

France presents highest honor to WWII veteran

Consul General of France Yannick Tagand pins the French Medal of Honor on the uniform worn by Arnold J. "Buck" Zahratka on March 23 at Montgomery Post 79.



MONTGOMERY — More than 200 people stood and applauded inside Montgomery Post 79 on Wednesday, March 23, when Consul General of France in Chicago Yannick Tagand pinned the French government's highest honor upon the chest of World War II veteran Arnold J. "Buck" Zahratka, 96.

Tagand said it was an honor for him to come from Chicago to Montgomery to pay tribute and pin the

French Legion of Honor upon his chest.

"The reasons for which I get to present this highest honor make me feel more privileged," Tagand said.

Many years have passed since Zahratka fought in Europe, but France has not forgotten, he said.

"Mr. Zahratka, you are a true hero. Thanks to you I grew up in a free country," Tagand said.

Established by Napoleon

Bonaparte in 1802, the French Legion of Honor is one of the most famous military decorations in the world. French ministers are responsible for identifying potential honorees. It is the highest distinction that France can bestow upon those who have achieved remarkable deeds for France. Zahratka will become a member of the National Order of the Legion of Honor, which is led

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Past National Vice Commander Al Davis speaks March 12 during the Department Executive Committee meeting at Forest Lake Post 225.

Fall Conf. to be in St. Cloud for 5 yrs.

Convention Corp. and CVB strike deal

FOREST LAKE — The Department of Minnesota Convention Corporation has signed a five-year agreement to hold the Fall Conference in downtown St. Cloud.

At the Department Executive Committee meeting on March 12, Adjutant Mike Maxa credited Past National Vice Commander Al Davis, who is the treasurer for the Convention Corporation, for finding a host and working out the details of the deal.

The Convention Corporation signed an

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'I want to serve'

Kristy Janigo shrugs off the occasional comment, focuses on the mission

By Tim Engstrom

OSSEO — "You look pretty in your uniform," said the cigarette-smoking, gray-bearded Legionnaire leaning on the wall outside Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172 to Kristy Janigo, a 3-year member of the post who serves on the honor guard.

"You can be pretty and strong, right?" she replied.

No answer.

"I get comments like that all the time," she then told this writer.

Another similar situation came at the Department Fall Conference in Mahanomen, when some younger veterans sat down to eat with some older ones.

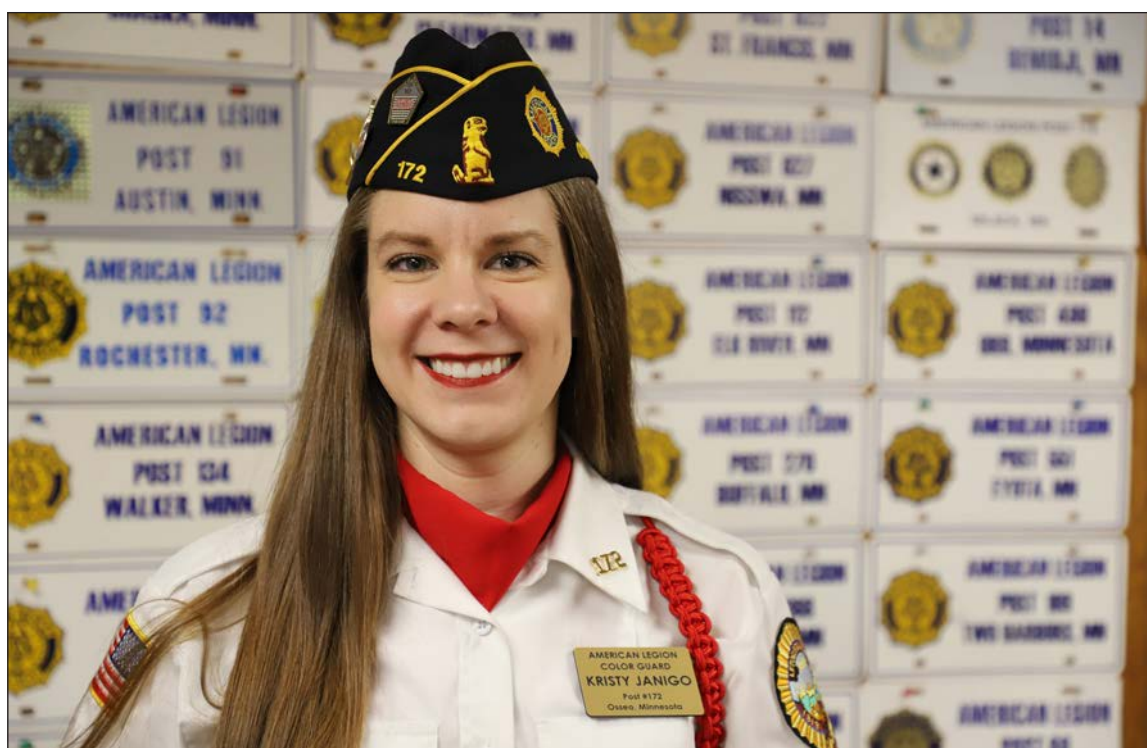
One one-timer asked her, "You in The American Legion?"

"Yes, I am," she replied.

"The American Legion Auxiliary?" Janigo pulled out her Legion cap, placed it on her head and said, "No, The American Legion, just like you."

Janigo, 38, was at the conference because she serves on the Department Media & Communications Committee. She often can be seen at department events running the laptop computer connected to the video feed being broadcast over Facebook.

"It can be frustrating, but, overall, I



Kristy Janigo of Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172 sports her Honor Guard uniform while standing in front of a wall of custom auto plates that posts across the country trade.

am fine being that person. If it causes people to stop and notice and be surprised that a Legionnaire is pretty, then it's one more way to elevate and bring awareness to veterans issues," she said.

"The majority of the people I meet at my post and statewide are supportive of me and respect my work. There's just a few people here and there who haven't encountered female veterans before, and those tend to be

the folks who make comments."

Janigo entered basic training Oct. 4, 2001, just weeks after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. She lived in Buxton, N.D., at the time.

"Mom was freaking out, crying and sad and saying 'I can smuggle you over the Canadian border,' and I said, 'Nah, I want to serve my country.'"

Joining felt important, giving her a sense of purpose. She ran a lot of

gravel roads around Buxton to prepare for basic.

Janigo's parents had open-enrolled her 23 miles northward to Red River High School in Grand Forks, where she graduated in 2001 with a 4.0 GPA. Back then, her last name was Simmons.

As the middle among five kids, she had an independent streak.

"By being a middle child, you've

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Eden Valley-Watkins student wins state Oratorical Contest

ANOKA — A sophomore at Eden Valley-Watkins High School is the champion of the Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest.

Megan Blonigen, 16, earns a \$1,500 scholarship from The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

She moves on to compete in the National American Legion Oratorical Contest April 22-24 in Indianapolis at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel. Quarterfinal and semifinal contests are scheduled for Saturday, April 23 with the finals scheduled for Sunday, April 24. Contestants and chaperones arrive Friday, April 22.

Scholarships are awarded at the national level, too. First place receives \$25,000, second gets \$22,500 and third takes \$20,000. All national participants and first-round winners not in the finals receive \$2,000.

Megan also won a \$700 scholarship from the Legion's District 7 of Minnesota.

"It's just amazing to see our future leaders, how they can articulate our U.S. Constitution," said Minnesota American Legion Commander Tom Fernlund of St. Cloud. "It's just an honor to be able to attend one of the

Continued on Page 2

Eagle Scout of the Year is St. Thomas Academy senior

WOODBURY — The Minnesota American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year for 2022 is Matthew Korf of Woodbury.

"I am very humbled to be able to represent a great organization. Boy Scouts has given me an opportunity to grow in my leadership skills," Korf said.

Korf is a senior at St. Thomas Academy in Mendota Heights and has a 4.2 GPA. He was sponsored by Woodbury Post 501, and his grandmother, Donna Korf, is a Vietnam veteran. He became an Eagle Scout last June.

"My current plan is to become a military officer because I want to serve and

protect my country," he said.

He applied for Army ROTC and Navy ROTC scholarships and has been accepted for both to attend Notre Dame University with a four-year ride. Further scholarships will assist with room and board. However, more recently, he has been accepted into the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. He is contemplating his plans, but at the time of his Eagle Scout of the Year application, he had favored a degree in engineering and mathematics, with a minor in Arabic.

His Eagle Scout project began

Continued on Page 2

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Oratorical Contest builds speech capabilities

Continued from Page 1

premier programs of The American Legion.”

Finalists from six American Legion districts across Minnesota competed at the state contest on Saturday, Feb. 26, at Anoka Post 102.

Megan was sponsored by Eden Valley Post 381 and was the winner of the Legion's 7th District, which is Grant, Douglas, Traverse, Stevens, Pope, Big Stone, Swift, Kandiyohi, Meeker, Lac Qui Parle, Chippewa, Yellow Medicine and Renville counties.

The Oratorical Contest requires contestants to deliver two speeches in front of a crowd without notes. The topics are related to the U.S. Constitution. The first speech is prepared beforehand and runs eight to 10 minutes; the second is three to five minutes, with just five minutes to prepare. Winners receive scholarships.

Megan said she hopes to go into politics someday.

“This contest has been a great opportunity for me to practice my speaking skills and talk about something important and something that I am passionate about,” she said.

Megan is the daughter of Sheri and Nicholas Blonigen of rural Paynesville. Their children attend Eden Valley-Watkins Schools.

The Oratorical Contest is part of The American Legion promoting the American form of government, which emphasizes public speaking. The contest and several American Legion



Photos by Ray Kane/M&C Committee

People posed for snapshots after Megan Blonigen won the Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest on Feb. 26. From left are Nicholas and Shari Blonigen, Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary President Patti Coleman, champion Megan Blonigen, Minnesota American Legion Commander Tom Fernlund, Minnesota Oratorical Contest Vice Chairman Amanda England and Minnesota Oratorical Contest Chairman Jamie Woods.

youth activities, such as baseball, fall under Americanism, one of The American Legion's Four Pillars.

Second place went to Devon Selmon, a senior at St. Agnes School in St. Paul. He was sponsored by St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577 and was the winner of the Legion's 4th District. He earns a \$1,000 scholarship.

Abigail Erpelding, a sophomore home-schooler from Kasson, won third place. She was sponsored by Kasson Post 333 and won the 1st District. She earns a \$700 scholarship.

Jonathan “Trent” Vickers, a junior home-schooler from Minneapolis, captured fourth place. He was sponsored by



The finalists were, from left, Jonathan Vickers, Abigail Erpelding, Megan Blonigen and Devon Selmon. Devon is the present governor of Minnesota Boys State.

Minneapolis Falldin Post 555. He earns a \$500 scholarship.

The last time a Minnesota student won the National Oratorical Contest was 2003, when

Henry Shea IV of Wayzata took the title. He was sponsored by St. Louis Park Post 282. The contest has been in existence since 1938.

Minnesota DAV is in Immediate Need for Additional Volunteer Drivers

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

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



DAV OF MINNESOTA



Woodbury Post 501 Commander hands Eagle Scout of the Year Matthew Korf a plaque that says “Eagle Scout of the Year” on Feb. 24.

Eagle Scout volunteers in community

in 2019. He said he knew he wanted to do a project with St. Ambrose Catholic School in Woodbury, where he attended preschool to eighth grade.

“The science teachers really wanted a garden to incorporate into their STEM program,” he said.

He worked with Warner's Outdoor Solutions to plan a 6x6x6-foot raised-bed garden, which then was approved by the school, the church and Troop 5. After a few changes and a week delay in order to have Gopher State mark utilities, the work began in late August 2020. The final cost turned out to be

\$2,188.

Korf works construction in the summers with his uncle, and he got to know some vendors. They donated materials to defray costs. Warner's Landscape donated the dirt to fill the garden. His uncle donated use of his trailer and tools.

Korf volunteers in many ways at St. Ambrose, from church cleanup to Christmas setup. He participates in Extreme Faith weekly. He also is a Junior Achievement facilitator at an inner-city elementary school. He is an assistant baseball coach. He collects coats for Coats for Kindness.

“He is a respectful young man who loves his family, God and is an inspiration to his peers in church, school and extracurricular activities such as baseball, cross country, swimming and band, in addition to being a young man of integrity and conduct,” the Rev. Peter J. Williams of St. Ambrose wrote in his nomination letter.

“Matthew is a well-rounded young man of unquestionable integrity, outstanding military bearing and unlimited leadership potential,” wrote St. Thomas Academy Commandant of Cadets Neil Hetherington, a retired Army colonel.

Don't miss out!

ST. PAUL — National Commander Paul E. Dillard is all set to tour the state April 10-15. His theme is “No Veteran Left Behind.”

Dillard flies into Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport on Sunday, April 10.

At 8:45 a.m. Monday, April 11, tune in to Fox 9 KMSP. He appears live on the morning news show.

The national commander later that day visits with Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke.

The public is invited to hear the national commander speak when he visits American Legion posts. He is going to St. Paul

American Legion National Commander's Tour

Please call or email to reserve your spot.

Location	Meal	Time	Contact
Monday, April 11 Arcade-Phalen Post 577	dinner*	6 p.m.	651-329-7369, mrman48@comcast.net
Tuesday, April 12 Red Wing Post 54	breakfast	8 a.m.	(see email address below) RWPost54NationalCmdrBreakfast@gmail.com (by April 1)
Dodge Center Post 384	lunch	noon	507-259-7241
Owatonna Post 77	dinner*	6 p.m.	507-213-7517 (Chuck Stone, leave msg.)
Wednesday, April 13 Austin Post 91	breakfast	8 a.m.	507-437-1151
Blue Earth Post 89	lunch	noon	507-525-1052 (daytime, ask for Paul) 507-525-7713 (between 5-8 p.m.)
Fairmont Post 36	dinner*	6 p.m.	stevefosness@gmail.com
Thursday, April 14 Brewster Post 464	breakfast	8 a.m.	605-310-8013 (Curt Luitjens)
Pipestone Post 6	dinner*	6 p.m.	507-825-3211 (leave message)
* includes 5 p.m. social hour			

Arcade-Phalen Post 577, Red Wing Post 54, Dodge Center Post 384, Owatonna Post 77, Austin Post 91, Blue Earth Post 89, Fairmont Post 36, Brewster Post 464 and Pipestone Post 6. See the box above for registration contacts. The commander gives a speech at each stop.

He will visit the Luverne Veterans Home on Thursday, April 14.

He flies out of Sioux Falls on Friday, April 15.

Rooms going fast for Department Convention

WILLMAR — Registration is under way for the 2022 Department Convention, hosted by Willmar Post 167.

Rooms are going fast. One hotel already is booked up.

The convention takes place July 14-16 at the Willmar Conference Center, which is connected to two hotels, Best Western Plus and Holiday Inn Express.

The Department Executive Committee meeting is at 7 p.m. July 13. Some committee meetings take place on July 13, too.

The other official hotels are Country Inn & Suites and Hampton Inn.

Attendees must make their own housing reservations with their hotel of choice.

Be sure to get The American Legion

discount. When making a reservation, please ask for “The American Legion Block.”

Best Western Plus: Sold out!

Holiday Inn Express: 320-231-2601

Single: \$112

Double: \$121

Suite: \$143

Country Inn & Suites: 320-214-0300

Single: \$116

Double: \$125

Hampton Inn: 320-796-3000

Single/Double: \$125

Hotel rates are subject to local and state taxes at time of check-in.

“The convention is a time to conduct the business of The American Legion,” said

Department Commander Tom Fernlund. “Thank you for taking three days out of your busy lives to come to Willmar. We hope to see new faces and familiar ones, too.”

The convention is when department officers will be elected. This year, two members are seeking the commander spot: Garylee Davenport of Spicer Post 545 and Jennifer Havlick of Duluth Post 28.

Larry Otto of Ellendale Post 296 is running for chaplain. Dean Knutson of Ashby Post 357 and Carla Tappainer of Apple Valley Post 1776 are seeking sergeant-at-arms. Teresa Ash of Christie DeParcq Post 406 is running for historian. Vice commander candidates haven't sent endorsements yet.



DEPARTMENT CONVENTION REGISTRATION

— Official Form —

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

Make your check payable to “American Legion Post 167” with “Dept. Convention” written on the memo line. No credit cards will be accepted. Please mail this form with your check to:

Willmar Post 167

Attn: Greg Krause

220 19th Ave. SW

Willmar, MN 56201

Registration at the door will be \$18.

Legion _____

SAL _____

Auxiliary _____

District # _____ Post/Squad/Unit # _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Delegate _____ Alternate _____ Guest _____

Delegate at-Large (Auxiliary) _____
(Choose Past Dept. President or Dept. Exec. Cmte.)

If additional registrations accompany this request, this registration form should be photocopied for each person. The \$15 registration fee must be enclosed for each person.

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Events are great way to engage public

The American Legion celebrated its 103rd birthday March 15. Many posts host dinners and recognition ceremonies throughout the month.

I travelled the 9th District recently and attended birthday and recognition ceremonies at Thief River Falls Post 117, East Grand Forks Post 157 and Moorhead Post 15 all in one weekend. The posts coordinated the events on the same weekend, which is very impressive.

I am very grateful for the invite and the immense hospitality the posts provided. I have a few more visits scheduled and look forward to participating and sharing information with our dedicated members.

Events at our post homes are critical to engaging our members and being visible for new members and the community. Membership has stalled at this point, and we need a boost to finish the year so that the momentum can continue.

Double check!

Attention commanders and membership directors at all levels. Anyone who entered membership online this year, please go back and review your online transmittals and make

Commander's Column

Tom Fernlund



sure the information posted matches the number of names on each list.

I had one that posted and had 72 names on the list — but only one name processed. Please review and let us know if you have differences. Thank you all for what you do for membership and continue welcoming members to our family.

Volunteers needed

Reminder: As restrictions are lowered at the medical facilities and veteran homes, there will be the need for volunteers to return and new volunteers. We are all very grateful to those who continue to serve. My wife and I were AWOL for a few days in February helping family in California.

We met a lot of veterans on our travels and so many do not know about our great organization. Sharing experiences can change many lives. Engage others and share the benefits of getting involved and helping spread our motto: Veterans Strengthening

America.

The volunteers involved in all our youth activities deserve a huge *thank you!*

The Department Oratorical Contest is over, The Eagle Scout of the Year has been named, scholarship winners have been chosen and rigorous planning is underway for Boys and Girls State, American Legion Baseball and Fastpitch Softball and Legionville School Safety Patrol Camp.

Without our dedicated chairman, committee members and numerous volunteers these life changing activities could not take place. On behalf of all our Department of Minnesota American Legion members, *thank you!*

Tom Fernlund of Waite Park Post 428 is the commander of The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

Mail Call

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

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

Legion Family is there for you

It's unreal to know you are so loved by another family — the American Legion Family!

Thank you for the cards, calls, act of kindness shown during the loss of our mom, grandma, sister, aunt, and "a great friend and mentor, with a friendly smile!" She is now waltzing across heaven with Ken! Again, thank you!

**The families of Cindy Nelson
Glenville Unit 264**

Presidential ego had a lot to do with Vietnam

I almost bit through my tongue when I read the political partisan, some by omission, hit piece (letter to the editor) by Bruce Montplaisir in our non-partisan Minnesota Legionnaire newspaper's February issue. I've finally settled down enough to respond.

The Vietnam War should have ended in 1965. But our commander-in-chief, having years before put the Joint Chiefs of Staff out to pasture on an extended holiday, made the unilateral decision to proceed with a war of attrition.

(Candidate Richard Nixon had more clout than the commander-in-chief for the previous five years? Absolutely ridiculous! Vegas oddsmakers were giving the election to Lyndon Johnson, until Johnson announced his withdrawal.)

Johnson was passed over for command positions all through World War II. It was his ego-driven ambition for command that was largely responsible for the Vietnam war,

avoided by the two previous presidents.

This bellicose attitude permeated throughout the military ranks of the career goldbricks. We citizen soldiers took the hits. Overworked, underpaid, held to near impossible tasks and subjected to waivers to do the work of NCOs, without NCO pay. Courts martial and brig time were in abundance. (Time in the service extended for all brig time served.)

Nixon took his turn at mas-saging his ego as the great communist slayer, while slaying thousands of U.S. boys. (Had we left in 1965 over 50,000 U.S. lives would have been saved, with absolutely no change in the outcome of the Vietnam War.)

Bill Clinton also wanted to be a wartime president and inadvertently was. His domestic life was all the war he could handle, so his inattention to foreign policy allowed the U.S. to be caught so off-guard, despite civilian warnings, for 9/11.

There's plenty of blame to go around. Most of that blame should rightfully be placed on the U.S. voters. We elect leaders for partisan reasons, having lost our faith for and with our God and Country.

**Ronald S. Zimney
Fergus Falls Post 30**

Editor's note: To be sure, many nonpartisan publications print letters with views leaning left, center or right. The letters are the views of the letter writers, such as yourself, not the publication staff. See the note under "Mail Call."

District map was helpful

Thank you for the map of

district posts. I wondered where I was! Also, the listing by counties on right column, if just that could be included in the monthly paper, at least we know what district number is where.

**John T. Kirby
District 3
Apple Valley 1776**

Why no issue with military vaccines?

I'm writing this mostly in response to the gentleman who referred in the March 2022 issue of the Legionnaire Publication to the COVID-19 vaccination as "poison" and being forced on us all as a result of government "tyranny."

I would just like to remind everyone who has served in the military, and especially those of us who were sent to foreign lands, that we had to receive many different vaccinations while in the military.

I am curious if this gentleman, as well as others, would have scrutinized every one of these vaccines as COVID-19 is today. Yes, we all fought for the freedoms our country has to offer all our citizens. We also had to be properly protected in order to fight for these freedoms.

Every time I hear of military personnel objecting to or outright refusing the COVID-19 vaccination, I have to question the motive behind that objection. We took the many vaccinations because that was what was required of us. There can only be one reason for objecting to the COVID-19 vaccination by today's military personnel and that would be for political reasons.

This vaccine has been given

Created with identity, purpose, value

The older man asked my husband and I in a hushed tone, "Do you know how to get rich?"

We leaned in for the answer. Just beginning our lives together, we had many more wants than we could afford.

The man answered: "Spend less than you make."

To identify as rich — it was quite simple.

How one thinks and behaves is informed by three factors. Over the next three months, I will talk a bit about each. The first one is identity. Our first identity is *imprinted* on us by our parents and family. The words spoken: "you are so talented" or "why are you so messy?" forms and feeds us.

Type of physical contact — a hug, a slap, a kiss good night or a roll of the eyes also lets us know who we are to others.

As we grow older, our identity includes the introspection of our own interests, passions, feelings. Who helps mold us now includes — peers, teachers, coaches, family and even those we don't know. How what we do (or not do) is tempered by how it is received by others.

Adulthood is ushered in by an identity with some experience. Our parent's dreams for us and beliefs imbued are rolled

Chaplain's Corner

Kelley Adelsman



over in our own minds for validity and our agreement. Many military members and veterans' faith identity is challenged during their military servicer. Some abandon and some adopt a specific faith.

Our dog tags, in less than 10 words: name, religion and blood type let others know what is needed to keep us alive or bury us. Owning and practicing a faith, religion and/or spiritual practice lets us live with a clearer picture of who are to ourselves and others. Our relationship with our God identifies we are created with identity, purpose, and value.

The American Legion is a veteran-centric volunteer organization recognizing God's overarching force. It is hard for me to imagine TAL's founders' thoughts to place God as the reason for its mission statement. Just returning from a battlefield where human life was blown up; gassed; used; destroyed, it could have been so easy to dismiss God.

War exhales death, fear, anxiety and even hopelessness. Did they hope to extinguish war to

make way for peace and hope? Their result was an American Legion which exists as testament that together, we heal from wounds inflicted on our souls and psyche.

Collectively, we companion with one another through traumas by coming alongside, embracing, and sometimes walking us to a place where deeper healing will happen. We are invited to, yes, love each other. I give thanks to God our founders and all before us who have remained open and fostered God's grace in our lives to guide our mission. May our identity as a Legionnaire frame us in to remain in sync with a source of Godly hope that our founder's evidenced when they agreed that it is for God and Country that we do what we do as Legionnaires.

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

to millions of people around the world (many more than the numbers in our military) with minimal adverse reactions. It has saved countless lives.

Just a reminder: When you take the vaccine, you are not only protecting yourself but your family, friends and neighbors. It is the patriotic thing to do!

**Stephen Savitt
Otsego
Minnesota Post 1982**

Thanks for bringing up topic of vaccines

Why vaccinate against virus?

I would like to thank the letter writer who brought up the vaccine issue. He and his family have done much to keep us free and express our feelings, but he, his father and brothers must have taken a number of mandatory vaccinations while in the military.

Us old Korean War veterans sure did.

**Allen F. Dziuk
Foley Post 298**

Vaccines were not political in the past

In reply to the letter, "Why vaccinate against virus?" the writer of that piece quotes the CEO of Moderna that the "so-called vaccine may not be effective against the latest variant." He writes, "Surprise, surprise!"

If the writer looks at stats, he would find that the vaccine does have an effect on the virus and in most cases causing only flu-like symptoms with short-lasting recoveries. If the writer does not

believe the stats or the media, he might find better answers with my findings among my family and friends. I know of at least a dozen and one half of friends of family, all of whom had been vaccinated but still got the virus but were in short and somewhat easy discomfort. My daughter and granddaughter tested positive after both had sore throats. They both recovered rapidly. The doctors and nurses who treated them told them that if

they had not been vaccinated, they probably would have been hospitalized and put on ventilators or even passed away.

If the writer has visited any medical facilities including VA clinics, he would find that all of them require masks and include social distance rules. Are all these medical experts wrong?

The writer refers to his family serving our great country and protecting our freedom. I'm sure

Continued on Page 6

The Minnesota

Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

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

Name of Deceased	Age	Date of Death	Branch	Era	Cont. Years	Post
Ahlman, Martin J. Jr.	80	2/5/22	Air Force	Vietnam	29	Morristown Post 149
Note: He was a world-renowned gunsmith and competition cowboy shooter, in addition to serving his country for 22 years.						
Baudoin, Gerald F.	93	12/30/21	Navy	WWII	46	Chatfield Post 197
Note: He was a past post commander and adjutant. He served aboard the high-speed transport USS Wantuck.						
Black, Jesse W. III	91	2/23/22	Air Force	Korea	30	New London Post 537
Boser, Milton G.	90	12/24/22	Army	Korea	32	Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172
Broadbent, Larry	78	3/2/22	Army Res.	Vietnam	53	Park Rapids Post 212
Bruzik, Marvin E.	86	3/7/22	Army	Vietnam	4	Alexandria Post 87
Burckhard, James S.	91	1/4/22	Air Force	Korea	32	East Grand Forks Post 157
Carlquist, Leonard F.	75	3/3/22	Army	Vietnam	50	Alexandria Post 87
Cederholm, Donald R.	89	2/20/22	Army	Korea	24	Hallock Post 63
Condon, Robert F.	90	2/22/22	Navy	Korea	56	Litchfield Post 104
Dammer, John	96	11/5/21	Army	WWII	37	Worthington Post 5
Note: He was a participant in the inaugural Southwest Minnesota WWII Honor Flight.						
Dawson, Gary D.	79	2/13/22	Army	Vietnam	48	Backus Post 368
DeWitz, Harold E.	90	2/27/22	Army	Korea	26	Rochester Post 92
Duitsman, William R.	93	3/12/22	Army	Korea	69	Round Lake Post 461
Feldhege, Robert J.	92	11/17/21	Army	Cold	3	Richmond Post 292
Fiereck, Donald E.	87	8/13/21	Army	Korea	63	Clear Lake Post 323
Flugum, Alton J.	78	12/20/21	Army	Vietnam	35	Bloomington Post 550
Gildea, Jerome R.	86	3/3/22	Navy	Korea	35	Arlington Post 250
Green, Clifford H.	95	2/19/22	Army	WWII	50	Halma-Lake Bronson Post 315
Groebner, Frederick L.	72	2/22/22	Army	Vietnam	5	New Ulm Post 132
Grund, Dale E.	80	2/27/22	Air Force	Vietnam	31	New Ulm Post 132
Haala, Bruce D.	72	3/5/22	Army	Vietnam	12	New Ulm Post 132
Haggen, Craig R.	unavail.	2/28/22	Air Force	Vietnam	3	Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172
Hannon, Stanley E.	94	2/9/22	Navy	WWII	32	Hackensack Post 202
Note: He served in Hawaii, Japan, China, Korea and Norway.						
Hauger, Curtis B.	74	3/8/22	Air Force	Vietnam	15	Greenbush Post 88
Hauschild, Ardean D.	86	2/22/22	Army	Korea	61	Wheaton Post 80
Note: He served in Alaska. He was the 7th District commander in 1999-2000 and 7th District adjutant in 1998-99. He was a past post commander and historian.						
Hodge, Donald L.	79	1/22/22	Army	Vietnam	50	East Grand Forks Post 157
Hunkins, John C. Sr.	78	2/4/22	Army	Vietnam	14	Inver Grove Heights Post 424
Janssen, Richard A.	74	2/22/22	Army Res.	Vietnam	39	Richmond Post 292
Note: He served as Department of Minnesota vice commander 2008-09, Department of Minnesota chaplain 2009-10, 6th District commander in 2003-04 and 6th District adjutant 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2004-05. He is a past commander of his post and past district chaplain.						
Kammers, Melvin N.	81	12/28/21	Marines	Vietnam	26	Richmond Post 292
Koetz, David W.	83	2/13/22	Army	Vietnam	17	Winona Post 9
Note: He was stationed in Korea 1961-62.						
Kratch, Gary	74	2/28/22	Navy	Vietnam	9	Winona Post 9
Note: As a fireman, he was decorated for helping to save the USS Jouett.						
Kukowski, Marshall D.	79	12/17/21	Army	Vietnam	49	Greenbush Post 88
Langworthy, Richard A.	94	2/23/22	Navy	WWII	40	Red Wing Post 54
Larson, Dwaine H.	84	2/28/22	Army/M.M.	Vietnam	52	Cambridge Post 290
Lorentz, Eugene E.	75	12/6/21	Marines	Vietnam	40	Howard Lake Post 145
Mackedanz, Charles A.	82	3/1/22	Army Res.	Vietnam	22	Paynesville Post 271
Malinowski, Stephen A.	71	3/8/21	Army	Vietnam	24	Park Rapids Post 212
Mark, James D.	90	2/19/22	Army	Korea	65	Brainerd Post 255
Meagher, Norval E.	93	12/23/21	Navy	WWII	52	East Grand Forks Post 157
Miller, James M.	77	2/28/22	Army	Vietnam	20	Caledonia Post 191
Morgan, LeRoy M.	95	2/19/22	Army	WWII	52	Albert Lea Post 56
Mulder, Darwin M.	76	2/12/22	Air Force	Vietnam	50	Ada Post 26
Myers, Donald R.	89	2/10/22	Navy	Korea	66	Redwood Falls Post 38
Nelson, Theodore A.	3/3/22		Army	Vietnam	3	Forest Lake Post 225
Nelson, William	75	3/8/22	Navy	Vietnam	38	Breckenridge Post 53
Note: He was stationed in Japan and involved in the Vietnam War.						
Nepp, Howard E.	95	3/3/22	Army	WWII	48	Austin Post 91
Norberg, Robert H.	88	2/8/22	Army	Korea	38	Cambridge Post 290
Ousky, Dwayne T.	87	11/24/21	Army	Vietnam	35	Belview Post 309
Palm, Dwaine R.	86	10/28/21	Army	Korea	46	Elk River Post 112
Parta, Michael A.	74	1/27/22	Army NG	Vietnam	43	New York Mills Post 116
Paulson, Norman J.	89	1/31/22	Army	Korea	54	Champlin Post 600
Pavlacky, Dick S.	88	2/23/22	Army	Korea	18	Pillager Post 100
Peterick, Phillip J.	77	3/28/22	Army	Vietnam	54	Twin Valley Post 431
Peters, Layton G.	93	3/9/22	Army	Korea	4	New Ulm Post 132
Pollock, John	92	2/12/22	Army	WWII	23	Waconia Post 150
Roeder, Walter D.	81	3/7/22	Army	Vietnam	20	New London Post 537
Ruhland, George N.	77	2/16/22	Army	Vietnam	14	Eden Valley Post 381
Ryan, William R.	75	2/1/22	Army	Vietnam	39	Lake Henry Post 612
Schaefer, Roman J.	79	2/11/22	Army	Vietnam	15	Lake Henry Post 612
Serafin, Stephen E.	71	1/11/22	Army	Vietnam	41	Pine City Post 51
Staska, Norman G.	92	6/24/21	Navy	Korea	21	Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172
Strasser, Anton	86	3/7/22	Army	Vietnam	29	Alexandria Post 87
Van Wyhe, Raymond	90	2/21/22	Army	Korea	47	Ellsworth Post 196
Voth, Adeline B.	99	10/9/21	Navy	WWII	23	Waite Park Post 428
Note: She served in the WAVES during the war as a yeoman in intelligence in the District of Columbia. She never spoke about the secrets she learned. She founded the Central Minnesota Unit of Women In The Military.						
Ward, Willard J.	98	12/11/20	Army	WWII	4	Grand Rapids Post 60
Webster, Alden L.	84	3/17/22	Air Force	Vietnam	17	Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172
Weidner, Erich J.	78	12/15/21	Army	Vietnam	40	Chanhassen Post 580
Welch, Roderick M.	87	2/24/22	Army	Korea	36	Stewartville Post 164
Yost, William H.	86	1/17/22	Army	Vietnam	40	Pine City Post 51

A word on Department Convention delegates and alternates

By Jennifer Havlick
Training Committee

Over the last few months, the Department Training Committee has been asked on several occasions to explain how the delegate and alternate process works for district and department meetings and

conventions.

This article endeavors to provide some guidance on how and when delegates and alternates are determined. First and most important ALL Legionnaires in good standing are welcome at department of Minnesota rallies, conferences and/or conventions. Delegates and alternates come into

play when “Legion Business” needs to be conducted.

This would be like voting on officers, resolutions, budgeting and things of that nature. Some business can be done between department conventions by the Department Executive Committee but that is

Continued on Page 7

All-Family Events Calendar

April 9: Department Junior Conference, Willmar Post 167
April 11-14: National Commander’s Tour of Minnesota
April 20: Veterans Day on the Hill (details below)
April 21-24: Minn. American Legion College, Camp Ripley
April 22-24: National Oratorical Finals
April 23: President’s Testimonial, Osseo Post 172
May 4-5: Spring Meetings at Legion HQ, Indianapolis
May 14: 8th District Convention, Hibbing Mem. Arena
May 21: 1st District Convention, Albert Lea Post 56
May 21: 3rd District Convention, Forest Lake Post 225
May 21: 4th District Convention, North St. Paul Post 39
June 3-4: 2nd District Convention, New Ulm Post 134
June 3-4: 6th District Convention, Ironton Post 443
June 3-4: 10th District Convention, Milaca Post 178
June 11: 7th District Convention, Montevideo Post 59
June 12-18: Minnesota Boys State, St. John’s University
June 12-18: Minnesota Girls State, Bethel University
June 18: Commander’s Testimonial, Moose Lodge 1400, Waite Park
June 24-26: SAL Det. Convention, E. Grand Forks Post 157
July 13-16: Department Convention, Willmar
July 28-31: Div. I Baseball State Tournament, Alimagnet Park, Burnsville
July 28-31: Div. I Jr. Baseball State Tournament, Red Haddox Field, Bloomington
July 29-31: Div II. Baseball State Tournament, Luverne
July 30: Fund 85 Run, St. Peter Post 37
Aug. 3-7: Div. I Baseball Regional, Rapid City, S.D.
Aug. 5-6: Div. II Jr. Baseball State Tournament, Ely
Aug. 5-7: Department Junior Fun Weekend, Legionville
Aug. 11-16: Baseball World Series, Shelby, N.C.
Aug. 20-23: Minnesota Legacy Run
Aug. 21-25: National Legacy Run, ending in Milwaukee
Aug. 26-Sept. 1: National Conventions, Milwaukee
Sept. 8-11: Legionville Camporee, Legionville
Sept. 10: Harvest Rally, Legionville
Oct. 12-13: Fall Meetings at Legion HQ, Indianapolis
Oct. 27-29: Department Fall Conference, River’s Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud

What’s happening?

Veterans Day on the Hill is good to go

ST. PAUL —Veterans Day on the Hill is back on track. Organizers say it is going ahead for 2022.

April 20 is scheduled for the annual day to rally lawmakers in St. Paul to pass veterans-related legislation. The event is part of the Minnesota Commanders’ Task Force. Its 2022 legislative agenda can be found at mnctf.org.

Doors open at the St. Paul Armory at 10 a.m., with coffee available. A free catered lunch from DAV Minnesota is set for 11 a.m., during with the CTF legislative priorities will be discussed.

Trent Dilks, director of legislative affairs for the Minnesota Disabled American Veterans, will lead the legislative talk.

“I will give an update on the situation and talk about how we can get over the finish line,” Dilks said.

No membership in a veterans organization is required, but it does help bolster visibility if veterans wear their service organization caps.

The march to the Capitol begins at 12:45 p.m. outside the Veterans Service Building, with the rally running from 1 to 2 p.m. at the Capitol.

Many Legion Posts plan to bring buses to the event. DAV of Minnesota will reimburse them for half the cost of transportation, if they contact the DAV of Minnesota by April 8.

Topics include improving property tax relief to surviving spouses of disabled veterans,

ensuring the long-term stability of services for all veterans, increasing access to the great outdoors and funding for homeless programs and suicide prevention.

Items the CTF is hoping to get passed this year are:

- Increase the state grant given to veterans service organizations.
- Pay a bonus to post-9/11 veterans, much like Minnesota did for veterans of other wars.
- Give property-tax relief to post homes of veteran service organizations.
- Reduce the cost of hunting, trapping and fishing licenses for all veterans, or at least disabled veterans.
- Modify the definition of a veteran to match the federal definition.
- Require county recorders to document discharge papers for all branches of the military.
- Eliminate the two rule for recipients of VA’s Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.
- Provided a percent-age-based change to the Homestead Market Value Exclusion.

WWII programs coming up

ST. PAUL —The Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table, at 7 p.m. April 12, hosts a program on the Doolittle Raid and its Minnesota connection.

Michel Paradis, author of “Last Mission to Tokyo,” will discuss the April 1942 raid and the subsequent trials of the
Continued on Page 7

Fire damages Lake Park Legion

DETROIT LAKES — Fire caused the loss of the Lake Park Post 181 home on Sunday evening, March 13, according to the Detroit Lakes Tribune. The building was closed at the time of the fire. No one was injured, Lake Park Fire Chief Dave Coufal told the newspaper.

Heat and smoke damaged the back side of the structure. A passerby spotted the fire at 8:15 p.m. and called authorities. The Tribune story said the cause is unknown. Lake Park Post 181 has about 140 members. Lake Park is about 32 miles east of Moorhead.

Riders wait to drink for very good reasons

Legion Riders

Ted Berg



Hopefully this finds everybody well and ready for the warmer weather. I really want to get the bike out now. I have seen a lot of bikes out lately, and I know there are some runs set up for April. March brought us a rollercoaster of weather, but that's Minnesota for you. I hope everyone had a great time at the American Legion Bowling Tournament. I know there were a lot of teams signed up. Thank you to Carri Lamb for inviting me to the opening ceremony. Just a reminder as I have heard some talk going around about people whining that they can't drink during a run. A lot of the runs put on by the Legion Riders are dry runs (no alcohol during the ride). The reason is we are under watchful eyes, and we represent the American Legion Family, and we are riding for veterans and their families, so we don't need to drink on the ride. We can have adult beverages at the end of the ride. Also, there are some people who think

they need to power drink at stops, and it looks bad on us and the Legion. If you have to drink alcohol on a ride, there are plenty of other rides not put on by the Legion Riders going on. Enough on that subject. Reminder: The Fund 85 Run is July 30 starting and ending in St Peter. The Legacy Run will be Aug. 20-23 and then some of us are going to ride out to Milwaukee for the National Convention. More info to follow in the next couple months as we finalize details on both runs. In closing, I would like to wish everyone a Happy Easter and a great April and hope y'all can get out and enjoy the warming weather. Ride safely. Ted Berg of Bloomington Post 550 is the director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders.

Oversight, governance are officer responsibilities

The Star Tribune reported in its March 19 issue that a veterans service organization (not The American Legion) was compelled by the Minnesota attorney general to make changes in how its charitable funds were handled. This was the result of failing to make changes after a state treasurer of that veterans service organization in 2017 and 2018 wrote checks to himself and his creditors in the amount of \$45,000. The money came out of that veterans service organization's funds. As a result of that misappropriation, that man was convicted of misdemeanor theft in 2019 and ordered to repay the money. However, that organization did not take corrective steps to ensure this did not happen again. That failure prompted Minnesota's attorney general to force that organization to take corrective action. Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison had this to say about the matter: "Let this be a reminder for all Minnesota charities: Proper governance and oversight are the chief responsibilities of nonprofit officers and executive committees. They should always have a watchful eye over their people, operations and assets." As I have said over and over again, our DEC and the executive committees of our districts and all our posts need to be careful with the Attorney General's Office. They are empowered by statute to enforce the nonprofit corporation act, liquor control and gambling operations. They have an entire division called the Charities Division made up of

"Our executive boards at all levels have a duty of care and a duty of obedience."

five lawyers and three financial analysts to enforce the law. Do not mess with these people. Remember that protecting our assets is accomplished by more than just prosecuting those who steal. We stay out of trouble by remembering our duties imposed by law. Our executive boards at all levels have a duty of care and a duty of obedience. The duty of care requires that each board member must act in a reasonable and informed manner when participating in the board's decisions and its oversight of management. Each board member must act in good faith, with common sense, practical wisdom and informed judgement. When a problem arises or something has occurred to make it obvious that a particular problem should be addressed, each board member is obligated to inquire into the surrounding facts and circumstances. Make the hard decisions that are required to protect our assets: establish or improve procedures to protect checking accounts, hire reliable trustworthy people, ask hard questions when the books don't balance and keep the membership informed. The duty of obedience requires each board member to follow the law both federal and state as well as their

Judge Advocate

Greg Colby



organization's constitution and bylaws. Ignoring tax law or labor rules violates this duty. Protecting assets is an obligation and duty of every officer whether at the post, district or department level. So, when you hear me harping again about following the law, it's because it's required. By doing what's required, we avoid the very unpleasant experience of meeting our attorney general in court and having a judge order us to do things. And having it splashed on the front page of the biggest newspaper in Minnesota. I leave to each post what to do with a post member who takes up to \$1,000 from post funds. Expel or reprimand that person as you see fit — but recover the money. If you need help with that, call me. But if it's more than \$1,000, I

"Nobody should be able to write checks for large sums without a committee's approval and the approval of membership."

recommend you turn that person over to your local county or city attorney for prosecution but insist on restitution for the full amount that is missing. If the money taken is over \$10,000, I advise you to demand felony prosecution with jail time if

there is a conviction. The American Legion is not a lending institution. We are a charity dedicated to helping veterans. A major theft of our funds deserves severe sanctions. If your executive boards or officers are not protecting post assets, then replacing them may be appropriate. Let's be clear about why the Attorney General's Office got involved. It was not because a large sum of money was taken. It's because the executive board took no action to put procedures in place to ensure this did not happen again. Nobody should be able to write checks for large sums without a committee's approval and the approval of membership. Secondly, there should always be two signatures on each check written. This attorney general is not demanding perfection. He is demanding real oversight of the money collected and how its distributed. And he is insisting that corrective action be taken when something seriously wrong occurs. If there are questions about this, feel free to contact me.

Greg Colby of Northfield Post 84 is the judge advocate for the Department of Minnesota. His email is greg.colby.northfield@gmail.com.

Mail Call

Continued from Page 4

he and his family served with great honor as all of us veterans have done. I was not around during World War I, and I have no information about vaccinations at that time. I was in grade school in World War II and remember the polio and smallpox pandemics. As kids, we dreaded the school nurse arriving at school with the long needles, but we stood in line to receive our shots. There was never any talk of losing our rights either, by us kids or our parents. We were all grateful to help stop the pandemics as we knew of other children who had died or been crippled for life. Korea was next. My brother came home after two years and told us that the sicknesses were as bad as the bullets. He was very grateful for the vaccinations by the Army medics that kept his unit going as a team. Then it was my time to serve. I remember our whole company being marched to a medical facility, and then we held out both arms. There was never any talk about losing our rights. In my six years, we were always very grateful that our medics kept us healthy and, as a team, ready to serve our country. The real issues are not getting vaccinated and how our country has changed. One thing that the March Mail Call writer and I agree on is that our forefathers are rolling around in their

graves, though I believe for the wrong reasons. John M. Peterson Hibbing Minnesota Post 1982

Letter had a lot of anti-vax views

Once again, I disagree with posting inaccurate information and cliches in Mail Call. The letter from Earl Pedersen is simply not true and full of the ridiculous statements that anti-vaxxers have continued to use. What does anyone in Renville give a [expletive] about what restaurants in St Paul and Minneapolis require? It's divisive to print drivel such as "follow the money," "papers, please," "so-called vaccines" and "tyrannical leaders." Please stop, thank you. Steve DeSpiegelaere Woodbury Minnesota Post 1982

Legionnaire should focus on positive

I read with great disappointment Adjutant Mike Maxa's column in the March issue of the Legionnaire newspaper. I

believe it is very inappropriate. Any issues with certain posts in our state should be addressed with the respective posts involved. I like to use the Legionnaire newspaper as a recruiting tool for new members. If a perspective new member would read the adjutant's article, do you think he or she would join the Legion? I don't think so. In the future, I would recommend that our state officers resolve any issues with the posts referred to in the adjutant's article discretely. I am pleased to say that the overwhelming majority of posts in our state do a fine job of representing the Legion and our respective communities. In the Legionnaire newspaper, we should always focus on the positive. I am a proud member of our post and very grateful for the continued service of our hometown veterans and all that they do for our community. Frank McKenzie Commander Underwood Post 489

Some posts need to hear the truth

With respect to the column in the March issue titled "Have

we Legionnaires forgotten our why?" by Mike Maxa, I concur. We need to take a break, take a step back, and ask ourselves why we are here. I've asked myself, "Why do I stay as a member of the post?" All I heard from a past post commander with a dictator's mentality was, "This is my post." To him, I would say, "Thank you for your passion, but you have lost your way. It's our post." By our, I mean the membership. We need to stop with the "I" and "my" and replace them with "we" and "our." Thank you for all that you do and have done. We, the next generation, want to carry on the legacy of the Legion. Use the leadership skills you received in the military to teach, train, and develop the next generation to carry on the legacy! We (most of us) are done serving our country in uniform, but we are not done serving our country and communities. We do have experiences that will help us increase the Legion's membership. We want the legacy that all of you worked so hard to create to live forever. Be transparent with us and teach us the right way to be a Legionnaire. Ray Kane St. Paul Park Post 98

Commander's Project

We did it!

Department Commander Tom Fernlund's Project raises funds for Legionville and for recreation at the 5 Minnesota Veterans Homes.

The portion for Legionville is intended to fund a dishwasher and 24-foot trailer for hauling wood. The recreation side is intended to lift spirits during these tough times.

Make checks out to Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 82.

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

Goal: \$60,000

Present: 115% at \$69,155

You donated \$21,675 in the past month, of which \$10,000 came from Minneapolis Post Office Post 540. That put Commander Fernlund over the goal. Thank you!

There's no harm in continuing to donate to the Commander's Project. Gambling funds are allowed.

Date of graphic: March 17

Endorsements

Post and district backs Ash for dept. historian

Teresa A. Ash has been endorsed by Christie DeParcq Post 406 in St. Paul and the 4th District for department historian for 2022-2023.

Ash started her adventure in The American Legion and Auxiliary in the 1st District at Houston Post 423 — where she worked with Girls State. Additionally, with the help of her sister, she organized and chaired the (now annual) Houston County Military Ball.

Ash currently is a member of the Christie DeParcq Post 406. She has been a member of The

American Legion for 17 years.

At the post level, she currently serves as the 2nd vice commander and public relations chair.

At the district level, she has held the positions of public affairs chair, vice commander, commander and is currently the media and communications chair.

At the department level, she served as public relations chair, a member of the 2011 and 2018 Department of Minnesota National Convention Corp., vice commander and currently the

Media and Communications Committee chair. She served as department vice commander for two years from 2019 to 2021.

She helped facilitate a COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee for the Department of Minnesota ensuring the continued work for veterans remained strong during the Pandemic.

Ash is eligible for membership in The American Legion through her service in the

Army Reserve. She is a graduate of the National American Legion College.

In her personal life, she and her husband, Mike, have a son and daughter (both proud veterans and members of The American Legion and Auxiliary) and four grandchildren (all proud members of either the SAL or the Auxiliary Juniors). She works full time for the Department of Veterans Affairs.



Teresa Ash

Tappainer tapped for dept. sergeant-at-arms

Carla Tappainer has been endorsed by Apple Valley Post 1776 for the position of Department of sergeant-at-arms for the 2022-2023 year. Tappainer served in the Army from 1981 to 2001 serving in the 25th Infantry Division Band in Hawaii for three years and The Old Guard Fife & Drum Corps (Presidential Honor Guard) in Washington, D.C., for 17 years as a bugler/trumpet player.

Tappainer retired in 2001

from the Army. She is a 17-year member of Post 1776 and has served in several positions including chaplain, 1st and 2nd vice commander, commander for three years, membership director and is currently the adjutant. At the district level she has been chaplain, vice commander and commander for the 3rd District and has served on several committees.

She is currently on the Strategic Planning Committee at

the department level. Tappainer is currently working for Target Corp. in the property tax department and is looking forward to retiring early next year.

She is very active in her community with Post 1776 Auxiliary, Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, Elks and the Apple



Carla Tappainer

Valley Arts Foundation. Tappainer has been married to her husband Joe (Army) for 35 years, and they have two beautiful daughters. Emily is a physician assistant and Jessica is a manager of a hair salon. They also have three spoiled dogs, Rowdy, Nubi and Tigger.

Minnesota Veteran Homes receive award for quality

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Veterans Homes have received Pinnacle Quality Insight's 2022 Customer Experience Award in the Skilled Nursing Facility category. The skilled facilities are in Fergus Falls, Luverne, Minneapolis and Silver Bay.

Pinnacle Quality Insight is a customer satisfaction measurement firm with 26 years of experience in post-acute health care. Pinnacle conducts over 150,000 phone surveys each year and works with more than 2,500 care providers in all 50 U.S. states, Canada and Puerto Rico.

Over the past year, Pinnacle interviewed both residents and their families on several areas including: cleanliness, activities,

therapy, personalized care, dignity and respect, communication and responding to resident concerns

The results are compared to others in the industry and the Minnesota Veterans Homes have been identified as "best in class."

"The Pinnacle survey results represent the overall quality our homes provide to our residents by our staff," said Deputy Commissioner Douglas Hughes. "We are very proud of the level of care that is provided and appreciate the work of all employees to provide this experience to residents and families."

Throughout its history of serving the community, the Minnesota Veterans Homes

have placed a strong emphasis on ensuring that the individual needs of every resident are met. Over the course of 2021, Pinnacle contacted residents and their families in monthly telephone interviews that included open-ended questions, as well the opportunity to rate the homes in specific categories.

Every month, each home reviewed these real-time survey results to gain a better understanding of Residents' needs and made improvements when necessary.

By qualifying for the Pinnacle Customer Experience Award, the Minnesota Veterans Homes have satisfied the rigorous demand of scoring in the top 15 percent of the nation across a 12-month average.

What's happening?

Continued from Page 5

captured crews. Special focus will be given to the modification of Doolittle's B-25s in Minnesota.

The program takes place at the Minnesota History Center. Attendance is free but be prepared to pay \$6 for parking.

Rosetown to host craft sale

ROSEVILLE — The Rose-town Spring Bazaar & Craft Sale takes place 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 23 at Rosetown Memorial Post 542 in Roseville, 700 W. County Road C.

Does your post want to win \$1,000?

WEST ST. PAUL — The Twin Cities Auto Show is hosting a contest. Winners get a \$1,000 prize, 25 VIP tickets, a ride in the parade, Fast Pass to Drive experiences and more.

In 250-500 words, describe

how your Minnesota American Legion post makes an impact in the community. Please include three to five photos and submit at twincitiesautoshow.com. Submission deadline is midnight on April 22.

Winners will be contacted before the auto show. Complete rules and prizes can be found at twincitiesautoshow.com.

The show is organized by the Greater Metropolitan Automobile Dealers Association of Minnesota.

Dog museum pays tribute to warrior K9s

NEW YORK — The American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog is pleased to announce the opening of a new exhibit, "Dogs of War and Peace," open March 16 through July 19, 2022. Ten life-sized, carved-wood allegorical memorials by sculptor James Mellick will be on display from his "Wounded Warrior Dogs" and "Over the Rainbow Bridge" collections, along with the museum's

permanent collection, which includes sculptures, paintings, collars, vests, photographs and more.

Celebrating the bond beyond the battlefield, this installation will highlight military dogs from WWII to Afghanistan.

Visit museumofthedog.com to learn more.

Post 15 offers Easter breakfast

DETROIT LAKES — Got up early for Easter Sunday services and now you are hungry after church? Detroit Lakes Post 15 hosts the Color Guard Breakfast 8 a.m. to noon April 17.

The post also plans to have its Zinger Steak Fry from 5 p.m. till the beef is gone on Friday, April 29.

Rice County to dedicate memorial

FARIBAULT — Mark down 1 p.m. May 7 on your calendars.

The Rice County Veterans Memorial is being dedicated at the Rice County Courthouse at that time and date.

Veterans and the general public are invited. The memorial is on the north lawn.

Rice County formed a committee to expand the Civil War memorial in 2008 into a memorial for all veterans. The result is a new memorial adjacent to the existing one.

Vietnam vets, this is for you

DAYTONA, Fla. — The Heroes Honor Festival at Daytona International Speedway is set for May 27-28.

Hosted by post-9/11 veterans, it is a patriotic welcome-home celebration for Vietnam-era veterans. Attendance is open to all people but free for Vietnam veterans.

There will be musical acts such as Toby Keith, military flyovers, interactive exhibits and demonstration rides. Get tickets at: HeroesHonorFestival.com.

Children & Youth Month is time to get kids going

National Report

Bill Barbknecht



Spring is here, and April is Children & Youth Month.

I hope your post is sending a boy or girl or two to Boys State and Girls State in June. Will your post have a Girls Fastpitch Softball team and an American Legion Baseball team? How about our Junior Shooting Sports Program? The National Oratorical Contest is April 22-24 in Indianapolis. Good luck to our Minnesota participant. These are all things the American Legion Family has to offer our children and youth as well as other children and youth.

Minnesota missed our 90 percent goal but we can make the 95 percent by April 13, with some contact with your members who have not renewed and there is a lot of eligible to be new members.

National Commander Paul Dillard is set to visit Minnesota April 10-14. Please check to see if he will be in your area and visit with him.

The spring SAL, NEC and American Legion meetings will be in Indianapolis April 30 to May 5. Donna and I will be in Indianapolis for the NEC meeting.

Armed Forces Day is May 21 and, of course, Memorial Day at the end of May. Is your post

doing something for its members?

Either day is a golden opportunity to do something to promote the American Legion Family.

Sign up new members. Or ask current members to be a part of your Memorial Day program or firing squad. Hold a program at the school or community center in your town or area. Please have some kind of recognition for this day. Teach our children and youth it is not only the beginning of summer vacation.

If you have a post home, please check on your insurance coverage. Lake Park in the 9th District lost their post home to a fire March 13. It was a big beautiful post home.

Donna and myself hope you have a blessed Easter Holiday with family. Remember veterans who may be alone.

As always if I can be of any a help or a question, please call me at: 218-770-6264.

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

Minneapolis Veterans Home administrator to retire

MINNEAPOLIS — Minneapolis Veterans Home Administrator Tom Paul has announced his plans to retire, and now the home is seeking a new administrator.

Paul began in January 2017 as assistant administrator, according to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs' Friday Digest. He has served in the field of long-term care for 50 years and was recognized by LeadingAge Minnesota at a recent conference.

Under his guidance, the Minneapolis Veterans Home was awarded the LeadingAge Minnesota Quality Award in 2019 and an Employer of the Year honor in 2020.

DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

Learn about being a delegate

Continued from Page 5

another article.

So, here is the deal, in the Department of Minnesota Constitution, Article 5: Legislative Organization, tells us the number of delegates and alternates each post gets. Each post gets to determine who their delegates and alternates are.

Now when I say the post, I don't mean the post commander, I mean the post members, at their general membership meeting, will elect their delegates and alternates to district and department convention.

Unless their post constitution and bylaws dictate otherwise.

Article 5, Section 3 states: "Each post is entitled to two delegates and one additional delate for each 100 members or major fraction thereof, whose department dues have

been received by department treasurer and whose district dues have been paid to their respective district officers 30 days prior to the convention for which they are chosen. The final voting strength of each post shall be determined 30 days prior to the convention.

Each post shall choose its own delegates, who shall be members in good standing of such post.

In addition, each post may choose alternate delegates to serve in the absence of the principal delegates."

I know that is a mouthful. Just remember that members of the post choose their delegates and alternates. The posts, district and department business is conducted by its members. Members elect people to represent them in the decision making at all levels of the Legion.

The SAL Update:

Convention to be in E. Grand Forks

I would like to thank everyone who attended our Spring Conference at St. Augusta Post 621 on March 18 and 19. I was in shock by the amount of donations for all our projects, but especially the Child Welfare Foundation that raised over \$6,000!

Thank you for helping this great program.

If you have not heard by now, our annual convention has been moved to East Grand

Detachment commander

Tim Weaver

Forks Post 157 on June 24 and 25. If you can attend, please do so, as this is our annual convention.

As always, please keep our service personnel both domestic and abroad in your thoughts and prayers.

Tim Weaver of La Crescent Squadron 595 is the commander of the Detachment of Minnesota for the Sons of The American Legion.



Detachment membership as of March 19

2021 Results as of 6/30/2021	10577
2022 Goal from National	11091
2022 Detachment Goal (approx 3%)	10895
2022 105%	11440
Current Received as of 2/19/2022	9744
Current Percentage	89.44%

87.86% **1347 needed for 100%**
89.44% **1151 needed for 100%**

*includes both traditional and online renewals

Vice Commanders	2021 Results	2022 Goal	105%	Current at Dept.	Percentage	Placing
1st and 3rd	3511	3617	3798	3170	87.64%	5
2nd and 7th	2033	2095	2200	1881	89.79%	2
4th and 5th	702	724	760.2	642	88.67%	4
6th and 9th	2311	2381	2500	2194	92.15%	1
8th and 10th	2016	2078	2182	1857	89.36%	3
Totals	10573	10895	11440	9744	89.44%	

Districts	2021 Results	2022 Goal	105%	Current at Dept.	Percentage	Placing
1st District	1578	1626	1707	1479	90.96%	4
2nd District	1196	1232	1294	1092	88.64%	7
3rd District	1933	1991	2091	1691	84.93%	9
4th District	359	370	388.5	323	87.30%	8
5th District	343	354	371.7	319	90.11%	6
6th District	1493	1538	1615	1428	92.85%	1
7th District	837	863	906.2	789	91.43%	2
8th District	507	523	549.2	437	83.56%	10
9th District	818	843	885.2	766	90.87%	5
10th District	1509	1555	1633	1420	91.32%	3
Totals	10573	10895	11440	9744	89.44%	

A life membership ensures your legacy

And now a word from our sponsors...

When I first joined the Sons of the American Legion 30 years ago, I was often asked, "Why do you belong to the SAL?" or even "I didn't know that you served in the military."

When I explain the purpose of the Sons of The American Legion, the response is often "Oh, that's nice."

At first, I found it disheartening and even felt that I was "odd" for having the passion to our organization that I do. After all, the SAL was essentially a shadow organization of The American Legion. There wasn't much to get involved in (or so I thought), but to me it was important.

It was important to support our veterans and their families. It was important to bring the amazing work of the SAL to the forefront, but most of all there was an honor in being able to continue a legacy and to be given charge of a responsibility. The responsibility of ensuring

Membership Director

Matthew Verkuilen

that the work of The American Legion (and Legion Family) never fades away — and is never forgotten.

This is where we need your help. We need your family to be part of our family. Perhaps it is as simple as your spouse, children, grandchildren becoming part of the American Legion Family. If you have children or grandchildren that are already members, consider gifting them a PUFL (Paid Up For Life) membership.

This option is available for the Legion, Auxiliary and SAL in Minnesota. This investment ensures that the legacies of those that have come before us continue well into the future.

But we also need your help in other ways. If you have young members, let's work together and get them involved. If you need ways to connect to your

younger adult members, we can help with that, too. If you are a seasoned member, we value your experience and guidance. There are so many benefits of working together as a Legion Family that to list all the reasons would take up the majority of the Legionnaire.

What I will say is this, if you need ideas of how to get more of your membership involved, or even more of our family involved with your communities, please ask. As they say on the commercials, operators are standing by!

Matthew Verkuilen is the membership director for the Detachment of Minnesota for the Sons of The American Legion.



Commander's Project benefits youth

By Doug Bible
Detachment Adjutant

SAL Commander Tim Weaver's project is monetary donations to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation (CWF). The foundation is in its 67th year and awarded 17 grants totaling \$639,328 to 14 nonprofits in 2022 on behalf of the American Legion Family.

These grants support youth serving projects that seek to enhance the lives of children by addressing their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs. CWF is the premier program supported by the Sons of The American Legion

across the nation.

The donation year is June 1 thru May 31 of each year. To donate to the Detachment Commander's Project this year, donations must be recorded at national by May 31. To ensure that donations arrive before the deadline, we are asking that they be received no later than May 10. Donations made at Detachment Convention will count toward the next calendar year.

Donations can be mailed to Detachment Adjutant Douglas Bible at 5602 West Oakes Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303. Please make checks payable to the Child Welfare Foundation and not the Detachment of Minnesota.



From left are 9th District Commander Terry Buraas, Detachment Commander Tim Weaver and Honorary Junior President Ashley Stai, who holds a check for her project from the 9th District SAL.



Commander Tim Weaver greets Minnesota Auxiliary President Patti Coleman to the SAL Spring Conference at St. Augusta Post 621.



Detachment Adjutant Doug Bible gives a report. He is a past national commander and past detachment commander. He is with Waite Park Squadron 428.



Detachment Chaplain Stu Sonnee hails from Arcade-Phalen Squadron 577.



Minnesota National Executive Committeeman Bill Barbknecht, left, stands beside Past Detachment Commander Robert Bristo of Gopher Squadron 440.



Past Detachment Commander Dennis Blue, vice commander for the 8th and 10th districts, speaks at the SAL Spring Conference in St. Augusta.



Past Detachment Commander David Vulcan of Nicollet Squadron 510 leads an auction fundraiser at the conference.



Membership Director Matt Verkuilen of Crystal Squadron 511 and Past Detachment Commander Shawn Davis of Richfield Squadron 435 lead the media efforts.

April is Children & Youth Month

By Shawn Davis
Detachment NECman

The fourth pillar of The American Legion is Children & Youth, which has three main objectives: to strengthen the family unit, to work with quality organizations that provide services for children, and provide communities with well-rounded programs that meet the needs of young people.

Children & Youth programs are many and varied. They are out there making a difference, and you may not realize it. These programs include:

- Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA): Through TFA, a local Legion post can call upon the national organization for cash assistance to help meet the basic needs of minor children of eligible veterans and servicemembers, when all other sources of assistance have been exhausted.

- Family Support Network: This provides immediate assistance to U.S. military personnel and their families whose lives have been directly affected by the war on terrorism. A nationwide toll-free telephone number, 800-504-4098, for servicemembers and their families to call for assistance. Requests also can be made online at www.legion.org/fsn. All inquiries are referred to The American Legion department in which the call originated. Departments relay the collected information to a local American Legion post. The post then contacts the servicemember or family to see how assistance can be provided.

- Child Welfare Foundation (CWF): This provides other nonprofit organizations with grants to educate the public about the needs of children across the nation.

Why bring this all up?
Because April is Children and

Youth Month. This month has been designated as such within the American Legion Family since 1938. It is the perfect time to demonstrate how the American Legion Family is committed to its community and especially its children. Consider holding a youth-themed community event. Invite a subject matter expert to give a presentation at your next meeting. Collaborate with a local school on a project. There are many opportunities and activities out there.

Once the event is done, let us know what you did, how it was attended, and any results you had as a result of participating in Children & Youth Month!

And don't forget that if your post, unit or squadron donates one dollar for each member (as of the total official membership as of June 1, 2021) and submits the 100 percent Per Capita Banner Request prior to May 3, a ribbon will be sent to you.

France honors Montgomery Post 79 member



Media members from the Twin Cities, Mankato and Montgomery gather around to interview 96-year-old Arnold "Buck" Zahratka, who served in the 106th Infantry Division in World War II.

Continued from Page 1

by the French president.

Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke commended Zahratka. He noted they both are combat veterans — Herke served in the Iraq War — and they both attended Camp Atterbury in Indiana.

Montgomery Mayor Tom Eisert thanked Tagand for coming to Minnesota and thanked everyone in attendance.

"How do you come up with a way to describe the honor, dignity and respect for a man who has been through what he has been through?" Eisert said. "Just look around the room."

An aide from Sen. Amy Klobuchar's office read a statement from her. Sen. Tina Smith sent a message to Post 79, and Commander Corey Kotek, who emceed the event, read the statement.

Also attending were Honorary Consul of France for Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota Christina Selander Bouzouina and Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic for Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota Marit Lee Kucera. Zahratka has Czech heritage.

"This is amazing," he said. "Never did I think I would get something like that."

KSTP reporter Joe Mazan asked him the secret to a long life.

"Drink a lot of Scotch," Zahratka

replied.

Zahratka was born Aug. 31, 1925, to parents Tom and Bessie Zahratka. He attended St. Raphael Catholic School, then Montgomery High School. At age 18, he was drafted into the Army in October 1943.

After 17 months of training in Florida, then a few more days in North Carolina, he was sent to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, to join the 106th Infantry Division. He showed proficiency as an expert rifleman, machine gunner and hand grenadier. The 106th was shipped to England for further training before going to Le Havre, in the Normandy region of France.

There, the 106th, known as the Golden Lions, regrouped and headed east to confront the Nazis, and they took the brunt at the opening of the Battle of the Bulge in 1944. Many soldiers in the division were captured or killed during the Ardennes campaign.

The Germans encircled two of the division's three infantry regiments — the 422nd and 423rd — and gained 6,000 prisoners in one of the largest mass surrenders in U.S. military history. Zahratka, however, was part of the division's lone remaining infantry regiment, the 424th. They fought through eastern Belgium and down into the Alsace region of France. In the chaos of war, Arnold ended up being separated from his unit and was left alone



Dignitaries, family, veterans and members of the general public applaud Arnold "Buck" Zahratka on March 23 at the Montgomery Post 79 banquet hall after he received the French Legion of Honor. Zahratka is a World War II veteran and has been a member of The American Legion for 70 years.



From left are Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke, French Legion of Honor recipient Arnold "Buck" Zahratka and Minnesota American Legion Commander Tom Fernlund.

in the Ardennes with no ammunition and very few provisions but eventually found his way back to his unit.

Zahratka was assigned to various duties in northern France and Belgium, then returned to California and finally to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, where he

was discharged in March 1946 with the rank of private first class.

He has received the American Campaign Medal, Bronze Star, European Campaign Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, World War II Medal, Efficiency Fidelity & Honor Medal, life member

of the 106th Infantry Division Association (Golden Lions), a Good Conduct Medal and a diploma from the French government for his part in liberating France.

He is a 70-year member of The American Legion. He has volunteered in many church and community activities and is well-respected in the Montgomery community.

After the war, Zahratka worked as a mechanic for several years before opening his own business, Buck's Cities Service. After five years, he sold it and opened Buck's Tavern, operating during the early 1960s. He sold it in the late 1960s and began working as a heavy equipment operator for Alexander Construction in Apple Valley. After 30 years, he retired, pursuing hobbies of fishing, snowmobiling, motorcycling and driving his Model T.

He married Gladys in February 1949. They had three children, Keith, Linda and Arnold. In January 2022, Gladys died of complications from Parkinson's disease. Arnold has been blessed with six grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Dept. of Veterans Affairs recommends CBOCs for Cambridge, Litchfield

The VA moves steps closer to modernizing its robust health care system with the release of its much-anticipated Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) recommendations. The AIR report, which was released March 14 by VA Secretary Denis McDonough was congressionally required as part of the MISSION ACT of 2018.

There has been much criticism centered around the suggested 17 medical centers in 12 states that would be completely closed. Although VA also recommendations to add 14 new major VA hospitals along with 140 multi-specialty community-based outpatient clinics. The plan in total would add 80 new medical buildings to the department's existing inventory of more than 1,200 across the country.

I believe this will allow VA to appropriate less of its funding to the private sector and only rely on its third-party network where it makes sense. VA will be able to focus its budget on its own infrastructure in locations where it demands services based on its market assessments.

If approved, these recommendations would provide

VA & Rehabilitation

Jeremy Wolfsteller

nearly 150,000 more veterans with primary care within 30 minutes; nearly 200,000 more veterans will have mental health care within 30 minutes; and over 375,000 more veterans will have access to outpatient specialty care within 60 minutes. The VA is required to provide these services within those drive times based on the MISSION ACT; otherwise veterans are eligible for care in the community.

Three things I believe veterans should take away from the recommendations. I'll end with recommendations for Minneapolis and St. Cloud VA Healthcare Systems.

First, VA's infrastructure is outdated. Sixty-nine percent of VA's 171 Hospitals are 50 years old, compared to an average of eight years in the private sector. Modernizing its infrastructure by replacing ancient, outdated facilities with state-of-the-art health care systems designed with veterans and VA employees in mind, adding an abundant of improvements to VA staff

pay and benefits to strengthen retention efforts, thus improving care throughout the system.

Many of VA facilities were built during times when women weren't allowed to serve in the military. Now women make up approximately 20 percent of those serving that requires new facilities specifically designed to deliver care that is all-encompassing and respects the dignity and uniqueness of each Veteran.

Second, a lot has changed geographically over 60 years. Once where there might have been a heavy population of veterans may now be reduced and the demographic demand for specific clinical need may have changed. VA's market assessments found out that in some markets, the Veteran population is rapidly increasing therefore they're adding new medical centers, community-based



outpatient clinics to meet that ever-growing demand. In other markets, the opposite is happening the number of Veterans is decreasing and the demand for services is changing in those markets, so VA may reduce its footprint but invest in new facilities that better address the needs of the veterans who live there.

Third, VA is investing profoundly in specialized services based on the demand of the veteran markets across the country. They're adding specialty services to their CBOC, creating/expanding community living centers, Home Based Primary Care, so the aging Veteran population can age where they want to, at home or near home. Also, adding new facilities in new places where the number of Veterans struggling with issues such as homelessness or substance use to make sure those Veterans have access to the care they need.

Regarding the health care systems in Minnesota, Minneapolis will focus modernizing the inpatient medical and surgical services space at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center by converting inpatient units to

single occupancy rooms. When complete, medical and surgical services units will all be single rooms occupancy rooms with the total operating beds remaining the same. It will expand numerous specialty care services into its community-based outpatient clinics.

St. Cloud would modernize its outpatient space by utilizing its 50-acre availability to create a new site. Building new structures is less expensive and less disruptive to its historic landmark. Modernize its Community Living Center, which is projected to increase by 2.2 percent between FY 2019 and FY 2029. The current CLC configuration and infrastructure does not meet VA standards of care for single patient rooms that include attached baths and family gathering spaces.

The health care system would modernize its Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program to become a regional resource for VISN 23. St. Cloud would add specialty care services to its existing Community Based Outpatient Clinics and establish two new CBOCs. The new CBOCs will

expand access to primary care and outpatient mental health services in the most sustainable locations within its catchment area.

The first is in the vicinity of Cambridge in Isanti County, which is projected to have 1,480 enrollees in FY 2029. The second CBOC in the vicinity of Litchfield, which will expand access to primary care and outpatient mental health services in the most sustainable location in Meeker County, which is projected to have 1,096 enrollees in FY 2029.

In short, these are just recommendations which will be provided to a congressionally appointed AIR Commission that will have one year to hold public hearings, visit VA facilities, meet with employees and partners, and listen to veterans. In the near-term, the recommendations will have no major impact and veterans will continue to get their care.

Jeremy Wolfsteller of Hopkins Post 320 offices at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and is the service officer for the Department of Minnesota.



Past Commander Dan Ludwig speaks during a discussion on the notion of a senior vice commander.

Should new commanders get a year to learn?

Continued from Page 1

agreement with the St. Cloud Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, also called Visit Greater St. Cloud. The Fall Conference will take place in the River's Edge Convention Center Oct. 28-29, with lodging at Best Western Plus Kelly Inn and Courtyard Marriott St. Cloud.

"Now we are trying to do the same for our convention," Maxa said.

The Fall Conference has an educational focus, and he said this year it will feature breakout sessions, much like a trade conference or convention. Hospitality rooms, he said, will be a thing of the past. Instead, there will be entertainment.

Davis said there will not be a local post hosting any longer. The Convention Corporation and the St. Cloud CVB act as hosts.

He noted the savings the deal will have for attendees, getting 2022 rates even in 2023-26.

The meeting took place prior to the Appreciation Rally at Forest Lake Post 225 and was broadcast live over Facebook.

Here are some of the other matters discussed at the DEC meeting:

Idea: senior vice commander

There was healthy debate March 12 over the notion of adding a senior vice commander to the list of Department of Minnesota officers.

Past Department Commander Mark Dvorak led a discussion at the Department Executive Committee on whether the Department of Minnesota ought to add the position.

"I think the intent is to be privy to all the information the

commander has," Dvorak said.

Presently, there are the commander, adjutant, five vice commanders, chaplain, historian, sergeant-at-arms, membership director and judge advocate, along with national committee man and alternate committee man. A senior vice commander would be elected at the convention, then be in line to assume the commander position the following year.

Third District Vice Commander Marissa LaCourt of Apple Valley Post 1776 said she worries the extra position, by adding a step, could serve as a deterrent to keep younger veterans from running for commander.

Pam Krill of Fairmont Post 36, chair of the Department Strategic Planning Committee, said it creates the impression there is a line of people to be the commander.

Past National Commander Dan Ludwig said each department of the Legion structures officers a bit differently and some indeed have a senior vice commander.

"Anyone can run," he said. "I think it is worth a try. I think the position would be an apprentice to the commander."

Ludwig added there is no guarantee that senior vice commander becomes the commander and said it would provide a chance to remove a dud.

He said being a senior vice commander gives the person time to spot talent statewide and find the right people to appoint to committees when he or she becomes commander. The goal, he said, is to have more committees be active.

Dvorak said the first few months as commander are nuts.

"They can start preparing for the year, and it will make us stronger," he said.

Look at it in a different context, said Past Department Vice Commander Teresa Ash, chair of the Media and Communications Committee. "It's not good-old boy. It's about mentorship."

"Perception is reality," countered 1st District Commander Mike Parry. People who run for department commander can be brought up to speed beforehand.

Department Judge Advocate Greg Colby, citing legal concerns, cautioned against sharing certain department business with non-elected members.

Adding a new department officer would require amending the Department of Minnesota Constitution and By-Laws. Department officers are outlined in Article 7.

Article 15 describes amendments: "This constitution may be amended at any convention by the vote of a majority of the total authorized representation, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been read at such convention at least 12 hours before the vote thereon."

Dvorak said The American Legion is a transparent organization and welcomes discussion on such matters.



Fastpitch Softball is rolling

Thanks for the donations, said Luann McMahan of Adams Post 146, a member of the Department Fastpitch Softball Committee.

The Fastpitch Softball Committee presently is at \$42,800, up from zero on Oct. 1. At the Appreciation Rally, it received a donation of \$10,000 from Minneapolis Post Office Post 540. She is looking forward to seeing girls playing this summer.

She said the webpage is up and linked to the bank and ready to accept team registrations. The website is minnesotalegionsoftball.com. Anyone with questions or needs the new logo can email mnlegionsoftball@gmail.com.

She encouraged posts to adopt

a team or help other posts adopt teams. There were 12 teams registered at the time of the DEC meeting.

McMahan said the program is working on a Facebook page. (By March 21, it had created one. It is found on Facebook as "MN American Legion Fastpitch Softball.")

The end of season state tournament is slated to be July 30-31, likely in Mankato.

By comparison, the North Carolina American Legion's first softball team only had 11 teams and is now above 80.

Donations to the softball program can be made to Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 60. Mail the check to the foundation at 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155.

Registration fees, however, should be conducted through the softball website.

Membership membership

The 90 percent membership target fell on March 9, three days prior to the DEC meeting in Forest Lake.

It was the first membership threshold the Department of Minnesota did not reach, said Membership Director Paul Hassing.

His opinion is the department indeed hit it but many memberships are stuck in processing, an issue affecting the Legion nationally.

"I do believe we hit 90 percent, where we are supposed to be by March," Hassing said.

He said there are National Guard and Reserve forces out there who want to be led into the Legion.

"They want to know they are joining something other than a bar down the street," he said.

Hassing thanked everyone for their hard work on membership. Many of the questions he took after speaking dealt with the membership processing delays.

"If I had an answer, I would give it to you," he said.

During the rally, Hassing announced membership winners.

In third place was the 8th District, at 90.59 percent.

In second was the 6th District at 90.99 percent.

Finishing at the top was the 7th District at 91.32 percent.

Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning Committee is forming a survey of membership, said Krill. It then plans to look into hosting an event that serves as a fundraiser.

She said she is passionate about getting younger veterans to join.

"We need to know the why. We need to figure out the why not?"

She encouraged Legionnaires to visit armories and veteran organizations at colleges.

Minnesota American Legion Foundation

Lloyd Ricker, past department commander and president of the Minnesota American Legion Foundation Board of Directors, said the foundation has a new brochure that will be mailed out. It features the foundation's new logo.

He spoke about the need for posts to donate to Fund 85, the Veteran Assistance Fund, and commended the department and posts on their cooperative efforts to assist veterans. The Legionnaire has featured



Luann McMahan of the Department Fastpitch Softball Committee gives a report to the DEC on March 12.



Department Commander Tom Fernlund receives a check for \$10,000 for his project from Minneapolis Post Office Post 540, which has turned in its charter. Presenting the check is Vice Commander Ray Eiden and 5th District Commander Wade Larson. Post 540 also donated \$10,000 to the new girls' softball program.



The Department Media & Communications Committee held a dance competition over the winter. Here, M&C Committee member Kristy Janigo hands Lou Michaels of St. Paul 3M Post 599 the individual award.



Kristy Janigo of the M&C Committee hands 6th District Commander Jim Lucas a trophy for his district winning the group competition of the dance competition. That's why you have seen photos of members dancing in the Legionnaire lately and on social media.

a handful of veterans helped, but there are many others not featured in the pages of this newspaper.

The fund "has never been done in any other department that I am aware of," Ricker said.

Maxa said \$35,000 has been paid out since Nov. 1.

Adjutant gives report

Maxa suggested holding the August Department Executive Committee 30 minutes after the gavel drops to end the Department Convention.

In past years, the August DEC meeting — the first of the newly elected commanders and committee members — was held the first Saturday in August at a post. Last year, it was Aug. 7 at Royalton Post 137.

Making the switch would save committee members a weekend during the Legion's busiest time of the year, when

commitments from baseball games to American Legion Riders' fundraisers to post-level fundraisers are prolific.

He encouraged department vice commanders and district commanders to visit posts and be sure call ahead to let them know you are coming.

The posts are the first line of defense when it comes to the new Veteran Suicide Coalition, a joint effort by the VA and The American Legion Department of Minnesota to prevent veteran suicides.

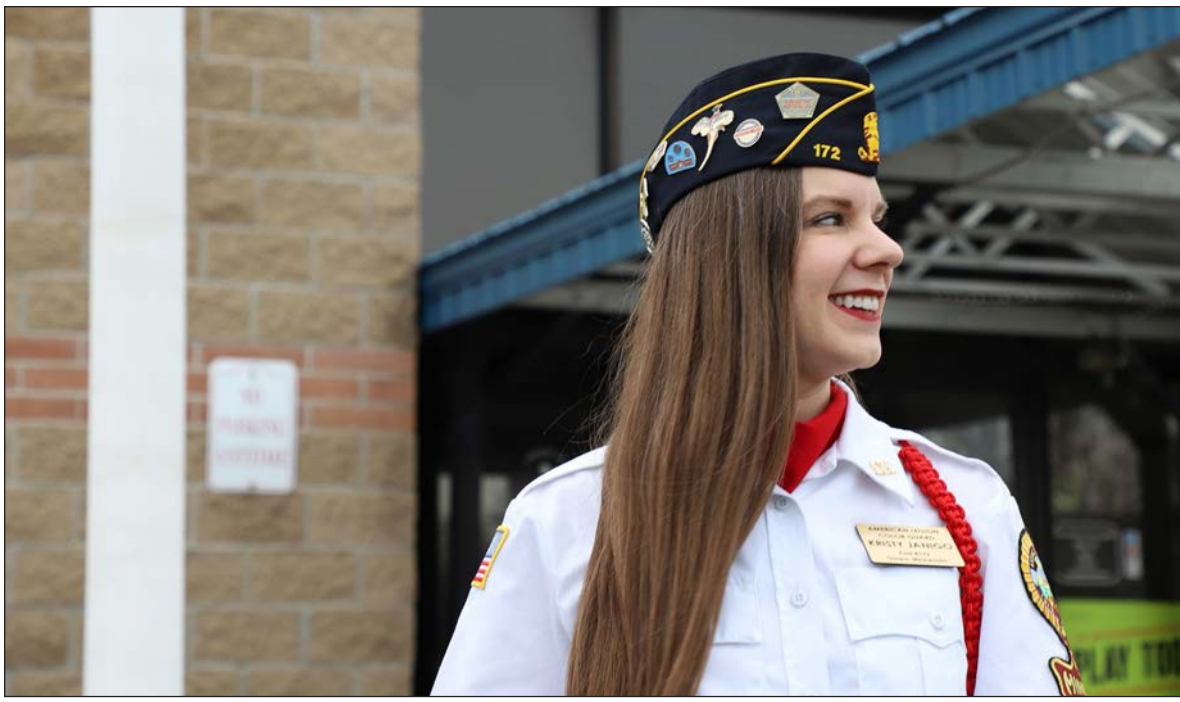
"They aren't going to walk into the department and say, 'I need help,'" Maxa said.

He said he has asked for patience with regard to the new membership software but now he is out of patience. Other departments are facing similar problems.

"We're not alone in this," Maxa said.



Forest Lake Post 225 Assistant Chaplain Jerry Peltier sings "God Bless America" at the Appreciation Rally on March 12.



Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172 Honor Guard member Kristy Janigo looks away while getting her photo taken in front of her post home on March 16.

Janigo worked for Target Corp. twice before switching careers from fashion to government

Continued from Page 1

got something to prove. I just thought life was boring in North Dakota, and I wanted to do something bigger, more interesting," Janigo said.

She ended up being the only member of her generation on both sides of the family to enter the military. After maxing the ASVAB, she was sworn into the North Dakota Army National Guard in December of her senior year of high school and was able to drill with her unit, the 132nd Quartermaster Company, a water treatment unit.

In fact, she was a member of the armed forces before she even received her driver's license, which she didn't acquire until some point later her senior year.

She had a family history of serving. A grandfather, Roland Weisenburger, served in the Army in World War II. She described him as a tough and sweet guy who worked as a social worker in local government through his career.

She has an uncle who served in the South Dakota National Guard and, as a civilian, a parole officer. Her father was in ROTC in college but a pulse problem prevented being commissioned.

She went to the summer semester at North Dakota State University in Fargo, where she majored in apparel studies, with assistance from the G.I. Bill.

That fall, as the United States launched its first airstrikes against the Taliban and al-Qaida, she went off to basic at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and then advanced individual training at Fort Lee, Va. She became a 92W, a water treatment specialist.

"Few units remain that do this work. It's like a city water treatment plant on a 30-foot truck bed," she said.

Janigo wasn't much into athletics in school, but at basic she found she had athleticism. The platoon divided up based on athletic ability, and she was in the top grouping. She and a guy in the platoon were good at rope climbing, wall-scaling and obstacle courses, and together they earned their platoon a guidon streamer.

During the 11 weeks at AIT, she learned to purify a maximum of 3,000 gallons of water per hour. The source could be a lake or a river.

Then it was back to NDSU, studying apparel and drilling monthly. In the summer of 2002, the 132nd Quartermaster Company went to Fort Story,

Va., to train how to purify ocean water.

In March 2003, the company deployed to Fort Lewis in Washington state, where they trained daily in preparation for going to Iraq. Janigo was 19 and couldn't have a drink with her unit at the servicemen's club. She was in the middle of the college semester.

She had to pull out of one class and finish the others through correspondence.

"It gave me something to do in my spare time while I hung out at the bar-

National Guard and never got to travel internationally, just stateside. She performed her duty well. In 2004, she was the North Dakota National Guard Soldier of the Year. In 2005, she received an award for leading tactical exercises as a sergeant.

In 2007, she landed a dream job with Target Corp. in the Twin Cities. She suddenly had a new mission: climb the corporate ladder.

"I thought I was super cool. I was living in the big city. I just decided to move on."

She decided against reenlisting. The reenlistment recruiter had her look at options, and, like others, she felt the military could have tried a little harder to convince her to stay.

She worked at Target for five years, and during this time she met Chip Janigo. He was from the Wausau area of Wisconsin, and he was buds with one of her Target coworkers. They struck up a relationship. He moved to the Twin Cities in 2008 to be with her.

She did well at Target but left to pursue being department chair at a for-profit college called Art Institutes International Minnesota. She had received a master's degree in design and sustainability from the University of Minnesota in 2012. She now had a faculty of 10 reporting to her.

In 2014, she went back to Target, just a few weeks after her father died. The institute was struggling and the writing was on the wall. In 2016, it announced it would not accept new students, and in 2019, it ultimately closed.

The first time she was at Target, she worked in swimwear and children's

wear. Children's wear, she said, doesn't change much. This time, however, she was in women's fashion, which was far more exciting.

In 2016, Kristy and Chip moved into a townhouse in Maple Grove. They have no pets and no kids.

"I don't know how to cook and have no time for cleaning. I do the finances and the taxes, which he doesn't like to do. We kind of parent each other," she said.

She helped launch brands for Target — Who What Wear, Knox Rose, among others — and helped with designer partnerships — Project North and Victoria Beckham are examples — and traveled to far-away places like China and Nicaragua.

"I had my favorite hotel in L.A. I had my favorite sushi place," she said. "In the last year I had six domestic trips and two international trips."

It got exhausting, in fact, and in 2017, she left.

"I just didn't care about it anymore and was searching for something else in life," Janigo said. "For a long time, I didn't think too much about my connection to the military other than it was a part of my past."

She job-hopped for a spell doing middle-manager positions and feeling unfulfilled. She ended up with a job where she was commuting to Duluth and living in Maple Grove.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic struck. The company in Duluth made cutbacks as the world shut down, and she was a victim of her own high pay.

Janigo found another job, this time commuting to Mankato. It was for the website Fun.com, known for its collectibles and costumes.

Meanwhile, she ran for Maple Grove City Council and lost a close one.

It was around this time she joined the Legion. Post 172 held a wreath laying at Maple Grove's Central Park. She met then-Commander Walter Cole, who invited her to a post meeting.

She found a passion for the charitable gambling donations, benefiting causes from domestic violence to homelessness to hunger to the arts.

That City Council run garnered attention, too.

"I originally ran because no one was running, so I decided to step forward," she said.

It was enough to impress Kevin Anderson, who had successfully won a seat on the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners. He asked her to work for him, and she promptly said no, because it was a reduction in pay.

But then she rethought the decision. The challenge of having to know

a little bit about everything — rather than a lot about one thing — was alluring. She now is a policy director for Commissioner Anderson, focusing primarily on transportation and veterans.

She loves the job, especially moments like Hennepin County being named a Beyond the Yellow Ribbon County, or when she helped Richfield get county funding to assist with a veterans memorial and, of course, now the possibility of a Hennepin County Veterans Memorial for Government Plaza in downtown Minneapolis.

"I think this is something I could be happy with for a very long time," Janigo said.

She exited the military with no injuries, so she now feels it her duty to support veterans who have major issues.

"Now I am involved in the Legion and work at the county government to work for better outcomes for veterans."

She is running for City Council again, too. She announced her candidacy March 12 at a public event in the morning, then came to the Appreciation Rally at Forest Lake Post 225 in the afternoon. She has been busy knocking on doors and meeting the public.

"I'm someone who's driven by serving," Janigo said.

She has participated in the Maple Grove Police Department's Police Academy. Her brother is a police officer. She is council vice president at Maple Grove Lutheran Church. She is treasurer of her homeowner association. She has served on the Maple Grove Arbor Committee and still volunteers to cut down buckthorn.

Besides serving on the honor guard at Osseo-Maple Grove American Legion Post 172, she is the post's media chair and legislative liaison. She is a past chaplain, too.

"The Legion is a unifier, or at least that is my vision for it," she said. "I know the women and men I meet do not agree with me on everything, and I expect that. The Legion is a way for us to get over our differences and remain committed to one another."



This is a picture of her basic training photo. Her maiden name is Simmons.

racks," she said.

She also got to enjoy the majesty of the Pacific Northwest. She kayaked on American Lake, hiked at Mount Rainier National Park and visited Seattle.

That same month was when Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch, Spc. Shoshana Johnson and four men of the 507th Maintenance Company were captured by Iraqi forces during an ambush on a convoy in Nasiriyah. That news served to stir up worries among Janigo's family members.

Then the company got word: "Your orders are canceled. You are going back to North Dakota." Some cried. Some were relieved. Everyone had anticipation of going to the other side of the globe.

"In hindsight, I feel like I missed out on an experience because few can say they went with the United States military to a foreign theater of duty," Janigo said.

She served six years with the Army



Kristy Janigo stands in front of Osseo-Maple Grove Post 225.



Kristy Janigo is a member of the Media & Communications Committee and often can be seen at department events operating camera equipment. Above, she is on the left at the Appreciation Rally in Forest Lake. Next to her, from left, are Ray Kane, Teresa Ash, Mike Ash and Jennifer Havlick.

Listening Post



From left are Minnesota Commander Tom Fernlund, 7th District Commander Chip Manson, Department Vice Commander Hal Mayer, Keith Seidler of Spicer Post 545 and Department Membership Director Paul Hassing. Manson and Meyer won Appreciation Awards for membership efforts in the 7th District. Seidler stood in for 7th District Membership Director Dean Knutson.



On the left and right in this series of photos are Commander Tom Fernlund and Membership Director Paul Hassing, respectively. Here, in the center, is Dale Wellik, 1st District Vice Commander of the Year.



Andrew Rose is the 5th District Vice Commander of the Year.



Robert Albrecht is the 6th District Vice Commander of the Year.



Marissa LaCourt is the 3rd District Vice Commander of the Year.



Pam Krill is the 2nd District Vice Commander of the Year.



Seventh District Commander Chip Manson stands in for Rueben Nathe, who is the 7th District Vice Commander of the Year.



Tenth District Adjutant Paul Orson, who clearly has a good sense of humor, stands in for Connie Herzog, who is the 10th District Vice Commander of the Year. Other award recipients received their certificates in the mail.



Lloyd Swenson of Atwater Post 375, a Vietnam vet with 52 years membership in The American Legion, still doing his thing for his post during their Sunday brunch fundraiser.



On March 3, the Minnesota American Legion Foundation Veteran Assistance Fund worked with Bayport Post 491's Pat Logan, right, to purchase a car from Apple Autos for a veteran in need. The Veterans Assistance Fund is Fund 85 and it accepts gambling funds.



On March 19, the Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172 Honor Guard presented the colors for the opening of the Minnesota American Legion Family Bowling Tournament at Sundance Lanes in Dayton.



The Veterans Appreciation Ride took place Feb. 12 in Grand Rapids.

MNSEAF and MnUSA held their 14th annual ride on Feb. 12 in Grand Rapids. This was our largest ride ever with 147 veterans and guests participating in the ride with 28 guides and sweeps from the local area snowmobile clubs providing 12 guided groups of riders enjoying the perfectly groomed trails.

The event was held at Sugar Lake Lodge and their staff hosted a wonderful event.

One of the many highlights of our ride was the trail of honor that was provided by local club members. As you can see by the attached picture, 100 eight-foot-tall poles and U.S. flags were placed along the trail coming into the lunch stop.

Our lunch stop was at the Itasca Driftskippers clubhouse whose members provided a great lunch donated and prepared by their members. The Saturday night banquet was again a huge success with great food and an open microphone being passed around for any veteran to share their service and stories with the group.

Our need for snowmobiles for veterans who don't have one was increasingly difficult this year and we need to thank everyone who provided sleds to use: Duluth Lawn & Sports, Polaris Industries, John Omshied, Don Wineland, Larry Shepard, Rick Murray, Bethany Maaniga and Terry Hutchinson.

Our event would not have been possible without the more than 120 donors who funded and supported the ride, and Duluth Lawn & Sports, Polaris Industries, Widdes Trailer Sales, Itasca Driftskippers, Lawron Trail Riders, all the local club members who helped, and especially Al Lauer.



On March 3, the Minnesota American Legion Foundation presented an additional check to the Fergus Falls Veterans Home for \$5,000, for a total donation of \$10,000 toward the Greenhouse Project, which needed additional funds because of rises in construction costs. From left are Minnesota American Legion National Executive Committeeman Bill Barbknecht, retiring Fergus Falls Veterans Home Volunteer Service Coordinator Deanna Mounts, Minnesota American Legion Foundation President Lloyd Ricker and new Coordinator Gary Harris Jr.



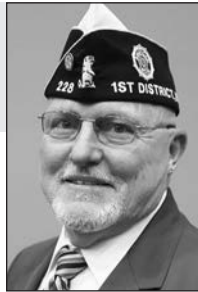
The American Legion 103rd Birthday was celebrated March 12th at Ashby Post 357. Renee Melby spoke about the history and importance of The American Legion. Ron Bowman, Julie Dahlen, John Thoennes, Marcia Bowman, Donna Thoennes and Joyce Lacey helped prepare and serve the meal. From left in back are Ron Bowman, Julie Dahlen, John Thoennes, Marcia Bowman, Donna Thoennes and, in front, Joyce Lacey.

District commanders



1st District

Mike Parry



Greetings, comrades.

When is there only room for one veterans organization in a community?

What? Did I really ask that question?

Yes, I did.

In my term as commander of the 1st District, I've had the question asked of me with all sincerity. Who would make that decision? The community? The organization members? The veterans organization with the most members dictating that "they" should be the only one?

Obviously in small communities as the memberships decline in both the VFW and The American Legion face that question. The key is new membership created by informing the young veterans just what our organizations

do for them.

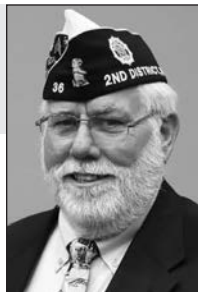
Maybe in some communities there should be a Veterans Service-men Club, like Blooming Prairie. It houses both the American Legion Post 52 & VFW Post 878. It is one beautiful building shared by the two greatest service organizations.

I'm afraid the reality is that in some small communities one organization would just as soon see the other go. Today, the present, will dictate what the future brings. It's time one takes a good long look at their posts and determine what will ensure that we will be veterans helping veterans today and in the future.



2nd District

Steve Fosness



Greetings from the Second-to-None District. May you have a blessed Easter! Remember our preamble "For God and Country" and say a prayer now for our country.

The 2nd District is preparing to host the national commander on his southern Minnesota tour. Please contact Blue Earth Post 89, Fairmont Post 36, Brewster Post 464 or Pipestone Post 6 to participate in the tour and hear the national commander's comments.

Please remember the Consolidated Post Report is due before June, and it is imperative for 100 percent completion. Each post has meetings, pays dues, or participates in military funerals and holidays.

All of these events can be

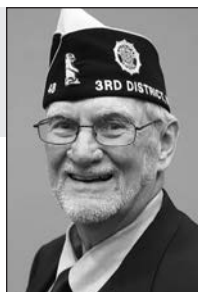
listed on the CPR. The information contained within the report is critical for continuing American Legion programs and our governmental lobbying. There is assistance for completing this report from district officers.

April is the month for our post elections. Thank you to all who have served in leadership positions. Please consider being a candidate, in elections, for a post officer or district officer or committee position and participating in June District Conventions. As in any organization, The American Legion is only as strong as its members.



3rd District

Bob Hart



In 1962, we were introduced to the idea that we could "Let our fingers do the walking" using the Yellow Pages for all the information we needed about local businesses saving us time and costly shoe leather.

In the 60 years since, the Yellow Pages have gone the way of the Princess phone. These days our fingers are still walking, but it's on computers, tablets and cellphones accessing more information than we ever thought possible.

My fingers decided to take a walk through the entire 3rd District to see which posts were on the internet. Out of 64 posts, only 39 were online (mostly Facebook) and 25 were not. Of the 39, only 15 were very good to excellent in my humble opinion. The other 24 were just not

up to date, one in particular, last posted something in 2012.

Social media is the norm today for putting your post in front of potential members or customers. Print advertising has its place, but you can say so much at little or no cost using Facebook or other social media.

I challenge each post to "walk" through their district and search American Legion, (Anytown, MN) and see what they are doing to sell themselves to their community.

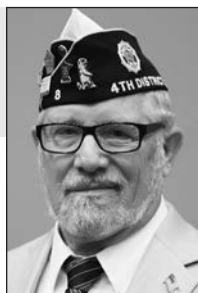
"American Graffiti" asked the question "Where were you in 62?"

If you are still there, the 21st century is calling.



4th District

David Dahl



One of the purposes of the "district" level of The American Legion organization is to act as an information conduit — between national, department and the posts — to facilitate

communications up and down! Most of the information we

receive and should be shared arrives via email. When we receive paper, we can scan those and attach to an email. We want to ensure that each post has an efficient way to forward messages to all of their members. Posts also need to print out and forward messages as "snail mail" to members who do not have email.

If your post doesn't have these capabilities, please reach out to district leadership, and we'll find help for you.

The other topic I want to share with you this month has to do with the limited funds we have for our Oratorical Contest. For a long time, we have operated with a total budget of only \$150. We

have fairly limited administrative expenses, so most of that money can be dedicated to scholarships for the contest winners. We should be awarding scholarships of approximately these amounts: \$500 to the third-place winner, \$750 to second place, and \$1,000 to the winner. Those amounts total \$2,250 — far above the \$150 we have in the budget.

I ask that all posts budget an amount for the District Oratorical contest — small amounts for those without gambling funds and larger amounts for those which do have gambling funds. As you set your budgets for the coming year, please remember the 4th District Oratorical Contest.



5th District

Wade Larson



Don't panic. Legionnaire Insurance Trust will have a mailing campaign for available benefits. They are a partner with the Legion, and they are legitimate.

For any member of the 5th District who would like to participate in our convention in June so far, we are having the memorial on Friday evening, June 3, the convention on June 4 and a banquet the evening of June 4.

Notify me if you would be interested if you haven't already. Most likely it is our last at the Holiday Inn in Bloomington.

Several meal options available from \$36.90 to \$42.20 — champagne chicken to walleye and others. Great comradeship and Legion business conducted.

If you haven't participated before or it's been a long while since you have participated, we would love to have you

participate in the process. It's a great way to see old friends

again and gain new ones.

If you haven't renewed your membership, you can renew online after creating your individual profile on MyLegion.org. Register with your email or contact your membership director and you can print your card after the transaction. Let's keep our numbers strong to help our Legion programs and let legislators know we are here advocating for veterans' health care and other benefits you have earned, as well as other veterans coming up in the future.

Or let us know "Why not?" You can reach me at wadealarson@yahoo.com.



6th District

Jim Lucas



April means we need to be at the 95 percent target for membership. We need to contact everyone who has not paid for 2022, and we need to find new members for the ones we lost to Post Everlasting.

Don't forget that you have members who have dropped for one reason or another and contact them to get them back. They might have dropped for a reason such as COVID and still want to belong to The American Legion.

Every service organization has its problems, and we need to be more involved as members of our military. We need to make sure that we take care of our brothers and sisters who have served with us and those who

are serving now.

This is our job. If we don't care of our own *no one* will.

The 6th District lost a great member this year in our district to Post Everlasting, and this person has served as a post member of Richmond Post 292. He has served in the district for many years and has served at the department level.

This person is Rich Janssen. He will be deeply missed, and we wish his wife, Sharon, all the blessings in the world. Rich is now sitting at the right hand of God and watching us do our work right.

Godspeed, Rich.



7th District

David "Chip" Manson



April and May tend to be the months for scholarship presentations. Many posts present scholarships to local high school students. Schools and students appreciate these scholarships and provide a great service to our local communities.

Posts, districts and the department also present additional scholarships outside local high school events. Some are applica-

tion-based and some are on a contest/competition process. Results of known scholarships include:

District 7:

• Oratorical: Megan Blonigen, Eden Valley HS, \$700; 2nd, 3rd and 4th place winners received a combined total of \$875 in scholarship dollars.

• Eagle Scout: Connor Petersen, ACGC HS, \$500.

Department of Minnesota:

Oratorical: Megan Blonigen, Eden Valley HS, \$1,500 (will now compete at National Contest with a potential of up to \$25,000 scholarship).

Minnesota Legion Foundation: Ava Provencher, Litchfield, \$500 and Alexis Hanson, Wheaton, \$500.

Minnesota Legion Nursing Training: Kaitlyn Sanstead, Hoffman, \$1,000

Many other scholarships are available. Check out mnlegion.org and legion.org websites and search for scholarships.

We are veterans helping veterans and veterans helping communities — both vital parts of why we are The American Legion.



8th District

Larry Pocrnich



I will start off with an apology, I sent last month's letter out, but it must not have spam-filtered by the department's email server.

Anyway, a lot of programs are starting up for the Legion. I hope you go out and contact members and get new members to help,

I have been a member of Boys State for over 10 years, and I would like for the post to contact the schools to see if there is a student wanting to go. It is only \$310 for a week of fun learning the Constitution and the process to make laws. Two posts can help pay for a student. Ask at the school and let's see if we can get the numbers back up there before the pandemic. There is also Girls State at the same time.

Do not forget the Wellness Program we have through

United Way. Contact them for what family outing is going on for the month.

The other news for veterans is The Wall That Heals (Vietnam Memorial Wall, three-quarters size) will be in Chisholm on June 21 and will be there all week, open 24 hours a day. We will need volunteers for this, so contact your post adjutant. He will get updates by email from the district. You can contact United Way, also.

One other item is the American Legion Riders of Deer River have their Fallen Veterans Ride at 11 a.m. June 18. It is their 20th anniversary. Come out and cheer them on.



9th District

Terry Buraas



For God and Country, The American Legion's No. 1 priority, and it should be all of ours, is defending our country from foreign nations. It is part of our principles, and the way things are happening in Europe we have to be extra watchful.

World War II started in the same way this minor war is happening. Getting drawn into another world war means we need to strengthen our military *now*. Build up our military and get our plants manufacturing ammo and other items needed to keep other

countries at bay.

We can supply arms and aid, but do not forget our homeland because it may be too late. Being prepared is important so our military family members stay protected. Letting a country like Russia to dominate a crisis is not leading the world. It is allowing them to build on the threat to other countries and our NATO allies.



10th District

William Gordon



Hey!!

We tried that; it did not work. That is the way we have always done it.

Don't fix what's not broken. Any of this sound familiar?

How about this? We need younger members. Without new members, we will not have a post. How can we get new members to join our post? How can you look at the speck in your neighbor's eye and not see the beam in your own eye? The answer? All of us.

Our brains are extraordinarily complex, it allows us to evaluate the same thing in two diverse ways. Think of it like a fork in the road. Do I travel the path less used or walk the worn path?

Remember Ron Propel? He sold spray-on hair. Yes, people went out and purchased a can to cover their bald spot. I bet everyone one of us said when we saw the commercial: "Not me. I would never use that."

Later you think: "Wonder

if it really works?"

Your secret is safe.

How about

these? Think outside the box. If at first you don't succeed try, try again. You can only fail if you fail to try. When you try even if you fail you gain knowledge.

When did you set up a video game contest for new veterans? Winner gets the first year's dues paid. How about a drone race? Have you even seen one? What about Battle Bots? What are these? These are the games and entertainment our younger generation is enjoying.

What happened to Over Come, Adapt, Improve? Here is a wild idea: Invite a group of nonmember veterans to the post one evening and ask them to brainstorm with you on ways to make your post bigger, better and more user-friendly.



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

651-224-7634

April 2022

Events begin again with the springtime at hand

President's Column

Patti Coleman



I see sunshine outside my window. I think spring finally arrived in the great state of Minnesota!

It will sure make getting outside and being more active easier. Larry and I are taking the national commander's challenge to complete the 100 Miles for Hope this year. Please join us! For a \$30 registration fee (paid to Flag & Emblem), participants receive a shirt and bragging rights that they have completed 100 miles of walking, cycling, rowing, running, canoeing or riding motorcycle. Any activity counts!

All proceeds benefit the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation. It is a great way to get active and kick off springtime. The shirts for the 2022 event are purple so you can sport them on April 15 for Purple Up for Military Kids Day. Remember, April is Children & Youth month in the ALA.

Minnesota ALA members have so much to look forward to in April. Mission Training 201 in Omaha, our Junior Conference in Willmar, the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota, annual reporting, testimonial dinners, Veteran Day on the Hill, and our leadership workshop in Elk River.

Contact your friends and participate in Veterans Day on the Hill on April 20 at the State Capitol. This event is to advocate for legislation supporting veterans. The DAV are the official hosts, but all veterans, family members and advocates are invited to attend.

Numbers count when making voices heard by our lawmakers. There is a free lunch being served at the pre-rally being held at the St. Paul Armory at 11 a.m. and then a march to the Capitol from the Veterans Service Building at 12:45 p.m. The actual rally is planned on the front steps of the Capitol at 1 p.m. When we all stand together, we can, and do, make a difference in the lives of veterans.

Recently, Minnesota was informed that the ALA National Children & Youth program has been awarded a grant from the Child Welfare Foundation for "Project Stuff Sack" to make a positive difference in the lives of children. The grant was used to get all departments started with 28 bags and a few items to

start stuffing sacks with comfort items, toys, and supplies for children.

It is up to us, as ALA members, to contribute more items and more sacks to make this event a huge success in Minnesota. Once stuffed, sacks can be distributed in our communities anywhere there are kids. My thoughts are CBOCs, VAHCS, homeless and women's shelters and the Armed Forces Service Center at the airport.

Department Children & Youth Chairman Nancy Lewison is working with our Department Leadership Chairman Mary Efta to hold a sack stuffing event in conjunction with our leadership workshop on April 30 in Elk River to fill the 28 bags that have been allocated to Minnesota. This will be an ALA mission in action event you won't want to miss.

Now is the time to start planning your Memorial Day events for your units. Remembering our heroes who have paid the ultimate sacrifice is the smallest gesture we can do to honor them.

Be sure to get your poppy orders in now if you haven't done that yet. Our veteran poppy makers are working hard to be able to fill those orders with poppies hand made by Minnesota veterans. Think of new ways to distribute poppies this year and challenge your members to distribute more poppies than ever before. It is our duty to raise awareness of our memorial flower, to acknowledge the sacrifices of our veterans and to remember them.

Thank you, Forest Lake American Legion Family, for hosting the spring Department Executive Committee meetings and the Appreciation Rally Family Gathering in March.

It was a day filled with activity, and the hospitality did not disappoint. Thank you for the attentiveness to our needs and staying on top of everything throughout the day.

For God & Country, wishing you all a very Happy Easter!

Patti Coleman of Lino Lakes Unit 566 is the president of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota.

Sending in content

When sending in photos and write-ups for the Auxiliary Bulletin part of the Legionnaire, please send JPGs and Word docs to Marsha Bible at marsha@mnala.org. Thank you.

See Page 5 for the All-Legion Family Calendar.

The Auxiliary Bulletin

President Patti Coleman • Secretary Marsha Bible, marsha@mnala.org

Appreciation



Richard Cross of Melrose Post 101 and Department 2nd Vice President Sharon Thiemecke of Bemidji Unit 14 dance at the Appreciation Rally.



Norma Tramm of Cold Spring Unit 455 and Beverly Grose of Sauk Rapids Unit 254 dance during the Appreciation Rally at Forest Lake Post 225.



Dee Dee Buckley of Arcade-Phalen Unit 577 in St. Paul and Garylee Davenport of Spicer Post 545 hold hands during the singing of "God Bless America" at the Appreciation Rally in Forest Lake.



Minnesota Honorary Junior President Ashley Stai takes a turn at the podium while Minnesota American Legion Membership Director Paul Hassing, emcee for the Appreciation Rally, stands by and listens.



Come to the Testimonial

Everyone is invited to join us in celebrating and honoring Department President Patti Coleman at her Testimonial Dinner. It will be held on Saturday, April 23, at the Osseo American Legion Post 172, 260 Fourth Ave. SE, Osseo.

Cost of the dinner is \$30 per person. Menu choice of prime rib or walleye. Social hour is 4 to 5 p.m. with dinner at 5 p.m. Program

to follow. Reservation deadline is April 9. Send to Kathy Moffat, 21168 Forest Road North, Forest Lake, MN 55025. Checks payable to: ALA Unit 566. We hope you can join us!

Please mail in 2023 Dues Forms

Time is running out for units to submit their 2023 Dues Forms. These forms have been in two unit mailings. Every unit needs to complete a form each year. The forms are needed so that the correct dues amount can be printed on the Membership Renewal notices that go out in September.

When deciding what your dues amount will be for next year, please remember that your unit needs to submit minimum dues amounts of \$24 for senior members and \$6 for Junior members to the Department Office. Any amount above that are funds that the unit keeps in order to operate for the year. In addition, please make sure that the name of the person on the form has paid their current 2022 dues.

Poppy information for the seven-county metro

The following is an agreement made with the VFW in 2013 and agreed upon through 2025 for the seven-county metro area (Anoka, Hennepin, Washington, Ramsey, Carver, Scott and Dakota only). This information does not apply to units in any other county in Minnesota.

POPPY CARD DAY (Post Home Only)

April 16, 2022

Poppy cards may be distributed within the confine's of one's own post home to members and patrons only on Thursday evening, April 14, only if they are to be hung on the wall of the post home. No "distributed" Poppy Cards may leave the Post Home on Thursday.

POPPY CARD DISTRIBUTION

April 15, 2022 thru April 24, 2022

Poppy Card Days are from Friday, April 15 through midnight Sunday, April 24, for the 10-day "closed territories. Effective Monday, April 25 Poppy Cards can be sold anywhere by anyone. Poppy Cards may be sold right up to Poppy Day.

POPPY DAYS

May 20-21, 2022

Poppy Days commence on Friday, May 20, and carry over to Saturday, May 21, if permitted by the community and the Post/Unit wants a two-day distribution. Closed territories are in effect until noon on Friday, May 20. Open territories begin on Friday, May 20 at 12:01 p.m. when anyone can distribute poppies anywhere.



Please be sure to get your forms in by April 15

By Linda Kelly
Membership Chairman

A membership challenge was announced at the Appreciation Rally at Forest Lake Post 225. I am calling it the “We Miss You Calls,” as I am asking every unit to make a call to all of their unpaid members.

If you are lucky enough not to have many unpaid members, please go one step further and call unpaid members from prior years. If you really want to go the extra mile, check out your post’s membership to see what spouses, daughters and granddaughters don’t belong to the ALA. (Don’t forget to check the female veterans to see if they belong!)

Since the Appreciation Rally, we received notice from the National Membership Team that they are hosting a Rejoin Campaign, with the slogan of “Spring into Action.” By the time you are reading this, their staff will have sent out a “We Miss You” email to former members with email addresses. So, now it is really

Membership as of March 12

DISTRICT	# of Units	Goal	Period Gain	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal
One	48	3,802	72	3,306	86.95%
Two	72	3,745	68	3,356	89.61%
Three	46	3,671	66	3,386	92.24%
Four	7	563	14	462	82.06%
Five	7	509	7	418	82.12%
Six	62	4,855	85	4,439	91.43%
Seven	60	2,970	28	2,660	89.56%
Eight	25	1,214	11	1,046	86.16%
Nine	49	3,239	60	2,883	89.01%
Ten	44	3,765	92	3,226	85.68%
1982 Dept	1	203	2	179	88.18%
District Totals:	421	28,536	505	25,361	88.87%

important that you make calls to those from prior years to see if you can get them to rejoin.

The National Office will track the number of rejoined members for each Department through April 20 and the winning department will be recognized at the 2022 National Convention in Milwaukee.

Remember to get your memberships sent into the Department Office on a regular basis.

Don’t forget this is a *unit* challenge — your membership

chairman needs all of us to help. Volunteer to make some of those calls.

A reminder to all units that annual report forms are due on or before **April 15**. Please send the entire collection of reports back together as a unit batch. The reports should cover anything done in your unit between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022. This year, especially, it is important for each unit to report anything that was accomplished. COVID has

had two effects — it either shut units down completely or it motivated our members to find different ways to carry out our mission outside of our comfort zone.

Even if you think that your unit didn’t do much, you probably did something. Don’t forget to complete the one-page Impact Report as well. If your unit truly didn’t do any activities, please do not forget to complete your listing of deceased members for the year.

Purple Up and celebrate military kids at your post

By Nancy Lewison
Children & Youth Chairman

Many of you know that The American Legion was founded on four pillars, the fourth pillar being Children & Youth.

There was a promise to take care of the doughboys’ children back in 1919. We continue with that promise today.

Purple up, my friends! Why purple? Purple is the color that symbolizes all branches of the military, as it is a combination of Army green, Marine Red and Coast Guard, Air Force and Navy blue.

April 15 is Purple Up Day for military kids. Set up a military kids table in your post to draw attention to these children.

You can find the table setting by searching online for “what is on a military kids table?”

Most recently when an Air Force member was asked what he would like most, his response was: “I don’t need cookies in a care package; I need you to take care of my kids.”

Did you know the American Legion Auxiliary awards certificates to youth who have done a good deed or a heroic action? New this year is the Youth Caregiver Award. Think about someone in your area. Have they done something that they should be recognized for? Talk to your unit, and let’s get an award out to them.

The Minnesota National Guard Youth Camp is a great

event for youth. Donate your skills or funds by helping out our local kids and be a counselor. Visit www.mngyc.org for more information.

Minnesota Nice. Yes, our Auxiliary members are that indeed! I asked for pillowcases for children in crisis and our members came through. There have been hundreds of pillowcases made and sent to the Eagle’s Healing Nest for distribution. Don’t forget to put this on your yearend impact reports.

Please encourage a good relationship between our youth and our law enforcement personnel. Kids need to know they can trust them when they need help. Last summer during a visit to the Mower County Fair, our

local sheriff took time to visit with our grandkids. It is good for them to see that kindness.

We recently found out the National C&Y program was awarded a grant from the Child Welfare Foundation. Project Stuff Sack has begun. We will be preparing bags to be given to children and youth who may be struggling.

Join us at the Leadership School on April 30 at Elk River Post 112. We will be filling and preparing the bags for delivery as part of this leadership day. Please see the information elsewhere in the Legionnaire.

Thank you all for the wonderful things you have done for our kids, not just military kids but our local children who need us to be good mentors.

Pillowcases for the kiddos

SANDSTONE — Sandstone unit members have embraced the Children & Youth program this year.

They have sent three shipments of handmade pillowcases for the children of veterans at Eagle’s Healing Nest. Now they’re ready to send 13 bags for children for Project Stuff Sack to the April 30 leadership school.

In addition, they also sent 15 bags full of fun items for the kids at the Nest! Way to go, Sandstone! Thank you for your dedication to our children.



Minnesota Sons of The American Legion Commander Tim Weaver surprises Honorary Jr. President Ashley Stai with a check for her project.



President Patti Coleman visits the SAL Spring Conference in St. Augusta.

One more Leadership Training

ALALeadership Chairman Mary Efta has one more Leadership Training scheduled for Saturday, April 30. It will be at Elk River Post 112 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration includes coffee, rolls, lunch and course handouts. Deadline for reservation is April 25. Cost is \$10. Send reservation to Mary Efta, 31883 300th Street NW, Argyle, MN 56713.

It’s not too late to attend Department Jr. Conference

WILLMAR — Calling all Junior members and their interested chaperones. If you haven’t pre-registered to attend the Department Junior Conference in Willmar on April 8 and 9.

For more information, contact Department Junior Activities Chairman Joanie Krantz at jkrantz@wiktel.com.

Reports due by April 15

ST. PAUL — A reminder that all reports are due no later than April 15, 2022. Every unit should send a Unit Impact Report, Deceased Member Listing, Service to Veteran Hours Report and Unit History to the Department Office with a copy sent to your district president.

Program Entry Reports and entries for national awards are also due on the same day. Send those to the department chairman for that program, district president and the Department Office. These report forms replace all other previously used documents. These reports will allow Minnesota to report nationally on what our units have been doing to work the mission.

Make your unit’s reservations for the 75th Minn. Girls State

ARDEN HILLS — It’s not too late to reserve a spot for your Girls State candidates.

Minnesota Girls State will be celebrating its 75th Anniversary in-person at Bethel University June 12-18. It’s hard to believe that the last session of Girls State held was in June 2019 and prior to the COVID pandemic.

Please make contact with your local schools and remind them about our program and ask them to guide you to eligible girls. There is a reservation form on the website at www.mnala.org that you can use.

Send that form along with the \$300 registration fee to the Department Office. Checks should be made payable to: ALA Department of Minnesota or if using gambling funds make check payable to: American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. Units may send as many girls as they wish.

New officer time is coming up

ST. PAUL — Soon it will be time to elect new unit officers. Every Unit is required to complete a new Officers Form every year, whether your unit keeps the same officers or not. Please review the information and submit to the Department Office by June 1. This gives the office time to input the information into our system prior to the Department Convention.

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Help for veterans and families

Foundation has a new logo

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota American Legion Foundation has a new brochure and a new logo.

Look for the brochure in a mailing to the posts in early April. Donating to the foundation is a great way to fulfill the Four Pillars.



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PROJECT NEW HOPE

PTSD has increased more than 300% since 2000.

Please go to our website and sign up for Military Family Retreats at **no cost** to Veterans. Our next retreats are June 10-12 at Osprey Wilds near Sandstone, Minn., and Dec. 2-4 at Inspiration Point near Vining, Minn. Please visit www.projectnewhope.net.

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Mike Petersen
MN Ins. Lic# 1005666

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