



Vets act clears first hurdle

Senate committee on veterans hears testimony

ST. PAUL — The Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee on Jan. 21 approved the Veterans Restorative Justice Act and forwarded it to the Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee.

Sen. Roger Chamberlain is the author of Senate File 116. He is a Legion member with Lino Lakes Post 566. Also on Thursday, the committee added Sen. Steve Cwodzinski of Eden Prairie as an author. That means it has Senate support from both political parties.

“We are here to get this thing done finally,” Chamberlain said.

The Senate passed the bill three times in three special legislative sessions in 2020. Each time, the vote was 67-0. However, despite promises from House leaders to pass it, the bill faced opposition in the House, where some lawmakers proposed a heap of amendments worded in ways to scare proponents

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Roger Chamberlain



Steve Cwodzinski

Air Force strong

Gold Star wife and USAF veteran keeps memory of pilot Jeff Hill alive

By Tim Engstrom

ELK RIVER — One recipient of the Jeff Hill Legacy Scholarship is a first-assignment instructor pilot at Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi.

Another is flying C-17s at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state.

Another is learning to fly F-35s.

These are among the many recipients of the Jeff Hill Legacy Scholarship since the Jeff Hill Legacy Fund formed in 2011 and began handing out educational aid to Air Force ROTC cadets at the University of Alaska in Anchorage, University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities and University of Wisconsin in Madison.

“These cadets get to carry on his memories,” said American Legion Department of Minnesota Financial Liaison Rachael Hill, Jeff Hill’s widow.

Rachael Brown spent most of her upbringing in Minnesota. The Browns lived in Moorhead during her K-7 grades. Her father’s work took the family to Indianapolis, where she excelled at violin in the orchestra at a big school.

She thought she might pursue music in college.

During her junior year, the family moved to a small town southwest of Cleveland, Ohio, called LaGrange. There was no orchestra. Without further instruction, her music dreams ended. When she graduated in 1997, she was a National Honor Society member.

But she also was undecided.

“And I didn’t want to go to a college, and I came from a military family,” Rachael said.

Her father served in the Navy during the Vietnam era. She had a



Air Force veteran Rachael Hill, a member of Elk River Post 112, is the financial liaison for The American Legion Department of Minnesota. She has two sons. Her husband was an Air Force pilot in Alaska who died in a crash in 2010. His legacy continues through the Jeff Hill Legacy Fund, which provides scholarships to Air Force ROTC cadets.



U.S. Air Force 2nd Lt. (at the time) Jeff Hill sits on a T-6 Texan II trainer aircraft. Hill eventually would reach the rank of captain and fly cargo jets in Alaska.

grandfather in the Navy and another in the Army during World War II. She had a great uncle who was a 101st Airborne Division paratrooper and jumped into Normandy on D-Day in 1944. He was killed by a sniper two weeks later.

Rachael Brown and her father went to see an Air Force recruiter and she enlisted through the delayed entry program.

Why Air Force? She felt the blue uniforms matched her blue eyes.

“Things happen for a reason,” Hill said.

Basic, of course, was at Lackland AFB outside San Antonio. Tech training was at Sheppard AFB in Wichita Falls, Texas, and that’s where she met Jeff, this guy from York, Pennsylvania.

“I was working CQ, and he came in,” she said.

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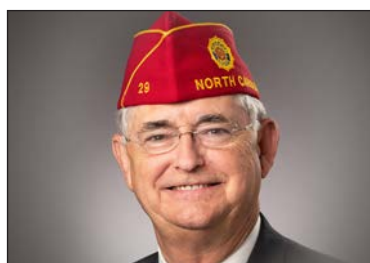
National Commander’s Tour treks northward this time

ST. PAUL — American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford returns to Minnesota in April.

In February 2020, Oxford, who hails from Post 29 in Lenoir, N.C., toured southern Minnesota. This time, the National Commander’s Tour will start in St. Paul and head northward.

He arrives Monday, April 5, at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. On Tuesday, April 6, he has lunch at noon at St. Paul Park Post 98, with dinner at North St. Paul Post 39.

Wednesday, April 7, the tour is northbound. Breakfast is at Osseo Post 172, lunch at Royalton Post 137 and



James W. “Bill” Oxford

dinner at Nisswa Post 627. On Thursday, April 8, the tour stops at Walker Post 134 for breakfast. On Friday, April 9, breakfast is at Park Rapids

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109th Airlift Squadron hits its federal centennial mark

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PAUL — The 109th Airlift Squadron, part of the 133rd Airlift Wing based at Minneapolis-St. Paul Joint Air Reserve Station at Fort Snelling, turned 100 on Jan. 17.

The 109th is the first federally recognized air unit in the Air National Guard.

Among the ways it marked the centennial was a presentation at the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II Round Table on Jan. 21 at the Minnesota History Center.

Col. Jamie D. Lindman, vice wing

commander of the 133rd, described the rich history of the Minnesota Air National Guard.

Lindman said he is a past commander of the squadron and, in the role, gained an appreciation of the 100 years. He said the 109th is the working arm of the 133rd, and most known for flying the C-130s around the metro.

In 1920, Army Lt. Col. William Garis, Lt. Ray Miller and journalist T. Glenn Harrison met at a restaurant in downtown St. Paul restaurant to discuss an idea: creating aviation units in the National Guard.

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Bill aims to help combat vets return to society

from voting over them. It worked. The bill never made it to the House floor for a vote.

Proponents of the bill hope the 2021 regular session will be the time the bill gets passed and the job gets done. They hope the opponents, whose leader is Rep. Marion O'Neill of Maple Lake, realize the good this does for trauma-impacted veterans, their spouses and their families.

The measure would make veterans treatment courts in Minnesota consistent across the board. There are eight veterans courts presently serving 25 counties. It also would provide defendants in counties without veterans treatment courts access to places with them, if a judge approves.

It does not set up the courts. It does not spend money. It does save \$1.3 million in the first two years and \$2.3 million the next two years, according to a state fiscal note.

Testimony

The Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee on Jan. 21 heard testimony from Tony Miller, a veteran of Army deployments in 2006, 2007 and 2008 with the 82nd Airborne Division.

In 2015, he appeared before a veterans court on a marijuana charge at the lowest felony level for substances.

He had a choice: prison for three years or agree to take veterans court.

He took veterans court, which forced him to get counseling with the VA.



Over Zoom video conferencing, Army veteran Tony Miller testifies on Jan. 21 before the Minnesota Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee.

"I got the counseling I desperately needed at that time in my life," Miller told the senators.

He cleaned up his life and got a bachelor's degree. Now he is seeking a master's degree at St. Thomas University.

He has testified before and hopes this year is the year.

"You guys have to really get together and get this thing passed," Miller said.

At the start of the second deployment to the Mideast, soldiers were calling federal senators and representatives, angry about going again.

The command sergeant major told his troops the calls do no good.

"These are the guys sending you over. They are not going to stop the deployment."

Since the politicians are the ones who send troops to war, they need to be the ones who help veterans when they integrate into the civilian world, Miller said. He quickly ran through a list of anecdotes of struggling veterans he knows.

"It is getting really bad out here," Miller said.

Assistant Washington County Attorney Tom Frenette, a Marine veteran who served two times in Iraq, spoke about his experience and about the veterans court in Washington County.

"It was difficult to find a job during the recession. I was applying for jobs well below what I was capable of doing," he said.

The combat infantry isn't given a lot of coping mechanisms after serving in war, Frenette said. He chose alcohol and sitting in front of a television.

"I think a lot of veterans share that. There's a feeling that you are lost," said.

They experience a fog when returning from combat, then another fog when getting out of the military and entering civilian life, he said. With no treatment, the fog lasts.

They perform a very important mission on behalf of the country, then they come back and wash dishes. They are lost, frustrated, confused, he said. A

common result is substance abuse, which brings them eventually before a judge.

In the Washington County veterans court, Frenette said he has seen a lot of success stories and not many failures.

"It takes someone who commits a crime and gets them the resources they need. It's not a free pass," he said, noting it happens through a stay of adjudication. "The veteran has to take responsibility upfront."

The bill works from Level 7-and-lower crimes, the presumed probation level, and it funnels the veterans to resources already in place at the VA. The crimes include domestic abuse, but it has the support of Violence-Free Minnesota because, without proper treatment, the abuse cycle often continues.

Prison doesn't solve the problem. Veterans courts let judges pinpoint the catalyst of the problem, Frenette said.

"We've got to stop that cycle," he said.

Marine veteran Todd Kemery, chairman of the Minnesota Commander's Task Force and president of the Minnesota Paralyzed Veterans of America, testified that the CTF has worked at educating lawmakers about the bill and fending off misinformation.

"We need to get this thing done," Kemery said.

The nine CTF members include The American Legion.

He noted how the defendant charged with the crime of toppling a statue of Christopher Columbus on the Minnesota Capitol grounds was given a restorative sentence. Kemery called for the same treatment for veterans who struggle with unseen war wounds.

Ben Johnson, legislative director for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, served in the Navy for six years and went on three deployments.

He said the bill provides a consistent application of justice for trauma-impacted veterans across Minnesota. He said many Greater Minnesota veterans do not have the same access to veterans courts that metro veterans have.

Johnson said he was at the Landmark Center on Jan. 19 two years ago, where many senators from both parties stood with Gov. Tim Walz and agreed this bill needed to be passed.

When people tell Johnson "thank you for your service," he appreciates it but knows "words are cheap."

"This is an opportunity to show action," he told the senators.

Tommy Johnson, legislative officer for the Jewish War Veterans, said the Hells Angels motorcycle gang was founded by disaffected World War II veterans. He said disaffected portions of society can be radicalized. Getting them to treatment avoids this.

"This is a public safety issue," he said.

The American Legion has been involved by providing talking points, a legislative flier and other useful documents.

Next steps

Advocates had expected the House would file the bill on Jan. 25, but that didn't happen.



Training Q&A

What's the deal with politics and the Legion?

By Paul Edwards
Training Committee member

Have you ever received a message, whether by email, letter, or text where someone is telling you about an issue and encouraging you to contact your state or national elected official?

How often does your mind say, "I can't do that. I am a Legionnaire, and I can't get involved in politics"?

Pro-veteran politics is OK

Whether or not this is the correct response depends on two things: the topic and how you present yourself.

If the topic is something that will benefit veterans, then by all means contact your legislator, and identify yourself as a member of The American Legion.

Remember that support for veterans and their families is one of our Four Pillars. If you identify yourself as a Legion member, then there is an implication that the Legion supports or opposes the issue.

A prime example of this is our state's Veterans Day on the Hill in the spring, and how, throughout the year, the Department of Minnesota works to pass legislation in St. Paul that benefits veterans or their families.

When to keep the Legion out of it ...

On the other hand, if the issue does not specifically benefit or concern veterans, then feel free to contact them as a private citizen, which is your right and duty as a citizen. As a private citizen, you also have the right to support whatever political party or candidate you choose, if you remember that *you* are supporting them and do not represent as a Legion member.

The Legion is a political organization

Many people do not realize that The American Legion is a very political organization. If you look at the organizational chart for your District, Department or National and perhaps your Post, you will find a legislative chair or even committee members.

Their job in the Legion is to be in the halls of Congress and the statehouses working with representatives from all political parties to support veterans' causes.

Have you ever heard of the VA? How about the G.I. Bill? Or perhaps the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act? All of these and many more can be attributed to the Legion lobbying for veterans.

In summary

Can you support an issue that supports veterans and their families as a Legionnaire? Yes.

Can you support any issue as a Legionnaire? No, only ones that support veterans and families.

Can you support a political party or candidate? Yes, as yourself, not as a Legionnaire.

Can you attend a political rally or protest? Yes, but do not wear your Legion cap or anything that might identify you as a Legionnaire.

What if you are a leader?


High-profile members of The American Legion face a different level of scrutiny than others. It can be said it is harder for them to just be a civilian and not represent the Legion with their actions and words in daily life.

It would be best for them to keep personal politics out of the public eye and focus on veterans issues. Most of all, avoid anything siding with one party or the other.

There are many more items that could be included but the basic thing to remember is that The American Legion is political in that it uses a political system to advance veterans' issues, but it is not partisan in that it does not support any party or candidate.

American Legion food, anyone?

- | | |
|---|---|
| The question was posed on The American Legion Department of Minnesota's Facebook page: "Can you name some of the best American Legion food in Minnesota?" | Post 108 |
| Here are some responses: | • Fried chicken, Adams Post 146 |
| • Grilled Windsor chops, Bricelyn Post 165 | • Club sandwiches, Pequot Lakes Post 49 |
| • Grilled pork chop dinner, Kimball Post 261 | • Ribs, Fergus Falls Post 30 |
| • Chicken wings, Le Center | • Burgers, Morristown Post 149 |
| | • Broasted Chicken, Wayzata Post 118 |
| | • Lasagna, Wells Post 210 |
| | • Steak, Alden Post 404 |



POST-9/11 PROJECT

Post-9/11 Roundtable

- via Zoom - throughout 2021

Monday, February 22 at 7:00PM
Always the 4th Monday of the month
Visit our website for full details

James Breckenridge, Ph.D. Provost, U.S. Army War College

Michael Neiberg, Ph.D. Chair of War Studies, U.S. Army War College

Mireille Rebeiz, Ph.D. Middle East Studies Program, Dickinson College

We invite you to share your personal accounts of 9/11 and the resulting Global War on Terror on our website:
mmilitarymuseum.org

Stories will become part of the permanent archive of the museum and inform our traveling display and tv documentary.

MN Military & Veterans Museum • Camp Ripley
15000 Highway 115 • Little Falls, MN 56345
320-616-6050 • mmilitarymuseum.org

This project has been financed in part with funds provided by the State of Minnesota from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society.



Endorsements

1st District backs Otto for Chaplain

Larry H. Otto has been endorsed for the Minnesota state office of Chaplain 2021-2022 by Ellendale American Legion Fidelity Post 296 and the 1st District.

Otto served in the U.S. Army from 1969 to 1971, stationed at Fort Campbell, Ky., Fort Dix, N.J., and at Kelly Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany. He is a 49-year member of American Legion Post 296, having held most every office at his local Post, as well as, a member of the Honor Guard. Currently, he is Post Commander and 1st District Chaplain.

Otto has been active in his local community as a member of Clarks Grove Cooperative Creamery Board, FFA advisory board, Barber-shop Society and a member of Steele County Historical Society. Otto is currently serving on the Community Foundation of Ellendale Board of Directors. In this position, he has been instrumental in co-leading renovation of the Ellendale Community Building project in cooperation with the City Council. Furthermore, as a member of



Larry Otto

Ellendale United Methodist Church, he is a certified lay speaker, church council chairperson, trustee, staff pastor parish relations committee member, audio-visual chair, and a member of the choir. In 2006, he was a key player in the construction of the new Ellendale United Methodist Church. For 25 years, Otto was a member of Praise Him, a group of eight adults who traveled throughout Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin.

Larry and his wife, Emily, have been married 49 years. Emily is a 70-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary. Both are retired, he from farming and construction and she from education. They have two children, Bethany and Josh, and seven grandchildren. Their oldest and only grandson is currently serving in the U.S. Army at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Becoming the Minnesota Department Chaplain is an office he would be honored to hold. Otto stated that this has been the one state office of which he most desires to attain.

Oxford returns to Minn. this spring

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Post 212, lunch at Bagley Post 16 and the grand finale will be a dinner at Detroit Lakes Post 15.

At each stop, Oxford speaks on various aspects of The American Legion.

Legion members and the general public are invited to attend his stops. Contact the Post for arrangements. See the inset box for phone numbers, times, other details.

Oxford flies out of Fargo on April 10.

The commander will tour with his aide, Larry Cline, of Lincolnton Post 30 in North Carolina, along with Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak of New Prague Post 45, Adjutant Mike Maxa of Montgomery Post 79, Membership Director Sy Fix of La Crescent Post 595 and Communications Director Tim Engstrom of Bloomington Post 550.

Oxford also has meetings not open to the public. During the tour, he is slated to meet with Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke and Minnesota National Guard Commissioner Maj. Gen. Shawn Manke. Oxford will tour Camp Ripley and meet with instructors and second graduating class of Minnesota American Legion College.



National Commander Bill Oxford speaks at Waseca Post 228 on Feb. 17, 2020.

He is the first National commander to serve a second year. With the National Convention being canceled in 2020 because of the coronavirus, officer positions throughout most of The American Legion went a second year.

He served as Department of North Carolina commander 2010 to 2013. He is a former mayor and City Council member of Cahah's Mountain, N.C. He has a bachelor's degree in environmental studies and multiple safety and environmental certificates. He has volunteered in Legion Baseball, too: coach, umpire and public address announcer.

He is a veteran of the Marine Corps and served during the Vietnam War as an aviation electronic technician for the A-6 Intruder. He served in Vietnam during his initial enlistment. He was discharged in 1970 as a sergeant, then joined the North Carolina National Guard, eventually retired as a colonel after more than 34 years of military service.

Oxford and his wife, Frances, have been married since 1967. They have a son, Charles (married to Deah Reid) and a daughter, Jackie (married to Mike Carr). They have four grandsons: Isiah, Micah, Jaggar and Dawson.



Col. Jamie Lindman, vice commander of the 133rd Airlift Wing and former commander of the 109th Airlift Squadron, spoke on the history of the squadron at the Minnesota History Center on Jan. 19. The unit received federal recognition on Jan. 17, 1920.

Minnesota Air National Guard history begins with an observation squadron

Continued from Page 1

Garis and Miller, the pilot and now a captain, took off from Curtiss Field on Sept. 26, 1920, with Gen. Walter Rhinow, to fly to Washington to lobby for the formation of an observation squadron. Lindman noted this was a time before airports, aids and airwaves. They had to plan fields to land in and places to refuel.

Curtiss Field was at the southeast corner of Snelling and Larper avenues, when they were just two-lane, unimproved roads in Rose Township. It closed in 1930. Curtiss Field Park in Falcon Heights is the last remnant of the former airfield.

The idea of the 1,600-mile tour was to gain support for the idea across the country. They flew to La Crosse, Wis.; Madison, Wis.; Chicago; Van Wirt, Ohio; Cleveland; Buffalo, N.Y.; Amsterdam, N.Y.; Albany, N.Y.; Garden City on Long Island, N.Y., back northward to Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; then to the nation's capital.

They were greeted by Gen. Billy Mitchell, today considered the father of the Air Force. He was impressed with them.

The result was that on Jan. 17, 1921, the 109th Observation Squadron received federal recognition. Miller was promoted to major and, today, he is considered the father of the Minnesota Air National Guard.

With that, Lindman said, came funding.

But they needed their own airfield, and they focused their efforts on Speedway Field. It was this big, oval racetrack off Cedar Avenue. Corporate investors had hoped Minneapolis could have its own Indianapolis

500, but the freeze-thaw of the state had crumbled the asphalt bed, Lindman said.

The site had been acquired by the Minneapolis Aero Club. By 1920, it was accommodating airmail services. It became the site of Miller's squadron.

Miller pushed aviation and airpower and, on July 10, 1923, Speedway Field was rededicated as Wold-Chamberlain field, named for Ernest Wold and Cyrus Chamberlain, pilots killed in World War I.



109th Airlift Squadron

Lindman noted that, while everyone knows the airport today simply as MSP, the official name is Wold-Chamberlain Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. It gained the Minneapolis and St. Paul names in 1948.

A Cook County commissioner became lost on Lake Superior in January, and the governor tasked Miller and a co-pilot to find the man. They searched for 10 days in subzero temperatures, risking their own lives. They never found him.

Miller participated in the first air-to-ground radio transmission, in conjunction with KSTP radio. He lobbied and received an airstrip at Camp Ripley. The

109th emblem, approved in 1939, is an arrowhead, acknowledging Minnesota's Arrowhead region. It has no unit number. No text. No Latin.

Lindman said it points up for the North Star State. The rays are for the aurora borealis, and there are 34 of them, in honor of the 34th Infantry Division, of which it had been part before receiving federal recognition.

The colors are aquamarine blue and golden orange, and they are the colors of the original Army Air Corps, the predecessor to the Air Force.

It is said, though not certain, that the two circles are for the Twin Cities.

Operation Capitol Response

One hundred years after the formation of the unit, the 109th Airlift Squadron was working a mission. On Jan. 17, 2021, it was part of Operation Capitol Response. Over three days, five 133rd aircraft flew 16 missions (42 sorties) with 105 flying hours, bringing 850 troops to D.C.

Normally, the unit performs 120 hours in a month, Lindman said.

"We accomplished in three days what we accomplish in a month," he said.

Then over two days the following weekend, they brought 850 back home, nearing what they do in two months.

The 109th Observation Squadron participated in World War II, with the name 109th Reconnaissance Squadron. It fought in Europe with the Eighth Air Force, then the Ninth Air Force, providing photo recon of bombing missions.

From June to November, there will be a large display along 100 feet of Concourse C at MSP about the 133rd Airlift Wing.

Watch for an air expo and open house at the 133rd Airlift Wing in summer 2022 to mark the centennial. (The 2021 expo was canceled.)

The 109th Airlift Squadron, Lindman said, has flown C-130 Hercules for 50 years — half of its history. It is slated to fly them through 2035. The unit's present fleet of C-130s, he said, are 25 years old. They have lobbied to receive the next generation of C-130s, an upgrade from C-130H3 to C-130J Super Hercules.



Lt. Col. William Garis, left, stands with Capt. Ray S. Miller in front of a biplane in this historic Minnesota Air National Guard photograph.

National Commander's Tour

April 6-9, 2021

Please call or email to reserve your spot:

Location	Meal	Time	Contact
Tuesday, April 6, 2021			
St. Paul Park Post 98	Lunch	noon	post98spp@gmail.com
N. St. Paul Park Post 39	Dinner*	6 p.m.	651-777-3708, Ext. 207
Wednesday, April 7, 2021			
Osseo Post 172	Breakfast	8 a.m.	763-425-4858
Royalton Post 137	Lunch	noon	320-584-5135
Nisswa Post 627	Dinner*	6 p.m.	218-963-9946
Thursday, April 8, 2021			
Walker Post 134	Breakfast	8 a.m.	218-547-1011
Friday, April 9, 2021			
Park Rapids Post 212	Breakfast	8 a.m.	218-732-5238
Bagley Post 16	Lunch	noon	218-209-8676
Detroit Lakes Post 15	Dinner*	6 p.m.	218-847-8533

*There will be a social hour starting at 5 p.m.

Dept. meeting discussed membership

Greetings, American Legion Family.

Department, District and Post meetings continued throughout January. Thank you to all who participated in these meetings. Some were held only using Zoom video conferencing and others had limited attendance and provided Zoom for those who didn't feel comfortable attending in person.

The Department Sweetheart Rally will be Saturday, Feb. 6, at Paynesville Post 271. Attendance will be limited, and Zoom will be provided. The Department of Minnesota Auxiliary will host this American Legion Family get-together. Please contact Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary for information on reservations.

On Jan. 13, The American Legion Department of Minnesota leadership had a membership meeting via Zoom with District commanders and District membership directors. Many good ideas were discussed on how to maintain membership and how to grow membership.

Now is the time to implement

Commander's Column

Mark Dvorak



your plan through messaging. Our many programs and legislative accomplishments speak for themselves. Become knowledgeable in a few of our successes and be ready to talk about them when recruiting veterans. Consider an open house and advertise/promote the Legion Act. There are many veterans that are still not aware of the Legion Act.

In our membership meeting much discussion was about our 1982ADs. Districts and Posts need to continue to work these lists. There are many members who join The American Legion through the Direct Mail Solicitation (1982ADs) with expectation of someone contacting them and welcoming them into the organization.

National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford sent a letter to all Department commanders with a "Call to Action" in regards to membership. Here are some of his challenges to us:

- Recruit 100,000 new members into this organization throughout the many Departments.
- Attain 90 percent renewal rate.
- Achieve 100 percent CPR reporting.
- Encourage Districts and Posts to work their expired rosters.
- Contact and renew those members who have not renewed.
- Conduct periodic Buddy Checks to see how they are doing.

Keep up the great work you all continue to do for our American Legion Family, For God and Country, we continue our mission!

Mark Dvorak is the commander of The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

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

Mail Call

Donate plasma for COVID antibodies

The purpose of the American Legion is service to God, country and each other.

On Feb. 3, 1943, four chaplains gave up their life jackets to save troops on the S.S. Dorchester. In their memory, the first Sunday in February is recognized nationally as "Four Chaplains Sunday."

You don't have to risk as much as the chaplains did to save lives. It's critical; the Red Cross has a convalescent plasma shortage. If you had the COVID virus and developed antibodies, consider donating your plasma.

I encourage my fellow Legion comrades to honor the four chaplains by donating COVID antibody plasma and blood during this month of February.

After donating, report your donation to your Post for possible inclusion as part of The American Legion Blood Donor Program.

**John Justin
Chaplain
Little Fall Post 46**

12 years in the Legion have been rewarding

It was the spring of 2009 in southeastern Minnesota. I was turkey hunting.

After a day of hunting, I went to a veterans club for a bite to eat. Sitting by myself eating, a fellow came over and started talking to me. He asked if I was a veteran, and, if so, do I belong to a veterans organization?

Yes, I am a vet, and, no, I don't belong to any veterans organization. He then asked, why? Then he said I owe it to my fellow veterans to belong to one.

By fall it was on my thoughts of what he said. I called The American Legion, and they said to call this number.

It was the commander of 3M Post 599 in St. Paul. I talked with him and learned he and I were in the military during the same time. We also had many things in common. The Post had a breakfast that Saturday, and he asked me to join them. The members were mostly World War II vets.

It was a great time talking to them and hearing some stories. I asked to join right then. The next week they had a membership meeting, and I made sure that I was there. It was also the meeting that they voted on new officers. The commander was elected again. I must have made a good impression on those older vets because they elected me as vice commander.

The next thing that happened I noticed the commander was wearing a Legion cap different than the rest of us. I asked him why is it different? He said he is an officer in the 4th District. He told me anyone can come to a District meeting.

I went to the next one. Wow! I learned more about the Legion. It was an eye-opener. It was also a time to get to know other Legionnaires.

In 2011, a friend ran for District commander and asked if I would like to be chaplain. I did.

That year, I learned more about how the meetings are run than I thought possible.

I became friends with many of the District folks at the meetings.

I guess they thought I did OK as chaplain, because they asked me to run for District commander. I said I would.

I was commander in 2012-2013 and then they asked me to do it again for 2013-2014. It was one of the best experiences you can have.

I then had opportunities at other officer positions and on many committees. You really

learn a lot on the committees.

I had one year as Department vice commander. I could never have done any of these offices without the support from past commanders and other officers. I want to thank those past officers and all the friends I made that helped me do all these jobs in the last dozen years.

(I'm still the vice commander of my Post for the past 12 years. Also, I know a lot of you and have been there and done that.)

**Carroll "Bird" Partridge
St. Paul 3M Post 599**

Legionville had an impact on my childhood

I'm glad I had the chance to go to this camp. The conclors [sic] are pretty strict, we've got to make square corners on our beds, and they have to be perfect or else they take it all apart and we have to make them all over again.

So began a letter to my parents from patrol camp at Legionville. It was the summer of 1957, and I had just completed my second year as a school patrol guard. Little did I know 10 years later square corners would be a necessary asset during basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas.

We are awakened by a bugle, put to sleep by a bugle and know when to eat dinner by a bugle.

Without realizing it, The American Legion had become an important part of my youth. I recall proudly blousing the pant legs of my Legion baseball uniform, and for several years I chased balls across a magnificently manicured diamond while playing for the Barnesville Legion team. Lifelong friendships sealed amongst home games, road trips, wins and losses.

Got classes in the morning from 10:00 to 12:00. The classes are school patrol, conservation,

Feb. has 4 Chaplains and Valentine's Day

As we enter February I always think about the Four Chaplains and their giving up their life vests "so others may live" during the sinking of the S.S. Dorchester on Feb. 3, 1943. The Four Chaplains, also referred to as the "Immortal Chaplains" or the "Dorchester Chaplains," were four World War II chaplains who died rescuing civilian and military personnel as the troop ship Dorchester sank.

The Dorchester was a civilian luxury liner converted for military service in World War II as a War Shipping Administration troop transport. She was able to carry slightly more than 900 military passengers and crew.

As we think about their love and sacrifice towards their fellowman during this tragedy, we also need to remember another February celebration of love between sweethearts, Valentine's Day.

Through the pandemonium, according to those present, four Army chaplains brought hope in despair and light in darkness. Those chaplains were Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Jewish; Lt. John P. Washington, Roman Catholic; and Lt. Clark V. Poling, Dutch

& first aid. I like the first aid class best. I got six friends besides the two I came with.

Please accept my donation to Commander Mark Dvorak's Foundation Fund 82 so more youngsters today may experience these same lessons in life.

**Dan Lien
Moorhead Post 21**

From smoking police to the masking police

I would like to make a few comments about the "to wear a mask" controversy.

In bringing up the anti-smoking law, I believe the ones who complain of their right taken away were not really listened to. They said that the restaurants have a right to go with smoking or non-smoking. It is their right to make that choice.

The anti-smokers insisted that everybody stop smoking because this is what they wanted.

Now the same thing is happening today with the mask wearing. If I understand that, if we are protected by wearing a mask, it also stops us from spreading it to other people.

So, my answer to the mask wearing police, if you wear your mask, then both of us are protected.

**Andre-Thomas DeMeules
Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172**

Lawmakers can skip the circus act this session

Facts matter. Or they should. It is unfortunate that misinformation and disinformation was used over and over and over again to derail a common-sense

Chaplain's Corner

Betty Jass



Reformed.

Quickly and quietly, the chaplains spread out among the soldiers. There they tried to calm the frightened, tend the wounded and guide the disoriented toward safety. By this time, most of the men were topside, and the chaplains opened a storage locker and began distributing life jackets. It was then that Engineer Grady Clark witnessed an astonishing sight.

When there were no more life jackets in the storage room, the chaplains removed theirs and gave them to four frightened young men.

"It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven," said John Ladd, another survivor who saw the chaplains' selfless act. A true act of love for their fellowman.

Another symbol of love is visible as we celebrate Valentine's Day among sweethearts, husbands and wives, classmates in elementary school, etc. You may remember filling out what seemed like a hundred Valentines that you gave

to your classmates on Valentine's Day. Or now, standing in front of a greeting card stand searching for that "perfect card" to give to your true love.

St. Valentine, also was known as St. Valentine of Rome, was a widely recognized 3rd century Roman saint, commemorated in Christianity on Feb. 14. From the High Middle Ages this day has been associated with a tradition of courtly love.

There are other ways to show your love to others like helping to save your fellowman like the Four Chaplains did during the sinking of the Dorchester or giving Valentine cards, showing small acts of love to your love ones, family and friends. The best way is to love your fellowman every day.

Betty Jass is the chaplain for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

bill that helps veterans in Greater Minnesota who become involved in the criminal justice system to take responsibility for their actions, get the help they need and reintegrate into society as productive citizens. It helps keep veteran families together. It saves Minnesota taxpayers' money by ensuring veterans receive care through the VA rather than state and county resources and by reducing incarceration, which we all know is expensive.

I applaud The Minnesota

Legionnaire's coverage of the Veterans Restorative Justice Act last session.

The Legionnaire doesn't write the story on legislation; legislators do — by their actions and inactions and the words they say. The Legionnaire simply reports the facts of the story so our members can be and stay informed.

Our members are going to have to be involved and applaud our elected representatives when

Continued on Page 7

The Minnesota

Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

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Department of Minnesota

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Taps



Adams, David A., 79, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 7, 2021. He was a past commander and 55-year member of Janesville Post 281.

Adelmann, Clemons J. "Clem," 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 29, 2020. He was a tank driver. He was a 38-year member of Savage Post 643.

Agrimson, Russell, 75, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 10, 2020. He served as a Seabee. He was a member of Apple Valley Post 1776.

Anderson, James M., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 10, 2020. He was a 32-year member of Clarissa Post 213.

Bahnson, Roger W., 79, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 21, 2020. He served as a helicopter mechanic. He was a member of Ashby Post 357.

Baker, Sherlan J., 82, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 16, 2020. He served in the Navy Reserve after his enlistment. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Barber, Duane, 90, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 8, 2021. He served in England and Morocco. He was a member of New London Post 537.

Beaty, John F., 96, Army Air Forces veteran of World War II, died Dec. 30, 2020. He served in the American Theater. He was a 72-year member of Little Falls Post 46.

Beebout, Lynn, 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 6, 2020. He served in the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam. He was a member of Milroy Post 274.

Berning, Edward B., 90, Marine veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 16, 2020. He was a 39-year member of Adrian Post 32.

Blakeslee, Jerry P., 90, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 15, 2020. He served aboard the battleship USS Iowa. He was a 62-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Boeltl, Robert "Bob," 83, Marine veteran of the Cold War, died Dec. 11, 2020. He was a 46-year member of Pine City Post 51.

Bradow, Erv, 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 27, 2020. He was a 60-year member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Brink, Jerry D., 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 31, 2020. He was a 39-year member of Edger-ton Post 42.

Brogger, John W. Sr., 85, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 3, 2021. He was stationed at Lowry AFB in Denver. He was a member of Northfield Post 84.

Brose, John C., 86, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 9, 2021. He was the mayor of Lanesboro for eight years. He was a member of Lanesboro Post 40.

Buchholz, Wayne M., 71, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 5, 2021. He was a member of Anoka Post 102.

Clark, Matthew M., 72, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 17, 2020. He was a point scout and earned a Purple Heart in Vietnam. He resided in St. Paul and was a member of Minnesota Post 1982.

Coe, James L. "Jim," 96, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 23, 2020. He was a member of Parkers Prairie Post 219.

DeMoss, John C., 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 14, 2021. He served with the 66th "Black Panther" Infantry Division in a mortar crew in France and later was stationed in Austria. He was a 70-year member of Minneapolis Hellenic Post 129.

Deters, R. Duane, 88, Army veteran of Korean War, died Dec. 17, 2020. He was a 59-year member of Caledonia Post 191.

Deutz, Gary, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 17, 2020. He was a 49-year member of Marshall Post 113.

Drown, David, 81, Army veteran of the Cuban Conflict and the Vietnam War, died Dec. 18, 2020. He was a 40-year member of Marshall Post 113.

Erickson, William "Bill," 75, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 24, 2020. He was a member of Cloquet Post 262.

Farnsworth, Robert M., 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 4, 2020. He served in radio communications. He was a member of Nashwauk Post 307.

Fish, Donald L., 103, Army Air Forces veteran of World War II, died Dec. 28, 2020. He was a B-17 pilot, completing 35 missions, with the 351st Bomb Group, 8th Air Force. He was a 44-year member of Waite Park Post 428.

Fisher, Fred L., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 4, 2021. He had a 30-year career in the Army and Army Reserve. He was the caretaker at Legionville School Safety Patrol Camp for 26 years, retiring in January 1990. He was a 75-year member of Brainerd Post 225.

Fitzgerald, Brian K., 77, (branch missing) veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 8, 2020. He was a 41-year member of Coon Rapids Post 334.

Fredin, Kenneth M. "Kenny," 92, Marine veteran of World War II, died Dec. 18, 2020. He was a 36-year member of Onamia Post 395.

Goebel, Virgil E., 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 30, 2020. He served in Osaka, Japan. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

Obituaries

The Minnesota Legionnaire reserves the right to edit all obituaries for style and brevity.

Please send to tengstrom@mnlegion.org or in the mail to The Minnesota Legionnaire, 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000. Senders often put the word "Taps" on the front of the envelope in the corner.

We thank you for your participation in honoring Legionnaires transferring to Post Everlasting.

Goldstrand, Robert D., 86, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 30, 2020. He was a career sailor. He was a member of a Post named for his World War I veteran uncle: Goldstrand-Beadle Post 371 in Roosevelt.

Gustafson, Richard D., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 26, 2020. He served at Fort Hancock, New Jersey, as a radar operator for guided missiles. He was a 66-year member of Waconia Post 150.

Hagen, Owen DuWayne, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 18, 2020. He served as a tank driver and heavy artillery man, stationed in Germany. He was a member of Spring Grove Post 249.

Hanson, Eugene L. "Gene," 90, Army veteran of Korean War, died Dec. 14, 2020. He was a 47-year member of New London Post 537.

Hanson, Roger T., 80, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 23, 2020. He served in Washington state. He was a member of Zimmerman Post 560.

Hayes, Leo W., 98, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 31, 2020. He was a heavy mortar leader and stationed in occupied Japan, in Sasebo. He was a 72-year member of Clarissa Post 213.

Himango, Donald "Slugger," 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 8, 2020. He was a member of Cloquet Post 262.

Hulieres, John, 89, Army veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, died Nov. 5, 2020. He was a 67-year member of Cloquet Post 262.

Janke, Donald G., 93, Army veteran of the Korean War, died on Dec. 20, 2020. He was a sergeant and served in Japan. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

Johnson, Virgil, P., 74, Navy and Navy Reserves veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 9, 2021. He was a member of Milaca Post 178.

Johnson, Warren B., 70, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 5, 2020. He served aboard the USS Orion and the USS Laffey. He was active in the honor guard and was 43-year member of Roseau Post 24.

Kahle, Marvin, 98, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 7, 2021. He was part of the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium and Germany. He received a Bronze Star and two battle stars. He resided in New Ulm and was a member of Minnesota Post 1982.

Kemp, Gerald L., 87, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 27, 2020. He served as a corpsman in the Navy for four years, then Navy Reserve for 16 years. He was a member of Arlington Post 250.

Kirmis, Wayne, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 20, 2020. He was a 70-year member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Knutson, Royal "Jim," 95, Army veteran of World War II, died on Dec. 18, 2020. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

Krein, Edgar E., 82, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 22, 2020. He was a 31-year member of Marietta Post 156.

Lackman, Walter, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 20, 2020. He received a Bronze Star. He was a member of Long Prairie Post 12.

Lahr, William J., 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 11, 2020. He was a past commander, Blood Program chairman, gambling manager and 43-year member of Coon Rapids Post 334.

Lavalla, Lloyd D., 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 7, 2020. He served in Vietnam. He was a member of Roosevelt Post 371.

Leith, Clarence "Cal," 78, Army veteran, died Dec. 12, 2020. He was an amateur boxer during his service. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

Loge, Derald, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 3, 2021. He served in Korea. He was a 55-year member of Blue Earth Post 89.

Longazo, Mike S., 99, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 24, 2020. He received the Purple Heart. He was a 30-year member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Lund, Roland H., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 14, 2021. He served in Germany. He was a 60-year member of Milaca Post 178.

Lundquist, James N., 86, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 24, 2020. He was in basic during the era's final month, then was stationed at Kessler AFB in Biloxi, Mississippi, trained in special upper-level electronics maintenance. After his four-year stint, he took a job in Huntsville, Alabama, teaching NATO forces on how to maintain and launch the Jupiter Missiles and participated in the test firing of the Saturn rocket engines. He was a member of Roseau Post 24.

McCarville, David L. "Skip," 80, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 1, 2021. He was a

member of Chisago City Post 272.

McClure, Stanford "Stan," 79, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 6, 2020. He served as a corpsman and met his wife, Hazel. He was the 10th District commander in 2003-04. He served as commander, adjutant and was a member of Robbinsdale and Crystal Post 251, before moving and transferring membership to Georgia in the mid-2000s. He and Hazel were members of Austell, Ga., Post 216 at the time of his death.

Nelson, James E. "Jim," 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 26, 2020. He was stationed in Korea and Japan. He was a member of Moorhead Post 21.

Nichols, Harvey A., 70, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 30, 2020. He served in Vietnam. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Niskanen, David A., 83, Army veteran of the Cold War, died Dec. 11, 2020. He served in the Corps of Engineers and was stationed in Whittier, Alaska. He was in the color guard and was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

Nord, David H., 80, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 22, 2020. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Palava, Michael P., 81, (branch unknown) veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 11, 2020. He was stationed in New Orleans (which means he probably was Navy or Coast Guard). He was a member of Keewatin Post 452.

Paquette, Vernon E., 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 9, 2020. He was a 57-year member of Anoka Post 102.

Paulsrud, Harlan D., 80, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 26, 2020. He served in the Navy Air Department. He was a 44-year member of Benson Post 62.

Phillips, Thomas J., 76, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 5, 2021. He was a 41-year member of New London Post 537.

Posch, Richard J., 68, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 27, 2020. He managed the bar for 30 years and was a 47-year member of Bowlus Post 642.

Putnam, Duane K., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 8, 2021. He served in Korea. He was a 57-year member of Cloquet Post 262.

Reck, Jack, 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 2, 2020. He was a tank mechanic. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

Ridge, Herman, 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 15, 2020. He was a 46-year member of Anoka Post 102.

Rosen, Al B., 88, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 5, 2021. He served as a radio/teletype operator on the destroyer USS Hamilton. He was a member of Waite Park Post 428.

Schnarr, Ernest H., Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 7, 2020. He served in the National Guard after his enlistment. He was a 52-year member of St. Leo Post 524.

Schwab, Gordon "Gordy," 67, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 24, 2020. He was a 44-year member of North Branch Post 85.

Siebenaler, Kenneth L., 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 15, 2020. He served in the Army National Guard as an officer for 26 years and was stationed in Germany for four of those years. He was a 49-year member of Winona Post 9.

Simmons, Thomas, 68, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 24, 2020. He served with the Seabees in the Far East. He was a 44-year member of Hutchinson Post 96.

Stinar, Leonard M., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 1, 2020. He was wounded in Korea at Heartbreak Ridge and earned a Purple Heart. He then became a drill instructor and met his wife while at intelligence school. He was a member of Bagley Post 16.

Svehaug, Leland N., 82, Army veteran of the Cold War, died Dec. 24, 2020. He was a member of Caledonia Post 191.

Turbes, Leroy J., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 2, 2021. He was stationed in Alaska. He was a 50-year member of Willmar Post 167.

Varley, Thomas D., 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 29, 2020. He served in Vietnam with the 1st Infantry Division, receiving two Bronze Stars. He was a member of Northfield Post 84.

Weiss, George J. Jr., 92, Marine veteran of World War II, died Jan. 4, 2021. In 1979, he founded the Fort Snelling National Cemetery Memorial Rifle Squad and, many times over, commanded the squad. He was a 47-year member of St. Paul North End Post 474.

Willmert, Bryan A., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 22, 2020. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Wiskow, Douglas E., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 21, 2020. He served as a military policeman in the Philippines and Guam. He was a 40-year member of Roseau Post 24.

Wolff, Robert W., 81, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 1, 2021. He was a past commander and served on several committees as a member of Hackensack Post 202.

Youngerberg, Clarence F., 98, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 20, 2020. He was a 69-year member of Janesville Post 281.

A painful year is also our finest hour

To my fellow Legionnaires in Minnesota,

A lot has happened since last spring. The novel coronavirus went from a regional disease to a global pandemic. In what I call The American Legion's "finest hour," Posts, Districts and Departments have stepped up with events such as drive-through food pantries, blood donations, virtual job fairs, fundraisers and supply drives for first responders and health-care workers. We have enhanced our Buddy Check efforts to ensure that all veterans realize that they have friends in The American Legion Family who care about them.

After a painful year of tragic deaths and economic hardship, there is hope. Vaccines are being distributed and the life that we

National Commander

James W. "Bill" Oxford



loved before the pandemic will indeed return. Even during the worse days of the COVID-19, The American Legion continued to effectively advocate for veterans. We have seen an expansion of Agent Orange benefits for our Vietnam veterans and renewed attention to those exposed to environmental hazards. Our military members received a well-deserved pay raise and the United States Space Force has taken shape.

This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the deadliest terrorist attack to ever occur on American soil. Since our organization's founding, The American

Legion has committed itself to ensure that our country maintains a strong national defense. We will insist that the 117th Congress fully fund our military and provide the resources needed to prevent future 9/11-type attacks.

I thank you for your service as military veterans, as Legionnaires and as members of the Legion Family.

Best wishes.
Building a Foundation for the Future.



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Put differences aside, come together

Greetings American Legion Family,

I am so looking forward to the day when we can all get together again. When we can look each other in the eye, exchange handshakes and hugs, and laugh together. It has been far too long.

The times we are living in are wearing on all of us. We need to be better. We are a great family, and sometimes family members have disagreements, but that doesn't mean we stop being a family.

Our family is made up of all different kinds of people. Different upbringings, different views of the world, and

Legion Riders

Paul Hassing



different experiences. We can still get along.

One of the great things I love about our family is the way we can disagree about things but still come together for the common good. We need to remember who we are, and why we need to continue doing the great things we do as a family.

We still need to work with our politicians whether we voted for them or not. Let's be civil to them and each other.

Remember to check in on friends and family. Seasonal depression along with everything else going on can really take its toll. Even the best can be better!

Paul Hassing is the director of the American Legion Riders for the Department of Minnesota.

Defense Dept. not seeing invisible wounds of war with discharges

For decades, the U.S. military has been handing out bad paper discharges in instances when they were not warranted. I agree in certain instances that a bad paper may be warranted. But over the last couple of decades since Sept. 11, 2001, it seems its easier for the military to issue an other-than-honorable (OTH) rather than looking at the facts leading up to the pattern of behavior change.

Could administering a medical separation under honorable conditions take more time, cost the service branch more money? Maybe it is being fiscally responsible to issue a bad paper verse giving service members a medical separation with a severance package or retirement? It seems unethical, inequitable and improper to me.

Here is an example of what has been happening: A service member has earned a Good Conduct Medal after three great years in the service. They are preparing for their first deployment to war. They are cleared, meaning no physical or mental limitations.

He or she deploys for a year, comes home and starts having anxiety attacks, feelings of depression. These mental health conditions are not being addressed by their chain of command and eventually leads to self-medication and then a failed urinalysis test, which ultimately precedes to their OTH discharge from the service.

What Department of Defense has failed to consider when administering discharges due to misconduct are patterns of behavior changes that can be contributed to invisible wounds

VA & Rehabilitation

Jeremy Wolfsteller



of service, like post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma and sexual harassment.

Are these mental health conditions not justifiable to issue a medical separation?

The veterans who have bad paper discharges are struggling not only with their invisible wounds created by their time in service but are struggling to get VA to take care of them. Whether it is trying to receive service-connected disability compensation, VA Health Care treatment or education benefits, its adding another layer of problems — all while dealing with their mental health conditions.

About a decade after 9/11, several law firms received word of this happening when veterans started stepping forward. A number of class-action lawsuits were filed against the Defense Department leading to changes in how the DOD Correction Boards consider these types of upgrade requests.

In 2014 the first of several directives by the secretary of defense were sent to the Board of Correction of Military Records to give liberal consideration when reviewing Vietnam veteran cases for an upgrade that can show PTSD was involved. In 2016, a revised memo was issued to the board that included traumatic brain injuries and PTSD for all eras of veterans.

Finally, in 2017, a memo was issued that would address cases involving military sexual trauma, sexual harassment and

sexual assault.

Unfortunately, as thousands applied under these new liberal rule considerations, the DOD boards were recently proven to ignore these directives and continuing to deny upgrades involving mental health conditions. But another recent class action lawsuit won by Yale Law School Veterans Legal Services Clinic in November 2020 against the U.S. Army will require the branch to review and potentially upgrade thousands of other-than-honorable discharges dating back to April 2011 and sending letters out to those with OTH's going back to 2001. The final decision of agreement between the two is pending approval by the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut. The Yale Legal Clinic is not stopping there, they are arguing a similar class-action case against the Navy.

The American Legion Department of Minnesota has a pro-bono program aimed specifically at taking on these types of cases. The program is called, "Operation Upgrade" which can be found here: <http://mn-legion.org/operation-upgrade/>

Jeremy Wolfsteller is the Department of Minnesota service officer. His email is jwolfsteller@mnlegion.org.

Too many calls to VA regarding COVID vaccines

A message from the Department of Minnesota Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee:

Veterans enrolled in the Minneapolis VA Health Care System will receive a letter from the Minneapolis VA Medical Center when they become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination. The letter will provide details about setting up the appointment to receive the Pfizer vaccination.

If you haven't received the letter from the Minneapolis VA Medical Center about being eligible to set up and receive the vaccination, please do not call the Minneapolis VA call center

for a vaccination. You will get the letter when your priority group is next.

Veterans are calling the call center for vaccinations when they are not a part of VA's priority group and it's contributing to call center wait times up to 10-20 minutes.

This is making it hard for veterans trying to speak with a triage nurse or setup other important health care appointments.

The Minneapolis VA presently is mailing letters to enrolled veterans 80 and older about how to schedule an appointment and received the COVID-19 vaccine.



The American Legion Department of Minnesota 2021 District Membership Report as of Jan 25, 2021

District	Commander	New 2021	PUFL 2021	Online Ren 2021	Trad Ren 2021	Paid 2021	HQ Trans 2021	Total Mbr 2021	Goal 2021	%Goal	HQ Trans 2020 (As of)	Total Mbr 2020 (As of)
01	DALE P WELLIK	57	864	785	5,228	6,934	15	6,949	8,009	86.76	19	7,339
02	BRADLEY PAGEL	47	654	485	4,131	5,317	12	5,329	6,189	86.10	4	5,684
03	LINDA DVORAK	110	1,568	1,677	6,502	9,857	88	9,945	10,938	90.92	103	10,069
04	JOSEPH M JANSEN	24	288	290	1,165	1,767	4	1,771	2,091	84.70	25	1,932
05	WADE A LARSON	16	308	367	1,023	1,714	0	1,714	2,164	79.21	7	1,941
06	PAUL D EDWARDS	110	1,112	1,127	6,820	9,169	53	9,222	10,598	87.02	24	9,721
07	DEAN KNUTSON	31	704	416	3,879	5,030	41	5,071	5,646	89.82	47	5,162
08	D MARVIN HILL	21	320	390	2,387	3,118	4	3,122	3,591	86.94	10	3,321
09	STEVEN G SUNDSTROM	48	554	599	4,016	5,217	53	5,270	5,953	88.53	19	5,412
10	THOMAS H ALLEN	93	916	1,372	5,224	7,605	22	7,627	8,780	86.87	15	8,082
99		9	180	449	1,331	1,969	0	1,969	2,997	65.70	0	1,772
Total:		566	7,468	7,957	41,706	57,697	292	57,989	66,956	86.61	273	60,435

Mail Call

Continued from Page 4

they enact legislation to help us and our families; we need to hold them accountable when they play loose with the facts and stymie good legislation.

Keep up the good work, Legionnaire!

Tommy Johnson
Bloomington Post 550

Please help a young man overcome steep challenge

I have a request.

Jonathan Freiermuth is my neighbor in Minnesota. I just learned of a fundraising effort to help him and his family to get a new disability van.

He is 19 years old with

Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD), the most common fatal pediatric disorder. It is a progressive disorder. Jonathan loves to play videogames and enjoys spending time with his neighbor Garrett, teaching him new gaming skills. He also likes to go to the movies and take drives to Duluth to watch the ships come in on Lake Superior. However, given the unreliability of Jonathan's current vehicle, which often breaks down and does not have a working air conditioner or heater, he has not been able to see the ships in two years.

A new handicap-accessible van would greatly improve the quality of Jonathan's life as well as his family being able to get him to medical facilities. He would like to go on a longer road trip, enjoy his late teens and early 20s with his mom and sister despite his physical

limitations.

As an American Legion member, please consider donating to Jonathan's Jett Giving Fund page, as I have, to help support his goal of a new accessible vehicle that can give Jonathan back his freedom and sense of adventure. All Jett Giving Fund donations are tax-deductible and will be matched by Jeff Foundation once the applicant and their family reach their fundraising goal.

Google "Jett Foundation Jonathan Freiermuth" and the result goes to a page where you can donate.

It is my hope that many of us will help them reach their goal and contribute to his efforts to be able to have his freedom and sense of adventure back.

I thank you all so much.

David Peyla
Hugo Post 620

What's happening?

2 training seminars planned for February

The Department of Minnesota Training Committee is holding two online training seminars in February. Both are via Zoom video conferencing.

The first is through Department Chaplain Betty Jass. It is "Four Chaplains Service: Why & How" and is planned for 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11.

The other is "Department Report: Consolidated Post Reports" by 3rd District Commander Linda Dvorak, set for 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25.

Contact 8th District Membership Director Jennifer Havlick at jennifer.havlick@outlook.com to get the Zoom link.

St. Cloud VA began outpatient COVID-19 vaccine distribution

ST. CLOUD — The St. Cloud VA started vaccinating with the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine on Dec. 22. It began vaccinating its highest-risk outpatient veterans on Jan. 11.

"We first provided Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to nursing home residents and health care personnel, said St. Cloud VA Health Care System Director Brent A. Thelen, We are now ready to start a phased plan to offer COVID-19 vaccine to veterans who want to be vaccinated."

St. Cloud VA the week of Jan. 11 took appointments for enrolled veterans who are on dialysis, undergoing chemotherapy at a hospital or outpatient infusion center, have had a transplant, are homeless, or who are 85 and older.

Vaccination appointments will be held in Bldg. 8 (Auditorium) at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, or at one of the VA Clinic locations in Alexandria, Brainerd and Montevideo. Dates for the VA Clinic vaccinations are being finalized.

Second-dose appointments were planned for four weeks later, according to a St. Cloud VA news release.

Minneapolis VA sending letters to enrolled veterans

The Minneapolis VA Medical Center was the first place in the state to administer a COVID-19 vaccine, back on Dec. 15. It began with its staff before opening it up to veterans who seek their health care there.

"Our goal is to do the most good for the most people during this time," said its website.

Currently, VA is offering COVID-19 vaccine to veterans already receiving care from the VA, based on CDC and VA risk criteria.

Currently, veterans 80 years and older who

receive care within the Minneapolis VA Health Care System should now schedule their COVID-19 vaccination appointments.

These veterans will receive a mailed letter with instructions on how to schedule their vaccine appointments. If you are a veteran who is interested in receiving care at the VA but are not yet enrolled, they may apply for VA health care by calling 866-414-5058.

Anyone who enters "VA stay informed" into a Google search engine should find a VA page that allows people to sign up for VA email messages on the progress of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

COVID cases at veteran homes have declined

The Minnesota Veterans Home, as of Jan. 26, have 10 cases of COVID-19.

The system provides a phone number people can call to get revised COVID numbers daily. That number is 651-757-1599.

It said the Minneapolis Veterans Home has seven cases, Fergus Falls two, Luverne one and none at Silver Bay and Hastings. The Minnesota Veterans Home system isn't allowed to delineate whether those cases were residents or staff.

Ten is a big drop from case numbers in the 60s in late November, when Silver Bay experienced an outbreak that was at 42 cases on Nov. 23.

Vets town hall planned

ST. CLOUD — A veterans town hall meeting focused on improving VA health care services and programs is scheduled for 2 p.m. Feb. 9, via Webex, for veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Medical Center.

Webex is a conferencing platform. For a link to the meeting, visit <https://www.stcloud.va.gov>.

Cuddyer nominated for Hall of Fame

Eight former American Legion Baseball players are on the 2021 ballot for the Baseball Hall of Fame, including two first-timers in pitcher A.J. Burnett and outfielder Michael Cuddyer, the 2014 American Legion Baseball Graduate of the Year.

Cuddyer played for the Minnesota Twins from 2001 to 2011. He hails from Virginia.

None of the first-time nominees are considered locks for induction in their first year of eligibility. The 2021 Hall of Fame induction ceremony in Cooperstown, N.Y., is scheduled for July 25.

Other American Legion Baseball alumni on the ballot are Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens, Jeff Kent, Andy Pettitte, Scott Rolen and Gary Sheffield.

The SAL Update:



The SAL Commander's Project paid for a new ceiling at the dining hall at Legionville School Safety Patrol Camp. The \$9,000 project was completed in January, but the SAL continues to fund repairs at the camp. To donate, send to SAL Detachment of Minnesota, 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000. Make checks to MN AL Foundation Fund 99.

Legionville is still in need of repairs

Greetings from Your Sons of The American Legion to the American Legion Family!

As we move through the first part of 2021 and all wait to get our vaccinations, I would like to thank everybody in the Minnesota American Legion Family for working so hard on keeping our membership up and going.

I also would like to invite you to check out the new Minnesota SAL website at mnsal.org. There is a lot of new and informational information on the website, and there is more to come as we develop the website even further.

Detachment commander

Dave Vulcan



I also would like to talk about my project this year.

It's 100 percent Legionville this year as there is a lot of projects at the camp that we need to put some attention to. So, if you can, please donate to my project. It is easy and quick. Make a check payable to MN AL Foundation Fund 99. Mail to Sons of The American Legion, 20 W. 12th St., St. Paul, MN 55155-

2000.

Until we

see each other again next month

at the Sweetheart Rally, please stay safe and healthy.

Dave Vulcan is the commander of the Detachment of Minnesota for the Sons of The American Legion.

Letter to Minn. SAL members

Gentlemen,

Congratulations on achieving the January goal of 60 percent before the target date. A big shout out to Wisconsin and Iowa for being over 70 percent. We have 6 Detachments at or above 60 percent (due to Friday being a target date Indiana's report was too late to make Nationals report).

As you can see, we are almost 17,000 behind last year nationally and over 8,000 behind in the Central Region.

Keep doing your Buddy checks and promoting MySAL. Hopefully with people starting to get vaccinated things will start to get better and we can get this downward trend turned around.

Visit mnsal.org

Richard "Doc" Pfeiffer
SAL National Vice Commander, Central

2020 Membership Results

National membership in the Sons of The American Legion decreased in 2020, likely in large part due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It's the first time in decades that SAL membership didn't increase year over year.

As of Dec. 31, 2020, there were 363,313 members of the SAL nationwide, down from 375,540 at the end of 2019 — a 3.3 percent decrease in total membership.

The 2020 membership renewal rate was 87.09 percent, with 327,051 renewals reported as of Dec. 31.

Eight detachments achieved all-time highs for membership in 2020: Puerto Rico, South Dakota, Mississippi, North Carolina, Iowa, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and South Carolina. Those eight and 12 other detachments — Hawaii, Philippines, Idaho, Alabama, Louisiana, France, Montana, Florida, Georgia, Arizona, Tennessee, and Illinois — achieved 100 percent membership by Dec. 31. Minnesota resulted in 94.433 percent for 2020 (11,094 out of a target of 11,748) and had a renewal rate of 88.28 percent.

Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent
1 Wisconsin * ^ ~ ? ! #	3,745	2,986	759	79.73%
2 Iowa * ^ ~ ? ! #	4,376	3,337	1,039	76.26%
3 Ohio ~ ? !	31,134	20,253	10,881	65.05%
6 Illinois * ^ ~ ? !	14,547	9,137	5,410	62.81%
5 Minnesota * ^ ~ ? !	11,749	7,243	4,506	61.65%
4 Indiana * ^ ~ ?	39,365	23,211	16,154	58.96%
7 Michigan	24,084	12,416	11,668	51.55%
8 Missouri	3,706	1,603	2,103	43.25%
TOTALS	132,706	80,186	52,520	60.42%

Q = Quota

* Met 09/10/20 goal of 10%

^ Met 10/15/20 goal of 25%

~ Met 11/12/20 goal of 35%

? Met 12/09/20 goal of 45%

! Met 01/21/21 goal of 60%

Met 02/10/21 goal of 75%

% Met 03/10/21 goal of 80%

\$ Met 04/14/21 goal of 90%

() Met 05/12/21 goal of 100%

] Met 07/28/21 goal of 105%

Military careers can involve many moves, sacrifices and health scares

Continued from Page 1

(Civilians: CQ means “charge of quarters,” and on a base environment it typically means sitting at a desk at the main entrance to the building, hanging on to lost keys, answering a phone, relaying messages and, especially late at night, reading a book. The Army, Navy and Marines call these residential complexes barracks. The Air Force calls them dormitories.)

Though they worked in different fields, they were in the same dorm, which is common at a training base. Rachael was training in finance. Jeff was training in aircraft electric and environmental systems.

They dated a month, and she graduated. They resolved to do the long-distance thing.

“His tech training was longer than mine,” Rachael said.

The Air Force sent her to a tiny island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean that February in 1998 — Guam. She cried when she learned her assignment, but she ended up loving it. That’s military camaraderie at work.

He went to Alaska in April. In August, he came with her to her sister’s wedding in Moorhead.

In transit, Jeff had to wait at the Memphis airport, and he called his mother. He told her he wanted to marry Rachael someday.

Rachael went home to York with Jeff on Christmas 1998 and they got engaged that New Year’s Eve. She went back to Guam; he to Alaska.

Her assignment was slated to end June 1, with her next assignment at McChord AFB outside Tacoma, Washington. If Rachael checked in, she would be committed for two years.

Both she and Jeff were just airmen. They had no money. No kids. Not much for strings to pull. To be stationed together, they had to marry.

Annually, Guam participates in Operation Tandem Thrust, with F-15 squadrons flying from Alaska. Jeff’s unit wasn’t flying to Guam that year, but squadrons worked it out so Jeff could fly to Guam so he and Rachael could wed.

What about witnesses? Rachael’s parents paid for her sister and sister’s husband to fly to Guam.

In Hagåtña, at the Superior Court of Guam, these two 19-year-olds were married on April 1, 1999. Now they could file with the Air Force as “joint spouse” and be stationed together. On June 1, 1999, she arrived at Elmendorf AFB outside Anchorage. She was an E-3 by now.

Jeff had rented an apartment off-base, and they lived there. A year later, they had a house. On June 3, 2000, they had a big wedding in Indianapolis for friends and family.

In the meantime, she was promoted in rank and winning awards: Below the Zone early promotion. Airman of the Quarter for the squadron and wing many times. Airman of the Year for her squadron, all the way to Airman of the Year for finance in the Pacific, then for finance in the Air Force.

“My picture was in the Pentagon for a year,” she noted.

Jeff won recognition, too, as a star performer for his electrician work on F-15s, and he received a Below the Zone early promotion.

They began taking college classes, working to become officers.

He was accepted into University of Alaska ROTC in Anchorage and was granted an early release from the Air Force. He went to school full time, with a dream of being a pilot, and did odd jobs, like delivering food, while she supported him by working full time. They moved back on base.

Rachael agreed to extend her



Jeff Hill, left, sits in the cockpit of a C-17 with Tyler, almost 3 at the time, on his lap in 2010. T.J., 5, sits on the lap of Rachael Hill to the right. The photo was taken at Elmendorf AFB two weeks before the crash.

four-year enlistment by two years. In her college studies, she pursued becoming a Russian linguist.

She became the non-commissioned officer in charge of customer service in finance for the base.

“Some people would come in, and they would only want to see me,” Rachael said.

She worked in special actions: separations, retirements, Article 15s, pay garnishments, travel pay. And she was especially good at resolving pay problems. She had been the most junior person to attend a military pay conference in Hawaii (Defense Finance Accounting Service, aka DFAS).

Rachael built a network within DFAS and used it to contact key people and resolve problems. She even passed her staff sergeant test on the first attempt.

Jeff applied for a pilot slot and was accepted. He was commissioned an officer in December 2002 and returned to active-duty Air Force in January 2003. He had to get his private pilot license before military pilot training.

At that time, Rachael began terminal leave before departing the Air Force. She was grateful for the family atmosphere at Elmendorf.

“Everyone worked hard to help us get to the next stage,” she said.

The Air Force sent them to Moody AFB in Georgia, where Jeff spent a year training on the T-6 Texan II, then it was off to Columbus AFB in Mississippi, where he flew the T-1 Jayhawk.

Jeff was a likeable fellow, and that led the instructors to select him to become an instructor himself — a FAIP, first assignment instructor pilot.

They remained at Columbus for three years, and he was chosen as favorite instructor for all three classes he taught.

Both of their sons were born in Columbus. T.J. is now 15, and Tyler is 13. Tyler was 6 months old when the family departed Columbus. That was 2008, and they returned to Elmendorf.



Capt. Jeff Hill, shown here in his flight suit, said he loved his work and had no plans to exit the Air Force.

But getting that transfer wasn’t easy.

In Columbus, Jeff had been diagnosed with ulcerative colitis, an inflammatory bowel disease.

“He was told he would never fly again and would be kicked out of the Air Force,” Rachael said.

But the family found a doctor who cleared Jeff to fly. The doctor remains a family friend. The day before he got to fly again, Rachael went into labor with their first son.

Still, the diagnosis left Jeff stranded in his assignment at a training base. He went up the chain of command seeking a new assignment. Nothing.

Finally, Rachael suggested he reach out to Gen. Tom “Pugs” Tinsley, wing commander at Elmendorf. He had been the squadron commander who administered Jeff’s commission oath.

Tinsley replied briefly (like generals do) in an email to send the paperwork.

Two weeks later, Jeff had an assignment in Alaska, and he went through 6 months of training on the C-17 Globemaster jet. The family arrived on T.J.’s birthday in June 2008.

Jeff, now a captain, helped “stand up” the 517th Airlift Squadron — convert from C-130 Hercules airplanes to C-17 Globemaster jets. And they got down to business.

The squadron provided supplies to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Jeff himself flew the first Elmendorf-based jet to provide relief in Haiti after the catastrophic earthquake in January 2010. He flew jets that aided with oil cleanup in the Gulf of Mexico that spring, too.

As operations flight commander, Jeff walked around the squadron to meet with his airmen, hear their concerns and make sure everyone was OK. He once had been enlisted himself.

The Arctic Thunder Air Show takes place annually at Elmendorf AFB (now Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson).

On Wednesday, July 28, 2010, Jeff left his wife and sons to go to work like any normal day. Tyler had just turned 3 three days earlier.

Jeff and three members of the Alaska Air National Guard that day were to fly C-17 as practice for the two-day show, coming up in three days. He would be co-pilot. Often, as they practiced, people would come out to watch the maneuvers.

He called her as he stepped to fly. It was the last time they spoke.

“I told him I loved him and to fly safe, like I always did.”

That evening, a wife from the crew called Rachael and said that a C-17 went down and asked her if there was someone to contact to get information.

Rachael called around, and she reached the director of operation’s wife. She confirmed there had been a crash, but she didn’t know who was aboard.

The news spread fast. Rachael called a neighbor to watch her sons, and she was watching it on the news as she called. The crash was at 6:22 p.m. Alaska Daylight Time, and it was airing on the 6:30 broadcast of local news.

The squadron commander called her later, around 7:30 p.m. They knew that she knew Jeff was aboard the jet.

The Air Force broke protocol. Normally, they don’t inform the family until two Class A-uniformed officers arrive at the door, much like in the movies.

But for her, the commander, C-17 director of operations, C-12 director of operations, first sergeant and chaplain all came over in their flight suits.

“Jeff has been in an accident,” they told her.

Protocol was followed for the three Alaska air guardsmen.

“Protocol says don’t go until there’s been confirmation, but I am grateful they came when they did and didn’t follow protocol,” Rachael said.

The “Sitka-43” C-17 had stalled during an air show maneuver. Low on altitude and speed, it was too late to pull up. The plane exploded in a fireball two miles from the runway.

Jeff Hill was 31, the youngest to die in the crash and the only active-duty Air Force member. The Air National Guard victims were Maj. Michael Freyholtz, 34, of Hines, Minn.; Maj. Aaron Malone, 36, of Anchorage, and Master Sgt. Thomas Cicardo, 47, of Anchorage.

At 9 a.m. the next day, Mortuary Affairs was at her home. She was making decisions about Jeff, such as choosing an urn, and financial decisions that would affect the rest of her life.

She was grateful to have Daniel White, the family liaison officer, by her side.

There were two memorial services. One was for all four men on the following Monday, then one for Jeff on

Wednesday, a week after the crash day. Rachael couldn’t bring herself to speak at the first one, and a friend read a statement on her behalf. She did speak at the second service.

As for the obituary, someone in Jeff’s squadron took care of it.

“I use it for everything still. I don’t know who even wrote it,” Rachael said.

The Arctic Thunder Air Show attracts 170,000 onlookers. It almost was canceled, but organizers decided to hold it to honor of the fallen. The show provided a memorial to the airmen — a C-17 with poster-size photos of them — and a moment of silence.

Jeff Hill is buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. During the service, Rachael, their sons and Jeff’s mother and father each received a folded U.S. flag.

After that, life was survival. Rachael was a single mother of two sons and the dedication of being a good parent drove her. It still drives her.

With help from friends, she started the Jeff Hill Legacy Fund (jeffhilllegacyfund.com). They meet with applicants in the fall, decide the winners in winter and hand out the scholarships in the spring. Each year, the board has awarded \$20,000 and \$25,000.

It also continues Jeff’s story. “Jeff is still inspiring people,” Rachael said.

There is a donation button on the website, or donors can mail a check to the address:

P.O. Box 770317
Eagle River, AK 99577

Rachael picked Elk River at random.

“After 3 1/2 years, I felt like I was needing to find myself,” she said.

In Alaska, she had a high-profile identity as “that widow of the pilot who died in the plane crash.”

After a good conversation with a friend, she concluded she didn’t need to live in Alaska to maintain the Jeff Hill Legacy Fund. She could return to Minnesota, and the scholarships would continue.

Rachael’s sons played sports, and she Googled “Minnesota high school hockey.” She came across rankings, and Elk River was ranked No. 3. It caught her eye, and she researched the community. Everything fell into place, and she moved in July 2014.

“It was a complete leap of faith,” she said.

No one but family knew her. She started teaching at the YMCA. She and the boys began making friends through the community’s youth sports programs.

T.J. and Tyler were involved in football, hockey and baseball. She could be a regular mom now. After one son asked what it was like to have a dad coach the team, she even coached a football team.

This month, Rachael Hill is the Elk River Volunteer of the Month.

Hill is a member of Elk River Post 112.

“I am proud to be a veteran and part of the Legion and honored to carry on my husband’s memory.”



Jeff Hill walks with T.J. and Tyler on a hike in Alaska on Labor Day weekend 2009. Jeff was an avid outdoorsman and even was on the Outdoor Channel’s “Hunting the Country.”

COVID-19 vaccinations begin at Minnesota Veterans Homes

MINNEAPOLIS — Ninety-seven percent.

That's how many veterans in the Minnesota Veterans Homes said they were willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine, according to a survey the state-run system conducted.

"I believe that they trust in the staff that takes care of them," said Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Douglas Hughes.

Some of the residents and staff at the Minneapolis Veterans Homes began receiving the COVID-19 vaccine Dec. 29.

The state's Minnesota Veterans Homes system received the vaccinations last week and performed a soft rollout of their vaccination steps in preparation for doing all five locations. Twin Cities media was present.

"With this vaccine, this is the beginning of the end," Hughes said.

On Wednesday, Dec. 30, vaccinations were given to residents at the Fergus Falls and Silver Bay homes, followed by vaccinations for staff.

Vaccines for the rest of the Minneapolis location happened Dec. 31. The vaccines came to the Luverne home on Jan. 4, Hughes said.

As a domiciliary facility, rather than nursing, Hastings will see vaccines in February, he said.

Vaccines are being given at the Minnesota Veterans Homes because all long-term care providers in Minnesota are vaccinating residents and staff this week.

Minneapolis is the largest of the five veterans homes. It has 260 residents and 550 staff.

Hughes said the same survey found 35 percent of staff said yes, 30 percent maybe and 35 percent said no. However, follow-up surveys are seeing rising results: 50 percent yes, 20 maybe and 30 no.

"We believe we will achieve 70 to 80 percent of the staff," Hughes said.

Some of the "no" replies, he said, might have been "wait and see" types, while others firmly refuse it.

"As a health care worker, my obligation is to do no harm. I would think that would



Minneapolis Veterans Home nursing assistant Joan Demey of St. Paul prepares to receive the COVID-19 vaccine on Dec. 29.

fit into it, getting the vaccine," Hughes said.

Like a flu shot

The deputy commissioner said reactions to the vaccine have not been bad. It hurts less than a shingles shot and about the same as a tetanus or flu shot. He said a couple of vaccine receivers have experienced fatigue as a side effect.

The Minnesota Veterans Homes experienced COVID deaths like all congregate care facilities in the state. He said the homes lose about a third of the residents to various causes of death each year.

He didn't have his specific numbers in front of him, but Hughes said the rate of death during the pandemic was only slightly higher than a typical pre-COVID year and on par with a strong flu season. He said respiratory diseases will work their course in a group setting.

"That's just the way it is," Hughes said.

Encouraged

"Encouraged" is the word Senior Director

of Veterans Health Care Simone Hogan said about beginning vaccinations.

She said the staff has performed wonderfully. She is glad the veterans homes are getting closer to the end of the pandemic.

"We really do need to thank our staff. They have risen up to the challenge," she said. "We are pleased with their efforts."

She also thanked the families of veterans for being "supportive and understanding." Many of them could not visit their loved ones because of strict visitation rules.

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Chief of Staff Mike McElhiney, a veteran of the Army Special Forces, said he would encourage all veterans in Minnesota to get vaccinated when the time comes.

"I don't know why a veteran would not want to get it," he said. "They got vaccines in the military. It's just one vaccination in the line of many to keep us healthy."

The sooner people get it, he said, the sooner life gets back to normal.

He said he has witnessed the hard work and dedication of medical professionals and trust people in the field to have the best interest of the public at heart.

"They are professionals, and they are going to do it right," McElhiney said.

Phenomenal

Hughes said the Minnesota Veterans Homes, for 10 months, have had to navigate ever-changing guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health and the federal Centers for Disease Control.

However, staff at the five homes have adapted quickly. The five homes act as one unit, he said.

"We communicated as quickly as we could after guidelines would come out," he said.

Hughes has a background in the pharmaceutical industry, and the accelerated speed with which the vaccine trials and approvals took place "is phenomenal," he said.

"And to be 95 percent effective, that's phenomenal, too."



Veteran Richard Evans, a resident at the Minneapolis Veterans Homes, describes receiving the COVID-19 vaccine to the Twin Cities media on Dec. 29.

VA Director Pat Kelly gives COVID-19 update

ST. PAUL — The COVID-19 vaccine does not stop the spreading of the coronavirus. It does stop people from the resulting illness.

"You still have the ability to spread the disease but not get sick from it," said Pat Kelly, director of the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

This was among comments he made to the Minnesota Commanders Task Force on Jan. 12.

The CTF meets monthly and is a joint legislative effort by nine congressionally chartered veterans organizations. However, it also is a forum where leaders in the veterans care community can talk to several commanders at a single time.

Kelly said there were 20 COVID-19 cases in the Minneapolis VA at the time. He noted it once had been as high as 50. He said the surges make planning difficult, such as scheduling elective surgeries or shifting staff from one area of the building to another.

"We could be like California or Arizona in a month, the way this thing kind of works around the country," he said.

The VA has its outpatient workload back to normal, he said, but inpatient surgeries are down. It had shifted from 10 operating rooms to five. Doctors and nurses normally working in the operating rooms are in the intensive care units.

But that adjustment results in a surgical backlog.

Kelly assured the commanders that surgeries needing to

be done are being done. He said another meeting the same day was to look at the next adjustments.

"It's a balancing act," he said.

He predicted Americans still will see masks, screenings, washing hands, social distance and other public health measures for another year.

The Minneapolis VA has vaccinated most of the staff who wanted it, Kelly said. The vaccination effort expanded to veterans on Jan. 13 and throughout the month.

It started with the high-risk groups, then to vets 75 or older, including ones not already enrolled in VA care.

Beginning the weekend of Jan. 23 and 24, the VA spread the word to veterans 75 and older to make an appointment to get vaccinated at the Minneapolis VA hospital, whether or not they were enrolled with the VA.

The shots are administered at the second floor of the Flag Atrium at the Minneapolis VA. Kelly hopes to expand to the community-based outpatient clinics across the region.

"It's a very large effort," Kelly said.

The American Legion Department of Minnesota, through its email capacity, contacted 32,000 veterans about the vaccinations being available.

After a rush, the Minneapolis VA is sending letters notifying enrolled vets about vaccine appointments. (See Page 7.)



Pat Kelly

Commander's Project

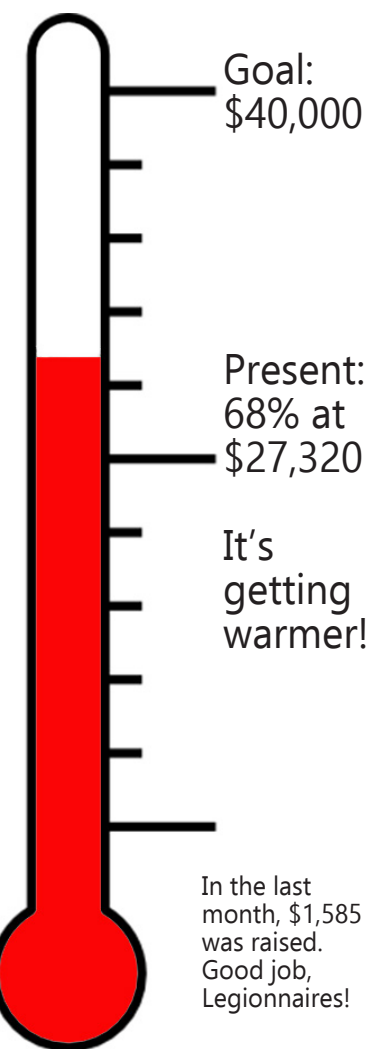
Let's do it for the dock!

Department Commander Mark Dvorak's Project gives 75 percent to Legionville and 25 percent to Wounded Warriors Guide Service.

The portion for Legionville is intended to fund a new dock that will enclose the swimming area, making it safer for campers.

Make checks out to Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 82.

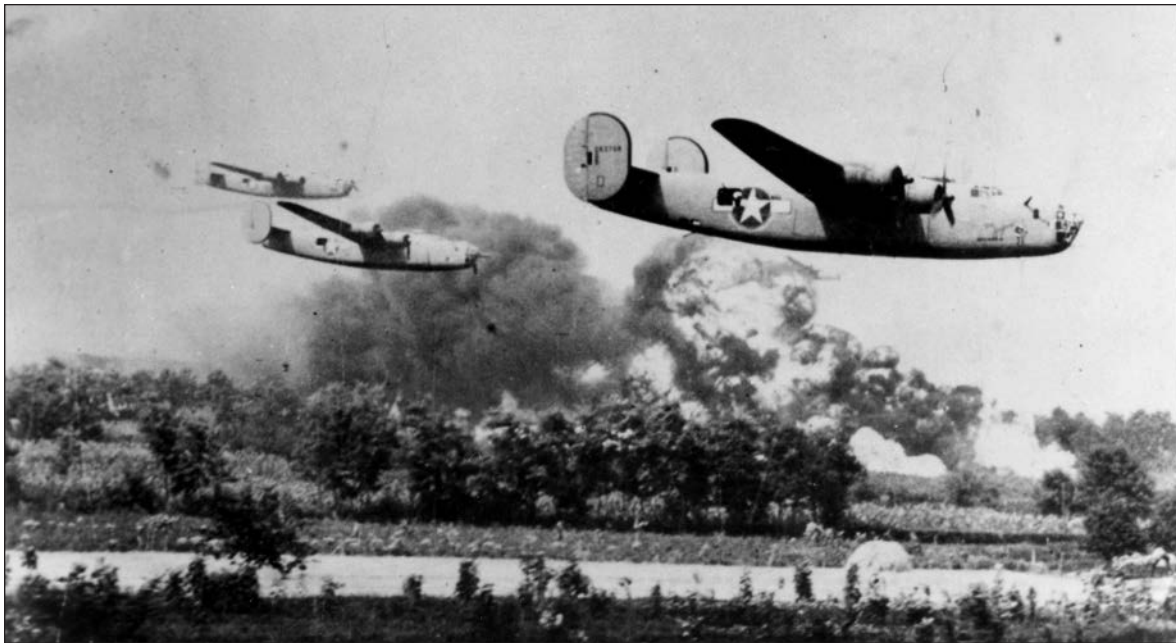
Mail to American Legion Dept. of Minnesota, 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000



Date of graphic: Jan. 25

MYTH
If I join The American Legion, then I am going to be obligated to do all this volunteer work.

"FOR GOD AND COUNTRY, WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER..."



On Aug. 1, 1943, the USAAF staged Operation Tidal Wave, among the most-daring air raids of the war. With B-24 bombers, it aimed to damage heavily-defended refineries at oil fields near Ploesti, Romania, by taking off 1,000 miles away in Libya. Five airmen received the Medal of Honor for their heroism. Of 178 bombers and 1,726 men, 54 aircraft and 500 men failed to return (310 killed, 186 captured).

Spies from the sky

Air intelligence was key to success in U.K., U.S. bombing

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PAUL — There is a lot of documented history of World War II, but there are topics here and there left unexplored.

Author Robert S. Ehlers Jr. should know. He found one: air intelligence.

He wrote “Targeting the Third Reich: Air Intelligence and the Allied Bombing Campaigns,” which came out in 2009 and was voted Best Air Force Book of 2010.

He is a retired Air Force colonel with 24 years as an intelligence officer. He had explored writing a book about Allied air intelligence during World War II when a job opportunity allowed him to pursue it.

Ehlers presented Jan. 19 to the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table via Zoom, before a spread-apart audience at the Minnesota History Center.

The Germany economy relied heavily on coal. Without access to oil, the railroads and waterways relied on synthetic oil made from coal. Bombing infrastructure, transportation and coal and oil production, Ehlers told the audience, sped the advance of U.S., British Empire and Soviet troops and shortened the war by three or four months and lessened casualties by more than 1 million.

To be sure, Allied bombing did not win World War II, as is oft-purported.

“The war was already lost by the time these bombings began,” Ehlers said. Winning the war “was a



The British multirole combat aircraft DH-98 Mosquito, aka “Wooden Wonder,” performed as photo recon, bombers, fighters and trainers during World War II. The ones in this photo were lost in the war.

combined-forces effort, and they each played their part.”

He said he uses the measure of three or four months, because if the Germans had not been defeated by August, they, too, might have been the target of U.S. atomic weapons. He noted the atomic bomb was originally designed to be dropped on Nazi Germany, with the military leaders leaning toward taking out the more dangerous enemy first.

Instead, Germany capitulated in May. The Germans, Ehlers said, had 14,000 aircraft sitting around. The Luftwaffe lacked pilots, fuel and parts for repairs, thanks to bombing.

“People want to engage in the ethical/moral concerns about bombing,” the retired colonel said.

He said he wasn’t taking up that issue in his presentation. Instead, he was revealing the effectiveness of the bombings.

The Germans preferred short and mobile campaigns, like the swift, successful invasion of France and the Low Countries in 1940. They then recoup, re-equip and roll on, Ehlers said.

This worked for the Axis until it failed to knock out the Soviet Union in 1941. Its next campaign took a southern route toward the Russian oil fields. The German panzer units required gasoline. The Luftwaffe required airplane fuel.

The Allies operating out of Great Britain couldn’t go after German transportation and fuel production until they first defeated the Luftwaffe and gained air superiority.

Aerial bombing began in 1911 over Libya in a war between Italy and the Ottoman Empire. The bombs of World War I started off hand-dropped and sighted with the naked eye, but by the end employed bombsights. The Central Powers were the first to bomb cities, with zeppelins making raids.

Strategies evolved. Bombs went after supply chains, production, civilians. Bombing also contributed to the war’s stalemate.

After the war, the U.S. disbanded its air intel. The U.K. shrunk its air intel down to just eight people, but Ehlers it kept core capabilities in place — mapping, surveying.

With rise of Hitler in Germany, air intel increased in importance. Previous wars had naval blockades, but now air blockades were possible, Ehlers said.

By 1936, Britain would find business reasons to fly to Germany but fly over sensitive targets on the way there and back, snapping photos from the sky. Britain had a company called Aircraft Operating Co. that led the way on aerial photography. It had been in business since 1925.

“They had kind of a head start on this,” Ehlers said.

During World War II, the allied air intel ballooned to 1,100 people. They would dismantle guns, radio and everything nonessential to flight from Spitfires and Mosquitos aircraft and install a big reconnaissance camera.

The idea, Ehlers said, was to get in, snap the pictures, get back.

“They thought: ‘If they didn’t come back, we will know something happened,’” he said.

One of the most accomplished British photo interpreters was a journalist named Constance Babington Smith, an officer who led an interpretation team at Medmenham. She and her team helped the Allies learn the progression of German jet aircraft. She, in November 1943, discovered the existence of V-1 rockets Peenemünde Airfield.

By December 1939, the Royal Air Force suffered 80 percent of its aircraft in raids on the German homeland. Other areas were seeing 50 to 80 percent losses. Bombing France had a range from 40 to 50 percent. Air crews were being killed off too quickly, Ehlers said.

RAF Marshal Arthur Harris switched the British raids to nighttime. But the air intel catalog was for day bombing.

That catalog played to the advantage of the U.S. Army Air Forces when it joined the war. The USAAF opted for high-altitude daytime bombing, starting in 1942.

That meant Germans faced British bombs at night and American bombs during the day. Both put a lot of money into it.

At first, British crews claimed they hit the targets. Photo recon proved otherwise.

Radar, radio signals, flares, bombing streams and special-trained “pathfinders” improved the numbers.

The nighttime area bombing, Ehlers said, resulted in Germans shifting efforts. They put an emphasis on anti-aircraft artillery. These are now guns not being used to fight tanks.

They were sending pilots up to fend off raids. These now are pilots not raiding England.

By bombing central cities, this destroyed production plants. The No. 1 salvage part in 1942-43 were propellers. It turns out, they were exclusively made in central cities.

“British bombing did severe damage to the Germans, but it did not bring the Germans to the negotiating table as predicted,” Ehlers said.

The USAAF was more accurate using daytime precision bombing. They used B-17 and B-24 aircraft, escorted by P-51s. They did photo flyovers within 12 hours, another within 24 hours and finally another two weeks later, to notice how the ground changed and determine which aircraft was best for the raid.

Gen. Dwight Eisenhower threatened to resign his role as supreme commander months before D-Day if British Prime Minister Winston Churchill didn’t grant him full operational command of all the bombers.

Churchill gave in.

There had been a major strategic argument, Ehlers said. Bomb transportation, oil production or cities. Transportation won out, and Ike wanted to reduce the ability of the Nazis to reach Normandy. After the decision, he told Gen. Carl “Tooney” Spaatz, on the side, to keep after oil production, too.

The RAF raids didn’t hit the train cars. The low-altitude bombs went after locomotives, marshalling yards and roundhouses.

The strategy hurt the ability of Germans to reach Normandy once D-Day came. They had to detrain 100 miles from the front. They lost half of their equipment, Ehlers said, were far from supplies and were frazzled by the time they entered the fight.

The Germans tried sneaking in on barges. The French resistance pointed it out, and the Allies bombed the barges.

On the Eastern Front, Germany failed to take the Caucasus, Iraq or Iran, making them even more vulnerable to attacks on oil refineries. American and British forces dropped bombs on Romanian and Hungarian targets to cripple oil production.

The Germans made the mistake of keeping fuel stores too far forward, and when forces were overrun by the Red Army, German soldiers fell back and lost access to fuel. This reduced their ability to fly sorties on the Eastern Front.

And even as the Germans retreated to defensible positions in their homeland, they continued to inflict heavier and heavier losses on their enemies, Ehlers said.

Shortening the war by three or four months, Ehlers said, made a difference. But it was done by a coordination of ground, air and sea forces.



Photo interpreters would analyze photos like this and determine, based on prior images, whether the target was hit. They later analyzed follow-up pictures to see whether the enemy was rebuilding.



USAAF officers with the 7th Photographic Reconnaissance Group look through cameras in front of a B-17 Flying Fortress in 1943. Based in Oxfordshire, the 7th Photographic Reconnaissance Group took over 3 million intel photos over the course of 4,251 sorties over Nazi-occupied Europe.



Photo by Joshua McCoy/Ole Miss Athletics

Abby Buessler is a senior on the Ole Miss rifle team, which was ranked No. 4 in the country when this story printed Dec. 24 in the Forest Lake Times. She was named to three All-American teams last year.

High caliber

Forest Lake's Buessler sisters excel at shooting sports

John Wagner
Forest Lake Times

FOREST LAKE — When Abby and Dana Buessler were young, they went to a game fair and shot air rifles. They both enjoyed the experience, and the folks running the air rifle booth told them of a weekly shooting event at Forest Lake American Legion Post 225.

When their father, Bill, was ready to take them to that meeting, the twin sisters resisted.

"We told my dad, 'We'd rather stay home,'" Dana said. "We had some neighbor kids over, and we didn't want to go."

But Dad insisted, and the twins relented, and despite their reluctance to attend, they enjoyed the experience. Those 12-year-olds grew to embrace riflery and have since become two of the best collegiate shooters in the country.

What's more, the success Abby and Dana enjoyed in riflery attracted their younger sister, Allison, to embrace shooting as well. As Abby and Dana approach the end of their collegiate careers — Abby competes for the University of Mississippi, while Dana shoots for Murray State — Allison has signed to compete for the University of Kentucky starting next year.

"Right away, I liked that my dad, my sister and I could go together and all learn something from it," Abby said. "And I liked that it was a unique sport: I could work individually, and grow on my own. As twins, we could work with one another, talk about what we were learning."

Dana agreed, adding: "We instantly fell in love with it — it wasn't like anything we had done before. Being able to instantly see your results was fun. That pushes you to test yourself, to see if you can improve and get instant feedback."

And both girls quickly knew they wanted to get better.

Getting better

When Abby and Dana started their freshman year at Forest Lake Area High School in 2013, they began to put in the work to improve. They started attending prestigious shooting camps and got specific instruction on the

technical aspects of the sport.

They soon realized there was more to the sport than grabbing a gun, then aiming and firing.

"It only took a couple of weeks into our time at Gopher [Rifle and Revolver] Club to realize there was lot more to it," Dana said. "At first we were shooting prone, so all I had to do was look at the site, line it up and pull a trigger. But then they started teaching us positions, and suddenly I had to hold the gun, and it got heavy. I had to learn how to breathe, and a lot of other things like 'natural point of aim.'"

"They taught us a lot of different techniques, and we started to realize how crazy technical shooting can be."

Both sisters excelled at the sport, helping lead the Minnesota Centershots team to the 2016 National Junior Olympic 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship. But the twins quickly realized that competitive fire should not be allowed to consume the relationship they had as sisters.

"Dana and I have a unique relationship in that we don't have that 'smack-talk,' competitive side to our competition," Abby said. "We go out and wish each other the best. I hope that I beat her at the end of the day, but that's where it ends."

Dana agreed, adding: "We're competitive in the way that we push each other to be better, but we support each other more than anything else. If Abby has a bad day and I have a good day, all I want is for her to feel better. I want to support her, and she supports me."

"We realized that we could fight over every single thing, or we could push each other to be better. And we chose to support one another."

Meanwhile,

Allison saw the tight bond that riflery had forged between the two older sisters.

"They did everything together all the time," Allison said. "They still do — they just live far away from one another now. They're the same, but they're different. They're both super-fun and love doing the same things, but they're different. People think twins are exactly the same, but they're different in their own ways."

Going their separate ways

As Abby and Dana approached their 2017 high school graduation, each sister had different answers to the question they were asked frequently: would they be going to college together? Abby's answer would return as yes, and Dana's would be no.

"I would look at her and wonder what she was talking about," Abby said.

"Seriously, we knew that if we went to the same college it would be a great time, but we weren't going to force it."

In the summer before their senior year, the Buesslers

toured six college campuses in four days. They began at Ohio State, then traveled to West Virginia, Murray State, Tennessee-Martin, Kentucky and Ole Miss. It soon became apparent that the sisters favored different schools.

"We looked at and talked about the same colleges, and we realized that if we came to the same conclusion, that would be great. But I think at that point we were ready to go separate ways," Dana said.

"I wasn't surprised," Allison said.

Eventually Abby chose Ole Miss, where she has enjoyed great success. Last year she posted a record-breaking season for the nationally-ranked Rebels, qualifying for the NCAA Rifle Championships with a 583 smallbore score and earning a spot on three All-American teams, including National Rifle Association First Team Smallbore All-American.

Dana selected Murray State, where she also has excelled. She was named Ohio Valley Conference Freshman of the Year in 2018, and last season she was named to the All-OVC Smallbore Second Team for the nationally ranked Racers.

"We always thought I would go to the 'big' school and Abby would go to a small school because of our personalities," Dana said. "So isn't it funny that Abby went to Ole Miss and I went to Murray State?"

The distance between the schools has not stopped the twins from staying close, though.

"I see her at competitions a couple of times during the season," Abby said. "Our schools are four hours away, so there are times where they will come to our range and compete against other schools."

Encouraging the next wave

In the same way the Buessler twins began their shooting career, younger sister Allison had little choice at the beginning.

"Since Abby and Dana started before me, they dragged me into shooting," Allison said with a laugh. "It's the classic 'younger sister' thing. They kept telling

me, 'Allison, you have to try this,' but I wasn't sure. I was in second grade, and I was a little scared. But then I tried it, and it was so fun."

She began shooting BB guns when her older sisters switched to air rifles. Then she switched to air rifles just as her sisters switched to shooting precision rifles. Her plan is to switch to precision rifles in college.

Allison said she was attracted to the sport for many of the same reasons that first enticed her older sisters.

But as Allison became immersed in the sport, she thought it was critical to answer one important question: Does she actually like the sport, or is she just doing it because it's what her family does?

"I realized I love it," she said. "I love the drive for perfection, and I love the people in the sport. And I think about it all the time: When we sit down at the dinner table, we all talk about shooting."

Allison also has excelled in the sport. In 2020, she claimed three major honors from the Minnesota Rifle and Revolver Association: She was the Junior Prone Champion as well as the 3-Position and 4-Position Champion — all with her older sisters cheering her on from afar.

"It was exciting to watch Allison get into the sport," Abby said. "To watch her learn the lessons she's learning, and to see her surpass what Dana and I did in high school, is super cool. I'm proud of her for following in our footsteps, because I think it would be hard to deal with the comparisons to Dana and me. I encourage her to stick to what she does, and not to worry about the comparisons. She's her own person."

While Allison is preparing to start her college career at Kentucky, both Abby and Dana are

Dana agreed, then laughed and said: "We had the typical big-sister, little-sister relationship — 'I love you, but you can be a pain in the butt.' Allison first dealt with the question of whether she should shoot in college because she had to or because she wanted to, and she decided she was doing it for her. When we talked, I told her that she should find the right environment, the place where she would be comfortable and really have a chance to grow."

Despite her successes, Allison admitted that following her sisters in the sport was a challenge at times.

"I live in their shadow a little bit, but I think I also had it easier than they did," Allison said. "They were the guinea pigs. My parents were still figuring things out with them, and that made it easier for me. It was tough being in their shadows, so sometimes I had to remind people, 'Hey, I'm Allison.'"

Instead of following Abby to Ole Miss or Dana to Murray State, Allison forged her own path and signed with the University of Kentucky in November.

"I asked them for a lot of help and guidance, and they helped me a ton," Allison said. "And the best part was that they both told me they would not be mad if I didn't choose their school. They said they would be happy with whatever school I chose. I chose Kentucky because the academic and athletic support they give the team is awesome. And I really like the 'family' aspect of the team."

Taking the next step

While Allison is preparing to start her college career at Kentucky, both Abby and Dana are

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Vi Ranney
605-665-3596
viranney@vyn.midco.net

Special note from Vi Ranney: If the World War II tour in May is postponed due to COVID-19, the departure date will be Sept. 11.

Listening Post

Glencoe Post 95 recognized by co-op

By the McLeod Cooperative News

McLeod Co-op Power is honored to award its 2020 Touchstone Energy Community Award to Glencoe American Legion Post 95. This annual award recognizes a local business, nonprofit or community group that made a positive impact within the Co-op's service territory during the past year.

Out of nine organizations nominated for the award, Glencoe American Legion Post 95 was selected as the winner of the 2020 McLeod Cooperative Power's Touchstone Energy Community Award.

"The Legion clearly demonstrates a strong commitment to community that at the Cooperative we value highly," Member Service Manager Dan Ehrke said. "We are very pleased to recognize this organization's positive contributions to our local community."

Celebrating its 100th anniversary, Glencoe American Legion Post 95 has a long history of service and civic duty. This award is a chance to recognize Glencoe American Legion Post 95 for all the great work they do in our service territory. Congratulations Post 95!

The Legion's members work diligently to support local veterans, area students, and other community groups. Some of the causes that the group supports financially include McLeod



Glencoe Post 95 was named the 2020 Community Award winner and accepts a \$500 award at the McLeod Co-op Power office.

County Veterans Assistance Fund, American Legion Foundation for Hospitalized Veterans, Returning Vets Program, American Legion Family Hospital Program, Christmas Gifts for Shut-in Veterans, Veterans Pheasant Dinner Program, Minnesota State American Legion ROTC Program, Blizzard Blast Hospice Fundraiser, Glencoe Days, Glencoe Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, Glencoe-Silver Lake (GSL) High School Scholarship Program, GSL After Prom, GSL Booster Club, GSL Trapshooting, GSL Robotics Club, GSL Close-up Program, and the GSL Business and Professional Association.

As this year's award winner, Glencoe American Legion Post 95 receives a \$500 donation. In addition, Glencoe American Legion Post 95's award application will be submitted for consideration for the

statewide Minnesota Touchstone Energy Community Award. The statewide award winner will be selected from a pool of local award winners from across Minnesota. The statewide winner will receive \$1,000 toward their community cause and be presented an award during the Minnesota Rural Electric Association's annual meeting in 2021.

We want to thank everyone that submitted a nomination for this award. We also applaud all these groups and so many more that are working tirelessly to improve their communities. Thank you!

Minnesota Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are part of a national alliance of more than 750 electric cooperatives in 46 states that adhere to the values of integrity, accountability, innovation, and commitment to the community.

MUST-SEE TV SETS



Woodbury American Legion Post 501 and Woodbury Veterans of Foreign War Post 9024 donated five flatscreen televisions to the Hasting Veterans Home just in time for the New Year celebration. American Legion Post 501 Commander Bob Dolan and Post member Tom Grezek, along with VFW Post 9024 Commander Paul Lindahl and VFW member Bob Fritschi, were on hand to present the TV sets to Sue Register, Hasting Veterans Home volunteer services coordinator.

OFFICER OF THE YEAR



Olmsted County Deputy Sheriff Tracey Pagel was presented with the Department of Minnesota's 2020 Law Officer of the Year Award at Eyota Post 551. (A story about her appeared in the June 2020 Legionnaire.) On the left is 1st District Commander Dale Wellik. On the right is Department Sergeant-at-Arms Richard Skillestad of Eyota Post 551.

SUPERIOR WREATHS

Two Harbors Post 109 had three Christmas wreaths made for the ceremony the Post had for the Wreaths Across America program in memory of our fallen service members. Shortly after the ceremony, the Post left one for display at the military section of a local cemetery, one to a nursing home in Two Harbors where there are many veterans and one to the Minnesota Veterans Home in Silver Bay. The Post received many thanks from members of the community.



Provided photo

Allison Buessler, a senior at Forest Lake Area High School, claimed three majors honors from the Minnesota Rifle and Revolver Association in 2020. Last month, she signed a letter of intent to compete at Kentucky.

Shooting success began with parents

Continued from Page 11

seniors who see their riflery careers coming to a close and new careers on the horizon.

Abby plans to pursue a master's degree in clinical laboratory science, with the goal of becoming a researcher. That means she will step away from competitive shooting, because she realizes she can serve only one intense and time-consuming master.

"Shooting will always be a part of who I am," Abby said. "But I won't be able to compete at the same level. It's funny, but I think being a researcher is, in some ways, like competing in rifle. You're working individually, running your own tests and stuff, but you're also part of a team. I think the lessons I have learned in shooting will have connections in the future."

Dana also plans to graduate in May 2021, having earned a degree in mechanical engineering. Her next step also involves a break with full-time competitive shooting to enter the workforce in her field.

"Don't get me wrong: I'll meet up with friends for cool matches among the alumni," she said. "But I'm really excited about engineering right now."

Still Dana realizes she will miss competitive

riflery.

"Shooting has been a part of my life for so long, I really don't know who I am as a person without it," she said. "I'm ready to get into the workforce and take the next step, but I know I'm going to miss shooting."

All three sisters thanked a number of people for their success in shooting, starting with their parents, Bill and Carla.

"They're so committed to giving us everything we need to be successful. I wouldn't know where we would be without them," Dana said of her parents. "And Abby and Allison have been so supportive. We could have taken this to a competitive, intense level, but instead they have been supportive."

Abby agreed, adding: "I definitely have to thank my dad for taking Dana and I to that first practice. He and my mom have been very encouraging and supportive. They saw my potential, and they helped me grow."

Abby also mentioned her first coach Joe Showalter, who "helped me find the joy in shooting," she said.

But she also thanked her sisters.

"They are the ones who were there every day with me and made it fun," Abby said.

District commanders

1st District Dale Wellik



Greetings from the Mighty First District American Legion Family.

Thank you for your service and support.

The inauguration of the president of the United States of America is upon us.

Let us all pray for peace, honor, unity and respect.

With all this in place we will be able to move forward.

We have many things to plan for. The Department and District rallies, the District Convention to be held in Austin at the Austin Post 91 in May. Officer elections on all levels, those planning to run for office need a letter of endorsement from your Post.

Membership is needing a boost to get those that are now delinquent and there is those that are in Post 1982AD.

Communication is a big

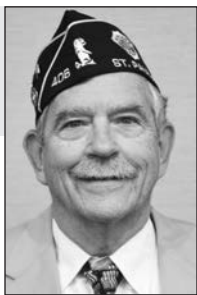
thing that we need to keep working on. Those that get electronic communication share it with others. Take it to your post meeting and copy it, make a copy and put it on the Post bulletin board.

For the pandemic, we now have a vaccine to help us to slow the spread, along with the mask, sanitize, social distancing and hand washing. Keep in your prayers those in need and assistance with a phone call or card. Pray for the deployed and their families.

Pray for the new administration, commander in chief and his cabinet as they take the lead in our nation.

For God and Country!

4th District Joe Jansen



Hello to all our 4th District Legion Family Members.

January started out great with the Joint 4th and 5th Districts get-together over Zoom.

Jennifer H. and Michael W. were our computer wizards. The prerecording of messages allowed the conference to focus on last-minute information from NRC representatives: The Auxiliary, The SAL, and The Legion Riders.

All of you are invited to our 4th and 5th Districts Monday night calls starting at 6 p.m. The February meeting of the Ramsey County Central Committee

will be at Rosetown Post 542 starting with the Executive Board meeting at 6:45 and the full meeting at 7 p.m.

It will be both in person and on Zoom.

Hopefully many of our members have started to receive letters or calls from the VA Medical Center at Fort Snelling. If you have not please contact them if you are 65 or over at 612-725-2000, the operator will transfer you to that department.

8th District D. Marvin Hill



Greetings to the great 8th District family!

We wish to thank Two Harbors Post 109 for hosting our Mid-Winter Conference on Jan. 23. It is a pleasure to again work with the 8th District family in person again.

Lt. Col. (ret.) Bill Lushine, a member of Chisholm Post 247 will be 100 years old on Feb 3. He served in World War II as a Marine and in the Korean War with the Army National Guard.

A convoy will form at the Chisholm Armory at 10:30 a.m. and move to his home where happy birthday and honors will be presented on his lawn.

The Minneapolis VA has received the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine must be given in two doses with the second one given 17 to 25 days to be effective. When donating blood to memorial blood centers, a review for COVID-19 anti-bodies will be done and the results mailed to you in two weeks.

Please stay healthy and safe during this uncertain time.

God bless our troops and god bless America!

2nd District Brad Pagel



It's that time again to add fuel to the fire as they say. How many of you keep up on veterans issues? Do you know there are several bills on the state level that have been introduced concerning veterans in the state of Minnesota. As veterans I believe we are obligated to take care of each other and fight for the issues concerning all veterans.

Do you know where to look for your local legislators' contact information? Keep in mind while making contact with elected officials, be cordial, stay on topic and voice your concerns on the issues at task. Yes, as an organization, we do have political influence but are nonpartisan, focus on veterans issues with both sides of the aisle.

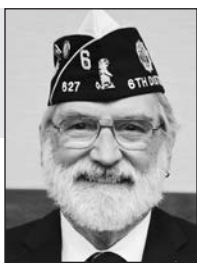
Next on the agenda is membership for the district. There are some posts out there that are lagging for one reason or another. Those of you that are

below the 85 percent, please let's get this up above that by Feb. 15, for some of you that is only one or two members.

Now that restrictions have eased a little bit, we can start looking at having limited functions again. Information will be forthcoming in the district newsletter, if you are not on the 2nd District Newsletter email list, contact me and we can get you on that, as we do send out information in between the monthly newsletter as well.

Remember our mission, committed to mentoring youth and sponsorship of wholesome programs in our communities, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting strong national security and continued devotion to our fellow service members and veterans.

6th District Paul Edwards



Greetings to the 6th District Legion Family,

Welcome to February. It looks like this is going to be a busy month with the Sweetheart Rally in Paynesville on Feb. 6. The Mid-Winter Conference at Nisswa and online is on Feb. 20, and Legion Family Basic Training at the Nisswa Post on Feb. 27. And with that, we run out of month. Must be a short month or something.

I can see from the latest membership report that the District is still chugging along. We need to keep on working the members from Post 1982 to get them transferred into a local organization. If you need help with that, contact our District membership chairman or me and we can download information on those people who live within a certain distance from your Post.

I want to send out congrat-

ulations to Paul Seefeld of Big Lake Post 147 for being elected to serve on Big Lake's City Council.

I will continue to stress that Legion membership is not a spectator sport. In June, the District will have new leadership. We have two good candidates for District commander. They will need your help and support. Look at the list of committees and decide where your particular skill set can do some good. Call them and let them know that if they are elected you would like to serve in some capacity.

I am excited about April, as I have been informed that National Commander Bill Oxford will be visiting the 6th District during his tour of Minnesota.

For God and Country.

9th District Steve Sundstrom



Hello everyone. I hope this finds everyone doing well. I don't know about you, but I'm enjoying our mild winter.

Last month I attended a virtual membership meeting. Many things were brought up. We need to keep up our efforts of getting the at-large Post 1982's to join a Post. This would help a Post reach their membership goals. Another item was that, regretfully, some Posts are turning in their charter for lack of members etc. If you know of one near you encourage the remaining members to join your Post. There is strength in numbers and the more we can the better.

It was discussed that we will be pushing for some type of tax relief at the State level, due to the COVID shutdowns. The idea of attending our county commissioner meetings so our voices can be heard on the local level also.

With the recent changes in Washington, D.C., I am concerned with what I have been hearing. Having said that, I will leave some food for thought with a quote from JFK: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what can you do for your country."

3rd District Linda Dvorak



Hello 3rd District

We had a member meeting over Zoom in mid-January. A lot of good discussion and ideas for membership during this slow time of the year. Hopefully those in attendance learned something.

The 3rd District had its Mid-Winter in the hybrid fashion. The Executive Board and some of the District officers met in person and the others were via Zoom. It was a great experience. Zoom has been a blessing for The American Legion.

As part of the Training Committee, we have put together some training webinars and developed a "Question of the Month," which will be published in the Legionnaire monthly. If you have a question or a topic

for a webinar, please send it to the Training Committee.

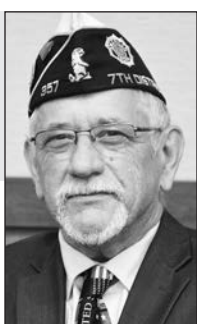
There should be a schedule of upcoming webinars and questions in the Legionnaire. For February (Feb. 11) we will have a webinar of the "Four Chaplains: Why & How" in commemoration of the four Army chaplains that went down with the S.S. Dorchester on Feb 3, 1943.

Also in February (Feb. 25) there will be a webinar on the "Consolidated Post Report: How to Complete the Form Online and on Paper."

Check them out and watch for more!

Until next month!

7th District Dean Knutson



Greetings to the Mighty 7th District!

I hope that all are staying safe and healthy!! With the loosening of restrictions on businesses and clubrooms, I hope everyone is slowly beginning to get back to business and that being we need to work together for the well-being of all veterans and the American Legion Family (Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Legion Riders.)

All Posts need to start concentrating on the yearly reports that need to be filled in a timely manner — IE: Consolidated Post Report, Officers Report List. Refer to the District directory for a listing of all other reports that need to be filled out.

A note to all membership directors: Please ensure that if you have members that have passed away, make sure that the paperwork is sent in as to their

passing so they can be removed from the active roster and put into Post Everlasting.

I would like to congratulate the following posts for attaining 100 percent in membership: Kensington, Elbow lake, Herman, Starbuck, Marietta, Boyd, Kerkhoven, Clinton, Bellingham, Renville, Franklin, Echo and Russell. A job well done.

We currently have 41 Posts that need 10 members or less to reach the 100 percent goal. Traditionally now is the time when membership drops, but with a little extra effort, it can be done. Let's keep up the good work. May God bless The American Legion as we move forward working for the good of all veterans.

10th District Tom Allen



Greetings from the Mighty 10th District.

Actions speak louder than words. "We all" must do what we can to cut down on the spread of the virus and the extremely high loss of life it brings. This current pandemic has shown us that we are an extremely resilient and capable organization.

What is the saying? Oh yes: "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

The 10th District has been remarkably busy. The District had a Zoom meeting and will continue to do so until we can completely reopen. We are enormously proud to be holding our 50th annual Snowmobile Membership Rally. That is right. I said 50th.

I want to thank Patti Coleman and her crew for all the hard work and time they put in to planning and organizing this awesome event.

Speaking of Events, we are holding our Department Legion Family Sweetheart Rally on Feb. 6 at Paynesville Legion Post 271 from 10:45 a.m. until 1 p.m. Zoom participation will be available at marsha@mnala.com.

We had to cancel our District Mid-Winter Conference. However, thanks to the hard work of our officers, vice commanders and chairman, we will

be mailing out all our reports. So, our members can read about all the wonderful things we have accomplished in the District.

Everyone, please make sure you have those reports into Adjutant Roger Stoick, rjstocik@aol.com, by email or U.S. mail, on March 15. With your help we will be able to have a productive Md-Winter Conference even through it is not an in-person meeting.

We are planning our District Testimonial and Past Commanders' Dinner. More information will be published when it becomes available.

WOW! Look at us. Our membership is currently at 95 percent in the District, and I am confident we will reach 100 percent real soon, as this letter is being written before the results of our 50th Snowmobile Membership Rally.

We would not be able to achieve this result without the outstanding support of our members in each Post, Unit, Squadron and Chapter in the District. Together we are the Mighty 10th District. I know you are looking forward to the

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The Auxiliary Bulletin

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President Mary Hendrickson • Secretary Marsha Bible, marsha@mnala.org

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February 2021

Many members have lost loved ones to COVID-19

President's Column

Mary Hendrickson



It was very exciting to return to my home, West Duluth Post 71, on Monday, Jan. 11. Some of the "regulars" were sitting in their usual chairs. I come from a very small family so they were a welcome sight during this difficult time in our history and my personal life. Like some of you, I recently lost a relative to COVID-19.

My cousin John Anderson was a 20-year retired Air Force veteran. Due to social distancing and other restrictions, only his immediate family was allowed at his funeral in Rice Lake, Wis. I pray that 2021 will allow us all the opportunity to be vaccinated and return to what we once knew as a normal life.

I recently had a chance to catch up with Minnesota American Legion Commander Mark Dvorak. We both commented on all the cancellation notices in our datebooks. January looks to be quiet at this point.

I hope to get together with the Girls State Committee as they spend a whole day beginning the process of organizing the 2021 virtual Girls State Session. This is new territory for the American Legion Auxiliary, so I applaud and appreciate this committee's efforts.

My husband, Carl, and I also hope to attend the culmination event of the 10th District Snowmobile Rally on Jan. 31 at Lino Lakes American Legion Post 566.

The Sweetheart Membership Rally will be held on Saturday, Feb. 6, at Paynesville American Legion Post 271!

The American Legion Auxiliary is traditionally in charge of this gathering. It will be wonderful to see some of my American Legion Family in person and communicate with those individuals joining us via Zoom.

I hope there will be a large turnout of memberships.

Unfortunately, we are over 2,000 memberships short of last year's total at this time. It's never too late to play catch up and continue toward our membership goals.

Thank you to those individuals, Units, Posts, Squadrons and Districts who have contributed to my President's Project (gift cards for service officers to distribute to needy veterans visiting our VA Medical Centers). I'm also grateful for the continuing contributions to our Auxiliary Emergency Fund program. There is great need at this time due to fires, floods, COVID-19, job loss, etc.

The American Legion Auxiliary West Duluth Unit 71 sold grab bags for \$1 each on the last night our post was open in December. It was a shopping frenzy! The bags sold out rapidly, resulting in \$161 for the Department Auxiliary Emergency Fund account. The Department of Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary was No. 1 in contributions in the nation for the 2019-2020 year.

Not only are we "Minnesota Nice," we're also "Minnesota Caring." I'd love to hear of any creative ways your unit used to raise funds for the AEF.

Stay safe and positive. God Bless America and our troops who serve to preserve our many liberties. Happy Valentine's Day!

Mary Hendrickson is the president of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota.

Thank you so much

Thank you, American Legion Family, for all the cards and good wishes that you sent me after my recent fall. I am now sporting a new hip and am aiming to see many of you at Department Convention in Redwood Falls.

I have had excellent care at the health facility and am now at home with assistance a few days a week for rehabilitation. Tom and I are blessed to have you all as friends.

We are also thankful for our daughter Madolyn Amundson (Tootie) who visits us daily for coffee and to check in on us. We are in great hands!

Gwen Hamilton
Past Department President 1997-1998

Girls State to be held virtually

Decision is based on present COVID-19 situation

The Girls State Committee has been diligently planning the 2021 session of ALA Minnesota Girls State.

After waiting to see how COVID-19 and new vaccines would affect all of us and watching the numbers for all these weeks, the decision had more to do with the present and future social climate in our state and our nation than with the COVID pandemic.

The decision was made Jan. 5 and reviewed Jan. 25. (The American Legion meeting regarding Minnesota Boys State is coming after The Minnesota Legionnaire's press deadline.)

Minnesota Girls State normally happens at Bethel University. The 74th session of ALA Girls State will be held virtually the week of Sunday, June 13 through Thursday, June 17, 2021.

The committee is going full steam ahead to put together a session that will be relevant, exciting, diverse and different from years past while retaining the core values of the American Legion Auxiliary and the Minnesota Girls State program.

It will begin with the traditional Sunday evening session and will include morning, afternoon and evening sessions. The cost for this program will be \$100 per citizen. As in the past, attendees will be required to attend all virtual scheduled events.

The main goal of this



Scholarships

Important note about
2021 ALA national scholarship applications.

Under the unusual circumstances of this year, the SAT/ACT requirement will be waived for the 2021 scholarship applications.

If the student is able to take the test at some point, the score should be included.

If a student is unable to take the test, please include a notation with the application that the student was unable to take the test due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Applications are due March 1, 2021, to the unit level.

Reminder: National scholarships can now be submitted online through a fillable application.

committee is to continue to provide the quality program that the American Legion Auxiliary is known for. We are the only program like this and we have many opportunities because of our reputation. The social climate in Minnesota in the upcoming months has the

possibility of being volatile and unpredictable.

Our concern this year is that all of our participants, their parents, and our volunteer staff feel comfortable and safe.

Letters will be sent to Minnesota high schools as soon as the final details are confirmed.

Units will also receive their information in a special Unit mailing that will hopefully be sent out the first week of February.

The ALA will have shirts and other items available to purchase from an online store during the event.

Unit 96 recognizes youth ministry for food drive

HUTCHINSON — In a year of uncertainty, it is good to know that the community of Hutchinson can count on the members of the Hutchinson Area Youth Ministries (HAY Ministries) to continue trick or treating for the McLeod County Food Shelf.

About 300 youth went door to door to collect food and cash donations. HAY Ministries also reached out to the food shelf to ask for a list of their current needs.

In the week prior to the night, a bag/ticket was delivered to all homes in the Hutchinson area. Bags were then picked up on the front steps beginning at 4:30 p.m. The past few years they have collected 12,000 pounds of food as well as cash donations.

Donna Telecky of Hutchinson Unit 96 nominated HAY Ministries for the ALA National Youth Hero Award. Shown in the picture are three representatives of the group being presented their award at a recent ALA Unit 96 meeting.

Congratulations to HAY Ministries and thank you to the Hutchinson Unit for recognizing another set of heroes in Minnesota.



Donna Telecky of Hutchinson Unit 96 stands with members of Hutchinson Area Youth Ministries.

Be a promoter of Americanism in these times

By Joanne Joachim
 Americanism Chairman

When I started writing this article it was right after Jan. 6. I believe that whatever I put down on paper now does not somehow seem as important as it would have on Jan. 5.

Now, as I finish this article on Jan. 13, we are impeaching the president of the United States. 2020 with the COVID pandemic, the death of George Floyd and the ensuing riots in the Twin Cities, and the contentious

election — what could top that? The storming of the Capital of our Country is right up there.

I hope and pray that by the time you read this article we will have had a safe and without incident inauguration of our new president.

I would like all of you to continue to promote leadership in Americanism. Become a promoter of Americanism at all levels — personal, Unit, District, and Department. The Americanism program promotes patriotism and

responsible citizenship. In this age of COVID, be an Americanism leader by showing responsible citizenship by wearing a mask in public places, social distancing and if not feeling well stay home.

If you submitted a report for a National Award, you will have to continue the report and cover 2019-21 in the report.

Essay contest: Same topic as last year.

However, essays submitted last year cannot be resubmitted this year. A new essay will have

to be submitted. I'm trying to Celebrate 100 for Americanism this year. Put a note on the winning essays you submit to me and tell me how many essays you received. I hope we can get more than 100 essays submitted.

Remember flag promotion and protection. Blue Star and Gold Star banners. Fly the flag.

And Reports: I'd like to see reports from every district. I missed one District last year. And I hope you all are getting the info that is sent out in the Unit mailings.

Let's keep mining for members; each one is a gem

By Sharon Thiemecke
 Membership Chairman

The cutoff for 2021 membership dues payment was Jan. 31.

That date falls on a Sunday, so, all membership had to be received in the Department office no later than 10 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 29, in order to meet the national cutoff.

Members who have not paid their 2021 dues by the Jan. 31 deadline risk the chance of losing their continuous membership and other benefits. These benefits include eligibility to take advantage of the American Legion Family Hospital Association, apply

for scholarships and apply for assistance from the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

Please do not hold your membership renewals for the Feb. 6 Sweetheart Rally. If you can mail it to be into the Department office by Jan. 29 do it now! Do it today!

It is more important to make sure your members dues have been processed on time than to turn in a big number at that rally.

Hand carry to the Sweetheart Rally what you cannot get mailed. Remember that you must have a lunch ticket to be admitted to the rally at the Paynesville Post Feb. 6. Attendance is limited due to COVID

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year 1/22/2020
One	3,994	3,236	81.02%	3,505
Two	4,015	3,201	79.73%	3,593
Three	3,870	3,076	79.48%	3,353
Four	581	450	77.45%	512
Five	572	430	75.17%	512
Six	5,170	4,123	79.75%	4,578
Seven	3,197	2,462	77.01%	2,848
Eight	1,302	998	76.65%	1,104
Nine	3,445	2,653	77.01%	3,045
Ten	3,978	3,143	79.01%	3,405
1982	193	189	97.93%	176
Totals	30,317	23,961	79.03%	26,631

rules and membership turn in from 11 a.m. to noon.

Membership is everyone's job, encourage everyone to contact their unpaid members now.

Let's get Minnesota to 100 percent. National goals are all do-able! Let's get all of 2020 to renew and add a couple for those deceased or transferred members.

Did you know?

Applications for ALA national scholarships are due March 1, 2021, to your local Unit. Now is a great time to contact your area high schools and send them the applications. Reminder: National scholarships can now be completed online through a fillable application.

Are you following @ALAFORVeterans on social media? Don't miss out on the latest news from ALA National Headquarters. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

By the way, we have more than a dozen Facebook groups dedicated to our national and Department ALA programs. These closed groups are dedicated spaces where ALA members can share updates, photos and messages with other members who share common interests in the Auxiliary's national programs. If you are looking for insight on how to run a program, interested in learning more about what other units and departments do to reach veterans, or simply want to connect with ALA members around the world, join one of our many ALA Facebook groups.

- American Legion Auxiliary 100th Anniversary Celebration
 - ALA Children & Youth
 - American Legion Auxiliary Chaplains
 - American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program
 - American Legion Auxiliary National Membership Group
 - ALA Education Program
 - American Legion Auxiliary Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)
 - ALA National Security
 - American Legion Auxiliary Americanism Program
 - AEF, American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund
 - ALA Legislative
 - ALA Leadership Program
 - ALA Public Relations
 - American Legion Auxiliary Historians
 - ALA Community Service
- Department Facebook Pages: (these are not closed groups)
- American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota
 - American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State

Watch for a special Unit mailing

A special Unit mailing will be sent around the first week of February with three important items:

- Annual Report Forms and Information
 - Call to Department Junior Conference
 - Girls State information
- Please watch for it in the mail.



Upcoming events

- Feb. 6:** Sweetheart Rally at Paynesville Post 271
- March 6:** Appreciation Rally & DEC Meetings at LaCrescent Events Center
- March 14:** The American Legion 102nd Birthday
- April 6-9:** National Commander's Tour
- April 8-11:** Minnesota American Legion College at Camp Ripley
- April 9-10:** Department Junior Conference, 6th District, St. Augusta Post 621
- June 13-17:** American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State
- June 13-19:** American Legion Minnesota Boys State
- June 19:** Joint Commander-President Testimonial Dinner, New Prague Post 45
- July 14:** DEC Meetings at Redwood Falls
- July 15-17:** Department Convention at Jackpot Junction, Morton
- Aug. 27-Sept. 2, 2021:** National Convention in Phoenix
- Oct. 21-23:** Fall Conference

Know your CVSO

Renae Schuch has been with Pipestone County since April 2018. She has been in the U.S. Navy as a hospital corpsman since November 2008. She spent nearly four years on active duty in San Diego and assisted in over 3,000 deliveries in Labor and Delivery at Naval Medical Center San



Renae Schuch

Diego, formerly known as Balboa. She now serves in the U.S. Navy reserves in Sioux Falls and proudly wears the rank of HM2, which is a second class petty officer. Renae has always been eager to learn and has earned her associate's degrees in liberal arts and business management and has earned the status of licensed practical nurse. She enjoys traveling and spending

time with her family, which includes her fiancé, stepdaughter, stepson and a son of their own. They also have two dogs and a cat that keep them busy at home.

Schuch resides in Pipestone and is the county veteran service officer for Pipestone County.

"I absolutely love my job! I have always been one to research any benefits that might be available for and now I get to do it for other people. It has been more than rewarding to help veterans in the community and I truly feel blessed every day."

She is a member of Pipestone American Legion Post 6.

Her phone is 507-825-1183. Her email is renae.schuch@co.pipestone.mn.us.



On July 28, Swanville Post and Unit 313 Legion and Auxiliary completely furnished three rooms at the Eagles Healing Nest in Sauk Centre. The rooms refurbished will be for female veterans in the Lady Liberty House.



The Legionnaire coin stands out in a crowd!

Having this one in your coin rack sure looks good. Help celebrate the 100th anniversary of this monthly publication by, for and about veterans and their supporters in the Land of 10,000 Lakes.

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Amount of donation: _____

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With fewer ads right now, this fundraiser helps. The Minnesota Legionnaire is a nonprofit publication and is classified as a 501(c)4 organization.

Cut out and mail to:
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St. Paul, MN 55155-2000

And thank you!



Are you the son of a veteran? Maybe you are a veteran *and* the son or grandson of one? Either way, join your local Sons of the American Legion.



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

Tom Allen: Continued from Page 13

District Convention as much as I am. Seeing old friends again, making new ones and remembering together those who have left us. The Convention is currently scheduled for June 5 and 6 at Osseo-Maple-Grove Legion Post 172. More information will be coming out in the coming months. As Peter Falk, "Lt. Columbo," says, "Just one more thing." If you are planning on running for a District or Post office, please announce your intentions to the current District officers and in your individual counties. A list of names of those volunteering to hold a District or Post office will be included in the March Mid-Winter newsletter. To allow everyone time to review it before the elections are held at our District Convention in June.

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No doubt you've noticed the increasing cost of health care services such as eye glasses, hearing aids, as well as diabetes supplies. This is why everyone should consider a program that gets you the discounts you need.

Your Department believes these benefits will help Legionnaires save money on important health care services, be a resource for answers to vital health care issues, and provide added convenience, quality and security to their lives. That is why the Department lends it endorsement to this high quality program. Legionnaires interested in learning more about these programs can call 1-800-235-6943.



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24-hour NurseLine	Optum	N/A	N/A
Diabetes Management	Liberty Medical	15%	N/A
GOLD PLAN - \$60/year			
PRODUCT	NETWORK	DISCOUNT	PROVIDERS
Vision	Cole Managed VisionCare	45% - 60%	9,000
Hearing	HearPO	30% - 62%	1,600
24-hour NurseLine	Optum	N/A	Unlimited Access
Diabetes Management	Liberty Medical	15%	N/A
Dental	CAREINGTON POS	20% - 50%	24,000
Chiropractic & Alternative Medicine	American WholeHealth	10% - 30%	25,000
Vitamins	American WholeHealth	25%	N/A
Podiatry	DDS	20% - 50%	3,500
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