



Zero tax bill gets zero action

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PAUL — An effort to reduce property taxes to zero on Posts belonging to congressionally chartered veteran organizations seem pretty much dead for the 2021 legislative session.

Bills that have not passed out of committee by the Easter break typically are left behind. In both the Senate and House, the bills have been stalled in tax committees.

Department Adjutant Mike Maxa called on Post leaders to contact lawmakers and help push this bill forward. It is HF182 and SF 259.

In the House, the Property Tax Division is chaired by Rep. Cheryl Youakim of Hopkins, with Jerry Herta of Greenfield as the minority lead.

Contact info:

Rep. Cheryl Youakim
591 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-9889
rep.cheryl.youakim@house.mn

Rep. Jerry Herta
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St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-9188
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In the Senate, the Subcommittee on Property Taxes is chaired by Bill Weber of Luverne, with Matt Klein of Mendota Heights as the minority lead.

Sen. Bill Weber
2109 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-5650
sen.bill.weber@senate.mn

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Back in the saddle



Minnesota Honorary Juniors President Emily Seuss is surprised by the \$667 raised by the room for her project to help veterans in care of the Minneapolis and St. Cloud VA hospitals. She told the audience she was \$345 short of her \$2,000 fundraising goal. Emptying his hat is SAL Detachment of Minnesota Membership Director Tim Weaver. Behind him are 7th District Vice Commander Garylee Davenport and Past SAL Detachment Commander Shawn Davis. Walking away after emptying his cap is SAL 4th District Commander John Weiss.



National Executive Committeeman Bill Barbknecht gifts a bottle of Fireball Cinnamon Whiskey to Minnesota American Legion Riders Director Paul Hassing on Saturday, March 6, in La Crescent, in appreciation for all he has done for the Legion Scholarship Fund.



Past National Commander Dan Ludwig speaks Saturday, March 6, at the DEC meeting at La Crescent Post 595. "God, it's good to be here. It's been a year," he said.



Department of Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak describes being near the end of serving two years. The Department did not hold a convention in 2020 and extended officer positions a second year.



Third District Commander Linda Dvorak laughs as her husband, Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak, cracks a joke at the podium on Saturday, March 6, at the Appreciation Rally. See stories, pics on pages 8 and 9.

Litchfield student wins Oratorical Contest, \$7,700 for college

ANOKA — A senior at Litchfield High School is the champion of the Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest.

Hazel Chvatal, 17, earns a \$1,500 scholarship from The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

Normally, she would move on to compete at the national level in April, but the National American Legion Oratorical Contest has been canceled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. If the national contest had been held, the winner would have received a \$25,000 scholarship. Instead, the national contest is awarding all state champions \$5,000.

She won a \$500 scholarship from Litchfield Post 104 and a \$700

scholarship from the Legion's District 7 of Minnesota.

That means Hazel has a grand total of \$7,700 in American Legion scholarship funding.

"Seeing young people grow in their skills and their knowledge of the country, this is what it means to be a Legionnaire," said Minnesota American Legion Commander Mark Dvorak of New Prague. "We look forward to this contest every year."

Finalists from four American Legion districts across Minnesota qualified to compete at the state finals on Saturday, Feb. 27, at Anoka Post 102. Hazel was sponsored by Litchfield Post 104 and was the winner of the Legion's 7th

Continued on Page 2



Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest champion Hazel Chvatal, right, a senior at Litchfield High School, stands for a photograph with her mother, Kristi, on Saturday, Feb. 27, at Anoka Post 102.



The four finalists of the Minnesota Oratorical Contest stand beside Minnesota American Legion Commander Mark Dvorak, of New Prague, on the left, and Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary President Mary Hendrickson, of Duluth, on the right. The contestants are in order of finish, from left: Hazel Chvatal of Litchfield, Julia Schowalter of Eagan, Abigail Erpelding of Kasson and David Vickers of Minneapolis.

Mom: 'She's always been a motivated student'

Continued from Page 1

District, which is Grant, Douglas, Traverse, Stevens, Pope, Big Stone, Swift, Kandiyohi, Meeker, Lac Qui Parle, Chippewa, Yellow Medicine and Renville counties.

The Oratorical Contest requires contestants to be able to deliver two speeches in front of a crowd without notes. The topics are related to the U.S. Constitution. The first speech is prepared beforehand and runs eight to 10 minutes; the second is three to five minutes, with just five minutes to prepare. Winners receive scholarships.

When the winners were announced, Hazel did not expect to come out the winner, she said.

"I was not expecting that at all. I was shocked," Hazel said.

She plans to study architecture this fall at North Dakota State University. Hazel is the daughter of Kristi and Bob



Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest Committee member Amanda England of St. Paul congratulates Hazel Chvatal on Saturday, Feb. 27, for winning the 2021 contest. In the background, contest chairman Cliff Newman looks on.

Chvatal of Litchfield.

"I am just so proud of her," Kristi said. "She worked hard to get here. She overcame challenges. She's always been a motivated student."

"She's a bright gal. She's going to go pretty far," said

Litchfield Post 104 Americanism Chair Rueben Nathe, a Navy veteran. He also served as District 7 Americanism chair.

Many American Legion youth activities, such as baseball, fall under Americanism,

one of The American Legion's Four Pillars.

Second place went to Julia Schowalter, a junior at Eagan High School. She was sponsored by Eagan Post 594 and was the winner of the Legion's 3rd District. She earns a \$1,000 scholarship.

Abigail Erpelding, a freshman home-schooler from Kasson, won third place. She was sponsored by Kasson Post 333 and won the 1st District. She earns a \$700 scholarship.

David Vickers, a freshman home-schooler from Minneapolis, captured fourth place. He was sponsored by Minneapolis Falldin Post 555. He earns a \$500 scholarship.

The last time a Minnesota student won the National Oratorical Contest was 2003, when Henry Shea IV of Wayzata took the title. He was sponsored by St. Louis Park Post 282. The contest has been in existence since 1938.

Eagle Scout of the Year enjoys ... engine repair

MOORHEAD — The Minnesota American Legion's Eagle Scout of the Year hails from the 9th District.

Karson Ferden is a student at Park Christian School in Moorhead. He was a Cub Scout for four years, a Boy Scout for seven and received Eagle Scout in September 2020. He is with Troop 635.

He wins a \$1,000 scholarship and his application will be forwarded to the National American Legion, where he could win a scholarship ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000.

Ferden has held the positions of chaplain, senior patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader, scribe, quartermaster and Order of the Arrow representative. He also has helped out as a leader for a local Cub Scout troop. He helped at Camp Wilderness by doing service projects and just helping where needed.

"I have done several small campouts with my troop and have helped teach merit badges and outdoor skills to the younger Scouts. I have participated in many service projects for the community via Scouts and have helped on nine different Eagle Scout projects for other Scouts."

Ferden's Eagle Scout project was tool-shadowing a toolbox and filling it with tools for the Fargo Air Museum. Tool shadowing is cutting foam for the sake of organizing tools. He has been a regular volunteer at the museum, and he said the toolbox available for restoration projects was a mess. After he was done, the tools were neat, secured and labeled.

"I am hoping to keep seeing these tools in use for many years and very happy with how much they have been used already," he said.

Ferden has been part of many ceremonial retirements of U.S. flags. He and his troop have been part of the large Kiwanis pancake feed at the Fargodome, setting up, serving, cleaning up

and breaking down.

His troop also built a ramp and a deck for a person who needed wheelchair access to a house.



Karson Ferden

In academics, Ferden regularly made the honor roll, lettering in academics. He made it to regionals in STEM science fair competitions. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and math.

At school, he received the Yale Science and Engineering Award, the Creativity in Technology Award and the Leonardo Largely Irrational Math Prize.

Ferden played percussion in the band and would help young members learn to play the instruments or read the music. In his last year, he was elected band president.

He lettered in trapshooting and was a member of the golf team.

When Park Christian had a major renovation one summer, Ferden helped teachers move in and out of their rooms, repaired equipment, move lockers and aided with summer events. And with band, he regularly helped set up and break down for concerts.

He volunteers, too: Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion, a Bible camp, local food banks. He likes repairing engines for friends.

Ferden said he always has had a passion for mechanical things. He said he might pursue North Dakota State University or Minnesota State University-Moorhead or attend a vocational technology school to become a mechanical engineer technician.

"My life's goal, my ambition, my purpose and my devotion is to be like a light in a dark room to as many people as I can," he wrote in his application. "I desire to help others and continue to do so until I breathe my last breath. I want to point others back to God and to have a rock-solid relationship with Jesus."

Know your CVSO

Jeffrey Gay was born and raised in Marshall. He and his wife have lived in Jackson since 1981.

They have a son who is a Christian musician and travels nationally and internationally. He lives in Nashville.

They have a daughter in the Storden area whose husband in a DNR enforcement officer and former deputy sheriff.

Between the two, Gay and his wife have six grandchildren.

They also have a foster daughter in the Jackson area.

Gay served in the active-duty Army, Army National Guard and the Army Reserve, for a total 25 years.

After retiring, he worked 10 years as a contractor for a Department of Defense program assisting servicemembers and their families as their loved ones deployed and reintegrated.



Jeffrey Gay

"As a CVSO, I strive to continue those same values of assistance through outreach and education," Gay said.

Gay has opened on off-site office and plans to open another.

He first joined The American Legion in 1979 in St. James, then became a member at Jackson Post 130. He then was at Marshall Post 113, eventually

serving as commander for 10 years and is a past 7th District commander.

Gay retired in 2015 and worked part-time jobs, then decided to ditch retirement and accept the position of Jackson County's veteran service officer. He said: "Listen. Assess. Resolve."

Gay enjoys family, woodwork, writing, local government. He represents Ward 2 on the Jackson City Council.

He can be reached at 507-847-4774 or cvso@co.jackson.mn.us.

Baseball Committee almost to 300 teams

MONTEVIDEO — Minnesota American Legion Baseball Committee Vice Commander Brandon Raymo coordinates registration.

He reported that, as of March 25, there have been 299 teams signed up, and he estimates about 76 more will come in before the 2021 seasons begins.

The American Legion fully intends to play baseball in 2021. See a box of tournament schedules on Page 12.

Minnesota American Legion Baseball fielded 366 teams in 2019. It had to cancel the 2020 season because of various COVID-related reasons.

The Baseball Committee Spring Meeting was slated to take place right after the Legionnaire's deadline.

The committee plans on hearing from Mike Hassan of the North Carolina American Legion Baseball Committee on how that group launched an American Legion softball program.

The Minnesota Baseball Committee members know there are places in Minnesota where the girls have no summer softball but the boys do. They have discussed possibly offering softball as a means to serve those girls.

Among other business, the committee will also:

- Hear from 2021 tournament directors and discuss 2022 tournaments.
- Discuss regional participation.
- Review COVID-19 protocols.
- Update the rule book.
- Go over financials.



MYTH

The American Legion is some secretive, exclusive club.

Truth:

The American Legion always has believed in transparency. It welcomes all veterans to join. It welcomes members, their families and the general public to visit its Post homes, stop by the Post meetings or look at our fiscal reports.



American Legion National Commander Bill Oxford meets with members of the New Prague Veterans Color Guard during a stop at Post 45 in February 2020.



American Legion National Commander's Tour

April 6-9, 2021

Please call or email to reserve your spot:

Location	Meal	Time	Contact
Tuesday, April 6, 2021			
St. Paul Park Post 98	Lunch	noon	post98spp@gmail.com
North St. Paul Post 39	Dinner*	6 p.m.	651-777-3708, Ext. 207
Wednesday, April 7, 2021			
Osseo Post 172	Breakfast	8 a.m.	763-425-4858
Royalton Post 137	Lunch	noon	320-584-5135
Nisswa Post 627	Dinner*	6 p.m.	218-963-9946
Thursday, April 8, 2021			
Walker Post 134	Breakfast	8 a.m.	218-547-1011
Friday, April 9, 2021			
Park Rapids Post 212	Breakfast	8 a.m.	218-732-5238
Bagley Post 16	Lunch	noon	218-209-8676
Detroit Lakes Post 15	Dinner*	6 p.m.	218-847-8533

*There will be a social hour starting at 5 p.m.

National Commander's Tour treks northward

ST. PAUL — American Legion National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford returns to Minnesota in April.

In February 2020, Oxford, who hails from Post 29 in Lenoir, N.C., toured southern Minnesota. This time, the National Commander's Tour will start in St. Paul and head northward.

He arrives Monday, April 5, at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and prepares for the week at a hotel in St. Paul.

On Tuesday, April 6, he will visit the Department of Minnesota HQ and meet with Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke and Minnesota National Guard Commander Shawn Manke.

He will have lunch at noon at St. Paul Park Post 98, with dinner at North St. Paul Post 39.

Wednesday, April 7, the tour is northbound. Breakfast is at Osseo Post 172, lunch at Royalton Post 137 and dinner at Nisswa Post 627.

On Thursday, April 8, the tour stops at Walker Post 134 for breakfast. In the afternoon, the tour heads to Fort Ripley for a mission brief and to visit the second class of the Minnesota American Legion College.

On Friday, April 9, breakfast is at Park Rapids Post 212, lunch at Bagley Post 16 and the grand finale will be a dinner at Detroit Lakes Post 15.

At each stop, Oxford speaks on various aspects of The American Legion.

Legion members and the general public are invited to attend his stops. Contact the Post for arrangements. See the inset box for phone numbers, times, other details.

Oxford flies out of Fargo on April 10.

The commander will tour with his aide, Larry Cline, of Lincolnton Post 30 in North Carolina, along with Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak of New Prague Post 45, Adjutant Mike Maxa of Montgomery Post 79, Membership Director Sy Fix of La Crescent Post 595 and Communications Director Tim Engstrom of Bloomington Post 550.

He is the first National commander to serve a second year. With the National Convention being canceled in 2020 because of the coronavirus, officer positions throughout most of The American Legion went a second year.

He served as Department of North Carolina commander 2010 to 2013. He is a former mayor and City Council member of Cahah's Mountain, N.C. He has a bachelor's degree in environmental studies and multiple safety and environmental certificates. He has volunteered in Legion Baseball, too: coach, umpire and public address announcer.

He is a veteran of the Marine Corps and served during the Vietnam War as an aviation electronic technician for the A-6 Intruder. He served in Vietnam during his initial enlistment. He was discharged in 1970 as a sergeant, then joined the North Carolina National Guard, eventually retired as a colonel after more than 34 years of military service.

Oxford and his wife, Frances, have been married since 1967. They have a son, Charles (married to Deah Reid) and a daughter, Jackie (married to Mike Carr). They have four grandsons: Isiah, Micah, Jaggard and Dawson.

VA has vaccines for all enrolled vets

MINNEAPOLIS — Enrolled Veterans of any age can now receive a COVID vaccination at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System. Veterans interested in getting vaccinated can call 612-467-1301 Monday to Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. to schedule vaccine appointments.

Over the next several weeks, the VA will text messaging enrolled veterans with cell-phones on record to schedule their vaccine appointments.

According to a VA news release: "If you receive a text message from the phone number 53079, it is the VA. Scheduling via text message will assist in managing high call volumes and reduce phone call wait times. If you receive this text message and choose to schedule by text, you will receive a confirmation text message when your appointment is scheduled. Please do not also call the COVID Vaccine Call Center if you have scheduled your appointment via text message. If you would like to opt in to receiving text messages from us, please text START to 53079."

To stay up to date on the Minneapolis VA vaccine information, please visit Covid-19 website www.minneapolis.va.gov/services/covid-19-vaccines.asp or social media channels.

By March 19, Minneapolis VAHCS was second out of 140 qualifying VA Medical Centers in the number of COVID-19 vaccines provided. To date,

the Minneapolis VAHCS has administered 58,091 vaccine doses.

Veterans have told the Legionnaire they had positive and quick vaccine experiences.

If you are a veteran who is interested in receiving care at the VA but are not yet enrolled,

please apply for VA health care online at www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction or call 1-877-222-VETS Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. to apply.

For more information about VA's Connected Care programs, visit connectedcare.va.gov.



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Mariah Jacobsen (Daughter of Tom Burnett)

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Dr. Andrew Baker

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Stories will become part of the permanent archive of the museum and inform our traveling display and tv documentary.

MN Military & Veterans Museum • Camp Ripley
15000 Highway 115 • Little Falls, MN 56345
320-616-6050 • mnmilitarymuseum.org

Greetings American Legion Family.

Thank you to La Crescent Post 595 for hosting our Department Appreciation Rally on March 6. Amazing hospitality was shown by all and the facility, the La Crescent Area Event Center was a wonderful place for the American Legion Family to meet. Department Membership Director Sy Fix did a great job in organizing this event!

A letter was sent out to all Posts by Department Adjutant Mike Maxa requesting completion of the following forms:

- Consolidated Post Report
- Officer Reporting Form
- Notification of Post/Squadron Commanders & Adjutants
- Annual Post Data Form

Please take the time to complete the above forms. The top two must be completed and submitted to Department prior to the deadlines in order to be

Commander's Column

Mark Dvorak



considered “off the goose egg.”

One of National Commander Bill Oxford’s goals is to have 100 percent completion of the Consolidated Post Report. The CPR can be completed as you accomplish any item listed on the report.

The easiest way to complete this form is through MyLegion.org. I know of a few Posts that enter items monthly on the CPR in MyLegion.org and submit/save the CPR. Once submitted, the CPR is considered complete but can be changed on a regular basis and submitted again.

If you only save the document, you must eventually submit the CPR for it to be considered complete and sent to Department and National. Training

was provided on the CPR by the Department Training Committee, go to the following for additional information on the CPR: YouTube, enter the following in the search: Minnesota American Legion. Video on CPR Training will be one of the videos listed.

March 15 was The American Legion’s 102nd birthday. Happy birthday to us! For God and Country, we continue our mission.

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

Opinions expressed in Mail Call are that of the authors and do not reflect the opinion of The Minnesota Legionnaire or The American Legion.

Mail Call

A Peace Corps memorial?

I am a Vietnam veteran who served with the U.S. Marine Corps as a hospital corpsman.

We have a Veterans Memorial Park here in Plainview that was done by a local Boy Scout as his Eagle Scout project.

He had heard a talk at the high school by a Vietnam veteran and wanted to show his appreciation for all veterans. There is a plaque about the Peace Corps there, also.

Now, a former resident, who was in the Peace Corps for two years wants to change the park and put up a Peace Corps Memorial that will over shadow the Veterans Park.

I am totally against it and feel that any veteran who draws breath would also be against it.

Clarence R. Day
Plainview Post 179

Editor's note: Here are numbers to share with your community leaders.

Since 1775, about 1.35 million Americans have died in combat or related to war. And that's a low estimate. And it is not counting injuries.

In fact, with Operation Iraqi Freedom alone, there were 4,418 military deaths and 13 DOD civilian-worker deaths.

The number of Americans who have died in the Peace Corps since it began in 1961 is 309.

We know Plainview had four early Peace Corps volunteers. There is nothing wrong with service to the country through the Peace Corps. In fact, former Peace Corps Director Gaddi Vasquez is a Boys Nation alumni. But the city should be respectful of the men and women, particularly the local ones, who died in war and not overshadow their solemn memorial.

A good point about war dead

The Legionnaire’s recent article about the artist Al Smith was very well done. As a young Marine, I helped families bury

some of those 58,202 killed in action.

I appreciate you printing some of the lovely artwork. Al Smith is a true hero in my book. His acknowledgement of the hidden internal emotional wounds is right on.

I challenge that author on one passage that, even as I read it today, I feel anger rising. The sentence begins, “This portrait depicted ... along with the number 58,202, the number of lives lost during the Vietnam War, at the bottom of the illustration.”

That is the number of *American* lives lost. The sentence implies that is all that matters are American lives.

Let’s be clear, between 2 and 3 million Vietnamese people were killed during that war. I, for one, do not consider any of those American lives worth more than a Vietnamese life.

Perhaps I am being unfair, and the author had no such intent. I’m open to your reply.

Jim Lovestar
Minneapolis Johnnie Baker Post 291

Editor's note: Good point. The freelance author said she had no such intent and was glad someone pointed it out.

Not happy with Rep. O'Neill

All veterans, veteran families and supporters of veterans should know that the Minnesota Commanders Task Force invited state Rep. Marion O’Neill of Maple Lake to our March meeting to discuss her objections and proposed changes to the Veterans Restorative Justice Act, HF 478, and her bill on veteran treatment courts protocols, HF 1098.

Her legislative assistant replied Rep. O’Neill would not be attending. The CTF followed up asking her what date and time would work for her. The CTF has not heard back.

This is not an isolated incident. While all politicians talk about how much they support us, it is rare that they actually talk to us. Most disappointing

is when they vote against bills we support — especially when they won’t talk to us.

This is also why it is so important for veterans and veteran families and supporters of veterans to call and email their elected representatives. They need to hear from all of us, and need to hear they cannot ignore us.

Todd Kemery
chair
Minnesota CTF

Editor's note: The CTF comprises the commanders of the Minnesota levels of The American Legion, American Veterans, Disabled American Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Vietnam Veterans of America.

Have you heard about the Bird?

Located in the northeast corner of Highways 394 and 100, and adjacent to the Breck School Athletic Field, the Chester Bird American Legion Post 523 features a restaurant, full bar, outside patio seating and a large assembly area. Charitable gambling is another ongoing offering of the Post: bingo, pull-tabs, tri-wheel, virtual racing and meat raffles, the latter featuring very prominently in the entertainment of the evening diners.

The Post was named after Chester D. Ptaszek, who perished in World War II. Ptaszek is a Polish derivation of “bird.” The Post — which is the people, not the building — was chartered on Nov. 28, 1945.

Having been extraordinarily well served by the state American Legion cadre of professionals, my wife and I decided to attend the Post’s weekly Friday evening Fish Fry.

What a treat! Food, fun and frivolity in great abundance.

The Fish Fry itself featured cod, coleslaw and French fries amply supplied. The gin and tonics were a perfect blend of alcohol and carbonated beverages. The ongoing meat raffles, at \$1

Compassion is the deep mercy of God

When I think of Easter Week, I often think of this Joe South song, “Walk A Mile in My Shoes” and its meaning. It means spending time trying to consider or understand another person’s perspectives, experiences or motivations before making a judgment about them.

Some people do this when they try walking a mile in their shoes before you dismiss them too quickly. God used “Empathy” and compassion when he forgave our sins.

In the Scriptures, Apostle Peter counseled Christians to have “compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous” (1 Peter 3:8, NKJV). The Apostle Paul also encouraged empathy when he exhorted fellow Christians to “rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn” (Romans 12:15). True empathy is the feeling of actually participating in the suffering of another.

The Bible says we are commanded to love our neighbor and to have intense love for fellow believers (Matthew 22:39; 1 Peter 4:8). Though we intend to love one another, we often miss opportunities to

How to ...

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a ticket, were great fun and built enthusiastic responses not only from the winners but also from each of the many participants, as we all watched the spinning wheel do it magic.

Sad to report that we were never a meat raffle winner, but our consolation prize was the opportunity to attend next Friday, and compete again for the meat prizes.

The Post has created a new labor-saving staff support model: The bartenders not only mixed the drinks that we consumed, but also took many of the patron’s orders and then delivered our food to boot! Talk about efficiency. They gave new meaning to the term “Service Above Self.”

In this period of trial and tribulation that we are currently experiencing, Chester Bird Post 523 serves as a beacon of camaraderie for all: young, old, military veteran, society member. Who would have thought a simple, but delicious, Lenten meal could subordinate “political differences ... to common humanity”?

For one night, at least fun and friendship became “the medicine of life.”

So, if you are not busy next Friday night, remember Bird is definitely the word!

Peter R. Bartling,
Golden Valley Post 523

Minnesota has lost a legend

Wayne Terwilliger died on Immortal Chaplains Day, Feb. 3, 2021. He was a World War II veteran and baseball lifer. My

Chaplain's Corner

Betty Jass



relieve others’ pain. That could be because we are unaware of others’ needs at times in our lives. Empathy is the key that can unlock the door to our kindness and compassion.

There are several examples of empathy in action in the Bible. Jesus was always sensitive to the plight of others. Matthew tells us how Jesus, “when he saw the crowds, ... had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

On another occasion, Jesus observed a widow about to bury her only son. Sensing her pain (the NLT says that Jesus’ “heart overflowed with compassion”), He approached the funeral procession and resurrected the young man (Luke 7:11–16). Having lived a human life, our Lord can and does empathize with all our weaknesses (see Hebrews 4:15).

The word *compassion* describes the deep mercy of God. God is the absolute best

at empathy: “He knows how we are formed;

he remembers that we are dust” (Psalm 103:14). He personally feels the pain of His people: “You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book” (Psalm 56:8, NLT). How comforting it is to know that God records all our tears and all our struggles! How good to remember God’s invitation to cast all our cares upon Him, “because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7)!

As we honor and celebrate Easter this month remember to “Walk a mile in their shoes” with empathy and compassion. God did that for us as he forgave our sins. Happy Easter!

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

dad built a house in Bloomington when I was 2 so we could grow up in the country.

When the corn field a mile away became Metropolitan Stadium, Terwilliger played for the Millers and lived behind us. We were on our first Bloomington Athletic Association little league baseball team, and the “Twig” let us hang out in his yard.

We mowed his lawn for the likes of used game baseballs, discarded manager’s lineups and free passes. He taught us, “A lot of time it seems like nothing is

happening, but when the pitcher winds up, you need to think ahead: If the ball comes to me, what should I do? You don’t want to panic and throw to the wrong place.”

He showed us how to make double plays, and once in a while, we did. That year we won the All-Bloomington Championship, and Terwilliger came to our game, under the lights at Legion Field where I-35W now crosses Lyndale Avenue.

When the Twins won the

Continued on Page 7

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Abernethy, W. David, 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 31, 2021. He faced combat in Europe and in the Pacific. He was a 76-year member at Tracy Post 173.

Allguire, James W., 85, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 20, 2021. He was deployed to the Caribbean and Mediterranean. He was a member at Alexandria Post 87.

Altenburg, Florian W., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 26, 2021. He was an infantryman stationed at Camp Roeder in Salzburg, Austria. He served in the 350th Infantry Regiment. He was a 31-year member at New Ulm Post 132.

Anderson, Larry D. "Pee Wee," 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 22, 2021. He served in Vietnam. He was a member at Austin Post 91.

Anderson, Larry, 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 25, 2021. He was a Department vice commander in 2002-03 and 5th District commander in 2000-01. He was Post commander 1995-97 and a 52-year member at Minneapolis Fire & Police Post 396.

Anglim, Richard T., 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 13, 2020. He was a past commander and 34-year member at Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435.

Archambault, Richard J. "Dick," 78, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 12, 2021. He was a member at Faribault Post 43.

Arends, Francis, 93, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 3, 2020. He was stationed in Greenland. He was a 45-year member at Minneota Post 199.

Arola, Donald E., 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 25, 2021. He served in the 24th Infantry Division as a tank driver and was stationed in Japan. He is a past commander, Boys State organizer and 61-year member at Nashwauk Post 307.

Baxter, Richard C., 92, Army Air Forces veteran of World War II, died Jan. 29, 2021. He was a radar technician stationed in Boca Raton, Fla., and Sumpter, S.C. He was a member at Cambridge Post 290.

Bell, Eugene E., 96, Army Air Forces veteran of World War II, died March 13, 2020. He was a 74-year member at Bayport Post 491.

Bengtson, Gordon A., 98, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died May 19, 2020. He attended ROTC during dental school, then was recalled to active duty in 1952, serving at Air Force bases in Columbus, Ind., and Milwaukee, Wis. He was a member at Dassel Post 364.

Bernardy, Gayle "Bud," 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 1, 2020. He served as an MP at Fort Warden, Wash. He was a 69-year member at Minneota Post 199.

Bernardy, Randall, 90, Army National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 14, 2021. He was a 64-year member at Minneota Post 199.

Blake, Keith W., 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb. 21, 2021. He served as an electrician on the island of Saipan, in the Mariana Islands north of Guam (and he also made sure sailors had fresh ice cream). He was a past commander and a 71-year member at Long Prairie Post 12.

Blaser, Willard, 95, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb. 25, 2021. He was a 73-year member at Austin Post 91.

Bliss, Richard, 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 6, 2020. He served in Vietnam. He was a 48-year member at Anoka Post 102.

Bode, Robert D., 72, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 8, 2021. He was a jet mechanic and crew chief at Travis AFB, Calif. He was a 42-year member at Wood Lake Post 556.

Boulton, Darrell, 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 17, 2021. He was a Post commander 1988-1992 and a 52-year member at Cold Spring Post 455.

Bous, Alvin J., 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 23, 2021. He served in Germany. He was a past commander and a member at Long Prairie Post 12.

Brunes, Gary O., 78, Army veteran of the Cold War, died Feb. 13, 2021. He was a member at Pequot Lakes Post 49.

Buchholtz, Ardell "Buck," 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 12, 2021. He served in Korea, Burma and Japan. He earned a Purple Heart at the age of 17 for wounds received at the Battle of Chosin Reservoir. He was a 50-year member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Burdorf, Wilbert "Wil," 79, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 24, 2021. He was a clerk, serving stateside for eight years. After a seven-year break, he served in the Minnesota Air National Guard for 21 years. He was past 2nd District commander and 2nd District vice commander. He was a past commander, was involved in Legion Baseball and was a 35-year member at New Ulm Post 132.

Cameron, Gary, 80, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 15, 2020. He served at Fort Carson, Colo. He was a member at Bayport Post 491.

Carmichael, Dale, 89, veteran of the Korean War, died June 2, 2020. He was a 57-year member at Bayport Post 491.

Caron, Ronald, 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War,

Obituaries

The Minnesota Legionnaire reserves the right to edit all obituaries for style and brevity.

Please send to tengstrom@mnlegion.org or in the mail to the Department of Minnesota.

The Minnesota Legionnaire portion of the Department website, mnlegion.org, now has an easy web form for submitting Taps by clicking a button.

died Dec. 8, 2020. He was a 37-year member at Faribault Post 43.

Clapp, Thomas, 83, Air Force veteran of the Cold War, died on Dec. 3, 2020. He was a member at Cold Spring Post 455.

Clayton, Clyde H., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 22, 2020. He was a member at Bayport Post 491.

De Wolf, Herman M., missing age, branch, war era and death date. He was a 53-year member of Bayport Post 491. (If you have an obituary for this deceased veteran, please send to tengstrom@mnlegion.org.)

Dix, Ronald A., 84, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 24, 2021. He served 20 years as a signal man. He served in Vietnam on Swift Boats and on the USS Mount McKinley and as a recruiter in Iowa. He was gambling manager and member at Spring Grove Post 249.

Dornfeld, Ronald, 76, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 8, 2019. He was a member at Bayport Post 491.

Downs, Cortzie, 84, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 18, 2020. He was a 51-year member at Bayport Post 491.

Doyscher, William "Bill," 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 18, 2021. He enlisted after many of his buddies were drafted. He was a past commander of Fairfax Post 205. He was a 66-year member at Tyler Post 185.

Duneman, Paul W., 91, Air Force veteran of World War II, died Jan. 22, 2021. He served in Germany, Okinawa, where he went to mainland Japan, Korea and the Philippines. A reverend in his career, he served two terms as Department chaplain, 1972-73 and 1974-75. He was a 53-year member at Alexandria Post 87.

Eder, Delmar F. Sr., 77, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 26, 2019. He was a member at Bayport Post 491.

Edwards, Roy Jr., 92, Army and Coast Guard veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Jan. 1, 2021. He was past chaplain, part of the Color Guard and a 41-year member at St. Francis Post 622.

Eischens, Sylvester J. "Buster," 87, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died March 13, 2021. He served many years as captain of the Honor Guard and was a 36-year member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Faber, Marlin A., 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 21, 2021. He was a member at St. Joseph Post 328.

Fauskee, Waldo A., 82, Army veteran of the Cold War, died March 7, 2021. He was a 31-year member of Brooten Post 288.

Feldt, David D., 79, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 3, 2021. He was a weapons mechanic, and after getting out, he became a pilot himself. He was a 40-year member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Festler, Fredrick J., 84, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 22, 2021. He was a ship electrician. He was a member at Little Falls Post 46.

Finnegan, Edward Jr., 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 30, 2020. He served in Vietnam providing air weather support. He was a 55-year member at Minneota Post 199.

Fontaine, Thomas E., 71, Army veteran of the Vietnam War and Persian Gulf War, died Dec. 22, 2020. He was a scout dog handler in the infantry. He later joined the National Guard and went to Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War. He was a member at Proctor Post 106.

Gast, Elroy A., 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 13, 2021. He was a 49-year member at Willmar Post 167.

Gernandt, Francis, 69, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 5, 2020. He was a 33-year member at Faribault Post 43.

Gilbertson, Marvin E., 93, Army veteran of the World War II, died Dec. 29, 2020. He served as a cook. He was a 74-year member at Willmar Post 167.

Gleason, Roger, 77, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 28, 2021. He served in Vietnam. He was a 43-year member at Bayport Post 491.

Graskow, Daniel J., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 11, 2021. He was a member at Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435.

Gross, Donald R., 78, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 3, 2020. He was a past commander and member at St. Francis Post 622.

Guiney, Thomas K. "Tom," 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 23, 2021. He was a member at Albert Lea Post 56.

Guion, Lyle F., 95, Army Air Forces veteran of World War II, died Jan. 2, 2021. He was a gunner on the B-24

bomber. He later served in the Army Reserve and the Air Force Reserve. In 1976, he took a 60-day assignment to lead, as a sergeant major, a team finding ways to combine active-duty, Reserve and National Guard training components, and it resulted in him returning to active duty, retiring in 1985. He was a 56-year member at St. Paul Frogtown Post 484.

Halberg, Charles, 100, Army veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died July 7, 2020. He was a 76-year member at Bayport Post 491.

Hammer, Robert, 89, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 17, 2021. He was a member at Faribault Post 43.

Hirte, Steven, 73, veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 7, 2020. He was a member at Bayport Post 491.

Horness, Donald, 87, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 13, 2021. He was a member at Faribault Post 43.

Janssen, Larry U., 70, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 11, 2021. He served on the Color Guard and was a member at Litchfield Post 104.

Jeglum, Ronald D., 71, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 23, 2021. He practiced dentistry in Rota, Spain. He was a 46-year member at Hayfield Post 330.

Jenniges, Yvo B., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died March 14, 2021. He served with the 199th Engineer Battalion. He was a member of Brooten Post 288.

Johnson, Eugene C. "Gene," 95, Army veteran of World War II, died March 2, 2021. He served in the Pacific Theater. He was a 74-year member at Hector Post 135.

Johnson, Irvin J., 99, Marine veteran of World War II, died Dec. 2, 2020. He was a 74-year member at Bayport Post 491.

Jorgenson, Robert E., 84, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 3, 2020. He was a 30-year member at Anoka Post 102.

Kaas, Leslie "Butch," 73, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 11, 2021. He served as a tactical aircraft mechanic at Tourane Air Base in Da Nang, Vietnam, during the Tet Offensive. Six years later, he joined the Minnesota Army National Guard. He was a member at Minneota Post 199.

Knefelkamp, Norman, 97, Marine veteran of World War II, died Feb. 12, 2019. He was a member at Bayport Post 491.

Kobs, John H., 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 13, 2021. He was a door gunner in the B Company "Aeroscouts," 123rd Aviation Battalion, Americal Division, in Chu Lai, Vietnam. He was a 38-year member at Anoka Post 102.

Kodet, Bonitus J. "Bonnie," 90, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died March 5, 2021. He was a 63-year member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

Kor, Jullo, 93, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 5, 2021. He defused landmines in Korea. Later, he served in the tank-led infantry and was a combat engineer. He earned five battle stars and two Bronze Stars in two years, then served another five in the Army Reserve. He was a 68-year member at Marshall Post 113.

Laiti, Robert, 87, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died June 7, 2019. He was a 54-year member at Bayport Post 491.

Larson, George B., 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died March 4, 2021. He was stationed in the Philippines. He was a 56-year member at Alexandria Post 87.

Larson, George B., 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died March 4, 2021. He served in the Philippines. He was a 56-year member at Alexandria Post 87.

Long, William L. "Bill," 78, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 13, 2021. He served in Vietnam. After 10 years active duty, he joined the Army Reserve, participating in Operation Cuban Refugee in 1980. He was a member at St. Paul Business and Professional Post 450.

Mariana, John W. "Abby," 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 2, 2020. He was a 65-year member at Bayport Post 491.

Marsh, Lewis, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 2, 2021. He was a member at Bagley Post 16.

Martin, Donald G., 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 17, 2021. He was Post commander 1994-95 and was a 49-year member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Masog, Joseph L. Jr., 76, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 22, 2021. He served in Vietnam aboard the USS Mansfield. He was a 34-year member at Little Falls Post 46.

McDonough, Eugene, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 4, 2020. He was a 41-year member of Cambridge Post 290.

Melchert, Kenneth, 68, Navy veteran of the Vietnam, Lebanon/Grenada and Persian Gulf wars, died Feb. 20, 2021. He served for 21 years. He was a 31-year member at Waconia Post 150.

Meter, Norman, 73, Marine veteran of the Korean War, died March 10, 2021. He fought in Korea. He was a member at Bagley Post 16.

Millard, Ward C., 71, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 21, 2021. He served as a legal clerk and court reporter. He was a 42-year member at Park Rapids Post 212.



Continued from Page 5

Murphy, William J. “Billy,” 39, Army veteran of the Iraq War, died Feb. 17, 2021. He was deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. He served his country as active duty and National Guard. He was a member at Northfield Post 84.

Myhre, James O., 68, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 27, 2021. He served 21 years as an armament specialist, including an assignment at Korat Thai Air Base, where he met his wife, Narida. He was a member at Spring Grove Post 249.

Nelson, Alden, 75, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 24, 2016. He was a member at Bayport Post 491.

Novotny, James, 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 30, 2020. He was a 42-year member at Faribault Post 43.

O’Brien, Richard J., 87, Marine veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 20, 2021. He was a 73-year member at Bayport Post 491.

Oelschlager, Orvin, 68, Army veteran of Lebanon/ Grenada, died Feb. 27, 2021. He was a member at Park Rapids Post 212.

Olson, Harvey, 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 21, 2020. He was a member at Faribault Post 43.

Ostrom, Bill R., 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 25, 2021. He was a member at Faribault Post 43.

Peterson, James O. “Jim,” 79, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 28, 2021. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Piehl, Gerald “Jerry,” 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 22, 2021. He was a past commander and 59-year member at Silver Lake Post 141.

Pike, Richard P., 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 23, 2020. He was a 50-year member at St. Joseph Post 328.

Pohlen, Jerald, “Jerry,” 77, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 31, 2020. He was a 37-year member at St. Leo Post 524.

Prybilla, James L., 73, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 24, 2021. He was a member at Minneapolis North Side Post 230.

Putnam, Robert G., 95, Army veteran of World War II, died March 30, 2020. He served in the 561st Field Artillery Battalion as a gun position surveyor. He stormed Omaha Beach on D-Day and participated in five battles in France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and Netherlands. He was a member at Aitkin Post 86.

Putney, Donald C., 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 7, 2021. He served with the 369th

Engineer Amphibious Support Regiment. He and his unit were in Nevada during atomic bomb tests at Camp Desert Rock. He was a 57-year member at Litchfield Post 104. He served in the

Quinnell, Delano, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 13, 2020. He was a 45-year member at Faribault Post 43.

Ritzenthaler, Paul F., 78, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 22, 2021. He served in England and Germany as an administrative specialist. He was a member at St. Joseph Post 328.

Rodecap, Paul E., 95, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 11, 2021. He served 20 months in the European theater. He was a 31-year member at Mora Post 201.

Savage, Donald J., 74, Navy and Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 6, 2021. He was a member at Bayport Post 491.

Schiffer, James S., 82, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 28, 2021. He was a member at Mora Post 201.

Seim, Stanley G., 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 22, 2019, He was a member at Bayport Post 491.

Shaver, Darwin C., 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 11, 2021. He was a past commander and 50-year member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Stafford, Claude D., 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 19, 2021. He served at the 39th Parallel and was a recipient of several medals. He was a member at Dodge Center Post 384.

Stassen, Lawrence J., 93, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 27, 2021. He was a 64-year member at Walnut Grove Post 267.

Stone, William “Bill,” 71, Army Reserve veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 27, 2020. He was a member at Currie Post 322.

Thoen, James A., 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 3, 2021. He served as an infantryman in Vietnam, then served in the Minnesota National Guard until retirement. He was a member of Broosten Post 288.

Thompson, William “Tuna” L., 72, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 22, 2021. He served in Okina-wa. He was a member at Waite Park Post 428.

Thull, William “Bill,” 93, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 27, 2020. He was a member at Cold Spring Post 455.

Tilney, Larry J., 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 24, 2020. He served in Germany. He was a member at Waseca Post 228.

Turbes, Leroy, 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 2, 2021. He served in Anchorage, Alaska. He was a past commander and a 50-year member at Willmar Post 167.

Tvrdik, Donald “Donnie,” 76, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 7, 2021. He was a member at Lowry Post 253.

Vacek, Virgil, 75, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 9, 2021. He was part of the Honor Guard and a 51-year member at Silver Lake Post 141.

Van Der Pol, Jeryl L. “Jerry,” 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 26, 2021. He served in West Ger-many as a cook with the 16th Field Artillery Regiment. He was a member at Raymond Post 420.

VanVleet, Walter “Bud,” 87, Marine veteran of the Korean War, died March 11, 2021. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Velzke, Gordon, 93, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 19, 2020. He was a 38-year member at Farib-ault Post 43.

Voss, Maxamillian N., 87, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 7, 2021. He served aboard the USS Salem. He was especially involved with placing flags on veterans’ graves and was a 56-year member at Mahnomen Post 31.

Wangerin, Roger, 71, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 24, 2021. He served two tours in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne Division. He was the chaplain, part of the Color Guard and a member at St. Francis Post 622.

Warmington, LaVern A. “Fuzzy,” 86, Marine veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 21, 2021. He served in Korea. After, he joined the Army Reserves. He was a 46-year member at Faribault Post 43.

Weaver, Barthlette “Barky,” 94, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 24, 2021. He served in Korea as an MP with the 1st Cavalry Division. He was a 52-year member at Winona Post 9.

Wegscheid, Ervin Sr., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 25, 2021. He was a member at Dent Post 148.

Wells, Howard “Howie,” 89, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died March 7, 2021. He was a member at Red Wing Post 54.

Wells, Merle C., 92, Marine veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 12, 2021. He was a 43-year member at Anoka Post 102.

Wines, Francis, 79, Army veteran of the Cold War, died March 13, 2021. He was a member at Dent Post 148.

Wissman, William H., 96, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb. 27, 2021. He was a 72-year member at Winona Post 9.

Wolf, Raymond J., 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 11, 2021. He served in West Germany. He was a member at Park Rapids Post 212.

Wurch, Kenneth R., 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb. 23, 2021. He was a 43-year member at Winona Post 9.

Important VA filing deadline looms for veterans of the Persian Gulf War

It was Aug. 2, 1990, when Iraq President Saddam Hussein ordered his troops to invade oil-rich Kuwait, thus creating tension with the United Nations, which condemned these actions. When diplomacy failed, U.S. President George H. W. Bush ordered the buildup of forces in the Middle East region. This buildup was Operation Desert Shield. A total of more than 670,000 coalition forces were supplied by 28 countries with the United States contributing the most, deploying more than 450,000. The war ended Feb. 28 when Iraq pulled out of Kuwait and officially accepted cease-fire terms on April 6, 1991.

Fast forward to March 19, 2003,

VA & Rehabilitation

Jeremy Wolfsteller



the United States President George W. Bush initiates a war with Iraq after the 9/11 attacks. With the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than 1.9 million U.S. military servicemembers have been deployed in support of the Gulf Wars dating back to 1990.

Those who served in Southwest Asia between Aug. 2, 1990, and today endured hazardous environmental exposures that were later determined to contribute to unexplained health conditions. The

VA was directed by Congress to develop regulations that would service-connect Gulf War veterans that have a diagnosed or undiagnosed health conditions associated with their service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations. The VA considers Southwest Asia being Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Bahrain. It

also includes the surrounding bodies of water and flying over the airspace.

These qualifying health conditions are listed at 38 C.F.R. 3.317 and outlined as three criteria. The first is an undiagnosed illness (UDX), the second is a medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illness (MUCMI), these have a diagnosis without conclusive pathophysiology or etiology and include chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and functional gastrointestinal disorders. The third is infectious diseases, an example of infectious diseases include malaria, TB, West Nile virus and brucellosis. Qualifying service for infectious diseases includes Afghanistan after Sept. 19, 2001.

VA’s current regulations states for veterans that want to file a claim for a Gulf War presumptive condition that one of these conditions must have manifested prior to December 2021. It’s not clear how VA will adjudicate these claims after the December sunset date but by interpreting the language the veteran must have clinical evidence of either an UDX or MUCMI prior to December of 2021 to have VA consider a presumptive claim for Gulf War.

If you think any of this applies to you, please contact your local county veterans service officer or your VSO.

Jeremy Wolfsteller is the Department of Minnesota service officer.

The American Legion Department of Minnesota 2021 District Membership Report as of Mar 24, 2021												
District	Commander	New 2021	PUFL 2021	Online Ren 2021	Trad Ren 2021	Paid 2021	HQ Trans 2021	Total Mbr 2021	Goal 2021	%Goal	HQ Trans 2020 (As of)	Total Mbr 2020 (As of)
01	DALE P WELLIK	68	867	830	5,492	7,257	32	7,289	8,009	91.01	61	7,741
02	BRADLEY PAGEL	52	656	513	4,357	5,578	15	5,593	6,189	90.37	6	5,972
03	LINDA DVORAK	143	1,574	1,777	6,798	10,292	118	10,410	10,938	95.17	137	10,589
04	JOSEPH M JANSEN	30	289	309	1,232	1,860	19	1,879	2,091	89.86	26	2,012
05	WADE A LARSON	16	309	391	1,045	1,761	1	1,762	2,164	81.42	7	2,041
06	PAUL D EDWARDS	138	1,112	1,187	7,216	9,653	93	9,746	10,598	91.96	33	10,289
07	DEAN KNUTSON	40	707	441	4,057	5,245	59	5,304	5,646	93.94	65	5,408
08	D MARVIN HILL	29	320	406	2,503	3,258	15	3,273	3,591	91.14	13	3,473
09	STEVEN G SUNDSTROM	61	555	634	4,225	5,475	75	5,550	5,953	93.23	29	5,713
10	THOMAS H ALLEN	117	916	1,458	5,503	7,994	45	8,039	8,780	91.56	40	8,487
99		11	182	494	1,416	2,103	0	2,103	2,997	70.17	0	1,858
Total:		705	7,487	8,440	43,844	60,476	472	60,948	66,956	91.03	417	63,583

In order, but not in order

Post	Temp charter date
Minneapolis Post 1.....	June 24, 1919
Shakopee Post 2.....	Aug. 5, 1919
Jordan Post 3.....	Aug. 5, 1919
Lakefield Post 4.....	May 23, 1919
Worthington Post 5.....	May 23, 1919
Pipestone Post 6.....	June 24, 1919
Sleepy Eye Post 7.....	June 2, 1919
St. Paul Post 8.....	May 7, 1919
Winona Post 9.....	July 19, 1919
Lake Benton Post 10.....	Oct. 13, 1919
Mankato Post 11.....	Aug. 29, 1919
Long Prairie Post 12.....	Aug. 25, 1919
Hitterdal Post 13.....	Jan. 10, 1921
Bemidji Post 14.....	Jan. 1, 1920
Detroit Lakes Post 15.....	June 21, 1919
Bagley Post 16.....	June 23, 1919
Pelican Rapids Post 17.....	June 16, 1919
Henning Post 18.....	June 24, 1919
Madelia Post 19.....	Sept. 29, 1919
Crookston Post 20.....	June 1, 1919
Moorhead Post 21.....	June 14, 1919
Red Lake Falls Post 22.....	June 24, 1919
McGregor Post 23.....	April 23, 1997
Roseau Post 24.....	June 1, 1919
Warroad Post 25.....	June 1, 1919
Ada Post 26.....	June 17, 1919
Warren Post 27.....	Nov. 6, 1919
Duluth Post 28.....	Aug. 5, 1919
Morris Post 29.....	June 23, 1919
Fergus Falls Post 30.....	May 10, 1919
Mahnomen Post 31.....	June 21, 1919
Adrian Post 32.....	June 6, 1919
St. James Post 33.....	July 16, 1919
Alvarado Post 35.....	July 25, 1919
Posts 36-43, 45-50.....	Aug. 1, 1919
Lakeville Post 44.....	Jan. 29, 1990
Posts 51-55, 58-62.....	Aug. 8, 1919
Posts 56-57.....	Aug. 7, 1919
Hallock Post 63.....	Aug. 5, 1919
Slayton Post 64.....	Aug. 25, 1919
Rosemount Post 65.....	April 29, 1920
International Falls Post 66.....	Sept. 3, 1919
Sauk Centre Post 67.....	Aug. 16, 1919
Posts 68-69.....	Aug. 11, 1919
West Duluth Post 71.....	Dec. 12, 1922
Appleton Post 72.....	Aug. 11, 1919
Henderson Post 74.....	Aug. 14, 1919
Posts 75-81.....	Aug. 16, 1919
Posts 82-84.....	Aug. 18, 1919
(If a number is skipped, it is because it doesn't exist.)	

Posts with lower numbers are not always older

All American

Tim Engstrom



Have you ever wondered about the Post numbers? Why is Minneapolis 1, Shakopee 2, Jordan 3, Lakefield 4, Worthington 5 and so on?

The nearest answers can be found in an excellent history book by Ben Gimmetstad called “Legion 50.” Published in 1970, it is about the history of the Department of Minnesota.

In 1919, The American Legion was a concept that caught fire — the notion of veterans coming together for common causes and to continue their camaraderie — and they organized rapidly.

Those discharged World War I veterans had no health care, no housing benefits, no educational benefits, no aid in re-employment, nothing. They had each other, and that led to forming associations.

In Minnesota, many popped up. Mankato and St. Paul, for example, formed chapters of the Soldiers and Sailors Club. Owatonna had the Steele County Former Service Men. Montevideo had the Chippewa County Minnesota World War Veterans. You could find associations across the state from Crookston to Winona. Some had VFW Posts, too. The first VFW Post dates back to 1902 in Hugo. There was no VFW Department of Minnesota yet.

Among these associations was the Loyal Legion of Minneapolis. With its origin tied to Mayor J.E. Meyers, this organization grew rapidly after forming in February 1919. By April, after learning of the existence of The American Legion, which first convened in Paris in March, the Loyal Legion voted to adopt the name “American Legion” to link itself to the national body.

In St. Paul, there had been three vets associations, and a

group of veterans, led by a colonel, formed a temporary committee with the intent to form a Minnesota branch of the Legion.

They sent a delegation to the St. Louis caucus in May, where the name “The American Legion” was adopted and the Preamble and Constitution approved.

It was there that Minneapolis was selected as the site for the first convention, to be held in November.

In late May, a committee formed to begin organizing the Department of Minnesota. It sought to organize local Posts throughout Minnesota. Minneapolis Post 1, the largest, would decentralize by establishing Posts throughout the city.

The early founders hired a secretary, George Chapin, who worked out of the Plymouth Building at Hennepin and Sixth in Minneapolis. (It’s that Embassy Suites building next to Murray’s.)

By the end of June, 19 Posts in Minnesota had temporary charters..

There were 11 from the 9th District, five from the 2nd and one each from the 1st, 5th and 6th.

It is widely assumed the numerical order of the Posts matches the order they were chartered. Yes and no. The lower ones are typically older, yes, but those early days had irregularities as a result of trying to organize rapidly.

The first one chartered?

It looks like St. Paul Post 8 is the oldest in Minnesota by charter date. Fergus Falls Post 30 comes in second.

I go by temporary charter date, not permanent charter date, as that is what pretty much everyone else goes by.

But, no doubt, Post 1 has a pre-charter history that dates back before even the Paris Caucus of mid-March.

Gimmetstad notes Post 2 in Shakopee and Post 3 in Jordan were chartered in August, and Warroad, Ada and Adrian, chartered in June, were assigned 25, 26 and 32, respectively. The numbers weren’t in precise order of charter. By August, Chapin reported the Minnesota Legion had 40 Posts.

In the effort to just get them completed, numbers might have come down to how they stacked up on the desk the day he began to tackle the work — rather than the order Chapin completed the work.

Perhaps the trickier paperwork sat around longer. You can imagine some Posts had officers more knowledgeable about paperwork than others, making it easier for Chapin to turnaround. That might explain why St. Paul and Fergus got done fast. Both have federal courthouses and, as a result, a good-sized legal community.

There are many 9th District small towns with low numbers. Did they coordinate travel well? Was there a roving helper? We’ll never know. It’s lost to history. I also see many regional centers with numbers in the first 100: Like how places such as Albert Lea is 56 and Owatonna 77 while Ellendale is 296 and Wells is 210.

It was 1919. Many rural areas didn’t even have electricity. Transportation was more difficult than today. Cars hadn’t even been around for 20 years, and most roads were dirt. Word of The American Legion spread to the regional centers a little faster, and they had more members, making it easier get filed.

That doesn’t mean a few small towns didn’t get the job done early, too. I mean, Long

Prairie is Post 12, Henning 18, Browns Valley 58, among others.

Some suburbs today are big cities but were tiny dots back in 1919. Two suburban Posts — Richfield 435 and Robbinsdale-Crystal 251 — ballooned. Richfield in 1920 had 2,411 people. Robbinsdale had 1,369.

Richfield Post 435 on July 1, 1969, had 5,670 members, and Robbinsdale-Crystal Post 251 had 3,505.

Richfield in 1967 actually ranked as the third-largest Post in the nation. Both consistently ranked among the largest in the country.

Lakeville is Post 44, but don’t let the number fool you. It received its charter Jan. 29, 1990.

McGregor has 23, but it began in 1997.

During the 1919 National Convention in Minneapolis, the state had more Posts and members than any other. There were 360 Posts and 35,000 members.

By the end of 1919, there were 402 organized Posts. By the time of the second state convention in Duluth, in August 1920, there were 470 Posts.

Over the years, the number rose all the way up to Sobieski Post 666. If there was an opening for an unused number, like for one that shut down, Posts could request it.

It wasn’t until 1976 that a Post in Minnesota requested an entirely new number, instead of being assigned one. Apple Valley Post 1776, chartered May 10, 1976, asked for Post 1776 and got it. Now several Posts have custom numbers, the most recent being Minneapolis Patrick Novack Post 5222, chartered Aug. 16, 2019.

After the National Spring Meetings next month, there will be 539 Posts in Minnesota.

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

Mail Call

Continued from Page 4

World Series in 1991, I was a specialist, teaching storytelling and video at Pillsbury School in Minneapolis. I had quit paying attention to Pro Ball, but was not surprised that the “Twig” had become a highly respected coach. I invited him to tell baseball stories when I had Glory Oljace’s fifth-grade class because they could also put our guest ball player on closed-circuit TV for the rest of the school to watch.

The great coach took questions with the same care he showed us when we were that age, and a week later I got a poem he had written, made with the names of all the students in Glory’s class. There is a great book, “Terwilliger bunts one,” about baseball, but also a great deal about the Twig’s time in the military. I now go to Twins games when I can, taking advantage of half price veterans’ tickets.

Larry Johnson
Golden Valley Post 523

Poem puts life in perspective

My husband, a retired master sergeant with the U.S. Air Force, wrote this poem several years ago and I can’t remember what it’s called, but he has full rights

to this.

We were wondering if you would be interested in publishing it in the Legionnaire. He would be so proud to have this published.

“Freedom Is Not Free”
If united we stand keeps us aware
Of how it feels to be free
Then united we must be
To keep us all free
Freedom for all through out the land
Comes only when united we stand

Freedom for so many people is held so dear
Freedom cannot be taken off the shelf
Once or twice a year
Many have had to pay the dues
Freedom is not free
Freedom it comes with a giant I owe you

Freedom is not free
We have taken it for granted for so many years
Remember this, that freedom is not free
It takes blood, sweat & tears
— Allan Whiteoak

Thank you.

Rachael Whiteoak
Elk River Unit 112

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Department Vice Commander for Districts 1 & 3 Pat Logan gestures as he speaks to American Legion Family members who attended the Appreciation Rally at La Crescent Post 595, which pretty much is one and the same as the La Crescent Area Event Center.



First District Honorary Junior President Taylor McElroy of Le Roy is applauded by the banquet attendees for her work helping veterans.



Department Membership Director Sy Fix gestures as he welcomes people to the Appreciation Rally on Saturday, March 6. He is a member of La Crescent Post 595, which hosted the rally. The American Legion gets to use the facilities at no cost. [Read a story on it in the May issue.](#)

Sanctify our comradeship

Dept. and District leaders meet at La Crescent to rally membership and to do what Legionnaires are charged with doing — gathering

Photos by Tim Engstrom



La Crescent Post 595 Commander Greg Lucas welcomes the audience of 114 to his community.



Sons of The American Legion Squadron 595 Commander Christopher Taulbee points as he welcomes people. The rallies motivate membership efforts.



Adams Post 146 Commander Dennis Lewison shakes hands with Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak after donating \$200 from the Post to the Commander's Project. See the thermometer on Page 12 for details on the project and how your Post can give.



Department Vice Commander for Districts 8 & 10 Bob Locker, second from left, holds a certificate for 2019-2020 Department Vice Commander of the Year. Department Vice Commander for Districts 1 & 3 Pat Logan is the 2020-21 Department Vice Commander of the Year (sharing it with Vice Commander for Districts 4 & 5 Teresa Ash). He also holds certificates for 2020-21 Pearl Harbor Award and the 2020-21 Appreciation Award.



District Vice Commanders of the Year for 2020-21 were recognized. From left are 1st District Vice Commander Mary Hanson, 3rd District Vice Commander Kelley Adelsman, 4th District Commander Joe Jansen (holding a certificate for Vice Commander Dave Dahl), 5th District Commander Wade Larson (for Vice Commander Michael Wybierala), 6th District Commander Paul Edwards (for Vice Commander Kenneth Johnson), 7th District Vice Commander Garylee Davenport, 8th District Vice Commander Carl Hendrickson and 10th District Vice Commander William Gordon. Also earning Vice Commander of the Year were Roxanne Zoet of the 2nd District and Wayne Krantz of the 9th District.



Sixth District Membership Director Mike Costello of Little Falls Post 46 awards the Kaisersatt Derby to 6th District Commander Paul Edwards. It is a 12-week competition from August to October.



The Sons of The American Legion announced that Gary Weaver of La Crescent Post 595 was the 2021 Legionnaire of the Year. In addition to being a past commander and adjutant for Post 595, Weaver has served as 1st District commander and many other District-level positions. He currently is the 1st District historian.



District 8 Membership Director Jennifer Havlick operates the Zoom video conference so members across the state can participate in the Appreciation Rally in La Crescent.

Cities over 5,000 without an American Legion Post

Note: We realize some suburban cities are pretty much rural townships incorporated as cities, with Post in a nearby conventional city, like Minnetrista is to St. Bonifacius, but we have included them to make sure the list is comprehensive. Also, some suburbs are served by a Post in the next suburb, like Fridley Post 303 is close to Mounds View, but, again, we wanted to be comprehensive.

City	Population	District
Brooklyn Park	80,068	10th
Plymouth	78,134	10th
Eden Prairie	64,179	10th
Blaine	64,114	10th
Minnetonka	53,025	10th
Cottage Grove	36,602	3rd
Andover	32,733	10th
Oakdale	27,963	3rd
Shoreview	26,791	10th
Ramsey	26,638	10th
New Hope	20,925	10th
Columbia Heights	20,118	10th
Otsego	16,763	10th
Vadnais Heights	13,444	4th
Mounds View	13,094	10th
East Bethel	11,870	10th
Little Canada	10,451	4th
Arden Hills	10,293	10th
Hermantown	9,604	8th
St. Anthony	9,038	5th
Lake Elmo	8,969	3rd
Oak Grove	6,682	10th
Baxter	8,202	6th
Orono	8,113	10th
Wyoming	7,914	10th
Minnetrista	7,621	10th
Albertville	7,436	10th
Spring Lake Park	6,535	10th
Corcoran	5,911	10th
Isanti	7,749	10th
Falcon Heights	5,571	4th
North Oaks	5,177	4th

Ludwig: Every membership card is equal

LA CRESCENT — Past National Commander Dan Ludwig said the annual membership drive is just 2,400 behind last year. He would like to see Minnesota achieve 100 percent.

Be sure to treat new members like they are welcomed, he said.

“Every membership card is equal,” he said. “My membership card isn’t worth a bit more than someone I signed up yesterday.”

Ludwig noted how there once had been 17,000 Posts across America, and now it is under 13,000. Membership was once at 3 million and now is 1.6 million. Minnesota once had 137,000 members and now 64,000.

Ludwig said he is proud the Minnesota American Legion has hung together during the pandemic.

“God, it’s good to be here. It’s been a year,” Ludwig said when he stood at the podium during the Department Executive Committee meeting in La Crescent, hours before the Appreciation Rally.

“We are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, and hopefully we won’t go backward,” he said.

He recalled how, in 2020, the Washington Conference was the last in-person American Legion gathering before the state and nation shut down to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. He said he hopes the National Oratorical Contest will be the final canceled event. It was slated for

April 9-11.

Ludwig said America is seeing many new groups arise — hate groups, anti-government groups.

“If you are looking at aligning yourself with any of these groups, many of them are wolves in sheep’s clothing,” he cautioned.

He said The American Legion Preamble talks about upholding the U.S. Constitution and about law and order. Joining anti-government groups would go against what it means to be a Legionnaire.

Zoom and other video conferencing applications, he said, have allowed meetings from greater distances, “and you don’t even need to wear a tie,” Ludwig said.

He called on District officers to develop personal relationships with Posts and identify ones having problems. He said some Posts are unwilling to talk or may not be open to help.

“You don’t want to be asked. You go in and help them,” Ludwig said.

As for Posts closing, he recognizes there are demographic changes, with small towns getting smaller, but he noted there are a fair number of cities in Minnesota above 5,000 population without Posts.

He called on the next round of District officers to start one Post in one of those cities in the next year.

Resolutions call on Legislature to help Legion Posts with costs

By Tim Engstrom

LA CRESCENT — The Minnesota American Legion’s Department Executive Committee approved two resolutions at a meeting prior to the Appreciation Rally at La Crescent Post 595.

The committee approved a resolution calling for the Minnesota State Legislature to exempt veteran organizations from property taxes for the sake of the good they do in their community, state and nation.

Resolution 2021-8 came from Minneapolis Falldin Post 555 and from the 5th District.

The second one, Resolution 2021-5, came from Underwood Post 489 and the 9th District.

This calls for the state Legislature to amend state law to allow veterans organizations to spend up to 50 percent of annual net profits on improving their buildings.

“It’s going to give them the much-needed funds after being closed for nearly a year,” said Department Adjutant Mike Maxa.

He noted many of the Posts could use the money to become Americans With Disabilities Act-compliant.

See a story about the Department’s legislative efforts on Page 1.

“We need members to be writing letters to their legislators if we want to get their attention and get them moving,” Maxa said. “The zero-tax measure has been stuck in committee.”

A handful of other resolutions had language that included the VFW. Past Department Commander Jim Kellogg, chairing a committee that reviewed the resolutions, said The American Legion cannot pass a resolution that speaks for the VFW.

Many also called for changing gambling funds to improve buildings. Another one that failed called for 50 percent of “gross profits,” and the DEC members said “net profits” was the proper language.

Legislature

The Department Executive Committee approved the 2021 Legislative Priorities. (A full description was printed in the March 2021 issue.)

1. Military Veteran Offender Restorative Justice
2. Congressionally Chartered Veterans Organizations Property Tax Exemption
3. Cpl. Caleb L. Erickson Memorial Highway Establishment
4. Credit for Sponsors of Veterans
5. Veterans Adult Day Care Program Authorization
6. Minnesota G.I. Bill Technical Changes
7. Reduced Fees for Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Licenses for Disabled Veterans

Membership

At the start of the Appreciation Rally, Department Membership Director Sy Fix said Minnesota was sitting in 6th place among the Big Twelve Competition. In it, Minnesota completes against states in a similar size category for pledged

membership goals.

Minnesota won the Category II competition in 2020.

“Don’t worry,” he said, “we are on track to win again like last year.”

He said Minnesota was 2,400 members behind last year, with 2,500 members unrenewed and 5,000 members need to be contacted.

“The members are out there,” Fix said.

There are 328,390 veterans in Minnesota, according to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs’ annual report.

Fix noted the MDVA report breaks down the veterans population by county, revealing how many veterans can be brought into the organization.

“We have a lot of asking to do,” he said.

National

National Executive Committeeman Bill Barbknecht, at the DEC meeting, noted that Posts can use gambling money to host a feed for veterans in the community and their families. This, he said, would be a way to attract new members. Have the Post Color Guard attend.

Barbknecht, reporting about activities at the National level, said the Oratorical Contest is canceled (was to be April 9-11) but after that, events have the green light.

“Shooting sports are on. The World Series is on,” he said.

National, he said, is in negotiation with IndyCar to be a racing

sponsor. The American Legion this 2021 season sponsors a No. 48 Indy Car driven by Jimmie Johnson and Tony Kannan.

The Legacy Scholarship Fund, he said, has about \$3.6 million in it presently. He said over the years it has helped 401,000 children. He encouraged children of Post-9/11 veterans who have died or who have a disability rating of 50 percent or greater to apply for scholarships. Visit legion.org/scholarships/legacy. The deadline is April 15.

“Minnesota can really be proud of the money they raised,” he said.

Barbknecht encouraged Legionnaires to walk as part of National Commander Bill Oxford’s 100 Miles for Hope.

The 100 Miles for Hope website says participants can use the cellphone app Kilter to sign up and track their miles. Participants accumulate points for their wellness activities. The goal is to raise funds for the Veterans & Children’s Foundation, which helps disabled veterans, military families and young people who lost parents in service to the nation.

He mentioned the Washington Conference took place virtually March 1-4, and Oxford’s testimony before Congress can be found at legion.org.

“You can see what’s going on and learn what The American Legion is all about,” Barbknecht said.

He encouraged members to

sign up for Legionnaire Insurance Trust for its health care and identity theft protection services.

Barbknecht also encouraged members to donate to The Minnesota Legionnaire and receive a free coin. (See ad on back page.)

Finances

Department Financial Chairman Carl Hendrickson reported 2020-21 had a budgeted income of \$1,250,546 and expenses of \$1,780,170. By January, revenue exceeded expenses \$539,298. The reason for costs being down, he said, was COVID-related cancellations.

Legionville

Legionville School Safety Patrol Camp President Gene Leifeld said the camp is holding its own month by month. Registrations are coming in for the 2021 season.

“We are going to have a summer camp this year,” he said.

He encouraged people to go to their Post and encourage registration. Parents can register their campers online at legionville.weebly.com.

Convention Corporation

Convention Corporation Treasurer Al Davis said the 2019 Department Convention had 700 delegates. The 2020 had 400 signed up before it had to be canceled.

He said the Department of

Continued on Page 10

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Remember, The American Legion Department of Minnesota Foundation is where we house our youth programs: Baseball, Boys State, Legionville, Oratorical Contest and many scholarships. Your donation will go directly to benefit those programs and not to the wages of the Department staff.

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City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

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St. Paul, MN 55155-2000

THANKS!

Spots remain open for Minn. Legion College

Continued from Page 9

Minnesota is constitutionally mandated to have a convention, as gathering as veterans is part of what Legionnaires do, but he wants to make sure the July 14-17 get-together has fun and vitality to draw delegates and their families.

Davis said he wants to think outside the box, such as bringing in pro sports teams or perhaps have the National Rifle Association give classes on permit-to-carry laws.

Presently, the convention is Thursday to Saturday. Moving the convention, he said, to Friday through Sunday, as happens in many other American Legion Departments, would be problematic. Sunday is often a day for family matters.

“There’s still a lot of them who still like to go to church,” Davis said.

Adjutant Mike Maxa proposed forming an ad hoc committee to look at increasing the draw to the convention.

SAL

Sons of The American Legion Commander Dave Vulcan invited everyone to attend the Detachment of Minnesota Spring Conference, which took place March 12 and 13 at North St. Paul Post 39.

He reminded everyone the Joint Testimonial takes place June 19 at New Prague Post 45.

Charter turn-ins

The Department Executive Committee approved the turning in of charters for the following Posts (most had zero or very few members):

- St. Paul And-Quist Post Post 218
- Tower-Soudan Nelson-Jackson Post 245
- Marble Poppe-Smuk-Appelget Post 327
- St. Paul Twin City Ford Post 439
- Duluth Mark Christian Post 558
- St. Paul Attucks-Brooks Inc. Post 606
- Tintah JFB Post 610
- Westport Post 638

If the National Executive Committee accepts the charter turn-ins at the Spring Meetings in mid-May, which it is likely to do, the number of Posts in the Department of Minnesota will be 539.

Legion College

Eighth District Membership Director Jennifer Havlick said Minnesota American Legion College is on track to begin Thursday, April 8, in the Education and Training Center at Camp Ripley. It wraps up Sunday, April 11.

National Commander Bill Oxford will visit at the end of the day of training on April 8.

As of the publication of The Minnesota Legionnaire, there were four spots still open. She noted SAL members can apply, too.

Contact the Department of Minnesota or visit the Department website, mnlegion.org, to apply for the training.

Adjutant report

Volunteers with youth programs of the Department of

Minnesota will now go through the same background checks and sex-abuse training that American Legion Baseball has been using, said Department Adjutant Mike Maxa.

The programs are Boys State, Legionville School Safety Patrol Camp, Junior Shooting Sports and the Oratorical Contest. The training is done using the company Protect Youth Sports.

As for emblem usage, Maxa urged Minnesota American Legion leaders to follow the chain of command. Don’t skip Department and go straight to National.

“It just gets kicked down to me,” he said.

He gave an update on the Department’s employment of marketing firm Wild Fig, based in Farmington. Maxa said the company is doing well and remains “excited and motivated.”

Members can find some of the work Wild Fig does on the “American Legion Department of Minnesota” page on Facebook. Examples are myths of The American Legion, dogs who served their country and Vet of the Month profiles of members. He reported an increase in social media traffic, especially among women.

The company is going to start blogging about Posts. Commanders, contact Maxa if your Post is interested.

He encouraged Posts with restaurant operations to consider doing business with Upper Lakes Foods of Cloquet. The company is contacting Posts across the state.

V4V

The Minnesota Veterans 4 Veterans Trust Fund is at \$6.4 million presently, after starting at \$5.2 million when it was founded following the sale of Lake Minnetonka’s Big Island Disabled Veterans Camp in 2006, reported V4V Treasurer Marlin Ronning, a past Department of Minnesota commander.

The V4V Trust Fund has given \$2.5 million in grants to veterans, their families and their caregivers of the years.

The camp is now a nature park and was jointly owned by the Legion, VFW, DAV and Military Order of the Purple Heart.

“You can see that the investment in that is doing very well,” Ronning said.

Media & Communications

Department Vice Commander Teresa Ash said there are considerations to stand up a Media & Communication Committee. The committee could handle the video conferencing and streaming duties at major functions as well as other yet-to-be-determined outreach work.

Legion Basic Training

Sixth District Commander Paul Edwards said he offers a sort of basic training for new Legionnaires. He said he would offer an in-person basic training to new members in other Districts, too.

“Training and education is a big passion of mine,” he said. “Let me know, and I will take my show on the road.”

His email is greyscouter@charter.net.

The Legion is looking forward to Phoenix

National Report

Bill Barbknecht



Spring is in the air. It has been a difficult year for everyone. We have lost some great Legionnaires, Auxiliary and SAL members this past year.

At this time, hopes are high that the vaccinations will fight off the virus and we may be able to get back to some normalcy.

The spring meetings in May in Indianapolis have been canceled due to the virus.

The American Legion will be on the IndyCar No. 48 on the oval tracks in 2021 with Jimmie Johnson driving Team 48. You will be seeing many items available in Emblem Sales. Our hope is you support the program.

I hope many of you can attend the National Commander’s Tour in April. It is a go so far. See Page 3 for a listing of stops.

Please make plans to attend the 102nd National Convention in Phoenix. Minnesota will be housing at the Sheraton along with 26 other Departments. The National SAL HQ will be housed there, also.

Now is the time for your Post to write resolutions and send to your District Convention

for discussions or actions.

It is time to put on your mask and go out and ring those doorbells of those members who have not renewed. We need them, and they need The American Legion. We can grow with everyone working for the cause. Helping your fellow veterans and their families.

In closing, I ask each of you to consider buying The Minnesota Legionnaire challenge coin (see ad on back page). This is the best Legion newspaper in the country. Use them for gifts to other veterans and for adding to your collection. The coin also helps keeping you getting The Minnesota Legionnaire and offsets a drop in advertising revenue resulting from the pandemic.

If I can be of any help, please call me at 218-770-6264.

Bill Barbknecht of Underwood Post 498 is the Department of Minnesota’s National Executive Committeeman.

The big ride is coming

Legion Riders

Paul Hassing



Hello American Legion Family, Spring is getting closer. It’s almost riding season.

We are currently in the process of getting our information up to date on the Department website. Please be patient. We also have a problem with new Chapters not notifying us when they are formed. If we could have each District representative send a list of the Chapters and point-of-contact information for those Chapters to Secretary Jody Hassing that would be great.

So far, it looks like the Minnesota American Legion Riders Legacy Run is a go for the first

two week-ends in August.

We have most of the overnight stops locked down, but if your Post would like us to stop for a rest break, or lunch, please let Jody Hassing know. There will be more information coming out soon.

In the meantime, everyone be safe, and do your best to keep others safe. We are a great family, and we are all in this together.

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

THE SEASON OF SEASONING



Nicollet Post 510 had pushed its annual Fish Fry back a month to March 6, but the plan worked out well because of warm weather, resulting in great turnout. The Fish Fry, according to the local newspaper, was takeout-only, but hungry diners stood outside in 40-degree sunshine. In all, 2,400 pounds of fish were served.

Pay close attention to charitable gambling in Minn. these days

Gambling Update

Allen Lund



Charitable gambling in Minnesota is at a crossroads.

The funds for the valuable work that we have done in the state over the last 75 years are increasingly harder to come by. Our costs and taxes/fees continue to rise each year. Overall sales are increasing, but the net on each dollar wagered goes down.

Three years ago the average organization netted 3.9 cents per dollar wagered. Two years ago it was 3.6 cents, and last year it was 3.0.

Many of us are guilty of not letting our community and elected officials (at all levels of government) know the value of the work that we do. It is not in our nature to be self-promoters; we do what we do with no expectation of recognition or reward.

When was the last time that you invited an elected official to your monthly meeting? When was the last time that you made available to patrons/local paper/local radio the donations that your Post made?

It is hard for me to put into words the pride that I feel every month when my Legion approves the donations at our monthly membership meeting. Yet, outside of the people at the meeting, very few of our members or local community know how much we do, where the money goes or how many other groups use our building for their meetings at no cost to them.

If the 75-year-old statewide safety net would ever come down, it would have a devastating effect on our entire state. We need to do everything we can to prevent that from happening on our watch.

This year at the Legislature there are 10 different bills (in both the House and Senate) that have been introduced that are gambling-related. One is related to sales tax

relief, three are related to gambling tax relief and six are related to policy issues.

Take the time to understand each bill and how it would impact your post.

Contact your state legislators and ask them for their support on the bills that you see as a benefit to what you do and to oppose those that do not support your mission. Help them understand the importance of what your Post and members do for veterans and your local community.

There is a bill being proposed by the Gambling Control Board that would change the star rating system. It would take taxes/fees out of the equation and have all A code donations (except A-8 and A-18) divided by your allowable expenses.

If your number was less than 20 percent you could be placed on probation. If you did not raise your rating in one year you could be subject to license suspension and/or fine.

Without any tax relief the ability to fund more donations will be a hard task for many organizations to accomplish. You need to know what your percent would be under the proposed change.

I want to thank each and every one of you for all that you do. You have made Minnesota a much better place to live because of your efforts.

Allen Lund is the executive director of Allied Charities of Minnesota, a 501(c)6 trade association that represents licensed gambling organizations in Minnesota. He is a 35-year member of the American Legion and is currently a member of the Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172.

What's happening?



The Department Convention at Jackpot Junction Casino in mid-July will be hosted by Redwood Falls Post 38.

Department Convention is on track to happen in mid-July

REDWOOD FALLS — The Department of Minnesota Convention is back on after a year hiatus resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is slated to happen July 15-17 at Jackpot Junction Casino and is hosted by Redwood Falls Post 38. Please note that some committees will meet around 4 p.m. July 14. The Department Executive Committee meets at 7 p.m. July 14.

Registration is \$15, with checks payable to "American Legion Post 38." Please write "Dept. Convention" in the memo. Credit cards are not accepted. Registration after July 1 goes up to \$18.

A check must accompany each registration form. Mail the forms and checks to Redwood Falls Post 38, P.O. Box 354, Redwood Falls, MN 56283.

Please book your own housing reservations directly with the hotel. Hotel rooms at the casino are \$90 a night, plus tax. Use Block 78196 or say "American Legion Convention" when making a reservation. Reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis.

See registration form below. Entertainment is on Page 18.

District conventions planned

ST. PAUL — District conventions are on for 2021. Contact District leaders about attending. Here is a rundown of information (time included if provided):

- 1st District: 9:30 a.m. May 22, Austin Post 91
- 2nd District: June 4-5, Fairmont Holiday Day
- 3rd District: 8 a.m. May 15, Faribault Post 43
- 4th District: May 22, 9 a.m., St. Paul Arcade-Phalen 577
- 5th District: June 4-5, location to be determined
- 6th District: June 4-5, Nisswa Post 627
- 7th District: 10 a.m. June 5, Spicer Post 545
- 8th District: June 5, Hibbing Post 222
- 9th District: June 11-12, Warren Post 27
- 10th District: June 5, Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION REGISTRATION

A registration fee of \$15 for each person attending, whether a delegate, alternate or a guest, must accompany this form.

Make your check payable to "American Legion Post 38" with "Dept. Convention" written on the memo line. No credit cards will be accepted.

Please mail this form with your check to:
Redwood Falls Post 38
P.O. Box 354
Redwood Falls, MN 56283.
Registration after July 1 will be \$18.

Legion _____
SAL _____
Auxiliary _____
District # _____ Post/Squad/Unit # _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Delegate _____ Alternate _____
Guest _____
Delegate at-Large (Auxiliary) _____
(Choose Past Dept. President or Dept. Exec. Cmte.) _____

If additional registrations accompany this request, this registration form should be photocopied for each person. The \$15 registration fee must be enclosed for each person.

The SAL Update: In person and on the air

Detachment commander

Dave Vulcan



Greetings from your Sons of The American Legion to the entire American Legion Family!

I would like to give a big thanks for everybody who has attended the Appreciation Rally in La Crescent. The Post 595 American Legion Family did a wonderful job. I would like to thank everyone who worked hard to make this event successful. The meal was delicious, and we had a wonderful time.

On March 13 and 14 the Sons of The American Legion had their Spring Conference. It was the first time we were all together in almost a year.

We had a great turnout as we had over 50 registered SAL members and guests. We were able to accomplish a lot of things that needed to get done. We even had a video visit by National Sons of The American Legion Commander Clint D. Bolt. I would like to say a big thank you to North Saint Paul Squadron 39 for hosting this event.

I hope many of you got to listen to my interview on Minnesota Military Radio. If not, check it out at minnesotamilitaryradiohour.com.

On a side note, I would like to touch on membership. The American Legion Family needs to work together on getting our existing members renewed and on getting new members enrolled. If we do this together, I know the

American Legion Family will hit our goals.

There is a couple dates coming up that I think everybody should know about. We have National American Legion Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford coming in the first part of April for his Department tour. We also have the very first joint testimonial of the American Legion Family (American Legion Commander Mark Dvorak, American Legion Auxiliary President Mary Hendrickson, and myself) at New Prague Post 45.

Mark, Mary, and myself would love to see everyone there. We might even have a surprise or two.

The Detachment Convention (known as "Detachment Campout") is coming up at Legionville on the 26 and 27 of June. I would love to see all of you come and make this weekend huge! It would be great to have every squadron represented. There is plenty of room for camping and the dorms will be open.

Until next month stay safe, stay healthy, and we will all get through this together!

Dave Vulcan is the commander of the Detachment of Minnesota for the Sons of The American Legion.



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



DOES YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD SHOW 2020?

If so, your 2020 membership card is EXPIRED and no longer valid. Please pay your Sons of The American Legion dues today to support your Squadron and The American Legion Family

If your membership card doesn't look like this then you need to RENEW TODAY!!!

Now is the time to push for new SAL members

By Tim Weaver
Membership

How is your membership program going? Have you met or exceeded each goal and by the National Target Date? How many members have you renewed so far?

As we approach the end of March, we are approaching the home stretch.

Right now, our most important function is to renew our members who have not done so for 2021. We all know who they are.

We need to do Buddy Checks and see how we can help. Please make this a priority over the next couple of weeks.

Membership Committee Chairmen at the District, County and Squadron can make this happen. It will take

some hard work, but I know we can do it!

You all know about MySAL (www.mysal.org).

It's been talked about for many months now. The question is, are you using it? Take advantage of this awesome membership tool. You will see how easy it is to use, and how much you will like using it.

May 12 is the cutoff for pre-printed membership cards for 2022 renewals. You need to get your membership renewals prior to that to get the members name on the pre-printed card. You also need to account for mailing and processing time. So mailing the membership renewals out on May 7 will not work!

Are you up to the challenge? Show everyone that you're a Proud Possessor of a Priceless Heritage and continue Serving Those Who Served.



Candidate for the Department of Minnesota Department Commander Tom Fernland of Waite Park Post 428 and his wife, Veronica, at the Spring Conference of the Sons of the Legion, March 12-13.



Minnesota SAL Adjutant Dennis Henkemeyer holds bags of coins to be donated to the Child Welfare Foundation.



Minnesota SAL Immediate Past Commander Shawn Davis and Matt Verkuilen of Crystal Squadron 511 operate technology at the Spring Conference at North St. Paul Post 39.



Photos by Lou Michaels
Minnesota SAL Judge Advocate Bill Goede and Advisor Gary Weaver fill out paperwork at the Spring Conference March 12-13 at North St. Paul Post 39.



Celebrating 125 years

Always looking for new members

We welcome all veterans of all backgrounds

Visit mnjwv.org or call at 612-638-8159

The American Legion of Minnesota Resolution Number: 2021-5

Received: 18 February 2021
Originating Source: The following resolution originated from American Legion Post 489
Subject: Amend MN Statute 349.12
The following resolution was approved by George Bergem Post 489 in Underwood at a regularly scheduled meeting:
WHEREAS, many older veterans’ organizations facilities need to be updated to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and
WHEREAS, the average age of membership in these facilities has reached a level that we need to respond more to our member’s needs for entrance/exit, bathroom and safety features; and
WHEREAS, too many of our facilities lack the resources to make the capital improvements needed to allow continued viability in our communities; and
WHEREAS, the current pandemic has further stressed these facilities financially; and
WHEREAS, many of these facilities are the only venue in small cities that can provide needed assistance; and
WHEREAS, these facilities are a major contributor to the area youth and veteran needs; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, the State Legislature of Minnesota amend MN Statute 349.12 to allow Veteran Organizations to spend up to 50% of annual net profits for capital improvements.

Approved by **Frank McKenize**
Commander, Post 489

Attested to **Scott Rochl**
Adjutant, Post 489

Approved by **Steve Sundstrom**
Commander, 9th District

Attested to **Dennis Henkemeyer**
Adjutant, 9th District

Distributed to: Resolutions Committee, 6 March 2021
Action: Read and passed by Department Executive Committee, 6 March 2021
Forward action: Minnesota House of Representatives and Senate

The American Legion of Minnesota Resolution Number: 2021-8

Received: 18 February 2021
Originating Source: The following resolution originated from American Legion Post 555
Subject: Congressionally chartered veterans organizations property tax exemption resolution
The following Resolution is backed by American Legion Falldin Post 555, the 5th District of Minnesota. At the regular Post meeting of Feb. 11, 2021, Falldin Post 555 of Minneapolis, Minnesota the following the resolution was adopted:
WHEREAS, The mission of The American Legion is to ‘help Veterans, their families and the community’; and
WHEREAS, the programs of The American Legion often need monetary assistance for the success of these programs; and
WHEREAS, American Legion Posts with Post homes come under financial hardships when excessive monies are needed for the purpose of paying real estate taxes for these buildings; and
WHEREAS, the community would benefit greatly from the Post being able to donate more to the American Legion programs and community projects effecting the community around the Post home; and
WHEREAS, the American Legion is a nonprofit organization chartered by the United States Congress on September 16, 1919 for the purpose of ‘helping Veterans, their families and the community’; now, therefore be it
RESOLVED, that the American Legion, Department of Minnesota in a special Executive Committee meeting assembled in St. Paul, MN urges and requests that the Minnesota State Legislature immediately pass Senate File 259 and House File 0182 to exempt Veterans organizations from property taxation for the betterment of our community, state and all Veterans.

Approved by **Donovan Orttel**
Commander, Post 555

Attested to **Raymond Eiden**
Adjutant, Post 555

Approved by **Wade Larson**
Commander, 5th District

Attested to **Raymond Eiden**
Adjutant, 5th District

Distributed to: Resolutions Committee, 6 March 2021
Action: Read and passed by Department Executive Committee, 6 March 2021
Forward action: Minnesota House of Representatives and Senate



The Department Executive Committee met March 6 at La Crescent Post 595 with members attending in person and over Zoom video conferencing.

What’s happening?

Minn. American Legion Baseball Tournaments			
Div. I	St. Cloud	Municipal Athletic Complex	July 29-Aug. 1
Div. II	Sacred Heart	Sacred Heart Ballpark	July 30-Aug. 1
Div. I Jr.	Bloomington	Red Haddox Field	July 28-Aug. 1
Div. II Jr.	Montevideo	high school ballfield	Aug. 6-8

Fergus Falls Veterans welcomes new administrator

FERGUS FALLS — Jonathan Stone joined the Fergus Falls Veterans Home as Administrator on March 10.
Jonathan comes to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs from the Good Samaritan Society Home in Blackduck, Minnesota.
He has worked in health care for 14 years, most of that time with the Good Samaritan Society. Jonathan started his career as a CNA, earned a master’s degree in healthcare administration and become an administrator in 2011.
Stone said he looks forward to this next phase of his career and the opportunity to serve veterans. He said he and his wife and two young daughters are looking for a home in the Fergus Falls area.



Jonathan Stone

New Ulm.
Registration is from noon to 12:45 p.m., with a muster at 12:50 and departure at 1 p.m. There is no cost to participate but donations are requested. Donations benefit the charitable work of the Post 132 Legion Riders.
There will be an optional poker run at a cost of \$10 per hand. Raffle tickets are for sale at \$5 each, with only 700 tickets sold.
The ride welcomes motorcycles, trikes, cars or trucks. The event happens rain or shine. COVID-19 rules will be followed.

Veterans Homes win award

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Veterans Homes skilled nursing facilities in Fergus Falls, Luverne, Minneapolis and Silver Bay have been recognized with the Pinnacle Customer Experience Award.
The Homes’ “customer experience” is measured through Pinnacle monthly telephone interviews with the residents or their families. The survey results are reviewed throughout the year to better understand residents’ needs and make improvements when necessary, according to a news release.
By qualifying for the

Pinnacle Customer Experience Award, the Minnesota Veterans Homes have satisfied the rigorous demand of scoring in the top 15 percent of the nation across a 12-month average, the news release states.
All four of the Minnesota Veterans Homes skilled-nursing facilities have received this recognition for the past four years starting in 2018. (The fifth one is a domiciliary.)
“We have set the standards high and have a track record of receiving these awards. Even a pandemic cannot impact our commitment to the highest quality of care and experience for our residents,” said Deputy Commissioner Douglas Hughes.

The destruction of Poland

The April 13 presentation of the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II Round Table at the Minnesota History Center features speaker and author John Radzilowski, author of “Frantic 7.”
Radzilowski tells the story of the destruction of Poland’s cities and the slaughter of its citizens by Nazi and Soviet armies.
He also will discuss Allied support.
Attendance is by invitation only, due to COVID restrictions. However, the presentations are shown later on the series’ YouTube channel. You can find past presentations, too.

COVID grants to end soon

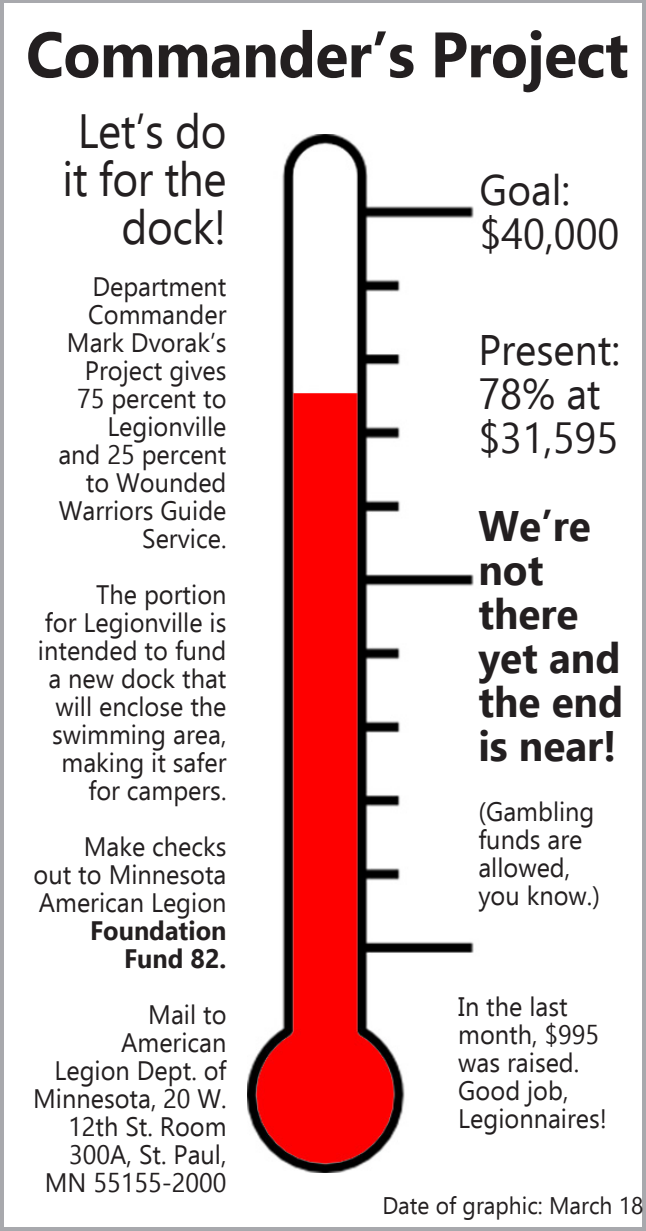
ST. PAUL — Based on current demand, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs expects funding for the COVID-19 Financial Relief Grants to end soon.
“Please reach out to your CVSO now if you have been financially impacted by the pandemic. Once the funding has been exhausted we will not process any applications received after the close date,” the MDVA says in its weekly newsletter.

Legion Riders to host eggs breakfast

NEW ULM — The New Ulm Legion Riders will host a scrambled eggs breakfast on Sunday, April 18, between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. at New Ulm Post 132, 13 S. Minnesota St.
Adults are \$8. Children 10 and under are \$4. Dine in or pick up.
Breakfast will be scrambled eggs, sausages, pancakes, applesauce, butter, syrup, coffee, milk and juice

Legion Riders holding ride, fundraiser

NEW ULM — The Jeff Weninger Memorial Ride is all set for Saturday, May 29, 2021, hosted by New Ulm Post 132’s American Legion Riders.
The ride starts at the Post, 13 S. Minnesota St., in downtown



Veterans courts bill could be passed

Continued from Page 1

Sen. Matt Klein
2109 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-4370
sen.matt.klein@senate.mn

The Department Executive Committee approved a resolution on March 6 that calls on legislators to approve 0 percent taxes on Legion Post homes. In practice, it means this is an issue it is OK for Legionnaires to be political about.

“Contacting the committee leaders and your local lawmakers would be prudent at this time,” Maxa said. “Show them the value of the community good that comes out of our buildings. Losing a Post home harms the economic value and closeness of a town.”

He added that Legionnaires also could ask their city and county officials to support this legislation, as many city officials recognize the value of their veterans’ groups and residents likely would be fine with offsetting the property taxes for Post homes.

Veterans Restorative Justice Act

This bill to allow veterans to participate in veteran courts regardless of which counties they reside in has been moving right along on the House side — but it is stuck on the Senate side.

HF 478 passed the Labor, Industry, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee in January, then passed the Judiciary Committee in February, then the Public Safety and Criminal Justice Committee in March.

It is awaiting a hearing in the Ways and Means Committee. A hearing is anticipated in April.

On the Senate side, it passed the Veterans and Military Affairs Committee in January and was referred to the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee, where it has stalled.

On March 12, Chairman Warren Limmer allowed a hearing on it but disallowed any vote.

In response, Minnesota American Legion Commander Mark Dvorak sent him and the entire committee a letter.

“One of those bills was legislation regarding prisoners with traumatic brain injuries. ‘People like this should not be in prison’ was said. How does a committee pass a bill that is compassionate to convicted criminals, then provide zero help to combat-traumatized veterans? This is shameful,” Dvorak wrote.

He noted the federal government passed the Veteran Treatment Coordination Act and then-President Donald Trump signed it in August 2020.

“The federal government is doing its part to help our broken veterans, and now it’s time for our Minnesota legislators to do their part,” Dvorak wrote.

Commanders from other veterans organizations belonging to the Minnesota Commanders’ Task Force also sent subsequent letters to the committee, asking why it won’t move on this legislation when, last summer, it passed the Senate three times unanimously but failed to see action in the House for various reasons.



Minnesota State Capitol

In the past two years, Limmer has been responsible for the bill never getting past his committee. It only passed during the summer sessions because the Senate voted to skip the committee process.

Last summer on the Senate floor, however, he stated his reluctance, saying he worried if veterans get a treatment court, then “every special-interest group” will want one.

In late March, several measures related to veterans or the Minnesota National Guard were wrapped into omnibus bills, one in the House and one in the Senate. The VRJA appears in the House omnibus bill, HF 752, but not the Senate one.

In a hearing on March 25, Sen. Jerry Newton of Coon Rapids asked about it.

“I do want to make sure we have this passed this year,” he said. “I don’t want to have all of our veterans groups up in arms.”

Sen. Andrew Lang of Olivia said it wasn’t included because the bill was stuck in the Judiciary Committee.

“I am looking forward to that opportunity to vote on it again,” Lang said.

A House hearing on its omnibus bill took place March 26, after the Legionnaire’s press deadline.

The two omnibus bills could become wrapped into larger omnibus bills, rather than see the floor themselves.

Gambling tax relief

There were several bills. Now, it’s pretty much down to one.

Allied Charities of Minnesota Administrator Allen Lund said SF1322 was heard in the tax committee, authored by Chair Carla Nelson of Rochester and now has a companion House bill, HF2207, authored by Rep. Bob Dettmer of Forest Lake.

Lund was happy to see the one bill get this far.

“It’s in as good of a position as we could anticipate at this time,” he said.

COVID relief

The COVID-relief bill signed by Gov. Tim Walz in December provided grants to businesses shut down by the pandemic. However, many American Legion Posts with business operations found they didn’t qualify for state aid under state Department of Revenue rules because they were classified as social/civic organizations and not bars or restaurants.

Walz’s policy adviser for

veterans, Jon Kelly, let the Legionnaire and its readers know, via the March 2021 issue, that Posts could apply for grants through the county governments, instead.

The result, Adjutant Mike Maxa said, was that many Posts received the relief grants and many did not.

Hennepin County, for example, had an early cutoff compared to other counties. The result was no Legion or VFW Posts in Hennepin County were aware they needed to apply to the county instead of the state in time to apply. Other reports said some counties had given out all their funds before the Posts applied.

Department of Minnesota leadership holds out hope the Governor’s Office will recognize the problem and rectify it during any further COVID relief.

Commissioner Herke

As you likely know, Cabinet confirmations are a Senate function. The House is not involved.

The Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee unanimously approved the confirmation of Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke on March 18. The next step is a floor vote to confirm the commissioner, though it has not been scheduled.

The Department of Minnesota leadership has endorsed Herke, along with several other veterans organizations.

MDVA bills

Several bills pursued by the Minnesota Veterans Homes, such as adult day care and dental services, have been rolled into the omnibus bills for veterans and the Minnesota National Guard.

This includes funding for suicide prevention, vouchers for housing homeless veterans and technical changes to the Minnesota G.I. Bill, including eligibility for non-veteran-status guardsmen.

There is a slew of other bills regarding appropriations, licenses and other matters. The Legionnaire will report on all veterans-related legislation that succeeds in the 2021 session.

9/11 Task Force

This September will mark 20 years since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, which eventually led to American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The House omnibus bill provides \$500,000 for a 9/11 Task Force, while the Senate version provides \$112,000. The task force was in charge of the state memorializing the anniversary.

Herke told the Senate committee that its amount was enough for just the ceremony on Sept. 11, implying a greater amount would fund efforts to capture stories and document Minnesotans’ experiences.

Efforts at the Capitol will become clearer in the next month. The Legionnaire will have a report on what ended up in them and where things stand in the next issue.

Q&A: 100 Miles for Hope

Question: When does the second annual 100 Miles for Hope challenge begin?

Answer: Registration is open now! The actual challenge officially begins April 1 and concludes Sept. 6, about 160 days — more time to engage in wellness activities and support The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation. We opened registration early so that participants could select their commemorative items for purchase from Emblem Sales and build in time to have those delivered in time for the start of the challenge.

Question: How do I get started and register? And what do I receive for registration?

Answer: The American Legion has reduced the registration fee to \$20 this year. Additionally, every participant will receive a medal to celebrate their accomplishment. There are two options for registration. The first option is to register via a smartphone app from a company called Kilter. For a helpful guide on using the app, search “100 Miles for Hope Kilter” on YouTube. For those who do not have a smartphone, they may register via Emblem Sales, similar to last year. For complete details on how to register, visit legion.org/100miles/getstarted.

Question: How do I register multiple family members?

Answer: Unfortunately, the Kilter app allows only one participant per account. If you want to register multiple family members, they will need to have separate accounts. Or you can register all of the family members via the registration page at Emblem Sales.

Question: I got a shirt for my registration last year. Why not this year?

Answer: After the 2020 event, we asked participants what type of swag items they would like for another challenge. Based on those responses, we decided to lower the registration fee and allow participants to select their preferences from the expanded merchandise options. The survey indicated that tech shirts, sweatshirts, baseball caps, pins, challenge coins and patches for Riders vests were the most popular. Purchases of those items can be made at this Emblem Sales page with proceeds going to the foundation.

Question: Why did you decide to use an app?

Answer: We are using the Kilter app so that every participant can track their progress and invite their friends and family members to donate on their behalf to support The American Legion’s Veterans & Children Foundation. Participants in the 2020 challenge expressed interest in being able to track their mileage, and asking friends and family members to donate on their behalf. After thorough research, American Legion leadership entered into an agreement with Kilter to use its already-established app.

Question: I don’t have a smartphone or tablet. How can I participate?

Answer: You are still able to participate by joining via Emblem Sales web page and doing the physical part of the challenge by walking, cycling, hiking, swimming, performing yoga, gardening or other activities. However, without a smart phone or tablet, you won’t be able to track your activities. Additionally, you can still support the Veterans & Children Foundation as part of the 100 Miles campaign by purchasing commemorative gear at Emblem Sales. Proceeds go to the Veterans and Children Foundation.

Question: What activities count and how do I track them?

Answer: Complete daily wellness activities of at least a half-hour and accumulate points. Aim to complete 100 activities within the challenge time frame. You can complete up to three wellness activities each day that count toward your total. There are more than 40 different activities to choose from. And if your activity isn’t represented on the app, you can create a manual activity that will count. Also, there are ways to receive bonus points! Check the app to find out

how. Click this link to learn more about how to track your efforts, review a list of activities and how to add manual ones.

Question: Riding a motorcycle is not listed among the activities. How do American Legion Riders participate?

Answer: We wouldn’t forget our American Legion Riders! There are several ways in which you can track your activities. American Legion Riders can log their activities by choosing “advocacy” or “volunteering,” or manually entering a ride. Here’s how to manually enter a ride or other activity.

Question: So the proceeds go to the Veterans & Children Foundation. Who benefits from those donations?

Answer: The foundation began in 1925 and since then has provided more than \$30 million in financial assistance to disabled veterans and military families in need. The V&CF covers training for accredited American Legion service officers who assist all veterans, at no charge, with their VA benefits and claims. Additionally, the foundation funds the Legion’s Temporary Financial Assistance program, which delivers grants to military families with financial needs.

Question: I want to help raise money for the V&CF. How can my family members and friends support the foundation and my challenge?

Answer: The Kilter app offers an easy option for peer-to-peer fundraising. Here’s how it works:

1. After you register, go to the app and select the 100 Miles for Hope under MY EVENTS. Before April 1 it will be in the UPCOMING tab. As of April 1, it will be in the LIVE tab.

2. Scroll down to the button that says FUND-RAISE and a prompt will come up. Click START REQUEST.

3. After you press the start request button, fill in the blanks for your goals for the event and the amount you are requesting from your potential sponsor.

4. You can then send the message via text or email to anyone in your contacts. In emails, it is recommended to change the subject line to indicate this is going to support The American Legion. For example: “Support veterans and military families.”

Question: I want to share my journey with others. How can I submit a story or tell my followers in social media?

Answer: We’d love to hear about your progress! You are encouraged to take a photo at the beginning of your journey and share it on social media with the hashtag #100MilesForHope. Tag The American Legion and we’ll help share your progress. Keep us posted on your progress throughout the campaign.

We’d also love to hear your stories about your various activities and fundraising achievements! Go to the Legiontown website and share your story. An editor will review the submissions and we may publish some in our national media to highlight your accomplishments.

Question: Why are you still calling it 100 Miles when it is based on activities?

Answer: Based on the success and name recognition, The American Legion opted to keep the same name for brand recognition for 2021 and beyond. And whether you complete 100 miles, 100 activities or some other metric, the goals of the campaign remain the same: encouraging physical fitness and wellness among American Legion Family members and friends while supporting a charity that funds critical resources for veterans and military families.

Question: I’m registered and ready to start! Anything else I need to know?

Answer: Yes! We’ve also made a customizable race bib available for you to download and wear or display. After downloading it from this web page, you can add a number and your name. The QR code on the bib provides a quick link to the Veterans & Children Foundation web page for those who want to learn more about the foundation and who it benefits.

Listening Post

YOU DID THIS!



THANK YOU! The generous readers of The Minnesota Legionnaire helped a 19-year-old with Duchenne muscular dystrophy get a van. This happened as a result of a letter to the editor in the February issue describing how he enjoys seeing the ships in Duluth but his family needed a new disability van. This is what it means to be a Legionnaire.

MOJO AND MOTORS



Buffalo Post 270 has released its car show dates for 2021. There will be a free dash plaque for the first 150 vehicles. A live band starts at 3:30 p.m. on the day of the Saturday shows. The Post is at 304 10th Ave. S.

Tuesday shows: 4:30-7:30 p.m. June 15 (Flag Day theme; drive-in movie at dusk), Aug. 10 (cruising theme; back-to-school items drive), Sept. 7 (back-to-school items drive)
Saturday shows: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. May 22 (Memorial Day theme), July 17 (Independence Day theme), Oct. 2 (fall harvest theme; food shelf drive)

FOR THE GOOD OF THE YOUTH



On March 2, 2021, Backus Post 368 Commander Bill Taylor presented a check for \$3,000 to Gina Dabill, Youth and Family Services, at Pine River-Backus High School. The school thanked the Backus Legion for its generous donation to The Tiger's Den, a local food pantry.



James, Julia and Stephanie Andrews.

Eagan is proud of Oratorical finalist

The Eagan Post 594 is pleased to announce that Julia Schowalter of Eagan is the second place winner at the Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest held at Anoka Post 102 Feb. 27. Schowalter earns a \$1,000 scholarship.

Schowalter won the 3rd District Minnesota American Legion High School Oratorical Contest that was held in New Prague, MN on February 14. For this win, she was awarded a \$1200.00 scholarship. In winning the Third District contest, Julia qualified to participate in the Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Final contest that was held in Anoka, MN. These scholarships can be used at any college or university in the United States.

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for

the U.S. Constitution among high school students.

Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Speaking subjects must be on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution, with some emphasis on the duties and obligations of citizens to our government. Speeches are eight to 10 minutes long; three- to five-minute speeches on an assigned topic also are part of the contest.

Julia, the daughter of James Schowalter and Stephanie Andrews, is a Junior at Eagan High School. Congratulations, Julia.

IF WE DON'T DO IT, WHO WILL?



Underwood Post 489 made a donation to the Underwood High School Marching Band of \$2,000 for new uniforms, at the Feb. 4 Post meeting. All veterans are encouraged to join the American Legion in your area.

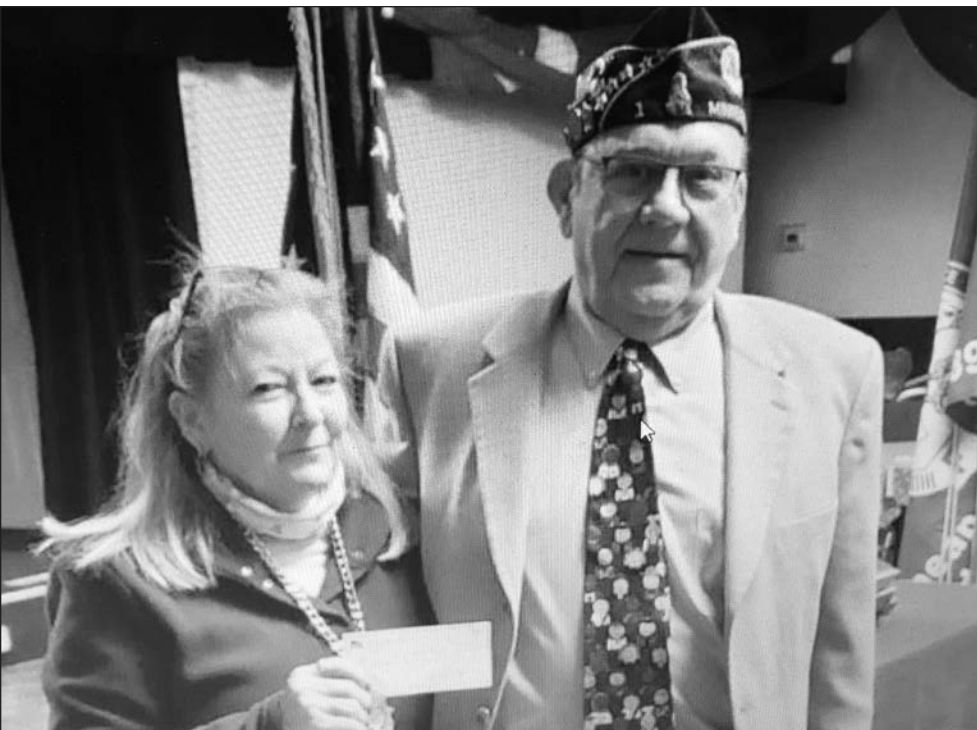
50 YEARS!



Hinckley Post 388 Commander John Rostberg presents a 50-year membership certificate to Army veteran John Bassett, center. Beside Bassett is his wife, Carolyn. Bassett, who experienced combat in Vietnam, joined The American Legion in 1971. He said decades after returning from war a total stranger saw his "Vietnam Veteran" ballcap and said "Welcome home," the first words of welcome for him.

Listening Post

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE



Minneapolis American Legion Post 1 First Vice Commander Milt Schoen recently presented a \$10,000 check to Minneapolis Eagles Aerie 34 Worthy President Mary Hedrick in support of the Eagles' ongoing mission during the current uncertainty, largely caused by the pandemic. Both entities, with over 100 years of service to the community, share the same location in south Minneapolis. "Any help would be greatly appreciated to keep these two historical organizations going," said Michael Krogan, Post 1 membership chair. Donations to the Eagles will assist in the viability of both; checks should be made out to Mpls. Eagles Aerie 34, 2507 E. 25th St., Mpls, MN 55406, c/o Mike Hadel, secretary. A donation button can also be found online. (Editor's note: If you visit, the Eagles feature a rock or blues band at 7 p.m. most Fridays and Saturdays. The Brian Naughton Band might be a good one to try, performing April 10.)

THE DICTIONARY PROJECT



Ron Deming, Gary Scharfencamp and Carl Buboltz, members of Franklin Post 308, presented 27 Cedar Mountain Elementary School third-graders (photographed above) with their own dictionaries on Veterans Day. The presentation was part of The Dictionary Project, a program designed to assist all students in becoming good writers, active readers, creative thinkers and resourceful learners by providing them with their own personal dictionary. The dictionaries are a gift to each student to use at school and at home for years to come. In addition to words and definitions, the dictionaries include 150 pages of additional information like the history of the American flag, the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, information on the states and past U.S. presidents, along with multiplication tables and other references that are useful to students.

EMPLOYER AWARD



DeGeus Flooring was honored for winning the Minnesota American Legion's 2020 Employer of Veterans Award Small (50 or fewer employees). From left are veteran Mitch Harris, veteran Greg Vaughn, Dodge County Commander and Committee Chairman George Gunderson, Mike DeGeus, Missy Bakken and 1st District Commander Dale Wellik.

FOR THE TROOPS



Cannon Falls Post 142 finished its "Pick a Box, Fill a Box" campaign will send 609 boxes of encouragement to members of the military, surpassing a goal of 600. The members learned soldiers stationed statewide were not allowed to leave their bases during the pandemic, and so the Post decided to show them support, in addition to ones overseas. From left are Commander Chad Sheridan, Scott Durdahl, Chuck Sheridan, Bill Sheridan, Gene Volkert, Larry Jensen and Vince Cockriel. This was the fourth year Post 142 has held the event.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST



David Jensen of Tempe, Ariz., sent these 1920s photos to The Minnesota Legionnaire on March 1. His wife, Margaret Nelson Jensen, is from Minneapolis, and he has been researching her family for a history book he plans to write. He discovered an original photo (top) of the St. Paul American Legion Ramsey County Central Committee Band. He said great-grandpa H.W. Nelson, originally of Denmark, is the clarinetist in the back right in front of the door. In researching that photo, he also found a parade photo on the Internet dated 1924. It's a parade from the 6th National Convention in St. Paul. The convention spanned Sept. 15 to 19 that year.

Listening Post

OUTSTANDING ENLISTED AWARDS

Outstanding Enlisted Award winners are typically recognized at the Fall Conference, but some honors have been delayed by duty, schedules and, yes, COVID-19. The National Security Committee makes an effort to complete all presentations.



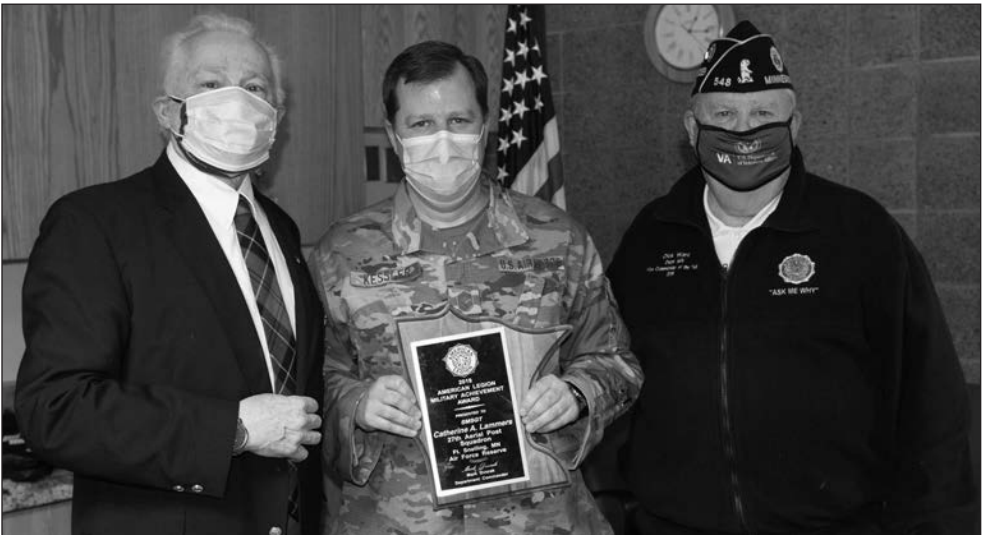
Army Reserve: Sgt. Alexander Huntimer of the 327th Engineering Brigade, presented by Curt Norenberg of the Department National Security Committee and Dick Ward of the 5th District National Security Committee.



934th Air Wing: Master Sgt. Chris Sequin, 2017 winner, presented by Past 934th Air Wing Commander Paul Groskreutz and Dick Ward of the 5th District National Security Committee.



934th Air Wing: Staff Sgt. CarsonLee Christenson, 2020 winner, presented by Past 934th Air Wing Commander Paul Groskreutz and Dick Ward of the 5th District National Security Committee.



934th Air Wing: Senior Master Sgt. Catherine Lammers, 2019 winner, accepted by Chief Master Sgt. Justin Kessler on her behalf, presented by Past 934th Air Wing Commander Paul Groskreutz and Dick Ward of the 5th District National Security Committee.

THE FORWARD PARTY



Seven of 10 Districts were represented as the Department of Minnesota Scouting Committee met March 13 at Apple Valley Post 1776. This year's Eagle Scout of the Year hails from the 9th District. (See story on Page 2.) "Always proud to see how successful young people are pursuing their goals!"

PANDEMIC SAFETY



Fairmont Post 36 donated \$1,000 to Martin County Youth for Christ senior youth for building the partitions between computers for social distancing while using online facilities at The Lighthouse in downtown Fairmont. The Lighthouse is a youth hangout run by Youth for Christ.

MORE OUTSTANDING ENLISTED



The Minnesota American Legion presented the Enlisted Service Member of the Year award to two non-commissioned officers who are part of the 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 136th Infantry Regiment, headquartered in Moorhead. Sgt. First Class Robert Hernandez, left, of Grand Forks was selected for development of training plans that led to a successful National Training Center rotation for the 1st Armor Brigade Combat Team last summer. Sgt. First Class Thomas Sauvageau, right, of Barnesville was selected for the administrative support he provided to the battalion during multiple, complex operations in 2020. The awards were presented by James Kellogg, Minnesota American Legion National Security Committee chairman. The Minnesota American Legion annually presents the Enlisted Service Member of the Year award to soldiers, sailors and airmen in National Guard and Reserve. The Guard is recognized with two awards as there are over 11,000 soldiers in Minnesota. The Army National Guard ceremony this year was at the Moorhead Armory in December.

District commanders



1st District

Dale Wellik



Greetings from the 1st District American Legion Family. Thank you for your service to our country. Thank you all for your loyal support of the American Legion Family.

Thank everyone for your prayers. Spring has sprung and now we should all feel better and ready to spring into action.

This month we have Easter and the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota. See Page 3 of the Legionnaire for his schedule.

The new MyLegion.org rollout is in April.

Some testimonial dinners, nomination for officers, some election of officers and District conventions are coming soon. District 1 is going to be in Austin at Post 91 on Saturday, May 22.

Let's continue to do our part to battle this virus; get the

vaccination, social distance, mask up, sanitize, wash your hands. The more we do now the sooner we can end this.

Membership, we need to hit this one. Many Posts are getting over the 90 percent mark, but 100 percent is the goal! This is everyone's job. Get an application and carry it with you. Be prepared. Recruit for the whole American Legion Family. Get them in contact with other American Legion Family members.

Pray for our deployed troops and their families whether at home or abroad. These are our future Legion Members.

Pray for peace and this virus to be concurred!

For God and Country.



3rd District

Linda Dvorak



Hello from the 3rd District. After this article, I have three left! Seems like I've been doing this for two years! In honor of this, my article will be short and sweet!

The governor is easing restrictions, which hopefully we can get back to somewhat of a normal society. That means we can get back to meeting in person and our programs can benefit by us getting out and promoting them.

Membership is getting

a little harder, but back in November we sent out letters and emails to all the Post 1982ADs in the 3rd District area, and we are still reaping the rewards. On average we are getting one member per week based on those emails/letters. Get out there and get those members!

Until next month!



4th District

Joe Jansen



Hello to all our 4th District American Legion Family members.

The Appreciation Rally was very nicely done and Sy Fix did a wonderful job making us feel welcome in La Crescent. Those of you who are receiving care from the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis and would like to receive your COVID-19 shot, please call 612-467-1301 from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. to schedule an appointment.

Our next Ramsey County Central Committee meeting will be on April 14 at North St. Paul Post 39. Don't forget that the National commander will be at the North St. Paul Post on April 6. The next Minnesota Legion College will be at Camp Ripley, Thursday, April 8, through Sunday, April 11. Once again tuition will be paid for our 4th District members from the Commander's Fund.

Please try to join your fellow members every Monday night at 6 p.m. for our 4th and 5th District Zoom get-togethers. Our Department Vice Commander Teresa Ash does a great job of gathering information, disseminating it to all who attend these Zoom meetings.

I was going to say she should get a medal for all her efforts over the past year, but then I remembered she was awarded one in La Crescent. Post commanders, please consider joining these Zoom meetings. She keeps us informed and is not afraid to say she has to get back to you if she doesn't know the answers. And then gets back to the whole group when she has the answer.



5th District

Wade Larson



Are you aware you can renew your membership online at the National American Legion website? Just search for "Legion renewal" on any search engine.

Encouraging for everyone to learn more of what the Legion is all about take the free basic training course online.

The American Legion vision statement is "Veterans Strengthening America" and value principals are as follows:

Veteran is a veteran, selfless service, American values and patriotism, family and community engagement, advancing the vision, honoring those that came before us.

Will you join the National commander and myself for 100 Miles for Hope, April 1-Sept. 6, supporting the Veterans and Children's Foundation.

The National Commander's Tour stops at North St. Paul Post 39 on April 6. Reserve your tickets for the 5 p.m. social, program and dinner. At least 40 tickets still available

We are excited for the new opportunities with Indy Car #48 and NASCAR #48. If we

can look at having tents present at racetracks across Minnesota to embrace getting the word out to race fans on all we accomplish for vets increasing membership and donations for the Legion Department of Minnesota.

Look for a La Crescent Post 595 story in the next Legionnaire about the first-class hotel and conference center that came about because of outside-of-the-box thinking with selling the Post's property.

Have you considered part of your estate to be used in a memorial fund to help veterans let us know.

If you are looking to see what opportunities are available for volunteering or hold a District office position once a year or more or if you would like to have more informative information and activities you can sign up for our District newsletter for our E-Flash at mnfightingfifth.org.



From left are wife and Nisswa Post 627 Commander Susan Edwards, me, brother and Legionnaire Karl Edwards, his wife, Tamara. On the tombstone is a bottle of Old Granddad bourbon, one of Dad's favorites.



6th District

Paul Edwards



I am going to do something I have not done in the past and share some of my personal history.

Not many people in the Department know that I am an Army brat. My father enlisted in the Army in 1939 and when World War II broke out, his enlistment was extended by presidential order for the duration of the conflict, plus six months.

He fought in Europe, and then stayed in the Army, also fighting in Korea. He was in Korea when I was born.

He continued to serve in the Army, saying that he could not

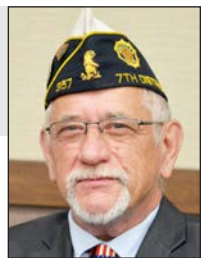
decide if he wanted to make a career of it and by the time he decided to, he already had. He retired from the Army after 33 years and 8 months active duty, serving two peacetime tours in Germany, one of which produced my brother Karl, and a peacetime tour in Korea.

I am sharing this now because on the weekend of March 14, my brother and I and our wives met in Washington, D.C., to go to Arlington to celebrate our father's 100th birthday.



7th District

Dean Knutson



Greetings to the 7th District! This year has been a little bit of a challenge with COVID-19 and the restrictions that have been put into effect, but we are a strong organization, and we find ways to conduct business the best way that we can.

Whether it be by Zoom meetings or by limited attendance, we seem to be able to accomplish our mission. Our ultimate mission is to look out for the needs of our fellow veterans and their families and the needs of the communities in which we live.

Now is also the time when the Posts in the District need to start thinking about filling out the reports that are required by both District and Department levels. These reports include: Consolidated Post Report, Post Service Report, Officers Report List and Children and Youth

Report. These reports need to be filled out and submitted to the District adjutant so they can be recorded and forwarded on to the Department. Let's try to get them done early so all requirements are met

It was good to be able to get together at the Appreciation Rally in La Crescent on March 6. The 7th District had a good representation there, and a good time was enjoyed by all.

As we move forward from COVID-19 and restrictions are loosened we still need to be diligent in our efforts to protect ourselves so we can help one another through this pandemic. Until next month: Stay healthy and safe and God bless the American Legion Family.



8th District

D. Marvin Hill



Greetings to the great 8th District Family!

Again, it has been our honor to celebrate 100-year birthdays for two more of our District members. Feb. 24 for Joseph Berklich Post 222 and Gaylord Powers of Post 239 on March 14.

God bless them for their service to our nation! On March 6, I attended the Department Executive Committee meetings and Appreciation Rally hosted by Post 595 in La Crescent. In the reports given, American Legion Baseball will be scheduled this year. Legionville School Safety Patrol Camp is again being held. The camp is financially currently holding its own.

Background checks will be required for those involved with Boys State. American Legion basic training is available to Districts upon request. Minnesota Legion College has four slots

open. National Oratorical Competition will not be held this year. The District Convention will be held at Jackpot Junction July 14-17, hosted by Redwood Falls Post 38.

During the Appreciation Rally, Carl Hendrickson was awarded the District Vice Commander of the Year award. We were honored to have Jennifer Havlick, our district 8 membership chairwoman in charge of the Zoom operations to accommodate delegates who were unable to attend. The COVID vaccine has arrived in our District. Locate a donor site and pre-register. Please stay healthy and safe during this uncertain time.

God bless our troops and God bless America!



9th District

Steve Sundstrom



I hope everyone is doing well and everyone that has wanted a COVID shot has been able to do so. It will be great to get things back to normal again so we can meet and see others again.

Membership seems to be going well but as usual there is plenty of room for growth. We need everyone to make an effort to achieve a good outcome. Please do what you can, if you have ideas on what might help share them and try to apply other's ideas. By doing this I am sure we can have some great results.

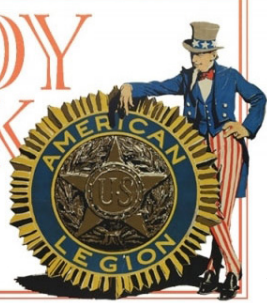
In the past couple of months I've become greatly concerned about the direction of our country with this cancel culture movement. They want to take away Elmer Fudd's gun, a cartoon that I grew up with, but they say nothing about the violence

in today's video games. They want to censor Dr. Suess, which really gets to me because I will never forget listening to my Dad read them to me. He had a way of reading them that would make you laugh so hard you would almost have tears in your eyes.

Also, they are trying to erase history. You cannot undo what has already happened, and it is there to remind us of our past good and bad, lessons we have learned and some hopefully not to be repeated. I could go on some more, but I will just leave this with you for a little food for thought.

Take care everyone and I hope to see many of you soon.

BUDDY CHECK
A NATIONAL WEEK OF CALLING



← Posts can organize Buddy Checks any time of year. Visit [Legion.org](https://www.legion.org) to learn more about Buddy Checks.

Annual reports are due soon

A reminder to all Units that Annual Report forms are due on or before April 15. Please send the entire collection of reports back together as a Unit batch.

The reports should cover anything done in your Unit between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021. This year, especially, it is important for each Unit to report anything that was accomplished. COVID has had two effects — it either

shut units down completely or it motivated our members to find different ways to carry out our mission outside of our comfort zone.

Even if you think that your Unit didn't do much, you probably did something. Don't forget to complete the one page Impact Report, as well. If your Unit truly didn't do any activities, please do not forget to complete your listing of deceased members for the year.

Leadership training is April 17

There is only one more Back to the Basics leadership workshop left for the year. The workshops run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration is required for \$10 which includes coffee, doughnut/roll, lunch and

course handouts.

The final school is set for Saturday, April 17, at Sanborn Post 286.

For more information contact Mary Kuperus at wmkuperus@tds.net.

Girls State, only virtual style

The 74th session of ALA Minnesota Girls State will be held virtually Sunday, June 13, to Thursday, June 17, 2021. We are excited about the changes to the program that are being made to accommodate a virtual session.

We are continuing to take reservations for ALA Girls State even though we have passed the March 31 deadline. By now, most Minnesota high schools have returned to in-person learning and are just starting to adjust to their old routine. If you haven't made contact with your local school, please do so today.

Reservation forms were in the second January/February Unit Mailing and are also on the Department website. The \$100 registration fee should be included with the reservation fee to reserve a place for your citizen.

When your reservation is processed, registration information for each citizen will be sent to your Unit. Units may send as many girls to ALA Girls State as they wish. The candidate must be a Minnesota resident and attend a Minnesota school or home school.

If your Unit selected a citizen last year and they are available to participate, they are welcome to participate this year.

We are making this exception for this year only since we did not have a Girls State session in 2020 due to COVID. Seniors participating this year are not eligible to participate in Girls Nation per the ALA National Standing Rules.

They are also not able to apply for the Samsung Scholarship per the American Legion National Headquarters.

Joint Testimonial to be June 19

NEW PRAGUE — Save the date of June 19 for the Testimonial Dinner.

Only this time, it will be the Joint Testimonial Dinner because the banquet honors Minnesota American Legion Commander Mark Dvorak, Minnesota Auxiliary President Mary Hendrickson and Minnesota Sons of The American Legion Commander Dave Vulcan.

The program is being arranged. It will be followed by remarks and presentations for the SAL, Auxiliary, then Legion.

The event will be at New Prague Post 45, which operates The Park Ballroom, 300 Lexington Ave. S. The social hour begins at 3:30 p.m., with dinner at 5 p.m., and a program to follow. There will be live music by the Revival Band during the social hour and after the program.

Commander Dvorak is a member of the Revival Band, and he will join them to play a few numbers. They play polka, waltzes and old-time rock and country.

The meal is baked chicken, ham, green beans almondine

and coleslaw.

Organizer Linda Dvorak, commander of the 3rd District and a member of Post 45, said presentations will be limited to save time, considering it is a joint testimonial.

The commanders and pres-



ident have sent personal invitations to family and close friends.

To RSVP, contact her at 952-457-2129 or ldvorak56@gmail.com by June 1. Payment of \$20 can be sent to:

Linda Dvorak
31047 221st Ave
Le Center MN 56057

A block of rooms has been held at the Quality Inn & Suites, 1200 First St. NE, New Prague. The event name is "Legion Testimonial," and the phone is 952-758-7300.

Additional hotels in the area are Mystic Lake & Casino in Shakopee, 800-262-7799, and Home Town Inn & Suites in Belle Plaine, 952-873-6017.

It has been a project of passion

Freedom Rock in Big Lake inspired by ones in Iowa

By American Legion Auxiliary Magazine

BIG LAKE — For over 10 years, Karen Blake and Linda Paulson have organized veteran-focused events at their local church in Big Lake.

As members of ALA Unit 147, both women have a strong passion for helping and serving veterans, but they needed a new way to honor them. While on a road trip to Iowa, Blake saw the original Freedom Rock in Menlo, thus sparking a creative idea.

"After discovering the meaning behind the rock's pictures and why the artist created it, I was deeply touched," said Blake. "He told stories of people who had fought in various critical situations and became heroes because of their bravery and courage."

The artist, Ray "Bubba" Sorensen II, repaints a large boulder every year with a different "thank-you" for our nation's veterans to honor their service. Blake was so inspired by the meaning behind the Freedom Rock, that she continued making trips to Iowa to see more than 70 Freedom Rocks.

"I read every story of every hero he painted and realized how so many had sacrificed for the freedoms I enjoy," said Blake. "My desire to put a Freedom Rock in Big Lake took hold of me. I wanted something to tell our veterans' stories and thank them for their service."

Wanting to make an impact in their community and a difference in veterans' lives, Blake introduced the idea to Paulson, and the journey began. The city opted to place the rock in a signature location: Lakeside Park.

"That would be a really special way to show them that we appreciate everything they do; we thank them for their service. And that's Bubba's whole story — that's why he wants to do it," added Blake. "He wants to thank



Big Lake Unit 147 members Linda Paulson, left, and Karen Blake bring a Freedom Rock to the community of Big Lake in honor of local veterans. They were featured in the February 2021 issue of the American Legion Auxiliary magazine.

"We just feel like the community needed something positive to lift us out of all the negative that was happening."

his veterans for what they've done and for the freedoms we have today, because they fought and died for those freedoms."

Hoping to get the community's support, Blake and Paulson presented the idea to their city council, The American Legion, Yellow Ribbon, ALA, and other organizations — all were in favor of the Big Lake Freedom Rock project.

"It's good to get a consensus from your community for ideas," said Paulson. "We wanted to know what people were thinking, and everyone Lake."

"We have just been in awe with how things have happened, and we feel we were steered into the right direction," said Paulson. "We do feel like this really

is a God-driven project. He just really wants to have this for the city of Big Lake."

Blake and Paulson created a Paver Program to help raise funds for the project. Pavers included a veteran's name, branch of service, and time served for a donation of \$100. After ordering the paver, a certificate is sent and makes for a great keepsake. Blake and Paulson are predicting the money will be raised, and the artist will be painting Big Lake's rock in 2021. The pavers will surround the rock and offer a unique opportunity for everyone to honor a veteran and leave a permanent legacy.

"We just feel like the community needed something positive to lift

us out of all the negative that was happening," said Paulson. "We see this project as a bright star in the lives of a lot of people in the city of Big Lake, where they have something really positive to look forward to."

The Big Lake community fully supported the project and even had a parade the day the rock arrived in town. The fire and police departments escorted the rock through town, along with 30 American Legion Riders.

"It's been a fun journey — it really has! And meeting all the veterans who are excited for this project has been amazing," said Blake. "It has seriously been one of the best things I have ever done."

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It's time to get your purple on for Purple Up!

By Robin Dorf
Children and Youth
Chairman

Purple Up! For Military Kids Day is April 15.

This is a day for communities to wear purple to show support and thank military children for their strength and sacrifices, but also the whole month of April is known officially as the month of the military child.

We need to help build awareness for the needs of our military families and celebrate our other heroes ... our military children.

This grassroots effort began in 2011 to honor the sacrifices that our military children make every day for our country.

Why purple?

Because it indicates all the branches our military. Air Force blue, Army green, Navy blue, Marine red and Coast Guard

blue; all combined to purple.

Way to Celebrate Purple Up! The easiest is to wear purple on April 15 to show support. Ask local officials and businesses to wear purple on Purple Up! Day.

Contact local schools, sports teams, youth organizations, clubs, after-school programs, and community organizations to recognize Purple Up! Day.

Make certificates from your Unit and bring to school to have them hand out to students who they know have parents serving. Request local businesses, stores and restaurants post a Purple Up! Message.

Make sure to share your activities and photos at our Department of Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary Facebook page with this hashtag : #MNALAPurpleUp

Be creative and have fun celebrating our military children.

Veterans Linkage Line™

minnesotaveteran.org | **1-888-LinkVet**
(546-5838)

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Your donation is tax-deductible!
 With fewer ads right now, this fundraiser helps. The Minnesota Legionnaire is a nonprofit publication and is classified as a 501(c)4 organization.

The Legionnaire coin stands out in a crowd!

Having this one in your coin rack sure looks good. Help celebrate the 100th anniversary of this monthly publication by, for and about veterans and their supporters in the Land of 10,000 Lakes.

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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 St. Paul, MN 55155-2000

And thank you!



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Your Department believes these benefits will help Legionnaires save money on important health care services, be a resource for answers to vital health care issues, and provide added convenience, quality and security to their lives. That is why the Department lends it endorsement to this high quality program. Legionnaires interested in learning more about these programs can call 1-800-235-6943.



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