



National commander to share 'Be the One' message

Let the public see what Legion does

ST. PAUL — American Legion National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr. comes to Minnesota the last full week of March. The route weaves from the Twin Cities metro to southern Minnesota, back to the metro, then westward.

The National Commander's Tour of Minnesota reaches the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th and 10th districts.

Stops at American Legion posts

are not limited to Legion Family members. The general public is welcome to RSVP just the same as regular members. Mayors and other dignitaries often come, too. (To RSVP, see the chart on Page 3.)

"The tour is really a way for us to engage members and to engage our local communities, so that they see The American Legion's mission," Department of Minnesota

Commander Carl Moon said. "We want them to learn we are not about restaurants or banquet halls. We are about supporting veterans and saving lives. We want the public and the media to help us."

LaCoursiere was elected national commander at the 105th National Convention on Aug. 29, 2024, in New Orleans.

An Air Force veteran, LaCoursiere has been a longtime field representative for the American Legion

Department of Connecticut's Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Fund, which financially assists veterans and their families in need.

He has served as a national vice commander, chairman of the national Legislative Commission and as Department of Connecticut commander. As national commander, LaCoursiere is strongly committed to raising awareness for The American Legion's "Be the One" mission to

prevent veteran suicide.

The commander flies to Minnesota with his aide, Butch Hansen, on Sunday, March 23. With them on the tour are Moon, Department Adjutant Mike Maxa, Department Membership Director Carla Tappainer and Department Communications Director Tim Engstrom.

On Monday, March 24, LaCoursiere is slated to meet privately with Minnesota Veterans Affairs

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James A. LaCoursiere Jr.

Death from above

9th District Cmdr. Steve NaSalle is an airman who served in Grenada, Panama and Persian Gulf

By Tim Engstrom

FERGUS FALLS — Veterans of the Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard often kid Air Force veterans for that branch's reputation of comfortable living conditions and less physically demanding roles.

Fergus Falls American Legion Post 30 member and 9th District Commander Steve NaSalle's military service defies the stereotype.

"The Air Force isn't all Chair Force like a lot of people think. I didn't play golf."

NaSalle, 62, graduated from Rosemount High School in 1980. He was living on his own in 1981 and jobs were scarce. He joined the Air Force for a career.

"I came from a family of veterans," he said.

NaSalle was in the third phase of air traffic control school when the Air Force showed him some other training options. He was impressed with TACP — Tactical Air Control Party.

The job calls for supporting Army S-3 (operations and training) officers in ground or airborne units with airstrikes



Ninth District Commander Steve NaSalle sits at Fergus Falls Post 30. Behind are sweatshirts that say "Legion Ribs" because Post 30 is famous for its delicious beef ribs. NaSalle has 165 airborne jumps to his name. He qualified for jumpmaster at age 22, and he combat-jumped into Panama. His jump wings have a gold star and a wreath. This Air Force veteran spent a lot of time attached to Army paratrooper units.

where needed for the advancement of infantry.

He ended up in the 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron at Shaw AFB in South Carolina. In January 1982, he graduated from the Army Airborne School at Fort Benning, Ga. Stationed

at Shaw, the 21st TASS would support many Army units: 82nd Airborne Division, 101st Airborne Division, 1st & 2nd Ranger Battalions, 1st Armored Division, among others.

While supporting, tactical air controllers would train with the Army

soldiers on field exercises. If the soldiers jumped out of airplanes, so did NaSalle. If they rucked 12 miles, so did NaSalle. If they slept on the ground in January and ate MREs, so did NaSalle.

NaSalle was attached to the 82nd

Continued on Page 8

Bill calls for zero property taxes for posts

ST. PAUL — Posts of veteran service organizations do so much charitable work for their local communities, yet meanwhile struggle with the burden of property taxes.

The Senate Taxes Committee on Thursday, Jan. 23, heard a bill that aims to exempt posts of The American Legion and other congressionally chartered veteran service organizations from property taxes. The bill, authored by Sen. Jim Abeler of Anoka, has bipartisan support.

He testified that he was surprised to learn that Post 102 in Anoka even has to pay property taxes, considering it maintains nonprofit status.

American Legion Department Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo also testified.

"Many 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations receive property tax exemptions after qualifying through their county assessor," she said. "Veteran service organizations often have other

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Meet the new executive director of Eagle's Healing Nest



Retired Minnesota National Guard Sgt. Major Shawn Kor is the executive director of Eagle's Healing Nest.

SAUK CENTRE — A Marine and Army veteran is now leading Eagle's Healing Nest, a 124-acre campus where veterans reside in an environment with peer-to-peer physical and mental healing.

Shawn Kor, 48, is an Army and Marine veteran with a wife, Mandy, and five children — four daughters and a son. He is an American Legion member with Sauk Centre Post 67. He started as executive director of the Nest on Dec. 1, 2023.

Kor said leading the Nest isn't about one person.

"Whether I am executive director or not, I don't see a scenario where I am not part of the Nest," Kor said. "Mel Butler (founder and prior director) had a great vision, but

it's the volunteers and veterans who come through here that make the Nest what it is."

Kor graduated from Worthington High School before entering the active-duty Marines, serving from 1995 to 1999, mainly at 29 Palms Marine Corps Training Center. He then served from 1999 to 2023 in the Minnesota Army National Guard, primarily drilling at 1-125 Field Artillery in Luverne.

With the Marines, he deployed in 1996 and 1998 to places in Asia. The Guard sent him to U.S. bases in Europe in 2003. In 2011, he deployed to Kuwait.

He received his bachelor's degree at Bemidji State, even though it meant driving all the way down to Luverne. Eventually, the

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What's happening?

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. Post 137 is at 103 N. Maple St.

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" and a name 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.

If you have two people, cut it for \$40, write "Appreciation Rally" and enter two names, and so forth.

Mail it to American Legion Dept. of Minn., 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155.

The American Legion Department Executive Committee meets at 9:30 a.m. March 8 in the Post 580 basement.

The American Legion Auxiliary Department Executive Committee meets at 8:30 a.m. March 8 at the Chanhassen Recreation Center in Room 4. (Doors open at 8 a.m.)

The rec center is at 2310 Coulter Blvd.

Appreciation Rally slated for March 8

CHANHASSEN — The Appreciation Rally is when membership awards are handed out, along with some other honors.

Social is set for 11 a.m. Saturday, March 8, at Chanhassen Post 580, with a noon meal and a program to follow.

The post is at 290 Lake Dr. E. Meal tickets are available online via Eventbrite. The link is available at mnlegion.org/calendar. The tickets are \$20, plus a \$3.18 convenience fee.

The online option closes at 11 p.m. Thursday, March 6.

To pay without the extra fee, mail a \$20 check to American Legion Department of Minnesota and put "Appreciation Rally" and a name in the memo. (Otherwise, staff might think it is a \$20 subscription to the Legionnaire.)

Date set for Veterans Day on the Hill

ST. PAUL — It took a lot of schedule wrangling, but DAV of Minnesota Legislative Director Trent Dilks was able to set Wednesday, April 9, for Veterans Day on the Hill.

Veterans Day on the Hill is held by the Minnesota Commanders' Task Force — which is the Legion, VFW, DAV and five other congressionally chartered veteran orgs — and brings together about 600 veterans from all across Minnesota to advocate for veterans legislation.

Doors open at 10 a.m. for coffee at the St. Paul Armory for Veterans Day on the Hill 2024.

The free lunch is at 11:30 a.m., followed by a program and a march to the Capitol Rotunda after. Be sure to thank the Disabled American Veterans of Minnesota for the meal and for renting the armory.

Legion posts are encouraged to rent buses and bus veterans from their area to the Capitol. The DAV of Minnesota is willing to cover half the cost of bus rentals. Contact Dilks at trent@davmn.org well in advance.

Are you ready to bowl?

DAYTON — The 79th annual Minnesota American Legion Family Bowling Tournament will be March 29 to April 27.

Singles and doubles leagues

2025 registration for Commander's Testimonial

Cut out and mail this form to:

American Legion Post 560
Attn: Bob Lundgren
P.O. Box 123
Zimmerman, MN 55398

Registration fee:
\$40 per person

There will not be an online payment option for this event. Checks only.

Make check out to:
Zimmerman Post 560

Dinner date and location
Saturday, April 5
Northern Lights Casino & Hotel

Meal
Buffet with baked chicken, barbecue ribs, wild rice, potatoes au gratin, California vegetable medley and green beans almondine.

Please enter names for the people attending

Contact hotels directly for your reservations:

Northern Lights Casino & Hotel

800-252-7529 or
218-335-3190

Request rooms under "American Legion block" at the rate of \$90 plus tax no later than March 21

Nearby hotels:

Country Inn
218-547-1400
Walker Hotel
218-547-2200
Chase on the Lake
218-547-7777

bowl at 11 a.m. Saturdays. Teams bowl at 3:30 p.m. Saturdays and noon Sundays.

Visit mnlegion.org. Hover on "Events" and find "Bowling Tournament" to receive instructions and download registration forms. Lodging options are listed.

Cari Lamb is the tournament secretary, and all requests for reservations and information should go to her. Her email address is crlmb74@gmail.com. Her cellphone is 612-968-4839. Her address is 3217 19th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407.

Dave Wendt of Westphal Post 251 in Robbinsdale is the Department of Minnesota Bowling

Committee chairman.

Bowling results will be printed in the Legionnaire, usually in the June or July issues.

Bingo and guns, together at last

BUFFALO — Buffalo Post 270 has a classic spin on two American Legion favorites: bingo and firearms.

Join Post 270 for Second Amendment Bingo with breakfast at 9 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 22, event registration at 10:30 a.m. and bingo starting at noon.

Bingo packets are \$60 a person. The overall grand prize is a Browning A5 Wicked Wing.

This event is a fundraiser for Roger Up!, a social service helping veterans and first responders struggling with mental health.

'Take me out to the ballgame'

MINNEAPOLIS — American Legion Night at Target Field takes place June 25.

The Minnesota Twins take on the Seattle Mariners at 6:40 p.m. Purchase tickets by going to mnlegion.org and hover on "Events" Find "Twins Game" and click on it.

More than 110 Legion Family members participated last year.

The purchase deadline is Jun 20. Commander Carl Moon will toss out the first pitch, and Membership Director Carla Tappainier will raise the U.S. flag.

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- JFK Museum
- Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame

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- Sternwheeler Riverboat on the Chena River
- Natural History Tour, Denali National Park
- Princess Rail Talkeetna to Whittier
- 7 Day Cruise on the Sapphire Princess
- 3 Ports of Call and 2 Scenic Cruising: Skagway, Juneau, Ketchikan, Hubbard Glacier, Glacier National Park
- Crew Appreciation, Princess Plus Beverage Package and WIFI



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- Narrated Cruise to Spirit Island on Maligne Lake, 10 Peaks
- Athabasca and Takkakaw Falls
- Columbia Glacier
- Lake Minnewanka
- Chateau Lake Louise
- 1988 Olympic Village and Calgary Stampede Grounds
- Skywalk in Yoho Park

\$5,799.00 pp
Double Occupancy

Passports Required



Norway

September 9-20, 2026

Included in your tour:

- Accompanied by a 4 Seasons Tour Director
- Roundtrip Delta Flights from Minneapolis
- 16 Meals: 9 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 6 dinners
- Frogner Park
- Vemorks Norwegian Industrial Workers Museum
- Hardangerfjord
- "Fjord Capital of Norway" Bergen
- Sognefjord scenic cruise
- Jostedal Glacier
- Skyway to Heaven - skylift ride
- Geirangerfjord scenic cruise and skywalk
- Lillehammer

\$7,199.00 pp
Double Occupancy

Passports Required





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2025 JUNE 6-8
Osprey Wilds near Sandstone, MN
2025 OCTOBER 3-5
Good Earth Village - Spring Valley, MN
2025 DECEMBER 5-7
Faith Haven Camp near Battle Lake, MN

Tour stops at posts in southern half of Minnesota

Continued from Page 1

Commissioner Brad Lindsay, Minnesota National Guard Adjutant General Shawn Manke and Minneapolis VA Director Pat Kelly.

Dinner that evening will be at Forest Lake Post 225. After each meal, there is a program.

The tour heads to Apple Valley Post 1776 for breakfast on Tuesday, March 25. Pine Island Post 184 for lunch, then La Crescent Post 595 for dinner. Post 595 is closely connected with the La Crescent Area Event Center and will host the social hour, meal and program there.

Post 595's meal is free to all who register and attend (because the post is observing the Legion's birthday on that day).

On Wednesday, March 26, the bus heads to Eyota Post 551 for breakfast, Alden Post 404 for lunch and Faribault Post 43 for social time and dinner.

Fridley Post 303 provides breakfast on Thursday, March 27. Buffalo Post 270 handles lunch, and Paynesville Post 271 handles the evening social hour and dinner.

Breakfast on Friday, March 28, is at Granite Falls Post 69, and lunch is provided by Slayton Post 69 inside the 4-H Building at the Murray County Fairgrounds.

LaCoursiere is married to his wife, Lisa, and has two children (Patrick and Meghan), and three stepchildren (Jason, Kaylene and the late Johnathan). His home post is Moosup, Conn., Post 91.

Also of note, American

National Commander's Tour of Minnesota

Please call to reserve your spot. Leave messages if no one answers.

WHERE	WHAT	WHEN	WHO
Monday, March 24			
Forest Lake Post 225	social dinner	5 p.m. 6 p.m.	651-464-2600 Ext. 308 (Terry Larson)
Tuesday, March 25			
Apple Valley Post 1776	breakfast	8:15 a.m.	952-240-7849 (Carla Tappainer)
Pine Island Post 184	lunch	noon	507-356-8991 (Post)
La Crescent Post 595	social	5 p.m.	duluthace@yahoo.com
(@ L.C. Area Event Center)	dinner	6 p.m.	(Ricardo Acevedo)
Wednesday March 26			
Eyota Post 551	breakfast	8:15 a.m.	507-545-2688 (Post)
Alden Post 404	lunch	noon	507-383-1809 (Larry Weigel)
Faribault Post 43	social dinner	5 p.m. 6 p.m.	507-384-2338 (Jill Manahan)
Thursday, March 27			
Fridley Post 303	breakfast	8:15 a.m.	612-325-2899 (Paul Orson)
Buffalo Post 270	lunch	noon	763-682-2262 Press 2 (Post)
Paynesville Post 271	social dinner	5 p.m. 6 p.m.	320-243-4982 (Post)
Friday, March 28			
Granite Falls Post 69	breakfast	8:15 a.m.	320-564-2537 (Post) or 507-430-3160 (Steve Midthun)
Slayton Post 64	lunch	noon	605-366-3025 (Brad Pagel, text) or bppagel@gmail.com
(@ 4H Building, Murray County Fairgrounds)			

Legion National Vice Commander Jim Kellogg, of Adams Post 146, will be at the stop in La Crescent.

National Commander's Incentive Program

LaCoursiere will award his national commander "Be the One" dogtag coin to any Legionnaire who obtains three new members into The American Legion.

A new member is any eligible person joining for the 2025 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2024 membership year. Transfers do not count as new members.

Each member listed must be eligible for membership in The American Legion. New Auxiliary members and Sons of The American Legion members do not count toward this incentive.

Forward names of Sons of The American Legion members or Auxiliary members to your squadron or unit for use in their respective incentive programs.

Only one coin will be awarded per individual.

On the internet, search "American Legion National Commander's Incentive Program" to download the incentive form and send it to National HQ, which verifies and sends out the coins.

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: Jan. 22

Goal:
\$60,000

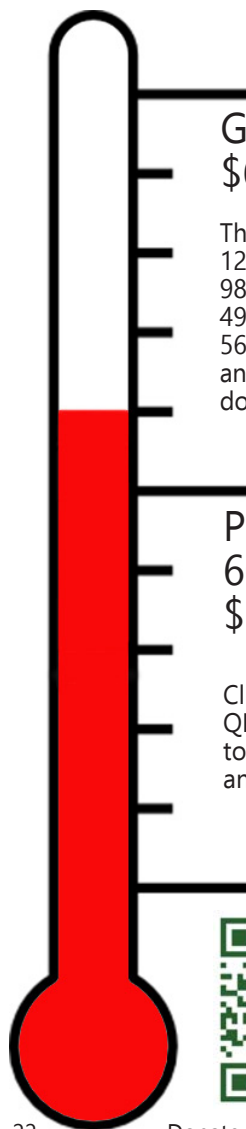
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Top Gun, Legislature and Testimonial

Happy 2025 everyone. My 2024 ended on a great note. On Christmas eve, I drove to our Post to meet a young Naval Officer, Briana Polhocky, from Zimmerman. Not only is she a F18 pilot, she is also the first female Top Gun instructor. Very impressive!

Not only did I have the privilege of signing her up as a new Legion member; our Post awarded her an honorary life membership.

Hopefully you will be able to read more about her in the next Legionnaire.

The district mid-winter conferences will soon be over and the ones that Peggy and I attended had great attendance. I want to thank the department vice commanders for filling in the conferences that I was unable to attend.

This is the time of year when our membership numbers start to slow down, and I cannot stress enough how important it is for the districts to start your revitalizations, armory visits, and student veteran organizations

Commander's Column

Carl Moon



at your local colleges. Our department membership director and vice commanders are here to help but you must ask for their assistance. We have met all of the national goals so far, so let's keep up the great work.

The Minnesota Legislature is back in session, in some form or another. I cannot thank Department Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo enough for all the work she has done to present our Legislative Agenda in Minnesota, but also for all the planning she has organized for the Washington Conference, set for Feb. 22-26.

Our national commander will visit Minnesota March 23-29. The schedule is out and any post that wishes to present a donation to him can make it out to: The American Legion Veterans & Children's Foundation, and in the memo section please

write, "Commander's Fund."

Peggy and I want to remind and invite you to my Testimonial Dinner, which will be on Saturday, April 5, at the Northern Lights Hotel & Casino. Please see the registration form in this month's publication.

On Feb. 2, I will have the honor of presenting a certificate of 71 years continuous membership to Leonard A. Wilde of Plainview Post 179. He will be 100 years old. Congratulations, Leonard.

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

Congressional research item threatens VA disability pay

One thing National American Legion I hope is aware of is this little sneaky proposal by the Congressional Budget Office. It's not mainstream, but when things like this are brought up, a few short years later, they seem to take root.

It's called "Introduce Means-Testing for Eligibility for VA's Disability Compensation."

Here is the written summary: "Veterans with medical conditions or injuries that occurred or worsened during active-duty service may receive disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Payments are structured differently than other disability programs. VA's disability payments are intended to compensate for the average earnings that veterans would be expected to lose given the severity of their service-connected medical conditions or injuries, whether or not a particular veteran's condition reduced his or her earnings. Unlike disability programs such as Social Security Disability Insurance, payments are unaffected by a veteran's earnings or other types of income.

"Under this option, VA would means-test (that is, restrict full compensation to those with income below a certain amount) all current and prospective recipients of VA's disability

compensation. Beginning in January 2026, veterans with service-related disabilities and total household income below \$135,000, excluding disability income from the VA, would receive full benefits. That threshold corresponds to the 70th percentile of total household income in the United States in 2022, adjusted for inflation to reach the threshold value applicable to 2026 benefits. CBO estimates that nearly 30 percent of veterans receiving disability payments from VA will have household income above that threshold in 2026. (After 2026, that income threshold would rise with the consumer price index for urban wage earners and clerical workers.) Above the threshold, benefits would be phased out at a constant rate: For every additional two dollars of gross household income, disability compensation would decrease by one dollar."

It means testing a veteran's household income (not individual), so if your household made over \$136,000, they start cutting your earned compensation benefit.

Doug Borgeson
Minnesota Post 1982

Bayport Post 491 goes big

My members asked that I send this in.

American Legion Post 491 in Bayport donated a total of \$95,000 to the following:

- Bayport American Legion Baseball \$15,000
- Bayport Community Action League (BCAL) Derby Days \$10,000
- Boy Scout Troop \$5,000
- Bravo Zulu House \$5,000
- City of Hugo Fire Dept \$5,000
- Disabled Veterans Camp \$10,000
- Hometown Heroes (Helping Disabled Vets) \$10,000
- Legionville \$10,000
- Lower St. Croix Valley Veterans Memorial \$5,000
- Yellow Ribbon \$15,000
- Youth Advantage \$5,000

Paul Curl
Adjutant
Bayport Post 491

Minnesotans want a state memorial for EMS personnel

To our Friends, Supporters, Sponsors, and Donors,

As 2024 comes to a close, we reflect on an extraordinary first year for the MN State EMS LoDD Memorial Foundation. Thanks to your support, our vision of honoring EMS personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice is one step closer to becoming a reality.

A Year of Milestones

1. 501(c)(3) Status: We officially filed for our own 501(c)(3) designation and are eagerly awaiting the IRS's decision. We

Should old acquaintance be forgot?

Upcoming High Holy Days:

Feb. 2: Imbolc, Pagan/Wiccan: Celebrates the beginning of spring and goddess Brigid.

Feb. 15: Parinirvana, Buddhist: Marks Buddha's death and his attainment of final Nirvana.

Feb. 26: Maha Shivaratri, Hindu: Major Hindu festival celebrating Lord Shiva.

Mar. 1-31: Ramadan, Islamic: Holy month of fasting, prayer, and reflection.

The Scottish song "Auld Lang Syne" might very well still be sung at gatherings on Dec. 31. It invites us to bid farewell which didn't serve to usher in better in the coming year. Do you observe this social holiday: at home, with friends and family or out watching a ball drop from a tower or fireworks? For me, it is at home with quietness.

This practice of bidding farewell to the old and ushering in the new involves resolutions, commitments and intents. These are spiritual acts for they go beyond the psyche (or brain process). Resolutions integrate not only your thoughts and body but are guided by what you believe your purpose here on earth is all about.

anticipate finalizing this process by winter 2025, solidifying our foundation as a recognized nonprofit.

2. Legislative Engagement: Over the course of the year, we met with several Minnesota state senators and representatives. Their positive feedback and support reaffirm our mission and its importance to the EMS and broader community.

3. Letters of Support: We received many incredible letters of support from both individuals and organizations. The State of Minnesota expressed their pleasure in seeing such widespread backing for our initiative. However, we recognize that every additional letter strengthens our case and moves us closer to realizing our dream.

4. Financial Growth: Despite the costs of startup expenses and legal fees, we successfully raised funds to deposit approximately \$8,655 into the bank. This strong start gives us momentum as we move forward. We are anticipating to have around \$10,000 by the end of 2024 due to a last minute donor promise.

5. Collaboration with CAAPB: We maintained ongoing communication with the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB), the body overseeing memorial and artwork projects at the Minnesota State Capitol. These meetings have been crucial to advancing our plans for a physical memorial.

Looking Ahead to 2025

We are excited to build on our success with ambitious plans for the new year:

- Representing the Foundation at the MN Arrowhead EMS Conference in Duluth

Chaplain's Corner

Kelley Adelsman



What have you committed to for 2025? My practice is to adopt a word for the coming year. This word and me get to know each other over the course of the year. It shows up in various activities and thoughts. So much of our lives are beyond our doing and control it is only our reaction that we can guide and my word sometimes is a friend and sometimes a coach.

For me the Bible also informs me. My word and me read about others struggles, joys, fears and foibles and have a framework for these life experiences.

In 1582, the Western world, as it was then, began using Pope Gregory XIII's calendar correction to the Julian calendar. He corrected the drift of equinoxes and solstices observations. Not all societies, countries or religions use the Gregorian calendar.

The Hebrew Lunar calendar observes the practice of bidding farewell to the old and welcoming the new on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. In 2024 it was Oct. 11-12.

What is striking are the similarities of New Year resolutions

and Yom Kippur. Both recognize our human condition of imperfection, struggle, thinking or doing what is not benevolent but is real even when we want to do good. The difference is vast, too.

New Year's observations are grounded in the material world and Yom Kippur is about the immaterial reality. It is a solemn day of acknowledging "I am what I am."

Many of us have had considerable health, mental and physical challenges this year. For many of us, our spiritual practices and beliefs carry us through for we know there is so much more than our current condition. We pray, God deliver us with complete healing. Be with us in thought and deed to evidence beyond our limited capacity into the fullness of love. Amen.

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

this January.

- Generating additional letters of support and expanding outreach and marketing efforts.
- Exploring opportunities for a fundraiser to further strengthen our financial foundation.

Continuing the application process with the CAAPB.

Driving forward the vision of the memorial through advocacy, collaboration, and unwavering dedication.

Continued on Page 5

The Minnesota Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

Official publication of
The American Legion
Department of Minnesota

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Legion posts must file 990 annually

Minnesota American Legion HQ has received a lot of calls asking whether posts are required to file taxes. The answer is YES, YES, YES!

All posts fall under The American Legion's 501(c)(19) umbrella, and to keep that nonprofit status, taxes need to be filed with a 990 return annually just like any other organization.

If a post has less than \$50,000 of income, it is required to file a simple 990N postcard. The easiest way to file this is through an account on the IRS website. Once logged in, the site will ask a variety of questions. When asked whether there is more than \$50,000 of income, clicking "no" will automatically generate the 990N.

If a post has more income,

then a more extensive 990 is required. I highly recommend consulting an accountant for this because it can become cumbersome, as you know from filing your personal income taxes. If you contact the Department of Minnesota Headquarters, you will be directed to explore the IRS website or call your local accountant for the most accurate information.

The bottom line is that all posts *must* file a 990 tax return to maintain their 501(c)(19) nonprofit status. It doesn't matter whether your post made money, lost money or stayed the same.

You must file the 990 annually. No exceptions.

If you don't have an accountant, I suggest you speak to your local nonprofit organizations and ask whom they use. That way, you end up with someone who is familiar with the nonprofit world.

Rachael Hill is the comptroller for the American Legion Department of Minnesota. She is a member with Elk River Post 112.

Comptroller

Rachael Hill



Mail Call

Continued from Page 4

This mission, this dream — bringing a lasting tribute to Minnesota's EMS heroes — would not be possible without your incredible support. Your belief in our purpose fuels our progress and keeps us motivated to achieve even greater milestones.

Thank you for being part of this journey. We wish you a joyful holiday season and a prosperous New Year. Together, we will make 2025 a transformative year for our foundation and the EMS community.

With gratitude,

Adam S. Harvey
EMT, Paramedic
President & Founder
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American Legion Department Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo testifies before the Senate Taxes Committee at the State Capitol. With her is Sen. Jim Abeler of Anoka.



Lawmakers from both parties gather with veterans around the new Great Seal of Minnesota inside Room G-15 at the State Capitol on Jan. 23. From left are Post 577 Operations Manager Josh Fowler, Post 577 Commander Dan Norton, Post 102 Commander Lori Allert, SAL Squadron 98 Commander Gregg Wilwert, state Sen. Jim Abeler, state Sen. Aric Putnam, Department Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo, Department Commander Carl Moon, Assistant Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo, Past Department Commander Paul Hassing and Department Adjutant Mike Maxa.

Can 501(c)(19) be like (c)(3) tax-wise?

Continued from Page 1

designations, such as 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(19). We are asking for access to the same nonprofit property tax exemptions provided to 501(c)(3) nonprofits."

She pointed out how a handful of states already provide this benefit to veteran posts. In Minnesota, there are some tax breaks, but county assessors and treasurers across the state interpret Department of Revenue rules differently from one county to another.

"A zero-tax measure would clear up much of the confusion county assessors across out 87 Minnesota counties have regarding post taxes," Janigo said.

The bill is SF 255.

In the room with Janigo was St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577 Commander Dan Norton, Post 577 Operations Manager Josh Fowler and Anoka Post 102

Commander Lori Allert, who stood ready to answer questions on tax burdens in the tens of thousands of dollars.

Janigo mentioned how taxes are endangering those posts and listed posts that have lost their buildings in recent years in part due to taxes: Coon Rapids, Champlin, Ham Lake, Stillwater, Marshall, Northfield and Waite Park. (Waite Park Post 428 had

annual property tax burdens of nearly \$60,000 by 2020.)

She described how these places raise funds for youth sports, blood drives, fire departments, food insecurity, homelessness, among other things.

"How many more communities will need to lose the gathering center for charity fundraising and activities before relief is provided?" Janigo asked.

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- Dental Insurance
- Long-Term Care
- Lifeline Medical Alert Service
- Device Guard

Hospital HELP Plan — Provides benefits for hospital stays including intensive care, cardiac care, care for cancer, rehabilitative facilities, and V.A. hospitals.*

Cancer Care — Provides important protection and a daily benefit if you are hospitalized due to cancer.*

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On-The-Move Travel Accident — Provides up to \$200,000.00 coverage when fatally injured in a covered accident while traveling, plus \$500.00 per day if a covered accident lands you in the hospital.*

ID Resolve — Provides 24-hour identity theft resolution that helps protect your money, your time and your financial reputation.

Emergency Assistance Plus — Provides you with 24/7 emergency medical and travel assistance services should something happen to you or your family while traveling away from home.

Medicare Supplement Insurance — Supplements your Medicare Coverage at group rates.

Health & Dental Insurance — Request a quote on various Health & Dental Insurance Plans designed with you in mind.

Long-Term Care — Can help provide home health care, supervised adult care, and more.

Lifeline Medical Alert Service — Provides fast access to help in the event of a fall or medical emergency so you can live confidently and independently.

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All-Family Events Calendar

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: Second Amendment Bingo, Buffalo Post 270
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 8: Minnesota American Legion Junior Shooting Sports 3 Position Air Rifle Championship, Anoka Post 102
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
March 29: First day of 2025 American Legion Bowling Tournament, Sundance Entertainment Center, Dayton
April 5: Department Commander's Testimonial, Northern Lights Casino & Hotel
April 9: Veterans Day on the Hill
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 (I-35W & 94th), Bloomington
June 7: 8th District Convention, West Duluth Post 71
June 7: 6th District Convention, Brainerd Post 255
June 7: 10th District Convention, Buffalo Post 270
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

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
Anderla, Joseph M.	78	1/6/25	Army	Vietnam	37	Anoka Post 102
Anderman, Richard D.	86	12/6/24	Marines/Navy	Vietnam	2	Pine City Post 51
Note: He was a jet mechanic.						
Arneson, Robert E.	95	1/7/25	Army	Korea	45	Fertile Post 238
Beissel, Donald L.	97	8/26/24	Army	WWII	5	Jordan Post 3
Berg, Joseph D.	88	5/3/24	Army	Korea	46	Fertile Post 238
Bohrer, Ruben R.	89	11/15/24	Army	Korea	67	Waite Park Post 428
Note: He served stateside as the sergeant of a motor pool.						
Brua, Harvey D.	95	12/5/24	Air Force	Korea	34	Albert Lea Post 56
Chuchna, William J.	99	12/24/24	Army	WWII	79	Winona Post 9
Note: He served in France, Germany, Italy and Austria with the 103rd Infantry.						
Clark, Willard M.	92	12/23/24	Army	Korea	14	Two Harbors Post 109
Costello, David E.	86	12/26/24	Army	Korea	47	Bloomington Post 550
Note: He was a longtime post membership director.						
Deloach, Robert E.	92	12/4/24	Navy	Vietnam	35	Aitkin Post 86
Note: He served in the Naval Reserve for 14 years. He was a past historian for posts in Aitkin and Chaska.						
Denne, Gerald H.	81	12/7/24	Air Force	Vietnam	15	Waite Park Post 428
Note: He served as an air policeman at Blytheville AFB in Arkansas.						
Donovan, Mary P.	68	1/7/25	Marine	Vietnam	31	Foley Post 298
Note: She managed the club for eight years.						
Drasher, Gene E.	74	11/30/24	Army	Vietnam	17	Albert Lea Post 56
Ferche, Bernard V. "Ben"	91	7/14/24	Army	Cold	27	St. Stephen Post 221
Note: He was stationed in Korea.						
Ferche, Robert J.	88	10/23/24	Army	Vietnam	1	St. Stephen Post 221
Note: He served at the Arlington Proving Ground.						
Findley, James L.	83	10/1/24	Navy	Vietnam	18	Two Harbors Post 109
Fosler, Robert W.	78	1/9/25	Navy	Korea	51	Little Falls Post 46
Fritz, Roy L.	85	12/20/24	Army	Vietnam	45	Stewartville Post 164
Fujan, Edward F.	91	12/15/24	Army	Korea	33	Rochester Post 92
Grosslein, August E. "Duke" Jr.	99	12/19/24	Navy	WWII	73	Anoka Post 102
Note: He served in the Seabees.						
Haider, Vincent L.	92	12/1/24	Army	Korea	53	Lake Henry Post 612
Hall, Donald W.	90	2/8/24	Army	Korea	66	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Hansen, Charles C. "Chisey"	100	11/7/24	Navy	WWII	7	Sleepy Eye Post 7
Hanson, Duane T. "Doc"	88	7/25/24	Air Force	Cold	39	Spicer Post 545
Note: He served as a captain and dentist in Kalispell, Mont., where the Air Force had a radar station at Blacktail Mountain. (The site was transferred to the FAA in 1978.)						
Haverly, Delroy A.	86	12/21/24	Army	Cold	43	New London Post 537
Note: He served in Georgia, Germany and Kansas. In Germany, he was in the 7th Cavalry Regiment's 3rd Reconnaissance Squadron.						
Hertzberg, Robert H.	96	12/5/24	MM/Navy	Korea	15	Grand Portage Post 2009
Note: He graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, N.Y. He served in the Merchant Marines and the Navy. In civilian life, he managed boats and barges on the Mississippi River for a Cargill company.						
Hestness, Elwood J. "Woody"	97	12/12/24	Army	WWII	39	Albert Lea Post 56
Holt, John W.	73	11/18/24	Army	Vietnam	23	Windom Post 206
Hoppe, Gregory A.	70	12/27/24	Air Force	Vietnam	35	Minnesota Lake Post 287
Note: He was a mechanic for the B-52 Stratofortress.						
Hunter, Ronald D.	82	12/12/24	Navy/CG	Vietnam	37	Rochester Post 92
Note: He joined the Navy in 1963 and transferred to the Coast Guard in 1972. He served a total of 20 years.						
Jacobson, Donald H.	89	1/1/25	Marines	Korea	14	Backus Post 368
Johnson, Kenneth R.	82	12/7/24	AF/Army	Vietnam	53	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He served in the Air Force for four years in Texas and Idaho, then joined the Minnesota National Guard until he retired as a master sergeant, working several years in the Active Guard Reserve program.						
Johnson, Ronald E.	76	6/25/24	Army	Vietnam	6	Pine City Post 51
Jurek, Eugene C.	80	1/12/25	Army	Vietnam	2	Foley Post 298
Note: He was the playwright who penned the Minnesota musical comedy "Deer Camp."						
Kamrowski, Joseph G.	97	11/12/24	Army	Korea	71	Winona Post 9
Kaufmann, Romaine A.	80	1/11/25	Marines	Korea	12	Anoka Post 102
Kean, Nyles E.	71	12/26/24	Navy	Cold	7	Two Harbors Post 109
Note: He served aboard the frigate USS Trippe and destroyer USS John Hancock.						
King, Ernest J.	89	12/4/24	Army	Korea	8	Austin Post 91
Kjellander, John K.	87	12/21/24	Army	Vietnam	5	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Knop, Ronald H.	77	12/19/24	Air Force	Vietnam	36	Hutchinson Post 96
Kooiman, Glenn M.	91	11/14/24	Army	Korea	35	Edgerton Post 42
Korngiebel, John W.	91	1/3/25	Army	Korea	34	Hutchinson Post 96
Note: He served in Germany as a radar specialist.						
Kramschuster, Francis P.	90	12/30/24	Army	Cold	6	Mora Post 201
Krofta, Frederick J.	85	12/9/24	Marines	Persian Gulf	6	Austin Post 91
Krueger, Don	88	12/15/24	Army	Korea	47	St. James Post 33
Krueger, Richard A.	87	1/4/25	N/A/M	Vietnam	24	Garvin Post 273
Note: He was past post commander. He served his military career in the Navy, Army National Guard and Marines.						
Labat, Donald J.	83	11/11/24	Army	Vietnam	63	Marshall Post 113
Lange, Harvey L.	93	5/21/24	Army	Korea	65	Spicer Post 545
Note: He was a National Guard member who was activated for the Korean War, serving as a tank commander and gunnery instructor at Fort Rucker, Ala.						
Lieser, Vernon B.	79	9/5/24	Army	Vietnam	26	Anoka Post 102
Lindenfelser, Eldred "Ellie"	78	11/18/24	Army	Vietnam	16	Aitkin Post 86
Lulf, Larry J.	79	7/4/24	Air Force	Vietnam	37	Lakeville Post 44
Note: He was a charter member and past post adjutant.						
Mallory, Robert M.	94	1/5/25	Air Force	Korea	43	Walker Post 134
McCandless, James J.	73	12/4/24	Army	Vietnam	52	Litchfield Post 104
Note: He served in Korea on the DMZ where Agent Orange was sprayed, leading to lifelong health problems such as neuropathy, diabetes and cancer.						
McDonald, John J.	92	12/11/24	Army	Korea	39	Bayport Post 491
McWilliams, John F. "Shorty"	85	1/1/25	Marines	Cold	53	Bloomington Post 550
Note: A Bloomington firefighter, he was one of the founders of the Bloomington Fireman's National Softball Tournament at Valley View Fields, which turns 67 this July.						
Mertes, Joseph E.	86	11/24/24	Army	Vietnam	41	St. Joseph Post 328
Miller, Thomas R.	72	1/7/25	Navy	Vietnam	7	Anoka Post 102
Murphy, Kenneth L.	91	12/28/24	Army	Korea	61	Waite Park Post 428
Nessett, Gregory D.	61	11/17/24	Navy	Persian Gulf	25	Sleepy Eye Post 7
Nielsen, Earl D.	94	12/2/24	Army	Korea	19	Albert Lea Post 56
Note: He was stationed in Guam as a machinist during the war.						
Nielsen, John "Jack"	91	11/23/24	Navy	Korea	56	Bloomington Post 550
Note: In 1957, he appeared in Life Magazine for being a member of NORAD.						

Department of Corrections

The middle initial and age were incorrect in the prior issue:
Pearson, Thomas G. 96 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.

Taps Continued from Page 6

Nintemann, John F.	91	10/11/24	Army	Korea	24	Eyota Post 551
Ohm, Jeffrey A.	78	1/1/25	Navy	Vietnam	55	St. Louis Park Post 282
Note: He was a past adjutant of Post 282 and past commander and adjutant of Squadron 282.						
Olson, Harold V.	98	8/12/24	Army	WWII	47	Fertile Post 238
Paggen, Benedict R. "Benny"	80	12/21/24	Army	Vietnam	31	St. Stephen Post 221
Note: He was stationed in Alaska. He was a member of the post color guard.						
Pauls, Terrence "Terry"	73	12/3/24	Army	Vietnam	50	Watkins Post 453
Pedersen, Wade F.	72	10/20/24	Navy	Vietnam	21	Sleepy Eye Post 7
Penkert, William O.	74	12/30/24	Army	Vietnam	49	New Ulm Post 132
Pratt, David W.	87	11/1/24	Army	Cold	4	St. Louis Park Post 282
Rand, Richard B.	91	12/24/24	Army	Korea	52	Anoka Post 102
Rasmussen, Virgil A.	81	9/13/24	Army	Vietnam	4	Anoka Post 102
Raymond, Don A.	89	10/3/24	Army	Korea	6	Anoka Post 102
Redepenning, Charles D.	81	1/13/25	Army	Vietnam	21	Anoka Post 102
Reichenbach, Lester J.	80	5/30/24	Navy	Vietnam	38	Cambridge Post 290
Rients, Leland R.	84	12/12/24	Army	Korea	15	Willmar Post 167
Sandberg, Jim L.	89	1/7/25	Army	Vietnam	41	Aitkin Post 86
Note: He previously had been a member at Owatonna Post 77, before retiring up north.						
Sandell, Richard G.	68	10/12/24	Marines	Vietnam	1	Eyota Post 551
Sapp, Wallace J. Sr.	85	11/3/24	Army	Vietnam	39	St. Paul Park Post 98
Schmidt, James W.	76	1/4/25	AF/Army	Vietnam	13	Little Falls Post 46
Schoenfeld, Harold A.	33	12/4/24	Navy	Vietnam	33	Owatonna Post 77
Schroeder, Jule F.	82	12/16/24	Navy	Vietnam	40	Hutchinson Post 96
Schuth, William H. Sr.	88	11/13/24	Navy	Korea	48	Winona Post 9
Note: He was a past post commander. He was a former member of the Post 9 Burial Detail. He served in the Pacific aboard the attack transport USS Bayfield.						
Shea, Jerome D.	88	11/8/24	Army	Vietnam	22	Eyota Post 551
Speirs, John T. "Jocko"	91	12/23/24	Army	Korea	27	Lowry Post 253
Standinger, G. Daniel	77	12/14/24	Navy	Vietnam	59	Plainview Post 179
Note: He served as an aviation technician. Nicknamed "Dinger," he was 1st District commander 2004-05, 1st District adjutant 1998-99, Post 179 commander 1994-95 and Post 179 adjutant 2001-03.						
Staniger, John A. Jr.	73	12/14/24	Army	Vietnam	3	Chisholm Post 247
Strandlien, Duane W.	72	12/20/24	Navy	Vietnam	18	Bagley Post 16
Suedbeck, Dennis J.	76	12/21/24	Air Force	Vietnam	25	Monticello Post 260
Note: He served on the post Bar Board. His four-year enlistment included one tour of duty in Vietnam.						
Svoboda, Samuel F.	98	7/4/24	Navy	WWII	50	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Tapio, John E.	78	12/4/24	Navy	Vietnam	54	Hutchinson Post 96
Note: He was a past post commander.						
Thompson, Maurice H.	91	12/20/24	Army	Korea	68	Spicer Post 545
Thompson, Robert A.	1/6/25	Air Force	Korea	74	Lanesboro Post 40	
Note: He was post commander in 1969.						
Vadner, Francis G.	93	9/16/24	Army	Korea	20	Bayport Post 491
Walter, Vernon	92	1/14/25	Army	Korea	25	Waconia Post 150
Note: He served in Germany.						
Watry, Thomas R.	79	11/9/24	Navy	Vietnam	47	Adrian Post 32
Note: He was a flight officer on a P-3 squadron, then was a commanding officer in the Naval Reserve for 28 years.						
Weber, Paul R.	94	1/6/25	Army	Korea	58	Le Center Post 108
Note: He served in Trieste, Italy, with the 98th Army Band during the Allied occupation.						
Weeks, Richard O.	93	12/9/23	Army	Korea	64	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Wenker, Clarence A.	96	12/24/24	Army	Korea	41	Melrose Post 101
Wiering, Peter	95	6/2/24	Army	Korea	23	Minneapolis Falldin Post 555
Wilt, Lyle E. "Bear"	85	10/11/24	Army	Korea	51	Lake Park 181
Note: In his 21-year career, he served in Germany (where he met his wife), Vietnam, California, Kentucky and Colorado. He was a Purple Heart recipient.						
Winter, Dennis H.	79	1/2/25	Army	Vietnam	20	Pipestone Post 6



Dan Standinger

There is a lot of Legion activity on the horizon

National Report

Bill Barbknecht



Happy New Year to all! May we all have a good 2025 with better health and doing more Buddy Checks to take care of our fellow veterans. "Be the One."

We have had many districts mid-winters by the time you read this article, as well as training sessions. To my knowledge that I have been informed (as I could not possibly attend them all), I hear they have been well-attended.

Thank you all for being committed to learning and helping your districts. Every post commander and adjutant should be attending to learn to make your post run more smoothly and efficiently.

The Washington Conference will be held Feb. 23-26. Several veterans from Minnesota will attend. While there, they will have an opportunity to meet with their local representatives and two senators from Minnesota.

Thank you, Kristy Janigo, for arranging those meetings.

Please help to get a student from your community school or home school to enter the Oratorical Contest. Also, it's not too early to think of Boys State, Eagle Scout or Legionville Camp this summer.

A BIG shout-out to our Baseball Committee. Minnesota has more teams than any other state. Nearly 400 teams last year.

Our girls softball — Minnesota American Legion Fastpitch Softball — is getting more teams each year also. Makes one very proud to be from

Minnesota with posts that really care and provide constructive entertainment and education for our youth.

Our membership is doing fair. This is the time of year, I understand membership is more difficult. However maybe just an addendum to a conversation may make a person think: Have I paid my dues? Every post should be at 85 percent. If you need help, please contact your district commander or membership director for help.

There are several veterans that say they have not been asked.

American Legion Spring Meetings in Indianapolis will be May 3-8. Again, several Minnesota veterans will attend.

State American Legion Convention will be July 9-12 in Willmar. This is a middle of the road location for you all.

The American Legion National Convention will be in Tampa, Fla., Aug. 22-28. This is the 106th National Convention, if you are keeping track. Never forget that the first one was right here in Minnesota.

Donna and I look forward as always to seeing many of you in the weeks ahead. Any questions call 218-770-6264.

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

Eagle's Healing Nest keeps its mission the same

Continued from Page 1

military brought him to central Minnesota. He presently lives north of Nelson, east of Alexandria. He retired as command sergeant major.

Kor became involved at the Nest when he attended an event there in the summer of 2023. A lieutenant he had deployed with had lived at the Nest for a time and recovered thanks to its veteran-focused supportive environment.

"I was shocked. I had never heard of it," Kor said. "I lived 20 miles away."

The Nest asked him to join the board. He applied and soon the board asked him if he would be the new director. He was hesitant at first.

"I did research. The place and what it was doing for veterans seemed too important to fail," Kor said.

Founded in 2012 by military mom Melony Butler and her veteran husband, Blaine, the Eagle's Healing Nest is on the site of a former state reformatory school for juveniles. The place housed girls from 1911 to 1967, then switched to co-ed until closing in 1999.

Beginning in 2022, Eagle's Healing Nest got into hot water with the Minnesota Attorney General's Office over the

blending of personal and organizational finances and failing to maintain proper controls. Kor helped guide the Nest through discussions with the Charities Division of the Attorney General's Office and an agreement was reached in March 2024.

Under the agreement, the Nest severed ties to the Butlers and must remain in compliance with charity laws and strengthen its financial checks and balances.

Kor said a big piece of that is creating transparency, with the board of directors, volunteers, veterans in residence, donors and the general public. The state put the Eagle's Healing Nest back in good standing on May 24, 2024.

Example: Kor comes right out and says the contract for deed for the land was in default. The Nest worked with United Prairie Bank, Minnesota National Bank and the Initiative Foundation out of Little Falls to replace the contract for deed with a mortgage.

Hutchinson City Councilor Tim Burley, a past commander of Hutchinson American Legion Post 96 and past chairman of the Department of Minnesota Public Relations Committee, is a long-time advocate and volunteer for the Eagle's Healing Nest.

"The Nest was always supposed to be run by veterans,"

Burley said.

He says American Legion posts that have donated to the Nest in the past can rest assured their donations will be properly handled. He encouraged them to resume their support.

"It's a place where we can call and get a veteran to a safe place immediately," Burley said. "It has programs that help reduce suicide and get veterans back on their feet. I am involved in helping veterans leave here."

Unlike some veteran nonprofits, the Nest is not one-person centric, Burley said. Many of the programs, such as art classes, have been developed by the veterans themselves. The classes are put on by veterans for veterans. "Veterans are intelligent and we know how to heal ourselves, and we just ask for the support and resources. We like to have purpose, to build and create," Burley said.

Next steps? Kor said the mission of healing veterans remains the same. However, four areas need attention: maintenance of buildings, vehicle upgrades, reviewing onsite outpatient services and bolstering services.

"People don't fall into categories needed to receive help, and the Eagle's Healing Nest is one place they can come to get that help," he said. "Also, we don't

set a timeline for recovery."

Kor has been speaking to groups around the region and said he would be happy to speak at any post meeting or event.

He said the Nest never will become government-funded.

"We don't want strings attached to the services we are able to provide."

He listed resources:

Peer-to-peer recovery living environment.

Transportation to equine therapy services.

Assistance with leaving the Nest.

Outpatient addiction services. Substance abuse counseling. Recovery support programs. Alternatives to violence classes.

Outings, experiences and retreats.

Continuing education and training.

Gym.

Music studio.

Rock shop.

Art therapy.

Outside partners that come on the campus to provide health, wellness and massage therapy. The current board of directors comprises a banker, an attorney, a math teacher, a nurse, a high-ranking Mason and a military mom who lost her son to suicide. Some are veterans.

DRIVE HOME YOUR SUPPORT!

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

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NaSalle walks with cane because he 'burned in' during combat jump

Continued from Page 1

Airborne's HQ when the division deployed to Grenada as part of Operation Urgent Fury, a mission to quell political violence, remove Cuban influence, protect the lives of U.S. students and restore democratic government.

While elements of the 82nd did parachute onto Grenada's new airport, NaSalle was with the part that landed.

American forces took the island in 72 hours. NaSalle controlled two airstrikes during the 12 days he was there. Both were on Grenadian military convoys with Cubans among them. An A-10 Warthog would strafe the target with its 30 mm Gatling gun, then return to drop cluster bombs. After the air attack, Army artillery shells would land. The infantry soldiers would do the rest.

Urgent Fury exposed differences in Air Force and Navy close air support (CAS) language. Ninety percent of the Purple Hearts awarded were because of friendly fire. After that, the Joint Chiefs of Staff put all military branches on the same page.

In 1984, he achieved the status of airborne jumpmaster at the age of 22, a pretty rare feat for that age.

That same year, the Air Force asked NaSalle to activate with the 3rd Ranger Battalion at Fort Benning.

"Working with a Special Operations unit was awesome," he said.

It goes without saying that training with Rangers was hard. The colonel, NaSalle said, was nice. He treated anyone attached to his unit the same as the Rangers themselves.

"We had to keep up with their guys just like they did," he said. "Training was constant and put a strain on family life."

The pressure for an airmen to keep up on runs and marches was strong, NaSalle said, because, if he fell out, it represented his entire branch of service. He was an E-5 staff sergeant at the time.

Training wasn't just at Benning, either. They travelled around the Western Hemisphere. With the Rangers, he went to Panama, Nicaragua, Chile, Belize, Mexico and a few undisclosed locations.

After, the Air Force sent NaSalle to Korea. He was with a joint-branch unit at Uijeongbu listening to radios and watching video feeds at a base inside a hill, logging what he observed. Now and then, he went a camp near the DMZ for scenario briefings.

Six months later, he went back to the States for a family emergency. The Air Force sent him back to Benning, and he was reassigned to Detachment 4. He was NCOIC for a team attached to the 10th Mountain Division before it moved to Fort Drum, N.Y., in 1985. He didn't go with them to Drum.

While supporting the 10th Mountain, they went to a battle exercise at Fort Irwin, Calif. When it was over, an Army colonel stepped into the tactical operations center and asked: "Who controlled the airstrike that killed all the bad guys?"

Someone pointed out that it was Sgt. NaSalle.

"Oh crap. I thought I did something wrong. I shouldn't have been controlling that airstrike. I just knew the terrain."

The colonel congratulated him. "You did a fantastic job of clearing the way so my guys could pass their test."

There were no drones with cameras back then, so tactical air controllers sought "eyes." They had maps, compasses and coordinates, but if they could see what terrain looked like — either for themselves or with pictures — it helped.

NaSalle knew the terrain because of prior certification training there. The colonel awarded him with an Army Commendation Medal.



Ninth District Commander Steve NaSalle stands and walks with a cane, here at Fergus Falls Post 30. He's got so much medical metal in him, veterans joke he is a cyborg. Thanks to physical therapy, which he calls PT, he is doing his best to avoid having to need a wheelchair to be mobile.



Steve NaSalle's American Legion Riders vest has a mixture of the Air Force units he belonged to with TACP (Tactical Air Control Party) and the Army units he was attached to. You'll find Rangers, Airborne, Cavalry and Mountain.

Other Benning units he supported while with Detachment 4 were 197th Infantry Brigade and 75th Ranger Regiment. He participated in one of the Reforger exercises in Europe. In addition to West Germany, he visited Holland, Belgium and France.

NaSalle was attached to the 82nd Airborne (and still with Det. 4) in December 1989 when the 82nd jumped into Panama for Operation Just Cause. NaSalle jumped, too.

It was a low-altitude drop of 500 feet. Airborne drops are usually 800 feet or 1,250 feet.

This left NaSalle with no time to untwist tangled-up suspension lines. Time spent trying to untwist them left him with no time to lower his equipment. Thud! He burned in. (In paratrooper lingo, "burn in" means hit the ground without a parachute or with an ineffective parachute.)

It was a combat jump — no going to sick call — so he got up and went to the Steiner Aid (drop zone gathering point), then rucked 21 miles while hurt.

"It all went pretty fast. We didn't engage an enemy because they were already engaged," he said.

He was involved in getting civilians to safer places before heading to a C-130 and waiting around on

the tarmac.

"When we got back, I made sure to take my Army guys to Air Force dining facilities," NaSalle said.

And the Navy performed surgery on his spine, at Bethesda Naval Hospital. This is why Legionnaires see him with a cane at gatherings. He doesn't want a wheelchair.

In May 1990, he went to Puerto Rico and participated in Operation Ocean Venture, a military exercise in the Caribbean involving all military branches.

Most veterans know Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, and America began sending troops to Saudi Arabia to protect that country and prepare for the liberation of Kuwait. NaSalle arrived Jan. 29, 1991, during the air war of Operation Desert Storm. He was attached to the 82nd Airborne at first, then to the XVIII

Steve NaSalle sits in a booth at the Viking Café in Fergus Falls sporting his Desert Storm Veteran cap. He is an Air Force veteran of three wars: Grenada, Panama and Persian Gulf War. In each of those, he served right alongside Army units.

Airborne Corps. He had a backup role and never called an airstrike.

He went from Riyadh to the tent city at King Khalid Military City. He flew in a Blackhawk helicopter to 82nd forces in Iraq near Tallil and near As-Salman, then back to KKMCC. He was sent back to the United States on the 10th day.

In March 1991, NaSalle had his second spinal surgery. This time, the Air Force gave him a non-combat job: medical administration. It sent him to Maxwell AFB in Alabama. He spent his final year with the 42nd Medical Group before medically retiring.

He has 165 jumps to his name. Most were static from C-130s and C-141s. Some were from choppers. Some were HALO jumps. HALO is "high-altitude, low-opening."

What happened to NaSalle's lower back? He had blown out two discs. Now, he has a fused lumbar spine at three levels, plates in the front and back of his cervical spine, pins in his right knee and neuropathy in his legs.

NaSalle stayed in Alabama and went to college at Troy University, getting a bachelor's degree in resource management in 1996. He joined The American Legion in Montgomery in 1993 but didn't renew after graduation.

He moved to Indiana in 1998. In

2001, he became a deputy sheriff in the Johnson County Jail. In 2004, he was hired by Butler University as a security guard. In 2004, he graduated from the Indiana Police Academy. Then Johnson County asked him to return and be their training officer and work as a deputy sheriff.

In 2001, he met Pollyanna Rupert. As groomsman and bridesmaid, they walked down the aisle together at his brother's wedding. In 2005, he considered moving back to Minnesota. His sister-in-law informed him Pollyanna was available, and he called her up during a heavy snowstorm.

She lived in Eden Prairie at the time. His sister lived in Burnsville, and Pollyanna drove through the heavy snow to see him.

"And we've been together ever since."

In January 2006, he moved back to Minnesota and quickly gained work as a veteran service representative for the VA Regional Office at the Whipple Federal Building at Fort Snelling. He handled veteran pensions.

He married his sweetheart on Dec. 27, 2006, and lived in Eden Prairie. The VA rated him 100 percent in 2009, right after another back surgery. In 2015, they moved to Chaska, and in 2016, he rejoined the Legion with Post 57, becoming commander for three years beginning in 2017. In 2020, he switched to Chanhassen Post 580.

In December 2021, he and Pollyanna moved to Fergus Falls for a new start. He qualified for two VA adaptive housing grants, and contractors presently are modifying their home "so I am able to do things as much as possible on my own."

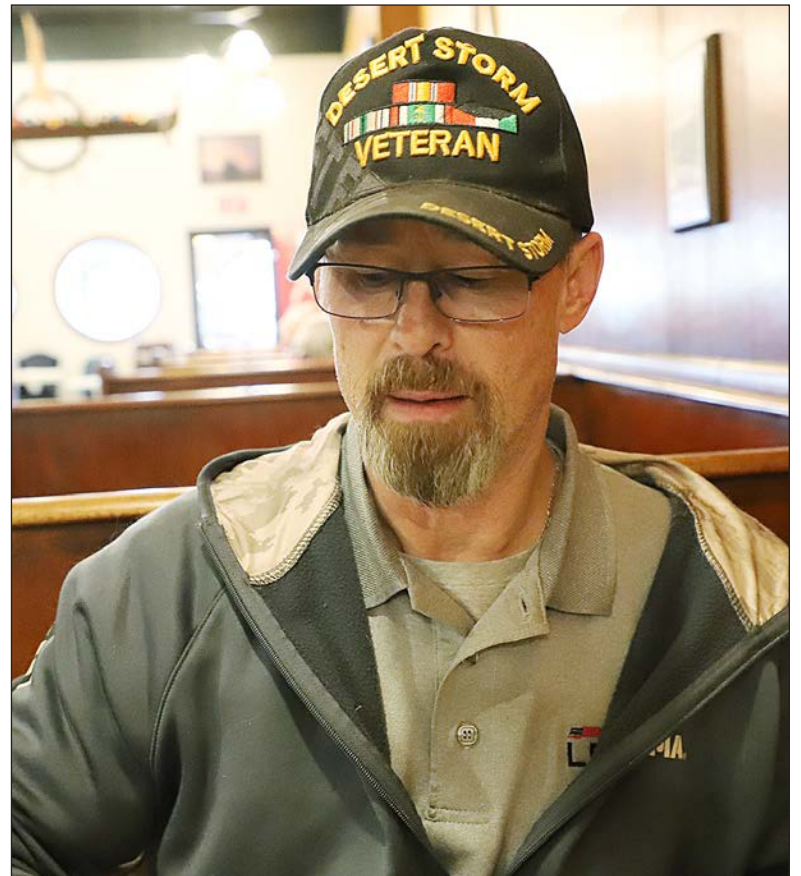
He originally joined Underwood Post 489 and soon switched to Fergus Falls Post 30. He serves on the Post 30 Honor Guard, though getting around the cemeteries is painful. He became 9th District commander in 2023 and is in his second term. He is running for department vice commander for districts 6 and 9.

NaSalle's Commander Project is divided into two: Legionville and the Fargo-Moorhead Honor Flight. His project during his first term was the Fergus Falls Veterans Home.

He said he loves the Legion for the veterans.

"Everyone I come into contact with, I love them to death," he said.

He likes the camaraderie, the rivalries among branches and the shared memories of time in service.





Construction workers have placed a few walls at the new site for the Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum. The museum is on 32 acres along Minnesota Highway 371.

Walls go up at new military museum site

CAMP RIPLEY — Walls are up at the new Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum.

The grand opening at the site on 32 acres just east of Camp Ripley is expected to happen in summer 2026, said Director Randal Dietrich.

“We would love to be welcoming folks into our museum during our nation’s 250th anniversary,” he said.

The \$32 million building will be 40,000 square feet. Motorists can view the walls from their cars and trucks when passing by on highways 371 or 115. Elrosa-based Breitbach Construction is the general contractor.

Dietrich said the construction funding — a mix of donations and state allocations — does not include the cost to move artifacts from the current museum on base or the cost to install new galleries. That fundraiser,

he said, is underway.

“We are working to raise another \$10 million to outfit the facility, install classrooms, theaters and tell stories,” he said. “We presently have \$6 million toward the \$10 million so far.”

Past Department Vice Commander Linda Dvorak is on the museum’s board of directors. She has helped the museum with fundraising through sending out charitable gambling request letters to Legion posts last year.

As of end of December, Legion posts had donated \$11,358.

To donate, make the check to “Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum” with “fundraiser” in the memo and mail the check to Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum, Attn: Randal Dietrich, Camp Ripley, 15000 Highway 15, Little Falls, MN 56345.

Galleries and theater spaces

will illustrate such things as Sept. 11, 2001, and Dec. 7, 1941, and the role of Minnesotans in those attacks, Dietrich said.

“There were more than 400 Minnesotans at Pearl Harbor that day,” he said. “Eighty of them were aboard the USS Ward.”

He added, “Sept. 11 had Minnesotans in the towers, in the planes, in the Pentagon.”

The role of The American Legion, which spring up across the state like wildfire following World War I, will be illustrated. Minneapolis was the site of the very first American Legion National Convention in 1919. From Legion Baseball to instilling patriotism to the GI Bill to veteran camaraderie, the Legion has had a strong impact on the state.

“Its story is something we want to convey to the public in this museum.”



From left are National American Legion Deputy Director of Claims and Benefits Philip Du, American Legion Service Representative Judith Ojard, Team Lead Beverly Moes and Veterans Service Representative Steven Pelletier. Need claims help? Find The American Legion National Claims Office in the Whipple Federal Building at Fort Snelling. Its phone number is 612-970-5660.

Minnesota welcomes Am. Legion’s deputy director of claims and benefits

On Monday, Jan. 13, we had the privilege of hosting American Legion Deputy Director of Claims and Benefits Philip Du at our VBA Regional Office and American Legion National Claims Office, located in the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building at Fort Snelling.

This visit was a significant opportunity to connect with high-level leaders committed to improving services and support for veterans.

The day included a series of productive discussions with key figures in debt management outreach and veteran services. These conversations centered on fostering stronger collaboration to better meet the needs of Minnesota’s veteran community. Among those in attendance were:

- Kim Graves, director of the VBA Regional Office (RO).
- Charles Martin, manager of the Veterans Service Center.
- James Frank, assistant manager for the Pension Management Center.
- Dawn Eggers, director of veterans operations for the Debt Management Center.

Representing the American

VA & Rehabilitation

Jeremy Wolfsteller

Legion at the regional level, our dedicated National Claims Office team included:

- Judith Ojard, veterans service representative.
 - Steven Pelletier, veterans service representative
 - Beverly Moes, team lead
- And for the American Legion Department of Minnesota:
- Me, your department service officer.

During this visit, the Minnesota team also had the opportunity to meet with the deputy director to discuss goals and address shared concerns. These discussions explored ways to strengthen coordination between the state and national teams, ultimately ensuring better service delivery for veterans.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the potential opportunities that could emerge at our upcoming Department Convention. While specific details are still being finalized, the convention promises to provide a valuable platform for innovation

and further collaboration to support veterans.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Deputy Director Du for visiting Minnesota and taking the time to witness the incredible work being done here. This visit underscores the strong partnership between The American Legion and all levels of the VA, highlighting the shared commitment to making a positive difference for those who have served our nation.

Stay tuned for updates as we continue to build on this momentum to enhance veteran support across Minnesota and beyond.

Ray Kane is the service officer for the Department of Minnesota and offices at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. He is a member of Hastings Post 47.



Rising costs are challenging all across the USA, and for members

As you know, this is the time of year that we start our membership slide. As of today, we are in 10th place for membership in the country, and it would really be great to get back into the top five.

We all need to do our best to recruit more veterans into The American Legion so we can have a loud voice in Washington, D.C., and do more for our communities. We should be going to our colleges and universities to talk to the student veterans about the Legion. Getting into our armories and talking to the soldiers and their families is also a great way to spread the word.

We have so much to offer our veterans, but we must get the word out!

One of the main challenges we’re facing is the recent increase in dues. Due to this, we have 84 posts in Minnesota that are considered “upside down” in their dues structure. What this means is that the amount of the membership dues does not cover the full amount that is owed to national, department or their district.

It’s then the full responsibility of each post to cover the remaining amount owed.

Membership

Carla Tappainer



Some posts are covering the difference out of their post funds so that they don’t have to increase their dues. The amounts vary from \$1.25 up to \$14.25 for each member. That’s not sustainable in the long run.

Another downside of this situation is that those posts that are “upside down” are not able to use MyLegion.org to process membership until their dues are corrected.

I totally understand how an increase in dues is hard for people to stomach, but it is a fact of life, and we must find a way to work with it. By focusing on the positives and communicating effectively, we can address the concerns regarding the dues increase and continue to grow as an organization.

This isn’t the first time, nor is it the last, for an increase. It seems that everything is going up in price nowadays. Unfortunately, we have many veterans who are on fixed incomes and it’s very hard for them to

understand why their dues keep going up. The best way to talk about the dues increase is to mention all the advantages of membership in the American Legion provides.

- Highlight the benefits and programs offered by the American Legion.

- Emphasize our role as the voice of veterans in Washington, D.C.

- Explain that without continued support, the benefits we enjoy may be lost.

Together, we can overcome these challenges and ensure that our mission and our voice remain strong. Spread the word about The American Legion and we will succeed!

Carla Tappainer is the membership director for the Department of Minnesota. She is a member of Apple Valley Post 1776.

Get ready to find your Boys Staters

June 8-14 are the dates set for the upcoming Boys State session. Registration will soon open.

St. John’s University will again host the weeklong program.

The experiences of attendees typically are positive and enhance their leadership skills at school and in their communities. The connections they make with fellow Boys Staters last a lifetime. Remind those you sponsored last year to share their advice to this year’s candidates.

Please encourage your 2025 Boys State applicants and their

Minn. Boys State

Neil Kruse



parents to view the information on www.mnboysstate.org.

If you have more candidates desiring to participate this June than you are capable of sponsoring, direct them to Jennifer at Department HQ.

Thank you for your promotion of and sponsorship of this program. We can’t do it without your support!

Leadership, cooperation, negotiation, compromise, sports-

manship, and networking are traits that develop while the young men work through local, county, and state government scenarios.

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

Listening Post



Second District Commander James Olson works an American Legion table at the Ag Expo in Mankato. He was joined by Slayton Post 64 Commander Brad Pagel.



Thank you to Barnum Public Schools for the wonderful tribute to Peterson/Westerberg Post 415 and all veterans on Veterans Day.



In December, Bloomington Post 550 Gambling Manager Tim Engstrom, right, presents a \$1,500 check to Every Third Saturday's Tom McKenna for 10th District Commander Kristy Janigo's Project. In January, Post 550 mailed another \$1,500 to ETS. She has a \$20,000 goal and is at \$13,000.



As part of Veterans Day, Deerwood Elementary School in Eagan created a tribute wall to recognize family members who have served in the armed forces. Eagan Post 594 supported the event by providing six service flags for the wall. The fifth-graders wrote many heartfelt messages.



American Legion Post 148 in Dent and VFW Post 4020 held a Veterans Day program at Perham Living on Nov. 11. There are 27 veterans and 31 spouses living there. Most of them attended.



Air National Guard Lt. Col. Rev. Cory Germain, chaplain for American Legion 2nd District and Fairmont Post 36, was guest speaker at the Fairmont High School Veterans Day Ceremony.



Lake City Post 110 Commander Dick Grobe, left, presents a certificate of initiation to Jay Johnson, who is 101 years old and served in the Army medical field in Washington, DC, for two years during World War II.



Pequot Lakes Post 49 2nd Vice Commander Scott Franke was awarded Employee of the Year by the Pequot Lakes Chamber of Commerce. Franke's dedication has made Post 49 a pillar in the local community.

KING TUTS & NEFERTITIS

The King Tuts held their annual fall gathering at the Paynesville Post 271, hosted by King Tut Tom Fernlund and Nefertiti Veronica Fernlund. A memorial eulogy was held for King Tut Bill Goede and his wife, Nefertiti Marie Goede in addition for Nefertiti Mary Louise Hayden. The conclave was held with the fest following. Later, games were played with winners and losers. King Tuts generally are past department commanders but not always. Nefertitis are their spouses. (The current adjutant and commander typically are invited, too.) The King Tuts gathering is a tradition held annually since the early 1920s in which they initiate the immediate past state commander into the Minnesota King Tuts and and welcomes their wife or significant other in to the Nefertitis.



In the front row from left are Michael Schaffer (Currie Post 322), Dan Ludwig (Red Wing Post 54), Lloyd Ricker (Sauk Rapids Post 254) and Chuck Kruger (Byron Post 119). In the back row are Darrel Redepenning (Anoka Post 102), Mark Dvorak (New Prague Post 45), Tom Fernlund (Waite Park Post 428), Paul Hassing (Bloomington Post 550) and Mike Maxa (Montgomery Post 79). The "Tut" reference is a joking nod to how they are in the past or "dead."



Nefertitis in the front row from left are Nina Schaffer (Fulda Unit 318), Betty Redepenning (Anoka Unit 102), Sheila Ricker (Sauk Rapids Unit 254), and Mary Ludwig (Red Wing Unit 54). In the back row are Jody Hassing (Bloomington Unit 550), LuAnn Marschel (Kimball Unit 261), Linda Dvorak (New Prague Unit 45), Veronica Fernlund (Waite Park Unit 428) and Donna Redepenning (Anoka Unit 102). The great Egyptian queen Nefertiti reigned at the wealthiest time of ancient Egypt.

Listening Post



Carver County Veteran Service Officer Steve Walker captivated the audience at Norwood-Young America.

Veterans Day 2024 celebrated in NYA

On Monday, Nov. 11, the Norwood-Young America community came together to honor our veterans. The audience comprised public school children (prekindergarten through grade 12), area residents, members of the American Legion Post 343 and VFW Post 1783, American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Unit 343 and VFW Auxiliary 1783 filled Central High School's gym to honor all United States veterans.

The program's keynote speaker was Carver County Veteran Service Officer Steve Walker, who captivated the audience with his message.

During his speech, Steve shared that having no real plans for his future, he decided to join the U. S. Army National Guard shortly after high school. His three deployments gave him a much-needed direction of purpose.

"When you join, you are the lowest-ranking soldier, a private. On my first deployment, I was a specialist and our squad was 12 soldiers. You look out for one another and work very closely together ... you follow the orders given and rely on your buddies to protect your back and they know you will protect them" he said.

By the time of his second deployment he achieved the rank of staff sergeant (E-6). With a higher rank comes more responsibility. He was in charge of a squad of 12 soldiers. He must

look out for all of these soldiers as best as he can.

On his third deployment, he held the rank of first sergeant. This increased his responsibility to a company of three to four platoons or 100 to 125 soldiers, sometimes in different countries from each other.

Again, his responsibility increased to more and more soldiers. His perspective changed as his rank changed.

Also, as his rank changed, so did his age. This gave a different outlook for the future. He mentioned that when coming home from each of his deployments, he was always greeted with "Welcome Home" celebrations ... and he knows that has not always been the case. He wanted *all* soldiers to be welcomed home and thanked for their service to which the audience applauded.

After the program, veterans and their guests were invited to a complimentary lunch by CHS Food Service. Students assisted guests through the lunch line, escorted them to the beautifully decorated private dining area where they served beverages and desserts. NYA Superintendent Tim Schochmaier greeted these guests and thanked them for their service. This year's seating overflowed the private dining area into the school commons area. It is the largest crowd of veterans and their guests ever in attendance for our Veterans Day program.



This bald eagle is one of the 3D wooden puzzles.

5th District donates 3D puzzles, gift cards to VA

American Legion members have been visiting the Minneapolis Veterans Hospital every month to visit with fellow veterans. We provide them with small gifts of toiletries, a deck of playing cards, memo pads, post cards and writing utensils.

Legion member Mel Robinson identified a need to expand our giving to these veterans. He suggested project activities such as model cars, planes, ships and appropriate puzzles or games could be provided.

The project began in August by making phone calls to potential donors such as Target, Walmart, Michaels, and Hub Hobbie. Over the next few months, more donors were acquired.

During a visit to the Afton Art Fair in September, Robinson found an art vendor selling 3D wooden puzzles. The puzzles consisted of a variety of wooden model cars, planes, trucks and even bald eagles. Realizing these puzzles would be ideal for the VA Hospital, Robinson purchased five of these wooden puzzles.

As these were purchased, the project was explained to the

owner Tim Murphy.

He was delighted to hear about the project, explaining that he was an Army veteran and his two sons are both currently serving in the Army. Murphy was so pleased to learn about the project, he immediately donated 50 of these puzzles to The American Legion.

Through September and October, the project continued, and has resulted in securing over 135 items consisting of 20-plus model cars to assemble, four jigsaw and 3D puzzles, and several other items. After, the 3D wooden puzzle owner discussed the project with his partner, he increased the quantity to 100 puzzles.

On Nov. 4, American Legion Post 555 delivered these items to the Minneapolis VA Hospital, specifically to the Center for Development & Civic Engagement. The value of the items, as required by the center, was determined to be in excess of \$1,200. All together there were 140 individual items and 92 paint items. Robinson is not finished. He received gift cards from Target and Walmart and more items are on the way.



Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Stacy Hayes was unable to attend the Fall Conference to receive her Outstanding Enlisted Award, due to a shoulder injury. Ninth District National Security Chairman Gary H. Olson presents her with her award on Dec. 7 during her promotion ceremony at the Detroit Lakes Armory.



DAV 15 Commander Mike Finstad, CVSO John Schotzko, Mike Howk, and American Legion 132 First Vice Commander Roger Hoffmann. The organization's leaders contributed \$4,000 to Mike and Shiela Howk, whose 26-year-old daughter was struck crossing a street in St. Paul by a car traveling 50 mph, then drove away. After months of surgeries, she has returned to her parents' home. The donation helps them defray associated costs.



Waite Park Post 428 Commander Joe Cordie, Veronica Fernlund, Tom Fernlund and Tim Weisbrich presented "The Right Thing To Do: The Joe Mauer Story" books by author Joe Schmidt to Rachel Mushel at Athlos Academy, Katherine Opsahl, Westwood Elementary & All Saints Academy schools in St. Cloud. Waite Park Post 428 purchased 50 of the books for local schools and libraries.

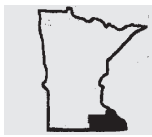


North St. Paul Post 39 members cleaned 782 markers of veterans at Evergreen Cemetery on three evenings in October. The post selected the project after noticing overgrown markers on Memorial Day 2024.

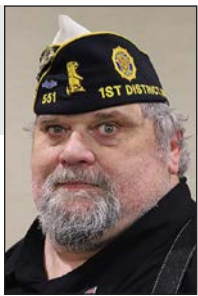


The seventh annual OMK Veterans Pheasant Hunt took place Oct. 26 at the OMK Lodge near Clinton. Thirty-four veterans participated cost-free, split into morning and afternoon groups. Sponsors were Wheaton Post 80, Wheaton Squadron 80, Clinton Post 258, Big Stone County Pheasants Forever and several local businesses and individuals.

District commanders



1st District Mark Maloney III



The American Legion has always stood as a pillar of support and camaraderie for veterans across the nation. Each month, we come together to share our experiences, honor our shared history, and look forward to the future. This month's article is particularly personal to me, as it reflects on my time as a veteran of Desert Storm and the importance of keeping our members connected and engaged.

As a Persian Gulf War veteran, my memories of the conflict are both vivid and profound. The year was 1991, and the world watched as the coalition forces, led by the United States, launched Operation Desert Storm to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. For those of us who served, it was a time of intense preparation, uncertainty, and ultimately, triumph.

I remember the camaraderie among my fellow soldiers, the long nights under the desert sky and the unwavering determination to see our mission through. We faced challenges that tested our resolve, but we also experienced moments of profound unity and purpose. The bonds we forged in the heat of battle have endured long after the conflict ended, and they continue to be a source of strength and pride.

Desert Storm was a defining moment in military history, and it is essential that we remember the lessons learned and the sacrifices made. As veterans, we have a unique perspective on the events that transpired, and it is our duty to ensure that these memories are preserved for future generations.

The liberation of Kuwait was a testament to the power of unity and international cooperation. It demonstrated the effectiveness of modern military strategy and the importance of clear objectives. But beyond the tactical and strategic achievements, the Gulf War was a human experience, marked by the bravery and resilience of those who served.

As we reflect on operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, let us remember the fallen, honor the survivors, and recommit ourselves to the principles that guided us during those challenging times. Their legacy is our legacy, and it is our responsibility to keep their stories alive.

One of the core missions of the American Legion is to foster a sense of community and belonging among veterans. In today's fast-paced world, it is more important than ever to keep our members engaged and connected. Here are a few strategies to ensure that we continue to support and uplift our fellow veterans:

Maintaining regular communication with our members is crucial. Whether through newsletters, emails, or social media, keeping everyone informed about upcoming events,

meetings, and initiatives helps to strengthen our community. Personal touches, such as birthday cards or phone calls, can also make a significant difference in making members feel valued and appreciated.

Organizing events that cater to a wide range of interests and backgrounds is essential for fostering inclusivity. From social gatherings and family-friendly activities to educational workshops and volunteer opportunities, offering diverse events ensures that there is something for everyone. Encouraging members to bring their families and friends can also help to expand our reach and build a stronger support network.

Providing access to support and resources is a fundamental aspect of our mission. Whether it's assistance with navigating the VA system, mental health support, or career guidance, ensuring that our members have access to the help they need is paramount. Establishing partnerships with local organizations and businesses can also enhance the resources available to our members.

Celebrating the achievements and contributions of our members is vital for maintaining morale and motivation. Whether it's recognizing a member's service, highlighting their accomplishments in the community, or celebrating personal milestones, taking the time to acknowledge and honor our veterans fosters a sense of pride and belonging.

Encouraging mentorship and leadership opportunities within the American Legion helps to build a strong and resilient community. By providing experienced members with the chance to mentor newer members, we can ensure that knowledge and skills are passed down, creating a legacy of excellence and service. Leadership opportunities also empower members to take an active role in shaping the future of our organization.

As we look to the future, let us remember the lessons of the past and the importance of staying connected. The American Legion is more than just an organization; it is a family. By keeping our members engaged and supporting one another, we can continue to honor the legacy of all who have served and build a brighter future for generations to come.

In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every member of The American Legion. Your dedication, service, and camaraderie are what make this organization truly special. Together, we can achieve great things and ensure that the spirit of the American Legion endures for years to come.



3rd District Joe Tappainer



Christmas and New Years are over and now we head into the emotional desert of the year. You know the time (January to April), when we are covered by clouds for days and, the temperature is either very cold or right at freezing (big mess) and a lot of people don't have activities during this time and depression can easily set in.

We must keep a close watch on our friends and neighbors. If we are talking Legion Family members, there is an easy way to do that. The post membership director should print out a list of all the members of the post 1982s, & 1982ADs. The post commander can then divide the list by the officers and post members who are willing to pitch in and the group then gives a call to all the people on his or her list at least once a month as a buddy check.

Note, I would suggest that during these checks, that no one

talks about membership. It is just a health and welfare check to let them know we are thinking about them and want to help. The "22 a Day" is a topic that is near and dear to my heart.

I have had three friends and three of my old unit buddies, who have taken their own lives. It sucks. After a few months, when you have built a rapport with them, then you can talk about membership.

I have asked Dr. Steve Lansing and Col. B. Wayne Quest to be our guest speakers at mid-winter. I know they talked last year but this year they will be talking about Book 2 of "Veterans in Crisis."

Happy New Year to Everyone and I hope you all have a fantastic 2025!



4th District Jon Haworth



The holiday season had me running all over the 4th District visiting different post Christmas parties. I've been visiting different veteran groups such as Every Third Saturday in South Minneapolis and Honor Bound Veteran in Rochester.

Honor Bound Veteran is going to be a community within a community to aid in the fight against veteran homelessness, loneliness and suicide rates in our ranks. I also attended the legislative mixer put on by 10th District Commander Kristy Janigo. It was truly a great opportunity to be able to rub elbows with

senators and state representatives that help with veteran issues.

The first meeting for the Legion Cruisers car club will be on at 10 a.m. Feb. 9 at Post 577 Arcade Phalen. If you're interested in joining us either in person or via zoom, please let me know at jhaworth@kw.com. I hope to see you all at the sweetheart rally in Royalton on Feb. 8. I will be talking about the Legion Cruisers there as well.



5th District Lynne Nottage



The 5th District held our Oratorical Contest this last weekend, I would like to thank all the contestants, their friends and families for their support, our volunteers and especially to Wold-Chamberlain Post 99 in Minneapolis for its space to hold our contest. We had some great speakers and a very deserving winner.

Our 4th and 5th Districts Mid-Winter was very successful this year, with some good training and camaraderie. I believe it was enjoyed by all, especially our first-time attendees.

Thank you to the 4th District for hosting this year's event.

Next up on our agenda is revitalization. We will be coming up with a date and place to host a revitalization event at our next district meeting on Feb. 1.

I'd also like to remind everyone that more volunteers are always needed at hospital visitation on the first Sunday of every month at 2 p.m. Please arrive early for instructions. I know these visits are truly appreciated

by our hospitalized veterans.

Wold-Chamberlain Post 99 has a pancake breakfast from 8 a.m. to noon on the fourth Sunday of each month through May. Many people have stated they are the best pancakes in town.

Also, Richfield Unit 435 has an omelet breakfast from 8 a.m. to noon on the second Sunday of each month through May. The breakfast is held at Post 99. Hope to see you there.

I've been watching all the emails flying from our 5th District Convention committee. They have been working very hard and everything is very close to being finalized. Our convention will be on Saturday, June 7, with our memorial service on Friday, June 6, and banquet also on June 7 after convention. Information will be sent out soon, please try to attend.



6th District Frank Grittner



Greetings from the Big 6th District.

We have now turned the corner into a new year. I hope everyone had a safe, wonderful, blessed holiday season.

Now it is time to get back to work. Membership is going well, but it can always be better. Working together, we can keep our current members, and together we can recruit new Legionnaires.

Remember that you don't always need to figure out a way to "go where they are." You are already there. You can see veterans almost everywhere you go ... at the grocery store, the hardware store, the gym, out ice fishing, at youth sporting events and many other places.

If you strike up a conversation, maybe just ask, "Are you a Legionnaire?"

What's the worst they can say? "No, and I'm not interested." You never know until you try. Together we can keep The American Legion strong.

It is also that time of year when we start preparing for awards and reports. Please keep an eye out for deadlines and reporting requirements. These reports are important as they are what we use when meeting with legislators at all levels. The more information we have, the better we can communicate what our veterans want, need, and believe in.

While our main focus has always been veterans, and veteran issues, remember our

four pillars (Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation,

Americanism, National Security, Children & Youth) also tells us we focus on our community. Part of that focus should be that we reward those that go above and beyond. Both within our ranks, and in our community. So please, make sure we are nominating those that deserve to be recognized.

This is also the time of year when we need to "Be the One" more than other times. The snow and cold mean that there are many that are shut in their houses and apartments. "Be the One" to reach out to someone you haven't seen in a while. "Be the One" who goes over and shovels a sidewalk or driveway for an elderly neighbor. "Be the One" who takes the time to take someone to the grocery store, or out for a quick lunch. "Be the One" who shows that there is someone out there who cares. You never know when one act of kindness, one reason to smile, saves a life.

There are many events coming up around the entire Department of Minnesota, at all levels, and I hope to get a chance to see many of you at these events.

Until next time, stay safe, stay warm, and "Be the One" because together we can do wonderful things.



7th District Carl Wilson



Greetings from the Mighty 7 District:

Winter has finally come to the great state of Minnesota and things are starting to slow down in our area after the holidays and now the New Year is upon us. The snowbirds have left for their homes down south and those of us that stayed here for the winter are working on getting the remaining Legion members in the district renewed for the 2025 membership year.

This is typically the time of year that membership slows down, but I know that with some work we will be able to reach our goal in the 7th District. This is also a good time to remind everyone that soon we all will have to be getting those reports in for the year.

I would like to also challenge everyone to reach out to the members in your areas to see how they are doing. This is the time of year that many of our older veterans are not able to get out as much as they do in the

summer months. We need to keep in contact with them.

They are the ones that have kept this great organization going for many years, talk to them, listen to them, learn from them.

We also need to talk with the younger veterans in our organization, see what they need, listen to their ideas on what would make our organization better and stronger. I think we all could learn from each other.

The older veterans need to realize that things may not work as well now as they did back in the early years and the younger veterans need to remember the older veterans have been though a lot in this organization.

If we do not work together, we will not survive. I hope to see all of you at many of the upcoming functions and I pray that everyone stays safe and healthy.

Past SAL Cmdr. Bill Peters, 77



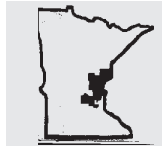
Bill Peters

Past Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Minnesota Commander Bill Peters died Dec. 14. He was 77.

Peters was detachment commander in 2009-11. He was SAL 5th District commander 2004-07. He held numerous position at squadron, district and detachment levels.

Known for his leadership, professionalism and genuine care for others, he made a lasting impact on his colleagues and workplace communities. The family kindly requests that donations be made to Sons of The American Legion (legion.org) in his honor.

District Commanders



10th District
Kristy Janigo



It's hard to believe we are midway through the 2024-2025 Legion year!

Thank you to everyone who made it out to Osseo for our 10th District Christmas Rally. Special thanks to the post for donating the hall rental and appetizer-style spread. We hosted deputies and staff from the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office for an informative presentation from their Community Outreach and Public Affairs (COPA) department as well as their Criminal Intelligence Division (CID). I've long thought veterans have a role in ensuring public safety by giving them our support.

I attended the Christmas party at Ogilvie Post 640, with Tess and Al Davis, for a huge holiday potluck. As I listened to their post meeting and the donations they made that night, I was reminded how important an American Legion post is, especially in a small community.

Shout out to all the posts that offered free Thanksgiving or Christmas meals. For my day job, I'm an assistant county veterans service officer focusing on homeless and justice-involved veterans. I heard from veterans I'm helping that they went to American Legion posts for a hot meal. You embody our American Legion values with these actions. What you do really matters.

Have you seen our new department legislative grassroots action page? You can quickly and easily send an email to relevant state elected officials by clicking on any of the campaigns on the website. Visit <https://mnlegion.org/action/>.

We had a great time and got a lot of work done at the 10th District Mid-Winter Conference at Anoka Jan. 11. Thank you to everyone who attended!

For anyone who has been

wondering about the 10th District Family testimonial, we discovered ours was on the same date as Department Commander Carl Moon's. We have begun to look for a different date. We are still hoping it will work out to have the event in Milaca.

We are planning another VA S.A.V.E. training in March, hopefully at the Wayzata post. We are supporting the national Be the One mission by training our members how to ask the most important question of all (are you thinking about suicide?), how to react to a suicidal crisis and how to use the 988 national suicide crisis line to get help.

Thank you for the great support for my commander's project, Every Third Saturday. They reported at midwinter that our posts have raised more than \$13,000 so far, which is well over halfway to our goal of \$20,000 for the year.

Have you seen our new district website? It is at mnmighty10thdistrict.org. Thank you to Jennifer Cole of Legion Social for her talents!

As your Department Legislative Committee chairwoman, I've gotten very busy making plans for Washington Conference in late February. I've been at the Minnesota Capitol Complex, giving an overview presentation of the Commander's Task Force priorities and testifying in the taxes committee for the bill which would exempt all CTF buildings from property taxes. A change to the Minnesota tax code would help us continue our physical presence in communities across this state.

In service.



8th District
Dan Siats



On behalf of 8th District Commander Philip Bodle, greetings to all American Legion members from the District of the Lakes & Pines! Hopefully you had a very blessed holiday season.

I am Border Area Vice Commander Dan Siats.

The 8th District Mid-Winter Conference is Saturday, Jan. 25, at West Duluth Post 71, 5814 Grand Ave., in Duluth. Please contact our district commander, adjutant or one of the four vice commanders, if you have any questions or an issue you'd like brought up relating to The American Legion!

The Legislative Social was Jan. 8 in St. Paul at Mancini's Char House. Thanks go to Kristy Janigo, our America Legion legislative chairwoman and 10th District commander, for putting that together!

It was a chance for Legionnaires to meet with lawmakers and learn about the American Legion Legislative Priorities that veterans hope will get passed at the Capitol in 2025!

Veterans in the North and West of the Eighth District can contact our Representative Roger Skraba from Ely at 651-296-2190 or email him at rep.roger.skraba@house.mn.gov.

Roger is a veteran. Another representative I spoke with is ret. Air Force Col. Tom Sexton. Tom is in his first term and is very concerned with veteran suicides!

Please do your Buddy Checks! Take a couple of minutes to check on and talk with veterans! Stay in contact!



9th District
Steve NaSalle



Happy 2025 New Year Roaring 9th American Legion Family!

I am glad to report that we are meeting our membership goals, but we still have some work to do. Every post in our district has received their perspective 1982 lists, so please reach out to our brothers and sisters, who are not affiliated with a post, and explain to them why it is a wonderful idea to join your post.

In fact, in the past few months, some of our posts have gone the extra mile by transferring two or more members to their post.

Fantastic job to all of you who have succeeded in transferring these members to your post! In support of your hard work, I would like to make your hard work more interesting. The post who has the most 1982 transfers, by the time our District Convention has begun, your post will receive an award for your hard work, so keep up the great work.

As we all know, our Mid-Winter Conference went off without a hitch and was very successful. I want to thank our American Legion Family Post 27 in Warren for your hard work and dedication for our success.

Just a reminder; our District Convention is scheduled for Saturday, June 7, 2025, at East Grand Forks Post 157. I

apologize for any miscommunication to the contrary. Our convention will begin promptly at 9 a.m. Please check out our 9th District Newsletter and/or Facebook site for updates and accommodations.

Our District Executive Board meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Friday, June 6. The information provided at our district events is a valuable resource for aiding in your post's success. Please be safe on your travels, and I look forward to seeing you all there.

In addition, I would like to announce my candidacy for our 6th and 9th Districts next department vice commander for the 2025-26 Legion year. I truly appreciate everyone's support.

Remember your buddy checks, especially during the holiday season. Sometimes a quick visit or a hello makes all the difference in the world to our veterans who may be alone during the holidays. God Bless you all!

"May we think of freedom, not as the right to do as we please but as the opportunity to do what is right." — Peter Marshall

Department Legion College cost overview:

- It is \$200 per applicant: This fee covers housing for three nights, classroom and technology access, the first night's social gathering, course materials.

- Legion posts and districts are encouraged to cover the \$200 fee for their members, potentially making the program more accessible for applicants and helping to support future leadership.

Department Legion College registration: mnlegion.org/legion-college/

Meals:

- Applicants are responsible for their own meals during the weekend.

- Camp Ripley dining facilities are available for breakfast, lunch, and dinner at a very

affordable cost.

- There is a local restaurant just outside the Camp Ripley gate.

This setup allows flexibility for applicants in terms of meal options while keeping the costs manageable. If you need any further clarifications or adjustments, let us know!

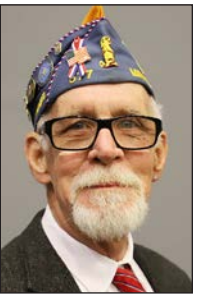
If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Department training Committee at trainingcomm@legion.org We look forward to hearing from you.

The deadline to register is March 15.

Attending the Minnesota American Legion College at Camp Ripley allows you to connect with a diverse network of Legionnaires from across the state.

The SAL Update: Turn in Consolidated Squadron Reports

Detachment commander
John Weiss



Happy New Year American Legion Family! My hope and wish for all of you, is a healthy, happy and prosperous 2025.

The past year has been a bit of a trying time, but I am dealing with it. Thank you to all of you who have expressed your concern for me, I do appreciate it.

I would like to remind all of the squadrons that they should be tracking the volunteerism that their squadron members are doing. And the donations that you are making. It should be an ongoing process.

After all, it's a good thing to get recognized for all of the good things that you SAL members are doing. And besides those numbers count. They count to our detachment and the national SAL organization as well as to The American Legion. When the leadership and our team reports those numbers to the Congress, we demonstrate to our elected representatives that we are a force in this great nation and in our state — a force for good and community service.

It's one of the things that we as an organization needs to do, toot our horn a bit about the many good things that we do in our community, state and nation. And the way that those wonderful numbers and information are passed up the chain is by filling out the Consolidated Squadron Report forms.

I know that I would be asking

a lot, but I would love to see the percentage of Consolidated Squadron Report forms (CSRs) turned in increase by a large margin over the past few years. I don't remember (at this point) the percentage of CSR's turned in, but I do remember seeing the number and percentage of squadrons turning them in was very low compared to the number of squadrons in the detachment, and I was very disappointed.

Let's see if we can improve that number. If your squadron needs assistance filling the CSR out please send me an email or speak with your district commander or the detachment vice commander who is responsible for your district. They are in the position to help you and your squadron.

I would like to also say, thank you for all of your hard work over the last year.

Be well and be safe in your travels.

Yours in service.

John Weiss of St Paul Arcade-Phalen Squadron 577 is the commander of the Detachment of Minnesota for the Sons of The American Legion. His theme is "Stepping Up For Veterans."

Fund 85 Run will cross northern Minnesota

Legion Riders
Jody Hassing



Hello, Legion Family!

The Sweetheart Membership Gathering will take place at the Royalton American Legion on Feb. 8. If you can make it, it is always a good time. Registration information is available on Eventbrite and on Page 2 of this issue.

Spring is coming fast; I can only hope that the lack of snow so far this winter continues, and we have an early spring.

We are beginning to plan the Fund 85 Run for July 24-27 with the Kickoff Party on July 23. This year, the run will be around northern Minnesota. If your Legion Family is interested in hosting the Riders this year, please contact me or MNALR Ride Captain Ted Berg. We are seeking a place for the Kickoff Party and the Ending Party.

It is time to start thinking about reporting. The Consolidated Chapter Report is important for us to be able to report to the Legion Family what the Riders are up to. Please look for the report in your email or look for it on the mnalr.org website. I am looking

forward to seeing what all the chapters have been up to this year.

I know there are many other chapter runs and fundraisers happening across the state and throughout the year. Please invite me to your events so I can see all the good things you are doing!

If you would like help setting up a chapter at your post, please let me or your district Riders representative know so we can help you get things going. If you are interested in having me talk to your chapter or district about the reason for writing our Constitution & Bylaws, please contact me.

God bless and keep the rubber side down.



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

The Copher Gopher

Consider attending Minnesota Legion College

By Jennifer Havlick

As an American Legion member in the Department of Minnesota, attending the Minnesota American Legion College at Camp Ripley April 24-27 is an invaluable opportunity to expand your knowledge, develop your leadership skills, and connect with fellow Legion members from across the state.

The Minnesota American Legion College offers comprehensive training and education for Legionnaires aspiring to take on greater leadership roles within their posts, districts, and the department. Over the course of several days, attendees participate in interactive workshops and discussions covering a wide range of topics, including:

- American Legion history, mission and programs.

- Gain a deeper understanding of the Legion's roots, its national and local impact, and the programs that serve veterans, their families, and communities.

- Post management and officer responsibilities

- Learn about effective post operations, including best practices for managing your post, engaging members, and meeting the needs of your community.

- Effective communication and public speaking

- Develop the skills to speak confidently, engage audiences, and communicate the Legion's mission and vision effectively, whether you're addressing your post or advocating at the state or national level.

- Legislative advocacy and grassroots engagement

- Understand how to engage with lawmakers, influence policy, and advocate for veterans' issues, using your position as a Legion leader to push for positive change.

- Strategic planning and goal setting

- Master the art of creating actionable plans that support the success of your post and the larger Legion mission.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 25 Vol. 5

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

Dept. HQ: Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155 651-224-7634 February 2025

Let's reach 85 percent mark by March 15

Mid-winter conferences are almost over. I hope many of you were able to attend your district's mid-winter and that you learned something new.

The month of February has several special days in it.

February is Americanism Month for the American Legion Auxiliary. Please promote the Americanism program at your unit meeting.

Feb. 2 is the Sunday that the four chaplains of the USAT Dorchester are remembered. Lt. George Fox, Methodist minister, Lt. Alexander Goode, Jewish Rabbi, Lt. Clark Poling, Dutch Reformed minister, and Lt. John Washington, Roman Catholic priest, distributed life jackets until they ran out.

They then removed their life jackets to save four others. As the ship was sinking, the four chaplains were seen standing on

President's Message

Judy Ackerman



the ship's stern, arms locked as they prayed and sang hymns. Not only was it a sign of bravery, but the chaplains put aside their different faiths and prayed as one.

The Sweetheart Rally will be held at the Royalton American Legion on Saturday, Feb. 8. Please reserve your ticket and bring a lot of membership with you. Membership Chairman Hope Wilson and I want to bring the Department Merit Medallion to Minnesota. The biggest hurdle for this achievement is to achieve the 85 percent benchmark membership goal by March 15.

Per the ALAMIS report as of Jan. 10, the department needs

1,726 members to reach the 85 percent. This is attainable,

but we need your help. Thank you for all the work you have done so far this year.

Happy Valentine's Day. Take the time and send a valentine to a veteran. Presidents Day is Feb. 17.

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."

Presidents Day is a time for patriotism

Kollet Kaehlert
Americanism Chairman



We observed Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, on Jan. 20, and will observe Presidents Day on Feb. 17, let us honor their legacies. Congress established George Washington's birthday on Feb. 22 as a federal holiday in 1879. The day had been informally celebrated since the great general's death in 1799.

In 1968, Congress passed an act moving the observance to the third Monday of February starting in 1971.

However, Congress never named the day "Presidents Day." Instead, Americans popularized the term in the 1980s to honor President Abraham Lincoln's birthday as well (Feb. 12). Since then, it has come to honor all presidents.

Also, that's why the punctuation lacks uniformity. Some organizations say President's Day, for President Washington. Some say Presidents' Day, showing plural possession. Newspapers have determined the name is Presidents Day, with "presidents" serving as a descriptor, not possessive. This is similar in construction to Veterans Day.

We know the history and the impact they had on our country and its citizens. So now is the time for the American Legion Auxiliary to step up and honor their legacies through our mission of Service Not Self.

"One person can make a difference, and everyone should try." — John F. Kennedy

"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." — Franklin D. Roosevelt

"Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and

verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." — Martin Luther King

So, let's be great! How can we do this, you ask? Here are a few suggestions. Gather your unit members and include your Juniors and organize a patriotic holiday event or volunteer for local patriotic events in Auxiliary attire and network with prospective members.

Recognize your patriotic neighbors! Create certificates and visit businesses and/or homes in your area and thank them for flying the American flag properly.

Although schools are closed on Presidents Day, plan a nearby day to visit your local schools and teach flag etiquette. There are many tools available through Emblem Sales to assist with this project.

Work with other Auxiliary committees to provide clean up services, assist with VA Stand Downs, and ALA Girls State recruiting.

The American Legion Oratorical season is upon us. Coordinate with your posts to volunteer. Perhaps provide refreshments after the presentations for the contestants, volunteers and audience. Offer to serve as a timer or chaperone. Attend the various levels of the contest as an audience member. If you haven't done this before, you will be quite impressed with the knowledge and skills of these students. And you will certainly learn more about the Constitution.

Americanism Essay Reminder: Be sure to follow up with the schools you work with to pick up the essays. Make sure you follow the various deadlines in your department, make sure your first-place winners are sent to your division chairman by April 15. For details on the Americanism Essay Contest, visit <https://www.legion-aux.org/americanism-essay-contest> The Americanism Essay Contest was created to teach students the value of patriotism and what it means to be Americans.

Thousands of students participate in the program each year and help promote a lifelong respect of our flag and country. Students (grades 3 to 12) explore the fundamental rights and freedoms we enjoy today. Each year's contest has a different theme; one student in each category per division is awarded a prize.

There is a category for students with special needs. Current Essay Theme: "What does America the Beautiful mean to me (regarding veterans and our military)?"

- Recognize Essay Contest winners with an award.

- Contact your local news to attend the award ceremony. (make sure you get the parents' approval) Invite winners to read their entry at your unit meeting.

Upcoming Dates in February: February is Americanism Month & Black History Month. Feb. 3 is Four Chaplains Day. Feb. 4 is USO Birthday. Feb. 9-15 is National Salute to Veteran Patients. Feb. 17 is Presidents Day. Feb. 19 is Coast Guard Birthday.



On Jan. 17, Albert Lea Auxiliary Unit 56 presented quilts to the following veterans: Dale Yost, Delmar Schnoor, Steven Olson, Paul Henschel, Richard Dohmeier. Richard Ashling received his quilt in October but he received a U.S. Navy Mobile Riverine Force certificate for his Vietnam service at this ceremony. Olson received the 100th Quilts of Valor from Unit 56 at the Jan 17 presentation.



On Nov. 15, Albert Lea Auxiliary Unit 56 presented quilts to the following veterans: Don Godeke, Richard Herfindahl, Chuck Pownell, and Sidney Troutner. Supporting veterans is what the Auxiliary is all about. Unit 56's next QOV will be Feb 21.

Testimonial Dinner

**Celebrating
American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota
President**

Judy Ackerman

**Hosted by:
Northrop Unit 522**



**May 17, 2025
Best Western
Fairmont, MN**

**Social Hour: 4:30 PM
Dinner: 6 PM
Program following
Cost: \$35**

**Send Reservations
By May 1st to:
Judy Ackerman
924 Shoreacres Dr.
Fairmont, MN 56031**

Menu:
**Pork, Chicken
Garlic Mashed Potatoes
Glazed Carrots
Salad
Dessert**

**Block of rooms are set aside at the Best Western (507-238-4771)
Ask for the American Legion block**

**Make Checks payable
To ALA Unit 522**

NAME _____ # of Guests _____

Contact # and Email _____

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
2025 Membership as of 1/24/2025
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 1/22/24	Difference from Last Year
One	47	3,341	44	2,782	83.27%	2,845	-63
Two	70	3,444	16	2,732	79.33%	2,911	-179
Three	46	3,476	35	2,779	79.95%	2,871	-92
Four	7	508	16	364	71.65%	385	-21
Five	7	463	4	272	58.75%	240	32
Six	60	4,469	71	3,755	84.02%	3,793	-38
Seven	52	2,561	57	2,057	80.32%	2,197	-140
Eight	20	1,117	12	823	73.68%	899	-76
Nine	45	2,944	14	2,353	79.93%	2,447	-94
Ten	41	3,391	48	2,576	75.97%	2,715	-139
1982	1	331	2	230	69.49%	240	-10
Department Total	396	26,045	319	20,723	79.57%	21,543	-820
Group 1 (Even) Linda Kelly	198	12,929	163	10,250	79.28%	10,703	-453
Group 2 (Odd) Robin Dorf	197	12,785	154	10,243	80.12%	10,600	-357

RANKINGS

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
84.02% District 6	83.27% District 1	80.32% District 7	79.95% District 3	79.93% District 9	79.33% District 2	75.97% District 10	73.68% District 8	71.65% District 4	58.75% District 5



Help with legislative efforts at state and federal levels of government

By Linda Kelly
1st Vice President & Legislative Chairman

I have the privilege of serving as the legislative chairman for the American Legion Auxiliary this year. I started out the year apprehensive of the job ahead of me, but I have changed my mind.

As with every program chairmanship I have had, I have learned so much. There is always someone there to answer our questions, no matter what program and I thank them.

Earlier this year, I provided our members with information on how they can help. There are a few websites that you can visit and sign up for notifications. Some of these notifications include a way to send a "support this bill" notice to each of your personal representatives.

Remember that the American Legion is non-political. Even if your representative is not from your personal party, they still represent you — they should still listen to your opinions.

www.legion-aux.org/Member/Guides/Advocacy-Guide has a downloadable copy of the Auxiliary's Legislative Advocacy Guide.

www.legion.org/publications/223496/legislative-handbook has a downloadable copy of the Legion Family Legislative Handbook

www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register is where you can sign up to receive American Legion legislative alerts when Family members are asked to act.

mnlegion.org/action/ is there you can tell our state lawmakers about issues we need passed in Minnesota, such as reducing taxes on charitable gambling and providing tax relief for post homes.

The Auxiliary's program chairman is invited to attend the Commanders' Task Force, which is made up of eight congressionally chartered veteran organizations in Minnesota.

I attended a retreat with this group last fall at Camp Ripley. There was a conversation over supper that will always stay with me. It was a

chat between members from three of the member organizations: American Legion, VFW and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

There was friendly joking about which branch of the military was the best and which veteran organization was the best. There was a short silence, and the CTF chairman at the time spoke up. He told us that no matter the branch or the organization, this group was together for one reason — to help our veterans.

This group meets monthly. Their main goal is to support bills coming before our legislators that will benefit our veterans. They bring in speakers to talk about the benefits. The MDVA tells us about the benefits they provide to our veterans. I am not going to list the issues here because I am hoping that you read all of them in the last issue of the Legionnaire. They benefit our veterans and that is our goal.

You also can find them listed at mnlegion.org/legislation. You even can download PDFs.

Veterans on the Hill is an upcoming CTF event that the DAV coordinates, and I hope many of you will consider attending. It is set for April 9, barring any changes. Details are on Page 2.

I attended last year for the first time, and it was so impressive to see our veterans and their supporters walk as a group from the Armory to the Veteran Service Building to the Capitol. There, we met in the Rotunda to hear from our representatives and Gov. Tim Walz.

It is a time for us to let our voices be heard.

I know we have citizens that say that their vote doesn't count, so they don't bother going to the polls in November. We think about our Minnesota veterans as voters, but then think about their spouses, children, grandchildren and siblings — all voters. That isn't even mentioning friends and neighbors. We are a group to reckon with. Please take an interest and remember to vote every November.

Get Member-opoly updates here

Jan. 31 was the last day to enter memberships to count towards the Unit 100 percent Goal Award. The units that reached the 100 percent goal will receive a 100 percent Flag Ribbon from national.

Members not renewed since 2022 will become former members. Members not renewed since 2023 will become expired members.

Reminder: You must perform a rejoin activity to rejoin former members into your unit. Please be mindful of what membership year you are paying for.

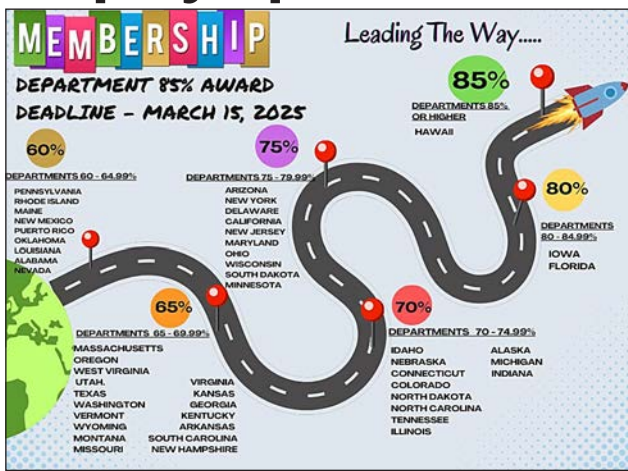
As of Feb 1, 2025, dues must be paid before 2024 or prior back dues can be paid. This ensures members remain current.

Minnesota standings at National Level:

As of Jan 8, Minnesota was in ninth place in the nation with 20,176 members setting us at 77.56 percent of goal. A small goal of 2.04 percent and we would overtake fifth place, but why stop there, we are only 3.94 percent short of second place. *That is obtainable! Lets get them!*

Minnesota is down 943 members from this time last year.

As we all know, the winter months are difficult to get our



membership collected. I encourage everyone to reach out to your members that haven't paid, check up on them, say hi and mention that you noticed that you saw that their membership has not been paid yet. Ten to one they think it was already taken care of already.

Northwest Division is rocking it! 75.55 percent the week Jan. 8

South Dakota is still ahead of Minnesota this week by .75 percentage points. I have a healthy competitive streak, and I am pretty sure even though we like AnnaMae and South Dakota we like the first place spot more. With a little

push, we can be back in that first place spot and maintain it.

We are followed in divisions by:

- Central Division: 74.57 percent
- Western Division: 74.12 percent
- Southern Division: 73.71 percent
- Eastern Division: 70.42 percent

Upcoming dept. goals

- Minnesota is at 77.56 percent as of Jan. 8.
- Feb 8 is our 80 percent department goal.
- March 15 is the 85 percent department goal (61 days as of this writing, Jan 13).

Are you ready for some baseball?

By Anne Steffen
Children & Youth Chairman

Are you still actively searching for Youth Hero and Good Deed award prospects?

This time of year, kids are supporting many outdoor chores for others and might be a good time to reach out if you see something like this on Facebook or in the community. Listen up for those children at school that have supported their classmates or teachers on the playground as perhaps they may be doing a good deed, and we don't even know it.

Let your educators know about the awards and they can be our advocates, as well. Let's really do what we can to recognize and reward the positive actions of our children and youth.

There are so many ways to engage with children and youth in your communities! National Children and Youth Chair Lisa Chaplin reaches out on the national Facebook page with invaluable information regarding this important program, which is one of the pillars of the American Legion Family!

Here are other ways our Legion Family and community can engage: Americanism Essay Contest, Poppy Poster Contest, promoting scholarships, ALA Girls State and TAL Boys state programs, American Legion Youth Shooting sports, American Legion Oratorical

Contest, American Legion Baseball.

Did you know that half of the Major league Baseball players played Legion ball and 81 of the Baseball Hall of Fame members played Legion Ball! We just need to let the world know what we do and have to offer! It's pretty neat!

OK, get those piggy banks out and bring them along to your events so we can raise more money for the Child Well-Being Foundation. Minnesota needs to do what we can in our Northwest Division to get more donations so we can increase the donation total as we are at \$665, and though not at the bottom, we are close to it, with Nebraska in the lead at \$2,180.46.

I encourage you to reach out to your Legion Family and have a piggy bank or whatever creative bank/bucket, etc. to ask for donations this year.

No better time than the present to consider the upcoming Military Child Month and Purple it up in April, with April 15, the day we celebrate our military children! This is the time to get your proclamations off to your city officials and make it official in your community and then brag about it around the community, Legion posts and units! Get your Purple on in April! More information to come.

Visit alaforveterans.org and ALA Facebook page and get inspired! Super good stuff!

Dept. Junior Conference is coming up

ANOKA — 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 was included in the January unit mailing and can be found online at www.mnala.org. For additional information or questions contact: Jean Walker, Department Junior Activities chairman, 218-686-1829 or jmwalker1992@hotmail.com.

Make Girls State reservations

In the January unit mailing, every unit received the necessary information and reservation form to reserve a place for their candidate(s) to the 2025 session of the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State. Please ask your unit president for the necessary information.

After your unit sends in the reservation fee (\$350 per girl), your unit will receive more information on registration.

Dues notice goes out Feb. 1

ST. PAUL — Second dues notice goes out Feb. 1. National has advised the Department Office the second dues notices will be sent out around Feb. 1

to anyone who hasn't paid their 2025 dues.

Members who haven't paid their 2025 dues by Jan. 31 are considered delinquent and may lose their rights, privileges and benefits of membership including their continuous years of service. If you haven't paid your 2025 dues yet, please do so as soon as possible. Ask your friends if they are up-to-date on dues, too.

DEC to meet before rally

CHANHASSEN — Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary President Judy Ackerman will call the Department Executive Committee to order at 8:30 a.m. March 8 in Room 4 at the Chanhassen Recreation Center, 2310 Coulter Blvd.

Doors open at 8 a.m. After, the Auxiliary members will travel across town to the Appreciation Rally at Chanhassen Post 580. There will be an 11 a.m. social,

with a noon lunch and program to follow.

The Minnesota American Legion's DEC meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. in the basement of Post 580, 290 Lake Drive E.

Scholarship applications are due by March 1

ST. PAUL — Applications for ALA national scholarships are due on or before March 1.

Now is a great time to contact your area high schools. Reminder: National scholarships can now be completed online through a fillable application.

Scholarship applications — department and Past Presidents Parley — are due to Department Office no later than March 15.

Unit Essay Contest winners should be sent to the Department Americanism Chairman Kollett Kaehlert no later than March 15.

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