



Legionnaire

Volume 96, Number 10

For God and Country

October 2014

Fall Conference slated for Mahnommen

The American Legion's annual school of instruction, the Fall Conference, will be held Thursday through Saturday, Oct. 23-25 at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahnommen.

The meeting will be sponsored by Bagley Post 16. Both the Auxiliary and Legion sessions will be held at the casino.

The event will kick off with a gambling seminar at 2 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 23, at the casino. There will be committee meetings at 4 p.m. that day.

The Legion will hold an Executive Committee meeting on Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Bejou Room.

The Legion conference will begin the next morning at 8 a.m. in the Bejou/Detroit Lakes rooms. Commander Peggy Moon will chair the meeting.

The morning will feature a visit by Dale Barnett of Georgia, a candidate for National Commander this coming year.

Also in the morning will be presentations on post histories, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, and Legion operations by Department Staff.

Friday afternoon will feature American Legion Riders training by Bill Sloan from the National American Legion Headquarters Staff.

At 4:30, the annual meeting of the American Legion Family Hospital Association will be held, and at 6:30 the annual reception for Legion Family officers will be staged in the Beaulieu Room. The Grand March will begin at 7.

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MEETING ROOM, SHOOTING STAR CASINO

Worlds finishes up as MDVA deputy commissioner

Reggie Worlds started at the bottom, made it almost to the top, and for now will take his passion for veterans to a middle level.

Worlds' last day on the job as deputy commissioner for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs was Sept. 23. His new job will be with the Department of Employment and Economic Development at their Mankato office.

"Some of the best days of my life were spent at the Department," he said. "I'll look back on my time there with nothing but a smile."

Worlds, 48, said the primary factor in his decision to leave the job was the commute from his home in Mankato to St. Paul each day. "I called it my 'trip of love.' I loved coming to work each day, and I loved going home to my beautiful wife and children each night.

"But 900 miles a week is a lot. It wears on the body. My wife and kids have been very supportive of my career, but now it's time to give something back to them."

He said he was fortunate to land the post at DEED. "It will allow me to keep helping veterans, and to help them find good jobs."

Worlds was born and raised in Florida. His first 13 years were spent in a rural part of the state in the panhandle. He moved to Tampa and graduated from a high school there. After school he joined the Army.

"I was a Patriot missile crew member, and I spent five and one-half years in Germany."

He worked as a postal employee in Tampa after the service and then was transferred to Mankato in 1993. He went to college to learn law enforcement, but instead took the job as Martin County Veterans Service Officer. Worlds left that job to go into law enforcement.

"But I didn't realize how much I would miss working with veterans."

He became an assistant CVSO with Hennepin County and was hired as an outreach specialist, working mainly with minorities and women, with the MDVA in 2004. By 2010, he had worked his way up to deputy commissioner.

He is credited in those four years with creation of the Linkvet veterans support center, for greatly reducing veterans homelessness in the state and with reaching out to the traditionally underserved women and minority populations.

"I can't really take credit for any of that. It's always a collaboration. I think the greatest thing is to be part of working toward a united veterans community that really focuses on veterans and their families."

Worlds paid special tribute to his wife and to his boss. "I need to give kudos and love to my wife, Sue, for what a great supporter she has been. Without her, I would never have been able to achieve anything. I owe her so much."

Continued on Page 2



DEPUTY COMMISSIONER REGGIE WORLDS

Commissioner: Two open deputy slots won't be filled now

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has lost its second deputy commissioner in the last six months, and neither position may be filled for a while.

Commissioner Larry Shellito said that since both positions are "at will," meaning they could be replaced by the next governor, it would not be fair to anyone that was hired at this point.

The state elections are in November.

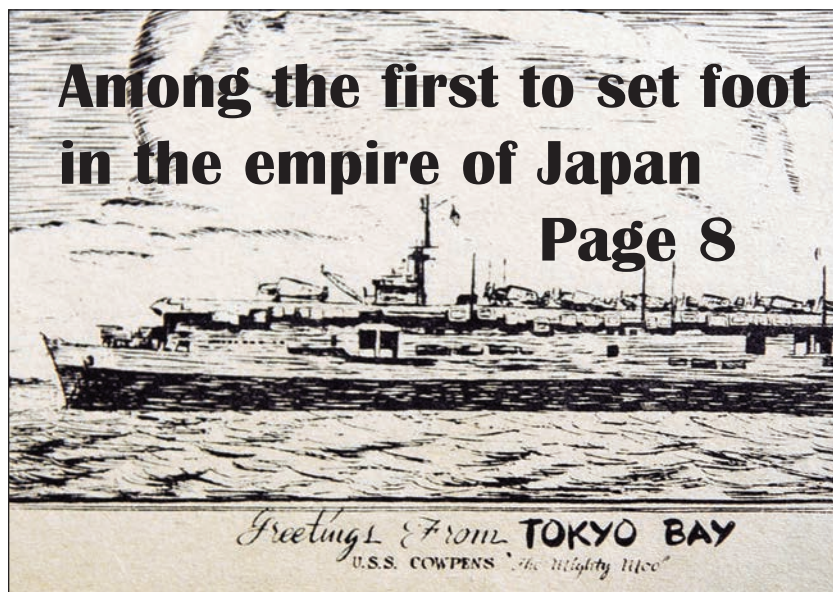
Shellito also said there were other factors. "We'll take a look at the financial forecast. If it looks like it will be consistent with what we have now, we'll pursue hiring at least one of those positions."

There is the possibility, he said, that there could be some serious cuts in funding in the future. "We want to keep our front line forces working at this time. We don't want to hire those deputies and end up having to lay off nurses or something like that."

Shellito said it will be critical for the MDVA to work closely with the County Veterans Service Officers and the veterans service organizations to make sure services are synchronized for veterans. "And if we have to hunker down because of cuts, we'll have to lean on the service organizations even more."

Among the first to set foot in the empire of Japan

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Legion: DoD must be protected from cuts

WASHINGTON D.C. -- American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm said U.S.-led air strikes against ISIS militants in Syria this week amplify our nation's need to protect the Department of Defense from drastic budget cuts and force reductions.

"The air-strike strategy is certainly an effective way to kill the enemy and destroy its war-fighting capabilities, at least in the short term," Helm said. "But the large-scale use of high-tech missiles is expensive. Launching 1,000 Tomahawks is going to cost DoD about \$1.5 billion, and the Pentagon has already said this week's air strikes are only the beginning. Also, lasting security and protection against resurgence of this army of terrorists can only be attained through complete military superiority, including ground forces."

Costs of the air campaign in Syria are currently being

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Fall Conference

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The hospitality rooms will follow.

On Saturday morning, there will be a series of reports on Legion programs concluded with a speech on national security. The conference is expected to adjourn about 11:30 a.m.

The 82nd Auxiliary Fall Conference will be held in the Richwood Room at the Casino.

On Thursday, Oct. 23, from 7-9 p.m. there will be workshops that will run consecutively. There will be a workshop on how to fill out Annual Reports and National Security will have a speaker on hand.

The Auxiliary sessions will begin Friday morning at 8 a.m. in the Richwood/Pine Bend rooms. There will be reports from the Auxiliary programs and "just ask" sessions throughout the day.

The Auxiliary conference will wind up on Saturday with a membership skit.

Because Bagley is so far away, some of the off hours activities will be sponsored by the Mahnomen Post.

The post will have soup and sandwiches on Thursday and Friday from 11-1. There will be brats, baked beans and chips from 4-7:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday.

There will also be daily drawings at the post for prizes.

There will be shuttle buses from the casino to the post.

To make reservations for rooms, please contact the casino and hotel at 218-936-2621 and request the American Legion block of rooms. The block code is 632397.

Preregistration can be done by using the form below.

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Worlds leaving as MDVA deputy

Continued from Page 1

Commissioner Larry Shellito, he said, was a great mentor and teacher. "He just has that desire and compassion to make sure the veterans and families get what they deserve."

His advice to whomever replaces him? "Listen to the staff and listen to the common people. You need to get involved. Talking to someone face to face is better than talking to them on the phone."

Worlds said there are many challenges facing the veterans community in the future. Strides have been made in ending homelesses, but much still needs to be done, he said.

Another ongoing issue is the continuing care of severely injured veterans. "In World War II or Korea, if you got severely wounded, you probably died. Now, many of these men and women are coming home. We are responsible for those lives."

"We have a great life in America, but we must take care of that one percent who year after year defend the nation."

No time to cut DoD funds

Continued from Page 1

covered by the Overseas Contingency Operations fund, which has about \$85 billion through fiscal 2014.


"But if these air strikes continue for months or years – and with more budget cuts kicking in from sequestration – then funding this war is going to be a serious issue," Helm said.

"The American Legion wants Congress to avoid any further cuts to the defense budget and to properly fund combat operations against ISIS, Khorasan and other militant Islamic groups, by air, sea and land."


"These threats must be annihilated, and now is not the time to shortchange DoD on funding necessary to conduct critical military operations in the ongoing war on terrorism."

The first air strike by U.S. and Arab allies happened in the early hours of Sept. 23, Syria time. Two days later, Pentagon spokesman Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby commented to CNN about fighting the Islamic militants.

"I think we are in this for a matter of years. We are steeling ourselves for that period of time."



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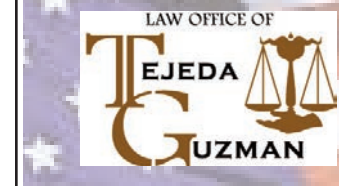
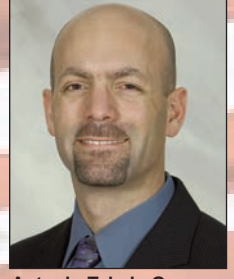


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Endorsements

Dvorak endorsed for 2015-16 Department Sergeant-at-Arms

Mark J. Dvorak has been endorsed by Charles Borak Post 45 New Prague as Department Sergeant-at-Arms for 2015-2016.

Dvorak has been a paid up for life member for over 19 years and is a dual member of the Sons of the American Legion.

He is currently on the Board of Directors for The American Legion Post 45/Park Ballroom and has held various positions including Chief, Financial Officer. Mark has also served on The American Legion Post 45 Board of Trustees.

Dvorak was the Third District Adjutant from 2010-2013 and Third District Commander 2013-2014. He currently serves on the District Convention Planning Committee and also was appointed and serves on the Department

Fund for Hospitalized Veterans Committee. As a Sons of the American Legion member he serves as the Finance Officer.

He served 22 years on Active Duty; six years in the Air Force and 16 years in the Minnesota Air National Guard on Active Duty, retiring from the Air Force in 1995.

He has a BS Degree in Accounting and from 1995 - 2010 worked in Public Accounting and as a Senior Accountant for a local metro company.

He is an active member of St. Wenceslas Catholic Church and participates in the adult choir.

The Dvoraks have six children, 13 grandchildren, and one great grandchild. His wife, Linda, is also retired from the Air Force and is the Finance Officer and Membership Director



MARK DVORAK

for American Legion Post 45 in New Prague and currently is the Third District Adjutant.

Minneapolis VA will participate in two major research projects

The Minneapolis VA Health Care System will participate in two research projects focusing on non-drug approaches to pain.

The studies were announced last week by the National Institutes of Health's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. "Pain is the most common reason Americans turn to complementary and integrative health practices," said Josephine P. Briggs, MD. "The need for non-drug treatment options is a significant and urgent public health imperative. We believe this research will provide much-needed information that will help our military and their family members, and ultimately anyone suffering from chronic pain and related conditions."

A 2011 Institute of Medicine report states that nearly 100 million American adults suffer from chronic pain at a cost of \$635 billion per year and notes a need for a cultural transformation to change this problem. Chronic pain disproportionately affects those who have served or are serving in the military. A June 2014 report in JAMA Internal Medicine

showed an alarmingly high rate of chronic pain—44 percent—among members of the U.S. military after combat deployment, compared to 26 percent in the general public.

Minneapolis VA's Melissa Polusny, PhD, and Erin Krebs, MD are principal investigators of a 4-year project that will study over 3,000 OEF/OIF/OND Veterans to learn about the development of chronic pain following deployment, what factors influence their utilization of different pain management approaches, including complementary and alternative medicine approaches, as well as gain a deeper understanding of veterans' preferences and attitudes towards pain management approaches.

In another study, Richard Branson, DC, staff chiropractor at the Minneapolis VA, will be collaborating with the Palmer Center for Chiropractic Research in Davenport Iowa on a study of how chiropractic care might be best integrated into existing Veterans Health Administration clinical practice guidelines for veterans with a combination of musculoskeletal pain and mental health conditions. In addition to Minneapolis, the

Iowa City VA and Connecticut VAs are collaborating. The study will launch in winter or spring of 2015 and involve 60-81 Veterans.

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COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Peggy Moon



Hello Legionnaires.

I can't believe this is my third column already. This is the best job on earth, and I can't believe how fast the time is going by.

Thank you to everyone that participated in our first membership rally at Legionville. You packed the place. The turn-in was fantastic, and was enough to put us in first place nationally, at least for one week. As I write this, we have slipped to No. 2 (those cheeseheads in Wisconsin are working hard), but I know you will bring us back into first place soon. I received a phone call from our National Commander congratulating us, and the next day, Carl received a call from our National Vice Commander. He said he was calling all the District Commanders to encourage them to work The American Legion programs and our Membership Program. If the National officers are working this hard, we can too. Now is the time for all our District Commanders and District Vice Commanders to be calling their Posts. And the Posts, in turn, should be contacting all their members. Let them know you care about them, and want to know how they're doing. They shouldn't only hear from us when we want to collect their dues.

I also had the opportunity to attend the County Veterans Service Officer Conference at Gull Lake. What a dedicated group of people. I was amazed at how much legal and medical information they need to be aware of in order to serve as advocates for our veterans. I learned a lot, and came away with a whole new perspective. The next time you stop in to see your CVSO, make sure to say "thanks" for all that they do.

Editorial

Legion must also be supporter of VA

One of the most important responsibilities of The American Legion is to perform a watchdog service over the Veterans Administration and other federal, state and local agencies that provide veterans with services.

It's a role that goes back to our beginnings. If we don't watch these agencies, who will?

This past few months, the Legion has performed that job admirably. It was the Legion that was first to make noise about the shenanigans going on in Arizona. It was the Legion that saw that this example of poor and illegal management might be going on in other hospitals across the country. It was the Legion that pointed out that each year we were promised the waiting list would go down, and it never did.

It was the Legion that called for the resignation of Eric Shinseki as director of the VA. Shinseki is an honorable man who has performed wonderful service for our nation, but the problems with the VA were unacceptable and getting worse. Sometimes you have to clean house in order to get things fixed. Congress agreed with The American Legion, and many members also called for change at the top. In addition, Congress passed emergency legislation aimed at correcting many of the VA's failures.

Yes, the Legion performed its watchdog role as well as you can do it. And we must continue to be vigilant.

But now the Legion must perform another role. It's quite different but equally as necessary.

We must tell the people that despite the terrible problems



Fall Conference is coming up, and I know the folks at the Bagley Post have been busy preparing for our arrival. Please get your reservations in to them if you haven't already. This is a great learning opportunity, and it's important that we get this information back to our Posts. Our staff and Committee Chairmen are planning some fantastic presentations, and I know you'll want to see them.

Welcome home to the 114th Transportation Company who just returned from Afghanistan. They performed a valuable mission on dangerous roads while over there, and completed their job admirably. Altogether, 140 soldiers returned home to places all over this great state. I was fortunate enough to attend the Welcome Home ceremonies in Becker, the home town of three of these fine soldiers. Thank you for your service. The American Legion stands ready to assist you in any way we can.

When I think of these troops, it reminds me of my theme for this year, "Celebrating Courage." As I explained when I was elected, courage is not the lack of fear, it is knowing and understanding that some things are just more important than fear. They certainly exemplify this. I'm sure each of you can find numerous acts of courage in your community. Please share these stories. I love to pass on the good deeds that are being done in our communities.

We have our responsibility to vote in November. Do you know where the candidates stand on veterans' issues, and those challenges that affect your community? This is the time to check it out before you head for the polls.

Also, don't forget my project, Legionville. The new building is coming along just fine, but we need to get this job done. I would like to see the bathrooms installed soon. If you have any extra money in your Post funds, I would really appreciate the donation.

The next month is filled with activities. Many of our committees are having their organization meetings and setting their budgets. There are a couple of veteran deer hunt outings, meetings with the Commanders' Task Force, the National Security/Foreign Relations Meeting at Camp Ripley, The American Legion Riders Romp at Legionville, and, of course, numerous membership dinners. There's also another Commanders/Adjutants meeting in Indianapolis, and once again, Carl and I are driving.

If you're keeping track, I now have 5300 miles on the new car, and recently got my first oil change. They also rotated the tires.

Life is good - but I think I need to fill up again. Until next month.....

in some sectors of the VA health organization, it's still a great system.

It is still one of the finest medical systems in the world, and a model for what kind of health care a government can provide.

There are a couple of good reasons the VA is a terrific system, or, as the Legion has called it, a "system worth saving."

One, is that we as a nation have poured billions of dollars into VA health care in recent years -- particularly since 9-11. If we are going to send soldiers off to war, we need to take care of them when they come back. It's expensive, but it's a commitment this country must make, and has been making for a decade.

The second reason is a little harder to define because it doesn't come from the pocketbook, it comes from the heart. For the most part, and were talking 99 percent plus, people who work at the VA really care about veterans.

From the doctors to the nurses to the administrators to the employees to the volunteers, we have seen again and again that there is a true heart for veterans. The people who staff the VA are highly trained, highly motivated and they have become well versed in the particular needs of veterans.

But most of all, they care. They really do.

No, it's not a perfect system. No gigantic bureaucracy ever is. But when it gets down to a person-to-person basis, the VA is a blessing to the veterans of this nation.

The people who work there should be proud of what they do, and they should feel good every day when they come to work, knowing that they are doing something extraordinarily important.

The waiting lists and quota fiascos have opened the door to increased scrutiny of the VA. And that's okay. But as the town hall meetings and television exposés go on, let's not forget that by and large, the VA is doing a seriously outstanding job.

For every botched appointment, there are a hundred stories of a veteran who was treated kindly and brought back to health.

Again, it's not perfect, but we'll keep working on that.

And now that the Legion has performed the first part of its role so well, and exposed the serious flaws in the structure of the system, it's time we do the other part of our job and tell the people who work at the VA hospitals and clinics in Minnesota the simple truth.

You're doing a hell of a job.

Chaplain's Corner

By
Steve Klinkner



By the time you read this I will have been to the Chaplains Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. I look forward to the opportunities made available for this position. One of the opportunities that I have already experienced thru the American Legion Family is the many "friendships" that develop amongst the veterans, and their supporters.

A year ago, a dear elderly lady confided in me that "Everyone needs someone." She had told me how life for her seemed impossible, then someone came to her aid. She experienced more than her share of troubles and having to go to the nursing home was the hardest. She went on to say, "No one knows the value of a true friend until that one comes to you in time of desperate need." That is "true friendship." For many years, she has let this be her guiding light. She told me to always be a friend to those in need. She passed away the next day. I will always think of her with a smile and remember her guiding words.

What does it mean to be a friend? Someone has said that a friend is one who knows all about you but still loves you. Most of us have friends like this, whether we deserve them or not. Many of us have found that a friend is one in whom you can confide in, one who listens to your innermost longings, shares your hopes and dreams, comforts you in your sorrows and helps you bear your burdens.

Slaves and servants were words quite common more than 2,000 years ago. Then a young man came into Galilee one day. He urged 12 other young men to become his disciples. In the course of time, Jesus gave these disciples new hope by saying to them, "Henceforth, I call not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: But I have called you friends for all things I have heard of my father I have made known to you." "Friend" was a word fashioned from a spirit of love and trust. Jesus knew all about his disciples. He knew their weaknesses, their fears, their sins; yet he loved them all.

One of the most commendable things that the enemies of Jesus knew about him was that he was the friend of sinners. He showed that He cared. He loved the sinner not the sin. If He had not been the "friend of sinners" what hope would we have today?

It has been said that a friend is one who comes in when the world has gone out. One cannot place an estimate upon this kind of friendship. Jesus exemplified this kind of "friendship." Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, experienced it; Peter, James and John, three beloved disciples, felt it. We, too, may know that kind of friendship.

Someone long ago said that the best way to have friendship was to wrap it up in a person. Even though Jesus personal ministry on earth was brief, much of it was spent talking with individuals and making "friendships." There was Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night and the Samaritan women at the well were another. It was not only what Jesus did and said, but the confidence that he gave to those who coveted his presence and experienced true "friendship."

Someone near each of us "needs someone" today, a "friend." Though it may be a little neighborly deed, we can go to them in the spirit of the master, Our Lord. The returns of "Friendship" will be greater than we ever could imagine. Keep in your prayers the veterans that have protected our freedom so that we can continue to support one another through "friendships."

The Minnesota Legionnaire

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Al Zdon, Editor

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What's Happening

Military credit deadline

Those who served in 2010 have until Oct. 15 to take advantage of a refundable tax credit. The Credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone is expiring for that year. The average refund is \$650 and more than \$2.4 million has been claimed thus far. For more information go to the Minnesota Department of Revenue website: www.revenue.state.mn.us.

St. Cloud needs drivers

The St. Cloud VA Medical Center is seeking volunteer drivers for in and around the St. Cloud area. You do not need to be a veteran. Some drive one day a week and others drive once a month. Drivers do have to pass a physical exam and go through other procedures including a background check, TB test, and an orientation. For more information please call 320-255-6365 or email vhasstcvastaff@va.gov.

Above and Beyond

The documentary movie "Above and Beyond," which prominently features a Minnesota pilot, will have a premier showing at the Riverview Theater in Minneapolis on Sunday, Oct. 26, at 7:30 p.m. The movie is about the operations of the first Jewish fighter squadron in the war of independence in 1948. Leon Frankel, who earned a Navy Cross in World War II while flying torpedo bombers off the USS Yorktown, volunteered for 101 Squadron and flew 25 missions in the war. There will be a question and answer session after the movie featuring Frankel and Nancy Spielberg, the producer of the film. Spielberg is the sister of renowned director Stephen Spielberg. Tickets to the movie are \$12. A special reception with Spielberg and Frankel will be held with a cost of \$118. To order tickets, go to tcjfilmfest.org.

Remembering the Vets

Veterans from Vietnam, Korea and World War II will be remembered in a three-day event at Pepitos Parkway Theater in Minneapolis.

On Sunday, Nov. 9, at 2 p.m. there will be a salute to Vietnam veterans with the midwest premiere of the documentary "Beyond the Divide." Guest Vietnam speakers will follow. Tickets are \$5 and veterans are free.

On Monday, Nov. 10, at 6:30 p.m. there will be a salute to Korean War vets with guest speakers followed by the film "Pork Chop Hill" starring Gregory Peck. Admission is free.

On Tuesday, Nov. 11, at 6:30 p.m., there will be a salute to World War II veterans with veteran speakers followed by Frank Capra's film "Why We Fight." Admission is free.

For more information call 612-822-2104 or go to www.theparkwaytheater.com.

Legal Clinics

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans is sponsoring a series of legal clinics for veterans. Subjects will include housing, employment, benefits, debt collection, and family law.

On Thursday, Oct. 30, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., there will be a drop-in legal clinic at the Anoka County Government Center, 2100 Third Ave., Room 237.

On Thursday, Oct. 23, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., there will be a drop-in legal clinic at the Olmsted County Public Building in Rochester at 2100 Campus Dr. SE.

On Tuesday, Oct. 21, there will be a drop-in legal clinic at Fergus Falls from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the VFW Post 612, 420 East Washington Ave., Fergus Falls.

On Tuesday, Oct. 7, there will be a drop-in legal clinic at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center Flag Atrium Balcony Room 2S 114. The center is located at 1 Veterans Drive in Minneapolis. The clinic will go from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free parking.

Round Tables

The October meeting of the World War II History Round Table at Fort Snelling will feature "Building the Death Railroad," the bridge over the River Kwai. Author Kelly Crager, author of "Hell under the Rising Sun" will be the featured speaker with combat veterans who were POWs as speakers. The meeting is at 7 p.m. at historic Fort Snelling Visitors Center with a \$5 admission. The Scott Hosier Veterans Round Table in Rochester will

be meeting at a new place this year. The meetings will be at Autumn Ridge Church, 3611 Salem Road SW. The October 13, Monday, meeting will be "Korean War on Land and Sea" with Swede Anderson, Dick Fuller and Jerry Graf. The meetings start at 7 p.m. with a \$5 admission.

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Roundtable will meet on Monday, Oct. 27, with social hour at 5, dinner at 6, and program at 7 at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater. The subject will be the "Sibley Expedition of 1863" with Bill Lass as the speaker. For more information, call Steve Anderson at 715-386-1268.

Women Veterans Fall Tea

The Fall Tea, sponsored by the Minnesota Humanities Center and the Women Veterans Initiative, will be held Saturday, Oct. 11, from 2-5 p.m. at the Minnesota Humanities Center, 987 Ivy Ave. East, St. Paul.

The design of the new women veterans license plate will be unveiled, and the women who worked for its passage will speak. The Women Veteran of the Year award will be presented. For more information, call the Humanities Center.

Grand Opening

The grand opening for the Women's Imaging Suite will be held on Friday, Oct. 17, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. There will be a program at 11 and open house and tours will follow.

The event will be at the medical center at First Floor Radiology, Room 1Q-100.

Flu Shots Available

Both the Minneapolis and the St. Cloud VA Health Care Systems are offering clinics for flu shots with no cost to veterans.

No appointment is needed. The clinics are offered at the VA medical centers and at the CBOCs around the state. For more information, contact your local CBOC, the Minneapolis VA Medical Center or the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, 320-255-6444, to ask about a clinic near you.

Preserving Minnesota's History

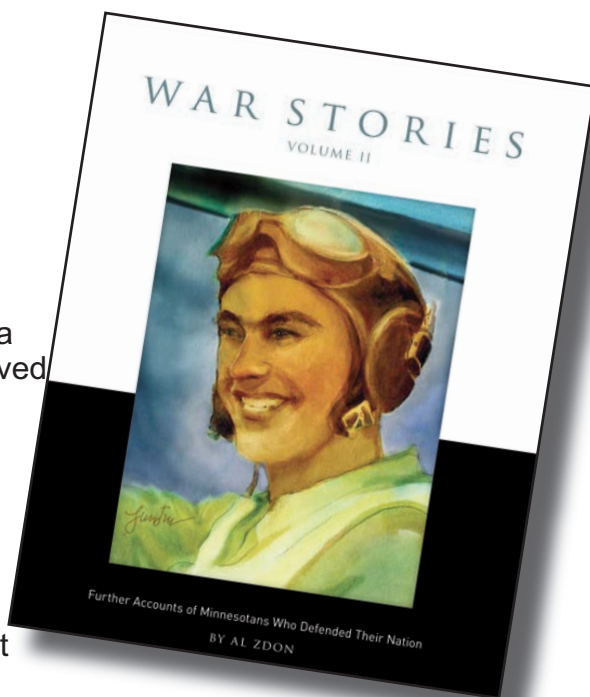
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Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By Tom Newman



During the 2014 American Legion National Convention, several learning sessions were available to attendees, to include various topics encompassing Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA/R). I attended several of these learning sessions and one in particular focused on the topic of skin cancers due to environmental exposure as supported by recent published studies. I found this a very applicable topic given the vast population of Veterans that such information would directly apply. I'll note that VA recommends a cancer related checkup, including a skin exam, every four years for those ages 20 to 40, and every year at 40 and older.

Here are a few of the informational highlights that have been discovered as affecting those who have been deployed to tropical or desert climates. In many cases it was identified that soldiers deployed to such climates are not being adequately protected from the most common cancer type according to a study recently presented at the World Congress on Cancers of the Skin in Edinburgh, Scotland. The World Congress was founded by the Skin Cancer Foundation and organized this year by the British Association of Dermatologists.

Skin cancer refers to a group of cancers predominantly caused by unprotected exposure to the sun, of which melanoma is the most dangerous. Melanoma claims 9,700 lives in the US each year. Previous research has shown that 34 percent of US military veterans who developed melanoma had also been deployed to tropical climates. In comparison, only six percent of non-military melanoma patients had spent time in tropical climates. This latest study, conducted by researchers from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, found that only 22 percent of military personnel were made very aware of the risks of sun exposure.

Furthermore, while 77 percent reported being exposed to bright sunlight for more than four hours a day, only 27 percent had regular access to sunscreen. Just under a third of respondents (32 percent) reported having no access to sunscreen at all. Consequently, a staggering 62 percent of military personnel reported getting sunburned while deployed abroad, including cases of skin blistering. 29 percent have noted a change in the color, shape or size of their moles (often a sign of skin cancer) since being deployed to tropical zones, however only four percent had received a skin examination from a physician since deployment.

"This study shows that the vast majority of soldiers who are facing a high risk of skin cancer are unaware of what to do to protect themselves," said Allan Harrington, MD, spokesperson for The Skin Cancer Foundation and former director of Skin Cancer Surgery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. "Since sun exposure causes the vast majority of skin cancer cases, it's imperative for our men and women in uniform to be armed with the tools they need to practice proper sun protection."

"The past decade of United States' combat missions, including operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, have occurred at more equatorial latitude than the mean average of the United States population, increasing the potential for ultraviolet irradiance and the development of skin cancer," said Jennifer Powers, Assistant Professor at Vanderbilt University and Head Researcher of this study. "This study demonstrates room for improvement for skin cancer prevention and early detection in the military population, including possible screening of higher risk personnel." - (Targeted News Service | Sep 04, 2014)

All may attend our upcoming VA/R learning session to be held on Thursday, October 23rd from 4-6 p.m. at the Shooting Star Casino & Conference Center in Mahanomen, MN. Our VA/R learning meeting will be held in conjunction with the Minnesota American Legion Dept. Fall Training Conference taking place from 23-25 October 2014. VA/R Meeting Room: (TBD).

newman@mnlegion.org

Legionville lists projects

Legionville School Safety Patrol Camp has announced a list of projects and approximate costs in order to finish the new learning center. The list includes:

1. Tape and mud all joints in the new building, \$8,000.
2. Sand all areas for painting, \$4,000.
3. Paint all areas, \$10,000
4. Install tile on floors of bathrooms, \$5,000.
5. Trim work around doors and windows, \$5,000.
6. Drop in ceiling in education area, \$10,000.
7. Finish cement floor, \$15,000.
8. Purchase and install cabinetry, \$10,000.
9. Equipment for catering kitchen, \$2,000.

Posts that are interested in sponsoring a project should contact Wayne Gilbertson, 763-458-4061.



EDUCATION CHAIRS -- Minnesota has both the national Education Committee chairs for the Legion and the Auxiliary this year. Marie Goede, Plainview, Auxiliary National Education Chairman and Mike Bredeck, Madison, is the Legion's Chairman of the Committee on Youth Education.



NALPA WINNER -- Ken Meyer, Pequot Lakes, won the National American Legion Press Association first place award for district newsletters for the Sixth District Legion Family Newsletter. He also won the award last year. Mike Duggan presented.



NALPA WINNER -- Carol Kottom, Buffalo, accepted the National American Legion Press Association Award for District newsletters for the 10th District ALA newsletter. NALPA's Mike Duggan presented.

Joe Mayne joins SAL Hall of Fame

Joe Mayne, Past National Commander of the Sons of the American Legion, from Minnesota, has been elected to the Sons of the American Legion Hall of Fame.

Mayne will be inducted in the Hall during a gala awards banquet slate for Nov. 15 in Pasadena, Calif.

Mayne has stayed active in Minnesota Legion activities, and has been a judge at the Oratorical Contest and a speaker at Legion events through the years.

Mayne was national commander in 1995.

Sons of The American Legion

By Dennis Henkemeyer



It seems that when a person is having a lot of fun, the time seems to fly by very quickly. That is what I am experiencing this year with my job as detachment commander. With the Sons of The American Legion here in Minnesota, we collect money, work our programs really hard and then we have fun.

Speaking of programs, by the time you get the current issue of the Legionnaire, the annual John Zgoda Memorial Deer Hunt for Disabled Veterans will be history. I want to thank all of the SAL members that took time out of their busy schedules to travel to Legionville and help out with this very worthwhile project. I know that the deer hunters truly enjoy being out in the woods and maybe even bagging a deer. Last year every hunter was able to shoot a deer and that really has to be rewarding for them.

As for raising money, I had the opportunity to travel to the Minneapolis Fisher House in Minneapolis and present our first donation to them. It was a check for \$5,000 which came from the Osseo American Legion Family. Since that time additional checks have been rolling in. If you would like to donate to this project, I would encourage you to bring your check to the Minnesota Department Fall Conference in Mahanomen. If you cannot make it to the Fall Conference, you can always send it to Detachment Adjutant Doug Bible at 5602 West Oakes Drive, St Cloud, MN 56303.

Since the SAL Fall Conference is just around the corner, I would like to encourage all members to attend this event as it truly is a training workshop. There is so much that you can bring back to your local squadrons. The conference will be held at the Shooting Star Event Center in Mahanomen, Minnesota. A questionnaire is being sent out to all the members of the executive committee. Because we have the grand march in the evening, as well as the open houses, we are hoping to change the starting time of the finance committee meeting to 2:00pm on Friday, 24 October and the executive committee meeting to 4:00pm on that same day. The general session will start promptly at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, 25 October.



\$5,000 DONATION -- SAL Commander Dennis Henkemeyer presented a donation to the Fisher House, his project for the year. The donation had come from Osseo Post.

Membership Chart As of September 24, 2014

| District | 2015 Goal | Total 2014 | Total 2015 | Percent of Goal | Same Date '13 |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1 | 9,976 | 9,918 | 6,565 | 65.81 | 6,812 |
| 2 | 8,110 | 8,026 | 5,377 | 66.42 | 5,585 |
| 3 | 12,486 | 12,421 | 8,479 | 67.91 | 8,738 |
| 4 | 2,554 | 2,530 | 1,742 | 68.21 | 1,830 |
| 5 | 2,959 | 2,936 | 1,950 | 65.56 | 2,085 |
| 6 | 12,698 | 12,627 | 8,327 | 65.58 | 8,611 |
| 7 | 7,245 | 7,167 | 4,687 | 64.49 | 4,835 |
| 8 | 4,768 | 4,727 | 3,034 | 63.63 | 3,253 |
| 9 | 7,443 | 7,378 | 4,810 | 64.62 | 5,006 |
| 10 | 11,243 | 11,189 | 7,458 | 66.33 | 7,660 |
| At-large | 2,340 | 2,338 | 1,744 | 55.22 | 1,556 |
| Totals | 81,822 | 81,257 | 54,163 | 65.55 | 55,971 |

Rally at Legionville

The new education center at Legionville was packed with Legionnaires, Auxiliary and SAL for the Harvest Rally in September.

And the harvest was good, putting Minnesota in first place nationally for membership at the time of the rally.

The Sixth District was the top finisher in the Legion district competition, while for the Auxiliary, the Fifth District topped the leaderboard. The Fourth District won the SAL competition.

The rally was held during the annual Camp-O-Ree.

"We have made all this progress," Commander Peggy Moon said, "and we are not one penny in debt."

Legionville is the commander's project this year, and she paid tribute to Camp Director Roy Kruger, Legionville President Wayne Gibertson, and longtime Legionville volunteer Jay Beebe.

Auxiliary President Chris Ronning said her project was for outdoor furniture and a grill for the adult day center at the Minneapolis Veterans Home and for the Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

SAL Commander Dennis Henkemeyer announced that the Apple Valley SAL had chipped in to purchase 17 more tables for the learning center. His project is the Fisher House.



Membership Director Pat Logan leads the 2014-15 membership team in "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" as the crew waited for everyone to assemble for a group picture. The new membership shirts, with a baseball theme, were distributed at the rally. Commander Peggy Moon joined in the singing.



NECman Ray DeZurik brought a special friend, Buddy, to the rally.



The Fourth and Fifth Districts held a parlay before the rally. They were sporting their new baseball jerseys.



Commander Peggy Moon believes in walking softly and carrying a big stick, or at least a big baseball bat.



Arnie Troe presents the "closest to the hole" golf contest winnings to Owen Carlson, the grandson of Jim Lucas.



Auxiliary membership chairman Judy Ackerman held a drawing while Department President Chris Ronning looked on.



The Legionville Camp-O-Ree went on all weekend, with districts gathering around their bonfires in the evening. Different districts and the SAL took turns in preparing meals with the profits going to the camp.



Department Vice Commander Glenn Mueller holds up the world's ugliest chicken, the prize the Fifth District took home for finishing last in the standings at the first rally. Membership Director Pat Logan actually presented a rubber version of the chicken to the district. Logan promised more animals in the future.

First to set foot in Japan

By Al Zdon

Lee Nordgren of Mankato, Minnesota, may have been one of the first Americans, who was not a prisoner of war, to set foot in Japan at the end of World War II.

Nordgren and his fellow pilots helped establish a U.S. airfield at Yokosaka, Japan, in late August, 1945 – a week before Japan's official surrender on Sept. 2.

He also flew his Hellcat fighter plane to Niigata, Japan, that week to make first contact with the prisoners of war held at Camp 5-B. It was his job to set the stage for a visit a day later by Commander Harold Stassen, who would officially free the prisoners.

It was the final act in a World War II Naval career that included a Navy Cross and over 100 carrier landings.

Lee Adolph Nordgren was born in Mankato in 1924, and he had an early interest in aviation.

"I was about seven or eight years old when I got to fly in a Ford Tri-Motor. In high school, I soloed before I got my driver's license."

Nordgren's interest came partly from his father, a World War I veteran who had been an aerial photographer. When the elder Nordgren came back from the war in 1919, he started a photo finishing operation that was a family business for the next 75 years.

Nordgren grew up as a Protestant in a Catholic neighborhood, which was a challenge in those days. "I remember one of the neighborhood kids told me, 'Lee, you're not going to heaven because you're not Catholic.'"

He enlisted in the Navy in October of 1942 when he turned 18. It was his intention to be a Naval Cadet and get into flight training. In fact, he had spent the summer training in Mankato with other aviation cadets. That fall, he attended Mankato State Teacher's College where he was a substitute on the football team.

He had not been a brilliant high school student, but in the aviation program, his real love in life, he shone.

Nordgren took his physical and was sworn in in Minneapolis. "During the physical they told us to bend over and spread your cheeks. I looked at the guy next to me and he had his hands on his face and was pulling his cheeks apart. I told him, 'No, I don't think they mean those cheeks.'"

He reported to Aviation Cadet School, called the V-5 program, in Mason City, Iowa, in February, 1943. "We stayed at the YMCA and we took our meals at the bus depot. Every day, we'd take a bus to the airport for classes.

"Because it was the winter time, the training planes were all equipped with skis. That was a little different for those of us who knew how to fly, because there were no brakes." The plane was an Aeronca, similar to the Piper Cub Nordgren had first soloed in.

The cadets wore Civilian Conservation Corps uniforms. "They were heavy wool, and that was good because it was cold outside."

At the completion of the program, Nordgren was sent home to wait until there was an opening in the Naval flight

program. "I was getting a little nervous after a while. I thought they had forgotten me."

Orders finally came to St. Mary's Catholic College near San Francisco. The Navy had turned the college into a school for pilots.

"When we showed up, my bunkmate was 26 years old and an accountant, and he had a little pot belly. I was assigned the bottom bunk and he had the top bunk, and it was a little tough for him to get into it. When the enlisted man came around we asked him if we could change bunks. He asked us which we had been assigned to and we told him. He said, 'That's the way it's going to be.'" Welcome to the Navy.

Each of the trainees was assigned to a sports group "to build a little intestinal fortitude." Nordgren was part of the boxing team. "You didn't volunteer for these things. Somehow I won my first few fights. My friend told me I was a dumbass. It was better to lose so you didn't have to fight the real boxers."

In the second to last fight, Nordgren scored an initial knockdown, but then got his clock cleaned. "But at the end of the fight, they held my hand up. They said I had won on points." It meant he got to fight for the group championship.

"This guy was the Northwest Golden Gloves champion from Seattle. My coach said I should box left handed, and it did seem to confuse him a little. I ended up just barely los-

Lee Nordgren of Mankato had already won a Navy Cross on a wayward mission a month earlier. This mission was even more interesting. He and another Hellcat pilot were ordered to fly to Niigata, Japan, to be the first Americans to liberate a large prisoner of war camp. The journey into the heartland of the Japanese empire came a few days before the war was officially over.



LEE NORDGREN
At home in Mankato



LEE NORDGREN
During World War II