



Past 7th District Commander David "Chip" Manson asks a question about a resolution on July 14.

Anthrax shot resolution passed

Convention business is important for serving veterans statewide

REDWOOD FALLS — A resolution approved at the 104th Department of Minnesota Convention in mid-July directs the VA to investigate the findings and effects of the experimental anthrax vaccination that was given to deploying Persian Gulf War veterans.

The resolution stems directly

from research at the University of Minnesota Brain Sciences Center at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. The Minnesota American Legion and Auxiliary helped to create the research center with their Brian Sciences Foundation.

At a meeting with the researchers in April, Dr. Brian

Engdahl told Legion and Auxiliary members how the Brain Sciences Center found a direct connection between the anthrax shot and Gulf War illness.

He said the findings never made it into VA policy.

Legionnaires at the meeting felt the research indicates that anyone who received the shot should automatically qualify for VA healthcare.

Engdahl said some of the issues found, compared to the

general population, were brain atrophy, respiration issues and bowel dysfunction.

The resolution at the convention was written by Department Service Officer Ray Kane and Assistant Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo.

Part of the resolution states, "Resolved, that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and The Veterans Affairs Health Care shall initiate a thorough and

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Camp could handle plenty more

Could Legionville be used in new ways?

REDWOOD FALLS — The current summer of camping at Legionville has 304 campers registered. The camp is capable of handling 144 weekly.

"So our mission next year will be trying to expand our presence to the local communities, the schools and our Legion posts about Legionville and what we can do," said Carl Moon, who is the president of the Legionville Board of Directors.

The current Constitution and Bylaws for Legionville do not provide for year-round use of other programs that deviate from the teachings of safety patrol, Moon said.

DSO Ray Kane has proposed using Legionville as a retreat for female veterans. Another proposal from members calls for Legionville providing an environment where veterans could

Continued on Page 3

Hassing rides again

New commander has served in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan

By Tim Engstrom

REDWOOD FALLS — Past Department Membership Director and Past State American Legion Riders Director Paul Hassing of Bloomington Post 550 was elected department commander on July 15, the final day of the 104th Department of Minnesota Convention.

"Somebody just told me that when you get to this level, you should no longer be nervous up here. I beg to differ," he said.

Hassing has been married to his wife, Jody, for 15 years. They have five children and eight grandchildren. She is president of Bloomington Unit 550.

When they aren't volunteering at their events, they enjoy riding their motorcycles, camping, cruising and hanging out with friends.

Paul Hassing retired from the Army Reserve in June with 32 years of service, though he still does some post-retirement work for the Army Reserve.

He has been deployed multiple times during the Global War on Terrorism. He has combat tours in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan. In addition, he deployed to Papua New Guinea on a humanitarian mission.

Hassing, during his yearlong campaign, had a life-size cardboard cutout



Jody Hassing, president of Bloomington Unit 550, prepares to place the white cap on her husband, Department Commander Paul Hassing, at the 104th Department of Minnesota Convention July 15.

placed near the doors at department events. It was known as "Flat Paul." He had used a Flat Paul when he campaigned for 10th District commander in 2016-17. He won and was the district commander for 2017-18.

"I found out I was going to be deployed during the year of campaigning.

And so I talked with the family, and they thought about it, and we thought, 'Well, how can I campaign from Afghanistan?'" he said. "So we came up with Flat Paul."

Hassing is the past commander of Minneapolis Veterans Home Post 581 and past commander and past

adjutant of Bloomington Post 550. He has served several roles in the 10th District. He graduated from National American Legion College in 2010. He serves on the National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Council.

Hassing thanked many people for

Continued on Page 2

Department Convention next year to be hosted by Willmar

News, notes and awards from convention reports

REDWOOD FALLS — Jim Mertens, chairman of the Convention Corp., said Willmar was approved for the site of the 105th Department Convention. He said committee members are in negotiation for a five-year deal much like the one St. Cloud has for the Fall Conference. Multi-year contracts result in better rates.

However, nothing long-term is signed, he said, and the committee is open to interests in convention hosting from any post in the state. He said the 2024 convention dates are July 10-13, hosted by Willmar Post 167.

The Fall Conference, he said, is Oct. 27-28 at



Several reports were given at the convention, including from Fastpitch Softball Director Mike Arvidson, left, and Baseball Director Randy Schaub, right. Both are SAL members.

River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud. It is hosted by the Convention Corp.

Here are news and notes from reports given during

the 104th Department Convention hosted by Redwood Falls Post 38:

National chaplain

National Chaplain Mark Antel attended the July 12 DEC meeting and gave the opening prayer for the convention on July 13. He said the greatest part of his time as national chaplain so far was getting to pray before the U.S. Senate.

Only Senate President Pro Tempore Patty Murray of Washington state was there, but it was broadcast live nationally and livestreamed to the D.C. and home offices of all senators. He said he had to travel to northern Virginia for Boys Nation to be part of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

He gave three pieces of advice at the DEC meeting:

1. Be the person God has called you to be; don't

Continued on Page 8

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Serving all of Minnesota

Kellogg wins race for national vice commander

Continued from Page 1

their support over the year. He gave particular attention to Steve Sullivan. He was feeling down about participation in The American Legion, and Sullivan showed him what the American Legion Riders do, and he got involved with them. That kept his interest going.

Hassing's theme is "The Road Ahead." He explains it in his column on Page 4. He said he appreciates the work of veterans of the past, though it is time to focus on what's ahead. He is the first state director of the American Legion Riders to become department commander.

Hassing named Past 2nd District Commander Pam Krill as membership director.

"A lot of you know me, and I have persistence, and I'm going to carry that on as your membership director this year," she said.

Hassing is the second department commander hailing from Bloomington Post 550. The first was Marvin F. Gerdesmeier, who served in the role in 1976-77. He was a Marine veteran of the Korean era. He was the owner-operator of Marv's Blacktopping Service in Bloomington. He had been membership director the prior year, and he served as 10th District commander in 1967. His wife was Elaine.

Kellogg endorsed for national vice commander

James Kellogg of Adams Post 146 won an election over Michael Ash of St. Paul Christie DeParcq Post 406 to capture the



After James Kellogg of Adams Post 146 captured the department endorsement for national vice commander on July 15. Competing candidate Michael Ash of St. Paul Christie DeParcq Post 406 congratulates him. Both are past department commanders.

department endorsement for the next national vice commander from Minnesota.

Minnesota submits an endorsement for a national vice commander about every eight years. Kellogg would take the position at the 106th National Convention in New Orleans in 2024.

Havlick says farewell

In addition to many thanks and statements of gratitude, outgoing Commander Jennifer Havlick reminded everyone that what the Legion Family does saves lives. She went through the Four Pillars.

Americanism strengthens the nation. National Security ensures the Armed Forces have what they need to perform. Children & Youth teaches safety. Veterans Rehabilitation & Affairs helps veterans and their families get the medical help they deserve.

She said how Past National Commander David Rehbein of Iowa spoke of how your "why" is fluid.

She said she joined as an Auxiliary member. They learned she was a veteran and asked her to join the Legion, and she helped fix some issues at hand, at their request. As she got involved in district and department, her "why" changed. She thought about her father and his experience after the Vietnam War.

"Because, Pop, I don't want what happened to you to ever, ever happen again to



Membership Director Pam Krill and other officers raise their right hands on July 15.

our veterans and their families ever," Havlick said.

Chaplain

There was a three-way race for department chaplain heading into the convention.

Joe Tappainer of Apple Valley Post 1776 withdrew for health reasons. That left two candidates.

Dean Knutson of Ashby Post 357 won the spot, defeating Randy Olson of Winnebago Post 82.

Vice Commanders

The department vice commander races were uncontested. Elected are:

Chuck Stone of Owatonna Post 77 for districts 1 and 3.

Victor Gades of Prairie Post 1998 for districts 2 and 7.

Lynne Nottage of Minneapolis Post 1 for districts 4 and 5.

Paul Edwards of Nisswa Post 627 for districts 6 and 9.

Bill Gordon of St. Michael Post 567 for districts 8 and 10.

Other officers

The other spots were uncontested. They were:

NECman: Bill Barbknecht, Underwood Post 489

Alternate NECman: Peggy Moon, Zimmerman Post 560

Historian: Christopher Anderson, Hastings Post 47

Sergeant-at-Arms: Brad Pagel, Slayton Post 64

Board of Publications

Incumbent Paul Edwards was elected by the convention to another three-year term on the Board of Publications, which oversees The Minnesota Legionnaire.

At the DEC meeting on July 15 after the convention, Past Chaplain Kelley Adelsman of Pine Island Post 184 was appointed to an open spot on the Board of Publications.

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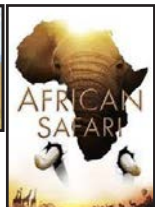
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Outgoing 1st District Commander Mary Hanson seconds a motion at the convention.

DEC creates Internal Affairs Committee to review Constitution and By-Laws.

Continued from Page 1

independent investigation to evaluate the effects of anthrax vaccinations on veterans, and be it further resolved, that the investigation shall aim to assess the short-term and long-term health outcomes associated with the anthrax vaccine in veterans, including any potential side effects or adverse reactions.”

It goes on to call for the federal government to take necessary steps to provide medical care and guidance for veterans affected by the anthrax vaccination.

The resolution now heads to the 104th National American Legion Convention in Charlotte, N.C., for approval.

A resolution from Kane and Lorenzo, along with VA&R Committee Chairwoman Marissa LaCourt, called for the Department of Minnesota to ask the federal government to preserve housing benefits for student veterans pursuing online education via the G.I. Bill. The resolution was sent to committee for a quick edit, then approved and then passed by the convention. It will go to the National Convention.

A resolution authored by the DEC to move supervision of the VA&R staff to the department adjutant and away from the VA&R Committee went to Constitution & By-Laws Committee. It passed the committee and was approved by members on the floor of the convention.

A resolution stemming from the April class of Minnesota Legion College was approved. It says American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales should offer female sizes and uniforms for all apparel “so that female veterans have uniforms that fit their needs and preferences.” For example, the honor guard uniforms for sale all are men’s sizes.

Several other resolutions were sent back by the convention committee. One called for the creation of a Technology & Innovation Committee. Another would create a Grants, Funding & Nonprofit Services Committee. Another called for the creation of an online version of Minnesota Legion College.

One resolution out of Litchfield Post 104 called for chairs of committees under the Americanism pillar of the Legion’s Four Pillars always be Legionnaires. Presently, there is no requirement that they or their committee members be Legion members. For instance, the directors

of Minnesota American Legion Baseball and Fastpitch Softball are both Sons of The American Legion members.

In many cases, district baseball directors also are SAL, Auxiliary or even not members at all. Several department programs have non-members in key positions, such as Boys State counselors and Oratorical Contest judges. The new director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders is an Auxiliary member.

The Americanism Convention Committee ruled the resolution out of order for vagueness.

Another resolution to give the districts and departments greater options for addressing serious issues at posts was sent back for a rewrite.

Past 7th District Commander David “Chip” Manson said districts and the department need a viable path to help ailing posts. Quibbling over words won’t fix anything, he said.

Adjutant Mike Maxa said Department HQ is working on a book of discipline, which spells out available actions, and he said he hopes to have it ready for DEC meeting in St. Cloud on Oct. 26. Manson was satisfied to hear that.

The convention approved a resolution to be sent on to the National Convention in Charlotte that calls for Congress to pass a bill requiring active-duty servicemembers who are retiring or ending their time in service to be given paperwork during out-processing about The American Legion and what it does for veterans. This resolution comes from Lewiston Post 90 and the 1st District.

A resolution was approved that calls for financial considerations for VA loans to include nonmarried partners who share a residence for at least one year “to give a more accurate assessment of the finances.”

A resolution to add correctional officers to the department’s Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award was amended to make correctional officer a separate award. The amendment and resolution were approved.

A resolution wanted to allow district committee chairs for National Security & Foreign Relations participate in the selection and voting for the Outstanding

Enlisted awards. This was sent back to the standing committee for review.

Finally, the convention approved a resolution from the Ad Hoc Internal Affairs Committee that cleans up but doesn’t majorly change language in the Department Constitution and By-Laws. To be official, however, the convention-goers, on the first day, had to sit through Department Judge Advocate Greg Colby reading seven rather-boring pages of the Constitution.

However, members survived the extensive reading with grace and aplomb. The changes were accepted.

The Department Executive Committee, on July 12, approved a resolution that creates a standing Internal Affairs Committee of four members, each with four-year terms. It also approved a resolution that allows the Department of Minnesota to print its Constitution and By-Laws electronically. Presently, they are printed in booklets sized for a coat pocket.

The committee also reviewed several resolutions and sent them to the floor for approval. They went to the DEC first because that’s how the resolutions were written.

Past National Commander Dan Ludwig asked resolution writers to please draft the resolved clause in a manner that sends the resolution straight to the convention for approval. He said the resolutions only need to go to the DEC if A. the issue at hand is strictly administrative or B. the matter is urgent and the convention won’t be available until next year.

“The convention floor is the ultimate authority of this organization,” Ludwig said, “not the Department Executive Committee.”

Sending any resolution to both the DEC and state convention wastes time, he added.

The DEC members gave a round of applause to Program Coordinator Jennifer Kelley for her 30 years working for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

NECman Bill Barbknecht thanked everyone for coming: “There is no other organization like The American Legion.”



Jennifer Kelley

Legionville needs hot water heaters to be installed; cost is \$28,000

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feel safe and open up about their experiences. Yet another idea is allowing Scouts to complete their community service projects there.

Moon said Camp Manager Adam Felton told the board that some schools are using Legionville graduates to teach other children about safety patrol. The state only recognizes Legionville and American Automobile Association (AAA) for certification. Anyone with awareness of other similar training needs to report it to the camp manager or department adjutant.

Land that had been for sale in Sections 13 and 14 — about 80 acres — was pulled from the market as a result of declining land value, Moon said.

A donor wall has been approved for inside the barn.

Legionville’s revenue exceeded expenses, as of May 31, by \$67,394. Total donations received as of July 7 were \$52,481.

A work-and-play weekend on May 20 went well but only 6th District members attended.

The roofing project for the dining hall is complete and new dishwasher installed. All toilets have been installed, and there remains five hot water heaters that will cost \$5,600 each to install, totaling \$28,000.

Felton is looking into the purchase and disposal of mattresses for the dormitories. One hundred fifty-four are needed

at a cost of \$150 each, totaling \$23,100.

“We are hoping that we can find a company that will donate that expense and take them off our hands when we buy them from them,” Moon said.

Dorms, he said, need 21 sets of new faucets and drains.

Felton looked into a fishing pier. However, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources indicated the pier would have to be about 200 yards long to reach a decent fishing depth, so that’s out of

the question.

Moon said Auxiliary Fun Weekend is Aug. 4-6. The Camporee is set for Sept. 7-10. The Harvest Rally is Sept. 9. The American Legion Riders Romp will be Sept. 14-17. The SAL’s John Zgoda Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt is Oct. 4-8.

The Parker family, in 1954, donated the original 560-acre site on North Long Lake where Legionville exists, so that the Legion and the Minnesota State Patrol could have a place for school safety training.

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It's time to look to 'The Road Ahead'

Greetings, Legion Family, I am truly honored and humbled to be elected commander of the greatest department in the greatest veterans service organization in the world.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to so many of you who have supported me — not only during my campaign, but throughout my entire time in the American Legion Family. We have some truly outstanding people in The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders. Your friendship, mentorship, willingness to listen, hard work, dedication and commitment to veterans, and their families is truly outstanding. I truly appreciate every one of you.

My theme this year is "The Road Ahead."

The American Legion has done so many great things since its beginning, and we as veterans can never thank them enough for everything they accomplished on our behalf. We can all sit back and enjoy the road that was paved for us. We like how smooth it was, and how fast we could drive. We can keep looking in the rearview mirror in admiration of that beautiful road because it was so great.

But then we wouldn't be paying attention to what's coming up ahead. We need to look back occasionally, but we need to stay focused on what's ahead.

There are a lot of potholes, curves, detours and construction to which we need to pay attention. The world is changing; the military is changing. The younger veterans are in many ways different than us old vets.

As Yogi Berra used to say, "Our similarities are very different." We need to learn to adapt to these changes. There are a lot of great younger veterans who have some really good ideas. We need to listen. We need to help them bring these ideas to fruition. We also need to welcome them into our organization.

Commander's Column

Paul Hassing



I've seen too many that never come back to a meeting, or event, because they were scolded for things that they didn't know — eating with their cover on, cutting the colors or not introducing their spouse.

These are teachable moments to be taught in private, not a time to berate someone publicly.

Most importantly, we need to enjoy the trip on the road ahead. We do great work and get a lot accomplished. We need to have some fun along the way, too. Speaking of fun, thank you, Hopkins American Legion Post 320, for the great time at the Raspberry Festival. You really did a great job.

For my project, I chose the Minnesota American Legion Veterans Assistance Fund (aka Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 85). We can all remember a time (or times) that we needed a hand.

Things happen in life that we need a little help with. In many cases a family is just one paycheck away from disaster, and when unexpected things happen, it can really have detrimental effects. We can be there for them when this does happen. We need to take care of veterans and their families. That is what we do, and why we are here.

I want to thank Past Department Commander Jennifer Havlick for all the advice she gave me, and I wish her well in her future endeavors.

I also would like to thank Patty Swanson in heaven for listening to me so many years ago, and finally telling me it's time to stop whining, and start helping others. If it weren't for her, I never would have found The American Legion.

Also, a special thank you to my friends Steve and Dianne Sullivan. You kept me interested in The American Legion by

introducing me to the Riders and pushing me to keep learning.

I would be remiss if I didn't say a big thank you to my wife, Jody. She has helped me in so many ways along the way. I don't know where I would be without her, and I look forward to working alongside her as she was elected director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders for a two-year term. I know she will do great.

Thank you to the Bloomington Post 550 Color Guard for coming to Redwood Falls, and thank you to Bloomington American Legion Baseball for supporting reception costs. Finally, thanks to Post 550 general membership for your support of my candidacy and campaign.

I am so looking forward to the great things that are going to happen this year in the American Legion Family. We have a great membership director in Pam Krill. We have some outstanding Legionnaires elected to vice commander, historian, chaplain and sergeant-at-arms.

Congratulations to Jim Kellogg for securing the endorsement for national vice commander, and another congratulations to Adjutant Mike Maxa for being appointed to another three-year term. You do a great job, and we are all better for it.

Please remember to have some fun, take care of veterans and their families, and enjoy "The Road Ahead."

Paul Hassing of Bloomington Post 550 is the commander of The American Legion Department of Minnesota. His theme is "The Road Ahead."

Be mindful of the needs of others

In God's grace let us go forth serving all mankind.

As we begin a new year within the Department of Minnesota under new leadership, let us all strive to work together for the good of our communities, posts, districts and our department.

The Four Pillars from which arose The American Legion are Veterans Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism and Children & Youth. All of these pillars have numerous programs under each one of them that were created for the good of each and every one of us, and we need to work together so they can be successful.

As we live our lives day to day, we need to be ever mindful of the needs of our fellow man and keep them in our thoughts and prayers and by God's loving grace and tender love for us may these programs be successful.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and to say that with great humility and honor I had the great opportunity to be elected to the office of chaplain of The American Legion Department

Chaplain's Corner

Dean Knutson



of Minnesota for the 2023-2024 membership year. I will strive to do the best job I can, and I am asking for God's grace and guidance throughout this year in this position as I know there are challenges that we all experience on a daily basis. I cannot handle them alone, so I am asking for words of encouragement along the way.

My name is Dean Knutson, and I currently live in Marshall. I am a 34-year PUFL member of Pederson-Tripp Post 357 in Ashby and am eligible for membership with my 29 years of service in the U.S. Army, retiring in 2003.

In my home church in Dalton, I have served as deacon, trustee and treasurer. I volunteer in numerous positions with the city of Marshall.

My contact information is:
Address: 303 London Road, Marshall, MN 56258.

Phone: 320-766-0502
Email: deknutson29@gmail.com.

If I do not answer your phone call, please leave me a voice message, send me a text message or send me an email, and I will get back to you as soon as I can.

I look forward to serving the great Department of Minnesota, and I will do the best job I can, and by God's grace and words of encouragement from all of the members within the department, it will be a good year.

In closing: May the strength of God sustain us. May the power of God preserve us. May the hand of God protect us. May the way of God direct us, and may the love of God go with us.

Dean Knutson of Ashby Post 357 is the chaplain for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

Again, thank you all so so much. I will see you soon! Thank you to the veterans for their service. Freedom isn't free. God bless.

Joe Voit
Boys Stater
Minnesota

veteran deserving recognition for my 30-month tour away from family.

Brian K. Ray
Brainerd Post 255

Iwo Jima idea for next parade

The symbol of liberation of World War II.

To recreate this scene of raising our U.S. flag on Iwo Jima, I once saw six people hold this pose on a horizontal flatbed trailer. It was pulled throughout a parade, but I do not remember where or when I saw it.

So, here's an idea for whom-ever would like to do the same. What an awe-inspiring addition for a parade!

Clark C. Peterson
Hinckley Post 388

Ghost War deserves era

To the writer of a letter about Cold War veterans in the June 2023 issue,

The eras are Cold War, Korean War, World War II, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and Persian Gulf. It's not my intent to leave out any era. They are all veterans of their own specific era.

I liked his description of a Ghost Generation idea, but I think ghost veterans from the Cold War is fitting.

As a Ghost War veteran who served during the Cold War, we deserve our era recognition to be separate. I am not as many others say a Korea or Vietnam vet.

The editor noted a resolution needs to be drawn up and presented for support of approval. That's hogwash!

That's another way to get lost in some political quagmire. It's like toxic burnpits or Agent Orange or nuclear exposure illnesses. They are all generational-era veterans who endured and died. Why would any special resolution of each exposure have needed to be presented? All it has done is given politicians a self pat on the back for duplicating those by era.

Those are as wrong as having no recognition for Cold War veteran era. Sadly, recognition pins or patches also must be approved to wear. Again, hogwash. When other era veterans say we don't deserve to wear any, it saddens me and others.

I am a proud Ghost War

Mail Call

Send letters to the editor for Mail Call to tengstrom@mnlegion.org.

Editor's note: All letters are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily The American Legion or The Minnesota Legionnaire. We do favor dialogue as key to the American form of government.

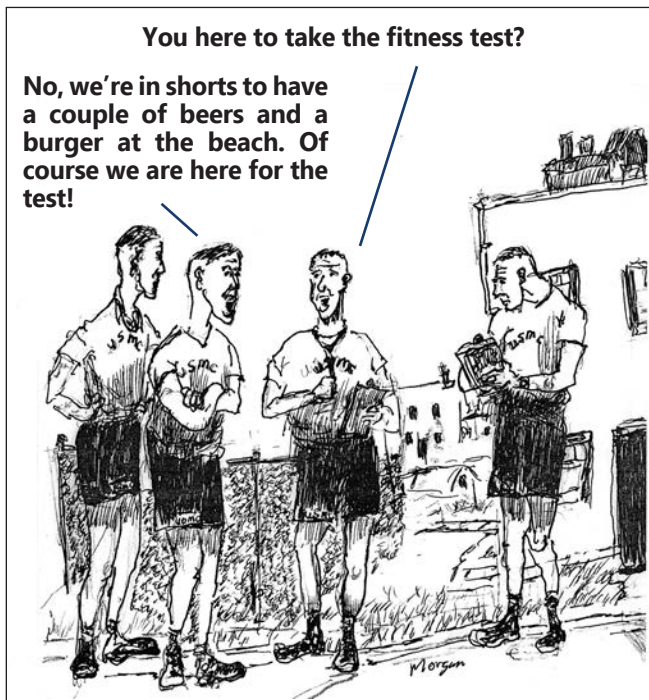
Boys State was a fantastic time

Dear David Hennen of Tauton Post 604,

I want to say thank you all so much for endorsing me on this amazing journey. I have had a life-changing time here at Minnesota Boys State. I came here not knowing very much what was up ahead, and I will leave Boys State with an experience that I will never forget.

Ever since the day you first came and talked to me, I was truly excited. I am so very thankful for the opportunities that were presented to me. I will be forever grateful.

I knew immediately as I arrived here that this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I had to make the best of it. I ended up doing just that. I ran for mayor and won. I ran for a county party delegate and became an alternate. I then became the timekeeper. I ran



Dan Morgan/North End Post 474 spot in the Senate and won.

for a state-party delegate position and won. At the convention, I was appointed as state party timekeeper. Finally, I ran for a

The process in the Senate has been grueling, but it has definitely been worth it.

Taps



Please send "Taps" entries to tengstrom@mnlegion.org or mail to 20 W. 12th St., Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155, or visit mnlegion.org/taps. Thank you.

Name of Deceased	Age	Date of Death	Branch	Era	Cont. Years	Post
Aaby, Henry A. Jr.	90	5/17/23	Army	Korea	49	Twin Valley Post 431
Note: He served many years on the post's honor guard until 2020.						
Ackland, Robert N.	83	6/13/23	Army	Vietnam	1	Albert Lea Post 56
Anderson, Eugene B.	87	6/18/23	Army	Korea	11	Pine City Post 51
Anderson, Gerald A.	92	6/20/23	Army	Korea	30	Austin Post 91
Anderson, Norman D.	95	3/20/23	Army	Korea	67	Fosston Post 114
Note: He helped construct Thule Air Base in Greenland. (It was renamed Pituffik Space Base on April 6 of this year. It has been under Space Force command since 2020.)						
Anderson, Virgil J.	97	6/4/23	Navy	WWII	72	Boyd Post 198
Note: After basic, his first stop was Pearl Harbor to prepare for the invasion of Japan. While in the middle of the Pacific Ocean on the way to Japan, the sailors received word Japan had surrendered.						
Berryman, Edwin F.	80	6/9/23	Army	Vietnam	42	Pine Island Post 184
Note: He was a past post commander and gambling manager.						
Bleyenbergh, William	80	6/20/23	Army	Vietnam	1	Edgerton Post 42
Boettger, Richard E.	86	6/19/23	Air Force	Korea	28	Springfield Post 257
Note: He served as a helicopter mechanic.						
Brabec, Robert	92	7/2/23	Army	Korea	33	Waconia Post 150
Butler, Charles G.	84	6/10/23	Army	Vietnam	37	Austin Post 91
Note: He quit school the first day of his senior year to join the Army. He served as a military policeman stationed in Germany. His unit deployed to Beirut. He was directing traffic one day when shooting broke out. He radioed for backup and eight tanks responded, encircling the intersection. The incident made worldwide news that day.						
Carlson, Glenn H.	87	6/5/23	Navy	Korea	60	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Clairmont, Terrance W.	92	2/4/23	Army	Korea	10	Walker Post 134
Note: He earned two Bronze Stars in Korea but spoke little of his experience with family. While in the war, he tried to help a young Korean boy go to the United States, but the Army refused. Later, years after his discharge, the Army asked him to return to train Green Berets, but he declined. He was a past Kelliher Post 470 commander.						
Cleland, Loren	96	3/21/23	Army	WWII	75	Austin Post 91
Note: He was inducted into the Army on D-Day. He served as a personal affairs counselor.						
Conroy, Donald R.	100	6/11/23	Army	WWII	78	Wheaton Post 80
Conroy, Donald R.	100	6/11/23	Army	WWII	78	Wheaton Post 80
Cornforth, Raymond J. "Jack"	98	6/25/23	Army	WWII	65	Minneapolis Viking Post 493
Note: He was a colonel in the Civil Air Reserve Fleet. He transported troops and supplied to Germany, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia during the Persian Gulf War. This Oklahoma boy who loved flying joined the Army Air Forces in spring 1943 and learned to be a pilot and mechanic. He came to Minnesota in 1948 to be a pilot with Northwest Orient Airlines. He was a past post commander.						
Curtis, Vernon M.	93	6/20/23	Navy	Korea	61	Waite Park Post 428
Davis, Steven L.	73	6/30/23	Army	Vietnam	27	Coon Rapids Post 334
Dickson, Roy E.	89	6/22/23	Army	Korea	68	Cloquet Post 262
Note: He received a Purple Heart. He was a past post commander.						
Dutt, Herbert J.	93	4/14/23	Navy	Korea	32	Willmar Post 167
Note: He was stationed in North Africa, England and Pennsylvania.						
Ellingson-Hegstrom, Jill D.	51	6/18/23	Army	Persian Gulf	2	New London Post 537
Engel, Willard J.	84	6/13/23	Army	Cold	45	Marshall Post 113
Evangelist, Thomas J.	92	5/10/23	Army	Korea	8	Minneapolis Falldin Post 555
Note: He was a volunteer visitor for veterans prior to the pandemic.						
Felling, James J.	76	5/27/23	Army	Vietnam	26	Little Sauk Post 417
Finnes, Donald D.	87	11/3/23	Army	Korea	24	Granite Falls Post 69
Giroux, Donald L.	93	3/23/23	Army	WWII	52	Mankato Post 11
Note: He landed at Normandy. He was given a prestigious award from the president of France.						
Groebner, Edwin J.	85	7/6/23	Army	Vietnam	34	Milroy Post 274
Hartwig, Donald R.	85	1/24/23	Air Force	Cold War	3	Hutchinson Post 96
Hoiosen, Phillip H.	83	6/15/23	Army	Vietnam	57	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Honstad, Lonnie O.	75	3/31/23	Air Force	Vietnam	54	Lake Crystal Post 294
Note: He was stationed in Florida, the Philippines, where he learned to fly, and Vietnam, where he worked as a fuel system mechanic on C-130s.						
Horejsi, Dallas J.	75	6/7/23	Army	Vietnam	39	Montgomery Post 79
Johnson, John M. "Jack"	93	6/27/23	Army	Korea	70	Tyler Post 185
Killeen, Michael J.	76	6/22/23	Navy	Vietnam	39	Aitkin Post 86
Note: He served aboard the tank landing ship USS Windham County, transporting troops and equipment during the war.						
Kipp, Bruce E.	72	6/10/23	Army	Vietnam	20	Springfield Post 257
Note: He was a retired lieutenant colonel. He was an avid WWII researcher and published two books on the subject.						
Kohlhof, Denton A. "Red"	91	5/24/23	Army	Korea	43	Springfield Post 257
Note: He was a forward observer in the 1st Cavalry Division.						
Kojetin, Woodrow D.	93	6/30/23	Army	Korea	15	Bayport Post 491
Note: He was awarded three Bronze Stars for his service in the Korean War.						
Leach, Walter L. Jr.	76	5/15/23	Army	Vietnam	42	Middle River Post 444
McCabe, Stacie W.	55	6/21/23	Navy	Persian Gulf	23	Coon Rapids Post 334
Note: She was past post commander.						
Meyer, Stephen W.	75	6/29/23	Army NG	Vietnam	34	Marshall Post 113
Midthun, Douglas L.	73	12/21/22	Navy	Vietnam	27	Lake Crystal Post 294
Note: He joined the Navy in September 1968, following the loss of his cousin, Roger Midthun, in Vietnam. He served aboard the carrier USS Constellation as a radioman.						
Minske, Ronald B.	73	3/16/23	Air Force	Vietnam	51	Owatonna Post 77
Moe, Garland D.	91	6/27/23	Army	Korea	33	Caledonia Post 191
Mulcrone, Richard T.	89	5/29/23	Army	Korea	35	Shakopee Post 2
Note: President Jimmy Carter appointed him to the U.S. Parole Commission.						
Naspinski, Theodore S.	75	5/22/23	Air Force	Vietnam	11	Shakopee Post 2
Norquist, Louis E.	97	6/7/23	Navy	WWII	62	Baudette Post 217
Note: He served three years in the Pacific Theater.						
Oliver, David C.	76	6/17/23	Air Force	Vietnam	1	Lake City Post 110
Pederson, Harry	95	6/18/23	Army	WWII	32	Roosevelt Post 371
Note: He served in occupied Japan.						
Piepho, Floyd W.	98	5/7/23	Army	WWII	78	Owatonna Post 77
Note: He received two Bronze Stars. His company of military police landed amphibiously at the Battle of Leyte Gulf. They later released American POWs being held in Manila.						
Plombon, Joseph L.	96	6/1/23	Navy	WWII	20	Waite Park Post 428
Note: He served as a gunner's mate third class in the Philippines.						
Poncelet, Erwin A.	77	6/30/23	Army	Vietnam	18	Pine Island Post 184
Rahliien, Marvin M.	98	7/2/23	Navy	WWII	76	Graceville Post 297
Note: He was sent to the Farragut Naval Training Station in Idaho and served on the cruiser USS Trenton and then the destroyer USS Brinkley Bass. He was the post's last surviving WWII veteran.						
Regenscheid, Andrew J.	84	12/7/22	Army	Vietnam	16	Montgomery Post 79
Note: He was assigned to an artillery unit for two weeks before being sent to get training as a company clerk. He was a past post historian and chaplain and member of the honor guard. He was particularly known for coaching youth sports.						
Reiten, Wayne N.	82	7/10/23	Army	Vietnam	20	Wood Lake Post 556

Continued on Page 6

All-Family Events Calendar

- Aug. 6:** Milaca Post 178 Fly-In Breakfast, Milaca Airport
- Aug. 4-5:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Prospect Series, Reynolds Field, Univ. of Northwestern, Roseville
- Aug. 4-6:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Jr. State Tournament, Granite Falls
- Aug. 4-6:** Junior Fun Weekend, Legionville
- Aug. 10-15:** American Legion Baseball World Series
- Aug. 12-13:** ALA Officers & Chairmen Workshop, Melrose Post 101
- Aug. 15-20:** American Veterans Traveling Tribute, Murray County Fair, Slayton
- Aug. 19:** Fund 85 Run (Minn. Veterans Assistance Fund), Forest Lake Post 225
- Aug. 25-31:** 104th National Convention, Charlotte, N.C.
- Sept. 7-10:** Camporee, Legionville
- Sept. 9:** Harvest Rally, Legionville
- Sept. 14-17:** American Legion Riders Romp, Legionville
- Sept. 16-17, 22-24:** Americanism Conference, Indy
- Oct. 3-8:** John Zgoda Deer Hunt, Legionville
- Oct. 9-12:** Fall Meetings, Indianapolis
- Oct. 12-15:** Minnesota Legion College, Camp Ripley
- Oct. 26-28:** Department Fall Conference, River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud
- Nov. 11:** Veterans Day, local ceremonies
- Dec. 9:** Pearl Harbor Rally, Paynesville Post 271
- Feb. 3:** Sweetheart Rally, Forest Lake Post 225
- March 2:** Appreciation Rally, Montgomery Post 79

Past commander makes her goal

REDWOOD FALLS — Jennifer Havlick made her goal for the Department Commander's Project just before she had to hand over the gavel on July 15.

Donations of \$1,000 each from Bloomington Post 550, Zimmerman Post 560 and Lonsdale Post 586 pushed her over the target figure of \$60,000. Her total as of press time was \$61,410.

She will divide the total among the Tunnel to Towers Foundation, Project Delta and Eagle's Healing Nest. Tunnels to Towers provides mortgage-free smart homes to disabled veterans. Delta trains dogs for veterans, and Eagle's Healing Nest aids veterans with invisible wounds of war.

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Taps

Continued from Page 5

Rud, Lester I.	95	6/23/23	Army	Korea	19	Northfield Post 84
Note: He served in Korea during the war.						
Ruff, Roger D.	59	7/5/23	Army	Leb/Gren	20	Shakopee Post 2
Note: He was past post commander and chaplain and a member of the honor guard. He served in Korea, Germany, Italy and Japan during his military career.						
Schleppenbach, Roy A.	92	5/27/23	AF/Army Res.	Korea	67	Cold Spring Post 455
Note: He was a helicopter mechanic who trained NATO forces at San Marcos AFB (renamed Gary AFB during his time) in Texas. He joined the Army Reserve after his Air Force enlistment.						
Schmidt, Ordean P.	96	6/15/23	Army	WWII	57	Wood Lake Post 556
Note: He was a truck driver during the occupation of Japan.						
Schmiesing, Gary C.	76	5/26/23	Navy	Vietnam	30	Backus Post 368
Note: He was trained in air reconnaissance.						
Seim, Cecil J.	101	5/10/23	Navy	WWII/Korea	10	Apple Valley Post 1776
Shellum, Robert A.	97	6/8/23	Army	WWII	26	Bagley Post 16
Shull, Howard V.	92	5/10/23	unav.	Korea	58	Cloquet Post 262
Simmons, Allen D.	72	6/29/23	Marines	Vietnam	1	Watkins Post 453
Note: He fought in Vietnam and received a Purple Heart.						
Sorenson, Robert F.	82	1/6/23	Army	Vietnam	49	Lake Crystal Post 294
Note: He served many post roles: gambling manager, commander, sergeant-at-arms, bingo caller, among others.						
Stasney, John G.	96	2/19/23	Army	WWII	49	Montgomery Post 79
Steele, Terry C.	74	5/12/23	Navy	Vietnam	23	Pine River Post 613
Note: He was a past post commander. He was a past grand chef of Minnesota for the 40&8 and served as a national cheminot officer. He was a plank owner for the gunboat USS Chehalis.						
Tanberg, Douglas M.	76	7/1/23	Air Force	Vietnam	19	Rosetown Post 542
Note: He was a jet mechanic and worked on SR-71 Blackbirds and B-52 Bombers. He was stationed in Minot, N.D., Glasgow, Mont., and Okinawa, Japan.						
Theisen, Eugene J.	91	7/31/23	Army	Korea	44	Fridley Post 303
Torgerson, Eugene A.	72	6/16/23	Navy	Vietnam	11	Aitkin Post 86
Note: His obituary says he died from respiratory failure due to multiple Agent Orange complications, resulting from his service in Vietnam. He enlisted in the Army after receiving a draft notice number of 13 during his senior year of high school.						
Vikse, Arland G.	90	6/22/23	Navy	Korea	37	Willmar Post 167
Weber, Kenneth J.	93	6/15/23	Navy	Korea	6	Lake City Post 110
Wierzbinski, James B.	93	2/27/23	Navy	WWII	49	Owatonna Post 77
Note: He served aboard the USS Renville, Saint Croix, George Clymer and Diachenko. He was part of Operation Crossroads in the Marshall Islands to test the effects of the atomic bomb.						
Williams, Michael	79	7/4/23	Army	Vietnam	21	Hackensack Post 202
Note: He served as a radioman on the USS Wainwright. He used his computer skills to publicize his post.						
Wilson, Laverne R.	90	4/15/23	Air Force	Korea	21	Owatonna Post 77
Note: He received the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster (which indicates a second).						
Wolf, Robert A.	85	4/21/23	Air Force	Vietnam	18	Apple Valley Post 1776
Wunderlich, Clinton L.	84	5/14/23	Army	Vietnam	57	Champlin Post 600
Note: He helped launch SAL Squadron 600 and was a past squadron and post commander. He was a past 10th District officer.						
Yates, David L.	82	12/10/22	Navy	Vietnam	23	Brewster Post 464

Correction:

Felling, James J. 76 5/27/23 Army Vietnam 26 Little Sauk Post 417
Note: He was the post finance officer. He served in Vietnam and was the recipient of two Purple Heart medals, along with several other decorations.

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What's happening?

Tickets for banquet are available

ST. PAUL — There are tickets still available for the National Commander's Banquet to be held during the 104th National Convention at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 29.

Tickets are \$60. If interested, contact Jennifer Kelley at Department HQ at 651-291-1800.

Which post is the best at cornhole?

BLOOMINGTON — My Credit Union Community Foundation is hosting the Fall Classic Charity Cornhole Invitational on Tuesday, Sept. 19, at the Medina Entertainment Center.

The tournament benefits veteran-related nonprofit organizations. One of them is Minnesota American Legion Foundation's Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund (Fund 85).

The first 16 American Legion posts to send teams will get to participate. Each team has two bag tossers.

The American Legion portion of the tournament will determine a Legion cornhole state champion.



St. Cloud VA to host games

ST. CLOUD — The ninth annual St. Cloud VA Summer Games are planned for 3 p.m. Aug. 11 at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center.

The Summer Games are open to all veterans enrolled at the St. Cloud VA and include wheelchair and ambulatory divisions in each event. Events include a one-mile run/walk/cycle/wheel, billiards, rowing, SkiErg, horse-shoes and weightlifting.

Registration forms are due by Aug. 1 and can be obtained at the Building 1 information desk or calling 320-252-1670, extension 6031.

Slayton hosting war display

SLAYTON — Slayton American Legion Post 64 is hosting a tribute display.

An 80 percent replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington arrives Aug. 15, during the Murray County Fair, and will feature opening ceremonies at 7 p.m.

This display is from American Veterans Traveling Tribute. It will also have a tribute to the veterans of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other wars and conflicts going back to 1914.

Endorsements

Moon backed for dept. commander Jass endorsed for sergeant-at-arms

Dr. Carl Moon has been endorsed for Department Commander for the 2024-2025 membership year by Kriesel Jacobson Post 560 in Zimmerman. He has also been endorsed by the 6th and 9th districts.

In 1972, Moon was awarded the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship, through the U.S. Air Force, to attend Southern College of Optometry, in Memphis, Tenn.

Moon served in the Air Force 1976 to 1984.

He is a Paid-Up-For Life American Legion member with 34 years of continuous membership. He served as Post 560 commander for two terms.

On the 6th District level, he served as commander, vice

commander, County Council commander, chaplain and, most recently, as membership director.

On the Department of Minnesota level, he served as Employment Committee chairman for five years, chairman of Finance Committee 2022-2023 and is currently the president of the Legionville Board of Directors.

On the national level, he is the national commander's representative to the VA&R Commission and is one of only four members appointed to the TBI/PTSD Committee. He is a member of ANAVICUS, Sons



Carl Moon

of The American Legion Squadron 560, 40&8 Voiture 414 and has a life membership in the DAV. Moon is also a proud member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 560.

Moon was employed at the St. Cloud VA as an optometrist for 20 years and retired in 2020.

He and his wife, Peggy, have been married 49 years, have two daughters, two grandsons and four granddaughters. She is an Air Force veteran, Alternante NECman and a past commander of the district and department.

Betty Jass has been endorsed for Department of Minnesota sergeant-at-arms for the 2024-25 year by Benjamin A. Remmele Post 7 in Sleepy Eye.

She is eligible for membership in The American Legion through her 22 years of military service in the U.S. Air Force, retiring in 1997.

Jass is a past department chaplain and a 2021 graduate of Minnesota Legion College. She serves on the Credentials Committee and is a member of the American Legion Riders, with Bricelyn Chapter 165.

At the national level, she has served on the National Cemetery Committee since 2021.

Within the 2nd District, Jass

has been vice commander and historian, as well as serving on committees for Safety Patrol, Membership, National Security and Public Relations. She served two years on the Legionville Board of Directors.

With Post 7, she is a 27-year PUFL member. She presently serves as adjutant and membership director. She also has served as 2nd vice commander and service officer. She is a member of the Sleepy Eye Honor Guard.

In her community, Jass is the president of the Ranchland Homeowners Association,



Betty Jass

president of the National Catholic Society of Foresters and chairwoman for the National Catholic Society of Foresters Compensation Committee.

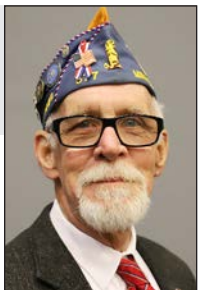
Jass resides in Lake Crystal and has two daughters, Sandra and Teresa. Sandra recently retired from the Air Force after 25 years and is a Post 7 member. Teresa was a National Guard member for six years and was a Legionnaire before her death in 2012.

Jass has a passion to help her fellow veterans and their families.

The SAL Update:

Detachment commander

John Weiss



Hello, Minnesota American Legion Family, my name is John Weiss. I was elected Detachment of Minnesota commander of the Sons of The American Legion at our convention at Anoka Post 102 on June 24.

I am honored to have been chosen to lead this great organization. My theme for the year is "Honoring the Past while Moving Forward."

I have chosen two worthy foundations for my projects. The first is the American Legion Veterans & Children's Foundation. The second one is the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund (aka Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 85).

The Veterans Assistance Fund is truly in dire need of our support. It is administered by the

Department of Minnesota American Legion and its aim is to give grant funding to our Minnesota veterans in need. So I hope you will be generous with your support.

Once again, I am honored to have been chosen to be the Detachment of Minnesota Sons of the American Legion commander, and I will strive to do the best job that I possibly can.

Yours in Service for God and Country,

John Weiss of St Paul Arcade-Phalen Squadron 577 is the commander of the Detachment of Minnesota for the Sons of The American Legion.



Leading candidate for national vice commander, Robert Bristo, addresses the Detachment of Minnesota Convention in Anoka in June.



National Vice Commander David Mannel smiles for the camera at the detachment convention in Anoka.



Outgoing Detachment Commander Tim Weaver receives his squadron cap from his wife, Michelle.

This membership goal is a real possibility

By Gary Richardson
Membership Director

Greetings, Minnesota Sons of the American Legion! As your new Detachment membership director, I am going to challenge each squadron in the state to get at least one new member and 100 percent renewal of all members currently active. I believe this is an achievable goal for the Detachment of Minnesota.

I need all SAL district commanders to get their membership directors' contact information, to include their email addresses

and phone numbers, to me as soon as possible so that we can get a viable program established for the detachment.

You can send this to: bnrider3@gmail.com or call me at 612-749-5711. Each squadron should have received their membership packets by now. If not, PLEASE call me as soon as possible!

Membership is critical to the operation of our organization and the support of our American Legion. I look forward to working with each of you this year to achieve our goals.



Incoming Detachment Commander John Weiss addresses the convention, held June 23-24 at Anoka Post 102.

Department of Minn. Commander's Project

WHOA!

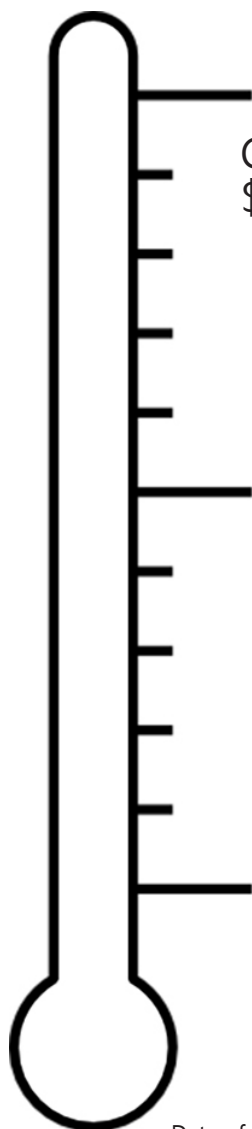
Department Commander Paul Hassing's Project raises funds for the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund, which operates under the Minnesota American Legion Foundation.

Mail to American Legion Dept. of Minnesota, 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000.

Make checks out to: **Minnesota American Legion Foundation**
Memo: **Fund 82.**

82 is the fund for the commander's project. The foundation is a 501(c)3. Gambling funds are permitted.

Goal: \$100,000



Date of graphic: July 19



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'We look out for other brothers and sisters'

Continued from Page 1

be somebody else.

2. Reach out to people of other faiths. We are not a church. Reach out to people without faith and provide guidance for them.

3. Keep in mind we cannot do what we do without the full American Legion Family.

Greetings

The convention was greeted by Robert Larson, president of the Lower Sioux Indian Community.

"We at the Lower Sioux have always held our warriors, our veterans, in high regard," he said. "The folks that defend and fight for the way of life that their people want, so we are proud and happy that you have chosen this venue and that we can host you. We're thankful for you."

He mentioned his uncle, who died and was buried in Germany fighting for the United States.

Redwood Falls Mayor Tom Quackenbush said Redwood Falls is humbled to have been selected as the site for the new state veterans cemetery. He encouraged Legion Family members to go by the site on the drive between the casino and the city.

"I would also like to thank all of you for your service and dedication to The American Legion," he said. "Your tireless efforts to support the veterans and their families, promote patriotism and strengthen our communities are truly inspiring."

Foundation

Lloyd Ricker, chairman of the Minnesota American Legion Foundation, said the foundation has \$600,672 in cash and checking. It has \$1.39 million in investments, and its total net worth is \$1.99 million as of the end of June.

Ricker passed out a new brochure for the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund, which is the foundation's Fund 85. He encouraged everyone to take several back to their communities.

He also said the foundation's overall brochure has been revised to reflect the addition of the John Zgoda Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt. Both brochures have QR codes, too.

He said Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund can help veterans, vetted by a post, for up to \$5,000 each. He said the fund has spent \$223,777 aiding veterans in need.

"People that are down and out, lost their job, wife ends up with cancer," Ricker said.

In the last quarter, the fund spent \$37,968.

"There is a need out there. We are very happy to come up with this brochure," he said.

Contact Department HQ if you wish to receive copies of the brochure in the mail.

Ricker also noted the Riders will have a Fund 85 Run on Aug. 19, starting and finishing at Forest Lake Post 225. He turned the podium over to Assistant DSO Janet Lorenzo to share some stories of helping veterans.

In one, Lorenzo described helping a female veteran who served two tours in Iraq, returning home in 2021. The transition was difficult. She had flashbacks of losing battle buddies. She was diagnosed with PTSD, anxiety and severe depression. DSO Ray Kane and Lorenzo connected her to a CVSO. She was diagnosed and awarded 80 percent disability. The Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund was able to keep her and her children housed just in time for her rating.

Lorenzo quoted the mother:

"I am a divorced single mom and a combat veteran. In the last couple of years since divorcing from my children's father due to his PTSD and substance abuse disorder, I have



Conventions are a time for debate and discussion on what The American Legion ought to be doing to serve veterans. Above, members of the 10th District converge on the convention floor to hash out their stance on an issue.



A color guard from New Prague Post 45 posted the colors at the start of the convention on July 13.



A color guard from Bloomington Post 550 retired the colors at the close of the convention on July 15.

struggled to keep a roof over my head while caring for my children and working two full-time jobs. ... Without the MVAFF grant, I would be on the streets and unable to recover. ... I can't thank The American Legion enough for their help."

Lorenzo's other story is detailed by Kane himself in a first-person account on Page 10.

Sons of The American Legion

The Minnesota Sons of The American Legion, at their convention in Anoka, elected John Weiss of Squadron 577 as the detachment commander to the two-year term. The detachment elected David Vulcan as the National Executive Committeeman.

SAL National Commander Christopher Carlton of Indiana visited the Minnesota SAL Spring Conference in Rochester. SAL National Vice Commander David Mennel visited the

Detachment Convention in Anoka.

The 2024 Detachment Spring Conference and Convention both will happen at Forest Lake Post 225. The 2024 budget for the detachment is \$90,900.

In the past year, the detachment raised \$9,600 for the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, placing second in the Central Region.

The John Zgoda Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt at Legionville takes place Oct. 3-8.

Departing Commander Tim Weaver said the detachment has created two new awards: SAL Member of the Year and Auxiliary Member of the Year. This is in addition to the existing award Legionnaire of the Year.

Auxiliary and SAL Members of the Year were Diane and Steve Sullivan. Jim Kellogg was Legionnaire of the Year.

Weiss said his commander's project

will benefit two causes. One is the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund and the other is the Veterans & Children's Foundation.

Finance Committee

The Department of Minnesota revenue exceeded expenses by \$535,346 as of June 30, reported Finance Committee Chairman Carl Moon. However, he noted the fiscal year doesn't end until Sept. 30.

As of May 30, fixed-income investments were \$1.9 million, with annual income from it at \$60,907. Stocks were at \$1.14 million, with estimated annual income of \$23,487.

He asked for committee chairs, if they think they might exceed their budgets, to notify the comptroller and him. "Please do not assume all can or will be honored," Moon said.

The Finance Committee meets in September at Elk River Post 112 to budget for 2023-24. The next Finance Committee chairman is Dennis Delong of Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435.

MACVSO

Many veterans think the county veteran service officers are the VA, said Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers President Martin Howes of Roseau County.

"I'm going to see my VA officer. I'm going to talk to the VA today," he said, describing such conversations.

"Well, close, but not quite close enough. We are county employees. We are not the VA. And that's where the true advocacy comes in," he said.

He said other states ask him how Minnesota is able to provide such strong support. He tells them it is because of support from the veterans organizations: The American Legion, VFW, DAV, JWV, Amvets and so on.

"We look out for other brothers and sisters," he said.

Minnesota CTF

Mick Aguirre, chairman of the Minnesota Commander's Task Force and immediate past commander of the DAV of Minnesota, noted this past legislative session witnessed a second veterans and military omnibus bill and \$90 million for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. He said the efforts to prevent reduction in e-tab revenue failed.

Legislative

Department of Minnesota Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo took the microphone with a member of her committee, Mike Parry, a former state senator from Waseca.

Minnesotan Legionnaires, they said,

traveled to Washington, D.C., in March to speak with their senators and representatives about veterans issues.

In St. Paul, much of the Legislative Committee's efforts focused on educating state lawmakers. They explained why the omnibus bill was important.

"We don't want to be pawns anymore," Parry said. "We want our own bills in our own package. We don't want to be used to pass this. We don't want to be the poison pill not to pass this. They understood that."

The infrastructure bill included \$77.7 million for work at the Hastings Veterans Home to replace many buildings. This funding will allow federal funds to assist in the construction.

Lawmakers expanded the Post-9/11 Bonus bill, allowing veterans who are Minnesota residents but didn't enter the military in Minnesota to take advantage of the bonus and bringing in veterans who served in Operation Inherent Resolve.

More details of the last session were available in the June issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire.

As for charitable gambling, Parry summed it up: "We took it in the shorts, folks. I'm sorry," he told the convention. "And it all happened behind closed doors. And I'll just say, as a former state senator, I have never seen such a strong coalition to have some of my colleagues tell me straightforward that they would never, ever vote for anything that would even harm veterans and their families, and then they turn around and they vote the opposite direction."

He added that his colleagues told him they do not recall any single issue where they got more email, mail and phone calls than they received on the matter of e-tabs.

"I believe when we come back this next legislative session, and we ask for a bigger tax break on gambling, I believe we are going to get it," he said.

"You've given charities a black eye," Janigo added. "Now how are you going to help us move forward?"

Training

The Training Committee finished its fourth Minnesota Legion College in April and is hosting its fifth on Oct. 12-15, said Chairman Michael Ash.

Chaplain Kelley Adelsman held well-attended online chaplain training sessions.

In addition to learning more about leadership, Legion College graduates appreciate the statewide networking they form with other veterans, he said.

Media & Communications

Chairwoman Teresa Ash brought her committee members up on stage and thanked them one by one for the social media, the videos, the livestreams and photography they performed all year. Each received a personalized trophy.

Baseball & Softball

Baseball Director Randy Schaub, a member of Olivia Squadron 186, told how he played Legion Baseball for Albert Lea Post 56 and began coaching Legion Baseball right after high school. He was 21 when he became the head coach of Post 56's baseball team.

He later coached in Sacred Heart and won the state title in 2000. He moved into organizing tournaments in the 7th District and eventually became the 7th District baseball director. Then-Department Commander Mark Dvorak appointed him state baseball director in 2019, and he was reappointed by Commander Jennifer Havlick this past year.

He ran through postseason locations (since finished by the time you read this) and thanked his committee and its staff for all they do, making Minnesota

Continued on Page 9



Back row, from left, are district commanders Mark Maloney of the 1st, Rod Reifsteck of the 3rd, Teresa Ash of the 4th, Dick Ward of the 5th, Anthony Koop of the 6th, Jan Ekert of the 7th, Jennifer Havlick of the 8th, Steve NaSalle of the 9th and Matt Berens of the 10th. In the front row are Department of Minnesota officers. From left are Commander Paul Hassing, Adjutant Mike Maxa, Membership Director Pam Krill, Vice Commander 1&3 Chuck Stone, Vice Commander 2&7 Victor Gades, Vice Commander 4&5 Lynne Nottage, Vice Commander 8&10 William Gordon, Vice Commander 6&9 Paul Edwards, Chaplain Dean Knutson, Historian Christopher Anderson, Sergeant-at-Arms Brad Pagel, Judge Advocate Gregory Colby, NECman Bill Barbknecht and Alternate NECman Peggy Moon. The next issue will have a page showing headshots of each of the department officers and district commanders, along with the official bio of the new department commander.

Continued from Page 8

the best Legion Baseball program in the country.

“It’s truly a team effort that makes this happen, and thank you for giving your time and allowing me to talk to all you fine veterans,” Schaub said.

Fastpitch Softball Director Mike Arvidson, a member of Detroit Lakes Squadron 15, said the first tournament in Mankato was successful.

“First pitch. Flyover with planes. It was magical. It really was. I couldn’t believe how well it went,” Arvidson said.

This year, the tournament is in New York Mills (also finished by the time you read this).

“Our biggest struggle so far has been kind of getting connected with the coaches who run the teams and actually put them together,” he said.

He noted how Legion Baseball is the oldest youth baseball program in the nation and began without competition. Legion Softball, however, faces stiff competition from club teams.

“It’s just hard to get people to change something that isn’t quite broken, even if maybe we have a better product financially or more opportunity, especially out in the rural areas,” Arvidson said.

He thanked the Fastpitch Softball Committee for all of its hard work.

Armed Forces Service Center

Liaison David Dahl, immediate past commander of the 4th District, described how for 49 years the Armed Forces Service Center at Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport never closed. The pandemic shut it down, and when it reopened, there weren’t enough volunteers to remain open 24 hours.

He asked for volunteers to help the place get back to full time. Visit mnafsc.org and click on “volunteer.”

Dahl encouraged posts to donate to the Armed Forces Service Center and he is hoping to send out request letters to post gambling committees.

Judge Advocate

Department Judge Advocate said some posts struggle as a result of individual behavior of some of their members, often leaders at that.

1. Veterans badmouthing other veterans. “Since the Civil War, veterans have been working, fighting and lobbying to get services. Why on earth would we badmouth each other?”

2. Some posts are blowing off the suggestions for improvement made by district commanders and adjutants. Sometimes, it is because the one making a suggestion is female. He said it is imperative for posts to follow their constitutions and bylaws, to have elections, take care of money and give due process.

“A lot of people are looking for the department to solve post problems,” Colby said. “The post has more authority than the department to solve the issue.”



The convention was graced at its start by National Chaplain Mark Antal. Though a member of the Department of North Dakota, he resides in Apple Valley.

American Legion Family Hospital Association

Abbreviated as ALFHA, it is a 501(c)3 organization. Twenty-five cents from every member’s dues goes to the association. Chairman Robert Bristo said members can contact the department to apply for relief from hospital expenses. He said a claims coordinator will contact members over the phone and the medical provider to negotiate the amount owed.

“We are there for you, and we will always be there for you,” Bristo said.

Children & Youth

Chairwoman Karen Welander announced award winners:

- Category 1: Lyle Post 105
- Category 2: Fairmont Post 36
- Category 3: Fridley Post 303
- Category 4: Duluth Post 71

Posts she recognized for meritorious service are Denham Post 361, Nisswa Post 627, Little Falls Post 46 and Park Rapids Post 212.

Steve Fosness of Fairmont Post 36 was the winner of the Jim Oldenburg Award.

Americanism

Chairwoman Tess Davis listed winners of Americanism awards. They were:

- Americanism Service Award: Litchfield Post 104
- Lyndale Community Service Award: Willmar Post 167
- Hanson Education Trophy: Eden Valley Post 337
- Frank J. Ring Boy Scout Trophy: Olivia Post 186

The Americanism awards by district were:

- District 1: Claremont Post 422
- District 2: Sleepy Eye Post 7
- District 3: New Prague Post 45
- District 4: North St. Paul Post 39
- District 5: Viking Post 493
- District 6: Hill City Post 340
- District 7: Clinton Post 258

District 8: Ely Post 248

District 9: Parkers Prairie Post 219

District 10: North Branch Post 85

Membership

Membership Director Linda Dvorak said Minnesota currently is at 31st place in the nation for the 2023 membership year, standing at 91.87 percent. She noted the membership year actually wraps up Dec. 31.

“So you can still be recruiting for 2023,” she said.

Within the department, the standings were:

First place: 9th District, 95.19 percent

Second place: 6th District, 94.81 percent

Third place: 1st District, 94.41 percent

Fourth place: 8th District

Fifth place: 2nd District

Sixth place: 3rd District

Seventh place: 7th District

Eighth place: 10th District

Ninth place: 4th District

Tenth place: 5th District

Dvorak said there are 1,869 members in Post 1982 AD, the statewide at-large post.

“Those are all members we can try to get into our posts,” she said.

They often don’t renew because no one reaches out to them.

The winner of the Premier Race was 1st District Commander Mary Hanson. Silver Brigade winners were Don Skow and Dean Londo of Forest Lake Post 225. The New Member Award went to Terry Larson of Post 225. The award for transferring the most members from Post 1982 went to Carl Moon of the 6th District.

American Legion Riders

Director Ted Berg gave thanks to the 1st District Riders for showing

up with a \$13,000 check for Eagle’s Healing Nest. He thanked everyone he worked with the past two years of his term, and he introduced the state’s first non-Legion director, Auxiliary member Jody Hassing.

She said many people know her from being chairwoman of the Legacy Run for the past two years and secretary since the start.

“I felt it was time to show the Legion Family that an Auxiliary member can also be the director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders,” she said.

Her husband, Paul Hassing, was elected department commander. Jody Hassing is with Bloomington Unit 550. He is with Post 550. They both live in Montgomery.

She described the Minnesota Legacy Run’s route: North Branch on July 26, then to Walker, then Thief River Falls, then Moorhead and down to Spicer.

Minnesota turned in \$1.5 million for the Legacy Scholarship since its

inception, she said.

Junior Shooting Sports

See Chairman Jared Sturgill’s report on Page 13.

Safety School Patrol

Chairman Jim Blakesley announced the winner of the Safety School Patrol’s Distinguished Service Trophy is Past Department Commander Mark Dvorak.

Other reports & VFW

Several reports were previously described in past issues of the Legionnaire, such as Law & Order, Oratorical Contest, Education and Bowling, among others.

The new commander of the VFW Department of Minnesota, Dan Meyer, spoke, too. He said the Legion and VFW need to work together. He called for members to join each other to up membership rolls. “We are all on the same side,” he told the convention.



Legionnaires at the convention salute the colors during the playing of “The Star-Spangled Banner” on July 15.



The 9th District Band was present on the final day of the convention to provide patriotic music.

Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund saves lives, offers hope for comrades

In a harrowing late-night incident, a Minnesota veteran's life was saved thanks to the timely intervention of a dedicated individual trained in suicide prevention. The sound of a loaded gun being chambered, a chilling noise etched into the memory of any servicemember, was the desperate cry for help that sparked a race against time to prevent a tragic outcome.

Receiving a distress call at the unholy hour of 3 a.m., I, still groggy from sleep, found myself thrust into a critical situation. It was a fellow veteran on the other end of the line, consumed by overwhelming despair and contemplating taking their own life. The urgency of the situation heightened as the veteran mentioned the imminent arrival of their grandchildren the next morning.

Using the training acquired through his military service and participation in programs like Psych Armor, I employed crisis intervention techniques, keeping the distraught veteran engaged on the phone. Every ounce of knowledge gained through suicide prevention education became a lifeline for both the vulnerable individual on the brink and me.

Following the successful intervention, immediate steps were taken to secure professional assistance. The Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund (aka Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 85), a vital American Legion resource dedicated to supporting veterans in crisis, stepped in to provide crucial financial aid. This lifeline ensured that the veteran could access treatment, including seeing a psychologist and receive the ongoing care they desperately needed.

The Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund has been a beacon of hope for struggling veterans in its two years of existence, offering a safety net when they find themselves at their lowest point. By dedicating resources to this life-saving initiative, the coalition behind the fund seeks to ensure that no veteran is left without support in their darkest hour, our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

VA & Rehabilitation

Ray Kane



This incident serves as a stark reminder of the importance of ongoing training and development in suicide prevention efforts. With countless lives hanging in the balance, it is incumbent upon us all to hone our skills and contribute to the collective mission of saving veterans from the clutches of despair.

Tomorrow holds the promise of a brighter future for struggling veterans, but only if we remain committed to their well-being and offer the unwavering support they so desperately need. By coming together as a community, we can make a difference and save lives.

In this case, we were able to avert tragedy. The incident underscores the broader issue of veteran suicide, which continues to be a pressing concern. The Minnesota American Legion Family Suicide Prevention Coalition urges individuals, orga-



Scan with phone to donate

nizations and policymakers to rally behind the cause, directing additional funding and resources to combat this crisis.

Partnering with the coalition has further fortified the impacted need for Fund 85. This collaboration brings together various stakeholders, including mental health professionals, community organizations — and veterans themselves — to develop and implement comprehensive suicide prevention strategies. Through shared expertise and resources, these entities are working collectively to save lives and support our veterans in crisis.

One of the critical aspects of this collaboration is the emphasis

on training and development. The coalition conducts workshops and educational programs, equipping our Legion Family with the necessary tools to identify warning signs and intervene effectively. By disseminating knowledge and awareness about mental health issues, they empower communities to actively participate in suicide prevention efforts.

The combined efforts of the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund (Fund 85) and the Suicide Prevention Coalition have already yielded significant results. By ensuring that veterans receive the necessary support and connecting them to appropriate care through the VA, and other committed organizations lives have been saved, and individuals have found renewed hope. However, there is still much work to be done to combat this complex issue comprehensively.

In the spirit of The American Legion's commitment to veterans' welfare and rehabilitation, it is vital that we continue to shed light on the challenges faced by our servicemen and women after their return from duty. By raising awareness through articles like this one, we can inspire others to get involved and contribute to the cause of suicide prevention.

Together, we can make a significant impact and show our unwavering support for our veterans in their time of need. Fund 85 is in need of donations to keep this vital program solvent. Please donate to Minnesota American Legion Foundation — and in the memo write "Fund 85." Be The One.

Ray Kane is the department service officer for The American Legion Department of Minnesota. He is an accredited veterans service officer and a member of Hastings Post 47.

Goal is to report successes of Riders

I am so excited to be your new director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders! I am honored to be the first non-Legionnaire elected to this position.

I look forward to working with the leadership from the rest of the Legion Family. Commander Paul Hassing (yes, he is my husband), President Sharon Cross and Detachment Commander John Weiss.

The beginning of the Legion year is busy, especially for us Riders! I hope to see many of you during the Legacy Run July 27-30 whether it is for one hour, one day or the whole run. The times and stops for this year's run are posted on www.mnlegacyrun.org.

On Aug. 19, we have the second annual Fund 85 Run. This year we will start and end at Forest Lake Post 225.

Legion Riders

Jody Hassing



Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. Kickstands go up at 9:30 a.m. At the end of August, we will head to Charlotte for the American Legion National Convention and will turn-in the money raised during the Legion Run.

Umm, can we maintain first place? Virginia has announced their run raised \$102,000. I challenge Minnesota to beat that total. After the National Convention is the Camporee (Sept. 7-10), and then the Romp (Sept. 14-17); both events are at Legionville. All Legion Family members are welcome to come to the Romp and learn more about your Legion Riders.

I know there are many other chapter runs and fundraisers happening across the state and that the chapters around the state of Minnesota support many different causes. My goal this year is to report all our successes to the Legion so that everyone in the Legion Family knows what the Riders do.

God bless and keep the rubber side down.

Jody Hassing of Bloomington Unit 550 is the director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders.

Stripping features from e-tabs will hurt nonprofits across Minn.

Congratulations to Commander Paul Hassing and your entire team. We must ALL work harder at signing up new members and stop the slide in membership.

How is your post doing with that? The new commander's post in Bloomington has a good idea. It is working with a company to create a website where the members can join or renew online, in addition to seeing photos and information showing how they help their community.

Good luck to SAL Commander John Weiss and Auxiliary President Sharon Cross. We are looking forward to a great year in membership for SAL and Auxiliary also.

Another great year was had at Minnesota Boys State. Well over 200 young men attended. Also, I'm hearing Minnesota Girls State as well. A fine opportunity for those completing their junior year in high school.

Congratulations to Sgt. Scott Kostonyz, as Law Officer of the Year from Moorehead.

People were very disappointed in our state legislators and governor, stripping away features from e-pulltabs, then giving a very tiny tax decrease.

National Report

Bill Barbknecht



They don't seem to care that the money goes to help our youth programs, food shelves, fire departments, city and county governments, veterans homes and cemeteries, schools, Legionville, MACV, 23rd Veteran, Legion Baseball, Scouts, local sports, parks and many other nonprofit efforts in our communities.

We let them know the mistake they were making. Lawmakers even told us they had never heard so much feedback on a single issue. Good job telling them, everyone.

We need to take back what they allowed one group to take away. Could this be called discrimination against charities? Elections will be so important in 2024, as you have seen what happens when one party is in control of the House and Senate. No matter either party.

As we get ready for the 104th National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., we always look forward to all the speakers, especially the youth. That certainly makes The American Legion

stand out as to what we do for children and families.

It is not too early to start planning your Veterans Day plans. Nov. 11 is on a Saturday, so contact your school about a program and maybe your post can do something for all veterans as well.

I want to thank all of you for your trust in me and electing me as your NECman. I try very hard to work for all veterans and do what is best for The American Legion.

Donna and I look forward to seeing many of you in the coming months. Help another veteran if you can. They need us as we need them.

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

Bill Barbknecht of Underwood Post 489 is the Department of Minnesota's National Executive Committeeman.

Be thinking now for Boys State kids

Enrollment at this past Minnesota Boys State was up from a year ago! We are grateful for that, and thank you for your efforts in recruitment. When I was a high school coach of various sports, I realized that the best recruiters were the kids themselves.

Some athletes came out because other coaches or I spoke with them, but the majority of the participants came because friends told them about the positives of being involved. I believe the same is true for our program.

Parades at summer celebrations and county fairs provide

Minn. Boys State

Neil Kruse



avenues for promoting the Boys State program. Help your recent attendees set up a booth at the celebrations, get a pickup, car or float in the parade, then hand out material to prospects and their parents.

Get next year's juniors thinking about the awesome experience they can have at the 75th offering of American Legion Boys State. It's OK to let them know attending will also open doors to scholarships! Resumes

are enhanced with this added to the list of activities they've participated in.

Thank you for helping us develop civic-minded individuals in your communities!

Neil Kruse is a counselor for Minnesota American Legion Boys State.



Ashley Stai
Outgoing Minnesota American Legion Riders Director Ted Berg presents a check for his project, Forgotten Heroes Range & Retreat, north of McGregor. From left are Paul Hassing, Jody Hassing, Ted Berg, Bret Sample and Brenda Evencevich. The Riders raised over \$15,000 for the retreat. Sample runs the nonprofit, and it was built in memory of Evencevich's husband, a Vietnam veteran. The range is designed to be accessible for the physically disabled. Visit forgottenheroesmn.org.

Listening Post



The Walker Post 134 Honor Guard recently installed a bronze marker and rendered honors for a Navy veteran who was an off-duty Minneapolis police officer when he was killed in 1976.



Honor Guard Commander Jeff Anderson presents the U.S. flag to George Partridge Jr.'s daughter, Tina Allen Partridge Thunderhawk.



Walker Honor Guard member Murray Bright, right, presents the family with a hand-crafted flag case.



Post 148 in Dent presented scholarships to Perham High School students on May 24. From left are Robert Wagenman, Olivia Rosenthal, Mya Morris, Micah Thompson, Noah Thompson, Natalie Rooney and Garry Menx.



Fairmont Post 36 recently participated in the Youth for Christ golf fundraiser and donated \$1,000. From left are Post 36 Executive Board member Bob Altman, wife Barb, Youth for Christ Director Chuck Rudolph, Post 36 Finance Officer Jim Miller and wife Gayla.



Farmington Post 189 leads the way for the Farmington Memorial Day Parade.



Hamel Post 394 and VFW Post 5903 hosted training for CPR and AED for 22 members, family and friends. The training was conducted May 22 by the Plymouth Rotary Club's Heart Safe Program (heartsafeplymouth@gmail.com).



St. Stephen Post 221 installed a flag retirement box made of stainless steel at the main intersection in town. It is already being filled with unserviceable flags. Thank you to Two Rivers Enterprise for donating the box.

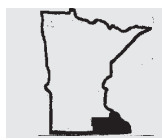


Woodbury Post 501 Commander Bob Dolan presents a certificate of appreciation to Boys State attendee Daniel Clysdales. The teenager told the post that he really enjoyed his time at Boys State. He was elected as the state auditor.



On Saturday, July 1, a decorated vehicle parade was held at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and the Minneapolis Veterans Home as an Independence Day weekend salute to the veterans. The next parade is Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

District commanders



1st District

Mark Maloney



Greetings from the 1st District! I am a PUFL member of Eyota Post 551 and Rochester Squadron 446. My grandfather served in the Army during World War II and my father was in the Air Force during Vietnam.

I began my military service with the Minnesota National Guard from 1983 to 1986. I served in the U.S. Army from 1986 to 1992. I was stationed at Fort Polk, La., and Bamberg, Germany. I was in the Persian Gulf War from 1990 to 1991. After combat, I returned

stateside and served in the Minnesota National Guard Red Bulls from 2004 to 2005.

I would like to thank those who have supported me. I am honored to be elected as commander of the 1st District. My goal is to utilize the technology and education that has been set in place to bring the Legion Family together. Together, we can make great things happen.



2nd District

James Olson



Greetings, 2nd District! My name is James Olson, and I am the newly elected 2nd District commander. I live near Amboy, went to elementary school in Winnebago and graduated from Blue Earth High School. After high school, I went into the Marines where I served as a machine gunner from 2003 to 2006. I joined Lorentz Post 11 in Mankato 19 years ago and have served in various offices there over the years as well as a vice commander and 1st vice commander in the 2nd District.

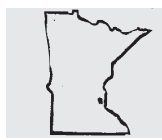
For most of last year, the 2nd District was in first place for membership. Let's get at it this year and remain in first place all year long!

The district vice commanders for this year are: 1st Vice Commander Roxanne Zoet of Madelia Post 19, Kevin Kibler of Blue Earth Post 89, Tom Behrends of

Brewster Post 464 and Stacy Foster of Bricelyn Post 165. Expect to see them visiting your post meetings and know that they are there to help your respective posts in any way they can.

I will do my best to visit as many posts as I can. With 78 posts in the district, it may not be possible. We are trying something new. Each month, I, along with the Auxiliary president, SAL commander and Riders director, will get out on what we're calling the Commanders & Presidents Tour.

We hope to visit each county in the district and would invite everyone in the district to attend the events when they can. Watch the district newsletter for more information.



4th District

Teresa Ash



As I assume the role of commander for the 4th District, I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the trust and confidence you have bestowed upon me. It is with immense pride and humility that I accept this position, and I promise to dedicate my utmost efforts to uphold the values and traditions of our esteemed organization.

First and foremost, I want to thank my predecessor, Commander David Dahl, for his exemplary leadership and dedication.

We have made significant changes to the district leadership. We have a young cadre of leaders who are being mentored by senior leadership. Great things will happen.

As we look forward to the future, I am excited to share some of the great plans we have in store for our 4th District

American Legion. Our core mission of supporting veterans, promoting patriotism and strengthening our local communities remains at the heart of everything we do. Here are some of the key initiatives we will be focusing on:

Our collective passion and dedication will be the driving force behind our success in the coming year. Together, we can build an even stronger 4th District American Legion and continue to make a positive impact on the lives of our fellow veterans and citizens.

Let us look ahead with optimism, determination and a strong sense of purpose. Together, we will create a bright future for the 4th District American Legion.



5th District

Dick Ward



As I look forward to my second term as commander of The Fighting 5th District, I am reminded of those Legionnaires who supported me then and those who support me now. Thanks for your vote of confidence.

Past 5th District Commander Lynne Nottage built a strong foundation for

supporting our future progress. I wish to acknowledge her efforts and wish Lynne well in her new role as department vice commander for the 4th and 5th districts. Thanks, and good luck, Lynne!

We plan to use the foundation that Lynne built as a springboard for an amazing year. Membership was strong at the end of July 2023, and we plan to continue that focus throughout the entire year. We have a great team in place and lots of new activities are in the works. Parades, blood drive, speakers at joint sessions of the 5th District Legion Family and many more ideas are contemplated. Stay tuned!

The 104th Department of Minnesota Annual Convention was a resounding success, and we look forward to working with Paul Hassing, our new department commander. Congratulations, Commander Paul.

New membership packages have been distributed to every post, and once again we begin our quest for membership and the benefits to all veterans derived from that effort. The American Legion supports many people and programs and strong membership is the backbone of that effort.

"To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."



6th District

Anthony Koop



What a wonderful department convention this year and congratulations to all the incoming 2023-2024 leadership!

It was great to reconnect with so many members across our great state and make many more friends. There was much to learn and we certainly kept busy.

My theme is "Better Together. Stronger Together," which focuses on the importance of working together and building relationships between our veterans, the American Legion Family, and communities to strengthen our organization to better serve our mission.

My Commander's Project is raising money for Legionville Educational Center & Summer Camp. Though Legionville is a department program, it is in our district, and we want to lead the way in supporting and utilizing it. I am hoping that all our Minnesota posts and units are sponsoring

students to attend these summer camps.

I hope to see all of you at Legionville Camporee (Sept. 7-10) and Harvest Rally (Sept. 9)!

My membership challenge is recruiting two (or more!) new members from the Gulf War era to current. The American Legion as a whole needs to be recruiting, mentoring, and training those that will become the future leaders of our great organization. This, of course, does not mean we lose focus on other eligible veterans from ALL eras.

Membership is everyone's job. Let's get new members in by giving them a reason to join and just as importantly, a reason to stay. Find a position or committee that they may like and help them learn the way!



7th District

Jan Ekert



Greetings to all of my fellow Legionnaires.

Congratulations to Paul Hassing, our new department commander and his new and returning officers.

Wow! What a fabulous start to a year of representing the Mighty 7th. As we start another year, I want to congratulate all of the districts on the long hard road we traveled in renewing and recruiting members. We need to use all of the tools that are available to us in explaining to our fellow veterans the benefits gained for them through The American Legion.

At the 104th Department Convention, another resolution was sent forward recommending additional benefits be afforded to veterans. At a state legislative level this past year, the biggest benefit was the Veterans & Military Omnibus Bill. See what we can accomplish when we stand as a group; our voices are strong and loud and cannot be ignored. We stand strong as a group.

The Four Pillars of The American Legion address many things. I think the Preamble says it all in an easy and forthright manner.

To all of the district executive officers as well as all of the committee chairman, I want to say thank you for stepping up to or remaining at the plate. It is your experience, knowledge and willingness to serve that will make the tasks we face easier. We are a great team.

To all of the members of the 7th District, I look forward to your support, input and even criticism, because that is how we develop solutions and make things happen. Together we will do amazing things.

Again, I look forward to this year and serving as your commander.

Remember our strength lies in our numbers. *Veterans helping veterans.*



8th District

Jennifer Havlick



Greetings, 8th District Legionnaires. Well, we are at that time of the year when our officers change. I will be your 8th District commander for 2023-2024.

The first order of business is to get all our post officer lists into department. The only way we can effectively communicate with you all is if we have an up-to-date officer list for your post. Please *do not* use the [same as last] box. Please complete the entire form. If you do not have a post officer form, contact me and I will get you one.

The fastest way to communicate that form to department is at mpadilla@mnlegion.org or district is via email at eighth-districtlegionmn@gmail.com.

We are looking for 8th District committee chairs for our programs, so if you are interested,

please contact me as soon as possible. You can see a list

of programs on our 8th District website at www.americanlegiondistrict8mn.com.

If you need assistance with membership processing through mylegion.org please do not hesitate to contact myself or one of our district vice commanders. We are working on setting up our Fall, Mid-Winter and District conventions for 2024 and will send notification as soon as we have confirmed the dates and locations. If a post would like to host any of these district events, please contact me as soon as possible.

I look forward to working with you all this year.



9th District

Steve NaSalle



Greetings, Legion Family from the Roaring 9th District!

First, I would like to thank outgoing 9th District Commander Terry Buraas and the 9th District officers for a job well-done from 2021 - 2023. Thank you, Terry!

Second, I want to thank all the 9th District posts for making the 9th District the first place membership winner in our great state of Minnesota, as announced at the Department Convention. Congratulations, 9th District! What a wild ride!

Lastly, I want to thank my home post, Underwood Post 489, for their support and confidence in supporting my election as your 9th District commander. Although the 9th District is in first place for membership, we still have some work to do. Currently, we have some posts in our district that are struggling, so I am asking for everyone's assistance. Therefore, I am asking for a team effort from all of our posts.

If your post is doing well, and the post closest to your post is not, please offer your post's assistance to help them get up to speed. Our strength is our ability to work as a team.

In addition, 9th District vice commanders and I have been tasked to visit your posts. Please welcome our visits as a positive influence and tool to meet

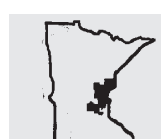
your post's goals for the 2023-24 fiscal year. We are here to help!

Remember, our Legion family (Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and the ALR) work together in support of our veterans, veterans families and our communities. Always remember our Four Pillars, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism and our Children & Youth.

As always, please submit your Consolidated Post Report (CPR) and your Post Service Officer's Report (PSO) before the cutoff dates. These reports are very important, not only for your post, but our district, department and national as well.

In closing, I am sending out a challenge and incentives to the 9th District for 100 percent membership goals, and have, at least, one representative from your post to attend our district meetings (in person or on Zoom).

Also, I am setting up a time, date and place for mylegion.org training, so we can make our membership experience a lot easier moving forward. Let's make this fiscal year one of the best we have ever had! I look forward to a great year.



10th District

Matthew Berens



Greetings to all of the men, women and children of the Minnesota American Legion Family. I would like to first extend a sincere thanks for being elected as your incoming commander for the Mighty 10th District. I'm a proud Air Force veteran, serving six years of active duty and 14 years in the Minnesota Air National Guard.

I'm very excited to be working with some of the finest people in the American Legion. Paul Orson will serve as my adjutant.

He has already proven to be a wealth of knowledge.

Kristy Janigo has agreed to come on board as our eager and capable membership director. Past Department Commander Darrel Redepenning is serving as judge advocate. We are definitely thankful to have his wisdom

Continued on Page 13



Junior Shooting Sports

Editor's note: This is the annual report from the chairman.

The 2022-23 season began with a new shooter orientation in October. This is a great opportunity for juniors who may have heard about the sport of rifle through the Game Fair or maybe just word of mouth. They come to learn about the sport and try shooting air rifles to see if they would like to pursue it further. If so, they are invited to join the club and start weekly practices with the team. This season we picked up 3 new competitors, a boy and two girls.

Competition didn't begin for the juniors until December with the Minnesota Air Gun Championship (MAG). This match is an "open" match allowing adults and juniors to compete together. It is also open to air pistol competitors. Overall, all high competitors earn a Minnesota State Champion Title from the Minnesota Rifle & Revolver Association (MRRRA).

Later in December, a couple of junior athletes traveled to the USA Shooting's Winter Air Gun Championship match at Camp Perry, Ohio. This is another open event allowing the juniors to compete alongside the nation's best, including Olympic athletes.

The U.S. Army National qualifier match was held at St. Thomas Academy. This season

was the first time the Minnesota Centershots did not qualify for the National Championship in eight seasons. Missing out by just a few points finishing 28th — the top 25 teams earning the invite. So close for the group of young juniors!

January saw us return to the Forest Lake Post 225 for the NRA Indoor Junior Air Rifle Sectional Match. It was nice to see our friends at that post back in operation since being shut down from COVID and the loss of their head coach.

January also brought in two matches from the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP). The CMP postal was held in lieu of practice and only for our club. The other match was the CMP State Championship. Both matches serve as a qualification match to attend the CMP Regional match at Camp Perry. This year one of our younger juniors auto-qualified and got to travel to a national event for her first time. She had so much fun while there that she cannot wait to go back again! Which makes the practices more purposeful.

The American Legion Round I postal match was held to determine who will get the second-round set of targets. Of the 220 competitors, only 62 earned that 2nd round set of targets. Of those, three were from Anoka.

From the American Legion Round 2 postal match, only the top 15 earn an invite to attend an all-expenses paid trip to the National Championship at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. From Anoka,

Megan Jaros, finished seventh overall earning her ticket to compete! Congrats, Megan!!

- This is the FOURTH consecutive season that Anoka has sent a junior to Nationals. (Tanner Barth, Allison Buessler and Gavin Barnick were the previous three).

- In February, the USA Shooting Junior Olympic Qualification matches were held. This season FIVE juniors from Anoka earned their invites to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. Three girls and two boys competed alongside 340 other juniors from all 50 states. This match tests the junior's endurance and stress as they compete in higher elevations and in front of many NCAA coaches scouting for talent looking for their next recruits.

- As March approaches, the local air rifle match scene is slowing down and concludes with the CMP State JO Match. This match serves as a qualifier for the CMP Nationals Championship at Camp Perry in July. Once again, the Minnesota Centershots have earned that invite. Now marking the seventh consecutive year to attend the national championship. For many high school graduating seniors, this is their last match. The CMP has many scholarships available for the top scoring graduating seniors.

- To better align with the end of the airgun season, when the athletes are in top-notch performance, the Minnesota Airgun Championship Match was moved from December to April and will now continue in

April going forward. This is the open match to include adults and juniors and open to both air pistol and air rifle. Both with a Minnesota state champion title on the line. This past April, the match grew and even had student athletes from the NDSU marksmanship team travel to compete at Anoka. I hope this trend continues and will eventually become one of the larger air gun match events in the Midwest.

- Once again, it is with pride that we can congratulate another junior being recruited to an NCAA rifle team. This fall, Tanner Barth will be a member of the University of Memphis Tigers! With this signee, the Minnesota Centershots has had 15 athletes attend Division I NCAA rifle teams since 2008!

- Of special note, Eric Zahua, a graduating senior from the St. Thomas Academy rifle team, has earned his appointment and will be attending West Point this fall. Congrats, Eric!

- Now as the weather improves, the juniors will be moving outdoors to compete in the second of this sports discipline: smallbore. Smallbore is a competitive .22 caliber target rifle at a distance of 50 meters. The juniors will learn about weather conditions including wind, rain and, of course, mosquitoes!

- The Minnesota Centershots will co-host a CMP smallbore camp this June at the Minneapolis Rifle Club.

**Jared Sturgill
Chairman
Junior Shooting Sports**

District Commanders

Continued from Page 12

Buffalo Post 270, Greg Hart-

man from Osseo Post 172, and Darrel Jensen from Bruno Post 563. Cliff Newman will be sergeant-at-arms. Butch Dixon is serving as chaplain, and Bruce Kottom is continuing as our finance officer. As our vice commanders, we have Duane Lindquist from Hopkins Post 320, Roger Bilderback from Fridley Post 303, Connie Herzog from

I think I've exceeded my space limit, so I'll be signing off. Feel free to contact me about visiting your posts (preferably on the motorcycle). You can reach me at mtberen@yahoo.com. Have a great summer!



At the convention, St. Louis Park Post 282 donated \$13,500 to the Minnesota American Legion Foundation funds 61, 65, 84, 85 and 86. These were separate checks, but portrayed on one big check for the photo. The funds were for National Emergency Fund, Pheasant Dinner Fund, Legacy Scholarship Fund, Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund and Rehab Veterans Outdoors Fund. From left are Foundation Chairman Lloyd Ricker, Lee Tallakson of Post 282, Commander Jennifer Havlick and Tom Schottenbauer of Post 282.



St. Louis Park Post 282 donated \$2,000 to Legionville. Here, Tom Schottenbauer of Post 282 stands with Legionville President Carl Moon.



Donations made to Jennifer Havlick's Commander's Project on the final day of the convention came from Bloomington Post 550 and Zimmerman Post 560. From left are Paul Hassing of Post 550 and Peggy Moon, Carl Moon and Frank Grittner of Post 560. The posts donated \$1,000 each. Lonsdale Post 586 donated another \$1,000 after the convention.



St. Paul North End Post 474 donated \$1,000 to the Minnesota American Legion Foundation in general. From left are Foundation Chairman Lloyd Ricker, Russell Scheidler of Post 474 and Outgoing Commander Jennifer Havlick.

What's happening?

ADSO named chair of Gambling Control Board

ST. PAUL — The assistant department service officer for The American Legion Department of Minnesota, Janet Lorenzo, has been named chairwoman of the Minnesota Gambling Control Board.



Janet Lorenzo

Her one-year term began July 17. The Inver Grove Heights resident is a member of Hastings Post 47 and previously served on the board as secretary.

Gov. Tim Walz first appointed her to the board in 2021, effective July 1.

Be sure to read the next issue of Gaming News.

Fund 85 Run takes off from Forest Lake

FOREST LAKE — Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 85 is a Minnesota American Legion effort designed to help veterans in need by providing quick funding and help in emergency situations.

The veteran can get quick help at any one of Minnesota's American Legion Posts. However, this fund needs to be refueled as it continues to help our veterans in need of these funds.

Forest Lake Post 225 has taken on the ALR Benefit Ride for Fund 85. It will start at 8:30 a.m. at Post 225, kickstands up at 9 a.m.

The tour heads to Arcadia, Wis., 150 miles down the road to the largest military memorial park west of Washington, D.C.

Lunch will be available in Arcadia. Take a two-hour tour through the park and head back to Forest Lake.

Upon arrival at 6 p.m. there will be food and beverages available. There will be a chase vehicle in tow with sodas, water, and tools if needed.

"I have shared this run with many people over the years and they all have enjoyed it and been inspired by the experience and camaraderie," said Jody Hassing, director the Minnesota American Legion Riders.

St. Cloud VA director to retire

ST. CLOUD — Brent A. Thelen, director of the St. Cloud VA Health Care System since September 2019, in July announced his retirement from VA service effective on Sept. 29.

In a statement to employees, Thelen said "After over 20 years in VA, several years in private sector manufacturing and almost ten years in the U.S. Air Force it's time to place my family first."

Thelen provided leadership and strategic guidance to a health care system with 388 multidisciplinary beds providing treatment in psychiatry, general medicine and extended care.

The St. Cloud VA serves a population of over 38,000 veterans per year in a 27-county area in central and west central Minnesota and includes the VA medical center in St. Cloud and three VA clinics located in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria. The St. Cloud VA employs about 1,925 employees and operates with an annual

budget of approximately \$537 million.

"When I arrived here in September 2019, I knew we wanted to continue to progress on the organization's high reliability journey. I had no idea that a pandemic was around the corner and that it would consume the next three years of our lives, both at work and at home. However, through our team's hard work and dedication, we've continued to deliver excellent care to our veterans in the face of a pandemic and have made impressive strides on our high reliability journey and the St. Cloud Management System," he said.

Thelen is an Air Force veteran, serving from May 1983 to August 1992 as a satellite/digital technician. He has worked for the VA in Georgia and Colorado, too.

State to dedicate veterans cemetery

REDWOOD FALLS — The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs is all set to dedicate its new veterans cemetery in Redwood Falls.

The dedication is at 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 19. The cemetery is at 33752 Noble Ave. in the countryside east of Redwood Falls.

There will be tours, live music, presenters, business leaders, elected officials, veteran service organizations, community advocates and refreshments. Email info. cemRF@state.mn.us for more information. The event is open to the public.

Job fair coming to Silver Bay home

SILVER BAY — The Silver Bay Veterans Home is hosting a job fair between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Aug. 10.

Positions available are in nursing, house-keeping, food service, maintenance, life enrichment and others.



Brent Thelen



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 24 Vol. 1

President Sharon Cross • Secretary Christie Avant, christie@mnala.org

Dept. HQ: Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155 651-224-7634 August 2023

Be The One to help your local veterans

Thank you to everyone who attended the American Legion Family Department Convention. Let me introduce myself. I have been an Auxiliary member since my first birthday. I originally qualified through my dad, but I also qualify to be a member through my grandfather, my three sons and one of my two daughters, who are all veterans.

I am humbled and honored to represent all our members as I travel this year as your department president. I look forward to meeting new faces and staying connected to our Legion Family.

Thank you for all the support and kind words of encouragement that brought me to this point in my life. I look forward to, and I am honored to serve with, newly elected Department Commander Paul Hassing, SAL Detachment Commander John Weiss, American Legion Riders Director Jody Hassing and the Honorary Department Junior Auxiliary President Taylor McElroy.

Thank you to everyone that said yes when asked to be a chairman or a committee member. I see a lot of fun and laughter in our future with 1st Vice President Judy Ackerman and 2nd Vice President Robin Dorf. All three of us were Junior members that are now your department leadership.

I have already enjoyed the opportunity to ride in the Hopkins Raspberry Festival Parade with the department leadership. I am an American Legion Rider,

President's Column

Sharon Cross



so as I write this, I am getting ready to participate in the 2023 Minnesota Legacy Run July 27-30 followed by the Junior Fun Weekend Aug. 4-6 at Legionville in Brainerd. Then the American Legion Family will be traveling to Charlotte, N.C., for the 104th National Convention Aug. 25-31.

My theme is "Be The One to Dance Into the Hearts of Veterans."

My symbol is a ballet dancer dancing with her veteran. Let's put the American Legion Family in the spotlight and record our history. Remember the Dr. Seuss book that is frequently a graduation gift "Oh The Places You'll Go!"

Being part of the Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary and the large, long 6th District since I transferred in 1999, I have traveled more than I ever imagined. With more travels ahead.

This is a time in many of our veterans' lives that they feel alienated because of PTSD. Educate your neighbors and other community members about the effects of PTSD and ways to be respectful of those who are facing it. There are many ways to assist those that are not as mobile as they used to be.

You can help around their house or their yard, pick up

groceries, play cards or board games, make them dinner, or invite them to go to a community event. Many veterans may not have anyone to help them, so you can make a big difference in their lives. Be The One to start the conversation that just might save a life. Be The One to listen with an open mind, offer direction or assist to find help where needed.

So, turn up the lights, roll the camera and let's take action. Work our programs, document and report "What We Do" so we can be in the spotlight for "Who We Are."

Come join the fun and involve your children and grandchildren. Focus on our programs, be visible, be branded. Let's make The American Legion and Auxiliary the volunteer organization that families want to belong to! Open the eyes of our communities to the bigger picture of Why We Matter!

Sharon Cross of Bemidji Unit 14 is the president of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota. Her theme is "Be The One to Dance Into the Hearts of Veterans."



American Legion Auxiliary Department President Mary Kuperus, Sons of American Legion Detachment Commander Tim Weaver, American Legion Department Commander Jennifer Havlick, Director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders Ted Berg and Honorary Department Junior President Sydney Borntreger.



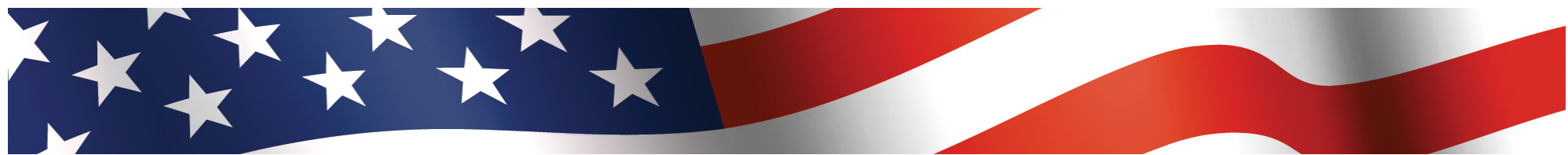
Department President Mary Kuperus with the 2022-2023 Unit Member of the Year Bonnie Luedloff, Waconia Unit 150.



Outgoing President Mary Kuperus after being inducted into the Department Past Presidents Parley visited The American Legion Department of Minnesota side of the convention on Friday and had her photo taken with a big gnome gifted to Outgoing Commander Jennifer Havlick.



Front row from left are Department 1st Vice President Judy Ackerman, Department President Sharon Cross, Department 2nd Vice President Robin Dorf. Back row from left are 1st District President Michelle Weaver, 2nd District President Kollett Kaehlert, 3rd District President Deanna Meyer, 4th District President Tamara Michaels, 5th District President Cari Lamb, 6th District President Patti Gunderson, 7th District President Hope Wilson, 8th District President Sharon Voltz, 9th District President Rebecca Olson, 10th District President Anne Steffen.



American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota Executive Board

Department President
Department 1st Vice President
Department 2nd Vice President
National Executive Committee Alternate NEC
Department Secretary
Department Treasurer
Department Chaplain
Department Historian
Department Parliamentarian
Past Dept President
1st District President
2nd District President
3rd District President
4th District President
5th District President
6th District President
7th District President
8th District President
9th District President
10th District President

Sharon Cross
Judy Ackerman
Robin Dorf
Jean Walker
Raleen Tolzmann
Christie Avant
Cathy Radil
Robin Olson
Renee Suess
Peggy Tesdahl
Mary Kuperus
Michelle Weaver
Kollett Kaehlert
Deanna Meyer
Tamara Michaels
Cari Lamb
Patti Gunderson
Hope Wilson
Sharon Voltz
Rebecca Olson
Anne Steffen



Committee Appointments

Department President Sharon Cross' appointments for the 2023-2024 Auxiliary year of "Be The One to Dance Into the Hearts of Veterans" were approved by the Department Executive Committee:

Americanism
Aux. Emerg. Fund
Children & Youth
Community Service
Constitution & Standing Rules
Education
Finance

Mary Kuperus
Margee Keller
Brandi Christensen
Wanda Seidler
Becky Nelson
Lorinda Kies
Jody Hassing
Norma Tramm
Mary Hendrickson
Cavalene Regan
Tonia Bettermann
Beverly Grose
Sandy Wersal
Linda Kelly
Patti Coleman
Bethany Dickert
Jesse Hoppe
Lynn Carr
Mary Kuperus
Renee Suess
Sally Strasser
Karla Otterness
Robin Dorf
Jenny Nelson
Robin Olson
Cheryl Grover
Carol Kottom
Chris Ronning
Peggy Tesdahl
Donna Barbknecht
Marsha Bible
Sharon Hammon
Judy Ackerman
Representatives:
Denise Milton
Doris Lafayette
Darlene Wondra
Jeannette Mertens
Sandy Gibson
Jennifer Hurst
Wanda Prescher
Nancy Hopper
Becky Olson
Mary Ann Davis
Diane Strassburg
Jan Benson
Carol Kottom
Kat Benjamin
Anna Eells
Barb Hopewell
Roberta Elvecrog
Linda Deschene
Cheryl Schauman

Gift Shop

Girls State Chairman
Girls State Director
Girls State Education Director
Girls State Committee
Girls State Americanism
History
Junior Activities
Leadership
Legislation
Membership
Memorial
Memory Book
National Security
Armed Forces Center
Parliamentarian
Past Pres. Parley
Poppy
Public Relations
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Veterans Home & VA Hospital
MN Vets Home Bemidji
MN Vets Home Fergus Fall
MN Vets Home Hastings
MN Vets Home Luverne
MN Vets Home Minneapolis
MN Vets Home Montevideo
MN Vets Home Preston
MN Vets Home Silver Bay
 Fargo VAMC
Minneapolis VAMC
Sioux Falls VAMC
St Cloud VAMC

Brain Science

Risk & Compliance



Endorsements

Kelly endorsed for 2nd vice president

Linda Kelly has been endorsed by Unit 184 of Pine Island, the 3rd District Past Presidents Parley, and the 3rd District Executive Committee for Department of Minnesota 2nd vice president for the year 2024-2025.

Kelly is an active member of her unit for 25 years. She is eligible through the service of two brothers, Stanley and Melroy Kundert. Stanley was stationed in Korea when Linda was born and Melroy served at Fort Bragg in North Carolina.

She has served her unit in many ways including president two terms, vice president, Executive Committee member and chaplain. She works many of the programs and is currently working with their local school to bring more patriotic programs into the school. She

served as president for the 3rd District for two years due to the pandemic, working her way up from Executive Committee. She has also served as chairman of Membership, Children & Youth, Education, Girls State, Leadership, Public Relations and Community Service.

Kelly has served as department chairman for Membership and Poppy. She will be serving as the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State chairman for the coming year. She has attended numerous district, department and national conventions, fall conferences and mission



Linda Kelly

training workshops. Kelly recently retired after working in Pine Island for 52 years for a local bank and a local agricultural cooperative. She has two daughters, Jennie and Sarah, and one grandson, Miles.

For many years, we have heard the saying, "Praise Publicly, Criticize Privately." As district leadership chairman this past year, she told the 3rd District that *criticize* is a negative word and the saying should be "Praise Publicly, Mentor Privately."

Kelly would love to serve as an officer of the great organization that is the American Legion Auxiliary.



Outgoing President Mary Kuperus and Outgoing Honorary Junior President Sydney Borntreger light a candle at the Memorial Service at the Department Convention on July 13.

Time to gear up for National Convention

The Auxiliary year came to a close on July 15 as we closed the 2022-2023 administrative year under the leadership of Mary Kuperus. Thank you to each of the officers and chairmen who gave of their time and talents to serve our organization.

The Department Convention was at the Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel and was hosted by the American Legion Family of Redwood Falls 38. There were 199 Auxiliary delegates, alternates and guests in attendance representing 98 units. Congratulations to newly elected President Sharon Cross, Department 1st Vice President Judy Ackerman and 2nd Vice President Robin Dorf, who assumed their duties at the close of the convention. Cross has chosen

"Be The One to Dance Into the Hearts of Veterans" as her theme for the 2023-2024 Auxiliary year.

Twenty-three delegates and alternates to the 2023 National Convention in Charlotte were elected and ratified to represent Minnesota. Kuperus will serve as the delegation chairman; Christie Avant will serve as the delegation secretary and Jean Walker will represent us as our National Executive Committee member. Our appreciation and congratulations are extended to Kuperus for her dedicated service as our 2022-2023 department president.

8 proposals passed; 1 going to national

The Auxiliary continues to "clean up" our governing documents. Four Department Standing Rules, two Unit Bylaws and one District Constitution totaling seven proposals all passed. One proposal to a National Standing Rule passed and has been forwarded to the National Committee.

2024 membership cards are available

For those units that did not pick up their cards at Department Convention, your cards went in the mail July 11. They were sent to the membership chairmen for the 2023-2024 Auxiliary year. It is now time to start collecting those dues. Reminder: Payment of all back dues are at the current rate of membership. We are still collecting 2023 membership dues as well. The Auxiliary membership year ends on Dec. 31.

How to send in content

When sending in write-ups for the Auxiliary Bulletin and the Legionnaire, send Microsoft Word documents. All photos should be sent in high resolution as a JPG attached to the email. Do not insert the JPG into a Word document.

The Auxiliary determines its own content in the Legionnaire. Therefore, send all articles and pictures to Executive Secretary Christie Avant, christie@mnala.org.

Thank you

Special thanks to Auxiliary Convention General Chairman Dawn Breikreutz and all members of the Redwood Falls American Legion Family for a very successful Department Convention. To these volunteers, *thank you!*

2023 Fall Conference to be in St. Cloud

Fall Conference will be held at River's Edge Conference Center in St. Cloud Oct. 26-28. The Department Executive Committee will meet at 1 p.m. Oct. 26. More details will be in the next Legionnaire.



Outgoing President Mary Kuperus and Outgoing Commander Jennifer Havlick carry wreaths during the Memorial Service on July 13.

Department of Corrections

The July 2023 issue of the Auxiliary Bulletin had an incorrect name listed as the incoming 2023-2024 4th District president. The 2023-2024 4th District president is Tamara Michaels.



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