Send in the cavalry

Jeremy Wolfsteller welcomes veterans into his office on the fourth floor of the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis. It is Room 104. His days are filled with assisting veterans — medical claims, health care, financial hardships, homelessness and service-discharge upgrades. He also visits places in Minnesota where vets get care, and he produces detailed reports, which are posted at mnlegion.org.

Combat-wounded veteran Jeremy Wolfsteller discovered his passion was helping others veterans, so he made it his career

This is the second in a two-part series. The first part profiled Jeremy Wolfsteller’s combat experience in the Iraq War, and the second part details what he does for The American Legion as the service officer for the Department of Minnesota.

By Tim Engstrom

When veterans seeking health care deal with the Department of Veterans Affairs, it can be difficult. It is a large agency, and there are various departments within the department. The veterans end up working with multiple employees of differing skill levels and roles, too.

But when veterans work with Jeremy Wolfsteller of The American Legion, they get the same person every day. He knows the VA. Or as they say in the military: He knows the drill.

"Thank you," one veteran said during a visit to his office. "You are the first person who stepped in and got me answers."

Wolfsteller is The American Legion’s department service officer at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, and his story shows there is a purpose-filled life to be lived after being wounded in battle.

As a cavalry scout, he was shot June 23, 2005, in Tal Afer, Iraq, while fighting insurgents with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. The bullet ricocheted through his body and never exited. The two men who saved his life on the battlefield died in another battle later in the Iraq War. Wolfsteller underwent a nine-hour life-saving surgery in Baghdad. After 10 months at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, where he learned to walk again, he transferred to Evans Army Community Hospital at Fort Carson, Colorado, where, often still in a wheelchair, he spent a year helping families who have lost a service member.

Wolfsteller medically retired from the Army on April 1, 2007, and moved back to Minnesota.

"And that’s where the after-life began," he said. He doesn’t walk with a cane today, but his limp is noticeable, kind of like there is one in use. In 2007, when he was 28 and living with his parents, he indeed had a fold-up cane.

"I would accidentally leave it places," Wolfsteller said. "If you go 27 years of walking without a cane, it’s hard to get used to one."

Continued on Page 7

At long last, the vets home bridge opens

2014-15 Legion commander pushed for funding of repairs

MINNEAPOLIS — New Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Larry Herke “probably thought I was stalking him,” said Peggy Moon at the opening of the steel truss bridge outside the Minneapolis Veterans Home on Jan. 9.

She said she bothered him so much about getting the bridge opened that Herke began approaching her first.

The bridge was declared unsafe in 2014. Moon was the Department of Minnesota commander for The American Legion in 2014-15 and chaired the Commissioners’ Task Force at the time. She and the CTF pushed for the state to repair the bridge when Commissioner Larry Shellito ran the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and again when Herke was commissioner when the bridge was declared unsafe and, long after her term, lobbied for the funding to repair the historic truss bridge. She heads to Washington in March as Minnesota’s alternative on the National Executive Committee.

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Continued on Page 7

Airport spot for troops gets new home

MINNEAPOLIS — The Armed Forces Service Center cut a red, white and blue ribbon on Jan. 9, celebrating the new location for members of the military to stay when they fly in and out of Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

Among the honored guests holding scissors were four siblings — Nancy Purdum Hall, John Purdum, Jill Purdum and Penne Purdum. They are the children of Maggi Purdum. Maggi Purdum’s son Scott Purdum died in the Navy during a plane crash in the Vietnam War, in March 1970. He had mentioned to his mother that service members lacked a place to stay when traveling, and you would see them on duffel bags and other odd arrangements on floors and benches when traveling through airports. After Scott died, Maggi pushed for MSP to provide a space for traveling military, and in November 1970, it was the first in the country to have one.

"Now they all do that," Nancy told Twin Cities reporters and a crowd of veterans, active military, airport workers and others packed into the room outside the new AFSC.

Most are operated by the USO, but the one in Minneapolis is an independent nonprofit. The American Legion and other veteran service organizations provide funds to the center, among other funding sources, like Delta Air Lines. The American Legion has a member who sits on the board — presently it is 4th District Commander Joe Jensen.

He had a pair of scissors, too.

Continued on Page 12

Reminder: National Commander’s Tour is this month. See schedule on Page 13.
Minnesota Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Larry Herke snips the ribbon on the 627-foot bridge over Minnehaha Creek outside the Minneapolis Veterans Home on Jan. 9. Though popular among cyclists and pedestrians, it is the only bridge open to automobiles downstream from Minnehaha Falls. The bridge originally was built by the Minneapolis Park Board in 1908 and these days belongs to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. Former American Legion Department of Minnesota Commander Peggy Moon is in a red Legion cap a little right of center. In the white Legion cap a bit farther right is District 4 and 5 Vice Commander Teresa Ash. State lawmakers with the Minneapolis Veterans Home in their districts stand next to Herke. They are Sen. Patricia Torres Ray on the right and Rep. Jim Davnie on the left. Former Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry W. Shellito is on the far left. Officials from other veterans service organizations were there. Among them were Veterans of Foreign Wars, Amvets and Paralyzed Veterans of America. Many MDVA employees and Minneapolis police officers and firefighters attended, too.

State Sen. Patricia Torres Ray of Senate District 63 said the bridge connects the neighborhood to the 53 acres of the Minneapolis Veterans Home. She added that the bridge is “a rare example of steel deck arch construction in Minnesota.”

State Rep. Jim Davnie of House District 63A thanked many groups, then noted his thanks to the steel workers who made the repairs happen despite cold temperatures.

The state color guard from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, left, shared the duties with the color guard from Waite Park Post 428 of The American Legion on Jan. 9 at the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

Minneapolis Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Larry Herke tells of the bridge’s history on Jan. 9 at the opening ceremony. The Minneapolis parks board built the bridge in 1908, the first year Ford produced the Model T. It was an age when horse and buggies shared the roads with cars.

The history of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs begins with the Minneapolis Veterans Home, founded in 1888 as the Old Soldiers’ Home and a place for indigent veterans of the Civil War, Herke said.

“It was not until World War I that medical care was provid-
ed,” he said.

Bridge No. 5756 was constructed in 1908. The Minne-
apolis Board of Park Commissioners wanted a way to connect to the Old Soldiers’ Home.

Herke said the bridge is “a rare example of steel deck arch construction in Minnesota.”

It was designed by Bayne & Hewitt Co. and listed on the National Register of Historic Places and Structures in April 1989.

In 2014, the Minnesota Department of Transportation recom-

ended its closure to pedes-
trians and motor vehicles alike.

In 2014, the Minnesota Department of Transportation delayed the project, Herke said, because of steel and welding issues de-
layed the project, Herke said.

The bridge was inspected in late fall 2017. Some painting and minor work will be completed this spring, Herke said.

“We’re excited to reopen the bridge today,” he said.

State Sen. Patricia Torres Ray said she was proud to secure funding and preserve the bridge for future generations of veterans and residents of the neighborhood.

“I cannot think of anything more important I do in the Min-
nnesota Senate,” she said.

State Rep. Jim Davnie recognized the site’s value as histori-
cal to the city and to the state.

“I’m pleased that the bridge respects and holds that heri-
tage,” he said.

The Minnesota Veterans Home is in the districts Torres Ray and Davnie represent.

Douglas Hughes, deputy commissioner for the MDVA, oversees the five veterans homes around the state, and he hosted the ceremony for the bridge opening inside Building 15 of the Minneapolis Veterans Home. The ribbon cutting fol-

owed, outside on the east end of the bridge.
Can Minn. effectively end veteran homelessness?

Commissioner calls on help of landlords and veteran organizations

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has a goal of becoming the fourth state to effectively end veteran homelessness.

Commissioner Larry Herke said 332 veterans were placed in homes in 2019 — the most ever since tracking began in 2014 — but there were 533 new or reoccurring veterans who came for help last year.

“I believe it is due to success and word has got around,” Herke said.

He said he expected a bounce in numbers signing up for the Homeless Veterans Registry. He said many homeless veterans have income, though not enough to support themselves.

Herke said what his department desires is 600 one-bedroom apartments, and he is seeking leads wherever he goes.

He admitted South Dakota probably is the most underfunded state, but getting it accomplished in 2020 remains a priority.

“I do believe it is do-able,” he said. “I can see we can do this.”

As of Tuesday, Jan. 21, there were 274 people on the Homeless Veterans Registry. Of those, 185 were eligible for VA health care, and 89 were not. There were 56 unsheltered (meaning the rest were couch-hopping or staying in temporary quarters, such as a car or tent).

There were 57 veterans who came for help last year.

Causes of veteran homelessness vary:

- Rising rents.
- Landlords can call HousingLink at 855-694-4243.
- Causes of veteran homelessness vary: Selling personal items.
- Failing behind on rent.
- Job losses.
- Self-imposed barriers, such as addictions.
- Legal troubles.

Landlords can call HousingLink at 866-522-2827 to list current or upcoming vacancies on a veterans-exclusive vacancy list. The state offers incentive and mitigation funding presently available for landlords willing to rent to veterans facing housing hurdles.

Other states that have effectively ended veteran homelessness are Connecticut, Delaware and Virginia. To achieve the status, the states must meet benchmarks set by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Seventy-eight cities or regions have qualified as effectively ending veteran homelessness, too, Des Moines, Iowa; New Orleans; Philadelphia; Las Vegas; Atlanta; LasCrosse, Wisconsin; Lincoln, Nebraska; Des Moines are among many cities on the list.

Moorhead, St. Paul, Duluth and St. Cloud are not on the list.

However, five of the rural districts for the Minnesota Homeless Veteran Registry are: southeast (Rochester and Mankato), southwest, west central (Moorhead), northwestern and northeastern.

The MDVA works with several nonprofit partners, such as the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other veteran groups in getting the funding request through the Legislature.

Veterans Day on the Hill is slated for March 25, Minnesota History Center, St. Paul.

February 2020

Endorsements

Susan Edwards endorsed for Department chaplain

Minnesota Legionnaire

Page 3

Susan Edwards has been endorsed for Department chaplain by Billie Brown Post 627 in Nisswa. She was also endorsed by the 6th District Executive Committee at the October meeting.

Edwards served in the United States Air Force from 1980 to 1985 as a law enforcement K-9 handler. She is a 16-year Legion member and is currently serving as post commander at Billie Brown Post 627 in Nisswa, 6th District adjutant and chairwoman of the Department Law and Order Committee.

She has served as Post chaplain, Post adjutant and District adjutant and District chaplain for the 6th District. Edwards was also honored to serve on the Children and Youth Committee at the 2019 National Convention.

A 1996 graduate of the National American Legion College, she is a strong proponent for women veterans, an active Legion Rider and editor of the 6th District Newsletter.

She is a member of Unit 627 of the American Legion Auxiliary. Edwards recently was ordained by the Universal Life Church.

Susan and her husband, Paul (current 6th District commandant, Army and Air Force veteran, 6th District member of the Auxiliary), are both retired from the Boeing Co. They have been married 30 years, have a son currently serving in the United States Army, and two grandchildren.
The 2020 Veterans Creative Arts Competition is on, and veteran posts are urged to send eligible persons through the unit to contact the Department of Minnesota. "We have a great number of contestants and need to ensure everyone is involved," said post. In all situations that need to vent, or need some help, we should be there for them. We should never be too busy or too tired to help others. We can help each other daily by being kind and being there for anyone. It’s important to make a difference. I’m hoping to see everyone you all.

Paul Hassing is the director of the American Legion Riders for the Department of Minnesota.

Do Legion, VFW posts with buildings know they can get a property-tax reduction? And in Peters’ office, commandant of Wabasha County American Legion and former legislator is pushing state government to pass a bill giving 100 percent property-tax relief to posts that own buildings. He also wants posts of The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars throughout the state to know they can file for a reduction in property taxes under present law.

Legion Riders

Paul Hassing

The Minnesota Legionnaire

About: The Minnesota Legionnaire, Minnesota Legionary is now in its 100th year of publication. The Legionnaire is a member of the National American Legion Press Association.

Subscription: $10 for non-members. Members receive the Legionnaire as part of their dues.

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Board of Publication: President Mark Dvorak, Vice President Scott Andersen, Dave Anderson, Joe Bayer, Minneapolis; Carroll Partridge, St. Paul; Jeff Reiman, Madison; Rich Paquette, Milwaukee; Paul Hassing, St. Paul; Paul Hassing is the director of the American Legion Riders for the Department of Minnesota.

Legion membership chart as of Jan. 23

<table>
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<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>2020 Goal</th>
<th>Total 2019</th>
<th>Total 2020</th>
<th>Weeks Goal</th>
<th>Posts</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
<th>% Of Goal</th>
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<tr>
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<td>8,091</td>
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<td>2,118</td>
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<tr>
<td>District 10</td>
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<td>1,854</td>
<td>1,873</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>96.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 11</td>
<td>3,655</td>
<td>1,897</td>
<td>1,714</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>97.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals | 64,922 | 63,853 | 60,236 | 363 | 353 | 70 | 98.81% | 41,917 |

Same Date Last Year

Winter is hard for motorcycle therapy

Greetingss, Family, I hope everyone is keeping their sanity in these cold months. I guess we have to go through cold winters in order to enjoy the spring. It is especially hard for those of us who rely on our motorcycles for therapy. Keep your head up though, riding season will be here before you know it. In the meantime, if you need to vent, or need someone to talk to, we have a great place that is here for you. You can call me anytime at 612-598-0149 if you need someone to talk to. Please take some time to reach out to fellow veterans and their families. We tend to shut ourselves in over the winter, so please don’t be like that. For help, if a friend doesn’t ask you to talk to someone, you can make a big difference. I’m hoping to see everyone next year.

Mark Dvorak is the commandant of The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

Four chaplains went down with the ship

On Feb. 3, it will be the 77-year anniversary of the sinking of the troopship SS Dorchester. According to Wikipedia, the “Four Chaplains,” also referred to as the “Immemorial Chaplains” or the “Dorchester Chaplains,” were four World War II Chaplains who gave their lives to save other civilian and military personnel as the troopship SS Dorchester sank on Feb. 3, 1943. The SS Dorchester was a civilian liner converted for military service in World War II as a War Shipping Administration troop transport. She was able to carry slightly more than 900 military personnel and crew. The ship left New York on Jan. 23, 1943, traveling to Greenland, carrying approximately 900 passangers, as part of a convoy of five ships escorted by Coast Guard cutters — Tampa, Escanaba and Comanche. During the early morning hours of Feb. 3, the vessel was torpedoed by the German submarine U-233 off Newfoundland in the North Atlantic. The chaplains helped the other soldiers board lifeboats and gave up their own life jackets when the supply ran out. The chaplains joined arms, said prayers and sang hymns as they went down with the ship.

The impact of the chaplains’ story was deep, with many memorials and coverage in the media. Each of the four chaplains was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart. The chaplains were nominated for the Medal of Honor but were found ineligible as they had not engaged in combat with the enemy. Instead, Congress created a medal for them, with the same weight and importance as the Medal of Honor.

Some people may wonder why we remember four chaplains and their sacrifice. We honor their selfless sacrifice because of their dedication and love for their fellow man. They didn’t ask those they helped for anything in return. Their actions continue to speak louder than words.

How about you or me? We can help each other as we go through life by being patient, being kind and being there for those in their time of need. This need could be helping someone by loading their groceries in the rain, or holding their hand when they are scared, lonely or sad. We can help each other daily by caring for our fellow man.

Bettys Jass is the chaplain for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.
Obituaries

The Minnesota Legislature reserves the right to edit all obituaries for style and brevity. Please send to tengstrom@mnlegion.org or in the mail to the Department of Minnesota, 315 Hamline Ave. S. St. Paul, MN 55102-3809.
**The VA's biggest family**

Greetings to the American Legion Family,

I would like to say that I have attended three weekends of Mid-Winter rallies and spoke about how well the Sons are doing in membership and our programs that we sponsor.

I also have talked about my proposal for better health care providers more than just VA training partners and agencies and organizations to recognize and refer VA to VA. A controversial bill is aimed for the president's desk this week would allow federal additional funding to provide grants to private organizations working to improve the quality of care for veterans in their communities. The bill sparked controversy between both parties arguing over how much oversight the grants receive, particularly when veterans could be eligible to receive money from the bill, but it could also be used to privatize the Veterans Administration. The VA secretary has lobbied for the bill, stating his agency should be one of the providing services. The question of many of us in Minnesota have for top VA officials is where is the increase in funding in the VA's Veterans Centers Program? Has the uniqueness of the program's complete separation from big VA's bureaucracy still kept you out of VA's gains in funding in veterans' suicides? For readers unfamiliar with suicide, it is the leading cause of death among veterans, and many veterans are at risk for suicide. VA's strategy offers guidance for both new and returning veterans in helping partners including other federal agencies, state and local governments, health care systems, and community organizations as a nation, we can prevent veteran suicide.

Congress has recognized it may take five times fewer deaths than just VA training partners and agencies and organizations to recognize and refer VA to VA. A controversial bill is aimed for the president's desk this week would allow federal additional funding to provide grants to private organizations working to improve the quality of care for veterans in their communities. The bill sparked controversy between both parties arguing over how much oversight the grants receive, particularly when veterans could be eligible to receive money from the bill, but it could also be used to privatize the Veterans Administration. The VA secretary has lobbied for the bill, stating his agency should be one of the providing services. The question of many of us in Minnesota have for top VA officials is where is the increase in funding in the VA's Veterans Centers Program? Has the uniqueness of the program's complete separation from big VA's bureaucracy still kept you out of VA's gains in funding in veterans' suicides? For readers unfamiliar with suicide, it is the leading cause of death among veterans, and many veterans are at risk for suicide. VA's strategy offers guidance for both new and returning veterans in helping partners including other federal agencies, state and local governments, health care systems, and community organizations as a nation, we can prevent veteran suicide.

Connect with the greater number of Minnesota veterans of the Vietnam War who are the key players in this crisis. The VA's suicide prevention team is focused on reaching veterans in rural areas. After all, as a combat veteran myself, I wouldn't want to enter a VA readjustment center with a billboard across the street that indicates “need help” sitting in my local community parking lot — but that’s just my opinion.

What VA needs to do is look at the way they allocate Veterans Centers per veteran in each state. The American Legion Department of Minnesota took this on back in 2010 via resolution with no success and, yes, it's time we as VSO's work together to give it another go.

There's no question that our VA's of Veterans Centers for Minnesota do a great job with what they have but with the demand in services, overworked staff contribute to burnout. We need to support their mission and the mission of combating veteran suicides and although there is no single effort like Vet Centers that will be the answer, more could prove to save lives.

Learn about Vet Centers: [https://www.veterancenter.va.gov/](https://www.veterancenter.va.gov/)


Jeremy Wolfsteller is the Department of Minnesota service officer. His email is jwolfsteller@mnlegion.org.

## The SAL Update: Update on Child Welfare Foundation

The Detachment goal for 2020 is a total donation of $8,220. We have donated $4,605 or 56 percent of that goal with a donation per capita of 56 cents per person. As we approach Spring Conference, as well as the month of Children and Youth (April), think about what you can do to make a donation.

**Please check the list of donors and the contribution list at [SALWebsite](https://www.sallegion.org)**

Dave Vulcan is the detachment commander of the Department of Minnesota for the Sons of the American Legion.

**Sons of the American Legion**

**Department goal: 11,596**

**Current members: 8,244**

**Region:** At the National level, the SAL reached a 101,218 percent with 775,540 members. For 2020, we have 8,226 turned in at National for 70,020 percent for goal target for Region. For the 2020, we have 8,226 turned in at National for 70,020 percent for goal target for Region. As we approach our next target of 75 percent on Feb. 12, as you yourself, "Can we do it to increase renewals, and gain new members?"

The 2019-2020 Individual Recruitment award forms are available online: [Recruit 5 new members to the SAL, complete recruitment award forms and upload to National for 70.020% goal](https://www.sallegion.org)
Jeremy Wolfsteller has an arm tattoo that memorializes his stepfather, Eric Woods, who died in battle in Iraq in 2003. His stepfather’s nickname “Fr8 Train” was a reference to the Associated Press code name for an F-16 Fighting Falcon, the jet plane he worked at Normandale Community College as a maintenance technician.

In fact, he got Minnesota American Legion support as a young technician. He had a security clearance, but not a position to work on the jet plane. He was asked to work on the majority of the other equipment on base, and he was able to continue to serve in the military. He retired as a master sergeant at Fort Bliss, Texas.

The American Legion’s Operation Comfort Warriors has allowed Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller to assist wounded soldiers at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center with comfort items, such as iPad Minis or Samsung tablets while going through long stays. It helps them take their minds away from worries. Another example is giving them weight sets to take home so they can continue therapy.

Curling bonspiels planned up north

BEMIDJI — Bemidji Post 14 will host its 68th annual Men’s Curling Bonspiel on Feb. 14, 15 and 16 at the Mixed (2 men and 2 women) Curling Bonspiel March 20 and 21. Both are set up for the novice curler; however, one experienced or league curler is allowed. Entry fee for both bonspiels is $180 per team and the Mixed in March is $170. Entry fee for both bonspiels include meal and a three-game guarantee. For more information contact Bob Atken at 218-766-0121, email (aikten-kenni@msbunyan.net) or Claude Sanal at 218-820-4859, email claudie@paulbunyan.net.
MDVA taking aim at veterans issues: courts, suicide, housing

Legislative agenda could change before session begins Feb. 11

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has been focusing on some of the key initiatives for the 2020 session. Opening day of the session is Feb. 11, and Veterans Day on the Hill is slated for April 20.

Though this will be a different session, before the session launches, the MDVA, as of press time, plans to ask the state Legislature to:

• Allow the commissioner of veteran affairs, and by extension certain staff members, to use data from the homeless veteran registry to help homeless veterans secure housing. This measure could be controversial in light of the sensitive nature of data privacy. It should be noted veterans grant the waiver when signing the homeless registry, and the agency on a regular basis helps them find housing they often cannot otherwise find themselves in a market of rising rents. The Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless is seeking the same authorization for homeless people it helps find housing.

• Expand veterans courts so they are available statewide. The notion of veterans courts actually is a diversion program for veterans facing criminal charges for behavior that can be connected to their time in service, typically combat. A judge can withhold a plea and assign help. If the veteran meets the court’s requirements, the judge can tear up the charges. Minnesota was a pioneer of veterans courts in 2000 and presently has the program in some districts but not all.

Chief Justice Lorie Gildea has been a pioneer of veterans courts in Minnesota — such as how some counties have low rates and some have high rates. The agency would work in line with the federal VA suicide-prevention efforts, too.

• Fund $4.2 million via bonding for improving the safety and security of the veteran homes in Laverne, Silver Bay, Hastings and Fergus Falls, such as electronic locks, among other upgrades. The Legislature typically has funded bonding bill (aka capital-investments bill) in its even-numbered years.

• Fund $16.7 million via bonding for asset preservation. The MDVA regularly requests bonding bill assistance with maintaining its 64 buildings, altogether valued around $311 million. Nine of them are residences for veterans.

• Fund $100,000 via bonding for a greenhouse at the Fergus Falls Veteran Home. The residents living there already have raised nearly $100,000 for the project.

• Permit the MDVA to employ a public relations agency. Because of the distance between St. Paul and four of the five homes it operates, the MDVA would like to rely on local agencies for community relations. A PR person in, say, Silver Bay knows the local media and services clubs better than one in the Twin Cities.

• Clarify language in the Minnesota G.L. Bill. The bill as it stands offers payment to veterans for three types of educational expenses: for college tuition, for career apprenticeships and for licenses and certifications.

The new language clarifies eligibility for each component to avoid confusing the three or misuse of the three.

• Authorize the MDVA to hire dental staff directly. Presently, the agency can only contract for dental care of veterans in the veteran homes.

• Authorize the MDVA to operate adult day care. The agency presently offers adult day care at its Minneapolis campus, but this measure is a technical correction that provides more specific language than it presently has.

American Legion St. Paul Post 599 member Lou Michaels, center, takes the oath of obligation as the commander of Jewish War Veterans on Jan. 14 at the Jewish Community Center, 1375 St. Paul Ave. in St. Paul, before outgoing Department Commander Peter Nickitas, the JWV national adjutant and a St. Paul Post 406 Legionnaire. Others are being sworn in for positions within the Minnesota. There are about 150 members in the state. Members don’t have to be Jewish to join JWV. They can be patron members, too. For instance, the chaplain for the three posts is Roman Catholic. The JWV was founded in 1896.

Minnesota Woman Veteran of the Year nominations sought

ST. PAUL — The Women Veterans Initiative is actively seeking nominations of Minnesota women military veterans to consider Woman Veteran of the Year for 2020.

Nominations will be accepted through March 1.

A Minnesota Woman Veteran of the Year is someone who:

• Has honorably served in the United States military.

• Displays leadership and supports women veteran issues.

• Is a serving citizen in her Minnesota community.

Nominations form must include the nominee’s general information along with a brief narrative explaining why the veteran is being nominated for the award. Nominations not selected may be retained for future award consideration. Nominations may be submitted by any Minnesota resident. Submissions from Minnesota veterans, Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs), county service officers (CSOs) and other veteran groups are encouraged.

To complete a nomination for this prestigious award, please visit the Women Veterans Initiative webpage: https://tinyurl.com/2020WomanVeteranAward and complete a “fillable” nomination form. Nominations may also be mailed to: Women Veterans Initiative, Minnesota Humanities Center, 987 Ivy AVE, St. Paul, MN 55106-2046.

In collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, the 2020 award will be presented as part of the 2020 MDVA Women Veteran Conference planned for Saturday, April 4 at the YMCA Mounds View Community Center, 5394 Edgewood Drive, Mounds View.

Please consider nominating outstanding women veterans for this recognition. We ask your help in reaching out to as many veterans as possible in this final push, by distributing this information to your circle of influence.

Call 612-270-1755 or email longfellow160@comcast.net with any questions.

Deadline for nominations is March 1.

Mpls. VA adds drug receptacle

MINNEAPOLIS — On Jan. 24, the Minneapolis VA Medical Center made available an on-site receptacle for the no-charge disposal of controlled substance medications such as opioids, non-controlled substance prescription medications and over-the-counter medications.

Increasingly prescription drug abuse is recognized as a public health problem in the United States. Over 40 percent of people aged 12 and older have misused prescription medications in the last year, according to the Minneapolis VA.

“Misuse of medications such as opioids, anti-depressants, anxiolytics and other medications can lead to serious behavioral and other health problems, addiction, and even death,” a news release stated.

According to the VA’s National Center for Medication Safety, 62 percent of teenagers and 39 percent of those with prescription drug problems said they abuse them because they are easy to find around a family member’s medicine cabinet.

Seventy-eight people die every day of opioid-related overdoses.

POSITION OPENING: LEGIONVILLE CAMP

GENERAL MANAGER

1. The Camp GM will be responsible for the overall operations and maintenance of Legionville.

2. The Camp GM will be available on site during the Camp Training sessions.

3. The Camp GM must possess good leadership and communication skills.

4. The Camp GM must have knowledge of general building maintenance, use of small electrical tools, hand tools, groundskeeping equipment, i.e.: mowers, hedge trimmers, tractor mowers, use of small electrical tools, 3-point hitch set-up.

5. Supervises day-to-day operations of the camp.

6. Makes deposits of monies received.

7. Assists in setting the yearly budget.

8. Suggests other camp policies as needed.

Persons interested must be members of the American Legion please submit your resumes to:

Eugene Leifeld, VP Legionville
664 Fourth St., E.
Zumbrota, MN 55992
or by email to: leifeldg@e.ntalk.com
Expert on Russian, Soviet military history looks at failures made by opposing forces

By Tim Engstrom

Operation Barbarossa — the Axis invasion of the Soviet Union — began on June 22, 1941. Franz Halder, chief of staff for the Army High Command in Nazi Germany, wrote in his diary on July 1 — the 10th day of the invasion — the following entry: “One can say that the assignment of smashing the mass of the Russian Army before the Dvina and Dniepr has been fulfilled … It is probably not too much to say when I assert the campaign against Russia has been won within two weeks.”

Bruce Menning, author of “Bayonets Before Bullets: The Imperial Russian Army” and a professor of history at the University of Kansas, spoke at the World War II History Roundtable Jan. 14 at the Minnesota History Center’s auditorium.

Menning, born in South Minneapolis, has another book on the way called “Russia at War: From World War I to the Cold War.” He retired in 2011 as a professor of strategy with the U.S. Army.

Menning began his talk citing Russian military strategist Alexander Andreyevich Svechin. Imperial-era Soviet experts in the 1920s felt the next war would be like the Russian Civil War between 1918 and 1921. Svechin had his own ideas on what future wars were going to look like: More violent and technologically intensive than the Great War.

- Systemic: Capitalism vs. Socialism, a fight to the last man.
- Two routes to invade Soviet Union from the west: north of the Pripyat Marshes toward the center of Moscow and Leningrad or south of the Pripyat Marshes to the breadbasket of Ukraine and the oil fields of Caucasus.
- Outcome would be decided by access to resources: food and fuel.

Svechin concluded an attack south of the Pripyat (also spelled as Pripat, Pripat, Pripiat) would be easier. They would mobilize in modern-day Belarus and Ukraine larger than more likely.

They planned a defense strategy called “the Ural bulge,” which is a big military salient into the Ural Mountains, 840 miles east of Moscow. The Soviets thought they would have to set up a line of defense all the way to their border with Germany and Poland.

“Menning said blitzkrieg works best with the surrounded forces of Germany and Poland,” Menning said.

A second, Germany had logistical planning from that era remains classified information. One reason he gave was that the Baltic States, at the time, were independent, and the modern-day Russians might not want to share with Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania what their specific plans were for fear of a black eye.

Still, the conventional thinking, despite Svechin’s outlook, was an attack would take the north route, Menning said. It would be swifter.

The Soviet military also wondered about an entirely new model of war, where “the enemy would fall on us like a bolt out of the blue,” Menning said.

Svechin was a Russian general during World War I who later became a professor at the Red Army’s academy. In 1913, he went to the galagos, given a divisional command in 1932, eventually landing back at the academy.

“He has a prickly personality, and he has this way of speaking truth to power,” Menning said.

He was arrested in 1937 and shot in 1938 as part of Joseph Stalin’s Great Purge. The Soviet dictator killed the men who knew how to mobilize the Red Army. Stalin said: “Stalin gave the Army a beautiful case of amnesia,” Menning said. “He killed its thinking brain.”

That left commanders to learn on the job, and, meanwhile, the world was changing: Germany took over Czechoslovakia, the League of Nations proved helpless as Italy occupies Ethiopia, and a proxy war against Fascists in Spain failed. Fascism, not capitalism, now was the threat to communism.

Germany invaded Poland in Sept. 1939, a week after signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The Soviets had a hard time defeating Finland in the Winter War of 1939-40, which gave Germany an impression of how vulnerable Soviet defenses were.

A Soviet pre-emptive attack, Menning said, was still on the table. The Soviets now shared a border with Nazi Germany. The attack, if executed, could rely on accurate intelligence and acute timing.

Svechin, however, was “neither fish nor fowl” from January to June 1941. Menning said, and opted to appease Hitler.

“You can guess where somewhere in the middle can get you,” he said.

The Soviets made four fateful decisions, Menning told the crowd of more than 200:

- Now they assumed any invasion would be to the south of the marshes.
- They redeployed troops into the new territories acquired after pact with Germany, though the land had no military value.
- They redeployed part of their forces to a second strategic echelon farther east.
- They failed to order troops to full readiness in forward defensive positions.

In fact, Stalin would discredit intelligence on Germany’s plans to invade by disseminating, saying it was all Nazis wanting to provoke the Soviet Union to begin a war. Meanwhile, Germans were coming into Soviet lands doing recon, as far as 200 kilometers in, with claims like we’re looking for World War 1 graves, yet the Soviets did nothing, Menning said.

And that’s when a euphoric Halder predicted, in his diary, a swift Nazi victory.

In the summer of 1941 came “surprise, catastrophe, destruction at all levels,” he said. The Germans invaded north and south of the marshes.

And that’s when a euphoric Halder predicted, in his diary, a swift Nazi victory.

By the summer of 1943, Halder writes: “The whole situation makes it increasingly plain that we have underestimated the enemy.” If we smash a dozen [divisions], the Russians simply put up another dozen.

Menning said blitzkrieg works best if the enemy is pushed against a barrier, such as the Ural bulge in Russia. And that’s flat, and there isn’t a barrier until you get to the Ural Mountains, 840 miles east of Moscow.

There, in a fight that lasted from August 1942 to February 1943, in what became the largest battle of the war, the Soviets cut off the German 6th Army and elements of the 4th Panzer Army.

Menning noted that the Americans during World War II never pulled off an encirclement, but the Russian forces did.

By the summer of 1943, after the Battle of Kursk, it’s a different war. The Soviet commanders are hardened and the American Lend-Lease Act is having an impact, bolstering the Ural Mountains, 840 miles east of Moscow.

The U.S. put the Soviet Army on wheels,” Menning said.

For example, America gave the Soviets 400,000 Studebaker and Dodge cars during World War II. In addition to airplanes, it gave them airplane fuel — enough for 40 million sorties. The Soviets took air superiority.

“The refineries in Baku could not produce aviation-grade gasoline,” he said.

By the late summer, the Soviets are taking the initiative and working on clearing enemy forces from Soviet territory. In summer 1944, they launch Operation Bagration while the Allies launch Operation Overlord.

“I saw a world situation that is on scale. Again, the numbers are daunting,” Menning said.

The professor shared a slide at the end of his presentation. Svechin, in 1919, wrote that the German high command was talented but: “It was probably only one inch shorter than the height needed for victory. But it is precisely that missing inch which differentiates genius from an ordinary mortal.”
Earl “Sonny” Meyer, 92, is a member of William R. Witty Post 37 in St. Peter. He was wounded in Korea and sent to a hospital, but massive soldier losses resulted in no records. His family for the past three or four years has unsuccessfully sought to reverse the oversight.

KOREAN WAR

Not every wounded soldier received a Purple Heart

St. Peter’s Sonny Meyer served in Merchant Marine and Army

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PETER — Earl “Sonny” Meyer, 92, never got a Purple Heart for being injured during war — shredded to a thigh — because the medics who was supposed to record his name most likely was killed, maimed or otherwise.

Representatives from several organizations have worked on his case, but, without a witness or documentation, it’s been difficult to go back and find any survivors — whether it was years ago or today.

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“Sonny” Meyer served in the Merchant Marine and Army.

Meyer was wounded in the Korean War.

In his case, but, without a witness or documentation, it’s been difficult to go back and find any survivors — whether it was years ago or today.

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Woodbury Post 501 honors vets with Wall of Thanks at local mall

WOODBURY — The Woodbury American Legion Post 501 had another successful Wall of Thanks charity drive at Valley Creek Mall during the holiday season.

The Wall of Thanks is an annual event to raise money for local charities and to honor veterans or members currently serving in the military. The booth was inside Valley Creek Mall across from Keys Cafe.

Visitors were able to donate money that will go directly to the Armed Forces Service Center, Christian Cupboard Emergency Foodshelf, Hastings Veterans Home and Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake.

Visitors to the booth were able to post the name of a veteran or a family member currently serving in the military, on a placard and affix it to the Wall of Thanks.

‘AN ASTONISHING PIECE OF FILMMAKING’

HOLIDAY HEROES

Pictured are Bob Weiman, Don Anundsen, Dan Selken, Jerry Peters, Mike Offerdahl, Don Modesitt and Ted Fairam. Not pictured are Mike Jacobson and Rick Swanson.

The Monticello Fleet Farm contacted Monticello Post 260 on Dec. 22 about a “Holiday Heroes” program, where foster parents bring foster children to shop and children pick out toys worth up to $50. They were short of “heroes” to shop with the little ones, so nine Legionnaires arrived on short notice to guide children through the store selecting toys. Selken said all of them found it enjoyable.

Onamia American Legion Riders Post 395 on Dec. 19 donated a $500 check to Operation 23 to Zero to help veterans deal with life outside of the military. On the left is Membership Officer Jeff Benson, and on the right is Director Mark Anderson. Operation 23 to Zero is based in Stillwater and its website is op23tozero.com.
The 49-year-old Armed Forces Service Center moves inside airport security, has twice the space

Continued from Page 1

The new Armed Forces Service Center is inside the security at the airport. It is across from the Blue Door Pub in Concourse C at the end of the tram ride. The old one was on the northern end of the mezzanine for the ticketing counter for Terminal 1.

Rick King, chairman of the Metropolitan Airports Commission, said the new facility has double the space (to 5,900 square feet from 2,700).

He said travelers generally like being on the secure side of an airport. He said he hopes military members enjoy the same benefit. "That’s when you are relaxed. That’s when you are ready to talk to people," King said.

Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Larry Herke spent the night at the old AFSC when he was a young lieutenant waiting on a flight, he said. He thanked the agencies for the collaboration and added that he also spoke on behalf of Gov. Tim Walz, a veteran himself.

Delta MSP Chief Pilot Ray Baltera said 1 percent of Delta’s profits go toward charitable causes and the AFSC is among them. He said Delta supports 15 military lounges across the country.

WCCO reporter Reg Chapman, a Persian Gulf veteran, said he stayed at the AFSC during his first visit to Minnesota. He had been to facilities in other airports but “this one is a little bit better.”

He quoted Maggi Purdum writing about the reactions of the Vietnam soldiers who stayed back in 1970, a time when returning military regularly encountered angry protesters. She wrote: “They can’t believe that people really care.”

Who stays there?

The Armed Forces Service Center is open to active military, military retirees, former prisoners of war, Purple Heart recipients, Medal of Honor recipients, NATO officers and Department of Defense or U.S. Public Health Service personnel on a 24/7 basis.

It has a four sofas, six recliners, two large TVs, a dining room for 10, a large kitchen, a flight display, three restrooms, a shower room, a business area, 10 bunks for females, 30 bunks for males, two cribs, a lactation room and a playroom.
Greetings from the Mighty 1st District American Legion Family

This year is getting started with the Mid-Winter Rally, which was educational with the Four Chaplains ceremony and then a short YouTube video of 15 questions to ask a veteran. It was very good.

We had a Gold Star family speak about the Gold Star memorial that is going to be built on the grounds at the Dodge County Courthouse. This is going to be the first one in the state of Minnesota.

They are working in conjunction with the Hershel “Woody” Williams Medal of Honor Foundation.

If any committee reports were given this year, if the committee chairman wasn’t in attendance a written report was sent and read at the rally.

We have a District rally coming Feb 22 in conjunction with a revitalization at Austin Post 91 and surrounding area posts, and programs planned for that day.

The Legion Act has had an effect on membership; people want to join. If it is one or a hundred, it all counts. Carry an application with you. Sometimes it all takes is to mention it to someone, and they may be ready to join. If you need or want help, ask another member or the membership chairman to assist you.

Medical benefits and eligibility get your ID card and sign up through your veterans service officer. Before you need that medical care.

Remember the deployed and their families who may need assistance and prayers in these times.

Thank you for your service and support.

Happy New Year! We started off great meeting at the Richfield Post 435 on Jan 8th for the 1st District Mid-Winter Conference.

Then, on the morning of Jan. 8, Mike Ash represented the Department at the grand opening of the Armed Forces Service Center.

Later that same day Teresa Ash represented the Department at the re-opening of the bridge at the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

Next up on Jan. 11 was the Constitutional Speech Contest at Arcade Post 577 in St. Paul.

Mickey Ostrom held a training event that same afternoon on MyLegion.org. Many of your fellow Legion members attended the Jewish War Veterans installation ceremony at the twilight of Jan. 14. We look forward to the St. Paul Winter Carnival Parade on Jan 25.

Greetings, to the Fighting 5th District. Thanks for putting up a successful Mid-Winter program. Special thanks to all involved on a special day. We would also like to thank Shawna Davis, on his efforts and planning that made this possible.

Our membership still isn’t where we would like it to be. We will assume it’s not because each member isn’t making an effort. We still have time to rectify this.

The next 5th District assembly is March 3 at Wold-Chamberlain Post 99 in Minneapolis.

Don’t forget about the 100th anniversary of the American Legion’s founding.

The most important event in the 5th District is the saluting of the district and the county commander’s project, Every Third Saturday. Call Tom McK. to find out how to make donations for veterans and their families, 952-356-5116. Or be on the lookout for it on your TV every third Saturday.

Never forget those convalescing at nursing homes and private care facilities. A hospital visit to any veteran is always welcomed.

Last month I wrote about membership and I can apply that to the mission and focus of the American Legion Family.

The 2nd District function on Feb 22 in Stlayon will be a presentation on public relations. This is open to not only the Legion Family but also leading members of your community. Contact me at the 3rd District as a gesture of love and solidarity for those convalescing as a result of the disease.

I encourage everyone to be an active Legionnaire. Find a way to be more involved. And don’t feel limited to just the Post level.

People are needed to work at the County Council and District level also.

While most of the Legion work is done at the Post level, a lot of decisions that affect the whole organization take place at the District level. Consider your own personal skill set, whether gained through work at home, in the community, or at the college, or on the job.

Do you have admin or financial sector skills? Perhaps you could be a Post or District adjutant or financial officer. Do you have a passion for helping veterans or youth? You might fit in as a veterans service officer or as a scout chairman. If you want to serve the Legion, there are ways to do it.

February 2020 Minnesota Legionnaire Page 13
National president is coming to Minnesota this April

Get ready. National President Nicole Clapp will visit Minnesota from April 6 to 8. Depart- ment President Mary Hendrickson, NEC Raleen Tolzmann, Membership Director Sharon Thiemecke and Department Sec- retary Sandie Deutsch will escort President Nicole to various stops.

A complete itinerary will be in the March Legislative. As her visit is quite short, she will set up stops in the metro area. This is a very big honor for our national president to visit so please try to attend one of our functions and get to know President Nicole.

Junior Conference is April 17-18

The annual Junior Conference is slated to be April 17-18 at Waite Park Post 428 with the 6th District serving as hosts. A fun evening has been planned for Friday, April 17. Complete information and the call to the Junior Conference was includ- ed in the January/February Unit mailing. Be sure you share this information with your Junior activities chair.

Make arrangements for your Juniors to attend. We need more Juniors to attend our conference and share their successes with other Junior members so we can grow the program. Junior members are the Auxiliary’s future, and we must encourage them to not lose interest.

Poppies orders

If you have placed your poppy order yet, please do so. We need to finalize the number of Poppies needed for this year’s Poppy distribution so we can plan accordingly. Let’s have 100 percent Unit participation in the Auxiliary Poppy Program. We still have quite a few Unities that haven’t placed orders yet. Remember our Poppies are made by our veterans, and they receive a small compensation for their work. Let’s support their efforts. It will help the Department Office tremendously if you get your orders in now and not wait until the last minute. That will ensure that we have the inventory to handle all orders.

Scholarships are available

Just a reminder all applications for any Department and National scholarships must be received in the department office by March 15. Let your schools know they are available and provide them with the application forms. They are also posted on our website for your convenience. If additional copies are needed, you may du- plicate those you have received or contact the Department office.

Send in reservations for 2020 Minnesota Girls State

In the January/February Unit mailing, every Unit was asked to provide the necessary information and reservation form to reserve a place for their candidate(s) to the 2020 session of the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State. Please ask your Unit president for the necessary information.

After your Unit sends in the reservation fee ($300 per girl) and it has been processed, your Unit will receive a packet of information including a complete registration packet for each girl you are sponsoring. This will be sent to the person who signed the reservation form. Information will be mailed to your school in January.

The schools will be waiting to be contacted by you. Let them know now if you will be sponsoring a girl. A Unit may sponsor as many girls from the same high school as it would like to. There is no limit. The candidate(s) must attend a Minnesota public, charter, parochial, private, home-school or be a resident of Minnesota. All reservation fees will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis. Any person, business or organization may provide the fee to sponsor a girl, but this must be run through a Unit.

This year the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will be held at Bethel University. The session will be held June 14-20. Please contact the Department Office if you have any questions.

Jan. 22, 2020, Membership:

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February is Americanism Month

Here is something from the 100th Anniversary History Program:

“Special 100th Anniversary History Program Facts: Americanism: a term which became relevant in the latter 19th century standing for allegiance to traditions. When the concept of Americanism was first used, nearly half of all Americans had not attended high school and many, being immigrants, did not speak English. Education came to the forefront to teach English, Americanism and Patriotism as well as to understand what our veterans had endured during the war. As the programs of the American Legion Family grew, so did the knowledge and feeling of Americanism and the U.S. Flag became our symbol of freedom and patriotism, known all over the world.”

I hope you have all been promoting the Americanism Essay contest with your Units. Essays should be getting in the mail by March 20 to me. And don’t forget to fill out the cover sheet completely!

Check out the Star-Spangled Kids program. Star-Spangled Kids is an initiative to educate children and youth in the history of the United States from the aspect of patriotism, Americanism and the U.S. Constitution. Auxiliary members can partner with the American Legion Family, team with their education chairman, and bring veterans or active duty military into the classrooms to talk about what their service means in defending the Constitution.

This year, I would again like to emphasize increased participation in the Americanism Essay Contest. There is a cash prize for the top three essays in each class. The cover sheet and topic will have been in this year’s first Unit mailing. Topic for this year: “How can we address the health and well-being of our veterans, military and their families?”

By the time you read this, Districts will have chosen the winners in the Oratorical Contest. I hope some of you have a chance to hear these young people.

Continue to support flag promotion and protection. Become involved in local patriotic programs, patriotic holiday observances, Get Out The Vote — a presidential election is coming up before we know it in 2020! And don’t be afraid to apply for awards — both Department of Minnesota and National! You might be surprised.

Oh, and thank you for the midyear reports. One chairperson sent me this with her report, and it started me thinking:

“I started to think about what I personally do as the chairman. So here is my contribution to the Americanism program at my unit. We have a lot about honoring our flag, fly the flag, wear our branding clothing and pins, etc. Celebrate the holidays that honor our veterans.”

America Joann Joachim is the Americanism chairwoman of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota.

“The occurrence to me to investigate why do we honor our flag so proudly. It runs deep. Why do we call ourselves patriots? Who gave that distinction to us and how? What does it really mean to be an American? What makes America different from the rest of the world or other countries?”

I started to think about what I personally do as the chairman. So here is my contribution to the Americanism program at my unit. We have a lot about honoring our flag, fly the flag, wear our branding clothing and pins, etc. Celebrate the holidays that honor our veterans.

Get to know Scrip Gift Cards

The American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State program is committed to keeping the cost down to Units to send citizens to Minnesota Girls State. We are selling Scrip Gift Cards to raise money for the program. Scrip Gift Cards are available for many retailers and are accepted like cash. The amount you pay is the same as the value of the card and the commission we earn is paid by the retailer to Minnesota Girls State.

Many of the cards we sell are reloadable online after you set up an account. Minnesota Girls State gets the commission from those. Many retailers offer Scripnow cards which you can print out at home and use like cash. Minnesota Girls State hands the commission to you when you set up an account.

Scrip Gift Cards will be available at the Sweetheart Rally. The cards we have available right now are for Target, Walmart/Sam’s Club, Cub Foods and Amazon.com. Each of these cards cost $25, and they are each worth $25 when they are redeemed.

If you are interested in different retailers or different denominations, please contact Peggy Tesdahl by text message at 612-715-4489 or by email at raangyp@hotmail.com. If we get them ordered in time, they will be at the Sweetheart Rally on Feb. 8.

Secretary’s Notes

Sandra Deutsch

Well, here it is already February — go to spend a couple weeks looking for that perfect winter home, visited the Texas kids, and we are more confused as to what we want to do when we grow up than ever. At least we made it back to Minnesota still as a married couple — no deaths incurred (laugh out loud).

Bustier than ever in the Department Office — looking forward to all of the upcoming events. Hope to see many of you at one or all of them. Shorty is officially retired — not sure how his staying in bed in the morning and my having to drive 55 miles to work is going to go over. We will see.

I want to remind you to make sure and invite President Mary to your Unit meeting or function. She is such a wonderful lady and loves to meet as many members as possible.

Have a wonderful Valentine’s Day and make sure you treat those special ones well. We all love flowers and chocolates.

Sandra Deutsch is the executive secretary for the American Legion Department of Minnesota.

BLANKET PARTY

On Dec. 6, 20 members of the Daniel R. Olsen (Eagan) American Legion Post 594 and Auxiliary Unit 594 participated in the annual Trim-the-Tree event at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Hastings. The group had a really good time decorating three of the facility’s common areas and donated holiday treats to the residents and staff while there.

The Auxiliary Unit also donated over 30 tie-blankets and three quilts while at the veterans home that evening. The blankets were put together earlier in the year by Unit and Post members, as well as by some extended Legion Family friends. The quilts were donated to the Auxiliary Unit by a Dakota County quilting guild.

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Get to know Scrip Gift Cards

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Are you the son of a veteran? Maybe you are a veteran and the son or grandson of one? Either way, join your local Sons of the American Legion.

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The lower the Margin, the more you qualify for. Call for our low rates. Libor Margins as low as 1.5%. Call or email me for a free consumer guide and a personal quote.

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Heart of Alaska July 15-22, 2020
• 4 seasons Tour Director Tammi Haney
• Nonstop Delta Flights
• 7 nights superior accommodations
• 14 Meals, 7 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 2 dinners
• Iditarod Trail Headquarters with Sled Dog Demo
• Ride the Alaska Railroad in a Express Dôme Car
• Denali National Park Natural History Tour
• Riverboat Discovery Cruise
• Mears Glacier - Chenia Indian Village
• Prince William Sound - Pan for Gold at Dredge #8
$3,799.00 per person double occupancy

Savannah & Charleston April 18–26, 2020
• 4 Seasons Tour Director Cindy Peterson
• Deluxe motorcoach transportation
• 8 nights accommodations
• 14 Meals
• Guided Trolley Tour of Savannah
• Guided tours of St Simon’s Island and Jekyll Islands
• Harbor Cruise in Charleston
• Luggage handling
$1,699.00 per person double occupancy

Alaska Tour & Cruise August 15-29, 2020
• 4 Seasons Tour Director Tammi Haney
• Roundtrip Delta Flights
• 7 nights accommodations
• 7 night Southbound Cruise on the Grand Princess®
• All meals and entertainment onboard the ship
• Onboard gratuities and transfers to/from pier
• All sightseeing/entrances fees as stated in itinerary
• Luggage handling
$5,099.00 per person double occupancy

MN Twins Training Camp March 4 - 14, 2020
• 4 Seasons Tour Director Joyce Langerud
• Deluxe motorcoach transportation
• 10 nights accommodations
• 16 Meals
• 4 Twins Spring Training Game tickets
• Edison Ford Estates
• Assateague Busch Brewery Tour
• Louisville Slugger and Coca Cola Museums
• Nashville Nightlife Dinner Show
• Luggage handling
$1,969.00 per person double occupancy

Legionnaire Insurance Trust Silver and Gold Health Discount Plans

Legionnaire Insurance Trust has developed a discount card for health care savings exclusively for Legenomites in our Department of The American Legion. This card can save you money every time you access the special services available to you. No doubt you’ve noticed the increasing cost of health care services such as eye glasses, hearing aids, as well as medical supplies. This is why we’ve decided to begin a program that gets you the discounts you need.

Your Department believes these benefits will help Legenomites save money on important health care services by offering a response for awareness to the health care issues, and providing added convenience, quality and security to their lives. That is why the Department lends its endorsement to this high quality program. Legionaries interested in learning more about these programs can call 1-800-235-6943.

Silver Plan – $35/year

- Vision
- Dental
- Hearing

Gold Plan – $65/year

- Vision
- Dental
- Hearing

SILVER PLAN – $35/year

- Vision: $25.00
- Dental: $25.00
- Hearing: $25.00

GOLD PLAN – $65/year

- Vision: $45.00
- Dental: $45.00
- Hearing: $45.00

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Call 651-291-1800, 866-259-9163, FAX: 651-291-1057