

Community Service

Community Service	x	X
Disaster Relief	x	
Legion Riders	x	X
Public Relations	x	
Religious Emphasis		
Sons of American Legion Liaison		X
State Fair/Veterans Day	x	X
Legislative Commission	x	X
Flag Alliance		

VETERANS SERVICES

Gifts to the Yanks who Gave	x	
Hospital Services		
National Cemetery/Monument (cem.va.gov)		
Poppy Sales/Production	x	X
Technology		X
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	x	X
Veterans Assistance Liaison	x	
Veterans' Home Advisory		X

YOUTH & FAMILY

Americanism Commission	x	X
American Legion Baseball		X
Boy Scout Committee		X
Children & Youth	x	X
Premier Boys State	x	x
Safety Law & Order	x	X
Education Scholarships/Awards		X
Temporary Financial Assistance		

SUPPORT THE TROOPS

National Security	x	X
POW/MIA	x	X

DEPARTMENT

Internal Affairs		X
Finance		
Leadership	x	
DRC	X	

Community Service Committee Report October 4, 2025

The Community Service Committee met at Legion Headquarters in Bloomington, IL at 1:00 pm. Members present were Vice Chairman, Gary Reynolds, and Tom Strossner. Those excused were Chairman, Jerry Howard, Bill Seward, Ron Hoffman.

Guests were Department Sr. Vice Commander, Celeste Latham, Department Membership Director, Mike Monroe. They presented information to the Committee on, Committee Chairman Expectations, and Video Conference Guidelines.

We want to welcome Tom Strossner from the 1st Division, 9th District the newest member of the committee. We look forward to working with him.

The following discussions were held:

1. How the Committee operates. General overview.
2. The awards programs. We are waiting on Department for implementation of Commander's Post Achievement Award. The certificate is being designed at Department. More details to follow soon.
3. How and when we meet. We will continue to meet on Zoom, as needed, as we have in the past. Our May meeting will be at Department Headquarters in Bloomington. At this meeting we will judge all the entries which will be awarded at State Convention in July.
4. We are waiting on the updated 2025-2026 brochure from Department.

Submitted by the Community Service Committee.

Gary Reynolds
Vice Chairman

September 27, 2025 American Legion
Department of Illinois

DISASTER RELIEF COMMITTEE

Chairman: Thomas Marciciak(2nd); Vice Chairman: Ronald Swaim(5th); Wade Hudson(1st); Thomas Chambers(1st); David Johnson(2nd); Steve Schlieper(3rd); Chirs Hagie(3rd); Terry Abdelnour(4th); Annette Tincher(4th); Wayne Madson(5th).

Present: Chairmen: Thomas Marciciak, VC:Ronald Swaim, Recorder: Annette Tincher, Wade Hudson, Steve Schlieper, Terry Abdelnour, Wayne Madson. (All others excused).
Guest: Mike Vazor, Alt NEC for the Sons.

Meeting was opened by Chairmen Marciciak at 1300 hrs. Prayer was given by Wade Hudson.

Chairmen Marciciak handed out Pamphlets and Brochures for NEF and IEF. Wayne Madson reported that there was \$6000. Paid out to 3 members in the 5th Division. That the Son's can no longer apply for NEF.

Post can receive up to \$10,000 from NEF, and \$500 from IEF. Members can receive up to \$300 from MEF and \$2000 from IEF. Members must be in good standing at the time of the Disaster.

Terry brought up that pictures are needed to accompany applications That we can't always get into a site, however, if we have a family member with us can get in. PICTURES TELLS THE STORE.....

Discussion that the committee is in need of Standard OP for IEF. Terry will send out ALA application to all members of the committee to put in packet.

Visit from Commander Roy Smith, Vice Commander Celeste Latham, Adj Josh Thielen., Josh gave guide lines for zoom meetings, while Commander Smith gave guide lines for the committee both were given to Chairmen Marciciak. Commander Smith was asked who approved the applications. Commander Smith that since there was 10 on the committee that 5 should be on the IEF and 5 on the NEF. That he would get with Josh and let the committee know.

Motion was made by Ronald Swaim to have 3 members approve applications. Second by Wayne Madson. Motion carried.

Motion by Terry to close meeting. Second by Ronald. Motion carried. Meeting Closed.

Annette Tincher
Recorder

AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

Chairman Lampert called the meeting to order at 1301 at Department Headquarters.

3 members of the committee were present.

- Joe Lampert – 1st Division – Chairman - Present
- John Reece – 2nd Division – Vice Chairman – Present
- Ron Harkness – 3rd Division - Absent
- Sean McNamara – 4th Division – Excused
- Roy Smith - 5th - Division (Dept. Commander) – Present

Budget from last year remained the same as previous years. No change for this year.

Discussed the ALR recruiter award (patch w/ year tab and Pin). They are available. Forms for recruiting 3 new ALR members is available on the Department website under the Riders tab (Programs and Services). Joe talked with Mike Monroe, Membership Director, about supply of patches and pins. They are available.

Discussed continuing the State ALR Officers meeting, meeting once a year vs twice a year, maybe a ride in event, etc. We are having the scheduled October 19 meeting in Plainfield. We decided to continue the meetings, currently planning only one annually, with the possibility to add another meeting if the group so desires. This will be discussed at the meeting on the 19th.

Haven Run is April 25, 2026. Make plans on joining us.

Visited by the Department Commander Roy Smith, Department Sr. Vice Commander Celeste Latham, Membership Director Mike Monroe, and Adjutant Josh Thielen. Commander Smith thanked us for a good job and asked us to continue the hard work. Plans for next convention are coming together. Brett Miller is working on the Commanders In-State VCF run which will be in the 5th Division. Sr. Vice Latham thanked the committee for all its work. Adjutant Thielen spoke about using zoom etc., for future meetings to help Department cut costs. Membership Director Monroe asked how a new Chapter goes about obtaining a chapter. Chairman Lampert explained the process. We need to streamline how info gets posted on the website (i.e. Department emails Officer Certification Forms to ALR Committee, then we update the list on the website). It is important these forms get submitted annually by EVERY Chapter.

Discussed the possibility of adding a Chaplain to the ALR. It was decided not to at this time.

Website for Illinois ALR is live www.illinoisamericanlegionriders.com. This is an additional resource, not to replace the Department site. We are discussing wither or not to continue this site. Also looking into having 1 POC from each District/Division with access to add info and post info on the website if it continues.

Bob Sussen, Past National ALR Chairman passed away recently, we ask that all Chapters remember Bob and his Family.

Discussed ALR involvement in "America 250", to include the cross-country ride on US 20, from New York to Oregon, as it is named Medal of Honor Highway, nationally. More to follow.

Department ALR Donated \$29,000+ to the VCF, \$12,100 to Be The One, and \$6,750 to North Carolina Hurricane relief.

Meeting adjourned at 1411

If you have questions or something you need help with or just want to start a Chapter, please contact your Division ALR Chairman.

Sincerely,

John B. Reece Jr.

Vice Chairman

Illinois ALR Committee

September 27, 2025

Public Relations/Information Exchange Committee.

The Public Relations Committee met at the Department of Illinois Headquarters at 10 AM. Members attending the meeting were Paul Garrett, Chairman, Jerry Howard, Vice Chairman, Thomas Strossner, Robert Gardner and Thomas Seaman. Visitors were Wayne Madson (SAL), Commander Roy Smith, Vice Commander Celeste Latham, Adjutant Josh Thielen and Membership Director Mike Monroe.

The Committee discussed and reviewed the following.

1. The 2025-26 primary focus is to encourage all Posts to use and award local news media for promoting TAL events and programs.
2. Communications to Posts will include Facebook, emails, personal visits, newsletters, Department website and other means of communication.
3. The Committee plans to push forward the program in the fall and spring to all Posts. The Posts will be encouraged to use the news media and recognize news media with our awards.
4. The Committee discussed other opportunities and options for Posts who lack local news media. Some options include using the Chamber of Commerce, Village calendars, Service Organizations, County and municipalities boards and City Cable Channels.
5. The Committee will use Zoom calls this year. We also requested Constant Contact for sending out information.
6. The Department advised us that Leadership wants this Committee to be responsible for the Department Facebook this year.
7. Goals for the Committee are more Communications, and more awards presented this year.
8. We asked for our flyer and application to be updated on the website.

Report transcribed by Jerry Howard, Vice Chairman

State Fair Veterans Day and Uniform Groups Committee Meeting

Oct 4, 2025

Chairman Miller called the meeting to order in Bloomington at 1:00pm

Opened with salute to the colors and pledge of allegiance.

Roll call was taken;

Present were:

Chairman: Larry Miller, Div 5

Vice Chair: Craig Fetzner, Div 3

Absent:

Thomas Jorstad, Div 2, recent surgery

Mark Friedman, Div 4, absent

1st Division position is vacant.

Miller passed out committee charge.

"STATE FAIR VETERANS' DAY AND UNIFORM GROUPS COMMITTEE shall publicize the Illinois State Fair Veterans' Day program throughout The American Legion, Department of Illinois; encourage each and every Post having an eligible unit to participate in the annual program. The duties and responsibilities of the Committee are to help on Veterans' Day at the Illinois State Fair. Members are assigned their duty by the superintendent of the fair. This Committee shall promote the organization, maintenance and sponsorship of the various types of musical and drill groups by the local Post, District, and County Council. They shall arrange for competitions, and prescribe the rules therefore, conforming to mandates of the National and Department Convention."

Veterans and Gold Star Day at the State Fair in Springfield for 2025 is August 16, 2026, and DuQuoin Aug 30, 2026.

The department budget has been the same for many years.

Miller reviewed the organization of the State Fair Committee at IDVA. The only tasking the Legion has had was passing out pins to veteran visitors to the fair. Miller also acted as the parade organizer in 2025.

Food at the fair was catered. It was suggested by the IDVA committee that for 2026, volunteers from the various veteran groups be

available to assist in serving the meal, if a meal was to be served. For a few years, vouchers were distributed for food, but the money for that ran out. IDVA committee members were encouraged to find sponsors for meals at the fair.

Also discussed was soliciting businesses to made donations to the State Fair fund, to allow for better menu at the Veterans Lunch.

Miller suggested that department committee members attempt to determine if any posts have honor guard groups that may want to participate in competitions at the Department Convention. I know of the Joliet band, but don't know of others. Rules would be the same as those used at National competitions. Robert Zimbelman is on the department convention committee. There generally has been no competition and the convention committee has no funding for competition.

The Consolidated Veterans Association (CVA) has run the beer tents for the past several years. This is by contract with the Department of Agriculture. The CVA may or may not have the contract for the 2026 fair. CVA's contract sith the Dept of Agriculture is for a designated amount. If the beer tents "earn" more than the designated amount contracted for, the overage amount is shared with the posts the beer tent workers are from, based on hours worked. Posts are encouraged to sign up to staff a beer tent, generally, for the duration of the state fair. (2026 State Fair Dates Aug 13-23)

Meeting adjourned at 1:40pm.

Larry Miller
Chairman

Minutes for Fall Legislative Commission Meeting
27 Sep 25

An in person meeting was called for the Department Legislative Commission at 10:00am on September 27, 2025. A zoom session was also active, which included American Legion Family members from the Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion.

Commission Members present were:

Chair Larry Miller, Div 5

Vice Chair: Cheri Stanton, Div 3

Member: Edward Stash, Div 2

Division 4 was represented in Bloomington by Theresa Thomas sitting in for commission member George Elzy.

Division 1 member Terry Cornell Jr was present via Zoom.

Guests present via Zoom were:

Linda Iberg, Auxiliary 1st Vice President and Auxiliary Legislative Team Chair

Michael Canevit, SAL Legislative Commission Member

Angie Golightly, Auxiliary Legislative Team Member

Becky Larsen, Auxiliary Legislative Team Member

Chairman Miller opened the meeting with a salute to the colors and Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call and introductions followed.

Chairman Miller then read the purpose of Commission as found in the Department Directory:

"LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION shall accept resolutions requiring legislative action passed at the Department Convention, Cause Appropriate bills to be drawn in proper form by the Illinois Legislative Reference Bureau, and secure sponsors for such bills in both the Illinois House and Senate. Testimony before Legislative Commission will be presented by individuals indicated by the Legislative Commission Chairman and appropriate monthly reports will be made. Assistance will be given on Federal Legislation when requested by the National Legislative Director, or such other authorized person on the National level."

Miller suggested Division commission members need to pass information about legislative efforts down through the districts to the posts.

The commission was visited by Department Commander Roy Smith, Department Senior Vice Commander Celeste Latham, Department Adjutant Joshua Theilen, and Department Membership Mike Monroe.

Commander Smith provided a list of expectations for Committee Chairman and encouraged our commission in this election year, to emphasize the Legion "Get out the Vote" campaign. Adjutant Theilen provided a document regarding commission/committee Zoom meetings.

As there were no resolutions from the Department Convention that required action by the commission, Chairman Miller suggested our job in the commission should be to monitor and report on Legislation in Illinois affecting veterans or military members. We need to encourage Illinois

Legionnaires to become aware of and submit "Witness Slips" prior to hearings on legislation affecting veterans and military members. He encouraged everyone to create an account at the Illinois General Assembly website. (<https://ILGA.gov>) This allows a person to create a list of bills they wish to follow in the 104th General Assembly and receive status of the bills. When hearing are scheduled, the status will give information about hearings and members then may submit Witness Slips to show they approve or disapprove the legislation. The ILGA.gov website has been revamped and what the witness slip process will look like will be forwarded once committee hearings are scheduled. A spreadsheet of bills affecting veterans was distributed to commission members and will be emailed to those not present in person.

A "Department Of Illinois TAL Legislative Action Center" group has been created on Facebook for use by commission members to get the word out regarding pending hearings and other actions on bills that have been introduced relating to veterans and military members. It is a private group and membership requests from commission members and district legislative contact will be approved to join the group.

Chairman Miller suggested visiting Springfield as a Legion Legislative Day, to visit members of the General Assembly and address the concerns of the Illinois American Legion, either Feb 4 or 18, 2026, ahead of the Veterans Legislative day tentatively scheduled for March 11, 2026. This would be strictly a voluntary effort as there is no funding to reimburse anyone for attending. Chairman Miller plans to attend a Department of Indiana Legislative Day scheduled for Monday, January 12, 2026 in Indianapolis, to get ideas for a possible Illinois Legislative Day.

At the National Convention, Legislative Chairman Matthew Shuman provided some training for Legislative visits to the capitol. In the training, two documents, "10 Tips for Successful Meetings on Capitol Hill" and a worksheet to plan your visit were distributed. The tip sheet and worksheets may be found at <https://legion.org/advocacy/legislative> in the Advocacy Resources & Toolkit link. Scroll down to the "Downloadable Tools" on the right side of the page and download copies of the documents. These tips and worksheet are beneficial at all levels when planning a visit to an elected official.

Miller gave a quick review of the legislative pages on the national website to those attending the commission meeting. Our role in the National legislative arena is to help by promoting National programs and all members should sign up for the Grassroots newsletter and participate in the Voter Voice campaigns. The Grassroots newsletter has a scoreboard of Departments submitting Voter Voice emails to their elected officials. Illinois should be one of the top 5 in each newsletter.

Chairman Miller suggested that all members sign up for Fast Democracy, <https://fastdemocracy.com>, a free service that tracks legislation on a national and state level and provides periodic email updates on actions being taken on bills. When signing up, select to receive emails on legislation affecting "Veterans and Military."

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:03am.

Larry Miller, Chairman

Gifts To The Yanks

Meeting September 27, 2025

2720 E Lincoln St.

Bloomington, IL 61704

Meeting Called to order by Vice Chairman, Thomas Lynch at 10:00 hours.

Present: 2nd Division-Thomas Lynch

3rd Division-Robert Gardner

5th Division-Francis "Dutch" Jancek (on phone)

Guest- Mike Todaro (Minerva), Jim Bacon (SAL) 12th District, Mike Monroe

Excused: 1st Division-Greg Jacobs

4th Division-Robert Balla

Vice Chairman Lynch called the meeting to order at 10:00 hours.

Dutch was called by Mike Todaro (needed an I phone) and put on a video call. Tom said lets start with the logo on the baseball hats, and beanies, which looked like the current pin.. Everyone weas sent mock ups on how the hats would look. There was a short discussion and every one liked them. A vote was taken and it was decided to use the pin design.

Mike T from Minerva was asked about the website. Mike said the website would be up October 1st until the 31st. He also stated that the changes to website with the Division representatives and their contact information is now on the website. Tom said this was done to stop people from calling Minerva and tying up their representatives. Tom Verified the pick up will be on December 10, 2025. Mike T said yes that will be the day. Our total cost is \$58,000.

Tom asked everyone to talk to their District Officers and ask them to have their Posts to fundraise for the program. Everyone said they would. Greg said the SAL would make sure the 12th District would help.

Meeting adjourned at 11:1=20 hours.

Department of Illinois Poppy Sales and Production Committee-HQ

October 4, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Chair Maden at 1:00 PM.

Sr Vice C. Latham and Membership Chair Monroe visited the committee with greetings and expectations.

Members Present: Division 1-Frank Thompson, Division 2-Todd Latham, Division 3 Ron Harkness, Division 4 Linda Glenn, Division 5-Dudley Maden, Auxiliary Sandy Kirby

A motion was made by Harkness, seconded by Maden, to approve the minutes of September 2025. The motion passed.

Unfinished Business-None

New Business-

A report was given by VC Latham on the status of the poppy program. This included poppies set for production, those currently in assembly, and issues with fabric.

The committee reviewed the current Poppy Post Contest Rules at the request of Sandy Kirby, and a discussion was held on the poppy rules, specifically on the leaves of the poppy and word usage.

Recommended changes: The language was discussed to remove the phrase 'no leaves'. Thompson moved, seconded by Harkness, and the motion carried.

Discussion occurred on the language of "The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary". The committee believes leaving this adds two more words, which leaves 8 words, and the rules may need to be amended. The concern is meeting the requirements at both the Departmental and national contests, which have a 10-word limit.

VC Latham offered to create a new Poppy Seminar training guide pending the National response on poster dos and don'ts.

Motion to adjourn by Latham, seconded by Glenn, adjourning at 1:58 am.

Respectfully submitted, Todd Latham, VC

VA&R MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 4TH, 2025 DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

BROUGHT TO ORDER AT 10:05

U.S Government shut down does not affect hospitals

Regional office closed

VA Clinics have not been affected; claims will still be heard. Federal appeals cases will be continued 1 day VA&R for Nov. 6th, might need to be postponed depending on the government shut down.

Mike Monroe and Dept SR Vice visited

University of Chicago is site of VA&R resource meetings.

Adjourned at 11:24

VETERANS' ASSISTANCE LIAISON COMMITTEE

OCTOBER 4, 2025

Committee meeting was called to order at 1:00pm by chairman Don Scheyer at Department Headquarters in Bloomington.

We had three (3) of our five (5) members in attendance.

We were visited by Department Sr. Vice Commander Celeste Latham and Membership Director Mike Monroe. They discussed the scheduling of committee meeting and the use of zoom and provided guidelines for same.

Dave updated the committee on the new superintendent for Winnebago County. Mentioned a V A & R event in Chicago in November.

We had a discussion about the pending lawsuit in Sangamon County filed by the County against the VAC. It is to determine who has the right to decide what is just and necessary.

Scheyer update the progress in the 5th Division. Currently, Bond, Clinton and Washington Counties have started their VAC's. Counties still working towards a VAC are Fayette, Marion, Union and Williamson. The next ones to start forming are Monroe and Randolph.

There is still talk about having multi- county VAC's. This most likely will not happen this year.

Scheyer distributed maps on how the VAC Divisions are made up.

The next VALC meeting is to be determined.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:50pm.

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Donald Scheyer

Chairman

Minutes Americanism Commission Dept of IL

4 Oct 2025

Dept of IL Headquarters, Bloomington, IL

🇺🇸 Chairman Mike Carder brought the meeting to order at 10:07 Hrs if full ceremony. Ralph Rounds offered a prayer and Norman Flowers lead the Pledge to the Flag.

🇺🇸 Present:

Mike Carder, 1st Div & Chairman

Celeste Latham, 2nd Div

Norman Flowers, 3rd Div

Ralph Rounds, 5th Div

➤ Other: Marty Conatser, Past Dept CC & current Dept Treasure

Diane Rounds, 23rd Dist Aux Americanism

Larry Miller, 5th Div Adjutant

➤ Excused: Mark Young, 4th Div.

🇺🇸 There was some discussion about the Oratorical program brochure and some needed changes. Under Contestant Certification the number of contestants for each division would be changed from three to two. It was also decided that there would be 10 total contestants at the Dept Contest. 1st through 5th would receive the normal scholarship amount as in previous contest. Sixth through 10th will receive \$500 each. This means that the 1st & 2nd place winners from the Division contest will advance to the Dept Contest. That contest will be on 7 Mar 2026 which will be at the Heartland Community College in Normal.

🇺🇸 During the meeting there was a visit from Dept Sr. Vice Celeste and Membership Dir. Michael Monroe.

🇺🇸 The Essay brochure is ready to go with no changes made.

🇺🇸 Both Oratorical and Essay are ready for print and posting on Dept. website.

🇺🇸 Next was the topic about A/I being used in the essays. Nat'l has decided to not do anything yet. It was decided to write a resolution to address the topic for the 2026 convention and see what happens with it.

🇺🇸 The Commission voted on another Americanism pin for 2026. We will order 750 pins. They will be sold for \$5 each and pending cost they could be sold for 3 for \$10. The third-choice pin was selected by those present. (See graphic)

🇺🇸 Old Business: It was discussed as to the possibility of the commission should have a booth at the 2026 Dept Convention. The concern was staffing and what we should put out on the table. The topic was set aside for further discussion.

🇺🇸 New Business: With the Oratorical contest being one day and no overnight hotel should the Americanism Commission meet twice a year (In the Fall and at Dept Convention) or continue with three meetings as previous only meet just prior to the contest. It was felt that it would be a good idea to have the meeting at the contest in place just in case it is needed. Ralph made the motion, 2nd by Celeste and it was approved.

🇺🇸 There being no further business Ralph made a motion to adjourn. 2nd by Celeste. Chairman Mike closed the meeting in full ceremony at 11:24 hrs.



Ralph W. Rounds II, Acting Secretary



Children & Youth Commission

Fall Meeting October 4, 2025

Department Headquarters

Meeting called to order 1000

Salute National Colors

Attendance:

Wade Hudson

David E. Johnson

Richard R Schomer Absent Excused

Mark Young Absent Excused

Christopher Schoo Temp Secretary

Sue Johnson ALA Chairman C&Y Guest

Visit from Department Sr Vice Celeste Latham and Membership Director Mike Monroe

Dave & Sue attended Children & Youth National Conference 9-27-2025 Indianapolis

Guest Speaker: Melanie Taylor ALA National Children & Youth Chairman

April is Children & Youth Month

April 15th is Purple Up for military children

American Legion Family Day: Last Saturday in April

Veteran and Military Family Recognition: Month of November

Youth Hero Award, Physical Acts of Valor, Good Deed Awards

Jr activities ALA patch program

Purple: Pre K to Kindergarten

Red: 1 -4

Gold: 5 – 8

Blue: 9 – 12

National Jr Meeting: November 15, Albany Minn, Jan 31 Feb 7 Atlanta

ALA Coloring books

Halloween Safety: Include your community, Trunk N Treat, Local Police and Fire, Booklets available

ALA Poppy Poster Contest June 1st

Military Child Ceremony

Guest Speaker: Jeff Trout, SAL National Chairman

VCF (addition) Veteran & Children Foundation

VCF Raised \$82,223 May 31, 2025, Raised \$115,000 at National Convention Tampa

CWF: Child Well-being Foundation, contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth.

COTA: Children Organ Transplant Association, President and CEO Rick Lofgren, 2501 W Cota Dr, Bloomington, In. 800-366-2682, www.cota.org, rick@cota.org

Cota Raised \$67,688 in 2025, 2.5 million raised to date. All donations to recipient.

TFA for active duty, TAL member.

ALA would like to include the family with their programs

We need to look at Churches and Schools for TAL programs

Dave is working on a flier for C&Y TAL programs detailing deadline dates, scholarships, costs etc.

Special Olympics Summer Games: June 12 – 13, 2026

Booklet: Children & Youth Department Chairman Program Guide. Being updated.

Booklet: The Whole Child 2025, Children & Youth Programs, available on web site, Advocacy, Youth Support

TFA: Temporary Financial Assistance, Newer claim form filled out completely, Minor child in home, must be used for child not car payments, etc. If not title 10 member (Active Duty) must be a legion member. Prior to home visit provide list of needed documents. Citizenship not required.

Youth Garden: Two years ago helping children how to plant, care for and harvest a garden.

Victory Garden: This years program, From WWII, Types of gardens, based on location, container gardens, Hydroponic gardens.

Youth Academy: Held at National conventions in Americanism

Two C&Y National Conference meetings at Indianapolis: Fall meeting last Saturday in September, Spring meeting first weekend in May.

Consolidated Post Reports (CPR): Due June 1st, The Department Chairman will receive new training at the next Spring Conference in Indianapolis.

July 4th: All service organizations get together for 250 Anniversary.

C&Y Post, District, and Division Chairman need to attend the Special Olympics Summer games. We need volunteers. This is a large project to complete. Thank you.

Meeting dismissed at 1205.

Children & Youth Commission Chairman

David E Johnson

Boys State Committee

The Fall meeting was called to order at 1000 hrs. on September 20th, 2025 by Chairman Benigno.

Role call was read and a quorum was present. There were no guests present.

The minutes from the spring meeting were distributed and approved.

The Treasurer's Report:

Expenditures and donations were discussed. The treasure's report was approved as given. A question was posed from a previous citizen in writing regarding additional scholarship monies, and how he could receive those funds since he was awarded the most any citizen could receive. The board elected not to entertain the request. The board did however have conversations about entertaining the idea of donating to the high schools that the two Boys Nation recipients come from on a yearly basis and that money would come out of the general fund and operating budget. Discussion was had around updating the by-laws and adding a zoom meeting in between our fall and spring meetings to discuss matters to strengthen our program.

The Chairman's Report:

Christopher stated that the program is almost where it needs to be and just needs a little fine tuning to get it to where it's more beneficial to the boys and thanked the staff for their commitment and hard work. We are working on marketing and advertising partnerships to assist with the expenses every year. It is crucial that we utilize all our volunteers onsite or remote every year. We need to keep our staff involved. I would hate to see anybody just fall off when they're passionate about the program and they want to come back, but they just can't. The Illinois Counselors Conference is November 13th and 14th. We have paid our fee for a silver sponsorship, which means we get a table with power. We get an opportunity to be part of their social evening, we have our logo on every newsletter that goes out from the time that we signed up, which was two months ago, and every newsletter they sent out until the time that the event happens in November. Chairman Benigno asked for a motion to allow for \$3,000.00 to get merchandise needed for the event. The motion and second was made and the body approved. New recruiting cards are in development. We will be looking into creating our own convention booklet. Possible targeted mailing to the post/district/division chairs. The alumni association is growing and bringing in outside (previous citizens) engagement. We will be continuing with the golden tickets.

Programming Reports:

Updating citizens spreadsheets. Updating citizen registration email response. More constant emails to registered citizens and their parents. Increased social media. New promotional videos. Positive exit interview responses from the citizens. We spoke about fine tuning the registration form to better know the local post in their areas. We spoke about the constant struggles of posts not reaching out to their candidates immediately so that the boy knows that he is going and could make the arrangements. We spoke about different ways to vet our new staff members. We had conversations around the upcoming new contract with EIU, and the additional expenditures it may bring along with logistical changes. We spoke about adding content creators every year and converting the citizen manual to a digital-first format. We will be applying for a Google grant to assist with marketing and advertising. We spoke about our upcoming 50 year partnership with EIU. Everything went well with contests and awards.

Director of Counselors Report:

Staff had a great experience and stated that it may have been the best year they have had. The staff worked well together and overcame a lot of curveballs. Communication will be fine tuned. The hand written letters were all completed this year.

Director of Education Report:

Seminars will be looked at and some may be revamped. There was one issue with a new staff member going off script. That was handled immediately during the session.

Unfinished Business:

Citizen recruitment

Illinois grant

New Business:

Presentation of a resolution by Don Smolinski regarding adding a color guard scholarship in the amount of \$2,000.00 annually which will become the Huntley American Legion Post 673 Militia Scholarship to be funded by Post 673. The board of directors added that the recipient of this award will also be given an interview for Boys Nation. There was a motion and second and the motion was approved. John Garris from the 10th District and a staff member brought up some ideas to add to the program and the board is taking those into consideration. We spoke regarding the staff shirts and what that will look like moving forward. We spoke regarding staff anniversaries.

For the Good of the Program:

Make sure Boys State is discussed at all Legion and SAL meetings. Parker Moore gave a wonderful speech at the state convention this year. New staff member was touched by the program and what he got out of it.

The meeting was adjourned at 1240 hrs.

Safety Law&Order Committee met Saturday September 27,2025 at 10am Department Headquarters in Bloomington.

Present was the following

1st Division Chevonne Woodard

2nd Division Chuck Coffey Vice Chairman

3rd Division Candy Gann

5th Division Wayne Madson Chairman

Excused 4th Division Paul Garrett

We made updates to our Youth Cadet Law Enforcement pamphlet for 2026 plus our Firefighter and Law Enforcement Officer of the Year pamphlets. We can't make arrangements at Camp Lincoln till October 1. Committee voted to keep cost at \$350 for cadets this year. Commander Roy Smith, Sr Vice Celeste Latham, Adjutant Josh Thielen and Membership Director Mike Monore stop by to visit with the committee. Committee approved a new certificate to honor those veterans that are still serving their local communities in Law Enforcement and Firefighters. That will be for local Post to recognize those veterans.

Meeting adjourned at 1050am

National Security Committee meeting convened at 1000 October 4, 2025, via zoom.

After a salute to the Flag, roll call was taken.

Members from the 1st and 4th Division were present.

The annual budget was discussed, which is the same as last year. It was noted we are trying to keep expenses down by using zoom meetings.

The Chairman asked that all members contact the ROTC and JROTC schools in their Division to update contact information and establish a good relationship with the schools.

Over the years and due to COVID, we have lost contact with some schools that have cadet programs.

Discussed the Grass Roots program of voicing your opinion to Congress on the Legion priorities. This “votervoicelink.com” is being used throughout the Legion membership.

At present, TAL is asking members to contact their Congress members about the “Ships for American Act”, and to fully fund the government and to end government shutdowns.

Our National organization in Washington D.C. provides a LINK to subscribe to the Legislative priorities through a Legislative weekly newsletter to let us know their work schedule. They update us on the number of repatriation of those missing in action on a regular basis, for example.

Meeting adjourned at 1025 in due order.

Roy Weber Chairman

October 1, 2025

Minutes from POW/MIA Committee Meeting

Sept. 27, 2025

The POW/MIA committee met at Department on September 27, 2025, at 1:00. Members present were John Buhle 1st Division 8th District, Paul Ahern 2nd Division 10th District, Sam Rice 3rd Division 16th District, Theresa Thomas 4th Division 17th District, Chris Schoo 5th Division 24th District.

When we got to our meeting we were informed that our members from the 1st Division and 2nd Division had been replaced. We introduced ourselves to the new members and explained what our committee's mission is.

Theresa, Chris and Sam spent quite a lot of time answering their questions.

Our mission is to promote public awareness to Legionnaires and the general public that the American soldiers that are still listed as missing are not forgotten.

We gave suggestions to John and Paul on how we speak at public events, especially near Memorial Day and Veterans Day, and National POW/MIA Recognition Day to make people aware of the MIA situations.

We also give reports at District and Division meetings.

We discussed our booth at the 2025 convention. Sam informed all that he would not be at the 2026 convention to man the booth.

We talked about who will get Sam's POW/MIA table to convention and set it up in front of the stage.

We also discussed how the booth went with only one table length in front. It was decided we would stay with one table frontage.

We were visited by Commander Roy Smith, Sr. Vice Celeste Latham, Adjutant Josh Thielen, and Membership Director Mike Monroe. Adjutant Josh gave us directions on guidelines of the committee chairman expectations and video conference guidelines. They also volunteered their help if needed.

This fiscal year of 2025, which just ended, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced that 231 former MIAs were returned to their families for proper burial. Still

unaccounted for from WWII – 71,850; Korean War- 7,398; Vietnam – 1,566; Cold War – 126 for a total of 80,940.

Over 41,00 of those still missing are presumed lost at sea and may never be accounted for.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Legion Leadership met at AL-Dept of IL HQ at 1 pm on September 27, 2025.

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Chairman T. Latham. Opening ceremonies were completed.

The committee was visited by Commander Roy E. Smith, Sr. Vice C. Latham, Adjutant Theilen, and Membership Director Monroe.

Members Present: T. Latham, R. Walker, J. Buford, D. Horn, M. Aaron excused.

The previous work of the Committee was reviewed:
Developing Leadership Training, Convention training

- Delivery options, training page, and the Leadership Manual.
- A training repository page is still needed on the Department of Illinois website.

The following unfinished business was discussed.

- The development of a Leadership Manual by October 20, 2024.
- Current training areas: Commander, Sr Vice, Jr Vice, Adjutant, Finance, Service Officer.
- Areas for consideration: Chaplain, Judge Advocate/ Effective Meetings, Legal Aspects of a Post, Sgt at Arms, Programs: Preparation and Delivery, Recruitment and

Retention, CPR, MyLegion, Rituals of the American Legion, Public Relations/Communications.

The committee members will evaluate other training manuals to eliminate duplication and consider what should and should not be in the Leadership Manual.

Goals for the Year:

- Completing the Leadership Manual
- Expand the Training Program
- Complete Training for Divisions

Schedule Training Tentative Locations

1st Div- TBD

2nd Div-Nov. 1, 9 am to 2 pm Ottawa, IL

3rd Div-Nov. 8, 1 pm to 4 pm Canton, IL

4th Div- Nov. 9, 1-4 pm, Champaign, IL

5th Div-TBD

Additional Work Assigned to the Committee

Manual work and edits weekly to the Leadership Manual

Review Four Pillars:

Americanism-Buford

National Security-T. Latham

VA&R- R. Walker

Youth Programs- Horn

Closing ceremonies were held with adjournment at 1:42 pm

Department of Illinois DRC Ad Hoc October 4th, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Wayne Fischer 2nd Div. Chairman; Larry Hippert 1st Div.; Wayne Erickson 3rd Div.; Don Horn 1st Div. Commander; Marty Conatser Past Dept. Adjutant.

Task: Consolidate the 1st Division from 7 Districts to 4 Districts

Don Horn updated the Group on current status of this consolidation of Districts. The 1st Division District Commanders met this past August, and the consensus was to move forward on Redistricting the 1st Division as follows: 2nd and 3rd into the 2nd District; 4th and 5th District into the 3rd; 7th and 9th into the 1st District; and the 8th into the 4th District.

Boundaries have been tentatively drawn but may be subject to change prior to the final approval. There is more discussion coming out of the 2nd District and it will need to be covered to ensure what is needed will come together by our Spring DEC for final approval at our 2026 State Convention. Marty will be assisting on that.

As part of this, there are Posts that may want to remain in a District outside a designated District, which has happened before and worked okay. This could be more last minute decisions.

Don also included a preliminary 1st Division Redistricting Resolution-Phase 1 that has been reviewed by the District Officers. (see attached)

1st DIVISION
REDISTRICTING RESOLUTION
PHASE I

WHEREAS, The 1st Division is currently made up of Cook County; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the 1st Division has within its' borders seven Districts consisting of Districts 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9; and

WHEREAS, The 1st Division membership has been reducing over the years to where District mergers have been considered; and

WHEREAS, It is geographically logical to combine Districts 2 & 3, Districts 4 & 5, Districts 7 & 9; and

WHEREAS, The 8th District covers the bottom 20% of the Division and bound by County Boundaries on three of its four sides therefore it is advantageous to stand alone; and

WHEREAS, Separate agreements of each individual merger will be submitted with this resolution; and

WHEREAS, A follow-up resolution will be submitted with further details on the renaming of Districts, recommended boundaries and other warranted details; therefore be it

RESOLVED, The Redistricting of the 1st Division be made at the Departments earliest convience and at one time in unison if possible to save the Department and her Division and Districts unnecessary time and expense; and therefore be it finally

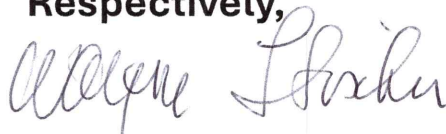
RESOLVED, By The American Legion, Department of Illinois, at the Annual Spring Meeting, assembled in Bloomington, Illinois, April 11, 2026, that The American Legion, Department of Illinois approves the 1st Division recommendations of Redistricting.

Moving Forward:

Larry Hippert has prepared and presented material supporting the next possible step focusing on moving forward to 4 Divisions with 4 Districts in each or 16 Department Districts. Certainly, these changes will bring new challenges in Leadership and Communication. While both the Divisions and Districts will be larger, we must find the Leaders and more effective means to get the word out that does help to turn around our Membership back to the positive. There are around 450,000 eligible Veterans in Illinois to join the American Legion according to the Illinois Veterans Assistance Commission.

Our first challenge is to resolve our 1st Division Redistricting, and our plan is to have a Resolution(s) to present at the Spring DEC for support, then for a final presentation at our 2026 Illinois State Convention.

Respectively,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Wayne Fischer".

Wayne Fischer, Chair

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS

DIVISIONS and DISTRICTS

FIRST DIVISION:

1st - 9th Districts: Cook County

SECOND DIVISION:

10th: Lake County

11th: McHenry, Kane, DuPage, Will

12th: Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb, Lasalle, Kendall, Grundy

13th: Jo Daviess, Stephenson, Carroll, Ogle, Lee, Whiteside

THIRD DIVISION:

14th: Rock Island, Mercer, Henderson, Warren, Hancock, McDonough

15th: Henry, Knox, Fulton, Adams, Schuyler

16th: Bureau, Stark, Putnam, Marshall, Peoria, Tazewell

20th: Mason, Brown, Cass, Menard, Morgan, Scott, Pike, Calhoun, Greene, Jersey

FOURTH DIVISION:

17th: Woodford, Livingston, McLean, Ford, Logan

18th: Kankakee, Iroquois, Vermilion, Edgar, Clark, Cumberland

19th: Champaign, DeWitt, Piatt, Macon, Moultrie, Douglas, Coles, Shelby

21st: Sangamon, Christian, Macoupin, Montgomery

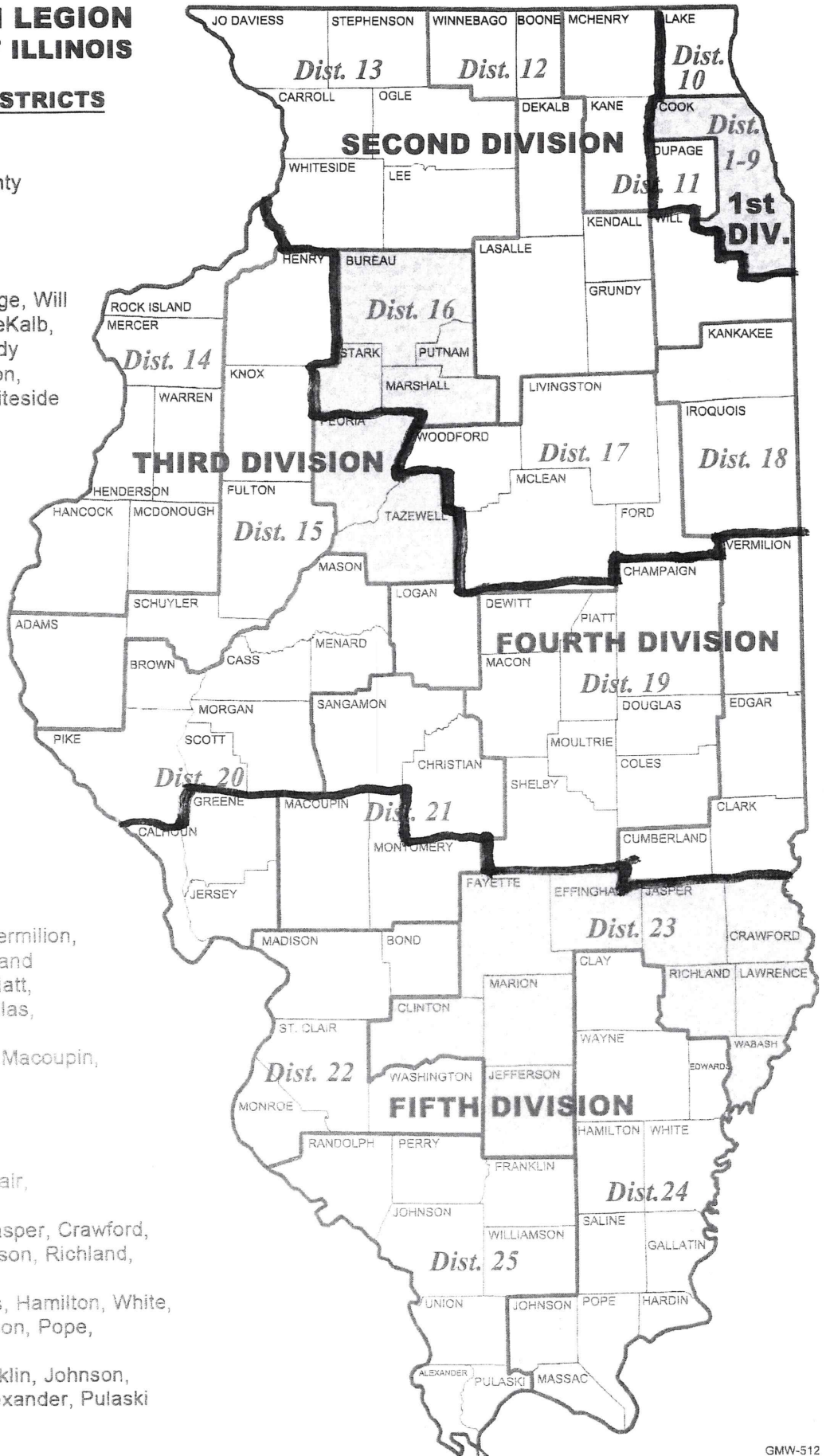
FIFTH DIVISION:

22nd: Madison, Bond, St. Clair, Monroe, Washington

23rd: Fayette, Effingham, Jasper, Crawford, Clinton, Marion, Jefferson, Richland, Lawrence, Wabash

24th: Clay, Wayne, Edwards, Hamilton, White, Saline, Gallatin, Johnson, Pope, Hardin, Massac

25th: Randolph, Perry, Franklin, Johnson, Williamson, Union, Alexander, Pulaski



Department Membership by county

Division 1		Division 2		Division 3		Division 4	
County	# of Members	County	# of Members	County	# of Members	County	# of Members
Cook	9780	Will	2244	McLean	822	Calhoun	176
Lake	2031	Kane	1495	Woodford	499	Greene	224
DuPage	2159	McHenry	1308	Mercer	150	Jersey	249
Total	13970	Boone	333	Rock Island	737	Macoupin	379
		DeKalb	618	Henry	625	Montgomery	175
		Grundy	322	Vermilion	723	Bond	148
		Kendall	554	Champaign	1080	Madison	1706
		LaSalle	1162	Warren	207	Monroe	315
		Winnebago	1183	Hancock	204	St. Clair	1154
		Carroll	309	Henderson	90	Washington	211
		Jo Daviess	227	McDonough	297	Clinton	839
		Lee	260	Fulton	604	Crawford	243
		Ogle	288	Peoria	1101	Effingham	601
		Stephenson	252	Tazewell	710	Fayette	196
		Whiteside	638	Adams	324	Jasper	200
		Bureau	276	Schuyler	98	Jefferson	228
		Stark	172	Brown	64	Lawrence	126
		Marshall	161	Cass	93	Marion	376
		Putnam	95	Mason	150	Richland	148
		Ford	169	Menard	85	Wabash	79
		Livingston	468	Morgan	252	Clay	218
		Iroquois	643	Pike	241	Edwards	57
		Kankakee	553	Scott	102	Gallatin	181
		Total	13730	Sangamon	1310	Hamilton	80
				Logan	387	Hardin	31
				Christian	375	Massac	168
				DeWitt	347	Pope	32
				Douglas	178	Saline	222
				Macon	393	Wayne	115
				Moultrie	218	White	202
				Piatt	296	Franklin	365
				Shelby	468	Jackson	321
				Cumberland	139	Perry	187
				Cumberland	63	Pulaski	57
				Clark	261	Randolph	536
				Total	13693	Union	59
						Williamson	410
						Total	11014