



Legionnaire

Volume 96, Number 3

For God and Country

March 2014

Purple Heart Medal return was old fashioned detective story

By Al Zdon

It started as a detective story, and ended up as a tearful reunion between a family and a medal earned when a soldier died in Korea.

It all began when Mark and Kristen Kasper bought 27 acres of land in Otsego last year and decided to clean it up and build a new house on it. Cleaning it up was not an easy chore.

"There were all these out-buildings and sheds just filled with junk, boxes and more junk," Mark said. "We started emptying them out one by one."

The Kaspers filled dozens of dumpsters with junk. "The previous owner liked to go to auctions, and he'd buy these boxes of stuff for \$5. I don't think he

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George J. Johnson was only 17 when he was killed in action in Korea in 1950.

All women Spam Post 570 still only one of its kind



Jay Hormel poses with two women from Spam Post 570 in 1946 or 1947.

Gretchen Wangen, a Navy veteran of World War II, approached the writer from the Minnesota Legionnaire with a question.

"Do you know the difference between a WAVE and a WAC?"

"Sure," replied the reporter. "A WAVE served in the Navy and the WAC served in the Army."

"No, that's not right," said Gretchen, a kindly-looking 92-year-old grandmother. "A WAVE looks like this," moving her arm and fingers in a friendly wave. "And this is a WAC," she said, while whacking the writer across the chest.

"Have you always been this feisty?" said the writer, trying to recover his composure and

Continued on Page 14

Eden Prairie junior wins Oratorical Contest

Caroline Donaldson is following in her brother's footsteps, and that's okay with her.

Donaldson, 17, won the 2014 Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest held at Anoka. The junior home schooler from Eden Prairie bested six other district winners from around the state.

Two years ago, her brother, Jack, also won the contest. Jack went on to finish third in the National Oratorical Contest held in Indianapolis.



CAROLINE DONALDSON

"It's going to be quite an honor to represent Minnesota," she said. "I'm really looking forward to it. It's so exciting."

Donaldson's prepared topic was "The

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National Commander visits a dozen posts and over 800 Legionnaires on his tour

The temperature outside was rarely above zero, but the 12 posts National Commander Dan Dellinger visited across southern Minnesota in February all gave him a warm reception.

Dellinger traveled over 800 miles on the National Commander's Tour, accompanied by Department Commander Mike Ash and Department Membership Director Tom Fernlund.

"Politics has replaced patriotism in Washington, D.C.," Dellinger told the Legionnaires along the way. "The American Legion must stand strong. We must stand up to Congress and make sure our veterans are taken care of."

Dellinger, an Army veteran and a native of Virginia, said he was asked during the federal shutdown this past year if he blamed a certain political party. "I told them, I don't blame the left and I don't blame the right. I blame the House, the Senate and the President."

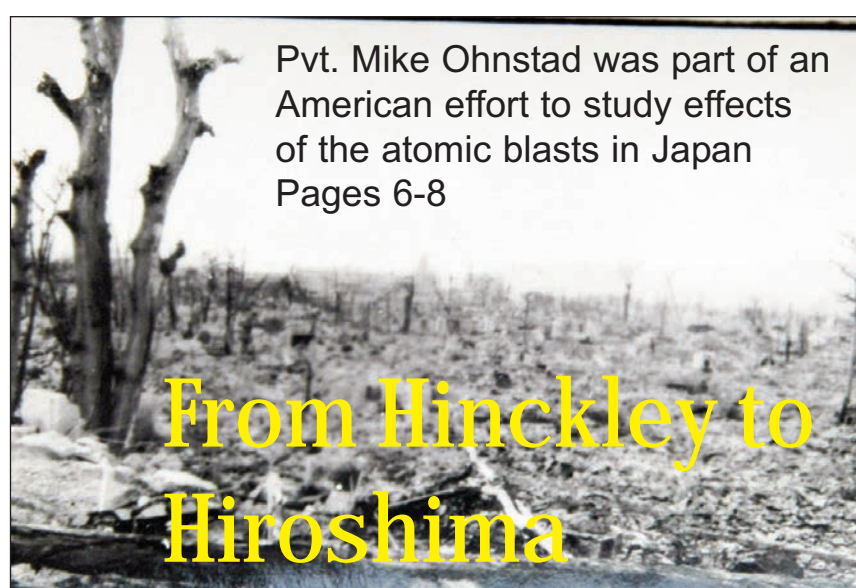
He pointed to the shutdown of the nation's memorials in Washington as an example of poor thinking. "First of all, there are no guards at those memorials in the first place. Then they had to rent the fences. Then they had to hire people to put up the fences. Then they had to hire guards to keep the people out. Does any of that make any sense?"

Dellinger said The American Legion has testified before Congress 39 times already this year, and it's important that

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TOURING MINNESOTA -- National Commander Dan Dellinger made a point at St. Peter.



Pvt. Mike Ohnstad was part of an American effort to study effects of the atomic blasts in Japan Pages 6-8

From Hinckley to Hiroshima

PNC Miller to speak at Ash Testimonial

Past National Commander Harold "Butch" Miller will be the keynote speaker at the Testimonial Dinner for Department Commander Mike Ash on Saturday, May 10.

Miller, who served as National Commander in 1998-99, is originally from Wabasha, Minnesota. He later moved to Virginia and

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PNC BUTCH MILLER



STATE WINNERS -- The four top finishers at the Minnesota American Legion Oratorical Contest posed at Anoka Post 102. From left: Department President Shirley Frederick, Nathaniel Larson, Minneapolis, fourth place; Aaron Evans, Sartell, second place; Kelly Erpelding, Kasson, third place; Caroline Donaldson, Eden Prairie, first place; Department Commander Mike Ash.

Donaldson wins Oratorical Contest

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Constitution: America's Grand Symphonic Score."

Comparing it to a great musical composition, she said, "The Constitution was penned over 200 years ago – rich and timeless enough to endure these centuries, yet flexible enough to adapt to the new ideas and circumstances of each era."

This past year, Donaldson has been attending Northwestern University in St. Paul as part of the post-secondary options plan. She will do the same next year and will most likely continue at Northwestern after high school.

"I have so many interests, I'm not sure of a major. Right now, I'd say music performance." Donaldson plays the harp.

She has been doing speaking from an early age. "My parents have always encouraged me in speech. They say you'll need to communicate your whole life."

She was involved in the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association national contests for several years, but now only does the Oratorical contest. "I got busy with other things at school."

Donaldson is the daughter of John and Lorinda Donaldson. She represented the 10th District and was sponsored by Wayzata Post 118.

"I like the energy and excitement of speaking. Good speakers are nervous, but they can overcome it. They can use it for their benefit."

She enjoys running and reading and the culinary arts. "I'm gluten intolerant, and so I have fun figuring out how to make bread or other dishes without gluten."

Donaldson says her favorite activity is spending time with her friends and family. She is the second oldest of 10

children. "We're all very active in music, athletics, dance and other things. We get along really well." The family attends Bethlehem Baptist in Lakeville.

Second in the contest was Aaron Evans, a senior home schooled, from Sartell. He was sponsored by Sartell Post 277 and the Sixth District and earned a \$1,000 scholarship.

Third was Kelly Erpelding, also a senior and also home schooled, from Kasson. She was sponsored by Kasson Post 333 and the First District and received a \$700 scholarship. Erpelding was last year's state champion.

And in fourth place was Nathaniel Larson, a junior at Southwest High School in Minneapolis. He was sponsored by Wold-Chamberlain Post 99 and the Fifth District and earned a \$500 scholarship.

Competing earlier in the day but not advancing to the finals were Mackenzie Bade, a senior at Lake Crystal Welcome High School, Second District and Lake Crystal Post 294; Auroura Eckberg, sophomore at Detroit Lakes High School, Ninth District and Detroit Lakes Post 15; and Josiah Green, senior at Litchfield High School, Seventh District and Litchfield Post 104.

Not able to make it because of the weather were Fourth District winner Anh Tuah Tong, a junior at Roseville High School, sponsored by Rosetown Memorial Post 542; and the Third District winner, Abigail Carter, a 10th grade home schooled from Hugo, sponsored by Hugo Post 620.

Donaldson was the winner of a \$1,500 scholarship. She will compete in the National Oratorical Contest at Indianapolis on April 4-7. She will automatically earn another \$1,500 scholarship for participating in the contest, and another \$1,500 for advancing past the first round. The champion will receive \$18,000.

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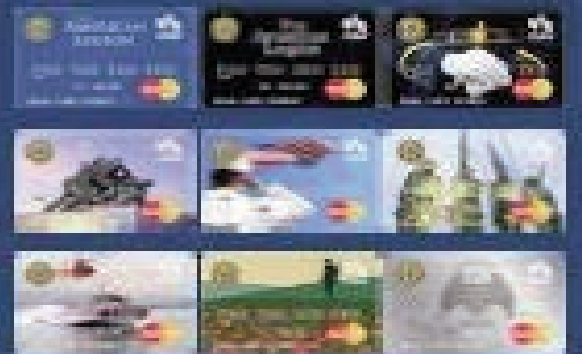
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ROLL 'EM -- Ninth District Commander Tom Norgaard, Department President Shirley Frederick, and SAL Commander John Affolter kicked off the tournament.



PAPERWORK -- Tournament Director John Torma logs in a team at the bowling tourney in Moorhead.

Bowling Tourney underway in Moorhead

The 67th annual Minnesota American Legion Bowling Tournament got underway Saturday, Feb. 22, in Moorhead at Sunset Lanes. The tourney is sponsored by Moorhead Post 21.

Over 1,000 bowlers and over 200 teams are expected to take part in the 2014 edition of the tourney.

The tournament will be held on weekends for the next several weeks until state champions are determined.

Ash Testimonial set for May 10

Continued from Page 1
was elected from there.

The testimonial will be held at the Rosetown Memorial Post 542 in Roseville.

The social will begin at 4 p.m. with the dinner at 6 and the program to follow. Al Zdon will be the emcee.

The event will be hosted by the commander's home post, Christie Deparcq Post 406 and the Fourth District.

Tickets are \$25 per person and can be obtained from Connie Anderson, 651-483-1597 or through her email: jimandconnie@msn.com.

The meal will include stuffed turkey, baby red potatoes with rosemary and garlic, Korean bulgogi with

sticky rice, salad, fresh long beans with water chesnuts and dessert.

The post is located at 700 W. County Road C.

Miller is still very active in The American Legion, and is one of the directors of Legion College each year. Ash is a graduate of Legion College.

Miller was mentored along the way by the late National Commander Dan Foley, who was also from Wabasha.

Ash was elected this past summer at the state convention at Mahanomen. His theme for the year is better communication, and his project is Legionville.

He is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force.



MIKE ASH

Legion supports Orange study

The American Legion has announced its support for extending Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits eligibility to veterans who were exposed to aircraft that had previously sprayed Agent Orange over Vietnam.

The Legion's support is based on a study published Feb. 21 in the scientific journal Environmental Research: "Post-Vietnam Military Herbicide Exposures in UC-123 Agent Orange Spray Aircraft." The study reports that environmental testing of such aircraft revealed traces of dioxin levels above Department of Defense (DoD) standards for maximum permissible exposure to poisonous chemicals.

U.S. Air Force and VA policies do not currently recognize "dried residues" of herbicide and dioxin as harmful.

CONCRETE WORK

by Tom Seemon

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Details: Trolling for the Troops

Date: Thursday/Friday, June 5-6, 2014

Headquarters: Camp Ripley, MN

Fishing Locations: Mille Lacs Lake and Mississippi River

To apply: mnlegion.org print the application form and send to Attn: Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl, The American Legion, 20 West 12th Street Rm 300A, St Paul, MN 55155, or you can email in **PDF Format Only** to rtesdahl@mnlegion.org. **Applications are due by April 15, 2014!** There is no application fee for the fourth annual Trolling for the Troops. It is important that your application reflect your current mailing address. A sponsor will select the participants. Those most recently deployed will have preference. Once selected, information as to billeting & meals will be mailed to you. Applications will also be available on the Camp Ripley Web site at:

http://www.minnesotanationalguard.org/camp_ripley/environment/

Fishing Application: (Limited to Minnesota Disabled Veterans & Soldiers)

Name _____ Rank: _____

Address _____

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Home # () _____ Cell # () _____

Email _____ D.O.B. _____

Emergency Contact _____ Phone # () _____

Relationship to Emergency Contact: _____

Briefly describe physical disabilities _____

Do you require the use of a WHEELCHAIR for independence: Yes _____ No _____

Please circle items used: WALKER CANE CRUTCHES other _____

Allergies (be specific) _____

WWII _____ Korea _____ Vietnam _____ Desert Storm _____ Afghanistan _____ Iraq _____

Shirt Size, Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ XLarge _____ XXLarge _____

For specific questions regarding the event please contact: Randy Tesdahl, The American Legion: 651-291-1800 or email rtesdahl@mnlegion.org Information regarding lodging and logistics will be sent out to the selected applicants.

Housing & meals will be provided by event sponsors.

By signing this application you hereby agree /allow for voice and photo release to promote the 2014 T4T event. Signature: _____

Agenda for June 5-6, 2014

June 5

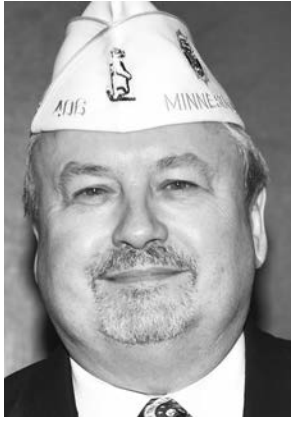
- 1500 - 1645 Registration -Team Meet and Greet @ Camp Ripley
- 1700 - 2100 Group Photo, evening dinner, door prizes

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Trolling for the Troops is open to disabled veterans or those who recently were deployed. They are teamed up with professional fishermen for a unique outdoor experience. Contact information is in the application above.

COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Mike Ash



The visit by National Commander Dan Dellinger was flawless. Every breakfast, lunch and dinner was very well-attended, the weather cooperated and all attendees showed that great trait of Minnesota Nice.

The Commander covered various topics at each stop - he hit on the necessity of keeping politicians from backing off on promises made while they are candidates.

This certainly applies as well to our local politicians - seems like when they visit our posts or other meetings, they are 200% veteran-friendly and willing to do whatever it takes to protect those rights we earned while wearing the uniform. However, a glance at some of those "I'm all for the veteran" legislator's voting records and you would think veterans don't even rate as second class citizens. Keep them honest and let them know you'll be watching if they get elected.

Commander Dellinger also spoke of the recently passed bipartisan budget, which included cutting military retirees under 62 Cost-of-Living Allowances (COLA) by 1% a year - which could amount to \$70,000 for the newest of retirees. Although a subsequent bill was passed and signed to remove this attempt to help balance the budget on the backs of veterans, what remains is that it will apply to those military members who join the service after January 1, 2014 - we will continue to fight for it total removal.

He also talked about the recent study concerning TBI/PTSD (Traumatic Brain Injury/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) released by the National organization called "The War Within" - he urged anyone with either of these maladies to get online to www.legion.org and take a short survey. The report was shared with the DOD and VA. A special thanks to Tom "Cornfield" Conway for accepting driv-

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By Tom Newman



I'd like to tell you about a significant piece of federal legislation which, if passed, could be among the most comprehensive in affecting Veteran benefits than any other ever passed over the past 40 years. One portion of the legislation I'm referring to is titled - "The Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014" (S.1950/S.1982).

Here's a good overview of the legislation which includes some additional insight as provided by The American Legion National Legislative Commission. Sen. Sanders chairs the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs and he's authored this particular legislation. Sanders participated in a terrific video where he can be seen describing this legislation. I've included this and several other web links below.

It should be noted that The American Legion supports passage of the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014. The bill contains 135 provisions (separate bills that have been combined into one vehicle). There are provisions that we support because we had something to do with writing them, and some provisions we aren't too crazy about. But the provisions that we wouldn't otherwise endorse, like the establishment of different studies and commissions, aren't egregious enough to be deal-breakers. The provisions we support are very powerful and many of them were written with our guidance and assistance. Some of the provisions (with section numbers) we are specifically interested in seeing enacted are:

201 - Require schools that participate in the GI Bill program to offer in-state tuition to veterans.

325 - Require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to report infectious disease outbreaks to local authorities.

327 - Improve rural healthcare access for veterans.

328 - Improve the VA telemedicine program.

331 - Support for alternative medicines at VA.

362 - Increased support for Sexual Trauma victims.

381 - Immediate authorization for the group of Community Based Outreach Clinics (CBOCs) that are currently unfunded due to Congressional Budget Office scoring conflicts.

401 - Extend the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP).

ing duties, Al "Award-winning Editor" Zdon, for navigating us through the highway abyss, Tom "MC" Fernlund, who did not miss a single introduction (and that wasn't easy hitting 12 different events in four days). The National Commander provided excellent guidance and his aide, Bob Renner, was the best of the best.

As I write this, the second revitalization (with the help of National) is about to take place at Richfield Post 435. This same help is available to any post that asks for it - we had great success in the 4th District, transferring over 100 holding-post members and new members into various 4th District (and surrounding districts') posts.

As stated by National: "What was once referred to as post revitalization has taken on a larger scope. American Legion national staff is now teaming up with department, district and post Legionnaires to engage in district revitalizations, targeting larger areas consisting of multiple Legion posts."

The National organization sends out letters to zip code areas selected by the district, and the district follows up by setting up a phone bank of volunteers who take a long weekend to call those individuals written (making it more of a follow-up and less of a cold call). Let's keep it growing.

Attending the Department Oratorical Contest provided some real insight. There were several figures about the low number of U.S. citizens who actually understand the constitution (or have read it) and the lack of teaching this most important document of our liberties by our schools. The contestants were very well-versed and made great presentations - and although all four presented on the same topic, they all applied their own special twists - it was truly inspiring. Public speaking is a common fear, but include the little "extras" such as maintaining eye contact, purposeful hand and body movements and keeping your voice at a constant without the help of a broadcasting system and you have some very special individuals.

And finally, an update on Legionville, my project for the year. The roughing-in of electric and plumbing continues in the new education building. It will be followed in March and April with sheet rocking and taping. In May, we will do paint and trim.

I hope to have some positive plans for a formal ribbon cutting and building dedication in early summer. Minnesota Military Radio would like to do a show from Legionville when we have the ribbon cutting. Keep an eye out for the latest happenings in the camp.

The American Legion recognizes that there is still much work to be done in many of these areas, and the bill still needs to pass the Senate, then the House. If signed into law, the Legion will start working closely with VA on implementation strategies. There will undoubtedly be a lot of controversy surrounding a bill of this magnitude, and one of the questions will be how this bill gets paid for. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. (who introduced S.1950) has suggested that money currently used to fund overseas deployment activities will no longer be needed as the United States withdraws from the Middle East, and that monies previously budgeted for can now be diverted toward caring for veterans. This is a controversial recommendation, and we are waiting until the Senate and House reconvene to see how that will ultimately play out. Finally - this bill addresses several high priority issues for The American Legion, like repealing the 1 percent retiree COLA provision, funding the stalled CBOCs for the VA, increasing access to health care for veterans at VA, employment and education fixes, and other programs that are important to us.

Sen. Sanders describes comprehensive Veteran legislation:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36BXXHnEzjM&feature=youtu.be>

Sen. Sanders Fights for Veterans and Military Retirees:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36BXXHnEzjM&feature=youtu.be>

tnewman@mnlegion.org

Mail Call

No-line bifocals

To the Editor:

I'm a member of the Minnesota American Legion and also I am fortunate to have access to the VA health system. I have been happy with the care until they started cutting the health care which I came to expect. Recently I received a letter telling me they will no longer provide no line lenses on new prescription lens. I couldn't believe it but figured, oh, that's the government for you. I had a eye problem and had to go to the VA in Orlando and I made a comment about no-line bifocals and, guess what, the Orlando operation still does offer them, and they told me if the Minneapolis VA is not, it is because they simply wanted to reduce cost and signed a contract with providers which is not beneficial to the veterans they work with.

Thanks VA for the care. I hope you get a nice raise for reducing cost.

Roger Lippold

Chaplain's Corner

By Richard Wog



Winter is starting to leave us and we can really say this was a hard winter. Not. I know for those who read this and if you are around my age, or older, maybe a little younger, you will or can say this is nothing like the old days. My parents were farmers and the winters seemed a lot harder back then. More snow, a lot more snow. Just as cold, but you still had to do the chores and go to school. Like my sons would say, "back in the olden days."

My father would hitch up the horses to a trailer, put my brother and I in the trailer and off we would go to our little country school. We would pick up the neighbor's kids on the way. We had fun and at the same time learned. Don't get me wrong, there were times we couldn't get to school, but we still found time to study under the watchful eye of our mother. Where am I going with this? When I was a young boy I enjoyed winter more than I do now. Not because of snow, but it is just so long ago. I love to think about the past. I also know one cannot dwell on it. One needs to look ahead, not too far, just enough. Question is, how far ahead? In today's world we are all so busy, we don't take the time. We are just too busy to think about just how good we had it. We need to slow down and enjoy what we have today and enjoy the love you give to your family; then think of the love you receive. It is like the love you have for your God and all the love you receive in return.

Easter will soon be here. Another sign of spring; but it is more than that. Lent starts March 5th. A lot of people give up things for those seven weeks. I think about what our God gave to each and every one of us. Why did God do this for each of us? Because our God is a loving and forgiving God. He had his only son to die for us and our sins. How does one receive this forgiveness? There are many ways, but I find it through prayer. Sunday in church I was thinking about prayer and what it is; what does it mean to pray unceasingly?

We wonder how it can be possible. Praying is actually the only thing we can do no matter where we are, what we are doing or who we are with. Just take some time to look back on your life and see how He has always been near. I know you veterans know what I'm talking about. He always helps through the good and the bad. This awareness will instill an attitude of joy and peace, knowing we are never out of His watchful care.

Joyfully share your life with its troubles and triumphs with your God to be certain that it will bring all things to their rightful conclusion. I read a quote about praying. The author is unknown and I'm not going to take credit for it, but it carries a lot of truth. "If you only pray when you're in trouble -- you're in trouble." I think what it is saying is to pray not just for yourself, but for others as well.

There are a lot of our men and women serving today, veterans and the families of those serving. Families left behind without their loved ones. Pray for them. Pray for our leaders, that someday we can live in peace and harmony.

Also pray and express your gratitude for what we have today, to not take it for granted. I want to leave you with this quote by C.S. Lewis, "Isn't it funny how day by day nothing changes, but when you look back everything is different."

For God and Country.

The Minnesota Legionnaire

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Al Zdon, Editor

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What's Happening

Richfield Bake Sale

There will be a bake sale, craft booths and merchant vendors on Sunday, April 27, at the Richfield Post 435 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be door prize drawings every hour. The post is located at 6501 Portland Avenue South in Richfield.

Veterans Day on the Hill

The annual Veterans Day on the Hill will be Monday, March 17, at the Rotunda of the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul. A session will be held in the Capitol and veterans can then visit their respective legislators. Times have not yet been set. The event is sponsored by the Commander's Task Force, the state CVSOs and others.

SAH Grants Available

Specially Adapted Housing grant program is available for veterans who have service-connected disabilities that affect their mobility. The SAH grants are available through the VA for modifying houses to create a barrier free environment. More information is available online at <http://benefits.va.gov>.

Pope County Expo

The Pope County Community Expo will be held Saturday, April 5, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Minnewaska Area High School in Glenwood. There will be displays from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, 9/11, and the war on terror. There will be a half-sized replica of the Vietnam Wall in Washington. Different seminars on community topics will be held throughout the day.

St. Paul Park Buffet

The St. Paul Park Post 98 Auxiliary Buffet Breakfast will be held on Sunday, March 2, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30. There will be eggs, sausage and bacon, two types of potatoes and more. Ages 11 and up, the cost is \$8. From four to 10, \$6. The post is at 328 Broadway Ave. in St. Paul Park.

New VA ID cards

The VA has announced a rollout of new secure Veteran Health Identification Cards. The new cards have additional

security features. New users of the VA will be the first to get the cards, and then in April the VA will attempt to get new cards to all card holders. More information is available at va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic.

Rochester Convention

This year's Department of Minnesota Convention for Legion and Auxiliary will be held at Rochester from July 17-19. Housing will be available at the Kahler Grand Hotel and the Kahler Inn and Suites. More information will be forthcoming in future Legionnaires.

No-Tap Tournament

The American Legion No-Tap Mixed Doubles Bowling Tournament will be held Friday and Saturday, March 21 and 22, at the Bemidji Bowl. Cost is \$35 per person and includes the bowling, a walleye dinner, and prizes. For a registration form, please contact 218-444-3821. The tourney is sponsored by Bemidji Post 14.

St. Cloud VA Home Care

The St. Cloud VA is expanding home-based primary care services for veterans in central Minnesota. A nurse practitioner is making house calls in the Glencoe and Willmar areas. For more information, contact your local county veterans service officer.

Insurance for IRR vets

Service members who have been recently assigned to the Individual Ready Reserves should know that their Servicemembers Group Life Insurance coverage will end in 120 days. Other insurance is available through Veterans Group Life Insurance. Please go to benefits.va.gov/insurance/apply-for-VGLI.asp.

History Theater Productions

"Lonely Soldiers: Women at War in Iraq" will be featured at the Minnesota History Theater in St. Paul. It will be shown concurrent with Tim O'Brien's "The Things They Carried." Group and individual tickets are available. The plays will be performed from March 16 to April 6. For more information, call 651-292-4320.

Family Rally

The next membership rally will be the Family Appreciation Rally at Richfield Post 435 on Saturday, March 8. Turn in will be from 3-4:30 p.m. with a plated dinner at 5 with the program to follow. The rally will be preceded by a Department Executive Committee meeting at 1 p.m.

Round Tables for March

The Rochester Veterans Round Table will feature "The International Red Cross" with Melanie Tschida, Gail Vukov, Barbara Boyer and the Canteen Radio Theater. Refreshments are courtesy of the Red Cross. The program is at 7 at the Rochester Assembly of God Church with a \$5 donation.

The Fort Snelling History Round Table will have two programs in March. On March 13, "Operation Cobra, the Breakout from Normandy" will be held. The featured speaker will be Jim Carafano, author of After D-Day. There will also be combat veterans from the battle.

On March 27, "The War in China, The Overlooked Struggle in Asia" will be held featuring Al Lathrop, Ted Farmer and John McLaughlin and veterans of the theater. Programs begin at 7 p.m. at the Fort Snelling History Center. Admission is \$5, free for students.

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Round Table will feature "Northern vs. Southern Armaments" with Bernie and Bruce Paulson. The dinner meeting will be held at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater. For more information, call Steve Anderson, at 715-386-1268.

Trolling for the Troops

The annual Trolling for the Troops event will be held Thursday and Friday, June 5-6, at Camp Ripley. Fishing will be done at Lake Mille Lacs and the Mississippi River.

Those eligible are disabled veterans and recently deployed soldiers. They will be matched with fishing professionals on their boats. An application form is available on Page 3 of this issue of the Legionnaire, or by going to mnlegion.org. The Facebook address is facebook.com/trollingforthetroops.

Taps

Smith, Dr. Vernon D., 96, veteran of three branches of service in World War II, died Jan. 29, 2014. He was a member of Hopkins Post 320.

Prodger, James A., 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 6, 2014. He was a gunnery instructor on the USS Wyoming. He was a past commander of Rosetown Memorial Post 542.

Baker, Walter R. Jr., 90, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 15, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Norine, Reuben, 90, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Feb. 8, 2014. He served in the Fifth Air Force including time with the occupation forces on Hokkaido Island in Japan. He was a member of Litchfield Post 104.

Dietz, Mike I.W., 87, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 5, 2014. He served in the European campaign. He was a member of Hamel Post 394.

Bolstad, Richard Carver, 87, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb. 5, 2014. He served on Underwater Demolition Team 26 on the USS Ranier (AE5) and LST 1140. He was radioman third class. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Chopski, Joseph "Jerry," 89, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 1, 2014. He was a member of Austin Post 91 and served on the funeral escort.

Brown, Max E., 82, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 6, 2014. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Pesch, Lyle, 81, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 27, 2014. He was a member of Minneota Post 199.

Johnson, Norman, 67, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 27, 2014. He was a member of Minneota Post 199.

McRea, Willmert, 92, Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died Jan. 4, 2014. He served in the South Pacific. He was a past commander of Blue Earth Post 89 and a past county commander.

Grobel, Lloyd W., 77, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 26, 2014. He was a member of the Chanhassen Post 580.

Makowsky, William A., 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 19, 2014. He was a member of Silver Lake Post 141.

Cheesman, William, 95, Army and National Guard veteran of World War II, died Feb. 4, 2014. He served in Tunisia, Naples and the Po Valley. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Bruns, Dick R., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 4, 2014. He was a member of Walnut Grove Post

267.

Nadeau, Roy Anthony, 78, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 17, 2014. He spent 37 years in the Army Reserve and was a sergeant major. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

Swanke, William, 97, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Jan. 25, 2014. He served in the China-Burma-India Theater. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

Kretsch, Melvin "Abie," 93, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 22, 2014. He served in the 87th Mountain Regiment in North Africa and Italy and earned a Bronze Star. He was a member of Wabasso Post 263.

Hart, Homer Harry, Jr., 86, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 30, 2014. He was a member of Keewatin Post 452.

Vieregge, Russell E., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 25, 2014. He was a member of Windom Post 206.

Christensen, Philip Arthur, 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 20, 2014. He served in Alaska. He was a member of Windom Post 206.

Bjogan, Oraine Eugene "Ole," 83, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 30, 2014. He served in Texas, England and California. He was a member of Pine Island Post 184.

Sorensen, Floyd Dale, 86, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 4, 2014. He was a member of Hayfield Post 52.

Schutt, Jerry E., 67, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 24, 2014. He was a member of Pine Island Post 184.

Kuns, Richard, 78, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 10, 2014. He was a past commander of Hackensack Post 202.

Pearson, Allan E., 86, Air Force veteran of World War II, died Jan. 21, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Janke, Roger, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 19, 2014. He was a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne. He was a member of Brownton Post 143.

Klein, Jon William, 65, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 10, 2014. He served in Vietnam. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Hassell, Reuben D., 90, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Jan. 16, 2014. He was a member of Staples Post 70.

Surerus, Milton E., 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 17, 2014. He was a member of Raymond Post 420.

Bjerken, Gordon, 80, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 27, 2014. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Fenske, Harold A., 87, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 8, 2014. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Mammenga, Donald, 73, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 12, 2014. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Davidson, William C., 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 14, 2014. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Rosenbloom, Noah S., 89, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 15, 2014. He served in the Naval Reserve. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Pagel, Delbert H., 87, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 20, 2014. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Havemeier, Willis, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 5, 2014. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Marti, Kenneth, 68, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 30, 2014. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Grothem, Juel, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 9, 2014. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Gedde, Raymond W., 89, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 8, 2014. He was a member of Pillager Post 100.

Obituary policy

Obituaries of members of the Legion Family will be published in the Minnesota Legionnaire in a monthly column under the heading "Taps."

Obituaries must be recent, within the last two months prior to the publication of the new edition of the Legionnaire. For example, the February edition would only contain obituaries from January and December.

While the obituaries are brief, the Legionnaire does seek certain information for our readers:

1. Complete name of deceased.
2. Age at death.
3. Branch of service and war or wars the veteran served in.
4. Exact date of death.
5. Additional information about the veteran's service background including unit, type of service, place of service, medals, etc.
6. The post, unit or squadron the deceased belonged to.
7. Additional information about Legion service including officer posts held.

The Legionnaire reserves the right to edit all obituaries for style and brevity.

From Hinckley to Hiroshima

By Al Zdon

When America dropped the two atomic bombs on Japan in August 1945, it was the first time — and so far the last time — such a terrible weapon had been used.

In a matter of seconds, between 90,000 and 160,000 people were killed in Hiroshima.

Both the U.S. and the Japanese wanted to know what the effect of the bomb was at ground zero. Radiation was little understood at the time. In particular, they wanted to know how the most destructive weapon ever conceived affected the people who lived in and near Hiroshima.

And so, in September, 1945, only weeks after the bomb was dropped, a team of American and Japanese doctors was sent to ground zero to do scientific research on the survivors.

For nearly four months, they labored in a bombed-damaged hospital right in the devastated city.

As the project began, people were needed to help the doctors. In Yokohama, a 19-year-old soldier who had never seen combat was plucked from the headquarters staff. It was probably because his service jacket showed he had learned shorthand and other clerical skills in high school.

On Sept. 2, 1945, orders were cut to send one Private Michas Ohnstad, a native of Hinckley, Minnesota, to temporary duty in Hiroshima to serve with the Joint Commission for the Investigation of the Effects of the Atomic Bombs.



Mike Ohnstad grew up on a farm outside of Hinckley. “Everybody was a farmer in those days, that’s how you survived. Everyone was poor, and most of us didn’t realize it.”

Born in 1926, he first attended a one-room school house about three miles from his home. “There were no buses. You got to where you were going by your feet. And it was just like the old joke: It was uphill both directions.”

After seven grades at the schoolhouse, Ohnstad moved on to Hinckley High School, and after eighth grade, he was able to take a bus. “There was no football or sports or band for me. Country kids went home after school.” He graduated from Hinckley High School in 1944.

Ohnstad’s mother was a first-generation Swedish immigrant and his father was a second-generation Norwegian settler. They attended, when they could, the Lutheran Church at Cloverdale.

Meanwhile, World War II was raging in Europe and in the Pacific. “It wasn’t as easy to follow the news in those days. Mainly, you paid attention to announcements that another Hinckley lad was killed. Hinckley and Pine County suffered a lot of casualties.”

He knew at some point he would be part of that war. “All of us at that age knew we would be drafted. I didn’t anticipate it with eagerness or regret. I just knew the time would come. Nobody liked to go to war, but everybody knew they had to do their share, and they did.”

In January of 1945, eight months after graduation, Ohnstad received his greetings from Uncle Sam. “They gave me an option of the Marines, the Army or the Navy. It blew my mind. I didn’t know I had an option. But I was pretty ambivalent about it, and I just went with the Army. Later I wished I’d joined the Marines.”

Ohnstad reported to Fort Snelling and was sent to Jefferson Barracks in Missouri for assignment, and then to Fort Knox, Kentucky, for basic training. By the middle of May, he was ready to join the war effort. “It was a time of great turmoil. Roosevelt had died, and the whole country was going through a big transition.”

By July, he was on a troop ship headed out into the Pacific. It took 21 days to reach the Philippines. “We zig-zagged all the way across the ocean.”

After arriving in Manila, he was sent to join the 43rd Infantry Division in a field artillery battalion on Luzon.

“The Philippine campaign was over with, and the leadership was sorting out what to do. We were told in the field that the next move would be to invade Japan. We were regrouping for what was next.

“They told us that if we did invade Japan, there would be a million casualties. Then what happened on Aug. 6th and 9th turned all that around.”

What happened was the use of the world’s first two atomic bombs, first at Hiroshima and three days later at Nagasaki. “Our initial reaction was generalized relief. We wouldn’t have to invade Japan. Our hope was that the war would end. But until Japan surrendered, who knew what would happen.”

On August 14, western Pacific time, Japan did in fact surrender. “I don’t know anyone who wasn’t relieved.” It was also Ohnstad’s 19th birthday.

Days later, Ohnstad was on a troop ship to Japan. He was now assigned to the First Cavalry Division, and was on temporary duty to MacArthur’s headquarters. The ship docked at Yokohama.

On Sept. 2, Ohnstad and a sergeant were sent on temporary duty to Hiroshima. “I don’t know why I was picked, unless it was because I had studied shorthand and office procedures in high school.”

The two were flown from Yokohama to Hiroshima. “I think it was a C-46. I know we had a Jeep on board, and we had plenty of D-rations. I was just along for the ride. Looking back, you might think I knew what was going on, but I knew nothing.”

The plane first landed at the wrong field. “The airstrip was too short for a takeoff, but we took off anyway. Every one of us lads was down on the floorboard of the plane hanging on.”

The transport finally landed in the right place, and Ohnstad found he was assigned to one of three American military groups which were assembling to determine the medical and other results of the atomic bomb. There were also two Japanese groups studying the effects. Ohnstad recalls that the military group was being called the Atomic Bomb Commission.

On Oct. 12, General MacArthur combined all the groups

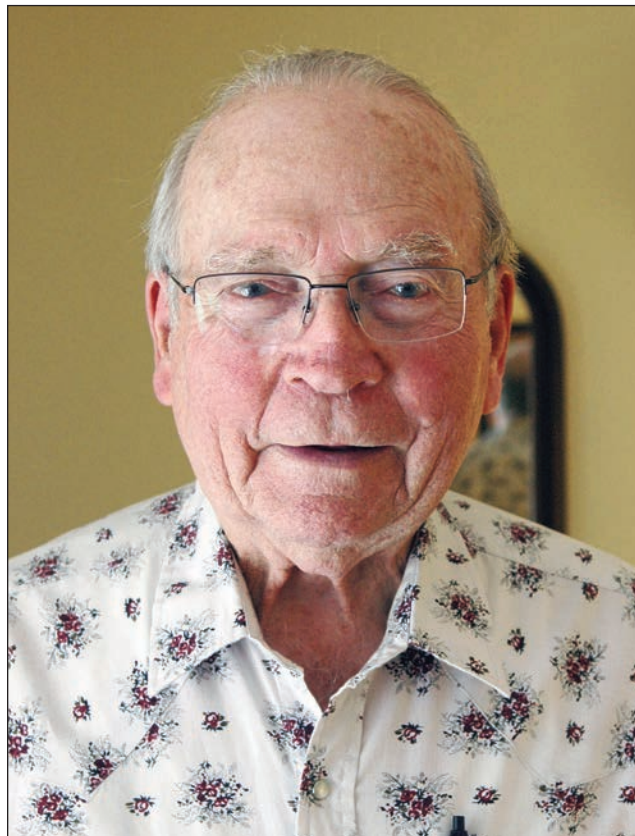
Michas Ohnstad had no idea when he was drafted in 1945 that he would soon be working with the first U.S. medical team to investigate the effects of the atomic bomb on the people of Japan.



into the Joint Commission.

Ohnstad found he was an assistant to the American and Japanese doctors and nurses who were studying the effects of the blast. “We ate, slept and worked on site. Our group was off limits to any other American or Allied service people.”

The group was supported by the two GIs, by a small group of Japanese nurses, and by two cooks, who had recently been serving as soldiers in the Japanese army.



MICHAS OHNSTAD
At home in North Branch



MICHAS OHNSTAD
As a private in World War II

“One of the cooks had lost his wife and two daughters in the war. He was an army sergeant and a combat veteran, but there wasn’t one ounce of hostility towards us. There’s a mystery in the human personality. There was no animosity with the Japanese people. They were a captured people. They had surrendered, and now they were moving on with life.”

The scene at Hiroshima was staggering. “It was total devastation, and way beyond what I imagined it would look like. They told us nothing would grow there for a hundred years, but here and there the grass was greening up again. Life was trying to start again.”

Looking back, Ohnstad said that written records sometimes indicate the Joint Commission people were able to determine the amount of radiation they were experiencing. “It’s just not true. We had no dosimeters. None of us. We had no idea about the radiation.”

They did know that radiation was dangerous. “There was an absolute uncertainty about what it was or what it did. But you’d have to be pretty dull not to pick up that it was dangerous. That didn’t make us heroes. This was just another wartime mission. We knew there was a risk factor.”

The group lived and worked at Ujina Hospital. “A doctor and I did medical evaluations. They did autopsies on the deceased civilians. It was my job to take notes on what the doctors were finding. I was also involved with interviewing the Japanese survivors.

“I remember one Japanese lady came in and she seemed pretty normal. But then she took off her head scarf, and I could see that her hair was just starting to grow back out again. It was just like a cancer patient who’s had radiation.”

“You could also see the effects of the blast on people’s clothing. Certain colors were more damaged than others. We didn’t understand why.”

“And, of course, some of the patients died. Conditions were very primitive.”

Ohnstad said the American and Japanese doctors worked well together. “I would listen to their conversations. They would determine who was going to do the autopsy. It was a learning process of working together.”

The doctors kept sections of body parts so that the effects of the blast, the heat and the radiation could be studied. “The burns depended on the proximity of the person to the blast. But all of them had some radiation consequences.”

The American doctors and the Japanese doctors were all leaders in their fields and came from major universities. Doctor Averill Liebow from Yale University was one of the top lung specialists in the world, and later had a disease named after him. Doctors came from Duke, Cornell, the University of Texas, the University of Southern California and others.

Dr. Tsuzuki Masao, on the Japanese team, was that nation’s leading expert on radiation.

“There was a high professional level on both sides, scientists you might say.”

As Ohnstad talks about those days in Hiroshima, his voice begins to tremble.

“It wasn’t a job. I was doing what I had to do. As I look back, it was part of the history of the human family. It was too intense for a 19-year-old lad to experience – to see the damage of war at its worst.

“I never looked for divine intervention, I had my faith. I was just doing what soldiers have to do. In my case, it was carrying body parts around.”

Ohnstad worked at it for over three months, taking notes, doing questionnaires with survivors, carrying human organs around for the doctors to examine. Just after the first of the year, the team’s work came to a close.

The Joint Commission would be replaced in a few months by the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, an agency that would study the effect of the bomb on people for many years.

Ohnstad was sent back to MacArthur’s headquarters staff in Tokyo. His job was somewhat less dramatic than studying the effects of the atomic bomb. He spent his days spraying Japanese civilians with DDT to kill the lice that were rampant in Japan following the surrender.

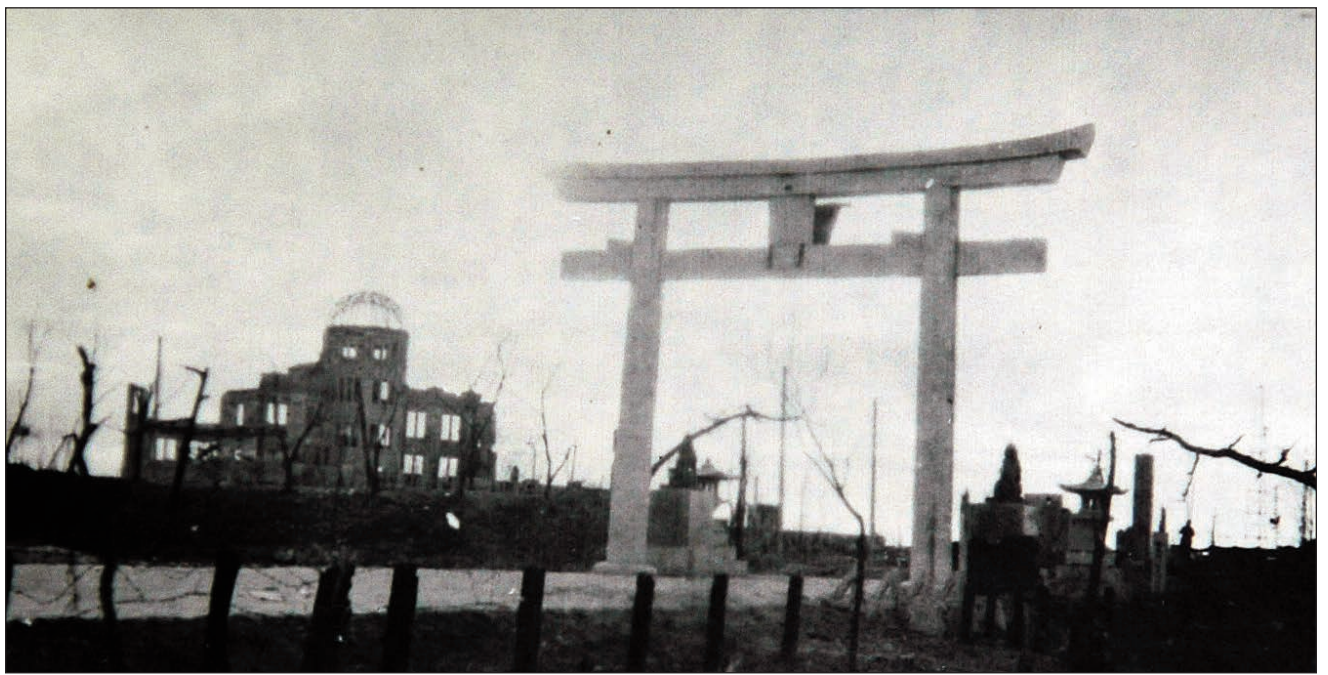
“We didn’t do it to protect the Japanese, we did it to protect our troops from typhus. But the Japanese would line up in long lines to get sprayed. Of course, nobody knew much about DDT in those days except it would kill the lice.”

Later, Ohnstad starting doing more clerical type work in the Dai-Ichi Building in downtown Tokyo, where MacArthur ruled the occupied nation.

“I would see MacArthur almost every day, although we never talked. I think I might have said good morning to him. I could kick myself for never having tried to get his autograph.”

Ohnstad knows that MacArthur’s career had its ups and downs, but at that time in Tokyo, he was greatly respected by both sides. “I was just a 19-year-old, and I was impressed in every respect. The Japanese people also admired him. For one thing he was punctual to the minute. The people would know when he was coming out of the building, and they would wait until he came out, and then bow in respect to him until he got in his car.”

“He was the conqueror, but the Japanese people loved him.



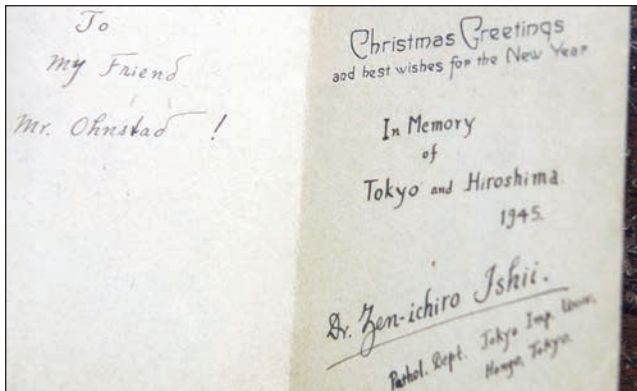
The Genbaku Dome, at rear left, later the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, was photographed by Ohnstad in 1945. The dome was near the epicenter of the bomb that was dropped on Aug. 6, 1945.



Two Japanese soldiers, Okabe and Oonishi, were the cooks for the Joint Commission. Okabe’s wife and two daughters were killed by the atomic bomb.



Japanese Red Cross nurses supported the Joint Commission at Hiroshima. From left: Miss Touruka, Miss Nishimura, Miss Ada, and Miss Moki.



Ohnstad received a Christmas card from one of the Japanese doctors working on the project. It is signed: Dr. Zen-ichiro Ishii, Pathology Department, Tokyo Imperial University.



A small cup that Ohnstad salvaged from the ruins is still in his possession. The cup shows the burns and blistering from the bomb.

30 Sep 45

AG 220.453 AGPD

SUBJECT: Order.

TO : EM concerned, Hq 1st Cav Div, APO 201.

Fol-named EM, now on TDY Advance Ech, GHQ AFPAC, APO 500, WP Hiroshima and Nagasaki and such other places adjacent thereto as may be necessary on further TDY for the purpose of carrying out instructions. Upon compl this TDY, EM will return Advance Ech, GHQ AFPAC, APO 500. EM are auth tvl between Hiroshima and Nagasaki at such times as may be necessary in the accomplishment of their mission. EM will report to COL A. W. CUMTERSON for dy. Tvl by mil acft is dir for accomplishment of an emerg war mission. Rail, Govt mtr and water transportation auth. Transportation Corps will furnish necessary transportation. TDN. Alws of 50 pounds personal baggage auth each EM while traveling by air. Per diem auth EM while traveling by acft in accordance with Sec I, AR 35-4810, 19 Apr 45. 65-*** P432-02 A 212/60425.

S Sgt Hial D. Huffaker 39196806
Pvt Michas Ohnstad 37782972

By command of General MacARTHUR:

"It was a massive occupation, but the way we did it was a tribute to MacArthur and a tribute to the United States. We came as a conquering nation, but we didn't treat them like a conquered people. We respected the people. MacArthur was a gentle man."

Later, in Korea, MacArthur was relieved of command when he disagreed with President Truman about how to pursue the war. MacArthur wanted to aggressively attack the North Koreans and Chinese, while the president was seeking peace.

"History may have proved his point," Ohnstad said. "We're not done with Korea yet. McArthur had a brilliant mind, and people need to read his biography."

By January, 1947, Ohnstad had enough points to be sent home. He had spent two years and 11 days in the Army, most of it in Japan.

He returned to Minnesota and earned several degrees including a bachelor's in pre-seminary training at an Illinois college. He then went into seminary training at Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Paul. He was ordained in 1956.

He traveled to Halifax to do mission development, and then took a pastoral position at St. John's Lutheran Church in Stacy. He studied in Sweden, and became a chaplain at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

From 1978 to 1988, he was the American Legion Department Rehabilitation Director. He served on the board of the Minnesota Veterans Homes. In 1990-91 he was named American Legion National Chaplain by National Commander Bob Turner.

"The Legion was a big part of my life, and I support what the Legion does."

Ohnstad also served in the Minnesota Legislature for one term. He and his wife, Alma, have been married for 45 years, and they live in North Branch.

Looking back at those days in Hiroshima, Ohnstad said he has been surprised that almost all the historical records on line only indicate an American presence beginning in 1946. "We were there first, and we were the only ones there at that time. We evaluated the consequences on the civilian population of Hiroshima. That story isn't being told. Those were the hero doctors. They were the historic doctors."



Ohnstad purchased cameras in Japan and took these photographs of the destruction himself.



A river winds its way through the devastation.



The dome is reflected by a river or canal.

Sons of The American Legion

By
John W. Affolter



I attended 10 of the 12 stops The American Legion National Commander made: Pipestone, Granite Falls, Redwood Falls, Olivia, St. Peter, Chanhassen, Elk River, Minneapolis 1, North Branch, and Rosetown. I was impressed with the SAL turnout at these stops and their activities. Feb 14, I attended the Valentine's Day visit with the patients of the St Cloud VA hospital (Detachment VC 4/5 Bruce Kuiper represented the SAL at the Mpls VA); Then Feb 15 the re-scheduled 7th District mid-winter at Browns Valley Squadron 58 and On Feb. 22th the 67th Annual Minnesota State American Legion Family Bowling Tournament at Sunset Lanes in Moorhead. I'm glad to travel where needed to represent the Sons of the American Legion.

Our Detachment (state) Spring Conference is March 14-15 at Eagle Lake Squadron 617 - 100 N 3rd St. Eagle Lake, hosted by Waseca Squadron 228. (Registration \$10 at the door). SAL National Vice Commander (Central) Randy Eicher of Ohio is planning to be in attendance. Please make plans on attending. Friday evening Finance (7 p.m.) and Executive (8 p.m.) Committees meet with full Detachment at 9 a.m. on Saturday. Also, for Friday evening, the squadron will have hamburger and fish baskets available, not a fish fry. Contact www.ronwolff5@gmail.com to let him know the number of attendees from your squadron and for info. Also, remember to have your officers and committee reports in to Douglas Bible saladjmn@gmail.com by March 7. A number of hotels in Mankato are available (Please ask for the state SAL Conference rate) Quality Inn 507-388-5107 \$80.00; Holiday Inn Express 507-388-1880 \$89/99; Fairfield Inn 507-386-1220 \$129; Country Inn and Suites 507-388-8555 \$125. Please consider hosting a future Spring Conference. We need bids for 2015+.

I encourage all Legionnaires and others eligible to be a "son" to join us. We hope to exceed 11,000 members for 2014 (we ended 2013 with 10,756). We are currently have 8,609 as of Feb 18 at 80.039% in 11th place nationally, 2nd in the 1st place central region (Mar 12 goal is 80%). Send in your memberships now or bring to the Mar 8 membership rally at Richfield & Spring Conference especially reach out to our 3,000+ un-renewed last year's members.

Legionville is my Commanders Project. Use the Brick Paver program to contribute if you can, otherwise any contribution will be accepted.

Please pass this on to those who may not receive the Legionnaire. Visit our website <http://mnsal.org> hosted by our webmaster Allen Amundson often for updated info on all SAL activities. We can have fun and get the job done!

Entries sought for 2015 Legion calendar

The sixth annual Minnesota American Legion Photo Calendar Contest is now underway.

Again this year, the contest will call for photographs that veterans shot while they were in the service.

Entries will be due by July 1, and the 12 winners will have their photo printed in the annual state Legion calendar. There will also be cash prizes for the photos judged to be the top three winners.

Top prize will be \$250, second prize will be \$150 and third prize will be \$100.

The winning photograph will be on the cover of the calendar.

There is no restriction on the type of photo that is submitted. It can be a group shot, a scenery shot, a view of everyday life, or even an action/combat photo. Entrants can submit up to three photos.

Please do not send originals. Scan or reprint the photos before submitting. Photos will not be returned.

Resolution on photos submitted electronically should be at least 200 dpi.

Here are the rules:

1. All photos must have been taken while the veteran was serving in the Armed Forces. Family members can submit photos from an immediate family member, as long as the person submitting is a current member of the Legion, Auxiliary or Sons of the American Legion. For instance, a Legion Family member can submit a photo taken by a

grandfather in World War I.

2. Photos may be entered by mailing them to the Department: Room 300A, 20 West 12th Street, St. Paul, MN 55155. Or emailing to azdon@mnlegion.org. Again, do not send original photographs. Photos will not be returned. Please mark the outside of the envelope or the subject line as "Photo Contest."

3. Entries will be judged not only on the unique quality and interest in the photo, but also by its technical merit.

4. All entries must be postmarked by June 30, 2014, or have been emailed by July 1, 2014.

5. All photos must be original and copyright free and be available to be printed in the calendar without legal encumbrance.

6. All entries must contain as much relevant data as possible, such as who, what, where and when. If there's a story that goes with the photo, please send it along.

7. Photographs may be from any war era.

8. The limit per person is three photographs.

9. Those submitting must include their name, which Legion organization they belong to, their Legion, Auxiliary or SAL ID number, their address, and their contact information including phone or email.

10. The person who took the photo should be identified by name, rank, unit, and any other information that is available.

Any questions, please call Al Zdon at 651-291-1800 or 1-866-259-9163. Or email: azdon@mnlegion.org.



A photo submitted by Kathleen Hagemester of Princeton is in this year's Minnesota Legion calendar.



Department Vice Commander Denise Milton presented certificates to Eighth District Commander Jerry St. Michel as Ninth District Commander Tom Norgaard and Tenth District Commander Dick Juhl look on.



Membership Director Tom Fernlund emceed the Waite Park rally.



Commander Mike Ash talked about the importance of communication.



President Shirley Frederick talked about her projects for the year.

Sweetheart Rally at Waite Park

The Ninth District ran away with the honors at the Sweetheart Rally in Waite Park in February.

The district came in first in both the Auxiliary and the Legion totals for percentage of membership goal.

For the Legion, the Ninth reached 90.91 percent for the rally, about seven-tenths of a point ahead of the Sixth District.

For the Auxiliary, the Roaring Ninth achieved 87.3 percent, almost two percentage points ahead of the Second District.

For the SAL, the Sixth District was first at percentage of goal with 77.52 percent.

The rally featured a speaker, Monique Coleman, director of the Veteran's Resource Center at St. Cloud State University.

Coleman said that returning veterans have much to deal with when they try to go back to college.

The first challenge is the financial needs, which often can be taken care of by using the GI Bill.

A second challenge is the social aspect. "These students are usually older than the usual college student, and they need a different social atmosphere.

The third challenge is aligning the educational effort toward getting a job in the real world.

And the fourth challenge is trying to make the returning veteran's military training transfer to the civilian work force. "They need to get credits for what they know," Coleman said.

Commander Mike Ash told the rally that communication with the local press is a major challenge for The American Legion.

"We do a good job of getting the word out -- to ourselves. But we need to get it out to other people."

Ash recommended using local newspaper and radio, but also telling the Legion's story when Legionnaires attend community meetings.

The next rally will be the Family Appreciation Rally at Richfield on Mar. 8.



St. Cloud State University Veterans Resource Center Director Monique Coleman was the guest speaker.



Third District Legionnaires and Auxiliary respond to one of the speakers at the Waite Park Rally.

Membership Chart

As of Feb. 19, 2014

District	2014 Goal	Total 2013	Total 2014	Percent of Goal	Same Date '13
1	10,370	10,312	9,422	90.86	9,891
2	8,528	8,443	7,708	90.38	8,257
3	12,927	12,862	11,804	91.31	12,335
4	2,686	2,663	2,421	90.13	2,530
5	3,112	3,089	2,779	89.30	2,979
6	13,192	13,121	11,990	90.89	12,641
7	7,545	7,467	6,828	90.50	7,184
8	5,049	5,008	4,500	89.13	4,763
9	7,659	7,594	7,056	92.13	7,313
10	11,741	11,688	10,596	90.25	11,292
At-large	1,733	1,748	2,215	127.81	1,695
Totals	84,542	83,995	77,319	91.46	80,880



Past National Commander Dan Ludwig and former Gopher basketball star Richard Coffey share a laugh with National Commander Dellinger at Chanhassen.



National Commander Dan Dellinger talks with National Executive Committeeman Ray Dezurik at Elk River. In back are Commander's Aide Bob Renner and Department Vice Commander John Torma.



The room was full at North Branch as the National Commander addressed the audience.

National Commander's Tour



Past National Chaplain Michas Ohnstad delivers the prayer at North Branch. From left are Department Commander Mike Ash, 10th District Commander Dick Juhl, Dellinger, Ohnstad, and Alternate National Executive Committeeman Marland Ronning.



Department President Shirley Frederick showed off her patriotic comic books in Elk River, part of her project for the year. Tom Fernlund is in the back.



National Commander Dan Dellinger presented his license plate to the Hinckley Post at a stop in North Branch.



At Olivia, the post had both an empty table for the Four Chaplains and for the POW/MIA.



Policeman and Legion College grad Ron Rollins provided an escort into North Branch, siren and all.



The two commanders head up the stairs at the Granite Falls Post.