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|  | | **7th DISTRICT NEWS JANUARY 2023** | | https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/564x/5b/8c/cc/5b8ccc01c98084b7065ffbb7ed926e1e.jpg  *Our Legion Family* |
| **COMMANDER**  Karen Welander C 320.368.0760  **VICE CDR AT LARGE**  Jan Ekert  C 320.339.9927  **MEMBERSHIP DIR**  Jan Ekert  C 320.339.9927  **VICE CDR – AREA A**  Carl Wilson  C 320.304.5333  **VICE CDR – AREA B**  Donald Brehmer C 320.304.1884  **VICE CDR – AREA C**  Rueben Nathe C 320.593.8654  **VICE CDR – AREA D**  John Jones 507.469.7995  **ADJUTANT**  Carol Jackson  C 320.979.4016  **FINANCE OFFICER**  Chip Manson  C 320.737.0014  **CHAPLAIN**  David Ecker  C 605.237.4736  **SGT AT ARMS**  Keith Seidler  C 320.309.3411  **HISTORIAN**  Victor Gades  C 320.288.6610  **JUDGE ADVOCATE**  Dean Knutson 320.766.0502 | **COMMANDER’S THOUGHTS**  A big shout out to the posts at 100 %. The Echo post is now joined by Clinton, Elbow Lake, and Taunton. It is not easy getting to 100% but we want to recognize this achievement at the mid- Winter presenting each post with the 100% Club banner. We have nine posts at 90 %. The 100% club should be growing with so many at 90%. Do buddy check phone calls and get them to pay their dues.  Just a heads up to those posts that use [mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org/). The 2023 report form has been posted for your use. You can start loading your information and save but don't submit the CPR form. If you used the MN administrative manual worksheets for each month at your meetings, you will have reduced input time. This information will be used by the national commander to brief congress in the assets you bring to fellow veterans.  Freedom is not Free Commander Karen  **DIRECTORY UPDATES**  **SPICER** Post #545 Lauren Kath, Adj/Membership Director e- mail address change: [post545adj@email.com](mailto:post545adj@email.com)  **APPLETON** Post #72 Allen Jensen, Commander, address/phone number change: 35 N. Miles St, Appleton, MN 56208. Cell phone 320-808-9694  **APPLETON** Post #72 add Donald Fischer, Membership Director. His information is 549 W. Schlieman Ave, Appleton, MN 56208. Cell phone: 320-297-1112. E-mail address: [dd.fischer@mchsi.com](mailto:dd.fischer@mchsi.com) | | **CHAPLAIN’S CORNER**  Christmas is over and we are beginning a new year. It looks like this could be another year of political indecision, but if we say our prayers for guidance, God will provide the best possible solutions to our problems. Remember God will only give you as much trouble as He knows you can handle.  We must pray for the President and the Congress that they will stand up for the Veterans and this can only be done through God’s hand and his Almighty love, understanding and guidance.  Mid-Winter is coming soon. I will pray that all will have safe travels that day so we may meet and take care of any training and business that will come before us. We must remember that the Supreme Commander will be watching and guiding us in our decisions.  Please say a little prayer each day for the troops that are still out  there in harm’s way.  Dave Ecker District 7 Chaplain  **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**  The Mid-Winter Conference is Saturday, January 28 at the Granite Falls Post home. Registration 8 am to 9 am.  Cost of the noon meal is $15. | |

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|  | **ADDITIONAL DATES TO TAKE NOTE OF**  **FEBRUARY 4 –** Sweetheart Rally. Osseo-Maple Grove Post  **MARCH 11 –** Appreciation Rally.  **MARCH 30 –** Veteran’s Day on the Hill. According to the Jan 2023 Legionnaire the DAV of Minnesota will provide a free lunch at 11 a.m. at the St Paul Armory, 600 Cedar St. Doors open at 10 a.m. It will be followed by the Veterans March at 12:40 p.m. from the Armory to the Veterans Service Building and a rally at the Capitol Rotunda at 1 p.m.  The following is part of a forwarded message from Mike Maxa, Department of Minnesota Adjutant. We will be discussing it at the Mid-Winter Conference.  Suicide prevention work in the community can take many different forms - you don't need to be licensed in mental health to help someone who is in a suicidal crisis. One way in which ***you*** can help prevent suicide is by increasing your knowledge around risk factors, how to identify someone who may be struggling and how to speak to someone who may be having thoughts of suicide. You can learn all of this in just ***one hour*** of suicide prevention training.  We want to provide **FREE** training for your American Legion Post staff, members, and community! Link to flyer  is [https://mnlegion.org/suicide-prevention-webinar-](https://mnlegion.org/suicide-prevention-webinar-warning-series/) [warning-series/](https://mnlegion.org/suicide-prevention-webinar-warning-series/) | **VA NEWS RELEASE – DATED JAN 13, 2023**  **Starting Jan. 17, Veterans in suicidal crisis can go to any VA or non- VA health care facility for free emergency health care**  WASHINGTON – Starting Jan. 17, Veterans in acute suicidal crisis will be able to go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost – including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit. This expansion of care will help prevent Veteran suicide by guaranteeing no cost, world-class care to Veterans in times of crisis. It will also increase access to acute suicide care for up to 9 million Veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA.  This will be discussed at our Mid-Winter Conference and more information will be available.  **2023 DISTRICT 7 ORATORICAL CONTEST**  When: Sunday, February 5, 2023 at 1 p.m.  Where: Willmar Home Post #167, Willmar Minnesota Awards: 1st Place $700 and the opportunity to advance to the  Minnesota Department Contest scheduled for February 25, 2023.  2nd Place $500. 3rd Place $250  Interested in knowing more and have questions? Contact Rueben Nathe, District 7 Oratorical Contest Chairman, at either 320-593-8654 or email [Ruebenn@hutchtel.net](mailto:Ruebenn@hutchtel.net).  Check out the District 7 Web Site at [www.mnlegiondistrict7.org](http://www.mnlegiondistrict7.org/) This web site has links to both the District 7 Legion and District 7  Auxiliary Facebook pages. Both list the important dates to remember clear up to the end of 2023. Keep in mind that location, time and dates are subject to change. |

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|  | **LEGISLATIVE**  The 2022 State Legislative session saw the passage of the first Veteran and Military Omnibus Bill. In the past Veterans issues were attached to other bills and often used as bargaining chips…possible concessions to be made to get the main bill passed.  A priority of the 2023 Legislative session is to maintain the Veteran and Military Omnibus Bill putting forward bills specific to Veterans and their families. The American Legion Department Legislative Committee has identified their priorities. Most focus on changes that will benefit individuals – either the veterans or their families.  One not of direct immediate benefit is the reconstruction of the Hastings Veterans Home with the aim of eliminating safety concerns and reducing operating expenses. Federal dollars would pay 2/3 of the cost leaving 1/3 for the state to pay. They are hoping to tap into the current state budget surplus and get this approved now.  The other is the on-going effort to reduce the taxation on Charitable Gambling. The current tax rate for charitable gambling is nearly 40%. Items are taxed twice and in some cases three times. By having them taxed only once, it would increase the amount of money available to be put back into the community.  Carol Jackson  District 7 Legislative Committee Chair  **GIRLS SOFTBALL**  District 7 is organizing a District Softball Committee and is in need of volunteer members – especially female Legion members to serve. This will be the 2nd year of conducting and supporting the program. It will not work in the future without member volunteers willing to service.  If you have an interest in the program and can support and serve, please contact Hal Meyer, District 7 Girls Softball Chairman, at either 507-530-4412 or email [Halmeyer3@gmail.com](mailto:Halmeyer3@gmail.com). District 7 posts should start organizing local teams if interested in joining the Girls 2023 Softball Season. Planning needs to start ASAP and we need YOU! | **AREA A NEWS**  Hello from Area A, and welcome to winter!! I hope everyone had an  enjoyable holiday season. With that being said, it’s time to get back to work. Currently Area A is at 81.9 percent of membership, and I want to thank everyone for their hard work in getting memberships turned in. Let’s keep working on getting the memberships coming in. Area A has 1 post at 100 percent already and 6 other posts within 5 memberships to hit their 100 percent goal. I have worked with one post quite a bit and am willing to work with any other post that would like me to, just let me know by phone or e-mail. I will be starting to try and find a nomination  for Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the year. If anyone knows of a deserving candidate or wants more information on this award please contact me and I will send it to you. I will be attending the Mid- Winter Conference and hope to see as many of you as possible. As a reminder Mid-winter is being held at the Granite Fall’s American Legion. Carl R Wilson, Vice Commander  District 7 Area A  **LEGIONVILLE**  A new calendar year is here and spring and summer are approaching. Soon it will be summer camping season and yes  Legionville is taking campers for the summer sessions.11 - 16 June  18 - 23 June  25 - 30 June  9 - 14 July  16 - 21 July  23 - 28 July  30 July - 4 August Now is the time to recruit a camper from your local students. How many children can benefit from The American Legion – Dept of Minnesota’s great safety camp. Not only them but the buses they ride, the school and your community. How better to spread our message and Americanism that we support? If your Post feels the cost is too high, partner with other nonprofit's. We encourage cooperation with other organizations.  Remember making a difference in a child's life reaps big rewards in the future.  Vic Gades, District 7 Legionville Rep Phone: 320-288-6610 |

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|  | **MEMBERSHIP**  As of the writing of this report for the newsletter the ” MIGHTY SEVENTH” is in 4th place in the membership Summary. 53 Posts have met or exceeded the November 9th 65% National membership target goal. Congratulations to the ECHO, ELBOW LAKE, RENVILLE, CLINTON, and TAUNTON posts for meeting or exceeding the 100% membership goals. The department is at 81.1% of our National goal. The push to 85% starts now with a deadline of January 19th for the Department’s Membership directors challenge for membership. Get with your area Department Vice Commanders or myself for any help you are needing. Give those non-renewed members a call. I have sent out letters with a fair response. Share this newsletter with your membership at a meeting. Invite non-member veterans to your meeting. Let’s get this done before our Mid-Winter in Granite Falls. What a great job everyone has been doing, we can’t let down yet. Keep up the good work. Remember that membership is all our job. When inviting a veteran to your meeting let them see what we are all about, how the Legion works to insure the benefits for all our veterans. By working together, we keep our voices strong both at the State and National levels. Many voices combined are heard. We have 29 Posts who need 5 or less renewals to meet their goals. Keep up the good work. I am hoping that all of you look at your non-renews and as the membership director or adjutant for your posts that you contact them. I know as a TEAM we can make this happen.  Jan Ekert  District 7 Membership Director | **DISTRICT 7 VICE COMMANDER AT-LARGE**  WOW, what a great effort by many of our posts in renewing and recruiting members to our Great organization and our District. Mark your calendars for the upcoming conventions and Department conferences as many of them may be held close to home in St. Cloud. Our District Mid-Winter is coming up in a couple of weeks and will be held in Granite Falls. I look forward to seeing many of you there. If you are struggling with the use of or thinking about using My Legion.org, there will be folks there who can assist you in establishing an account or troubleshooting any issues you are having with it. We also have some rallies coming up. The Sweetheart rally has moved to Osseo on February  4. Don’t forget the Legions Birthday March 15th, and the Appreciation Rally in New Prague April 15. The National Commander’s tour will follow in the week of April 16 - 21. Watch for more information on this and where he will be. It was a real inspiration for me to be privileged to meet the National Commander last year when he was in Minnesota. Many of you are aware of the focus on Suicide prevention at both the State and National American Legion levels. If you know a veteran or hear of a veteran that maybe struggling give them a call, sometimes just knowing that some is willing to listen can and will make a difference. The Legion has a program called S.A.V.E., for more information check out the Department or National websites. Remember saving someone might just be a phone call away.  Jan Ekert  District 7 Vice Commander At Large  **VA’s S.A.V.E. SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM**   * Newly added phone number – 988, (press 1 for veterans) for veterans assistance * Or, Text MN to 741741 * SAVE acronym stands for:   + S – See the SIGNS   + A – Ask the questions   + V – Validate!   + E – Encourage & Expedite getting help! |

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|  | **NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS**  Once again, it is time to submit applications for the Enlisted Soldier of the Year. Sadly, the applicant that the 7th District submitted last year was not selected but I will resubmit her this year. If you know a soldier who has demonstrated exemplary service, talk to them and get them to submit an application.  Contact me and I will send you the format for the paperwork. The selection process is scored on many things and the task for the selection committee can be daunting. How many of you have a Guard or Reserve Unit in your area? Start thinking about a soldier or guardsman you might know who has gone above and beyond. Let me know and I will try to contact them and their Unit Commander and First Sergeant. There are many aspects that fall under the auspices of National Security and Foreign  Relations with the standouts always being the “**Four Pillars of the American Legion”.**  **Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation –** taking care of our veterans and their families both in our communities, our Posts, utilizing our county Veteran Service Officers, and VA hospitals and outreach clinics. For any who may not know, we have a new Department Veterans Service Office. His name is Ray Kane and he is very involved in meeting the needs of veterans. If you have concerns or questions, need additional assistance navigating the VA benefit system, or want to talk to someone outside of your area, he is the “MAN” for the job.  **Americanism –** “For God and Country” comes to mind when I see this pillar. In my heart it means promoting the values we cherish as Americans, Freedom, being a good citizen, staying true to our oath of Office or Enlistment.  **Children and Youth –** This will be the second year of our Girls Fast Pitch Softball. What a great thing to see and be a part of. Remember that the Legion has an upcoming Oratorical contest what a fantastic opportunity for our youth, again both Boy’s and Girl’s state. These programs are all about giving to these young people. Many of the programs that your post is involved in supports Children and Youth. | **NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS –** Continued  I salute each and everyone of you in your commitment to the American Legion and for your service to your Country. Stay strong and support your brothers and sisters in Arms.  Jan Ekert  District 7 National Security and Foreign Relations Chair |