Bonding bill yields legislation related to veterans

Restorative Justice Act falters, but one-time transfer for surviving spouses passes

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PAUL — Everyone watching the Veterans Restorative Justice Act expected it to pass the House and Senate in the October special session without any problems. After all, it had passed the House in May 2019, and it passed the Senate unanimously this year in August, September and again in October. But it failed as two major political parties did what they do best: fight. (See story Page 3.)

Still, another priority of the Minnesota Command- er in Chief’s Task Force (CTF) did pass, tucked inside the bonding bill at Line 149:5. Rep. Bob Dettmer of Forest Lake spoke with House Tax Committee Chair Paul Marquart about inserting language in the tax bill. The language allows surviving spouses of disabled vets to do a one-time transfer of the Homestead Market Value exclusion property of similar or lesser value, letting them to live in smaller homes without losing the exclusion.

The measure amends a law the CTF successfully pushed in 2019. The Legislature that year passed a law eliminating the eight-year cap for surviving spouses on the exclusion, making it permanent. How it works: The Homestead Market Value Exclusion is available to veterans with a 70 or 100 percent disability. County veterans service officers verify the VA disability rating to the county or city. For a rating of 70 percent, $150,000 of market value is excluded. For 100 percent, $300,000 of market

Continued on Page 2

Graves get go-ahead

Grant opportunity for cemetery in Redwood Falls is announced

By Tim Engstrom

REDWOOD FALLS — The VA’s National Cemetery Administration let the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs know last month of a $5.9 million grant for building a state veterans cemetery in Redwood Falls. Congressman Collin Peterson announced the funding Oct. 15.

“We were happy when we found out,” said Redwood County Council Commander Jim Mertens. “There has been a lot of next year, next year up until now.”

MDVA Administrator of Memorial Affairs David Swantek said there are a number of hoops the agency must jump through for the Redwood Falls Veterans Cemetery to become reality.

“The funding opportunity is there, but we have to make sure we put all the pieces in place,” he said.

American Legion Department Commander Mark Dvorak in October

Continued on Page 7

Federal Premium Ammunition in Anoka is recognized for hiring veterans

By Tim Engstrom

ANOKA — Shannon Culver of Elk River retired from the military 10 years ago after serving 18 1/2 years in the Minnesota Air National Guard. She has been at Federal Premium Ammunition for eight years now.

In her prior job as a staffing supervisor for a nursing home in New Hope, she was let go because she was too direct — a trait common, and typical among veterans. She had been a master sergeant (E-7) and knew how to supervise people.

“They said I didn’t ‘fluff my language’ well enough,” Culver said.

She was an unemployed veteran for six months. Through a friend, she found Federal. There, being direct is a good thing.

“Working at a place with a lot of veterans has a lot of camaraderie,” Culver said. “It doesn’t matter what branch you are, you are still part of our family.”

Federal’s ammunition plant in Anoka has 1,500 employees, of which more than 10 percent are veterans. Federal, owned by Vista Outdoors, is the winner of the Employer of Veterans Award in the large company category (201 workers or more) from The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

BRAINERD — The American Legion Family Fall Conference, scheduled for Oct. 22-24 at Breezy Point Resort, was canceled the morning of Oct. 21.

American Legion Department of Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak, after talking with key leaders, canceled the conference due to an impending snowstorm and forecasts of hazardous travel.

“The safety of our members is of utmost importance,” said Adjutant Mike Maxa.

The resort is in Crow Wing County, and Brainerd is the route to Breezy Point for many travelers — reported 6 inches on Oct. 22, breaking a record of 2 inches set in 1987.

The newspaper said the city got 6 inches Oct. 21, breaking a record of 2 inches set in 1936.

Little Falls — along the route to Breezy Point for many travelers — reported 6 inches on Oct. 22.

The State Patrol reported many spinouts because of icy roads. The law enforcement agency urged motorists to “drive smart” and said ice and snow created treacherous driving conditions.

The Fall Conference was to be hosted by Nisswa Post 627. Breezy Point Resort agreed to give full refunds for lodging. A Department Executive Committee meeting over Zoom is set for 7 p.m. Nov. 5.
Continued from Page 1

value is excluded.

Then if the veteran dies before his or her spouse, the exclusion carries over until the spouse remarries, sells, transfers or disposes of the property — unless that spouse uses the new one-time transfer to downsize to a new home. In that case, the exclusion ends only when the widower or widower remarries, sells, transfers or disposes of the property.

The tax bill ended up being combined into the bonding bill. The House on Oct. 14 approved the $1.87 bonding bill 100-34, then sent it to the Senate, where it passed 63-4 on Oct. 15. Gov. Tim Walz signed it into law Oct. 21.

“I’m glad we were able to get that provision through for military spouses,” said Dettmer, the minority lead on the House Veterans Affairs Committee. “When I spoke with Paul Marquart, he didn’t make any promises, but it looks like he was able to get it in. I called him up and thanked him.”

Minnesota Military Museum
$13 million for the new Minnesota Military Museum at Camp Ripley.

The funds go toward acquiring land and to design, construct and equip a site for the Minnesota Military Museum outside Camp Ripley. The museum presently occupies space inside a building at the camp. This limits its ability to grow its collection.

“This new museum will be a focal point for the Minnesotans who have served in all branches of the armed forces,” said Randall Dietrich, executive director of the Museum. “The bipartisan support in both the House and Senate was crafted with the leadership of local district Rep. Ron Kresha, House Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Division Committee Chair Rep. Rob Ecklund and committee member Rep. Bob Dettmer.”

The new site is on 32 acres at the junction of highways 371 and 115. The new museum is to cost $40 million and open in spring 2023. A full story in the April 2020 issue showed renderings and spelled out plans.

The cost of construction, moving and outdoor elements totals $16 million. The KAHR Foundation has donated $3 million to get the building rolling, and the museum seeks another $5 million for additional tools and technology to share veterans’ stories.

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

The Minnesota Legislature appropriated $6.75 million for MDVA needs. Here is a breakdown:

• $3 million for asset preservation. The MDVA has 68 buildings to maintain in Minnesota Veterans Homes and Minnesota Veterans Cemeteries, and this funding goes toward maintaining those structures.

MDVA Legislative Director Ben Huberson said repair projects are ongoing. He said the agency performs annual infrastructure assessments, determining useful life of, for example, a roof, a window, a carpet, and it spends the funding in order of need. The agency originally requested $10.7 million in asset preservation and $4.2 million in safety and security upgrades for the homes.

The agency has a 1.06 million square feet to maintain, and its 68 buildings have a replacement value of $311 million. (This does not include the Veterans Service Building in St. Paul, which is under the Department of Administration.)

• $100,000 for designing and constructing a new greenhouse at the Fergus Falls Veterans Home. The local veterans community already has raised another $100,000 for the project.

Johnson said Fergus Falls Post 30 Commander Warren Wilson. “It’s another activity the veterans will have available to them. Our Legion does a lot of projects up there. I believe it is one of the best veteran homes in the state if not the nation.”

Fergus Falls Veterans Home Administrator Scott Buchanan said the state and private funding will provide enough for the greenhouse project. He said the groundbreaking is slated for sometime in 2021, though COVID-19 could stand in the way.

“When completed, our greenhouse will allow for an accessible, comfortable space for our veterans to garden. Our veterans and our staff very much appreciate all the generous donations given and any state funds provided for this project,” Buchanan said.

• $350,000 to Martin County to design and construct a veterans memorial.

Foard Post 36 Commander Steve Fosness said the funding will help finish out the existing memorial. It will pay for six bronze statues between the memorial and the restored Bell Cobra attack helicopter to the north. Each statue will represent a different branch of the military and a different era.

The Martin County Veterans Memorial earlier this year received state funding in the Legacy Amendment for $130,000. That will fund four bronze statues in front of the POW/MIA/KIA area. It will be a life-size woman on a bench with a child beside her. Presenting her with folded flags will be American Legion and VFW members.

Fosness said donated money, land and in-kind work totals $550,000 for the project.

Truss Bridge Project

The MDVA reopened the Minnesota Veterans Home Truss Bridge on Jan. 9 with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting. The 2020 bonding bill, however, denotes $7.85 million and features language saying the unspent portions of the project can go toward veteran homes, half for asset preservation and half toward campus security and safety upgrades. It is not a new appropriation, Johnson said. It is the same as the 2017 appropriation but with language that revises the original so the agency has authority to spend any leftover funds. Johnson said right now there are about $3 million remaining. The bridge still has to go through a few more inspections.

The Department of Homeland Security in 2018 and 2019 assessed the security of Minnesota Veterans Homes, and the MDVA has worked toward meeting the recommendations. Presently, once inside with code or badge access, visitors have access to most anywhere, Johnson said. The hope is to provide visitors access to designated areas.

Related funding

• $24.5 million to the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs, aka Department of Homeland Security. The biggest chunk of this pie was the $13 million for the museum, and the rest was $1 million to renovate space at the Rosemount Readiness Center, $2.1 million to renovate space at the Fergus Falls Readiness Center, $3.5 million to renovate space at the Moorhead Readiness Center and $3.1 million to renovate space at the Marshall Readiness Center.

• $1 million for construction of the Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail. This DNR trail honors vets. The plan calls for 32 miles of paved trail in the Little Falls area to connect other state trails, resulting in a 500-mile network.

• $5 million to Wisconsin for construction of the Veterans Memorial Greenway, which includes memorials, a community gathering space and a trail connection between Lebanon Hills Regional Park and the Mississippi River.

• $700,000 to Redwood County as a reimbursement for paving Noble Avenue, including paving the main access to a new state veterans cemetery planned for near Redwood Falls. (See story on Page 1.)

The American Legion and other veterans with the CTF visit the Capitol on Oct. 12 after the Minnesota Senate approved the Veterans Restorative Justice Act 67-0. Back row from left are American Legion Adjutant Mike Maxa, Relph, Anderson, American Legion Legislative Chairman Robert Hart, VFW Legislative Officer Tommy Johnson and Jewish War Veterans Commander Lou Michaels. In front are PVA Commander Todd Kemery and PVA Legislative Chairman “Big Tim” Valentín.
Restorative Justice Act fails to pass the House

By Tim Enstrom

ST. PAUL — Most laws are just a mix of legalese, vague generalities or textbook drivel. The Veterans Restorative Justice Act, however, has a passage that is quite eloquent: “It is in the interest of justice to restore a defendant who acquired a criminal record due to a mental health condition stemming from service in the United States military to the community of law-abiding citizens.”

Those words most folks agree upon. Arguing over other terms is what undermined this bill from even reaching the floor of the House on Oct. 14. The Senate, on Oct. 12, passed it 67-0 for the third month in a row. The House had failed to pass it in May, but to send to the governor’s desk, they must both pass it in the same session.

The act, if passed, provides pre-adjudication supervision for veterans who experience service-connected trauma primarily from combat. It is a state protocol for veterans courts in Minnesota and gives access to existing veteran courts and service-related defendants facing charges in counties without them.

Instead of giving combat vets a black mark for life, harming their ability to earn income, the judges would have the option to get them back on their feet and paying taxes again, not draining taxes. If completed successfully, the incident is removed from the public record.

The VRJA saves an estimated $1.3 million in the first two years and $2.3 million the next two years, according to the Minnesota Department of Management and Budget.

In August, House Speaker Melissa Hortman had told CTF members from The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars the House would pass it after the bond-rating quiet period ended.

The time ended in late September, and the stage was set for October’s special session. It was House File 9/Senate File 2.

The bill addresses Severity Level 7 crimes and below by creating, in Minnesota, Level 7 crimes and below are presumed not to go to prison. Orput said Level 7 and below do not include some violent crimes. Level 8 and above are “adjudicable,” he said. Changing this law, he implied O’Neill wants to change all the criminal laws, he noted.

He said sending a defendant to veterans treatment is a more-difficult path for the defendant than regular punishment, but, if the judge, the defendant and prosecutor agree, it has proven to get them back on track to being productive, tax-paying citizens.

“You don’t want to go to probation once a month for 10 or more years or do want them to get a job and go to the House minimum-wage program,” he asked.

“We broke them. We got to fix them. They are not criminals when they went in,” Orput said.

Savings come to the state and counties, in one way, because VA picks up the cost of treatment. VA treatment has them with other vets, while regular court-managed treatment places people with combat trauma in non-veteran hospitals.

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“Why this bill is correct as is” By State Public Defender Bill Ward

It is incredibly important that after two years, there are still such fundamental misconceptions about the Veterans Restorative Justice Act, the policy reasoning behind the legal incentives and sanctions included in the bill’s actual mechanics, and its relation to veterans courts.

Before it ever reached the Legislature, the VRJA was the product of 18 months of negotiations in a working group that included representatives of the state’s primary group of prosecutors at the Minnesota County Attorneys Association, veterans advocates, representatives of the state and federal Departments of Veterans Affairs and the Board of Public Defense.

This group identified the need to address the effects military service has had on many of our returning veterans while recognizing the inability to establish dedicated veterans courts in all 87 counties of Minnesota. The group worked on developing a solution to the inequitable treatment of our veterans — whether a veteran court had been established or not — and how veterans courts themselves differed from one another.

A statutory solution was identified as the most equitable and expedient way to treat our returning veterans who are charged with criminal offenses. Although representatives from the VRJA Workgroup have discussed the workings of veterans courts on numerous occasions, there continue to be misconceptions.

For example, Rep. Marion O’Neill posits: 1. that the bill

Continued on Page 6

Violence-Free Minnesota and legal community favor this bill

The 12-foot-high steel statue “Monument to the Living” on the grounds of the Capitol Complex aims to remind lawmakers of their duties to the men and women politicians send to war. Sculpted by veteran Rodger M. Brodin, the veterans of Minnesota dedicated it in 1982, with the words “Why do you forget us?”

Call to action!

Are you frustrated that an overwhelming number of Minnesota legal experts and politicians have vett ed this bill and supported it, yet it still gets hung up? Do you support legislation that saves tax dollars during a recession?

Call your state representatives, regardless of party. Ask for their support. Don’t accept deceitful answers.

If it is a priority of the bill, does it say why it is a priority of the bill because it deals with criminal justice, and fixing criminal justice for combat vets is on par with other Minnesota criminal justice laws passed this year, our state’s legal community supports this, and we stand by them.

To quote the end of The American Legion preamble: “To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

This law is about getting our combat-worthy buddies back on their feet, and Legionnaires have done that for each other all the way back to right after World War I.

Why this bill needs amending …

Public statement by state Rep. Marion O’Neill

I am extremely disappointed that a compromise on the language of the Veterans Restorative Justice Act could not be arrived at and signed into a diverse legislation. My bill to Rep. Rob Ecklund, and the House majority were unwilling to compromise and incorporate necessary changes to the bill.

Unfortunately, missrepresentations of the bill were persistent. Proponents of the bill liked denigrated it to veterans courts; however, the bill in its current form is significantly different from veterans courts in troubling ways.

Unlike veterans courts, where successful completion of mental health chart and addiction treatment courts. Sculpted by veteran Rodger M. Brodin, the veterans of Minnesota dedicated it in 1982, with the words “Why do you forget us?”

The bill was brought up during the special sessions for October’s special session. It was written to be in line with veterans treatment courts.

“Why this bill is correct as is” By State Public Defender Bill Ward

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Why so much emphasis on members?

I was asked by a Legionnaire the following question: “Why so much emphasis on recruiting new members?”

The answer to this question varies as to why a person decides to join our great organization or why some individuals get involved at various levels of The American Legion. All volunteer organizations not only require an influx of new members, but also involve new members to volunteer their time to better the organization. The American Legion is an incredible organization and learning and becoming familiar with a few of our many programs can help explain why you decided to become a Legionnaire or why you became involved in making a difference for our country.

Each year National hosts its Membership Workshop in Indianapolis for all Department leadership teams. This past August it was held virtually and was the 57th annual workshop.

Ron Neff from National is the American Legion National membership engagement coordinator and below are some ideas he shared for recruiting new members.

- Be prepared to answer what this organization will do for them. “We are a group of givers. We volunteer our time because we believe in the cause. It’s not about what we receive but about what we give. Whether it’s filling that void or providing that camaraderie, there is something mutual in that relationship that we need to discuss.

- Be confident and knowledgeable about the organization. Take the Legion’s Online Basic Training course and haven’t already at legion.org/training.

- Passively recruit. “Most important thing we can do is thank every veteran you see for what they have done for their nation. You can then ask if they’re a member or consider continuing their service by joining. But at the end of the day, it’s all about thanking them, it’s that Buddy Check.”

- Show pride. “Display your pride in the organization by what you wear. Put your hat on and what you display in public. Set the example by demonstrating the highest degree of professionalism among all things that relate to The American Legion.”

- Approximately 11 years ago when I became the 3rd District adjutant, I was ignorant about the mission and programs that The American Legion was involved in. At the very first District Convention I attended was in May of that year and I was exposed to many of these programs, such as the District Oratorical Contest taking place at Rockford.

- Be conscious of the image the legionnaire should portray. Watching the parade or your local convention I attended was in May of that year and I was exposed to many of these programs, such as the District Oratorical Contest taking place at Rockford. The Legion is a family for America. It’s a dedicated group of men and women who work tirelessly to support and defend our Constitution.”

- Ted Hovey

4th District’s Jim Anderson will be missed

Jim Anderson was one of the most dedicated men for America and The American Legion I have known in my 32 years of Legion membership. He was the past Post commander at my Post, Rosetown Post 542. He was also my mentor.

I was elected to his former position as 4th District vice commander. Jim left this position for health reasons due to his progressing cancer. Jim was a great gentleman, a tremendous family man and extremely dedicated to the Legion. He was a super friend, confidant and mentor. I will miss him greatly.

George Gillespie

Albert Lea Post 56

Engstrom’s column was thoughtful

Thank you, Tim Engstrom, for your thoughtful and valuable piece entitled, “Why be Patriotic? Let’s not take living in a democracy for granted.”

At this time, when authoritarianism threatens our democracy, we need voices such as yours to remind us that democracy and freedom are fragile. That’s why so many of us gave several years of our lives to support and defend our Constitution.

Ted Hovey

4th District Rosetown Post 542

Classic poem is a piece of naval nostalgia

This is so old, but I just ran across it, and I thought I’d send it to our veterans.

“T’He Far East Blues”

Out in the middle of nowhere
The Far East is the spot
Where we’re doomed to spend
Our time,
In a land that God forgot.

Out with the typhoons and creeping crud,
Out where a man gets blue.
Nine thousand miles from the United South Dakota,
And the Far East is the spot.

Earning our measly pay.
We’re in the Navy now,
Out where a man gets blue.

Five thousand miles from home,
Out with the typhoons and creeping crud,
Out where a man gets blue.
Nine thousand miles from home.

Ted Storch

Morris Post 29

Freedom comes at a great cost of lives

Happy Veterans Day to all our veterans! Through the years most of us have had the comment, “Freedom isn’t free. Thank a veteran.”

I’d like to thank every veteran who signed that “blank” check securing our American freedoms. You’re great, and may God bless you!

I sometimes think that some Americans are taking their freedom for granted. Because we have the privilege to live in “the land of the free and the home of the brave,” perhaps we assume what we have experienced so far in our lifetimes will always be there in the future.

Of course, many view the free vignetted verses and anecdotes about people losing their freedom as isolated cases hardly worthy of concern. We veterans know what hardships and sacrifices we made to keep our fellow Americans free. Please never forget their sacrifices.

Perhaps you are one of those who assume your freedom, particularly your freedom of speech, will stand solid and strong like the presidents carved on Mount Rushmore in South Dakota or even like the picturesque view of Mount McKinley, which has stood for millennia and will continue to stand for many more. Freedom comes at a great cost and our veterans took a part of their lives protecting those freedoms.

Ronald Reagan stated, “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same.”

When I see children in our schools who can no longer read their Bibles or say The Pledge of Allegiance without fear of reprisal, when I see our schools disrespecting the national anthem and our American flag, I get frustrated.

At times, it seems like our freedoms in America are teetering on the brink of extinction because people forget what our veterans and amateur athletes disrespecting the national anthem and our American flag. I get frustrated.

Freedom isn’t free! Thank a veteran!”

So thank you to all our veterans. Thank you for the reason of freedom. Thank you for our freedoms of speech and our other freedoms. And thank you so very much for signing that “blank” check to keep America free, now and forever.

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

Betty Jass

The American Legion

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The Minnesota Legionnaire 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.

Veteran of Savage Post 643.

Hahn, Robert D. Sr., 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 12, 2020. He served in the South Pacific. He was a 57-year member of Post 35.

Haskins, Robert D., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 11, 2020. He served in Vietnam with the 31st parachute landing force as a staff sergeant with the 82nd Airborne Division. He was involved in Vietnam and was a member of the National Guard with the 133rd Infantry Regiment. He served a 58-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Hauser, Eldon R., 85, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 7, 2020. He was a member of Raymond Post 420.

Herbst, Clarence "Red," 93, Army veteran of World War II, died Sept. 9, 2020. He served in Germany. He was a 57-year member of Lake Crystal Post 294.

Hill, Gale, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 24, 2020. He served in France and Germany and received Bronze Star. He was a member of at-large Post 1982 and resided in Westbrook.

Hollinger, Robert J. "Bob," 91, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 20, 2020. He served as a boatswain’s mate and involved in Operation Ivy, the first testing of the hydrogen bomb. He was a member of Clamenton Post 422.

Johnson, Clifford E., 63, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 19, 2020. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Jensen, Stanley L., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 20, 2020. He was a 56-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Johnson, Curtis L., 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 26, 2020. He was stationed in Mannheim, Germany. He had a 42-year member of Willmar Post 167.

Jerde, David, 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 20, 2020. He earned two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star. He was a 36-year member of Delano Post 377.

Johnson, Darrell, 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 23, 2020. He was a 40-year member of Savo Post 383.

Johnson, Francis P., 62, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 22, 2020. He was a 44-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Johnson, Joseph C., 68, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 5, 2020. He was a member of Post 1982 and resided in Cloquet.

Keesling, Kenneth P., 88, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 21, 2020. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Kercher, Leon F., 80, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 29, 2020. He was a 35-year member of Waconia Post 150.

Kill, Francis "Frank," 91, Army veteran the Korean War, died Aug. 25, 2020. He was stationed in Alaska. He was a 51-year member of Morris Post 29.

Klimstra, Donald J., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 24, 2020. He served on active duty in Fairbanks, Alaska. He was a 47-year member of Litchfield Post 104.


Kutzen, John C., 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 2, 2020. He was stationed in Germany. He was a member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Lambert, Roger "Rocky," 67, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 18, 2020. He served on the USS Newport频繁 with 12 different steamelates. He was a 45-year member of Hutchinson Post 96.

LeNoe, Brandon D., 45, Marine veteran of the Persian Gulf War, died Sept. 26, 2020. He was stationed at Cherry Point, North Carolina. He was a member of Anoka Post 102.

Lupkes, Roger A., 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 9, 2020. He was a member of Adrian Post 32.

McBroom, Burt, 97, Marine veteran of World War II, died Oct. 18, 2020. He was a life member of New London Post 53.


Moorman, David, 71, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 15, 2020. He served as a forward observer. He was a member of St. Louis Post 282.

Nagel, Robert D., 63, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 7, 2020. He served in Vietnam with the Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit. As a civilian, his career was as a Willmar police officer and a law enforcement instructor at Ridgewater College. He was a 37-year member of Willmar Post 167.
Continued from Page 3

takes too severe of offenses, 2. that it does not require the vet-
ner to “complete” treatment, and 3. that it is bad for public
safety as it gives the gatekeep-

ing role to judges rather than pro-
secutors and victims.

It was agreed by the Working
Group that the most important
thing the VRJA could accom-
plish is to provide consistent
legal incentives to those veter-
nas suffering from the worst
service-related conditions to
ensure their compliance and
substantial completion of treat-
ment such that the Court
identifies as necessary to
rehabilitate and prevent recidivism.

After lengthy debate, the Working
Group was confident that to
accom-
plish this goal the VRJA
must include more serious
level offenses as those
are committed by the veterans with the
greatest treatment needs.

However, the allegation
must be at a severity level
of 7 or below (please note, as
per the Minnesota Sentencing
Guidelines, an individual al-
leged to have committed a se-
vriority 7 or below is presumed
to be eligible for probation if
she has a criminal history score
of 2 or below).

The difference with this bill
than other actions involving
Level 7 or below offenses is the
ability to receive a stay of
judgment. It should be
remembered that those charged
with public safety in the MCA
agreed to this because rehabili-
tating veterans who possess
dangerous skill sets is a more
effective way to protect public
safety than even the most
severe sentence available for
these offenses.

Re. O’Neill

The Working Group decided
the best way to ensure actual
rehabilitation was the goal-orien-
ted examination by the judge
rather than a simple checklist.

Finally, Re. O’Neill con-
tinues to raise the point that
she believes prosecutors and
victims should be able to deny
the benefits and responsibilities
to veterans under the VRJA.

This is bad for public safety
and would result in zero improve-
ment in our current system. It
is bad for public safety because:
• It will greatly limit the
number of court-involved
veterans who are induced to com-
plete the difficult rehabilitative
steps outlined above.

• It would lead to the same
system we have today, with
the same problems the VRJA
was designed to solve as cited
above.

I have worked with the
leadership of the MCAA
on many matters in my role
as state public defender. I
suggest that the leadership
of the MCAA did not take into
consideration the concerns of
victims’ rights advocates
is ludicrous.

Additionally, Re. O’Neill
is incorrect to suggest that
the victim has “no say in the deci-
sion” by the judge as to what

benefit the veteran receives
under the VRJA. Subdivision
2(b) clearly states the judge
should consider “the level of
harm caused to the ‘victims’”
and that includes the victim.

While Rep. O’Neill
states that proponents of the bill
have likened to veterans courts,
the opposite is true from this
writer. Current individual
County Attorney’s Offices decide if
they are willing to have a dedi-
cated Veterans Court in their
county, the rules by which veterans
would be allowed to participate,
and what legal benefits they will
receive if s/he participates.

Most counties have not
established veterans courts and
the ones that exist all
do not have practices that leads to more failure
than success.
The disparate practice that current-
ly exists is concerning to me—it should concern all our
citizens—and that is why I chose to participate
as part of the working group.

It should not matter, as a due
process consideration, where
a crime was alleged to have been
committed. Whether in Inuit,
International Falls or Inver
Grove Heights, all of our
veterans should be treated fairly
and equally in the criminal
court system.

Those who oppose the bill
espouse that they are in support
of non-VA medical emergencies
and that the VRJA will cover
the costs.

One of the first questions vet-
ner asks is, “How important is
it to have a supplemental plan
for my Medicare for emergen-
cies? Or should I be paying for
a private health-insurance plan?”

My suggestion is, yes, have
a backup plan.

Frankly, I believe VA could
do a better job ensuring their
employees bring
veterans to the bene-
th of non-VA medical emergencies
for payment. Granted VA does
have Medical Emergency
Fact Sheets on the process,
but who knows how to search for them
on the internet and should

veterans be responsible to seek
out this information?

Am I going to try to break
down some important infor-
mation for you to know that
will hopefully assist you in
having VA consider covering
your medical emergency that
happens in a non-VA facility.

Let’s consider because VA
considers these on a case-to-
case basis.

There are three different
ways VA can consider paying
for a veteran’s emergency
episode of care, but all three
require a 72-hour notification.

First, starting June 6, 2019,
under the VA MISSION ACT,
VA will consider payment for
generations that go to an “in-net-
work” community emergency
department. This just requires
a 72-hour notification, meet
the definition of emergency
prudent layperson defini-
tion and VA facilities were not
spending that money.

Are you still with me? That
was the easy one. Next is cov-
erved under 38 USC 1728, which
covers any emergencies for
veterans that are 100 percent
service-connected, a VA-rated
or a VA non-service-connected
veteran who self-presents to an
emergency room within
24 months of an emergency
visit to VA.

Our veterans sacrificed for us.
Our citizens — and that is
me — it should concern all
of us.

That is outstanding.

Finally, Rep. O’Neill con-

Well, I was hoping to see all
of you at Fall Conference, but
that didn’t go as planned. I’m
sure it was a hard decision to
make for Commander Mark
Dvorak, but I agree, safety first.

The Legion Riders did great
this year for Legacy Run dona-
tions. We didn’t have a Minne-
sota yard this year but you all
still managed to raise over $48,000.

That is outstanding.

Thanks to all of you who
worked so hard, and thanks to
all who donated.

We have a lot of things to go
over regarding the new resolu-
tion that was passed by the Nation-
al ALR advisory committee.

If you get a chance, you can read
it on the Department website.
It is Resolution # 32. We will go
over it at the next Department
Riders meeting on Dec. 5 in
North St. Paul.

There is currently snow on the
ground, but they are talking about
above-normal temperatures
in November, so I hope the
bikes aren’t put away for the winter.

Love to all of you. Stay safe
and stay warm.

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

Battle Lake’s Barbknecht endorsed for NECman

Bill Barbknecht

Peggy Moon has been endorsed for Alternate NECman by Kriesel-Jacobson Post 560 of Zimmerman and the 6th District for the years 2021-2023. Moon has been a member of Kriesel-Jacobson Post 560 for 43 years and was awarded a life membership by her Post in 1997. She has served as Commander, Adjutant, Chaplain and was on the Post Honor Guard. She served in the Air Force from 1971 to 1974. On the District level, Moon served as Commander, Commander, County Council Commander and is currently the District Chaplain.

On the Department level he served as District Commander, Vice Commander, County Council Commander and is currently the District Commander.

Carl Moon

Dr. Carl Moon has been endorsed for 6th and 9th Department Veteran Commander for the 2021-2022 membership year by Kriesel-Jacobson Post 560 in Zimmerman.

Moon served in the Air Force from 1976 to 1984. He is a Paid Up For Life Member with 32 years of continuous membership. He served as Commander for two terms.

On the District level he served as District Commander, Vice Commander, County Council Commander and is currently the District Commander.

On the Department level he has served as Employment Chairman for five years.

Walker’s Moon endorsed for Alternate NECman

Peggy Moon

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Walker’s other Moon endorsed for Vice Cmrd.

Representative to the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee and is one of only four members appointed to the Traumatic Brain Injury/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Committee. He is a member of ANAVICUS, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 560, 40 & 8 Voiture 414, and has a life membership in the DAV.

Moon was employed at the St. Cloud VA as an optometrist for 20 years and has recently retired. Carl and his wife Peggy (Air Force veteran and Past 6th District and Department Commander) have been married 46 years, have two daughters and six grandchildren, all members of The American Legion Family. They reside in Walker.
Federal responding to national ammo shortage

and Oct. 23, Federal hired more than 250 employees. Almost 20 percent of the production staff is new, and about 30 percent of the new hires are vets. The company still is hiring and encourages veterans to apply.

Angell is proud of Federal’s track record of hiring veterans and donating to veteran causes. He’s also proud that Federal, founded in Anoka as Feder-
al Cartridge Corp. in 1922, remains non-union.

“Federal is the most unionized non-union shop you can find,” he said. “It is run like a union without all the union dues.”

When he was working full-time, Angell had the staff forward hiring applications from veterans to him and Shotshell Plant Manager Scott Collier.

“He and I would look at it because veterans have military attributes that a human resources person might look past,” he said.

Culver, 46, first was hired as a temporary staffer, a way to get experience. A couple of months later, she became full-time. She started in rimfire as a charger operator, then she moved to centerfire as a material handler. Now she is a mechanical adjuster for a conventional loader of shotshells.

She found out Sept. 15 she has breast cancer. She is going through chemotherapy and expects surgery will take place in the spring. Because she had to cut off her hair, three co-workers — all men — cut their hair in support and one of them, an employee, cut off her hair, three co-workers — all men. They cut their hair in support and one of them, an employee, cut off her hair, three co-workers — all men.

“I like it here a lot better than where I was,” Culver said.

How the ammo is made

Senior Director of Operations Erik Carlson said he wants to assure people that the plant has ramped up produc-
tion. Shifts work 24/7 to respond to the nationwide shortage of ammunition.

“We’re making it. It’s on its way,” he said.

The Anoka plant has 700,000 square feet of enclosed space and sits on a 175-
acre campus. Every 10 hours another semi pulls up filled with lead, and eight to 10 semis depart with ammunition daily.

Carlson stood before a black-and-white photo from the World War II days, when the plant was making ammo for the war effort.

“The fundamentals of making ammunition have not drifted from what it was in those days,” he said. Angell said he thinks of the plant as three connected buildings:

• rimfire
• centerfire
• shotshells

Carlson said 85 percent of what Federal sells are 9mm, .357 and .38. However, the company has a fourth area — the custom shop, where workers make custom ammo, often for antique guns or specialty rifles.

“It’s literally craftsmanship at work,” he said.

And the fifth area is the employee store, where workers can buy Federal clothing, water bottles, ammo, hunting gear and other products.

Federal has contracted customers, such as the military, police organizations or government agencies, among others, and it has its commercial retail products sold in stores across the country, Carlson said.

The lead is the start to the production process. All of the lead is from recy-
cled sources — batteries, construction sites, metal dealers. It comes in various alloys of antimony, which determines how pliable the lead is and what sort of round it will be used in.

With machines, the lead is pulled into tubes, cut and formed into bullets.

As most veterans know (but non-vets read this publication, too), the bullet is only the tip of the round. It is the projectile.

The word “cartridge” means the same as round. A cartridge has the bullet, a case (or shell, usually made from brass), a propellant (usually gunpowder), a rim (pretty much the bottom) and a primer (which, when struck, ignites the propellant).

And even in these parts, there are smaller parts, such as the battery cup, primer cup and anvil in the primer. Turn a centerfire round over, look at center of the bottom, and you see the little primer cup in the middle. Inside the primer cup sits the anvil, which crushes the primer mix that fires the round. The primer cup and anvil are encased in what’s called a battery cup.

When you tour the plant, you see precision machines making all of these big and little parts, and there are more machines that put them together or punch grooves into the rims or heat the brass to give it less shine, if that’s what the contractor wants. Some of the machines are built from scratch, such as one that puts the lube on the tip of a rimfire round. Lube provides consistency shot to shot by providing a barrier between the bullet and the bore. Cartridge rotary loaders keep the shells moving as they put the various parts together, and you see these precision loaders in all parts of the plant. Some loaders do one at a time, but a new 9mm pistol loader at the plant can load 500 at a time using a special tray.

Accuracy and safety are huge in the firearms community. If you are a police officer or a military member, you want something that could save your life. If you are a hunter or a target shooter, reliability is key to improved performance.

Accuracy and safety are key at an ammunition plant, too, Carlson and Angell said.

For example, they showed a loader for .45 cartridges. The machine weighs one each. All the parts are the same weight, so the only variable is the powder. If it detects the weight is off, it rejects the cartridge.

At the 9mm pistol packaging machine, Carlson and Angell showed an employee checking for quality before the machine is packed. The loader has a camera, photographing each and every cartridge, before they are packaged.

As the tour went on, it was clear each type of ammunition had humans and computers double-checking the quality.

“Every cartridge is quality-checked by a packer and a camera,” Angell said. “They make sure the primer is not up-side-down or sideways or the bullet backward or any other problems.”

“A day code” goes on every box and case. It tells what day the ammo was made and which shift, down to which loader machine was used and who the packer was.

“When it comes to quality, we are selling to the military and law enforce-
ment, when that round has got to per-form, it’s got to perform,” Angell said. “The rest of us reap the benefit of that level of quality.”

Culver operated a shotshell dial loader. She fed the machine the ma-terial, dry powder, pouch and shot. It loaded the Size 6 shot, crimped the shells, then kicked them into an eleva-
tor and down a ramp for her to inspect.

Federal Cartridge Co.’s 2020 donation recipients

• Minnesota Special Olympics
• Paralyzed Veterans of America
• Twin Cities Honor Flight
• Camp Ripley
• Trust Vets
• Minnesota Military Radio
• Disabled American Veterans
• Vietnam Veterans of America
• Shoot for the Troops
• Minnesota Commanders’ Task Force introductory event (canceled because of COVID)
• BOB-FM fundraiser
• Hugo Beyond the Yellow Ribbon

load 500 at a time using a special tray.

Everyone loves to see shiny brass when they tour the Federal plant in Anoka. Here, brass casings are washed in a tub.
Antimonial-lead ingots are stored in three areas depending on how pliable they are. The more antimony in the alloy, the harder it is. The ones in this image are 1.5 percent, 3 percent or 3.5 percent antimony. The lead-antimony alloy is highly resistant to corrosion. Even though it is technically an alloy, everyone still calls it lead. The lead is pulled into long cords and coiled for the next step.

A contracted crew places a sleeve over a silo at the Federal ammunition plant in Anoka on Oct. 23 to make it look like a shotgun shell. The silos contain plastic resin, which comes to the plant by rail and is pumped into the silos.

Federal retiree Dennis Angell, who has come back to help with hiring as production expands, holds up a piece of brass from which casings were made. The leftover brass gets sent to the supplier, melted down and used all over again.

Senior Director of Operations Erik Carlson reaches into a bin of .22 rounds awaiting packaging and shipment. There are 135,000 in a bin.

A machine cuts and forms the long cords into bullets, then drops them into a bin.

 Completed shotgun shells come out of an elevator and down a ramp for employee Shannon Culver to inspect.

A sign welcomes people to the rimfire area of the production plant. It says “Proud of who we are. Rimfire. We take pride in what we do.”

Senior Director of Operations Erik Carlson holds up a black sweatshirt for sale at the company store. It has an image of soldiers in front of a flag and says “I support our veterans” above the Federal logo.
National Security Awards

Minnesota National Guard

City: Grand Forks, N.D.
Rank: Sergeant First Class
Branch: Minnesota National Guard
Unit: HQ 2-136 Inf.
Combined Arms Bn., Moorhead

Nomination: Moorhead Post 21
Duties: He provides training plans and operations support to allow the battalion to qualify on all weapons systems.

Decorations: 24 medals and ribbons, including Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Iraq Campaign, GWOT; he is a member of the Order of St. Maurice.

Member: Yes, Moorhead Post 21

Minnesota Air National Guard

City: Roberts, Wis.
Rank: Chief Master Sergeant
Branch: Minnesota Air National Guard
Unit: Joint Force Headquarters, St. Paul

Nomination: New Prague Post 45
Duties: She is the personnel superintendent for headquarters and leads personnel and human resources programs.

Decorations: 14 awards and decorations, including Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Achievement, GWOT; has performed duty in Germany, Virgin Islands, Antarctica and New Zealand.

Member: Yes, Wisconsin Post 2930 (at-large)

Marine Corps Reserve

City: Lake Elmo
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Branch: Marine Corps Reserve
Unit: HQ Company, 4th Law Enforcement Bn., St. Paul

Nomination: U of M Post 54B
Duties: He is the company gunnery sergeant. He is the technology and cybersecurity advisor and coordinator of medical, administrative, supply and safety. He coordinates drill evaluation and training exercises.

Decorations: 15 medals and ribbons, including Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Iraq, GWOT; has deployed to Iraq, South Africa, Thailand, Morocco and Jordan.

Member: No

Army Reserve

City: Rosemount
Rank: Specialist
Branch: Army Reserve
Unit: 327th Engineer Company, Onalaska, Wis.

Nomination: U of M Post 54B
Duties: He is a heavy engineering equipment operator.

Decorations: He has been awarded for his skills with the equipment.

Note: He was activated five months ago and is presently on active duty, serving in Kuwait.

Member: No

Navy Reserve

City: St. Paul
Rank: Petty Officer First Class
Branch: Navy Reserve
Unit: Navy Operations Support Center, Minneapolis

Nomination: U of M Post 54B
Duties: He is a command career counselor, water well driller and construction planner and estimator specialist.

Decorations: 18 medals and ribbons, including Combat Action Ribbon, Iraq, Afghanistan, GWOT.

Member: No

Air Force Reserve

City: Park Rapids
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Branch: Air Force Reserve
Unit: 934th Airlift Wing, Minneapolis

Nomination: U of M Post 54B
Duties: She is a command post technician.

Decorations: Over 14 awards and ribbons, including Joint Services Accommodation Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal, GWOT; she received letters of accommodation while serving at Fort Meade, Md., as a cryptologic language analyst of Arabic and on duty in Iraq and Saudi Arabia; named Outstanding NCO in the 934th in 2019.

Member: Yes, Park Rapids Post 212

Coast Guard Reserve

City: Grand Forks, N.D.
Rank: Chief Petty Officer
Branch: Coast Guard Reserve
Unit: Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment, Minneapolis

Nomination: U of M Post 54B
Duties: He is a marine science technician, a facility inspections supervisor, a vessel inspector, a casualty investigator and a pollution responder.

Decorations: Over 18 medals, including Achievement Awards, Unit Accommodations, Meritorious Teams, Good Conduct Medals; has attended 10 schools specific to his duties.

Member: No

About this feature ...

The Department of Minnesota’s National Security Awards were going to be presented at the Fall Conference. They are shared here instead with some of the information they submitted. All of the awards honor outstanding enlisted personnel.
Winnebago American Legion Post 82 donated $7,000 to the Winnebago Area Ambulance Crew to go toward new monitors.

Eagan Post 594 facilitated a Flag Education and Disposal Ceremony on Oct. 8 at Thomas Lake Park in Eagan. It was supported by members of the Eagan Girl Scouts and their families. The post and auxiliary recognized four Girl Scouts for their assistance at this year's 9/11 Remembrance at the Eagan Tribute Plaza. Back row are Post 594 Commander John Flynn, Unit 594 President Susan Flynn, Post 594 Adjutant Wayne Bierman and the four medal recipients with their certificates are in the front row.

Bob Lambert, left, was presented a Quilt of Valor in honor of his four years serving in the U.S. Army as a helicopter pilot, one year spent in Vietnam and recognition of his leadership chairing the St. Peter Area Veterans Memorial Committee. The Quilt of Valor was made by Gail Dummer, far right. Dummer has 13 family members represented on the memorial, totaling over 150 years of military service. Lambert is a member of St. Peter Post 37.

Veterans Memorial Park was established by a group of local veterans from all services, to honor all veterans dating back to the start of the country. This task, however, began about three years ago, and the dedication of a veterans memorial took place June 26, 2020. Ownership of the park was transferred to the city of Alexandria. The site chosen for the park, at one time, was American Legion Post 87 Park, which was turned over to the city several years ago. Veterans Memorial Park is on Broadway in downtown Alexandria. Post 87 says thanks to all who made the massive project possible. With the support of many businesses, banks, manufacturers and individuals, as well as local veterans and veterans organizations, Post 87 contributed $10,000 to the project. Commander Allan Gerlach presents a $5,000 check to Ken Voigt and Russ Oorlog of the Veterans Memorial Park Committee. Gerlach encourages Legionnaires to stop in and visit the park.

The Slayton American Legion Riders Chapter 64 presented a check in the amount of $2095 to Duane Mabon, volunteer services coordinator for the Luverne Veterans Home. Mabon is also the Slayton Chapter 64 director. The money was raised to help veterans living there due to a decrease in available personal funds for the veterans during the covid-19 pandemic. The Chapter held the Ride for Veterans fundraiser on Aug. 22. It also presented a certificate to hang in the Luverne Veterans Home thanking the veterans for their service to the country. From left are Mabon, Kathy Holliway, Tom Carlson, Shirley Carlson, Colleen Miller, Murl Cole, Mark Retty and Tim Kunselman.

The American Legion conducted its 30th annual Junior-3 Position Air Rifle Tournament, which provides competitors an opportunity to test their marksmanship ability in competition with other junior competitors across the country. Redwood Falls Post 38 sponsored a team that placed second in the Minnesota Department Sporter Class. For the first round rankings, Noah U'Ren placed sixth, George Turbes eighth, Todd Detering 12th and Owen Horejsi 14th. Regional and national matches were canceled. American Legion Jr. Shooting Sports medals were awarded for the local match. U'Ren received Gold, Turbes earned the Silver and Detering Bronze. The Legion team is affiliated with the local 4-H Shooting Sports/Wildlife Club. From left are Post 38 Commander Dustin Hunter, Owen Horejsi, Todd Detering, George Turbes, Noah U'Ren and Post Athletic Officer Duane LeBruns.

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Buffalo Post 270 hosted a drive-in movie night featuring the 1985 hit “The Goonies.” Outdoor concessions were available as well as a curbside pick up menu. Event was sponsored by: Insurance Center of Buffalo, Post 270, Buffalo Chamber of Commerce, city of Buffalo and Minnesota Dairy Herd Improvement Association.
Legionnaire of the Year named

By Shawn Davis

ST. PAUL — The official state of Minnesota Veterans Day Program will be held virtually this year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. A 30-minute recorded program will be available starting at 8 a.m. Veterans Day, Nov. 11, on the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs website at MinnesotaVet.org/VeteransDay2020.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs invites all Minnesotans to celebrate and honor all Veterans who have served our state and country. “While we are unable to gather in person this year, the importance of recognizing Minnesota’s Veterans for their service and sacrifice has not diminished,” said MDVA Commissioner Larry Herke. “We encourage all Minnesotans to take a moment to thank the Veterans in their lives for the freedoms we all enjoy.”

The recorded program will include music and remarks from Gov. Tim Walz, Herke, Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard Brig. Gen. Shawn Manke, members of the Minnesota Congressional Delegation, Minnesota Commanders’ Task Force Chairman Todd Kemery, MDVA employees, 14th Infantry Division Red Bull Band. The program will be hosted by U.S. Army Gulf War veteran and CCO-TV reporter Reg Chapman.

MDVA reminds Minnesotans veterans financially impacted by COVID-19 to consider applying for one of three COVID relief grants. In March, MDVA was allocated $6 million in state funding to assist Veterans via the Disaster Relief Grant, the Special Needs Grant or the Distance Learning Support Grant. For more information, visit MinnesotaVet.org/COVIDRelief.

What’s happening?

Squadron Post 8 to host walk on Vets Day

ST. PAUL — Sponsored by St. Paul American Legion Post 8, this walk starts at 1 p.m. Nov. 11 and begins at the Veterans Service Building, 20 W. 12th St., at the Minnesota Capitol Complex in St. Paul. It is the building directly across the lawn from the Capitol on the south side of the grounds. The walk will be on the sidewalks of downtown St. Paul: Down St. Peter Street to Kellogg Boulevard, then back upstairs. Veterans and walkers are encouraged to bring a flag to carry. The walk honors all veterans, living and dead, of all eras.

Post 8 Adjutant Dave Dahl said World War II navy veteran George Hanskin is the inspiration for this year’s Veterans Day Walk. The 93-year-old is a 49-year member of The American Legion.

The Finance Committee meets at 7 p.m., with the Detachment Executive Committee meeting at 8 p.m. A general session is planned for 9 a.m. March 13.

Pearl Harbor Rally shapes up

The American Legion Family Department of Minnesota’s Pearl Harbor Rally is slated for Dec. 5 at North St. Paul Post 39, 2678 Seventh Ave. E. in North St. Paul.

Social hour is noon with a 1 p.m. lunch. Program begins at 2 p.m.

To save a space, contact Mike Ash or Jody Hassing at 2 p.m. Mike Ash or Jody Hassing at 2 p.m. Mike Ash or Jody Hassing at 2 p.m. Mike Ash or Jody Hassing at 2 p.m. Mike Ash or Jody Hassing at 2 p.m. Mike Ash or Jody Hassing at 2 p.m.

SAL schedules Spring Meeting

The Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Minnesota Spring Meeting, hosted by North St. Paul Squadron 39, is March 12.

Legends of the Past

Wollschlager, Eugene, 89, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died on Oct. 6, 2020. He served as a radar instructor. He was a 51-year member of Austin Post 91.

Young, Clarence, 91, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 15, 2020. He was a member of Paul Post 8.

Young, Richard E., 86, Navy veteran of the Cold War, died Sept. 26, 2020. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

Zilkia, Richard “Zeke,” 72, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 11, 2020. He earned a Bronze Star for valor as an infantryman in Vietnam. He worked as Camp Riley for 27 years and the Little Falls Veterans Cemetery for 28 years. He was a 52-year member of Hillman Post 602.

Legionnaire of the Year named

By Shawn Davis

Though Fall Conference was canceled, we continue to host meetings to meet, stay connected, and get the work done. If your District or Squadron wants to meet, consider using a virtual meeting or blend virtual with a live meeting to get more participation within the organization.

Pearl Harbor Membership Rally is coming up Dec. 5. I hope to see you there or at other American Legion Family functions. Until then, stay safe and well. Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

Dave Vulcan is the commander of the Detachment of the Sons of The American Legion.
Greetings from the 1st District American Legion Family.

By the time you get this, you will be able to read all about the cancelation of the Fall Conference at Breezy Point. We hope those who went to the area anyway had a good weekend. Down here, we are getting our first touches of winter weather.

We are now looking ahead to November and Veterans Day, and membership needs, maybe drive-by meals and to-go meals. How creative can we get?

Marine Corps was established in 1775, just four weeks after the U.S. Navy.

Daylight saving time ends Nov. Election Day is Nov. 3. Get out do your duty (obligation) to have your say! Membership is coming along slower at this time, but we are holding our own. Don’t hold on to the memberships. SEND THEM IN!

We don’t hand out awards for sending the most at one time! Mail or email them in electronically regularly.

This winter, drive carefully as always.

Pray for our deployed and their families.

Continue to do the Buddy Check. Pray for peace. For God and Country!

Training Tuesdays! These will be 60-90 minute virtual training sessions on a variety of subjects — to include the new Personify 360 which is coming online in December!

Here’s hoping your Thanksgiving is blessed with family and friends!

GREETINGS FROM THE 2ND DISTRICT

Election Day is Nov. 3. Get out do your duty (obligation) to have your say! Membership is coming along slower at this time, but we are holding our own. Don’t hold on to the memberships. SEND THEM IN!

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This winter, drive carefully as always.

Pray for our deployed and their families.

Continue to do the Buddy Check. Pray for peace. For God and Country!

Greetings from the 6th District

Paul Edwards

Greetings to the 6th District Legionnaires:

Even though the Fall Conference had to be canceled because of the snowstorm, I still want to thank all the folks from Billie Brown Post 627 in Nisswa who put so much effort into making a pleasurableOnline session for all who would have attended.

Something else that is now in the history books is the first session of the Minnesota American Legion Congress. Congratulations to all 20 students who represented the 10 districts of Minnesota. And a special “hats off” to the two students from the 6th District, Karen O’Bar and Leslie Kruft. If you get within speaking distance of these two fine Legionnaires, be sure and congratulate them for a job well done.

The membership numbers are chugging right along. Several posts did not have a good weekend of drive-by meals and are already at or above the percentage goal for December, so let’s keep it up to Payneville Post 271 for already qualifying for the National Commander’s 103 percent award.

MinnesotaLegion.org is changing over to a new vendor called Personify 360. Watch for training opportunities on the new system. Perhaps the most important thing you can do is to prepare is to make sure that yourLegion.org has a valid email address for you.

To close, Happy Thanksgiving. I pray your day is filled with love and family with a big smile at your table.

Greetings 8th District Legionnaires:

I’ve got my mail out for Veterans Day, so I hope you will receive your Post card.

Greetings to the 6th Legion Family.

Hello everyone.

I hope everyone is doing well in this windy winter here. If you are planning on traveling anywhere, please be prepared for any weather as we may encounter and drive safely.

In October the remains of an unclaimed veteran, Lelan Derr, were returned to the Far-Moorhead area. I would like to give a special “thank you” to the FM Legion Riders for recovering this veteran and honoring him.

Veterans Day is coming soon. I hope everyone takes a moment of time to pay respect for all who served in the Armed Forces before us, for those who are still out there protecting us. We live in the greatest nation in the world, and without these people it would be the poorest and also to those who took their time to serve this country and honor him.

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Membership efforts start off with really good figures

President’s Message

Mary Hendrickson

As I write this column, I’m still feeling sad about the cancelation of Fall Conference. As Minnesotans, we know that Mother Nature had different plans for us that week.

Members of the Department Executive Committee agreed to meet Saturday, Oct. 24, via Zoom or in person at Breezy Point Resort.

Our special guest on Zoom was National Auxiliary President Nicole Clapp, who joined us from her home in Iowa. Ray and Pat DeZurik emailed us that DEC completed some necessary business. I was happy to announce the Minnesota National and Department unit and individual award winners for 2019-2020. The district presidents will bring these citations, plaques and gifts for 2020 Department President’s Award of Excellence Winners back to their districts to present at Mid-Winter gatherings.

Congratulations to all our winners! I hope to be at many of your Mid-Winters to join your District president in handing out these much-deserved awards.

We will reschedule National President Nicolle’s visit to Minnesota.

BREAKING NEWS: Last week our 2020 membership total reached 30,002! I’m sure you remember (from pleading in person and online) our wish to reach 30,000 during my term in office.

I was thrilled when Department Executive Secretary Marsha Bible informed me that the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota had reached the goal and was awarded No. 1 in donations to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

I’ve always known that Minnesotans have caring hearts for those in need.

Our donations to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund come from our Fall Conference Silent Auction as well as donations from individuals and Units. In this year of horrendous fires and hurricanes, not to mention the devastating effects of coronavirus, our assistance to others is needed more than ever.

Since Fall Conference was canceled, the DEC brainstormed about possible ways to make up for the loss of income from our annual Fall Silent Auction. We usually make between $35,000-$6,000 at this popular event.

Some Districts, which made a seasonal basket for the auction, are holding a virtual silent auction for the item at their Post home. Other District presidents suggested exploring the idea of an online auction for some of the items.

Several DEC members suggested bringing the very popular $1 grab bags to one of our Department membership rallies. Department Secretary Marsha Bible will consult with our Auxiliary Emergency Fund Chairman Joanie Krantz to consider all the suggestions. If you have any ideas, please contact me or the Department Office.

October has been a slow month for visitors to visit our units around the state. Auxiliary committees have been busy corresponding by emails, teleconferences and Zoom meetings.

On October 17, I had the pleasure of speaking at Legion College, which was held at Camp Ripley. They allowed me 10 minutes to tell the story of the American Legion Auxiliary. At the conclusion of my speech, they then headed to Legionville to attend the fall meeting of the Legionville Board.

Like other organizations (and partly due to the cancelation of the summer 2020 School Patrol Camp sessions), Legionville is struggling financially and would appreciate any donations from individuals and Units.

Please invite me to your Unit meetings and special events. I know that the coronavirus has changed the way we are able to meet and continue our support of veterans, active-duty military and their families.

I’m reminded of a song that was popular in England during World War II. It was called “We Will Meet Again” and was sung by soprano Vera Lynn. The main lyrics were: “We will meet again. We don’t know where, we don’t know when. We will meet again.”

Vera Lynn died in June at the age of 103. England mourned her loss and reflected on the impact her song had on soldiers and the public during this difficult time in England’s history.

God Bless America at this difficult time in our history. Please vote!

Mary Hendrickson is the president of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota.

Breezy Point Resort provides full refunds

BREEZY POINT — Meetings, conferences and conventions for the American Legion Family have been canceled since mid-March due to the coronavirus.

American Legion Auxiliary members were concerned and very hopeful that our Department Fall Conference, our unofficial start to the year, would still be held. Planning in both Department offices began in early June for a COVID-compliant conference and had been going forward.

The Auxiliary office was set and ready to go to Breezy Point. Local Co-Chairmen Ray and Pat DeZurik emailed the final registration numbers — a total of 350 members, anxious yet still nervous to attend the conference. One hundred forty-eight of them were Auxiliary members.

Our truck was loaded at the Department office during a heavy snowstorm and waiting in St. Cloud ready to head to Breezy Point on Wednesday morning. At 7:01 a.m. we received the call that Fall Conference had been canceled — not due to COVID but to Mother Nature and her impending forecast for much of northern Minnesota. It was a tough day for all.

The forecast for Friday and Saturday were cold and the forecast for much of northern Minnesota. It was a tough day for all.

The Facebook page to our National office to cancel the visit of National President Nicole Clapp of Iowa. She was set to arrive at Brainerd airport that evening.

Our hosts, Breezy Point Resort, were just as shocked as we were. They had worked so hard as well to prepare and set everything up for us. All rooms were ready, food was purchased, and extra staffing was brought in. They advised members who canceled their rooms that our first night’s deposit would not be refunded.

President Mary Hendrickson and Secretary Marsha Bible watched the weather reports to see when the Department Executive Committee might possibly meet. The forecast for Friday and Saturday were uncertain. After a poll of the members of the Department Executive Committee, it was decided that the Department Executive Committee would change their meeting from Thursday to Saturday morning. That way, a few already paid for hotel rooms would not go unused.

On Friday, Breezy Point Resort, in a most generous gesture, reversed their decision to not refund deposits. Down payments were refunded to everyone who chose not to go to Breezy Point and stay, after all. The Executive Committee knew it still had to meet and decided to continue with its meeting.

Thank you

Special thanks to all who worked to plan and prepare to host our Fall Conference. We truly appreciate your efforts Nisswa American Legion Family and the staff of Breezy Point Resort. We hope to be back real soon!

Department Executive Committee meets

The Auxiliary DEC met on Saturday, Oct. 24, at Breezy Point Resort with one member and several guests participating via Zoom.

Our special guest was ALA National President Nicole Clapp. She participated in our meeting from start to end.

This was her second scheduled and canceled visit to Minnesota (her first visit was scheduled for April). She told us that she hopes we invite her again. The third time might be a charm!

She thanked all members who have been sewing masks and doing other tasks to help fight COVID and asked us to continue to help whenever asked.

The sooner we get started, the sooner we finish

By Sandra Fredrickson
Past Presidents Parley Chairman

As we continue from last year and celebrate our 100th Auxiliary Anniversary let us recommit ourselves to our mission:

Remember, honor and serve!

The purpose of the Past Presidents Parley is to utilize past Auxiliary leaders as mentors and ambassadors to ensure the strong future of our organization. This year again, as past presidents, whether in the Unit, District or Department, we continue to focus on:

1. Our very own Minnesota Past Presidents Parley Health-care Scholarship
2. Unit Member of the Year
3. Salute to Servicewomen Units, Districts and our Department should utilize the experience and knowledge of past Auxiliary leaders, helping to ensure strong future leadership for the organization.

Every level of our organization should have a Parley. So, if you don’t have one, I hope you form one!

We need to make everyone aware of the awesome Department Past Presidents Health-care Scholarship. It is for health care — that does not mean just nursing.

This could be for radiology, certified nursing assistants, medical secretaries, emergency medical technicians and on and on.

Last year the Department awarded six $1,000 scholarships. Applications need to get to your schools ASAP. These can be filled out now and sent back to the Units so they can be forwarded to the department to be reviewed.

Don’t wait until May! Kids are busy as we are, so the sooner it gets out there, the sooner they can get them in. Unit presidents, please make sure your student has followed the rules and the form is filled out properly.

If your Unit has any extra funding, donations to the Department for this scholarship are much appreciated. Remember any donation from your Unit or memorials can be sent earmarked Past Presidents Parley Scholarship program. This scholarship is dependent on donations.
National president heard on Minnesota Military Radio

American Legion Auxiliary President Nicole Clapp participated in a radio interview with Minnesota Military Radio on Oct. 22, even though Fall Conference was canceled. Also joining in on the interviews were Department Commander Mark Dvorak, National Vice Commander of The American Legion Bruce Feserbach of Iowa, Sons of The American Legion Detachment Adjutant Dennis Henkemeyer, Minnesota American Legion Riders Director Paul Hassing and Minneapolis VA Health Care System Director Patrick Kelly.

‘Back to the Basics’ schools on leadership are coming up

Leadership Chairman Mary Kuperus has scheduled leadership schools in five locations throughout the state. The schools are scheduled for Nov. 21 at West Duluth Post 71; Jan. 23 at Forest Lake Post 225; Feb. 20 at Thief River Falls Post 117; Feb. 27 at Winsted Post 407 and April 7 at Sanborn Post 286. More information is in the upcoming Unit mailing.

Thanks go to Minnesota V4V

The American Legion Auxiliary was notified last week that we have once again received a grant from the Minnesota V4V Foundation. The grant, in the amount of $7,500, will be used toward purchasing gifts for our veterans that reside in the VA Medical Centers and Minnesota Veterans Homes for the Gift Shop Program. A second grant was spearheaded by the efforts of Carol Kottom, a deputy VA Voluntary Services representative at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center. V4V granted the St. Cloud VA a grant of $10,000 to purchase winter coats for the residents that need them.

We are forever grateful to the V4V Foundation for these generous gifts that make the lives of our veterans in need better.

Watch for sewing patterns

Linda Kropenke and Carol Kottom have spent the past few weeks cleaning up all our sewing patterns for the items needed at the facilities. Some of the patterns have come through Karlstad Unit 445 and are still not permitted to be in the facility canteen to be open while social distancing.

Gift Shop ideas are in bloom across Minnesota

The Gift Shop is moving forward. It will be very different from past years since volunteers are not still permitted to be in the facilities. Some of the facilities have come up with some wonderfully unique ideas.

One facility is using a local vendor to monogram clothing for the facility’s name and another has teamed up with the facility canteen to be open after hours so a limited number of veterans can do their shopping while social distancing. They are even wrapping the gifts for them.

While another is offering surprise bags for the veterans only and yet another has ALA members who are also employees of the gift shop who will be distributing gift cards after their shifts are over.

At other facilities, gift cards will be distributed by the social workers and cards for the veterans and dependent children will be mailed to them. A lot of thought and planning went into making this happen for our veterans and their families.

Chairman Mary French and Committee member Lynn Olson wish to thank all the Medical Center and Veterans Home representatives as well as all the volunteer service coordinators for their time and ideas to make the Gift Shop happen even during COVID.

A $25 gift card or equivalent value gift as noted above will be given to each veteran, spouse/caregiver and dependent children under 18 all because of the donations from the American Legion Auxiliary and a few others.

Gift cards are mostly from Target, Walmart, Amazon and Dollar General. We are purchasing them using our Scrip program. This gives us the opportunity to receive a variable percentage discount on each card purchased.

3 GENERATIONS, SORT OF

Department President Mary Hendrickson and her 10th District “Daughter,” Brandi Christiansen, hold Laura, born on Sept. 5 at the Department Executive Committee meeting.

At other facilities, gift cards will be distributed by the social workers.

Upcoming events

Nov. 10: American Legion Auxiliary 101st Birthday
Dec. 5: Pearl Harbor Rally at North St. Paul Post 39
Feb. 6: Sweetheart Rally at Payneville Post 271
March 6: Appreciation Rally & DEC Meeting
March 13: The American Legion 102nd Birthday
April 9-10: Department Junior Conference, location to be determined
June 13-19: American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State
July 14: DEC Meeting at Redwood Falls
July 15-17: Department Convention at Redwood Falls
not be possible.

The American Legion is trying to get Buddy Check Week passed in legislation. Hopefully it will get passed. Please do your best to keep in contact with your fellow veterans. In these times a simple phone call can mean a lot to someone who is unable to get out.

Fall Conference is in a couple of days, with current conditions I hope we have a good turnout. Due to COVID we won’t be having a hospitality night, hopefully we will still have some sort of opportunity to get together and talk with each other.

Take care and safe traveling.

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.

A keen observer spotted this fellow with a Grasston-based nonprofit called Flag Wavers Hope and sent in this image. The observer said the man was trashing other veterans organizations and dressed like a veteran but was not one himself. His nonprofit is registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State’s Office, with him as the sole member and president. The observer said he asked for donations from every customer at the Walmart in Grand Rapids. Walmart soon barred him from returning. “I challenged him, and he got very defensive right away and accused me of harassing him.”

Marty Howes grew up in Delano, graduated in 1992 and later enlisted in the U.S. Army. After serving in the Regular Army he transferred into the National Guard in Crookston. He currently lives just out of Warroad with his wife and two kids. Howes has a passion for community service holding various leadership positions throughout his church (Warroad Zion), The American Legion, VFW, Roseau Masonic Lodge and Kem Shrine (Snonobles), and is also a member of 40 & 8, and the DAV. He serves as the vice president of the Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers, and being the CVSO for Roseau County for six years and counting only complements his desire to give back to the community while trying to make a positive difference. Howes spends time riding motorcycle or with his family enjoying country living as they love to fish, hunt and go for ranger rides in the state forest near his backyard.

Lisa Klenk is a U.S. Army veteran. She served in Germany and Texas. She has been the Sibley County veteran service officer for more than 12 years. Klenk is a member of The American Legion and Disabled American Veterans. She enjoys spending time with her friends and family. She is an avid do-it-yourselfer and enjoys the outdoors and crafting.

She served as a legal specialist in Germany and at Fort Hood, Texas. She has a bachelor’s degree in business management and is a certified veterans advocate.

She is married with three children. They reside in Winthrop.

Lisa Klenk

Marty Howes

**Know your CVSOs**

Lisa Klenk

Marty Howes