



**American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota
2025-2026
Department President
Robin Dorf
April 2026 Unit Mailing**

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Congratulations American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota we achieved the 85% needed for the National Merit Medallion! We did it because of you the members, unit and district membership chairman, and our department membership chairman Kollett Kaehlert. I am so proud of everyone who helped make this goal and contacting us to see what they could do to help. Every morning, we were anxious checking the numbers.

Please support our junior program by bringing your junior members to **Department Junior Conference April 10-11, 2026**, hosted by the First District in Stewertville. Department Honorary Junior President Anastasia is busy getting ready for a great conference.

The **Unit Annual Reporting** zooms were well attended with over 125 attendees for the three zooms. Great feedback was shared and I took notes to share in hopes that future leadership will continue. Do not forget that your annual reports are due to district program chairman and your impact reports to your district presidents before April 15th.

Department chairman annual reporting and awards zoom will be Tuesday, April 7th at 7pm. If you are unable to attend, I am asking that you notify me in advance of the meeting. There is a lot of information to make sure our department programs are represented at the national level.

I was invited to attend the American Legion Department of MN Oratorical contest and as always it was a wonderful day listening to our youth speak. They amaze me with their presentations. So many in the audience were in awe of their speeches.

The Appreciation rally was well attended. It was great to see so many of our American Legion family together. We heard about the last two pillars of Children and Youth and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation from the Legion and Auxiliary chairman.

We are so close to our goal of \$35,000 for the **Honor Flight**. As I am writing this article we are at \$31,000. Thank you to everyone who has contributed. I say that this project is because of our members and to me it will always be the Minnesota members' project.

Do not forget to **Purple Up on April 15th** to support our military children. This is a day to show support and thank our military youth for their strength and sacrifices.

Make plans to attend **Veterans Day on the Hill** Thursday, April 23rd. This is a great day to support our Minnesota veterans and rally together.

Our **National President Pam Ray** will be in Minnesota July 2-5, 2026. There will be a dinner on Thursday, July 2nd at the Osseo-Maple Grove Post. More information will be coming on making your reservations for this special 250th Birthday Dinner. You can also see President Pam in the Forest Lake 4th of July parade. More details will be shared once travel is confirmed.

The **Department of Minnesota Joint Testimonial** will be on Saturday, June 27th in New Prague. Social at 5pm, dinner 6pm, with 7pm program, and then a live band until 10pm. Only \$25.00 for the meal of turkey and brisket, sides, and dessert. And only one night out of your busy summer. Please come celebrate with us. To me it is not about us, it is about all the hard work all our members have done this past year. The flyer is in this unit mailing and on the department websites.

Department of Minnesota Joint Testimonial Dinner

American Legion Commander Linda Dvorak

American Legion Auxiliary President Robin Dorf

Sons of the American Legion Commander Jeremy Copher



Saturday, June 27, 2026

New Prague American Legion Post

5pm Social ~ 6pm Dinner ~ 7pm Program ~ Band until 10pm

Menu will be turkey and brisket, sides, and dessert

\$25.00 per person

Purchase your tickets on the Department American Legion website OR send check to New Prague American Legion, PO Box 113, New Prague MN 56071

Reservations due by June 19, 2026

Block of rooms available at Quality Inn & Suites in New Prague.

(952)758-7300 ~ ask for the American Legion Block

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ # of Guests \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_





**Department of Minnesota**  
April 2026 Unit Mailing  
**Americanism Chairman, Tamara Thayer**  
**tlthayer@gmail.com**

## Celebrating Americanism: April Events and Opportunities

As we welcome the brighter days of April, the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota is excited to highlight the heart of our mission: the Americanism Program. This cherished initiative inspires patriotism, promotes responsible citizenship, and encourages respect for our nation's traditions and values. Throughout the year, our members work tirelessly to instill these principles in our communities and especially among our youth.

April brings a fresh opportunity to rededicate ourselves to Americanism. Many Units are organizing local flag etiquette workshops in honor of Patriot's Day April 19<sup>th</sup>. The due date for the essay contest was March 26<sup>th</sup>, and I look forward to announcing the winners at our Department convention. Locally, you could have students read their essays to your unit or acknowledge them for their participation. Celebrate the creativity and patriotism of Minnesota's young essayists, whose words remind us all of the enduring power of our nation's ideals. The deadline for your applications for Girls State is April 1<sup>st</sup>. We encourage all members to participate in and support these activities, whether by volunteering, donating materials, or simply spreading the word.

Did you know that there are many complete lesson plans on the topic of Americanism to use in schools, found on the Wreaths Across America website? This organization is much more than just laying wreaths on graves once a year. These lessons were focused on teaching K-12<sup>th</sup> grade the history of our country and importance of remembering those who have gone before us. Lessons include flag etiquette, Women's History month, Black History Month, Buffalo Soldiers, MIA/POW table, and many more topics. All the lessons can be found at: [www.wreathscrossamerica.org/Resources/EducationalResources](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/Resources/EducationalResources).

If your unit is looking for ideas on how to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of America check out this official website: [A milestone in the making - America250](#)

And Minnesota's website: [America 250 Resources](#) I encourage your units to plan a 250<sup>th</sup> celebration open to the public giving everyone an opportunity to show their support for our country and it's heroes.

Thank you for your continued dedication to the Americanism Program. Together, we keep the spirit of patriotism alive in Minnesota.





## CHAPLAIN / MEMORIAL

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

**APRIL 2026**

As you are preparing your Annual Reports, please don't forget to return your list of deceased members to both your district Chaplain and me. This form can be found in the February Unit Mailing behind the Chaplain/Memorial page.

As I prepare this unit mailing, our hearts are saddened by the loss of 13 service men and women, with one of them being from Minnesota.

### ***PRAYER FOR OUR SERVICE MEMBERS & DECEASED MILITARY***

Heavenly Father,

We lift up every American service member now deployed in this hour of conflict—those on ships, in the air, on bases, and in forward positions. Shield them with Your mighty hand. Give them clarity in every decision, courage under fire and peace that passes all understanding. Surround them with Your angels, guard their bodies and minds, and bring them safely home when their mission is complete.

Comfort their spouses, children, parents and loved ones who wait at home with heavy hearts. Replace fear with faith, anxiety with hope, and sleepless nights with the assurance that You neither slumber nor sleep. Hold their families close, provide for every need, and let them feel the support of a grateful nation.

Lord, we ask for wisdom for our leaders, protection for the innocent, and a swift path to de-escalation and lasting peace in the region. May justice prevail and evil be restrained.

Please receive the brave souls of our deceased military members of Operation Epic Fury into your eternal peace. Hold them close and honor the lives they lived in service and love for our country. Rest in peace, faithful service members. Your service, love of country and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

In your name we pray. Amen.



April is the month of the Military Child. It is important now, more than ever, to remember our military children in prayer as well as in our outreach activities.

### ***PRAYER FOR MILITARY CHILDREN***

Lord,

We bring before You the children of our military personnel. Please shield their hearts from fear and anxiety while their parents are deployed. Comfort them when they are lonely and protect them when they are scared.

Lord, bless them with new friends and supportive communities during PCS moves. Give them resilience and a special awareness of Your presence, reminding them that You are with them wherever they go.

For the ones missing a parent on holidays and special days, wrap Your arms around them and reassure them of their parents' love. Keep these families close and bring them together in safety and joy again. In your name we pray. Amen.

If you have members who are no longer able to attend meetings or functions in your unit, why not pick up the phone and give them a call just to say "hello" and ask them how they are. Simple gestures like this mean more than you may ever realize. It shows that you cared enough about them to take a few moments from your day to connect with them. When you have members who have had medical issues, a simple thinking of you card signed by your members at the previous meeting means a lot. When I came to Minnesota, I knew no one other than my husband and his immediate family members. I found myself needing emergency gall bladder surgery 5 months after I moved here. You have no idea how much that card that our members signed meant to me. It made me feel like someone cared. I am so glad they continue to do this simple act of kindness.

If your unit has ideas to share on what you do to show you care for your members, do not forget to include that in your Memorial Annual Report.

It's time for us to celebrate, Children and Youth has been the fourth pillar of the American Legion since 1919. April is the month of the Military Child. How is your unit promoting that we are here for military children and families. It can be hard to identify these families, but word of mouth, church, and social media may help. Let your communities know that we are here to help.

Purple up! On April 15th we ask members and our communities to wear the color purple. Why purple? Purple is the color that symbolizes all branches of the military, as it is a combination of Army Green, Marine Red, Coast Guard Blue, Air Force Blue, and Navy Blue.

Set up a Military Child's Table in your post to draw attention to children of our deployed troops. "When an Air Force officer was asked what he needed in Iraq, he said, "Please don't send cookies, care packages or socks. Just help take care of our children." Our county has always supported its military in times of war through community efforts," Said First Lady Laura Bush during a White House speech in 2004. "We have a great capacity to care for the home front. Now is the time for a new victory garden. In this garden we can tend to the needs of the military child." The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary emphasize protecting, caring for, and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans and military families. Let's show them extra support in the month of April.

Legionville Educational Center and Summer Camp is the only camp of its kind in the United States, established by the Minnesota American Legion in 1956. The magic of this camp is teaching safety and skills the kids will use, that are invaluable and life changing for most kids.

The Official Flower of the Military Child is the Dandelion. We ask why?

Dandelions put down roots almost anywhere and it's almost impossible to destroy. It's an unpretentious plant yet good looking it's a survivor in a broad range of climates.

Military children bloom everywhere the winds carry them. They are hardy and upright. Their roots are strong, cultivated deeply in the culture of the Army, planted swiftly and surely. They're ready to fly in the breezes that take them to new adventures, new lands, and new friends.

Military children are well-rounded, culturally aware, tolerant, and extremely resilient; they have learned from an early age that home is where their hearts are, that a good friend can be found in every corner of the world. They learn that to survive means to adapt, that the door that closes one chapter of their life opens up to a new and exciting adventure full of new friends and new experiences.

Military Child's Table Items

Potted flowering plant.  
Hand Spade.  
Birthday Cake with Candles.  
Baseball Glove.  
Ballet Slippers.  
Family Photo.







Department of Minnesota  
April 2026 Unit Mailing  
MN American Legion Auxiliary  
Girls State Chairman, Wanda Prescher

**Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary Girls State 2026 is soon approaching!  
June 14-19, 2026 at Bethel University in Arden Hills!**

**April 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for reservations!** Reservations have been coming in very slowly!

How can we Help!

We really need your reservations so we can start planning with Bethel and staff for the week of Girls State.

If there are units who are looking for a girl and cannot find one from their area, we have girls contacting us directly for sponsorships. These girls really want to go!

Electronic Registration will start April 15<sup>th</sup>. Instructions will come from the department office prior.

We say thank you to units that have not hesitated to sponsor a citizen, they are very appreciative.

Shirt Shack package is again \$60 for units wanting to purchase for their citizens. Please mail your check to the department office along with the citizens' name you are sponsoring.

We are looking for a few volunteers to help Sunday 10:30-2:30 with the Shirt Shack. We have a captive audience with citizen and parents. A good way to help with Girls State!

Thank you to units who have not hesitated to sponsor a citizen when we have put the info out to our district chairman. Your sponsorship is greatly appreciated by the committee and the citizen.

Girls State Committee:

|                              |                                                                        |              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Chairman: Wanda Prescher     | <a href="mailto:w.prescher1951@gmail.com">w.prescher1951@gmail.com</a> | 507-254-0304 |
| Director: Peggy Tesdahl      | <a href="mailto:ranpegt0814@hotmail.com">ranpegt0814@hotmail.com</a>   | 612-715-4489 |
| Education: Amelia Tesdahl    | <a href="mailto:ametes201@hotmail.com">ametes201@hotmail.com</a>       | 763-753-8247 |
| Committee Member: Rene Suess | <a href="mailto:rsuess3@gmail.com">rsuess3@gmail.com</a>               | 763-300-2226 |
| Committee Member: Jen Stolz  | <a href="mailto:jstolz.de@gmail.com">jstolz.de@gmail.com</a>           | 763-234-1198 |
| Americanism: Linda Kelly     | <a href="mailto:lkkauxiliary@gmail.com">lkkauxiliary@gmail.com</a>     | 507-421-8270 |



### Leadership Workshop

On March 2, 2026, a Leadership Workshop was held at Roseau American Legion with 14 members present from Bagley, Roseau, and Warroad. This workshop was hosted by the Roseau American Legion Auxiliary Unit 24. Many programs were reviewed and discussed and of course Kahoots was involved in the workshop. Thank you to all who were able to attend. Lunch was delicious! Very thankful that it didn't snow on both travel days!



### Please be sure to nominate your Unit Member of the Year

American Legion Auxiliary units all have hardworking, dedicated members who give their time and talent to further the mission of our organization but have no desire to serve beyond the unit level. To recognize such dedicated service, each unit may nominate one candidate for Unit Member of the Year in its department.

#### Requirements:

- Open to senior members who are not currently, nor have ever been, in an elected or appointed leadership role higher than unit president. Current membership dues must be paid. Years of membership are not a part of the criteria; the nominee may be a new member.
- Units submit a narrative of 1,000 words or less to department Leadership Chairman Mary Kuperus. Describe the nominee's accomplishments and activities for the current administrative year. Include the nominee's name, telephone number, and address. The Unit President and Secretary must sign the entry unless the nominee is one of them in which case, a Past Unit President must sign the entry. The nomination is due by April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The Department Leadership Chairman will use the electronic form to submit the department's Unit Member of the Year. Recognition of the winners occurs at the American Legion Auxiliary's national convention.





**Department of Minnesota**  
April 2026 Unit Mailing  
**Membership Chairman,**  
**Kollett Kaehlert**  
**[kkaehlertaux@gmail.com](mailto:kkaehlertaux@gmail.com)**

First and foremost, please take a moment to pray for the lives lost and their families, the troops who remain fighting, and their families, during Operation Epic Fury. This is where our membership plays a valuable role in our mission of supporting our troops, reaching out to families, and show encouragement during this time.

Thank you to all of you and your dedication to membership, Minnesota ALA reached the National Goal of 85% on March 10<sup>th</sup>, well ahead of the deadline of March 15<sup>th</sup>. The next goal is 95% by June 12<sup>th</sup>, we need 2,263 renewals/rejoins/and new members to hit our goal by this date. I know that looks like a lot, but if you break it down by weeks not so hard, there are 13 weeks to that goal, so if we can bring in 175 memberships a week, we will make it. I am confident that Minnesota can make this goal as well!

*“Without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination.” – Fitzhugh Dodson*

ALAMIS can help you see who has not renewed their membership, the Units that use ALAMIS can run the Unpaid Dues Roster Report, this will help you reach out to members that still need to renew:

- Sign into ALAMIS
- Click on Unit drop down
- Click Unit Reports
- Click on 2026 unpaid dues roster (this will tell you who has not paid for 2026)

I encourage you to look at all the reports that are available to you, there are reports that will tell you who has not renewed in the last two years, etc. These are great tools available to you, try them out. If you do not have access to ALAMIS please contact me and I will pull this report for your unit.

Thank you for all you do,

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY**  
**Bulletin Appreciation Rally as of 3-15-2026**  
**2026 Membership**  
**Celebrating Members**

**"Finding Members in Everyday Places"**  
**Leading the Celebration is Kollett Kaehlert**



| DISTRICT              | # of Units | Goal          | Period Gain | Membership To Date | Percent of Goal | Membership LY 3/11/2025 | Difference from Last Year |
|-----------------------|------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| One                   | 47         | 3,240         | 11          | 2,808              | 86.67%          | 2947                    | -139                      |
| Two                   | 68         | 3,229         | 12          | 2,803              | 86.81%          | 2926                    | -123                      |
| Three                 | 45         | 3,390         | 77          | 2,865              | 84.51%          | 3060                    | -195                      |
| Four                  | 5          | 456           | 2           | 372                | 81.58%          | 404                     | -32                       |
| Five                  | 7          | 344           | 1           | 263                | 76.45%          | 290                     | -27                       |
| Six                   | 57         | 4,370         | 21          | 3,830              | 87.64%          | 4011                    | -181                      |
| Seven                 | 49         | 2,427         | 6           | 2,087              | 85.99%          | 2198                    | -111                      |
| Eight                 | 20         | 1,092         | 8           | 934                | 85.53%          | 910                     | 24                        |
| Nine                  | 43         | 2,786         | 16          | 2,435              | 87.40%          | 2511                    | -76                       |
| Ten                   | 40         | 3,146         | 34          | 2,715              | 86.30%          | 2778                    | -63                       |
| 1982                  | 1          | 408           | 4           | 249                | 61.03%          | 248                     | 1                         |
| <b>Depart. Total</b>  | <b>382</b> | <b>24,888</b> | <b>182</b>  | <b>21,361</b>      | <b>85.83%</b>   | <b>22,283</b>           | <b>-922</b>               |
| <b>Group 1 (Even)</b> | <b>190</b> | <b>12,293</b> | <b>77</b>   | <b>10,654</b>      | <b>86.67%</b>   | <b>11,029</b>           | <b>-375</b>               |
| <i>Jodi Hassing</i>   |            |               |             |                    |                 |                         |                           |
| <b>Group 2 (Odd)</b>  | <b>191</b> | <b>12,187</b> | <b>111</b>  | <b>10,458</b>      | <b>85.81%</b>   | <b>11,254</b>           | <b>-796</b>               |
| <i>Linda Kelly</i>    |            |               |             |                    |                 |                         |                           |

**RANKINGS**

|                                            |                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1st</b><br>87.64%<br><b>District 6</b>  |  |
| <b>2nd</b><br>87.40%<br><b>District 9</b>  |  |
| <b>3rd</b><br>86.81%<br><b>District 2</b>  |  |
| <b>4th</b><br>86.66%<br><b>District 1</b>  |  |
| <b>5th</b><br>86.30%<br><b>District 10</b> |  |
| <b>6th</b><br>85.99%<br><b>District 7</b>  |   |
| <b>7th</b><br>85.53%<br><b>District 8</b>  |    |
| <b>8th</b><br>84.51%<br><b>District 3</b>  |    |
| <b>9th</b><br>81.58%<br><b>District 4</b>  |    |
| <b>10th</b><br>76.45%<br><b>District 5</b> |    |



# THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY

## NATIONAL POPPY DAY®

### Lace up your running shoes and support National Poppy Day

To honor those who have served and died for the United States, The American Legion Family petitioned Congress for National Poppy Day. Celebrated Friday prior to Memorial Day, the Legion Family honors the sacrifices of our servicemembers and veterans by wearing a red poppy. The poppy has been recognized and worn by Americans as a symbol of sacrifice since World War I.

National Poppy Day is May 22 this year. Leading up to this significant day, a virtual 5K will happen throughout May to raise awareness and support. Keep a lookout on ALA National Headquarters' social media for more information. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) @ALAforVeterans.

### How to Participate

There are many ways individuals and groups can help bring greater awareness to this symbolic flower, honor our fallen and support the living heroes on National Poppy Day®.

### EVERYONE CAN HELP

Anyone can participate in National Poppy Day®. Here are a few simple ways:



❖ Wear a red poppy

Wear a red poppy all day and tell everyone why.

❖ Distribute Poppies

Distribute poppies to friends, co-workers and family and tell everyone why.

❖ Collect Donations

Collect donations to give to the Poppy Program. [CLICK TO BUY A COLLECTION CAN](#)



❖ Share on Social Media

Tell the story of who you are wearing your poppy to remember or support. **#PoppyDay**

❖ Make a Donation

Accept a poppy and [make a donation](#) if you see ALA members distributing poppies.

❖ #PoppyDay

Use this hashtag to share poppies on an [Instagram virtual garden](#).

## The Friday before Memorial Day

The American Legion Family has the support of Congress to designate the Friday before Memorial Day as National Poppy Day®, a day that encourages all Americans to wear a red poppy as a symbol to honor the fallen and support the living heroes who have worn our nation's uniform.

National Poppy Day® is an initiative supported by the entire American Legion Family, which includes The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and the American Legion Riders.

After World War I, the poppy flourished in Europe. Scientists attributed the growth to soils in France and Belgium becoming enriched with lime from the rubble left by the war. The red poppy came to symbolize

the blood shed by those who fought and those who continue to fight for our country following the publication of the wartime poem "In Flanders Fields." The poem was written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, M.D. while serving on the front line in World War I, to honor soldiers killed in battle.

The mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad.

Each year, members of The American Legion Family, led by the American Legion Auxiliary, distribute poppies with a request that the person receiving the flower make a donation. Proceeds from the sale of items such as jewelry and other themed merchandise also benefit the mission to support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.

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*Primary Source by John D. McCrae, J. A. Armstrong, and Ella Jane Osborn*

**World War I poems: "In Flanders Fields" and "The Answer," 1918**

*A Spotlight on a Primary Source by John D. McCrae, J. A. Armstrong, and Ella Jane Osborn*

Ella Osborn's 1918 diary provides insight into the experiences of an American nurse serving in France at the end of World War I. In addition to her notes about the men under her care and events in France, Osborn jotted down two popular World War I poems, "In Flanders Fields," by Canadian surgeon Lt. Col. John D. McCrae, and "The Answer," by Lt. J. A. Armstrong of Wisconsin.

McCrae composed "In Flanders Fields" on May 3, 1915, during the Second Battle of Ypres, Belgium. It was published in *Punch* magazine on December 8, 1915, and became one of the most popular and frequently quoted poems about the war. It was used for recruitment, in propaganda efforts, and to sell war bonds. Today the red poppy of McCrae's poem has become a symbol for soldiers who have died in combat.

## In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow

In Flanders fields.

~Lt. Col. John McCrae

"The Answer" is one of many poems written in response to "In Flanders Fields":

### The Answer –

In Flanders Field the cannon boom  
And fitful flashes light the gloom;  
While up above, like Eagles, fly  
The fierce destroyers of the sky;  
With stains the earth wherein you lie  
Is redder than the poppy bloom  
In Flanders Field.

Sleep on ye brave! The shrieking shell,  
The quaking trench, the startling yell,  
The fury of the battle hell  
Shall wake you not; for all is well.

Sleep peacefully, for all is well.  
Your flaming torch aloft we bear,  
With burning heart an oath we swear  
To keep the faith to fight it through  
To crush the foe, or sleep with you  
In Flanders Field

~Lt. J. A. Armstrong of Wisconsin

# Poppy Palooza Challenge Incentive Reminder

• **Each District** that hosts a Poppy Palooza will be entered into a **drawing for a gift**, selected by **President Robin**, to be presented at **Department Convention**.

• The **District that makes the MOST poppies** between **September 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026** will receive a **special gift**, selected by President Robin and presented at Department Convention.

**Important:** These poppies must be made for our **Department**, helping eliminate the need to purchase poppies from outside departments. **All poppies MUST be verified** with the Department Poppy Chairman for an accurate count. Please call or email with your total poppies sent to Department.

## Poppy Palooza Challenge

**It's Easy – and It Makes a Difference!**

Hosting a **Poppy Palooza** is a fun, meaningful way to support our veterans and help our **Department** remain self-sufficient in poppy production.

### **What a Poppy Palooza Can Include:**

- Invite surrounding **Posts, Units, and interested poppy makers**
- **Veterans get paid** to make poppies ✓ **\$0.10 / small poppy & \$0.25 / large poppy**
- Poppy snacks, poppy trivia, and poppy history
- Making **large and small poppies**
- Fellowship, fun, and productivity!

*(These are just a few ideas — make it your own!)*

## Poppies Made for Department by Districts as of 3/14/2026

### **Small Poppies**

- District 1 ~ **1,000 poppies**
- District 2 ~ **2,000 poppies**
- District 3 ~ **23,793 poppies**
- District 5 ~ **5,775 poppies**
- District 6 ~ **25,725 poppies**
- District 7 ~ **17,500 poppies**
- District 10 ~ **1,000 poppies**

### **Large Poppies**

- District 2 ~ **84 dozen (1008) poppies**
- District 3 ~ **296 dozen (3552) poppies**

## Poppies Made During Poppy Paloozas

### **District 3**

- Forest Lake – **1,000 poppies**
- Waconia – **1,250 poppies**
- St. Paul Park – **1,500 poppies**
- Cleveland — **1,500 poppies**

### **District 6**

- Kimball – **1,275 poppies**

### **District 7**

- Cosmos – **3,000 poppies**

### **District 9**

- *To be held May 16, 2026*

**Total poppies = 89,318 small poppies + 4560 large poppies (380 Dz)**

## The Impact We're Making

In **2024**, the Department ordered **135,400 poppies**. So far this year, only **100,900 poppies** have been ordered.

This significant decrease is due to **Units ordering kits and making poppies for their own use**.

**The best news? NO poppies were purchased from outside departments this year.**

The Department is excited to continue encouraging **Individuals, Units, and Districts** to create poppies **year-round**, strengthening our mission and supporting our veterans.

# Poppy Contest for Department Convention 2026

250<sup>th</sup> Celebrate the USA

### **Contest 1 – Craft Project**

Celebrate 250 years in “Poppies” **without using** the American Legion Auxiliary Poppies.

- ❖ The words Celebration, Freedom and Sacrifice are your inspirational words.
- ❖ Find a creative way to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the USA without using the crepe paper poppy.
  - This can be done in any number of ways.
    - Diamond art, paint, yarn, popcorn, etc. use your imagination.

### **Contest 2 – Wearable “Honor Flight” wear.**

In 2025-26 our MN Project this year is Honor Flights.

- ❖ Your challenge will be to **use** the American Legion Auxiliary Poppy to create an item that could be worn on an Honor Flight.
  - This can be done in any number of ways.
    - Hats, scarves, sashes or possibly a piece of wearable jewelry i.e.. Bracelet, broach, veteran pin. etc. The sky is your limit.

1<sup>st</sup> Place -\$20.00

2<sup>nd</sup> Place - \$15.00

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – \$10.00

People’s Choice - \$20.00 -with funds going towards President Robin’s Project – Honor Flights

Poppy entries must be brought to the Department Convention at Willmar Conference Center by Friday July 10th, 2026, at 10:00 am. Let’s see how many tables we can fill.



**Department of Minnesota**  
**April 2026 Unit Mailing**  
**Public Relations Chairman,**  
**Michelle Weaver**  
**[weaver.michelle595@gmail.com](mailto:weaver.michelle595@gmail.com)**

As we enter the final months of the 2025–2026 reporting year, this is an important reminder for all District Public Relations Chairmen to connect with your Unit Chairmen regarding their Annual Public Relations Reports. These reports help us capture the incredible work being done across Minnesota—every article, photo, social media post, community partnership, and outreach effort tells the story of who we are and why our mission matters.

#### Unit Reports Due April 15, 2026

Please remind your Unit Public Relations Chairmen that their Unit PR Reports must be submitted to their District Chairman by April 15, 2026. Many Units are already close to completing their reports, and a friendly nudge can make all the difference in ensuring strong participation.

#### District Reports Due May 15, 2026

Once Unit reports have been collected, District Chairmen should compile their District Public Relations Report and submit it to the Department Public Relations Chairman no later than May 15, 2026.

#### Looking Ahead

I look forward to reading your District reports and seeing the many ways you have promoted the American Legion Auxiliary throughout the year. Your efforts ensure that our mission is seen, understood, and appreciated across Minnesota communities.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to telling our story.





**Department of Minnesota**  
**April 2026 Unit Mailing**  
**Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation**  
**Linda Kelly, Chairman**  
**lkkauxiliary@gmail.com**

Nice weather is usually followed by another round of snow and I'm guessing this month won't be any different. Stay safe and know that spring is just around the corner.

I also know that you are finishing up your annual reports. Please get them sent off to your district chairman so your numbers will count. All auxiliary numbers count for our veterans.

District chairman: Please complete your district VA&R report and submit to me. I would very much appreciate receiving a report from each of our ten Minnesota districts. If you think there is a unit that should be considered for President Robin's award, PLEASE let me know on your report.

As you are completing your VA&R report, check to see if you donated to this great program. All donations benefit veterans – especially those residing in one of our eight veterans' homes and those receiving services at one of our four medical centers. If you haven't, please consider it. The VA&R program is our most expensive program but think about all the things we do for our veterans in those facilities.

AND don't forget the upcoming Silent Auction at our convention in July at Willmar. All funds will go directly to the VA&R budget. We are looking for all types of items: baskets, all types of creative work, jewelry – the options are unlimited. If you're like me, I'm trying to downsize and I have found several items that I'm going to bring – maybe things that we haven't seen before, but someone else can use. There will also be a bake sale and grab bags.

I am still looking for members to help me create the "goodies tray" for the winner of our guessing game. All money donated to this game will go to the VA&R program.

I recently visited with Sunshine MillerMaloney from the 1<sup>st</sup> District. Her husband, Mark, was recently a patient at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. Sunshine told me about the Fisher House, "It is a beautiful bed and breakfast setting, free of charge for hospitalized veterans' loved ones to stay located right across the street from the VA Medical Center." We always hear about places and people that help our veterans and their families, but this is one about our own. Thanks for sharing, Sunshine.

Secretary of the VA, Doug Collins recently spoke at the Washington DC Legislative Conference. He had the honor of awarding Dr. Karen Armbrust the VA&R Physician of the Year Award and Amy Stanwood the Healthcare Provider of the Year Award. **Both women are employed at our own Minneapolis VA Medical Center.** What an honor for Minnesota to have both National award winners.





# VA&R SILENT AUCTION

Department Convention

Willmar Conference Center, 240 23<sup>rd</sup> St, SE, Willmar, MN

Thursday, July 9 - Friday, July 10, 2026

Items can be dropped off from 3 pm to 7 pm on Wednesday, July 8

Bidding will be Thursday and Friday, 8 am to 4 pm.

Bring new or slightly used items, theme baskets, quilts, patriotic items, jewelry, jams, jellies, baked goods, munchies, pies & etc. \$2 Grab bags and more.

All money raised will go towards the Auxiliary VA&R program - the program that touches the lives of so many Minnesota veterans. Bid high, bid often.



## New this year

Please make a donation and participate in our "guessing game". The question will be listed at the Silent Auction on Friday morning. The winner will receive a large tray of goodies, all made by the wonderful bakers of the American Legion Auxiliary. Donate high, donate often.











## **OFFICIAL FAMILY HOUSING INFORMATION**

### **Willmar Department Convention, July 9-11, 2026 (pre-convention meetings held on July 8)**

You must make your own lodging reservations directly with your hotel of choice. Please ask for **“The American Legion block.”**

Best Western Plus: 320-235-6060

Holiday Inn Express: 320-231-2601

Country Inn & Suites: 320-214-0300

AmericInn: 320-365-1995

The Days Inn doesn't have a Legion block, but it is only about three city blocks away: 320-403-2334.

There are other lodging options in the Willmar but are farther from the convention site.

**\*\* All hotel room rates subject to applicable state and local taxes in effect at time of check-in.**





## UPCOMING EVENTS

April 3: Good Friday – Office Closed  
April 7: Annual Report Department ZOOM Meeting 7pm  
April 10-11: Dept Jr Conference – 1<sup>st</sup> District Hosting  
April 15: Purple Up Day!  
April 15: Annual Reports Due to District Chairman  
April 18: Good Friday – Office Closed  
April 25: 9th District Joint Testimonial, Bagley Post 16  
May 9: 4th District Convention, North St. Paul Post 39  
May 16: 1st District Convention, Wild Wings Activity Center in Lake City (for now but location could change)  
May 16: 2nd District Convention, Redwood Falls Post 38  
May 16: 3rd District Convention, New Prague Post 45  
May 22: National Poppy Day  
May 22: American Legion Night at CHS Field, Saints vs. Omaha Storm Chasers, CHS Field, St. Paul  
May 25: Memorial Day, local observances (Office Closed)  
May 30: 7th District Convention, New London Post 537  
**June 1: 2026-2027 Officers List DUE**  
June 6: 5th District Convention, Holiday Inn, Bloomington  
June 6: 6th District Convention, St. Augusta Post 621  
June 6: 8th District Convention, West Duluth Post 71  
June 13: 9th District Convention, Moorhead Post 21  
June 14-19: Minnesota Girls State, Bethel University  
June 14-20: Minnesota Boys State, St. John's University  
June 27: Joint Testimonial Dinner (for department commander and president), New Prague Post 45  
July 2-5: National President's Tour (details to come)  
July 3: 4<sup>th</sup> of July – Office Closed  
July 9-11 Department Convention, Willmar  
July 22: Fund 85 Ride Kickoff, New Ulm Post 132  
Aug: 14-16 Junior Fun Weekend (information in the May Unit Mailing)

## TIDBITS

- Girls State reservations are due to the Department Office April 1<sup>st</sup>. Participants can begin registering April 15<sup>th</sup>. Detailed directions will be emailed to the Unit's Girls State Chairman.
- 2026-2027 Unit Officers List is due June 1<sup>st</sup>, send to Department Office whether your Unit has changes or not.
- Bonding Fee and ALAMIS User invoices were emailed/mailed out in March. Please, make sure your Unit remits payment as soon as possible. Thank you to those that have taken care of payment.
- Remember to send pictures with a short description into the Department.