



Charitable gambling revenue rose 9%

Legion posts account for 10% of all gambling

ROCHESTER — Revenue rose in the realm of charitable gambling in Minnesota in fiscal year 2024 by 9 percent compared to the previous year, reaching a net of \$712 million and allowing Minnesota charities to increase donations by \$6 million.

The figures came in comments Allied Charities of Minnesota Director Rachel Jenner gave at the annual ACM Convention at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester Nov. 21-22.

Total donations came to \$128 million, she said. Fiscal years for Minnesota charitable gambling end June 30.

“Despite the small tax-rate reductions we received in 2023, our taxes also increased \$6 million to \$199 million in state and local taxes paid,” Jenner said. “The state remains the No. 1 benefactor of charitable gambling — as you can see taxes took 28 percent of every dollar we deposited. ACM is committed to changing this.”

The Minnesota Legislature came close to legalizing sports betting, and the bill had language that would have provided \$40 million in tax relief for charitable gambling organizations. It fell one vote short. Jenner said she needs bipartisan support for sports betting to pass in 2025.

“Our legislative initiative in 2025 will be to support a sports betting bill that steps down our tax rates over three years to the proposed rates of 3 percent, 10 percent, 18 percent and 26 percent respectively,” she said.

The end of 2024, she added, brings an end to conventional rules for electronic pulltabs. Games falling under a new law enacted in 2023 go into effect Jan. 1, 2025.

“Game manufacturers are optimistic about the success of these games and their ability to generate the same revenue as

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The Cardiac Kid

Slayton’s Brad Pagel is a Gulf War veteran who survived peace

By Tim Engstrom

S LAYTON — Brad Pagel, 55, grew up on a dairy farm in rural Garvin, milking cows twice daily. His father served in the Army, and during Pagel’s sophomore year of high school, he became interested in following in his father’s footsteps.

By his junior year, he was certain of the decision. He signed up for the Delayed Entry Program after his junior year and graduated in 1987 from Balaton High School.

Flying to New Jersey to attend basic training at Fort Dix was his first time on an airplane. AIT was at Fort Lee, Va., where he trained to be a 77F, a petroleum supply specialist. He handled POL — petroleum, oil and lubricants.

The Army sent Pagel back to Dix to learn to drive an M977 HEMTT truck. The acronym stands for Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck. It is a diesel-powered, eight-wheel drive, 10-ton truck that has been in service since 1982. However, the Army — in its infinite wisdom — sent him to a Chinook helicopter unit in Fort Hood, Texas, where his job was refueling choppers.

Pagel became part of B Company, 2nd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment. It turned out his team supported the whole base and fueled all kinds of



Slayton Post 64 Commander Brad Pagel stands among other Legionnaires from across the country in August at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans. Legion members gathered in the Crescent City for the 105th National Convention. On Sunday evening, Aug. 25, they went to the museum.

birds: OH-58 Kiowa, UH-1 Iroquois “Hueys,” UH-60 Black Hawk, AH-64 Apache, CH-47 Chinook.

At the time, Fort Hood was home to two divisions, the 1st Cavalry and the 2nd Armored. Choppers from the base helped fight the Yellowstone National Park fires in the summer of 1988. Otherwise, the units at Hood were holding down the fort and going to field training exercises.

That changed when the Mideast nation of Iraq, led by dictator Saddam Hussein, invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990. The United States launched Operation Desert Shield to protect Saudi Arabia and a few other nearby countries while the world watched to see whether Iraq complied with deadlines from the United Nations.

Meanwhile, the operation provided a platform for a coalition of nations

to prepare for an offensive response.

Orders for the 2/158th came down in October. There would be no going home for Thanksgiving or Christmas. They were to load a railhead in November and send vehicles and equipment on ships out of the Port of Houston.

The ships took 30 days, while Pagel and his fellow soldiers flew across

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U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs St. Paul Regional Office Assistant Directors Mike Lee and Jessica Gillette brief veteran service organizations and state staff on Tuesday, Dec. 3.

VA’s St. Paul Regional Office covers western half of the U.S.

FORT SNELLING — As of October, 115,172 Minnesota veterans or their survivors received a monthly VA benefit. That comes to \$166 million a month. For the year, the total is 1.99 billion.

Nationally, the VA processed \$187 billion in benefits to 6.7 million veterans and survivors for the federal fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. It processed more than 2.5 million claims, surpassing last year’s record.

The VA achieved a grant rate of 64.1 percent. The average overall disability rating

granted to veterans is 70 percent.

These figures come from a briefing members of the Minnesota Commanders’ Task Force received on Tuesday, Dec. 3, from the St. Paul Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Commonly called the RO, it is in the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building on the unincorporated territory Minnesotans call Fort Snelling.

Assistant Director Jessica Gillette gave the report along with fellow Assistant Director

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Service officer: ‘We all could very easily be in her position’

SHAKOPEE — One of Marissa LaCourt’s neighbors in Farmington wanted to get rid of his wife’s old car after she purchased a new one.

He is a Vietnam veteran and knew LaCourt helped veterans as a county service officer and an American Legion member of Apple Valley Post 1776. He told her he would wait until she found a veteran who needed it.

LaCourt asked whether the neighbor was sure. He said he would rather donate it than sell it for \$500.

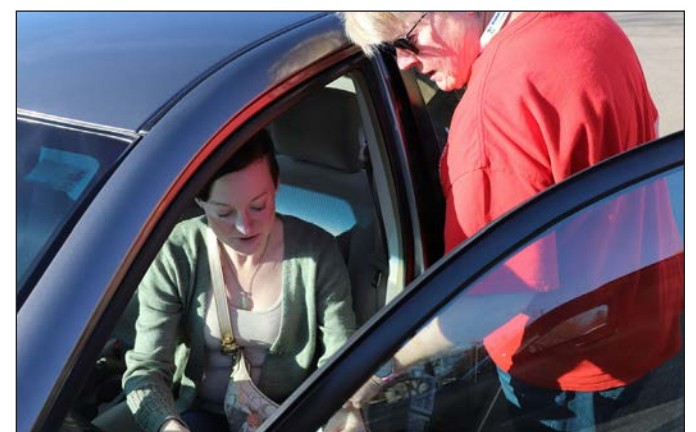
“He looked at me and said, ‘It was meant to be.’”

That 2006 Toyota Corolla ended up in the hands of Minnesota National Guard veteran Danielle Rand of Shakopee, a mother of two. LaCourt has a history of finding cars for veterans in need of transportation.

“This is my sixth car,” she said. “A car is the great equalizer. Now she and her children have safe transportation.”

She said veterans like Dani Rand emphasize why Department Commander Carl Moon’s fundraising project is important. He hopes to raise \$60,000 for the Veterans Defense Project, a nonprofit working to expand

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At the Scott County Courthouse parking lot in Shakopee, DAV Chapter 40 Commander Carla Tappainer (and American Legion member from Apple Valley) hands car keys and an inspection sheet to Army veteran Danielle Rand.

Veteran in need receives used car

Continued from Page 1

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veterans courts in Minnesota. "There is a bit of stigma around justice-involved veterans," LaCourt said, "and some people look down on them, but they are still people. We all could very easily be in her position."

The way to do it without burdening the veteran with tax implications, she said, is to have the donor give it to a nonprofit organization, such as an American Legion or VFW post, and that organization then donates it to the veteran.

This time, she went through Disabled American Veterans Chapter 40 out of Apple Valley. Chapter Commander Carla Tappainer was on hand for the presentation Nov. 15.

Tappainer said Chapter 40 had the car detailed, covered the cost of registration and bought floor mats and an ice scraper. It paid to have Dick's Valley Service in Apple Valley inspect the car, too.

"This is going to make a lot of difference for me," Rand said. She is a mother to son Landon, 6, and daughter London, 2.

Rand graduated from Shakopee High School in 2008. By her sophomore year, she knew military was her career path. She entered the Delayed Entry Program, and she went through basic training after her junior year.

Advanced Individual Training was at Fort Jackson, S.C., where she trained to be a 42A, a human resource specialist in the Minnesota National Guard.

Rand drilled in Roseville at the 147th Human Resources Company. In April 2011, her father had a traumatic brain injury. She found him on his side and called 911. Meanwhile,



From left are Army veteran Danielle Rand, DAV Chapter 40 Commander Carla Tappainer, former Scott County Veteran Service Officer Marissa LaCourt and Scott County Veteran Service Officer Derek Farwell. Rand, a single mother of two children, was the recipient of a used 2006 Toyota Corolla on Nov. 15. LaCourt, who now works for Goodhue County, handled the arrangements, and it was the sixth automobile she has found a way to provide for veterans in need of transportation. Tappainer and LaCourt are Legion members. Farwell said he will join. LaCourt will ensure Rand renews.

her unit was preparing to deploy in November and asked whether she still planned to go. She remained dedicated to deploying.

Rand deployed with the 147th to Ali Al Aalem Air Base, Kuwait. By this time, she had reached the rank of E-4 specialist. There, she provided overhead slides for generals and staff. She said she went six months without a day off. She found the need to run, and would participate in organized runs. She got bronze in one race.

She finally got Wednesdays off.

She said she had three lieutenants supervising her during her military career. The second one, a female, was particularly hard on her for inverting numbers, to the point of laughing and berating her in front of others.

She was happy to have a new LT, this one male and more professional, Rand said.

Soldiers, she said, lived in trailers while in Kuwait and were provided alcohol somehow. A male MP, she said,

sexually assaulted her one night, leaving bruises up and down her arms. She didn't say anything until she returned to the United States out of fear of getting in trouble for drinking in a dry country.

Rand came home Nov. 11, 2012, and cried tears of joy upon returning. She moved into an apartment with a fellow female soldier, but after two months, the roommate wanted out, leaving Rand to find a new roommate.

Meanwhile, while she had been out of country, her father suffered three medical episodes and became hooked on opioids.

With the new roomie, she began to drink more and went through another sexual assault.

In June 2014, she met the man who became the father of her children while she was working security at Mystic Lake Casino. After all, she'd had a crush on him in high school.

Four months later, Rand lost her apartment and her car. She and her boyfriend were locked up in the Scott County Jail

for possession of controlled substances.

Her father bailed her out. She was honorably discharged from the military in December 2015.

She and her boyfriend remained together.

"I think part of me felt like I could help him," Rand said.

By June 2017, she found herself in front of drug treatment court. She had been in and out of 20 rehab centers. While at the St. Cloud VA in July 2017, she found out she was pregnant.

She found her father dead in his apartment on Aug. 25, 2017. Her son was born March 21, 2018. The VA rated her as service-connected in 2019. (She is now 80 percent.)

Rand said the Shakopee police performed a raid (likely a multi-agency drug task force) in February 2021, and her son was taken from her and brought to her sister in St. Paul for care. Rand was sent to treatment.

Her boyfriend, meanwhile, continued to use drugs and had access to her money. Her parole officer gave her one more chance to stay off drugs, but she hung out with the wrong crowd and, admittedly, did drugs. She was arrested Sept. 12, 2021, and ended up before a judge in Scott County's veterans treatment court. A judge sent her to a treatment center in Waconia, and she followed the court's restorative justice steps.

Success! She gave birth to her daughter in February 2022.

She got custody of her children in October 2022.

Her boyfriend was charged with murder in November 2022. Eventually, he was sent to state prison in Lino Lakes.

Rand has been drug-free since the day after her arrest, meaning she recently passed the three-year mark. She graduated veterans court in May and hopes to become a mentor to other veterans.

"She's one of my favorite success stories because she is one that I counted out," LaCourt said.

LaCourt is a Goodhue County service officer who used to be a service officer for Scott County. She lives in Farmington. She plans to help Rand renew her American Legion membership at Shakopee Post 2.

"Serving your community is a good thing for veterans," LaCourt said. "It's therapeutic for us when we serve others."

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Carla Tappainer and Danielle Rand speak with a Scott County worker about the car's registration.

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Constitution & Bylaws handled by committee

Legion Riders

Jody Hassing



Happy Holidays! This year has gone by so fast; I cannot believe the holiday season is upon us already. I always love to see all the pictures of the gift shops at each of our Minnesota Veterans Homes. Please remember to take time for yourself over the busy holiday season; you deserve it!

Since the approval of the Minnesota American Legion Riders Constitution & Bylaws, I have received many questions regarding how and why. I first want to ensure all the Riders in the state that the Constitution & Bylaws was not written by a single person.

The documents were written by a committee based in part on our Standard Operating Procedure (that we have been operating under for years) and in part on the Constitution & Bylaws of the SAL (also a Legion program).

The MNALR Constitution & Bylaws was then discussed and revised by the body of the MNALR and the district representatives at two different state meetings (MNALR Department Convention in July, Romp at Legionville in September).

The Constitution & Bylaws was reviewed by Department Judge Advocate Greg Colby and the Minnesota American Legion Department Executive Committee. The Riders approved it at the

Romp in September and DEC ratified it at the Fall Conference in October.

Why did we decide to do this now? The main reason we formed the committee was because our SOP referred to two resolutions at the national level that are now obsolete. Please review your Constitution and Bylaws, if your chapter/district has one. If the Constitution and/or Bylaws refer to obsolete resolutions, it is time to rewrite it.

The Riders are a program of the Legion and exist to support the principles of the Legion.

I know there are many other chapter fundraisers and events happening across the state. Please invite me to your events so I can see all the good things you are doing! If you would like assistance setting up a chapter at your post, please let me or your district representative know so we can help you get things going.

If you are interested in having me talk to your chapter or district, please contact me.

God bless and have a great holiday season.

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



AMERICA'S BEST NURSING HOMES 2025

Congratulations to the Minnesota Veterans Homes!

National recognition has been awarded to several Minnesota Veterans Homes! Both Newsweek and U.S. News & World Report magazines have announced "America's Best Nursing Homes" for 2025. And Minnesota Veterans Homes were on the list:

- The Fergus Falls Veterans Home was named a "Best Nursing Home" for the third year in a row by U.S. News & World Report
- The Luverne Veterans Home was recognized by both publications, and also named a "Best Nursing Home" for the third year in a row by U.S. News & World Report
- The Minneapolis Veterans Home was recognized by both publications

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'Tis the season to serve the community

'Tis the season, and here's hoping everyone enjoyed their Thanksgiving and is looking forward to a jolly Christmas and a joyous New Year.

'Tis also the season for our state Legislature to begin their 2025-2026 biennium on Tuesday Jan. 14. This could be a challenging session with the House being equally divided. That said, please make sure to respond to your state and federal senators and representatives when you receive emails from the American Legion Department of Minnesota "grassroots" or "Voter Voice" and let them know your support for those issues that are so important to veterans and their families.

I am very sure that Department Legislative Chair Kristy Janigo will keep us informed when your support is needed. As of this printing, the date for Veterans Day on The Hill has not been set. The Washington Conference will be Feb. 22-26.

'Tis also the season for our District Mid-Winter Conferences to begin. This is a great time to attend your district conferences to learn what is going on, the important issues, and an opportunity to provide your input and get involved. *Your*

Commander's Column

Carl Moon



district needs you and your support.

Your district and department also need your involvement and support for our youth programs. Start planning on who you should contact at your local schools for these wonderful opportunities for scholarships and education about how our government functions.

The Department Oratorical Contest is scheduled for Feb. 22. Boys State begins June 8, at St. John's University. Legionville School Safety Camp begins June 15. These six weekly sessions are not only an opportunity for our young children to have a great time, meet new friends, but also learn about how to be safe and what to do in various emergencies.

Be sure to look at the All-Family Events Calendar on Page 6 for a full slate of Minnesota American Legion, Auxiliary and SAL activities.

As I began this article mentioning the holiday season, please be ever mindful of our

fellow veterans and friends who may be suffering from depression and loneliness. "Be the One" to reach out to someone you haven't heard from in a while. Just a phone call or maybe sharing a cup of coffee can make a huge difference.

In closing, please help me welcome two of our newest members: Army veteran Hank Shea, former U.S. assistant attorney and present chair of the Veterans Defense Project; and Army veteran Brock Hunter, a former recon scout and co-founder of the Veterans Defense Project. *Welcome.*

Peggy and I just want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Carl Moon of Zimmerman Post 560 is the commander of The American Legion Department of Minnesota. His theme is "ACT: Accountability, Communication and Transparency."

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

Mail Call

Why would knives be made in China?

Several years ago, I received a knife from the Legion as part of renewing my membership. Upon receiving the nicely packaged item; I noticed on the box "MADE IN CHINA". I was more than offended! I realize money is a driving agent, but why, oh why must we be insulted with product made by our enemy?

Respectfully,

John W. von Lange
retired U.S. Army
North Branch Post 85

Leave donation to your post

Although I live in an "old folks" home called Knollwood in Washington, D.C., which was established 62 years ago by Mamie Eisenhower for widows of servicemen, I am a regular reader of The Minnesota Legionnaire because of two veterans in Owatonna.

Neill Bennett (ret. Navy) sends me each issue, and Curt Abraham (ret. Army) serves on the honor guard at funerals. I have a keen interest in your publication as my father who died in Owatonna some years ago was

a retired Air Force captain. In retirement, he regularly rode the Legion van to Fort Snelling to play "Taps" at funerals. Oh, how he missed that when he resided in a nursing home and could no longer play his trumpet.

So following his death at 93 years of age and having no close friends or his wife still alive, he wanted no funeral but desired that the money spent for such a ceremony be donated to the Legion post to help purchase a new van so others could continue the tradition of the 60-mile trek north to honor their fallen comrades.

It was the best contribution we made in his name so I encourage others to leave a little something from a serviceman's estate to his local Legion in hopes that other Legionnaires will benefit in some way from a serviceman's passing.

And I am particularly proud that The Minnesota Legionnaire is now in its 101st year of publication. Congratulations!

Kathy A. Megyeri
Washington, D.C.

Recognition of Gulf, GWOT veterans

Readers, you might find the attached proclamation interesting and noteworthy for other

Posts around the state to replicate. We need to show these "younger veterans" The American Legion is a place for them.

Whereas,

The American Legion Apple Valley Post 1776 is an organization deep in the Military Tradition and honors all those who have served and are serving our great nation, recognizes the brave military men and women of the United States of America who served in Operation Desert Storm, Desert Shield, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation New Dawn, in Afghanistan, Iraq and around the globe in support of these battles, herein, all considered Gulf War Veterans for the United States Department of Veterans Affairs purposes, and our gratified acknowledgement, and

Whereas,

Anyone who served on active duty from Aug. 2, 1990, to the present, is considered a Gulf War Veteran, having made extraordinary sacrifices, endured tremendous hardships, have returned home facing challenges of readjustment, physical and emotional wounds and need our continued support, and

Whereas, the Apple Valley American Legion Post 1776, our community and the Nation must remember their service and sacrifice, and

Whereas, we must continue

National College dedicated to Legion

For the past three years I have had the privilege of being a "tator" (i.e.: facilitator) at the National American Legion College in Indianapolis. It is a weeklong lift-me-up.

It is a 5 1/2-day intensive, in-person school for those in The American Legion (TAL) wanting to lead beyond post level.

The learning involves skill development, relationship building and information of right practices to ensure our organization is able to positively effect veterans and their families. This year Department Membership Director Carla Tappainer, of the 3rd District, attended. There was even a student from Puerto Rico.

Fifty-two students dedicated a little over a week to just The American Legion. Their families are the backbone of our organization because without home support, one is not able to be mentally present. In a volunteer organization, sometimes individuals bow out due to family needs.

Some step back when they need to fortify their mind, spirit and body. I have witnessed many acts of mercy acknowledging that volunteering requires agility in managing the responsibilities of our four pillars and programs. So many of us have willing hearts being tugged in many directions. Learning to lead with

to ensure these brave men and women of the Gulf Wars continue to receive care, respect and recognition for their efforts, and

Whereas, approximately 9,000 Gulf War veterans live in Dakota County, Minnesota and Legion Post 1776 proudly includes over 125 Gulf War Veterans, as members,

Now, Therefore, the American Legion Apple Valley Post 1776, hereby acknowledges August 2, as Gulf War Veterans Day and will set aside each August 2, as a day to recognize and remember the veterans of this war, beginning with August 2, 2025, the 35th Anniversary of the start of the Gulf War.

Proclaimed this 19th day of November, 2024.

Bernie Baumann
Commander
Apple Valley Post 1776

Coach training available for junior air rifle

Dear posts of the Minnesota American Legion,

Minnesota Junior Shooting Sports wants you to be aware of an opportunity for posts to launch a Junior Shooting Sports program. The key to launching a program is having a coach. Our American Legion Junior Shooting Sports is a youth air-rifle program typically held indoors.

There is an upcoming NRA Level 1 class at the Anoka American Legion on Dec. 28-29 for anybody who is interested in coaching Junior Air Rifle sports. The course will be taught by an instructor from Fort Wayne, Ind.. The cost of the class will be \$100 to cover the books. The

Chaplain's Corner

Kelley Adelsman



these variables as a reality is the heart of TAL.

The students who attend the National American Legion College have to quickly learn how to work alongside others with differing viewpoints, skills, geographical homes, ages (my students were 36 to 78 years of age; a veteran is a veteran) and of course the human element — bias, personality issues, behaviors and expectations. This human element defines us from our electronic world as computers will never have the issues humans have.

This human element often times is the spiritual barometer informing us of a world that remains unfair, inequitable and sometimes harmful. How we make room for one another is challenged at NALC for leading requires the ability to work with the volunteers we have and assess all issues to reach a workable solution. Learning to transcend one's own foibles and make room for another is a lifelong endeavor.

Minnesota has a long tradition of sending those members who are then expected to lead together in the Minnesota American Legion College and

have the skills to transcend issues that cause roadblocks in fulfilling the mission of TAL.

December high holy days are: Christians celebrate the birth of the expected savior in Jesus Christ on the 25th. Pagans and Wiccans celebrate Yule from Dec. 21 to Jan. 1 (origin is Germanic, with holly, gift-giving, bonfires, mistletoe, ritual sacrifices) and the winter solstice (Northern Hemisphere when the earth is at its axis furthest from the sun).

Dec. 8 is Bodhi Day for Buddhists to observe the day Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment. Hanukkah is from Dec. 26 to Jan. 2. It is an eight-day celebration to remember when the Jews were victorious over the Syrian Greeks. Thank you everyone for learning how to work together to fulfill a mission that is larger than one of us to complete.

Kelley Adelsman of Pine Island Post 184 is the chaplain for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

instructors' fees have been taken care of through a grant.

This is an outstanding opportunity for posts wanting to take part in this growing American Legion program. We do ask that those who are interested

be affiliated with an American Legion Shooting program and have an NRA number.

For those of you who are interested in taking the course, please contact Minnesota

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The Minnesota Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

Official publication of
The American Legion
Department of Minnesota

About: The Minnesota Legionnaire (USPS 013679) (ISSN 01644270) is published monthly by The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, 20 W 12th St., Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000.

Periodicals postage paid at St Paul, Minnesota, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Minnesota Legionnaire, 20 W. 12th St., St. Paul, MN 55155-2000.

First published in 1920 as the Hennepin County Legionnaire, the Minnesota Legionnaire is now in its 101st year of publication. The Legionnaire is a member of The American Legion Media Alliance.

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Phone: 651-291-1800, 866-259-9163

Fax: 651-291-1057

Email: tengstrom@mnlegion.org

Web: mnlegion.org/legionnaire

Editor: Communications Director Tim Engstrom

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Bruce Olson, a former Marine, carries the Certified Military Advisor designation, providing dedicated support for both military and non-military members and their families.



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LSS CORE provides support for veterans, families

LSS CORE Provides Support for Veterans, Active Military Members and Their Families

Military service can have a long-range impact on service members and their families. From managing financial concerns to maintaining healthy relationships or caring for loved ones with a disability — active service, deployment and returning to civilian life each have their own challenges.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has a long-standing partnership with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS) to provide supportive services to veterans and their families through the CORE program.

LSS CORE (casework, outreach, referral and education) has successfully served thousands of veterans to help improve quality of life. CORE services include casework, caregiver support and respite, financial counseling, housing assistance, access to nutritious meals and mental health counseling.

Casework includes assessment of individual needs and personalized support. Individualized plans are created through a strengths-based lens.

In recent years, 100 percent of individuals using CORE

Guest Column

Adam Dorow



services said they:

- Were treated with respect.
- Found the services helpful.
- Would use CORE services again.
- Would recommend CORE services to other veterans.

All CORE services are free and confidential for qualifying veterans and their immediate family members.

LSS is a PsychArmor Institute Certified Veteran Ready organization, which means we have been trained so that we can effectively engage with and support military service members, veterans and their families.

“Once I started using the LSS CORE services, I felt empowered to take charge of my treatments, to look into my disability benefits and to get myself on a path to recovery,” one veteran said. “I feel lucky I’ve been able to figure out where I want to be, thanks to LSS.”

CORE services include:

Caregiver Support & Respite

We offer classes, coaching, emergency care planning,

resources, respite care, support groups, and workshops to help caregivers develop their caregiving skills and maintain a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

Housing Services

We work with veterans to secure housing and achieve their personal goals. We offer supportive housing in the Twin Cities metro area that includes a rent subsidy and case management services.

LSS Financial Counseling

We provide nonjudgmental, confidential support and guidance to help individuals and families achieve financial wellness. We offer financial counseling for budgeting, credit improvement, debt management (including Debt Management Plans), foreclosure prevention, homeownership, reverse mortgages, and student loan debt.

LSS Meals

We offer nutritious, home-style meals through LSS Meals to Go — a convenient frozen meal shipment service. Our meals are designed by a registered dietitian to provide variety, balanced nutrition, and to meet dietary needs.

Mental Health Services

We provide support for improved quality of life, including assessment and evaluation, trauma therapy, deployment and reintegration support, and counseling for individuals, couples and families. We offer compassionate, effective counseling to deal with family relationships, grief, PTSD, substance use, military sexual trauma and more.

Let us know how we can support you: 844.577.2673. Visit lssmn.org/support4vets to learn more.

Thank you for your sacrifice.

Adam Dorow is the state-wide program manager for LSS CORE Services for Veterans. His family has a strong history of military service, which inspired him in 2022 to step into supporting veterans after many years of working with youth in various nonprofit settings.

Mail Call

Continued from Page 4

Centershots with your name, phone number, email address and NRA number as soon as you can. It might be full by the time this copy of the Legionnaire arrives in your mailbox. We also contacted commanders

and adjutants about this opportunity.

To register, send in your info to mncentershots10.9@gmail.com.

If anyone has questions they can also contact me at carl196545@hotmail.com or by phone at 320-304-5333.

Thanks for all you do for The American Legion!

Carl Wilson
Chairman
Junior Shooting Sports

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All-Family Events Calendar

Jan. 1: Registration opens for Minnesota American Legion Baseball & Fastpitch Softball
Jan. 8: Minnesota American Legion Legislative Social, 4:30-8:30 p.m., Mancini's Char House, St. Paul
Jan. 11: 1st District Mid-Winter Conf., Winona Post 9
Jan. 11: 4th & 5th District Mid-Winter Conference, Arcade-Phalen Post 577
Jan. 11: 9th District Mid-Winter Conf., Warren Post 27
Jan. 11: 10th District Mid-Winter Conf., Anoka Post 102
Jan. 15: 80 percent membership target date
Jan. 18: 6th District Mid-Winter Conf., Melrose Post 101
Jan. 18: 7th District Mid-Winter Conf., Olivia Post 186
Jan. 25: 8th District Mid-Winter Conf., location TBD
Jan. 25: 3rd District Mid-Winter Conf., Lonsdale Post 586
Feb. 2: Four Chaplains Sunday
Feb. 8: Sweetheart Rally, Royalton Post 137
Feb. 15: 2nd District Mid-Winter Conf., Bricelyn Post 165
Feb. 22: Minnesota State Oratorical Contest, Osseo Post 172 & Anoka Post 102
Feb. 22-26: Washington Conference, Hilton Hotel, D.C.
Feb. 22: ALA Department Leadership Workshop, Cold Spring Unit 455
March 8: TAL & ALA Department Executive Committees, Chanhassen Post 580
March 8: Appreciation Rally, Chanhassen Post 580
March 9-15: Buddy Check Week
March 14-15: SAL Detachment Spring Conference, hosted by Rochester Post 446
March 15: American Legion Birthday
March 24-28: National Commander's Tour of Minnesota
March 29: ALA Department Leadership Workshop, New Ulm Unit 132
April 5: Department Commander's Testimonial, Northern Lights Casino & Hotel
April 11-12: ALA Jr Department Conf., Anoka Unit 102
April 24-27: Minnesota Legion College, Camp Ripley
May 5-9: Spring Meetings, Indianapolis
May 14: 100 percent membership target date
May 15-18: Work & Play Weekend, Legionville
May 17: Dept. President's Testimonial, Fairmont
May 17: 1st District Convention, Lake City Wild Wings
May 17: 3rd District Convention, Forest Lake Post 225
May 17: 4th District Convention, N. St. Paul Post 39
May 17: 7th District Convention, Echo Post 204
May 17-18: American Legion National Oratorical Contest, Hillsdale College, Mich.
May 26: Memorial Day, local ceremonies
June 7: 2nd District Convention, Pipestone Post 6
June 7: 5th District Convention, Holiday Inn/Green Mill (along I-35W), Bloomington
June 7: 8th District Convention, location TBD
June 7: 6th District Convention, Brainerd Post 255
June 8-14: Minnesota Boys State, St. John's Univ.
June 15: First session at Legionville Summer Camp begins (there are six sessions in 2025)
June 14: 9th District Convention, E. Grand Forks Post 157
June 15-21: Minnesota Girls State, Bethel University
June 15-Aug. 1: Six weeklong sessions of youth camping at Legionville
June 25: American Legion Day at Target Field, Minnesota Twins vs. Seattle Mariners, Minneapolis
June 27-28: SAL Detachment of Minnesota Convention, Morris Post 29
July 4: Independence Day, local ceremonies
July 9: Minnesota American Legion & Auxiliary Department Executive Committee Meetings, Willmar
July 10-12: 106th Department Convention, Willmar
July 12: Department Executive Committee, Willmar
July 18-25: Boys Nation, Marymount Univ., Va.
July 19-26: Girls Nation, Bolger Center, Potomac, Md.
July 24-27: Fund 85 Ride, location TBD
July 28-31: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I-A State Tournament, Burnsville (dates tentative)
July 31-Aug. 3: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I State Tournament, St. Michael
Aug. 1: Final session of Legionville ends
Aug. 1-3: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Jr. State Tournament, location TBD
Aug. 1-3: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II State Tournament, Ely
Aug. 2-3: Minnesota American Legion Fastpitch Softball State Tournament, Fairmont
Aug. 8-10: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Jr. State Tournament, Hayfield
Aug. 6-10: American Legion Baseball Regionals
Aug. 14-17: American Legion World Series, Shelby, N.C.
Aug. 8-10: Auxiliary Junior Fun Weekend, Legionville
Aug. 16: Minnesota Legacy Run, location TBD
Aug. 18-22: National Legacy Run, ending at national convention in Tampa
Aug. 22-28: 106th National Convention, Tampa, Fla.
Sept. 1: Registration opens for Junior Shooting Sports
Sept. 4-7: Camporee, Legionville
Sept. 11-14: Minnesota ALR Romp, Legionville
Sept. 15: Sons of The American Legion Birthday
Sept. 30-Oct. 5: John Zgoda Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt, Legionville

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
Adank, Richard A.	91	9/29/24	Army	Korea	70	Winona Post 9
Note: He was post commander 1987, 2002 and 2003.						
Ahluquist, David E.	84	10/4/24	Navy	Cold	47	New London Post 537
Anderson, Leo O. Sr.	86	11/11/24	Army	Vietnam	43	Bemidji Post 14
Backes, David J.	92	10/19/24	Navy	Korea	50	Dassel Post 364
Bauer, Alois R.	79	11/13/24	Army	Vietnam	47	Melrose Post 101
Baumann, Richard H.	76	10/25/24	Army	Vietnam	37	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He served as a food inspector.						
Becker, Dale L.	85	3/2/24	Army	Vietnam	3	North Mankato Post 518
Becker, Ronald	84	4/10/24	Army	Vietnam	9	Ironton Post 443
Bickford, Gregory A.	64	11/9/24	Air Force	Cold	1	Aitkin Post 86
Binger, William V. III	82	11/25/24	Mar./Army	Vietnam	57	Cambridge Post 290
Note: He received the Purple Heart as a result of wounds sustained in Vietnam. He was a past post commander.						
Boe, Marvin K.	94	10/6/24	Army	Korea	51	Minnesota Post 1982
Bohrer, Ruben R.	89	11/15/24	Army	Korea	67	Waite Park Post 428
Brown, Charles G.	76	11/20/24	Navy	Vietnam	10	Rochester Post 92
Bulthuis, Bernard E. "Buzz"	93	10/18/24	Army	Korea	17	New London Post 537
Note: After training, he was promoted to sergeant and sent to the Korean War.						
Bunting, Robert H.	85	8/4/24	Army	Cold	44	Storden Post 391
Burt, Randolph A.	78	7/24/24	Navy	Vietnam	1	Little Falls Post 46
Cedergren, John W.	78	9/23/24	Army	Vietnam	34	North Mankato Post 518
Note: He was a generator operator on a NATO site.						
Cowden, Paul R.	96	9/28/24	Air Force	WWII/K/VN	32	Pine Island Post 184
Danner, Duane A.	75	11/1/24	Marines	Vietnam	22	Fairmont Post 36
Note: He served in Vietnam in admin as an employment interviewer.						
Duenow, Lloyd A.H.	91	10/15/24	Army	Korea	19	Glencoe Post 95
Ehnert, Ronald D.	76	9/28/24	Army	Vietnam	45	New York Mills Post 116
Engelhardt, Larry L.	80	11/24/24	Army	Vietnam	16	Caledonia Post 191
Erlandson, John L. Sr.	84	10/6/24	Navy	Leb-Gren.	9	Cambridge Post 290
Note: He was a retired naval commander who served 26 years.						
Frandsen, Raymond S.	98	8/18/24	Navy	WWII	59	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Gentz, Milford C.	88	10/31/24	Marines	Korea	47	Lakefield Post 4
Gruhot, Donald L.	91	10/29/24	Army	Korea	30	Marshall Post 113
Hendrickson, Gene L.	93	11/8/24	Army	Korea	42	Bemidji Post 14
Hiemenz, David J.	77	12/2/24	Army	Vietnam	33	Little Falls Post 46
Note: He was a recipient of the Bronze Star.						
Hoffarth, Roman "Romaine"	98	10/28/24	Navy	WWII	58	Waite Park Post 428
Note: He served aboard the escort carrier USS Makassar Strait.						
Holicky, David P.	77	122/3/24	Air Force	Vietnam	53	Le Center Post 108
Note: He was stationed at George AFB, Calif., in the Mojave Desert.						
Hughes, Warren G.	91	11/8/24	Army	Korea	68	Kelliher Post 470
Note: He was assigned to the 8113th Engineering Company in Korea.						
Ivers, Edward O.	93	11/3/24	Army	Korea	70	Austin Post 91
Jacobson, Harold D.	92	10/27/24	Air Force	Korea	72	Brooten Post 288
Note: He was a past post commander.						
Jech, Carl F.	85	11/27/24	Army	Vietnam	27	Austin Post 91
Jurek, Jacob J.	88	11/13/24	Army	Korea	38	Milaca Post 178
Kaiser, Ronald A.	75	11/14/24	Marines	Vietnam	4	Bagley Post 16
Kalvig, Harold "Buckwheat"	76	9/25/24	Air Force	Vietnam	13	Glenville Post 264
Kaspar, George B.	87	12/1/24	Navy	Vietnam	35	Milaca Post 178
Kava, Mark S.	53	10/12/24	Air Force	Persian Gulf	35	Barnesville Post 153
Note: He was a past post commander.						
Kluegel, James A.	93	11/24/24	Army	Cold	69	Spicer Post 545
Kobs, Kenneth A.	81	10/19/24	Navy	Vietnam	19	Lake City Post 110
Larson, Larry R.	75	10/11/24	Army	Vietnam	53	Owatonna Post 77
Note: He was stationed in Korea.						
Ledin, Howard N.	99	11/4/24	Navy	WWII	72	Pine City Post 51
Note: He trained as a radioman and was stationed stateside for two years. Uncle Sam then sent him on a troop transport ship for the invasion of Japan, which surrendered before arrival. He spent his final year on an LST (landing ship, tank) in the Philippine Islands.						
Lenort, Thomas M. Sr.	88	11/4/24	Army	Cold	17	Albert Lea Post 56
Note: He was stationed in Germany with the 11th Armored Calvary Regiment.						
Lestrud, Larry D.	85	11/23/24	Army	Vietnam	58	Albert Lea Post 56
Line, Roger R.	77	12/6/24	Army	Vietnam	8	Silver Lake Post 141
Lozinski, Dennis N.	80	10/21/24	Army	Vietnam	46	Marshall Post 113
Maleska, Frank A.	93	11/6/24	Army	Korea	62	Melrose Post 101
Matthys, Leonard L.	88	10/27/24	Army	Korea	44	Willmar Post 167
Mavencamp, Henry P.	90	8/28/24	Navy	Korea	58	Maple Lake Post 131
McCoy, Harry M.	101	10/26/24	Army	WWII	65	Motley Post 124
Note: He served in the 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion in the European Theater.						
Menk, James E. Sr.	98	9/9/24	Navy	WWII	66	St. Peter Post 37
Moller, Joseph A.	81	11/28/24	Navy	Vietnam	9	Rosetown Memorial Post 542
Morris, Dennis R.	72	11/14/24	Marines	Vietnam	1	Lake City Post 110
Novak, Francis E. "Fritz"	95	9/16/24	Air Force	Korea	68	New Prague Post 45
Note: He served as a mechanic with the 342nd Bomb Squadron, 8th Air Force, working on B-50 Bombers. When the war began, the military asked him to stand up a maintenance squadron, then he spent his remaining two years in England.						
Palm, Jerry D.	81	7/12/24	Marines	Vietnam	57	Ironton Post 443
Palmer, Harry D.	73	10/23/24	Army	Vietnam	44	Rosetown Memorial Post 542
Note: He served in Germany.						
Paterson, Robert J.	96	11/28/24	Marines	WWII	33	Anoka Post 102
Pearson, Thomas C.	80	5/22/24	Navy	WWII	80	Anoka Post 102
Note: He served 18 months in uniform, then became a teacher. He taught and coached in Iowa and in Europe before coming to Anoka, where he was the longtime athletic director. He was the 1987 grand marshal of the Halloween Parade.						
Potter, Deuel W.	82	10/1/24	Coast Guard	Vietnam	16	Owatonna Post 77
Note: He served at several stations on the East and West coasts, but he was most fond of Ketchikan, Alaska.						
Prader, Wallace G.	90	10/31/24	Air Force	Korea	40	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He served as an administrative clerk serving in Luke AFB, Ariz., and Ashiya Air Field in Japan.						
Pumper, Francis G. "Fritz"	91	10/10/24	Air Force	Korea	72	New Prague Post 45
Note: He served stateside as a mechanic making sure aircraft was in top condition.						
Reinardy, Ronald A.	85	11/15/24	Navy	Cold	15	Cannon Falls Post 142
Richards, Neil L.	90	8/14/24	Navy	Korea	37	Millville Valley Post 579
Note: He served aboard the aircraft carrier USS Kearsage and the light aircraft carrier USS Wright.						
Rohwer, Lloyd W.	96	11/25/24	Army	Korea	71	Dodge Center Post 384

Taps Continued from Page 6

Note: He served in Ludwigsburg, Germany.

Saari, Arthur J.	83	11/11/24	Navy	Vietnam	1	Deer Creek Post 283
Note: He served on the aircraft carrier USS Hancock as a fighter jet mechanic.						
Schilling, Ronald V.	77	10/13/24	unk.	Vietnam	29	Marshall Post 113
Slowinski, Anthony F.	96	10/27/24	Navy	WWII	29	Lyle Post 105
Stemmann, Duane E.	77	11/19/24	Army	Vietnam	27	Bellechester Post 598
Strong, James G.	90	10/27/24	Army	Korea	36	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Struve, Paul M.	79	10/1/24	Army	Vietnam	4	Two Harbors Post 109
Note: He served with the military police in Alaska.						
Swinehart, Leslie E.	68	10/6/24	Navy	Leb-Gren	28	Fulda Post 318
Terwey, Arthur B.	95	10/10/24	Army	Korea	48	Holdingsford Post 211
Tobin, Wade F.	101	11/7/24	Navy	WWII	58	St. Paul Business & Prof. Post 450
Note: He was past post commander.						
Uglen, Lee W.	70	10/8/23	Navy	Vietnam	44	Ironton Post 443
VanBlaricom, Lyle L.	84	10/5/24	Navy	Vietnam	37	Backus Post 368
Note: He served as a radioman.						
Wessels, Leslie O.	77	12/3/24	Army	Cold	5	Little Falls Post 46
Note: He served 2 1/2 years of his four-year enlistment as an MP in France.						
Williamson, James M.	83	11/19/24	Navy	Vietnam	18	Northfield Post 84
Wilson, B. Glen	92	9/13/24	Army	Korea	51	Willmar Post 167
Zibrowski, Richard A.	83	12/7/24	Army	Vietnam	41	Caledonia Post 191

What's happening?

Legislative Social slated for Jan. 8

ST. PAUL — The Department Legislative Committee hosts its Legislative Social at Mancini's Char House in St. Paul from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. Jan. 8. Appetizers and cake will be offered. To RSVP, contact kristy.janigo@gmail.com. Lawmakers and Legionnaires plan to mingle and learn about legislation veterans hope will cross the finish line in 2025. See the Legislative Priorities on Page 8 or visit mnlegion.org/legislation.

Sweetheart Rally coming up Feb. 8

ROYALTON — The Sweetheart Rally takes place Saturday, Feb. 8, at Royalton Post 137. This one starts at 11 a.m., with a noon meal and a program to follow. Cost of the meal is \$20. The luncheon is chicken, ham, mashed potatoes, gravy, dressing, corn or green beans, dinner roll, water, lemonade and coffee. The Sweetheart Rally is organized by the Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary and is an event for all members of the Minnesota American Legion Family. To pay online, visit mnlegion.org/calendar and click on the Eventbrite link. There is a \$3.18 convenience fee. To pay by mail and skip the fee, send a \$20 check and write "Sweetheart Rally" in

the memo. Mail it to Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary, 20 W. 12th St. Room 314, St. Paul, MN 55155. Minnesota ALA Secretary Christie Avant asks members to sign up by Monday, Feb. 3, so she can provide the post with a meal count. The Appreciation Rally is set for Saturday, March 8, and it will be at Chanhassen Post 580. The social hour is slated to start at 11 a.m.

Commander's Testimonial is April 5

WALKER — The Department Commander's Testimonial Dinner takes place Saturday, April 5, at Northern Lights Casino & Hotel. Social hour starts at 5 p.m. There is a 6 p.m. dinner, with program and music to follow. The annual testimonial dinner is a chance to show appreciation for the travel and hard work the department commander has done in the past year. Commander Carl Moon shifted his event up to early spring because, he said, people get busy with summer plans. The buffet menu will be baked chicken, barbecue ribs with wild rice, au gratin potatoes, California vegetable medley and green bean almandine. The meal includes a dinner roll, mixed green salad, brownie, coffee, tea and water. To reserve your seat, send a \$40 check payable to Zimmerman Post 560. Reservation must be received by March 21.

Please mail the check to American Legion Post 560, Attn: Bob Lundgren, P.O. Box 123, Zimmerman, MN 55398. Write down number of people attending. (Also, there will not be an online payment method for this event.) To reserve a room, contact the hotel directly at 800-252-7529 or 218-335-3190 and request rooms under "American Legion block" at the rate of \$90 plus tax no later than March 21. There are additional nearby lodging alternatives: Country Inn, 218-547-1400; Walter Hotel, 218-547-2200; Chase on the Lake, 218-547-7777.

National Cmdr.'s Tour schedule released

ST. PAUL — American Legion National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr. visits Minnesota the week of March 24. The National Commander's Tour of Minnesota starts off with visits to the state VA and federal VA. Department Adjutant Michael Maxa is in the middle of lining up and confirming stops along the way. Confirmed stops are La Crescent Post 595, Faribault Post 243, Buffalo Post 270, Granite Falls Post 69 and Slayton Post 64. See the next issue of the Legionnaire for a full schedule of stops and RSVP contacts. LaCoursiere is an Air Force veteran, a member of Post 91 in Moosup, Conn., and a past national vice commander.

Winter brings district conferences, trip to D.C.

National Report

Bill Barbknecht



Donna and I hope you all had a very good Thanksgiving. Everyone has so much to be thankful for, some may take a little looking around for, but I promise it is there. As we approach Christmas, I ask you to do a Buddy Check, with someone you may have not seen in a while. That may just be your thankful. Go visit them, talk to them, maybe they just can't afford their dues, help them to pay that, just plain help in any way you can. Again, that may just be your thankful. National HQ has changed the name of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to the Child Well-Being Foundation. The Pearl Harbor Rally is over as you read this. The American Legion Riders did an outstanding job. We have the best Riders in our organization. Great work, Jody Hassing and former directors of this program of the American Legion. Some posts need to work with your Riders and SAL as they are a programs under The American Legion. We can get so much done by working together. Is your post's constitution and bylaws updated? Where are they and who has access to them? Posts are expected to update them about every five years. If you need help, call your district officers.

about the Oratorical Contest? Thousands of dollars in scholarships may be won. Please get a student to enter. It is not too early to think of Boys State or Safety Patrol at Legionville either. Yes, The American Legion has many opportunities and programs for school-age persons. The Washington Conference will be Feb. 23-26. We have a large delegation from Minnesota attending again this year. Legislative Chair and 10th District Commander Kristy Janigo will be heading it up for Minnesota, and you probably already know she does a phenomenal job for us. Is your post holding any form of Christmas gathering this year? How about a day with coffee and treats. So much you can do inexpensively for your members this time of year. We hope you have a great Christmas and maybe make the day of a servicemember from your area, with a Christmas card and a note of encouragement to an active-duty person. It's such a small effort and means so much to them to receive that from someone who's been in their shoes. Know 'tis the time of year to slow down as some roads may not be in the best driving conditions. Donna and I look forward to seeing you all in 2025 somewhere. I am also so thankful for all the prayers for our Alternate NEC Peggy Moon. She is done with all her treatments and has shared with me she will be traveling around in 2025. Welcome back, Peggy! Merry Christmas.

Mid-Winter Conferences will be starting Jan. 11 and every weekend in January, as well as some in February. We look forward to attending as many as possible. Feb. 8 will be the next statewide American Legion Family get-together. The Sweetheart Rally is at Royalton Post 137. The social hour is 11 a.m., meal at noon, program follows. Rallies are for everyone — Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, Riders. Let's have a great attendance. Royalton has a beautiful Post, and plenty of room. Have you visited your school

Bill Barbknecht of Fergus Falls Post 30 is the Department of Minnesota's National Executive Committeeman.

2023 Dept. Financial Report

INCOME STATEMENT: SEPT. 30, 2023

Department Income	
Department Dues Income	\$703,082
Less: MN Legionnaire Portion	\$(163,950)
Revenue Enhancement Program	\$164,377
Grants	\$139,663
Investment Income	\$297,709
LIT Insurance - (Royalties)	\$63,966
Donations / Contributions	\$2,962
In-Kind Rent	\$84,458
Miscellaneous Income	\$35,910
Total Department Income:	\$1,261,894

STATEMENT OF BUDGET EXPENSE: SEPT. 30, 2023

Headquarters Expense		
Administration Salaries	Budgeted	Disbursed
FICA Expense	\$322,400	\$320,098
FUTA Expense	\$24,700	\$34,037
SUTA Expense	\$210	\$210
Group Health & Life Ins.	\$380	\$400
Employee's Ret. Fund	\$85,760	\$84,143
Unbudgeted Expense	\$0	\$0
Audit Expense	\$11,000	\$12,881
Investment Management Fees	\$14,000	\$12,404
General Office Expense	\$43,500	\$21,903
Elect. Equip., Maint & Mod.	\$23,450	\$17,898
Insurance (Other)	\$9,500	\$11,833
Travel Expense	\$17,790	\$15,672
Telephone	\$5,000	\$3,765
Marketing	\$20,000	\$24,240
Misc. Expense	\$0	\$1,918
Prior Year Voided Cks	\$0	\$46
Loss on Sale of Assets	\$0	\$711
Total Headquarters Expense	\$610,930	\$593,939

Unbudgeted Annual Expense

Depreciation Expense	\$0	\$4,462
Rent Expense	\$0	\$84,458
2019 Accountant Adj. Entries	\$0	\$9,765
Total Unbudgeted Annual Expense \$0	\$98,685	

Rehab Expense

Salaries	\$113,000	\$108,338
FICA Expense	\$8,750	\$8,430
FUTA Expense	\$100	\$108
SUTA Expense	\$175	\$174
Group Health Insurance	\$37,100	\$27,251
Employee Retirement Fund	\$11,380	\$11,457
General Office Expense	\$4,000	\$9,625
Claims Office Expense	\$1,000	\$0
CVSO Travel & Training	\$5,000	\$0
DSO & ADSO Travel	\$7,500	\$16,277
Rehabilitation Committee	\$6,000	\$722
Total Rehab Expense:	\$194,805	\$182,432

Committee Expense

Americanism	\$3,300	\$3,085
Blood Program	\$170	\$225
Chaplain's Fund	\$200	\$146
Children & Youth Committee	\$1,500	\$470
Commander's Budget	\$33,000	\$33,000
Convention Corporation	\$2,000	\$1,079
Dept. Convention Committee	\$3,500	\$1,079
Dept. HQ Conf. & Convention	\$18,000	\$27,095
Department Treasurer	\$3,000	\$3,000
Employment Committee	\$0	\$0
Executive Committee	\$28,000	\$26,398
Finance Committee	\$1,700	\$2,131
Historian	\$650	\$420
Insurant Trust Committee	\$1,500	\$1,486
Judge Advocate	\$8,800	\$8,800

Law & Order Committee	\$200	\$221
Legislative Committee	\$2,000	\$2,364
Membership (Incl. Vice Cmdr.)	\$40,000	\$32,212
National Executive Committee	\$4,000	\$4,000
Nat'l. Convention Delegates	\$35,100	\$35,181
Nat'l. Security/Foreign Relations	\$9,000	\$8,085
Media & Comm. Committee	\$18,000	\$18,000
Resolutions Assignment Committee	\$500	\$911
LIT. Advertising	\$4,725	\$4,500
USAA Advertising	\$4,725	\$5,288
Strategic Planning Committee	\$700	\$129
Credentials Committee	\$630	\$725
Sergeant-at-Arms	\$100	\$81
Alternate NEC	\$2,000	\$2,000
Education and Training Committee	\$6,000	\$1,793
Total Committee Expense	\$233,000	\$225,622

GRAND TOTAL Budget vs. Actual \$1,038,735 \$1,100,678

Total Undesignated Revenue	\$1,261,894
Total Undesignated Expense	\$1,100,678

Change in Net Assets \$161,216





MINNESOTA AMERICAN LEGION LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2025

The 2025 Minnesota Legislature convenes Jan. 14. The annual legislative priorities issued by the Minnesota American Legion help members know which measures are being pushed this session so they can talk fluently with local lawmakers about them.

These Minnesota American Legion priorities for 2025 were approved by the Department Executive Committee on Oct. 24:

Bring back the Veterans Affairs committees for both chambers

Over the spring and summer months, Minnesota lawmakers told veterans that our Legislature needs to bring back a Senate Veterans Affairs Finance & Policy Committee, which they got rid of in 2023. In November 2024, House leadership did away

with the House Veterans Affairs Finance & Policy Committee, too. This is absolutely unacceptable. Why is it state government spending totals increase by \$20 billion (around \$41B in 2019 to \$61B in 2024) and yet the state cannot staff legislative committees for the men and women who served? Restore our committees.

Protect veterans from consumer fraud and claim sharks

Consumer fraud and aggressive practices targeting veterans' VA benefits compensation are on the rise. Few insults are more egregious than to take advantage of disabled veterans or their families. The American Legion at the national level wants the return of criminal penalties enforced against these non-accredited violators. While the federal government is in gridlock on whether or not to pass the GUARD Act (S. 740 and H.R. 8736), states like New Jersey are beginning to pass their own legislation to protect veterans. The American Legion Department of Minnesota believes this issue is too important to wait for the federal government to act. We worked with the Legislature on draft language (CS144-5005671173743550781) to empower veterans to recover damages from these illegal practices and hope to see the bill pass this year.

Reduce state taxes on charitable gambling

We call on lawmakers to provide meaningful tax relief for Minnesota charities. Our posts pay more in taxes than they give to the charities they support, which leaves less revenue for us to support our communities. Last year, The American Legion Department of Minnesota worked with lawmakers on a bill (HF 2000, SF1949) that would have dedicated a percentage of legal sports betting state tax revenue to provide rebates to charitable gambling operations. The bill died in the final hours of the 2024 session. We commend the authors for the progress they made last year, as it brought us closer than we have been in more than a decade to getting much needed tax cuts. Let's get this measure across the finish line in 2025.

Other gambling priorities:

Expand lawful purpose expenditures for post homes

Many of our posts are very old, in disrepair and have limited means to complete large capital projects such as roof repairs or parking lot resurfacing. Often charitable gambling is the only source of revenue for these projects. The state limits lawful purpose expenditures on these projects to a small percentage of annual gambling revenues. Last year, lawmakers tried to include lawful purpose expansion to 50 percent of annual gambling revenue for congressionally chartered veterans service organizations. Two separate pieces of legislation included this measure, the sports betting bill (HF2000) and the House tax omnibus bill (HF5247), but both efforts failed in the final hours of the 2024 session. We ask lawmakers to reintroduce this measure, without a sunset or expiration date, to ensure our continued presence in communities across Minnesota into perpetuity.

Increase amount posts can spend on meals recognizing veterans

The \$5,000 annual cap on how much posts can spend from gambling for meals held in recognition of military service is no longer reasonable. This amount was set by the Legislature in 2002. It is MS 349.12, Subd. 25(17). We feel this figure should be \$15,000 so that it meets modern-day cost of meals for present and future needs. Let's do right by our veterans and make this simple change.

Modernize the Disabled Veterans Homestead Market Value Exclusion

Currently, there are two levels of property tax exclusions. The exclusion values have not changed in over 10 years while home values have dramatically risen, reducing the impact of this benefit. The first level is a maximum exemption of \$150,000 for veterans

rated by the VA as 70 to 100 percent disabled. The second level of exclusion is for 100 percent permanent and total (100 percent P&T) disabled veterans at \$300,000. We wish these amounts to be increased to \$200,000 (base level) and \$400,000 (double the base level), respectively. The new values need to be indexed to inflation. We need a technical fix to remove the word "honorable" from the statute. Counties should not re-adjudicate veterans' character of service, since the federal VA has already deemed the service honorable for disability compensation purposes. In 2024, House lawmakers introduced a bill (HF4259, no Senate companion) including all the provisions we hope to become law. We cannot allow Minnesota veterans to lose their homes as prices continue to skyrocket and the property-tax exclusion benefit becomes less and less effective.

Modernize the Surviving Spouse Homestead Market Value Exclusion

There are several areas of the current market value exclusion statute that are unfavorable to surviving spouses and exclude them from receiving the benefit. First, we support the removal of the equal or lesser value language for surviving spouses. It is often more expensive to downsize from a large home that is already paid off to a smaller home, town home, or a condo. Second, the present law, MS 273.13, Subd. 34(d), says the surviving spouse must file within two years of the death and must live in the home at the time of the death. In 2021, we got rid of most of the time limits, but we should finish the job and remove all time limits for surviving spouses applying for the benefit. Third, the law discriminates against active-duty spouses and would help only Minnesota National Guard or Reserve spouses. Active-duty spouses likely live on or near out-of-state bases when their spouse dies in service to the country. When they return to Minnesota, they find they do not qualify for the Gold Star property-tax exemption. This is not in the spirit of our state's support for veterans and their families. Lastly, we also would favor changing the law to allow the spouse to remarry and retain the benefit. Veterans who have passed on would want their loved one to find happiness in their absence. We have worked with lawmakers and research staff on draft language (JS089-16475571070973784702). We hope to see this introduced as a bill in 2025 and passed into law.

Provide 100 percent property tax relief for post homes

Many 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations received property tax exemptions after qualifying through their county assessor and going through a three-year assessment review. We desire Minnesota to give 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(19) organizations access to the same nonprofit property tax exemptions provided to 501(c)(3) nonprofits. This would reduce the disturbing trend of posts going under. There are a handful of states that provide this same benefit as a recognition of the good veteran service organizations do for their communities, and Minnesota needs to be among them. As a side benefit, a zero-tax measure would clear up much of the confusion city and county assessors statewide have regarding veteran posts and tax laws. In 2024, this bill (HF4038, SF3953) received widespread bipartisan and bicameral support but was denied hearings in both tax committees. We call on Rep. Aisha Gomez and Sen. Ann Rest to hear these bills, which are widely supported by their colleagues and Minnesotans. Let's treat our veteran nonprofits like other nonprofits.

Continued on Page 9

DRIVE HOME YOUR SUPPORT!

Purchase a plate and support MN Military members, Veterans and their families. MinnesotaVeteran.org/SOT

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HELP IS HERE FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

SERVING MINNESOTA VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES



State Rep. Steve Elkins of Bloomington and Minnesota American Legion Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo sit before the House Veterans Affairs Committee in March 2024. Elkins authored a bill that lets counties help fund Veterans Day observances. The legislation passed.



Veterans from across Minnesota gather at the State Capitol on April 17 for Veterans Day on the Hill. The Minnesota Commanders' Task Force has not set a date for Veterans Day on the Hill in 2025. (DAV is working with Rotunda and Armory staff on it.)

Continued from Page 8

Offer free vehicle registration for Gold Star spouses, children

Many states do not charge vehicle registration fees for Gold Star spouses (based on the DD-1300 or DD-2064) and sometimes for their children. Minnesota should follow suit. These people have made deep sacrifices on behalf of our federal, state and local governments, and this would be the least our state could do to thank them. Last year, a bill (HF4338, no Senate companion) was introduced to make this a reality. We need to take care of our Gold Star spouses and children and get this done.

Produce a license plate for Jewish War Veterans

There are license plates for other congressionally chartered veterans organizations, such as American Legion, VFW, DAV, Amvets, Military Order of the Purple Heart and a few others, but, strangely, there is not one for the JWV, which was founded in 1896 and received its congressional charter in 1984. It's time to fix this oversight, honor and celebrate the service of Jewish War Veterans. We support the re-introduction of the bill (HF3962, SF3456) that would add this specialty plate to our state's list of offerings and respectfully request hearings in both chambers' transportation committees.

Address food insecurity resources for all Minnesota veterans

The veterans omnibus bill last year and the year prior included significant funding to address veteran food insecurity through Metro Meals on Wheels. Metro area CVSOs report that one of the first steps they take after a homeless veteran is stably housed through HUD-VASH or another veteran specific resource is to sign them up for Meals on Wheels to deliver prepared frozen meals to their home. In 2024, two senators voted against the veterans omnibus bill because the funding

went only to the metro area and not Greater Minnesota. Determine the level of need in rural and outstate areas and decide whether Meals on Wheels, Lutheran Social Services or another provider can address food insecurity statewide, so all Minnesota veterans have adequate nutrition.

Add 2 more Vet Centers (federal issue)

VA Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers that provide a wide range of social and psychological services, including professional counseling to eligible veterans, servicemembers, including National Guard and Reserve components, and their families. In Minnesota, we are home to almost 300,000 veterans. We have just three full-fledged Vet Center locations to serve our entire population. They are in Anoka, St. Paul (presently in Richfield) and Duluth. A new Vet Center outstation opened in June 2024 in St. Cloud under the supervision of the Anoka Vet Center. There are huge areas of Minnesota which are underserved because of the distance to a Vet Center. We favor making the St. Cloud outstation a full Vet Center, and adding them in Mankato and Bemidji, too.

Make hearing loss and tinnitus presumptive (federal issue)

Many federal VA resources are spent on claims for hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing in the ears), whether initial claims, supplemental claims, or various types of appeals. A majority of Board of Veterans Affairs appeals dockets are consumed by hearing loss and tinnitus appeals for service connection. Consequently, the government is likely spending far more with these processes than if these claims were all granted. We propose making hearing loss and tinnitus presumptive of military service. Regardless of one's military duties, all military personnel must learn how to use weapons, and many are routinely noise exposed. In years past, hearing protection has been absent, proven inadequate, and many times not practical to use in the field. Additionally, there is no scientific test to prove the presence or absence of tinnitus. We can influence Congress to make hearing loss (in the presence of audiometric findings) and tinnitus presumptive of military service.



Minnesota Military Museum Director Randal Dietrich, left, and Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Brad Lindsay, right, hold doors for veterans and their supporters at the south entrance to the Minnesota State Capitol on April 17.

Have you heard of the Legion Cruisers?

ST. PAUL — There is a new movement afoot with The American Legion nationally. It started in North Carolina and is spreading to other states.

It is called the American Legion Cruisers. Much like the Riders, it is for members of the Legion, Auxiliary or SAL but they have classic automobiles, which is defined as 20 or more years old, or have custom cars.

Fourth District Commander Jon Haworth is leading the charge in Minnesota. He has a custom 2012 Subaru WRX, a performance car.

"We can start by doing car shows at a post, then it can turn into a cruise from one post to another or many others."

He hopes to enlist the help of posts to launch Legion Cruiser chapters across the state and form up a department level.

Contact Haworth at jhaworth@kw.com if your post wants a Legion Cruisers.

"We'll obviously need a chain of command for this club, so please ask around for people that would be interested in those positions."

Snowmobile ride for vets is on Feb. 15

GRAND RAPIDS — All veterans are welcome to enjoy

a day snowmobiling, including lodging and meals at the annual Veterans Appreciation Ride.

It takes place Feb. 15 in Grand Rapids.

Bring your own snowmobile or, if you don't have one, there will be one provided. Same for helmets and suitable clothing.

The Veterans Appreciation Ride is co-sponsored by the

Minnesota Snowmobile Education & Advancement Fund and Minnesota United Snowmobile Association.

Advance registration is required. To sign up, download the form at mseaf.org and mail it in by Jan. 25.

Questions can be sent to mnveteransride@gmail.com.

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Minnesota DAV is in Immediate Need for Additional Volunteer Drivers

Minnesota DAV is in immediate need of additional volunteer drivers. This FREE service provides Veterans with transportation to and from their VA medical appointments and has transported over 15,000 Veterans this year

Contact your nearby VA Medical Center Voluntary Services Office and ask how to become a volunteer driver

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Regions in high need of drivers include:
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You do not need to be a Veteran or DAV member to volunteer. Drivers must be fully vaccinated.

DAV OF MINNESOTA

Lucky for him, buddy was a medic

Continued from Page 1

the Atlantic Ocean on Dec. 26.

They landed at King Fahd International Airport and headed to KKMC — King Khalid Military City.

The Middle East Division of the Army Corps of Engineers had construction agreements with Saudi Arabia going back to 1951, and, from 1976 to 1988, the corps had a \$14 billion agreement to build hospitals, schools, roads, airfields and other structures as a joint American-Arabian training program. This included three military bases, and the crown jewel was the \$1.3 billion, octagon-shaped KKMC in the northeast part of the kingdom. It was completed in 1986 and designed to house 65,000 personnel.

The bond forged through these construction projects was a major reason why Saudi Arabia accepted the U.S. military presence during Desert Shield/Storm.

It's hard to say just how many troops were at KKMC. It's been said Americans had their own city among many coalition forces at the base — a city within a city. It was a place where the Army engineers had their HQ, too.

Plus, Air Force engineers were present for repairs to runways and helicopter pads. Large quantities of supplies and pre-positioned equipment were at that base, and Patriot missiles were positioned to protect it from Iraqi Scuds.

Pagel said 2/158th's active-duty A and B companies deployed. C Company was a Reserve unit and didn't go. D company was a National Guard unit, and it went.

B Company's mission was refueling birds. They had 57 Chinooks on one airstrip all lined up.

"We had hot refueling points set up on the airstrip at KKMC," he said. "Other companies were bringing fuel back from the tank farm."

When he wasn't on duty, he was hanging out at the tents, playing spades and other card games and dealing with scorpios and camel spiders.

When Iraq didn't meet its Jan. 16 deadline, Operation Desert Storm began. Helicopters from KKMC took off and headed in different directions. Just because a pilot flies south from the airfield doesn't mean it is headed to a southern objective.

"You never know the chopper's destination or what the load is," Pagel said.

Now and then, he would overhear the crew talk about what's going on in Iraq, such as transporting enemy prisoners of war.

"I mainly put my head down and did my job," he said. "It was hot."

On Feb. 21, Iraq fired three Scud missiles at or near KKMC and another on Feb. 24, all intercepted by the Patriots. Thirty-seven miles away and out of the range of KKMC's Patriot system, on Feb. 14, the city of Hafar al-Batin reported five Scud impacts, causing four injuries but no deaths.

The 2/158 returned Memorial Day 1991, flying back on Trans World Airlines to Fort Hood. Families met their soldiers at the brigade gym area. However,



In September 2021, Brad and Patricia Pagel stand in front of the Grand Canyon with a Minnesota sign from the 102nd National Convention in Phoenix.

Pagel's parents ran a dairy farm, so you know what that means.

Shipping of Army equipment across the seas was backlogged, and the unit's stuff didn't arrive until August 1991. No one in the 2/158 had trucks, equipment or work to do. Pagel finally saw his parents when he got out of the Army in August 1991.

"People asked me what the Middle East was like. I told them it was like what you read in the Old Testament," Pagel said.

He didn't want recognition. By September, he got a job with a beer distributor. He was in Minnesota for the Halloween Blizzard of 1991. He had to deliver beer the next day.

Pagel did that for 1 1/2 years before deciding to try a bigger truck. He got his Class A CDL and began driving semis for Floyd Wild Trucking in Marshall. He hauled kitchen cabinets to Michigan weekly. He has driven for Larry Schaffer out of Redwood Falls and Larry Peterson of Fulda. For Peterson, he hauled meat and produce to California and back.

He drove an oversized rig for CRT Specialized Transportation, which his aunt and uncle operate.

"I didn't mind that. It was daylight hours," Pagel said.

He met Patricia Stoakes in 2003 on Interstate 90 over the CB radio around 2 in the morning on day. Brad was driving a new 2004 big rig. She said she was driving a "piece of crap out of Brandon, S.D. and the trailer light wasn't working."

His new truck, however, "smelled like he ran over a dozen skunks," Patricia said.

She radioed him about the smell. He radioed her about the taillight. They pulled off at Fairmont, and that's how they met.

"It turned out I knew her sister and brother, her dad and others in her family, but not her," Brad said.

Brad and Patricia Pagel wed on Thanksgiving weekend in 2006. By this time, they were working as a team for Leroy

Prins Trucking out of Rushmore, hauling meat and produce.

Every one of these veteran stories you read in the Legionnaire seems to have a date on which everything changes. For Pagel, it was March 31, 2007. He had stopped to eat at McDonald's with a buddy in Fairmont and suffered a sudden heart attack.

Well, actually, it was six massive heart attacks: One in Fairmont, then five more on the ambulance ride to Mankato.

Three days prior, he had experienced back pain. He blew it off as needing to see a chiropractor. There was no arm feeling that heart-attack patients often describe.

He woke up partially while riding in the ambulance to Mayo Clinic Health Systems in Mankato, which transferred him to Rochester. It was in Rochester that he woke up fully.

"Then they tell me what happened," Pagel said. "I don't remember how many days it was. It's been downhill since. Never sick a day in my life until those heart attacks."

For that part of the story, you have to ask Patricia.

On that day, helicopter flights were grounded because of thunderstorms, she said. Mankato doctors put stints in Brad to prepare him for the 82-mile ride of his life to the Mayo Clinic's St. Marys Hospital.

"They gave him a 5 percent chance of making it to Rochester," she said. "He somehow made it."

It helped that his lunch buddy at the Fairmont McDonald's was a combat medic with a tank crew, she added. Pagel had collapsed in the restroom, and neither Brad nor Patricia recall who found him in there. However, his buddy acted fast, performing compressions until the ambulance arrived.

Brad also credits the medical crew.

"The ambulance guy gave me nitro glycerin," he said.

On June 7, Brad had a triple bypass, and on Nov. 7, doctors

implanted a defibrillator.

Patricia graduated from Brandon Valley High School in Brandon, S.D., in 1980. After marrying, she and Brad lived in Hills, a tiny southwest Minnesota town near the Iowa border, and suffered a house fire in 2009. They moved to Slayton in 2012.

He joined The American Legion in March 2015 as a member at Slayton Post 64 while involved with local veterans working on a memorial for Murray County.

"I showed up at one meeting, paid dues at the next meeting. At the third meeting, I was elected commander that night. I've been post commander ever since," Pagel said.

Pagel went to a 2nd District Convention in Madelia one year, where Randy Olson of Winnebago Post 82 and Ryan Hill of Brewster Post 464 convinced him to be a district vice commander. The next year, he was commander, and he ended up being the Covid commander who served two years.

He served as a department sergeant-at-arms last year. Presently, he serves on the Department of Minnesota National Security/Foreign Relations Committee and is the judge advocate for the 2nd District.

Why the Legion? He likes the programs, the Four Pillars (Veterans, Defense, Americanism and Youth) and how The American Legion welcomes anyone who served, whether or not they deployed.

Post 64 has no building and, he said, works hard for its visibility in Slayton. Recently, a member of the post convinced his company to donate a pickup to the post instead of trading it away. The post accepted it and wrapped the 2016 Chevy Silverado with 140,000 miles with a patriotic design and put carpet in the bed.

Now, the members take it in parades. The honor guard uses it to travel to funerals.

The post also gets noticed for having American Legion Baseball and Fastpitch Softball teams, and with a good relationship with the school district. The honor guard provides colors at football games.

Pagel has had four mild heart attacks since his episode in 2007, bringing his cardiac attack tally to 10. The Mayo Clinic told him he lacks the heart function to keep working. He travels to the VA Medical Center in Sioux Falls for his health care. He says the care is top-notch.

"The heart attack hurt my ability to work. I do help my brother on the farm now and then, but being involved in The American Legion gave me a purpose again, and, you know, I like that," he said.

They are a blended family, with six grown children. Together, they have 12 grandkids, one dog, two cats.

Patricia joined the Auxiliary in 2017. She is a member of Avoca Unit 576.

"I finally joined after I saw what he was doing, and I liked what he was doing. I decided I would join the Auxiliary so I could help veterans, too," she said.

Who manages your pensions? They do

Continued from Page 1

Kyle Lee.

The RO has five divisions: Veterans Service Center, Pension Management Center, Benefit Eligibility Support Team, Support Services Division and Veteran Readiness & Employment.

Gillette shared, via slideshow, that the Veterans Service Center completed 56,612 rating claims, the Pension Management Center completed 36,650 rating and 86,685 non-rating claims, the Benefit Eligibility Support Team completed 128,392 non-rating claims, Support Services' Committee on Waivers & Compromises completed 11,805 waiver decision and Veteran Readiness & Employment completed 222 job-ready decisions.

The RO employs the equivalent of 942 full-time employees. Of those, 51.3 percent are veterans, Gillette said.

It is one of 56 VA Regional Offices.

PACT Act

"The PACT Act is the biggest expansion of veteran health care and benefits in generations," Gillette said.

Since it was signed into law in August 2024, the VA nationally has received 2.1 million PACT Act-related claims and processed 1.8 million of them, with a grant rate of 74.5 percent, she said. More than \$8 billion has been awarded in backdated benefits.

Veteran Service Center

This is the division that processes compensation benefit claims and special mission claims. Of the 56,612 claims completed in fiscal year 2024, 2,331 were completed above the "outstanding target" level. St. Paul ranked 17th in the nation out of the 56 ROs.

Lee said the center is on track for fiscal 2025 to outpace 2024.

VASP

Many in attendance were interested in the Veteran Serving Purchase Program, a federal effort to help eligible veterans facing foreclosure on their VA-guaranteed home loans. Also called VASP for Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase, it provides a fixed 2.5 percent interest rate for the remainder of the loan.



The Minnesota Commanders' Task Force comprises veteran service organizations and Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs leaders. Often, a policy aide from the Governor's Office will attend, too.

Loan servicers were expected to come into compliance with this guidance by Oct. 1, Gillette said.

PMC

St. Paul RO is one of three Pension Management Centers in the nation, Lee said. The other two are in Milwaukee and Philadelphia. St. Paul handles Minnesota and all states west of the Mississippi River.

The St. Paul PMC also is the site for Blue Water Navy survivor claims, regardless of jurisdiction. St. Paul has paid retroactive BWN payments totaling over \$260 million since Jan. 1, 2020.

COWC

There are many aspects of the veterans world to navigate. Among them is the work done by the RO's Support Services Division.

The St. Paul RO is one of three with a Committee on Waivers and Compromises, or COWC. The others are in Milwaukee and Buffalo. Buffalo handles education debts. St. Paul and Milwaukee have jurisdiction over debt waivers, payroll debt waiver requests and compromise offers over \$1,000. The St. Paul one handles loan guaranty debts for the entire country.

VR&E

Veteran Readiness & Employment assists service-connected disabled veterans in obtaining suitable employment or achieving maximum independence in daily living, Lee said.

"Veterans are entitled to VR&E services if their service-connected disabilities cause or contribute to an employment handicap," he said.

This division also advises veterans to identify a career goal and related training. They can qualify for payment of tuition, books, fees, certifications and licenses. Self-employment services are available, too, he said.

Employment coordinators assist veterans with resumes, job-seeking skills and finding job leads. The VA provides a grant to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development for vet-related employment services.

Total American Legion posts with gambling: 190 Auxiliary units with gambling: 3 40&8 voitures with gambling: 1 Total: 194

Gross receipts \$460,467,719 Prizes paid \$392,332,287 Net receipts \$68,135,432 Allowable expenses \$34,085,331

Note: "Charitable Contrib." means donations to outside your post, such as a food shelf or Legionville, and "Mission" means donations within your post, like honor guard uniforms, membership dinners or roof repair. "Char. & Mission" is the total of the two. "Total LPE" is both plus taxes and fees.

Taxes & Fees \$17,641,874 Charities \$9,675,014 Mission \$6,003,777 Charitable & Mission \$15,678,791 Total LPE 33,320,665 LPE change from FY23 Up 1.74% % LPE is taxes 52%

Table source: Minn. Gambling Control Board (fiscal year July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024)

Table with columns: Post or Unit, Gross Receipts, Prizes Paid, Net Receipts, Allowable Expenses, A.E.% of Net, Charitable Contrib., Mission Expend., Char. & Mission Ex., Miss.% of Net, Taxes & Fees, Tax/Fee % of Net, Total LPE, %LPE of Net. Lists 190 American Legion posts and their financial data.



Bill Gordon of St. Michael Post 567 walks into the exhibition area of the Allied Charities of Minnesota Convention on Nov. 22.

New etab laws take effect Jan. 1

Continued from Page 1

the old games," Jenner said, "so we encourage you to continue to offer electronic games."

The 193 American Legion posts and units and one 40&8 voiture with charitable gambling licenses donated \$9,675,014 in the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2024, a 4 percent increase from the prior year.

Those same posts, units and voiture paid \$17,641,874 million in taxes and fees. Despite slight tax cuts, they still paid 1.6 percent more in taxes — a result of the revenue increase. Still, it is clear they end up paying more to taxes than to causes.

American Legion-related net receipts came to \$68.1 million. (\$460.4 million gross minus \$392.3 million in prizes.) American Legion posts have more gambling licenses than any other organization in Minnesota, and their percentage of net receipts when compared to all licensed organizations is 9.56 percent.

In other words, it's safe to say the Legion alone accounts for about 10 percent of all charitable gambling in Minnesota.

Many communities like having an American Legion post because they donate to a variety of causes, said Commander Carl Moon.

"Many charities do one sport or one cause, and that's great," he said, "but it's very valuable for any town that their Legionnaires give to a variety of community needs, such as veteran causes, local food shelves, youth programs, scholarships, fire-fighting, flags, Scouting, honor guards, homelessness — many areas that otherwise would not receive gambling proceeds."

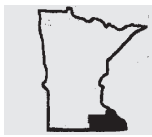
His Commander's Project this year is the Veterans Defense Fund. It is a nonprofit working to expand veterans treatment courts across the state.

"Treatment courts are valuable for helping veterans dealing with PTSD and other unseen wounds of combat. This essentially allows judges to ask, 'Why are you here?'" and get them to treatment rather than just leave them with a black mark on their record for the rest of their lives."

To donate, posts can make the check to Minnesota American Legion Foundation and enter "Fund 82" in the memo. Fund 82 always is the Commander's Project. Gambling funds are allowed. After the July 2025 Department Convention in Willmar, the entire total will be tallied and presented to the Veterans Defense Fund.

The table above shares a little more than half of the posts with gambling licenses. There isn't room to publish all. Visit mn.gov/gcb/publications/reports/ to find them all.

District commanders



1st District Mark Maloney III



I want to say Merry Christmas, and I am proud to be your commander by making sure that everyone is informed as the 1st District officers are. Everything at the district is an open book; just ask any district officer. With that being said, we still have a lot more work to be done.

We still have some posts that are short of officers or have officers who do not know the basics of The American Legion. We also have a few posts that SAL and ALR members think The American Legion follows their bylaws when they are actually programs of The American Legion and are to report to the parent organization.

Post members have final say in anything we do in The American Legion. The chain of command in the American Legion is the post, the district, the department and then national.

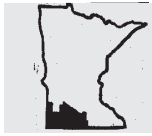
Both the SAL and the ALR follow American Legion

guidelines parent group guidelines. But The American Legion sets the guidelines.

These are some of the problems that I see our posts are having. They can be solved having the members and post officers taking classes on the American Legion (Basic Training online) and also attending district or department events or going to Minnesota Legion College in the spring.

If you plan on becoming an officer and want to know what is going on and what your rights are as members, please attend as many events as possible. As members it your responsibility to make sure your officers should do their best for you.

Let's remember to do buddy checks and remember those who will not be home for Christmas.



2nd District James Olson



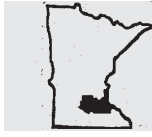
Greetings, 2nd District! I hope everyone had a fantastic Thanksgiving, and I would like to wish all of the Department of Minnesota a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

With the holidays here, please remember to reach out to your buddies and check up on them. This time of year can be difficult for people and they may slip into, or further into, a state of loneliness or depression. A phone call or a visit can go a long way to lifting the spirits of someone who is feeling lonely or depressed during this time of year.

The 2nd District is doing well with membership. We met the 75 percent target date early. The 80 percent target date is Jan. 15.

There is no reason why we can't make that goal or hit 90 percent of goal by the end of January. If you have not reached out to those Legionnaires who have not renewed, please do so as soon as possible. Remind them of the reason we are all Legionnaires. Remind them of being a Legionnaire and that we, as an organization, can do more with them than without them in our ranks.

Mid-Winter is coming up on Feb. 15 at Nels Lee Post 165 in Briceyn. Get registered as soon as possible. It's shaping up to be a great day of information, education and training!



3rd District Joe Tappainer



The cold winter wind is blowing, and snow has finally come, though it didn't stick around too long. Winter is finally here!

The past few weeks have slowed way down, but after Thanksgiving it always begins to heat back up again with the people that for the past few months have said they will not renew until the 2024 membership is just about to expire. You know who you are!

Christmas is on its way and families will be getting together to celebrate the holidays! Grab your family (even the furry ones) and friends and hold them tight! There is nothing more precious

in this world than family and friends!

Here is a great idea for this month! Check with your local nursing homes or assisted living centers for veterans that may have been forgotten. Consider maybe getting them a small gift or card. It's nice to know that someone is remembering them. However, no treats unless you check with the staff first!

Until next month! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



5th District Lynne Nottage



Greetings from the 5th District. This year has just flown by. Thanksgiving is over. We are on to Christmas and all the winter holidays.

The 5th District will not be holding district meetings in

December or January; however the 4th and 5th Districts Mid-Winter will be

held on Saturday, Jan. 11, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Arcade-Phalen Post 577. This year's Mid-Winter Conference will be training oriented for all members of the 4th and 5th Districts Legion Family. I hope to see you all there!

We do have some sad news. Past District Commander Wade Larson passed away on Friday, Oct. 18. He was a member of Gopher Post 440. He will truly be missed.

As for membership, the 5th District is holding tightly to 10th place. We've been here before and understand the work we need to do to accomplish our goals. The district will look into holding a revitalization in the new year. If your post needs

help before then, please let us know if you would like some assistance. We're here for you.

A special thank you to Gary Martin for keeping track of our membership and keeping us all informed.

The 5th District Oratorical will be at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 18, at Wold-Chamberlain Post 99. If you have an interested contestant, please let me or Ray Eiden know. We also need help with judging, timekeeping, etc. Please let us know if you would be available.

The Winter Carnival parade is Saturday, Jan. 25 — meet at Arcade-Phalen Post 577 by noon. Membership rally will be after the parade. Everyone is welcome to attend.



6th District Frank Grittner



Greetings from the BIG 6th District.

So now we are in the heart of the holiday season. Veterans Day and membership celebrations are behind us. Hunters are all in from the woods, and we are all stuffed like Thanksgiving turkeys. I hope everyone had a wonderful, safe autumn filled with blessings and success.

In my travels around the district, I'm proud to see all the good work and kindness being done in our communities. Make sure we are blowing our own horn and letting people know what a vital part our posts are playing.

We enjoyed a great turnout at the Pearl Harbor Rally at Spicer Post 545. Through a lot of hard work and dedication, as of the last report, the 6th District is in first place for membership. This is due to the work we are putting in TOGETHER! It truly amazes me what we can accomplish by working TOGETHER! Keep pushing, especially those that haven't paid up for 2024 yet.

Next up, after the beginning of the year we have the 6th District Mid-Winter Conference

on Jan. 18 at Melrose Post 101. Please register early.

I hope to see many of you there, at least one from each post would be fantastic. Many times, these events have a 20% participation rate, meaning only 20 percent of the posts actually show up. Remember the best way to be heard is if you participate.

Please send out good thoughts and prayers to those that are struggling. Better yet, reach out to those you haven't seen in a while, or to those that you know may be struggling. You never know when a phone call, or a friendly visit, saves a life. This time of year is statistically one of the hardest for people to get through. Let's make sure we are all doing everything we can to BE THE ONE.

Until next time, from my wife, Wendy, and I and the entire Grittner family to all our American Legion Family, we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year filled with all of life's best. Remember to BE THE ONE!



7th District Carl Wilson



Happy Holidays from the 7th District:

I'm sorry I missed the last issue of the Legionnaire; it has been a very busy couple of months.

In September I attended the Joint Americanism Conference in Indianapolis on Sept. 27-28. I learned a lot of great information in my quest to bring a Junior Shooting Sports program to the 7th District.

In October I attended a fun shoot for American Legion Junior Shooting program where I took first place, by 1 point. I then attended the Department Fall Conference in St. Cloud where I was able to meet with several members from the 7th District and of course other districts.

In November I attended the first of many mission trainings put on by the National HQ in Denver. I learned about different subject matters to enhance

leadership qualities in the Legion.

December doesn't look like it will be any slower. I went down to the Olivia Post 186 to set up the District Mid-Winter scheduled for Jan. 18. I hope to see many of you there. Registration for it will be in the district newsletter coming out soon.

I am hoping to have a couple seminars at Mid-Winter but have not decided what they will be on yet. I would like to take this opportunity to let everyone know that there is an NRA Level 1 coaching class being offered at the Anoka American Legion on Dec. 28-29. To attend this class please contact Minnesota Centershots at mncentershots10.9@gmail.com.

Thank you for all you do for our veterans and have a safe holiday season.



9th District Steve NaSalle



Hello Roaring 9th District American Legion Family!

As the 2024 calendar year comes to an end, our membership goals continue to improve as we move forward into 2025. Please keep up the great work. Our membership numbers for our district are still meeting or exceeding our Legion goals.

Congratulations to our posts that have met their 100 percent goal. Excellent Job! During the holiday season, please continue your buddy checks to ensure our homebound, and our assisted living veterans are safe and warm during the upcoming holiday season. We leave NO ONE behind!

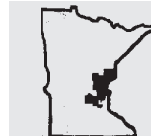
Remember to be safe during your holiday travels and please plan accordingly. Please remember to mark your calendars for our upcoming District

Mid-Winter Conference at Warren Post 27 scheduled for 9 a.m. Jan. 11. The 9th District Executive Board meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Jan. 10. All are invited.

Please ensure to arrive early, so we may get started on time. Again, I would like to see, at least, one representative from each post in the 9th District to attend.

Have a wonderful holiday season and please continue to keep up the great work.

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." — John F. Kennedy



10th District Kristy Janigo



By the time everyone reads this, I hope you've had time to practice gratitude with friends and family around Thanksgiving and are not too busy yet preparing for the winter holidays.

Thank you to everyone who opened their post homes to me the week of Veterans Day. I began my week participating in a flag-raising with Department Vice Commander Bill Gordon at Magnus Veterans Foundation in Dayton on Friday, Nov. 8.

I spoke at the Anoka American Legion Veterans Day Dinner Saturday, Nov. 9, and enjoyed catching up with Commander Lori Allert and the entire post family.

Thank you to District Auxiliary President Bethany Dickert for organizing 10th District Veterans Day observance in Lino Lakes Sunday, Nov. 10, and for the first aid kits that were passed out to each veteran as a thank you. Sunday evening, Bethany and I traveled to Harris for an

elaborate home-cooked Veterans Day dinner at Kaffee Stuga.

On Monday, Nov. 11, I participated in color guard with my post (Osseo 172) at the state Veterans Day observance in Arden Hills.

I also remain your American Legion Department of Minnesota legislative chair through the 2025 cycle. See Page 8 or visit the department webpage for the approved legislative platform <https://mnlegion.org/legislation/> and join us at Mancini's in St. Paul Jan. 8 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. for a legislative mixer where all Minnesota state lawmakers will be invited to have some appetizers and cake and learn about what we hope to get accomplished for our veterans this year.

In service.



Chip Mason presents a \$500 check from Spicer Post 545 to Commander Carl Moon for his project at the Pearl Harbor Rally on Dec. 7. His project is Veterans Defense Project.



Garylee Davenport presents a \$150 check from Spicer Post 545 to ALR Director Jody Hassing for her project on Dec. 7. Her project is Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund.

Listening Post



Minneapolis Falldin Post 555 delivered apples for the teachers to Columbia Academy elementary school in Columbia Heights on Nov. 20 during American Education Week. From left are Commander Donovan Orttel, Principal Duane Berkas, Chaplain Fred Schilling and Adjutant Ray Eiden.



Members of the Monticello Post 260 Honor Guard spent Veterans Day visiting comrades in three local care centers. Unit 260 President Christine Koehn presented gifts of 36 caps to the veterans. From left are Dave Lofte, Steve Merritt, Ted Farnam, Koehn, Bob Weiman, Don Anundsen, Dennis Knudson.



More than 40 motor vehicles, from motorcycles to Corvettes, participated in the VA Decorated Vehicles Parade on Veterans Day. A holiday parade was held Dec. 14, too.



On Sept. 23, Dent Post 148 had its annual flag retirement at St. Paul's School in Perham. Students from St. Paul's and St. Henry's participated. The post also conducted a ditch cleanup on Highway 108 on Sept. 16.



Department of Minnesota Commander Carl Moon presents the George J. Kaisersatt Award to the Brainerd Police Department in October for its strong support of and participation with Legionville Education Center. Accepting the plaque is Officer Travis Gleason.



American Legion Department Commander Carl Moon attended the Jewish War Veterans Membership Dinner at Mancini's in St. Paul in October. From left are Moon, JWV National Commander Gary Ginsburg and JWV Department Commander Stewart Mednick.

THE AMERICAN LEGION Department of Minn. Commander's Project

Department Commander Carl Moon's Project raises money for the Veterans Defense Project.

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.**

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

The Veterans Defense Project defends veterans and aims to expand veterans courts across the state and nation.

Date of graphic: Dec. 9

Goal:
\$60,000

Thanks to posts 11, 45, 62, 74, 79, 100, 101, 108, 119, 121, 150, 167, 172, 282, 292, 357, 373, 399, 455, 510, 560, 602, 617 and individuals.

Present:
49% at
\$29,312

Click on the QR code below to donate over any cellphone.



Donate at mnlegion.org



The honor guard from Elk River Post 112 presents the colors at an Elk River High School football game against Brainerd on Sept. 6. The Elks defeated the Warriors 50-14. The Elks won the state title on Nov. 23, defeating Alexandria 33-24. Post 112 member Rachael Hill's son, SAL member Tyler Hill, was a lineman on the team.



Veterans with Woodbury Post 501 gather with locals at the Woodbury Veterans Memorial for an annual Veterans Day observance. They also gathered at Woodbury High School for a second ceremony.



Jordan Post 3 Commander Bill Rutz and member Joe Bares present 20 new classroom flags at Jordon Elementary School. A school addition resulted in the call for more flags, and some seasoned ones needed replacing. Principal Melissa Barnett is on the left.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 25 Vol. 4

President Judy Ackerman • Secretary Christie Avant, christie@mnala.org

Dept. HQ: Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155 651-224-7634 December 2024



American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota members attend 2024-25 National ALA Mission Training in Colorado in November. From left NEC Jean Walker, Jody Hassing, Jill Davis, President Judy Ackerman, Membership Chairman Hope Wilson, Denise Milton, Sally Koltes, Mary Efta, Past President Sharon Cross and 1st Vice President Robin Dorf.

Time to re-energize spirit for the mission

Happy Holidays!

The month of December brings many holidays for celebrating — Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and New Year's Day — to name a few. Whichever holiday you celebrate, I wish you bountiful blessings this holiday season and in the New Year.

December is Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Month. Please take the time to do Buddy Checks on the local veterans and those that are at a distance but close to your heart. Everyone needs to have that feeling of support.

January is the month for national security and legislation. What plans have you made for these programs? Tell your lawmakers to support their veterans.

Thank you to the units and districts that issued invitations in November — Glenville,

President's Message

Judy Ackerman



Cosmos, Osseo and 4th District. I enjoyed seeing members in these units. Your hospitality was fantastic. Osseo had their Boys and Girls Staters speak at their dinner. What an awesome group of young adults. They will go far in life. Our future is in good hands with these young leaders.

I will be busy traveling the state in December. Hoping for good weather throughout the month.

Mission Training in Denver was an educational trip. Minnesota was well-represented in the Northwest Division with 10 seniors and three juniors attending. We came back with new ideas and excitement for our programs.

Mid-Winter Conferences will be held in January. Please take the time to attend and reconnect. This is a time to re-energize and get engaged with our programs and the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.

Judy Ackerman of Northrop Unit 522 is the president of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota. Her theme is "Back to the Basics: Recognize, Respect, Remember."

It's Veterans Affairs & Rehab Month

By Robin Dorf
VA&R Chairman

Every month we should recognize and support our veterans, but the American Legion Auxiliary recognizes December as Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Month.

The key program statements for our program this year include supporting veteran caregivers, family members and survivors, enrolling members as VA Voluntary Service volunteers at our VA health care facilities, supporting our veterans with support of rehabilitation and healing through arts, crafts and hobbies they are interested in, helping to promote job fairs for veterans and their families while helping with our homeless veterans crisis, and finding opportunities for members to serve veterans within your communities, and volunteering with partner organizations like Wreaths Across America and Honor Flight Inc. More information on these program can be found in the unit guide.

Minnesota is blessed to have eight beautiful veterans homes and we work with four VA Health Care Systems that serve our veterans and their families through quality care and an environment of community. President Judy Ackerman has appointed the following to serve as the representatives this year:

- Bemidji Veterans Home: Denise Milton, Bagley Unit 16
- Fergus Falls Veterans Home: Doris Lafayette, Barnesville Unit 153
- Hastings Veterans Home: Darlene Wondra, Montgomery Unit 79
- Luverne Veterans Home: Jeannette Mertens, Redwood Falls Unit 38
- Minneapolis Veterans Home: Sandy Gibson, Rosetown Unit 542
- Montevideo Veterans Home: Jennifer Hurst, Montevideo Unit 59

- Preston Veterans Home: Wanda Prescher, Stewartville Unit 164
- Silver Bay Veterans Home: Nancy Hopper, Two Harbors Unit 109
- Fargo VA Health Care System: Becky Olson, Moorhead Unit 21
- Minneapolis VA Health Care System: Janet Thompson, Apple Valley Unit 1776
- Sioux Falls VA Health Care System: Diane Strassburg, Adrian Unit 32
- St Cloud VA Health Care System, Jan Benson, Waite Park Unit 428

If you visit one of the facilities or see them at an event, make sure to thank them for their time with our veterans. They are many times the first face of the American Legion Auxiliary to these veterans and their families.

It is important that we support our Minnesota Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation programs first financially. Through donations, directly sent to our department office, from units and individual members we support the following for our veterans:

- American Legion Auxiliary Hospital Program: Money received to the fund allows the hospital and home representatives to provide clothing, personal care items, special outings, events, treats, cards and much more for all the veterans utilizing our facilities.
- \$5 Bill Shower: Provides a \$5 bill to all veterans in our facilities for personal use
- Overall Minnesota Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program: Supports all activities we do in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation program
- Gift Shop: Provides gifts to hospitalized veterans, nursing home residents and their families during the holiday season.
- Minnesota Fisher House: Donations help cover support supplies, food, personal hygiene items, and other special needs for the families.



Department President Judy Ackerman and Department Commander Carl Moon enjoy time with Legion, Auxiliary and SAL members at the Pearl Harbor Rally on Dec. 7. Among those members were the 6th District Membership Team, including District President Dori Hamilton and District Membership Chairman Wendy Grittner. They take no prisoners when it comes to membership efforts. They had a "Get Out of Jail Free" sign.

Committee promotes strong defense

By Mary Kuperus
National Security Chairman

Strengthening and supporting military servicemembers and their families maintains and promotes this purpose. We can support military families by working with command groups and family readiness groups. Offer kindness and understanding and be there when a lonely spouse or child needs someone to talk to. Put yourself in their place for a moment and do whatever it takes to make sure our military families know they are not alone.

Working and supporting the American Legion Family and partnering with initiatives that strive to improve the quality of life of our servicemembers, and their families is another way to promote a strong

national defense. Some of the initiatives are bills that support payment for all branches of service in the event of a government shutdown, bills for educational resources and improved living quarters. Needs with childcare, healthcare, base housing, spousal employment, financial security, food security are a few more.

Let's remember our POW/MIA's and continue to support the work being performed by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). Missing personnel are being found and identified by the continued work of the DPAA.

The Salute to Servicemembers Award was established in 2003 and has evolved from honoring women veterans to honoring active-duty women,

to honoring all enlisted personnel who are currently serving our country in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force and the National Guard/Reserve.

One enlisted servicemember from each branch of service as well as the National Guard/Reserve will be recognized at the American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. Who from Minnesota can we nominate? Wouldn't it be awesome to nominate a service member from each branch of the military!

Talk to Blue Star Parents, church families, and neighbors to inquire about their son or daughter in the military. The nomination form is online at alaforveterans.org along with more information.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Bulletin #14 as of 12/9/2024

2025 Membership

Member-opoly

"Finding Members in Everyday Places"

Your Leader is Rich Aunty Pennybags, Hope Wilson



DISTRICT	# of Units	Goal	Period Gain	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year	Difference from Last Year
One	47	3,341	149	2,460	73.63%	2,449	11
Two	70	3,444	193	2,374	68.93%	2,566	-192
Three	46	3,476	129	2,380	68.47%	2,429	-49
Four	7	508	9	292	57.48%	325	-33
Five	7	463	17	238	51.40%	201	37
Six	60	4,469	60	3,374	75.50%	3,360	14
Seven	52	2,561	106	1,778	69.43%	1,953	-175
Eight	20	1,117	18	737	65.98%	742	-5
Nine	45	2,944	71	2,045	69.46%	2,136	-91
Ten	41	3,391	62	2,235	65.91%	2,345	-110
1982	1	331	0	217	65.56%	224	-7
Department Total	396	26,045	814	18,130	69.61%	18,730	-600
Group 1 (Even)	198	12,929	342	9,012	69.70%	9,338	-326
Linda Kelly							
Group 2 (Odd)	197	12,785	472	8,901	69.62%	9,168	-267
Robin Dorf							

RANKINGS

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
75.50%	73.63%	69.46%	69.43%	68.93%	68.47%	65.98%	65.91%	57.48%	51.40%
District 6	District 1	District 9	District 7	District 2	District 3	District 8	District 10	District 4	District 5



American Legion Auxiliary Unit 560 of Zimmerman raised \$5,000 at its Christmas event on Dec. 7 from members of the community, including Legion Family members. In addition, the fire truck was filled with gifts to be distributed by Neighbors Helping Neighbors. Thanks to the Zimmerman Fire Department for joining in.



Lamberton Unit 41 has held a Halloween party for the children of Lamberton and surrounding communities for decades. Kids up to sixth grade can participate in games and win various prizes. There was also a drawing for larger prizes. Each age group had a prize such as a free game of bowling, free pizza, summer fun package and gift certificates. Top prize was tickets to the upcoming school musical "Frozen." A free hot dog meal was offered before the youngsters went into the community trick or treating. Post 41 and area businesses made donations to offset event expenses.



Wheaton Unit 80 presented longevity awards; 10 years: Peyton Duhme, Nancy Kracht, 15 years: Kelly and Ziva Levi; 20: Dana Aalgaard, Laura Cronen, Sherry Marts, Beverly Rasmussen, Marilyn Timm, Diane Vollmers, Susan Wilts; 25: Shirley Murray Peyton; 30: Jean Nelson; 45: Karen Koch; 50: Kathleen Johnson; 55: Evie Rinke. Accepting certificates, shown above, are, front row Kathleen Johnson, Peyton Duhme, Marilyn Timme, and back row Evie Rinke, Karen Koch, Susan Wilts, Dana Aalgaard, Jean Nelson.



On Nov. 18, Norwood Unit 343 gathered in the community room at Oak Grove Senior Residence to assemble thank-you baskets for educators and staff from area schools as part of American Education Week. From left are Judy Schindler, Bonnie Wigfield, Diane Hoffman, Dottie Simmons, Jeannette Bachmann and Mary Wilson. Present but not pictured are Diane Mackenthun, Janet Stolz (photographer) and Project Chair Carol Lagergren, who made prior arrangements with Kwik Trip and delivered the apples, cookies, and popcorn before having to leave.

2024 membership expire on Dec. 31

By Hope Wilson
Membership Director

Welcome to winter, Minnesota! We all know this dance. The first snow, the first ice on the lakes, the first guy to go through the lake trying to ice fish first.

Hey, I have lived here all of my life. I know! It also means we have to work harder to get memberships to come in. Many of our members have gone south where it is warm, many posts and units do not meet in the winter. But now is a great time to make those phone calls and do the buddy checks and slip in that you noticed that they haven't paid their dues yet while you are checking on them on these cold lonely days.

All 2024 memberships expire on Dec. 31. If

you are in a leadership position within your unit, you will be in non-compliance and will not be able to hold a meeting in your unit. Someone from your district will have to come in and conduct your unit meeting for you. Being said, please send in your unit dues.

Jan. 2, 2025: Senior members not renewed for 2025 in ALA MIS by midnight, will get a second renewal notice

Right now, Minnesota is fourth in the nation and first in the Northwest Division. We are going strong. Please continue to send in your memberships.

The national goal was 75 percent on or before Dec. 7. Huge congratulations to the 6th District for reaching the goal. Fantastic job! The next goal is 85 percent by March 15.

Units that have not turned in any transmittals

(Figures reflect only PUFLs or online payments)

Dist	Unit	Location	2025 DNO	Jr.	Sr.	Total	% to Date
01	81	Harmony	44	0	1	1	2.27%
01	422	Claremont	20	0	3	3	15.00%
02	123	Luverne	29	0	6	6	20.69%
02	133	Jasper	24	0	0	0	0.00%
02	322	Currie	55	0	3	3	5.45%
02	464	Brewster	61	0	3	3	4.92%
03	37	Saint Peter	76	0	4	4	5.26%
03	408	Green Isle	35	0	5	5	14.29%
03	518	North Mankato	84	0	7	7	8.33%
07	169	Clarkfield	31	2	2	4	12.90%
07	253	Lowry	57	1	3	4	7.02%
07	420	Raymond	37	0	3	3	8.11%
08	452	Keewatin	32	0	2	2	6.25%
09	31	Mahnomen	24	0	0	0	0.00%
09	35	Alvarado	58	0	1	1	1.72%
09	181	Lake Park	17	0	1	1	5.88%
09	238	Fertile	33	0	4	4	12.12%
09	371	Roosevelt	34	0	0	0	0.00%
09	390	Stephen	18	0	0	0	0.00%
09	466	Strandquist	13	0	0	0	0.00%
10	139	Harris	28	0	2	2	7.14%

Divisional stack-up

Energy: Northwestern Division 66.51% up from 53.31%
Air: Central Division 63.45% up from 51.62%
Earth: Southern Division 61.44% up from 50.67%
Fire: Western Division 61.84% up from 50.24%
Water: Eastern Division 57.88 up from 44.78%

It's beginning to look at lot like Christmas

Department office to be closed for the holidays On behalf of the department staff, we wish each of you a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and happy holidays.

"We are thankful for each of you and ask you to continue to work the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary," said Executive Secretary Christie Avant.

The Department Office will be closed Dec. 24 and 25 for Christmas, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1 for New Year's and Jan. 20 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Junior Conference will be in Anoka

ANOKA, MN — It is time for units to begin planning for the Department of Minnesota Junior Conference.

It will be held on April 12 at Anoka American Legion Post 102 with the 10th District serving as host. A fun evening of activities is planned for Friday, April 11. Complete information and the Call to Junior Conference will be included in the January unit mailing.

See the All-Family Calendar on Page 6 for a full listing on Legion and Auxiliary events.

Department of Corrections

On the bottom left of the November issue of the Auxiliary Bulletin, a photo of Hope and Carl Wilson identified a Junior member with an incorrect relative. In fact, she is their niece.

NEW RULES... STILL GREAT GAMES!



Arrow is leading the way developing new E-Tab games under the new rules – players are already embracing Arrow’s latest games!



MINNESOTA CHARITIES
Win with Arrow!



**ASK YOUR DISTRIBUTOR ABOUT OUR E-TAB PROMOTION
RUNNING THROUGH FEBRUARY 28TH, 2025!**