



Department
of Iowa

Legion Link

Department Commander's Message



Legion Family,

As my time as your Department Commander comes to a close, I am filled with overwhelming gratitude for the honor of serving the Department of Iowa. This year has been a journey of shared challenges and collective hard work, and I want to express my deepest appreciation to the team that made it all possible.

First, a heartfelt thank you to all nine District Commanders. Your tireless dedication on the ground, leadership in your communities, and commitment to our mission have been the backbone of this department over the past year. I also want to extend a special thank you to our Department Staff. The work you do behind the scenes to keep our operations running smoothly, answer the calls, and support our programs is invaluable. We simply could not function without your expertise and steady support.

The Membership Challenge

Turning to our final national membership standing, the reality is stark: **we finished the year 1489 members short of our goal.**

When you break that number down across our great state, the missed opportunity becomes incredibly clear. **If every single American Legion Post in Iowa had secured**

just two more members, we would have successfully made our goal.

Membership is not just a numbers game—it is the lifeblood of our organization. A declining membership roster directly impacts our financial stability. Because we are strictly expected to maintain the exact same high-level requirements and vital services for our members year after year, declining numbers mean that **dues increases are unfortunately on the horizon**. We cannot sustain our programs on passion alone; we need the numbers to back them up.

Legislative and Advocacy Victories

While membership remains a uphill battle, our legislative efforts this year have shown the true power of advocacy. We fought incredibly hard at the Capitol to protect Iowa veterans, successfully standing our ground against bills that would have negatively affected those who served.

But our work is far from finished. Right now, we are actively spearheading an initiative to get **all Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) across the state to work together**. Our collective goal is to identify exactly what systemic issues are causing Iowa to be ranked **46th in the nation for VA compensation**. Our veterans did not give 46th-place efforts when they wore the uniform, and they do not deserve 46th-place benefits now. By uniting Iowa's VSOs, we will get to the bottom of this deficit and demand better for our brothers and sisters in arms.

Thank you all for an unforgettable year, for your continued service to our communities, and for your unwavering devotion to The American Legion. Let us keep moving forward, together, for the veterans of Iowa.

Still Serving America,

Darrin Alderson
Department Commander
The American Legion, Department of Iowa

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