



Legion loses hard charger

Roger K. Olson dies at age 87

By Tim Engstrom

HUTCHINSON — The American Legion Department of Minnesota lost one of its heavy hitters on Tuesday, Jan. 26.

Roger K. Olson, 87, served in the Air Force during the Korean War and was in the Alaskan Air Command.

He was the Department of Minnesota commander 1997-98, 3rd District commander 1994-95, 3rd District adjutant 1993-94 and Post 96 commander 1989-90. He served in many leadership and committee positions at the Post, District, Department and National levels over the years. He was a 51-year member of Hutchinson Post 96.

“When I came on board and became commander, Roger stepped up to be a mentor,” said Post 96 Commander Tim Burley. “Roger was always respectful of everybody. We have no rank.”

Burley, chair of the Department Public Relations Committee, said Olson would do what he felt is best for the Legion and often volunteered when others wouldn't. He especially pursued membership.

“Roger believed in membership, and the more you had, the better you were,” Burley said. “And he was right. He felt all

Continued on Page 9



Roger K. Olson

State: Posts should contact counties

ST. PAUL — Many American Legion Posts with bar and restaurant operations across Minnesota reported being denied by the Minnesota Department of Revenue for COVID-19 Business Relief Payments.

Why? Because the classification system counts many of them as social and civic organizations, rather than bars

and restaurants.

“It's a fairness issue,” said Department of Minnesota Adjutant Mike Maxa. “We were shut down just like bars and restaurants, but we are being punished now for having a charitable mission.”

The Department of Minnesota contacted the Governor's Office, the

Department of Revenue and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs on Feb. 18. During the meeting, Maxa and Communications Director Tim Engstrom explained what was happening and requested guidance.

The result: The next day the Department of Revenue issued a statement urging Posts with bar, restaurant or

banquet operations to request COVID-19 relief through their county governments. This is the statement, slightly abridged for space:

Posts urged to contact county ASAP for COVID-19 relief

Minnesota American Legion and
Continued on Page 11

The essence of veterans

Illustrator sketches pencil portraits of past military

By Kara Hildreth

WATONNA — Minnesota illustrator Al Smith tells a story with all his works of art.

Three years ago, Smith, 82, began a journey of self-discovery as a retired graphics artist when he was asked to draw a good friend who was a Vietnam veteran and a patriot.

This commissioned art piece led to a new trajectory of his life. He began the fulfilling work of drawing soldiers and veterans of war for military families. His work included historical pieces of unknown soldiers and soldiers he grew to know through stories from their families.

Smith, 82, believes he has been asked to use his God-given artist talent for the good of others. He hopes his purposeful work can give love and comfort to family members who miss their loved ones and are busy with the healing process. They miss sons, husbands, brothers who may have served or even died during war or during active duty in the United States military.

This prolific artist said he feels proud to showcase more than 140 illustrations from his body of work that cover the Vietnam Experience, Women of War and, today, he is actively working on images in a collection he calls World War II Iconic.

As a boy he spent his childhood sketching anything he found interesting. His grandfather encouraged him by



This piece and others were part of Al Smith's "Vietnam Experience" collection.

bringing images to draw and he spent hours sketching from his desk. He imagined his life as he peered outside his bedroom window in Austin.

“I spent most of my time drawing pictures — cars, trucks, hot rods, girls, war scenes, boats.”

Smith headed off to college with talent and high hopes of working in the art industry.

“I was the best artist in my school and town,” Smith recalled.

He continued his liberal arts studies at Minnesota School of Art that today is called Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

Smith devoted his professional career to his work in the graphic arts and advertising industry, eventually owning and operating his own small ad agency.

He took a sabbatical from pencil drawing for most of his life, he said. In fact, he put down his pencils for more than 60 years.

Healing illustrations

The one exception came to light after he and his wife suffered a devastating loss when one of their children died at

Continued on Page 10

Minnesota Legion Baseball is full steam ahead in 2021

SACRED HEART — American Legion Baseball is heading into the 2021 season on pace with last season.

“I think the interest has been as strong or stronger than it has in the past,” said Director Randy Schaub, a Sons of The American Legion member with Olivia Squadron 186.

Schaub is the baseball head coach at Renville County West High School, which plays its home games in Sacred Heart. For Legion Baseball, he coaches the Sacred Heart Post 229 team.

Minnesota American Legion Baseball is the largest Legion Baseball

program in the country. It fielded 366 teams in 2019 and had 357 signed up to play in 2020 before the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Committee was forced to cancel the season because of COVID-19 factors ranging from insurance to legal questions to social distancing.

However, the world has come a long way in a year in figuring out how to manage a pandemic and still let youth play sports safely, Schaub said. Legion Baseball is full steam ahead in 2021.

Continued on Page 9

Resolution: Reopen National Personnel Records Center

ST. PAUL — The American Legion Department of Minnesota Executive Committee approved a resolution in February and sent it to the National Executive Committee for approval at the Spring Meetings in May.

The resolution calls for the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis to reopen and catch up on its mounting backlog. The center shut down in March 2020, fulfilling only emergency records request.

It worked fast. The NPRC opened.

The Washington office of The American Legion let the federal agency know

the resolution was on its way.

The resolution remains pertinent, because it also addresses federal funding for scanning older military records.

“This resolution addresses the important roll the National Personnel Records Center plays in VA's duty to assist veterans during the claims process. With NPRC being shut down since March 2020 due to the pandemic only fulfilling emergency records request, it has played a role in VA's claims inventory reaching 500,000 with 210,000 considered backlogged over

Continued on Page 3

On behalf of Minn. veterans

2021 legislative priorities could include: vets courts, tax relief, memorial highway, adult day care

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PAUL — The Department of Minnesota Executive Committee meets March 6 at La Crescent Post 595.

On the agenda will be determining the state legislative priorities for 2021.

The meeting starts at 2 p.m., prior to the annual Appreciation Rally.

The American Legion Department of Minnesota is based in St. Paul at the Veterans Service Building, just across the lawn from the Capitol, and it works to pass legislation on behalf of veterans across the state. It is among the many reasons to become a Legionnaire.

The following are the bills under consideration.

1. Military Veteran Offender Restorative Justice Sentence

SF 116: Chamberlain, Lino Lakes
HF 478: Feist, New Brighton

The bill provides uniformity among veterans treatment courts in Minnesota and allows veteran defendants in counties without vets courts to transfer their cases to places with them.

It provides judges with the ability to pursue restorative sentences for veterans facing Level 7 offenses or below but it does not require them to. Judges have the final call.

Most of all, it gets veterans with service-connected trauma, often from combat, to get the VA treatment they need. Good vets courts have a low rate of repeat offenders. Uncle Sam broke them, and it must now fix them.

The American Legion NEC, in 2016 at the Cincinnati Convention, approved a resolution in support of veterans treatment courts.

Other supporters: Violence-Free Minnesota, Minnesota County Attorneys Association, Minnesota Board of Public Defense, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, Minnesota Commanders' Task Force and many nonprofits.

Judges and justices cannot weigh in on legislative matters, but it is widely understood, based on enthusiasm at veterans courts ribbon-cuttings, that they favor this measure.

2. Congressionally Chartered Veterans Organizations Property Tax Exemption

SF259: Lang, Olivia
HF182: Dettmer, Forest Lake

This language calls for reducing property taxes on Legion and VFW Post homes (the buildings) to 0%.

These places are far more than merely the business operations of bars and restaurants. They are places where veterans organizations conduct their business, including ones that don't own the building itself.

The business side is almost always a small area of the entire structure. Business profits go toward the mission of the veterans organization as well as costs of the building itself.

The Legion/VFW halls across Minnesota are meeting places for communities across the state, and losing more of them would hurt the local economies and reduce the charitable good performed out of them.



The sun shines on the Minnesota State Capitol on Feb. 19. Discover your state senator and representative at leg.mn.gov. Give them a call or email about these bills.

It is noteworthy that legislators often go to the Posts when they want to meet with a community.

By reducing taxes to zero, it will help save many of these Posts from shutting down their buildings. The cost of the structures will be born by the rest of the tax base, typically with overwhelming favor.

3. Cpl. Caleb L. Erickson Memorial Highway Establishment

SF302: Jasinski, Faribault
HF482: Petersburg, Waseca

This would rename a section of Minnesota Highway 13, from the southern border of Woodville Township to the northern border of Blooming Grove Township in Waseca County, the "Corporal Caleb L. Erickson Memorial Highway."

Signs would be erected north and south of the city of Waseca denoting the name.

Erickson, of Waseca, died in February 2014 when his convoy was attacked by a suicide bomber.

4. Credit for Sponsors of Veterans

SF413: Bakk, Cook
HF485: Ecklund, International Falls

The bill would allow the state to give up to \$250,000 per year in tax credits for sponsors of qualifying veterans staying at Veterans on the Lake Resort in the Superior National Forest near Ely.

If passed, this section of law would expire Dec. 31, 2030.

Veterans on the Lake Resort was started as a camp in 1983 for disabled veterans but is open to non-veteran disabled, able-bodied veterans and active military, in addition to group activities.

5. Veterans Adult Day Care Program Authorization

SF93: Lang, Olivia
HF88: Lippert, Northfield

This bill amends state law to authorize adult day care for the Minnesota Veterans Homes.

It is a program that, pre-COVID, the Minneapolis home already was doing and now performs it virtually instead.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs receives reimbursements from the federal VA for the day care program, in addition to collecting fees from the participants.

Passing this measure simply codifies a program already in existence. The homes, under existing law, are allowed to develop new programs based on appropriate levels of care.

6. Minnesota G.I. Bill Technical Changes

SF92: Anderson, Buffalo
HF585: Sandstede, Hibbing

As it stands, the Minnesota G.I. Bill offers payments to veterans for three types of educational expenses: college tuition, career apprenticeships or licenses and certifications.

The new language clarifies eligibility for each component to avoid confusing the three or misuse of the three.

7. Reduced Fees for Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Licenses for Disabled Veterans

No bills filed

The American Legion Department of Minnesota is working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to reduce the cost of hunting, trapping and fishing

licenses for service-connected disabled veterans.

After coming to an agreement with DNR officials, we will urge the Minnesota Legislature to pass a proposal.

We feel this likely would give the DNR an net increase in license revenue and give veterans the health benefits that come from the great outdoors.

In 2020 ...

The American Legion Department of Minnesota's legislative advocacy was a key player in the passing in October of a one-time transfer of the Homestead Market Value Exclusion.

Disabled American Veterans of Minnesota was a main proponent of the original 2019 bill that eliminated the eight-year cap for surviving spouses on the Homestead Market Value Exclusion. However, a passage regarding a one-time transfer, allowing surviving spouses of disabled veterans to downsize their homes, did not pass that year.

The two organizations worked together to get the language across the finish line in 2020.

The Legion also advocated for funding to repair Minnesota Veterans Homes, among several other pieces of legislation.

In 2021 ...

Passing veterans-related legislation this year will require members of The American Legion to call their legislators, said Bob Hart, chair of the Department Legislative Affairs Committee.

"We are going to make sure lawmakers hear our voices, even though we can't approach them at the State Capitol," he said.

Hart and other Legion members this session have monitored and testified on legislation remotely.

On charitable gambling ...

The Department of Minnesota does not delve into charitable gambling, but Posts across Minnesota do.

Posts use proceeds to do the work of the Legion by supporting youth, the community and veterans.

There are several bills Posts are following:

SF63/HF184 Housley/Dettmer

Exempts sales tax on the lease or purchase of gambling equipment.

SF195/HF142 Anderson/Dettmer

Lowers combined receipt tax to 6/12/18/24% from 9/18/27/36% with similar trigger levels.

SF196/HF140 Anderson/Dettmer

Exempts lawful purpose donations from the gambling tax.

SF197/HF143 Anderson/Dettmer

Removes requirement of the outside annual audit, with audits required by the Department of Revenue when red flags are raised, such as late filing, lay payments, failure to comply, etc.

SF267/HF811 Koran

Requires an electronic manufacturer to sell to all who want to carry their product.

SF368/HF96 Ruud/Lueck

Reduces net receipt tax from 8.5% to 4.25% and reduce the combined receipts tax to 4.5% on the first \$200,000 combined net receipts, 9% on \$200,000-\$500,000 and 13.5% over \$500,000.

SF391/HF531 Housley/Nash

Allows a check or debit card to be used for purchasing of raffle tickets over the phone.

SF458/HF564 Lang/Dettmer

Allows a licensed veteran Post to spend up to 50% of their annual gross profits on the maintenance or improvement of real property and capital assets each year through July 31. It presently is 5%.

SF746/HF898 Koran/Huot

Removes taxes and fees from the star rankings. Organizations with more than \$75,000 in annual sales and less than 20% of donations may face probation or fine, followed a year later by suspension. It could double the organizations on probation.

SF756/HF897 Koran/Huot

Allows a Gambling Control Board member to continue holding office until a successor is appointed.



Normandy Beach

GUIDED GROUP TOURS - EVERYONE WELCOME!

2021

MAY 27: WWII Tour - Visit France, Belgium, and German WWII Sights (10 seats left)

If postponed due to Covid, departure date is Sept. 11

AUGUST 21: England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales

OCTOBER 7: The French Riviera, Spain, and Portugal

2022

APRIL: Once in your lifetime Africa

MAY: WWII Tour

SEPT: Europe - includes Oktoberfest in Munich & Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany, & other countries

Reserve your tour with local escort Vi Ranney
605-665-3596 ~ viranney@vyn.midco.net



The American Legion Resolution Number: 2021-1

Subject: The National Personnel Records Center Pandemic Response Regarding The Department of Veterans Affairs Records Requests.

WHEREAS, The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) is one of the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) largest operations employing 1,000 personnel, and

WHEREAS, they are the central repository of personnel-related records for both the military and civil services of the United States Government, and

WHEREAS, their mission is to provide world class service to government agencies including the Department of Veterans Affairs, military veterans and their family members, former civilian Federal employees, the general public, and

WHEREAS, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Personnel Records Center is closed except for emergencies regarding medical treatments, burials, or homeless veterans seeking admittance to a homeless shelter, and

WHEREAS, the National Personnel Records Center has not had sufficient on-site staff since March 2020 to respond to many other important requests due to the emergency executive order, including requests from the Department of Veterans Affairs related to veteran's compensation or pension benefits, and

WHEREAS, the National Personnel Records Center plays a critical role in VA's claims developmental process providing the Agency with military records requests, and

WHEREAS, the VA is approaching a claims inventory of 500,000 with over 200,000 claims backlogged pending over 125 days due to The National Personnel Records Center inability to virtually fulfill VA's records request for military records prior to 2000, and

WHEREAS, modern military service records from the year 2000 to current are maintained electronically, most requests submitted to The National Personnel Records Center involve veterans who separated from the military prior to year 2000 that are only available in paper or microfilm formats, which require on-site access, now therefore it be

RESOLVED, by The American Legion, Minnesota, Department Executive Committee by email vote on 10 February 2021, that the National Personnel Records Center be provided the proper PPE to maintain a sufficient number of onsite staff to fulfill VA's records requests pertaining to VA benefits while helping reduce VA's claims inventory and backlog, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the National Personnel Records Center provide a specific team of staff to digitize veterans' records for those who served prior 2000 so in the future staff can continue to fulfill VA's record requests virtually for all era of veterans, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that, this resolution be forwarded to the National Executive Committee for their concurring action.

This is to certify that this resolution was adopted using electronic email voting by our Department but, with National action substituted for local resolving clause.

Michael Maxa, Adjutant, Department of Minnesota
Originating Source: Jeremy Wolfsteller, Department Service Officer, Department of Minnesota.

Endorsements

Swanson endorsed for Vice Cmdr.

West Duluth Post 71 and the 8th District have endorsed Wilbur "Gene" Swanson as a candidate for Department Vice Commander for the years 2021-2022.

Swanson served in the Air Force from 1965 to 1991, first in intelligence operations and then as a first sergeant. He is a Paid Up For Life member with 27 years of continuous membership. He has served as Post Commander for four years and has filled other Post

positions for several years.

In the District, he has served as District Commander and Sergeant at Arms. As an officer in the Duluth Honor Guard for the past eight years, Swanson participated in several hundred funerals for departed service members.

He and his wife, Rita, an American Legion Auxiliary member, have been married for 41 years. He has two stepsons who are both Air Force veterans.



Gene Swanson

7th Dist. backs Meyer for Vice Cmdr.

Marshall Post 113 and the 7th District proudly endorses Harold "Hal" Meyer for Department Vice Commander for the years 2021-2022.

He has served on many committees in his Post, has been 2nd vice commander, 1st vice commander and Post commander.

In the District, Meyer has been sergeant of arms, vice-commander Area D twice, membership director and District commander.

Last spring, he filled a vacancy as Department Vice Commander for Districts 2 and 7.

Also, Meyer has served many offices in the Sons of The American Legion.

He is a Vietnam War combat veteran and a member of Marshall Post 113 for 54 years.

Meyer and his late wife have five children, 10 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren and all of them are in the Legion Family.



Hal Meyer

Vietnam Wall coming to Rice

RICE — The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Replica Wall and Mobile Education Center released its national tour schedule, and the small Minnesota city of Rice appears. The wall is scheduled to be in Rice, 16 miles north of downtown St. Cloud, from Aug. 19 to 22.

We Need You!!!

REMEMBERING Those That Have Served

Veteran Volunteers

We need your help to provide our departed military veterans with their **FINAL SALUTE**. Join our All Veteran, Honors Organization.

Details on our website at www.MemorialRifleSquad.org/join

Time to digitize older military records

Continued from Page 1

125 days pending," said Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller at The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

The National Personnel Records Center plays an important role in straightening out VA matters. Not having it as a resource complicates many efforts by veterans organizations to help veterans, from VA education to health care and other benefits.

The American Legion National Office in Indianapolis will take up Resolution 2021-1 during its upcoming Annual Washington Conference March 1-3 to address NPRC's backlog of VA

record requests and support legislation aimed at funding NPRC \$150 million to digitize veterans' records who served prior to the year 2000.

The American Legion's National Executive Committee was slated to vote on the resolution during its Spring Meetings, held virtually May 5-6.

The National Personnel Records Center is part of the National Archives and Records Administration.

"This is an update driven by veteran feedback, and officially a part of The American Legion Department of Minnesota," said Department Adjutant Mike Maxa.

Appreciation Rally is good to go for March 6

LACRESCENT — The Minnesota American Legion Family Appreciation Rally is the next membership get-together on the Legion Family calendar. It is slated for March 6 at La Crescent Post 595, in the La Crescent Events Center, 509 N. Chestnut St., La Crescent.

Cost is \$18. To make reservations, contact American Legion Department of Minnesota Membership Director Sylvan Fix via email at papafixone@gmail.com.

In addition to beverages, the meal is beef tips and gravy (with or without mushrooms), mashed potatoes, a vegetable, coleslaw and dessert.

The American Legion Auxiliary Executive Committee meets at 10 a.m.

The Department Executive Committee meets at 2 p.m.

Membership turn-in and social time is at 3:30 p.m. Dinner is at 5 p.m., with programs from The American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and Legion Riders to follow.

The La Crescent Events Center is part of the Best Western Plus, and the hotel has



Sy Fix

rooms set up for the Minnesota American Legion Family. To reserve a room, contact the hotel directly at 507-895-1001 or the national reservation line at 800-780-7234.

The Appreciation Rally is a time Department and District commanders recognize vice commanders for their hard work.

The Appreciation Rally last year was to be in La Crescent on March 21, but the first shutdown order came on March 13, canceling the gathering.



POST-9/11 PROJECT

- SPEAKERS BUREAU -

Developed in partnership with the 9/11 and Global War on Terrorism Remembrance Task Force, a dedicated cadre of speakers is now available to address community groups statewide.

mnmilitarymuseum.org

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



Here is what Americanism really means

Greetings, American Legion Family.

A big thank you to Department Auxiliary Secretary Marsha Bible for organizing our Sweetheart Rally on Feb. 6 at Paynesville Post 271. Great job, Marsha!

Paynesville Post 271 did an excellent job hosting the rally. Thanks to Teresa Ash and Jennifer Havlick, the rally was live-streamed using Zoom and Facebook so many who could not attend in person were able to be a part of our Sweetheart Rally.

The Department Appreciation Rally will be on Saturday, March 6, in La Crescent. Please contact Department Membership Director Sy Fix for more information. (Page 3)

The following subject "Americanism," what does Americanism mean? It has been part of many conversations that I have been a part of the last several months.

Here is a brief history and description of Americanism according to our American Legion. The National Americanism Commission of The American Legion was created by a resolution adopted by the National Convention held in Minneapolis in 1919. The original objectives of the National Americanism Commission are as follows:

1. To promote understanding of the principles of democratic government, develop interest in governmental problems and bring more citizens to think seriously of the duties

Commander's Column

Mark Dvorak



of citizenship.

2. To encourage education in every way possible by presenting scholarship medals in thousands of schools, cooperating in National Education Week and promoting night schools for adult education.

3. To inform American citizens about the history of the U.S. Flag, promote respect for it and ensure proper flag etiquette is observed.

4. To work tirelessly for the youth of America, sponsoring the National High School Oratorical Contest, American Legion Boys State, Boy Scout activities, American Legion Baseball, the Junior Shooting Sports Program and many other citizenship training programs.

5. To combat subversion and all un-American groups and activities that work toward the downfall of democracy in America.

6. To assist legal aliens in adapting to the American way of life through education programs, and to restrict immigration to ensure this assimilation may be made smoothly.

7. To provide worthy, practical service to our communities in order to make them better places to live.

The following is a brief definition often used by the National Americanism Commission to define Americanism: the Love of America; loyalty to

her institutions as the best yet designed by man to secure life, liberty, individual dignity and happiness; and the willingness to defend our Flag against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Obviously, Americanism can be defined in many ways by each of us. The American Legion chooses to describe it as allegiance to the United States of America and its customs and institutions.

Below is "The American's Creed," which is on the wall at The American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis. It was written by William Tyler Page and adopted by the House of Representatives, April 3, 1918. It is what I believe!

"I believe in the United States of America ... established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives ... It is my duty to my country to Love it, support its constitution, to obey its laws, to respect the flag,

And to defend it against all enemies."

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

America losing its cohesiveness

Being and still becoming an American is advanced citizenship in a very divided and unsure world of 2021.

I, like most Americans, prefer to get our way. In the fall of 2020, with an election on the national scene, everything looked extremely divided and several incidents only made it worse. The election was contested and dragged out to three races in Georgia on Jan. 5, 2021.

The George Floyd killing was a horrible example of how an incident in an isolated site snowballed into one of the biggest issues, and riots ensued, and we're still afraid it could erupt again and again.

We've lost our cohesiveness, and it must be brought back to unite us as civil citizens who see the issues, decide our options, lay them on the table, debate our choices as we listen to others and their thoughts on the issues. Then we look to agree upon what we can agree and leave the chosen strategies alone. We work from faith and not from fright.

The America that solves problems together and starts seeing that we need to make progress toward solving problems, not throwing everything and too many things at each other continuously. We can become a more united and cohesive society.

Being divided prevents progress and destroys opportunities

for individuals and groups to be heard in the larger arena. We need to come together in civility and more forward as a united states, country and all lives matter.

David Swenson
Montevideo Post 59

Unseen wounds are the truth

I'm writing to thank Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller for his article in the February issue of the Legionnaire titled "Defense Dept. not seeing invisible wounds of war with discharges."

I'm a retired U.S. Army Medical Corps mental health officer who served three years active duty and 30 years in the Reserve. While I never saw combat, I trained and served with many who did and saw my share of the type of "casualty" you spoke of so eloquently in the article.

Your article brought back an interesting memory for me. When serving as an enlisted mental health specialist on an inpatient psychiatric unit at a U.S. Army hospital in Germany many years ago, I read an editorial in the Stars and Stripes newspaper written by a physician in that same hospital who actually was of the opinion that the hospital "not treat" soldiers who were "drug addicts."

I was so incensed by his attitude, I immediately wrote

a scathing letter to the editor attaching the ethics of the physician in question that caught the attention of the medical command at the time. We've come a long way in the medical care of soldiers both on and off the battlefield, yet there is still an unfortunate stigma attached to non-battle injury particularly when it is a behavioral disorder or has anything to do with mental health and the ability to withstand the stressors of being in the military. I was proud to command a Combat Stress Control Unit during my career here in Minnesota and know firsthand the military's need to recognize and grant medical separations for soldiers whose wounds though not visible, have in the words of Abraham Lincoln "borne the battle."

Your editorial speaks to the fact that in the words of Ret. Gen. Hall Moore it is possible for Americans to "hate war, but love the American warrior."

Thank you for your service!

William K. Marsella
Ret. Lt. Col., Army Reserve
Minnesota Post 1982

U.S. always takes health measures

I wish to respond to the letter titled "From smoking police to the masking police" in the February 2021 issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire. It seems to me the idea expressed is less than

What is special meaning of St. Michael?

Chaplain's Corner

Betty Jass



When I went into the Air Force in September 1975, I knew I would defend my country and that I would have to learn a lot of new and important things as a jet engine mechanic and for my new life.

I knew things would get intense with my military and mechanical knowledge and get physically challenging as I continued my journey. After I was in basic training for about two weeks, I received a package in the mail from the Wintheiser family in Sleepy Eye.

In the package was a silver St. Michael's medal and chain for me to wear as a new servicemember. They explained that St. Michael was a "Soldier of God" and that he would "guide and protect me as I carried out my duties in the military."

I wore that medal for many years and through lots of traveling and different military missions while in the service. When my two daughters served in the military, I passed on this St. Michael's medal to them.

My daughter, Sandy, still has that medal as she serves in the Air Force at Osan Air Base, South Korea. She, too, has the

protection of St. Michael.

So why is St. Michael considered "special" to us veterans and active duty servicemembers?

St. Michael is viewed as the commander of the Army of God. From the time of the apostles, he has been invoked and honored as the protector of the church. Scripture describes him as "one of the chief princes" and the leader of heaven's forces in their triumph over the powers of evil. He is a healing angel, and a protector. We, too, are protectors.

St. Michael is mentioned in the Book of Daniel, when Prophet Daniel had a vision after the period of fasting. Daniel 12:13-31 says that he saw an angel who identifies Michael as the protector of Israel and Daniel gets a message that Michael will arise during the "time of the end" (Daniel 12:1). In the New Testament, Michael is mentioned in the Book of Revelation as

defeating Satan and throwing him to earth.

As veterans, St. Michael also protected us and other active soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines when we were fighting the forces of evil. (Probably whether we knew it or not, we had God's guidance and protection.) And in turn we protected others.

So, as I remember that silver St. Michael's medal I received in basic training and its special meaning, I loved being able to pass that medal onto my two daughters while they serve(d) in the military.

As "Soldiers of God" we, too, helped provide guidance and protection to others while fighting the powers of evil.

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

helpful for all of us to do our part in responding to a public health crisis.

Where does the idea come from that wearing a mask is somehow an infringement of personal freedom or individual rights, rather than a precaution for the benefit of the public and society as a whole?

We have always had appropriate public health declarations over the years when faced with deadly diseases that could ravage a community or a country. Examples include mandatory quarantines of homes during times of certain diseases that particularly targeted children; and confinement to state-operated or specialty hospitals to control such diseases as polio and tuberculosis.

Growing up in the 1940s and 1950s, my family experienced the real loss of personal freedom. In the 1940s, our home was quarantined due to childhood diseases where no one could visit or leave the house for weeks, and in the 1950s, my mother was diagnosed with TB.

When her doctor and health officials consulted with Mom and Dad, the message was clear that she was to be confined to a state TB hospital — not if or when — but right now. There wasn't a lot of concern for two teenage sons and what sort of infringement such hospitalization would have on them; it was explained to us that Mom was sick and could make us sick as well as others. The infringement for Mom was 16 months of hospitalization — not a few hours when in a crowd requiring a mask be worn.

Was it infringement of personal freedom or individual rights? Certainly, one could conclude. Was it for the protection of public health? Absolutely.

In the past, as it should be understood today, imposing precautions by our governor and health officials, was and is for the benefit and protection of the public. Regardless of our political persuasion, let's get real and every one of us comply with

the basics to protect one another during this pandemic and public health issue.

No excuses: 1. Wash hands frequently. 2. Wear a mask. 3. Practice social distancing.

It is not difficult. It is easy and the least we can do for one another in returning to "normal."

Duane A. Blanck
Nisswa Post 627

Folds of Honor is a good cause

"Honoring Their Sacrifice, Educating Their Legacy" may best describe the military

foundation Folds of Honor.

Founded in 2007 by Lt. Col. Dan Rooney, an F-16 fighter pilot, Folds of Honor provides academic scholarships to the spouses and dependents of fallen or disabled service members. Many times, the families of our fellow veterans are forgotten or are left with limited resources when a soldier has fallen or is wounded in the line of service. Since its inception, Folds of Honor has provided over 29,000 scholarships totaling over \$145 million. Among the students served, 41 percent are minorities.

Last year, Folds of Honor

Continued on Page 7

The Minnesota

Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

Official publication of
The American Legion
Department of Minnesota

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

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

First published in 1920 as the Hennepin County Legionnaire, the Minnesota Legionnaire is now in its 100th year of publication. The Legionnaire is a member of the National American Legion Press Association.

To advertise: 651-424-4612 or use the email below
Subscription: \$20 for non-members for one year or \$35 for two years. Members receive the Legionnaire as part of their dues.

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

Fax: 651-291-1057

Email: tengstrom@mnlegion.org

Web: mnlegion.org

Editor: Director of Communications Tim Engstrom

Editor Emeritus: Al Zdon

Board of Publication: President Mark Dvorak, New Prague; Vice President Dennis Henkemeyer, Blue Earth; Secretary Mike Maxa, Montgomery; Treasurer Bill Goede, Plainview; Don Amundson, Blue Earth; Darrel Redepenning, Fridley; Joe Bayer, Minneapolis; Carroll Partridge, Oakdale; Paul Edwards, Brainerd; Dennis Henkemeyer, Bagley; Patti Coleman, Circle Pines; Mary Kuperus, New London



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.



Orv
Otterness



Jerry
Odegaard

Adamski, Gerald, 64, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 16, 2020. He was stationed at Fort Lewis, Wash. He was a 42-year member of Flensburg Post 136.

Ahlgren, Wilton R. "Bud," 97, Army veteran of World War II, died July 4, 2020. He served in the Philippine Islands. He was a 71-year member of Dassel Post 364.

Anderson, Wallace, 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 11, 2021. He served at Fort Carson, Colo., and in Korea. He was a litter bearer and grave register soldier in Korea. He was a 41-year member of Wood Lake Post 69.

Ankeny, John I., 97, Army Air Forces veteran of World War II, died Feb. 8, 2021. He joined after the Pearl Harbor attack and served in the Philippines, Okinawa and mainland Japan. He was a 75-year member of St. James Post 33.

Bagstad, Lowell A., 99, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 15, 2021. He joined before the war and served its entire duration. He served in Europe and was awarded three battle stars. He was a 75-year member of Marshall Post 113.

Baune, Darrel, 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 22, 2021. He was wounded in Korea and received the Purple Heart. He was a past adjutant and 74-year member of Wabasso Post 263.

Beebout, Ronald, 72, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 27, 2021. He served in Vietnam and was awarded the Purple Heart, spending 100 days at Great Lakes Navy Base hospital. He was a member of Milroy Post 274.

Bergrud, Ardell S., 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 12, 2021. He worked for Grant County Veterans Service for 22 years. He was a 75-year member of Wendell Post 426.

Black, William J., 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 16, 2020. He was a 42-year member of Coon Rapids Post 334.

Block, Clayton H., 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 21, 2020. He was instrumental in starting a Sons of The American Legion Squadron. He was past commander and 73-year member of Cleveland Post 207.

Boyle, Gerald C., 91, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 1, 2021. In the Air National Guard, he was called to active-duty Air Force during the Korean War and served as a food service specialist at Kirksville Air Force Station in Missouri. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Bresnahan, Robert W., 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 21, 2021. He was a Cobra helicopter mechanic. He was a 42-year member of Willmar Post 167.

Butkowski, Clarence A., 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 29, 2021. He served with an infantry unit in Korea as rations and munitions supplier, as well as performing mail call. He was a 55-year member of Waite Park Post 428.

Carivau, Douglas B., 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 17, 2021. He met the love of his life when he was at a bus station in Minneapolis returning from boot camp and two years later married her while he was a patient at Fitzsimmons Army Hospital in Denver. He was a 66-year member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Case, Robert T., 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 8, 2021. He was a 40-year member of Fairfax Post 205.

Copa, Thomas J., 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 20, 2021. He was a 41-year member of Little Falls Post 46.

Croat, Francis, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 22, 2021. He was a member of St. Augusta Post 621.

Cutcher, Ralph, age and service details unavailable, died Jan. 4, 2021. He was a member of St. Louis Park Post 282.

Dardis, Norbert M., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 16, 2020. He served as a cook in West Germany. He was a 51-year member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Demmer, Boyd W., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 1, 2021. He served as an MP during the U.S. occupation of Japan, then joined the National Guard after his Army discharge. He was a past commander and 75-year member of Hayfield Post 330.

Dennison, David J., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 21, 2021. He was a 57-year member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Duoss, Robert "Bob," 97, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 11, 2021. He was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He was a 65-year member of Cambridge Post 290.

Eastman, Robert A. "Bob," 79, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 15, 2020. He was a member of Roseau Post 24.

Ehlenfeldt, Arlin "Bud," 77, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 2, 2021. He was exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam. He was a member of Le Sueur Post 55.

Estling, Owen A., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 30, 2020. He was a member and past commander of Boyd Post 198.

Feichtinger, Robert E., 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb. 9, 2021. He served in the South Pacific. He was a 62-year member of Willmar Post 167.

Fietek, Roderick "Butch," 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 24, 2020. He served 11 months in Vietnam. He was a 54-year member of Flensburg Post 136.

Frank, Ivan, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 19, 2020. He served at Fort Campbell, Ky. He was a 67-year member of Mazeppa Post 588.

Freeman, Donnie, age unavailable, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 11, 2021. He was a member of Minnesota at-large Post 1982, residing in Minneapolis, and had recently transferred from Indiana.

Gebhart, Lennard M., 80, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 3, 2021. He was a member of North Branch Post 85.

Gluth, John, 90, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 26, 2021. He was stationed at Wiesbaden, Germany, and helped with the Berlin Airlift. He was a 60-year member of Springfield Post 257.

Gmyrek, James, 78, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 3, 2020. He was a 45-year member of St. Louis Park Post 282.

Golombiecki, Jerome "Jerry," 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 1, 2020. He served in Korea, arriving on his birthday. He was a 44-year member of Flensburg Post 136.

Grahn, Francis J., 97, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 14, 2020. He was a cook stationed at Fort Snelling, then at Camp Lee in Virginia. He was a 76-year member of Roseau Post 24.

Grow, Arlen V., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 11, 2021. He served in Korea. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Halvorson, Muriel V., 99, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 24, 2021. She was in charge of new recruits, serving in New York and Ohio. She was a 31-year member of Clearbrook Post 256.

Hartl, Wenzel "Jay," 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 10, 2021. He was a past adjutant of Pine Island Post 184.

Hartman, Melvin J., 68, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 30, 2021. He served in Germany. He was part of the Honor Guard and a 45-year member of New Prague Post 45.

Hastings, Herbert C. "Herb," 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 11, 2021. He was a member of Minneapolis Post 1.

Hector, David A. "Dave," 76, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 25, 2021. He was a radio telegraph operator and served in Vietnam and at Camp Lejeune, N.C. He was a 54-year member of Waite Park Post 428.

Heitz, Earl R., 81, Army veteran of the Cold War, died Feb. 12, 2021. He was a 49-year member of Chanhassen Post 580.

Heller, Larry L., 75, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 26, 2021. He served aboard the USS Yosemite. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

Hennen, Kenneth M., 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 15, 2021. He was a part of the Honor Guard, sergeant at arms for more than 25 years and a 68-year member of Maple Lake Post 131.

Hesli, Dale, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 23, 2020. He was a 58-year member of Anoka Post 102.

Hinkemeyer, Roy, 76, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 24, 2021. He was a 49-year member of St. Augusta Post 621.

Hoelz, Roger W., 80, Army Reserves veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 11, 2021. He was a New Ulm resident and a 30-year member of Minnesota at-large Post 1982.

Holdorf, Richard C., 86, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 27, 2021. He served as a crypto technician

and supervisor during his 20-year career. He was on the Honor Guard for nine years and a 30-year member of Winona Post 9.

Holland, Loren M., 100, Army Air Forces veteran of World War II, died Feb. 2, 2021. He spent 100 days in a hospital after suffering a collapsed lung in a bombing attack. He served in the South Pacific. He was a 47-year member of Mora Post 201.

Holz, Donald "Don," 79, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 14, 2020. He was a member of Flensburg Post 136.

Hovis, Gerald D., 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 1, 2021. He was a member of Cloquet Post 262.

Hoye, Dennis P. 62, Army veteran of Lebanon/Grenada, died Jan. 27, 2021. He served with the 82nd Airborne Division. He and his wife volunteered more than 2,000 hours at the Armed Forces Service Center at MSP. He was a member of St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577.

Jacobs, Leo, 86, Army Reserve veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 30, 2020. He served at Fort Leonard Wood, Fort Knox, Camp Ripley and Fort McCoy. He was a member of St. Augusta Post 621.

Jacobson, Lyle R., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 6, 2021. He served as a cook supervisor in Korea. He was a 69-year member of Winona Post 9.

Jennison, Alden, 88, Army veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Jan. 29, 2021. He was a 68-year member of Deerwood Post 557.

Johnson, Gerald V., 87, Army veteran of Korean War, died Jan. 16, 2021. He was a 62-year member of New London Post 537.

Johnson, Irvin V., 99, Marine veteran of World War II, died Dec. 2, 2020. He was a 74-year member of Bayport Post 491.

Johnson, Lloyd M., 89, Army and Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 10, 2019. He was part of the Frozen Chosin and one of only 22 men who returned home after being missing in action. He served 15 years in the Air Force after seven years in the Army. He was a 35-year member of Brainerd American Legion Post 255.

Justice, Robert A., 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 12, 2021. He was a 30-year member of Austin Post 91.

Klein, Gerald A. "Cardboard," 80, Army veteran of the Cold War, died July 27, 2019. He was a 58-year member of Watkins Post 453.

Klein, Lyle "Doc," 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 29, 2021. He was a member of Tyler Legion Post 185.

Kuhlmann, Harley G. "Jim," 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died Nov. 23, 2020. He was an airplane mechanic and flew with his commander. One time, his plane made a getaway from London with German fighters in pursuit. Upon landing, the crew found 26 holes in the aircraft. He was a past mayor of Hokah. He was a past commander and a member of Hokah Post 498.

Laage, Richard, 99, Coast Guard veteran of World War II, died Dec. 13, 2020. He was a 34-year member of Brooten Post 288.

Lang, Gerald M., 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 16, 2020. He was a past commander and 37-year member of Watkins Post 453.

Langseth, Gary D., 79, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 5, 2021. He was part of the Honor Guard and a member of Round Lake Post 461.

Lapos, Gilbert "Bert," 72, Air Force and Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 14, 2020. He was a member of Flensburg Post 136.

Lestrud, Kenneth, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 20, 2021. He was a 46-year member of Austin Post 91.

Liebold, Rodney J., 85, Army veteran of the Cold War, died Oct. 29, 2020. He served as a tank driver and spent 18 months in Germany. He was head of the Honor Guard and a past sergeant at arms and a member of Cokato Post 209.

Linnemeyer, Donald K., 96, Navy, Marines and Navy Reserve veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Jan. 8, 2021. As a pharmacist's mate, he was at the Navy base in Sydney, Australia during WWII, then to Camp Lajeune, N.C., between the wars, then to Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Calif., during Korea. He was a 73-year member of Pipestone Post 6.

Loomis, Harold, 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 16, 2020. He was a member of St. Augusta Post 621.

Meyer, Edwin, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 20, 2021. He was a member of St. Augusta Post 621.

Moore, Michael M., 69, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 1, 2021. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Morrison, Jerry R., 83, Air Force veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, died Dec. 11, 2020. He was stationed in Korea and at Prince George, British Columbia, Canada, flying missions along both coasts. He was a member of La Crescent Post 595.

Muellerleile, Stanley L., 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 25, 2020. He was active for many years in the Legion Drum & Bugle Corp. He was a member of

Taps



Continued from Page 5

St. Peter Post 37.

Nelson, Latta F., 89, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 16, 2021. He was a 35-year member of Le Sueur Post 55.

Nolan, Ronald S. "Steve," 86, Army veteran of the Cold War, died Jan. 28, 2021. He was a member of the Dassel Post 364.

Nystrom, Kenneth R., 84, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 14, 2021. He served as an Honor Guard member, facilities director and a meal preparation volunteer as a member of Deerwood Post 557.

Odegaard, Gerald "Jerry," 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 19, 2020. He earned two Bronze Stars. He was Department vice commander 1991-92, 9th District commander 1987-88 and 9th District adjutant 1993-94. He served on the Color Guard, Executive Committee and as post commander and was a 74-year member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Olson, Roger K. "RKO," 87, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 26, 2021. He was Department of Minnesota commander 1997-98, 3rd District commander 1994-95, 3rd District adjutant 1993-94 and Post 96 commander 1989-90. He served in many leadership and committee positions at the Post, District, Department and National levels over the years. He was a 51-year member of Hutchinson Post 96.

Otterness, Orville C. "Orv," 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 27, 2021. He was 10th District commander 1991-92, Department sergeant at arms 1996-97, Department vice commander 2003-04. He also served on National committees. His wife, Beverly Otterness, is a past ALA Department president. He was a 65-year member of North Branch Post 85 and commander in 1986, 1987, 1997 and 2007.

Oviatt, Charles F. "Chuck," 74, Army veteran of Vietnam War, died Nov. 22, 2020. He served in Germany and France. He was a past commander and 33-year member of Rochester Post 92.

Page, Joseph L., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 14, 2020. He was a welder/machinist. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Perry, Alfred A., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 24, 2021. He was a 66-year member of Zumbrota Post 183.

Poock, Dennis, 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 1, 2021. He was part of the Honor Guard and a member of Gaylord Post 433.

Prink, Harlan, 83, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 20, 2021. He was a member of Lowry Post 253.

Randall, James M., 77, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 7, 2021. He was the former Claremont chief of police. He was a member of the Claremont Post 422.

Rey, William A., 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 12, 2020. He was stationed at the Arctic Testing Branch, at Big Delta Air Force Base (now Fort Greely) in Alaska. He was a 44-year member of Roseau Post 24.

Risland, Robert O., 70, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 18, 2020. He was a 49-year member of Bemidji Post 14.

Ritmire, Charles L., 89, Navy veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, died Feb. 2, 2021. He served as a navigator on a P2V Neptune aircraft. After his enlistment, he was in the Navy Reserves for 27 years. He was a member of Bloomington Post 550.

Ronningen, Robert "Bob," 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 5, 2021. He was a 53-year

member of Eyota Post 551.

Ruprecht, Gerald "Jerry," 71, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 23, 2020. He served in Vietnam and received the Purple Heart and four Bronze Stars. He was a 32-year member of Watkins Post 453.

Salonek, Urban, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 25, 2021. He served as an officer in Seoul, Korea, and was assigned to five frontline detachments. He was a 51-year member of Springfield Post 257.

Schlangen, John P. "Jack," Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 28, 2020. He was a 42-year member of Watkins Post 453.

Schmauss, Dori, 98, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 29, 2021. She was a nurse. She was a member of Lake City Post 110.

Schmitke, Irvin M., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 26, 2020. He served overseas with the 11th Airborne Division. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Schneider, Earl, 95, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 16, 2020. He served on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. He was a 59-year member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Schreifels, James M., 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 23, 2020. He served in the Special Forces and completed Spanish at the Defense Language Institute. He served much of his time in the Panama Canal Zone as part of the 8th Special Forces Group, with occasional missions around Central America. He was a 31-year member of Watkins Post 453.

Sculthorp, Richard "Dick," 76, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 19, 2020. He was a 52-year member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Shasky, James, 85, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 5, 2020. As an electrical mechanic, he served at Lackland AFB, Texas, and in Okinawa, Japan. He was a 33-year member of Moorhead Post 21.

Simacek, Bernard T., 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 12, 2021. He was a member and past commander of Lonsdale Post 586.

Skalberg, Kenneth L., 96, Army Air Forces veteran of World War II and Air Force veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, died June 29, 2020. He was a fighter pilot. He was discharged in 1946, then reactivated in 1952, retiring in 1970. He was a 72-year member of Dassel Post 364.

Slominski, Henry J., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 26, 2021. He was a 32-year member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Soderberg, Larry A., 80, Army veteran of the Cold War, died Feb. 1, 2020. He served with the 47th Infantry Regiment in Worms, Germany. He was a member of Dassel Post 364.

Sonnenberg, Carol J., 64, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 4, 2020. She was a past bartender and 37-year member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Stahlberg, Ronald J., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 31, 2021. He was a 39-year member of Alexandria Post 87.

Sterns, Matthew G., 83, Air Force veteran of the Cold War, died Jan. 25, 2021. He trained as a construction equipment repairman and served at Duluth Air Force Base and Thule Air Base in Greenland. He was a member of Ashby Post 357.



Stommes, Roman F., 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 21, 2020. He was a 55-year member of Watkins Post 453.

Swanson, Kermit J., 101, Army Air Forces veteran of World War II, died Nov. 1, 2020. He was a glider pilot who flew three missions: Overlord (D-Day), Market Garden and Varsity. He was awarded the Purple Heart and three Air Medals. He was a 73-year member of Dassel Post 364.

Tschida, Vernon, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 25, 2020. He was a member of St. Augusta Post 621.

Tweten, Henry, 97, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 31, 2021. Part of Gen. Patton's Third Army, he received the Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart for actions during the Battle of the Bulge. He was a 69-year member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Ulbrich, Kenneth A., Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 2, 2021. He served in Bad Kreuznach, Germany. He was a 40-year member of Winona Post 9.

Vanasek, Richard J., 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 19, 2021. He served in the Panama Canal Zone. He was a 35-year member of Northfield Post 84.

Vanden Berg, Lester, 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 22, 2021. He served as a medic squad leader in the war. He was a 32-year member of Edgerton Post 42.

Vavra, Charles, 92, Air Force veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, died Dec. 1, 2020. He was a crew chief for B-29 and B-52 aircraft. He served for 23 years and was stationed at Remstein Air Base in Germany for three. He was a member of Le Center Post 108.

Veit, Harvey J. Sr., 97, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 31, 2021. He was stationed in Italy, serving as a switchboard operator. He was a 54-year member of New Ulm Post 132.

Viskoe, Dexter, 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 3, 2021. He served two tours in Vietnam. He was a member of North Branch Post 85.

Walinski, Joseph J., 88, Marine veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 7, 2021. He served in Korea. He was a 68-year member of Winona Post 9.

Watkins, Ray, 91, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 14, 2021. He was a 51-year member of Litchfield Post 104.

Werner, John G. "Jack," 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 17, 2019. He served in France and Germany. He was a past commander, historian and 74-year member of Watkins Post 453.

Wieneke, Leo J., 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 16, 2020 (date is correct). He was a member of Watkins Post 453.

Winkels, William P., 79, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 7, 2021. He was a part of the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam. He was a 54-year member of Adams Post 146.

Wippler, Don, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 3, 2020. He was a member of Flensburg Post 136.

Zaviska, Dennis J., 82, Army National Guard veteran of the Cold War, died Nov. 19, 2020. Known for playing the accordion in shows and on the local radio, he was in a band that appeared on the "The Lawrence Welk Show." He was a member of Lowry Post 253.

Headquarters **VFW**
Job Opening VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

STATE OFFICE MANAGER

Job description & application:
www.vfwmn.org
 Facebook: @MNVFW
 Email: vfwmnoffice@gmail.com
 Open until filled



The American Legion Department of Minnesota 2021 District Membership Report as of Feb 21, 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	63	866	811	5,423	7,163	22	7,185	8,009	89.71	21	7,568
02	BRADLEY PAGEL	51	655	505	4,286	5,497	14	5,511	6,189	89.05	5	5,890
03	LINDA DVORAK	126	1,571	1,750	6,690	10,137	102	10,239	10,938	93.61	126	10,387
04	JOSEPH M JANSEN	25	289	304	1,207	1,825	15	1,840	2,091	88.00	26	1,991
05	WADE A LARSON	16	309	383	1,041	1,749	0	1,749	2,164	80.82	7	1,993
06	PAUL D EDWARDS	116	1,112	1,165	7,000	9,393	74	9,467	10,598	89.33	26	9,986
07	DEAN KNUTSON	36	706	435	3,992	5,169	48	5,217	5,646	92.40	52	5,297
08	D MARVIN HILL	27	320	402	2,452	3,201	14	3,215	3,591	89.53	13	3,410
09	STEVEN G SUNDSTROM	51	554	622	4,148	5,375	58	5,433	5,953	91.26	19	5,577
10	THOMAS H ALLEN	105	916	1,433	5,401	7,855	27	7,882	8,780	89.77	25	8,344
99		11	181	478	1,402	2,072	0	2,072	2,997	69.14	0	1,824
Total:		627	7,479	8,288	43,042	59,436	374	59,810	66,956	89.33	320	62,267

Mail Call

Continued from Page 4

Minnesota funded 93 applicants and raised over \$800,000 toward educational scholarships to those who deserve and need our help. The scholarships support private education tuition and tutoring for children in grades K-12, as well as higher education tuition assistance.

The scholarships are valued at up to \$5,000 per scholarship, and are awarded annually as long as the qualified applicant reapplies.

I have recently become involved with this nonprofit as a volunteer because I believe in its mission. To help a fellow veteran's family in a time of real need is what we do as soldiers. We all remember the camaraderie and teamwork of a close-knit military unit; the close bonds that form are beyond compare. Folds of Honor is there to help the veteran's families and honor them, when they need a little extra help.

Education is one of the greatest gifts Folds of Honor believes it can give. Folds of Honor is proud to have 90 cents of every dollar raised go directly toward its scholarship awards, an amazingly high percentage in the nonprofit world. They are rated 4 out of 4 stars by Charity Navigator and have a platinum seal of transparency from GuideStar, both the highest marks a nonprofit can receive. This is the real deal!

Educational support, but also honoring those who served, is what Folds of Honor offers.

Let's help provide more scholarships.

The Folds of Honor scholarship application window closes on March 31. For more information and an application visit: minnesota.foldsofhonor.org.

David J. Weeres
Clearwater Post 323

Kindness can offset the sins

This is a message for all Legionnaires and friends who would like to help improve the world. I think we can all agree that the world is a mess and needs improvement.

Many people believe that this is true because of sin. We are all

sinner, but some of us think sin can be defeated by doing something nice for another person, and if many people would create many acts of kindness throughout every day, the world would be a much nicer place. This is our goal.

If you would like to be a part of this mission, send me a note, and I will give you more information. I am at 1281 Antelope Way, Maplewood, MN 55119.

Bill Reynolds
Maplewood Post 39

Legionnaires make difference

Thank so much for all of you who read my letter in the February 2021 issue and contributed to Jonathan Freiermuth's van request. I cannot thank you enough for all that you have contributed. I so appreciate the effort you all gave to those who have no control but deal with what is dealt.

Thank you again so much,

David Peyla
Hugo Post 620

Editor's note: Freiermuth, 19, suffers from Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Peyla's letter described how the teen loves trips to Duluth to see the ships. See his story at Jett Giving Fund.

Department staff are just doing their jobs

The purpose of my letter is to both thank and commend two members of the staff of The American Legion of Minnesota: Jeremy Wolfsteller and Tim Engstrom. They have greatly assisted me with my health care inquiry and performed in an extraordinary manner.

In a message to Tim, I had attached a letter I sent to Sen. Tina Smith outlining an issue of access that I recently had with the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

Having never, ever utilized this facility and its offerings, I had no inclination whatsoever that it was available to all veterans poor or rich, woman

or man, any ethnicity. Tim was thoughtful enough to forward my letter for Sen. Smith to Jeremy, your resident expert on registration with the Minneapolis VA Health Care System. Jeremy, in turn, reached out to me, both via email and telephone, to explain the nuances of the enrollment process and where he could be of assistance.

In Vietnam we had a title for people like Tim and Jeremy: STRAC: a troop Skilled, Trained and Ready for Action.

I will be forever grateful for their efforts on my behalf. They could have very easily disregarded my situation, and gone about their business. Instead, they made my business their business. Truly dedicated professionals who practice "service above self;" they are a credit to your organization and should be recognized for their stellar performance on behalf of an officer who willingly served his country, even in that hellhole of Southeast Asia.

Tim and Jeremy were "world-class" in their care and concern for my problem, and give me hope, and I am sure all the veterans in our state, that their needs and requirements will be resolved in a timely and appropriate manner.

It is important for me to note, as well, that I have never been active in The American Legion, although I have been a member for many years. Please know that if I can be of assistance to your/our organization, just say the word and I will be there.

With the stress that I have felt with the prevalence of COVID-19 and my inability to become vaccinated, these two people have now given me a fighting chance to survive; and regardless of the outcome (I may have to run for public office to resolve the matter — God forbid!), I am more than willing to give back in any way that I can.

In my career, I have always defined a leader as an individual that others will gladly follow without equivocation. With Tim and Jeremy, you most definitely have two such individuals on your staff. Bravo!

All the best!

Peter R. Bartling
Golden Valley Post 523

The SAL Update:

Several big events are coming up

Greetings American Legion Family members from your Sons of The American Legion!

Well, another month has passed. We had the Sweetheart Rally in Paynesville. I would like to extend a big warm "thank you" to the entire Paynesville American Legion Family. It was a chilly day, but we had a great turnout. Those who didn't come could sit and watch the rally on their computer in the comfort of their home.

Regarding membership, The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion are working toward our goals, though it is certainly a tough time on getting out and talking to our members because of the

Detachment commander

Dave Vulcan



COVID. I would like to remind everybody we need to all help each other with our ongoing renewals and recruitment.

Upcoming events: We have the Appreciation Rally coming up on March 6 at La Crescent Post 595. On March 12 and 13, we have the Detachment of Minnesota Sons of The American Legion Spring Conference at North Saint Paul Post 39.

One other thing that I think all of you would like to put on your calendar is the combined testimonial for Commander Mark Dvorak, President Mary

Hendrickson and myself. See all the information and our picture inside the Legionnaire for all the information on how to come to that event. (Page 13)

Until next month, stay safe, stay healthy, and let's get our membership.

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

The mission is repairing Legionville

I would like for all squadrons to consider donating to my project this year.

My project this year will be capital improvements to the housing buildings at Legionville. The goal will be to ensure that the housing at the camp will allow our members and members of The American Legion family to help out at events (such as Camporee and the John Zgoda Memorial Disabled Veteran Deer Hunt), and make a difference with veterans, their families and our communities.

I am sure that the Detachment of Minnesota can be proud partners working with the Minnesota American Legion Family to find and complete

this project.

Please send your checks payable to: "MN American Legion Foundation," and add in the memo line "Fund 99."

Send it to:
Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of Minnesota

Attn: SAL Commander's Project
20 W. 12th Street, RM 300A
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2000

Thank you for your donation, your membership, your hard work, and your comradery!

For God and Country!

— Commander Dave Vulcan

Squadron Data Report is important

Throughout the year, it is necessary for National to contact Squadrons regarding membership renewals, awards and general communications.

In addition, National receives daily requests for Post and Squadron information from members and potential new members or others who are looking for information about The American Legion at the local level. Maintaining your Squadron's current information with the National Headquarters has become more important than ever.

Completing an annual Squadron Data Report (SDR) is necessary to inform your

Department and Detachment and National Headquarters of pertinent information regarding your Squadron and, most importantly, membership renewal information. Complete an annual SDR even if your Squadron information has not changed. Any information that has changed can be indicated by checking either the "change or correction" boxes.

Squadron information will be maintained with National's records and published on the mylegion.org and mysal.org websites and through the "Post Locator" feature. Members who are traveling or have moved, or simply want to transfer,

frequently refer to the Post Locator for assistance.

Remember to inform your Department and Detachment Headquarters any time a change is made throughout the year.

Complete and return this form to your Detachment and National Headquarters no later than May 1 annually.

Failure to meet this deadline may prohibit your members from renewing their membership online through mysal.org and cause renewal notices to be mailed with incorrect information.

The form is available at MNSAL.org and Legion.org/sons/publications.

American Legion 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 North St. Paul Post 39	Lunch Dinner*	noon 6 p.m.	post98spp@gmail.com 651-777-3708, Ext. 207
Wednesday, April 7, 2021 Osseo Post 172 Royalton Post 137 Nisswa Post 627	Breakfast Lunch Dinner*	8 a.m. noon 6 p.m.	763-425-4858 320-584-5135 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 Bagley Post 16 Detroit Lakes Post 15	Breakfast Lunch Dinner*	8 a.m. noon 6 p.m.	218-732-5238 218-209-8676 218-847-8533

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

2021 Membership Report

	42,775	33,159	9,616	77.52%	455
Southern	132,706	95,269	37,437	71.79%	1,652
Central	30,377	20,912	9,465	68.84%	223
Midwest	146,287	98,298	47,989	67.20%	1,427
Eastern	26,405	17,030	9,375	64.50%	147
Western	378,550	264,668	113,882	69.92%	3,904
TOTALS					

Membership ahead/behind prior year date (32,497)

Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Increase
1 Wisconsin * ^ ~ ? ! # %	3,745	3,200	545	85.45%	30
2 Iowa * ^ ~ ? ! # %	4,376	3,616	760	82.63%	34
3 Ohio ~ ? ! #	31,134	24,062	7,072	77.29%	475
4 Minnesota ^ ~ ? !	11,749	8,561	3,188	72.87%	16
5 Illinois * ^ ~ ? !	14,547	10,360	4,187	71.22%	(1)
6 Indiana * ^ ~ ?	39,365	27,969	11,396	71.05%	412
7 Michigan	24,084	15,422	8,662	64.03%	686
8 Missouri	3,706	2,079	1,627	56.10%	-
TOTALS	132,706	95,269	37,437	71.79%	1,652

Q = Quota
* Met 09/10/20 goal of 10% # Met 02/10/21 goal of 75%
^ Met 10/15/20 goal of 25% % Met 03/10/21 goal of 80%
~ Met 11/12/20 goal of 35% \$ Met 04/14/21 goal of 90%
? Met 12/09/20 goal of 45% (Met 05/12/21 goal of 100%
! Met 01/21/21 goal of 60%) Met 07/28/21 goal of 105%

Visit the SAL Detachment of Minnesota's new website by going to: mnsal.org

Calendar

• Detachment Spring Conference @North St Paul Post 39

Friday, March 12
7 p.m.: Finance Committee
8 p.m.: Detachment Executive Committee

Saturday, March 13
9 a.m.: General Session

• Detachment Convention @Legionville

Friday, June 25
7 p.m.: Finance Committee
8 p.m.: Detachment Executive Committee

Saturday, June 26
9 a.m.: General Session



Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435 for decades was the largest Post, by membership, in the state. The building is in Richfield next to Veterans Park, but the Post has "Minneapolis" in its name because Minneapolis annexed part of Richfield in 1927, in addition to annexations in 1867, 1883 and 1887.

A changing of the guard

Post 435 to sell with hopes of being at same place eventually

RICHFIELD — The restaurant, bar and banquet operations of Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435 have been closed since January 2020, and since that time, there has been a fair share of wild speculation.

"The goal of Post 435 has been to endure and come the other side stable and able to engage in Legion business, being a part of the community and serving veterans," said Commander Adam Seamans.

Presently, the city of Richfield has a moratorium in place for development of structures on the southwest corner of Veterans Park, because the city wants to make sure what ends up there fits in with the park. That moratorium comes to an end this summer.

The next step for Post 435, Seamans said, is to hire a real estate agent, then

hear proposals from developers.

Post leadership, he said, would like a space in the new structure for a Post home that has room for a restaurant, a bar and banquet space — scaled down and nothing like the nearly 19,000-square-foot structure it is burdened with. It even could be a spot for other Legion or VFW Posts to call home.

"We are still working with the city and the mayor. They want us there. We want to remain there," Seamans said. "We just don't know what it's going to look like at this point."

Post 435 was chartered in 1927, and it experienced phenomenal growth on its way to becoming the largest American Legion Post in Minnesota. It added "Minneapolis" to its name in 1941 to acknowledge an area of Richfield that

had been annexed by Minneapolis.

According to "Legion 50," a history of the first 50 years of the Minnesota American Legion, Post 435 reached the 1,000-member mark in 1946, 2,000 in 1959, 3,000 in 1961, 4,000 in 1962 and 5,000 in 1967. In fact, that year, Post 435 was the third-largest Post in The American Legion. By the 1950s, the Post had membership greater than 7,000.

The first Post home was at 6439 Nicollet Ave., purchased in 1943 from a nightclub owner. In 1956, arrangements were made to sell that structure and build a new place at 6501 Portland Ave. adjacent to Veterans Park.

A dedication ceremony took place March 20, 1957. There stood Department Commander Everett Getten of Wayzata with Past Department

Commander Dan Foley of Wabasha on hand with National Commander Wilbur "Dan" Daniel of Virginia.

Foley would go on to be national commander in 1963-64.

The Post organized a fun club in 1958. A remodeling and expansion took place in 1966-67. Another expansion happened in 1974-75.

Today, the Post has 862 members and is the second-largest in Minnesota, losing its first-place title to Apple Valley. Richfield was at 1,015 last year, but the issue of the building has prompted some members to transfer to other Posts.

Seamans acknowledges emotional attachment members have to the building.

"I'm attached to it, too. I live four blocks away," he said.

But that building is cost-prohibitive. Seamans said Post leadership looked into renovating.

The plumbing would need to be redone, with a new connection to the sewer. It would need a new roof, new heating and air conditioning, not to mention asbestos problems.

Plus, Post 435 had mounting bills. It owed back taxes, owed utilities and had unclear books, all resulting from manager and bookkeeper turnover, a lack of skills and, as usual, poor communication. It even had an embezzling scandal in 2015 and relinquished its charitable gambling license.

The overall problem? Too many chiefs, each with their own take on running the place.

Example: One bookkeeper with little

knowledge of the Legion Family or the Post's history almost sold off its historic flags.

Post leadership hopes the worst is in the rearview mirror.

"We've proven we are not restaurateurs. It's a different industry now," he said. "And it has distracted us from the business of the Legion."

Seamans envisions a bar and kitchen operated by a third-party contractor. The banquet space would be a place for community functions, from weddings to conferences to service club meetings, and a place for the members to conduct Legion business. And the Auxiliary. And the Sons of The American Legion. And the Legion Riders.

As for the rest, the options are open: The new building could be a one-story or multistory building, possibly with other businesses nearby or with apartments above or beside.

The city, he said, has pushed for affordable housing, and Seamans said it would be great if that housing was for veterans. After all, Post 435 is pretty much just down Highway 62 from the Minneapolis VA hospital.

"It will help us fulfill our mission," Seamans said.

But he and others remain open to the city's input. The city is conducting a study during the moratorium, and, he said, it will be interesting to see what it envisions for the location.

Post 435 owns a firing range south of the Twin Cities, and that has been one of many reasons for its strong membership. The gun range is not part of any sale.

10 largest Minnesota American Legion Posts

As of Feb. 16, 2021:

1. Apple Valley Post 1776	895
2. Minneapolis-Richfield 435	862
3. Rochester Post 92	779
4. West Duluth Post 71	685
5. Anoka Post 102	654
6. Forest Lake Post 225	608
7. Waite Park Post 428	596
8. Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172	595
9. Brainerd Post 255	571
T10. Moorhead Post 21	561
T10. East Grand Forks Post 157	561

Note: This list does not include Post 1982, which is for at-large Minnesota members who don't belong to a local Post. It has 2,067 members. At above 6,600, the Lady Lake, Fla., Post presently lays claim to the largest in the world.

The sale of Post 428 is in the process of closing after a failed bid last November

WAITE PARK — Don't believe the rumors. Waite Park Post 428 is not turning in its charter. Its not giving up conducting the work of The American Legion, especially in a vet-heavy community with a VA hospital and many veteran funerals.

It is, however, selling its building where it held bar, restaurant and banquet operations.

Adjutant Tom Fernlund confirmed that the Post Executive Committee is in the closing process with a company that intends to turn the location into a car wash.

The Waite Park Post 428 home is at a high-traffic location, on the corner of Division Street and Second Avenue. Fernlund noted the Post still owns a parking lot across Second Avenue, next to a fast-food joint called Bestburgerever.

The Post's monthly meetings will continue at the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge in Waite Park for the time being, he said. The Post will complete the sale before members figure out the next move.

"It's kind of an exciting move, the way I look at it," Fernlund said. "We can focus more on what The American Legion does."

The sale is expected to close in May or June.

Fernlund said being on a busy road was a plus but the public didn't always realize they can enter a service organization's restaurant.

The main problem was a large and aging building, he said.

"We were spinning our wheels to pay for things. The cost of everything keeps going up: electricity, heating, property tax," he said.

The roof was starting to leak, too, so another major expense was on the horizon.

"It's just all the things coming together, and we have to look at all the things coming in and figured it was time," Fernlund said.

Other factors were the government-imposed shutdown, government-imposed smoking ban, people not dining out at sit-down restaurants as much as they used to, many more types of dining options in the Crossroads Center area and aging membership that wasn't coming in as often, he said.

He said there has been talk about finding an off-site location for its charitable gambling. Bingo, presently, is on hold while the sale is going through. The Post continues to serve



The location of Waite Park Post 428's building, if the sale closes successfully, is probably going to become a car wash. The Legion bought the building in 1961 and dramatically expanded it over the years.

funerals and support the community and veterans-related celebrations. He hopes Post 428 eventually can get back to a situation where it hosts rallies and conventions, considering the decent hotel space St. Cloud and Waite Park offer.

American Legion Department of

Minnesota records show Post 428 was chartered in 1939, though the Post's website says there was an attempt to receive a charter in 1935.

The Post met at another location from 1947 to 1961. That is the year it completed the purchase of the property at Second and Division.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held March 15, 1961.

Since then, adjacent lots were purchased. The building went through remodels, growing from 30-by-110 feet to 110-by-110 feet, allowing it to accommodate 300-plus-person weddings and other banquets.

Roger K. Olson remembered as a 'force du jour'

Continued from Page 1

veterans should be part of The American Legion."

Past Department of Minnesota Commander Don Pankake, of Hutchinson Post 96, recalled membership drives with Olson. They even would door-knock.

"He knew certain ones were grouchy when we knocked on their door," he said. "I got into some unique situations that way."

Pankake would come out of the house with the dues and return to the truck to find Olson laughing.

"He knew he sent me into a hornet's nest."

Olson, Pankake said, was a hard charger if something was for the good of the Legion.

"If Roger got behind somebody, me, Don Hayden, Ray Dezurik, if Roger felt they were a good person, he had their back," Pankake said.

Like with any hard charger, there would be times people disagreed with him.

"He would say, 'Uh, Pankake, we got to talk.'"

"I was brought to his house, and there were times we would have the Scotch," Pankake said. "In the end, we would walk out of there, and everything would be figured out. And he did that for everybody."

He pushed officers to move up within the Legion.

Hayden, of Le Center Post 108, was a national vice commander in 2007-08 and Department of Minnesota commander in 2002-03. Dezurik, of Waite Park Post 428 at the time, was Department of Minnesota commander in 2000-01. Dezurik had been membership director for Commander Olson in 1997-98.

"He was that kind of personality. He made a Legionnaire a better Legionnaire, a commander a better commander, a state representative a better state representative."

Whether it was at church or any committee, when there was a fundraising problem and no one saw a solution, RKO had one.

"He would say, 'I can do that. Give me three good men,'" Pankake said. "If you happened to be standing close to him, you might become one of those good men."

Pankake said Olson raised funds so often he was on a first-name basis with all the Hutchinson area bankers.

RKO came from an era when, if you

didn't have 100 percent or an all-time high, it wasn't even in the vocabulary. He ran Post 96 membership from 700 up to 1,200. No matter who the vice commander was, Olson would instruct the person on how to handle membership.

Olson was great at remembering faces and names, he said. He was a perfectionist who kept his home manicured and, Pankake said, was supported by a wonderful wife, Darlene.

"Roger was a mentor of mentors," Pankake said.



Don Pankake



Dan Ludwig



Don Walser

Past National Commander Dan Ludwig said Olson was a passionate veteran who was a patriotic American.

"He was a good friend to me and like many, I will miss his presence," Ludwig said.

Past Department Judge Advocate Don Walser is a Hutchinson Post 96 member. He presently serves as the Post 96 judge advocate.

He said Olson always had the best interest of the organization in mind all the time.

"He was such a quiet and humble but very effective mover and shaker," Walser said.

Olson accomplished a lot locally, often with controversy, too, because "he was just absolutely devoted to membership."

Walser said Post 96's membership is large for a city Hutchinson's size.

"There are people all over the country who pay dues at our Post," he said. "I always wondered why or how, but he got them to be on our list."

Olson was often called by his initials: RKO. He had a 34-year career with 3M and dedicated much time to the Holstein associations at the county, state and national levels, too. He often knew how to move behind the scenes. His community recognized him as Mr. Hutchinson in 2012.

Within the Legion, in addition to membership, he was known for fundraising and supporting youth activities. At the National American Legion level, he served as vice chairman of the National Resolutions Committee. He was the Department of Minnesota

representative at National for foreign relations, credentials and membership. He was a committee member for the McLeod County Veterans Park in Hutchinson.

Former Communications Director Al Zdon called RKO a "force du jour." Zdon had written books about Minnesota veterans, called "War Stories."

The week before a big Department gathering, Commander Olson would call Zdon and tell him to bring 10 cases of books.

"What for?" Zdon asked.

"Just bring them," Olson replied.

During the gathering, he would have District commanders meet in the corner and hand them each a box of books.

"I don't want any of these books back," he told them. "I just want the money when you sell them."

Zdon recalled Olson sitting with him at one event to help peddle the books. Instead of sitting behind the table, he sat in front of it. He would grab people walking by and haul them over.

"He didn't ask them if they wanted to buy one. He would ask them to whether they want to buy two or three. Maybe get an extra one for your local library," Zdon said. "We sold maybe 60 or 70 books that night. It was unbelievable."

Zdon often wrote speeches for Department commanders. Zdon's words sounded better coming from some commanders than others.

"But it turned out, he was the greatest speech reader of all time. People would have tears running down their faces. He was just an incredible speaker," Zdon said.

Olson, Zdon said, would have an idea just about every 20 minutes. It became tough on the staff having to execute his ideas. Finally, Zdon started telling him which ideas wouldn't work.

"So he would let it go and he was on to something else. Twenty minutes later, he would have another idea. He was just bubbling over with optimism," Zdon said.

Some members were not always happy with Olson because he was always pushing people to do more, Zdon said, "but looking back, we have realized he was a dynamo."

Olson is survived by his wife, Darlene, and their children Robert and Kathleen. A private service with military honors was held in Hutchinson. Memorials are preferred to the Hutchinson Area Community Foundation.



Tim Burley



Al Zdon

Baseball tournament to have pool play

Continued from Page 1

Vice Director Brandon Raymo, an SAL member of Montevideo Squadron 59, said 103 had signed up as of Feb. 16, which is about the same as last year at this time. Teams register at baseball.legion.org. They have until April 1.

Change of format

Minnesota American Legion Baseball is renowned for its 16-team Division I state tournament. Legion Baseball programs in other states have eight teams.

The old bracket approach is being thrown out, Schaub said, and this year the tournament will offer pool play.

"The result is teams are guaranteed three games," he said. "Before, they were guaranteed only two."

Anyone who watches team sports during the Olympics is familiar with pool play. Teams play each other in a very short season, then ones with the best records advance.

For the Minnesota American Legion Division I State Tournament, there will be 16 teams. Fifteen qualify by winning their substate region, and the 16th team is the host. The best eight teams then compete in a winner-advances bracket.

This year, the tournament is in St. Cloud, and the host will be the St. Cloud Chutes of St. Cloud Post 76, named for Wallace S. Chute, who died Dec. 6, 1918, from machine gun fire to his hip a month before on a battlefield in France during World War I.

Burnsville, which had anticipated hosting the 2020 tournament, is planning to host it



in 2022. Other 2020 hosts will host this year instead. Each has eight teams, seven qualifiers plus the host team.

The Division II Tournament, for smaller communities, will be in Sacred Heart this year.

Division I Junior Tournament, for players 17 and younger, is slated to be in Bloomington, and the Division II Junior is set for Montevideo.

Starting last year and continuing on, all coaches are required to have child safety training, which includes lessons on preventing sexual abuse. This has become part of most youth sports activities since the abuse scandal of gymnasts at Michigan State University. They must receive it every two years.

Background checks continue to be required, too. Coaches must receive concussion training every third year. Teams are approved in the registration system once all three are completed.

Teams register and fulfill requirements by visiting the website baseball.legion.org.

"The past year has been a journey, but it reminds us how much we love the game," Schaub said.

Know your CVSO

Jacob Turner joined the Army in 2009. After basic training and jump school, he was stationed with the 264th Engineer Clearance Company at Fort Bragg, N.C. He served two deployments to Afghanistan where his platoon would scour roads looking for improvised explosive devices. He spent roughly 18 months conducting combat operations.



Jacob Turner

Turner met a woman through a mutual friend. Following the second deployment, she changed his life, and now they are happily married and live in Brandon with two children.

He is a member of Brandon Post 278. His hometown is Nampa, Idaho.

"I love being able to help veterans navigate the complicated VA systems and get them help when they have thought for years that there is no help there for them," Turner said.

He is the Douglas County veteran service officer and the secretary for the executive board of the Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers.

His phone number is 320-762-3883, and his email is jacobt@co.douglas.mn.us.

George Fiedler served in the Air Force as an officer for 30 years in the career field of information technology, after he graduated from St. Cloud State University.



George Fiedler

He was a commander and vice commander multiple times, with several assignments in the Washington, D.C., area, including two tours at the Pentagon.

He retired as a colonel in 2005 and returned to Minnesota.

Fiedler has been the Benton County veteran service officer since 2012. He is accredited to help veterans with the VA, American Legion, American Veterans, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, National Association of County Veteran Service Officers and the Minnesota Department

of Veteran Affairs. He has a minor in physical education, a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a master's in guidance and counseling.

"I enjoy meeting veterans and their families and helping them obtain earned benefits and mentoring them through any issues they may have," Fiedler said.

He and his wife, Mary Lou, live in 20 acres of farmland he grew up on near Rice. His main hobby, he said, is "solving problems."

In addition to being a member of NACVSO and Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers, he is involved with the Minnesota Association of Townships.

His phone number is 320-968-5044, and his email is gfiidler@co.benton.mn.us.

Commander's Project

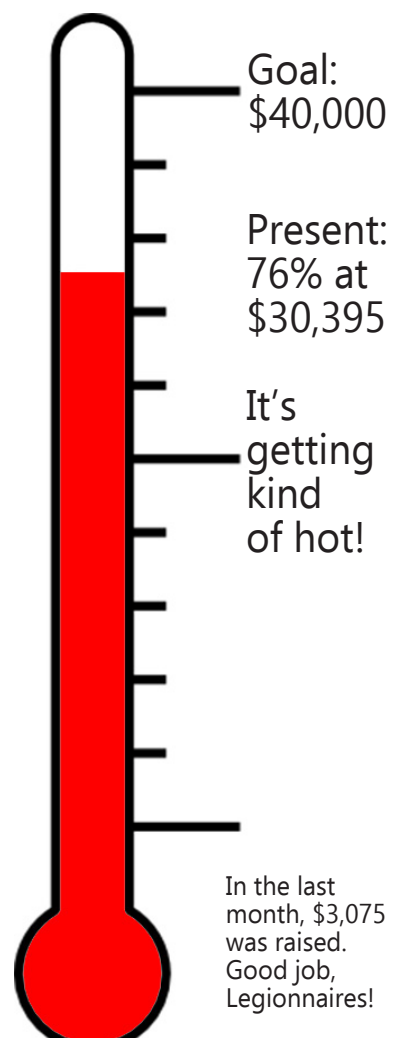
Let's do it for the dock!

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



In the last month, \$3,075 was raised. Good job, Legionnaires!



Photo by Kara Hildreth

Prolific artist Al Smith uses his God-given talent to showcase the array of emotions and loss from war. Today he spends hours drawing veterans for military families.

Prayer helps with creating and finishing art

Continued from Page 1

a young age.

His young son died in his sleep from an asthma attack. This emotional loss propelled him to draw a portrait of his son's face the night before his funeral.

Married to his wife, Pat, for more than 60 years, the couple makes a home in Owatonna, and both thrive in retirement together creating beautiful expressions of the world inside their basement studios.

Smith described his wife as an avid quilter who designs and sews piles of quilts from scraps of fabric that keep family and friends warm. Wall quilts decorate the couple's home and rooms come to life with his original art and paintings.

"It brings him a peaceful joy, and he knows what God has meant for him to do, and when he is connected to God he can draw a picture," said Pat.

She said she understands how her husband finds reward when he brings veteran families happiness when they can see life in the eyes of their loved ones whose faces are resurrected in his illustrations.

"I had been thinking about my son who died at 32 years old," Smith said. The deep loss and grief shook up his world.

"It is a horrible experience, and it never goes away, and it is diabolically opposed to all the rules of nature — that a parent should bury its child."

Explaining how his life took a backspin without his son, this loss ended up leading to his retirement from his career as he decided to undergo a hip replacement that took six months of therapy to heal.

A friend approached him about doing a portrait of him as a Vietnam veteran. Smith met this man at Compassionate Friends, a support group for parents who lost a child. This man asked him to draw him and honor his life as a Vietnam veteran and as a sober man who overcame his addiction to alcohol.

"When he asked me, I said 'no' for two years," Smith said. "He wanted me to draw him in a portrait of the iconic picture known as the 'Grace Prayer.' And so I agreed and told him I will make a picture of you on my own terms. I said I am not going to do an oil painting or an acrylic painting; I am going to do a pencil drawing of you, and he was satisfied," Smith said.

This portrait depicted his friend quietly praying sitting at a table beside his Holy Bible and the AA book, along with the number 58,202, the number



Above and at right are a few of the sketches Al Smith of Owatonna has done of veterans.

of lives lost during the Vietnam War, at the bottom on the illustration.

This journey of sketching brought back memories for Smith and that is when he realized his first love — the art of bringing new life and expression to images through pencil sketches.

"When I drew that picture, I resurrected that love of pencil drawing that I had when I was a kid," he said, recalling all the hours spent drawing in his childhood that kept him busy from 6 to 16 years old.

Smith said he feels his artist talent is God-given.

"When I was done, I was amazed as how it far exceeded my expectations of what it was going to look like because I hadn't drawn in all those years," he said.

This illustration was only the beginning. He finished a series he would call the Vietnam Experience that he shared with a PowerPoint presentation that included war stories of the Vietnam War. Smith never served abroad in a war, though he did serve his country as a member of the Minnesota National Guard.

This hobby of drawing served as an artistic journey as he worked to heal his own personal loss that further gave his life purpose and more meaning during his retirement.

"I started drawing with a passion and a fervor and it would not stop — and I could not stop," Smith admits, as he kept running to Northfield to buy more paper.

Drawing with a musical backdrop

This illustrator prefers to sketch in

his basement art studio while listening to what he calls "the most beautiful song." The song is called "Cavatina," a 1970s classical guitar piece made popular by the epic Vietnam film "Deer Hunter."

Reviewing the fine details of his sketches, you may think his drawings resemble realistic black-and-white photographs.

Before drawing his Vietnam series of images, he would do research at the library and found compelling photos of young soldiers' faces and war images inside library books and magazines.

"I feel so much for the military veterans I drew, and I talked to the Vietnam boys, and I asked 'Did you make it out OK? What is your life like today? Do you have any children?'"

Prior to the pandemic, Smith showcased his art at art and history centers, local civic groups, roundtable discussion, churches, schools and senior centers. Smith gave five presentations as part of the Exchange Club in Owatonna, an outreach group that links youth in schools with the community. Smith shared how he took pride in being a part of the mayor's prayer breakfast in his own city.

Blessed be his mind and hands

"One of the things I have learned to do in my life as an artist is to say a little prayer first, and I ask the Lord to combine my mind with my hands," Smith said.

Creating new pieces for his World War II Iconic collection, Smith was busy illustrating an image from the Yalta Conference in 1945. Though he was facing a challenge. His finished

piece shows the coming together of world leaders — President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Premier Joseph Stalin and Prime Minister Winston Churchill — as the men discussed postwar peace and how Europe would be split up after the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Smith shared how he almost gave up on this piece. He explained his difficulty in drawing Churchill's facial expression. His first attempts made Churchill's face look like a pig and he grew frustrated. After talking it over with his wife, Smith said she encouraged him not to give up. After all, she said he could draw anything.

"Then I realized that I had forgotten to pray before drawing," Smith said.

After he took a few minutes to say a quiet prayer, he was able to sketch all the world leaders, including Churchill's face, with ease.

"I began laughing out loud because it all came easy."

Smith illustrated the famous war journalist Ernie Pyle, who earned a Pulitzer Prize after writing war stories about ordinary American soldiers during World War II. Smith gave a talk at the history center in Faribault after he illustrated pieces of female veteran soldiers that became a part of his WOW series or Women of War sketches.

Vietnam Experience

Visiting the public library to research history and photographs that inspired him, Smith began his journey in drawing pieces in his collection called the Vietnam Experience.

"One of my favorites was an image of a young black man that I found in a book at the library," Smith said.

This illustration became a challenge to realistically create the fine details of the terry-cloth towel over the young man's head. He also needed to accurately reflect the shade of the man's black skin with his pencils. Admitting this piece is one of his favorite pieces from his Vietnam War Experience.

This artist uses sharpened black and blue lead pencils to bring life to his illustrations that capture airplane fighter jets, soldiers and the war experience.

Each illustration in the 38-piece Vietnam collection were chosen intentionally to depict the arrays of emotions young men faced in this divisive war on the battlefield and when returning home. The internal wounds left within each soldier, Smith said, nearly tore the fabric of the nation at the time as political debates brewed during and after young soldiers boarded planes to head back home.

"There are stories behind each one as they have to dust off or remove the injured or dead persons from the battlefield," Smith said. "This piece shows how this soldier is not leaving him in his wounded state — he is holding him as he is filled with drought."

Smith gets visibly emotional as he shares his art that depict young soldiers' experiences as he would never know their personal stories.

Another favorite sketch depicts a young soldier who is clean-shaven, wearing his U.S. Army uniform with an American flag placed inside his back pocket.

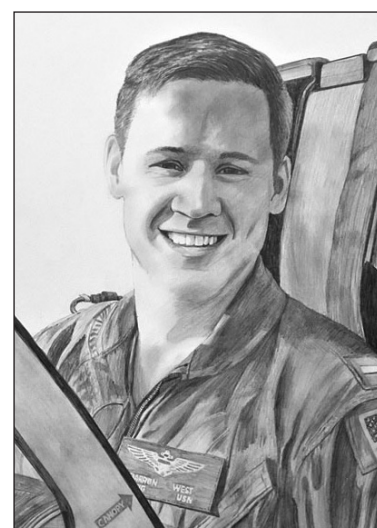
"He's protesting the war, in his own way, but what you don't see is how he is standing in line to get on an airplane to come back home," Smith said.

The gentle pencil strokes from his artist's heavy heart and mind showcase the harsh realities of a war that lead to thousands of young lives lost.

Memorializing lives

Today Smith continues his war sketches and has begun creating commissioned art of veterans for family members in recent years after word of mouth has spread of his talent.

"I absolutely love doing commission work because it means so much to them, the families who have lost sons,



brothers, fathers and family members," Smith said.

Military family members offer deep gratitude to Smith for resurrecting their loved one's essence on paper.

The very personal pencil illustrations can be enjoyed by family and hung on walls for future generations to remember and enjoy, he said.

Last week, he completed a World War II airplane and aircraft carrier on his drawing board.

Smith welcomes commission work and loves to sketch loved ones and pets. He can be connected via Facebook or goldenboy2245@gmail.com.

Smith said it is vital for everyone to talk about lost loved ones, even if it is painful because this is all a part of a person's grief journey. He said as he has learned this from his own journey and the advice of his grief counselor.

"If you don't cry on the outside, you are going to cry on the inside and by that, I mean you may experience physical ailments that are going to hurt you."



Past Department Commander Dennis Sculthorp speaks at the 50th annual 10th District Snowmobile Run. It finished at Lino Lakes Post 566 on Jan. 31.

By Tim Engstrom

LINO LAKES — The 10th District Snowmobile Run has come to the end of the trail.

After 50 years, organizer Patti Coleman has decided to hang it up. Her father, Gerald “Jerry” Coleman, began the Snowmobile Run as a way to collect membership before the Jan. 31 delinquency deadline.

“Dad loved his toys,” Patti said. “He played hard and worked hard.”

Participants in the Snowmobile Run would take automobiles or snowmobiles from Post to Post around the 10th District from Friday to Sunday on the final weekend in January to collect membership dues and forms. In the early days, they even slept on the floor of Post homes, because there weren’t as many hotels and motels as today.

The 10th District encircles three-quarters of the Twin Cities, from Bloomington to Lino Lakes, as well as west to Cokato and north to Denham. The suburbs grew during the past 50 years. The Districts of the Department of Minnesota are based on the congressional map at the time of the Legion’s beginning in 1919.

Jerry was the adjutant and membership director of Blaine Post 566 for many years. His wife, Patricia, was an Auxiliary member and would help out. The Post moved to Lino Lakes in 2000. Whether Blaine or Lino Lakes, the Snowmobile Run always would finish at Post 566.

The Coleman family in those days lived in Circle Pines. The old Blaine Post was by the border with Lexington, and it had members from the



Larry Woods of Hopkins Post 320 sports several pins on his cap from prior 10th District Snowmobile Runs. Gerald Coleman and his wife, Patricia, started the snowmobile run 50 years ago. Woods said Gerald Coleman gave him the hat years ago.

After 50 years, Snowmobile Run comes to an end



Minnesota ALA 1st Vice President Patti Coleman speaks at the podium at Lino Lakes Post 566. She is the organizer of the 10th District Snowmobile Run. To the left is 10th District Membership Director Daryl Harmon of Champlin Post 600. On the right is 10th District President Brandi Christiansen of Delano Unit 377.

Blaine-Lexington-Circle Pines-Lino Lakes community. After Mom and Dad could no longer run the run, daughter Patti took over.

Patricia died May 26, 2013. Jerry died Feb. 20, 2018. He was Post 566 commander in 1960-61. He served a term as a District 10 vice commander, too. He was a Legionnaire for 60 continuous years.

“He believed the real work of the Legion was at the Post level,” Patti said. “He was the type of guy who would go to the Post every day and look after the membership and other paperwork, and he already worked odd hours as a truck driver for the Post Office.”

On Saturday, Jan. 31, the 50th annual 10th District Snowmobile Rally wrapped up at Lino Lakes Post 566. A half-sized crowd of participants gathered in the back room, and Patti spoke.

She said that, in 50 years, there had been zero accidents and just a single speeding ticket.

This year yielded 140 memberships for the Sons of The American Legion, 66 for The American Legion and 136 for the American Legion Auxiliary. That’s a total of 342.

Patti also announced the run would be discontinued.

“It’s been a District Family event, represented by every branch of the Family,” she said. “My parents are in heaven celebrating today.”

She called the ride a legacy of Post 566 and of the Coleman family.

Tenth District Membership Director Daryl Harmon, unopposed candidate for commander, said the District will have a new rally of some kind in 2022.



Tenth District Sergeant at Arms Cliff Newman of Anoka Post 102 gives a hand salute at the end of the 50th annual Snowmobile Run at Lino Lakes Post 566 on Jan. 31.

Posts meet roadblocks

Continued from Page 1

VFW Posts that did not receive a direct COVID-19 Business Relief Payment from the Minnesota Department of Revenue earlier this year are urged to contact their local county as soon as possible to determine if additional COVID-19 relief is available.

In December 2020, Gov. Tim Walz signed a bipartisan COVID-19 Business Relief package. The law provided funding for direct payments from the Department of Revenue to businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic that met specific eligibility requirements. The law also provided \$114,800,000 to counties. Each Minnesota county received a prorated appropriation based on population.

Each of Minnesota’s 87 counties have set up their own grant program to provide economic relief to local businesses and non-profits adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each county is responsible for establishing its own application process and requirements for these business relief grants. Because each county can set up the program to best meet their local needs, Legions and VFW Posts that were not eligible for a direct COVID-19 Business Relief payment will need to contact their local county for information on how to apply for this funding.

It is very important to note that the law directs any unspent funding in this program to go back to the state’s general fund on **March 15, 2021**, meaning Legions and VFW Posts will need to act soon. ...

For questions about direct COVID-19 business relief payments from the Department of Revenue, email salesuse.tax@state.mn.us or call 800-657-3777.

SCENES FROM THE SWEETHEART RALLY



Many people attended the Sweetheart Membership Rally through the Department of Minnesota’s Zoom account. Their faces were projected onto a pull-down screen.



Department Commander Mark Dvorak, right, hands Sweetheart Awards to 5th District Commander Wade Larson and Vice Commander Teresa Ash. They also received New Member Awards. Awards for membership accomplishments are handed out at Department rallies.



Department Commander Mark Dvorak, right, hands the Pearl Harbor Award to his wife, 3rd District Commander Linda Dvorak. The Dec. 5 Pearl Harbor Rally was canceled.



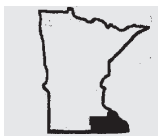
Tenth District President Brandi Christiansen of Delano Unit 377 holds her 5-month-old daughter, Laura, at Paynesville Post 271 on Feb. 6.



Members of the 3rd District gather for a group photo. From left are Dave Vulcan of North Mankato, Mark and Linda Dvorak of New Prague, Mike and Nancy Maxa of Montgomery, Elroy and Betty Schlueter of Hutchinson, Linda Kelly of Pine Island, Pat Jackson of Pine Island and Casey Lenort of Mankato.



Paynesville Post 271 Adjutant Jerald Quarfot welcomes Legionnaires from across Minnesota. Post 271 offers a spacious banquet hall, in addition to its restaurant/bar.



1st District

Dale Wellik



Greetings from the 1st District American Legion Family. Thank you for your service to our country and for all our supporters.

We continue to plan ahead and move forward.

The first District Oratorical Contest went very well, and the Department Oratorical Contest was planned for Saturday, Feb. 27, at Anoka Post 102. It happened after the Legionnaire's press deadline and will be over before you read this.

Membership continues to need our attention. We need to focus on veteran benefits to belong and work the 1982 and 1982AD list.

- The LEGION Act, where eligibility now includes all wars and dates from Dec. 7, 1941, to present.

- The Four Pillars programs of The American Legion.

- Read the District newsletters that is put out by most Districts.

There are still veterans out here who haven't signed up with the VA to get their benefits that were gotten and so well-deserved.

Sign up with your county veterans service officer (CVSO). *Give them a call.*

This is another avenue for getting the vaccination at the VA.

Do your part to help get this virus under control, wear a mask, sanitize, wash your hands, social distance, be safe avoid crowds.

March 6 is the Appreciation Rally in La Crescent starting with a social at 4 p.m., dinner at 5 p.m. Program to follow. CDC mandates will apply.

Check The American Legion websites for your easy reading pleasure: legion.org, mnlegion.org, mylegion.org.

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

Pray for our deployed troops who are now doing double duty and pray for their families. We are all in this together.

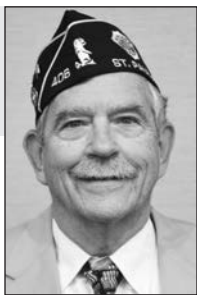
Continue to do the Buddy Checks.

For God and Country!



4th District

Joe Jansen



Hello to all of our 4th District Legion Family members. Once again, the Auxiliary did an outstanding job of hosting the Department Sweetheart Rally on Feb. 6 at Paynesville Post 271. It was great to be able to gather together with so many Legion Family members from across the State. The Ramsey County Central Committee meeting at Rosetown Post 542 was held in the virtual and in person.

Thanks to all of you who attended. We did have a quorum so we could officially conduct business. One of the items we have been asked to do is the Buddy Checks.

After the bitter-cold weekend, this is a great way to touch base with our members and show them we care about their well-being. Post commanders, please help the vice commanders

with the national commander's request that the Post contact Legion members on the 1982 and 1982AD lists to join a local Post. If you have any questions about this area, please ask your Post commander or your vice commander.

As a last resort, ask Mickey Ostrum, our 4th District membership director. Our next Department-level gathering will be at La Crescent Post 595 on March 6. The next RCCC meeting will be at the North St. Paul Post on April 14, 6:30 for the executive board and 7 p.m. for the full meeting. Every effort will be made to ensure we can hear those members who join us via Zoom.



5th District

Wade Larson



Excited for the new opportunities with NASCAR No. 48. If we can look at having tents present at racetracks across Minnesota to embrace getting the word out to race fans on all we accomplish for vets increasing membership and donations for the Legion Department of Minnesota.

Our District along with the 4th led the first ever Midwinter Conference on Zoom in the state.

Our District won two awards at the family gathering in Paynesville last month.

We will be looking into open houses on Zoom. I am looking forward to the family gathering hybrid on Zoom and in person in Le Crescent.

National Commanders tour in North St. Paul is April 6. Reserve your tickets.

We look forward to several emergency resolutions moving forward to support current state

legislative efforts to help our physical posts with relief.

The 5th District Legion and Auxiliary partnered this past month to distribute over 500 thank-you cards to Kosovo troops and beef jerky to the USS Nimitz carrier. Thanks for the selfless service of Elaine Rider in her dedication to overseas troops and local vets with neck warmers.

If you would like to have more informative information and activities you can sign up for, see our District newsletter for our E-Flash at mnfighting-fifth.org.

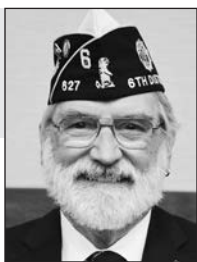
Let us not forget our obligations to our communities, state and nation.

Feel free to reach me for more information at wadealarson@yahoo.com.



6th District

Paul Edwards



Greetings to the 6th District Legion Family,

From the current temperature, it appears that the polar vortex has gone elsewhere, and we can take some comfort from the fact that when you read this it will be March, or nearly so, and the start of spring.

I am happy to see that many of our Posts are already at or above the 90 percent goal for the Legion Birthday on March 10, and eight posts have hit the 100 percent of goal.

Speaking of membership, it was announced at the Sweetheart Rally that the 6th District had won the Kaisersatt Derby. Well done, everyone! Keep up the great work.

Be aware that effective this year, membership is no longer a part of the Goose Egg. Getting off the egg now requires submitting your Post's Consolidated Post

Report and Post Officer Report in a timely manner.

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.

We are excited by the news that National Commander Bill Oxford will visit four Posts in the 6th District. Send in your registration and let's show him what the Mighty 6th District is all about.

For God and Country.



8th District

D. Marvin Hill



Greetings to the great Eighth District family!

Don't throw out economic impact debit cards. The U.S. Treasury and the IRS are mailing out 8 million economic impact payments in the form of prepaid debit cards.

Most received their EIP either by direct deposit or mailed checks. However, the debit cards are being sent out to consumers for whom the IRS does not have bank account information on file.

The visa name will appear on the front of the card and the name of the issuing bank (Meta

Bank) on the back. This is not a scam!

On March 6, La Crescent Post 595, LaCrescent is hosting the Appreciation Rally and Dept Executive Committee meetings at the area events center. Your commander and District officers will attend. The COVID-19 vaccine has been slow to reach us in the North Country. Please stay healthy and safe during this uncertain time.

God bless our troops and God bless America!



7th District

Dean Knutson



Greetings to the 7th District!

Boy, time sure does have a way of getting away from us. It seems like things just seem to run together and before you know it you have forgotten one thing or another. Even though this does happen, we cannot lose sight of what the American Legion Family stands for and what we do. We need to keep the interests of all veterans (past, present and future) always in our minds. We all know at least one veteran with family members who may be on hard times and could use some kind of assistance.

This aid can come through just a kind word or a listening ear or by directing them to the right organization that can help them out. Our greatest source is our veterans service officer within our counties. Our obligation within The American Legion is to see that no veteran and their family is ever forgotten.

Remember that March 6 is the Appreciation Rally for the Department of Minnesota at La Crescent Post 595 and March 10 is the 90 percent cutoff for

membership. If you have any members who have not paid their 2021 dues, please contact them and ask them to pay so their continuous years do not get affected. Please, by looking at the lists of names on the mylegion.org site for those who are members in your area but have joined either MN Post 1982 or MN Post 1982AD.

If you do not have access to mylegion.org, please contact me, and I can help get you set up with an account, or I can get you the list of names for your posts. Membership is not just the responsibility of the commander and membership director but is up to all of us to keep The American Legion a strong voice for all veterans.

Special thanks to Rueben Nathe and the Litchfield American Legion for hosting the District Oratorical Contest on Feb. 6.

Stay safe and stay healthy. Until next month God bless America and The American Legion.



9th District

Steve Sundstrom



Hello everyone. I hope this finds everyone doing well. With the increase in availability of the COVID vaccine, those of you who feel the need for it should be able to get it soon if not already.

I'm happy to say the national commander will visit two Posts in the 9th District, Bagley Post 16 (lunch) and the Detroit Lakes Post 15 (dinner). I am sure we will put forth our best effort to make his visit a memorable one. I encourage you to join us and give him a great Minnesota welcome!

With the recent shut down of the XL pipeline, it does not only affect the workers on the pipeline, it has a big impact on the community in the areas it was going to be going through. Many businesses have been struggling because of COVID, and this is another blow to their survival. These include

motels, restaurants, bars and even our Post homes.

I encourage you to patronize these establishments and tip kindly. I know many of us have been doing this to keep our local small businesses alive.

Commander Mark Dvorak has made a pledge to National Commander Bill Oxford to reach 92 percent by March 10. Currently we are 90.56 percent. I know that many of you have been making great efforts to get where we are today; hopefully, these efforts will pay off, and we can reach that goal. Those of you who are doing all this time-consuming work are not appreciated enough. I want to thank you for all your hard work and dedication. *Thank you!*



2nd District

Brad Pagel



Communication, communication, communication. How many times have you heard that? Communication is key to knowledge, but — yes, there is a "but" in every situation — what about the follow through on the communications? I know I am OK generally speaking with communication, but the follow through is where I am really terrible.

I have issues, as we all do, with being able to get things to follow-through correctly and in a timely manner. I feel that, and this is my opinion, there is a lack of mentorship on all levels.

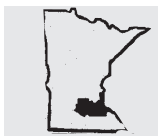
What happened? Have we become so disenchanted and disengaged that there is no mentorship being offered the way it should be, or is it setting up the younger members, who want to be involved in different aspects, to fail so they leave and it can go back to the way it used to be.

That is not the answer anymore. If there is no moving

forward to advance for the betterment of an organization, then we are setting up ourselves to fail. Do you like to help veterans? Do you like the camaraderie? Or do you like the way things are now? Or do you prefer the way it used to be?

Coming up is an event where your opinion can be heard, June 4-5, will be District Convention, location TBA. We also have technology available to voice opinions on. I am readily available through several means of communication to voice opinions to if the need arises. Don't be afraid as everyone is entitled to an opinion.

Membership is still key to an organization's lifeline, so let's get out there and get something done correctly and show others the ways to do it. Let's rise up and build together.



3rd District

Linda Dvorak



Hello from the 3rd District March is here, and I hope it brings warmer weather.

The 3rd District had its Oratorical Contest on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, in New Prague. It was a close race for the top two, only five points separated them.

The District Convention committee also met to discuss and plan the 3rd District Convention. Yes, it will be in person! The restrictions are being loosened by the governor, and we hope to have a good turnout in May. We are also planning on providing Zoom video conferencing for members who still don't feel comfortable being in person.

The rally in Paynesville had great participation. It was really nice to see so many people we have not been able to visit with for a year. Hopefully, La Crescent will be the same.

We will soon be into the convention/testimonial time of the year. Lots of traveling and visiting with fellow veterans and Legionnaires, I can't wait!

Did you get your shots yet? That seems to be the question I hear whenever I see someone. So, did you get your shots yet? Until next month!

Why is Feb. so long?

Legion Riders

Paul Hassing



Spring is almost here. Why does it seem like February is the longest month of the year? I know we get a lot of snow in March, but I can see the light at the end of the tunnel when March finally comes.

It was great seeing a lot of you during the 10th District Snowmobile Run, and at the Department Sweetheart Rally in Paynesville. It feels so good to see people in person again. Even with masks. (I'm better looking with a mask on anyway).

The Minnesota American Legion Riders are still doing a lot of great stuff even if the bikes are put away. Congratulations to the Fargo-Moorhead Legion Riders for picking the coldest nights of the year to camp out, raise a lot of money (I didn't hear the final numbers), and bring more awareness to the plight of the homeless. Awesome job!

We have many members of our family who are fighting battles right now. Whether it's COVID, or depression, or any number of other things, we need to help them win the battles, and eventually the fight. Please help one another. If you are going through something, please reach out to someone. We may not have all the answers, but sometimes just having some of the answers helps. We are such a great organization, I know we can find a way to help.

So looking forward to seeing all of you again.

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

Enrollment is open for the second Dept. Legion College

TWO HARBORS — Are you interested in how The American Legion of Minnesota accomplishes the mission of the Four Pillars? Are you interested in how you can make your American Legion Post the heart of your community?

Then this course is for you. The goal of the Department of Minnesota Training Committee is to provide the knowledge and enthusiasm you will need to be a successful leader at all levels of the American Legion most specifically right here in the state of Minnesota.

The Department Training Committee holds its second annual Legion College on Thursday, April 8, to Sunday, April 11, at Camp Ripley. Reporting time on Thursday is 3-4 p.m. The course graduates around noon on Sunday. The cost of this year's session is \$200 per

student, payable to Department of Minnesota American Legion, with "Dept. Legion College" in the memo line.

The registration fee includes lodging and course materials. Your Post or District may be able to pay your registration. Legionnaires interested in attending Minnesota Legion College must take the online Basic Training course through the National American Legion website.

The online Basic Training course can be found at www.legion.org/alei. Once that is completed the application for Department of Minnesota Legion College can be found at form.jotform.com/201546001458043. The deadline for registration is March 12.

Applicants will be notified by March 19 via email. Any question can be emailed to trainingcomm@mnlegion.org.

Gov. Walz plans to make no cuts to the MDVA

ST. PAUL — Gov. Tim Walz told the Minnesota Commander's Task Force he was asking leaders of state government to cut \$200 million from the budget and implement a hiring freeze.

However, he noted there will be one department to be fully funded — Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

"The mission for veterans persists in good times and bad," he said.

Walz made his comments to the Minnesota CTF over a Zoom video conference on Feb. 5.

In addition to its cemetery, education, VA claim, assistance and employment programs, the MDVA has grants for veterans, service officers and veterans organizations, and it advocates for veterans, such as making efforts to house homeless veterans and end veteran suicide. But the agency is most widely known for operating the five Minnesota Veterans Homes: Minneapolis,

Hastings, Fergus Falls, Silver Bay and Luverne. Four of them are nursing homes and one is a domiciliary.

The American Legion Department of Minnesota endorsed the confirmation of Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke in September. The endorsement letter noted Minnesota Veterans Homes are a health care organization that needs to be strong and stable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Minnesota CTF also advocates for fully funding the MDVA.

"A fully funded MDVA is not an accomplishment; it is an expectation," states a CTF document on 2021 legislative priorities.

The governor also commented that he will advocate for the passage for the Veterans Restorative Justice Act. He said the bill should steer clear of partisanship, as it has supporters on both sides of the aisle.

What's happening?

Testimonials planned for June 19

NEW PRAGUE — Save the date of June 19 for the Testimonial Dinner.

Only this time, it will be the Joint Testimonial Dinner because the banquet honors Minnesota American Legion Commander Mark Dvorak, Minnesota Auxiliary President Mary Hendrickson and Minnesota Sons of The American Legion Commander Dave Vulcan.

The program is being arranged. It will be followed by remarks and presentations for the SAL, Auxiliary, then Legion.

The event will be at New Prague Post 45, which operates The Park Ballroom, 300 Lexington Ave. S. The social hour begins at 3:30 p.m., with dinner at 5 p.m., and a program to follow. There will be live music by the Revival Band during the social hour and after the program.

Commander Dvorak is a member of the Revival Band, and he will join them to play a few numbers. They play polka, waltzes and old-time rock and country.

The meal is baked chicken, ham, green beans almondine and coleslaw.

Organizer Linda Dvorak, commander of the 3rd District and a member of Post 45, said presentations will be limited to save time, considering it is a joint testimonial.

The commanders and president have sent personal invitations to family and close friends. Considering the size of The Park Ballroom, there will be room for 100 additional guests, Dvorak said.

To RSVP, contact her at 952-457-2129 or ldvorak56@gmail.com by June 1. Payment of \$20 can be sent to:

Linda Dvorak
31047 221st Ave
Le Center MN 56057

A block of rooms has been held at the Quality Inn & Suites, 1200 First St. NE, New Prague. The event name is "Legion Testimonial," and the phone is 952-758-7300.

Additional hotels in the area are Mystic Lake & Casino in Shakopee, 800-262-7799, and Home Town Inn & Suites in Belle Plaine, 952-873-6017.

Registration is open for Legionville

BRAINERD — Registration is open for Legionville School Safety Patrol Camp.

Following COVID-19 precautions, the camp is accepting roughly half the number of campers it can accept.

This will allow space for activities while maintaining safety protocols.

The Legionville Board of Directors meets virtually March 20 to discuss progress.

Legionville was closed in 2020 because of the pandemic. It was open in 2019. It was

closed in 2018 because a 4-acre floating bog that settled on Legionville's beach.

The beach is in good shape now, and swimming, canoeing, hiking and other activities are going to be part of the camping experience.

Camps at Legionville run June 13-18, June 20-25, July 11-16, July 18-23, July 25-30 and Aug. 1-6.

Registration is \$325 per student and is open until camp begins. The website is legionville.weebly.com.

There will be an alumni-only camp June 27-July 2. Alumni registration is \$350.

Boys State is coming along

ST. PAUL — Minnesota Boys State is planned for June 13-19.

The Boys State Subcommittee met Jan. 27 to form plans for the annual gathering that teaches American civics to high school boys.

Department of Minnesota Adjutant Mike Maxa said the subcommittee is waiting on word from St. John's University on whether it will allow in-person summer programming.

He said subcommittee members are hoping Boys State can happen as an in-person gathering, but there is a backup plan to go virtual.

Lessons learned at Boys State translate into life lessons on being involved in democracy. For example, the 2004 governor of Minnesota Boys State is Zach Duckworth, and last year, Duckworth was elected as a state senator from Lakeville.

You can find many of the participants involved in their communities years later.

Many celebrities, from Michael Jordan to Tom Brokaw to Tim Cook, went to Boys State. (See the Auxiliary pages for information on Girls State.)

Washington Conference is happening virtually

WASHINGTON — The Washington Conference is slated for March 1-4.

National Commander William "Bill" Oxford testifies at 10 a.m. Thursday, March 4. The event will be livestreamed on the National American Legion website.

A full schedule of speakers is available at legion.org/washingtonconference. It also requires registration to participate via Zoom.

Department Service Officer Schools happen March 8-26 and April 5-23. Both will happen virtually.

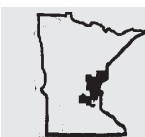
The American Legion Legislative Agenda for the first session of the 117th Congress calls for:

- Having the VA establish peer support similar to The American Legion's Buddy Check program.
- Amending the Constitution to prohibit physical desecration of the U.S. flag.



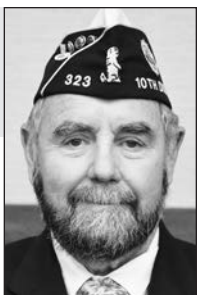
Several members of the Minnesota American Legion Family attended the Washington Conference in March 2020. It was the last event before the state and nation began shutting down gatherings.

- Constructing a monument in Washington to the veterans of the Global War on Terrorism.
- Addressing toxic exposures and burn pits among post-9/11 veterans by passing the Toxic Exposure in the American Military Act of 2020.
- Calling on Congress to oversee the VA to improve health care for women veterans and increase women enrollment in VA services.
- Implementing a pilot program to provide VA telehealth services in American Legion Posts.
- Getting Congress to address the Forever War and renew its war-making oversight role by repealing or replacing the outdated post-9/11 authorization for use of military force.
- Implementing measures that support naturalization for immigrants who serve honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Paying members of the Coast Guard during government shutdowns.
- Ensuring veterans and their families receive quality education for their G.I. Bill benefits by closing the 90-10 loophole and targeting bad actors who desire to fleece veterans of their educational benefits.
- Passing legislation lifting statutes of limitations and other obstacles that impede proper investigations into minority veterans who may otherwise have qualified for military citations and medals.



10th District

Tom Allen



Greetings from the Mighty 10th District: The prayers of everyone in the Tenth District go out to all those effected by this heart-breaking recent shooting in Buffalo: "May he hold you in the palm of his hands."

We also want to pass along our sincerest condolences and prayers for the loss of Past District Commander Orville Otterness. He was the 10th District commander in 1991-92. He was a genuinely great Legionnaire.

We completed our 50th annual Snowmobile Membership Rally. What a great turnout! Social distancing and mask wearing did not slow us down.

What an awesome event and great numbers, 325, in the middle of a pandemic. Our membership is at 86 percent when I last checked the website.

Let us all get behind National Commander Bill Oxford and Department Commander Mark Dvorak's "call to action." Look over those 1982 members listed and see what you can do to facilitate their transfer into your local post. If you have not received the information for this initiative, please contact Tenth District Adjutant Roger Stoick at rgstocik@aol.com, 10th District Membership Officer Daryl Harmon at darylhm@aol.com and or Wright County Vice Commander William C. Gordon Jr. at wgordon2494@hotmail.com.

We completed another

District officer Zoom meeting on Feb. 8. You can attend by computer or telephone. Paul Orson does a great job sending out all the information you need to join the meeting. I look forward to seeing all the 10th District officers at our next meeting. It is a great format that can help you glean a lot of useful information for your county/sub districts. Meetings last between an hour and an hour and half.

The next upcoming event is the 10th District Convention on June 4 and 5. This year the banquet will be a formal affair. We all know how wonderful the ladies will look, so break out that tux, good-looking suit or kilt.

One last thing and this is especially important: Our federal charter requires us to submit an annual report to Congress on our activities for the year. The Consolidated Post Report, or CPR, is a discriminator and weighs heavy on requests for National Emergency Fund (NEF) support. Did you know that over one-third of all American Legion activity has not been captured and reported to Congress? Use this link (www.legion.org) to go to mylegion.org in the menu across the top.

Please make sure you submit your post CPR to national no later than June.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 21 Vol. 8

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

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

651-224-7634

March 2021



President Mary Hendrickson speaks at the Sweetheart Membership Rally at Paynesville Post 271 on Feb. 6.

It has been good to start seeing friends once again

President's Column

Mary Hendrickson



March is a month which tests our strength in Minnesota. Many of us have memories of hockey and basketball state tournament blizzards that dumped lots of snow just as our minds were thinking spring was on the horizon. As a high school senior, I was involved in a bus/snowplow/nine-car pileup near Tomah, Wis., on our way to the state basketball tournament in Madison.

People died and help was slow to arrive in these pre-cellphone days. I've always admired The American Legion for its recognition of special law enforcement officers and firefighters who have been nominated for this honor by their local American Legion Posts. Today I'm thinking of those law and fire department officers who came to our rescue that long-ago March blizzard day.

Looking back, late January and February brought the opportunity to get back on the road for special events. Carl and I so enjoyed the opportunity to go to Lino Lakes Post 566 on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 31, for the culmination of the three-day 10th District Snowmobile Run.

The American Legion Family attendees were enjoying the fellowship and reporting of the memberships gathered. This was the 50th anniversary of this event and unfortunately will be the last.

Congratulations go out to our 1st Vice President Patti Coleman, who was this year's chairman and an active participant for many years. Thank you to everyone who participated.

One week later, the Snowmo-

bile Rally memberships were added to the totals reported at our annual Sweetheart Membership Rally held at Paynesville Post 271. It was a very cold day outside, but inside spirits were high as American Legion Family friends were excited to once again see each other.

The Post was very hospitable and did an excellent job with social distancing and providing of a great lunch. Thank you to Teresa Ash, Jennifer Havlick and the other individuals involved in setting up the technical equipment necessary for other American Legion Family members to join the Sweetheart Rally via Zoom.

As a retired educator, I'm excited about attending the Oratorical Contest finals at Anoka Post 102 on Saturday, Feb. 27. (Contest was after the Legionnaire press day. Results will be at mnlegion.org the next day or find them in the next issue.)

This was the last event I attended in 2020 before the March pandemic arrival. This year I'm also very excited about holding a DEC meeting and attending the Appreciation Rally on March 6 in La Crescent. I hope to see you there! Think good travel weather.

God bless our troops and America.

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

President Mary Hendrickson speaks to the room at Lino Lakes Post 566 on Jan. 31, the final stop of the 10th District Snowmobile Run. Her hand is on her husband, 8th District Adjutant Carl Hendrickson of West Duluth Post 71.



Time to get out there

March is Community Service Month

By Diane Hayes
Community Service
Chairman

The Community Service program demonstrates who we are, what we do and why we matter and focuses on making community life better. Its key components are: Become visible within your community; work with and invite other organizations to work with your Unit on Community Service projects; and work on a project as the American Legion Family.

Some ideas of Community Service Projects are:

- Food and needed items like cleaning, care items, water, etc.
- Participating in drives, walks or virtual walks and fundraisers for other community organizations (hospitals, shelters, centers, fire departments, etc.).
- Representing the American Legion Auxiliary on local community boards and special events.
- Sponsoring events and activities for nursing homes.
- Cleanup/fix-up yards, homes, parks in the community.



The Roseau American Legion Auxiliary Unit 24 presented three quilts to the Roseau Fire Department. These quilts will be in the fire trucks to be used for emergency use to keep people warm until other assistance can be provided. At the time of this presentation, the temperature outside was 12 degrees! The quilts were made by unit member, Jean Pederson. Pictured are Jean Pederson making the presentation to Roseau fireman Troy Hammer.

These are just a few of the things individual members can do as a member of the American Legion Auxiliary: volunteer at local libraries, food pantries, domestic violence shelters, senior citizen centers,

assisted-living centers, nursing homes, yard work, relays for life, donating to needy families, delivering meals on wheels, sewing quilts and presenting them to the Fire Department, making cards for local nursing

homes, sending thank you cards to essential workers and sewing and/or donating facemasks within your community.

National Volunteer Week is the third week in April. Don't forget to thank your volunteers.

EAGAN UNIT 594 LOOKS BACK AT 2020



At Every Third Saturday in Minneapolis.



At Hy-Vee grocery store in Eagan.

Eagan Unit 594's Purses with Purpose Project started on Feb. 24, 2020, before anyone realized how hard the pandemic was going to hit. Hy-Vee helped the Unit collect over 75 handbags, string bags, clothe grocery bags and backpacks before they had to remove the box from their front entry due to COVID-19 concerns.

With that project on hold, the members of the unit brainstormed to find other ways to let veterans know they were not forgotten. For Independence Day, personal "Thank You" notes were written and distributed to 300-plus veterans at Hastings Veteran Home, Minneapolis VA Home, and five senior residences in the Eagan area.

Splitting "Thank You" cards into workable packets, Susan Flynn, president of the unit left the box of stationary on her front stoop for members to drive by, pick up, fill out and mail. The response from recipients at all the facilities was overwhelmingly positive. The calls and letters the unit received in return were heartwarming. Leading up to Veterans Day the process was repeated, this time sending postcards to every veteran the unit could reach.

On 9/11, a scaled-back program by Eagan Post 594 had members of the Auxiliary participating at the Eagan Community Pavilion. Unit member Kim Ashland read a moving tribute to those we lost that day. September found the Unit assisting the local Post with flag retirement at a community park with Girl Scouts.

Christmas tree decorating was

canceled in 2020 at the Hastings Veterans Home due to COVID, but that did not stop the Unit from participating in its Adopt-a-Vet program. President Flynn's house was the drop-off and pick-up point again as different members donated to the gift box for our adopted vet.

Treasurer Paulette Stark delivered it, plus a few batches of baked goods also made by some of the Unit members to Volunteer Coordinator Sue Register as a thank you for all she does for veterans every day at the Hastings Home.

Winter had approached and the pile of handbags and string sacks grew as members delivered more bags they had collected from friends and family to President Flynn's basement. She was able to connect with a wonderful warehouse called Every Third Saturday in December. It is located just up the street from the Minneapolis VA hospital.

People there distribute necessities to homeless and "in need" veterans all over the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. The sign on the door says all that is needed is a VA card or a DD214 discharge letter. In addition, the Unit put a call out to its members for winter coats, boots and other warm winter wear to donate.

On Jan. 6, Susan Flynn and Colleen Vaubel, a Unit member and veteran herself, delivered two very full cars to Every Third Saturday's doorstep.

Included in the bags were boots, scarves, hats, gloves, coats, new thermal underwear, gently used sweaters and sweatshirts.

Dept. Junior Conf. is April 9-10

Our Junior members will hold their 57th Department Junior Conference on Saturday, April 10, at St. Augusta Post 621. The 6th District will be the hosts.

A fun evening has been planned for Friday, April 9. Complete information and the Call to the Junior Conference was included in the January-February 2 Unit Mailing. Be sure to share this information with your Junior Activities Chairman. Make your plans now and be sure to reserve a space for your Juniors.

We need everyone to register

so that we know exactly how many people to plan for. This will help to keep the costs to a minimum.

Registration is \$15, and everyone in attendance either day must register. Encourage your Junior members to attend this Conference and learn and share with other Junior members. Juniors do not have to be from an active Junior unit. Department Honorary Junior President Emily Suess has done a great job representing the Junior members for the past two years (2019-2021).



Please place poppy plea pronto

The busiest poppy time is fast approaching. As of mid-February, 99 out of 423 units have ordered small or large poppies for 2021. We understand that this past year has been a very difficult one for each of our units and that most of you were unable to hold your poppy distributions last spring and summer.

However, please remember that the low number of poppy orders also affects our poppy

makers as well. They make our poppies as a means of therapy. If our orders decrease, so does our need for them to make poppies.

If your Unit or Post finds that you could use some poppies, please place an order today. We need to know if our current inventory is adequate to cover our orders or if our poppy makers can continue to make more poppies.

Reservations being made for Girls State during this month

Reservations are now being taken for ALA Girls State and your \$100 registration fee must be received by March 31 to reserve a place for your citizen. Reservations with payment will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

When your reservation is processed, registration information for each citizen will be sent to your Unit. Units may send as many women to ALA Girls State as they wish.

The candidate must be a Minnesota resident and attend a Minnesota school or home school. If your Unit selected a citizen last year and they are available to participate, they are welcome to participate this year.

We are making this exception for this year only since we did not have a Girls State session in 2020 due to COVID. Seniors participating this year are not eligible to participate in Girls Nation per the ALA National Standing Rules.

They are also not able to apply for the Samsung Scholarship per The American Legion National Headquarters.

The 74th session of ALA Minnesota Girls State will be held virtually Sunday, June 13, through Thursday, June 17.

"We are excited about the changes to the program that are being made to accommodate a virtual session," said ALA Secretary Marsha Bible.

Due dates are coming up

Scholarships

Applications for all scholarships are due to the Department office by March 15. Announcement of winners will be printed in a future edition of The Auxiliary Bulletin. Please make sure all rules are followed including required signatures.

Annual reports

Annual report forms have been sent to the Units and are due on or before April 15. Please send the entire collection of reports back together as a Unit batch. The reports should cover anything done in your Unit between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021.

"We know that all of us were

drastically affected by COVID-19 and the long shutdowns," said ALA Secretary Marsha Bible. "However, we also know that we had some Units that are simply amazing and didn't let that roadblock stop them. They stepped up and did things a different way and continue to make a difference."

No matter how much or how little your Unit has been able to contribute, it is important that we record everything in our reports, she said.

Also included in the reports is a listing of deceased members for the year. Please make sure at the very least that you complete this report.

HAPPY 102ND BIRTHDAY



Happy 102nd birthday, American Legion, from the American Legion Auxiliary.

GOOD JOB!



Paynesville Unit 271 President Betty Freiling speaks at the Sweetheart Membership Rally on Feb. 6.

Get out there and earn gems for mining carts

By Sharon Thiemcke
Membership Chairman

Hello and greetings to all our ALA members!

March brings thoughts of spring and garden planning. With the Sweetheart Rally behind us, here are a few tidbits from that rally.

The rally was well-attended (within COVID limitations) and via Zoom. COVID protocols were enforced. There were temperature checks upon arrival, everyone was required to wear a mask, safety precautions were observed and we had social distancing throughout the event.

Thank you to the Paynesville American Legion Family for helping us to have such a great rally!

Congratulations to the 10th District on holding its 50th annual Snowmobile Rally the weekend prior to the

Sweetheart Rally. They were very successful at their rally and District 10 came in first place with 83.99 percent. Tenth District Membership Chairman Betty Brown received the diamond gem for her mining cart. The special drawing for all Units that achieved 90 percent paid membership by the Sweetheart Rally was won by Dent Unit 148.

Don't forget to turn in your membership at the Appreciation Rally on March 6 in La Crescent. There will be a drawing of all Units that have reached 100 percent and one lucky Unit will receive \$50. The week of April 1-7 is the week of Caring and Sharing. Information on how you Unit could win this is in the next unit mailing. Your Unit could win a \$25 Emblem Sales gift card for submitting a report on this. Information can be found at alaforveterans.org.

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year 2/19/2020
One	3,994	3,349	83.85%	3,687
Two	4,015	3,364	83.79%	3,736
Three	3,870	3,202	82.74%	3,594
Four	581	485	83.48%	541
Five	572	440	76.92%	528
Six	5,170	4,305	83.27%	4,759
Seven	3,197	2,618	81.89%	2,938
Eight	1,302	1,066	81.87%	1,175
Nine	3,445	2,881	83.63%	3,147
Ten	3,978	3,366	84.62%	3,710
1982	193	198	102.59%	188
Totals	30,317	25,274	83.37%	28,003

Leadership training scheduled

Leadership Chairman Mary Kuperus is continuing to provide a Back to the Basics leadership workshop to members. There are two more leaderships scheduled.

The workshops run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration is required for \$10 which includes coffee, donut/roll, lunch and course handouts.

Leadership schools are planned for Saturday, March 13, at Pine Island Post 184 and Saturday, April 17, 2021, at Sanborn American Legion Post 286.

For more information contact Kuperus at wmkuperus@tds.net.

Annette Bray, 1940-2021

Annette Bray, Past Department President 2000-2001 passed away on Monday, Feb. 15, 2021, after a valiant battle with ALS. She was 85.

Bray was a 39-year member of Minneapolis-Richfield Unit 435. She served as Unit president in 1986-1987 and served two terms as District president in 1992-1993 and again in 2013-2104. She also held multiple National appointments after her term as Department president.

Bray loved the American Legion Auxiliary. She was an active chaperone for their Unit Junior Auxiliary and loved the time spent with the girls. She loved the Girls State program and the National Creative Arts Festival. She was instrumental in Minnesota's hosting the festival in 2002 and continued volunteering at festivals across the country for many years after that. She was also an active volunteer at the Minneapolis VA and the Minnesota Veterans Home-Minneapolis.

Bray is survived by her husband, Bill, a World War II veteran; son Tim (Nancy) Snyder; daughter Jodi Johnson as well as grandchildren Tonisha (Scott) Laurion, Kendra Johnson, Allie Johnson, Ben Snyder and great-grandchildren Rorik Madsen and Fia Madsen.

Her theme when she was President was Winning Friends, Influencing People and her project was having Units create Memory Books for foster children. This project was very near and dear to Annette since she was adopted a few weeks after her birth.



Annette Bray

Upcoming events

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 (Virtual)

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

WE SUPPORT OUR VETERANS
CUMMINGS MOBILITY

VISIT OUR LOCATIONS
Albertville: 763-497-0103
Burnsville: 952-435-8889
Roseville: 651-633-7887
Des Moines: 515-207-3555

BraunaAbility
Life is a Moving Experience

Veterans Linkage Line™

minnesotaveteran.org | **1-888-LinkVet**
(546-5838)

Help for veterans and families

New tech aimed at reducing the appeals backlog

In my previous column I discussed changes under the Appeals Modernization Act (AMA) and how it provides three lanes of appeals to choose from for claimants. One of those lanes is to appeal directly to the Board of Veterans Appeals. The Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) is a part of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), located in Washington, D.C. The Board's mission is to conduct hearings and decide appeals properly before the Board per their website.

Appeals Modernizations Act was to address the ever-growing appeals backlog at BVA. Which in 2017 was around 470,000 with the average days pending around 5 years. The Veterans Affairs Secretary David J. Shulkin said "it might take about another decade to start dealing with a backlog of 470,000 legacy appeals claims for VA benefits". Once implementation of AMA took effect February 2019, the Board was provided funding to add 142 more staff

VA & Rehabilitation

Jeremy Wolfsteller



and modernize their technology platforms.

If a veteran chooses the BVA appeal lane, AMA changed how the Board addresses those appeals. The Board began offering their claimants three options at BVA to choose from. The first option is called the "Direct Review" where a Veteran's Law Judge (VLJ) reviews the appeal without any new evidence or hearing. This option is the fastest to get a decision currently around 256 days.

The second option, called "Evidence Submission" is where a VLJ reviews an appeal with new evidence, if the evidence was provided within 90 days of filing the appeal, there is no hearing option in this lane. This option is currently 297 days pending for a decision. The third and final option is a Hearing with

a Veterans Law Judge. This option allows for additional evidence to be submitted and a choice of either a in-persons Traveling Board Hearing at a local VA Regional Office or an in-person Video Conference Hearing at a local VA Regional Office. This option is currently pending 381 days for a hearing.

Although BVA has done exceptional work since AMA, reducing the legacy appeals inventory from 470,000 to 118,711, appeals under AMA requiring a hearing has grown to 41,266. Currently the average days pending for a legacy appeal which require a hearing is 632 days. Newer appeals under AMA that require a

hearing are pending 381 days. These numbers are continuing to climb as the pandemic has suspended traveling boards and video conference hearings since March 2020.

Because of this, The Board of Veterans' Appeals has launched a new virtual tele-hearing option, providing Veterans with the flexibility and convenience of attending Board hearings with Veterans Law Judges (VLJs) and Veteran representatives from a personal computer or mobile device.

Per VA, "The Tele-hearing Modernization Act, signed by President Trump on April 10, 2020, gives Veterans the choice of location for their hearing. For example, the Veteran can be in their home with their VSO/representative in a separate location, or both the Veteran and the representative can be together. Veterans can also have those around them such as family members or caregivers assist them in this user-friendly process, whether it's helping set

up the iPad/computer, or supporting access to a cellphone. Veterans should feel comfortable participating in their Board hearing".

Veterans can request a virtual tele-hearing the same way they would request other Board hearing options. I recommend this should be done through a County Veterans Service Officer or VSO POA Office. When filling out the Board Appeals form (VA form 10182) Notice of Disagreement, select the choice "11C" under Part II of the form, "Hearing with a Veterans Law Judge" 2. Once the Notice of Disagreement is filed, Veterans will receive a letter from the Board informing them of the available hearing options. In their response to the correspondence, Veterans can elect to have a virtual hearing. The Board schedules hearings in docket order (the order in which they receive appeals).

The Minnesota Dept. of Veterans Affairs and American Legion Claims Office Director

Ron Quade has since initiated coordination with the Board to receive a list of Minnesota veterans pending a Board hearing. Director Quade states, "Election of the current virtual BVA hearing will allow our staff to represent claimants more efficiently and timelier. MDVA, representing The American Legion as power of attorney, will be reviewing all pending BVA appeals pending a hearing and contacting claimants when we believe the case would be better served in the Virtual BVA hearing lane. Communicating with your County Veteran Service Officer any time you have questions, concerns or guidance is an option the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs promotes. We look forward to serving you in the opportunity to expedite hearings with the proper background for success."

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

Legionnaire coins still available

Looking for the ad to get a Legionnaire challenge coin? It will return in the next issue. You also will find "Listening Post" submissions return in the next issue, too.

Attention Veterans!
This is your northern Minnesota resort. Barrier-free and open 12 months a year. Gateway to the BWCA. 800-777-7538 email: vetlake@frontiernet.net www.veteransonthelakeresort.org All cabins have a lake view.

VETERANS on the LAKE RESORT
Ely, Minnesota

RESORT FOR DISABLED VETERANS, ACTIVE DUTY AND ABLE BODIED VETERANS, DISABLED GENERAL PUBLIC AND FAMILIES.

Minnesota DRIVE HOME YOUR SUPPORT!

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

Independent Rural Living

Senior apartments for elderly and those with disabilities. Safe, convenient, comfortable, and affordable rural living in Southeast Minnesota.

Also available: Housing with Services, Nursing Home, Subsidized Rent, Homemaker services

Good Shepherd Lutheran Services

Contact: Samantha 507-864-7714 or www.goodshep-rushford.org

Reverse Mortgages

The future doesn't have to be uncertain.

The lower the Margin, the more you qualify for. Call for our low rates. CMT Margins as low as 2.1%. Call or email me for a free consumer guide and a personal quote.

Let a retired active-duty veteran you can trust show you how you may benefit from a Reverse Mortgage.

MIKE KRAUS
Loan Officer
NMLS ID #283509

MORTGAGES UNLIMITED
guiding families home

Mike Kraus Serving all of Minnesota
7365 Kirkwood Court North, Suite 300
Maple Grove, MN 55369
763-355-8540 mkraus@muihomeloans.com

YOU SERVED YOUR COUNTRY

AS A VETERAN, YOUR LIFE OF SERVICE HAS JUST BEGUN.

HELP YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR COUNTRY AND FELLOW VETERANS — ALL WHILE HAVING A GOOD TIME MAKING DIFFERENCES WITH PEOPLE WHO GET YOU.

BE PART OF THE LEGACY. SHARE THE VISION.

JOIN THE LEGION AT MNLEGION.ORG

I SERVED FOR Honor

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

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

USAA is proud to be the Preferred Provider of Insurance and Financial Services to The American Legion

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