



## CVSO group marks 75 years

Organization works toward consistency

NEW ULM — This is the 75th year of the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers, but their plans for the big year were wiped out by the COVID-19 pandemic.

But you know how a first convention takes place in the zero year? That mean the MACVSO 75th convention happened last September, in the 74th year of the organization.

"Who would have thought that the next year we would have to cancel our gatherings marking the anniversary?" said MACVSO President Greg Peterson.

Funny enough, the MACVSO bylaws say they must have an annual meeting, and Peterson hopes that can be accomplished online. The bylaws specify voting with paper ballots, so they will have to address that aspect.

The county veteran service officers help veterans, but, as a professional society, MACVSO helps the county veteran service officers. Peterson said the organization is developing a vision, with goals and objectives.

"We want all CVSOs to operate consistently on a core set of standards," Peterson said.

For example, the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs sends

Continued on Page 2



Greg Peterson

# Masks ... on the double

Quilts of Valor out of Dent, Maine Twp., Fergus Falls fulfills orders for veterans

DENT — Five thousand four hundred masks.

From a partnership between Quilts of Valor and The American Legion.

For veterans and staff at VA hospitals and state veteran homes.

All made by a dedicated group of quilters.

This is patriotism in action during the age of COVID-19.

Quilts of Valor members award quilts to veterans "touched by war," but when it began in 2004, the quilts went to veterans who experienced combat in the Global War on Terror. That morphed over time to GWOT veterans wounded physically or psychologically. Then to any war. Then to its present phrase "touched by war."

The state coordinator for Quilts of Valor is Jenny Caughey, and she is one of 33 members of the Dent-based group of quilters, and they call themselves Comfort for Courage. Dent is about 10 miles away from Perham, and the members are from around those towns. They work closely with two other Quilts of Valor groups in the area: Fergus Falls and Maine Township.

Fergus has about 80 quilters and calls itself Caring Hearts. Maine has a little more than 20 and goes by Loving Hands.

Like many quilters, they aren't ones to tout their story. They create and give and create and give and create and give some more, because the two actions make them feel good inside. It's not about getting ink in the newspaper or the attention of the community.

But Caughey is a big advocate for her dedicated volunteers and she told a brief history of the Comfort for Courage group of women.

By 2008, they had created and given quilts to many of the qualifying veterans in their area. They contacted Andy Riewer, whose brother, Greg, of

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Mary Ann Strauch, left, and Debra Larsen, center, remove fabric cut in the shape of facemasks from the AccuQuilt fabric cutter on June 2, while Janelle Lotzer sets the pieces on a cutting mat.



Paulette Hoebelheinrich of Fergus Falls drops off finished masks at the Dent Community Center on June 2. The Quilts of Valor group in Dent gets them to The American Legion's distribution network, bringing them to veterans' medical care facilities across the region.

## Vets organizations desire to be heard by lawmakers

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Commanders' Task Force, a body that meets monthly and pushes for veterans-related legislation, voiced their displeasure and frustration with lack of access to state lawmakers at their June meeting.

"I'm very concerned that other interests will take the day next year," Robert Hart, legislative director for The American Legion Department of Minnesota, told lawmakers on June 16.

The CTF is made up of nine



Rob Ecklund

congressionally chartered veterans organizations, and the chairman, Paralyzed Veterans of America Vice President Todd Kemery, had invited House and Senate leadership to the June 16 discussion held virtually over Zoom.

Instead, District 39A Rep. Bob Dettmer, Republican and Legion member with Forest Lake Post 225, and District 3A Rep. Rob Eck-

lund, DFLer and International Falls resident whose Legion membership is with Crosslake Post 500, joined the meeting. Both serve on the House

Veterans Affairs Committee, and Ecklund is the chairman.

Ecklund said every veterans-related bill went through the House Veterans Affairs Committee, then went elsewhere to die.

"This whole COVID thing just upset the whole apple cart," he said.

The Legislature took a five-week hiatus when the pandemic restriction began in mid-March.

He said if there is a session in July — and now, one is expected, as Gov. Tim Walz would like to see a bonding bill passed — there is hope for getting



Bob Dettmer

veterans-related legislation approved.

Dettmer said the main piece of funding the Legislature secured was \$6.2 million in COVID-19 grants for veterans financially impacted by the pandemic. (See story on Page 2.) Lawmakers also secured \$250,000 for the Medal of Honor Memorial outside the Veterans Service Building in St. Paul.

He said the Legislature in June approved \$62.5 million in grants for small businesses impacted by COVID-19, of which \$2.5 million

Continued on Page 2

**2020 Fall Conference Official Registration**

Mail to:  
Roberta Nyquist  
Nisswa American Legion  
P.O. Box 427  
Nisswa, MN 56468

**Registration sliding fee:**  
Registration received by Oct. 1: \$15  
Registration received after Oct. 1: \$20

Registration fees are for each person attending, except for Junior SAL and Junior Auxiliary members. Please copy and send a separate form for each person attending. All delegates, alternates and guests must pay the registration fee.

Please indicate "Fall Conference" on the memo line.  
Please make checks payable to:

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**Conference dates:**  
Oct. 22-24, 2020

**Headquarters hotel:**  
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Breezy Point, MN 56472

**Contact the hotel directly for your reservations:**  
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**Breezy Point Resort was a popular place for the rich and famous in the Roaring 20s. Today, it features a convention center, three 18-hole golf courses, a boat marina, an ice arena, four restaurants, four bars, cabins, condos and a resort hotel.**

## Fall Conference is on for Breezy Point Resort

NISSWA — The 2020 Department Convention planned for July and the 2020 National Convention planned for August were cancelled, along with Spring Meetings, Boys State, Girls State, Legion Baseball, Legionville, Veterans Day on the Hill and on and on and on, so it's a given Legion members across Minnesota will be happy to see each other again at the 2020 Fall Conference, slated for Oct. 22-24 at Breezy Point Resort in Nisswa.

The Fall Conference is the Legion Family's annual school of instruction. Please see the registration form to the left.

Participants should make their own reservations and should ask for Block 253750 to get

the Legion rates. It is \$110 a night for standard rooms with two queen beds, two double beds or one king bed with a pullout sofa. It is \$149 a night for suites with two double beds or a king bed with a pullout. It is \$149 a night for a lodge apartment, too, which has two doubles and a pullout.

There are three-bedroom and two-bedroom condos. People can call or email for availability.

Online registrations are preferred by Sept. 15. The group coordinator password is BLK253750.

The inquiry email is mmorris@breezypointresort.com. The website is www.breezypointresort.com. The phone is 800-432-3777.

## There's plenty o' money in the COVID grant fund

ST. PAUL — Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Deputy Commissioner Brad Lindsay said veterans still can apply for grant money if they have been financially impacted by COVID-19.

"There's still money available," he said. "We would like to spend it by the end of the calendar year, but we've got it until June 30, 2021, technically."

Lindsay said the best way for vets to apply for the grant right now is to see their county veteran service officer, who then helps with the forms. The MDVA also has a website at minnesotaveteran.org/covidrelief.

The Minnesota Legislature, when passing the late March COVID-19 relief package, allocated \$6.2 million for veterans impacted by the statewide COVID-19 shutdown.

The MDVA administers the funds, and the amounts are \$1,000 for the Disaster Relief Grant and \$3,000 for the Special Needs Grant.

The first kind goes to Minnesota statute-qualifying veterans impacted financially by the pandemic. The second is a one-time assistance to a qualifying veteran or surviving spouse in financial trouble, and the money goes directly to the vendor or creditor, not the applicant.

Lindsay said the MDVA has spent \$2,153,000 on the Disaster Relief side and \$59,665 on the Special Needs side. That means \$3,987,335 remains, as of 3 p.m. June 23, when The Minnesota Legionnaire interviewed the deputy commissioner.

The MDVA has received 4,973 applications. Its staff has approved 2,153 of the Disaster Relief Grants and 29 of the Special Needs Grants. It has denied 249 of the Disasters and 41 of the Specials. It has requested additional information on 2,145 Disasters and 48 Specials.

Processing, Lindsay said, is down to 5.9 days. It was more than a month when the program began and applications flooded in as a result of the shutdown.

He said the staff averages 139 decisions a day, and, at 3 p.m. June 23, there were 188 to process. The staff would have caught up probably by June 24 or 25. He said it then can double back on the ones where additional information was sought.

By comparison, MDVA typically processes about 250 applications for the State Soldier's Assistance Program a month. This once-in-a-lifetime help assists with finances and, of course, was in place before COVID-19. Veterans apply through the local CVSO.

Lindsay said the MDVA was able to shift resources to have people, from campus representatives to the claims staff to the veterans preference officer, focusing on the financial assistance.

"Either you are at the cemetery, a veterans home or you are processing COVID-19 grants," he said.

## Veterans treatment courts would save \$1.3 million in 2 years

Continued from Page 1

must go to veteran-owned businesses. Walz later signed the measure.

Dettmer said he hopes the Legislature can address issues such as adjusting the Homestead Market Value Exclusion so surviving spouses of veterans can do a one-time transfer of property to a lesser value, so they can live in a more manageable home. He said he wants to back veterans-oriented job fairs, recruiting access in college campuses and initiatives to reduce veteran suicides.

"We look to the CTF to give us priorities and awareness of veterans issues," he said.

### Veterans Restorative Justice Act

The main piece of legislation the veterans organization members said they would like to see get through the Legislature in July is the Veterans Restorative Justice Act, otherwise known as

veterans courts.

It almost passed in 2019, dying in conference committee, and it has received bipartisan support, as well as support from the state Supreme Court chief justice and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

Minnesota Management and Budget studied the bill and estimates it would save \$1.3 million in the first two years.

It allows judges to withhold pleas and assign help for veterans facing criminal behavior that can be connected to combat and other service-based trauma.

The American Legion passed a resolution at the 2016 National Convention in Cincinnati approving the establishment and expansion of veteran treatment courts. Legion Posts often are instrumental in working with judges to help defendants with PTSD find veteran-specific treatment, too, as well as personal support.

It has existed in 27 counties

as a pilot program started in 2008. The MDVA and CTF want it all across Minnesota as a regular part of the court system. There are zero upfront costs. It merely allows judges to take action.

Ecklund said the bill died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"I worked the senators as hard as we could. It never moved in the Senate," he said.

He said he was over in the Senate explaining it five times. He credited Dettmer for his efforts, too.

"Maybe we need to re-evaluate the bill to see where we are getting pushbacks," Dettmer said.

Ecklund said no legislation is ever perfect.

MDVA Legislative Director Ben Johnson said legislators who want to appear in favor of something but are really against it, instead, will find fault with wording, rather than come directly out opposed. The VRJA has been altered already.

"At this point, it seems like a fishing expedition to find fault, to find reasons not to support it," he said.

Dettmer and Ecklund suggested new strategies, such as using other legislators so they can get the political gain from supporting veterans legislation.

"Don't bring the bills to the same old faces," Dettmer said.

"I agree," Ecklund said, "especially freshmen."

They also suggested using their offices for meetings, rather than the Veteran Service Building, once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

They also suggested veterans statewide call the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee: Warren Limmer of Maple Grove.

His phone number is 651-296-2159.

In related news:

• Johnson and MDVA Chief of Staff Mike McElhiney reported the MDVA was able to get 236 homeless veterans off

the streets to safety before the protests and riots occurred in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

• As of the Legionnaire's press time on June 26, the CTF is nailing down a time to meet virtually with Gov. Tim Walz in July and form its specific request of him and other lawmakers for the July session. The VFW's legislative officer, Tommy Johnson, said Walz promised during his campaign he would meet with the veterans on a quarterly basis. No meetings have since occurred since he took office.

• The CTF is forming its 2021 legislative agenda much farther in advance than the 2020 one, when it was done in December. This cycle, the body is hoping to solidify its platform in July and August, which gives it time to publicize the proposed measures through the fall and garner statewide support.

"The CTF is starting to grow some legs, it seems," said Kemery, the chairman.

## County veteran service officers in rural offices know their vets

Continued from Page 1

out bronze star flag holders to CVSOs for Memorial Day. Brown County disperses them to each Legion Post, and the Legionnaires decorate the graves. Nicollet County has the Legion members drive to the courthouse in St. Peter, on the eastern edge of the county. That's about 42 miles at the farthest.

Peterson would like veterans across the state to know that the CVSOs are not under the control of MACVSO. They are not employees of the federal or state VA departments, either. They are employees of their respective counties. If there is

a problem with a CVSO falling down on the job, address it first with the CVSO or another one in the same office. If nothing results, contact a county commissioner.

He often explains it by using the sheriff as an example. Sheriffs work for the county, not for the FBI, even though they work with the FBI. They are not the feds. CVSOs are not the VA.

"For complaints, you got to go to the controlling body," Peterson said. "We are appointed, not hired, on four-year terms."

The American Legion has a service officer, too, if veterans aren't finding results with their claim via the CVSO.

Jeremy Wolfsteller works for the Legion out of an office at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and often can get direct answers. (612-467-3849)

MACVSO and the MDVA are happy to work with counties on hiring CVSOs, Peterson said, to help county board members choose the best person for the job, people who can do thorough research and tackle challenging situations.

"Even Agent Orange can be broad," he said.

Peterson has been working for Brown County out of New Ulm for 16 years now, and now and then even he encounters new situations in dealing with

the federal VA, usually in the appeals process.

He said appeals are often based on having more evidence. He said he would rather have a high-level conversation with proper documentation versus getting it on paper and having the wrong form and the veteran has gone home. Sometimes, the veteran lives 40 miles away, and in the winter, redoing the claim or appeal can be tough.

"There are a lot of factors that can make rural counties difficult to meet with out customers," Peterson said. "Generally, they are 55 years or older."

The younger veterans he encounters are asking about

the G.I. Bill or the Minnesota Military Appreciation Fund's \$500 grants to post-9/11 vets.

Seven metro-county CVSOs are utilizing the State Soldiers Assistance Program more frequently than rural counties, on a per-capita basis, Peterson said.

He said he knows all the Vietnam veterans in his county. If something comes out with Agent Orange, he can mail a letter to each one. He mentioned building a database of Navy Blue Water veterans.

"Our goal is 100 percent benefits," he said. "We make certain these people get every benefit they are entitled to."

Editor's note: Many readers sent items to The Minnesota Legionnaire for this issue. They could not all fit, considering the many convention reports we print annually for the July issue, but we will aim for printing the remaining submissions in the next issue.



Memorial Day in Albert Lea was a rainy day without wind. The ceiling was only 200 feet with low visibility, and glassy water is like a mirror, making it hard for the pilot to determine height. Pilot Jim Hanson flew over Bridge Street and Katherine Island, instead, minimizing the distance to touchdown.



Albert Lea Post 56 Commander Jim Olson directs the Honor Guard. Broadway Avenue and downtown Albert Lea are in the background.

## Albert Lea ensures tradition goes on despite pandemic and weather

By Jim Hanson  
Albert Lea Post 56

The American Legion was founded in 1919 — 101 years ago.

Leo Carey Post 56 in Albert Lea was founded not that long thereafter, on Aug. 7, 1919. The Post follows the Legion mission of aiding and honoring veterans — and the Memorial Day tradition of honoring those who died on active duty.

At Albert Lea, a tradition was started immediately after World War II. The city surrounds Fountain Lake. Years ago, the Legion and the VFW decided that an appropriate way to honor all servicemen was to pay tribute to those who served on land, at sea or in the air by dropping a memorial wreath into Fountain Lake from an airplane.

Albert Lea Post 56 is situated on Albert Lea's Broadway Avenue — right downtown — and only a few hundred feet from Fountain Lake Park — and Fountain Lake.

With the Post closed for the COVID-19 pandemic, the question arose as to whether the traditional ceremony could be held. Because the Memorial Day ceremony needed only two people at the pier in the lake, and the four-man rifle squad, it would be easy to maintain "social distance."

I'm proud of my Post. *This is what the Legion exists for — to honor and aid our veterans and their families.*

*We would not miss this important duty!*

I am the longtime manager of the Albert Lea Municipal Airport — located only a mile and a half north of the lake.

Federal Aviation Administration regulations prohibit flight over "populated areas" unless a safe landing can be accomplished — except for takeoffs or landings. I chose a lake amphibian aircraft — it can operate from land or water. Since we were to make an intentional water landing, the regulation would not apply.

The ceiling and visibility were low, but better than the "one mile and clear of clouds" required by the FAA regulations. The landing to place the wreath in the water was scheduled for 9 a.m. — with the Honor Guard and presenters in place just before due to the rain.

We landed at 8:59 and taxied by the Legion Honor Guard and presenters precisely at 9 to drop the wreath in the water as "Taps" was played and the volleys fired. We turned for takeoff, and less than a minute later, landed at the airport.

Unlike previous years, there weren't many spectators to watch the ceremony in the rain — and that's OK, considering the social restrictions and the weather. I couldn't help but think that many of those being honored died in less than good conditions as well — as military veterans, we don't ask for much, and take what we can get. We keep faith with our fellow veterans.

I was so proud of our Legion Post — and the mission of honoring our veterans, their families, and aid those who need help. We continued our tradition of honoring fallen servicemen — a string of over 70 years (and I've been involved in 46 of them!).

*There was no way we would miss this mission to honor our veterans! It's who we are!*

## COBRA TIME!



This is the last in-shop inspection for Cobra 327. The Cobra 327 was moved to the Veterans Memorial Park in Fairmont in late June. From left are Victor Nguyen of the Minnesota Vietnamese Association, Joseph Grove of the state of Minnesota, local liaison Steve Chase and Thomas Cao of the Minnesota Vietnamese Association. The chopper will be a central part of the Aug. 1 dedication of the veterans memorial.

## Endorsements

### Post 428's Tom Fernlund endorsed for Department commander

Tom Fernlund has been endorsed by Silver Star Post 428 in Waite Park and the 6th District for Department Commander for the 2021-2022 year.

Fernlund served in the Air Force from 1981 to 1992. He is a 28-year honorary life member at Waite Park and served as post commander two terms and is currently the adjutant. On the District level, Tom served as 6th District commander, adjutant, vice commander, County Council commander, membership director and held several chairmanships.

On the Department level, Fernlund served as vice

commander, membership director, sergeant-at-arms and is currently the Strategic Planning Committee chairman.

On the National level, he serves on the Media and Communications Commission and is a 2007 graduate of The National American Legion College.

Fernlund is a member of ANA-VICUS, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 428, 40/8 Voiture 415, DAV and is the St. Cloud Area Metrovets Finance Officer. He has



Tom Fernlund

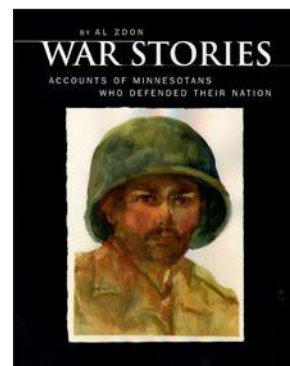
been employed at Rex Granite Co. in St. Cloud as a sales representative for 19 years.

Tom and his wife, Veronica (Air Force veteran and Past 6th District commander), have been married 31 years and have two sons, two daughters and two grandsons.

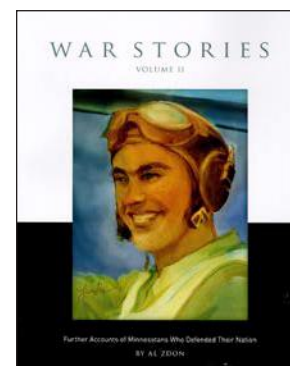
Daughter Kristen is a schoolteacher, daughter Kaitlin is currently serving in the Navy, son Michael is serving in the Minnesota Army National Guard and son Chris recently enlisted in the Air Force.

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# Legion leading the way in tough times

Greetings American Legion Family,

Thank you to our American Legion Family for providing support for all the National Guard soldiers and airmen who were deployed at various locations throughout Minnesota.

Many items of need were provided including food, various beverages, clothing items or just a simple "Thank you for your service." They are citizen soldiers and airmen and deserve our respect and gratitude for doing an outstanding job!

As we move into a new membership year, I'm asking each Legionnaire, Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion member to be an active participant in membership recruitment. Identify a program that you are passionate about and learn as much as possible about this program and be ready to explain it to a potential new member.

I'm personally learning something new about our Legion Family daily. Did you know that we have Auxiliary volunteers at each Minnesota Veterans Home and at the VA hospitals? They have been involved with identifying different items that are needed during these times of no visitation and notifying the proper Legion Family members to get these items delivered to the facilities.

I received a personal letter from the director of the VA Hospital in Minneapolis, Patrick J. Kelly, thanking The American Legion for their anonymous donations of masks. Items are being delivered to our Minnesota Veterans Homes on a weekly basis.

Thank you to our Legion Family Members for making a difference each day!

Below is a statement released on June 12, 2020, from our National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford. Please take the time and read his statement:

## American Legion National Commander: Unequal treatment violates nation's highest values

INDIANAPOLIS, June 12, 2020 — American Legion

## Commander's Column

Mark Dvorak



National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford issued the following statement today:

"The American Legion stands on principles and serves purposes worldwide that are violated when justice, freedom and democracy are not applied equally, regardless of race, color, creed or class. These principles formed the foundation of the organization over a century ago, in a very different and deeply divided time in U.S. society. As our nation grieves and tries to reconcile the unconscionable deaths of African-American citizens George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, retired St. Louis Police Capt. David Dorn, Federal Protective Services Officer Patrick Underwood in Oakland, California, and others, The American Legion stands firm in a value it has upheld, in the form of a national resolution, first adopted 1923:

WHEREAS, The fundamental law of our country guarantees to all peoples equal rights and equal opportunities and the right to worship their God as they see fit; and ...

WHEREAS, Membership of The American Legion is made up of those who served our country in a time of great national stress, without distinction as to race, color, creed or class; and ...

RESOLVED, ...That we consider any individual, group of individuals, or organizations, which creates, or fosters racial, religious or class strife among our people, or which takes into their own hands the enforcement of law, determination of guilt, or infliction of punishment, to be un-American, a menace to our liberties, and destructive to our fundamental law; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we consider such actions by any individual, groups, or organizations, to be inconsistent with the ideals and purposes of The American Legion.

"This resolution's place in The American Legion's conscience is so timeless it was reaffirmed, in full, at the organization's 99th National Convention in 2017.

"Throughout its history, The American Legion has fought to improve racial equality not only for veterans, but for the communities they serve. In 1919, African-American veterans of World War I were among the organization's founders who adopted a mission statement — the Preamble to The American Legion Constitution — that pledges among other things 'to maintain law and order,' 'promote peace and goodwill on earth' and 'safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy.'

"Where the law has been broken, justice must be served. Where freedom has been denied, it must be returned, without prejudice. Our nation has much to consider as we continue to strive toward a shared goal found in the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag: 'with liberty and justice for all.' All means all. Anything less than complete equality in the execution of these values today is as un-American now as it was in 1923."

The American Legion, www.legion.org, is the nation's largest veterans service organization and was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national defense, the care and wellbeing of U.S. military veterans, patriotic youth programs, and Americanism.

We salute National Commander Oxford for his timely article.

For God and Country, we continue to serve!

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

# 'For God and Country ...' still important

## Chaplain's Corner

Betty Jass



"For God and Country ..." are the first few words of our American Legion Preamble that we recite at the beginning of our American Legion Meetings throughout America.

"To the founders of The American Legion, service to country was service to God, and service to God was service to country, the two being mutually inclusive. We cannot stand without the other."

These words are still so important as we continue into the second phase of our coronavirus requirements. We still need to keep our hearts with both our God and country.

This coronavirus still holds many mysteries to us as we bravely extend our contact with each other in our daily lives. I know I often say a prayer before going out to get groceries or fill up my car with gas that God will keep my family and me safe from harm. I wear a face mask and rubber gloves to keep both myself and my community safe. We are looking at engaging and building our community and country's economics as we expand into Phase 2. There are still a lot of questions and fears and we need to keep taking care

of each other.

We need to continue doing our Enhanced Buddy Checks, whether completed by phone, in person or participating in "Zoom" meetings with family and friends. Our communicating with our families and friends helps us to remain strong and useful while finding out what phase two has in store for us. Keep God in your life so you can feel God's comfort and love through others. The stronger we feel, the more we can help others feel that strength too. We human beings were created for lives of peace but find ourselves living in a dangerous world, and so we depend on the strength of God in our personal spiritually and in our country, the military, to resist evil and create conditions where justice and peace can thrive.

From all walks of life, our American Legion members and our communities think of America as both a gift of God and that we live here is an act

of grace.

"The founders of The American Legion — warriors and preachers alike — have given us a great gift. Our veterans have helped secure that gift. In every gift, there is a responsibility." And "For God and Country ... our responsibility is to take care of each other, even during the coronavirus, and keep our country safe and secure.

"Dear God, we pray that this coronavirus ends soon. Please give our first line responders the knowledge and capabilities to find a cure quickly. We pray that you keep everyone safe and our economies growing stronger as we enter Phase two requirements. We ask for this in God's name, Amen."

Visit [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).

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

## Mail Call

Editor's note: We are happy to print your opinions. Unhappy about someone in the Legion Family? Then it makes sense to speak directly to the person first.

### 2 thoughts on the U.S. flag

Two things on my mind: Recently House Speaker Nancy Pelosi presented a folded U.S. flag. While the man should not have died in the manner that he did, he was not a hero!

In fact, he had a history of criminal behavior. Presenting a folded U.S. flag has always been reserved as a symbol of honor to the family of someone who has honorably served their country or in the case of firemen or police officers of service to their community. The man did not deserve this action! I believe that The American Legion should strongly condemn the action of Nancy Pelosi!

The other thing on my mind is the recent discussions at the National Football League. Drew Brees stated that everyone should respect the American flag. He was immediately ridiculed and forced to apologize and to say that NFL players have a right to protest. Since when is respecting the U.S. flag controversial and something that needs to be apologized for?

When I was in basic training and throughout my 25-year career with the U.S. Air Force Reserve, it was always impressed on me that when I was wearing the uniform, I was representing the U.S. Air Force and that I was not allowed to attend political events, nor should I voice political opinions on the president or other superiors and to always conduct myself in a manner to bring respect and honor to the uniform.

When in civilian clothes and off duty, I had all of the freedoms of every other American. The NFL should be no different. When on the field and in

### How to send ...

Send letters for Mail Call to [tengstrom@mnlegion.org](mailto:tengstrom@mnlegion.org). Make the subject line "Mail Call" or "Letter."

uniform they represent their team and the NFL. They are there and are being highly paid to perform athletic competition, not to protest.

The fans pay to watch a

sports competition, not to hear or see protests or disrespect to our U.S. flag or national anthem. The players have every right to protest when off the field and not in uniform. I believe that The American Legion should strongly condemn any disrespect to our flag by the NFL and its players!

Thank you for hearing my opinion.

James Mueller  
USAFR (Retired)  
Lewiston Post 90

The Minnesota

# Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

Official publication of  
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Department of Minnesota

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DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

Editor's note: Cartoonist Dave Granlund donates these patriotic cartoons to The Minnesota Legionnaire. He is a longtime member of Waconia Post 150. His cartoons are syndicated nationally in newspapers nationwide. We thank and salute him for his gift and for his military service.

# What's happening?

## Martin County Veterans Memorial event is Aug. 1

The big item on all calendars is the Aug. 1 dedication of the Martin County Veterans Memorial.

It features the "Snake," a Bell Cobra Attack Helicopter 327 that actually served in combat in Laos and Vietnam from 1968 to 1971. Vietnam War

veterans on both sides of the conflict from all across the country are expected to attend, many of them chopper pilots.

Five states were vying for acquisition of the Cobra, but hard work by the Martin County veterans and the state government of Minnesota brought it to Fairmont.

Often restoration work on military equipment happens out of the town where it is intended to be displayed, but in this case, there were Minnesotans who had experience repairing Cobras,

and they leaped at the chance to restore one.

The dedication ceremony begins at 9 a.m. Aug. 1 and features a parade, VIPs, and even family members of soldiers who served on this very helicopter.

All U.S. military veterans are invited to hang their dog tags from the display pedestal. Dog tags are available for order by emailing [mcvmdogtags@gmail.com](mailto:mcvmdogtags@gmail.com).

The memorial is at 507 Winnebago Ave. in Fairmont. COVID-19 guidelines

will be followed, organizers say.

## The 2nd Nest is the 2nd's project

The American Legion Family of the 2nd District of Minnesota invites all veterans and their families to a presentation of the District Family Project.

Legion 2nd District Commander Brad Pagel said it will be at 5 p.m. July 18 at the Eagle's Healing Nest,

1001 E. Elm St., in Redwood Falls.

"If anyone still wants to help donate monetarily or items needed for the Nest, they can be brought there that night," Pagel said.

Country singer Connie Lee will give guided tours and perform afterward. The location of the performance has yet to be determined, Pagel said.

"We hope to see everyone there," he said.

The original Eagle's Healing Nest is in Sauk Centre.

## Taps



**Adamek, Donald E.**, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died June 7, 2020. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

**Anderson, Jerome C. "Swede,"** 80, Navy veteran of the Vietnam era, died May 30, 2020. He was a member of Worthington Post 5.

**Backlin, Sigfred,** 93, Army veteran of World War II and Korean War, stationed domestically for both, died June 11, 2020. He was a member Richfield Post 435.

**Berg, Harold,** 100, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 13, 2020. He was a 30-year member of Faribault Post 43.

**Billmark, Roy E.**, 94, Merchant Marine veteran of World War II, died June 5, 2020. He was a 55-year member of Milaca Post 178.

**Boman, Arnold W.**, 71, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 31, 2020. He served in Vietnam with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, F Troop. He was wounded in May 1971 and awarded a Purple Heart. He was a 46-year member of Middle River Post 444.

**Bombardier, Earle E.**, Army veteran of World War II, died April 19, 2020. He was in the 101st Airborne Division and survived 10 1/2 months as a POW in Europe. He was a member of Fergus Falls Post 30.

**Bongers, Kenneth,** 76, National Guard veteran of the Vietnam era, died May 12, 2020. He was a member of Faribault Post 43.

**Briggs, Martin "Marty,"** 86, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died June 12, 2020. He was an aviation electrician. He was a 63-year member of Hutchinson Post 96.

**Buckingham, Lyle W.**, 95, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 1, 2020. He served on the USS Hector (AR-7) and at the naval base at Ulithi Atoll. He was a 40-year member of Monticello Post 260.

**Carver, Russell,** 87, Army veteran of Korea era, died June 2, 2020. He was a 58-year member of Faribault Post 43.

**Ellingson, Merle,** 82, Army veteran of Vietnam, died May 30, 2020. He was a 53-year member of Fergus Falls Post 30.

**Emmons Jr., Harold G.**, 84, Army Reserve veteran of the Vietnam era, died May 30, 2020. He was a member of Winona Post 9.

**Englund, Wendell,** 92, Army veteran of the Korean War who served in Germany, died May 17, 2020. He was a 62-year member of Evansville Post 188.

**Entinger, Donald M.**, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 18, 2020. He was a member of New Prague Post 45.

**Erickson, John O.**, 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, wounded during his second tour, died May 14, 2020. He was a member of West Duluth Post 71.

**Evans, Gerald L.**, 92, Army veteran of Korea, died April 11, 2020. He was a 35-year member of Richfield Post 435.

**Evenson, Arlin "Arly,"** 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean era, died May 31, 2020. He was a 55-year member of Breckenridge Post 53.

**Fieldsend, 86,** Army veteran of Korea, died June 5, 2020. He was a 44-year member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Franta, Dennis A.**, 81, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 30, 2020. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

**Freitag, Jack Gary,** 79, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 31, 2020. He was a 51-year member of Robbinsdale Post 251.

**Friesen, David,** 52, National Guard veteran, died May 31, 2020. He was a member of Lowry Post 253.

**Gjerde, Norman,** 72, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam era, died June 4, 2020. He was a member of New London Post 537.

**Green, Claude W.**, 86, Navy veteran of Korea, died May 19, 2020. He was a member of Long Prairie Post 12.

**Greenwood, Darcy L.**, 78, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died April 27, 2020. He served in the Signal Corps in Turkey. He was a member of La Crescent Post 595.

**Gustafson, Darwin,** 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam era and Army veteran of the Lebanon/Grenada era, died June 17, 2020. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Hagman, John R.**, 89, Army veteran of Korea, died April

## Obituaries

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

Please send to [tengstrom@mnlegion.org](mailto:tengstrom@mnlegion.org) or in the mail to the Department of Minnesota.

25, 2019. He was a 64-year member of Aitkin Post 86.

**Hassel, Frank "Pete,"** 90, Navy veteran of the Korean era, died April 21, 2020. He was a member of Roseville Post 542.

**Heida, Lambert "Bert,"** 88, Army veteran during the Korean War, died May 24, 2020. He was a 51-year member of Raymond Post 420.

**Hilgren, Larro O.**, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died May 9, 2020. He was a member of Parkers Prairie Post 219.

**Hitchcock, Richard D.**, 84, Army veteran of the Korean era, stationed mainly in California, died March 13, 2020. He was a member of Fergus Falls Post 30.

**Hockert, Roger J.**, 88, Army veteran of the Korean era, died March 22, 2020. He was a 41-year member of Millerville Post 527.

**Hoodecheck, Robert A.**, 89, Army veteran of the Korean era, died May 28, 2020. He served two years as the secretary to the commanding general of Fort Hood, Texas. He was a member of Winona Post 9.

**Hooker, Melvin,** Freddie, 88, Army veteran of Korea, died June 1, 2020. He was a 55-year member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Jensen, Scott K.**, Army National Guard veteran for 20 years, died June 7, 2020. He was a member of Winona Post 9.

**John, James "Jim,"** 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 4, 2020. He was a 46-year member of Marshall Post 113.

**Johnson, Larry W.**, 71, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 29, 2020. He was a forward artillery observer and called in strikes. He was a member of Spring Grove Post 249.

**Juetten, John,** 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 2, 2020. He was the past commander and 67-year member of Hillman Post 602.

**Kamphenkel, Donald,** 94, Army veteran during Korean era, died June 5, 2020. He served at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal outside Denver, Colorado. He was a 72-year member of Long Prairie Post 12 and served 15 years as the gambling officer and was quick to volunteer for other jobs.

**Kinnan, Robert,** 89, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died March 18, 2020. He was awarded the Airman's Medal for saving his crew. He was a 33-year member of Crosslake Post 500.

**Kvam, Lee A.**, 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam era, died June 4, 2020. He was a 33-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Labrash, Earl,** 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 28, 2020. He was a 30-year member of Lake City Post 110.

**Lewis, William,** 82, Marine veteran of Korea, died June 7, 2020. He was a member of Faribault Post 43.

**Lyndsley, Walter J.**, 82, Marine veteran of the early Vietnam era, died March 30, 2020. He was a 40-year member and past commander of Minneapolis Court-house Post 310. He also was a past commander of the 5th District. He drove an Edina school bus for 25 years.

**Marquardt, 89,** Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 26, 2020. He was a 53-year member of Dodge Center Post 384.

**McLaughlin, Clarence,** 94, Army veteran of World War II, died May 10, 2020. He spent a year of his enlistment in occupied Japan. He was a 74-year member of Marshall Post 113.

**Petty, Marvin "Bud,"** 93, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 19, 2020. He was a paratrooper. He was a 42-year member of Hillman Post 602.

**Pitzl, Raymond A.**, 95, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 25, 2020. He served on the USS New Mexico and took part in many South Pacific battles. His ship awaited Japan's surrender while anchored off Tokyo Bay at the end of the war. He was a 37-year member of Roseville Post 542.

**Regan, William C.**, 73, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam era, died May 21, 2020. He was a 44-year member, first at De Graff Post 362 then Benson Post 62.

**Rich, David,** 78, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 20, 2020. He was a 37-year member of Anoka Post 102.

**Rolf, David,** 72, Navy veteran, died June 17, 2020. He was a 32-year member of Waconia Post 150.

**Rustad, Gordon,** 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died March 17, 2020. He was a 68-year member of Moorhead Post 21 and lived in Edina.

**Sagerhorn, Patrick J.**, 72, Navy veteran of Vietnam, died May 26, 2020. He was a 47-year member of Fergus Falls Post 30.

**Schmidt, Kenneth L.**, 77, Navy veteran of the Vietnam era, died Jan. 5, 2020. He was a 44-year member of Woodlake Post 556.

**Schoephoerster, Norman,** 97, Army veteran of World War II, died June 8, 2020. Serving in Europe, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. His division was scheduled to invade Japan. Instead, he paraded in the streets of Los Angeles to celebrate V-J Day. He was a 74-year member of Marshall Post 113.

**Schumacher, Donald,** Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 24, 2020. He was a member of Wanda Post 385.

**Starr, Dale,** 88, Army veteran of Korea, died June 9, 2020. He was a 64-year member of Hillman Post 602.

**Swentkofske, Thomas C.**, 84, Marine veteran of the Korean era, died June 2, 2020. He served in Korea, Japan, Panama and Puerto Rico. He was a member of Grand Rapids Post 60.

**Thoennes, Matthew J.**, 101, Army veteran of World War II, died June 13, 2020. He was a 39-year member of Millerville Post 527.

**Tobin, Michael L.**, 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died March 27, 2020. He served in the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He founded and coached a Legion-sponsored pellet rifle team. He was a member of Owatonna Post 77.

**Trullinger, Gerald D.**, 73, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 6, 2020. He served 13 months in Vietnam, then was stationed in San Diego. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

**Van Riper, Warren B.**, 97, Army veteran of World War II, died May 25, 2020. He was a 31-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Vokaty, Curtis,** 86, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died May 30, 2020. He was a 49-year member of Lowry Post 253.

**Wallner, Gerald,** 79, Air Force veteran of Vietnam, died June 12, 2020. He was a Legion baseball coach and a Legion member for 55 years. He was a past commander of Minneapolis Fire and Police Post 396. He was member of Marietta Post 156.

**Wendt, Melvin W.**, 93, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died May 18, 2020. He was a 50-year member of Fairfax Post 205. He served on the cargo ship USS Acheron (AKA-53).

**Werner, Leland "Pete,"** 93, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 18, 2020. He was a 65-year member and he was past commander, finance officer, Drum Corps member, Honor Guard member and honorary member of Jackson Post 130.

**Winans, Russell L.**, 88, Army veteran of Korea, died June 2, 2020. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Witte, Orland G.**, 85, Air Force veteran of the Korean era, died June 14, 2020. He was stationed in Okinawa, Japan, as an F-86D mechanic. He was a 33-year member of Brownton Post 143.

**Wood, David G.**, 85, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 17, 2020. He served an 18-month tour in Vietnam. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

**Zimmerman, Joe,** 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 19, 2020. He was a 65-year member of Anoka Post 102.

### Department of Corrections

An obituary for Ernest Hemp had an error. Here is how it should appear:

**Hemp, Ernest Elmer,** 78, Army veteran of the Korean era, died April 2020. He was stationed at Fort Barstow, California. He was member of Middle River Post 444.

# The 48-hour review is critical for service organizations to aid vets

The American Legion's national commander sends President Trump a letter on behalf of veterans, service-member, families and survivors asking on the president to instruct the secretary of veterans affairs to maintain the 48-hour review, a decades-old practice allowing veteran service organizations like the Legion to review benefits decisions for accuracy before those decisions are finalized.

As the world hunkers down from life as we know it, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs decides it is a great time to make a drastic change in the way the agency conducts its business, maybe hoping nobody notices. The drastic move involves the agencies collaboration with veteran service organizations allowing them to represent veterans filing for benefits.

Just to recap, veteran service organizations like The American Legion have trained staff across the country to advocate for veterans filing claims with the VA and by law, VA recognizes VSOs as a veterans' power-of-attorney or representative when navigating the bureaucracy of VA benefits. This great responsibility comes with special privilege for POAs to be able to effectively advocate for their claimant.

This privilege grants POAs access to VA's multiple software programs to view veterans claim files as they are being developed by the VA. Once VA has a veterans claim ready to rate, the VA contacts the POA office of jurisdiction

## VA & Rehabilitation

Jeremy Wolfsteller



informing them they have 48 hours to review their decision before the claim is promulgated or made final.

If the VSO acting as POA finds an error during the 48-hour review they can notify the VA to address the error. This is a critical part of the advocacy process that could affect a decision on a claim, whether being granted or the level of the disability percentage being awarded among other issues like retroactive pay, award dates and inadequate C&P exams. This critical process has prevented hundreds of thousands of veterans over the years from having their claims denied and having to be appealed. This has also directly assisted the VA preventing further Board of Veterans Appeals backlogs.

The Minnesota American Legion was way ahead of the importance of the 48-hour review practice and drafted a resolution addressing that the 48-hour review needs to be reworded to 48 business hours, which was passed during the 2017 National Convention in Reno Nevada. With this resolution on file, it is The American Legion's official position on the issue and has used this position to lobby Congress to draft legislation that if past would create a law that VA would have to allow a decision review process for POAs.

On May 19, Sen. Joe Tester of Montana introduced a bill called the Veterans Claims Transparency Act. This legislation will require VA to reinstate the 48-hour review.

This is The American Legion; this is how our members make a difference. We are a century old organization that will always ensure our veterans have a fair fight in the way they are treated.

For God and Country!

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

## TV station looks into VA

KARE-11 featured an investigative segment about the VA forcing veterans to go to examinations during the pandemic or possibly lose benefits, even after the VA also told them to stay home.

Find it at kare11.com under the headline "KARE 11 Investigates: Vets penalized for missing cancelled exams."

## Legion membership chart as of June 24

2020 Goal	Total 2019	Total 2020	Weeks Gain	Total Posts	Goal Posts	% Of Goal	
8,149	8,102	7,927	5	58	21	97.28%	8,061
6,497	6,426	6,091	1	84	14	93.75%	6,395
11,021	10,887	10,839	11	65	29	98.35%	10,913
2,136	2,107	2,072	0	18	5	97.00%	2,102
2,346	2,218	2,107	10	23	3	89.81%	2,311
10,891	10,827	10,486	12	71	32	96.28%	10,785
5,778	5,707	5,553	6	76	26	96.11%	5,670
3,788	3,737	3,550	2	40	6	93.72%	3,740
6,124	6,071	5,931	41	65	23	96.85%	6,026
9,108	9,043	8,685	11	54	13	95.36%	9,030
3,655	1,897	1,911	17	2	0	52.28%	1,893
69,493	67,022	65,152	116	556	172	93.75%	66,926

Same Date Last Year

## FOOD FOR MORE THAN THOUGHT



Heaven's Table Director Greta Lintelman accepts a donation of \$5,000 from Fairmont American Legion Post 36 Commander Steve Fosness.

# Why hire a veteran? More experience with diversity than typical college grads

"I used to work for the world's most diverse employer."

Working in private, for-profit businesses for most of my career, that's a phrase I would tell people, usually to other managers in discussions about our work staff but occasionally with members of the public when community diversity came up. People immediately wanted to know the employer.

"The U.S. Army," I replied.

But, really, I meant the entire U.S. armed forces. My point usually was about embracing diversity.

We lived, ate, worked, camped, showered, relaxed and partied with and fought alongside and took orders from people of all backgrounds across the country. We were willing to give our lives for each other, our brothers and sisters in arms.

As a result, I made lifelong friends of people from all over, and today I could easily travel the country without needing hotels, staying in homes of people from varied ethnicities, religions and talents.

What do they all have in common? They have a fricking sense of humor, for one.

For two, they know how to laugh together because they care deeply. Some civilians in big cities seem to act like robots, I swear. They have lost all feelings.

And third of all, in my experience, they all enjoy playing cards. I think cards — the most portable form of group entertainment — are a requirement to become a true warrior.

Colleges and universities strive for diversity and often market how diverse they are. Ooh! Aah! Look at us!

But in reality, most of them have nothing on the military.

The military doesn't market its diversity. That's because everyone is camouflage.

Still, the military can be proud of its record. It has been integrated longer than most of America.

## All-American

Tim Engstrom



President Harry S. Truman integrated it with Executive Order 9981 on July 26, 1948.

In 2017, 57 percent of members of the military were white, 16 percent black, 16 percent Hispanic. Around 4 percent were Asian and 6 percent were other.

Back in 2004, 36 percent of the active military were a racial minority, and by 2017, that number was 43 percent. Hispanics are the fastest-growing minority in the military. These are DOD numbers.

Collegesimply.com is a website that provides stats on universities and colleges, such as entrance test scores, high school GPAs and so on. It shares diversity figures, too. Let's see if these colleges can top 43 percent minority.

The University of Minnesota, it says, is 70 percent white and 30 percent minorities. That breaks down to 4 percent black, 4 percent Hispanic, 9 percent Asian, 4 percent mixed and 9 percent who marked "international." There were some fraction percentages, such as Native American or Pacific Islander and a smidgeon of "unknowns."

What's more, at 70-30, collegesimply.com rates the U of M as "medium" in terms of racial diversity.

My alma mater is Iowa State University. Collegesimply.com says it is 76 percent white and 24 percent minority. It gets a rating of "low."

Minnesota State Mankato also is 24 percent minority. North Dakota State is 14 percent minorities.

Clearly, military veterans have experienced far greater American diversity than your typical straight-to-college white graduates. It's another reason

to hire veterans.

Typically, military types don't even bother counting up the people based on skin color because diversity just happens throughout the armed services without an overt effort. I like to say we think in 22nd Century terms of all being on the same side, and we wish the civilian world would catch up to the military world and see us all as Americans. Sadly, it hasn't.

I know, yes, the military has racial problems that come up from time to time, but so do universities. I know mine did. I won a Hearst Award (and a scholarship) for my student-paper coverage of three black students. Iowa State's secretive kangaroo courts removed them from leading black student organizations, pretty much because these kids voiced opposition to the naming of a building.

But I think more and more colleges and universities are seeing the value of veterans on their campus, and that's a good sign.

I know a veteran who works at a community college in the Twin Cities, and he notes that, on campuses, too often the students break up into clubs and organizations by ethnicity and don't interact as much outside of classes as officials hope. But when you go to the veteran groups on any campus, you find people of all races in the same club.

Hearing that, I couldn't be prouder to be a veteran.

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

# Get to know American Legion Family

Greetings, American Legion Family.

The summer months are going by so fast. I hope everyone is doing OK and staying sane during the madness that is going on around the country.

I miss seeing all of the faces in our Legion family, but it has given me time to slow things down a bit. Work is very hectic, but most days I get to ride to work. The ride to and from work lets me reflect on why I love riding a motorcycle so much.

I would like to take this time and remind our family that we are not an MC (Motorcycle Club). We are a program of the American Legion. We are members of the Legion Family and love riding motorcycles.

## Legion Riders

Paul Hassing



We do some great things on behalf of The American Legion. Some of us can ride a lot, while others can only ride a little. We all do what we can.

Chapters shouldn't be penalizing people who can't make every meeting, or every ride. We should all be able to enjoy life, do the best we can, and make decisions based on our own priorities at the time. We are all at different stages in life, and that's what makes it such a great organization.

I urge all of you to learn as

much as you can about the American Legion Family.

The more you know about this great organization, the more you will see the bigger picture.

Thank you and love to all of you.

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





Sue Register sits in an outdoor courtyard chair at the Hastings Veterans Home, where she works as the volunteer coordinator.

## COLD WAR

# She brings her mission mindset to any task

Whether it is fixing aircraft for the Air Force or coordinating needs for the Hastings Veterans Home, Sue Register is on it

By Tim Engstrom

HASTINGS — Who in The American Legion in Minnesota doesn't know Sue?

Very few, that's who.

Sue Register, 65, is the volunteer coordinator for the Hastings Veterans Home, and she is the chaplain for Apple Valley Post 1776. She has been pictured in The Minnesota Legionnaire many times when members of Legion Posts bring donations for the Hastings Veterans Home or spend volunteer time there.

Got something to donate? Or time to spare? You go to Sue.

Right away, you can tell she was in the military. But not a lot of people know about her military years.

Register committed to the Air Force through the Delayed Entry Program while in high school in Fremont, Nebraska, where she grew up. She joined in 1973.

After basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, where all airmen go for basic (that is, up until COVID-19; so half of recruits go to Keesler AFB now), she went to Keesler in Biloxi to learn her specialty in avionics, the electronic systems on aircraft. She learned to fix bombing and navigation systems.

This was the '70s, and she found the military presence in Biloxi was not welcomed. She recalled seeing a bumper sticker that read: "Clean up, Biloxi. Kill an airman."

Register got involved in a drill-and-ceremony contest for the base and did well before leaving for her permanent duty station at McConnell AFB in Wichita, where she repaired KC-135 Stratotankers.

She became the first woman to earn Maintenance Man of the Month. Then

she was named Airman of the Quarter for the wing and the base. In 1975, she was Airman of the Year for the wing, base and the 8th Air Force, ending up as runner-up for Strategic Air Command.

She even got to work on Air Force One. Well, it was one of the backup Air Force One planes. The actual designation is for whichever one the president is aboard.

In 1976, Register was sent to California for further training before being sent across the Pacific Ocean to Osan Air Base in Korea. She worked on F-4 Phantoms and F-105 Thunderchiefs.

She was damned good at her job, among the very best, and she loved her line of work, too. But she got passed over for promotion because of her gender. A man got the promotion instead; higher-ups thought he needed the money because he was married.

She also found the U.S. military in Korea didn't treat the Koreans with much respect. It rubbed her the wrong way.

"Korea was a beautiful country, and the people are wonderful," she said.

Register was in Korea for the American Bicentennial on July 4, 1976. She and other members of the military had to paint everything red, white and blue. Then on the July 5 they began to paint it all back.

"There's your tax dollars at work," she said with a chuckle.

The time in Korea was for a year, and the airmen pretty much are stuck on base for that year. She worked an evening shift and would make a two-mile walk home every night after working on the aircraft.

Register did get off the base thanks to her love of sports. She was on the

women's volleyball team for the base and for all of the military in Korea. The base team got to travel to other bases, and the Korea team went all the way to the always-hot Philippines.

That was the same year that a tree just about ended the Korean ceasefire. Register worried she might not get to go home so soon.

An 80-foot Normandy poplar tree blocked the line of sight between the Bridge of No Return checkpoint and an observation post at the Joint Security Area. That's the part of the demilitarized zone near where soldiers are face-to-face and buildings are used for negotiations. The poplar had become a problem over the years. North Korean soldiers once held U.S. troops at gunpoint, and other Americans had to go get them to bring them back safely.

On Aug. 18, 1976, two captains (one American, one South Korean), an American lieutenant and 11 enlisted United Nations soldiers, with five South Korean civilians, went out to trim the tree. A North Korean lieutenant, nicknamed Lt. Bulldog, was upset when the American captain continued to trim the tree despite his objections. Lt. Bulldog ordered the guards to attack, and they bludgeoned the American captain and lieutenant to death before they could defend themselves. The U.N. cadre dispersed the North Koreans.

The United Nations launched Operation Paul Bunyan on Aug. 21, when a convoy of 23 American and South Korean vehicles hauling engineers and a security detail unexpectedly drove into the JSA. They were equipped with chainsaws and pistols. The South Koreans also sent a special taekwondo force, and the U.S. had Cobra helicopters overhead. Meanwhile, the

Air Force dominated the skies, and the USS Midway moved closer offshore. All along the DMZ, U.S. and South Korea prepared for war.

North Korean troops arrived in buses and, from two machine gun positions, watched the Americans fell the poplar, purposely leaving a 6-foot stump. It was cut down in 1987 and a stone monument to the two slain officers was erected. It is believed Lt. Bulldog was killed in a 1984 firefight at the JSA.

It was a frightening moment in Cold War history, but normalcy returned. Register got to return to the United States. She earned the Air Force Commendation Medal while in Korea.

The Air Force sent Register to George AFB in Victorville, California, out in the Mojave Desert.

The base closed in 1992 at the end of the Cold War. It now is a business and freight airport and an aircraft boneyard. The base's water supply was contaminated by jet fuel, benzene, pesticides and other toxic chemicals.

"But we were drinking that all the time," Register said.

There, she enjoyed working on the F-4s and F-105s again. And, again, she got the evening shift. She was used to being part of a team that strove for excellence, but, at George, the brass didn't like that she was so good at making repairs. She said they told her not to perform so well so that they could keep their staffing budgets.

"I told them the goal for me was to keep our pilots alive," she said.

Register became part of the Active Reserve. She was based out of Hill AFB in Utah, and the Air Force would fly her to Seattle monthly to work on C-130s. She found that she was competing with civilian technicians who didn't want military members fixing the planes so that civilians could get the jobs.

She got out of the Air Force in 1979 and went to school at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. She went on a church mission to Montana and Wyoming, too. She double-majored in agronomy and horticulture, and then got her master's degree in horticulture and plant physiology at

the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.

She was aiming to be a teacher, but there were no jobs in vocational agriculture instruction at the time. She sold ag chemicals in Utah and Idaho instead.

"You have to feed yourself so I went out and did that," Register said.

She got good at it and eventually became the general sales manager. She had a stint in Texas, then back in Utah, and she got married for a short time. She gave birth to a boy, John.

She and John moved to Minnesota in 1992 because her parents were living in Austin. Her father was a hog buyer for Hormel and had moved from that corporation's Fremont facility to the Austin plant.

Register started her own business in Austin and sought to raise John without day care. They lived across the street from Register's folks. The business was named SDS — Sue Dad Son.

"We did anything legal and moral," she said.

Lawn mowing, landscaping, nighttime cleaning and maintenance for Austin businesses. The son of SDS grew to become the Minnesota American Legion Scout of the Year in 2008 and was the national runner-up. At Austin High School, he earned All-Conference honors in tennis. Today, John works for US Bank in Salt Lake City, and he and his wife are expecting their second daughter.

Register did various jobs over the years, such as working at Home Depot. She also went on an 18-month mission trip with the Church of Latter-day Saints to Nauvoo, Illinois.

Shortly after, she got the job at the Hastings Veterans Home. It was 2015, and a friend in the VFW Military Order of the Cootie suggested she apply.

"I didn't have any of the qualifications they were looking for," Register said. "This is literally the best job for me. I am helping veterans by working with veterans. It's been a good run."

In the Cooties, she is junior vice commander for the state. She belongs to the Hastings VFW. She is active in the Zumbrota Amvets as Department of Minnesota first vice commander. And in addition to being in the Apple

Continued on Page 8



Post 1776's Sue Register used to repair the electronics on aircraft like this one, the McDonnell-Douglas F-4 Phantom II fighter/bomber.



Hastings Veterans Home volunteer coordinator Sue Register stands by the sign out front. The home has 200 domiciliary beds. It was converted from an old state hospital to a vets home in 1978.

# USS Mpls St. Paul is coming soon to St. Paul



By Pat Dolan

DULUTH — On June 15, 2019, the future USS Minneapolis Saint Paul (LCS-21) was christened by ship sponsor Jodi J. Greene, deputy under secretary of the U.S. Navy for policy, in an exciting side launch into the Menominee River at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine Shipyard in Marinette, Wisconsin.

The USS Minneapolis Saint Paul (LCS 21) will be one of the fastest combat ships in the U.S. Navy. The ship is designed for shallow water missions and near-shore combat and to defeat asymmetric “anti-access” threats such as mines, quiet diesel submarines and fast surface craft. The ship will be homeported in Mayport, Florida.

In July 2019, Duluth was identified as the port where the ship will be commissioned. The commissioning is expected to take place in the spring of 2021.

So why does it take so long to go from ship christening to commissioning?

There are many milestones the

The Latin motto of “Aut Viam Inveniam Aut Faciam” translates to “I Will Find a Way or Make One.” The Minneapolis-St. Paul is among the first Freedom-class littoral combat ships to be fitted for anti-submarine warfare.

ship and the crew must pass before the official commissioning ceremony. While the outer part of the ship’s hull is done, there is still a lot of work to be done to complete the inside of the ship. The shipbuilder at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine Shipyard is completing construction and fitting out of the ship. Fitting out includes installation of the ships power plant, engine, other machinery, installation of electrical, plumbing, and HVAC, finishing interior spaces and installation of all furnishings.

This is much like the construction of a large hotel or office building where you see the outside is done, but before the building is open, a lot of interior work must be completed. Once the interior and exterior of the ship is complete and prior to commissioning, the ship undergoes builders and sea trials in Lake Michigan. This gives the shipbuilder and the crew the opportunity to test the design, equipment, and other ship specific systems to ensure that they work properly and to identify any deficiencies that need to be corrected.

So what does the ship’s crew do during the time between christening and commissioning?

USS Minneapolis Saint Paul will be manned by 140 sailors. 107 of those sailors are currently in Mayport, Florida and have been training vigorously in order to be able to operate the ship. Minneapolis Saint Paul sailors will be the first anti-submarine warfare (ASW) LCS in the naval fleet.

ASW is the branch of underwater warfare that uses surface warships, aircraft, or other submarines to find, track, and deter, damage, or destroy enemy submarines. Sonar technicians from the ship attended the first LCS sonar class to be taught for the fleet in San Diego to qualify on the ASW mission package. Other ship sailors have attended training at the LCS Training Facility in Mayport.

Also, sailors from the ship have gone underway with several LCS’s to support certifying events for those ships but to also receive training onboard and qualifying in their



The future USS Minneapolis Saint Paul (LCS-21) was christened June 15, 2019, in an exciting side launch into the Menominee River at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine Shipyard in Marinette, Wisconsin.

watch stations to return and train other Minneapolis Saint Paul sailors.

Crew members have also engaged in community outreach events to build relationships with their future homeport in Mayport, but also with the state of Minnesota. Sailors from the ship have supported local Jacksonville volunteer events such as building homes for in need families, beautification of four local elementary and middle schools, park clean ups, and volunteering at the USO at Jacksonville International airport.

Last year, crew members traveled to Duluth, Minnesota where they cleaned up several outdoor paths. They also attended the Minnesota Navy League Navy Ball in Minneapolis, a local high school football game, were featured on several news sites unveiling the ships crest, and attended the Minnesota Gopher and Viking football games.

In the next few months, Minneapolis Saint Paul sailors will begin Crew familiarization training which will lead to Builders trials, Dock Trials, and Acceptance trials finally to commissioning in Duluth next spring.

The Minnesota Navy League has been designated as the lead for the commissioning of USS Minneapolis Saint Paul. The Commissioning Committee depends on sponsorships from corporations and individuals to help fulfill this obligation to the US Navy and the ship’s crew. Various levels of sponsorship opportunities are available.

To donate and for more information on the Minnesota Navy League Council visit our webpage at: <https://navyleaguemn.org/>.

Pat Dolan is vice president of communications for the Minnesota Navy League.



Sailors from USS Minneapolis Saint Paul perform beautifications at the General Joseph Finegan Elementary School in Jacksonville, Florida.



Crew members attended the Oct. 16, 2019, Minnesota Vikings game at US Bank Stadium.



Sailors from Minneapolis Saint Paul assist the USS Indianapolis with an underway. This is a great way for sailors to get experience and work on qualifications, all while lending a hand to fellow shipmates.

## Employee: Sue Register ‘always jumps in’ and puts ‘veterans and staff first’

Continued from Page 7

Valley American Legion, she is a member of the Pine Island Legion Auxiliary and the Zumbrota VFW Auxiliary. She resides in Hastings.

You could say she is very involved in the veterans community, and no one would dispute the observation.

Register has high praise for the American Legion Auxiliary members and Secretary Sandie Deutsch for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Hastings Veterans Home, all veterans and staff are wearing masks.

“The Auxiliary really stepped up. We needed masks, and we needed them now.”

She said the American Legion did a good job, too, getting a delivery network together and coordinating mask donations

from My Pillow. Register has been meeting Legionnaire Randy Olson of the COVID-19 Committee at Fleet Farm in Owatonna to pick up donations for the Hastings Veterans Home.

“It really set a good precedence of stepping up when there are no big dollars available,” Register said.

Register said the Disabled American Veterans is doing some transportation, too. She said the VFW out of Austin has been outstanding in its support for the vets home. And she had kind words for Darlene Wondra of Montgomery, The American Legion 3rd District representative who operates a little store at the home.

“She does sewing and mending — any clothes, blankets and quilts,” Register said.

Hastings Veterans Home Administrator Mike Anderson said Register is dedicated

to the residents of the home.

“She works very hard to ensure that the residents get maximum benefit from the volunteers and the donations that are graciously given to the home,” he said.

A special MDVA newsletter that published weekly during the COVID-19 shutdown to mid-June featured staff members who could nominate other staff members. In the May 27 issue, one of them was Sue Register.

The kind words stated: “Sue always jumps in and finds everything everyone asks for! She recently helped veterans with their taxes and showed staff how to navigate the EIOR system (a state government inter-office network for purchase requests). She constantly puts the veterans and staff first and is willing to go the extra mile any time of the day or week!”



Sue Register, while in the Air Force, also worked on the Republic F-105D Thunderchief supersonic fighter-bomber.



The Lakeville Ramp Team gathers for a photo after building a ramp for veteran Doug Dugas on June 2 in Lakeville. The group, funded by the VFW and American Legion members in Lakeville, builds ramps for veterans in a nine-county area.

By Tim Engstrom

PEACETIME

**L**AKEVILLE — Terry Branham's father lost his left leg above the knee at 18 years old as an anti-aircraft gunner on the USS Downes, a Mahan-class destroyer, in the South Pacific during World War II.

In his later years, he needed a ramp to get out to go to the VA hospital, visit people, attend church and so on. The family could not afford the cost of a ramp, and young Terry was still serving in the Army.

"It was a huge regret by our family," Branham said. "Dad had this saying: 'You can never have enough deck.'"

Branham had a 26-year career in the Army, enlisting in 1967, then going to Officer Candidate School, then Flight School. He flew Cobra helicopters in Vietnam in 1969-70, then commanded field artillery batteries. He commanded an aviation battalion in Korea in 1978, and he commanded an Apache

# Meet the Lakeville Ramp Team

This group of builders has overcome veteran discrimination and kept on building, thanks to the local VFW and Legion

helicopter squadron during the Persian Gulf War.

"I would come home on leave, and we would build or rebuild decks for family and friends. I learned how to work with wood from my dad and loved

it," he said.

Branham, a Lakeville resident and member of American Legion Post 44 and VFW Post 210 in that south-metro suburb, took a medical retirement in 2009.

He learned of the St. Paul-based Metropolitan Center for Independent Living's Ramp and Home Modification Project in 2009 when he could no longer work as a result of Agent Orange exposure. The MCIL has a program specifically for veterans, their widows or their children who needed ramps in the seven-county metro area.

"The pain in my lower legs was too intense," Branham said. "I found if I was moving around that I did much better, so I joined the MCIL ramp guys, and my team finally took over when a double-amputee Vietnam veteran could no longer run the teams."

MCIL started a veterans ramp program thanks to grants and donations, then it lost the funding. A Lakeville senator and representative led the charge to garner state funding, and \$100,000 was appropriated. MCIL hired a coordinator to manage the funds, and Branham handled creating ramp plans, submitted them for approval and funding, and submitting photos of the finished work.

That lasted for three years, with up to 15 projects a year, and in 2012, a new director took over at the MCIL, and he told Branham he would need to find funding elsewhere.

"His exact words were, 'I'm just not into this veteran thing.'"

The director further explained it as a risk-management decision, that someone could get hurt and sue.

Branham said no one has been hurt in all these years. He said it is another case of the Twin Cities letting the veterans down while enjoying the freedoms they secured.

Four years ago, MCIL stopped developing ramps altogether, whether veteran or civilian, after funding was lost. The nonprofit now provides guidance. (See sidebar on MCIL.)

**B**ranham's team broke off on its own. They actually went to the Legislature and asked for funds where vets could apply for \$3,000 ramp grants — but no state agency or

nonprofit would administer it.

"This was 2014 or 2015. They passed the bill, but there was no mechanism to apply to get funding," Branham said. "So we just went our own way. The lack of support was embarrassing."

He coordinated with the MCIL coordinator and the county veteran service officers to get leads on who needs ramps. Tee It Up for the Troops was a large donor of equipment at the time and now the Lakeville VFW Post funds and manages the account that pays ramps and other home projects, with support from the Lakeville American Legion Post, too.

The mission grew to nine counties, and they call themselves the Lakeville Ramp Team.

The team has 14 people this summer; most are men over 70 years old. Five are veterans and the rest are their friends. They get information about who needs ramps from county veteran service officers and the general public.

The Lakeville Ramp Team builds about eight a year.

"Every home is different," Branham said. "The height of the ramp is different, and the way it stoops to the driveway is different, so I have to design each one."

He works with city officials throughout the metro, and he said they are kind to veterans by waiving the building-permit fees, except two cities — Minneapolis and St. Paul.

"They say, 'We don't give waivers to anybody,'" Branham said.

They charge full price, yet inspectors from Minneapolis and St. Paul never come to inspect the work of the Lakeville Ramp Team.

Sometimes, the need isn't even a ramp. Sometimes, the team widens doorways so wheelchairs can fit, or add egress windows or fix restrooms.

The Lakeville Ramp Team passed the mark of 80 projects last year, and Branham documents them all in a big book they bring to an annual New Year's Eve get-together.

"We keep it a nice, little family atmosphere, just like the military," Branham said.

Know a veteran in the nine-county metro who needs a ramp? Email [terrybranham46@outlook.com](mailto:terrybranham46@outlook.com).

"His exact words were, 'I'm just not into this veteran thing.'"

— Terry Branham,  
Lakeville Ramp Team

## Veterans and the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living

"It's a new day at the MCIL," said Todd Kemery, vice president of the Minnesota Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Kemery said the present-day director, Jesse Bethke Gomez, was not there when the ramps-for-veterans program was cut. (See story.)

Kemery is a Marine veteran who suffered a spinal-cord injury near the end of his military stint and gets around these days in a wheelchair. He is on the MCIL board of directors.

"They sought me out four years ago," he said.

Kemery said what the PVA does for veterans the MCIL does for the civilian world, but it, too, serves veterans. Kemery said the MCIL and Centers for Independent Living across the country have grown very pro-veteran. He said they are working with the VA Health Care System on medical services to vets. That includes efforts to work with the Minneapolis VA.

Some of those efforts, he noted, have been on hold because of COVID-19, but the desire remains. They are working to be CARF-certified in order to qualify for VA status. CARF stands for Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and it sets standards.

Gomez gave a response, too: "I am red, white and blue, tried and true."

His great uncle was an Army paratrooper in World War II in the Pacific and survived the Battle of Corregidor. Another great uncle served under Gen. George Patton and was wounded in Sicily. An uncle was in the Army in Korea. Two more uncles served in the Army and another uncle in the Marines, in addition to a current generation of family members in the armed services. His in-laws have a military history, too.

"I have a deep commitment to honoring veterans, notably elevating in Minnesota the contributions of Latino veterans," Gomez said.

These days, his agency works with an array of ramp providers. When anyone calls inquiring about ramps, MCIL offers a menu of ramp builders.



Lakeville Ramp Team's Terry Branham designs the ramps, like this one installed June 2.

# Quilters received a grant from the Legion Foundation to make masks

Continued from Page 1

Frazer, died at age 30 while on patrol in Fallujah during the Iraq War. He was a sergeant with the Minnesota National Guard. His unit was from Bemidji.

They asked Andy where the wounded soldiers from Minnesota go? He told them many go to Fort Knox, Kentucky. So the women sent quilts there.

By January 2010, Fort Knox invited the women to award the quilts in person. American Legion Post 489 in Underwood got word of the trip, and its members began raising funds so the quilters could charter a motorcoach bus.

Forty quilters left in May 2010 for Kentucky with 612 quilts. They were gone five days and were hosted by Legion Posts all the way.

"When I say we were escorted, honestly, I say the quilts were," Caughey said. "This was never about us."

They stopped at quilt shops on the way back and got more fabric to begin making more quilts.

Since then, the quilters have been to Fort Riley, Fort Campbell, Fort Hood, Fort Sam Houston, Fort Bragg and back to Fort Knox.

"None of this would have been possible without the support we got from the Legion," Caughey said.

Mary Ann Strauch of Richville noted the quilters on the trip had to pay out of pocket, too.

"We were all responsible for own hotels and any meals not provided by the Posts," she said.

They had fun, to be sure.

Outside Fort Knox, the women stopped at Elizabethtown Post 113. The commander told them the bar and restaurant are open and they can order whatever they like.

"That's the kind of hospitality we've gotten from the Legion everywhere," Caughey said.

She has stories of Nebraska, Missouri and other places where Legion kindness was evident.

The Minnesota American Legion Foundation spearheaded the endeavor of making masks. Foundation President Lloyd Ricker, a Vietnam veteran and former Department commander out of Dawson, told Caughey masks were needed at VA hospitals and state veteran homes and asked if her team could make them.

"I said you tell me what you need, and we'll get it done," Caughey said.

Ricker said it is a good cause. He said he learned about the quilters not being able to present quilts because of COVID-19 through a conversation with NECman Bill Barbknecht of the Underwood Post. The Foundation donated \$1,000, and the Quilts of Valor made masks on behalf of The American Legion.

The money purchased an AccuQuilt cutter, dyes and fabric for the effort.

Ricker said Posts can donate further assistance, including gambling revenue, to Fund 85. It can help the women buy more fabric for more masks.

Quilts of Valor created 5,400 masks as of June 22.

No one who made those masks is younger than 60 years old.

"We're all arthritic and farsighted," Caughey said. "Hand-cutting 4,000 masks was just not going to happen. This has enabled us to get the job done."

Dent Auxiliary Unit 148 purchased \$300 of fabric, which went toward about 600 or 700 masks. The rest came from donations of Quilts of Valor members.

The masks were donated to the five Minnesota Veterans Homes (Fergus Falls, Luverne, Hastings, Silver Bay and Minneapolis) and four VA hospitals (Minneapolis, St. Cloud, Fargo and Sioux Falls).



Quilts of Valor State Coordinator Jenny Caughey of Perham shows a Millennium longarm quilting machine. The quilters operate out of two rooms at the Dent Community Center.

The quilts are delivered via a volunteer transportation network coordinated by Randy Olson, a Legion member from Winnebago in the 2nd District and a member of the Department of Minnesota's COVID-19 Committee. He works with Legion members across the state. In the Dent area, the quilters have turned them over to Barbknecht or Paul Edwards of Nisswa Post 627. Edwards is the 6th District commander. Jim Scott, commander of Dent Post 148, also has transported masks and so has KLN Brands retiree Wayne Caughey, husband of Jenny.

Either they go the whole way or they shuttle the masks to another Legion member partway, who then takes them to where they are needed. Edwards fitted 1,000 into the saddle bags of his motorcycle by vacuum-packing them, Caughey said.

The quilters work out of two rooms in the Dent Community Center, a former elementary school. The building kind of has two fronts. One side faces a street, and the other faces a highway. And on the highway side, the people dropping off materials or masks made at home can use a drive-up window, rather than come indoors, because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Quilting has been curtailed. When Quilts of Valor awards a quilt, the members wrap the veteran in it.

"It's tough to do that from 6 feet away," Caughey said.

Dent resident Debra Larsen, whom Caughey said is "the brains of this outfit," said awarding a quilt wouldn't be the same from far apart.

"It holds the same meaning for them or us," she said.

Caughey said the quilters in Dent, Fergus Falls and Maine are all tight about spending money and using fabric. Even the small scraps get used in pillows given to a kennel in Detroit Lakes for training service dogs.

"Really nothing goes to waste," she said.

Caughey said she became involved during the post-9/11 wars. She had a bumper sticker that said "I support the troops."

"But I wasn't doing anything," she said. "Support should be an action verb."

So she joined Quilts of Valor. She said if the small gesture of comfort of

a quilt offsets any amount of anxiety from the battlefield, then it is worth it.

Larsen said she joined because Vietnam veterans were treated poorly when they returned to the United States. Her grandson was in Afghanistan, and she wanted to ensure he and other military members were welcomed home.

Strauch said she was the head chef at the Perham Lakeside Golf Club on Little Pine Lake. She had always been a sewer (the dictionary's second definition of that word is "one who sews.") She knew many of the quilters from the golf course. Her son was in the Marines for six years and a daughter was in the Air Force for 20 years. So she joined.

Janelle Lotzer, a Comfort for Courage member from Vergas, said her father and stepdad were in the Army in Korea and the Legion. Her mother was in the Auxiliary. When she moved to the area, she was looking to do quilting.

"I think this is something I would like to do and help give back and forward on," she said.

She likes the awarding presentation.

"You really feel that heartwarming feeling inside, where you present that quilt to someone who has given us that freedom."

"I cry at all of them," Larsen said. "I still cry. A lot of veterans cry, too."

A Vietnam veteran touched her heart when he told her Quilts of Valor volunteers were the first people to say thanks for serving.

Early on, when a Quilts of Valor group begins, the volunteers want to make sure their relatives and combat veterans in the community get a quilt. After that, they pursue strangers, often the wounded vets.

"You only do one or two awards and the mindset shifts to gratitude for each and every veteran," Caughey said.

Vietnam vets, she said, went a generation without thanks, until the public opinion shifted to gratitude during the Persian Gulf War and again after the 9/11 attacks.

Paulette Hoebelheinrich of the Fergus Falls group joined after hearing Caughey speak to a quilting guild in 2007. She helped start the Fergus Falls one in October 2007. She has a son with 21 years in the Army and Army Reserve and Air Force who has served in the Middle East.

"I've always been a patriotic mom," she said.



Piles of fabric await their turn to be turned into masks.



The quilters in Dent let hardly anything go to waste. Leftover fabric from quilting will become masks.



Each quilt made by Quilts of Valor show who pieced it, who quilted it and who finished it, in addition to the veteran it was presented to and on which date. This quilt stands ready to be presented once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.



U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Brian Winter, deputy commander of the 133rd Mission Support Group, listens to U.S. Air Force Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel, chief of the National Guard Bureau, during a visit to the 133rd Airlift Wing at Fort Snelling south of Minneapolis.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Sabrina Phipps, 133rd Operation Support Squadron's aircrew flight equipment shop, receives an elbow bump from U.S. Air Force Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel, chief of the National Guard Bureau, at the 133rd Airlift Wing.



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. George Wexler, right, 133rd Security Forces Squadron, speaks to U.S. Air Force Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel, chief of the National Guard Bureau, about the riot gear which was used in the civil unrest assignment in St. Paul. On June 17, Lengyel came to the 133rd Airlift Wing to personally say thank you for the work the airmen and military security guards have done during the recent state active-duty assignments.

# Top Air Guard general visits 133rd Airlift Wing

By Anna Long

FORT SNELLING — The chief of the National Guard Bureau, Gen. Joseph Lengyel, visited the 133rd Airlift Wing June 17 to thank and recognize Minnesota National Guard members, including some American Legion members.

The Minnesota Guard was recently called up for state active-duty to assist with COVID-19 testing and civil unrest.

"Thank you for your service," said Lengyel, addressing members of the 133rd. "Civil unrest, working with people on the street — that is probably one of the hardest missions we

do ... You never know what bad things you stopped from happening. In my view, that is what we bring ... Thank you for your leadership."

Lengyel serves as the 28th chief of the National Guard Bureau and as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

American Legion member Lt. Col. Brian Winter was at the 133rd for Lengyel's visit. Winter is currently serving in the Minnesota Air National Guard as deputy commander of the Mission Support Group at the 133rd.

During the recent activation of the entire Minnesota National Guard, Winter led the 133rd's

Emergency Operations Center.

Winter joined the American Legion in Minnesota more than 10 years ago at Post 15 out of Detroit Lakes and is currently a member of 3M Post 599 in St. Paul. He said he is thankful for the comradery and support he's received through his years of membership in the Minnesota American Legion.

"I'm proud to serve at the 133rd Airlift Wing and proud to be a member of The American Legion," he said. "The 133rd serves the local community, state and nation, and The American Legion does as well. It is truly an honor to represent both."

Photos by Amy M. Lovgren/Air National Guard

# The SAL Update:



Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Minnesota Commander Dave Vulcan explains what goes where to Detachment Chaplain Stu Sonnee, Vice Commander Steve Sullivan and Adjutant Dennis Henkemeyer as the four assemble SAL membership packets on June 24 at the Veteran Service Building in St. Paul.

## Events are returning to the calendar

Greetings, American Legion Family members. It is your Detachment Commander Dave Vulcan from the Sons of The American Legion here.

A few things to keep in mind. We are planning on having Camp-o-ree, a Fall Harvest Rally and the John Zgoda Memorial SAL Disabled Veteran Deer Hunt at Legionville later this year. If you have anybody who would be interested in the deer hunt, please keep an eye out in The Minnesota Legionnaire for more information in an upcoming issue. Our Facebook page will have more information as we solidify plans.

As I sit here and think about the last year, it was just a year ago that I was elected has the Detachment commander for your Sons of The American Legion. It started out as a whirlwind as we went from campout (convention) right into Department Convention, and then we went from parade to parade all

### Detachment commander

Dave Vulcan



summer long.

I was able to attend a couple of District picnics as well, and we cannot forget about the Minnesota ALR Legacy Run that I attended with the final stop at the Osseo/Maple Grove Post. Then off to National Convention we went. Camporee and Fall Harvest Rally in early September followed with the John Zgoda Memorial Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt late that month. Fall Conference in October, Pearl Harbor Rally in December. January started the Mid-Winter conferences, then Sweetheart Rally in February.

Then COVID-19 hit, just as we were about to have our spring conference, and everything screeched to a halt. But we've been busy doing phone

conferences, keeping up with membership, and all the other things that we need to do to support the programs of The American Legion.

And this will continue as we begin our new year. We will get the job done.

Membership packets will hopefully be here soon (as of the time of this article being written) and distribution of them throughout this month.

Thanks for all you do.

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

### Detachment Membership Standings as of June 17, 2020

DET	GOAL	ACTUAL	%
IA Q1 *	4,375	4,596	105.051
WI Q2 *	3,744	3,852	102.885
IL	14,546	14,292	98.254
OH	31,133	29,336	94.228
MI	24,083	22,252	92.397
MN	11,748	10,878	92.594
IN	39,364	35,408	89.950
MO	3,705	2,808	75.789
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>132,698</b>	<b>123,422</b>	<b>93.010</b>

Q = QUOTA - CONGRATULATIONS!!!  
 ● = All Time High  
 \* = Met June 17 National Target of 100%  
 ^ = Met June 30 Central Region Challenge of 110%

### Detachment Renewal Rates as of June 15, 2020

DET	2019	RENEWED	%
IA	4,452	4,068	91.37
OH	30,456	27,021	88.72
IL	14,431	12,627	87.50
WI	3,945	3,398	86.13
MN	11,565	9,879	85.42
MI	24,126	20,324	84.24
IN	38,876	31,997	82.31
MO	3,485	2,577	73.95
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>131,336</b>	<b>111,891</b>	<b>85.19</b>



51st annual Camp-O-Ree 2020 is a go

BRAINERD — Legionville and the Minnesota Sons of The American Legion are planning the 51st annual Camp-o-ree to benefit Legionville School Patrol Camp.

More details will follow as planners work out this event with the circumstances the country is in.

Save the date: Thursday, Sept. 10, to Sunday, Sept. 13.





# Annual reports to the \*Convention of The American Legion Department of Minn.

\*The Department Convention is canceled, making the annual reports even more important for communication

## Adjutant

What a start to my first year as your Adjutant. Who would have thought The American Legion Department of Minnesota would be forced to cancel youth programs, meetings and our annual convention?

These were tough decisions that had to be made, but it was in concern for the safety and health of our members, our youth and the communities we live in. We have found new ways to communicate and conduct the business of our Department. The number of our members who have taken on tasks of training Posts, Districts and committees how to meet virtually and Zoom is now part of our daily vocabulary.

The American Legion members took charge and organized PPE supply deliveries to our Veterans Homes, VA hospitals and any organization that called and needed help. The American Legion answered those calls.

Sue Register from the Hastings Veterans home told me in a recent phone call how proud she is to be a part of The American Legion. She called for help and the overwhelming response was unbelievable and she knows who to call in the future when help is needed. This is just a couple of examples we heard of here at the Department how our Legionnaires stood up to the calls, and this is our why, why we belong!

What is on the horizon moving forward, what challenges will 2021 bring us? Membership is one of our biggest challenges and the promotion and participation of our programs in Children & Youth, Americanism, Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation, and a Strong National Defense after these events were canceled is added to the list of challenges.

Now is the perfect time to review all our programs and fine tune them to make the programs better and bigger. We now have the time with no pressure of running these programs, due to everything being canceled, to take a hard look at how can we improve. We need to review

how we operate and how can we grow our programs, let's think outside the box.

The staff at Legionville has embraced this concept, and they are leaving no stone unturned. I was up there on June 13, and they are walking the walk and talking the talk. I have never seen Legionville look so good! Please take the time to review your programs and communicate with your committee persons on what can we do better. All of our committees should have a "mission statement" and "goals" for the 2021 year. If you need help the Department is here to help, we have two Zoom accounts, and we can help facilitate a meeting for your committee.

Your Department has gone through some personnel changes due to the retirements of Randy, Al and soon Laura. They are all, soon to be, missed and we wish them all but nothing but the best in their retirement years. Lord knows they deserve it.

We have a new Communications Director, Tim Engstrom, who is doing great with our website and the Legionnaire. Rachael Hill, replacing Laura, is in the process of absorbing Laura's 27 years of experience here at the Department. Wish them both the best of luck and help them when needed. Don't worry, we still have 42 years plus of continuity and experience at the Department with Jennifer Kelley and Misty Padilla; we will survive.

As for me it has been a real learning experience these first six months. I could not have been successful in these trying times without the great support from The American Legion Family Department of Minnesota and my staff.

In closing, we are your Department here to serve you and assist with the running of the programs, the business, and the glue of The American Legion Department of Minnesota. Thanks

For God & Country.

**Mike Maxa**  
Department Adjutant

## Commander

My theme this past year was "For Love of Country." As a Legion Family, we support the founding principles of our country through our "4 Pillars":

1. Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
2. Children and Youth
3. Americanism
4. National Security

We continue to make a difference in our communities. At all official meetings of The Legion Family, we recite our "Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion." Every time I recite our Preamble, I get a sense of increased responsibility and patriotism for my community, state and nation.

Increased *messaging* of all the great volunteerism we are involved in on a daily basis was emphasized through out the year. Almost each and every day I witnessed examples of our American Legion Family in action. We sometimes take for granted all the amazing things we do and don't take the time to document them. There is no doubt that our *messaging* has gotten better and more effective with the use of various communication outlets.

National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford's theme is "A Foundation for the Future." In various ways, I feel, we have made progress building our foundation. At the beginning of our membership year I asked all District and Department leadership for their ideas on how best to commit our time and limited resources to make a difference and help our posts with messaging and growth.

Two items that most were concerned with was 1. Training 2. Easier Access to Information. An ad hoc committee was appointed to research and plan the opening of a Minnesota Legion College.

At the March Department Executive Committee meeting, a resolution was approved to appoint a Training Committee, with two subcommittees, Minnesota Legion College and MyLegion.org.

Members have been appointed and are busy having Zoom meetings planning implementation of both Subcommittees area of responsibilities. There are several myLegion.org training sessions planned and Power-Point training aides are available on mnlegion.org. Thank you all for the amazing work you have done on these committees! There have been articles in the Legionnaire explaining both subcommittees.

Thank you all who have contributed to my two projects, Wounded Warriors Guide Service (a Minnesota nonprofit) and Legionville.

Two important members of the full-time staff retired at the end of December, Adjutant Randy Tesdahl and Communications Director Al Zdon, thank you for your many years of service to our American Legion Family. Replacing them are Adjutant Mike Maxa and Communications Director Tim Engstrom. The full-time staff also gained Assistant Finance Liaison Rachael Hill. Welcome all to the full-time staff!

From the end of July through the end of December, I spent time not only traveling to various Legion functions around the state, but also made three trips to Indianapolis, Indiana. The highlight of all these trips was to witness the commitment and dedication of all I came in contact with. Visiting with many Legionnaires, Auxiliary members and Sons of The American Legion members and finding out all the different programs they are volunteering for, was truly heart-warming. I am happy to report that all evening post functions that I attended were packed with Legion Family members!

January and February were the District conferences and our National Commander's Tour. I was able to attend most of the conferences and listen to all the good things being accomplished. Mid-February National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford came to Minnesota and made 11 stops. Adjutant Mike Maxa, Communication Director Tim Engstrom, Membership Director Sy Fix and I traveled

with him and his aide.

Nine of the stops were to posts for breakfast, lunch or dinner and were well-attended with media in attendance at several of the stops. Several mayors were also in attendance at various locations and thanked him for coming to their town. Commander Bill was interviewed several times by the media and articles were written in the local newspaper talking about the mission of The American Legion. He was also interviewed by one radio station.

It was a busy time for our national commander, and he is a gentleman and an American Patriot!

In March, several of us traveled to Washington, D.C., to support the National American Legion legislative agenda. We divided up in teams and visited with our two senators and our representatives or their aides. All meetings went well, and I can assure you that the Legion is listened to.

They often went out of their way to personally meet with us. We all know what happened toward the middle and end of March. All travel for National officers and staff was cancelled, and we received a resolution from National canceling the National Convention in August and all National officers, Committee Chairmen and Committee members will remain in place until the National Convention in August 2021. It also recommended that states do the same.

The Department Executive Committee voted to keep our Department leadership in place along with Committee chairmen until the Department State Convention in July 2021. The DEC recommended the Districts and Posts do the same. A big thank you to all the Department, District and Post officers who agreed to serve another year. Your commitment and dedication to our American Legion Family is inspiring.

Zoom teleconferences have increased at the Department, District and Post level. Some of us continue to have almost daily Zoom conferences, sometimes two and three in one day. All Districts have access to Zoom Pro through their District commander and are using it for various meetings. Even after we begin having meetings in person, Zoom will remain an effective tool to hold various meetings.

The last couple of months, Legion Family members have been volunteering their time, money and skills to provide needed items at our Veterans Homes, VA Clinics/Hospitals and various other institutions. Legion Riders did a drive by to honor a deceased veteran and provided an escort for Minnesota National Guard Troops from Mankato to Camp Ripley. The troops will be deploying to the Horn of Africa. Simply amazing what the Legion Family has accomplished this past year and at times under incredibly challenging circumstances. It was truly an honor and privilege to work with all the amazing Legion Family members this past year and look forward to working with all of you in the future.

**Mark Dvorak**  
Department Commander

## Vice Cmdr. 1st and 3rd Districts

Upon the vacancy left when Mike Maxa became the Minnesota American Legion Adjutant, I was voted in by the Department Executive Committee and became Mike's replacement as Department vice commander for the 1st and 3rd Districts.

This year's travel through the 1st and 3rd Districts has been inspiring. I have had a great opportunity to meet some of the best Legionnaires, Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion and Riders in the State — with special attention to the 1st and 3rd during these noted events:

- Department Fall Conference
- Veterans Day Event
- 1st & 3rd District Membership Rallies
- 1st & 3rd Membership Reconciliation and Revitalizations
- Post 1982 MN & AD Contact
- Pearl Harbor Rally
- Peavey Plaza Memorial Dedication
- Mid-Winter Conference
- Sweetheart Rally
- National Commander Visit
- Third District Oratorical Contest
- Virtual Covid-19 Meetings

A *standout feature* in the Department of Minnesota Membership Bulletin, from Bulletin 43 through Bulletin 50, showing the 1st and 3rd District are 1 and 2 in the State of Minnesota.

I would like to thank Joe Tappainer, Myron Ehrich and Wayne Hammon Jr. for hard work in leading the charge of membership in their respective districts.

The success of membership could not be accomplished without leadership from Post membership vice commanders and the District area membership vice commanders — the true backbone of the total membership picture.

Great job, everyone!

I am looking forward to the 2020-2021 year. Stay safe and stay well.

**Pat Logan**  
Districts 1 & 3  
Vice Commander

## Vice Cmdr. 2nd and 7th Districts

My duties as a department vice commander began with a quick pace attending the initial Department Executive Committee meeting and then off to American Legion National Headquarters for membership and leadership training.

On Sept. 14, I had the privilege of representing Commander Mark Dvorak at the membership dinner and program for Elbow Lake Post 321 in the 7th District. Just five days later, I again had the privilege to be in Lewisville in the 2nd District.

In November, I attended the Pheasant Dinner at the Luverne Veterans Home, and I was there again on March 5 for the annual Venison Dinner.

As a county veterans service officer in southwest Minnesota, I get invited to these events at the

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Luverne Veterans Home every year. For this year, however, my attendance was special as I was dressed in suit and tie to again represent the commander. I missed the 7th District Convention in Balaton this year to perform military honors for a veteran and fellow Post member gone to Post Everlasting.

The 2nd District Convention in Sleepy Eye was a fun and informative event attended by Commander Dvorak, NEC Man Bill Barbnecht and NEC Alt Peggy Moon, as well as many other high office of responsibility holders of the Department and District Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Riders.

As always at all events, the food was great and there was always plenty of it. Conversation, camaraderie and fun coupled with a sense of purpose have always been the order of the day for the Posts I visited and the Legionnaires and veterans I met as a Department vice commander.

Since early March of this year, the 2nd and 7th Districts, the Department, the entire American Legion organization and I have been thrust into the 21st century of communication and technology in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I, perhaps as many Legionnaires, need to force myself to become more proficient in communication and attending meetings etc. utilizing Zoom, webinars, Facebook, twitter, snapchat and all social media avenues.

Our fellow Legionnaires and all Legion Family members have been cordial, energetic and committed to forwarding membership and the principles of The American Legion.

This year has truly been a year of honor, respect, friendship and enthusiasm.

**Bill Brockberg  
Districts 2 & 7  
Vice Commander**

**Vice Cmdr.  
4th and 5th  
Districts**

It's been quite a year. And just when I thought it was coming to an end, I hear shouts of "One more time!"

Being the Department vice commander for the 4th and 5th Districts was a real honor and I enjoyed (almost) every minute!

Together with help from members of the Legion Family, we accomplished a great deal during the year. After attending the annual membership workshop in Indianapolis, I returned to Minnesota energized and ready to change the world (2 Districts at a time).

Much of the year included the usual duties of attending the monthly meetings and events of the 4th and 5th District, helping posts in need, visiting the Minneapolis Veterans Home, Fall Conference, Pheasant Dinners and generally representing our outstanding Commander Mark Dvorak at various events.

One standout event was speaking at the dedication of the new 5th District Patrick Novack Post 5222 in Minneapolis in November. With the Mid-Winters done, the world turned upside down. With the outbreak of Covid-19, everything seemed

to come to a halt.

But that's not The American Legion I know. Working with Jennifer Havlick in Two Harbors – virtual conferences over Zoom became the way to keep in touch. I started a weekly 4th and 5th District meeting for all who wished to attend to keep our members on top of the seemingly daily-changing "What Now?" updates.

With the generous help of our Department Membership Director Sy Fix, every district now has a Zoom account, free to use for virtual meetings and conferences for a year.

Two memorable recent events included the 4th and 5th District donating \$600 (\$300 each) worth of masks to our local Veterans Home and the 4th District donating more than \$600 worth of goodies (kind of a cross between "nice to have" and necessities) to our National Guard troops, recently called up for duty to assist law enforcement personnel.

We delivered them to the American Legion Riders at Post 98 in St. Paul Park. Wow! That felt *really* good!

I want to thank all those who assisted (and taught) me during the year, and I'm ready (not!) to put in another stellar year for Commander Mark and our entire Legion Family.

**Teresa Ash  
Districts 4 & 5  
Vice Commander**

**Vice Cmdr.  
6th and 9th  
Districts**

The 2019-2020 year has been one that I won't forget.

The year started out very busy with a lot of travel both in the 6th and the 9th, and a few others outside of the Districts. Every trip (some short, some long) to the different Posts and Veterans Homes was gratifying as I got to meet a lot of great members of the American Legion Family and hear about all the great things that are going on within their communities.

Representing the 6th and 9th as a Department vice commander was a great honor, and I look forward to serving another year (due to the COVID-19 situation). The last four months of the year created some new challenges due to the coronavirus, and as we look to the future, I believe these changes (change is good) will be significant for the Department of Minnesota.

I want to thank Commander Mark Dvorak for allowing me to represent the Department of Minnesota at various events.

**Tim Haugen  
Districts 6 & 9  
Vice Commander**

**Vice Cmdr.  
8th and 10th  
Districts**

I have to say that even at my advanced age I was very eager to serve as a Department vice commander for The American Legion. Right away, knowing I would get to go to Indianapolis and work with many of the people, I have for many years interfaced with indirectly through articles, conventions

and publications was going to give me a chance to let them know how I felt we could grow The American Legion.

I want to thank Commander Mark Dvorak, Membership Director Sy Fix and Adjutant Randy Tesdahl for all they did putting that trip together. I want to thank the other vice commanders for making it a great time. It was all I wanted it to be. Everyone I encountered was ready to get their information across but give me the time to present my views. What I found was they had really been working hard to evaluate what we had been doing and what we needed to try different to go forward for another successful 100 years of The American Legion.

After returning to Minnesota it was of course first getting to know the officers of the districts I would be working with, seeing what I could do to help them get their year started especially the task of doing membership.

For years as adjutant for my post and the district I had wanted to get everyone to "want to do membership" especially using the tools that Department and National had provided. That was the major theme at the National Membership Workshop. I put together a PowerPoint presentation and held a class. I admit I had two much information for one session, but it went well.

I was hoping the commander would need me to stand in for him at a few events because he would be asked to interface with 10 Districts and 554 Posts during his year, and, of course, he is a member of every committee. I have to say I had a great time bringing Commander Dvorak's message to the following events: September: Dedication of the new Veterans Cemetery in Duluth. October: Legionville Deer Hunt, North St. Paul Park of Monuments, Brainard Post Early Bird Dinner, and in November: St. Cloud VA Medical Center.

I want to thank everyone of the 8th and 10th Districts for your support and your hard work and I am ready to work one more year to finish many of the things we have started.

**Robert Locker  
Districts 6 & 9  
Vice Commander**

**Treasurer**

As treasurer, I serve on the Department Finance Committee, Minnesota Legionnaire, and the Legionville Board Directors. It has been my pleasure to serve as your Department treasurer.

The treasurer is charged with the responsibility and administration of all Department funds and related financial affairs with direct responsibility to the Department Executive Committee. Some of the duties include the overseeing accounting principles and financial processes of the Department Headquarters, assisting the Department finance liaison, analyzing and prescribing financial reports and investing the assets of the Department.

The following is an overview of the Department's investments between June 1, 2019 and May 31, 2020. The current allocation is 72 percent bond and 28 percent stocks. Bonds in the account are primarily high-grade corporate bonds and FIDC insured CDs. The bonds

and CDs are ladder between one and five years. The stocks are diversified between large, medium and small companies with a heavier weighting toward large companies. Interest paid out of the Department checking account June 1, 2019 and May 31, 2020 totaled \$56,792.60.

Again, thank you for allowing me to serve as your Department treasurer, and I look forward to serving you in the future.

**William B. Goede  
Department Treasurer**

**Chaplain**

Thank you, God!

It's been a busy year since I have become our Department of Minnesota chaplain. I have had an opportunity to provide spiritual guidance for an amazing group of veterans and share many special events in their lives. Even though our daily mission is taking care of our veterans' families, it has taken on extra meaning as we have made major life adjustments in our lives because of COVID-19. Thank you, God, and everyone for their support of each other.

Through this year we have unified even more on our goals with God's guidance. We have expressed an interest in expanding our faith in God as we search for more meaningful ways to help our veterans and their communities. In our unity we have become the strength of the communities we serve and the veterans we help care for. Our team continues to evolve in its mission as the needs in our veteran community changes. Thank you, God, for providing our knowledgeable leadership.

We have ridden our motorcycles as we collected funds, new appreciation, and goodwill for the children of veterans who were either killed in action after 9-11 or receiving a disability rating of 50 percent or higher for their injuries. Our spirits were lifted as our 10-year Legacy Scholarship Fund proceeds of over \$1 million without any accidents through all kinds of weather. Thank you, God, for these dedicated Legion Riders.

I have seen our fellow American Legion members stand beside a veteran and their family while the veteran struggled through PTSD issues and was on the verge of Suicide. No judgments, no time monitored, strong encouragement and prayers were all that were shared. I have also stood at the grave site comforting a family as they said their final good-byes to their Fallen Hero. Thank you, God, for their courage and strength.

Many of our communities were unable to give honors to their fallen heroes on Memorial Day as we continued our social distancing. For those communities that were able to provide these honors, they were given with limited participation because of COVID-19 we also found out that we are still their Memory Keepers every time we tell their story and we keep picture of them in our homes and posts. Thank you, God, for our Memory Keepers.

I've witnessed families who have lost a member of their family to COVID-19 and not be able to be with them they breathed their last breath. As the family struggled with not being

able to accompany them in the hospital these health professionals provided witness to their last words as they held their hands or shared that final moment via Facetime to the families. Dear God, thank you for our health care professionals.

I see people struggle with the things they had no control over such as lost jobs, family separation and feeding their families to the power of those who took control over and changed what they could by making face masks for their neighbors and hospitals. They made deliveries of food, personal and household products to those without. Our veterans not only took care of enhanced Buddy Checks but provided extra serenity in our communities. Thank you, God, for providing those heroes.

"For God and Country ..." is why we exist. Amen.

**Betty Jass  
Department Chaplain**

**Historian**

It's been an "interesting" year serving as your Department historian and the upcoming year doesn't promise to be any less interesting.

The year started off as any other, at the Department Convention with incoming Department Commander Mark Dvorak taking the helm from outgoing Department Commander Darrel Redepening in beautiful Willmar. We continued with the "usual" National Convention, Fall Conference, District Mid-Winters, assorted Post events.

Then it was the National Commander's Tour, and it was shortly after that the wheels started coming off — but The American Legion must carry on its business of supporting veterans, our communities, state and nation — and so we did. (Er, do!)

I will have quite a truckload of photos, for the first Department of Minnesota commander to serve a two-year term, when we finally wrap this baby up in 2021. If anyone has any pictures they would like me to use, please feel free to email them to me at mikeash202@gmail.com (and include event, names and dates) or just let me know where to find them online.

Thankfully, with Facebook, I can ITALICS appropriate photos of the commander at events I can't attend — thanks to both the commander and the first lady, Linda, for keeping up on that particular social media. Thanks also to our new director of communications, Tim Engstrom, who is doing a real bang-up job and contributing photos.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Department historian (so much so you voted me in for a second term; lucky me).

**Mike Ash  
Department Historian**

**NEC Man**

As this being my first year as your National Executive Committee man, I would like to say thanks to our NEC alternative, Peggy Moon. Peggy and I have done a lot of traveling together to Mid-Winter membership rallies and dinners.

A big thank you to Past

National Commander Dan Ludwig, as he has been very helpful.

I really enjoyed the Fall NEC meetings in Indianapolis. We arrived on a Saturday and left on Thursday. It was a real eye-opener.

We made the trip to D.C. for the Washington Conference. We met with our senators and congresspeople. We were fortunate enough to be able to visit the grave site of General Lewis Blaine Hershey at Arlington National Cemetery. General Hershey was the second and longest-serving director of Selective Service (the first only served a few months) and the first director of ANAVICUS. It was followed by a tour of the Selective Service headquarters. When we got home on Wednesday, everything at the U.S. Capitol shut down due to the pandemic.

Thanks also to our Adjutant Mike Maxa and Commander Mark Dvorak. We have been able to have several Zoom meetings.

The National Headquarters and I have had many conference calls and many emails.

I look forward to many travels this fall. We will be having a fall NEC meeting in Indianapolis in October. It has been good to have Donna Arends along as she has been a lifesaver.

A big *thank you* to Al Zdon and Randy Tesdahl for all their help in the past. Along with all the office staff and Jeremy Wolfsteller and Heather Larson, as well.

If I can ever be of any help please call me at 218-770-6264.

Be safe, be careful and speak the truth.

**Bill Barbknecht  
National Executive  
Committeeman**

**Judge Advocate**

My primary duty is to the Department Executive Committee and to the Department commander. Since Jan. 1, 44 percent of my communication has been with either the Department commander or the Department adjutant. Major projects I have worked on include summarizing the governor's emergency executive orders and addressing a variety of COVID-19 issues.

I have advised and assisted our baseball program, Legionville, Boys and Girls State and the SAL. This year I have not had a lot of communication with them, but there has been significant time devoted to several of their issues.

I have advised and assisted our department officers. In 2020, 18 percent of my communication has been with them. I have had several communications with our department service officer as well as our department historian. I have also had the chance to work with one department vice commander to address several different legal issues at a post with particularly difficult problems.

In 2020, I have devoted about 13 percent of my communication to Posts and Districts. I still cannot give legal advice to Posts regarding Post businesses such as a bar or a restaurant. However, our Department adjutant has urged me to assist Posts with organizational issues such as

**Continued from Page 13**

nonprofit corporation questions or bylaws problems.

A fair amount of communication with outside entities or individuals has occurred as well. The National judge advocate and I have exchanged emails on several subjects. In addition, I have had communication with the Charities Division of the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, a federal prisoner who is a veteran, a law school professor and a retired judge.

2020 has been a tough year, but we will get through it. An emerging issue that could affect us all is whether the governor has exceeded his authority regarding the public health crisis. I will keep the Department advised on that one.

This year I have had the assistance of some great people such as our past National commander whose counsel and advice are always top-notch. And while we have been going through some extraordinary challenges, let's not forget that Mike Maxa has been in the thick of it and he's still in the first year of his new job as Department adjutant. It has been a privilege to serve with these great people and all of you as members of The American Legion.

**Greg Colby**  
Department Judge Advocate

**Americanism**

I would like to thank Department Commander Mark Dvorak for allowing me to serve as the Americanism chairman for The American Legion, Department of Minnesota.

I would also like to thank my Americanism Committee members Larry Pocrnich and Tess Davis, for their able assistance during the past year.

I would lastly like to thank the Americanism Subcommittee Chairpersons and their assistants for their dedication and hard work over the past year. They are: Boys State Kyle Oldre and Lee Tallakson, Community Service Thomas Clabo, Education Don Skow, Junior Shooting Sports Jared Sturgill, Boy Scouts Tom Hallett, Oratorical Cliff Newman and Linda Dvorak, Safety and School Patrol James Blakesley, Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Larry Ryan and the District Americanism Chairpersons. Please see the individual committee reports for further information concerning these Americanism Subcommittees.

The Department Americanism Committee met at the 2019 Fall Conference in Mahanomen. The Americanism Committee; the chairpersons and the representatives from Boy Scouts, Community Service, Education, Oratorical, Safety and School Program, National Americanism Commission, and six District Americanism chairpersons attended the meeting.

The Scholarship Selection Committee, due to the coronavirus situation, met in June 2020, but after the Legionnaire deadline. There will be three Minnesota Legionnaire Insurance Trust scholarships, and six American Legion Memorial scholarships awarded and will be in the August issue.

The Americanism Committee continues to promote the increased submittal of The

American Legion Consolidated Post Report. There were approximately 335 CPR's submitted in 2019, equating to 61 percent submittal. We have continued to track the submittals of the CPR and have recorded the information that is submitted under the Americansim category of the CPR. This Americanism information is then transmitted to the various Americanism Subcommittees and to the respective District Americanism chairpersons.

The CPRs submitted indicated the total support for the following Americanism programs: Boys State Support, \$93,978 Legacy Scholarship Support, \$74,610 Legion Baseball Involvement & Support, \$624,497 Other Sports Involvement & Support, \$152,427 Assistance to Local Schools, \$29,540 Boy Scouts Support, \$148,917 Oratorical Contest Support, \$26,500 American Legion Education Week Support, \$61,658 Scholarship Involvement & Support, \$299,640 Memorial Day Activities, 319 Posts Veterans Day Activities, 290 Posts Community Service Support, 129,819 Hours Community Service Monetary Support, \$545,283 Shooting Sports Involvement & Support, \$24,058

Congratulations to all the Department of Minnesota American Legion Posts that submitted the Consolidated Post Report and a thank you for their support of the Americanism programs.

Americanism is an unflinching love of country, loyalty to its institutions and ideals, eagerness to defend it against all enemies, individual allegiance to the flag, and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

Our forefathers laid the foundation for a civilization that is the envy of the world. It has brought us greater spiritual and material wealth than any people has ever known. This is our heritage.

**Art Tobkin**  
Chairman

**Boy Scouts**

I first want to thank Department Commander Mark Dvorak for reappointing me as the Department of Minnesota Boy Scouts chairman. I next want to thank all 10 District Boy Scouts chairmen for their support and dedication to the Boy Scouts programs. They have been outstanding with their help and knowledge; we make a great team.

Your Post's support of your local Scout packs, troops and councils is also greatly appreciated. From its birth, The American Legion has supported the wonderful Scouting youth programs with both volunteers and financial assistance. Additional thanks go to all the Posts that have donated to the Department Boy Scout Council Assistance Fund 81.

The fund's status as of May 31 stood at \$58,379.30. Please make a contribution to this fund each year because we are striving to raise additional interest in order to give more than a yearly donation of \$1,000 to a Minnesota Scout council project. Current records show that no

donations have been received from the 1st, 7th and 8th districts so far this year.

Congratulations to Blake Madison from Troop 32 in Adrian who is our Minnesota American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year for 2020. Please read the May issue of "The Minnesota Legionnaire" for Blake's biography for his Eagle Scout of the Year award. He is a very deserving Scout.

Once again, thank you, one and all, for supporting Scouting in all its programs to advance the cause of freedom and its dedication to 100 percent Americanism.

**Tom Hallett**  
Chairman

**Community Service**

The deadline for the Community Service Contest has been extended to July 15, due to COVID-19 shutdown.

Please take this time to submit your reports. Thank you.

**Thomas Clabo**  
Chairman

**Junior Shooting**

- At the CMP State Match in January, the precision team qualified for the CMP Regional Championship in Camp Perry, Ohio, Regionals, which was cancelled due to COVID-19.

- American Legion Postal Round precision team won first place in the state and Gavin Barnick finished first state individual. The precision team also earned a second round set of postal targets for finishing top 10 in the nation. Two Individuals, Allison Buesseler and Nathan Engman earned a second round of targets for finishing top 100 in the nation. This second round was cancelled mid-match and so was the National match due to COVID-19.

- The precision team qualified in December for the U.S. Army National Championship at Fort Benning, Georgia. The three-day national match took place at the end of January before the COVID-19 orders were in place and the team ended up finishing 13 overall. Gavin Barnick made the finals for smallbore as well as air rifle finishing 7th and 3rd overall.

- The Junior Olympic Qualifier took place the first weekend in February at St. Thomas Academy. The results were amazing as we had five individuals qualify! For smallbore, Alison Buesseler, Gavin Barnick, Nathan Engman auto qualified. Then for air rifle, Allison, Juliana Hays, Gavin, Nathan, and Tanner Barth all auto-qualified. They all will be attending the Junior Olympics at the Olympic Training center in Colorado Springs, Co. This championship was to take place in April but has been postponed until fall 2020 due to COVID-19.

- The precision team auto-qualified at the CMP JO State Match held at Anoka Post 102 in February. This qualification is for the CMP National Championship planned for July 2020.
- The Sporter team this year had seven young athletes all new comers to the sport. They had to

learn from the very basic intro to the sport, learning all three positions, and all have competed in many local matches. The young shooters have learned the sport very quickly and have found their places on the podium in their respective ages class (sub-jr)- twice they have swept the podium with first, second and third place finishes! Their progress has been amazing, and I am very excited to see them next season as their skills increase even further!

- Gavin Barnick has been on an Olympic path for over a year. He has trained with former Olympians and traveled to many ranges throughout the US to hone his skills. He is currently in seventh place in the Nation (not as a junior but OVERALL) in men's smallbore. He was added to the national team and had planned to compete in the World Cup in India, but the event was cancelled due to COVID-19. Gavin is sitting well heading into the final competition for the final two Olympic team spots — however, this event has also been postponed until the COVID-19 orders clear up.

- Alumni news: At the NCAA Level, this year found three of our former juniors at the NCAA Championship! Abby Buesseler with Ole Miss qualified as an individual in smallbore. Her sister Dana Buesseler qualified with her Murray State team. Samantha Peterson and Elizabeth Ewert's Nebraska Huskers team were also in attendance! Unfortunately, the NCAA had to make the decision to end the championship match due to COVID-19 before it was able to start. All the athletes and teams had traveled to Kentucky and were all there and had already practiced together. The match was scheduled to begin the next morning when the NCAA had made the decision to cancel the event. Very unfortunate for these fine athletes. Awards for their season performance were still mailed to them, and I am proud to say Abby Buesseler was named to the NRA's All American list (top 10 in the nation)! Congrats to all!

Anyone interested in starting a Junior Shooting club, contact me and I will assist you.

**Jared Sturgill**  
Chairman

**Oratorical Contest**

The Oratorical Contest of 2020 took place on Feb. 29 at the Anoka American Legion. Due to illness and nerves, there were only six contestants. Unfortunately only seven Districts had contestants with one contestant falling ill before the semifinals. The decision was made to have the semifinals and final contest at Anoka.

Jordan's Jamie Jablonsky, 12th-grader from the 3rd District, was the Department winner. Crosby-Ironton's Jasmine Siliznoff, 10th-grader from the 6th District, was second. St. Paul's James Hanley, 10th-grader from 4th District, was third. Dover-Eyota's Alexis Heins, 11th-grader from the 1st District, was fourth. It would be awesome to see these students return next year.

I thank Linda Dvorak (Oratorical vice chairwoman) for all

her help with the contest and all the people who were able to help with all aspects of the contest. A very special thanks to President Mary Hendrickson and Commander Mark Dvorak for their attendance and encouragement to the kids. Many thanks to the Toastmasters for their impartial judging. It really makes a world of difference for the contestants. Thank You, Osseo Post 172, for helping. Maybe next year we will have a better turnout. Thank you, Anoka Post 102, for all your help.

Thank you to Jennifer Kelley and the staff for all their behind-the-scenes work. Thank you to Tim Engstrom for his pictures and interviews. Thank You, Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and Legion Riders for all your help.

**Cliff Newman**  
Chairman

**Safety Patrol**

The Minnesota Twins, due to the COVID-19 virus, have not yet played this year. Hopefully part of the season will be able to be played.

The Legionville Safety School Patrol Center is a valuable part of the Safety and School Patrol Program. It is the only facility ever developed for this purpose. The COVID-19 event has caused the center to cancel camp this year. The board has done much to improve the facility during this time.

The Department of Public Safety's State Fire Marshal Division reports that 42 people died in fires in Minnesota last year. That marks a 14 percent increase from the previous year.

The leading cause of fire deaths in each of these years was careless smoking.

About 67 percent of the people killed in 2019 were over the age of 50, and there weren't any working smoke alarms in 12 percent of the homes where people were killed.

The numbers will be confirmed later in 2020, after hospitals in the state report the last of their data to the Minnesota Department of Health.

Authorities are reminding Minnesotans to not leave their space heaters, candles, or food cooking on the stovetop unattended.

There are many little things we can do to prevent a devastating fire from happening in our homes. It is important to practice fire prevention and safety every day.

Officials recommend that homeowners test their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms monthly, and also create a family escape plan in the event of an emergency.

Preliminary numbers show 364 people have been killed in traffic crashes in 2019, compared with 381 last year.

Of the 364 fatalities: 27 people died in distracted driving-related crashes, 71 people died in speed-related crashes, 102 people died in alcohol-related crashes, 72 people died who were unbelted, 235 were men, 129 were women, 50 were pedestrians, 11 were bicyclists, 44 were motorcyclist.

27,975 motorists were arrested for DWI in 2019 (January-December), compared with 26,825 in 2018. That's a 4.2 percent increase.

I encourage everyone to watch for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcycles and, yes, farm equipment.

I remind everyone too of the need for safety on the water and on recreational vehicles. We are known for our outdoors activities. I encourage everyone to think safety first. Nothing takes the joy out an activity as much as would an injury or death at an activity designed to be enjoyable.

Safety is not just for our youth. I encourage Posts to invite your district State Patrol safety officer to a meeting to present a program on this and other issues. Fire, police and other safety program professionals are available most times just for the asking. I encourage you to use them. Every community has its own safety concerns. I encourage Legionnaires to identify these areas of concern and implement programs of safety education. I am aware of many posts that are hosting safety programs and networking with other groups to provide safety training in many areas. Let's all think safety.

**Jim Blakesley**  
Chairman

**Armed Forces Service Center**

A significant event occurred on Nov. 8, 2019. The Armed Forces Service Center (AFSC) moved into new, modern, and expanded facility at Terminal 1 (Lindberg Terminal) of the Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport.

This move culminated a year-plus of joint effort by Alliance Architecture, Metropolitan Airport Commission, construction workers and management, MINNCOR and the staff and volunteers of the AFSC.

Many people and groups helped fund the relocation. Some of the larger donors were Delta Airlines, American Legion Post 1 from Minneapolis, American Legion Post 1776 from Apple Valley, Tee It Up for the Troops and a grant from the state of Minnesota. An in-kind donation of all of the plumbing fixtures was made by the family of the AFSC founder.

The Grand Opening Ceremony occurred later in 2019. Among the many dignitaries present was Michael Ash, who represented the Department of Minnesota. Mike was a longtime volunteer and a past president of the AFSC Board of Directors.

Before having to temporarily close due to COVID-19, The AFSC had nearly doubled the number of guests using it every month in comparison with previous years. We believe factors that help us serve more troops are being on the secure side of the airport, the new furniture, and layout of the new facilities which are designed to serve both military families and individuals. The new space which MAC provide for the AFSC is nearly double the previous space. While the AFSC had a few issues to work with after the opening ceremony, MAC (including all the workers, managers and the top brass) has been there to help us get everything resolved.

The temporary closure has,

**Continued from Page 14**

however, not stopped the meet-and-greets for deployed troops. During the week of May 18-25 the AFSC hosted two flights for returning troops. Thank you to the entire American Legion Family for your past support in both donations and people who have volunteered to staff the center. Future cash donations and volunteers would continue to be greatly appreciated.

**Joseph Jansen  
Chairman**

**Blood**

Thank you to all the District chairmen for taking your time and energy to support this life-saving program of The American Legion. Thank you, Commander Mark Dvorak, for this appointment.

Hosting a blood drive is a partnership where everyone wins: Start a new tradition this year. A tradition that brings about togetherness and strength with your family, friends and community.

Organizations gain goodwill from their community and build morale and camaraderie as their members work together for a good cause.

Blood donors feel good about giving back together with colleagues, friends, or peers.

Patients in the community and across the nation receive the gift of life.

**1st District:**

1st Place: Dodge Center Post 384 210 units

2nd Place: La Crescent Post 595 125 units,

3rd Place: Emmons Post 317 45 units.

Four Posts reporting

**2nd District:** no report

**3rd District:**

1st Place: Montgomery Post 79 471 units

2nd Place: Forest Lake Post 225 262 units

3rd Place: Balaton Post 433 237 Units.

Twenty Posts reporting

**4th District:**

1st Place: North St. Paul Post 39

2nd Place: 3M St. Paul Post 599,

3rd Place: Roseville Post 542 and St. Paul Post 8.

**5th District:**

1st Place: Richfield Post 435 21 units

2nd Place: Minneapolis U of M Post 548 10 units

3rd Place: Minneapolis Post 19 units.

Three Posts reporting

**6th District:**

1st Place: Park Rapids Post 212 400 units

2nd Place: Zimmerman Post 560 117 units,

3rd Place: Little Falls Post 46 80 units.

Eleven Posts reporting

**7th District:**

749 units District total, 19 Posts reporting

**8th District:**

1st Place: Duluth Post 71

2nd Place: Virginia Post 239

3rd Place: Grand Rapids Post 60.

**9th District:**

1st Place: Bagley Post 16 217 units

2nd Place: Moorhead Post 21 95 units

3rd Place: Warren Post 27 80 units.

Fourteen Posts reporting

**10th District:**

1st Place: Princeton Post 216 2,784 units

2nd Place: Anoka Post 102 341 units

3rd Place: Milaca Post 178 302 units.

Nine Posts reporting

**Total:** 7,815 units reported from seven of the Districts.

**Terry Larson  
Chairman**

**Brain Science**

Thank to all the Posts that have donated this year to the Minnesota American Legion Brain Science Foundation Scholarship Program.

Your Post or individual members can still do so if you desire by sending a check to the Minnesota American Legion office. The donations for the last five years are:

2015: \$11,783.00

2016: \$15,023.70

2017: \$14,024.45

2018: \$27,767.36

2019: \$16,392.58

A donation by a individual member recently was designated specifically for stem cell research and that was presented to the University of Minnesota Brain Science Center for that purpose.

**Gary H. Olson  
President**

**Children and Youth**

The objectives of 4th Pillar: Children and Youth are to strengthen the family, work to provide services for children and provide programs that meet the needs of young people.

We are accomplishing this by grants to individuals and organizations to benefit young people that are facing many societal pressures.

We are sustaining the American family to support growth in youths' development by improving the well-being of all children.

We use gambling funds to advance family values, educate on risky behavior and promote healthy and wholesome development. The success of our young people are our future.

**Karen Welander  
Chairman**

**Convention Corporation**

The Convention Corporation consists of five members plus a treasurer and a parade chairman. The names of the above can be found on the Department website under committees.

Our main duty is to solicit and schedule future conventions and fall conferences.

The Department Convention Corporation has been busier than usual due to the coronavirus situation. The 2020 Department Convention at Jackpot Junction has been cancelled. We have scheduled the 2021 Convention to be hosted by Redwood Falls, at Jackpot Junction. The Convention Corporation has been involved in making arrangements for next year.

The 2021 Department Convention was scheduled to be held at Willmar. With their

approval, we have assigned them the 2022 convention. As of this report, the 2020 Fall Conference at Breezy Point is still on schedule. The committee is looking for Posts or Districts to host one of the following. 2021 and future fall conferences and the 2023-and-up Department conventions. Please consider volunteering for one of these. The Convention Committee will meet and work with you on things to do and help plan and carryout the event

If anyone has any questions or suggestions, please contact me or the Department adjutant. Stay safe and we look forward to working with you. Thank you to all for understanding during this trying time.

**Phil Bellefeuille  
Chairman**

**Employment**

This past year, the Employment Committee received two nominations for the Employer of Veterans Award. Both of these companies were selected and forwarded to the National Veterans Employment and Education Division for consideration and recognition.

The company submitted, by the Kasson American Legion Post 333, for the small company category of having 50 or less employees was the Degeus Tile & Granite Inc. of Rochester.

The second company, submitted by the Anoka American Legion Post 102, for the large size company having 201 or more employees was Federal Cartridge Co. of Anoka.

Because of the cancelation of the 2020 Department Convention, both of these companies will be recognized and awarded a plaque at the 2020 Department Fall Conference.

We will also recognize the Rise Co. of Spring Lake Park, submitted by 5th District Commander Ray Eiden, the award for Enhancement of the Lives of Disabled Persons.

I want to congratulate Commander Mark Dvorak for his year as our Department Commander. I feel that he did an outstanding job of representing our organization and our veterans.

I also want to thank Commander Dvorak for the appointment as the chairman of the Employment Committee and allowing me to serve the veterans of our state for both the 2019-2020 and the 2020-2021 years.

**Carl R. Moon  
Chairman**

**A.L. Family Hospital Association**

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, it is my pleasure to report on this fiscal year's activities. I am reporting on all activities from the beginning of the fiscal year August 1, 2019 through June 15th, 2020. A complete fiscal year report will be provided to The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary and The Sons of the American Legion at our annual meeting held at the Fall Conference. Application history from the beginning of the fiscal (August 1st, 2019)

through (June 15th, 2020) can be seen below:

	FY-19	FY-20
Applications	27	23
Approvals	25	20
Disbursed	\$39,953	\$36,481

Listed below is the breakdown on the number of claims and amount of payouts by District:

District	Claims	Payout
First	2	\$6,689
Second	1	\$2,333
Third	0	\$0
Fourth	0	\$0
Fifth	0	\$0
Sixth	2	\$6,150
Seventh	1	\$0
Eighth	2	\$4,921
Ninth	12	\$10,446
Tenth	3	\$5,942
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>\$36,481</b>

Listed below is the financial picture for the ALFHA as of June 15, 2020:

Total assets as of July 31, 2019: \$242,563

Total income YTD: \$48,615

Total expense YTD: \$51,395

Net assets Reduction YTD: \$2,780

Special thanks to Roger Myren and Laura Weber for all the work they do for the American Legion Family Hospital Association. Also thank you to the board members who have served this past year.

They are: Jennifer Havlick, Theresa Rudnicki, Alberta Marth-Wohfeil, Robert Bristo, Diane Hayes, Mark Dvorak, Mary Hendrickson and David Vulcan.

Also special thanks to the entire American Legion Family for allowing me the honor of serving as your president for the American Legion Family Hospital Association.

**Roger Stoick  
President**

**Finance**

The Department Finance Committee met at Fergus Falls Post 30 American Legion on Sept. 24, 2019, to set the budget for the Department for 2019-2020.

After discussion, the budget was set to be a break-even. Our non-membership revenue remains a very important part of maintaining our programs.

It appears with two more months to go on the year, we should come close to meeting our budget forecast.

The committee thanks Commander Mark Dvorak, Adjutants Randy Tesdahl and Mike Maxa and the office staff, especially Laura Weber, for their help

Members of the committee are Chairman Tom Burau, Floyd Kumerow, Ray DeZurik, Richard Oelschlger and Richard Wog.

**Tom Burau  
Chairman**

**Fund for Hosp. Veterans**

The Committee for Hospitalized Veterans meets once a year,

and the last couple of years, this meeting has been held at the Department Fall Conference. The meeting was held at the Department Convention Center in Willmar. Committee members in attendance: Tim Haugen, Wes Thompson, Christine Wendt and Linda Kropuenske. Also, in attendance was American Legion Department of Minnesota Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tim Haugen at 3:57 p.m. Christine Wendt was elected secretary.

There was no old business to discuss. Minutes from the previous meeting were read by Chairman Tim Haugen and a motion to approve the minutes was made by Wes Thompson and seconded by Linda Kropuenske. Motion passed.

Haugen requested that Wolfsteller go over last year's funding and give a brief synopsis of the breakdown of why, where and who. Explanation accepted and understood by the committee.

After a short discussion, the budget was approved with some changes in regards to the wording of "emergent needs" as requested from each receiving hospital and lowering the budget. It was discussed to delete the line item "Chairman's Emergency Contingency" (\$200 per quarter) as it had not been used in the last three years.

Wolfsteller also briefed the committee on the disbanding of this committee after this year; it will be incorporated with another committee.

Linda Kropuenske made a motion to accept the attached proposal for annual budget (subject to Finance Committee approval) Oct. 1, 2019, to Sept. 30, 2020. Wes Thompson seconded.

Christine Wendt volunteered to take care of sending thank-you cards out to the various organizations that donate money to the Hospitalized Veterans Fund.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Tim Haugen at 4:40 p.m.

**Tim Haugen  
Chairman**

**Law and Order**

The Law and Order Committee received three applications for Firefighter of the Year and seven for Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, and after consideration by fellow committee members Gary F. Miller of Stewartville and Jeff Brokaw of Winona, we have selected Deputy Tracy Pagel of the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office as Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, and North Branch Fire Chief Kevin Grote as Firefighter of the year for 2019-2020.

The criteria for these awards are very strict and set down by National American Legion Headquarters. They consist of community service, 35 points; professional career, 40 points; heroism, 20 points; and letters and substantiating documents, 5 points.

This year we had many very qualified candidates, but the two selected not only shined on their own merit, but the paperwork submitted was well completed and had all the necessary information and signatures.

I would like to thank Ms. Pagel and Mr. Grote for their

fine service. They are truly the gold standard of their professions. I would also like to thank Mr. Miller and Mr. Brokaw for their insight and the guidance they provided me as experienced mentors and members of the committee, and I would like to thank Commander Mark Dvorak for giving me the honor of serving his administration on the Law and Order Committee. I look forward to serving in the coming year.

**Susan D. Edwards  
Chairman**

**Legionnaire Insurance Trust**

Another outstanding year.

Considering the world as it is, with loss of membership, a loss of revenue.

But an increase in Accidental Death program and long-term care. Sad news more claims on Accidental Death.

We encourage every member of the SAL, Legion Riders, Auxiliary and American Legion to apply for the \$1,000 LIT Accidental Death Policy free.

Accidental Death Policy is \$5,000 if killed on American Legion business free. You must be 18 years or older and must sign up thelit.com.

This past year the annual meeting was held by Zoom. Minnesota was very fortunate, we received nearly \$49,000 from LIT Insurance to help our veterans programs.

A special thank you to GaryLee Davenport and Eric Wilkens, who also serve in the LIT Committee, for their ideas and help. I would especially like to thank the entire office staff for all they do. We are very lucky in Minnesota to have help that really cares about all veterans. Any questions please contact me any time at 218-770-6264.

**Bill Barbknecht  
Chairman**

**Legionville**

This has been a year to remember 2020! President Wayne Gilbertson was seriously injured the day after Thanksgiving Day 2019. Gilbertson since that time is now at home recovering, unfortunately. Due to his injuries, he will not be returning to Legionville as president.

As vice president I was elected president of Legionville at our April 4 meeting. The motion was approved.

The meeting was conducted virtually due to the coronavirus that has impacted our nation. Thank you to Shawn Davis for your support with the virtual component.

The board made the decision at the Oct. 20, 2018, fall meeting to hire a camp director and camp manager for the upcoming year.

I want to thank the Legionville Board of Directors for all your support! The Legionville School Patrol Camp has been cancelled this year and all activities due to the coronavirus.

The Sons of The American Legion will keep moving forward with the Fall Camporee and Harvest Rally until we hear otherwise from the Minnesota Governor's Office.

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On Feb. 29, I met with special committee members Rich Cross, Cliff Tieglund, Shawn Davis, Jim Blakesley. We interviewed Adam Felton. Felton was chosen and selected as our next caretaker at Legionville.

We will have Tom Sanford returning this year and a small crew who will come to Legionville and prepare the camp for the 2021 year.

Blakesley informed the board he will take over the brick paver program. The board approved that Gilbertson would be voted as member emeritus. The motion was approved.

I would like to thank all the Posts, Units and Squadrons that have continued to support Legionville with funds.

The board of directors had a virtual meeting on May 2. Adam Maleski, with Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation, briefed the board on Re-Invest in Minnesota (RIM) program.

The county receives money that pays landowners to enroll a portion of their land into the program. The land can still be used for hunting, some timber harvest, hiking trails.

This is a permanent program. Dennis Henkemeyer made the motion to explore putting Legionville land into the RIM Program, seconded by Blakesley.

The motion carried. Please note: I completed the conservation easement application on May 7 and forwarded to Maleski.

The representatives' on the Board are: 1st District Glenn Mueller, 2nd District Floyd Kumerow, 3rd District Eugene Leifeld, 4th District Joe Jansen, 5th District Dennis Delong, 6th District Dwayne Collins (Wayne Gilbertson, member emeritus), 7th District Victor Gades, 8th District Carl Hendrickson, 9th District Dennis Henkemeyer, 10th District William Gordon, Department Commander Mark Dvorak, Department Adjutant Michael Maxa, Department Finance Officer William Goede, Department Auxiliary President Mary Hendrickson, SAL Commander David Vulcan, School Safety Patrol Representative Jim Blakesley, Legion Representative Richard Cross, 40/8 Representative Cliff Teigland, Finance Liaison Laura Weber, Legal Counsel Greg Colby.

**Eugene J. Leifeld**  
President

## Legislative

The Legislative Committee is chaired by Robert Hart and assisted by Deon Ford, Randy Olson and Lyle Foltz.

The American Legion works with eight other federally chartered veterans' organizations and the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs as part of the Minnesota Commanders' Task Force. The CTF has crafted a legislative agenda focused on asset preservation for properties managed by the MDVA.

In addition, we sought passage of the Veterans Restorative Justice Act supporting veterans treatment courts. We looked at reducing cost of hunting, trapping and fishing licenses for disabled veterans, and we also sought tax relief for Post homes.

High on our list was an initiative to allow widows and widowers a one-time transfer

of property to a similar or lesser value so they could possibly live in a more manageable-sized home. We also sought increased compensation for personal care attendants, many of whom care for our veterans.

Special challenges faced us this year with the COVID-19 pandemic shutting down the state and hampering all government functioning. State budgets took a beating and our heathy surplus evaporated under the strain of dwindling revenues. There were no public hearings since the pandemic was at peak when the session was due to start.

At this writing we are awaiting word on progress in a special session. All of this is further complicated by recent events resulting in mass protests, riots and destruction that will result in additional strain on resources and political will. Everything is on hold currently.

The Commanders' Task Force is planning a new format going into next year. The goal will be to start early with a select group that will take the long view and work on issues year-round, bring new commanders up to date in the fall of each year on the status of events. More on this as it matures.

In addition to action at the state level, The American Legion Washington Conference was well-attended. We secured meetings with all representatives and or their aides. Our delegation also met with Sen. Tina Smith as well as a key aide to Sen. Amy Klobuchar.

Our priorities at the national level included:

- Toxic exposure and burn pits
- Heath care for women veterans
- Support for VA's suicide prevention efforts
- Reaffirm our commitment to allies
- Fully fund a superior national defense
- Pay the Coast Guard when government closes down
- Implement and oversee recent laws such as the VA Mission Act
- Protect the G.I. Bill
- Help end veteran homelessness
- Support for Gold Star families
- Protect the American flag

All congresspeople and senators received not only one-page talking point list, but the expanded background papers as well.

I thank Commander Mark Dvorak for the confidence placed in me this year and this concludes my report.

**Robert Hart**  
Chairman

## Membership

Last year we started out in the top three through 2019 and beginning 2020. We then slowly started slipping to a point of where we are, as of June 18, in 19th place at 93.817 percent. We should be doing better with the Legion Act being signed as well as the push to get the 1982AD transferred.

Last year Past Membership Director Maxa had each Legion Family group lead a rally. We continued that again this year. I would hope that continues into the future. One thing I hear as

membership director is about how rallies used to be. They ask: Do we really have rallies any more or is it just a social event?

Well, perhaps a little of both. Even though there may not officially be training at a rally, one can still learn much just by conversing with your fellow family members.

The biggest push this year was to work the 1982 and 1982ADs. There was some success in accomplishing that. We transferred 476 out of 1982AD, but there are still 2,491 in 1982AD.

It is imperative that those members be contacted. They need to be in a Post. Once we get them into a Post, let's not forget about them. Keep them in the loop. See what their interests are. Spend time with them for they may be a potential leader in your Post. If so, utilize the best person within your Post or District to mentor them. Mentoring can be done without a lot of fanfare.

When I started getting active in the Legion there were many folks who were mentoring me, and I didn't even realize it. Now, getting back to direct mail solicitation. That process of working the DMS members is myLegion.org. We have some amazing folks in Department such as Linda Dvorak, Dick Ward, Marvin Ostram, who have the skills to use and teach this program.

The training for myLegion.org can be held at your Post or District level. Just give Linda a call. Once you have the knowledge of myLegion.org, membership in your Districts and Posts can do nothing but grow.

With COVID-19 playing havoc on our daily lives, we were also afforded the opportunity to be presented with a way of socializing with voice and video through a program call Zoom. Again, thanks to members like Teresa Ash and Jennifer Havlick who stepped up to make this happen. Membership funds were used to provide each District the opportunity to have a subscription to Zoom for a year. It provides a way for the Districts and Posts the opportunity to get together without physically being together.

Another push this year was to have every District hold a revitalization. Some Districts held more than one. If we can get all Posts trained on myLegion.org and they see the benefits to them, District revitalizations might dwindle to a point of the Post being self-sufficient.

I had hoped with all the opportunities afforded us we could be in a better position. We had a great team this year and they will continue this coming year. With this coming year being an unprecedented one with most everyone keeping their current position and all the training that is and will take place, including Legion College, I see nothing but good things happening for the Department of Minnesota. My sincere thanks to the vice commanders for what you do. Thank you to Commander Mark Dvorak for his leadership and friendship. It has indeed been a pleasure.

**Sy Fix**  
Membership Director

## Pheasant Dinner

I would like to thank all of

the Legion Posts and Auxiliary Units and Sons of The American Legion and the Legion Riders for their donations this past year. It was a busy year, and I had the great opportunity to get to three pheasant dinners and two venison dinners, putting on 1,670 miles.

It was very rewarding to be able to enjoy meals with the veterans and listen to their stories. We were able to do three nice donations to the following veterans homes. One donation was for seed money for a new van. Another donation was for the memorial wall with all branches of the service on pillars. The other one was for a memorial room for those being called to eternal rest and helping complete their memory wall of veterans.

A big thank you to the Owatonna post for their auction with the help of the community and the VFW, our counterparts. Thank you, Commander Mark Dvorak, for this great year and appointment of this great committee. Please keep the donations coming in so we can have many more great years to come. Respectfully yours

**Glenn Mueller**  
Chairman

## Resolutions Assignment

The Resolutions Assignment Committee is composed of three members, Chairman Al Davis, Jim Copher of Mound and Jim Munson of Richfield.

Responsibilities of the committee include the review of all resolutions submitted to the Department Convention for consideration. After reviewing all resolutions, the Committee assigns them to a convention committee for action of approval, rejection, or amend and approved. During the convention each committee reports on its actions to the delegates, who have the final authority on all resolutions.

The Resolutions Assignment Committee monitors all reports and prepares a final report on the actions taken by delegates to the convention.

Thank you to Commander Mark Dvorak for the confidence in us by appointing us to this committee. Also, thank you to the Department staff that assists us greatly in getting all the resolutions properly completed prior to the presentation to the delegates at convention.

**Al Davis**  
Chairman

## Sons of The American Legion

This year we have seen many changes. Ray Ozmun stepped down as Department advisor for the SAL and was replaced with Dennis Henkemeyer. Then Doug Bible stepped down as Detachment adjutant with Dennis Henkemeyer replacing him. Then I was appointed to replace Dennis. Then as our year starts to wind down in steps COVID-19, and we all know what happened then.

A special thank you to Joe Niessen, who is the assistant advisor to the south, and Walt

Folendorf, who is assistant advisor to the north. These men are both highly active dual members of the American Legion Family.

I missed last year's Fall Conference because I thought it was more important to attend one of my granddaughters wedding.

I would like to congratulate Detachment Commander Dave Vulcan, his officers, and committeemen for a great year.

Finally, I want to thank the staff at Department Headquarters for all their help throughout the year. And thanks to Commander Mark Dvorak for the appointment to this position.

**Gary L. Weaver**  
Department Advisor

## Sports: Baseball

Minnesota American Legion Baseball was on track to reach the 400-registered-teams mark before the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to cancel our 2020 season. Minnesota leads the nation with the number of registered teams by a wide margin. We hope to bounce back stronger than ever in 2021.

Scheduled state tournament hosts for 2020 will now host for 2021. Burnsville will be the exception, which will host in 2022. St. Cloud, Sacred Heart, Bloomington and Montevideo will host the various tournaments in 2021.

Our baseball committee is made up of the following members: Vice Director for Division I is Jeff Miller and for Division II is Brandon Raymo. The Junior Level Director is Jim Peck. The following are the District Directors: District 1 is Scott McCready, District 2 is Vern Kitzberger, District 3 is Bruce Young, District 4 is Gail Kalata, District 5 is Kyle Nutting, District 6 is Wes Thompson, District 7 is Mike Gort, District 8 is Tom Coombe, District 9 is Mike Arvidson, and District 10 is Luther Dorr.

The results from the 2019 State Tournaments were as follows: Division I Senior at Cold Spring had Excelsior as the champion and Edina as the runner-up. Division II Senior at Pelican Rapids had Dilworth as the champion and Plato as the runner-up. In Junior Division I at Bloomington, Hopkins was the champion, and Excelsior was the runner-up and in The Junior Division II tournament at St. Charles, Aitkin was the champion, with Esko as the runner-up.

A special thank you to Al Zdon and his new replacement, Tim Engstrom, for their work at the state Legion Department promoting American Legion Baseball.

**Randy Schaub**  
Director

## Sports: Bowling

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 bowling was cancelled this year. All entry fees were returned to team captain. We will be back in 2021 at Sundance Lanes in Dayton, hosted by Legion Post 172 of Osseo.

**Bob Mace**  
Chairman

## Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning Committee started the year with an organizational meeting at the Fall Conference in Mahanomen. I am thankful to previous year's SPC Chairman Bishop Dan Williams and committee for all their hard work and knowledgeable leadership. They provided a working document, the Department of Minnesota Strategic Plan for Sustained Membership Growth. Draft versions were also started for the District and Post levels.

A written plan that has a purpose of providing guidance for the sustained future of a large organization like the Department of Minnesota is an easy target for criticism. This initial plan provides the top-of-mind information to make the gears start turning and build a foundation of growth for our organization.

One of the objectives this year for the SPC was to make sure the strategic plan continues as a living document and is made easily accessible. A draft version is still available on Facebook and you can view by searching "Dept of Minnesota American Legion Strategic Planning."

Copies of the strategic plan were handed out to the District commanders and Department vice commanders who attended the focus group meeting held this past winter at the Montgomery Post 79. The session was very successful for sharing successes, ideas and roadblocks. The membership year started as a historic time for The American Legion. The changes to The American Legion Family eligibility, electronic processing of membership direct to National and the use of media technology are a few of the issues we were adapting to that greatly affect our legacy.

The pandemic created new hurdles but our organization is continually stepping up and showing we are up to the challenge.

Our organization is making great efforts to formalize education and training and to update printed material to reflect recent changes. What we can't forget is our purpose of service to our veterans and service to our communities. Our interactions within our VAs, veteran homes, military units and communities need to be revitalized and emphasized to the current and new generation. The legacy of our actions will set the path for the future of the Department of Minnesota. The Strategic Planning Committee is an important resource for our organization and needs to be utilized to its potential. The knowledgeable, creative members selflessly volunteer their talents to lead us on a successful path. Thank you, Commander Mark Dvorak, for the opportunity to be part of the Strategic Planning Committee once again.

Committee members are Chairman Tom Fernlund, Jennifer Havlick, Paul Hassing, Carla Tappainer, Immediate Past Department Commander Darrel Redepening, Department Commander Mark Dvorak and Past National Commander Dan Ludwig, special advisor. The secretary position is vacant.

**Tom Fernlund**  
Chairman

# District commanders

## 1st District Dale Wellik



Greetings from the 1st District American Legion Family. Thank you for your service and support.

We need to stay strong and healthy, do what we need to do, facemask and social distancing to stay away from the virus.

All reports should be in by now. We should be ready to start on the 2020-2021 year.

The membership packets should be delivered by the time you read this.

The Fourth of July — the USA's birthday — is upon us.

We are working on the 2021 calendar.

The Department Training Committee is doing training virtually, Zoom webinars, so we can be informed right from

our own homes or Legion Posts.

Yes, the Department of Minnesota website, mnlegion.org has lots of good information. What you need can be found here.

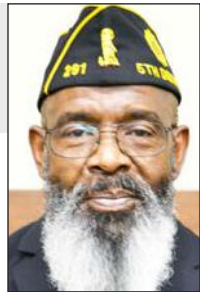
American Legion Posts are opening up, now leaning on the cautious side.

We need to start this year strong.

Pray for the deployed, their families and all front-line personnel. Their tasks are hard and difficult. They need our support. They are defending our freedom home and abroad.

*For God and Country.*

## 5th District Andrew Rose Sr.



Greetings from the Fighting 5th District. We pray that all are safe and making every effort to stay that way.

Our membership numbers are still the lowest of all Districts. This is disheartening to me as commander of the District. This trend should end at the close of this membership year, with the advent of new leadership.

At our June 6 virtual convention, we elected Wade Larson as our new district commander. We are still reaching out to Posts for 1st, 2nd and 3rd District vice commanders. There are also a couple of appointed positions that need to be filled.

All interested should reach

out to Jim Munson, nominations chair. Or get your inquiries in to Ray Eiden. He'll be glad to help.

And if you are a veteran or veterans family member in need of monetary or material items, call Tom McKenna 952-356-5116, or tom@everythirdsaturday.com. Remember that your support of Every Third Saturday is greatly appreciated.

Yourself as well as I, never forget our convalescing and hospitalized veterans and family members. With visiting restrictions please call.

## 3rd District Linda Dvorak



Hello from the 3rd District.

The 3rd District held its District packet pick-up and had some training as well. Several Posts were in attendance and packets were distributed. The packet pick-up is a great way to get everyone together to discuss ideas and make plans for the upcoming year.

I am also part of the newly formed Training Committee. We had three webinars in June that were directed at MyLegion.org. The first one was for the Districts and was on the available reports in MyLegion.org. We did have a few glitches, but since it was the first one that

was to be expected.

The second one, which went much better, was also on the reports, but it was for the Posts. Last, but not least, we had a webinar on how to process membership using MyLegion.org. Great way to get your membership processed without mailing anything to Department. Watch for future webinars on a variety of subjects. If you have a suggestion, let the Training Committee know. We can certainly try to accommodate.

## 6th District Paul Edwards



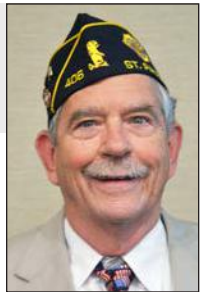
In spite of the weirdness all around us, the Legion and the people that make up the Legion Family are a shining example of what is right in our world. Even though we are unable to meet face to face, I hear many reports of the Legion family stepping up. I know of Legionnaires making masks and then others collecting them and driving many miles to get them to veteran's hospitals and homes where they are desperately needed. I hear of food drives being conducted for local food banks. I hear of Legion Riders doing a ride by to wish a child a happy birthday or to welcome home a Gold Star Mother. Good people make the Legion a wonderful organization.

Typically, at this point, we would be bidding farewell to

officers and greeting new ones, but due to the COVID-19 crisis and the extension of the terms of office, that is not the case this year. Some officers and committee chairs have decided to step down and I want to express my profound gratitude for your service. And in the same breath, I will say thank you to those who have committed to stay in harness until our next elections.

Thank you for a great year and I look forward to new and greater challenges and triumphs as we move on into 2020-2021 term, continuing the work to improve communication and more education opportunities in the Mighty 6th District.

## 4th District Joe Jansen



Hello to all of our 4th District Legion family members. As many of you saw on Saturday, June 13, we had a great flag retirement ceremony at the veterans camp. The weather was perfect, and while it was a smaller gathering everybody enjoyed their time together. Just a reminder we are NOT having an RCCC meeting in July.

The next meeting will be at the Arcade-Phalen Post in St. Paul with the executive board meeting at 6:30 p.m. and the all members meeting at 7 p.m. Once again I am asking the

Posts to turn in their Consolidated Post Reports. If a post doesn't, then I ask the vice commanders to get the data and submit one for them. Please be sure we have good information to put out this fall on the Post command structure: dates, locations and times of your meetings. Plus, of course, the names, telephone numbers and email addresses of all the post officers.

## 8th District Anne Koskinen



Greetings, 8th District Legionnaires,

District Convention was on 6th of June via Zoom and went well. The agenda was posted in emails sent out. I wish more members would take part; it's actually easier to attend (you don't have to leave home). The business of the 8th District is your business, so please stay informed.

We have a new vice commander for Mesabi-Itasca area. Jeffrey Graves has stepped up to take that on. He hails from Keewatin Post 452.

At the Post level, many Posts have begun conducting regular business with only small groups in the halls; Department is encouraging the return to Post meetings. We all want to get back to business and socialize with our fellow Legionnaires; please take your social distancing cautions and stay well while getting back to meetings.

The Department has decided on a Fall Conference at Breezy

Point Resort, Oct. 22-24, so I hope that stays in our calendar as an in-person meeting. Naturally, I want you to put that on your "to-do list."

Looking forward to Independence Day celebrations around the District (state and nation). One of these days I'll get to D.C. and experience Fourth of July in our nation's capital; that indeed would be something grand.

Follow The American Legion Twitter feed @AmericanLegion. National has been posting a lot of time-sensitive information on meetings, projects, and more. Comments on tweets allow the leadership to know your thoughts.

I may not be physically available in the next month or so; I will be continuing to help my handicapped "adopted" mom at her house.

## 10th District Tom Allen



Greetings from the mighty 10th District. It's been a long three months with not much going on, with our Posts being closed, and trying to get our reports in, holding Zoom meetings, and curbside food

so people could order take out. I would like to thank all our officers and chairmen for taking their offices for another year. We are planning our schedule for next year, and we will have an e-board Zoom meeting

the end of June.

Thanks to our membership director, Daryl Harmon, and all the posts for getting us at 95 percent of our goal. A big thanks go out to our Minnesota National Guard for protecting our state buildings and stopping the riots in the Twin Cities.

## Pop quiz

Can you match the full name and number of the Post to its city? Draw the connections with a pen or pencil. Answers are on the back page.

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Oscar Iverson Post 133                   | Nashauk        |
| Lind-Gordon-Berg Post 106                | Int'l Falls    |
| Ralph Gracie Post 14                     | Wabasso        |
| Edward B. Cutter Post 102                | Jasper         |
| Walter Riley Post 307                    | Kenyon         |
| Dale E. Wayrynen Post 23                 | Slayton        |
| Erwin March Post 64                      | Minneapolis    |
| Abner Rude Post 481                      | Hibbing        |
| Edward Born Post 343                     | Bemidji        |
| The Hellenic Post 129                    | Virginia       |
| Pratt-Volden-Mickelson-Anderson Post 239 | Bloomington    |
| Victor Hirsch Post 263                   | South St. Paul |
| Woodcock-Herbst Post 216                 | Crosslake      |
| Richard Howard Ferrell Post 46           | Lanesboro      |
| Adamson-Norman Post 30                   | Proctor        |
| Cobb-Williams-Nehiba Post 222            | Norwood        |
| William Robideau Post 66                 | Fergus Falls   |
| Potz Heartland Post 500                  | McGregor       |
| Henry M. Guttormson Post 40              | Princeton      |
| Joseph A. Gates Post 78                  | Little Falls   |
| Hogberg-Gerszewski Post 353              | Anoka          |
| Earl C. Hill Post 550                    | Argyle         |

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Burnsville: 952-435-8889  
Roseville: 651-633-7887  
Des Moines: 515-207-3555

## FLAGS OVER EAGAN



On June 1, Eagan Post 594 donated 13 U.S. flags to the city of Eagan. Adjutant Wayne Beierman, right, presented them to Eagan Buildings Supervisor Mike Sipper, left, at the Eagan Community Center. The post has provided flags for the Tribute Memorial Plaza for over eight years, and expanded the program in early 2018 to cover the U.S. flag needs for all city buildings.

**Veterans Linkage Line™**  
minnesotaveteran.org | 1-888-LinkVet (546-5838)  
**Help for veterans and families**



# The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 20 Vol. 12

President Mary Hendrickson • Secretary Sandie Deutsch • Secretary Marsha Bible

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

651-224-7634

July 2020

## Farewell, Sandie Deutsch, and welcome, Marsha Bible

### President's Column

Mary Hendrickson



As I write this article, Northern Minnesota is experiencing a 90-degree day in mid-June. My husband is out searching for plexiglass to surround the bar at West Duluth Post 71 in anticipation of a July 1 reopening.

Many safety measures will be put into place to protect our members and guests. It will be great to see old friends and meet new ones. One of the hardships of isolation and social distancing is the lack of interaction with family (including my American Legion Family) and friends. I'm hoping life will be returning to normal and we can get together at Camporee and Fall Conference.

Membership has been on my mind. After a promising start to the year, the coronavirus caused the "bottom to fall out" in mid-March.

Department Membership Chairman Sharon Thiemecke and her District Membership Chairmen have held two Zoom meetings and are hard at work gathering renewals and new members. We are very close to 30,000 members, which is one of my biggest goals for our Centennial Year.

Please help us do this before the Aug. 1 deadline. Due to social distancing, a great way to renew your dues is by telephone (317) 569-4570 or online at [www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org). National will mail you your membership card.

As a retired educator, I'm really excited and proud to have three Minnesota winners of 2019-2020 American Legion Auxiliary National Scholarships. Congratulations to Maria Melbo (\$5,000 Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship), Shannon Michelle Swanson (\$2,000 Non-Traditional Scholarship) and Lexus Efta (\$2,500 Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship).

Congratulations also go out to those Units, which submitted their applications: Irvin Blix 16; Apple Valley 1776 and Hogberg-Gerszewski 353. This is positive proof that you need to keep sending in those applications for possible national recognition.

On the good news front, thanks to the generosity of Units, Posts and Squadrons, I've received enough donations to complete both of my President's Projects.

Last week I drove up to Veterans on the Lake near Ely to see the two new golf carts which were recently delivered there.

A photo of the general manager and me is included in this edition of The Minnesota Legionnaire. My other project, a television projection device and setup for the Great Room at Silver Bay Veterans Home, will be installed within the next two weeks.

Activities Director Joyce and the residents are very excited!

This paragraph will be a tough one to write. This is the month we say goodbye to our Department Executive Secretary Sandie Deutsch. She has been an incredible asset to our organization for the last nine years. Her wealth of knowledge, enthusiasm and organizational skills are top-notch.

We've grown especially close the last few months, which have been stressful for both of us as we wrestled with serious questions about canceling events, what to do about our office and office staff during this pandemic, etc. With events changing almost daily, there were many early and late-night emails and telephone calls.

Sandie has definitely been my rock during my term in office. Thank you, Sandie, from all of us.

P.S.: We will be honoring Sandie at the Fall Conference.

Welcome aboard to new Department Executive Secretary Marsha Bible!

She is a former Department president who, like Sandie, has a wealth of knowledge about our organization. Sandie has done a great job showing Marsha "the ropes" about organizing meetings and conventions, dealing with our financial assets, etc. I look forward to working with Marsha in the months ahead.

Normally this would be my farewell column. The coronavirus caused the cancellation of both our Department and National conventions, so all officers at those two levels are staying in place until 2021. It's time for me to "reboot" and get ready for the second half of my 24-month year. I don't know if I should call it a sequel or Department President Part II.

Thank you for your confidence in my ability to lead this organization as we move forward.

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

## Meet the Hometown Hero from Wabasha Unit 50

By Michael Smith  
Wabasha County Herald

WABASHA — We've heard a great deal about Hometown Heroes the past couple of months as the country deals with the coronavirus pandemic.

From hospital workers all the way from St. Elizabeth's to New York City and points in between, to public health workers of all types, to grocery store check-out staff and child care providers, these people have put themselves on the "front line" of this epic battle.

But not all hometown heroes are at the hospitals — though we want to thank each and every one of them every single day, or at least we should — for all that they do. Some are contributing in this fight in their own way.

LaVerne "Red" Rumsey, a member of the Wabasha American Legion Auxiliary Unit 50 and perhaps best known by others for her years of working at the Legion Club here, has been contributing to this fight in her own way. "Red" has now made over 1,000 facemasks and she has given nearly all of them to veterans at veterans homes across Minnesota.

"I have sent masks to homes all over the state," she said during a visit outside her home last week. "I've sent them to homes in Luverne,



Photo by Wabasha County Herald

LaVerne Rumsey displays a sampling of the masks she has made.

the Minnesota VA Hospital in Minneapolis, the VA HCS in St. Cloud, the Hastings Veterans Home and the Veterans Home in Silver Bay. They were to be used by the veterans at those facilities, or staff, if necessary.

"And I'm still making more!"

She has also made 25 masks for the Jewel Golf Course and Clubhouse in Lake City. "People stop and ask me for some," she added. "I made many for my son to use at his work."

Red has been at this since

Day 1, practically, of this pandemic.

She's been using material that she's had stocked up in her home. "I mostly use cotton and flannel ... even T-shirt material," she noted.

"The elastic has been in my basement, too. It's elastic that is usually used to make underwear," she chuckled. "I started with a roll this big," she said, spreading her hands out about a foot apart. "But I'm almost out."

She has been getting reimbursement for the postage from the Auxiliary, but otherwise,

she's doing this all on her own.

"It's something I can do. I'm good at sewing, stitching ... so I can put my skills to good use this way."

Why not? Having been married to a veteran — her husband of many years, Bernie, passed away several years ago — she understands the needs of aging veterans and their lifelong commitment to their country. So for her to pitch in and help in this way ... to be a different kind of "hometown Hero," well, it's only natural, we'd say.

Now, if only this pandemic would just naturally go away.

## There still is time for recruiting new members

By Sharon Thiemecke  
Membership Chairman

Membership 2019-2020 is not finished yet! There is still time to get out there and recruit, renew and rejoin members. Spouses, mothers, daughters and granddaughters — if there is one then there is the potential for three or more.

Mining for members. They are our gems! Membership is our organization. It is what allows us to do what we do. Membership helps us work our mission successfully. Our veterans, active duty military and their families need us.

By Diane Hayes  
Community Service Chairman

During the COVID-19 pandemic, remember to follow the COVID-19 guidelines in your community. Donate or volunteer safely with food banks and pantries. Deliver meals and groceries to those who are unable to get out.

Also check your local Meals on Wheels to learn ways to volunteer.

**Help a school:** Check with your area school system to see if they need volunteers

Enthusiasm is contagious.

Share your *why!* Start the conversation! 2020 membership is still coming into the Department office every week. Keep up the good work and keep those memberships coming. The Celebration Award from National Headquarters is within our reach! Let's make President Mary proud with 100 percent for our Centennial Celebration!

We are almost at 30,000 members and our Department goal is 31,754 members. Together we can do this. We are a Team! Many hands make light work. Remember that membership is *everyone's* job.

These have been times to get creative for

our members working our programs and our gatherings. Creative we have been as The American Legion Family works together — we do not give up — we find a way!

If social distancing is important to you, dues can be submitted by calling National Headquarters at 317-569-4570 or online at [alaforveterans.org](http://alaforveterans.org).

Dues may still be paid directly to your Unit membership chairman like we have always done. Remember that the spouse of our female Legionnaire veterans now qualify to join the American Legion Auxiliary. Welcome to a fresh prospective and new ideas.

## Give back during the time of COVID-19 pandemic

By Diane Hayes  
Community Service Chairman

to distribute food or other items to children and families in need.

**Give blood:** Blood donations have decreased dramatically. Help fill the need by contacting your local Red Cross or other blood donation sites.

**Stay in touch:** Check on your neighbors, friends and family, especially those who are older or may be alone. A phone call, text or a conversation through the door or a message written on a poster board could brighten their day.

**Sew masks:** Sew and donate masks to

your community if they need more.

Yard work, window washing, caring for flowers, shrubs, road ditches, etc. Contact your local community for volunteer opportunities.

Visit the Minnesota State Service Commission's website for details or contact your Chamber of Commerce or other organizations to see if there are any events coming that you can volunteer for while following the guidelines for COVID-19 in your communities.

Take care, be safe, God bless America.

**Update on the Honorary Department Junior President Project**

Honorary Department Junior President Emily Sueess has collected funds towards her 2019-2020 project of necessary items for the 5 Minnesota Veterans Homes. In June, Emily delivered the first shipment to the veterans at Silver Bay Veterans Home.

Even though the veterans were still in COVID-19 lockdown, they were able to view through the windows as Emily presented her donations to the home.

This donation was valued at \$1,312.20 and included 21 pairs of sweatpants — 28 pairs of shorts — 120 colored pocket T-shirts and 30 \$10 gift cards to McDonald's. Thank you to everyone who has donated to this project.

(See three photos on the right.)



**Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary President Mary Hendrickson is at Veterans on the Lake in Ely.**

**2020-2021 Unit officer list**

All Units were to have their Officers Lists into the Department Office some time ago. We are missing many unit lists. Please email them immediately to deptoffice@mnala.org.

These lists are very important as we develop our mailing lists for the year from them. NO 2021 membership cards/packets will be sent to your Unit until we have received your 2020-2021 list. You can download the form on our website mnala.org to your own computer, fill it out and email it to us. It is as simple as that.

**2021 membership cards**

Since our Department Convention has been cancelled this year, 2021 Membership cards will be mailed to your Unit Membership Chairman. We anticipate that cards will be mailed no later than July 17th. We will post notification on the Department Auxiliary Facebook when the cards are on their way.

**2020 Department Fall Conference**

Department Fall Conference will be hosted by the Nisswa American Legion Family at Breezy Point Resort October 22-24, 2020. Information on hotel accommodations and registration can be found on Page 2 in this Legionnaire. We are working on program information and will have more details in next month's addition.

**2019-2020 American Legion Auxiliary National Scholarship Winners**

Congratulations to the following national scholarship winners:

**Children of Warriors National President Scholarship:** \$5,000 to Maria Melbo submitted by Bagley Unit 16

**Nontraditional Scholarship:** \$2,000 to Shannon Michelle Swanson submitted by Apple Valley Unit 1776

**Junior Membership Loyalty Scholarship:** \$2,500 to Lexus Efta submitted by Argyle Unit 353



**Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch retirement**

As most of you are aware by now, Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch will retire on July 17. Originally this date was set to coincide with our Department Convention and a proper send-off was in the works. And then came COVID-19!

The Department knew that many of you would want to wish Sandie well in her retirement and have one last visit with her. She will be in attendance at Fall Conference and a small celebration is being planned. Please try to attend.

The staff, Jan Lauby, Jocelyn Yasis and Marsha Bible, wish you only the very best on your retirement. May you have all the

time in the world to spoil your grandchildren to your hearts content.

"Just don't forget to enjoy some me time just for you and Shorty. Thank you for helping to make the transition as smooth as you could considering the new world of working remotely, social distancing and spontaneous 'events' at the Capitol," Bible said.

**The ALA has come through during COVID crisis**

**By Patti Coleman**  
COVID-19 Committee Representative

Our Units and Districts need to be commended for staying connected and continuing to work the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary during these trying times of COVID-19.

Many members have taken the time to become familiar with Zoom to participate in meetings, sharing and caring calls, or to keep in touch. Even as our Post homes are starting to open, please continue to offer the option of using Zoom to our members. Many cannot attend in person but would love to be a part of everything that you have happening in your Unit. This is a great way to include all members going forward. It is a new tool in our ALA toolbox, and we

need to continue to utilize the technology that is available.

Our veterans have continuously been in need during this time of COVID-19 and the ALA has come through for them. We have many members throughout the state who are supporting our veterans by ensuring that our Minnesota Veterans Homes and VA Health Care Systems have the masks they need, ear protectors, gowns and so much more.

I am proud and grateful for all of those who are sewing and sewing and sewing to fill this need. Many hands have had a role in the thousands (yes, thousands!) of items that have been donated to our VA facilities during COVID-19. The needs are not dissipating. I encourage you to help when and if you can.

When the Minnesota National Guard was called up to serve during the unrest that was taking place in the Twin Cities, The American Legion Family stepped in to ensure that they had plenty of water, Gatorade and snacks. Communities worked together to support those men and women who are our citizen soldiers. There was an awesome response and they have expressed their sincere gratitude for the support.

I encourage our Units to continue to be innovative and adapt to the changing circumstances in how you work our programs during COVID-19 and beyond.

You are doing terrific work for the American Legion Auxiliary, you are supporting our veterans, active military and their families and you are relevant in your communities. Thank you for all you do every day!

**Scrip Cards and how you can help Girls State**

**Peggy Tesdahl**  
ALA Minnesota Girls State Director

Your American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State committee is committed to keeping this program at the same low cost of \$300 as it has been for the last few years. We know that it has been hard lately for our Units to do any fundraising. Units and all members of the American Legion Family can help us to keep the fees down by participating in our Scrip Gift Card program.

Scrip Gift Cards are sold to you at the face value of the card and the retailer pays a commission to the American Legion Auxiliary usually ranging from 2 to 7 percent of the face value. It is a win-win for everyone.

Scrip Gift Cards are available from many retailers in many denominations. Groceries, gas, hotels, movie theaters and more all have Scrip available to purchase including Cub Foods, Walmart, Target, Amazon, QuikTrip, Starbucks, Panera, Chipotle, Best Buy, Kohl's, Menards, Taco Bell, Dairy Queen, Great Clips, Papa Murphy's, to name a few. They are available as physical gift cards, as downloadable printable gift cards or downloadable to the wallet app on your smart phone.

Scrip Gift cards aren't just for gift giving. They are usable for your every day shopping and many can be reloaded from your phone or home computer.

We will continue to have a select inventory of gift cards available at American Legion functions. They are limited to a few different retailers and they are \$25 value.

Does your Unit or District purchase Gift cards for our Veterans homes or veterans in your communities? Please consider purchasing them through the ALA Minnesota Girls State program.

If you are ordering physical gift cards, we need at least two weeks lead time or more if possible. The website can be a little overwhelming at first and I am here to help you. Please call me for help or with questions at 612-715-4489 or email me at ranpeg0814@hotmail.com.

Please contact me or the Department Office to order your cards. Thank you for supporting the Minnesota Girls State program, and we hope you will use the Scrip Gift Card program.

**Adios, auf wiedersehen, au revoir, sbohem, aloha**

**Secretary's Notes**

**Sandie Deutsch**



Editor Tim Engstrom said he needs more things for the July Legionnaire, sooooo, just a quick addendum from Secretary Sandie — you thought you were done with me, but nooooo.

HA! As I said in my short, condensed column last month, I would probably forget some very important friends and that I did. This time, this is it, for sure, and if I didn't mention your name after this, I blame it on old age.

I do have to mention Chuck Stone and Tonia Betterman. I am so happy to have been able to get to know both of you and my turtle has its home at our motorhome in Hastings — many, many compliments on him (Ralph is his name).

Also, don't know how I could have forgotten Jim and Jeannette Mertens, what a pleasure it was to run quite a few conventions and conferences

with them. They are the best. Yes, Patti Coleman, you are on my bestie list forever.

One more couple that mean the world to me are Bev and Orv Otterness. What wonderful people they are and Bev knows where to get the best Virginia peanuts in the world.

I also can't believe I didn't miss my other couple of favorites, Don Hayden and dear Vrzy from Montgomery.

This is it now. Finito! Again I love you all to death and keep the mission rolling!

*Sandie Deutsch is the departing executive secretary for the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota. Her final day is July 17.*

# THE AMERICAN LEGION

## Answers:


Below are the answers to the pop quiz on Page 17:

- Oscar Iverson Post 133 ... Jasper
- Lind-Gordon-Berg Post 106 ... Proctor
- Ralph Gracie Post 14 ... Bemidji
- Edward B. Cutter Post 102 ... Anoka
- Walter Riley Post 307 ... Nashwauk
- Dale E. Wayrynen Post 23 ... McGregor
- Erwin March Post 64 ... Slayton
- Abner Rude Post 481 ... South St. Paul
- Edward Born Post 343 ... Norwood
- The Hellenic Post 129 ... Minneapolis
- Pratt-Volden-Mickelson-Anderson Post 239 ... Virginia
- Victor Hirsch Post 263 ... Wabasso
- Woodcock-Herbst Post 216 ... Princeton
- Richard Howard Ferrell Post 46 ... Little Falls
- Adamson-Norman Post 30 ... Fergus Falls
- Cobb-Williams-Nehiba Post 222 ... Hibbing
- William Robideau Post 66 ... International Falls
- Potz Heartland Post 500 ... Crosslake
- Henry M. Guttormson Post 40 ... Lanesboro
- Joseph A. Gates Post 78 ... Kenyon
- Hogberg-Gerszewski Post 353 ... Argyle
- Earl C. Hill Post 550 ... Bloomington

## NOT BUFFALOED IN BUFFALO



On Saturday, June 20, Buffalo Post 270 hosted a car show with live music from the Everett Smithson Band and also served up burgers, dogs and beverages outside in its huge parking lot. "We had plenty of space for social distancing. There were nearly 100 classic and antique cars in attendance. Everyone had a wonderful time!" said Adjutant Connie Herzog. At far left is Post Commander Bob Larson watching from a distance. The next car shows are July 21, Aug. 18 and Sept. 15. A grand finale will be Oct. 3.



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