

Legionnaire

legionnaire.org



A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY

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For God and Country

March 2025

More taxes for Mora post?

County assessors are all over the map with property taxes

ST. PAUL — American Legion Post 201 in Mora has no bar or restaurant. It has a small piece of land with a veterans memorial on it, and a building which displays local veteran-related memorabilia, like a museum. It functions as a meeting space.

Still, Kanabec County wants to

charge the post \$7,000 in commercial property taxes. The American Legion, VFW and other organizations in the Minnesota Commanders' Task Force are calling on lawmakers to treat the 501(c)(19) and 501(c)(4) veteran organizations like 501(c)(3)'s and let them qualify for zero property taxes.

On Feb. 12, Mora Post 201 Adjutant Alan Skramstad, a former Mora mayor, testified at the State Capitol before the House Veterans Affairs Division, which is a subcommittee of the State Government Finance and Policy Committee, on HF195. "Our post has no intentions of
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State Rep. Peggy Bennett of Albert Lea sponsored HF195 to treat posts like other tax-exempt nonprofit property. Beside her are Department Commander Carl Moon and Post 201 Commander Alan Skramstad.

'No cuts to benefits'

VA secretary makes pledge to Legion

WASHINGTON — With issues swirling in each day's news cycle, new Secretary of Veterans Affairs Doug Collins addressed members of The American Legion from all across the United States in the Washington Hilton's famous International Ballroom on Feb. 24.

"I still believe deeply in this country," he said. "The best days for veterans are still ahead of us."

Collins described taking funds away from non-mission-critical areas, such as \$14 million in diversity initiatives, and putting it toward veterans' care.

Calling it "a new day at the VA," he said the mission is about veterans. He praised The American Legion for its suicide-prevention efforts.

With word of about 2,400 VA workers losing their jobs, and about 1,000 of them returning through an appeals process, Collins was asked about cuts to VA benefits.

"There are no cuts to benefits and health care to the veterans. Period. It's not happening," he said.

Asked about veteran homelessness, Collins said he wants the United States to end veteran homelessness. He spoke about the ineffectiveness of \$10 billion spent on education of veteran homelessness and said it is time to consider different solutions.

He said billions have been spent on veteran suicide prevention efforts, with \$2.3 billion on counseling, and the number remains 17 a day. He said



American Legion National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr., an Air Force veteran, is flanked by U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney of Connecticut, left, and American Legion Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Director Cole Lyle of Virginia. Courtney introduced the national commander and praised the Legion defying the stereotype of lobbyist-oriented D.C. and performing grass-roots advocacy.

the VA needs to partner with organizations, such as the Legion, to reduce the number. He also wants the VA to open up to other methods of treating PTSD and to reduce misprescribing and overprescribing.

On Feb. 26, Commander Jim LaCoursiere Jr. testified to a joint House-Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on the many programs The American Legion performs across the country. He described the "Be
Continued on Page 7



At the Washington Hilton, VA Secretary Doug Collins said there will be no cuts to benefits and health care for veterans.

Bill takes bite out of claim sharks

Opponents say language is overboard

ST. PAUL — An American Legion-backed bill before the Minnesota Senate Veterans Affairs Subdivision on March 3 aims to reduce claim sharks in Minnesota.

"This bill modifies the veteran benefits disclosure statute to require VA accreditation for those who want to represent veterans on federal VA benefit matters and also makes it possible for veterans to recoup damages through legal means, if they are taken advantage of by bad actors," said Minnesota American Legion Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo.

Janigo, a member of Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172, is a Hennepin County veteran service officer, accredited herself through five organizations including The American Legion.

"What bothers me, chair and members, are vulnerable veterans sign up to pay these fees," she said.

The hearing for SF1894, authored by Sen. Aric Putnam of St. Cloud, had supportive testimony from Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans

Continued on Page 8

Oratorical Contest champion repeats

ANOKA — For the second year in a row, Elijah Cox of Walker won the Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest Finals. They were held Saturday, Feb. 22.

He was the 6th District champion. He is sponsored by Walker Post 134. His parents are Chris and Courtney Cox.

"Good luck, Elijah, as you represent the Department of Minnesota at the National Oratorical Contest in May for the second time," said

Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest Chairwoman Jamie Brooks. "This year, the top two contestants were so close. We had to do a tiebreaker."

The National Oratorical Contest will be May 16-18 at Hillsdale College in Michigan. Quarterfinals and semifinals are scheduled for May 17, with the finals May 18.

Placing second in Minnesota was Alyson Johnson of Willmar Post 167. She
Continued on Page 6



From left are Minnesota Oratorical Contest champion Elijah Cox of Walker Post 134, second-place finalist Alyson Johnson of Willmar Post 167, third-place finalist Matthew Watters of Stewartville Post 164 and fourth-place finalist Lisa Vickers of Minneapolis Post 1.

What's happening?

Date set for Veterans Day on the Hill

ST. PAUL — 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 2025. 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.

Find a flier and other details at mnlegion.org/veterans-day-on-the-hill/.

printed in the Legionnaire, usually in the June or July issues.

Registration is open for Legionville

BRAINERD — Make the most out of summer with programs that enable kids to get outdoors, meet new friends and learn lifelong skills.

Campers may be sponsored and tuition paid by an American Legion post, school, other community organization, or an adult such as a parent or guardian.

The registration fee is \$500 per student and is paid by the sponsor.

"Does your post send campers to Legionville?" said Minnesota NECman Bill Barbknecht. "If they don't, they should. This is part and parcel of what we do."

Often posts mail the check to Department HQ at 20 W. 12th St Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155, with the camper's name and contact info of the parents. Then HQ gives the parents a code for registration purposes as proof of payment.

Legionville is separate non-profit organization, and post gambling funds are permissible.

Visit legionville.org for further registration details. Questions? Email Comptroller Rachael Hill at rhill@mnlegion.org.

Session dates for 2025 are June 15-20, June 22-27, July 6-11, July 13-18, July 20-25, July 27-Aug. 1.

Legion Night at Target Field is June 25

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 June 20. Commander Carl Moon will toss out the first pitch, and Membership Director Carla Tappainen will raise the U.S. flag.

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
5 p.m., 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
218-335-3100

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

"The Minnesota Legion and the Minnesota Twins have a relationship that goes back generations now," Moon said. "We both support the national pastime and hope to see this tradition continue."

for \$6 per person. To sign up, call 507-421-0134 or 507-273-8972.

Sign up today

Fleet Farm invites any American Legion post's color guard, honor guard or bugler to share their stores to participate to their Memorial Day programs at their stores "Fleet Farm Salutes Taps Across America" and to join the local communities in a Moment of Remembrance. Contact person at Fleet Farm is: Megan Tatge at Megan@evo-communications.com.

Who is best at beanbag toss?

RUSHFORD — The American Legion Riders are hosting a beanbag tournament at Post 94 in Rushford from 11 a.m. to finish on Saturday, March 15.

Entry fee is \$20 per team of two. Lunch includes a pulled-pork sandwich, pickle and chips

It's fish fry season in the American Legion

NORTH ST. PAUL — Many posts within The American Legion all across the land will host fish fries during Lent.

American Legion Post 39 in North St. Paul let the Legionnaire know about its fish fry.

The post will host its annual fish fries on Friday evenings through Good Friday, April 18. Served from 5 to 8 p.m., the meal will include four pieces of deep-fried pollack or eight pieces of shrimp, with french fries, coleslaw and dinner roll. The cost is \$14 per person. The Friday night menu will be a roast beef hoagie with chips for \$11.

The dinners will be ordered and served in the bar. Orders to go will be available.

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Bowling tourn. set for spring

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

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

Visit mnlegion.org/bowling-tournament/.

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

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June 14-22, 2025

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- 8 nights accommodations
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- Guided tour of the historic seaside towns of Hyannis and Sandwich
- Visit Martha's Vineyard
- Eastham Windmill
- JFK Museum
- Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame

\$1,899.00 pp
Double Occupancy



Gems of the Midwest

June 25-28, 2025

Included in your tour:

- Accompanied by a 4 Seasons Tour Director
- Deluxe Motorcoach Transportation
- 6 Meals: 3 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners
- 3 nights accommodations
- Mississippi River Museum
- Captain's Dinner Cruise on the Celebration Belle
- Tour of Ulysses S. Grant Home
- Circa 21 Dinner Theater "Chicago"
- John Deere Wiman Home Tour
- Quad City Botanical Center
- Hot Glass Inc. demonstration
- Field of Dreams Movie Site
- Shopping and lunch in LeClaire

\$799.00 pp
Double Occupancy



National Parks

September 8-18, 2025

Included in your tour:

- Accompanied by a 4 Seasons Tour Director
- Deluxe Motorcoach Transportation
- 10 Nights accommodations
- 16 Meals: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 5 dinners
- Luggage handling (1 per person)
- Durango/Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad
- Admissions to: Badlands, Mount Rushmore, Painted Desert & Petrified Forest, Grand Canyon, Zion National Park and Bryce Canyon

\$2,699.00 pp
Double Occupancy



Smoky Mountains

September 26-October 2, 2025

Included in your tour:

- Accompanied by a 4 Seasons Tour Director
- Deluxe Motorcoach Transportation
- 7 nights accommodations
- 15 Meals: 7 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 6 dinners
- City Tour of Nashville, Music City USA
- Ryman Auditorium
- Grand Ole Opry
- Country Tonight Theater Show
- Patty Waszak Morning Variety Show
- Dolly Parton's Stampede
- Tour of Smoky Mountains National Park
- Tour and Tasting at Ole Smoky Moonshine
- Titanic Pigeon Forge Museum
- Array Variety Show

\$2,199.00 pp
Double Occupancy



Ark Encounter

October 20-25, 2025

Included in your tour:

- Accompanied by a 4 Seasons Tour Director
- Deluxe Motorcoach Transportation
- 5 Nights accommodations
- 11 Meals: 5 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 4 dinners
- Luggage handling (1 per person)
- Ark Encounter
- Creation Museum
- Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption

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Double Occupancy

- National Underground Railroad Freedom Center
- Patriot's Landing
- B&B Riverboat Dinner Cruise
- Circa 21 Dinner Theater "Come from Away"






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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

Be sure to hear the national commander speak



James A. LaCoursiere Jr.

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, 6th, 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. Some stops might be filled by the time you read this. (There was an article in the last issue, too.)

"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

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 Pine Island Post 184 La Crescent Post 595 (@ L.C. Area Event Center)	breakfast lunch social dinner	8:15 a.m. noon 5 p.m. 6 p.m.	952-240-7849 (Carla Tappainer) 507-356-8991 (Post) duluthace@yahoo.com (Ricardo Acevedo)
Wednesday March 26 Eyota Post 551 Faribault Post 43	breakfast social dinner	8:15 a.m. 5 p.m. 6 p.m.	507-545-2688 (Post) 507-384-2338 (Jill Manahan)
Thursday, March 27 Fridley Post 303 Buffalo Post 270 Paynesville Post 271	breakfast lunch social dinner	8:15 a.m. noon 5 p.m. 6 p.m.	612-325-2899 (Paul Orson) 763-682-2262 Press 2 (Post) 320-243-4982 (Post)
Friday, March 28 Granite Falls Post 69 Slayton Post 64 (@ 4H Building, Murray County Fairgrounds)	breakfast lunch	8:15 a.m. noon	320-564-2537 (Post) or 507-430-3160 (Steve Midthun) 605-366-3025 (Brad Pagel, text) or bppagel@gmail.com

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

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: March 3

Goal:
\$60,000

Thanks to Post 230 and to three individual donors, one of whom was the state commander for the VFW.

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ON-SITE DOCUMENT DESTRUCTION

Trips to D.C., St. Paul have been worth it

I've just returned from the 2025 Washington Conference where we had 18 Legion Family members attend. We met with our congressional representatives and presented American Legion National Legislative Priorities. My very special appreciation to Department Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo, for all of her hard work and coordination of all of our congressional visits.

I have also had the opportunity to accompany and testify with Kristy in St. Paul before the Minnesota House and Senate subcommittees on veterans affairs (they call these subcommittees "divisions") as chairman of the Commanders' Task Force and as commander of the American Legion, concerning our Minnesota Legislative Priorities.

Kristy provided me with a very well-prepared testimony. I know a lot of you have expressed concerns about the reported layoffs at the VA medical facilities caring for our Minnesota veterans.

I did send out a letter of explanation over Legionnaire.org, through an email to members for whom we have email addresses

Commander's Column

Carl Moon



and to local media, but for those of you who did not see it, here is a summary: VA Secretary Doug Collins spoke at the Washington Conference and assured everyone that the layoffs would not affect patient care and that hundreds of the employees that had been laid off were able to return due to a generous appeals process.

Just a reminder that National Commander James LaCoursiere Jr. will visit Minnesota March 23-29. Let's have a strong showing at the posts he visits.

Veterans on the Hill is scheduled for April 9 at 10 a.m. Both the DAV and the Zimmerman Legion are having buses available. Please contact them for their scheduled pick-ups.

Congratulations to Elijah Cox from Walker (in the 6th District) on winning the American Legion Department of Minnesota's Oratorical Contest that was held on Feb. 22. And

Congratulations to Jamie

Brooks for her continued chairmanship of this great Legion program.

Just a reminder that my Testimonial Dinner will be on Saturday, April 5 that the Northern Lights Casino Hotel. Reception will be at 5 p.m. with dinner at 6. Our guest speaker will be Past National Commander Jimmie Foster of Kansas and the emcee will be the one and only Pat Logan.

Please have your reservations into Bob Lundgren of Zimmerman Post 560 no later than March 21. Dress will be business casual, and I look forward to seeing you there.

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.



If you receive any suspicious electronic communications that look like they are coming from any leadership of The American Legion asking for you to send gift cards, make sure you look up the contact information for that individual on official websites, and call them directly. Report any suspicions of this type of fraud to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Sincerely Yours,

Frank Grittner
6th District Commander

Editor's note: I want to weigh in on this topic. Anyone can make an email account with anyone's name. I could make one with Carl Moon's name in 10 minutes. It's called spoofing. Commander Grittner is right to say look at the email address itself to see whether it is familiar. If it isn't delete it.

Also, department communications come from email addresses that end with mnlegion.org. If the email address doesn't have mnlegion.org, it is not from the Department of Minnesota.

Property tax relief would result in more local donations

In 2024, North St. Paul Post 39 paid \$40,000 in property taxes and our charitable contributions were \$46,925, achieving a 4.73 star rating.

A \$40,000 relief would allow us to donate additional money to our local food shelves, community events supporting children and youth, veterans' organizations, and allow us to make repairs to our building without having to worry about having enough money to pay our taxes. Our post, like many others, actively contributes to community welfare supporting

numerous programs.

We strongly urge all Minnesota American Legion posts to contact their legislative representatives in support of SF255, a bill that would grant veteran service organizations a zero-tax status. This legislation would allow us to redirect funds from property taxes directly into community services and veteran support programs.

By eliminating these tax obligations, we can maximize our ability to serve veterans and local communities more effectively.

Daniel Bronk
Adjutant
North St. Paul Post 39

Why won't Legionnaire print a story?

A belated Happy New Year to you and your family!

The purpose of my letter is to acquaint you with the thinking of a cadre of veterans who do not agree with your decision to not print a story about a successful Legionnaire, who gave of his body and mind to a war effort that almost cost him his life; and who now will be forever imperiled by his military wounds.

Your letter of denial communicates your thinking that certain feature stories that you published focused on former military members "as veterans and Legion members, not strictly about a nonprofit organization."

[This part of letter removed.]

We are not asking for a free lunch, but rather to be recognized as part of the solution for the continued support of Minnesota's world-class military personnel. Whether in public or private service, we in the

The story of Dave, jet fuel and faith

Chaplain's Corner

Kelley Ackerman



Dave fueled jets on an aircraft carrier for six years in the U.S. Navy. A few years out of service his skin would break out in a rash. His wife also noticed a few memory slips. After the kids moved onto their lives, dizzy episodes, anxiety and irritability started happening.

Dave put on his wife's lotions to relieve the rash discomfort. Nothing abated. He had a family to provide for, friends, and his motto to keep the "little problems little." His friends noticed the dizzy episodes. They bought him a water bottle and a cane, called him Dizzy Dave.

For years the quiet voice in his head whispered the issues were beyond normal wear and tear. He ignored as long as he could. He gave in and saw his county veteran service officer. The claim was for debilitating effects of jet fuel inhalation (thank you, service officers).

Dave's little problems grew into debilitating issues. Friends didn't know how to be his friend. His wife struggled wishing he sought help sooner. What do we do when someone we care about is afflicted?

There is not one of us who wants to have to rely on another. Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness can engulf. Becoming afflicted is not a life lesson in learning how to be vulnerable or how to be kind but it can teach us.

Religions interact with

affliction differently. Is it a normal part of living, a condition of sin, a biological manifestation? We have yet to agree on the answer.

What is consistent is our desire to bring relief. Dave's condition grew worse. Relationships evolved and many learned how a joke, story, presence or a meal-enriched their time together and that was enough. May we always intend to be with first, because love extends beyond producing results, it is much larger than that.

I encourage you to practice a faith. All religions (good, bad and lovely) have generations of history examining affliction, suffering, joy and the human purpose. Trusting can trip us up and choosing to be balm for another or to receive the gift of care can smooth out that rug. It was certainly a loss when Dave couldn't work anymore. It remained a valuable life he lived though as all learned to make room for affliction at the table.

Give thanks with me as we think of those who tend to us and those we tend to. For together in the sway of giving and receiving, love smooths out the wrinkles.

Upcoming Holy Days:
March 1-31, Islamic: Ramadan, Muslim month of fasting, prayer, reflection concludes with Eid al-Fitr.
March 5: Christian: Ash Wednesday, beginning of Lent, a season of fasting and prayer.
March 14, Hindu: Holi, Festival of colors, celebrating the arrival of spring.
March 14, Sikh: Hola Mohalla, festival of showcasing martial arts, poetry, and community.

March 20, Baha'i: Naw-Ruz-New Year, celebrated with joy and festivities.

April 10, Jain: Mahavir Jayanti, celebrates founder, Lord Mahavira's birth.

April 12, Jehovah's Witnesses: commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ.

April 18 & 20, Christian: Good Friday and Easter Sunday, celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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

Mail Call

Beware of any spoof emails claiming to be real messages

Nefarious forces are in action trying to deceive our veterans and most especially the officers in our department, district and posts.

In specific, these people are "spamming" our The American Legion leadership. More clearly, they are sending electronic messages (through email, text, etc.) that look like they are coming from our leadership and asking for funds to be sent via gift cards, etc.

Most often the emails say something like "I need your help with ..." or "I'm in meetings all day, and I need your assistance ..." or "Did you receive my previous email?", or something along those lines.

Then they describe a situation and ask the person getting the message to get gift cards for a certain amount and send them the numbers. In one recent incident the person that got the email actually went and got the gift cards and sent the information out.

The 6th District leadership is advising the following: DO NOT ever send any money in any form unless you have spoken directly to the individual asking for the funds. This means, before you send any money, in any form, pick up the phone and speak to the person that is asking for the funds.

Don't just look at the name. Double check the email address that is sending the request. If it is not something you recognize, DO NOT send any money.

I will NEVER send an email asking you to get gift cards for me. NONE of the 6th District leadership, when acting in their official capacity, will ask for gift cards to be sent to them.

veteran community are proud, patriotic, and participatory; and we deserve to avail ourselves of any and all possible support options. We have served and sacrificed in support of peace, progress, and prosperity.

A great newspaper serves the lives of all those who read it. Be a living testament to great journalism and those who read it.

Please hear our voices, and reconsider your editorial policy as it relates to public vs. private military service support programs.

Peter Bartling
Wayzata Post 118

Editor's note: First off, I appreciate feedback so I printed most of your letter, but I could not publish the entirety of your letter without revealing the story I had declined to write. I had to shorten your letter.

There are many, many nonprofits in the veterans community. As editor, I have a role to stand guard against too many of them seeking free publicity via the Legionnaire's content.

Sometimes, these nonprofits appear in these pages because of a commander's project, or as part of a veteran's military story, or even to highlight a event, such as the new museum being constructed outside Camp Ripley, a local fundraiser or MACV working hand in hand with a post to shelter vets. I don't just write about any new, unproven nonprofit out of the box, even if I really respect its board, staff and mission.

I even served on a longtime veteran-oriented nonprofit's board last year, and I didn't betray my role as editor for them. Its board never would have asked me for free publicity, either.

Plus, I already wrote your

veterans military story back in 2020. It's an amazing tale of survival. I respect and honor that.

I did offer another way to get into the Legionnaire, and that is through advertising. Nonprofits such as Project New Hope and

Veterans on the Lake continue to advertise in the Legionnaire because an overwhelming number of their clients say the ads work. Our rates are reasonable. Please consider going that route. Thank you.

The Minnesota Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

Official publication of
The American Legion
Department of Minnesota

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

To advertise: 651-424-4612 or use the email below
Subscription: \$20 for non-members for one year or \$35 for two years. Members receive the Legionnaire as part of their dues. The Minnesota Legionnaire delivers anywhere in the United States, its territories or its overseas military addresses. Under our postal status, we cannot mail to international addresses.

Address: The Minnesota Legionnaire, 20 W. 12th St., Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000

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

Fax: 651-291-1057

Email: tengstrom@mnlegion.org

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Taps



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Name of Deceased	Age	Date of Death	Branch	Era	Cont. Years	Post
Anderson, Donald G.	88	12/22/24	Marines	Korea	17	Winona Post 9
Anderson, Lester G.	90	2/15/25	Army	Korea	42	Albert Lea Post 56
Asche, Harlan A.	80	2/9/25	Army	Vietnam	3	Raymond Post 420
Axelsson, Wallace C. Sr.	91	1/10/25	Air Force	Korea	21	Cambridge Post 290
Barnum, Bruce J.	82	2/5/25	Coast Guard	Vietnam	36	Lake City Post 110
Baumler, Arlan W.	80	2/19/25	Army	Vietnam	47	Millville Valley Post 579
Becker, Eugene T.	83	1/30/25	Army	Vietnam	52	Lake City Post 110
Note: He joined the Army Reserve after high school and was called up for active duty during the Berlin Crisis, serving at Fork Polk, La.						
Becklin, John H.	98	2/13/25	Navy	WWII	61	Milaca Post 178
Note: He served in the Philippines 1945-47.						
Berger, Erling M.	94	6/10/24	Army	Korea	70	Alexandria Post 87
Boser, Ronald H.	83	2/13/25	Army	Vietnam	50	Hillman Post 602
Branstad, Harley D.	75	1/9/25	Army	Vietnam	54	St. James Post 33
Brutlag, Harold D.	89	1/28/25	Army	Korea	59	Maple Lake Post 131
Collins, Dewayne J. Sr.	75	1/24/25	Navy	Vietnam	41	Brainerd Post 255
Note: He served in Vietnam aboard the destroyer USS Knox. He was the 6th District commander in 2015-16. He was a district vice commander from 2020 to present. He was a past post commander and adjutant. He also is a past member of the Legionville Board of Directors.						
Cummings, Richard W.	89	1/23/25	Air Force	Cold	27	Austin Post 91
Cwikla, Jerome P.	84	12/13/24	Army	Vietnam	50	Middle River Post 444
Davis, Tracy J.	77	2/22/25	Navy	Vietnam	13	Albert Lea Post 56
Deitman, Ronald M.	70	2/20/24	Navy	Vietnam	6	Kimball Post 261
Note: He served aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Okinawa, a ship that was involved in operations in Vietnam and Southeast Asia.						
Deutz, William A.	81	2/5/25	Army	Vietnam	52	Marshall Post 113
Donnay, Jerry C.	73	2/13/25	Navy	Vietnam	33	Elk River Post 112
Edblad, Gary R.	85	2/22/25	Navy	Cold	49	Cambridge Post 290
Note: He served aboard the heavy cruiser USS Canberra when it hosted the ceremony for the selection of the Unknown Soldier of World War II in 1958.						
Eggen, John K.	92	12/23/24	Army	Korea	42	Elk River Post 112
Farka, Ward W.	98	6/2/24	Navy	WWII	4	Alexandria Post 87
Note: He was a signalman, serving in the Pacific and Korea, then finishing in Hawaii.						
Finley, Charles E.	73	1/31/25	Air Force	Vietnam	53	Pine Island Post 184
Gibbons, Gary B.	91	2/25/24	Army	Korea	30	Alexandria Post 87
Note: This veterinarian owned three practices in the Twin Cities. He also spent 18 months in Korea during the war.						
Glackler, Richard F.	80	8/1/24	Army	Vietnam	20	St. Peter Post 37
Godtland, Dean G.	92	10/18/24	Air Force	Korea	62	Gonvick Post 304
Note: He was a past post commander.						
Goodman, Norman W.	83	1/31/25	Army	Korea	8	Rochester Post 92
Groebner, Kenneth L.	82	2/7/25	Air Force	Vietnam	39	Springfield Post 257
Groskreutz, Robert A.	81	2/4/25	Army	Vietnam	29	Litchfield Post 104
Gulbraa, Kenneth L.	92	1/10/25	Navy	Korea	72	Elk River Post 112
Note: He made three trips to Korea during the war.						
Hadley, William G.	98	2/1/25	Navy	WWII	64	Elk River Post 112
Hagen, Richard L.	84	1/5/25	Air Force	Vietnam	36	Chanhassen Post 580
Hale, Reginald V.	93	2/23/24	Army	Korea	62	Alexandria Post 87
Hanson, Lyle O.	89	11/30/24	Army	Korea	40	Tyler Post 185
Hawker, Marvin D.	90	2/2/25	Army	Korea	58	Hutchinson Post 96
Hengel, Richard C.	78	2/19/25	Army	Vietnam	12	Winona Post 9
Hengel, Victor M. Jr.	96	1/24/25	Army	Korea	53	Waite Park Post 428
Hruza, Robert L.	78	1/23/25	Army	Vietnam	33	Northfield Post 84
Jensen, Larry D.	77	1/1/25	Army	Vietnam	13	Kimball Post 261
Joel, Gene O.	74	12/23/24	Army	Vietnam	6	Albert Lea Post 56
Johnson, Richard J.	91	1/30/25	Navy	K/Cold/VN	57	Spicer Post 545
Note: He worked with flight simulators and anti-submarine warfare trainers as an electronic mechanic, retiring in 1973. He served on the Post 545 Honor Guard.						
Kell, Thomas P.	77	1/2/25	Navy	Vietnam	2	Anoka Post 102
Note: He had a top secret clearance and served in Central America as a communications specialist and linguist.						
Ketter, George H.	98	2/28/24	Army	WWII	69	Alexandria Post 87
Note: He was stationed on Luzon in the Philippines as a cook.						
King, Kenneth A.	74	1/24/24	Army	Vietnam	47	Pine River Post 613
Kozak, William "Bo" III	81	12/23/24	Army	Korea	17	Minneapolis Hellenic Post 129
Larson, Louis E.	93	1/1/25	Army	Korea	13	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Note: He served in the infantry with the 5th Army.						
Larson, Paul L.	90	2/13/25	Navy	Korea	56	Mora Post 201
Note: He served aboard a replenishment oiler in the Atlantic and Mediterranean.						
Lastine, James C. "Red"	83	11/25/24	Army	Vietnam	10	Lyle Post 105
Leaf, Donald W.	90	1/27/25	Army	Korea	45	Cambridge Post 290
Liptrap, Victor M.	99	1/11/25	Army	WWII	23	Bloomington Viking Post 493
Note: He enlisted at age 17. He became a paratrooper in the 11th Airborne Division, known as "The Angels," and served in battles of Leyte, Manila and Luzon. He was present on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay for signing of peace agreement.						
Macken, Gerald E.	85	2/5/25	Army	Vietnam	14	Rochester Post 92
Note: "Jerry" was on the University of Minnesota national champions football team in 1960 and played in the Rose Bowl. He also played football for the Army's 3rd Infantry Division.						
Maroo, Paul A.	74	2/15/25	Navy	VN/Leb-Gr	36	Dodge Center Post 384
Note: He was post commander in 1992-93, served in several other officer and staff roles and on the honor guard. He retired from a 20-year military career in November 1989. He served on surface ships and submarines as a radioman. He retired for a second time in June 2013 from the Postal Service.						
McDonald, Harry K. "Bud"	91	1/19/25	Army	Korea	60	Hillman Post 602
Note: He served as a field radio operator and was stationed near Munich, Germany.						
Melcher, James A.	85	1/14/25	Army	Korea	55	Deer Creek Post 283
Michaels, Lou	81	2/5/25	Navy	Vietnam	12	St. Paul 3M Post 599
Note: He was current state historian for the SAL Detachment of Minnesota and a past American Legion 4th District historian. He was known as "The Photo Guy" and frequently took photos at Legion events. He was past state commander for the Jewish War Veterans and CTF vice chairman.						
Miller, Gerald "Bruce"	88	1/16/25	Navy	Cold	20	Glencoe Post 95
Note: He was a member of the Glencoe Military Honor Guard.						
More, Charles W.	84	1/23/25	Army	Vietnam	33	Le Center Post 108
Murphy, Larry J.	79	1/23/25	Marines	Vietnam	28	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He served in combat in the Vietnam War and received the Purple Heart.						
Murphy, William C.	75	2/17/25	Navy	Vietnam	33	Elk River Post 112
Nelson, John R.	78	2/4/25	Air Force	Vietnam	16	Chisholm Post 247
Note: He served in Wakkanai, Japan, and Alamogordo, N.M.						



Dewayne Collins



Lou Michaels

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All-Family Events Calendar

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, Taconite Post 301
June 7: 6th District Convention, Brainerd Post 255
June 7: 10th District Convention, Buffalo Post 270
June 7: 9th District Convention, E. Grand Forks Post 157
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 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 in N. Minn. 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, Bloomington
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: AL Baseball Central Plains Regional, Fargo

Taps Continued from Page 5

Nistler, Robert N.	90	2/1/25	Army	Korea	57	Albert Lea Post 56
Note: The Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Jr. Championship Trophy is named in his honor. A Glenville High School coach and teacher, Nistler was very involved in many local, regional and state roles of Legion Baseball, volunteering every year at state tournaments. He was inducted into the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame in 2014.						
O'Rourke, Michael J.	75	2/11/25	Air Force	Vietnam	3	Walker Post 134
Note: He was trained as a Korean linguist and served two tours in Korea listening to electronic communications. He was in a unit better known by its nickname: Skivvy 9.						
Olson, Kenneth G.	81	1/14/25	Army	WWII	2	Fairmont Post 36
Opdahl, Norman R.	77	12/18/24	Army	Vietnam	28	Middle River Post 444
Note: He served two tours of duty in Vietnam.						
Pederson, Harvey B.	74	2/18/25	Marines	Vietnam	7	Lowry Post 253
Perry, Ralph F.	85	1/16/25	Air Force	Cold	53	Pine River Post 613
Peterson, Mark R.	63	1/24/25	Air Force	Leb/Gren	6	Foley Post 298
Purvis, John R.	81	12/18/24	Army	Vietnam	14	St. Paul 3M Post 599
Quade, Howard P. "Skip" Jr.	89	1/23/25	Army	Cold	34	Hutchinson Post 96
Reul, Paul W.	82	1/22/25	Air Force	Vietnam	41	Austin Post 91
Riemer, William J.	75	1/18/25	unk.	Vietnam	35	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Robinson, Robert J.	87	1/22/25	Army	Vietnam	32	Slayton Post 64
Sacre, Douglas D.	85	2/19/25	Army	Korea	33	Walker Post 134
Note: He served in the Post 134 Honor Guard and held many officer positions. He was post commander 2001-02. He was instrumental in the remodel of the club.						
Sadlowsky, Ronald J.	86	1/1/25	Air Force	Cold	40	Waite Park Post 428
Note: He was stationed at Wurtsmith AFB, Mich.						
Schackel, David H.	81	12/16/24	Army	Vietnam	57	Alexandria Post 87
Smith, Ralph T.	91	2/3/25	Army	Korea	40	Bemidji Post 14
Note: He served in the JAG Corps at the Pentagon.						
Snyder, Vernon L.	62	1/6/25	Marines	Leb/Gren	1	New York Mills Post 116
Stanley, Richard D.	80	12/1/24	Navy	Vietnam	2	Elk River Post 112
Stemmann, Duane E.	77	11/19/24	Army	Vietnam	25	Bellechester Post 598
Stock, Elmer H.	80	1/5/25	Navy	Vietnam	8	Millville Valley Post 579
Stoltz, Emil J.	91	2/6/24	Air Force	Korea	36	Alexandria Post 87
Telfer, E. John Jr.	80	12/23/24	Navy	Vietnam	15	Elk River Post 112
Note: He served as a fire control technician aboard the guided-missile frigate USS Dale.						
Thisius, Harold J.	88	12/8/24	Army	Korea	2	Wells Post 210
Thompson, Harold J.	98	4/28/24	Navy	WWII	66	Alexandria Post 87
Note: As a gunner on a PV-1 Ventura, he flew many combat missions and bombing runs.						
Thorn, Leland R.	unk.	1/17/25	Army	Korea	54	Round L. Post 461
Ubbens, Henry O.	89	2/3/25	Army	Cold	4	Lake City Post 110
Urban, Donald C.	97	12/12/24	Army	Korea	48	Raymond Post 420
Viessman, Donald W.	87	2/21/25	Navy	Vietnam	40	Worthington Post 5
Wahlin, A. Perry	88	2/6/24	Marines	Korea	39	Alexandria Post 87
Weisz, Jerome Q.	76	2/10/25	Army	Vietnam	54	Hillman Post 602
Note: He was stationed in Korea.						
Wengel, Vernon W.	95	2/13/25	Army	Korea	28	Deerwood Post 557
Note: He was a radio operator.						
Wenzel, Vernon L.	88	1/29/25	Army	Korea	10	Fulda Post 318
Wraa, Gerald H.	102	5/15/24	Navy	WWII	24	Clearbrook Post 256
Young, Robert E.	92	1/13/25	Army	Korea	69	Gaylord Post 433
Zahratka, Arnold J. "Buck"	99	1/9/25	Army	WWII	73	Montgomery Post 79
Note: He fought in the Battle of the Bulge with the 106th Infantry Division's last-uncaptured infantry regiment, the 424th. He ended up separated from his unit and was left alone in the Ardennes with no ammunition and few provisions. Still, he found his way back to his unit. He later was assigned to duties in northern France and Belgium, then sent back to the States. The Bronze Star recipient was featured in the April 2022 issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire (and on many TV stations) when the consul general of France in Chicago traveled to Montgomery to pin the French Legion of Honor upon his chest that spring (see photo).						
Zimmer, Ervin L.	91	1/26/25	Army	Korea	70	Echo Post 204
Note: He was drafted June 2, 1953. He was discharged May 2, 1955. He joined The American Legion July 1, 1955.						



Buck Zahratka

Department of Clarifications

The listing for Jeffrey A. Ohm, 78, of St. Louis Park Post 282 in the February 2025 issue was correct, but the editor would like to add that he also was past 10th District vice commander and a past chef de gare of 40&8 Voiture 45 in Minneapolis.

7 district champs competed in Anoka for the title

Continued from Page 1

was the champion for the 7th District. Matthew Watters of Stewartville Post 164 placed 3rd and was the champ for the 1st District. Lisa Vickers of Minneapolis Post 1 came in fourth and was champ for the 5th District.

There were seven contestants who won their districts and made it to state. The semifinal round was held in the morning and the final round in the afternoon, both at Anoka Post 102. Each year, only four make the finals.

At all levels of the American Legion Oratorical Contest, contestants give speeches about constitutional issues, and judges review their speaking performance.

The three semifinalists who didn't reach the finals were: 10th District champion Dan Nguyen of Bloomington Post 550, 2nd District champion Aidan Moller of Lake Crystal Post 294, 3rd District champion Titus Maart of Forest Lake Post 225.



From left are proud father Chris Cox, two-time state champion Elijah Cox, Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest Chairwoman Jamie Brooks and proud mother Courtney Cox.

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The Minnesota American Legion Family members who traveled to Washington met on Feb. 23 to go over plans for visiting with lawmakers from Minnesota. From left, in front, are Past Department Commander Paul Hassing, Chaplain Kelley Ackerman, Auxiliary Legislative Chairwoman Linda Kelly, 3rd District Membership Director Amy Larsen, Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo and Assistant Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo. In the back are Adjutant Mike Maxa, Alternate NECman Peggy Moon, Department Service Officer Ray Kane, NECman Bill Barbknecht, 3rd District Adjutant Linda Dvorak, National Vice Commander Jim Kellogg, NSFR Committee member Gary H. Olson, Commander Carl Moon and Past Department Commander Chuck Kruger. Many of them also serve on national committees and attended committee meetings.

Legionnaires gathered from across the country

Continued from Page 1

the One” mission and efforts to change the direction on military recruitment.

“We stand by efforts to make a better, cost-effective VA,” La-Coursiere said.

He cited the need to update many health records into the electronic age

“Billions of our taxpayer dollars have been spent on this,” he said. “The result has been delays, unsuccessful pilot programs, flawed infrastructure and continued inability of the Department of Defense and VA to make transition as seamless as possible for those leaving service and entering their lives as veterans.”

He called for improving the transition between Department of Defense health care and VA health care.

“Young people who have been told that military service will leave them broken or unsupported in the end will think twice about their propensity to serve at all. And that is a matter of national security,” LaCour-siere said. “We need to change the narrative. We can change the narrative.”

LaCoursiere called for parity in G.I. Bill benefits for National Guard service. He said American Legion service officers helped 1.2 million veterans in the past year.

A questioning period after his testimony devolved into political theater by members of both parties but especially the chairman, Rep. Michael Bost of Illinois, and the ranking member, Rep. Mark Takano of California. The debate mainly was over recent VA layoffs. A video of the full exchange is posted on the Department of Minnesota’s Facebook page.

There were 18 members of the American Legion Family who flew to D.C. They returned home to find many people asking The American Legion to make a statement. Commander Carl Moon sent one out that said political motivations only aim to divide veterans. He said the Legion will watch to ensure care for veterans remains strong, that there is smooth implementation of the PACT Act and that there will be no effort to privatize the VA.

Moon cited a VA news release that pointed out: “The VA continues to hire for 300,000 mission-critical positions exempt from the federal hiring freeze.”

Department Communications Director Tim Engstrom said it is wise to pick battles. “Our focus is the care of veterans. If we speak up against any and all staff cuts, then our voice is diminished should health care be impacted down the road.”

The Minnesota Legionnaires visited the offices of all eight congressional representatives and two senators, spelling out the 2025 legislative desires of The American Legion:

1. Accelerate military quality of life improvements.
2. Improve border security.
3. Advance the lethality of the Armed Forces.
4. Fund a robust State Department and foreign operations budget.
5. Protect Coast Guard pay and entitlements.
6. Provide a full accountability of our POW/MIA servicemembers.

The legislative efforts included calls for improving the quality of VA Compensation & Pension exams, improving access to community care, ending veteran homelessness, modernizing transition assistance and



Meeting with Rep. Pete Stauber’s aide Nicky Hazelbaker, behind the chair, were, from left, Ray Kane, Linda Dvorak, Amy Larsen and Jim Kellogg.



Kristy Janigo, Janet Lorenzo and Paul Hassing were excited to watch the national commander report to Congress.

“Be the One” veteran suicide prevention.

Most of the lawmakers had their aides meet with Legion members. Rep. Brad Finstad of southern Minnesota was the only one who sat down and met them in person. (To be clear, Rep. Betty McCollum did stand for a photo but had to leave for a vote.)

“We are spending more on debt service than our defense,” Finstad said. “At some point, something is going to suffer.”

Finstad stated concerns about America’s lack of shipbuilding capacity and about China’s coast guard acting like a navy that is prepared to fight.

He wanted to improve recruitment to the military by ensuring America provides its veterans a good life.

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He wanted to improve recruitment to the military by ensuring America provides its veterans a good life.



Meeting with Rep. Angie Craig’s aid Meghan Mullan, center, were, from left, Amy Larsen, Linda Dvorak, Paul Hassing and Ray Kane.



Meeting with Rep. Brad Finstad, third from left, were, from left, Jim Kellogg, Chuck Kruger, Tom Schottenbauer, Kelly Ackerman, Ray Kane and Gary H. Olson.



Meeting with Sen. Tina Smith’s aide Maggie Blomgren, second from left, were, from left, Jim Kellogg, Kristy Janigo, Janet Lorenzo, Kelly Ackerman and Ray Kane.



Standing for a photo with Rep. Betty McCollum, second from right, are Janet Lorenzo, Kristy Janigo and Legionnaire Editor Tim Engstrom. McCollum had to depart for a vote, and the aide scheduled to meet the Legion group that day was out sick. Janigo left behind materials.



Meeting with Rep. Tom Emmer’s aide Luke Sandlin, center, were, from left, Peggy Moon, Carl Moon, Kristy Janigo, Janet Lorenzo and Linda Kelly. There were meetings with aides with Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Rep. Kelly Morrison, Rep., Rep. Michelle Fischbach and Rep. Ilhan Omar, too.



Standing with National Vice Commander Jim Kellogg, left, and Department Commander Carl Moon, center, are ANAVICUS inductees from Minnesota Janet Lorenzo, Tim Engstrom and Ray Kane. ANAVICUS stands for Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada United States. It promotes goodwill between the two countries.



The Minnesota American Legion donated \$6,735 to the campaign of Dan Wiley, third from right, of Kansas. Wiley is the leading candidate for American Legion national commander. This was part of a large group photo with the same cast of characters seen in the image at the top of this page. The National American Legion is broken down into five regions, and Wiley is projected to be the first national commander from the same region as Minnesota since Michael Helm of Nebraska in 2014.

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Why do veteran nonprofits get taxed differently from other nonprofits?

Continued from Page 1

using the site for commercial enterprise, except for meetings and as an educational tool for the community,” he told the lawmakers. “Currently, we charge no fees to use the meeting room.”

Joining him were American Legion Department Commander Carl Moon and VFW Department Commander David Staehlin. State Rep. Peggy Bennett of Albert Lea is the chief sponsor.

Moon pointed out how many posts have closed and the community suffered from the loss of their fundraising efforts for other nonprofits. He noted how many tax assessors have confusion over tax laws, something discussed for decades at veteran get-togethers.

“A zero-tax measure would clear up much of the confusion county assessors across our 87 Minnesota counties have regarding posts’ taxes. This drives workload and inefficiencies that are inevitably covered by taxpayers,” Moon said.

People often assume posts are just bars and restaurants or places to gamble, he said.

“We prop up small, local nonprofits providing important community services including youth sports, addressing food insecurity and homelessness, and funding public safety equipment for our cities, such as fire trucks. These are important gaps filled that federal, state, and local government cannot address.”

He added that the American Legion has 531 posts, and 261 of them have buildings. He said Stillwater, Marshall, Northfield, Waite Park, Coon Rapids and others, especially in the metro, have had to sell their buildings to survive in recent years.

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

Staehlin went through the various costs posts are facing: payroll taxes, insurance costs,



Korean War veteran Walt Olen, 93, stands next to a 48-star American flag with gold stars. The flag had draped his uncle’s casket, a soldier killed in the Battle of the Bulge. The display is inside Post 201. In the foreground is Olen’s Navy uniform.

building upkeep. He said these places have been generous with their communities and are 100 years old. He said in gambling alone VFW posts gave \$1.6 million last year. That’s not counting bake sales and other fundraisers happening at the posts.

The banquet spaces often are free for local nonprofits to use, and when they do charge, such as for wedding receptions, they cost less than many other options. It is a service for people celebrating key moments in life but without the deep pockets often needed, he said.

Many Legion and VFW members, when they interact with veterans from other states, find that posts don’t pay property taxes in the other states.

The committee voted to refer the bill to the House Taxes Committee. It has bipartisan support.

Post homes in Minnesota are supposed to be taxed at 1 percent through an annual filing process. However, before 2017, it was at 30 percent, so some assessors still think it is at the old level. Further, some assessors, like in Kanabec County, think the 1 percent is “1 percent reduction” instead of actually 1 percent.

There are many places where assessors tax Legion and VFW

posts at 100 percent and make no effort to allow them to reach 30 or 1 percent.

“Despite that reduction in property taxes, Legions and VFWs are struggling to keep their doors open,” Bennett said.

The post home in Mora is like a local military and veterans museum. Right next to it is the Kanabec County Veterans Memorial, complete with a Huey helicopter that actually flew as an air ambulance in Vietnam.

Groundbreaking began in 2023, with completion in 2024. The post raised \$265,000 via donations, fundraisers and assistance from the Lions Club and Federated Co-op. A married couple donated the land.

Skramstad was mayor at the time and had been seeking a site for a memorial considering the city was out of park space for one.

Among the displays is a U.S. flag spangled with 48 gold stars that Walt Olen’s family received after the uncle’s death. Staff Sgt. Floyd Snare was wounded three times in Belgium in World War II until he died of wounds sustained in the Battle of the Bulge.

Another display shows pages from the Minneapolis Tribune that lists every Minnesotan killed in World War II — by



Mora Post 201 has offices, a meeting room and room displaying military and veteran artifacts and memorabilia. The build serves no commercial purpose, yet Kanabec County taxes it like one. The county assessor did not return the Legionnaire’s phone call seeking answers.



The Kanebec County Veterans Memorial in Mora was dedicated last summer and was joint project of Mora Post 201 and Ogilvie Post 640. It is on land donated to Post 201. The memorial does contain a Christian cross. Courts have determined, time and again, that religious speech is allowed in veterans memorials on public or private land. Faith is what got many veterans through harrowing experiences.

county. An Ogilvie postmaster had saved it.

There are weapons of war, like a Russian M44 carbine with bayonet, a 1951 Russian SKS assault rifle and an 1854 Austrian Lorenze Musket bayonet.

It has a bronze statue Post 201 commissioned called “Silent Battle” The artist is from Colorado, and the Gulf War veteran of the 1st Infantry Division who posed for it suffered from severe PTSD. Sadly, Brian Lee Zimmermann, recipient of three

Bronze Stars, succumbed to his demons in 2021.

The Legionnaire attempted to reach Kanabec County Assessor Tina Diedrich-Von Eschen for this story.

To donate to Mora Post 201, send a check to American Legion Post 201, P.O. Box 44, Mora, MN 55051.

Because Post 201 does not have a gambling license, it is lawful for posts with gambling to donate to Post 201 for purposes of its mission, such as its

memorial or military displays, not the property tax burden.

Editor’s note: The Legionnaire has checked on this subject with the Gambling Control Board staff many times. It’s a common misnomer that “a Legion can’t donate to a Legion.”

In reality, they mean a gambling-licensed Legion can’t give to a gambling-licensed Legion. Mora Post 201 is not licensed for gambling and, thus, can receive donations.



On March 3, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Legislative Director Jon Kelly, Rep. Aric Putnam and MDVA Veterans Service Director Ron Quade speak before the Senate Veterans Affairs Division, a subcommittee of the Ag Committee. American Legion Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo also testified that day on SF1894.

Continued from Page 1

Service Director Ron Quade and Legislative Director Jon Kelly. The bill also is supported by the Minnesota Commanders’ Task Force.

Quade told how a northern Minnesota veteran he dealt with felt overwhelmed by the claims process. He ended up with an unaccredited organization that told them he could get his claim and back payment approved if he signed an agreement to pay.

They made him do most of the work. The claim was denied. The organization invoiced him nevertheless. He tried to get them to leave him alone but eventually paid them to avoid harming his credit score.

Opposition groups made their concerns known.

First, readers must understand there are four kinds of people who can handle a veteran’s claim legally: 1. A service officer accredited through

Will claims parties work out a compromise?

a veteran service organization (the most common kind, as found in any county veteran service office or the federal building at Fort Snelling, and it is always free of charge). 2. A VA-accredited service officer (who might charge a fee for services) 3. A VA-accredited attorney (who also charges fees) and 4. the veteran on his or her own behalf.

Typically, claim sharks will skirt existing laws by saying they were advising the veteran who was acting as Option 4. SF1894 seeks to end that.

People representing paid VA-accredited service officers and attorneys (Options 3 and 4) testified that the bill, in its effort to root out unaccredited claim sharks, puts a chilling effect on options for Minnesota veterans who desire the help that paid professionals may offer them, should the free representation fail them.

“It’s a lifeline for veterans who can’t afford to wait,” said



Zach Duckworth

Ashleigh Barry of the National Association for Veterans Rights.

VA-accredited attorney Brian Lewis of Woodbury said the bill has the state stepping on a federal matter and could put a lot of attorneys who help veterans out of business. Under current Minnesota laws, many lawyers won’t

help veterans with their claims, he said. He described a case where he worked for six years, and the veteran got \$100,000, and Lewis received 20 percent. If the claim was denied, he gets nothing.

“This bill is not using a scalpel. It’s using a nuke,” he said. Attorney Ben Krause said there already are laws on the books that the state attorney general can enforce. The unauthorized practice of law in Minnesota has been illegal, he said, since 1931.

He said VA-accredited service officers and attorneys “love what MDVA and CVSOs do.”

He said this bill “gets into preemption problems and First Amendment problems.”

(Pre-emption refers to the federal government having higher authority over state governments.)

Testimony was followed by vibrant debate among senators, with Sen. Zach Duckworth of Lakeville leading off. He said the bill does a disservice to veterans by preventing legal options. An infantry officer himself, he called for keeping the bill within that committee for review instead of voting on it.

Sen. Heather Gustafson of Vadnais Heights called for a vote, arguing the bill is clean. She said she is shocked by stories of fraudsters bilking veterans out of money.

Putnam said his bill isn’t aiming to put anyone out of business, but it makes sure veterans “have a recourse in case things go south.”

The bill prevailed 5-4. Its next



Heather Gustafson

stop was the full committee. There is no full veterans committee, so the “division” is a subcommittee of the Senate Agriculture Committee this session.

The Ag Committee was to meet Friday, March 7 on it, but Putnam moved it back to give time for both sides to review the language and find bipartisan support.

After that stop, it likely heads to the Senate Judicial Committee.

SF1894 adds to existing state law where paid claims officers and attorneys must inform veterans they may receive free services from county veteran service officers. The new language requires VA accreditation, prohibits guarantees, removes an ineffective \$1,000 civil penalty and replaces it with punishment under existing fraud, solicitation and deception statutes — in other words, allowing lawsuits to be filed against claim sharks.



Minnesota American Legion Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo testifies on the sports betting bill on Feb. 13. Beside her is chief author Matt Klein of Mendota Heights. The bill proposes a rebate for charities that is calculated on the success of sports gambling revenue. Some say the rebates could provide greater funds than tax cuts. Others worry that rebates are easier to undo than tax cuts. The Legion and ACM are backing the sports betting bill, whether it provides rebates or tax cuts.

Charitable gambling mentioned in 2 bills at Legislature: sports betting and undoing the 2023 etab changes

ST. PAUL — New e-pulltab requirements went into effect on Jan. 1, 2025. In January, revenue from e-tabs were down 18 percent from December, according to Gambling Control Board figures.

February was down another 5 percent compared to January, similar figures say.

Statewide figures comparing January 2025 e-tabs to January 2024 showed a decrease of about 14 percent in sales.

Minnesota American Legion Communications Director Tim Engstrom testified before the House Veterans Affairs Division on Feb. 20 on a bill that would restore free plays and bonus games to e-pulltabs.

They were removed in 2023 in the darkness of the waning days of the session even though the open-all button had been the focus of the committee process.

“Let me remind you courts have ruled several times that these features are not breaking the 2012 agreements with casinos. Etabs don’t have jackpots. They don’t have unlimited bets. Harming etabs is not going to result in greater revenue at casinos,” Engstrom said. “People will continue to go to their favorite bars. These changes, all they do is result in less revenue for charities. If I can’t help a veteran service officer house a homeless veteran, it’s because of these etab changes.”

The bill, HF733, passed the committee and was sent to the Commerce Committee. Its chief author is Rep. Bjorn Olson of Fairmont.

Allied Charities of Minnesota Director Rachel Jenner also testified in support. She and American Legion Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo on Feb. 13 before the Senate Commerce Committee testified in support of the sports betting bill, which includes rebates for charitable gambling organizations.

It is SF757, and its chief author is Matt Klein of Mendota Heights. That committee vote ended in a tie, leaving the legislation in limbo.

Senate File 757 allows exclusive online sports betting through the 11 tribes within Minnesota. Sen. Matt Klein of

Mendota Heights is the chief author.

The bill faced opposition from the Catholic Church and the Minnesota Family Council. The debate mainly was centered on good and bad that comes from gambling, along with discussions of self-determination.

The point Klein made is that sports gambling already happens via offshore websites, and a majority of Minnesotans say they want a sports betting bill.

A KSTP poll in May of 1,853 registered voters said 55 percent favor legal sports betting and 21 percent said it should remain illegal. The remainder was “not sure.”

Minnesota remains one of 11 states without it. Missouri has legalized it, but it isn’t operational yet. Minnesota is surrounded by states that allow it either at sites only (such as casinos) or through online sportsbooks.

What do other states tax?

Minnesota taxes charitable gambling starting at 8.5 percent but as months go by it soon climbs to its top rate of 33.5 percent of cumulative net receipts (this means money after prizes are awarded; some states call it adjusted gross revenue). Some cities even charge an additional 10 percent.

People who hear about other states are surprised at how astronomically high Minnesota is. Other states typically only tax enough to cover the burden of a regulatory agency.

North Dakota is around 1 percent. It changes depending on how much it costs to regulate it.

Kentucky is a tiny fraction of 1 percent. New Hampshire is 7 percent on bingo and \$15 for every \$3,500 made in paper pulltabs, which works out to less than a half percent.

Mississippi charges 1 percent for bingo and 2.4 percent on e-pulltabs. Virginia has various rates for different kinds of charitable gambling, but most are at three-quarters of 1 percent.

In Ohio, the rules change from city to city or county to county, but after looking at city ordinances, it appears the local jurisdictions rarely tax the

revenue from charitable gambling at all, probably because cities, counties, schools and local nonprofits benefit from the donations.

In Washington state, the state calculates each group’s gambling receipts on various types of games and uses it to determine an annual licensing fee, up to a cap figure. Pulltabs are calculated at 1.515 percent, with a cap of \$16,000. Bingo is 0.488 percent, with a cap of \$17,600. Cities and counties may collect a tax on pulltabs of up to 10 percent and for bingo 5 percent. In Ellensburg, for example, the city charges 1 percent.

New York charges 3 percent on all forms of charitable gambling except pulltabs, where the rate is 5 percent. Alaska is at 3 percent and handles it all through distributors. Indiana only sets a rental rate but doesn’t tax charitable gambling.

Louisiana has a state fee of \$75 with state laws, but it is taxed and supervised at the city or parish level. Baton Rouge, for instance, taxes it at 1.5 percent to cover costs of supervision.

Pennsylvania is unusual. In 2013, the commonwealth passed a law to allow taverns — not charities — via distributors (likely via dispenser machines) to sell pulltabs and similar “small games of chance”

Opponents at the time said the new law would harm veterans clubs and civic associations that already had been selling them as a fundraiser since 1988. It passed, and now the Keystone State has two kinds of gambling licenses: tavern and club.

Basically, the tavern license is for-profit gambling. The club license is nonprofit. Taverns pay a tax of 60 percent with \$4,000 in licensing fees. Clubs only pay a small annual licensing fee of \$125. The club also may use up to 40 percent of the proceeds for any club expenses: paying the gambling manager, fixing the roof, installing new restrooms, etc., as long as the other 60 percent goes to public interests.

What about property taxes? Well, unlike in Minnesota, Pennsylvania doesn’t require veterans’ clubs to pay property taxes.

Chester Bird Post 523 to fly west to site of a former Red Lobster

GOLDEN VALLEY — Chester Bird American Legion Post 523 in Golden Valley announced on Jan. 31 the selling of its post home to Breck School.

The announcement comes after Post 523, last October, announced its intention to purchase the former Red Lobster building at 8900 Golden Valley Road, with plans to relocate its bar, restaurant and banquet operations there.

Post 523 Commander Craig Hartman said the move will raise the visibility of The American Legion in that community.

“This move is an investment in our legacy and our vision for the future,” said Post 523 Commander Craig Hartman. “We look forward to continuing

our mission of raising critical support for the local veterans community while maintaining a lasting and visible presence in Golden Valley.”

The Breck School, a private Episcopal school offering college-preparatory education from preschool to 12th grade, is adjacent to Post 523’s current property at 200 N. Lilac Drive. People could sit on the patio at the post and watch baseball games. The acquisition is part of the school’s “Future Focus” strategic plan.

“We are incredibly proud and honored to reach this milestone in shaping the future for both Breck and the Chester Bird Post 523,” said School Head Natalia R. Hernández. “Breck’s mission can only

be realized through strategic planning and collaboration, and this expansion reflects our commitment to creating a vibrant and student-focused campus.”

Terms of the transaction are confidential. The Chester Bird Relocation Committee and Breck’s Board of Trustees and Leadership were key in making the transaction possible. Both parties expressed gratitude toward the other in a news release today.

With the transaction now finalized, American Legion Post 523 will begin remodeling and updating its new facility, which is expected to open in September 2025. In the interim, the post will continue operations at its current location.



The National Commander’s Tour in April 2024 stopped at Post 523. The national commander at the time, Dan Seehafer of Wisconsin, approaches the podium after then-Department Commander Paul Hassing introduced him.

Endorsements

Richardson backed for sgt.-at-arms

Gary Richardson has been endorsed by his post, Mahtomedi/Willernie Post 507, to run for the office of sergeant-at-arms for the Department of Minnesota for 2025. He has been an American Legion member for 26 continuous years.

The positions he has held in the Legion are as follows:

- Post 507 sergeant-at-arms, 24 years (current)
- Post 507 commander, two years
- Post 507 adjutant, four years (current)
- Post 507 membership

director, 10 years (current)

- 3rd District commander

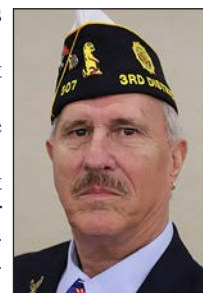
- 3rd District vice commander

- 3rd District membership director

- 3rd District sergeant-at-arms, eight-plus years (current)

- SAL Detachment of Minnesota membership director, two years (current)

He is a retired Air Force tech sergeant. He spent the first half of his career as a



Gary Richardson

radiologic technologist at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and the remainder until retirement as an electro-mechanical tech working on Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles at Minot AFB, N.D.

After retirement, he worked for the BNSF and Wisconsin Central railroads until landing another career and retiring (again) after 20 years with CenturyLink communications.



Albert Lea ALR Chapter 56 showed up Feb. 8 to honor the late Bob Nistler, an Army veteran of the Korean War era who was very dedicated to American Legion Baseball. He died Feb. 1. He is listed in “Taps” on Page 6. Many people connected to Legion Baseball were present, too.

Joe Bares/Jordan Post 3



The five American Legion national vice commanders stand for a photo at the International Ballroom (known for its large, pillarless construction) at the Washington Hilton. From left are Joseph Lysaght of Post 147 in James Island, S.C., Charles Robbins of Post 351 in Seaside Heights, N.J., Roger Mathison of Post 116 in Coon Valley, Wis., James Kellogg of Post 146 in Adams, Minn., and Gary Leach of Post 77 in Woodland, Calif.

Don't be afraid to take on an officer role within your post, district, dept.

Spring is in the air, which means Girls Fastpitch Softball and American Legion Baseball. Our own Minnesota Twins are at their spring training too, so let's start thinking along those lines for our youth. Get those teams registered.

I hope you have a Boys Stater picked out. Please send some children to learn at the Legionville School Safety Camp, also.

As always, "Be the One" to do buddy checks over this long cold stretch. Donna and I have an 85-year-old veteran neighbor we share food and call often. He so very much appreciates our checks on him. Go see those members and veterans, you have not seen in quite some time. Kindness goes a long way and is free.

Our membership should be at 90 percent now. The snowbirds will be returning soon, go see them, do not let them feel left out.

Has your Post planned a St. Patrick's Day event for your veterans and others? It brings a lot of foot traffic and whatever that may produce as far as memberships also.

Just around the corner is the American Legion 106th birthday March 15-17. We go back to 1919. Even without a post home,

National Report

Bill Barbknecht

how about a cake and coffee for all at a local community center or a church in your community?

Your post should start thinking about election of officers for the coming year. Maybe a time of change? Step up and take a leadership role. It's OK for a commander to ask a promising member to be the next commander. Avoid thinking no one can fill the shoes for any officer role. The American Legion is about mentorship and personal growth, too.

Past National Commander Paul Dillard spoke on the matter in 2022 during his tour of Minnesota. He said a post commander should serve no longer than three years.

A very good Department Executive Committee meeting was held at Chanhassen Post 580 on March 8.

The Washington Conference was held and attended by many Legionnaires. A big thank-you to Kristy Janigo for another outstanding job getting us appointments to see aides for our two senators and congressmen.

Contact your local senator

and representative to support Senate File 757 to reduce taxes on charitable gambling.

I thank all members from Minnesota who attended the Washington Conference. They are very dedicated veterans.

I ask you to please send a check to the Department Commander's Project to help our justice-involved veterans. See Page 3.

Donna and I look forward to seeing you at all the birthday dinners, and the upcoming district conventions. Again, please step up to be a leader. It builds character, competence, and commitment. The American Legion changes and saves lives.

Be the One.

If you have any questions, please call me at 218-770-6264.

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



Warm weather is around the corner

Hello, Legion Family!

What a wonderful week this has been with temperatures in the high 40s and low 50s. Spring is coming fast; I can only hope that the lack of snow so far this winter continues, and we have an early spring. I know most motorcycle riders cannot wait to get their bike out on the roads. In fact, my neighbor got his bike out last weekend.

The American Legion Riders Department Road Captain Ted Berg has started the planning of 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 Post Legion Family is interested in hosting the Riders this year, please contact myself or Ted Berg. We are seeking a place for the kickoff party and the ending party.

Please make plans to attend the Minnesota American Legion Riders Department Convention in Willmar on July 11. This year

we will elect a new MNALR director to a two-year term, as well as an assistant director to a one-year term, along with a secretary/treasurer to a one-year term.

The National Mission Ride (Legacy Ride) is being hosted by the Walker American Legion Riders this year and will take place on Aug. 16. We are looking forward to a fun time in Walker.

The MNALR Romp is being planned and will be Sept. 11-14. If you are interested in helping to plan this fun weekend, please contact myself or the MNALR Secretary Shawn Davis.

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 a constitution and a set of bylaws, please contact me. I can be reached at jodyhassing@gmail.com or 651-329-7197.

God bless and keep the rubber side down.

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



Legion Riders

Jody Hassing

Serendipity

Veteran tries to connect with distant relative's POW experience

By Wendell Affield
Bemidji Post 14

In 2019 I drove 3,300 miles and 72 years into the past when I connected with my paternal biological family. Thanks to DNA technology I suddenly I had five new brothers and a new sister whose unconditional love and acceptance have been amazing. Over the past five years they've shared history of our family with me. As a youth, I spent four years in the military, so when I learned that I had a distant relative, Andrew O. Grignon Jr. who was a Japanese prisoner of war (POW) during WWII, I had to learn more about him.

Andrew O. Grignon Jr. grew up on a farm in Wisconsin. I recently began searching for his surviving family members. A 1936 newspaper account documents an early act of Andrew's bravery: Winneconne, Wis.--(Special)—Russell Grignon, who lives two miles west of this village, had a narrow escape from death Sunday evening in the hunting shanty of Henry Sparks, near Land O' Lakes. Andrew Grignon, with his sons Andrew Jr. and Russell, stayed with Mr. Sparks at his lodge. Sunday evening, after returning from a hunt for deer, one of the men lighted a gasoline stove which exploded within a few minutes, filling the entire room with flames. Russell's clothing was ignited, and he called for help. His brother, Andrew Jr. threw him into the snow and rolled him over, and over, thereby saving Russell's life, but burning his hair and eyebrows. Neither was seriously hurt. The shanty was entirely destroyed....

Russell, the brother Andrew saved, lived a full life and named one of his children after the brother who saved him. As I continued my quest into Andrew's life, through findagrave.com, I learned about his horrifying POW experience on the infamous Japanese "Hell ships."

"Andrew Grignon was one of 1,622 Japanese Prisoners of War boarded onto the Oryoku Maru at Manila. The ship sailed on December 14, 1944, for



The author visits Manila American Cemetery in July 1966.

DPAA

Want to search for any POW/MIA?
Visit dpaa.mil.

Did you know The American Legion has fought tooth and nail to keep this federal agency in tact? It is the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

Subic Bay. After arriving there the same day, it was bombed by American planes while it was picking up Japanese personnel. As dusk came, the planes broke off the attack. The next day, the planes returned and resumed the attack. The Japanese abandoned ship. They then ordered the POWs to abandon ship during an air raid on the ship. When the American pilots saw the large number of men climbing from the ship's holds, they stopped their attack. As the POWs swam to shore, the POWs were shot at by Japanese soldiers with machine guns. The surviving POWs were herded onto tennis courts. Those who stated they were too sick to go on were taken into the mountains and beheaded at a cemetery. The remaining POWs were taken to San Fernando La Union and boarded onto a second ship, the Enoura Maru, which reached Takao, Formosa. While in harbor, on January 9, 1945, the ship was bombed by American planes resulting in the deaths of many POWs. They were buried in a mass grave on the island. The survivors were put on a third ship, the Brazil Maru. Those who died on this ship were thrown overboard before the

ship reached Japan on January 29, 1945. Only 403 of the POWs, who boarded the ship at Manila, survived the war."

Have you ever had a sense of coming full circle in life? The summer of 1966, during my first deployment to Vietnam, some shipmates and I had the opportunity to visit Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines.

Walking through shaded halls, I studied the 36,286 names honoring those killed in action (KIA), body not recovered, each memorialized on the Walls of the Missing. Stepping out of the hall, I gazed in awe across groomed vistas of white crosses honoring an additional 16,859 buried.

I remember asking myself, how is it that this many people died? I was 18 that spring, and it was the first national cemetery I had ever seen. Coming from a northern Minnesota isolated farm kid background, what I was looking at was beyond my worldview. Today I searched the Walls of the Missing and found my ancestor.

Walls of the Missing: This person was listed as "missing in action". GRIGNON, Andrew O, Second Lieutenant, 201st Philippine Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army, Service# 0-890037, Enlisted: Wisconsin, d. 9-Jan-1945, Walls of the Missing, World War II, Purple Heart

Today, I pause and reflect as I honor my distant relative's memory. I try to imagine the horror that he experienced. A generation later, after I was wounded in Vietnam, I received succor in a military hospital in Japan, from descendants of those whose countrymen murdered my ancestor.

There is time to register for Boys State

High school boys currently in their junior year are registering for the 2025 Boys State session at St. John's University June 8-14 at www.mnboysstate.org.

At that website, you and others interested can find more information about the week of developing leadership skills and learning about Minnesota government at the city/township, county and state levels.

Are you interested in being a counselor or visiting during the week? Contact Jennifer at jkelly@mnlegion.org.

Minn. Boys State

Neil Kruse

If you haven't a high school representative yet, reach out to past years' Boys Staters from your area to help you recruit for the upcoming week.

Saturday of Boys State is recognition day. Scholarships, team sport awards, test awards, and Boys Nation selections will be made known. Hugs and tears close out the productive week, as the young men travel back

to their hometowns.

We appreciate all you do to promote the program and support those attending!

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



Listening Post



Pat Schmidt/Post 455

Cold Spring Post 455 initiated the services of the Eden Valley Patriot Quilters to make its first presentations of 15 one-of-a-kind personalized quilts delivered free of charge to its members, many of whom are hospitalized, in nursing homes or in assisted living facilities. Pictured from top, left are Vicki Peschon, Deb Hesse, Past Commander Dave Johannes and Deb Mayer. Also receiving a quilt was Past Commander Ralph Johannes receiving his personalized quilt. The Patriot Quilters have sewn quilts for over 600 veteran recipients since their inception eight years ago. Post 455 has put in an order to purchase additional quilts for many more of its members in the near future.



World War II veteran Mervin "Butch" Jones celebrated his 100th birthday on Monday, Feb. 17, at the Woodstone Senior Living Center in New Ulm. Joining Jones were members of Cambria Legion Post 329 and dozens of his family and friends. Jones served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and was onboard his ship in Tokyo Bay when the Japanese Empire surrendered on Sept. 2, 1945. He joined Cambria Post 329 80 years ago and is one of the longest serving American Legion members in Minnesota.



After January's regular meeting, Clifford Larson Post 189 in Farmington had a special presentation from Becky and Denise from the Rosemount Chapter of Quilts of Valor. They presented Post 189 members Ray Holford and Terry Werner with quilts.



After six years of dedicated perseverance, members of the Montevideo American Legion Riders, the SAL and Legion Auxiliary completed construction of their impressive Veterans Memorial Park at the intersections of Minnesota Highway 7 and 17th Street in Montevideo. Dedication ceremonies were held on Veterans Day followed by a community luncheon at Post 59. The memorial represents the tireless efforts of the above mentioned three Legion families and the benevolent support of the Montevideo community. Additional landscaping and small parking area are slated for completion this spring. Paver engravings of individual veteran names and service info application forms are available at Post 59 or contact Everett H. Bain at ehbain@yahoo.com.



American Legion Woodbury Post 501 Commander Bob Dolan accepts the award for the Woodbury Nonprofit of the Year. From left are Pat Dolan of Auxiliary Unit 501, Post 501 member Ken Cartier, Woodbury Chamber of Commerce Board Chair Meggan Kerkenbush of Bridgeman's Ice Cream; Post 501 Commander Bob Dolan; Post 501 Vice Commander JoAnne Kramer and Woodbury Mayor Anne Burt.



Listening Post



On Feb. 2, Plainview Post 179 celebrated the 100th birthday of Leonard Wilde. Wilde was born on Feb. 4, 1925, and is an Army veteran of the Korean War. He has been a member of The American Legion for 71 years. Wilde was presented with a Certificate of Recognition by Department Commander Carl Moon. More than 300 people attended the open reception. Wilde's sash says, "100 Never Looked So Good!"



Woodbury Post 501 Commander Bob Dolan and Vice Commander JoAnne Kramer awards the Eagle Scout of the Year to Ryan Kuehn at the post's annual award banquet.



Norwood-Young America Auxiliary Unit 343 hosted a Valentine's Day party in the Community Room at Peace Villa on Feb. 3. Peace Villa senior residents enjoyed some sweet treats while socializing with members of Unit 343, while some simply stopped by to pick up a treat and just to say thanks and took the treats back to their apartments to enjoy later. Forty-four guests chose from a variety of six homemade cakes served with ice cream and candy. In the photo on the left, from left, are Janet Stolz, Bonnie Wigfield, LaVonne Kroells, Dottie Simmons, Mary Spille, Jeannette Bachmann, Diane Mackenthun and Christine Bachmann. Not pictured but present at the party is Judy Schindler. The unit meets on the first Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at Peace Villa and welcomes new members.



Bloomington Post 550 sent member Paul Hassing and his wife, Jody, to the Fort Snelling Joint Service Military Ball on Saturday, March 1, at the DoubleTree hotel on Normandale Blvd. in Bloomington. Paul, in back center, is a past Post 550 commander, and Jody, second from right, is president of Unit 550. Also appearing is Post 550 member Chris Schmid, right, commander of the Navy Reserve Center Minneapolis.



The Minneapolis VA participated in the National Salute to Veteran Patients on Feb. 13 and many American Legion Auxiliary members attended. ALA Secretary Christie Avant, left, and 5th District President Sandra Gibson, right, attended. At center is Minneapolis VA Director Pat Kelly, flanked by two nurses.



American Legion Auxiliary Department President Judy Ackerman signs the charter for the newest unit in Minnesota, Hurlbut-Ziemer Unit 476 in Coleraine in the 8th District. Post 476 is known as the post for Lawrence Lake Township. Coleraine is the next town up from Grand Rapids on U.S. Highway 169. It's a stone's throw from Bovey. Seated is Unit 476 President Briana Anderson. In the top photo are Ackerman with Charter Junior Members Gracie Dubey and Karlie Dubey.

District commanders

1st District Mark Maloney III



The essence of leadership within any organization lies in the unwavering commitment to the principles of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct. Nowhere is this more evident than in the esteemed ranks of the American Legion. Established in the aftermath of World War I, the American Legion has grown into a beacon of support for veterans, advocating for their rights and well-being.

4. Decision-making processes
5. Ethical conduct and integrity
6. Dedication to service
7. Professionalism and competence
8. Collaboration and teamwork
9. Responsiveness and accountability
10. Innovation and adaptability

At the heart of this venerable institution is the steadfast dedication of its officers to uphold the highest standards of integrity and responsibility. American Legion, a prestigious organization composed of wartime veterans, prides itself on upholding the highest standards of accountability and work ethics among its officers.

In an ever-changing world, innovation and adaptability are crucial work ethics for American Legion officers.

Individuals should adopt current ideas, technologies, and methods to improve the Legion's operations and services. This includes being open to change, seeking continuous improvement, and adapting to new challenges and opportunities.

These principles are essential to fostering trust, loyalty, and a sense of duty within the Legion's membership. This document explores the accountability of American Legion officers to their members and outlines the work ethics that guide their conduct.

By fostering a culture of innovation, officers can ensure that the Legion remains relevant and effective in fulfilling its mission.

I hope this answers questions about the officers you elect.

God bless the troops and God bless America.

1. Accountability to members
2. Transparency in operations
3. Financial responsibility

2nd District James Olson



Greetings from the 2nd District!

It's everyone's favorite time of year: Reports! Get those Consolidated Post Reports and program reports filled out and sent in as soon as possible. Post Data Reports and Officer Reports will be coming due in a few months as well.

Information regarding the 2nd District Convention will be coming out soon. The convention will be June 6-7 at Pipestone Post 6. When your post holds its annual elections, get your ducks in a row with who your delegates for the district and department convention will be. If your post is not holding annual elections, your post needs to get their ducks in a row. Period.

Elections are coming for posts and those officer reports are essential for keeping records updated for communication purposes. The past few years, the district officers have spent hours on the phone with post adjutants who would not turn in CPRs or officer reports. They only take a few minutes to fill out and send in. There is no reason why anyone from district should have to call a post to fill out a report for you.

I hope to see many Legionnaires at their post meetings as well as at upcoming district functions before my term as 2nd District commander is completed and the torch is passed to the next commander in June!

3rd District Joe Tappainer



Here we are cruising into mucky March. We missed the Sweetheart Rally, but we have the Appreciation Rally coming up on March 8. I am disappointed that more of the posts are not getting officers and volunteers together to do a revitalization of their posts.

the post membership report. I would divide up the list between my officers, and each officer would be responsible for calling each person on their list for a buddy check once a month. At the monthly executive meeting there will be a line item on the agenda to talk about how the buddy checks are going and how our people are doing.

All it takes is for the membership chairs to print out the lists of people who have not renewed their membership and the officers and volunteers to give them a call and ask what we can do to get them back into the Legion. Once those lists are exhausted then go to work calling the 1982's and 1982AD's.

Accountability is important! We must take steps to contact our fellow veterans on a regular basis or we are going to lose them. Show them that we care about them!

If I were to be a post commander next year, I would have the membership chair print out

Have a blessed Easter!

4th District Jon Haworth



Hello, everyone! The year has started off with a bang and we are busier than ever planning different things happening within the district and the community. We had an executive meeting at the beginning of the month at Arcade-Phalen to try and devise a plan to not close the post, as revenue has decreased. We have a plan and we would truly appreciate more support from members.

My theme for this year is going to be, "We're Getting it Done." We're doing some changes and we're not asking permission anymore. We're doing things differently because it needs to be done.

We had our first Legion Cruisers meeting on Feb. 9. Our next Legion Cruisers meeting will be on Sunday, March 9 at Arcade-Phalen Post 577 at 10 a.m. (after the Legionnaire comes out but before it reaches your mailbox). Slowly but surely this thing is coming together. Please tell all of your motorhead friends.

Once it warms up, I'm going to start organizing walks around

Lake Phalen, which will then turn into a food shelf ruck march around Lake Phalen, and one starting at Minnehaha Falls and ending at the VA as the VA has a food shelf. I did a ruck march last year with Kristy Janigo, Alex Fleming, James Hultgren, Matt Berens, Janet Lorenzo and others. We had a fantastic time and wanted to go for a longer distance at the end. It's always good to stay mobile and being active is what we used to do. So let's be active again.

The VA visitations have been going well, and we've been getting more members to show up. We will need a new volunteer to be the leader of the 4th District VA visitation group.

We lost one of our dear legionnaires, Lou Michaels, this month. Lou was an Army Reservist and a longtime photographer. I will always remember his quick wit and jokes.

I hope everyone has a wonderful month!

6th District Frank Grittner



Greetings from the BIG 6th District.

We should all be proud of the work we have done so far this year. Many of our posts are at or above the 90 percent goal and working hard to continue to bring in more memberships. Now that it looks like the really cold weather is behind us (at least we hope so), it is time to get out to visit some of those members we haven't seen for a while in person.

We all know there are people who wait to renew their membership until someone stops to visit them. There are those who say this is where the Department of Minnesota starts to fade. Let's not let them be right.

Spring is always full of activities for The American Legion. We have reports coming due (Children & Youth, Consolidated Post Report, Officers Report, etc.), and nominations for awards (Firefighter of the Year, Peace Officer of the Year, Servicemember of the Year, and

a whole lot more) are just an example.

We also nominate and elect our new post, squadron and chapter officers for the coming year. It is our duty to encourage, mentor, and support those that are looking to step into leadership roles.

This is also the time where submissions for youth events (Boys & Girls State, Legionville Safety Training, Baseball, etc.) are coming due. Don't let this opportunity pass by. I know we have some outstanding young people in our communities that would love to be a part of these events.

I hope to see many of you at the events and rallies that are coming up around the Department and in our BIG 6th District.

Until next time, stay safe, stay warm, and "Be the One" and "Together We Can" do wonderful things.

7th District Carl Wilson



Greetings from the 7th District:

This past month has been busy with a number of different things and the 7th District is going well. The applications for Boys State and Girls State are out and our posts are making their choices on who to send.

I believe that Legionville registration has opened for this coming year, and our Junior Shooting club will be participating in the first ever American Legion State shoot in Anoka on March 8. The 7th District had our Oratorical Contest, and we have a strong candidate that

I believe will do very good at the state level.

Unfortunately, as I write this I do not know if she won the state contest, but we should know by the time this article goes to print. Our district membership is holding strong, and we are making the goals set by national, but like everyone else this is our slow time of the year for membership renewals, but we are working hard to keep meeting our goals.

Thank you for all you do!



8th District

Dan Siats



From the Lakes & Pines Eighth District, greetings to all Legion members!

I'm helping out Commander Philip Bodle by writing this article for this issue.

Hopefully we're out of the cooler weather for this season. Spring is close at hand and our Legion posts are gearing up for the spring and summer activities and programs!

A huge thank-you to West Duluth Post 71 for doing a great job on hosting the 8th District Mid-Winter on Saturday, Jan. 25.

There are many uncertainties going on in Washington, D.C., and all veterans should be concerned about any potential and possible cutbacks at the Department of Veterans Affairs!

Sen. Tina Smith can be contacted at 202-224-5641 or 720 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 50510.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar at 202-224-3244 or 425 Dirksen Senate Building, Washington, DC 20510 Rep. Pete Stauber has a

Herman-town Office and can be contacted at 218-481-6396 or at 145 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 or 202-225-6211.

Veterans Day on the Hill in St Paul is April 9 this year. If you want to be part of helping push veterans issues forward please contact your state senator and state representative for your area!

Do buddy checks! Even a two-minute phone call once a month will let another Legion member know that someone is thinking about them. For many of our older members who don't have the means or ability to get out much in the winter they can use a call!

As per Our Legion Preamble states: "To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America! To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism!"



9th District

Steve NaSalle



Hello, Roaring 9th District American Legion Family!

Welcome to March 2025, which comes with spring right around the corner. Time for post committee updates and preparing for elections.

With that in mind, let's all stay ahead of our membership goals, which seem to be going well in the Roaring 9th, so keep up the great work.

In addition, this is a good time for planning future events, and fundraising opportunities. Remember, teamwork is still your best key to moving forward into the future, and success. In addition, please take this opportunity to review and update your post constitution and bylaws. Generally, nonprofits review and update bylaws every five years. Some bylaws require a different timespan. Remember, times are changing, and we need to

stay ahead of these changes.

Dates to remember:

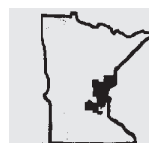
- The 9th District Convention is June 7, beginning at 9 a.m. at East Grand Forks Post 157.

- The 9th District Executive Board meeting is June 6, beginning at 7 p.m. at Post 157. I look forward to seeing you all there.

- Department Appreciation Rally is at Chanhassen Post 580 on March 8. (Before this issue arrived in mailboxes.)

Let's continue to be mindful of our members who are homebound or in assisted living facilities and remember our buddy checks.

"Without volunteers, we'd be a nation without a soul." — Rosalynn Carter
Respectfully in service.



10th District

Kristy Janigo



There's a lot going on in the Mighty 10th District in March!

The 10th District Commander's Trophy Competition is back this year and will be at Bill's Gun Shop in Robbinsdale, at noon March 15. Golden Valley Post 523 Commander Craig Hartman and Past 10th District Commander Matt Berens are already trash talking about who will win this year's competition.

Both are amazing shots, so let's see who comes out on top!

We have a V.A.S.A.V.E. training March 19 at the Wayzata Post 118. Come at 5:30 p.m. for socializing and light appetizers, and we will get started with the training at 6 p.m.

Check out our Facebook invite, <https://www.facebook.com/share/167GLfnp50/> for the link to RSVP, or just email me directly at kristy.janigo@gmail.com.

It is expected to last 90 minutes. We are supporting the na-

tional "Be the One" mission by training our members how to react to a suicidal crisis.

The 10th District American Legion Family Chili Cook-Off will be March 23 at the Hopkins Post 320 from noon to 3 p.m. The entry fee for competitors is \$10, and it will be \$15 for members of the public for tasting. This event is open to all members and guests!

Our American Legion Department of Minnesota has wrapped another successful Washington Conference trip. Thank you to everyone who traveled with me to D.C. I want to give a shout out to Past National Sergeant-at-Arms Tom Schottenbauer for traveling with me three years in a row!

In service.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 25 Vol. 6

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

Dept. HQ: Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155

651-224-7634

March 2025

Dept. is near a membership milestone!

Spring is right around the corner. Happy Birthday to the American Legion.

March is Community Service Month. What are your plans for your community? Please share your ideas with the district and department community service chairmen. We want to be able to toot your horn in the annual reports as to what you have done and will be doing.

Unfortunately, the weather forecast did not cooperate for the Sweetheart Rally. It's better to be safe and cancel than to have someone have an accident trying to get to or home from the rally. Membership is high on the priority list. Please help Membership Chairman Hope and the 10 district membership chairmen to help us reach the 85 percent goal by March 15. As of Feb. 12, Minnesota was at 81.64 percent.

We only need 875 members to attain this milestone. We can do it. Please send in your memberships right away. Bring your memberships to the Appreciation Rally on March 8 at Chanhassen Post 580. It would be fantastic if Membership Chairman Hope Wilson can

President's Message

Judy Ackerman

announce that we have achieved 85 percent.

This milestone will help the Department of Minnesota be recognized at the National Convention with the Department Merit Medallion Recognition. This is our biggest hurdle for this recognition. We are so close. Hope and I are counting on you to help us achieve this recognition.

Thank you to the American Legion Family and individuals for donations to the Department President's Project. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you also for the invitations to visit your units.

Mid-Winters are over, and I am hoping that you were able to attend your district's Mid-Winter and learn some new information.

I am sending a huge shout-out to the Montgomery Post 79 Legionnaires for their hospitality on Feb. 13. They were excellent hosts to their Auxiliary unit members. It was so fun to be

waited on and served by the Legionnaires. This is an annual event for them. Appetizers, beverages, meal, dessert and door prizes. It was a great time. Thank you so much.

Annual report time is approaching fast. I hope that your unit has been keeping track of what your unit has done this past year. Please send in your reports and pictures so we can share what the Department of Minnesota has done. We want to be able to show your good deeds on the big screen at Department Convention.

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."



NAT'L SAMSUNG SCHOLAR IS A GIRLS STATER!



From left are Minnesota American Legion Alternate NECman Peggy Moon, Department Commander Carl Moon, Minnesota Girls State Samsung Scholar Jessica Jensen and Auxiliary 2nd Vice President Linda Kelly during the American Legion Washington Conference. There, at the Washington Hilton, Jensen was among 10 scholars who were recognized at a dinner. The 10 Boys and Girls Staters each received \$10,000 scholarships from the the American Legion's Committee on Youth Education, which awards Samsung American Legion Scholarships. She is from Anoka and participated in Minnesota Girls State in 2024. The Samsung scholarship supports undergraduate studies (e.g., room and board, tuition and books), and each applicant is selected according to his or her involvement in school and community activities, academic record and financial need.

Minn. Girls State deadline is April 1

By Wanda Prescher
Girls State Chairman

American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State 2025 78th session is June 15-21, 2025, at Bethel University in Arden Hills.

We are looking forward to another exciting year! Units, please send in your reservations! The deadline is April 1.

The new Girls State video has created more interest for the program in our high schools. Units also received the video to be used for recruiting.

To view the video, go to

mnala.org Girls State. The American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Committee started working with Camp Wise starting with this session. All forms that are required for Girls State will be done electronically by the student and parent. The citizens' brief for the week will also only be available on their electronic devices.

It is time to embrace the electronic age if we expect to attract the younger generation, as well as save time in the department office and cost to the overall Girls State program going forward.

If any member knows of a current Junior student, please encourage them to apply for Girls State, there are units that want to send a citizen, but unfortunately are not able to recruit a student.

Your American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Committee has been working hard to implement these new changes to your Girls State program. Our committee and counselors are excited and looking forward to the upcoming 78th American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Girls State Session!



Department Leadership Chairman, Carol Kottom is pictured with four of the presenters at the Feb. 22 Leadership Workshop in Cold Spring. The next Leadership Workshop will be on Saturday, March 22, in New Ulm. From left are Ashley Kuperus, National Security Chairman Mary Kuperus, Leadership Chairman Carol Kottom, Finance Committee Chairman Norma Tramm and Hastings Veterans Home Representative Darlene Wondra.



Members listen to presenters during the Leadership Workshop held in Cold Spring.



Patti Gunderson pictured presenting to the members of the ALA during February's Leadership Workshop.

February had love for Minnesota veterans

By Robin Dorf
VA&R Chairman

February was full of LOVE for our veterans in the eight Minnesota Veterans Homes and four VA medical centers the Department of Minnesota supports.

Over 1,379 veterans received \$10 cash or a credit in their personal account from the Department of Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary and the Minnesota Veterans 4 Veterans Trust Fund.

I want to give a huge thank-you to the American Legion Family, units, posts, squadrons and V4V for helping to make the \$5 Bill Shower the \$10 Bill Shower!

Special request from overseas commissaries for coupons

By Mary Kuperus
Department National Security Chairman

Helpful tips and contact information on where to send the coupons:

1. Only manufacturer's coupons may be used. This can include coupons for food, non-food items like hygiene or cleaning supplies, baby items such as diapers and pet supplies. The commissary is unable to accept store coupons, restaurant coupons or internet coupons.

2. Cut out the coupons. Please do not send sheets of unclipped coupons.

3. Overseas commissaries are permitted to accept expired manufacturer coupons up to 6

months past the expiration date. Be sure to consider the time it will take to mail the coupons and for the commissary to sort.

4. Try and sort the coupons before mailing: separate the expired (or soon to expire) from the non-expired. Then separate and group together by type: Food, non-food, baby & children, and pets.

National Volunteer Week is around corner

By Becky Olson
Community Service Chairman

National Volunteer Week was established in 1974.

This year National Volunteer Week is April 20-26th. The theme this year is "Volunteers Make Waves."

Volunteer Week is to acknowledge the kindness, courage and strength of people who volunteer their time and efforts without expecting anything in return. As of April 2024 each volunteer has a value of \$33.49 per hour. No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burdens of another.

What is an impressive number of volunteer hours? The answer is between 50 and 200 hours. Among age groups the highest rates of volunteering were those between 65 years and older. With 7.8 percent women and 6.4 percent men volunteering. Every day can be a volunteer day.

Upcoming dates for volunteering are Memorial Day, Flag Day, Fourth of July and let's not forget our Gold Star Mothers.

Record all your volunteer hours. You will be surprised how fast they accumulate. The Red "V," which has become an international symbol for volunteering, was commissioned by Margaret Bell, former president of Volunteering Australia.



Seated at the table is President Judy Ackerman, Preston Veterans Home Representative Wanda Prescher, 1st District Honorary Jr. President Regan McElroy, Sharon Hamman, Wayne Hamman and 1st District Commander Mark Maloney.



Tom Fernlund/Post 428
At the American Legion Family at Fergus Falls Pheasant Dinner are Home Representative Doris Lafayette, Department President Judy Ackerman, 9th District President Donna Rae Jacobson, 9th District Commander Steve NaSalle, Department Vice Commander Veronica Fernlund and Pheasant Feed Chairman Glenn Mueller.

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 _____

Minnesota DAV is in Immediate Need for Additional Volunteer Drivers

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

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

Minneapolis: 612-467-2050

St. Cloud: 320-255-6365

www.dav.org/help-dav/volunteer/drive-a-van

Regions in high need of drivers include:
Blue Earth, Brown and Sibley Counties
St. Cloud Area
(Morrison, Mille Lacs, Kanabec & Wright Counties)



You do not need to be a Veteran or DAV member to volunteer. Drivers must be fully vaccinated.



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