



Legionnaire

Volume 97, Number 1

For God and Country

January 2015

Moon Testimonial will be held in Walker March 21

The Testimonial Dinner for Department Commander Peggy Moon will be held in at the Northern Lights Casinao in Walker on Saturday, March 21.

The featured speaker for the event will be Past National Commander Butch Miller of Virginia.

Miller grew up in Wabasha, Minnesota, and was national commander from 1998-99. He has been a leader in The American Legion College.

There will be a special musical review to follow.

The event will begin with a social hour at 5:30 p.m. with dinner and the testimonial program to follow at 6:30.

The cost is \$25 per person, and dinner reservations should be sent to "Commander Peggy's Testimonial," Kriesel-Jacobson Post 560, Box 123, Zimmerman, MN 55398. Reservations must be received no later than March 14.

Rooms at the Northern Lights are blocked out under "Commander's Dinner." For room reservations, call 1-866-652-4683.

Other hotels in the area include the Country Inn and suites, 218-547-1400 or the America's Best Value, 218-547-2200.

The dinner will include garden salad, choice of dressing, garlic roasted red potatoes, green beans, slow-roasted prime rib with creamy horseradish, rolls and butter, beverage, cheesecake.

Legion presents colors at Gopher Game



The Department of Minnesota Color Guard from New Prague Post 45 presented the colors during the National Anthem prior to the University of Minnesota vs. Seattle game at Williams Arena in December. It was Legion Family Day at the Gophers.

WITNESS TO HISTORY



Don Oulette saw the first H-bomb exploded. Page 8

Suicide prevention bill signed into law

In 2013, 132 U.S. servicemembers died in combat operations.

During the same span of time, more than three and a half times that number died by their own hands.

Sen. Joe Donnelly, D-Ind., is hoping legislation that was signed into law Dec. 19 can cut that number down considerably – and eventually reduce it to zero.

The Jacob Sexton Military Suicide Prevention Act – part of the National Defense Authorization Act signed into law by President Obama last week – includes language that will require all members of the U.S. military – active, National Guard and reserve – to receive annual mental health assessments beginning in 2015.

Continued on Page 2

National Commander's Tour to travel both north and south

The National Commander's Tour for 2015 will cover a lot of Minnesota ground.

The tour, featuring National Commander Mike Helm from Nebraska, will begin in Moorhead, head east to Grand Rapids, south to the Twin Cities, and finish up with a swing to the west.

The tour will take place from Feb. 2-5.

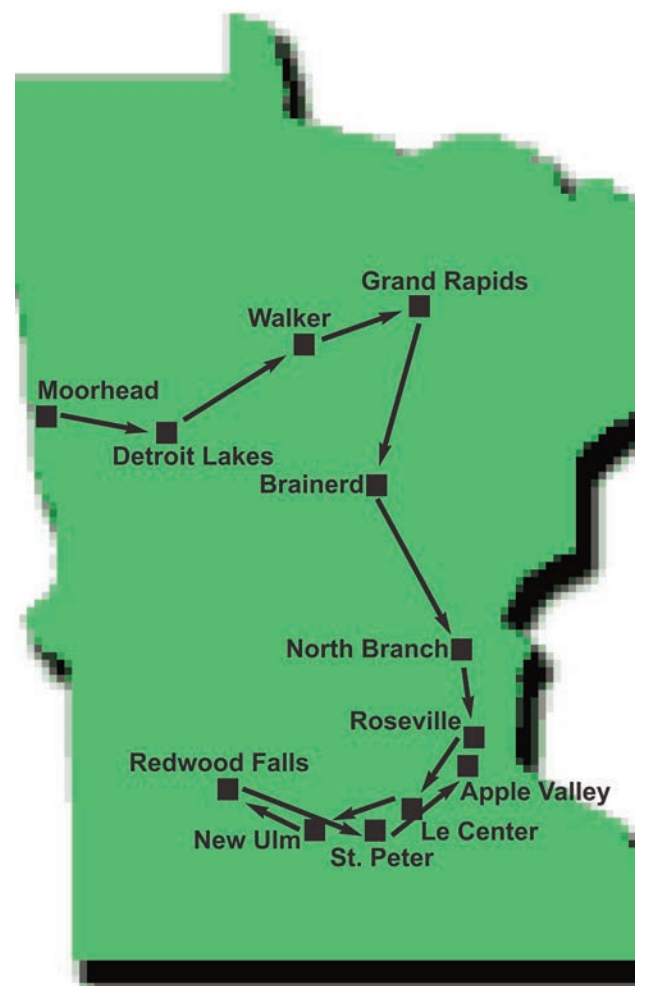
Helm will be visiting 12 posts in four days. The final event will be in Apple Valley.

Other stops include Detroit Lakes, Walker, Brainerd, North Branch, Roseville, Le Center, New Ulm, Redwood Falls, and St. Peter.

Helm was elected at the national convention held this year in Charlotte.

The meetings at the posts will include breakfast, lunch or dinner. The dinner meetings will be preceded by a 5 p.m. social hour.

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National Commander's 2015 Minnesota Tour

Continued from Page 1

Traveling with the national commander will be Department Commander Peggy Moon, Department Membership Director Pat Logan, and Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl.

All posts that are at goal by the time of the visit will receive a certificate and have their picture taken with the national commander. Those pictures will appear in the Minnesota Legionnaire.

Those who plan to attend any stop should make reservations with the hosting post. All details about the meal and its cost are being handled by the local post.

The place, time and contact information are listed below. The schedule includes:

Monday, Feb. 2

-- Moorhead Post 21, 8 a.m.; Delyle Ishaug, 701-361-3652.

-- Detroit Lakes Post 15, noon; 218-234-7315, Eric Wilkens.

-- Walker Post 134, 6 p.m., 218-547-1011, Tony.

Tuesday, Feb. 3

-- Grand Rapids Post 60, 8 a.m., 218-326-9141.

-- Brainerd Post 255, noon, 218-829-2249.

-- North Branch Post 85, 6 p.m., 651-674-6100.

Wednesday, Feb. 4

-- Rosetown Post 542, 8 a.m., 651-483-3535, Tosha.

-- Le Center Post 108, noon, 507-357-4787.

-- New Ulm Post 132, 6 p.m., 507-354-4016.

Thursday, Feb. 5

-- Redwood Falls Post 38; 8 a.m., 507-641-5406, Jerry Ludwig.

-- St. Peter Post 37, noon, 507-934-6435.

-- Apple Valley Post 1776, 6 p.m., 952-431-1776, Joan.

Suicide bill

Continued from Page 1

During a press conference in Indianapolis on the day the legislation was signed, Donnelly said measures had to be taken to deeply cut into the number of military suicides occurring annually – until that number eventually reaches zero.

“We have to end this scourge,” Donnelly said. “We seek to prevent another servicemember’s family from experiencing the tragedy of suicide.” Donnelly was flanked by Jeff and Barb Sexton, the parents of the National Guardsmen for whom the legislation is named. Jacob was an Indiana National Guardsman who took his own life during a 15-day leave from Afghanistan.

“The day they passed the bill would have been Jacob’s 27th birthday,” Jeff said. “I can’t think of a better birthday present for him. Hopefully this will bring a change to the stigma and bring out the help our men and women need.”

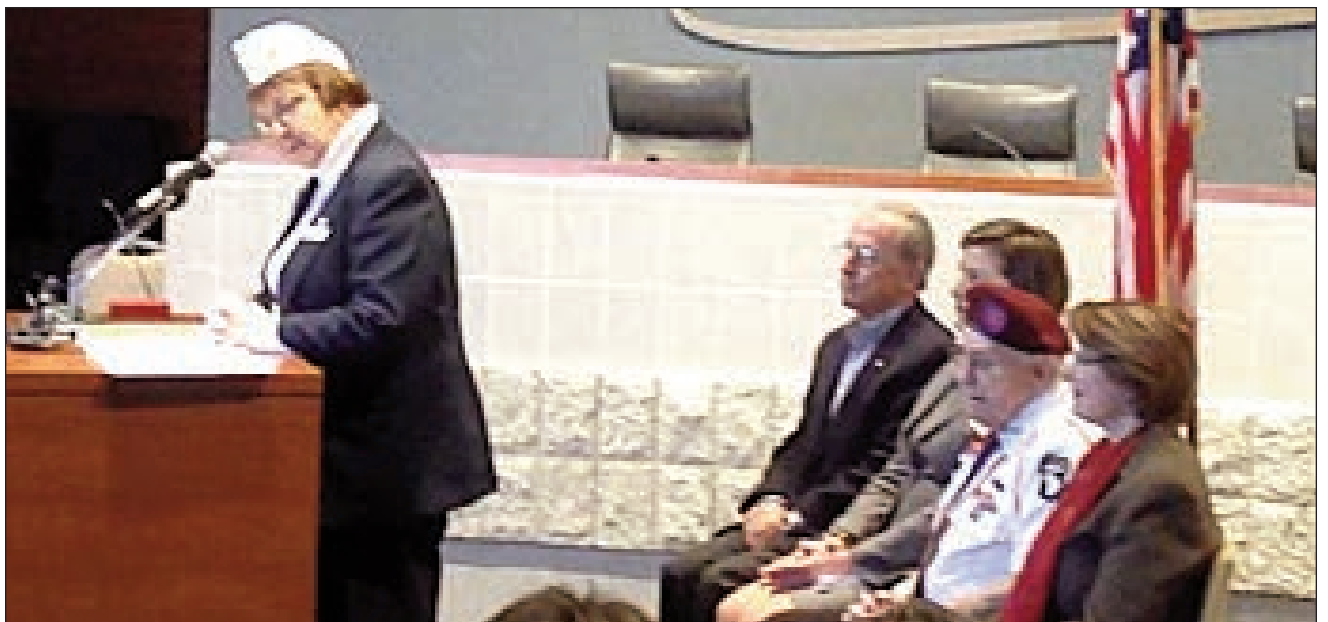
The legislation also requires an evaluation of existing mental health practices and provides measures to keep the privacy of servicemembers who seek mental health care. The language of the Sexton legislation is supported by the Legion’s Resolution 292, passed during the 2014 National Convention in August 2014.

Donnelly said the legislation simply is honoring a pact made with those who take the oath of service. “It is important to our nation,” he said. “It is important to every single family that their brother or sister, their husband or wife, loved one – both those who have deployed and those who are not deployed – that they be able to live out their life with their family in peace and in happiness.

That they not feel the stigma about searching for help and having someone to talk to. We owe them.”



LEAVING THE COURT -- As the Department of Minnesota Color Guard left the court at Williams Arena, after presenting the colors, they were greeted by members of the Gopher basketball team.



LEGION OF HONOR -- When France presented its Legion of Honor to Jim Carroll, a paratrooper in World War II, Department Commander Peggy Moon served as master of ceremonies. It was held at Bloomington City Hall.


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WORLD WAR II BATTLEFIELDS
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June 1-13 & August 10 - 22, 2015

Paris • Normandy Beaches • Walk on Omaha & Utah Beaches • Pointe du Hoc
Battle of the Bulge • Ardennes Forest • Remagen Bridge • Nazi Rally Grounds
Reims' Map Room • Dragon's Teeth & Fox Holes • Pegasus Bridge
Mulberry Harbor • Tank Museum • Sainte-Mère-Église's Paratrooper Church
Patton's Grave • Dachau Memorial • Eagle's Nest • Hofbräuhaus in Munich

"We knew at the time we were fortunate to be on the tour together (my father, son and I) but in retrospect, it was the best thing we could have done and a wonderful experience filled with so many great memories. To be in Normandy on D-Day and witness, first hand, the gratitude of the French people was a blessing for my dad and the other vets, a priceless memory. I think the Normandy experience was truly a surprise for my father and added new meaning and depth to his memories of the war." ~ Bill T, California

VIETNAM... THEN AND NOW
March 24 - April 3, 2015


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- Ha Long Bay Cruise
- Former Military Bases
- Cu Chi Tunnels
- Former DMZ
- A Shau Valley
- Cam Ranh Bay
- Chu Lai
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Endorsements

Redepinning endorsed for Department VC

Edward B. Cutter Post 102 in Anoka has endorsed Darrel Redepinning for the position of Department Vice Commander for the year 2015-2016.

He is a 43-year member at Anoka and has served his Post in numerous offices and chairmanships including two terms as commander and the last 13 years on the Executive Committee.

In 2011 his post awarded him Honorary Life

Membership.

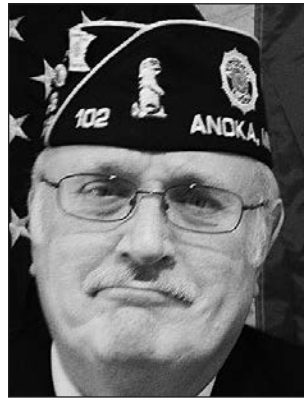
Redepinning has served the 10th District for many years as Trophy & Awards Chairman, two terms as District Vice Commander and in 2010-2011 he served as District Commander. He currently serves on the District Finance Committee and is the 10th District's National Security Chairman.

Redepinning has also served the Department of

Minnesota as Trophy & Awards Chairman and in the year 2012-2013 served as Department Membership Director.

He is currently serving the Department on the Veterans Rehabilitation Committee.

He has been married to his wife Donna (10th District President, 2013-2014) for 38 years and they have two sons. They also have two grandchildren.



DARREL REDEPINNING

Amundson endorsed for Dept. Vice Cdr.

Blue Earth American Legion Post 89, has endorsed Don Amundson, for the office of Vice Commander – Department of Minnesota, for the year 2015 – 2016.

His eligibility for Legion membership comes from service in the U.S. Air Force in the Korean War era.

Following college Amundson spent just short of the next 34 years working with the Rural Electric Program. Since retiring in 1998 he and his wife Ginny of 59 years, returned to Blue Earth, where he drives the County Veterans Van four to five days a month.

Also after retirement he became active at Bricelyn Post 165. He served as Post Vice Commander for two years and Post Commander two years.

Amundson has since transferred his PUFL Membership to Post 89 Blue Earth, MN. He serves as Chaplain, Membership Director and Gambling Manager.

He served as District Vice Commander, and three years as District Chaplain. He also served as Boys State Chairman and Pheasant Chairman.

At the Department level Don is serving on the Board

of Publication of the Minnesota Legionnaire and National Security/Foreign Relations Committee. He served two years on the Executive Committee and as Department Chaplain 2012-2013.

At the National level Don serves on the National Security Commission.

He is also active in the 40/8 Voiture Locale #281 Mankato, AMVETS, DAV, United Lutheran Church in Frost, and the Blue Earth Lions Club.

The Amundsons have two daughters, and six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.



DON AMUNDSON

Home Depot starts vets grants program

Improvement projects at American Legion posts and necessary home repairs for veterans in need are eligible to receive grants from The Home Depot Foundation, a longtime supporter of The American Legion.

The Home Depot Foundation announced at National Convention last summer that it is dedicating no less than \$1 million for American Legion projects throughout the country. The Home Depot Foundation grants provide American Legion posts with funds and volunteer help to fix the little things that make huge differences: weatherizing windows, insulating attics, interior and exterior painting, installing new ceiling tiles, replacing fans and replacing flooring.

Additionally, these grants provide an opportunity for Legion posts to aid veterans in need of home repairs. For one example, on Veterans Day, Home Depot volunteers made repairs to the St. Louis home of a Vietnam War veteran. A similar effort made a life-changing difference for a veteran couple in Idaho. The Home Depot Foundation and The American Legion have teamed up hundreds of other projects in communities everywhere.

There are two options for applying for the funds:

1. Community Impact Grants provide up to \$5,000 in The Home Depot gift cards for any project to be completed by The American Legion and/or community volunteers. Team Depot volunteers are not involved in these projects, but these grants are a great option for engaging your Legionnaires and community.

2. Team Depot Grants fund volunteer projects that utilize Team Depot, The Home Depot's associate-led volunteer force, along with volunteers from your American Legion post. Legionnaires are encouraged to apply for both grants offered by The Home Depot Foundation, but only one at a time.

To review guidelines for eligible improvement projects and both application processes, contact Home Depot. Questions should be directed to Scott Miller, Deputy Director, Strategic Alliances at smiller@legion.org or (317) 630-1220.

Taps

Herda, Joseph W., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Thursday, Nov. 13, 2014. He was a member of Faribault Post 43 and drove the Rice County veterans van for many years.

Gray, Paul Stanley, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 5, 2014. He was held as a prisoner of war for 33 months. He was a member of Faribault Post 43.

Schutz, William D., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 30, 2014. He was a member of Pine Island Post 184. He was stationed in South Korea.

Magner, Robert, 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 13, 2014. He was stationed in France. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Petterson, Philip M., 97, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Dec. 6, 2014. He served in the 305th Bombardment Group in Europe. He flew 29 missions in a B-17 as a radio operator/ machine gunner. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

Kleven, Gilbert "Bud," 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 10, 2014. He served in Vietnam. He was a member of Mora Post 201.

Hazen, Michael, 67, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 15, 2014. He was a member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Robert Pfannenstien, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 16, 2014. He was a member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Walter, Wilbert Francis, 89, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 13, 2014. He was a member of Chaska Post 57.

Schmidt, Frederick Raymond, 87, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 20, 2014. He was a member of Chaska Post 57.

Engelhart, Earl "Scrubby," 93, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 28, 2014. He was a member of Chaska Post 57.

Lundeen, Charles A., 67, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 26, 2014. He served as an aircraft maintenance specialist for the 778th Tactical Airlift Squadron. He was a member and former gambling manager for Hackensack Post 202.

Zylstra, David L., 63, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 21, 2014. He was a member of Maple Lake Post 131.

LaCore, Donald, 85, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 25, 2014. He was stationed in France. He was a member of Lismore Post 636.

Meyer, Marlin, 81, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 9, 2014. He was a member of Waconia Post 150.

Skroch, Clemence, 86, Navy veteran of the Korean War,

died Nov. 12, 2014. He was a member of Rice Post 473.

Koller, Daniel Victor, 80, Marine Corps and Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 23, 2014. He served as a Marine until 1952 when his brother was killed in action, and then served in the Army for three years. He was a past commander of Pine City Post 51.

Sankey, David J., 88, Navy veteran of World War II, died Nov. 28, 2014. He served on a destroyer. He was a member of Chandler Post 338.

Jacobson, LeRoy Curtis, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 27, 2014. He was a member of Granite Falls Post 69.

Engfer, Jon, 75, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 4, 2014. He was a member of Hillman Post 602.

John Beireis, 72, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 6, 2014. He was a member of Hillman Post 602.

Erickson, Raymond H., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 19, 2014. He was a member of Monticello Post 260.

Nobbs, Blaine, 81, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 1, 2014. He served with the 52nd Engineering Company. He was a member of Monticello Post 260.

Shelquist, Milton G., 95, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 5, 2014. He was a member of Monticello Post 260.

Carlson, Roger, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War and the Vietnam War, died Dec. 5, 2014. He was a combat medic. He served 23 years in the Army including two tours of Vietnam. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Moos, Joseph J., 90, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 6, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Wagner, Earl S., 86, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 4, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Jelberg, Irvin, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 30, 2014. He was a member of North Branch Post 85.

Whipps, Lyle, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 7, 2014. He was a member of North Branch Post 85.

Lundquist, Alvin, 93, Army Air Corps member of World War II, died Nov. 7, 2014. He served in Europe. He was a member of Nisswa Post 627.

Kamp, Jeffrey D., 53, Army veteran of Persian Gulf War, died Nov. 2, 2014. He served 16 years in the Army. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Staloch, Edward E., 98, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 14, 2014. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Baer, Vernon L., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 15, 2014. He served in North Africa and Europe. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Killeaney, Lawrence, 78, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 8, 2014. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Kalahar, Randy Lee, 61, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 5, 2014. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Peterson, James M., 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 11, 2014. He was aboard the ship that brought the second flag that was raised at Mt. Suribachi at Iwo Jima. He was a member of Morris Post 29.

Billings, Avery Charles, 81, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 10, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Lindstrom, Fred C., 89, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 21, 2014. He served in Germany. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Anderson, Oliver, 92, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Dec. 7, 2014. He was a plane mechanic. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Gulbrandson, Maynard Lloyd, 73, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 7, 2014. After his Navy service, he served 20 years in the National Guard. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Vierstraete, George, 84, Marines Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 24, 2014. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Skottegaard, Norman T., 81, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 13, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Krienke, Dwayne J. "DJ," 68, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 12, 2014. He served on the USS Forrestal and survived the ship's fire in 1967. He was a member of Waconia Post 150.

Toops, George A., 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 18, 2014. He was a radar instructor. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Doll, Virgil, 89, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 18, 2014. He served in the Pacific. He was a member of Cold Spring Post 455.

Gengler, Cyril F., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 17, 2014. He was a combat engineer. He was a member of Lismore Post 636.

Yorek, John J., 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 26, 2014. He served in the military police. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Teschke, Edgar H., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 30, 2014. He was a member of Faribault Post 43.

COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Peggy Moon



Happy New Years Legionnaires.

I have just completed a month of Christmas parties. The food was terrific, and the friendship was fantastic. I met many Legionnaires, and enjoyed learning about the amazing things you are doing in your communities. Keep up the great work. You are living proof of The American Legion's dedication to veterans, children, and service.

In Breckenridge, I met one of our proud members, "Bud," who whipped out his American Legion Membership card to show me that he has 71 years of continuous membership. How wonderful is that? It made me think - I wonder how many other members we have that can meet or top Bud's membership. Thank you for your service, Bud, and for your continued dedication to The American Legion. Also, thank you to all who contributed to my project, Legionville.

The District Mid Winter Conferences begin this month, and I am looking forward to attending as many as possible. Our main focus will be on membership. I recently received a letter from National Commander Micheal Helm, who is very disappointed with the current shape of our membership program. His concern is our retention rate, which is falling further and further behind. He has announced a retention surge beginning immediately, and lasting through Jan 31. He is asking each post to call on at least three lapsed members per week and renewing them. He is having our National Vice Commander, Paul Sanford, call me each week to see how we progress, and I need that information from you. Consequently, I am asking each Department Vice Commander to call their respective District Commanders each week to offer assistance, and

membership progress, and relay that information to me.

I can just hear the moans from the crowd - but let me tell you, it works. Last week our 6th District Membership Chairman Jim Lucas sat for two hours and made phone calls to prospective members he researched on mylegion.org. He got 12 transfers and four new members. Think of the progress we could make if every post did this. Think of what it could do for our programs. We owe it to the veterans that came before us, like "Bud," to keep this organization strong. I am counting on your help.

Commander Helm has also asked that we help in replenishing The American Legion Emergency Fund as we know, someone, somewhere, will be hit by natural disasters this coming year. Talk to your post and see if you can donate \$1 per member to this fund - and pray that it won't be us who needs it.

I have finalized the details for my testimonial, which is scheduled for Saturday, March 21, 2015 at Northern Lights Casino in Walker, Minnesota. The cost will be \$25 per person, and reservations can be made by mailing your requests to "Commander Peggy's Testimonial", Kriesel-Jacobsen Post 560, P.O. Box 123, Zimmerman, MN 56398. Rooms have been blocked at Northern Lights under "Commander's Dinner." Past National Commander Butch Miller has agreed to give the keynote address under the condition he doesn't have to say nice things about me - so I'm not sure what I have agreed to. Also, we have some "special" entertainment planned - so please join us. I don't think you'll be disappointed.

Our new granddaughter arrived. No - she isn't an Ellie - they named her Stella Marie Meyer, and she is a little sweetheart. All six pounds of her. She appears very healthy and has strong lungs, which I've already witnessed, so I know she will be a good fit for this proud family. And yes, she is already a member of The American Legion Junior Auxiliary.

For those of you who are keeping an update on my car - I am currently at 16,909 miles. I think all but maybe 1,000 of them are "Legion" miles. I took my car into the dealership for its 15,000 mile check up, and then had to return a week later when the engine light lit up. My car even told me to schedule an appointment. It's amazing what car computers can do in this age. Evidently, a sensor has gone bad, and needed to be ordered - so I'm going back in today to have it replaced. Then, once again, I need to fill up the gas tank.

Until next month...

Chaplain's Corner

By Steve Klinkner



I have no excuse; I always put things off until the last minute and then try to think of a subject to write on, so what's more fitting than the subject of "no excuse."

I knew it was going to happen, I felt bad about it, I was gaining weight, the doctor said you better lose it. No one suggested that I was just a little over weight; no one seemed to want to come out and say what needed to be said. I didn't just need to change my habits temporarily; I needed to make a permanent change. Yet I resisted such a change; rather I sought to "excuse" the fact that the weight was not going away by itself. I was sincerely adhering to a false standard; I just lacked the will power to change. Along with my wife's support, I did change; it hasn't been easy but it was worth all the sacrifices I have made.

You might at this point, be wondering why I am sharing this, believe me it's not because I'm on some kind of ego trip. Rather there is meaning to all of this when you apply the same attitudes and reasoning toward sin. Many people deal with sin the same way I dealt with weight as "excuses." They will think, I'm really not that bad of a person or I'm a better person than he is and then claim to be religious.

The Apostle Paul said "For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." (2 Cor.10:12). There is some pleasure to be derived from sin but it is short-lived and in the end you must pay for it. The joy derived from being and doing right is everlasting. It is far better to set your mind to value good things in Life, not the "excuse" of sin.

That brings me to a story about a jar and two cups of coffee told by my past high school teacher (a veteran): A professor stood before his philosophy class with some items in front of him. When the class began, he wordlessly picked up a large empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full and they agreed that it was. The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar, shook the jar lightly, the pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full; they agreed that it was. Next he poured a box of sand into the jar and the sand filled everything else and asked again if it was full and the students unanimously responded "YES." The professor then stated that this jar represents your Life. The golf balls are the important things in Your Life -- God, family, health, friends and your passions. And if everything else was lost and only they remained your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, house, and car. The sand is everything else, the small stuff. If you put the sand into the jar first, there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for your Life; if you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff you will never have room for the things that are most important to you. One of the students inquired how come he didn't pour his coffee in it. He replied that is to be shared with a friend, always take time out of your day and share it with a veteran or someone that is at home alone. "No Excuses."

Please keep our Veterans and current men and women that are defending our country in your prayers every day.

Mail Call

World War I Memorial

To the Editor:

I thought the MN American Legion should be aware of the political shenanigans going on in Washington, DC related to legislation to create a National WW I Memorial for the WW I Centennial.

Just a quick update on the WWI Memorial bill that passed the House earlier this year, buried in a Defense bill that sidestepped committee scrutiny and was passed on a voice vote that my congressman Rep. John Kline said most congressmen did not even know they were voting on a WWI Memorial that was hidden in a large defense appropriations bill.

The legislation was part of an earmark gimmick by Rep. Emmanuel Cleaver of Missouri who is advocating for the National WWI Museum and the authorization for placement of a WWI memorial in Kansas City at the WWI Museum, while sitting on the board of that private corporation. In essence the present legislation is authorizing the building of two WWI Memorials -- one in Washington, DC at Pershing Park and the other in Kansas City at the National WWI Museum.

The sordid story of this legislative effort by Rep. Cleaver is revealed in a Baltimore Post-Examiner article on August 9, 2014, entitled "The World War I Memorial Deserves More Respect from Congress" (see: <http://baltimorepostexaminer.com/world-war-i-memorial-deserves-more-respect-from-congress/2014/08/09>).

Hopefully the bill will die with the 113th Congress this month and will have to be reintroduced all over again in the next congress (114th), where veterans organizations and 4.7 million WWI veteran families (118,000 in MN) can ask our congressmen to insist on serious congressional scrutiny to what is going on regarding this issue in Washington, DC and fight to get the National WWI Memorial on the Mall with the other 20th Century War Memorials.

As members of the MN American Legion whose loved ones fought in The Great War, we could sure use some help from The American Legion to clear legislative roadblocks and fight provincial special interest groups to get congressional authorization to build with donations a memorial to properly honor these WWI veterans with a National WWI Memorial in Washington, DC on the Mall for Armistice Day 2018 -- 100 years after WW I ended.

Dave Thompson
Rosemount, MN

Chaplain thoughts

To the Editor:

I have a unique office in a unique organization. My ecclesiastical affiliation matters not. The role I play is spiritual in nature and an integral part of The American Legion. My main purpose is to help our members grow in their relationship with God and one another. In respect to this objective I would like to speak with you in this issue of our newsletter about the power of prayer.

There are three ways that men get what they want; by planning, by working and by praying. Everything we do in life takes careful planning, thought processes, and a well-disciplined demeanor to carry out our plans. There is an unknown influence that spells out defeat or victory, success or failure. It is the reaction we have to the ordeal when it actually comes. Some people call this successful outcome "luck" or "getting all the breaks", I call it God. It's not "Good Luck" it's "Good Fortune," as God guides our every waking moment we truly are "fortunate" and "blessed". God has his part in everything, and that's where prayer comes in.

During WWII, General Patton felt that God had blessed the Third Army with success in Africa, Sicily and Italy. These blessings he felt were a result of the people back home praying for them. General Patton was a true believer in this "Power of Prayer," so much in fact that he had his chaplain write a special prayer to stop the rain that plagued Patton's Army throughout the Moselle and Saar Campaigns during the months of September through December, 1944. This famous Prayer, "The Prayer at Bastogne" was composed as follows:

"Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies and establish Thy justice among men and nations."

In closing, I pray that all of you (our membership) can see the importance, and the power, of Prayer, as it concerns our Legion program "For God and Country".

Remember, prayer is simply talking to God, so keep up the conversation.

Chris Erickson
Chaplain, Westphal Post 251

Legionnaire

The Minnesota

Official Publication of and Owned Exclusively by
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Al Zdon, Editor

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What's Happening

Last chance for calendars

The 2015 Minnesota American Legion official calendar has been mailed to the membership. The company that produces and mails the calendar does not send them to every member, but instead sends them to members who have made contributions in the past plus a sampling of the entire membership. In all, 35,000 calendars were sent.

If you have not received a calendar and would like to, please contact Department of Minnesota Headquarters, 866-259-9163.

The calendar contains the photo winners from veterans in this year's calendar contest. The photos were taken while veterans were serving.

Bowling Tournament

The 2015 Minnesota American Legion Bowling Tournament will take place from February through April at the Brunswick Zone XL in Brooklyn Park. The 68th tourney is being sponsored by Osseo/Maple Grove Post 172.

There is a \$22 entry fee per event. There is also an all events category available for \$2 per person.

Entries and fees for reserved shifts needed to have been postmarked by the end of the year. For information or to register, contact John Torma, 7724 82nd Ave. N., Brooklyn Park, MN 55445. Cell: 612-749-3704. E-mail: johntorma@aol.com.

Division I is for Legion competition with at least one Legion member per team. Division II is for Auxiliary with four Auxiliary members per team. The tourney is open to all Legion members and all SAL member who are over 18.

There will be handicap and scratch brackets, kangaroo bracket and a 30 Clean Jackpot.

Tree Seedling Purchase

Information on species and prices for purchasing tree seedlings will be mailed to the posts in January. That information will also be available on the Department of Minnesota website, mnlegion.org, at a future date.

"It's never too early to be thinking about purchasing tree seedlings from The American Legion," said Energy and Conservation Chairman Carl Hendrickson. "Spring will be here sooner than you think."

For more information, call Hendrickson at 218-393-0079.

Family Camps

Operation: Military Kids is offering family camps for military families with at least one child in grades K-12.

The first camp is Feb. 6-8 at Camp Shamaineau near Motley with registrations due by Jan. 21. The second camp is March 27-29 at Ironwood Springs Ranch near Stewartville. Registrations are due by March 11.

To register go to www.operationmilitarykids.org, click on "state information," then "MN," then "events." Those interested can also contact kharries@unm.edu or call Kia Harries at 507-372-3900, ext. 3908. There is a \$25 fee per family that can be waived.

MACV Legal Clinic

A drop-in legal clinic for veterans will be held Tuesday, Jan. 13, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Flag Atrium Balcony Room at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. There is free parking.

The clinic will include attorneys, CVSOs, and other veterans support people. Issues will include housing, benefits, debt collection, and family law. For more information, call 651-200-4750. The clinic is co-sponsored by Fredrikson and Byron P.A.

Possible Scam

The Veterans Administration is alerting veterans that a phone scam has been perpetrated on some veterans. The caller identifies himself as the "VA" and says that the veteran has a \$9,000 grant coming from the VA. The caller then asks the veteran for personal information such as their Social Security number or bank account information.

The VA will never seek this information from a veteran over the phone, nor is it likely to be calling you about a \$9,000 grant.

Snowmobile Ride

The 7th annual snowmobile ride, sponsored by MSEAF and MnUSA will be held Saturday, Jan. 10, at Silver Bay. All veterans are welcome to join, and those who do not

have sleds, snowmobiles and gear will be furnished.

Pre-registration is required. Contact the Minnesota Snowmobilers Association at 866-811-7669 or email: veteransride@mnsnowmobiler.org or go to the website: www.mnvetsnowmobileride.org.

Round Tables

The January meeting of the World War II History Round Table at Historic Fort Snelling will be "The Myth of the German Offense" with John Mosier, author of "The Blitzkrieg Myth."

The program will be held on Thursday, Jan. 8, at the Fort Snelling Visitor Center starting at 7 p.m. The admission is \$5.

The Rochester Veterans Round Table will be held on Monday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m. and will feature "The 82nd Airborne Division, World War II and today." Scale modelers Don Monson and Mark Hickey will be featured. The meetings are held at the Autumn Ridge Church at 3611 Salem Road. Admission is \$5.

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Round Table meeting will be held Monday, Jan. 26, and the subject will be "Notable Revelations: Civil War Carbines, Cavalry and Re-enacting." The speaker will be Mike Martin. It will be a dinner meeting. For more information, contact Steve Anderson at 715-386-1268.

Carver County Memorial

The Carver County Veterans Memorial and Registry is now selling pavers and accepting donations. The memorial will be located in Mayer. Carver County veterans are encouraged to share their story in the register with the purchase of a paver.

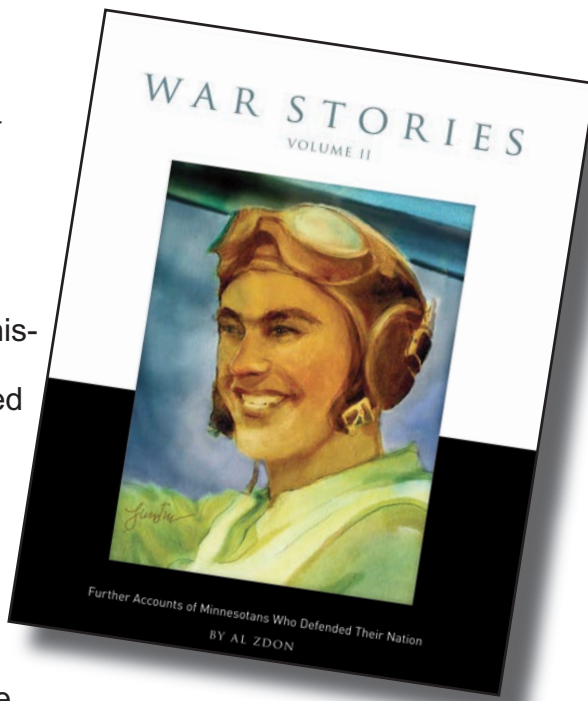
For more information, call 612-888-6366 or email: cvcvmr.org@gmail.com.

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To order, you can use the blank below and enclose a check. Or you can go to www.mnlegion.org and use your credit card.



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St. Paul, MN 55155

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Cost is \$23 per book. Includes shipping and handling.

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Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By
Tom Newman



Dental Care

"My teeth damn hurt! In fact, they hurt so bad I can hardly eat." This was a statement made by a veteran who attended the recent town-hall forum hosted by the St. Cloud VA Healthcare System.

Several in attendance gasped. It was an impactful statement. I'll add that this was a public meeting implemented as an opportunity to directly listen to the concerns of our veterans and had been held at the Monticello American Legion Post 260 on December 10th.

It's not a far stretch to make the statement that traditional VA outpatient dental care is out of reach for many Veterans. That said, it's critical for veterans to also be aware that although this may be the case, it's certainly not game over as other opportunities to secure dental care, to include other forms of short term dental assistance, do exist.

I'll explain myself, but before I do....as John Wayne would say – "If everything isn't black and white I say why the hell not?" In reverence to the spirit of the "Duke" I'll do my best to keep the remainder of this article in plain language.

In general, eligibility for outpatient dental care is not the same as for most other VA medical benefits. To establish eligibility to VA outpatient dental care a Veteran must be service connected resulting from combat wounds or service trauma, have a dental condition clinically determined by VA to be associated with and aggravating a service connected medical condition, or be a Veteran actively engaged in a Vocational Rehabilitation program (38 USC Ch. 31), or be an enrolled Veteran in VA Healthcare who is homeless. Yup – it would certainly appear at face value that there is not much room for establishing eligibility for VA dental care.

Now you may be wisely asking yourself - So what about establishing my ability to access VA dental care as an inpatient instead – would this change anything? VA Bulletin 10-442 (February 2014) explains that Veterans receiving hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care will be provided dental services that are professionally determined by a VA dentist, in consultation with the referring physician, to be essential to the management of the patient's medical condition under active treatment.

For veterans not eligible for VA outpatient/inpatient dental care, I recommend you consider the VA Dental Insurance Program (VADIP). VADIP is a three year, national pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing a premium based dental insurance plan to eligible veterans.

Those eligible to participate are all veterans enrolled in the VA healthcare program and CHAMPVA program. VA has contracted with Delta Dental and MetLife, private insurers, to administer the dental insurance program. Each participant will pay a fixed monthly premium for coverage, in addition to any copayments required by his or her plan selected.

Individuals interested in participating in VADIP may complete an application online, over the phone or by mail at any time throughout the year. There is no specific open enrollment period.

Multiple plan options will allow participants to select a plan that provides benefits and premiums that meet their dental needs and budget. The offered plans vary and may include diagnostic, preventative, surgical, emergency and endodontic/restorative treatment. Coverage begins on the first of the following month in which you enrolled.

For example, if you enroll in January 2015, your coverage would go into effect on February 1, 2015. This dental insurance pilot program began in November 15, 2013 and will remain available through the contracted period of the pilot unless the program is extended or made permanent.

What are the estimated costs? It depends on the plan you select. Three plans exist – Standard, Enhanced, and Comprehensive. The Standard dental plan covers visits to a dentist twice a year for routine cleaning and exams. The average monthly premium for Standard is \$10/month (price of a movie ticket & with an icy soda pop).

Enhanced allows for routine cleaning and exams, root canal, gum surgery and simple tooth extractions. The average monthly premium for the Enhanced plan is \$16/month (price of one of those fancy Starbucks coffee drinks).

The Comprehensive plan covers routine cleaning and exams, root canal, gum surgery, simple tooth extraction, crown implant, denture – (*After a 12 month waiting period). Average monthly premium is \$29/month (price for a date night dinner out for two).

Always remember to work with your County Veteran Service Officers whenever pursuing Veteran benefits administered by either the Federal or State Department of Veterans Affairs.

County Veteran Service Officers provide invaluable assistance to Veterans seeking assistance with this and other available programs. Eligible Veterans interested in participating in VADIP are provided an opportunity to apply for VADIP by mail, online or by phone. For further details, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits/VADIP or call Delta Dental at 1-855-370-3303 or MetLife at 1-888-310-1681.

The American Legion is pursuing VA dental coverage which would cover all Veterans enrolled into the VA Healthcare System. Please see Resolution No. 181: The Department of Veterans Affairs Dental Care. Resolved, That The American Legion supports legislation to amend Title 38, United States Code, Section 1712, to provide outpatient dental care to all enrolled veterans.

tnewman@mnlegion.org

Oak Ridge Boys join Legion in speaking out for detection, treatment of PTSD

The Oak Ridge Boys join The American Legion's commitment to address the needs of veterans. The American Legion and the Grammy Award-winning Oak Ridge Boys are uniting to raise awareness and support for needs of U.S. military veterans, including better detection and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), help with the VA benefits process, as well as education and career opportunities for those who served our nation in uniform.

The American Legion is the country's largest veterans service organization, with 2.4 million members who work every day on behalf of the men and women who have served our nation in uniform. The Oak Ridge Boys will participate in a national fundraising and awareness campaign to support the detection and treatment of mental health issues among veterans, 22 of whom are lost each day to suicide. As one of country music's longest-running groups, The Oak Ridge Boys' legacy extends back to the end of World War II. The current group – which consists of lead singer Duane Allen, bass singer Richard Sterban, tenor Joe Bonsall and baritone William Lee Golden – recently celebrated more than 40 years performing together. In that time, The Oak Ridge Boys have produced more than 30 top 10 hit songs, 12 gold records, three platinum records, one double-platinum album and a double-platinum single, with combined sales totaling 41 million records sold. They maintain a vigorous touring schedule and released a live album in April, "Boys Night Out." Bonsall, a member of The Oak Ridge Boys since 1973, penned an inspirational biography about his veteran parents titled G.I. Joe and Lillie: Remembering a Life of Love and Loyalty.

Joe's father spent much of his life living with the wounds of war, both seen and unseen, as told in the book. A song by the same name was included in the Oaks' album, Colors. "I know firsthand the ongoing care of our nation's veterans is critical and how it impacts the entire family unit," Bonsall said. "Uniting with The American Legion to raise awareness of those who are suffering, as my father did, is work

we are proud to champion." The VA estimates that upwards of 20 percent of veterans from the recent wars are confronting PTSD.

"The American Legion welcomes the support of The Oak Ridge Boys in our efforts to help veterans and their families deal with the mental scars of battle," American Legion National Commander Mike Helm said. "With the generous support of the Oaks, their fans and patriotic Americans, The American Legion will be able to help more veterans get the support and assistance they need."



The Oak Ridge Boys have joined with The American Legion in promoting awareness and treatment of PTSD.

Sons of The American Legion

By
Dennis Henkemeyer



There are so many exciting things happening here in the Detachment of Minnesota these days that it makes a person very proud to be the detachment commander.

First of all, money continues to come in for my project, which is the Minneapolis Fisher House. For those of you that think this only benefits the people in the Twin City Metro Area, you are so very wrong.

The Minneapolis Fisher Houses provide military families housing close to a loved one during hospitalization for an illness, disease or injury. They offer lodging to these people that provides more like a bedroom at home, than a hotel room. In addition, the families share a common kitchen, laundry facilities, a warm dining room and an inviting living room. Fisher House Foundation ensures that there is never a lodging fee. Since inception, the program has saved military and veterans' families an estimated \$235 million in out of pocket costs for lodging and transportation. So in this time of giving, please consider a donation to the Minneapolis Fisher House.

You can make your check payable to "MVAVCS" and print "Fisher House" on the memo line. Then drop your check in the mail to Detachment Adjutant Doug Bible, 5602 West Oakes Drive, St Cloud, MN 56303. Remember, they also appreciate donations of canned goods and supplies. However, please check the expiration date on the canned goods and make sure that the items still have a long shelf life.

As for membership, we are making our mark on the national scene. This past week we were number seven in the nation and number one in the Central Region. We have met and exceeded every national target so far this year. Last week, Detachment Membership Director Paul Spyhalski and 2nd District SAL Commander Gene Olswold presented a new charter to the guys in Lake Wilson.

I would like to send out a special welcome to those new members and wish them the best of luck. I would like to congratulate Commander Olswold on winning the U.S.S. Bowfin "Pearl Harbor Avenger" Challenge Coin at the Pearl Harbor Car Caravan in Montgomery. Also, congratulations to all ten districts for making the national target of 45% on or before the national target date of 10 December.

Just a reminder that our annual Detachment of Minnesota Spring Conference will be held at the Anoka American Legion Post on 20-21 March. I look forward to seeing many of you at this great event.

Together, let's propel to the top.



LAKE WILSON CHARTER -- The Detachment of Minnesota presented an SAL Charter to Lake Wilson.

Pearl Harbor Rally at Montgomery



SIXTH DISTRICT CLEARS THE BASES -- Membership Director Pat Logan, center, presented a Tony Oliva autographed bat to Sixth District Commander Carl Moon and Sixth District Membership Director Jim Lucas for having the top membership at the rally.



TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME -- Pat Logan leads, from left, SAL Membership Director Paul Spyhalski, SAL Commander Dennis Henkemeyer, Department Commander Peggy Moon, and Auxiliary President Chris Ronning in a song about the national pastime.



SCALLEN-CARLSON -- Auxiliary Membership Chair Judy Ackerman presented Ninth District President Margee Keller the coveted Scallen-Carlson Trophy for highest percentage by Fall Conference.



KAISERSATT -- Membership Director Pat Logan presents Second District Commander Jennifer Kafka with the Kaisersatt Derby Plaque for having the highest number of membership points.



JOINING THE TEAM -- Past National Commander Dan Ludwig was presented with a Department membership baseball shirt by Pat Logan. Ludwig spoke on the meaning of remembering Pearl Harbor.



JUNIOR AUXILIARY -- Honorary Junior President Jules Efta greeted the Pearl Harbor Rally crowd.

WWII remembered

It was a sober reminder of the passage of time that when Membership Director Pat Logan asked for all the World War II veterans to stand, only one answered the call.

Wayne Glanton, Fifth District Commander, was the sole WWII veteran present at the Pearl Harbor Rally in Montgomery.

Past National Commander Dan Ludwig spoke about the debt America owes these veterans.

"They were our teachers, and they were our role models. We are feeling the void with their significant influence waning," Ludwig said.

"The American Legion must keep that flame of freedom alive. We must be the teachers."

Results of the rally were announced.

For the SAL, the second district led the way with 76.41 percent. Overall, the SAL was at 61 percent.

The Auxiliary's top district was the Seventh with 71.68 percent. The state totals were 67.60 percent.

For the Legion, the Sixth District continued to lead the way with 84.3 percent. The district won the autographed Tony Oliva bat.

Bill Johnson gave a report on the 10th District revitalization. There were 122 transfers into local posts.

Membership Chart As of Dec. 17, 2014

District	2015 Goal	Total 2014	Total 2015	Percent of Goal	Same Date '13
1	9,976	9,918	8,297	83.17	8,651
2	8,110	8,026	6,847	84.57	7,145
3	12,486	12,421	10,400	83.29	10,834
4	2,554	2,530	2,112	82.69	2,266
5	2,959	2,936	2,380	80.43	2,501
6	12,698	12,627	10,788	84.96	11,094
7	7,245	7,167	6,029	83.22	6,269
8	4,768	4,727	3,898	81.75	4,169
9	7,443	7,378	6,348	85.29	6,457
10	11,243	11,189	9,352	83.18	9,765
At-large	2,340	2,338	2,181	69.06	2,008
Totals	81,822	81,257	68,632	83.06	71,159

EYEWITNESS TO ATOMIC HISTORY

On November 1, 1952, at the Eniwetak Atoll in the western Pacific Ocean, the United States exploded the first hydrogen bomb ever created, and the largest bomb mankind had unleashed up to that point. Don Oullette was there to see it.

By Al Zdon

There are only a handful of people still living who can say they saw the first hydrogen bomb explode.

Imagine sitting on the deck of an aircraft carrier, wearing goggles, with your head down between your legs. Even with the welder-type goggles and your eyes shut tight, you can still "see" the bomb going off 30 miles away.

And then there's that blast of heat.

And then there's that tsunami wave that nearly capsizes the ship.

And if that wasn't enough fun, the ship did it all over again 16 days later for a conventional atomic bomb, this time at only 17 miles distance.

Oh, yeah, and then there's the radiation.

□□□□□□□□

Donald Oullette grew up right next to St. Clement Catholic Church in Northeast Minneapolis. "In fact, we were so close that my mother could look out the dining room window and make sure my brother and I actually went in the church."

One of nine kids in the family, including a twin brother, Oullette graduated from Edison High School in 1950. "I was pretty good a gymnastics until I discovered girls."

He was employed at Stillman Grocery after high school and worked his way up to fruit and vegetable supervisor. But he knew with the Korean War starting that Uncle Sam would soon be calling.

He enlisted in the Navy, but two weeks later got a letter asking him to report for an Army physical. The confusion was solved when his mother received a letter saying he had been accepted in the Navy.

Boot camp was at Great Lakes in Chicago. After basic, Oullette trained as a hospital corpsman at the same base. "It was my third choice for a school because I hated the smell of doctor's offices. I asked why they made me a corpsman, and they said that's what they needed."

His first assignment was at Camp Pendleton where, for three weeks, he was a corpsman assigned to a Marine platoon doing rifle target practice.

Next stop was the USS Rendova, CVE-114, which was about to leave for Korea. The Rendova had been built right at the end of World War II, and had been decommissioned for a time. It was re-commissioned in January 1951 after North Korea had invaded South Korea the previous summer.

Not as large as the attack carriers during World War II, Rendova was still a large ship at 557 feet long. "I got out of the cab and said, 'Holy crapes, look at this thing.' I went up the gangway and saluted the watch and asked where the sickbay was. He said it was down past the after elevator. That was a long walk."

One of the first things he learned was that the ship's doctor liked to spend a lot of time up on the ship's superstructure, the island, watching the planes take off and land. "He should have been a pilot.

"When someone came in after a hit in the head, he instructed us to check him out, and to press on the wound. If it was solid, we were told to put in a few stitches and he'd be down to check him out later."

In order to pick up supplies and ordnance, the escort carrier had to enter San Francisco Harbor and go under the Golden Gate Bridge. "We were all up on the flight deck and we were sure the superstructure was going to hit the bridge.

We had no doubt. But then when we got up to it, we cleared it by 20 or 30 feet. No problem."

The ship's main port in Asia was at Yokosuka, Japan, and Oullette traveled through Tokyo while on liberty several times. "There were still huge areas of the city where there was nothing except maybe a pile of burned rubble. They were still dealing with the fire bombing from World War II."

In September of 1951, Rendova picked up her air squadron, the Marine fighter squadron VMF-212, and on Sept. 26th the ship was on station "Nan" off the coast of Korea. Except for monthly visits back to Japan for supplies, it was to be the Rendova's home for the next six months.

The main job of the Marine Corsair fighter planes was to provide close fire support for the American troops on the ground in Korea. The Rendova set a Navy record for the number of sorties it flew during that time.

Part of Oullette's job as a hospital corpsman was to be stationed on the flight deck in case anything bad happened when the carrier was recovering aircraft. The corpsmen were stationed next to the deck at about the fourth cable stretched across the deck to catch the tailhook of the Corsairs. "We liked to sit in our cubbyhole and watch the planes come in while we were drinking coffee."

"The pilots had four cables they could catch as they landed, and they said the ideal was the third cable. If they caught the fourth cable, they were reprimanded."

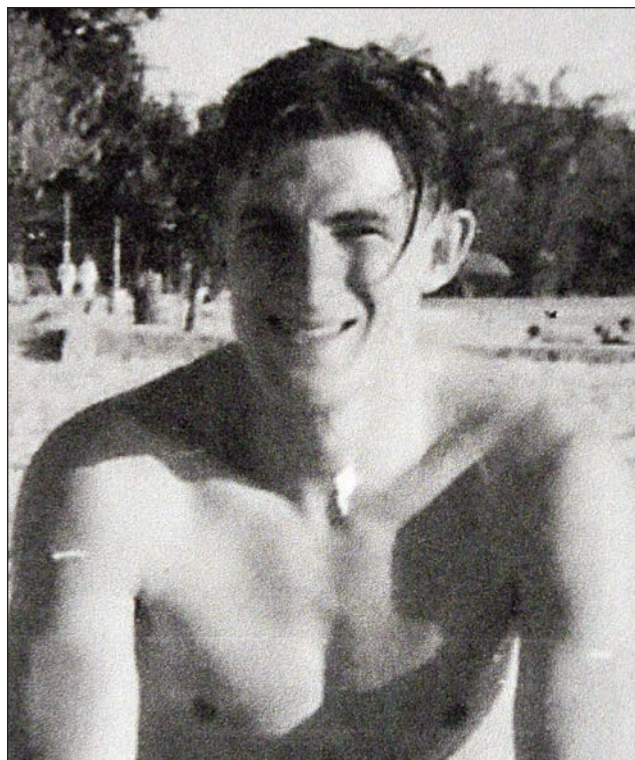
Sometimes a plane would miss the fourth wire and plow into a barrier net that popped up and was the last chance of catching the aircraft so it wouldn't continue down the deck and hit other planes. "The flight deck crew hated it when the barrier was deployed. All that stuff would be wound around the propeller."

He recalled night operations. "It was so black at night off Korea that you really couldn't see your hand in front of



your face. They had these lights along the deck, they looked like dust pans, and the light only shown down. But it was enough to let the pilots see the outline of the ship."

The worst accident he saw was during the day, and Oullette had a small part in it. "This plane was coming in way too low, and the landing safety officer was waving his signals around like crazy trying to catch the pilot's attention. Everybody could see he was too low, and I stood up from our little cubbyhole and I was waving my arms too, trying to let him know. At the last minute, the pilot just cleared the deck by about one foot but his tailhook hit the signalman on the head. He was killed instantly."



DON OULLETTE
Enjoying some liberty at Waikiki Beach in Hawaii



DON OULLETTE
At the VFW Post in Golden Valley