

Legislature passes its 1st veterans omnibus bill

On May 6, House Rep. Rob Ecklund of International Falls describes how the veterans omnibus bill is a result of bicameral, bipartisan efforts.



Bonuses for post-9/11 veterans are on the way

ST. PAUL — Veteran service organizations at the State Capitol were pleased to see lawmakers pass a \$152.5 million veterans omnibus bill in May.

The measure includes bonuses for post-9/11 veterans, funding to furnish three new Minnesota veterans homes and an increase in the grant program for veteran service organizations.

On Thursday, May 5, the Minnesota

Senate approved SF4233 on a 64-0 vote, and on Friday, May 6, the Minnesota House of Representatives suspended the rules to skip committees and readings and took an immediate vote: 122-1.

Gov. Tim Walz signed the bill on Tuesday, May 10. There was no waiting until the May 23 adjournment deadline for veterans.

“We can’t be complacent,” said Ron

Haugen, chairman of the Minnesota Commanders’ Task Force, commander of DAV Minnesota and a Legion member with St. Peter Post 37. “We need it to pass next year to set a precedent.”

Veteran-related legislation, in the past, would be tacked on to other bills. Legislators would see veterans’ requests as a means to get their measures passed. However, the typical result was veteran-related legislation would die in silence.

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Amid crashes, fireman saves lives

Eagan man named Firefighter of Year

EAGAN — The winner of the Minnesota American Legion Firefighter of the Year dragged a highway crash victim to safety despite being struck by a vehicle.



Paul Burgett

Paul P. Burgett of Apple Valley is a firefighter at the Eagan Fire Department’s Station 1.

On the morning of Nov. 13, 2021, Burgett responded to a crash on icy roads in Eagan. He and his crew witnessed another crash on an adjacent icy bridge deck. The second crash involved three vehicles and was 50 feet from the end of the bridge.

Burgett, a Marine veteran, noticed the three vehicles were blocking the right and center lanes. One vehicle had

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In ship shape



With their hands on their hearts and gray clouds overhead, sailors in summer whites line up in front of the ship’s gangway during the commissioning of the USS Minneapolis-St. Paul (LCS-21) on Saturday, May 21, at the Port of Duluth. She was built by Lockheed Martin and Fincantieri Marinette Marine in Wisconsin, with assistance from the ship design firm Gibbs & Cox.



A Navy color guard stands ready to proceed with the commissioning on May 21.

Minnesota witnesses commissioning of USS. Mpls-St. Paul

By Tim Engstrom

DULUTH — It was a Navy kind of day when about 3,500 people turned out to see the commissioning of the USS Minneapolis-St. Paul on Armed Forces Day, May 21.

With overcast skies, 44-degree air temperature and occasional rain, people were wet and cold. The motto for the Navy’s newest ship is “Aut Viam Inveniam Aut Faciam,” which translates to “I will either find a way or make one.”

Fitting. Everyone — the sailors, the speakers, the crowd, the band — got through the 90-minute ceremony with aplomb.

“The strength of America’s national security is being tested today like at no time in our lifetime,” said U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense. She was the featured speaker among a handful of politicians.

McCollum attended a christening in 2019 and mentioned how there was no COVID and no war in

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National award presented locally to St. Cloud VAMC podiatrist

ST. CLOUD — The American Legion Department of Minnesota on May 12 presented the American Legion Physician of the Year Award to Dr. Joel Syvrud of St. Cloud VA Medical Center.

This national award typically is presented at the Washington Conference in March, with the secretary of the VA and American Legion national commander present, but this year the conference was held virtually.

Department Commander Tom Fernlund and Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller handed out the hardware during a St. Cloud VA ceremony to honor staff.

“It’s incredibly humbling,” Syvrud

said. “I don’t know if it’s deserved, but I’ll take it.”

Wolfsteller said he and the Minnesota Legion’s Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee alternate between submitting doctors from the Minneapolis and St. Cloud VA hospitals.

He said Syvrud, a podiatrist, has provided palliative foot care for veterans for 22 years. The work ranges from foot problems stemming from diabetes or neuropathy to the kind that comes from complex wounds.

Fernlund said, as commander of the Minnesota American Legion, a volunteer

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Department Commander Tom Fernlund, left, and Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller, right, present the distinct honor of American Legion Physician of the Year Award to Dr. Joel Syvrud of the St. Cloud VA Medical Center.

ST. PAUL — Department committee reports are due to Editor Tim Engstrom by June 15. They must be submitted electronically by email as Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF files. Email the report to Engstrom at tengstrom@mnlegion.org. Do not type them in all capital

letters, please. Do not exceed 500 words. He will edit them, then publish them on the website, mnlegion.org, then send a mass email notifying members. As a cost-saving measure, they will not appear in the pages of The Minnesota Legionnaire.

Call for 103rd Department of Minnesota Convention

The 103rd Annual Convention of The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, is hereby called in conformity with provisions of the Department Constitution and Bylaws, and by action of the Department Executive Committee, sponsored by Willmar Post 167 and held at Willmar Conference Center in Willmar, Minn., July 14, 15, 16, 2022.

PURPOSE OF CONVENTION

The Convention is called for the purpose of electing officers for the ensuing year, amending the Constitution and Bylaws, and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it.

REPRESENTATION AT CONVENTION

The Department Convention shall be composed of delegates from each Post, members of the Department Executive Committee, the Department Chaplain, Treasurer, Historian, and the District Adjutants, but only delegates from Posts shall be entitled to vote at such Convention, (Sec. 2, Article Five, Department Constitution).

Each Post shall be entitled to two delegates and to one additional delegate for each hundred members or major fraction thereof, whose Department dues have been received by the Department Treasurer and whose District dues have been paid to their respective District officers, 30 days prior to the Convention for which they are chosen. The final voting strength of each Post shall be determined 30 days prior to the Convention. Each Post shall choose its own delegates, who shall be members in good standing of such Post. In addition, each Post may choose alternate delegates to serve in the absence of the principal delegate, (Sec. 3, Article Five, Department Constitution).



Delegates or alternates must register in order to vote.

GAMBLING SEMINAR MEETING

The Gambling Seminar will be at 2 p.m. Thursday, July 14, at the Willmar Conference Center.

DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Department Executive Committee has been called and will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, at the Willmar Conference Center, as specified in the upcoming Call to Meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Standing Department Committee Meetings will be held at the Willmar Conference Center in the meeting rooms to be determined. These rooms will be confirmed in each committee's Call to Meeting.

AMERICANISM

4 p.m. Wednesday, July 13 TBD

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

4 p.m. Wednesday, July 13 TBD

FINANCE

4 p.m. Wednesday, July 13 TBD

NATIONAL SECURITY

4 p.m. Wednesday, July 13 TBD

REHABILITATION

4 p.m. Wednesday, July 13 TBD

GENERAL SESSIONS

Willmar Conference Center Thursday, Friday, Saturday

HOUSING AND REGISTRATION

For the 2021 Department Convention, hotel reservations will be done "on your own" directly with the hotel.

The phone number to make reservations at the Best Western Plus is 320-235-6060. To make reservations at the Holiday Inn Express, please call 320-231-2601. When making your reservation, ask for "The American Legion Block." A registration fee of \$15 for each delegate/alternate and/or guest must be sent to: Legion Post 167, Attn: Greg Krause, 220 19th Ave SW, Willmar, MN 56201.

Registration checks should be made payable to "American Legion Post 167" with "Department Convention" in the memo line. No credit cards will be accepted.

Registration will be \$18 at the door.

DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

A temporary Legion Department Headquarters office will be set up at the Willmar Conference Center in a room still to be determined starting Thursday, July 14, for convention service and business during convention business hours only. Meetings will start ON TIME as scheduled unless otherwise announced.

Tom Fernlund
 Department Commander

ATTEST: Mike Maxa
 Department Adjutant
 Dated at St. Paul, Minn., this first day of May 2022

Civil War Battleground Richmond, VA September 19 - 28, 2022

INCLUDED IN YOUR TOUR

- White House of the Confederacy
- Historical Battlegrounds
- Civil War Museums in Richmond and Appomattox
- Pamplin Historical Park
- Appomattox Court House National Park
- Jefferson's Monticello
- Stonewall Jackson House
- Virginia Military Institute
- Lincoln Presidential Museum
- Lincoln Tomb
- Judge David Davis Mansion
- Virginia Capitol



17 Meals: Included on your tour
 9 Breakfasts
 2 Lunches
 6 Dinners

Proof of vaccination required or negative Covid Test within 24 hours of departure.

Starting at \$1,699.00 pp
 Double occupancy



636 E. 11th Street Albert Lea MN 56007
travel1@4seasonstravel.net
507-373-4705 or 507-373-2473
4-seasonsvacations.com

Be sure to make your area lodging reservations in advance

WILLMAR — The 2022 Department Convention takes place July 14-16 at the Willmar Conference Center, which is connected to two hotels, Best Western Plus and Holiday Inn Express.

Attendees must make their own housing reservations. Be sure to get The American Legion discount. When making a reservation, please ask for "The American Legion Block." **Best Western Plus:** Sold out!

Holiday Inn Express: 320-231-2601
 Single: \$112
 Double: \$121
 Suite: \$143
Country Inn & Suites: 320-214-0300
 Single: \$116
 Double: \$125
Hampton Inn: 320-796-3000
 Single/Double: \$125
 Hotel rates are subject to local and state taxes at time of check-in.

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Hastings, MN 55033

Phone: 651-539-2486
Fax: 651-480-0058

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION REGISTRATION

— Official Form —

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

Make your check payable to "American Legion Post 167" with "Dept. Convention" written on the memo line. No credit cards will be accepted.

Please mail this form with your check to:
 Willmar Post 167
 Attn: Greg Krause
 220 19th Ave. SW
 Willmar, MN 56201
 Registration at the door will be \$18.

Legion _____
 SAL _____
 Auxiliary _____
 District # _____ Post/Squad/Unit # _____
 Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Delegate _____ Alternate _____
 Guest _____
 Delegate at-Large (Auxiliary) _____

(Choose Past Dept. President or Dept. Exec. Cmte.)

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

Taps



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

Name of Deceased	Age	Date of Death	Branch	Era	Cont. Years	Post
Alberson, Steven D.	71	3/19/22	Marines	Vietnam	12	Twin Valley Post 431
Anderson, Dennis R.	74	3/19/22	Navy	Vietnam	3	Bayport Post 491
Anderson, Leonard A.	93	4/22/20	Army	Korea	42	Elk River Post 112
Anderson, Roger R.	85	5/4/22	Army	Cold	3	Marshall Post 113
Baune, Dale J.	84	5/5/22	Army	Korea	38	Redwood Falls Post 38
Becker, Roger L.	81	5/1/22	Army	Vietnam	37	Fairfax Post 205
Beneke, Delford M.	84	3/26/22	Navy	Vietnam	36	Norwood Post 343
Bensch, Lester G.	80	4/11/22	Air Force	Korea	1	Minnesota Post 1982
Note: He was trained in electronics and instrumentation for the B-52 and KC-135 aircraft.						
Borud, Dennis N.						
Buchite, Warren R.	78	4/22/22	Army	Cold	39	Deerwood Post 557
Carrick, Carol L.	92	4/20/22	Army	Korea	70	Clarissa Post 213
Chambard, Kenneth M.	94	3/25/22	Navy	WWII	32	Finlayson/Sandstone Post 151
Note: He was a past post commander.						
Dauwalter, Douglas G.	88	2/23/22	Army	Korea	64	Chaska Post 57
Davidson, Charles H.	89	5/15/22	Navy	Korea	61	Anoka Post 102
Deutsch, Fabian N.	94	4/26/22	Army	WWII	28	Ellsworth Post 196
Dykhoff, Richard D.	75	5/1/22	Army NG	Vietnam	1	New York Mills Post 116
Dythe, Robert D.	88	4/20/22	Army	Korea	61	Chandler Post 338
Ellenburg, Kenneth D.	66	5/5/22	Navy	Leb./Gren.	32	Round Lake Post 461
Engel, Duane H.	89	4/26/22	Army	Korea	68	Janesville Post 281
Erhorn, Roy Jr.	97	2/11/22	Marines	WWII	34	Bayport Post 491
Erickson, Charles H.	83	4/20/22	Army	Vietnam	36	New Prague Post 45
Feuer, Robert E.	93	11/8/21	Navy	WWII/Korea	39	Sebeka Post 456
Note: He served aboard the USS Blue destroyer, the USS Rupertis destroyer and USS Conserver rescue and salvage ship.						
Fokken, Leonard W.	84	1/22/22	Army	Korea	43	Clara City Post 485
Forrest, William O.	73	4/14/22	Army	Vietnam	10	Hacksensack Post 202
Frank, Kenneth A.	72	4/18/22	Army	Vietnam	4	Watkins Post 453
Fuller, Bruce R.	72	3/29/22	Navy	Vietnam	5	Monticello Post 260
Getting, Robert L.	87	4/17/22	Army	Korea	62	Lonsdale Post 586
Gilbertson, Douglas D.	71	3/4/22	Army	Vietnam	28	Russell Post 460
Gramentz, Eugene H.	93	4/27/22	Navy	Korea	45	Springfield Post 257
Gravem, William A.	94	3/11/22	Army	Korea	32	Inver Grove Heights Post 424
Groven, Eldon L.	80	5/18/21	Army	Vietnam	44	Elk River Post 112
Haglund, Walter A. Sr.	75	3/31/22	Navy	Vietnam	2	Minnesota Post 1982
Haider, Philip J.	82	4/13/22	Army	Vietnam	55	Thief River Falls Post 117
Halverson, Duane K.	88	4/26/22	Army	Korea	42	Austin Post 91
Helget, Jonny L.	83	5/6/22	Army	Vietnam	38	New Ulm Post 132
Hennen, Elmer J.	89	12/6/21	Army	Korea	64	Cold Spring Post 455
Hiemenz, Edward J.	94	4/12/22	Navy	WWII	48	St. Augusta Post 621
Hilgers, Gerald C.	77	3/24/22	Army	Vietnam	41	Chaska Post 57
Honzalek, John R.	90	4/7/22	Army	Korea	24	Hacksensack Post 202
Isenberg, Gary W.	71	11/22/21	Army	Vietnam	50	Russell Post 460
Johnson, Floyd L.		12/23/21	Army	Korea	66	Thief River Falls Post 117
Note: He was awarded a Purple Heart.						
Johnson, Robert D.	92	11/12/21	Army	Korea	62	Elk River Post 112
Krause, Harold G.	74	4/10/22	Marines	Vietnam	3	McGregor Post 23
Lambert, Roger J.	78	8/31/21	Army	Vietnam	51	Elk River Post 112
Lamson, Ernest L.	100	4/27/22	Army	WWII	19	St. Paul Hamline Post 418
Larson, Paul T.	74	5/6/22	Army	Vietnam	25	Albert Lea Post 56
Larson, Ralph D.	94	1/29/22	Army	WWII	48	East Grand Forks Post 157
Larson, Steven L.	67	4/13/22	Air Force	Vietnam	6	Rochester Post 92
Lien, DeWayne N.	89	3/7/22	Army	Korea	25	Brooten Post 288
Luna, Raymond G.	88	4/19/22	Army NG	Korea	7	Albert Lea Post 56
Madsen, Howard L.	93	8/27/21	Army	Korea	58	Elk River Post 112
Manbeck, Keith P.	101	11/23/21	Army	WWII	58	Little Falls Post 46
Meints, Orville L.	88	4/17/22	Navy	Korea	52	Clara City Post 485
Merry, Roe T.	82	11/15/21	Army	Vietnam	6	Elk River Post 112
Meyer, Arthur	89	5/14/22	Army	Korea	57	Park Rapids Post 212
Meyer, Harlan E.	89	4/16/22	Navy	Korea	44	Maple Lake Post 131
Note: He is a past post commander and member of the Honor Guard.						
Miller, Donald C.	83	8/11/21	Army	Vietnam	12	Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172
Moe, Roger A.	72	8/1/21	Army	Vietnam	3	Bayport Post 491
Mohs, Alban L.	82	3/15/22	Marines	Vietnam	33	St. Joseph Post 328
Naplin, Charles E.	81	4/23/22	Army	Vietnam	26	Thief River Falls Post 117
Neisen, Jerome A.	73	4/19/22	Army	Vietnam	12	Jordan Post 3
Nelson, John W.	94	5/1/22	Army	Korea	18	Rochester Post 92
Nystrom, Clay J.	64	5/7/22	Army	Vietnam	2	Waconia Post 150
O'Keefe, Joseph	80	6/15/21	Army	Cold	52	Elk River Post 112
Olson, Carl H.	96	10/8/21	Army	WWII	12	Elk River Post 112
Olson, Carroll A.	87	7/27/21	Army	Korea	12	Moorhead Post 21
Orput, Peter J.	66	4/3/22	Marines	Vietnam	11	Bayport Post 491
Note: He was the Washington County attorney at the time of his death. For five years, he advocated for passing the Veterans Restorative Justice Act, which became law in 2021.						
Palmer, Gerald P.	89	8/4/21	Army	Korea	60	Elk River Post 112
Paschke, Raymond J.	77	5/7/22	Air Force	Vietnam	16	Rochester Post 92
Peil, Kenneth E.	93	3/22/22	Army	Korea	41	St. Paul Arcade-Phalen Post 577
Porter, Vernon D.	85	4/19/22	Air Force	Korea	49	Willmar Post 167
Quam, Henry S.	97	5/12/22	Navy	WWII	48	Austin Post 91
Rahn, Mark G.	69	1/29/20	Air Force	Vietnam	31	Elk River Post 112
Rice, John E.	92	4/17/22	Army	Korea	61	Hanley Falls Post 127
Note: He served in the war with the 1st Cavalry Division's 7th Cavalry Regiment.						
Roley, Marvin L.	85	4/4/22	Army	Vietnam	25	Elk River Post 112
Ryba, Jakub T.	87	4/8/22	Air Force	Korea	34	Pequot Lakes Post 49
Sand, Maynard T.	92	3/20/22	Air Force	Korea	38	St. Joseph Post 328
Sarkilahti, Dennis D.	72	8/22/21	Army	Vietnam	40	Coon Rapids Post 334
Schlenk, Mark J.	74	3/28/22	Army	Vietnam	40	Chanhassen Post 580
Schmidt, Fred E.	86	5/11/22	Army	Korea	25	Rochester Post 92
Shalander, Rueben H.	96	11/13/21	Army	WWII	55	Bayport Post 491
Smith, Donald M.	86	4/11/22	Navy	Korea	48	Winona Post 9
Note: He served as a radioman on the USS New Jersey battleship.						
Steines, Alphonse J.	90	5/13/22	Army	Korea	20	Stewartville Post 164
Strike, Dale W.	73	3/25/22	Navy	Vietnam	37	Cambridge Post 290
Talberg, David	72	4/27/22	Army	Vietnam	47	Hillman Post 602
Tollefson, Wallace A.	97	4/16/22	Army	WWII	26	Gaylord Post 433

All-Family Events Calendar

June 3-4: 2nd District Convention, New Ulm Post 134
June 3-4: 6th District Convention, Ironton Post 443
June 3-4: 10th District Convention, Milaca Post 178
June 10-11: 9th Dist. Convention, E. Grand Forks P-157
June 11: 7th District Convention, Montevideo Post 59
June 12-18: Minnesota Boys State, St. John's University
June 12-18: Minnesota Girls State, Bethel University
June 18: Minnesota American Legion Commander's Testimonial, Moose Lodge 1400, Waite Park
June 24-26: SAL Det. Convention, E. Grand Forks Post 157
July 13-16: Department Convention, Willmar
July 28-31: Div. I Baseball State Tournament, Alimagnet Park, Burnsville
July 28-31: Div. I Jr. Baseball State Tournament, Red Haddock Field, Bloomington
July 29-31: Div II. Baseball State Tournament, Luverne
July 30: Fund 85 Run, St. Peter Post 37
July 30-31: State Fastpitch Softball Tournament, Jaycee Park, Mankato
Aug. 3-7: Div. I Baseball Regional, Rapid City, S.D.
Aug. 5-6: Div. II Jr. Baseball State Tournament, Ely
Aug. 5-7: Department Junior Fun Weekend, Legionville
Aug. 11-16: Baseball World Series, Shelby, N.C.
Aug. 20-23: Minnesota Legacy Run
Aug. 21-25: National Legacy Run, ending in Milwaukee
Aug. 26-Sept. 1: National Conventions, Milwaukee
Sept. 8-11: Legionville Camporee, Legionville
Sept. 10: Harvest Rally, Legionville
Oct. 8-9: SAL Fall Meetings, Legion HQ, Indianapolis
Oct. 10-13: TAL Fall Meetings, Legion HQ, Indianapolis

What's happening?

Denise Rohan is coming to testimonial

WAITE PARK — The testimonial dinner honoring Minnesota American Legion Commander Tom Fernlund is slated for Saturday, June 18, at the Waite Park Moose Lodge, 1300 Third St. N. Past National Commander Denise Rohan of Wisconsin is scheduled to speak. Things get going at 3:30 p.m. with a social hour and entertainment. At 4:30 p.m. dinner is served. The program is at 5:30 p.m. RSVP no later than June 10. The cost is \$25 per person. Mail payment and names of attendees to: Waite Park Post 428 Attn: Veronica Fernlund P.O. Box 421 Waite Park, MN 56387 Call 320-248-8326 or email silverstarpost428@gmail.com with any questions. The meal will be an Italian buffet with salad, lasagna, broccoli chicken alfredo, pasta with meatballs, garlic bread and dessert. The hotels closest to the Moose Lodge are:

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

Silver Bay to celebrate 30

SILVER BAY — The staff and residents of the Silver Bay Veterans Home plan to celebrate the home's 30th birthday. There will be refreshments, a program and entertainment from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, July 9. Ely-based musical act Pat

Surface and the Boundary Water Boys will perform. The home opened Oct. 10, 1991, after being converted from Campton Elementary School, which was constructed in 1953 during the North Shore's mining boom. The school began its transformation to a veterans home in 1989.

World War II airplanes take flight June 18

GRANITE FALLS — The Ray Fagen Memorial Airshow is happening Saturday, June 18, with a rain date of Sunday, June 19. The numerous warbirds take flight at the Fagen Fighters World War II Museum at the Lenzen-Roe-Fagen Memorial Airport near Granite Falls. Admission is \$25 per adult online or \$30 in person. Current military is \$15. Ages 10-17 is \$15, and 9 and younger are free. The link to purchase tickets is available from the event's Facebook page. In addition to airshows and reenactors, a concert by Eddie Montgomery begins at 7 p.m.

Legionville exceeds last year's numbers

BRAINERD — Camping at Legionville Educational Center and Summer Camp begins June 12. There are seven weeklong sessions that go through Aug. 5. The number of reservations made as of May 24 is 367, which is more than last year's 350, which had a pandemic-shortened registration window. Registration for 2022 is not over. The fee is \$400 per student and is paid by the sponsor (typically, the local Legion

Grateful for friendships and hospitality

The American Legion motto, "Veterans Strengthening America," is evident through the hard work of our members, ensuring the care and rehabilitation of our veterans, mentoring and providing opportunities for youth, promoting patriotism and advocating for a strong national defense.

These are the Four Pillars of our organization and every event I attend with veterans and their families I recognize the effects of our Four Pillars.

I had the distinct opportunity to visit with veterans participating in the Minnesota Veterans Outdoor Programs annual turkey hunt. Events like the turkey hunt provide the special opportunity for our veterans to enjoy Minnesota's outdoors and the special comradery of fellow veterans.

Thank you to all involved in making this program possible and to all our heroes participating.

The American Legion

Commander's Column

Tom Fernlund



Department of Minnesota is proud to be a partner of the Minnesota Veterans Outdoor Programs.

District Conventions are an exciting time in The American Legion. Members converge for a weekend to hear final reports from district officers and committee chairman.

Toward the end, they elect new officers stepping up to take leadership roles in The American Legion. Old friends find time to socialize and welcome new friends to mentor.

As I travel this year to as many conventions as possible, I am in awe at the energy and enthusiasm that is present when our American Legion Family gets together.

When the gavel drops and conventions close, our mission

continues. I still have a full schedule the next couple of months as department commander, and I will provide a final report next month.

I will always be grateful for the friendships made and hospitality shared at events throughout our state. My family and I are honored to be American Legion Family members and look forward to seeing everyone at the Department Convention in Willmar on July 13-16.

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

Challenges do not detract from value

Chaplain's Corner

Kelley Adelsman



Star Trek fans might be interested to learn that in 2006 William Shatner's expelled kidney stone was auctioned off for \$25,000 with proceeds donated to a housing charity. This type of value placed on the source of a painful body process is an end to itself, not a spiritual value. The last two articles unpacked identity and purpose. Value is an intrinsic component of our spirituality.

Just as we all have veins, we all are of worth.

Social media sites regularly have spiritual value posts such as: "You are worthy," "You are loved." They generate a lot of "likes."

Many, many, many years ago, I was told "God doesn't make junk." The doubt about my value in this life were challenged by this statement. Would I trust and believe that I was created with worth beyond price even though I was living through some very painful experiences?

Many years ago, Gary Chapman's book, "The Five Love Languages" was making its way through Christian circles. It invited the reader to learn love languages or how you feel loved by others. Love is a spiritual value of all people — no human ever has not wanted to feel unconditionally loved.

Chapman claims a person

feels and receives love predominantly in one of five ways: touch, gifts, time, work or words. The book's goal was to teach the reader to discern their own love language, then learn their spouses for a better marriage.

Of course, learning the love language of others you hold dear can only be good, such as knowing your close friend feels more loved by you giving them a compliment than a gift. Each of us is a mixture of many things (culture, family, time, place, gender, genetic disposition) and there is not another of you.

It definitely requires one to observe, be curious and even ask, "How do you feel most loved by me?"

I imagine some Legionnaire relationships actually do ask this of one another for we are kind and selfless.

There is no earned value when it comes to being a human. God delighted in your creation. The challenge we face comes with aligning human values with God's values and love. Do you value yourself? Do you think pain and suffering

is a gauge of your worth?

In today's culture we expect to live pain-free. If we suffer or struggle, we can get caught up believing that life is worthless. We are valuable to each other (I realize I am preaching to the choir) and for many of us, would gladly suffer on behalf of another or sit alongside and suffer with.

This is compassion — to suffer with. Life is full of challenges but doesn't detract from our value.

This concludes the three components of spirituality. Spirituality is a constant in awe process which hopefully continues to develop. I pray we don't question our value; remain curious about who we are in today's world and use our purpose for good and practice forgiveness when we fall short.

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

Mail Call

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

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

It was about proven vs. unproven

I would like to put my "two cents" into the vaccination discussion.

Like most of you, when I grew up, I received vaccinations for polio, German measles, tetanus, and various other things throughout most of my life. When I entered the military in the mid-1950s, I received a battery of vaccinations in both arms and both cheeks. And then when I went overseas I got another battery of them. And when I came back from overseas they gave me still another battery of them.

Not one single time did I have to take the same vaccination over three times and then a booster.

I said no to the COVID vaccinations because officials pushed them through too fast, and there was not enough time for proving that they were going to be good vaccines. It seems that I was correct when I did say no because they themselves know they did not work and that is why they are using force.

Enough said.

For God and country,

Andre-Thomas deMeules
Osseo Post 172

'Taps' gives us something to kibitz about

As a Minneapolis VA home visit/phone volunteer to several veterans (two are World War II era), I'm privileged to be an audience to some pretty amazing "war stories."

Sometimes our conversations drift to the Legionnaire and its many outstanding features on the lives and good works of vets past and present.

Several times our talks have included "Taps," arguably the



Dan Morgan/North End Post 474

most popular feature in the monthly publication.

Sometimes I'm asked questions I cannot answer, such as, are deaths of non-Legion members ever noted in "Taps" or any other section of the paper?

Should relatives notify the Legionnaire of a death, in case the Legion post unintentionally does not? Is there a protocol for this?

Our conversations also centered on why it seems that some areas of the state seem to have more notifications printed than others, in reference to Gerald Sundberg's letter in the May edition. He noted that Duluth (population 86,000) is noticeably under-represented in the death announcements. Perhaps Sundberg is on to something when he asserts that longer life is the result of the Northland's frigid, disease-killing climate!

Anyway, our group looks forward to your insightful reporting each month. It gives us plenty of quality content to kibitz about!

Bruce L. Lindquist
Minneapolis Post 1

Editor's note: Thanks for asking.

Entries in "Taps" are for Legionnaires only. These deceased

veterans contributed to not only the Four Pillars mission of The American Legion, with their dues and volunteerism, they also funded the ink, paper and postage of this publication, so they get recognized in "Taps."
As for sending in the deceased veterans, typically, there are just members who like to handle it. Sometimes they are the chaplain or adjutant. Sometimes, they are just members who care. To be sure, I accept them from any source: family, civilian friend, funeral home. If an area of the state lacks representation, it is because, as you all have astutely noticed, no one from there sent them in.

I discourage sending "Taps" entries for veterans who died more than a year prior, but I am not all that strict about it. I guess I am a sucker for veterans, just like you.

I want to add one thing: Just because a deceased member is marked "deceased" in myLegion.org or entered on a Member Data Form, this does not mean it automatically gets a veteran in "Taps." The senders must specifically get the information to me. There is an online form, email, postal mail or, for Hillman Post 602, ye olde telephone.

What's Happening

Continued from Page 4

(post). All forms should be done two weeks before the chosen session.

Registration is online at Legionville's website: legionville.weebly.com.

In addition to safety and preparedness training from organizations like the American Red Cross and the Minnesota State Patrol, campers enjoy kickball, relay races, bonfires, soccer, volleyball, tug-o-war, swimming, movies and other activities.

Vietnam Wall coming to Iron Range

CHISHOLM — The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Replica Wall is coming to the Iron Range.

"The Wall That Heals" is coming June 23-26 to Chisholm Football Field on the west end of the city's Lake Street.

The tour was delayed for two years by the pandemic. The United Way of Northeastern Minnesota is responsible for bringing the wall to the region.

The display is free and open to the public. It opens to the public at noon June 23, with group tours available by contact info@unitedwaynminn.org. There is an honor ceremony at 10 a.m. June 25.

The family-friendly Fabulous Armadillos perform free at Hibbing High School on June 20. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. They will perform songs from the Vietnam War era.

'Forrest Gump' is coming

BLUE EARTH — The real Forrest Gump is coming to Blue Earth Post 89 for a breakfast at 7 a.m. July 9.

Medal of Honor recipient Sammy L. Davis also will be featured in the Giant Days Parade at 10 a.m. that day in a Jeep owned by Post 89

Commander Paul Kafka.

Davis speaks at the Main Street stage at noon.

Breakfast tickets are available for \$10 each, with proceeds to the Rural Renaissance Project. Send check, quantity and names to Sammy L. Davis Breakfast, 120 S. Main. St., Suite C, Blue Earth, MN 56013.

A commemorative T-shirt is available for \$20. To get one, include that in the order.

The Minnesota

Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

Official publication of
The American Legion
Department of Minnesota

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Hey, these two are from Minneapolis and St. Paul, and they are standing by the USS Minneapolis-St. Paul. Among the Legion members at the commissioning were Jamie Woods of Minneapolis Johnnie Baker Post 291, left, and Teresa Ash of St. Paul Christie-DeParcq Post 406.

Steel for ship was mined in Minnesota's Iron Range

Continued from Page 1

Ukraine at the time. She said it is her job to ensure the crew has the equipment to achieve the mission of defending America.

"It is my commitment to you to ensure Congress will support our Navy," she said.

U.S. Rep. Pete Stauber noted the steel for the hull came from the Hibbing area. Steel, he said, is an issue of national security.

"The steel was mined by our own friends and neighbors," he said.

He noted Americans are reminded of the dangerous world as they watch events unfold in Europe.

He told the crew, "We from the United States are behind you in whatever is asked of you."

A christening is when a woman, called the sponsor, breaks a bottle of champagne on the bow, on the day of launch or shortly after. Then the ship is given a crew and put through trials and tests. Finally, she is commissioned, where the boat gets a pennant, joins the fleet and receives the USS moniker.

The CO of the ship, Cmdr. Alfonza White, explained the long, narrow pennant, sometimes called a streamer. In the 17th century, it became difficult to tell naval ships from merchant ships, so navies began flying the pennants on warships.

White is a native of Milwaukee. He said his crew performed well coordinating and then navigating the trip to Duluth, the country's farthest inland port with access to the Atlantic.

"The objective of getting a ship to Duluth is no small task," he said.

Though built in Marinette, Wis., and launched in 2019, the Freedom-class ship came to Minnesota from its home port in Jacksonville, Fla.

The sponsor for the USS Minneapolis-St. Paul is Jodi J. Greene, who retired after 31 years working in the Department of Defense. She is from Northfield and is an Air Force veteran. Her initials are forever etched in the keel of the ship.

She told the crew: "I will be your biggest advocate and supporter. God bless this crew of the Minneapolis-St. Paul."

At ceremony, she gave the command to the crew of 110 to



At the stern, there is room for an inflatable boat to drive right through the rear doors and onto a lift.



On this deck, sailors can take advantage of exercise equipment.

man the ship and bring it to life. The sailors not already on the ship lined up between the crowd and the ship.

The USS Minneapolis-St. Paul is LCS-21. The acronym stands for littoral combat ship. Though littoral means "near shore," said Vice Adm. Scott D. Conn, she can fight in the open ocean, as well.

He said the ship and its crew are ready to serve America at a moment's notice.

"If you go in harm's way, at the command of your CO, you will in fact be ready to perform," Conn said.

The USS Minneapolis-St. Paul is 387 feet long. She can achieve speeds above 40 knots (46 mph) and can maneuver like a Jet Ski. She has an MK 110 gun, which can fire off 220 rounds per minute and a SeaRAM that fires defensive missiles. Looking like "R2D2," it is similar to the well-known Phalanx CIWS that fires a Gatling gun autocannon.

She has a flight deck 1.5 times larger than most surface combatants. There is hangar space for two MH-60 helicopters.

She is the second ship named for Minneapolis-St. Paul. The first was a Los Angeles-class fast attack submarine launched in 1983 and sponsored by Penny Durenburger, wife of Sen. David Durenburger, and commissioned in 1984. It was the first sub to carry Tomahawk missiles and it used them when it served in the Persian Gulf War. She was decommissioned in 2008.

Two ships have been named



The commander of the ship, Cmdr. Alfonza White, gestures as he leads the media on a tour of the ship on Thursday, May 19. With him is Command Senior Chief Edward Pare, the top enlisted sailor on the vessel. White hails from Milwaukee. Pare is from Rhode Island. The executive officer, Cmdr. Bryan Kemnitz, is from Wisconsin.

for Minneapolis, and two for St. Paul. The second USS Minneapolis, a New Orleans-class cruiser commissioned in 1934, fought in World War II in battles at Midway, Coral Sea, Tassafaronga (sinking the Takamami and sustaining two torpedoes), Philippine Sea, Guam and Surigao Strait. She was Admiral Thomas Kinkaid's flagship when he accepted the surrender of Japan's forces in Korea, then patrolled the waters. She was decommissioned in 1947.

The second USS St. Paul was a Baltimore-class cruiser, commissioned in 1945. She went straight for the Japanese island of Honshu, assisting carriers and bombarding industrial targets. She was present in Tokyo Bay during the Japanese surrender. During the Korean War, she provided support for South Korea, and conducted shore bombardments, at times while being fired on by shore batteries. She starred in the 1965 John Wayne movie "In Harm's Way." She was decommissioned in 1971.

Mayors from Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth were on the guest platform but did not speak. Also speaking at the commissioning of the USS Minneapolis St. Paul were Under Secretary of the Navy Erik Raven, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Lockheed-Martin Vice President and General Manager for Integrated Warfare Systems & Sensors Jon Rambeau.

Rambeau said while the ship-makers built the USS Minneapolis-St. Paul, "It will be the skill and bravery of the crew that bring her to life."

He quoted President Teddy Roosevelt, who once remarked: "A good Navy is not a provocation to war. It is the surest guaranty of peace."



People wait under cloudy skies and occasional light rain for the ceremony to begin on Saturday, May 21.

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Legionnaire editor wins 6 nat'l awards

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Legionnaire editor won six national awards for his media efforts.

Tim Engstrom is the director of communications for the American Legion Department of Minnesota. In that role, he edits the Legionnaire, and he also handles public relations, marketing, website, social media and other communications for the department.

The awards are from TALMA, which stands for The American Legion Media Alliance. Dues are \$15, and the organization offers monthly online media seminars, hands out annual awards and gets together at the national conventions.

Departments and districts compete together as a class. Other classes are posts up to 249, posts 250-749 and posts over 750. This year, there were 95 entries.

The Minnesota Legionnaire was named the top department/district publication in the nation.

The website, mnlegion.org, was named the top department/district website for the second year running.

Engstrom won first place in the "editorial/news writing" category for his December 2021 profile of Marissa LaCourt, a Navy veteran who is a member of Apple Valley Post 1776 and who suffered sexual trauma while trapped on a Navy destroyer in the Indian Ocean.

He also won first place in the "editorial/informational writing" category for his coverage in the June 2021 issue of failed efforts to pass the Veterans Restorative Justice

Act in the Minnesota Legislature. The bill died at the end of the 2021 session after some lawmakers were asking questions that offended veterans: "Couldn't soldiers opt out of a second tour?" No, obviously. The story illustrated the generation gap between today's military and the Vietnam era.

The bill later passed in a special session.

Another first place award came for public relations.

It was for efforts to draw media attention to the need to expand Vet Centers in Minnesota. It culminated with state and federal politicians visiting the St. Paul Vet Center on Veterans Day, while 4th District veterans marched through St. Paul. The Associated Press wrote a statewide story about Vet Centers.

"The 4th District deserves a good share of this award," Engstrom said.

He received a surprise, too. Engstrom received the Chairman's Award for his work on The Minnesota Legionnaire. He will receive his plaques at the 103rd National Convention in Milwaukee in late August from American Legion Media and Communications Commission Chairman David Frederick Wallace of Virginia.

"I am honored to receive these awards, but the credit goes to the veterans of Minnesota and how they care about each other. They are the finest people," he said.

Engstrom will be a presenter at the next TALMA virtual training. It is 7-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 8. He will speak on the topic of readership. TALMA members can view the training on the TALMA Facebook page.



Tim Engstrom

Post-9/11 bonuses exclude move-in veterans

Continued from Page 1

"We were a political football to get other people's items across the finish line," said Department of Minnesota Adjutant Mike Maxa, "but then neither one would pass."

They often would die without a vote, like being stuck in a committee or never brought to the floor.

On Monday, May 2, the Minnesota American Legion worked with the DAV of Minnesota to raise awareness of the omnibus bill. The DAV set up a Voter Voice webpage to make it easy to contact lawmakers, and the Minnesota American Legion had the ability to email about 37,000 veterans with Constant Contact and tell them about the webpage.

It worked.

Trent Dilks, legislative director for the DAV of Minnesota, said 2,184 messages were sent to lawmakers in Minnesota.

"They got the message loud and clear that veterans wanted this bill passed," he said.

Dilks said veterans can go to davmn.org, which has a page called MinnFluence, where they can sign up to receive alerts on legislation.

"It's good when the DAV and Legion work together in the interest of veterans," he said.

The bill was sponsored in the House by Rep. Rob Ecklund of International Falls and in the Senate by Sen. Andrew Lang of Olivia. Both are Legion members.

"This bill is a result of dedication and bicameral, bipartisan compromise," Ecklund said. "It represents that our system can work for our veterans and for the state of Minnesota. While this compromise legislation does not include some provisions and appropriations that could have made it a great bill, members, this is a good bill and I'm proud of it, and proud to support it."

Post-9/11 Bonus leaves out move-ins

In the bill, the Legislature approved \$24.9 million to give bonuses to Minnesota residents who are post-9/11 veterans, but there's a kicker — they have to have entered the military from Minnesota.

That leaves out residents who moved to Minnesota after or during military service.

Minnesota Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke said he asked lawmakers for \$40 million so that the bonuses would include Minnesota residents who joined the military from other states.

When the staff of the American Legion Department of Minnesota testified on this bill, it was before the \$15.1 million cut.

"We would like to push for the additional bonuses for newer residents next year," said Bob Hart, chairman of the Department of Minnesota Legislative Committee.

The post-9/11 campaigns mainly are Afghanistan and Iraq, but a handful of others would be covered under the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal or the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

The bonuses are \$1,200 to veterans with a campaign badge, \$600 to veterans who served at the time, and \$2,000 to Gold Star surviving beneficiaries as listed in state statutes.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs leaders say they will have more details on bonus applications ready for the July issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire. The new law says bonuses must stop on



The Minnesota Commander's Task Force meets May 10 in the Veterans Service Building. Department Commander Tom Fernlund and Adjutant Mike Maxa are on the upper left of the photo. The group is a coordinated legislative effort of eight congressionally chartered veterans service organizations: The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Jewish War Veterans, American Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Marine Corps League.

June 30, 2025.

Additional funds for new veterans homes

Construction costs are rising, and it hasn't been helping the work on the three new veterans homes, which are in Preston, Montevideo and Bemidji. Herke said they are 25 to 35 percent complete.

The bill allocates \$10.33 million in the coming state fiscal year for the new veterans homes, and it sets aside another \$16.54 million for the following fiscal year. State fiscal years begin July 1.

Veterans service organizations grants go up

The cost of living has risen 20 percent since 2009, but the state grants for veteran service organizations remained the same, until this year.

The grants had an annual allocation of \$353,000, which was divided among congressionally chartered veteran service organizations based on claims and members, and the funds went to activities that supported veterans, such as a service officer or a van for transporting veterans to the VA, not for youth or community efforts. The program got another \$147,000, bringing the annual allocation to \$500,000.

"We are excited to receive an increase that was long overdue," said American Legion Department Adjutant Mike Maxa, "and the wheels are in motion for determining our next steps."

Also, the VSO grant program now is in statute.

Other items

The veterans omnibus bill also:

- Amends the county veteran service officer program to authorize the commissioner to use unspent funds to provide additional grants for counties that fund new and innovation ways to serve veterans and their families. The grants presently go toward training and education. The Legislature allocated an ongoing \$450,000 increase to the program.

- Appropriated \$2.8 million in new funding to expand the MDVA's efforts to prevent and end veteran homelessness. The bill says \$1.71 million of that \$2.8 million is for temporary alternative housing options and for outreach, and the remaining \$1.1 million goes to incentives for landlords and for removing barriers to permanent housing. It sets the base for each year after this fiscal year at \$950,000.

- Granted \$5.4 million to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans in its efforts to help veterans and their families facing homelessness. The grant helps MACV with the establishment and management of permanent supportive housing options for homeless veterans.

- Appropriated \$500,000 for the construction of a new Fisher House near the Fargo VA Medical Center.

- Increased funding for state cemeteries by \$830,000, as the MDVA now has the new Redwood Falls Veterans Cemetery in its budget to operate. Its other cemeteries are in Little Falls, Preston and Duluth.

- Granted \$774,000 to Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake for updating wastewater infrastructure.

Bonding bill

The omnibus bill didn't have everything related to veterans, just a bulk of it. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs had requested \$59 million in the bonding bill to build a new campus at the Hastings Veterans Home. If the agency receives the funds, it becomes eligible to receive another \$111 million from the federal VA.

The MDVA also requested \$10 million in asset preservation. This is the typical maintenance the agency does for its 64 buildings.

However, no bonding bill was in sight when the legislative deadline came and went May 23.

There also was language in this session regarding surviving spouses of disabled veterans, specifically the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, but that will remain on hold as Minnesotans watch what comes next.

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REFRESHMENTS | PROGRAM



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Taps



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Vander Maten, Stanley G.	88	5/11/22	Army	Korea	1	Edgerton Post 42
Voeltz, Dennis E.	68	5/13/22	Marines	Vietnam	11	Lanesboro Post 40
Wacker, Dorothy J.	89	5/18/22	Army	Korea	60	Dent Post 148
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Wester, Donald H.	84	1/8/22	Army	Vietnam	25	Elk River Post 112
Westphal, Richard G.	85	4/24/22	Navy	Vietnam	28	Kenyon Post 78
Wiechmann, Alphonse H.	96	3/2/22	Army	Korea	36	Brooten Post 288
Wille, Raymond F.	99	N/A	Marines	WWII	34	Elk River Post 112
Wolff, Lowell R.	94	10/10/21	Army	WWII	61	Clara City Post 485
Young, Richard T.	90	4/22/22	Army	Korea	15	Winona Post 9
Zellman, Robert J.	89	5/10/22	Navy	Korea	22	Norwood Post 343

Note: He is a 2004 inductee into the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame. He served on the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Committee on behalf of the 3rd District for many years.

National says there will be no increase in dues

National Report

Bill Barbknecht



Spring is here! Wet and windy, but no snow and ice. After our drought last year, we welcome the rain, for the farmers and the lakes.

Spring meetings were held in Indianapolis on May 1-5. Good news. NO dues increase for many years.

A total of \$705,937 was spent from the Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund for scholarships for 2022. In the national Eagle Scout of the Year program, Matthew Korf of Woodbury Minnesota placed third and will receive a \$2,500 scholarship. Resolution 23 regarding immigration reform was passed at this NEC meeting.

With Memorial Day upon us May 30, it is a good time to ask those veterans you come into contact with to join the ranks of the rifle squad of your post. As well as always ask to belong to the world's largest veterans organization.

I am so very proud of my post, Post 489 in Underwood. The honor guard visits 14 cemeteries and also have a program at the school for the community.

Commander Frank McKensie and our post every year recognizes a member of the community with the Meritorious Legion Award. At the writing of this letter, our ceremony has not been held and it is always a surprise to that recipient; therefore, there is more to come about that in my next report.

National Poppy Day is May 27. Help support our Auxiliary units to be able to fund veterans

through their Poppy Program. Com-

mander Tom Fernlund's testimonial is June 18 at Waite Park; everyone welcome. See Page 3 for details.

District conventions are going on now. Please take time to attend yours.

Make plans to attend the state American Legion and Auxiliary conventions in Willmar on July 13-16. The National Convention is just a little east of us in Milwaukee on Aug. 26-Sept. 1.

What will your post be doing for Flag Day? Any flag retirement ceremonies?

Also, Girls Softball and American Legion Baseball, Boys and Girls States are held in June. I hope your post is sponsoring someone or a team. Legionville camp will be opening very soon for the School Crossing Guard and First Aid training. Please send someone from your post or unit.

Thank you to all of you that have donated to the American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation. As always, any questions please feel free to call me at 218-770-6264. Donna and I look forward to seeing many of you our American Legion Family members at any of the upcoming events.

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

Follow Minn. Boys State by going to website

Minn. Boys State

Neil Kruse



The 2022 session of Minnesota American Legion Boys State begins on June 12 at St. John's University in Collegeville. It concludes on Saturday, June 18.

Between dates, the young men will learn about duties of elected and appointed governmental officials, with most of the participants becoming those officers in local, county and state governments. Actual political officers from Minnesota will also speak to the Boys Staters about their positions.

You can follow the week in pictures at www.mnboysstate.org, as well as on Facebook. You are also welcome to stop by for a day or part of a day to observe campus activities engaged in by the boys.

Thank you again for your support of the program!

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

THE AMERICAN LEGION
MINNESOTA

Boys
STATE

Firefighter struck by SUV on ice

Continued from Page 1

a female in her car. A woman stood outside of a minivan. The third vehicle was empty but blocking the center lane.

As Burgett, his captain and a paramedic crossed the highway, a car approached rapidly, failing to take notice of the icy bridge, and slid out of control at 60 to 70 mph.

The firefighters ran for cover toward the far highway shoulder and heard the car strike the empty vehicle in the center lane. Metal and plastic flew over their heads.

They realized cars were careening into the crash scene. Now there was a man and a woman standing outside their cars, right on the highway in the middle of it all.

Burgett called to them. The woman and the female who had been sitting in her car moved to a safe area behind a guardrail. The man, however, refused to come. He stayed by the minivan, so Burgett exposed himself to the oncoming traffic to figure out why, in hopes of preventing the man's death. The captain stayed with the females, assessing injuries and interviewing them.

The man's wife was trapped in the front passenger seat. Her door had been broken, and she could not exit.

Burgett took her arms to assist her from the minivan by pulling her across the seats, then he ordered her and her husband to the safe area behind the guardrail.

As they neared the guardrail, Burgett looked back and noticed a white SUV heading right toward them. He told the man and woman to run, then he was struck by the SUV and knocked unconscious.

"As I flew down the highway, I remember everything spinning and then the lights went out," he recalled.

The captain began assisting, and Burgett came to his senses. He immediately saw the woman who had been in the minivan lying unconscious on the ground in front of him. He stood up and attempted to lift the woman, but a searing pain in his left leg prevented it.

He told the husband to lift the legs of his wife and help carry her to safety. Together, they lifted her to the shoulder.

Meanwhile, a pickup careened into the other crashed automobiles at 70-plus mph, knocking the vehicles sideways. The captain had to dive to avoid being struck, and smoke began rising from the minivan. Somehow, the sliding cars didn't hit any of them.

"If the adult females, the husband and the wife had remained in the vehicles on the highway," says the nomination, "they most likely would have lost their lives by the last impact."

Burgett was taken to Regions Hospital in St. Paul. The unconscious wife was taken to Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis. She survived her injuries.

Burgett and his wife, Natalie, have a son. He is a member of Minneapolis Post 1.

He received three previous awards for saving lives in his career. Two came while working the Hopkins Fire Department and one while working for North Memorial Ambulance Service. He graduated from the paramedic course at Century College in 2018 and is a graduate of the

Camp Ripley Firefighter Honor Guard Academy. He is part of the Eagan Fire Department Honor Guard.

He has gone through multiple surgeries and undergone therapies since saving lives at the icy bridge. He engages in physical therapy two to three hours a day, three or four times each week.

"He will have to wear orthotics for the rest of his life due to nerve damage that he suffered in this incident," says the nomination. "Despite his injuries, he expects to return to full active duty as a firefighter soon, in June of 2022."

"I'm thankful that I can work for such a great community and alongside such a stellar team of professionals at the Eagan Fire Department," he said. "I know that we did the best we could under difficult circumstances and would gladly do it again to save the lives of the people we serve."

The nomination was written by Eagan Fire Chief Hugo Searle and Eagan Post 594 Commander Wayne Beierman. Burgett will receive the honor at the Department Convention.

Officer makes a difference in Forest Lake schools

FOREST LAKE — The Minnesota American Legion Law Enforcement Officer of the Year is a school resource officer for the Forest Lake Police Department.

Megan Olstad of Stillwater has been a police officer for 15 years. She has been a school resource officer for six years and, before that, a patrol officer for nine. She has served the Forest Lake high and middle schools.

"Through Megan's hands-on approach to policing, she has built a positive relationship with our students and the community," said Forest Lake Area High School Principal James Caldwell in a letter supporting her nomination. "She meets parents and students where they are, is proactive, visible and, most importantly, approachable."

Caldwell goes on to describe how she has developed relationships on and off campus cares deeply about the students and families, resulting in safer schools.

"I am beyond excited to give Officer Megan Olstad my highest recommendation. Please do not hesitate to call for any additional positive information. She is so deserving."

Superintendent Steve Massey also spoke highly of her.

"During the height of civil unrest in Minneapolis, there was a national and local call for schools to no longer contract for police officers in schools," he wrote. "Contrary to this outcry, I received a letter from an African-American student arguing that we keep SROs in our schools. He specifically mentioned Officer Olstad as the reason he was pursuing a

career in law enforcement and shared that she made a personal connection with him and demonstrated that community policing is about ensuring community safety through making connections and building relationships."

Her nomination to the

Minnesota American Legion Law & Order Committee included comments from fellow officers. One sergeant described how, on March 18, school resource officers receive a report of a student possessing a gun. They found the student and then found two BB guns the

replicated handguns. There was a brief struggle as the student tried to flee. Megan and other officers took him into custody, and Megan and another officer conducted multiple interviews to get an accurate portrayal of what happened.

Continued on Page 8

WANTED

Gambling Manager

METRO LEGION POST LOOKING TO HIRE A GAMBLING MANAGER

Desirable qualifications:

- Be or be eligible to become a member of The American Legion.
- Have previous documented financial and administrative office manager experience.
- Able to pass a criminal and financial background check.
- Qualify for and obtain a Gambling Control Board Manager's License.
- Be bondable and maintain "qualified" status.
- Possess a working knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel.
- Be a team-oriented person who is able to work with our assistant gambling manager.
- Possess leadership skills (ability and experience to supervise, direct and evaluate staff).
- Possess communication skills both verbal and written.

Our post is known for our friendly camaraderie and our charitable giving to the community. Please help us continue our legacy.

This is a part-time salaried position that would be ideal for a semi-retired or retired veteran. For additional information, contact 763-544-9047. Leave a message.

The SAL Update:

The year's project has gone very well

June is the time where we reflect on the past year accomplishments and also look ahead to the future.

I'd like to remind everyone of upcoming events within the detachment. Our annual Detachment Convention will be in East Grand Forks on June 24 and 25.

If you are wanting to attend, please contact Terry Buraas to get your registration in. I am hoping for a great turnout.

Secondly, the SAL National Convention will be in Milwaukee on Aug. 26-28. If you are wanting to be a delegate, please attend the Detachment

Detachment commander

Tim Weaver



Convention or contact Adjutant Doug Bible ASAP.

My project this year is the Child Welfare Foundation. When I was installed as commander last summer, I had set a goal of \$1 per member and I can happily say that goal was blown out of the water. I won't give an exact number yet as I want to make sure all donations get turned in.

As always, please keep our

service personnel both domestic and abroad in your thoughts and prayers

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

Detachment Convention taking place at East Grand Forks Post 157

EAST GRAND FORKS — The annual Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Minnesota Convention is planned for June 24 and 25 at East Grand Forks Post 157.

Reservations are requested to 9th District Commander Terry Buraas at 701-213-1006 or via email to terry.buraas@gmail.com.

Registration is \$20 per person and includes a continental breakfast and lunch on Saturday.

The Detachment Finance Committee meets at 7 p.m. June 24, with the Executive Committee meeting at 8 p.m. The general business session gets rolling at 9 a.m. June 25. There will be the election and installation of officers, too.



Detachment membership as of May 19

2021 Results as of 6/30/2021	10577
2022 Goal from National	11091
2022 Detachment Goal (approx 3%)	10895
2022 105%	11440
Current Received as of 5/19/2022	10715
Current Percentage	98.35%

96.61% **376 needed for 100%**
98.35% **180 needed for 100%**

*includes both traditional and online renewals

Vice Commanders	2021 Results	2022 Goal	105%	Current at Dept.	Percentage	Placing
1st and 3rd	3511	3617	3798	3557	98.34%	2
2nd and 7th	2033	2095	2200	2049	97.80%	3
4th and 5th	702	724	760.2	680	93.92%	5
6th and 9th	2311	2381	2500	2420	101.64%	1
8th and 10th	2016	2078	2182	2009	96.68%	4
Totals	10573	10895	11440	10715	98.35%	

Districts	2021 Results	2022 Goal	105%	Current at Dept.	Percentage	Placing
1st District	1578	1626	1707	1646	101.23%	3
2nd District	1196	1232	1294	1171	95.05%	7
3rd District	1933	1991	2091	1911	95.98%	6
4th District	359	370	388.5	345	93.24%	9
5th District	343	354	371.7	335	94.63%	8
6th District	1493	1538	1615	1542	100.26%	4
7th District	837	863	906.2	878	101.74%	2
8th District	507	523	549.2	472	90.25%	10
9th District	818	843	885.2	878	104.15%	1
10th District	1509	1555	1633	1537	98.84%	5
Totals	10573	10895	11440	10715	98.35%	

Thank you for all the support of SAL

As we come to the end of our 2021-2022 membership year, I would like to begin by expressing my sincerest gratitude for supporting the Sons of The American Legion at your district, squadron and detachment levels.

Through your help, we continue to be #SALStrong.

Over the past year, we have seen new squadrons chartered, dormant squadrons reactivated, and a palpable energy within our American Legion posts as we see more and more squadrons stepping up to help in ways that are both new and exciting.

None of this would be possible without your support. To my colleagues from The American Legion, Auxiliary, Legion

Membership Director

Matthew Verkuilen



Riders and SAL, congratulations on a job well done.

It has been my honor to serve alongside you this year and I am excited for what next year holds.

With summer quickly approaching, one could feel like it's time to kick back and shelve our work with the Legion Family for a while.

While balance is always necessary, our work is not complete. There is room for many more

squadrons, room for even more involvement, but most of all a need to continue to support our veterans, their families, and our

communities.

We are the Sons of The American Legion. We are part of the American Legion Family. We are the proud possessors of a priceless heritage. We are #SALStrong. Again, congratulations on a job well done.

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

A firsthand report from Poland

By Michael Wille

Lowry Squadron 253 commander

I flew into Warsaw on Sunday, April 10, and rented a car. Arrived the afternoon of April 11 at a border town "Przemysl" nine miles west of Ukraine. Przemysl is the first stopping point in Poland for Ukrainians refugees fleeing Putin's atrocities.

I had arranged to meet a local Cargill business associate in Przemysl at 3:30 p.m. We walked three blocks to the Przemysl train station. The area around the station was bustling with activity related to Ukrainians arriving from the east.

There was a 25x50-foot tent just outside the station that welcomed hungry Ukrainians. The tent and train station were staffed by volunteers — mainly from Poland and other European countries. The common areas of the train station were filled with Ukrainian refugees, who the Poles refer to as "guests." Over 500,000 Ukrainians have arrived at this small train station in the last two months.

Prior to my arrival, my host had scheduled a meeting at the Ukrainian consulate office in Przemysl. The senior authority at the consulate spoke excellent English. He gave us a synopsis of what was currently happening in the immediate area and shared what the Ukrainians and their Polish hosts needed most.

In essence, his message was simple: "Give us money. We know what the people need, we know how to source it, and we know how to get it to the people who need it."

He stated that "it will actually cost much less if we buy it here versus you shipping it to us". Points taken.

I offered and he accepted both USD I had brought and the Polish currency, zloty, that I had exchanged in Warsaw. He also directed us to a warehouse where we could drop off the supplies.

We took my rental car to a warehouse about six kilometers from the Ukrainian border. The warehouse manager dropped a pallet next to my vehicle and I emptied the contents of the



A food tent outside the Przemysl, Poland, train station on April 11.



The Ukrainian consulate office in Przemysl. Michael Wille is on the left.

duffle bags onto the pallet. I had brought tents, bedding/pillows, and food. He moved the pallet into the warehouse and I set off for Ukraine (Lviv) with what I had left.

Mission accomplished!

If anyone wants to help, sending money to the Ukrainian Consulate in Przemysl is the most efficient means: <https://www.embassypages.com/ukraine-consulate-przemysl-poland>.

CONGRATS, GRADUATES!



Here are the graduates of Minnesota American Legion College for 2022, held in April at Camp Ripley. Front row from left are Dean Knutson, Kelly Kauss, Luis Campero, Gary Richardson, Trish Diersen, Commander Tom Fernlund, Diane Jankowski, Paul Orson, Mark Lessard and Lew Ratajczak. Back from left are Kenneth Toole, Christopher Anderson, Carl Wilson, Greg Artman, Rod Reifsteck, Mike Parry and Greg Crow.

Podiatrist loves history and veterans

Continued from Page 1

at the St. Cloud VA and as a St. Cloud resident, he is proud a physician from the St. Cloud VA received the honor.

Serving veterans has been enjoyable over the years, Syvrud said. When he started, it was World War II veterans. Then it became Korea, interwar, Vietnam and now even young veterans.

"I love history, where they were stationed and what they saw," he said. "The personal interaction has been the best. They are a breed apart."



Joel Syvrud

Syvrud was in private practice prior to working at the VA. He said he has admired the calm demeanor of veterans compared to the general public.

"They have been through a lot of what life has thrown at them," he said. "The attitudes from being in the military inculcates in them."

Syvrud was nominated for the American Legion Physician of the Year by Dr. Alfonso Alarcon, director of surgery and specialty care at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center.

Police officer inspires law enf. careers

Continued from Page 7

"I also received a text from the school principal, who had nothing but high praise and gratitude for all involved and the quick and peaceful resolution," the sergeant wrote.

Forest Lake Post 225 nominated Olstad. Commander Paul Siebert said she goes above and beyond and treats others with

respect and dignity.

"I would say the honor that really stands out is her recognition as the Minnesota Juvenile Officer Association's Excellence in Service Award in February of 2022 and appointed MNJOA vice president by her peers," he wrote.

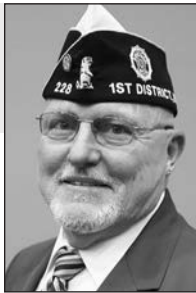
Olstad will be recognized for the honor at the Department

Convention in July in Willmar.

She is married to a fellow Forest Lake officer, and they have three children. She graduated the law enforcement program at Rochester Community and Technical College, and she volunteers for many nonprofit efforts, from Shop with a Cop to MADD to Night to Unite, among others.

District commanders

1st District Mike Parry



Greetings Comrades,
As we watch the flowers, lawns and gardens bloom, let us also watch our posts bloom with new leadership and direction.

This is an important time of the year for many posts. New leadership, new ideas and the question for the members of each post is: Will you support, will you sit back and complain, will you jump on board and help make a difference or just sit like a lump on a log and do nothing?

The life of your post is really up to you. Make a choice and do it.

What are your plans for Memorial Day? Planning the same ol' same ol' Memorial Day Service? Why not search out younger veterans and ask them

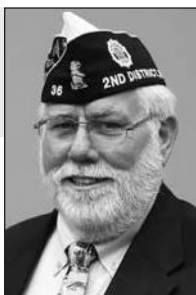
to speak about what Memorial Day means to them? Seriously, I think you might be very impressed.

Finally, I see the face of The American Legion changing. If you don't see it, I'm afraid that you might be living with your head in the sand. Are you part of that change or are you one who sits and glares and says, "We don't do it that way and never have?"

Have a wonderful Memorial Day. Be safe. Be well. Be alive.

God bless America! God bless our veterans and their families!

2nd District Steve Fosness



Let us all take a moment to remember the Greatest Generation and the insurmountable task of the World War II D-Day Allied Invasion in Normandy, France.

Your vote counts! Now we start the summer months of district conventions and the department and national conventions. So many Legion members and posts don't participate in the conventions and then comment, "What does The American Legion do for me?"

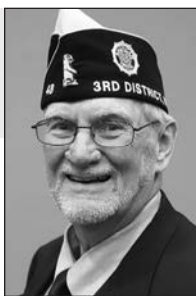
This is a two-way street.

You can't receive unless you're willing to give. We

have a voice and should use it in becoming a post delegate to vote for resolutions and officers.

Conventions have several committee meetings and training sessions. The quickest way to learn and have a voice is to get involved. New thoughts and ideas are always welcomed and encouraged!

3rd District Bob Hart



At the time of this writing, I have not walked on my own power for three weeks. I have been admitted at the VA Medical Center Spinal Cord Injury Unit.

This misadventure started in April of 2021. I had turned 71 without ever being in a hospital overnight and having no long-term prescription medications. I had a few episodes of intense upper torso pain whose cause escaped notice until recently.

On April 22 this year I lost my mobility — for now!

This column is not about me. It is about the VA Hospital SCI Unit.

I understand that this is one of only four such centers in the country. I have often argued in legislation that we don't advocate for ourselves, but for the good of others.

Many of those in this unit face grave challenges every day. The

doctors and staff are dedicated to the cause of improving the lives and prospects of those in their charge.

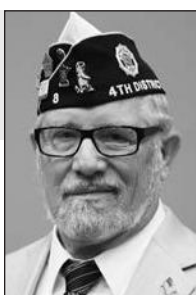
The serendipitous benefit to us is that a program designed for the most catastrophic needs can cast a glow for the good of the qualified everyday veteran in need of essential services.

That is one more reason to be supportive of The American Legion and other federally chartered veteran service organizations. It is what we do!

Why join The American Legion? Add SCI to the long list.

At this point, I have reason to believe that I can achieve near or normal recovery and can credit SCI for their commitment to excellence. Thank God!

4th District David Dahl



At our Oratorical Competition this year, we talked with retired Col. Dwight Dorau, the senior JROTC instructor at Johnson High School. We discussed having a conference in August with the leadership of all seven JROTC units in Ramsey County to talk about the

Oratorical Competition and encourage their cadets and midshipmen to participate.

As I talked with other Legionnaires about this conference, we

came to realize that those cadets and midshipmen are the target audience for many other Legion programs.

Our conference will now include presentations on the Legion's JROTC Military Excellence and Scholastic Excellence awards. Each JROTC unit will be paired with a Legion post to facilitate the presentation of these awards.

We will also educate the JROTC unit leadership on Boys State and Boys Nation and hope to have an ALA member to talk about Girls State and Girls Nation. We will also tell them about Legion Baseball and Legion Softball.

The last Legion program we

plan to discuss is the Legion's Junior Shooting Sports. Members of St. Paul Post 8 are eager to start a Junior Shooting Sports program.

A recent conversation with Col. Dorau concluded that the August conference would be a good start, but that we need to go into each school and make presentations directly to the students. We will encourage the school's guidance counselors to attend these presentations.

I am excited to pursue all of this and see many cadets and midshipmen get involved in our Legion youth programs.

Still serving — serving veterans and serving our communities!

5th District Wade Larson



On July 1, National HQ will start accepting renewals for 2023.

We are very close to obtaining 90-95 percent renewals. Don't let your membership years lapse.

We are looking at incorporating some very good training opportunities at our convention and future district meetings. Our district convention we are looking at finalizing training for "how to fundraise without a bar or pull tabs" and for the Department of Minnesota's coalition on suicide awareness with the VA on how to help veterans you would come across facing a crisis.

See this issue on Page 3 for details about the Department Convention in Willmar. Contact your post and Department

Adjutant Mike Maxa if you wish to attend the National Convention in Milwaukee.

You can renew your membership at mylegion.org. We need your support to keep the programs continuing.

"Be the one to help the one." Call a veteran or Legionnaire buddy to check in with them from within your post and other Legionnaires.

Our Richfield Post 435 needs help in finding a new home for the JR shooters for the colder months of fall through early spring. Contact Andy Keller at AndyPost435@gmail.com.

Reach me wadealarson@yahoo.com.

7th District David "Chip" Manson



Hi District 7!

As we near the end of this 2021-2022 membership year, I'd like to take a moment to thank our 75 district posts for your efforts to keep a viable legion post in your local community!

We have seen the proof that posts can continue to not only exist but to thrive!

Being a positive and participating member of our communities; showing others our dedication to our veterans, country, children and patriotic endeavors; and being willing to reach out to all veterans and invite them to help us meet these lofty goals — they all help us represent the good things about American veterans in today's society.

The June 11 District Convention in Montevideo Post 59 will elect our new officers. New committee chairs will be selected, and the table will be set for our 2022-2023 membership

year. I hope you can or were able to join us!

And now, we will see the election of our department officers at the Department Convention in Willmar July 14-16. All posts attending have the right to vote for our new officers.

This is your chance to choose the future of our American Legion. Will your voice be heard?

The 2023 membership packets will be distributed June 24-28. The schedule of dates, times and places has been distributed (see our newsletter). Reminder: To receive your membership packet, you must submit copies of your annual reports. Please bring copies with you when you come to pick up your packet.

Thank you for the great year. I truly enjoyed my year as your district commander.

8th District Larry Pocrnich



Hello veterans,
The months are sliding by fast. I hope everyone celebrated Memorial Day for what it is meant.

The month of June brings a lot of activity, send in your officer lists even if it is the same as 21-22. The membership officers should be checking on those who are not paid for 21-22. The new membership packets will come out later in June.

To the officers who are leaving office: Thanks for a job well done, and those who have stepped up to cover those officers, thank you, too.

Chapter 1 of the Legion Riders Deer River has their

20th anniversary bike run on June 18.

"The Wall That Heals" will be in Chisholm the week of June 19. The week will start off Monday with a free concert by the Fabulous Armadillos at the Hibbing High School Auditorium at 6:30pm. The wall will open at midnight Thursday and run till Sunday. On Saturday, the honor ceremony will be at 10 a.m.

To volunteer contact www.unitedwaynemn.org/volunteer. Thank you to all the veterans who are still out helping veterans and their families.

9th District Terry Buraas



Americanism, I thought I had a good working knowledge of the term.

I attended the Spring Meeting in Indianapolis and discovered I did not know all that the word means.

Children & Youth, Baseball, Scouting, Oratorical, Junior Shooting Sports, Boys State and the Youth Cadet Law enforcement program.

This last one is important because The American Legion wants to help increase the numbers joining the police force. Minnesota is just developing this program and needs volunteers to get it started.

Police forces are losing members because of age and, let's face it, the way they are treated by their peers and the media. A patrol person stops a vehicle, and the officer doesn't know if the driver is armed and ready to shoot. Also, Mr. Public has a camera on their phone getting everything down so that the criminal can sue the police.

Prior deeds are not taken into consideration, so the police are always wrong.

10th District William Gordon



The word support means endure bravely, quietly bear, uphold, defend and advocate. In short, it is a two-way street when you expect the support of an individual, group or organization. They expect your support in return.

That means you need to try to support the same individuals, groups and or organization. Of course, there are times when you will not be able to because of your commitments to your church, family, and job. This concept is not new at all it has been around an exceptionally long time. You just need to understand the left hand washes the right or vise versa.

The next time you are looking for support from the Auxiliary, SAL, Juniors, Riders. Look at your schedule, ask. How can I support them in return? Can I attend a meeting this moth or this year? Can I sell poppies for a couple of hours? Can I help with the meat raffle? Can I help with the local fish fry for a day? Can I help set up for the event?

You know it is the small things that make the greatest difference. Change comes with the "RC Factor."

Wow! What is that "resistance to change?"

What is wrong with the way we do it now? Why do you want

to change it?

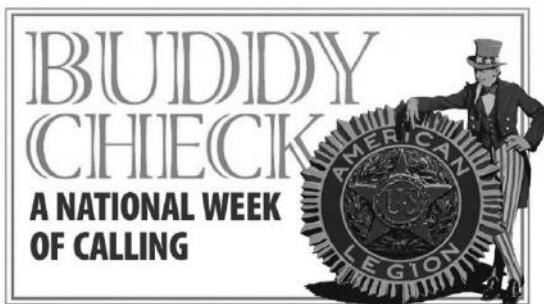
Laughing, let's take a short look back in history. How many of you use a horse, mule or oxen to go to work? Do you have VA benefits? That car you drive, the cell-phone you use, the VA benefits you enjoy. They are all here because someone said, "We need to change the way we [fill it in]." History is full of change from using fire to cook to the way we communicate.

On June 1, please get your Consolidated Post Report in to the Department HQ. Let's get 100 percent from the district this year. June 3 the 10th District banquet will be held at Milaca at 6:30 p.m., followed by the 10th District convention on June 4.

Department Commander Fernlund's Testimonial Dinner will be June 18 at the Waite Park Moose Lodge. See Page 3 for details. Page 2 has information on the Department Convention.

On June 28, at Excelsior Post 259, lunch will be served before the 40&8 promenade and rendezvous at about 6:30 p.m.

"When you're finished changing you finished." — Benjamin Franklin





The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 22 Vol. 11

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

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

651-224-7634

June 2022

It's the most wonderful Auxiliary time of the year

President's Column

Patti Coleman



I am having a hard time containing my excitement now that it is almost June!

Most people look forward to specific holidays and their excitement builds in the month leading up to their favorite one. For me, it's not a holiday. What I look forward to the most each year is American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State!

It is my favorite time of the year and has been since the mid-80s when I first served on staff. For me, it is the most satisfying experience guiding young women through a week of learning the processes of how government functions at the city, county and state levels, about the role the political process plays in our governments, how to campaign and elect officials and representatives and, most importantly, about Americanism and why we honor our veterans.

This program allows the American Legion Auxiliary to play a role in developing good citizens in Minnesota. The bonus is that it is so much fun working with young people! Thank you to the entire Legion Family for continuing to sponsor young women to participate and for your support of American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State. The program would not exist without all of you and our exceptional volunteers.

I know our units and districts struggled this year with the changes the department made to the reporting procedures. Remember, my metaphor with the kaleidoscope? We can do things differently and it can be just as successful or beautiful as before. I hope that my explanation here will help you in the future.

The Unit Impact Reports are meant to provide the statistics of the year, or more clearly, the numbers, and numbers only. Your hours of service can be reported anywhere on the form as long as they are not reported more than once.

Choose the category that fits best and enter those numbers. The unit Impact Reports are

what is sent into the Department Office along with your deceased members list.

Your mission delivery stories and photos are what need to be sent to the district and department chairmen with a copy to the Department Office. We are asking for a short synopsis of your activity. What did you do?

This can be the same information that is given to your unit members when you report to them about the activity at your unit meeting. This should be a short description of your mission in action.

Showing others through words and photos what you are doing in service to veterans, active military, your communities and our youth. The expectation is that these reports are sent electronically so there is no postage required.

It is also requested that you send them throughout the year each time you complete an activity your unit believes is worth reporting. Send the information while it is fresh in your mind. These are the stories that the department chairmen will use to determine trophy and award winners and in turn pass along to the national chairmen to tell the story of the Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary's year of service.

It is not just a numbers game anymore. It's about what we do that matters.

Change is difficult to embrace, when we have been doing the same thing for so many years. Change never comes as easy as we would like, but we learn from the lessons so we can do better moving forward. We are proud Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary members, and we are evolving to endure!

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



Sending in content

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

See Page 3 for the All-Legion Family Calendar.

The 2022 Department Convention is on horizon

WILLMAR — District conventions are happening throughout the early weekends of June, and, before you know it, we will be holding our 2022 Department Convention.

Wow! This year has gone by very quickly.

The Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary Department Convention will be July 14-16 at the Willmar Conference Center.

Prior to the convention, the Department Executive Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 13, at 1 p.m. in Ruff's Wings & Sports Bar, inside the Best Western Plus that is attached to the conference center.

Auxiliary district caucuses will take place on both Thursday and Friday mornings 8-9 a.m. The convention sessions will

begin at 9:15 a.m. to allow everyone to get from their caucus to the convention hall.

Our special guest will be our own Northwestern Division National Vice President Dee Dee Buckley. The Department Constitution and Standing Rules committee members have been working this year to align our documents, so there will be resolutions to consider as well.



Leadership attendees help to stuff bags for Project Stuff Sack.



President Patti Coleman displays a finished sack for Project Stuff Sack.

Have you heard of the national Project Stuff Sack effort?

ELK RIVER —The final leadership training of the year was held at Elk River on April 30. There were members of the entire Legion family in attendance.

One of the activities of the day was for members to participate in Project Stuff Sack, a national Children & Youth initiative that all departments participated in. Members brought items for military children that they stuffed into a sack for distribution throughout the state.

A hair-dyeing challenge for all of Minnesota

By Linda Kelly
Membership Chairman

Last count we are at 93.51 percent. We are hoping to get to 95 percent by Poppy Day and eventually to 100 percent.

Wouldn't you like to see me with red, white and blue hair?

I already have the white — just have to add the other colors.

If the Department of Minnesota reaches 100 percent of our goal by July 1, I will come to the Thursday meeting of our Department Convention in Willmar with red, white, and blue hair.

Wouldn't that be a sight? I am challenging all of us to work hard for that renewal, rejoin or new member. We can do it. First, there are over 80 units that need only one or two memberships to meet goal. That said, there are also units among us that are struggling

Membership as of May 11							
DISTRICT	# of Units	Goal	Period Gain	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year	Difference from Last Year
One	48	3,802	53	3,470	91.27%	3707	237
Two	72	3,745	42	3,511	93.75%	3642	131
Three	46	3,671	10	3,526	96.05%	3567	41
Four	7	563	5	494	87.74%	544	50
Five	7	509	3	446	87.62%	488	42
Six	62	4,855	21	4,623	95.22%	4721	98
Seven	60	2,970	16	2,779	93.57%	2887	108
Eight	25	1,214	17	1,108	91.27%	1180	72
Nine	49	3,239	17	2,991	92.34%	3143	152
Ten	44	3,765	22	3,419	90.81%	3670	251
1982 Dept	1	203	0	186	91.63%	203	17
District Totals:	421	28,536	206	26,553	93.05%	27752	1,199

to get their membership to where it was last year. I understand the battle, and I hope that you will continue to work towards your goal — we are all behind you.

Look at your list of unpaid members — divide those names among your members and give them a call. Tell them you miss them and ask them to send in their membership or better yet, volunteer to stop

by and pick up their check.

A couple of years ago, I spoke at our school's annual Veterans Day program. During my presentation I asked anyone that had served our country to stand, and I thanked them for serving. I also asked anyone (adults and students) to stand if their spouse, parent, sibling, child or grandchild had served or was currently serving in our military.

The number that stood was amazing and very surprising. I told them they were eligible to join one of the parts of the American Legion Family. There are so many possible members out there. Let's find them and ask them to join.

Good luck this month. I hope I need to come with colored hair. My hair hasn't been anything but gray and white for a loooooong time.

Unit members share memories of heroes in their community

By Janet Stoltz
Norwood Young America
Unit 343

NORWOOD YOUNG AMERICA — Monday, May 2, was more than just another American Legion Auxiliary Unit 343 meeting.

It was a planning and work session for several upcoming events: Selecting a Central High School senior girl for the \$300 Outstanding Citizen Award from the class of 2022, the upcoming Rada Cutlery fundraiser, sixth-graders poppy poster contest, prepare for the poppy distribution in the Norwood-Young America area, the Unit 343 election of officers, plan the Flag Day party at Peace Villa and Memorial Day duties.

Traditionally May is known to many for Memorial Day activities: picnics, barbecues, fishing, the unofficial start of summer events, but to veterans and their family members, it is a way to honor those veterans who gave their all for this great country.

In honor of our veterans, the Unit 343 members, after concluding their meeting, decided to have an old-time show and tell. The following are some

Told of how well these cemeteries are maintained and how easy it is to find the location and gather info on American veterans buried there.

After one of her trips, she prepared a display board of info about Edward Born, the namesake of the Norwood Young America post and unit. She suggested that members visit the NYA Willkommen Heritage & Preservation Society to see this exhibit.

One mentioned and showed jewelry made from items in her husband's military sewing kit from buttons and metals.

On March 31, 1944, one dad entered the Navy during World War II and was sent to the Naval Training Center at Great Lakes Naval Base. He took part in the Battles of Guam, Iwo Jima, Leyte Gulf, Luzon and the Marianas, while on the aircraft carrier USS Storm King. The date of his separation from the Navy was May 25, 1946. He



This Auxiliary member shows off her grandma's Blue Star banner from World War II.

that he was buried in his VFW uniform.

Another member's father, now 90-years-old and a great uncle, said it is hard to get them to talk about their service days but they are trying to get them to share some of their memories.

A husband of one member that served in Vietnam said that he doesn't want to remember those days, but he has lasting nightmares and health issues because of it.

A brother of one member was wounded twice, treated and returned to fight again before being wounded a third time so badly that he was sent to a hospital in Germany before given an honorable medical discharge and sent home, only to be greeted at the Minnesota airport by protesters that spit on him and shouted "Baby Killer!"

He still has shrapnel in his body, doesn't go to any fireworks celebrations, suffers from flashbacks and nightmares and visits the VA medical center regularly. A few years ago, a student at the local high school asked him to speak to his civics class about his days in the service during Vietnam. Days after giving his presentation, he experienced such trauma while at work that his co-workers call 911 for help in getting him to

the VAMC.

The next year when the teacher called him to speak to his civic class again, because he did such a good job the previous year, he said "NO!" He couldn't go through that again.

An Army veteran (a member's husband) couldn't talk about his actions during his service days for many years because what he did was highly "classified." After returning to civilian life, when he wanted to join the local VFW, he was denied membership because they said Vietnam was not a war.

The American Legion welcomed him and his service to this great country even though the Vietnam conflict was not recognized as "war."

That's why even today he is only a member of The American Legion and said that he will never join the VFW even after his records were declassified and the VFW organization asked him to join. Since his discharge in 1970, he has only met one other veteran that even knew or heard about the exclusive group of guys that carried the small nuclear weapons in their backpacks and had to be ready at all times, officially stationed in Germany but traveled to many "classified" areas at a moment's notice. He only talked about the fun things he was able to do, the service centers and the other places he visited during his free time.

On Memorial Day, it is a great honor and a responsibility to recognize people who died while serving in the Armed Forces. If the news events each day in Ukraine don't make you thankful for ALL that we have here in the USA, I truly feel sorry for you. The Ukrainians are fighting for what we take for granted every day.

Executive secretary's note: Even though this issue is after we just celebrated Memorial Day, I thought that this was a great example of what a unit did to celebrate and remember their heroes.



This member talks about a book on cemeteries in Europe where Americans are buried.

memories shared.

One brought Grandma's Blue Star banners, a small memento cloth that French women handed soldiers as they marched forward. Also, we read an article from a 1945 issue of "Warweek" explaining a liberation of the Gestapo Prison of Cologne by the arriving Americans.

Another showed pictures and memorabilia collected during trips to European cemeteries where USA veterans are buried.

was depressed from seeing his friends being killed and died on June 19, 1955, at age 29 and is buried at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. She also had two brothers in the military — one in the Army and another in the Naval Air Corps that flew with pilot eye-level with soldiers.

One member said that her dad wouldn't talk about his days in the service, but he valued his membership in The American Legion and VFW so much so



Michele Smith of Unit 112 hands a \$300 big check to Rachael and T.J. Hill with the Jeff Hill Legacy Fund on May 21.

Elk River unit donates to AFROTC scholarships

ELK RIVER — On May 21, T.J. Hill, held his National Honor Society project, a one-mile run through Woodland Trails in Elk River. His project piggy-backed off of the Jeff Hill Legacy Fund's virtual 5K.

All proceeds went to the JHLF fund with 100 percent going directly to fund scholarships for Air Force ROTC cadets.

Elk River Unit 1st Vice President Michele Smith presented a check in the amount of \$300 to Rachael and T.J. Hill for the fund. Air Force Capt. Jeff Hill was one of the crewmembers killed in a C-17 plane crash on July 28, 2010, in Alaska. The JHLF was created with the mission of providing educational financial assistance for young cadets in the Air Force ROTC program. A memorial scholarship is presented each spring to deserving applicants from the University of Alaska-Anchorage, the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Minnesota has 2 winners for NW Division scholarships

We have received word from our National American Legion Auxiliary that Minnesota had two winners for scholarships in the Northwestern division. Congratulations to both of these winners:

- Children of Warriors National Scholarship: \$5,000, to Kaitlyn Kirchner, Lake Crystal-Memorial High School
- Nontraditional Student Scholarship: \$2,000 to April Jespersen, Warba Unit 432

Girls State to convene on June 12 at Bethel

ARDEN HILLS — The 75th session of American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will convene on Sunday June 12 at Bethel University in St. Paul. It will be so nice to finally have our group in-person to celebrate this milestone and amazing program for our participants.

Thank you to the units that persevered and were able to find girls who are interested in participating in this experience. Your commitment to the Girls State program is unwavering and we salute you for that!

We are excited to have many of our volunteer speakers and presenters back as well as the traditional day at the Minnesota State capitol. The long time staff members at both the House and Senate have all expressed their thanks that our program is back and are ready to greet our citizens. Look for more information in next month's Legionnaire.



The Monticello American Legion Auxiliary, Junior Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion gathered at the club on March 26 to create May baskets for the care center residents and for our WWII and Korean Veteran Members of Post 260. The baskets were filled with treats and delivered in May.

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A message to the readers

Editor's note: I know this issue was unable to have space for the ever-popular "Listening Post" section of the paper, where posts send us photos of their activities. Trust me. Those are my favorite pages. I plan to have extra "Listening Post" pages in the July issue. Funds are tight as a result of increasing postal rates. In May 2021, the U.S. Postal Service raised rates on periodicals by 8 percent, and it is hurting us. Among other steps, the Board of Publications and I, over the course of the summer, will encourage many younger readers to opt for email PDF delivery, so that we afford to mail copies to older readers who prefer paper. We oppose raising dues.

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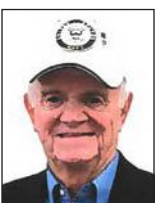
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Mike Petersen
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