‘Tip of the spear’

David Nguyen served in Iraq and Afghanistan; now he houses veterans

By Kara Hildreth

ST. PAUL — One time, a couple showed up at the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans office in St. Paul after the husband, a veteran, lost his job.

His wife quietly told MACV staff that her husband was let go because he lacked sleep. He suffered from mental health issues related to his military service.

“He has been staying up all night doing guard duty, watching the window, waiting for anything to happen,” the wife said.

Another time, a young veteran — and his wife with six children — showed up after he lost his job. They were going to be evicted. He had been drinking to cope with surviving combat overseas and possibly suffered from post-traumatic stress syndrome.

“There are the struggles facing veterans, and Legionnaire David Nguyen, 40, helps them daily in his job on the front line of ending veteran homelessness in Minnesota,” Hildreth said.

He is the metro housing team leader for St. Paul-based MACV. The 29-year-old nonprofit agency has a mission of ending homelessness in Minnesota and has forged many partnerships throughout the state to connect veterans to resources.

The American dream

Nguyen is a member St. Paul Post 599, the 3M Post. He was born in St. Louis Park and grew up in Plymouth. He is the son of parents who were first-generation immigrants to the United States.

“My dad came to the United States after 35 years serving in the Air Force for the South Vietnamese after the Tet Offensive,” he said.

The Tet Offensive began in 1968 and was North Vietnam’s push to end the stalemate of the war. By 1975, South Vietnam was falling to northern forces, and many people means possible to avoid living under communism.

That’s when his father, Hein, and mother, Van, left with son, Huy, and daughter, Lynn.

“My Dad’s and Mom’s story is unbelievable after the mass exodus from Vietnam,” he said.

Due to limited capacity, only women and children were accepted on boats. His mother and young sister left on a boat, and his dad and brother were still in Vietnam.

“Minne” gave my brother to an American soldier, who took my brother, who was a year old, and they exchanged addresses and my dad slipped it into his pocket, and Lord knows how many times he wrote the address down, and that was before smartphones or the cloud,” he said.

“It was quite the odyssey because my mom and sister ended up in Thailand and ended up working in a seamstress shop, and my mom said this is not where we are supposed to be,” he recalled.

His mother and daughter ended up taking a boat to Hawaii, where they were considered political refugees. His father managed to reach Guam before reaching the mainland United States as a refugee. The Hopkins American Red Cross and Lutheran Social Services played a part in placing the father with a foster family in Minnesota.

At the time, his father spoke no English, and he made a living cutting grass.

Continued on Page 8

National Guard has a new leader

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota National Guard held an installation ceremony Aug. 31 at the Veterans Service Building in St. Paul, officially welcoming Maj. Gen. Shawn Manke as the organization’s 32nd adjutant general.

“It’s a time for us to reflect as an organization on the past and a time to look toward the future,” said Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz.

“There are few institutions that have the credibility and the trust of the American people as the National Guard; and that comes from the quality of the people who are there and it comes from the leadership,” Walz said.

Manke had been the assistant division commander of the 34th Infantry Division based in Rosemount. He also has served as chief of staff at Joint Force Headquarters in St. Paul. He has served in deployments to Kosovo and Iraq.

Manke, of Cambridge, takes on this position during a time when the Minnesota National Guard has been busier than usual with several state activations in addition to planned training and deployments.

“It is almost unimaginable this summer,” said Walz, who served 24 years in the Guard.

“Troops were helping us test for COVID-19. They were doing their annual training. Some of them were going to the National Training Center. Some were preparing to serve in missions overseas — and in the midst of all of that, we ask our National Guard to help restore order in our great state. That is an incredible

Continued on Page 7

It was a big day for check passing

Legionville getting repairs it needs

By Tim Engstrom

BRAINERD — The 2020 Legionville Camporee had some big checks being passed around.

For one, the 10th District American Legion Riders raised $30,000 for the Legacy Scholarship Fund, all in one weekend ride, Aug. 22-23.

“You raise more money in your district than most states do,” said National Executive Committee member Bill Barbinecht.

For two, Bloomington Post 550 donated $10,000 to Legionville School Safety Patrol Camp. And they used one of those giant checks.

“We are grateful for The American Legion,” said Minnesota Commander Dave Vulcan.

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Seventy-five percent of the Commander’s Project the past year went to Wounded Warriors Guide Service, which takes disabled veterans hunting at no cost to them. On Sept. 12 at Legionville, Department of Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak handed over a check for $11,973. From left are Deer River Post 122 member Dan Essig, Wounded Warriors Vice President Todd Grewe, Dvorak and Wounded Warriors President Justin Lightfoot. The other 25 percent went to Legionville.

Continued from Page 1

for Legionville (including the Post 550 donation) during the Camporee.

Vulcan welcomed the audience to the Harvest Rally, held on the Saturday of the Camporee. The meeting was held with cloudy skies under canopies because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

“My heart is full of love because you are all here,” he said.

SAL National Commander Clint Bolt was to attend the Fall Conference, Oct. 22-24, at Breezy Point Resort, but his plans were canceled because of COVID-19.

Vulcan said $16,000 has been raised to repair the ceiling of the dining hall at Legionville. The work should be completed this fall. He said his Commander’s Project is Legionville: 1. Fix the Bauer Cabin. 2. Fix the Main House.

Dvorak described how busy Legion members have been, from delivering masks to Minnesota Veterans Homes to feeding people in their communities to raising funds for scholarships to paying homage to victims of the 9/11 attacks.

“I thank you for all the volunteer work you’ve done,” he said.

Thanks to the work of the ad hoc COVID-19 Committee and the Membership Committee, the districts all have Zoom video conferencing. Dvorak urged districts to carry on the work of the Legion.

He described a statement the Department of Minnesota sent to the Minnesota Vikings and to newspapers statewide, saying that the national anthem is no longer for percentage of new members.

Continued on Page 3

Dvorak gives a 2019-20 Appreciation Award to 6th District Membership Director Myron Ehrich, right. At center is Department Vice Commander for Dist. 1 and 3 Pat Logan.
Continued from Page 2

skits will have a rodeo theme. She congratulated Honorary Junior President Emily Seuss for being elected National Junior vice president for the Northwest District.

Seuss said Juniors raised $6,965 to help out five Minnesota Veterans Homes.

Awards intended to be given at the canceled Appreciation Rally in March in La Crescent were handed out.

Appreciation Award
This went to 6th District Commander Paul Edwards. The District took the prize with 3.76 percent of membership growth between the Sweetheart Rally on Feb. 8 and the Appreciation Rally that had been set for March 21.

District Vice Cmdr. Awards
District commanders award these to vice commanders for excellent work in membership and outreach. They would have been awarded at the Appreciation Rally:

1. Mary Hanson of Austin Post 570.
2. Steve Fosness of Fairmont Post 36.
5. Wade Larson of Minneapolis Gopher Post 440.
7. David Manson of Spencer Post 545.
8. Marvin Ott of Grand Rapids Post 60.

The remaining awards were originally planned to be presented at the canceled Department Convention at Jackpot Junction in July in Morton.

New Member Award
This one, for the percentage of new members, went to Sacred Heart Post 180 Commander Chris Dunsmore and Membership Director Earl Pederson.

New Member Award
This one, by amount of new members, went to Winona Post 9 Membership Director Dar Troke.

DMS Award
This went to 3rd District Membership Director Joe Tapani. DMS is for direct mail solicitation, and the award is for percentage of transfers from District to Department.

Winners of the District Vice Commander Awards (or their substitutes) pose for a photograph. See the story for who won. From left, are Department Commander Mark Dvorak, 1st District Vice Commander Mary Hanson, 6th District Commander Paul Edwards, 2nd District Membership Director Randy Olson, 7th District Commander Dean Knutson, 3rd District Commander Linda Dvorak, 4th District Vice Commander Dave Dahl, 8th District Membership Director Jennifer Havlick (and dog Dakota), 5th District Commander Wade Larson, Past Department Commander Denise Milton for the 9th District, 10th District Commander Tom Allen, Department Membership Director Sy Fix.

Legionville President Eugene Leifeld of Red Wing Post 54, left, and Camp Manager Adam Felton speak during the Harvest Rally on Sept. 12 at Legionville.

Department of Corrections
A reprint on Page 6 of the September issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire of a photo from the Redwood Falls Gazette in November 1968 mistakenly described the relation of William Schottenbauer (fifth from the right in the top row) to Tom Schottenbauer of St. Louis Park Post 282. William is Tom’s uncle, not grandfather.

Get your THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY water bottle!
Send a $22.99 check marked "water bottle" in the memo to:
The American Legion Dept. of Minn.
20 W. 12th St., Room 300A
St. Paul, MN 55155-2000
(price includes shipping and taxes)

2020 VETERANS' VOICES
AWARD CEREMONY

HONORING MINNESOTA'S VETERANS
BY CELEBRATING THEIR POETRY, PROSE, ESSAYS, MEMOIRS AND WRITINGS

FEATURED:
MDVA COMMISSIONER, LARRY HERKE
AUTHOR & VETERAN BRIAN TURNER
AUTHOR & SPEAKER KAO KALIA YANG
MHC CEO, KEVIN LINDSEY

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
BRIAN TURNER

OCT. 8TH | VIRTUAL EVENT
MNHUM.ORG/VETERANS-VOICES/AWARD
Fall is a time for patience, preparedness

Last month we had the Minnesota Camporee at Lebanon, and even though the temperature varied with peeking sunshine and cooling clouds, everyone in attendance seemed to enjoy each other. Fall just seemed to sneak in around the corner while we were there.

Why not immerse yourself in the beautiful changing foliage and the coziness of a blazing campfire and the honking geese traveling south? I think God wants everyone to enjoy fall. Destroy all other spiritual authors have shared their thoughts on it.

The seasons come and go, and we are the God who remains unchanged and unchanging.“Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God” (Psalm 90:1-2).

There’s a lot of unwelcome change in our world. Moral and social changes bother me most when we turn on our television or glance at the magazines. We’re painfully aware our kids are growing up in a world far different from the one we knew as children. And personal changes children leaving home, the passing of dear friends, the slow, steady decline in our vitality and health. Sometimes we feel outdated at work. But amid all the changes, one thing, one person, never changes — our eternal God. And the fall is often a season of waiting — waiting for winter, waiting for the holidays, waiting for the Super Bowl, and so on.

The apostle James captured this theme with a farming metaphor to remind us of the im- portance of waiting on God’s timing. “Therefore, brothers, be pa- tient until the Lord’s coming. See how the former times used to be, and you know it is not bringing anything new. The sun and the rain are not the same thing, yet each does its own work. As the sun rises from the east, it advances toward the west and does not return. So also it is with the Lord, who brings on his kingdom with patient endurance (James 5:7-8)

Mail Call
Thank you for the memories

In April 1993 I applied for a job and was hired at The American Legion, Department of Minnesota. Through the next 17 years, I was the membership administrator. In 2010 I became finance liaison for the Department.

The means I have been employed for, this American Legion Department Headquarters for 27-plus years. I have worked with five different adjutants, four different comptrollers and 27 different commanders, and the Legion has always been a haven of good people who disagree or attacking the author's views, the courts. We believe the nation -ist interest warrants increased attention in which every Legionnaire should consciously seek to strengthen. But our difference in opinion, not vindictiveness. This is the American way. It’s the only way that works in a free society.

By practicing responsible Americanism this American Legion of ours has served as a stabilizing force in the life. We stand today as a buffer against extremism of both the left and the right. This is a position in which every Legionnaire may take pride and which every Legionnaire should consciously seek to strengthen. We need not nor rigid conformity. Nor can we permit a few over-zealous and unreasoning individuals to overshadow the common sense and judgment of the people.

As I retire at the end of this year, I have no idea what I will be doing, but I know that you will all continue with the excellent work you have done and will continue to do in the coming years. Thank you all.

Laura Weber
Post 1982
Stillwater

Anthem piece was excellent

Thank you, Commander Mark Dvorak, for a very well-written article. Though I’m not a veteran, I have loved served, I have a deep appreciation for those who have served. It’s time we unite behind our great country that offers the ability for change.
BREZZY POINT — The Fall Conference is weeks away.

The registration form and information have been in the past three issues of The Minnesota Legislator. If you need to sign up, visit mnlegion.org/fall-conference and the form and information are available there.

The dates are Oct. 22-24 at Brezzy Point Resort on Pelican Lake. While it may seem rural, the resort is in an incorporated city called Brezzy Point, about four miles east of Pequot Lakes and six miles northeast of Nisswa (nine by road).

Please note that the Department Executive Committee meeting at 7 p.m. Oct. 22 takes place in Nisswa, not at Brezzy Point.

To participate in the blood drive, schedule an appointment at redcrossblood.org and enter “Legion conference” or call 866-236-3276.

Schedule

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<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td>Registration starts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Noon-5 p.m.</td>
<td>American Legion Family Blood Drive, Lakeside B Hall</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5 p.m.</td>
<td>American Legion Headland Room 1</td>
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<td>6 p.m.</td>
<td>DEC Meeting at Nisswa Post 627 (Meeting membership immediately following DEC)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>ALA’s Law &amp; Order Panel, Whitebirch I and II</td>
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Oct. 23

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<td>8 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 a.m.</td>
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<td>12 noon-2 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 p.m.</td>
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<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>General Session</td>
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<td>4 p.m.</td>
<td>General Session</td>
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</table>

BRENNUS, Joseph D., 93, Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 21, 2020. He served as a medic. He was a 42-year member of Monticello Post 260.

Pemberton, Loren D., 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 6, 2020. He served as a medic. He was a 42-year member of Monticello Post 260.

Platz, Joseph L. “Joe,” 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 8, 2020. He was trained as an engineer equipment mechanic and served with the 3rd Engineer Battalion. He was a 47-year member of New Ulm Post 132.

Pridy, Gerald T., 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 25, 2020. He was a member of Anoka Post 102.

Quarnstrom, Warren, 95, Navy veteran of World War II, died Aug. 22, 2020. As an attorney, he was on the committee that successfully lobbied Minnesota State University to Marshall in 1964. He was a 75-year member of Marshall Post 113.


Stucky, Larry E., 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 15, 2020. He was stationed in Korea and Georgia. He was a member of Ogilvie Post 640.

Sull, Leland, 72, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 13, 2020. He was a 31-year member of Anoka Post 102.

Sustacek, Myron, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 26, 2020. He was a 57-year member of Marshall Post 113.

Tesch, Don “Junior,” 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died Sept. 12, 2020. He joined the service at age 17. He stayed in after the war and retired after 20 years, then worked for Westinghouse for 24 years, before returning to Blue Earth. He was a member of Blue Earth Post 212.

Tresch, Don “Junior,” 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died Sept. 12, 2020. He joined the service at age 17. He stayed in after the war and retired after 20 years, then worked for Westinghouse for 24 years, before returning to Blue Earth. He was a member of Blue Earth Post 212.

VanBuren, Shirley, 97, Navy veteran of World War II, died Aug. 17, 2020. He was in the Seabees. He was a member of Anoka Post 102.

Veld, Darwin F., 72, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 10, 2020. He served as a Seabee in Vietnam. He was a past commander and 44-year member of Lismore Post 634.

Vickstrom, Gordon, 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Sept. 15, 2020. He was a 31-year member of Cambridge Post 290.

Welker, Jimmy, 94, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 15, 2020. He was a member of Arlington Post 250.

Wendolsek, John T., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 18, 2020. He was a 63-year member of Silver Lake Post 141.

West, Gary L., 78, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 29, 2020. He was a member of Anoka Post 102.
### VA expanding caregiver benefits to pre-9/11 veterans, as of Oct. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VA &amp; Rehabilitation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremy Wolfsteller</td>
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**starting Oct. 1, 2020,** the expansion portion of PCAF C under the MISSION ACT will start in phases. First, VA will be enrolling those seriously injured in the line of duty from before May 7, 2017. Then two years after the first expansion, VA will further expand PCAF to those seriously injured in the line of duty between May 8, 1975, and Sept. 10, 2001.

For those veterans already enrolled and receiving PCAF benefits, they are considered “legacy participants” and will receive one year to be reassessed under the new program. Between Oct. 1, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2021, if veterans wish to stay in PCAF, an appointment will be scheduled to be reassessed under the new eligibility criteria set forth in the final rule. If you’re interested in this expansion or a legacy participant and have questions, please consider contacting the local care coordinator, app staff and ask about PCAF.

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

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### Mail Call

**Continued from Page 4**

**Mail Call**

**etc., etc.** Additionally, the Post sends me — free — three large catalogs of the Sons of The American Legion. Our Post chaplain and my Legion Auxiliary sends me — free — three large catalogs of the Sons of The American Legion. My neighbor, past commander of the Sons of The American Legion, mows my lawn and plows my long driveway if I don’t beat him to it — which I seldom do anymore. (He even confiscated my truck key for a while.) He also drives me to medical appointments. Yes, this Post, with its outstanding officers, both male and female, are family and every bit as close as actual relatives can be. God bless them.

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### Why be patriotic? Let’s not take living in a democracy for granted

We talk about wanting to educate people about why they should be patriotic. Let me share some words on why people ought to be patriotic, regardless of your political stripes.

I get it. You don’t have to be. It’s a free country.

But are you a citizen or a subject? If you are a citizen, be grateful. Be patriotic. Hear me out.

When the United States of America came into existence in 1776 as a democracy, it sent shockwaves throughout the world. Giving power to the people threatened monarchies, aristocracies and oligarchies. Authoritarian regimes have been quick to surrender their vast advantage.

When this new country defeated the British Empire in 1783, it sent more shockwaves. Liberty was given a chance. By 1791, it established the Constitution with its “We the people” preamble and a Bill of Rights. These, too, surprised the planet. Then it survived a second war with Britain in 1812-1815.

Would more of the world see this new country and admire the same freedoms? I think a lot of Americans know U.S. history but not world history. That contrast is missing and contrast is a great teacher. Well, in a nutshell, tyranny and oppression were the order of the day. People didn’t leave the EU for the New World for stability for centuries because Europe was hungry-dory. Much of the rest of the globe was subjugated by colonial powers. No, the United States was not perfect. One problem was not all adults could vote. Don’t own land? Too bad for you. (Most white males could not vote until between 1826-1860, depending on where you were on that state.) Woman? Too bad for you. Black? Awful for you. Native American? Sorry for you. I’m not saying America was Utopia.

But the Founders made a major step forward from a British nobility system where your birth determined your life status. That taste of freedom, of democracy, of liberty was a beginning. It was a work in a world of darkness.

This flicker of hope, this notion of equality, grew. It spread across the world. In the United States, as we expanded and extended our rights, and it spread to other countries. Another thing Americans forget: Democracy and freedom are fragile. Most fail. France is now on its fifth attempt, for example. Imagine if ours failed, and we all lived in an autocratic country. Americans would dearly miss our liberties.

By 1900, there were only 11 democracies. That’s it. World War II diminished the number to nine: United States, Canada, Australia, Uruguay, United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand.

By 1974, there were only 39. The West still felt fairly isolated in our cause for freedom. By 1993, the number boomed to 77, and by 2000, it reached 120.

My numbers are from the nonpartisan Freedom House, and it says in 2020 there are 115 democracies outside of the 195 countries of the world. And it all started with one flicker of hope — the United States of America. That’s a solid reason to feel patriotic.

Freedom House’s 2018 Freedom in the World report (the most recent available) describes the recent decline in democracies. It also notes many democracies have gone down in freedoms. It says: “Perhaps worst of all, and most worrisome for the future, young people who have little memory of the long struggles against fascism and communism, may be losing faith and interest in the democratic project. The very idea of democracy and its promotion has been tarnished among many, contributing to a dangerous apathy.”

It also notes: “The retreat of democracies is troubling enough. Yet at the same time, the world’s leading autocracies, China and Russia, have seized the opportunity not only to step up internal repression but also to export their malign influence to other countries, which are increasingly copying their behavior and adopting their disdain for democracy.”

Need I say more?

—

Tim Engstrom

Tim Engstrom is the director of communications for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

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### The American Legion Department of Minnesota 2021 District Membership Report as of Sep 23, 2020

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A mortar exploded. It was the first round of the second barrage of Fire Support Base Ripcord by the North Vietnamese Army around 6:15 the morning of July 1, 1970, in the A Shau Valley of South Vietnam.

The explosion threw Army soldier Bill Cochrane through the air. He had seen smoke from a generator before the first barrage but didn’t make it. He landed and realized he was alive. He first noticed his leg had been broken as though someone dropped a cinder block on it. It had hunks of metal in it. Then he felt the pain of a massive headache and was struggling to breathe. He looked down and noticed his chest was open.

Cochrane survived triage, and a man nicknamed “Bear” was assigned to care for him. Cochrane was going into shock — something the body does naturally when severely wounded. It was taking every ounce of energy for the soldier to draw breath. Bear made sure Cochrane was on it. He thought of his fiancée, whose boss now worked in Minneapolis, but his brother had drowned in shallow water in Eden Prairie after a car crash in 1968. He was to marry her. He thought about how he couldn’t die.

“I couldn’t do that to my poor wife,” Cochrane said.

He arrived in a Marine hospital in Quang Tri and doesn’t recall much from being there except being hungry. He had to recover enough — about a month for the collapsed lung — before being transported to Japan. A C-130 cargo airplane took him to a bigger hospital, and in the airplane he saw soldiers with more severe wounds than his, particularly lost limbs. He was in Japan for a couple of days, then off to Travis Air Force Base northeast of Oakland, California.

He witnessed one severely injured man who was taken off the plane, smelled the air, realized he was in the United States, then suddenly died.

Cochrane was sent to Fitzsimmons Army Hospital in Colorado. His records were lost during the chaos, delaying his discharge. He told the authorities he would just walk out, that he had no further obligation to the Army.

Before the Army, Cochrane had worked in Milwaukee, but his boss now worked in Minneapolis. He made room for the wounded veteran in the company — Ford Motor Co., which has a strong track record of hiring veterans.

He had a four-day whirlwind. He got a job, got a car and got married. Susan, his bride, planned it all.

“All I had to do was show up,” Cochrane said.

They were married at St. Patrick’s Catholic Church in Edina in 1970. Susan passed away in May 2014. Cochrane spent most of his career in the Twin Cities and Detroit working for Ford in sales and marketing, though the company sent him to St. Louis for a stint. Those days, the recipient of the Purple Heart and Bronze Star resides in Eden Prairie.

Cochrane grew up in Richfield and is part of the Richfield High School class of 1964. His parents moved to Minnesota after the first barrage but didn’t make it to the 101st Airborne Division at Camp Evans near Huế north of Da Nang and eventually to Gladstone Base in the nearby mountains. His artillery unit had accurate 105 mm guns, but not as far-reaching as the Soviet guns the NVA had. At Gladiator, he experienced a zapper attack — a suicide attack where American soldiers at the guard points had to shoot the enemy down or be killed.

“You have the realization that these people are trying to kill us,” he said.

For the clandestine offensive Operation Texas Star, his unit was at Ripcord, built on top of a hill and used to destroy enemy supply lines.

On July 20, though Cochrane was no longer there, a soldier in an infantry platoon scouting a nearby hill tapped into an enemy communication wire. Thanks to a translator, they learned there were 6,000 to 8,000 NVA soldiers dug in around Ripcord on all sides. Between that knowledge and the artillery fire they had taken through the battle, Gen. Sidner flew on July 22 made his decision to evacuate Ripcord. Amid fire, helicopters extracted soldiers and weapons from the hilltop base.

In all, 75 Americans were killed at the Battle of Ripcord that July, but the total rises to 139 in the A Shau Valley that started from March to July. It was the last major confrontation of the war between the NVA and American ground forces.

Gen. Jensen becomes director of Army National Guard

Continued from Page 1

ask. And each and every time this organization rose to the occasion,” Manke wrote.

Manke assumed the responsibilities of adjutant general from Lt. Gen. Jon Jensen, who in July was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as director of the Army National Guard. He was sworn in on Aug. 10 in Arlington, Virginia, and promoted to lieutenant general.

Jensen served as Minnesota adjutant general since November of 2017.

Jensen attributed the success of the organization to the continued support at all levels of government and from individual citizens for the soldiers and airmen of the Minnesota National Guard.

“We serve in your communities,” said Jensen. “And I’m deeply appreciative of the trust that you give us and the support that you give us every single day.”

During the ceremony, Walz promoted Manke up from brigadier general. Walz had announced Manke as successor to Jensen in mid-August. The adjutant general serves for a term of seven years and is a state employee appointed by the governor of Minnesota.

“Our state and nation are going through some challenging times,” said Manke. “But I hope you can sleep a little easier at night knowing how seriously I take this assignment. I am engaged and committed to the Minnesota National Guard and the success of Minnesota as a member of your team.”

Manke and his wife, Mary, have two children, Kalie and Lucas. They are both lieutenants in the Army.
Continued from Page 1

His father founded a Vietnamese-language publication, which served as a pamphlet to help resettle refugees in the United States.

“His was a place where people put ads for loved ones they could not find,” he said.

He posted a photo of his mother in the pamphlet, and they connected. Nguyen joked that he is the happy ending after all the heartache, worry and separation.

“We have a newspaper clipping with my dad in his bellbottoms and his mustache,” he said.

His father passed away in 2005, but he did live the American dream of raising a family in the United States, alongside his mother.

His father worked at Honeywell at first. He took his passion for civic engagement, and he applied for a job with Hemepin County in the social services area. His father worked in the food support program for more than 30 years.

Enlisted on Sept. 10, 2001

Little did David Nguyen know that, when he enlisted, it would be the day before the 9/11 attacks, the day the world changed.

He went through basic at Fort Jackson, South Carolina in November 2001, followed by jump school at Fort Benning, Georgia.

From there, he served until 2004 with the 82nd Airborne Division, as a supply specialist for the 550th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The famed division is not just about jumping out of airplanes. As a rapid-deployment force, the 82nd goes anywhere in the world in a moment’s notice. The saying goes: “Wheels up in 18 hours or less.”

Nguyen was with the 82nd Airborne for 17 days before he deployed to Afghanistan for about eight months. He was among the first to go.

“When we arrived, it was really a barren desert,” he said.

They set up tents by an airstrip near Kandahar.

“It was as authentic to the movies as you can make it, and we slept outside some nights,” he added.

In 2003, he came back and was home for four months before he was then deployed to Fallujah, Iraq, a hot area of combat.

“It was a totally different deployment than Afghanistan, and I spent more time deployed overseas than I spent with my unit stateside,” he said.

Nguyen worked primarily as a supply clerk, helping provide supplies to soldiers going out on missions.

In Fallujah, he was promoted and selected as the commander’s driver.

“My main responsibility was taking care of the commander’s vehicle and driving the commander. It was a completely different deployment for me because I drove convoys and our company drove with the line company, and so I probably went on just as many missions with our entire battalion,” he said.

Nguyen witnessed violence and rocket-propelled grenades that were fired, as well as firefights and mortars launched into camp that exploded at night.

“We were based close by — west of the actual city,” he said.

Pride of patriot son

“In the Vietnamese culture, the big focus is going to college, and you choose among the profession of becoming a doctor, lawyer or engineer,” Nguyen said.

It was a shock and surprise when he told his father how he decided to enlist in the Army. He did so without the permission or blessing of his parents.

The decision to enlist came from a wanderlust place in his heart, Nguyen said, and was somewhat impulsive at 20 years old after he had spent two years at Normandale Community College.

“Afier I joined, I came home and said, ‘Dad, you are going to have to see or recognize that thing, and only until you are able to see or recognize that thing, and then do certain things happen,’ he said.

“For me, I needed to go, and I think because I chose to sign up, I think it set the stage for the deployments."

A short time later he told his father about the enlistment, his dad said to him: “You have chosen your path and I am proud of you. That was really my passion — to want to get out and to explore the world.”

“I had to work many challenges, and I was ready to defend my country and fight as a patriot, and I was proud to be what we called at the time, ‘America’s Tip of the Spear’, in the 82nd Airborne’s rapid-deployment cycle, and I was in Afghanistan within four months of signing up to be in the Army,” he said.

Military service “was what I needed, and I feel like being as far away as we were in Afghanistan, it felt right for me because I had the energy and the motivation,” he said.

The deployment was hard for his parents.

“My dad would go into my room and turn on the night light every night when I was deployed, every night,” he said.

During his deployment to his brother succumbed to an aggressive non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. It was November 2003.

He left the active-duty Army in October 2004. In January 2005, his father died. It was tough to lose two family members in a short span.

Showing love to his mom was important to him since he understood how she had endured such devastating loss of her older son and husband.

This period of his life was a crossroad, like it can be for many veterans. He faced deep grief and needed to address his own mental health.

“I had to work many challenges, and I was brought to MACV, and in 2005, I had been struggling to integrate back into community, and I was living with my mom and became a student at the University of Minnesota,” he said.

He experienced times where he was looking for areas where a bomb may go off. He was also serving as the man of the house, wanting to take care of his mother with the household grass and winter snowfall.

In 2005, he bumped into folks in Harlem and, and told them he was a student now. But he eventually began talking with them.

“I felt like I kept getting drawn back to it, and because of the Army, I felt very comfortable talking with officers about the ROTC program that trains officers,” he said.

Nguyen joined the Minnesota Army National Guard and began training to become an officer. He was commissioned as an officer where he would lead a platoon in the 34th Combat Aviation Brigade.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in literature and went on to earn a master’s degree in public and nonprofit administration. He left the National Guard in 2009.

In fall of 2003, he was a young soldier in Iraq photographed at the Falluja railway station during a convoy mission alongside his friend and platoon sergeant, Freddy Cruz.

“I was on an odyssey trying to find my real path in life and, at times, I was struggling with life and resources, and I had my own housing crisis after helped my mom move to Iowa, and just like every person who comes to MACV, they have their own personal journey that has brought them here, and I say that because we are a nonprofit, and nonprofits are driven by their mission,” he said.

Full circle

Before he came to work for MACV, he faced his personal challenges. He volunteered to work with veterans who were incarcerated or just out.

“That was the first time I have come into contact with this entire ecosystem of veteran services because I had never reached out ever,” he said.

His volunteer work meant he began receiving letters from veterans coming out of jail or prison, and he needed to gather resources like the networking services that are offered at MACV.

“The stories of our veterans are the most valuable thing that we need to understand and cherish like we do at MACV. I think for me, to have my own personal struggles kind of helped me identify with them,” he added.

Nguyen began working at MACV in June 2013.

“In many ways, my personal odyssey brought me full circle back to my enlistment paperwork,” Nguyen said, who shared how he works with the man who enlisted him into the military years ago.

Nguyen loves his fulfilling career helping veterans via the MACV.

“Our job at MACV is to be the best guides for our veterans, and sometimes veteran stories we need to walk with them, and sometimes they are not at a place where they can walk with us,” he said.

“Other times, and many times, they are walking with us and we help them get back to stable housing,” he said.

In addition to housing agencies and property owners, MACV works in partnership with the federal VA and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, which maintains the Minnesota Homeless Veterans Registry.

“We identify each veteran on the list to make sure no veteran falls through the cracks,” he said.

Many agencies provide veteran names and referrals to MACV.

“We are positioned in Minnesota to be the fourth state in the nation to declare a functional zero in regards to veteran homelessness, and we work to effectively end veteran homelessness, and our goal at MACV is to end veteran homelessness in the state of Minnesota,” he said.

“I think a measurement of MACV is all the homeless veterans you do not see on the street because we have been much work on the streets, and because veterans are coming to us, and they go into housing and so no one ever sees them,” he said.

“That is why The American Legion has been so instrumental because they will deliver food to our homes and help veterans,” he said.

Many of the MACV staff are driven by own personal journeys and each staff member embodies their own skill set and personal and professional qualities that make the team work well together, Nguyen said.

The pandemic has meant MACV staff has needed to work even closer to help veterans during the uncertain times and health challenges that have been present during the COVID-19 in the past six months.

“MACV is even more relevant because we can carve out our remote work environment seamlessly with Zoom meetings, database platforms unlike some other nonprofits that have to do everything in person,” he said.

Now that he works on behalf of veterans, he feels a sense of purpose.

“After I joined, I came home and said, ‘Dad, you are going to have to see or recognize that thing, and only until you are able to see or recognize that thing, and then do certain things happen,” he said.

“I say that because we are a nonprofit, and nonprofits are driven by their mission,” he said.
Carolyn Mowery stands in front of birthday cakes, celebrating her centennial.

Mpls. Veterans Home volunteer celebrates 100

Carolyn Mowery, a Canadian veteran, misses her vets

Carolyn Mowery served in the Royal Canadian Air Force in World War II. She was one of the first Canadian women to serve in the military during World War II. After the war, she returned to Canada and studied psychology at the University of Minnesota, where she earned her doctorate in psychology. She also studied French for a year at the University of Saint Thomas.

Mowery moved to Minneapolis in 1962 and is originally from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. She became a dual Canadian/American citizen in 1997.

Mowery served in the Royal Canadian Air Force from September 1942 to December 1945, as a pilot officer, flying officer. When discharged, she was a flight lieutenant, the equivalent of a captain in the U.S. Air Force.

As a veteran, she has been a constant presence here and is an excellent listener and friend. Mowery moved to Minneapolis in 1962 and is originally from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. She became a dual Canadian/American citizen in 1997.

Mowery served in the Royal Canadian Air Force from September 1942 to December 1945, as a pilot officer, flying officer. When discharged, she was a flight lieutenant, the equivalent of a captain in the U.S. Air Force.

She covered the cost of her graduate degree psychology in Chippewa, where she met her husband John, an American student who was a former American WWII pilot. They married in 1958.

Carolyn Mowery remained in the Reserves. She was called up in 1950 to respond to major flooding in Winnipeg and the Red River Valley. A state of emergency was declared, and the Canadian Army and the Red Cross were brought in.

Over the course of the flood, 100,000 residents were evacuated from their homes. It was the largest evacuation in Canadian history until the 1979 Mississauga train derailment.

The Mowerys moved to Minneapolis so John could attend the University of Minnesota and complete his doctorate in psychology. They also lived in Indianapolis and Toronto. Carolyn retired from Lutheran Social Service, where she worked for 21 years as a therapist. She loves to travel, and she and John made many winter trips to Hawaii. She also would regularly travel without John to spend April in Paris — 11 trips in all.

The year she retired from LSS, she enrolled in the University of Saint Thomas where she studied French for a year. She has a nephew in Texas and nieces and nephews in Winnipeg. Her “baby brother,” 93, and his wife live in Winnipeg as well.

Volunteering at the veterans home has allowed Mowery to extend her “military career.” “I like volunteering because of the contact with the veterans. My military experience was very satisfying, I really got to know the guys and become a real military Joe. They were great guys,” she said. “It is nice to be back amongst them. John (my husband) was in the military, too. I like being around the veterans now, much more.”

While an in-person birthday party is not possible, the Minneapolis Veterans Home celebrated Mowery’s milestone birthday with a shower of cards and well wishes from residents, staff and other volunteers. The team looks forward to Mowery and her fellow 344 volunteers returning.

“Carolyn was one of the first volunteers I got to know when I started at the veterans home 3 1/2 years ago,” said Administrator Thomas Paul. “It was at her annual birthday party she puts on for all staff and veterans. Over the years, I have got to know her as a very gracious host and volunteer. She is a very humble and dedicated volunteer. Everyone always looks forward to her great party. I wish her the very best on her 100th birthday and hope to be able to again see her on our campus. She is deeply missed by all of us.”
Taube, 57, served in the active-duty Air Force from June 1982 to January 1990. He was stationed at Ellsworth AFB in South Dakota until 1987. For the first four or five years, he was in a transportation squadron, working with aerospace ground equipment, like big generators and air compressors. Then he went into transportation and drove everything from staff cars to tractor-trailers to 15-ton wreckers.

In that role, he sometimes took VIPs when they arrived. Taube took Secret Service agents on three different trips to MT Rushmore. President Ronald Reagan came in September 1987, and Taube met him and Nancy in person.

A special recognition
When Taube became commander, Post 189 had 53 members, down from 280 in 2011, when the building was sold.

The building, along Highway 3, became a Carbone’s Pizza. The owner closed it at the end of 2019 to seek a smaller location. The property was sold to the Holiday Station Stores chain. Construction is happening now.

Taube was sworn in as new commander in November 2018 by Eagan Post 594 Commander John Flynn. Taube told him: “I will hit the pavement hard and give it 110 percent. I will work on increasing membership and work on getting more women involved and being involved in the community.”

He has fulfilled his promise. The membership count is now 116.

“By the grace of God, I had a lot of help,” he said.

The 3rd District had planned to honor Taube and his crew of Legionnaires at Farmington VFW Post 7662 on Aug. 19 with the Post Excellence Award, but those plans were shifted to Sept. 16.

At the presentation, 3rd District Membership Director John Flynn said Post 189 was one of four Posts in Minnesota to earn the recognition and all four are in the 3rd District.

The others are Cannon Falls Post 142, Eagan Post 594 and Bellechester Post 598. There were 185 Posts nationwide to receive it.

Flynn said membership must be at 103 percent of the previous year, with a renewal rate of at least 90 percent. Post 189 was at 103.8 percent and at 96.7 percent for those two marks.

They also must file the Consolidated Post Report by July 1, have one officer attend District meetings and hold a community event.

He recalled the strife the Farmington Post faced and enjoyed seeing it grow.

“It was a blast to watch it,” Flynn said. “This is what the Legion does.”

Taube gave credit to his Post.

“It is not an individual award,” he said.

“It is a Clifford Larson Post 189 award.”

Third District Vice Commander Kelley Adelsman noted the presentation happened on American Legion Day. The organization has been helping veterans for 102 years.

“People have poured their livelihood into The American Legion,” she said. She told of past successes and the need to build the organization for the future.

Third District Commander Linda Dvorak said: “I want to thank each and every one of you.”

Growing membership
He said the secret to growing membership in Farmington was being involved in the community and raising the profile of the Post.

In June last year, the Post hosted a sensory zone during Dew Days, so named because, back when pop was big, Farmington had a high consumption rate of Mountain Dew. PepsiCo, maker of Dew, withdrew from Dew Days in 2006, but the event lives on.

What’s a sensory zone? For the last three blocks of the parade route, there are no sirens, musical instruments, horns or revving of engines, making it more friendly for dogs, children and some seniors. It’s an area parade watchers can sit without being overwhelemed. Farmington and Post 189 were the first to do it. There was a lot of press attention, and Fastenal of Lakeville donated 4,000 earplugs, too.

Taube was on the Dew Days Committee, and, most visibly, Legionnaires were spread out through the sensory zone interacting with townspeople.

The Post hosts a Wall of Honor on Independence Day, and it holds Memorial Day events at two elder care centers in town. Whenever he is out and around town, he is promoting the Legion.

“People know I am the commander,” he said. “Veterans, believe it or not, have come up to me and said, ‘I would like to join.’”

Taube is a firm believer in working off the Post 1982 list. That’s where you find local at-large members and ask them to join your Post.

“I’ve done it numerous times and have had the best success with that,” he said.

He gave credit to Post 189 Adjutant Jason Kohlbeck for being thorough.

“He has been with the Legion for 17 years and is good at it. If I have any questions whatsoever, he has been tremendous.”

Right now, the Post has three officers, and the goal is to increase officers as the membership grows. They meet at the VFW in Farmington at 7 p.m. every third Wednesday.

Taube is disabled as a result of his back. He has had five major back operations and a sixth is planned for October. He is not working and has the time to be out and about for the Legion. In addition to military service, he was a volunteer firefighter for five and a half years and has a hard charging attitude about him that inspires others.

“When I say I am going to step up to the plate, I am going to give it 110 percent,” he said.

He credited his time in the Air Force, especially the NCO prep courses, for teaching him to be a good supervisor. He liked to be hands-on and get the job done.

His advice to new Post commanders is this: Have big shoulders. Be able to listen, take it in and move on. Even if a member is directing a complaint at a commander, he or she should not take it personally.

Farmington Post 189 rises from the ashes, keeps growing

By Tim Engstrom

Farmington Post 189 Commander Doug Taube stands at the Farmington Area Veterans Memorial, dedicated in 2014. Post 189 won the 3rd District’s Post Excellence Award. He said he grew membership by being visible and available in his community, working through at-large Post 1982 lists and asking people about their military service.

Taube, 57, served in the active-duty Air Force from June 1982 to January 1990. He was stationed at Ellsworth AFB in South Dakota until 1987. For the first four or five years, he was in a transportation squadron, working with aerospace ground equipment, like big generators and air compressors. Then he went into transportation and drove everything from staff cars to tractor-trailers to 15-ton wreckers.

In that role, he sometimes took VIPs to MRushmore. President Ronald Reagan came in September 1987, and Taube met him and Nancy in person when they arrived. Taube took Secret Service agents on three different trips to Rushmore.

That same year, he put in for base of preference. He chose Holloman AFB in New Mexico but got Little Rock, AFB in Jacksonville, Arkansas. He is glad the Air Force sent him to Choice No. 2.

“I visited Holloman. I would not have liked living there,” he said.

From Arkansas, he went on temporary duties to Texas, Louisiana and some other places stateside but nothing overseas. After he got out, he was in the Reserves for a year until back problems ended his military career.

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The following commentary was sent to newspapers statewide. Among others, it was printed in the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, Fargo Forum, Albert Lea Tribune, West Central Tribune (of Willmar), Duluth News-Tribune, Crookston Daily Times, Mankato Free Press, Austin Daily Herald, Rochester Post-Bulletin and Fairmont Sentinel.

By Mark Dvorak
Department of Minnesota commander

The American Legion Department of Minnesota recognizes the nation’s divisions are laid bare during a difficult year for all Americans, and we hope to explain why the national anthem should not be the time and place for kneeling or other forms of protest.

The playing of the national anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner,” is intended as a time of unity. It is a time when we can be one United States of America. After all, despite divisions over race, criminal justice, employment, health care, economy, elections and, of course, contentious partisan rhetoric, we, as Americans, all want the same thing—a more perfect union.

The song’s history at sports contests dates back to the seventh-inning stretch of Game 1 of the 1918 World Series in Chicago. The World War I death count was at 100,000, and a day before a bomb had exploded in the Windy City, killing four and injuring dozens. Like now, America was in turmoil. The Chicago Cubs decided to play “The Star-Spangled Banner” during their contest with the Boston Red Sox at Weeghman Park, now Wrigley Field. The song became the national anthem in 1931, and playing it before sporting events grew and especially proliferated during World War II.

This tradition of a moment of oneness and national pride continued after the war. Like the word “United” in our country’s name, this solemn time allowed us to reflect and put away our differences.

It pains us, as veterans, to see time for honoring the flag become politicized because so many of us have risked our lives or died for this country, so that we may secure the blessings of liberty—such as free speech and the constant back-and-forth dialogue on important issues of the day. We aren’t opposed to improving the lives of America’s people, no matter race, ethnicity, gender or politics. Veterans served with people of all backgrounds and were willing to fight for them. Wear whichever message you wish to convey. Support whichever cause you desire. Push for change. That’s America.

But, for brief moments in our lives, let’s recognize that there are brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, mothers and fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers, sons and daughters, who have given their lives for this nation. Respecting the flag respects them.

Let’s respect the flag and those who sacrificed their lives for our freedom.
S

B

year in fighting Germany. America, he
wax. Most happened in the previous
resulted in the dropping of the atomic
“140 Days to Hiroshima” spoke on the
of Japan, and author David Barrett of
leaders by author Andrew Nagorski
13 and strategic mistakes by the Nazi
with author John McManus, on Oct.

The next two are the Army’s role
for attendance before possibly expand-

cations, said the Minnesota History
Center in St. Paul.

This time, there were 37.

Doug Raney, director of the Min-
nesota Historical Society’s metro lo-
cations, said the Minnesota History

The Missouri was chosen as the place of Japanese surrender because it was the 3rd Fleet’s flagship, not
Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Roundtable organizer Don Patton stands in front of a

A war to fight.”

August is a long time
famously told Commander Frederick
in February 1945 in Guam,

He said Japan never figured out cen
munitions months in advance as part of its
production of the Type 97.

losing Saipan, the Japanese increased
exposing the soft underbelly. After

The meeting was delayed until the
next day “because a member of the council decides he has more pressing business,” Barrett said.

They met Aug. 9, and talks descend-
ed into a stalemate. Japan had its own
atomic weapon program — to the point of feasible on paper but lacking time
to build — and the Big Six concluded
no country could produce enough fis-
sile material to create more than one
A-bomb.

Bix Six members Admiral Soemu Toyoda, Minister of War Korechika Anami and Chief of the Army General
Staff Yoshide Umezu were confident of Operation Ketsu-Go. They demand-
ed either continuing the war or four
conditions to end it:
• Preservation of the imperial
• No or limited occupation of Japan.
• Japan’s relief from occupation.
• Japanese control over war crime

That very day, the “Fat Man” bomb
raided Nagasaki, and Russia entered
the war with Japan in Manchuria. Suzuki
was stunned, Barrett said, but the Big Six’s demands remain unchanged.

Early on Aug. 10, the Emperor
expressed his desire to end the war.
The signatory peace message to
Washington with two conditions:
preserve the imperial system and do not compound the Emperor as the
sovereign ruler.

The Allies counter:
• The Japanese government and au-
thority of the Emperor shall be sub-
ject to the supreme commander of the
Allied Powers.

A new form of government shall be established by the Japanese

Deadlocked, the Big Six bickered
for two more days. Hirohito, on Aug
14, intervened to break the impasse.
It became clear Anami wanted to
stop the war. He cornered Umezu
after the conference and asked: “Do
you believe that the war should be con-
tinued even at the risk of launching a
capital.”

Umezu responded: “No, it is im-
possible, because the decision of His
Majesty the Emperor has already been
given.”
Continued from Page 12

Amani then goes to his secretary, Col. Saburo Hayashi, asking to attack the U.S. fleet in Tokyo Bay with everything they have. (The fleet wasn’t in Tokyo Bay.)

Hayashi said: “In the first place, it’s only a rumor that the U.S. fleet is outside Tokyo Bay. Secondly, the Emperor has just demanded an end to the war.”

Then he goes to his brother-in-law, Col. Masahiko Takeshita, who, after a talk, asked Anami to resign the cabinet instead. It would prompt a dissolution of the government and halt the war termination.

“Get me some ink,” he said. “I will write my resignation.” Then he vacillated. “And if I resign, I will never see the Emperor.”

On the night of Aug. 14, the eve of the broadcast to the people of the war’s end, Anami’s Ministry of War staff attempted a coup d’état, using lies to convince some members of the Imperial Guard to join them. Though they held the palace, they failed to find the two wax records of the surrender. The men holding them were in a vault beneath the palace. By dawn, Gen. Shizuichi Tanaka’s troops had surrounded them. The failed coup is now known as the Kyujo Incident.

Emperor Hirohito’s message was broadcast by national radio at noon Aug. 15. Barrett noted he never used the word “surrender.” Instead, he said, the war “developed not necessarily to Japan’s advantage.”

He said Japan had “not fought to aggrandize its territory but, rather, to ensure Japan’s self-preservation and the stabilization of East Asia.”

On the atomic bomb, he said: “The enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is indeed incalculable. … Should we continue to fight, it would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization.”

“Emperor Hirohito,” Barrett said, “ended the war because of the atomic bomb, and he said so four times.”

On Aug. 8, when speaking to Togo. On Aug. 15, in his speech to the people. On Sept. 6, in a letter to his son. On Sept. 7, to Gen. Douglas MacArthur. He told the American: “The peace party did not prevail until the bombing of Hiroshima created a situation which could be dramatized.”

Barrett made his point on defeat vs. surrender by quoting Japanese historian Sadao Asada. Asada noted some people argue that Japan was a defeated nation by August 1945 and that atomic bombs were unnecessary.

“This argument confuses ‘defeat’ with ‘surrender.’ Defeat is a military fait accompli; whereas surrender is the formal acceptance of defeat by the nation’s leaders — an act of decision-making. After the loss of Saipan in early July 1944 brought Japan within range of B-29 bombers, its defeat had become certain, and Japan’s leaders knew this. But because its governmental machinery was, to a large extent, controlled by the military and hampered by a cumbersome system that required unanimity of views for any decision, Japanese leaders had failed to translate defeat into surrender.”

2nd Place: Reegan Radaich, Prior Lake

1st Place: Keira Radaich, Prior Lake

3rd Place: Finn Radaich, Prior Lake

4th Place:Carolyn Mangan, Pine City

2nd Place: Taylor Radaich, Prior Lake

1st Place: Micah Bonick, Waconia

4th Place: Bree England, St. Paul

3rd Place: Finn Radaich, Prior Lake

4th Place: Carolyn Mangan, Pine City

Editor’s Honorable Mention: Janik Wagner, Lonsdale
**EAGLE-EYED**

Paul Warmka of Boy Scout Troop 270 in Monticello wanted to thank Monticello Post 260 for its support of Troop 270. For his Eagle Scout project, he led the painting of a patriotic mural on Post 260’s building. It took him and his fellow Scouts about 3 1/2 days to finish.

**ACTING LEGION**

Iver J. Anderson, father of Minnesota Navy League member David E. Anderson, celebrated his 98th birthday Sept. 9. Anderson is a World War II Coast Guard veteran and a Korean War Navy veteran. A drive-by birthday celebration was held Sept. 12 in his honor, at Newton Manor, a Presbyterian Homes facility in Bloomington. Members of the Minnesota Navy League, the United States Submarine Veterans Incorporated, Minnesota Submarine League, United States Naval Academy Alumni Association, former crew of the USS Sproston (DDK 577), U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, Bloomington Police and Woodbury American Legion Post 501 participated in the parade. In the photo above, Dave Anderson congratulates his father on his military service.

**A NEW MEMORIAL IS COMING**

A group of volunteers got together Aug. 29 to lay new sod and spruce up the new Isanti County Veterans Memorial Park. They were from the Cambridge-Isanti Bluejackets football and girls’ soccer teams, Legion Post 290, parents of veterans and grateful citizens. Supplies were provided or purchased by local businesses or veterans groups. The memorial dedication is tentatively set for 6 p.m. Oct. 9.

**9/11 FLYOVER**

Honor Flight Twin Cities and Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Charity, in coordination with the T-6 Thunder Pilots Association, held a flyover as a tribute to the victims of the 9/11 attacks 19 years ago. In the photo above, you see six airplanes in formation, but this is one of the two formations, and there was a Huey helicopter. Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller rode in a T-34 Marine Warbird. He snapped the top picture. Communications Director Tim Engstrom snapped the bottom one. He stood in Fort Snelling National Cemetery near the Columbarium, when members of the Patriot Guard showed up with flags moments before the airplanes.
Kanthak-Matthies Post 441 in Bellingham celebrated its 100th anniversary on Sept. 12 at the community center. Sixty current Bellingham Legion and Auxiliary members and their spouses attended. A free catered stuffed pork chop dinner was served. Door prizes and meat raffles were held. Pictured are some current Bellingham Legion members with war eras and continuous years of membership:

Front row from left are Dave Borgerson, World War II, 16 years; Roger Reiffenberger, Vietnam, 50 years; Wally Norby, World War II, 64 years; Willard Rakow, World War II, 67 years; Stan Olson, Vietnam, 50 years.

Back row from left are Dave Christopher, 7th District commander in 1986-87, Vietnam, 51 years; Jack Bornmann, Vietnam, one year.

Eagan Post 594 Family held a Patriot Day remembrance at the Eagan Tribute Plaza in Central Park to honor the victims of the 9/11 attacks. Post Commander John Flynn served as emcee. Members of the Eagan Junior Girl Scouts led the audience in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. Auxiliary Unit 594 member and Eagan High School teacher Kim Hanson Ashland delivered a moving speech recalling the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and how that day changed America. Flynn led a moment of silence. Auxiliary Unit President Susan Flynn and the Junior Girl Scouts led everyone in singing “God Bless America.” John Flynn provided a benediction. Past Post Commander Tom Mullon performed “Taps” while the Post 594 Color Guard raised the U.S. flag, as well as the city’s flags for fire and police, to full staff.

Fairmont Post 36 donated $2,400 to purchase an intensity electrotherapy system for the Therapy Department of Heartland Senior Living in Truman. Pictured are Administrator Heather Hardt and Director of Nursing Susan Rock.

Carter Mosloski received a $1,000 scholarship from Fairmont Post 36 & Auxiliary Unit 36. It was presented by his grandfather, Bob Altman, a member of the Post’s Executive Board.
Do you want to join?

Here's why:
- We push for laws on behalf of veterans in St. Paul and in Washington. From veterans treatment courts for Minnesota or getting the VA to care for victims of toxic burn pits, among many issues, we don't give up until the job is done.
- We ensure your benefits continue to exist. The American Legion serves as the VA's biggest supporter but also as a watchdog for when it doesn't hold up what Congress intended.
- We mentor young people in communities, whether through sports, speech programs, even local holiday activities. Many veterans like the family aspect of the Legion.
- Most importantly, we provide mutual aid for each other. One day, you are helping a veteran. Another day, you might be the one who needs help. We have each other's backs.

Here's the eligibility:
Are you an honorably discharged veteran? Then you are eligible.

Here's how:
Go to mngen.org, click on “Click here to join today,” then fill out the form. The cost is $45.

Today,” then fill out the form. The cost is $45.

MDVA introduces learning grant

ST. PAUL — To assist Minnesota Veterans impacted by distance learning expenses, MDVA recently introduced the COVID-19 Distance Learning Support Grant. The purpose of the COVID-19 K-12 Distance Learning Support Grant is to mitigate the negative financial impact a family experiences by implementing their school district’s distance learning or hybrid learning plans by providing a one-time grant in the amount of $3,000.

Minnesota Veterans Homes follow new COVID requirements

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Veterans Homes follow the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services COVID-19 testing requirements for long-term care facilities. All CMS-certified facilities across the country must comply with a new requirement for mass testing of residents and staff.

Event to showcase veterans topics

ST. PAUL — A free virtual gathering of veterans, their families, providers and supporters takes place over the Internet 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 29.

Continued from Page 6

What's Happening?

Robert McDivitt

continued to walk on the sidewalks of downtown St. Paul. Down St. Peter Street to Kellogg Street, then back up Wabasha Street. 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 Hunkins is the inspiration for this year’s Veterans Day Walk. The 93-year-old is a 49-year member of The American Legion.

The kickoff ceremony is at 10 a.m. Gov. Tim Walz and congressional leaders have been asked to speak. Their time will be followed by informational sessions on 50 topics of interest to military-connected people.

“Fire is something here for any American Legion member,” said Allison Alstrin of the Minnesota Military and Veteran Exchange.

To register, go to mmne.us or to www.accevents.com/e/mmne2020.

Department leaders show support for Commissioner Herke

ST. PAUL — Department of Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak, Adjutant Mike Maxa and Communications Director Tim Engstrom, as The American Legion’s representatives on the Minnesota Commander’s Task Force, sent a letter in support of the Senate committee confirming Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke.

The Senate has been holding confirmation hearings on the Minnesota Cabinet.

The letter was sent Sept. 9. Dvorak has said he would be willing to testify on behalf of Herke should the Senate hold a hearing on his position.

The letter says Herke has made it a point to be available and to listen to stakeholders.

“He has been firm in his resolve to address veterans’ issues, from homelessness and suicide to educational and health benefits to employment, among others,” the letter states.

It also praises his leadership of a health care organization, the Minnesota Veterans Homes — through the COVID-19 pandemic.

“...he largely remains above the fray of politics and focuses on what’s good for Minnesota veterans.”

Other member organizations of the CTF also wrote letters of support.

Alexandria Post 87 assists local scholars

ALEXANDRIA — Alexandria Post 87, for the 27th consecutive year, gave out a $1,000 Post scholarship to a senior from Douglas County.

Post Commander Alan Gerlach said the Andy Jacobson Scholarship was started in honor of Andy Jacobson, who was wounded twice during the Battle of Okinawa, Japan. After leaving the Army with wounds, Jacobson was on 100 percent disability but was able to return to Japan in 1977 to attend the “Reunion of Peace.”

The $500 scholarship has some restrictions applied to it. The recipient must be a senior in high school and be physically or mentally handicapped and have no more than a 3.5 grade-point average. Though Jacobson had his disability to contend with, he was never without a smile on his face and always eager to help others.

Roundtables are planned for October

ST. PAUL — There are two World War II History Roundtable presentations slated for October. They begin at 7:30 p.m. and happen at the Minnesota History Center. Participation is by invite only because of COVID-19 restrictions. Masks and spacing are required.

The first is Oct. 13. John McMann, author of “Fire and Fortitude,” will focus on the Army’s role in the Pacific Theater, which was a Navy-dominated operation.

The second is Oct. 27. Andrew Nagorski, author of “1941,” will demonstrate the evidence that the war cause was lost early because of strategic mistakes and miscalculating the resolve of the Allies.
Greetings from the Mighty 1st District American Legion Family. Thank you for your service and support.

We must thank the Sons of The American Legion and the 4th District for the great Harvest Rally at Legionville, and for all the work they put into this, adhering by the many new rules. Many people came on Saturday for the rally.

Local Post meetings and District rallies are beginning again to be more regular and only attend if you feel comfortable with the COVID-19 rules that should apply.

The 1st District Rally is Oct. 3 in Dodge Center at 6 p.m. and Legion Hall beginning at 10 a.m. The rally will be in person and over Zoom.

Breezy Point is the place to be Oct. 22-24 for the District Fall Conference. Membership needs to be on our list of needs to continue to do. Many Posts and Districts are over the 50 percent mark.

The American Legion programs are a way to get members involved. Many of our programs that we all do the time don’t get reported so we don’t get credit for doing them.

Remember to pray for our deployed and their families back home. Pray for the young and old during these trying times of COVID-19. Pray for our leaders so the correct decisions are made.

For God and Country!

Teresa Ash, the Zoom part of our meeting went very well.

Some of us from 4th District just followed Legionnaires members at Legionville for the annual Harvest Rally.

Dave Dahl was presented with an award for his efforts as a District commander. While the award contained a check, Dave is not able to accept it due to the bag of gifts (which included a sweatshirt) he received as a 1st District member. Mickey Ostrom also received an award with a check for his outstanding work on the membership. Mickey has stepped up and taken the initiative on planning for the Hospitality Room at the Fall Conference Oct. 22-24 at Breezy Point.

The next RCCC meeting will be held at the North St. Paul American Legion Post 39.

God bless all the members of the American Legion Family.

Hello from the 3rd District.

The new year has begun, and we are finally getting back into having in-person events. The Camporee was great. It was so good to see people again and catch up on all that is going on.

Are your Posts getting the recognition they deserve for their hard work? There are several opportunities for the Posts to receive awards — Post Honor Ribbon, Post Membership Retention Award, Certificate of Meritorious Service, Five or more Consecutive All-Time High Post Awards, Pioneer Award and Post Recognition Letter.

These plus the District, Department and individual awards are covered in the National Membership Program Manual.

Third District was able to award four Post Excellence Awards this year. Two of these posts were in danger of turning in their charter just a few years ago, but the District worked with them, and we were able to get them turned around.

Don’t let a Post go unnoticed. Did you register for the 100 Miles for Honor Rally? We registered with reportedly more than 200 in attendance. All of the meals provided by the SAL and different 4th District were outstanding.

I am especially proud of Dave Dobbura and his entire fish fry team for their work adding local recognition to Legionville of almost $2,900 from the proceeds.

Even if they didn’t get to call and remind me to bring them beer. The District received an award for the most memberships turned in before the Appreciation Rally. West Subdistrict

Greetings to the 6th Legionnaire District. My District Commander’s Project for the 2020-21 Legion Year was to be a yard tractor with a snow blower attachment for the Eagle’s Healing Nest to allow the staff to clear the sidewalks more efficiently.

The 6th District will have a hospitality room at the Fall Conference at Breezy Point. Hope to see a bunch of you there. If you see the floor met face to face, please stop by and introduce yourself.

Greetings to the Mighty 7th! I would like to thank all the posts in the District for all their hard work with membership. With the last report sent out from the Department, the 7th District was in 3rd place at 64.74 percent. Congratulations to Franklin Post for hitting the percent.

Even though it looks good so far, there is still work to be done to meet our 60 percent goal for the District. We need to work through the Post 1982 list of members and get them to transfer to a Post in the District.

I attended the Harvest Rally that was held in Legionville, and it was good to get together once again with old friends. If you have not been to Legionville, you should try to see it. Very beautiful place.

Congratulations to Grant County as they were proclaimed a Yellow Ribbon County within the State of Minnesota.

Hello, everyone. I hope everyone is doing well and enjoying the end of summer. Hopefully we’ll have a long warm fall.

I attended the National Security and Foreign Relation meeting at Camp Ripley. I felt very privileged to be seated with such a very dedicated and knowledgeable group. I went there to learn about what is going on and to remember what I learned, take it home and apply it.

If it hit close to home, it was mentioned. It is important that when someone turns 18 they get in and register for the Selective Service. They don’t lose that. More and more students are filling out their loan applications and a few are speaking to a Post about joining or just to a veteran, let’s remember that, many of the veterans we are fighting for.

A huge thank you for everyone’s effort in achieving the Goose Egg Award as a District. We were one of five districts to receive the award and check for him.

Someone asked at the last 4-10 meeting how much money the 4th District received an award with a check for 100 percent.

If they don’t, we can lose out on student loans and possible government Jobs. Having a grandson that just turned 18, I will be making sure that he does this as soon as possible.

We had a guest speaker from the Veterans Outreach Reach Coordinator Rachel Johnson. I was surprised by the size of the organization and all the benefits they provide for our active duty, Guard and Reserve members.

If you urge me to take a look at its website at mbaty.org.ml. There is a lot of information there.

Greetings to the 8th Legionnaire District.

Our first District get-to-gether with the Legion Family was held at the Legionville Camporee weekend. Friday night we had a chili feed with mild and hot chili. We served the chili until it was gone. Saturday at the Eagles Club we had a Bull Dog Celebration. Had a good turnout,

though, so the question is: What can we as a Legion Post in our community help to do? I believe they will be sending information to Districts and Posts. It is a very important cause to donate to, if possible.

I would like to give a special thanks to Camp Ripley and its staff for allowing us to be a part of this.

I urge my Post to get more involved in Legion activities.

Greetings from the 10th District American Legion Service Officer Robert Larson for all his hard work.

November is American Education Week, so the question is: What can we as a Legion Post in our community help to do?

I urge you to look at its website at legionbranches.com. I have come across an American Legion Post 39.

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The Auxiliary Bulletin

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President Mary Hendrickson • Secretary Marsha Bible, marsha@mnala.org

The Auxiliary Bulletin

President's Column

Mary Hendrickson

It’s just past mid-September and time to write my October column for The Minnesota Legionnaire. A modified fall schedule has returned to most Units and Posts.

My West Duluth Unit 71 met last night for the first time since November 2019! (We only meet in October, November, April and May).

There was a great turnout of members with social distancing in effect. We were all happy to see each other and get out of the house! Hope your home Unit can start either meeting again or communicating with each other using some other method.

The Sept. 10-13 Camporee held at Legionville was a rousing success. There was a nice turnout of American Legion Family members. It felt like a family reunion seeing many familiar faces and special friends. I’ve been lucky enough to attend through my participation in this great organization.

Thank you, SALT, for engineering this event. You were definitely “fitting on all cylinders” and guaranteeing that a good time was had by all who attended one or more of the days. I know you had a lot of extra work and responsibility in ensuring a healthy and safe environment for attendees.

As you know, Camporee is our first membership turn in Family event of the 2020-21 year. Thank you to everyone who brought memberships or mailed them to the Department Office just before Camporee.

Department Treasurer Jan Lauby emailed our first membership report of the new year this week. We have 3,478 Unit members, which is 1,284 more than last year currently!

This is even before our National Office has sent out the first official renewal notice. They should arrive in mailboxes the third or fourth week of September. Thank you, membership chairman, from the Unit and District levels.

Remember our membership theme: “Mining for Members.” Each One is a Gem.” We will have a rodeo theme membership skit Friday night at Fall Conference. The conference is Oct. 22-24. Start rounding up those cowboy hats, fringed shirts, spurs, etc. for a fun night. See you there!

Speaking of Fall Conference, we will be honored to have National ALA President Nicole Clapp as our special guest. She hails from the neighboring state of Iowa. You will enjoy her personality and have a chance to get one of her official pins honoring our centennial. It features poppies and fireworks and is truly a “wow” pin for your collection.

I’m sorry to report I haven’t received any invitations yet to visit Units this year. I know this will change once the coronavirus has been contained better. The health and safety of our members is foremost in my mind.

Tomorrow (Sept. 19), I will meet with our Hospital and Home reps at Waite Park. We have some difficult decisions to make regarding gift shop and other matters. At this point, only our Minneapolis VA Medical Center rep is allowed in her facility. She is restricted to her office. Our reps are a very caring group of ladies and are very anxious to return to their facilities. I hope to see you at Fall Conference. Stay safe and hopeful.

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

Upcoming events

Oct. 22-24: Fall Conference at Breezy Point Resort
Nov. 15: American Legion Auxiliary 101st Birthday Breakfast
Dec. 5: Pearl Harbor Rally at North St. Paul
Feb. 6: Sweetheart Rally at Paynesville
March 6: Appreciation Rally & DEC Meeting at LaCrescent
March 14: The American Legion 102nd Birthday
April 9-10: Department Junior Conference, 6th District, location to be determined
June 13-19: American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State at Bethel University
July 14: DEC Meeting at Redwood Falls
July 15-17: Department Convention at Jackpot Junction, Motton
Aug. 27-Sept. 2, 2021: National Convention at Phoenix

Law & Order Panel set for Fall Conference

National President Nicole Clapp to speak

Fall Conference will be Oct. 22-24, hosted by the Ninowa American Legion Family 627.

Our meetings will be at Breezy Point Resort’s conference rooms in Whitebirch 1 and II on the second level.

On Thursday, Oct. 22, at 7 p.m., there will be a Law & Order Panel in Whitebirch I and II featuring a county attorney, county sheriff, a county treasurer and a judge. This session is open to the entire American Legion Family.

Our special guest for the event will be National ALA President Nicole Clapp from Gladbrook, Iowa. We will also recognize new or honor retired Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch since we didn’t have a convention this year.

Prior to the hospital rooms on Friday evening, we will have a Legion Family Membership Roundup, including our National guests.

Membership Chairmen Sharon Thiemke, Sy Fix and Tim Weaver have quite a program planned. Everyone is invited to attend. Department Convention Awards and a few National awards will also be presented on Saturday morning.

As always, please remember to bring memberships and turn them into the office by noon Friday.

A silent auction for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund will be held on Friday, Oct. 23. This is every member’s opportunity to help fellow members in their time of need by either donating items to the auction or being the highest bidder or both.

Chairman Janie Kranz is requesting new or gently used items. Theme baskets are also very welcome. Items should be brought to the Governors and Pelican Rooms on the second floor. The silent auction begins Thursday evening or early Friday morning. Bidding will be Friday only from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Willmar Unit 167 assembled bags of lap robes, body wash, socks and a tabletop flag for veterans, men and women, at an assisted-living center in Willmar. Two members shopped and the bags were put together on an Auxiliary Unit meeting night. These items were purchased from their Poppy Fund distribution this year.

2020 Hospital and Home Rep met Sept. 19 at Waite Park. Front row from left are Phyllis Mealey, Silver Bay; Janet Benson, St. Cloud VA; President Mary Hendrickson; Mary Ann Davis, Minneapolis VA; Linda Kroepenke, VA&VR chair.

In the second row are Marsha Bible, Department secretary; Mary Kuperus, second vice president; Doris Lafayette, Fergus Falls; Carol Kottom, St. Cloud; Mary French, Gift Shop chairman; Sandy Gibson, Minneapolis veterans; Sandra Locker, Service to Veterans chairman; Darlene Wondra, Hastings; Patti Lueck, first vice president.

Missing are Lynn Olson, Gift Shop; Lynette Andel, Fargo VA; Linda Gibson, Fargo VA; Jeanette Mertens, Luverne; and Diane Strassburg, Sioux Falls VA.

Gift Shop program active despite COVID pandemic

The American Legion Auxiliary has a program that very few members are aware of, and that is the Gift Shop. The Gift Shop began in 1923 with ALA members assisting with decorating wards and providing food and entertainment for the veterans in the VA hospitals. Over the years the Gift Shop program has evolved to become one of our member’s favorite programs that supports our mission of caring for veterans, military and their families.

The Gift Shop program is primarily funded by Auxiliary Units and members generous donations. We also receive generous donations. We also receive donations from the Pheasant Farm Fund and grants from Minnesota Veterans 4 Veterans. The budget for this program in 2020 is $75,000! The Gift Shop committee consists of a chairman, Mary French, and a committee member, Lynn Olson.

Gifts are provided free of charge to each veteran to keep one for him/her, one gift for their spouse or significant other, and one gift for each dependent member of his/her immediate family.

In a COVID world, gifts were purchased by our Gift Shop Committee and distributed to the VA Health Care Centers in Minneapolis, St. Cloud, Sioux Falls and Fargo and to the Minnesota Veterans Homes in Fergus Falls, Minneapolis, Silver Bay, Hastings and Luverne. Unit members from surrounding communities volunteered to assist at the Gift Shop and helped veterans “select” gifts for themselves and their families. ALA volunteers wrapped the gifts, added gift tags and the veterans were given the gifts to give to their families at a later date.

COVID has changed our Gift Shop program for this coming year. Auxiliary hospital representatives have not been able to enter the facilities they serve since early March.

The big question was “How will we handle Gift Shop?” Secretary Marsha Bible said, after talking with the appropriate people at each of the facilities, ALA members have determined that there is no cookie-cutter solution.

“So this year only, Gift Shop will look different in every facility,” she said. “Our volunteers will not be able to go into the hospitals and homes, but the gracious employees know how important this program is to our veterans and they have agreed to distribute the gifts on our behalf.

Most of the gifts will be gift cards and most of the facilities have staff members who have agreed to volunteer to work with the veterans on their off time to help select the gifts they wish to purchase with their cards. We are most thankful to everyone who donates to this program and or has agreed to assist this year to make Gift Shop work for our veterans!”
Endorsements

Unit 14 endorses Sharon Thiemcke

The 6th District American Legion Family, the 6th District Past Presidents Parley and Ralph Gracie Post and Unit 14 of Be- midji proudly endorse Sharon Thiemcke for the position of Junior Member of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota 2nd Vice President for the 2021-22 year.

Sharon’s eligibility is through her father, Charles A. Ruckoldt, a Korean War and Vietnam Marine veteran. She is also eli- gible for membership through her grandmother, Frank Moskal, a World War I Navy veteran, and past commander of Portage Park Post 183 in Chicago; her son Robert S. Haas II, a 24-year veteran retired from the Air Force; son Matthew Haas, Army National Guard; daughter Jennifer Lowry, an Army veteran; and son Kristopher Thiemcke, an Army veteran.

Born in Chicago and raised in Arlington Heights, Illinois, she grew up active in the Junior member of Portage Park Ameri- can Legion Auxiliary. She was a member of the Auxiliary and served as District President in 2011- 2012 and 2018-2019. She has held many chairmanships in special events. At the Department level, she has been the Leadership chairman, served on the Audit Committee, Girls State Commit- tee, and was a member of the Department Mem- bership chair and also a board member of The American Legion Family Hospital Association.

Sharon has served as a commit- tee member at the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State and attends Fall Conferences, Mid-Winter Conferences, District, Department and National Conventions.

In loving memory ... McGowan, Barbara Joan, 76, died Sept. 3, 2020. She was 3rd District president 2000-2001 and a member of Pine Island Unit 184.

Membership is off to a solid start

By Sharon Thiemcke Membership Chairman

Congratulations are defini- tively in order for the District chairmen, our Unit membership chair- man and our members. After all, membership is everyone’s job.

The first Department mem- bership rally was held at Le- gionville in September. After the Harvest Rally, the Auxiliary is 1,284 members ahead of our total at this time last year. This is before members even received their first dues notice. Awesome job everyone!

The winners of our drawings were:
• 40 percent of goal by Harvest Rally for $50: Wykoff Unit 367
• All membership turned in: Maple Plain Unit 514

About those 2020-21 scholarships ...

ALA Department of Minne- sota Scholarship has eight $1,000 scholarships. They are available to graduating seniors, who must be residents of Minnesota and members of the Auxiliary, American Legion or both.

Past Presidents Parley Health Care Scholarship has 10 $1,000 scholarships. They are available to individuals who have three or more continuous years of membership and wish to further their education (in- cluding graduating seniors) and are entering the health care field.

Children of Warriors National President Scholarship has up to five $3,000 scholarships offered in the Western- division for undergraduate study at a four-year accredited college or university.

Spirit of Youth Scholarship has one $5,000 scholarship for Junior members of the Northwestern Division of- fered for Junior members of the American Legion and Auxiliary, who have three or more continuous years of membership and current dues paid. Applicant must be a senior in high school.

Nontraditional Student Scholarship has one $2,000 scholarship in the Northwestern Division. Applicants must be members of the American Legion Family with two or more continuous years of membership and current dues paid.

Applicant must be a senior in high school.

Does anyone know a pianist?

The Department of Minnesota is looking for an Auxiliary member willing to play piano for Fall Conference and Department Convention.

If interested, please contact Department Secretary Marsha Bible at 651-224-7034 or marsha@mla.org.

2020-21 National appointments

The following are the National appointments that National President Nagy has made to serve with her this 2020-2021 Auxiliary year:
• Norma Tramm, National Legislative chairman
• Sandy Fredrickson, National Poppy vice chairman
• Tamara Opland, National Security Commit- tee member
• Raleen Tolzmann, Northwestern Division Auxiliary Emergency Fund chairman
• Jean Walker, Northwestern Division Educa- tion chairman
• Peggy Tesdahl, Northwestern Division Auxil- iary Junior Activities chairman
• Carol Kotton, Northwestern Division Leader- ship chairman
• Shirley Frederick, Northwestern Division Mem- bership chairman
• Dee Dee Buckley Northwestern Divi- sion National Security chairman

Congratulations to both of these units!

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Know your CVSOs

Heidi Fier has been the Lyon County veteran service officer since October 2017. For more than 20 years she served as an Air Force electrical engineer and program manager for various programs such as the B-2 Bomber, Minuteman III and various space systems.

She is a member of the Taunton American Legion Post 604, DAV Chapter 33 and the Military Officers Association of America. Fier enjoys being outdoors, volunteering and living on the family farm with her husband of 32 years, in Taunton.

Throughout her military service, she found that her most rewarding times were helping her fellow service members. When she retired and moved back to Minnesota, the opportunity was presented to continue serving others by working with veterans and their families as a veteran service officer. This chance was more than she could have hoped for.

Josh Beninga joined the U.S. Army Reserve his senior year of high school. He served in a Special Operations unit out of Arden Hills as a psychological operations specialist, was sent to the Defense Language Institute to study Korean in April 2001, graduating in July 2002.

He deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 and was honorably discharged from the Army Reserve in the fall of 2004. Beninga has been the Lac qui Parle County veterans service officer since January 2010 and belongs to Bellingham American Legion Post 441, Madison. VFW Post 1656, DAV Chapter Western 24 and the Wounded Warrior Project. He lives in Madison with his beagle, Rupert.

10th District

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Camporee weekend. They did something with nothing.

Congratulations to 10th District President Brandi Christenson on the birth of a little girl. I believe that this is the first time in the 10th District that the Department president gave birth while in office. Wow!

I’m glad to hear of all the activity going on in our Posts, and that they are getting back with our Legion programs. A big congratulations to our 10th District Riders Legacy for a highly successful run.

Our next get-to-gather will be at Breezy Point Oct. 22-24 for the Department Fall Conference.

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