1 in Tulsa. Will also visit Post 308 in Tulsa, Post 1776 in West Tulsa and Post 110 in Broken Arrow before returning to Washington, DC area.

The following weekend the Leading Candidate Jay Bowen from Colorado who will be our next National Commander has asked to visit Tulsa and NE Oklahoma. He will be arriving on Friday June 5th and the next day Post 17 in Sand Springs will host a breakfast and Mayoral Proclamation for him. We will then take him to Post 147 to visit the outstanding military museum there, then go to the Home Post of our current Department Commander Steve Thomas, Post 178 Grove for tour and lunch, then a walk-through visit at Post 1 in Tulsa and walk-through visit and dinner at Post 1776 in West Tulsa. The following day, depending on his travel time east, he will visit Post 50 in Tahlequah.

All of these visits will be at no cost to the Department.

We are making the finishing touches to the National Commander Dan Wiley's official visit to Department of Oklahoma June 28-July 2, 2026, which will include beautiful southeast Oklahoma including Ardmore and Durant with the Choctaw Nation and in the OKC area including visiting Bunker 58 in Guthrie which they specifically requested to see.

V/R,

Charlie O'Leary

NEC 2024-26

Campaign for NEC



Greetings Legionnaires!

At the Mid-Winter Conference in January in Norman, I formally announced 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 2021-2

Charlie-Mike,
Continue Mission

I am declaring my
candidacy for a
SECOND TERM
as Department National
Executive Committeeman



Double Thunderbird

45th Infantry Brigade 1980-2007
1791N, 2791N, 1801N, 160FA,
C-MED CDR 700 SB, 45BCT SURG



Active Duty/USAR 1967-1973
1st Special Forces Grp
Airborne, Okinawa
12th Special Forces Grp Airborne
OKC, Green Beret A-Team Member

Leadership Goals

- Representing Oklahoma in a Positive manner at National
- Developing new and younger Legion leaders in Oklahoma
- Helping regular Blue Caps across the State
- Working together with the entire Legion Family to benefit Veterans across the State.



CHARLIE O'LEARY
for
**National
Executive
Committee
2026-2028**

No One Left Behind

2



Attending Washington Conference Meeting
with Senator Marwayne Mullen

Caring and Compassionate

Tirelessly working to bring about a positive
image for the Department of Oklahoma
with Past, Current, and Future National
Commanders, Officers, and Staff

Diligently working to develop and mentor new
and younger leaders in Oklahoma

Advocating and empowering members to
constructively connect across our State

Working to project a positive image and foster
a cohesive spirit within the Department

Support integrity and transparency of word and
action in all of our members

FUTURE GOALS

- Wisely vote on financial and goal setting issues that affect all Oklahoma Legionnaires
- Work on camaraderie programs and projects to benefit veterans
- Reach out to Legionnaires across the State by continuing to visit Posts as I have done in the past.
- Increase communication with Blue Caps concerning issues with the VA and Congressional funding to benefit veterans, within the limitations of my duties and responsibilities as NEC

**LEGION
FAMILY
WORKING
TOGETHER
FOR YOU**



**Vote
For
Continued
Leadership
At
NEC**

Department First Term NEC Accomplishments

- Attended all required NEC meetings
- Voted on all National issues presented
- Served as NEC Liaison on National Finance Committee
- Participated in fiscal discussions
- Voiced opinion on Policy
- Appointed Finance Committee Chaplain
- Recommended new and younger Legion Members to Natl Committees, all approved by the NEC
- Recommended new ANAVICTUS members from Dept of OK including first Female nomination in this Century
- Reported NEC activities and issues to OK membership in monthly Dept Newsletter articles, District and Dept meetings

No One Left Behind

American Legion Riders

Attention Riders Across the Great State of Oklahoma!



Greetings to Riders,

As the dust settles from the 2026 Department of Oklahoma American Legion Riders In-State Legacy Run, I honestly don't know if words can fully express what we witnessed across this great state of Oklahoma.

What started as a mission to raise money for the Veterans & Children Foundation became something so much bigger. It became a moving reminder of who we are as American Legion Riders, Legionnaires, Auxiliary members, Sons, veterans, patriots, and Oklahomans.

Because of the incredible generosity and selfless service of so many people, we have now raised an unbelievable \$20,600... and donations are STILL continuing to come in.

Think about that for a moment.

Every dollar raised represents someone caring enough to help a veteran in crisis... a military family needing support... or a child whose life may be forever changed because somebody decided to step up and serve others before themselves.

And that is exactly what this run has always been about.

Over three incredible days, we traveled across Oklahoma and were welcomed with open arms everywhere we went. Small towns, Legion Posts, Riders Chapters, volunteers, kitchen crews, road guards, chase truck teams, donors, supporters, and everyday Americans showed up for the cause. Some fed us. Some prayed for us. Some donated what they could. Some simply stood outside and waved flags as we rode through their communities.

What we experienced was not just support...

It was love of country.

Love of veterans.

Love of community.

And love for one another.

And let me say this plainly... God absolutely smiled on this run.

The weather could not have been more perfect. Through every mile ridden, every stop made, every ceremony held, and every safe arrival, you could feel His hand of protection over all of us. Riders from across Oklahoma came together as one family with one mission — “Ride for the cause, not the applause.”

I could not be prouder of our American Legion Riders Department of Oklahoma family.

To every Post, Auxiliary, SAL, and Chapter that opened their doors...

To every volunteer who worked behind the scenes...

To every rider who sacrificed time, energy, and resources...

To every spouse and family member supporting from home...

And to every donor who believed in this mission...

THANK YOU.

You are the reason this organization continues to change lives. And yes... there is STILL time to donate. No donation is too small, because every dollar helps us continue supporting veterans and children in need through the Veterans & Children Foundation.

If you would like to support the 2026 In-State Legacy Run, come see us at Convention or email me directly at 1forgodandcountry@gmail.com.

We also accept Venmo, Cash App, and PayPal.

And as we gather together during Summer Convention, we are already beginning plans for the 2027 In-State Legacy Run. We would love to talk with your Post, Auxiliary, SAL, or Riders Chapter about sponsoring a stop along next year's route and what that opportunity means for your community, your visibility, your membership engagement, and your support of veterans and military families across Oklahoma.

The Department of Oklahoma American Legion Riders once again showed the nation what servant leadership, patriotism, faith, compassion, and selfless service truly look like.

For God, Country, and Service,

Brett Martin

Director

Department of Oklahoma American Legion Riders

For God, Country, and Service,

Brett Martin

American Legion Riders Director

Department of Oklahoma

Past Department Commander's Corner

My fellow Legionnaires,

As this article reaches our Legion family across Oklahoma, Boys State 2026 is wrapping up another outstanding year of leadership development, patriotism, education, and mentorship for our young men across this great state.

Programs like Boys State and Girls State remain some of the finest investments The American Legion and Auxiliary make in the future of America. These young leaders return home with a better understanding of government, citizenship, responsibility, teamwork, and service to community and country. Many future leaders — military officers, elected officials, business owners, educators, first responders, and community servants — first discovered their potential through these incredible programs.

This year, approximately 460 young men attended Oklahoma Boys State. That is something every Legionnaire in Oklahoma should be proud of. But imagine for just a moment what it would mean if next year we broke the 500 mark.

We can do it.

If your Post did not send a boy or girl to Boys State or Girls State this year, I encourage you to begin planning now for next year. Yes, some Posts are more financially blessed and can sponsor multiple students, but every Post in Oklahoma can make a difference by sponsoring at least one deserving young person from their community.

Every town.

Every school.

Every community.

Every Post area.

There are outstanding young men and women out there waiting for an opportunity that could truly change their lives forever.

Sometimes all it takes is one sponsor...

One conversation...

One Legionnaire willing to step forward and say, "We believe in you."

I also want to encourage every Legion family member to attend Summer Convention. Your participation matters. Your voice matters. Your vote matters. I encourage every Post to send their delegates and be part of shaping the future of the Department of Oklahoma.

Summer Convention is more than meetings and elections. It is where we come together as one Legion family — sharing ideas, solving problems, building friendships, strengthening programs, and ensuring we continue serving veterans, youth, communities, and this nation with honor and purpose.

I look forward to seeing many of you there.

For God, Country, and Service,

Brett Martin

Past Department Commander 2023–2024

Greetings Legionnaires!

Make plans now to attend the Department Summer Convention at the Grand Casino in Shawnee July 9-12, 2026.

The General Membership Meeting will be Saturday July 11, 2026. The members will be voting on the Resolutions that will be sent out to each Post this month for review. We will also be voting on a new Department Constitution and By-Laws for our Department.

Sunday July 12, 2026, starting at 9:00 AM Department Elections for Department Officers will take place, starting with the NEC vote at 9:00 AM and concluding with the Department Commander vote.

BE THERE TO VOTE AND MAKE YOUR VOICE AND VOTE COUNT FOR NEXT YEAR'S LEADERSHIP!

Also, don't forget this year, in order to vote all of your delegate voters must be paid up in advance. Department will be announcing when the cut-off date is to receive registration fees for delegate votes that can be cast at the time of voting. If you don't get your delegates paid up by the designated pre-convention time, you will not get to cast those votes for your Post's candidates of choice.

In the past this rule in the current C&BL has not been enforced but my understanding is it will be enforced this year. You can't just walk up and register on Sunday morning and cast your Post's votes as had been done in the past.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR POST'S REGISTRATION FEES BY THE REQUESTED TIME!

Thanks everyone!

Charlie O'Leary

Past Department Commander

2021-2022

Department Adjutant

CAM RAHN BAY AIR FORCE BASE- VIETNAM

REUNION - SEPTEMBER 10 - 13, 2026

"To all Cam Rahn Bay Air Base, Vietnam veterans. A reunion is now scheduled in Colorado Springs, CO for September 10 - 13, 2026". Information/registration can be found at: dicancook@gmail.com or on CRB

Web Site at: 2026 Cam Rahn Bay Reunion Colorado Springs.

Any questions contact information below.

Sincerely,

Jimmy M. White, Co-coordinator

Cam Rahn Bay Air Base Reunion

PO Box 334

Wadena, MN 56482-0334

218-631-3211

**PREDECISIONAL
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 29, 2026**

Oklahoma City VA Hosts Freedom 250 Community Engagement Event

WHAT: The Oklahoma City VA Health Care System will host a community engagement event to inform Veterans about benefits available under the PACT Act. VA staff will be on-site to discuss Veterans' needs, help navigating the VA system, and connect Veterans, spouses, and survivors with available resources.

WHO: Veterans, spouses, caregivers, survivors, and active-duty members nearing retirement.

WHEN: Saturday, June 6, 2026, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. CST

WHERE: Life Church, 6809 E Reno Ave, Midwest City, OK 73110

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: For more information, contact Oklahoma City VA Health Care System Public Affairs at okcpublicaffairs@va.gov.

About the PACT Act

The PACT Act is the biggest expansion of Veteran health care and benefits in generations. It ensures millions of Veterans who were exposed to hazards such as sandstorms, burn pit smoke, chemicals like Agent Orange and other toxic substances during their military service receive care and benefits for the conditions linked to those exposures.

Note to media: For consideration in editorial calendars, online listings, and PSA inclusion.

PSA – 30 seconds

Veterans, families, and active-duty service members nearing retirement are invited to a PACT Act community engagement event hosted by the Oklahoma City VA Health Care System on June 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Life Church in Midwest City. More Veterans than ever before are eligible for VA health care under the PACT Act, and VA staff will be available to help Veterans, spouses, and survivors connect with benefits and resources.

Online Listing

More Veterans than ever before are eligible for VA health care under the PACT Act, including some who were previously denied. Veterans who are not enrolled in VA health care are encouraged to attend a PACT Act community engagement event hosted by the Oklahoma City VA Health Care System on June 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Life Church in Midwest City.

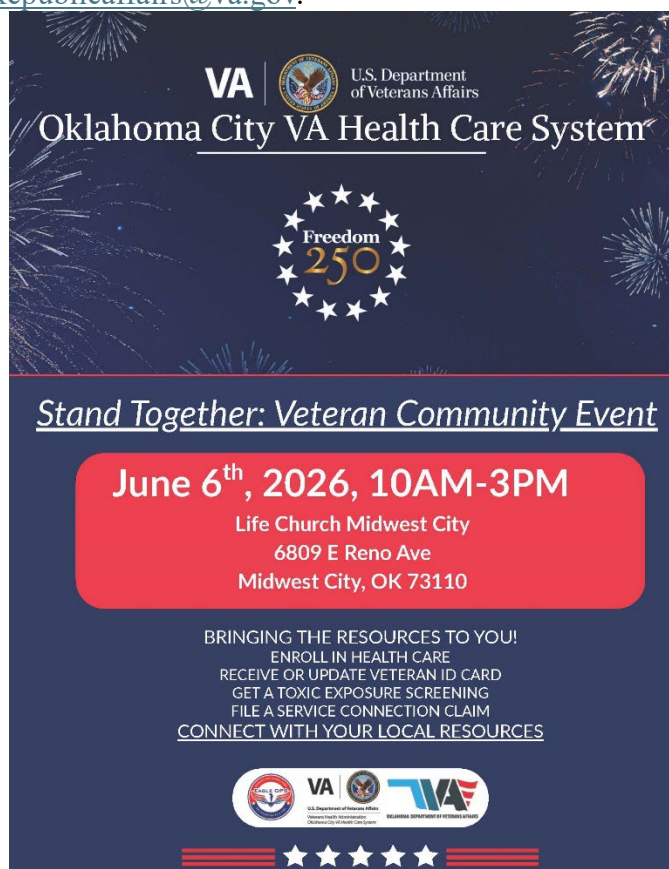
During the event, attendees can learn more about VA benefits and receive assistance enrolling in VA health care.

Veterans are encouraged to bring the following documents, if available:

- DD-214
- Proof of income from the previous year

- Date of marriage (if applicable)
- Social Security numbers and birth dates for any dependents

For more information, contact the Oklahoma City VA Health Care System Public Affairs Office at 404-456-5148 or okcpublicaffairs@va.gov.



Oklahoma Veterans Commission & ODVA Update

As we continue moving forward in service to Oklahoma's veterans, I wanted to provide an update on some of the important work currently taking place across the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs and the Oklahoma Veterans Commission.

The work being accomplished throughout ODVA continues to reflect a strong focus on mission, accountability, care, and long-term sustainability for the veterans we are honored to serve.

Across all seven Oklahoma Veterans Homes, we are seeing continued progress and stabilization. Facilities such as Sallisaw have successfully passed important federal recognition surveys, while Norman continues maintaining strong occupancy levels. Lawton is also showing significant improvement as additional beds continue coming online. Statewide, the ODVA system currently reflects approximately 1,400 beds dedicated to veteran care, with continued efforts underway to maximize occupancy and ensure every veteran receives the dignity, respect, and quality care they have earned.

One of the most encouraging developments is the financial progress being made across the department. ODVA is now operating in the black financially for the first time since 2019.

while also achieving the highest occupancy levels seen since that same period. Those are significant indicators that operational improvements, leadership focus, and teamwork are making a real difference.

At the Commission level, we remain actively engaged in strengthening partnerships, building opportunities, and ensuring Oklahoma continues leading the way in veteran support and services. Work continues on grant opportunities and foundation partnerships while maintaining compliance and accountability standards necessary to protect long-term success.

The ODVA Foundation also continues progressing toward the launch of its website, which will provide Oklahomans with an easier and more direct opportunity to support veterans programs and initiatives across our state.

Additionally, Oklahoma continues performing strongly on the national stage in veteran services rankings. That success does not happen by accident. It reflects the dedication of ODVA employees, home staff, commissioners, veterans organizations, volunteers, and partners all working together with one shared mission: taking care of veterans.

Recently, I had the privilege of witnessing another important step forward for the Oklahoma Veterans Commission. Progress was made toward restoring the Commission to its full intended strength with the reappointment of Commissioner Ted Perry and the advancement of newly selected Commissioner George Thomas through the Senate committee process. Both now move forward for final consideration.

A fully staffed nine-member commission matters. It provides stronger oversight, broader experience, improved accountability, and a stronger unified voice advocating for Oklahoma veterans and their families.

I would also like to personally thank Governor Kevin Stitt, Secretary Nash, and Senator Brenda Stanley for their leadership, vision, and continued commitment to Oklahoma's veterans.

At the heart of everything we do remains one simple truth: every veteran matters.

The mission continues. The work continues. And together, we will continue striving to ensure Oklahoma remains a national leader in veteran care, support, and service.

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 or Tina Kilmer at 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_FBhUsz1p3dI

2025-2026 Goal

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

American Legion Auxilliary

As we move into summer, I continue to be amazed by the dedication of our members across Oklahoma. Every month I have the opportunity to see the incredible work being done in our units, and May was no exception.

The Friday before Mother's Day, members of the American Legion Auxiliary had the privilege of assisting at a baby shower hosted by the VA Hospital for expectant mothers receiving care through the VA. Nearly 70 women attended the event. Auxiliary members helped serve and celebrate these moms as they prepare to welcome new additions to their families. It was a wonderful reminder that supporting veterans often means supporting the families who stand beside them every day.

By Memorial Day gave many of our units the opportunity to partner with their American Legion Family members to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Across Oklahoma, Memorial Day services were held in communities large and small. Thousands of flags were placed on veterans' graves, creating beautiful displays of remembrance and gratitude. Thank you to every member who volunteered their time to ensure these heroes were remembered.

As Memorial Day activities concluded, many of our volunteers immediately shifted gears to another one of our flagship programs—Oklahoma Girls State. What an incredible week it was! This year, 311 outstanding young women attended Girls State. There were sleepless nights, new friendships, leadership lessons, and enough singing of "Oklahoma" to last until next summer. Elections were won, elections were lost, and citizens experienced firsthand the excitement, challenges, and occasional frustrations that come with public service. Most importantly, they learned that leadership is about service to others. Watching these young women grow throughout the week is always inspiring, and I know many of them will go on to accomplish great things for their communities and our state.

Membership continues to be one of our biggest success stories this year. Oklahoma currently stands at 97% membership, and we need only 52 members to reach 100%. To the best of our knowledge, the Department of Oklahoma has never achieved 100% membership. We are closer than ever to making history. If your unit still has members who have not renewed, now is the time to reach out. Every phone call, text message, email, or handwritten note can make a difference.

Summer Convention is just around the corner, and I hope to see many of you there. Convention gives us the opportunity to celebrate our accomplishments, learn from one another, recognize outstanding members, and enjoy the fellowship that makes our organization so special. It always feels like a big family reunion. We have been on the road to this reunion all year,

working together in our units and communities, and convention gives us the chance to reconnect with friends we may not have seen since last summer.

As you make your plans to attend, please be sure to send in your registration. If you plan to attend the banquet or the Past Presidents Parley, be sure to get those payments submitted as well. On Friday during convention, Tecumseh will be hosting a dance. The cost is \$10, and all proceeds will go to support the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Oklahoma. Looking ahead, June 14 marks both Flag Day and the birthday of the United States Army. I encourage units to take time to honor our nation's flag and recognize the service and sacrifice of Army veterans, active-duty soldiers, and their families.

Thank you for everything you do to support veterans, military families, and our communities. Because of your dedication, the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Oklahoma continues to make a difference across our state every single day.

Kim McInnis
Department President
American Legion Auxiliary Department of Oklahoma

Veterans Service Officer

American Legion Oklahoma Tool Box

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1N7SEJNiLaggXafRX5XBSTkd2stJrhDhK?usp=sharing>

Jack Sikes Jsikesokamlvso@gmail.com
443-271-5545

Legion News

AWARDS

Now it is time to say "Thank You" to all of you who submitted nominations. I Thank you, the Department Thanks You, and the Nominees thank you.

The nominations are out to the committee members for their selection and will be tabulated when we get them back. The winners will be announced at the Department Convention in July. Post with winners will be notified before July 1 st .

Again, to those of you who submitted nominations, the Department says "THANK YOU"

Paul Ray: 405-921-5819 plainoldpaul@yahoo.com awards@mustangpost353.org

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.

Department of Oklahoma Fundraising Committee

10 GUN DRAWING TICKETS \$10 EACH



SIG SAUER P226 9MM



**SIG SAUER P365 9MM FUSE ROMEO X
COMPACT SITE 2-21 RND & 1-17 RND MAG**



RUGER MINI 14 RANCH 5.56



CZ FS DRAKE 12GA



WATCHTOWER T15M 5.56



VENTURE 2 6.5 CREEDMORE



MOSSBERG 500 TAC 12GA



FRANCHI 6.5 CREEDMORE



CANIK TP9SF 9MM

**Thank you for supporting the
Oklahoma American Legion
Family and Oklahoma Veterans.**

Drawing JULY 11th 2026!

Winners must be of age and pass a background check and all IAW State Laws.



STOEGER STR-9 9MM

Legion Family,
Chris Sherbourne
Department Fundraising Committee Co-Chair
The American Legion, Department of Oklahoma

Department Blood Program Chair

Department of Oklahoma – Blood Donor Collection Chair

At each District Conference since last summer's Department Convention, I provided each and every Post with a packet of materials and a cover sheet asking them to sponsor one or more blood drive in their community. American Red Cross and Our Blood Institute was/is available to provide mobile blood collection units with their buses and teams where the post is unable to provide a suitable site. Posts that failed to attend their conference should have been provided their packet by their District Commander.

I've received no information from any post but have seen a few Facebook notices of drives. Hopefully, several have taken place and will be reflected in the Consolidated Post Reports (CPRs). Every post has a responsibility to submit their CPRs to arrive at the Department by July 1st. The CPR is the used to for Department Awards and is the sole document used by The National Legion to prepare the National Commander's report to Congress each year. Post CPR submissions have diminished over the years. If your post needs help with their submissions, please contact your District Commander, your Department Executive Committeeman or woman. They are experts and they know many experts. Every post has done something that affects their community, our Department and our Legion. Do not hide your light under a basket. Every action reported proves our value.

I will provide blood program materials at the summer convention 9-12 July at the Grand Convention Center. Please attend your Convention. Meet and Greet. Share successes, build legion knowledge.

See you there. Until then, keep serving, ask for, and provide others, assistance when needed. It's an honor serve and I thank each of you for your service in uniform and as legionnaires.

John Bishop, Blood Donor Program Chair,

Questions/Concerns, call or email me – John Bishop, jbishop22@cox.net, 405-414-2515

<https://ourbloodinstitute.org/>

DEPT OF OKLAHOMA BLOOD DONOR CHAIR 2025-2026

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

**For submissions,
please include District
and Post number in
Subject line**

District 1A

District Commander Rich Conn – kd5jxu@gmail.com

Post 105 – Bartlesville

The Wall that Heals, A Vietnam Veterans Memorial

May 7-10, 2026

Lee Lake

2200 SE Adams Blvd

Bartlesville, OK 74006

Schedule of Events

May 5th - 12:45-1:30 Line the streets to welcome the escort from Copan Truck stop down Hwy 75 to Lee Lake.

May 6th - 8AM Start building The Wall That Heals

- 6PM Volunteer Training

- Dusk (TAPS)

May 7 - 6PM Welcome Home Ceremony

- Dusk (TAPS)

May 8 - TBD - Bringing Light to PTSD Ceremony (TAPS)

May 9 - Dusk (TAPS)

May 10 - 1:45PM - Closing Ceremony (TAPS)

- 2:00PM - Break down The Wall That Heals and load the truck.

The main components of The Wall That Heals are The Wall replica and the mobile Education Center.

The Wall That Heals exhibit features a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The replica is 375 feet in length and stands 7.5 feet high at its tallest point. Visitors experience The Wall rising above them as they walk towards the apex, a key feature of the design of The Wall in D.C.

Like the original Memorial, The Wall That Heals is erected in a chevron-shape and visitors can do name rubbings of individual service member's names on The Wall. The replica is constructed of Avonite, a synthetic granite, and its 140 numbered panels are supported by an aluminum frame. Machine engraving of the more than 58,000 names along with modern LED lighting provide readability of The Wall, day and night.

As on The Wall, the names on The Wall That Heals are listed by day of casualty. Beginning at the center/apex, the names start on the East Wall (right-hand side) working their way out to the end of that wing, picking up again at the far end of the West Wall (left-hand side) and working their way back in to the center/apex, joining the beginning and end of the conflict at the center.

The 53-foot trailer that carries The Wall That Heals transforms into a mobile Education Center. The exterior of the trailer features a timeline of "The War and The Wall" and provides additional information about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Additional exhibits give visitors a better understanding of the legacy of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the collection of items left at The Wall.

We will be honoring all service members and families touched by the Vietnam war, including those lost in the war, those that passed after the war, those still with us, as well as those from Vietnam that came to America for a better life.

Apply by April 7, 2026, at <https://www.thewallthathealsbartlesville2026.org/> To have your veteran included as part of the mobile Education Center display when The Wall That Heals is on display in Bartlesville. If you have a loved one whose name is on the wall the organizers would like you to be at Lee Lake when the memorial arrives and at the Welcome Home Ceremony on May 7th at 6 pm.

Contact

www.thewallthathealsbartlesville2026.org/

or

https://www.visitbartlesville.com/the-wall-that-heals-a-vietnam-veterans-memorial-event-details_1201

Post 240 – Salina



CAR SHOW & CRUISE NIGHT

401 W Ferry St, Salina, OK
June 13th, 2026
Car Show : 12 pm - 4 pm
Price: \$20
Cruise Night: 5 pm - 9 pm

**Hamburger Cookout to Support the American Legion
Additional Donations Welcome
Car Show Brought to you by American Veteran
Tours**



District 1B

District Commander Andrew Fisher – aldistrict1bok@gmail.com

Post 110 – Broken Arrow

I met a veteran when I was waiting in the waiting room at OSU to have a study done some time back. I asked him if he was in the American Legion. To that he said no. I told him if he needed help with anything or wanted to become a legionnaire to reach out to me. Last week he reached out asking if I knew of any resources to help him move. I decided to bring it to Commander Fisher's attention. We spoke about it & we decided to ask Post 110 (Broken Arrow) if they would like to assist. I'm very proud of Commander Jeff Martin of Post 110. He is now heading up the move for this veteran tomorrow. I expect some or all of my family will go help. If you would, please reach out to Commander Martin to gain more info about this project. I do have more details; however, I'd like to give him the chance to share with you. Thank you. Also, I found out in the past week this same veteran has a Bronze Star. It's a good feeling knowing Legion family is pulling together to help him. (On a side note, one day when I spoke to him about his move I was at the cemetery putting out flags. When he realized that, he mentioned finding out who could help him with a project at his family cemetery around Holdenville, Oklahoma, that has several veteran's graves. He would like to see if we can have the cemetery adopted by an American Legion Post to have it cleaned up & flags place at the graves in the future. This project could potentially lead to another article for you down the road.)





Post 17 - Sand Springs & Post 450 - Ochelata

Vietnam Veteran Welcome Home Dinner in May. Post 450 (Ochelata) held a dinner on May 16th, with TAL Post 198 (Pawhuska) Commander John Henry Mashunkashey as the guest speaker. Post 17 (Sand Springs) held a dinner on May 23rd, with TAL Post 237 (Owasso) Commander Larry Cozart as the guest speaker. There are 5 upcoming dinners in the process of being scheduled in the following communities: Bartlesville, Claremore, Bristow, Nowata & Midwest City. These dinners have been a great success in several ways. The most important is the Vietnam Veterans are getting the love & attention they deserve. Some are taking a big step by leaving their home to come see what it is all about. It is time for healing for those who are still among us. May God continue to lead us in this vital endeavor. A big thank you to Wayne Flowers for the Presidential packets with the Vietnam Veteran pins for the veterans. They have thoroughly enjoyed receiving the packets. Thank you to Rob Ray of Post 17 for donating real plates for the dinners. (It was incredible to hear the Vietnam Veteran say in passing, "They are feeding us on real plates.") Thank you to the Boy Scouts of SAL Squadron 17 for serving the veterans dinner at Post 17. Thank you to Reasor's of Sand Springs for the beautiful cake. We appreciate all the donations & volunteers.

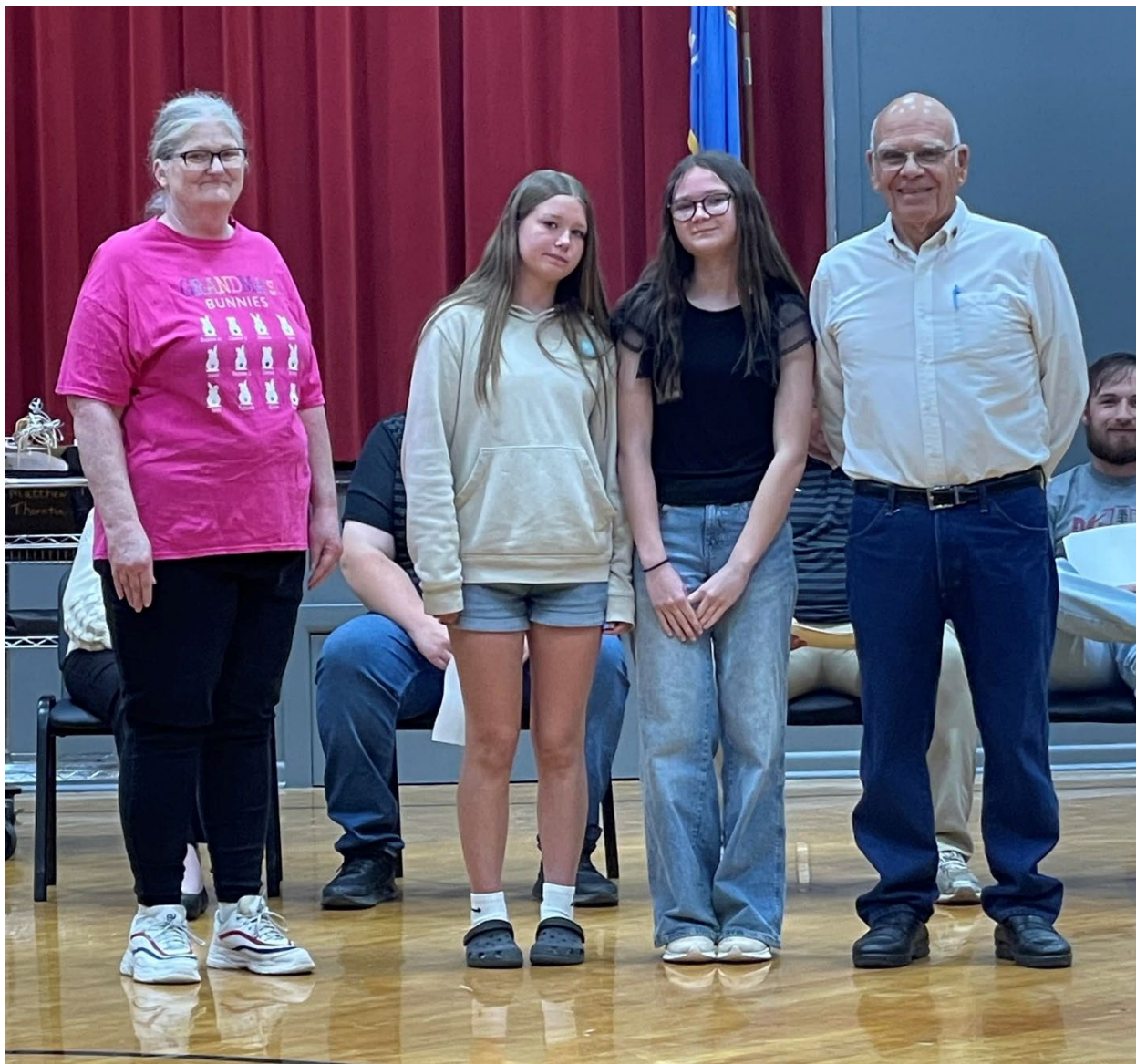
Red Steiner from the Post & Teresa Griffith from the Unit also donated money to purchase gifts for the baby shower.

Post 227 - Barnsdall

I understand TAL Post 227 (Barnsdall) Commander Claude Rosendale has been a little extra tired lately. So, he possibly did not contact you. However, Barnsdall had Big Heart Day on May 23rd. He may have some input for you.



Nine members from Barnsdall's Post 227 and 13 members from Pawhuska's Boy Scout Troop provided the Memorial Day Ceremony at Ethel Reece Cemetery. The program consisted of the Pledge of Allegiance, a prayer, placing of the wreath, singing the National Anthem, violin playing of patriotic songs, reading of a State Legislative Citation to the Post, a Veterans Memorial Speech, a 24-gun salute and playing of Taps.



Paula Widener and Claud Rosendale from Post 227 American Legion Auxiliary and American Legion presented the Americanism Essay checks to the 9th grade winners. Journey Sofian received the 1st place \$50.00 check and Kaylee Bradfield received the 2nd place \$35.00 check.



The Barnsdall Legionnaires set a booth up at the Bartlesville SunFest Event the last week of May. Eleanor Allison, Ivan Winger (both pictured) and Claud Rosendale manned the booth. They sold raffle tickets, donated handmade items and solicited memberships.

Post 1 - Tulsa

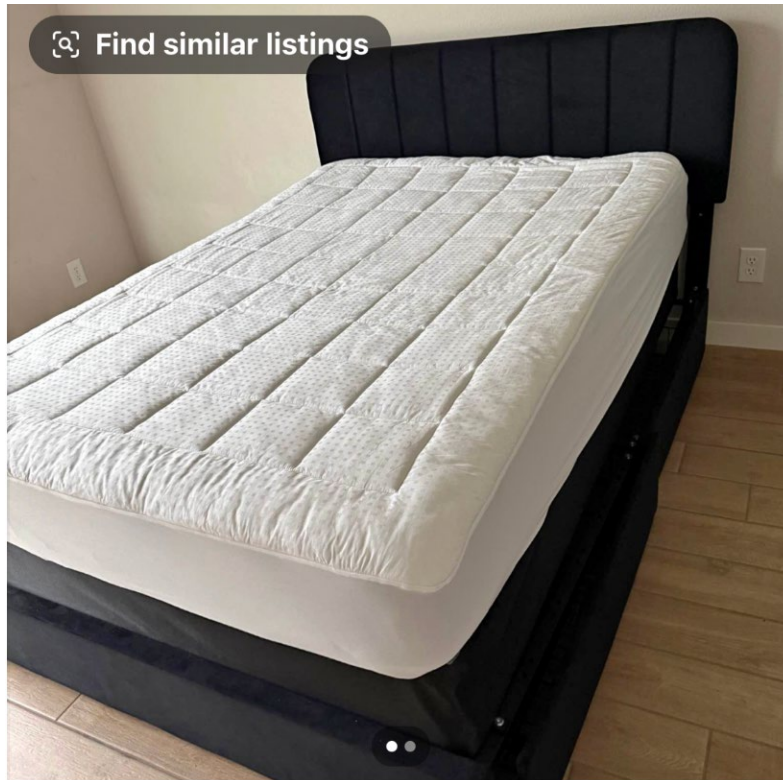
John Nelkorn & Bob Walker lead the clothing giveaway for Post 1. They are making a huge impact in Tulsa & it has a ripple effect in the surrounding communities. They do this monthly (3rd Tuesday monthly, from 9am-3pm) & have been providing this service to the community for 4 years this July. A few other posts (than Post 1) have poured into this service: Post 2 (Collinsville), Post 237 (Owasso), Post 337 (Talala), Post 450 (Ochelata) & Post 1776 (Tulsa). Other American Legion Posts have talked about donating to this event. It is a very successful event & rewarding to the volunteers as much as it is to those receiving from this service. People from the community are beginning to donate to the giveaway. John has literally given the coat off his back & Bob is just as generous, 2 great influences.



Unit 1 – Tulsa

Unit 1 (Tulsa), Unit 198 (Pawhuska) & Unit 450 (Ochelata) donated to the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center female veteran baby shower.

Post 2 – Collinsville



Thank you to Post 2 and Bud York for helping find a bed and to house a Veteran in his time of need. Thank you to the others who stepped up to get him a near new bed and sheets (Teamwork)!!

Unit 198 – Pawhuska



Mary Elsberry & Carole Revard of Unit 198 bought items for unit membership, not pictured, Jeannie Bighorse personally purchased diapers and wipes.

District 2A
District Commander Kayla Rector –
amdistr2acommander@gmail.com

District 2B
District 3A
District 3B

District 4
District Commander Vane Bell – Vanebell1960@gmail.com

Post & Unit 64 – Chandler







The Veterans of Chandler and the American Legion Post 64 conducted a memorial service in the Towns of Davenport, Sparks and Chandler to honor those Veterans who sacrificed all and those who have gone before us.

Honoring and remembering those who served in the past, supporting those who serve in the present, providing hope for those who will serve our future.

District 5A

District Commander Ezekial Jenkins – zj777@cox.net

Post 108 – Cushing/Drumright



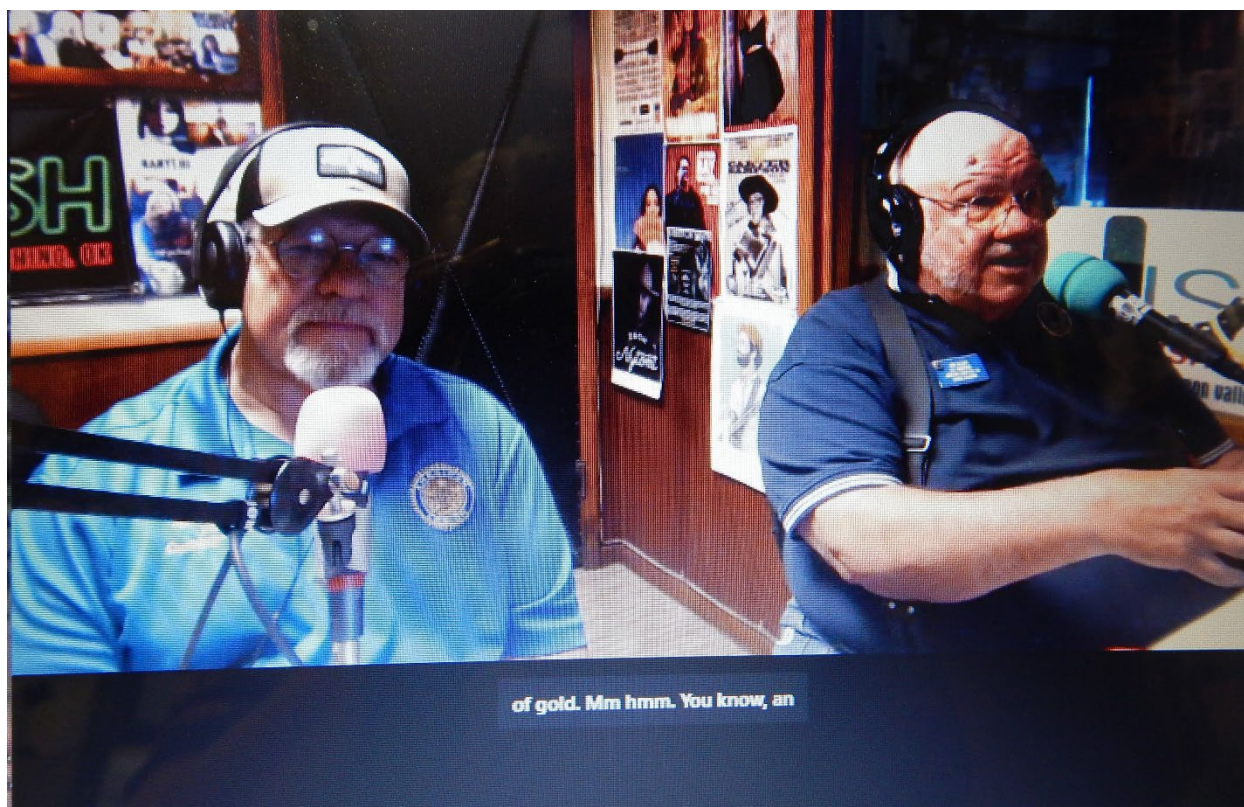
5-13-26

Post 108 donates 2 boys and 2 girl's bikes to the Brandon Hise Bike Safety Rodeo.

L to R: Officer Walker, Detective Livergood, Tim Potter, Don Tyson



5-14-26 Leon Sullivan awards good citizen certificates at Cushing Middle School, 8th-grade graduation.



5-15-26 Tim Potter and Leon appear on KUSH Radio: Discussing upcoming American Legion Riders of Oklahoma Legacy Run Visit and the meaning of Red Friday.



5-17-26 American Legion Riders of Oklahoma Legacy Run visit. Brett Martin awards Certificate of Appreciation to Post Commander G. W. Davis. Commander Davis gives a monetary donation to the scholarship.

L to R: Brett Martin, G.W. Davis



5- 22-26 Community and Post members plant American flags on Veteran graves at Fairlawn Cemetery.





5-25-26

Charles S. O'Leary, LTC [Ret], American Legion National Executive Committeeman representing The American Legion Department of Oklahoma, speaks at Memorial Day services at Donaldson/Walker Post 108, Fairlawn Cemetery, and Euchee Valley Cemetery in Cushing. He encourages listeners to tell stories to the younger generation of the many brave men and women who fought, and died, to keep America free. This was preceded by a 21-volley salute and Taps conducted at each location by the Post 108 Honor Guard.

Post 58 – Guthrie

TAL LeBron Post 58 remains active in the community in spite of ongoing construction. We remain focused on the mission of the organization.

The American Legion Billie A Hall Post 17 Sand Springs hosted a Korean Recognition Ceremony in partnership with the Consulate General of The Republic of Korea Houston, Texas, and Ministry of Patriot and Veterans Affairs, the Republic of Korea, to present the Ambassador for Peace Medal to Veterans for their service in the Korean War. Commander Robert Epperly submitted Veteran James Albert Metcalf Jr, US Army, and Steve Donnell Post 240 Salina submitted Veteran Roy Shouse Jr, US Army, awarded posthumously.

Jaeho Yi, Global Veterans Honor Club, MPVA the Republic of Korea and Commander Kim Vincent have been recognizing Veterans who served in the Korean War since July 2023.



During the 2025 Guthrie FFA Veterans Day Ceremony, Legionnaire Ron Powell shared with students about losing his FFA jacket in a fire in the 60's. Unbeknownst to Ron, Ms. Dusty organized to have the students present Ron with a new jacket at the FFA banquet. She even connected with Ron's high school in Kansas. During the ceremony Ron shared that he graduated in 1962.

Post 58 members took a road trip to The Wall That Heals, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Replica at Mitch Park in Edmond, Oklahoma. For many, these moments become deeply meaningful opportunities for reflection, healing, remembrance, and solitude.

Members of Post 58 and VFW Sooner Post 4578 were recognized for Military Funeral Honors Performed for William Deane Galbraith. On behalf of Marla and the Galbraith family, Mike Helm, 2014-2015 American Legion National Commander, of Lebanon, Nebraska, presented both Posts with a certificate of recognition for services rendered.





We also stopped in Sapulpa for a home visit with Samuel Balsiger, submitted by District Commander / Laverne Post 273 Wayne Flowers. TAL Post 1000 organized a ceremony at the Del City Chamber of Commerce where we recognized Charles Walter submitted by Korean Veteran Lloyd Fischer from Enid, who travels the state with us now, and Herbert Bailey, presentation in the near future, submitted by Post 1000 Commander Jeaneth Helton. The Korean Consular General who oversees the southern 5 states has been following our ceremonies and joined us. We missed Earl Stoneburner as he fell ill and was then called home, but we recognized him posthumously at his Memorial Service in Rose, OK, submitted by James Heflin Post 240 Salina. This truly has become a statewide effort. Please let us know if you would like to host a ceremony in your area of the state.



Pictured (L-R) is USPS District Manager Falonda Woods, Senator James Lankford, and Katharine Hayes stand with the Oscar J. Upham plaque that will be placed inside the Guthrie Post Office

The Guthrie Post Office was officially dedicated on Tuesday morning in honor of Medal of Honor recipient Oscar Jefferson Upham during a ceremony attended by community members, military representatives, postal officials, and elected leaders, including U.S. Senator James Lankford.

The post office will now permanently bear the name of Oscar Jefferson Upham, a Guthrie resident, U.S. Marine, and Medal of Honor recipient who later served the community for more than three decades as a Guthrie mail carrier. **Related article:** [Guthrie Post Office to be named for Medal of Honor Recipient Oscar J. Upham](#)

The ceremony opened with the presentation of colors by the Guthrie Job Corps Honor Guard, the national anthem by Jason Reece, and an invocation led by Pastor Coleman. Stephanie Fiordelisi, Guthrie postmaster, welcomed attendees and said it was an honor to celebrate Upham's legacy with the community and family members present.



Falonda Woods, district manager for Arkansas and Oklahoma with the United States Postal Service, spoke about the significance of the dedication and the rare honor of naming a federal post office after an individual.

“It takes an act of Congress literally and a signature of the President of the United States to make it happen,” Woods said. “This honor is reserved for a few individuals.”

According to Woods, the Postal Service has more than 33,000 retail locations nationwide, with only 1,048 facilities named after individuals. Upham becomes only the 14th person in Oklahoma to receive the distinction.

Woods highlighted Upham’s military service, including his actions during the Spanish-American War and the Boxer Rebellion in China, where he earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery under enemy fire.

After his military service, Upham returned to Guthrie and worked as a letter carrier for 36 years before retiring from the post office.

Senator Lankford detailed the congressional effort required to rename the post office and praised the persistence of Upham’s family, especially great-granddaughter Katherine Hayes, for helping bring the project to reality.

“The more that we started digging and researching, the more we could see this absolutely needed to be done,” Lankford said.

Lankford also shared a letter from President Donald Trump recognizing Upham’s military service and sacrifice.

“The dedication of the Guthrie, Oklahoma Post Office in his name stands as a permanent tribute to his legacy,” the letter stated.

Lankford spoke extensively about the Boxer Rebellion and the actions of U.S. Marines who defended Americans, Christian missionaries, and foreign embassies during a three-month siege in China in 1900.

“It was an enormous act of bravery,” Lankford said. “He was the one that answered the call.”

Captain Joshua S. Rogers of the United States Marine Corps also spoke during the ceremony, praising Upham’s lifelong dedication to service.

“What he did repeatedly his entire life was excellence,” Rogers said. “Not a single act, but a lifetime.”

Hayes, one of Upham’s surviving great-granddaughters, addressed the crowd on behalf of the family. Hayes said the Medal of Honor returning to their side of the family years ago sparked renewed efforts to tell Upham’s story and preserve his legacy.

“What stands out is his reliance and faith in God,” Hayes said. “Oscar left our family a generational blessing.”

Hayes credited the Oklahoma Territorial Museum, local leaders, postal officials, and members of the community for helping educate the public about Upham’s life and accomplishments.

The ceremony concluded with the unveiling of the official dedication plaque, which will soon be permanently displayed inside the Guthrie Post Office lobby.

District 5B

District Commander Dave Shacher- Okresqtek52@yahoo.com

Post 187 – Moore



Memorial Day at Veterans Memorial Park was a meaningful reminder of the sacrifices made by the men and women who gave their lives in service to our nation. Presented by American Legion Post 184 and the City of Moore, the ceremony brought together veterans, families, and community members to honor the fallen and reflect on the true meaning of Memorial Day. Special guests Darrel Weaver, Rita Aragon, and William Lowe each shared heartfelt remarks that reinforced the importance of remembrance, patriotism, and supporting those who continue to carry the legacy of service forward.



Members of Post 184 also proudly stood in support at the Oklahoma State Capitol as Aaron Hudgins was recognized as the 2026 Oklahoma Veteran of the Year. Through his dedication and leadership with the Travis Manion Foundation, Aaron has made a lasting impact on veterans, service members, and communities across Oklahoma. His continued efforts to

inspire leadership, volunteerism, and community engagement serve as an outstanding example of veterans leading long after their time in uniform.



At the Post, camaraderie remains strong thanks to Travis Johnson's continued efforts and regular Poker Night gatherings. Week after week, members and guests come together for an evening filled with laughter, friendly competition, and fellowship. More than just a card game, Poker Night has become another way for veterans and the community to connect, strengthen friendships, and enjoy the welcoming atmosphere that makes Post 184 feel like home.

District 6A

Commander Mike Devenitch – Sentrymike@yahoo.com

Post 160 – Yukon

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT



LIBRARY

LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS

Veterans History Project




American
Red Cross

Hosted by James Albert Wheatley American Legion Post 160
1010 W. Main St., Yukon, OK

★

JAMES LANKFORD

★

U.S. SENATOR FOR OKLAHOMA

Saturday, June 6th, 2026 • Starting at 9 a.m.

Veterans sign-up for interview:
Register at Eventbrite

Volunteers conducting interviews:
Register at Eventbrite

For questions, call our office at 918-581-7651

STARTING AN HONOR GUARD: Step one is complete — securing a gun safe. With that in place, the Post will now begin the process of obtaining ceremonial rifles. Special thanks to Jason O. for helping acquire the safe, and to his son's friend Evan for putting in the hard work to get it in place. Thank you as well to Wally and Cliff for preparing the Post for its arrival. It took a true team effort to get this done, and it's a great step forward in building our future Honor Guard.

Post 24 – Anadarko

Celebrate AMERICA DAY

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE 250 YEARS OF AMERICA!

PARADE STARTS AT 10 AM AT RANDLETT PARK OKLAHOMA STREET GATE EAST ON OKLAHOMA ST., TO SW 2ND, THEN NORTH ON 2ND TO MAIN ST. WEST ON MAIN TO VFW.

SATURDAY JUNE 13TH

FESTIVITIES BEGIN AT 10 AM

RANDLETT PARK
Anadarko, Oklahoma

FLAG FOLDING CEREMONY

PRO BASEBALL PLAYERS

CAR SHOW ON BROADWAY

FREE HOT DOGS FOR EVERYONE AT THE VFW!
Provided by VFW Post 1015 Auxilliary at noon

ALL BUSINESSES, ORGANIZATIONS, CHURCHES, AND TRIBES ARE ENCOURAGED TO JOIN THE PARADE. SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN LEGION. CALL GLEN PRICE 405-402-0151 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Register for parade the day of @ 901 W. Central American Legion Post

1 PM HONOR MILITARY (RANDLETT)

FREE BOOTHS FOR VENDORS NEAR BANDSTAND (RANDLETT)

4 PM RETIRE USED FLAGS
VFW HUT

BRING YOUR LAWN CHAIRS!

MUSIC AT BAND STAND (RANDLETT)

Post 24 is sponsoring a Celebrate America event on June 13, 2026, in conjunction with VFW Post 1015 here in Anadarko.

Post 353 – Mustang



American Legion Post 353 Representative Paul Ray accepts the Outstanding Service Organization Award for the Post from MHS FFA students. PHOTO BY JACOB STURM

Chamber recognizes businesses at annual Awards Banquet
By Jacob Sturm news@mustangpaper.com

On a night full of community investment opportunities for many Mustang area businesses, it was the common goal of the betterment of the thriving community that shined the brightest. The annual Mustang Chamber of Commerce, Awards Banquet occurred this past week at the Venue located next to the Bridge Church on State Highway 152, where a silent auction and a live auction took place to help raise funds for the Chamber of Commerce. Those funds go toward all chamber functions and will also be a strong factor in supplying the scholarships for MHS Seniors for next year. The night also involved the announcement of a plethora of awards, with many noteworthy names (article content edited).

American Legion Post 353 Representative Paul Ray accepts the Outstanding Service Organization Award for the Post from MHS FFA students to a standing ovation from the crowd in attendance.

District 6B

District Commander Bobby Marshall – anakah76@gmail.com

Post 55 – Duncan

April 21st, 2026: We honored long time American Legion Post 55 member Robert Skiles during a Post Everlasting Ceremony. Robert was a Vietnam War Era USAF Veteran. Here is a link to his obituary: [Robert Skiles Obituary February 2, 2026 - Carter-Smart Funeral Home](#)



May 19th, 2026: Post 55 was able to give out the Joe Moore Award to Mystic Knight during the Duncan High School Award Ceremony. The Joe Moore Award is awarded to a graduating senior who has overcome a lot of obstacles during their time in high school. The student is selected by the Duncan High School teaching staff and are selected by not only overcoming obstacles but by their positive attitude as well as not giving up on their dreams for the future. Congratulations to Mystic Knight and the future ahead!



May 23rd, 2026: Post 55 had their first blood drive of the year. We had the Oklahoma Blood Institute come out with the Blood Mobile to the post and we had 8 successful blood donations for the day!





May 25th, 2026: Post 55 participated in the Memorial Day Ceremony in Memorial Park in Duncan. We worked with other local Veterans Organizations during the ceremony. The ceremony turned out beautiful and we were honored to come out and memorialize those who gave all.



Post Renovations Update: We got the walls set up for the office. We had spackled and primed the walls in the office and are now in the process of painting it. The kitchenette area is coming along as well. We were able to install the sink and sink counter. We also made leeway on the kitchen countertop project that has all the military emblems. We were able to epoxy and smooth out the edges of the countertop and are in the process of installing it. Thanks to our Post SAA Douglas Carroll for spearheading the countertop project and to those who helped out to make it possible!

We were able to send out 1 delegate for Girls State and 2 for Boys State.

District 7

District Commander Elmo May - [ElmoMay 55@yahoo.com](mailto:ElmoMay55@yahoo.com)

Post 181 – Elk City

Elk City Post 181 sponsored 8 boys and 7 girls to Boys and Girls State this year which is a record in modern times for us.

Post 146 – Sayre



Post 146 in Sayre gave 4 scholarships to Sayre High School seniors and certificates to 8 high school students, one student wasn't present for awards,



Cub Scout pack 3662, Legionnaires Shirley May, Elmo May and 4 granddaughters put out over 400 flags at the local cemetery for Memorial Day observance.

Elmo May had the honor of giving a Memorial Day speech at Sayre's local golf course before t-time. The Kiwanis puts on the tournament and the money raised goes towards children and youth in the community.

I am proud of everything all the posts in District 7 does.

Post 300 – Corn

Post 300 in Corn sponsored and sent 1 boy to Boys state.

Post 91 – Weatherford



Post 91 in Weatherford proudly sent 4 young men to Boys state:



Pic of two Cordell HS Seniors receiving an American Legion Scholarship. The funds for these scholarships are provided from funds from Cordell American Legion Post that was closed about 10 years ago. These funds are invested with the Cordell Edwards Jones office and used for two annual scholarships and for Boys/Girls state delegates when any apply.



Weatherford Regional Hospital highlights growth, staffing and future challenges

Weatherford Regional Hospital Administrator Darin Farrell provided an update on the hospital's operations, economic impact, and future concerns during a recent Weatherford Area Economic Development Foundation meeting at Weatherford City Hall Wednesday.

Farrell discussed the hospital's long history in the community, noting that healthcare services have been provided in Weatherford for more than 60 years. He explained that the current hospital facility will reach 20 years old next year, creating a growing need for infrastructure upgrades and maintenance projects including roofing, boilers, and ventilation systems.

He credited community support and local donations as major reasons the hospital has remained stable and successful over the years. Contributions through the hospital foundation and support from local residents have helped fund

equipment, facility improvements, and healthcare resources for the community. Farrell explained that Weatherford Regional Hospital operates under the Weatherford Health Authority while SSM Health manages the hospital's day-to-day operations. He said the partnership allows the hospital to benefit from large-scale purchasing agreements, stronger insurance contract negotiations, leadership support, and access to electronic medical record systems that would otherwise be difficult for a rural hospital to afford independently.

The hospital currently offers a wide range of healthcare services and continues working to recruit additional providers to serve the area. Farrell praised the cooperation among physicians, nurses, and hospital staff, describing the hospital's workplace culture as one of its strongest assets.

Hospital statistics presented during the meeting showed 7,477 admissions, 219 births, more than 9,000 emergency room visits, and approximately 25,000 outpatient visits over the past year. Farrell said those numbers demonstrate the hospital's importance not only to Weatherford residents but also to surrounding communities. An economic impact study included in the hospital's community health needs assessment estimated the hospital employs approximately 222 people and contributes more than \$13 million in payroll-related economic activity to the local economy. The study also estimated the overall healthcare sector generates more than \$65 million annually in economic impact for the Weatherford area. Farrell reviewed several recent equipment and facility upgrades completed at the hospital, including

payments have helped improve the hospital's financial outlook in recent years. The hospital ended 2024 with a small operating loss, but improved Medicaid reimbursement rates contributed to stronger financial performance in 2025. An economic impact study included in the hospital's community health needs assessment estimated the hospital employs approximately 222 people and contributes more than \$13 million in payroll-related economic activity to the local economy. The study also estimated the overall healthcare sector generates more than \$65 million annually in economic impact for the Weatherford area. Farrell reviewed several recent equipment and facility upgrades completed at the hospital, including

Photo: Ken Hospital, Page 9

'Bricks of Honor'

Celebrating those who have served our country



The Weatherford American Legion sells 'Bricks of Honor' to commemorate those who have served in the military and the sacrifices they have made for their country. The bricks are placed at the Greenwood Cemetery memorial. These bricks are available for purchase to anyone who has served in the military or is a family member of a veteran. Veterans do not have to be deceased or residing in Weatherford to be included in this memorial. The cost to purchase a brick is \$50 and this goes toward the cost of the brick itself, the inscription of names and the placement of the brick. Order forms for these bricks may be requested from David Lawrence, American Legion Post 91 Commander. Lawrence can be contacted at (580) 819-2112.

Photo: Ken Hospital, Page 9

WEATHERFORD DAILY NEWS, WEEKENDER, MAY 16, 2026 - PAGE 15

Local news

'Bricks of honor'

Celebrating those who have served

The Weatherford American Legion sells "Bricks of Honor" to commemorate those who have served in the military and the sacrifices they have made for their country. The bricks are placed at the Greenwood Cemetery memorial. These bricks are

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Retirees



Reid Newspapers poll shows early Oklahoma gubernatorial trends

Lucas Pottasch
Reid Newspapers
County Strategist

with a separate survey on State Question 622, marked the first poll conducted by Reid Newspapers.

Launched last Tuesday, the gubernatorial election poll, along

Reid Newspapers' digital platform and presented in Reid Newspapers' print edition.

With the Republican and Democratic primaries quickly approaching,

developing our own polling dataset for the gubernatorial race was a priority. After one

Photo: Ken Pottasch, Page 2A

Reminder:
Weatherford City employees ask that flowers placed on gravesites on Memorial Day be picked up by June 6. Any left will be collected by the City of Weatherford. They also ask that all flowers be secured due to possible high winds.

Reminder:
Because Monday is a federal holiday, there will be no Weatherford Daily News. Thursday delivery will resume. Weatherford Daily News and information can still be found on the Weatherford Daily News Facebook page.



Weatherford honors '26 athletic hall of fame inductees'

Weatherford honored its Class of 2026 Athletic Hall of Fame inductees Friday. The honorees included: Emily Kaiser Broadbent, Class of 1980; Barry Jones, Class of 1982; and Kevin Weidner, Class of 1982.

Hawkins to continue Memorial Day tradition honoring fallen heroes with playing of taps

David Topolowski
City Manager/Police

to carry on the tradition of honoring the fallen, Hawkins said. "I hope to be a good example for my kids, and others, by showing up and honoring our nation's heroes, regardless of the weather or anyone else being there."

Hawkins said when he was a youth he played in quite a few Memorial Day ceremonies.

Photo: Ken Pottasch, Page 14A



WDN Green Spade Award is back for second year!



After a popular and successful inaugural year for the WDN Green Spade Award, the contest returns in 2026. See more details on Page 3A. Above is the contest of Paul and Jo Simon's garden. The Simons were the Weatherford Daily News Green Spade winners in July 2025.

Weatherford veteran reflects on honoring America's fallen

David Topolowski
City Manager/Police

For many Americans, Memorial Day serves with backyard cookouts, long weekends and the unofficial start of summer. But for Dr. David Lawrence, the holiday carries a far more solemn meaning.

Lawrence, a retired military officer, reflects on the sacrifices of those who served. "I think it's great that we have a nation that honors its military men and women," Dr. Lawrence said. "Starting with"



Memorial Day, the fact that we honor those who have given their lives in defense of our country and our way of life.

Photo: Ken Pottasch, Page 14B

Chatterbox

Do you have information for the WDN Chatterbox? Call (580) 722-1244. Email: Chatterbox@wdn.com. Jan Pugh: Irene Brown, Katherine Brown, Buck Robinson, Anne Davis, Kelly Noren-Khoo, Lillian Taylor and Linda Davis.

WEATHERFORD DAILY NEWS, WEEKENDER, MAY 23, 2020 - PAGE 13A

Local news

'Bricks of honor': Celebrating those who have served our country

The Weatherford American Legion sells "Bricks of Honor" to commemorate those who have served in the military and the sacrifices they have made for their country. The bricks are placed at the Greenwood Cemetery memorial. These bricks are available for purchase to anyone who has served in the military or is a family member of a friend of a veteran. Veterans do not have to be deceased or residing in Weatherford to be included in this memorial.

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Honor

Continued from Page 1A

of life is very telling of who we are in this country."

Dr. Lawrence described Memorial Day as a solemn occasion centered on those who never returned home, while Veterans Day serves more as a celebration and expression of appreciation for anyone who served in the armed forces.

"Veterans Day is more of a celebration and recognition of appreciation by our nation to anybody who served," he said. "Not necessarily going to war or anything, but to actually sign up and go to boot camp and serve their country."

He also pointed to Armed Services Day, celebrated May 16 of this year, as another important observance, recognizing those currently serving in the military.

"I think it's really great that we kind of cover all groups," Dr. Lawrence said. "Those that gave it all, anybody who served, and those who are currently serving."

For Dr. Lawrence personally, Memorial Day serves as a reminder that freedom comes with a cost.

"What it means to me is just the sacrifice that some have made for our way of life and for our freedoms," he said. "Freedom isn't free. We're the land of the free because of the brave."

That understanding was shaped in part by his own time in the military. Dr. Lawrence joined the United States Marine Corps in 1980 during the height of tensions surrounding the Iran hostage crisis. At the time, American hostages taken in 1979 were still being held, and Lawrence said many service members believed war with Iran was possible.

"My dad was in the Air Force, and I joined the Marine Corps and went to boot camp prepared to go to war with Iran," Lawrence said.

Although the hostages, who were held for 444 days, were released in early 1981 on the same day President Ronald Reagan was inaugurated, Dr. Lawrence remembers weekends spent on standby while Marines prepared for the possibility of conflict.

"We were actually called in on some weekends on standby thinking we might go to war with Iran," he said.

More than four decades later, Dr. Lawrence said it is striking to see the United States still dealing with tensions involving the same Iranian regime.

"When I learned about the current conflict with Iran, I was going, 'Good grief, we've been dealing with these folks for a long time,'" he said.

Dr. Lawrence also recalled the 1983 bombing in Beirut, Lebanon, in which 241 American service members — including 220 Marines — were killed in a terrorist attack on a military barracks.

"That happened while I was actually in the Marine Corps," he said. "I wasn't over there, but I could have been."

He later became eligible to join the American Legion during the era surrounding the U.S. invasion of Grenada.

Today, Dr. Lawrence continues participating in local Memorial Day events in Weatherford, saying the observances remain important reminders of the sacrifices made by generations of military men and women.

"I always try to partake in Memorial Day events here locally for that very reason," he said.



WEATHERFORD AMERICAN LEGION 100th BIRTHDAY BASH!
CENTENNIAL ON MAIN STREET
JUNE 6TH
HOMEMADE ICE CREAM CONTEST 5PM-9PM
Come hungry Leave happy
LIVE MUSIC, FACE PAINTING, BOUNCE HOUSES
5:00PM - Ice Cream Contest Begins
7:00PM - Kids RC, Go Kart, Car Parade
7:30-9:00 PM BOUNCE HOUSES
FREE BIRTHDAY CAKE FOR EVERYONE!
\$10 for the 1st birthday, \$5 for any additional • ICE CREAM CONTEST • BOUNCE HOUSES

District 8A

District Commander Barry Vincent - Bvincent27@gmail.com

Post 53 – Perry



At the Posts regular monthly meeting, Commander Jeremy Hines hosted Nathan Reed, Perry City Manager, shared updates on several projects and developments during a recent discussion. A Utah native who came to Oklahoma seeking to escape the snow, Reed said he quickly grew to appreciate Perry's strong sense of community. He reported the Perry Lake Dam Project is progressing well with work expected to begin in late summer, while ongoing street improvements—including the alley behind Homeland—are nearing completion. Reed also noted continued progress on the YMCA facility, which is anticipated to finish construction this summer. Looking ahead, a new Amazon operation west of I-35 is expected to open in November, bringing approximately 100 driver jobs. Additional commercial growth includes planned locations for Dunkin' and Jimmy John's by 2027, as well as a Jack in the Box tied to the Pilot Travel Center Project, which is expected to be completed in early 2027.

Perry also sent 1 delegate to Boy's State and 1 delegate to Girl's State.



A dedicated crew of volunteers helped place flags throughout Grace Hill Cemetery in preparation for Memorial Day, honoring the nation's fallen veterans. Among those assisting were the Mayor and his family, who joined community members in the annual tradition of ensuring veterans' graves were properly marked with American flags. Also included in the events of the day was the Mayor signing and presenting the Perry Poppy Proclamation Day.



Preparations for the Memorial Day Ceremony were completed by a dedicated group of volunteers who worked to ensure a meaningful tribute to the nation's fallen heroes. The ceremony featured Oklahoma State Senator Chuck Hall as guest speaker, joining residents in honoring the service and sacrifice of local veterans.

District 8B

District Commander Wayne Flowers – Cdrpost273@yahoo.com

PLEASE SEND ALL
SUBMISSIONS TO
TALOK1889@GMAIL.COM

NO LATER THAN
1800hrs on the 28TH
OF THE MONTH

Please include District
and Post number in
the subject line for
submission

POST EVERLASTING

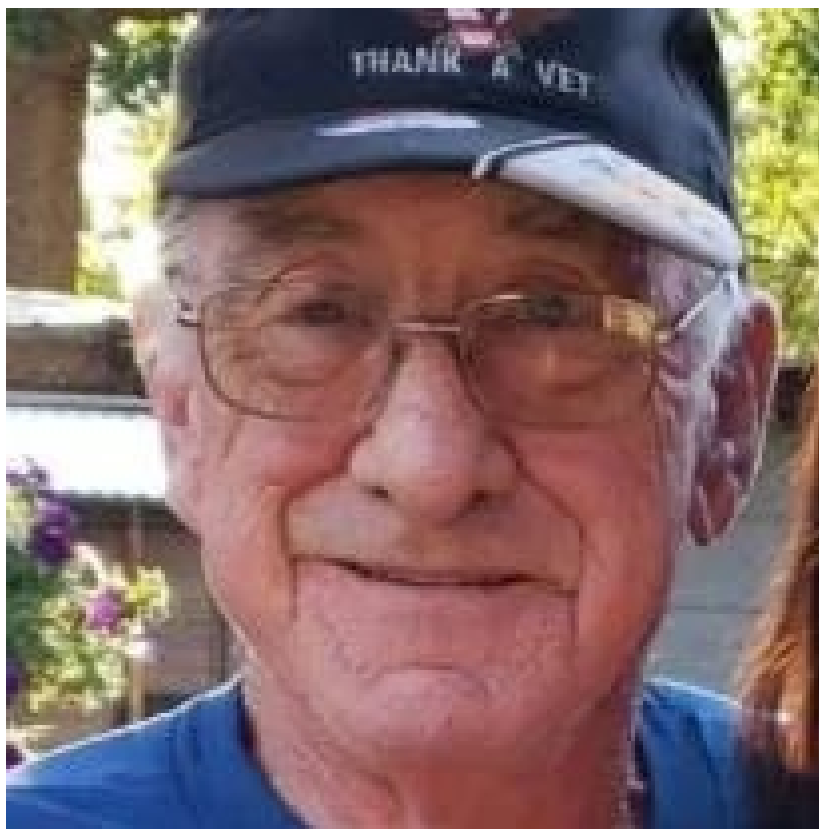


Daniel H. “Dan” Pennington

No photo provided

<https://www.echovita.com/us/obituaries/ok/guthrie/daniel-pennington-21409028>

Ronnie J Moore



<https://www.nicholsfuneralandcremation.com/obituaries/ronnie-moore-10/#!/TributeWall>

Robert Skiles



<https://www.cartersmartfuneralhome.com/obituaries/robert-skiles>

Roscoe "R.C." Smith



<https://www.smithgallo.com/obituary/roscoe-rc-smith>

Samuel Stevenson Jr.



<https://www.templeandsons.com/visitations.php?id=7332>

Ernest Lee McMullen



<https://www.huber-benson.com/obituaries/Ernest-Lee-McMullen?obId=47890413>

Royce Wayne Garsee



<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/royce-garsee-obituary?id=61142767>

Donald Lee Bishop



<https://www.mcneilsfuneral.com/obituaries/Donald-Lee-Bishop?obId=48091896>

Jarrett Oscar Lee



<https://www.tributesw.care/obituaries/jarrett-lee>

Emery Lee Dye



<https://www.sevierfuneralhome.com/obituaries/emery-dye#:~:text=Emery%20Lee%20Dye%20of%20Tuttle,Newcastle%20High%20School%20in%201953.>

Lori Anne Bateman**ALA**

Wife of Bud York, Legionnaire from Post 2.



<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/lori-bateman-obituary?id=61429583>