

Greetings to all members of the American Legion Family,

It does not seem like it should already be March. It was good to see so many of you at the 2022 Winter Conference held in Bismarck. A huge thank you to everyone who brought items for our silent auction event, as well as those who supported us by bidding during the auction. This would never have been possible without our American Legion Family working together. You are all amazing!

I enjoy receiving American Legion Family articles through Facebook from across the state of North Dakota and elsewhere. Everyone has so much to offer as we continue to learn through each other. One important thing we can all benefit from is to learn to work together and support each other. We must first take care of ourselves.

We have all experienced misunderstandings, been hurt, or felt unappreciated. The first thing is to open a line of communication with the other person. If one does not understand, one cannot fix what needs to be fixed. Your actions do affect other people. Be careful what you say and do; it is not just about you. We cannot control what others do. We will continue to move forward without a glance over our shoulders to see who is with us, for the ones who matter will be walking beside us.

It took me a long time to understand what it means to forgive someone. I always wondered how I could forgive someone who chose to hurt me. After some soul searching, I realized that forgiveness is not about accepting or excusing their behavior, it is about letting go and preventing their behavior from destroying my heart. Forgiveness does not free the other person from his/her ethical and moral obligations, but it will free you. Forgiveness is for your benefit, not the other person's. If you cannot forgive, the enemy gets a foothold in your life and will assume valuable real estate in your mind and emotions. Please do not let that happen.

I was honored to have been invited by William G. Carroll Unit 26 of Minot to participate in their Gold Star Mothers Banquet held on November 11 at the Moose Lodge. The Gold Star 'Mother of the Year' was Adi Reis, mother to Kenneth Hendrickson who was killed in action January 2004. Kenneth was a staff sergeant in the National Guard and was deployed overseas in Iraq. I was especially honored to pin the Gold Star American Legion Auxiliary pin on Adi. Linda Siewert, Unit 26 President, and members of the unit hosted the event. The Moose Lodge provided a free meal to every veteran in attendance as their way of saying thank you for their service. The Moose Lodge Auxiliary also provided a beautiful, delicious cake.

The colors were posted and retired by the Minot Post 26 Honor Guard. Family and friends of both Adi and Kenneth gathered to be part of the award ceremony. Stories were shared during the evening. There was live music, folding of the American Flag,

and playing of taps to complete the evening events. It was a most heartwarming and memorable evening.

How is your unit doing updating your Constitution & Bylaws? If you need help or have questions, please reach out to Diane Kraemer, our Department Constitution and Bylaws Chairman. Have you mailed a copy of your updated Constitution and Bylaws to Diane? Diane will share your document with the Department Office, so you only need to send it to her.

God Bless our troops and all veterans.

Sandra Petermann