

## Adams Post 146 is there after tornado strikes

Twister takes down half of Taopi, a town 4 miles away

ADAMS — Adams Post 146 had its regularly monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 12.

On the drive home, that's when the rain and wind came along, and so did an F2 tornado that struck Taopi, a town of 65 people four miles to the west. The Legionnaires in and around Taopi largely belong to the Adams post. Adams has a population of 775.

Post 146 Commander Dennis Lewison said his wife, Nancy, began calling other Auxiliary Unit

146 members the next day with the idea of serving soup to tornado victims. They received loads of soups, cookies and supplies. On Thursday, April 14, Unit 146 served lunch at the post home as a free meal for tornado victims. Members of the public ate, too, and they donated \$6,000.

As a result, the Legion Family began spearheading a fundraiser, not just a meal. Lewison called it the Taopi Relief Fund.

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**Buildings in Taopi were flattened by a tornado on April 12.**

Photos by Nancy Lewison

## 'It saves lives'

Nat'l Commander Dillard emphasizes prevention of veteran suicides

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PAUL — A veteran is a veteran is a veteran.

To prevent veteran suicides, it is important that they contact each other, Buddy Check each other and stay in touch.

"That might just be the most important phone call you ever make," said National Commander Paul Dillard at St. Paul Arcade Phalen Post 577. "Call friends, neighbors, families, check on them."

Dillard made similar comments at stops across the state during the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota in mid-April.

Maybe a health condition, the loss of a job or taking less of a job has impacted their sense of purpose.

"It just might be that phone call that got them over the hump," Dillard said.

He urged veterans to make at least one call a day.

"It saves lives."

Dillard's theme for his year as national commander is: "No Veteran Left Behind."

There were about 120 people in attendance that evening at Post 577. These stops attract American Legion Family members but also draw in some members of the general public,



**Past National Commander Dan Ludwig of Minnesota welcomes National Commander Paul Dillard of Texas to Ludwig's post, Red Wing Post 54, for breakfast on Tuesday, April 12, as Department of Minnesota Membership Director Paul Hassing and Commander Tom Fernlund hop out of the van taking them on the weeklong tour. On the right is St. Paul Park Post 98's Ray Kane of the Department Media & Communications Committee.**

as well as media outlets. The breakfast stop at Red Wing Post 45 also had about 120 folks. Lunch at Dodge Center Post 384 had around 85.

Blustery weather impacted much of the remainder of the tour. The Owatonna Post 77 dinner had 55 as a storm passed through. Around 50 packed into Austin Post 91, with a tornado striking nearby Taopi the previous evening. There were reports

of many Legionnaires out helping to clean up. Lunch at Blue Earth's beautiful Post 89 had about 45. Dinner in Fairmont, which got to display its new post home, had 110.

Around 60 people arrived for breakfast at the former sports fieldhouse that is Brewster Post 464, and about 90 showed up for the dinner banquet at Pipestone Post 6, not counting the many customers at the bar and grill.

Considering both the restaurant and banquet were busy, it was the evening hotspot.

Dillard appeared on Eden Prairie-based Fox 9 to begin his tour. Along the way, he visited the 934th Airlift Wing at Fort Snelling and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and American Legion claims offices at the federal Bishop Whipple

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## State and fed VA announce Vet Center outstation

But standing it up will take over 2 years

ST. CLOUD — In reaction to seeing troops struggle after returning from wars in the Middle East, the Minnesota American Legion passed a resolution, calling for the VA to build three new Vet Centers in Minnesota.

That was in 2011.

For years, Legionnaires have spoken with state and federal officials about how Minnesota has among the worst ratios of veterans to Vet Centers in the nation. There are only three: Anoka, St. Paul and Duluth. Iowa and North Dakota, by comparison, each have four. Wisconsin has six.

Eventually, Legionnaires and state officials determined St. Cloud, Bemidji and Mankato would be the preferred locations for them.

On March 28, news arrived. The VA announced it plans to create a Vet Center Outstation in St. Cloud.

"As a veteran, I recognize the obligation we have as a state and a country to deliver on the benefits our veterans have

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**State Rep. Bob Dettmer, 71, plans to retire from state politics after the current legislative session.**

## Under Rotunda, Rep. Bob Dettmer gives farewell address to veterans

ST. PAUL — Veterans Day on the Hill on April 20 was a time to tell state leaders about legislation Minnesota military veterans want passed, but this time around, it also was the farewell for state Rep. Bob Dettmer, the House's ranking member when it comes to veterans affairs.

Dettmer, a member of Forest Lake Post 225, is not seeking re-election this fall. He was first elected in 2006. He is a retired teacher and Army Reserve chief warrant officer. He and his wife are moving from Forest Lake to Florida but plans to visit Minnesota in the summers. His sons, both West Point graduates, are now lieutenant colonels in the Army.

"They outrank me, so I have to salute them," he told the Legion, VFW, DAV and Amvets members gathered at the Capitol Rotunda. "But I tell them I am the commander in chief in my own house — whenever their mother isn't around."

Some of Dettmer's accomplishments were eliminating state tax in military pensions, securing funding for three new veterans homes (construction begins this fall), eliminating the eight-year limit spouses faced to receive the homestead property-tax exclusion, allowing those spouses to have a one-time change of residence while keeping the exclusion, securing

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The color guard from Waite Park American Legion Post 428 led the march to the Capitol on April 20.

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Minnesota American Legion Commander Tom Fernlund, right, and Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary President Patti Coleman, center, look upward while sitting at the Capitol Rotunda. On the left is Adjutant Mike Maxa.



Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary Honorary Junior President Ashley Stai is recognized for raising \$10,000 for the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) after initially setting a goal of \$1,500.



The DAV of Minnesota supplied a catered lunch for the veterans at the St. Paul Armory.



Gov. Tim Walz walked down the hall from his office to speak to the veterans at the Capitol Rotunda.

# Veterans Day on the Hill sheds light on cause for an omnibus veterans bill

Continued from Page 2

funding for the construction of the Medal of Honor Memorial at the Veterans Service Building (presently under construction), expanding the Minnesota G.I. Bill to include apprenticeships and on-the-job training, lowering property tax rates for VFW and Legion posts to 1 percent, authorizing Purple Heart cities and counties and designating March 29 as Vietnam Veterans Day in Minnesota.

Dettmer cited a list of unfinished business. Eliminating property tax altogether for VFW and Legion post homes was among them. Dettmer was able to get the language into the tax bill this session, but the Tax Committee chair yanked it out the next day.

Presently, many tax assessors across Minnesota still fail to recognize state law regarding the 1 percent rate for post homes, and rising taxes has caused many post homes to close, leaving veterans without resources. The Minnesota American Legion is working to bring it to 0 percent and without needing to file annually. (National Commander Paul Dillard, during his tour of Minnesota in mid-April, said his home state of Texas does not impose property taxes on post homes.)

Dettmer called for reducing taxes on charitable gambling so the Legion and VFW posts can provide more charity to their communities. He also called for the state to ensure military recruiters have access to high schools.

He said he was endorsed by his wife to retire. They have eight grandchildren.

He thanked DAV of Minnesota Legislative Director Dilks and several people for their roles in shaping veterans-related legislation over the years, and he thanks the state Legislature for largely remaining nonpartisan on veterans-related legislation.

## Veterans omnibus bill

The No. 1 push of Veterans Day on the Hill was asking lawmakers for a veterans omnibus bill.

Dilks said he is sick and tired of veterans legislation being used as a political football to pass other bills. A veterans omnibus bills keeps partisan politics away from veterans' issues.

"We can do better, and that is why we are here today," he said.

Gov. Tim Walz, a Legion member of Mankato Post 11, said he would much prefer to have veterans-related legislation in a veterans omnibus bill, rather than this and that language tacked into other bills. He said he would sign it.

"Only about 1 percent of the people do the work of this democracy in uniform so the other 99 percent of this democracy can live in this democracy and live in freedom," Walz told the crowd.

He cited the Russian invasion of Ukraine as an example of how fragile democracy can be.

He praised the veterans organizations for working to get the Veterans Restorative Justice Act passed in 2021.

The chairman of the committee that handles veterans affairs, Robert Ecklund of International Falls, a member of Minnesota At-Large Post 1982, said the House has a veterans omnibus bill that includes funding to assist the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs with its suicide prevention efforts.

"This includes education at places where guns are for sale, proactive engagement with at-risk veterans and the development of a pilot for mobile mental health crises services tailored for veterans," Ecklund said.

He said the bill also allocates \$10 million toward ending veteran homelessness. The goal is to have temporary supportive housing to deal with veterans experiencing homelessness and permanent housing so veterans have a place to meet needs, and funding support for landlords to encourage them to offer tenancy to veterans.

The bill, he said, has service bonuses for post-9/11 veterans, enlistment and re-enlistment bonuses for National Guard members, grants for county veteran service officers and increased grant funding for veteran service organizations.

"Have we got a bill for you? The veterans bill has about everything we talked about today," Ecklund said.

Sen. Andrew Lang, with Olivia Post 186, also said he favors a veterans omnibus bill. He thanked the veterans for their support of last year's Veterans Restorative Justice Act.

A stream of speakers took the podium: Dilks, Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke, MACVSO Legislative Director Greg Peterson, MACVSO President Martin Howes, MACV President Neal Loidolt, MACV Chief Operating Officer Jon Lovald and Commanders Task Force Chair and DAV Minnesota Commander Ron Haugen.

Haugen noted the state says there are 312,843 veterans in Minnesota, and if families are added in, that brings the legislative clout of the veterans community to 1 million votes.

Prior to the Rotunda, the veterans enjoyed a catered meal at the Armory, paid for by the DAV of Minnesota. There, Lovald recognized American Legion Auxiliary Honorary Junior President Ashley Stai, an 18-year-old who set out to raise \$1,500 for MACV. She raised over \$10,000.

MACV is the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans and it offers housing, employment and legal services to veterans in need.

About 300 people attended Veterans Day on the Hill. It brought together veterans wearing primarily American Legion, VFW, DAV, JWV and other congressionally chartered organizations with garrison caps.

Notably absent at Veterans Day on the Hill and all other state legislative advocacy for veterans are people from the array of so-called "pop-up veterans organizations" whose main missions seem to be fundraising, not veterans.

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# Commander: Let's raise \$450,000 this time around

INDIANAPOLIS — American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard has set an ambitious goal to raise \$450,000 during the 2022 American Legion 100 Miles for Hope challenge.

You can help achieve that goal with support from family, friends and others and earn incentives as you achieve your own fundraising goals during the challenge.

The 100 Miles for Hope Mobile Cause platform provides participants and their

supporters an easy way to connect during challenge.

Visit [legion.org/100miles/](http://legion.org/100miles/) to register, watch videos and to raise funds.

There are mini-challenges, incentives and rewards to stay motivated. You can share your journey on the site and inspire others.

The is the third year for 100 Miles. The first two raised more than \$500,000 to the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, supporting disabled veterans

and military families.

The foundation also trains 3,000 accredited American Legion service officers and provides grants for military families facing financial distress.

There is a \$30 registration fee. Participants track their progress with the Strava app, other mileage tracking devices or your own means of tracking.

Participants are using the hashtag #100MilesForHope to share their progress.



Jennifer Havlick



Garylee Davenport



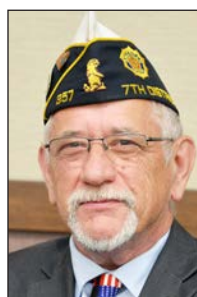
Larry Otto



Teresa Ash



Carla Tappainer



Dean Knutson

## Who is running for which seats?

ST. PAUL — The list of candidates for Department of Minnesota officers is shaping up.

Presently, Minnesota has two candidates for department commander. They are Garylee Davenport of Spicer Post 545 and Jennifer Havlick of Duluth Post 28.

Sister districts alternate in nominating vice commander

candidates. Presently, four of the five are Duane Anderson for the 1st and 3rd districts, Ryan Hill for the 2nd and 7th districts, Randy Bastyr for the 4th and 5th districts and Gary H. Olson for the 6th and 9th districts.

The vice commander candidate for the 8th and 10th districts remains undetermined. This year, the vice

commander will come from the 10th District, which has its convention June 3-4 at Milaca Post 178.

District convention dates and locations appear in the calendar on Page 5.

Two candidates are running for sergeant-at-arms. They are Dean Knutson of Ashby Post 357 and Carla Tappainer of Apple Valley Post 1776.

Larry Otto of Ellendale Post 296 is seeking the chaplain spot, and Teresa Ash of St. Paul Christie-De Parcq Post 406 is running for historian.

Officers for Department of Minnesota will be elected by convention delegates on the final day of the Department Convention in Willmar on July 16.

## 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.

"It's going to be the best convention ever," said Department

Adjutant Mike Maxa.

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."



Willmar Convention Center

## 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.

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# What are your plans for Memorial Day?

Across our nation many anticipate having an extra day off from work. A weekend for families to get together for outdoor activities and to shed off some of the long winter layers.

I spent many years looking at Memorial Day as another holiday away from work and time to get the yard cleaned up. Getting involved in veteran service organizations changed my direction and forever instilled how I observe and participate in remembering our active military and veterans not just on holidays, but every day.

Memorial Day we remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, those whose lives were cut short leaving families with only memories or thoughts of what could have been.

“Preserving the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars” is a part of the Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion. This means in part, keeping alive forever the memories of the supreme

## Commander's Column

Tom Fernlund



sacrifices of gallant American patriots, sacrifices necessary to the winnings of wars.

I am forever grateful for the freedoms we have and the opportunities to remember and thank those who continue to protect us every day.

Last month we had the privilege to host the visit of our National Commander Paul E. Dillard. Thank you to all the posts we visited and the enormous hospitality provided.

Commander Dillard was grateful to all our members who showed up and recognized the camaraderie and dedication of our Minnesota American Legion Family.

Post and District officer elections will be taking place the next couple of months. Officers in our organization play important

roles to our success. Training is vital to provide effective leadership and integrity of elected positions.

There are many opportunities available for training. Minnesota American Legion College is an excellent opportunity to get in-depth knowledge, but you can also request training at your posts or in your districts. Just ask!

Continue to invite veterans and their family to be a member of the American Legion Family! Veterans Strengthening America!

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

## Mail Call

*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.*

### State definition of a veteran discriminates

Minnesota, through its driver's license policy, is discriminating against certain veterans of the military that reside in Minnesota. The discrimination is in the form of what is or is not required to renew a driver's license with “veteran” listed on the bottom-right corner. If you cannot meet their requirement, nothing is listed on the license. They are now at a point of ignoring my messages completely.

When I recently registered for my new license, the instructions indicated that a DD214 was required to have the “veteran” designation listed. Following communication with the Department of Public Safety, a form was provided that in context would then prevent me from meeting their requirements.

The U.S. Congress in 2016 approved a bill, signed then by President Barack Obama, that then became law whereby any veteran that served in the U.S. military for 20 years receiving retirement pay qualified as a veteran. The state of Minnesota is not using this law of 2016 to certify certain veterans as being approved for the word “veterans” to be stated on driver's licenses.

Following several requests for the Department of Public Safety to correct this discriminatory practice, nothing has happened. I respectfully request the American Legion Department of Minnesota to take swift action and report back to me the results.

**John M. Schuster**  
retired brigadier general  
Shell Lake, Wis., Post 225  
Woodbury, Minn. resident

*Editor's note: Beginning in 2021, the Minnesota American Legion spearheaded efforts to change the state definition of a veteran to match the federal*

*definition. It is part of our legislative agenda, and we garnered the support of other veteran service organizations through participation in the Minnesota Commander's Task Force.*

*The Department of Minnesota staff have had a subsequent email conversation with the retired brigadier general, and he will continue to ask questions of various state agencies on the matter.*

### 'Danube Waltz,' anyone?

Congratulations to Dr. Joel N. Syvrud on his earning the award of The American Legion Physician of the Year.

I have been seeing him twice a year for several years now to have my toenails trimmed.

On one occasion a couple of years ago, our conversation went like this:

Dr.: So you live in Danube?  
Me: Yes, that's right.

Dr.: So do you know the “Danube Waltz?”

Me: Well, yes, I am acquainted with it.

Dr.: I believe I have that on my computer. Let me bring it up.  
So, he did, and it started playing.

I am probably the only veteran to get his or her toenails trimmed to the tune of the “Danube Waltz!”

Dr. Syvrud is a great American. Thank you. I am a Korean-era veteran, 1953-1955.

**Edsel Bernstrom**  
Danube Post 227

### Veterans in Duluth must be living long

I have not been a member very long, only a few months, but I notice in the “Taps” section that there are never any from Duluth area that have passed away!

So I assume that we here live

in a no death zone or there are no posts in the area that are active or never has been any!

Maybe you all should tell all veterans to move to Duluth if they want to live longer. The weather is way too nasty for diseases to live here, thus longer lives.

**Gerald L. Sundberg**  
Minnesota Post 1982  
Duluth

### How far are we willing to go?

A member has sat back in the shadows, withdrawn to a point, watching and listening to others on how things should be, how it should be done now with the technology available today. Everything is all hunky-dory in some eyes, as this is the way to progress to gain more insight.

At what cost of the alienation of other members of the family are we willing to go to? At one time there was a family that was built up over the years that worked together for the betterment of others, and in a short few months, it has all been turned inside out and has caused so much resentment between family members that there are some that are leaving and going elsewhere because of it. When mentors and those of experience are leaving the family and going elsewhere, there is a huge and major problem.

It is time to reflect and take a hard look at the way some things are being done, and if there is criticism be strong enough to accept the opinions of others and see if there is a way to come to an agreement, instead of being like a bull in a China shop, and doing things however they see fit to do.

There are some who may be on power trips for whatever reasoning there is. It is far past time to take the chips off of the shoulders and look to the future as a family that is in sync and meshes well with the other members of the family.

# The draft changed lives, their purpose

Before conscription ended in 1973, many a young American man's purpose in life was sidelined, demolished or ended by our country's demand for their military service.

For many, the result of this remains difficult to talk about. Having one's dreams denied or carrying out actions that are not compatible with one's own principles can set in motion a lifelong examination of purpose for living. After 1973, military service in the U.S. Armed Forces is no longer obligatory. Those now serving choose freely aligned with their values and purpose in life before commitment.

Purpose, the second aspect of spirituality, is a human endeavor to question why we are here. We seem to be the only living creature on earth that ponders this. We are hard-wired to be of benefit and do constructive acts. What gives your life meaning stems from this search and resolution your belief about God, gods or even your belief of no god.

This deep spiritual examination sets direction. Many veterans have shared with me how their military service changed their direction in life.

For those who have held that draft letter in their hands, letting go of a dream for duty is

Some members may not care for certain members of the family, but there is a way to put differences aside for the future of the family. If some members are unable to do that, then it is time to take a look in the mirror and ask the hard questions on self-reflection in that mirror.

**Brad Pagel**  
Slayton Post 64

### War in your living room

I would like to respond to fellow Legionnaire Ronald Zimney's letter on presidential ego from the April issue.

Politicians have controlled our military starting way back in the Revolutionary War when the Continental Congress dictated to Gen. George Washington his every move.

Politicians have run all of our wars — through the Civil War when the politicians were *divided* into two countries — and down to the present day.

But what happened in Vietnam was the media and their cameras were allowed in the combat zones. And the war was broadcast directly into our living rooms. What happened was that the citizenry did not like what they saw and the generals became politicians, and the politicians became more political.

So the problem through the years has not been a single president. They are all in control, and they all argue and fight for their way. Remember the “dough-boys” were the first ever group to march into Washington, D.C., to demand their benefits.

What makes you think that anything has changed since then?

**Andre-Thomas deMeules**  
Osseo Post 172

## Chaplain's Corner

Kelley Adelsman



not easy. For many it ended their life here on earth.

Joe's draft number was 37, and it was early in the war. He was set to graduate high school in four months. His plans to become an elementary school teacher kept fading away. The reality of military service put his dream on the shelf. His voice, even at the age of 92 still belies his anger; sadness and thoughts of defiance that swam in his 18-year-old head.

After the war, he has a strong desire to be a benefit through teaching. His elder reflection acknowledged that his purpose in life to be responsible, selfless, have integrity were present in military service and after.

Purpose is not void of suffering, challenge, choices and difficult decisions (and military services has all). All religions include suffering in a purposeful life. Why you are here is not to live a life devoid of strife. Difficult days will just naturally happen.

Purpose, defining your reason or trusting the heavens

with your life, frames how you will act, think and do when the storms come and sun shines. Knowing that your life is on purpose, has purpose and is a benefit strengthens your sails. Purpose is found in the values you hold dear, informed by your faith and nourished by your trust in a higher power.

Finally, purpose's goal is to be of benefit. It is not confined by time or even your lived life. Planting a tree is full of purpose, value and hope. Enjoyed by you when you plant for the promise, it will continue to be evidenced even decades later. Purpose is found throughout the threads of The American Legion and is shown through those that lead, administer, give, envision, clean, prepare, fix, create, deliver and support.

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

### Does anyone have a Minn. state flag?

To whom it may concern,  
Hi, my name is Landon Oxford, and I am 21 years old. I have just recently started collecting flags, and I wanted

to ask: Is there any way that I could possibly receive a Minnesota flag?

My address is 2104 Holland Place, Lawrenceville, GA 30043. If so, that would be awesome! Thank you so much!

**Landon Oxford**  
Lawrenceville, Ga.



The Minnesota

## Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

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Name of Deceased	Age	Date of Death	Branch	Era	Cont. Years	Post
Asleson, Curtis J.	79	3/21/22	Army	Vietnam	33	New Ulm Post 132
Avery, Roger A.	81	1/30/22	Army NG	VN-Gulf	28	Fridley Post 303
Bergrud, Ardell S.	96	1/12/21	Army	WWII	69	Wendell Post 426
Note: He was the Grant County veteran service officers for 22 years.						
Brey, Alois J.	96	4/11/22	Navy	WWII	76	Wabasso Post 263
Note: He was in the Navy Flight Training Program. He was a past post commander.						
Burmeister, Keith	92	3/20/22	Army	Korea	45	Lanesboro Post 40
Childers, Harlan D.	90	2/19/22	Army NG	Korea	66	St. Cloud Post 76
Note: He was a past post commander.						
Christians, Clares R.	90	4/1/22	Army	Korea	55	Edgerton Post 42
Czech, Elmer L.	93	2/22/22	Navy	Korea	48	Golden Valley Post 523
Danielson, Leland R.	91	3/4/22	Navy	Korea	26	Eden Valley Post 381
Elyea, Leo D.	86	4/8/22	Air Force	Korea	57	Backus Post 368
Evenson, Richard F.	90	2/17/22	Air Force	Korea	18	Mora Post 201
Folie, Carlyle M.	94	4/10/22	Navy	Korea	35	Albert Lea Post 56
Gadola, David L.	90	3/16/22	Air Force	Korea	30	Mora Post 201
Gasperlin, Valerius N.	95	4/9/22	Navy	WWII	77	Alexandria Post 87
Goblirsch, Eugene	90	3/23/22	Army	Korea	76	Wabasso Post 263
Note: He served as an MP in Berlin.						
Gunderson, Dennis R.	90	3/31/22	Army	Korea	23	Isle Post 395
Haberman, David J.	76	4/9/22	Air Force	Vietnam	39	Janesville Post 281
Halvorson, Myron K.	84	4/3/22	Army	Korea	40	Marietta Post 156
Herbert, Joseph F.	86	2/13/22	Army	Korea	35	Cleveland Post 207
Herrman, Donald C.	93	4/13/22	Army	Korea	27	Waconia Post 150
Horbal, Raymond L.	79	4/1/22	Army	Vietnam	31	Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172
Hosto, Frederick J.	93	3/30/22	Army	Korea	35	New Ulm Post 132
Jacobson, Leon J.	92	12/18/21	Army	Korea	36	Lyle Post 105
Jedlicka, James M.	78	3/26/22	Army	Vietnam	42	Clarissa Post 213
Johnson, Harlan C.	91	4/6/22	Air Force	Korea	61	Fergus Falls Post 30
Jorgenson, Milton E.	87	3/25/22	Army	Korea	4	Middle River Post 444
Kalk, Kenneth H.	81	3/29/22	Army	Vietnam	37	Rochester Post 92
King, Richard D.	74	2/2/22	Army	Vietnam	18	New Ulm Post 132
Klooster, Marvin F.	91	3/14/22	Army	Korea	41	Adrian Post 32
Note: He served in combat in Korea with the 2nd Infantry Division.						
Korlath, Charles P.	94	3/25/22	Navy	WWII	4	Eagan Post 594
Krippner, Earl A.	95	4/14/22	Navy	WWII	76	Rochester Post 92
Krueger, Douglas J.	63	2/20/22	Navy	Vietnam	25	Cleveland Post 207
Kruger, Elvin J.	73	3/31/22	Army	Vietnam	49	Fulda Post 318
Kuechle, Alquin A.	79	4/6/22	Army	Vietnam	36	Cold Spring Post 455
Larson, Charles E.	88	3/1/22	Army	Korea	2	Wayzata Post 118
Leasman, Lynelle B.	74	3/2/22	Navy	Vietnam	20	Boyd Post 198
Leek, Wayne W.	95	4/5/22	Navy	WWII	76	Pequot Lakes Post 49
Lindgren, Eugene R.	87	10/23/21	Navy	Korea	46	Minneapolis Falldin Post 555
Majerus, Kenneth W.	69	3/27/22	Army Res.	Vietnam	12	Waite Park Post 428
McCabe, William E.	69	10/8/21	Army	Vietnam	30	Cleveland Post 207
McClune, Thomas L.	83	2/16/22	Army	Vietnam	41	Le Center Post 108
Meinhardt, Leo E.	96	4/5/22	Navy	WWII	52	New Ulm Post 132
Note: He served aboard the USS Iowa and was present in Tokyo Harbor when the Japanese surrendered on the USS Missouri at the end of World War II.						
Melham, Dennis M.	79	2/27/22	Army	Vietnam	39	Willmar Post 167
Menter, Frank E.	85	3/4/22	Army	Korea	18	Anoka Post 102
Note: He was a longtime post service officer.						
Molskness, Gerhard E.	102	4/2/22	Army	WWII	35	Thief River Falls Post 117
Note: While in the military, he assisted Warner Bros. make Army training films and even played a German soldier in the 1943 film "Baptism of Fire." He then made several landings in Papua New Guinea before being badly wounded in the Philippine campaign in April 1945. He received a Purple Heart medal.						
Mukomela, Kenneth D.	86	3/12/22	Army	Korea/VN/Gulf	43	Marshall Post 113
Note: He had a 40-year Army career, retiring at the rank of colonel. He received the Army's highest peacetime honor, the Legion of Merit. He served on the Post 113 honor guard and in various officer roles.						
Mulder, Kenneth J.	92	12/21/21	Army NG	Korea	53	Lake City Post 110
Nelson, Arlan V.	91	2/24/22	Army	Korea	47	Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435
Nelson, Eugene A.	102	3/25/22	Army	WWII	77	Little Falls Post 46
Note: He was among the first troops in the Normandy Invasion. Of the 200 men in his unit, about 30 survived. He was part of Gen. George Patton's Army in Europe. He has a Purple Heart from being wounded on Aug. 13, 1944.						
Nelson, Lloyd R.	97	3/24/22	Navy	WWII	30	Rochester Post 92
Neseth, Glenn R.	74	2/26/22	Army	Vietnam	10	Kasson Post 333
O'Brien, John G.	72	1/12/22	Army	Vietnam	5	St. Paul Post 8
O'Neil, Michael G.	78	3/26/22	Army	Vietnam	17	Anoka Post 102
Oldsberg, James E.	82	2/4/22	Navy	Korea	48	Shakopee Post 2
Olson, Bruce G.	79	3/25/22	Army	Vietnam	50	Windom Post 206
Olson, Everett D.	91	12/15/21	Marines	Korea	65	Pine River Post 613
Palmby, Larry P.	82	3/29/22	Army	Vietnam	16	Lanesboro Post 40
Pearson, Archie R. Jr.	84	3/19/22	Army	Vietnam	41	St. James Post 33
Peterson, Eddie W.	77	3/31/22	Air Force	Vietnam	35	Elk River Post 112
Queen, Gerald E.	90	12/5/21	Marines	Korea	57	Cleveland Post 207
Quinn, John B.	95	3/12/22	Army	WWII	72	Robbinsdale Post 251
Ramler, Marlin M.	90	2/8/22	Army	Korea	21	Cold Spring Post 455
Rath, Robert	96	3/18/22	Marines	WWII	48	Stewartville Post 164
Ray, Bradley S.	65	3/15/22	Marines	Vietnam	6	Walker Post 134
Rethemeier, Arnold G.	74	3/24/22	Army NG	Vietnam	16	Dent Post 148
Note: He served in the Minnesota National Guard for 32 years, commanding many units and reaching the rank of colonel. He also is in the Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame.						
Reuvers, John R.	96	3/28/22	Army	WWII	15	Marshall Post 113
Rothstein, Robert J.	88	3/20/22	Army	Vietnam	21	Cold Spring Post 455
Ruchti, Dennis W.	77	1/10/22	Navy	Vietnam	43	St. Bonifacius Post 597
Note: He served in Vietnam with Patrol Squadron 19 aboard a P-3 Orion and also served on the unit's color guard.						
Rugland, Robert L.	99	3/6/22	Army	WWII	31	Thief River Falls Post 117
Note: He served with the 3rd Army during the Battle of the Bulge.						
Schwartz, Dale H.	86	4/6/22	Army	Korea	32	Rochester Post 92
Schwichtenberg, Robert I.	88	3/18/22	Army	Korea	38	Waconia Post 150
Serbus, Russell J.	73	3/5/22	Army	Vietnam	22	Cleveland Post 207
Sexe, William J.	69	11/7/20	Army	Vietnam	46	Cleveland Post 207
Sheldon, Leonard E. Jr.	79	2/7/22	Army	Korea	35	Lyle Post 105
Sobiech, Alfred B.	89	3/7/22	Army	Korea	52	Bowlus Post 642
Soukup, Thomas M.	72	1/22/22	Army	Vietnam	13	Pine River Post 613
Stalboerger, Kenneth E.	75	3/13/22	Army	Vietnam	3	New London Post 537

# All-Family Events Calendar

**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 10-11:** 9th Dist. Convention, E. Grand Forks P-157  
**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:** Minnesota American Legion 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. 8-9:** SAL Fall Meetings, Legion HQ, Indianapolis  
**Oct. 10-13:** TAL Fall Meetings, Legion HQ, Indianapolis  
**Oct. 27-29:** Department Fall Conference, River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud  
**Dec. 11-14:** National American Legion College, Indy

# What's happening?

## Denise Rohan is coming to testimonial

WAITE PARK — The testimonial dinner honoring Minnesota American Legion Commander Tom Fernlund is slated for Saturday, June 18, at the Waite Park Moose Lodge, 1300 Third St. N.

Past National Commander Denise Rohan of Wisconsin is scheduled to speak.

Things get going at 3:30 p.m. with a social hour and entertainment. At 4:30 p.m. dinner is served. The program is at 5:30 p.m.

RSVP no later than June 10. The cost is \$25 per person.

Mail payment and names of attendees to:

Waite Park Post 428  
Attn: Veronica Fernlund  
P.O. Box 421  
Waite Park, MN 56387  
Call 320-248-8326 or email [silverstarpost428@gmail.com](mailto:silverstarpost428@gmail.com) with any questions.

The meal will be an Italian buffet with salad, lasagna, broccoli chicken alfredo, pasta with meatballs, garlic bread and dessert.

The hotels closest to the Moose Lodge are :

- Hilton Garden Inn: 320-640-7990
- Hampton Inn & Suites: 320-252-4448
- Holiday Inn & Suites: 320-253-9000
- Country Inn & Suites: 320-345-5276

the last redoubts and the climactic end of World War II in Europe at the next Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table.

The presentation begins at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 10, at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. Admission is free, but parking costs \$6 for non-Minnesota Historical Society members. The members pay \$4.

## 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.

## Legal clinics for vets are back

ANOKA — The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, also known as MACV, is returning to hosting legal clinics for veterans.

It is hosting one at 9 a.m.-3 p.m. June 2 at the Anoka County Government Center, 2100 Third Ave, Room 237, Anoka.

The clinic will aid low-income veterans with housing, employment, debt collection, expungement and family law, to include child support.





## Join fellow veterans and families on May 27 for big Twins game

MINNEAPOLIS — Minnesota American Legion Department Commander Tom Fernlund will throw out the first pitch for the Minnesota Twins game on Friday, May 27.

It will be American Legion Family Night at Target Field. The Twins take on the Kansas City Royals.

American Legion Family members are encouraged to purchase tickets. They can be purchased from the Department of Minnesota website.

Go to mnlegion.org. Hover your cursor over “Events” and you will see “American Legion Family Night at Target Field.” There, you will see the purchase link.

“Attending sports events as a Legion Family is a long tradition among the Minnesota American Legion, going all the way back to the 1920s,” said Department Commander Tom Fernlund.

“Let’s show Minnesota how much the Minnesota American Legion loves baseball.”

Ticket prices for Section 101, which is closer to the field, are \$37. Prices for sections 306 or 307 are \$18.

The Twins noted on the site: “The American Legion is a major supporter of youth baseball all across Minnesota, and this a chance to enjoy a day at Target Field watching the Minnesota Twins take on the Kansas City Royals. Legion members and their friends and families are welcome to participate.”

Minnesota American Legion Baseball is the largest Legion Baseball program in the country. As of April 25, there are 389 teams registered, beating the previous record set last year of 371 teams. In 2019, there were 366 teams.

Some registered teams usually are unable to field enough players, so the total teams for 2022, by the time the season begins, probably will end up around 383 teams, but that still would be a record.

“We hope to see you at the game,” Fernlund said.

## Be sure to mark July 30 on motorcycle calendar

### Legion Riders

Ted Berg

Hello Legion Family, Well, it is gradually getting warmer out and seeing a lot of bikes getting out there.

As we roll into May, there have been a couple of rides already underway with more coming up in May.

I am looking forward to getting out and putting some miles on with the different chapters in the state putting on runs, with that just want to put out a reminder that a lot of cages (vehicles with more than three wheels) that do not watch for bikes, so please be watchful for them.

This past month we got the opportunity to meet with National Commander Paul Dillard and got around to a few more posts for celebrations. It is great to get out and meet with Legion Family and share experiences and ideas for keeping the family moving forward and helping those in need.

As reminder we have the Fund 85 Run July 30 and the

Legacy run Aug 20-23, more info will be posted on Facebook and on the ALR website.

I would also like to welcome Redwood Falls Chapter as they got their charter and St. Augusta and Aitkin posts are also working on their charters. If you know of other posts that want to start chapters or have questions, please contact me if you need any help.

In closing, let’s keep our fingers crossed that out trip to the Capitol for Veterans Day on the Hill helped get things passed and signed to help the veterans of our state. They gave so everyone can enjoy our freedom! Ride safe.

Ted Berg of Bloomington Post 550 is the director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders.



# What’s happening?

Continued from Page 5

There are changes with the reopening of the clinic. The nonprofit organization says it:

- Will no longer offer estate planning services.
- Will target low-income veterans, not all veterans.
- Will not advise family members of veterans.

“We are still willing to discuss a broad range of legal issues that may impact housing stability, including family law, criminal expungement, debt, driver’s license issues, employment, financial issues, access to benefits, and any other legal issue that impacts a veteran’s ability to become or remain housed. As always, no appointment is necessary but if a veteran has questions about what services we can provide please have them call us prior to coming out to the clinic to discuss,” MACV said in a news release.

For more information, contact Vetlaw at 651-200-4750.

## Party to honor Ronning’s retirement

OSSEO — Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172 is throwing a party to honor its finance officer of 31 years, Marland Ronning.

He turns 80 on May 15, and with that, he has chosen to retire from the finance role.

Ronning served as department commander in 2003-04. He also is a past alternate NECman.

If you walk into Post 172 and go past the bar and toward the kitchen, there is a display case featuring Marland and Chris Ronning’s achievements in the Legion and Legion Auxiliary.

“He has been a member and leader in our post for decades and has represented us on the

state and national stage with his wife, Chris, at his side,” said Kristy Janigo, media and communications chair for Post 172. “One example was in 2019 when they joined an American Legion delegation of 20 Minnesotans to lobby at our nation’s capitol to advance several important veterans issues.”

The party is from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, May 15.

## Veterans Service Building reopens to the public

ST. PAUL — The Veterans Service Building in St. Paul is among many state buildings that reopened to the public April 22.

Most state buildings closed to the public in March 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic hit. MDVA will have a receptionist on duty Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to greet visitors.

According to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs’ Friday Digest, other staff may be working in a hybrid schedule, varying from remote to in the office.

The American Legion Department of Minnesota Headquarters are on the third floor of the Veterans Service Building. So is the Auxiliary Department Office.

The MDVA Claims Office at the Bishop Whipple Federal Building will also have an on-site presence every weekday starting April 22.

## 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.

## Were you at Cam Rahn Bay in Vietnam?

WADENA — Any service members stationed at Cam Rahn Bay Air Base in Vietnam from 1962 to 1975 are asked to attend a reunion from Sept. 29 to Oct. 2, 2022, in Kansas City.

Please contact co-coordinator Jimmy M. White of Wadena by calling 920-609-5672 or emailing dicancooka@gmail.com.

## Memorial Day concert features St. Michael post

ST. MICHAEL — The Summerfield Amphitheater in St. Michael is offering half-price tickets for veterans for a Memorial Day weekend show.

On Saturday, May 28, the colors will be presented by St. Michael Post 567, along with the playing of “Taps” at 6:50 p.m.

It will be followed by a concert featuring The Fabulous Armadillos playing songs from the Vietnam War era. The concert is being called “What’s Going On?”

The concert aims to honor all veterans with video, narrators and the songs.

Gates open at 6 p.m.

Visit summerfieldlive.com to get tickets.

## Free gun locks available

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs is partnering with the VA Healthcare System to distribute free gun locks.

A few moments can be the difference between life and death when a veteran is contemplating suicide, and gun locks delay access to firearms.

To request one, send an email to SuicidePrevention.mdva@state.mn.us with your name and address.

Requests are confidential.

## Career fair set in Chisholm

CHISHOLM — The second annual Veteran Information Fair will be held at the Chisholm National Guard Building on May 12 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is sponsored by the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon-Hibbing/Chisholm committee.

The Minnesota Veterans Career Fair is Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at the Earle Brown Heritage Center from 2 to 6 p.m.

Are you looking for a higher salary and a great career? Work for an employer that recognizes and appreciates your military service and the value you bring to the team!

The Veterans Career Fair features:

- Nearly 100 veteran-friendly employers on-site.

- Complimentary LinkedIn photography station available for job seekers.

- Have your resume reviewed and brush up on your interviewing skills with a mock interview.

- Service providers offering assistance for veterans and their families.

- There is no cost to attend and registration is not required.

- Job seeker attendees are eligible to register for one of 50 Minnesota DNR gift cards (\$100 value).

## Taps



Continued from Page 5

**Sorry, Donald W.** 92 4/6/22 Army Korea 67 Austin Post 91

**Strom, Todd S.** 69 3/16/22 Navy Vietnam 33 Red Wing Post 54

Note: He was a submariner in the Navy.

**Svihel, Lloyd N.** 86 1/24/22 Army Korea 46 Cold Spring Post 455

**Tuper, Calvin G.** 71 3/20/22 Air Force Vietnam 21 Aitkin Post 86

**Vagle, Wallace L.** 93 3/3/22 Army Korea 58 Thief River Falls Post 117

**Verbrughen, Henri P.** 87 3/24/22 3 branches Korea/VN 27 China Post 1

Note: Though a member of the Department of China, he enjoyed fellowship at Park Rapids Post 212. He served in the 82nd Airborne Division, the 934th Airlift Wing and the 11th Marines. He spent 3 1/2 years as a kicker (freight specialist) with Air America and 3 1/2 years as a pilot with Continental Air Services, a total of seven years fighting communism in Southeast Asia.

**Visker, Jans K.** 89 3/17/22 Air Force Korea 73 Tracy Post 173

**Weinandt, Carl N.** 71 1/22/22 Army Vietnam 22 Cleveland Post 207

**Westenberg, Abram** 95 3/30/22 Army WWII 60 Edgerton Post 42

**Wicker, Roger J.** 91 4/7/22 Army Korea 64 Waite Park Post 428

Note: He served in an amphibious tank battalion in the war.

**Williams, James A.** 91 11/28/21 Army Korea 53 Chisago City Post 272

**Yost, William H.** 86 1/17/22 Army Cold 40 Pine City Post 51

Editor’s note: Continuous years means continuous years in The American Legion, even if the person changed posts. Don’t send in the number of years the deceased was in just your post. Send in the number of years the deceased veteran was in The American Legion. If you don’t know it, leave it blank, and we will look it up.

## Correction

The era was incorrect in the “Taps” entry for William H. Yost in the April issue. He was a soldier of the Cold War, not Vietnam. He is listed again in “Taps” this month so it appears correctly.

Interestingly, many servicemembers who fell between the Korea and Vietnam war eras still joined The American Legion, often a decade or two after getting out, and their posts would mark them down as Korea and Vietnam, as “Other” wasn’t an era option before the 2019 LEGION

Act. We appreciate all Legionnaires and are glad they found a way to join. If you were a Cold War servicemember and need your era fixed, contact either your post membership director or call the Department of Minnesota HQ. A veteran is a veteran is veteran.



# Legion membership is not a spectator sport

While campaigning for and serving as 6th District commander, I stressed three things: communication, education and mentorship.

At the time, I felt that those three things were essential for a successful American Legion organization. To a very great extent, I still believe that to be true, but hindsight being particularly acute, I think that a fourth thing should be added to the list — participation.

Forgive me for a moment while I share something to give some context.

Years ago, while serving as a Scoutmaster, a 17-year-old Scout asked me to sign off on an application for a prestigious award he was seeking. The problem was that while he was still registered with the Scout Troop, I had not seen him at any meetings or activities for a year. Since the very first sentence on the application read, “While being active as

## Guest Column

Paul Edwards



a Scout...,” I refused to sign the application.

I was told by some senior leadership in Scouting something that set my teeth on edge. And that was, as far as the National Council was concerned, as long as a Scout’s dues are paid, they are active.

I wonder how many Legion members feel the same way, that as long as they pay their dues, they are active. Consider these names and the impact they have had on the Minnesota Legion: Dan Ludwig, Denise Milton, Pat Logan, Mark Dvorak, Tom Fernlund, Dennis Henkemeyer, Carl and Peggy Henk.

Think how The American Legion in Minnesota would be different if all of them had felt that just paying their dues

was active enough.

In the American Legion Preamble, we say, “We associate ourselves together for the following purposes,” and we end it by saying, “To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship...”

I read both the beginning and end of the Preamble to mean that we are supposed to be coming together to do things. I have to wonder what is going on when a post that lists more than 150 members struggles to gather a 10-person quorum at a business meeting so the business of the post can be done. Or there is a struggle each year at election time to fill the slots on their

executive board. Do all of their members feel that just paying their dues is active enough and there is no need to participate in the meetings?

All of us have skills and talents that can help the Legion, whether at the post, district or department level. Not all of us can be commanders, but that is not the only way to participate. Some of us can juggle words or numbers. Some can be friendly greeters. Some of us can interpret what others have written and help guide the leadership. And many other skills that might be of use to the Legion.

I will close with this quote from Theodore Roosevelt’s autobiography, “Do what you can, with what you’ve got, where you are.”

*Paul Edwards of Nisswa Post 627 is a past 6th District commander and an instructor at Minnesota American Legion College.*

# Veterans impacted by affordable housing shortage

MACV has served veterans seeking housing stability for over 30 years. As the nongovernment leader in the fight to end veteran homelessness in Minnesota, we provide a wide-reaching, comprehensive network of staff and partners throughout the state.

The past two years have changed our world in more ways than we could ever predict. A pandemic, the call to do better on behalf of our neighbors of color, and a changing financial landscape have affected all of us. The affordable housing shortage has continued to build, contributing to a lack of accessibility for renters with less-than-ideal histories or other significant barriers to housing stability.

Sadly, many of the individuals most severely impacted by these changes are veterans. Hundreds of our brothers and sisters-in-arms have found themselves on the street, living in a car, or couch-surfing after losing their homes.

Inequity within Minnesota’s veteran community contributes to this problem. When compared

## MACV

Neal Loidolt



to Minnesota’s overall veteran community, homeless veterans are far more likely to identify as non-white. Interestingly, the amount of disparity seen between the homeless and housing-stable veteran populations follow trends seen between homeless and housing-stable Minnesotans in general. In short, service in the military does not overcome the increased risk for housing instability noted in BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities.

We use innovative strategies to empower veterans because no one who serves should wonder where they’ll sleep tonight. Our team of 70 staff — roughly half of whom are veterans themselves — is talented, diverse and committed to our shared mission.

Many of us are looking to the future and wondering what 2022 holds. At MACV, we will

continue to move veterans out of emergency housing in hotels to longer-term and stable housing situations. We will expand our outreach to shelters and unsheltered locations. We will forge new relationships with housing providers. We will continue to adapt to the evolving needs of those we serve.

MACV operates 151 beds of transitional and permanent supportive housing units in Duluth, Hibbing, Mankato, St. Cloud and throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area. We have nine additional units coming online in April, and 24 starting construction with the goal of completion in 2022. Strong cross-sector partnerships between MACV and our government, philanthropy and

corporate supporters directly resulted in these units.

The good news is that these innovative strategies to end veteran homelessness in Minnesota are working. St. Louis County has functionally ended veteran homelessness in its communities as of April 2022. This historic declaration means that we only have two more Continuums of Care remaining before Minnesota becomes the fourth state in the nation to declare the functional end to veteran homelessness.

Simply put, MACV could not do this important work without the support of veteran service organizations like local American Legion posts. Thank you for your support of our mission to end veteran homelessness in Minnesota.

*Neal Loidolt is an American Legion member with Anoka Post 102. He is the president and CEO of the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. He is a major general in the Minnesota National Guard, serving as deputy adjutant general.*

# Resolutions shape and alter The American Legion

By Paul Edwards  
Training Committee

Congratulations! You can be proud of yourself. You have written a well-thought-out and properly put-together resolution. Now what?

For a resolution to do anything, it must go through a process of approval and sometimes that process can be simple and at other times very involved and complex. Some of the things that affect this complexity are the level in The American Legion of the author, the level at which the work of the resolved clause must be done, and lastly, what the resolution hopes to accomplish.

The level of the author in the Legion is also the first level of approval. If the author’s involvement in the Legion is only at the post level, then the post membership must approve the resolution first, before moving it on.

Occasionally at Legion levels above the post, there is only one level of approval. An example of this from 2020 is during the COVID-19 shutdowns. The department judge advocate, who is a member of the Department Executive Committee, wrote

the resolution to cancel the 2020 Department Convention. While the resolution itself was complicated due to all the things that had to be addressed for the cancelation and reschedule, the process of approval was simple.

A member of the Executive Committee was the author and presented it to the Executive Committee for approval. It had to go no further than that and if memory serves correctly, the whole process took less than a month.

That was a simple one. Let’s get more complicated.

Let’s say that Legionnaire Sally has written a resolution that, if approved, will clarify some wording in the National Constitution. Since Sally has chosen to keep her involvement in the Legion at the post level, that must be the first approval.

Once the resolution is approved by the post membership, the post adjutant will transmit the approved resolution to the district adjutant for processing and so on up the chain until it gets to the national adjutant.

At every level, Sally’s resolution will be checked several times. Probably first by a resolutions committee who will look at

form and content and then by a committee to make sure that it does not conflict with existing statutes.

At the national level it will be reviewed by more committees. Possibly the Internal Affairs Committee, the Americanism Committee, or the Constitution and By-Laws Committees. Eventually, if the stars align, Sally’s Resolution will come to a vote on the convention floor.

The process in the first example was simple because everything occurred on one level. With Sally’s resolution, what she wanted to do was simple, but the process was complex due to many levels of approval and changing the constitution is not a simple task.

Also note that while the first example took less than a month, the processing on Sally’s resolution may take a year or more, depending on the timing of meetings, conferences and conventions.

In closing, write those resolutions. Keep in mind that not every resolution will be approved but even if your resolution is disapproved, you made the Legion Leadership think about your issue, if even for just for few minutes.

# Oratorical champ advances

INDIANAPOLIS — Minnesota’s Oratorical Contest champion, 16-year-old Megan Blonigen, advanced at the National Oratorical Contest April 22-24 in Indianapolis.

She was among 15 semi-finalists among the 50 competitors.

That means Blonigen, a sophomore at Eden Valley-Watkins High School,

earned a \$1,500 scholarship for winning the Department of Minnesota contest, another \$700 for winning the District 7 contest. She receives \$2,000 for participating in the national contest, and she receives another \$2,000 scholarship for advancing to the group of 15.

The national winner was Emma Noble, a junior from Birmingham, Ala.

# May is a time of elections at the Legion’s post level

## National Report

Bill Barbknecht



Thank you to all who took the time to listen to the National Commander Paul Dillard while he was in Minnesota.

Great job as always by Department Commander Tom Fernland, Membership Director Paul Hassing, Minnesota Legionnaire Editor Tim Engstrom and, of course, Adjutant Mike Maxa. It wasn’t easy driving a van in those horrible winds during his visit.

As we go into May, we are having elections and installation of post officers. Are you proud of your post and its officers? Is it time for a change of command or is your current officers doing well? Yes or no to those questions can be remedied by attending your local post meeting this month of May for elections.

It is an honor to belong to The American Legion. You gave up so much to serve your country. We are a special organization as; you can’t just say “Here is my \$30 to \$50, I want to join.”

No, you gave up time away from family to be able to belong to The American Legion, to serve your community, state and nation. Please ask those veterans to join us. We need new ideas.

The National Executive Committee Spring Meetings

are held the first week in May in Indianapolis.

Also, meeting is Youth Education, Child Welfare Foundation, Americanism Commission and other committee meetings.

Mother’s Day is May 8. Is your post doing something special for mothers? Armed Forces Day is May 21. Three district conferences are on that day. See the calendar on Page 5.

Memorial Day is May 30. Have you reached out for a speaker at your program? Please teach adults and children alike Memorial Day is *not* just the start of summer or a long weekend.

Thank you for being a member of the American Legion Family. We are a family that does so much for the community, veterans and children.

As always, if I can be of any help, please call me at 218-770-6264. Donna and I look forward to seeing many of you throughout our summer activities.

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

# Is your post struggling to get Boys State boys?

## Minn. Boys State

Neil Kruse



Enrollment should be in progress for the 2022 American Legion Minnesota Boys State session at St. John’s University.

Pass on to schools [www.mnboysstate.org](http://www.mnboysstate.org), which has the registration application, as well as pictures from previous years.

Each of the tabs on the site can provide answers to questions potential delegates might have. Legionnaires, Boys State candidates and parents will find much information of interest on this site.

For those districts struggling to have delegates to sponsor, we invite a representative from the school (teacher, counselor, administrator) and Legion Post to visit one day during the week to see what a day in the life of a Boys Stater is like. We are looking forward to increased enrollment to this year’s session from June 12 (registration) to 18 (awards). Friday night’s program is open to guests.

Thank you for your interest and help in developing active civic-minded individuals throughout communities in Minnesota!

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



# The SAL Update:

## May showers bring squadron forms

By Shawn Davis  
National Executive  
Committeeman

April showers bring May flowers.

But do you know what May brings?

Squadron elections and district conventions!

That means that we need each squadron to do their part in communication. We need this information to be able to properly communicate and keep everyone aware of what is happening in the organization!

First off, the newly elected squadron officers should complete a Squadron Officer Report form. These have been mailed to each squadron adjutant and

are available on our website if you do not remember getting it. (mnsal.org/Home2/index.php/forms/). These forms should be fully completed yearly, *even* if there is no change in the officers or any other information from the prior year. These can be mailed or emailed to detachment.

Next complete the Squadron Data Report (SDR). Yes, the information is partially duplicative from the Squadron Officer Reporting Form. And, yes, it was due April 15.

But this is the information that national needs to update the Squadron Directory so members can find you, and renewal notices can be mailed out with the correct information. And with

online renewals coming, this has to be completed to allow your members to renew online! So mail or email it in right away.

Finally complete the Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR). This is a form that needs to be completed every year, even if the squadron has “done nothing.” But I think every squadron in our great detachment has done or donated something, that can be logged on this form. This form is due at Detachment Convention June 25.

Once these forms are done, be glad that your squadron has taken its first steps on having done their part in communicating the squadron information to wrap up 2021-2022 and be ready to move forward with 2022-2023.



**Bloomington Post 550 donated \$1,000 to the SAL Commander's Project. Presenting the check is Post 550 Adjutant Tim Engstrom, which is the Child Welfare Foundation. The SAL's Matthew Verkuilen accepts.**



**LeRoy “Gonzo” Gonzales delivers wheelchair bags to the Minneapolis Veterans Home on behalf of Auxiliary President Patti Coleman. Minneapolis Veterans Home Volunteer Coordinator Erin Betlock accepts.**



**Detachment Commander Tim Weaver stands with Honorary Junior President Ashley Stai at the Auxiliary Juniors Conference in Willmar.**



**Detachment Commander Tim Weaver speaks with Taylor McElroy at the Auxiliary Juniors Conference in Willmar.**

## Our house rules: We do Legion Family

In our kitchen, and probably many kitchens around our state, hangs a sign with “House Rules.”

These rules can be anything from “We do hugs” or “We do real” or “We do fun” to these rules incorporating a Disney theme or Harry Potter theme or some other form that captures the spirit of the home and of the family.

But have we ever considered what this would look like if we were to have a sign for the Legion Family House Rules?

Perhaps, it would start something like, “We do helping veterans” or “We do fellowship” or even “We do community.” These are easy to come by when we’re facing outward — which, don’t get me wrong, is absolutely important. It can be hard or perhaps even overlooked to face inward and have “We do’s” that give inward support for our Legion Family.

I had the pleasure recently of being in the background, but observing nonetheless,

### Membership Director

Matthew Verkuilen



the American Legion Auxiliary Juniors Conference held in Willmar. These young ladies came from all over the state and showed not only what leadership is, but that our Auxiliary is in very good hands in the future.

I’ve also had the honor of not only being a Boys State participant but a past counselor. As with our Auxiliary Juniors Program, the young men selected to Boys State (and the young women selected for Girls State) show us very profoundly that our organizations and our communities are in good hands — if we give them the chance to lead. And if we are there to support them along the way.

This leads us back to our “Legion House Rules.” If you’re finding your Legion Family getting stalled or becoming less active, perhaps a reinvestment is in order. Consider for a moment

these “Legion House Rules.”

First, we do helping veterans and their families, we do fellowship, we *do* promote the Auxiliary and Juniors (and their programs), we *do* promote the SAL and the Riders (and their programs).

We *do* find ways to include everyone in the Legion Family... and not just those that have been around the organization for several decades, but even the ones who may have only around for a single decade (or even less). We *do* work as a family (and we even recruit... as a family).

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

# 1st softball tourney to be in Mankato

MANKATO — Minnesota American Legion Softball and Mankato Post 11 are near to securing a location for the first state tournament.

Unless a meeting on April 29 goes awry, it will be July 30-31 in Mankato at Jaycee Park, with the players staying in dormitories at nearby Mankato State University. A banquet with coaches, players and parents will take place July 29.

Peggy Moon, the first female Department of Minnesota commander, will throw out the first pitch. Moon presently is Minnesota’s alternate on the National Executive Committee.

“I’m honored, I am just so honored,” she said after being asked to throw out the first pitch.



The first Minnesota American Legion Baseball State Tournament took place in Mankato, back in 1923.

Luann McMahan of Adams Post 146 is on the Minnesota American Legion Softball Committee, and she said the Mankato historical tie to Legion Baseball is part of the theme for the first Legion

Softball tournament.

“We’re going back to Mankato, and this time, it’s for the girls,” she said.

The tournament will be an eight-team single elimination tournament. Because of consolation games, there will be 12 games total.

There are more details to come, McMahan said. The banquet speaker is close to being named, and the committee is working to arrange a flyover.

So far, 27 teams have registered to play Minnesota American Legion Softball.

To compare, North Carolina had 11 teams its first year kicking off Legion Softball. It now operates with more than 80 teams.

## MACV, Rocks on Trucks win awards

ST. CLOUD — A St. Cloud area company and a St. Paul-based nonprofit have been recognized for employing veterans.

The American Legion Department of Minnesota Employment Committee has announced the winners of its annual Employer of Veterans Award.

In the small company category of 50 or fewer employees, Rock on Trucks Inc. of Waite Park was named the winner. The company has 42 employees and has five veterans on the staff.

Dennis Schiffler, commander of Waite Park Post 428, nominated Rocks on Trucks for the award.

In the medium company category, which is 51-200 employees, the Minnesota Assistance

Council for Veterans was named the winner. The nonprofit serves veterans statewide, providing housing, legal service and employment aid, and has workplaces in St. Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth, St. Cloud, Moorhead, Mankato and Rochester.

It has 67 employees, and 33 are veterans. Last year, it made 10 hires, and of those, six were veterans.

Tim Engstrom, adjutant of Bloomington Post 550, nominated MACV for the award.

Luis Campero, commander of Bloomington Post 550, chairs the Employment Committee. He said there were no nominees in the category for large companies.

Rocks on Trucks and MACV will be recognized at the Department Convention in July.

## Claims offices partner with CVSOs

Your American Legion Claims Divisions, as of April 22, in Fargo and St. Paul are open for business and operational from initial claims to regular communication and support of County Veteran Service Offices to holding multi-point virtual Board of Veteran Appeals hearings.

We remain at the cutting edge of advocacy at a local, state, federal and national level. In previous segments you learned about the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and American Legion Claims Division involvement in programs and operations.

Though times have changed some of the way we are providing advocacy, our mission remains the same. MDVA is the premium service provider you should expect. We have an exciting report on programs and progress made, developments and changes in office operations.

MDVA offices are open, and our business model has changed. MDVA is excited to announce our new approach to claims and appeals is based on a partnership and service approach including your local representative, the county veteran service officer (CVSO). When you select The American Legion or Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs, you are choosing a premium service provider who will stand with you though the entire claims process and much more.

MDVA is taking a team approach to its mission and while

### VA & Rehabilitation

Ronald Quade



working with your CVSO, any qualified person will have lifelong benefits available to them, including, yet not limited to, education, claims, outreach, homes, cemetery benefits and state benefits.

In times of change, we also see time for opportunity. We have used this change in our business to seize the moment and make improvement where before change would have been more time consuming and or difficult.

As an example, in Fargo, the claims division was dependent on the federal technology network. While fitting staff with equipment to work from home, we modified the staff and moved them onto the state of Minnesota network making major improvements for them in doing so.

Another example, the VA’s Board of Veteran Appeals (BVA) was required to offer a modification to their hearing process. The BVA had been working with our Claims Division Offices to pilot a program called BVA Video Connect which allowed you, the claimant, to attend your BVA hearing virtually from your home or CVSO office of your choosing while still connecting with your power of attorney and the judge in Washington, D.C.

We are now one of the lead

states participating in regular video connect BVA

hearings, a means in which BVA’s hearings will continue indefinitely. We see this time, as difficult as it may be, as a way to make progress and continue to support you in the best way possible.

Thank you for placing your trust in our staff, in our ideas and in our offices. We will continue to press on and honor you for the service and sacrifice you provided our beautiful state and country.

We continue operations and are virtually open for business. Please contact your local county veteran service office or contact the American Legion Claims Division directly at 612-970-5662 if you are interested in any claims or benefits information.

I look forward to bringing you more information about our programs and the Claims Divisions on the ground for you every day.

Ronald D. Quade II is an American Legion member with New Prague Post 45. He is the director of claims and field operations at the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.





Jim Larson holds a model of a World War II Lockheed P-38 Lightning April 1 at Rice Post 473, north of St. Cloud. Larson is the artist behind the many airplane models made of beer and other beverage cans that hang at the Post 473 building.

# Beer cans make history

Legion member in Rice crafts model planes out of aluminum

By Sarah Colburn  
Sauk Rapids Herald

**R**ICE — A Lockheed P-38 Lightning. A Grumman F4F Wildcat. A Vought F4U Corsair. All planes of historic wars. Each one hangs above the dining room of American Legion Post 473 in Rice; each one is intricately hand-crafted to its likeness out of beer cans. The man behind the planes is Jim Larson, who served in the U.S. Air Force as a steam plant operator shoveling coal.

Every month or so, Larson, who has a modest cabin on the north end of Little Rock Lake, brings another new plane to the bar. Each one is displayed just above the bar for a month before moving to the dining room to make way for a new creation. On April 1 He brought his latest plane — a Japanese Zero — to Post 473.

“I’m a World War II buff; I love World War II history,” he said. “Every time I watch a war movie, I think what it would have been like to be there. It’s just the courage of that generation that really gets me, those men and women were awe inspiring.”

Larson often has to rely on donated cans for his creations. Each plane takes 18 to 23 cans to create.

Larson gets the plans online and painstakingly maps out each specific piece, tracing the paper templates onto clear acrylic and then placing the clear template over the artwork on the can he wants to use. Marker in hand, he traces each piece and cuts the aluminum with a scissors.

Each plane takes a few weeks to design and create. He uses a combination of two-part epoxy, double-sided tape, hot glue and staples to assemble the pieces. The process is slow, meaning he can only add a few pieces at a time before he has to wait for the glue to set, returning to the plane later or the next day to do a little more.

Larson built a Wildcat out of Natural Light cans, taking special care to affix the eagle on the can to both sides of the tail. The red, white and blue colors of the can give it a patriotic flair.

“It’s my way of expressing my art talent,” he said.



Replicas of a British Spitfire (from left), Japanese Zero and Grumman F4F Wildcat are finished products of Jim Larson’s. Larson uses aluminum beverage cans to create the models, using the can design or painting the material to achieve the look he desires.



Jim Larson crafts planes out of beer cans, often choosing them for their artistic elements rather than the beer that is inside. Tabs from beer can tops are layered to create the engines of the models.



This Curtiss P-40 Warhawk is made from Rolling Rock cans.



Limited edition corn-themed Busch Light cans are used to create the WWII American Fighter P-47 Thunderbird, otherwise known as “The Jug.” Jim Larson displays information about each plane along with the model itself when debuting model planes at the Legion building.

Larson said he has always had an engineering aptitude, and to that end, his art is very detailed, even the cartoons and drawings he creates.

With the planes, he focuses on the color and look of the can more than the beer inside. He can be found frequenting more upscale liquor stores as he hunts for import cans that create the color and look he wants to achieve. On occasion, he paints the cans, but most often, he leaves them in their true form.

Larson started building the planes in the mid-2000s and has roughly 10 hanging at the Legion at a time, bringing them home once they have had their run. So far, he has made 16 planes of 54 available designs. He has gifted them on occasion to relatives and once to a veteran who flew planes in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. He met the veteran when he accompanied him on an Honor Flight to Washington.

Larson himself is a 20-year member of the Rice American Legion Honor Guard and is also a member of the

Patriot Guard Riders, a nonprofit organization known for holding flags at veterans’ funerals and protecting mourners from possible harassment. He often wears his Patriot Guard vest while with the American Legion Honor Guard.

Larson has always had an affinity for planes. He took private pilot lessons at the St. Cloud Regional Airport in the early 1990s; he never received his pilot’s license. He also flew an ultralight powered parachute for nearly a decade. His father was a tank commander in Okinawa in World War II, and though he said his dad never talked much about the experience, he had a shoebox filled with historic photos.

Today, Larson can list off details of many planes from memory, which one was most powerful, which one dominated the skies and which was the most agile along with strengths and weaknesses.

For him, it is a way to help keep the history alive and honor those who have served.



A German ME 262 is in production at Jim Larson’s home. The plane was the only jet fighter used in World War II, and it is the first jet plane model produced by Larson.



Jim Larson hangs a model of a Japanese Zero at the front of the bar inside Rice Post 473 on April 1. The plane is Larson’s newest work of art and will be displayed by itself for one month before being transferred to the dining area.





A home stands but is mostly demolished after a tornado ripped through Taopi on April 12.



Minnesota House District 27B Rep. Patricia Mueller of Austin and her husband, Daniel, stopped by Adams Post 146 to help out with the effort. Piles of donated goods filled the banquet hall.



A flag flies outside the Lodi Township Hall.

## Adams post raising funds for tornado victims

Continued from Page 1

The building became the location for donating goods. That Thursday afternoon, people from surrounding communities were bringing clothes, shoes, food, water, baby needs, toys, coats, toiletries, you name it, to the post home at 132 W. Main St.

On Friday, the Post 146 Legion Family did it again. They served fish and brats, and after they ran out, they served chicken. The people of Taopi filled the Legion that evening to get away and relax. On Saturday, the Auxiliary again served soup to Taopi residents, and everyone hung out at the Legion again that evening.

“This shows our community how important the Legion is,” Lewison said.

The tornado was reported to be about 320 yards wide and lasting for seven miles.

Lewison said Taopi residents have been coming to



A soup lunch for Taopi residents begins to be served at Post 146.

Post 146 to pick up supplies. “They were overwhelmed but now are getting back into their own lifestyle,” he said.

The donations came from other Legion posts, local stores and individuals.

First District Commander Mike Parry called about helping veterans, and posts from around the district sent \$2,535 to help veterans impacted by the tornado. Post 146 even got a check from Nebraska.

Lewison said individuals can donate to their efforts.

Send a check to: American Legion Post 146 PO Box 181 Adams, MN 55909

In the memo line, put “Taopi Relief Fund” to help all tornado victims or put “Taopi Relief Fund for Legion Family” to specifically help Legion Family members affected by the tornadoes.

The Legionnaire checked with the Allied Charities and the Gambling Control Board. Posts cannot send gambling funds, but they can send in

Form LG 270 to have the state board review, at its June meeting, a request to donate to another licensed post.

Another option is to purchase merchandise (not cash or gift cards), then send that.

Lewison said many homes in Taopi will need rebuilding, and there is talk about the Post 146 Family furnishing the new homes with flags and flagpoles. That, he said, is a discussion for the next meeting.

Let’s hope the drive home from that one has clear skies.

## Focus group says staffing a Vet Center has a catch

Continued from Page 1

earned, including mental health care when they come home,” said Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz in the news release. “This new Vet Center outstation reflects our strong commitment to expanding services to veterans here in Minnesota.”

Vet Centers provide hassle-free and confidential counseling for trauma-impacted veterans and their families, including members of the National Guard and their families. They are particularly important for veterans who want to get counseling but not have it on their permanent VA health record.

Vet Centers are under the federal VA funding umbrella but operate separately from the VA Healthcare System.

The outstations are not full-fledged Vet Centers, but they are satellites where at least one full-time counselor can provide services at no cost. As demand increases, the services could expand into a full Vet Center, according to a joint news release from the state and federal VAs.

The announcement of an outstation comes after state officials, from the governor on down, joined the Legion in recent years in its efforts to expand Vet Centers.

In December 2019, other veterans

organizations joined the Legion on this issue through their participation in the Minnesota Commanders’ Task Force.

Legion members Phil Ringstrom, Tom Mullon, Tommy Johnson and Tim Engstrom comprise a focus group that has worked with the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs staff on the effort. Mullon is the past director of the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. Ringstrom is a former staff nurse, nurse manager and staff assistant at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center and, during his VA career, was a team leader for Vet Centers in Sioux Falls and Duluth.

(To be upfront, Engstrom is the editor of this publication, and he also has a role in legislative advocacy for veterans.)

Ringstrom pointed out that the downside of the announcement is the new St. Cloud Vet Center Outstation likely won’t be operational until 2024. The VA must go through locating, procurement, leasing and hiring.

“I hear there is no additional FTE, and we have to prove the value of adding more staff,” he said. “It’s a Catch-22 again.”

FTE stands for full-time equivalent, a reference to budgeting staff. The Catch-22 is: How will veterans know the counseling

exists if there is no marketing of it?

Ringstrom appreciates the support of the governor and MDVA.

The VA, he said, calls the state’s involvement in the effort “political pressure, but the fact is it is not political. It is reality. It is what we see exist, and, as for The American Legion, it is our job to serve veterans and explain to the government where the problems are.”

He noted how the VA itself began because The American Legion pointed out to the federal government the lack of care for wounded World War I veterans.

“It is absolutely wrong to call this political pressure,” he said.

In the meantime, veterans in the St. Cloud area needing readjustment counseling can call 763-503-2220.

Engstrom noted how long it has taken. “Many combat soldiers coming back to Minnesota started telling us they had problems to resolve way back in 2005. They even told us they needed counseling. The counseling will begin happening 19 years after the problem first surfaced,” he said. “This outstation is good news, but how long it has taken for our nation to respond is sad news.”



Phil Ringstrom



Sunday night liberty with an early Monday formation.  
Dan Morgan/North End Post 474



Catherine Gallenberger, commander of Wabasha Post 50, left, shakes hands with Diane Ties, center. Joining them at a Veterans Wall of Honor are the Auxiliary’s Rosi Schmidt and Gloria Hager.

## 2 Veteran Walls of Honor go up in southeastern Minnesota

WABASHA — Memorials honoring local veterans are now permanently displayed at Gunderson St. Elizabeth’s Care Centers. Last month two Veterans Walls of Honor, which recognize 15 veterans including three World War II veterans, were unveiled. The display, originated and partially-funded by Gunderson St. Elizabeth’s Hospital and Clinics, is wholeheartedly supported by the Wabasha American Legion, Legion Auxiliary and VFW posts.

“This is a way we can support those who sacrificed so much for this country,” said Diane Ties, Recreation Therapy Manager at Gunderson St. Elizabeth’s. Ties managed the veterans project. “We hope these memorials remain a visual reminder to honor and recognize our veterans, service members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families.”

Veterans like 96-year-old resident Paul Klees. Klees was part of the Battle of Okinawa in 1945.

“Being a veteran is a shared experience. It’s something that we went through together,” Klees said. “There’s camaraderie in coming together.”

As Ties handed Klees his photo and certificate during the Dec. 15 ceremony, tears filled his eyes.

“All the hard work we put into

this Wall of Honor was for that moment,” said Ties. “This project – and that moment – went right to my heart.”

Long-term care administrator Kristi Petersen and hospital administrator Jim Root were present at the unveiling.

“Our team is honored to serve you and are forever grateful for all that you gave,” said Petersen.

Root echoed that. “We are proud and honored to care for those who sacrificed so much to serve our country.”

Gunderson St. Elizabeth’s Care Center holds a VA contract. Currently 12 veterans live at Gunderson St. Elizabeth’s Care Center-Shields Avenue and three reside at Gunderson St. Elizabeth’s Care Center-Grant Boulevard.

“It’s so important for us to support, honor and remember the veterans who served our country,” said Catherine Gallenberger, commander, Wabasha American Legion Post 50. “I’m thankful that we can be a part of this project and legacy.”

Rosi Schmidt, president of the Wabasha American Legion Auxiliary Unit 50, said the Auxiliary is also proud and excited to be a part of this venture.

Schmidt helped involve the Auxiliary, Legion and VFW who then donated to this tribute to veteran residents at the health care centers.



# Charles Childs flew in two wars and counseled the young

By Gary Kass

TRACY — Charles LeRoy Childs was born in Arnegard, N.D., on July 17, 1920, the third of five children born to Adela and Henry Childs.

Henry was a barber and owned a pool hall. Ever inquisitive, Charles Childs was fascinated with flight and music from a very young age. He learned to play the drums at age 8 and was playing in local bands by 12.

Born into the Roaring '20s, he remembered, "Everybody had money, then the Depression came, the banks closed and nobody had any money."

At 14, disgusted with the hard times and ever curious, he hopped a freight train to California looking for work. Much to his parent's chagrin, he did the same thing each summer for the next two years.

Infuriated, his father signed him up for the Civilian Military Training Camps that convened each summer in Bismarck, N.D. The CMTC was a program by the War Department from 1921 to 1940 orientating young men to military service without a military obligation.

Childs enjoyed the CMTC, playing the drums in the base band, but wanderlust soon came again, and he was enticed to join a carnival band. Persuaded by the carnival's band director, his father agreed to release him from the CMTC.

He was touring the country until his mother, Adela, became quite ill. He jumped a freight train and arrived at his mother's bedside just before she passed.

Newly responsible, he joined the North Dakota National Guard's 164th Infantry Regiment and attended Mayville State Teachers College, in Mayville N.D., from 1938 until the Guard was mobilized in February 1941.

After mobilization, the Guard units from the Midwest were sent to the Louisiana Maneuvers. The Louisiana Maneuvers, August to September 1941 was the largest military training exercise conducted by the US since World War I. The maneuvers covered a wide area in western Louisiana that included Fort Polk and Camp Claiborne.

There, Childs volunteered to train with the Army Air Corps. After rigorous testing, Childs was selected for pilot training. From November 1941 to July 1942, he was trained as a B-17 pilot and commissioned on July 3, 1942. The next day (the Fourth of July), he married his longtime college girlfriend, Grace Saueressig, a teacher from North Dakota.

Childs was sent to Montgomery, Ala., to train British pilots to fly the B-17 Flying Fortress. Released from AAF Training Command, he was sent to the 15th Army Air Forces in Italy.

With a B-17 and crew he was sent to an Amendola AAF Base near Foggia, Italy. (Built in 1931, Amendola Air



B-17 Flying Fortress.



Charles and Grace on their wedding day, July 4, 1942.

Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City, S.D. He and Grace had four children, Connie, Charles Jr, Cara and Candy. Upon retirement, he served as a district executive director for the Boy Scouts of America.

Then he became a probation officer for the South Dakota Judicial System.

Childs said given his rough-and-tumble youth, he was quick to correct juvenile offenders in their errant ways. When asked about how he felt about his service, he quickly responded, "Best thing that ever happened to me."

Daughter Cara died in 1999, son Charles died in 2010. Due to failing health Charles and Grace moved to Tracy, in southwest Minnesota, to be near their two surviving children, Candy and Connie, who live near Storden.

A lifetime member of The American Legion with Tracy Post 173, he is an inspiration to many and one of those

## Wayward child to pilot hero



A new Eagle Scout, Charles Childs Jr. with District Scout Director Charles Childs Sr.



The Childs' children smile for the camera while in Japan. From left, they are Candy, Cara, Connie and Charles Jr.

Base today is a training site for the Italian Air Force.)

As Childs puts it, "I flew 37 missions out of Italy — to Germany, clear up to Poland."

Childs said: "I had some tough missions; my engineer was killed; my co-pilot, my radio operator and one of my waist gunners were seriously wounded."

Childs won two Distinguished Flying Crosses for his intrepid leadership on dangerous combat missions.

Childs said that he was often the "lead" in his group, meaning that he flew first and his bombardier determined when the rest of the group would drop their bombs. He flew two extra flights called "Lone Wolf" sorties. Such missions were flown by a single B-17, at night using radar to bomb strategic enemy targets.

Childs was on a ship headed to New York on V-E Day. He elected

smooth-running, almost clock-like operation. This increased the daily tonnage so much so as to meet all the needs of the citizens of Berlin. So efficient had the airlift become that, after 13 months, the Russians reopened the land corridors to Berlin.

Returning to the States, Childs shuttled aircraft around the country until he was sent to Japan to fly supply flights to U.N. Forces in the Korean War. This time, Childs was able to take his family and they stayed in Japan for three years.

In this war, Childs flew the C-119 Flying Boxcar.

"I dropped supplies and paratroopers. We flew over enemy territory and dropped them (paratroopers). I didn't like that because I knew where they were going."

That would be into combat.

Childs won the Bronze Star for his service in Korea.

After having been certified to fly 22 different military aircraft, Childs retired in 1961 at



Charles and Grace Childs in a church portrait.

whose life is dedicated to serving our country and inspiring young men to dream big and excel.

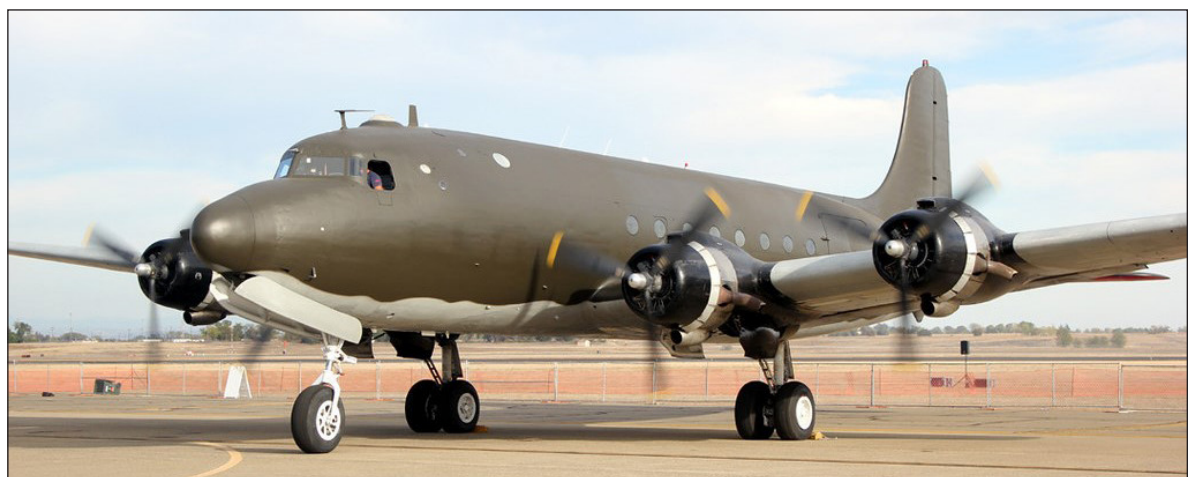
*Editor's note: Two months after the author interviewed him, Charles passed away on Oct. 27, 2019, at the age of 99. Grace passed away on May 8, 2021 at the age of 100. Kind, quiescent and stoic, Charles, and Grace, remain an inspiration to and a symbol of what is great in this country.*



C-119 Flying Boxcar.



Major Charles Childs in Japan.



C-54 Skymaster.





National Commander Paul Dillard speaks at St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577 on April 11.

# Nat'l cmdr. says Congress needs to pass Honoring Our PACT Act

Continued from Page 1

Building, also at Fort Snelling. Media turned out to hear Dillard during stops at Dodge Center, Owatonna, Austin, Blue Earth, Fairmont, Brewster and Pipestone.

Dillard described how The American Legion is trying to get congressional recognition for a National Buddy Check Week.

He said a judge should decide whether veterans who have received mental health counseling have a right to own a gun, not an unelected bureaucrat.

And Dillard called on the Senate to pass the Honoring Our PACT Act, which expands VA health care to veterans who were exposed to toxic substances by allowing the presumption of a service connection. This is the burn pit legislation the Legion spearheads.

"We know they got cancer and respiratory problems. They need health care," Dillard said. "The federal government wrote the check over 20 years ago. It's time to cash that check."

In 1996, the VA, after Legion-led efforts, waived the means test for World War I and Spanish-American War veterans. Dillard wants the VA to do the same now for the remaining WWII veterans, so they can get VA health care without having to provide tax returns.

"There are less than 322,000 around. It's time for to pass that. [Past National Commander] Dan Ludwig every year asks about it," Dillard said. "We don't tell them what to do. We try to give them enough information so they can make the

right decision."

The Legion wants the VA to have more female-veteran-oriented facilities, such as mammogram machines and maternity care. About 11 percent of military veterans are women.

The American Legion paid \$1.25 million to Coast Guard members rank E-5 and down, and to their families, during the government shutdown in 2019. They hadn't been paid because the Coast Guard is under Homeland Security and not Department of Defense.

The Legion, Dillard said, would like Congress to pass the Pay Our Coast Guard Act to rectify the situation.

He said today's young veterans are do-ers, and they like to be active. He called on posts to offer them involvement with baseball, or else to hold activities such as cornhole leagues, 5-kilometer runs, or wherever their interests lie, like with helping their communities after storm damage.

"A post will be as successful as a community allows it to be. A community will be as successful as a post will be," Dillard said.

He said Minnesota is about 6,600 members shy of the goal. He pointed how about 5,400 members did not renew in the past year.

Department of Minnesota Membership Director Paul Hassing said young people have a reputation of not being joiners, but he said they are. They are do-ers.

"The younger veterans are the future of The American Legion, whether they join or

not," Hassing said.

He called on officers at Legion posts to shift every year or two.

"If you are a commander for five, 10 or 15 years, don't you think it's about time to raise another one up to fill your shoes? It's your job to find your replacement."

Dillard's National Commander's Project is a fundraiser for the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, some of which was used for paying the Coast Guard. The foundation provides support to military and veteran parents in unexpected financial crises. There is an effort to replenish and grow it over the next decade.

Dillard is hoping to raise \$2 million during his one-year term. Posts in Minnesota donated \$27,000 to the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation and the National Emergency Fund during the tour.

Any Legion posts wishing to donate can mail a check made out to "American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation" to:

The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation  
P.O. Box 361210

Indianapolis, IN 46236-1210

The foundation is a 501(c)3, with zero spent on administration or employees. The EIS is 35-6039680. Under Minnesota law, charitable gambling funds may be used.

Since the foundation began in 1925, it has provided \$76 million in aid to military members, veterans and their families.

"That's just the way we are," Dillard said.



National Commander Paul Dillard and St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577 Commander Michael Manske walk beneath sabers held by Johnson High School Jr. ROTC.



Blue Earth Post 89 was proud of the cakes it had ordered from a talented baker at the Fairmont Hy-Vee grocery store.



National Commander Paul Dillard imagines smoking a calumet and wood peacepipe given to him by Pipestone Post 6 Commander Bradley Carson.



National Commander Paul Dillard checks out the Martin County Veterans Memorial, which includes a Cobra attack helicopter that served in combat in Vietnam.



Ryland Hassing, 5, of Hopkins Squadron 320, has his photo taken with National Commander Paul Dillard during the stop at Owatonna Post 77.



On April 14, Brewster Post 464 Sergeant-at-Arms Ryan Hill snaps a salute to an empty chair before placing the MIA/POW drape on it.





Dave Dahl accepts a 100 percent membership certificate on behalf of his post, St. Paul Post 8.



Members of Minneapolis Patrick Novack Post 5222 accept a 100 percent membership certificate.



Members of Lake City Post 110 accept a 100 percent membership certificate.



Don Skow accepts a 100 percent membership certificate on behalf of his post, Forest Lake Post 225.



Kelly Balko accepts a 100 percent membership certificate on behalf of her post, St. Charles Post 190.



Glenn Mueller accepts a 100 percent membership certificate on behalf of his post, Lewiston Post 90.



Members of Adams Post 146 accept a 100 percent membership certificate.



Garylee Davenport accepts a 100 percent membership certificate on behalf of his post, Spicer Post 545.



Members of Fairmont Post 36 accept a 100 percent membership certificate. Posts unable to pick up a certificate received them in the mail.



St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577 Commander Michael Manske hands National Commander Paul Dillard a Legion license plate and \$500 for the National Commander's Project.



Red Wing Post 54 Commander Darwin Christofferson gives National Commander Paul Dillard a \$1,000 check for the National Commander's Project.



Bayport Post 491's Pat Logan hands National Commander Paul Dillard a big check for \$10,000 for the National Commander's Project.



Department Membership Director Paul Hassing, right, and Department Communications Director Tim Engstrom, left, hand National Commander Paul Dillard a \$2,000 check to the National Commander's Project. The gift was from Bloomington Post 550, of which Hassing and Engstrom are both members.



Brewster Auxiliary Unit 464 President Naomi Hill hands National Commander Paul Dillard \$1,000 for the National Commander's Project. With her is her husband, Ryan Hill, whose post, Post 464, donated \$237. (Some snickerdoodles may have been donated to the commander's aide, too.)



Fairmont Post 36 Commander Steve Fosness holds a big check with National Commander Paul Dillard, signed for \$11,000. His project is to raise \$2 million for the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation. About \$27,000 was donated to his project or to the National Emergency Fund during the tour of Minnesota.





Members of the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota stand with airmen of the 934th Airlift Wing in front of a C-130 in a hangar at an area of Fort Snelling with greater security called the Minneapolis-St. Paul Joint Air Reserve Station. The military personnel were appreciative of the Legion's efforts to garner benefits for them.

# Side scenes from the tour

Not every stop was at an American Legion post



A technician in a Twins baseball cap steps away after attaching a microphone to National Commander Paul Dillard right before he was to be interviewed on air by Fox 9 Morning News Anchor Tom Butler on Monday, April 11, in Eden Prairie.



Rolando Sotolongo, supervisor of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and American Legion Claims Office, gives a tour to National Commander Paul Dillard as Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke looks on.



American Legion National Commander Paul Dillard visits the Minnesota American Legion Claims Office in the Bishop Whipple Federal Building at Fort Snelling. From left are MDVA Veterans Advocate Judy Ojard, Department of Minnesota Benefits Coordinator Sarah Sturner, Dillard, American Legion National Veterans Affairs and American Legion Rehabilitation Commission Team Leader Julie Larsen, and Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller.



At the Luverne Veterans Home, Korean-era Army veteran Bob Debates shakes National Commander Paul Dillard's hand as he tours the place. The home has a nice view of a pond where the veterans sometimes fish. A wall along a hallway showed about 20 plaques with American Legion emblems on them describing the many times the 2nd and 7th District Legion and Auxiliary donated equipment to the Luverne Veterans Home.



National Commander Paul Dillard receives a tour of the Luverne Veterans Home from Director of Nursing Missy Verbrugge, and, sporting a "Korea Veteran" cap, Army veteran Ben Smidstra walks over to greet him. Find photo galleries from the tour at [mnlegion.org](http://mnlegion.org) and click on "Media."



# Listening Post



Fairmont Post 36 Commander Steve Fosness and National Commander Paul Dillard present a 50-year membership certificate to Robert Altman, a member of the Post 36 Executive Board.



Foley Post 298 Commander Gary Gruba hands a \$1,000 check to the Foley Police Department for an annual bicycle rodeo, which is a safety program for children.



From left are 4th District Commander Dave Dahl of St. Paul Post 8, St. Paul Midway YMCA Director David Dominick, Post 8 Commander Jim Bury and Post 8 Sergeant-at-Arms Steve Kufus, the liaison between the Y and the post. The post donated \$500 to the Midway YMCA.



Rochester Post 92 Commander Jeff Van Galder, left, presents a \$500 donation to Craig Ugland, right, for the Southeast Minnesota Hockey Military Scholarship.

## The incredible story of the marker at Fort Snelling for Dennis Hoff

Dennis Wayne Hoff and I met when we both entered high school in 1963. He as a freshman and me as a sophomore.

We became friends while being German language lab partners for multiple years. I knew Dennis to be a kind and reserved gentleman.

When I later learned that he had become a medical corpsman in the Army, it seemed to be very fitting with his personality. He had also earned his silver wings as a member of the 101st Airborne Division.

I saw his obituary in the Minneapolis paper in the spring of 1968 and learned he had been killed in Vietnam. He was only 18 years old.

As years went by, my father-in-law was interred at the Fort Snelling National Cemetery, having served in the Army in the European Theater of Operations during World War II and then 20 years in Navy Air.

When we started to visit his site on Memorial Days, we then looked up the location of my grandparents. My grandfather was a World War I veteran. We would also seek out Dennis Hoff. We then visited and left flowers at each of those markers each year. We later added others, such as our next-door neighbor of 40 years, who had flown in B-29s in the Pacific during World War II.

About eight years ago, there was a feature article in the Minneapolis paper about the Faces Never Forgotten Project, which was an effort to obtain pictures and information about Vietnam War casualties to be included in a virtual wall, as an adjunct to The Wall in Washington. The name Dennis Hoff was right there on the front page.

I checked with another former classmate, who still volunteers at the high school, and verified the 1967 yearbook could be viewed in the school library, and it had Dennis's high school senior picture. I telephoned Herb Reckinger, who was featured as a contact and spearhead of the Never Forgotten Project, and told him I knew Dennis Hoff, and how he could get a copy of his picture. That picture is now included in the Virtual Wall, and based on a recent conversation with Mr. Reckinger, I believe the project was successful in getting pictures of all who had been from Minnesota. Much

### Guest Column

Milt Bellin



appreciation is due to Mr. Reckinger and the Never Forgotten Project team.

With Dennis then being searchable online, I found other sites which had information on him and on decorations he had received while a PFC in Vietnam, including two Silver Stars, the second one being awarded as a Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, and for the actions resulting in

about Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, who himself had quite a military history. A book he wrote was titled "Skyward." It is a great book for anyone interested in the early history of naval aviation.

Well, Byrd was awarded the Medal of Honor for his flight over the North Pole, and his marker, which looks just like the ones at Fort Snelling, had "Medal of Honor" boldly across the front. That piqued my interest again in the marker of Dennis Hoff.

After trying many new avenues with limited progress, I found the answer in the small print. It turned out the creators of the rules had the wisdom to leave an opening for a case like that of Dennis. It allowed that an officer of a congressionally chartered veterans service organization could make a request! I knew such a person!

Tom Schottenbauer is the service officer at the St. Louis Park American Legion, Post 282, and I have known him for many years. I asked Tom if he would consider submitting a form to alter the marker stone and properly honor Dennis. He agreed that it should be done.

Very soon I learned that the marker stone for Dennis would be altered to include the Silver Star designation. Jeremy Wolfsteller, service officer for the American Legion Department of Minnesota, had completed an order that the stone for Dennis Wayne Hoff be redone.

I understand that Sammi Korinek at the Fort Snelling National Cemetery is making arrangements for the redone stone, and has agreed to add the Silver Star citations to the Veteran's Legacy Memorial entry for Dennis.

Many thanks to Tom, Jeremy, and Sammi for a very meaningful endeavor.

It is a fitting honor for Dennis Wayne Hoff, a true hero.

Minneapolis resident Milt Bellin is not a veteran but was friends with Hoff in school.



Dennis Hoff, in the Army and in high school

him being KIA. The citations for those awards can be found at:

- [valor.militarytimes.com](http://valor.militarytimes.com). They tell quite a story. He was a true hero.

- Remembrances can also be found at [VVMF.org](http://VVMF.org), the Wall of Faces.

- Other decorations can be found at [honorstates.org](http://honorstates.org).

The marker stone for Dennis only included PH for Purple Heart, so I made contacts to see if Silver Star could be added. I kept hearing that only a family member could make a request, and, after searching, I was not aware of any surviving family. I was later reading two books



The Fargo-Moorhead American Legion Riders from Moorhead Post 21 raised \$10,551 in only a few hours on April 3. The proceeds went to Lake Park Post 181, which lost its building in a fire on March 13. The Lake Park post plans to rebuild after receiving insurance money but will need aid.





On March 21, Albert Lea Post 56 held a Post Everlasting ceremony in remembrance of their 31 fallen veterans. The Honor Guard, officers and family and friends attended the ceremony in tribute of the veterans and their families.



Beroun Post 347 awarded a 75-year certificate to Roy Reiser, a past post commander. From left are Post 347 member Al Davis, Reiser and Post 347 Commander Melvin Leiding.



Bill Barbknecht hands a \$500 check from his post, Underwood Post 489, to staff from the Fergus Falls Veterans Home in support of the Department Commander's Project.



Top: Albert Lea Post 56 Commander Ole Olson presents 50-year certificates to Gary Neist and Tom Henderson. Terry Vandersnick, Charles Peterson and Greg Morfitt were unable to attend. Bottom: Arlyn Anderson received the 2022 Post 56 Legionnaire of the Year award.



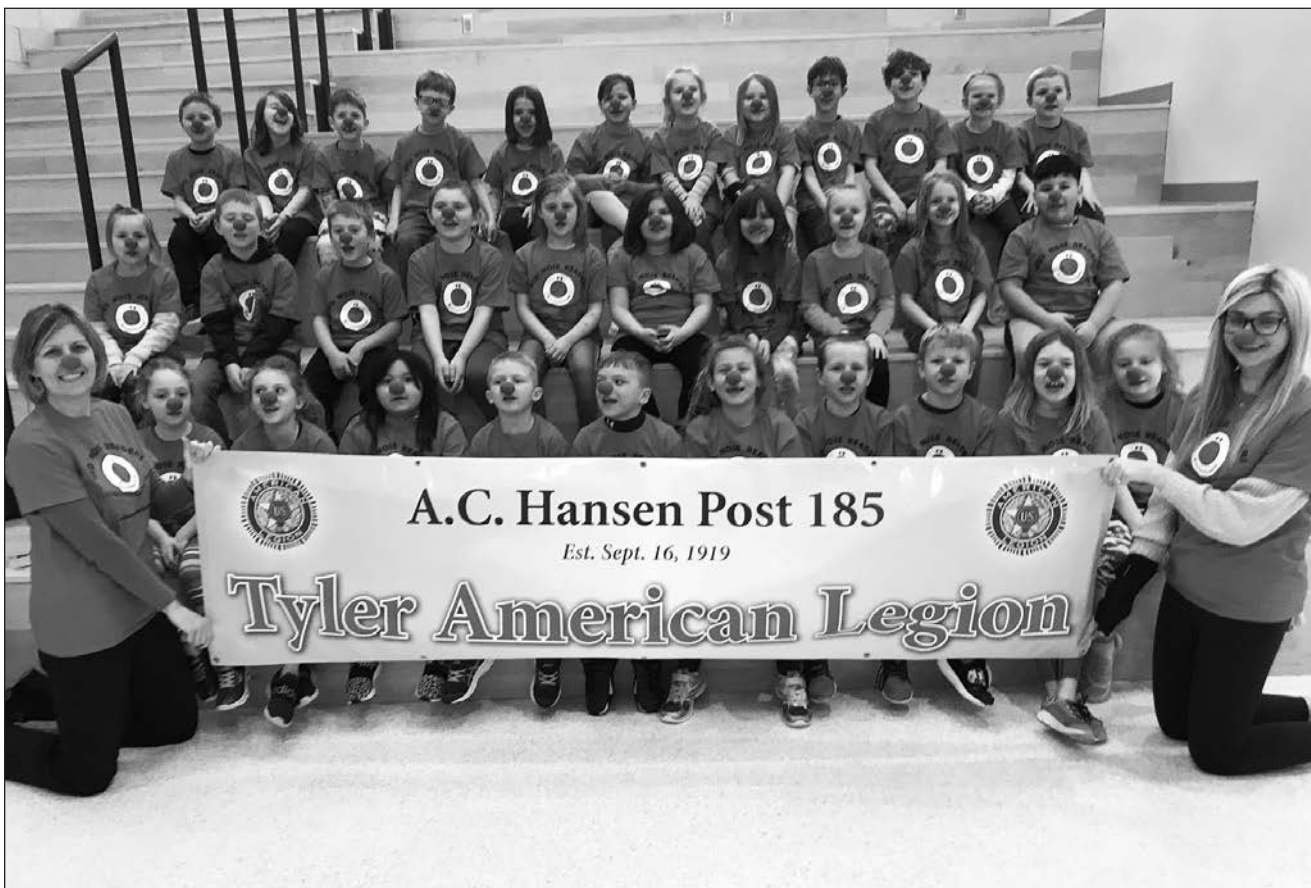
Department of Minnesota leaders attend the 103rd birthday of The American Legion and Anoka Post 102. From left are Ashley Stai, Ted Berg, Tom Fernlund, Patti Coleman, Tim Weaver, Anoka Unit 102 President Cari Sturgill and Anoka Post 102 Commander Jared Sturgill.



William Marth of Herman, who is a 95-year-old World War II veteran, received a 75-year certificate from Herman Post 378 Commander Larry Vipond. From left are Adjutant Jeff Olsen, Marth, Vipond and Finance Officer Neil Blume.



Echo Post 204 Adjutant John Jones accepts the post's 100 percent flag banner from District 7 Commander Chip Manson, recognizing its second consecutive year of the post joining the district's 100 percent membership club.



Tyler Legion Post 185 sponsored the Red Nose Reader Program for the first-grade students at the Russell-Tyler-Ruthton School on March 9, 22 and 30. The RNRP is a nationwide program that promotes literacy and anti-bullying by inviting a certified member to read a book to students and then transform into a friendly clown right in front of their eyes. Hopefully this experience will prevent children from forming a fear of clowns, show them that it's OK to be different and creative, and encourage a love of reading. Post 185 Commander Duane Blake was both the reader and the clown.



Clarissa Post 213 Commander Carol "Butch" Booker, right, honors Carol Carrick, center, with a 70-year continuous membership certificate and James Line, left, with a 50-year continuous membership certificate.



Franklin Post 308 Commander Dick Scharfencamp and Membership Director Joel Harmoning attach their District 7 100 percent flag banner to their post flag. District Commander Chip Manson, left, congratulated the post for earning their third consecutive year of 100 percent membership.

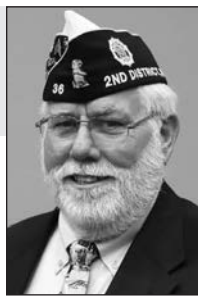


# District commanders



## 2nd District

Steve Fosness



Please remember all veterans that are now serving with the Most Holy Supreme Commander this Memorial Day.

In the past, I commented on listening to the veteran, not just hearing their story. I recently learned about LASSIE. I think it is very beneficial in Buddy Checks and conversing with any veteran.

Remember we're not "selling" memberships; we're offering our services to the veteran. As the national commander indicated, in his southern Minnesota tour, we are here to assist "all" veterans, not just members or those who choose to be members.

LASSIE consists of:

Listen (learning by listening): Every person primarily connects and communicates with their head, as in the intellectual thinker; with their heart, as in the sympathetic individual; or with their hands, as in the doer.

Ask (asking in order to listen): Ask meaningful questions that require more than a yes or no answer and engage the veteran into a conversation to

make them more comfortable.

Seek (finding a point of connection): Discovering what is happening in the veteran's life, which in turn will spur more discussion.

Share (speaking about the American Legion Four Pillars): From your previous questions, the veteran has indicated which pillar that most interests them.

Invite (appeals to the veteran): The veteran is going to be most open to the invitation that appeals to the head, heart, or hands; which will have the veteran become involved using his assets.

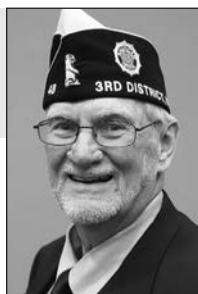
Encourage (follow up and follow through): In what concrete ways can you extend encouragement to the veteran considering timing, tact and assets.

Remember every veteran has served our country and deserves our assistance; whether honorable, general, or dishonorable discharges. Start the conversation!



## 3rd District

Bob Hart



"Oh, the days dwindle down to the precious few

September, November

And these few precious days I'll spend with you"

Lyrics from the song "September Song" was released in 1950 (the year I was born) by Earl Wind and later were hit songs for Frank Sinatra, Willie Nelson, Sara Vaughan, Jimmy Durante and Ella Fitzgerald among others. The song in general speaks to the loves of one's youth. But the songs best remembered words are those from above.

As we approach these "few precious days" of our mature life, we assign high value to our partners in these golden years, as well as those personal victories and civic contributions. So here is the rub — I take umbrage with the stereotype

description of the Legion Hall as a bunch of old soldiers boozing it up and talking about "the wars."

I have spent my share of hours at Legion posts, but the few war stories I have heard were about heroics of others — not themselves. Most of the stories I heard were about past commanders and influencers within the Legion at the post level but also expressed pride in their post members that went on to district-level positions.

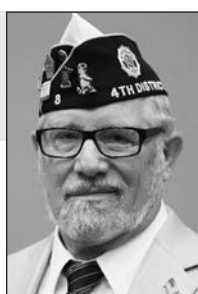
So consider those "precious days" and ask yourself: How will I spend them?

More on this at our 3rd District Convention May 20-22 in Forest Lake.



## 4th District

David Dahl



A large part of this column is taken from an American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division publication titled "From Crisis to Confidence," dated May 2015.

In 2014 a national crisis emerged in the way the VA was serving our veterans. The VA Inspector General's Office substantiated claims that as many as 40 veterans in Arizona died waiting for medical appointments while their names languished on a secret list.

It was not just a Phoenix problem. The American Legion went to work with the VA to turn around the crisis in the health-care and benefits systems.

American Legion and VA efforts have provided help

from both American Legion service officers and from VA

personnel to ensure the VA mission of timely, adequate care and support for those who served our nation in uniform.

Millions of dollars in overdue, retroactive VA benefits have been paid to veterans. Doctor appointments have been moved up. Homeless veterans have found resources to help them. Moreover, The American Legion is helping VA obtain a firsthand understanding of the real issues their patients and benefits applicants are facing.

The American Legion continues to be here to assist all veterans obtain services from the VA. Veterans should contact their post or district service officer. Also available to help are VA&R Benefits Coordinator Sarah Schlicht (who can be

reached at 612-970-5402 or ssturner@mnlegion.org) and Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller (who can be reached at 612-467-3849 or jwolfsteller@mnlegion.org).

Still serving, serving veterans and serving our communities!



## 5th District

Wade Larson



We have several events to take part in. One is the heroeshonorfestival.com. It is a welcome-home free event for Vietnam veterans May 27-28 at Daytona International Speedway with concert of Toby Keith at 7:30 p.m. May 28. Register online at heroeshonorfestival.com. Tickets available for purchase for other guests.

Next is the Holiday Inn, which is off of Interstate 35W at 1201 W. 94th St. in Bloomington. Call 952-884-8211. The 5th District Convention is there on June 3. Legion registration at 8:30 a.m. Banquet registration is due by May 20.

And convention registration or higher for same-day registration. Email Grumpy 371@comcast.net to receive address to mail check. Champagne chicken \$35, honey glazed ham \$30, crusted walleye \$35. You will receive a registration form for those attending convention or banquet.

The Minnesota state convention is July 14-16 in Willmar.

See registration information on Page 3.

We would love to see new and old faces at any or all the events. "No veteran left behind."

Give them a call and check how they are doing.

Three posts received their award for 100 percent membership by National Commander Paul Dillard last week at the St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577 stop. They were Minneapolis Post Office Post 540, Minneapolis Bearcat Post 504 and Minneapolis Patrick Novak Post 5222. Minneapolis Bainbridge 355 also achieved 100 percent membership and have a certificate waiting for them at the district convention.

I appreciate any help to raise the post memberships above 90-95 percent. Please let me know if you need info for membership to renew. Reach me at wadealarson@yahoo.com.



## 7th District

David "Chip" Manson



Hello District 7!

Our district includes 75 Legion posts; some with post homes but most meeting at hometown facilities like fire halls, community centers, etc.. (Only 14 have a bar/restaurant). Each post has developed its own traditions and activities. Our hope, however, is these traditions or activities support The American Legion's Four Pillars.

These pillar activities often include hosting local blood drives, helping present flags or perform patriotic presentations in their local schools, supporting other youth programs, helping veterans (especially deployed veterans and our aging veterans), honor guards and

volunteering for local community programs.

Sadly, some posts are approaching what some call "Last Man Standing" status. They no longer hold meetings, seek out new members, engage with other local veterans, participate in local events, etc. and membership dwindles as they lose them to Post Everlasting. It's never too late!

Revitalization, and Buddy Check programs are available to help — but they only work if the post wants to turn things around. Contact your district representatives if you'd like to talk about these programs.



## 8th District

Larry Pocrnich



I hope you all had a happy Easter with family and friends. The 21-22 membership year is coming close to the end, let's get out and find the few that are procrastinating.

The Great Eighth is in third place, so if we find a few more we may make it to the top 100 percent of goal. Thanks for your help.

This month is new or holdover officer voting month. Please look into being an officer for a year. It is not that hard. I have been an officer for 19 years

in one way or another.

In the post, I have been all positions and committees. Same for the district.

I have been a Boys State counselor for 14 years. At the department level, I have been a vice commander and was on the Americanism Committee for 14 years. If I can handle this on a part-time basis, so can some others. If retired, get involved

with the Legion. I do not regret starting one bit. Meeting fellow veterans and talking is great.

Chapter 1 of the American Legion Riders in Deer River is having its 20th anniversary ride on June 18, registration and kickstands up at noon. The ride will return at approximately 3 pm for speaker and lunch. See you there.

United Way of Northeast Minnesota's wellness event in May for this area will be family bowling. Check on their website for time and place to sign up.



## 9th District

Terry Buraas



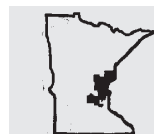
Americanism is honoring our American flag by saluting, uncovering when appropriate and much more. Telling a service person "thank you for serving" be it a military, local police or a medical EMT. All this is honoring Americanism.

By sending our youth to Boys State or Girls State teaches them that service to a political system is how our government works, by enacting laws and obeying laws whether we agree or not. Thoughtfulness to an older veteran is also needed in this era of COVID. Many of the

older veterans are placed in a nursing home and ignored.

I have a sister in a facility where no one visits, and when I am able, she is so happy to have someone to talk with. Nursing homes are lifting restrictions; so go visit those that are left alone by so many families. Making the effort to visit will go a long way to lifting their spirits.

*For God and Country.*



## 10th District

William Gordon



Greetings Mighty 10th District. I want to address with you several items this month. They are:

### 1. Suicides.

The 2021 National Veterans Suicide Report states that 45,861 happen this past year and of those 6,261 were veterans. Yet more women attempt suicide than men. In most western countries there is a "gender paradox" for suicide: Women have more suicidal ideation than men and attempt suicide three to four times as often as men, but men are three-and-a-half times more likely to kill themselves.

We all know veterans and their family members who were very active in our posts. Then they are taken ill and after our service officer or chaplain has checked in on them once or twice and reported back it's on to business as usual. There are many reasons a person commits suicide. One is isolation. This one we can all help to stop. All it takes is making a telephone call or stopping by for a few minutes during your month to visit with someone. For example, have you ever not seen your parents or grandparents not feel so happy when you come to visit or bring the grandchildren?

Our brothers and sisters who have served with us need that visit, too. Try this, the next time you are out doing errands, add 30 minutes more to your schedule by stopping by and visiting a fellow veteran or veteran family member. I will guarantee you that visit will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life.

2. Membership. Only you can increase our

membership. That's right you. You can talk to other veterans, inform them of our organization, welcome new veterans to your community and let your communities know what your post is doing.

This can be done in many ways, for example through your personal communications with other veterans, newsletters, Facebook posts, Next Door application posts, your personal and other organizational websites, at a city council, county board and any other meetings you attend.

Remind everyone that The American Legion is still serving the needs of veterans or our fellow veterans in our communities. You as a member of the Legion, Auxiliary, SAL, Riders, Juniors and the 40&8 are the most important part of our organization!

Teamwork is dream work.

### 3. Consolidated Post Report.

Please reach out to your local adjutant, secretary, recorder. Email them. Text message them. Write them a letter. Call them. Let them know what you are doing so they can complete the Post CPR report or End of Year report or whatever it's called.

That information and our numbers are so important to our organization to maintaining the benefits our fellow veterans and veterans' family members have earned.





# The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 22 Vol. 10

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

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

651-224-7634

May 2022

## May is a time for poppies and for electing officers

### President's Column

Patti Coleman



May is Poppy Month, the time of the year the American Legion Family traditionally distributes poppies in our communities to remember those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country.

Please wear your poppy with pride. Remember to distribute poppies at your Memorial Day services to honor our fallen heroes. Please review the rules on how poppy funds can be used before making any monetary distributions. It is imperative that they are used appropriately.

Many units are electing their new officers to serve for 2022-2023 this month. Have you volunteered to hold a position in your unit? Our units are re-awakening and need members to take active roles in leadership, administration and mission delivery. If your skill set fits, jump in, and make a difference.

Remember to take the time to install your new officers. It isn't required that they be installed into their offices, though it will make them feel special. All our ALA volunteers should be made to feel special anytime we get the opportunity. Kindness costs nothing.

Our 10 district presidents have been working hard for us all year. Reward their service by planning now to attend your district convention. This is where the decisions are made for your district, where you can take an active role in making changes and you elect your new leadership. This is also where units can share their achievements, exchange ideas and receive recognition for excellent mission delivery for our veterans, active military, their families, children and youth and in your communities.

Legion Family members are needed to participate in the Work & Play Weekend at Legionville May 20-22. At Work & Play, members volunteer to get the spring cleaning done, both indoors and outdoors, to get Legionville ready for campers this summer. If you are available, please just show up at Legionville to lend a hand. You can stay in the dorms or bring your own camper. Many hands make light work.

It's hard to believe that our membership year is winding down and our job is not done yet! Please make that extra effort to contact those who have not renewed their membership for 2022. Many may have just overlooked it. Others may have feedback to share that our organization can benefit from.

They may just be waiting for that personal contact, a phone call or knock at the door, so they know that they matter to us and to our veterans. Membership is the job of every member, not just those doing the admin work to get it processed. Every member is needed and appreciated if we are to be successful in our mission.

Thank you to the many units who have been pushing forward and making gains each week and those of you at 100 percent. Well done.

Congratulations to our Honorary Junior President Ashley Stai on a very well-led Department Junior Conference on April 9. I was beaming with pride as the day progressed and was honored to conduct your graduation ceremony into senior membership. Elected to serve as Honorary Junior President for 2022-2023 was Sydney Borntrager from the 2nd District. The Juniors will have a fantastic year under her leadership. Many thanks are extended to the 7th District American Legion Auxiliary and Willmar Unit 167 for hosting a great conference for our younger members.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to my unit, Lino Lakes Unit 566, for hosting a wonderful testimonial dinner in my honor, and thank the members who attended. The evening will be one of those memories I will cherish for the rest of my days. Few are honored in such a way, and I am humbled. Thank you.

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

## Junior leaders



Newly elected Junior officers for 2022-23 are, from left, Historian Emily Seuss, Chaplain Samantha Stai, Sergeant-at-Arms Bree England, 1st Vice President Taylor McElroy, Honorary Junior President Samantha Borntrager, 2nd Vice President Teriann Richards, Secretary Hailey Ketter and Treasurer Josie Deschene.

### Conference in Willmar welcomes 45 Juniors

WILLMAR — The 58th annual Department Junior Conference was held on Saturday, April 9, hosted by the 7th District at Willmar American Legion Post 167.

Honorary Department Junior Ashley Stai did an outstanding job of running the conference. There were 33 units represented with 45 Junior members and 54 Senior

members and American Legion Family guests for a total of 95 attendees.

The Juniors had a fun Friday evening with great food and lots of fun activities including dancing thanks to the 7th District.

Junior members had the opportunity to participate in four poppy contests. It was so difficult to choose the winners because

there were three tables full of entries.

Junior members also had the opportunity to hear about her President Ashley's project from Jon Lovald at MACV and how the impact of our junior members touches important lives. A surprise grant in the amount of \$2,500 was presented to both President Ashley and Department President Patti Coleman for their respective projects by Tim Burley from Saluting Community Heroes.



Honorary Junior President Ashley Stai leads the conference while Secretary Eva Burket takes notes.



Hutchinson's Tim Burley, right, donates \$2,500 to Coleman and Stai for their projects. The funds come from Hutchinson's Saluting Community Heroes fundraiser.



Junior members gather to celebrate their 78th annual Department Junior Conference.

### Juniors elect officers at Minn. Department Junior Conference

New Junior officers for 2022-2023 were elected and installed by Department President Patti Coleman. The newly elected Honorary Department Junior Officers are:

Honorary President:	Sydney Borntrager	Trimont Unit 373	District 2
Honorary 1st Vice President:	Taylor McElroy	LeRoy Unit 373	District 1
Honorary 2nd Vice President:	Teriann Richards	Argyle Unit 359	District 9
Honorary Secretary:	Hailey Ketter	Le Roy Unit 373	District 1
Honorary Treasurer:	Josie Deschene	Argyle Unit 353	District 9
Honorary Chaplain:	Samantha Stai	New London Unit 537	District 7
Honorary Historian:	Emily Seuss	Monticello Unit 260	District 10
Honorary Sergeant at Arms:	Bree England	Minneapolis Unit 1	District 5

Minnesota's official delegate to the Northwestern Division National Junior meeting is Sydney Borntrager of Unit 373 in District 1.



### 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.



# There is a drive to get former members to rejoin

By Linda Kelly  
Membership Chairman

A membership challenge was announced at the Appreciation Rally in Forest Lake. 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 that 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 important that you make calls

## Membership as of April 12

DISTRICT	# of Units	Goal	Period Gain	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal
One	48	3,802	34	3,378	88.85%
Two	72	3,745	14	3,461	92.42%
Three	46	3,671	39	3,478	94.74%
Four	7	563	7	482	85.61%
Five	7	509	3	435	85.46%
Six	62	4,855	30	4,574	94.21%
Seven	60	2,970	41	2,741	92.29%
Eight	25	1,214	14	1,078	88.80%
Nine	49	3,239	41	2,959	91.36%
Ten	44	3,765	55	3,362	89.30%
1982 Dept	1	203	0	185	91.13%
District Totals:	421	28,536	278	26,133	91.58%

to those from prior years to see if you can get them to rejoin.

The National Office will be tracking the number of re-joined 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.

# May is Poppy Month; there are lots of resources

By Lynn Carr  
Poppy Chairman

It’s time to prepare for National Poppy Day on May 27. Try to plan an event for this special day. Advertise so people know about it. Don’t forget to promote it on your social media, reach out to your local media outlets and include it in your post home newsletter and more!

Other resources are available to help you promote your American Legion Family National Poppy Day events and activities such as banners and posters. If you have questions on how poppy funds can be used, we encourage you to watch a recording of the ALAAcademy webinar Using Poppy Funds to Serve Our Mission.

The Department Office has assured me poppy sales to units and posts are strong this year! Keep

up the good work. A great way to honor our veterans is to distribute our red poppies and tell *why* you are a member of the American Legion Auxiliary. Units are allowed to cross departments if a location is desirable to units for poppy distribution.

Did you know that ALA Poppy has a Facebook page? <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAPoppy>. This is a closed group so you have to request permission to join. You then have to answer two questions to be approved: 1. Are you a member of the ALA? and 2. What is your unit and department?

Did you know that National has a blog? The blog features excellent info and photos that can be easily shared. No log-in required!

<https://member.legion-aux.org/Blog>. Some poppy resources

that might be helpful are located on the National website Poppy Committee Section

- Poppy Guide: [https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Guides/ALA\\_Poppy\\_Guide.pdf](https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Guides/ALA_Poppy_Guide.pdf).

- Poppy Day resources: <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/poppy/poppy-days>

- Poppy Day Coloring Book: [https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Programs/ALA\\_Poppy\\_Coloring\\_Book-11-2019-lp.pdf](https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Programs/ALA_Poppy_Coloring_Book-11-2019-lp.pdf)

- Poppy Coloring Book [https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Programs/ALA\\_Poppy\\_Coloring\\_Book-11-2019-lp.pdf](https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Programs/ALA_Poppy_Coloring_Book-11-2019-lp.pdf)

There will be two poppy contests at the Department Convention in July.

Contest 1: Poppy Wreath Contest

Rules: Must use Department President Patti Coleman’s theme “Honoring Tradition – Evolving to Endure” and the poppy.

Contest 2: Basket or Can Decorated for Units to Use on Poppy Day

Rules: Must use Department President Patti Coleman’s theme “Honoring Tradition – Evolving to Endure” and the poppy.

Both contests are open to all Auxiliary members. All entries must include a card in an envelope containing your name, unit number, district number and location.

Small or large poppies may be used with the white tags removed. Voting for People’s Choice will be by donation, with the funds going to the Department President’s Project. Those who choose to donate their entries may do so and it will be donated to a veteran.

## Scholarships awarded

### National scholarship entries

Department Education Chairman Brandi Christensen has selected the following recipients to be forwarded on to the Northwestern Division for national scholarship competition. National winners will be announced at a later date.

- Spirit of Youth Scholarship: Isabelle Selthun, Triton Unit 422
- Children of Warriors National Scholarship: Kaitlyn Kirchner, Lake Crystal-Memorial H.S.
- Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship: Anistyn Walthers, Moorhead Unit 21
- Nontraditional Student Scholarship: April Jespersen, Warba Unit 432

### Department of Minnesota Scholarships: \$1,000

Department Education Chairman Brandi Christensen has selected the following recipients of \$1,000 department scholarships for 2021-2022:

- Ginevra Johnson, Roseau High School, Roseau Unit 24
- Claire Dahl, Pine River-Backus School, Pine River Unit 613
- Alex Lindgren, Kennedy School, Fergus Falls Unit 30
- Brandon Beurkle, Springfield High School, Springfield Unit 257
- Alexis Piekarski, Concordia College Rasmussen University, Lowry Unit 253
- Sydney Mertens, North Dakota State University, Redwood Falls Unit 38
- Kaylee Campbell, Tracy Area High School, Tracy Unit 173
- Hailey Amsden, Red Rock Central High School, Lamberton Unit 41

### Past President Parley Scholarships

Department Past President Parley Chairman Raleen Tolzmann is pleased to announce the following recipients of the \$1,000 Past Department President Healthcare Scholarships for 2021-2022:

- Sydney Mertens, Redwood Falls Unit 38
- Alexis Piekarski, Lowry Unit 253

## Time for an Gift Shop update

By Sue Nunnelee and Suzette Maluchnik  
Gift Shop Committee

Once again, the units of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota stepped up to provide good cheer and gifts for veterans who were confined to VA Health Care facilities or in Minnesota Veteran Homes throughout the state during the holiday season.

Working with coordinators and ALA representatives, we served approximately 1,400 veterans and 500 family members/caregivers in four VA locations (Minneapolis, St. Cloud, Sioux Falls and Fargo) and five Veteran Homes (Silver Bay, Luverne, Minneapolis, Hastings and Fergus Falls).

Although, most of our volunteers were not allowed in, we did work with their staff to make sure everyone was remembered and received an appropriate gift. Funds were also given to provide a “party” or treat to help celebrate.

A huge thank you to all the ALA reps, Department Office staff and VA&R chairman and Mary Kuperus for helping with the program.

Thank you also for the 245 Unit donations and memorials received to keep this program going. It is so appreciated by this veteran population.

## And the Poppy Contest winners are ...

### Painted Poppy Picture

Class I	First Place	Miley Mahoney	Clinton Unit 258	District 7
	Second Place	Hazel Mertens	Kimball Unit 261	District 6
Class II	First Place	Brooke Mertens	Kimball Unit 261	District 6
	Second Place	Bree England	Minneapolis Unit 1	District 5
Class III	First Place	Hannah Peterson	Warren Unit 27	District 9
	Second Place	Bailey Anderson	Stewartville Unit 164	District 1

### Poppy Distribution Container

Class I	First Place	Miley Mahoney	Clinton Unit 258	District 7
	Second Place	Hazel Mertens	Kimball Unit 261	District 6
Class II	First Place	Chloe Carter	Sanborn Unit 286	District 2
	Second Place	Serenity Johnson	Westport Unit 638	District 7
Class III	First Place	Rylee Wolbeck	Brandon Unit 278	District 7
	Second Place	Kimberly Johnson	Westport Unit 638	District 7

### Poppy Jewelry & Accessories

Class I	First Place	Miley Mahoney	Clinton Unit 258	District 7
	Second Place	Ashlyn Anderson	Stewartville Unit 258	District 1
Class II	First Place	Brooklyn Mahoney	Clinton Unit 258	District 7
	Second Place	Chloe Carter	Sanborn Unit 286	District 2
Class III	First Place	Rylee Wolbeck	Brandon Unit 278	District 7
	Second Place	Kimberly Johnson	Westport Unit 638	District 7

### Poppy Centerpieces

Class I	First Place	Miley Mahoney	Clinton Unit 258	District 7
	Second Place	Hazel Mertens	Kimball Unit 261	District 6
Class II	First Place	Brooklyn Mahoney	Clinton Unit 258	District 7
	Second Place	Addison Bienek	Warren Unit 27	District 9
Class III	First Place	Elizabeth Spoden	Kimball Unit 261	District 6
	Second Place	Rylee Wolbeck	Brandon Unit 278	District 7



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