

## Shakopee, Fairmont win baseball, softball titles

New London, Burnsville, St. Charles, St. Michael also win

By John Sherman  
and Tim Engstrom

ST. MICHAEL — For Minnesota kids who grow up playing baseball, there is always the fantasy that you will deliver the winning hit in a championship game.

But not many kids get that chance in real life. They can only imagine what an experience like

that would be like.

On Sunday, Aug. 3, at Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Sr. State Tournament championship game at Lower Rec Field in St. Michael, fantasy became reality — not just for one Shakopee Post 2 player — but for several. With a furious rally, Shakopee erased a five-run Grand Rapids Post 60 Wolfpack lead to win the state title 13-9. It was

Shakopee's first-ever state Legion Baseball title.

Shakopee entered the top of the seventh inning with its hopes for a state championship hanging by a thread. Coach Dave Johnson's boys trailed Grand Rapids 9-8 and the first two batters of the inning were retired.

That left it up to Kyser Boran to

Continued on Page 10



Department Commander Linda Dvorak claps as Shakopee Post 2 players lift the Div. I state championship trophy above their heads at St. Michael's Lower Rec Field on a cloudy Aug. 3.

## A Dvorak is back

Convention elects  
Linda Dvorak  
4 years after  
Mark Dvorak's term

By Tim Engstrom

WILLMAR — Delegates to the 106th American Legion Department of Minnesota Convention in Willmar elected a new statewide commander on the final day, July 12.

Linda Dvorak of New Prague Post 45 in the 3rd District has been a Legionnaire since 2003. She served 27 years in the Air Force and Air National Guard. She retired from active duty in 2002 and retired from the Minnesota Air National Guard in 2019.

She announced her theme is "Back to the Basics — the Four Pillars." Her project is the Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund (Fund 85) and benches and pillars at the new Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum.

Dvorak named Joe Bares of Jordan Post 3 to be membership director. He said his theme is "Baseball."

She is married to Past Department Commander Mark Dvorak, who was the Covid commander 2019-21 and served two years instead of the standard one-year term.

It is worth noting that Mark and Linda Dvorak are the second husband and wife who have served as department commanders. They follow in Peggy and



Department Commander Linda Dvorak raises her right hand and takes an oath. Beside her is Membership Director Joe Bares. Both are from the Thundering Third District.

Carl Moon's footsteps. Denise Milton and Dennis Henkemeyer are married but weren't when in office.

Linda Dvorak has held many positions within her post and district. She was the 3rd District's Covid commander. She has served the department as Oratorical Contest chair and as chair

of the Internal Affairs Committee. She served a year as department membership director and, as part of the Training Committee, has been instrumental in helping posts understand MyLegion.org as well as implementing Minnesota Legion College at Camp Ripley.

At the national level, she serves

on the Aerospace Committee. She is a 2022 graduate of American Legion College.

Dvorak ran unopposed. There were two contested races at the convention, however.

Two past department commanders

Continued on Page 11

## Riders raise \$63,000 for vets in need

Fund 85 Run  
donors thanked

PAYNESVILLE — The Minnesota American Legion Riders kicked off their big fundraising ride on July 23 at Forest Lake Post 225 and ended it at Paynesville Post 241 on July 26.

Over the course of the ride, they visited many posts, with overnight stays in McGregor and Walker. Riders Secretary Shawn Davis said they raised \$63,000, and more donations are trickling in.

Jody Hassing, who is Fund 85 Ride chairman, said the final total will be announced at the Fall Conference.

"I want to thank each of the Legion posts we stopped at for their hospitality and donations," she said.

Fund 85 is the Minnesota American Legion Foundation's Minnesota Veterans Assistance Fund. Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo and Adjutant Mike Maxa are able to use the funds as a last resort for veterans unable to seek help through other existing sources.

## Museum work at midpoint

CAMP RIPLEY — The \$40 million Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum is at its construction midpoint. The local news media was invited on a tour July 23.

Of course, because this is the wet summer of 2025, it rained.

The 40,000-square-foot museum is slated to open in summer 2026. It sits on 30 acres along Highway 371 next to the Camp Ripley exit north of Little Falls.

Museum Executive Director Randal Dietrich said the project was motivated by three things:

- Veteran resilience. He said he hopes veterans host reunions, find

stories about themselves, their friends or their relatives.

"This will be a place where they can come together and have a sense of belonging," he said.

- Servicemember retention. He wants currently serving soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines to feel good about their service to the country.

"We want folks in the military to feel this reflects well on them and what they are doing to currently support the state and nation," Dietrich said.

- Future generations. He said he hopes young people are inspired by what they see and considering joining

Continued on Page 6

## SAL moves quickly to remove vandalism from headstones

By Andy Proffett  
legion.org

FOREST LAKE — Members of Squadron 225 in Forest Lake worked with others to remove spray-painted vulgarities from veterans' headstones.

Over the Fourth of July weekend, approximately a dozen headstones in Scandinavian Cemetery in Forest Lake were defaced with vulgarities in black spray paint.

But the members of Sons of The American Legion Squadron 225 in Forest Lake moved quickly to deal

with the graffiti.

Squadron Adjutant Jeff Larson; Squadron First Vice Commander Bill Murphy; a friend, Tom Larson; and Blake Johnson, who owns a local auto detailing business; headed to the cemetery to try to clean off the spray paint.

"Scandinavian Cemetery is one of the cemeteries we've been to and have done some headstone cleaning for veterans and their wives," Jeff Larson said. Over the past few years, the squadron — using D/2 headstone cleaner — has restored some 80 headstones at a time.

Continued on Page 9



# What's happening?

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**Wounded veteran John Kriesel speaks to coaches, players and parents at the 2022 Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I State Tournament Banquet at Brackett's Crossing Country Club in Lakeville. That's WCCO Sports Director Mike Max on right.**

## Motivational speaker John Kriesel to speak at Fall Conference

ST. CLOUD — The featured speaker for the Minnesota American Legion Fall Conference will be St. Paul Park Post 98 member and motivational speaker John Kriesel.

The 2025 Minnesota American Legion Fall Conference takes place at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud Friday, Oct. 24, to Saturday, Oct. 25, with some activities beforehand on Thursday, Oct. 23.

In December 2006, the blast from a 200-pound improvised explosive device killed two of Kriesel's best friends. He lost both of his legs and suffered many broken bones and internal injuries. He wasn't supposed to survive, and he died three times on the operating table. He spent nine months at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Yet he is alive today. Kriesel is director of veteran services for Anoka County, a part-time radio personality and an award-winning author.

Come to the Fall Conference and hear Kriesel share his message of hope and how to overcome life's obstacles. He speaks at 3 p.m. Friday, Oct. 24.

To register, use the form printed on this page or visit [mnlegion.org/fall-conference/](http://mnlegion.org/fall-conference/). The Department of Minnesota has dropped Eventbrite and now uses Zeffy, which does not charge our members processing fees.

One of the activities on Thursday, Oct. 23, will be a service project. Commander Linda Dvorak, President Robin Dorf, SAL Commander Jeremy Copher, ALR Director Duane Mabon and ALA Jr. President Anastasia Donnelly are asking attendees from across the Legion Family to bring the following items for the St. Cloud Stand Down:

- Men's underwear (boxers or briefs)
- Women's underwear
- Men's socks — much needed they distributed over 3,000 last year.
- Women's socks
- Men's thermal wear
- Men's winter jackets
- Women's winter jackets
- Men's winter hats, scarves, and gloves
- Women's winter hats, scarves, and gloves
- Full-size toiletries including

body wash, deodorants, razors, lotions, brushes/combs, tampons and sanitary pads (light/medium)

"Let's fill the room for our veterans," Dvorak said.

Another service project is the Fall Blood Drive. There are 38 openings, and Blood Chairman Terry Larson needs them filled.

The Fall Blood Drive is noon to 5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 23, at the Kelly Inn's State Room. Sign up to donate blood by going to [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) and enter "Legion Conference" or ZIP code 56301.

"Embrace our community and make a lasting impression on others with our can-do attitude blood drive," Larson said.

The Gambling Control Board will conduct a gambling seminar at 2 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 23.

The recipients of the Outstanding Enlisted Awards will be at 10:30 a.m. Friday, Oct. 24. Adam Walsh from the Columbia University Lighthouse Project speaks at 9:25 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 25, about prevention of suicide.

Visit [mnlegion.org/fall-conference/](http://mnlegion.org/fall-conference/) to see the full schedule. Meal tickets must be purchased in advance. It's best to purchase them when registering. People who don't purchase meal tickets still can find food at local restaurants.

## Romp is a rally

BRAINERD — The American Legion Riders have re-branded their annual Romp as the Romp & Rally.

It takes place at Legionville Education Center Thursday, Sept. 11, to Sunday, Sept. 14.

There will be food, fun, bag-toss tournament and other activities. The Riders will install officers, too.

A flier says it is \$75 per person, \$125 for a family or \$10 for Saturday only.

## Who has the best ribs?

ELK RIVER — Legion Social's Jennifer Cole is heading up the second annual MN American Legions Rib Cook-Off.

It is Saturday, Oct. 4, at Elk River Post 112, 525 Railroad



**MINNESOTA  
AMERICAN LEGION  
FAMILY  
FALL  
CONFERENCE**

## 2025 Fall Conference Official Registration

### Mail to:

Minnesota American Legion Convention Corp.  
P.O. Box 166  
Princeton, MN 55371

### Registration sliding fee:

Registration received via mail by Oct. 14: \$20  
Registration online: \$20 + possible fees  
Registration after Oct. 14 or at the door: \$30

Only the pre-registered will receive a booklet.

Registration fees are for each person attending, except for Junior SAL and Junior Auxiliary members. Please copy and send a separate form for each person attending. Everyone must pay the registration fee.

Checks only by mail; bank cards are accepted online. Please indicate "Fall Conference" on the memo line. Please make checks payable to:

**Minnesota American Legion Convention Corp.**

### Conference dates:

Oct. 24-25, 2024

Various committees meet Oct. 23.

### Contact the hotel directly for your reservations:

#### Headquarters hotel:

Best Western Plus Kelly Inn, St. Cloud  
320-253-0606

#### Nearby hotels:

Courtyard by Marriott, St. Cloud

320-654-1661

Grand Stay Residential Suites St. Cloud

320-251-5400

District	Post	Unit	Squadron
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**Meals:** Pre-purchased meals are available for \$15 each. The meals are breakfasts on Friday and Saturday and a lunch on Friday. Please indicate which meals you desire:

Breakfast Friday \_\_\_\_\_ Lunch Friday \_\_\_\_\_  
Breakfast Saturday \_\_\_\_\_

Drive. Posts, units, squadrons or chapters are encouraged to form teams and enter for \$150 (which covers the cost of ribs). Teams receive 10 racks of St. Louis-style ribs and turn in five bones for judging. Set up is at 7 a.m., cooking is from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This event is not a fundraiser. It is being held in the spirit of friendly competition. There will be cash prizes for first, second and third place.

Visit [legion-social.com/rib-fest](http://legion-social.com/rib-fest) for more.

## Camporee is ready for you

BRAINERD — The Camporee is bringing back the dunk tank this year.

The annual camping trip to Legionville is Sept. 3-7, with pizza on Thursday evening, a 10th District pork dinner on Friday evening and a 6th District fish fry at noon Saturday, then a 1st District steak fry on

Saturday evening.

There will be bingo, pulltabs, drive-in movies for the kids as well as games for young and old.

It is \$10 per day per person to stay Wednesday and Thursday. It is \$15 Friday and Saturday, up to \$120 family maximum. Visitors are charged \$5 a day. Ages 3 and under are free. Active military are free on Saturday.

The Camporee is a fundraiser for Legionville. Questions? Email [legionvillecamporee@gmail.com](mailto:legionvillecamporee@gmail.com).

Pay when arriving or find the Legionville Camporee Facebook page to find an online payment link.



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## 2025 MINNESOTA RETREATS

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Camp Shetek near Slayton, MN

2025 JUNE 6-8

Osprey Wilds near Sandstone, MN

2025 OCTOBER 3-5

Good Earth Village - Spring Valley, MN

2025 DECEMBER 5-7

Faith Haven Camp near Battle Lake, MN

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# Mission: Focus on the Four Pillars

I want to thank you for the opportunity to be your department commander. My theme for the year is “Back to the Basics – The Four Pillars.”

I want to emphasize the importance of going “Back to the Basics” and reiterating our commitment to these pillars that define who we are and what we stand for.

Since my election, I have had the opportunity to participate in many events. One of those events was the Division I Sr. Baseball State Tournament, which took place starting on Wednesday, July 30, with a banquet at the Medina Ballroom attended by approximately 500 baseball players, coaches, parents and volunteers.

Baseball falls under the Americanism Pillar. State Director Randy Schaub and Vice Directors Jeff “Slick” Miller and Brandon Raymo do an amazing job at making sure everything runs smoothly. Baseball holds five state tournaments. Four of them have eight teams, while the Div. I Sr. tourney has 16 teams. That’s 48 teams, each with 18 players and at least two coaches.

Each district has a director who works within their district to make this program a success, and the following Baseball Committee member were at state tournaments supervising or assisting: 1st District Director Scott McCready, 2nd District Baseball Director Vern Kitzberger, 3rd District Baseball Director Bruce Young, 4th District Director Gail Kalata, 5th District Director Michael Rothstein, 6th District Director Wes Thompson and 7th District Director Joe Dollerschell, alongside Schaub, Miller and Raymo.

Several people volunteered their time. They were Jack Strong, Brady Sweitzer, Sean Brierly, Joe Bares, Jason Storm, Warren Christopherson, James Huss, Jeff Lenz, Jon Sands, Jim Peck, John Sherman and Matt Baker. I want to give thanks to

## Commander’s Column

Linda Dvorak



Brett Christofferson, manager for the Osseo Post 172 team, for his many years of running a substate tournament. I hear he is retiring.

Communications Director Tim Engstrom is also an integral part of Minnesota American Legion Baseball, not just taking pictures. He is the secretary and handles a lot of the administrative duties.

Without these individuals, our program would not be the premier program in the nation. Minnesota does have the most Legion Baseball teams in the country!

I also need to give a shout out to Scheels of St. Cloud for being a major sponsor of our Legion Baseball program. Thank you!

I want to point out that 9th District Baseball Director Mike Arvidson is also the state director for Minnesota American Legion Fastpitch Softball. Committee members helping with that tournament of eight teams were Vice Directors Luann McMahon and David Thompson, 2nd District Director Steve Fosness, 3rd District Director Mark Doble, 6th District Director Tom Fernlund. Also helping was Veronica Fernlund.

Finally, let’s thank Past National Commander Dan Ludwig for going to the Div. II Sr. tournament and thank National Vice Commander Jim Kellogg for going to the softball tournament. Past Department Commander Carl Moon went to the Div. II Sr. tourney, also.

Another event that I attended was not a scheduled event. It falls under the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Pillar.

Clearwater American Legion Post 323 Riders had a benefit and motorcycle run supporting veterans. They had a silent and live auction and a band. I

was able to meet several groups that are non-profits helping veterans: Roger Up, (Rogerup.org) focuses on Mental Health for Veterans and First Responders; Freedom Farm(freedomfarmmn.org) partners with the unique gifts of the horse to offer healing, hope, confidence, and strength and the Veterans Resource & Enrichment Center (vrecmn.com) helps veterans in a variety of ways, advocacy, food referrals, wellness, just to name a few.

In conclusion, as we reflect on the Four Pillars of the American Legion — Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism and Children & Youth. Let us remember that these principles are the bedrock of our organization. Going “Back to the Basics” means reaffirming our dedication to these pillars, ensuring that our commitment to veterans, national security, American values, and the next generation remains unwavering.

As members of The American Legion, let us continue to stand together, shoulder to shoulder, in service to our nation. Through our collective efforts, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of veterans, contribute to a stronger and more secure America, and inspire a sense of pride and unity in our great nation. Thank you for your dedication, and may we continue to uphold the Four Pillars of The American Legion with pride and purpose.

*Linda Dvorak of New Prague Post 45 is the commander of The American Legion Department of Minnesota. Her theme is “Back to the Basics – The Four Pillars.”*

*Opinions expressed in Mail Call are that of the authors and do not reflect the opinion of The Minnesota Legionnaire or The American Legion.*

from Post 357 in Ashby. Everything Laura Wade said in the July Legionnaire about controls in charitable gambling is correct. We established an oversight committee after we had a costly violation years ago and our committee does monthly spot checks on various aspects of our charitable gambling operations. We look for accidental or intentional errors. Our random checks include various onsite and offsite operations involving pull tab games, bingo games, raffles, etc. The committee reports results to the membership each month and the committee has the full support from our command group. Although the checks are random the employees and managers know the boss is watching. And that is good.

**David Ford**  
**Gambling Committee Chair**  
**Ashby Post 357**

## Ward gun was 1st to hit target

It’s good to hear that the historic gun from the USS Ward

will have a safe and permanent home at the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum, now being constructed near Camp Ripley.

In the interest of historical accuracy, I would like to offer a correction in the story. The opening paragraph says that “The gun that fired the first American shot at an enemy in World War II is moving.”

Not quite. Early in the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, Ward was steaming on patrol at the mouth of Pearl Harbor. A periscope was reported by a minesweeper in the harbor and the Ward went to battle stations.

The first gun to be fired — the first shot of the war for the United States — was from the Ward’s No. 1 four-inch gun. It missed. Seconds later a shot from the No. 3 gun, the one that is moving from St. Paul to the new museum, hit the conning tower and sank the midget submarine, killing its two-man crew. This was still a couple of hours before Japanese carrier aircraft attacked the American fleet.

# A mother’s faith inspires chaplaincy

As your newly elected chaplain, I’m honored to be your eyes, ears and mouthpiece. It’s an honor to be able to pray for our 54,000 members, our 530 posts and 10 districts.

My Journey of Faith began in Aberdeen, S.D., as the oldest of four boys in the Presbyterian church as a young lad of 5 years old in Sunday School. Grandmother Alice Timmons was with us in the fifth pew every Sunday! Overlooking from the choir loft was my mother, Bobbi Kay Mead, nicknamed the “The Church Lady.”

After moving to Bloomington in 1969, we adjusted to our new home and became members of Hope Presbyterian Church in Richfield. My mother played the harp and sang in the choir. She sang for 35 years on Memorial Day for Post 550 and once a year she played her harp at the Fort Snelling Chapel.

She was a very large part of my faith and forever motivates my interest in being a chaplain. At the age of 35, I took the RCIA class and converted to Catholicism to join my wife, Carolyn, and our sons Nicholas and Douglas. The point here is that no matter what your beliefs or religion is the Ten Commandments pretty much sums up God’s will and testament of

## Chaplain’s Corner

Jim Mead



all living things.

In the first month as department chaplain, I attended North Branch Post 85’s Christmas in July Motorcycle Ride and the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Sr. State Tournament Banquet at Medina Ballroom, where I offered the meal prayer for 500 players, parents, coaches, volunteers and a few guests, and I participated in the 2025 Fund 85 Run.

At the Fund 85 Run Kickoff at Forest Lake Post 225, I got to present the first donation. It was \$5,000 from Bloomington Post 550. The Fund 85 Run raised \$63,000 so far. We stopped at many posts until we finished at Paynesville Post 271.

I remain chaplain for Bloomington Post 550, too, and as part of the Bloomington Honor Guard, I’ve attended six veteran funerals in the past month.

Past Chaplain Kelly Ackerman has a New Chaplain Resource Guide for all Minnesota post chaplains that will appear on the Minnesota American Legion website before the Fall Conference in St. Cloud Oct. 24-25.

In closing I’m offering a

prayer for my fellow chaplains, all Legionnaires, Legion Auxiliary members, SAL members and family and friends:

“Almighty Lord of all earth, look down on us as we ask and pray and thank you each in our own way. Give us strength to honor You. Let our knowledge of You be our guide to living and dying with the faith, hope and love You bestowed upon us. As chaplains, teach us to be tolerant and understanding of each other, knowing that we can get to the kingdom of heaven on the same highway. Bless our families and communities with the faith and understanding we all need to continue on the road of life until we return to Your home. Guide us through this day and all days that You grant us to do your work, Amen.”

*Jim Mead of Bloomington Post 550 is the chaplain for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.*

Minnesota’s connection with the USS Ward was that it was manned almost entirely by a St. Paul Naval Reserve unit.

The gun that has resided for many years at the Capitol isn’t the first gun to be fired in the war. It was the first gun that hit something. The Ward was later overhauled and someone had the foresight to save the No. 3 gun. The No. 1 gun, however, was scrapped and probably melted down for the war effort.

Yes, it’s a minor correction, but it’s probably a good thing to keep our history straight.

**Al Zdon**  
**Hibbing Post 222**

## Will disability be affected?

The “talk” about the VA reducing disability compensation based on your income should be very concerning to The American Legion.

A veteran’s disability will probably last a lot longer than the amount of income they are making when this may go into effect.

I’m not so sure the disability income will go back up if the veteran is no longer making additional income.

I would think every American Legion organization — as well as every VFW could join forces and make a strong voice that would get attention if and when this may go through.

Anyone given any of this some thought?

Thanks for listening,

**Chuck Pappas**  
**USMC veteran**  
**Rochester**

*Editor’s Note: The American*

*Legion’s D.C. Bureau is well-respected in our nation’s capital for working with lawmakers and the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to preserve and expand veterans’ benefits — in a non-adversarial manner unless truly necessary. That means they don’t often make big splashy*

*statements because it preserves access to key people in power.*

*We urge you to renew your membership, so we can have a strong and unified voice in D.C.*

**Mail Call continued on Page 8**

# Mail Call

## SAL members salute the flag

There seems to be a few Legionnaires that do not think that the members of the Sons of The American Legion should be allowed to salute our nation’s colors.

After doing some research, the is what I have found:

“Members of the Sons of the American Legion (SAL) salute the American flag when wearing their official cap, in the same manner as if they were in a military uniform. If not wearing the cap, they follow standard civilian etiquette for saluting the flag.”

This is the protocol of The American Legion, not the Sons of The American Legion doing it on its own.

**Dennis J Henkemeyer**  
**Bagley Post/Squadron 16**

## Good article on gambling

Just a congratulatory note



# Taps



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

Name of Deceased	Age	Date of Death	Branch	Era	Cont. Years	Post
Adamek, Gerald G. "Jerry"	79	6/27/25	Navy	Vietnam	47	Montgomery Post 79
Note: He served aboard the aircraft carrier USS Franklin Roosevelt.						
Albrecht, John C.	76	6/17/25	Marines	Vietnam	56	St. Peter Post 37
Anderson, Wallace S. "Wally"	89	6/15/25	Army	Korea	16	Chanhassen Post 580
Berg, Richard E.	92	5/9/25	Marines	Korea	58	Crystal Aviation Post 511
Note: He was post membership chairman for many years.						
Berg, William L.	85	6/28/25	Army	Vietnam	44	St. James Post 33
Bilotta, Michael P.	77	7/28/25	Marines	Vietnam	10	Rosetown Memorial Post 542
Note: He lost his sixth battle against cancer due to exposure to Agent Orange.						
Binsfeld, Gerald M.	82	6/23/25	Navy	Vietnam	8	Eden Valley Post 381
Bohn, Norman L.	84	7/9/25	Army	Vietnam	58	Hutchinson Post 96
Brinkman, Harold J.	81	6/8/25	Army	Vietnam	20	St. Joseph Post 328
Britton, Gordon J. Jr.	86	7/5/25	Army	Vietnam	11	Finlayson-Sandstone Post 151
Broucek, Robert J.	79	5/19/25	Army	Vietnam	7	Anoka Post 102
Bruxvoort, Gerald D.	92	6/11/25	Army	Korea	39	Round Lake Post 461
Buckner, Robert E.	87	6/28/25	Navy	Vietnam	37	Benson Post 62
Note: He served as an air controlman and radar operator in Nebraska and Georgia.						
Burkel, Gerald P.	85	6/10/25	Air Force	Vietnam	17	Greenbush Post 88
Cherrington, Roger W.	100	7/30/25	Navy	WWII	16	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He served from May 1942 to December 1947, attaining the ranking of torpedoman's mate second class. He served in the Pacific Theater and was assigned to a 20mm AA cannon aboard the destroyer USS Robinson.						
Cleven, Earl L.	77	7/4/25	Army	Vietnam	13	Albert Lea Post 56
Note: He served as a combat engineer with the 82nd Airborne Division.						
Copple, John D.	87	4/23/25	Marines	Cold	2	Stewartville Post 164
Cremers, Anthony M.	100	6/4/25	Army	WWII	14	Alexandria Post 87
Note: Entering in 1943, he was stationed in England, France and Germany.						
Crossfield, Frederick H.	87	7/21/25	Navy	Korea	61	Lewiston Post 90
Note: He served aboard the destroyer USS Gearing. Known also as Fred, Fritz, Rex or Santa, he was a member of the honor guard for more than 20 years.						
Defries, Harrell	88	7/2/25	Army	Korea	19	Pequot Lakes Post 49
DeWitte, Daniel P.	74	3/19/25	Army	Vietnam	33	Rochester Post 92
Note: Both of his parents were post commanders.						
Disse, Jerome L.	81	5/17/25	Army	Vietnam	12	Lake Park Post 181
Donnelly, Patrick J.	74	7/29/25	Navy	Vietnam	16	Elk River Post 112
Doty, Edwin L.	97	6/4/25	Army	WWII	37	Stewartville Post 164
Dykema, Roger O.	99	6/28/25	Navy	WWII	80	Raymond Post 420
Note: He served as a tailgunner in a B-24 bomber based in the Philippine Islands. He joined The American Legion on July 1, 1945.						
Ehlert, Allen C.	83	6/22/25	Army	Korea	43	St. Joseph Post 328
Ellestad, Donald E.	93	11/25/24	Army	Korea	72	Spring Grove Post 249
Note: He served in Alaska as a medic. He was a past post commander and adjutant.						
Feia, Cyril L. Jr.	73	7/8/25	Army	Vietnam	55	Holdingford Post 211
Note: He set up the color guard for parades and funerals.						
Ford, Stephen R.	71	6/6/25	Marines	Vietnam	21	Lake Park Post 181
Friday, Thomas J.	56	7/2/25	Navy	Persian Gulf	2	Mora Post 201
Note: He served aboard the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz during the war.						
Gladfelter, Paul H.	98	5/28/25	Navy	WWII	14	Fairmont Post 36
Note: He was a member of the honor guard.						
Gleisner, Richard J.	87	7/6/25	Army	Korea	39	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He served in the Minnesota National Guard for six years.						
Gora, Robert J.	79	6/11/25	Army	Korea	14	Winona Post 9
Graham, Thomas P.	94	7/13/25	Army	Korea	11	Winona Post 9
Hagen, Alvin H.	94	6/21/25	Air Force	Korea	56	Kerkhoven Post 223
Hanna, Roger L.	88	6/20/25	Army	Korea	17	Albert Lea Post 56
Hanson, Gary A. "Squeak"	79	7/23/25	Air Force	Korea	40	Pinewood Post 438
Harris, David E.	66	7/8/25	Army	Vietnam	6	Winona Post 9
Hawker, Dale J.	78	6/21/25	Army	Vietnam	44	Rochester Post 92
Hoffman, Ronald E.	89	7/23/25	Army	Vietnam	50	Sartell Post 277
Note: He served two tours in Vietnam.						
Huff, Alvin T.	98	6/20/25	Army	WWII	7	Glencoe Post 95
Johnson, Jay L.	101	7/4/25	Army	WWII	1	Lake City Post 110
Note: He was stationed at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C.						
Johnson, Norman L.	100	7/5/25	Air Force	WWII	76	New London Post 537
Note: He started the ambulance service in New London and served as fire chief for many years.						
Kalash, Donald L.	81	7/5/25	Army	Vietnam	44	Windom Post 206
Note: He was a past post commander and adjutant.						
Kesler, Ray M. Jr.	61	7/8/25	Air Force	Leb-Gren	6	Winona Post 9
Klankowski, Donald R.	93	10/30/24	Army	Korea	66	Spring Grove Post 249
Kuechle, Edwin J.	83	7/8/25	Army	Vietnam	10	Watkins Post 453
LaFavor, Keith G.	75	6/25/25	Army	Vietnam	56	Lake Crystal Post 294
Note: He was a past post commander.						
Lager, La Verne H.	93	3/6/25	Air Force	Korea	40	Caledonia Post 191
Larson, Matthew E.	56	7/28/25	Navy	Persian Gulf	16	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He was a petty officer second class in aviation maintenance. He deployed to Southwest Asia during the war.						
Lehman, Karl F.	89	7/15/25	Army	Korea	48	St. James Post 33
Lester, Earl J.	85	8/3/25	Army	Vietnam	57	Owatonna Post 77
Lindberg, John A.	99	7/1/25	Army	Korea	69	Lyle Post 105
Note: He served in the Signal Corps in Okinawa. He was past post commander.						
Mankie, Brendon M.	26	7/8/25	Army	GWOT	8	Walker Post 134
Markon, Clyde E.	74	7/15/25	Army	Vietnam	5	Anoka Post 102
Note: Dr. Markon was a nephrologist. In 2004, he joined VA Health Care as a medical director for clinics in northeastern Wisconsin and north central Minnesota.						
McDermond, William Sr. "Mac"	92	7/13/25	Air Force	Korea	16	Melrose Post 101
Meyer, John E.	78	5/16/25	Marines	Vietnam	59	Spring Grove Post 249
Note: He trained as a helicopter and jet mechanic. He was known to many as "Big John."						
Middendorf, Jeffrey W.	74	5/17/25	Army	Vietnam	38	Caledonia Post 191
Note: He served as a communications specialist in Germany for three years. He also played football for Winona State for four years.						
Miller, Steven A.	72	4/11/25	Army	Vietnam	25	Balaton Post 237
Mixner, James H.	88	6/7/25	Army	Korea	39	Worthington Post 5
Monserud, Howard E.	84	2/17/25	Army	Vietnam	48	Anoka Post 102
Morem, Thomas W.	92	5/1/25	Army	Korea	58	Austin Post 91
Note: He was stationed in Germany.						
Mostrom, Walter D.	93	2/13/25	Navy	Korea	48	Anoka Post 102
Note: He belonged to St. Francis Post 622 for 44 years.						

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## All-Family Events Calendar

**Sept. 1:** Registration opens for Junior Shooting Sports  
**Sept. 4-7:** Camporee, Legionville  
**Sept. 11:** Patriot Day, local observances  
**Sept. 11-14:** Minnesota ALR Romp, Legionville  
**Sept. 15:** Sons of The American Legion Birthday  
**Sept. 16:** American Legion Day  
**Sept. 19:** POW/MIA Day, local observances  
**Sept. 26-28:** Americanism Conference, Indianapolis  
**Oct. 1-2:** John Zgoda Deer Hunt, Legionville  
**Oct. 4-5:** SAL Disabled Veterans Turkey Hunt, Legionville  
**Oct. 4:** Veteran Suicide Prevention & Awareness Day, "Be the One," Red Baron Arena, Marshall  
**Oct. 6-9:** Fall Meetings, Indianapolis  
**Oct. 7-9:** Minnesota Veterans Outdoors Disabled Veteran Deer Hunt, Camp Ripley  
**Oct. 23:** Minnesota American Legion Department Executive Committee, Kelly Inn, St. Cloud  
**Oct. 24-25:** Fall Conference, River's Edge Convention Center & Kelly Inn, St. Cloud  
**Nov. 10:** American Legion Auxiliary Birthday  
**Nov. 10:** Buddy Check Week  
**Nov. 11:** Veterans Day, local observances  
**Nov. 16-21:** American Legion College, Indianapolis  
**Nov. 18-22:** American Education Week  
**Dec. 6:** Pearl Harbor Rally, Buffalo Post 270  
**Jan. 1:** Baseball and softball registration opens  
**Feb. 28:** Minnesota Oratorical Contest, TBD  
**Feb. 28-March 4:** Washington Conference  
**March 14:** Appreciation Rally, Bloomington Post 550  
**March 15:** Deadline to register for Minnesota American Legion College  
**April 19-23:** National Commander's Tour of Minnesota  
**April 23-26:** Minnesota American Legion College, Camp Ripley  
**May 4-7:** Spring Meetings, Indianapolis  
**June 27:** Joint Testimonial Dinner (for department commander and president), New Prague Post 45  
**July 9-11:** 107th Department Convention, Willmar  
**Aug. 28-Sept. 3:** 107th National Convention, Louisville



The part of a submarine that stick upward is called the sail, and the new museum will feature the sail of the USS Minneapolis-St. Paul rising from the prairie.

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## Taps Continued from Page 5

<b>Mulhern, Eugene R.</b>	88	6/23/25	Army	Korea	5	Spring Valley Post 68
<b>Nadeau, Pierre J. "Pete"</b>	95	8/7/25	Marines	Korea	73	Hugo Post 620
Note: He served in the Marine 1st Division at the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir and could be the last Minnesotan member of the Chosin Few. Also, for many years, he served on the Fort Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad.						
<b>Niskanen, Donald V.</b>	93	3/23/25	Army	Korea	38	Bemidji Post 14
<b>Norton, Dean O.</b>	84	2/2/25	Navy	Vietnam	9	Anoka Post 102
<b>Olson, Gary L.</b>	81	4/22/25	Army	Vietnam	19	Storden Post 391
<b>Olson, Roy J.</b>	85	6/30/24	Army	Cold	47	Owatonna Post 77
<b>Orgon, Donald R.</b>	92	8/3/25	Air Force	Korea	24	Bemidji Post 14
<b>Othmar, Schmitz J.</b>	97	8/8/25	Army	WWII	79	St. Joseph Post 328
Note: He served in an artillery unit defending the Panama Canal during the war.						
<b>Perry, Ralph R.</b>	89	5/12/25	Coast Guard	Korea	18	Winona Post 9
<b>Peterson, Merle G. "Murph"</b>	85	5/9/25	Marines	Korea	31	Aitkin Post 86
<b>Pierson, John L.</b>	90	6/20/25	Army	Vietnam	24	Aitkin Post 86
<b>Pongratz, John D.</b>	96	7/29/25	Army	Korea	64	Caledonia Post 191
Note: He was drafted and spent his full two-year duty in Japan in an Army band.						
<b>Ringle, Otto F.</b>	93	7/14/25	Army	Korea	52	Walker Post 134
Note: He was a top-secret specialist for the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission established in July 1953 to negotiate and supervise the agreement between the two Koreas along the demilitarized zone. He was recognized for this distinguished service in Washington, D.C., in 2023. He also played football for the Army. After, he became a dentist who was well-known for civic involvement. In Otto's 20s, he saved a young boy from drowning. That boy now is Post 134 Past Commander and Minnesota Boys State choir director Murray Bright.						
<b>Rose, Lyle D.</b>	80	6/13/25	Army	Vietnam	39	East Grand Forks Post 157
Note: He was post commander in 2016-17 and served on the honor guard for many years.						
<b>Rutledge, Dennis F.</b>	82	6/17/25	Navy	Vietnam	24	Litchfield Post 104
Note: He graduated from the Naval Academy in 1967. He received his wings as an aviator in 1968 in Corpus Christi, Texas. He served until 1979.						
<b>Rydeen, Reuben L.</b>	98	4/10/25	Navy	WWII	79	Clearbrook Post 256
<b>Sandmann, Jerry A.</b>	79	5/24/25	Army	Vietnam	50	Northfield Post 84
<b>Sauer, Frederick D.</b>	95	4/23/25	Army	Korea	51	Little Falls Post 146
<b>Schmiesing, Milan C.</b>	81	6/24/25	Air Force	Vietnam	32	Willmar Post 167
<b>Schreiner, Richard F.</b>	99	6/28/25	Army	Cold	25	Cold Spring Post 455
<b>Skauge, Roger L.</b>	81	6/6/25	Army	Vietnam	59	Spring Grove Post 249
<b>Staniszewski, Eugene L.</b>	72	5/19/25	Army	Vietnam	51	Russell Post 460
Note: He served primarily in Korea.						
<b>Stelter, Stanley A.</b>	70	4/25/25	Air Force	Vietnam	37	Russell Post 460
<b>Sukow, Leo C.</b>	95	7/17/25	Army	Korea	58	Albert Lea Post 56
<b>Thorson, Wayne</b>	84	7/28/25	Army/AF	Vietnam	20	Albert Lea Post 56
Note: He drove trucks in Germany.						
<b>Troe, Duane O.</b>	95	7/19/25	Navy	Korea	60	Albert Lea Post 56
Note: He served aboard the battleship USS Wisconsin during the war.						
<b>Vaillancourt, Gary R.</b>	86	4/1/25	Army	Vietnam	42	St. Paul Park Post 98
<b>Van Booven, Cecil C. Jr.</b>	72	12/30/24	Coast Guard	Vietnam	51	White Bear Lake Post 168
Note: He served aboard the cutter USCGC Pontchartrain.						
<b>Vandersnick, Terry L.</b>	77	8/6/25	Army	Vietnam	54	Albert Lea Post 56
Note: He served a year in Vietnam.						
<b>Vasel, Raymond W.</b>	90	6/28/25	Air Force	Korea	21	Ely Post 248
Note: He served in Germany during four years of active duty, then continued in the Air National Guard for 20 years.						
<b>Vouk, James R.</b>	86	4/21/25	Air Force	Cold	3	St. Stephen Post 221
Note: He served two years in Taiwan and a year at Strategic Air Command in Nebraska.						
<b>Walthers, Dwaine E.</b>	80	6/9/25	Navy	Vietnam	30	Willmar Post 167
<b>Weis, Clayton</b>	96	6/19/25	Army	Korea	76	Caledonia Post 191
Note: He served two years in the war.						
<b>Welle, Kelly M.</b>	42	7/13/25	Army	GWOT	22	Holdingford Post 211
Note: Shortly after marriage in 2007, she was deployed to Iraq as a chemical specialist with the 704th Chemical Company based in Arden Hills.						
<b>Wetherill, Edwin D.</b>	97	7/30/25	Army	Korea	27	St. Peter Post 37
<b>Wickham, Gerald J.</b>	84	7/19/25	Navy	Cold	8	Aitkin Post 86
Note: He served on the minesweeper USS Notable during the Cuban Missile Crisis.						
<b>Wilcek, Gary G.</b>	80	6/27/25	AF/ANG	Vietnam	40	Little Falls Post 46
<b>Winterfeldt, Lyle L.</b>	92	7/8/25	Army	Korea	23	Glencoe Post 95
<b>Witter, Lanny L.</b>	82	7/11/25	Army	Vietnam	16	Rochester Post 92
<b>Woeste, Roger H.</b>	81	2/8/25	Army	Vietnam	40	St. Joseph Post 328

**Department of Corrections**  
The person who sends the "Taps" entries for Worthington Post 5, Commander Steven Ahlberg, was inadvertently entered as being the "Taps" entry. To be sure, Ahlberg remains alive and healthy. The correct deceased Legion member is James H. Mixner, who is in this issue. (Sorry, commander!)



Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum Director Randal Dietrich leads a media tour through the new \$40 million musuem being constructed near Camp Ripley.

## The goal is timelessness

**Continued from Page 1**

the military or stand by the national service of friends and relatives.

"We're going to rely upon those folks when we get older," he said.

Architect Steven Dwyer with design firm HGA said the design of the building is modern yet reflects Camp Ripley's heritage of black granite stone gates and fences built during the Great Depression.

"We're trying to think about the timelessness that we are trying to achieve," he said, "Now, I can't say we're achieving timelessness, but that's the goal. Only time will tell if something is timeless."

The purpose of the museum is to be a monument to all who have served, he said. He said he and the construction team try to be stewards of dollars while constructing the building to be expandable in the future.

He spoke about the black precast panels that line the exterior, in which visitors will be able to see their reflections.

Dietrich took the media members into the museum and explained how it will welcome visitors, whether they come for the museum, the state veterans cemetery or to the military base. The main entrance will be on the west side. Once inside, the first exhibit the visitors experience will be the No. 3 Gun from the USS Ward — Minnesota's prime connection to the start of World War II.

There are several rooms for displays, and on the south side there is a large space for gatherings, and it will have a door facing the future parade grounds.



# Endorsements

## Davenport endorsed for department commander

Henderson-Lewis Post 545 of Spicer and the 7th District endorse Garylee Davenport for commander for the 2026-27 year.

Serving in the Army National Guard 1983-1995, then active Army 1985-1988, with most of the time serving as an 11B (infantry soldier). He served in Georgia, Egypt and Germany, leaving as a disabled veteran.

As a PUFL of Spicer Post 545, he has served as commander, adjutant, 2nd vice commander, sergeant-at-arms, Executive Committee, Honor Guard and director of American Legion

Riders Chapter 545. He is the current 1st vice commander and fills in on the honor guard at times.

He served with the 7th District as commander, vice commander-at-large, membership director, Area C vice commander, chaplain, sergeant-at-arms, ALR director and on the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee. He currently serves as ALR director for a third time.

At the Department of Minnesota level, Davenport served as sergeant-at-arms 2017-18. He was chairman of the VA&R Committee 2022-23 and still

serves on the committee. Other roles he has held are member of the LIT Committee, two years on DEC and assistant director of the ALR.

He is a PUFL member of the Sons of The American Legion.

He works for Factory Motor Parts going on 20 years. After 27 years, he retired from Atwater Fire Department in October 2020. Twenty-one of those he served as an EMT for the ambulance service.



Garylee Davenport

Davenport is proud to belong to DAV, 40&8, Eagles, Elks, Willmar Rifle & Pistol Club, Two Harbors Gun Club and Belgrade Sportsman's Club. He is a member of ANAVICUS.

Davenport has been a member of The American Legion for 20 years. He enjoys gardening, trap-shooting, practical shooting, fishing, hunting and riding motorcycles. He is the one you call if you need assistance.

## Post 594 endorses Yanchury for chaplain

Daniel R. Olsen Post 594 in Eagan has endorsed the Rev. Cynthia "Cindy" Yanchury for chaplain of the Department of Minnesota for the 2026-27 term.

She is a past post chaplain who now serves as post adjutant and chaplain for the 3rd District. Yanchury entered seminary in 1989. Upon graduation, she was commissioned for ministry in 1995 and ordained in 1998. She served three churches and retired in 2022 from Advent Church in Eagan. However, she kept going after retirement and served a fourth church in St. Anthony Village for three years.

"I still follow that call to do occasional pulpit supply and often officiate funerals for a local funeral home, especially for veterans and their spouses," she said.

Yanchury grew up in the south metro and enlisted in the Navy two days after graduating high school. She got the duty she sought — Coronado Island, San Diego. She was stationed there for 1 1/2 years, then it was off too Adak, Alaska, for another 1 1/2 years.

After the service, she and her husband moved to Connecticut

to attend college and she served in the Navy Reserve. After graduation, she moved back to Minnesota as a single mother. To supplement her income, she enlisted in the Minnesota Army National Guard and was company clerk for the 47th Military Police Company. She was "deputized" to be an acting MP when a female was needed. She remarried. They remained married for 37 years until his untimely passing in 2019. They have three grown children and one grandchild.

Yanchury joined The American Legion in 1999 as an Army and Navy veteran of several war eras — Vietnam to Global War on Terrorism. She resides in Eagan.

"I would like to serve as the department chaplain as a way to continue serving God and Country. My vision is to provide resources and training for chaplains at the post level, helping them to feel comfortable in this important role — reminding each of us that we are beloved and we each have a calling to live out in this life — the call to serve in whatever way and wherever and whenever we can."



Cindy Yanchury

## Pam Krill endorsed for department commander

Lee C. Prentice Post 36 in Fairmont endorses Pamela J. Krill for the position of Department of Minnesota Commander for the year 2026-27

Krill is a retired Air Force veteran, having served for 21 years. She grew up in Kingston and graduated from Annandale High School. After graduation, she enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and attended basic training at Lackland AFB, in Texas.

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

logistics specialist.

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

Her final duty station was Langley AFB, in Virginia, where she worked as a weapon system manager. While at Langley, she spent one tour in Iraq at Balad Air Base and then one year at Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, and then another year at Shindand Air Base, Afghanistan. Both tours she was an adviser to the Afghan Army and the Afghan Air Force.

Upon returning from a second tour in Afghanistan, her son asked her to retire. After a wonderful 21 years, she turned down an assignment manager, prepping and deploying members to numerous locations around the globe.

They moved back to Minnesota in February 2015 and purchased a small house on five acres in the countryside near Blue Earth.

Krill is a lifetime member of Disabled American Veterans, where she is a chapter treasurer. She is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. She is a past department vice commander and past membership director



Pam Krill

for The American Legion Department of Minnesota. She is a past chairman for the Department Strategic Planning Committee. She is a 2021 graduate of National American Legion College. She has served on the National Americanism Council since 2021.

She was 2nd District commander for 2022-23 and is past district membership director.

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



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

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

**Accidental Death** — Helps provide financial protection for you and your family. Up to \$5,000.00 LegionCare AD coverage at no cost to Legionnaires is available: (activation required).\* You can also purchase additional Accident coverage up to \$100,000.00.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Thanks for the scholarship

Thank for you awarding me the Norm Arveson Memorial Scholarship on behalf of the Legion. I am beyond grateful for your support of my education. I will reach out to the provided contact upon acceptance to college. Thank you for this amazing gift from the Legion!

I would also like to thank you for the amazing experience I had at Boys State! This experience helped develop my leadership skills, taught me valuable lessons about our government and deepened my appreciation for our nation. I made connections with others from across the state that I will not forget. Most importantly, I learned valuable life lessons that will truly shape the rest of my life.

Thank you for your hard work that made this experience life-changing. I am honored that my peers have trusted me to help others have the same experience next year, and I look forward to coming back. Thank you for supporting me and this program!

**Luke McCrea**  
**Governor**  
**2025 Boys State**

## Prison post is actively serving

One of Post 1918's members has a unique way to spend his downtime. Chuck LaTourelle crochets baby blankets for needy mothers in the greater Duluth area.

Like all members of Post 1918, Chuck is incarcerated at the prison in Moose Lake. Post 1918 is the second post at a Minnesota Department of Corrections prison in Minnesota. There are Legion posts in prisons in 13 other states.

(Editor's note: The WCCO story in April was incorrect in saying Post 1918 was the first American Legion post in a prison in Minnesota. The Legionnaire story in the June 2025 issue reported the first one is Prairie Post 1998, opened in

## Mail Call

1998 at the prison in Appleton. Though the prison is now vacant, Post 1998 still has 13 members.)

Chuck first learned to crochet while at the prison in Stillwater. He continued after transfers, first to Lino Lakes, then to Moose Lake. He made pieces mostly for his family. When his family told him they had enough stuff, he looked for another place where he could donate his items. That's when he found out about the Bundles of Love project.

Bundles of Love had been run by a Twin Cities church, which furnished the yarn, but was suspended during the pandemic. When the restrictions were lifted, Chuck sought help from Moose Lake prison staff to find a way to donate the baby blankets he was making, using the remaining yarn donated pre-pandemic.

Chuck crochets about eight baby blankets a year and has completed around 35 so far. He says he enjoys giving back to the community, especially to those in need and crochets to keep himself occupied. He says the blankets he makes aren't fancy, no special patterns, just basic stripes in a few different colors. The blankets are made for functionality, not art, he says.

Giving back to the community, supporting those in need, and trying to make amends for previous wrongdoing are hallmarks of Post 1918 members. Chuck LaTourelle exemplifies that spirit.

**Don Frey**  
**Adjutant**  
**Moose Lake Fires Post 1918**

## Post 39 works well together

We're excited going into a new American Legion year with 13 members ranging from Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Riders stepping into leadership roles. This will be their first time and it shows we're doing something right at Post 39 with mentoring new members.

## Legion Riders

## Duane Mabon



American Legion Riders. I am hoping this approach can address the concern and ratify the issue promptly.

I realize everyone's life schedules are busy away from Legion business, therefore, a courtesy reminder to follow the All-Family Events Calendar printed in the Legionnaire normally somewhere within the first five pages. I have found the information to be quite useful when looking for dates and events within the Legion Family.

On Sept. 4-7 is Camporee, and on Sept. 11-14 is the Romp. Both events held at Legionville. All Legion Family members are welcome.

We just completed the Fund 85 Run, and Secretary Shawn Davis announced Minnesota ALR received donations around \$63,000, with more trickling in. The final tally will be announced at the Fall Conference in St.

You might ask: How did they do this? By making them feel welcome, listening to their ideas and recommendations — and trying them. We have nothing to lose by trying something new. The only thing we have to lose is a member by not listening and making them feel like they're part of the team and *not* just a number.

Every 90 days leaders from each entity of Post 39 come together to discuss events coming up in the next 90 days. This is very beneficial as it ensures we're all on the same page and can support each other's events. Here are just a few things that we have or had going on:

- Post 39 offers indoor cornhole leagues on Monday and Wednesday nights. Monday night league starts July 7 and Wednesday night league starts July 9. See our website for sign-up information.

Our 11th Annual Golf Tournament was scheduled for Aug. 3. It was an 18-hole scramble (shotgun start). Entry fee is \$320 per four-person team. Entry fee includes golf with cart, prizes and a meal back at Post 39. Individuals interested in playing next year should contact Ken at 651-354-0064.

Post 39 Family Brat & Corn feed is scheduled for Aug. 23 at 11 a.m. until gone. The event takes place in our parking lot so stop by with the family and friends to enjoy some good food and drinks. I guarantee our food and drinks are cheaper than the State Fair. If you love playing cornhole, there'll be a tournament for you to compete in.

Looking for some extra cash?  
Try your luck by attending our  
reoccurring events.

Tuesdays: 5:30 p.m. Gift Card Raffles, 6 p.m. Progressive Bingo

Wednesdays: 5 p.m. Gift Card Raffle, 7 p.m. Hump Day Raffle (\$700)

Fridays: 4 p.m. Meat Raffle,  
5 p.m. Virtual Racing, 8 p.m.  
Lucky Buck (\$500)

Saturdays: 4 p.m. Progressive  
Bingo, 4 p.m. Gift Card Raffles

Sundays: 4 p.m. Sunday-Funday Raffle (\$1,000)

**Daniel Bronk**  
1st Vice Commander  
North St. Paul Post 39

## Pro-active approach is key to future

Greetings to my fellow Legionnaires and the Minnesota American Legion Family. My name is Duane Mabon, and I am the newly elected director for the Minnesota American Legion Riders. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to Jody Hassing for her time and devotion as ALR director these past two years. Job well-done!

I am a 24-year member of Pipestone American Legion Post 6. I've been a Legion Rider for over 12 years. I'm proud to be serving my fifth year as the Riders director for the Slayton Chapter 64, and I have worked at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Luverne as their public affairs/volunteer services coordinator the past 18 years.

As I begin my new role, I anticipate there will be road bumps and detours along my journey the next two years as director. However, no elected position that I'm aware of ever goes smoothly. Therefore, my goal is to take a pro-active approach and try to get in front of any issues I am made aware of regarding the Minnesota



# The SAL Update:



**SAL Detachment Commander Jeremy Copher reads the Code of Sportsmanship to players before the first game on Saturday, Aug. 2, at the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Sr. State Tournament in St. Michael.**

## Greetings from new commander

**By Jeremy Copher**  
Detachment Commander

Greetings, my fellow SAL members.

The first month was an eye-opening experience, but thanks to all the wise past commanders, I made it.

I got to go to Le Center for the SAL bass tournament. I handed out the prizes to all the winners. It was fun. I was invited to throw out the first pitch for the day (a Saturday) at the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Sr. State Tournament in St. Michael.

Then the next day I was invited to bring greetings at the American Legion Auxiliary Department Executive Committee meeting at Anoka Post 102.

I was also invited to bring greetings at the Fund 85 American Legion Riders Kickoff Party at Forest Lake Post 225. I rode in the Hopkins Raspberry Festival Parade.

Next weekend I got to ride in the Lino Lakes Parade.

Then the really fun starts with the National Convention in Tampa. I got my pins and to those who did not get one I will have them at National.

*Jeremy Copher is the commander of the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Minnesota.*

## Speak to local service clubs



**Boys State**  
**Neil Kruse**

This week, Zander Carboneau, one of Minnesota's Boys Nation Senators, spoke to Luverne's Rotary Club of his experience in Washington, D.C., in July. He highlighted the sites visited and the political experiences he enjoyed during the eight days on the East Coast. I believe if more Boys State alumni shared their experiences with civic organizations in their communities, a greater interest to encourage friends to partake will occur.

Families, posts and schools work together to recruit Boys State participants. Community members can enhance that effort, and knowledge of the program is necessary to make that happen.

School assemblies aren't far away. Take advantage of opportunities to have your sponsored young men share their excitement for how Boys State has improved their lives thus far. If your local newspaper hasn't featured your participant, plant the idea in the ear of a reporter or editor.

Thank you for supporting Minnesota American Legion Boys State!

*Neil Kruse is a counselor for Minnesota Boys State.*

## Anti-American sentiment removed from headstones

Continued from Page 1

The black spray paint, which was used to write anti-American sentiment in some cases, proved tougher than the usual stains. But the local Home Depot, which has donated products to the headstone restoration efforts in the past, donated graffiti removal material to the cause this time, Jeff Larson said.

"You can hardly see the paint now," he said. There is one headstone whose material absorbed too much of the spray paint. Larson said he plans to "track down the family of that stone and see if it's possible to get permission to take some light sandpaper and get the rest off there."

Forest Lake Police are investigating the incident, Larson said, and the cemetery has installed trail cameras in hopes of catching someone returning to vandalize more headstones.

In the meantime, Squadron 225 will continue to show their support for veterans and the community.

"We are doing this to honor our vets and their families. It's an act of citizenship. It's something for our community, the American Legion; it's a form of true spirit of Americanism," Larson said. "We're not looking for a pat on the back ... it's just a shame that such shenanigans are going on."



**Bill Murphy of Forest Lake Squadron 225 holds flags picked up after cleaning headstones at Scandinavian Cemetery on May 31.**

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This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the East Central Regional Arts Council thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.



# Shakopee started strong at regional

Continued from Page 1

keep the dream of Shakopee's title alive. He hit a slow roller to shortstop, the kind of ball that often produces an out, but the the throw to first hit the dirt and bounced past the Grand Rapids first baseman for an error. Post 60, coached by the well-respected Bill Kinnunen, came very close to winning it all.

Boran sprinted to second base, then waited for the fire-works to begin.

Carson Schroeder drilled a base hit to score Boran from second base to tie the score, then a sharp single to right by Ryder Peace was a key piece. Nick Johnson, Shakopee's clean-up hitter, singled home a run with a hit to right field. Kaden Olson added a single. Colton Jenks put an exclamation point on the five-run seventh inning with a hit.

When the inning ended, Shakopee had five runs on seven hits.

Schroeder, who started the seventh-inning hit parade, said, "I was just trying to put the ball in play. It was a great feeling to get that hit."

With Peace coming to the plate, Schroeder had a good feeling. So did Peace, who lined a hit early in the count.

Nick Johnson had three hits and four RBIs in the game. Olson followed with his third hit of the game.

Jenks, who would bat clean-up for many Minnesota teams, brought home two insurance runs.

After accepting the Fred Wanmaker Outstanding Player Award, Peace said, "It was not possible to win this award without my teammates. They get on base for me. I played well this week, but it's a team effort."

Peace's stat line for the State Tournament included a .533 batting average, two home runs and 15 RBIs. The Father Moran Sportsmanship Trophy went to St. Michael Post 567 Mikes.

Fridley Post 303 Gold and New Ulm Post 132 received Red Haddock Final Four plaques.

Both Shakopee and Grand Rapids advanced to the double-elimination Central Plains Tournament at Starion Bank Field in Fargo. Grand Rapids fell after two losses. Shakopee won two, beating Elkhorn, Neb., Post 211, then Fargo Post 400. They lost to the Carpetland Rugs of Lincoln, Neb., Post 500, then to the West Fargo Post 308 Patriots. Lincoln won the regional.

At the American Legion World Series, Lincoln fell to Rockport, Ind., Post 254, then lost to League City, Texas, Post 554 and was out.

The ALWS title game was League City vs. Chesapeake, Va., Post 280. Post 280 won.

## Fastpitch Softball

**FAIRMONT** — Fairmont Post 36 not only hosted the Minnesota American Legion Fastpitch Softball State Tournament, but they won it, too.

Plus, Post 36 won Fastpitch Softball Post of the Year.

The Fairmont girls went up against Parkers Prairie Post 219 in the title game on Sunday, Aug. 3, winning 10-4. It was the second time in three seasons Post 36 has brought home the championship trophy in Legion Softball.

According to the Fairmont Sentinel, Post 36 batted in five

runs in the second inning. It started with a couple of errors by the Parkers Prairie short-stop, placing two runners on base with no outs. That was followed by a bunt, loading the bases. Mackenzie Lowry and Gwyneth Schultz walked, and two runs crossed the plate.

Brylee Miller slapped one into the outfield for a triple that sent three more runs home.

In the fourth inning, Schultz hit a home run, scoring two runs. Bria Williamson extended the lead by hitting a double that drove home two more runs.

Parkers Prairie scored two runs in each of the sixth and seventh innings, but it was too little too late by then.

Miller struck out seven or more batters for the third time during the tournament, the Sentinel reported.

Schultz was named Outstanding Player of the Tournament. She had six hits on the weekend and three homers. Kaitlyn Klasen of Melrose was named the Outstanding Pitcher.

The games were played at Cardinal Park in Fairmont.

Howard Lake Post 145 captured third place, defeating La Crescent Post 595 in a 6-5 thriller. Post 595 came in fourth. Bemidji Post 14 took fifth place. Melrose Post 101 came in seventh.

Other teams at state were Belview Post 309 and Swanville Post 313. Melrose Post 101 took home the Sportsmanship Trophy.

## Div. II Sr. Baseball

**ELY** — In the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Sr. State Tournament, New London-Spicer Posts 537 & 545 won the title by a score of 8-1 against Montevideo Post 59.

Luverne Post 123 took home third place, beating Sibley East 4-1. Sibley East is affiliated with Gaylord Post 433.

Esko captured the title of consolation champion, beating Ely Post 248, the host, 10-3. Esko lacks a Legion post and is affiliated with Esko Baseball Association instead.

Other teams in the state tournament were Dilworth Post 397, which draws from Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton High School, and La Crescent Post 595. Those two teams met in the seventh-place game, with Post 397 winning 6-4.

Pitcher and shortshop Griffin Epema was named Outstanding Player of the Tournament. At the tournament banquet, Zach Haala of Sleepy Eye Post 7 was presented with the Coach of the Year plaque. Sleepy Eye Post 7 won the state championship in 2024.

## Div. I Jr. Baseball

**BLOOMINGTON** — The Burnsville Post 1700 Rattlers took home the trophy in the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. I Jr. State Tournament at Red Haddock Field on Sunday, Aug. 3.

Junior Legion Baseball is for players 17 and under. Div. I are teams from schools with more than 400 enrollment in grades 10-12. The Rattlers won 13-2 in the title game over Bayport Post 491.

Eden Prairie defeated Bemidji Post 14 10-5 to capture the third-place plaque. With a score

of 5-3, Excelsior Post 259 beat New Ulm Post 132 to win consolation champ.

Other teams that made it to state were St. Michael Post 567 and Bloomington Post 550 (as host). Post 550 received the Ron Nenovich Sportsmanship Trophy, named after their former program manager and coach. He was a veteran who also served as 1st vice commander and athletics officer for Post 550.

Outstanding Player in the Tournament went to Burnsville shortstop/catcher Liam Henke.

## Div. II Jr. Baseball

**HAYFIELD** — St. Charles Post 190 defeated Montevideo VFW Post 380 by a score of 4-2 to capture the championship trophy in the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Div. II Jr. State Tournament in Hayfield.

Le Sueur-Henderson Posts 55 & 74 took home the hardware for Consolation Champion, beating Sleepy Eye Post 7 2-0. Other teams in the tournament were Hayfield Post 330, Dilworth Post 397 (DGF), New London-Spicer Posts 537 & 545 and Ely Post 248.

Dilworth captured third place, beating Hayfield 10-1 in the third-place game.

Hayfield was the recipient of the Sportsmanship Trophy. Evan O'Bryan of St. Charles was named Outstanding Player of the Tournament.

## Div. I-A Baseball

**BURNSVILLE** — St. Michael Post 567 Golds beat New Brighton Post 513 Tri-City Blue 10-9 in a close one on July 31 at Alimagnet Park in Burnsville to take home the Div. I-A title.

Div. I-A, sometimes called Tier I-A, is for posts who field second or third teams. This gives those extra teams a postseason. It also is for teams from small metro high schools under 1,000 enrollment in grades 10-12, such as Minneapolis Roosevelt.

St. Michael defeated Richfield Post 435 2-0 to advance to the title game. Tri-City, climbing out of the loser bracket in the double-elim tournament, also beat Richfield, 7-6, to get there.

Tri-City received the Sportsmanship Trophy. St. Michael pitcher and left fielder Ethan Funk was named the Outstanding Player of the Tournament. He is a senior at St. Michael-Albertville High this fall.

Other teams in the tournament were Prior Lake Legion Lakers 1A, Holy Family of Victoria, Jordan Post 3 and Edina Post 471 #2.

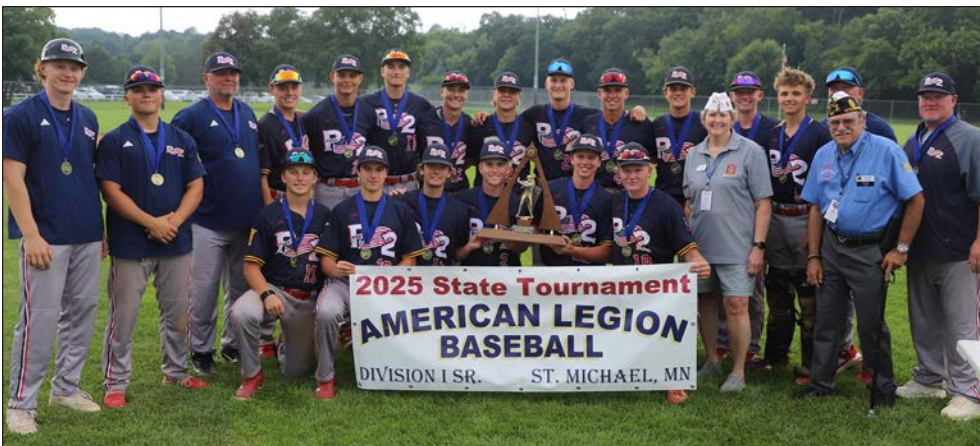
## Next season

**ST. PAUL** —Here are the sites of 2026 state tourneys: Fastpitch Softball: TBD (If interested in hosting, contact Michael Arvidson at michaelarvidson@hotmail.com.) Baseball Div. I Sr.: New Ulm

Baseball Div. II Sr.: Glenwood-Lowry  
Baseball Div. I Jr.: Alexandria  
Baseball Div. II Jr.: Parkers Prairie

Baseball Div. I-A: TBD (If interested, contact Randy Schaub at randypschaub23@gmail.com.)

The dates are the weekend where July turns into August, except for Div. II Jr., which is the following weekend.



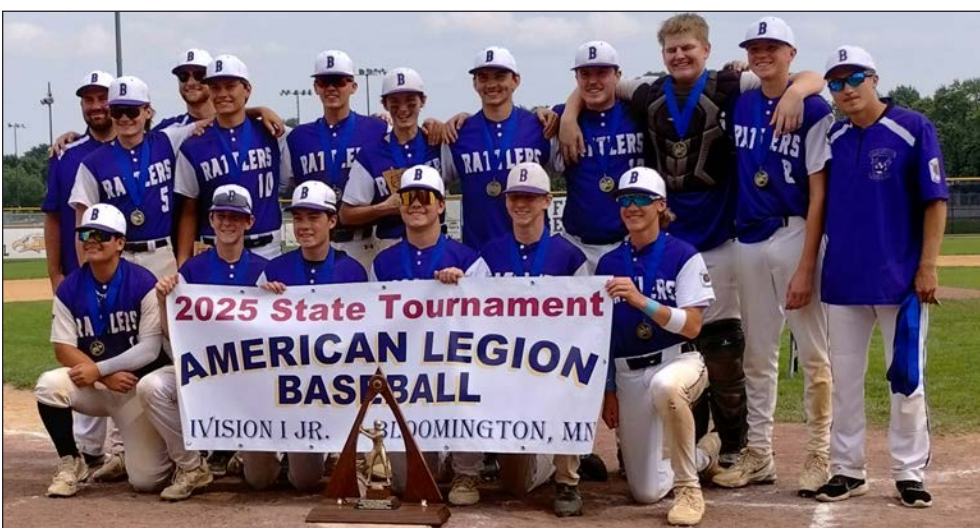
Shakopee Post 2 players and coaches hold the title trophy and pose with Department Commander Linda Dvorak and 10th District Commander Bill Gordon after winning the Baseball Div. I Sr. State Tournament in St. Michael.



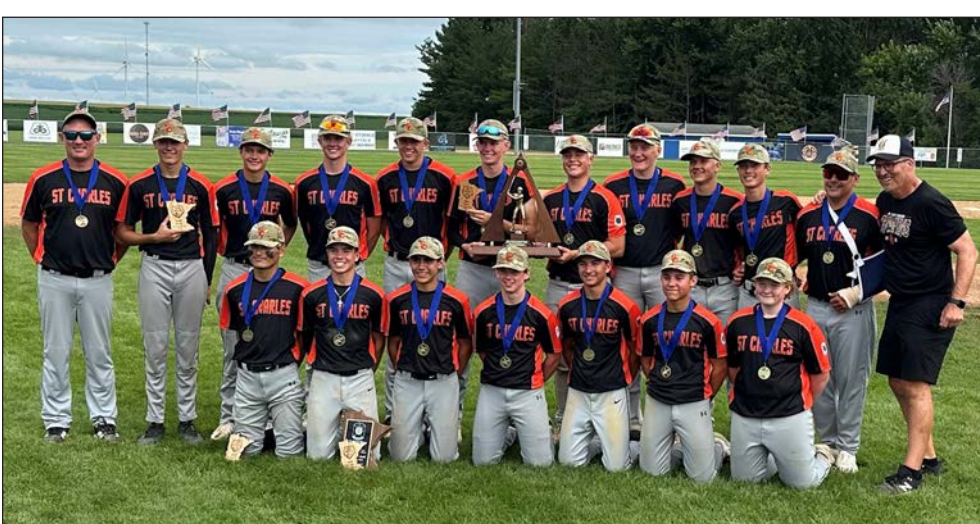
Fairmont Post 36 players and coaches pose with the championship trophy and a bracket board in front of the scoreboard after winning the Fastpitch Softball Tournament in Fairmont. Post 36 is the first to have two softball titles.



Players and coaches with New London-Spicer Posts 537 & 545 hold a banner and the championship trophy after winning the Baseball Div. II Sr. State Tournament in Ely.



The Rattlers of Burnsville Post 1700 hold a banner and pose with the title trophy after winning the Baseball Div. I Jr. State Tournament in Bloomington.



St. Charles Post 190 players and coaches pose with the championship trophy after winning the Baseball Div. II Jr. State Tournament in Hayfield. The team photo for Div. I-A State Tournament champs St. Michael Gold will appear in the October issue, along with Hall of Fame inductees and other award recipients.



# Hassing, Mead win contested races

Continued from Page 1

sought the alternate NECman spot. Paul Hassing of Bloomington Post 550 prevailed against Tom Fernlund of Waite Park Post 428. Both men are friends and even played golf together on the day before the convention began.

Hassing will replace Peggy Moon of Zimmerman Post 560. He takes office at the end of the National Convention in Tampa. Moon announced at the Appreciation Rally in March that she would not run again.

Jim Mead of Bloomington Post 550 was on the ballot for chaplain, having been endorsed by his post in March. Two delegates were nominated off the floor to run against Mead. They were Rochester Post 92 Past Adjutant Deb Williamson and Past Department Chaplain Dean Knutson of Ashby Post 357. The pair would be write-in candidates in a three-way race.

Past National Commander Dan Ludwig noted that if no candidate received a majority, then the lowest one would be dropped and a second election would be held among the top-two candidates. In other words, everyone would have the stay longer than planned. That didn't happen, however, and Mead prevailed with enough votes to garner the white cap.

Carl Moon of Zimmerman Post 560 won unopposed in the election for NECman. He replaces NECman Bill Barbknecht at the close of the National Convention on Aug. 28.

The new department vice commanders are Karen Welander of Kerkhoven Post 223, Steve NaSalle of Fergus Falls Post 30, Myron Ehrich of West Concord Post 295, Daniel Siats of Northome Post 499 and Dennis De Long of Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435.

Sandy Gessler of Austin Spam Post 570 was elected historian. Gary Richardson of Mahtomedi-Willernie Post 507 is the new sergeant-at-arms. David "Chip" Manson of Spicer Post 545 was re-elected to the Board of Publications for a three-year term.

The Board of Publications also has a DEC-named member each year, and the DEC on July 12 returned Carroll "Bird" Partridge to the board for a three-year term.

## Resolutions

The convention passed four resolutions, with three to be forwarded to the 106th National Convention in Tampa. They are:

Resolution 25-1: This one urges Congress and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to expand the presumptive exposure for veterans who served on the Korean DMZ for soil contamination for Agent Orange and for funding to research the impact of Agent Orange on veterans who served in the region.

The author is Marissa LaCourt of Red Wing Post 54, and the resolution was first approved by Lonsdale Post 586.

Resolution 25-2: It calls for National American Legion to distribute dues they collect no later than the 28th of the month of their collection. This one comes from Adams Post 146.

Resolution 25-5: The author of this resolution is Fairmont Post 36. It calls for the Minnesota Legislature to increase allocations to support and expand the Veterans Employment Program administered by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and that the state hires additional DVOP and LVER staff.

DVOPs are "disabled veterans' outreach program" specialists, and LVERs are "local veterans' employment representatives." DVOPs provide career services to veterans, while LVERs engage with employers. Because it is aimed at state government, there was no need to forward it to national.

Resolution 25-6: The author of this resolution, Paul Edwards of Nisswa Post 627, wants the National American Legion Constitution to be changed from, "The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment," to, "The American

Legion shall be absolutely non-partisan and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment."

Edwards teaches resolution-writing at national conventions and other places. He argues that the Legion is naturally political in advocating for the passage of veteran-related legislation, and the better word is "nonpartisan," in that it does not adhere to any political party.

Two resolutions sent back for review dealt with forming a Department Grants Writing Committee and forming a Technology & Innovation Committee. A third resolution giving veterans free access to Minnesota State Parks was rejected as "irrelevant, already being pursued."

The new members of Department Executive Committee convened 30 minutes after the convention ended, and they approved a resolution regarding the Department Constitution.

This resolution had been debated during the convention and restructured. It is:

Resolution 25-8: It authorizes administrative verbiage correction to mandates. This was passed in reaction to the use of some words that were common decades ago but are no longer acceptable. The author was the Children & Youth Convention Committee.

The convention spent time updating many mandates. The 2025 version of the Department of Minnesota Constitution & Bylaws can be found at mnlegion.org. To find it, hover on "Department," then click on "Governing Documents."

## News & Notes

Here are tidbits from various reports given at the convention and two DEC meetings:

- Minnesota achieved 100 percent turn-in for Consolidated Post Reports, announced Sy Fix of La Crescent Post 595, whom the commander had tapped to spearhead the effort.

- Judge Advocate Greg Colby referenced the attempted assassination of President Donald Trump, the assassination of former Minnesota House Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband, and the attempted assassination of state Sen. John Hoffman and his wife, as well as 9,474 statements or threats were made against members of Congress in 2024, according to U.S. Capitol Police. He said people may disagree on politics but called on members to not tolerate loose talk regarding dead politicians at post clubs. "You don't have to put up with that kind of talk in your bar. You can put up signs right next to the no-smoking sign: violent talk will not be tolerated."

He continued: "Let's promote America by toning down the rhetoric and demanding respect for leaders on both sides."

- Minnesota Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Brad Lindsay said his agency, with the help of the Minnesota Commanders' Task Force, passed the fourth Veterans & Military Affairs Omnibus Bill. He said his agency received funding adjustments to fully staff new veterans homes in Bemidji, Montevideo and Preston. Only Ramsey County remains before Minnesota can reach "functional zero" for veteran homelessness.

Efforts to strengthen protections around claim sharks were "stymied by lobbyists and their allies who represented them as a legitimate choice for veterans to use instead of the free services The American Legion and other service organizations, the county veteran service officers, or my department, provide to our veterans."

He called on the Legion to continue its support for passage of the GARD Act in Congress, which would negate the need for states to pass claim shark bills.

Lindsay shared how the MDVA is partnering with The American Legion in holding its seventh annual Minnesota Veterans Suicide & Prevention Day on Oct. 4 in Marshall.

"At that event we will be highlighting The American Legion's Be the One application," he said.

Finally, he thanked then-Commander

Carl Moon for serving as CTF chair the past year.

- Moon presented a check for his project: the Veterans Defense Project. It was for \$45,382. Accepting was attorney Ryan Else. The VDP aims to expand veterans courts in Minnesota and across the United States.

- Minnesota Boys State has developed an SOP (standard operating procedure) outlining who has different responsibilities. Director Kyle Oldre reported Boys State experienced growth in attendance this year with 170 delegates and 30-plus counselors.

Surveys say 93.2 percent of Boys State alumni report the experience having an impact on the rest of their lives.

- The publishing of books from PCI documenting the experience of Minnesota veterans has been delayed.

- The Department of Minnesota received a check of \$23,211 from American Income Life and the adjutant anticipates another \$17,000, Adjutant Mike Maxa said.

- The DEC ratified Jason Storm as the assistant department service officer.

- The DEC on July 10 approved Hitterdal Post 13 and Ulen Post 412 turned in their charters. On July 12, the new DEC approved charter turn-ins for Willow River Post 163, Vesta Post 306, Mountain Lake Post 389, Revere Post 582 and Champlin Post 600.

- Maxa announced his plans to retire and will step down at the 2026 convention. Dvorak said the department plans to hire an assistant adjutant by Oct. 1 to be trained for the role.

- Maxa announced there is a conversation about redistricting the boundaries. A discussion ensued regarding the boundaries. Treasurer Al Davis said they are set to what congressional districts were in 1930.

Minnesota's congressional districts remained the same from 1913 to 1931, when the state lost its 10th district. The only differences when compared to Legion districts are that, per the Department Constitution, Richfield and all of Minneapolis are in the 5th District. (The 1913-1930 5th congressional district didn't cover all of Minneapolis.)

Charter revocation is not final until approved by the National Executive Committee.

- Finance Committee Chairman Richard Wog said department revenue exceeded expenses \$302,357 as of June 30. In 2024, that figure was \$280,083. It was \$535,346 the year before.

- Training Committee Chairman Jennifer Havlick reported 28 people who attended Minnesota Legion College. The group training on post, district and department officers and discussed the 21st Century Report — a national American Legion effort to build membership and reshape the direction of the organization.

She said there are 128 alumni of Minnesota Legion College.

- Outgoing SAL Commander John Weiss reported the Detachment had elected Jeremy Copher of Mound Squadron 398 as its commander. The detachment switched region, from the Central to the Midwest, and it now is the largest detachment in the region.

Copher said his theme is "Charge Up for Veterans." His project is Helping Paws in Eden Prairie. Dave Arend of Forest Lake Squadron 225 is the membership director.

- Junior Shooting Sports Chairman Carl Wilson said there are eight American Legion JSS clubs in Minnesota with 44 shooters. He encouraged posts to donate to Fund 87, which supports JSS in Minnesota.

- Children & Youth Chairman Karen Welander announced awards for Children & Youth programs: Minneapolis Johnnie Baker Post 291, Big Lake Post 147, Waite Park Post 428 and West Duluth Post 71.

- Blood Chairman Terry Larson announced 144 posts reported blood donations, totaling 10,040 units. (Winners of each district were listed in the previous issue, with a feature story on Zimmerman Post 560's No. 1 efforts.)

Minnesota placed second among all departments in terms of blood donated.

He said there will be a blood drive at the  
**Continued on Page 12**



**New Department Commander Linda Dvorak smooches her husband, Past Department Commander Mark Dvorak.**



**Alternate NECman Peggy Moon replaces her husband's white cap with a blue one, then goes in for a quick kiss and embrace. Carl Moon was elected NECman and will receive a red cap at the National Convention.**



**The Strategic Planning Committee stands with a poster of their 5-Year Strategic Plan, a draft that will be discussed further at the Fall Conference.**



**New Minnesota American Legion Riders Director Duane Mabon smiles when stepping to the podium. Behind him is Immediate Past Director Jody Hassing.**



**Bloomington Post 550 had a great convention. Post 550 received the Pat Cliff Award for assisting veterans in need, member Jim Mead was elected department chaplain and member Paul Hassing was elected Alternate NECman.**



**Excelsior Post 259 won the Bowling Tournament. Accepting the traveling trophy on their behalf was 10th District Commander Bill Gordon. Also, Alex Eide of a team from Mahtomedi Post 507 bowled a 300 game.**





Americanism Chairman Paul Orson, top left, announced Americanism Winners for each district: Adams Post 146, Sleepy Eye Post 7, New Prague Post 45, St. Paul Post 8, Mpls.-Richfield Post 435, Melrose Post 101, Willmar Post 167, Bagley Post 16 and Anoka Post 102. Certificate of Distinguished Service went to North St. Paul Post 39 and Certificate of Meritorious Service went to Fairmont Post 36. Americanism awards are based off of Consolidated Post Reports, due June 1 annually.



From left are Minnesota Boys State Director Kyle Oldre, 10th District Vice Commander Tom Allen, Boys State Governor Luke McCrea and Commander Carl Moon. McCrea was sponsored by Clearwater Post 323, and Allen is a member of that post.

## Davis endorsed for SAL nat'l vice cmdr.

Continued from Page 11

Fall Conference on Oct. 26.

• Tom Clabo announced Community Service Awards. Recipients for Most Dollars Spent are Minneapolis Post 129, Fairmont Post 36 and Austin Post 91. Recipients for Most Volunteer Hours are Minneapolis Post 493, Mora Post 201 and Eagan Post 594.

• Bowling Committee member Tom Olson filled in for the chairman. The winner of the Bowling Tournament was Excelsior Post 259.

• Employment Chairman Luis Campero presented an Employer of the Year Award, in recognition of hiring veterans, to Guardian Fleet Services out of Clear Lake. Accepting were Steven Schrader and Lloyd Stimmler, who themselves are members of Clear Lake Post 354.

• Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Chairman Pam Krill announced Bloomington Post 550 as the recipient of the Pat Cliff Award.

“This post really stepped up to the challenge. They have donated over \$25,000 in direct support to their veterans and veterans programs within their community,” Krill said. “Instead of having to reach out to the department to take care of it, they are really working in-house to take care of veterans.”

• School Safety Patrol Chairman Rod Reifsteck, with Legionville President Carl Moon, presented the George J. Kaisersatt School Safety Award to Department Comptroller Rachael Hill.

• Then-Membership Director Carla Tappainer announced that the 1st District wins the Premier Race and recognized people for their membership efforts.

Gold Brigade is a national contest among department vice commanders. Gold Brigade results were 1. Donny Scow of 1st & 3rd at 95.62 percent, 2. Veronica Fernlund of 6th & 9th at 94.26 percent, 3. Pam Krill of 2nd & 7th at 93.96 percent, 4. Bill Gordon of 8th & 10th at 92.4 percent and 5. Joe Jansen of 4th & 5th at 85.92 percent.

Posts achieving 100 percent are listed at [mn-legion.org/posts-100-percent/](http://mn-legion.org/posts-100-percent/).

Minnesota finished its membership efforts

in 35th place. (For new members, that doesn't mean 35th largest. It's a ranking by percentage compared to the previous year.)

• NECman Bill Barbknecht presented a certificate of appreciation to Carl and Peggy Moon and Tess and Al Davis for their years of service to The American Legion.

• The Internal Affairs Committee held an evening session to discuss the draft of a five-year strategic plan it is developing. There will be more about this at the Fall Conference in late October.

• The DEC ratified the SAL slate of officers and endorsed Shawn Davis of Squadron 435 for SAL national vice commander.



Shawn Davis

### National Media Contest

Minnesota cleaned house in the National Media & Communications Contest.

**Innovation Award:** Jennifer Cole, video of Zimmerman ALR Chapter 560's annual veterans motorcycle ride

**Dept/Dist. Websites:** Jennifer Cole, [mnmigh-ty10thdistrict.org](http://mnmigh-ty10thdistrict.org)

**Posts up to 249 Websites:** Robert Dolan, [americanlegionpost501.org](http://americanlegionpost501.org)

**Posts over 750 Websites:** Bernard Baumann, [americanlegionpost1776.com](http://americanlegionpost1776.com)

**Dept/Dist. Editorial/News:** Timothy Engstrom, “Legion-Hearted” story on Army veteran Anthony Koop in Minnesota Legionnaire

**Dept/Dist. Editorial/Info:** Timothy Engstrom, “Ripley's Believe It” guide on turkey hunting with disabled veterans at Camp Ripley in Minnesota Legionnaire

**Dept/Dist. Publications:** Timothy Engstrom, The Minnesota Legionnaire

**Dept/Dist. Visual Media:** Timothy Engstrom, photo of National Commander Dan Seehafer preparing for a TV interview in Moorhead

**Posts up to 249 Visual Media:** Jennifer Cole, video of Zimmerman ALR Chapter 560 annual veterans ride

The contest's annual deadline is April 15. Submissions are sent in at [legion.org](http://legion.org).



Members of posts or their substitutes hold certificates for being among the top three in their districts in blood donations. First place winners were Winona Post 9, New Ulm Post 132, Chanhassen Post 580, Rosetown Post 542, Mpls. Hellenic Post 129, Zimmerman Post 560, Willmar Post 167, Cloquet Post 262, Bagley Post 16 and Anoka Post 102. A list of winners was printed in the July 2025 issue.



Commander Carl Moon stands next to Law Officer of the Year recipient State Patrol Trooper Zachary Gruver of Moorhead. With him is his captain and a member of the nominating post, Moorhead Post 21.



At the center of the three firefighters is Firefighter of the Year Shaun Heiderscheit of the Sleepy Eye Fire Department. With him are fellow Sleepy Eye firefighters, Commander Moon and two members of the nominating post, Sleepy Eye Post 7. Stories on the heroic actions of the Law Officer of the Year and Firefighter of the Year were printed in the June 2025 issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire.

## 3 goals for membership in 2025-26

I am Joe Bares of Jordan Post 3. Commander Linda Dvorak has asked me to be the membership director for her one-year term. Here are my three goals for membership this year:

**1. Retention:** Retention is our first priority, keeping the members we already have. Obtaining rosters and names of members who did not renew in 2023, 2024 and 2025. Then posts should reach out to them. If we are losing valuable members, we need to understand why. Was it due to a conflict, culture, bullying or isolation? Was it at the post, district or department levels? We can provide training to address these issues. Let's communicate with these members and try to bring them back. If promises were made, we need to fulfill them.

**2. Membership:** While we always aim for 100 percent, my realistic goal is 95 percent, which would place us in the top 10 percent nationally. We need to actively recruit new members, particularly focusing on reaching out to younger, minority and

### Membership Matters

female veterans.

The number of eligible veterans in these groups is low, so it is crucial to engage with them and utilize the new app for recruitment. Do not let potential members slip away; they can always be transferred to other posts later. Utilize the Post 1982-AD excel spreadsheet broken down by zip code for transfer effort. This should simplify the process of printing and sending out information to encourage members to transfer to a local post or a district at-large post. While posts are typically responsible for recruitment, if the department can provide assistance, we should take advantage of it.

**3. Community engagement:** Encourage posts to host open houses and showcase the work the Legion does in the community. Utilize opportunities such as county fairs, town celebrations,

Joe Bares

female veterans.

Also go to school boards and city councils and explain our four pillars. “Back to the Basics” is explaining our veterans and youth programs. A big reason to join is mutual helpfulness itself. Utilize resources from the national and department organization for media items and promotional materials. I will make an effort to attend as many membership functions and open houses as possible. Additionally, I will organize special events throughout the year.

Joe Bares of Jordan Post 3 is the department membership director.







Front row from left are Sergeant-at-Arms Gary Richardson, Historian Sandy Gessler, Chaplain Jim Mead, Vice Commander Daniel Siats, Vice Commander Steve NaSalle, Vice Commander Dennis De Long, Vice Commander Karen Welander, Vice Commander Myron Ehrich, Membership Director Joe Bares, Adjutant Mike Maxa, Commander Linda Dvorak. Back row are 1st District Commander Brian Medinnus, 2nd District Commander Tom Behrends, 3rd District Commander Amy Larsen, 5th District Commander Lynne Nottage, 7th District Commander Pete Flannery, 8th District Commander Steven Birkemeyer, 9th District Commander Dennis Henkemeyer and 10th District Commander Bill Gordon.



Minnesota Commissioner of Veterans Affairs presents Commander Carl Moon with his coin. With them is Past Department Commander Paul Hassing.



Minnesota Oratorical Contest champion Elijah Cox and his father, Chris Cox, stand with Commander Carl Moon and Americanism Chairman Paul Orson.



Commander Carl Moon presents attorney and veteran Ryan Else of the Veterans Defense Project with a check for \$45,383, the result of his Commander's Project.



Lee Tallakson, center, and Tom Schottenbauer, of St. Louis Park Post 282 present a big check for \$11,000 representing donations for Minnesota American Legion Foundation funds 61 (ROTC Scholarship), 65 (Pheasant Dinner), 78 (Minn. Disaster Relief) and 87 (Jr. Shooting Sports).



Sergeant-at-Arms Gary Richardson's wife, Teri, made a motorcycle quilt for Past Minnesota ALR Director Ted Berg, center. Holding it are Jeffery Olson of Briceyn Post 165 and Richardson.



The New Prague Veterans Honor Guard posts the colors at the end of the 2025 Department Convention. They will serve a year as the department color guard.



The Minnesota 9th District American Legion Band was present Saturday morning of the convention to play and sing patriotic songs.



Minnesota American Legion Foundation President Lloyd Ricker hands Commander Carl Moon a \$5,000 check for the foundation for his project, which will later will be presented to Veterans Defense Project.



Owatonna Post 77 Commander Todd Schwanke presents \$250 to the Brain Science Foundation and \$1,000 to Commander Moon's Project.



Membership award recipients display their goods. From left back, Past 1st District Director Mark Maloney won the 2024-25 Premier Race (a competition among districts), a Little Falls Post 46 member substitutes for Jessica Warzecha of Post 46, Membership Director Karla Tappainer, Pequot Lakes Post 49 Commander Beth Medeiros and Zimmerman Post 560 member Frank Grittner for Post 560 Commander Sergio Sajon. In front are Commander Carl Moon and Gold Brigade winner Terry Larson of Forest Lake Post 225.



Commander Linda Dvorak, center, and Past Commander Mark Dvorak, right, stand with members of their family after the end of the convention.



# Suicide Prevention Day in Marshall to feature ‘Be the One’ mobile app

MARSHALL — The American Legion will have a major part of the seventh annual Minnesota Veteran Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day being held at Red Baron Arena in Marshall from 9 a.m. to noon Oct. 4.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs organizes the event. The theme this year is “Be the One: A Wellness Mission for Service Members, Veterans and their Families.”

Wendy Lakso of the Columbia

Lighthouse Project and Minnesota American Legion Communications Director Tim Engstrom will speak about the Legion’s “Be the One” mobile app and how it can assist in the prevention of veteran suicide.

The MDVA is asking veterans to download The American Legion’s “Be the One” mobile app. MDVA is working hand-in-hand with officials from the national and state American Legion to customize the app.

The Legion worked with the Columbia Lighthouse Project to develop its suicide-prevention app.

The event schedule is 9-10 a.m. vendor fair and networking, 10-11 a.m. program, 11 a.m.-noon vendor fair and networking, along with Sioux Falls VA conducting S.A.V.E. training for anyone who desires to take it.

Marshall Post 113 will present the colors alongside the Lower Sioux Color Guard.

## BE THE ONE

American Legion Department Service Officer Janet Lorenzo will be there, staffing a table and able to answer questions veterans and their supporters have about the Department of Minnesota.

The MDVA veteran-suicide prevention staff is creating packets to

go out to posts with cantinas to help their bar, restaurant and pulltab staff identify and prevent signs of veteran suicide. Look for it to be distributed in September.

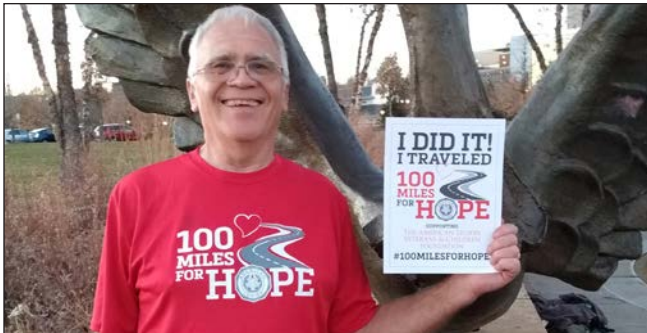
“Our goals are to increase awareness and provide resources to communities as we strive to reduce veteran suicide deaths in Minnesota,” states an MDVA news release.

For more information, contact [suicideprevention.mdva@state.mn.us](mailto:suicideprevention.mdva@state.mn.us).

## Listening Post



Alexandria Post 87 Commander Charlie Olson presents a \$2,000 donation to Eagle’s Healing Nest Executive Director Shawn Kor.



Bloomington Post 550 member Larry Johnson wears his American Legion 100 Miles of Hope shirt and wants members to participate in the American Legion USA 250 Challenge in celebration of the nation’s 250th birthday. The challenge has varying levels and concludes July 4, 2026. Register at [legion.org](http://legion.org) and get a free USA 250 T-shirt.



Commander Linda Dvorak met 101-year-old WWII veteran Lester Schrenk at the Raspberry Festival Parade in Hopkins. Schrenk spent more than a year as a POW in Germany.



On Feb. 27, 1969 the Da Nang Navy Support Activity group sustained the highest casualties for any U.S. Navy operation during Vietnam. The casualty toll was 22 KIA and 37 WIA. Long overdue recognition for their sacrifices, a congressional declaration was awarded for the NSA group, with assistance from Congressman Brad Finstad. From left are survivor Jon Rackley, Congressional Aide Isaiah Osborne, survivor Steve Chase, survivor Leonard Sonneck and survivor Paul Garske.



The North St. Paul Post 39 Honor Guard and VFW Post 1350 Rifle Squad honored two service members with military honors at two cemeteries, with 17 veterans respectfully paying their final respects and saluting their fellow veterans, exemplifying the enduring spirit of camaraderie.



North Side Post 230 members present a \$500 check and \$40 cash to the Minneapolis Veterans Home so residents could celebrate Christmas in July.



Lake City Post 110 recently presented certificates of commendation to the training personnel of the Lake City Fire Department. From left are Legion Member Bill Otto, Lake City Firefighters Dan Cox, Jake Schumacher, and Derek Nibbe, Post 110 member Steve Brandt and Post 110 Commander Dick Grobe.



Dent Post 148 held a fish fry for veterans from the Fergus Falls Veterans Home on June 20. All had a very enjoyable time.



Chaska Post 57 Commander Gary VanEyll led a Memorial Day service at Veterans Park in Chaska, with a keynote address by Norwood-Young America Post 343 Past Commander Richard Stolz, who spoke on the importance of veterans who served in support roles to make combat at the front lines successful.



# Listening Post



Marshall Post 113 members recently held a flag retirement. The event, where 655 flags were respectfully consumed in a proper fire, was conducted in a dignified manner outlined in the Legion manual. Flags can be brought to receptacles at the Legion post at 411 W. Lyon St., at the swimming pool maintenance building or the Running's store.



The Rosetown Post 542 Color Guard honors the retirement of Ken Gibson from its ranks after serving 30 years.



St. Louis Park Post 282 Commander Dick Brammer, left, and Past Commander Tom Schottenbauer hold a replica version of the historic Revolutionary Era Bunker Hill flag. They also hosted a display of various colonial flags. The post has a large collection of historical flags and has decided to put them on display. It is at 6509 Walker St.



National Vice Commander Jim Kellogg congratulated Fairmont Post 36 Commander Steve Fosness on his post being named Post of the Year by the Department Fastpitch Softball Committee.



New London Boy Scouts assist New London Post 537 with a flag-retirement ceremony.



St. Michael Post 567 Commander Chelby Augello, second from left, awards life memberships to Frank Kocon, Elmer Eichelberg and Maynard Warne, an 80-year member for whom Post Service Officer Andy Hanson filled in. Unfortunately, Warne passed on to Post Everlasting Aug. 17.



On June 15, the Winona Post 9 Chapter of the American Legion Riders had the honor of escorting Miss America for the second time for the Winona Steamboat Days Parade.



Woodbury Post 501 members participate in Northern Tap House's Nonprofit Tuesday. In the picture are Post Commander Bob Dolan, Post Finance Officer Teresa Skinner and Post members Ken Cartier and Tim Crear.



Truman Blakesley Post 432 in Warba, led by Commander Gary Sutherland, accomplished major improvements to its campground, public beach and playground over the past several years. The campground went through electrical upgrades with individual water supply lines, raised gravel pads for RVs and drive-thru access. The restroom/shower house has been completely remodeled. The post finished a \$32,000 landscape improvement to its open-to-the-public beach on Sand Lake this spring. There is a new 24-foot-by-28-foot maintenance building, that wrapped up last fall. The projects were funded with campground income and generous grants from the Blandin Foundation, the Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board, the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation, Enbridge Energy and others. Auxiliary Unit 432 member Lisa Randall, has been instrumental in grant applications. A dedicated group of volunteers from Post and Unit 432 show up every Tuesday morning to work on projects, from trees to roofs to interiors.





LINDA DVORAK  
New Prague  
COMMANDER

# Minnesota's 2025-26 Dept. Leadership Team



MYRON EHRICH  
West Concord  
VICE COMMANDER 1&3



KAREN WELANDER  
Sunburg  
VICE COMMANDER 2&7



DENNIS DE LONG  
Bloomington  
VICE COMMANDER 4&5



STEVE NASALLE  
Fergus Falls  
VICE COMMANDER 6&9



DANIEL SIATS  
Northome  
VICE COMMANDER 8&10



JOE BARES  
Jordan  
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR



SANDY GESSLER  
Albert Lea  
HISTORIAN



JIM MEAD  
Bloomington  
CHAPLAIN



GARY RICHARDSON  
Mahtomedi  
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS



CARL MOON  
Walker  
NECman



PAUL HASSING  
Montgomery  
Alternate NECman

Moon and Hassing receive red caps  
shortly after the national convention.

## District Commanders



BRIAN MEDINNUS  
Austin  
DIST. 1 COMMANDER



TOM BEHRENDIS  
Worthington  
DIST. 2 COMMANDER



AMY LARSEN  
Webster  
DIST. 3 COMMANDER



JON HAWORTH  
Minneapolis  
DIST. 4 COMMANDER



LYNN NOTTAGE  
Minneapolis  
DIST. 5 COMMANDER



FRANK GRITTNER  
Elk River  
DIST. 6 COMMANDER



PETE FLANNERY  
Hancock  
DIST. 7 COMMANDER



STEVE BIRKEMEYER  
Cloquet  
DIST. 8 COMMANDER



DENNIS HENKEMEYER  
Bagley  
DIST. 9 COMMANDER

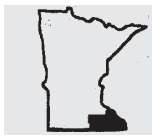


BILL GORDON  
Albertville  
DIST. 10 COMMANDER

Shown above are new officers. Department officers continuing in their positions are Adjutant Michael Maxa, Judge Advocate Greg Colby and Treasurer Al Davis. Also on the team are Past Department Commander Jennifer Havlick, PNC Dan Ludwig and immediate past district commanders (or their substitutes). NECman Bill Barbknecht and Alt. NECman Peggy Moon end terms Aug. 28.



# District commanders



## 1st District

Brian Medinnus



Greetings from the Fighting First.

It isn't often in the Legion Family that a district commander gets a second chance to lead their district. It used to be a rare occurrence. Now it seems to happen more often. I am one of the people who has a second chance to lead — 12 years after my first term.

The 1st District won the Premiere Membership Race last year, 2024-25. As of this article we are still leading. As I remind my district, this is a new membership year. Last year's race is

over, and a new race has begun. We can't let up. We have to work that much harder to stay on top.

This is a year of change. The landscape of The American Legion has changed, and we have to keep up on the Legion world as it is today.

It will be an interesting year — bring on the challenges and let us see where things take us. The sky is the limit!



## 2nd District

Tom Behrends



Welcome from the Sizzling Second, my fellow Legionnaires and American Legion Family! Thank you to everyone for electing me to be the 2nd District commander for the coming year. Thank you, James Olson, for your time and devotion to duty the last two years as 2nd District commander! I have some big shoes to fill!

I am Tom Behrends from Post 464 Brewster. I have been an American Legion member for 33 years, as well as a SAL member for 14 years. My dad was in World War II, fighting his way across Europe with Gen. George Patton. I was in the Minnesota Army National Guard for 29 1/2 years, serving as a 11C 81 MM mortarman, 11B Infantryman, and finished out my career as a 13B artilleryman. I deployed to England to augment the Air Force Security Forces as a 1st sergeant in 2003-04, and then deployed to Iraq as a command sergeant major from 2005 to 2007. Veterans' causes are near and dear to my heart.

My theme for the coming year is, "What Can We Do to Help?" The 2nd District leadership team

is here to help, if you have a question or a problem let us know. We will find the answer for you and will help you resolve any issues.

My official Commander's Project is to raise funds for the Tails of Hope therapy dog program at the Bravo Zulu House near Winnebago. Initial donations will be used to help finish the state-of-the-art kennel for 12 therapy dogs for the veterans who are healing at Bravo Zulu House.

Once that phase of the mission is complete, funds will be allocated for the dogs themselves and their upkeep. I know personally how healing a dog can be for a veteran. Well, in my case it takes four dogs. Most days they are my therapy dogs; some days I am their therapy human. You can check it out [bravozuluhouse.org/tails-of-hope](http://bravozuluhouse.org/tails-of-hope). Donations can be sent to: Thomas Behrends, 78739 320th Ave, Worthington, MN 56187. For God & Country.



## 3rd District

Amy Larsen



It is both an honor and a privilege to serve as your commander. This year, my theme is "Helping Veterans Connect." What does that mean? It means listening — truly listening — to our fellow veterans to understand their needs, experiences and hopes.

We all found a home serving this country. Many of us have found a new home serving our communities through The American Legion. But connection doesn't stop there. I've had veterans come to me and say, "I want to talk to someone who served in the same time and area as I did." And that's exactly what I try to help them do — find those connections that matter.

One place I've seen this connection in action is at the hunting and fishing event at Camp Ripley. Veterans come not just for the outdoors, but for the opportunity to talk, reflect and heal. These moments remind me that sometimes the most powerful thing we can do is simply

listen. The American Legion is a home for all veterans. But to truly live up to that promise, we must be open to their ideas, respectful of their time and willing to meet them where they are. Our organization was built on the backs of volunteer veterans who shared a common goal: to continue serving this nation. Let's honor their legacy by coming together, listening more and projecting less.

As we march forward, let's remember those who came before us and strive to make them proud. And let's never forget — we are setting the example for the next generation. For the children who wave flags and place hands over hearts as we pass by in parade routes, we are the living embodiment of service and sacrifice.

Let's make sure they see a community united, compassionate and strong.



## 6th District

Frank Grittner



Greetings from the BIG 6th District.

Another Department Convention is behind us, and the beginning of National Convention is just a little more than a week away.

Congratulations to all of the new department, district and post officers elected at the conventions and meetings over the past few months. I look forward to working with each of you to make this another successful year for The American Legion.

My theme this year is once again twofold. The first is "Together We Can." This is in reference to all that we can accomplish if we bond *together*.

Each time I stop in on a meeting, or attend an event I am invited to, it just continues to reinforce the fact that we can do so much *together*. We need to continue to let our communities know what a vital part we play in everyday life. From supporting local youth sports teams, to acquiring and installing accessible ramps for a needy veteran.

The other theme is "Hunting for Membership." As always, membership retention and getting

new members is a challenge. But if we are dedicated to our American Legion, we can find opportunities everywhere we go. All we need to do is keep our eyes and ears open to those opportunities. Let's all work *together* to make the hunt successful.

My Commander's Project is to raise funds to enhance the safety training experience at Legionville for our kids. We are planning to offer ATV safety in conjunction with the Minnesota DNR, and we need all the equipment necessary to do this. From ATV's, to helmets and other safety equipment. We also need to replace some of the water safety equipment that is starting to show signs of age. And adding a full-size beach volleyball court for some added activities would be nice as well.

I look forward to seeing all of you in my travels this year. I hope to see you at Camporee at Legionville on Sept. 4-6, especially at the 6th District fish fry on Saturday.



## 8th District

Steven Birkemeyer



Hello to the 8th District!

Thank you for everyone's support from our district convention. I will do my best to deserve it. I've already met with officers from several posts, and I would like to meet as many other posts as I can. If you would like me to come visit your post, contact me to work out something.

With the new year comes new goals and projects. I have two projects as my goals. One is supporting Legionville. They do great work with our youth, with safety training on a variety of areas to the camping for families.

My other project is to improve communications in the district at all levels. I will be sending out a letter with more details soon. If you have ideas or concerns, let us know about them. Without interest or input from the membership, we won't get things done. Department has set a goal for the district to increase membership by 36 members. If you have any questions or ideas, or if you need help, contact the

district membership director.

As Vice Commander Gene Swanson stated in last month's issue, we have filled all our officer and committee positions except chaplain. If anyone is interested, contact the commander or adjutant.

The Minnesota American Legion Baseball Division II Sr. State Tournament was held in Ely from July 31 through Aug. 2. Fan turnout was fantastic.

We are looking for posts to host the District Mid-Winter Conference on Jan. 24, 2026, and the District Convention on June 6, 2026. If any post is interested in hosting either of these, contact the adjutant.

It takes all of us, working together, to make the district a winning team. "Together We Can," because we can do wonderful things when we put our minds and our hearts into it. Blessings to all of you. Stay safe.

**Below are members of the St. Michael Post 567 Honor Guard in the Albertville Friendly City Days Parade on June 15. With them is Unit 567 President Tami Morton. The post had a float with the Statue of Liberty, highlighting the post's Liberty Restaurant.**



## 9th District

Dennis Henkemeyer



Greetings from the Roaring 9th District! First and foremost, I want to congratulate and wish the best to Department Commander Linda Dvorak of New Prague Post 45.

I also want to congratulate and wish the best to our very own Department Vice Commander Steve NaSalle of Fergus Falls Post 30. I want to wish the very best to Department President Robin Dorf of Monticello Unit 260.

Last and definitely not least, I want to congratulate my beautiful wife, Denise Milton, as the new 9th District president.

When I was elected detachment commander of the Sons of The American Legion, I selected the theme "Together Let's Propel to the Top" in honor of my late father who was a proud Navy

veteran of World War II serving in the Pacific Theater as an aviation machinist mate. I shall stick with that same very theme.

I was struggling with a project this year until I listened to Legionville President Carl Moon at the Department Convention talk about all the BIG projects at Legionville — so that is what I am settling on.

As a matter of fact, 9th District President Milton has decided on Legionville, too, and so we are making it a joint district project.

I look forward to a great year in the 9th District and the Department of Minnesota.



## 10th District

Bill Gordon



Do you hear the "Jaws" theme? What an honor to be able to serve as your 10th District commander for another year. I am truly humbled and very proud to stand with you side by side as we serve our veterans and their families. I look forward to your support this year and seeing you at our post, district and department events.

We have a lot of work ahead of us and so many fun-filled events for your family and your Legion family. You should soon be receiving your post and district newsletters. They are loaded with all sorts of news, events and interesting things that we are doing in our local communities and our Mighty Tenth District.

I will wait. Go head and get your post, district newsletters, the current issue of the Legionnaire your school and sports schedules and your work schedule. Oh, and don't forget your calendar, either paper or electronic.

Do you have them and your favorite beverage? Great so we are ready to get started. First let's make sure we have all the dates we want to set aside for our deity, wife, husband, significant other and our family. Next let's make sure we have marked off our work time. Wow, it looks like there is some space left between the date nights, recitals, games, birthdays and reunions to make memories with your family and the Legion Family.

Now write in all the events, meetings, conferences, conventions and even rallies you will be attending with your family. You

and your family can also become members of the American Legion, the largest veterans organization in the county. Family members can become members of the Auxiliary, the Sons of the American Legion, Juniors Auxiliary and the American Legion Riders.

Email me at [wgordon5665@aol.com](mailto:wgordon5665@aol.com), or text me at 320-491-5665. I will get you the information you need for your local community or have someone reach out to you in your local area.

District vice commanders, post adjutants and or commanders, please email me or text me at 320-491-5665, you can even call and leave a voice mail for me at 1-763-515-3686. Let me know the date, time and location {address} of your meeting so I can schedule it.

District vice commanders, if you can visit your posts with me that would be awesome. I will be looking forward to meeting and visiting everyone to hear all about what *you* and *your* post are doing in your communities, the Mighty Tenth District and our awesome state of Minnesota.

What suggestions and recommendations do you have that will make our organization stronger? "Everyone wants to be interesting. The vitalizing thing is to be interested. It's what you learn, after you know it all that counts." — John W. Gardner





# The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 26 Vol. 1

President Robin Dorf • Secretary Christie Avant, christie@mnala.org

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



Front from left are 1st Vice President Linda Kelly, 2025-26 Department President Robin Dorf and 2nd Vice President Jody Hassing. Back from left are 1st District President Wanda Prescher, 2nd District President Kristen Donnelly, 3rd District President Ann Bovy, 4th District President Sandra Gibson, 5th District President Becky Nelson, 6th District President Wendy Grittner, 7th District President Mary Kuperus, 8th District President Tamara Martin, 9th District President Denise Milton and 10th District President Brandi Christensen.

## Working our programs promotes ALA

Welcome to the 2025-2026 American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota year!

I am honored to represent the members of the Department of Minnesota. This organization, and you the members, have given me opportunities to grow, learn and contribute in ways I never thought possible. We need to continue to encourage each other, support new ideas, and celebrate both individual achievements and collective success of our department.

Our theme this year is "Promoting Our Mission by Working Our Programs."

The Department President's Project (our Minnesota Project) this year will be Honor Flight. Participation in an Honor Flight trip gives our veterans the opportunity to share this significant occasion with other comrades, remember the fallen, and share their stories and experiences with other veterans.

The goal is to raise \$35,000 to split evenly between the six hubs and Lone Eagle Honor Flight that support our Minnesota veterans, so that each gets \$5,000. There is a flier in the unit mailing, and it will be on the website about the project and what hubs support the surrounding counties.

Let's talk about Fall Conference Oct. 24-25, with committee meetings Oct. 23, in St. Cloud. Plans are being made, and the conference will have a different look this year, but with some favorites. More information will be in the unit mailings. We will add some outside speakers, and our program chairman will have a focus for their reports. Resource information will be available.

There will be a Poppy Making Contest again this year between

## President's Message

Robin Dorf



sister districts on Friday night. What an opportunity to volunteer and give back! We are asking all of the American Legion Family to come over on Friday night to help. There is a continued poppy shortage. Poppy distribution helps with donating funds back to our veterans. Poppy Chairman Hope Wilson will have more information in the unit mailing.

The American Legion Family will have a service project this year for the St. Cloud Stand Down. The St. Cloud Stand Down assists veterans in Minnesota with resources and needed items free of charge. They provide food, clothing, accessories, footwear, job connections, and housing information and resources for veterans in need, at risk, or homeless.

We will be collecting new (not used) men's and women's underwear, men's and women's socks, men's and women's winter jackets, hats, scarves and gloves, full-size toiletries including body wash, deodorants, razors, lotions, brushes/combs, tampons and sanitary pads (light/medium).

Congratulations to American Legion Commander Linda Dvorak, Sons of the American Legion Commander Jeremy Copher, American Legion Riders Director Duane Mabon and our Honorary Junior President Anastasia Donnelly. I am looking forward to working with you this year.

To our outgoing leadership, thank you for your tireless service and the strong foundation you have built this past year.

We are grateful for your service and the positive changes you have brought about during your year. A special thank you to Past President Judy Ackerman for your leadership and service this past year.

To our incoming leadership congratulations on your election. I look forward to serving with you. Your dedication, skills, and fresh perspectives will be invaluable in guiding us toward a brighter future for our department. Let us remember that our strength lies in our shared commitment to our mission.

Leadership is not always easy. We may face challenges and tough decisions. But we need to keep in mind we are here to serve our mission. We have the support of fellow members, and the experience of those who came before us.

Thank you again for this honor. I promise to continue working hard, supporting our members and representing our department with pride. Together, we will keep building something special that makes a real difference for our veterans, military and their families.

*Robin Dorf of Monticello Unit 260 is the president of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota. Her theme is "Promoting Our Mission by Working Our Programs."*

## Membership theme will celebrate America turning 250 years old

By Kollett Kaehlert  
Membership Chairman

Hello, I am Kollett Kaehlert, your 2025-2026 department membership chairman. I am from Mankato Unit 11 in the 2nd District and have been an Auxiliary member for 43 years. If you would like to reach me, my email is kkaehlertaux@gmail.com.

### 2025-26 District Membership Chairmen

District 1: Karla "Sunshine" Maloney  
928sunshine@gmail.com

District 2: Robin Olson  
rrde2002@gmail.com

District 3: Jeorgia Cluckey  
jcluckey11@gmail.com

District 4: Karla Joyce  
drkarlajoyce@comcast.net

District 5: Mary Younkin  
mary.younkin440@gmail.com

District 6: Abby Zenzen  
abbyzenzen654@hotmail.com

District 7: Kathy Xchmiedeker  
kschmiedeker@gmail.com

District 8:

District 9: Molly Magnusson  
mollymagnusson95@gmail.com

District 10: Barbara Hopewell  
barbara.hopewellala@outlook.com

Our great country turns 250 years old on July 4, and we are going to celebrate all year long with our members.

We will be bringing together our current members, past members and of course new members. The goal is to get to 100 percent. Where do I look, who do I ask, and how do I get members to sign up?

All excellent questions. We need to look in everyday places that you may not have thought to look at before. The best line when you are meeting someone new is "Do you have anyone in your family who has or is serving in the military?" Start the conversation. Tell them about the great programs we work and how we support our veterans. If you had someone that was eligible at one time but wasn't ready to join, try asking them again, maybe things have changed in their life. Remember to ASK!

### Department Goal Awards

50% Oct. 25, 2025

Fall Conference: St. Cloud

75% Dec. 6, 2025

Pearl Harbor Rally: Buffalo

85% March 14, 2026

Appreciation Rally: Bloomington

95% May 23, 2026

National Poppy Day

I am excited to see us work together in Legion Family style as we gain new members. We can do this! I am looking forward to being able to encourage and motivate the members! Let's have a *fun* year as we play together! There will be a lottery drawing at each of the rallies, the units that have reached the goal for the rally by the end of membership turn in will be placed in the drawing for \$75. (One winner per rally.)

I am honored to be your Department of Minnesota Membership Chairman for 2026. I look forward to a successful year with all ten districts and getting to know you all more! Feel free to contact me anytime. I am always open to hearing your ideas and finding ways to make them happen!

## Poppy Contest to be held at Fall Conference

We have the tradition of doing two poppy contests at Fall Conference and Department Convention. I hope to make them fun so everyone will feel like participating. We again will have prizes and people's choice. The fund from the people's choice will go to Department President Robin's project: Honor Flights. Hopefully you will all be inspired to get your junior members involved with one or both contests. I can't wait to see what you all will come up with.

### Contest 1 – Poppy Holiday Display

Using the ALA poppy, create a holiday display of your choice. The white tags should be removed from the entry. Be creative! Think outside the box.

### Contest 2 – Poppy Craft Project

Using a poppy theme but not using any of our ALA poppies, create a craft project depicting the poppy/poppies. This project can be sewn, knitted, crocheted, embroidered, painted, drawn, diamond dots, etc. – the skies the limit. Let's show that we can promote the poppy without using our precious poppies since we are in such short supply.

1st Place - \$20  
2nd Place - \$15  
3rd Place - \$10

People's Choice - \$20, with funds going towards President Robin's Project: Honor Flights

Poppy entries must be brought to the Department Fall Conference at the Rivers Edge Convention Center by Friday October 24th, 2025, at 10:00 am. Let's see how many tables we can fill.

Friday Night Fun will be a Poppy Making American Legion Family Competition Team

## Want to go?

The 2025 Fall Conference will be held at River's Edge Conference Center in St. Cloud Oct. 24-25. The Department Executive Committee will meet Oct. 23.

The Auxiliary Department of Minnesota has a lot of information packed into these three short days for units to partake. A reminder to all that we will once again be holding a silent auction and Poppy Contests.

Find registration form or how to register online on Page 3.

Rematch! This fun event is for the WHOLE American Legion Family. Gather up your best or worst poppy makers and let's see which District's will come out on top. Remember that the veterans will get paid for the poppies they make, it will be very fun.

How this is going to work each team will be made up of sister districts, so five (5) teams total. The teams are 1 & 3, 2 & 7, 4 & 5, 6 & 9 and 8 & 10, they will work together to see which team will come out on top. We are hoping to get a lot of poppies made on Friday night. How many can each team make? Let's see if we can beat last year's numbers. We had 154 participants and a whopping 3,729 Poppies were made.





## 2025-26 Department Officers

Dept. President  
1st Vice President  
2nd Vice President  
NEC  
Alt NEC  
Sergeant at Arms  
Chaplain  
Historian  
Parliamentarian  
Secretary  
Treasurer & Past Dept. Pres.  
Honorary Junior President

Robin Dorf  
Linda Kelly  
Jody Hassing  
Jean Walker  
Raleen Tolzmann  
Lorinda Kies  
Marsha Bible  
Karla Otterness  
Norma Tramm  
Christie Avant  
Judy Ackerman  
Anastasia Donnelly

## District Presidents

District 1	Wanda Prescher
District 2	Kristen Donnelly
District 3	Ann Bovy
District 4	Sandra Gibson
District 5	Becky Nelson
District 6	Wendy Grittner
District 7	Mary Kuperus
District 8	Tamara Martin
District 9	Denise Milton
District 10	Brandi Christensen

## Chairman and Committees

Advisory Committee  
Advisory Committee  
Advisory Committee  
Advisory Committee  
American Legion  
Convention Corporation  
Americanism  
Armed Forces  
Servicemen's Center  
Aux. Emerg. Fund  
Brain Science Chairman  
Brain Science Committee  
Brain Science Committee  
Children & Youth  
Community Service  
Constitution & Standing Rules  
Education  
Finance Chairman  
Finance Committee  
Finance Committee  
Finance Committee  
Finance Committee  
Gift Shop Chairman  
Gift Shop Committee  
Girls State Chairman  
Girls State Director  
Girls State Ed Director  
Girls State Committee  
Girls State Committee  
Girls State Americanism  
Junior Activities  
Leadership  
Legislation  
Membership  
Memory Book  
National Security  
Past Preidents Parley  
Poppy  
Public Relations  
Risk & Compliance Chair  
Risk & Compliance Cmte  
Risk & Compliance Cmte  
VA&R  
MN Vets Home - Bemidji  
MN Vets Home - Fergus Fall  
MN Vets Home - Hastings  
MN Vets Home - Laverne  
MN Vets Home - Minneapolis  
MN Vets Home - Montevideo  
MN Vets Home - Preston  
MN Vets Home - Silver Bay  
Fargo VAMC  
Minneapolis VAMC  
Sioux Falls VAMC  
St Cloud VAMC

Chris Ronning  
Darlene Wondra  
Raleen Tolzmann  
Carol Kottom  
Cathy Radil

Tamara Thayer  
Jean Walker

Joanie Krantz  
Barbara Hopewell  
Patty Gunderson  
Bethany Dickert  
Sandy Wersal  
Tamara Martin  
Carol Kottom  
Cari Lamb  
Judy Ackerman  
Cavalene Regan  
Tonia Betterman  
Jill Davis  
Patti Coleman  
Becky Nelson  
Sharon Voltz  
Wanda Prescher  
Peggy Tesdahl  
Amelia Tesdahl  
Renee Suess  
Jen Stoltz  
Tamara Thayer  
Brandi Christensen  
Mary Kuperus  
Jody Hassing  
Kollett Kaehlert  
Ashley Kuperus  
Anna Eells  
Sharon Cross  
Hope Wilson  
Michelle Weaver  
Kathy Kessler  
Deanna Meyer  
Sandra Fredrickson  
Linda Kelly  
Denise Milton  
Doris Lafayette  
Darlene Wondra  
Jeannette Mertens  
Sandy Gibson  
Sandy Wersal  
Wanda Prescher  
Tamara Martin  
Becky Olson  
Janet Thompson  
Diane Strassburg  
Jan Benson

**2024-25  
Department  
President Judy  
Ackerman  
and Past  
Department  
Executive  
Secretary  
Sandy Deutsch  
share a laugh  
during the  
department  
convention.**



Junior members sitting in front of the Legionville sign during the 15th annual Junior Fun Weekend held Aug. 8-10.

## Jr. Fun Weekend was filled with fun

**By Brandi Christensen**  
Junior Activities Chairman

LEGIONVILLE — The 15th Annual Junior Fun Weekend was held Aug. 8-10 at Legionville in Brainerd.

Friday after everyone got settled the girls played a couple of games to “get to know” one another.

One was a bead game where they went around and collected a bead from one another and introduced themselves and told that person an interesting fact about themselves. They collected these beads to make a bracelet.

Saturday morning, the younger girls learned from the older girls how to raise the American flag. Then they learned about the poppy, heard about the Poppy Lady, and learned how to make a poppy from Department Poppy Chairman Hope Wilson.

The girls also made some poppy fingerprint art to take home. All of this helped them earn their Poppy Patch from the Patch Program.

Thank you, Hope, for doing this!

Later they tie-dyed T-shirts and played some fun games outside. Then it was off to the beach

for some fun!

As night came, they learned how to lower the American flag and fold it while learning the meaning of the folds. Thank you to the Department Americanism Chairman Tamara Thayer. The juniors loved this!

Saturday night, they enjoyed a fire with snacks and a movie.

It was a bittersweet farewell on Sunday morning when it was time to clean and pack up to go home. The juniors absolutely love this weekend and they have so much fun!

I was very impressed with these girls as they all stuck together and included everyone in everything! No one felt left out at all! Such amazing young ladies!

Thank you, Department President Robin Dorf, for all your help as well as Past Department President Judy Ackerman.

Thank you, Kristen Donnelly, for being our resident EMT. Thank you to our cooks Joanie Krantz and Jean Walker. And thank you to the chaperones for all your help and support with the girls.

And most of all thank you to the juniors for such an awesome weekend! I will never forget it!



**2024-25 Department President Judy Ackerman and Department Leadership Chairman Carol Kottom present Tami Paul, as the 2024-2025 Member of the Year. Besides the plaque and recognition at Department Convention Tami Paul, member of Shakopee Unit 2, receives money towards a trip to National Convention to be held in Tampa, Fla., the last week of August. While there she will attend the Member of the Year luncheon to be recognized with recipients from other departments.**



**From left are SAL Detachment Commander Jeremy Copher, American Legion Department Commander Linda Dvorak, American Legion Auxiliary Department President Robin Dorf and American Legion Auxiliary Honorary Department Junior President Anastasia Donnelly.**

## ‘Be the Sun’

**By AJ Donnelly**  
Honorary Jr. President

My name is Anastasia or “AJ” Donnelly. I am a senior in high school at North Union High School in Armstrong, Iowa.

I am active in color guard; I work at Taco Johns in Fairmont. I have been in the Junior Auxiliary since I was born. I have held many positions on the district and department levels.

This year my symbol is the sunflower. My theme is “Be the SUN in a Veterans Life”

My project is to raise funds for Legionville to help with the plumbing expenses and whatever else they need. The reason for this project is due to *all* of the good times at Junior Fun Weekend over the years.

It has been a great place to learn about the programs that the American Legion Auxiliary has to offer. This is a place that deserves to be around for a long time to come but without funds for updating that will not be possible. I attended my last Junior Fun Weekend; it was a fun time but a sad time as we said, see you later at the end of the weekend.

I look forward to seeing you this year as the Juniors will be “Be the *Sun* in a Veterans Life.”

## Of the way we were

**By Ashley Kuperus**  
Memory Book Chairman

Hello everyone! It's a new Auxiliary year full of new opportunities. As the memory book chairman this year, I am asking everyone to send me pictures of President Robin Dorf during her year in office.

Please include details such as the date and location where the photo was taken, as well as a brief description of the activity or event. I ask you to only send digital pictures as Dorf has asked for her memory book to be digital this year. Thank you in advance!

## AEF Silent Auction & Bake Sale

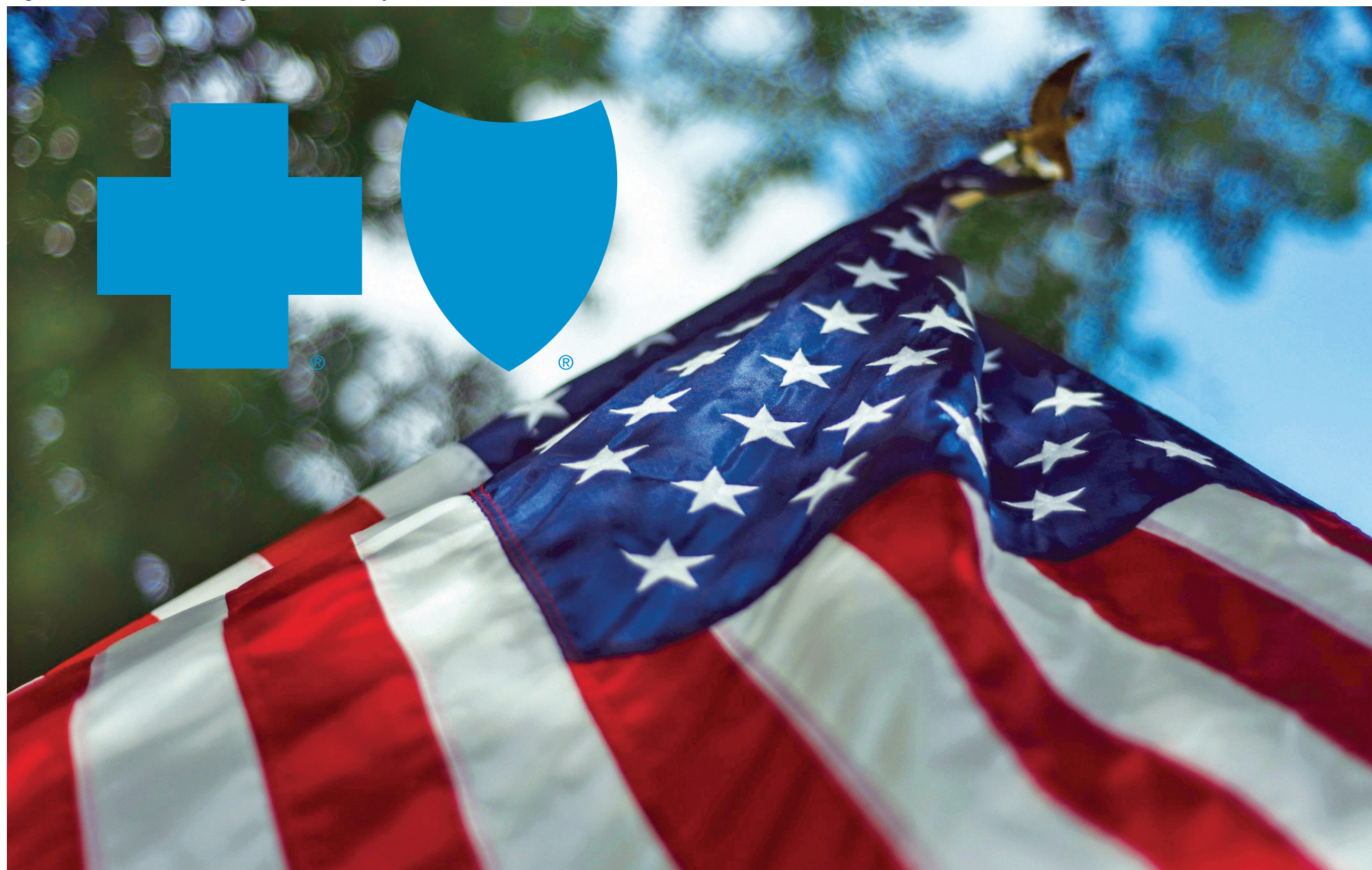
**By Joanie Krantz**  
AEF Chairman

The Silent Auction to support the Auxiliary Emergency Fund is back again this year at Fall Conference. It's time to get together as a unit/post/squadron or family to come up with a theme basket or maybe even two. Suggestions for other items to donate are quilts, books, patriotic items, pictures, jewelry, American Legion family items or decorations.

We know how everyone loves a bake sale! If you're a baker, please, consider donating some goodies. To top it off, cash donations will be collected for Department President Robin Dorf's project: Honnor Flight.







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