



This limited edition print, "The Last Mission," is available to posts of the American Legion for \$100. It was commissioned in commemoration of Merrel Duncan of Dundee.

Son keeps father's legacy alive

RED WING — It's 1944. Radio operator Merrel L. Duncan of Dundee has returned from a mission aboard a B-17 Flying Fortress. He is back at his quarters at Bassingbourn in England, writing in his diary. "Aug. 16. Target for today was a factory 3 1/2 mi. N.E. of Leipzig. It manufactured wings for Ju88s. We carried 10 500# clusters of incendiaries. We bombed from 24,000' temp -20°C. Flak was encountered quite heavy in spots, but at the target, we didn't get much. On oxygen for 6 1/2-7 hours. Almost all our oxygen was used up by the

time we got back. We got enemy fighters for our first time since I started flying. We were in heavy flak + all of a sudden the flak stopped + bandits hit. They hit the ships in the high element right in back of us + to the left. There were ME 109s + FW 190s [Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighters and Focke-Wulf Fw 190 fighters]. They just laid up there + peeled off into the B-17s. I think the gunners were caught unaware because there was hardly a shot fired from the ships that went down. One ME 109 came past at 90°, + I fired about 150 to 200 rounds,

so did Muscles + Umlor. He peeled over + went under our ship + exploded. They made just one pass, it lasted about 50 sec. if that long. On the one pass they got 8 of our B-17s. I saw one B-17 blow up another, another go down in flames, 2 others drop out of formation all afire. I saw one chute bail out delayed jump. Another looked like the fellow was almost gone. He hung like a rag doll. When we got back to the base we found out that Lt. Goods crew was one of the crews that was hit but he made it back.

Continued on Page 8

Herke retires from MDVA

Commissioner position is open

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs is in the midst of a leadership change with the recent retirement of Commissioner Larry Herke. In mid-September, Herke announced his retirement due to an ALS diagnosis. His final day was Sept. 22.



Larry Herke

Gov. Tim Walz appointed Herke to lead the agency in January 2019; he was reappointed in January 2023 to a second term. In April, Herke began a leave of absence to address health issues.

Herke shared: "It was an honor to serve veterans and their family members in my role as commissioner. I will continue to serve veterans

Continued on Page 7

Slay the lava monster

Gabe Keith was in Baghdad when the Saddam statue fell

By Tim Engstrom

WEST ST. PAUL — Gabe Keith of West St. Paul works in a fantasy, horror and science fiction bookstore. The Marine veteran is leading an effort to bring veterans who like to write together for a monthly writing workshop he calls Write Club.

The title is a play on words from the Brad Pitt thriller "Fight Club." The workshop encourages writing as therapy, and the idea is to have the group critique and improve their work.

Keith, 40, is a member of St. Paul Post 8.

In his youth, Keith read science fiction and fantasy books, which often have military aspects, and he figured the Marines would provide him with the adventure he sought.

"It was a way to get out and be on my own," he said.

He graduated from Stillwater High School in June 2002, though he grew up in St. Paul. He said he was sheltered as a kid. He had an uncle who served in the Army during Vietnam as a door gunner on a Huey. His grandfather was in the Navy in World War II.

The Marines didn't recruit Keith. He approached the Marines as a result of a famous TV commercial out in the late



Gabe Keith of St. Paul Post 8 stands in front of the airfield at Camp Ripley on Oct. 12. He was there to attend the October session of Minnesota Legion College. He joined the Marines after seeing a TV commercial where a young man slays a lava monster.

1990s and early 2000s.

A young man scales a big machine in the rain, pulls a Claymore sword out of a forge, slays a giant lava monster and turns into a Marine. The Marine Corps title the commercial "Rite of Passage." The Marine Corps infantry, he figured, would be his biggest challenge.

Boot camp was at MCRD-San Diego. School of Infantry was at Camp Pendleton. His duty station would be at 29 Palms, also called Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. He served in the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marines Regiment — the Bastard Battalion.

Keith was a machine gunner. He barely had time at his new unit to zero his weapon before they deployed to Kuwait in February 2003. In March, the Bastards crossed into Iraq. Fantasy was about to get real.

He was part of a weapons platoon. In Iraq, his squad (a section of a platoon) was assigned to a rifle platoon. His platoon had M16A4 rifles, M203 grenade launchers, M249 squad automatic weapons (better known as SAWs, and, from afar, they sound like a saw, too) and the M240G, a belt-fed medium machine gun which fires 7.62 mm rounds. The 240 was Keith's weapon.

The 3rd Battalion had to engage Saddam Hussein's mobile infantry. They rolled behind tank battalions in AAVs, or Amphibious Assault Vehicle. Once an enemy's line was broken,

Continued on Page 9

VA debuts vans for bringing medical care to the veterans



Sidney Patterson, an Army veteran who previously experienced homelessness, cuts a ribbon Oct. 3 dedicating the new Mobile Medical Unit, which brings medical care to veterans.

ST. PAUL — The Minneapolis VA Health Care System presented its new Mobile Medical Unit on Oct. 3 outside the Catholic Charities Opportunity Center in St. Paul.

Catholic Charities runs many of the efforts to shelter and care for the homeless or people at risk of experiencing homelessness in St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The VA's mobile unit will allow the agency to reach veterans in one of Catholic Charities' shelters or homeless veterans on the streets of St. Paul. It will be at 422 Dorothy Day Place in St. Paul from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday.

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter

was present for the ribbon cutting. "This challenge requires big thinking and big partnerships," he said.

He thanked the VA and Catholic Charities.

"We need great organizations who are in the trenches with us," Carter added.

Sidney Patterson, an Army veteran who previously experienced homelessness, held the scissors that cut the ribbon. He described the places he has slept — abandoned buildings, inside cars, others — and said the mobile units for providing health care are a good idea.

"I can't really tell you how

Continued on Page 7

American Legion Veterans



UCare has a Medicare Advantage plan for you. Get the benefits and coverage you need.

- \$0 plan premium
- \$0 preventive dental
- \$0 copay for primary care office visit
- Partial refund of Medicare Part B premium



You must have Medicare Parts A and B to qualify. No pharmacy benefits included in this plan. We do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options. UCare Minnesota is an HMO-POS plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in UCare Minnesota depends on contract renewal. Y0120_0422_2459_12614_032023_M

What's happening?

Pearl Harbor Rally is Dec. 9

PAYNESVILLE — The Pearl Harbor Rally happens Dec. 9 at Payneville Post 271 this year.

Social hour and membership turn-in are at 11 a.m. Lunch is at noon with a program to follow.

The meal is \$16. The meal is a make-your-own-burger bar with chips and a salad.

The Pearl Harbor Rally is organized by the Minnesota American Legion Riders and is an event for all members of the Minnesota American Legion Family.

Volunteers sought for veterans event

FORT SNELLING — Delta Air Line's annual event to recognize its many employees who are veterans and servicemembers seeks volunteers from The American Legion.

Legion Family volunteers can assist with the event on Nov. 9. This also is an opportunity to grow membership and have a very enjoyable experience behind the scenes of an airline.

There are three shifts available: 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.: need 5 volunteers.

1:30 p.m.-6 p.m.: need 5 volunteers.

6 p.m.-11 p.m.: need 5 volunteers.

The more volunteers, the merrier. The main point of contact for American Legion volunteers is Pam Krill. Contact her via email at pjkrill74@gmail.com.

There will be food trucks on site. There is free cake involved, too.

This event takes place at Hangars 5 & 6 Delta MX Facility, 7500 Airline Drive, Minneapolis.

Official state Veterans Day program is set

INVER GROVE HEIGHTS — The official state Veterans Day event takes place Nov. 11 at the Inver Grove Heights Veterans Memorial Community Center.

A free breakfast begins at 8:30 a.m., with the official program starting at 10 a.m. The community center is at 8055 Barbara Ave. in Inver Grove Heights.

The program is sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and The Minnesota Commanders' Task Force.

Do you like military stuff?

CANNON FALLS — The North Central Military Collectors Association LLC is hosting its SE MN Military Show on Nov. 11 and 12 at the Grand 02 Event Center near Cannon Falls.

The show runs from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 11, and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 12, at 32057 64th Ave.

See the ad on Page 3. Attendance is \$10 per person. Children 14 and under are free.

Training available on preventing veteran suicide

PINE ISLAND — Past American Legion Department of Minnesota Chaplain Kelley Adelsman is hosting a suicide prevention effort called "safe-TALK" at Pine Island Post 184.

Adelsman is ordained and

endorsed for chaplaincy through Converge Worldwide.

She is a member of the Minnesota American Legion Suicide Prevention Coalition. Her efforts include residencies at Mayo Clinic and the St. Cloud VA, teaching her the value of listening when a person is facing hopelessness.

With her will be David Goehl-Manolis, who manages NAMI-Minnesota's suicide prevention programs. NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness. He is a certified instructor on safeTALK, CALM, QPR (question, persuade, refer) and Survivor Voices.

The training is from 8 a.m. to noon Nov. 8. Post 184 is at 108 First Ave. SE in Pine Island. There is no charge. To inquire or register, call 507-273-0165 or email kladelsman@gmail.com.

S. Vietnamese author to speak at museum

SHAKOPEE — The Scott County Historical Society will have a special speaker for the November edition of its series SCHS Nights at the Museum.

Dr. Ha Tuong is a war researcher and author of two books, "Two Minnows" and "The War." He has made a strong effort to make the voices of American and South Vietnamese veterans heard. He is a native of Saigon and served as a second lieutenant in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam during the last three years of the war. He escaped the communists and was incarcerated in a Malaysian refugee camp before he came to the USA and resettled in Minneapolis.

The presentation is 6:30 to 8 p.m. Nov. 14 at the museum, 235 Fuller St. S., Shakopee. Visit scottcountyhistory.org to inquire.

There will be a book signing

after the talk.

Plainview park recognizes national service

PLAINVIEW — A special park was created in Plainview to honor national service, and an event is planned called Launch of the National Service Park.

Plainview was the home to four of the first cadre of Peace Corps volunteers. The park recognizes Peace Corps, AmeriCorps and military service.

Speakers on Saturday, Nov. 4, are Peace Corps Director Carol Spahn, AmeriCorps NCCC Director Ken Goodson, ret. Army Gen. Joseph Votel and Minnesota National Guard Col. Eduardo Suarez.

The dedication is 10 a.m. to noon at PEM High School, 500 W. Broadway, Plainview, with doors opening at 9 a.m. and open until 3:30 p.m. All ages are invited.

Be ready to help a veteran avoid suicide

OSSEO — Post 172 in Osseo will host S.A.V.E. suicide-prevention training from 5 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30.

Free wings will be provided. S.A.V.E. is a VA program specific for the prevention of veteran suicides. It stands for "Signs of suicidal thinking should be recognized. Ask the most important question of all. Validate the veteran's experience. Encourage treatment and expedite getting help."

The more veterans get training, the more they are prepared to prevent veteran suicide.

Post 39 offers Veterans Day meal a day early

NORTH ST. PAUL — American Legion Post 39 in North St. Paul will serve its ninth annual free SOS lunch for veterans.

The meal is available from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, Nov. 10.

A news release states: "Served in mess halls throughout the military services as breakfast, lunch or dinner, chipped beef on toast was fondly referred to as SOS."

The lunch will include a fruit cup. Beverage is not included. Family members of veterans and all other customers will be able to order from the regular lunch menu.

The post is at 2678 E. Seventh Ave. in North St. Paul.

MDVA, AARP coming to MOA

BLOOMINGTON — Please join AARP Minnesota as it honors and supports military veterans and their families at the AARP Information Center at the Mall of America, 2nd floor at the west side entry, between 9 a.m. and noon Friday, Nov. 3.

AARP Minnesota will host staff from the Minnesota

Continued on Page 3



Kelley Adelsman

Reverse Mortgages

The future doesn't have to be uncertain.

Don't let inflation get the best of you. Lock in your line of credit now while home prices are still high. Call or email me for a free Information Guide and personal quote.



MIKE KRAUS
MN Loan Officer
NMLS ID #283509
Let a retired active-duty veteran show you how you may benefit.

Team USA Mortgage

1709 Tullamore Ave.
Bloomington, IL 61704
Call or email me at:
763-355-8540
mike@teamusamtg.com

NMLS ID #9908

EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

Serving all of Minnesota

4 Seasons Vacations
636 E. 11th Street
Albert Lea, MN 56007

4 Seasons Vacations, Inc.
VACATIONS AND TOURS FOR PEOPLE ON THE GO

Call us TODAY!
507-373-4705

Charming Charleston
February 24-March 3, 2024

Included in your tour:

- Accompanied by a 4 Seasons Tour Director
- Deluxe Motorcoach Transportation
- 8 Nights accommodations
- 14 Meals: 8 breakfasts, 6 dinners
- Visit to the Historic Charleston City Market
- Harbor Cruise in Charleston
- Visit to the Famous and Historic Middleton Place
- Guided tour of Charleston
- Tour a Historic Charleston Home
- Guided tour of a Historic Charleston Plantation

\$1,599.00 pp Double Occupancy

Cruise to Cabo & Pacific Coast
February 29-March 9, 2024

Included in your tour:

- Accompanied by a 4 Seasons Tour Director
- Roundtrip air from Minneapolis to Los Angeles on Delta Airlines
- All transfers to and from the airport, hotel and pier
- 1 night Minneapolis Embassy Suites
- 1 pre-cruise night in Los Angeles, CA
- 7 Day Cruise on the DISCOVERY PRINCESS
- Visiting 4 port of call: Los Angeles, Cabo San Lucas, Mazatlan, Puerto Vallarta
- All meals and entertainment onboard the DISCOVERY PRINCESS
- Crew appreciation, Premier Beverage Package and WIFI
- Luggage handling at the hotel and on the ship (1 suitcase per person)

Starting at \$3,399.00 pp Double Occupancy

New Orleans
April 13-21, 2024

Included in your tour:

- Accompanied by a 4 Seasons Tour Director
- Deluxe motorcoach transportation
- 14 Meals, 8 breakfasts, 6 dinners
- 8 Nights Accommodations
- Luggage handling (1 per person)
- Guided tour of New Orleans
- Admission to Mardi Gras World
- Admission to the National World War II Museum
- Guided tour of a Louisiana Plantation Destrehan Plantation
- Visit Historic New Orleans French Quarter
- Riverboat Cruise on the Mississippi River
- Mississippi Agriculture & Forestry Museum
- National Ornamental Metal Museum

\$1,599.00 pp Double Occupancy

The Ark Encounter
April 15-20, 2024

Included in your tour:

- Hosted by Pastor John Holt
- Deluxe motorcoach transportation
- 5 Nights accommodations
- 10 Meals: 5 Breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners
- Luggage handling (1 per person)
- Ark Encounter and Creation Museum
- National Underground Railroad Freedom Center
- American Sign Museum
- St. Peter in Chains Cathedral Basilica
- Patriot's Landing
- B&B Riverboat Dinner Cruise

\$1,299.00 pp Double Occupancy

Washington D.C.
April 25-30, 2024

Included in your tour:

- Accompanied by a 4 Seasons Tour Director
- Round trip Delta Flights from Minneapolis to Washington D.C.
- 1 Night Embassy Suites, Minneapolis
- 4 Nights accommodations in the Washington D.C. area
- 8 Meals: 4 breakfast, 4 dinners
- Luggage handling (1 per person)
- Guided Memorial & Monuments Tour
- Tram ride through Arlington National Cemetery
- National Harbor
- Admission to George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate & Garden
- Two full-day guided tours of Washington D.C.
- WWII Memorial, Capitol Hill, Embassy Row, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Smithsonian, Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial

\$1,799.00 pp Double Occupancy

PROJECT NEW HOPE

Military Family Retreats at no cost to Veterans

UPCOMING MINNESOTA RETREATS

Visit projectnewhope.net.
Veterans and their families of all eras are welcome!

9-11 JUNE 2023
OSPREY WILDS
NEAR SANDSTONE, MINN.

29-30 SEPT & OCT 1
GOOD EARTH VILLAGE
NEAR SPRING VALLEY, MINN.

1-3 DECEMBER 2023
INSPIRATION POINT
NEAR VINING, MINN.

Continued from Page 2

Department of Veterans Affairs and local county veteran service officers to answer questions on veterans benefits and services. They will hand out vouchers for free cups of coffee, too.

Veterans and their supporters can show up or register in advance online here: events.aarp.org/FCF1103.

Decorated vehicle parade coming Nov. 11

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minneapolis VA Medical Center hosts a decorated vehicle parade on Veterans Day.

The parade starts at 11 a.m. Nov. 11 with Lot 11 serving as the staging area beforehand. The parade will drive all the way around the medical center, then go through Minnehaha Park to the Minneapolis Veterans Home, circling that campus.

To participate, contact Greg Arrigoni at gregory.arrigoni@va.gov or at 651-248-1604.

To watch, just sit out along the parade route.

Veterans Day Walk planned for St. Paul

ST. PAUL — St. Paul Post 8 is inviting all veterans and their supporters to join them for their annual Veterans Day Walk.

The walk departs at 1 p.m. from the Veterans Service Building, 20 W. 12th St., then goes down St. Peter Street to Kellogg Boulevard before returning via Wabasha Street.

The walk honors all veterans living and dead. Participants often carry American flags, big, medium or small.

Lineup set for WWII Round Table

ST. PAUL — Here are coming speakers for the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table, which takes place at 7 p.m. at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul on the dates listed below:

- Nov. 15: The author of "Bending Spines," Randall Bytwerk, will discuss propaganda used by the Nazis to gain power in Germany in the 1930s and maintain support for Hitler's regime.

- Dec. 12: The author of "A Pitiful Unholy Mess," Michael Wenger, will show the air battles between the Americans and Japanese during the attack of Dec. 7, 1941, and discuss the early use of primitive radar.

- Jan. 9: James Conroy, the author of "The Devils Will Get No Rest," will discuss the Casablanca Conference of January 1943, where a grand strategy among Allied powers were planned for both theaters.

- Feb. 13: Three authors collaborated to write "The Viking Battalion." They are Erik Brun, Kyle Ward and Olaf Minge. The book is a collection of biographies from the veterans of the 99th Battalion, formed of Norwegian-Americans to liberate Norway.

- March 12: James Kimble, author of "Mobilizing the Home

Front," will present on efforts to rally the public, and Todd DePastino, author of "Bill Mauldin," will show how cartoons of Willie & Joe in "Stars & Stripes" were used to raise the morale of troops in the battlefields.

- April 9: David Dworak, author of "War of Supply," will discuss the logistics efforts in the Mediterranean in the part of fighting in the European Theater.

- May 14: "One Day in August" author David O'Keefe will go over the tragic failure of the August 1942 amphibious attack on Dieppe and how lessons learned led to success on D-Day in June 1944.

Attending the presentations are free, but the museum does charge a small fee for parking.

Post 131 has bingo event

MAPLE LAKE — Doors open at 11:30 a.m. and bingo begins at 1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4, at Maple Lake Post 131.

The event is called High Roller Bingo Extravaganza. There will be a guaranteed payout on Game 12 of \$1,500, guaranteed payout on Game 6 of \$750 and guaranteed payout of \$200 on all other games — contingent on at least 150 players attending.

For \$35, players get a packet of six cards, and additional three-card packets will be available for \$5. Meat raffles and tipboards will be sold prior to bingo and during intermission. Proceeds go to Team Huro (named for Mike Huro). Seating is limited. Reserve a spot by calling 320-963-3911 or 612-419-6326.

How is that vets courts law coming along?

MINNEAPOLIS — The Veterans Defense Project on Nov. 9 presents A Salute to Veterans in Need of Restorative Justice.

It takes place 4 to 6 p.m. at the University of St. Thomas School of Law, 1101 Harmon Place, in Minneapolis. A panel of veterans, judges, lawyers and mental health professionals will discuss the outcomes of the Veterans Restorative Justice Act, passed in 2021. It allows veterans before a judge to avoid certain sentences by instead taking steps to treat underlying trauma and expands eligibility for veterans courts to veterans in counties without them.

People also can attend the event online.

The event is free but registration is requested: salutetovets2023.eventbrite.com.

It's OK to just show up, too.

MDVA to have presence at sports games

ST. PAUL — To reach more veterans and families and explain to them their benefits, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs is piloting outreach at pro sports events this fall. Most sports teams sponsor a Military and Veteran Appreciation game during their seasons, and often discounted tickets for veterans are available and special events

take place during the game. So far, MDVA will attend:

- Minnesota Wild Hockey game at the Xcel Energy Center on Tuesday, Oct. 24.

- Minnesota Gophers Football game at Huntington Bank Stadium on Saturday, Nov. 4.

- Minnesota Vikings Football game at U.S. Bank Stadium on Sunday, Nov. 12.

Game activities vary but all will include an information table and space where MDVA team members hope to connect with veterans and families to start a relationship with those who are not familiar with the agency. There are also advertising opportunities in the stadiums for the Gophers and Vikings to increase awareness of MDVA.

If these initial outreach events go well, MDVA plans to explore more sports marketing opportunities with other teams in the winter and next spring and summer.

Auxiliary unit will cover vets for breakfast

FARMINGTON — Farmington American Legion Auxiliary Unit 189 will pay for any veteran or active servicemember attending the Sons of The American Legion Omelet Breakfast from 8 a.m. to noon Sunday, Nov. 12.

The breakfast will be served at Farmington VFW 7662, which is at 421 Third St.

The general public also is welcome. The price is \$14 for adults, \$12 seniors, \$7 children 13 and under.

Veterans Day Parade is on in St. Cloud

ST. CLOUD — This community is having its annual Veterans Day Parade.

Lineup begins at 10 a.m. Nov. 11, and the route is from the Great River Regional Library to the River's Edge Convention Center. The parade begins at 11 a.m.

The American Red Cross will give out hot chocolate at the start and end.

Percolators brewing Black Friday tunes

HOPKINS — It's Black Friday at the Hopkins Legion.

The Percolators will perform at Hopkins Post 320 on Friday, Nov. 24, from 7 to 11 p.m. at 10 12th Ave. S.

The Percolators are Hans Gasterland on drums and vocals, Marc Partridge on guitar and Rich Pearson on bass and vocals. You might encounter a few friends playing with the band at times, too.

Post 601 hosts Bingo Night

NEW GERMANY — American Legion Post 601 in New Germany hosts Bingo Night on Tuesday, Nov. 21, at 7 p.m. There will be hamburgers and baked goods for sale. Participants can win items such as turkey, ham or cash.

MAGGOT, DO YOU LIKE MILITARY COLLECTIBLES? YES, DRILL SERGEANT!



THEN YOU HAD BETTER GET YOUR REAR END TO CANNON FALLS, MINN., NOV. 11 & 12 FOR THE SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA MILITARY SHOW.

*The Grand O2 Event Center
32057 64th Ave, Cannon Falls
90-plus tables (totally filled up!)
0800-1500 Saturday, Nov. 11
0800-1400 Sunday, Nov. 12
Admittance is \$10 per person (ages 14 and under free when with adult)*

WE ARE AMERICAN LEGION-FRIENDLY!

Minnesota DAV is in Immediate Need for Additional Volunteer Drivers

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

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

Minneapolis: 612-467-2050

St. Cloud: 320-255-6365

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

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



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

DAV OF MINNESOTA

Never forget we take care of veterans

Greetings again, Legion family.

I can't believe October is gone already. I guess staying busy really does make time fly. It has been a busy month with lots of travelling both around the state and to Indianapolis for the Fall Meetings.

Thanks again to Adjutant Mike Maxa and Program Coordinator Jennifer Kelley for keeping things straight for me and letting me know where I need to be. I know it is not an easy task.

With all the meetings and business to attend to, it's easy to get bogged down and lose sight of why we are here. When I get to travel to the posts and talk to members of our Legion Family, it brings things back. We are here to take care of veterans, their families and our communities. If it ever seems like I am forgetting that, please do not hesitate to remind me.

As of this writing, it is Buddy Check Week. Please reach out to members you haven't heard from in a while. Every one of us can use a friend to talk to occasionally. It doesn't need to be Buddy Check Week to reach out to someone.

When you think of someone, don't wait and think you will call them tomorrow; it may be too late. The American Legion's mission of "Be the One" is happening for a reason. We are losing too many veterans and family members to suicide. We can make a difference. Please reach out if you need anything.

Commander's Column

Paul Hassing



Membership is going well. Right now, Minnesota is going back and forth between second and third place. Thank you everyone for working so hard to keep us up there. We really need to keep up the pace. I know we can do it. The American Legion is too great of an organization. We just need to keep telling our story and what we are about. The American Legion does not exist without its members, and veterans benefits will not exist without The American Legion.

If you haven't heard already, my project is the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund (Minnesota American Legion Foundation's Fund 85). There are veterans around the state that really need our help. This fund provides grants to veterans who need help. Most of us at one point or another have needed a helping hand. Department Service Officer Ray Kane and Assistant DSO Janet Lorenzo do a great job of not only determining if the veteran truly has a need for the grant, but also finding programs available to help the veteran with any issues that may have caused the situation to occur in the first place. It is what we are about. Taking care of our brothers and sisters when they need it.

I want to ask all of you a

favor. If you go to legion.org/action, it will bring up a list of legislative actions. The American Legion is concerned about at the national level. If you click on the issue, it sends an email to your representatives and senators to let them know we are watching. It is a very effective tool, and easy to use, even for me. Our representatives in Washington need to be reminded of issues that are important to us as veterans and Americans.

I have a hard time putting into words how proud I am of our Department of Minnesota. We really have some great posts throughout our state. The volunteerism in Minnesota is second-to-none. I get to visit a lot of posts, and I learn something from each one of them. I do know that there are a lot of departments that wish they had what we have in the Land of 10,000 Lakes.

Thank you again for all you do to make things better for others.

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

On baseball background checks, Jr. Shooting Sports, Thanksgiving Day

Fall Meetings were all about our American Legion youth programs. Programs included were Legion Baseball, Oratorical Contests, Boys Nation, Shooting Sports and Scout of the Year.

All the youth that will be going onto national events such as our 64-team American Legion Baseball Regionals, or any young man turning 18 prior to the event, must have a background check. Please contact me with any questions. My contact info is always included in this report.

This is the 30th anniversary of the Vietnam Women's Memorial in Washington, D.C. The founder is Diane Carlson-Evans, who was a nurse in Vietnam and from Northfield, here in Minnesota. She now resides in Montana. FYI: The American Legion gave \$1 million for that memorial 30 years ago.

Congratulations to Megan Jaros of Roseville, in the National Air Rifle Precision Program contest. She shot 246.2. We would appreciate witnessing more posts get involved in the youth program of Junior Shooting Sports.

Now is the time to start thinking of sponsoring a Girls American Legion Fastpitch Softball

National Report

Bill Barbknecht



team. That is a great up-and-coming program.

I hope every post is doing something for all veterans in their community on Veterans Day weekend. My post, Post 489 in Underwood, will have a program at our local school, with the band performing, and also awarding quilts to some deserving veterans. Every school should be doing something with your post assistance for veterans in their community. Teach these young people and community members to respect and honor those veterans service.

Pearl Harbor Membership Rally, is at 11 a.m. Dec. 9 at Payneville Post 271. All members of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, American Legion Junior Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders are invited to attend. Bring someone with you.

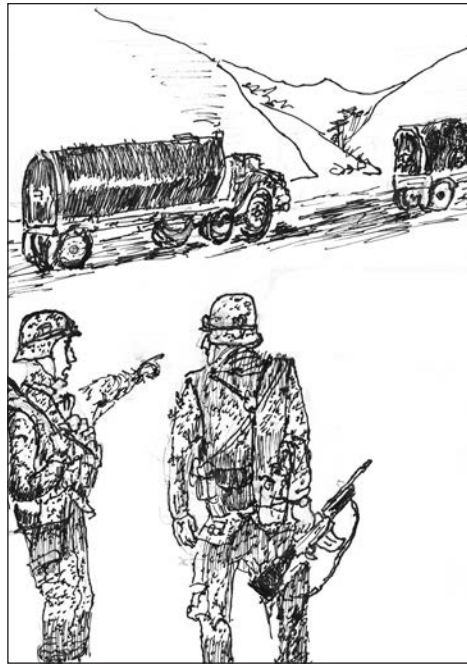
I am very proud as you can tell of my small post in Underwood. We will be serving a free turkey dinner Thanksgiving Day to anyone from 11 a.m. until it is gone. We usually serve

about 200 people. You may be surprised that those who do not have anywhere to go, and even some families, take part as well, as it is so much easier for older parents and grandparents. Donna and I will work at that event. What is your post doing during that time?

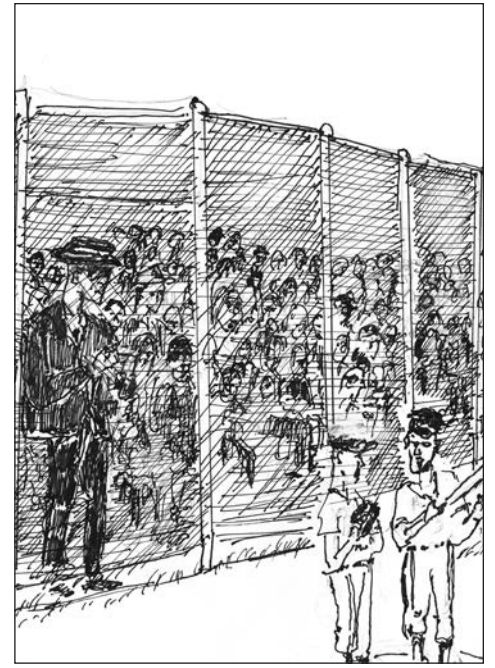
After attending fall meetings, with other officers, from other states and listening to ideas, some good, some not so good, I sincerely feel lucky to have Peggy as the alternate NECman. I thank her and Dr. Carl Moon. They are always willing to help in any situation. We are also lucky in Minnesota to have the fine staff we do under the leadership of Adjutant Mike Maxa. A big thank you to them all as well.

Any questions, please call me.

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



Dan Morgan/North End Post 474
"Let's get an M151 between that oil tanker and water buffalo. Oil and water, not a good mix!"



Dan Morgan/North End Post 474
"I think he is an agent for trading some of us from Junior Legion Baseball to Senior Legion Baseball."

God has bestowed gifts upon all of us

What an awesome God that we have. He bestows gifts upon us each and every moment of our lives and most of the time we are unaware. God bestows us these gifts because of his unconditional love that he has for us. He does not ask for anything in return. That's right. There are no strings attached. They are given freely.

Let us take a look at some of these gifts so we can get a better understanding of these great gifts.

Gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the gift that helps us to grasp the meanings of the truth of our religion.

Gift of Righteous. This is the gift of being in the right standing or place with God.

Gift of Eternal Life. This gift given to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is given to us through our faith by which we are saved.

Gift of Salvation. The gift is one we do not earn or deserve but is given freely to all who believe in him.

Other gifts we receive are The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom. The special capacity of judging human things according to God's will.

Knowledge. The gift of knowing the true value of creation in relationship to our creator.

Counsel. This gift acts as a breath of fresh air in our conscience and helps us discern what is good and what makes us happy.

Fortitude. This gift allows us to courageously live out the life that God wants us to.

Understanding. This gift helps us to comprehend God's word and deepen the truth that he teaches us.

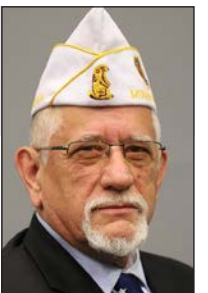
Piety. This gift heals our hearts of all hardness and allows them to be in a tender relationship with God and with our brothers and sisters.

Fear of the Lord. This means having a mature spirit that is aware of our guilt and the weight of our sins. Do not be afraid of the Lord; trust in his mercy.

These are but a few of the great gifts we receive from our

Chaplain's Corner

Dean Knutson



God on a daily basis. Let us not keep our God's great love to ourselves, but let's spread it to our families, brothers and sisters, communities and to all mankind.

In the words of President John Adams, "There is no such thing as human wisdom, all is the providence of God."

In the month of November, we need to keep in mind these events in our thoughts and prayers.

- All Saints Day: Nov. 1
- Election Day: Nov. 7
- Veterans Day: Nov. 11.

- American Education Week: Nov. 13-17.
- Thanksgiving: Nov. 23
- Black Friday: Nov. 24
- Small Business Saturday: Nov. 25
- Cyber Monday: Nov. 27
- Giving Tuesday: Nov. 28

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

The Minnesota Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

Official publication of The American Legion Department of Minnesota

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fax: 651-291-1057

Email: tengstrom@mnlegion.org

Web: mnlegion.org/legionnaire

Editor: Communications Director Tim Engstrom

Editor Emeritus: Al Zdon

Board of Publication: President Paul Hassing, Montgomery; Vice President Mike Ash, St. Paul; Secretary Mike Maxa, Montgomery; Treasurer Bill Goede, Plainview; David "Chip" Manson, Sunburg; Darrel Redepenning, Fridley; Michael Ash, St. Paul; Carroll Partridge, Oakdale; Paul Edwards, Brainerd; Kelley Adelsman, Pine Island

SAVE THE DATE:
**LEGION NIGHT AT
TARGET FIELD WILL
BE FRIDAY, MAY 24!**

Taps

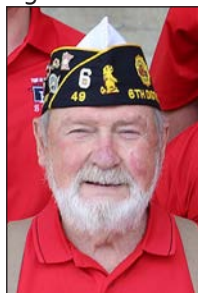


Please send "Taps" entries to tengstrom@mnlegion.org or mail to 20 W. 12th St., Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155, or visit mnlegion.org/taps. Thank you.

Name of Deceased	Age	Date of Death	Branch	Era	Cont. Years	Post
Acers, James D.	85	8/31/23	Army	Vietnam	29	Elk River Post 112
Antonson, Michael B.	81	9/23/23	Marines	Cold	3	Elk River Post 112
Bailey, Forrest Jr.	77	9/26/23	Navy	Vietnam	28	St. Paul Park Post 98
Bakkedahl, Lowell G.	88	9/22/23	Army	Korea	44	Hayfield Post 330
Benson, Jerome O. "Jerry"	94	10/9/23	Navy	Korea	66	Little Falls Post 46
Berg, Eugene H. "Murph"	90	9/17/23	Army	Korea	44	Red Wing Post 54
Blowers, John L.	83	8/28/23	Army	Vietnam	34	Becker Post 193
Note: Readers may recall one of the first stores in the Mall of America was Everything's a Dollar. He opened that store.						
Callier, Thomas C.	79	10/4/23	Navy	Vietnam	52	Hutchinson Post 96
Chihak, Adolph A. "Tony"	92	9/29/23	Navy	Korea	34	Stewartville Post 164
Note: He served on a helicopter crew in Korea.						
Coughlin, Maurice I.	87	10/12/23	Army	Korea	13	Moose Lake 379
Crocker, Dale E.	97	9/8/23	Navy	WWII	51	Cloquet Post 262
Note: He served with the Seabees.						
Dempsey, Terence M.	91	2/2/23	Air Force	Korea	46	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He served as a pilot and was stationed at Mather AFB in Sacramento, Calif. He remained in the Reserves, achieving the rank of captain.						
Dhennin, Jerry B.	89	9/26/23	Army	Korea	13	Coon Rapids Post 334
Duzan, Richard E.	90	9/6/23	Army	Korea	24	Shakopee Post 2
Edwards, Gerald M.	78	10/8/23	Air Force	Vietnam	52	Milroy Post 274
Fitschen, Frederick A.	76	8/7/23	Army	Vietnam	43	Red Wing Post 54
Foote, Grovner W.	91	9/5/23	Navy	Korea	67	Brainerd Post 255
Fortroy, G. Donna	77	7/22/23	Air Force	Vietnam	50	Duluth Post 71
Note: Her last duty assignment was as a medical lab specialist at the base hospital at Carswell AFB, Texas. She also was a member at Brainerd Post 255 and Cloquet Post 262.						
Frericks, Marvin E.	94	9/16/23	Army	Korea	33	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He served in the 369th EASR Boat Battalion at Fort Worden, Wash. The EASR (Engineer Amphibious Support Regiment) trained replacements during the Korean War.						
Friedrich, Marvin	85	9/16/23	Army	Vietnam	32	Bayport Post 491
Gall, Robert J.	85	7/25/23	Army	Korea	55	Hillman Post 602
Note: He served many years on the rifle squad.						
Gardner, Laurence D.	88	9/22/23	Navy	Korea	45	Pine City Post 51
Gerken, Leon H.	89	9/17/23	Army	Korea	47	Fairmont Post 36
Note: He served as 2nd District commander in 2000-01. He was past post commander and a regular member of the honor guard.						
Goldammer, Luverne C. Sr.	94	9/12/23	Army	Korea	32	Spring Valley Post 68
Graf, Richard A.	90	7/18/23	Army	Korea	40	St. Paul Park Post 98
Hallaway, Thomas A.	85	9/17/23	Air Force	Vietnam	33	Elk River Post 112
Hayenga, James S.	97	10/2/23	Army	WWII	64	Stewartville Post 164
Hess, Wilfred N.	94	2/9/23	Army	Korea	42	St. Paul Park Post 98
Howe, Dwayne T.	85	3/20/23	Navy	Cold	33	Red Wing Post 54
Indrelie, Robert A.	84	9/21/23	Army	Vietnam	58	Albert Lea Post 56
Isensee, James H.	98	8/1/23	Navy	WWII	68	Red Wing Post 54
Kapischke, Dennis R.	78	9/24/23	Army	Vietnam	57	Waseca Post 228
Karst, John F.	78	10/2/23	Air Force	Vietnam	48	Coon Rapids Post 334
LeBlanc, Kenneth J.	75	10/5/23	Army NG	Vietnam	20	Little Falls Post 46
Lind, Rush V.	76	9/29/23	Army Res.	Vietnam	53	St. Peter Post 37
Lokensgard, Orion E.	95	9/10/23	Navy	WWII/Korea	25	Hutchinson Post 96
Note: He was discharged in 1948, then re-entered in 1950 for the Korean War. He served as a fireman and deployed to China, India, Saudi Arabia and Australia.						
Louisiana, Duane H.	81	10/7/23	Army	Vietnam	43	Monticello Post 260
MacLeod, Thomas H.	89	10/3/23	Air Force	Korea	47	Monticello Post 260
Maland, Robert A.	94	9/14/23	Army	Korea	10	Elk River Post 112
Manley, Lloyd T.	81	8/9/23	Army	Vietnam	20	Moorhead Post 21
Mathison, Gary R.	85	8/15/23	Army	Vietnam	10	St. Paul Park Post 98
Maxson, Gaylord C. "Max"	95	9/5/23	Army	Korea	34	Pine Island Post 184
Note: He went to California after high school. There, he was drafted and served in Korea during the war.						
McNamara, Eugene B.	86	9/7/23	Army	Cold	31	New London Post 537
Meek, David L.	70	7/30/23	Navy	VN/PG	26	Kasson Post 333
Meyer, Kenneth W.	84	9/22/23	Navy	Vietnam	36	Pequot Lakes Post 49
Note: He was a longtime counselor for Minnesota Boys State. He was the 6th District adjutant in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15. He is a past post commander, adjutant and finance officer. He also served in the color guard. In the Navy, he served much of the time aboard the aircraft carrier USS Oriskany.						
Miller, Robert L.	90	9/20/23	Army	Vietnam	19	Willmar Post 167
Monse, William	92	9/27/23	Army	Korea	49	Aitkin Post 86
Note: He was a tank commander and a gunner in Korea until he was wounded.						
Nelson, Elaine	102	7/24/23	Marines	WWII	35	Park Rapids Post 212
Note: She served as a turret lathe operator in the assembly and repair department at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in North Carolina.						
Ogle, Michael D.	82	10/3/23	Navy	Vietnam	33	Melrose Post 101
Note: He was a past post commander.						
Otteson, Donald E.	78	9/4/23	Navy	Vietnam	20	Brooten Post 288
Ozmun, Brian L.	55	8/19/23	Navy	Cold	5	Northfield Post 84
Note: He served aboard the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson. He was a 46-year member of SAL Squadron 84.						
Pagel, Walter W. "Bill"	73	9/15/23	Army	Vietnam	13	Bemidji Post 14
Note: He was a past post commander and past honor guard leader. The final stop on his 22-year military career was the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Lewis. He had jumpmaster wings.						
Parent, Richard F.	91	9/13/23	Army	Vietnam	43	Minneapolis Longton Post 618
Paschke, Loring D. Sr.	78	9/22/23	Army	Vietnam	13	Windom Post 206
Patzner, Jerome A.	90	9/9/23	Air Force	Vietnam	50	Lewiston Post 90
Note: He served at Patrick AFB in Florida.						
Peck, John "Jack"	94	9/23/23	Navy	Korea	60	Little Falls Post 46
Note: He was instrumental in getting the five paintings of the five branches of the military commissioned and placed at the Little Falls State Veterans Cemetery near Camp Ripley.						
Praml, Lawrence A.	84	9/1/23	Army	Vietnam	20	St. Paul Park Post 98
Richert, Howard I.	79	3/2/22	Army	Vietnam	35	Bayport Post 491
Roddy, Gary L.	82	9/19/23	Navy/MM	Vietnam	1	Lanesboro Post 40
Note: He served in the Merchant Marines for seven years after his three-year Navy enlistment.						
Roemhildt, Eugene P.	91	10/15/23	Army	Korea	42	St. Peter Post 37
Saamanen, Roger A.	79	10/12/23	Navy	Vietnam	2	Two Harbors Post 109
Sanborn, Fred W.	92	9/8/23	Air Force	Korea	31	Pine Island Post 184
Schutteimer, Fremont W.	98	9/29/23	Army	WWII	39	Caledonia Post 191
Schwartz, Kenneth E.	82	9/10/23	Navy	Army NG	9	Moorhead Post 21
Sethre, W. Stuart	96	8/6/23	Navy	WWII	75	Newfolden Post 427



Leon Gerken



Ken Meyer

All-Family Events Calendar

- Nov. 11:** Veterans Day, local ceremonies
- Nov. 11:** Official State Veterans Day Ceremony, Veterans Memorial Community Center, Inver Grove Heights
- Dec. 9:** Pearl Harbor Rally, Paynesville Post 271
- Feb. 3:** Sweetheart Rally, Forest Lake Post 225
- Feb. 24-28:** Washington Conference, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C.
- March 2:** Appreciation Rally, Montgomery Post 79
- April 12-13:** ALA Dept. Jr. Conference, Detroit Lakes Post 15
- April 15-17:** National Commander's Tour of Minn.
- April 28-May 2:** National President's Tour of Minn.
- May 6-9:** Spring Meetings, Sheraton Hotel, Indianapolis
- May 24:** American Legion Night at Target Field
- June 9-15:** Minnesota Boys State, St. John's University
- June 9-15:** Minnesota Girls State, Bethel University
- July 11-13:** Department of Minnesota Convention, Willmar Convention Center, Willmar, hosted by Willmar Post 167
- 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. 2-4:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Sr. State Tournament, Bird Island
- Aug. 3-4:** Minnesota American Legion Fastpitch Softball State Tournament, location TBD
- Aug. 9-11:** Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Jr. State Tournament, St. Charles
- Sept. 5-8:** Camporee, Legionville
- Sept. 13-15:** American Legion NS/FR Weekend, Camp Ripley

Legionnaire Insurance Trust has raised nearly \$4.6M for Minn.

ST. PAUL — Legionnaire Insurance Trust has been good for the departments of The American Legion, raising \$96,729,403 since its inception in 1965.

Of that, Minnesota has received among the most, at nearly \$4.6 million. The distribution is based on how many Legionnaires sign up for LIT. It is the endorsed insurance program of the Department of Minnesota. Learn more about its supplemental health and accident plans at thelit.com.

Here are the top-12 departments ranked by LIT income:

1. Pennsylvania: \$8,069,430
2. Florida: \$6,133,627

3. Ohio: \$5,916,424
 4. Michigan: \$4,602,722.
 5. Minnesota: \$4,591,084
 6. California: \$4,282,745
 7. Indiana: \$3,720,320
 8. New Jersey: \$3,542,296
 9. Maryland: \$3,249,791
 10. Kansas: \$3,154,935
 11. Wisconsin: \$3,099,373
 12. Missouri: \$2,729,950
- This revenue source has helped offset the cost of the department headquarters and cover expenses like service officers, membership coordinators, financial officers and program coordinators, reducing the need to raise dues. It is a key reason why American Legion dues are far less than service clubs.



Where do you find merch with the new department logo?

Visit vikingswagcompany.com

Veterans Linkage Line

your link to experts

minnesotaveteran.org | 1-888-LinkVet

HELP IS HERE FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES



SERVING MINNESOTA VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

FREE TRAINING!

ON ANY AMERICAN LEGION SUBJECT: LEADERSHIP, OFFICER ROLES, CONDUCTING MEETINGS, COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES, YOU NAME IT!



TELL US WHEN, WHERE (IN PERSON OR VIA ZOOM) AND WHAT. WE'LL DO THE REST.

CONTACT US AT: TRAININGCOMM@MNLEGION.ORG.

BraunAbility
FIND YOUR go

WHEELCHAIR VANS
• NEW/USED
• COMMERCIAL ADA
• VAN RENTALS

WE SUPPORT OUR VETERANS

CUMMINGS MOBILITY

VISIT OUR LOCATIONS
Alberville: 763-048-0103
Burnsville: 651-435-8889
Little Canada: 651-633-7887
Des Moines: 515-207-3555
Cummingsmobility.com

• TRANSFER SEATS
• DRIVING AIDS
• SCOOTER LIFTS

Ely, Minnesota

Open year-round!

800-777-7538

vetlake@frontiernet.net

veteransonthelakeresort.org

For all Veterans, Disabled Public, their Families and Friends

Taps



Continued from Page 5

Shively, Robert A.	79	8/19/23	Army	Vietnam	5	Cannon Falls Post 142
Note: A wrestler and football player for the University of Illinois, he served in Germany and Belgium after getting his medical degree. He later was the orthopedic surgeon for the St. Louis Rams and Cardinals. He volunteered to return to active duty at the age of 64 to provide medical care in Iraq.						
Skweres, Michael	75	2/5/23	Army	Vietnam	18	St. Paul Park Post 98
Sorensen, Dale C.	88	10/4/23	Navy	Korea	22	Two Harbors Post 109
St. Mary, Glenn W.	86	8/18/23	Army	Korea	12	Caledonia Post 191
Stalboerger, Anthony	77	9/1/23	Army	Vietnam	20	Lake Henry Post 612
Sundstrum, Kenneth C.	90	9/16/23	Marines	Korea	57	Coon Rapids Post 334
Thorson, Olaus G. "Jerry"	86	10/1/23	Air Force	Vietnam	42	Bagley Post 16
Topel, Fred E.	101	8/7/23	Army/Navy	WWII/Korea	10	Monticello Post 260
Tucker, Ralph D.	69	9/5/23	Army	Vietnam	44	Hutchinson Post 96
VanderBeek, Gerald J.	78	9/9/23	Air Force	Vietnam	31	Brooten Post 288
Note: He served in Germany doing meteorology.						
Voth, Larry W.	74	7/19/23	Air Force	Vietnam	26	Red Wing Post 54
Waller, James R.	91	9/25/23				
Wenger, Fred A.	94	8/24/23	Air Force	Korea	68	Moorhead Post 21
Werner, Leeun A.	86	9/28/23	Army NG	Vietnam	38	Little Falls Post 46
Wright, Everette A.	74	3/13/23	Navy	Vietnam	26	St. Paul Park Post 98

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.

There is a national blood crisis at hand

Since the start of the pandemic, blood banks across the United States have been calling on eligible donors to come down and help stave off shortages. It's critical that blood banks have enough of a supply for local hospitals, which risk having to make hard choices about who receives immediate treatment and who must wait.

In the United States, every two seconds, a person needs blood or platelets, making it vital to have a lot banked. Blood is needed for everything from surgeries to traumatic injuries to cancer and sickle-cell disease treatments, with roughly 29,000 units of

red blood cells, 5,000 units of platelets and 6,500 units of plasma required on a daily basis. Blood and platelets cannot be made synthetically, making voluntary donations necessary.

Every year, only 3 percent of Americans donate blood, and at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, that number plummeted. Blood drives at schools and clubs were canceled and donor centers were closed, and because of staffing troubles and rising costs, things still haven't gone back to normal.

In January 2022, the American Red Cross declared its first-ever blood crisis, after experiencing a 10 percent decline in the number of people donating.

About 60 percent of blood donations are

from people who are 40 and older, and Katie Smithson with the Blood Connection stated last fall that "we're losing donors quicker than we're gaining donors. Part of that is due in fact to COVID. When COVID hit and schools went virtual, whether it be high schools or colleges, we lost about 30% of our donor base because we used to go to these schools and we couldn't anymore because the kids weren't there."

If eligible please donate, schedule an appointment. Spread the word, let friends and family know about this national crisis.

Terry Larson
Chairman
Department of Minn. Blood Committee
Forest Lake Post 225

Send in runs, rides and fundraisers

Hello!
With fall upon us, many of us Legion Riders are hoping for a couple of more rides before we have to put our bikes away for the winter. The warm weather is holding on for a bit longer, so I hope you are all getting your wish for a couple of nice fall rides.

What plans does your chapter have to keep active during the winter? Bring those thoughts and ideas to Fall Conference and share them during our learning session on Saturday afternoon.

The Pearl Harbor Rally is Dec. 9 at Paynesville American Legion Post 271. This is a Legion Family gathering that is hosted by the American Legion Riders. Social hour will be at 11

Legion Riders

Jody Hassing

a.m.; Lunch at noon with a program to follow. The meal will be a make your own burger bar with chips and a salad for \$16. I am looking forward to seeing many of our Legion Riders there as well as the rest of the Legion Family!

I know there are many other chapter runs and fundraisers happening across the state and throughout the year. Please invite me to your events so I can see all the good things you are doing! The Riders will have a learning session at Fall Conference. It is Oct. 28 at 2 p.m., though it

probably is in the past by the time you read this. Please join us in St. Cloud. The entire Legion Family is welcome to come learn more about your American Legion Riders.

God bless and keep the rubber side down.

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

One right move can make a difference

The Directors' Conference in Indianapolis last month provided ideas for attendees to modify to fit their programs. Good discussion among the Minnesota group has set the stage for improvements to the 2024 session.

The current chaos in Washington, D.C., may discourage many high school students to shy from government and politics. It's also an opportunity for us to encourage those same individuals to become the government representatives they want to see in St. Paul and Washington. Some are student body leaders, team captains and academic stalwarts already. They

Minn. Boys State

Neil Kruse

can be future policy makers with encouragement from us. Minnesota Boys State and Girls State are the next steps that can enhance life experiences for them, their friends and their communities. Spread the word!

I encourage you to watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mo6fBAT8f-s> as assurance that all you do affects those around you. A book of the same name "The Butterfly

Effect" by Andy Andrews contains even more examples of historical events with big effects.

Thank you for all you do to help improve our communities!

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

I SERVED FOR Honor

At USAA, the same values that guide our military inspire us to go above and beyond for our members. When you join USAA, you'll be part of an organization where we have everything you need to make your membership a lifelong bond.

JOIN USAA TODAY AND GET A QUOTE.
CALL 877-699-2654 OR VISIT USAA.COM/LEGION

USAA means United Services Automobile Association and its affiliates. Use of the term "member" or "membership" refers to membership in USAA Membership Services and does not convey any legal or ownership rights in USAA. Restrictions apply and are subject to change. The American Legion receives financial support from USAA for this sponsorship. © 2019 USAA. 257612-0119-TAL

The SAL Update: Fisher House does an excellent job!



Hello, American Legion Family!

This has been a busy month for me. I've put a quite a few miles on my vehicles traveling our great state.

I was invited to Granite Falls to speak with the members of Post 69 and the Sons of The American Legion Squadron there. It was a very interesting and productive meeting. Thoughts and ideas were exchanged on revitalizing the post and squadron, and I believe we all got something from the visit.

I would like to thank the members of the post and squadron for their hospitality and a special thank you to John Jones for the invitation.

Next, I went up to Legionville for the Minnesota Legion Riders Convention, also known as the Romp. I went to bring greetings from the over 11,000 SAL Detachment members to the American Legion Riders.

Note: Quite a few of the SAL are also ALR members.

I also had another motive for attending as I'm also an ALR member and the 4th District ALR representative and the chapter director at my home post. I will say that it was a most enjoyable time meeting with all of the folks in attendance.

My next visit was to the home of Becker Post 193 for its annual Fall Concert. It was a fundraiser for Fisher House. It seemed to be a huge success. The food was very good, and the band was rocking the house.

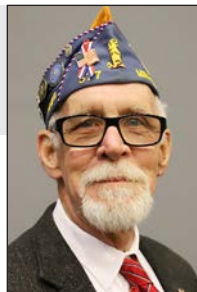
I thoroughly enjoyed myself, and I believe the folks in attendance enjoyed themselves, too. I got to meet many of the people who came, and their hospitality was fantastic. I also got to meet the managing director of Fisher House Minneapolis VA, Kim Bihm. She then offered to give me a tour of Fisher House at my convenience.

Luckily, I had an appointment at the VA the following Wednesday and took advantage of being on that side of the Twin Cities to take the tour. That's quite the facility that they have there for the family of veterans getting care at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center who live 50 miles or farther away.

I would like to thank two of the officers of Squadron

Detachment commander

John Weiss



193. Squadron Commander Andrew Lee and the Squadron Vice Commander and Chairman of the Fundraiser Concert Dave Anderson. You gentlemen did an outstanding job. Keep up the good work!

Then my final visit before writing this column was to the John Zagoda Memorial Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt at Legionville. The whole weekend was a very good time. I must say that the volunteerism that goes on up there is a wondrous sight. The Deer Hunt committee does a fabulous job of setting it up and taking care of the veterans and the volunteers who show up to put in their time to make it a success.

Quite a few deer were seen but

out of five hunters only two got lucky enough to harvest a deer. Better luck next time to those of you who missed out.

With that I will close this column for the month with this wish to you, my brothers and sisters of the American Legion Family. Be well and be safe in your travels.

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, While Moving Forward."



Minnesota SAL Commander John Weiss visits Becker Squadron 193. From left are Fisher House Managing Director Kim Bihm, Squadron 193 Vice Director and Chairman of the Fundraiser Concert Dave Anderson, Squadron 193 Commander Andrew Lee and Weiss.



The Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Minnesota made its presence known at the SAL National Convention in Charlotte in August. In the gold caps are NECman Shawn Davis, kneeling, and National Vice Commander Robert Bristo.

Herke retires

Continued from Page 1

in retirement as I partner with veteran organizations to advocate for advances in medical research toward a cure for ALS, a disease veterans receive a diagnosis of twice as much as the general population."

Walz and Herke served together in the Minnesota National Guard. Herke, at one time, was boss to Walz. As governor, he became boss to Herke.

In a press release distributed last month, Walz said: "As a veteran of the U.S. Army and Minnesota National Guard, Commissioner Larry Herke dedicated his career to serving our state and country. As commissioner, he worked tirelessly to make progress toward ending veterans homelessness, strengthening our veterans homes and cemeteries, and helping Minnesota's veterans and their families receive the best care and benefits. I am deeply grateful for his service and wish him well in his retirement."

Herke, a member of Sauk Centre Post 67, told the Legionnaire he wishes to bring attention to the higher rates that veterans end up with ALS than the general population.

Deputy Commissioner for Programs and Services Brad Lindsay is in the role of interim commissioner.



Gov. Tim Walz, a member of Mankato Post 11, listens to Minnesota American Legion Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo spell out the legislative priorities of the Minnesota Commanders' Task Force at a meeting in St. Paul on Oct. 18. Those priorities will be finalized in November and shared in the next issue.



American Legion caps for Commander Paul Hassing and Adjutant Mike Maxa are visible in the foreground. Hassing spelled out some of The American Legion priorities.



Purchase a "Support Our Troops" Plate. Call: 651-4TROOPS Visit: www.minnesotaveteran.org

VA comes to the veterans with a van

Continued from Page 1

important this is. When you are homeless, the last thing you are thinking about is your health," he said.

Nationally, the VA is employing 25 new Mobile Medical Units, or MMUs.

Jonelle Glubke, director of the Minneapolis VA Homeless Programs, said the MMU represents a shift in thinking.

"What if we make it our responsibility to come to you?" she asked.

A news release from the Minneapolis VA states: "MMUs are vans or trucks that move from one location to another that can provide veterans with services such as health assessments and education, preventive care, referrals to VA homeless programs and other resources in the community. MMUs provide VA's Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams, or HPACTs, staff with the necessary infrastructure to provide care in community-based settings, all in a safe and confidential space with medical supplies and equipment readily available. HPACT MMUs provide a one-stop shop for wrap-around services that are integrated and coordinated, engaging veterans in intensive case management, and providing high-quality, culturally sensitive health care."

Help wanted
Est. 1969
Age 55+ workers needed for part-time custodial work at rest areas and state parks in Minnesota. Contact us:
800-969-1913
651-639-1913
admin@greenviewmn.com

Geoffrey A. Forbes, MS
VA Accredited Claims Agent ★ U.S. Army Veteran
Mobile: 612-251-9681 ★ gforbes@vabenefitspro.com

I WANT YOU TO WIN YOUR VA CLAIM
PLEASE CONTACT ME FOR A FREE CONSULTATION TO DETERMINE YOUR ELIGIBILITY FOR VA COMPENSATION
(Appeal services are offered at no cost by VSOs.)



Mike Duncan of Red Wing Post 54 stands, on Oct. 4, before momentos of his father's brave service aboard B-17 Flying Fortresses in World War II.

Diary chronicles events of 30 bombing raids

Continued from Page 1

Their oxygen was shot out + they were at 24,000'. The 324 Squadron lost 7 ships + have only a few crews left. Pine bailed out over Germany + just before he went he called + said he was shot up bad so was going out. Tyson, got killed 2-20 mm in the head + 1 in the neck. Peters, got 1-20 mm in the ankle. He's in Cambridge Hospital at the present. They got back to this side but crash landed in Southern England. I never was so all in + shaken up in my life. I've Prayed every day that I've been here + I know it's the Lord who has seen us through this far. As I write date Aug. 16, 1944, for the first time today. I realize that this date is my 28th birthday + I've been given Grace by our Supreme Father to live."

Airman Duncan, a graduate of Fulda High School, survived 30 missions over Europe in World War II, with the 91st Bomb Group, 401st Squadron, based in Eastern England at RAF Bassingbourn. They were known as "The Ragged Irregulars."

In its first seven months of action, the 91st Bomb Group suffered 82 percent casualties and lost 41 of its original 48 aircraft. Duncan was among the few to survive. He recorded all of his missions in a small, 60-page, spiral-bound diary.

He began serving as a radio operator aboard the "General Ike" B-17. After a time, he became group lead radio operator, serving aboard various bombers. His last mission was aboard the "Tennessee Tess." He was a technical sergeant (E-6) by this point.

"Dad was always calm no matter how crazy and wild it got," said his son, Michael, who lives in Red Wing. "That was what was amazing about him."

Michael Duncan works to keep his father's legacy alive all these years later. Michael himself is a Vietnam veteran and a member of Red Wing American Legion Post 54.

After his father's death on Nov. 16, 1989, son Michael Duncan read the diary for the first time. He had it reprinted in handwritten fashion as a

limited edition on spiral-bound notebooks for the public to consume. It is titled "The Last Mission."

For four years in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Duncan combed the country talking to media outlets to find the aircraft called Tennessee Tess. He found a fellow in Florida who had flown with his father. The man had a photo of the aircraft. Duncan used the photo to prove its existence to federal authorities and historical societies. That photo is on the back of the reprinted diary.

The aircraft ended up in a boneyard and scrapped.

Duncan himself served in the Air Force, with the 9th Reconnaissance Wing, mainly flying into weather systems ahead of fighter groups. He was part of the crew on WC-130s. He served from January 1969 to January 1973. After he got out, he had a hard time getting a VA claim, but a woman working as a county veteran service officer helped him stick with it, and he won his claim.

"I owe her a debt of gratitude," he said. "It's a different VA now than it was back then."

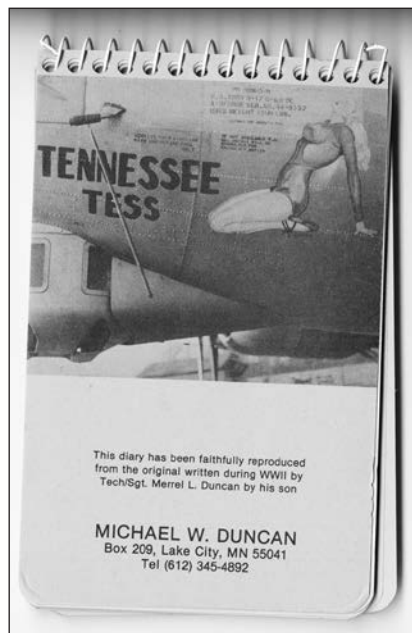
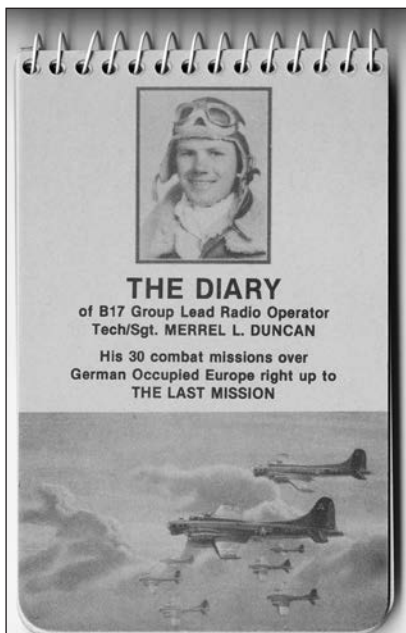
Duncan commissioned artwork in his father memory and, in November 1992, was part of a signing ceremony in Lake City. Called "The Last Mission," its artist is Bryan Moon. With them was retired Capt. R.R. Goldsmith, group lead pilot.

Duncan sells the limited prints to American Legion and VFW posts for \$100. The print normally costs \$150. It hangs in the entrance to the VA Medical Center in Atlanta. You can find one in at Post 54 in Red Wing. There is now one at The American Legion Department of Minnesota, too.

Contact him at mikeduncan4653@gmail.com if your post wants one.

Merrell Duncan was from a family of five brothers and five sisters. His brother Earl was drafted. Earl was married, so Merrell — whose nickname was "Squirt" — volunteered to take his place. Squirt married his wife, Bonnie, in Fort Ord, Calif., before shipping out. She was from Heron Lake.

He arrived at Bassingbourn on July 2, 1944, and completed his tour on Jan. 1, 1945.



The diary of Merrell Duncan contains compelling reading about World War II.

Legion College



Graduates of the October session of Minnesota Legion College at Camp Ripley are, front row, from left Jeffrey Dahlen of Freeborn Post 552, Dave Arend Jr. of Forest Lake Squadron 225, Joan Welscher of Bellechester Post 598 and Francis Wetterlund of Bellechester Post 598. In the middle row are Josh Fowler of St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577, Andru Peters of Minneapolis Post 1, Brandy Fulton of Lino Lakes Post 566, Wendy Arend of Forest Lake Unit 225, Pat Logan of Bayport Post 491, Gregg Wilwert of St. Paul Park Post 98, Nathan Olson of New Prague Post 45 and Gabe Keith of St. Paul Post 8. In the back row are Michael Herbert of Bemidji Post 14, Kevin Kiernan of North Branch Post 85, Josh Axel of Hastings Post 47, Anthony Koop of Ironton Post 443, Dustin Speed of Hastings Post 47, Stu Sonnee of St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Squadron 577, John Huneke of Bellechester Post 598, Steve Welscher of Bellechester Post 598 and Tom McBroom Sr. of Elysian Post 311.



Instructors at Minnesota Legion College for the mid-October session at Camp Ripley were, from left, Joe Tappainer of Apple Valley Post 1776, Michael Ash of St. Paul Christie DeParcq Post 406, Amy Larsen of Lonsdale Post 586, Paul Edwards of Nisswa Post 627, Linda Dvorak of New Prague Post 45, Carla Tappainer of Apple Valley Post 1776 and Kelley Adelsman of Pine Island Post 184. Dvorak is the chairwoman of the Department Training Committee. Also on the Training Committee are Ash, Adelsman, Edwards and Joe Tappainer. Larsen and Carla Tappainer were guest instructors.

Listening Post



Pat Logan of Bayport Post 491, center, presents a \$25,000 check from his post to 2022-23 National Commander Vincent "James" Troiola for the American Legion Veterans & Children's Foundation during the 104th National Convention in Charlotte. On the left is Minnesota Convention Delegation Chairman Tom Fernlund of Waite Park Post 428.

Marines of 3rd Battalion return for 2nd, 3rd tours

Continued from Page 1

they ensure the enemy stragglers could not refuel or flank the American tanks. Instead, they would get stranded and captured.

This resulted in skirmishes with enemies and shooting up enemy fuel trucks.

The Marines typically operated at night because they had a tactical advantage with the night-vision technology. They would take positions behind a berm, then attack enemy vehicles as they approached. Often, they were ragtag vehicles, like small pickups. The AAVs had a .50-cal mounted on top. Between the .50-cal and grenade launchers, they would take out the enemies well before they could get close.

The Marines secured bridges and towns on the way to keep supply lanes open for convoys. Then they took Baghdad.

"I was a block away when the statue of Saddam fell," Keith said.

The famous toppling seen around the world on television took place April 9, 2003. Keith and others were providing security at an intersection.

The 3rd Battalion was in the Iraq War for only four months. He got back May 24, 2003.

"Some people back home didn't realize we had left or saw combat," Keith said.

His parents were supportive and, like a lot of military parents, didn't know what their kids were being sent into. Keith met up with a few friends and just relaxed.

"I spent a lot of time just doing nothing. I didn't really share at the time what I had gone through," he said.

Keith went back to California. His battalion had left all their weapons in Iraq for their replacements. Those replacements came from Okinawa, Japan. So, in February 2004, the Marine Corps, in its infinite wisdom, was flying his unit to Okinawa to get weapons from that Marine base.

After two months in Japan, the 3rd Battalion then went back to Iraq, arriving in April 2004 while the First Battle of Fallujah was nearing an end.

The 3rd Battalion created a perimeter around the city. However, his platoon was pulled out to be a reactionary element. Keith was a team leader by now.

They flew in Hueys, CH-46s and CH-53s to hot spots. For example, they would pop in and perform traffic stops on hostile vehicles. Some of the other units doing the same thing were special operations units.

"They didn't use us for the sexiest missions," Keith said. "They aren't going to send a Marine platoon for the most dangerous situations, but we always showed up for duty. My squad was reliable. We had to be available for every rotation."

They also were assigned to provide security for non-infantry convoys. For example, one was an Army supply



Gabe Keith of St. Paul Post 8 was a student at Minnesota Legion College at Camp Ripley in mid-October. The instructors shared how The American Legion works and prepared them for leadership within the organization. The next Minnesota Legion College is April 25-28. Register at mnlegion.org.

convoy that ran across Haditha Dam on the Euphrates River.

"We supplied the front and rear security," he said.

On that one, his team and another team handled the front. They ran ahead to a trouble spot where the road went between two hills. They somehow missed driving over a pothole that turned out to be a bomb and, instead, a supply truck hit it.

Five months in country, and by July 2004, the 3rd Battalion returned home.

"I went back to Minnesota. I just tried to spend as much time with friends and family as possible," Keith said.

Then he went UA. UA is unexcused absence. It's the equivalent to the Army's AWOL. He missed formation for 25 days. And he wasn't the only one.

"There were talks we were going to go back because of elections," Keith said. "It became apparent they were going to remove our leave to ensure we would prioritize training for going back to Iraq."

If he had been gone for 30 days, the Marine Corps would have considered him a deserter. He was busted down from E-3 to E-1. The 3rd Battalion returned to Iraq for a third time in January 2005.

During Vietnam, soldiers volunteered for second and third tours. Those days were long gone by the time of the Iraq War. Tours are mandatory. In a volunteer military, once you say the oath, you belong to Uncle Sam.

These Marines provided roadside security and ran patrols. The U.S. military had problems with improvised explosive devices not being detected and



Gabe Keith, left, at a guardpoint near Fallujah.

insurgents ambushing convoys. The insurgents thought they were winning.

The 3rd Battalion's job was to find them and convince them otherwise.

"We go in and break their spirit," Keith said.

They conducted foot patrols, and, if shot at, they would lay down a base of fire, then an element would break off and take out or scare off the enemy.

On July 25, 2006, Keith got out of the Marines with an honorable discharge. He moved in with an aunt named Mary Keith who lived in a park reserve in Illinois. Unfortunately, she soon was diagnosed with ALS, better known as Lou Gehrig's disease, so he took care of her for a year until she needed better care.

"She had been the one who got me into reading and writing years before," Keith said.

Specifically, the novel was "The Sword of Shannara," a 1977 epic fantasy by Terry Brooks. It's the first in a trilogy. He read it when he was 9 or 10. Then Keith moved around a lot. He lived in Arkansas, Las Vegas, Tampa Bay area of Florida.

"I always kept coming back to Minnesota."

He got his degree in public safety specializing in criminology from Capella University in 2012. He wrote his military memoir while in Vegas. The 2017 self-published book is called "Little Warrior Brother."

He returned to Minnesota near the beginning of 2021 during the pandemic. His real estate agent was an Army veteran and Legionnaire. The agent helped Keith purchase his home in West St. Paul. A year later, he asked Keith to join and have a drink. Keith

had quit drinking in the meantime but, in fall 2022, happily joined St. Paul 3M Post 599 and hung out.

"I thought the Legion was a series of bars and that it revolved around events, and I didn't know it had a greater purpose until I started talking to Teresa Ash," Keith said.

Ash is heavily involved in the 4th District and has been a department vice commander and historian. She presently is the 4th District commander.

"The first thing she asked is 'What is it you know about The American Legion?'" he said.

She explained the various programs, how the Legion secures veterans benefits, helps them with claims and raises funds for good causes.

He had been in his home too much and thought it was good to get out and meet other veterans. He said he had become "a creature of my routines."

He's now the 4th District adjutant. Past Department Commander Mike Ash — husband of Teresa — is showing him the ropes.

Earlier this year, Keith attended Post 8's meeting at Joseph's Grill on Wabasha Street south of the river. He transferred posts because their meeting site is closer to his home and work. He works at Other Skies Weird Fiction, at 803 Dodd Road. (Its website is otherskies.ink.)

Keith also signed his stepfather up to join Post 8.

He found himself without a car after his, a 2014 Chevy Traverse, was stolen from outside a gym. As a new homeowner, he didn't have credit available for another. Minnesota American Legion Department Service Officer Ray Kane signed over his own car, a

2009 Hyundai Sonata in need of repairs, to him for free. The American Legion Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund (Fund 85) paid for the mechanical repairs, not the hail-damaged body.

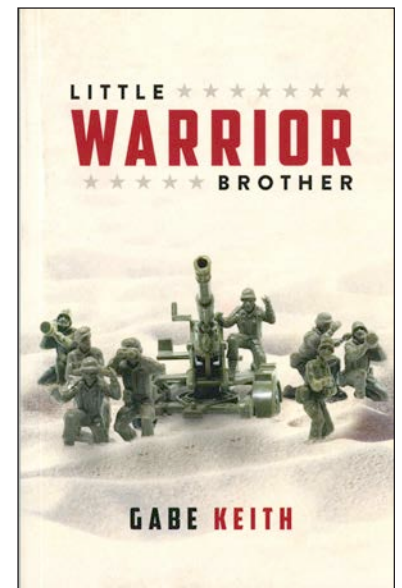
"I can't thank Ray and the Legion enough," he said.

Keith attended the October session of Minnesota Legion College at Camp Ripley and encourages other to attend.

"We need young veterans so the Legion can get our veterans benefits to the next generation," he said.

Write Club started in May 2022 and meets the second and fourth Mondays at St. Paul Post 39. He started it "because I know how much it helped me to write down my experiences. My goal is to grow the Legion. This is how I would bring something to the table."

Contact Keith about Write Club or about purchasing his book at gabekeithbooks@gmail.com.



Little Warrior Brother is a book by Gabe Keith. It is simultaneously about his experience in the Iraq War and his uncle's experience in the Vietnam War.

An excerpt from "Little Warrior Brother," a stream of consciousness found on pages 197 and 198:

"One general told us, in a speech before our second deployment, that we needed to go over there and be capable of handing candy to kids one moment and turn to shoot an insurgent the next. He said we needed to win hearts and minds. But we didn't have a degree in psychology. We were kids. That speech wasn't for us. It was for his friends and the American public. That speech was the same reason they sent us to Iraq, the same reason they said the Towers were attacked, and the same reason they do anything they feel needs to be done. It's because we can't handle the truth. They weren't conditioning us for combat. They were conditioning the American people. I have no idea what the general even meant. Do you think he ever had to operate in a combat zone under that kind of pressure? I doubt it. The world believed he lived in was a lie. He was making everyone back here believe that lie. No one has those standards for themselves. But now they all treat us like we're somehow different. We slip off their consciousness, like when you watch a movie that's so pathetic you can't remember how it ends. Their thoughts are BS."

"It's war that's BS. We go over there to kill MFers. Hearts and minds, my ass. It's going to get easier, Gabe. There is a light at the end of a tunnel, there really is. You're not losing your mind. Don't let these civilians get to you. They're idiots, just immature and idealistic. Let them talk. I know it bothers you because they believe their opinions are truth and because rationalizations can translate into actions even though you and I know they're just empty words. Then again, it's OK. They're not your problem."



Gabe Keith, center, stands for a photo with two of his Marine buddies in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Listening Post



Becky Lassila Photography

Elk River American Legion Post 112 provided the colors for the opening ceremonies of the rivalry football game Oct. 6 between Elk River and Rogers.



Albert Lea Post 56 dedicated a bench in front of the post home to Army & Air Force veteran Ruth Perry, the 2019 Minnesota Woman Veteran of the Year who served in World War II and for 20 more years after. She was a tireless volunteer for her post. In back left to right are Judi Olson, Roxann Linthicum, Sandy Maiden, Deanna Luedtke and Barbara Peterson. Seated are Pat Johannsen and Julie Hamson.



Pictured are four of six cadets at Cretin-Derham Hall who received American Legion awards last spring.



Dent Post 148 had its annual flag retirement ceremony at St. Henry's Area School in Perham. Students from St. Henry's and St. Paul attended.



Joyce Lacey of Ashby volunteered Aug. 29 for Military Appreciation Day at the Minnesota State Fair. With her was ret. Capt. Mark Stange.



Presented at New London-Spicer High School by New London Post 537 with Auxiliary and Sons, Spicer Post 545 with Auxiliary and Sons, Willmar VFW Post 1639 were U.S. military branch flags and U.S. military war flags. This was a combined service organization honor guard for the Fallen Heroes commemoration event.



The 3rd District Family Gathering was 11 a.m. to noon Sept. 23 at Brownton Post 143.

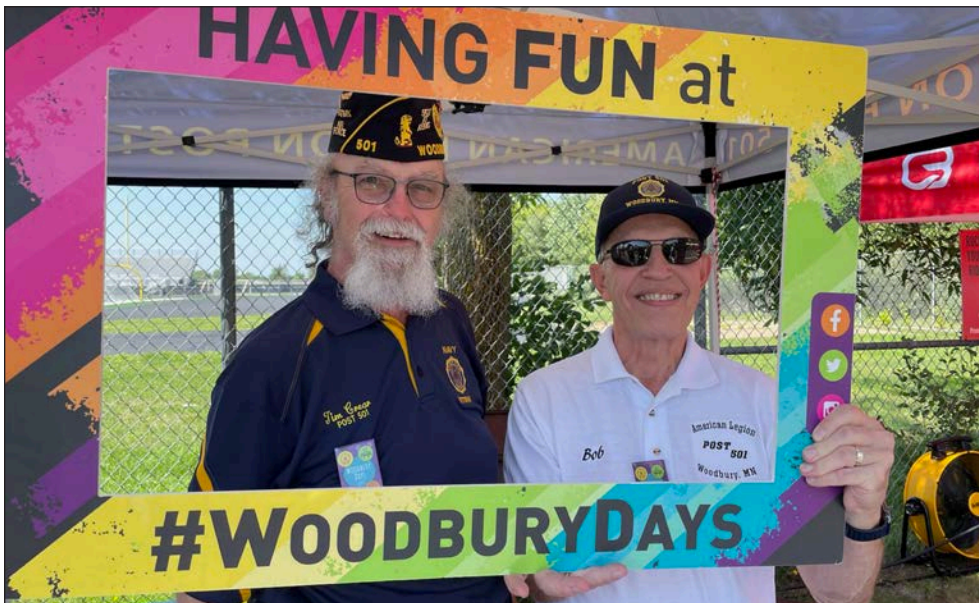


Fifth District Commander Dick Ward, Minneapolis Veterans Home Post 581 Commander Steven Schultz and Deputy Commissioner for Healthcare Eric Meitteunen stand for a photo after the Post 581 meeting. Meitteunen brought greetings to the members and talked about plans for the homes and funds allotted for improvements.

Listening Post



Prior Lake Post 447 participates in the Mount Pleasant Street Art Walk on Sept. 23. All items are handmade. Proceeds benefit veterans in need of assistance.



Woodbury Post 501 sponsored a booth at Woodbury Days in August.



St. Francis Post 622 Sergeant-at-Arms Ev Mattison presents Principal Ryan Johnson of the St. Francis Elementary School with a \$1,000 check to help the teachers with extra expenses.



Lou Michaels

Detachment of Minnesota Chaplain Stu Sonnee, Detachment Commander John Weiss and SAL National Vice Commander Robert Bristo enjoy the Camporee at Legionville.



Veterans of Woodbury Post 501 also rode in the Woodbury Days Parade.



Sixth District Chaplain Veronica Fernlund had a successful deer hunt at Legionville.



Sixth District Commander Anthony Koop had a successful deer hunt at Legionville.

6th District ruled the day during annual John Zgoda Deer Hunt

By Anthony Koop
6th District Commander

LEGIONVILLE — One shot. One kill. As an Army combat medic, my mindset was more on saving lives than the other side, but I did pick up some pretty good rifle skills that come in very useful in deer hunting!

The Sons of The American Legion John Zgoda Memorial Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt — often shortened to Zgoda Deer Hunt — at Legionville, which is on 500-plus acres on North Long Lake, near Brainerd, was Oct 5-8 where the BIG 6th DISTRICT represented!

The hunt is named after past Detachment of Minnesota Commander John Zgoda, who envisioned the hunt for our disabled veterans in our state. Working with The American Legion, he sought out and finally got permissions needed to do this hunt. This first hunt was held in 2007 and four disabled veterans participated. They now have up to six participants every year.

The hunt is held in early October on the grounds of Legionville Educational Center. There is an application process and requirements include being a disabled veteran and a member of The American Legion. It is hosted by the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Minnesota and run by volunteers from the American Legion Family who come together to provide a fun, safe, and unique experience for our hunters.

This is an event of camaraderie! Hunters chosen this year were Veronica Fernlund, Ross LaCourt, Betty Jass, Mark Kappings and me. Upon getting there, from sighting in the rifles and getting a tour of beautiful property, to the fantastic meals, to being around the campfire, it is a time spent being at the amazing 500-plus acres of Legionville with other American Legion members that you call friends.

I was able to bag a deer on Day 1, and 6th District Historian Veronica Fernlund was the other hunter of five who was successful. We all received a complimentary blaze orange T-shirt and cap with the John Zgoda Deer Hunt logo. It was a great time with all the hunters, with so many great people helping the hunters.

A very special thanks and gratitude are expressed to all the volunteers: Tom Lage, Todd Schwanke, Ted Berg, Laura Blue, Jim Kellogg, Dave Valcan, Glen Neville, Dave Arend, Dave Builderback, Steve Builderback, Duane Anderson, Matt Berens, Adam Felton and Gary Richardson!

The hunt is a dedicated fund under the Minnesota American Legion Foundation, a 501c3 nonprofit. Donations can be made out to "Minnesota American Legion Foundation" and write "Fund 54" in the memo line. Checks can be mailed to MN SAL John Zgoda Memorial Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt, 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A., St. Paul, MN 55155-2000.



Zgoda Deer Hunt participants and volunteers hang out by a fire one night.

District commanders

1st District Mark Maloney



Hello from the 1st District. It is hard to believe it is November already. I have had the pleasure of participating in various events this month and was glad to witness four Legion members receive their 10-year membership pins. Also, two received their 70-year membership pins. It is great that we keep up with traditions and recognition of our long-term members.

made." As American Legion members, we are trying to make veterans feel proud for giving the greatest gift they could. Freedom, the right to live where we want and the right to vote for our representatives.

When they are asked how they stayed in the organization for so long, they say, "It's a veteran's honor and duty. We are here to help the next generations, so that people do not forget the great job and sacrifices we

We need to remember what our mission is. We are volunteers. We are here to help one another, our family members and the community. Commit yourself to helping others, even if it seems minimal, every little bit helps.

2nd District James Olson



Greetings! I would like to begin by wishing all veterans a very happy (and hopefully warm) Veterans Day! As we celebrate all veterans and our service on Nov. 11, please take some time during your day to check in on our fellow veterans who may not be able to make it out to the various celebrations in the 2nd District. Stop by your local nursing homes and spend some time with those veterans who may not otherwise have visitors on this special holiday. Make phone calls to Legionnaires and veterans in your community who you have not heard from in a while.

with those Legionnaires who have not renewed for 2024 and speak with other veterans who have not ever joined The American Legion or who have let their membership lapse for whatever reason. There is a place for every veteran in The American Legion!

In short, conduct Buddy Checks! The 2nd District is doing well membership-wise, but we can always do better. Get in touch

By the time you are reading this, harvest should be pretty well over. Now is the time to harvest those memberships and do everything we can to get the 2nd District to 100 percent membership for 2024! If there is anything I can do to help your post out, please call or text me at 507-525-2957 or email me at olson457@gmail.com.

3rd District Rod Reifsteck



In reflecting on this last month, I feel honored to be included in so many events as your commander. In keeping up with the past timelines of events including the National Committee at Camp Ripley in which the 10 districts met for the purpose of showing support for first responders by acknowledging, showing recognition and honor.

Post Highlights: North Mankato Post 518 honored a Veteran of the Month in a patriotic ceremony. Pine Island Post 184 spoke with the Chamber of Commerce about what the Legion does and stands for. Elysian Post 311 presented the Commander's Project in Legionville with the goal of \$40,000 and received a large donation I appreciate. Apple Valley Post 1776 visited and met the commander and building manager for upcoming events. Waseca Post 228 took a walking tour of the building and met with the membership director and joined them for a liver dinner with the fixings. I visited Le Center Post 108 several times and supported their monthly steak fry.

Legionville included visiting with most participants who gathered over Camporee and the Harvest Rally. In addition, I was involved with the Finance Committee to the Legionville Commander's Project along with getting replacements for a few district officers.

I am looking forward to some great events such as Veterans Day activities on Nov. 11 around the district. I encourage you all to attend and be visible to the posts and units. On Nov. 17,

I feel my team of officers are finally doing their jobs, and I am proud of them. Then the Auxiliary sponsored our family gathering, which provided camaraderie and lunch along with guest speaker, Bill Arndt, who shared facts and riveting stories about the cemeteries in Europe honoring our veterans. I look forward to the Fall Conference, and the excitement of getting together with our strong leadership.

New Prague Unit 45 is sponsoring "A Taste of New Prague."

I attended last year and found the event inspiring. As I close this letter, I want to recognize all the efforts of the Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, the Legion Riders and all the

time invested in supporting all our Legionnaires and posts. We appreciate everyone's excitement about our membership goals. Remember to "Be the One." You really do make a difference.

4th District Teresa Ash



Well, the month of October was filled with excitement. The Children & Youth pillar includes taking children trick-or-treating. We had a great Ramsey County Central Committee. (Outsiders, this is our official title for the equivalent to a 4th District e-board. The distinct name goes back to its founding in 1919. We tend to call it the RCCC for short.)

will celebrate all holidays between Thanksgiving Day and New Year's Day. The "cost" of the meal is an unopened gift for an underprivileged child. We will hold our next RCCC meeting somewhere during the event. There will be the annual Veterans Day Walk hosted by St. Paul Post 8. See the listing on Page 3 for details.

Minnesota Department Veteran Service Officer Ray Kane and Assistant Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo came to the district and spoke. They provided a lot of great information to our members and answered a lot of questions from them.

There are many, many things happening around Veterans Day. Be sure to thank a veteran as you look in the mirror and smile and be very proud of yourself. December RCCC will be held by Zoom. It is a very busy time, and the weather in Minnesota is unpredictable. Keep telling the world why you are a proud member of The American Legion.

November is going to have a new event in the district. The 4th District Family leadership will host a first-ever Family Holiday event for the district on Nov. 8 at North St Paul American Legion. The leadership will provide a meal for those attending. We

5th District Dick Ward



To all my fellow veterans, thank you for your service to our beloved USA. Freedom isn't free and your commitments have created the greatest nation on earth. Remember this Veterans Day by celebrating with your post, your family and your friends.

agenda have all contributed to making the gathering "worth your while." Speakers are lining up, and we are pressing forward.

Vice Commander Andru Peters and I have been meeting with posts to pass along the word that wherever possible, the 5th District is available to support them in all areas. They have appreciated that message and our attendance at their meetings.

Membership Chairman Gary Martin tells me we made the membership target goal for the October report. Thanks to all for your continued support and the membership you transmit. Nov. 15 target is 65 percent and the Pearl Harbor rally Dec. 9. Target is 75 percent. Keep 'em coming!

November is the month to vote. They say the elections closest to your home have the most impact on your life. Be it school board, city council, mayor or local issues, make certain your voice is heard. Get out and vote!

Minneapolis Wold-Chamberlain Post 99 hosts Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435's Omelet Breakfast on the second Sunday and Post 99 Pancake Breakfast on the fourth Sunday. Remember to support your local posts! "To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

Attendance was up at our last 5th District meeting. Informative speakers and an updated

6th District Anthony Koop



Greetings and salutations from the Big 6th!

ment Fall Conference.

Another fantastic month has passed, and 6th District has moved into No. 1 in membership in the department! I have been busy attending membership dinners of Richmond, Nisswa, Ironton and Brainerd. I attended the SAL John Zgoda Memorial Deer Hunt, Minnesota Legion College, 6th District Executive Committee meeting, Legionville Board of Directors meeting and Depart-

ment Fall Conference. November is here, which means Election Day, Veterans Day and Thanksgiving Day! Take the time to be thankful and enjoy spending time with your own family and doing your own self-care. This will help you feel refreshed to showcase all the great things your American Legion Family Members are

doing at your local levels.

Membership is going strong. Let's keep it up! Continue reaching out and talking to our fellow veterans. This is a great way to not only get your memberships renewed, but also "Buddy Check" and "Be the One."

schools now and year round about the Oratorical Speech Contest, Minnesota Boys State, Minnesota Girls State, American Legion Baseball and Fastpitch Softball.

You never know when your phone call might make the difference in someone's life! Our Legion programs are also in full swing, as they should be worked on year-round. To ensure your programs are successful, connect to your

Talk to your communities about Veteran Employer of the Year, Law Enforcement of the Year, and Firefighter of the Year, among the many other programs and awards that our Four Pillars support!

9th District Steve NaSalle



Hello, Roaring 9th Legion Family!

the ultimate sacrifice in our country's freedoms. Also, please continue your buddy checks. Remember your voice can go a long way to those who are struggling.

We are now beginning our fourth month into our 2023-2024 fiscal year with a great start.

Communication is one of the keys to success. In addition, if you have any questions, or need assistance, please reach out to your area's vice commanders, or me. We are all here to help you succeed.

Our membership numbers for our district are meeting or exceeding goal. Please keep up the great work.

If traveling, please be extra cautious of your environment. Be safe!

Remember Nov. 15 is when our membership target must reach 65 percent or better. Because November is a very important month for our veterans, please remember to reach out to those veterans who are homebound or in a veterans home when celebrating your Veterans Day events.

November is also a time to give thanks to those who gave

Everyone has different story on joining Legion

Membership Moment



Pam Krill

When my membership was first purchased for me by Auxiliary Unit 483 in the little town of Kingston, population of 161 (I'm sure it's grown over the years), it gave me a sense of purpose. That there is no person in the community left behind, and no matter where we are in the world, we still have a family back home we can turn to in times of need.

All you need to do is coordinate.

Initially, I was hesitant and apprehensive to renew because no one reached out or welcomed me when I moved and transferred my membership, until one day, I found my extended family with Lee C. Prentice Post 36 in Fairmont.

Each of us are just one spoke in the wheel when it comes to membership, and we are all spokes that keep that wheel moving. You may not hold a position in your post, your district or even in the department, but we are all vital to membership.

So, today, as we transition into fall, I ask each one of you, to help another veteran find their purpose. To welcome them into the Legion Family and provide them with the plethora of opportunities to them and their families. Show them there is no veteran and their family who will be left behind and The American Legion Department of Minnesota has so much to offer. We are not just focused on numbers; we are focused on the person, their family and the needs of our veterans and adding to their extended family.

Whether you are a Legionnaire, an Auxiliary member, a Son of the American Legion, or a Rider, we all our purposes for belonging, for participating in the programs, for encouraging other veterans to be active and take part. Let's help connect with other veterans and help them find their purpose.

There are five vice commanders in the Department of Minnesota who are ready and willing to assist with membership rallies, revitalizations and recruitment.

If each of us recruited one new member we could put the Department of Minnesota on top at the nation. Currently, the Department of Minnesota continues to stay within the top two or three and thank you for making our great state show other Departments what we have!

Thank you everyone for all your hard work and dedication, I am honored to be part of the American Legion Family.

Pam Krill of Fairmont Post 36 is the membership director for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

Emmons dedicates Huey in Veterans Mem. Park

By Albert Lea Tribune and The Minnesota Legionnaire

EMMONS — Crews placed a decommissioned vintage Bell UH-1 Iroquois utility helicopter from the Vietnam War, also known as a Huey helicopter, into its place on Sept. 27 at the Emmons Veterans Memorial Park.

The helicopter was purchased and transported to Emmons in December. The park also includes three flagpoles with the United States, Minnesota and POW flags, silhouettes of service members on the corners of the park and a veterans memorial with names of over 400 area veterans dating back to the Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam War all the way up to Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

A dedication ceremony took place Sept. 30, with 1st District American Legion officials present.

Aside from the Huey, the park's veterans monument was unveiled to the public in May, with a crowd of supporters gathering to see. Clair "Dag" Dagestad, member of Emmons Post 317 and president of the Emmons Veterans Memorial Committee, thanked community members for their support of the project, which has been underway since 2018.

He thanked other committee members: Larry Rasmusson, Paul Henschel, Mark Heggstad and Jerry Thompson. Thompson is the commander of Post 317. Rasmusson and Henschel are members. Haggstad is the adjutant of Squadron 317.

The monument was unveiled by Purple Heart recipients Al Larson and Gary Honsey, both Post 317 members.



Lory Groe via Albert Lea Tribune

A Huey helicopter is placed at the Emmons Veterans Memorial Park Sept. 27 ahead of a dedication ceremony on Sept. 30.



Sunshine Maloney

The helicopter is lit up by the supermoon of Sept. 29.

Department of Minn. Commander's 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.

Goal: \$100,000

Shout out to posts 545, 165, 318, 47, 48, 39, 172, 165, 399, 12, 46, 60, 24, 27, 102, 143, 555, 136, 147, 255, 62 and 550.

Thanks also go to the 3rd District and a handful of individual donors.

Present: 18% at \$17,590



Date of graphic: Oct. 19

Come to the convention for charities

ST. CLOUD — Allied Charities of Minnesota's 32nd annual convention takes place at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud Nov. 16-17.

Early bird registration is over, but registration remains open.

There will be over 30 classes on charitable gambling.

Importantly, there will be a townhall meeting on electronic pulltabs from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 16.

ACM has held e-tab townhall meetings around Minnesota since last spring, when the state Legislature passed a law to make e-tabs less entertaining, claiming they were in conflict with tribal casino monopoly on slot machines because of the "open all" button. Lawmakers also provided a very slight amount of tax relief. Minnesota remains the state with the highest taxes on charitable gambling.

The Minnesota American Legion stands firmly opposed to scaling back e-tabs.

The funding from e-tabs helps struggling veterans in many ways, said Department Legislative Chairwoman Kristy Janigo. Losing the funding hurts the ability of veteran service officers with counties and with the Legion and VFW to help them.

"Harming veterans is a non-starter for me," Janigo said. "Minnesota has to fix this."

There is a big difference between how slot machines operate and electronic pulltabs. Slot machines have variable prize structures, jackpots and unlimited bets. E-tabs never have. E-tabs in Minnesota, even before the 2023 changes in law, already were more restrictive than other states.

E-tabs have helped charities statewide raise additional funds as the price of everything goes up.

Department Commander



At the State Capitol last spring, Randy Bastyr, who was a department vice commander at the time, holds a sign that says, "This Bill Hurts Charities." On the left is then-VFW State Jr. Vice Commander Dave Staehlin and on the right is Joe Jansen of St. Paul Christie DeParcq Post 406.



Members of the Spring Lake Park Lions were at the Capitol last spring trying to convince lawmakers to not scale back e-tabs. Lawmakers said they had never heard so much feedback on one single issue. E-tabs remains a hot topic going into the 2024 legislative session.

Paul Hassing noted that it costs more for food shelves to purchase food, so e-tabs have helped offset the inflation. Charities who use to donate \$2,000 to a food shelf now must give \$3,000 to provide the same level of charity, he said.

Many others involved in the debate have pointed out how tribes can give campaign donations to politicians, but the charities are barred from doing so. That's why it passed with support from only one party.

The American Legion Department of Minnesota, Allied Charities of Minnesota, Protect

Our Charities and others are calling on lawmakers this session to provide meaningful tax relief, to bring back bonus games and to bring back free plays. They are willing to compromise by passing up on the matter of the "open all" button.

Friday, Nov. 17, has additional workshops, a monthly meeting of the Minnesota Gambling Control Board and an annual meeting of Allied Charities of Minnesota.

The Friday evening banquet features entertainment by Minnesota-based comedian C. Willi Myles.



Ride for the Stones raises \$16,000

By Pamela French

BAGLEY — Navy Veteran Jeff Schermerhorn from Bagley was named "Hometown Hero" for his vision and continued commitment to see that veterans buried in Clearwater County cemeteries get an engraved stone paver placed at the Clearwater County Veterans Memorial in Bagley.

On Sept. 2, the "Ride for the Stones" celebrated 10 years. The ride broke all records; 126 bikes and 40 riders, "many" non-riders and a huge number of raffle items and food, raising over \$16,000 to enable the purchased nearly 80 pavers.

Recipients of a paver are chosen at random in a lottery type system. Donations for the raffle and bike riders came from all over



Jeff Schermerhorn with a cake made to honor him.

Minnesota and from other states, even a bike rider from Texas. This makes \$70,000 raised in 10 years. All food and raffle items were donated, meaning 100 percent of all money raised went toward the stones.

"Saturday was the greatest day of my life," Schermerhorn said. "I want to say a heartfelt thank you to each and everyone who participated in the 10th annual Ride for the Stones Motorcycle Rally. I've posted many thank-yous, tributes and personalized stories about individuals who have assisted or donated to the ride. Yet, I know that I've probably missed someone. I worked hard to thank each and every one of you personally, as well as visit with you. If you are someone I missed I want to say thank you with all my heart."



Quilts of Valor and the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 56 in Albert Lea gave quilts on Sept. 22 to veterans Robert Jacobson (Army), LaVerne Strand (Navy), Duane Troe (Navy), David Christianson (Air Force) and Earl Nielson (Army). The ceremony took place at Albert Lea American Legion Post 56.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 24 Vol. 4

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

Dept. HQ: Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155 651-224-7634 October 2023

New challenges pop up every month

November is Past Presidents Parley Month and the American Legion Auxiliary's 104th birthday. Record your activities with photos and a narrative. How are you honoring the past presidents in your unit? What are you doing for the Auxiliary Birthday?

Remember *not* to write on the page with the photos. When you are emailing them to your district chairmen, send either actual pictures with a caption or pictures need to be large and JPG files.

Also, no writing on the picture page that is emailed. The caption should be on a separate page (such as a Microsoft Word file or in the body of the email itself).

Please know that shrinking photo sizes for email only makes them unprintable. Keep them large and perhaps send one or two images with captions per email message. You always can send a second or third email message if you have more photos to provide. Also, never send all your photos. Just select your best ones.

Adopt a student to help with the computer stuff if you don't have anyone around to help. Then be sure to teach them about the American Legion Auxiliary: Who we are, what we do and why we matter! You just might eventually find

President's Column

Sharon Cross



their family loves our mission and just maybe you will grow your membership. Our passion for what we do shines brightly when we speak about our why. Participating in our mission is a wonderful way to honor the veteran in their family.

Ask and ye shall receive. Department Poppy Chairman Marsha Bible has had some response to her request for veterans to make poppies from her article in the Legionnaire last month. Let's get the word out and get some more veterans onboard.

Let us put Minnesota in the spotlight and keep our poppies veteran made. Contact the Department Office for more information. Remember also that your unit poppy orders are due by Nov. 28. Thank you to those that have expressed an interest in helping the Auxiliary with the need for poppy makers.

We could always use more veterans so ask those that are in our veteran homes and hospitals too!

I know the plan is in the works to have hands on instruction for our veterans that want to earn a little extra in their spare time. I am certain we can also arrange

for auxiliary volunteers to show our hospitalized veterans that they can do this too. Each month some new challenge or question presents itself, and I need to say thank you to those Auxiliary members who have been helping in different areas of our state with some of our challenges. They are deeply knowledgeable and do wonderful things with our units. I am looking forward to year end reporting to hear everything that is going on around our state.

Keep your Juniors and SAL active in your unit and post functions. They are our future. Does your unit need help to revitalize your membership? If we do not know, we can't help. Contact your district president and *just ask*. We are here for you.

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 the Hearts of Veterans."

Units encouraged to form parleys

By Donna Barbknecht
Past President Parley Chairman

Units are encouraged to establish a Past Presidents Parley. (Like Veterans Day or Twins fans, is no apostrophe in the name.) This may be done on the district level also.

The parley is a group of past unit, district or department presidents. These parleys mentor and educate current or new members and officers, or members seeking offices. They help the meetings move toward a positive conclusion. They welcome new members, also.

Past Presidents Parley has an annual health care scholarship for the medical field. There are so many different avenues the medical field entails these days, so please review what all this scholarship may include as far

as medical occupations. Rules and regulations for 2023-2024 as well as applications will be available on the department website.

Again, this year the Past Presidents Parley program will offer the Kienholz Walker Plaque Department Award. Award criteria is as follows: The unit submitting the best narrative on the activities the unit's Past President Parley has done. These PPPs must be in existence prior to 2023. Award guidelines: Entry must be type-written in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words. The entry may include no more than five pictures and news articles. Again, the parley must be in existence prior to 2023.

This year a new initiative is in place for units to organize a Past Presidents Parley. I have challenged the 10 district presidents

to organize five new Past Presidents Parleys in their districts. A \$50 gift card will be awarded at the Department Convention to the first district president to accomplish that.

Criteria for this is:
1. Phone number of the president of that unit with a new PPP must be provided to me so I can call and verify it is a new parley.

2. The new PPP must organize a clothing drive, a food drive or a school supply drive before the Department Convention. Pictures and results should be shared with me.

Please help your district president with this challenge. Please check the PPP page in the Unit Guidebook for tips on organizing these fun and useful organizations. Contribute to the PPP for the annual health care scholarship, also.

Department of Corrections

There was an inadvertent omission in the October issue of The Auxiliary Bulletin. Waite Park Unit 428's Marsha Bible is the 2023-2024 Northwestern Division Poppy Chairman.

HAPPY VETERANS DAY

"OUR DEBT TO THE HEROIC MEN AND VALIANT WOMEN IN THE SERVICE OF OUR COUNTRY CAN NEVER BE REPAID. THEY HAVE EARNED OUR UNDYING GRATITUDE."

— PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN

NORTH TO ALASKA



Department members attend the American Legion Auxiliary National President's Homecoming in Alaska hosted by Fairbanks Unit 57. From left are Sandy Wersal, Mary Kuperus, Tamara Opland, National President Lisa Williamson, Jean Walker, Department President Sharon Cross, Cindy Goepferd and Norma Tramm. They dressed in Mardi Gras costumes as part of the gathering.

MEMBERSHIP TOUR



Members of the 10th District Leadership Team gather at Pine City Post 51 with members from units in Bruno, Pine City and Sandstone in Pine County. It was the first stop of the 10th District Membership Tour.

WELCOME HOME



Since January 2019, North St. Paul Unit 39 has assembled Welcome Home Bins for Veterans who have overcome homelessness through the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. In four years, 350 bins have been donated. They contain sheets, pillows, blankets, towels, person care items, laundry supplies, kitchen supplies and items needed when setting up a home. Each bin costs \$180 to \$225 depending on the needs. Unit 39 has three or four fundraisers a year to pay for the bins. By August 2023, the supply was depleted, and the unit reached out for help from Post 39. Legionnaire Joe Vogel contacted the City & County Credit Union, which came through with a gift of \$24,000 to Unit 39 so it could continue the Bins for Veterans. On Oct. 9, Unit 39 and credit union staff put together 30 bins for MACV.



Endorsement

Tolzmann backed for Alternate NEC

Fred K. Werner American Legion Auxiliary Unit 287 in Minnesota Lake proudly endorses Raleen Tolzmann for the office of Alternate National Executive Committeeman for the Department of Minnesota for the 2024-2026 years. Tolzmann is eligible through her husband, Curtis Tolzmann, a veteran of the Vietnam era and past Post 287 commander.

Curt and Raleen have two daughters (Paula and Ramona) and one son (Adam), five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Raleen and Curt live at Lake Jefferson near Cleveland. They attend St. Paul's Lutheran Church on German Lake. Raleen has served in the following areas:

She has been a member of Unit 287 for 30 years. She has served as president five times and has served on almost all of the unit chairmanships. Faribault County Council Auxiliary president several times. She currently is the unit president.

At the district level, was

president in 2003-2004, 1st vice and 2nd vice president, two years on the executive board and served on the following committees: Membership, Americanism, Finance, Leadership, Public Relations, Poppy, Community Service, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, chaplain, Parliamentarian, Resolutions and By-Laws, Past President Parley, Girls State and secretary/treasurer, District Color Guard and Page Department Conventions. She is currently serving as the district secretary/treasurer.

She served as Department of Minnesota president 2012-2013, department 1st vice president, department 2nd vice president, legislative chairman, membership chairman, Americanism chairman, Girls State Committee, Girls State staff, Junior Activities chairman, Children & Youth,



Raleen Tolzmann

National Security, Musical Extravaganza, sergeant-at-arms, Credentials Committee, National Security chairman, Past President Parley and Leadership. Tolzmann is currently the National Executive Committee person for Minnesota. At the national level, she has been NEC, Alternate

NEC, national community service chairman (2018-2019), vice chairman of public relations, the following committee chairman in the Northwestern Division-Membership, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Junior Activities (twice), National Security Northwestern Division Auxiliary Emergency Fund chairperson. Tolzmann is the Northwestern Division Children & Youth chairman for 2023-2024. She has always been involved in her community and church along with the American Legion Auxiliary.

ALA Department hires new treasurer



Shannon Brown

Shannon Brown is the new treasurer for the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota. She began Oct. 11. Her email is shannon@mnala.org.

She is a member at-large. She is eligible through her grandfather, Hjalmer Fredrickson, who served during World War II.

Brown has two sons, one daughter and two granddaughters: She has a loving boyfriend, John Johnson. Her family has been very supportive about her new adventure, and she couldn't do it without them.

She's a country girl at heart, born and raised in McGregor. She has 25-plus years of accounting experience and is looking forward to applying her knowledge to the greater good. She loves to ride her Harley and spend tons of time with her service dog, Harli.

You may even see Harli with Brown from time to time. Don't be

afraid to say hello. Harli and Brown have found an apartment in Plymouth and on the weekends and holidays they will travel to their home up north in Isle to spend time with friends and family.

"I am very excited about this opportunity and couldn't think of a better way to finish my career than here at the Auxiliary," she said.

Radil to retire

Longtime Department Treasurer Cathy Radil announced her intention to retire earlier this year. With the hiring of Shannon Brown, Radil will retire Dec. 1.

She has been an asset to the department during her time in the office. She plans to spend time with her family, especially her grandkids. Please, take a moment to thank Radil for all she has done for the Department of Minnesota.



Cathy Radil

Cruising the Sea for Members!

As of Oct. 17

DISTRICT	# of Units	Goal	Period Gain	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year	Difference from Last Year
One	47	3,762	364	1,124	29.88%	1,287	163
Two	71	3,890	286	1,086	27.92%	1,028	-58
Three	46	3,882	228	1,006	25.91%	1,127	121
Four	7	579	91	197	34.02%	196	-1
Five	7	522	3	55	10.54%	177	122
Six	61	5,031	553	1,669	33.17%	1,633	-36
Seven	53	2,955	167	635	21.49%	604	-31
Eight	19	1,185	243	445	37.55%	452	7
Nine	46	3,348	375	902	26.94%	1,205	303
Ten	42	3,812	378	1,082	28.38%	987	-95
1982 Dept	1	404	61	164	40.59%	146	-18
District Totals:	400	29,370	2,749	8,365	28.48%	8,842	477

Group 1 (Even)	200	14,497	1,551	4,479	30.90%	4,296	-183
Robin Dorf							
Group 2 (Odd)	199	14,469	1,137	3,722	25.72%	4,400	678
Judy Ackerman							

RANKINGS

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
37.55%	34.02%	33.17%	29.88%	28.38%	27.92%	26.94%	25.91%	21.49%	10.54%
District #8	District #4	District #6	District #1	District #10	District #2	District #9	District #3	District #7	District #5



Swanville Unit 313 toured and gave a donation to the St. Cloud Stand Down on Oct. 9. The facility offers many resources for veterans. Every veteran is welcome at the Stand Down. From left are Joyce Swanson, Arlene Van Heel, Lucy Gessell, Francis Palm, Judy Hagstrom, Stand Down President Bob Behrens, Carol Duke, Launette Tisdale, Evelyn Budde and Patti Gunderson.



Auxiliary members from the 3rd District Family Gathering hold up Bibles for 3rd District President Deanna Meyer's Project. From left are Kelly Klaus, Rosemary Niesen, Edna Thayer, Deanna Meyer Dist Pres, Diane Mackenthun, Karla Otterness and Mary Jo York.



Rick Cross

Department President Sharon Cross, Department Commander Paul Hassing visited Brainerd Post 255 for the Post 255 Membership Dinner on Oct. 17. From left are Cross, Hassing, Bemidji Post 255 1st Vice Commander DeWayne Collins, Unit 255 President Sharon Berg, Post 255 Commander Rick Wiersgalla, 6th District Commander Anthony Koop and 6th District President Patti Gunderson.



Rick Cross

Department Commander Paul Hassing accepts a \$500 check from Brainerd Post 255 for his Commander's Project at the program for the annual dinner.



The 5th District Past Presidents luncheon was on Sept. 23 at Olive Garden in Bloomington. From left are Bonnie Brenna, Theresa Gundlach, Ramona Nack, Mary Younkin, Gerda Goodrich, Jill Davis, Julie Martin, Cari Lamb, Deb Bayer, Cheri Wright, Becky Nelson and LoAnn Grill.



JACKPOT MOBILE E TABS

PROUD TO BE A
SUPPORTER OF



NOW PLAYING!

HOOKED UP

Walleye	Pike	Brook	Crappie	Bass	Perch	Bluegill
\$250.00	\$125.00	\$100.00	\$75.00	\$50.00	\$35.00	\$25.00

CASH \$124.00 WIN \$5.00 PLAY

Anglers in Minnesota spend 50 million dollars on bait each year.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL
DISTRIBUTOR FOR MORE INFO

@PLAYETABSMN

ARROWINTERNATIONAL.COM/MN