



Legionnaire

Volume 96, Number 11

For God and Country

November 2014

Riders still dominate Department discussion

State's ALR asks DEC again for OK of constitution

For the third Department Executive Committee meeting in a row, the hot topic was the American Legion Riders.

In July, the DEC was made aware that it had never voted on the Riders' constitution which had been presented to the committee a couple of years ago. In August, the DEC decided not to approve the Riders' constitution because of liability issues brought forth by then Judge Advocate Don Walser and Adjutant Randy Tesdahl.

Neither were at the recent meeting in Mahnomen – Walser has retired and Tesdahl is out on sick leave – but the issue was still on the front burner.

Scuffy Paulson, a Legionnaire from Rushford Post 94 and president of the Department's Riders, gave the executive board a history lesson on the emergence of the Riders in recent years.

The origin of the Riders was in Michigan, and it quickly spread to other states including Minnesota. In 2010, the state's Riders began to work on a constitution in order to establish a statewide organization. The Riders are considered by The American Legion as a post program.

It took many meetings to get the Riders to agree on a constitution. "It was a big deal to get all of us on the same

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NATIONAL SPEAKER -- Assistant Director for Internal Affairs Bill Sloan spoke at the Fall Conference in Mahnomen. He said the Department of Minnesota would have to make its own decision on American Legion Riders state organization.

National's Sloan says it's a decision for the Department

If the Department of Minnesota was looking for an easy answer to its quandary over passing a constitution for the American Legion Riders in the state, it didn't get one from Bill Sloan.

Sloan was the featured speaker at the Fall Conference, and his subject was the Riders. Sloan is an assistant director of Internal Affairs in Indianapolis, and he is the resident expert on the The American Legion Riders.

While he provided nearly two hours of information on the Riders from his national perspective, he shied away from addressing Minnesota's problem specifically. "We must let the Riders and the Departments figure this out for themselves."

In Minnesota, the Riders have proposed a constitution, but the Department has not approved it mainly because of liability issues.

"I know you have fears about liability and other things, but you can work it out."

Sloan noted that he has not received calls for help from Minnesota in four or five years. "That's an indication of strong leadership in the Department and strong leadership in the Riders."

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Leading candidate Barnett welcomes his third career opportunity

Dale Barnett has had two careers and is about to embark on another.

Barnett, the leading candidate for National Commander, spoke at the Fall Conference in Mahnomen.

"I had no intention of having a career in the military," he said. "All I wanted to be was a high school teacher and coach."

But an appointment to West Point after high school changed all that. After graduation and commissioning in 1974, he began a 22-year career in the Army.

Although he didn't serve in Vietnam, he witnessed how veterans were treated when they came home from that war. "Shame on American society and shame on our history."

He said veterans since then owe a lot to the Vietnam veterans who made sure that the country has never treated returning soldiers and sailors in that way again.

Barnett served in the first Gulf War in mechanized infantry unit and earned a Bronze Star. He retired in 1996 as a lieutenant colonel and began his second career and first love: high school teaching.

Barnett applied to teach in a very tough school in Atlanta. "Now that was really a combat job."

When he applied for the job, he was asked why someone with no teaching experience would be qualified to teach in

such a challenging school. Barnett told of his Amy background. "And he recognized what a veteran can bring to the job force."

At the school he introduced both the Oratorical Contest and Boys State as opportunities for the youth. He coached various sports including cross country where his teams won regional titles. He was named teacher of the year in 2005-2006 at his high school.

He retired from teaching in 2011, and next year he will likely be elected the commander of the nation's largest veterans group. "I'm now embarking on the capstone run of my life."

He said his theme would be the famous Army motto: Duty, honor, country.

"All of us showed our duty by coming into the military service — and now by being members of The American Legion. We do so much to help veterans and their families."

Honor, he said, was often represented in the military by the uniform. "But now all we wear is our Legion cap. But people recognize the Legion and respect what we do."

And finally – country. "There's no country I'd rather live in than the United States of America, and I'm proud to say that." He said the Legion plays a key role in the nation as a promoter of patriotism.



LEADING CANDIDATE -- Georgia's Dale Barnett spoke at the Fall Conference.

Bucky Bacaner

Merchant Marine was just the first of his adventures

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Legion Day at 'U' hoops is Dec. 19

The annual Legion Family Day at the University of Minnesota Gopher Men's Basketball will be held Friday evening, Dec. 19, in a game vs. the University of Seattle.

Tickets will be \$20 for the event.

Prior to the game, The Department's official color guard from the Third District, will present the colors.

For more information or to order tickets contact Steve Walter, ticket sales executive, at the University. His phone is 612-626-1592. His email address is: walte607@umn.edu.

Legion basketball fans can also order tickets online. For the link, go to the Department of Minnesota website at mnlegion.org.

The Gophers, the winners of last year's National Invitational Tournament, are coached by second-year mentor Richard Pitino. They are expected to have another strong team this year with a blend of new recruits and players returning from the NIT championship team.

Riders back at DEC

Continued from Page 1

page," Paulson said.

In a 2012 DEC meeting the constitution was accepted, but never acted upon. Many of the Riders considered it a done deal, and Paulson said that then Department Commander Don Pankake indicated to the Riders that the constitution was in place.

But when Paulson went back at one point to get a copy of the constitution, he said he was told by the Department that it didn't exist.

Paulson reminded the DEC that the Minnesota Riders had raised \$87,000 this year for the Legacy Scholarship Fund, the most by any Department in the nation. "We do everything as volunteers. Everything we do is on our own dime. We don't want a penny."

Paulson reiterated that the constitution gave the Riders a state level organization that allowed them to have meetings and plan events.

Rick Oelschlager, the Riders liaison with the Department last year, addressed the liability issue which seems to be the sticking point. It had been brought up in August that recognizing the Riders at a state level could provide legal ties that could lead to lawsuits involving the Department. If it was a post program that would not happen.

At that meeting, Walsler also said the cost of insuring a Riders' run might be cost-prohibitive. Oelschlager disagreed. "That information was very erroneous. If it was not false, it was at least misleading."

He pointed out that every Rider has personal motorcycle insurance, plus, he said, it would only cost about \$150 to \$200 to insure a ride.

Past Fourth District Commander Bird Partridge said that if the Riders have the answers to the liability issues, then he had no problem with a state constitution.

Commander Peggy Moon noted that a half day was to be spent the following day at the Fall Conference with Bill Sloan, assistant director National's Internal Affairs division talking about the Riders. "We'll find out tomorrow if we can co-exist."

Paulson said again that the Riders are a post program, but are only seeking a constitution to coordinate statewide activities, such as runs and raffles. He said the lack of action on the constitution has left a "bad taste" with many Riders.

"They will leave you just as fast as they came," he said. "I beg you to reconsider our constitution."

Moon said again that the Riders are one of the Legion's most important programs in terms of fund raising, membership and visibility. In other business, the DEC:

-- Heard from Membership Director Pat Logan that Minnesota has been ranked first in the nation in membership for the past two months. Using the baseball theme for membership, he said, "Now we need to keep this going the entire nine innings and not just the first two innings." He said there would be a revitalization Dec. 2-5 for the 10th District in Osseo and volunteers were needed. He also said there would be "interleague" play between the 4th and 5th District in a membership challenge coming up.

-- Convention Corporation President Phil Bellefeuille said that a questionnaire is being distributed seeking information and thoughts on upcoming meetings. The questionnaire is on the home page of the Legion's website: mnlegion.org.

-- Was presented a fiscal year report by Treasurer Richard Horn. The Department finished the 2013-14 year with a net gain of \$32,333. Horn said the loss in membership dues was the biggest problem facing the Department, and that more income will have to come from revenue enhancement programs. For the coming year, the estimated revenue for the Department will be \$1.21 million and the estimated expense will be \$1.206 million.

Resolution 35 guides Legion Rider program

FROM RESOLUTION 35 AS VOTED ON BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION ON OCTOBER 17-18, 2007 AND AMENDED BY RESOLUTION 32 BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION ON MAY 4-5, 2011

All American Legion Rider groups must be a program supported by a Post or Department of The American Legion and shall uphold the declared principles of The American Legion as well as conform to and abide by the regulations and decisions of the Department, Post or other duly constituted Department governing body.

The following guidelines are recommended for The ALR program of The American Legion:

All members of The American Legion Riders shall be current members of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion

Each ALR member shall establish and maintain membership by owning, individually or through marriage, a motorcycle licensed and insured as required by state law

ALR programs may allow for continued membership for those members who have given up motorcycle ownership because of age, illness, injury, or other reasons outside the member's control

All ALR members shall strive to maintain the image of The American Legion, at all times upholding The American Legion name and emblem, which symbolizes the integrity and principles of this great organization

All The ALR groups shall avoid the perception of being a "motorcycle club" or biker club"

The only recognized The American Legion Rider logo is that which is copyrighted and sold through The American Legion National Emblem sales

All Members will obey the motorcycle laws of their state

No use of rockers with the ALR patch because touching the patch violates trademark laws of the ALR patch

Sponsoring organization (Post and Department) will review liability insurance coverage to ensure that adequate coverage is available to cover the organization to include coverage for any specific special riding events.

American Legion Rider groups shall abide by The American Legion Constitution and By-laws as well as the established Post and Department directives.

The American Legion National Headquarters and the respective Departments shall maintain general oversight of ALR Program as regards to proper use of the name and emblem of The American Legion, ALR and The American Legion Legacy Run, and compliance with the National Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion.

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Sloan

Continued from Page 1

He pointed to Resolution 35, first passed by the National Executive Committee in 2007, as the official stance on the Riders. It says, he noted, that Riders are "a program supported by a post or department."

Sloan pointed to the fact that all of the guidelines in Resolution 35 are recommendations and not requirements. "We didn't want to be too specific."

He said around the country issues have arisen about who can be a member, how big a motorcycle they must own, are volunteers okay, can you allow males spouses of female Riders, and what to do about Riders who are getting too old to ride.

All chapters, he said, must align with a post, much like the Sons of the American Legion. The Auxiliary is a completely different case, though, because they are a separate organization. If a post folds, the SAL and Riders must fold also, but an Auxiliary unit may continue.

In what may be a key element for Minnesota, Sloan said that across the nation, Riders are trending away from having constitutions, and, instead, are using "standard operating procedures" or other kinds statewide organizational documents that don't have the legal weight or legal problems of a constitution.

All Riders groups are expected to make monthly reports to the posts on finances and activities in order to satisfy the legal demands of trademark laws. The post, he said, maintains authority over the Riders and can remove officers, install officers, and approve bylaws. The post must be a signatory on all Rider chapter checks.

Insurance varies widely across the country, Sloan said. "I don't have much advice to give you. It's different in all 50 states." He recommended going to the agent who handles the post insurance and talking to him about Riders liability, and how to cover that liability and provide event coverage.

Sloan concluded by saying that at the beginning, many thought the Riders would be a "flash in the pan."

"A lot of people expected the Riders to fall on their face. But they've just been growing and growing and growing. A lot of people are getting more involved in Legion programs because of the Riders."

National Commander Candidate Dale Barnett, who was attending the conference, also had high praise for the Riders. "They have brought us out of the post home and into the community. They are very visible and have been a great success."

"I think this organization is much better because we have Legion Riders. They're here to stay."

Sloan also talked about the Legacy Scholarship Fund which was created to give scholarships to the children of military killed after 9-11. He said that the Riders have been so successful in raising money for the scholarship (currently about \$8 million) that there has been some talk of capping the fund.

He also noted that there is a federal program, the Fry Scholarship, that is very similar to the Legion Legacy Scholarship.

Sloan said the national Legion "is examining other ways we can help active duty personnel and their dependents." He said it would probably be years before that decision would be made.

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Endorsements

Milbrath endorsed for Vice Cdr.

John W. Milbrath was endorsed by Elysian Post 311 for the position of Department Vice Commander for the First District and Third District American Legion Department of Minnesota for the year 2015-2016.

Milbrath is a paid up for life member of The American Legion, a dual member of the Sons of the American Legion, a member of the VFW Post 1562 in Faribault and a member of the 40/8 of Voiture Locale 281 in Mankato.

At the county level, Milbrath is currently the County Commander for Le Sueur County Council, and served as a Vice

Commander for 2 years.

At his home Post, he is a Past Commander, a member of the Executive Board for 12 years, and a member of the Color Guard for 15 years. For the Post, he also served as Service Officer, Adjutant, 2nd Vice Commander, and 1st Vice Commander. Currently, he is the Post's Finance Officer.

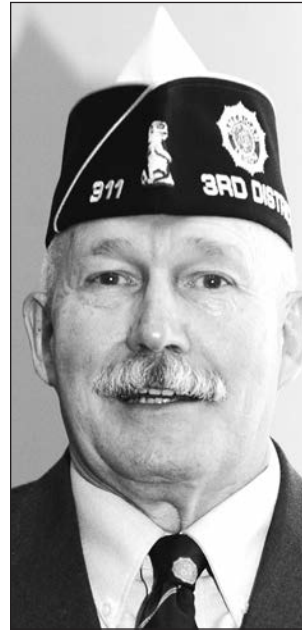
In the Third District, he was District Commander for 2010-2011, and served the District as a Vice Commander and as Membership Director. Currently, he is the Chairperson for the Children and Youth Committee.

At the Department he was appointed to serve on the Brain Science Foundation, and currently appointed to the Legionnaire Insurance Trust Program.

He served 3 years active duty in the Navy on the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk Aircraft Carrier CVA-63 from 1962-65.

Milbrath worked his way through Mankato State College and received a B.S. degree in Business Administration and a Minor in Sociology.

He has three children and two grandsons. His wife Rita is a member of the Auxiliary Unit at Post 311.



JOHN MILBRATH

Minneapolis VA accredited for pain rehab program

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International announced that the Minneapolis VA Health Care System's Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Program (CPRP) has been accredited for the maximum accreditation period of three years.

It is the only chronic pain program in Minnesota to be CARF accredited.

"This is an important acknowledgment from an independent organization that our Veterans are receiving high quality pain care," said Michael Armstrong, MD, Chief of the Minneapolis VA's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service.

The Minneapolis VA's CPRP began in early 2014, serving veterans throughout a six state area. To date, 12 veterans have successfully completed the program.

The program provides an intensive, interdisciplinary four-week outpatient treatment program for Veterans with chronic pain. The program focuses on improving the quality of life and functioning of the whole person – not just the site(s) of pain. This is done by addressing all of the factors that are impacted by chronic pain like complex physical functioning, mood, work, leisure/hobby activities, and relationships.

Working with a team of pain specialists (physicians, psychologists, pharmacists, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists and recreational therapists), participants join others with chronic pain to learn about and practice skills to achieve greater control over their pain and their life when a cure isn't possible.

Throughout the group-based program, various types of treatments and therapies are presented to help each participant improve self-management of their pain symptoms and return to a more active and fulfilling life.

CARF International is an independent, nonprofit accrediting body whose mission is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process and continuous improvement services that center on enhancing the lives of the persons served.

10th District seeks help for revitalization

The 10th district will be holding a District revitalization, December 2-5. Working with the National organization, the district will be contacting at-large members, form the national lists that have not been released to the Department, along with veterans who have never joined The American Legion.

The scope of the revitalization will be all of suburban Hennepin County, Anoka County, and the city of Otsego, in Wright County.

"We are looking for our fellow legionnaire's help, in staging this effort," said Membership Director Bill Johnson. "Our primary need is people who are willing to contact prospects, to be assigned to a local post in the area. You will need a cell phone and a charger. We will have prepared scripts for you to use.

"We also will need people to do correct contact, by either

dropping off literature, or talking to prospective member personally. If you are uncomfortable doing this, don't be afraid to volunteer. We will find a job for you."

Volunteers can also take back valuable information to show the other Districts in the Department how it is done.

"Talking to members of the 4th and 5th Districts, it went so well they plan to do another one in March," Johnson said.

If you would like to join in this effort, contact Bill Johnson at 763-424-2229, or by email Johnson at billdtm@yahoo.com. You can also mail him at: 10404 Yorktown LN, Maple Grove, MN 55369. Please include what dates and times you are available for Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Friday 8 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. There will be a training session on Tuesday afternoon, on Dec. 2.

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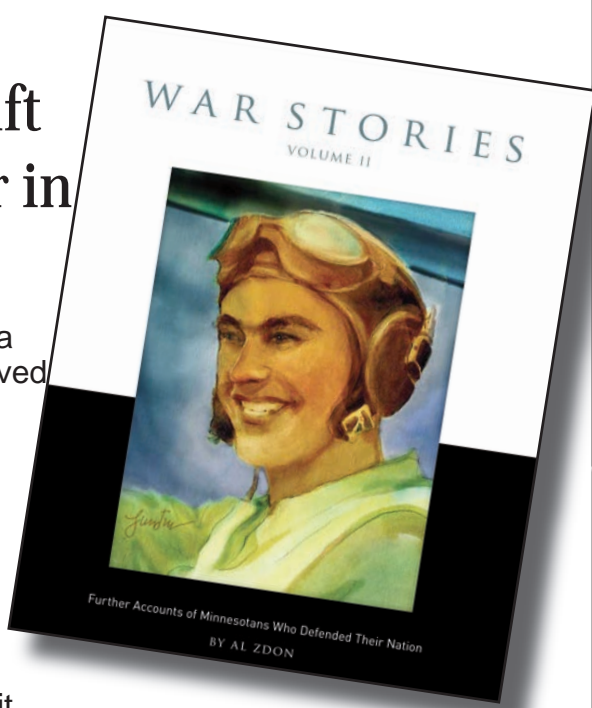
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COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Peggy Moon



Happy November. Time is sure going by fast.

We have all just returned from our 2014 American Legion Department of Minnesota Fall Conference, and what a wonderful turnout we had. Thank you, everyone, for taking time out of your busy schedules to attend this conference. I'm sure you learned a lot about all of our programs, and are as excited as I am to see them to fruition.

Thank you to Irvin Blix American Legion Post, Unit, and Squadron 16 for all the hard work and dedication you gave to deliver to us a very well run event. The registration went exceptionally smooth thanks to all of your volunteers. If I had any issues that cropped up along the way, Conference Chairman Denise Milton took care of them immediately. I couldn't have asked for more.

Our one snag in the entire event was that Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl and Department Service Officer Tom Newman were unable to join us. Unfortunately, Randy fell the week before, obviously trying to maneuver some type of fancy fishing experiment, and broke some ribs. We missed you, Randy, and hope you are starting to heal. Our prayers are with Peggy, who I know is by your side. Tom and his wife welcomed their daughter, Savannah, into the world, and he was needed at home. Congratulations, Tom, to you and your wife as you enjoy this new chapter in your life.

Jeremy Wolfsteller, our Assistant Department Service Officer, along with Al Zdon, our Communications Director, did a remarkable job filling in for both of you. They were constantly at my side throughout the conference, and I appreciated their support. It reinforced my admiration of our entire Department staff.

We were honored to have the leading candidate for

National Commander, 2015-2016, Dale Barnett of Georgia with us the entire time. He is a West Point graduate, and very involved in our American Legion Programs. He delivered a stirring speech Saturday morning, and we can rest assured that we will have great leadership next year.

We also had a very insightful presentation from Bill Sloan from our National Staff concerning The American Legion Riders. I believe he helped ease some concerns, and gave us some direction in how to proceed with this most valuable program. Thank you to all The American Legion Riders for attending this session. It was very impressive to see you all there and want to be a part of our future.

As I mention our future - this is November, and once again we return to the polls to elect our own political leadership. Please make sure you understand the issues concerning our troops, our veterans, our families, and our communities. Be active in your community, and offer assistance to those that may require transportation to the voting precincts. Also, thank you to all who volunteer to work at the polls assisting us in this process. I know it's a long day, and we appreciate your commitment.

During the first week of December, the 10th District will be conducting a revitalization, and are asking for our help. Please contact their Membership Director, Bill Johnson, for details. This is a great opportunity to learn how you can help your district grow as well.

For those of you that are keeping track of my mileage - I am now up to 11,023 miles. It's been a wonderful month of membership dinners, deer hunting experiences, another trip to Indianapolis, and many, many committee meetings. I've learned so much about our wonderful programs, and all the volunteer work it takes to institute them. However, on top of the mileage, I have also had to replace one of my tires. It seems we ran over a rebar in a parking lot, and the darn thing was completely unrepairable. One brand-spanking new tire is now ready for recycling. After a few hours at the dealership, I was back on the road. Let's pray that's the only thing that will need repair this next year.

I want to wish all of you a very happy Thanksgiving. This is probably my favorite holiday of the year. It's a time when we stop what we're doing, and count all the blessings we have in our life. I'm sure as you reflect over this last year, you will be able to be thankful for so many friendships and special occasions. Carl and I are especially excited about the birth of our sixth grandchild, a girl, who is expected about that time. She's actually due December 1, but our daughter has a tendency to deliver early. Oh well, more about that next month. Happy Thanksgiving, and enjoy each other.

Chaplain's Corner

By Steve Klinkner



Recently I attended the American Legion Chaplains Conference in Indianapolis. My wife and I toured the American Legion Headquarters and met The American Legion National Commander Mike Helm in his office. He shared information about the veteran memorial parks, monuments, museums and historical buildings near the Legion Headquarters that we could visit during our stay. There is endearing pride shown for our veterans.

The Chaplains Conference was very informative with 26 State Chaplains in attendance. The theme for this year is "For God and Country." The focus is getting "God and Country" back into our schools and communities. From my point of view, I think the politicians have forgotten "God and Country." They are advocating to remove "God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. Remember when we used to say the Pledge of Allegiance before we started school each day and before games? We the people of America have to speak up to our congressmen to remember where our daily freedom came from - "God and Country."

I read an article in an old 1990 Minnesota farm paper one day after I returned from Indianapolis and it read like this: Eight year old Jimmy was busy drawing a picture. His mother was looking over his shoulder and asked "Jimmy, what are you drawing?" "I am drawing a picture of God" responded the enthusiastic artist. "But nobody has ever seen God" his mother replied. "They will when I have finished!" exclaimed Jimmy.

What kind of a picture of God are you drawing? How big is our God? Is he still alive? One of our astronauts, flying far out in space, said that he could not help but believe in a great God, who, he believed, created and organized such an indescribable universe.

It is good, at times, to ask ourselves some questions, like is God really necessary in my life? We live in a day of self-sufficiency. Many have called it a materialistic age. We recognize and are grateful for the great discoveries of science. Man is a marvelous creature, but he has his limitations. Many of us have grown weary of those "God is dead" and "the Church has served its day" articles. Much of this that we have read has been coming from those who are not willing to pay the price of letting God really live in their lives. What do these messengers of a new way offer in the place of God and the faith that the Church has contributed through out the centuries?

In the rear window of a car I saw going to a Legion Department rally one day read "My God is alive, I'm sorry if yours is dead". He is alive for I saw him today at a church dinner where a little baby was sitting next to his mother, his God is alive.

I also received an article with a very good message from my friend, Don Amundson, former Department Chaplain. In 1954, The American Legion sponsored a series of network TV broadcasts called "Back to God." On one of those telecasts, President Dwight Eisenhower appeared from the White House and thanked The American Legion for urging Americans to acknowledge God in their daily lives. Then the President said, "As a former soldier, I am delighted that our Veterans are sponsoring a movement to increase our awareness of God in our daily lives. In battle, they (the veterans) learned a great truth, that there are no atheists in the foxholes." Can you imagine this happening today?

Mail Call

VA Staff dedication

To the Editor:

It was interesting to read the Legionnaire Editorial titled "Legion must also be supporter of VA" (October 2014) and its emphasis on the value of a caring VA staff in the provision of quality health care for Veterans.

In my travels throughout the U.S. visiting VA health care facilities as a member of the Legion's System Worth Saving Task Force, I found real dedication by VA staff in providing excellent and compassionate service to Veterans and their families. The competency of Physicians and other staff members is very high and each of the VA facilities is fully accredited by the national health care inspection teams from the Joint Commission and other national health care review bodies which also review private facilities. In addition, most VA Medical Centers are closely affiliated with a Medical School that watches carefully the quality of services provided by VA as a training ground for their physicians.

I believe the VA has some problems with access to the system as evidenced by the findings related to scheduling of Veterans for care. These problems are mostly related to the success of the system in delivering care that is respected and sought by Veterans. Since the mid 1990's, the veterans cared for in the VA System has risen from 3.5 million veterans cared for to almost 9 million today. If the system is so broken and poor in quality, why is there such a demand to receive care at VA facilities?

The question then arises, why do veterans seek care in the VA? Health care, perhaps more than any other business or industry is care delivered by people. The care deliverers must be highly qualified but also must be committed to proper and compassionate care of those who have honorably served this country. With very few exceptions, this is the case in the VA, and most veterans know it.

In addition to the qualified, committed staff at VA facilities, each medical facility has volunteers that support the caregivers and provide a very valuable service in so many different ways. Many of the volunteers are veterans themselves who have received care in VA facilities and want to help their comrades return to good health. Members of veteran's service organizations such as the Legion and its valuable Auxiliary members are heavily involved in helping as volunteers as are other community organizations and individuals. You don't often find this same connection and commitment to veterans in the private health care sector.

Lastly, but very important is the help one veteran patient gives to his or her fellow veteran patient. I have seen over

and over the veteran patient help another veteran patient in the dining hall, in the rehab clinic, in recreational activities and in numerous other ways. The veteran patient supports his/her fellow veteran patient as they did while in the military service itself. They rarely lose that comradery and desire to protect their fellow service member whether in combat or in a medical care setting. You will rarely find that same sense of support and caring of one veteran for another in a private facility.

Without going into a discussion of the many successes of the VA health care system in providing excellent care, it is still the people that make the system work. Staff, volunteers and the veteran patients themselves make it happen.

Tom Mullon Eagan

Just Doubletalk

To the Editor:

Re: Your editorial "Legion must also be a supporter of the VA."

The editorial is nothing but doubletalk. The truth always hurts. You should ask for a contribution from the VA.

The VA (people who work there) cover for each other and are doing a hell of a job doing so.

My word and theirs are completely different.

Robert Mellema Aitkin

Marine in jail

To the editor:

A Marine with at least two tours in Iraq is in jail in Mexico and where is The American Legion. We should be on every news media outlet complaining about the treatment of this Marine. Our Legionnaire Magazine should have been full of letters asking what the legion was going to do about this travesty. I have been a member of the Legion for 41 years and for the first time I am ashamed of the Legion. We write great stories about World War One, Two and Korea. Where are the stories about the Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan? Look around your post where are the young Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines? We worry about the way the VA is treating us. What about the way they are treating these young soldiers? A good way to start would be to start raising hell about this Young Marine being held in Mexico. Maybe if they thought we cared about them, they would join the Legion.

John Finnegan Wadena

Legionnaire

The Minnesota

Official Publication of and Owned Exclusively by The American Legion, Department of Minnesota

Al Zdon, Editor

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What's Happening

Remember the vets

Pepitos Parkway Theater will have a three-day event on Veterans Day weekend honoring three wars. On Sunday, Nov. 9, at 2 p.m. there will be a salute to Vietnam veterans with a showing of the documentary "Beyond the Divide." There will be speakers from the Vietnam era. Tickets are \$5.

On Monday, Nov. 10, at 6:30 p.m. the Korean War vets will be honored with a showing of Pork Chop Hill. Free Admission.

On Tuesday, Nov. 11, at 6:30 p.m. World War II veterans will be honored with war guests and a showing of "Why We Fight." Free admission. For more information, call 612-822-2104.

Camp LeJeune Eligibility

Veterans who served at Camp LeJeune for at least 30 days may be entitled to VA Care as "Category 6" veterans. The conditions eligible are similar to Agent Orange conditions. Family members may also be eligible for benefits. For more information, go to this link: www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/.

Festa Italiana Salute

Festa Italiana MN will salute veterans on Sunday, Nov. 9, from 2-6 p.m. at DeGideo's Restaurant and Bar in St. Paul. There will be a presentation on Minnesota Italians in the military. Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. There will be Italian buffet, silent auction, wall of wine, and a raffle for a USS Arizona flag. For more information, call 651-765-1813. Proceeds go to area charities.

Military Appreciation Dinner

The 6th annual Military Appreciation Dinner will be held Friday, Nov. 7, from 6-9 p.m. at Trinity Evangelical Free Church in Lakeville. The program will highlight Vietnam Vets. There will be dinner, entertainment and prizes for each veteran and one guest. Reservations are required: www.lakevilleyellowribbon.org.

Drop-in Legal Clinic

There will be a Drop-in Legal Clinic on Tuesday, Nov.

18, at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The clinic will feature housing, employment, benefits, expungement, debt collection, and family law. There will be attorneys and Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans staff. The Robins, Kaplan, Miller and Ceresi law firm is a sponsor. For more information, call Sara Sommarstrom at 651-224-0292.

Round Tables

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Round Table will meet on Nov. 24 and the subject will be "Bugling in the Civil War" with bugler Bill Crowder. The dinner meetings are held at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater. For more information, call Steve Anderson at 715-386-1268.

The Scott Hosier Veterans Round Table in Rochester will feature "German POW Camps at Algona, Owatonna and Whitewater," with Leon Swendsen, Gerry Ganfield, Earl Timm and Betty Peterson. The program will be on Monday, Nov. 10, at the Autumn Ridge Church in Rochester. Admission is \$5.

The World War II Round Table at Fort Snelling will meet on Thursday, Nov. 13, with the Harold C. Deutsch Lecture. Speaking will be Douglas Waller, author of "Wild Bill Donovan." He will present a profile of Donovan and a review of some of the OSS operations.

The program will be at 7 p.m. at the Fort Snelling History Center. Admission is \$5.

AFSC open house

The Armed Forces Service Center will have an open house and dedication ceremony on Monday, Nov. 10, from 10 a.m. until noon at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport in Lindbergh Terminal 1.

The program will be at 10:30 a.m. and will dedicate the MSP Airport Veterans Celebration Wall. Speakers will include Jeff Hamiel of the MSP Commission, Carl Madden of the AFSC and LTC Larry Walzer of the Marine Corps.

RSVP by Nov. 5 by calling 612-726-9156. Attire is business casual or service uniform. Parking has been arranged in short-term parking.

Veteran Photos Sought

Minnesota and Wisconsin communities with an Associated Bank outlet will be creating a display of veterans and active duty military personnel in uniform. The photos will be on display. The different branches in each state will be competing against each other for the best display, and \$2,500 will be awarded to the post in the city that wins.

Veterans Day in St. Cloud

The St. Cloud Metropolitan Veterans Council will help sponsor the 8th annual Veterans Day Parade on Sunday, Nov. 9. It will begin on the west side of the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, proceed across 44th Street and end at Apollo High School.

The parade will be at 1 p.m.

The council will also sponsor a Veterans Day Program at 1:30 p.m. on Nov. 11 in Building 8 (Auditorium) at the St. Cloud VA. Jeremy Wolfsteller, the Department of Minnesota Assistant Service Office, will provide the keynote address.

Veterans and the public are welcome.

Wolfsteller given Jaycee award for young Minnesotan

Jeremy Wolfsteller, the Assistant Department Service Officer for the Department of Minnesota, has been recognized with the Minnesota Jaycees Ten Outstanding Young Minnesotans Award.

Wolfsteller is a combat-wounded veteran who works with other veterans at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center.

He was presented his award at a recent meeting of the Hopkins City Council.

He qualifies as an entrant into the Ten Outstanding Young Americans award.

The award has been given out in Minnesota since 1951 and it recognizes the efforts of young adults who have contributed to our state through service, thought and influence, community involvement or entrepreneurship.

Those awarded the TYOM through the years include Walter Mondale, Dave Winfield, Tim Penny, Paul Douglas, Wheelock Whitney and Al Zdon.

Taps

Balfanz, William, 68, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 24, 2014. He served in the military for 26 years. He was a member of Champlin Post 600.

DeCeault, Joseph, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Oct. 12, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Proudfoot, William R., 88, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 9, 2014. He served in the Armed Guard, defending Allied merchant ships. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Minnick, Michael, 58, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 7, 2014. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Olson, Eugene, 84, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 23, 2014. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Maurer, Kenneth J., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 19, 2014. He served in the 82nd Airborne and made 15 jumps. He was a member of Rice Post 473.

Anderson, Loring, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 22, 2014. He served in France. He was a member of Princeton Post 216.

Jacobson, Henry, 89, Army veteran of World War II, died recently. He served in the infantry in the South Pacific. He was a member of Tyler Post 185.

Reker, Milo, 93, Merchant Marine veteran of World War II, died Oct. 4, 2014. He was a member of Round Lake Post 461.

Hanson, Harold L. "Stub," 102, Navy veteran of World War II, died Sept. 22, 2014. He was a member of Blue Earth Post 89.

Miller, Larry A., 60, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 21, 2014. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Beaver, Phillip, 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 17, 2014. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Peterson, Merlin S., 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 9, 2014. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Flicek, Ralph Roman, 88, Army veteran of World War II, died Oct. 4, 2014. He was a member of Lonsdale Post 586.

Moser, Robert Fred, 81, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 18, 2014. He was a member of Hayfield Post 330.

Severson, Calmer LuAllen, 79, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 28, 2014. He was a member of Hayfield Post 330.

McGraw, Rolland J., 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 29, 2014. He was a medic. He was post adjutant and finance officer for Franklin Post 308.

Higgins, Edward Jr., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 26, 2014. He was a member of Eyota Post 551.

Byrne, Donald, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died Sept. 10, 2014. He served in the Philippines and knew the future president of that nation, Ferdinand Marcos. He was a member of Millerville Post 527.

Miller, Merwin S., 87, Navy veteran of World War II, died Sept. 6, 2014. He was a member of Elysian Post 311.

Scheer, Verlin Harold, 65, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 29. He was a member of Wood Lake Post 556.

Staples, Kenneth Arthur, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 8, 2014. He was a member of Champlin Post 600.

Berghuis, William H., 100, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Sept. 25, 2014. He served in the 15th Air Force and flew 51 missions in Europe. He earned several Air Medals. He was a member of Edgerton Post 42.

Bressem, Richard, 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 22, 2014. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

Brekke, Raymond G., 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean War. He was a member of Faribault Post 43.

Korff, William D., 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Sept. 23, 2014. He was a chief petty officer and trained as a sonar man and to be an officer. He was a post commander of Faribault Post 43.

Shotwell, Peggy, 81, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 25, 2014. She was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Terwey, Erwin "Ike," 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 23, 2014. He was a member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Teich, Douglas Roy, 67, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 3, 2014. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

Lewis, Jim, 82, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 2, 2014. He served in the 440th Signal Company in the Fifth Air Force in Japan and Korea. He was a member of Hayfield Post 330.

Braun, Brad A., 61, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 15, 2014. He was membership director of Clear Lake Post 354.

Veterans 4 Veterans grants \$5,000 to Shop Ship and Share

At the October Minnesota Veterans 4 Veterans Trust Fund monthly meeting, a grant for \$5,000 was awarded to the American Legion Fourth District Department of Minnesota. It was approved by the eight member board of directors to support their "Shop, Ship, and Share" program.

The mission of the Shop, Ship and Share program is to bring a piece of home to the brave men and women serving in the battlefields across the world. It is felt that this program is extremely important, especially during the holidays when the stress of being deployed can be a fatal distraction.

The program sends donated items not readily available to our service members who will be spending the December holidays away from family and friends.

Further information on how you can help on this program can be obtained by contacting the American Legion 4th District Adjutant at mash@mpls.k12.mn.us or at http://www.mnlegion.org/html/state_info.htm

The Minnesota Veterans 4 Veterans (V4V) Trust Fund is a 501c(19) non-profit organization established as the result of the 2006 sale of Lake Minnetonka Big Island Disabled Veterans Camp. The non-profit organization has eight board members, two veterans each who are appointed by the DAV, VFW, MOPH, and American Legion. The board oversees the funds from the sale of the island to the City of Orono and has a grant application process on their website. Grants are made to organizations serving MN veterans in a way that conforms to the criteria the V4V has documented online at their website.....Website: mnv4v.org

District Commanders

FIRST DISTRICT

**Myron Ehrich
Commander**



Greetings from the Big Red First.

This month is Veteran Day's-Nov 11th. Let us honor those that have served, those that are in active duty at this time and the families of these dedicated veterans.

In observance of Veteran's Day, I will be attending the Triton Public School Veteran's Day program with other military veterans.

On September 27th, I had the privilege to go to Camp Ripley for the district commander outing. The weather was great and I had a good time with other district commanders.

In November, American Education week is observed. Let us say thank you to our wonderful teachers.

I can not forget the Marine Corp Birthday on Nov 10th. Happy Birthday to my fellow Marines.

As always, keep our Service Personal in your prayers. God Bless the USA.

SECOND DISTRICT

**Jennifer Kafka
Commander**



More than one a day. That is how many members of our active-duty military, National Guard and Reserve forces have committed suicide over the last year. Simply put, we are losing more service members by their own hands than we are by the enemies at hand. Only those who experienced firsthand the horrors of combat can understand why most of these young men and women feel compelled to take such drastic and permanent measures. As Veterans Day ceremonies and parades occur throughout the country, it is important that we commit ourselves to do everything possible to prevent these needless and tragic deaths. We are their friends, their family, their co-workers and their neighbors. It is up to us to ensure that every veteran feels that his or her service to this country is appreciated by their fellow Americans. There are many tangible ways that we can acknowledge their sacrifice, but the easiest is to simply say, "Thank you for what you have done for our country." If a veteran is showing signs of unhappiness or depression, encourage him to seek help through the VA immediately. If there is difficulty obtaining the benefits that veterans are entitled to, let them know that The American Legion has thousands of trained service officers nationwide that will help navigate the bureaucracy free of charge. And if that veteran has made the supreme sacrifice, remember the price that has been paid for our freedom and offer your support to the loved ones left behind. But Veterans Day is a time to honor not just those who have fought for us in battle, but, in fact, all of the outstanding men and women who served in our nation's Armed Forces since our founding more than 239 years ago. Not all veterans have seen war, but a common bond that they share is an oath in which they expressed their willingness to die defending this nation.

THIRD DISTRICT

**Duane Anderson
Commander**



Greetings from the Thundering 3rd.

Another busy month for the Commander of the 3rd District. Seems like the time to write another newsletter approaches way too rapidly. The days are getting much shorter rapidly and the colorful leaves are steadily falling to the ground with hints of colder days to come.

Last month I attended several membership meetings and or dinners throughout the district. These included Morrystown Post 149, New Prague Post 45, Lonsdale Post 586, Chaska Post 57 and Elysian Post 311.

The last week of September I was able to attend the annual organizational meeting of the National Security and Foreign Relations Committee held at Camp Ripley. This was an informative meeting that included getting a tour of Camp Ripley and being able to spend some time getting to know the other district commanders from around the state.

The 3rd District also organized and conducted the annual appreciation dinner to honor our County Veterans Service Officers and Post Service Officers. On October 6th, Vice Commander James Entinger held a membership rally at Silver Lake Post 141.

The rally was rather well attended but the training seminar that was to follow was canceled due to lack of participation. I will close by wishing all veterans a memorable Veterans Day and may you be able to participate with other Veterans and friends on a day set aside to honor you.

Embrace Change/Maintain Mission.

FIFTH DISTRICT

**Wayne Glanton
Commander**



Greetings from the Fighting Fifth.

Being the commander of the Fifth District has been very rewarding and busy. I looking forward to the rest of the year being very enjoyable. I went with the group on the VA hospital visitation on the first Sunday of the month. We had a group of 18 Legionnaires. We gave out needed supplies that they wanted. Our most popular item was playing cards.

Some of our group are getting ready to go to the Fall Conference slated to be in Mahanomen at the Shooting Star Casino sponsored by Bagley Post 16. This should be a enjoyable Conference.

This year the Commanders project is a recliner chair with wheels for the VA Hospital. The head nurse said that this is very much needed and will help them to move patients more easily. There's a new program to pay up for life with a \$100 discount. Check it out. It is a good deal for us. No more dues. For more information call 800-433-3318.

Now is the time to start planning your Christmas Program and New Year Party.

The American legion is for veterans, their family, and community. Keep up your good work. God bless The American Legion, America and our friends.

SIXTH DISTRICT

**Carl Moon
Commander**



On October 4th our District hosted the Annual 6th and 9th District Rally at Cross Lakes-Fifty Lakes Post. Ownership of the infamous "Leg" was at stake. For those of you who do not know about the "Leg" it is awarded to the District with the lowest percent membership turn-in for the week preceding the rally and is given to help motivate that District to "get a leg up" on membership. I was unable to attend the Rally, due to work, but our posts, my stand-in Vice Commander Dewayne Collins, and our Membership Director Jim Lucas, did an outstanding job. Needless to say "Thank You 9th District" for keeping that "thing" for another year. I also want to thank Mel Buesseler, Department Vice Commander for the 6th & 9th, for putting the Rally together.

The Department Fall Conference will have come and gone by the time you are reading this article. I have been looking forward to seeing everyone especially my fellow District Commanders. There should be lots of good information to take back to our District Posts and I want to encourage everyone in attendance to discuss the topics presented and get our members invigorated about our programs and get them involved. I know there will be issues that we all will not agree upon, but we must remember to do what is best for our fellow Veterans and our Organization.

Veteran's Day is fast approaching. Please keep our veterans, especially those on Active Duty and those who are Homeless, in your prayers. I want to wish those Posts having Veteran's Day Programs success and thank you for your continued service to our Veterans.

Commander Peggy and I also want to wish everyone a very happy Thanksgiving.

SEVENTH DISTRICT

**Victor Gades
Commander**



Greetings.

By the time you read this, you all should have participated in one of our greatest freedoms -- the right to vote in a free election, a right that our forefathers handed down to us and one that we have fought and died for. On Veterans Day let's not forget the sacrifices that many men and women have worked and sometimes given their lives for. November is the month that my home Post has its Post Everlasting Service during the regular meeting; it is one meeting that I hate to miss. Make a point to be present when your Post performs this ceremony. Those that have passed deserve your attendance.

As I attend other Post meetings and functions, it is amazing how the smaller Posts have such a large percentage of members involved in day to day operations of their Posts. They ask how many members at my larger Post attend meetings and are involved with Post activities. This question is asked many times and I have to say that many larger Posts have the same number of members at the meetings as the smaller Posts have. Here is where we need to improve at all Posts. We need to be involved and active. Let's get our organization out before the community. Let the people

know what we stand for -- how your Post and the Posts with Auxiliary Units and Sons Squads work together to make an impact on their communities with their activities. They certainly are proof that working together we can make a difference.

Membership at the District level is meeting the goal percentages. We still have posts that are lagging behind. Let's get out and get those members renewed and new members signed up.

Have a good Thanksgiving and pray for our troops that cannot be with their families.

EIGHTH DISTRICT

**Wilson Spence
Commander**



Greetings from the Great Arrowhead 8th District of the Minnesota American Legion.

The Eight District is very fortunate to have so many agencies helping veterans. There are two VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics; a Minnesota Veterans Home; one of three Vet Centers in Minnesota; a MACV center; and several highly qualified County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers. We would like the entire state to know the concern we have for our Nations veterans in this Eight District of The American Legion.

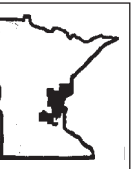
This month we go to the polls and cast our ballots for the people to lead our country by making laws that affect all of us. There is no one else who have earned the right to vote more than the veteran who has sworn an oath to defend and protect this great country. We veterans have earned the right and have an obligation to partake of that right. Veterans vote.

Opportunity for the members of the 8th District members exists. After the smoke clears and the legislators have been elected, get to know them. Speak to them about issues affecting veterans. One issue to be discussed affects veteran's funerals. The funding has been cut for active duty servicemen attending the funeral of a deceased veteran. The veterans of the 8th District will be directly affected. The dignity needed at a veteran's funeral is being hindered by the lack of funding. We need to talk to our legislators and have the budget reinstated.

Membership is a responsibility of each member all we have to do is ask. Membership in The American Legion is a power.

TENTH DISTRICT

**Tom Sanders
Commander**



Greetings American Legion Family.

As I write this month's article I want to tell the "Legion Family" that this month remembrance of all who served and all that have paid the ultimate price for our freedom will never be forgotten. Remembering our Veterans on Veterans Day comes special for me. My father served in Korea 1950 to 1952 and now rests with God. He like many other veterans never spoke about his experience while he served. It wouldn't be until years later that I would learn that my father had seen things that were not worth mentioning.

My Dad never showed signs of PTSD. He I think was very strong at heart and family kept him sane. We see some of our veterans coming back that are struggling with their experiences away from home. There are programs to help with these veterans and "Helping Paws" is the 10th Districts Family project this year and as projects go we need financial support from donations. I hope the "Blue Cappers" out there can help support our combined project and want to thank the ones that have already gave us support.

November 15th the 10th District will have a Rally hosted by the Monticello Post #260 at 2 p.m. I'm hoping for a huge "turnout and turn in" of membership and new rally goers. We our getting close to the end of the year and we know by past history it will be getting tougher to get those memberships in.

As I have in the past and will continue to do in the future I thank all you who have served or are still serving and are supporting our troops today. Caps off to you. For God and Country

Service members honored



SSG TODD TURNER



TSGT MICHAEL JOHNSON



MSGT BRYCE HANSON



CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT JAMES E. GIBSON
NS/FR featured speaker

The Department's National Security and Foreign Relations Committee presented its awards for outstanding Guard and Reserve service members at the Fall Conference.

- SSG John Angelo, Army National Guard, St. Paul.
- SSG Todd Turner Army National Guard, Sauk Centre.
- MSGT Bryce Hanson, Air National Guard, Glencoe.
- SGT Clay Rich, Marine Corps Reserve, Apple Valley.
- PS1 Jessica Mayberry, Naval Reserve, Rosemount.
- TSGT Michael Johnson, Air Force Reserve, Lakeville.

Notes from the Fall Conference

The 2014 Fall Conference was held at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen, sponsored by Bagley Post 16.

Conference highlights included:

-- Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Acting Deputy Brad Lindsey said that the state's \$50 reimbursement for military funerals has not changed. Federal funding has been cut back.

-- Assistant Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller gave a report on the Rehabilitation Committee. He said that the new \$1 million entryway into the Minneapolis VA Medical Center was complete. He said the money from the project did not come from patient care funds. An expansion of the center's emergency department is now underway.

-- Several Legionnaires described how they go about recruiting students for Boys State. Jim Copher, Mound, said the Boys State volunteers at the post need to go down to the school and meet the principal and counselors. Bert Marth, New Ulm, said it was important that seniors who had been to the Boys State talk to potential juniors. Larry Pocrnich, Hibbing, said it was important to start early, and that last year's Boys Staters can alleviate the concerns of the new boys. Ken Meyer of Pequot Lakes said they have a pizza party at the post for all applicants and their parents. Lee Tallackson of St. Louis Park said it wasn't unusual for the boys to pay their own way if the post runs out of funding.

-- Legionville Camp Manager Roy Kruger gave a history of Legionville through the years, and the construction of the new educational facility. He said the camp is forging a new partnership with AAA of Minnesota. He said the alumni programs, where students come back for a second year, were growing. It was announced that Bloomington Post was donating \$22,000 to Legionville.

-- Al Davis, Princeton, gave two reports on baseball. He said Legion baseball has excellent name recognition in the public

and provides a positive image to the public. He noted that with the high school baseball season expanding, the Legion season is now down to about 35 days. He also gave a report on this past year's Legion Baseball accomplishments.

-- Tess Davis, Princeton, described how to do an application for the Oratorical Contest. She said that home schoolers and Catholic schoolers were becoming an increasingly strong part of the program.

-- Public Relations Committee Member Jennifer Havlick, Two Harbors, stressed the importance of getting the word out. "If people don't know who we are and what we do, then it's on us." She described how to build a website. "It's better not to have a website than to have one that's never updated."

-- Phil Bellefeuille, Callaway, said bids were awarded to Marshall for the Fall Conference in 2016 and Willmar for the Fall Conference in 2017. Next year's convention will be in Redwood Falls, and the Fall Conference will be in Pequot Lakes.

-- Jerry Whitcomb, Kimball Post 261, was named the Legion's Volunteer of the Year.

-- Bob Stephenson of Founding Fathers Brewery gave an update on the agreement between the Legion and the beer company. He said it was important for Legionnaires to convince their bar managers to try the beer.

-- Buffalo Post 270 presented a check of \$10,000 for Legionville. It was the third installment of a \$30,000 pledge.

-- Bill Barbknecht, Underwood, said everyone should sign up for the LIT free AD&D policy. The phone number is 800-235-6943.

-- Membership Director Pat Logan said District 6 was in first place overall in membership, and District 2 was ahead in the Kaisersatt Derby.

-- Chief Master Sergeant James Gibson gave the Saturday military speech on the Air Guard in North Dakota and the use of drones.

Sons of The American Legion

By Dennis Henkemeyer



A letter has been distributed from National Adjutant Dan Wheeler advising about a new American Legion media campaign.

Ladies and Gentlemen, The American Legion is launching a national awareness campaign to raise funds to help our organization assist veterans, their families, young people and communities.

The first installment of that campaign will focus on the mental health needs of veterans, particularly those who are battling the signature wounds of today's war era: PTSD and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Because these messages will air nationally and before audiences that may be unfamiliar with The American Legion and its services, you may receive calls, visits and other correspondences from veterans in need, or their families.

If the request is routine, please handle as you usually would, as being a service organization.

If the need is urgent, refer the veteran or family member to a VA emergency support service, such as:

- Suicide prevention hotline: 800-273-8255, press 1.
- Texting service: 838255
- Online chat service:

www.VeteransCrisisLine.net

If a veteran comes to you or your post as a result of the message, please be welcoming and helpful.

Offer him or her the services of the nearest accredited American Legion service officer, who can easily be found online at www.legion.org/service-officers or connect the veteran to local resources through your post service officer or other members.

Please feel free to con-

tact Chuck Krupa, Managing Director of Non-Member Fundraising at 317-860-3030 or ckrupa@legion.org if you have any further questions. DANIEL S. WHEELER National Adjutant

As reported at the fall meetings, The American Legion is launching a national awareness campaign to raise funds to help our organization assist veterans, their families, young people and communities.

The first installment of that campaign will focus on the mental health needs of veterans, particularly those who are battling the signature wounds of today's war era: PTSD and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

The campaign will launch beginning on Tuesday of this week in various national networks and time slots.

Legion launches new media campaign

Membership Chart

As of Oct. 15, 2014

District	2015 Goal	Total 2014	Total 2015	Percent of Goal	Same Date '13
1	9,976	9,918	6,807	68.23	
2	8,110	8,026	5,543	68.47	
3	12,486	12,421	8,810	70.56	
4	2,554	2,530	1,786	69.93	
5	2,959	2,936	2,035	68.77	
6	12,698	12,627	8,944	70.44	
7	7,245	7,167	4,937	68.14	
8	4,768	4,727	3,192	66.95	
9	7,443	7,378	5,048	67.82	
10	11,243	11,189	7,845	69.78	
At-large	2,340	2,338	1,804	57.12	
Totals	81,822	81,257	56,571	65.55	

Later this week the Detachment of Minnesota will be conducting its annual Fall Conference in Mahanomen, Minnesota. I am really excited about getting together with my fellow SAL members, enjoying their friendship and learning more about this great organization of ours.

Something that I have learned over the last couple of years is that you are never too old to learn. Our detachment officers and committeemen are well qualified to talk about the programs of our organization and I am sure that each member will be able to take much of this information home and share it with their respective squadrons.

The annual John Zgoda Memorial Deer Hunt for Disabled Veterans was a huge success. Three of the four hunters bagged a deer and enjoyed a number of great meals. The weather on Friday was not for the weak hearted like the detachment commander, but we did have a number of SAL members and hunters that braved the weather and went into the woods that afternoon.

Thanks so much to co-chairmen Dave Vulcan, Bill Stein and Steve Bilderback. Plans are in the making for increasing the amount of hunters next year, subject to DNR approval.

The donations for the Minneapolis Fisher House are coming in very well at this time. Hopefully, we will see a lot of donations being made at the fall conference.

If you are not familiar with the Fisher House, please dig out your August issue of The American Legion Magazine. Matt Grills wrote a great article that I am sure that you would enjoy.

The membership program is going very well under the leadership of Detachment Membership Director Paul Spyhalski. Paul has laid out a program which is going to take us to an all time high in membership for 2015. I have no idea where he came up with the idea, but the program has a Navy theme.

Together, let's propel to the top!



V4V Board Member Marland Ronning presented a check for \$20,000 from V4V to the Auxiliary for the Gift Shop program. Marland's wife, Chris Ronning, Auxiliary president, thought the donation was going to be for \$10,000. Department Commander Peggy Moon helped out in the presentation.



Legionnaires filled the conference room at Shooting Star Casino.

Fall Conference at Mahnomon



The Big Three were introduced to the conference goers during the Grand March on Friday night. From left: President Chris Ronning, SAL Commander Dennis Henkemeyer, and Commander Peggy Moon.



Bloomington Post 550 presented a check for \$22,000 for Legionville, Commander Moon's project for the year. Presenting was Paul Hassing, a member of the post.



Scuffy Paulson of the Rushford Post 84, president of the American Legion Riders in Minnesota, made his case before the Department Executive Committee why the ALR's constitution should be approved.



Floyd Kumerow of Lambertson was named the SAL's Legionnaire of the Year. Presenting were Commanders Moon and Henkemeyer.



SAL Commander Dennis Henkemeyer addressed the Fall Conference at Mahnomon.



Buffalo presented a check for \$10,000 for Legionville, the third of three installments. Presenting for the post were Bruce Kottom and Bonnie Hanson.