

Legionnaire



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For God and Country

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Bonding bill yields legislation related to veterans

Restorative Justice Act falters, but one-time transfer for surviving spouses passes

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PAUL — Everyone watching the Veterans Restorative Justice Act expected it to pass the House and Senate in the October special session without any problems.

After all, it had passed the House in May 2019, and it passed the Senate unanimously this year in August, September and again in October.

But it failed as two major political parties did what they do best: fight. (See story Page 3.)

Still, another priority of the Minnesota Commanders' Task Force (CTF) did pass, tucked inside the bonding bill at Line 149.5.

Rep. Bob Dettmer of Forest Lake spoke with House Tax Committee Chair Paul Marquart about inserting language in the tax bill. The language allows surviving spouses of disabled vets to do a one-time transfer of the Homestead Market Value Exclusion to a property of similar or lesser value, letting them to live in smaller homes without losing the exclusion.

The measure amends a law the CTF successfully pushed in 2019. The Legislature that year passed a law eliminating the eight-year cap for surviving spouses on the exclusion, making it permanent.

How it works: The Homestead Market Value Exclusion is available to veterans with a 70 or 100 percent disability. County veterans service officers verify the VA disability rating to the county or city. For a rating of 70 percent, \$150,000 of market value is excluded. For 100 percent, \$300,000 of market

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Bob
Dettmer



Paul
Marquart

Graves get go-ahead

Grant opportunity for cemetery in Redwood Falls is announced

By Tim Engstrom

REDWOOD FALLS — The VA's National Cemetery Administration let the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs know last month of a \$5.9 million grant for building a state veterans cemetery in Redwood Falls.

Congressman Collin Peterson announced the funding Oct. 15.

"We were happy when we found out," said Redwood County Council Commander Jim Mertens. "There has been a lot of next year, next year up until now."

MDVA Administrator of Memorial Affairs David Swantek said there are a number of hoops the agency must jump through for the Redwood Falls Veterans Cemetery to become reality.

"The funding opportunity is there, but we have to make sure we put all the pieces in place," he said.

American Legion Department Commander Mark Dvorak in October

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'Part of our family'



Shannon Culver of Federal Premium Ammunition looks up from a machine she operates at the company's plant in Anoka. She said, as a veteran, she likes working at a place with other veterans around. The American Legion Department of Minnesota awarded Federal the 2020 Employer of Veterans Award for a company with 201 or more employees.

Federal Premium Ammunition in Anoka is recognized for hiring veterans

By Tim Engstrom

ANOKA — Shannon Culver of Elk River retired from the military 10 years ago after serving 18 1/2 years in the Minnesota Air National Guard. She has been at Federal Premium Ammunition for eight years now.

In her prior job as a staffing

supervisor for a nursing home in New Hope, she was let go because she was too direct — a trait common, and typically appreciated, among veterans. She had been a master sergeant (E-7) and knew how to supervise people.

"They said I didn't 'fluff my language' well enough," Culver said.

She was an unemployed veteran

for six months. Through a friend, she found Federal. There, being direct is a good thing.

"Working at a place with a lot of veterans has a lot of camaraderie," Culver said. "It doesn't matter what branch you are, you are still part of our family."

Federal's ammunition plant in Anoka has 1,500 employees, of which more than 10 percent are veterans. Federal, owned by Vista Outdoors, is the winner of the Employer of Veterans

Award in the large company category (201 workers or more) from The American Legion Department of Minnesota.

Dennis Angell, a Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, was the senior supervisor of operations before retiring four years ago. He's been asked to help the plant hire hundreds of additional employees as Federal increases production.

After all, there is a nationwide shortage of ammunition. Between June 1

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Legion Family Fall Conference canceled because of record snowfall, icy roads

BRAINERD — The American Legion Family Fall Conference, scheduled for Oct. 22-24 at Breezy Point Resort, was canceled the morning of Oct. 21.

American Legion Department of Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak, after talking with key leaders, canceled the

conference due to an impending snowstorm and forecasts of hazardous travel.

"The safety of our members is of the utmost importance," said Adjutant Mike Maxa.

The resort is in Crow Wing County, and Brainerd is the seat.

The National Weather

Service predicted 6 to 9 inches of snow to fall in the Brainerd area for Oct. 22. The Brainerd Dispatch reported the city ended up receiving 4 inches on Oct. 22, breaking a record of 2 inches set in 1987.

The newspaper said the city got 6 inches Oct. 20, breaking a record of 2 inches set

in 1936.

Little Falls — along the route to Breezy Point for many travelers — reported 6 inches on Oct. 22.

The State Patrol reported many spinouts because of icy roads. The law enforcement agency urged motorists to "drive smart" and said ice

and snow created treacherous driving conditions.

The Fall Conference was to be hosted by Nisswa Post 627.

Breezy Point Resort agreed to give full refunds for lodging. A Department Executive Committee meeting over Zoom is set for 7 p.m. Nov. 5.



This architectural rendering shows the parade ground with mobile artifacts, such as Humvees and tanks.

New Minn. Military Museum gets \$13 million

Continued from Page 1

value is excluded.

Then if the veteran dies before his or her spouse, the exclusion carries over until the spouse remarries, sells, transfers or disposes of the property — unless that spouse uses the new one-time transfer to downsize to a new home. In that case, the exclusion ends only when the widow or widower remarries, sells, transfers or disposes of the property.

The tax bill ended up being combined into the bonding bill. The House on Oct. 14 approved the \$1.87 bonding bill 100-34, then sent it to the Senate, where it passed 64-3 on Oct. 15. Gov. Tim Walz signed it into law Oct. 21.

“I’m glad we were able to get that provision through for military spouses,” said Dettmer, the minority lead on the House Veterans Affairs Committee. “When I spoke with Paul Marquart, he didn’t make any promises, but it looks like he was able to get it in. I called him up and thanked him.”

Minnesota Military Museum

• \$13 million for the new Minnesota Military Museum at Camp Ripley.

The funds go toward acquiring land and to design, construct and equip a site for the Minnesota Military Museum outside Camp Ripley. The museum presently occupies space inside a building at the camp. This limits its ability to grow its collection.

“This new museum will be a focal point for the Minnesotans who have served in all branches of the armed forces,” said Randal Dietrich, executive director of the Museum. “The bipartisan support in both the House and Senate was crafted with the leadership of local district Rep. Ron Kresha, House Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Division Committee Chair Rep. Rob Ecklund and committee member Rep. Bob Dettmer.”

The new site is on 32 acres at the junction of highways 371 and 115. The new museum is to cover 40,000 square feet and open in spring 2023. A full story in the April 2020 issue showed renderings and spelled out plans.

The cost of construction, moving and outdoor elements totals \$16 million. The KAHR Foundation has donated \$3 million to get the ball rolling, and the museum seeks another \$5 million for additional tools and technology to share veterans’ stories.

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$6.75 million for MDVA needs. Here is a breakdown:

• \$6.3 million for asset preservation. The MDVA has 68 buildings to maintain in Minnesota Veterans Homes and Minnesota Veterans Cemeteries, and this funding goes toward maintaining those structures.

MDVA Legislative Director Ben Johnson said repair projects are ongoing. He said the agency performs annual infrastructure assessments, determining useful life of, for example, a roof, a window, a carpet, and it spends the funding in order of need. The agency originally requested \$10.7 million in asset preservation and \$4.2 million in safety and security upgrades for the homes.

The agency has 1.06 million square feet to maintain, and its 68 buildings have a replacement value of \$311 million. (This does not include the Veterans Service Building in St. Paul, which is under the Department of Administration.)

• \$100,000 for designing and constructing a new greenhouse at the Fergus Falls Veterans Home. The local veterans community already has raised another \$100,000 for the project.

“It’s an excellent project,” said Fergus Falls Post 30 Commander Warren Wilson. “It’s another activity the veterans will have available to them. Our Legion does a lot of projects up there. I believe it is one of the best veteran homes in the state if not the nation.”

Fergus Falls Veterans Home Administrator Scott Buchanan said the state and private funding will provide enough for the greenhouse project. He said the groundbreaking is slated for sometime in 2021, though COVID-19 could stand in the way.

“When completed, our greenhouse will allow for an accessible, comfortable space for our veterans to garden. Our veterans and our staff very much appreciate all the generous donations given and any state funds provided for this project,” Buchanan said.

• \$350,000 to Martin County to design and construct a veterans memorial.

Fairmont Post 36 Commander Steve Fosness said the funding will help finish out the existing memorial. It will pay for six bronze statues between the memorial and the restored Bell Cobra attack helicopter to the north. Each statue will represent a different branch of the military and a different era.

The Martin County Veterans Memorial earlier this year received state funding in the Legacy amendment for \$130,000. That will fund four bronze statues in front of the POW/MIA/KIA area. It will be a life-size woman on

a bench with a child beside her. Presenting her with folded flags will be American Legion and VFW members.

Fosness said donated money, land and in-kind work totals \$550,000 for the project.

Truss Bridge Project

The MDVA reopened the Minneapolis Veterans Home Truss Bridge on Jan. 9 with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting. The 2020 bonding bill, however, denotes \$7.85 million and features language saying the unspent portions of the project can go toward veteran homes: half for asset preservation and half toward campus security and safety upgrades.

It is not a new appropriation, Johnson said. It is the same as the 2017 appropriation but with language that revises the original so the agency has authority to spend any leftover funds.

Johnson said right now there are about \$3 million remaining. The bridge still has to go through a few final inspections.

The Department of Homeland Security in 2018 and 2019 assessed the security of Minnesota Veterans Homes, and the MDVA has worked toward meeting the recommendations. Presently, once inside with code or badge access, visitors have access to most anywhere, Johnson said. The hope is to provide visitors access to designated areas.

Related funding

• \$24.5 million to the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs, aka National Guard. The biggest chunk of this pie was the \$13 million for the museum, and the rest was \$1 million to renovate space at the Rosemount Readiness Center, \$2.1 million to renovate space at the Fergus Falls Readiness Center, \$5.35 million to renovate space at the Moorhead Readiness Center and \$3.1 million to renovate space at the Marshall Readiness Center.

• \$1 million for construction of the Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail. This DNR trail honors vets. The plan calls for 32 miles of paved trail in the Little Falls area to connect other state trails, resulting in a 500-mile network.

• \$5 million to Dakota County for construction of the Veterans Memorial Greenway, which includes memorials, a community gathering space and a trail connection between Lebanon Hills Regional Park and the Mississippi River.

• \$700,000 to Redwood County as a reimbursement for paving Noble Avenue, including paving the main access to a new state veterans cemetery planned for near Redwood Falls. (See story on Page 1.)

TANGO YANKEE (Radio call for thank you.)



Representatives of the Minnesota Commanders’ Task Force pose on Oct. 12 with Sen. Michelle Benson of Ham Lake after the Minnesota Senate approved the Veterans Restorative Justice Act 67-0. Top row from left are Benson, American Legion Legislative Chairman Robert Hart, American Legion Adjutant Mike Maxa. Bottom row from left are Todd Kemery and “Big Tim” Valentin of Paralyzed Veterans of America. Kemery is the chairman of the CTF.



The same CTF members pose with Sen. Roger Chamberlain of Lino Lakes, at right, on Oct. 12 after the Minnesota Senate approved the Veterans Restorative Justice Act 67-0. Chamberlain is the bill’s author in the Senate and a Legion member with Lino Lakes Post 566.



Members of the CTF pose with Sens. Jerry Relph and Bruce Anderson on Oct. 12 after the Minnesota Senate approved the Veterans Restorative Justice Act 67-0. Back row from left are American Legion Adjutant Mike Maxa, Relph, Anderson, American Legion Legislative Chairman Robert Hart, VFW Legislative Officer Tommy Johnson and Jewish War Veterans Commander Lou Michaels. In front are PVA Commander Todd Kemery and PVA Legislative Chairman “Big Tim” Valentin.



The American Legion and other veterans with the CTF visit the Capitol on Oct. 12 and let House lawmakers, via text messages, know not to amend the legislation. A disagreement between the two parties kept it from being brought to the floor. It is expected to return in November.

The CTF members strive to be nonpartisan in their dealings. COVID-19 makes it difficult to pose with everyone in the Senate who backed the Veterans Restorative Justice Act, but, to be sure, it was a bipartisan effort. (More photos could happen in a later issue.)

Restorative Justice Act fails to pass the House

Violence-Free Minnesota and legal community favor this bill

By Tim Engstrom

ST. PAUL — Most laws are just a mix of legalese, vague generalities or textbook drivel.

The Veterans Restorative Justice Act, however, has a passage that is quite eloquent: "It is in the interests of justice to restore a defendant who acquired a criminal record due to a mental health condition stemming from service in the United States military to the community of law-abiding citizens."

Those words most folks agree upon. Arguing over other terms is what undermined this bill from even reaching the floor of the House on Oct. 14. The Senate, on Oct. 12, passed it 67-0 for the third month in a row. The House had passed it in May 2019, but, to be sent to the governor's desk, they must both pass it in the same session.

The act, if passed, provides pre-adjudication supervision for veterans who experience service-connected trauma, mainly from combat. It has a statewide protocol for veterans courts in Minnesota and gives access to existing veterans courts for service-related defendants facing charges in counties without them.

Instead of giving combat vets a black mark for life, harming their ability to earn income, the judges would have the option to get them back on their feet and paying taxes again, not draining taxes. If completed successfully, the incident is removed from the public record.

The VRJA saves an estimated \$1.3 million in the first two years and \$2.3 million the next two years, according to the Minnesota Department of Management and Budget.

In August, House Speaker Melissa Hortman had told CTF members from The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars the House would pass it after the bond-rating quiet period ends.

The time ended in late September, and the stage was set for October's special session. It was House File 9/Senate File 2.

At the urging of Rep. Marion O'Neill of Maple Lake, the minority party put up 15 amendments. House leadership decided to hold off until after the election.

The main push O'Neill had was for one thing: remove violent crimes. She has an education in psychology and marital counseling and was concerned for victims of domestic violence.

Rep. Bob Dettmer of Forest Lake — a Legion member and ranking minority member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee — said she would have dropped all the other amendments if the majority had agreed to the one violent-crimes amendment.

O'Neill, during a House discussion on Oct. 13, said Violence-Free Minnesota opposed the bill. Her statement was incorrect.

Violence-Free Minnesota Director Liz Richards communicated later that day to House members to set the record

straight. The organization would not support removing domestic violence from the bill.

"We have always maintained our support for the diversion program within the act," she told the Legionnaire. "A criminal system that just puts you in jail and doesn't address the underlying issues doesn't help anybody."

In fact, Violence-Free Minnesota has its own domestic abuse project for veterans, Richards said.

Minnesota County Attorneys Association Executive Director Robert Small said his organization and the State Public Defender's Office often don't agree on legislation.

"We aren't always standing close, but we stand close on this bill," he said.

Washington County Attorney Pete Orput, a Marine veteran and Legion member with Bayport Post 491, said the veterans treatment court in his county is successful.

"I have the full support of the female victims," he said. "I thought this bill was the one thing this time that isn't political."

The bill addresses Severity Level 7 crimes and below because, in Minnesota, Level 7 crimes and below are presumed not to go to prison, Orput said. Level 7 and below include some violent crimes. Level 8 and above are "adios," he said.

Changing this law would imply O'Neill wants to change all the criminal laws, he noted.

He said sending a defendant to veterans treatment court is a more-difficult path for the defendant than regular punishment, but, if the judge, defendant and prosecutor agree, it has proven to get them back on track to being productive, tax-paying citizens.

"Do you want them to go to probation once a month for 10 months or do you want them to get even more-stringent programming?" he asked.

"We broke them. We got to fix them. They were not criminals when they went in," Orput said.

Savings come to the state and counties, in one way, because VA picks up the cost of treatment. VA treatment has them with other vets, while regular court-mandated treatment places people with combat trauma in with non-veterans.

Orput said vet problems do not correlate to the problems non-vets face, so the treatment typically fails. VA treatment, he said, is far better, more targeted and works.

The Legionnaire did offer to interview O'Neill. She issued a statement instead. It is printed to the upper right.

State Public Defender Bill Ward helped craft the bill's language and said no judge is forced to send a veteran to veterans court. And once a vet begins the veterans court route, a judge can bring them back to regular court at any time.

Striking language on violence would only prevent getting the veteran to the VA counseling he or she needs, he noted, and could



The 12-foot-high steel statue "Monument to the Living" on the grounds of the Capitol Complex aims to remind lawmakers of their duties to the men and women politicians send to war. Sculpted by veteran Rodger M. Brodin, the veterans of Minnesota dedicated it in 1982, with the words "Why do you forget us?"

Call to action!

- Are you frustrated that an overwhelming number of Minnesota legal experts and politicians have vetted this bill and supported it, yet it still gets hung up?
- Do you support legislation that saves tax dollars during a recession?

Call your state representatives, regardless of party. Ask for their support. Don't accept deceitful answers.

The bill was brought up during the special sessions because it deals with criminal justice, and fixing criminal justice for combat vets is on par with other Minnesota criminal justice laws passed this year. Our state's legal community supports this, and we stand by them.

To quote the end of The American Legion preamble: "To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

This law is about getting our combat-weary buddies back on their feet, and Legionnaires have done that for each other all the way back to right after World War I.

result in repeat offenses.

Ward said the legislation was not written to "get more" for veterans in legal trouble. It was written to be in line with existing statutes and to trust judges. Language in the bill regarding "substantial completion" does mean defendants get off, as O'Neill believes, he said. Ward wrote a statement for the Legionnaire, explaining this. It is printed at right and continues on Page 6.

Amending the bill, Ward said, would drastically cut the number of veterans this legislation is aiming to rehabilitate.

Rep. Rob Ecklund of International Falls — chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, the bill's author in the House and Legion member — said he is not giving up.

"I think we are going to have to tackle it next session and get these answers firmly and finally behind us," he said.

In the November special session, he plans to bring a state representative with a law background to address legal questions.

"I don't see how it could pass one body 67-0 and have all these legal organizations behind it and have one person be able to bring it down," Ecklund said.

He said he is committed to the measure whether it is in special sessions or the 2021 regular session.

American Legion Department of Minnesota Legislative Committee Chairman Robert Hart of Stillwater Post 48 was quoted in a Star-Tribune story on Oct. 16 about the bill failing again: "We see what really happened here: The House minority decided to use it as a means to bash the majority prior to an election. And the House majority failed on its promise to us to pass it because leadership became scared. We expect more from both parties when it comes to taking care of combat veterans dealing with trauma. In the end, both sides look horrible."

American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota Legislative Committee Chairman Patti Coleman placed a statement on Facebook about it: "The American Legion Auxiliary has faced the combat trauma of our veterans longer than anyone. We know the issue well. We support the Veterans Restorative Justice Act language as is, no amendment."

The Veterans Restorative Justice Act is a priority of the Minnesota Commander's Task Force and has the support of the veterans organizations in Minnesota.

Veterans treatment courts also have the support of the National American Legion, which passed a resolution at the National American Legion Convention in 2016 in Cincinnati.

Why this bill needs amending ...

Public statement by state Rep. Marion O'Neill

I am extremely disappointed that a compromise on the language of the Veterans Restorative Justice Act could not be arrived at. The chief author, Rep. Rob Ecklund, and the House majority were unwilling to compromise and incorporate necessary changes to the bill. Unfortunately, misrepresentations of the bill were persistent. Proponents of the bill have likened it to veterans courts; however, the bill in its current form is significantly different from veterans courts in troubling ways.

Unlike veterans courts, where successful completion of mental health or chemical dependency treatment is the foundation, this bill does not require the completion of treatment. In fact, treatment is not even required.

And unlike veterans courts, which does not accept defendants whose charges include violent crimes, this bill allows diversion for defendants charged with violent offenses, including felony domestic assault by strangulation, second-degree assault with a dangerous weapon, aggravated second-degree robbery and kidnapping.

My deep concern is that this bill does not balance the important goal of helping a defendant heal and change, with the concerns and safety of the victims. The bill does not require the prosecutor to consent to entering the defendant into a diversion program and the crime victim has no say in the decision. In addition to not being required to successfully complete treatment, the defendant also does not need to be in compliance with probation to have the charges and case dismissed and the record sealed from the public.

I have tried to work with the bill's author and bill advocates, but they have been unwilling to incorporate any suggestions to improve the bill so that veterans who suffer from service-related mental or chemical health concerns get the treatment they need, while ensuring that crime victims are not further victimized. I am willing to continue working on this bill to get it right and hope advocates will demonstrate a willingness to do the same."

Marion O'Neill is a state representative from Maple Lake. Her statement was issued after the House adjourned.

Why this bill is correct as is ...

By State Public Defender Bill Ward

It is incredibly unfortunate that after two years, there are still such fundamental misconceptions about the Veterans Restorative Justice Act, the policy reasoning behind the legal incentives and sanctions in the VRJA, the bill's mechanics, and its relation to veterans treatment courts.

Before it ever reached the Legislature, the VRJA was the product of 18 months of negotiations in a working group that included representatives of the state's primary group of prosecutors at the Minnesota County Attorneys Association, veterans advocates, representatives of the state and federal Departments of Veterans Affairs and the Board of Public Defense.

This group identified the need

to address the effects military service has had on many of our returning veterans while recognizing the inability to establish dedicated veterans courts in all 87 counties of Minnesota. There was robust discussion on the inequitable treatment of our veterans — whether a veterans court had been established or not — and how veterans courts themselves differed from one another. A statutory solution was identified as the most equitable and expedient way to treat our returning veterans who are charged with criminal offenses.

Although representatives from the VRJA Workgroup have discussed the workings of the bill on numerous occasions, there continue to be misconceptions.

For example, Rep. Marion O'Neill posits: 1. that the bill

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Why so much emphasis on members?

I was asked by a Legionnaire the following question: "Why so much emphasis on recruiting new members?"

The answer to this question varies as why a person decides to join our great organization or why some individuals get involved at various levels of The American Legion.

All volunteer organizations not only require an influx of new members, but, also, for those new members to volunteer their time to better the organization. The American Legion is an incredible organization and learning and becoming familiar with a few of our many programs can help explain why you decided to become a Legionnaire or why you became involved in making a difference for our country.

Each year National hosts its Membership Workshop in Indianapolis for all Department leadership teams. This past August it was held virtually and was the 57th annual workshop.

Ron Neff from National is the American Legion National membership engagement coordinator and below are some ideas he shared for recruiting new members.

- Be prepared to answer what this organization will do for them. "We are an organization of givers. We volunteer our time because we believe in the cause. It's not about what we receive but about what we give. Whether it's filling that void or

Commander's Column

Mark Dvorak



providing that camaraderie, there is something mutual in that relationship that we need to discuss."

- Be confident and knowledgeable about the organization. Take the Legion's Online Basic Training course if you haven't already at legion.org/training.

- Passively recruit. "Most important thing we can do is thank every veteran you see for what they have done for their nation. You can then just ask if they're a member or consider continuing their service by joining. But at the end of the day, it's all about thanking them, it's that Buddy Check."

- Show pride. "Display your pride in the organization by what you wear, what you say and what you display in public. Set the example by demonstrating the highest degree of professionalism and patriotism as it relates to The American Legion."

Approximately 11 years ago when I became the 3rd District adjutant, I was ignorant about the mission and programs that The American Legion was involved in.

At the very first District Convention I attended was in May of that year, I was exposed to many of these programs, such as the District Oratorical Contest

winner, Eagle Scout of the Year, Junior Shooting Sports winner, Legion Baseball Player of the Year and Boys State winner. Also, I met the District Police Officer of the Year and Firefighter of the Year, just to name a few.

They were all honored and had a short presentation on what this award meant to them. In July, I attended the Department/State American Legion Convention in Rochester, and presentations for Department/State awardees took place for the same programs. In August I attended the National American Legion Convention in Milwaukee and the same thing happened for the National winners for these awards.

I thought to myself "Wow! This is an incredible organization that I definitely want to be a part of and hopefully be able to make a difference in my own little way."

For God and Country, we continue our mission!

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

Freedom comes at a great cost of lives

Chaplain's Corner

Betty Jass



Happy Veterans Day to all our veterans! Through the years most of us have heard the comment, "Freedom isn't free. Thank a veteran."

I'd like to thank every veteran who signed that "blank" check securing our American freedoms. You're great, and may God bless you!

I sometimes think that some Americans are taking their freedom for granted. Because we have been privileged to live in "the land of the free and the home of the brave," perhaps we assume that what we have experienced so far in our lifetimes will always be there in the future.

Perhaps many view the frequent vignettes and anecdotes about people losing their freedom as isolated cases hardly worthy of concern. We veterans know what hardships and sacrifices we made to keep our fellow Americans free. Please never forget their sacrifices.

Perhaps you are one of those who assume your freedom, particularly your freedoms of religion and speech, will stand solid and strong like the presidents carved on Mount Rushmore in South Dakota or even like the picturesque view of Mount McKinley, which has stood

for millennia and will continue to stand for many more. Freedom comes at a great cost and our veterans took a part of their lives protecting those freedoms.

Ronald Reagan stated, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same."

When I see children in our schools who can no longer read their Bibles or say The Pledge of Allegiance without fear of reprisals, when I see professional and amateur athletes disrespecting the national anthem and our American flag, I get frustrated.

At times, it seems like our freedoms in America are teetering on the brink of extinction because people forget what our veterans have done to maintain those freedoms. God has enabled us to continually protect our freedoms, so we should never forget.

Some people have apparently forgotten the cost of

freedom. Some have forgotten that eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. Many servicemembers gave their lives, other came home with permanent medical issues and there are still other active-duty servicemembers still working hard to secure our freedoms.

My daughter, Sandra, and many others on active duty still work hard each day to maintain our freedoms.

"Freedom isn't free, thank a veteran!"

So, thank you to all our veterans. Thanks for our freedom of religion. Thanks for our freedom of speech and our other freedoms. And thank you so very much for signing that "blank" check to keep America free now and forever.

Happy Veterans Day to all, and may God bless!

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

Mail Call

Words from Dan Foley resonate today

Thank you, Commander Mark Dvorak, for posting Past National Commander Dan Foley's comments in the October issue of The Legionnaire. It's surprising how relevant Foley's words were some 57 years ago:

"Ours is a big country with big and perplexing problems. The answers do not come easily. They will not come at all if substantial numbers of Americans permit themselves to be led into extravagances of hate and fear."

Dan Lien
Moorhead Post 21

VA provides the best care anywhere

I have been going through bladder cancer since January 2019. It all started when I was urinating and a clot of blood appeared.

I called my primary care provider, who saw me the next day. A urine test revealed there were cancer cells in my urine. My primary care staff informed me and had already made an appointment for me to see the urology care team at the VA Health Care Facility in Minneapolis a week later on Jan. 28, my wife's birthday.

CT scans revealed I had a growth in my bladder. Surgery was set for Feb. 14, 2019. (My wife refers to the VA Urology Clinic as our special place.)

After surgery, my urology doctor informed me that I had what was called a high-grade cancer of the bladder. The best treatment for my bladder cancer was to follow up surgery with BCG treatments.

BCG treatment is inserting tuberculosis into my bladder via catheter and holding that in my bladder for two hours once a week for six weeks — repeating the process every three months for four total treatments the first year. The second-year it is three treatments every three months.

I am almost at the end of the second year. In between those treatments, cystoscopy and biopsies were done, as well as another CT scan. The most comforting thing about this whole journey was the care the VA medical staff provided.

The nurses (men and women) actually care about you. They take time to get to know you. They care for your comfort and keep you informed of your progress.

George Gillespie
Albert Lea Post 56

Engstrom's column was thoughtful

Thank you, Tim Engstrom, for your thoughtful and valuable piece entitled, "Why be Patriotic? Let's not take living in a democracy for granted."

At this time, when authoritarianism threatens our democracy, we need voices such as yours to remind us that democracy and freedom are fragile. That's why so many of us gave several

years of our lives to support and defend our Constitution.

Ted Hovey
Rosetown Post 542

4th District's Jim Anderson will be missed

Jim Anderson was one of the most dedicated men for America and The American Legion I have known in my 32 years of Legion membership. He was the past Post commander at my Post, Rosetown Legion Post 542. He was also my mentor.

I was elected to his former position as 4th District vice commander. Jim left this position for health reasons due to his progressing cancer. Jim was a great gentleman, a tremendous family man and extremely dedicated to the Legion. He was a super friend, confidant and mentor.

I will miss him greatly.

Jeffrey Proud
Vice Commander
4th District
Rosetown Post 542

Classic poem is a piece of naval nostalgia

This is so old, but I just ran across it, and I thought I'd just send it to our veterans.

"The Far East Blues"

Out in the middle of nowhere
The Far East is the spot.
Where we're doomed to spend

our time,
In a land that God forgot.

Out with the typhoons and
creeping crud,
Out where a man gets blue.
Out in the middle of nowhere
Nine thousand miles from
you.

You swear, you work, you
sweat,
It's more than a man can
stand
They tell us we're not convicts,
Just defenders of our land.

We're in the Navy now,
Earning our measly pay.
Guarding our country's
millions,
For two-and-a-half a day.

Living with our memories
And waiting for our gals,
Hoping while we're waiting,
They haven't wed our pal.

Nobody knows we're living,
Nobody gives a damn
Although we're forgotten
We belong to Uncle Sam.

And when we pass those
pearly gates,
We'll hear Saint Peter yell:
"Fall in you Far East sailors,
You have served your time in
Hell."

— Author unknown.

The poem is from when I served there 1956-1958. It probably is not PC now.

Ted Storck
Morris Post 29

Editor's note: Thank you for sending this. We always enjoy nostalgic reads.



The Minnesota Legionnaire

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

Official publication of
The American Legion
Department of Minnesota

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Anderson, James E., 79, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 4, 2020. He was a member of Lake City Post 110.

Anderson, James M. Sr., 72, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 29, 2020. He served as 4th District vice commander and part of the Fort Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad. He was a member, color guard member and past commander of Roseville Post 542.

Andreen, Ronald D., 88, Army National Guard veteran of Korean and Vietnam wars, died Sept. 25, 2020. He was a member of his Post's Honor Guard and received the award for over 500 military funeral ceremonies. He was named 2020 Minnesota Veteran Volunteer of the Year by the Minnesota Network of Hospice and Palliative Care. He volunteered with the Rice Hospice veterans program. He was a past commander and 63-year member of Willmar Post 167.

Baldwin, Lawrence, 79, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 1, 2020. Part of his service included loading atomic bombs. He was a 38-year member of Lonsdale Post 586.

Baniecke, Eugene, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 29, 2020. He was a member of Hillman Post 602.

Bastis, Charles B., 90, Marine veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 6, 2020. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Beaver, Robert, 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 16, 2020. He served with the 11th Infantry Regiment at Augsburg, Germany. He was a 46-year member of Hayfield Post 330.

Bernhagen, John, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 26, 2020. He served in Orleans, France. He was a 31-year member of Hutchinson Post 96.

Biessener, Jerome A., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 18, 2020. He was a 46-year member of Hackensack Post 202.

Brand, Robert, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 16, 2020. He served in a heavy mortar company for the 33rd Infantry. He was a 34-year member of New Ulm Post 132.

Bruzek, Verlyn, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 29, 2020. He was a 43-year member of Lowry Post 253.

Buller, Menno L., 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died Sept. 28, 2020. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

Byker, Eugene, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 11, 2020. He was a member of Mora Post 201.

Collins, Joseph M., 95, Marine veteran of World War II, died June 31, 2020. He was a 42-year member of Waseca Post 228.

Colvin, Frank, 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died Sept. 1, 2020. He served in the South China Sea on submarines and mine sweepers. He was a 67-year member of Eyota Post 551.

Cook, Virgil D., 76, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 23, 2020. He was a 39-year member of Adrian Post 32.

Damm, Duane, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 26, 2020. He was a 59-year member of North Branch Post 85.

Dunlop, John F. "Jack," 82, Navy veteran of the Cold War, died Sept. 19, 2020. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Dzubay, William R., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 10, 2019. He was a member of Ham Lake Post 2000.

Eberle, Roger A., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 10, 2020. He was a member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Enck, Carl W., 70, Army Reserves veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 16, 2020. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Fitzsimmons, John "Jack," 91, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 14, 2020. At age 16, he obtained a commercial truck license to haul German POWs to and from New Ulm during World War II. During the Korean War, he served in Japan as an avionics technician for the B-36 bomber. He was a 63-year member of Waseca Post 228.

Froehlich, Roland H., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Sept. 20, 2020. He served in Italy. He was a 34-year member of Kerkhoven Post 223.

Gapko, Rudy A., 91, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died June 29, 2020. He served on the oiler USS Tolovana. He was a 39-year member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Georges, James, 87, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died July 7, 2020. He was a member of St. Louis Park Post 282.

Goembel, Arthur J., 82, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 22, 2020. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Grimsrud, Thomas, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 5, 2019. He served as a medic. He was a 34-year member of St. Louis Park Post 282.

Gutoske, Duane F. "Mic," 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 21, 2020. He was a 53-year

Obituaries

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

Please send to tengstrom@mnlegion.org or in the mail to the Department of Minnesota.

veteran of Savage Post 643.

Hahn, Robert D. Sr., 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 12, 2020. He served in the South Pacific. He was a 57-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Haskins, Robert D., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 11, 2020. He made 31 parachute landings as a member of the 82nd Airborne Division. Later, he served in the National Guard with the 135th Infantry Regiment. He was a 58-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Hauser, Eldon R., 85, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 7, 2020. He was a member of Raymond Post 420.

Herbst, Clarence "Red," 93, Army veteran of World War II, died April 9, 2020. He served in Germany. He was a 67-year member of Lake Crystal Post 294.

Hill, Gale, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 24, 2020. He served in France and Germany and received a Bronze Star. He was a member of Eyota Post 551.

Hochstein, James W., 76, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 13, 2020. He served at Hickham AFB in Hawaii. He was a member of at-large Post 1982 and resided in Westbrook.

Hollinger, Robert J. "Bob," 91, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 20, 2020. He served as a boatswain and was involved in Operation Ivy, the first testing of the hydrogen bomb. He was a member of Claremont Post 422.

James, Clifford E., 63, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 19, 2020. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Jensen, Stanley L., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 20, 2020. He was a 56-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Jenson, Curtis L., 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 26, 2020. He was stationed in Mannheim, Germany. He was a 42-year member of Willmar Post 167.

Jerde, David, 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 20, 2020. He earned two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star. He was a 36-year member of Delano Post 377.

Johnson, Darrell, 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 23, 2020. He was a 40-year member of Savage Post 643.

Johnson, Francis P., 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 22, 2020. He was a 44-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Johnson, Joseph C., 68, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 5, 2020. He was a member of Post 1982 and resided in Cloquet.

Keesling, Kenneth P., 88, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 21, 2020. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Kelzer, Leon F., 80, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 29, 2020. He was a 35-year member of Waconia Post 150.

Kill, Francis "Frank," 91, Army veteran the Korean War, died Sept. 25, 2020. He served in Alaska. He was a 51-year member of Morris Post 29.

Klimstra, Donald J., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 24, 2020. He served on active duty in Fairbanks, Alaska. He was a 47-year member of Litchfield Post 104.

Koester, Roger F., Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 2, 2020. He was a member of Anoka Post 102.

Kutzer, John C., 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 2, 2020. He was stationed in Germany. He was a member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Lambert, Roger "Rocky," 67, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 18, 2020. He served on the USS Newport as a firefighter and steamfitter. He was a 45-year member of Hutchinson Post 96.

LeNoue, Brandon D., 45, Marine veteran of the Persian Gulf War, died Sept. 26, 2020. He was stationed at Cherry Point, North Carolina. He was a member of Anoka Post 102.

Lupkes, Roger A., 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 9, 2020. He was a member of Adrian Post 32.

McBroom, Burt, 97, Marine veteran of World War II, died Oct. 18, 2020. He was a life member of New London Post 537.

Meuwissen, Howard A., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 6, 2020. He was a member of Chanassen Post 580.

Moorman, David, 71, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 15, 2020. He served as a forward observer. He was a member of St. Louis Park Post 282.

Negen, Glenn D., 73, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 7, 2020. He served in Vietnam with the Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit. As a civilian, his career was as a Willmar police officer and a law enforcement instructor at Ridgewater College. He was a 37-year member of Willmar Post 167.

Nicholson, Ronald, 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 4, 2020. He served aboard the USS Wasp, which shot down the last kamikaze pilot of World War II before the pilot could fly down the smokestack. He was a 50-year member of Litchfield Post 104.

Nunn, Grant A., 71, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 2, 2020. He served for 36 years, the last 18 with the 119th Wing Civil Engineer Squadron out of Fargo. He was a 50-year member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Olson, Russell P., 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 14, 2020. He was a 59-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Otrema, Jerome T. "Flatop," 89, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 14, 2020. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Paulson, Kennard, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 7, 2020. He served as a small arms repairman. He was a 36-year member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Perry, Arthur, 76, Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 14, 2020. He served two tours in Vietnam. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Peterson, Derry D., 79, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 20, 2020. He served in the North Dakota National Guard. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

Phelps, Peter, 82, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 22, 2020. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Precious, Thomas A., 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 29, 2020. He was a member of Eagan Post 594.

Raguse, Raymond W., 81, Army veteran of the Cold War, died Oct. 6, 2020. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

Reischl, Jerome J., 87, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 19, 2020. He was active-duty, then Reserve. He was a 34-year member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Roberts, James C., 91, multibranch veteran of World War II and Korean War, died Sept. 14, 2020. Joining the Navy in 1946, he was stationed in Hawaii. Later, in the National Guard, his unit in Worthington was called to Camp Rucker in 1951. He was a member of St. James Post 33.

Roske, Harold J., 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 26, 2020. He served stateside. He was a member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Saunders, Gordon L., 110, Army veteran of World War II, died Sept. 18, 2020. He served as an airplane repairman. It is not documented but believed he was the oldest WWII veteran in Minnesota at the time of his passing. He was a 75-year member of Blue Earth Post 89.

Schwartzfield, Sidney, 93, Army veteran of World War II, died May 19, 2020. He served in the European and Pacific theaters. He was a member of St. Louis Park Post 282.

Scieszka, Stanley "Bob," 87, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 11, 2020. He was a 51-year member of Hutchinson Post 96.

Severson, Arnold O., 83, Navy veteran of the Cold War, died Oct. 7, 2020. He served in Washington, D.C. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

Shurson, George "Buddy," 98, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Sept. 16, 2020. He flew 50 successful missions over enemy territory and participated in the attack on D-Day over France. He was a past commander and 73-year member of New Richland Post 75.

Smith, Alden E., 100, Army veteran of World War II, died Sept. 18, 2020. He served with the 51st General Hospital in the South Pacific. He was a member of Mora Post 201.

Stegman, Arnold H., 84, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 10, 2020. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Tollefson, Arvid, 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 11, 2020. He was a past commander and 41-year member of Waseca Post 228.

Useldinger, Gregor Jr., 87, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 6, 2020. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Visser, James "Pete," 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 27, 2020. He served in Army aviation as a flying crew chief. He was a member of Gary Legion Post 505.

Wagner, John A., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 14, 2020. He was a 56-year member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Warzecha, Marvin P. "Muddick," Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 15, 2020. He was a member of Hillman Post 602.

Westin, Dale, 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 5, 2020. He was a member of Savage Post 643.

Whiteaker, Merryelle M., 88, Army veteran of the Cold War, died July 25, 2020. She worked as a "Rosey the Riveter" in a defense plant before she served in the Women's Army Corps. She was a member of Hayfield Unit 330 who participated in Post 330 meetings.

Williams, Timothy B., 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 19, 2020. He served two tours in Vietnam. He was a member of Bruno Post 563.

Public defender explains veterans bill

Continued from Page 3

takes too severe of offenses, 2. that it does not require the veteran to “complete” treatment, and 3. that it is bad for public safety as it gives the gatekeeping role to judges rather than prosecutors and victims.

It was agreed by the Working Group that the most important thing the VRJA could accomplish is to provide consistent legal incentives to those veterans suffering from the worst service-related conditions to ensure their compliance and substantial completion of treatment such that the Court identifies as necessary to rehabilitate and prevent recidivism.

After lengthy debate, the Working Group was confident that to accomplish this goal the VRJA must include more serious level offenses as those are committed by the veterans with the greatest treatment needs.

However, the allegation must be at a severity level of 7 or below (please note, as per the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines, an individual alleged to have committed a severity 7 or below is presumed to be eligible for probation if s/he has a criminal history score of 2 or below).

The difference with this bill than other actions involving Level 7 or below offenses is the ability to receive a stay of adjudication. It should be remembered that those charged with public safety in the MCAA agreed to this because rehabilitating veterans who possess dangerous skill sets is a more effective way to protect public safety than even the most severe sentence available for these offenses.

Rep. O’Neill opines that the VRJA does not require the veteran to complete treatment despite explanations by both prosecutors and defense attorneys that this is not true.

To be granted a dismissal, Subdivision 2 of the VRJA requires the veteran must show “substantial compliance” with the conditions of probation, that the veteran “successfully participated in court-ordered treatment,” that the veteran does not pose a danger to self or others, and that the veteran is rehabilitated such that the

legal incentive discussed above is appropriate.

The court must be satisfied that all these conditions are met to grant the dismissal. The Workgroup agreed upon “substantial compliance” to take into account relapse and other hurdles that one too often faces when entering any treatment program and to avoid either the veteran completing the valuable parts of treatment and without getting a formal certificate of completion or a veteran who gets a certificate of completion without really

“Rehabilitating veterans who possess dangerous skill sets is a more effective way to protect public safety than even the most severe sentence available for those offenses.”

taking rehabilitation seriously.

The Working Group decided the best way to ensure actual rehabilitation was the goal-oriented examination by the judge rather than a simple checklist.

Finally, Rep. O’Neill continues to raise the point that she believes prosecutors and victims should be able to deny the benefits and responsibilities to veterans under the VRJA. This is bad for public safety and would result in zero improvement in our current system. It is bad for public safety because:

- It will greatly limit the number of court-involved veterans who are induced to complete the difficult rehabilitative steps outlined above.

- It would lead to the same system we have today, with the same problems the VRJA was designed to solve as cited above.

I have worked with the leadership of the MCAA on many matters in my role as state public defender. To suggest that the leadership of the MCAA did not take into consideration the concerns of victims’ rights advocates is ludicrous.

Additionally, Rep. O’Neill is incorrect to suggest that the victim has “no say in the decision” by the judge as to what

benefit the veteran receives under the VRJA. Subdivision 2(b) clearly states the judge should consider “the level of harm to the community or victim” after a hearing that includes the victim.

While Rep. O’Neill states that proponents of the bill have likened it to veterans courts, the opposite is true from this writer. Currently, individual County Attorney’s Offices decide if they are willing to have a dedicated Veterans Court in their county, the rules by which veterans would be allowed to participate, and what legal benefit they will receive if s/he participates.

Most counties have not established veterans courts and the ones that exist all have disparate practices that leads to more failure than success. The disparate practice that currently exists is concerning to me — it should concern all our citizens — and that is why I chose to participate as part of the workgroup.

It should not matter, as a due process consideration, where a crime was alleged to have been committed. Whether in Isanti, International Falls or Inver Grove Heights, all of our veterans should be treated fairly and equitably in the criminal court system.

Those who oppose the bill espouse that they are in support of the needs of our veterans but assert that that the bill “goes too far.” The reality is that our veterans are currently in the criminal court system. As a society we need to address the underlying reasons as to why one of our veterans found him/herself in the system.

This bill provides for a consistent, fair and effective approach to address their underlying concerns, provide rehabilitative services and support without having to establish 87 veterans courts throughout the state.

Our veterans sacrificed for us. The least we can do is provide the support they need when they find themselves in dire straights as a result of their service on behalf of our country.

Bill Ward is the state public defender. He wrote this to clarify misinformation about the VRJA.

Does VA cover medical emergencies?

Are you enrolled in VA Health Care and wonder what you are supposed to do if you find yourself in a medical emergency that requires you to go to the nearest emergency department that may not be VA?

Do you think about if your bills are going to be covered by the VA? Those medical bills including special mode transportation like an ambulance or helicopter can get awfully expensive, and if you do not have a third-party insurance, then those bills may end up in collections if VA denies payment.

Whelp, there goes your credit you worked so hard to build.

If you do think about this and are confused on the process, then you are not alone. Over my decade-long time as a service officer, I can say there has been a consistent trend of veteran confusion regarding non-VA medical emergencies and whether the VA will cover the costs.

One of the first questions veterans ask is, “How important is it I have a supplemental plan to my Medicare for emergencies? Or should I be paying for a third-party health insurance?”

My suggestion is, yes, have a backup plan.

Frankly, I believe VA could do a better job ensuring their enrollees understand the process to have non-VA medical emergencies considered for payment. Granted VA does have Medical Emergency Fact Sheets on the process, but who knows how to search for them on the internet and should

VA & Rehabilitation

Jeremy Wolfsteller



veterans be responsible to seek out this information?

I am going to try to break down some important information for you to know that will hopefully assist you in having VA consider covering your medical emergency that happens in a non-VA facility. I say “consider” because VA considers these on a case-to-case basis.

There are three different ways VA can consider paying for a veteran’s emergency episode of care, but all three require a 72-hour notification.

First, starting June 6, 2019, under the VA MISSION ACT, VA will consider payment for veterans that go to an “in-network” community emergency department. This just requires a 72-hour notification, meet the definition of emergency per prudent layperson definition and VA facilities were not feasibly available.

Are you still with me? That was the easy one. Next is covered under 38 USC 1728, which covers any emergencies for veterans that are 100 percent service-connected, a VA-rated service-connected disability, those participating in Chapter 31 vocational rehabilitation or for a non-service-connected condition aggravating a service-connected condition.

Lastly, veterans that are neither 100 percent service-connected

nor have service-connected conditions that could contribute to an emergency and do not have a third-party insurance will fall under 38 USC 1725. This requires the veteran to be seen at a VA within the last 24 months prior to emergency and is financially liable to the provider of emergency care.

Beginning June 8, 2020, The Office of Community Care is requesting all community hospitals notify the VA of a veteran who self-presents to an emergency department within 72 hours of the start of the episode of care.

It’s very important all enrolled veterans understand this process and notify the Community Care Centralized Call Center at 1-844-724-7842 or by email: VHAEmergency-Notification@va.gov.

I will wrap up by saying if a veteran has a third-party health insurance plan and that plan does not cover the entire episode of care including co-insurances and deductibles, veterans can send those to VA to be paid.

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

Thanks for help with the Legacy Run

Hello American Legion Family,

Well, I was hoping to see all of you at Fall Conference, but that didn’t go as planned. I’m sure it was a hard decision to make for Commander Mark Dvorak, but I agree, safety first.

The Legion Riders did great this year for Legacy Run donations. We didn’t have a Minnesota run this year, but you all still managed to raise over \$48,000. That is outstanding.

Thanks to all of you who worked so hard, and thanks to all who donated.

We have a lot of things to go

Legion Riders

Paul Hassing



over regarding the new resolution that came from the National ALR advisory committee. If you get a chance, you can read it on the Department website. It is Resolution 19. We will go over it at the next Department Riders meeting on Dec. 5 in North St. Paul.

There is currently snow on the ground, but they are talking about above-normal temperatures

in November, so I hope the bikes aren’t put away for the winter yet.

Love to all of you. Stay safe, and stay warm.

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



The American Legion Department of Minnesota 2021 District Membership Report as of Oct 27, 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	30	857	552	4,149	5,588	10	5,598	8,009	69.90	3	5,751
02	BRADLEY PAGEL	26	646	344	3,272	4,288	5	4,293	6,189	69.37	3	4,597
03	LINDA DVORAK	74	1,551	1,181	5,268	8,074	20	8,094	10,938	74.00	46	7,967
04	JOSEPH M JANSEN	17	286	209	958	1,470	2	1,472	2,091	70.40	22	1,593
05	WADE A LARSON	10	303	277	721	1,311	0	1,311	2,164	60.58	3	1,467
06	PAUL D EDWARDS	70	1,104	770	5,568	7,512	16	7,528	10,598	71.03	9	7,931
07	DEAN KNUTSON	21	700	283	3,099	4,103	14	4,117	5,646	72.92	33	4,169
08	GERRIANNE KOSKINEN	11	317	271	1,928	2,527	3	2,530	3,591	70.45	4	2,587
09	STEVEN G SUNDSTROM	31	551	427	3,109	4,118	32	4,150	5,953	69.71	10	4,230
10	THOMAS H ALLEN	56	909	961	4,290	6,216	13	6,229	8,780	70.95	7	6,416
99		6	178	293	1,116	1,593	0	1,593	2,997	53.15	0	1,276
Total:		352	7,402	5,568	33,478	46,800	115	46,915	66,956	70.07	140	47,984



Gravestones at Fort Snelling National Cemetery on Sept. 11, 2020.

Work on new veterans cemetery in Redwood Falls could begin in November 2019

Continued from Page 1

sent a statement to Peterson's office for a news release.

"The time is now to fund the Redwood Falls Veterans Cemetery," Dvorak said. "This community has an outstanding track record of supporting veterans and their families. Meanwhile, expansions to other cemeteries, rather than new ones, have been funded. A veterans cemetery in this part of Minnesota is necessary, and expanding far-away cemeteries won't cut it. We are grateful to U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson for his work on this matter."

MDVA Commissioner Larry Herke said: "We appreciate the NCA's support in expanding the state veterans cemeteries in Minnesota. This grant funding is an important first step in making this new cemetery a reality."

If everything goes as planned, Minnesota will find out next summer whether that cemetery truly gets the \$5.9 million, Swantek said. Construction would begin November 2021.

The funding comes from the VA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program. Often, expanding cemeteries bumps new cemeteries down the funding list, and states applying for new cemeteries never know how many expansion projects will be on the list.

"The Redwood Falls project has always been subject to being pushed down the list," Swantek said.

Expansion, he added, doesn't mean more acres. It means developing more gravesites on existing property.

Swantek has been with the MDVA since 1996 and has led efforts to build new cemeteries in Duluth and Preston.

He said another factor in scoring funding is veteran population within a 75-mile radius. The calculated area for Redwood Falls comes to 22,198 veterans and includes the cities of Mankato, Worthington, Marshall, Willmar, Fairmont, New Ulm, St. Peter, Hutchinson, Glencoe, Granite Falls, Pipestone, Cold Spring and Montevideo. The higher the number of vets served, the more likely a new cemetery can get funded.

Swantek said when Preston was proposed, it served about 50,000 veterans. It opened in 2015. Duluth served 25,000. It opened in 2019. (Little Falls opened in 1994.)

The best solution, he said, would be if Congress kicked

more dollars into the cemetery grants.

"There has been no significant increase in funding from Congress, but the number of states operating cemeteries has expanded significantly," Swantek said.

The MDVA asked Peterson to get Congress to put more funds into the program. Peterson sits on the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

In 2000, the grant program rules changed to fund 100 percent of the construction cost. Before, it has been a 50/50 split. That brought increased competition for the grant dollars.

Still, even with the feds paying construction costs, the state pays the largest share — perpetual operation expenses — he said.

Other factors, Swantek said, that can delay or derail a project are 1. costs changing between when estimates are made and when construction occurs, 2. the bidding climate at the time bids are solicited, and 3. availability of construction companies in the first place.

Redwood County stepped up and committed \$1 million toward purchasing the property in Paxton Township. It is 70 acres east of the city of Redwood Falls — exactly 2.6 miles from Post 38 — on the southwest corner of Highway 19 and Noble Avenue. It is owned by the son of a veteran. Noble is a gravel road, and the bonding bill passed in October commits \$700,000 to pave it. It is already paved, but the funding reimburses the county.

All that's left is the turning lane for an entrance, said Post 38 Commander Dustin Hunter, who also is the county veterans service officer.

Mertens said Legion members from around the county wore their caps to the Redwood County Board of Commissioners meeting about 11 years ago when the purchasing agreement was on the agenda, just to make sure their presence was known. "They all voted for it," he said.

On Nov. 3, the County Board agenda calls for the actual purchase of the property.

Hunter said it's good to see the project get this far.

"It's becoming a reality instead of a 'what if.' That's my biggest thing. Just to see some of the veterans just cheer up, because this has been going on over a decade," he said.

Endorsements

Battle Lake's Barbknecht endorsed for NECman

George Bergen Post 489 of Underwood has endorsed Bill Barbknecht for a second term as National Executive Committeeman for the Department of Minnesota.

Barbknecht is a 51-year member of The American Legion. He proudly served as Post Commander at Browns Valley Post 58 in the 7th District in 1974-1975, where he first joined The American Legion.

He served as Post

Commander at Barnesville Post 153 in the 9th District 1978-1981. He has served two years as Post Commander at Underwood Post 489, as well.

Barbknecht has held many District and Department chairmanships. He served as 9th District Commander 1982-1983. He served as Department



Bill Barbknecht

Membership Chairman 1983-1984 under Department Commander Conrad Erickson of Albert Lea. Again, he served as Department Membership Chairman 1984-1985, this time under Department Commander Brad Jorgens of Beardley.

Barbknecht currently serves as

Subcommittee on Resolutions. He is the Liaison to the National Security Committee. Barbknecht presently serves as Chairman of LIT committee for the Department of Minnesota.

He is married to American Legion Auxiliary Past Department President 2017-2018 Donna Barbknecht. She is serving as the Chairman of the Jr. Activities Program for the ALA Department of Minnesota.

They reside on a small ranch near Battle Lake.

Walker's Moon endorsed for Alternate NECman

Peggy Moon has been endorsed for Alternate NECman by Kriesel-Jacobsen Post 560 of Zimmerman and the 6th District for the years 2021-2023.

Moon has been a member of Kriesel-Jacobsen Post 560 for 43 years and was awarded a life membership by her Post in 1997. She has served as Commander, Adjutant, Chaplain and was on the Post Honor Guard. She served in the Air

Force from 1971 to 1974.

On the District level, Moon served as Commander, Vice Commander, Public Relations Chairman, Children and Youth Chairman and currently serves as the Commander's Advisor.

On the



Peggy Moon

Department level, Moon has served as Employment Chairman and Children and Youth Chairman. She served as Membership Chairman 2009-2010, and as our Department Commander 2014-2015.

On the National level, she currently

serves as Alternate National Executive Committeeman, Vice President for the Board of Directors, American Legion Child Welfare Foundation and as Vice Chairman of the Children and Youth Council.

She and her husband, Carl, have been married for 46 years, have two daughters and six grandchildren, all members of The American Legion Family. They reside in Walker.

Walker's other Moon endorsed for Vice Cmdr.

Dr. Carl Moon has been endorsed for 6th and 9th Department Vice Commander for the 2021-2022 membership year by Kriesel-Jacobson Post 560 in Zimmerman.

Moon served in the Air Force from 1976 to 1984. He is a Paid Up For Life Member with 32 years of continuous membership. He served as Post Commander for two terms.

On the District level he

served as District Commander, Vice Commander, County Council Commander and is currently the District Chaplain.

On the Department level he has served as Employment Chairman for five years.

On the National Level he is the National Commander's



Carl Moon

Representative to the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission and is one of only four members appointed to the Traumatic Brain Injury/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Department Committee. He is a member of ANAVICUS, Sons of the American Legion

Squadron 560, 40 & 8 Voiture 414, and has a life membership in the DAV.

Moon was employed at the St. Cloud VA as an optometrist for 20 years and has recently retired. Carl and his wife Peggy (Air Force veteran and Past 6th District and Department Commander) have been married 46 years, have two daughters, two grandsons and four granddaughters.

APPRECIATION



Top: Front row from left are Minnesota Fleet and Surplus Services Director Holly Gustner, Eligibility Officer Joe Grove (a veteran who handles military requests), Martin County Veterans Services Officer Doug Landsteiner, Fairmont Post 36 member Steve Chase. Behind them are FSS employees. Bottom: From left are Fleet and Surplus Services Operations Manager Brian Daun, Chase, Grove, Landsteiner and Gustner. Chase and Landsteiner drove to the office on Aug. 31 to surprise Grove and thank him for securing a Cobra helicopter for the Martin County Veterans Memorial. The chopper was dedicated Aug. 1.

Commander's Project

Let's do it for the dock!

Goal: \$40,000

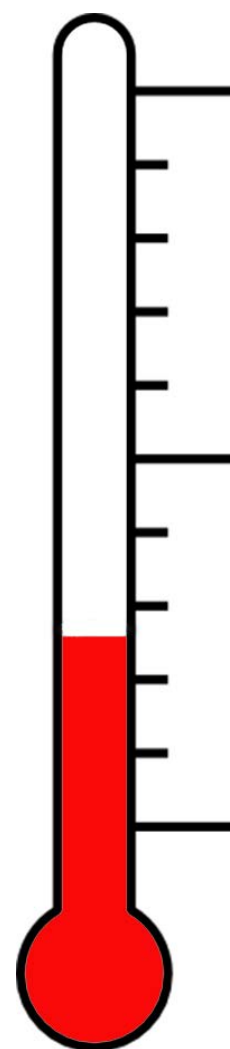
Department Commander Mark Dvorak's Project gives 75 percent to Legionville and 25 percent to Wounded Warriors Guide Service.

The portion for Legionville is intended to fund a new dock that will enclose the swimming area, making it safer for campers.

Present: 30% at \$11,925

Make checks out to Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 82.

Mail to American Legion Dept. of Minnesota, 20 W. 12th St. Room 300A, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000



Federal responding to national ammo shortage

Continued from Page 1

and Oct. 23, Federal hired more than 250 employees. Almost 20 percent of the production staff is new, and about 30 percent of the new hires are vets. The company still is hiring and encourages veterans to apply.

Angell is proud of Federal's track record of hiring veterans and donating to veteran causes. He's also proud that Federal, founded in Anoka as Federal Cartridge Corp. in 1922, remains non-union.

"Federal is the most unionized non-union shop you can find," he said. "It is run like a union without all the union dues."

When he was working full-time, Angell had the staff forward hiring applications from veterans to him and Shotshell Plant Manager Scott Collier.

"He and I would look at it because veterans have military attributes that a human resources person might look past," he said.

Culver, 46, first was hired as a temporary staffer, a way to get experience. A couple of months later, she became full-time. She started in rimfire as a charger operator, then she moved to centerfire as a material handler. Now she is a mechanical adjuster for a conventional loader of shotshells.

She found out Sept. 15 she has breast cancer. She is going through chemotherapy and expects surgery will take place in the spring. Because she had to cut off her hair, three co-workers — all men — cut their hair in support and more Federal employees are planning to do the same.

"I like it here a lot better than where I was," Culver said.

How the ammo is made

Senior Director of Operations Erik Carlson said he wants to assure people that the plant has ramped up production. Shifts work 24/7 to respond to the nationwide shortage of ammunition.

"We're making it. It's on its way," he said.

The Anoka plant has 700,000 square feet of enclosed space and sits on a 175-acre campus. Every 10 hours another semi pulls up filled with lead, and eight to 10 semis depart with ammunition daily.

Carlson stood before a black-and-white photo from the World War II days, when the plant was making ammo for the war effort.

"The fundamentals of making ammunition have not drifted from what it was in those days," he said.

Angell said to think of the plant as three connected buildings:

- rimfire
- centerfire
- shotshells

Carlson said 85 percent of what Federal sells are 9 mm, .357 and .38. However, the company has a fourth area — the custom shop, where workers make custom ammo, often for antique guns or specialty rifles.

"It's literally craftsmanship at work," he said.

And the fifth area is the employee store, where workers can buy Federal clothing, water bottles, ammo, hunting gear and other products.

Federal has contracted customers, such as the military, police organizations or government agencies, among others, and it has its commercial retail products, sold in stores across the country, Carlson said.

The lead is the start to the production process. All of the lead is from recycled sources — batteries, construction sites, metal dealers. It comes in various alloys of antimony, which determines how pliable the lead is and what sort of round it will be used in.

With machines, the lead is pulled into tubes, cut and formed into bullets.



Federal Premium Ammunition Senior Director of Operations Erik Carlson accepts a certificate of appreciation, mounted on a plaque, from The American Legion. The plaque is from National American Legion's Veterans Employment and Education Commission. Presenting the award on Oct. 23 is Anoka Post 102 Second Vice Commander Lori Allert. The company was recognized for hiring veterans. The bell behind them was a gift from the city of Anoka. Given to Federal founder Charles Horn in 1956 in appreciation for his charitable deeds, it had hung in the old Anoka City Hall.

2020 Employment and Education Commission Awards for Minn.

Employer of Veterans Award Small (50 or fewer employees)

DeGeus Tile & Granite Inc., Rochester
Nominated by Kasson Post 333

Employer of Veterans Award Large (201 or more employees)

Federal Cartridge Co., Anoka
Nominated by Anoka Post 102

Employer of Veterans Award Medium (51-200 employees)

No winner this year

Enhance the Livings of Disabled Persons Award

Rise human-services nonprofit, Spring Lake Park
Nominated by 5th District

About the awards

The winners in Minnesota are selected by the Department of Minnesota Employment Committee. The chairman is Carl Moon of Zimmerman Post 560.

The awards — the plaques actually come from National — were unable to be presented at the Department Convention and Fall Conference because of cancellations, but they will be presented in other ways. Anoka Post 102's Lori Allert presented Federal's award on Oct. 23 at the ammo plant.

Want to nominate a company for an American Legion award? Here is the list:

- Employer of Veterans Award Small, Medium, Large
- Employment Service Award (for veteran employment reps)
- Employer of Older Workers Award
- Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons Award
- Homeless Veterans Outreach Award

Contact the Department of Minnesota's Jennifer Kelley at jkelly@mnlegion.org to receive the nomination form.



A worker and a computer both inspect each finished cartridge for the slightest blemishes. Federal has a photo of every round it makes.

As most veterans know (but non-vets read this publication, too), the bullet is only the tip of the round. It is the projectile.

The word "cartridge" means the same as round. A cartridge has the bullet, a case (or shell, usually made from brass), a propellant (usually gunpowder), a rim (pretty much the bottom) and a primer (which, when struck, ignites the propellant).

And even in these parts, there are smaller parts, such as the battery cup, primer cup and anvil in the primer. Turn a centerfire round over, look at center of the bottom, and you see the little primer cup in the middle. Inside the primer cup sits the anvil, which crushes the primer mix that fires the round. The primer cup and anvil are encased in what's called a battery cup.

When you tour the plant, you see precision machines making all of these big and little parts, and there are more machines that put them together or punch grooves into the rims or heat the brass to give it less shine, if that's what the contractor wants.

Some of the machines are built from scratch, such as one that puts the lube on the tip of a rimfire round. Lube provides consistency shot to shot by providing a barrier between the bullet and the bore.

Cartridge rotary loaders keep the shells moving as they put the various parts together, and you see these precision loaders in all parts of the plant.

Some loaders do one at a time, but a new 9 mm pistol loader at the plant can

Federal Cartridge Co.'s 2020 donation recipients

- Minnesota Special Olympics
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Twin Cities Honor Flight
- Camp Ripley
- Trust Vets
- Minnesota Military Radio
- Disabled American Veterans
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Shoot for the Troops
- Minnesota Commanders' Task Force introductory event (canceled because of COVID)
- BOB-FM fundraiser
- Hugo Beyond the Yellow Ribbon

load 500 at a time using a special tray.

Accuracy and safety are huge in the firearms community. If you are a police officer or a military member, your weapon firing could save your life. If you are a hunter or a target shooter, reliability is key to improved performance.

Accuracy and safety are key at an ammunition plant, too, Carlson and Angell said.

For example, they showed a loader for .45 cartridges. The machine weighs each one. All the parts are the same weight, so the only variable is the powder. If it detects the weight is off, it rejects the cartridge.

At the 9 mm pistol packaging machine, Carlson and Angell showed an employee checking for quality before the machine is packed. The loader has a camera, photographing each and every cartridge, before they are packaged.

As the tour went on, it was clear each type of ammunition had humans and computers double-checking the quality.

"Every cartridge is quality-checked by a packer and a camera," Angell said. "They make sure the primer is not upside-down or sideways or the bullet backward or any other problems."

A "day code" goes on every box and case. It tells what day the ammo was made and which shift, down to which loader machine was used and who the packer was.

"When it comes to quality, we are selling to the military and law enforcement, when that round has got to perform, it's got to perform," Angell said. "The rest of us reap the benefit of that level of quality."

Culver operated a shotshell dial loader. She fed the machine the material, dry powder, pouch and shot. It loaded the Size 6 shot, crimped the shells, then kicked them into an elevator and down a ramp for her to inspect.



Everyone loves to see shiny brass when they tour the Federal plant in Anoka. Here, brass casings are washed in a tub.



Antimonial-lead ingots are stored in three areas depending on how pliable they are. The more antimony in the alloy, the harder it is. The ones in this image are 1.5 percent, 3 percent or 3.5 percent antimony. The lead-antimony alloy is highly resistant to corrosion.

A photo tour of Federal Premium Ammunition



Senior Director of Operations Erik Carlson reaches into a bin of .22 rounds awaiting packaging and shipment. There are 135,000 in a bin.



Even though it is technically an alloy, everyone still calls it lead. The lead is pulled into long cords and coiled for the next step.



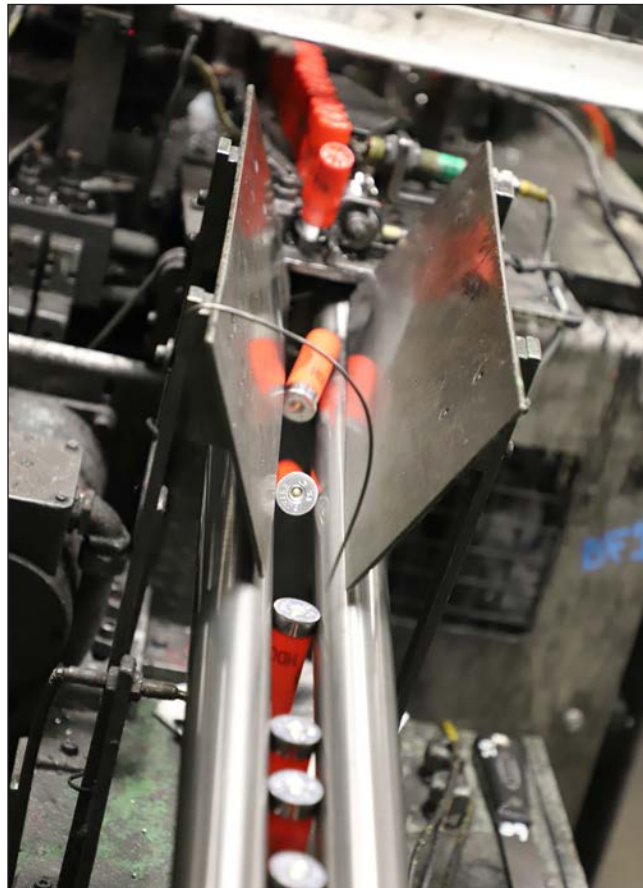
A contracted crew places a sleeve over a silo at the Federal ammunition plant in Anoka on Oct. 23 to make it look like a shotgun shell. The silos contain plastic resin, which comes to the plant by rail and is pumped into the silos.



Anoka Post 102 Second Vice Commander Lori Allert looks at newly made brass casings.



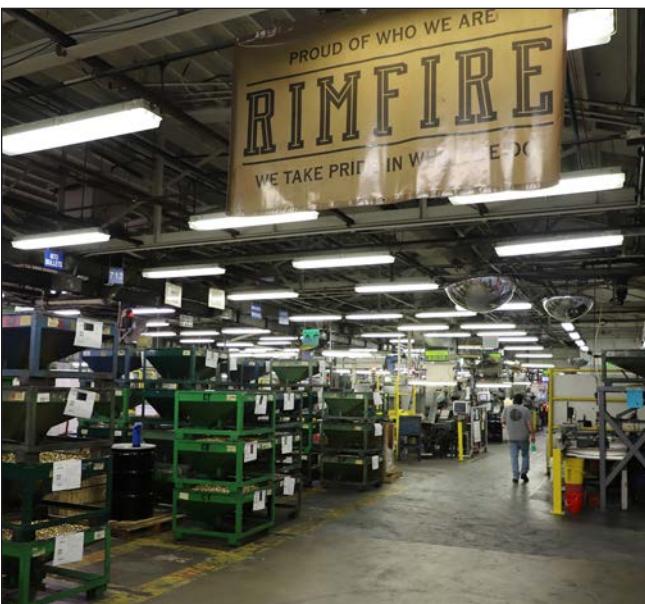
A machine cuts and forms the long cords into bullets, then drops them into a bin.



Completed shotgun shells come out of an elevator and down a ramp for employee Shannon Culver to inspect.



Federal retiree Dennis Angell, who has come back to help with hiring as production expands, holds up a piece of brass from which casings were made. The leftover brass gets sent to the supplier, melted down and used all over again.



A sign welcomes people to the rimfire area of the production plant. It says "Proud of who we are. Rimfire. We take pride in what we do."



A machine cuts steel to be formed into primers for shotshells.



Senior Director of Operations Erik Carlson holds up a black sweatshirt for sale at the company store. It has an image of soldiers in front of a flag and says "I support our veterans" above the Federal logo.

National Security Awards

SPECIAL SALUTE



Robert P. Hernandez

Minnesota National Guard

City: Grand Forks, N.D.
Rank: Sergeant First Class
Branch: Minnesota National Guard
Unit: HQ 2-136 Inf. Combined Arms Bn., Moorhead
Nominated by: Moorhead Post 21
Duties: He provides training plans and operations support to allow the battalion to qualify on all weapons systems.
Decorations: 24 medals and ribbons, including Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Iraq Campaign, GWOT; he is a member of the Order of St. Maurice
Member: Yes, Moorhead Post 21



Thomas A. Sauvageau

Minnesota National Guard

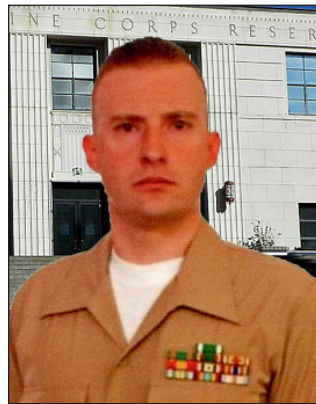
City: Barnesville
Rank: Sergeant First Class
Branch: Minnesota National Guard
Unit: HQ 2-136 Inf. Combined Arms Bn., Moorhead
Nominated by: Moorhead Post 21
Duties: He provides administrative, legal, HR and operational support to the battalion full-time and mob day soldiers.
Decorations: 23 medals and ribbons, including Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, GWOT, Iraq, NATO; he is a member of the Order of St. Maurice
Member: Yes, Moorhead Post 21



Melissa P. Nelson

Minnesota Air National Guard

City: Roberts, Wis.
Rank: Chief Master Sergeant
Branch: Minnesota Air National Guard
Unit: Joint Force Headquarters, St. Paul
Nominated by: New Prague Post 45
Duties: She is the personnel superintendent for headquarters and leads personnel and human resources programs.
Decorations: 14 awards and decorations, including Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Achievement, GWOT; has performed duty in Germany, Virgin Islands, Antarctica and New Zealand
Member: Yes, Wisconsin Post 2930 (at-large)



Joseph F. Hoffman

Marine Corps Reserve

City: Lake Elmo
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Branch: Marine Corps Reserve
Unit: HQ Company, 4th Law Enforcement Bn., St. Paul
Nominated by: U of M Post 548
Duties: He is the company gunnery sergeant. He is the technology and cybersecurity advisor and coordinator of medical, administrative, supply and safety. He coordinates drill evaluation and training exercises.
Decorations: 15 medals and ribbons, including Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Iraq, GWOT; has deployed to Iraq, South Africa, Thailand, Morocco and Jordan
Member: No



Photos and info by Mark W. Persons
Brainerd veteran Walt Straka received a Congressional Gold Medal in a ceremony at Edgewood Vista in Brainerd. Only 168 such medals have been given in our nation's history. Straka was a member of the 194th Regiment that was mobilized just before World War II. He fought bravely in the Philippines before taken prisoner by the Japanese in April 1942. Half of the captives died during the Bataan Death March. Walt survived and, as of this date, was 100 years old. He also received the Minnesota World War II Memorial Medallion and an autographed copy of the book, "Thunder on Bataan."



Anthony Hanto

Army Reserve

City: Rosemount
Rank: Specialist
Branch: Army Reserve
Unit: 327th Engineer Company, Onalaska, Wis.
Nominated by: U of M Post 548
Duties: He is a heavy engineering equipment operator.
Decorations: He has been awarded for his skills with the equipment.
Note: He was activated five months ago and is presently on active duty, serving in Kuwait.
Member: No



Matthew T. Hufford

Navy Reserve

City: St. Paul
Rank: Petty Officer First Class
Branch: Navy Reserve
Unit: Navy Operations Support Center, Minneapolis
Nominated by: U of M Post 548
Duties: He is a command career counselor, water well driller and construction planner and estimator specialist.
Decorations: 18 medals and ribbons, including Combat Action Ribbon, Iraq, Afghanistan, GWOT
Member: No



CarsonLee M. Christenson

Air Force Reserve

City: Park Rapids
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Branch: Air Force Reserve
Unit: 934th Airlift Wing, Minneapolis
Nominated by: U of M Post 548
Duties: She is a command post technician.
Decorations: Over 14 awards and ribbons, including Joint Services Accommodation Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal, GWOT; she received letters of accommodation while serving at Fort Meade, Md., as a cryptologic language analyst of Arabian and on duty in Iraq and Saudi Arabia; named Outstanding NCO in the 934th in 2019
Member: Yes, Park Rapids Post 212



Terence S. LaFollette

Coast Guard Reserve

City: Grand Forks, N.D.
Rank: Chief Petty Officer
Branch: Coast Guard Reserve
Unit: Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment, Minneapolis
Nominated by: U of M Post 548
Duties: He is a marine science technician, a facility inspections supervisor, a vessel inspector, a casualty investigator and a pollution responder.
Decorations: Over 18 medals, including Achievement Awards, Unit Accommodations, Meritorious Teams, Good Conduct Medals; has attended 10 schools specific to his duties
Member: No

FUN IN FAIRMONT



MERGE Board of Directors accept a \$1,000 donation from Fairmont Post 36 Commander Steve Fosnes for Martin County youth activities.

About this feature ...

The Department of Minnesota's National Security Awards were going to be presented at the Fall Conference. They are shared here instead with some of the information they submitted. All of the awards honor outstanding enlisted personnel.



1 and 2 BR units available in the Twin Cities Metro. Veteran-friendly!
 Sela Investments
 EHO Amy Gonyea
 612-290-6680

Listening Post

WAY TO GO, WINNEBAGO



Winnebago American Legion Post 82 donated \$7,000 to the Winnebago Area Ambulance Crew to go toward new monitors.

QUITE A QUILT IN ST. PETER



Bob Lambert, left, was presented a Quilt of Valor in honor of his four years serving in the U.S. Army as a helicopter pilot, one year spent in Vietnam and recognition of his leadership chairing the St. Peter Area Veterans Memorial Committee. The Quilt of Valor was made by Gail Dummer, far right. Dummer has 13 family members represented on the memorial, totaling over 150 years of military service. Lambert is a member of St. Peter Post 37.

MAKING IT WORK IN ALEX



Veterans Memorial Park was established by a group of local veterans from all services, to honor all veterans dating back to the start of the country. This task, however, began about three years ago, and the dedication of a veterans memorial took place June 26, 2020. Ownership of the park was transferred to the city of Alexandria. The site chosen for the park, at one time, was American Legion Post 87 Park, which was turned over to the city several years ago. Veterans Memorial Park is on Broadway in downtown Alexandria. Post 87 says thanks to all who made the massive project possible. With the support of many businesses, banks, manufacturers and individuals, as well as local veterans and veterans organizations, Post 87 contributed \$10,000 to the project. Commander Allan Gerlach presents a \$5,000 check to Ken Voigt and Russ Oorlog of the Veterans Memorial Park Committee. Gerlach encourages Legionnaires to stop in and visit the park.

'NEVER SAY DIE' IN BUFFALO



Buffalo Post 270 hosted a drive-in movie night featuring the 1985 hit "The Goonies." Outdoor concessions were available as well as a curbside pick up menu. Event was sponsored by: Insurance Center of Buffalo, Post 270, Buffalo Chamber of Commerce, city of Buffalo and Minnesota Dairy Herd Improvement Association.

UV FOR LUVERNE'S VETS



The Slayton American Legion Riders Chapter 64 presented a check in the amount of \$2095 to Duane Mabon, left, volunteer services coordinator for the Luverne Veterans Home. Mabon is also the Slayton Chapter 64 director. The money was raised to help veterans living there due to a decrease in available personal funds for the veterans during the covid-19 pandemic. The Chapter held the Ride for Veterans fundraiser on Aug. 22. It also presented a certificate to hang in the Luverne Veterans Home thanking the veterans for their service to the country. From left are Mabon, Kathy Holiway, Tom Carlson, Shirley Carlson, Colleen Miller, Murl Cole, Mark Rettey and Tim Kunselman.

ON TARGET IN REDWOOD



The American Legion conducted its 30th annual Junior-3 Position Air Rifle Tournament, which provides competitors an opportunity to test their marksmanship ability in competition with other junior competitors across the country. Redwood Falls Post 38 sponsored a team that placed second in the Minnesota Department Sporter Class. For the first round rankings, Noah U'Ren placed sixth, George Turbes eighth, Todd Detering 12th and Owen Horesji 14th. Regional and national matches were canceled. American Legion Jr. Shooting Sports medals were awarded for the local match. U'Ren received Gold, Turbes earned the Silver and Detering Bronze. The Legion team is affiliated with the local 4-H Shooting Sports/Wildlife Club. From left are Post 38 Commander Dustin Hunter, Owen Horesji, Todd Detering, George Turbes, Noah U'Ren and Post Athletic Officer Duane LeBrun

EAGER IN EAGAN



Eagan Post 594 facilitated a Flag Education and Disposal Ceremony on Oct. 8 at Thomas Lake Park in Eagan. It was supported by members of the Eagan Girl Scouts and their families. The post and auxiliary recognized four Girl Scouts for their assistance at this year's 9/11 Remembrance at the Eagan Tribute Plaza. Back row are Post 594 Commander John Flynn, Unit 594 President Susan Flynn, Post 594 Adjutant Wayne Bierman and the four medal recipients with their certificates are in the front row.

Taps

Continued from Page 5

Wills, Donald P., 71, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 12, 2020. He served a year in Vietnam. He was a member and board member of Milaca Post 178.

Wilmot, Allen, 90, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 8, 2020. He was a 53-year member of Lonsdale Post 586.

Wojahn, Elmo, 96, Navy veteran of World War II, died Sept. 17, 2020. He entered the Navy before the war and served on the USS Hornet carrier when it supported the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo. His final duty station after 20 years was Minneapolis, where he worked on helicopters. He was active in the Post's color guard. He was a 59-year member of Houston Post 423.

Wollschlager, Eugene, 89, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 6, 2020. He served as a radar instructor. He was a 31-year member of Austin Post 91.

Young, Clarence, 91, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 15, 2020. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Young, Richard E., 86, Navy veteran of the Cold War, died Sept. 26, 2020. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

Zilka, Richard "Zeke," 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 11, 2020. He earned a Bronze Star for valor as an infantry officer in Vietnam. He worked as Camp Riley for 27 years and the Little Falls Veterans Cemetery for two years. He was a 52-year member of Hillman Post 602.

Legionnaire of the Year named

By Shawn Davis

Though Fall Conference was canceled, the mission goes on. The Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Minnesota is proud to announce the recipient of the Legionnaire of the Year.

This year's recipient is a dual member of The American Legion, and the Sons of The American Legion. He has served at the Squadron level as adjutant, commander and

Squadron advisor. He has also held the position of adjutant and commander at his Post.

He has served numerous positions at the District level for both organizations, including commander. He has served as Scoutmaster guiding a number of Scouts to the rank of Eagle. He is currently serving as Sons of The American Legion Detachment advisor.

Please congratulate Gary Weaver as our Legionnaire of the Year!



Gary Weaver

What's happening?

Minnesota Veterans Day Event to go virtual

ST. PAUL — The official state of Minnesota Veterans Day Program will be held virtually this year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A 30-minute recorded program will be available starting at 8 a.m. Veterans Day, Nov. 11, on the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs website at MinnesotaVeteran.org/VeteransDay2020.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs invites all Minnesotans to celebrate and honor all Veterans who have served our state and country.

"While we are unable to gather in person this year, the importance of recognizing Minnesota's Veterans for their service and sacrifice has not diminished," said MDVA Commissioner Larry Herke. "We encourage all Minnesotans to take a moment to thank the Veterans in their lives for the freedoms we all enjoy."

The recorded program will include music and remarks from Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, Herke, Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard Brig. Gen. Shawn Manke, members of the Minnesota Congressional Delegation, Minnesota Commanders' Task Force Chairman Todd Kemery, MDVA employees, 34th Infantry Division Red Bull Band.

The program will be hosted by U.S Army Gulf War veteran and WCCO-TV reporter Reg Chapman. MDVA reminds Minnesota

veterans financially impacted by COVID-19 to consider applying for one of three COVID relief grants.

In March, MDVA allocated \$6.2 million in state funding to assist Veterans via the Disaster Relief Grant, the Special Needs Grant or the Distance Learning Support Grant. For more information, visit MinnesotaVeteran.org/COVIDRelief.

St. Paul Post 8 to host walk on Vets Day

ST. PAUL — Sponsored by St. Paul American Legion Post 8, this walk starts at 1 p.m. Nov. 11 and begins and ends at the Veterans Service Building, 20 W. 12th St., at the Minnesota Capitol Complex in St. Paul. It is the building directly across the lawn from the Capitol on the south side of the grounds.

The walk will be on the sidewalks of downtown St. Paul: Down St. Peter Street to Kellogg Boulevard, then back up Wabasha Street. Walkers are encouraged to bring a flag to carry. The walk honors all veterans, living and dead, of all eras.

Post 8 Adjutant Dave Dahl said World War II Navy veteran George Hunkins is the inspiration for this year's Veterans Day Walk. The 93-year-old is a 49-year member of The American Legion.

SAL schedules Spring Meeting

The Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Minnesota Spring Meeting, hosted by North St. Paul Squadron 39, is March 12.

The Finance Committee meets at 7 p.m., with the Detachment Executive Committee meeting at 8 p.m.. A general session is planned for 9 a.m. March 13.

Pearl Harbor Rally shapes up

The American Legion Family Department of Minnesota's Pearl Harbor Rally is slated for Dec. 5 at North St. Paul Post 39, 2678 Seventh Ave. E. in North St. Paul.

Social hour is noon with a 1 p.m. lunch. Program begins at 2 p.m.

To save a space, contact Mike Ash or Jody Hassing by Nov. 27. Ash's email is mikeash202@gmail.com and phone is 612-499-1404. Hassing's email is jodyhassing@gmail.com and phone is 651-329-7197.

The event is limited to 150 people because of the pandemic. Registration is necessary to be admitted.

Roundtable finds a way to keep going

The Harold C. Deutsch World War II Roundtable continues Dec. 8 at the Minnesota History Center.

Richard Frank, author of "Tower of Skulls," will show the origins of the conflict in the Pacific Theater, beginning with the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937.

Attendance is by invitation only. All presentations are posted on YouTube in the following weeks. Search "World War II History Round Table" to find the channel.

The SAL Update: Inquire about eligibility for family

Greetings to the Minnesota American Legion Family from your Sons of The American Legion.

Fall is upon us and Thanksgiving will be here before you know it and Christmas soon afterward. I hope you are all staying healthy and well.

Your Sons of The American Legion are doing very well in membership, but we could use the American Legion Family's help. Please reach out to your squadrons and make sure they are working on communicating with the squadron membership and processing their renewals.

With the eligibility change as a result of the LEGION Act, we hope to build our member-

Detachment commander

Dave Vulcan



ship along with The American Legion. So if you have a Legionnaire joining now as a result of the membership eligibility change, be sure to inquire about their spouse and their children and work on getting them to join The American Legion Auxiliary as well as the Sons of The American Legion.

We made our October target of 25 percent! Our next membership target is 35 percent on Nov. 12. The next renewal notice mailing from National will be

Jan-Feb 2021. Don't forget to use MySAL.org!

As you know Fall Conference was canceled, but we continue to us virtual meetings to meet, stay connected, and get the work done. If your District or Squadron wants to meet, consider using a virtual meeting or blend virtual with a live meeting to get more participation within the organization.

Pearl Harbor Membership Rally is coming up Dec. 5. I hope to see you there or at other American Legion Family functions. Until then, stay safe and well. Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

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

Detachment	Goal	Actual	Needed for Quota	Percent	Difference
1 Wisconsin * ^ ~	3,745	1,797	(1,948)	47.984%	1,948
2 Illinois * ^ ~	14,547	5,927	(8,620)	40.744%	8,620
3 Iowa * ^ ~	4,376	1,555	(2,821)	35.535%	2,821
4 Ohio	31,134	9,228	(21,906)	29.640%	21,906
5 Indiana * ^	39,365	11,393	(27,972)	28.942%	27,972
6 Minnesota ^	11,749	3,129	(8,620)	26.632%	8,620
7 Missouri	3,706	655	(3,051)	17.674%	3,051
8 Michigan	24,084	4,161	(19,923)	17.277%	19,923
TOTALS	132,706	37,845	94,861	28.518%	94,861

* Met Sept. 10, 2020 goal of 10%

^ Met Oct. 15, 2020 goal of 25%

~ Met Nov. 12, 2020 goal of 35%

Really, what have you got to lose?

Gentlemen,

Ever wonder what "extras" you get with your Sons of The American Legion membership. Some members may not know the discount programs that are offered exclusively to members of The American Legion and Sons of The American Legion. For those of you who do not know, there are some good deals out there.

Paying your dues will help you to make sure you can receive these discounts, as well as all other rights and privileges that come with being a member of the Sons of The American Legion.

Have you paid your dues yet? If not, don't delay. Call your adjutant immediately and get this taken care of today. Who's next?

You may also lose your privileges at your Post home, maybe can't attend meetings, or maybe you can't vote on issues within your Squadron. Don't wait, pay now!

If you are a member of a

Vice Commander

Jeff Vrabel



Zero Squadron, there is even more to lose. Hold a District or Detachment office, not for long if you're not paid. It's also wise to make sure your Squadron has submitted its Officer Certification Form and Consolidated Squadron Form. These are vital to our membership program and allow for proper reporting. Did your Squadron submit these documents? If not, please take care of it now. Who's next?

I was on a National conference call the other day, and I heard people from across the country state that their membership numbers were OK, but they always have a slow start and finish strong. Anyone see the problem?

We must change our mentality and the culture of our membership

program. If we think we can get different results by doing it the same way we always have, we won't get anywhere.

What can you do to help to change how we've always done it? What can you do to get your fellow members to understand that dues are due in July and we cannot wait to make our payment? What can we do, together, to change our culture? The first step is to make sure we are all paid. And don't forget to mention MySAL so we can get faster results. Who's next?

As always, please do not hesitate to contact NVC Doc Pfeiffer or me if you need help with anything.

Continue "Serving those who served...full steam ahead!" Who's next?

Proud Possessor of a Priceless Heritage.

Jeff Vrabel Sr. of Ohio is the Central Region chairman of the National Membership Committee for the Sons of The American Legion

Membership report as of Oct. 24

2020 Results as of 8/22/20	11038	Results as of	
2021 Goal from National	11749	24-Oct-20	
2021 105%	12455		
Current at Department	3366		
Percentage	28.65%		

Vice Commanders	2020 Results	2021 Goal	105% Dept.	Current at Dept.	Percentage	Placing
Glenn Mueller (1st and 3rd)	3762	3882	4114	1193	30.73%	3rd
Scott Gebel (2nd and 7th)	2206	2441	2591	423	17.33%	5th
Robert Bristo (4th and 5th)	666	773	818	209	27.04%	4th
Larry Ripplinger (6th and 9th)	2343	2429	2574	878	36.15%	1st
Steve Sullivan (8th and 10th)	1976	2224	2358	742	33.36%	2nd

District Commanders	2020 Results	2021 Goal	105% Dept.	Current at Dept.	Percentage	Placing
Greg Lemmer (1st)	1703	1818	1929	511	28.11%	7th
Russell Lietzke (2nd)	1250	1418	1507	249	17.56%	9th
Jack Thomas (3rd)	2059	2064	2185	682	33.04%	4th
John Weiss (4th)	347	378	400	79	20.90%	8th
LeRoy Gonzales (5th)	319	395	418	130	32.91%	5th
Robert Foss (6th)	1536	1589	1684	541	34.05%	3rd
Shawn Kosbab (7th)	956	1023	1084	174	17.01%	10th
Paul A Malsac (8th)	439	571	607	211	36.95%	2nd
Terry Buraas (9th)	807	840	890	337	40.12%	1st
Daryl Harmon (10th)	1537	1653	1751	531	32.12%	6th

1982 Squadron At Large	2020 Results	2021 Goal	105% At Dept.	Rally	Total
	7	0	0	0	0

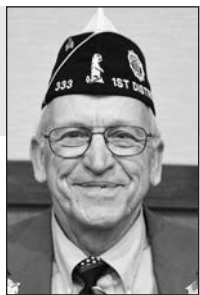


District commanders



1st District

Dale Wellik



Greetings from the 1st District American Legion Family. By the time you get this, you will be able to read all about the cancelation of the Fall Conference at Breezy Point. We hope those who went to the area anyway had a good weekend.

Down here, we are getting our first touches of winter weather. We are now looking ahead to November and Veterans Day, and membership meals, maybe drive-by meals and to-go meals. How creative can we get?

Marine Corps was established in 1775, just four weeks after the U.S. Navy.

Daylight saving time ends Nov. 1.

Election Day is Nov. 3. Get out to your duty (obligation) to

have your say! Membership is coming along slower at this time, but we are holding our own. Don't hold on to the memberships. SEND THEM IN! We don't hand out awards for sending the most at one time! Mail or send them in electronically regularly. This winter, drive carefully as always. Pray for our deployed and their families. Continue to do the Buddy Checks. Pray for peace! *For God and Country!*

2nd District

Brad Pagel



Here we are with most of 2020 in the rearview mirror. I will not lie it has been a hard year. I find myself overwhelmed by so many things — work, harvest time, COVID-19, my District commander responsibilities and, of course, the coming elections. I imagine most of you are feeling the same.

All this makes keeping in touch even more important. We are working hard to put together a new, all-inclusive newsletter together for the 2nd District, and we need your help. I need your help. We would like to include entries from all our Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and Riders District officers.

This also includes our program committee chairman. We would love to hear about how the programs are being worked in Posts across the District. If your Posts are doing fundraisers and would like to include information about them, we will take that also. Please reach out to the Post in the District and see what they are up to.

If you have questions about what to write about it, please send your questions ...

Attention: 2nd District Newsletter Gremlin ...

and they will send you a list of ideas.

You can email them through-out 2nd District email at 2nddistrictalmn@vastbb.net.

Now onto membership. Please remember that your membership

processing year begins July 1 of each year, which means you can pay your dues each year starting July 1. By now Legionnaires have received several postal mail renewal requests. Your 2021 membership will be delinquent Jan. 1, 2021 which mean your membership benefits will be suspended, and you risk losing your continuous years of service to The American Legion. Please get your membership to your Post as soon as possible. Last, but not least, we need to start talking about when we have our Post, District and Department events, conferences and convention. Our younger veterans have families and full-time employment. Gone are the days where we can have an event that starts on a Thursday and goes until Saturday.

Our young veterans and their families cannot afford to take two or more days off to attend Legion functions. If you have ideas on how we can accomplish a more inclusive schedule, please send us your ideas. Our district Mid-Winter is scheduled Jan. 8 and 9, 2021, at St. James Post 33 with the Christmas Party on the Jan. 8 after the Executive Committee Meeting. Remember we are all in this together. I look forward to hearing from you.

3rd District

Linda Dvorak



Hello from the Thundering Third!

I am writing this article as the snow is falling! Snow in October, what else will this year bring!

The 3rd District has been busy, not only getting membership but also in volunteering. Eagan Post 594 cleans the streets in town. We have Posts that are planning on Veterans Day events; some will be virtual, some will be in person.

The vice commanders have been busy visiting their Posts

and helping them out. This year we have two new vice commanders and two old vice commanders that have moved to new areas. Shaking thing up a bit in the 3rd! Have you gone into National's website and looked at the variety of newsletters you can sign up for? There is so much information available to you. To include the information about

Training Tuesdays! These will be 60-90-minute virtual training sessions on a variety of subjects — to include the new Personify 360 which is coming online in

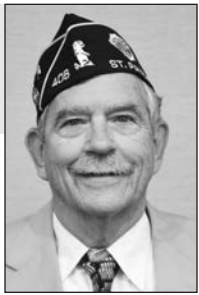
December!

Here's hoping your Thanksgiving is blessed with family and friends!



4th District

Joe Jansen



Hello to all.

We are having a good time with all the programs attempting to restart. One of the great things about being a District commander is seeing how taking a risk can pay off.

Last spring, one of our members wanted to be named as the coordinator for the Veterans Hospital third-Sunday-of-the-month visits. Unfortunately, that program cannot restart. The Veterans Affairs Medical Center will advise us if and when that program may restart.

However, your fellow member John Grams has teamed up with the Auxiliary to donate materials we have already purchased through the efforts of Mary Ann Davis and Mary French. They are authorized (by the VAMC) to make up gift bags (estimated materials should allow for 250 to 300 bags) for all the patients who will be spending the holidays hospitalized there.

The VAMC staff will be doing the actual distribution of the gifts.

This donation was approved by the members attending the

Ramsey County Central Committee meeting at North St.Paul on Oct. 14.

The 4th and 5th Districts had great training on Oct. 10 at the University of Minnesota, St Paul Campus. Lane Stunkel, Ken Gibson and Dave Dahl, attend Minnesota Legion College training at Camp Ripley the weekend October 16, 17 and 18.

Any of you who would like to attend upcoming sessions of Legion College, please contact your Post commanders for an application. The 4th District is paying for your training, so cost should not be a factor in your decision. I was able to attend the Legionville semi-annual meeting on Oct. 17. You will learn more about the great plans for this coming season next month.

I hope you all have a Great Thanksgiving Holiday and remember our service members on active duty who are unable to spend the holidays with their families.



5th District

Wade Larson



Be sure to vote on Election Day.

Happy Veterans Day on Nov. 11. The normal official state ceremony will be available online on the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs website

Review Veterans Day discounts on military.com. Some of the discounts I found beneficial are:

- Target discounts 10 percent off online and in store on Nov. 1-11 for veterans and service members. Verify eligibility by creating an account at www.target.com/Circle/Military.
- Kohls on Nov. 7-11 has 30 percent in-store discounts for veterans and family members. Customers must show a valid military ID, military dependent ID or veteran ID at the point of purchase.
- Sport Clips on Veterans Day will provide free haircuts to veterans and service members, as well as donate \$1 to the VFW's Help A Hero scholarship program.
- Verify on its website, but Mister Car Wash typically offers free car washes to veterans on Veterans Day.
- The restaurants Texas Roadhouse, Applebee's, Starbucks, Denny's, Famous Dave's and others offer free meals on Veterans Day. Verify closer to the date, of course. Others are Mystic Lake Buffet and Perkins.

It may be more difficult this year, but think of a veteran you can pick up and take with you or coordinate with a restaurant manager to drop off a meal for them if takeout is available. Send

the veteran a Veterans Day card and phone call. Remember our veterans with the Minnesota Assistance Council of Veterans that are experiencing with job loss and homelessness. Typically this time of year I am wrapping up from stand downs for MACV 10 locations from across the state of Minnesota.

We received another award that only three Districts accomplished for 100 percent Post Consolidated Reports of Post of the District.

National Commander James Bill Oxford's new goal to have 5,000 participants for the 100 miles for hope to benefit Veterans Children Foundation. You don't have to stop at 100 miles. Many members have exceeded by multiples several times over.

Update your story's to Legiontown of your post or group of individuals of your post.

Highly recommending the Legion's Basic Training course for everyone. You will truly learn the history and what the Legion is about more in depth especially if you haven't been involved with Legion programs in the past. To help you better comprehend the programs the Legion is involved with and help you explain to others what we are all about.

Jamie Woods and myself graduated the first class of the Minnesota Legion College at Camp Ripley. Finding this

interaction over the weekend with all the other state Districts that will be cultivating ideas of how we can possibly be improving interactions and how we operate in the future.

For me it really cultivated a deeper thought process of how to look at new ways to interact within our District community and across District borders.

If you thought of volunteering

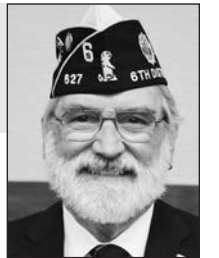
but haven't started, or would like to in a small way or have ideas, even if only once a year, contact me.

Our next District meeting will be on Zoom as well as in person on Nov. 2, a Monday (because of the election) at 6:30 p.m. at the Eagles Post 2507, E. 25th St. Minneapolis Legion Post 1 we would be happy to have you join us.



6th District

Paul Edwards



Greetings to the 6th District Legion Family,

Even though the Fall Conference had to be canceled because of the snowstorm, I still want to thank all the folks from Billie Brown Post 627 in Nisswa who put so much effort into making it a pleasant experience for all who would have attended.

Something else that is now in the history books is the first session of the Minnesota American Legion College. Congratulations to all 20 students who represented the 10 districts of Minnesota. And a special "hats off" to the two students from the 6th District, Karen O'Bar and Leslie Kruft. If you get within speaking distance of these two fine Legionnaires, be sure and congratulate them for a job well done.

The membership numbers

are chugging right along. Several posts in the district are well ahead of rate and are already at or above the percentage goal for December. Special shout out to Paynesville Post 271 for already qualifying for the National Commander's 103 percent award.

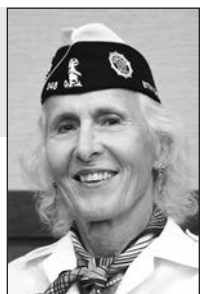
MyLegion.org is changing over to a new vendor called Personify 360. Watch for training opportunities on the new system. Perhaps the most important thing you can do to prepare is to make sure that myLegion.org has a valid email address for you.

To close, Happy Thanksgiving. I pray your day is filled with lots of love with family around you at the table.



8th District

Anne Koskinen



Greetings 8th District Legionnaires:

Sorry about missing my Post in October; I was very busy with personal family issues which mostly have been resolved.

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 continue to encourage each of our Posts to return to in-person meetings; get back to business and socialize with your fellow Legionnaires; and sign up new members per the LEGION Act.

MyLegion.org will be changing soon (nothing will be lost) and Posts are urged to use this to map members (and other things).

Districts 8 and 10 had a Rally in Duluth on Oct. 10 that went really well. It was good to have an in-person general meeting. Some business was done but it was a gathering of fellowship. We even had a group of Legion

Riders show up.

The 8th District conducted an Executive Committee meeting by Zoom to do some necessary business:

- Winter Conference is set for Jan. 23 in Two Harbors.
- June Convention is set for June 5 in Hibbing.
- There will be a blood drive on The Range by the American Legion Riders.
- The Department Fall Conference was canceled because of inclement weather.

Did Judge Advocate Greg Colby's letter on local bars serving as Post meeting place help any of the you? I haven't heard back.

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



9th District

Steve Sundstrom



Hello everyone.

I hope everyone is doing well. It looks like winter is here. If you're planning on traveling anywhere, please be prepared for any weather you may encounter and drive safely.

In October the remains of an unclaimed veteran, Lelan Derr, were returned to the Fargo-Moorhead area. I would like to give a special "thank you" to the FM Legion Riders for escorting the funeral despite the poor weather and also to those

who took their time to attend and honor him.

Veterans Day is coming soon. I hope everyone takes a moment of time to pay respect for all who have passed before us and for those who are still out there protecting us. We live in the greatest nation in the world, and without these people it would



The Auxiliary Bulletin

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

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November 2020

Membership efforts start off with really good figures

President's Message

Mary Hendrickson



As I write this column, I'm still feeling sad about the cancellation of Fall Conference. As Minnesotans, we know that Mother Nature had different plans for us that week.

Members of the Department Executive Committee agreed to meet Saturday, Oct. 24, via Zoom or in person at Breezy Point Resort.

Our special guest on Zoom was National Auxiliary President Nicole Clapp, who joined us from her home in Iowa. The DEC completed some necessary business. I was happy to announce the Minnesota National and Department unit and individual award winners for 2019-2020. The district presidents will bring these citations, plaques and gifts for 2020 Department President's Award of Excellence Winners back to their districts to present at Mid-Winter gatherings.

Congratulations to all our winners! I hope to be at many of your Mid-Winters to join your District president in handing out these much-deserved awards. We will reschedule National President Nicole's visit to Minnesota.

BREAKING NEWS: Last week our 2020 membership total reached 30,005! I'm sure you remember (from pleading in person and online) my wish to reach 30,000 during my term in office.

I was thrilled when Department Executive Secretary Marsha Bible informed me that the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota finished **No. 1** in donations to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund!

I've always known that Minnesotans have caring hearts for those in need.

Our donations to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund come from our Fall Conference Silent Auction as well as donations from individuals and Units. In this year of horrendous fires and hurricanes, not to mention the devastating effects of coronavirus, our assistance to members is needed more than ever.

Since Fall Conference was canceled, the DEC brainstormed about possible ways to make up for the loss of income from our annual Fall Silent Auction. We usually make between \$3,500-\$6,000 at this popular event.

Some Districts, which made a seasonal basket for the auction, are holding a raffle or silent auction for the item at their Post

home. Other District presidents suggested exploring the idea of an online auction for some of the items.

Several DEC members suggested bringing the very popular \$1 grab bags to one of our Department membership rallies. Department Secretary Marsha Bible and I will consult with our Auxiliary Emergency Fund Chairman Joanie Krantz to consider all the suggestions. If you have any ideas, please contact me or the Department Office.

October has been a slow month for opportunities to visit Units around the state. Auxiliary committees have been busy corresponding by emails, teleconferences and Zoom meetings. On Oct. 17, I had the pleasure of speaking at Legion College, which was held at Camp Ripley.

They allowed me 10 minutes to tell the story of the American Legion Auxiliary. At the conclusion of my speech, I then headed to Legionville to attend the fall meeting of the Legionville Board.

Like other organizations (and partly due to the cancellation of the summer 2020 School Patrol Camp sessions), Legionville is struggling financially and would appreciate any donations from individuals and Units.

Please invite me to your Unit meetings and special events. I know that the coronavirus has changed the way we are able to meet and continue our support of veterans, active-duty military and their families.

I'm reminded of a song that was popular in England during World War II. It was called "We Will Meet Again" and was sung by soprano Vera Lynn. The main lyrics were: "We will meet again. We don't know where, we don't know when. We will meet again."

Vera Lynn died in June at the age of 103. England mourned her loss and reflected on the impact her song had on soldiers and the public during this difficult time in England's history.

God Bless America at this difficult time in our history. Please vote!

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

Canceling was a tough call

Breezy Point Resort provides full refunds

BREEZY POINT — Meetings, conferences and conventions for the American Legion Family have been canceled since mid-March due to the coronavirus.

American Legion Auxiliary members were confident and very hopeful that our Department Fall Conference, our unofficial start to the year, would still be held. Planning in both Department offices began in early June for a COVID-compliant conference and had been going forward.

The Auxiliary office was set and ready to go to Breezy Point. Local Co-Chairmen Ray and Pat DeZurik emailed us the final registration numbers — a total of 350 members, anxious yet still nervous to attend the conference. One hundred forty-eight of them were Auxiliary members.

Our truck was loaded at the Department office during a heavy snowstorm and waiting in St. Cloud ready to head to Breezy Point on Wednesday morning. At 7:01 a.m. we received the call that Fall Conference had been canceled — not due to COVID but to Mother Nature and her impending forecast for much of northern Minnesota. It was a tough day for all.

Facebook messages, emails and phone calls were the order of the day for many. The toughest call was to our National office to cancel the visit of National President Nicole Clapp of Iowa. She was set to arrive at Brainerd airport that evening.

Our hosts, Breezy Point Resort, were just as shocked as we were. They had worked so hard as well to prepare and set everything up for us. All rooms were ready, food was purchased, and extra staffing was brought in. They advised members who canceled their rooms that our first night's deposit would not be refunded.

President Mary Hendrickson and Secretary Marsha Bible watched the weather reports to see when the Department Executive Committee might possibly meet. The forecast for Friday and Saturday were clear. After a poll of the members of the Department Executive Committee, it was decided that the Department Executive Committee would change their meeting from Thursday to Saturday morning. That way, a few already paid for hotel rooms would not go unused.

On Friday, Breezy Point Resort, in a most generous gesture, reversed their decision to not refund deposits. Down payments were refunded to everyone who chose not to go to Breezy Point and stay,



Yes, there was lots of snow at Breezy Point — this snowman by the water was definite proof of that. Some Legion Family members made the trek to the Nisswa Post 627 area anyway and enjoyed each other's company.



ALA National President Nicole Clapp, top row second from left, smiles during a Zoom call with the Department of Minnesota on Oct. 24. Her trip to Minnesota in April was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic, and her October visit was scratched due to weather. She hopes to be invited again.

after all. The Executive Committee knew it still had to meet and decided to continue with its meeting.

Thank you

Special thanks to all who worked to plan and prepare to host our Fall Conference. We truly appreciate your efforts Nisswa American Legion Family and the staff of Breezy Point Resort. We hope to be back real soon!

Department Executive Committee meets

The Auxiliary DEC met on Saturday,

Oct. 24, at Breezy Point Resort with one member and several guests participating via Zoom.

Our special guest was ALA National President Nicole Clapp. She participated in our meeting from start to end.

This was her second scheduled and canceled visit to Minnesota (her first visit was scheduled for April). She told us that she hopes we invite her again. The third time might be a charm!

She thanked all members who have been sewing masks and doing other tasks to help fight COVID and asked them to continue to help whenever asked.

The sooner we get started, the sooner we finish

By Sandra Fredrickson
Past Presidents Parley
Chairman

As we continue from last year and celebrate our 100th Auxiliary Anniversary let us rededicate ourselves to our mission!

Remember, honor and serve!

The purpose of the Past Presidents Parley is to utilize past Auxiliary leaders as mentors and ambassadors and to ensure a strong future for the organization. This year again, as past presidents, whether in

the Unit, District or Department, we continue to focus on:

1. Our very own Minnesota Past Presidents Parley Healthcare Scholarship
2. Unit Member of the Year
3. Salute to Servicewomen Units, Districts and our Department should utilize the experience and knowledge of past Auxiliary leaders, helping to ensure strong future leadership for the organization. Every level of our organization should have a Parley. So, if you don't have one, I hope you form one!

We need to make everyone

aware of the awesome Department Past Presidents Healthcare Scholarship. It is for health care — that does not mean just nursing.

This could be for radiology, certified nursing assistants, medical secretaries, emergency medical technicians and on and on.

Last year the Department awarded six \$1,000 scholarships. Applications need to get to your schools ASAP. These can be filled out now and sent back to the Units so they can be forwarded to the department to be reviewed.

Don't wait until May! Kids are busy as we are, so the sooner it gets out there, the sooner they can get them sent in. Unit presidents, please make sure your student has followed the rules and the form is filled out properly.

If your Unit has any extra funding, donations to the Department for this scholarship are much appreciated. Remember any donation from your Unit or memorials can be sent earmarked Past Presidents Parley Scholarship program. This scholarship is dependent on donations.



3 GENERATIONS, SORT OF



Department President Mary Hendrickson and her 10th District "Daughter," Brandi Christiansen, hold Laura, born on Sept. 5 at the Department Executive Committee meeting.

National president heard on Minnesota Military Radio

American Legion Auxiliary President Nicole Clapp participated in a radio interview with Minnesota Military Radio on Oct. 22, even though Fall Conference was canceled. Also joining in on the interviews were Department Commander Mark Dvorak, National Vice Commander of The American Legion Bruce Feuerbach of Iowa, Sons of The American Legion Detachment Adjutant Dennis Henkemeyer, Minnesota American Legion Riders Director Paul Hassing and Minneapolis VA Health Care System Director Patrick Kelly.

'Back to the Basics' schools on leadership are coming up

Leadership Chairman Mary Kuperus has scheduled leadership schools in five locations throughout the state. Schools are scheduled for Nov. 21 at West Duluth Post 71; Jan. 23 at Forest Lake Post 225; Feb. 20 at Thief River Falls Post 117; Feb. 27 at Winsted Post 407 and April 7 at Sanborn Post 286. More information is in the upcoming Unit mailing.

Thanks go to Minnesota V4V

The American Legion Auxiliary was notified last week that we have once again received a grant from the Minnesota V4V Foundation. The grant, in the amount of \$7,500, will be used toward purchasing gifts for our veterans that reside in the VA Medical Centers and Minnesota Veterans Homes for the Gift Shop Program. A second grant was spearheaded by the efforts of Carol Kottom, a deputy VA Voluntary Services representative at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center. V4V granted the St. Cloud VA a grant of \$10,000 to purchase winter coats for the residents that need them. We are forever grateful to the V4V Foundation for these generous gifts that make the lives of our veterans in need better.

Watch for sewing patterns

Linda Kroppeunske and Carol Kottom have spent the past few weeks cleaning up all our sewing patterns for the items needed at our Medical Centers and Homes. They will be in the upcoming Unit mailing. Please consult the information before making items — many needs have changed.

Upcoming events

- Nov. 10:** American Legion Auxiliary 101st Birthday
- Dec. 5:** Pearl Harbor Rally at North St. Paul Post 39
- Feb. 6:** Sweetheart Rally at Paynesville Post 271
- March 6:** Appreciation Rally & DEC Meeting
- March 14:** The American Legion 102nd Birthday
- April 9-10:** Department Junior Conference, location to be determined
- June 13-19:** American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State
- July 14:** DEC Meeting at Redwood Falls
- July 15-17:** Department Convention at Redwood Falls

Awards

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Award	Member	Unit
Americanism		Elysian 311
Children & Youth	Milo Blanich	Elysian 311
Children & Youth	Glen Dornfeld	Hutchinson 96
Community Service		Anoka 102
Community Service	Star	St. Michael 567
Education	Coppa Starr	Hayfield 330
Senior History	Betty Gartner	Elysian 311
Junior History	Stickley Gifford	New Germany 601
Senior History	Best District Report	Jeanne Ray, Hutchinson 96
Junior Activities	Starr Lauck	New Germany 601
Junior Activities	Cederberg Lundgren	Elysian 311
Leadership	Florence Hamel	Elysian 311
Legislation	Marie Harding	Elysian 311
National Security	Lonergran	Elysian 311
Past Presidents Parley	Kienholz Walker	Vickie Milbrath, Okabena 608
Poppy	Vanlandingham	Chaska 57
Public Relations	Ruth Hutton	Coon Rapids 334
VA&R	Binger	Chaska 311

PRESIDENT'S AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Award	Unit
Americanism	Barnum 415
Children & Youth	Hayfield 330
Community Service	Kimball 261
Constitution & Standing Rules	Hayfield 330
Education	Elysian 311
Senior History	Glenville 264
Junior Activities	Morris 29
Leadership	Hackensack 202
Legislation	Princeton 216
Memorial	Elysian 311
National Security	Norwood Young America 343
Past Presidents Parley	Fridley 303
Poppy	Anoka 102
Public Relations	Hackensack 202
VA&R	Chaska 57
Service to Veterans	Elysian 311



NATIONAL AWARDS

Very few National awards were presented this year and will be presented next year in Phoenix. These were the ones that we received:

- Pequot Lakes Unit 49 won the American Legion Child Welfare Plaque, called the Children First Gift Club Caretaker Award
- Morgan Weisbrich won first place in the Northwest Division Grades 3-4 in the Americanism Essay Contest. She wins a certificate and a \$50 award. Her entry come through Karlstad Unit 445
- Addie Athman won first place in the Northwest Division Grades 2-3 in the Poppy Poster Contest. She wins a certificate. Her entry came through Pierz Unit 341.
- Alexia Jones won first place in the Northwest Division Grades 4-5 in the Poppy Poster Contest. She wins a certificate. Her entry came through Osseo Unit 172.

PROUD TO BE MEMBERS



Villard Unit 175 recognized three members with over 60 years of continuous membership. From left are Marilyn Brekke, 60 years, Margaret Laumeyer, 65 years and Beatrice Walker, 62 years.

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year 10/16/19
One	3,994	1,566	39.21%	1,622
Two	4,015	1,561	38.88%	1,490
Three	3,870	1,602	41.40%	1,554
Four	581	210	36.14%	278
Five	572	215	37.59%	179
Six	5,170	2,278	44.06%	2,154
Seven	3,197	1,053	32.94%	1,140
Eight	1,302	630	48.39%	553
Nine	3,445	1,441	41.83%	1,442
Ten	3,978	1,549	38.94%	1,391
1982	193	151	78.24%	126
Totals	30,317	12,256	40.43%	11,929

Gift Shop ideas are in bloom across Minnesota

The Gift Shop is moving forward. It will be very different from past years since volunteers are still not permitted to be in the facilities. Some of the facilities have come up with some wonderfully unique ideas. One facility is using a local vendor to monogram wearing apparel with the facility's name and another has teamed up with the facility canteen to be open after hours so a limited number of veterans can do their shopping while social distancing. They are even wrapping the gifts for them. While another is offering surprise bags for the residents only and yet another has ALA members who are also employees who will be distributing gift cards after their shifts are over. At other facilities, gift cards will be distributed by the social workers and cards for the spouses and dependent children will be mailed to them. A lot of thought and planning went into making this happen for our veterans and their families. Chairman Mary French and Committee member Lynn Olson wish to thank all the Medical Center and Veterans Home representatives as well as all the volunteer service coordinators for their time and ideas to make the Gift Shop happen even during COVID. A \$25 gift card or equivalent value gift as noted above will be given to each veteran, spouse/caregiver and dependent children under 18 all because of the donations from the American Legion Auxiliary and a few others. Gift cards are mostly from Target, Walmart, Amazon and Dollar General. We are purchasing them using our Scrip program. This gives us the opportunity to receive a variable percentage discount on each card purchased.

10th District

Continued from Page 13

not be possible.

The American Legion is trying to get Buddy Check Week passed in legislation. Hopefully it will get passed. Please do your best to keep in contact with your fellow veterans. In these times a simple phone call can mean a lot to someone who is unable to get out.

Fall Conference is in a couple of days, with current conditions I hope we have a good turnout. Due to COVID we won't be having a hospitality night, hopefully we will still have some sort of opportunity to get together and talk with each other.

Take care and safe traveling.

A QUESTIONABLE USE OF VETERANS



A keen observer spotted this fellow with a Grasston-based nonprofit called Flag Wavers Hope and sent in this image. The observer said the man was trashing other veterans organizations and dressed like a veteran but was not one himself. His nonprofit is registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office, with him as the sole member and president. The observer said he asked for donations from every customer at the Walmart in Grand Rapids. Walmart soon barred him from returning. "I challenged him, and he got very defensive right away and accused me of harassing him."

Know your CVSOs

Lisa Klenk is a U.S. Army veteran. She served in Germany and Texas. She has been the Sibley County veteran service officer for more than 12 years.

Klenk is a member of The American Legion and Disabled American Veterans. She enjoys spending time with her friends and family. She is an avid do-it-yourselfer and enjoys the outdoors and



Lisa Klenk

crafting.

She served as a legal specialist in Germany and at Fort Hood, Texas. She has a bachelor's degree in business management and is a certified veterans advocate.

She is married with three children. They reside in Winthrop.

Marty Howes grew up in Delano, graduated in 1992 and later enlisted in the U.S. Army. After serving in the

Regular Army he transferred into the National Guard in Crookston. He currently lives just out of Warroad with his wife and his two kids. Howes has a passion for community service holding various leadership positions through out his church (Warroad Zion), The American Legion, VFW, Roseau Masonic Lodge and Kem Shrine (Snobles), and is also a member of 40 & 8,



Marty Howes

and the DAV. He serves as the vice president of the Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers, and being the CVSO

for Roseau County for six years and counting only complements his desire to give back to the community while trying to make a positive difference. Howes spends time riding motorcycle or with his family enjoying country living as they love to fish, hunt and go for Ranger rides in the state forest near his backyard.



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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