



## Minnesota Senate passes Restorative Justice Act

House to wait until bond-rating quiet period ends; both chambers to do it all again

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Senate on Aug. 12 passed the Veterans Restorative Justice Act during the third special session, but it's not a law yet.

This time, the Minnesota House didn't vote on it. It was a reversal of the Senate's vote in the July special session and a reversal of the 2019 regular session, when the House passed it and the Senate did not.

But members of the Minnesota Commanders'

Task Force expect it to cross the finish line before Election Day.

Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka and House Speaker Melissa Hortman separately told the Legionnaire they will be glad to approve it all over again and send it to the governor's desk for a signature next month.

Hortman cited the bond-rating blackout for the House not acting. Before the one-day session, Minnesota Management and Budget Commissioner Myron Frans had called for a quiet period on the

state fiscal outlook. Even if the VRJA saves money, it affects the outlook.

That means the bill will be voted on again in September.

Gazelka said it made sense to get it done. "It was never about veterans not being important," he said. "It was about not doing too much in a special session without a committee process."

He credited Sen. Roger Chamberlain of Lino

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Paul Gazelka



Melissa Hortman

## Legion donates 50 iPads to VA

Dept. won a grant from Operation Comfort Warriors

By Cameran Richardson

MINNEAPOLIS — When the COVID-19 pandemic caused VA health care facilities nationwide to close their doors to visitors for the safety of hospitalized veterans and staff, the Minneapolis VA Medical Center put plans in motion to provide virtual visitor opportunities. Those plans involved an \$18,000 Operation Comfort Warriors grant from The American Legion.

Operation Comfort Warriors is an American Legion program dedicated to meeting the needs of wounded, injured or ill veterans and military personnel by providing them with items usually not supplied by the government.

On July 30, 50 Apple iPads were presented to Minneapolis VA Director Pat Kelly to help connect inpatient

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## Cobra-327!



American Legion Fairmont Post 36 member Steve Chase, who, as a member of the Martin County Veterans Memorial Committee, helped procure Cobra-327, stands before the ribbon cutting and the chopper in Fairmont on Aug. 1. Standing with scissors, from left, are Joseph Grove, who manages federal supplies for the state of Minnesota, VA Acting Deputy Secretary Pamela Powers and 5th District Martin County Commissioner Steve Flohrs.



Martin County Veterans Memorial Committee Chairman Terry Anderson speaks to the crowd Aug. 1.

## Martin County dedicates a combat-tested attack helicopter

FAIRMONT — That Cobra-327 is still and silent today.

But no doubt in the minds of Vietnam veterans who stand before it, they can hear the chopper escort Hueys and Chinooks in and out of the hottest landing zones. It saved lives.

"In that, they found measures of comfort."

Those were the comments of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Acting Deputy Secretary Pamela Powers, a retired Air Force colonel, at the dedication of a 1966 Bell AH-1 Cobra helicopter at the Martin County Veterans Memorial on Aug. 1.

Powers is from Minnesota and was a distinguished speaker.

The Cobra she refers to is no ordinary piece of military equipment found at parks, courthouses, capitols, veterans memorials and American Legion or VFW Posts across America. Many

of those were surplus and never experienced combat. This one did.

In Vietnam, Cobra-327 was hit by enemy fire at least 12 times. It survived thanks to Bell's armored plating. It saw service in Laos at the Battle of Lam Son 719, among the deadliest battles of the war. The pilots were members of the Army's 7th Squad, 17th Cavalry, C Troop.

Cobra-327 was shot down for good and the pilot and gunner survived (though gunner later died at age 37 from Agent Orange). New helicopters arrived and Cobra-327 was sent to Kern County, California, where it received upgrades to carry 360 gallons of water and fought nighttime wildfires. They gave it the nickname "The Snake" because of its maneuverability.

Five states vied for the acquisition of the Cobra, and thanks to the hard work of the Minnesota state government,

veterans of the Fairmont area and local volunteers, it went to Martin County, said Steve Chase, government liaison on the Martin County Veterans Memorial Committee and a Legion member.

State employee Joseph Grove, who manages federal surplus property for the state, was key in helping Minnesota get the attack helicopter.

From California, the Cobra arrived at the Fairmont airport on June 24, 2019, thanks to Baarts Trucking out of Truman. The committee formed a 28-person restoration team led by Legion member Tom Westcott of Fairmont. On June 18, 2020, the Cobra was mounted on a 10-foot pole at the Martin County Veterans Memorial Park.

It's safe to say thousands attended the ceremony the morning of Aug. 1. Hundreds were inside the ropes and hundreds more were outside. Further

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# Minnesota CTF shows how vets work together

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Commanders' Task Force didn't give up on the Veterans Restorative Justice Act, and it got over the hump at a most unlikely time because the veterans organizations were working together and veterans all across Minnesota called their representatives and senators.

That was the sentiment of Todd Kemery, chairman of the CTF. He is vice president of the Minnesota Paralyzed Veterans of America.

"To have the Veterans Restorative Justice Act wind up in the 2020 outbox during a third special session, while the COVID-19 pandemic is going on, and with criminal justice coming to the forefront, and even before the bonding bill gets done, well, that's a great job," he said. "We could not have done that without the commanders, the associates, other supporters, local members who took the time to email and call political leaders, and the Minnesota

Department of Veterans Affairs staff for their work on the bill."

It passed the Senate on Aug. 13. It passed the House in 2019. Kemery and other CTF members received word from Senate and House leaders that it will be passed again when a bond-rating quiet period ends.

American Legion Department of Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak said the CTF has worked on the Veterans Restorative Justice Act for the last three years.

"They have done a tremendous job on it, and finally it has come to fruition," he said.

Dvorak said many Legion members statewide called their senators and representatives after reading the August issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire, and those calls had a positive impact. He thanked the senators for changing course from last month and looks forward to the bill reaching the governor's desk in September.

"It shouldn't have taken this long," he said.

VFW Department of Minnesota Commander Curt Hermanson said this would not be possible without unified support from all of the CTF members.

"In the future, lawmakers are going to see more of a unified front to ensure veterans will get what veterans have earned," he said.

Kemery said the cooperation at the CTF is a prime example of why veterans should join more than one veterans organization.

The CTF comprises The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Vietnam Veterans of America, Marine Corps League.

He said the CTF will move forward with its 2021 legislative agenda in September. The next meeting happens over a video call at 10 a.m. Sept. 8.

## Sen. Limmer: Avoid a possible slippery slope

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Lakes for getting the bill over the top.

Chamberlain, chief author of the Senate's bill, said the timing was right, considering information learned in hearings. He said lowering the costs of criminal justice and aiding service members transitioning to civilians are important.

"As a society, as a culture, as a state, we don't want people in prison who don't need to be there," he said.

The only change in this version was moving the effective date out to April 1, 2021, he noted.

The measure allows judges to hold pleas for low-level crimes and instead send a veteran to veterans-oriented treatment, such as VA counseling, if the actions can be tied to military-related trauma.

The Senate only allows five authors per bill. Other authors were Sen. Carrie Ruud of Breezy Point, Sen. Andrew Lang of Olivia, Sen. Bruce Anderson of Buffalo and Sen. Jeff Howe of Rockville.

Sen. Michelle Benson of Ham Lake pushed for the bill during caucuses. She said she will make sure it passes again in September.

"We are supportive of veterans and their unique experiences being treated in a unique and respectful way by Minnesota courts," she said. "We are excited for the opportunity to rebuild their lives if they have taken a wrong step."

Rep. Rob Ecklund of International Falls, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Com-

mittee, chief author of the original 2019 bill and a Legionnaire, called it the signature legislation of his committee.

soon as quiet period for bonds sales is done, and we'll be ready to go."

Rep. Bob Dettmer of Forest Lake, ranking member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee and a Legionnaire, was a co-author of the original 2019 bill.

"This piece of legislation should have been brought down during the regular session," he said.

He said he hopes it gets passed by both chambers in a September special session. He also wants to see how it lines up with a federal veterans treatment courts law President Donald Trump signed Aug. 8. The federal measure provides \$20 million in funding in grants for setting up the special courts.

### Minnesota Senate floor debate

The video of the Aug. 12 debate on the Senate floor can be seen on YouTube at the channel Minnesota Senate Media Services at the 1-hour-56-minute mark of a video titled "Senate Approves \$30 Million to Assist Services for Disabled," which happened earlier the same day and is unrelated.

Gazelka urged an emergency be declared with respect to Senate File 14, which is the VRJA, and the rules of the Senate be suspended, which means skipping the committee process.

Minority Leader Susan Kent of Woodbury encouraged members to support the declaration of emergency. The motion prevailed.

Chamberlain, a Legionnaire, said it began in 2019 as SF1153. It was reintroduced in 2020 in the second special session as SF62. It is now SF14. He said the governor's supports it. He said the House had an

informational hearing on it (see adjacent story) in late July and the Senate had a hearing in 2019.

"It has the support of all — that I know — the veterans organizations in Minnesota and nationally," he said.

He described how the bill targets veterans and active-duty members suffering a condition from their time in service. It creates uniform standards for courts throughout the state. It provides a pre-trial diversion program and a series of conditions the veteran must meet. It is not mandatory that counties have veterans courts. He described the savings as about \$1 million a year, and there is no seed money, only guidance, in the bill.

"The hope is that veterans, who do not need to be in the criminal justice system, due to conditions that is not their fault, end up in that system, so we allow the courts to look at these veterans, evaluate them, then have the judges and the court create a diversion program and keep them out of the system," Chamberlain said.

Sen. Steve Cwodzinski of Eden Prairie, who called for a floor vote the prior month, when it failed 35-32, said: "This is one of those great moments where we reach across the aisle and do the people's business."

Then Sen. Warren Limmer, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee where the bill died in 2019, spoke. He said there are eight court programs to help veterans, with a ninth being formed presently. They are expected to serve 30 counties by the end of the year.

He said his committee took a field trip to Anoka County last year to learn about veterans courts. He said the military accepts no one with a criminal record but some veterans come out with trauma. A pattern of

criminal behavior emerges, he said, where there was not one before. Veterans struggling with trauma deserve help reintegrating into society.

"But I do have to give some advice to our senators," Limmer said. "It is very tempting for us to think that the legislative branch is the appropriate branch to handle this type of subject. We're making rules now and putting demands on the judicial branch. We are getting close to going over a bit of a line on separation of powers."

He said he would vote for the bill, but he described other times in criminal justice lawmaking where a slippery slope occurs.

"Now we will have a special court treatment for different categories of people," Limmer said, forecasting what could happen.

He said the more appropriate venue for such legislation is the judicial branch's advisory committee, which reviews standards and adjusts best practices.

"Those who want to advocate in the future for other special treatment in our court system, I suggest they should start visiting the Minnesota State Judicial Council," he said.

"In the future, I hope we send them their way."

Sen. Julie Rosen of Vernon Center said: "I want to make very clear to all our veterans out there how important they are to us, and we take this issue very, very seriously here in the Senate and in this entire building veterans issues and the service and the commitment and the sacrifice they have made for our country."

A vote was called. The bill passed 67-0.



**Roger Chamberlain**



**Michelle Benson**



**Rob Ecklund**



**Bob Dettmer**



**Warren Limmer**



**Steve Cwodzinski**



**Julie Rosen**



**Susan Kent**

## Hearing: Veterans have earned these benefits

ST. PAUL — Lee Ulferts of Brooklyn Park is a past Department of Minnesota commander for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a member of American Legion Champlin Post 600 and the past chairman of the Minnesota Commanders' Task Force.

But he was a Marine in 1969, when he was in the Vietnam War. He got married a year and a half after returning.

He testified before the Minnesota House Veterans Affairs Committee on July 30 for an online hearing about the Veterans Restorative Justice Act.

He told the lawmakers, attorneys and veterans in attendance that he had typical symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, struggled with nighttime problems and all kinds of issues of anger most of his life.

Ulferts found alcohol was a numbing agent. He ended up with drunken driving citations and sought relief, but "I just didn't know where to go or what to do."

So he kept drinking. In 2004, he was sentenced to a local treatment program.

"Honestly, the treatment program I went through with all of the others was nothing more than, in my words, a joke," Ulferts said. "Before finishing I couldn't wait to have a margarita when I was done."

As a result, he didn't place much faith in treatment programs.

In 2012, he was in a minor traffic crash and police arrived. He blew a 0.21 blood-alcohol content on a breath test. He went through the courts and, with his past, he realized he was probably headed for some hard time. He petitioned to be transferred to a veterans court, thinking he could get an easier sentence.

"I soon found out first day I was there it was not going to be done my way," Ulferts said. "It was going to be done their way, but they were there to help."

He was assigned a probation officer, a judge and a VA counselor. He said the most important thing was the involvement of a VA treatment program.

"At that time, I was with other veterans, and for the first time in almost 50 years I found some peace and some relief. I found how to deal with my problems," he said. "Since that time, I am happy to say I am eight years sober. I graduated after one year from veterans court. And without that help, I can assure you, I would not be here today. My problems were so great I didn't care so much about living anymore."

He said he is happy, his marriage is restored and he is

enjoying life. "Minnesota has a long history of helping those who need help. Certainly, we should be able to reach out to those veterans who are crying for help but don't know where to go."

### Clearing up misinformation

State Rep. Rob Ecklund of International Falls, chairman of the committee and a Legion member, held the hearing in an effort to clarify questions on the Veterans Restorative Justice Act. The bill had failed to pass in the July special session and in the 2019 regular session, where it had reached conference committee before dying.

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Legislative Director Ben Johnson, a Legion member, said the bill has the full support of Gov. Tim Walz, the MDVA and veterans organizations. He said it provides no better demonstration of the governor's "One Minnesota" theme.

"It allows a veteran in Roseau to be treated the same as a veteran in Roseville," Johnson said.

The Veterans Restorative Justice Act ensures the veterans treatment courts in the state operate the same way. It does not install 87 veterans courts, Johnson noted. It lets counties choose whether to set them up, and the law provides a unified system when they do, rather than a patchwork.

What's more, the measure allows veterans facing low-level crimes tied to trauma from their time in service to seek out a veterans court, even if their county does not have one, he said.

Washington County Attorney Pete Orput was in the violent crimes division of the Hennepin County Attorney's Office prior to 2011. In the mid-2000s, he witnessed an uptick of returning combat veterans dealing with mental health wounds, he said.

He learned Erie County in New York (where Buffalo is) set up a veterans court. He spoke with prosecutors there, then began working with Minneapolis lawyer Brock Hunter and others, and they put together a pilot program in Hennepin County in 2010.

When he went to Washington County, he spoke with leaders about setting one up there, too, and they did.

Since then, he and others have done outreach. A statute, he said, provides a uniform system so no veterans are left behind.

"There is so much misinformation, it is frustrating for me," Orput testified.

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## Governor's Office weighs in

Teddy Tschann, communications director for Gov. Tim Walz, provided a statement to The Minnesota Legionnaire, which assures veterans the governor will sign the bill into law.

"This critical legislation could have gotten done in July, but Gov. Walz is glad to see that the Senate now is on the record as supporting the Veterans Restorative Justice Act. As both a veteran and the former ranking member of the U.S. House Committee on Veterans Affairs, the governor has been a longtime supporter of the bill and would happily sign it when it gets to his desk."

# Legion: Keep USPS strong

## Nat'l resolution passed in 2016

INDIANAPOLIS — The American Legion issued the following statement Aug. 18 highlighting its commitment to veterans who rely on timely mail delivery to receive prescriptions: “Millions of our nations’ veterans depend on a strong U.S. Postal Service for critical needs such as prescription refills. The Department of Veterans Affairs fills over half a million prescriptions each day through the Consolidated Mail Output Pharmacy system. The vast majority of these prescriptions are mailed to veterans through the USPS.

“Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, reduced availability of in-person services at VA facilities, including access to the pharmacy, places veterans in larger reliance on mail-ordered prescriptions and a strong USPS. If our leaders in Washington, D.C. choose not to fund the post office by the end of September, The American Legion is concerned it could have dire consequences for the millions of veterans who rely on the mail every day to deliver life-saving medication. The Postal Service often plays a pivotal role in the delivery of paperwork needed to process claims for veterans who have been disabled in the service of their country.

“The American Legion has spoken out in favor of a strong USPS before with the passage of a resolution at our National Convention in 2016. The American Legion implores Congress to address this issue impacting our nation’s veterans in an expedited manner so they can continue to receive the critical services they need during these difficult times.”

## American Legion passes a new motto

INDIANAPOLIS — By electronic vote, the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in August passed a resolution to adopt “Veterans Strengthening America” as the motto of the organization.

The resolution provides a mission statement: “The American Legion strengthens our communities, states and nation with programs and services for our veterans, the military and their families.”

And it gives a vision statement: “The American Legion strengthens America by improving the lives of our veterans, the military and their families.”

- It sets value principals, too:
- A Veteran is a Veteran.
  - Selfless Service.
  - American Values and Patriotism.
  - Family and Community Engagement.
  - Advancing the Vision.
  - Honoring Those Who Came Before Us.

The full text of resolution No. 5 can be found at [mnlegion.org](http://mnlegion.org) under Adjutant’s Updates.

# Ward: ‘We need to get away from the one-size-fits-all mindset’

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He said Washington County has had significant savings and helped a lot of vets. He wants his public to be safe and called for bipartisan support of the measure.

He noted the Minnesota County Attorney’s Association is in full support of the bill.

### It must be done right

State Public Defender Bill Ward, who has led the Minnesota Board of Public Defense for six years, said the Hennepin County veterans court was a success, but, after Orput left, it became unsuccessful with time, and he became discouraged with the disparate ways veterans courts were implemented statewide. His office pulled out.

Basically, counties had them to have them, but they weren’t meeting the needs of the vets, he said.

“It wasn’t giving them that second chance, which is why I believe veterans courts should have been established in the first place,” Ward said. “Not only because of the work they have done for the country but the sacrifices they made.”

He was reluctant to be involved in being on a committee to draft the language of Veterans Restorative Justice Act, too, but he was glad he did. It took 18 months.

“Ultimately, we hammered out what I firmly believe is an incredibly fair and just bill that should be supported by all of you,” Ward told the lawmakers.

He said the measure allows the courts, no matter where a veteran is charged, to wonder: Why are you here?

He said the justice system’s goal is to prevent people from

coming into the justice system in the first place. With veterans, he noted, it is a different case, because the incident is stemming from their service.

The bill, he said, is not a Get Out of Jail Free card.

“Please understand this is not an easy task. Many of those people, due to their circumstances, I like to say, are set up for failure, so in order to succeed, individuals who are sentenced under this bill have to accomplish a lot,” Ward said.

### National resolutions

VFW Department of Minnesota Legislative Officer Tommy Johnson, speaking on behalf of the Minnesota Commanders’ Task Force, which includes The American Legion, noted veterans treatment courts are national priorities for the VFW, Legion and other veterans organizations in the CTF.

The American Legion National Executive Committee passed a resolution in favor of veterans courts in 2016.

Johnson, a Legion member of Bloomington Post 550, noted that a federal veterans court measure had passed Congress, and it was expected to be signed by President Donald Trump (he signed it Aug. 8). It would provide technical and financial assistance to counties in rural areas looking to set up veterans courts. He said it is anticipated that, to be eligible, there needs to be a statewide system in place.

“If this bill doesn’t pass, our rural areas might not be able to get the financial assistance they need to set one up,” he said. “The justice a veteran received should not be dependent on a county line.”

Y ABELER	Y EICHORN	Y KENT	Y PRATT
Y ANDERSON, B.	Y EKEN	Y KIFFMEYER	Y RARICK
Y ANDERSON, P.	Y FRANZEN	Y KLEIN	Y RELPH
Y BAKK	Y FRENTZ	Y KORAN	Y REST
Y BENSON	Y GAZELKA	Y LAINE	Y ROSEN
Y BIGHAM	Y GOGGIN	Y LANG	Y RUUD
Y CARLSON	Y HALL	Y LATZ	Y SENJEM
Y CHAMBERLAIN	Y HAWJ	Y LIMMER	Y SIMONSON
Y CHAMPION	Y HAYDEN	Y LITTLE	Y SPARKS
Y CLAUSEN	Y HOFFMAN	Y MARTY	Y TOMASSONI
Y COHEN	Y HOUSLEY	Y MATHEWS	Y TORRES RAY
Y CWODZINSKI	Y HOWE	Y MILLER	Y UTKE
Y DAHMS	Y INGEBRIGTSEN	Y NELSON	Y WEBER
Y DIBBLE	Y ISAACSON	Y NEWMAN	Y WESTROM
Y DRAHEIM	Y JASINSKI	Y NEWTON	Y WIGER
Y DZIEDZIC	Y JENSEN	Y OSMEK	Y WIKLUND
Y EATON	Y JOHNSON	Y PAPPAS	

SF 14 Chamberlain  
FINAL PASSAGE

YEA 67  
NAY 0

### Want to see bipartisanship? It was all yes votes when the Minnesota Senate voted on the Veterans Restorative Justice Act during the third special session held Aug. 13.

#### What about the money?

Lawmakers on the committee asked questions. What about money? Extra cases for probation officers? Time spent? Domestic violence groups? Court judges?

“Everybody on this committee wants to help our veterans. I want to make sure this is done right,” said state Rep. Matt Grossell of Clearbrook, a veteran and retired sheriff’s deputy.

Orput said he asked for not one nickel in developing the veterans courts in Hennepin and Washington counties.

“With this bill, I don’t think it would require money,” he said. “It requires a mindset that instead of using the same old tools us prosecutors use, which is typically a bucket of hammers, we now drop the adversarial and work toward restoring these vets.”

Orput said the veterans court in Washington County had support from the local domestic assault victims group, because many wives had husbands who

needed the right treatment, and the statewide bill still has their support. He noted that in the two years it is been in the Legislature, they have not testified against it.

“The biggest advocates for the veterans are their partners, their spouses. They are the ones saying, ‘I want my old husband or girlfriend back, the way they were before they went in the service.’”

Ecklund and Ward noted that the Minnesota courts typically do not comment on proposed legislation. Ecklund noted the chief justice has spoken at opening ceremonies for veterans courts in southern Minnesota. Vets courts exist in 27 counties in Minnesota.

Rep. Jeff Brand of St. Peter said that if the chief justice opposed it, she has had two years to make it known.

Ward said probation checks for most people happen monthly. For veterans, it would be weekly. Yes, he said, it means

increased time for probation officers, but the Minnesota Management and Budget’s fiscal note shows savings of \$1.3 million in the first two years and \$2.3 million the next two years because the veterans, in large part, do not return to the system.

He said weekly supervision would not be a burden because the vets won’t return.

“This is the right thing to do. This is not an onerous thing,” he said.

If the charge and the situation require a bigger hurdle, Ward said, the probation can be extended to suit.

“We need to get away from this one-size-fits-all mindset,” he said.

Rep. Bob Dettmer of Forest Lake, ranking member on the Veterans Affairs Committee and a Legion member, said it was his seventh term in the Legislature and said passing legislation can take years. He said it is important to maintain relationships and avoid blame.



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.

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](mailto:mmorris@breezypointresort.com). The website is [www.breezypointresort.com](http://www.breezypointresort.com). The phone is 800-432-3777.

### 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:

Nisswa Post 627

Conference dates:  
Oct. 22-24, 2020

Headquarters hotel:  
Breezy Point Resort  
9252 Breezy Point Drive  
Breezy Point, MN 56472

Contact the hotel directly for your reservations:  
[www.breezypointresort.com](http://www.breezypointresort.com) • 800-432-3777

District	Post	Unit	Squadron
Name _____			
Address _____			
City _____		State _____	Zip _____
Email _____		Phone _____	

# Attn: Calling all Post commanders!

Greetings American Legion Family,

One of my emphasis last year was on "MESSAGING." We do so many wonderful things in our communities that we take for granted. Let's continue to make a concerted effort to share what we do to make our communities, state and nation a better place to live.

Below is a letter that will be sent to each Post to make it easier to donate to one of my two projects. Again, 75 percent of donations will go to Legionville and 25 percent to Wounded

## Commander's Column

Mark Dvorak



Warriors Guide Service, a Minnesota nonprofit (501c3) helping any veteran with a VA service-connected disability heal through recreational therapy. It could involve an afternoon trip fishing or hunting, or up to five days camping, fishing and hunting. All expenses are paid for the veteran. They operate solely on donations, grants and fundraising. For more information go to:

wwgsmn.org.  
For God and Country we continue our mission!

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

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA  
20 W. 12TH ST., ROOM 300-A, ST. PAUL, MN 55155-2000

Dear Post Commander:

I understand we are in trying times, but our mission of The American Legion continues and we will emerge stronger as we are Veterans and we adapt and overcome. I am writing your Post to inform you of my projects for the coming year. I am continuing to raise much-needed funds for Legionville and Wounded Warriors Guide Service.

Legionville Safety Patrol Camp was cancelled for 2020 and the income for the camp was \$0.00. However, the camp director and staff put together a garage sale and were able to raise approximately \$9,000, but this is still a far cry from what is needed to operate the camp on a monthly basis. The dock is unsafe and in need of being replaced before we open the camp for the 2021 season. The camp director has received a bid to replace the dock at a cost of \$30,000. The dock would be in the shape of a "U" to help contain the campers while they are swimming and in direct sight of the lifeguards.

Wounded Warriors Guide Service is a program to help our Veterans in need. This is a nonprofit organization that takes Veterans hunting and fishing. There is no cost to the Veterans that participate in hunting and fishing excursions, but there are cost to the organization to get the Veterans to the hunting and fishing locations. Some of these are over a weekend and some are day trips. These trips help Veterans who are in need to take their minds off of their troubles.

My goal for the coming year is to raise \$30,000 for Legionville and \$10,000 for Wounded Warriors Guide Service, a total of \$40,000 for these two organizations that meet two of our Four Pillars — Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and Children and Youth. Any contribution is greatly appreciated and gambling funds can be used. Thank you for all you do for The American Legion and the Department of Minnesota.

For God and Country,

Mark Dvorak  
Department Commander

Please fill out and mail to:  
The American Legion, 20 W. 12th St., Room 300-A, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000

Post City & Number \_\_\_\_\_ District # \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Checks must be made payable to "Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 82."

## Mail Call

### Nonpolitical piece was right

During an election year when our country is so politically divided, Department Judge Advocate Greg Colby's August article, "When is it fine to be political and when is it wise to be nonpolitical," was very timely.

With social media, we now have the ability to express our personal political views to a much larger audience. Perhaps some need a reminder that as recognized Legionnaires, veteran advocates and veteran leaders, our personal views can inadvertently and unintentionally be perceived as the views of The American Legion.

It's important that we protect the American Legion's neutrality in politics so we can always be welcoming to all veterans, regardless of political affiliation. If you missed Judge Colby's

article, I urge you to take the time to go back and read it.

Darrel Redepenning  
Past Dept. Commander  
Anoka Post 102  
Judge Advocate

### Commentary was political

I found Page 6 of the August 2020 Minnesota Legionnaire reflective of the times we live in. On the top right of Page 6 the judge advocate advises Legion members to be non-political. He points to the Legion's Constitution and Article 2 Section 2.

However, on the left of the page, the service officer totally violates this idea and excoriates VA secretary Wilkie, the present administration, heaps praise on a D and specific scorn on six Rs.

As usual what is to be followed by the membership is not being

followed by the leaders of our state organization. Big double standard.

David Deierling  
Anoka Post 102

Editor's note: Thank you. DSO says he mentioned parties inadvertently out of being detail-oriented. It is noted going forward.

### Can USA honor the Rosies?

Many of us learned of 94-year-old Mae Krier, one of the original "Rosie the Riveters," from recent news outlets. Miss Mae is back at work on the front lines, this time sewing masks to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

When Miss Mae was working as "Rosie the Riveter," she and her co-workers built B-17 and B-29 bombers to support World War II's domestic war effort.

# 'One day at a time' is a good outlook

"One day at a time, sweet Jesus That's all I'm asking from you. Give me the strength to do everything what I have to do. Yesterday's gone, sweet Jesus, and tomorrow may never be mine. Help me today, show me the way One day at a time."

These are some of the song lyrics written by Owen Gray as a prayer to ask God for his assistance during each day as we go through life. Some people may remember a TV show by this name and many artists have sung this song from Merle Haggard to a grandchild at a funeral for their grandpa. Many of us have asked God for just that "extra strength" while we go through challenging times and during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Back in 2004, I was a passenger in a van that was T-boned by another motorist who went through a stop sign. The other motorist wasn't paying attention to her travels and caused the crash.

There were four people in the car I was traveling in at the time. I was injured the worst with back and shoulder

## Chaplain's Corner

Betty Jass



injuries, torn chest wall inflammation and breathing difficulties. It took me quite a while to recover from my injuries and during part of that time I prayed sometimes for relief just a moment at a time and God answered my prayers. We never know what God's plans are for us so we need to not worry about the future but stay in the moment the best you can. I know this is not easy so ask for God's assistance to stay in the moment when you find yourself struggling.

Everywhere we go we can see our fellow man taking "one day at a time ..." as they stay in the moment with their children laughing and playing. We see people holding each other (even during this pandemic) as they grieve for a loved one after they pass from this world to the next.

Each are wondering how they can best remember them and celebrate their loved one's

life. I recently officiated a funeral service as the Department chaplain and the grandchildren sang this song as the funeral service procession started. Oh! The wonderful and innocent sounds of their voices filled the church and gave everyone comfort.

Earlier this month, my daughter and I took her new husband, Chad, to the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally for the first time. Instead of worrying about the potential trouble that was predicted for the rally, we rode through a different part of the Black Hills each day to enjoy the beautiful scenery. We took each day "one day at a time" and stayed in the moment.

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

Today, Miss Mae Krier is on another mission, and she needs our help. She is working on a crusade to remember all the Rosies, their service and keep their legacy alive by honoring them with the Congressional Gold Medal.

The U.S. House of Representatives agreed with her, but the U.S Senate has not seen fit to do the same.

I believe, this is a bill that should pass with little or no opposition. This should be a bipartisan effort. Rosies are women who labored long hours in often difficult situations to help the Armed Forces of the United States of America make the world a safer place.

Please contact your senators and let your voice be heard. These women deserve and have earned the Congressional Gold Medal honorably.

Thank you, Rosies, each and every one of you.

Terri Michels  
Mankato

### China is not USA's friend

With all of the Wuhan China virus going around, we must take time and take a long hard look at where we as Americans are spending our discretionary dollars. Because the communist government of China is using our dollars to build up its military!

When we go into any retail establishment or online to purchase and item, do you look for the country of origin? Especially food? Or even if it looks like an American company, but who actually owns the business? A large percentage of the merchandise in the big-box "China-Mart's" comes from China! You say, so what! China is not our friend, China is not our friend!

Yes, I said that twice. Because it needs repeating! China's ultimate goal is world

### How to send

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

Or send them via postal mail to Mail Call, Legionnaire, 20 W. 12th St., Room 300-A, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000

control! Both monetarily and economically!

Every time we purchase an item that says "Made in China" you are helping to destroy America, the America that we all took an oath to defend. Am

I always able to buy American? No. Sometimes we have to hold our noses.

I, myself, have been in retail stores many times and see an item that I think, "Gee, I'd like to have that," but then I look for the country of origin and see "Made in China" and it gets put back on the shelf. I've learned to do without it, thank you.

If we all would do this, we would see a more robust and a more secure America!

If a vaccine should ever become available, and if it's from China, forget it!

Earl Pederson  
Renville Post 180

# The Minnesota Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

Official publication of  
The American Legion  
Department of Minnesota

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**Anderson, Harry C.**, 102, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 3, 2020. He was a 51-year member of Richfield Post 435.

**Baker, Ronald W.**, 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died April 4, 2020. He was a 32-year member of Coon Rapids Post 334.

**Bannister, Irvn T. "Mike,"** 81, Army Reserve and National Guard veteran of the Vietnam and Gulf War eras, died July 15, 2020. He was in the military for more than 33 years. He was a 35-year member of Backus Post 368 and served on the color guard.

**Barclay, Floyd A.**, 86, Air Force veteran of Vietnam War, died May 14, 2020. He was a 37-year member of Mahtomedi Post 507.

**Barduson, Truman L.**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean era, died Aug. 8, 2020. He was stationed in Germany. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Cada, Michael G.**, 75, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam era, died July 2, 2020. He was a member of Winona Post 9.

**Cota, Richard "Dick,"** 70, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died June 23, 2020. He was a 38-year member of Richfield Post 435.

**Cross, Steven C.**, 77, Navy veteran of Vietnam War, died May 28, 2020. He was a member of Richfield Post 435.

**Daleiden, Edward J.**, 82, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died March 13, 2020. He was a member of Coon Rapids Post 334.

**DeVine, Eddie**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean era, died July 13, 2020. He lived in Florida but was a member of Lanesboro Post 40.

**Dyrstad, George L.**, 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 19, 2020. He served 18 months on the USS Meredith. He was a 71-year member of Alexandria Post 87.

**Earl, Michael "Mike,"** 79, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 16, 2020. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Eickhoff, Melvin**, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 1, 2020. He was a 74-year member of Wykoff Post 369.

**English, W. Blake Sr.**, 100, Army veteran of World War II, serving in India and the Philippines, died May 29, 2020. He was a 52-year member of Richfield Post 435.

**Erickson, Robert R.**, 85, Navy veteran of the Korean era, died Aug. 4, 2020. He met his wife while training for hospital corps at Great Lakes Naval Base, Illinois, before they were stationed at Bremerton Naval Base, Washington. He was a member of Rush City Post 93.

**Evers, Alvin H. "Big Al,"** 83, Army veteran of the Korean era, died July 29, 2020. He was a 40-year member of Marshall Post 113.

**Froemming, E.J.**, 93, Marine veteran of World War II, died July 7, 2020. He served in China with the occupation forces. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

**Gatzmeyer, Lyle V.**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 23, 2020. He was an honorary member of Hutchinson Post 96.

**Grisson, Robert E.**, 90, Navy veteran of an unknown era, died Aug. 6, 2020. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Grundseth, John A.**, 86, Army veteran of the Korean era, died July 31, 2020. He was a member of Brooten Post 288.

**Hakenson, Milton**, 84, Army veteran of Korea, died May 27, 2020. He was a member of Post 80.

**Halberg, Charles "Charlie,"** 100, National Guard veteran of World War II and Korea, died July 7, 2020. He was called to active duty three years after joining the Hastings unit and served with Gen. George Patton. He was Department of Minnesota membership director in 1980-81, 3rd District commander in 1975-76 and Department vice commander 1979-80. He was a 76-year member of Bayport Post 491 and commander in 1965-66.

**Hammell, James A.**, 87, Army veteran of the Korean era, died July 20, 2020. He was in the 25th Infantry Division, stationed in Hawaii. He was a member of Caledonia Post 191.

**Hantge, Donald**, 77, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 23, 2020. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

**Haugan, Curtis**, 81, Marine veteran of the Cold War, died June 27, 2020. He was a member of Deer Creek Post 283.

**Heikkila, Earl W.**, 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died June 25, 2020. He was a 39-year member of Cloquet Post 262.

**Helfritz, Robert H.**, 90, Army National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died June 16, 2020. He was called to active duty to serve in Korea. He was a 38-year member of Austin Post 91.

**Holman, Gary "Pops,"** 71, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 22, 2020. He was a member of North Branch Post 85.

**Holmbo, Clyde E.**, 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 15, 2020. He was a 73-year charter member of Champlin Post 600.

## 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.

**Holmbo, Clyde E.**, 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 15, 2020. His civilian career was in the business office at the University of Minnesota. He was a 73-year charter member of Champlin Post 600.

**Homme, Tom**, 81, Naval Air Reserves veteran of the Korean era, died July 24, 2020. He was a member of Gaylord Post 433.

**Imsdahl, Marvin L.**, 89, Army veteran of the Korean era, died May 3, 2020. He was a member of Brooten Post 288.

**Janke, Edward**, 90, Army veteran of the Korean War. He was a past commander of Cloquet Post 262.

**Jenniges, Omer "Butch,"** 95, Army veteran of World War II, died May 1, 2020. He was a charter member, 65-year member and past commander of Wanda Post 385.

**Jirik, William J. "Bill,"** Army veteran of the Vietnam War and Cuban Missile Crisis, died July 20, 2020. He was a 50-year member of New Prague Post 45.

**Johnson, Donald**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean era, died Aug. 20, 2020. He was a member of Paynesville Post 271.

**Johnson, Lowell C.**, 81, Army veteran of the Cold War, died July 19. He was stationed in Germany during the Berlin Crisis. He was a company training sergeant in the 8th MP Company, 8th Infantry Division. He was a 42-year member of Dodge Center Post 384.

**Jordan, Myron L.**, 84, Army veteran of the Korean era, died June 12, 2020. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

**Kaderlik, Leonard T.**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean era, died April 20, 2020. He was a 45-year member of Richfield Post 435.

**Kirk, Charles W.**, 95, Air Force veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Aug. 5, 2020. He served as an aerial navigator during World War II. He was a 74-year member of Minneapolis Fallin Post 555.

**Koehmstedt, David E.**, 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died Aug. 3, 2020. He was a 52-year member of Middle River Post 444. He was also a member of the American Legion Riders and Minnesota Patriot Guard.

**Koep, Ronald M.**, 68, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died Aug. 2, 2020. He was a 49-year member of Millerville Post 527.

**Kor, Wayne**, 82, Army veteran of the Korean era, died Aug. 7, 2020. He served in Germany after the Korean ceasefire. He was a 49-year member of Marshall Post 113.

**Kosmicki, James T. "Jim,"** 77, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam era, died May 8, 2020. He was a 36-year member of Richfield Post 435.

**Kotten, Thomas L.**, 80, Army veteran of the Korean era, died Aug. 2, 2020. While standing in line to go to Korea, he was pulled aside to be stationed in Oahu, Hawaii, where he chauffeured officers and dignitaries. He was a member of Paynesville Post 271.

**Kremer, William N. Sr.**, 90, Army veteran of the Korean era, died March 14, 2020. He served as a cryptographer. In his civilian career, he co-owned many weekly newspapers and manufacturing companies. He was a 65-year member of Wheaton Post 80.

**Langenbrunner, Ray**, 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 1, 2020. He was a 54-year member of Cloquet Post 262.

**Langlais, John B.**, 95, Army veteran of Korea and Vietnam wars, died July 17, 2020. He was an interpreter and an instructor. He earned an Air Medal and a Bronze Star. He was a 33-year member of Waite Park 428.

**Lien, N. Duane**, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 28, 2020. He served with the 2nd Infantry Division as a radio operator and lineman. He was 36-year member of Crookston Post 20.

**Lindeman, Lester W.H.**, 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 26, 2020. He was a 59-year member of Brownton Post 143.

**Lodien, Roger**, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 12, 2020. He was the youngest of six brothers from Cambridge to serve in the U.S. military. He was a member of Robbinsdale Post 251.

**Majerus, Clarence J.**, 101, Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 10, 2020. He served in the Philippine campaign. He was a member of The American Legion.

**Mallinson, Leroy**, 86, Marine veteran of the Korean era, died March 4, 2020. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Marino, James R.** 84, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died July 23, 2020. He was a 40-year member of Coon Rapids Post 334.

**Marynak, Frank**, 101, Army veteran of World War II, died May 2, 2020. He was a 46-year member of Richfield Post 435.

**McDevitt, Daniel**, 72, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 20, 2020. He was a member of Hamline Post 418 in St. Paul.

**McKenzie, Lawrence J. "Larry,"** 89, Marine veteran of the Korean War, died July 24, 2020. He was part of the Color Guard as bugler for and 30-year member of

Chisago City Post 272.

**Monsrud, Gerald**, 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died July 28, 2020. He worked as a tank mechanic. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

**Mortenson, Paul A.**, 89, Army veteran of World War II, died July 14, 2020. He served as Post chaplain for many years for Benson Post 62.

**Myers, Theodore "Ted,"** 86, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 12, 2020. He came from a long line of family doctors. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Nieman, Earl L.**, 81, Air Force veteran of Vietnam era, died July 22, 2020. He was a 34-year member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Norling, Vernon "Lefty,"** 84, Army veteran of the Cold War, serving in Korea, died Aug. 8, 2020. He was inducted into the Minnesota Auctioneers Hall of Fame in 2004. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Olson, Ralph A. "Ole,"** 82, Army veteran of the Cold War, died July 19, 2020. He was stationed in Germany. He started Olson Sheet Metal. He was a 46-year member of Willmar Post 167.

**Onstad, Kurt O.**, 66, Army Reserve veteran of Lebanon/Grenada era and Gulf War era, died Dec. 4, 2018, and interred July 24, 2020. He had a 20-year career and commanded several Reserve units in Minnesota. He was a member of Spring Grove Post 249.

**Opsahl, Raymond I. "Ray,"** 93, Army veteran of World War II, died June 2, 2020. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

**Poppler, Gerald E.**, 82, Army veteran of the Korean era, died Aug. 9, 2020. He served in Colorado handling unit mail. He was a member of Waconia Post 150.

**Rasmussen, Richard A.**, 73, Navy veteran of the Vietnam era, died July 27, 2020. He was a member of the Honor Guard. He was a member of Lewiston Post 90.

**Rasmussen, Roger F.**, 90, Navy veteran of the Korean era, died March 30, 2020. He was a 53-year member of Willmar Post 167.

**Ripplinger, Joseph**, 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 10, 2020. He was a 35-year member of Underwood Post 489.

**Roche, Kenneth R.**, 95, Army veteran of World War II, died May 26, 2020. He served in France and Germany under Gen. George S. Patton. He was a 38-year member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**Roering, Norbert J.**, Army veteran of World War II, died June 28, 2020. He was a 42-year member of Upsala Post 350.

**Rolfe, Roddy C. "Rod,"** 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died July 9, 2020. He was a 50-year member of Alexandria Post 87.

**Rypkema, Wallace R.**, 95, Coast Guard veteran of World War II, died April 17, 2020. He patrolled for submarines around the waters of the Florida Keys. He was a member of Richfield Post 435.

**Sawyer, Forrest P.**, 96, Army veteran of World War II, died July 6, 2020. He was a member of Winona Post 9.

**Saxton, Gerald "Jerry,"** 92, Army and National Guard veteran of Korea and later eras, died July 31, 2020. He was an officer and full-time military technician at Camp Ripley. He was a 69-year member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Schmidt, Brad W.**, 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 17, 2020. He served two tours as an air combat medic in the 101st Airborne Division. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star with Valor and two Purple Hearts. He played offensive guard for the Anoka-Ramsey Community College football team and then the University of Minnesota football team. He was a member of Bruno Post 563.

**Schugg, Theodore A.**, 73, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 16, 2020. He was a member of Waconia Post 150 and held positions of gambling manager and a member of the rifle squad.

**Schulz, Robert L. "Fuzz,"** 65, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 22, 2020. He was a helicopter crew chief with the 101st Airborne Division. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

**Seifert, Donald "Don,"** 89, Navy veteran of the Korea War, died July 30, 2020. He served on the USS Bexar as an operations office yeoman and a captain's office yeoman. He became a school business manager and was the announcer for Perham High sports. He was a 63-year member and a past commander of Dent Post 148. During his term, he was instrumental in building the Dent Veterans Memorial.

**Semmen, Larry D.**, 71, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died Aug. 17, 2020. He served in Germany during the war. He was a member of Lanesboro Post 40.

**Shaver, Jerald**, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 13, 2020. He was a member of Eagan Post 594.

**Smith, Gerald**, 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died Aug. 17, 2020. He was a 35-year member of Hamline Post 418 in St. Paul.

**Smith, Joseph M.**, 60, Army National Guard veteran of Lebanon/Grenada era, died Aug. 9, 2020. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

**Spizman, Sheldon**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 30, 2020. His family founded the Spizman Fruit Co. He was a member of Eagan Post 594.

# Listening Post

## GENTLEMEN AND SCHOLARS



American Legion Riders Chapter 395 out of Onamia made its inaugural scholarship donation of \$500 each to two Onamia High School seniors who graduated in 2020. The recipients were Zach Anderson and Bryce Brandt.

# Riders need to toot their own horns

Hello American Legion Family,

I hope everyone is doing well. For those of you who aren't, please reach out. We have a great organization that is full of people who understand what you may be going through.

It looks like the Camporee is a go for September. It will be great seeing everyone. The ALR Romp on Sept. 17-20 is also a go. We will be having a meeting for all of the District reps at 1400 hours Saturday, Sept. 19. (That's 2 p.m. for those of you who have been out a long time). We will discuss the new National Riders Resolution along with a few other items.

For all of the chapters out

**Legion Riders**  
Paul Hassing



we need to change that. Let the world know just how awesome we are.

Again, if you need anything, or just need to talk, my number is 612-598-0419.

I really hope to be seeing a lot of you this month.

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

there, please let us know about the things you are doing. We have to start tooting our own horns. We do so many things that people don't know about, and

## PAID UP FOR LIFE



Pipestone Post 6 presents a certificate to World War II Army veteran Harold Totman for becoming a 75-year member.

## TREE TIME



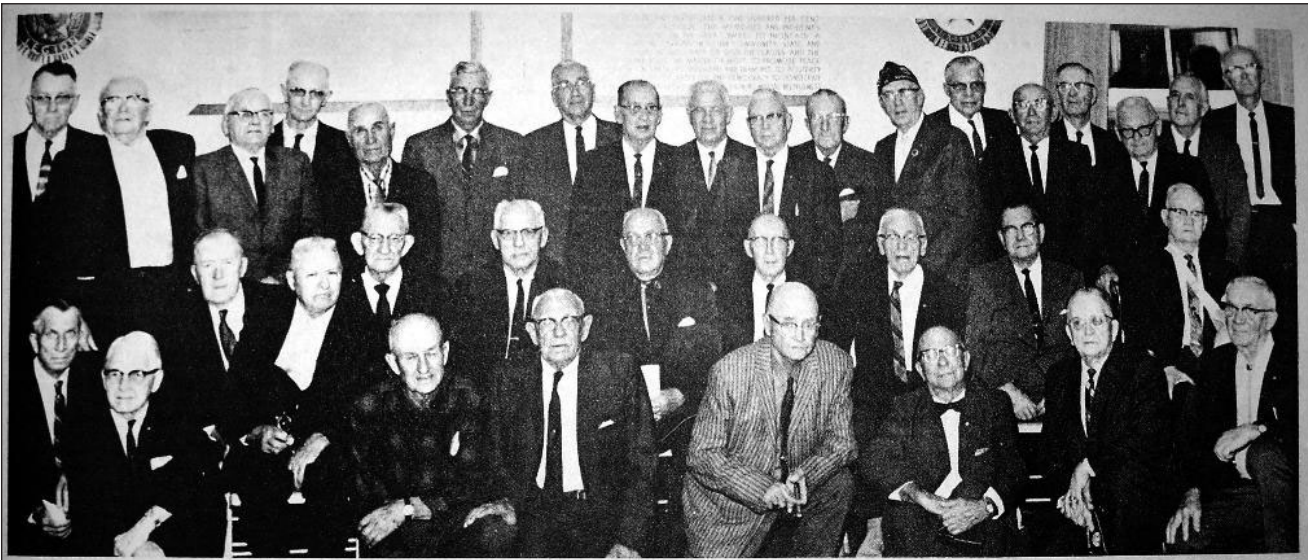
Dent Post 148 planted a tree at Veterans Park in Dent on July 15.

## COMMUNITY-MINDED



Cory Germain of Habitat for Humanity Martin-Faribault County, left, accepts a \$1,000 donation from Jim Miller, finance officer for Fairmont Post 36.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICAN LEGION ...



The caption of this photo in the Redwood Falls Gazette from November 1968 said:

"World War I vets honored at the celebration of the American Legion's 50th birthday by the Redwood Falls Post included, back row, left to right, Richard Cook, B.E. Marsh, Carl Hultquist, George Tordsen, John Macholds, Otto Werner, D.W. Gold, Clem Hillig, J.A. Stensvad, E.L. Gallea, E.H. Bollum, William Glassco, G.N. Nelson, William Schottenbauer, Bert Zumwinkle, Dr. J.C. Budik, Parker D. Sanders and Casper Olsen. First and second rows, from left, Herman Bagdon, George Beecher, William Dessler, Ray Stegner, Joe Greene, William Keil, Walter Hassenstab, E.C. Korfhage, P.M. Barber, L.W. Hassinger, Frank Welch, Olaf Austbo, Clarence Stelter, Lee Rebstock, Wilbur Schmidt, Hugh McKay and Harry Thomas."

Clipping sent in by Tom Schottenbauer of St. Louis Park Post 282. His grandfather is fifth from the right in the top row.



### The American Legion Department of Minnesota 2021 District Membership Report as of Aug 20, 2020

District	Commander	New 2021	PUFL 2021	Online Ren 2021	Trad Ren 2021	Paid 2021	HQ Trans 2021	Total Mbr 2021	Goal 2021	%Goal	HQ Trans 2020 (As of)	Total Mbr 2020 (As of)
01	DALE P WELLIK	9	853	323	2,872	4,057	4	4,061	0	0.00	0	3,838
02	BRADLEY PAGEL	10	642	207	1,783	2,642	0	2,642	0	0.00	1	2,959
03	LINDA DVORAK	24	1,541	689	3,698	5,952	18	5,970	0	0.00	7	5,715
04	JOSEPH M JANSEN	4	285	108	814	1,211	2	1,213	0	0.00	0	1,214
05	WADE A LARSON	1	300	163	252	716	0	716	0	0.00	1	963
06	PAUL D EDWARDS	30	1,093	467	3,740	5,330	1	5,331	0	0.00	1	5,497
07	DEAN KNUTSON	9	692	162	1,736	2,599	0	2,599	0	0.00	1	2,872
08	GERRIANNE KOSKINEN	5	316	161	1,366	1,848	0	1,848	0	0.00	1	1,912
09	STEVEN G SUNDSTROM	12	544	241	2,089	2,886	1	2,887	0	0.00	5	3,079
10	THOMAS H ALLEN	27	900	531	3,114	4,572	2	4,574	0	0.00	1	4,477
99		0	175	152	893	1,220	0	1,220	0	0.00	0	1,065
<b>Total:</b>		<b>131</b>	<b>7,341</b>	<b>3,204</b>	<b>22,357</b>	<b>33,033</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>33,061</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33,591</b>



The National American Legion staff hired a Minneapolis freelance videographer to cover the Operation Comfort Warriors donation on July 30. Here, the videographer records Minneapolis VA Medical Center Director Pat Kelly and American Legion Department of Minnesota Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller. The video is worth watching and can be found by going to <https://www.legion.org/operationcomfortwarriors/videos/> then scrolling down a bit.

## Operation Comfort Warriors comes through for VA

Continued from Page 1

veterans face-to-face virtually with their loved ones during this ongoing pandemic.

"This is just one more example, a continued example of the incredible support we get from all of our service organizations, but I really want to distinguish the work we have been doing and the help we have been getting from The American Legion," Kelly said during the presentation outside the Minneapolis VA, where American Legion Department of Minnesota leadership were present. "Thank you, The American Legion. This is really going to help us."

The OCW grant was made possible thanks to the efforts of American Legion Department of Minnesota Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller, whose office is next to the polytrauma unit at the Minneapolis VA. He was informed by the telehealth coordinator and assistive technology program coordinator of their need for iPads.

"This demonstrates The American Legion's longtime support and advocacy for the VA," Wolfsteller said. "The American Legion always stands ready, and it's here to assist the VA in its mission."

Wolfsteller put in an OCW grant application for the iPads back in April, a time when iPads were in high demand due to schools nationwide moving to e-learning because of COVID-19. It took until July for the iPads to arrive because of the backlog. "We are so happy to bring these to the VA. And get them into the patient's hands," Wolfsteller said.

Kelly said outside communication has been limited for COVID-19 patients. "In some cases, the veterans are dying and this (iPad) provides a way for them to reach and talk with families."

He also added that while veterans come to the VA for their health care needs, they also have social needs and "need to be connected to their families and loved ones. (The iPads) enable that connection.

"Without these iPads we would not be able to facilitate



Department Vice Commander Teresa Ash and VA&R Administration Assistant Heather Larson unload boxes of iPads from DSO Jeremy Wolfsteller's car on July 30 outside the Spinal Cord Injury & Disorder Center entrance of the Minneapolis VA Medical Center.



WCCO reporter Reg Chapman, center, speaks with VA Technology Program Coordinator Benjamin Barrett on July 30 while a WCCO videographer records.



DSO Jeremy Wolfsteller, while Vice Commander Teresa Ash watches, presents Minneapolis VA Medical Center Director Pat Kelly with the first iPad from the grant.

the same level of social support that our veterans get because of the work of The American Legion. So we are incredibly grateful."

Department of Minnesota Vice Commander Teresa Ash said Operation Comfort Warriors stems from one of the The American Legion's Four Pillars: Veteran Rehabilitation.

"The American Legion works with VA hospitals to bring in essentials to veterans in need," Ash said.

Benjamin Barrett, assistive technology program coordinator and occupational therapist with VA Minneapolis, said all the rooms have phones, but with the video on the iPads, people can visit face to face.

"It's straightforward and easy to use," he said.

He thanked his colleague, Angela C. Nichols, the telehealth coordinator at the hospital, then said the patients are saying: "It's so much better than just a phone call."

WCCO's Reg Chapman was there to cover the presentation. Chapman is a Gulf War veteran and belongs to a Legion Post in Omaha. The segment was on the 10 o'clock news.

So why 50?

Wolfsteller said the VA asked for help with getting iPads. He spoke with Operation Comfort Warriors's main guy at the National HQ, James Baca, who mentioned the Legion's partnership with Samsung. Wolfsteller estimated 50.

"I just shot for the moon," he said.

It was approved a month later. However, Wolfsteller found out the VA needed Apple products, so that meant iPads. Somehow, Baca got the iPads, though salmon-colored was all that was available, and the number still was 50.

"It's a special day for the VA and for us," Wolfsteller said. "Today is a day for celebration."

He added that 100 percent of donations to Operation Comfort Warriors go toward helping vets. Nothing goes to marketing or administration.

"There's not too many programs out there with 100 percent going to helping veterans."



Staff Sgt. Dan Wieman is flanked by some of his family, including from left Allen and Joleen Bartels of Winthrop (uncle and aunt), Wieman and his parents, Carl and Denise of Owatonna.

## Soldier follows in dad's footsteps in U.S. Army Reserves

By Rick Bussler  
Steele County Times

OWATONNA — For 19-year veteran Staff Sgt. Dan Wieman, he is following in his father's footsteps of military service.

The Owatonna native just returned from serving a yearlong deployment with the U.S. Army Reserves to Djibouti, Africa, where he took part in Operation Enduring Freedom. This was Wieman's third deployment as he previously served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He was one of 102 soldiers from the Mankato unit involved in the most recent deployment.

Wieman credits his father, Carl Wieman, for drawing him into the military. Carl was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1972 for two years before transferring to the Army Reserves for another 25 years. Carl retired in 1998.

As a senior at Owatonna in 2001, Dan Wieman enlisted into the Army Reserves. Carl recalls talking to his son about joining. "I told him that if he joined, there is no turning back no matter how much he may not like it," Carl said. "I also gave him the positives. You do get to travel, maybe not always to a place that you want to go to," he added.

Dan Wieman was in basic training in Oklahoma in September 2001 when the 9/11 attacks put the world on edge. Nobody really knew what would happen next. At one point, they were all told they might become infantry, even though Dan had entered to be a truck mechanic. It was a time Dan's mother, Denise, had wished she talked him out of serving the military.

During Dan's tour in Iraq, his enlistment came up. He decided to reenlist for another six years. He hasn't looked back ever since making that decision. He is approaching his 20th anniversary of service.

"Dan has learned a lot in those years that he would not have learned in a normal civilian job," Carl says. "Everything from how to get along with all kinds of people to now as a staff sergeant and squad leader of how to protect and train your

young soldiers. He has also had to help a few younger soldiers through some tough times while overseas," he said. "We are very proud of him and even though he is our young son, he is like a father figure to some of the younger soldiers."

During his most recent deployment to Africa, Dan's work focused mostly on air travel operations. He was attached to a Special Forces unit. Dan is assigned six soldiers in his squad. He related how it's easier to make six soldiers excellent rather than supervising the next level of 28 soldiers doing sub-par work.

Dan especially enjoyed being assigned to Special Forces because he got to work with people from various branches of the military, including Marines, Air Force and Army. "It was fun getting to know people from all different walks of life," he said. "We took care of each other. We all worked together," he noted.

What complicated the deployment was the COVID-19 outbreak. "It took us out of our normal routine," Dan said. "They restricted us on where we were going and what we did."

While Dan is proud of following in the shadows of his dad, he jokes about putting his father in his place at times. "He tries to put his two cents in on what he did when he was in, but I remind him that times have changed," Dan says. "There have been many changes since dad was in," he added.

Dan began his most recent deployment on Aug. 16, 2019. When he's not deployed, he commits one weekend every month and two weeks during the year for training with the Army Reserves.

He will return to work at the end of August as a truck driver for a company out of Faribault.

"It is great to see Dan making a career in the U.S. Army Reserves following my footsteps," Carl said. "We are proud of his military accomplishments. He has received many accommodations and awards, and he is a person that does not brag about them," he said of his son. "He still stays very humble."

# 'They were craftsmen who tirelessly patched them up'

Continued from Page 1

events commenced at the fairgrounds in the afternoon.

Vietnam veterans, especially ones who had ties to helicopters, came to see it from all across America.

Powers credited the pilots who flew the dangerous missions and the gunners who came along, then noted the chopper doesn't fly by itself. She acknowledged the work of the crew chiefs, test pilots, mechanics and more.

"They were the craftsmen who tirelessly patched them up," she said.

She asked Vietnam vets to raise their hands.

"No one ever questions the intentions of these honorable men," Powers said.

She then read a message from President Donald Trump.

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke, who grew up in Mankato, was a distinguished speaker, too. He told how he rode on a Cobra when he was in the National Guard. The pilot showed him the moves.

"I thought, 'Oh, my goodness. Are we going to survive this ride?'" he said.

Near the end, the pilot employed autorotation, where the rotors turn without engine power as a result of upward airflow, and turned the engine off. Then he flared and turned the engine back on and landed.

"I said: 'Thank God I am still alive,'" Herke said.

He said he appreciates Minnesota's 308,000 veterans. He mentioned the MDVA's five veterans homes and said the agency is working to add three more. The MDVA has three state cemeteries and wants to add two others.

The MDVA, he said, is helping with employment and disability claims and is working to reduce veteran suicides and eliminate veteran homelessness. On Aug. 1, Minnesota had 263 known homeless veterans. He mentioned the COVID-19 grants for veterans facing financial hardships, which remain available. Contact the local county veterans service officer to find out how to get one.

At one point in Herke's time in the Minnesota National Guard, with a field artillery unit, Gov. Tim Walz was his first sergeant, and Herke was his commander.

"Now the roles are reversed, and he's the boss," Herke said.

He read a proclamation from Walz, then thanked the veterans for their sacrifices and service to their country.

Retired Col. Chad Smith, an expert on Bell helicopters, said the Army by

the early 2000s thought all choppers needed to do was hover 800 feet up and shoot six miles away. That was the Army doctrine leaning heavily on its technological might.

"On March 16, 2003, they found out that wasn't the case," he said.

Guerillas shot down an American helicopter outside of Falluja, Iraq, killing 16 soldiers and wounding 20 others. A missile struck the rear rotor blade, and the Chinook exploded in midair, then crashed in a field. A second missile almost hit a second Chinook.

That is when the Army dusted off techniques pioneered in Vietnam, said Smith. The Army War College in Pennsylvania began to train those techniques as the new strategy.

He said what Vietnam chopper crews did back then saves lives on modern-day battlefields.

Terry Anderson, chairman of the Martin County Veterans Memorial Committee, said there were times in Vietnam the soldiers were in places they should not have been.

"That style of chopper saved my butt a couple of times," he said.

He thanked Chase for finding it. He said the committee wanted a Cobra but figured they would end up with a Huey.

"Chuck [Mixon] and Steve get together, and Steve says, well, I can get you a Cobra and here it is," Anderson said.

Emcee Elliot Belgard, a Martin County commissioner, said everyone wanted it really badly and compared getting it to winning the lottery.

Chase, who had five tours in Vietnam, thanked the veterans and resident of Martin County.

"Heroes are ordinary people doing extraordinary things in the face of extreme adversity," he said.

He thanked the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, which flew a Huey around that morning, and nurse Kay Bauer, the 2018 Minnesota Female Veteran of the Year.

Fairmont Mayor Debbie Foster gave a greeting. The Vietnamese Community of Minnesota, as allies in the war, laid a wreath on the memorial and read a poem. Westcott oversaw placement of dog tags on the pole that holds the Cobra.

Major Cory Germain, a chaplain with the Minnesota National Guard who is a pastor in Fairmont, gave a benediction. The American Legion and VFW fired a rifle salute, and high school students played "Taps" with a mournful echo. Bryn Miller was the drummer, and Lilly and Hudson Laven were buglers.



South Vietnamese veterans who are part of the Vietnamese Community of Minnesota place a wreath at the Martin County Veterans Memorial. President Thomas Tan Cao stands, with a white shirt and black coat, at center. VA Acting Deputy Director Pamela Powers is in a blue dress and Martin County Veterans Memorial's Steve Chase is in a Navy Dress Blue uniform.



Riflemen from honor guards with the Fairmont American Legion and VFW fire a salute at the Aug. 1 ceremony.

## Proclamation from Gov. Walz

Whereas: Martin County, Minnesota, is dedicating an internationally famous Cobra Rotary Wing Attack Helicopter that is on public display at the Martin County Veteran Memorial Park as a reminder of the dedication of our veterans of county, state, country and our allies who have served in our Armed Forces.

Whereas: The bravery of the U.S. Army crews that flew the Cobra AH-1F-15327 completed all its combat missions in the Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos during the Vietnam War.

Whereas: The stalwart crews completed many missions of combat, recon and armed escort, and bullet holes riddled the helicopter 12 times in Vietnam. After a repair, the Cobra was put back in action.

Whereas: At the battle of Lan Son 719, in Laos, pilot David Stinson and gunner Stephen Wilton took on a devastating projectile in the hydraulic system directly behind pilot Stinson's head, making a landing that will never be forgotten. Members of the South Vietnamese ARVIN assisted in their rescue and they all made it back alive.

Whereas: Cobra-327 was again put to the test for Kern County, California, fire department. Strapped with a 380-gallon water tank and infrared sensors, it fought night fires, maneuvering in the tightest spots that earned this machine the title of "The Snake."

Therefore: May this memorial remind us of all of the veterans who have acted bravely in face of danger to preserve the American dream.

— signed by Gov. Tim Walz

## Message from President Trump

I send my best wishes to those attending the dedication ceremony of the Bell Cobra Helicopter 327 in Fairmont, Minnesota.

Our nation's service members and veterans are the pride of America and embody our country's unyielding and intrepid spirit. Since our founding, they have dauntlessly defended our cherished freedoms and precious liberties. Thanks to their devotion to duty and willingness to defend our interests both at home and abroad, the United States has been blessed with unparalleled prosperity and success.

In addition to paying tribute to one of our nation's most historic military assets, the Bell Cobra Helicopter 327, today's ceremony is also an opportunity to honor our military members and their families for their immeasurable sacrifice and valiant service. As commander in chief, I join you and a grateful nation in saluting these patriotic men and women.

May God watch over our Armed Forces, and may he continue to bless the United States of America.

— signed by President Donald Trump



Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke stands at the podium on Aug. 1 in Fairmont.

MARTIN COUNTY VETERANS MEMORIAL  
**MCVVM**

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# Scenes from the dedication



Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, veterans and elected officials recite The Pledge of Allegiance on Aug. 1 in Fairmont.

## Shadows of Liberty: The Fallen Soldiers

This poem was read by Vietnamese Community of Minnesota President Thomas Tan Cao at a wreath-laying in Fairmont on Aug. 1. It was written by Oanh Pham of Minnesota:

Like drops of morning dew soaked with rays sparkly  
So vibrant full of life to end so suddenly  
You came to our homeland to build democracy  
together for human right and equality

No honor so high and service so dearly  
for our countries and for humanity  
from now on till eternity  
with sacrifices of precious own right to be

You fell so liberty stands tall majestically  
with branches grow beyond nations' boundaries  
Giving up yours gracefully for so many  
being able to live and die with dignity

No honor so high and service so dearly  
for our countries and for humanity  
from now on till eternity  
with sacrifices of precious own right to be

Fallen soldiers stand for ever the legacy  
to always be ingrained in the Viet memory  
of those indebted to presents so heavenly  
of lives, hearts and souls on eagle's wings carried



Members of the Vietnamese Community of Minnesota carry a large flag of the Republic of Vietnam, allies of American forces in the Vietnam War. Also called the South Vietnam flag, it is banned today in communist Vietnam.



The Bell AH-1 Cobra has a two-blade rotor with a single engine and BGM-71 TOW anti-armor missiles. The Army used the attack copters in Vietnam from 1967 to 1973.



Martin County Commissioner Elliot Belgard, emcee, turns the microphone over to Acting VA Deputy Director Pamela Powers during the Cobra-327 dedication ceremony on Aug. 1 in Fairmont.



The men who restored Cobra-327 are recognized.

*Display, Protect and Preserve Your Memorial United States Flag in a Beautifully Handcrafted Solid Oak Flag Case with a Glass Front, Removable Back and Engraved Plate with Name and Branch of Service of Veteran.*



**Minnesota Veterans Home**  
**1200 E. 18th Street**  
**Hastings, MN 55033**

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



Vietnam War veteran Lyle Foltz relaxes in his home in Apple Valley. He retired as The American Legion Department of Minnesota adjutant in 2009. He is a member of Mabel Post 299.

## VIETNAM WAR

# One close call after another

Lyle Foltz served one year in Vietnam with the Black Scarves

By Tim Engstrom

APPLE VALLEY — Vietnam veteran Lyle Foltz has been a member of Mabel Post 299 for 53 years, lives in Apple Valley and is a former Department of Minnesota adjutant.

But in 1966, he was just planning to get his degree and pursue a career. That's when his country called on him to serve in the Army.

He was raised across the border in Hesper, Iowa, and that's where he attended K-7. Then he went to high school in Mabel. The two towns had a reciprocal agreement. He was attending junior college in Rochester when he was drafted.

"That changed my course, my direction, significantly," he said.

The Army put him a bus with other draftees headed to Fort Des Moines in Iowa. A sergeant handed him a clipboard and said he was in charge during the ride. He was at the processing center there a couple of days, then headed to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, for basic training.

After basic, most other soldiers left for their assignments, but he and a few other men waited around for days. Finally, they got the word: advanced infantry training at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

When he arrived, he learned there had been an outbreak of spinal meningitis and three guys died. So for the entire AIT, Foltz experienced no physical training, and everyone had to maintain space, even at the movies.

"Fortunately, no one got spinal meningitis, but we were unable to have a meaningful experience," he said. "But in the Army way, at the end, they gave us a PT test."

His training focused on the 81 mm mortar. The soldiers there had an idea they were going to Vietnam, but by the end, the drill sergeants told them they were going.

Foltz flew to Travis AFB, where he spent a few days with his parents, then



he left for Vietnam on Feb. 16, 1967, aboard a C-141 Starlifter.

He handed the Air Force his duffel, and the plane flew to Wake Island, then to Clark AFB in the Philippines, then to Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon.

He got off the bird. It was the middle of the night and Foltz said it was pitch dark. The heat, he said, stuck to you like a wet rag.

"And the smell was so bad it just about knocked you over," he said. "I think it was just about three weeks before I had my appetite. The smell was horrendous."

Buses took him to the 90th Replacement Battalion. There was a large field with flood lights. Soldiers searched for their duffels. Foltz didn't find his. He was sent back to the plane. Gone.

All he had were the clothes on his back: khaki pants and shirt and a maroon undershirt. He wore them for a week and stood out among the green fatigues the Army wore in Vietnam.

Three days later, he was assigned to The Big Red One. He was among replacements sent to Di An Base Camp, where the 1st Infantry Division's headquarters were. The next day, he and a Japanese-American were assigned latrine detail. Drag the barrel out. Dig a hole. Burn it. That got old, and no one was around, so they beat feet to

the Enlisted Men's Club and closed the place down.

Next day, in formation, the sergeants weren't impressed and assigned them latrine detail again. Again, the duo headed to the EM Club.

Next day, Foltz and others were sent on a C-130 Hercules from Di An to Phuoc Vinh Base Camp. The crew told them they were going to a combat zone and to run as soon as the door drops. They bolted out.

But there was only a group of children selling Coca-Cola.

"The joke was on us," Foltz said.

He was a new member of 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, often called the Black Scarf Battalion. He also was issued jungle fatigues, jungle boots and equipment.

Early on, his platoon sergeant assigned Foltz to ride shotgun in the first truck in a convoy of deuce-and-a-halves. They stopped suddenly. Troops got out with minesweepers and found a mine 40 yards ahead in the road. The convoy went back.

He was in an infantry platoon, and, this one time, a chopper crashed in a river. Troops in it had been rescued, but the pilot and co-pilot were dead. His platoon, 3rd Platoon, had to get the bodies. Foltz carried one of them up a riverbank and another 75 yards to an awaiting helicopter.

The division was involved in Operation Junction City, one of the largest operations during the Vietnam War. It took place in War Zone C, northwest of Saigon, starting Feb. 22. With infantry on one side and airborne troops on the other, its mission was to flush out the military headquarters for the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army operating in South Vietnam and destroy it.

"After the war, they found it didn't exist. It actually was groups of eight to 12 people, core leaders, who would never stay in one place. We came close a couple of times to getting them, but

they changed all the time," Foltz said.

On March 31, the Battle of Ap Gu occurred, up near the Cambodian border, at LZ George. The result was 609 VC and 17 Americans dead after Lt. Col. Alexander Haig's 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry was pinned down by enemy gunfire.

The Black Scarves were nearby that night, and Foltz and another soldier were on a listening post about 100 yards outside the perimeter of their camp. They could hear noises. Movements. The platoon sergeant came out and listened, too.

"I think they went right past us and attacked the 1st of the 26th," Foltz said.

The next day the Black Scarves swept through the area to flush out remaining VC.

The 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment moved every day, and at night, they had to dig an NDP, night defensive position. They used shovels, picks and sandbags and would build DePuy bunkers, named for the 1st Division's commander, William E. DePuy. It had a back entrance, and apertures in the front corners, allowing men to shoot 45 degrees to either side.

They could go for weeks without showers. If they found a stream, they might be lucky to have the time to bathe.

"It seems like those times were extremely rare," Foltz said.

They patrolled so much that one time, when Foltz took off his socks, some of his skin came off, too. That's why they usually slept fully clothed with their boots on. The majority of the time, he had one set of fatigues. Eventually, he got a second pair.

In May, at dusk, the company was called out. A Rome plow (an armored bulldozer) was stuck in a swampy pond. His platoon was sent out to secure the area. They marched out, and, by now, it was dark.

The plow was on the other side of the pond, and the platoon for some reason went through it single-file. Foltz was on his tippy-toes trying to breathe, holding his weapon above him.

"It was just asking for trouble," he said.

A typical contact with the enemy was a one- or two-minute firefight, with the Army troops pulling back to call an artillery strike and airstrikes. The main forms of indirect fire from the enemy were 60 mm and 82 mm mortars, but they also had devastating 120 mm rockets now and then, too.

This time, on July 18, after the airstrikes, the VC were waiting for his platoon to check for dead. The VC unleashed an attack and killed six infantrymen and one medic from Foltz's platoon. The dead included his squad leader and platoon leader.

"It was just the luck of the draw that I wasn't killed," he said.

On listening posts, the soldiers became accustomed to the distinct sound of enemy mortars coming out of the tube. They would yell "Mortars!" and everyone would dive into their bunkers.

His battalion moved to a large camp where bunkers already were built. One bunker had 16-foot-high bags even. A 120 mm rocket had killed everyone in that bunker prior to his unit's arrival.

Foltz patrolled as a rifleman for the first six months, then he became the RTO for the 3rd Platoon. (That's radio-telephone operator.) Radiomen, in Vietnam, had short life expectancies because they were clear targets. He carried a PRC-25, which weighed 25 pounds with batteries and accessories.

"It would hook on any vine and branch. It was just impossible. It was a bitch to maneuver, but you learned how to move, how to adapt to it," Foltz said.

The downside was the extra weight, but the upside was not doing listening posts. The division, for three weeks, required RTOs to point antennas down, but that resulted in poor reception, so they went back to normal.

The Black Scarves had routine search-and-destroy missions. They would find small hooches, slang for Vietnamese huts, in the free-fire zones, where no one was allowed. Anyone in a free-fire zone who wasn't American was an enemy. The American soldiers would have Zippo raids, where hooches were lit on fire.

One of Foltz's buddies earned the nickname Terry the Torch because he lit himself on fire by mistake. Another fellow who humped the M-60 earned the nickname Cool Breeze, after he mentioned it would be nice if they had a cool breeze.

On Oct. 3, his platoon set up an NDP near Hobo Woods. They had a new leader, too, a second lieutenant this time. The bunker for the command post typically accommodates five men with shelter halves for cover. The new LT didn't like officers sleeping with enlisted, so they had to dig a new bunker 20 feet away for him and the platoon sergeant.

At 1 a.m., "Mortars!"

Foltz and another RTO were changing shifts right at that moment. A soldier in the CP named Dale wanted to wake up the leaders. They went out.

Kablam!

A mortar round struck near Dale, the platoon leader, platoon sergeant and Foltz.

"It feels like a tornado has hit you with a large basket of sand and gravel and everything," he said.

Foltz fell on his back, stunned. He scrambled to the CP bunker. He had been hit in the right leg. He had small pieces of metal in his neck, too, and another in his right index finger. He heard the medic screaming and blinded, so he dragged him into the bunker.

Continued on Page 11



The 1st Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment, in April 1966, captured a large quantity of black cloth after heavy fighting. The Viet Cong used it to make black pajama uniforms. The commander ordered the cloth to be made into scarves and worn so he could distinguish his troops from others and to give them something better than the Army-issue towels men were wearing around their necks in the heat. The unit continued to issue the black scarves as new men joined.

Continued from Page 10

He got on the radio and called the company CP, asking for medics. Medics convoy in, and a medevac helicopter lands. Four guys get loaded on, and they ask Foltz whether he wanted to hop aboard, too.

He bristled at the thought of riding in the chopper at night and passed.

A staff sergeant from none other than St. Paul, Minnesota, took over the platoon, and the next morning, still Oct. 3, Foltz and others had to clean up the blood, and they had to hump the entire camp to a new site.

A different medic looked at Foltz's wounds, put a salve on his legs and popsicle sticks on his finger. Well, the popsicle sticks broke in five minutes. And that medic never recorded Foltz's wounds. You know what that means? There's no record of him being wounded. Foltz didn't receive a Purple Heart. In the ensuing years, his platoon sergeant gave statements on his wound, and X-rays showed the shell fragments, but still no medal.

Of the guys on the chopper, Dale went home. The others returned to the field. The medic had been blinded temporarily by the mortar sand. If Foltz had got on the chopper, he might be a Purple Heart recipient. Instead, he chose his buddies.

The little BB-size fragment in his knuckle was there for 17 years before it grew out. He was going to save it, but it dissolved like grains of sand turning into dust.

Walking to the new site, the platoon got into a firefight, killing a few VC along the way. They got there, dug bunkers, got the CP set up, welcomed their new medic. It was now Oct. 4, and 3rd Platoon of Bravo Company led a battalion-sized patrol.

After a few dozen steps, Charlie Company moved along the right and ahead of Bravo, right into an ambush. Six people were killed. The firefight was more like a battle and lasted all day long, with airstrikes and artillery coming in. His company hunkered down on the perimeter.

During the battle, the company surgeon, a captain, and a medic, who was a conscientious objector in battalion HQ, together ran out into the battle to help wounded and got killed.

The medic was helping people get on a medevac chopper. When he went back to get another person, he was shot and killed.

"We just came that close to being unlucky," Foltz said.

The Black Scarves next were assigned to protect convoys on Highway 13. Called Thunder Road, it connected Saigon to Loc Ninh.

One evening, Foltz was sitting on the corner of a bunker, he could see the lights of a Chinook helicopter. He noticed tracers from the ground going up to the chopper, and, somehow, the chopper crashed.

"It was like in the movies," he said, "just an incredibly big ball of flames."

The new 3rd Platoon leader and the sergeant from St. Paul were at the battalion CP getting orders, and Foltz radioed them about the chopper being shot down. The platoon headed down the road to the crash. Another helicopter landed to pick up possible survivors, and then more troops joined. Both the pilot and co-pilot died.

Sometime in October or November, 3rd Platoon was providing security for an artillery battery. They had planned to fly back that afternoon, but the weather turned bad. The artillery was flown out but not the infantry. It was raining cats and dogs in the dark as they headed to a Special Forces camp two miles down the road.

On the way, a radio call informed them not to jump in the ditch if attacked because the ditches were full of mines.

There, they encountered the Green Berets and Montagnards, indigenous



A portrait of Foltz as a specialist in the Army. You can see his combat infantry badge.

mountain people who opposed communism because of its religious suppression. Foltz was smoking three packs a day at this point, and a Montagnard gave him a Ruby Queen, a Vietnamese cigarette, to satisfy his need for a smoke.

But he was soaked, too, and he knocked on a door to ask for fatigues. The door opened, and he offered to trade his lighter for a uniform.

The man said: "I am the executive officer of the camp. I don't want your lighter, but I will give you fatigues."

They were tight, but they fit. Foltz still has that uniform.

Around Thanksgiving, the 1st Battalion commander gave a speech on a stump about needing to be gung-ho and aggressive, Foltz said. That officer was killed in April 1968 by a sniper. He left behind a wife and six children.

In early December 1967, they flew out on a chopper to an LZ a quarter mile from Cambodia, near the village of Bu Dop. The chopper could not land, so they had to stand on the skids and jump 10 feet with all of their gear. Shortly after, they found bamboo nearby that had been chopped to have pointy ends. Good thing they didn't jump there.

They go set up an NDP, and the ground is all laterite, which is rich in iron and aluminum and hard.

"A pickaxe after 20 minutes would only get you three inches," Foltz said.

Instead, the soldiers used C-4 plastic explosives.

"You blow it up, get a foot down, and repeat until you have a decent bunker," he said. "There was no secret where we were."

After chow on Dec. 7, Foltz received a care package from home and was sharing it with the guys. He told them he had a feeling this camp was not a good place to be.

He said: "I think we are going to get attacked tonight somewhere between 1 and 2 in the morning."

The guys did not believe him.

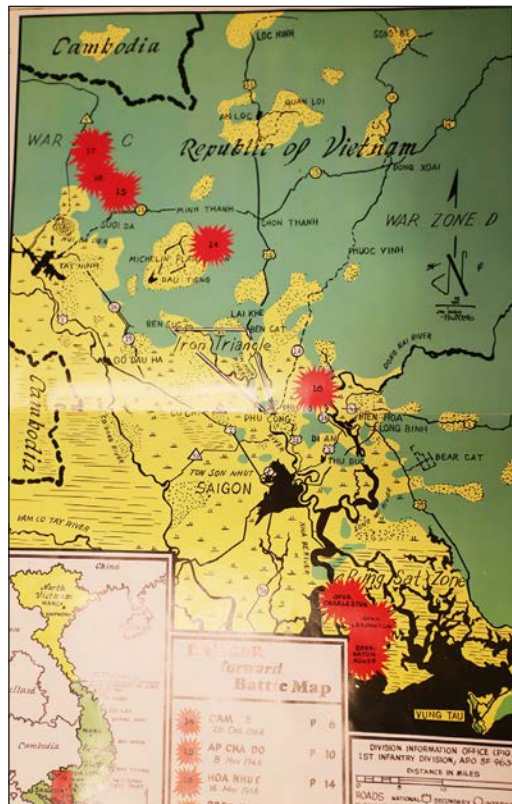
There was a buck sergeant who made a deal with the first sergeant to extend his tour in exchange for a two-week leave and duty in the rear. He went on leave, returned, and the first sergeant was gone. There was a new one, and he wouldn't honor the bargain. The sergeant was sent back to the field, totally upset.

That sergeant was assigned to the listening post on Dec. 7 and decided not to go 100 yards out. He would sit just outside the perimeter, thinking it would be safe there. Of course, the NDP always had Claymore mines around its perimeter.

As a tactic, soldiers randomly set off the Claymores, and a couple of other

guys were with the sergeant when one blasted them. A medevac helicopter had to extract the wounded. Fifteen feet from the chopper, the buck sergeant gets off the stretcher and runs to the bird.

The St. Paul sergeant was there and commented: "He's not hurt that bad."



This map in a glossy book Foltz has at home shows details of the area he served.

That night, the VC started a mortar attack, as Foltz predicted. An ambush patrol got hit and had to run back to the perimeter. Soon, a ground attack began, killing a listening post soldier

trying to return to safety. The two sides battled the rest of the night.

It turns out they were attacked by two regiments of North Vietnamese Army troops. The Americans would drop flares, allowing them to see the enemy and gun them down. A battery of artillery was inside the American perimeter. The battery had beehives, which are anti-personnel rounds that fire directly at the enemy.

"They blasted the [expletive] out of them with beehives. Once they did that, it pretty much put a stop to the attack," he said.

There was a body count of 49, but the Vietnamese removed their dead to stymie counts. The estimated Vietnamese dead was 250. Four Americans were killed, with none in Foltz's platoon. They had to put the Vietnamese bodies in cargo nets to be flown out.

Foltz's platoon was on patrol in January 1968 and found a 500-pound bomb and leaflets in the grass about American imperial dogs. Was this a booby trap? A dud?

They called back to the CP, and they wanted to have them blow it up. They had a demolition expert with them, and after packing it with C-4, the platoon took off running down the road and waited. And waited. And waited.

Nothing.

The St. Paul platoon sergeant said they have to go back. Foltz, the platoon sergeant and the demo guy go back and determine the fuse was wet. The demo guy replaces the fuse, and they run again.

Ten seconds later: Kablewy! Shrapnel rains down on the trees.

"I wondered what would have happened if it had gone off when we came by," Foltz said.

One time, Foltz and the St. Paul sergeant were scouting 200 yards ahead of the point. Suddenly, there were screams of terror from the platoon. They had walked into a real beehive, and those big Vietnamese honeybees were chasing them.

The Black Scarves were riding with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment at the end of January when they learned the Tet Offensive had begun. Foltz and others rode atop tanks.

"I would just as soon walk," he said.

They were called back to Quan Loi Base Camp, where Foltz spent the rest of his tour. On Feb. 13, a friend said, "Let's go to headquarters so we can go home."

They walked over, signed out, the commander shook his hand, and off they went in a helicopter to Di An, then to the 90th Replacement Battalion, then

on a freedom bird to Travis AFB. From there, he flew a commercial flight to Minneapolis, then to Rochester, where his family greeted him and took him home to Mabel and Hesper.

"I then got insulted by a World War II veteran," Foltz said.

It was some comment about his Class A uniform.

His time in Vietnam was done, but his service wasn't over. He was sent to Fort Hood, Texas.

Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4. The Army flew his unit to Chicago for riot control. They stayed at Mayor Daley's gym by Lake Michigan and slept on the floor. They were issued M-14s and no ammo. It was over swiftly, and Foltz was sent to North Fort Hood, where he stayed in a tent city for five more months. It was almost like Vietnam but no combat.

"The tent was a next step up from sleeping on the ground in Vietnam," he said.

They spent their time training National Guard troops that summer. He was discharged Aug. 31. He got home on a Saturday and went to work at his father's construction company on Monday.

He did that for a year, then enrolled at Winona State and graduated in 1973 with a degree in social studies and a teaching certificate. He was unable to find a job teaching, though, and returned to the construction company.

In 1986, The American Legion Department of Minnesota had a job opening — hospital representative serving vets at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis. Two years later, his boss retired, and Foltz got the job as Department service officer, only back then it was called director of rehabilitation.

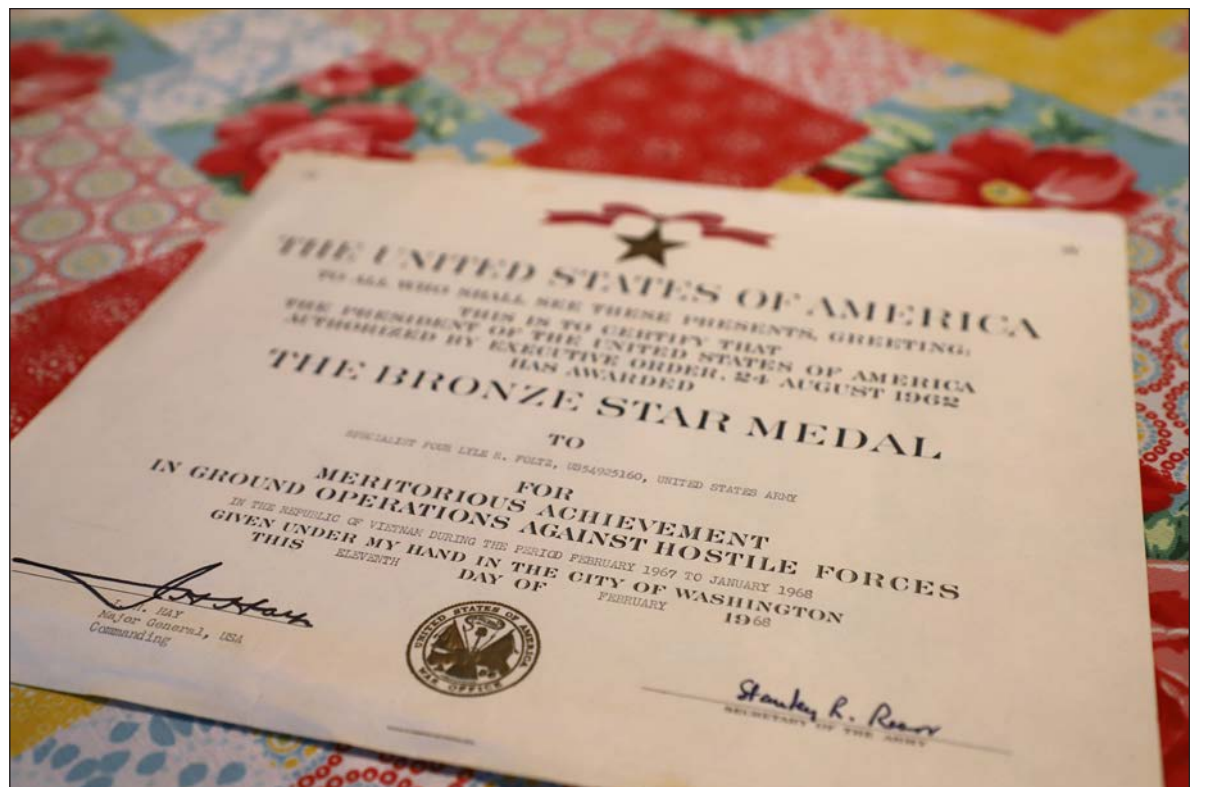
After six years, he applied for the assistant adjutant position. He was in the role for a year and a half when the adjutant, Al Davis, left. Foltz served as adjutant for the Department of Minnesota from 1995 to his retirement in 2010, one of the longest tenures.

Some of his accomplishments were:

- Going to secret ballots to elect Department officers.
- Reorganizing the Finance Committee to recognize the commander and treasurer as voting members.

- Assembling a staff of dedicated and conscientious people: Laura Weber, Jennifer Kelley, the late Sharon Perrins, Misty Padilla, Roger Myren and Al Zdon.

"These people provided the Minnesota American Legion with reliable support and quality work," Foltz said. "I was privileged to work with them and for The American Legion Department of Minnesota."



This certificate, signed by Maj. Gen. John H. Hay, awards the Bronze Star Medal to Spc. Lyle R. Foltz.

# Taps

Continued from Page 5

**Stanius, Dennis H.**, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 28, 2020. He was a 31-year member of Cambridge Post 290.

**Stankey, Delmar**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean era, died Aug. 10, 2020. He was a 41-year member of Red Wing Post 54.

**Taleen, Edward V.**, 97, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 10, 2020. He served in the Pacific aboard the USS Enterprise. He was a 75-year member of Ironton Post 443.

**Thomas, Jerome E.**, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 20, 2020. He served in the 19th Infantry Regiment of the 24th Infantry Division, from Pusan to the 38th Parallel. He was a member of Princeton Post 216.

**Volkart, Howard W.**, 101, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died July 12, 2020. He was a pilot, serving as an instructor. He was a member of Winona Post 9.

**Walker, Jack H.**, 82, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 21, 2020. He was a 33-year member of North Branch Post 85.

**Wangen, Lamar C.**, 90, Army veteran of the Korea era, died April 14, 2020. He

was a 42-year member of Richfield Post 435.

**Wickstrom, Clarence W.**, 90, Air Force veteran of the Korean era, died Aug. 5, 2020. He was a 50-year member of Grand Rapids Post 60.

**Wolf, Douglas T.**, 72, veteran of the Vietnam era, died July 11, 2020. He was a 43-year member of Coon Rapids Post 334.

**Wollin, Russell**, 79, Army National Guard veteran of the Korean era, died July 18, 2020. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**Wussow, Wallace "Jerry,"** 89, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died July 12, 2020. He was a 66-year member of Parkers Prairie Post 219.

**Zahl, Carsten J.**, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 9, 2020. He served in communications running lines from one camp to another. In the Legion, he held every officer position at one time or another and was a 69-year member of Winger Post 200.

**Zins, Donald E. "Ed,"** 98, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died July 25, 2020. He served as a B-25 navigator/bombardier while flying 43 missions in the South Pacific. He was a 36-year member of Waite Park Post 428.

## What's happening?

### World War II Roundtable is coming back

Don Patton, organizer of the Harold C. Deutsch World War II Roundtable, has released a schedule for the 34th year of the presentations.

On Sept. 8 at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul, D.M. Giangreco, author of "Hell to Pay," will discuss the planned invasion of Japan called Operation Downfall. David Barrett, author of "140 Days to Hiroshima," will reveal the indecision of Japanese leadership that resulting in dropping of the atomic bombs.

Patton said the September, October and November lectures will have reduced attendance based on a roster and no student outreach.

The Minnesota Legionnaire will be present to share the stories with veterans who could not attend. Patton also has a volunteer who records them and posts videos to the YouTube channel "World War II History Round Table."

### Camporee remains on the calendar

BRAINERD — Legionville and the Minnesota Sons of The American Legion are ready for the 51st annual Camporee, which benefits Legionville School Patrol Camp.

It is Thursday, Sept. 10, to Sunday, Sept. 13.

- Each meal is a fundraiser:
- Thursday supper: Steak Fry, provided by the SAL.
- Friday supper: Chili Feed, provided by the 10th District.
- Saturday lunch: Fish Fry, provided by the 6th District.
- Sunday breakfast: Omelets, provided by the SAL
- Other meals are available at the SAL Snack Shack.
- The Harvest Rally is planned



for Saturday, Sept. 12. (See brief on Page 15.)

Organizers say social distancing should be maintained at all times. Masks will be required inside buildings. Sanitizing stations will be available. Building capacities will be limited. Plan on tenting, trailering or RVing.

Camping fees, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, are \$10 a day per person, \$75 max per family.

If you overnight off the property but participate in Camporee, the fee is \$5 a day per person, \$75 max per family.

On Saturday, members of the military and their family are complimentary.

Camping before Thursday is free. Ages 3 and under are free.

### Space Force veterans now welcome

In May, American Legion Judge Advocate Kevin Bartlett, backed by Adjutant Daniel Wheeler, issued an opinion stating service members who served in the new United States Space Force are eligible to join The American Legion.

Under the Legion's congressional charter, a person is eligible to join if he or she served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War I or at any time since Dec. 7, 1941, and were honorably discharged, or the person, as an American at the time of service, served in an allied military.

Bartlett said, because Space Force is an armed force, its members would be eligible to join The American Legion.

Therefore, no congressional act is needed to clarify membership, he added.

### Vets homes have 10 positive cases

The Minnesota Veterans Homes COVID-19 update recording said, on Aug. 24, there were 10 positive cases in the system.

It said there were eight cases at the Minneapolis Veterans Home, one case at the Luverne Veterans Home and one at the Hastings Veterans Home. There were none at Fergus Falls or Silver Bay.

Due to privacy laws, the MDVA is not allowed to delineate whether the figures are residents or staff.

Call 651-757-1599 to hear. The recordings are made at 9 a.m. daily.

### Blood donors needed now

The American Legion Department of Minnesota is hoping to make a sizable donation of blood to the American Red Cross at the Fall Conference.

"There's currently an urgent need for blood donors of all blood types to give now," said Terry Larson, chairman of the Department's Blood Program Committee.

From noon to 5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 22, conference-goers can sign up to donate. Larson said the goal is 34 units, which amounts to three or four donors per District.

Go to RedCrossBlood.org and enter "legion conference" for zip code or call 866-236-3276.

### Department of Corrections

A brief on Page 4 mistakenly said the annual John Zgoda Memorial Deer Hunt takes place at Camp Ripley.

# The SAL Update: Help the Sons rebuild Bauer Cabin

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

It is an interesting time as we move through the COVID-19 era in our lives. We will have Camporee 2020 and Fall Harvest Rally at the wonderful grounds on North Long Lake called Legionville School Patrol Safety Camp on Sept. 10-13.

I hope many of you are able to attend the Fall Harvest rally at Legionville to see all the wonderful changes and improvements that the crew did this summer.

We do have one major issue at Legionville that we need to address. One of the cabins called the Bauer Cabin was condemned by the board this

## Detachment commander

Dave Vulcan

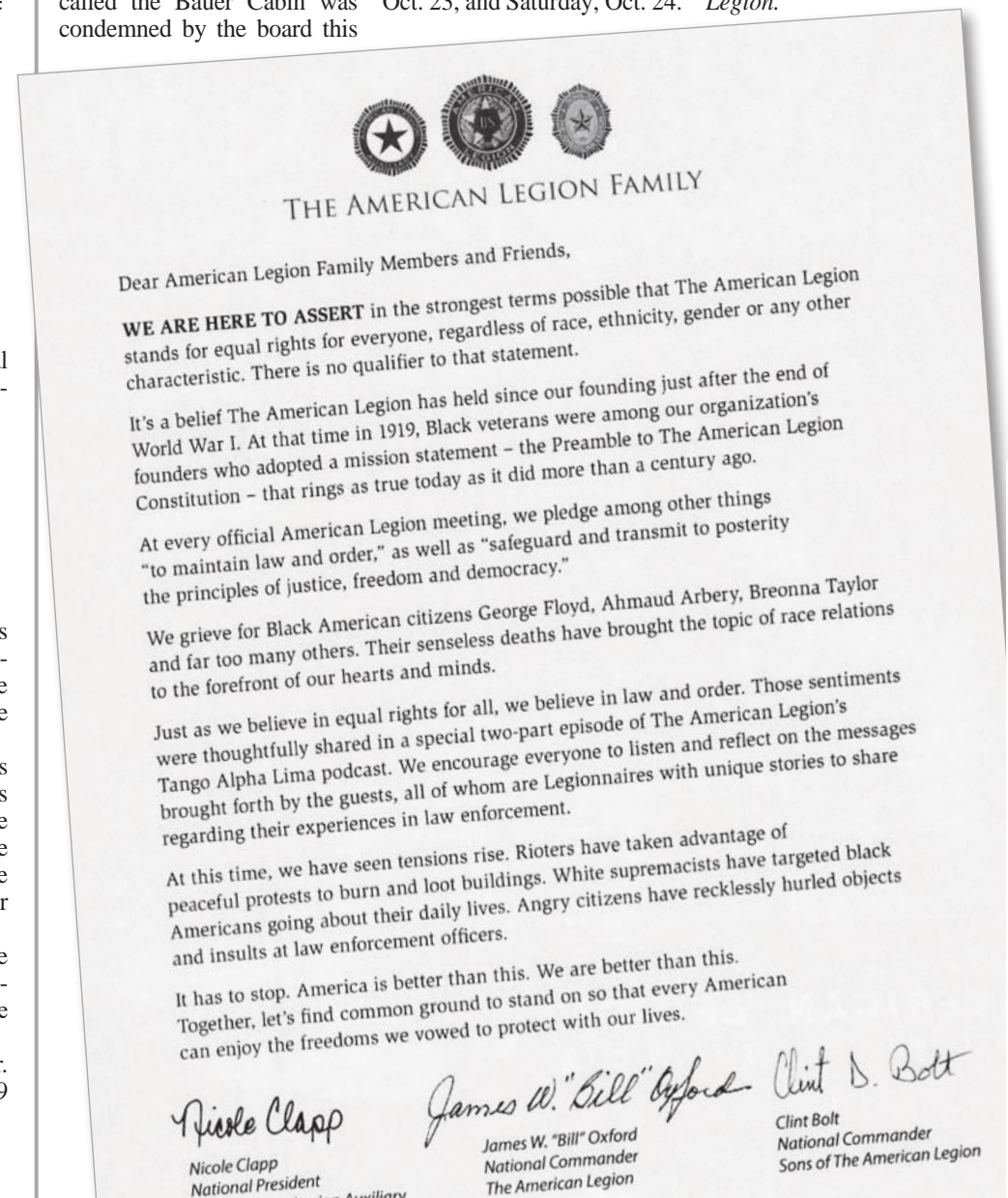


summer because of black mold found throughout the building. My project for this year is to start fundraising with the goal of getting it rebuilt. I hope all of you will consider helping me with this project since it will be a big undertaking. Please consider whatever resources you can access to assist.

As we look forward to our next upcoming event, Fall Conference will be at Breezy Point east of Pequot Lakes on Friday, Oct. 23, and Saturday, Oct. 24.

Executive Board and Finance will be on Friday during the day, General membership on Saturday. I look forward to seeing you all at Fall Conference. Until we see you again, stay safe and healthy.

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



Dear American Legion Family Members and Friends,

**WE ARE HERE TO ASSERT** in the strongest terms possible that The American Legion stands for equal rights for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or any other characteristic. There is no qualifier to that statement.

It's a belief The American Legion has held since our founding just after the end of World War I. At that time in 1919, Black veterans were among our organization's founders who adopted a mission statement - the Preamble to The American Legion Constitution - that rings as true today as it did more than a century ago.

At every official American Legion meeting, we pledge among other things "to maintain law and order," as well as "safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy."

We grieve for Black American citizens George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and far too many others. Their senseless deaths have brought the topic of race relations to the forefront of our hearts and minds.

Just as we believe in equal rights for all, we believe in law and order. Those sentiments were thoughtfully shared in a special two-part episode of The American Legion's Tango Alpha Lima podcast. We encourage everyone to listen and reflect on the messages brought forth by the guests, all of whom are Legionnaires with unique stories to share regarding their experiences in law enforcement.

At this time, we have seen tensions rise. Rioters have taken advantage of peaceful protests to burn and loot buildings. White supremacists have targeted black Americans going about their daily lives. Angry citizens have recklessly hurled objects and insults at law enforcement officers.

It has to stop. America is better than this. We are better than this. Together, let's find common ground to stand on so that every American can enjoy the freedoms we vowed to protect with our lives.

Nicole Clapp  
National President  
The American Legion Auxiliary

James W. "Bill" Oxford  
National Commander  
The American Legion

Clint Bolt  
National Commander  
Sons of The American Legion

2020 - 2021 MEMBERSHIP					08/20/20
Region	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Difference
Southern	42,775	5,768	(37,007)	13.485%	37,007
Midwest	30,377	3,181	(27,196)	10.472%	27,196
Central	132,706	9,847	(122,859)	7.420%	122,859
Western	26,405	1,581	(24,824)	5.988%	24,824
Eastern	146,287	3,675	(142,612)	2.512%	142,612
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>378,550</b>	<b>24,052</b>	<b>(354,498)</b>	<b>6.354%</b>	<b>354,498</b>

Membership ahead of 2020

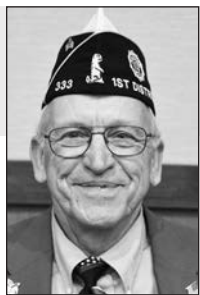
4,589

Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Difference
Illinois *	14,547	3,976	(10,571)	27.332%	10,571
Wisconsin *	3,745	751	(2,994)	20.053%	2,994
Indiana	39,365	2,909	(36,456)	7.390%	36,456
Iowa	4,376	315	(4,061)	7.198%	4,061
Minnesota	11,749	666	(11,083)	5.669%	11,083
Ohio	31,134	961	(30,173)	3.087%	30,173
Michigan	24,084	237	(23,847)	0.984%	23,847
Missouri	3,706	32	(3,674)	0.863%	3,674
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>132,706</b>	<b>9,847</b>	<b>122,859</b>	<b>7.420%</b>	<b>122,859</b>

\* Met Sept. 10, 2020 goal of 10%

# District commanders

## 1st District Dale Wellik



Greetings from the Mighty 1st District American Legion Family.

Thank you for your service and support.

We are off and into another American Legion year.

Membership is off and on a big roll. Some posts are over 50 percent renewal already. This is great, and let's keep things rolling.

We still have to abide by COVID-19 rules and regulations.

We need to continue to plan to go forward and to getting information out to the membership — newsletter, email, Zoom, conference calls or other means you can come up with.

With larger meetings, you may have to limit the

number of people on site and go with Zoom or conference calling at the same time so everyone gets the same information at the same time, firsthand.

We have the Camporee and Department Harvest Rally at Legionville.

Department Fall Conference is coming up at Breezy Point.

More information on these are elsewhere in this issue!

Remember and pray for the deployed and their families back here who need help at this time of the COVID-19 crisis.

Pray for our leaders to make the right decision for the people.

## 6th District Paul Edwards



Greetings to the Minnesota Legion Family,

As we approach Labor Day and the end of summer, I sincerely hope that everyone has had a good summer despite so many things being shut down because of the coronavirus. I hear reports of many Posts resuming activities, although on a limited basis due to the governor's mandates. Let's continue to be safe but get together with Legion Family members as much as possible. I attended a wedding a few days ago with many Legion folks present. The event restored my spirits a lot because we have not been able to fellowship for so long. That fellowship and supporting one another is a big reason that we do the things that we do.

For membership, I will just report with a smile on my face that the 6th District is off the "Goose Egg." A big "well done" to all the vice commanders, Post

commanders and membership directors who worked to make this happen.

I am going to change how our digital resources are being used as we move forward. Our website: [www.mn6thdistrict.org](http://www.mn6thdistrict.org) will be used for information that will be valid for a while, such as calendars, newsletters and lists of officers.

Look for monthly updates. <https://www.facebook.com/MNSixthDistrict/?ref=bookmarks> will be used for more quickly changing information. Announcements from Department and National as they are made available. Fliers from Posts that might be holding special events or announcements about awards received or recognition and pictures from special events. Please check both frequently and share.

For God and Country.

## 8th District Anne Koskinen



Greetings 8th District Legionnaires:

Our Department commander continues to keep The American Legion going for Minnesota. The business of the Department is your business, so please stay informed.

I encourage each of the District Posts to return to in-person meetings; get back to business and socialize with your fellow Legionnaires (and other veterans). Use that opportunity to bring new members in, sign them up, and show them what our American Legion is doing.

The Judge Advocate Greg Colby responded in a letter to my inquiry as to whether a local bar (for those Posts without one) can serve as the meeting place and display the Post sign and flag. I can provide a copy of the letter to anyone who contacts me. Basically, the idea is that you keep politics away from the Legion, and use responsible rea-

soning in following our guidelines and ethics.

Keep in mind the Department's Fall Conference at Breezy Point Resort, Oct. 22 through 24. I hope that stays in our Department calendar as an in-person meeting. Go online and put in your reservation.

I miss American Legion (and VFW) Baseball, though some areas like Northeast Range are playing an unofficial season; after all, children want to play baseball anyway. The whole summer seems somewhat unreal.

Follow The American Legion Twitter feed @AmericanLegion. National posts a lot of good, time-sensitive information on gatherings, projects, ideas and more. Comment on the tweets.

## 3rd District Linda Dvorak



Hello from the 3rd District!

Did you watch the webinars that National put on? Did you have a favorite or two? I thought the one on volunteering and what makes a great post were my favorite. All eight webinars provided great information. They have been loaded on the National website at [www.legion.org/training/membership](http://www.legion.org/training/membership). Check them out!

It is good see that Camporee is still on for September. Fall Conference is around the corner, Oct. 23-24, and that appears to be still on as well.

In October the 3rd District will have a rally, or a family gathering, as we call it. It will be great to see Legion Family members

in person instead of on a computer screen.

Membership is going well in the District, the new membership report from Department takes a little getting used to and knowledge of how to read it. Goals are not loaded yet, once all the district goals are received by Department they can be added.

I have not been very active in the weekly Legion chats on Zoom, but this time of year is very hard to commit to. Hopefully later this fall or winter participation will pick up. It is a great way to keep in touch.

## 7th District Dean Knutson



Greetings to the Mighty 7th! Boy, does time have a way of getting away from us. It seems like the membership years go by faster and faster. With all the changes to the scheduling of events over this last year, we have all had to learn how to adjust and adapt to the changes. We have six myLegion.org/membership sessions scheduled for this fall, and I hope that many of you can take advantage of these sessions.

The sessions will all start at 1 o'clock and run for two-and-a-half hours. They are to be held at Litchfield on Aug. 22, Montevideo on Aug. 29, Marshall on Sept. 19, Alexandria on Oct. 10 (meeting at Eagles Club), Willmar on Nov. 28, and Wheaton on Dec. 19. To all the Posts that are registered with myLegion.org, please make sure you use this great tool for processing your membership as this is the way of the future. To those

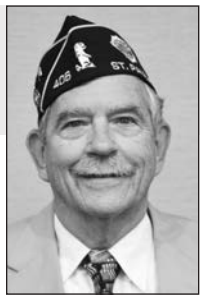
Posts that are not registered, please consider attending one of these sessions to find out how the site works and how it can be of an advantage to you.

An event coming up is the Proclamation of Hero Day for Grant County on Sept. 11 (Patriot Day) to be held at West Central Area Schools Football field in Barrett at 2-2:45 and in Ashby at the Veteran's Memorial at 4-4:45. Grant County has Become a Yellow Ribbon County to honor all who have served your nation. Hope to see you there.

The new year has started out good so let's keep the momentum going to Keep the Legion a strong and viable voice for the American veteran.

My project for this year is Legionville, and my slogan is "Serving America's Veterans."

## 4th District Joe Jansen



Hello to all our 4th District Legion Family members. In August, we held our first dual meeting — we had a physical meeting at the North St. Paul Post 39 and Zoom coverage available for those who felt more comfortable staying home.

Since it was both an executive and full membership convention, we voted on recommended changes to the bylaws, as suggested by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Copies of the changes and reasons for them were passed out to those present and shown on line to those on Zoom.

The changes were adopted and your Post commander will receive a full set of bylaws in the near future. We also asked for hosts of future dates and lo-

cations for the RCCC 2020-2021 Legion year and will get that information to you when we know.

However, Mid-Winter 4th & 5th District Joint meeting will be Jan. 2, 2021, at Rosetown Post 542 (hosted by Post 8 and Post 406) and 4th District Convention will be May 22 at Arcade-Phalen. Details to follow on both. All RCCC meetings are at 7 p.m. Hope this helps you plan ahead.

P.S.: Post commanders and any interested members please make your reservations for the Fall Conference at Breezy Point, Oct. 22 through 24. See details on Page 3.

## 9th District Steve Sundstrom



Hello, everyone.

I hope everyone is doing well and enjoying the summer.

I'm looking forward to the Fall Conference at Breezy Point, Oct 22-24. If you haven't made a reservation yet, now would be a good time. It will be great to get together and see everyone. I'm sure it will be a very good meeting with lots of information to be gained.

I would like to thank all the Post membership directors for all their hard work this time of year. With all the renewals coming in it takes quite a bit of effort and time to get everything done. Hopefully most are using myLegion.org; it is a very helpful tool.

Detroit Lakes Post 15 now has its own chapter of Legion Riders. The Riders from the Moorhead Post 21 helped us get started. We have been on a couple short rides so far, and we're planning on getting more involved. If anyone is interested our activities will be posted on Facebook at Lakes Area Legion Riders.

On our last run we visited Park Rapids Post 212. The members have a very nice Post home there, and if you're in the area, I urge you to pay them a visit.

## 10th District Tom Allen



Hello, 10th District Family

I hope everyone is doing good and staying healthy, and, as far as I know, no one has COVID-19, and I hope that I'm right.

The Legions are starting back opening their doors, having meeting, function and events (even bingo).

I want to congratulate the Clearwater Riders for their highly successful "Homeless Vets Run." I was told there were over 125 bikes involved and, for the run they had food, music, auctions, raffles and more. I must say, very well done, Clearwater

Legionville is still a go for Sept. 10-13. Camping is allowed, and no dorms are available. On Friday the 10th, District will have a chili feed instead of the pig roast this year. We will

be serving our chili in separate containers. This is a fundraiser for Legionville. Let me know if you would like to help.

We will be having our first family celebration (rally) at 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12. Please try to attend.

Our 10th District project for the Legion, Auxiliary and the SAL is still the same this year. Clothing for the VA in St. Cloud. If you have new clothing to donate or would like to donate money, you can bring them to Legionville with you or call Carol Kottom. Her cell is 763-360-6102, and her landline is 763-6822-3465. Thank you.

For God and Country

## Get to know your CVSOs



Ashley Laganieri

Ashley Laganieri joined the Minnesota Army National Guard at age 17 and is a third generation Army veteran and spouse. She has been an Olmsted County veteran service officer for three years and previously served as the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs women veteran and Gold Star family coordinator as well as a veteran service representative for the federal VA.

Laganieri is a member of American Legion Post 551 in Eyota and is active in DAV Chapter 28 and Department activities. In her free time, Ashley enjoys historical films, kayaking

and spending time with her family. Laganier can be reached by phone at 507-328-6355 and by email at [laganieri.ashley@co.olmsted.mn.us](mailto:laganieri.ashley@co.olmsted.mn.us).

Greg Peterson is a 1980 graduate of New Ulm Public High School. He served 23 years in the U.S. Air Force as a loadmaster flying aboard the C-141 and C-17 jet transports. He lives on the family Century Farm in rural New Ulm with his spouse and two children. Peterson has been the director of veterans services in Brown County since April 2004.

Besides being the president of the Minnesota Association of County Veteran

Service Officers, he is also president of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in New Ulm. He belongs to Legion Post 300 in Lafayette and serves as their funeral honors flag presenter. He is a member of Legion Riders Post 132 in New Ulm as well as the DAV and VFW. He enjoys history, motorcycles and snowmobile riding.

Peterson can be reached by phone at 507-233-6637 and by email at [peterson@co.brown.mn.us](mailto:peterson@co.brown.mn.us).



Greg Peterson



# The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 21 Vol. 2

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

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

651-224-7634

September 2020

## Highs and lows happened in the month of August

### President's Column

Mary Hendrickson



September has always been one of my favorite months. I loved school, both as a student and a teacher. A new school year meant a fresh start with new people, new activities and new goals.

In the past, the American Legion Family somewhat shared this concept. COVID-19 threw a wrench into this pattern. Our world is different today in so many ways. I greatly appreciate those Auxiliary members at the Unit, District and Department levels who have indicated they are willing to hold their offices until our next Department convention in July 2021.

The American Legion Family leadership team looks forward to working together in the second half of our 24-month year of service! Hopefully members will be able to host and attend the activities and events we have come to love during the year between department conventions. Above all else, our eyes remain focused on service to veterans, active duty military and their families.

August proved to be a month of incredible highs and some deep lows. In early August, my husband, Carl, and I had the opportunity to join many other American Legion Family members at the outdoor wedding of NEC Bill Barbknecht and Past Department President Donna Arends.

Our retired Department secretary, Sandie Deutsch, officiated at the ceremony. Congratulations and best wishes to Bill and Donna!

On Aug. 15, Auxiliary Department officers, District presidents, committee chairmen, committee members and special appointees spent the day at the Waite Park American Legion for our annual organization gathering, making plans for the 2020-2021 Auxiliary year.

It was so nice to see all of these loyal and hard-working members. The Girls State Committee,

Finance Committee and Membership Team under the direction

of Membership Chairman Sharon Thiemecke spent some quality time getting organized for the coming year. The DEC met for three-plus hours in the afternoon.

It was a long, but productive day. I'd like to personally thank our office staff for gathering and organizing all the notebooks, folders, etc. which needed to get in the hands of our leadership team that day.

I'm still enjoying the opportunity to share information with individuals and committees via Zoom. One of my favorites was the mid-August ALA 100th Anniversary "Chat & Check-In Social Hour" hosted by the National ALA 100th Anniversary Virtual Celebration Sub-Committee. I assume, like me, you're probably getting very tired of the word "virtual"! Yes, we need to keep the 100th anniversary in the forefront of our ALA programs through August of 2021. Don't put away those 1920s hats and flapper clothes/ accessories just yet!

On a very sad note, we send our deepest condolences to DuWayn Thygeson of Thief River Falls and his extended family on the loss of his wife, Karen. Karen was our Department president in 2002-2003. She was a mentor to several members and an inspiration to all of us. We will miss her smile and her willingness to share her knowledge and time. Rest in peace, Karen.

I hope to see many of you at Camporee. Stay safe and optimistic about the future.

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

## National president to be at Fall Conference

NISSWA — National President Nicole Clapp of Gladbrook, Iowa, will be our special guest at Fall Conference at Breezy Point on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Oct. 22-24, 2020, hosted by the Nisswa American Legion Family. All of the Auxiliary's sessions will be held in the Whitebirch Room 2.

Thursday evening's session is from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. and is open to the entire American Legion Family. It will be a law-and-order panel featuring a county attorney, county sheriff, county truancy case aide and hopefully a retired judge.



Nicole Clapp

Friday's session will begin at 8 a.m. and run until about 3 p.m. A reception for retiring Secretary Sandie Deutsch will

be at the close of the afternoon session. Auxiliary members are also encouraged to attend the Hospital Association meeting at 4:30 p.m. as well.

Friday evening from 6:30 to 7:30 there will be the Legion Family Membership Payoff under the direction of our membership chairman Sharon Thiemecke. The conference will continue into Saturday morning from 8 to 10:15 a.m.

Please try to attend — social distancing and the current rules will prevail.

## Workshop forms plans for the year

WAITE PARK — The American Legion Auxiliary held its annual August Workshop at the Waite Park American Legion Post 428 with social distancing in place. It was quite different from the typical meeting with tables separated and scattered around the room.

Program chairmen came together and planned their programs for the new Auxiliary year. Options for holding some of our most important activities utilizing COVID-19 precautions are also being considered and planned for as a precaution.

In the afternoon, President Mary Hendrickson presided over the first Department Executive Committee meeting of the year. Programs and solicitation of funds for programs were approved as well as projects for each respective district.

All of these plans will be included in the Unit Guide, which will be available at Fall Conference. Units will receive one copy in the second Unit mailing of the year as well. Please read this guide when you receive it. It will help to make you and your members more aware of the programs this year.

## Past president succumbs to cancer

THIEF RIVER FALLS — Past Department President, 2002-2003, Karen (Fredrickson) Thygeson, passed away on Aug. 14 after a long battle with cancer. She was 74.

Karen was married to Floyd Fredrickson until his death in 1997 from cancer. She married DuWayn Thygeson in 2002. She is survived by her husband, DuWayn;



Members of the Department Executive Committee gather for a photo at Waite Park Post 428. From left, seated, are First VP Patti Coleman, President Mary Hendrickson and 2nd VP Mary Kuperus. Standing are Wanda Prescher (Dist. 1), Robin Olson (Dist. 2), Secretary Marsha Bible, Linda Kelly (Dist. 3), Sandy Gibson (Dist. 4), Mary Younkin (Dist. 5), Roberta Elvecrog (Dist. 6), Lorraine Wigen (Dist. 7), Sue Korhonen (Dist. 8), Treasurer Jan Lauby, Pat Hanson (Dist. 9), Brandi Christianson (Dist. 10).

son, Brian (Becky) Fredrickson, and daughter, Karla (Marcus) Fredrickson, as well as grandchildren Dalton Fredrickson, Michaela Fredrickson, Keagan Fredrickson-Noyes and Ava Fredrickson. She is also survived by many stepchildren and their families.



Karen Thygeson

Karen's theme when she was president was "Karing with Karen, in Service to our Veterans," and her project was a flashlight for every Minnesota veteran and she also collected funds for Minnesota Girls State and The American Legion Family Hospital

Association.

## President Mary's project to be CVSOs

DULUTH — Department of Minnesota President Mary Hendrickson will change her project for the 2020-2021 year. This year with the help of all of you, she would like to assist the veterans service officers in Minnesota's 87 counties.

The role of the county veterans service officer (or CVSO) is to assist service members, veterans and their family members to efficiently navigate the Veterans Administration benefits system. They assist veterans to help them get the federal, state and county benefits they have earned.

Many of the veterans who visit their CVSO are also in need of a helping hand, and they can offer emergency resources. President Mary's project will be to purchase gift cards for items such as gasoline and groceries so that they can distribute them when needed.

General funds, poppy funds and charitable gambling are acceptable to use. Donations should be made payable to: ALA Department of Minnesota earmarked President's Project and sent to the Department Office.

## Who would like a presidential visit?

ST. PAUL — If you would like to have the Department president attend a function or meeting of your Unit, please invite her, said Department Auxiliary Secretary Marsha Bible.

"She has dedicated this year to serving the American Legion Auxiliary, its programs, and working with you, our Unit members, in a meaningful and helpful manner," she said. "President Mary would like the opportunity to work with each of our Units and Districts and is more than happy to join you, schedule permitting."

Invitations should be directed to "Department President" and sent to Marsha Bible, Department Secretary, American Legion Auxiliary, 20 W. 12th St., Room 314, St. Paul, MN 55155.

Please do not send invitations to her home address, Bible said. An invitation form will be included in the first Unit mailing. Please be sure to put a point of contact name, phone number and email address in case a cancellation occurs.

## Annual silent auction needs donations

A silent auction will again be held at our Fall Conference with the proceeds going to support the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. This has become a tradition at Fall Conference, giving each of us the opportunity to help our members in need.

Chairman Joanie Krantz is asking for new or gently used items to be used in the silent auction. All items welcome.

"We are looking for the very popular Theme Baskets again this year from Units, Districts, TAL, SAL or TLR's," said Krantz. "The baskets bring in a tremendous amount of donations for our program."

Krantz said bidders can be all members of The American Legion Family. All members are welcomed. All items should be brought Thursday evening or early Friday morning. Bidding will be on Friday only from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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The American Legion Dept. of Minn.  
20 W. 12th St., Room 300A  
St. Paul, MN 55155-2000

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# Endorsements

New London American Legion Auxiliary Unit 537 and the 7th District American Legion Auxiliary have endorsed Mary Kuperus for the position of Department first vice president for the 2021-2022 Auxiliary year.

Mary is a 37-year PUFL member. She is eligible through the service of her late father, Earl Manson, who served during World War II and her husband, Bill Kuperus, retired sergeant first class of the

U.S. Army serving during the Persian Gulf War.

Mary has served all offices and most committee chairmanships at the local level, including Unit president for multiple years.

In the 7th District, she has held many offices and served as the 7th District president in 2010-2011.



**Mary Kuperus**

She was secretary for five years.

At the Department level, Mary has held chairmanships in Children & Youth, Community Service, Junior Activities, Poppy, Membership and Girls State. She has served as a counselor for three years. Mary is currently serving as the Leadership chairman.

For the past 28 years, Mary has been employed with the New London-Spicer Elementary School as a Title I Paraprofessional. She is the president of her union at school and is on the Board of Directors with the New London to New Brighton Antique Car Run.

Mary belongs to Peace Lutheran Church in New London. She and her husband have three adult children, one son-in-law and seven grandchildren.

## WE SHALL NOT SLEEP, THOUGH POPPIES GROW



**Hillcrest Cemetery in Hackensack, MN received new flower planters in memory of all veterans, to commemorate the Auxiliary's 100th year. #ALA100Celebration**



Hackensack Unit 202 donated new flower planters at Hillcrest Cemetery in Hackensack in memory of all veterans. This donation was made to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Auxiliary's service to veterans, active military and their families.

# September is Junior Activities Month

## Junior Activities

**Donna Barbknecht**



September is an appropriate month for Junior Activities Month. It's quite appropriate for the start of the school year, perhaps even the entire year. We are all appreciative of our Junior members (whether an organized group or not).

Now during this unprecedented era, we are living in have you ever thought our Juniors could teach us? As you know they are much more proficient than most of us are in social media. We are never too old to learn, ladies, and never too young to teach.

Honorary Department Junior President Emily Sues's initiatives this year are to recruit and mentor Junior members. Both may be possible by reaching out to them and requesting help from them or their friends on their expertise of setting up social media accounts for your Units. Department Secretary Marsha has information for

Zoom meetings online, also. This enables for a much safer meeting from the comfort of your own home.

The theme this year will continue to be "Juniors Catching Veterans Hearts" with the softball as her symbol. The juniors raised \$6,965 that was distributed among the five veterans homes last year. With such a great response for supporting our veterans' homes, Emily is changing the project for this year to raise funds to support the Minneapolis and St. Cloud VA Health Care Systems. The funds raised will be split evenly between the two facilities.

*Donna Barbknecht is the chairman of the Junior Activities Committee for the Department of Minnesota.*

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year 7/31/19
One	4,177	3,942	94.37%	4,109
Two	4,191	3,950	94.25%	4,107
Three	4,064	3,814	93.85%	4,002
Four	624	573	91.83%	613
Five	603	564	93.53%	595
Six	5,393	5,099	94.55%	5,309
Seven	3,369	3,134	93.02%	3,296
Eight	1,363	1,276	93.62%	1,333
Nine	3,618	3,392	93.75%	3,569
Ten	4,304	3,953	91.84%	4,217
1982	178	193	108.43%	176
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31,884</b>	<b>29,890</b>	<b>93.75%</b>	<b>31,326</b>

## Upcoming events

- Sept. 12:** Harvest Rally, membership turn-in for Auxiliary at Legionville
- Sept. 19:** Hospital and Home Representative Meeting at Waite Park
- Oct. 22-24:** Fall Conference at Breezy Point Resort
- Nov. 15:** American Legion Auxiliary 101st Birthday
- Dec. 5:** Pearl Harbor Rally
- Feb. 6:** Sweetheart Rally
- March 6:** Appreciation Rally & DEC Meeting
- March 14:** The American Legion 102nd Birthday
- April 9-10:** Department Junior Conference at Waite Park
- June 13-19:** American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State
- July 14:** DEC Meeting at Redwood Falls
- July 15-17:** Department Convention at Redwood Falls

## Harvest Rally is set for Sept. 12

**BRAINERD** — The Harvest Rally, held during the Camporee at Legionville on North Long Lake, starts at 3 p.m. Sept. 12 and is slated to end at 6 p.m. The Sons of The American Legion host.

Details on the Camporee and its prices are on Page 12. "Since the Harvest Rally is more of a family picnic this year, the SAL Snack Shack will be open and serving food before, during, and after the event," said Chairman Dennis Blue of the Legionville Camporee Committee. "So please enjoy. No tickets are needed. Cash is preferred."

Due to the situation with COVID-19, the event can change quickly. To stay informed, please follow the Facebook Page (facebook.com/LegionvilleCamporee) or subscribe to the committee's texting service. Send CAMPOREE to 84483 to receive alerts about Legionville Camporee.

The committee can be reached at legionville.camporee@gmail.com or 218-262-9502.

For the Auxiliary side of things, turn-in will be 2-3 p.m. Sept. 12. There will be no evening meal tickets, though the SAL will have its Snack Shack concession stand open.

Be sure to bring a lawn chair for the rally. Masks will be required inside buildings. Sanitizing stations will be available. If you plan on playing bingo, you can bring your own dauber or buy one from the SAL.

## INSIDE OR OUTSIDE?



At the August Workshop in Waite Park, Department President Mary Hendrickson and Honorary Junior President Emily Sues look like they are in a boat, but they actually are standing in front of a framed image at Waite Park Post 428.

## Poppies can be ordered now

**ST. PAUL** — An order form will be included in the first Unit mailing. Prices in effect for this year: Small Poppies — \$20 a hundred plus shipping. (Small poppies must be ordered in lots of 100 only); large poppies are \$18 a dozen. The shipping charge schedule is on the order form.



Tyler Trimbo makes a long putt for Eagle on Hole 2.



St. Peter Post 37 Color Guard presents the colors to kick off the day.

## Last Man Club Golf Classic was a success

The fifth annual Last Man Club Golf Classic Presented by Ballman Roofing took place on June 19 at Shoreland Country Club in St. Peter and is put on by the Last Man Club of Vietnam War Era of St. Peter.

The annual event raises funds for the Last Man Club Veteran Relief Fund, which provides emergency assistance to local veterans in crisis where no federal, state or local program exists or those funds have been exhausted. The primary goal of the relief fund is to keep veterans in a stable situation or return them to one.

To date, the relief fund has assisted over 40 local veterans totaling over \$29,000 in relief. More than 140 sponsors and 160 golfers supported this year's event and helped to raise \$20,000 for the relief fund. The next one is scheduled for June 18, 2021. For more information, please visit [lmclassic.com](http://lmclassic.com).



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

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