

## Special Convention Edition



### Department Commander Jerome Goolsby

It's time for the 107<sup>th</sup> Department Convention!

I hope to see us celebrate our accomplishments, recognize and award Legionnaires and those who have excelled in our youth programs and share in comradery with others in our Legion Family.

We will also be electing the officers who will lead our Department forward in the 2026 – 2027 Program Year.

I would like to thank the Department for allowing me the privilege of serving as Department Commander for the 2025 – 2026 Program Year. I very much appreciate all the hard work you've done this year. I believe we've finally gotten all the rust knocked off from the 2020 COVID Pandemic and our programs are almost back to full operation level. I believe our long-term financial plans are also on a good path. While our Membership Drive didn't quite get to where we needed it to

go, I appreciate the strong effort and leadership of Senior Vice Commander Slocum and everyone on the Membership Committee and all of you who worked membership at your respective Posts. If we continue this year's efforts going forward, I believe our membership will improve.

I know our National Officers who visited our Department were very pleased with our operations and the hospitality that was shown to them. Those who hosted events for them did yourselves proud and showed our entire Department in a wonderful light. Well done, one and all, and thank you for your efforts on our behalf.

Our nation needs us to continue our efforts to fulfill the obligations in our Preamble and help strengthen the foundation of our country. In my comments when I took office last year, I stated a line from a song I'd heard – "the world won't get no better if we just let it be". Thank you for not just letting things be.

Thank you and may the good Lord bless and keep you.



### Department President Wanda Kinder

American Legion Auxiliary Prepares for 105th Annual Convention

Members of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Missouri will gather this summer for their 105th Annual Convention, a multi-day event filled with leadership meetings, community-focused discussions, and ceremonial traditions honoring veterans and their families.

The convention, scheduled for July 9–12, 2026, is expected to bring together Auxiliary leaders and members from across the state to review the past year's work, elect new officers, and plan initiatives for the future. The event will open Thursday afternoon with registration and a Department Executive Committee meeting, where leaders representing districts throughout Missouri will convene to discuss organizational business and committee reports.

Friday marks the official start of general sessions, beginning with a formal processional that includes district presidents, past department presidents, and current officers. The opening ceremony will feature the presentation of colors, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the national anthem, followed by welcoming remarks from Department President Wanda Kinder and other officers.

A highlight of the day will be the "Poppy Parade," an event symbolizing remembrance of fallen service members. Leadership introductions and committee reports will follow, along with remarks from American Legion leaders and guest speakers addressing issues such as support for women veterans and assistance programs like the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

Throughout Friday afternoon, members will reconvene to hear reports on key initiatives, including children and youth programming, education efforts, community service, and veterans' advocacy. Representatives from Veterans Affairs medical centers and state veterans homes are also scheduled to provide updates on services across Missouri.

Saturday's agenda will focus heavily on membership and governance. A membership parade and division reports will highlight progress across the state, followed by essential convention business, including the nomination and election of department officers for 2026–2027. Delegates will also be selected to represent Missouri at the national convention.

Additional presentations will showcase programs such as Girls State, public relations initiatives, and veteran outreach. A special guest speaker from Fisher House St. Louis is scheduled to address attendees, emphasizing support services for military families.

The convention will conclude Sunday with a memorial service honoring deceased members, the installation of new officers, and final announcements. The closing ceremony will include the retirement of colors and adjournment of the session.

Organizers note that the convention not only serves as a business meeting but also as a celebration of service, camaraderie, and ongoing commitment to veterans, their families, and communities across Missouri.



## Special Convention Edition



**Membership Corner**  
**Senior Vice Commander**  
**Alex Slocum**

I would like to congratulate all the posts and districts within the Department of Missouri who have met their membership goal this year.

Having been a post and district commander, I know reaching that milestone is a challenge. I thank the commanders, adjutants, membership chairman and all the members for their efforts.

Looking at our membership numbers we picked up over 1,000 new members. That is a good thing but that means there are over 2,000 members who paid dues for 2025 but didn't pay 2026 dues. Why didn't those 2,000 plus members renew?

I know some have passed away that post are unaware of and still show on our rosters. With each member who passes away who didn't pay dues you have to recruit two members to increase your membership.

Another reason for not doing better in membership is over 100 posts didn't recruit a single new member or even complete a transfer into their post. Many others only had one new or transferred member. You can't grow without new members.

Earlier this year I emailed over 3,000 members who hadn't renewed to try and get them to pay their 2026 dues. I never heard from 99.9% of those I emailed. A few responded back with the reason they weren't renewing.

None of them said they were struggling financially and couldn't afford the dues. A couple were not happy with our national organization. Most of those who responded back were not happy with the post. They went to the post for help and the post never assisted them. Members lost who will never return.

As we move into the 2027 membership year you will see renewal notices sent out the first week in July and then again in October 2026, November 2026, January 2027, March 2027 and May 2027.

It will be up to the incoming national commander to establish our 2027 goal. Regardless of our new goal, national renewal target dates are already established with 50% due by September 10, 2026. Renewal percentages will go up by 5% each month from then on (except December which goes up 10%).

It is hard for a post or district to have continued success from one membership year to the next. For the post and districts who didn't do so well membership wise in 2026 you can have success in 2027 with the right amount of effort. Start early and keep up the hard work through the entire membership year.

### 100% Goal Post

Post	Post Name	Commander
43	Kaffenburger - Williams	Mark Davy
349	Dudley - Patton - Harvey	Patrick McGuire Jr.
11	MacDonald - Dugger - Duncan - Petree	Alvan C. Ellis
143	Oliver Guy Vassar	Walter Lobster
59	Kenady - Hanks	Bill Kidd
18	Sullivan	Dale Wigger
66	Samuel T. Adams	Phillip M. Greenway
232	Mississippi County	Jim Presson, Adjutant
384	Smith - Holloway	Ray Kelly
233	Koca - Reeder - Giddens	Dennis Floyd
372	Roy E. Carr	Kevin J. White
121	Paul P. Shutts	Brian Brashears
277	Robert Graham	Paul Johnson
26	James Bledsoe	James E. Martin
120	Benjamin - Elliott - Stockton	Milo L. Daniel
498	Garden City Memorial	Nina J. Finney
68	McAfee - Stephens	James Wycoff
558	Malta Bend Memorial	Tom McCutcheon
47	Greenfield	Christopher L. Lurvey
637	Table Rock	Heather M. Lawson
282	Reynolds - Martin	John Price
393	Gower Memorial	Ron Hardwick
1107	Heartland Women Veterans	Sheridin Jones
94	John I Wilson Memorial	Mike Bath
39	Coleman - Frazier - Cole	Paul Pillard
431	Miller - Goodwin - King	John P Ferguson Sr.
195	Estill Pummill	Todd Suma
138	Howard S. Keeling	James Woods
276	Humansville	Wade M. Harris
586	Swan Lake Memorial	Robert Gladbach
82	Windsor	David Free
23	Wayne T. Boles	Robert Lee
228	Sullivan County	Leroy Wyant
273	Howard County	Eric E. Fizer
420	Old Monroe	Harry Eggering
270	Rolla Memorial	Dennis Meschke
601	Davisville Memorial	John Moore
304	Edgar Cole	Henry Suddarth
783	Denson - Winans	Thomas J. Lang
309	Clarence Memorial	Carl Langhammer
297	Union	Pete Colombo
162	Lemay Memorial	Daniel Bub
371	Ingham - Morgan	Dennis Echols
197	Pershings Old Home	Denzil Heaney
318	Leon A Robbins Memorial	Levin Stremmel

### 100% Goal Post Cont.

90	Munday - Hancock	Charles McCulloch
100	James Edward Gray	Phillip Rickabaugh
604	Lewis - French	Donald Feasel
258	Lohman - Meyer	David L. Meyer
554	Bloomsdale Memorial	Jeffrey Thomas
202	Herbert Williams	Roy Stigers
491	George T. Murphy	Douglas Schouten
391	Claude Duff	James D. Nanneman
508	Robinson - Beeching	Ronald D. Green
158	Altenthal - Joerns	Steven Skelton
494	Quilin Memorial	Kevin Warren
57	Green Hills	Wayne Kitchen
379	Oak Grove	Michael Sanchez
642	George A. Whiteman Memorial	George Shepherd
404	St Louis Women's	Esther Richards
322	Darris S Schalk	Don Wooten
392	Pineville - Jane	Tim McCaine
434	Nixa Memorial	Nicholas Gerdes
239	LeRoy Smithpeter	Martin D. Rainey
153	Brown - Mabry	Jesse Wells
676	Kirby Wilcox Bicentennial	Mike Easterly
359	Pony Express	Jim Williams
4	Fred W. Stockham	Thomas J. Williams Sr.
137	Fred A. Boswell	Jason Dannellet
29	Albion E. Robinson	Wm. D. (Bill Burnett)
113	Charles W. Waller	Steven R. Clark
114	Henry Meldrum	Frankie Adams
230	Trent - Sallee	Larry E. Griffin
172	Webster Groves Memorial	Jeffrey A. Parrotte
88	Pemiscot County	James A. Atchison
125	Norval Stafford	Charles Hopkins
163	Clyde R. Burdick	Virgil Alcorn
639	Vietnam War Memorial	Mike Goforth
587	Rosebud Memorial	Michael Stillman
331	William C. Anderson Memorial	Loman Tanner
293	William & Edward Phillips	James W. Duck
131	Matthews - Crawford	Bill Gullickson
397	Creve Coeur Memorial	Thomas Payeur
41	Texas County	Robert Joens
97	John Callahan	Ricky Volkmann

**Special Convention Edition**

**2026 CONVENTION SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS / EVENTS (as of 5/12/26)**

<b>THURSDAY, JULY 9</b>		
Education & Scholarship Committee	3:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Sonoran
Department & National Convention Committee	4:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Bora Bora
VA&R Committee	5:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Kalahari
Economics Commission	5:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Sonoran
Past Department Commanders (closed meeting)	6:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Arabian
Legislative Committee	7:30 - 8:00 p.m.	Arabian
Credentials Committee	7:00 - 8:00 p.m.	Mojave
Dept. Executive Committee	8:15 p.m.	Maui
<b>FRIDAY, JULY 10</b>		
Finance Commission	8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Kalahari
History Book Judging	8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Bora Bora
Membership Training	8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Sahara A
ROTC Committee	9:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Sahara B
Resolutions Committee	9:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Arabian
Americanism (Award Review)	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Sonoran
<b>Blood Drive</b>	<b>9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Maui</b>
Cadet Patrol	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Sahara A
Constitution & By-Laws	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Sahara B
Delegate Selection	10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Bora Bora
Foundation Committee	10:00 - 12:00 p.m.	Kalahari
BSA Committee	11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Arabian
Media & Communication (Newsletter Judging)	11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Sahara A
<b>General Session (Committee/Commission Reports)</b>	<b>1:30 - 4:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Grand Ballroom</b>
Past Post Commander's Club	4:00 - 4:30 p.m.	Sahara B
ALR Executive Committee Meeting	4:30 - 6:00 p.m.	Sonoran
Children & Youth Committee	5:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Sahara A
POW/MIA Committee	5:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Bora Bora
Color Guard Competition/Exhibition	5:30 - 6:00 p.m.	TBA
<b>Legion Family Banquet</b>	<b>6:30 - 10:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Maui</b>
<b>SATURDAY, JULY 11</b>		
Past Dept. Commander's Breakfast	7:30 a.m.	Arabian
American Legion Rider General Session	7:30 - 9:00 a.m.	Kalahari
A. L. Leadership Training Committee	8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	Sahara A
Homeland Security	8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	Mojave
<b>General Session Reconvenes (Membership Awards)</b>	<b>9:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Grand Ballroom</b>
Sons Of The American Legion DEC (Closed Session)	9:30 - 10:30 a.m.	Maui
Sons Of The American Legion General Session	10:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Maui
Distinguished Guest Luncheon	12:00 p.m.	Sahara
Navy Club	12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Bora Bora
<b>AL Family Joint General Session (Department Awards)</b>	<b>1:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Grand Ballroom</b>
District Caucuses	4:00 - 5:00 p.m.	TBA
Catholic Services	5:00 p.m.	Sahara A
Protestant Services	5:00 p.m.	Sahara B
Post Service Officers Training	5:30 - 7:00 p.m.	Maui
<b>SUNDAY, JULY 12</b>		
Past District Commander's Breakfast	7:00 a.m.	Sahara
District Cdr/1st Vice Cdr and District Adjutants Training	8:00 - 9:15 a.m.	Sahara
<b>General Session Reconvenes (Elections)</b>	<b>9:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Grand Ballroom</b>
<b>D.E.C. Meeting (Ten minutes after General Session adjourned)</b>		<b>Maui</b>

**2026 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION  
HOUSING REQUEST  
July 9 -12, 2026**

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**HOUSING/HOSPITALITY/CAUCUS ROOM & VENDOR TABLE REQUEST**  
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Oasis Hotel and Convention Center  
2546 North Glenstone Ave, Springfield, MO 65803  
1-417-866-5253 Group: American Legion

Make reservations directly with the hotel, using a credit card for confirmation be sure to mention you are with The American Legion.

**\*\*CUTOFF DATE FOR ALL HOUSING RESERVATIONS IS JUNE 10, 2026\*\***  
(Group room rates is not guaranteed after the cutoff date)

Cost per night is \$119.00 (plus Sales and Lodging tax)  
\$25.00 a night incidental fee will be charged during check-in and release at the end of stay

Check in time 4:00 p.m.

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**HOSPITALITY ROOM**

**DISTRICT CAUCUS ROOMS**  
Will be assigned by Department Adjutant at Convention

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Table Request for Vendors, Post and Auxiliary

All table requests will be reserved through Department Headquarters.  
Please call Theresa Boss to make your request 573-893-2353  
Deadline for table request: **\*June 10, 2026\***

The Department Convention Itinerary will not be available before May 1, 2026

**THE AMERICAN LEGION  
DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI**

# CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

Sponsored By  
**Past Post Commander's Club**  
**THURSDAY, JULY 9 2026**  
**OASIS HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER**  
**9:00 AM**  
(BACK-UP LOCATION - LEGION POST 125)

<b>Registration:</b>	<b>2-Person Teams</b>	<b>Grab a Partner or Come Solo</b>
<b>\$30</b>	<b>Cash Prizes!</b>	<b>We'll Match You Up!</b>
<b>Per Person NLT 1 July</b>	<b>Best of 3 - Advances</b>	<b>50/50 Drawing</b>

All Proceeds Benefit: Dept of Missouri Charitable Account

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Make Checks Payable To: American Legion Dept of MO

Name: _____	Mail To:
Teammate: _____	Betty Gonzales
Solo: <input type="checkbox"/>	34 Countrywood Dr
Phone #: _____	St. Peters, MO 63376
	For Additional Info:
	Betty (636) 485-9772

Special Convention Edition

2026 Award Winners



Distinguished Legionnaire of the Year Melanie Klingeman

The American Legion, Department of Missouri Distinguished Legionnaire Award is awarded to living members of The American

Legion who have rendered and continue to render outstanding and even sacrificial service to The American Legion and its programs, For God and Country.”

St Louis Service Women’s Post 404, and the 11/12th District of The Department of Missouri nominated Legionnaire Melanie Klingeman. Legionnaire Klingeman served in the US Army honorably from July 1979 until she retired honorably in August 2001.

Legionnaire Klingeman joined the St Louis Service Women’s Post 404 in 2004. She has served Post 404 as 2nd Vice Commander, 1st Vice Commander and Commander from 2022 to 2024. As the 1st vice commander, she exceeded Post 404’s membership goal to 101% in 2022 and received an award from The Department of Missouri.

Legionnaire Klingeman demonstrated her dedication to The American Legion and her community by volunteering with the approval of The Department of Missouri, to coordinate the restoration of the American Legion Monument located in St Louis Missouri, the location where The American Legion was founded in 1919. The monument was dedicated on September 6, 1942, and was in desperate need of repair.

Legionnaire Klingeman has exemplified her devotion to The American Legion and her community as a member of District 11/12 and elected in several executive management position, also as a National Security Council member. Legionnaire Klingeman has served the 11/12 district as historian from 2011-2015 where she completed a Commanders pictorial album of all activities the five years; she has been Vice Commander 2013-2024, Senior Vice Commander 2014 and 2025, she has also been the Commander of the 11/12th district 2016-2017.

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Oratorical Contest Winner Tess Lehman

The Department of Missouri is proud to announce Tess Lehman, a junior at Palmyra High School in Palmyra Missouri as our State Oratorical winner for 2026, winning a \$5,000 scholarship. Giving her oration titled “Speech is Power.”

Tess is from Taylor, Missouri, who splits her time between homeschooling and Palmyra High School. She is sponsored by Boots-Dickson American Legion Post 174 in Palmyra, Missouri, and was a semifinalist in the American Legion National Oratorical Contest. Tess is actively involved in the Quincy Area Concert Choir, the Palmyra High School track team, and her church youth group. She has a heart for serving others, participating in mission trips to Sunset Gap, Tennessee, and the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico, and volunteering at the Palmyra Food Pantry. In her free

time, Tess enjoys playing piano, running, working on puzzles, traveling, and using her love of public speaking to connect with and inspire people wherever she goes.

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Legion Rider of Year Anita Backues



The Department of Missouri American Legion Riders proudly recognizes Anita Backues as the Missouri American Legion Rider of the Year for her outstanding dedication, volunteerism, and continued service to veterans, families, and the American Legion Family.

Anita earned her American Legion Auxiliary eligibility through her husband’s service in the United States Army from 1981 to 1984 and has been a continuous member of the American Legion Family since 2013. She is a member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 317 in Freeburg, Missouri, and has been an active American Legion Rider since 2013, beginning with Chapter 5 in Jefferson City and currently serving with Chapter 152 in Ashland.

Anita’s commitment to service extends throughout every level of the organization. At her home Unit 317, she supports numerous unit and post fundraisers each year, including the highly successful annual pork burger BBQ that has become a favorite community event. She has also faithfully served as American Legion Auxiliary District 8 Chaplain for the past two years.

As a charter member of American Legion Riders Chapter 152, Anita has become a driving force behind the chapter’s success and continued growth. Her dedication to fundraising and community involvement has helped the chapter earn recognition as a past Small Chapter of the Year recipient. Through her efforts supporting the chapter’s “Breakfast with Santa” fundraiser, Chapter 152 has donated more than \$6,000 over the last five years.

Anita is also deeply involved in honoring veterans and first responders across Missouri. She regularly participates in motorcycle escorts, memorial rides, and flag lines, providing support and respect to families during important and difficult moments alike. Whether traveling across Missouri or on rides throughout the country, she makes it a point to visit veterans’ cemeteries and historic battlegrounds, reflecting her deep appreciation for those who served before us.

Riding alongside her husband and averaging more than 10,000 motorcycle miles each year, Anita proudly represents the American Legion Riders everywhere she goes. Her professionalism, compassion, and willingness to volunteer exemplify the values of the American Legion Family and the mission of the American Legion Riders.

The Department of Missouri proudly congratulates Anita Backues on being named Missouri American Legion Rider of the Year and thanks her for her continued service and dedication to veterans, communities, and the American Legion Family.



# Missouri Legionnaire

June 2026

[WWW.MISSOURILEGION.ORG](http://WWW.MISSOURILEGION.ORG)

## Special Convention Edition

2026-2027 Proposed Department Budget

AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI, INC.	
BUDGET 2026 - 2027	
	5/22/2026
<b>ANTICIPATED INCOME</b>	
MEMBERSHIP DUES @ \$14.00	\$308,531
POST 1000 DUES @ \$21.50	\$64,104
SAL DUES @ \$3.00	\$12,779
SAL ADMINISTRATIVE FEE	\$1,000
MAILING LABEL PROGRAM	\$9,070
INTEREST EARNED	\$31,418
INVESTMENT ACCOUNT EARNINGS	\$1,384
INVESTMENT ACCOUNT CHANGE IN VALUE	\$4,067
CADET PATROL FEES (25 CADETS @ \$450)	\$11,250
LIT INSURANCE ADMINISTRATIVE FEES	\$50,823
CONVENTION BADGES	\$1,820
EMBLEM SALES	\$0
GRANT MONEY FOR VA&R	\$4,085
FOUNDATION	\$127,723
DONATIONS	\$15,725
SWEEPSTAKES (2)	\$300
LEGION RIDERS @ \$3.00	\$15,406
LEGION RIDERS ADMINISTRATIVE FEE	\$10,473
DIGNITY MEMORIAL	\$650
AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL INCOME	\$4,000
Travel Mileage	\$4,000
STATE TOURNAMENTS	\$2,000
Fundraisers (Cardinals,donations,golf,etc)	\$28,000
Social Media (Marketing/promotions/streaming)	\$8,500
MISCELLANEOUS	\$9,000
TOTAL AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL INCOME	\$55,500
NATIONAL FUNDRAISER	\$19,959
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE	\$1,741
USAA	\$2,555
NEPTUNE	\$1,740
<b>TOTAL ANTICIPATED RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$752,103</b>
<b>ANTICIPATED EXPENSES:</b>	
<b>DEPARTMENT OFFICERS' EXPENSES:</b>	
COMMANDER	\$12,420
ADJUTANT	\$10,800
CMD/ADJ DISCRETIONARY DEPT TRAVEL	\$2,000
FINANCE OFFICER	\$1,920
4 ZONE VICE COMMANDERS @ \$1,104 each	\$4,416
SENIOR VICE COMMANDER	\$6,240
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN	\$3,840
ALT. NECMAN	\$3,840
HISTORIAN TRAVEL	\$1,100
Chaplain Travel	\$1,100
MEMBERSHIP WORKSHOP - INDIANAPOLIS	\$1,500
PICTURES - COMMANDER	\$1,306
CELL PHONES	\$3,050
<b>TOTAL DEPARTMENT OFFICERS' EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$53,532</b>
<b>DISTRICT, CONFERENCE &amp; CONVENTION:</b>	
DISTRICT COMMANDER EXPENSE ALLOWANCE @\$480	\$3,968
EXECUTIVE & SUB-COMMITTEE - NOTE (1)	\$3,568
CONFERENCES	\$3,500
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES - 4 Zones	\$400
MEMBERSHIP &/OR REVITALIZATION TRAVEL	\$500
NATIONAL CONVENTION	\$2,101
IMMEDIATE PAST DEPT. CMD TRAVEL	\$2,973
DEPARTMENT CONVENTION	\$6,117
CONVENTION STAFF TRAVEL	\$1,000
NATIONAL COMMANDER VISIT	\$1,800
NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER VISIT	\$750
<b>TOTAL DISTRICT, CONFERENCE &amp; CONVENTION</b>	<b>\$26,678</b>

<b>COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES &amp; PROGRAMS:</b>	
<b>AWARDS, PLAQUES, AND SCHOLARSHIPS</b>	
AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL EXPENSES	\$4,000
Travel Mileage	\$4,000
STATE TOURNAMENTS	\$2,000
Fundraisers (Cardinals,donations,golf,etc)	\$28,000
Social Media (Marketing/promotions/streaming)	\$8,500
MISCELLANEOUS	\$9,000
<b>TOTAL AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$55,500</b>
<b>AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL SURPLUS</b>	
AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE	\$800
AMERICANISM	\$800
BOY SCOUTS	\$200
BOYS STATE COMMITTEE	\$670
CADET PATROL COMMITTEE	\$100
CHILDREN AND YOUTH	\$350
COLOR GUARD CONTEST	\$1,000
DEPARTMENT LEGION COLLEGE	\$800
DISTINGUISHED LEGIONNAIRE AWARD	\$200
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD	\$300
ECONOMICS	\$0
EDUCATION & SCHOLARSHIP	\$700
FINANCE COMMISSION	\$900
HISTORIAN PROGRAM	\$750
HOMELESS VETS	\$0
JR. SPORTS SHOOTING	\$100
LAW & ORDER & PUBLIC SAFETY AWARD	\$400
LEGION RIDERS	\$10,473
LEGISLATIVE	\$300
LINCOLN PILGRIMAGE AWARDS	\$1,000
MEMBERSHIP AWARDS	\$1,500
MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVES	\$2,000
ORATORICAL	\$14,000
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION	\$500
ROTC AWARDS COMMITTEE	\$850
SAL PROGRAM	\$12,779
STATE YOUTH IN GOVT DAY	\$50
TRUMAN DAY	\$20
CADET PATROL ACADEMY (FEE OFFSET)	\$11,250
<b>TOTAL COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES &amp; PROGRAMS</b>	<b>\$118,292</b>
<b>HEADQUARTERS OPERATING EXPENSES:</b>	
ACCOUNTING & AUDITING	\$10,579
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	\$8,800
COMPUTERS & SOFTWARE	\$9,691
EMPLOYEE LIFE & HEALTH	\$28,150
EMPLOYEE PENSION	\$3,145
MEMORIAL FLOWERS	\$300
FURNITURE & FIXTURES	\$500
INSURANCE & SURETY BONDS	\$23,351
MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS	\$6,920
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES	\$2,949
OFFICE SUPPLIES & PRINTING	\$6,916
PAYROLL EXPENSE	\$4,727
PAYROLL TAXES	\$38,220
POSTAGE & DELIVERY	\$14,012
TELEPHONE	\$6,695
UTILITIES	\$6,730
<b>TOTAL HEADQUARTERS OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$171,685</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS SALARIES:</b>	
ADJUTANT SALARY	\$72,428
OVERTIME	\$2,000
BONUS	\$2,700
OTHER STAFF SALARIES	\$80,106
<b>TOTAL DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS SALARIES</b>	<b>\$157,234</b>

<b>VETERANS AFFAIRS &amp; REHABILITATION:</b>	
SERVICE OFFICER SALARY	\$62,199
SALARIES	\$256,069
EMPLOYEE BONUSES	\$2,250
EMPLOYEE LIFE & HEALTH	\$18,767
EMPLOYEE PENSION	\$6,410
OFFICE EXPENSES	\$7,000
REFERENCE MATERIALS	\$3,300
SOFTWARE	\$4,490
STAFF TRAVEL	\$10,000
<b>TOTAL VETERANS AFFAIRS &amp; REHABILITATION</b>	<b>\$370,485</b>
DEPRECIATION EXPENSE	\$20,408
MEMBERSHIP ADVERTISING	\$2,000
MISSOURI LEGIONNAIRE	\$0
TAX ON UNRELATED BUSINESS INCOME	\$403
VEHICLE EXPENSE	\$5,000
INVESTMENT EXPENSE	\$5,744
CHARITABLE DONATIONS	\$0
BANK SERVICE CHARGES	\$480
PRIOR RETIREMENT PLAN - NATIONAL LEGION	\$7,000
MEDAL OF HONOR UPKEEP	\$500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$41,535</b>
<b>TOTAL ANTICIPATED EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$939,441</b>
<b>ANTICIPATED NET INCOME OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>(\$187,338)</b>
<b>FOOTNOTE TO EXECUTIVE &amp; SUB-COMMITTEE BUDGET:</b>	
(1) THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE COMMANDER, ADJUTANT, FINANCE OFFICER, ZONE VICE COMMANDERS, HISTORIAN, CHAPLAIN, SENIOR VICE COMMANDER, NEC, AND ALTERNATE NEC. They have their own budget.	
Capital expenditure: Laptop Computers for VA&R \$3,000.	
Travel policy will allow one way vehicle mileage reimbursement for travel to Convention or Conference, unless you have a Department vehicle or an employee.	
Travel per diem is \$50 for a full day, 1st and last day \$37.50. Mileage reimbursement .50 cents per mile.	
For the last several years Department has had surpluses because of the 2020 dues increase. We are now showing losses and will use up the those surpluses. However, we don't anticipate any dues increase through 2031 if National does not have any increases	

**Special Convention Edition**

**Candidates for Office**



**Alex Slocum – Candidate for Department Commander**

Matthews – Crawford Post and the 6<sup>th</sup> district of The American Legion Department of Missouri has a Legionnaire that is deserving of your consideration for the office of Commander for The American Legion of Missouri.

Legionnaire Alex Slocum gained his eligibility in The American Legion by serving in the United States Air Force for 20.5 years and retired on February 1, 2020. Legionnaire Slocum had duty assignments in the United States, Germany, Korea, Philippines, and England. Alex has also had three deployments to Saudi Arabia. Alex retired as an Air Force civilian employee with the 509<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing at Whiteman Air Force, after 45 years of combine service with the United States Air Force.

Legionnaire Slocum is an active member of Matthews – Crawford Post 131 in Warrensburg, Missouri for 21 years. Legionnaire Slocum has held post level positions of Commander, Adjutant, Historian and Sergeant-at-Arms. He served the Sixth District Commander and Zone III Vice Commander Position.

As post commander Legionnaire Slocum was 100 percent members post commander for two consecutive years. For the 2024 membership year, he was the only district commander within the department to reach 100% of the membership goal. He was also the Departments Recruiter of the year. As post historian his history yearbook won first place at the National Historian Competition three times and garnered a second-place finish one other year. Alex is a past “Legionnaire of the Year” for his post, district, and department. Alex currently is the chairman of the ROTC Committee and serves on the Education and Scholarship Committee and the Department Commander’s Sub-Committee.

Legionnaire Slocum is also a life member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2513 in Warrensburg, and a life member of the Disabled American Veterans, Oliver Buehrle Chapter 17 in Jefferson City.

The American Legion Department of Missouri 6<sup>th</sup> District endorses Legionnaire Alex Slocum for the position of Commander for the 2026-2027 term.

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**Lloyd Miller - Candidate for Sr. Vice Commander**

Monroe County Post 221 and the 1<sup>st</sup> District of The American Legion Department of Missouri has a Legionnaire that is deserving of your consideration for the office of Senior Vice Commander for The American Legion of Missouri.

Legionnaire Lloyd Miller gained his eligibility in The American Legion though his service in the in the United States Navy from 1966 to 1971, receiving an Honorable Discharge.

Lloyd is an active and committed member of the Monroe County Post 221 and has served his post as Chaplain, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander, and Commander; Lloyd has served the First District as Commander. Lloyd has served as the Zone 1 Vice Commander and currently services on the Departments Children and Youth

Commission, County Government Committee, State Youth Government Committee Chair, Veterans Affairs and Rehab Committee and on The Boys State Commission.

Legionnaire Miller has unquestionably demonstrated his qualities in leadership, knowledge, and devotion to The American Legion, he currently serves on the Paris Chamber of Commerce Board, Jacksonville Assistance League Board of The Missouri Veterans Cemetery, an active member of the Paris Rotary Club, an active member of the Paris United Methodist Church, an active volunteer for Monroe County 4-H and as Owner/Administrator of Miller Resident Care of Paris Missouri. Lloyd has volunteered and been supportive of many other community organizations.

The Monroe County American Legion Post 221 and the first district of The American Legion, Department of Missouri endorses Legionnaire Lloyd Miller for the office of Senior Vice Commander for The American Legion Department of Missouri.

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**John R. Buckwalter – Candidate for Finance Officer**

MacDougall – Lowe Post 20 and the 1<sup>st</sup> District of The American Legion Department of Missouri has a Legionnaire that is deserving of your consideration for the office of Finance

Officer for The American Legion of Missouri.

Legionnaire John R. Buckwalter established his eligibility in The American Legion by his service in the United States Army from December 19, 1971, when he received a commission as a Second Lieutenant, Corps of Engineer through the Army ROTC program at the University of Missouri-Rolla until July 31, 1996 when he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel after 24 years 7 months of active service.

John has been a member of MacDougall – Lowe Post 20 since 1996 and has served Post 20 as Sergeant at Arms, Adjutant, Post Commander and is currently serving the as the Post Finance Officer. Legionnaire Buckwalter has served the First District as Adjutant , Finance Officer, Vice Commander, and Commander. Legionnaire Buckwalter has served the Department of Missouri as Zone 1 Vice Commander, Finance Officer 2018-2023, Senior Vice Commander 2023-2024 and Department Commander 2024-2025 and was appointed Finance Officer at the 2025 Fall Department Executive Committee to complete the 2024-2026 term following the resignation of the incumbent finance officer.

The MacDougall – Lowe Post 20 and the 1<sup>st</sup> District of The American Legion, Department of Missouri endorses Legionnaire John R. Buckwalter for the office of Finance Officer for The American Legion Department of Missouri.

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**Special Convention Edition**



**Rachel Merlos – Candidate for Department Chaplin**

Heartland Women Veterans Post 1107 and the 5<sup>th</sup> District of The American Legion Department of Missouri have a Legionnaire that is deserving of your consideration for the office of Department Chaplain for The American Legion of Missouri.

Legionnaire Rachel Anne Merlos gained her eligibility in The American Legion though her service in the United States Army Reserves from 1997-2005.

Legionnaire Merlos is an active and committed member of Heartland Women Veterans American Legion Post 1107 and has been an active and dedicated member of The American Legion.

Legionnaire Merlos has serviced Heartland Women Veterans Post 1107 as Commander for four years and is currently serving as the First Vice Commander. Legionnaire Merlos has served as District 5 Adjutant for 6 years and serves as the 5<sup>th</sup> District Oratorical Chairperson. She is currently serving on the Department Children and Youth Committee and the Economic Committee.

The Heartland Women Veterans Post 1107 and 5<sup>th</sup> District of The American Legion Department of Missouri endorse Legionnaire Rachel Anne Merlos for the high office of Department of Missouri Chaplain for 2026-2027.

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**Harry T. Barnes Jr. - Candidate for Zone 4 Commander**

Peebles – Vaughn – Wideman Post 253 and the 13th District of The American Legion Department of Missouri has a Legionnaire that is deserving of your consideration for the office of Zone 4 Vice Commander for The American Legion of Missouri: Legionnaire Harry T. Barnes Jr.

Legionnaire Barnes has been an active member of The American Legion since 2010, he became eligible though his service in United States Army from 1971 to 1974; and received an honorable discharge.

Legionnaire Barnes is an active and dedicated member of Peebles – Vaughn – Wideman Post 253 and has served as Post Commander for four years, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander for two years and adjutant for two years. Legionnaire Barnes has served as the Thirteenth District Vice Commander from 2019-2021 and the fourteenth district commander from 2021-2023; Harry is currently serving on Post 253 Funeral Honors Team. While being a Post Commander and Vice Commander for 8 years Legionnaire Barnes post earned the Department’s Toot-Our-Horn award each year. While being a District Commander Legionnaire Barnes his district finished first for Zone 4 membership during his tenure.

Peebles – Vaughn – Wideman Post 253 and the 13th District of The American Legion, Department of Missouri endorses Legionnaire Harry T. Barnes Jr. for the office of Zone 4 Vice Commander for The American Legion Department of Missouri for the 2026-2027 term.

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**John D. Lomax - Candidate for Chaplain**

Boots – Dickson Post 174 and the 1<sup>st</sup> District of The American Legion Department of Missouri has a Legionnaire that is deserving of your consideration for the office of Department

Chaplain for The American Legion of Missouri.

Legionnaire John David Lomax gained his eligibility in The American Legion though his service in the United States Navy from March 30, 1992 to April 1, 2013, when he retired after 21 years of Reserve and Active Service.

Legionnaire Lomax has been a member of Boots – Dickson Post 174 in Palmyra since 2013 and has served Post 174 as Commander since 2024. Legionnaire Lomax has served the First District as Vice Commander since 2025.

Legionnaire John David Lomax has demonstrated his abilities to serve as chaplain for the Department of Missouri by his service as acting Chaplain of Detachment of 0815 of Seabee Battalion 15, USN, Trustee & lay minister for Ewing Missouri Baptist Church, Trustee for Mission Hill Baptist Church in Palmyra Missouri and Worship Leader and Associate Pastor for the Warren Missouri Christian Church.

The leadership of Post 174 believes that John David Lomax meets all of the qualification outlined for service as the Department Chaplain. Boots – Dickson Post 174 and the 1<sup>st</sup> district of The American Legion, Department of Missouri endorses Legionnaire John David Lomax for the office of Chaplain for The American Legion Department of Missouri.



**Tom Payeur – Candidate for Zone 4 Commander**

Creve Coeur Memorial Post 397 and the 10th District of The American Legion Department of Missouri have a Legionnaire that is deserving of your consideration for the office of Zone 4 Vice

Commander for The American Legion of Missouri: Legionnaire Thomas G. Payeur.

Legionnaire Payeur has been an active member of The American Legion since 2017, he became eligible though his service in United States Navy from 1982 to 2006; and received an honorable discharge.

Legionnaire Payeur is an active and dedicated member of Creve Coeur Memorial Post 397 and is currently serving as the Post Commander. Legionnaire Payeur has held the Assistant Adjutant, Assistant Service Officer and on the Color Guard for the past 8 years. Legionnaire Payeur has served the 10<sup>th</sup> District as the Assistant Service Officer. Tom is a life member of the Gateway Vulture Forty et Eight, Disabled American Veterans, St Louis Council of the Navy League, St Louis Building Trades Wellness Coalition.

Creve Coeur Memorial Post 397 and the 10th District of The American Legion, Department of Missouri endorses Legionnaire Thomas G. Payeur for the office of Zone 4 Vice Commander for The American Legion Department of Missouri for the 2026-2027 term.

Special Convention Edition



Kerry Boardman - Candidate for National Executive Committeeman

Tirey J. Ford Post 21 and the 5th District of The American Legion Department of Missouri has a Legionnaire that is deserving of your consideration for the office of National Executive Committeeman for The American Legion of Missouri.

Legionnaire Kerry Boardman gained his eligibility in The American Legion by his service in the United States Army and National Guard from 1979 to 2001, receiving an Honorable Discharge.

Kerry is an active Legionnaire serving the Tirey J. Ford Post 21 as Judge Advocate for the previous 5 years. Legionnaire Boardman has also served as the 5th District Commander, Vice Commander, and Chaplain. Legionnaire Boardman has served the Department of Missouri as Alternate NECman, Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Zone II Vice Commander. Kerry also serves on the Department's Law & Order Committee. Legionnaire Boardman is the current Chairman of the Boys State Commission and the Foundation Committee. Kerry also serves on the National Marketing Commission.

Legionnaire Boardman has demonstrated his qualities in leadership, knowledge, and devotion to The American Legion. Kerry is a past commander of VFW Vaughan-Hudnall Post 6603, Past Chef de Gar, Forty and Eight, Voiture Trois (3).

The Tirey J Ford Post 21 and the 5th District of The American Legion, Department of Missouri endorses Legionnaire Kerry J. Boardman for the office of National Executive Committeeman for The American Legion Department of Missouri.



Mark R. Clark - Candidate for Alternate National Executive Committeeman

Tirey J. Ford Post 21 and the 5th District of The American Legion, Department of Missouri has a Legionnaire that is deserving of your consideration for the office of Alternate National Executive Committeeman for The American Legion of Missouri for 2026-2028.

Legionnaire Mark R. Clark gained his eligibility in The American Legion serving in The United States Air Force during the Lebanon and Grenada era, Gulf war era, and the War on Terror era by enlisting in 1979 and serving our great nation honorably until 2009.

Legionnaire Clark joined the American Legion in 2003 and became a member of Tirey J. Ford Post 21, Independence MO in 2009. Legionnaire Clark is an active and dedicated member of The American Legion through his loyal and committed membership in Tirey J. Ford American Legion Post 21. Mark has served Post 21 as ALR Chapter 21 Director, Chaplain, 3rd Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander, 1st Vice Commander and Commander.

Legionnaire Clark has served as the 5th District Chaplain (2013-2015) District Commander (2015-2017), District Oratorical Chairman (2015-2017) and the 5th District Boys State Chairman (2015-present)

Legionnaire Clark has served the Department of Missouri as Department Director American Legion Riders (2012-2014), Zone II Vice Commander (2017-2019). Legionnaire Clark has also served as the Department Commander 2023-2024. Legionnaire Clark is currently serving as chairman of The American Legion Leadership

Training Committee and as the Dean of Missouri American Legion College.

Legionnaire Clark is presently serving as a consultant on The National American Legion Riders Advisory Committee and has served on the committee continuously since 2013 and as Chairman from 2019-2025. Legionnaire Clark is a member of the National Security Council. Legionnaire Clark is a graduate of the 2015 National American Legion College.

Legionnaire Mark R. Clark has unquestionably demonstrated his qualities in leadership, and devotion to The American Legion.

Tirey J. Ford Post 21, The American Legion, Department of Missouri, and the 5th district unanimously endorse Legionnaire Mark R. Clark for the office of Alternate National Executive Committeeman, Department of Missouri for the years 2026-2028.



DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY BANQUET & USA 250th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Friday, July 10, 2026 Oasis Hotel and Convention Center 2546 North Glenstone Ave Springfield, MO 65803

6:30 p.m. Dignitaries Reception 7:00 p.m. Dinner 7:30 p.m. Program

Join us in our American Legion Family Celebration Banquet marking the 2025-2026 Department Commander Jerome Goolsby and Department President Wanda Kinder year of service to The Department of Missouri American Legion Family. Come dressed to impress in your Red, White and Blue!!!!



Please RSVP by June 30, 2026 and remit your banquet reservation(s) of \$50.00 per person (Make Check payable to The American Legion Department of Missouri) Send to:

The American Legion Department of Missouri P. O. Box 179 Jefferson City, Mo 65102 If you have any questions, please call: 573-893-2353

Person(s) attending:

\_\_\_\_\_

Total Included: \_\_\_\_\_



## Special Convention Edition



### VA&R National, Department and General News ~Tracy Vawter, DSO ..

The American Legion was founded on four core pillars of service established in 1919—Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth—with the **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)** pillar serving as a primary pillar. VA&R utilizes a network of accredited Service Officers to provide free, professional assistance to veterans and their dependents for VA benefits, healthcare, and claims appeals.

#### The Four Pillars of The American Legion

1. **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R):** This pillar focuses on ensuring veterans receive proper care and earned benefits. Through this, the Legion advocates for timely access to VA facilities, fair disability claims rulings, and supports veterans transitioning back to civilian life.
2. **National Security:** Advocates for a strong national defense, homeland security, and support for military families. It includes initiatives like Operation Comfort Warriors and supporting troop morale.
3. **Americanism:** Promotes patriotism, civic engagement, and respect for the U.S. flag. Key programs include Boys Nation, American Legion Baseball, and voter participation.
4. **Children & Youth:** Dedicated to the well-being of young people, providing financial assistance to families in need and fighting against social issues like child sexual exploitation

**What is a DSO?** Department Service Officers in our Department are Paid Employees of the American Legion Department of Missouri. We are specially trained and accredited, which means officially recognized and authorized by Department, National and VA. We follow the Code of Procedures and VA Regulations. We represent Veterans and their Families in their claims and appeals for VA benefits. We also further the work of The American Legion’s initiatives on VA&R.

**We provide this professional lay advocacy service at no charge.**

There are Non-VA-Accredited Companies out there that prey on veterans. They are taking millions of dollars from veterans and their families. Anyone charging fees without being accredited by VA is deliberately avoiding VA regulations, oversight, and accountability. They are charging fees for claims that would have been granted without any assistance. They charge fees when they have added no value.

There are three types of VA accreditation:

- 1) VA-recognized and trained Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), who are free.
- 2) Attorney in good standing with a state bar.
- 3) Claims Agent who undergoes a character review by VA and passes VA’s written exam.

Attorneys and agents charge fees only after a claim is denied or a rating has been awarded and only after they add value, by turning a denial into a grant or by getting VA to increase a rating or by obtaining an earlier effective date.

It is illegal to represent a Veteran in a claim if you are not accredited by VA. “[N]o individual may act as an agent or attorney in the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of any claim under laws administered by the Secretary unless such individual has been recognized for such purposes by the Secretary.” This is the law.

Preparing or advising a Veteran in the preparation of a claim is representation. Only VA-accredited representatives should advise or assist a Veteran with any part of the process.

It is illegal to file any type of VA claim without prior VA accreditation.

It is illegal to charge fees for assisting a Veteran with a claim, if you are not accredited by VA.

It is illegal to charge any fee for assistance provided before VA initially decides a claim.

**Be aware of anyone or any company who does not want VA to know they are involved with a Veteran’s claim.**

<https://news.va.gov/133852/beware-claims-predators-want-to-prey-on-your-benefits/>



## Special Convention Edition

VSOs Provide High Quality Representation. I want you to be proud of your programs, including your Department Service Officers.

In 2023, VA confirmed Veterans represented by VSOs are consistently more successful than non-VA-accredited companies with initial claims. VSOs add value for post decision review and appeals because we have access and training on filing these post-decision review options (including appeals to the Board of Veterans Appeals).

**Why do VSOs still matter in this “information age”?** Large Language Models such as Chat GPT do not have Ethos, Pathos or Logos. Ethos, pathos, and logos are Aristotle’s three rhetorical appeals, forming the "rhetorical triangle" used to persuade audiences. **Ethos** establishes credibility and authority, **Pathos** evokes emotional responses, and **Logos** uses logic, evidence, and reason. Effective persuasion (making an argument that will win) typically balances all three to engage, convince, and connect with audiences. Large Language Models such as Chat GPT do not have character and credibility. They do not have emotion or express sympathetic imagination. They do not reason. They cannot apply law, regulation and policy to clear fact-based argument.

These Large Language Models (LLMs) are tools based on pattern recognition. The set of patterns is called a “model”. The tool creates outputs that have the same patterns as the model. The more unusual the case, the more likely these tools will make a serious error. Lawyers have used these tools and been caught out with fake citations and fictional cases. Air Canada had to pay damages for its chatbot lies. Veterans have used these Large Language Models to “write” their PTSD stressor statements. Chat GPT will hallucinate a response. The human VSO provides ethical oversight.

**Can a veteran do their own VA claim?** Sure, a veteran could do their own VA claim, just like a person could pull their own tooth. You can do it, risking infection, nerve damage, broken roots and intense pain. Going to a dentist is the best option. They are trained experts. Just because you can do something doesn’t mean you should. Please work with the closest Accredited Representative and encourage your fellow Veterans and their Families to do likewise.