

**American Legion Auxiliary  
Department of Minnesota**

**2024-2025**

**Department President  
Judy Ackerman  
January Unit Mailing**

State Veterans Service Bldg. 20 W 12th St #314  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Phone: 651-224-7634 Email: deptoffice@mnala.org  
Website: www.mnala.org



**A New Year inspires us to define our new goals. It motivates us to make new commitments. It encourages us to live up to our promises. Wishing you a wonderful 2025.**



Membership – We need your help to reach 85% of our Department Goal by March 15<sup>th</sup>. National President Trish has a challenge out to all departments to achieve the Department Merit Medallion. It would be an honor to represent the Department of Minnesota on the stage at the National Convention in August. To achieve this award, we need 3,710 more members. Membership Chairman Hope and I know we can achieve this goal with your help. WE CAN DO THIS.

Thank you to all the donations that have been sent in for the Department President's projects. I am a little behind with Thank You's, but they will be sent out shortly. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Thank you to the units that have issued invitations to visit their units. I have had a great time visiting these units and the weather has been very good for traveling until this week.

Wreaths Across America – It was a humbling experience to participate in laying wreaths at Fort Snelling on Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>. It is not too early to plan for next year. It is such an awesome sight to see these wreaths on the headstones. Unfortunately, not all graves get a wreath. Please think about donating a wreath or two or more for this next year.

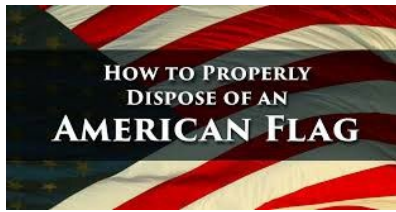
Poppies – Have you ordered your poppies for this year? If not, please get your orders in so the Department Office can ensure that there are enough poppies to fill the orders.

January is National Security and Legislative month. Promote these programs at your meeting.

Testimonial – My testimonial will be May 17<sup>th</sup> at Best Western, Fairmont, MN. There will be a flyer coming out soon.

May you have a blessed and Happy New Year. Stay safe now that the winter weather is upon us.

**Judy Ackerman  
Department President**



**Department of Minnesota**  
January 2025 Unit Mailing  
**Americanism Chairman, Kollett Kaehlert**

**FLAG ETIQUETTE**

**Americanism Committee**  
**2024 - 2025 Flag Etiquette Article 4**

Many Americans proudly fly the U.S. flag at their homes and places of work, but what do you do with it when it's old and ratty and you're ready for a new one? Don't just throw it in the trash like any other old item — that's considered disrespectful.

Just as there's etiquette for displaying Old Glory, there's also etiquette for disposing of flags in a dignified manner.

***Flag Retirement Ceremonies***

Many state and county government offices and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts have flag disposal boxes outside of their buildings. Police stations also collect them. Once the disposal boxes are full, various organizations such as American Legions, VFWs and the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts collect the flags and hold flag retirement ceremonies.

Rules on how to properly fly the flag were established in June 1923, when the National Flag Conference met in Washington. Its members created the Flag Code, which states that "the flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing."

The American Legion passed a resolution about flag retirement ceremonies in 1937, and they've been an important ritual ever since. According to the resolution, "The approved method of disposing of unserviceable flags has long been that they be destroyed by burning."

The U.S. flag is considered such a sacred symbol that burning it in an undignified manner constitutes desecration. That's why the ceremonies are held in a specific manner.

***Ceremony Specifics***

Every year on June 14, Americans celebrate Flag Day. Not surprisingly, it's considered the most appropriate day to hold flag disposal ceremonies, which are often held at night.

During an American Legion ceremony, participants stand aligned in two parallel rows about 20 feet apart, facing each other. A small fire burns beyond the rows of members, opposite the Legion commander.

The flags that are no longer serviceable are presented to Legion commanders, who inspect them to make sure they should, in fact, be discarded. When it's agreed upon that they've reached their current worn state due to proper service of tribute, memory and love, a color guard presents the colors and a chaplain offers prayers.

As the crowd salutes, the flag detail dips the retired flags into kerosene and puts them on a rack over the fire. A bugler sounds "To the Colors."

***Other Methods of Disposal***

Flags don't always have to be disposed of with such pomp and circumstance. If you can't drop yours off with one of the groups, you can do your own small ceremony — as long as it's still held in a dignified manner. When you start your fire, make sure it's big enough to fully burn the flag before you put the folded flag on it. Next, salute the flag and say the Pledge of Allegiance or hold a moment of silence.

Once the flag has been fully consumed, make sure to safely extinguish the fire and of course, make sure you're conforming to local and state fire codes and ordinances before doing any of this!



Winter is here! Brrr....

It's been exciting hearing what districts and units are doing to support our kids, especially during the holidays! Thank you for your support and encouragement in the community and beyond! Please post what you are doing on Facebook and send me a copy so we can brag about all the things that are happening in our communities around the state!

Great news, we have one applicant for the Good Deed award submitted so far in our department. We would like to see as many as possible so keep them coming! We are still waiting for the Youth Hero award applicants as well. Remember our goal this year is to recognize at least one individual for their selfless acts of service and acts of bravery/valor. You need to submit applications *online* for consideration! Go to the ALA Academy to learn about the differences between the "Good Deed Award" and the "Youth Hero Award". Watch your local news, Facebook, and even your schools for these kids doing amazing things in their communities!

If you haven't joined the ALA Children and Youth Facebook page, you are missing out as the information shared is invaluable. The country would like to hear about us as well, so I encourage you to join! Following is the link that will take you right there, although you can always search for ALA Children and Youth when you are already on Facebook!

[\(20+\) ALA Children & Youth | Facebook](#)

When tracking your program hours, remember that you can only declare actual hours under one program, although you can report under many, for example your Christmas, Thanksgiving and Halloween events can potentially be reported under community service, Children & Youth and Public Relations, although only ONE program gets the volunteer hours and the money on their impact report! If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out! Thanks.

I have had the honor of meeting some of the Children & Youth Chairman around the country. The events, experiences and journey they are on are inspiring and know that we are doing similar things, we just need to share with others, if possible, with pictures and communication. It definitely takes a village, and we are all working together for our children & youth and making the world a better place! Love it!

It is my honor to support you all and keep this program at top of mind as the children and youth are our FUTURE! Thank you for inspiring the leaders of tomorrow!



## CONSTITUTION & STANDING RULES

Marsha Bible – Department Chairman  
5602 West Oakes Drive – St. Cloud, MN 56303  
(320) 492-8977 [marsha.bible@gmail.com](mailto:marsha.bible@gmail.com)

### January 2025 Unit Mailing

#### TOPIC #3 – What is the difference between a Constitution & ByLaws?

Constitution & ByLaws is the program that provides a roadmap for our members at every level of our organization. This month we are going to discuss the difference between a Constitution, ByLaws & Standing Rules. These are the documents that govern our units, districts, department and national organization. Units need to remember that the ALA is an incorporated, non-profit organization and can be held accountable for not following both state non-profit rules and their organizations own ByLaws.

The laws of the state of Minnesota supersede everything. State non-profit laws require compliance on things like how meetings may be held, number of officers, how voting may be conducted and if a unit folds, what happens to the assets of the unit. It is our responsibility as Auxiliary members to comply with these regulations.

#### We will start with the Constitution....

What is a Constitution?

- The Oxford dictionary states that a Constitution is a body of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which an organization is acknowledged to be governed.

**The Constitution** provides the structure for governance in our organization and how it will function. It includes the basic rules that are so important that they cannot be changed without prior notice. They are the backbone of the rules of the organization. A Unit, District or Department Constitution may be patterned after that of the American Legion Auxiliary's National Constitution & ByLaws, but they cannot conflict with them. The Constitution should be reviewed regularly but changed infrequently.

#### If we have a Constitution, why do we need ByLaws?

ByLaws are rules adopted by an organization chiefly for the governance of its members and regulation of its affairs.

ByLaws are the governing documents that provide details on:

- Who is eligible for membership and the types of membership we have?
- Who can vote?
- The officers the organization will have and their responsibilities.
- How officers are nominated, elected, the term in office, vacancies filled, or how discipline is handled
- Types of meetings (regular, special, annual) and how members will be notified.
- The number of members needed for a quorum in order to transact business.
- How meetings may be conducted (in person or electronically)
- If an Executive Committee will exist and which members are a part of it
- What standing committees will exist and how new committees are formed
- How the unit chooses to govern itself (usually Robert's Rules of Order)
- How the governing documents can be amended.

In the Department of Minnesota, the Unit, District & Department Constitution AND ByLaws are all under the jurisdiction of the Department of Minnesota. That means that these documents **can only be revised by Department Convention action**. That doesn't mean that our members can't have input into changes to be made at each of these levels. All members are encouraged to review these documents and if they want to propose a revision, they should write a resolution using our new Proposed Amendment paperwork. This document is available on our national website. It provides 3 columns which show current wording, proposed amendment and an if adopted, will read section. For changes to the district governing documents, the change is voted on at the unit level and is then forwarded to the district prior to its convention so that it can be voted on there. If the change is for the department or national governing documents, the proposal is voted on at the unit level and then forwarded to the department office prior to the department convention. Proposed changes to national governing documents are voted on at the department convention and if approved, are forwarded to national prior to the national convention.

To recap:

- remember the difference between the Constitution & ByLaws
- The department, district and unit Constitution, ByLaws and Standing Rules cannot be in conflict with national governing documents.
- Most important rule – When the national governing documents change, departments, districts and units should automatically update their governing documents. No vote is to be taken to approve changing these documents.

Happy New Year Unit Presidents and Members.

It is my hope that everyone had a wonderful and blessed Christmas and welcomed in the New Year with family and friends.

With the holidays now over, it's time to get back to business and that means focusing on our Scholarship program. It takes time to fill out, gather information needed for the applications, such as grade transcripts, and the required letters of recommendations.

Scholarship information has been sent out in the previous Unit mailings, but as a reminder these are the Scholarships available. They can be found at [www.mnala.org/scholarships](http://www.mnala.org/scholarships)

- ❖ Children of Warriors National President's Scholarship-Due March 1<sup>st</sup>
- ❖ The Non-Traditional Student Scholarship
- ❖ Spirit of Youth
- ❖ Department of Minnesota Scholarship
- ❖ Department Past President's Parley Health Care Scholarship
- ❖ Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship
- ❖ The American Legion Legacy Scholarship

Please make sure your Unit Chairman check the applications over before submitting or make sure the students do the checking. Either way, we certainly don't want to anyone be disqualified for not following directions



*Wishing you and your family health,  
happiness, and prosperity in the new year.*

Sharon Voltz, Chairman  
[Sharon.voltz63@gmail.com](mailto:Sharon.voltz63@gmail.com)  
218-259-4711



**Department of Minnesota  
January 2025 Unit Mailing  
Minnesota Girls State Chairman,  
Wanda Prescher**

Greetings and Happy New Year!

Our American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Committee is gearing up for our week at Bethel University June 15-21, 2025. The committee has been working on obtaining a website that will help everyone to do so much electronically.

Ashley Stai is putting together a video; in which Peggy Tesdahl will do the commentary talking about the program. This will be sent to all schools in mid-January as well as to our units to use for recruiting. We are hoping this helps with getting our info out there to the right people and not a letter that does not get passed on. It will also be a great tool for the unit to send to the school counselor, who in turn would forward to the students, teachers or class that it would relate to. We hope this helps us with the difficulty of getting into the school to just talk to someone about the program.

We hope your unit will be working on sponsoring a student! The deadline for applicants is March 31<sup>st</sup>. We hope to increase our last year's total of 200 girls. The more students we have, the more cities and counties we will have, which makes for better competition between them.

All of us right now need to focus on getting that student for Girls State, which is the toughest thing we will have to do for the Girls State program, the rest will fall into place accordingly.

If you would like to help the Girls State Program financially, we have started a program called ALA MN Girls State All-Stars. Please see the form for the details!

We will still be continuing with the script cards from [www.raiseright.com](http://www.raiseright.com).

If you would be interested in helping to sell raffle tickets for the quilt, we are giving away at the Appreciation Rally in March, just let me know!

Remember to try and get a girl stater from last year to come and talk about their week at your Mid-Winter!

## ALA MN Girls State All Stars

Thank you for becoming an ALA MN Girls State All Star.  
Our program is successful because of people like you who know the  
impact this program makes in the lives of young women.

If you wish to become a donor to the 2025 session of ALA MN Girls State,  
please complete the form below and mail with a check made out to  
ALA Dept of Minnesota.

Name/Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Contact email \_\_\_\_\_

White Star Donor \$1-\$49 \_\_\_\_\_

Red Star Donor \$50 - \$99. \_\_\_\_\_

Blue Star Donor \$100 - \$249 \_\_\_\_\_

Gold Star Donor \$250+ \_\_\_\_\_

All ALA MN Girls State All Stars will be recognized on the ALA MN Girls State Facebook page  
and in our citizen handbook.

Please consider making a personal donation, a unit donation, a post, squadron or chapter  
donation or a corporate donation to the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State  
Program. Your donation is appreciated and will be used to aid in the mission of our program to  
educate young women.

Please mail donations to: American Legion Auxiliary  
Department of Minnesota  
20 W 12th St Room 314  
St Paul, MN 55155





## American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State

The 78th session of American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will be held June 15-21, 2025, at Bethel University in Arden Hills. The ALA MN Girls State citizens will arrive on Sunday and leave on Saturday morning before noon.

The school mailing to principals was mailed in January. The schools are aware that units will be contacting them to set up an appointment to meet with potential candidates from the Junior High School class to attend the 2025 ALA MN Girls State session. ***Please read all the information we have provided so that you are aware of the eligibility and qualifications required.***

- ❖ ***2025 eligibility updated to include MN ALA junior members living out of state and meeting all other criteria.***

There is **no** limit to the number of girls a Unit may sponsor to ALA Minnesota Girls State.

**The registration fee remains at \$350 per citizen for the 2025 session.** If there are no high schools in your community, please consider sponsoring or co-sponsoring a girl(s) from the Junior class in a neighboring community.

What can your Unit do to raise funds to send a girl to Minnesota Girls State? Here are a few suggestions:

- ✓ Units may hold different types of fundraising events
- ✓ **Charitable Gambling funds** may be used for the reservation fee only.  
If gambling funds used make checks payable to: **American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.**
- ✓ Donations can be received from local businesses and/or community organizations.
- ✓ Their checks need to be made out to your Unit and then your Unit sends a check to the Department office for the reservation fee.
- ✓ Ask your American Legion Post or Sons of The American Legion Squadron to sponsor a girl or girls by writing a check to the American Legion Auxiliary.

A resolution, passed at the 2011 Department Convention, states that monies sent to the Department Office for reservations not used to sponsor a girl to ALA Minnesota Girls State would be placed into a **Girls State Reservation Fee Fund.** This fund is available for any unit to use ***one time every 3 years on a first come-first serve basis.*** If your Unit has a girl who is interested in attending and you do not have enough funds to reserve a place for her, consider applying to the Department Office in writing to request these funds.

All reservations are due by **March 31<sup>st</sup>** accompanied by your check. Once your Unit has submitted your reservation and payment of \$350.00 per girl, you will be sent Registration information. This information will be sent to the name listed on the Reservation Form. The paperwork included in this packet has due dates listed which must be followed. It is important that you read everything thoroughly before you share it with your citizen. Please remember there are NO late arrivals and NO early dismissals. The 2025 Girls State session begins promptly at 3:00 pm on Sunday, June 15<sup>th</sup> and ends on Saturday morning June 21, 2025.

All attendees must be registered by **May 1, 2025**. Our contract with Bethel University requires that we commit to a final number of reservations for citizens and staff on that date, so the deadline is very important.

The ALA Minnesota Girls State Committee has been working diligently to ensure that our citizens have a truly memorable week at ALA Minnesota Girls State. We look forward to welcoming a participant representing your unit and community.

Please refer to the Auxiliary web page at [mnala.org](http://mnala.org) for forms and other information about Girls State.

***If you have questions, feel free to contact any of the members of the Department Girls State Committee. We are here to assist you!***

Wanda Prescher, Girls State Chairman

Peggy Tesdahl, Girls State Director

Amelia Tesdahl, Girls State Education Director

Renee Suess, Girls State Committee Member

Jennifer Stolz, Girls State Committee Member

Kollette Kaehlert, Americanism Chairman

**Wanda Prescher – Department Girls State Chairman**  
Cell: 507-254-0304 Email: [w.prescher1951@gmail.com](mailto:w.prescher1951@gmail.com)

**Peggy Tesdahl – Girls State Director**  
Cell: 612-175-4489 Email: [ranpegt0814@hotmail.com](mailto:ranpegt0814@hotmail.com)



American Legion Auxiliary
Minnesota Girls State
20 W 12th St #314, St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: 651-224-7634
Email - deptoffice@mnala.org

APPLICATION FOR RESERVATION - PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY MINNESOTA GIRLS STATE

Return by MARCH 31st to:

American Legion Auxiliary - Department of Minnesota State
Veterans Service Building
20 W. 12th St. - Room 314
St. Paul, MN 55155

Unit Number \_\_\_\_\_ Unit Location (city) \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. How many girls is your Unit sponsoring to Girls State? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name of the High School(s) you are sponsoring a girl(s) from \_\_\_\_\_
3. Amount of reservation check enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ (\$350.00 per girl)

NOTE: Checks should be made payable to: ALA Dept. of MN unless you are using gambling funds.
Checks from Gambling Funds should be made payable to: American Legion Auxiliary Foundation

Please note: There are no restrictions limiting the number of girls a Unit may sponsor to Girls State from the same high school. Consider sponsorship of a citizen from outside your Unit/area. Check Home Schools, Charter and Private Schools.

Upon receipt of your Unit's reservation fee(s), your space will be reserved for this year's session and your Unit will receive an formation packet and instructions how to register each Girls State citizen you are sponsoring.

Information of Unit Member the citizen packet(s) should be sent to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_
Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Position in Unit: \_\_\_\_\_
Email: \_\_\_\_\_



**Department of Minnesota  
Call to the 2025  
Department Junior Conference**

The 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Junior Conference of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota is hereby called to be held at the Anoka American Legion Post 102 400 Main Street Anoka MN 55303 at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> for the purpose of:

1. Presentation and judging of awards
2. Reports from the District Honorary Junior Presidents
3. Election of Department Honorary Junior Officers
4. Other business for the good of the Junior Auxiliary

**Conference Schedule**

All events will be held at the Anoka American Legion Post 102 400 Main Street Anoka MN 55303

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Registration  | Friday, April 11th 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.   |
|   | Saturday, April 12th 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. |
| Advisory Committee Meeting<br>(See below for who attends) | Friday, April 11th 7:30 p.m.               |

|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| Processional Practice<br>a.m. Senior Advisor/Senior | Saturday, April 12th 8:00 |
|---|---------------------------|

Judges Meeting Saturday, April 12th 8:00 a.m.  
(All Senior members are requested to attend)

|                          |                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Conference Call to Order | Saturday, April 12th 9:00 a.m. |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|

The Advisory Committee is comprised of the Department Junior Activities Chairman, Honorary Department Junior President, Secretary, First Vice President, Second Vice President, District Junior Presidents, and District Junior Activities Chairmen. Also included are the Department Junior Conference Parliamentarian and Senior Secretary.

Processional - Each district is encouraged to bring their District Colors. Per the Standing Rules, Junior Color bearers should wear navy skirt or navy slacks and white blouses or appropriate attire.

**Conference Location**

The Department Junior Conference will be held at the Anoka American Legion Post 102  
The conference is hosted by the 10<sup>th</sup> District. Housing information for the Junior Conference is attached to this Call to Conference.

**Registration Fee**

The registration fee for the Department Junior Conference is \$15.00 per person and should be paid when you arrive at the Anoka American Legion and check in for the Conference. To prepay please send your check along with your registration form. Checks should be made payable to Tenth District American Legion Auxiliary.



**Department of Minnesota  
Call to the 2025  
Department Junior Conference**

**Delegates**

Each organized group shall be represented by two delegates with two votes at the Department Junior Conference, plus one additional delegate for each fifteen members or major fraction thereof. (Standing Rules) Delegate strength is determined 30 days prior to Department Junior Conference.

| Junior Membership | Number of Delegates |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1-7               | 2 delegates         |
| 8-22              | 3 delegates         |
| 23-37             | 4 delegates         |
| 38-52             | 5 delegates         |
| 53-67             | 6 delegates         |
| 68-82             | 7 delegates         |
| 83-97             | 8 delegates         |
| 98-120            | 9 delegates         |

Only Junior Members will be allowed to speak on the Conference floor. Please remember that Senior members are advisors only and this is the Juniors Conference. Juniors will be seated by District with one advisor per District. If space allows one advisor per Unit may also sit with the Juniors. The District Junior Activities Chairman will be the Senior Advisor for her District if she is present.

**Eligibility to hold office (Standing Rules)**

1. No officer shall succeed herself in the same office.
2. Any Junior officer must be classified as a junior member the year she holds office.

**Endorsements**

Endorsements for Department Honorary Junior Officers shall be sent to the Department Office as soon as possible. The Department Office will send them to the District Junior Activities Chairmen, District Honorary Junior Presidents, Department Honorary Junior President, and the Department Junior Activities Chairmen prior to the Department Junior Conference (Standing Rules).

Endorsements should state the candidate's name, age, district, offices held in the Unit and District and years of membership.

Send endorsements to: American Legion Auxiliary  
State Veterans Service Building  
20 W. 12th Street- Room 314  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
or email to [deptoffice@mnala.org](mailto:deptoffice@mnala.org)



**Department of Minnesota  
Call to the 2025  
Department Junior Conference**

**Friday Evening Activities**

On Friday evening, April 11th, a fun evening is planned for the Juniors beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Anoka American Legion. The 10th District is busy planning so that the Juniors can make new friends, rekindle friendships they already have, and have lots of fun together. Food and beverages will be provided for Friday evening and is included in the registration fee. Food will be served from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This will be a fun time for everyone. Registration begins at 6:00 p.m. and the Advisory Committee's meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

**Department Honorary Junior President's Project**

Department Honorary Junior President Terianna's and the Juniors of Minnesota's project this year is raising funds to repair the plumbing for the Lady Liberty House for female veterans at the Eagles Healing Nest in Sauk Centre.

**Completed forms needed:**

Please complete the enclosed forms and return them as noted on each form. It is important that attendees register (both Junior and Senior members) including their names, addresses, phone numbers and email address.

1. Pre-registration form (in duplicate) so that our Department Honorary Junior President can make tentative committee appointments prior to the Conference. Due date is Friday, March 14, 2025.
2. A Media Release Consent Form must be completed for each Junior member and signed by their parent or guardian.
3. The registration form for the local committee indicating the number attending from your Unit is also attached. This helps the local committee to plan supplies for activities and food that is needed. Deadline for registration is Friday, March 14, 2025.
4. The registration fee for the conference is \$15.00 per person and will need to be prepaid or at the conference when you arrive. Checks should be made payable to 10<sup>th</sup> District American Legion Auxiliary.

Any questions regarding the Department Junior Conference please contact me at 218-686-1829 or at [jmwalker1992@hotmail.com](mailto:jmwalker1992@hotmail.com)

**Jean Walker**  
**Department Junior Activities Chairman**

## Poppy Contests

It is the responsibility of the District Junior Activities Chairman to see that all District entries are brought to the Department Conference.



There is no limit to the number of entries per Unit for the contests



Only one entry per Junior per contest



All entries must include a large or small, or a combination of the Poppies.



All white tags must be removed from the Poppies



All entries must be at the Department Junior Conference by 9:00am on Saturday, April 12, 2025, for judging.

All entries must have a sealed envelope attached with the contest name and class number on the envelope.

Inside of the envelope must have the Juniors name, Unit number, location, and District number on a card inside

### Classes for each contest

|           |                        |
|-----------|------------------------|
| Class I   | Ages 6 years and under |
| Class II  | Ages 7 - 12 years      |
| Class III | Ages 13 - 18 years     |

### Awards

|           |                                |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| 1st Place | \$10 cash award for each class |
| 2nd Place | \$5 cash award for each class  |

### Poppy Jewelry/Accessories Contest

To the Junior member in each class with the best Poppy Jewelry/Accessory using Honorary Department Junior President Terianna's theme ***"We love our Veterans to the Moon and Back"*** using the star and the moon,

### Poppy Corsage/Boutonniere Contest

To the Junior member in each class with the best Poppy corsage or boutonniere using Honorary Department Junior President Terianna's theme ***"We love our Veterans to the Moon and Back"*** Her symbol is a star and the moon.

### Poppy Memorial Day Wreath

To the Junior member in each class with the best Poppy Memorial Day Wreath with the poppy as the focus of the wreath.



Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2025
Department Junior Conference

MEDIA RELEASE CONSENT FORM

- 1. I, the undersigned, hereby authorize American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota to photograph me, take motion pictures of me, take video footage of me and/or make electronic sound recordings of me (herein referred to as photographic or electronic reproductions) as well as use my name and likeness.
2. I authorize the use of any such photographic or electronic reproductions and my name and likeness for any purpose, including, but not limited to, educational and other public media as may be deemed appropriate by the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota. I understand that I may be identifiable from such photographic or electronic reproductions for non-profit public purposes.
3. I understand that I will not be compensated financially for such uses.

Print Name
Title
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone
Email Address

PARENTAL CONSENT

I certify that I am the parent and/or guardian of the individual above, a minor under the age of eighteen years. I hereby agree to assume legal responsibility for his/her authorization referred to in this General Media Release.

Signature of Applicant's Parent/Guardian
Date
Address of Parent/Guardian (if different)
Cell Phone Number
City, State, Zip Code
Email Address





Department of Minnesota  
Call to the 2025  
Department Junior Conference

Please complete this form so that the local committee can make their plans and have an accurate count of people to expect for food and activities.

**Friday Evening Activities - April 11, 2025**

# of Junior members \_\_\_\_\_

# of Senior members/guests \_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday Noon Lunch at the Conference -April 12, 2025**

# of Junior members \_\_\_\_\_

# of Senior members/guests \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any special dietary needs or allergies for Junior and/or Senior members:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Unit# \_\_\_\_\_ Unit Location \_\_\_\_\_ District# \_\_\_\_\_

Motel where group is staying \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFERENCE RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025**

Mail Reservations to:

Jean Walker  
Department Junior Activities Chairman  
426 E Ross Avenue  
Warren MN 56762



**Department of Minnesota  
Call to the 2025  
Department Junior Conference**

**HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS  
2025 DEPARTMENT JUNIOR CONFERENCE**

**Comfort Suites  
6440 US 10 West  
Ramsey MN 55303**

**763-323-4800 to make reservations for our Junior Conference block**

**Room Type  
2 queen beds 4/11/2025 – 4/12/2025  
Rate: \$123.20 plus taxes  
Check-in time: 3:00 pm (no early check-ins)**

**Cutoff Date for block reservations: March 25, 2025**

**2025 DEPARTMENT JUNIOR CONFERENCE PRE-REGISTRATION**

*NOTE: It is important that we have all of the information requested below. Please print legibly!*

**JUNIOR MEMBERS**

| NAME | AGE | COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS | EMAIL ADDRESS | PHONE NUMBER | COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT PREFERRED |
|------|-----|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
|      |     |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |     |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |     |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |     |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |     |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |     |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |     |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |     |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |     |                          |               |              |                                |

**SENIOR MEMBERS**

| NAME | COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS | EMAIL ADDRESS | PHONE NUMBER | COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT PREFERRED |
|------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
|      |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |                          |               |              |                                |
|      |                          |               |              |                                |

UNIT# \_\_\_\_\_ UNIT LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_  
 DISTRICT# \_\_\_\_\_ MOTEL WHERE GROUP IS STAYING \_\_\_\_\_  
 SUBMITTED BY \_\_\_\_\_  
 POSITION \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

*Please send one copy to both of the following:*

Terriana Richards, Honorary Jr President  
 302 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue North  
 Fargo, ND 58102

Jean Walker  
 Junior Activities Chairman  
 426 E Ross Avenue  
 Warren, MN 56762

**DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025**



**Department of Minnesota**  
**January 2025 Unit Mailing**  
**Legislation Chairman, Linda Kelly**

The Minnesota American Legion has published its 2025 Legislative priorities, and they are printed here in our January newsletter.

Please take the time to read them and understand why these priorities are important to our veterans. Contact your legislators to encourage them to vote "yes" when they come up to vote. You can also print the pages out and mail them or e-mail them to your legislators.

At this point, the Veterans on the Hill date has not been set. You can always check the Minnesota American Legion website ([WWW.MNLEGION.ORG](http://WWW.MNLEGION.ORG)) as the month goes on. It is listed on the drop-down listing under "events" at the top. Last year was my first time attending this event and it was so amazing. Seeing the veterans and the rest of us march up from our office building and then up the steps to the Capitol and then into the Rotunda was breathtaking. Please consider joining us.



# MINNESOTA AMERICAN LEGION LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

# 2025

*Approved by the Department Executive Committee on October 24, 2024*

## **Bring back the Veterans Affairs committees for both chambers**

Over the spring and summer months, Minnesota lawmakers told veterans that our Legislature needs to bring back a Senate Veterans Affairs Finance & Policy Committee, which they got rid of in 2023. In November 2024, House leadership did away with the House Veterans Affairs Finance & Policy Committee, too. This is absolutely unacceptable. Why is it state government spending totals increase by \$20 billion (around \$41B in 2019 to \$61B in 2024) and yet the state cannot staff legislative committees for the men and women who served? Restore our committees.

## **Protect veterans from consumer fraud and claim sharks**

Consumer fraud and aggressive practices targeting veterans' VA benefits compensation are on the rise. Few insults are more egregious than to take advantage of disabled veterans or their families. The American Legion at the national level wants the return of criminal penalties enforced against these non-accredited violators. While the federal government is in gridlock on whether or not to pass the GUARD Act (S. 740 and H.R. 8736), states like New Jersey are beginning to pass their own legislation to protect veterans. The American Legion Department of Minnesota believes this issue is too important to wait for the federal government to act. We worked with the Legislature on draft language (CS144-5005671173743550781) to empower veterans to recover damages from these illegal practices and hope to see the bill pass this year.

## Reduce state taxes on charitable gambling

We call on lawmakers to provide meaningful tax relief for Minnesota charities. Our posts pay more in taxes than they give to the charities they support, which leaves less revenue for us to support our communities. Last year, The American Legion Department of Minnesota worked with lawmakers on a bill (HF 2000, SF1949) that would have dedicated a percentage of legal sports betting state tax revenue to provide rebates to charitable gambling operations. The bill died in the final hours of the 2024 session. We commend the authors for the progress they made last year, as it brought us closer than we have been in more than a decade to getting much needed tax cuts. Let's get this measure across the finish line in 2025.

## Other gambling priorities:

### Expand lawful purpose expenditures for post homes

Many of our posts are very old, in disrepair and have limited means to complete large capital projects such as roof repairs or parking lot resurfacing. Often charitable gambling is the only source of revenue for these projects. The state limits lawful purpose expenditures on these projects to a small percentage of annual gambling revenues. Last year, lawmakers tried to include lawful purpose expansion to 50 percent of annual gambling revenue for congressionally chartered veterans service organizations. Two separate pieces of legislation included this measure, the sports betting bill (HF2000) and the House tax omnibus bill (HF5247), but both efforts failed in the final hours of the 2024 session. We ask lawmakers to reintroduce this measure, without a sunset or expiration date, to ensure our continued presence in communities across Minnesota into perpetuity.

### Increase amount posts can spend on meals recognizing veterans

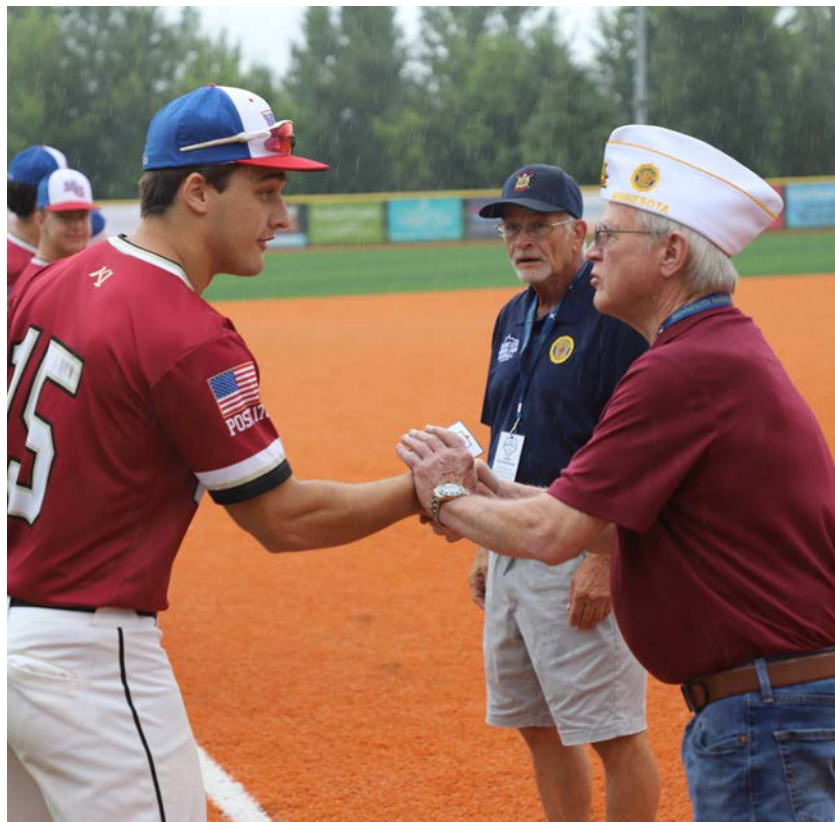
The \$5,000 annual cap on how much posts can spend from gambling for meals held in recognition of military service is no longer reasonable. This amount was set by the Legislature in 2002. It is MS 349.12, Subd. 25(17). We feel this figure should be \$15,000 so that it meets modern-day cost of meals for present and future needs. Let's do right by our veterans and make this simple change.

## Modernize the Disabled Veterans Homestead Market Value Exclusion

Currently, there are two levels of property tax exclusions. The exclusion values have not changed in over 10 years while home values have dramatically risen, reducing the impact of this benefit. The first level is a maximum exemption of \$150,000 for veterans rated by the VA as 70 to 100 percent disabled. The second level of exclusion is for 100 percent permanent and total (100 percent P&T) disabled veterans at \$300,000. We wish these amounts to be increased to \$200,000 (base level) and \$400,000 (double the base level), respectively. The new values need to be indexed to inflation. We need a technical fix to remove the word "honorable" from the statute. Counties should not re-adjudicate veterans' character of service, since the federal VA has already deemed the service honorable for disability compensation purposes. In 2024, House lawmakers introduced a bill (HF4259, no Senate companion) including all the provisions we hope to become law. We cannot allow Minnesota veterans to lose their homes as prices continue to skyrocket and the property-tax exclusion benefit becomes less and less effective.

## Modernize the Surviving Spouse Homestead Market Value Exclusion

There are several areas of the current market value exclusion statute that are unfavorable to surviving spouses and exclude them from receiving the benefit. First, we support the removal of the equal or lesser value language for surviving spouses. It is often more expensive to downsize from a large home that is already paid off to a smaller home, town home, or a condo. Second, the present law, MS 273.13, Subd. 34(d), says the surviving spouse must file within two years of the death and must live in the home at the time of the death. In 2021, we got rid of most of



the time limits, but we should finish the job and remove all time limits for surviving spouses applying for the benefit. Third, the law discriminates against active-duty spouses and would help only Minnesota National Guard or Reserve spouses. Active-duty spouses likely live on or near out-of-state bases when their spouse dies in service to the country. When they return to Minnesota, they find they do not qualify for the Gold Star property-tax exemption. This is not in the spirit of our state's support for veterans and their families. Lastly, we also would favor changing the law to allow the spouse to remarry and retain the benefit. Veterans who have passed on would want their loved one to find happiness in their absence. We have worked with lawmakers and research staff on draft language (JS089-16475571070973784702). We hope to see this introduced as a bill in 2025 and passed into law.

## Provide 100 percent property tax relief for post homes

Many 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations received property tax exemptions after qualifying through their county assessor and going through a three-year assessment review. We desire Minnesota to give 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(19) organizations access to the same nonprofit property tax exemptions provided to 501(c)(3) nonprofits. This would reduce the disturbing trend of posts going under. There are a handful of states that provide this same benefit as a recognition of the good veteran service organizations do for their communities, and Minnesota needs to be among them. As a side benefit, a zero-tax measure would clear up much of the confusion city and county assessors statewide have regarding veteran posts and tax laws. In 2024, this bill (HF4038, SF3953) received widespread bipartisan and bicameral support but was denied hearings in both tax committees. We call on Rep. Aisha Gomez and Sen. Ann Rest to hear these bills, which are widely supported by their colleagues and Minnesotans. Let's treat our veteran nonprofits like other nonprofits.

## Offer free vehicle registration for Gold Star spouses and children

Many states do not charge vehicle registration fees for Gold Star spouses (based on the DD-1300 or DD-2064) and sometimes for their children. Minnesota should follow suit. These people have made deep sacrifices on behalf of our federal, state and local governments, and this would be the least our state could do to thank them. Last year, a bill (HF4338, no Senate companion) was introduced to make this a reality. We need to take care of our Gold Star spouses and children and get this done.

## Produce a license plate for Jewish War Veterans

There are license plates for other congressionally chartered veterans organizations, such as American Legion, VFW, DAV, Amvets, Military Order of the Purple Heart and a few others, but, strangely, there is not one for the JWV, which was founded in 1896 and received its congressional charter in 1984. It's time to fix this oversight, honor and celebrate the service of Jewish War Veterans. We support the re-introduction of the bill (HF3962, SF3456) that would add this specialty plate to our state's list of offerings and respectfully request hearings in both chambers' transportation committees.





## **Address food insecurity resources for all Minnesota veterans**

The veterans omnibus bill last year and the year prior included significant funding to address veteran food insecurity through Metro Meals on Wheels. Metro area CVSOs report that one of the first steps they take after a homeless veteran is stably housed through HUD-VASH or another veteran specific resource is to sign them up for Meals on Wheels to deliver prepared frozen meals to their home. In 2024, two senators voted against the veterans omnibus bill because the funding went only to the metro area and not Greater Minnesota. Determine the level of need in rural and outstate areas and decide whether Meals on Wheels, Lutheran Social Services or another provider can address food insecurity state-wide, so all Minnesota veterans have adequate nutrition.

## **Add 2 more Vet Centers (federal issue)**

VA Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers that provide a wide range of social and psychological services, including professional counseling to eligible veterans, servicemembers, including National Guard and Reserve components, and their families. In Minnesota, we are home to almost 300,000 veterans. We have just three full-fledged Vet Center locations to serve our entire population. They are in Anoka, St. Paul (presently in Richfield) and Duluth. A new Vet Center outstation opened in June 2024 in St. Cloud under the supervision of the Anoka Vet Center. There are huge areas of Minnesota which are underserved because of the distance to a Vet Center. We favor making the St. Cloud outstation a full Vet Center, and adding them in Mankato and Bemidji, too.

## **Make hearing loss and tinnitus presumptive (federal issue)**

Many federal VA resources are spent on claims for hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing in the ears), whether initial claims, supplemental claims, or various types of appeals. A majority of Board of Veterans Affairs appeals dockets are consumed by hearing loss and tinnitus appeals for service connection. Consequently, the government is likely spending far more with these processes than if these claims were all granted. We propose making hearing loss and tinnitus presumptive of military service. Regardless of one's military duties, all military personnel must learn how to use weapons, and many are routinely noise exposed. In years past, hearing protection has been absent, proven inadequate, and many times not practical to use in the field. Additionally, there is no scientific test to prove the presence or absence of tinnitus. We can influence Congress to make hearing loss (in the presence of audiometric findings) and tinnitus presumptive of military service.



## MN Membership Member-opoly Report

I was just looking at the Membership numbers from National and I am very excited to say that the Northwestern Division is at 68.84% up from 66.51% last week. We are officially currently "Leading the Way" in the Divisional Race. South Dakota has taken our 1<sup>st</sup> place position in the Northwestern Division by a .3% lead and Nebraska is creeping up right behind us with just 1.05% to go. It is a tight race. Keep those memberships coming in. Right now, MN is in 6<sup>th</sup> place in the National Membership race with 70.74%. I know we can improve on that as the numbers show we are still down (1,136) members from this time last year. When you look at the numbers, there is only 2.85% keeping us from 3<sup>rd</sup> place and 4.23% from 2<sup>nd</sup>. Hawaii will be hard to overtake at 31.87%, but I do love a challenge. We want that front row seating at the Tampa Convention!

| Northwestern Division |                  |                |                |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Department of         | Total Membership | 2025 Num. Goal | % of Num. Goal |
| South Dakota          | 6,592            | 9,279          | 71.04%         |
| Minnesota             | 18,402           | 26,014         | 70.74%         |
| Nebraska              | 10,795           | 15,490         | 69.69%         |
| North Dakota          | 4,727            | 7,300          | 64.75%         |
| Colorado              | 2,859            | 4,478          | 63.85%         |
| Montana               | 1,692            | 2,686          | 62.99%         |
| Wyoming               | 1,601            | 2,545          | 62.91%         |
|                       | <b>46,668</b>    | <b>67,792</b>  | <b>68.84%</b>  |

As most of you see from this report, it is a numbers game. The more members we get rejoined / join the better. It helps the veterans with voting power in congress. It helps get new people involved into the Auxiliary and to pass down our knowledge on how to work our programs. It allows us to mentor new members.

**If you haven't already, you will be hearing from Membership Chairmen very soon!!**

Units need to turn in membership once a week or at least every other week no matter how many members are on the transmittal.

This is Membership 101, our members need to be paid AND sent to the Department to be counted. Our Leadership for each Auxiliary Unit should be providing an example and be the 1<sup>st</sup> one on the transmittals that are sent so we can say "we were first, now join us".

If you are having trouble in your Unit, or with your memberships, please reach out to your District Membership Chairman or myself. We want to help your Unit thrive. We are devastated when a Unit gives up its Charter. You have worked too hard and too long to give up now. Ask us for help.

Any Unit that is Under 50% as of 12/9/2024, I will be reaching out to your unit to see if there is anything I can do to help your unit. All units above this mark, the District Membership Chairmen will be contacting you to urge you to our next two goals of 80% by 2/8/25 (Sweetheart Rally) and 85% 3/8/25 (Appreciation Rally). But don't give up there, we have 3 more goals after this point yet before National Convention!!!

**Here is your GO TO Membership Chairman Team:**

| Membership  | Name           | Unit | Email  |
|-------------|----------------|------|--|
| District 1  | Rosalie Trom   | 333  | <a href="mailto:rosalie7g@gmail.com">rosalie7g@gmail.com</a>                       |
| District 2  | Pam Sandland   | 11   | <a href="mailto:djs1947@charter.net">djs1947@charter.net</a>                       |
| District 3  | Ann Bovy       | 601  | <a href="mailto:abovyauxiliary@centurylink.net">abovyauxiliary@centurylink.net</a> |
| District 4  | Teri Rieger    | 542  | <a href="mailto:sunnie55126@gmail.com">sunnie55126@gmail.com</a>                   |
| District 5  | Jill Davis     | 435  | <a href="mailto:alajilldavis@gmail.com">alajilldavis@gmail.com</a>                 |
| District 6  | Wendy Grittner | 560  | <a href="mailto:wgrittner@gmail.com">wgrittner@gmail.com</a>                       |
| District 7  | Jennifer Hurst | 169  | <a href="mailto:jenhurstauxiliary@gmail.com">jenhurstauxiliary@gmail.com</a>       |
| District 8  | Jessica Hanna  | 71   | <a href="mailto:jessicajoreinhardt@gmail.com">jessicajoreinhardt@gmail.com</a>     |
| District 9  | Denise Milton  | 16   | <a href="mailto:kuuky@hotmail.com">kuuky@hotmail.com</a>                           |
| District 10 | Michelle Lesch | 566  | <a href="mailto:pmlesch@hotmail.com">pmlesch@hotmail.com</a>                       |

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY**  
**Bulletin #15 as of 12/17/2024**  
**2025 Membership**  
**Member-opoly**


**"Finding Members in Everyday Places"**  
**Your Leader is Rich Aunty Pennybags, Hope Wilson**



| DISTRICT                      | # of Units | Goal   | Period Gain | Membership To Date | Percent of Goal | Membership Last Year 12/19/23 | Difference from Last Year |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| One                           | 47         | 3,341  | 107         | 2,567              | 76.83%          | 2,603                         | -36                       |
| Two                           | 70         | 3,444  | 136         | 2,510              | 72.88%          | 2,742                         | -232                      |
| Three                         | 46         | 3,476  | 105         | 2,485              | 71.49%          | 2,610                         | -125                      |
| Four                          | 7          | 508    | 14          | 306                | 60.24%          | 357                           | -51                       |
| Five                          | 7          | 463    | 10          | 248                | 53.56%          | 232                           | 16                        |
| Six                           | 60         | 4,469  | 102         | 3,476              | 77.78%          | 3,552                         | -76                       |
| Seven                         | 52         | 2,561  | 111         | 1,889              | 73.76%          | 2,057                         | -168                      |
| Eight                         | 20         | 1,117  | 11          | 748                | 66.97%          | 807                           | -59                       |
| Nine                          | 45         | 2,944  | 82          | 2,127              | 72.25%          | 2,250                         | -123                      |
| Ten                           | 41         | 3,391  | 65          | 2,300              | 67.83%          | 2,539                         | -239                      |
| 1982                          | 1          | 331    | 5           | 222                | 67.07%          | 229                           | -7                        |
| Department Total              | 396        | 26,045 | 748         | 18,878             | 72.48%          | 19,978                        | -1,100                    |
| Group 1 (Even)<br>Linda Kelly | 198        | 12,929 | 328         | 9,340              | 72.24%          | 9,997                         | -657                      |
| Group 2 (Odd)<br>Robin Dorf   | 197        | 12,785 | 415         | 9,316              | 72.87%          | 9,752                         | -436                      |

**RANKINGS**

**1st**  
77.78%  
District 6 


**2nd**  
76.83%  
District 1 

**3rd**  
73.76%  
District 7 

**4th**  
72.88%  
District 2 

**5th**  
72.25%  
District 9 

**6th**  
71.49%  
District 3 

**7th**  
67.83%  
District 10 

**8th**  
66.97%  
District 8 

**9th**  
60.24%  
District 4 

**10th**  
53.56%  
District 5 

# *The American Legion Family Sweetheart Rally*



***February 8, 2025  
Royalton American Legion Post 137  
103 North Maple Street Royalton, MN***

*11AM Membership Turn-in / 12 PM Lunch / Program to Follow*

***Menu:*** *Chicken & Ham, Mashed Potatoes & gravy, Dressing, Vegetable, Dinner roll and a Beverage (water & lemonade & coffee)*

***Cost:*** \$18.00

***Tickets:*** *Order online at [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)*

***or***

*Make check payable and send to:*

*ALA Department of Minnesota*

*20 W 12th St Room #314*

*St. Paul, MN 55155*

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*Name/s* \_\_\_\_\_

*Email* \_\_\_\_\_

*Cell Number* \_\_\_\_\_

## **January is National Security Month**



The Armed Forces Service Center has been located at the MSP Airport since November of 1970. They offer complimentary refreshments, sleeping bunk rooms for men and women, a nice lounge, playroom, dining room, luggage room, PC, CAC reader, shower and three bathrooms during the daily hours of operation. The lobby area is available 24/7.

The Armed Forces Service Center is open 8:00 am to 10:45 pm every day. It is located on Level 2 of A Concourse. The center would not be able to be open without the many dedicated volunteers that work there every day. Donations are always welcome for this very important center. Many military members use this center for some down time while waiting at the airport. Those eligible to use the facility are Active Duty, National Guard, Reserves, Purple Heart, MoH, former POW, Retirees, Dependents, DoD and 100% DAV (with a DoD ID Card).

The AFSC is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization

The Department of Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary donates a lot of money each year. Please continue to do so. They are very appreciative of any and all donations.

In honor of National Security Month, a donation to the center would be awesome. They are looking for small bags with items or activities to do for children to take with them on the airplane. Please let Chris Ronning, Armed Forces Service Center ALA Representative, know if you have items to deliver to the airport. Monetary donations should be sent to the Department Office earmarked for the Armed Forces Service Center.

Thank you all for the support for our Military, their families, and our veterans throughout the state of Minnesota!





Department of Minnesota  
January 2025 Unit Mailing  
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation  
Chairman, Robin Dorf



Now that you have enjoyed the holidays and have read all your cards what do you do with them? We need your holiday cards! Please consider donating them to be used to make gift tags for our veterans at the Gift Shops next year.

You can bring your cards to your midwinters or to the February American Legion Family Sweetheart Rally and I deliver to our crafty elf, Karen Foss, to start making tags for the gifts next year.

## No veteran should ever be without a place to call home.



The number of homeless veterans is continuing to decline, but we are not done yet in helping our veterans. The 2024 point-in-time count showed a 7.5% decrease since 2023 and a 55.6% decrease since 2010.

What these numbers don't represent is the veterans who ends up returning to

homelessness after obtaining permanent housing through a program. There are countless reasons that a veteran returns to homelessness: losing income, using their limited resources to care for a friend or family member, or experiencing high medical costs themselves, to start with. These veterans may have initially found permanent housing, but they may find themselves needing to reengage with VA homeless programs.

What is unsheltered homelessness? It is when a veteran has a primary nighttime location that is typically not a place where individuals sleep, such as streets, vehicles, or parks. In 2023, 44% of homeless veterans were unsheltered. Unsheltered homelessness excessively effects African American and Hispanic/Latino veterans. These groups have higher rates of unsheltered homelessness compared to their representation of the general population.

The profile of an unsheltered veteran has changed. They are younger in age, usually under the age of 50, male, educated with having some college, history of combat exposure and or military sexual trauma, receiving VA service-connected disability, and have low VA healthcare service use.



Why does unsheltered homelessness matter? Housing insecurity can lead to financial, physical and mental health, and employment challenges. This leads to an increased reliance on care. They are more likely to have criminal justice history, medical and drug problems, poor social support, and financial hardship, and they may need additional resources to get housed.

Don't think that this is not happening in your community. This is happening in every community, not just the larger cities. Connect with local county Veterans Service officers or city officials to let them know to connect veterans with your American Legion Family.

Ideas on how we can help:

- ♥ Participate by volunteering or funding a Minnesota Stand Down program.
- ♥ Support local emergency shelters.
- ♥ Volunteer your time to help transitioning military veterans in seeking employment or resources needed.
- ♥ Work with employment services in your area and local businesses to help find needed jobs for veterans.
- ♥ Work with programs that offer veterans transitional housing and contribute needs they may have.
- ♥ Create a running list of resources that can be passed out if a veteran in need contacts your local American Legion Family.

**Together we can help, and we can all do something.**

*\*Statistics and information from the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans and the US Department of Veterans Affairs.*



**Department of Minnesota**  
**January 2025 Unit Mailing**  
**Gift Shop Chairman, Sandy Werzal**  
**Committee Member, Becky Nelson**

## ***A BIG THANK YOU***

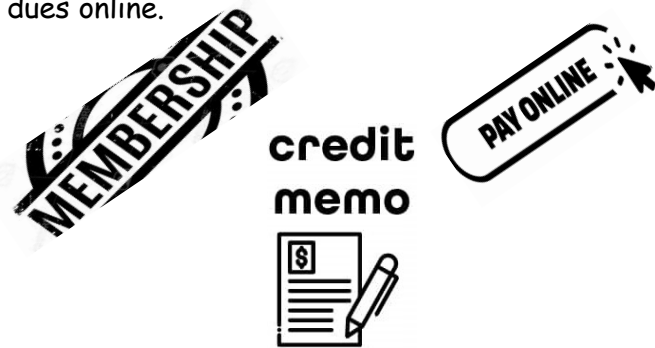
to all the American Legion Family that gave money to the Gift Shop this year, and all the unit members that took their time and energy to go wrap, set-up, delivered gifts to the veterans rooms. At each gift shop was so special, you're the best. Members came away with that great feeling of giving back and we received a gift from the veterans, that they never realized. We did have some covid homes that made it harder to visit with the veterans, but we made it work this year.

## ***Special Thank You***

to the VA Hospital and Veterans Home Representatives. Bemidji ~ Denise Milton, Fergus Falls ~ Doris Lafayette, Minneapolis ~ Sandy Gibson, Sioux Falls ~ Diane Strassburg, St Cloud ~ Jan Benson and Carol Kottom-Deputy, Hasting ~ Darlene Wondra, Luverne ~ Jeannette Mertens, Minneapolis ~ Janet Thompson, Montevideo ~ Jennifer Hurst, Preston ~ Wanda Prescher, Silver Bay ~ Nancy Hopper, VA Hospital Fargo ~ Becky Olson. ***Your deduction is much appreciated.***

**Individual Members  
Paying Dues Online**

Historically, Jocelyn has come into the department office every morning, pulled the online dues report and started calling all the units that had a member on that report. Then, when national sends us the funds due to the department and the units, I would then process a credit memo out to the units and email them. We've decided to change this process. Jocelyn will no longer be making those calls. Instead, twice a month, when the funds come from national, she will be processing the credit memos and emailing them out to the units. Please feel free to call in and ask the department office if there have been any members who have paid their dues online.



**Users Information**

I will be sending out an email to all ALAMIS users regarding their access for 2025. This is a reminder that the fees for ALAMIS access cover a calendar year, January to December. I will be

reviewing the list and sending emails to the current users asking whether they wish to continue with access. Please be watching for this email to hit your in boxes by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. It will take me some time to get through all the users, but I'm happy to do it. It's been such a wonderful membership tool for those that have chosen to take the leap. The number of ALAMIS users in Department of Minnesota has seen a large increase this year. If you are at all interested, contact the department office.

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**Poppy Update**

***THE ORDERS ARE FLOWING IN!! IF YOU HAVEN'T GOTTEN YOUR ORDER INTO THE DEPARTMENT OFFICE, PLEASE DO SO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!!***



We need all orders turned in right away. We are working our way through them as they come into the office but are facing another shortage this year for both small and large poppies. If you are a unit that has the ability to make your own poppies, we highly encourage you to order a kit from the department office as soon as possible. There are several volunteers and veterans that are making poppies for us but we are afraid that they will not be able to fill all of the department orders.