

**AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY**

The Message

North Dakota American Legion Auxiliary
1801 23rd Ave N, Rm 113, Fargo, ND 58102-1047
701-253-5992 • www.ndala.org
www.facebook.com/ndamericanlegionauxiliary/

NW Division National Vice President to Visit Convention

The American Legion Auxiliary Department of North Dakota welcomes Shareen Johnson, Northwestern Division National Vice President, as a guest to the 2026 Department Convention. Vice President Johnson is a 42-year member of Don Stough Unit 33 of Lander, Wyoming.

Vice President Johnson's eligibility comes through her father, Master Chief Petty Officer John Sturgeon, who served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean and Vietnam Wars as a naval submariner, and her twin sister, Kathleen Ebert, who retired after serving 20 years in the U.S. Navy.

Vice President Johnson worked as a medical transcriptionist with an orthopedic surgery group for 21 years. She then worked for 12 years for the State of Wyoming with the Department of Health at the Wyoming Life Resource Center, a facility for intellectually disabled and dual diagnosis residents, until retiring in 2022. Not one to sit around and twiddle her thumbs, Vice President Johnson left retirement behind and found full-time work at a grocery store as the staff scheduler and pricing coordinator.

Welcome to North Dakota, Shareen Johnson!



Shareen Johnson

Welcome To 2026 Department Convention

Carol Wolf, President of Gilbert C. Grafton Unit 2 Fargo and Carol Grieve, President of Richard E. Nelson Unit 297 Harwood, and their team of convention volunteers welcome members of the American Legion Family to the 2026 American Legion Department Convention. The event will be held June 26-28 at the Ramada by Wyndham, (formerly Doublewood), 3333 13th Ave South in Fargo, North Dakota.

The Convention Committee encourages everyone to experience not only the convention events but to get out and enjoy the dining and shopping experiences the community of Fargo-Moorhead has to offer. Welcome to Fargo and enjoy your stay!

Department President

"At the end of the day, it is not about what you have or even what you've accomplished...it's about who you've lifted up, who you've made better. It's about what you've given back." - Denzel Washington

Happy spring to you all as I am writing my last 'Message' article as your American Legion Auxiliary Department President. As my year draws to a close, reflecting on what a wonderful experience this has been brings a smile to my face and fills my heart with gratitude.

For many years, my personal philosophy has been to give back wherever I feel led. God led me to the Department of North Dakota to serve in this role, and I hope I have represented the organization positively while helping move it forward. It is my sincere hope that this organization will continue to thrive in its mission, thinking creatively, and finding new ways to grow and expand our role within the American Legion Family.

What a fulfilling and blessed year this has been so far. I have shed many happy tears over the past few years as I stepped into Department leadership roles. Those tears often came unexpectedly, and through them, I came to know that this was a role God placed me in at exactly the right time.

I would like to take this time to reflect on the year so far. From being installed last June to being ratified at the 2025 National Convention, to Fall and Spring District meetings, to the Winter Conference, to meetings and events I was invited to take part in during my term, to the relationships that were built and are now deeply cherished, and to the articles and information shared on behalf of our organization - I am incredibly grateful to have been a part of every single moment.

Thank you for supporting my President Projects, participating in the York American Legion Family Day, and stepping into leadership roles that help move our organization forward. Thank you for the words of encouragement, the support, the camaraderie, the team spirit, the positive energy, and for so much that goes unsaid, yet has made this year more amazing than I could have imagined. I truly see us as a team, and I am deeply grateful to everyone who has been part of that team this year - supporting one another, encouraging one another, and continuing to promote our organization.

We recently concluded our Spring District meetings, and I enjoyed traveling across the state to participate in each one. During these meetings, I discussed the Department of North Dakota's plans to develop a one-to-five-year strategic plan. I reviewed the former 2014-2019 National Strategic Plan and asked for insight on additional ideas we could incorporate into our upcoming North Dakota strategic plan to ensure growth and longevity of our organization for years to come.

At each meeting, I also posed a simple yet powerful question: "What is your why?" The responses were varied, heartfelt, and deeply meaningful. Hearing those personal reflections was by far the favorite part of the meetings and a strong reminder of why our work matters so much.

As a proud, long-time member of the York ALA, I was thrilled to see the National organization encourage units to "open their doors" for an American Legion Family Day. I wanted to do just that, open the doors of our local Posts and Units, and Saturday, April 25, turned out to be one of the best days of my life. Approximately one hundred people were in attendance to support the American Legion Family. The day included a large raffle to raise funds for my President's Projects, a free meal, a great band, and shared fellowship between the York Post and Unit. We also honored our veterans with presentations, including "Welcome Home" coins for Vietnam-era veterans and "Thank You for Your Service" coins presented to all veterans in attendance.

I was honored and excited to present continuous years of membership certificates to members of the York unit. What a truly blessed day it was, spent with friends, family, and fellow American Legion Family members. Thank you to everyone who helped support the event in any way. In addition to celebrating American Legion Family Day, we were also proud to recognize America's 250th birthday, the 80th anniversary of the York Post

and the 75th Anniversary of the York Unit.

Over the course of this year, I have communicated with National and Department levels to determine a way to recognize and present continuous years-of-membership certificates to our members. With so many factors involved, particularly regarding membership rosters, it is not something that can be implemented Department-wide at this time. However, it is my hope that this can be achieved in the future. In the meantime, I encourage units to present continuous years-of-membership honors to your long-time members at your unit meetings. It truly makes a difference when members are recognized in this meaningful way. Providing a special certificate shows each member that they matter, and it becomes a cherished keepsake for both the member and their family.

The next big event on our calendar is the 2026 Department Convention, which will be held June 26-28 at the Ramada by Wyndham in Fargo. I encourage each of you to attend and support both your current and future leaders. During the convention, we will present the most up-to-date draft revisions to our Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules for a vote. We are also honored to welcome Shareen Johnson, Northwestern Division National Vice President from Wyoming, who will provide both inspiration and insight. I am confident that great memories will be created over this memorable weekend.

As I reflect on the big items I encouraged over the year, here are a few reminders:

Please become familiar with our Department website at www.ndala.org. The website is frequently updated and has information and links to a wide variety of items.

Please sign up and take 10 ALA Academy training sessions through the national ALA Academy website (www.legion-aux.org/ala-academy) to receive a certification of completion that will be presented to you at the convention.

Please share your unit's activities on our ND American Legion Auxiliary Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ndamericanlegionauxiliary/

Continue working toward 100% membership. Remember, individuals who sign up ten new members and Districts and units achieving 100% membership by June 15th will be entered into a drawing for a prize that will be drawn at the Department Convention in Fargo.

As I write this, our membership has surpassed 86%! We have thirty-three units that have reached 100% membership so far. Keep doing what you are doing to support membership!

Thank you to everyone who has donated to my President's Projects: The Honor Flight Network for Eastern/Western North Dakota and the NDSU Bison Strides Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies Program for Veterans and their Families. Additional donations are always welcomed and may be sent to the Department Office at 1801 23rd Ave. N., Fargo, ND 5801-1047.

If you have any photos from this past year that you would be willing to share, I am hoping to put together a slideshow and would love to include a variety of photos from throughout the year. Our Department Historian, Carrie Heinz, is also seeking additional photos to include in the President's scrapbook. Your shared memories help preserve this year's story and are genuinely appreciated.

I am so thankful for each of you and feel truly blessed to have served as your Department President. I will be forever grateful for this opportunity of a lifetime. Please remember that everything you do on behalf of this organization truly matters. Thank you for your continued loyalty, dedication, and commitment. It is an incredible honor to be part of the North Dakota American Legion Family. This has been one of the best years of my life, and I close with a grateful heart.

Thank you and may God bless each of you.

Candace Berg



Candace Berg

105th Department Convention

Ramada By Wyndham in Fargo

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (may be revised without notice)

Changes will be available at

www.ndala.org/department-convention/

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2026

- 1:00 PM Auxiliary Registration Opens (Registration closes at 5:00 PM)
- 1:00 PM Auxiliary Department Executive Committee (DEC) meeting
- 2:00 PM Meet and Greet - Incoming District Officers and Incoming Department Commander and Department President
- 3:00 PM Legion VA&R Committee Meeting / Auxiliary Members Welcome
- 3:00 PM District Commanders and District Presidents Flag/Banner Rehearsal (for Joint Session)
- 4:00 PM Auxiliary Installation Rehearsal - Department Officers, District Presidents
- 4:30 PM Pictures for Department Officers, District Presidents and Department Chairmen
- 4:30 PM District Presidents and Department Chairmen (Incoming and Outgoing) Exchange Duty Books and Flags (Meet with Candace Berg and Sandy Smith)
- 5:00 PM Supper Break
- 6:00 PM Joint Opening Session
- 7:00 PM Teri Bryant's Retirement Party

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2026

- 8:00 AM Auxiliary Registration Resumes (Auxiliary Registration closes at Noon)
- 8:30 AM Auxiliary Opening Session: Memorial Service, Guest Speakers, Chairmen Reports, Awards
- 9:00 AM Legion Children & Youth Committee / Auxiliary Members Welcome
- 10:15 AM Teddy Roosevelt Presentation (Sponsored by TAL)
- 12:00 PM Past Presidents Parley Luncheon
- 1:30 PM Auxiliary Session resumes
- 2:00 PM Registration and Credentials Committees Reports Nominations and Elections of Department Officers (2026-2027)
- 4:00 PM 2026 National Convention Meeting (Auxiliary Delegates)
- 5:30 PM Banquet Social
- 6:30 PM Department Convention Banquet Dance by the ND State Band

SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 2026

- 7:00 AM Catholic Mass
- 9:00 AM Joint Worship Service
- Joint Session
- Auxiliary Session Resumes
- Installation of Department Officers (2026-2027)
- Department President (2025-2026) Report, Candace Berg
- Close of 2026 Department Convention
- 12:00 PM Organizational DEC Meeting (2026-2027)
- Department Executive Committee, District Presidents, and Finance Board

Department Secretary

Greetings Auxiliary Members.

Have you made plans to attend the 2026 Department Convention slated for June 26-28 at the Ramada by Wyndham (formerly known as Doublewood) in Fargo, ND? You will find registration and banquet ticket order information for the Department Convention elsewhere in this publication. Members of Gilbert C. Grafton Unit 2 (Fargo) and Richard E. Nelson Unit 297 (Harwood) have teamed up again this year to co-host the convention. We welcome you all to the Fargo-Moorhead area and hope you will be able to explore our beautiful communities while you are here.

North Dakota currently has thirty-three units with over 100% membership. Thank you to Unit Membership Chairmen for your work gathering dues from current, new, and rejoined members. By now, all officers and chairmen should have paid their 2026 dues. Members who have not paid 2026 dues are not eligible to hold office in a unit, District, or the Department, and those names will be removed from officer lists. This action may result in your members not receiving information and relevant materials

from the Department Office.

The annual year-end impact reports are arriving, and the information compiled so far indicates that units and members continue to be active in their communities, supporting our mission to support veterans, active military, and their families. Congratulations, and thank you for the work you all do on behalf of veterans, children and youth, and in your communities across the state of North Dakota. I am so proud to be part of this wonderful organization.

I wish each of you good health, and I look forward to seeing everyone in Fargo in June. Please keep our veterans, our troops, and their families in your prayers. Take care of yourselves and one another.

God Bless our troops and God Bless America.

Marcy Schmidt



Marcy Schmidt

Department NEC

When completing a Year-End Impact Report, it is easy to question whether the numbers truly reflect the time and effort involved. At a recent executive meeting for Unit 135 of McVile, I realized how much my reported hours underestimated my actual involvement. In just one week, I spent four days in National-level ZOOM meetings focused on strengthening our organization, from revising the "Mission Statement" to improving the leadership development process.

These meetings were led by our National Executive Director, Ben Hendricks, whose marketing background and collaborative leadership style have been impressive. He listens openly, encourages ideas, and offers thoughtful guidance without judgment. Attendance from the 52 Departments could have been much stronger at the five information-packed ZOOM sessions held this week and last. The lack of participation highlighted a broader issue - members at the Department, District, and Unit levels are not taking advantage of the extensive resources available to them.

One such resource, delivered quarterly to all members, is 'The Auxiliary Magazine.' This publication consistently offers valuable information for Auxiliary members, sometimes even through its advertising. For those less comfortable online, printed resources remain essential, but the National website and ALA Academy provide a wealth of training opportunities that are easily accessible and self-paced. Programs can even be viewed together during Unit meetings.

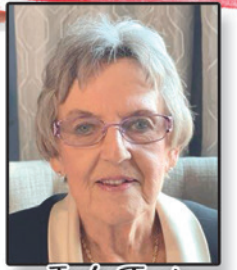
Additional National sessions addressed membership, inclusion, and leadership development. We discussed the importance of first impressions and ensuring that the public understands we are a service organization rooted in honoring those who serve our country. Inclusiveness across generations was emphasized along with the idea to "meet members where they are." Some members may not attend meetings but are eager to contribute their talents in meaningful ways.

At Unit 135, members serve effectively based on their interests and availability: coordinating, designing, and delivering greeting cards to veterans; overseeing the poppy poster contest; managing community service projects, participating in legislative efforts, and serving in Girls State leadership. These examples show how meeting members "where they are" strengthens our organization.

Leadership growth and advocacy were recurring themes, and the training options currently available support this development well. While I may have spent more hours than officially recorded, every moment was worthwhile. The knowledge and enthusiasm already exist - we simply need to encourage participation, engage one another, and get excited about our shared mission.

Encourage, Engage, Get Excited.

Judy Twete



Judy Twete

Department Treasurer

I encourage all Unit Officers to attend our 2026 Department Convention in Fargo this summer. Even better, bring interested members from your units! It is such a fun time as we gather to talk about how we support our veterans, listen to the Legion Band, enjoy great food, vote on Department leadership, and meet new people. It is so important for leadership in the units to understand how the Department works, as well as meet Department Officers that can help them throughout the year.

I am running for a third term as your Department Treasurer and hope that I can count on your support. The last two years have been so interesting as we have been able to convert our State Life Members to PUFL membership, as well as clean up the books to present GAAP (Generally

Accepted Accounting Principles) compliant cash-basis financial statements. I really appreciate my predecessor, Sonnie Otto, for her good work to get this process started.

Thank you for your dedication and support for the veterans! It's always so important to remember and revisit why we are here - what our purpose is - as we plan for activities and supporting programs for the year.

Hope to see you there!

Susan Degner, CPA



Susan Degner

Department Chaplain

Happy Birthday America!

July 4, 2026, will be a time to celebrate and be proud of our country. The Bible supports a healthy love of country. It is both our duty and our privilege to pay taxes and obey laws. We are to pray for our nation and to honor and love our country. Even when leaders are not the ones you personally chose, we are to respect them.

I am personally honored to be able to celebrate this upcoming birthday of our nation, as so many my age will not have this opportunity. Believe me, it is rare that I admit there is something good about growing old. But when you think about Methuselah's age, I am just a baby—right?

1 Timothy 2:1-2 urges us to pray for our leaders so that we may live in peace. We should also seek God's wisdom for our nation. Romans reminds us, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

I enjoyed a recent newspaper editorial about North Dakota's growth. As I researched it, I found it to be true that our state consistently lost population from 1930 to 2000. Much of the growth we see today appears to be tied to the discovery of massive oil reserves in western North

Dakota. Since that discovery, our state has continued to grow, according to each census that has been taken. From 2000 to 2020, North Dakota grew by 15.8% to 770,094, the highest population in state history.

Based on estimates from January 2026, some predictions suggest we may soon reach nearly 800,000 people. Since 2010, our state has grown by about 19%. Migration and births are exceeding the death rate, and we have more opportunity than ever to encourage our young people to stay and thrive. We have so much to be proud of—and it really is amazing when you stop and think about it. So, let's blow up the balloons, bake the cake, put the candles on it, and celebrate like we've never celebrated before. Our American Legion family can help lead the way in this parade.

Virginia Satrom



Virginia Satrom

Holiday Baskets in a Small Town

American Legion Auxiliary Joseph E. Appert Unit 126 of Hazelton was busy during the 2025 holiday season. Members worked on projects such as baking holiday cookies and making festive candies, thoughtfully shopping for simple gifts, and then assembling Christmas gift baskets. Local veterans who might have spent the holiday alone with no family members nearby to help add holiday cheer enjoyed a holiday basket.

The ladies outdid themselves this year! Everyone had an idea, and there was not a bad plan among them. The baskets and gift bags (our cup runneth over!) were filled with items such as fresh fruit, cocoa mix, puzzle books, neck warmers, decorated holiday cookies, homemade fudge, Christmas ornaments, banana bread, chocolates, a gift card for a free meal at the local Coffee Shop, and a Christmas card wishing them a "Merry Christmas and thank you for your service."

It is just a small gesture on our part to show our appreciation for their sacrifice to keep our country safe and free. Some of the veterans came to the Coffee Shop to pick up their baskets, and Auxiliary members were able to spend some quality time with these special men. They were appreciative of our efforts to ensure they each had

a bright holiday. Truth be told, they made our Christmas brighter too!

Photo and article submitted by: Arlene Davis



Pictured (l-r): Auxiliary members Jenny Moch, Arlene Davis, Carol Humann, Sheri Brunner, Joy Hopkins, and Gloria Pederson.

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District 4



Hello from District 4. We had a great Winter Conference in January. We learned to make poppies—our goal was 250—and the workshops were very informative.

Once again, our Spring District Meeting was threatened by inclement weather, but it did not happen. Department President Candace Berg asked the question, “What is your why? Why did you join the American Legion Auxiliary?” It was interesting to hear the stories of each member’s “why,” and how long members have belonged to the Auxiliary. President Berg also encouraged everyone to sign up for the e-newsletter and join the North Dakota American Legion Auxiliary Facebook page. She suggested members take 10 Auxiliary Academy online training courses by June 15; participants will receive a certificate upon completion.

Department Membership Chairman Sandy Smith spoke on membership and encouraged all members to report their volunteer hours, mileage, and donations for the 2026 Year-End Impact Report. Shelley Schuster, Department Vice President, was able to attend our Spring meeting and was pleased to meet and visit with those in attendance.

Betty Geigle, Jamestown Unit 14, was elected as District 4 Vice President/Secretary. I would like to send a big, heartfelt thank you to Gail Marsolek for her time and talents serving as District 4 Vice President for the past several years.

We are looking forward to the 2026 Department Convention in Fargo. Congratulations to the Unit Membership Chairs who have achieved 100%+ membership and to those who have already achieved 90%. I look forward to seeing many of you at the convention and I wish you all a wonderful summer.

Jane Schoonover
District 4 President



Junior Activities

I know we struggle to get our Junior members involved in another function along with the many activities in school, FFA, 4-H, and church. I am happy to inform you that William C. Blair Unit 144 in Belfield has found a way.

Claire Coty, the Unit Junior Activities Chairman, started a local Junior Auxiliary Unit the end of 2024. The Officer Installation Ceremony was completed in April of 2025 and currently five Juniors are active members. Their Mission statement is: To support the American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who served/serving. Service, Not Self.

In May of 2025, these young ladies aided in the Poppy Program. On Memorial Day, they sang songs, recited poetry and stories, and handed out flyers and poppies to the audience. This earned them a Poppy Patch.

This group of Juniors held a bake sale to raise funds for the Children of Warriors Patch Program. They are currently working on an Adopt a Soldier project.

These Junior members work alongside the ALA Senior members, assisting them when needed.

Thank you, Claire, for setting such an outstanding example for other North Dakota units to get their Juniors involved in Junior Activities and the Patch Program. Please keep up the good work.

Jane Schoonover
Junior Activities Chairman



Follow us on our **NEW** Facebook page!

See what the Department of ND is doing to help veterans.

Search: www.facebook.com/ndamericanlegionauxiliary

Education

May is here and that means scholarship judging. Thank you to Erin Wood, Lake Region State College Public Information Officer and Dawn Johnson, Instructional Coach for Northeast Education Services Cooperative for judging Department and National scholarships. The panel selected Zachary Berger of Velva, Rowan Jess of Carrington, and Brandi Schock of McVile for the three \$500 Department Education Scholarships.



National scholarships are applied for and judged online. Referred on to the Northwestern Division for judging were: Drew Burriss, Children of Warriors selectee; Elydie Johnson, Spirit of Youth selectee; Brennan Martin, Member Loyalty selectee; and Julie Goeres, Non-Traditional Student Selectee. Final winners of the National scholarships will be announced in late May by the National organization.

Congratulations to these students and to all who applied for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to academics and their communities. Every applicant was worthy of the scholarships.

Reminder to this year’s Girls State and Boys State attendees: the Samsung American Legion Scholarship is due the first day of the program using an online application. Direct descendants of a wartime veteran who served on active duty during at least one of the periods of war officially designated as eligibility dates for membership in the American Legion should check out www.legion.org/scholarships/samsung to be ready with the information needed to apply.

Thank you to everyone who supported our youth, education personnel, schools and the units who reported activities to help me complete my year-end report for Northwestern Division. Look for the Education Program year-end report on the Department website at www.ndala.org/education/.

Start planning for “Ten for Education” so you’re off to a head start for next year’s Education Program. Each and every one of you truly make a difference!

Lynn Tomlinson
Department Education Chairman

2026-2027 Endorsed Officers

- Department President – Sandra Smith
- Department President-Elect – Shelley Schuster
- Department Treasurer – Susan Degner
- Department Secretary – Marcy Schmidt
- Department Chaplain – Virginia Satrom
- Department Historian – Carrie Heinz
- National Executive Committeeman – Sandra Petermann

This list is current as of publication. Further nominations may continue to be brought forward.

For full endorsement information, visit www.ndala.org/department-convention/

2026 Americanism Essay Contest Winners

Arliss Koski, Department Americanism Chairman, announces the following Department winners of the 2026 American Legion Auxiliary Americanism Essay Contest.

- Class I** Brinxlee Hay, sponsored by Lavern J. Thompson Unit 11, Cavalier
- Class II** Tenly Wolsky, sponsored by John Raymond O’Hara Unit 25, Carrington
- Class III** Ryan Richards, sponsored by Treuman-Webb-Phelps Unit 6, Grand Forks
- Class IV** Averie Sondeland, sponsored by Lavern J. Thompson Unit 11, Cavalier
- Class V** Hazel Albert, sponsored by Jefferson-Steinke Unit 18, Hope

Thank you to the units that promoted the 2026 Americanism Essay Contest and congratulations to the winners of this year’s contest.

Vietnam War Veterans Day Event

The American Legion Posts and Auxiliary Units of Gackle, Streeter, and Fredonia, along with the American Legion Post of Kulm, jointly hosted the 107th American Legion Birthday Party / Vietnam War Veterans Day event. The celebration took place at the Gackle Legion Hall on Saturday, March 21, 2026. Attendees enjoyed a light meal before participating in a special program honoring the occasion.

Commander Jon Metz of the Gackle Legion Post #250 welcomed everyone to the event and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Candace Berg, Auxiliary Department President, served as guest speaker. She provided insights into the American Legion and Auxiliary, highlighting the strong partnership and close relationship between the two organizations.

A highlight of the event was the presentation of Milestone Service Awards. Accolades included a Legion 60-year award and an Auxiliary 65-year award.

American Legion – Gackle
60 Years: Clifford Klundt

American Legion Auxiliary – Gackle
40 Years: Connie Kuhn
55 Years: Virginia Kleingartner
60 Years: Kathy Kleingartner, Cynthia Vik
65 Years: Mona Klose

American Legion Auxiliary – Streeter
30 Years: Paige Roesler, Jenna Miller
50 Years: Bonnie Nelson, Melissa Brenneise

Marella Koenig paid tribute to the symbolic “Missing Man Table,” reading its elements to the audience. Randy Entzminger led prayers, and Sharon Schlittenhard, pianist, accompanied group songs including “Star Spangled Banner,” “God Bless America,” and “Happy Birthday.”

Thank you to everyone who attended the event.
Article and photos submitted by: Elaine Ackerman



Front Row (l-r): Auxiliary members: Peggy Schroeder; Jane Schoonover, President District 4; Candace Berg, Department President; Elaine Ackerman, President Unit 250; Rosi Long. Back Row (l-r): Marella Koenig, Patty Moos, Judy Schultz.



Elaine Ackerman (left) with Mona Klose, 65-year Auxiliary member.



Pictured (l-r): Birthday party attendees. Elaine Ackerman, Auxiliary President Unit 250; Candace Berg, Auxiliary Department President; Jon Metz, Legion Commander Post 250.

A Legacy of Service to the Auxiliary

For fifty-five years, the members of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 166 of Walcott have known one constant presence at the heart of their work: Linda Stone. What is remarkable about those 55 years is that Linda not only served as an active member, but she also led the Unit as its President and leader for thirty-six consecutive years. As Linda retires from her long tenure as president of Unit 166, the Auxiliary and the entire community pause to recognize a remarkable legacy of service, leadership, and unwavering dedication to veterans and their families.

Linda's commitment to service runs deep. As the wife of a United States Air Force veteran and the proud mother of three children—one of whom is a retired member of the North Dakota Air National Guard—she has always understood the sacrifices made by military families. Her family's tradition of service also includes two brothers who served in the Armed Forces. But Linda's contributions extend far beyond her own family. Over the years, she has served the American Legion Auxiliary in numerous leadership roles including: District 10 President, Department of Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R) Field and Home Service Chairwoman, and Unit Treasurer. In each role, she brought the same energy, compassion, and tireless work ethic that members of Unit 166 have come to admire.

Perhaps no events better reflect Linda's dedication than the annual Memorial Day program and dinner she faithfully organized year after year. Each spring, Linda coordinated every detail—securing guest speakers, arranging the program, and rallying volunteers to prepare and serve the meal that followed. What many saw as a meaningful community tradition was, behind the scenes, the result of Linda's countless phone calls, planning sessions, and quiet determination to ensure veterans were properly honored.

Her leadership did not stop there. Every November, Linda again took the lead in organizing the Annual Veterans Dinner, arranging speakers and volunteers so that the event would be both memorable and meaningful for the veterans who attended.

Linda also took on many of the less visible but equally important responsibilities that kept our Auxiliary unit running. She managed communications, guided the unit's activities, and organized the annual Christmas party for Auxiliary members. Beyond Unit events, she regularly gathered groups to visit the local Veterans Home, where they hosted bingo parties and helped veterans shop for special Christmas gifts at the ND Veterans Home in Lisbon.

When the Iraq War created a need for hand-knitted helmet liners for service members overseas, Linda immediately mobilized the unit. Members picked up knitting needles and crochet hooks, producing helmet caps for deployed troops for as long as the military requested them.

Her dedication to honoring veterans extends even into the quiet spaces of local cemeteries. Each year, Linda visits seven area cemeteries to ensure that deceased Auxiliary members are properly recognized with the American Legion Auxiliary bronze marker placed on their graves—a small but meaningful tribute that reflects her deep respect for those who served.

Outside of the Auxiliary, Linda has long been an active member of her local Lutheran church, where her spirit of service has also been felt.

Those who work alongside Linda know that her leadership style has always been one of humility. She leads not for recognition, but out of a sincere desire to serve. One newer member of the Auxiliary captured that spirit perfectly.

"I have only known Linda for a year as I became an ALA member last winter. However, in this brief time I have known her, she has a heart of gold which is obvious to all. She tirelessly puts the veterans in her community first while quietly leading the charge. Never expecting a thank you or any praise, just quietly putting their needs first. So thoughtful and kind, Linda is a true patriot who loves her community, the veterans, and the ALA. She is the first to arrive and the last to leave any event." Those words reflect what so many in Unit 166 already know: Linda's service has never been about

titles or recognition. It has been about people—veterans, families, fellow Auxiliary members, and the community she cares so deeply about.

After 36 years as president and fifty-five years of membership, Linda Stone leaves behind more than a record of service. She leaves behind traditions that will continue, a stronger Auxiliary, and an example of what true patriotism and community leadership look like.

While she may be stepping down from her official role, the impact of Linda's dedication will continue to be felt for many years to come.

Submitted by: Laura Boyer, Unit 166 President



105th Annual Department Convention – June 26-28, 2026

Auxiliary Registration Form

Ramada By Wyndham, 3333 13th Ave S., Fargo, ND
(hotel formerly known as Doublewood)

Hotel Direct Phone: **701-235-3333**

Deadline to make hotel reservations is **May 18, 2026**
Please note: Call the hotel directly – do not call the 800 # Reservation Line

Please use this order form for Auxiliary Registration and to order Convention Banquet tickets and Past Presidents Parley Luncheon tickets.

- The Auxiliary Registration fee is **\$15.00** per person. Advanced registration by **June 12, 2026**, would be appreciated. Units are required to send in one (1) registration even if no one from the unit is attending.
- Advanced Department Convention Banquet Tickets – **June 10, 2026**, is the deadline for the \$40.00 (advanced price). Orders received after June 10th are \$45.00 per ticket.
- Past Presidents Parley Luncheon - **\$25.00** per person. Order advanced PPP tickets by **June 12, 2026**. Limited number PPP tickets may be available on-site.

| Member Name | Auxiliary Registration \$15.00 | Past Presidents Parley Luncheon - \$25.00 | Convention Banquet \$40 by June 10 / \$45 after June 10 | Total Amount Submitted |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|------------------------|
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Make Checks Payable to: American Legion Auxiliary

Mail Payment to: American Legion Auxiliary Dept of ND, 1801 23rd Ave N., Room 113, Fargo, ND 58102-1047

In Memoriam

District 2

- Martha B Johnson, PUFL, Lakota
- Marie Solberg, Lakota
- Ruth Hatten, Lakota
- Karen Kern, Pembina
- Betty Beck, Northwood
- Marlys M Langton, McVillie
- Marian D Hendrickson, PUFL, McVillie
- Ila L Loken, Lankin
- Laurie A Jensen, Lankin
- Trudy E Wippler, Lankin
- Mae Shulson, St. Thomas

District 3

- Monna R Morse, Langdon

District 4

- Shirley Stoller, Jamestown
- Susan L Sanderson, New Rockford
- Clara J Bredeson, Wimbledon

District 5

- Loretta Streifel, Washburn
- Vonnie Mehlhaff, PUFL, Wishek

District 6

- Mildred C Hagen, Mohall
- Betty Blumhagen, PUFL, Butte

District 7

- Katie Leer, PUFL, Stanton
- Mary Lou Beringer, Center
- Jean Barth, Wildrose

District 8

- Darlene I Johnson, Bismarck
- Arlene Walch, Hettinger

District 9

- June C Feil, HLM, Crosby
- Jane Benter, Crosby
- Shari Hellen, Crosby
- Donna Lagein, Noonan

District 10

- Joan Buske, PUFL, Oakes
- Gudrun M Oddo, Lidgerwood

We apologize for any omissions or incorrect information
Key: HLM - Honorary Unit Member;
PUFL - Life Member.