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For God and Country

May 2024

Give veterans purpose, relevance

National Commander Seehafer speaks on efforts to prevent suicides

MOORHEAD — American Legion National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer was humbled by the Vietnamese leadership and people during his visit to the country in December.

"They marvel at how we take care of veterans. They value the relationship between these two nations," he told about 115 members of the American Legion Family at Moorhead Post 21 on Sunday, April 14, on the first stop of the National Commander's

Tour of Minnesota.

So what does the United States do when asked? Seehafer said we share our knowledge.

"It's what we call Americanism," he said. The Legion Family ranged from longtime Legionnaires who posted the colors to the boys on the Moorhead Blues and Golds baseball teams who served.

The ever-fantastic America Legion 9th District Band warmed up the room with

patriotic music.

Some veterans, when asked to join The American Legion, ask, "What's that?" Some others ask, "What's in it for me?"

Seehafer told a story about two fighter jets in Vietnam in 1968. One was shot down. The other pilot spotted no ejection and no parachute but recorded the location. There was an attempt to recover the body later on, but it was enemy territory.

Continued on Page 8



National Commander Daniel Seehafer holds up his left index finger on April 16 at Chester Bird Post 523 in Golden Valley and says, "Be the One."

Ripley's believe it

What's it like to be out in the blind with a disabled veteran hunting turkeys?

By Tim Engstrom

CAMP RIPLEY — Ray Nagengast, a disabled veteran and American Legion member of Buffalo Post 270, was one of the 34 disabled veterans who signed up as hunters for the 20th Veterans with Disabilities Turkey Hunt.

It began on a beautifully sunny Tuesday, April 30, at Camp Ripley. Warm weather after days of clouds and cold rain had everyone itching to get through the instructional class and out on the range.

"I love to do this because it is a good time to get out in the woods,' Nagengast said.

Assisting Nagengast was Steve Hanson of Detroit Lakes.

"It's an honor to come and do this for these guys.'



A mama bear and her cub walk up behind our blind.



Steve Hanson of Detroit Lakes instructs disabled veteran Ray Nagengast of Buffalo Post 270 during the Veterans with Disabilities Turkey Hunt at Camp Ripley. The hunt is organized jointly by several veterans organizations including The American Legion. Hanson is the secretary for the Minnesota chapter of the **National Wild Turkey Federation.**

Hanson is the secretary for the Minnesota chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. I joined them on Tuesday afternoon when they first went out.

To set up a blind, it's good to think about the position of the sun in the morning, he said. They like to get some sunshine, but they don't like to look straight into a rising sun. In the spring, the blind close to the southeast corner

their main occupation is mating.

Turkeys have incredible eyesight and acute hearing. They can pinpoint the source of any sound. Hanson and Nagengast were assigned an area on the west edge of Camp Ripley. After patrolling for a quality spot along Luzon Road, they selected a clearing shaped like a sideways-T. We set up

of the junction, facing north and northwest. From here, we could see both directions

Hanson set up the decoys, and I ran a string from the tom decoy to the blind. A handle on the line allows us to fan its tailfeathers.

Then we hid our vehicles behind a berm near the entrance. When we **Continued on Page 2**

Sports betting bill close to finish

As of press time, it was waiting a turn on the House floor

ST. PAUL — The sports-betting bill containing tax relief for charitable gambling was close to the finish line at the state Legislature as of press

It was slated to be heard on the House floor on May 15. However, after long debates on many other subjects, House File 5274 (previously HF2000) did not get a turn. As of press time, it was described as "on the table." The Legionnaire was sent to the printing presses in Madelia the afternoon of May 16.

Advocates now hope to be heard May 17, which gives the measure less time to cross the path of the Senate before the Legislature adjourns May

"Right now, Minnesota charities and our American Legion posts involved in charitable gambling operations are disappointed that once again we've been put in the middle of partisan fights," said Minnesota

Continued on Page 5

Forest City Post 225 remodels its post home, more to come

FOREST LAKE — Forest Lake Post on Thursday, April 25, with a ribbon cutting, champagne and many local officials.

Forest Lake Area Chamber of Commerce President Nannette LaNasa recalled meeting at the Legion for many projects going back 25 years.

"When I found out what you were doing here, I got pretty excited," LaNasa said.

American Legion Department of Minnesota Commander Paul Hassing said he has been at Forest Lake Post 225 many times over the years. The post is a shining example of veterans for in part by gambling funds, in part working together.

"Forest Lake is one of the American 225 dedicated its remodeled post home Legions we are so proud of," he said.

Most American Legion posts do not have a post home (building). The ones have a bar, restaurant or banquet business often struggle to maintain the structure, pay taxes and keep operations going.

Post 225 2nd Vice Commander Travis Dye served as the project manager for the remodel. Upgrades were done to the main bar, main restrooms, business offices, gambling booth and game area.

The effort involved nine months of planning, he said.

The price tag was \$800,000, paid



Forest Lake Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Assistant Kayla Mildon holds her cellphone camera high as she prepares to snap a photo of the ribbon cutting on Thursday, April 25. American Legion Continued on Page 11 Post 225 in Forest Lake dedicated its remodeled interior.

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Camp Ripley Turkey Hunt: 'This is the best therapy'

Continued from Page 1

walked back to the blind, a hen ran across our path.

Hanson's blind has a big back door, which makes it easy for getting in and out, like if the veteran is in a wheelchair. Not all of the disabled veterans at the hunt are in wheelchairs, though. Hanson walks, but it was clear he needs assistance with setting up and picking anything off the ground. He wouldn't be hunting without Hanson's help.

Of course, I knew the virtue of what we are doing. We are helping disabled veterans enjoy Minnesota's great outdoors. But now, here I am, sitting in the blind, and his hat fell off. He can't bend to reach it. I grabbed it and handed it to him.

My thoughts turned to how amazing this is, to help this man, my fellow veteran, bag a bird. I contemplated this as we sat quietly, listening to the breeze.

Patience is key. Hanson said he calls every 20 minutes or so.

He started with a soft call. He used a mouth call. It's like a half-potato chip a hunter bites on. The chip has a plastic reed allows him to mimic a hen's call.

Twenty minutes later, he tried the box call. This is the classic wooden turkey caller, with a lid grinding against the box. It's loud.

Finally, he uses a slate call. These calls may or may not have slate in them, but they all involve rubbing a peg against a surface that could be slate, glass, crystal, ceramic or aluminum. Sometimes, they are called pot calls. In terms of volume, it



Disabled veteran Ray Nagengast of Buffalo Post 270, left, bends over next to guide Steve Hanson of Detroit Lakes with a jake turkey Nagengast shot around 6:30 a.m. May 1.

seems in between the other two.

"Every call works, and every call doesn't work," Hanson said.

The box call worked this time. We heard gobbles.

And again. And again.

The tom expects the hen to come to him, Hanson said. However, when the hen doesn't come, the tom often works his way closer to the hen in an at-

tempt to connect. Suddenly: c-c-c-crack! A tree or branch or something fell in the woods. It was followed by a quiet calm. Hanson tried the mouth call.

"Gobble."

It sounds farther away now. "Gobble gobble."

He's moving, that's for sure. Hanson whispered there are factors we might not realize. Maybe the birds are afraid of a certain clearing because of a past coyote attack, for example.

We waited another five minutes.

"Gobble."

The tom is even farther away. Hanson tried the slate call.

Nope. The tom had left the

The hunting time began around 1 p.m., lasts until 6:30 p.m., and I hadn't planned to stay the whole time. Hanson opened the rear hatch, and we both stepped out to see the likely reasons the tom wandered away a mama black bear and her cub were staring right at us.

We stared right back in awe. Hanson reminded me to take some photos.

You probably wonder whether I was afraid. No, I wasn't.

I reside in the metro these days, but I have lived most of my life in small towns or out in the country. When I lived in

Washington state, we had bears there, too, and I explored the Cascade Range like crazy. I knew black bears rarely attack, especially when we don't have dogs or food, so I wasn't scared one bit. Mama seemed calm, and I snapped some photographs.

Hanson asked me to send the photos of the bears to him. I shook his hand, gathered my camera bag, and I walked to my car, occasionally looking back to check on the whereabouts of

His efforts to position themselves for a good morning hunt worked. Nagengast leveled his shotgun through an opening of the blind at 6:30 a.m. Wednesday, May 1, and shot a jake.

The Veterans with Disabilities Turkey Hunt is run by Minnesota Veterans Outdoors (mnvetsoutdoors.org), which is a collaborative program among the Minnesota levels of The American Legion, DAV, VFW, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Elks, Camp Ripley Outdoor Adventures and Veterans 4 Veterans Trust Fund.

Late Tuesday evening, participants enjoyed a banquet in the Hangar Conference Center.

Col. Troy Fink, commander of Camp Ripley, led off. He thanked the veterans and volunteers. He said he loves the annual hunt, and he reminded people that events like this keep Camp Ripley busy.

"This place is humming pretty much every day," he said.

Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Brad Lindsay noted his agency, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, will hold a commemorative event to mark 50 years since the Vietnam

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PROJECT NEW HOPE ■ * ■

War at the Mall of America June 13-15, with special program at 11 a.m. June 14. He will be there with Gov. Tim Walz and Adj. Gen. Shawn Manke.

He gave an update on the dedications for the three new veterans homes. Montevideo is May 31. Preston is June 27. Bemidji is July 1. And he shared legislative measures passed last year and in play this session.

Tom Kramin is the coordinator for Minnesota Veterans Outdoors, and he is there on behalf of the Elks, which has programs to serve veterans. However, he is a member of Chanhassen American Legion Post 580, too.

He spoke about the other Minnesota Veterans Outdoors events: Trolling 4 Troops the first Friday of June and Disabled Veteran Deer Hunt the first week of October.

Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Sarah Strommen met Kramin at an ice-fishing event on Medicine Lake called Holes 4 Heroes.

She said helping veterans and their families enjoy the outdoors is part of the core values of the

Strommen told how she was really tired after a busy week, and, nevertheless, reluctantly got up early and went to a hunting event. As she was sitting in a blind at 7:15 a.m. she felt the weight of the world lift off of her shoulders.

"This is the best therapy. I was thankful that I didn't give in to exhaustion," she said. "It was healing. It was really powerful."

Kramin responded, "That weight lifted off your shoulders is what we call 'recreational therapy.'

American Legion Department Commander Paul Hassing said the Legion, DAV and VFW tend to fight each other like brothers. However, they share many of the same values. With Minnesota having 280,000 veterans, and only 30 percent of them belonging to a veterans organization, there is work to be done to help veterans connect to their veteran communities.

"I just want you to join at least one of us. Our voice needs to be heard. The legislators told us they are not listening to us as much as they used to," Hassing said. "We need to be heard as a collective.'

Hennepin County Veteran Service Officer Mike McElhiney was there on behalf of Minnesota Veterans 4 Veterans Trust Fund, a board that governs the funds received from the 2006 sale of Lake Minnetonka's Big Island to the city of Orono for \$5.7 million. The island had been owned by the Legion, DAV, MOPH and VFW and operated as a veterans' camp. Now, V4V funds veteran programs such as recreational opportunities. For the turkey hunt, it covers all the lodging costs for the veterans and their guides.

New DAV of Minnesota Commander Oather Martin thanked the base for allowing the hunt and banquet to happen on base. He was an Army Ranger in Vietnam.

"Ever since I got back, I've been trying to help out my brothers and sisters," he said.

How many birds were harvested?

Kramin said 15, one shy of the prior year.

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Thursday, June 13 - Saturday, June 15 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., North Atrium



- Historical displays from the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum
- American Veterans Traveling Tribute Wall
- Resource Fair with Veterans benefits information

Special Events on Friday, June 14 include:

10:30 a.m. Minnesota National Guard 34th Infantry Division

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11 a.m. Vietnam War 50th Anniversary

Commemorative Program

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11:30 a.m. Vietnam Veteran Brunch

-1:30p.m. North Atrium, 2nd Floor

12:15 p.m. Movie screening: Welcome Home! A Nation's

& 2:45 p.m. Tribute to Vietnam Veterans

B&B Theatres, 4th Floor

This is a public event open to Vietnam Veterans, Allies of the United States, Nurses, their families, friends and anyone interested in learning more about the Vietnam War.



For more information, visit: MinnesotaVeteran.org/Vietnam50

Hello American Legion family.

I want to start off the article by getting something off my chest. I've been talking all year about how we need to be open to new ideas, and to not be afraid to try

A Legionnaire approached me earlier in the year with a bold new idea they wanted to try. It was out of the box, and the idea could really work if done correctly.

Fast forward to a few weeks ago, and I was told by someone that the idea wasn't working, and it was causing problems. I conveyed that to others without finding out firsthand if it was working or not. I automatically went the negative route.

It turns out the idea is working, and I was wrong for jumping to conclusions without verifying, and I was also wrong for conveying that to others before I went to the source. I am sorry, and I promise to do better. I think if our organization is going to survive, we need more thinking outside of the proverbial box and a lot less negativity.

I think most of us that get involved with various organizations do so in part to make a difference. I know sometimes it doesn't feel like you are. I know you get tired and wonder if what you're doing is worth it. I know you wonder if anyone cares anymore.

Believe me they do care, and you are making a difference. It may not be evident right away,

Commander's Column

Paul Hassing

and sometimes the credit goes raise some to the wrong people, but hang in there. What you are doing means so much to so many people. Sometimes we can give a lot, and sometimes just a little. It all matters, and I thank all of you for everything you do.

We had a great time with National Commander Dan Seehafer and Commander's Aide Mike Rohan. The two of them are a wealth of knowledge, and I am very fortunate to have been able to pick a part of their brain for a few days.

Thank you for the great hospitality and all the hard work that went into making his trip successful and showing them what the greatest department in the American Legion can do.

Adjutant Mike Maxa did a great job coordinating the whole thing and getting us where we needed to go. Membership Director Pam Krill, and Communications Director Tim Engstrom also did outstanding jobs.

On another note, it turns out that Department of South Dakota Commander Courtney Steffen and I have the same birthday, so on June 8 we are having a little get together in Big Stone City, S.D. It's an American Legion post right on the border. It will be a good time, and hopefully

our projare invited.

On June 13-15 at Mall of America they are having a 50th anniversary Vietnam War commemoration put on by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. All are welcome, and we are also looking for volunteers. A program takes place at 11 a.m.

My testimonial will be in Montgomery on June 22nd. I am hoping you can make it. It should be a great time.

In closing, I really can't stress enough the importance of relaxing a bit and taking time out to enjoy the things we love. Life is very short, and I know we all want to do whatever we can to make that difference, but what good is making that difference if you don't enjoy doing it. Remember, success is only real success if you have someone to share the joy of success with.

I really hope to see you all on the road ahead.

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

Keep on the sunny side of the Legion | Stewardship involves 4 principles

Stewardship is a term that a lot of people associate with the tithing of gifts to their religious affiliation. This word stewardship goes on to mean a lot more than just the act of tithing but also includes our time, our talents and our treasures.

Stewardship means that we not only have to take care of ourselves but of each other and all of God's creation and take responsibility for our actions.

Merriam-Webster describes the word to mean: "The conducting, supervising, management and responsibility of something that is extended to one's care.

The Bible explains the word stewardship as: "Recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God, and we are to take responsible and sensible care of these gifts and generously and gratefully give them away and put them to good use for the glory of God's name."

Stewardship is about exerover his creation and reflecting the image of our creator in our care, responsibility, maintenance, protection and beautification of his creation.

There are four principles that relate to stewardship, and they are: ownership, responsibility, accountability and reward.

The word *ownership*, when it comes to stewardship, means

Dean Knutson

Chaplain's Corner

God has created it and own's everything, and he has put man here to work as a steward of all of his creation.

The term responsibility means that God own's everything, and we have been given them as a gift and are expected to treat each one of these gifts with respect and use them to the glory of God. As the owner, God has rights, and we as stewards have to be responsible.

The term accountability means that we are all stewards of the resources, abilities and opportunities that God has given us and we are expected to take care of them, use them to God's glory as one day we will be asked to account for our actions concerning these gifts.

The term reward means that cising our God-given dominion if we do God's will and are a good and faithful servant, we can expect to be rewarded, not in this life but in the eternal life we are given through our belief in God by faith.

references There are throughout the Bible in which God tells us to be responsible and take care of the creation which he has given.

In the Book of Genesis, it

says: "Go forth and be fruitful and

multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over all the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and everything that crawls upon the

ground. **Important** upcoming holidays:

May 18: Armed Forces Day May 20: Veterans Day Canada)

May 22: National Maritime Day

May 27: Memorial Day June 6: D-Day

June 14: Flag Day

June 14: Army Birthday

June 16: Father's Day June 19: Juneteenth

June 20: American Eagle

June 23: Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday June 27: PTSD Awareness

July 4: Independence Day

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

Fund 85 Run to cross southern Minn.

Hello, Legion Family!

Motorcycle season has arrived! I want to remind everyone to watch out for motorcycles on the road, take that extra look in both directions to ensure that you are not overlooking a motorcycle.

With motorcycle season comes benefit runs hosted by Minnesota American Legion Riders (MNALR) chapters throughout the state.

On MNALR.org, under "resources," is a calendar where we can each highlight our rides and events. Each district has a sub-calendar for your rides and events, please contact your district representative to have events added.

Attention all American Legion Riders chapters in the Department of Minnesota, your district representatives have received a copy of the proposed Constitution & Bylaws. If you would like a copy, please contact me (jodyhassing@gmail.com) or our secretary (secretary@ a copy for your chapter to on this at the MNALR Convention in July in Willmar.

Please remember to return 2 p.m., more details to follow.

Legion Riders

Jody Hassing

your Chapter Consolidated Informa-Report. Let's show the Legion what we do! The Fund 85 Run is in the

final stages of planning. The kickoff party will be July 24 at Pipestone American Legion Post 6. The doors will open at 4 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m., and program at 7 p.m.

A block of rooms has been reserved at Grandstay Hotel & Suites in Pipestone. Thursday evening, we will stay in Montevideo, and a block of rooms is available at the Grandstay.

Friday evening we will stay in Austin; there is a block of rooms at the Days Inn, and right next door to the Days Inn is the AmericInn.

Saturday evening has not been finalized as I am writing this article, but we are looking at blocking rooms in La Cresmnalr.org), and we will send cent (more to come). The ending party will be July 28 at Bay review and vote on. We will vote port American Legion Post 491. We usually plan to arrive at the ending location between 1 and

tion for the Fund 85 Run will be posted on Face-

book and on our website: www.mnalr.org.

If your post's Legion Family is interested in hosting the Riders this year and you are located along this route, please contact me or MNALR Ride Captain Ted Berg (ridecaptain@ mnalr.org).

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

God bless and keep the rubber

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

Ameriprise

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.

1 TV station, 1 VSO covered **Veterans Day** on the Hill

The annual Veterans Day on the Hill is a time for us to celebrate veterans issues in Minnesota. I was able to contribute my time on Tuesday, April 16, to help set up the conference at the St. Paul Armory with some 500-plus chairs for seating. Appointments at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center on the day of the event, Wednesday, April 17, did not allow me to attend.

I looked forward to the evening TV news, hoping to catch up on this large gathering of veterans:

I tuned in to Fox 9 News at 9 p.m. No mention of the event.

I tuned to KARE-11 at 10 p.m. No mention of the event.

On Tuesday morning, I scoured my Star-Tribune account online. No mention of the event.

A search of WCCO-TV found no mention the event.

However, KSTP Channel 5 did a great 2-minute segment on the event, and The American Legion Department of Minnesota's Facebook page covered the entire event from the St. Paul Armory to the march to inside the Capitol Rotunda.

Thanks to reporter Joe Mazan at KSTP Channel 5 for highlighting our veterans. Thanks to Christopher Anderson of the Department Media & Communications Committee for providing full footage.

Dick Ward University of Minnesota



The Minnesota

egionnaire

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

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Continued from Page 1

American Legion Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo.

'We asked lawmakers to give us our tax cuts and finally bring relief for all charities and aid for all Minnesotans in the nonprofit sector. For years, we've been promised some sort of relief, and it just hasn't come."

She expressed gratitude for the American Legion posts and their gambling managers who have supported the bill and understand the need for tax relief.

The posts and units of The American Legion are the largest segment of charitable gambling organizations in the state, at 193 license holders.

She is grateful for the support from Allied Charities of Minnesota, chief author Rep. Zack Stephenson of Coon Rapids and co-author Rep. Ginny Klevorn of Plymouth.

She even offered thanks to the Minnesota Indian Gaming Association. While she opposed MIGA's involvement with e-pulltab changes in 2023, MIGA firmly supported tax cuts for charitable gambling this

Janigo held out hope the bill might pass this year, but, if not, it has made an impression, which would impact the 2025 session.

"I sure hope this can still happen," she said.

She encouraged members to watch legionnaire.org or the Department of Minnesota Facebook page to find out what happens after the May 20 adjournment.



on May 10 during a hearing of the House Ways & Means Committee. Revenue from sports betting would offset tax cuts to charitable gambling.

The sports-betting bill sur- create a black market. vived the House Ways & Means Committee on Friday, May 10.

The committee approved the measure on a voice vote.

State Rep. Zack Stephenson testified how, in the first year, tax cuts for charitable gambling add up to \$7 million, in the second year \$24 million and in the third \$40 million. However, the tax cuts only kick in if sports betting revenue is high enough.

He faced questions about that contingency. Projections show state revenue from taxing sports betting will be double or even more than double the amount to be reduced from charitable gambling, he replied. This, he said, is based on estimates of the growth of sports gambling in other states.

He said the notion of the state failing to reach the expected revenue to trigger charitable gambling tax cuts is doubtful.

"I think it is very unlikely. In fact, it's extremely unlikely," Stephenson said.

An opponent said giving the green light to sports betting will

Veteran and Family

Owned and Operated

Just the opposite is true, Stephenson said. "There already exists a black market for sports betting in Minnesota. This will turn it from a black market to a legitimate one," he said.

There was debate over whether a fiscal note reflected the true cost of criminal enforcement; however, others noted that regulating a previously criminal activity naturally would reduce crime, not increase it. Stephenson also noted that registration fees would more than pay for start-up costs for regulating the industry.

The biggest difference on the measure remains its treatment of horse racing tracks. The bill, as it stood May 10, provided \$650,000 to the Minnesota Racing Commission for an economic development fund, from which its proceeds can increase purses. However, Rep. Brian Pfarr said it isn't enough.

By May 15, the bill had been changed into percentages, likely to yield higher results. The Racing Commission would oversee the account.

There remains debate about the tribal casino's long-held exclusivity to slot machines. Tribes say horse-racing machines at tracks seem too similar. Yet others are concerned, citing last year's fight over e-pulltabs, about tribes wanting to use their clout to reduce competition for the overall entertainment dollar.

The veterans community Legion, VFW, Amvets — along with other charities have no stance on the debate regarding the tribes and tracks. They are focused on long-promised tax cuts.

State Rep. Pat Garofalo, near the end of the hearing, talked about how compromise on the bill seems close at hand to make the language bipartisan and bicameral.

The bill passed the House Tax Committee on a 12-9 vote April 30. It includes provisions allowing congressionally chartered veterans organizations to use more of their gambling proceeds to repair their buildings after June 30, 2024 and before Aug. 1, 2029.

Vets omnibus bill passes ST. PAUL — In all of the Department of Veterans Affairs, hubbub at the State Capitol, one the bill:

The Minnesota Legionnaire

piece of business got done early.

on May 1 passed the Senate lan-

guage of the Veterans and Mili-

tary Omnibus Bill. The Senate

Its author? Sen. Nicole Mitch-

ell of Woodbury, who was ar-

rested for first-degree burglary

at her stepmother's home in De-

troit Lakes in the early morning

The case, however, had no

impact on the veterans omnibus

bill because it passed the Senate

before the incident in question.

Gov. Tim Walz signed it May 8.

lecting several bills and consol-

idating them into one.

An omnibus is formed by col-

This is the third year Minne-

sota has produced an omnibus

bill for veterans and military

affairs, removing their provi-

sions from the political games

of state politics. With three years

of precedence, the Minnesota

Commanders' Task Force hopes

it becomes standard operating

The bill was HF3454. The

This year's bill had fewer

provisions than past years, but

the most notable one for veteran

service organizations is allow-

ing counties to fund Veterans

Day observances just like they

Also, the state removed the

\$300 cap. Now, counties can

fund VSOs to run local obser-

vances for the two holidays

According to the Minnesota

without a spending limit.

www.VeteranShredding.net

DOCUMENT DESTRUCTION

do for Memorial Day.

Senate language came from

procedure.

hours of April 22.

passed the bill on April 18.

The House of Representatives

· Makes a technical correction in law that said Minnesota Veterans Homes administrators report directly to the MDVA commissioner. This was a mistake put into law after the Veterans Home Board was dissolved and became the Health Care division of MDVA. (HF4335)

· Authorizes in law the Central Pharmacy that MDVA already operates for the Veterans Homes throughout the state. (HF4412)

· Allows MDVA to lay the groundwork for a fourth State Veterans Cemetery in the Bemidji area. (HF4336)

 Provides flexibility to Health Care funding to use next fiscal year's appropriation to cover expenses due to the delay in opening and receiving federal certification for the three new Veterans homes (HF5181, sec. 3). This was GTW/MDVA's only supplemental budget request.

 Allows the grant for Metro Meals on Wheels to use this fiscal year's funds next year (not introduced as a standalone bill).

· Gives county boards the authority to provide funds to Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) posts for Veterans Day activities. Previously, boards were only permitted to provide funds for Memorial Day. The funding cap was also eliminated (HF3677).

 County Veterans Service Officers and VSO service officers are now permitted to receive discharge papers at no charge from county recorders (HF3801).



State Rep. Zack Stephenson, right, answers questions from state Rep. Marion Rarick

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Page 6 The Minnesota Legionnaire











HELP IS HERE FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES





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

Name of		Date of			Cont.	
Deceased	Age	Death	Branch	Era	Years	Post
Anderson, Dale D. "Andy"	70	3/29/24	Air Force	Vietnam	9	Balaton Post 237
Anderson, Daryl D.	90	1/11/24	Army	Korea	62	Sherburn Post 356
Andraschko, Robert L.	92	3/16/24	Army	Korea	20	Winona Post 9
Bartelma, Steven J.	81	4/27/24	Army	Vietnam	14	Mora Post 201
Bartz, Herman W. "Goonei	r " 86	4/12/24	Army	Vietnam	45	Waite Park Post 428
Note: He served on the Waite Park City Council.						
Beranek, Cletus G.	78	2/27/24	Army	Vietnam	50	Wanda Post 385
Bjork, Larry O. Sr.	83	1/12/24	Marines	Vietnam	45	New London Post 537
Blaisdell, Donald V.	74	3/23/24	Army	Vietnam	19	Janesville Post 281
Blakesley, James L.	77	5/10/24	Navy	Vietnam	57	Aitkin Post 86
Note: He served as the Dep						
1995. The member in that re						
2013 to 2017 on the Nation						
National Distinguished Gue						e 6th District. He was James L.
a two-time past commande				local color gu	ard.	Blakesley
Blanchard, Michael S.	76		Navy	Vietnam	22	Spring Valley Post 68
Buchtel, Arthur J.	90	3/20/24	Army	Korea	65	
Budziszewski, Thomas R.		4/8/24	Army	Korea	19	St. Paul Park Post 98
Critchley, William S.	98		Army AF	WWII	33	Eagan Post 594
				spry and witt	y vetera	an would remind people he served
before his part of the Army						
Crotty, David F.	97	4/23/24		WWII	78	Pierz Post 341
DeBruin, Ronda J.	64	2/9/24	Air Force	Leb/Gren	13	Pipestone Post 6
Note: She was the first and						
Dennie, James L.	86	-, -,	Air Force	Korea-P. Gu	lf	18 Cloquet Post 262
Note: He was a member of						
Dilling, Leland J.	83	3/29/24		Vietnam	14	Albert Lea Post 56
Elbert, Jerome L.	93		Air Force	Korea	25	Savage Post 643
Erickson, Herbert M.	96	3/22/24	Army	WWII	55	Rochester Post 92
Fischer, William L.	89	2/3/24	Navy	Korea	34	Rochester Post 92
Note: He served in the Navy Sea Bees.						
Flatten, Duane H.	83	1/28/24	Army	Vietnam	34	La Crescent Post 595
Fluegge, Larry L.	78	4/2/24	Navy	Vietnam	11	Mora Post 201
Fuith, Richard C.	96	4/20/24	Army	WWII/Korea		St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577
Fuller, Richard G.	89	4/27/24	Army	Korea/VN	46	Lanesboro Post 40
Note: He earned a Purple Heart serving with the 7th Army 17th Infantry Regiment in Korea. After,						
he became a medic serving						
Gilbertson, Wayne M.	81	4/2/24	Navy	Vietnam	41	Zimmerman Post 560
Note: He was 6th District co						
tor 2009-10, and Departmen	nt of M	1innesota v	rice command	der 2012-13 a	nd a pa	ast president of the

Legionville Board of Directors. He served on the National Americanism Council from 2009 to 2020. He was a past commander of Post 560. Walker Post 134 Gooderum, Steve D. "Goody" 73 4/11/24 Army Vietnam 14 Note: He was a paratrooper in Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

La Crescent Post 595 Grattan, Carol L. 3/28/24 Navy 85 Vietnam Gregurich, William L. 100 3/15/24 Bayport Post 491 WWII 36 Marines Note: He served in the Pacific Theater on a number of islands. He ultimately was seriously wounded on Guam and received the Purple Heart. His son-in-law tells the Legionnaire that his dogtags

were shot off, so he received last rites from a Catholic priest, a Lutheran minister and a Jewish rabbi. He was proud of



Kuchar, Stanley J. Kuntz, Charles M. Lane, Patrick D. Note: He was stationed in Okinawa, Japan. He was a longtime member of the post's honor guard. Lane, Patrick D. 77 3/23/24 Air Force Vietnam 54 Graceville Post 297 Lang, George C. 82 4/17/24 53 Rosetown Memorial Post 542 Army Vietnam Lewandowski, Ervin D. 90 3/24/24 Marines Korea 70 Coon Rapids Post 334 Note: He lived by the adage, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine," and was proud to be a Korean War veteran.

Lovell, Kell E. 3/22/24 Army Korea 41 Bemidji Post 14 Note: During his military dental career, he spent a year in Vietnam providing dental treatment to soldiers and ran a

mobile dental unit for locals in desperate need of care. He also survived the Great Alaska Earthquake in 1964. 4/8/24 Maine, Gerry Lake Henry Post 612 Army Vietnam March, Paul R. 86 1/13/24 Army Korea 37 St. Paul Park Post 98 Mason, Thomas C. 94 2/5/24 Army Korea La Crescent Post 595 Note: He fought in the war as a staff sergeant on a mortar crew. Navy McKibbon, Stanley W. 3/11/24 42 Cloquet Post 262 73 Vietnam

Meredith, Kip A. 73 4/15/24 Army Vietnam 10 Rochester Post 92 Messer, Ralph E. 88 2/21/24 Air Force 46 Granada Post 319 Vietnam Note: He served as a fuel systems mechanic for 20 years, retiring in 1974. His daughter told the Legionnaire he died

from metastatic cancers due to chemical exposure while supporting combat troops in Southeast Asia. Mitzner, Dean G. 85 4/10/24 Army Vietnam **Balaton Post 237**

Wayne

Gilbertson

All-Family Events Calendar

May 24: American Legion Night at Target Field

May 24: National Poppy Day

May 27: Memorial Day, local ceremonies
May 31: Dedication of Montevideo Veterans Home

June 1: 6th District Convention, Brainerd Armory June 1: 10th District Convention, Fridley Post 303

June 7: Luverne Veterans Home 30th Anniversary June 8: 2nd District Convention, Fairmont Post 36 June 8: 5th District Convention, Holiday Inn Bmtn. W. June 8: 9th District Convention, Moorhead Post 21

June 8: Historian Arn Kind speaks on D-Day on its 80th anniversary, Bagley Post 16

June 8: Minnesota Boys State 75th Anniversary

Banquet, Anoka Post 102

June 9-15: Minnesota Boys State, St. John's University June 9-15: Minnesota Girls State, Bethel University

June 15: 4th District Convention, Rosetown Post 542 June 16: 1st session of Legionville safety camp begins

June 22: Commander's Testimonial, Montgomery Post 79 June 27: Dedication of Preston Veterans Home July 1: Dedication of Bemidji Veterans Home

July 10: Department standing committee meetings, Willmar Conference Center, Willmar

July 11: Department Executive Committee meeting, Willmar Conference Center, Willmar

July 11-13: Department of Minnesota Convention, Willmar Conference Center, hosted by Willmar Post 167 **July 24:** Fund 85 Run Kickoff Party, Pipestone Post 6

July 27: Navy Blue Angels perform at the Fargo AirSho, Fargo Air Museum, Hector International Airport, Fargo July 29-Aug. 1: Baseball Tier 1 Tournament, Burnsville July 28: Fund 85 Run Ending Party, Bayport Post 491 Aug. 1-4: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Sr.

State Tournament, Maple Grove Aug. 1-4: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Jr.

State Tournament, Bloomington Aug. 2: Final session of Legionville safety camp ends Aug. 2-4: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II

Sr. State Tournament, Bird Island Aug. 3-4: Minnesota American Legion Fastpitch Softball

State Tournament, Bemidji Aug. 9-11: Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II

Jr. State Tournament, St. Charles Aug. 9-11: Junior Auxiliary Fun Weekend at Legionville

Aug. 17: Minnesota American Legion National Mission Ride, Slayton

Dedications planned for 3 new veterans homes

new Minnesota Veterans Homes are completed, and, finally, all the summer schedules for elected officials and civic leaders have aligned, allowing the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs to announce dedication ceremonies.

Friday, May 31. Social hour and to follow.

MONTEVIDEO — The three live music begin at 10 a.m., with the program starting at 11 a.m.

> The dedication program for the new Preston Veterans Home is at 3 p.m. June 27, with a social hour and self-guided tours beforehand.

The dedication for the new Bemidji Veterans Home is July The dedication of the new 1. The program is set for 1 to Montevideo Veterans Home is 2 p.m., with self-guided tours

50th anniversary of the Vietnam War to be commemorated at MOA

BLOOMINGTON — There and their families. will be historical displays Thurs-15 at the Mall of America, with a commemorative program at 11 a.m. July 14.

That day also is Flag Day and the Army's birthday. It takes place at MOA's Huntington Bank Rotunda, which is on the first floor of the east side of the megamall, near Barnes & Noble.

Called the 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration, it is organized by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

Many historical displays will be from the Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum. The American Veterans Traveling Tribute will have a replica Vietnam Memorial wall and other displays.

The 11 a.m. program will be followed by a complimentary brunch for Vietnam-era veterans

No RSVP is required to day, June 13, to Saturday, June attend. The event is open to the public. All veterans who served in or during Vietnam are especially welcome, along with their friends and families.

> There will be veteran resources available, too.

> The program will highlight the service of the armed forces during the war, recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by allies, and provide an opportunity for healing and thanking veterans. Minnesota Military Radio will do a live taping. The Bloomington Honor Guard (made up of Legion and VFW members) will present the colors.

Just before presstime, the DAV of Minnesota and V4V Trust Fund announced they would reimburse all transportation costs. Contact them for more

Let's keep it going! **Department of Minn.** Commanders Project

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

Foundation.

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

Make checks out to: Minnesota American Legion **Foundation** Memo: Fund 82. If you make it out to Fund 85, that's accepted, too, but 82 is the fund for the commander's project. The foundation is a 501(c)3 Gambling funds are permitted.

Date of graphic: May 9

Goal: \$100,000 Present: '114% at \$114,149

\$14,522 was raised since the last thermometer reading March 20.

Shout out to posts 30, 96, 117, 165, 157, 167, 177, 323, 523, 545, 621, units <u>4</u>7, 566, Squadron 566, Chapter 566, several individual donors, and one who donated in memory of Alberta Marth of New Ulm Post 132. Several attendees at the funeral for Tom Norton of Woodbury Post 501 donated, raising \$890.



Donate at mnlegion.org



Join the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, elected officials, Veterans Service Organizations, staff, long-time allies, donors, volunteers and community members to honor our nation's heroes as we celebrate the opening of three new Minnesota Veterans Homes.

To learn more about dedication event details, visit MinnesotaVeteran.org/Events





Legion members and their supporters join hands to sing "God Bless America" at Moorhead Post 21 during the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota.



Fergus Falls Post 30 Commander Warren Wilson greets National Commander Dan Seehafer as the Fergus Falls High School band prepares to play.



Bloomington Post 550 Commander Dan Welch carries the department colors to the Capitol on April 17.



National Commander Dan Seehafer listens to VA Minneapolis staff members on April 17 at the St. Paul Armory. In the white cap is Department Service Officer Ray Kane.



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Seehafer quotes Bud Grant at Vets Day on the Hill

Continued from Page 1

Fast forward to 2023. With offices in Hawaii, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is in charge of finding American remains in Vietnam.

"If it wasn't for The American Legion, that agency would be gone," Seehafer said.

DPAA found the wreckage and site, and Seehafer went with them to the remains of the pilot. They found the remains.

"Imagine if that's you," he said, regarding the "What's in it for me?" person. "Do you want your country to say, 'So be it."

The POW/MIA flag is not just a "cool flag" hung at American Legion meetings, he said. It is symbolic of the Legion's purpose and relevance.

"The ability to be brought back and laid to rest on American soil is our mission," Seehafer said.

In the veterans' community, many numbers are spoken in regard to veteran suicide, he said.

There is the well-known 22 per day. There are statistics that put it at 17 or 18. Other figures put it as high as 44. Seehafer said the number might be as high as 150 if the entire family and friends support system for veterans is considered.

"We would say one is way too many. We made this our mission, to save one at a time," Seehafer said.

The national commander told a story of how a veteran in a wheelchair wheeled himself into a veterans club and asked for some help. A man in the back overheard his plea and spoke up: "Son, I fought my war. Can't fight yours."

"I pray that never comes out of the mouths of our family members," Seehafer said.

That wheelchair-bound veteran chose suicide. The revolver clicked not once but twice. The weapon didn't fire.

"I know who was watching over his situation," said Seehafer, a Lutheran pastor from Wisconsin.

He said a post with a strong character, much like Moorhead Post 21, got the man the resources he needed.

"It changed his life and saved his life. That's The American Legion," Seehafer said.

Life has its ups and downs, but members of the Legion Family have each other. It's not just a social club. There is a purpose and a relevance to what the Legion and the entire Legion Family does. Every member might be the difference between life and death for a veteran, he said.

He praised Moorhead Post 21 for the excellent job it did hosting him and the rest of the touring party. Many donations were made to the National Commander's Project, which is the American Legion Veterans & Children's Fund.

The commander went on to Fergus Falls Post 30, Willmar Post 167, Howard Lake Post 145, Le Center Post 108 and Golden Valley Post 523.

He delivered a message of the importance of suicide prevention and how all members of the Legion Family can "Be the One."

Seehafer encouraged members to seek out training on suicide prevention.



National Commander Daniel Seehafer speaks at the St. Paul Armory on April 17.



National Commander Dan Seehafer enjoyed Howard Lake eggbake at Post 145.



A banquet hall full of Legionnaires listens to the national commander at Le Center Post 108.



hosting him and the rest of the members as he enters Willmar Post 167.



National Commander Dan Seehafer met with Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, a member of Mankato Post 11, before speaking at Veterans Day on the Hill. Seehafer also heard a report from Veterans Affairs Commissioner Brad Lindsay.

Veterans Day on the Hill

Seehafer was the keynote speaker at Veterans Day on the Hill on Wednesday, April 17. He spoke at the St. Paul Armory.

Though a fan of the Green Bay Packers, Seehafer quoted legendary Minnesota Vikings coach Bud Grant, who made a point to distance himself from being called a hero. Grant said: "Stars and heroes are different. Stars entertain us; heroes define us. In the morning light, stars fade away. Heroes never do."

Seehafer said a 2021 study by Brown University estimated 135,000 veterans have died by suicide since the 9/11 attacks in 2001. This is four times the number of servicemembers who have died in combat over those 20 years.

It is more than servicemembers killed in Vietnam, Korea, Persian Gulf and Global War on Terrorism combined, he said.

"Together, we can be the one to save one," Seehafer said.

He reiterated the importance of purpose and relevance to veterans and called on all veterans and their supporters in the room, from all veterans organizations, to work to save lives.

"The Good Lord brought you here today so we could embark on a mission," Seehafer said.

Veterans Day on the Hill is an annual legislative push, reminding lawmakers to take up veterans-related legislation and get it across the finish line.

American Legion Department of Minnesota Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo told the Mankato Free Press, in an interview that day, one such issue was allowing county veteran service officers to obtain vital statistical documents for free.

"One example might be a marriage certificate, so for a veteran to add their spouse onto their VA benefits and be compensated for having a dependent, you have proof that they're actually your dependent," she said.



The audience of 600 stood and applauded after National Commander Dan Seehafer gave his speech April 17 at Veterans Day on the Hill.



Veterans pack the Capitol Rotunda on April 17 for Veterans Day on the Hill.

One sharp shooter

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Also, please be sure to thank our loyal advertisers and inquire about their services.



Continued from Page 6

Nasby, Irving P. "Bud"	age,	date unavai	l. Army	WWII	56	St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577
Note: He served as post commander two times.						
Navratil, Alvin D.	89	4/14/24	Army	Korea	40	Silver Lake Post 141
Neagle, Frank M.	60	4/1/24	Army NG	Leb/Gren	6	North Mankato Post 518
Nuehring, Ronald A.	86	4/12/24	Marines	Korea	39	Little Falls Post 46
Oldenburg, Gary W. Sr.	91	3/20/24	Navy	Korea	23	La Crescent Post 595
Pedersen, Roy A.	79	4/1/24	Navy	Vietnam	11	New London Post 537
Puhl, Mark A.	82	3/30/24	Marines	Panama	34	Farmington Post 189
Pumper, Craig S.	69	4/13/24	Army NG	Vietnam	48	Northfield Post 84
Raforth, Charles J.	97	4/9/24	Navý	WWII	15	Fairmont Post 36
Regnier, Eugene A.	93	4/15/24	Army	Korea	69	Currie Post 322
Reiman, Kenneth O.	82	4/2/24	Army	Vietnam	22	Fairmont Post 36
Robeck, Roger J.	92	4/13/24	Army	Korea	70	St. Michael Post 567
Note: He helped establish the post's first honor guard, which he was a part of for more than six decades.						

Roberts, Warren J. "Runt" 88 4/17/24 Air Force Vietnam 37 Marshall Post 113 Note: He and his family moved all over the world with his military career, including Japan, Turkey and Germany. He served in Vietnam, too. After retiring in 1975, he became a part-time American Legion bartender for a while.

Runia, Wallace L. 2/21/24 Army 95 Korea 43 **Balaton Post 237** 93 Sagedahl, Charles E. 4/13/24 Marines 35 **Brooten Post 288** Korea 105 2/22/24 Army & AF WWII Schmid, Donald E. 52 Albany Post 482

Note: He joined the Army Air Corps in 1940, which became the Army Air Forces in June 1941, which became the Air Force in 1947. He retired from the Air Force in 1964. In WWII, he served with the 98th Bombardment Group 344th Squadron. The group fought in North Africa, then Southern Europe.

Schmidtbauer, Larry W. 84 4/26/24 Army Cold 50 Pierz Post 341 Note: He was stationed in Washington, D.C., during the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas. His

unit was responsible for creating the original Eternal Flame still burning in Arlington National Cemetery. Schminski, Leonard M. 3/9/24 39 Air Force Korea Cloquet Post 262

1/27/24 Marines/Army Viet.-GWOT 45 Schoppe, Lawrence A. Minneapolis Post 1 Note: He was past post commander. He enlisted in the Marines, served the military for 40 years and retired as an Army Reserve sergeant major.

Schuelke, Thomas G. Bellingham Post 441 1/11/24 Korea Army Shuck, Arlo R. 89 4/20/24 Army Vietnam 12 Fergus Falls Post 30 Sorenson, William A. 87 2/24/24 Army Korea 44 Pipestone Post 6 Stanchfield, Walter E. II Navy 77 4/25/24 Vietnam 27 Mora Post 201 Tembreull, Cletus J. 91 4/5/24 St. Paul Park Post 98 Army Korea 46 Army Vietnam Thompson, Thomas C. 73 4/15/24 Winona Post 9 Note: He enlisted at 18 and served in Vietnam. Vandale, Donald D. Apple Valley Post 1776 3/19/24 Army Vietnam 38 42 Walhof, Allen H. 89 4/30/24 **Edgerton Post 42** Army Korea Waseca Post 228 Wilker, Bruce A. 77 3/31/24 Navy Vietnam 6 Youngblom, Jerome R. 89 3/26/24 Army Korea 53 Princeton Post 216

Department of Corrections

The first and last name were reversed in the prior issue. Here it is corrected:

81 2/12/14 Army St. Paul Park Post 98 Tellin, Howard R. Vietnam 44 Note: He served in the 101st Airborne Division. He was a trumpeter for the Fort Snelling Rifle Squad.

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Call for 105th Dept. of Minnesota Convention

The 105th Annual Convention of The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, is hereby called in conformity with provisions of the Department Constitution and By-Laws, and by action of the Department Executive Committee, sponsored by Willmar American Legion Post 167 and held at Willmar Conference Center in Willmar, Minnesota, July 11, 12, 13, 2024.

PURPOSE OF CONVENTION

The Convention is called for the purpose of electing officers for the ensuing year, amending the Constitution and By-Laws, and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it.

REPRESENTATION AT CONVENTION

The Department Convention shall be composed of delegates from each Post, members of the Department Executive Committee, the Department Chaplain, Treasurer, Historian, and the District Adjutants, but only delegates from Posts shall be entitled

to vote at such Convention, (Sec.2, Article Five, Department Constitution). Each Post shall be entitled to two delegates and to one additional delegate for each hundred members or major fraction thereof, whose Department dues have been received by the Department Treasurer and whose District dues have been paid to their respective District officers, 30 days prior to the Convention for which they are chosen. The final voting strength of each Post shall be determined 30 days prior to the Convention. Each Post shall choose its own delegates, who shall be members in good standing of such Post. In addition, each Post may choose alternate delegates to serve in the absence of the principal delegate, (Sec. 3, Article Five, Department Constitution). Delegates or alternates must register in order

GAMBLING SEMINAR MEETING

The Gambling Seminar will be at 2:00 PM on Thursday, July 11, 2024 at the Willmar Conference Center, Willmar, Minnesota.



DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Department Executive Committee has been called and will be held at 8:30 A.M on Thursday, July 11, 2024, in Willmar, MN at the Willmar Conference Center, as specified in the upcoming Call to Meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Standing Department Committee Meetings will be held at Willmar Conference Center, Willmar, Minnesota, in the meeting rooms to be determined. These rooms will be confirmed in each committee's Call to Meeting.

AMERICANISM

4:00 P.M., Wednesday, July 10, 2024 TBD

CHILDREN & YOUTH

4:00 P.M., Wednesday, July 10, 2024 TBD

FINANCE

4:00 P.M., Wednesday, July 10, 2024 TBD

NATIONAL SECURITY

4:00 P.M., Wednesday, July 10, 2024 TBD

REHABILITATION

4:00 P.M., Wednesday, July 10, 2024 TBD

GENERAL SESSIONS

Willmar Conference Center Thursday, Friday, Saturday

HOUSING AND REGISTRATION

For the 2024 Department Convention, hotel reservations will be done "on your own" directly with the hotel. Please call the hotel directly and use block "The American Legion": Best Western Plus – 320-235-6060 or Holiday Inn Express – 320-231-2601. A registration fee of \$15.00 for each Delegate/Alternate and/or Guest must be paid. Payment can be made through Eventbrite at

mnlegion.org/events/calendar or sent by check to: Carrie Werner, 36898 Co Hwy 6, Redwood Falls, MN 56238. Registration checks should be made payable to "AMERICAN LEGION POST 167" with "Department Convention" in the memo line. Registration will be \$25.00 after June 26th.

DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS OFFICE

A temporary Legion Department Headquarters office will be set up at Willmar Conference Center in a room still to be determined starting Thursday, July 11, 2024 for convention service and business during convention business hours only. Meetings will start ON TIME as scheduled unless otherwise announced.

Paul Hassing Department Commander

ATTEST: Michael Maxa Department Adjutant

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this 1st day of May, 2024

Rules for 105th Dept. of Minnesota Convention

To the Post Commanders:

The Rules Committee submits the following proposed Rules for the Convention to be held in Willmar, Minnesota, July 11, 12 and 13, 2024:

- 1) With the following modifications, Robert's Rules of Order, revised, be adopted for this Convention.
- 2) (a) That the speech of any Delegate, recognized by the Commander, shall be limited to three (3) minutes and no more.
 - (b) Where a motion is made to table a resolution, the sponsor shall be entitled to speak to the Convention for three (3) minutes on the subject, and three (3) minutes rebuttal be granted to the maker of the motion to table before the motion is put.
- 3) That the Floor be permitted but once to any individual on any subject, except with the unanimous consent of the Convention.
- 4) (a) That all resolutions, with the exception of those prepared by Convention Committees, must be presented in writing signed by the author thereof, not later than 9:00 A.M. the first day of the Convention, to the Department Adjutant who shall refer them to the Resolutions Assignment Committee without debate. Each District Delegation Chairman or Secretary will meet with the Department Resolutions Assignment Committee at 9:00 A.M. of the first day of the Convention to be informed as to the resolutions assigned to each Convention Committee, then provide copies of those resolutions to the representatives they have appointed to said Convention Committee. The Resolutions Assignment Committee is responsible for receiving, registering and accounting for all resolutions forwarded to it by the Department Adjutant and all committee originated resolutions. (b) Resolutions containing matters of legislation shall be cleared by the Convention Legislative
- (c) In the event a convention committee does not receive any resolution assigned to that committee, said committee has no requirement to meet.
- 5) On matters where voting has been by roll call vote, when the poll of any Post Delegation is demanded by the Delegate of any Post, the Secretary of the Convention shall poll the vote of that Delegation by Delegates, without debate or discussion.
- 6) That on Roll Call, the Chair or Acting Chair of each Delegation on the Floor shall announce the vote of this Delegation.
- 7) No person, not duly accredited, shall participate directly or indirectly in debate on any subject before the Convention, but Past Department Commanders and members of the Department Executive Committee shall have the privilege of speaking from the Floor, but not of voting, except as Delegates.
- 8) That no Delegate be permitted on the Convention Floor unless certified by the Delegate's Post as Delegate or Alternate and that every Delegate or Alternate, to be duly accredited, must be registered.
- 9) That the published program be approved by this
- Convention.

 10) No person or Delegate shall act by proxy for any Post. No Post shall vote unless at least one registered and accredited Delegate or Alternate

be present on the Convention Floor.

- 11) The voting shall be by acclamation, except when a Roll Call is demanded by the Chair or Acting Chair of at least three Delegations; and except for elections which shall be as follows:
- (a) The election of Department Officers, NEC positions, and the Member of the Board of Publications shall be by written ballot unless there is but one candidate or, in the case of election of Vice Commanders, there are but five candidates. (b) The election of candidates for other positions shall be by District as set forth in Rule 14 below. Candidates receiving the highest number of votes in one round of voting shall be elected to the positions.
- If there are more than five candidates for Vice Commander, those five receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. Cumulative voting shall not be allowed.
- The printed ballot shall include the names of all candidates who have notified the Department Office of their candidacy at least 30 days prior to the first day of the Convention.
- For the election of Department Officers and NEC positions, the Tellers shall issue to the Delegation Chair of each registered Post the number of written ballots equal to the delegate strength of that Post. Said Chair shall sign for the ballots.
- Ballots shall be issued and the polls shall be open during the following times:
- (a) Friday, for one hour after recess of the Convention, with a starting time to receive ballots no more than one hour after the Department Commander or his designated vice commander gavels the session of the convention into recess. A time less than an hour may be set by agreement between the Department Commander or his designee, the Department Adjutant, and the Department Judge Advocate.
- (b) Saturday, from 8:00 A.M. until 8:30 A.M. No ballots shall be counted before Saturday morning. No ballots shall leave the polling place.
- The District Commander of each District shall appoint a Teller. Tellers shall elect among themselves two Tellers from the Districts which have no candidate for Commander. These two Tellers, and the Judge Advocate, shall tabulate and total the election results. The result of each contest shall be confidential and shall be placed in a separate envelope and delivered to the Commander.
- If there is a written ballot contest which has not resulted in a majority vote (except for Vice Commanders), the Commander will be informed immediately. Then, written ballots for that contest shall be distributed immediately in accordance with these Rules and be cast within one-half hour of completion of the distribution. Tabulation and reporting shall be in accordance with these Rules.
- Results of the vote count shall be reported to the Convention. All ballots and results shall be destroyed immediately following the close of the Convention, unless there is a motion to preserve.
- 12) Nominations for Department Officers and NEC positions shall be held on the afternoon of Friday of the Convention. Nominations shall be made from the Floor on Roll Call by Districts, in ascending order starting with the District whose

- number matches the last digit of the year of the Convention; each District may present as many candidates as it chooses. Thereafter, nominations may be made from the Floor.
- 13) Nominating speeches for Department Officers shall be limited to five (5) minutes. There will be no seconding speeches allowed for any candidates.
- 14) When the convention has adopted a Motion to suspend the rules and vote on a matter by District, each District may vote its entire voting strength. If the matter is the election of individuals for any open positions (such as Department Delegate at-Large), each District may vote its voting strength times the number of open positions, but shall not vote more than its voting strength for any one individual. The call for District votes shall be in ascending order starting with the District whose number matches the last digit of the year of the Convention.
- 15) In the event more than two candidates are nominated for any office, the balloting shall continue until one candidate shall have received a majority of the votes cast. In elections where there are more than two candidates, the candidate receiving the fewest votes in each round of voting shall be eliminated.
- 16) No personalities or partisan politics shall be discussed or indulged in on the Convention Floor, and the Department Commander shall prohibit such indulgences.
- 17) (a) Rules Committee approves the following list of Convention Committees to be chosen at this Convention, each District to choose one representative on each Committee:

Americanism National Security/Foreign Relations

Children & Youth

Public Relations Constitution-By-Laws

Recreation-Sports Employment

Rehabilitation

Legislative Resolutions

Resolutions Membership

Safety-School Patrol

(b) The following Department Standing Committees are approved as Convention

Committees:

Finance
Next Meeting Place
(Convention Corp. Committee)
Resolutions Assignment
Credentials

18) The order of business of the Convention shall be in accordance with the printed program, except that the election of officers shall be a special order of business, to be held in accordance with Rules 11 and 12. The order of election of Department Officers shall be as follows:

Commander

Five Vice Commanders, without numerical designation

Chaplain

Historian Sergeant-at-Arms Member of Publication Board, for three-year erm

Delegates-at-Large to the National Convention Five Alternates-at-Large to the National onvention

National Executive Committeeman and Alternate National Executive Committeeman (when appropriate)

- 19) The Committee Chairman shall inform the Department Commander when the report is ready to be presented, and the Department Commander shall recognize it as an order of business. The committees reporting action on Resolutions must read all approved Resolutions. It is sufficient to report all rejected Resolutions by number, unless requested by a Delegate to set a Resolution aside for separate consideration.
- 20) All printed reports, which shall have been handed to the Convention Committees, shall be referred to the proper Convention Committee for action.
- 21) No Band, Drum Corps or other musical organization shall be permitted in the Convention Hall without the invitation of the Department Commander.
- 22) (a) Any Guests who are not on the official program as speakers shall be introduced by the Department Commander only, and shall be limited to an address of not more than three (3) minutes. (b) The Commander is to adhere as nearly as possible to the printed program so that guests, and others to be honored, are presented without undue delay.
- 23) No elective political office holder shall be permitted to speak during the Convention except the Chief Executive of the State of Minnesota, and the Chief Executive of the Convention City, or such persons as are on the official printed and published program.
- 24) All major speeches shall be limited to fifteen (15) minutes and all others not to exceed five (5) minutes.
- 25) No intoxicating liquors shall be sold or dispensed in the building of the Convention meeting, except as authorized by the Convention Corporation.
- 26) The Roll Call of Posts shall be called in numerical sequence in accordance with Post numbers assigned, including the city or town, beginning with Post No. 1, except in odd numbered years the order of call will be reversed, but only those Posts having one or more duly registered and accredited Delegates or alternates accredited prior to 9:00 a.m. as confirmed by the Credentials Committee, shall be included in the Roll Call at any time.
- 27) Posts challenging exclusion from the Roll Call shall consult with the Credentials Committee for resolution of the problem.

THE COMMITTEE: (Members Present)

DIST. **MEMBER** First Mark Maloney Third Joe Bares Fourth Teresa Ash Dick Ward Fifth Anthony Koop Sixth Jan Ekert Seventh Jennifer Havlick Eighth Matt Berens Tenth

HOMETOWN Winona Jordan St. Paul Minneapolis Ironton South Haven Two Harbors Andover

What do members get for dues?

I received a question from the adjutant of Spicer Post 545. What do I tell prospective members when I ask them to join, and they reply, "What do I get for my dues?'

I said I would reply in print: • You get advocates in Wash-

ington, D.C., for your veterans' **benefits.** If you enjoyed the G.I. Bill, VA Loan, VA Healthcare and other benefits, you need someone fighting on your behalf to get these benefits to the next generation of veterans. There are special interests that would like to spend that money on other things besides veterans.

Did you know how crucial The American Legion was in getting the PACT Act passed? The Blue Water Navy Act? The Forever G.I. Bill? Many other laws expanding vets benefits? When federal lawmakers in the late 2000s were considering privatizing the VA, guess which veterans organizations stood alone to prevent that from happening? The American Legion. We won, and we pushed to improve the VA, not break it apart.

• You get advocates in St. Paul for veterans' legislation. Every year, we are dealing with various veteran bills. Do you favor veterans courts? Did you know The American Legion had a major role in getting the Veterans Restorative Justice Act passed in 2021? We successfully pushed to have the eight-year property-tax-break sunset for surviving spouses removed. We push annually for a veterans omnibus bill so our measures don't get caught up in politics.

We helped get the state government to allow veterans in homeless shelters to keep more of their disability and pension checks. We defend the benefits of charitable gambling for our communities and push for tax relief. We advocate for all kinds of things: license plates, hunting licenses, property tax relief for posts, funding for veterans homes, Post-9/11 Service Bonus, Gold Star families, CVSOs, on and on.

 You get people who will fight for your VA claim. You get a nonprofit with high ratings on Charity Navigator and low or no administrative costs. You get a staff who will help your post help a struggling veteran make use of the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund and other local and state resources. You get The Minnesota Legionnaire. You get the Legion Magazine. You get your local post's newsletter.

• You get an organization that lets you pursue your interests. A few years ago, Army veteran Kristy Janigo

From the Editor

Legislative Committee because lot of good that was more fitting to her interests. Soon, the chair stepped away for health reasons, and she became the chair. Janigo is only 40, and she leads our legislative efforts at the Capitol. Amazing!

I can provide other similar examples from Baseball, Softball, Oratorical Contest, Boys State, Girls State, Pheasant Dinner, Jr. Shooting Sports, Bowling, honor guards, leadership, finance, service officer, membership, national security, event organization, on and on and on and on.



· You get this group of motorcycle riders who raise funds for amazing causes. They just completed a mission that raised millions for scholarships for the children of those killed or disabled in combat. You get youth programs that cost less than most others and mentor today's youth with pride in their country, positive outlook and good sportsmanship. You get people who understand the importance of civics, the U.S. flag, the Constitution, and law and order. You get Auxiliary and Sons organizations that will help out with anything when asked. You get people who know how to help a community after a natural disaster strikes.

• You get a sense of purpose. This is important because someday, young veteran, you will retire. Someday, your kids will move out, your career will be done, and you will sit around wondering, "What can I do next?" Often, this is when veterans join. But why wait?

We raise all kinds of funds for all kinds of community needs: heat detectors at fire departments, scoreboards for school sports, therapy for combat-traumatized veterans, preventing veteran suicide and homelessness, American Legion Baseball, food shelves, clothing programs, Scouting, fireworks, Sister City initiatives, Legionville, honor guards, playground equipment, veterans memorials, trees in the parks and so on.

When I was in the Army, I was a member of Osseo Post felt like I had a strong sense of 172. Then she was named to purpose. We had to win a war! munications director for The the Department Media & Com- Î liked that sense of purpose. American Legion Department munications Committee. Then Now, being part of my post in of Minnesota and editor of The she requested to move to the Bloomington allows me to do a Minnesota Legionnaire.

things for my community. By helping others.

Tim Engstrom

I help me.

There is dignity in community service. This is why we do what

 You get camaraderie and mutual helpfulness. Most veterans like being around other veterans. Yes, they sometimes disagree. Yes, they can be like herding cats. However, I find veterans forgive quickly, and they put past disagreements behind them easily. And when they come together for a mission and work in unison, they are unstoppable.

You might gather civilian friends through life, but I tell you, if you are down and out and struggling, the veterans will have your back. Those guys over there who are kidding around, giving you a hard time, making fun of your service branch, they are the ones who will get you gift cards to feed your family when you have no money for groceries.

They will talk with you if you feel suicidal and get you the help you need. They will pay the fees to send your kids to summer camp. They might even send you to a district, department or national convention. They will visit you when you are in the hospital. They are the ones who will honor you at your funeral. The bond is more than mere friendship.

I agree with Past National Commander Bill Oxford. Join as many veterans' organizations as possible. Congress doesn't know we belong to multiple ones. Oxford said he belonged to eight. I belong to four.

Veterans need to see dues as more of a donation than an expense. You pay dues in veterans organizations because it is the right thing to do for you, your comrades, your community, for America. It's an honor and a privilege to belong. It's not about, "What is in it for me?" It's about, "What can I do to help?"

Yes, there are many small veteran nonprofits that apply Band-Aids to one problem or another, but the Legion is focused on the long term. We need a large veterans organization to move a large federal government. Join

The more fragmented we are, the less we accomplish.

Tim Engstrom is the com-



JOIN THE **LEGION RIDERS TODAY!**

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Tell us when, where (in person or VIA ZOOM) AND WHAT. WE'LL DO THE REST.

CONTACT US AT:

TRAININGCOMM@MNLEGION.ORG.



Third District Commander Rod Reifsteck of Elysian Post 311 shakes hands with Post 225 Commander Pat Silovich after making a brief comment about how great the remodel looks.

Mayor thanks veterans for all they do

Continued from Page 1

by community donations and in part by post funds from the bar, restaurant and banquet operations, Dye said.

On the gambling part, there were \$300,000 counting as lawful purpose expenditures and \$55,000 as allowable expenses. The post received permission in advance from the Minnesota Gambling Control Board for the remodel.

Besides the new walls, the first noticeable difference is the post's long, straight bar is no longer straight, and it isn't as long. It has a U in the middle

now. By shortening the bar and moving the gambling booth to a new area and clearing out some walls, the space opened up for more seating without sacrificing bar stools. There is more room for bartenders to get around and for servers to serve food.

Dye said the remodel involved fixing nine code violations, most notably Americans with Disability Act codes. The main restrooms are far more wheelchair-friendly, for

This is the first of three phases, he said. The next phase involves roof replacement and do for the community.

a third calls for redoing the tiki bar outside to be more secure and better-looking. A small bank mortgage will help cover those upgrades, he added.

Jody Hassing, director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders, told the crowd that the Fund 85 Run departed from and returned to Post 225 last year.

"Maybe we should have another ride kicking off or ending from here," she said.

Forest Lake Mayor Mara Bain spoke, too, saying she can't thank the veterans of Forest Lake enough for all they

Come to the department convention

WILLMAR — The 105th mailboxes around July 3. American Legion Department is July 11-13 at the Willmar Conference Center, with some standing committees meeting on July 10. Willmar Post 167 is hosting.

The official registration form is found on this page. The registration fee is \$15. To encourage early registration, the fee goes up after June 26 to \$25. That will be the fee for registration at the door, too. Be sure to include one form per participant.

Need another form? It is available for download as a PDF at mnlegion.org/ department-convention.

Registration is available online through Eventbrite by visiting mnlegion.org and selecting "events." Anyone also can find the links at mnlegion. org/department-convention

mnlegion.org/calendar. Eventbrite will charge a \$2.85

The Department of Minnesota Convention Corp. thanks Auxiliary member Carrie Werner of Redwood Falls Unit 38 for helping with registration. She can answer registration questions. Her email is carriewerner@gmail.com.

Organizers urge members to make lodging reservations as early as possible directly with the hotels. Ask for "The American Legion block."

Best Western 320-235-6060

Holiday Inn Express: 320-231-2601

Country Inn & Suites: 320-214-0300

AmericInn: 320-365-1995 The convention program is under development. More information on schedules, presenters and activities will be out for the next issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire, which arrives in

This is the first of five years of Minnesota Convention the convention will be hosted at statewide Legion membership the Willmar Conference Center. conducts its business and elects A five-year deal struck last year new officers.

reduces conventions costs.

The convention is where the



DEPARTMENT CONVENTION REGISTRATION

— Official Form —

A registration fee of \$15 for each person attending, whether a delegate, alternate or a guest, must accompany this form.

Make your check payable to "American Legion Post 167" with "Dept. Convention" written on the memo

Please mail this form with your check to: Carrie Werner 36898 County Hwy. 6 Redwood Falls, MN 56238 Registration after June 26 will be \$25.

Legion	
SAĽ	
· Auxiliary	
District #	Post/Squad/Unit #
l	
، Name	
Address	
City	State Zip
Delegate	Alternate
Guest	
Delegate at-Large	(Auxiliary)

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

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

Outstanding Law Officer leads programs LINO LAKES — There are many young, new police officers doing inyoung, new police officers doing inyoung new police officers doing new police new police officers doing new police ne

LINO LAKES — There are many young, new police officers doing incredible work, and they don't make the 10 o'clock news.

Officer Shelby Bonczek of the Lino Lakes Public Safety Department is one such officer. She is this year's Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer for The American Legion Department of Minnesota. She will be at the Department Convention in Willmar in July to be recognized.

Bonczek has been a facilitator for many community education programs and lead coordinator for crime prevention initiatives. This includes the annual Night to Unite event. In 2023, she coordinated with more than 30 block captains to facilitate 39 block parties, with police and fire in attendance at each one.

She placed herself as the primary point of contact for three large residential and elder care facilities in town. This partnership led to many seminars and speaking engagements, bringing together people who the police might not otherwise meet. It led to education on how to prevent crime, such as identity fraud attempts among seniors.

Bonczek was the first officer on scene at a cardiac arrest in 2023, arriving within three minutes of the dispatch call. Right away, she began resuscitation ef-

forts. Additional help arrived, and the resident survived.

She also has been known to take on challenges that many officers avoid. She volunteered to represent the department on an Anoka County committee dealing with records management. In addition, she took on the extra duties of evidence technician for the department, something few others have done.

She has been recognized



Shelby Bonczek

previously for finding an illegally loaded handgun, which later was determined to be a stolen firearm from another state.

Lino Lakes Post 566 is the sponsor of her nomination for Outstanding Law Officer, and she was chosen by the Department of Minnesota's Law and Order Committee of Pat Logan, Jeff Brokaw and Susan Edwards.

Bonczek grew up in the Isanti area. She possesses a bachelor's degree in criminology from the University of Minnesota, Duluth. During college, she was a part-time community service officer for the Duluth Police Department.

She attended a law enforcement skills program at Fond Du Lac Tribal & Community College. She was hired by the city of Lino Lakes in October 2021.

Outstanding Firefighter solves problems, does research

LINO LAKES — The American Legion Department of Minnesota's 2024 Outstanding Firefighter is known for his problem-solving skills.

Lt. Brian Gustafson is a firefighter and emergency medical technician at Lino Lakes Fire Station 1. He has been a paid, on-call firefighter with the Lino Lakes Public Safety Department since December 2017. He previously served 6 1/2 years with the Centennial Fire District.

When the department has a need, he is the first to share his ideas and step up to the plate, such as covering additional calls for service, which allows greater time for administrative work. He mentors new firefighters and is in charge of the onboarding process. He leads the Fire Division's monthly fire and EMS training.



Brian Gustafson

He developed the apparatus specifications for the city's two new fire engines. It was a process that involved several meetings and ample research.

His nomination was sponsored by Lino Lakes Post 566. He was chosen for recognition by the Department of Minnesota's Law and Order Committee of Pat Logan, Jeff Brokaw and Susan Edwards.

Gustafson has a bachelor's degree in business manage-

ment and currently works in project sales for Viking Electric. He has been married for 15 years, with two boys, ages 6 and 11. He and his family live in Lino Lakes. He attended the Anoka County Fire Protection Academy and has obtained Firefighter I and II certification, along with certification for hazardous materials and EMT. He, too, will be at the Department Convention.

What's Happening?



It's Legion Day at Target Field

MINNEAPOLIS — Attend American Legion Day at Target Field. The Minnesota Twins take on the Texas Rangers at 7:10 p.m. May 24. This is the Friday of Memorial Day weekend.

"We welcome anyone who is part of the American Legion Family: veterans, relatives, supporters, Legion baseball and softball players, coaches and their families, and anyone who participates in any American Legion program, such the Riders, Oratorical Contest, Boys and Girls State, Legionville, you name it. We want to have the largest American Legion presence ever at this game," said Department Commander Paul Hassing.

Purchase your discounted tickets here: https://fevo-enterprise.com/ event/American6

Or find the link at mnlegion.org, then hover on "Events" and click on "Twins Game."

The purchase deadline is May 20. Commander Paul Hassing will toss out the first pitch. So will Membership Director Pam Krill. George Hunt of Brooklyn Center Post 630 is slated to sing during the 7th inning stretch.

Conventions are happening at district levels

ST. PAUL — Almost half of the district conventions are done.

They begin at 9 a.m., though they usually have a few committee meetings the evening beforehand. Most attendees show up in the mornings.

Members of the Legion Family can register when they show up without a problem. To register in advance, you may have to visit either the district website or Facebook pages to find registration information.

Here are the remaining district conventions:

• 2nd District: June 8, Fairmont Post 36

• 4th District: June 15, Rosetown

Post 542

• 5th District: June 8, Holiday Inn Bloomington West, 5120 American Blvd.

• 6th District: June 1, Brainerd Post 255

8th District: June 1, Aurora Post2419th District: June 8, Moorhead

Post 21
• 10th District, June 1, Fridley Post

4 posts will host training for suicide prevention

BLOOMINGTON — Veterans and their supporters are invited to receive suicide-prevention training at four metro posts in June.

June 10, 6 p.m.: Bloomington Post 550, 311 W. 84th St.

June 15, 1 p.m.: Rosetown Memorial Post 542, 700 W. County Road C

June 24, 1 p.m.: Hopkins Post 320, 10 12th Ave. S.

June 25: Golden Valley Chester Bird Post 523, 3:30 p.m., 200 Lilac Drive N.

VA Minneapolis staff will be on hand to present S.A.V.E. training. The VA's S.A.V.E. teaches communities how to help veterans at risk for suicide. It will help you act with care and compassion if you encounter a veteran who is in suicidal crisis.

S: Signs of suicidal thinking should be recognized.

A: Ask the most important question of all.

V: Validate the veteran's experience. E: Encourage treatment and Expedite getting help.

North St. Paul to host golf tourney

NORTH ST. PAUL — The 10th annual Club 39 Golf Tournament is scheduled for Sunday, August 4 at Applewood Hills Golf Course in Stillwater. The 18-hole scramble will feature a 9 a.m. shotgun start, with meal and program at Post 39 in North St. Paul following the tournament.

Cost is \$320 per four-person team, and includes golf with cart, prizes and meal. The winner will receive \$500, with second 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 13. 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.

For more information, contact Ken Giannini at 651-354-0064 or kenng5822@hotmail.com, or go to the Post website. Sponsorship information is also available at the Post and on the website. Individuals interested in playing should also contact Giannini.

Wall That Heals coming to Hutch

HUTCHINSON — The Wall That Heals is slated to appear in Hutchinson on Aug. 22-25.

The wall is a Vietnam Veterans Memorial replica. There is a mobile education center, too.

It will be hosted by the McLeod County Veterans Memorial Park, but at 1150 Benjamin Road SE.

Luverne Veterans Home to turn 30 years old

LUVERNE — The Luverne Veterans Home is celebrating a birthday.

The state-run nursing home for veterans is hosting an open house on June 7 to mark its 30th anniversary. There will be tours from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., a lunch between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., with a program at 1 p.m.

The public is invited.

Parking will be available in the back parking lot and across the street at the American Reformed Church. A shuttle service will be available.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs owns and operates the Luverne Veterans Home, as well as seven other veterans homes in the state of Minnesota.

Vet Center event is set for June 13

ST. CLOUD — Minnesota is getting a fourth Vet Center in the form of an outstation.

The grand opening and open house ceremony for the St. Cloud Vet Center Outstation happens at 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, June 13, at 330 Highway 10 S., Suite 101.

Vet Centers offer readjustment counseling for veterans, servicemembers and spouses without that counseling becoming part of their medical record.

Adding Vet Centers in this state has

been an issue The American Legion Department of Minnesota has pushed for since the mid-2000s. It passed a convention resolution on it in 2011.

See Page 16 for the Commander's Testimonial Dinner

That's because Minnesota has one of the worst Vet Center-to-veteran ratios in the country.

Minnesota has three Vet Centers: Anoka, St. Paul and Duluth. The St. Cloud outstation is a satellite of the Anoka one. The state veterans community hopes it develops into a full-fledged Vet Center.

2 commanders throw birthday bash

BIG STONE CITY, S.D. — Minnesota American Legion Commander Paul Hassing has the same birthdate, June 10, as South Dakota Commander Courtney Steffen.

So they decided to have a shared birthday party.

Join them June 8 at the Border Birthday Bash at Big Stone City, S.D., Post 229 from 4 to 8 p.m. The post is in the countryside at 14521 485th Ave.

Car show coming to Fort Snelling

FORT SNELLING — The 934th Airlift Wing will host a car show for all military retirees at Military Family Day on Saturday, Aug. 3.

First come, first-served. Details and registration, call 612-713-1662.

To enter the Minneapolis-St. Paul Air Reserve Station, 760 Military Highway, participants must have a valid ID card.

Program in Bagley looks at D-Day

BAGLEY — Bagley Post 16 is proud to host "Minnesota in World War II: 80th Anniversary of D-Day: Operation Overlord," featuring Historian Arn Kind on Saturday, June 8 at 11 a.m.

This program will focus on the events of June 6, 1944, forever known at D-Day.

The Bagley post is at 112 Main Ave. N.
The same presentation will take place at 2 p.m. Friday, June 7, at the Fertile Public Library, 101 S. Mill St.

Military vehicles will have a convoy

EAST GRAND FORKS —The

Military Vehicle Preservation Association Historical Archives and the Jefferson Highway Association present the 2024 Jefferson Highway Historic Military Vehicle Convoy.

It musters in East Grand Forks, then heads to the northern border to then take the highway's historic route south to Louisiana. It departs East Grand Forks Oct. 1

Overnight stops within the state include Bemidji, Itasca State Park, Camp Ripley, Hutchinson and Albert Lea. Call 800-365-5798, email ha@.

Call 800-365-5798, email hq@ mvpa.org or visit mvpa.org.

VA to have parade on Memorial Day

MINNEAPOLIS — A decorated vehicle parade is slated for Memorial Day, May 27, at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center.

Drivers can gather their vehicles at Parking Lot 11 of the Minneapolis VA. The route goes around the hospital, then past the Fisher House, then over to the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

To participate, contact organizer Greg Arrigoni at uniqueballoons@gmail.com. To watch, just show up.

Memorial Day Parade goes down South Lyndale

BLOOMINGTON — Bloomington American Legion Post 550 and VFW Post 1296 will lead their annual Memorial Day Parade on May 27.

Spectators are invited to line the route at 9 a.m.

The parade starts near 94th Street and Lyndale Avenue and continues south about a mile and a quarter to Bloomington Cemetery.

Any organizations interested in participating in the parade can contact Post 550 Chaplain Jim Mead at meadformayor@gmail.com.

Elk River parade on Memorial Day

ELK RIVER — Yellow Ribbon Elk River and the city of Elk River host the community's Memorial Day Parade on May 27.

The parade begins at 10 a.m. on Norfolk Street, east of Handke Pit, and runs down Main Street to King Avenue. There will be a ceremony at Rivers Edge Commons Park. The parade features Legion and VFW posts.



Photo by Jim Huttner

Braving the cold and bitter wind on a Minnesota winter day for the Brown County Last Union Veteran Ceremony on Nov. 19 in New Ulm. It was a combined honor guard from New Ulm American Legion Post 132 and the VFW Post 1648, leaders of the SUVCW Camp 56, relatives of the Last Union Veteran in Brown County Pvt. Jacob Klossner, Bryce Stenzel as President Lincoln, and SUVCW leaders.

Operation Headstone needs help from local American Legion posts

By Gabe Keith

undreds of Civil War Hassing. veterans in Minnesota are buried in unmarked

The Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, aka SUVCW, plans on doing something about it, but it needs your help. The organization was formed in 1881 by the Grand Army of the Republic and charted by Congress in 1954.

"One of our goals in Phase I of this operation is to identi-VFW posts the unrecorded Civil their local cemeteries," Gary Carlberg said.

He is a retired combat vet and the commander of the SUVCW Camp 56, which covers Minnesota and Wisconsin. He began researching where Civil War soldiers are buried in 2021 and since then has been joined by 10 other researchers, trained in by Jimmy Johnson and himself.

"I think it's important for us to inform the posts in Minnesota of those soldiers they are not aware of so they can be recognized on Memorial Day," Carlberg said. "We can work together to get the headstones that those veterans deserve."

The data on this situation is shocking and yet explainable. Some of these guys have headstones and the SUVCW just needs someone to go find the grave and provide a photo of the headstone.

A lot of them we need help on, probably 40 percent, are in unmarked graves, he said. Others are buried and have headstones, but it says nothing about them being in the military. That's where the SUVCW can come in and help identify people that we know are veterans that are buried in these cemeteries, according to our documents.

"This is where we can help each other to make a significant difference," Carlberg said. "This is not an overnight or even a one- or two-year project. But it's doable if we work together. In the end, our goal is to get 250 headstones a year for our civil war veterans who currently are interred in unmarked graves."

If you want to know how you can specifically help, reach out to Carlberg at his email: gary. carlberg@hotmail.com.

"This is a significant community service veterans project. None of us can do this statewide project alone. The heroes of our past helped pave the way for the road ahead and we must complete this project" said to find where this guy was Department Commander Paul buried."

How it works is Carlberg will send you a list of Civil War veterans interred in your county and what we know about them to include where they are buried. Print it out and save it for future records. The list will state, for example, there's 20 people buried in the Union Cemetery in White Bear Lake who are Civil War vets, three of whom a photo of the headstone is sought.

Then you go there and find fy from American Legion and out two are buried there and one does not have a name to match. War veterans who are buried in Let's say of the three you find, one has a headstone, one has a privately listed one, and one resides in an unmarked grave. Two of them should at least be given a flag on Memorial Day and the one that is unmarked, we can work together to get the headstone from the VA they provide at no cost. The SUVCW researchers will look for those hard-to-find documents the VA requires.

A real-life example is Rice County. The national database said there were 134 guys buried there. As of now, Carlberg has a list with 603 soldiers. There are probably 50 or 60 guys that are not Civil War vets. They might be Mexican-American, Spanish-American, or War of 1812 vets. But each one of these guys needs to be researched.

"This morning, I spent a two-hour Zoom session with a new researcher who is doing really well," Carlberg said. "It looks like there are about 900 Civil War soldiers buried in that county alone. Going through each of those is time-consuming and a big deal. It's a lot of fun. It's like a mystery. A puzzle. You're chasing the clues by locating and analyzing documents

There are a lot of reasons this situation has occurred over time. Before the 1900s, death certificates were not provided in Minnesota when the family buried a loved one. Sometimes a family has a soldier dug up and moved to a different cemetery. One soldier was discovered to have been moved twice. Sometimes they are moved because the government put a freeway directly through a cemetery. Sometimes the family wants them relocated to where they are at and not the battlefield they died at.

Minnesota had close to 25,000 soldiers in the Union Army and only about 11,000 in the database. In part due to Minnesota being a territory at the time, we also have somewhere between 25 to 50 percent more who originated from other places around the U.S. In large part because vets ended up in Minnesota for free land. If you fought in the Civil War and you served for three years, when you came with your new bride and filed your deed, after two more years the land was yours. Everyone else had to live there for five years before they could own the land. But for every year you served in the union army, it took off a year of that legally binding time. So, the incentive for Civil War vets to move to Minnesota was very great.

"I can't go to the 20 cemeteries in the 87 counties in Minnesota and look for who does and who doesn't have a headstone," Carlberg said. "That's where I need the help. In White Bear Lake as one of the Legion members there, I've got the map. Nobody knows who's buried in the cemeteries better than veteran groups. So, working together we can get this done."



Photo by Mary Ellen

Pvt. Elbridge Andross, who served in Co G, 3rd Minnesota Infantry during the Civil War received a headstone this fall due to the work done by Gary Carlberg and others from the SUVCW. Andross (Andros in military records), was 39 when he enlisted on Oct. 3, 1861, at Wabasha and mustered into "G" Co. Minnesota 3rd Infantry. He was discharged for disability on Jan. 15, 1862. He applied for a Federal pension on Aug. 6, 1887, from the state of Minnesota.

KARE-11 wins American Legion award

neapolis television station and a Kentucky newspaper will receive American Legion Fourth Dr. Mary Jo Lanska were later Estate Awards during the 105th National Convention of the nation's largest veterans organization in New Orleans on Aug. 29.

The Fourth Estate Award has been presented annually by The American Legion since 1958 for outstanding achievement in the field of journalism. Nominations in 2024 were considered in broadcast and print categories. They were selected by the organization's Media & **Communications Commission** during its meeting in Indianapolis last week.

Taking top honor in the broadcast category is KARE. In its series, "Broken Promises," the NBC affiliate examined the have failed to prepare for worsthigh rate of denials veterans received when applying for benefits after examinations from one er Stephanie Kuzydym built particular neurologist at the a searchable "deadly games"

INDIANAPOLIS - A Min- Wisc. Investigative reporter more than 100 years of such A.J. Lagoe exposed a system in which 649 claims denied by reversed. Some of the claims included veterans diagnosed with serious illnesses such as multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease.

The denials led to an apology to the veterans by Secretary of Veteran Affairs Denis McDonough. Lanska was also removed as an examiner. KARE and Lagoe were previously recognized with a Fourth Estate Award in 2018.

The Courier Journal of Louisville, Ky. is being recognized for its 2023 series "Safer Sidelines," which explored the many ways high schools, athletic associations and lawmakers case scenarios of sudden deaths on athletic fields. Lead report-VA Medical Center in Tomah, database, which includes

incidents.

"I am looking forward to presenting KARE and the Courier Journal with their well-deserved Fourth Estate Awards,' said Daniel J. Seehafer, national commander of The American Legion. "The American Legion is extremely appreciative of the importance of a free and independent media. As veterans, we defended the freedoms guaranteed by our nation's Constitution Our Fourth Estate winners represent the best in their field. These award winners are being recognized for outstanding works of journalism that not only stand far above normal media reporting but have had a positive impact on society."

Previous winners of the award include CNN, CBS, USA Today, ABC News, C-SPAN, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, and Life Magazine, among

Minn. officer honored by the Legion

INDIANPOLIS — The American Legion announced April 1 that Minnesota's Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer for 2023 has been named as a regional winner.

The Regional Law Enforcement member and a detective. Officer of the Year Awards go to, Nicholas De Felice of Maryland in the Northeast Region, Lacey Pueblo of Oklahoma in the Southwest Region, Ryan Rathbum of Washington in the Western Region, Brad Milstein of Georgia in the Southern Region, and Scott Kostohryz of Minnesota in the man suffereing from a heart attack until Midwest Region.

Kostohryz is a patrol sergeant with the Moorhead Police Department. He started with the department in 2004.

Over the years, he has served as a field training officer, SWAT team

He saved a life in a smoke-filled house on Jan. 8, 2009, while firefighters were already involved in another fire.

On Feb. 18, 2012, he negotiated with a woman who threatened to jump off a bridge and intervened, saving her life. In 2013, he used a defibrillator on a

medical professionals arrived.



Scott Kostohryz

Legionnaire Benefits

As a Member of the Legion Family, You Know How Important It Is to Help Protect Those in Need ...

Now We Can Help

The LIT Plans can help with

- Hospital HELP Plan
- Cancer Care
- Accidental Death Protection
- On-The-Move Travel Accident
- Emergency Assistance Plus
- Medicare Supplement Insurance
- Health Insurance
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- Long-Term Care
- Lifeline Medical Alert Service







- Hospital HELP Plan Provides benefits for hospital stays including intensive care, cardiac care, care for cancer, rehabilitative facilities, and V.A. hospitals."
- Cancer Care Provides important protection and a daily benefit if you are hospitalized due to cancer.*
- Accidental Death Helps provide financial protection for you and your family. Up to \$5,000.00 LegionCare AD coverage at no cost to Legionnaires is available: (activation required).* You can also purchase additional Accident coverage up to \$100,000.00.
- On-The-Move Travel Accident Provides up to \$200,000.00 coverage when fatally injured in a covered accident while traveling, plus \$500.00 per day if a covered accident lands you in the hospital.*
- Emergency Assistance Plus Provides you with 24/7 emergency medical and travel assistance services should something happen to you or your family while traveling away from home.
- Medicare Supplement Insurance Supplements your Medicare Coverage at group rates.
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To Learn More and Enroll, Visit

www.TheLIT.com

For Questions Call 1-800-235-6943

*The Accidental Death, Cancer Care, Hospital Help Plan, and On-The-Move Accident Insurance Plans are underwritten by Securian Life Insurance Company, St. Paul, MN. Plans may not be available in all states. These policies contain limitations and exclusions. Please visit www.TheLIT.com to review plan details.

Listening Post



Albert Lea Post 56 Adjutant Tom Norby presents the Legionnaire of the Year to Lowell Peterson.



On April 15, Albert Lea Post 56 members received certificates for their continuous years. From left are Commander Ole Olson, Steven Hoelscher (50 years), Dale Viktora (50 years), Paul Luttrell (60 years), Jim Olson (50 years) and Paul Nechanicky (50 years).



Veterans and spouses from the American Legion 2nd District and DAV met with state Rep. Bjorn Olson to discuss Veteran legislation. From left are Steve Fosness, Merlin Oddan, Bjorn Olson, Randy Olson, Joe Stauffer, Bob Altman and Barb Kotewa.



Greenbush Post 88 honored Bob Wollin on his 100th birthday for 75 years of continuous membership in The American Legion. From left are grandson Shawn Wollin, son Greg Wollin, Bob and son Steve Wollin. Shawn, Greg and Steve also are veterans. Greg and Steve each have 52 years of continuous membership. Shawn retired after 20 years in the Navy.



Litchfield Post 104 hosted Boys & Girls Meeker County for the 39th year. The program showed 32 students from eighth, ninth and 10th grades various Meeker County facilities, the Meeker County Historical Museum and Litchfield's historic Grand Army of the Republic Hall. Unit 104 served lunch.



Minnesota State University, Mankato, ROTC Cadet Sambhav Bhattarai was the American Legion Department of Minnesota Military Excellence Scholarship and Award recipent on March 21 at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter. Presenting the certificate and \$750 scholarship are Brad Pagel and Amy Larsen of the Minnesota American Legion National Security/Foreign Relations Committee at the Maverick Battalion Spring Military Ball.



St. Michael Post 567 honored Korea-era veteran Roger Robeck for his 70 years of continuous Legion membership.



Post 36 Color Guard Members Pete Hennager, Cory Germain, Doug Landsteiner, and Ken Ringeisen present the "colors" at the annual Pheasants Forever Banquet.



New Prague Veterans Honor Guard presented the colors at the Twin Cities Auto Show for Military Appreciation Night on April 2.

Listening Post



University of Minnesota ROTC Midshipman Jacob Kuhlman is presented with American Legion Outstanding Scholastic and Military awards at the annual University of Minnesota ROTC Joint Service Review. Pictured with him are, proud parents Jason and Angie Kuhlman along with 5th District Commander Dick Ward and 5th District Adjutant Ray Eiden.



During the National Commander's Tour, Moorhead Post 21 donate \$1,000 to his project. ALR Chaper 21 donated \$250. SAL Squadron 21 donated \$250. Auxiliary Unit 21 donated \$150. His project is the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.



During the National Commander's Tour, Fergus Falls Post 30 Commander Warren Wilson presents \$1,000 to the National Commander Dan Seehafer's Project and another \$1,000 to Department Commander Paul Hassing's Project.



During the National Commander's Tour, Golden Valley Post 523 Commander Craig Hartman presents a \$2,000 check to Commander Dan Seehafer's Project.



During the National Commander's Tour, Buffalo Post 270 Commander Constance Herzog, left, and Bruce and Carol Kottom, right, present a check for \$1,500.

What do you do if the national anthem is played in public?

By Dick Cole Department of Virginia

COLONIAL HEIGHTS, Va. - I was sitting in the waiting room of the Commonwealth Vein Center on Thursday, Dec. 28, having arrived several minutes before my noon appointment. I was catching up on emails on my cellphone when, the radio in the room began playing "The Star-Spangled Banner.

Immediately, I stood and, there being no flag in the room, I faced the direction of the music and put my right hand over my heart.

As you might imagine, this got several stares from the other four patients waiting in the room for their appointment and from the receptionist. Not a single person stood and joined in honoring the anthem, nor did the receptionist stop talking to a woman at the desk whom she was assisting with scheduling a follow-up appointment.

As I was standing with my hand over my heart, the nurse opened the door to the waiting room and called my name. I didn't respond as the anthem was playing. She called my name again and again I didn't respond.

Finally, when the anthem ended, I spoke up to the nurse that I was there and followed her to the room for my procedure. I asked her what radio station was playing in the waiting room and explained I didn't immediately respond as I was showing respect for the national anthem.

The nurse is an immigrant from Pakistan and, understandably, didn't connect the relationship between the national anthem playing on the radio and showing proper courtesy.

She had to ask which radio station was turned on in the waiting room, and it turned out to be WKHK — a country station ("K95") serving Colonial Heights and Petersburg. The station is one of many across the nation playing the anthem at noon daily.

The station is owned by SummitMedia — a broadcasting company based in Birmingham, Ala. The company operates stations in Alabama, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and Hawaii. During the COVID pandemic, SummitMedia joined other affiliated stations at noon.

I took the opportunity to



The 9th District American Legion Band plays patriotic music on April 14 at Moorhead Post 21.

educate the staff at the clinic I would never do anything to that 36 U.S. Code § 301 requires "at the first note of the anthem and maintain that position until the last note; members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute in the manner provided for individuals in uniform; and all other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, and men not in uniform, if applicable, should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart; and when the flag is not displayed, all present should face toward the music and act in the same manner they would if the flag were displayed."

I apologized for not having immediately responded to her when she called my name and explained why I didn't speak up. I wish others would have followed my lead.

Mission BBQ, a restaurant chain with a location in Colonial Heights, asks its patrons to stand for "The Star-Spangled Banner" each day at noon.

Many members of the public complained about the practice on Reddit. Reddit user Buzz— Fledderjohn commented, "As an American, this makes me incredibly uncomfortable."

Reddit user BlankBillboard offered, "I've been there at noon and sat there through the whole thing. I don't care how many of the old men there were giving me dirty looks.'

Reddit user Itslolo52484 wrote, "I'd just sit and keep eating. You're not obligated to do anything you don't want to do. That includes standing for the anthem, and that's what being an American is all about. I love this country, and it has broadcasters like iHeartMedia a long way to go before we in playing the anthem on their get things right. As a business owner, I think this could turn a lot of people off your business.

give any information about my religious or political affiliations as a business owner. I'd see green, not red and blue."

The Rainbow Oaks Restaurant in Fallbrook, Calif., has its customers stand up every day to sing a rendition of the national anthem. Footage of the patriotic occasion was posted to TikTok by user @paulinappa_0, showing approximately a dozen people standing by the bar area as "The Star-Spangled Banner" played aloud on the TV screens.

Captioning the post, the TikToker wrote: "By far the most dangerous situation I've ever been in," while using the hashtags #godblessamerica, #getout, #illegal and #whitepeoplethings.

In just the first week after its upload to TikTok in May 2023, the post has gone viral with more than 3.4 million views, 580,000 likes and 23,000 comments.

Like the content creator, many were not too impressed with the video. "Yeah, no, stopped doing it in school a while ago and the rage & hate I felt around me was insane," one person wrote.

It's sad that we are not doing a better job of teaching respect for our flag and our national anthem in America. Clearly patriotism is something to be avoided and is somehow creepy or Nazi-like among today's "woke" society.

As American Legion members let us rededicate our-selves to educating our fellow citizens about when and how to render respect for our nation, its flag, and our national anthem.

Dick Cole is the public relations officer for Colonial Heights Post 284 and is on the Department of Virginia Media and Communications Committee.



At the stop at Le Center Post 108, Commander Anita Janda, center, and Adjutant Charles Dempewolf present National Commander Dan Seehafer with a \$1,000 check. In all the Tour of Minnesota raised more than \$11,000 for his project.

District commanders



1st District **Mark Maloney**

Wow, what a quick year. It a flag line seems like yesterday I was elected as your district commander. I am very grateful that you had put your trust in me, and I hope I have served you well. Well, last year I had the opportunity to show everyone if we act as a family we can get great things

We have dropped in the percentage of membership. We are ninth, but if you look at our membership number we are third with 6,425 members. The 3rd District is in first place with 9,218, and 6th District in second place with 7,006 members.

Not bad at all, so everyone should pat themselves on the back to keep up the membership we have a new year ahead of us. We still have work to do.

With that in mind, you should never judge a veteran who is disabled. They are the reason that The American Legion is here. We have a long list of the things we do for them and their families.

Case in point: My wife and I had helped a veteran who was told he could never join The American Legion. He was suicidal. He didn't want anything to do with anyone or anything. His son got him on the Honor Flight and then when he had seen the American Legion Riders doing

and the the Honor Flight made this day.

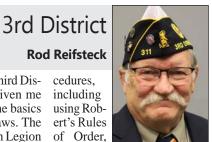
But he was still unhappy. He still wanted to join and belong to a group of people that would understand him and the things that war can do to people and how much it changes them.

Well, it has been 90 days since he joined. He is the proudest man, happy to talk about things that he was ashamed of being a veteran who served as many of us did.

It just goes to show the smallest things you do can make a difference. It's good to see a man happy to talk to people and be included as someone in a family who doesn't judge the things we had to do to survive the harness of what man is forced to do in the name of freedom.

So, in closing remember ARK (act of random kindness). It goes along way if we work together in our post and in the district. We can do anything, but we need everyone to help — Auxiliary, Legion, SAL, Riders. We make an effective team and work well together.

God bless our country and God bless our troops.



Rod Reifsteck

To the Thundering Third Dis-cedures, trict, this spring has given me time to think back to the basics of why we follow bylaws. The bylaws of the American Legion are crucial for maintaining the integrity and the effectiveness of any organization. The purpose of bylaws are to govern its operations, activities and procedures. Bylaws can cover officer duties, meeting procedures and membership eligibility.

Each post should have their own set of bylaws. Once approved by the general membership, the bylaws should be dated and signed by the post commander and adjutant. A copy then should be sent to Department Adjutant Mike Maxa at mmaxa@mnlegion.org.

We should familiarize ourselves with the bylaws annually. It is important as issues arise in different posts that all members of the posts take the time to read and understand them. This could about the interpretation of the look forward to seeing all of our freedom!" be done as prescribed by the Executive Board.

The main criteria outlined by the bylaws will help maintain following procedures. As questions arise concerning election of officers, the bylaws clearly describe their roles and responsibilities, along with a multitude of other answers.

Meetings should be conducted following the rules and pro-

including using Robert's Rules of Order, like how

meetings are called and business is conducted, as well as how decisions are made.

As financial discussions take place a protocol should be written and adhered to in the guidelines of the bylaws, which may include budgeting, reporting, clarifications, and auditing

If bylaws need to be amended or changed it is essential to follow channels already in place that are set up in the bylaws. It is up to the Executive Board and the post general membership, which approves any changes in the amendments.

When questions or challenges arise, and uncertainties occur, it is essential to seek guidance bylaws. Members can always ask for clarification from the post commander, district vice commander and district commander.

In summary, by following the bylaws of the American Legion, each Post can insure that their local organization operates easily, transparently, and following the mission of each Post.





5th District

Our 5th District Convention the MyLweekend is right around the corner. A very reverent memorial service is led by the Auxiliary on Friday evening, and every-

one for the full Conference on

Saturday.

Get a look as we wrap this year and meet our new officers as they lead us next year. Look for your Convention Call and get onboard.

The Fighting Fifth District had 100 percent participation with submitting the Annual Post Data Reports, as required for the new membership year. Outstanding! Thanks to all of our posts!

The school year is nearing an end and there will be a final exam for all Posts in the 5th District. That's right! We're going to measure your completeness of individual Legionnaire information in MyLegion.org.

You will have a ranking, a report and several benchmarks for improving targets. The final exam will be at the first district meeting in September 2024. Awards will be presented! The program will continue quarterly!

your post ranks and give them tion to mutual helpfulness."

Greetings to all members of

Dick Ward

egion.org challenge; clean it up, fill it up and verify

the information. Experts on Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word can be a big help. Export data, sort data, mail-merge data and print data can be a force multiplier for your post. Raise your hand if you want to be a force multiplier for your post!

The participation at 5th District VA Hospital Visitation program in April was a WOW! We had a great turnout and very well received by the patients I, and others met. Mark your calendars for the first Sunday of the month at 2 p.m. The patients feel better and so will you.

It is time to consider stepping up your game for the new year. We have officer positions, committee positions and more opportunities to dip your toe into the district waters and see if you like what you find.

Thank you for all you do in support of our veterans and The American Legion.

"To consecrate and sanctify Find the techie Legionnaire in our comradeship by our devo-



humbling the 8th District. Back in July, I took the position of vice comday to see mander for the border area to all the vetget the membership packets to erans organizations

8th District

After the resignation of District Commander Jennifer Havlick, I became the interim commander and look forward to working with all nembers of the American Legion Family!

our posts.

A huge thank-you goes to Carl Hendrickson for jumping in as adjutant and getting the communication lines going out to all the posts in our district. Thank you to Peter Dubey, D. Marvin Hill and Gene Swanson for being here as vice commanders, and to Bruce Braun for continuing as chaplain for the district. We're very grateful for Wilson Spence for filling the position of judge advocate.

The date for our 8th District Convention has been moved out to June 8. It will be held at the Ouayle-Shuster-Truman-Munich Post 241 in Aurora. We 8th District posts being represented at this year's convention.

Veterans Day on The Hill on April 17 was very well-attended. This was the first time that my wife, Ann, and I had participated.

Dan Siats It was a

and their auxiliary members and supporters there to have their voices heard. Together we can! Be the one! Veterans for veterans!

Consolidated Post Reports are due to department before the end of May. A great time to send them in is right after Memorial Day. The reports give the department and national organizations the information needed to determine future programming and to prove that the intent and purpose of The American Legion is being carried out under our charter!

Memorial Day is only a few days away. A message passed on from National Commander Dan Seehafer: "Memorial Day is not the end of a three-day weekend, but a somber moment to reflect on the steep price paid for our

call me, Dan Siats, at 651-491-2093, or call Adjutant Carl Hendrickson, at 218-393-0079.

Thank you for being a member of The American Legion!



Spicer Post 545 donated \$500 to Department Commander Paul Hassing's Project, Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund.

Who is going to **Commander Hassing's Testimonial Dinner?**

MONTGOMERY — Department Commander Paul Hassing will be honored at his Testimonial Dinner. Montgomery Post 79's Taco Terco will provide

Starting at 4 p.m. in Faribault, Bloomington Post 550 will provide its bus to shuttle guests between Post 79, the Quality Inn in New Prague, and the four hotels on the north side of Faribault.

Social hour is 5 p.m. Dinner, followed by program is 6 p.m. Entertainment is 8 p.m.

This event is a chance for members of the American Legion Family to sit back, relax and enjoy camaraderie following a year of hard work and great effort. This one, especially, is going to be a great time you don't want to miss.

Lodging:

New Prague Quality Inn & Suites: 952-758-7300

Faribault Days 507-334-6835

Faribault Hometown Inn & Suites: 507-334-1634

Boarders Inn & Suites Faribault: 507-334-9464

GrandStay Residential Suites



Department Commander Paul Hassing in Moorhead.

Faribault: 507-334-2888

To pay online, go to mnlegion. org and click on "Events." There is an Eventbrite link avilable. Or else just search Eventbrite.

To pay offline, mail payment and names of attendees to Jody Hassing, 108 N. Circle Drive, Montgomery, MN 56069-1326. Make the check out to "Jody Hassing."

Tickets must be purchased before end of day June 16.

Questions about the event can be emailed to jodyhassing@ gmail.com. Questions about Eventbrite can be emailed to tengstrom@mnlegion.org.



9th District **Steve NaSalle**

Hello, Roaring Ninth District for June 8, American Legion Family!

It's election time for your posts. Commanders and Adjutants please ensure that all your new and continuing officers are sworn in. Once accomplished, please ensure that all your post forms (PORs & CPRs) have been filled out properly and sent to the department for updating.

If you need assistance, please contact Tim Haugen, our district vice commander at-large.

Things to be mindful of:

• Our dues are increasing in 2025, as you likely know, so please adjust accordingly per your membership's requirements. In addition, please

• Get your dues updates to the department ASAP. This is greatly appreciated.

Reminders: The 9th District Convention is scheduled intention." — Oscar Wilde

beginning at Moorhead Post

21. Our District

Executive Board will meet on June 7, beginning at 5 p.m. Please visit our 9th District Facebook page, or our district newsletter for reservations and costs. I look forward to seeing you all there. Please be safe on

your travels. Please continue to be mindful of our members who are homebound or in assisted living facilities and remember our buddy checks. Our comrades deserve our attention.

Thank you for volunteering. "The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest



10th District **Matthew Berens**

Hello, men and women of the I'm also Mighty Tenth District.

First of all, I want to the Golden Valley and Howard Lake posts in the Mighty Tenth for hosting National Commander Daniel Seehafer. I've heard some very positive comments. Commander Seehafer is certainly an excellent orator, emphasizing the American Legion "Be The One" initiative. And though I was unable to attend Veterans Day on the Hill, I heard it was a huge success.

Summer is nearly here, so let's get right to events happening to help our veterans in the great state of Minnesota. Our 10th District Convention is happening June 1 at Fridley Post 303, and we could not be more excited.

to Commander Paul Hass-

ing singing

karaoke as Elvis when he meets his project goal for the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund at his Testimonial Dinner on June 22.

Our American Legion Riders are hitting it out of the park this year. The ALR Ride for Magnus Veterans Foundation drew over 100 motorcycles. And that's just the beginning. If you're interested in what the American Legion Riders are doing this summer, email me at mtberen@yahoo.com to receive our events link.

Endorsements

Krill endorsed for department vice cmdr.

Lee C. Prentice Post 36 in Fairmont endorses Pamela J. Krill for the position of Department of Minnesota vice commander for the 2nd and 7th districts for the year 2024-25.

Krill is a retired Air Force veteran, having served for 21 years. She grew up in Kingston and grad-

School. After graduation, she enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and attended basic training at Lackland AFB, in Texas.

She attended technical training at Lowery AFB, in Colorado, and then was assigned to Beale AFB, in California, as a supply specialist. She moved to Colorado Springs, Colo., and worked at the 367th Recruiting Headquarters as a logistics specialist.

Then, she spent time in Iceland as a mobility specialist and in media affairs and public relations. Two years later, she moved to Altus, Okla., where She served as a unit deployment manager, prepping and deploying members to numerous locations around the globe.

Her final duty station was Langley AFB, in Virginia, where she worked as a weapon system manager. While at Langley, she spent one tour in Iraq at Balad Air Base and then one year at them," she said.



Pam

Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, and then another year at Shindand Air Base, Afghanistan. Both tours She was an advisor to the Afghan Army and the Afghan Air Force.

Upon returning from a second tour in Afghanistan, her son asked her to retire. After a wonderful 21 years, she turned down

uated from Annandale High an assignment to Hawaii to be with her son. They moved back to Minnesota in February 2015 and purchased a small house on five acres in the countryside near Blue Earth.

> Krill is a lifetime member of Disabled American Veterans, where she is a chapter treasurer. She is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and she is membership director for The American Legion Department of Minnesota and for the 2nd District. She was 2nd District commander for 2022-23. She is a past chairman for the Department Strategic Planning Committee. She is a 2021 graduate of National American Legion College. She has served on the National Americanism Council since 2021.

> "As a veteran, I will always be dedicated to my country and our fellow veterans, doing what I can to aid in taking care of

There remains time to sign up for Boys State

Minn. Boys State

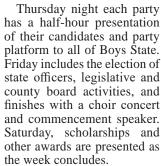
We are still welcoming reg- meetings istrations of high school junior boys to the 75th session of Minnesota's American Legion Boys State. St. John's University will host us June 9 through the 15. All information needed to register can be found at www.mnboysstate.org.

American Legion members are invited to observe for a day. Sunday is an organizational and "get to know each other" period. Monday includes city campaigning and the election of city officers. Tuesday and Wednesday the boys will be involved with the political process — city and county caucusing and the State Party for state offices will be selected support of the Boys State by each party.

There will be more city business, as well as an introduction to county government. Election Minnesota American Legion of legislators and county board members will lead to Thursday's

167.

Legislature and county



Come see what your sponsorship entails for participants. Convention where nominees Thank you for your continued program!

Neil Kruse is a counselor for

Auxiliary Past Department President presented \$120 to National Commander Dan Seehafer's **Project during** the stop at Willmar Post



Dept. Convention might be a day shorter for some

A big thank-you and shoutout to all the posts that hosted National Commander Dan Seehafer during his tour of Minnesota. There were very good crowds on each visit.

Also, a huge thank-you to all the posts that donated to his project, the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

Spring meetings were held May 5-9 in Indianapolis. Minnesota is very lucky to have an outstanding Alternate NECman in Peggy Moon. She took my place. I was not up to a trip like that. Getting better each week following my heart surgery.

The warm weather and sunshine are helping immensely. Another upcoming event is the National Oratorical Contest May 17-19. That is being held at Hillsdale College in Michigan.

Minnesota is once again leading the nation by having nearly 400 American Legion Baseball teams and many more Legion Girls' Fastpitch Softball teams. Thanks to all the hard work and time put in by the baseball and softball committees.

Be The One.

Are you out visiting and knocking on the doors of members you have not seen for a long time? Or those who have not renewed their memberships?

National Report

Bill Barbknecht

They would love to know that on the line they are missed.

A face-to-face meeting means so much. No text, or email, a simple visit lets them know you are concerned about them. As I am sure you want them to be a member of your

I hope you are making plans for a memorial program in your community. Have a program with your school and teach those children the meaning of Memorial Day, not just a barbecue and picnic. A great time to possibly see those members that need to renew their memberships.

District conventions will be starting soon, and all 10 districts will have a convention. Please step up and take a chairmanship or even offer to be a officer. I cannot stress enough the sense of accomplishment for a wonderful organization and the many friends you will make through our American Legion Family.

National Law Enforcement week is May 12-18. Take time to honor your police officers, troopers. They put their lives Communications Director Tim Executive Committeeman.

as we did, when we all served, They too. are closer to

home but still a very dangerous occupation currently.

Armed Forces Day is May 18. There were three district conventions that day. Have you taken a good look at your building, inside and out? Now is the time for a big cleanup. Appearance on the outside is as important as appearance on the inside. No one wants to visit

Donna and I were able to attend Seehafer's visit to Fergus Falls Post 30 and Willmar Post 167. I am a now a member at Post 30, and Donna is from Willmar. Her 90-year-old mother was very impressed with the commander's speech. He is a powerful speaker.

Those of you who did not attend do not know what you

A big thank-you to Commander Paul Hassing, MemEngstrom and Adjutant Mike Maxa — an outstanding crew for all their time and effort to make the national commander feel right at home.

Please consider this thought on the dues increase. It is not the price you pay to belong to this great organization; it is the price you paid so you are eligible to belong.

Donna and I hope to see you at a district convention if God is willing. But definitely at the Department Convention in Willmar July 11-13. The Department Executive Committee meets on Thursday morning this year, so it might shorten the convention by one day for

For others, they still might have committee meetings on Wednesday afternoon.

The plus side is Wednesday evening will be open for dining and camaraderie.

I cannot express enough my gratitude for all the cards, texts, emails, phone calls and physical visits at our ranch from all of you. It meant a lot to be part of the American Legion Family.

As always, Donna and I look forward to seeing you all.

Bill Barbknecht of Underwood Post 489 is the Departsheriff's deputies and state bership Director Pam Krill, ment of Minnesota's National

Fill positions based on merit, not personality As we work our way through Detachment Cmdr.

this beautiful spring weather, I've had a couple of thoughts come to mind.

As we move into the season of post, unit, squadron and chapter elections — and then district and finally department elections — these thoughts have occurred to me. We, the membership of the various parts and levels of the American Legion Family, need to really be looking to our future when it comes to electing the people who are going to be helping lead us through the next year.

I believe that sometimes we let our decisions on the officers that we will elect be driven by personalities (as in our or others conflicts with those people) rather than whether that person will be not only be good in the position and will do the job to the best of their abilities — as well as to whether that person is someone that we want representing our portion of the American Legion Family.

I know personality conflict is part and parcel of human interaction but let's put that aside and think about what it takes to represent us and will that person be there to do the job. And that's

John Weiss the person who we elect for any personal position be there to do the job

and do that job to the best of their abilities. And if they are doing the job that means that they are representing us all well by their words, actions and deeds. I've learned to look at it by that

metric from the mentors in my

personal life and my mentors in the American Legion Family. And I'd like to take a piece of this column right now to say, I thank them for their input not only in my personal life but for their being there and mentoring me into being able to serve in a better way for all of my fellow veterans, their families and the American Legion Family as a

If I start bringing names to this message to them, I'll probably forget someone who is very deserving and I don't want that. So that's my little segue in and out.

The idea is still, by looking at that metric we hope to find the person that will be truly reprewhat it's really all about, will sentative of us as a whole. My part of the Legion Family and While Moving Forward."

opinion is that the toughest job in the

Legion Family is the job of post commander, because all of the different factions on a much smaller and personal level and all vying for the level of support they want for that part of the family.

But it begins on a lower level than that. It's probably the newest member who gets the (ahem) opportunity to be the sergeant-at-arms at the post, unit, squadron or chapter level. And that's where we mentor and see how they go about doing the job.

Then, hopefully, if we've done a good job mentoring, they do that job well then, they decide that they want to move into another position and onward and upward we as

And yet even still that sergeant-at-arms represents that

as they move up that representation grows larger and larger.

That's why I say that we should always look for a person who is going to do the job and that they will try their very best to do the job well.

That's it for this column. I hope that it's given us all something to think about as we go into and through this election time of the year. Be well and be safe in your travels.

As a postscript if I may, and hopefully without stepping on any toes. Even though I'm the SAL detachment commander, I'm also a proud Legion Rider so please be aware of all us on motorcycles that you are sharing the highways and byways

After all, it could be Commander Paul Hassing, President Sharon Cross, Riders Director Jody Hassing or even me riding right alongside you someday.

Have a safe and wonderful

John Weiss of St Paul Arcade-Phalen Squadron 577 is the commander of the Detachment of Minnesota for the Sons of The American Legion. His theme is "Honoring the Past,



At the stop at Golden Valley Post 523, Bloomington Post 550 members Paul Hassing and Tim Engstrom presented Commander Seehafer with a \$2,000 check.



Willmar Post 167 Commander Jon Olson presents a \$500 check to the national commander for his project. Spicer Post 545 also donated \$500. Olivia Post 186 gave \$100.

The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 24 Vol. 9

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

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

651-224-7634

May 2024

Melrose, Mpls., Montevideo & Mem. Day

Melrose American Legion Post 101 hosted my testimonial dinner in April. Thank you to my family and Legion Family that celebrated with us. It was wonderful to have everyone together to share this evening. Thank you to the Melrose American Legion Family for all your hard work. I appreciate how you all work together so well helping to make this night special.

Following my testimonial, NEC Jean Walker, Department Membership Chairman Jenny Nelson and I had the privilege of escorting National President Lisa Williamson on a tour of Minnesota. We had an incredible four days highlighting some of our veteran facilities.

Williamson was able to share her focus on the Spirit of Youth Scholarship and the Legion Family "Be the One" initiative.

This is a first for all three national leaders. National Commander Dan Seehafer, Sons of The American Legion National Commander J.R. Hall and Williamson to walk the same path together as they share the importance to Be the One to Save One.

Let us all continue to remove the stigmatism of not talking about suicide and share that it's OK not to be OK. A: Ask the important question. Are you thinking of killing yourself? L: Listen to what they are saying. R: Reach out and get them help. You be the one to dial 988 and be their ears if they are not willing to make that call.

President's Message

Sharon Cross

Be The One to Save One! The Spirit of Youth Scholarship, which is available to our Juniors, is no longer one winner from each division. It has increased to one winner for each department. So instead of only seven scholarships, there will be 52! That is 46 more scholarships available to our Juniors supporting our Legion Family. If you would like to donate to this great scholarship opportunity for our Juniors, mail your donation into the American Legion Auxiliary Department Office and earmark it for the Spirit of Youth Scholarship.

Williamson had the opportunity to talk with veterans and families, visiting the Armed Forces Service Center, Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Brain Sciences Center, Minneapolis Fisher House, Minneapolis Veterans Home, the newest state veteran cemetery in Redwood Falls, both the Sauk Centre Eagles Healing Nest and the Redwood Falls Healing Nest, one of our newest veterans homes located in Montevideo and the Luverne Veterans Home, which is celebrating its 30-year anniversary this summer.

It is incredible that this is just a small portion of our facilities in Minnesota. We are so blessed. We were treated to amazing the Hearts of Veterans."

meals our meal stops and even had an American Legion

Riders escort from the Legion Post in Adrian to our destination at the Luverne Veterans Home.

Looking forward to some district conventions as my availability allows. Putting family first, I will be in Texas part of May for a granddaughter's graduation.

Remembering and honoring past members, I attended a beautiful, heart-touching memorial service with the Nashwauk American Legion Auxiliary. Poppy distribution and Memorial Day are soon upon us and in June many of us will be busy volunteering at one of our premiere programs, Girls State. I have the privilege to be one of the volunteer counselors this year.

Mark your calendar and save the date to join us at the Department Convention at the Willmar Conference Center July 11,12 and 13.

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



After arriving at the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport, Department of Minnesota President Sharon Cross gave National President Lisa Williamson of Alaska a tour of the Armed Forces Service Center. Cross presented a check on behalf of the Department of Minnesota for \$16,430. From left are Armed Forces Service Center President Rick Dale, Williamson, Cross, NEC Jean Walker, Department Membership Chairman Jenny Nelson and an AFSC volunteer.



Brian Sciences Chair Apostolos P. Georgopoulos M.D. speaks with National **Auxiliary President Lisa Williamson about** the work he and his team does.



National American Legion Auxiliary President Lisa Williamson visits with a resident of the Luverne Veterans Home, helping him to call bingo.

Come to the 15th Jr. Fun Weekend

BRAINERD — Make plans to have your Junior members attend the 15th Annual Junior Fun weekend, Friday thru Sunday, Aug. 9-11, 2024.

Please notice the change in the date. It is the second weekend of August this year.

Our Juniors will get to learn more about the programs of the American Legion Auxiliary, do some crafts, a service project for female veterans, work on one of the patches, learn flag etiquette, learn parliamentary procedure, make new friends and get re-acquainted with old friends. Please bring a 2x2-inch picture of a veteran for a spe-

The Fun Weekend will be at the Legionville Safety Summer Camp (on North Long Lake, near Brainerd).

The registration fee will be \$25 per person if reservations and payment are received in the Department Office no later than July 19, 2024. Late registrations will be \$30 if received after July 19. Meals and snacks are included in the registration fee.

The Fun Weekend is open to all Juniors and their advisors/chaperones. Everyone attending must pre-register and prepay. (We need an accurate count to plan meals and activities.)

Senior members will be limited to one Senior member for every three Juniors unless space is

If you have any questions, please contact Judy Ackerman, Cell is 507-848-0145 or email judya2002@gmail.com.



2024 Junior member graduates. From left are Raelynn Borntrager, Eva Burket, Josie Deschene, Brooklyn Hoshal, Liv Efta, Taylor McElroy and Samamtha Stai.



Department President Sharon Cross' Testimonial was held April 27 at the Melrose American Legion. Pictures with President Sharon is her husband, Rick



Department President Sharon stands with Department Commander Paul Hassing at her Testimonial Dinner April 27. His **Testimonial Dinner takes place June 22** at Montgomery Post 79. Sign up over **Eventbrite or contact Jody Hassing.**

We have no problem talking to people about other subjects, so why not put our words into action and grow our organization!

Our objective is to stop the decline in members, decrease charter cancellations, charter new units, and develop mentor programs that ensure growth.

At this time, we have 1,260 fewer members than last year. If every member recruited just one member, we would be where we need to be and more!

Yes, we have circumstances that get in the way of our goal. Many members are just waiting

for us to reach out and ask why they have not paid their dues. If we act like it doesn't matter that they are still a member, they will move on to something else. We need them, and they are necessary for our survival!

We need to be good communicators, good mentors and brag about how we help our veterans! The outside world needs to know how we make a difference.

When was the last time you sat next to a stranger and asked them if they have any veterans in their family? Take it from there and have fun with it. Always have an updated application with you!

Please go through your handouts and applications to make sure they are current!

We can turn this around if we value each member, including all ideas and respecting all differences for our commonality. We are all related to military veterans, and we have a great opportunity to give something back through voluntary service.

There are common areas that may bind us in lifelong relationships, but if we remember the basic common reason we are allowed the privilege of belonging to the American Legion Auxiliary, we will elevate our membership to a place of distinction, where it belongs! Continue to Cruise the Sea for Members!

Thank you for all you do!



On May 10, Department President Sharon Cross delivered a check for \$18,562 to Schmitt Music for a player piano for the Bemidji Veterans Home, to be installed before the dedication on July 1. The piano was her President's Project. With her is Andy Fleser of Schmitt Music.



A speaker from Believet with his Believet companion stands with Honorary Junior **Department President Taylor McElroy at** the Junior Conference. Northfield-basaed Believet is her fundraising project, and a check will be presented in July.

Go to the 2024 **Department** Convention

WILLMAR — Please join us at the 104th Department Convention being held July 11-13, 2024 at the Willmar Conference Center. Prior to the Convention, the Department Executive Committee will meet at 1 p.m. Wednesday, July 10.

Auxiliary district caucuses will take place on both Thursday and Friday mornings at 8:15

The convention sessions will begin at 9:15 a.m.

Find the registration form on Page 11 of this issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire

Convention schedule Wednesday, July 10, 2023 Pre-Convention Dept. Exec-

utive Meeting 1 p.m.

Thursday, July 11, 2023 District Caucuses (Auxiliary) 8:15 a.m. Convention Session 9:15 a.m. Joint Memorial Service 11:15 a.m. **Convention Committee** Meetings (Auxiliary) 2 p.m.

Friday, July 12, 2023 District Caucuses (Auxiliary) 8:15 a.m. Convention Session

9:15 a.m. Past Department Presidents Luncheon 11:30 a.m. Convention Reconvenes 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 13, 2024

Convention reconvenes at 9 a.m. Election of 2024-25 Officers

11 a.m. Installation of 2024-25 Officers 11:30 a.m. The following members have been endorsed for Department office:

• Department President: Judy Ackerman, Northrup Unit 522

 Department 1st Vice President: Robin Dorf, Monticello Unit 260

 Department 2nd Vice President: Linda Kelly, Pine Island Unit 184

Nominations will be on Thursday morning. When there is more than one candidate nominated, elections will take place by balloting. There will also be nominations for delegates at-large to the National

Poppy thanks

ST. PAUL — Special thanks to all of the members of the American Legion Family who have stepped up this year and assisted our Department in poppy making. Hopefully, we have a few veterans who will continue to assemble poppies for us throughout the year. If you know of anyone interested, contact the Department office.

60th Dept. Junior Conf.

DETROIT LAKES —The 2024 Junior Department Conference was held Saturday, April

13, at Detroit Lakes Post 15, hosted by the 9th District.

Honorary Department Junior Taylor McElroy did an outstanding job of running the conference. The Juniors had a fun Friday evening with great food and lots of fun activities thanks to everyone that planned and worked the Conference.

Junior members had the opportunity to participate in three poppy contests. Junior members also had the opportunity to hear about the Honorary President's Project Believet from two very special guests.

Elections were held for the 2024-2025 Junior Auxiliary year. The Honorary Junior President for the year 2024-2025 is Terianna Richards from Argyle Unit 353 in the 9th District.

Her theme, if approved, will be "We love our veterans to the moon and back."

Department Convention poppy contests

ST. PAUL — Cash prizes for each contest at the Department Convention will be:

1st Place: \$25 2nd Place: \$20 3rd Place: \$15

People's Choice Award: \$10 Please be creative for these contests and think outside the box.

Entries must be submitted at Department Convention at the Willmar Event Center on Thursday, July 11, by 10 a.m.

CONTEST 1: Wearable item Using ALA Poppies or a Poppy motif

The Minnesota Legionnaire Poppies and their tie to Memorial Day

By Marsha Bible Poppy Chairman

The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary has used the poppy as its symbol almost since our inception. The beautiful red poppy has remained as our way to recognize the lives lost to war since World War I and they play a large part in our Memorial Day ceremonies. Many of our members may not realize that the poppy is also worn in many of the countries that were Allied Forces during World War I including Great Britain, France, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

However, in most of those countries, the poppy is worn on what they refer to as Remembrance Day (our Veterans Day in the U.S.)

Red poppies bloomed in France and Belgium during World War I and were attributed to the soil that was enriched by rubble left over from the battles fought there. The bright red flowers sprouted around and among the rows of white crosses of fallen soldiers in Flanders Field American Cemetery & Memorial in Waregem, West Flanders, Belgium.

During the first World War, from 1914 to 1918, Flanders Field was a major battle zone. A million soldiers from more than 50 different countries were wounded, missing or killed in action there. Entire villages were destroyed and the U.S. 37th and 91st divisions

this peaceful site, 368 of our military dead lie in rest. Their headstones are aligned in four symmetrical areas around a white stone chapel that stands in the center of the cemetery.

Memorial Day to the American Legion Family is more than just cookouts and trips to the cabin over a long weekend. The holiday is about commemorating the millions of brave Americans who have given their lives defending the values our country was founded on. The words of John F. Kennedy say it best: "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them."

Our beautiful red poppy is a symbol to represent the ultimate sacrifice paid by our men and women who fought for our country. Poppies are typically seen in abundance over the month of May, especially during Memorial Day weekend. It shows as our way to keep our thoughts on the most important reason for the holiday.

How the poppy became the official Memorial Day flower began back in the spring of 1915. Allied battle surgeon and poet Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae saw the barren fields blanketed with the vibrant red poppies. In the spring of 1915, just after a battle that resulted in the deaths of 87,000 Allied soldiers, McCrae composed a poem on the spot. His poem was published in Punch

suffered heavy casualties. At magazine later that year and would become one of the most famous poems to emerge from World War I.

The American Legion made the poppy its official flower to memorialize those who fought and died on Sept. 27, 1920, and began national distribution programs around the country in 1924.

The most common way to use the poppy is to simply pin one on your lapel or hat. Emblem Sales have created many other poppy related items that can be worn or displayed. Check them out — there is a nice collection.

There is a nice cardstock poster that many units offer to local businesses that states "Honor America's Veterans: Wear a poppy with pride." These can be found at emblem. legion.org.

Many units have made beautiful corsages or bouquets to display throughout the holiday. Others have used the poppy to decorate anchors to represent those who died at sea. Still others have decorated crosses and Stars of David with poppies to display at religious ceremonies throughout their community. Another idea is to distribute poppies to all who attend your local Memorial Day ceremonies — without accepting donations.

Simply ask them to wear a poppy in remembrance. It's amazing how much this small gesture means, especially to

2024 Jr. Conference Poppy Contest Winners

Poppy Memorial Day Wreath

Class I	1st Place	Hazel Mertens	Kimball Unit 261	6th District				
Class II	1st Place	Alanna Willis	Bagley Unit 16	9th District				
	2nd Place	Emma Lovas	Morris Unit 29	7th District				
Class III	1st Place	Anika Mertens-Maxson	Kimball Unit 261	6th District				
	2nd Place	Shania Mertens	Kimball Unit 261	6th District				
Poppy Corsage/Boutonniere								
Class I	1st Place	Sophia Suchar	Argyle Unit 353	9th District				
	2nd Place	Hazel Mertens	Kimball Unit 261	6th District				
Class II	1st Place	Mattea Efta	Arayle Unit 353	9th District				

	CIUSS II	13t I lacc	Mattea Lita	raggic offic 333	Jul District			
		2nd Place	Miley Mahoney	Clinton Unit 258	7th District			
	Class III	1st Place	Hannah Pederson	Warren Unit 27	9th District			
		2nd Place	Lily Lovas	Morris Unit 29	7th District			
Poppy Centerpieces								
	Class I	1st Place	Harley Nelson	Argyle Unit 353	9th District			
		2nd Place	Hazel Mertens	Kimball Unit 261	6th District			
	Class II	1st Place	Lauren Lampman	Northrop Unit 522	2nd District			
		2nd Place	Alanna Willis	Bagley Unit 16	9th District			
	Class III	1st Place	Ashley Baird	Warren Unit 27	9th District			

Officers

Officers for 2024-2025 were elected and installed

2nd Place Addison Bienek

by Department President Sharon Cross.

The newly elected Honorary Department Junior Officers are:

Teriana Richards Honorary President Argyle Unit 359 9th District Honorary 1st Vice Pres. Bree England North St. Paul Unit 394th District Honorary 2nd Vice Pres. Abigal Koltes Melrose Unit 101 6th District Argyle Unit 353 Honorary Secretary 9th District Faith Efta Honorary Treasurer Regan McElroy LeRoy Unit 373 1st District Honorary Chaplain Lauren Lampman Northrop Unit 522 2nd District Honorary Historian Mattea Efta Argyle Unit 353 9th District Minneapolis Unit 511 5th District 5 Honorary Sgt.-at-Arms Claire Verkuillen Minnesota's Official Delegate to the NW Division National Junior meeting is Teriana Richards, Argyle Unit 359, 9th District

Compiled by Sally Strasser, Junior Activities Chairman

Warren Unit 27

Something wearable with poppies included that you might wear when you distribute poppies. Please be creative. This can be anything – jewelry, clothing, hair accessories, hats, etc.

CONTEST 2: Poppy Donation Container

A Poppy Donation Container that was created by one of your unit members and used when

your unit distributed poppies. Again, be creative.

Contests are open to all Auxiliary members. You do need to have a poppy of some sort in your entry, but you do not have to use the ALA poppy. All entries must include an attached sealed envelope with a card unit number and unit location. If using ALA poppies, remember Montevideo.

to remove the white tags. Small or large poppies may be used.

9th District

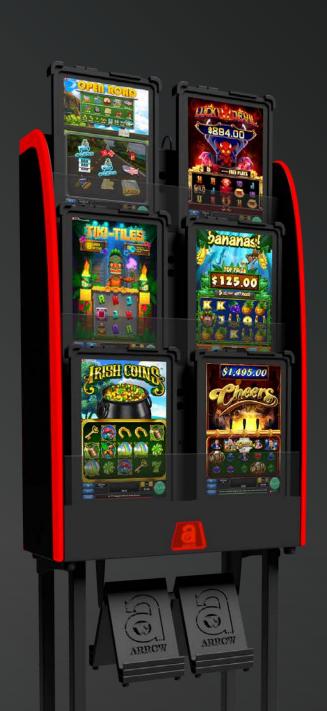
Voting for the People's Choice will be by donation, with the funds going to the Department President's Special Project of purchasing a player piano for the Minnesota Veterans Home in Bemidji inside that states your name, and funds for activities at the veterans homes in Preston and





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