



Minn. Medal of Honor Memorial is dedicated

The ceremony comes after many years of fundraising, designing

The 1954 "Promise of Youth" sculpture, nicknamed "Millie," is now part of the Medal of Honor Memorial and symbolizes how veterans secure peace for the sake of future generations.



ST. PAUL — At long last, Minnesota has its Medal of Honor Memorial. "This memorial stands in symbolic defense of not only the Capitol — and state and nation — it has the high ground among other veterans memorials on the grounds," said John Kraemer, chair of the Minnesota Medal of Honor Memorial Board.

The memorial was dedicated at the State Capitol complex on Sept. 22, after 10 years of efforts to design, fund and build it. The feature is situated on the side of the Veterans Service Building facing the Capitol building. It takes the 1950s-era "Promise of Youth" sculpture that had been in a rectangular pool, often leaking

into underground tunnels, and places it squarely in the center of the new granite monument.

The artwork features a five-sided granite block with water pooling atop and flowing down the sides. Nearby, there are two granite walls with the Medal of Honor

Continued on Page 4

Resolved: The biz of the Legion

3 resolutions from Minnesota pass at National Convention

MILWAUKEE — Resolutions are a part of The American Legion that many new or potential joiners are unaware of, but they play a major role in the mission of the organization. They are the roots of this grass-roots organization.

They come from posts, districts and departments across the nation.

Three resolutions from the Department of Minnesota regarding health care passed at the 103rd American Legion National Convention in Milwaukee. Share them with young veterans to show what the Legion does for them.

They are:

- Resolution 31, which says when the Department of Veterans Affairs cancels a veteran's medical appointment and the next availability to be seen is outside the wait time access standard, the veteran should be eligible for care in the community. This resolution is calling for expansion of wait times for the Veterans

Continued on Page 9

Sacrifice and service

James Olson still has shrapnel from blast in Iraq War

By Tim Engstrom

MILWAUKEE — You can see why James Olson of Mankato Post 11 is a Legionnaire. The American Legion has done a lot for the rehabilitation of veterans like himself, and he wants to do the same for other veterans.

Olson was wounded in combat, but you never hear him bring it up.

The Legion, he said, played a major role in helping him transition to civilian life, by being with veterans who could relate to what he went through.

"Whether they know it or not, it has helped me out a lot over the years," he said.

The Amboy kid graduated from Blue Earth High School in spring 2003. On July 21, 2003, he left Minnesota for San Diego's Marine Corps Recruit Depot.

It was the first time he had ever flown on an airplane.

"I never have cared for flying," he said.

He did basic, then a month at Camp Pendleton, another month at San Diego, then it was to infantry school at Camp Pendleton, where he and a handful of others were stuck over the holidays and had to perform the duty of camp guards.

After infantry school, he was assigned to India Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment at Camp Horno, which is the part of Camp Pendleton that is home to the 1st Marine Regiment.



Minnesota American Legion 2nd District Vice Commander James Olson of Mankato Post 11 smiles while on the floor of the 103rd National Convention in Milwaukee. He says young veterans will not regret getting involved in local and higher levels of The American Legion.

Olson was a machine gunner.

It was February 2004. Everyone in the battalion thought they were headed to WESTPAC — Western Pacific. However, by March they learned they were going to Iraq. They were set to deploy in mid-June 2004, and until then, they trained and trained.

They flew to March Air Reserve

Base in California. However, the bird he was on was too heavy, and they went home.

"Man, did we get drunk that night. There wasn't a drop of beer left at the PX," he said.

Because they all had prepared the barracks for deployment, all blankets or pillows were at supply. And their

fart sacks were with their rucks still loaded on the plane.

"We had to leave all of our junk on there so they could figure out weight distribution," he said.

They slept on bare mattresses.

The next day, hungover and all, the Marines of India Company went back

Continued on Page 12



Second District Commander Pam Krill looks up from Microphone 1 on the floor of the 103rd National Convention. She made a motion to elect Vincent Troiola of New York national commander.

Minnesota leads the way with major Legacy donation

MILWAUKEE — Legionnaires from all across the country lined up on the stage of the 103rd National Convention to announce donations to the American Legion Legacy Scholarship, which provides college funding for children of killed or disabled post-9/11 veterans.

It is the primary cause of the Legion Riders, and Minnesota, once again, had the highest number. Minnesota American Legion Riders Secretary Jody Hassing stood at the microphone and announced Minnesota raised \$155,000.

That figure was added to donations from all departments and from the

National Legacy Run, allowing then-National Commander Paul Dillard to announce a grand total of \$1,324,528.

The National Legacy Run alone collected \$606,840, with \$100,000 alone coming from Post 64 in Indianapolis. The ride started in Mobile, Ala., and went to Oak Creek, Wis., crossing seven states for a journey of 1,164 miles. It had a daily average of 340 motorcycles.

It was the first time having the American Legion national commander, American Legion Auxiliary national president and Sons of The American

Continued on Page 10

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Your complete Application package containing all required, signed documents can be submitted by email or U.S. Mail.

Have questions about the Application process?

- Contact your County Veterans Service Officer or
- Email NewHomesAdmissions@state.mn.us

Note: Incomplete Application packages will not be accepted and applicant will not be placed on the list. Veterans have first preference. Admissions to our new Veterans Homes are expected to begin in mid-2023.



To learn more about Minnesota Veterans Homes, visit MinnesotaVeteran.org/Homes.



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Tickets and donation information available online at ptsdbenefit.org

District 11 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of Wisconsin has joined forces with Warfighter Advance to raise money to HELP STOP our warfighters suffering with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from ending their lives. Each day 20 of those we trained to be warfighters suffering from PTSD commit suicide. You can STOP this from happening.

What's happening?

Fall Conference speaker is mom who lost son to suicide

ST. CLOUD — A speaker lined up for Friday, Oct. 28, at the Department of Minnesota Fall Conference is Brainerd military mom Vicki Randall, whose son Cody Lee Randall took his own life at age 28 during the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020.

The Fall Conference takes place at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud Oct. 27-29.

Cody was an Army sergeant stationed outside Anchorage, Alaska, at the beginning of the pandemic. Alaska shut everything down, including his regular outside-the-Army counseling sessions. He had been at Anchorage's Fort Richardson for three years when he died by suicide.

At the same time, Vicki lost her job as a nail technician when the state-mandated shutdown forced her to close her business in Brainerd.

She was able to fly to Alaska, go through a two-week quarantine, then see her son before he was cremated.

Vicki will share how her son never received a proper burial and how people at the time were dying alone. Seven soldiers at Fort Richardson died by suicide that year, and the mainstream media neglected their stories, she told Alpha News in April.

When she got off the airplane in Brainerd, veterans from Eagle's Healing Nest in Sauk Centre greeted her with American flags.

A more dignified ceremony for Cody was held on private property five months later.

Now Vicki works to prevent veteran and servicemember suicides and has held fundraisers for Eagle's Healing Nest called the Panda Project.

Commander candidate

Candidate for National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer of Horicon, Wis., Post 157 will speak Friday, Oct. 28, at the Fall Conference.

Seehafer served in the U.S. Navy during the Bosnia/Herzegovina War era as a commissioned officer and was part of the chaplaincy program.

He has been a Legionnaire since 1997.

"Lieutenant Dan" is married to his wife, Stacey, and has a son, Jacob, and a daughter, Emma. The reverend has a master of divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind.

He went through American Legion College in 2012.

The Fall Conference is the annual school of instruction, and the kind of event people talk about when they return home.

Breakout sessions

It also will feature breakout training sessions about various topics, from suicide prevention to MyLegion.org or mentoring new members to post revitalization or officer responsibilities. Instructors are Legislative Chairman Eric Ahlness, Past 6th District Commander Paul

Edwards, Department Commander Jennifer Havlick, the VA's Andrea Sandberg, Judge Advocate Greg Colby, Department Membership Director Linda Dvorak, Apple Valley Post 1776's Joe Tappainer, 3rd District Commander Gary Richardson and Training Committee Chairman Mike Ash.

And, of course, the awards for enlisted personnel of the year will be presented at the Fall Conference.

The Department Executive Committee meets at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 27. There are several committee meetings starting either at 3 or 4 p.m.

The gambling seminar takes place at 2 p.m. Oct. 27 at the University B Room.

Did you sign up for meals?

A breakfast buffet will be available Friday and Saturday morning at the Kelly Inn's pool area. It is 6:30 to 8 a.m. for breakfast and 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for lunch. The cost is \$15 per person per meal.

There is a registration form on Page 5, but if you register at mnlegion.org (not MyLegion, but mnlegion), you can download a form to register for the meals in advance. The deadline to register for meals is Oct. 14.

Pearl Harbor Rally is now in Spicer

SPICER — The meeting place for the annual Pearl Harbor Rally is now at Spicer Post 545 on Dec. 3.

The gathering previously had been set for Royalton Post 137. However, a scheduling conflict arose.

The rally begins at 11 a.m. with a social hour and membership turn-in. Lunch will be served at noon, and the program begins at 1 p.m. and ends at 2 p.m.

The meal will be broasted chicken, mashed potatoes, corn, coleslaw and a roll. The cost of the meal is \$15, payable at the door with cash, check or credit card.

Parking will be in the Saultsbury Beach lot across Lake Street.

The Minnesota American Legion Riders are hosting the rally.

Chili, music and funding at Osseo Post 172

OSSEO — The American Legion Riders Chapter 172 out of Osseo and Maple Grove are hosting Chili For Charity 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 29.

People from all around are welcome.

The event takes place at Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172.

Entry is free. Unlimited tasting of the chili contestants is \$10. There will be live music by Bryce Hegge, a 19-year-old musician from St. Michael.

The event also features an auction.

The fundraising goal is \$10,000, with proceeds going to the Magnus Veterans Foundation in Dayton. Post 172 has donated a \$5,000 matching gift.

Magnus' own Shawn Alderman and Diane Peters, along with Post 172's Kristy Janigo, will serve on the chili-judging panel.

Department Convention returning to Redwood Falls

REDWOOD FALLS — The Department of Minnesota Convention is slated to be in Redwood Falls next summer.

The convention returns to Jackpot Junction Casino on July 13 to 15, with a Department Executive Committee meeting on July 12.

Other highlights on the Legion calendar include the National Commander's Tour of Minnesota April 16-21 (heading north this time), Minnesota Legion College April 20-23, Sweetheart Rally at Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172 on Feb. 4 and Appreciation Rally at New Prague Post 45 on April 15.

The Department Commander's Testimonial Dinner is set for May 13 at New Prague Post 45. The ALA Department President's Testimonial Dinner is scheduled for April 22 at Spicer Post 545.

State Veterans Program back like before

INVER GROVE HEIGHTS — The official state Veterans Day program returns to its pre-COVID glory this year.

The event takes place Nov. 11 at the Veterans Memorial Community Center in Inver Grove Heights, with a free community breakfast starting at 8:30 a.m. The official program begins at 10 a.m., featuring remarks from Commissioner Larry Herke and state elected officials.

An online livestream of the program will be available, too.

Hugo to host classic rock

HUGO — The Groove Kings return to Hugo Post 620 on Saturday, Oct. 15.

The show begins at 8 p.m.

The Groove Kings perform classic and Southern rock from the 1970s and 1980s.

Pro wrestling coming to Faribault post

FARIBAULT — Faribault Post 43 is hosting Midwest All-Star Wrestling on Saturday, Oct. 15.

The event is called Lights Out at the Legion, sponsored by Donnelly Stucco.

Tickets for adults are \$15, for kids 10 and under \$10. Advance tickets are available for purchase at the post.

Doors at Post 43 open at 6 p.m., belltime 7 p.m.

Wrestlers include Tugboat, Lena Solana, The System, So Fresh, Leslie Muneca and more.

Endorsements

Gades is endorsed for Dept. Vice Commander

Victor Gades has been endorsed by the American Legion Walter Tripp Post 29 of Morris and the 7th District for the position of Department Vice Commander for the 2023-2024 year.

Gades is a 39-year member of Post 29 and has served as Commander, Adjutant and as part of the Honor Guard.

At the district level, Gades has served as Commander, Vice Commander, Membership Director,

Sergeant-at-Arms and presently serves as Legionville District 7 Representative and as 7th District Historian.

At the national level, Gades currently serves on the Department of Minnesota National Americanism Council.

Gades served with the U.S. Navy from 1970 to 1976. He had aviation electronics training at Naval Air Technical Training Center Millington in Tennessee. He was

stationed four years at Naval Air Station Miramar in California, with Navy Fighter Weapons School and one year at NAS Oceana in Virginia with the VF-143 squadron.

Gades retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service after 24 years. He and Pam Gades will have been married 40 years come December. He adopted Pam's two daughters, and they have a son together. So far, they have nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



Victor Gades

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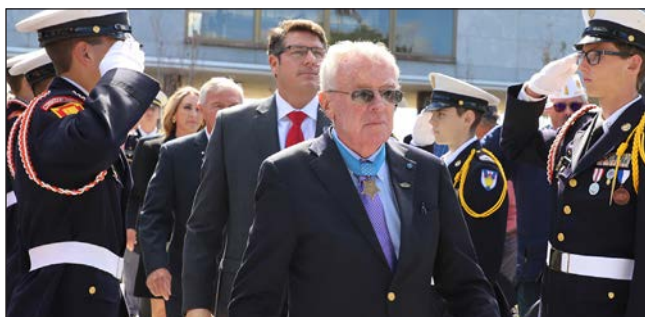
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SCENES FROM THE MEDAL OF HONOR MEMORIAL DEDICATION



Historic airplanes leave trails across the sky during the dedication ceremony Sept. 22.



Medal of Honor recipient Thomas G. Kelley of Massachusetts steps toward the stage on Sept. 22.



Memorial committee chair John Kraemer approaches the podium on Sept. 22.

JOB FAIR

9 a.m.-2 p.m.
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*DD214 required. *Income limits apply. Total household income must be UNDER the following: 1 Occupant: \$49,320 | 2 Occupants: \$56,340 | 3 Occupants: \$63,360 | 4 Occupants: \$70,380 | 5 Occupants: \$76,020 | 6 Occupants: \$81,660 | 7 Occupants: \$87,300 | 8 Occupants: \$92,940

Minnesota DAV is in Immediate Need for Additional Volunteer Drivers

Minnesota DAV is in immediate need of additional volunteer drivers. This FREE service provides Veterans with transportation to and from their VA medical appointments and has transported over 15,000 Veterans this year

Contact your nearby VA Medical Center Voluntary Services Office and ask how to become a volunteer driver

Minneapolis: 612-467-2050

St. Cloud: 320-255-6365

www.dav.org/help-dav/volunteer/drive-a-van

Regions in high need of drivers include:
Blue Earth, Brown and Sibley Counties
St. Cloud Area
(Morrison, Mille Lacs, Kanabec & Wright Counties)



You do not need to be a Veteran or DAV member to volunteer. Drivers must be fully vaccinated.

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Treatment that's gaining attention

VA & Rehabilitation

Jeremy Wolfsteller



When I heard ketamine, which the Food and Drug Administration classifies as a Schedule III controlled substance, is being used to treat veterans and is improving the health of so many struggling with a variety of mental health conditions, suicidality, even chronic pain, it intrigued me to do some research and get the word out there.

Ketamine is one of the most widely used and safest anesthetics in the world according to the World Health Organization, who lists it as an essential medicine. When ketamine is administered by a practitioner in a controlled environment using a variety of techniques, it can help patients heal by processing, overcoming and releasing trauma.

These traumas include depression/major depression, anxiety, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder), bipolar disorder, and certain addictions/substance use disorders. It also has positive effects for people with chronic pain and fewer side effects than other pain medications.

Mental health conditions are becoming more common in the United States. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly one in five U.S. adults live with a mental illness (46.6 million in 2017). More than 1.7 million veterans received treatment in a VA mental health specialty program in fiscal year 2018.

Various research has shown that mental health conditions can damage synaptic connections in

the brain that affect information flow and patterns of thought. Left untreated, or when traditional treatments are ineffective, mental health conditions are unlikely to disappear and can contribute to chronic pain, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide.

Ketamine treatments are shown to successfully repair and improve these damaged synaptic connections while also building new, healthy ones. In one study, 88 percent of the participants given a ketamine infusion in the emergency room had their suicidal ideation go away in just 90 minutes.

In October 2021 the Ketamine Wellness Centers, which is the largest ketamine therapy provider in the United States announced a new partnership with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The partnership allows KWC to offer ketamine infusion therapy to veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare at no out-of-pocket cost. Currently the VA has partnered with KWC in select locations (Arizona, Minnesota & Chicago).

The Minneapolis VA created a Veteran Care Agreement (VCA) outlining services which only covers patients experiencing treatment resistant depression when traditional VA treatment options have proven unsuccessful.

The Minneapolis VA Healthcare System's Veterans Care

Agreement (VCA) with KWC is an individual agreement specifically for a provider to provide services to veterans enrolled in the VA Healthcare System. It's separate from VA's Care in the Community Network administered by Optum, and why there is currently only three VCA's with KWC across the nation.

The process for a consult isn't quick and easy. Veterans interested must have a diagnosis of depression that has been resistant from traditional treatment. The consult process starts with a mental health provider then makes its way through various VA oversight before it is sent to the VA Care in the Community Office for an authorization.

Then Care in the Community contacts KWC in Burnsville providing the authorization which in turn KWC contacts the veteran to start all their required paperwork.

For more information about the KWC please visit: VA Community Care Network – KWC (ketaminewellnesscenters.com).

Jeremy Wolfsteller of Hopkins Post 320 offices at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and is the service officer for the Department of Minnesota.



Cheryl Holder of New Jersey places a rose on the Minnesota Medal of Honor Memorial on Sept. 22.

Memorial funded via state and private

Continued from Page 1

stars and the words "Minnesota Medal of Honor Memorial" facing the Veterans Service Building. Facing the sculpture are traits embodied in the Medal of Honor: Sacrifice, Integrity, Citizenship, Patriotism, Commitment and Courage."

Kraemer said the Minnesota Medal of Honor Memorial Board will not end. Instead, it will expand in scope and commitment to honor the selflessness of Medal of Honor recipients.

He said he found out, during the fundraising efforts, that State Capitol Building architect Cass Gilbert, near the end of his 1895-1905 tenure, drew a sketch of where he would like to see a veterans memorial. That spot is where the Medal of Honor Memorial exists.

The new \$1 million memorial relied on private donations, donations from veterans organizations and state funding. Much of the state funding came via Legacy Amendment Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund.

Minnesota has 72 Medal of Honor recipients. None is alive presently. The last one was Leo Thorsness of Walnut Grove. He was an Air Force colonel who spent six years in captivity in North Vietnam and had exhibited extraordinary heroism during a combat mission prior to the one that resulted in captivity. He died in May 2017.

However, other Medal of Honor recipients and their families from across the country were present at the ceremony.

Gov. Tim Walz read a proclamation naming Sept. 22, 2022,

Minnesota Medal of Honor Day. Other speakers were Medal of Honor recipient Tom Kelley of Massachusetts (and past national president of the Medal of Honor Society), Minnesota Medal of Honor Board Co-Chair Tiffany Kovaleski, state Rep. Bob Dettmer and Minnesota Medal of Honor Board member Mike McElhiney.

Emceeding the ceremony was Col. Randy Stoeckmann, commander of the 934th Airlift Wing, based at the Minneapolis-St. Paul Air Reserve Station area of Fort Snelling.

A flyover, the 34th Infantry Division Band, St. Thomas Academy Choir and formation by St. Thomas Academy cadets, along with cannon fire from the New Ulm Battery, were elements of the ceremony.

Taps



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

Name of Deceased	Age	Date of Death	Branch	Era	Cont. Years	Post
Altendorf, Jerry A.	75	8/31/22	Army	Vietnam	8	Thief River Falls Post 117
Anderson, Donald D.	94	9/15/22	Navy	WWII	47	Rochester Post 92
Balaski, Hubert J.	89	8/29/22	Army	Korea	17	Little Falls Post 46
Becker, Jerome L.	85	2/16/22	Army NG	Cold	39	Lewisville Post 561
Bode, Herbert H.	93	7/30/22	Army	WWII	3	Deer Creek Post 283
Breiwick, Donald L.	76	8/5/22	Navy	Vietnam	17	Chanhassen Post 580
Burggraff, Edward H. Jr.	93	8/25/22	Army	Korea	53	Little Falls Post 46
Byker, Alan R.	74	7/31/22	Army NG	Vietnam	74	Milaca Post 178
Caviness, Harold R.	92	9/6/22	Army	Korea	51	Windom Post 206
Christenson, Charles R.	90	8/15/22	Army	Korea	70	Lowry Post 253
Coleman, Kenneth L.	94	2/28/22	Army	WWII	47	Lewisville Post 561
Czaplewski, Theodore J.	79	9/3/22	Army	Vietnam	45	Winona Post 9
Doran, Noel F.	76	8/6/22	Navy	Vietnam	57	Wayzata Post 118
Eiynck, Ervin L.	76	9/8/22	Army	Vietnam	25	St. Joseph Post 328
Falcon, Normand	83	7/24/22	Air Force	Korea/VN	21	Albany Post 482
Note: Born in Quebec and naturalized to the U.S. in 1954, he served as a French translator for Forward Air Control in Vietnam. He flew more than 30 missions and received a Bronze Star and four Air Medals. In his 20-year career, he also served in Germany, Texas and Minnesota.						
Fawver, Richard H.	96	10/9/21	Navy	WWII	37	Bloomington Post 550
Fink, Michael L.	68	2/28/22	Army	Vietnam	38	Mpls. Wold-Chamberlain Post 99
Fradenburgh, Daryl D.	83	12/28/21	Air Force	Vietnam	8	Bagley Post 16
Gile, Bert II	95	8/29/22	MM/CG	WWII	32	Winona Post 9
Goodmund, Duane C.	91	9/1/22	Army	Korea	67	Russell Post 460
Graves, James E.	77	9/4/22	Navy	Vietnam	10	Winona Post 9
Graves, Jeffrey A.	52	8/7/22	Air Force	Afghanistan	23	Keewatin Post 452
Note: He was a past post commander and past 8th District vice commander.						
Gross, Richard C.	91	8/7/22	Army	Korea	26	Watkins Post 453
Note: He served as a military policeman at Chitose, Japan, during the war. The reverend was a past post chaplain.						
Hacker, Gordon A.	70	8/6/22	Navy	Vietnam	45	Albert Lea Post 56
Halvorson, Donald E.	77	8/18/22	Army	Vietnam	43	Blue Earth Post 89
Hansen, Delno P.	84	8/14/22	Army	Vietnam	57	Tyler Post 185
Hansen, Gordon A.	100	8/18/22	Navy	WWII	76	Wells Post 210
Note: A standout football quarterback, he was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers but instead volunteered for Midshipman School at Northwestern University as the war began. He was a commanding and executive officer on destroyers in the South Pacific. He later became school superintendent in Wells.						
Hanson, Thomas	87	8/18/22	Army	Korea	39	Hayfield Post 330
Henrich, Julia M.	98	8/29/22	Army	WWII	34	Nassau Post 536
Holst, Robert Jr.	94	8/16/22	Army	Korea	70	Rochester Post 92
Jirak, Clarence J.	97	9/3/22	Army	WWII	48	New Prague Post 45
Note: He served in the Philippines.						
Johnson, Lawrence D.	82	9/9/22	Army	Vietnam	8	Thief River Falls Post 117
Johnson, Sherman L.	90	9/13/22	Army	Korea	21	Coon Rapids Post 334
Johnson, Victor L.	79	10/4/21	Army	Korea	22	Rush City Post 93
Jones, Richard A.	75	6/11/22	Navy	Vietnam	47	Albany Post 482
Karpinski, Fredrick J.	92	8/11/22	Army	Korea	65	Flensburg Post 136
Kietzer, Hartwin H.	91	7/12/22	Army	Korea	68	Lewisville Post 561
Kollos, Marvin J.	94	9/25/22	Army	Korea	66	Janesville Post 281
Kosec, Walter J.	90	8/24/22	Army	Korea	57	Red Wing Post 54
Kruzel, Anthony E.	86	1/12/22	Army	Vietnam	1	Albany Post 482
Lahr, Arthur A.	82	9/7/22	Army	Vietnam	50	Eden Valley Post 381
Lindquist, Larry D.	84	8/27/22	Army	Vietnam	49	Kerkhoven Post 223
Lunz, Rodney L.	79	5/10/22	Army	Vietnam	29	Shakopee Post 2
McKeon, Preston A.	64	9/12/22	Navy	Leb/Gren	10	Rochester Post 92
Merseth, Donovan I.	82	7/21/22	Army	Vietnam	16	Red Wing Post 54
Moorse, Lawrence H.	92	8/16/22	Army	Korea	69	Marshall Post 113
Myers, Larry L.	79	7/6/22	Air Force	Vietnam	6	Faribault Post 43
Nelson, Larry E.	82	8/27/22	Army	VN/PG	5	Mora Post 201
Nelson, Thomas B.	77	8/26/22	Army	Vietnam	13	Faribault Post 43
Nistler, Austin A.	83	8/7/22	Army	Cold	53	Watkins Post 453
Note: He and his wife, Rosie, managed Post 453's club for 25 years.						
Patterson, Lori A.	59	8/11/22	Army	Leb/Gren	13	Rush City Post 93
Pauly, Steven W.	78	9/5/22	Army	Vietnam	34	Hackensack Post 202
Note: He served 13 months stationed in Korea.						
Randall, Ralph N.	88	3/20/22	Army	Korea	37	Albert Lea Post 56
Randall, Wayne T.	92	1/8/22	Navy	Korea	5	Mora Post 201
Reiser, Roy M.	96	8/26/22	Army	WWII	76	Beroun Post 347
Note: He deployed to France and Germany.						
Schwartz, Ronald A.	96	8/27/22	Navy	WWII	69	Faribault Post 43
Sinclair, Darrell W.	95	6/14/22	Navy	WWII	17	Spring Grove Post 249
Note: He served aboard the USS Iowa and the USS Astoria and at Guam, Washington, D.C., and Long Beach, Calif. After, he worked for Bell and was responsible for a missile silo during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He later worked for North American Aviation and tested equipment at White Sands Missile Range used on the Apollo space missions.						
Singleton, Richard L. Sr.	76	7/30/22	Army	Vietnam	7	Two Harbors Post 109
Note: His obituary says he died due to complications from cancer related to Agent Orange exposure. He was a combat military policeman in Vietnam.						
Snow, Richard E.	75	8/11/22	Army	Vietnam	48	Houston Post 423
Note: He was a past post commander, a past Houston County commander and served on the honor guard. As a teen, he attended Boys State.						
Sroga, Stanley J.	89	8/18/22	Army	Korea	13	Minneapolis Fallidin Post 555
Stafford, Donald F.	97	5/4/22	Navy	WWII	28	Dodge Center Post 384
Standage, Jason L.	43	8/18/22	Army NG	GWOT	8	Little Falls Post 46
Note: He was the post finance officer at the time of his unexpected death.						
Stensrud, Cyril C.	95	8/23/22	Army/AF	WWII	68	Thief River Falls Post 117
Note: He served in France, Germany and Belgium. He joined The American Legion at Post 1 in Paris, France.						
Stowers, Philip D.	85	8/10/22	Air Force	Vietnam	14	Dodge Center Post 384
Note: He had a 20-year military career. He later was club manager for Post 384 for a few years.						
Strandberg, John N.	97	8/13/22	Army	WWII	39	Marshall Post 113
Turner, Peter G.	71	8/15/22	Army Res.	Leb/Gren	7	Pine River Post 613
Ulman, Jerry T.	88	8/19/22	Marines	Korea	26	Virginia Post 239
Waddell, Raymond L.	82	5/30/22	Army	Cold	62	Park Rapids Post 212
Weber, Garry J.	75	11/21/21	Air Force	Vietnam	21	Rosemount Post 65
Wessel, Wayne W.	80	9/1/22	Army NG/Res.	Vietnam	47	Mpls. Wold-Chamberlain Post 99
Note: He was a past post commander and a past 5th District vice commander.						
Wolf, William A.	91	9/8/22	Navy	Korea	44	Wayzata Post 118
Yocum, Ronald P.	85	9/14/22	Marines	Korea	39	Red Wing Post 54

All-Family Events Calendar

Note: Tours of Upper Post Flats at Fort Snelling are available every Tuesday and Thursday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Oct. 4-6: Veterans Outdoor Deer Hunt, Camp Ripley
Oct. 7-8: Districts 4&5 Revitalization, N. St. Paul Post 39
Oct. 8-9: SAL Fall Meetings, Legion HQ, Indianapolis
Oct. 13: 55 percent membership target
Oct. 10-13: TAL Fall Meetings, Legion HQ, Indianapolis
Oct. 22: King Tuts Enclave, Paynesville Post 271
Oct. 22: Legionville Board Meeting, Legionville
Oct. 27-29: Department Fall Conference, River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud
Oct. 29: Chili for Charity, 3-6 p.m. Oct. 29, Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172
Nov. 9: 65 percent membership target
Nov. 11: Minnesota Veterans Day Program, Veterans Memorial Community Center, Inver Grove Heights
Dec. 3: Pearl Harbor Rally, Spicer Post 545
Dec. 11-16: National American Legion College, Indy
Dec. 14: 75 percent membership target
Jan. 19: 80 percent membership target
Feb. 4: Sweetheart Rally, Osseo-Maple Grove Post 172
Feb. 15: 85 percent membership target
Feb. 26-March 1: Washington Conference
March 15: 90 percent membership target
March 25: ALA DEC Meeting, Dept HQ
April 15: DEC/Appreciation Rally, New Prague Post 45
April 16-21: National Commander's Tour of Minnesota
April 19: 95 percent membership target
April 20-23: Minnesota Legion College, Camp Ripley
April 22: Department President's Testimonial Dinner, Spicer Post 545
May 13: Department Commander's Testimonial, New Prague Post 45
May 17: 100 percent membership target
June 11-17: Minnesota Boys State, St. John's Univ.
July 4: Forest Lake Post 225 Fourth of July Parade
July 12: DEC, Jackpot Junction Casino, Redwood Falls
July 15: Department Convention, Jackpot Junction Casino, Redwood Falls

AMERICAN LEGION

2022 Fall Conference Official Registration

Mail to:
 Al Davis
 PO Box 166
 Princeton, MN 55371

Registration sliding fee:
 Registration received by Oct. 14: \$15
 Registration received after Oct. 14: \$18
 Registration at the door: \$25

Only the pre-registered will receive a booklet.

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. Everyone must pay the registration fee.

Checks only; credit cards not accepted.
 Please indicate "Fall Conference" on the memo line.
 Please make checks payable to:
Minnesota American Legion Convention Corp.

Conference dates:
 Oct. 27-29, 2022

Contact the hotel directly for your reservations:
Headquarters hotel:
 Best Western Plus Kelly Inn, St. Cloud
 320-253-0606

Nearby hotel:
 Courtyard by Marriott, St. Cloud
 320-654-1661

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

Note: Meal registration form is found at mnlegion.org. You must register for your meals by Oct. 14!

'Be the One' who checks on veterans

Every morning I get online and write a morning message on the Department Facebook page and my personal Facebook page. I also reach out to a few of my friends via private message just to say "Good morning."

This starts my day checking in with others and offers an opportunity for them to check in with me — a morning icebreaker, if you will.

What is your morning routine? Are you checking in with your battle buddies? This time of the year, it's easy to get caught up in the craziness swirling around us.

Kids are going back to school, playing sports, birthday, holidays and countless other events on our schedules. It's easy to get overwhelmed, exhausted and disillusioned.

I have to admit, I've been struggling with everything swirling around me. Recently, someone noticed I was struggling and simply said to me, "Jennifer, you're safe and you are with friends."

I can't tell you how much that meant in that moment. A simple statement that brought me peace in a difficult time. That is a buddy check in its most grassroots form, and it made a difference.

So many of us (veterans) struggle from day to day just to keep our heads above water. We need to do a better job loving, supporting and encouraging each other, and it's OK to ask for help and ask whether someone

Commander's Column

Jennifer Havlick



is OK.

The National American Legion has announced our "Be the One" campaign, and I encourage everyone to participate in it. It's not complicated to be a good person and check in on your fellow veterans. If you have issues or concerns, go to someone who has information or can find you the information.

Rumors and fabricated stories are poison to a community, and we are a community of veterans. Our families need to support and protect each other. We cannot constantly bicker. It is a distraction from our mission of service to our veterans, their families and our communities.

As a response to the "Be The One" campaign, the Department of Minnesota will move from the awareness phase of suicide prevention to the ACTION phase of suicide prevention. We have The American Legion Minnesota Family Suicide Prevention Coalition that will spearhead our efforts here in Minnesota to combat veterans' suicide.

This coalition will provide training and events to empower our members to help veterans live a positive, healthy and fulfilled life. Our efforts will be to intervene to assist our veterans before they are in major crisis.

During our Department Fall Conference, there will be several opportunities to attend S.A.V.E. training along with other training that will assist our posts and their members in day-to-day post operations and programs of The American Legion. Programs that provide support and assistance to our veterans within their communities and posts. We have a special speaker coming to share her story with us about her struggles after her son committed suicide while on active duty.

There will be a lot going on during Fall Conference. Please plan on attending to check on your buddies, make new friends and learn a few things. The Fall Conference is Thursday, Oct. 27, beginning with a charitable gambling seminar going through Saturday, Oct. 29. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Now get out there and do great things.

Jennifer Havlick of Duluth Wisted Post 28 is the commander of The American Legion Department of Minnesota. Her theme is "Honoring Our Past by Securing Our Future."

He is the potter, and we are the clay

A couple of weeks ago Isaiah 64:8 caught my attention: "You are the Father; we are the clay, the work of your hands."

We are the work of the Lord's hands. Even at old age, God is continuing to mold and shape us; each of us is still a work not yet finished. A potter will start a piece, and when it develops a slight flaw, will re-work it into another vessel. God does the same thing in our lives.

How many times have you started something, only to change your mind? I think God works in the same way. Have you ever thought you'd like to be someone or something in particular, but never made it? Maybe it was your plan but not God's. Maybe your skill set was better-suited for some other purpose.

We each have our own talents that are best-suited for a job God has in mind, but not one what we wanted or imagined was possible.

Just remember God can always use us if only we would seek Him first. He can even use cracked pots, which is what all of us are. We all have our own cracks and flaws — some are more visible than others, but

Chaplain's Corner

Larry Otto



we all have them. That being said, God can still use us. He has a plan for each one of us.

Do you know what God has in store for you? Some of us do and some don't; but nevertheless, God knows and has a plan. First, we must seek His will and purpose for our life, and then follow His lead, not stepping out and trying to do "it" on our own. Just trust God; He will never let you down.

Isaiah 30:19-21 reminds us that "The Lord is compassionate and when you cry to Him for help, He will answer you. The Lord will make you go through hard times, but He himself will be there to teach you, and you will not have to search for Him anymore. If you wander to the right or left, you will hear His voice behind you saying, 'Here is the road. Follow it.'"

The colors of fall are starting to show up in my part of the state. The bounty in gardens and fields is beginning to come

to fruition by the grace of God. Take some time and look around at God's creation. Field work is starting in southern Minnesota, so if you're on the roads, be careful. Farmers are busy harvesting. Long hours sometimes lead to mistakes, so give them a brake. Also, school buses are picking up/dropping off our next generation. Be careful!

Remember to respect all faith groups as their special days roll around. Help those in need. Do a buddy check. "Be the One."

Until next month, stay safe and healthy and remember: God is good, all the time, and all the time, God is good!

Larry Otto of Ellendale Post 296 is the chaplain for The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

Mail Call

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

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

How can state deny drinks to men, women who serve?

It's always been a black mark on our government that over the years it mandated and now asks our young men and women of age 18-20 years old that they have a duty and obligations to serve our country. With that also the possibility of loss of life, arms, legs, eyes, hearing, mental issues, etc., but still too young to have a drink.

With this I talked to my state senator, Carrie Ruud, and was told to even consider bringing it up to committee in St. Paul for hearings, it would have to have backing from The American Legion itself.

Again with this, I called and was able to talk to six of the 10 District Legion commanders. I explained my thoughts. It was then explained to me such legislation has to begin with a letter of resolution at a post level, carefully written, sent to district, read twice, and if accepted, sent to department. If passed, it could possibly be sent to St. Paul to be heard in a number of committee hearings at the capital.

With this, at our regular April Legion meeting of Pequot Lakes Post 49, I asked the 16 members present if anyone opposed the right to a drink. On a "voice" vote, all 16, 100 percent, said they have that right.

Ten minutes later, I made a



motion to write the letter to district. It was seconded, then the same who "voiced" 100 percent support backed down. It didn't carry majority when asked to sign on the dotted line. So much for our veterans' loyalty and going to bat for our own.

Let's hope some post in the state picks this up and goes with it.

Does this have any chance to advance in St. Paul, if it gets there? Who knows, but at least some of us Legionnaires can say we tried to make what's wrong right. It is a matter of principle, on this we should all agree.

In closing, what do you say to an 18-20 year old veteran who comes into your post, possibly an arm or leg missing, and asks for a drink? Our state government's answer, "You don't have a right."

World War II comes to mind, where tens of thousands of 18-20-year-olds died. Most never having a wife, kids or even a legal glass of beer. When

is The American Legion itself going to speak up and make this right?

Jack Schmidt
Pequot Lakes

Editor's note: At one point, no doubt, The American Legion took up this issue already. The present status of a resolution is a question for the American Legion Library, established in 1923. It exists on the top floor of the American Legion HQ Building in Indianapolis. The library maintains an archive of past resolutions and can decipher whether a resolution on the minimum drinking age passed, for example, in the 1970s. Perhaps it was superseded by another later on. Resolutions, after all, sometimes become obsolete, conflict with other resolutions or even end for "accomplishment of purpose." In these cases, they get rescinded. Otherwise, they are still in effect. The researchers at the library can help you get to the

bottom of it. The phone number is 317-630-1366. Let our readers know what you find, please.

The VA ought not to force shots on staff

When I got the most recent edition of The Minnesota Legionnaire paper, I was very disgusted with what the VA and other governmental agencies, and also what private entities are doing to their workers, by forcing them to take "the jab."

This is a violation of federal law (21 U.S.C. § 360bbb-3(e) (1)(A)(ii)), which reads as follows: "Appropriate conditions designed to ensure that individuals to whom the product is administered are informed — that the Secretary has authorized the emergency use of the product; of the significant known and potential benefits and risks of such use, and of the extent to which such benefits and risks are unknown; and of the option to accept or refuse administration of the product, and of the consequences, if any, of refusing administration of the product, and of the alternatives to the product that are available and of their benefits and risks."

Also, people are not being informed of all the potential problems with the vaccine.

A very high percentage are objecting on religious grounds, which is covered under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. In the private sector, a lot of people who have refused "the jab" have been unjustly fired, and in the military, some have had their careers cut short.

What ever happened to the individual's right of refusal to an experimental chemical concoction? Did our Bill of Rights get thrown out of the window with the baby and the bath water?

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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Fax: 651-291-1057

Email: tengstrom@mnlegion.org

Web: mnlegion.org/legionnaire

Editor: Director of Communications Tim Engstrom

Editor Emeritus: Al Zdon

Board of Publication: President Jennifer Havlick, St. Cloud; Vice President Dennis Henkemeyer, Bagley; Secretary Mike Maxa, Montgomery; Treasurer Bill Goede, Plainview; David "Chip" Manson, Sunburg; Darrel Redepenning, Fridley; Michael Ash, St. Paul; Carroll Partridge, Oakdale; Paul Edwards, Brainerd

The SAL Update:



Delegates for the SAL Detachment of Minnesota are in these two photos, with a wide range of ages

Minnesota makes mark at convention

As you are reading this, the temperatures from the summer have started to go down; however, we are heating up with getting membership and working the great programs of the Sons of The American Legion.

This year is going to be another great year for us and the Minnesota American Legion Family. Our national convention has ended, and I would like to thank the Detachment of Wisconsin for hosting.

The 50th annual National Convention for the SAL was great and included fun, fellowship and friends. The Detachment of Minnesota received awards not only for meeting a \$1 per member for donations to the Child Welfare Foundation, but also for being the highest donor per member within the Central Region.

My project last year was the Child Welfare Foundation, and if you did not hear by now, the detachment donated \$17,625! (And 9 cents.)

Thank you all so much for the donations! Next year's national

Detachment commander

Tim Weaver



convention is in Charlotte, N.C., Aug. 25-31.

The Fall Conference is Oct. 28 and 29 in St. Cloud, and everyone should be getting information on this in this newsletter or via mail shortly. The Finance Committee will meet at 5:30 p.m. on Friday with the Executive Committee meeting 10 minutes after the close of the Finance Committee.

Our general session will start at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 29. If you can attend, please do so, as this is where we discuss and teach everyone what was learned at our National Convention and also get a head start on the year to come.

My project for this year is the American Legion Veterans & Children's Fund. This is another project I feel strongly about. The children are our future, and we need to remember that every day. Any donation you make can

be made to the Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 99 and can be made through charitable gambling.

If there is an event that you would like myself or another Detachment of Minnesota officer to attend, whether it be squadron or district level, please feel free to contact me either via email at saltimweaver@gmail.com or via telephone at 608-304-6532.

As always, please keep our service personnel, both domestic and abroad, in your thoughts and prayers.

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

Give the SAL the opportunity to help

There is a mentoring moment my dad had with me when I was quite young. It was an idea or mantra he lived by, and something that was engrained in our household.

It was evident, whenever our family was involved in anything, be it veterans organizations or community work, that we were a household that wasn't afraid to get their hands dirty. My mom and dad would always be the first to arrive and the last to leave.

We would be the most tired out of the whole group. And then would turn around and do it all again the next day if the need was there. I remember this moment even more poignantly as I got older, and it has hit me like a brick wall more often than I care to admit.

The message was this: The best leaders are the ones that are so deep in the work alongside everyone else that you forget they're supposed to be "the leader." My parents would never ask anyone to do anything they wouldn't be the first to do themselves. They would support, encourage, help pick up

Membership Director

Matthew Verkuilen



the pieces if it went off the rails and be there to celebrate even the smallest victories. They knew what it meant to have your six, all the time.

At the recent SAL National Convention, the national chaplain for the SAL did something very bold and very necessary at our final session. He asked all the veterans in the room to stand, and once they were all standing, he addressed the veterans and asked them to take a look around at the SAL members still seated.

He proclaimed, "Thank you for your service. WE GOT YOUR SIX."

It was a very simple, yet profound, statement to reinforce what the Sons of The American Legion stands for. It is our way of giving back, our way of being the legacy that was created for us. It is our way to pay on the enormous debt of gratitude for ALL the men and women who have served in our military.

Often, it is confusing to posts as to either the value of having an SAL squadron or even what the SAL squadron can do. The reality is that the SAL can assist in just about any aspect of The American Legion post, not to push out our veterans, but to assist in keeping the legacy of The American Legion and the mission of The American Legion alive.

To continue to support our veterans and their families alongside the rest of our Legion Family. We simply need to be given the opportunity.

We got your six. Do you have ours?

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



At the SAL National Convention, Minnesota Commander Tim Weaver receives the CWF Award for the region.



Commander Tim Weaver received an SAL commander's course certificate.



Sons of The American Legion Past National Commander Doug Bible, of Waite Park Squadron 428, emceeds the installation of national officers.



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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SEND IN YOUR VETERAN MEMORIALS!



Veterans Memorial Park of Blaine

SPECIAL MEMORIAL EDITION IS COMING UP

The November issue of The Minnesota Legionnaire will feature veteran memorials from all over Minnesota, but to pull it off, we need you to send them in! Please select one JPG file that best represents your community's veterans memorial, and then write a good two- or three-sentence caption about it. Please send the photo, the caption and, most importantly, the exact name of the memorial to tengstrom@mnlegion.org by Oct. 17.

Won't it be great to see so many memorials next to each other in one issue? It will be a poignant and patriotic tribute to our heroes.

The Minnesota
Legionnaire

Lots of thanks to go around after convention

A big “thank you” to all of the American Legion Family members who attended the National American Legion Convention in Milwaukee.

One big highlight was being a guest at the 50th anniversary of the Sons of The American Legion. Thanks, Past National Commander Doug Bible, for inviting Donna and me.

Another big highlight was being present as the American Legion Riders presented a check of \$155,000 plus, and as always being the largest contributor to the Legacy Fund again this year.

Great work, American Legion Riders!

Also, a big thanks goes to Paul Edwards of Nisswa Post 627 for teaching a class on writing resolutions. Also, Commander Jennifer Havlick, a big thanks for teaching a class on MyLegion.org for posts and a class on mentorship/leadership.

A big thank you for Pat Logan and Bayport Post 491 for

donating \$25,000 to the Hope Children’s Foundation. We have many that serve as sergeant-at-arms and many years of service by Wayne Beierman.

Jim Troiola of New York was elected 2022-2023 national commander. Thank you, Past National Commander Dan Ludwig, as I was reappointed to the subcommittee of Resolutions and liaison chair of the National Security Committee to the National Executive Committee.

We had a very good turnout at the Harvest Rally at Legionville. As always, the SAL put in many hours of preparation for this event, and it showed. Everything was seamless and all went well.

A big thank you to the SAL Detachment of Minnesota. It is a camp all members should see

and consider sending their and their schools’ kids to the School Safety Patrol and First Aid training. So very much can be learned in that week. Underwood Post 489 sends kids every year.

Americanism and Children & Youth conference will be held at National Headquarters Sept. 19-22. Fall meetings will be Oct. 10-13, with the NEC meeting Oct. 12-13.

Donna and I look forward to seeing many of you at the Fall Conference in St. Cloud at the Kelly Inn Oct. 27-29. Please contact Al Davis for food and registration at Fall Conference. The more food we purchase, the

National Report

Bill Barbknecht



better deal the convention corporation gets on facility charges. Food is \$15 breakfasts and \$15 lunches. Look at any menu wherever you go, and that is not a bad price at all. It helps the Convention Corporation immensely.

Candidate for National Commander Rev. Daniel J. Seehafer of Wisconsin will be our guest speaker on Friday. What a great motivational speaker. Please come and check that out. I do not think you will be disappointed.

A reminder now is the time to work on your Veterans Day programs, speakers and plans need to be put in motion soon for that.

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

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

Hey, how are Legion dues distributed anyway?

Q: I pay my dues every year. How are my dues distributed?

A: \$18.50 goes to National Headquarters, which includes the administrative costs of running the National American Legion as well as the National Legion Magazine. \$13.50 goes to the Department of Minnesota, again, this includes the administrative costs of running the state programs, and 25 cents goes to the Legion Hospital Association. Everyone in Minnesota pays \$32.25.

Membership Moment

Linda Dvorak



Then there are the district dues. Each district is different, and they range from \$2.25 to \$4, and these amounts are voted on by the district general membership.

This helps the districts with their administrative and program costs. Each local post has post dues. This amount is voted

on by the general membership of the post. Again,

this is what allows the post to promote American Legion programs and donate to charities

of their choosing.

All these amounts total your membership dues. Example: My post dues are \$38.50, national, department, Hospital Association amount is \$32.25, my district dues are \$3, which leaves \$3.25 for the post.

The average dues nationwide are between \$40 and \$45.

Linda Dvorak of New Prague Post 45 is the membership director for the Department of Minnesota.

Riders, it is time to prepare for the off-season

Hello, Legion Family.

September was a busy month. We returned home from the National Convention after turning in \$155,000 for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. We had a great trip around the state, then some of us rode to National Convention in Milwaukee for turn-in.

After returning home, Camporee was next at Legionville. Then the following weekend was the Legion Riders Romp at Legionville with the Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt coming up,

put on by the SAL.

As we all know, the riding season is coming to an end, so with that, now is the time to think out of the box for fundraising. Put on dinners and raffles, for example. Also work with your home posts, the Auxillary, Sons of The American Legion and other Riders chapters to see

what they may need help with on events they may have.

If we work as a Family, we will be more successful and get the family back together.

Legion Riders

Ted Berg



Hope to see you all at Fall Conference in St. Cloud.

P.S.: For all the Legion Riders chapters out there, the traveling trophy is back in play. It is currently at Post 91 in Austin. And up for grabs. Any questions on the rules of the game, you can contact Roe Naylor at 507-438-5804, Joe Smillie at 641-590-3522 or me at 507-766-1143.

Ted Berg of Bloomington Post 550 is the director of the Minnesota American Legion Riders.

Homecoming is a chance to seek out Boys Staters

Several representatives from Minnesota will attend the 86th annual Boys State Directors Conference. While in Indianapolis, they will attend sessions to learn ways to enhance the program in the future. They will also share ideas with representatives from other states that are striving to improve their programs.

Homecoming at schools is another opportunity for 2022 Boys State attendees to advertise for next year’s class. The parade is

a great place to showcase this year’s accomplishments and stir up questions on what to anticipate when attending next June.

With elections soon upon us, might we encourage our Minnesota Boys State attendees to help get citizens out to vote?

Our most recent Boys Staters may not be old enough to vote, but they can provide rides to the polls for

those needing transportation. They can also develop a checklist of how candidates stand on issues to help voters make decisions. This action promotes civic responsibility for all involved.

Thanks again for your support of the Minnesota American Legion Boys State program!

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

Minn. Boys State

Neil Kruse



BE THE ONE

AMERICAN LEGION

TO ASK VETERANS IN YOUR LIFE HOW THEY ARE DOING.

TO LISTEN WHEN A VETERAN NEEDS TO TALK.

TO REACH OUT WHEN A VETERAN IS STRUGGLING.



The American Legion elected a new national commander at the 103rd National Convention. Here he is, Vincent Troiola, of New City Post 1682 in New York, sitting with his delegation on Tuesday, Aug. 30, two days before he was elected. Troiola will tour Minnesota April 16-21.



Alternate NECman Peggy Moon addresses the Minnesota Caucus on Monday, Aug. 29, in Milwaukee to discuss resolutions of the 103rd National Convention.



At the National Convention, Past National Commander Dan Ludwig leans forward to speak with Immediate Past Department Commander Tom Fernlund, left, as Past Department Membership Director Paul Hassing listens. Fernlund was chairman of the Minnesota delegation.



Past National Commander David Rehbein of Iowa salutes during the national anthem in the opening ceremonies of the convention. The singer asked everyone to sing with him.



Minnesota was recognized as a leader in blood donations and Junior ROTC. Much of the credit goes to Pat Logan, left, and Terry Larson, right. Read about it on Page 10.

Legion Constitution is amended

Continued from Page 1

Community Care Program. Through it, veterans can work with their VA health-care provider or other VA staff to see if they are eligible to receive community care based on VA's new access standards criteria which includes a limited scope on wait times.

- Resolution 32, which calls on the VA to share suicide prevention statistics and trends, but not names or other personally identifiable information, from its Behavioral Health Autopsy Program, or BHAP, with state departments of health for purposes of conduction research on veteran suicides, in an effort to further reduce suicides among veterans.

- Resolution 33, which says VA disability ratings should not be determined by the effects of treatment, and it notes that tinnitus be recognized as a stand-alone condition in line with several court rulings. The resolution says ratings for mental health disorders "should continue to be based on the frequency, severity and duration of symptoms, which can have serious effects on a veteran's quality of life." Further, it calls on the VA to justify the appropriateness of VA rating the disabilities of veterans using the World Health Organization's criteria, which is based on the entire world, rather than on veterans who went through military service.

American Legion Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller and his American Legion Department of Minnesota Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee deserves much of the credit for bringing these matters to the attention of the veterans community and crafting the resolutions.

Rolling memberships?

Many other resolutions came from all across the 55 departments of The American Legion, but the most talked about was Resolution 1. This measure amended the American Legion Constitution and By-Law to allow multi-year and rolling memberships.

Presently, the Legion year begins July 1, so most Legion members renew their memberships between July and December. Recruitment efforts wane in the spring because a new membership will only be good for part of a year. Under this change,

a person who signs up on, say, March 25 would be good for a full year. For that matter, the person could purchase, say, four years, rather than just one.

However, it should be noted that the passing of Resolution 1 did not make multi-year or rolling memberships happen. It only allows the National Executive Committee to investigate and implement such changes through the normal legislative process. The NEC next meets Oct. 10-13 at HQ in Indianapolis.

Resolution 1 did not come through a specific department. It originated from the Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments.

Other resolutions

A few other notable approved resolutions:

- Urged Congress to revise the Selective Service System to require all Americans ages 18-25 to be registered for purposes of possible military conscription. Presently, only men must register. While the military has advanced to allow women to serve in all kinds of roles, the Selective Service System has not been updated to match the military. This resolution came from the Department of Illinois.

- Called on the Department of Defense to implement an appeals process for medical malpractice claims by service-members. This stems from the Department of California.

- Requested Congress to recognize participants in the Kabul Airlift of 2021 by awarding the Congressional Gold Medal, or the Medal for Humane Action, mirroring what was done after the Berlin Airlift of 1948-49. This originated from the Department of Illinois.

- Urged Congress to repeal the Rescission Act of 1946, which said service in the territorial army for the Philippines (which was

a U.S. possession during World War II), was not deemed service in the U.S. military. The Rescission Act denied these Filipino veterans post-WWII benefits, even though they fought on behalf of America. This resolution came from the Department of California.

- Encouraged Congress to designate U.S. Highway 20 as "National Medal of Honor Highway," with appropriate signage. This one comes from the Department of Nebraska.

- Pushed the federal government to require colleges and universities eligible for G.I. Bill utilization to spend at least 50 percent to their gross tuition and fees on instruction. This measure comes from the Department of California; however, fraudulent colleges fleecing veterans of their education benefits has been a problem nationwide.

- Called on levels of governments to not provide tax-funded benefits for illegal immigrants. The resolution notes, "to incentivize the flood of illegal immigrants is not compassionate, but subjecting them to and our country to human trafficking, drug trafficking, crime and the enriching of drug cartels." The resolution says it is compassionate to return them across the border. This one comes from the Department of Texas.

- Renewed the Legion's commitment to housing, employment, rehabilitation and other resources for homeless veterans and for ones at risk of becoming homeless. This came from the Department of California.

In all, 26 resolutions passed during the 103rd National Convention. A Google search for "American Legion resolutions" brings up the national page for resolutions. Click on the blue button that says "search resolutions," then click on a link for "2022 National Convention" and you can read them all.

FREE TRAINING!

On any American Legion subject: Leadership, Officer Roles, Conducting Meetings, Committee Responsibilities, **You name it!** Tell us when, where (in person or via Zoom) and what. We'll do the rest.

Contact us at trainingcomm@mnlegion.org.



Minnesota recognized for Blood, Jr. ROTC

Continued from Page 1

Legion national commander on the route at the same time.

In fact, the national chairman for the Legion Riders, on stage, praised then-ALA National President Kathy Daudistel, who hails from Kentucky, for completing the entire trip on a Harley Softail with no windshield, even in the rain. She was the first ALA national president to ride her own bike, rather than go as a passenger.

The ride stopped in Mayfield, Ky., a community devastated by a tornado last December. The Riders donated \$6,650 to Post 26 there, and Post 26 donated \$1,000 to the Legacy Fund.

See box on Page 11.

The American Legion Department of Minnesota donated \$10,000 to the American Legion Veterans & Children's Foundation. St. Louis Park Post 282 donated another \$10,000, and Bayport Post 491 donated \$25,000.

VCF, as it is called, provides support to military and veterans parents in financial crises and support for service officers in their efforts to obtain care and benefits for disabled veterans and their families.

The Department of Minnesota also donated \$1,000 for Operation Comfort Warrior and \$1,000 for the National Emergency Fund.

Dillard announced more than \$4.3 million had been raised for Legion charities during the convention.

America's 250th birthday

The United States of America turns 250 years old in 2026. David Hamon, of America 250, was at the convention to formally invite The American Legion to America's 250th birthday party.

On Wednesday, Aug. 31, he said, "We need your help."

He said the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission aims to "officially recognize in a material way every living veteran during the commemoration and further, to create and ensure meaningful, special service tribute paid to all active-duty, reserve component service and military families. To accomplish this, we need the advice, guidance and contributions of all veteran service and military service organizations. It is our vision that on July 4, 2026, every community across the United States will have a celebration organized and led by veterans and military members — a hometown celebration unlike any other. With the aid of the Department of Defense, every continental U.S. military base, every overseas base and all the ships at sea will hold their own celebratory events."

The commission hopes to celebrate the nation's diversity and common humanity, deepen understanding of American history and inspire a new movement of civics and civics education.

He said the commission will be counting on the Legion to help with the vision.

VA secretary and PACT Act

VA Secretary Denis McDonough told convention-goers that the Legion was crucial in getting the PACT Act legislation passed in Congress. It delivers help to toxic-exposed veterans with 20 new presumptives.

He said the PACT Act, as worded, was going to roll out over the next few years, but he announced that would not be the case.

"Veterans have waited too long for this care and these benefits already, and we're not going to make them wait any longer," McDonough said. "So, instead of phasing-in conditions over the coming years, we're making all conditions outlined in the PACT Act presumptive Aug. 10 — the day the bill was signed into law. And VA will begin processing PACT Act benefits on Jan.



Several members of the Minnesota American Legion get their picture taken with National Commander Paul Dillard after announcing the state total of \$155,000 raised for Legacy Scholarships.

1, which is the earliest date possible."

He urged veterans and survivors to apply for PACT Act benefits now. Go to VA.gov/PACT or call 1-800-MY-VA-411.

He said more than 60,000 veterans died by suicide in 2019, the latest figures available. He said even one is unacceptable. However, there was good news in that the number was 299 fewer than 2018, the biggest decrease in 20 years.

"We are looking to build on that momentum," McDonough said.

He said the VA is pushing three areas of emphasis:

1. Suicide prevention at the local levels, with help from organizations such as The American Legion. (You will read more about Minnesota's role after the Department Fall Conference.)
2. The new suicide hotline number 988 Press 1. (The old one still works, too, though.)
3. Tele-mental health.

Global War of Terrorism Memorial

The American Legion has been instrumental in many of the memorials in the nation's capital and vicinity. From the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, to the World War II Memorial and the recently unveiled World War I Memorial. The Legion has been there to "preserve the memories and incidents" of wars.

The convention heard from Michael

Rodriguez, an Army Green Beret veteran who is president and CEO of the GWOT Memorial Foundation.

The organization urges Congress to begin planning an appropriate GWOT memorial on the National Mall.

He said he has received great support from The American Legion for it.

Rodriguez said he hopes groundbreaking could occur in 2025, with the Legion receiving an invite in 2027.

Ground was broken in July for a national memorial for the Persian Gulf War, with a dedication planned for 2024. It was led by the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association, also with Legion support.

Philip B. Onderdonk Jr. Award

The 2022 winner of the Onderdonk Religious Liberty Award is former Bremerton, Wash., high school football coach Joe Kennedy, a Marine veteran.

The coach won a victory at the U.S. Supreme Court. The ruling said his sideline prayers after football games did not violate prior rulings against teacher-led religious activities in public schools.

First Liberty, an organization that protects religious freedom, names the award annually. The award is named for a former national American Legion judge advocate. The Legion and First Liberty have partnered in many cases to preserve veteran memorials and POW/MIA remembrances.

The court ruling said the Bremerton

school district could not ban coaches from quietly praying just because they can be seen by the public.

Minnesota recognized

The National Security Commission recognized Minnesota's leadership in two areas: Blood donations and Junior ROTC. Terry Larson of Forest Lake Post 225 is chairman of the Department Blood Committee and Pat Logan of Bayport Post 491 is main driver of the Junior ROTC efforts.

Attendees for National Legion College were announced. The two going from Minnesota, in December, are Linda Dvorak of New Prague Post 45 and Marissa LaCourt of Apple Valley Post 1776.

New commander elected

Second District Commander Pam Krill, attending her first national convention, had the rare and distinct honor of making the motion to elect the next national commander.

After delegation chairs from each department had gone through with nominations, with New York nominating Vincent Troiola of New City, N.Y., Post 1682, (not New York City, just New City; it is in Rockland County, west of the Hudson River), it was time for the election.

Krill stood at one of the two floor microphones and moved to allow the national adjutant to cast one vote for the entire delegation strength of the

convention to elect Troiola the national commander by acclamation.

"I felt honored to have that privilege to go up there and make that motion," Krill said later. "Being a newly elected district commander, for them to have the faith in me to represent the Department of Minnesota, it was an honor. I was to thank Past National Commander Dan Ludwig for putting me in that position. He has truly been a mentor to me."

She said normally she would not be able to take a week off from work to attend any organization's national convention, but she was glad to she did.

"I did not know the scope of all The American Legion does until I got there," Krill said.

Troiola's theme for the coming Legion year is "V.E.T.S.," which stands for "Veterans, Education, Teamwork and Sponsor."

He served in the Navy and Navy Reserves from 1969 to 1974 and served aboard the USS Nitro, an ammo ship with the Sixth Fleet. He also is a member of SAL Squadron 1682.

His career has been in the automotive service industry as a parts manager at dealerships. After retirement, he began driving a school bus. He married his wife, Saveria, in 1973. They have two daughters, a son-in-law and three grandchildren.

He was commander for Department of New York in 2010-11. He was a national vice commander in 2016-17.

"The American Legion is asking you to 'Be the One,'" he said to the convention.

He said the new "Be the One" campaign is about providing peer-to-peer support. He encouraged every American to help end veteran suicide.

During COVID, many posts had to close, he said, and many youth programs suffered because of restricted access. He hopes they bounce back stronger, with greater knowledge of new technologies.

He thanked Dillard for taking veteran advocacy to new heights, and he said Dillard deserves credit for helping get the PACT Act passed. Dillard was there with President Joe Biden at the White House for the bill signing.

Troiola called on the federal government to support Afghan allies.

He also said the Legion work will continue, even if membership isn't what it used to be.

"As long as our America has veterans, there will always be an American Legion Family."

- The national vice commanders are:
- Kenneth C. Hylton of Indiana.
 - Patricia A. Harris of North Carolina.
 - Glenn Wahus of North Dakota.
 - Paul M. Kennedy of Pennsylvania.
 - Douglas R. Uhrig of Wyoming.

It should be noted that the new national chaplain resides in Minnesota. National Chaplain Mark Antal lives in Apple Valley and is a member of Edinburg, N.D., Post 156. He served as chaplain for the Department of North Dakota for seven years. He and his wife, Ruth, have four children and 11 grandchildren.

Other national constitutional officers are:

- Adjutant Daniel Wheeler of Virginia.
- Treasurer Shawn T. Long of Indiana.
- Judge Advocate Mark Seavey of Virginia.
- Historian Deborah Davis of Colorado.
- Sergeant-at-Arms Michael T. Byrnes of New York.

The new American Legion Auxiliary president is Vickie Koutz of Booneville, Ind., Unit 200. The new Sons of The American Legion National Commander is Christopher Carlton of Indianapolis Squadron 495.



Members of the Minnesota American Legion Family managed to fit into a single picture on Sunday, Aug. 28, in the lobby of historic 1927 art deco hotel Hilton Milwaukee City Center.