



Baseball decision to come May 9

Convention, Legionville, etc. all cancelled

BLOOMINGTON — The Minnesota American Legion Baseball Committee held the first virtual meeting in its history on April 11.

But that's not what made news statewide.

It was the decision to not make a decision on whether to have a 2020 Legion Baseball season. The committee decided to hold off until May 9 to make a decision.

"We didn't feel it was our turn at bat," said Director Randy Schaub.

After all, the Twins hadn't cancelled their season. The Minnesota State High School League hadn't cancelled spring prep sports at that point. Legion Baseball usually is third in that lineup in terms of season openers, so it made sense to not leapfrog the other baseball organizations, he said.

Meanwhile, everything else on the planet was shutting down.

The Department Executive Committee had cancelled the Department Convention, slated for July 15-18 at Jackpot Junction in Morton, and it had urged other Legion Family activities to cancel.

And cancel they did:

- Boys State at St. John's in Collegeville June 14-20.
- Girls State at Bethel University in Arden Hills June 14-20.
- Legion College at Camp Ripley May 29-31.
- Legionville School Patrol Camp along North Long Lake near Brainerd June 14-Aug. 7.
- Sons of The American Legion Detachment Convention June 26-27

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Technology changes VA critical care

Minneapolis hospital leads the way in how specialists can treat patients from afar

By Tim Engstrom

MINNEAPOLIS — It's the middle of the night. A patient in critical care needs a doctor — now.

In the olden days, all across America, someone at the hospital had to call a physician at home, wake him or her up, then speak over a telephone.

In fact, in many parts of the country, that method remains common. But an even greater problem is this — the country is short on critical care physicians.

The VA Medical Center in Minneapolis led the nation in changing the way doctors care for patients in intensive care, ways that provide more

information to doctors and get the patients home faster.

The program is called VA Tele-Critical Care-West, and the Administrative Officer, Andrew Nelson, said it all started in 2006, when Dr. Robert Bonello, a critical care physician at the Minneapolis VA, read a story about telemedicine in ICU settings.

Bonello, who retired in September 2019, began research on the concept for VA critical care, Nelson said.

By 2008, the intensive care units within VISN 23 (VA hospitals in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska), began a pilot program to connect ICU physicians

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No one left behind ...



Photo by Anna Long

Inset: Mitchell Lee Olson in his obituary photo. **Main:** Paul Hassing, president of the Minnesota American Legion Riders, drives past the house of Mitchell Olson's mother and father in Minnetonka on April 11. Olson was a 34-year-old veteran of the Iraq War who had been buried without military honors, until the Legion and VFW Riders provided drive-by honors.

Legion and VFW Riders join forces to provide military honors for a veteran

By Tim Engstrom

on Saturday, April 11.

The American Legion Riders partnered with the Veterans of Foreign Wars Riders to honor a fallen soldier Mitchell L. Olson died in March at age 34 in Coon Rapids. He was a Hopkins graduate, had a degree in law enforcement from North Hennepin

Community College and served in the Minnesota National Guard. He was deployed to Iraq in 2009-10.

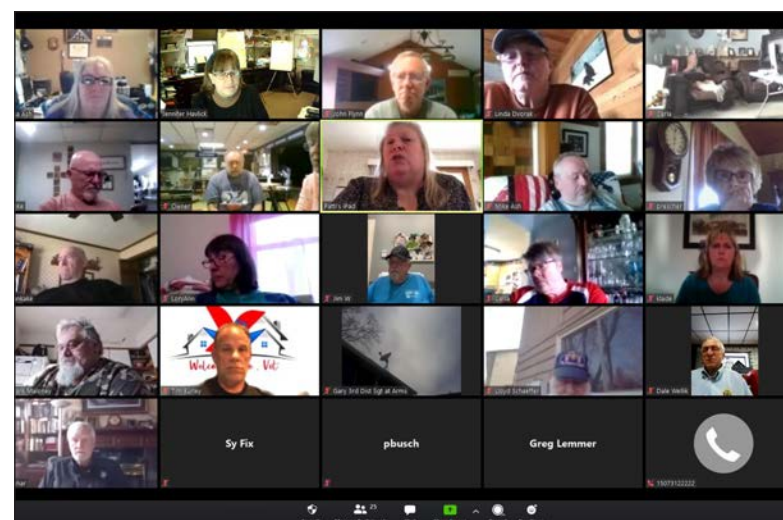
The combat veteran was interred without military honors because of the COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings.

Army Infantry Maj. Nick Eidemiller out of Maryland was in Minnesota with his fiancée helping her deal with the

loss of her brother. He reached out to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, who forwarded the request to two members of The American Legion Department of Minnesota in the St. Paul area.

They had seen drive-by birthday celebrations and thought, perhaps,

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Screenshot of the subcommittee's April 22 Zoom meeting.

Commander forms committee to grow from COVID lessons

ST. PAUL — Amid the cancellations, the postponements and calendar shifting, a silver lining was spotted: The American Legion all across Minnesota took about 20 giant steps forward in terms of technology.

Committees at all levels found ways to meet using technology — Zoom, Facebook Messenger, Webex, GoToMeeting. The DEC met in March mostly through phone conferencing. The Baseball Committee met in April twice using GoToMeeting video conferences. There has been a Nightly Buddy Check over Zoom, where any

member across the state can talk to fellow members of the Legion Family. And Facebook Messenger has been a popular way to check on others in an out-of-the-blue way like a phone call but with a friendly face.

Commander Mark Dvorak in mid-April created an ad hoc subcommittee called the COVID-19 Response Ad Hoc Committee. It is under the Strategic Planning Committee. The idea? To put this remote technology to good use after the COVID-19 gathering restrictions go away.

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Are you a Minn. veteran impacted by COVID-19?

There is funding relief available

ST. PAUL — Has the coronavirus restrictions caused you to lose your job? Has it shut down your veteran-owned business? The American Legion suggests you get your documentation ready for Monday, April 6, when you can apply for relief from the state of Minnesota.

That's because Minnesota veterans impacted by COVID-19 may be eligible for grants from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

Starting April 6, the MDVA began accepting applications from Minnesota veterans who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. MDVA awards one-time financial relief grants in the amount of \$1,000. Funding is available for both Disaster Relief Grants and Special Needs Grants.

"We are grateful to Gov. Tim Walz and the Minnesota Legislature for their support of Minnesota Veterans in the recently enacted Emergency Response package," said MDVA Commissioner Larry Herke. "Minnesota veterans have served our country in many past conflicts, so it is only right that we support them now during this

challenging time."

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must be:

- A veteran or the surviving spouse of a deceased veteran as defined by MN Statute 197.447.
- A Minnesota resident.
- Financially impacted negatively by COVID-19.

To apply for the Disaster Relief Grant

You have 3 options:

- Contact your local county veterans service officer (CVSO). To find one, visit MACVSO.org.
- Contact an MDVA field operations representative at FO.MDVA@state.mn.us.
- Apply online at MinnesotaVeteran.org/COVIDRelief.

To apply for the Special Needs Grant

You have 3 options:

- Contact your local county veterans service officer (CVSO). To find one, visit MACVSO.org.
- Contact an MDVA field operations representative at FO.MDVA@state.mn.us.
- Apply online at MinnesotaVeteran.org/COVIDRelief.

No baseball practices allowed in meantime

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at Legionville.

- Testimonial dinners for Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak and Auxiliary President Mary Hendrickson.

- The Minnesota Legacy Run.
- District conventions. Post meetings. Committee meetings. Etc., unless they can meet by phone or video conferencing.

Nationally, The American Legion cancelled the Legion World Series in August and the regional tournaments. It cancelled the National Convention in Louisville Aug. 28-Sept. 3. Boys Nation, the National Legacy Run, National Oratorical

Contest, Spring Meetings, Membership Workshop, military reunions all were off.

The Baseball Committee's motion to hold off carried on a 13-0 vote, with one member unable to participate.

The decision suspends all American Legion Baseball practices and activities until further notice.

Schaub said the situation around COVID-19 changes every week and the committee wanted to wait on federal and state leaders, President Donald Trump and Gov. Tim Walz, as well as health organizations, so it could make the most-informed decision.

VA Medical Center adjusts for COVID-19 health care

By Tim Engstrom

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minneapolis VA Medical Center is not the same.

"You would not recognize the place if you came here," said Director Patrick Kelly. "The Flag Atrium is mostly deserted."

The director called in to the Minnesota Commander's Task Force on April 7, which held its monthly meeting by conference call. Commonly called the CTF, it comprises the nine congressionally chartered veteran organizations: The American Legion, VFW, DAV, Amvets, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Jewish War Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Marine Corps League and Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Kelly said — keep in mind this was back on April 7 and numbers have changed since then — they had tested 275 veterans and staff for COVID-19, with 16 positive cases and three or four deaths.

"The good news is we are discharging several. We see them. They get better, and they are doing OK," he said. "If we can do things via telephone or telehealth, we are."

He said if the situation worsens, the VAMC will have capacity. It also has been buying ventilators and identifying alternate roles for staff members.

If a surgeon is not doing surgeries or an emergency room nurse not handling emergencies, they have fallen back on other training.

"Many of them have not served in those roles in many years. They were trained, but they have not served in those roles," said Kelly, a Legionnaire who is a retired Navy captain.

He said the hospital has been divided into hot and cold zones. The hot zones have COVID-19 cases, while cold zones do not.

Kelly said the 30 patients were sent to the St. Cloud facility, in the community-living center, to make room at Minneapolis.

The hospital implemented screening at the entrance and its no-visitor policy in March, with exceptions for dying patients. Adult day care is closed, too.

He said the place has



The VA Medical Center in Minneapolis on Good Friday, April 10.

Do you want to donate?

- Minnesota American Legion distribution leads:
- Luverne Veterans Home & Sioux Falls VA: Randy Olson 507-525-6532
 - Silver Bay Veterans Home: Jennifer Havlick 218-834-4975
 - Hasting Veterans Home: Mike Ash 612-499-1404
 - Fergus Falls Veterans Home & Fargo VA: Bill Barbknecht 218-770-6264
 - Minneapolis Veterans Home and Minneapolis VA: Ken Gibson 651-329-8220
 - St. Cloud VA: Sue and Paul Edwards 206-459-7070/218-820-6086

rescheduled almost all surgeries. The VA still is doing urgent cases, he added, but otherwise, they have been rescheduled.

Normally, the Minneapolis VAMC does 40-50 surgeries a day, now it's eight or 12.

Some services that can be done are happening, he said; dialysis and cancer care are two examples.

He said the hospital is doing its best to preserve personal protective equipment, or PPE.

"The hardest hit people in our nation have been health care workers," Kelly said.

He said the VAMC has transitioned to a leadership model, which is more directive than in the past. He said administrators are asking staff to be good followers, as there is less time for debate.

He noted many civilian systems are losing revenue, but he noted the VA is well-funded. He said Secretary Rob Wilkie has asked VA hospitals to be

ready to assist civilian population. Kelly and Wilkie referred to it as the VA's fourth mission — helping the nation in times of war, national emergencies, natural disasters.

"We want to be overprepared and hopefully underwhelmed," Kelly said.

What does the VA need now? Kelly said PPE — gloves, face shields, masks — continue to be in demand.

The CTF also heard from Douglas Hughes, deputy commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

He noted the Minnesota Veterans Homes also have a no-visitor policy in place, except for end-of-life situations. Staff is reviewing PPE needs around the state for conducting visits.

Hughes listed what is needed: masks, games, entertainment. He said the MDVA has secured iPads, which allows residents to speak with loved ones, and it is seeking more of them.

He said if there is anyway to thank the staff, it would be welcomed.

"We are trying to find innovative ways and fresh ways to really thank our staff," Hughes said.

He said the MDVA is working to alleviate fears among front-line workers.

"This is one job you can't do by telework. You can't call in sick for a long time. This is 24/7 work you do every day of the week," Hughes said.

MDVA Chief of Staff Mike McElhiney said the MDVA has been planning for Skilled Nursing Care Week, which is May 10-16, and celebrating health care workers and what they do.

The Commanders' Task Force also went over much of its legislative efforts. The response is many legislative efforts have been put on hold with the Legislature addressing COVID-19 funding.

MDVA Legislative Officer Ben Johnson said the COVID-19 relief bill provided \$6.2 million in funding to provide \$1,000 grants to military veterans financially impacted by the pandemic's restrictions. (Go online to minnesotaveteran.org/covidrelief to apply.)

Johnson described it as a once-in-a-lifetime "special needs" grant to assist with problems such as housing, lost job, unable to get work.

"Not a lot of agencies were called out for special funding, but we were," Johnson said.

Get ready now for a big thank-you to nurses

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has renamed Skilled Nursing Care Week. The agency now is calling it Minnesota Veterans Homes Week.

And a drive-by thank-you is in the works.

"I invite you and your organizations to please come and help us celebrate the week of May 10-16, 2020," said Commission of Veterans Affairs Larry Herke.

He said the staff are who earns the Minnesota Veterans Homes a great reputation and said they are rising up during the challenge of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Herke said the MDVA is planning a drive-by celebration for the staff on the week of May 10, similar to drive-by birthday parties.

"We encourage you to participate with your veterans service organization at one,



Mpls. Veterans Home on April 23.

two or all five of our Minnesota Veterans Homes locations," he said.

The MDVA provided ideas for an outdoor celebration:

- Line the street/entrance of the Veterans Home — while practicing social distancing during change of shift.
- Arrange a parade of vehicles with flags

and signs and balloons.

- Play music.
- Sing songs.
- Shout hooray and applaud staff as they enter and exit.
- Shower the facility with thank-you cards which can be posted on a Gratitude Wall.
- Be creative and come up with more ideas.

To participate, contact each home for details on dates, times and locations.

- Fergus Falls: Deanna.Mounts@state.mn.us
- Hastings: Michael.RH.Anderson@state.mn.us
- Luverne: Duane.Mabon@state.mn.us
- Minneapolis: Sandy.Larson@state.mn.us
- Silver Bay: Joyce.Scott@state.mn.us



Message from the Commissioner



A Reminder to Minnesota Veterans

If you have these symptoms:



101°F
Fever



Cough



Shortness of Breath

The VA Health Care System asks that you call FIRST if feeling ill:

- Minneapolis: 612-467-1100
- Fargo: 701-239-3700 extension 2319
- St. Cloud: 320-252-1670 or 800-247-1739
- Sioux Falls: 605-336-3230 or 605-336-5001

The medical staff will advise you on next steps based on your symptoms. In a medical emergency, call 911.



Stay Healthy and #StayHomeMN!

A Memorial Day speech fitting for present times

Editor's note: The Legionnaire recognizes most or all Memorial Day ceremonies on May 25 will not happen. Let retired Lt. Gen. Richard Nash's words serve as your Memorial Day speech during the state-wide stay-at-home order.

Remembrance

Richard C. Nash



This year's Memorial Day will be like no other any of us alive have ever experienced. Our daily lives, family activities, employment and social interactions have dramatically changed.

We have heard over and over and rightfully so, we are all in this together. Never in the last century have so many people been impacted to the very core of our existence where our health and lives are at risk.

We are being asked by our local state and national leaders as well as our best medical and research minds to stay at home, minimize travel, keep our social distancing and take personal responsibility for our well-being. With this being the facts for the foreseeable future, we are approaching a significant national holiday which is extremely important to all Americans and has been since the late '60s when it was formally recognized by Congress.

Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day shortly after the Civil War, has been solemnly celebrated to recognize our war fatalities from the North and the South.

Every year this is a holiday for all of us where we acknowledge this day at cemeteries,

grave sites of our fallen veterans, parades, fireworks, laying of wreaths, or flag presentations at our memorial sites. This year these events will be certainly smaller, fewer or actually cancelled. Our enthusiasm, responsibility, and duty to stop and remember why this day across America should not be diminished, but measured to reduce exposure to each other.

We must not let Memorial Day be just another self-isolation day without meaning or awareness. Take this special day, adjust your routine and remember those that gave and are still giving "their last full measure of devotion" and who paid the ultimate price for our freedom by honoring what they gave to all of us as we enjoy the lives we cherish today.

Those men and women suffered far more and overcame unimaginable obstacles much greater than what we are now experiencing.

We must not forget the battle of the Chosin Reservoir, Hue City, Iwo Jima, D-Day, Argonne Forest or the Second Battle of Fallujah. We have lived through tremendous challenges as a country throughout our long history. The greatest generation survived four years of war on two fronts, we weathered the 9-11 attacks and continue with the longest conflict in

our history with Iraq and Afghanistan. Never before nor should we now suspend honoring those who have served and died. We are currently seeing service members who are dying while performing their duties fighting COVID-19 around the globe.

These men and women are on the front lines today along with all of our civilian first responders, doctors, nurses, healthcare providers and those taking care of our elderly family members.

Memorial Day this year is a day when we should all pause, reflect, and pray for those lives lost since the beginning of our Republic. We must pause for a moment of silence, think of all of those who have died or been killed in conflicts. Think of their families left behind and what their lives could have been and be very grateful that they stood up and filled the ranks alongside of extremely brave men and women of all services to protect you and me.

The willingness of American's veterans to give their lives for something greater than even their own self existence must be honored and we owe that debt to their memories and acknowledge it this Memorial

Day regardless of the daily challenges we are facing.

Think about how you might spend this day safely and consider calling a veteran. Thank them for serving and talk about their service and console them if they have fellow service members who were lost in action. Consider sending a donation that day to one of our Minnesota Veterans Homes, donate to your local American Legion or VFW Posts.

Use one of the many technologies and social media outlets to connect with a distance relative who served in one of the branches of service. We can do simple things like flying the flag or a visit to a cemetery near you to search for a veteran of the past.

Finally, taking time during the day, stop long enough and reflect on how with everything considered, how better off you and your family is partially due to those that have fought and died on behalf of our nation.

Those we honor on this day gave their very existence for the people and the nation they loved. The least we all can do, regardless of what is going on around us, is to stop, reflect, say a simple prayer and a thank you. They have earned our undying gratitude.

We will overcome our current crisis because we as a nation can rally, pull together our collective talents, and focus on defeating this current dilemma. America is strong because of the people. That's just what we do in dark and trying times.

Eagle Scout of the Year

ADRIAN — Blake Madison, an 18-year-old sponsored by Adrian Post 32, is The American Legion Department of Minnesota's Eagle Scout of the Year.

Madison earns a \$1,000 scholarship from the Department of Minnesota. The honor was announced March 14. His entry now competes for a National American Legion scholarship.

For his Eagle Scout project, he worked with the city staff in Adrian to build a large, outdoor chess and checkers board at the Adrian Municipal Campground and named it after a 50-year Scouting leader who enjoyed chess: Arnie Dwire.

Madison is the captain of the top Knowledge Bowl team at Adrian High School and has led it to state competition. He is the leader of the school's Chess Club and several times has earned the award for highest scorer on the school's Mathematics League. He is the leader for the junior varsity golf team, has been involved in band for many years and was selected for the southwest Minnesota Honor Band.

Madison maintains a 4.07 grade-point average, and he always places on the "A" honor roll, earning academic letters and individual academic awards. He earned a 34 on his ACT.

He became a member of the National Honor Society as a sophomore. The group helped

organize the moving of books when the library had to relocate. It helped with special transportation for veterans to attend the community's Veterans Day program, and it helped organize the school's graduation ceremony.

Madison said he donates blood when the American Red Cross Blood Mobile comes to the school. "And I encourage others to do it," he said.

With Scouting, Madison is enrolled with Troop 32 of Adrian and Troop 134 of Worthington. He was chaplain for three years with Troop 32 and den chief for two years. He served as Order of the Arrow representative and attended several OA conclaves. He has attended the Northern Tier High Adventure Camp and the Missouri River High Adventure Base.

Through his Scout troops, he has volunteered at the Veterans Homes, sent care packages for troops, given care packages for local sick children and donated time doing concessions at local races and ice-fishing contests.

"We have sponsored ceremonies to properly dispose of flags," Madison said.

The troops helped clean a veterans memorial, prepare a Veterans Day meal and aided the local American Legion Post with community events.

He has earned 28 merit badges, the 50-Miler Award and an Eagle Palm. Photo by Worthington Globe



Blake Madison

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

3 WAYS TO EXPLORE HISTORY at HOME

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Even though our sites are temporarily closed, you can keep exploring history online. Check out these digital resources and learn something new!

1

HEAR FROM THE GREATEST GENERATION

Check out **Stories of Minnesota's Greatest Generation**, an online collection of personal stories that follow members of this remarkable generation through the pivotal decades of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Listen at mnhs.org/mgg.



2

EXPLORE THE CIVIL WAR

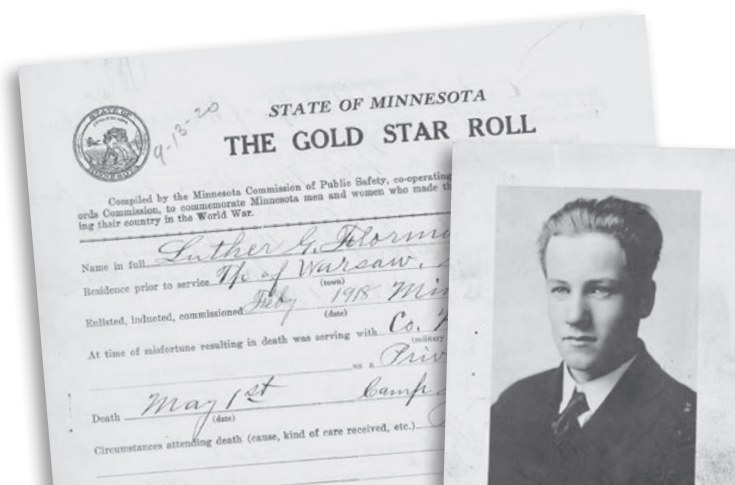
Watch dozens of videos about **Minnesota's rich, complex Civil War history** and explore our Civil War collections, battle flags, artifacts, and much more at mnhs.org/civilwar.



3

SEARCH DIGITAL RECORDS

Use our online **Minnesota People Records Search** to search and download fully digitized records from the WWI Gold Star Roll and Minnesota State Census. Accessible for free at mnhs.org/search/people.



Technology allows meetings to happen

Greetings, Minnesota American Legion Family.

I hope all of you are doing well and staying healthy. It's been a busy and challenging few weeks. Here are some updates and cancellations at the National and Department levels.

The National Convention in August has been cancelled and all meetings and travel of the National officers and staff through Sept. 30 have been canceled. All National officers elected and appointed will continue to serve until the 2021 National Convention.

Also, this applies to all National chairpersons and committee members. Resolution 3 from National recommended all Department conventions and meetings be cancelled and Department leadership continue to serve through their convention in 2021.

The Department Executive Committee approved Resolution 2020-2 April 10. This resolution followed the resolution from National and approved the following: July Convention in Morton was cancelled and recommended that the Sons of The American Legion, Auxiliary and Districts do the same.

Department officers will continue to serve along with committee chairpersons and committee members through the Department Convention in July 2021, and the DEC

Commander's Column

Mark Dvorak



recommended that the Sons of The American Legion, Auxiliary and Districts do the same.

For current information concerning COVID-19 and cancellations, please go to the mnlegion.org website and click on COVID-19 updates or Adjutant's Updates. Grant and loan information available for veterans and posts is available on the Department website, also.

There have been numerous teleconferences held throughout our American Legion Family the past several weeks, and initial report is that they have been going great! All are welcome to be part of one or both of the Department teleconferences that are being held each week using Zoom.

You can use a computer, iPhone, iPad or simply call in to be part of the teleconference. One started on March 21 with the main focus on Buddy Checks, and it now has developed into idea planning and a question-and-answer session.

The second is being developed as I write this article. It is the COVID-19 Response Committee. It will focus on improving communication in a pandemic environment and provide training moving forward that would

enhance meetings for the Districts and Posts to be able to get together and continue having meetings through teleconference. We hope to identify immediate needs of our American Legion Family and be responsive to those needs in a timely manner and continue to work the programs of The American Legion Family.

For more information on the Buddy Check teleconference, please contact Jennifer Havlick at: Jennifer.havlick@outlook.com. For more information on the COVID-19 teleconference, please contact Teresa Ash at: mrsash1@yahoo.com.

I have had several questions about our Joint Testimonial in June. Yes, it has been cancelled and rescheduled for Saturday, June 19, 2021. I'm excited to say it will remain a joint testimonial with Department President Mary Hendrickson.

We all continue our mission, For God and Country!

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

Mail Call

Was photo an April Fool's joke?

I usually enjoy reading the materials as presented in this monthly publication. But this April 2020 issue may have disguised some April Fool's items, it seems to me.

Specifically, on Page 8, is a photo that surely is a display of foolishness.

In it: "Rep. Ilhan Omar poses for a photo with Legislative Committee Chairman Robert Hart of Stillwater Post 48."

Surely this must be a joke. Ilhan Omar should never have been shown in any contact with any American Legion publication.

For one thing, she is not really American. She would never repeat our Pledge of Allegiance, "One nation under God"? She would refuse. She wishes that Israel be eliminated from history in her one-state solution of the mythical Palestinians.

Our God is not the same as her Allah, and you know that. Meetings I attend do state our Pledge, and then offer opening prayer "in Jesus' name."

Please do not publish such jokes as this again.

Richard DeVries
Maple Grove

Can't believe Omar was in Legionnaire

Sir: I was concerned, disappointed and angry that there was a photo of Ilhan Omar with Legislative Committee Chairman Robert Hart of Stillwater Post 48 in the recent Legionnaire. This woman hates our nation, our founders, our culture, Christianity, The American Legion, our borders, and anything and everything else that signifies freedom, capitalism, individuality, civil liberties, the Second Amendment. ... I could go on and on.

I've been around 79 years and have seen a lot to get angry about, and when I look at that photo, the angrier I get. My god! We are losing our country because of the agendas, and goals of people like her.

It's too late for Americans my age, but consider our children's and grandchildren's future, for Pete's sake! If you are not aware of Omars' history, you can look it up, and don't give me any P.C. B.S.

David L. Tollefson
Farmington

Disappointed to see that photo of Omar

I was extremely disappointed when I read the April issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire. A picture was printed of Rep. Ilhan Omar with Legionnaire Robert Hart. To disgrace this fine newspaper with a picture of the most anti-American person to ever serve in the United

How to send ...

Send letters to the editor for Mail Call to tengstrom@mnlegion.org. Make the subject line "Mail Call" or "Letter."

States Congress is just awful.

She is a disgrace to the state of Minnesota and all Americans!

Curtis Lundeen
Pelican Rapids

A fine example of a fine Buddy Check

Good Morning: This is a Buddy Check.

The buddy check is a procedure carried out by scuba divers using the buddy system where each diver checks that the other's diving equipment is configured and functioning correctly just before the start of the dive.

As veterans we learned the same thing. To look out for our fellow team member. No matter if it was self-inspections prior to a formation, a night on the town or an equipment check before taking post or going to combat. We always had our buddy's six, and we always knew they had ours.

Today I am checking on YOU!

With the pandemic, many of us are kind of locked in. Some of us are getting to those special "If I had time to do that" projects.

Still others are catching up on honey-do lists. Others are learning a new talent. No matter what you are doing with your time at home, I wanted to just check in and say thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for serving our county. Thank you for doing your part in this pandemic.

I also want to take this time to invite you to take part in our local Post meetings. (In my message you can find where and what time they meet.) Our meetings normally don't last longer than maybe two hours. You can come early like I do and have dinner or a drink before the meeting. We have very active Auxiliary Units, Sons of the American Legion Squadrons, and American Legion Riders Chapters, as well.

So, if you have family members who would like to be active and share the fun and camaraderie as well, they are very much welcome.

So why should you take part in the local Post? Great question. To start with your local Post gives back most of the funds we earn to the local community.

To support local programs, these range from helping local veterans, to supporting children's programs and seniors to name a few. Further, as a member of your local post, we support the District, Department and National Legion. They fight to ensure the benefits you earned are not taken away or that you as a veteran and veteran family are never forgotten.

I am sure you know that most of the benefits you have are because of The American Legion and other such organizations working together to ensure our city, county, state and federal representatives never forget the many sacrifices you and your family made in the service of your county.

Which brings me back to

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Serenity needed during troubled times

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

As we are living day by day with this COVID-19 virus interruption to our lives, God is with us when you're dealing with the storms of life, but this can be especially difficult when we can't see a way. There are many situations that we face in life that can propel us toward God or away from Him. One great way to deal with these challenges is to turn to prayer.

Prayer is a powerful tool for communicating with God. It is an opportunity to become one with the Creator and Giver of all things. Prayer helps us to find strength for today and hope for our future. We should actively pray and trust in its power to change our circumstances for good.

Your faith life directly correlates to the quality of your prayer life. Prayer has the power to change not only the people and things around you. Prayer also has the power to change you from the inside out. When you're in need of strength, remember that God is the No. 1 healer and can guide you in

Chaplain's Corner

Betty Jass



endless ways. If your heart and life are centered on God, His Word and His Holy Spirit, you can rest assured that He will direct your path.

Many of us are confused about the COVID-19 restrictions — possibly not going to work, separation from family, not knowing when this crisis will be over and how we will make it from payday to payday.

We are being asked to change our entire life. I'd like to offer the "Serenity Prayer" as consideration while dealing with is crisis. The "Serenity Prayer" offers valuable lessons and wisdom on dealing with life's toughest circumstances while giving courage to deal with some of life's toughest situations. It is a great prayer for everyone to use to encourage them, especially when times are tough.

Accept the Things You Cannot Change: When it comes to dealing with life's circumstances, know that there are certain things outside your control, so don't focus on changing

every little thing. Instead, celebrate and embrace what you can learn from the situation.

Having the Courage to Change the Things You Can: The only thing you can change in life is you. Have the courage to acknowledge your strengths and weaknesses. Take an honest look at yourself and acknowledge your weaknesses and work on them.

Having the Wisdom to Know the Difference: We are called to this Earth for a specific purpose, with a specific purpose, even when we don't always know what that purpose is. Learn to accept that you can't change certain life circumstances, so accept who you are as a beautiful contribution to this world. Amen.

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

Minnesota loses long-serving NEC man

Longtime Department of Minnesota National Executive Committee Man Don Schroedl, 98, of Minneapolis, died April 7. Funeral services and burial at Fort Snelling were private.

Schroedl, an Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, served 22 years as NEC man, from 1975 to 1997. He was a 66-year paid-up-for-life member of The American Legion and belonged

to Post Office Post 540.

He was 5th District commander for 1967-68, Department vice commander for 1972-73, acting Department membership director 1972-73 and alternate NEC man 1974-75.

Schroedl served on the advisory board for the Minnesota World War II Veterans Memorial and the board for the Servicemen's Center at the airport.



Don Schroedl in 1974

The Minnesota

Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

Official publication of
The American Legion
Department of Minnesota

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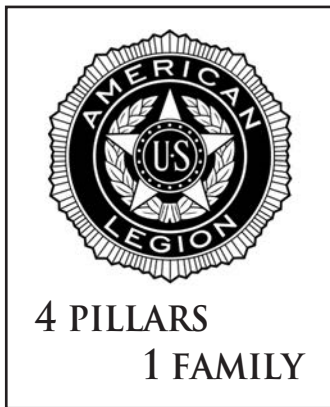
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Continued from Page 4

you. How are you and your family doing? Are there any questions I can help you find answers to? Just email me back or come to our next post meeting. You are the most important part of our Legion and our community.

Do you know a fellow veteran who may enjoy a Buddy Check from you? Give them a call or send them an email right now. After all, 10 minutes with a genuine friend is like a shower for your soul.

William C. Gordon Jr.
1st vice commander
St. Michael Post 567
chairman
10th District Legionville



MDVA is looking out for veterans

Guest Column

Larry Herke



The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs continues its mission to serve our veterans and their families as the COVID-19 pandemic persists. We recognize the potential impact on the physical, mental and financial health of veterans, and we are promoting our programs and services that may assist those in need.

COVID-19 grants

I'm pleased to share that we have had a tremendous response to the COVID-19 Disaster Relief and Special Needs Grants for Minnesota Veterans. We began accepting applications on Monday, April 6, and received more than 3,600 applications by April 24. We have tasked staff from other areas to assist and are striving to complete application processing within two weeks of receipt, though processing is around 30 days right now. As of April 24, we have awarded 203 grants.

Applications will continue to be accepted until the \$6.2 million in funds are depleted. Veterans can apply through their county veterans service officers or online at MinnesotaVeteran.org/COVIDRelief.

Staff teleworking

Effective April 13, MDVA transitioned all staff from both its St. Paul and Fargo Veterans Claims Offices to teleworking. To comply with Gov. Tim Walz's stay-at-home order, MDVA had already moved most Programs & Services and Central Office staff to remote work last month. All staff phones are rolled over to agency cell-phones and all systems are accessible online.

Most veteran claims that MDVA represents are based on work initiated by a county

veterans service officer (CVSO) who had been submitting a majority of documentation via the U.S. Mail. To provide an alternative, we have created an online document submission portal for use by both CVSOs and veterans.

For more information, contact Director Ron Quade at ron.quade@state.mn.us.

Veterans Homes

This can be a stressful time to care for our residents in the Minnesota Veterans Homes; however, we also know there continue to be many positive and uplifting things happening there every day as well. And we all can benefit from some positive news to lift our spirits.

We have introduced the "Heroes at Home" campaign to share upbeat stories of support for our Healthcare division staff. The attached "Heroes at Home" newsletter is a series especially created to highlight and share what is going on in the Veterans Homes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to this newsletter, we are sharing many of these stories via social media and



with the traditional media. If you don't already, we encourage you to follow MDVA on social media. We are already sharing posts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn with the #HeroesAtHome hashtag.

We are also recognizing our health care division staff with signage at each facility and special buttons. Pictured is a sign at our Luverne Home. The signs are well-received and a nice morale booster for the staff.

Ongoing updates are available at MinnesotaVeteran.org.

MDVA is hiring

The needs of Minnesota Veterans do not diminish during this time, and MDVA needs staff to serve and care for our veterans. We have a significant

need for certified nursing assistants and resident assistants in our Veterans Homes.

Working for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs is a rewarding career with great state of Minnesota benefits. If you know anyone seeking a fulfilling career supporting Minnesota veterans and their families, please encourage them to explore opportunities with MDVA.

For more information on current job openings, visit our Work for MDVA webpage.

Thank you for your support of Minnesota veterans!

Larry Herke, a Sauk Rapids resident and a Legionnaire of Hastings Post 47, is the Minnesota commissioner of veterans affairs.

Taps



Andreen, Clifford A., 96, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb 15, 2020. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Baillie, Bill R., 93, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died March 9, 2020. He served as a military policeman investigator with the Army Air Corps and played the trumpet in the Army Air Forces Band. He was a 57-year member of Anoka Post 102.

Barnett, Ronald, 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 15, 2020. He was a member of Pillager Post 100.

Bender, Donald J., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 23, 2020. He was a 61-year member of Winona Post 9.

Borchardt, Eugene, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 27, 2020. He was a 55-year member of Fairmont Post 36. He served as a chaplain and in the honor guard.

Carlson, James Kenneth, 95, Navy veteran of World War II, died March 21, 2020. He loaded ammunition in an anti-aircraft gun aboard an aircraft carrier in the South Pacific and played French horn and trombone in an on-board band. As an architect, he designed the Winona Post Home. He was a member of Winona Post 9.

Dahlin, Donald E., 87, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died April 14, 2020. He was a 43-year member of Jackson Post 130.

Davison, David C. "Spuds," 77, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 16, 2020. He was a member of Winona Post 9.

Decker, Larry A., 70, Army veteran of Vietnam War, died March 12, 2020. He was in the 101st Airborne Division and received the Bronze Star. He was a member of St. Paul Post 1982.

Dolny, John Richard, 99, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died April 13, 2020. He retired at age 60 in 1981 with 39 years of service with over 10,000 hours as a command pilot, 135 combat missions and 211 combat hours. The major general was inducted in the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame in 1998 and an exhibition on his career is on display at the Minnesota Air National Guard Museum. He was from Minneapolis.

Eilers, Donald W. "Fuzzy," 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 1, 2020. He was a member of New Prague Post 45.

Goor, Dwight D., 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 1, 2020. He was a 41-year-member of Anoka Post 102.

Hammerschmidt, Jerome "Joe," 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 13, 2020. He was a member of Fulda Post 318. He served as an engineer with the 1st Cavalry.

Hanson, Vernon O., 80, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 14, 2020. He was a member of Cambridge Post 290.

Hassel, Arthur "Skip," 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died Nov. 1, 2019. He was a 45-year member of St. Paul North End Post 474.

Haugstad, Elmer W., 95, Army veteran of World War II,

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 Department of Minnesota.

died April 6, 2020. He was the last World War II veteran of Lanesboro Post 40 and was a member for 70 years.

Heine, Merle "Bud," 97, Army veteran of the Italian campaign in World War II, died March 1, 2020. He also served in the Minnesota National Guard. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Hoffman, Frank Henry Jr., 85, Army veteran during peacetime stationed in Europe, died April 5, 2020. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Jacobi, Joseph George, 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died March 15, 2020. He was a 63-year member of Winona Post 9.

Jelinski, Wilfred, 89, Army and Army National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died March 22, 2020. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Jorgenson, Roy, 99, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died March 17, 2020. He flew 26 missions with the 8th Air Force. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Kemper, Dale, 82, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 22, 2020. He was a member of Lismore Post 636.

Lind, Paul E., 82, Air Force veteran, died April 1, 2020. He was with the MP canine unit. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

Ling, James L., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 3, 2020. He was a member of Worthington Post 5.

Marple, Stanley L., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 20, 2020. He was a 41-year member of Eden Valley Post 381.

McKinstry, Jay, 93, Naval Air Corps veteran of the Pacific Theater in World War II, died March 29, 2020. He was a radioman and a gunner in a two-seat dive bomber. He was a retired Minneapolis Fire Department captain. He was a 32-year member of Buffalo Post 270.

Millard, Raymond L., 83, veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 13, 2020. He was a member of Rush City Post 93.

Moen, Richard O., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War era, died March 30, 2020. He was a member of Spring Grove Post 249.

Naber, Lawrence Jr., 75, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 6, 2020. He was a member of Marshall Post 113 and active in the honor guard.

Olson, Oscar E. Jr., 90, Navy Reserves and Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 27, 2020. He was a 43-year member of Willmar Post 167.

Paplow, Wayne E., 70, Army Reserves veteran during Vietnam era, died Jan. 27, 2020. He was a past commander and membership chairman for Dundee Post 386.

Peltier, William K., 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War era, died March 24, 2020. He was a member of Grand Rapids Post 60.

Pflueger, David A., 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam

War, died Jan. 21, 2020. He was member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Poole, Munroe, 85, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died March 28, 2020. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Proft, Walter August, 95, Air Force veteran of World War II, died March 29, 2020. He was a radio operator for B-17 aircraft and served as a communications officer for 20 years, with tours in Germany, Korea and Okinawa. His final assignment was Duluth. He was a member of North St. Paul Post 39.

Rasmussen, David, 77, Army and Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 26, 2020. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Reber, Edwin, 101, Army veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Feb. 17, 2020. He was a 35-year member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Ruhland, George M., 92, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died March 24, 2020. He was a 43-year member of Eden Valley Post 381.

Sanborn, Clinton E., 77, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam era, died March 19, 2020. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Severance, Lewis, 96, Army Air Forces veteran of World War II, died March 7, 2020. He was a 60-year member of Kasson Post 333.

Stangler, Norman, 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 30, 2020. He was a member of Elysian Post 311.

Stradtman, Kenneth, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 27, 2020. He was a 54-year member of St. James Post 33.

Thoreson, Jerry, 94, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died March 18, 2020. He was a dentist in civilian life. He was a 65-year member of Blue Earth Post 89.

Tillemans, Lawrence P., 93, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 28, 2020. He was a 53-year member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Tracy, Eugene R., 89, Army veteran of the Korean War era, died April 5, 2020. He was in the Corps of Engineers stationed with East Asia Occupational Forces. He was a member of Round Lake Post 461 and active in the honor guard.

Walsh, Richard "Dick," 81, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died March 24, 2020. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Yutzenka, Ted, 82, Navy veteran of the Korean War era, died Feb. 28, 2020. He was a past commander with Argyle Post 353 and a 44-year member.

Zobel, Walter "Wally," 70, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 2, 2020. He served with the 1st Cavalry Division (2nd Btn., 7th Cav. Reg. "Ghost Battalion") as a mortarman and was awarded the Bronze Star and Air Medal. He was a first vice commander and membership director within New Ulm Post 132.

Department of Corrections

The Minnesota Legionnaire received incorrect information for an entry under the last name Baune in the April 2020 issue. Here is how it should appear:

Baune, Alvin "Bud," 85, Army veteran of the Korean era who served in Germany, died March 2, 2020. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

Veterans often have questions on Compensation & Pension Exams

Once a service member transitions to veteran status and begins using VA entitlements, they will become familiar with compensation and pension exams (C&P exams). C&P's are a common phrase in VA terminology that is used to discuss a process when a veteran file's for service-connected disability compensation.

C&P's are a part of a duty to assist law that requires VA to gather information that may help support the veterans claim. Under recent changes implemented by the Appeals Modernization Act, the VA's duty to assist is limited to first-time claims and supplemental claims. C&P exams are used to diagnose, determine the severity of disabilities and provide a medical opinion if it was likely or not connected to a veteran's time in service. This is known as a Nexus opinion.

FACTS, not MYTHS. C&P examiners do not decide claims and these examiners do not provide medical treatment. Around 90 percent of the examiners are third-party contractors the VA uses, which was established in 2016 when VA awarded \$6.8 billion to companies such as Quality Timeliness Customer Service Medical Services (QTC) and Logistical Health Incorporated (LHI) to administer VAC&P exams for establishing

VA & Rehabilitation

Jeremy Wolfsteller



disability benefits. So, if you get a call from these contractors, you are not being solicited.

If you have ever had a C&P exam, you know majority of them have you in and out in less than 20 minutes. Prior to the exam, VA sends examiners specific disability benefit questionnaires (DBQ's) based on what the veteran filed for; the examiner administers the exam using those questions and are supposed to provide an adequate opinion based on facts like a veteran's prior medical history, examinations, lay statements and be supported by adequate rational backed by medical research.

Honestly in 20 minutes if a doctor can do all this, they must have extraordinary talent. Therefore, I would not want a 20-minute C&P exam opinion to be the sole basis for my claim determination. That is why it is especially important for veterans to enter the claims process once they have a diagnosis and treatment plan in place either through the VA or their private provider that hopefully includes a "nexus opinion." VA's duty to assist requires VA to consider

all evidence a veteran provided like their medical records and lay statements when deciding a claim, not just the C&P examiners medical opinion.

If a veterans C&P examiner failed to take time to thoroughly review the veterans entire record like considering lay statements from other veterans, family members, diagnosis or symptoms in medical records or theories raised by the record and it negatively affects the rating, then veterans can file for an inadequate exam stating VA failed to fulfill its duty to assist.

Remember, do not go into this alone. There are experts waiting to assist you at no cost. Those experts are your county veteran service officers or your appointment veteran service organization like The American Legion.

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

Legion membership chart as of April 23

2020 Goal	Total 2019	Total 2020	Weeks Gain	Total Posts	Goal Posts	% Of Goal	
8,149	8,091	7,787	2	58	16	95.56%	7,968
6,497	6,413	6,048	5	84	13	93.09%	6,355
11,021	10,956	10,595	-2	65	25	96.13%	10,768
2,136	2,118	2,017	-10	18	4	94.43%	2,095
2,346	2,325	2,065	-9	23	3	88.02%	2,182
10,891	10,820	10,382	-8	71	28	95.33%	10,705
5,778	5,702	5,450	1	76	19	94.32%	5,641
3,788	3,748	3,507	4	40	6	92.58%	3,682
6,124	6,059	5,778	18	65	16	94.35%	5,989
9,108	9,054	8,580	13	54	12	94.20%	8,894
3,655	1,897	1,857	1	2	0	50.81%	1,857
69,493	67,183	64,066	15	556	142	92.19%	66,136

Same Date Last Year

Membership target dates moved

Due to the pandemic and related restrictions and cancellations and economic hardships, it has been decided for national to move the April and May target dates one month down the calendar.

The new target dates are now:

- April 95 percent target date: May 13.

- May 100 percent target date: June 17.

Delegate Strength date: July 24.

With this being said, the extract dates will remain the same. There is an extract that

took place April 10, for the sixth and final renewal notice.

The extract for the first renewal notice in July will be May 13.

Adjutant Mike Maxa said: "Please continue to send in all dues that you have received prior to this to ensure members do not receive this renewal notice. Whether it is through the mail or through mylegion.org. We highly encourage the online method."

Please don't sit on

membership, he said.

"Now is a great time to start using mylegion.org. I have been saying for years online membership processing is the future. Well, my friends, the future is here and knocking down your door."

He said people can contact him, District leaders or members of the COVID-19 Committee if they need help with technology.



Mike Maxa

It's not the time for politics in the Legion

Hello Legion Family, I hope everyone is staying healthy and doing what you need to do in order to keep your sanity. It is great to see so many of our Legion Family stepping up and helping others. The American Legion Family is truly made up of the best of best.

Thank you to everyone for keeping the spirit of The American Legion alive. Whether it's making masks, or Buddy Checks or delivering groceries, or the countless other things that are too many to mention. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

We are heartbroken that so many things are cancelled this year. Conventions, testimonials and the Legacy Run. Hopefully

Legion Riders

Paul Hassing



this will pass with everyone staying healthy, and we will be able to see each other soon.

I would also urge you to check out The American Legion Bootcamp. It is an online course that you can take. It is free to members. Trust me, you will get a lot out of it.

Lastly, I know people are scared and frustrated. You want things to go back to normal, and you might want someone to blame. This isn't the time for politics in the Legion. We are a nonpartisan organization that has to work

with both sides to get the things that all veterans and their families deserve. We all have our opinions, and that is our right. Let's keep them out of the Legion.

Thank you, and May God bless all of you.

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

Politician's picture provokes perusers to put pen to paper to pan compiler

I sure got a beatdown from some readers this month. Many of you were none too happy about a photograph on Page 8 of the April 2020 issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire.

It was a photo of Robert Hart, chairman of the Department Legislative Committee, standing with U.S. Rep Ilhan Omar outside the door of her office in Washington, D.C.

OK, here's how the complaints went: Some people called me up and let me know how much they didn't like the photograph. Some people sent me email messages. Others wrote me messages.

A few were merely inquisitive and wanted to know the reasoning behind publishing it. Others were just furious. They wanted to know who the heck did I think I was publishing a photo of her in the Legionnaire, of all places.

One writer was short on periods but long on dashes: "Enclosed is your April '20 — photo of the shame full woman that you depict — she hates us — and I'm ashamed of your photo-op. Some of us — 'connect the dots w/these people you just endorsed — good luck to God and country — Minnesota has slid down 'the hole of reason!!' P.S.: Makes me sorry to call MN home."

First, I am neither Democrat, Republican, liberal, conservative. I am generally skeptical of all politicians and find they all are full of hot air most of the time. But they still get to vote on veterans-related legislation.

Second, Omar wasn't the one doing the talking. Hart was. Omar was the one doing the listening.

She sat down with Hart to hear the national legislative agenda of The American Legion. Visiting ALL of our congressional members is how laws get changed to benefit veterans.

All-American

Tim Engstrom



But, you know, if we only spoke to the ones who agreed with us, we wouldn't get laws passed in our favor.

As the editor The Minnesota Legionnaire, I figured you, the members of the Legion here in the Land of 10,000 Lakes, would like to know that, yes, we talked to Omar, who last year had us meet with an aide out in the hallway.

I mean, think of it this way. When she is the one doing the talking, she appears on Fox News, CNN, MSNBC and other national media outlets, right? Does her appearance mean they endorse her? Obviously not.

Well her photo with Hart in the Legionnaire doesn't mean this publication endorses her, either. The American Legion is nonpartisan. The Legionnaire is nonpartisan. We don't endorse any politicians. In fact, we, like all veterans, have a healthy dose of skepticism regarding politicians, as most Americans do.

At the Washington Conference, I try to get around to the meetings with members of Congress from Minnesota, but many meetings happen at the same time and in different buildings with security entrances, all on a single day. I made it to three, where I took photos.

For the others, I received photos from Legion members. I only got three — including the one Hart sent of him with Omar.

I wish I had photos of Legion members standing with the other four so I could have printed pictures of all 10. (Minnesota has eight representatives, two senators).

Hart belongs to Stillwater

Post 48, and his buddies there josh him about the photo because they know he and Omar are complete polar opposites on the political spectrum. But Hart was glad to have his photo with her because he understands the value of sitting down and talking with her on behalf of veterans everywhere.

What's Not Happening? Someone asked: Where's "What's Happening?"

Since everything has been cancelled, I would need to call it "What's Not Happening?" above a lot of white space.

When gatherings return, so shall the "What's Happening?" section.

Front Page

Readers liked the flag-draped Legionnaire nameplate across the top of the Front Page in the April issue. I did that because of the COVID-19 situation America is going through, and I thought I would show our patriotism in such times.

I didn't know at the time that a return to normalcy would be more than a month or two, but now I will state for the record: The flag-draped Legionnaire stays until America reaches a standard that seems "normal" — gatherings, sports, open businesses, work from work, rallies, conventions. Meanwhile, I will fly the colors.

Tim Engstrom is the director of communications for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

New subcommittee

Continued from Page 1

"We think this is an opportunity to take the situation we have now and use it to benefit us in the future as far as our ability to community and to connect with younger members who are more technology-driven," said Jennifer Havlick of Two Harbors.

The subcommittee members already

has Zoom set up for the Districts. The hopes is to spread the tech to be in common use among Posts, too.

Want to attend your Post meeting but you've got to cook supper or watch a young one or move the lawn sprinkler? Maybe you are just tired of the car and it's a traffic headache to reach the Post. Attend via videoconference.

Department 4th and 5th Vice Commander Teresa Ash of St. Paul will head

up the subcommittee. Havlick, as secretary of the Strategic Planning Committee, will lead the technology education portion. Also on the subcommittee are 3rd District Commander Linda Dvorak and Historian Mike Ash, both of whom will provide training with video conferencing and MyLegion.org, and 2nd District Membership Director Randy Olson, who will field questions on COVID-19 response supplies needed

around the state. Tom Fernlund, chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee, will be looped in on the subcommittee's activities.

Teresa Ash said when the state and country began to shut down, so did many Legion Posts. In fact, they needed to do the opposite — find the ways and means to engage veterans.

"That's what our organization is

about," Teresa said. "It goes back to 1919. There's a fight to get people connected."

Havlick was optimistic about getting naysayers to learn conferencing technology. She called video conferencing a tool to move The American Legion forward. "It's just about managing people's expectations," she said. "I believe they can do stuff they don't believe they can do."



This famous photo by war photographer Robert Capa is from March 24, 1945, just before the jump over the Rhine River. The paratrooper is Jim Conboy Jr. of the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment. He was from Pennsylvania. Just after landing, his right leg was shattered by a 20 mm shell and later amputated. After the war, Conboy earned a bachelor's of business, married and had four sons and a daughter. He worked as superintendent of maintenance for the Philadelphia Suburban Water Co. from 1953 to 1997. He died in 2004. (Dallas police officer J.D. Tippit, killed trying to apprehend Lee Harvey Oswald, also served in the 513th PIR.)

WORLD WAR II

'These are guys who would fight at the drop of a hat'

Author James Fenelon recounts the story of the Allied buildup for Operation Varsity, the largest airborne assault of the war

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PAUL — Maj. Gen. William M. Miley didn't want soldiers who stayed out of trouble. His troops in the brand-new 17th Airborne Division at Fort Benning, Georgia, were getting into fights all the time when they went to town.

In fact, Miley told his men he would rather hear about them getting black eyes or having torn uniforms than find out they ran from a fight.

"He didn't want a bunch of angels within the ranks of his units and he wanted guys who were willing to fight, and, more specifically, and to the method of his madness, he wanted them to fight for each other," said author James Fenelon.

Fenelon spoke March 10 at the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Roundtable, right before the world changed.

A recap: The World Health Organization labeled COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11. Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz issued a peacetime emergency on March 13. Schools closed by March 18. The first Minnesota coronavirus-related fatality was March 21. The stay-at-home-order was issued March 25.

The WWII History Roundtable happens at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. It is a museum and is closed like all museums in the state. Don Patton, organizer of the roundtable, has cancelled presentations planned for March 24, April 9 and May 12. He hopes to reschedule them.

But on March 10, Fenelon was sharing history documented in his book: "Four Hours of Fury: The Untold Story of World War II's Largest Airborne Invasion and the Final Push into



Author James Fenelon is at left in this screenshot from YouTube. Editor Tim Engstrom was in Washington, D.C., at the time of Fenelon's presentation in St. Paul, so he watched it online while working from home. Past presentations are available at the YouTube Channel for "World War II History Round Table." The videos are shot by Rob Barros of Lake Elmo. Depicted are Col. Edson Raff, Sgt. John Chester and Lt. Frank Dillon.

Nazi Germany."

That invasion was Operation Varsity, where 19,000 Allied paratroopers dropped into Nazi Germany.

Fenelon himself served 12 years in the Army and was a paratrooper and pathfinder. In 1988, he was a private at age 18 going through jump school at Fort Benning. He went through the infantry museum, saw a small exhibit about the airborne in World War II Europe and it mentioned Operation Varsity as "the drop across the Rhine."

"In my naivete, I had assumed I had learned everything I needed to know about World War II in my high school history class, and I was a little dismayed I hadn't heard of this operation. I had heard of the jump into Normandy,

Market Garden in Holland, but I wasn't aware of the 17th Airborne Division or their jump across the Rhine."

Over the years, he wanted to see more written about the 17th Airborne, and finally his wife challenged him to do something about it.

He got to know the 17th Airborne guys. In fact, he was at a reunion and was walking back to his hotel room and noticed a group of veterans pushing a brass luggage cart. Instead of luggage, there was an 80-year-old man. Was there a medical emergency? Nope. The fellow drank too much.

They asked Fenelon to help. He learned they wanted to leave the cart at the door of the man's hotel room, knock and run away before his wife opens the door.

"Now I knew why they recruited me,

because I could run," he said.

He made a clean getaway.

"I got high-fives and slaps on the back and was invited to join them back at the bar."

Fenelon found when these paratroopers get together, they go back in time, to when they made their best friends.

The U.S. Army formed five paratrooper divisions during World War II. The 82nd and 101st were formed during World War I and were part of the Army Reserve between wars. They were brought into the active-duty Army and designated airborne divisions in 1942. The other three were new divisions formed in 1943: 11th, 13th and 17th.

The 11th served the Pacific Theater, while the others were assigned to Europe.

At the time of Operation Varsity, the 17th Airborne Division had three regiments: the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 507th Infantry Regiment and the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, all of which had support of field artillery, medical, signal and so on.

Miley, a West Point grad who served at the end of World War I, spent 15 years as a lieutenant during the reduced military in the interwar period. He was an advocate of physical fitness and professional development. He was positioned well when the Army expanded in the late 1930s. As a major, he was tapped for the first organized unit of paratroopers, the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Fenelon said Miley was instrumental in paratrooper traditions that exist today. He asked a captain to design jump wings for graduating jump school, then sought approval from the War Department for paratroopers wearing them. He got approval for paratroopers wearing jump boots with dress uniforms and the blousing of their trousers for a distinct look.

The way his troops behaved — getting into fights and living hard — plagued his career until he became commander of the 17th Airborne.

"When they got to England in September 1944, the entire division, 8,000 guys, were allegedly banned from London for two weeks after a particularly egregious bar fight in London that included switchblades. These are guys who would fight at the drop of a hat," Fenelon said.

The Allies made their broad push east across Europe until December 1944, when the Germans counterattacked — the Battle of the Bulge.

The 17th Airborne was sent into this campaign. Fenelon said their entry into combat was not elegant. Miley and his staff took intelligence reports at face value and believed Germans were withdrawing. In fact, panzer units were coming forward. This resulted in casualties.

The 17th was assigned to Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army flank and what it lacked in experience, it made up for in courage. The 17th never lost an objective for more than a couple of hours. If the Germans kicked them

out of a city, the paratroopers countered. The aggression held up the reputation of airborne units, but it was costly.

There was a portion of the 17th that did have combat experience, Fenelon noted. It was the 507th PIR, commanded by Edson Raff, nicknamed Little Caesar. He was short and had a high opinion of himself. He had led the Army's first combat jump in North Africa.

"They either loved him or they hated him, and most of them hated him," Fenelon said.

The 507th had jumped in Normandy. Miley didn't like Raff, because Raff needed him. Raff didn't smoke or drink and loved to focus on squad- and platoon-level tactics — fundamentals like ruck marches and calisthenics. It paid off in the Battle of the Bulge because Raff had fewer casualties than other units in the division.

In mid-February of 1945, the 17th pulled out and moved to rest camps so it could replace casualties. Guys like Sgt. John Chester, a farm kid from Missouri used to rising at 3:30 a.m. for chores before school, had the job of integrating the new soldiers.

"He's kind of one of these legendary guys you hear about when they join the Army," Fenelon said. "They think the Army is actually a vacation because you could sleep in."

Awake at 6 a.m., three meals a day, Chester was quickly promoted to sergeant, and he was in charge of a 75mm Pack Howitzer. He drilled to make sure everyone on the squad could do all the jobs. His guys became the fastest gun crew, so commanders would cherry-pick his people to raise the competency on other crews. Chester then brought the replacements up to speed.

The 17th got time with actress-singer Marlene Dietrich sporting jump boots on a USO Tour. The soldiers again routinely got into fights. They even caused a minor international incident when some of them beat up some British MPs in Paris, Fenelon said.

They also were trained to jump with new single-point-release harnesses. They had been accustomed to three-point harnesses, and they didn't want to change. The Army, though, had lost too many paratroopers to drowning or shooting in Normandy because the men couldn't get out of the harnesses fast enough after landing.

"When someone is shooting at you, you want to get unencumbered as soon as possible," Fenelon said.

The new doors on the C-46s bothered them, too. (Planes twice the volume of C-47s.) They didn't like the double doors and weren't used to a door on the left. Commanders parked trucks at the back of the planes so the paratroopers could climb in and practice.

Only Miley and his staff knew the plans for Operation Varsity, but all the men knew the next mission was unlike any prior.

"Unlike the jumps into France or Holland, this was going to be an invasion, not a liberation, and the subtle differences there were not lost on these guys, who realized and were

Continued on Page 8



Wayne DeHaven, 96, right, wears an Army uniform with the distinctive parachutist's badge on his left side.



Operation Varsity took place north of the German city of Wesel, between the Rhine and Issel rivers. The British dropped up north, while the Americans dropped to the south. On the right, 17th Airborne soldiers with mohawk haircuts listen to plans.

The Germans knew the Allies were jumping, and they jumped anyway

Continued from Page 7

speculating and talking among themselves about the possibilities of how the German civilians were going to react to their landing in Germany," Fenelon said.

Pitchforks? Shotguns? What if they got caught in trees? What about gas? All troops were issued gas masks.

In early March, the Allies reached the Rhine River, whose banks were 400 yards apart. The Americans wanted to capture an intact bridge on the fly before Germans could destroy it, like at Remagen.

British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery preferred to stop at the Rhine and build up divisions and equipment. Monty wanted two airborne divisions to land on the far side of the Rhine near Wesel and set up a defensive perimeter as troops cross the water. Ten Issel River bridges needed to be held by glider personnel.

German Gen. Alfred Schlemm was an accomplished soldier, artilleryman and aviator who was familiar with airborne tactics. He had helped plan the Nazi invasion of Crete.

"His own experience in Crete verified that the point of most vulnerability in airborne troops is right when they landed," Fenelon said.

The Allies learned March 18 that any element of surprise was lost. Schlemm had captured a copy of an after-action report of Operation Market Garden. What's more, the Germans had jets taking recon photos of French airfields where the 17th had been training. They saw the airplanes and gliders. They knew the Allies had Wesel at the top of their list.

The Allied commanders never shared this fact with the men — but the German propaganda machine did.

"GI's almost universally in Europe liked to listen to German radio allegedly because it had better American music than American stations did," Fenelon said.

On March 23, 1945, the German radio had an announcement, by name, for the 17th Airborne Division, to leave the parachutes at home "because the flack was going to be so thick when they fly over Germany that they can just walk down the flack bursts."

The American soldiers wondered if the plans would be canceled. The next morning, the day of the attack, they knew it still was on. They were fed steak and fresh eggs for breakfast, with helpings of ice cream.

The soldiers realized: "The mission was still on because they wouldn't have fed us this way if it wasn't on."

On March 24, 1945, aircraft took off from 12 airfields in France and 11 in England in what became the largest airborne armada to date. There were 1,500 troop transports, 1,300 gliders and more than 500 fighter escorts. Trailing them were 240 B-24s rigged to drop supplies, fuel, medical and extra ammo.

"If you stood there and watched the first aircraft come over, it would have taken three and a half hours before the last aircraft would have passed overhead," Fenelon said.

Paratroopers could hear the flack as they approached the Rhine. It sounded like someone tossing gravel on a tin roof. In the gliders, it had a pop-pop sound, often going in one side and out the other. Two pops was a good sign. One pop bad.

The first man to jump for the 17th was Raff, followed by his 507th.

Montgomery had created a 22-mile-wide smokescreen, and the airborne guys asked the field marshal to turn it off, but it was too late. Pilots couldn't see drop zones. The 507th was a mile off. Fortunately, they had jumped with radios and could reorganize.

Miley jumped on the second pass. The 513th PIR dropped three miles away, in the British sector, and they had to hold off the German infantry as they came southward to the Americans.

Fenelon said glider pilots prefer to be cut loose as soon as possible and be in the air as little as possible. The experienced German gunners loved to shoot down gliders because they make easy targets. Fenelon spoke of a pilot that snagged a barbed-wire fence, then had wings ripped off by two trees. They got out and moved to their bridges.

"This was their commute to work, so to speak," he said.

Eisenhower called Operation Varsity "the most successful airborne operation carried out to date."

The 17th Airborne Division suffered 1,300 casualties, with 430 killed in action. The British had 700 injured and 374 killed. More died if counting the air crew, glider pilots or B-24 pilots killed when flying at 300 feet to drop supplies.

Read the rest in Fenelon's book.

He did mention, during a Q-and-A session that some Germans took Nazi propaganda at face value and attacked Americans riding bicycles and using what they could find for weapons.

"You can imagine the disparity in the firepower and how that ended," he said.

Roundtable organizer Don Patton interviewed Wayne DeHaven that evening. DeHaven will be 97 in June and has been married for 74 years.

DeHaven grew up in St. Paul, was drafted into the Army, trained at Fort Benning and went to Camp Mackall in North Carolina, where he joined the 17th for more training before it moved to Camp Forrest in Tennessee and then overseas.

Patton asked DeHaven about his memories of training. He replied: "We did a lot of running."

DeHaven said he jumped 13 times during training. He never made a combat jump. During the Battle of the Bulge, he was a radioman. Shrapnel from an explosion behind him shredded his radio and hit up and down his backside.

Today, the Roseville resident sets off machines at airports. He has shrapnel in the back of head, between his shoulders and down by his buttocks.

"They won't take it out because they said it does more harm than good," DeHaven said.

Patton mentioned that Minnesota was the second-largest manufacturer of gliders during the war, at around 1,500 made. The largest was Ford, making around 5,000 in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Legion and VFW Riders honor vet

Continued from Page 1

some kind of drive-by honor guard would be perfect, and who better to do it than the Legion Riders.

Olson had been in the VFW, so the Legion staff contacted Paul Hassing, president of the Legion Riders, and Jon "Gutterball" Durst, chairman of the VFW Riders, about arranging with Eidemiller for the two groups to do drive-by honors for the late veteran.

PR firm SnowGlobe reached out to Boyd Huppert of KARE11, a reporter known for his quality, in-depth pieces.

On April 11, the Legion and VFW Riders grouped at the VFW Post in Hopkins along Shady Oak Road. They left at 10:30 a.m. to drive past the mother's house in Minnetonka, with an escort of fire trucks, then regrouped at the VFW in Coon Rapids.

At 12:30 p.m., the parade of motorcycles went past the widow's home in Coon Rapids.

On Monday, April 13, Huppert aired his story:

By Boyd Huppert
KARE11.com

Fifteen miles of social distance from Fort Snelling National Cemetery, a military family grieves in the age of COVID-19.

No hugs, no graveside service, no 21-gun salute.

Just the worst pain possible, made impossibly worse.

"Mitchell's my younger brother," Casey Olson says, standing near the flag her family flies next to the porch. "This is where we grew up, my parents have been here since 1979."

Since March 30th, the house has never felt quieter.

That's the day Iraq War veteran Mitch Olson died by suicide.

"We really did not see this coming," Casey says. "Given his struggles, we knew this was a possibility, but we really didn't think it was to that point."

The United States was deep into the 2007 troop surge, when Mitch felt the call to serve. In 2008, he joined the Minnesota National Guard, and a year later was deployed to Iraq as a gunner on an MRAP, a

Thinking suicide?

There is help.
Veterans Crisis Line
800-273-8255, press 1
Vet Centers
877-927-8387

Need help with benefits?

Vets Linkage Line
888-546-5838

Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle.

"I think he loved the camaraderie and the sense of purpose," Casey says.

But the things he loved, were the same things Mitch missed when his service was done.

"In the military, you just have a sense of you are signing up to die for the people to your left and right, and then you go back to civilian life and, you know, people are bickering about sometimes superfluous things, and that can be frustrating to veterans," Casey says.

Mitch's marriage to his wife, Megan, and the birth of their son, Hunter, brought Mitch joy.

Casey says Veterans Administration counseling also helped her brother, but the epidemic of veteran suicides is a mystery we, as a country, are still solving.

"Had he been thinking clearly, I know this is not the decision he would have made," Casey says. "There was some level of pain there that couldn't be eliminated."

Against that backdrop — the pain, the quiet and a family deprived of a proper military service — on Saturday, motorcycle riders with The American Legion, Combat Veterans Association and the Veterans of Foreign Wars rode in.

"Every veteran should have an honor guard," Paul Hassing of The American Legion Riders said.

"I want them to know that they're loved. Even though we've never met, they're a part of my family too," Jon Durst of the VFW Riders added.

So, led by fire trucks, the bikers rode past the parents of Mitch Olson.

"USA, USA," Mitch's mom, Sylvia Olson chanted as the parade passed the couple's Minnetonka home.

Then, 30 miles away in Coon Rapids, the bikers also rode past Mitch's wife and home.

Surrounded by a handful of friends and family, Megan blew a kiss and wiped away tears as the bikers passed.

Full military honors will come later.

But a wife and a family, so weighted with grief, needed every ounce of support now.

"God bless every single one of them," Mitch's mom said after the motorcycles had passed. "Stay healthy and hug your kids."

She knows had the tables been turned her son would have saddled up, too.

"Mitchell would have loved this; he would have really, really loved this," Casey said.

On otherwise quiet streets, love is showing the way in dark days.

After, Casey Olson, the sister, emailed everyone who made the event happen. She wrote: "We cannot begin to thank you for what you and your organizations have done for my brother and our family.

When I saw those fire trucks, motorcycles, police and ambulance come around the corner, it finally gave me some relief. In this difficult time of social distancing we have been carrying such a heavy load and your arrival felt like you were there to pick up the burden for us. You were truly the first responders to our grief and your presence comforted my weary heart. This has given us such peace we cannot thank you enough. Thank you for not leaving my brother behind."

Eidemiller wrote: "I cannot begin to express how impactful your efforts were yesterday. Thank you so very much from the bottom of my heart."

A celebration of Mitchell's life will occur at a later date. You can find the story by scrolling down to April 13 on The American Legion Department of Minnesota's Facebook page, then clicking through to KARE11.

Memorials for Mitchell L. Olson may be directed to: K9s for Warriors Foundation, Mission22 and Autism Society of Minnesota.



The American Legion Riders outside the Hopkins VFW.

Photo by Jody Hassing



ST. PETER — It was June 1967. Bruce Frey had graduated from St. Peter High School. His life was ahead of him. He and five of his buddies were having beer and talking.

Join or get drafted?

Hoping to stay together, they decided to join the Navy under the buddy system. He entered the Delayed Entry Program in August and went to boot camp in January.

He went from MEPS in Minneapolis to the Great Lakes Training Center, then to Camp Barry, where during processing the people there found Frey needed glasses. That delayed him two weeks, and he was unable to remain with his pals.

They found Frey had a skill: He could type 60-70 words per minute. After basic, he was sent home on a two-week leave, then he was sent to the 7th Fleet. It was based out of Long Beach, California, technically, but Frey said it never went there. Instead, the crews would rotate while the ships remained off the coast of Vietnam.

Frey was on the USS Arlington AGMR-2, a light aircraft carrier that, in 1965, had been converted into a major communications relay ship.

It's funny how the military works. He got there, and there wasn't an opening in his military occupation specialty, so he became a gunner's mate while he waited. He maintained three-inch 50-caliber anti-aircraft guns, two aft and two fore, along with small arms such as M-16s, .45s, M-14s, Medusa .50-cals, riot shotguns, line shotguns and even flares.

He ended up being a gunner's mate the entire tour.

The Arlington operated at Yankee Station handling 7,000 messages a day and maintaining ground to air commo. Unlike most sailors, the ones on the Arlington could call home because it was one of two ships with satellite commo. The other was the USS Annapolis AGMR-1.

Did the Arlington get attacked out there in the South China Sea's Gulf of Tonkin?

Frey said the ship had some junks come after it. The brass sent smaller ships after them.

In another case, an airplane buzzed

them at night. The pilot demanded identification or risk being fired upon.

"If you look at the ship, you would not think there was anything in the fleet that looked like that," Frey said.

What's more, the ship typically operated in a hidden location and, in this instance, was under orders to maintain radio silence. After firing a flare, they had to break the silence.

But it was all a misunderstanding. The pilot was American. Frey said someone's ass was chewed that night.

The Arlington would take turns with the Annapolis at Yankee Station, staying online usually 30, 40 or 50 days.

During the offline days, the ship's crew would get some R&R, or perform repairs and other upkeep, usually at Subic Bay in the Philippines.

Apollo 8 was a shot around the moon, without a landing. The Arlington headed to Hawaii to add another satellite dish, then she went to the splashdown area to assist with the communication in recovering the astronauts.

Then, of course, the Arlington headed back to Yankee Station to relieve the Annapolis.

In May 1969, the Arlington helped the splashdown for Apollo 10, which did everything short of landing on the moon, and in July, Apollo 11, the first moon landing.

President Richard Nixon stayed on the Arlington the night before the splashdown. The ship was in the national spotlight, and Frey saw Nixon but didn't talk to him.

"He wore lots of makeup," Frey said.

All the ammo and small arms had to be locked below deck, and the main armorer slept inside with the weapons that night.

The USS Arlington came back to the United States in September 1969.

"We got word that we were no longer needed, that we were outdated, and they were decommissioning the ship," he said.

Frey returned home just before Thanksgiving in November. The Arlington was decommissioned at San Diego in January 1970, mothballed until 1976, when she was sold for scrap to the National Steel & Shipbuilding Company, which towed her to Terminal



Bruce Frey of St. Peter sits next to a Christmas gift he once received, a commemorative Navy bell.

VIETNAM WAR

From a war zone to an astronaut splashdown

Sailor Bruce Frey recounts the voyages of the USS Arlington

By Tim Engstrom

Island in Los Angeles. The buyer was finished scrapping her in 1987.

"We went from highly sophisticated in 1966 to nothing in 1969," Frey said.

In her time, the Arlington earned seven campaign stars for Vietnam War service.

Frey had another year to serve, and he was moved to the Naval Reserve. (The Naval Reserve became the Navy Reserve in 2005.) He had to travel to Bainbridge, Maryland, once a month, and he separated in the fall of 1970.

He joined the VFW, like his father, then the Legion, too. Eventually, the VFW in St. Peter folded. With American Legion Post 37 in St. Peter, he was deeply involved in the steak fries for 16 years. He got into volunteering at the Legion to raise funds for a new roof.

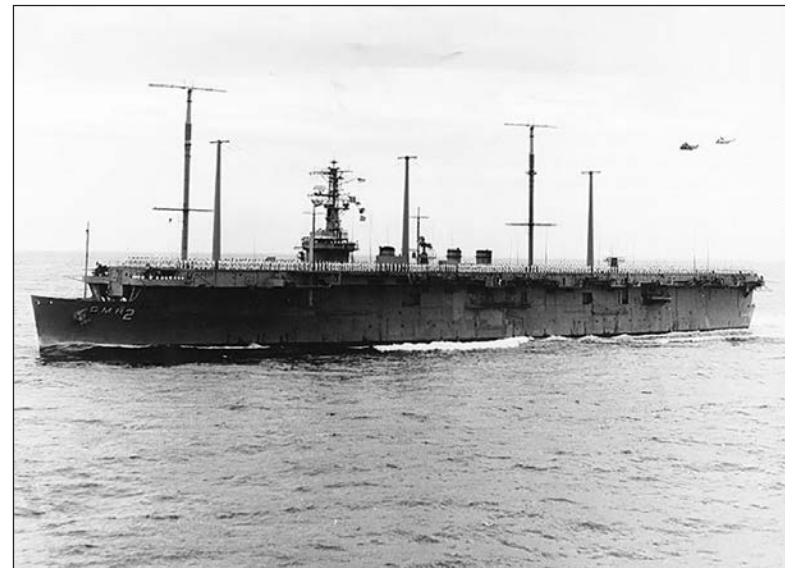
Frey went to a vocational school and pursued a career in sales and marketing. He tried to adjust swiftly to civilian life, hardly mentioning his military background. He had seen protesters at Travis AFB and was called a "baby killer" and asked "How can you do this?" outside of Customs at the San Francisco airport.

He got to the Minneapolis airport, and all was quiet on the Midwestern front.

But St. Peter is home to Gustavus Adolphus College, and one day, as the Vietnam War continued overseas, students had a protest with upside-down flags. A bunch of local veterans wanted to confront them, Frey said, but a patrol blocked the road.

He got married to his wife, Susan, and they had a daughter, Stacy.

The same thing happened to him that happened with his Navy MOS. He ended up doing something else.



The USS Arlington AGMR-2, circa 1968. It had been a light aircraft carrier before becoming a communications ship.

He couldn't find sales work, but he got a state job as a security councilor at the Minnesota Security Hospital in St. Peter. He did that for 30 years. He still teaches security classes for the hospital, often to contractors.

He had known Susan from high school, when he worked with her at the Red Owl grocery store. After the Navy, they connected at Sioux Trail Bowling in St. Peter. Their daughter lives in St. Peter with her husband, Wally. They have two children, a daughter and a son, both young adults.

These days, Frey, 78, is active with the St. Peter Area Vietnam Veterans Last Man Club. It began running the Last Man Club Golf Classic in spring 2016 at Shoreland Country Club in St. Peter. Proceeds benefit the organization's Veteran

Relief Fund, which provides emergency assistance and unmet needs to local veterans, usually when no local, state or federal aid exists. Doling out around \$30,000, the fund has helped more than 40 vets.

The Last Man Club Golf Classic is scheduled for Friday, June 19, and it remains scheduled mainly because the organizers haven't met. It's a month and a half away.

"We either need to move it back into the fall or figure it out in the next few weeks," Frey said.

They have been busy signing up participants and getting sponsors. There are 160 golfers signed up — completely full. If you want to play, try next year, like in February.

The outing has 90 hole sponsors so far, Frey said, and there is room for more. The website is lmcclassic.com.



Not a lot of veterans of any branch can rightfully display three Apollo Mission patches, but Bruce Frey can.



Heading to Fort Snelling Golf Club? You might spot Building 222 across the street.

COVID-19 impacted the VA's plans for connecting via Tele-Critical Care

Continued from Page 1

using technology. On Aug. 2, 2011, two connected. By 2012, there were seven hospitals.

The group of doctors could help each other out whenever and wherever and with greater information. Nelson said that was key because of the national shortage of critical care specialists.

The VA Medical Center in Spokane, Washington, was interested. By March 2012, they were activated, and the program expanded to Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Colorado, Nevada, among others. In 2015, the U.S. Air Force wanted to look at the program. The Navy did, too.

"The Air Force said, 'How can we incorporate your program to help us?'" Nelson said.

The VA, he said, has a problem of smaller, rural facilities not having enough critical care specialists to cover consistently. They get covered by medicine hospitalists (basically, doctors who cover a lot of bases). Now, thanks to the Tele-Critical Care program, they have a critical-care doctor immediately available who can walk them through what's needed.

Nelson said Congress encourages collaboration and provided grant money that brought Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas on board, as of August 2018.

The program these days uses a software system that provides two-way audio-video plus patient analytics to help detect and prevent patient deterioration. Doctors and nurses have access to medical records, lab reports, X-ray images and patient bedside monitors. The software pulls together information from all these sources to point out the acuity or severity of the patient.

"We didn't take anything away from the staffing at the

hospital," said Nelson, a retired Air Force master sergeant. "The military would call us a force multiplier."

Cincinnati started a telemedicine program for intensive care about six months after Minneapolis did. The two programs tie together ICUs and step-down units, plus a few other critical care needs, for the VA Health Care System nationwide.

The program in Cincy is called VA Tele-Critical Care-East. The one based in Minneapolis is VA Tele-Critical Care-West. The Cincinnati one covers east of the Mississippi River, and Minneapolis covers west of the Mississippi River with some overlap back and forth.

The VA Tele-Critical Care-West provides service to 21 VA hospitals and one Air Force facility, plus four more VA hospitals in the pipeline to join, Nelson said. That's about 234 beds, when fully implemented in the West there will be 800 to 850 beds covered when the expansion is completed.

At any given time of day, there are physicians and nurses on the West shift.

"Instead of one in-service care physician at every hospital, we can have doctors on shift to advise a resident or guide them through a procedure or a process," he said.

The East and West programs are working to get to the point where they can back up each other, Nelson said. Say the Internet does down or power goes for the East, then West can cover them.

Tele-Critical Care has become a priority for VHA Telehealth community, which leads the nation in Telehealth resources and patient care. Nelson and his staff moved in June 2019 across the Crosstown Highway

to Fort Snelling, in historical Building 222, a brick exterior structure with a modernized interior on Bloomington Road across from Hole 3 of the Fort Snelling Golf Club.

The response to COVID-19 has speeded things up, when it comes to connecting over technology, like it has at workplaces nationwide.

Nelson said the plan was to keep expanding the next eight to 10 years, until Minneapolis and Cincinnati are connected to every VA ICU nationwide, but that is now planned to happen in about five years.

The VA is distributing mobile carts to every VA hospital, to help extend the reach of Tele-Critical Care during the COVID-19 pandemic. This enables the Tele-Critical Care programs to reach every ICU in the VA system.

But until then, the doctors and nurses have used technology from the outpatient telehealth system — especially iPads and the VA Video Connect platform. Nelson said the Tele-Critical Care crew made a huge effort to find temporary solutions with existing VA telehealth resources. Now physicians go room to room with the iPads, talking to patients while having another expert on the video screen.

He said the Tele-Critical Care has shown some achievements in:

- A reduction in the amount of ICU patients being transferred to other facilities, such as a university hospital.

- An improvement in mortality rates as compared to community hospital programs.

"You can't put a price on saving a life. We are starting to see data that we show the program is worth its cost," Nelson said.

The SAL Update:

Events, gatherings are cancelled, but the Sons membership drive is on

Greetings from the Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of Minnesota to the entire American Legion Family.

With all the things that have gone down in the last month, if you not heard, the National Convention was cancelled for this year.

The Detachment of Minnesota followed suit and our summer convention (campout) scheduled for June 26 and 27 has been cancelled.

For The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary, their convention scheduled for July in Redwood Falls has been cancelled. Many other things have been cancelled due to the uncertainty of things and the challenge of scheduling. Boys State, Girls State, Oratorical, Junior Shooting Sports,

Detachment commander

Dave Vulcan



the list goes on.

Per the resolution that came out of National, all National officers will remain in their positions (subject to their agreement to stay) for the next year, until we can have a convention and elect new officers and appoint new chairs. A similar resolution was generated for Detachment, and that is what we are doing as well. So, if your District or Squadron is doing the same, that means you can mail in your officer reports in as soon as you get the forms. Let's have 100 percent turn-in this year!

I hope everybody is staying safe and staying in. Looking toward the future, and, as for membership, we are at 90 percent. I know the great Detachment of Minnesota can hit the 100 percent! Stay safe and we will see you all soon.

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

Mail Call

Where there's a will, there's a way

Good day to all,

As we are all dealing with things we have never dealt with before, I hope to find all are doing as best they can and being safe. I know many meetings, fundraisers, and event have been cancelled all over, and it is hurting income for our Squadrons and Posts that make donations to our Legion and community programs.

This year has been like no other, and we need to do what we can do. Let me share some stories from my home Detachment of Maryland that show ways we can work during these times. Squadron 82 Harry White Wilmer, Squadron 60 Laurel and more have worked with the Legion and asked permission from the local and state government to open for a blood drive.

Permission was granted each time, and the American Red Cross was happy that The American Legion helped them in a time when blood is getting low.

Great work being done to help many during the lockdowns in Maryland. In Glen

Burnie, south of the Baltimore airport, American Legion Post 40 has taken to Facebook and had raffles to raise money for the Post. They sell 60 numbers using PayPal and then YouTube for live drawings. They have raffled off three iPads, a power washer, gift cards and more and have raised over \$2,000.

In these times we need to help all of our programs we have, and we cannot forget to help take care of our Post home, too. Take the down time to plan what we can do once we are allowed to get back to normal and get creative with things we can do to help.

As Sons of The American Legion, we have always been known for finding ways to make money for the programs and also to work the programs. Let's not just accept that we have lost our fundraisers and opportunities to work the program.

Let's find new ways to carry

on the programs and get more people involved. We can do it. We just need to put our minds together. Even if it's on a conference call because we can't meet right now, let's challenge ourselves to step up to the challenge and continue on.

We cannot change what has been taken from us because of the virus and how it has cancelled so many things. We can come back strong if we are prepared to and are ready to.

We are the Sons of The American Legion, it is our jobs to assist and carry on! Let's get working on what's next. Share what you are doing with others and help everyone come back strong. I hope to see all of you soon and hear more of the great works we are doing.

Serving Those That Served, Full Steam Ahead,

Don "JR" Hall
Americanism Chairman
Sons of The American Legion

April 14, 2020 Membership Report

Department of Minnesota
Membership Bulletin No. 9



National Goal
Department Goal 11,596
Current Membership 10,499

District	2020 Goal	Total 2019	Total 2020	Week's Gain	Total Squads	% Of Goal	
District 1	1,789	1,807	1,659	52	41	92.73%	1,595
District 2	1,334	1,361	1,155	17	34	86.58%	1,206
District 3	2,066	2,057	1,913	51	36	92.59%	1,839
District 4	375	370	345	26	7	92.00%	343
District 5	382	387	320	36	7	83.77%	358
District 6	1,578	1,569	1,524	78	33	96.58%	1,492
District 7	1,016	1,040	937	59	22	92.22%	909
District 8	554	548	430	-20	16	77.62%	478
District 9	846	830	723	43	18	85.46%	741
District 10	1,653	1,652	1,486	58	34	89.90%	1,493
District 11	3	2	7	0	2	233.33%	1
Totals	11,596	11,623	10,499	400	250	90.54%	10,456
							Same Date Last Year

Blame COVID-19 for the Legionnaire not being to garner a larger, sharper photo, but this training image shows how doctors from other VA hospitals can be in the same room as medical staff and the patient. The Tele-Critical Care program has connected many VA ICU personnel, and COVID-19 has speeded up the process for connecting more facilities.



Despite social distancing, Brainerd's 194th Armor Reg. did not forget Bataan

By Tim Engstrom

BRAINERD (remotely from Bloomington) — The motto of the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor Regiment, is: "Remember Bataan ... Never Forget!"

The 78th annual wreath-laying ceremony in Brainerd in honor of the 194th Armor Regiment soldiers who endured the brutality of the Bataan Death March happened April 9 despite the statewide shutdown.

The ceremony's audience, however, attended via Facebook Live.

"The current state of our community and the world has prevented us from gathering in person today, but thanks to many technological advances over the years we can now continue this tradition during this somber day, and honor the memories of those who fought on the Bataan Peninsula, online," said Capt. Michael Popp, commander of Headquarters Company, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor Regiment.

In the battalion, Headquarters and Headquarters Company are in Brainerd, A Company is in Alexandria, B Company in East St. Paul, C Company in Sauk Centre, D Company in St. Cloud and G Company is at Camp Ripley.

Lt. Mitchel Welinski read the unit's history to the soldiers present for the ceremony and to the 463 viewers watching live on Facebook. (Viewers who missed it can still see it at the Facebook page titled "1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor.")

On Feb. 10, 1941, the 34th Tank Company of the Minnesota National Guard out of Brainerd, under the command of Ernest B. Miller, was ordered to Fort Lewis for training.

There, it was combined with National Guard tank companies from St. Joseph, Missouri, and Salinas, California, to form the 194th Tank Battalion, with Maj. Miller appointed as commander of the new formation. A Company was the Brainerd guys, B Company was from St. Joe, and C Company was Salinas.

The National Guard was instrumental in America's readiness before the country's entry into World War II. Miller and his 194th Tank Battalion were the first U.S. tank unit in the Far East when they deployed, minus B Company, to the Philippines, an American territory at the time. They arrived in Manila on Sept. 26, 1941.

B Company, beforehand, had been reassigned to the Alaska Defense Command and was the first armored unit sent outside the continental United States.

The rest of the battalion trained at Fort Stotsenburg, by Clark Field, near the Filipino city of Angeles on the island of Luzon, until the war's outbreak at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and the Japanese invasion of



In this computer screenshot, a soldier with the 194th Armor Regiment affixes a wreath to the display in memory of soldiers the unit lost in the Bataan Peninsula of the Philippines.

the Philippines 10 hours later. "After the invasion of the Philippines by the Japanese, the battalion was crucial to the beleaguered defense of Luzon and the Bataan Peninsula," Welinski said.

On April 9, 1942, lacking resources and with the Navy's Pacific Ocean battleships sunk at Pearl Harbor, Maj. Gen. Edward King ordered his 78,000 men (66,000 Filipino and 12,000 U.S.) defending the Bataan Peninsula to surrender. It remains the largest surrender of American forces.

"For their outstanding performance of duty in action, the 194th Tank Battalion was awarded three presidential unit citations," Welinski said.

Disease-ridden and

weakened soldiers were ordered on the infamous Bataan Death March, starting on April 9 or 10 and lasting about five to 10 days, from southern Bataan to Camp O'Donnell, through the jungles of Luzon. The men of the 194th, Welinski said, began marching April 10 from near Mariveles 60 miles to San Fernando, packed into rail cars and sent to Capas, from where they marched another seven miles to Camp O'Donnell. They arrived April 13.

"The prisoners, without food or water, experienced extreme cruelty and atrocities dealt by the Japanese," he said. "Nearly 10,000 troops died both American and Filipino."

Hundreds died at Camp O'Donnell. Many prisoners

were spread throughout the Japanese Empire, and they often were packed onto unmarked Japanese ships called hellships and taken to labor camps in Japan, including men from the 194th.

"Many of these unmarked POW warships were sunk unknowingly by the U.S. Navy en route to Japan, killing many POWs," Welinski said.

Eighty-two officers and enlisted men left with the tank company out of Brainerd, and 64 of them went with the 194th to the Philippines. Of them, one was wounded and evacuated, two went to officer candidate school, three were killed in action, 29 died as prisoners of war and 29 survived captivity. Only 32 men survived and returned to live in the Brainerd Lakes area following World War II.

Capt. Philip Wong, battalion commander, said: "We remember these men who so bravely left the Brainerd Lakes area to fight for and protect our freedoms. We remember those who never had the chance to return home, paying the ultimate sacrifice in the Philippines or on the Japanese hellships as prisoners of war. We remember those who came home again after enduring the unimaginable horrors of being a prisoner of war and the lives they lived in the post-World War."

Many of the men, he said, went on to be active in the Brainerd Lakes area, living with the scars of the war while giving back to the community and raising families.

The 1/194th has 226 soldiers who call Brainerd their home station. Overall, there are 733 soldiers serving "just like your loved ones did back in February of 1941."

The soldiers of the 1/194th learn the unit's heritage and display it for the world "to see what your loved ones had to endure and the examples they set in discipline, perseverance and ultimate resiliency," Wong said.

Department Convention is off

The Department of Minnesota Executive Committee approved cancelling the Department Convention slated for July 15-18 at Jackpot Junction in Morton, near Redwood Falls, in southwestern Minnesota.

The committee also awards the convention to Jackpot Junction, a casino, hotel and conference center, for the next available year.

The resolution, drafted by Judge Advocate Greg Colby, can be read here.

The resolution also keeps present officers in place for another year, exactly like what had been done when the National Convention planned for Louisville, Kentucky, in late August was cancelled.

"The Department Commander, the five Department Vice Commanders, the Department Chaplain, the Department Sergeant at Arms and the Department Historian continue serving in their current positions until the close of the next Department Convention in 2021," it states.

The committee voted by electronic communication.

The resolution also strongly urges Minnesota's Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Riders, American

Legion Auxiliary and all programs and foundations to follow the same course of action.

It states: "Due to the numerous health and safety reasons and needs of our members, the Department of Minnesota Executive Committee strongly



Greg Colby

urges the Detachment of Minnesota Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Riders of the Department of Minnesota, the American Legion Auxiliary, all programs and foundations of The American Legion, and all Districts of the Department of Minnesota follow a similar

course of action, namely: cancel their 2020 convention, elections, all gatherings and maintain their current officers until 2021."

The resolution cites how National events are cancelled through the end of September and urges all cancellations up to that date.

"The American Legion Nationally has passed Resolution Number 3 cancelling the National Convention, all meetings, and all travel of the National Officers and Staff through 30 September 2020 and all National Officers elected and appointed will continue to serve until the 2021 National Convention."

Legionville camp is cancelled

ST. PAUL — The committee that oversees the Legionville School Patrol Camp for The American Legion Department of Minnesota has decided to cancel for the 2020 season.

"It is with a heavy heart that this decision is made," said Legionville President Eugene Leifeld. "Legionville is central to what it means to be a Legionnaire in Minnesota. We hope to return to full strength in 2021."

"The safety and health of our campers is our No. 1 priority," said Department Commander Mark Dvorak. "The decision to cancel was a difficult one, but it had to be made."

The camp teaches school-safety patrol procedures, guidelines for intersections and bus patrols and emergency bus safety to boys and girls all across Minnesota. Typically, the patrollers are entering fourth, fifth or sixth grade. The camp is a function of the Department of Minnesota (state level)

but receives support from American Legion Posts and Auxiliary Units all across the state.

The first session was planned to begin June 14. The last would have ended Aug. 7.

The camp welcomes more than 1,000 girls and boys each season over the course of seven sessions. Each session has a capacity of 168, and all sessions are co-ed. The American Legion operates under four pillars, and Legionville is part of the pillar for mentoring children and youth.

The Minnesota State Patrol and The American Legion teamed up in 1935 to begin a patrol program for youth. By 1948, The American Legion began to raise funds for a permanent training camp and purchased a site on North Long Lake near Brainerd.

"That camp today has provided many lasting memories for many Minnesota children and their families," Leifeld said.



Eugene Leifeld



Mark Dvorak

VA to host virtual baby shower

ST. CLOUD — To honor and support Veterans welcoming new children into their families in 2020, the St. Cloud VA is hosting virtual a baby shower 5 to 6 p.m. May 13.

The goal of the baby shower is to celebrate veteran parents — especially moms — while also increasing awareness of VA's comprehensive maternity care services and to encourage

women Veterans to choose VA to support their health and wellness goals, said Amber Willert, St. Cloud VA women veterans program manager.

"Veteran moms, dads and adoptive parents with babies born or expected in 2020 are welcome," said Willert. "Spouses are welcome to attend, games, gifts and information are all part of the shower."



Kneeling, from left, are Kevin Carrigan and Cory Fouquette. In the main row are Kay Nowak (Larry's sister) Norby Nowak (Larry's nephew), Leon Pesina, Vuirgil Vacek, Gerry Ardolf (Larry's son), Gary Mallak, Bonnie Ardolf (Larry's daughter) and Joann Ardolf (Larry's wife). In the back row are Ron Miskosky, and Gary Nowak (Larry's brother in law). Working the camera is Bob Nowak (Larry's nephew).

They visited through the window

On Saturday, April 18, seven members of the Silver Lake American Legion Post 141 visited a fellow member at the Good Samaritan Home in Howard Lake. The member is Larry Ardolf, and there were members of Larry's family present, as well.

The visit had to be done through the window to Larry's room inside due to the pandemic. The idea for the visit started with a call from Bonnie to Cory Fouquette saying that Larry was having a difficult time with having spent the last two years bouncing from hospitals

to multiple nursing homes due to failing health and recently without visitors due to the pandemic. Larry is a past commander of Post 141, longtime Past Financial Officer at Post 141, Past 3rd District American Legion officer and 46-year member of The American Legion.

NOTHING GONNA STOP THEM



Bobbi Toutges of Shakopee Auxiliary Unit 2 delivers burgers and fries to a customer via the back window of a car in the Post home's parking lot on April 22. The Post's restaurant is open for drive-up orders twice a week.



Jenny Berg, a new Auxiliary member, takes an order. Wednesday is Burger Nite 5-8 p.m.. and Friday is Fish Fry Nite (or tater tot hotdish), same hours. Meals are \$11.

RAILING FOR THE MAN



Hibbing Post 222 built hand railings and cemented apron so Jack Lund can get into the house with his walker. Just coming home from nursing home after breaking his pelvis. From left are Larry Pocrnich, Jack Lund, Al Nikila.



GROCERY DELIVERY



Tyler Post 185 member Jim Brust prepares to deliver groceries to a customer of the Maynard's grocery store in Tyler. During this COVID-19 crisis, Post 185 members are covering the normal Friday delivery routes in order to free up Maynard's staff to remain in the store to help customers.

2019 Legion financial report

INCOME STATEMENT: SEPT. 30, 2019

Department Income	
Department Dues Income	\$865,294
Less: MN Legionnaire Portion	\$(234,490)
Revenue Enhancement Program	\$120,064
Grants	\$105,812
Investment Income	\$92,237
LIT Insurance - (Royalties)	\$205,791
Donations / Contributions	\$1,747
In-Kind Rent	\$83,598
Miscellaneous Income	\$42,291
Total Department Income:	\$1,282,345

STATEMENT OF BUDGET EXPENSE: SEPT. 30, 2019

Headquarters Expense	Budgeted	Disbursed
Administration Salaries	\$345,000	\$352,078
FICA Expense	\$26,393	\$25,793
FUTA Expense	\$400	\$285
SUTA Expense	\$390	\$340
Group Health & Life Ins.	\$65,730	\$64,214
Employee's Ret. Fund	\$31,775	\$32,231
Unbudgeted Expense	\$0	\$0
Audit Expense	\$9,000	\$8,932
Investment Management Fees	\$10,200	\$9,669
Furniture & Fixtures	\$1,000	\$0
General Office Expense	\$43,600	\$40,000
Elect. Equip., Maint & Mod.	\$26,330	\$18,370
Insurance (Other)	\$11,302	\$10,951
Travel Expense	\$16,000	\$15,089
Emergency Fund	\$500	\$0
Telephone	\$10,100	\$9,572
Misc. Expense	\$0	\$0
Prior Year Voided Cks	\$0	\$0
Loss on Sale of Assets	\$0	\$0
In & Out	\$0	\$0

Total Headquarters Expense \$597,720 \$587,525

Unbudgeted Annual Expense

Depreciation Expense	\$0	\$18,673
Rent Expense	\$0	\$83,598
2019 Accountant Adj. Entries	\$0	\$49,146
Total Unbudgeted Annual Expense \$0	\$151,417	

Special Budget

National Emergency Funds Disbursed	\$1,000	\$1,000
Legal Expense	\$1,000	\$0
Operation Comfort Warrior	\$1,000	\$1,000
Total Special Budget Expense: \$3,000	\$2,000	

Rehab Expense

Salaries	\$110,000	\$111,330
FICA Expense	\$8,415	\$8,517
FUTA Expense	\$144	\$84
SUTA Expense	\$200	\$134
Group Health Insurance	\$19,820	\$19,643
Employee Retirement Fund	\$11,500	\$10,800
General Office Expense	\$8,000	\$5,891
Claims Office Expense	\$15,000	\$16,652
CVSO Travel & Training	\$12,000	\$9,964
Hospital & Vet Assistance	\$3,000	\$243
Veteran Event Support	\$6,000	\$1,895
DSO & ADSO Travel	\$16,000	\$15,484
Rehabilitation Committee	\$8,000	\$8,722
Total Rehab Expense: \$218,079	\$209,358	

Committee Expense

Americanism	\$7,000	\$5,162
Blood Program	\$140	\$139
Chaplain's Fund	\$600	\$101
Children & Youth Comm.	\$2,000	\$1,859
Commander's Budget	\$33,000	\$33,000
Convention Corporation	\$3,500	\$1,994
Dpt. Convention Comm.	\$3,500	\$3,082

Dpt. HQ Conf. & Conv.	\$27,000	\$38,186
Department Treasurer	\$3,000	\$3,000
Employment Committee	\$1,300	\$1,206
Energy & Cons. Comm.	\$0	\$0
Executive Committee	\$27,000	\$21,666
Exec. Cm. Contg. Fund	\$1,000	\$0
Finance Committee	\$3,700	\$2,817
Historian	\$1,000	\$719
Ins. Trust Committee	\$1,000	\$1,067
Judge Advocate	\$5,000	\$5,000
Law & Order Committee	\$500	\$648
Legislative Committee	\$5,000	\$4,073
Membership (Inc. Vice Cmdr.)	\$50,000	\$34,822
Marching Dept Color Guard	\$3,000	\$3,000
NEC	\$4,000	\$4,000
Nat'l. Conv. Delegates	\$37,400	\$35,200
Nat'l. Sec./Foreign Rel.	\$6,500	\$6,483
Operation Post Home	\$0	\$0
Post Dev. Committee	\$1,500	\$650
Public Relations Comm.	\$19,000	\$5,865
Res. Assign. Comm.	\$750	\$726
Servicemen's Center	\$300	\$134
L.I.T. Advertising	\$3,400	\$3,375
Legion Riders	\$300	\$0
USAA Expense	\$3,400	\$3,375
Strategic Planning Committee	\$2,000	\$1,047
Credentials Committee	\$750	\$594
Sergeant-at-Arms	\$500	\$321
Alternate NEC	\$2,000	\$2,000
Education and Training Committee	\$2,000	\$0
Total Committee Expense \$256,040	\$225,311	

GRAND TOTAL Budget vs. Actual \$1,074,839 \$1,175,611

Total Undesignated Revenue	\$1,282,345
Total Undesignated Expense	\$1,175,611

Change in Net Assets \$106,733

District commanders



1st District

Dale Wellik



Greetings from the mighty First District American legion family. We all need to stay strong, active, and raise the flag. We The American Legion will prevail.

COVID-19 is still active and we need to do all preventive things possible to hold it at bay and beat it.

Since last month the word "cancelled" seems to be used way too much, but if that is what it takes, we need to do it. Most Post home buildings are not open, but The American legion is not shut down. We need to do business and communicate differently. Telephone, email, text, Live stream, Facebook, YouTube, Zoom call, teleconference calls.

We have a task force committee that is doing training on these things, so if have a question? Ask!

Membership still and always

needs our attention. Keep working on this! Continue

to do the Buddy Checks. It may be a way to remind some that they need to pay their dues.

It is time to get reports into the District and Department.

Some of the deadlines have been extended, but some of the mail has been taking longer. Send to the correct address that saves time and confusion.

Thank you for all the work everyone has and is doing for all veterans and supporters. Thank you for your service!

Thank you to all of the first responders and all medical personnel!

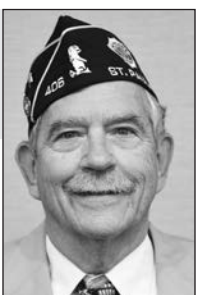
Pray for the deployed and their families.

God Bless. For God and Country!



4th District

Joe Jansen



Hello to all you American Family members in the 4th District. We are all adjusting to the new way of helping each other during this unusual time.

Zoom is now a fact of life and a great tool to allow us to reach out to our members with relevant information. The April Legionnaire has great information and will continue to pass along tips as we move forward in our various missions while providing services to the community and our fellow veterans.

I must say the online meeting for the District RCCC was very successful; we re-elected all our current officers for Legion 2020-2021, we talked about the annual 4th District conference to be hosted by Post 8 and Post 406 but delayed a decision.

The next RCCC meeting will be on May 13, and it will most likely be on Zoom again. Our adjutant, Mike Ash, will inform all our members after the May 4 stay-at-home deadline has been

reached.

A funny thing occurred to me during the last Zoom meeting while watching Mike, who appeared to be drinking a Coke. He seemed happier as the meeting continued. Of course, those of us who know him have never seen him drink a straight Coke. Which, of course, is something he could not do at a physical RCCC meeting. It's a good thing the Zoom camera can't tell a glass of water from a glass of Irish whiskey. Or I might be in the doghouse.

Please keep the faith and if you can't get out to help our fellow American Legion Family members, please do the Buddy Check and tell your post commanders and district officers if someone needs our help. Thanks for all you do to make this situation better.



7th District

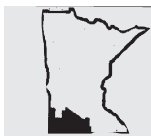
Dean Knutson



Hope everyone is staying healthy and safe. What a change this has pandemic has made concerning the programs of The American Legion. Even though things have been cancelled, we still need to keep in touch with each other and see how we can help each other.

Now that there is a lot of home time, it is the perfect time to be working through the past due membership roster as well as the

Post 1982 and Post 1982 AD lists. The members are there, and in many cases, they have never been asked to join a certain post. The American Legion has always been a strong voice for the American veteran; we cannot let this get us down. Remember "Keep Veterans First."



2nd District

Brad Pagel



As we sit and ponder what is next on the list of cancellations with The American Legion Family events, as most things have been cancelled through September, this is a time we can use our energy and resources to rise up and overcome the challenges we have been dealt with.

We are American Legion Family Strong. Let's use this time to show the rest of the country that we have what it takes to lead and take care of our veterans, whether or not they are Legion Family. A veteran is a veteran, remember that.

I am reminded of a 1985 movie called "The Breakfast Club," and the letter that was written at the end of the movie:

"Dear Mr. Vernon, we accept the fact that we had to sacrifice a whole Saturday in detention for whatever it is we did wrong, but we think you're crazy for making us write an essay telling you who we think we are. You see us as you want to see us, in the simplest terms, in the most convenient definitions. But what

we found out is that each one of us is a brain, and an athlete, and a basketcase, a princess and a criminal. Does that answer your question? Sincerely yours, The Breakfast Club."

With the COVID-19 situation going on, I know there are a lot of us who feel we will be sacrificing an entire summer that feels like we are in school detention all over again.

Think about this. We can use this crisis, though we have no control over how or why it spreads, to our advantage and rise up even stronger and louder than before and fight this thing together, just like we have in the past.

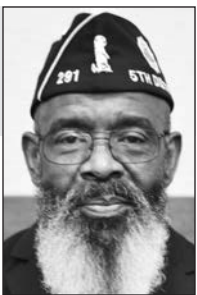
Just remember that each of us has different ideas and strategies to get through this and it's time to share and listen to each other, no matter how crazy the idea sounds, it may just work.

Still Serving America.



5th District

Andrew Rose Sr.



Greetings Fighting 5th District Family. I pray you are all well and abiding by the rules and regulations to keep you and your families safe. Gov. Tim Walz has extended the stay-at-home order until May 4. We should follow this and the regulations of the CDC and MDH.

The next 5th District meeting will be May 5, where we will be taking nominations for commander and 1st, 2nd and 3rd vice commanders. This will be a teleconference meeting. More info on this and other meetings in the 5th District News Flash, generated by 5th District adjutant, Ray Eiden. He can be reached at eidenr@aol.com.

Tom McKenna, at Every Third Saturday, wanted all veterans to know that although the office is closed, they are still supporting veterans in need. The supply store is full and can accommodate needs for clothing,

shoes, quilts, etc. And they do have some money set aside for emergency financial help. He asks that you contact him directly at 952-356-5116 or everythirdsaturday.com.

Don't forget our veterans at home or hospitalized. I'm sure they all have phones.

Wayne Glanton is now back at home after successful therapy and will be turning 98 on April 24. Let's wish him a happy birthday and many more 612-590-0438. I'm sure he'll be happy to hear from all.

The 5th District, wishes to extend its condolences to the friends and families of Walt Lyndsley (Court House 310) and Don Schroedl (Post Office 540). They will be missed by all.



9th District

Lowell Philp



During this awkward time, we will be going through many changes.

Our means of communication will be different.

We have persevered for 100 years despite difficulties and obstacles.

We may start out small and slowly, but keep moving forward. Some of us older Legion members are technologically challenged. Our younger members have a wealth of knowledge in that direction. I would like to thank those who have helped in

that area. Please make sure that all Post Officers Reports are sent in. Even though all officers were asked to serve in the same capacity, there will be some changes. We need to keep the line of communication open. Please keep helping others. Pray for our troops at home and abroad. Stay safe. May God bless all of you.



3rd District

Linda Dvorak



As of April 14, we had 39.1 percent of our Consolidated Post Reports turned in, 25 out of our 64 posts have turned in their CPR. Please let's all do our part to make 100 percent. I have asked the vice commanders to contact each post and either complete the CPR with them or urge them to do it online. Remember a post can submit a CPR online through MyLegion.org and make changes to it.

With our stay-at-home orders, several people have used video conferencing to communicate. I have been a part of several Zoom meetings. It is very easy to do, and it is very beneficial when you can't meet in person.

The end of June will be packet pick-up. We aren't sure yet how this will go. We will wait to see what kind of restrictions we are

faced with. Do you have access to MyLegion.org?

The 3rd District currently has 34 out of 64 posts who are actively using MyLegion.org. We have another 17 that at some point signed up for access but have not accessed in a while; their access has probably been suspended.

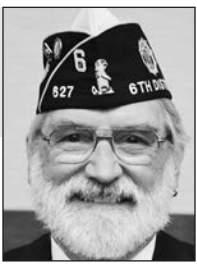
That makes 13 posts that have not done anything with MyLegion.org. If you need help getting set up or if your access has been suspended, let your vice commander know. They can help or you can always contact me.

I think this is enough for one month! Until next month.



6th District

Paul Edwards



Greetings to the Minnesota Legion Family,

I have heard stories of an ancient curse that says, "May you live in interesting times." I think we can all agree that we are living that curse.

On April 15, the 6th District Executive Board met online to discuss and act on a resolution to cancel the 2020 District Convention and to extend the terms of all officers until elections could be held at the next convention in 2021.

Since all leadership in the Legion is voluntary, several opted out for personal or health reasons. The board approved the following leadership changes to take effect in June: Ashley Yoder will take over as vice commander for the North Sub District. Mike Jones will become the Cass/Hubbard County Council commander. Ken Toole will become the Boy Scout

chairman. Dwayne Collins will join the Legionville Board as representative from the 6th District.

The 6th District is still in 3rd place in the Department, with 29 posts at 100 percent of goal or higher and 15 posts have achieved 103 percent of goal or more to qualify for the National Commander's Award. I will complete the paperwork and submit it so these posts will receive the awards.

I am very proud to be part of the Minnesota Legion Family when I hear about how many masks are being made and taken to VA hospitals and to Minnesota Veterans Homes or the collections that are being conducted to support local food banks. This is what we do when the rubber meets the road.



10th District

Tom Allen



Legion Family,

Well, what do you write, as we've had no meetings, no conventions, no rallies, no testimonials and, worst of all, no bingo.

It's a heck of a way to get the summer off.

I got the yard raked, driveway swept, snowplows put away, shovels waxed, tabs put on the camper, as it's going to be sitting in the yard.

It looks like another month before it will get back to normal.

We still can get some memberships and reports in. Please

call each other to stay in contact. Be safe, stay home, don't go buying more groceries and then you won't need more toilet paper.

Question: How do you know when it's time to clean your garage?

Answer: When you can change your light bulb without a ladder.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 20 Vol. 10

President Mary Hendrickson • Secretary Sandie Deutsch

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

651-224-7634

May 2020

Sad to lose so many events, but glad to be near 30,000

President's Column

Mary Hendrickson



As I write this column, Gov. Tim Walz has just extended the stay-at-home directive to May 4, though it could be farther out by the time you read this.

Last month, I talked about the new normal. Unfortunately, the new normal is changing day-to-day as information arrives in the press. We will make it through this coronavirus pandemic, but as we all know, it will include a painful period of stress, personal loss and financial hardships.

As political activist and revolutionary Thomas Paine said in 1776, "These are the times that try men's souls."

The American Legion Auxiliary has always been known as a patriotic and a service organization. I'm so proud of Auxiliary members who quickly stepped forward to sew masks, face covers and gowns for our veterans' homes and hospitals as well as their local medical and senior housing facilities.

You are living my President's Theme of "Remember, Honor, Serve." Other members have contributed to local food shelves and made telephone calls to neighbors and friends asking if they need any help during these difficult times. Every contribution and every gesture of help makes our current situation more tolerable.

I'm disappointed that my scheduled visits in April had to be canceled. There were events scheduled on 13 of the 30 days in April including the National President's Tour. Our Junior Convention schedule for April 18 was also a victim of coronavirus.

The new District Junior presidents were elected at their conventions in March (at least 30 days before the Department Junior Convention as required) and take office on July 18 on what would have been the last day of the Department Convention.

Congratulations to each of them.

As you are probably aware by now, the National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, was cancelled, followed quickly by the cancellation of our Department Convention scheduled for July 15-18 at Jackpot Junction Casino in Morton.

National and Department (as well as most District) officers will continue in their current positions until the next convention in 2021.

National President Nicole Clapp wants us to remember that since there were no conventions,

2020-2021, is really just an extension of the current year. Of course, there will be a few new beginnings. New membership data will begin being recorded at the end of the fiscal Auxiliary year.

Speaking of membership, I would love to see the Department of Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary reach 30,000. We are tantalizingly close. I know our numbers have slowed due to the loss of membership rallies and regularly scheduled local Auxiliary unit meetings. This time of isolation is a golden opportunity to contact members who have not yet renewed.

For those of you with great granddaughters, the next few months are your last opportunity to sign them up as members under their veteran great-grandparent.

We will have to follow new membership guidelines, which states NEW MEMBERS CAN ONLY BE NO MORE THAN TWO GENERATIONS removed from the veteran. Let's sign up those great granddaughters now! Thank you, Membership Chairman Sharon Thiemecke, and our District membership chairmen, for all your efforts this year.

In closing, I'd like to acknowledge Department Executive Secretary Sandie Deutsch, our office staff and current trainee/upcoming new Department Executive Secretary Marsha Bible for keeping the office going, answering a large quantity of telephone calls and emails and keeping me current with all the new, ever changing, developments within our organization at all levels.

They have been my anchors in the last few weeks. A District resolution paper (one of those whereas, whereas, therefore documents) was recently emailed to all District presidents. They will review it with their District Executive Committees and choose to ratify or decline it. In it, it was suggested that local units may choose to keep their same officers or meet to hold new elections at a safer time.

Stay at home; Stay healthy; Stay the course.

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

It's a new world out there

Department executive secretary position filled

Marsha Bible has been hired to replace retiring Secretary Sandie Deutsch who is retiring on July 18. Marsha is a long-time member of the Waite Park Auxiliary Unit 428. Marsha has held many positions within the organization on the Unit, District, Department and National levels.

Marsha has also served as Department of Minnesota President. Marsha has started working in the office and will officially take on the title July 19. Please welcome Marsha, she is an asset to the organization and is ready and willing to take over.



Marsha Bible

Cancellations

As with the rest of the world, the Department of Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary is experiencing a time like no other. We are doing our best in the Department Office to keep you, the members notified of cancellations, changes, etc. Following are the cancellations which will not be rescheduled this year:

- American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State along with the Samsung Scholarship

- President Mary and Commander Mark's Testimonial – this has been rescheduled for June 26, 2021
- Department Convention
- The Junior Conference had been cancelled and will not be rescheduled until 2021

- Legionville Safety Patrol Camp
- There will be no National President's Tour
- National Convention in Louisville

Please go to our Department website www.mnala.org as we are trying diligently to update this as we hear of new cancellations. I received a notice from Gov. Tim Walz's office that I will not be receiving a Poppy Proclamation this year.

As far as Poppy Days go, please keep in mind that we are supposed to support the Poppy program year-round so we encourage you to have your Poppy distribution days but wait until the all clear is given to be able to get back out in the public, maybe Fourth of July, Labor Day weekend or even Veterans Day.

All of the Poppy orders have been shipped out of the Department Office from

orders we have received. They can still be ordered if anyone needs them.

COVID-19 Ad Hoc Subcommittee

The American Legion has put together an Ad-Hoc Committee in regards to giving our organization's support to combat the COVID-19 virus.

Patti Coleman has been appointed by President Mary Hendrickson as the Auxiliary representative to the committee. This is an American Legion Family project. There is more information in regards to this committee within The American Legion pages.

2020/2021 American Auxiliary Year Resolution

Following is a resolution that was passed by the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota Executive Committee. The resolution cancelled the July 2020 Convention at Jackpot Junction in Morton. Please note that all 2019/2020 Officers, Chairmen and Committee members will remain in place for the 2020/2021 Auxiliary year.

All District presidents were sent this resolution via electronic communication in order for them to put together resolutions at the District level.

Poppy Month of May has arrived

May is Poppy Month and Poppy Distribution Day. If the stay-at-home order is lifted, it would be fine to hold distribution as normal, but remember some people may not be back to work, or have a job, so smile and just give them a poppy to wear.

After the stay-at-home order is lifted, Units may need to hold a second distribution, or some kind of fundraiser to help out your poppy fund. Some of you know I like to think outside the box, so here we go: Units can consider doing distribution day this year on July 4 or Veterans Day in November.



Auxiliary members sell poppies throughout the month of May.

Poppies

Sandy Wersal



Pick a day and get with your public relations chairman to get the word out to the community about what day would work for your unit.

We will work the Poppy Poster Contest digitally this year. At my report for the Fall Conference, I mentioned we may have to do this someday — well here it is!

This is a good year to start this, and next year we will continue to do posters digitally as a money saver. We need to use the poppy all year long, not just in May, this is a great program that serves our veterans in two ways — by them making the poppy and the Units giving money back to the veteran's programs.

The support you gave the poppy auction items at Fall Conference was amazing! A total of over \$1,000 was given to the Servicemen's Center at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Let's use that great feeling to get us through this upside-down world in 2020.

— Sandy Wersal, poppy chairwoman

April 23, 2020, Membership:

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year 4/15/19
One	4,177	3,884	92.99%	3,978
Two	4,191	3,888	92.77%	4,021
Three	4,064	3,735	91.90%	3,882
Four	624	567	90.87%	584
Five	603	545	90.38%	579
Six	5,393	5,014	92.97%	5,134
Seven	3,369	3,054	90.65%	3,221
Eight	1,363	1,251	91.78%	1,284
Nine	3,618	3,318	91.71%	3,463
Ten	4,304	3,885	90.26%	4,075
1982	178	193	108.43%	173
Totals	31,884	29,334	92.00%	30,394

Adams Legion Family steps up, donates sanitizer, masks to VA

MINNEAPOLIS — Many Posts of The American Legion continued to serve veterans in a time of national crisis, and one way was to provide personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer to veterans hospitals and veterans homes.

Adams Post 146 was among them. Only they did it with a maple twist.

On April 10, Past Department Commander Jim Kellogg, a member of Post 146 who also is the chairman of the Department National Security/Foreign Relations Committee, drove up from Adams to the Minneapolis VA Medical Center with his wife, Brenda, to deliver 250 bottles of hand sanitizer and several packages of handmade facemasks.

Kellogg credited the donation to the entire Legion Family at Post 146. The masks, made by Auxiliary Unit 146, allow VA staff members to get longer use out of N95 masks and are useful for anyone lacking a mask. The VA stopped accepting visitors in March, except for end-of-life care and for patients who need assistance at outpatient clinics.

The hand sanitizer, however, was made by Sapthre Maple Products, based in Adams. It makes whiskey and maple syrup. But since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the globe, the company came out with hand sanitizer, too. Rub it on your hands, and it smells lightly of maple.

The Legion Post purchased 200 of the bottles, and the other 50 donated by Sapthre.

You might have noticed the company name is quite similar to the Adams Post commander's name: Lynn Sathre.



Past Department Commander Jim Kellogg of Post 146 drops donations from Post 145 and Unit 146 at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis on April 10. He is speaking with Ron Devall, the director of volunteer community resource services with the Minneapolis VA, and Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller.



Adams Post 146 Commander Lynn Sathre hands a check to his nephew, Kevin Sathre, for Sapthre Hand Sanitizer. The younger Sathre is a Sons of The American Legion member. At right is Adams Squadron 146 Commander Dean Kiefer.

The owner of Sapthre Maple Products is Kevin Sathre, Lynn's nephew. Kevin is a member of Squadron 146 of the Sons of The American Legion.

Kellogg coordinated the donation through Department

Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller, who worked with Ron Devall, director of volunteer community resource services at the VAMC.

Kellogg found that, even if the Adams Post wanted to donate to

the community-based outpatient clinic (CBOC) in Albert Lea, the donation had to go through the VA hospital in Minneapolis, which then distributes.

They also brought materials for patients to read but those were not allowed inside. Even The Minnesota Legionnaire, which usually circulates 125 copies at waiting rooms inside the hospital, is not allowed, because reading materials get passed among patients and visitors.

Those 250 bottles only lasted a week or so. On April 20, Kellogg returned with 25 additional gallons — yes, gallons — of hand sanitizer, donated in part by Lyle Post 105 and in part by personal donations.

Let's see. The bottles were 60 ml. That's about 2 ounces. There are 32 ounces in a quart, four quarts in a gallon. So a gallon fills about 64 bottles. That means 25 gallons fills 1,600 bottles.



Ruby Kellogg, Junior member of the Adams Auxiliary, and Luann McMahan, a Legion and Auxiliary member, hold handmade facemasks.

Secretary's Notes

Sandie Deutsch



As you all know, my days are numbered but you aren't done with me yet. I can't ever remember giving a 10-month notice before! First off I want each of you to welcome Marsha Bible with open arms. I am sure she will do a great job. She is very knowledgeable in regards to the American Legion Family and will be able to answer any of your questions — if she can't she will get the answer for you.

I am not writing my farewell letter yet — that will be coming shortly. I have to do some soul searching for that one as it will be very hard to put in words. Carol Kottom knows how I like to talk so I am sure I will be up to the task.

This month I want to send special hello's and love to my wonderful friend Karen Thygeson, also Virginia Whaley who I hope is doing well during this time. Also, Delores "Bardy" Horton who I miss as well. Call me, and we can chat. These are three wonderful ladies who are very near and dear to my heart.

I want to let you know that I have been trying my hardest to keep the Department Office going and up to date. I have been having one person, sometimes two as we sit far apart, in the office each day.

Jan, Jocelyn and I have the capabilities of working from home and if I don't have a person in the office the phones are transferred to one of us so we can help you with any of your needs. I would like to


thank all of the Units who have submitted Annual Reports. We have received almost 250 Unit reports. This is more than we received when there wasn't a pandemic! Please don't hesitate to call or email with any questions or concerns you may have.

On a personal note, by the time you read this Christopher Michael Deutsch will be a part of our family. Neither hell nor high water will keep this Papa and Grammie from going to Texas to meet this precious person. Little Elizabeth has been practicing her big sister skills on her doll. She even gave it a tattoo on the forehead. This will be interesting.

I am so looking forward to performing my first and probably only wedding on Aug. 8 for Bill and Donna — what an honor. After they hear my sermon they might have hoped to pick someone else (just kidding you two sweeties).

Next month will be my farewell, and I will be turning the reins over to Marsha. Everyone please follow the rules and stay safe and healthy — as I have been told many times "this too shall pass."

Sandie Deutsch is the executive secretary for the American Legion Department of Minnesota.



ALA BINGO

Made a poppy	Know a male ALA member	Distributed poppies	Read the latest issue of the ALA eNews
Read Auxiliary magazine	Took an ALA Academy Course	Followed ALA on Instagram	Attended an ALA meeting within the last year
Recruited a new ALA member	Followed ALA on Facebook	Flew a U.S. flag at my home	Read the ALA Blog
Helped make a care package	Donated to Auxiliary Emergency Fund	Attended ALA Mission Training	Checked in on an ALA member during social distancing

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District 1 Auxiliary President Wanda Prescher



Adams Auxiliary Unit 146 President Jill Eischens

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