



The Brain Sciences Center began with a \$1 million endowment from the Minnesota Legion and Legion Auxiliary, matched by the U of M, in 1991. From left are Dr. Lisa James, Dr. Apostolos Georgopoulos, Dr. Brian Engdahl and Dr. Peka Savayan. They met April 13 with the Minnesota American Legion Brain Sciences Foundation.

Brain researchers share findings

Women sought for aging research; anthrax shot has role in GW illness

MINNEAPOLIS — Women of all ages. You are wanted for a women's aging brain study at the University of Minnesota Brain Sciences Center. The center, though, is not at the U of M campus. It is at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. And it was created by The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary, dedicated in 1991, in conjunction with the university.

Dr. Lisa James heads the Women's Healthy Brain Project and Women Veterans & PTSD Study.

Want to donate?

Go to mnlegion.org, hover over "Donate." Or mail a check to Minnesota American Legion & Auxiliary Brain Sciences Foundation, 20 W. 12th St., Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155. It is its own 501c3 foundation; no fund number is needed. Gambling funds are allowed.

"In the last 15 years, death from heart disease has decreased by 11 percent. Death from cancer has decreased by 25 percent, and since 2000, death from Alzheimer's has increased by 145 percent," she said.

She said one in three senior citizens are dying from Alzheimer's or a related form of dementia.

James cited the Blue Zones, areas of the planet where people live long. There is less cancer, heart disease and virtually

Continued on Page 2

Measure calls for scaling back e-tabs

Nonprofits worried about reduction in gambling revenue

ST. PAUL — They said it wasn't going to happen. Then it happened.

A bill amendment to scale back e-pulltabs came out April 17. The same amendment took the long-sought-after tax cuts to charitable gambling and reduced them from reasonable to barely anything.

The author of the amendment was Rep. Aisha Gomez of Minneapolis, chairwoman of the House Tax Committee.

"Are there no high school sports teams, no food shelves, no nonprofits in her district?" asked Kristy Janigo, chairwoman of the Department Legislative Committee. "I have been to Lake Street. I know there are charitable

Continued on Page 12

Readiness reduced

Nat'l Cmdr. Troiola listens to concerns of Coast Guard

By Tim Engstrom

DULUTH — Concerns heard at Coast Guard Station Duluth match much of what American Legion National Commander Vincent J. "James" Troiola has heard at other military sites.

These include bad water, recruitment and retention issues, inability to get uniforms and even problems with health care.

"I was actually disgusted when I left the station this morning," Troiola said when he visited with Chisholm Post 247 members and their families that evening.

The station in Duluth is part of a wide area called Sector Sault Ste. Marie stretching from Lake of the Woods all the way to the middle of Lake Huron east of Alpena, Mich. It is part of the bigger Great Lakes district, headquartered in Cleveland. Duluth is among many Coast Guard stations along key shipping points.

Here are some of the issues Troiola heard from Master Chief Justin D. Olson:

- At one of the stations in the sector, enlisted coasties had to live with progressively undrinkable water over the course of 20 years, as their well and pipes aged. It got so bad, they would



Master Chief Justin Olson of Coast Guard Station Duluth gives National Commander Vincent J. "James" Troiola and the traveling party on the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota a tour of his station. Olson, who grew up in Litchfield, spoke freely of the challenges facing the Coast Guard. The American Legion talks with Congress about problems facing national defense.

pool money to purchase their own Culligan delivered water. For two years, leadership in the sector and district could not get a two-star admiral in Washington to sign off on funding a new well and water system. Finally, after much pushing, it got done.

- Most servicemembers get health and dental care for free on base, but servicemembers in remote locations

such as Coast Guard stations lack a nearby base. They must use a federal program called Prime Healthcare. It pays the same as Medicare, so most health providers won't take it. Sometimes, they must travel great distances to reach a provider, and that can be a national security issue when the mission is readiness.

- Basic Allowance for Housing, or

BAH, for lower enlisted is so low that some coasties in Duluth are forced to reside in the "scuzziest" neighborhoods, often with crime and drug problems. The allowance also fails to account for the housing market. Hawaii off-base housing costs a lot more than Duluth, but Duluth costs more than, say, Bayfield, Wis.

Continued on Page 8

Department of Minn. Executive Committee approves new logo

NEW PRAGUE — The American Legion Department of Minnesota Executive Committee approved a new departmental logo on April 15.

"We at the department have received a number of calls and emails from our young veterans who prefer this one," said Adjutant Mike Maxa, holding up an image of the new logo and describing its features. "Here I feel it represents Minnesota much more than just a blue outline."

The meeting took place at the New Prague Golf Club, which is across the street from

New Prague Post 45, where the Appreciation Rally was slated to take place later that day and the Auxiliary Junior Conference was electing new leaders.



Media & Communications Chairwoman Teresa Ash made the motion, which would have added the new logo to one approved at the Fall Conference in St. Cloud in October 2022. This idea was that, like many organizations, the Department of Minnesota could have two logos.

That other one features a blue outline of the state next to The American Legion brand mark. It had won a close vote at the DEC meeting in St. Cloud.

However, in New Prague, after discussion, DEC members felt the department ought

to have one logo. Amendments were made and Ash's new motion called for approval of a new departmental logo. The motion carried.

Maxa said the push for a new logo comes as national has its new brand mark and many other departments have created their own logo. It was time for Minnesota to have one.

In other action, the DEC:

- Heard a report from Lloyd Ricker, chairman of the Minnesota American Legion Foundation. He said Fund 85 — the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund — is now about

one-and-a-half years old and has provided \$182,000 in assistance for veterans in need. He said \$37,560 of that was in the first quarter of 2023.

"With the economy the way it is, this will be even more important than it has been," Ricker said.

Ricker listed a few examples of aid rendered: \$1,908 for a mortgage, \$4,081 in back rent, \$4,561 in back rent, \$743 car repair, \$4,044 overdue utility bills, \$1,675 overdue rent, \$3,356 repair of a water leak, \$569 chair purchase to ease

Continued on Page 10

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Anthrax shot traced to root of Gulf War illness

Continued from Page 1

no dementia. One-third of the people live past 90.

A few of these places are Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan; Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica. (Blue Zones explorer and author Dan Buettner happens to be a Minnesotan, too.)

The Brain Sciences Center began with a \$1 million endowment from the Minnesota American Legion and Auxiliary. The Women's Healthy Brain Project began in 2010, with an endowment from a group of Twin Cities women. About 300 women participate in the study, ages 24 to 104.

James said she welcomes more women, especially veterans, for research regarding women in general and women facing post-traumatic stress syndrome.

James said the goal of the research is to find how the brain changes over the lifespan for healthy functioning and to find why some brains are more resilient than others.

With the PTSD research, she is looking into why the majority of women do not develop significant mental health problems despite exposure to potentially traumatic events, while others do. The reason for the two trajectories is not well-understood.

Participants can come from all walks of life, whether they served or not.

To request to participate, send a letter with contact information to VA Medical Center, Brain Sciences Center, One Veterans Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55417,



Several members of the American Legion & Auxiliary Brain Sciences Foundation Board of Directors met with the U of M Brain Sciences Center at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center on April 13. Board Vice President Michael Schaffer is in front. Next to him is Department Commander Jennifer Havlick. Beside her is Assistant Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo. The rest, from left, are Board President Raymond Eiden, board members Anna Eells, Barbara Hopewell and John Weiss, along with commander's driver-for-the-day Mike Ash and Department Service Officer Ray Kane.

or call 612-467-1458.

To learn more, visit brain.umn.edu.

The American Legion Department of Minnesota Brain Sciences Foundation, chaired by Past Department Vice Commander Ray Eiden, made its first visit to the Brain Sciences Center since before the pandemic. The visit was on April 13.

James, Dr. Apostolos Georgopoulos and Dr. Brain Engdahl met with Legion and Auxiliary members.

In addition to the study on women's brains, there are six areas of research at the Brain Sciences Center:

- PTSD, with discoveries on how magnetoencephalography offers a possible biological test to diagnose and treat PTSD, as opposed to psychological evaluations, which cannot always distinguish it from depression or other mental illnesses.

- Gulf War illness, with a finding that Gulf War veterans show an accelerated brain atrophy compared to the normal population, as well as some other areas of health, such as respiration issues and bowel dysfunction.

Engdahl said the Brain Sciences Center made the connection between the military's anthrax shot, given to Midwest-bound servicemembers, and the illness.

"This science center cracked the code for Gulf War illness," said Engdahl. "Unfortunately, not enough people have the right genetic makeup to fight the anthrax vaccine."

Commander Jennifer Havlick asked, "Why don't all Gulf War veterans qualify for VA medical care?"

Engdahl replied that the findings never made it into VA policy.

Havlick said it would be a good resolution for The American Legion to pass and then push the VA for change, so that anyone who received the anthrax shot automatically qualifies.

Engdahl said the French military never received the anthrax vaccine, and they did not suffer Gulf War illness. Among American forces, 25 to 30 percent developed it.

- Addiction, with an emphasis at looking how to prevent addiction. One aspect is immunogenicity, meaning the ability of a substance to provoke an immune response, and antigenicity, the capacity of chemical structures to bind with cells in the body. The goal: Imagine doing a drug and it has no effect.

- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or ALS. This muscle-atrophy condition is best known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

- Alzheimer's disease.
- Dementia, with an emphasis on sorting out the various kinds of dementia and preventing them from being misdiagnosed as Alzheimer's.

On GW illness

About 250,000 Gulf War veterans suffer from GWI. Research has tied it to neurotoxic exposures, such as oil-well fires, bromide pills and destroyed ammo dumps.

The U of M researchers believe there's another cause. U.S. servicemembers were given as many as 20 vaccines to protect them from diseases ranging from cholera to yellow fever in case of biological weapons attacks during the 1991 invasion of Iraq. "If you were called up at that time, you were given every vaccine in the refrigerator, including some that were not FDA-approved," says Brian Engdahl, a researcher at U of M's Brain Sciences Center.

The doctors at the Brain Sciences Center believe their research shows the anthrax vaccine is an additional cause and is why some who didn't deploy suffer from GWI.

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Dr. Apostolos Georgopoulos shows American Legion and Auxiliary members the Brain Sciences Center's MEG, short for magnetoencephalography scanner.

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Endorsements

Randy Olson endorsed for department chaplain

Winnebago Post 82 and the 2nd District Executive Committee endorse Randy Olson for chaplain of The American Legion Department of Minnesota for the year 2023-24.

Olson is eligible for membership in The American Legion through his service in the Army National Guard from January 1977 to October 2007. He is a 29-year member of The American Legion.

At Post 82, he has served as commander, adjutant, 1st

vice commander, 2nd vice commander and director of the Chapter 82 Legion Riders. In the 2nd District, Olson served as commander in 2017-18, 1st vice commander 2016-17 and the positions of vice commander, membership director, board member, ALR director and several committee chairmanships. He also is a member of SAL Squadron 82.

Olson is a member of the 40&8 Voiture 281. He is involved at Lutheran Church

of Our Savior in Winnebago, serving as Sunday School teacher, deacon, usher and council member.

He has been a licensed electrician for more than four decades and has had other side work in trucking and timber purchasing. Olson is an ordained minister. He was instrumental in building



Randy Olson

a Department of Minnesota distribution network for personal protective equipment to reach places where veterans seek care in 2020 during the onset of the COVID pandemic.

Olson and his wife, Robin, have been married for more than 20 years. They have five children between them and six grandchildren.

Chuck Stone backed for dept. vice commander



Chuck Stone

Owatonna Post 77 and the 1st District proudly endorse Chuck Stone for vice commander for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

At the post level, Stone has held 2nd vice commander, 1st vice commander, commander and staff judge advocate. Stone has served as Steele County Council commander. At the district level, he has been on various committees and served as vice commander, adjutant and commander.

Stone was department director of the American Legion Riders for three years, having ridden in every Legacy Run the department has held.

Additionally, he is a dual member and has held numerous positions at the squadron, district and detachment level. Most notably, you will see Stone the first weekend each October working hard to ensure disabled veterans have an enjoyable deer hunt.

Stone is a metal fabricator in Owatonna. He earned his eligibility for The American Legion by serving 20 years active-duty in the Army. He worked in military communications from 1981 to 2000.

His son is serving with the Army in Germany. His girlfriend, Tanya Bettermann, is active in the Auxiliary. Bettermann's daughter serves with the Marines in Hawaii. Her son is active with the SAL, and Stone is active with the SAL.

Candidates for the department election shaping up

REDWOOD FALLS — Registration is under way for the 2023 Department Convention, hosted by Redwood Falls Post 38.

The convention takes place July 13-15 at Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel.

The Department Executive Committee meeting is at 7 p.m. July 12. Some committee meetings take place on July 12, too.

Attendees must make their own housing reservations with their hotel of choice. All delegates, alternates and guests must pay the \$15 registration fee. Use

the form below. After July 1, the fee becomes \$18.

Hotel rooms are \$120 plus tax per night. Use block "American Legion State Convention." Reservations are on a first-come-first-served basis.

Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel can be reached at 507-679-8000 or 800-946-2274. It is at 39375 County Highway 24, Morton.

"The convention is a time to conduct the business of The American Legion," said Department Commander Jennifer Havlick. "Thank you for

taking three days out of your busy lives to come to Redwood Falls. We hope to see new faces and familiar ones, too."

Candidates for office

Elections of officers take place at the convention, and a new slate of department officers will be announced on the final day of the convention.

Candidates announce their candidacies in the form of endorsements printed in The Minnesota Legionnaire. This way, the entire Minnesota American Legion membership can be aware of candidacies.

Keep in mind, there remains time to announce a candidacy. In fact, nominations even can come at the convention.

Here are the announced candidates for department officers and their home posts:

Commander

• Paul Hassing, Bloomington Post 550

Vice Commander (vote for five)

- Victor Gades, Morris Post 29
- Paul Edwards, Nisswa Post 627
- Chuck Stone, Owatonna Post 77

• (Other candidates plan to announce in June issue)

Chaplain

• Joe Tappainer, Apple Valley Post 1776

• Dean Knutson, Ashby Post 357

• Randy Olson, Winnebago Post 82

Historian

• Christopher Anderson, Hastings Post 47

Sergeant-at-arms

• Brad Pagel, Slayton Post 64

Here are the announced candidates for national officers from Minnesota and their home posts:

NECman

• Bill Barbknecht, Underwood Post 489

Alternate NECman

• Peggy Moon, Zimmerman Post 560

Vice Commander (vote for one)

• Michael Ash, St. Paul Christie-DeParcq Post 406

• James Kellogg, Adams Post 146

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— Official Form —

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

Please mail this form with your check to:

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Registration after July 1 will be \$18.

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Delegate _____ Alternate _____

Guest _____

Delegate at-Large (Auxiliary) _____

(Choose Past Dept. President or Dept. Exec. Cmte.)

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

Commander's statement on e-tabs

Editor's note: This call-to-action statement was sent out April 17 to all Minnesota American Legion members whose email is connected to their membership data. Contact Editor Tim Engstrom if you are not on the email list and would like to be.

Commander's Column

Jennifer Havlick



In fact, the post closed because they couldn't afford to repair the leaky roof. This is what they are voting on. There are people in power in our state who actually and truly hate the charities. It's astonishing.

Please contact your lawmakers. Tell your state representatives and senators what the House Tax Committee is proposing is flat-out wrong.

What's going on:

To offset rising costs as a result of inflation, the House had a bill, filed earlier this session, that would have given moderate tax cuts. For a gambling operation with \$157,500 or more combined net receipts, the cuts would have dropped to 31 percent from 36 percent.

However, on Monday, April 17, Tax Committee Chairwoman Aisha Gomez proposed an amendment that changes it to just 34.75 percent. If the operation is under \$87,500 in combined net receipts, the rate drops to 8.5 percent from 9 percent.

Basically, Gomez wants to make the tax cuts a drop in the bucket. She wants to claim it is a "reduction" while barely reducing anything.

At the same time, Gomez's amendment wants to get rid of the "open all" feature on

e-tabs and require players to manually touch the screen to play each line of an e-tab, in an effort to slow down gameplay and reduce revenue. This reduction in revenue will not be offset by the small tax cuts. Some manufacturers estimate the decreases would be anywhere from 5 percent to 50 percent but one major manufacturer said when this happened in another part of the country, the impact was 20 percent to 30 percent loss in e-tab revenue.

The committee approved her amendment. An effort to remove the language in the House failed. The Senate does not use the language, so it's not an issue there. Conference Committee is up next.

The talking points on gambling this session are simple:

1. Don't touch e-tabs.
2. Provide real tax relief for charitable gambling.
3. We are fighting for local needs. Who fills in the gap?

Jennifer Havlick of Duluth Wisted Post 28 is the commander of The American Legion Department of Minnesota. Her theme is "Honoring Our Past by Securing Our Future."

It's OK; we know May is messed up

May in Minnesota is ripe with challenging contradictions. The weather is getting warmer. We see landscapes of muted browns, grays, with dirty snow. The snow melts, making way for vibrant colors.

For many of us, the grass perks up with shades of green. Springing forth from the ground are yellow daffodils, purple and white crocuses, tulips in a rainbow of colors. Migratory birds return singing their lively songs. The trees and bushes long in hibernation ready up with new buds to grow into a new season. We shake off the winter doldrums, lift our arms up in the air to greet a warm sun, inhale deeply from the gentle breeze also ready for another (God granting) season of long days, nights out on the deck and a big backyard no longer fenced in by snow piles.

Teenagers and young adults' graduations culminate in jubilant celebrations and forecasts of bright futures. Wedding ceremony planning come to fruition with vows taken, gifts given and new houses to transfer into homes. Baseball and softball season begins! Our 10,000 lakes become our playground.

Then, at May's end, all of our highly anticipated and welcomed avenues of new, fresh, colorful and warm come

Chaplain's Corner

Kelley Adelsman



to a halt with Memorial Day. Graveside visits, parades and events happen to remember the multitude of lives killed in wars. Our nation needs to protect our borders and assist our allies in keeping freedoms, which came at a steep cost.

Starting with the American Revolutionary War, the death toll estimate is 1,304,444. The Civil War, 1861-1865, remains the highest count of deaths at 620,000. Also, there is the sad reality that the most prevalent type of deaths for service members are unintentional injuries, suicides and homicides — a very somber reality to serving in military uniform. Their friends and families live in this reality every single day.

This paradoxical May beckons us all to live out our valuable hopes and dreams. Our Declaration of Independence of the United States consecrated each and every person in our borders to live their life in liberty and be afforded the opportunity to pursue happiness. Our country also requires a strong military force to ensure our declaration remains alive and the U.S. Constitution remains our guiding

document. When we are younger, we are not aware that our heart can hold both grief and joy together. As we live our lives, we learn that the sun that warms us also burns. We learn to live in tension appreciating that a pursuit of happiness comes with a cost of lives.

May invites us to live in the tension that life is as enjoyable as the deep inhalation of a spring rain and is painful when a life ends for our secure future. Don't skip past our nation's Memorial Day. Bring tissue to the parades and graveside visits. Allow the tears to flow. We learn God weeps with us; celebrates with us.

Our struggle to trust our good God in it all invites our grief filled compassion to invest toward good. May it be so.

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

Mail Call

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

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

Send birthday cards to this 101-year-old combat Marine

Lupe Gasca celebrated his 101st birthday on March 12. He is a longtime member of Albert Lea American Legion Post 56. He enlisted in the Marines Corps and was assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Regiment, 1st Battalion, Company B. (The 2nd Marine Division distinguished itself during World War II battles of Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Tinian and Okinawa.)

Lupe's first combat was the bloody island invasion of Tarawa. The Japanese commander boasted the island was so well-fortified it would take Marines 100 years to capture it. The Marines took the island in three days.

Lupe was wounded on the third day. After months of recovery, Lupe rejoined his old company. It had been designated as A "Special Operations Force." That means dangerous missions. Lupe participated in the island invasions of Saipan, Tinian and Okinawa.

Now, a squad leader, Lupe and his men slipped ashore at 4 a.m. on the island of Okinawa. Their arrival was six hours prior to the main invasion. Their task: destroy an important Japanese radio station. Mission accomplished. Two atomic bombs ended the

When do you use the 'The'?

An astute Legionnaire noticed how a coffee cup featuring the new American Legion logo says "American Legion" without the "The" before it.



THE AMERICAN LEGION

*The American Legion
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the Legion*



First, in all organizations, branding differs from writing. You can see from the branding images the "The" is sometimes used, sometimes not.

Let's talk about writing. The answer is found in the Legion's Publication Style Guide.

It says, "Always use *The American Legion* on first reference, capitalizing the 't.' May use *the Legion* on second reference. Do not abbreviate *TAL*."

At the 103rd National Convention in Milwaukee, a media seminar explained further. Standing alone, it is *The American Legion*. With a proper noun behind it, 'the' is lowercased, as in the *American Legion Auxiliary*, the *American Legion Riders*, the *American Legion Post 102 Chili Contest*. One exception is the *Sons of The American Legion*.

You also see *The American Legion Department of Minnesota*, but, hey, the department breaks rules sometimes. Don't tell anyone.

war. The 2nd Marine Division was deployed to Nagasaki to maintain the peace and assist Japanese civilians. Later, an honorable discharge returned Lupe to civilian life.

Dunwoody Institute, Partnership in Auto Electric Repair Business, instructor at ALTEC

(now Riverland Community College), grand marshal of the Albert Lea 3rd of July Parade, many time volunteering and finally retirement briefly summarizes Lupe's life.

Lupe was married 64 years before he lost his wife in 2010. He has two daughters,

five grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Lupe still lives alone in his home, drives to St. Theodore Catholic Church and Hy-Vee Foods. Lupe remains sharp as a tack and is looking ahead to birthday 102.

Please send birthday wishes to Lupe Gasca, 109 Fairlane Ave., Albert Lea, MN 56007.

**John McGaughey
Albert Lea Post 56**

Why isn't member chart printed?

For the longest time, we are reminded of membership — the only way this organization can survive. Since my year as 6th District commander (1996-97), the department was setting on 117,711 members, and since those days, it's been downhill.

One valuable bit of information that is no longer in print is the standings on membership in our department newspaper. I remember this being a tool to make you work harder against the other nine districts for position in the department.

I'm sure that whatever district you represent in The American Legion, you would like to know how you stand. So bottom line to my question: Why has this department stopped publishing the standings?

**Richard Philabaum
Past 6th District commander
Lake Henry Post 612**

Editor's note: The district commanders still use the standings. The department membership coordinator posts membership standings every other week on the department website, mnlegion.org.

Thanks for printing letter

Thank you for publishing the letter to the editor on my life and 101st birthday in the February edition of The Minnesota Legionnaire. I received 50 cards and letters from all over

the state of Minnesota and from Minnesota snowbirds in Florida and Arizona. It was a pleasure receiving and reading the messages in the cards. I shared them with family and friends. Thank you again.

**Ervin H. Stark
Mora Post 201**

The Minnesota Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

**Official publication of
The American Legion
Department of Minnesota**

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Web: mnlegion.org/legionnaire

Editor: Director of Communications Tim Engstrom

Editor Emeritus: Al Zdon

Board of Publication: President Jennifer Havlick, Two Harbors; Vice President Dennis Henkemeyer, Bagley; Secretary Mike Maxa, Montgomery; Treasurer Bill Goede, Plainview; David "Chip" Manson, Sunburg; Darrel Redepinning, Fridley; Michael Ash, St. Paul; Carroll Partridge, Oakdale; Paul Edwards, Brainerd



Name of Deceased	Age	Date of Death	Branch	Era	Cont. Years	Post
Amley, Gene A.	94	3/4/23	Army	Korea	61	New Richland Post 75
Anderson, Jarvis W.	89	3/20/23	Army	Korea	66	Plainview Post 179
Note: During the Korean War, his National Guard unit was called to active duty and shipped to Munich, Germany. He coached baseball at Plainview High School and was a former 1st District director for Minnesota American Legion Baseball. In 2014, he was inducted into the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame. His Legion teams in Plainview had state appearances in 1968, 1992 and 1995 (taking runner-up that year). His high school teams won the state championship in 1978, with state appearances in 1976 and 1985.						
Arndt, Ervin	91	2/11/23	Army	Korea	69	Lewisville Post 561
Austad, Allen	72	9/8/22	Navy	Vietnam	2	Shakopee Post 2
Bellmore, Howard L.	96	1/20/23	Army	WWII	63	Moorhead Post 21
Benkowski, Kenneth J.	85	2/2/23	Army	Vietnam	52	Bloomington Post 550
Note: After the service, he became a professional wrestler known as "Sodbuster" Kenny Jay, best known for appearances in the American Wrestling Association.						
Bennett, Theodore R.	89	4/18/23	Army	Korea	13	Rochester Post 92
Berns, John L.	79	3/21/23	Army	Vietnam	45	Little Falls Post 46
Note: He served in Vietnam with the 1st Squadron of the 1st Cavalry Regiment. He was awarded the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart, among other decorations.						
Birr, Toby J.	46	4/4/23	Marines	Persian Gulf	15	Litchfield Post 104
Blum, Ralph A.	77	3/5/23	Air Force	Vietnam	34	Hutchinson Post 96
Bolduc, Vern J.	97	2/27/23	Army	WWII	71	Bloomington Post 550
Note: He was drafted into the Army two weeks after graduating from Roosevelt High School. He fought the Germans as a member of the 4th Battalion 25th Field Artillery "Wolfpack" Artillery Regiment.						
Bruggeman, Dwight J.	70	3/13/23	Army	Vietnam	48	Thief River Falls Post 117
Burgstahler, John R.	93	3/5/22	Army	Korea	13	Hutchinson Post 96
Burstad, Robert	88	1/2/23	Army	Korea/VN	24	Thief River Falls Post 117
Note: During his 20-year career, he was stationed in Fort Campbell, Ky.; Munich, Germany; Fort Bragg, N.C. (with the 82nd Airborne); Taipei, Taiwan; the Pentagon; Vietnam and Fort Meade, Md.						
Buterbaugh, John R.	98	4/8/23	Army	WWII	12	Walnut Grove Post 267
Butler, Gerald E.	92	2/26/23	Army	Korea	65	Richfield Post 435
Butler, Michael J.	77	4/15/23	Marines	Vietnam	56	Hutchinson Post 96
Carlson, Leroy R.	87	2/21/23	Air Force	Korea	12	Coon Rapids Post 334
Colin, Robert	79	2/27/23	Marines	Vietnam	23	Elk River Post 112
Conser, Daniel P.	72	3/28/23	Marines	Vietnam	40	Waconia Post 150
Cowley, Edmund C.	71	3/6/23	Coast Guard	Vietnam	9	Litchfield Post 104
Defries, Loren H.	83	4/12/23	Air Force	Vietnam	46	Windom Post 206
Duke, Larry M.	79	4/16/23	Army	Vietnam	50	Bagley Post 16
Dvorak, Wayne J.	97	1/30/23	Army	WWII	35	Bloomington Post 550
Note: He was a past post chaplain.						
Ellingston, Bruce E.	79	2/23/23	Army	Vietnam	11	Moorhead Post 21
Falk, Glen H.	88	2/26/23	Army	Vietnam	50	Kelliher Post 470
Note: He was trained in radio repair. He was discharged in 1961 and recalled to active duty in 1962.						
Fenske, David E.	84	3/19/23	Navy	Vietnam	8	Rochester Post 92
Fick, George W.	90	3/14/23	Army	Korea	54	Dent Post 148
Finnes, Donald D.	87	11/3/21	Army	Korea	24	Granite Falls Post 69
Flaherty, David D.	83	2/27/23	Navy	Vietnam	29	Le Center Post 108
Frederick, Fay E.	61	3/18/23	Air Force	Vietnam	4	Hackensack Post 202
Gacke, Carl E.	75	11/22/22	Air Force	Vietnam	12	North St. Paul Post 39
Gilberts, Algene D.	75	7/19/22	Army	Vietnam	48	Hutchinson Post 96
Good, Galen G.	77	1/28/23	Navy	Vietnam	25	Norwood Post 343
Note: He completed several tours of the Mediterranean aboard the aircraft carrier USS Shangri-La.						
Gutknecht, Kenneth	73	4/11/23	Air Force	Vietnam	19	Bagley Post 16
Hall, Kenneth B.	98	3/30/23	Navy	WWII	40	Pine Island Post 184
Hammer, Bradley D.	82	3/24/23	Army	Vietnam	36	Albert Lea Post 56
Hesse, James R.	79	4/12/23	Army	Vietnam	43	Rochester Post 92
Hieronimus, Robert E.	81	12/9/22	Army	Vietnam	18	Willmar Post 167
Hinkemeyer, Floyd J.	76	3/15/23	Army	Vietnam	40	Rice Post 473
Hinz, Gene N.	84	3/30/23	Marines	Korea	56	Foley Post 298
Hislop, Leonard O.	90	3/19/23	Navy	Korea	6	Lake City Post 110
Note: He served aboard the USS William Seiverling, which patrolled the coast and bombed North Korea during the war.						
Hix, Clarence M.	88	3/24/23	Navy	Korea	55	St. Peter Post 37
Hjelle, James D.	89	2/7/23	Army	Korea	35	Middle River Post 444
Hoglund, Ronald E.	81	3/18/23	Army	Vietnam	13	Monticello Post 260
Note: He was stationed in Bamberg, Germany, and served on the Post 260 honor guard.						
Holgate, Richard D.	95	4/3/23	Navy	WWII	74	Austin Post 91
Jacobson, Robert W.	98	3/28/23	Navy	WWII	68	Willmar Post 167
Johansen, Darwin E.	80	3/31/23	Army	Persian Gulf	13	Worthington Post 5
Johnson, Charles T.	77	3/10/23	Army	Vietnam	56	Willmar Post 167
Johnson, Merrill L.	89	11/10/22	Army	Korea	66	Hutchinson Post 96
Johnson, Robert C.	84	3/22/23	Army	Vietnam	20	Litchfield Post 104
Kasa, Harland E. Sr.	80	5/24/22	Army	Vietnam	33	Cannon Falls Post 142
Kennedy, James M.	88	3/23/23	Air Force	Korea	49	Walker Post 134
Note: He is a past post commander and longtime membership director. He served in the 6th District as a county council commander and district vice commander. He was known for mentoring younger members.						
Lackmann, Roland	91	1/18/23	Army	Korea	16	Moorhead Post 21
Leagjeld, Louis H.	88	4/16/23	Army	Korea	29	St. Peter Post 37
Lilyquist, Clinton R.	87	10/30/22	Navy	Vietnam	39	Hackensack Post 202
Note: He was stationed at Naval Air Station Lakehurst and worked as a journalist and editor of the base newspaper.						
Lind, Lloyd J.	84	3/9/23	Army	Vietnam	29	Bemidji Post 14
Lindstrand, Harvey D.	86	3/25/23	Army	Vietnam	39	Willmar Post 167
Markman, Eugene C.	88	3/8/23	Army	Cold	34	Waite Park Post 428
Marth-Wohlfeil, Alberta V.	89	3/30/23	AF/Army	NG/Vietnam	47	New Ulm Post 132
Note: She was among the very first female post commanders in the state, serving as Post 132 commander in 1980-81. After, she was post adjutant for 13 years. She was a past post and district chaplain. She served nine terms as 2nd District adjutant, 2003-04, 07-08, 08-09, 10-11, 13-14, 15-16, 16-17, 17-18 and 18-19. She was a strong advocate for Minnesota Boys State and had served 25 years on the Minnesota Boys State office staff. In 2014, she was inducted into the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame for years of assisting 2nd District baseball directors going back to the 1980s. She was serving on the Minnesota American Legion Family Hospital Association Board of Directors at the time of her passing. Last summer, she was named 2nd District Legionnaire of the Year. Raised in Montana among mountains and horses, Marth was featured in the January 2022 issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire.						
Morris, Allen E.	90	3/19/23	Air Force	Korea	40	Moorhead Post 21
Morris, Gordon V.	78	4/17/23	Navy	Vietnam	20	Little Falls Post 46
Myers, Chauncey H.	87	2/26/23	Army	Vietnam	17	Hillman Post 602
Nelson, Walter W.	81	4/14/23	Army	Korea	55	Hayfield Post 330

All-Family Events Calendar

- May 1:** Boys State reservations due
- May 1-3:** National President's Tour of Minnesota
- May 8-11:** Spring Meetings, National HQ, Indianapolis
- May 17:** TAL 100 percent membership target
- May 26:** National Poppy Day
- May 29:** Memorial Day, local ceremonies
- June 10:** 2v2 Call of Duty Charity LAN Tournament, Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172
- June 11-17:** Minnesota Boys State, St. John's Univ.
- June 11-17:** Minnesota Girls State, Bethel Univ.
- June 13:** ALA 95 percent membership target
- June 16:** Last Man Club Golf Classic, Shoreland Country Club, St. Peter
- June 23-24:** SAL Detachment Conference, Anoka Post 102
- July 4:** Forest Lake Post 225 Fourth of July Parade
- July 12:** DEC, Jackpot Junction Casino, Redwood Falls
- July 13-15:** Department Convention, Jackpot Junction Casino, Redwood Falls
- July 26:** Legacy Run Kickoff Party, North Branch Post 85
- July 27-30:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Sr. State Tournament, Rochester
- July 27-29:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Jr. State Tournament, Burnsville
- July 28-30:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Sr. State Tournament, Roseau
- July 28-30:** Minnesota American Legion Fastpitch Softball State Tournament, New York Mills
- Aug. 4-5:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Prospect Series, Reynolds Field, Univ. of Northwestern, Roseville
- Aug. 4-6:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Jr. State Tournament, Granite Falls
- Aug. 15-20:** American Veterans Traveling Tribute, Murray County Fair, Slayton
- Aug. 19:** Fund 85 Run (Minn. Veterans Assistance Fund), Forest Lake Post 225
- Aug. 25-31:** National Convention, Charlotte, N.C.
- Oct. 12-15:** Minnesota Legion College, Camp Ripley
- Oct. 26-28:** Department Fall Conference, River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud
- Nov. 11:** Veterans Day, local ceremonies



Dan Morgan/North End Post 474

Don't let your tongue say what your arse will pay for later!



Dan Morgan/North End Post 474

Everytime I work on an MRAP, I get hungry.



Bertie Marth

Minnesota Legacy Run planned for late July

NORTH BRANCH — Get your motorcycles out of the garage. North Branch American Legion Post 85 will serve as the site of the kickoff for the 2023 Minnesota Legacy Run of the Minnesota American Legion Riders.

The first kickstands down and overnight is Thursday, July 27, at Walker Post 134.

The second is Friday, July 28, at Thief River Falls Post 117. The third is Moorhead Post 21. The ending party is Saturday, July 30 at Spicer Post 545.

Hotel blocks for the Legacy Run are:

- AmericInn, 38675 14th Ave., North Branch, 651-243-4596, "American Legion Riders."

- Walker Hotel, 907 Minnesota Ave. W., Walker,

218-547-2200, "American Legion Riders."
 • AmericInn, 1920 U.S. Highway 59, Thief River Falls, 218-681-4411, "American Legion Riders."

• MicroTel by Wyndym, 2915 12th St. S., Moorhead, 218-284-4022, "American Legion Legacy Fund."

The Legacy Run raises money for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, which provides scholarships to children of post-9/11 veterans who died on active duty or have a 50 percent or greater disability.

Minnesota for many years has been the top donor in The American Legion. At the 2022 National Convention, Minnesota presented \$155,000 for the Legacy Scholarship.

Taps



Continued from Page 5

Note: He drove a school bus for Hayfield Community Schools for 57 years.

Nichols, Glen V.	93	11/22/21	Army	WWII	43	Pine Island Post 184
Nyberg, Lyle A.	91	3/8/23	Army	Korea	70	Willmar Post 167
O'Meara, Patrick J.	82	4/10/23	Navy	Vietnam	44	Le Center Post 108
Ostrem, James A.	88	4/4/23	Air Force	Korea	49	Lanesboro Post 40
Otto, Ray F. Sr.	86	3/15/23	Marines	Korea	9	Foley Post 298
Overvig, Merlyn J.	88	12/28/22	Army	Korea	46	Marietta Post 156
Parkin, James	88	10/17/22	Army	Korea	45	Cannon Falls Post 142
Pauly, Myron H.	81	3/23/23	Army	Vietnam	7	Jordan Post 3

Note: He served in Colorado Springs in the meteorologist section, sending up weather balloons and using Morse code to communicate with artillery.

Pavlicek, William J. 83 3/8/23 Air Force Korea 36 Bloomington Post 550

Note: He was a past commander of Backus Post 368.

Peters, James F. 97 3/17/23 Army Korea 39 Raymond Post 420

Note: He served as a mechanic.

Peterson, Russell D. 78 4/5/23 Navy Vietnam 19 Aitkin Post 86

Note: He was a Navy Seabee and enjoyed studying Civil War history.

Potter, Elmer A. "Bud" 94 2/2/23 Marines Korea 46 Bloomington Post 550

Powell, James D. 90 1/28/22 Army Korea 40 Richfield Post 435

Radtke, Horst K. 97 3/19/23 Army WWII 4 Red Wing Post 54

Ritz, Maurice J. 86 4/10/23 Army Vietnam 14 Nicollet Post 510

Schmeltzer, Donald L. 84 9/29/22 Marines Vietnam 5 Minnesota Post 1982

Schultz, Richard B. 79 2/11/23 Army Vietnam 29 Bloomington Post 550

Note: He was a former deputy chief of the Minneapolis Police Department. He served the city for 35 years.

Seppelt, Richard S. 89 3/15/23 Navy Korea 44 Hillman Post 602

Sharstrom, Herbert L. 97 3/3/23 Navy WWII 46 New London Post 537

Sherer, Gene H. 81 2/3/23 Navy Vietnam 33 Kingston Post 483

Note: He served aboard the Talledega and George Clymer.

Skaran, Norbert S. 98 3/14/23 Navy WWII 78 Ostrander Post 544

Note: He was drafted prior to graduating from Grand Meadow High School and entered service after graduating. He served on Guam as a fireman and machinist.

Skarp, Daniel R. 75 3/23/23 Army Vietnam 52 Springfield Post 257

Note: He was a food inspector in the service. He served as emcee for Post 257's annual change of command ceremony.

Sobania, Alvin "Pretzel" 79 3/3/23 Army Vietnam 40 Flensburg Post 136

Note: He was a reconnaissance scout in Vietnam.

Spalding, John P. "Jack" 87 3/13/23 Air Force Korea 15 Chanhassen Post 580

Spinler, Richard L. 71 3/14/23 Army Vietnam 40 Lyle Post 105

Note: He received a Purple Heart in Vietnam after sustaining a leg injury from shrapnel.

Spychalla, Roland A. 89 12/14/22 Navy Korea 31 Browerville Post 293

Note: He served aboard the USS Fletcher.

Stoltman, Theodore 82 3/5/23 Marines Vietnam 13 Thief River Falls Post 117

Stueber, Ervin H. 92 7/31/22 Army Korea 40 Nicollet Post 510

Stukey, W. Edward 89 3/27/23 Army Korea 13 Hillman Post 602

Stult, Mark O. 73 1/22/23 Army Vietnam 49 Nicollet Post 510

Supan, Jerome C. 87 2/16/23 Army Korea 49 St. Stephen Post 221

Note: He was stationed in Aschaffenburg, Germany. He served as a member of the post color guard and, for the past 15 years, post chaplain.

Swenson, Richard J. 95 3/8/23 Army Korea 70 Eden Valley Post 381

Te Brake, Herman J. 72 3/13/23 Army Vietnam 11 Brooten Post 288

Thompson, Lyle H. 73 9/10/22 Army Vietnam 45 Nicollet Post 510

Torgerson, David E. 94 3/19/23 Air Force Korea 68 Clinton Post 258

Note: He was stationed in Massachusetts, Philippine Islands and South Dakota. He was involved in a mapping squadron for Korea.

Valek, Robert R. 79 2/27/23 Air Force Vietnam 13 St. Joseph Post 328

Wageman, Edward E. 89 1/13/23 Army Korea 7 Moorhead Post 21

Wallman, Frederick W. III 78 3/11/23 Army Vietnam 23 Park Rapids Post 212

Note: His military career spanned 30 years.

Welsh, Arthur C. Jr. 88 1/30/23 Army Korea 36 Bloomington Post 550

Wellick, Dale P. 74 4/6/23 Air Force Vietnam 47 Kasson Post 333

Note: He was 1st District commander in 2019-20 and 2020-21. He was current district membership chairman and was a past district vice commander. He served on the color guard for Kasson Post 333 and Dodge Center Post 384.

West, Graden R. 87 2/13/23 Navy Korea 41 New London Post 537

Widmark, Arthur O. 84 2/14/23 Army Vietnam 10 Bagley Post 16

Wilfert, Floyd C. 86 4/1/23 Army/Navy Vietnam 47 New Ulm Post 132

Note: He enlisted twice in the Army, then enlisted in the Navy. He was an accomplished concertina player.

Wilking, Thomas G. 72 2/17/23 Navy Vietnam 27 Nicollet Post 510

Wittlief, Richard A. 88 3/18/23 Air Force Korea 4 Pine Island Post 184

Zietlow, Robert H. Jr. 74 3/15/23 Army Vietnam 22 St. Paul Park Post 98

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ST. CLOUD STAND DOWN



Department of Corrections

A "Taps" submission was misspelled in the April issue. Here is a reprint with the correct spelling:

Kroshus, Gary B. 74
 1/27/23 Army Vietnam 55
 Spring Grove Post 249
 Note: As part of the 5th Special Forces in the Vietnam War, he led 35 recon missions as point man. Why? "Nobody could read a map like this country boy from Iowa," he said. He received two Bronze Stars. His cause of death was connected to exposure to Agent Orange.

You can visit Boys State anytime

Counselors and staff are prepping for the upcoming session of Minnesota American Legion Boys State (June 11-17 at St. John's University).

Again, the site that answers most questions is www.mnboysstate.org. The return of the choir is anticipated to enhance the Friday night program.

We continue to invite Legionnaires and school staff to visit for a day during the week to see how impactful this experience

Minn. Boys State

Neil Kruse

is for the young men participating. This could be most beneficial for schools having trouble sending students. We were sorry to lose Bert Marth. She was a champion for Boys State for many years in the New Ulm area. How many are willing to step up to the challenge of matching her passion for recruiting



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

Osseo post to host in-person gaming tourney

By The American Legion

OSSEO — During what he called a “rough” stretch in his life, U.S. Army veteran Ian Hollifield was connected with Regiment Gaming, then just a fledgling group but now the nation’s largest military and veteran gaming community.

Hollifield, a member of Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172, would go onto join Regiment, though not as an active gamer. “I started paying more and more attention to Regiment,” he said, “not really involved in the community online so much, but just kind of looking at their news articles.”

Then Hollifield reached out to Regiment founder and U.S. Marine Corps veteran Chris Earl, who started Regiment in 2020 to assist both himself and fellow veterans in their transition from the military to their civilian lives.

“I just asked him, ‘Do you guys ever go to Legion posts and hold post tournaments?’” Hollifield said. “I’m relatively new to The American Legion. Internally, in my head, I’m like, ‘What can I do to potentially drive a younger force, younger people to our Legion.’ I go into this Regiment group and go into a chatroom where there’s a bunch of kids, just (BS’ing) and being together as veterans, I thought that might be a good way.

“So, I just asked (Earl), and he said, ‘Funny you say that, because we’re going to the national convention.’”

For three days during the 2022 American Legion National Convention, Regiment members had gaming stations set up in the Wisconsin Center, allowing them to interact with Legionnaires, who in turn learned more about gaming. Meanwhile, Hollifield had the answer he needed, and he took his idea to Post 172’s executive board, of which he



is a member.

With an OK from the board, Hollifield helped organize what will be the first American Legion post-hosted Regiment Gaming tournament. On June 10, the post will host a \$5,000 2v2 Call of Duty Charity LAN (Local Area Network) tournament. The \$5,000 prize pool was provided by Post 172 and will be donated to Stack Up, which has worked with The American Legion to provide gaming equipment and tournaments to active-duty military personnel.

“I think it’s an amazing opportunity to bring in a younger demographic of veterans, specifically post-9/11 veterans,” said Earl, a member of the American Legion Department of California. “Everyone plays video games at this point. Between the ages of 18 and probably like 28, they all have something in common. And nine out of 10 times they’re a gamer.”

Post 172 2nd Vice Commander James Hultgren, who will take over as post commander this summer, said he’s always willing to try something to benefit the post. A member of the Department of Minnesota’s Media & Communications Committee, he said this tournament has potential to do exactly what Hollifield is hoping it can.

“It’s something we’ve never done. You can do all your main

types of fundraising, steak fries and things like that,” said Hultgren, an Operation Iraqi Freedom U.S. Army veteran. “But (gamers) are this generation of vets. When I was in Korea Xbox came out, and so (the game) Halo was pretty big. We sit around the day room and play the games. And as it became more popular and more available for everybody to afford as we moved up in rank, then we could buy the next game. It was our after-hours, hanging out with everybody. Gaming is a part of our lives.

“It’s a way that’s going to bring some more people together that might not (come to the post). And being at the post, it’s another event that’s here and they can see the rest of the (post). Where people can come to play a game, but they realize, ‘Wow, you have this facility.’ Our marketing and fliers, right when you walk into the building, tell you everything you need to know about this post. The way it’s set up you can learn so much about the post in five minutes.”

The tournament is open to active-duty military, veterans and their dependents. Team and spectator passes for the tournament are free and can be found at the post’s Facebook page.

There’s no deadline to sign up for the tournament, and Earl expects to see some gamers come to the post the day of the tournament to sign up. “We’ll have time (June 10) to finalize teams,” he said. “It’s pretty easy, just because it’s a (two-player vs. two-player tournament), rather than a 4v4. If it was a 4v4 we’d operate this a little differently, with a cut-off (date).”

For Hollifield, 42, being able to connect the post with Regiment could have a ripple effect. “I think one of the ways we can bring in younger people is by doing things younger people want to do,” he said. “If it all pans out it’s great — not just for our post, but for The American Legion as a whole. It could potentially change some things.”



Commander’s Project

It’s rising!

Department Commander Jennifer Havlick’s Project raises funds for Minnesota families receiving mortgage-free smart homes from Tunnel to Towers Foundation.

She also hopes to raise funds for Project Delta, which creates service dogs for veterans from rescue/shelter dogs, and for Eagle’s Healing Nest, which helps veterans with the invisible wounds of war.

Contribution Deadline: July 15

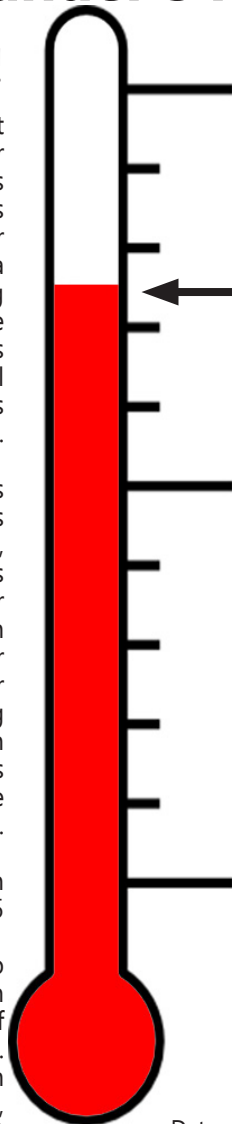
Mail to American Legion Dept. of Minnesota, 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000

Goal: \$60,000

Present: 76% at \$45,650

Shout out to Posts 33, 35, 74, 117, 126, 157, 165 and 308 for their recent contributions. Also thanks to donors at the Appreciation Rally.

Make checks out to: **Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 82.** The foundation is a 501(c)3. Gambling funds are permitted.



Date of graphic: April 24

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From left are Coast Guard Senior Chief Petty Officer William Peebles, Department Adjutant Mike Maxa, Department Membership Director Linda Dvorak, Department Commander Jennifer Havlick, National Commander Jim Troiola and Coast Guard Master Chief Justin Olson. They stand next to a self-righting response boat, which Olson described as "like a 45-foot jet ski."

National commander says VA is slow to hire

Continued from Page 1

A debate over a uniform contract left new coasties at many stations without uniforms. Remote military locations lack the same support, inventory and PX stores that big bases have. This slows efforts to make new recruits feel like they are part of the team.

Many coasties get recruited away by the Coast Guard's contractors for their abilities to steer boats and for their tech skills. What's more, the military's new blended-retirement system, which combines traditional military pension retirement with civilian 401k retirement, results in service branches losing valuable experienced personnel. The blended retirement options begin at 10 years of service, reducing the NCO corps. In other words, it's hard enough to recruit servicemembers, and it's getting harder to keep them.

Troiola said he plans to carry the information he learned with him to American Legion HQ in Indianapolis and to the bureau in Washington, D.C., in an effort to make change and support America's national defense.

The rest of the tour

Troiola visited northern Minnesota. The stops were West Duluth Post 71, Coast Guard Station Duluth, a restaurant discussion with Public Affairs Coordinator Randall Walz of the Silver Bay Veterans Home, Valentini's Supper Club in Chisholm (where Chisholm Post 247 holds banquets), Aitkin Post 86, Hackensack Post 202, Ironton Post 443, Underwood Post 489, Long Prairie Post 12 and Minnesota Legion College at Camp Ripley.

Troiola didn't mind seeing a mostly rural part of the state and said the little posts deserve as much attention as the big ones.

"At the beginning of the year, I promised I would visit as many posts as I can," he said in Duluth and several stops. "It's really important because it's where the rubber hits the road."

He said he doesn't feel like a national commander. He said he's blue collar like the folks he met. He had a career in automotive parts and in retirement drives a school bus.

He described how The American Legion's Indy race car is bringing attention to the "Be The One" suicide prevention campaign.

"We are trying to ask for help with breaking the stigma of asking for help," Troiola said. "We need local resources badly and instant help."

The American Legion is a longtime supporter of the VA, but it takes action when needed to improve the system. One issue facing the VA is hiring personnel. A major reason, he said, is the VA centralized hiring. Now, when a hospital or clinic director wants to hire someone, they send the paperwork to D.C., and it can take up to 128 days to turn around. By then, the candidate has taken some other job.

What's more, quality specialists command high salaries, but in the federal government, no one can make more than the \$400,000 annual salary made by the president.

"I've talked to VA people from Salt Lake, Utah, to Sumter, South Carolina. They can't hire people. It's absolutely nuts," Troiola said.

The American Legion has been in touch with VA Secretary Denis McDonough about hiring practices, he said, and about the VA opting to disregard parts of the VA Accountability Act, which passed in 2018. McDonough announced in April that the VA plans to ignore parts of the law that require the agency to hold bad employees accountable.

"I don't know what kind of

agency it is that thinks they can just not follow a law passed by Congress," Troiola said.

He said military quality of life is important to him. He described a visit to Pearl Harbor's Red Hill Fuel Storage where jet fuel seeped through a corroded tank and into the drinking water. He also learned about contamination of the drinking water at the Marine base on the island of Okinawa, Japan.

He said he appreciates that the Armed Forces allow servicemembers to speak freely with the Legion so that the Legion can get them the help they need in Congress.

Troiola, who hails from New City Post 1682, New York, described an enjoyable breakfast he had with New York Yankee great Bobby Richardson, 88, who credited being discovered to American Legion Baseball.

Richardson told Troiola, "I wouldn't be standing here today if it weren't for American Legion Baseball."

Troiola said you never know who or how American Legion programs will touch Americans.

He told how a boy he recruited to New York Boys State, 30 years later, thanked him and told how it changed the career choice he made.

"Don't ever think you aren't making an effect on their lives because you are," Troiola said.

The Silver Bay Veterans Home could not be visited directly as originally planned because it was experiencing a COVID outbreak.

Donations during the tour

National Commander Jim Troiola's project is the American Legion Veterans & Children's Foundation. He thanked the following for their generosity:

8th District	\$2,000
Long Prairie Post 12	\$1,000
Hackensack Post 202	\$1,000
Ironton Post 443	\$500
Underwood Post 489	\$500
Hackensack Squadron 202	\$500
Underwood Squadron 489	\$500
Aitkin Post 86	\$300
Chisholm Post 247	\$300
Clarissa Post 213	\$300
Cash donations	\$140
Hackensack Unit 202	\$100
Underwood Unit 489	\$100
Upsala Post 350	\$50
Upsala Unit 350	\$50
Total	\$7,340



National Commander Jim Troiola prepares a microphone at Duluth TV station KBJR. The broadcast is called Northern News Now. Visit the station's website and search "Legion" to find the interview. Troiola and staff at HQ in Indianapolis liked the segment.



West Duluth Post 71 Commander Peter Leone greets National Commander Jim Troiola on Monday, April 17, for an evening program.



Quilts of Valor members got up on stools to give Troiola, who is a tall man, a quilt. They also awarded a quilt to National Commander's Aide Gary Schacher.



Many members like to get their pictures taken with the national commander after he speaks. At Valentini's Supper Club in Chisholm, several members of the Chisholm Post 247 Family gathered to take one big photo instead.



Likely the most touching moment of the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota was when a special bottle of liquor was handed to a Korean War veteran for being the last man of a Chisholm Korean War veteran last-man club. Chisholm Post 247 2nd Vice Commander and Historian Dave Pessenda presented Korean War veteran John Pagliacetti with the bottle. Pagliacetti's family was present to watch the presentation. The local newspaper, Mesabi Tribune, was invited to the banquet but sure missed an unexpected community-news moment by not coming.



National Commander Jim Troiola salutes the music outside Underwood Post 489, where even the local high school band showed up to greet him. Breakfast at Post 489 had the largest reception of the tour and easily the highest attendance.



Bloomington Post 550 allowed the use of its bus on the National Commander's Tour. The bus is spotted here beside the Two Harbors Lighthouse. The bus normally is used for its baseball teams and its honor guard.



At Ironton Post 443, audience members bow their heads to pray.



Troiola likes to give photos, license plates and pens to post commanders. At Hackensack Post 202, the gifts went to Post 202 Commander Robert Arkulary.



Head tables were not used. Troiola preferred to sit and listen to members, typically just selecting an empty seat at random. Here he is at Long Prairie Post 12. Legion Family members from surrounding posts often came to hear him speak at each stop.



Who doesn't like a good cup of coffee while sharing time with fellow veterans and listening to the national commander talk about veterans issues? They did at Aitkin Post 86. See several galleries of photos from all stops of the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota at the "American Legion Department of Minnesota" Facebook page.



Checks for the National Commander's Project were presented at each stop. The posts in Minnesota raised \$7,340 for the American Legion Veterans & Children's Foundation. Here, Troiola shakes the hand of Ironton Post 443 Commander Donald Imberi, whose post had a stage with a big \$500 check resting on an easel.



Carl Moon, president of Legionville Education Center and chairman of the Department Finance Committee, gives financial reports to the Department Executive Committee at the New Prague Golf Club.

Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund helps veterans get back on their feet

Continued from Page 1

back pain, \$1,280 to prevent repossession of a car, \$1,428 in overdue car insurance and \$3,707 past-due day care.

"I want to remind you these are all Minnesota veterans," Ricker said.

Maxa added that Department Service Officer Ray Kane and Assistant Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo work to help the veterans get back on their feet and not to rely on the assistance perpetually. The two show the veterans in need how to improve spending habits, for example.

The Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund has a cap of \$5,000 per lifetime of the recipient. Charitable gambling donations are permitted under law. Posts may make donations to Minnesota American Legion Foundation and write "Fund 85" in the memo. Send to: Minnesota American Legion Foundation, 20 W. 12th St., Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155.

Bloomington Post 550's Paul Hassing, the leading candidate for department commander, said if elected at the department convention he would make Fund 85 his project for the year.

Ricker noted a Fund 85 flier is forthcoming.

- Heard from Finance Committee Chairman Carl Moon, who said department revenue exceeds expenses by \$550,361 as of March 31. However, the fiscal year is not over, and more expenses are expected, he noted.

"Temporarily, we are doing quite well," he said. Total value of fixed accounts, he said, is \$1,917,069. Stocks, he said, are at \$1,088,581.

- Heard from Moon again, with a report on Legionville Education Center. Moon is the chairman of the Legionville Board of Directors.

The board, he said, rescinded the sale of two parcels of land because land values declined. The parcels, adding up to 80 acres, are inaccessible from the rest of the camp. Hunting leases on the land will remain.

The Legionville board also heard presentations on using Legionville for Legion veteran rehabilitation programs and possibly an outside nonprofit with rehab programs, he said. Legionville's Constitution and Bylaws, he said, presently do not allow this but could be amended to allow them and still keep Legionville's existing 501(c)3 status. The next board meeting is in October.

Moon said the first session of camp begins June 11. He asked for members to encourage local posts to send kids to the camp. He reminded everyone the camp still does safety patrol, but it has added other safety activities, such as water rescue, first aid, CPR and so on.

- Heard from Linda Dvorak, chairwoman of the ad hoc Internal Affairs Committee. She and the committee created an Outline of Operations and are working on proposed changes to the Department of Minnesota Constitution and Bylaws. She encouraged members to watch for the revisions to be posted at the department website, mnlegion.org, for review prior to a vote at the department convention this summer.

A story will appear in an upcoming issue of the Legionnaire to help all members understand the



The departmental logo approved in October 2022, above, has been superseded by the one seen on the front page.

proposals.

- Heard from NECman Bill Barbknecht, who praised Legislative Committee Chairwoman Kristy Janigo's work with legislative affairs this year, and he thanked Past 1st District Commander Mike Parry, who is on the Legislative Committee, for making everyone aware of the crucial threat to e-tabs that could decrease revenue for all charities across the state.

He also encouraged all posts to welcome new members, especially women and minorities.

- Heard from Janigo, who said it has been an interesting session at the Legislature.

First, the Senate rolled its Veterans Affairs Committee into its State and Local Government Committee, then Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke finally was confirmed by the Senate. The Veterans & Military Omnibus Bill was in danger of being rolled into another giant omnibus bill, but the Legion and other organizations pushed for it to stand apart from other bills. Lawmakers in the House and Senate agreed. And the Legion has pushed for lawmakers to fix the bonuses for Post-9/11 veterans to include move-in veterans and participants of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Her committee and the Media & Communication Committee led press conferences and sent out newspaper op-eds in efforts to protect revenue from e-tabs, calling on lawmakers to not scale back e-tabs, she said.

"There was a lot of legwork over the past week," Janigo said.

- Heard from Historian Teresa Ash, chairwoman of the Media & Communications Committee, who noted the 4th District has a new writers group for veterans. She also said she was leading an effort to return the Department of Minnesota to the Minnesota State Fair, which happens at the same time as the American Legion National Convention.

In the 2010s, the Legion would get assigned a worse location each year at the fair, and eventually the department quit going, according to former Legionnaire Editor Al Zdon. Now, Ash hopes to bring the department back by participating in Military Appreciation Day, which is Tuesday, Aug. 29, at the fair.

- Accepted the turning in of the charter of Minneapolis Police & Fire Post 369, as a result of declining membership.

- Discussed legal issues facing three posts in various parts of the state. The DEC voted to have Department Judge Advocate Greg Colby send letters to those posts.



Minnesota American Legion Foundation Chairman Lloyd Ricker looks at a document with Sue Edwards of Nisswa Post 627. Ricker also is a district judge advocate.



Past National Commander Dan Ludwig addresses members and guests before the DEC meeting April 15. The meeting was at the New Prague Golf Club because it is right across the street from New Prague Post 45, where the Auxiliary Junior Convention was taking place and preparations were being made for the Appreciation Rally.



Department Adjutant Mike Maxa speaks as Commander Jennifer Havlick listens and stenographer Lori Morrow takes notes.



Department Historian Teresa Ash gives a report on the Media & Communications Committee she chairs.

District	New	PUFL	Renewal	HQ Tran	Totals	Goal	% of Goal
1 MN Dist 0001 LGN	207	837	5,628	30	6,702	7,241	92.56
2 MN Dist 0002 LGN	102	609	4,500	25	5,236	5,651	92.66
3 MN Dist 0003 LGN	285	1,574	7,300	98	9,257	10,185	90.89
4 MN Dist 0004 LGN	49	274	1,311	24	1,658	1,840	90.11
5 MN Dist 0005 LGN	14	300	1,121	9	1,444	1,704	84.74
6 MN Dist 0006 LGN	262	1,097	7,690	120	9,169	9,870	92.90
7 MN Dist 0007 LGN	98	670	4,108	23	4,899	5,376	91.13
8 MN Dist 0008 LGN	134	321	2,545	30	3,030	3,285	92.24
9 MN Dist 0009 LGN	92	541	4,364	47	5,044	5,534	91.15
10 MN Dist 0010 LGN	221	954	5,966	99	7,240	8,024	90.23
11 MN Dist 0099 LGN	15	217	1,517	0	1,749	3,121	56.04
SUM:	1,479	7,394	46,050	505	55,428	61,831	89.64

Membership numbers by district are posted every two weeks to the department website, mnlegion.org. Here is an image of the April 19 download. The 6th District barely edged out the 2nd District for first place.

6th District rallied literally

The district membership race was won in the last days

NEW PRAGUE — The 6th District barely surpassed the 2nd District in membership just in time for the Appreciation Rally to take home the top prize.

The 1st District placed third, 8th District fourth and 9th District fifth.

Department of Minnesota Membership Director Linda Dvorak announced the winners at the Appreciation Rally, which took place April 15 at New Prague Post 45. About 150 people attended.

Dvorak thanked everyone for their membership efforts and said they will continue to the end of June. She handed out certificates for top performers.

American Legion Riders Director Ted Berg encouraged soliciting corporations to donate to the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund, aka Fund 85. He said the Riders will host the Fund 85 Ride on Aug. 19,

starting from Forest Lake Post 225.

SAL Detachment Commander Tim Weaver thanked everyone for contributions to his project, which is the American Legion Veterans & Children's Foundation. He drew the room's attention to Taylor McElroy, who is a dual member in a way rarely seen. She is an Auxiliary Junior member with Le Roy Unit 161 and an American Legion member with Le Roy Post 161. She is in high school but completed basic training in January. She is in the Army Reserves.

Le Roy is about 35 miles south of Rochester, right on the Iowa border. In fact, Elroy lives in Iowa, with her Legion Family memberships in Minnesota. She is the only dual Junior/Legionnaire member in the Department of Minnesota.

Weaver's father, Gary Weaver, is the detachment's membership

director. He said the detachment has 10,131 members and is at 89.04 percent. It needs to reach 90 percent, and to do so needs another 190 members.

Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary President Mary Kuperus introduced the new department executive secretary, Christie Avant, who began March 13. She is a Minnesotan who had been living in Iowa and has returned.

Auxiliary Membership Director Sandy Wersal said there are 3 1/2 months to go, and the Auxiliary Department of Minnesota needs 4,062 new or renewed members to reach the June 12 goal of 95 percent.

She said she is unhappy that Minnesota is in fifth place in the Northwest Division.

"I still believe we can make our goals," she said.

Membership years for the Legion, Auxiliary, Sons and Riders end June 30.



Department Membership Director Linda Dvorak speaks at the Appreciation Rally. Behind her is James Hultgren of the Media & Communication Committee, which livestreamed the gathering on Facebook.



District Vice Commanders of the Year or a stand in line up for a photo. The award is for their membership efforts. From left are Bill Gordon holding for the 10th District's Darrell Jensen, Larry Pocrnich for 8th's Peter Dubey, Karen Welander for 7th's Rueben Nathe, 6th's Mike Van Heel, 5th's Andru Peters, 3rd's Amy Larsen, 2nd's James Olson, 1st's Nick Prestby and Terry Buraas for the 9th's Dan Wisley. In the 4th, Carroll "Bird" Patridge was the recipient.

Donations to Legionville Education Center were made at the rally. In the top photo, 10th District Commander Bill Gordon presents a \$3,000 check from his post, St. Michael Post 567.

In the bottom photo, Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary 1st Vice President Sharon Thiemeke presents a \$300 check to Legionville from her unit, Bemidji Unit 14. Legionville President Carl Moons accepted both checks. He reminded everyone that Legionville still does safety patrol training. It just also does other types of safety training, too.



Third District Vice Commander Sarah Sturner and Department Service Officer Ray Kane share a laugh during dinner at the Appreciation Rally at New Prague Post 45.



New Prague Post 45 member Keith Deutch, an Afghanistan War veteran and national champion in adaptive snowboarding, works the bar area during the Appreciation Rally.

ACOMB	ELDELSON	HOWARD	MEKELAND	QUAM
AGBAJE	ELKINS	HUDELLA	MOLLER	REHM
ALTENDORF	ENGEN	HUDSON	MUELLER	REYER
ANDERSON, P. E.	FEIST	HUOT	MURPHY	RICHARDSON
ANDERSON, P. H.	FINKE	HUSSEIN	MYERS	ROBBINS
BACKER	FISCHER	IGO	NADEAU	SCHOMACKER
BAHNER	FOGELMAN	JACOB	NASH	SCHULTZ
BAKEBERG	FRANSON	JOHNSON	NELSON, M.	SCOTT
BAKER	FRAZIER	JORDAN	NELSON, N.	SENCER-MURA
BECKER-FINN	FREDERICK	JOY	NEU BRINDLEY	SKRABA
BENNETT	FREIBERG	KEELER	NEWTON	SMITH
BERG	GAROFALO	KIEL	NISKA	STEPHENSON
BIERMAN	GILLMAN	KLEVORN	NOOR	SWEDZINSKI
BLISS	GOMEZ	KNUDSEN	NORRIS	TABKE
BRAND	GREENMAN	KOEGEL	NOVOTNY	TORKELSON
BURKEL	GROSSELL	KOTYZA-WITTHUHN	O'DRISCOLL	URDAHL
CARROLL	HANSEN, R.	KOZLOWSKI	OLSON, B.	VANG
CHA	HANSON, J.	KOZNICK	OLSON, L.	WEST
CLARDY	HARDER	KRAFT	O'NEILL	WIENER
COULTER	HASSAN	KRESHA	PELOWSKI	WIENS
CURRAN	HEINTZEMAN	LEE, F.	PÉREZ-VEGA	WITTE
DANIELS	HEMMINGSEN-JAEG	LEE, K.	PERRYMAN	WOLGAMOTT
DAUDT	HER	LIEBLING	PETERSBURG	XIONG
DAVIDS	HICKS	LILLIE	PFARR	YOUAKIM
DAVIS	HILL	LISLEGARD	PINTO	ZELEZNIKAR
DEMUTH	HOLLINS	LONG	PRYOR	SPEAKER
DOTSETH	HORNSTEIN	MCDONALD	PURSELL	HORTMAN

The House on April 27 voted 66-58 against removing language harmful to e-tabs, such as ending the "open all" feature. Green is who favored removing the language, and they stood with the nonprofits. Thank them. Red is who voted against removing it. The Senate does not have similar language, so the e-tabs issue will be addressed in Conference Committee. Minnesota would be the only state with an "open all" button.

State lawmakers seemed destined to hurt local communities with language to scale back e-tabs

Continued from Page 1

causes in her district that her proposal would harm. Many people fail to realize the nonprofits that raise funds with charitable gambling make donations to nonprofits not involved with gambling at all. It's a team effort."

Gomez could not be reached for comment.

Gomez's measure would remove the "open all" feature of e-tab games with the goal of making play slower for customers, thus lessening e-tab revenue. The issue has been covered by Twin Cities TV stations.

Some fear the proposed language could be interpreted to bring e-tabs back to the 2012 level, when they were very basic and didn't generate much player interest.

The House Tax Committee heard comments on the proposals April 19 and, despite objections from The American Legion, Allied Charities of Minnesota, Protect Our Charities and others, went ahead and approved the amendment on April 20 anyway. The measure presently exists as part of the House Omnibus Tax Bill.

"They filed it late in the legislative session so that the people of Minnesota have little time to be aware of what is going on," said Minnesota American Legion Department Service Officer Ray Kane.

Press conferences, social media campaigns, email

marketing and in-person speaking with lawmakers have brought awareness to the matter.

"It's amazing how many lawmakers totally do not understand how charitable gambling quietly

helps their local communities on a daily basis," Janigo said. "Local taxes don't just fund everything. Nonprofits step in and help."

An effort on the House floor to remove the language from the bill failed. See the vote above.

Commander Jennifer Havlick sent out a statement via email to all Legion members in Minnesota. It is printed on Page 4.

She wrote: "We can't let them do this to our local communities! State lawmakers want to take steps that devastate charitable gambling, which in turns hurts Minnesota veterans, food shelves, homeless shelters, youth sports, children's activities and many good community-based nonprofits. They know it is wrong."

E-tab manufacturers estimate the decreases could be anywhere between 5 to 50 percent, but the best guesses say 20 to 30 percent losses in e-tab revenue. This would be more than would be offset by the small tax cuts, Havlick said.

E-pulltabs have been around since 2012 and helped pay off bonds that built a pro football stadium in downtown Minneapolis.

Casinos have been behind efforts to scale back e-tabs. Courts have twice ruled that the 2012 agreement with the Dayton administration regarding e-tabs has not been violated.

Gomez regularly tells the media a recent court ruling is why state lawmakers need to change the law. However, she fails to grasp or conveniently omits that ruling only dealt with email explanations from the Gambling Control Board. The actual 2012 agreement has been supported by the courts.

Two years ago, the House actually passed a bill to get rid of e-tabs. It was killed by the Senate. A state fiscal note said charities would lose \$33 million a year, wages would be reduced by \$35 million and bars and restaurants would lose \$30 million. It was widely agreed upon, at the time, that nobody would up and suddenly leave their favorite bar or restaurant and go to casinos instead.

Instead, the revenue would be lost, at a time when nonprofits already struggle to raise funds, Janigo said.

She encouraged people to call their lawmakers, especially state senators, and show them how charitable gambling donations help Minnesotans everywhere.

Charitable gambling has been part of the Minnesota landscape since 1945, with the bingo law, with the notion of preventing commercial gambling. Now, it would seem commercial gambling is out to harm charitable gambling.



Aisha Gomez



Department Commander Jennifer Havlick speaks about preventing veteran suicide to the crowd of about 500 at the St. Paul Armory on March 30 for Veterans Day on the Hill.



Veterans gathered in the Capitol Rotunda on March 30 for Veterans Day on the Hill. Several elected officials stood at the podium and spoke.

Veterans Day on the Hill brings out key issues for Minnesota veterans

ST. PAUL — Drawing attention to efforts to prevent veteran suicide was a major aspect of Veterans Day on the Hill 2023.

A little more than 500 veterans and their supporters showed up at the St. Paul Armory on March 30 for the annual legislative gathering of veterans organizations in Minnesota.

"We are currently fighting a war," said Minnesota American Legion Commander Jennifer Havlick.

She pointed out the Veterans & Military Omnibus Bill includes provisions to bolster the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs efforts to stem veteran suicide. She also noted the Minnesota American Legion Suicide Prevention Coalition and now the Legion's buddy checks are crucial to preventing suicides at the local level.

Sarah Weigel of the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans said 97 percent of veterans who work with MACV are at or below the level of "extreme poverty."

Her nonprofit organization served 1,700 veterans in 2022. Minnesota is hoping to be the fourth state to declare functional zero when it comes to veteran homelessness.

She described functional zero as "rare, brief and never again."

St. Louis County Commissioner Ashley Grimm said county rule changes and working with local agencies helped Duluth and St. Louis County to reach functional zero.

"We effectively ended veteran homelessness in St. Louis County. It's possible," she told the veterans in attendance.

The only two remaining counties in Minnesota are Hennepin and Ramsey.

Marine veteran and Veterans Day on the Hill emcee Eric Therwanger replied, "You know, the only thing I like more than setting a goal is accomplishing it."

DAV Legislative Director Trent Dilks asked all Vietnam veterans to stand up. He said they easily could have given up on a nation that did not appreciate their service, yet they kept going and fought for veterans benefits, even though many of those same benefits were taken away from them.

After a march to the Capitol, veterans and their

supporters gathered around the Rotunda.

Minnesota Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Brad Lindsey said MDVA collaborates with veterans organizations to serve the needs of the 300,000 veterans in the state.

Last year, this effort resulted in the first omnibus bill for veterans and military affairs, removing these issues from being used as leverage for other political interests.

"We believe this omnibus bill created a new precedent that should be followed for years to come," Lindsey said.

He said the MDVA hopes to continue its current operations, such as the five veterans homes and three state cemeteries. Plus, the state agency is asking for funding to help it with start-up costs of three new veterans homes and a new state cemetery, as well as the growing demand for counseling services. (Call 888-LinkVet for support service.) MDVA is asking for an increase to the Minnesota G.I. Bill to reflect the growing costs for higher education.

The MDVA, he said, would like lawmakers to approve a one-time funding to complete the bonus program for Post-9/11 veterans. This would add veterans of Operation Inherent Resolve (the war with ISIS) and allow any current Minnesota resident, regardless of where he or she entered the military, to receive the bonus.

Finally, the MDVA seeks funding to establish a community health program to support veteran suicide prevention efforts, improve efforts to assist transitioning veterans and bolster efforts to end veteran homelessness, Lindsey said.

Sens. Erin Murphy and Nicole Mitchell spoke and said they will work to provide a veterans omnibus bill, so that veterans issues, as Murphy put it, "avoid the B.S. in this Capitol."

Several lawmakers spoke about efforts to pass veterans legislation.

Gov. Tim Walz wrapped up the proceedings. He said he favors a stand-alone veterans and military omnibus bill and said he wants the state budget surplus "returned to the people."

Walz said the state hopes to fund a commemoration at the Capitol of the 50th anniversary of the U.S. pullout from Vietnam, which was in 1973.



Veterans march from the Veterans Service Building to the State Capitol on March 30 as part of Veterans Day on the Hill. See a gallery at the department Facebook page.

Minn. Legion College



Minnesota Legion College took place April 20-23 at Camp Ripley. National Commander Jim Troiola took the time to visit. Graduates of Legion College, front row from left, are Jeffrey Olson, Kurt Roettjer, Amy Larsen and Mike VanHeel, Middle row from left are Tony O'Donnell, Joe Bares, Robert Dolan, Kristy Janigo, Steve NaSalle, Michael Kleindl and James Hultgren. Back from left are John Miller, Jon Haworth, Daniel Siats, Troiola, Frank Grittner, Rob Rollins, Michael Johnson and Chuck Stone.



Instructors at Minnesota Legion College also stood for a photo with Troiola. From left are Mike Ash, Gary Richardson, Paul Edwards, Jennifer Havlick, Troiola, Linda Dvorak, Carla Tappanier and Joe "Get over here; we're trying to take a photo with the national commander" Tappanier. A good-spirited, fun time was had by all. Veterans enjoy being on base and learning about the Legion and leadership. Minnesota Legion College is offered by the Training Committee, and the next one takes place Oct. 12-15. Enroll by going to mnlegion.org and looking under "Programs."



David Weeres rides a 1973 Honda CB750.

Motorcycle refresher course offered

By David J. Weeres
Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Task Force

Have you been riding your machine for 10 years, 20 years, or even 30 years, and think you know it all? Do you want to challenge yourself? Take a one-day course and let's see what you've got. The "Advanced" and "Expert" courses will take you to another level skillwise.

These courses are sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety in coordination with local colleges. The instructors are expert riders and will share their skills to make

you a better rider. The classes are limited to 10 students, with two instructors, and 90 percent of the day on your machine. You will finish exhilarated and exhausted! Really, what is better than spending a day on the bike, and then learning a few things along the way? In essence, you learn to be better connected to your cycle.

These courses are taught in the Twin Cities metro area along with St. Cloud. Bikers from all over the state have ridden to these courses for one day excursions.

If you're relatively new to riding motorcycles or have been out of the saddle for a

time, an "Intermediate" course is probably better suited to freshen your skills.

And if you want to learn to ride, the "Basic Rider" course is a great way to learn and become a licensed rider. These courses are offered throughout the state of Minnesota through local community/technical colleges.

For more information, and to sign up, visit the Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Center web page.

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/mmsc/Pages/default.aspx>

Join the fun, challenge yourself, and be the best rider you can be!

What's happening?

Legionville accepting registrations for camp

BRAINERD — Registration is open for sending kids ages 10-12 to Legionville Education Center.

Legionville now has a new website. It is at legionville.org.

The registration fee is \$500, and that cost typically is paid by the local American Legion post or other sponsor, like a local school, fraternal organization or civic club.

"I encourage posts to send their local kids to camp. They have fun and learn a lot," said Legionville President Carl Moon.

Parents complete the registration, but it is advised to have the sponsor lined up first.

Session dates are June 11-16, June 18-23, June 25-30, July 9-14, July 16-21, July 23-28 and July 30-Aug. 4.

Safety patrol lessons remain part of what Legionville teaches to kids; however, the camp also teaches them CPR, first aid, swimming safety and other safety lessons.



It is a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

St. Thomas Academy is a private all-boys Catholic military preparatory middle and high school.

The wall is to be accompanied by a mobile education center.

The display begins at 2 p.m. May 25 and ends 2 p.m. May 29. It will be behind Flynn Hall on the practice fields.

It honors the 3 million Americans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces in the Vietnam War. The wall bears the names of 58,281 men who died in Vietnam.

"It is an honor and privilege for Saint Thomas Academy to host The Wall That Heals," said ret. Col. Neil Hetherington, commandant of cadets at Saint Thomas Academy.

Group tours are available. To schedule one, email John Morris at revmorris@comcast.net or call 651-683-1547.

War displays coming to Slayton in August

SLAYTON — Slayton American Legion Post 64 is hosting a Vietnam wall, too.

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

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

Club 39 Golf Tourney is set for late July

NORTH ST. PAUL — The ninth annual Club 39 Golf Tournament is scheduled for Saturday, July 29, at Applewood Hills Golf Course in Stillwater.

In addition to the new course, the 18-hole scramble will feature a 9 a.m. shotgun start, with meal and program at North St. Paul Post 39 following the tournament.

Cost is \$300 per 4-person team, and includes golf with cart, prizes and meal. The 1st place winner will receive \$500, with 2nd place taking \$300. The remaining teams will be entered in a drawing for \$100.

A maximum of 25 teams will be entered, with a registration/payment deadline of July 8. Starting holes will be assigned on a first come/first served basis. Registration forms are available at Legion Post 39 at the sign-in podiums, and at americanlegionnorthstpaul.com.

Any teams registered in the tournament representing Minnesota Legion Posts will also be eligible for the Commanders Cup, a traveling trophy for local Veteran's organizations.

For more information, contact Ken at 651-354-0064 or kenn5822@hotmail.com, or go to the Post website. Sponsorship information is also available at Post 39 and on the website.

Who wants to attend National Legion College?

ST. PAUL — The Department of Minnesota is encouraging posts to fill out the nomination form for sending a member to National American Legion College.

Nominees must first complete American Legion Basic Training prior to submitting an application.

The application is found online at legion.org/college or mnlegion.org under "Programs," then "Minnesota Legion College," then "National Legion College."

National American Legion College is Nov. 12-17 in Indianapolis.

The deadline for submitting applications is July 1. Send applications to The American Legion Department of Minnesota at 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155, or via email to Adjutant Mike Maxa at mmaxa@mnlegion.org.

VA Medical Center needs your assistance

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minneapolis VA Medical Center has urgent needs for the following items:

- Sweatpants, men's or unisex, in medium, large and extra large.

- Zip-up sweatshirts, men's or unisex, in medium, large and extra large.

- Neck pillows, purchased or handmade. If handmade, filling must be firmly stuffed using new batting.

- Deodorant, men's or unisex, travel-size preferred but any size accepted. No aerosol cans.

Donations of items such as these help a Veteran patient feel cared for, and help them retain their dignity during a time of need.

Contact Goldie Bosard with the Center for Development & Civic Engagement at 612-467-3202 or by email at goldie.bosard@va.gov.

VA clinic is Alexandria moving to new place

ALEXANDRIA — The Max J. Beilke VA Clinic is moving to a new, larger facility at located at 410 30th Ave. East, in Alexandria. Starting May 15, all veteran appointments will occur at the new location.

"We are pleased to be able to increase the size of Max J. Beilke VA Clinic in Alexandria and continue to deliver health care services to area Veterans," said St. Cloud VA Health Care System Director Brent Thelen, "This new facility increases available space by about 6,000 square feet and ensures we have room to serve the increasing numbers of Veterans seeking care close to home."

A ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. Thursday, May 11. Veterans served by the clinic are invited to attend.

The clinic offers primary health care services and specialty care referrals to the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, other VA facilities and in-network community health care organizations. Other services at the clinic include mental health services, medication management, telemedicine, clinical pharmacy services, social work services, lab draws, tele-audiology, home based care and primary care physical therapy.

The new clinic is in a building that was remodeled and leased by VA. The lease contractor is Command & Control Construction LLC of Hawley.

Vietnam War display coming to St. Thomas

MENDOTA HEIGHTS — The Wall That Heals is coming to St. Thomas Academy for Memorial Day weekend.



Listening Post



Members of Woodbury Post 501 toured Warrior Brewing in Duluth.



On April 17, Albert Lea Post 56 Commander Ole Olson presented 11 50-year certificates and one 60-year certificate. Receiving certificates, in the top photo, were Dave Lundak, Ray Hardies, Gary Anderson, Duane Olson (60 years), Frank Wilcox, Sid Troutner, Albert Allen, Charles Van Wey. Unable to attend were Dick Dahlen, Kurt Hanson, Gerald Redig and Curtis Schoenrock. In the next photo, Olson presents the 2023 Legionnaire of the Year plaque to Tom Norby.



Underwood Post 489 Commander Shawn Savage, state Rep. Tom Murphy, ADSO Janet Lorenzo, Past Department Commander Mike Ash, NECman Bill Barbknecht, DSO Ray Kane and state Sen. Jordan Rasmusson dined together March 29 at Mancini's Char House in St. Paul.



Ashby American Legion Auxiliary Unit 357 member Joyce Lacey volunteers at Military Appreciation Night on April 4 at the Twin Cities Auto Show with MACV Employment Program Manager A.J. Brock.



Third District Commander Gary Richardson, left, and St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Squadron 577 member Stu Sonnee, right, present a quilt to Post 577 member John Weiss in honor of his military working dog, King, in the Air Force. Willernie Auxiliary Unit 507 member Teri Richardson, who is Gary's wife, spent many hours making the quilt, calling it "a labor of love." The quilt was presented at Post 577's April 17 membership meeting.



Heaven's Table Director Greta Lintelman accepts a donation of \$10,000 from Fairmont Post 36 Commander Steve Fosness.



Fairmont Area Youth Trap Club instructor Scott Fuhrman accepts a donation of \$3,000 from Fairmont Post 36 Commander Steve Fosness.



Listening Post



American Legion posts in Meeker County hosted the 38th annual Boys & Girls County program on April 18. Thirty-two eighth-, ninth- and tenth-grade students from Eden Valley-Watkins, Cosmos and Litchfield high schools travel to Litchfield to observe and experience a day in the life of their county government. The day started with a briefing at Litchfield Post 104, then a history lesson at the Grand Army of the Republic Hall & Museum, toured Meeker County departments, then lunch at the post with county commissioners and staff, and finally a tour of the Family Services Center. Their favorite part seemed to be the courtrooms, where they participated in a mock trial.



Slayton Post 64 Commander Brad Pagel, right, accepts \$875 donation from Lismore Post 636 and \$875 donation from Lismore SAL Squadron 636 toward the Vietnam Wall and Cost of Freedom displays coming to Slayton during the Murray County Fair Aug 15-20.

Raylin Dutrieuille, right, presents a \$1,000 check April 17 from Bloomington American Legion Post 550 to Children's Minnesota Foundation for its autism intervention program. Raylin's father, Raymond, is a Post 550 member.



Department Vice Commander Randy Bastyr, left, and North St. Paul Post 39 Commander Don Bronk, right, pose for photos with Harry Johnson, center, after presenting him with certificates commemorating 50 years of service with The American Legion and with Post 39. Johnson is a past post commander and a member of the Legion Riders.

Rochester Post 92 Commander Chris Gilmore, right, conducts installation ceremony for new Post 92 Chaplain David Crawley, left, while the Post 92 Sergeant-at-Arms Bill Born, center, watches.



District 7 Eagle Scout of the Year Dominique Claseman was presented his scholarship award April 18 at Olivia Post 186. Dominique and his parents, Mark and Wendy Jurgensen, announced they had spent the previous weekend in Washington, D.C., with the National Medal of Honor Society. At a special event, Claseman and five other civilian recipients received Congressional Medal of Honor Society medals. What an honor!



Faribault Post 43 has a new drop box for used flags, making it easier for the public to properly drop off and dispose of flags.

Marcus Adamek of Mercury Minnesota Corp. in Faribault had an idea to create flag boxes that are outdoor-ready and secure. The company donated this prototype to Post 43. Adjutant Jim Douda said, "It's working great, and we're proud of it. We hope posts across the state will order some from Mercury Minnesota."

The company is a sheet-metal contractor. Posts wishing to order a similar flag box can call Marcus Adamek at 507-332-1116 or email him at marcusa@mercurycorp.com.

Page 16 The Minnesota Legionnaire May 2023

VA changes rule to cover emergency transportation

ST. PAUL — The VA has corrected the problem of not reimbursement enrolled veterans for ambulance and helicopter transportation associated with emergency care.

The rule change was effective April 24.

“This is certainly a direct result of our CODEL’s letter,” said Greg Peterson, legislative director from the Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers.

CODEL means “congressional delegation.”

The American Legion Department of Minnesota last summer and fall worked with the Minnesota representatives and senators in Washington, D.C., to talk about and craft a letter to send to VA Secretary Denis McDonough.

The VA had been not properly processing many of the emergency transportation reimbursements for veterans rated at 30 percent or below since the MISSION Act went into effect in 2018.

“In light of the sacrifices our veterans have made, we must fulfill our

obligation to provide those who have served this country with a high standard of care,” the letter said.

The letter was signed by Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith and by Reps. Tom Emmer, Pete Stauber, Betty McCollum, Michelle Fischbach, Ilhan Omar, Brad Finstad, Dean Phillips and Angie Craig.

The letter was written by Communications Director Tim Engstrom and past Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller, in conjunction with staff from Rep. Tom Emmer’s office.

Wolfsteller had been in touch with veterans and with county veteran service officers statewide who encountered problems with VA not paying transportation. Meanwhile, ambulance costs were skyrocketing.

Engstrom and Wolfsteller also met with officials from the Minneapolis VA Health Care System and with VISN-23, the regional offices.

During many of the meetings, they would bring veterans whose credit scores were impacted by the VA not reimbursing ambulance bills.



Jeremy Wolfsteller



Tim Engstrom

Dept. of Minnesota was busy in April

Hello from your extremely tired department membership director. I’m not sure what happened to April, but I am sure glad it’s over.

The month started out with the Twin Cities Auto Show. The Minnesota Automobile Dealers Association had a contest and gave away five \$1,000 awards to the VFW and American Legion posts that submitted an application on how their posts help in the community. Of the five awards, four were received by the American Legion; New Prague, Underwood, Waseca and Woodbury.

We then had the Appreciation Rally in New Prague at Post 45. What a great turnout and congrats to those district vice commanders who were

Membership Moment

Linda Dvorak

chosen as District Vice Commanders of the Year by their district commanders!

We rolled right into the National Commander’s Tour of Minnesota. It was a northern route this year, and we gave National Commander Jim Troiola a taste of Minnesota with rain and snow. I think we even had one nice day! That day came at the northernmost point, when we visited Chisholm.

National Commander Troiola ended his tour with a visit to Camp Ripley and a question-and-answer session with

our April class of Minnesota Legion College students. We had 18 graduates of Minnesota American Legion College this session, and all students were engaged, contributed and made the class such a great experience.

Linda Dvorak of New Prague Post 45 is the membership director for the Department of Minnesota.



Spring is time of elections at the posts

Spring has sprung with green grass at last. April has been a very busy Legion month with the nomination of officers in some posts and the election of them in others.

The same is soon to follow for districts and departments.

As we elect new officers, let’s all of us get behind them and work with them. Many new officers will bring new ideas. We may or may not agree with them; however, some changes are needed. We want to continue on our path to helping our veterans, families and communities. Listening and mentoring helps others, too.

With spring here take a close look around your post home. My own Underwood Post 489 has put in a new ceiling and floor. We painted all the walls and installed handicapped bathrooms. This was done by the Auxiliary and Legion members working TOGETHER. Check the outside of your Post home and make it look like a place you would like to enter.

National Commander Jim Troiola made a visit to many Legion posts in Minnesota. He, as we, was very pleased with

National Report

Bill Barbknecht

the turnout at each visit. When he visited the Underwood post, he installed the post commander. Outgoing Post Commander Frank McKensie and new Post Commander Shawn Savage enjoyed the special ceremony. All three are Navy veterans.

Please keep in contact with your senator. We need to keep e-tabs as they are, not change them, and lawmakers need to lower taxes so the state’s charities can benefit.

Spring and NEC meeting are coming up May 7-11 in Indianapolis. Several Minnesota veterans will be in attendance. A BIG thank you to Past National Commander Dan Ludwig, for all he does for Minnesota and the national organization. Thank you also to Adjutant Mike Maxa, Communications Director Tim Engstrom, Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo and her Legislative Committee for a Veterans Day on the Hill.

I hope your post is ready

for a busy summer with Minnesota American Legion Baseball and Minnesota American Legion Fastpitch Softball. Have you arranged for a boy to go to Boys State? A girl to Girls State? How about participants for Legionville summer camp, with its school patrol, first aid and other safety training?

Donna and I look forward to seeing you all at the upcoming district conventions. Thanks go to the outgoing commanders and best wishes to the new incoming

To the new commanders and officers, you have a big responsibility; however, I am confident you and we can do it.

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



MDVA programs serving veterans

Greetings from the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs’ Programs and Services Division.

Aligning with Gov. Tim Walz’s State of the State address, I am happy to share a “State of the MDVA” summary.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs state remains strong and highly capable. Leadership at MDVA continues to ensure that the agency provides the most exceptional programs and premium services to Minnesota veterans and their families.

The following are hot topics that deserve attention:

- The MDVA State Soldiers Assistance Program, or SSAP for short, is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Established on April 21, 1923, SSAP has been providing support and assistance to veterans who have sacrificed for our nation and has impacted veterans and their families for 100 years!

- In response to changing needs, the Veterans Relief Grant was implemented in 2005 and COVID-19 Disaster Relief Grants provided \$6.2 million to Minnesota veterans in 2020 and 2021. These grants have been critical in helping veterans who are eligible in life-changing circumstances. SSAP recently increased its income and asset limits to match 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. This change has made the program more accessible to those who need it, and it is a testament to the program’s commitment to meeting the needs of veterans. Please investigate your options for all state and federal benefits programs.

- MDVA has the privilege of

Guest Column

Ron Quade



administering the Minnesota Post-9/11 Veterans Service Bonus, which was passed in legislation by the first-ever Veterans & Military Omnibus Bill in 2022. The legislation allocated \$24.8 million in funding to eligible persons serving during the prescribed time period of Sept. 11, 2001 to Aug. 30, 2021.

There are three tiers of available bonuses in the amounts of \$600, \$1,200 and \$2,000 depending on eligibility. MDVA began accepting applications on July 7, 2022, and continues to accept applications until June 30, 2024. MDVA received 22,608 applications and approved 18,978. MDVA has disbursed \$20.3 million out of \$24.8 million.

- Check your eligibility and apply online at MinnesotaVeteran.org/ServiceBonus, or contact your local county veteran service officer, also known as CVSO, for assistance at macvso.org and click on “Find a CVSO.”

- The MDVA’s education team for CVSOs continues to hold trainings, both virtual and in person. This ensures Minnesota’s chief veterans advocates have the most up-to-date information to assist each of their county’s veterans and their family members.

Recently, there has been special focus on PACT Act information and the changes affecting their veterans nationwide. Minnesota CVSOs, with the assistance from MDVA, are all

accredited federally and certified with MDVA to ensure the best advice and service possible is provided to all 87 Minnesota counties. Additionally, the MDVA Claims Office has changed its business model into a county-focused model.

This means that each CVSO has a primary MDVA claims representative for VBA claims. This gives the CVSO more continuity in claims support and gives the claims reps more familiarity with their primary customers. We have seen an increase in the amount of work sent into our east and west offices so this is a good sign the change has had a positive impact.

The state of the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs’ Programs and Services Divisions is strong. We continue operations and are virtually open for business. Please contact your local county veteran service office or contact the MDVA Claims Division directly at 612-970-5662 if you are interested in any claims or benefits information.

Ron Quade is currently serving as the interim deputy commissioner for programs and services and is the director of claims and field operations for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

E-commo is fast and inexpensive

Have you every watched an old Western movie where some miscreant climbs up a telegraph pole and clips the wire, thus preventing information about a robbery, an attack or some other event from getting to the folks that need to know?

That breakdown in communication is the same thing that happens when National HQ, Department of Minnesota or your district are unable to contact you because of missing or incorrect information.

At this time of year, many posts of The American Legion are holding elections, and we are seeing new names and faces in leadership positions. One of the most important things that a Legion leader must do is communicate, so it is vitally important that every Legion Leader provide complete and correct information, including phone and email.

I include email because more and more the Legion is relying on electronic communication. Why would they

Training Committee

Paul Edwards



do that? Because it is fast and inexpensive. When our department adjutant receives something from national that needs to be published, he can have it in the hands of several thousand Legion members in a matter of minutes. The only costs involved in that transaction are the annual fees paid for internet services.

I know that there are some folks who have the attitude that, “If it’s important for me to know, then it is important enough for you to put it in an envelope and mail it.”

I acknowledge that is one method, but let’s consider two things.

- First to consider is mailing costs. The current cost of first-class postage is 63 cents. For ease of math, let’s only send out 1,000 envelopes. That single mailing would cost \$630. I suspect that is

more than a year of internet and email service costs.

- The second thing to consider is how long it takes USPS to deliver mail. To address that issue, I will just ask one question. How often have you received Christmas cards or presents in January that were mailed in mid-December?

The point of this article is to encourage new commanders and adjutants at every level to make sure that the officer reports that are sent in are complete and accurate. Failure to do this will result in cut telegraph lines.

Paul Edwards is a past 6th District commander and a member of the Department Training Committee.



The American Legion Department of Minnesota was at Military Appreciation Night at the Twin Cities Auto Show April 4. Kurt Roettger of the Department Media & Communications Committee smiles as he stands next to a Ford GT.

District commanders



1st District

Mary Hanson



Hello from the 1st District. It is with a sad heart, for the third time this year, to announce the passing of another great Legionnaire. Dale Wellik passed away on April 6 after a short illness. He was the 1st District commander for 2 years. He guided the 1st through the COVID time frame. He was the current district membership director.

we leave this place, go with the peace and grace of our Heavenly Father, proclaiming all He has done for you. Go and spread the love that our Father has for us to all you meet. And may the wind of the Spirit of God blow you where you need to be."

He also held many other positions from the post on up. Dale was a very kind man with an infectious smile. He travelled the district and attended more meetings than anyone I know. If you wanted to know what was going on, all you had to do was ask Dale. His patriotic van will be missed in the parades all over southern Minnesota.

The 1st District Convention will be on May 20 at Post 333 in Kasson. Please come as this is a business meeting with election of officers and resolutions to consider. Now is the time to consider stepping up into a leadership position.

Dale joins Jim Westby and Larry Otto. In Larry's words, "As

The CPR report and many others are coming due. Please make sure they are turned in on time. Do your part. Pray for peace in the world.



2nd District

Pam Krill



Greetings, 2nd District American Legion Family.

very welcoming.

As we spring into spring, we have to think about the things we can still accomplish. The 2nd District did fall behind the 6th District in membership, but we have so many things to be excited about. We have continued to introduce The American Legion to our members, and they are renewing. You are making a statement that the American Legion matters and your membership matters.

As we continue to push toward the end of the year, I ask everyone to try and make that connection with those who have not renewed or joined The American Legion yet, talk to them about the benefits of being a member, the family they are about to join. We need to help everyone find their purpose and today, so many people need to have a purpose to be a part. They need to be able to help them find where they can have the biggest impact. We all make an impact, and we need to help our members find where they can find their joy.

Thank you to every one of you, because you are doing great things in your areas and have been creative on the ways you recruit and retain you members. You have the motivation to keep our district going and show we are a force to be reckoned with. Again, I am proud to be a member of the 2nd District.

Keep pushing, 2nd District. We can finish the year in first place. Find the joy in what you are doing, and we will come out on top.

This year I have also found the "joy" within The American Legion. It has been such a great time visiting every post and to find the joy everyone has for the mission we are doing and that is serving our veterans, their families and the communities we are living.

Reminder: We have 2nd District Convention coming up quickly here on June 9 and 10. The 9th will be a small gathering at Evoke Winery in Madelia at 4 p.m. to celebrate our successful year, with the District Executive Meeting at 7 p.m. At 8 a.m. on the 10th, Registration will open with the convention starting at 9 a.m. Everyone is welcome; you do not need to be a post officer.

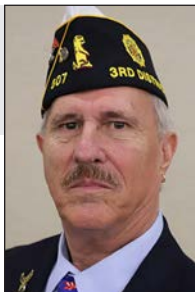
So, many of our posts have taken the time to find creative ways to give back to the community, but also reach the goals of The American Legion, by setting the example. I can't express how welcome I have felt visiting every post and the county councils, everyone has been

We hope to see all of you at the 2nd District Convention.



3rd District

Gary Richardson



Membership in the American Legion continues to decline not just in the state of Minnesota but nationwide. We had over 60,000 members last year. We are still working to get current and past members to renew their membership and with a little work we still have time to get there again.

we try everything we can to keep retention up and to get new members because without them we can't perform our mission of helping our communities and veterans.

This time of year, it becomes more difficult, but we need to stress how important it is that

Mentoring our upcoming new officers for their roles in

The American Legion will be each of our responsibilities. We must always be teaching and learning from one another because there is a vast knowledge base and history contained in the minds and writings of previous leaders of this organization. We must also be mindful of the fact that each and every one of us is a volunteer and we need to remain conscious of that fact. Though we have made a commitment

to the Legion, each of us has family and personal responsibilities to attend to outside of the organization.

This year is quickly coming to an end. We will soon be turning over the responsibilities to new and possibly seasoned members of this great organization. Let's help them in any way we can to transition to the roles they are about to assume.

Until next month, stay safe, and thank you for all you do!



4th District

David Dahl



When I transferred my Legion membership to Minnesota in 1974, I was almost immediately thrust into the office of adjutant of first one and then another of the largest posts in the state. Since I was newly married, employed full-time, and going to night school part-time, it was a recipe for disaster. I even stopped being a member of the Legion for a period.

process has started!

When I rejoined the Legion and became active in the 4th District, we cautioned our posts to engage with younger veterans but to NOT put them into leadership positions too quickly. We are now doing a 180-degree turn from that guidance.

We have a growing group of younger veterans who are engaging with us to bring them into leadership positions, with each of them paired with a seasoned Legionnaire who will help them to succeed. These younger veterans are bonding as a group and with their mentors.

In my column last month, I talked about a revolution and the need to hand off the reins of power in the 4th District. I am delighted to tell you that the

This is an exciting time for the 4th District. While I know there may be a "bumpy road" ahead, I am expecting good things to come from this process. The 4th District will emerge from this process as truly the "Fabulous Fourth!"

Still serving! Serving veterans and serving our communities.



5th District

Lynne Nottage



The Legion year is winding down, and we still have many things to accomplish. We are very busy here in the 5th District preparing for our Memorial Day service at the Minneapolis Veterans Home. If you've never attended, please keep us in mind. We are also planning the 5th District Convention for the first weekend in June.

at Highway 100 and I-494. Please review the Call to Convention carefully.

We have changed the location, due to a conflict at the Holiday Inn, to the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Minneapolis South, which is in Bloomington

The 5th District is still looking for interested Legionnaires, willing to either become an officer, member of the Executive Committee or a committee chairman. We have several spots to fill. If interested, please contact any district officer.



6th District

Karen O'Bar



Happy May. Wow! Three days at 60 degrees, and all the snow is gone. Soon the farmers and fishermen will be out in force.

in first place. Outstanding work by everyone in the district. Continue to keep up the great work. Mike Van Heel was named 6th District Vice Commander. Was great to see everyone.

Wow! I can't believe my year is almost over. No recycling for me as the 6th had two candidates for district commander 2023-2024 membership year. Susan Edwards from Nisswa Post 627 and Dwayne Collins from the Brainerd Post 255. Make the time to come and have a vote. You can only make a difference if you show up.

I want to take this time to thank each and every one of you. Without your support and encouragement, I'm not sure I could have done it. The 6th District is my home. I look forward to what the future holds.

April has been very busy. I'm so glad with all my travels the wonderful Legion family I met on the way. I continue to look forward to this.

My projects for the year were the Delta Dogs at the Eagles Healing Nest and Guitars for Heroes thru the St. Cloud Stand Down. The total for my projects is \$23,562. Again, thank you all. Without your support this would not have been possible.



7th District

Karen Welander



The leadership team has the challenge of articulating to our members the goals and objectives to be carried out. We must continue to provide leadership and involvement in American Legion programs which are the lifeblood of our organization.

community service, assistance and support.

Meaningful programs also help to generate interest and participation in our programs and for new members to join our tremendous organization. Minnesota is a leader in volunteerism. The leadership in activities supporting veterans and their families are a vital sources for

Our area has experienced some natural disasters and storms in the last month or so. Remember that the American Legion National Emergency Fund for Legion family members in a declared natural disaster. As we continue to service our communities and help out those in need we are still serving America. God bless America.



8th District

Larry Pocrnich



Good day, veterans.

The month of May is upon us, we should be winding down for the fiscal year, but let's give it one more big push to get us into the upper 90 percent for membership.

the suffering they are having from conflicts while in the service. These will be the ones who need the help. Make yours and theirs a better place to live after the services to our country. Only you can tell how you are feeling. Get the help from our congress and legislators by talking to them. You are the future.

May is also new officer nomination month. Some will be renominated to their position, but it would be nice if new veterans take the place. Volunteer to be an officer and meet new veterans. It is your friends that help you complete the mission and in turn they may take the officer position.

The officers of The American Legion Department of Minnesota and all others have done their best this year. I believe with more volunteers helping we can get the job done fast. It is the volunteers who get the grunt work done so other unfortunate veterans can get the help they need.

It is no longer a meet at the bar and drink. There are training groups that come around or zoom talk to you to finish what you start. The conventions are exciting and worth your time to be there.

Thank you, 8th District and post membership chairs. We may not be first, but we tried.

The veterans in the past are aging and don't get around as easy to keep the benefits going for veterans. We need younger veterans to tell their stories of

I look forward to working with the 8th in a different capacity. Thank you.



9th District

Terry Buraas



The American Legion Birthday celebrations are now over.

shoot them if they knock on our door at any time of day. This country

I, myself, received my 50-year certificate. When I started paying dues, I would have never thought I would make 50 years. But I have discovered that 60 and 70 years are attainable, and a couple of years ago, my post had a 75-year member. Honoring those that make a commitment to The American Legion is something each post should make the effort to present.

needs to start looking at our behavior and reevaluate what is happening in this country. We also need to assist our neighbors and tend our youth as they are the future of this country. I hope this type of reaction is a turning point so gun violence stops.

I realize we in this area know our neighbors, but we don't

Plan summer camp for the kids today!

Registration for Legionville Education Center is open now!



Sun.-Fri. sessions begin June 11. The camp is for students who will be between 9 and 13 years old by Sept. 1. Learn safety for school patrol, swimming, first aid, CRP, internet, canoeing and more. Visit legionville.weebly.com.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

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President Mary Kuperus • Secretary Christie Avant, christie@mnala.org

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

651-224-7634

May 2023



President Mary Kuperus and Honorary Junior President Sydney Borntreger smile for the camera at the Appreciation Rally, which was the same day and location as the Junior Conference. The rally happened after the conference at New Prague Post 45.



Honorary Jr. Department Auxiliary President Sydney Borntreger presents a check for \$13,674 to the adaptive sports program at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center.

Department Junior Conf. was a success

Welcome to May!
As I write this article, I am preparing to join part of the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota. My hope is that many American Legion Family members attend the breakfasts, lunches and dinners in his honor along the way.

Excitement is building for our American Legion Auxiliary National President Vickie Koutz to arrive in Minnesota for a tour May 1-3. Donations for her project may be presented to her at any of the lunches and dinners. Hope to see many of you along the tour!

The 59th annual Department Junior Conference was a great success on Saturday, April 15 at New Prague Post 45. Thank you to Department Junior Activities Chairman Renee Suess and 3rd District President Kim Carlander and her committee for all their work in preparing for this conference.

Thank you to Unit and Post 45 for hosting! The conference was wonderful!

Honorary Junior President Sydney Borntreger led her conference with dignity and grace. Donations of over \$13,000 were presented to representatives from Sioux Falls VA Health Care System for Adaptive Sports Equipment to

President's Column

Mary Kuperus



help improve independence, well-being and quality of life for veterans. Congratulations to Sydney and the 2022-2023 Honorary Junior Officers for a wonderful year of service.

As April 15 was also Purple Up for Military Kids, Auxiliary Juniors and Seniors wore purple. Military kids will know that the Department of Minnesota supports and cares about them when they see our pictures!

Thank you all for the donations toward the Department President's Project. The three new veteran homes will appreciate all that the American Legion Family does for them and their residents now and into the future. Please continue to donate if you can. We have not reached our goal of \$30,000 as of yet.

National Poppy Day is on May 26. Poppy distribution is held on different days around the state as that is up to the unit to decide. As the president, I will present the story about the poppy at American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State in June. I also plan to show the young women attending how

to make a poppy.

Happy Mother's Day to all mothers, especially to mothers of military children! As someone who has lived through raising children in the military, I know exactly how tough a job it can be. Military moms are tough and very resilient. May all moms have a very special day on May 14.

Memorial Day is on May 29. This is the day that we remember those veterans who are no longer with us. May they all rest in peace. I am sure many Memorial Day programs will be held.

As we "Serve and Honor Every Day," let's remember all veterans who have served our country at home and abroad. Thank you for all you do for our veterans and military!

Mary Kuperus of New London Unit 537 is the president of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota. Her theme is "Serve and Honor Every Day."



President Mary Kuperus steps to the podium at the Appreciation Rally at New Prague Post 45. The post also is known as the Park Ballroom.



Department Membership Director Sandy Wersal reports on membership efforts at the Appreciation Rally on April 15. The red flannel shirts are part of the Paul Bunyan theme for the year.



President Mary Kuperus with the Honorary Jr. Auxiliary President Sydney Borntreger and the girls at the Junior Fun Night in New Prague on April 14.



Taylor McElroy, right, is the only dual member of her kind in the Department of Minnesota. She is an Auxiliary Junior member with Le Roy Unit 161 and an American Legion member with Le Roy Post 161. She is in high school but completed basic training in January. She is in the Army Reserves.



Poppy Month has finally arrived

By Linda Kelly
Poppy Chairman

By the time you are reading this, we have turned our calendar to May. It is Poppy Month, though I have been telling you to use the poppy throughout the year. Have you been successful?

First, I suggest that you ask your mayor to make a proclamation for National Poppy Day. We do that in Pine Island every year, and we get a picture in the paper.

Second, I hope that you are preparing a distribution program for your area. Do you send letters to members or businesses asking for donations? Do you put cans in local banks and

stores? How do you display the poppy? Do you ask for donations in your post and hang cards across the walls? Have you considered making poppy sprays or wreaths to lay at the graves of your deceased members?

Do members volunteer to sit at a table at the bank or a store to answer questions about the poppy? It was suggested to me that you ask a veteran to sit with you — better yet, with his uniform and cap on.

Don't forget that we do not sell poppies. We do distribute them, and we accept donations. We are governed as to how we spend our poppy profits.

These rules are for anyone distributing poppies — whether

it is the Auxiliary, Legion or American Legion Family. Our donations must be used for a project directly for veterans.

I am in the process of preparing packages of poppies to be mailed to the 22 television stations in Minnesota. I will provide them with information about the poppy and asking the anchors and reporters to wear a poppy.

What I am asking of you is to let me know if any of your anchors or reporters wear the poppy. If they do, I hope they will mention why they are wearing them. Please let me know by email to lkkcauxiliary@gmail.com or text to 507-421-8270. I hope to hear from you.



April 15, 2023, Membership:

DISTRICT	# of Units	Goal	Period Gain	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year	Difference from Last Year
						4/12/2022	
One	48	3,810	14	3,275	85.96%	3,378	103
Two	72	3,833	30	3,296	85.99%	3,461	165
Three	46	3,797	8	3,348	88.17%	3,478	130
Four	7	570	0	470	82.46%	482	12
Five	7	515	0	412	80.00%	435	23
Six	62	4,991	16	4,342	87.00%	4,574	232
Seven	57	2,938	3	2,507	85.33%	2,741	234
Eight	23	1,237	1	1,064	86.01%	1,078	14
Nine	47	3,305	5	2,881	87.17%	2,959	78
Ten	43	3,758	12	3,126	83.18%	3,362	236
1982 Dept	1	203	0	236	116.26%	185	-51
District Totals:	413	28,957	89	24,957	86.19%	26,133	1,176
Group 1 (Even)	207	14,389	59	12,298	85.47%	12,957	659
<i>Judy Ackerman</i>							
Group 2 (Odd)	205	14,365	30	12,423	86.48%	12,991	568
<i>Sharon Thiemecke</i>							

RANKINGS

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
88.17%	87.17%	87.00%	86.01%	85.99%
District #3	District #9	District #6	District #8	District #2
85.96%	85.33%	83.18%	82.46%	80.00%
District #1	District #7	District #10	District #4	District #5

Congrats to the 3rd District!



Minnesota Honorary Junior President Sydney Borntreger of Trimont Unit 373 in the 2nd District stands with 2nd District Commander Pam Krill, left, and Past 2nd District Commander Steve Fosness. Krill and Fosness both are with Fairmont Post 36.



Here are the 2023-2024 officers for the Honorary Junior Department of Minnesota.

Juniors enjoyed a fun-filled event

The 59th Annual Department Junior Conference was held on Saturday, April 15 hosted by the 7th District at New Prague Post 45. Honorary Department Junior Sydney Borntreger did an outstanding job of running the conference.

There were 22 units represented with 34 Junior members and 35 Senior members and 4 American Legion family guests for a total of 43 attendees. The Juniors had a fun Friday evening with great food and lots of fun activities thanks to New Prague Unit 45 and the 3rd District.

Junior members had the opportunity to

participate in three poppy contests. It was so difficult to choose the winners because there were three tables full of entries.

Minnesota's official delegate to the Northwestern Division National Junior meeting is Taylor McElroy of Le Roy Unit 161 in the 1st District.

Junior members also had the opportunity to hear about the Honorary President's Project. Borntreger presented the representatives from the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center's adaptive sports program with a check for \$13,674.

Poppy Memorial Day Wreath

Class I	1st Place	Hattie Efta	Argyle Unit 353
Class II	1st Place	Elizabeth Jarshaw	Argyle Unit 353
	2nd Place	Ashlynn Anderson	Stewartville Unit 164
Class III	1st Place	Eva Biffert	Stewartville Unit 164
	2nd Place	Gracy Swanson	Warren Unit 27

Poppy Corsage/Boutonniere

Class I	1st Place	Hattie Efta	Argyle Unit 353
	2nd Place	Josephine Andringe	Northrop Unit 522
Class II	1st Place	Izzy Slovinski Zipperer	Stewartville Unit 164
	2nd Place	Ashlynn Anderson	Stewartville Unit 164
Class III	1st Place	Lily Lovas	Morris Unit 29
	2nd Place	Makenna Swanson	Warren Unit 27

Poppy Centerpieces

Class I	1st Place	Hattie Efta	Argyle Unit 353
	2nd Place	Lou Jarshaw	Argyle Unit 353
Class II	1st Place	Mattea Efta	Argyle Unit 353
	2nd Place	Cloe Carter	Sanborn Unit 296
Class III	1st Place	Taylor Wentz	Warren Unit 27
	2nd Place	Brooke Miller	Warren Unit 27

Officers

New officers for 2023-2024 were elected and installed by Department President Mary Kuperus. The newly elected Honorary Department Junior Officers are:

Hon. President:	Taylor McElroy	Le Roy Unit 161
Hon. 1st Vice Pres.:	Teriana Richards	Argyle Unit 359
Hon. 2nd Vice Pres.:	Bree England	Minneapolis Unit 1
Hon. Secretary:	Raelyn Borntreger	Trimont Unit 373
Hon. Treasurer:	Claire Verkuillen	Minneapolis Unit 511
Hon. Chaplain:	Abigal Koltes	Melrose Unit 101
Hon. Historian:	Eva Burket	Belview Unit 309
Hon. Sgt.-at-Arms:	Josie Deschene	Argyle Unit 353



Department President Mary Kuperus and Department Commander Jennifer Havlick stand together at the St. Paul Armory for Veterans Day on the Hill.





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BONUS

CASH: \$124.00

WIN: []

BET: \$5.00

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