

called me Sandy. We were like a family, really.

"Most of the guys on the crew were 18 years old. None of them were old enough to vote except for me and the top turret gunner. I was the old man at 26."

The lead plane announced they were 200 miles out, which meant it was about an hour to the target. The Liberators could fly at about 185 miles an hour.

As the target came near, the flak began. On this day, the flak was extraordinarily heavy. "The Germans had fighters out, but they didn't come close to us. They didn't want to get into the flak. Their main job was to tell the gunners on the ground exactly what our altitude was. We were at about 18,000 feet."

Still a little ways from the target, both Sander's plane and the lead plane were hit simultaneously by the anti-aircraft fire. Immediately, both bombers lost their right inboard engines.

The lead plane immediately dove down and began to circle back towards England. All of the other planes in the formation, according to their training, followed him down and around.

Only Sanders' plane continued toward the target. "We heard later that someone in another plane radioed, 'There's some crazy guy who's going in to bomb the target by himself.' That would have been us."

The Spirit of LSU stayed at 18,000 feet and Sanders dropped his bombs into the smoke of the burning refinery. Only then did it circle back toward home.

He tried to keep up with the formation, but that was not possible with an engine gone. Not long after, the other engine on the right starts to sputter and then dies.

"Pretty soon we lost another engine. We flew over Belgium with two engines. I told the crew, you'd better start getting out because we're going to have to leave this thing."

Sanders ran the two remaining engines at max power, but they begin to overheat. He radioed a "mayday" and his aircraft's position. By ones and by twos, the crew bailed out of the stricken aircraft until only the pilot and co-pilot were left.

"All I had left by now was the right outboard engine. I set the autopilot to keep it flying as straight as possible because with one engine, the plane will want to circle. I got out with my parachute into the clear air, but I looked and the plane was coming back at me. But then it crashed into a potato field on a hillside."

As the parachutes drifted toward earth, both the German Army members in the area and the Belgian underground volunteers were watching.

"When I hit the ground, I sprained my ankle. It was pretty bad."

The Belgian resistance fighters were first on the scene and helped Sanders along as fast as he could limp, but when they had to go through a fence, his parachute harness got caught and cut his face all down his brow and nose. He was bleeding profusely.

"There was a young Belgian girl there with red hair. She took out a white handkerchief and held it to my face. Years later at a reunion in Belgium, I was telling the story of that young girl, and somebody said, 'Ces't moi.' I turned around and there she was, the same redhead."

The escape included riding bicycles, which improved their speed until the chain came off Sanders' bike. "That was a disaster." Time was spent hiding in a field.

He was finally taken to a safe house. "The resistance took everything from me except for my suntans (uniform) and my boots."

When the Germans came around and asked where the "luft gangster" was, the Belgian patriots told them that the pilot had gone down with the plane and burned.

The resistance moved Sanders, who was now dressed like a laborer, from place to place. One method of transportation was a hay wagon with a false bottom. "A German soldier poked a pitchfork into the hay, but I was okay."

Meanwhile, back at home, his wife Millie gave birth their son, Mike, just two days after the crash. She also received the dreaded telegram saying that her husband was missing in action.

A young doctor was brought in to see Sanders. "He couldn't do anything about my ankle, so he just wrapped it up and put it back in the boot and pulled the laces tight to act like a cast."

Eventually, Sanders was brought to a large barn. "I walked in and there were 17 men in German uniforms. I thought it was all over."

But it turned out the men were escaped Russian prisoners of war who had stolen the uniforms. They were also armed to the teeth.

As time went by, food was hard to come by. "But there never was any shortage of something to drink." At one point, another pilot was brought in. "It was great to have somebody who could speak English."

At a farm in Wisbecq, Belgium, things got dicey when the Germans encircled the farm and blocked all the roads. At this time Sanders companions were the other American pilot and three of the Russians. They hid under a floor in the attic of the barn. The main activity of the Americans was to keep the Russians from storming out and trying to kill the Germans.

Word came down through the resistance that it might be possible to smuggle the Americans into Switzerland, but they would have to go to Brussels first.



LT. SANDERS CREW -- The crew of the Spirit of LSU posed during training at Tucson, Arizona, in February 1944. From left, standing: Al Sanders, pilot; Danny O'Connell, bombardier; Tom Zobelein, navigator; Fred Morley, co-pilot. Front: James Sizemore, armorer and gunner; A.B. Smith, nose gunner, William Kozulak, top gunner; Lou Lujan, flight engineer and waist gunner; John Lawrence, waist gunner; Robert Swaffield, tail gunner.



REUNION -- Sander's crew got together for a reunion in 1990 in Ohio. Eight of the original crew plus the crew chief take part in the get together. From left, standing: Sanders, O'Connell, John Nedean (crew chief), Morley. At bottom: Sizemore, Smith, Kozulak, Lujan.



Al Sanders hiding out on a farm at Wisbecq in Belgium. He is wearing civilian clothes.



A Belgian citizen took this picture of the Spirit of LSU burning on a hillside. Sanders had bailed out minutes before, the last one out of the plane.

"They drove like mad, and when we got to town, we headed for a garage at great speed. I wondered what they were doing. Just as we got there, the garage door opened, we drove in and they hit the brakes. It was as wild a ride as you can imagine."

For a time he stayed with a Belgian family in the city. "She apologized to me because they had nothing to give me except beer and potatoes. I told her that was fine."

It was at this time that Sanders and the others became acquainted with Prosper De Zitter, a man with one thumb who was posing as a member of the resistance, but was actually a German collaborator.

Sanders was told he would need a passport and other papers to make his escape to Switzerland, and that they needed to go to the Palace of Justice in Brussels. Unfortunately, it was a ruse planned by De Zitter, who was captured after the war and executed.

Once there, Sanders was taken to an office and the door was slammed. "There was a Luger pointed at us. And then the fun started. He told me to take off my clothes down to my shoelaces. I said, 'No.'"

"He asked me what I was doing. I said I wasn't doing anything, but I didn't want to take my clothes off. He took me next door and another officer asked me why I didn't obey the command. I said I just didn't want to take my clothes off. They called me a wise guy."

Sanders was taken to St. Gilles Prison in Brussels and put in a cell. There was a daily interrogation, but Sanders refused to give more than his name, rank and serial number. The prison was full of Allied airmen and civilian political prisoners. Sanders stayed there for about four weeks. It was now September of 1944.

"One night, the cell door opened and the Germans were saying, 'Raus, raus.' We just had time to put our shoes on and we were out in the dark getting on a big truck.

"They put 47 of us into one small railroad car. There was only room for some of us to stand and others of us to sit."

Sanders had been put aboard what would later be called the "Nazi Ghost Train." With the Allied armies approaching, the Germans were anxious to move the prisoners from Brussels to prisoner camps in Germany. The 30 cars on the train were crammed with 1,370 political prisoners and 41 Allied airmen, including Sanders.

"We spent two days and two nights on the train, and we were still in Brussels."

What was happening was that the people of Brussels were determined not to let the train depart with all the Belgian prisoners on board. To that end, they sabotaged the tracks, had engineers call in sick, and lost a locomotive. The Germans, while moving the train around, actually lost track of the cars that contained the prisoners of war, and they were shunted off to a side track. It was Sept. 2, 1944.

"We got the door open and a couple of guys volunteered to try and escape. Off they went, and it was bang, bang, but they didn't touch them in the dark. Then a couple of more guys went, and the Germans shot but couldn't hit them.

"I talked another American pilot into going, and pretty soon it was our turn. The door opened and off I went, but the other pilot stood in the boxcar door and wouldn't budge. I was on the platform by myself.

"I started running and made it into the darkness. I hadn't run that fast since I was at LSU. I could hear the bullets pinging off the railroad tracks. Bing, bing.

"I headed for the canal and dove over a six-foot embankment. I jumped right on top of the first two guys who had escaped."

Sanders saw a boat tied up down the river and headed for it. "I got to the boat and I didn't know what kind of welcome I'd get. I knocked and the voice inside said, 'Queen Wilhelmina.' I answered, 'President Roosevelt.' The voice said, 'Comrade,' and they let me in."

He spent three days on the boat, and then crossed over the canal to the Summer Palace. By this time, the Allies were coming into Brussels.

"A Jeep came by, and I hopped on board. He took me into town. They were so happy to find someone who had escaped. We went to a hotel where I could get food and drink, and, boy, did I eat. And then, boy, did I lose it."

He waited in Brussels until Sept. 6, and then he learned he could hitch a ride to England if he went to Amiens, France. The city had been liberated only a few days earlier.

He was taken to an airfield there, and he rushed across the airstrip to a waiting Dakota C-47 transport plane. "The door opened and I ran up. A sergeant caught me by the shoulders and hauled me on board. He asked my name, rank and serial number. Then he said, 'This is the one, let's go.' As we took off, people were shooting at us."

The plane landed in London, and Sanders was taken by ambulance to a hospital. He was severely malnourished from his time in the prison, and his ankle had never been properly treated. "All I had on was the tatters of my civilian clothes. The nurse said, 'Take those off right now.'"

He was finally able to send a telegram to his wife. He still was unaware that he had a son.

"They kept me there until they thought I was okay. One day a doctor came in and he said, 'This is yours.' I looked, and it was a Purple Heart. I said, 'That's great.'"

Eventually, Sanders got a pass and went back to his base north of London, but nearly everyone was gone since the airfields had moved to France as the Allies advanced. First he went to the home of a British family where he was bil-



Nearly 20,000 B-24 Liberators were built during World War II.



Al and Millie Sanders were married while Al was in training to become a pilot.

leted.

"The mother thought I was a ghost and started screaming. Then she ran out and hugged me. I went over to the base, but nobody there wanted to talk to me. They had no interest in what I had done. They did let me eat at the dining hall."

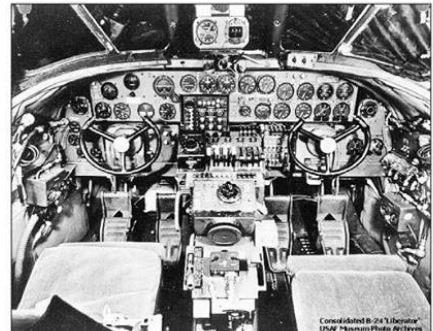
Sanders was sent back to the United States where he spent the rest of the war training other pilots. He was at Fort Worth when the war ended.

After the war, Sanders decided to stay in the military and retired in 1962 as a major. He had advanced to flying jets.

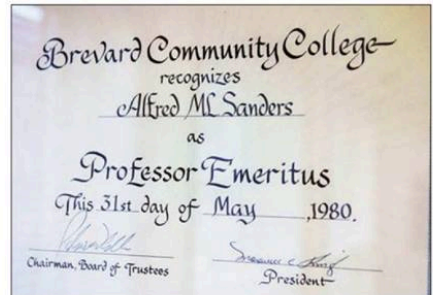
He went back to college and wound up teaching at a junior college. He and his wife had one more child, Winkie.

Over the years he was able to round up every one of his crew, who all managed to survive the war, and they had several reunions over the years. Only two are still alive at this time. He went to a reunion in Belgium where he was able to meet again with many of the families in the resistance who had sheltered him.

He moved to Minnesota a few years ago to be near his daughter. Millie died in 2013 after 71 years of marriage. Al Sanders lives in White Bear Lake.



The cockpit of the B-24 was a jumble of gauges and controls.



After his military career, Sanders went back to his first choice for a career -- teaching. In 1980, when he retired, Brevard Community College in Florida awarded him a "professor emeritus."



Louisiana State University honored Sanders by naming him to their Hall of Honor in 2009 for his military and civilian careers.

District Commanders

FIRST DISTRICT
Roland Hanson
 Commander




Hello Comrades, I trust Christmas was a joyful holiday for you and I hope the New Year looks bright. The First District Christmas party was fun and the caroling at the Rest homes in Austin was enjoyable. Post 91 in Austin was the host for the party.

Past First District Commander Kenny Nelson passed away on November 26. He was a good friend and comrade. My condolences to his family.

The Pheasants for Veterans program is doing well. I attended the appreciation dinner at the Minneapolis Veterans Hospital. The pheasant was excellent and the Director said the Veterans enjoyed it also.

I also visited the Brain Science Center and picked up some literature. Raising funds to continue this important work is my project for the year and also the Department Commanders project. Remember the Sweetheart Rally and Chili Cookoff is coming up on February 6 at Legionville. The Legionville Ice Fishing Derby is the same day, if there is any ice. Remember to thank a veteran.

SECOND DISTRICT
Ryan Hill
 Commander




It's a brand new year for the Legion Family. I hope you all had a happy and safe New Year.

The big news in 2nd District is that we have scheduled a Revitalization for February 8 and 9 at Worthington's First United Methodist Church, 508 11th Street, Worthington MN. This is a great chance to grow our Legion Family. We know there are many veterans in our area who could add their voices and experiences to our great organization.

Thank you for all the donations to the 2nd District Joint Commander & President's Project at the Luverne Veterans Home. We are over half way to our goal of expanding the picnic area so the veterans who are able to be outside can soak up some sunshine and enjoy the small lake scenery north of the home.

THIRD DISTRICT
Don Skow
 Commander




Our membership year is rolling along very well thanks to our membership directors, but the last 10% is always the hardest, so lets all get to work on this and ourselves at goal in January. Remember any dues getting to Department after January 13th will be charged at the 2016 rate (5.50 increase), so please help us get Director Pat Logan and several area members did a revitalization in the Egan area, and got us 38 new members. Thank you Pat and your team! The 'Has Beens' Rally will be held in Savage. We need to have alot of our posts at goal by then so lets all help the Has Beens put together a successful rally.

The next big thing in the Third District will be our Midwinter in Silver Lake on January 30th. All district chairmen are asked to submit a written report to our District Adjutant Linda Dvorak by January 15th, and please include your contact info. We are changing the program a little this year, let us know what you think. We need all officers and chairpersons of the district to bring along some blue-cappers to the conference, we need their input also, The American Legion is a great organization and getting better, but we need everyone's participation.

FOURTH DISTRICT
Dan Williams
 Commander




The Fabulous Fourth finished calendar year 2015 well. Thanks to the dedication and hard work from the entire District Family: The Ladies Auxiliary, the Sons of The American Legion, The American Legion Riders and of course, The Legionnaires. Thank you all for everything you have contributed to our common success.

I will dedicate this month's article to pay a special recognition to a good friend of mine. This person has been a Legionnaire for 56 continuous years. He has been very active in his post as well as at District and Department levels. I've known him for nearly 15 years and throughout the years he has demonstrated his love for God and Country. I want to extend this very special recognition and say thank you Cliff Gustafson.

Cliff has been a great personal help to me and many oth-

ers in learning about The American Legion and providing wonderful history. Cliff is no longer as mobile as in the past, but his commitment has not diminished.

Cliff has shared memories of his travels. He loves his children and freely shares how proud he is of each of them. He is well versed on American Legion matters. Finally, I encourage you to pull up a chair and ask Cliff to share some of his insights; I know he will be glad to do so. Again, Cliff Thank you.

Calendar: January 2 - 4th District Mid-Winter 9:00 AM North St. Paul Post 39; January 17 - VA Hospital Visitation 1:00pm; January 30 - Winter Carnival Parade & Joint 4th & 5th Districts Rally Meet at Arcade Phalen Post 577.

FIFTH DISTRICT
Gary Martin
 Commander




Hope all had a blessed and safe holiday season. With the holiday's over its time to finish up our membership and move on to enhancing our Legion programs, projects and activities.

The Shop, Ship and Share program at the Maplewood Mall was a great success. The Fourth District and United States Postal Service did a fantastic job coordinating the event. On behalf of the Fifth District, thank you to all who volunteered time, monies and goods supporting our servicemen and women at this special time of the year.

January 30th the Fifth District will participate in the Saint Paul Carnival Winter Parade with the Fourth District. The bus will leave Arcade-Phalen Post 577 between 12:00 and 12:30 PM for the parade. Following the parade, we will return to Arcade Phalen for snacks, lunch, refreshments and a membership rally. Come join us and bring your American flags for the mass display of our nation's colors as the Fourth and Fifth Districts march in the parade, no post colors.

Our Fifth District Family project this year will be providing entertainment items for the newly remodeled building at the Minneapolis Veterans Home. We are also working with the Minneapolis Veterans Home Adult Day Care Center for their needs. We are asking all posts within the Fifth District and the Department of Minnesota to support these vital programs as much as they can. Donations can be sent to: Fifth District Family Project, 3552 25th Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406. Please make your checks out to Fifth District and earmark District Project in the memo line. Thank you.

Our next District Assembly will be February 2, 2016 at the Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435. University of Minnesota Post #548 is the host. Executive Committee meeting 6:45 PM and General session at 7:30 PM.

With our Legion year half over it is time to start thinking about endorsing Post and District Officer candidates for 2015-16 and District Legionnaire of the Year. It is also time to start gathering the information you've documented for our yearly reports. Again this year, the Fifth District has committed to 100% Consolidated and Children and Youth reporting.

SIXTH DISTRICT
Dwayne Collins
 Commander




Pearl Harbor Rally went very well. More membership would have been better but that is the way it goes. The 6th District came in 3rd place in Dept. Thanks to all that have paid their dues before the 1st of 2016. The rest of those who have not paid, will be paying a higher price in dues.

As the New Year began I have gotten a haircut and a trim to the beard, what a cold day that was. As Santa's days are over for another year. I had a great time doing this with the kids this past year.

I will be continuing to visit post meetings and any other meeting that is needed. This would include the county council meeting. The first weekend in February is the Sweetheart Rally. The rally is being held at Legionville camp. Then on February 13th is Mid-Winter Conference, which will be held in Waite Park. I hope to see lots of Legionnaires at both of the events, so mark your calendars.

There are two membership revitalizations planned for the 6th District. The first is in Melrose on January 16th and this is for all the posts within 25 miles. The second one is at Brainerd the week of February 8-12.

I hope that all of you enjoyed the holiday season. This last month as much as I did, had a great time with the family. Watching grandkids opening their presents and the stories they told was great. Let's work on having a great New Year in 2016 to keep 6th District bigger and better.

Please contact me at dcollinsr@yahoo.com or 218-821-7314 if you have or think there is something we can do to change or better things.

SEVENTH DISTRICT
Karen Welander
 Commander




We are having our Mid-Winter at Cosmos on January 16th at 9 AM. You will find out about our programs and what other posts are doing. Plan to attend and meet more of our American Legion family. I know you will have a very good time and enjoy the camaraderie and information. I look forward to seeing everyone and make sure you bring a friend.

As the New Year progresses we need to put on that blue cap and recruit other veterans so they can enjoy the benefits we enjoy. The strong voice a veteran uses on the issues that impact all veterans is only as passionate as we are at being veterans. Your passion can be contagious to other veterans and the membership is what needs to happen to strengthen our voice. Don't let your membership goal stop you from achieving your post's goal of helping all veterans.

The national commander will be in the district and we need to show our support for the hard working posts that are hosting. The message of Commander Barnett will be well received and appreciated. He has gone the extra mile for us and now we will go the mile for him.

It is now time to start planning for your remembrances on Four Chaplains Sunday. You are encouraged to memorialize the significant event and sacrifices of their lives for another's safety.

Many thanks to all that have volunteered to go that extra mile to help us to continue to serve veterans.

EIGHTH DISTRICT
Jennifer Havlick
 Commander




2015 was a busy year with conventions, membership rallies and conferences, and 2016 also looks to be a busy year. Quick reminder: If your post dues as still less than \$31.50 a year you will lose money on each renewal you receive after January 16. Now onto the New Year. Is your post working with your area schools on an Oratorical Contest? If so please contact me as so as possible with dates.

If we have multiple posts having contests we will need to have a district contest to choose who gets to advance to the Department Contest. Posts should have received the information and application for the Annual Military Achievement Awards for "Outstanding Enlisted men and Women" serving in National Guard and Reserve Units throughout Minnesota. You can also find the information and applications on our district website at www.american-legiondistrict8mn.com.

I would like to encourage all posts to work with other members of our Legion Family, the best way to serve our veterans and their families is to work closely with our Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and Legion Riders. Consider a joint meeting to discuss working together throughout the year. Thank you all for your hard work. I'm looking forward to an exciting year.

NINTH DISTRICT
Denise Milton
 Commander




Mid-winter conference will be January 9. This year will be a one day event and done jointly with our Legion family at Detroit Lakes.

Deadline for submitting the special dues increase form has come and gone, but please submit it anyway. There has been a recent update for deadline for sending in transmittals to avoid national dues increase. If department receives your membership transmittal no later than 13 January, it will not be subject to the \$5 increase. Anything after that will have to reflect the new dues structure.

Membership is going well, overall we have surpassed all of our National target dates. I would like to extend a big thank you to the posts that have already reached 100% goal-Argyle, Euclid, Nielsville, Ulen, Henning and Wolvorton. We have several that are 1-4 members short of goal. It is attainable -- just ask.

Department has sent out applications for Outstanding Enlisted Servicemember of the Year-please contact your local Reserve/Guard units. If you need assistance contact the National Security Chairman Gary Olson or myself.

Upcoming events: Godfathers rally, Feb. 5 in Mahanomen, 5p.m., soup/sandwiches, 6 p.m. membership rally; Sweetheart rally-Feb. 6 at Legionville.

We all work for the same cause, to better the lives of our military and their families and to make our communities a safe and good place to live. Remember to thank those that actively serve and in harm's way.

World War II History Round Table

Navy pilots recall carrier war in the Pacific

So what was the best fighter in the Pacific in World War II, the Corsair or the Hellcat?

That debate has been raging for over 70 years, and it was continued at the December World War II Round Table at Ft. Snelling.

Lyle Bradley, a Marine and a Corsair pilot, and Dick Mann, a Navy pilot who flew Hellcats, continued the friendly controversy at a meeting that looked at the first couple of years of the carrier war in the Pacific.

"I loved the Hellcat. It was a very easy plane to fly and it had good trim. In the time I was in the Navy, I flew about 800 or 900 hours in the Hellcat and only two or three in a Corsair."

Bradley was adamant about his choice. "I flew the Hellcat, and it was a beautiful plane, but it was not as good as a Corsair. But they did have the same engine. The Pratt and Whitney people did a fabulous job at producing engines."

Mann grew up in Fort Dodge, Iowa. "It was a different world. Everything was closed on Sunday, and relatives took care of relatives and didn't rely on the government."

He joined the Navy at Fort Snelling and did pilot training around the country. He did his first carrier landings on the USS Wolverine, a 1912 side-wheel steamer that was converted into a freshwater aircraft carrier in the Great Lakes.

In the fall of 1944, he reported to the South Pacific as a fighter pilot aboard the USS Saratoga. "It was an old ship, but a good ship. It could do 30 knots. And we had new planes."

On one mission in his Hellcat, he was doing combat air patrol off the coast of Japan. "The weather was horrible. We knew there were Japanese airplanes in the vicinity."

When it came time to get back to the ship, though, in the bad weather he couldn't find the Saratoga. "I found the USS Enterprise instead and landed there. I stayed overnight and went back to the Saratoga in the morning. I was just glad I found something to land on."

In early 1945, the Saratoga was part of the Battle of Iwo Jima. "We were between Iwo Jima and Japan, and that was not a great place to be. Three Japanese kamikazes came at us, and they must have come in low because they came in under the radar."

"We went to general quarters, and less than a minute later, they hit us. The hangar deck was on fire. It was late in the day and it was very dark. We developed a four or five degree list. Then we were hit by two more kamikazes."

"We had 40 or 50 planes gassed and ready to go, but we just shoved everything overboard. There were only two Hellcats left out of 43."

"I finally got smoked out of the ready room, and I went behind the five-inch gun by the island. It thought it was a safe place, but one of the gun crew yelled at me, 'You'd better not stand there, as soon as we start firing, the shells will be ejected there, and they'll kill you.' I went and manned a fire hose."

"We had 125 buried at sea."

Mann also remembers that his squadron was the first to fly an air raid over Tokyo. "I remember coming in over the city and you could see Mount Fuji sitting there so beautiful and so peaceful. I thought, 'This is stupid. They're trying to kill us and we're trying to kill them.'"

Mann made about 120 carrier landings. "It was always a great piece of excitement. With the deck pitching up and down like that, you never knew if you were going to catch a wire."

While he loved his Hellcat, he said there was one area where it didn't match up with the Japanese Zero fighter. "The Zero was lighter and smaller, and it could turn inside a Hellcat. They told us never to dogfight a Zero. But as it turned out I never saw a Zero in the air during the war. They wouldn't come up and fight us."

Only once did he have to ditch a plane. "I was trying to set my prop at low pitch, but something went wrong it went to full high pitch. I was barely able to stabilize the plane. I radioed in and asked what to do, and they told me to pick out a destroyer and land in the water well ahead of it."

That's exactly what Mann did. "I got out of the cockpit and walked out on the wing. By the time I got to the end of wing, boom, it was gone. They only take about a minute to sink."

The destroyer pulled up alongside him, and Mann had to climb the ladder to get on board. "It was wiggling all the time, and it was very hard to do. Once I got on board, though, they took my wet uniform, cleaned it and dried it and I had it back on 15 minutes later."

Mann thought he was being treated special because he was the only pilot aboard the destroyer. "I thought I was a big shot, but I found out I was worth 10 gallons of ice cream. A destroyer couldn't keep ice cream, but a carrier could. Whenever a destroyer returned a pilot, they asked for 10 gallons of ice cream."

"When it came time for me to go over to the carrier on



The Corsair was the main Marine fighter plane.



The Hellcat was the primary Navy fighter in the war.

the high line, they said, 'No way, we don't have our ice cream yet.' The ice cream was sent over, and I finally got back to the carrier. And you know what, the guys there hadn't even missed me."

While at sea, Mann had a brief encounter with a Lt. Gerald Ford, who was in charge of physical fitness on the USS Monterey. Ford later became president of the United States. All Mann recalls is that the airplane elevator, where he played basketball with Ford, was oily and dirty and the basketball was soon the same. "But I wish I'd got to know him better. I could have gone to Washington, got an easy job, and made some big bucks."

Mann was also one of the more than a thousand planes that flew over Tokyo Bay when the formal surrender was signed on the USS Missouri. "We wanted to show the Japanese how much fire power we had right off their coast. It took us an hour and a half just to form up. I think we only had one mid-air collision."

Mann also flew over Japan looking for prisoner of war camps. "They were supposed to have a 'PW' written on the roof. And we found one. I wrapped up some cigarettes and candy in a T-shirt and dropped it to them. I was so interested in dropping it, that I damn near hit a tree."

Bradley grew up in Dubuque, Iowa, and joined the Marines during World War II.

Part of his training was at Fleming Field near downtown St. Paul. "We were flying Stearmans, and all of a sudden we couldn't see the ground. A fog had rolled in and trapped 20 of us in the air. You only had two choices: You could bail out, but then you'd never know where your plane would crash, or you could come in very slowly and try to find the ground. I was coming in very slowly when all of a sudden, zing, a big number one went by. I had just missed the First National Bank Building. But then I knew where I was and I found the field. All 20 of us got down by going very slowly."

His first fighter plane was the Wildcat, an older carrier-based fighter. "It was a terrible plane. It tried to kill me five different times. But then I got to fly the Corsair, and it was like Heaven."

He flew to Hawaii as a passenger on the China Clipper, a one-of-kind four-engined flying boat built by Pan American Airways.

"After we got airborne, the pilot came back and asked if there was another pilot on board because the co-pilot was sick. So I went forward and was the co-pilot all the way to Hawaii. It turned out I flew almost all the way there because the pilot was sleeping. We could do about 110 knots, and the auto-pilot didn't work. When I finally saw Diamond Head I was so happy. I was exhausted."

Another flight that took him farther west was also interesting. "On board the plane there were five pilots and five Navy nurses. Well, I can't tell you everything..."

Bradley said the plane had to stop at Johnston Atoll for repairs. "We sat under the wing and killed a couple of bottles of Southern Comfort. We were singing quite well."

Bradley was at sea in December 1944 when the U.S. fleet sailed directly into the teeth of a typhoon with 100 mile an hour winds. "We had four men swept overboard, and we lost 55 aircraft. The typhoon sank three destroyers with all hands lost. We had more damage because of an admiral's decision than the Japanese did that whole year."

Prior to the veterans' part of the program, author Steve Moore from Texas gave a talk on the first couple of years of the war. He has written two books on the subject.

He talked about carriers and the planes aboard, including the Douglas SBD Dauntless, a plane used by the Navy for scouting and bombing. "It went 250 miles an hour and it was slower than most of the enemy aircraft. They called it 'Slow But Deadly.' The pilots had great respect for it. It was built like a tank."

Moore described the early battles of the war, including

the Battle of the Coral Sea, the first naval battle in history where the ships never saw each other. The carrier Lexington was sunk.

At about that time, though, the U.S. broke the Japanese naval code and knew that the next target was Midway Island. Both the U.S. and Japanese carrier fleets converged on the island.

The three torpedo bomber squadrons flying from the three U.S. carriers were annihilated in the attack. Flying the obsolete Devastators, one squadron lost 15 of 15 planes, another lost 12 of 12, and the third lost 10 of 14.

"But they set the stage for the bombers that came in next." In the end, the Japanese lost four large aircraft carriers and the U.S. lost one, a turning point six months into the war.

Moore talked about the naval support for the invasion of Guadalcanal, which the Japanese called "Hell's Island."

Once the U.S. captured Henderson Field on the island, Navy, Army and Marine aircraft began supporting the battle effort by flying from the field. It was called the "Cactus Air Force."

"You can imagine what it was like for the Navy pilots who had come in from the carriers. They were sleeping in the dirt, eating Army food, and being hit daily by Japanese bombers. They were pretty miserable."

The invasion had begun in early August of 1942, and, Moore said, by Sept. 27 the Cactus Air Force had run out of planes. More planes were ferried in, and in mid-November the Cactus group of planes from the USS Enterprise, the last carrier left in the Pacific at that time, scored a major victory by destroying a Japanese battleship and sinking seven of 12 Japanese troop transports bringing re-enforcements to Guadalcanal.

The rest of the transports were run aground, and were easy picking for continued bomber attacks.

Moore noted that in the first year or so of the war, there were four major carrier battles and only two more during the rest of the war.



DICK MANN



LYLE BRADLEY



STEVE MOORE

Listening Post

News from around the State



ST. CLOUD DEDICATES REHABILITATION CENTER -- A ribbon was cut in December to celebrate the opening of the new Rehabilitation Center at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center. The 19,000 square foot center will offer expanded treatment areas and state-of-the-art equipment.



BACKUS CHRISTMAS PARTY -- Santa brought some cheer to World War II veteran Paul Kunde at the post's annual Christmas and customer appreciation party.



WOODBURY WALL OF THANKS -- The Woodbury Post 501 and Santa presented its annual Wall of Thanks at the Woodbury Mall. Donors can pay tribute to a veterans and the name will be displayed for several weeks.



FALLDIN APPLE DONATION -- Minneapolis Falldin Post 555 donated apples the the Columbia Heights Elementary School. From left: Commander Donovan Ortel, Principal Michelle DeWitt, Vice Commander Paul Soderberg, Adjutant Ray Eiden, and Membership Director Virgil Persing.



NORTH BRANCH HONOR -- Legionnaire Everett Pearson, center, received his 70-year pin from Orv Otterness and Randy Koivisto.



BRECKENRIDGE OLD TIMER -- Eugene Leinen, left, was honored at Breckenridge Post 53 recently for his 73 years of membership. He is in the top 10 in the state for longevity of membership. Greeting him are Department Commander Jim Kellogg and Post Commander Kira Barbosa.



MONTICELLO DINNER -- Monticello had a Christmas Dinner with featured speaker Melony Butler, director of Eagle's Healing Nest. From left: Don Lee, Cheryl Latham, Butler, Ted Farnam and Jeff Grimm.



REDWOOD FALLS CHRISTMAS -- Redwood Falls Post 38 presented Christmas blankets, notepads and cards to 27 veterans in local facilities. The honored Harry Knudsen with a certificate for 70 years membership. From left: Pat Schmidt, Jim Mertens, Knudsen, Jeanette Mertens.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 16-6

President Sandy Fredrickson

January 2016

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

Department Headquarters, Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155 651-224-7634

The President's Column

By
Sandy
Fredrickson



As we start the New Year 2016 and look out into the big picture of our organization -- What do you see?

New Year 2016 is the time of new beginnings, learning experiences and to gain new knowledge.

I see brightness, cheerfulness, excitement, newness and much progress within the Department of Minnesota, American Legion Auxiliary. Things are happening and things are changing.

These are all great features of our American Legion Auxiliary.

The strategic planning committee and audit committee are working very hard to form/change the Department of Minnesota to get us up to date with policies and changes of our National organization. Your department secretary is working hard trying to put grants together for the organization. It is my hope that Districts and Units are working on this same type of revitalization.

All the tools you need are on the National web site and many things are on the Department web site. If you can't find what you need and still have questions, do not hesitate to call Department and speak with one of the employees. They will direct you in the right direction!

At this time I would like to "thank" all units, friends, co-workers, and family for all the invites, food, gifts, & help getting me to where I need to be. Your hospitality has been outstanding.

Remember, January is National Security and Legislative month. Make sure your Units are informed of the legislative concerns and changes for our Veterans. Keep informed. Contact your representatives and Senators to make them aware of your concerns for our veterans. Let your voice be heard.

As the New Year begins, let us pray that it will be a year with new peace, new happiness, and abundance of new friends. God bless you throughout the New Year.

May we pray that a culture of "goodwill" will excite each of us within the American Legion Auxiliary.

Happy New Year 2016.

Auxiliary programs need your help

In reviewing the contributions to the various approved Department programs, we find there seems to be some questions as to what are our own Auxiliary programs; what are not.

Each year the Department Chairmen receive approval from the Department Executive Committee for those Auxiliary programs that need our financial support. These programs are listed on pages 13-14 of the Unit Guide. Those marked with an * are our own Department Auxiliary programs, namely: Junior Activities, Department Scholarships, Girls State, Past Presidents Health Care Scholarship, American Legion Auxiliary Hospital Program, \$5.00 Bill Shower, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and the Christmas Gift Shop. These programs cannot be carried on without the financial support of our Units and those Posts that have so kindly supported our programs.

Many Units are having difficulties financially. Every Unit should look carefully at what they are donating to. Many, many letters of solicitation come to the Unit from other organizations. Some Units feel that they "must" support these other organization in order to be carrying out the programs of the ALA. That is not the case. Too, some Units are supporting programs we are no longer involved with financially or that have been completed.

Reservations due for Girls State program this year

In the January Unit mailing, every Unit received the necessary information and reservation form to reserve a place for their candidate(s) to the 2016 session of the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State. Please ask your Unit President for the necessary information.

After your Unit sends in the reservation fee (\$300.00 per girl) and it has been processed, your Unit will receive a packet of information including a complete registration packet for each girl you are sponsoring. This will be sent to the person who signed the reservation form.

Information has been mailed to each high school in December. The schools will be waiting to be contacted by you. Let them know now if you will be sponsoring a girl.

A Unit may sponsor as many girls from the same high school as it would like to. There is no limit. The candidate(s) must attend a Minnesota public, charter, parochial, private, home-school, or be a resident of Minnesota. All reservation fees will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis. Any person, business or organization may provide the fee to sponsor a girl but this must be run through a Unit.

This year the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will return to Bethel University. The session will be held June 11 - 18, 2016.

JUNIOR CONFERENCE

Saturday, April 9th is the date for the annual Department Junior Conference. It will be held at the Grace Lutheran Church in Fairmont with the Second District serving as our hosts. A fun evening has been planned for Friday, April 8th. Complete information and the Call to the Junior Conference will be included in the January Unit mailing. Be sure you share this information with your Junior Activities Chairman. Arrange now for your Juniors to attend. We need more Juniors to attend our Conference and share their successes with other Junior members so we can grow the program. Junior members are the Auxiliary's future and we must nurture and promote what they do.

2016 POPPY ORDERS

Poppy orders are still being accepted in the department office. As of this writing, we have received orders from 232 Units. Please get your order into the Department Office. We need to know how many 2016 Poppies are needed so we can plan accordingly. If you have already ordered and need to place a second order, please do so.

Shipment of Poppy orders has been ongoing. Upon receipt of your order, please check it carefully and report any discrepancies to the department office immediately. Please do not wait until Poppy Day.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual reports have been sent to all Unit President's in the January Unit Mailing packet. Please make sure and go through the reports and instruction sheets. If your Unit doesn't participate in all of the programs be sure to fill out the ones you do participate in and return them. If your Unit is inactive and doesn't participate in any of the programs, please send them back stating "do not participate" on the form.

SECOND DUES NOTICES

The National organization will be sending out a second dues notice around January 15, 2016 to all Senior members whose 2016 dues were NOT received and recorded by the National organization by December 10. That means some of you will receive this second notice though you recently paid your dues.

If you have already paid your dues and receive another notice, please disregard it. We know that some of the dues and the dues notices cross in the mail.

Reminder: Any member who has not paid her 2015 dues by January 31 is considered delinquent and loses her rights, privileges and benefits of membership. Payment of her 2015 dues reinstates her as a member in good standing.

MEMBERSHIP HELP

The Department Office, Executive Committee and Membership Chairmen are looking for your help. If any of you have any success stories or interesting ways of collecting you membership renewals, we are all ears. Our membership continues to decline - with the dues being paid the Department Office will no longer be able to function. We are here for you and would like to continue working for this wonderful organization forever! Please contact Sandie at the Department Office via email; sandie@mnala.org or deptoffice@mnala.org or call 651-224-7634. We would love to hear from you and share these success stories.

2016 DIRECT BILLING

My how the time flies - though the calendar just turned to 2016, it is already that time of the year when the National organization requires the necessary information for printing the 2016 dues notices. Every Unit will receive a notice asking for the amount of your Unit's year 2017 Senior and Junior dues, and the name and address of the person whose name should appear on the year 2017 dues' notices. The information and form will be in the February Unit mailing. The information is due into the department office no later than March 31, 2016. We would appreciate your cooperation and getting this form back to us in a prompt manner. This form will also be on our website. Make sure and discuss this with your Unit at your next meeting and vote on your Unit dues so the form can be filled out with the correct amounts for 2017.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Question: What has your Unit done with the copies of the scholarship applications sent to you last fall? Are they sitting in your Unit's files, or have you taken them to your local schools and shared them with the students who are searching for ways to finance their education? If you are in need of additional copies for distribution, you may duplicate those you received or contact the department office for additional copies.

All scholarship applications are due into the department office by March 15, 2016. Let your schools and community know about these scholarships. There are seven (8) Department scholarship awarded each year at \$1,000.00 each. The Past Presidents Parley Health Care Scholarships are also \$1,000.00 each. All applications can also be found on our website.

CORRECTION

The endorsement for Sandra Fredrickson to run for the 2016/2017 Alternate National Executive Committee member was incorrect. This position will not be eligible for candidates until the 2017/2018 Auxiliary year. This was a new change to our Constitution and there error wasn't caught until after the Legionnaire came out. For the year 2016/2017 the position of Alternate NEC will be appointed by the Department Executive Committee.

NATIONAL EMBLEM SALES

The National Emblem Sales catalog for the year 2016 has been sent to all Unit Presidents and Post Commanders. If you have not received your copy by the end of January, please request a copy of same directly from National Emblem Sales. 2016 prices are now in effect.

WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

The 2016 Washington Conference will be held in Washington DC, February 21-24, 2016. If any member is interested in attending, please contact the department office for details.

SECRETARY SANDIE'S NOTES

Another year is starting and the weather has been cooperating with my drive so all is good. The days are now getting longer instead of shorter which makes me very happy. We have Annual Reports out to the Units, Girls State registrations out to the Units, Junior Conference registrations out to the Units so now it is up to you to get everything back to me. It is one big circle we have here at the Department

Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

Office and with your cooperation and participation it makes us the successful organization we have become. The year 2015 was a very interesting for me with many very highs and very lows.

It sure makes life interesting. This year our focus is to come up with ways to help Units get their memberships paid and get new members to join. We must get the picture out there of what a wonderful organization we are and what we do. I do remember when I was young (yes I can remember that far back) and always thought anything with the word "auxiliary" meant the old grandmas in our communities were getting together for coffee and it was for them only.

It never even dawned on me to join the organization as there was never any information put out there explaining what it was and what it did. We all really need to get the word out there.

Sorry for the sermon, I generally like to keep this pretty easygoing. I have to let you in on what my two wonderful staff members got me for Christmas.

If you remember what I wrote about Jan and Julie being so wonderful in last month's notes, I was presented with two packages of bon-bons and some very comfortable socks to put my feet up with - we really do have a good time a work.

To all of you out there reading this, please have the best year of your life in 2016, keep up the spirits and help me and your Executive Committee find ways to get the best kept secret in world - Join the American Legion Auxiliary to help veterans and their families.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

There is a very special group of people who serve our hospitalized veterans every day of the year. These are our Hospital/Home Representatives and the volunteers who work with them.

Each month is busy for them as they make the stay of our hospitalized veterans a bit more pleasant and comfortable. During the month of December they are exceptionally busy with the Christmas Gift Shop and \$5.00 Bill Shower programs.

Our appreciation and many thanks to all our representatives and the volunteers who serve with them.

January is ALA National Security Month

January is National Security month. What is National Security-The National Security Program and the 2014-2019 Centennial Strategic plan -Maintaining and promoting a strong national defense by supporting service members and their families helps us build brand loyalty among a target membership population while keeping focused on our mission.

POW/MIA Remembrance service falls under National Security. Support the troop and family programs of The American Legion. Take care of wounded warriors and their families, collect comfort items once they get home. Help with household chores. Suggest to them to sign up in the VA system.

Send care packages to our active military. Find out if there are families that you could give a Gold Star or Blue Star Banner to. Look for contacts who know of active Military families. Wear red on Fridays to "Remember Everyone Deployed". Become informed about issues affecting military families' home life, such as PTSD. One program is the Yellow Ribbon program. Assist with a blood drive with your American Legion. Honor ROTC and JROTC Cadets, by hosting a dinner. These are just a few things what National Security is. With winter upon us, don't

forget to have a Winter Survival kit in your vehicle. Don't forget about our Servicemen's Center at the Minneapolis Airport, they are always in need of volunteers. My challenge to you is to make goodie bags for the Service members and their families such as gift cards, magazines, treats and also something for the children that are traveling with them. You can also find more information in the Unit Guide and in our Unit mailings.

Chris Ronning
Department National Security Chairman



CHRIS RONNING
National Security Chair

It's also Legislative Month for Auxiliary

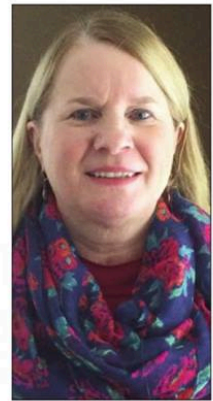
Legislation is where the laws that govern our nation come from. To make a difference in the legislative process, we must develop a relationship with our Legislators. We choose our elected officials to carry out the difficult task of determining which laws and policies will serve our best interests. To perform their job, legislators rely heavily on input from a variety of sources. Leadership, teamwork and a clear understanding of how and when to make a concerted effort to get Legislation passed are necessary to get the job done. As Auxiliary members, we follow the mandates set forth by the American Legion. It is important that we are aware of these issues and address them in a very timely manner today and in the days going forward.

Being a Legislative Advocate takes time. Keep informed on veteran's issues and the bills that will affect them and their benefits. Some excellent resources available are the Legionnaire, The Dispatch, and websites such as The American Legion (<http://www.legion.org/legislative>). Also, our close working relationship with the Minnesota American Legislative Chairman Bob Hart and his commit-

tee to promote advocacies concerning our veterans as the Legion Family.

When we advocate for issues we can show others who we are and what we stand for. This gives us the opportunity to invite others who share this common ground to join our Legion Family. It is time to have our voices heard again. We can't just "walk the talk" We need to "talk the talk" and put our words into action today. We must continue to be strong advocates to ensure our Veterans are respected, cared for and honored.

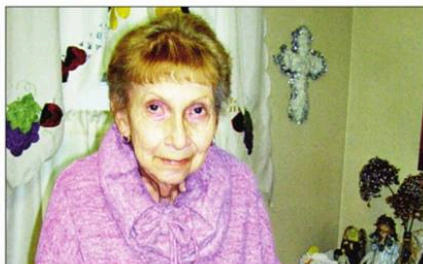
Margee Keller
Department Legislative Chairman



MARGIE KELLER
Legislative Chair



HOSPITAL HOME/REPS -- Front Row: Gloria Lindquist, Sioux Falls, Mary Ann Davis, Minneapolis, Jan Benson, St. Cloud, Back Row: Judy Kumerow, Luverne, Phyllis Mealey, Silver Bay, Sandra Gibson, Minneapolis, Carolyn Albertson, Fargo, Doris LaFayette, Fergus Falls, Darlene Wondra, Hastings



HONORED BY DISTRICT -- Elaine Karsmo, Raymond, a long-time 7th District Sergeant-at-Arms, was honored for her work with the Auxiliary recently.

Dec. 15, 2015, Auxiliary Membership

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year
One	6,146	3,730	60.69%	3,910
Two	5,979	3,792	63.42%	4,099
Three	5,323	3,480	65.38%	3,559
Four	920	524	56.96%	589
Five	1,047	635	60.65%	670
Six	7,318	4,927	67.33%	5,017
Seven	4,859	3,171	65.26%	3,324
Eight	2,005	1,180	58.85%	1,286
Nine	5,232	3,601	68.83%	3,706
Ten	6,382	3,855	60.40%	4,211
1982	198	122	61.62%	105
Totals	45,409	29,017	63.90%	30,476

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- Guided tour of New Orleans
- National World War II Museum
- National Ornamental Metal Museum
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

\$1,099.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

Savannah, Jekyll Island & Beaufort
 April 9-17, 2016

Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Tour Director, Joyce Langerud
- 8 nights accommodations
- 14 meals: 8 breakfasts, 6 dinners
- Tours of Jekyll & St. Simon's Island
- Guided tours of Beaufort, SC and Savannah, GA
- Jimmy Carter Presidential Museum and Library
- Willie Nelson & Friends Museum & Store
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

\$1,059.00
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Heart of Alaska
 July 28-August 4, 2016

Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Tour Director Jenny Gilbertson
- Delta Air Flights between Minneapolis to Anchorage
- 7 nights accommodations
- 12 meals: 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 1 dinner (including an Alaskan Salmon Bake)
- Iditarod Travel Headquarters
- Travel the Alaska Railroad
- Denali Park Natural History Tour
- Riverboat Discovery Cruise
- Chena Indian Village
- Prince William Sound Cruise
- Meares Glacier

\$3,429.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

New York City Tour
 June 22-26, 2016

Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Tour Manager Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta airlines flights from Minneapolis to New York City
- 4 night stay at the Hotel at Times Square
- Two Broadway musicals, Aladdin and Wicked
- Lunch at Carmine's
- Manhattan Island City Tour
- 9/11 Memorial and Museum
- Harbor Cruise with lunch
- Daily continental breakfast
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

\$2,399.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

National Parks, Utah & Arizona
 May 2016

Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Tour Director, Joyce Langerud
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 10 nights accommodations
- 13 meals: 10 breakfasts, 3 dinners
- Bryce Canyon, Zion National Park, Grand Canyon, Painted Desert & Petrified Forest and Badlands National Park
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

\$1,439.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

Alaska Tour & Cruise
 August 19-31, 2016

Fairbanks-Denali National Park-Anchorage-Hubbard Glacier-Glacier Bay-Skagway-Juneau-Ketchikan-Inside Passage-Vancouver

Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Tour Director Sue Barber
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis to Fairbanks and return from Vancouver to Minneapolis
- All sightseeing and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary
- A 7 night southbound cruise on the ISLAND PRINCESS
- Cruise Gratuities
- All meals and entertainment while onboard the ISLAND PRINCESS

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New York City & New England/Canada Cruise
 September 22-October 1, 2016

Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Tour Director, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis New York City
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- 2 nights stay at the Millennium Broadway Hotel in Times Square New York
- Circle Line Cruise of Manhattan with lunch
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MP2772 1/12