



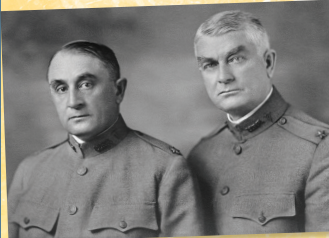
# EVERY DEPARTMENT HAS A STORY

## THE AMERICAN LEGION OF MINNESOTA



*The American Legion Department of Minnesota, home of the organization's first national convention in 1919, has more than 450 patriotic posts, units, squadrons and chapters that serve veterans, troops, students, athletes and children. Since that first formative year, Minnesota has produced two American Legion national commanders, four American Legion Auxiliary national presidents, five American Legion Baseball World Series champions, five Boys Nation presidents and multiple Major League Baseball stars. The American Legion of Minnesota is also the state's ambassador of remembrance, having brought to life hundreds of monuments and memorials honoring those who have sacrificed on behalf of our nation. The 100th American Legion National Convention in 2018 is the state's seventh time as host city for the gathering.*

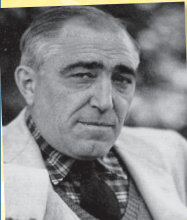
### MN Legion lineage



**Drs. Charles and William Mayo, Rochester,** were charter members of William T. McCoy American Legion Post 92 in Rochester. The famed Mayo Clinic doctors, World War I veterans,

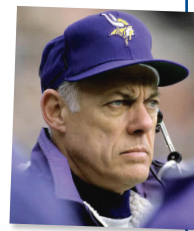
helped create Minnesota's American Legion Hospital Association, which assists veterans with health-care needs, as the Mayo brothers did after World War I. Charles Mayo Jr. received The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal in 1964, for continuing the work of his father and uncle in support of veterans.

**Theresa Erickson,** a U.S. Army nurse during World War I and before, in the Philippines, was a member of The American Legion and is the namesake for a nursing scholarship still presented by Edward Cutter American Legion Post 102 in Anoka.



**Jay Hormel, Austin,** is regarded as the first enlisted Minnesotan to report for duty at Camp Dodge, Iowa, at the outbreak of World War I. Following the war, the eventual president and CEO of Hormel Foods started American Legion Post 91 in Austin in 1919.

**Bud Grant,** Pro Football Hall of Fame coach of the NFL's Vikings and former three-sport star for the University of Minnesota, joined the Navy after high school in 1945 and is now an honorary chairman for the Minnesota American Legion Centennial Committee.



The newly rebuilt Legionville training center near Brainerd provides instruction for hundreds of children annually.

### Legionville: purpose-driven camp

**S**chool crossing guards and bus patrollers can't always learn all they need to know by reading instruction manuals. In Minnesota, the Legionville School Patrol Training Center has instructed thousands of kids for over half a century in a unique program that combines outdoor fun with a nationally recognized curriculum for kids that includes crosswalk and bus safety, first aid, along with watercraft and swimming guidance.

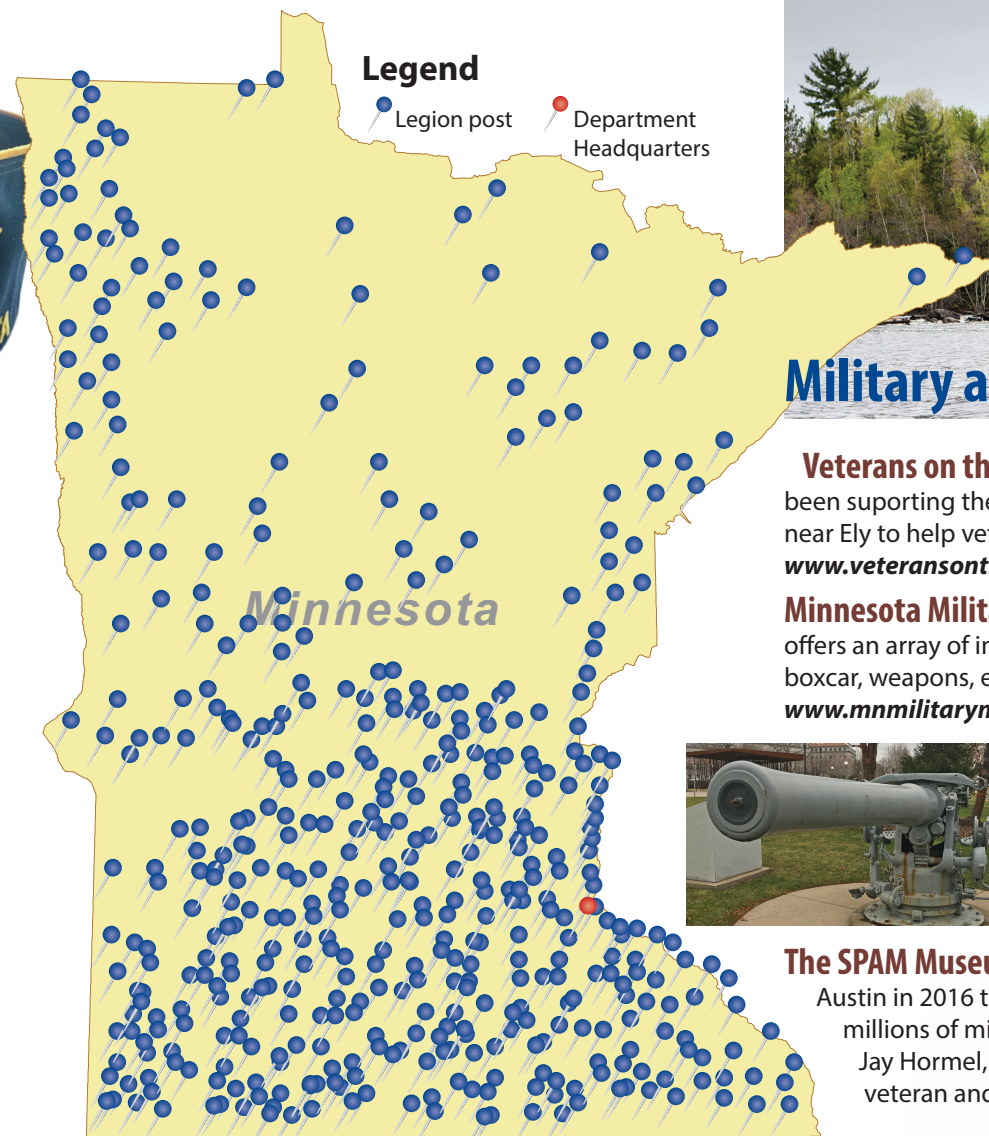
Launched in 1921 in St. Paul, the crossing-guard safety program shifted to the Minnesota Highway Patrol, which turned to The American Legion to help enact it across the state. The program, with volunteer assistance from qualified Legionnaires, was conducted at the Crow Wing County Fairgrounds and Camp Ripley until the 1950s before moving onto its permanent site – a 610-acre wooded camp with 1,500 feet of North Long Lake shoreline. The familiar old barn-shaped building with the name LEGIONVILLE above the front entry was torn down in 2014 and replaced with a brand-new Legion-funded facility that opened in 2016.

The program, supported by American Legion posts throughout the state, annually attracts more than 1,000 crossing guards and transportation-safety patrollers ages 8-13. Legionville is also home to an annual camporee and special hunting trips for disabled veterans.

Learn more about the Legionville School Safety Patrol Training Center online, [www.mnlegion.org](http://www.mnlegion.org) or on Facebook [www.facebook.com/Legionville](https://www.facebook.com/Legionville).



Children ages 8-13 have received safety training at Legionville since the 1950s.



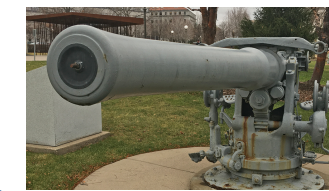
### Military and veteran attractions

**Veterans on the Lake** For over half a century, Minnesota Legionnaires have been supporting the outdoors program on Fall Lake in the Superior National Forest near Ely to help veterans and families through difficult transitions.

[www.veteransonthelakeresort.org](http://www.veteransonthelakeresort.org)

**Minnesota Military Museum** The museum outside Camp Ripley near Little Falls offers an array of indoor and outdoor exhibits, including a World War I "40 and 8" boxcar, weapons, equipment, uniforms, memoirs and oral histories.

[www.mnmilitarymuseum.org](http://www.mnmilitarymuseum.org)



**The USS Ward gun** USS *Ward*, crewed by St. Paul Naval Reservists, fired the first shot of World War II for America, sinking an enemy sub at Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941. The gun is west of the state Veterans Service Building in Minneapolis, home of Minnesota American Legion department headquarters.

**The SPAM Museum** Hormel Foods opened the new SPAM Museum in downtown Austin in 2016 to showcase the ways in which the iconic canned meat has fed millions of military personnel and citizens worldwide and is enjoyed today.

Jay Hormel, son of Hormel Foods founder George Hormel, was a World War I veteran and active member of The American Legion.



**ALL-WOMEN SPAM POST:** Composed of women who served during World War II, **SPAM American Legion Post 570** of Austin was a national sensation. The post's band and drum and bugle corps performed at numerous events throughout the country. The so-called "Spam Girls" traveled some 30,000 miles a year promoting Hormel products and The American Legion. The all-women veterans post, which dwindled in membership in recent years, is now being revitalized.

**The Linwood-Laughy post** at Baudette undertakes a project in 1966 to plant 6,000 trees a year for a memorial forest.

**The 4th District** provides volunteer support and leadership for the **Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake** near St. Croix and presides over an annual flag-retirement ceremony there.

**American Legion Post 1975 in St. Paul** is comprised mainly of post/911 veterans who are descendants of Hmong allies who fought in Vietnam and Laos before escaping southeast Asia and resettling in the United States in the 1970s. Minnesota has the nation's second-largest Hmong population, at nearly 50,000.

The entire Minnesota American Legion Family contributes funds and items for "Shop, Ship and Share," a program conducted at the Maplewood Mall, with the U.S. Postal Service, to send holiday items to troops deployed overseas.



Minnesota's Sons of the American Legion program recently topped a record-high 10,000 members.

1919

Minneapolis is host for the first American Legion National Convention. And if it hadn't snowed during the parade, it may have become the home of American Legion National Headquarters.



1925

In the first five years after its founding in Minnesota, The American Legion helped build and dedicate nearly 50 memorials to the Great War statewide.



1926

The first American Legion Junior Baseball Tournament is played in Mankato, and Crosby takes the championship.



1928

The Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel is dedicated after Minnesota Legionnaires raise \$28,000 to build it.



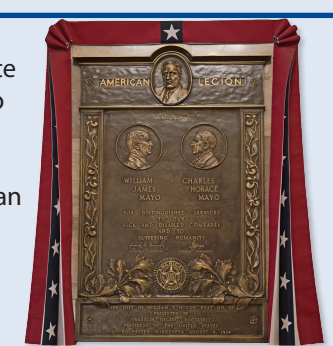
1929

The Legion promotes a statewide campaign to put signs in every community warning drivers to watch out for children. The signs are created at a disabled veterans workshop, run by The American Legion and Auxiliary in Minneapolis.



1934

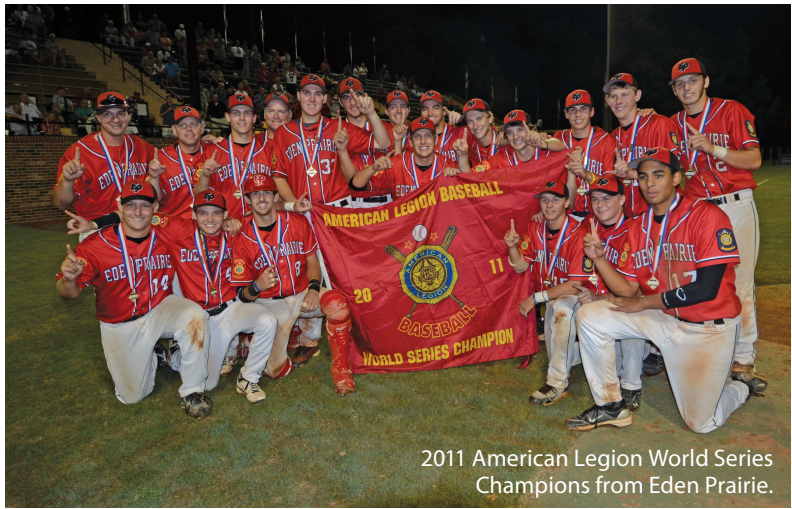
The American Legion pays tribute to Drs. William and Charles Mayo in a ceremony attended by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. A plaque presented to the veteran doctors from American Legion National Commander Ed Hayes still hangs in the Mayo Clinic.



1935

The Minnesota American Legion reports having found jobs for approximately 36,000 veterans in the state over a two-year period.





# BALL STARS

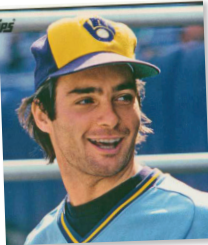
Minnesota has fielded one of the nation's most consistently successful American Legion Baseball programs. Five American Legion World Series champions – including three in the last 17 years, to go along with three others that finished runner-up in the national title tournament – have come from Minnesota.

With more than 350 teams, Minnesota has the largest American Legion Baseball program in the country. National champions, to date, include: Richfield (1943); Edina (1983); New Brighton Tri-City (1999); Rochester A's (2003); and Eden Prairie (2011).

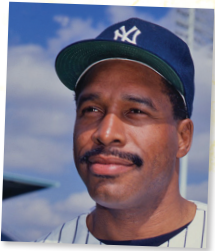
## St. Paul's Baseball Hall of Famers

Outfielder **Dave Winfield** and infielder **Paul Molitor**, both played for St. Paul Attucks-Brooks Post 606.

The team won the state title in 1967 and 1968 when Winfield played. They won it again in 1974 with Molitor. The coach for those teams



Molitor



Winfield

was Billy Peterson, a legend in Minnesota baseball. Winfield and Molitor went on to become All-Americans at the University of Minnesota. As pros, each recorded more than 3,000 hits and each won the MLB World Series. Molitor, who would later be hired as manager of the Minnesota Twins, was American Legion Baseball Graduate of the Year in 1996. Winfield was Graduate of the Year in 1977. Both have been inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

## Boys State governor's double play

Henry "H.J." Shea, sponsored by St. Louis Park's Frank Lundberg Post 282, was elected Minnesota American Legion Boys State governor in 2002 and followed that in April 2003 by taking first place in The American Legion National Oratorical Contest, which came with an \$18,000 scholarship.



# Brain Chair

*A \$1 million fundraising effort by Minnesota Legion Family seeded top research program.*

The American Legion Family of Minnesota had done it once before. In 1946, when heart illnesses caused by rheumatic fever were epidemic in the United States, especially among veterans, The American Legion Memorial Heart Research Professorship Trust Fund was created and raised \$500,000 over six years to establish a dedicated heart research chair through the University of Minnesota.

Among those who trained in the program was Dr. Christiaan Barnard of South Africa, who performed the first human-to-human heart transplant in 1967.

Two decades later, The American Legion Family once again stepped up to fund cutting-edge medical research with the University of Minnesota. An 18-month statewide fundraising effort led by Dan Ludwig of Red Wing's Post 54 (who would be elected national commander of The American Legion in 1995) generated \$1 million to start The American Legion Family-University of Minnesota Brain Sciences Chair at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center.

The program, led by Greece-born Dr. Apostolos Georgopoulos who has been at the University of Minnesota



Dr. Apostolos Georgopoulos

since 1991, has produced numerous breakthroughs for veterans coping with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, Alzheimer's Disease, schizophrenia, substance abuse and other conditions.

In recent years, the Brain Sciences Center has made great strides in the study of Gulf War Illness, using brain-imaging technology and genetic science to identify effective treatment programs for individual veterans dealing with the complicated symptoms of the service-connected illness.

For his work as director of the Brain Sciences Center, Dr. Georgopoulos received The American Legion's Distinguished Service Medal at the 99th National Convention in Reno, Nev., in 2017.

The American Legion Family in Minnesota maintains an active role with the center and the brain chair it seeded, one donation at a time, between 1987 and 1989. A committee of three Legionnaires, three American Legion Auxiliary members and two Sons of The American Legion today oversees management of funds, and the Department of Minnesota awards two scholarships a year to UM neuroscience students.

## Did you know?

The Minnesota American Legion Family Hospital Association traces its roots to August 1922, a time before VA, when veterans from across the country poured into Rochester to receive care from the Mayo Clinic. Many veterans lacked money to cover expenses or treatment. Funded by American Legion posts and Auxiliary units statewide, the association expanded to serve veterans and families after World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam War and beyond. Now supported by The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders, the association adopted its "American Legion Family" name in 1999.

# Post-9/11 MNLEGION

*I love The American Legion just because I miss the camaraderie of how it was when I was in. When I was in the Marine Corps, everyone was welcome. You worked hard. You played hard. The Legion is the same atmosphere. You meet other vets. You just relate to one another. It's a place where post-9/11 veterans can really benefit. They can go there and hear about scholarships ... hear about job placements.*



Minnesota American Legion Post 580 Adjutant Teri Hlavka, U.S. Marine Corps veteran, 2003-2008.



■ **Spencer-Ross American Legion Post 134** in Walker was rated by a Twin Cities radio station as the best veterans service club in the state for 2015. The growing post attracts young veterans and their families in a number of ways, including new twists on traditional fun, like "cosmic bingo," the revival of a post curling team and holiday events for the whole family.

## Hunting, fishing and the Minnesota veteran

Hunting and fishing for the benefit of veterans can be found in every corner of Minnesota. Notable Legion-supported activities of the **Minnesota Veterans Outdoor Programs** include:

- **The Disabled Veteran Turkey Hunt** at Camp Ripley every May.
- **The Veterans Northern Minnesota Fishing Trip**, also in May.
- **Trolling for the Troops**, a June fishing trip for veterans and military.
- **Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt** every October at Camp Ripley.
- **Pheasant Feeds** are annual at five state veterans homes and four VA health-care facilities.



## Contact The American Legion of Minnesota

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651.291.1800 [www.mnlegion.org](http://www.mnlegion.org)

## Join The American Legion

[www.legion.org/join](http://www.legion.org/join)



<p><b>1948</b></p> <p>The Minnesota Legion raises \$1 million to fight rheumatic fever. The fund now has over \$2 million and has established two chairs at the University of Minnesota aimed at researching cures for children's diseases.</p>	<p><b>1955</b></p> <p>The American Legion Fund for Hospitalized Veterans is expanded and made year-round in Minnesota, providing veteran patients with writing portfolios, record players, records, playing cards and other items.</p>	<p><b>1963</b></p> <p>Daniel F. Foley of Wabasha Post 50 is elected national commander of The American Legion.</p>	<p><b>1964</b></p> <p>Diane Carlson Evans of Buffalo receives an American Legion High School Citizenship Award. Inspired, she goes on to serve as a combat nurse in the Vietnam War and later leads the effort, with support from The American Legion, to erect the Vietnam Women's Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.</p>	<p><b>1987</b></p> <p>The Brain Science Foundation is established and The American Legion raises over \$1 million to establish a University of Minnesota chair to conduct research at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center.</p>	<p><b>1995</b></p> <p>Daniel Ludwig of Post 54, Red Wing, is elected national commander of The American Legion.</p>	<p><b>2018</b></p> <p>Minneapolis serves as host city for the 100th American Legion National Convention, the seventh time Minnesota has been home for the gathering.</p>
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