

Overall, during the war, about 8.6 percent of soldiers were black.

With his new unit, an officer was looking around for the topographer. "Where's my topographer," he yelled. "Where's my topo, where's my topo?"

"And that was it," Glanton said. "For the rest of the war my nickname was 'Topo.'" (Pronounced Toh-poh)

The unit was getting ready to go overseas, but the Army wanted it to have some hands-on experience. "They were going to send us to the Pacific to build airfields, and so they sent us into the jungle in Florida to make an airstrip."

Glanton did much of the surveying for the project. "We chopped down trees and burned them. The bull dozers pulled up the roots. The men did what the bull dozers couldn't. And finally we put the mat down."

The "mat" was what the Army called "pierced steel planking" or Marsden Matting. It gave the planes a solid footing, but it was made up of steel sheets filled with holes that let the swamp underneath ooze through.

"I could see that this wasn't going to hold. Once those bombers landed on it, the mats would just go down into the swamp. I tried to explain that to the captain, but he couldn't see it. So he told the major, 'I think we can land planes now.' But the major went out and looked at it and said, 'Wrong, we can never land a plane here.'"

"So they put dynamite charges under it and blew it all up."

Once that practice mission was over, the 1898th got its orders overseas – to Italy. "We did all that Pacific training, and we got on the boat and went to Europe."

The unit boarded a cargo ship at Hampton Roads. The soldiers were put in the hold of the ship which had been converted into a makeshift barracks. "They put steel poles from the floor to a very high ceiling and put hammocks between the poles. We had to climb on top of each other to get to our hammock. The food was okay, but we all got diarrhea."

The ship was part of a huge convoy, and Glanton's first exposure to war was when the German planes attacked the oil tankers in the convoy. "We just watched those ships burn in the water."

"What I remember most is that it took us 31 days to get there."

The ship landed at Naples and the men disembarked. Right then, the Germans decided to bomb the harbor. "We started to run, and then the bombs came closer, and so we ran again. We just kept running until the bombing stopped. We waited about a half an hour, and started walking back. It was pitch dark, and there wasn't a light to be seen. We had no idea where we were and we just walked aimlessly around. Finally someone saw some lights. We didn't get everybody back together until morning."

The engineers were sent to Spinazzola in southern Italy. It was their job to lengthen the airfield there so it could be used by American bombers. What Glanton liked was that the U.S. Army had no shortage of equipment and materiel to do the job. "We had the stuff to build it right."

The Germans never attacked the field or any field that Glanton worked on during the war. "There was one disaster. There was a whorehouse about a half mile from the base. If you got the clap, you didn't get paid. That was a real disaster for a lot of guys."

At various fields, the engineers also built hangars and housing for the officers. As the war moved north, so did the engineers.

At one field, a P-51 Mustang fighter came in for an emergency landing. "When that happened, we would rush out to the aircraft to try and get the pilot out before the plane burst into flames. We got this guy out and he took off his mask, and he was a black man."

The pilot was one of the famed Tuskegee Airmen who were noted for their flying skills and courage. "I was amazed. It was the first and only black officer I saw in the whole war."

Glanton spent the war in Italy, and when it was over he was granted two weeks furlough. "We went to Venice and Pisa and then down to Rome. Rome was fascinating to me as a builder. It was incredible what the Romans did a couple of thousand years ago. And they did it without steel."

He also took a tour of the Vatican. "At the end, they brought us into a room and four Swiss Army guys came in carrying the Pope in a chair. He came over to us and gave us his blessing. He asked me what religion I was, and I said Baptist. He turned to his interpreter, and the interpreter said I was a Protestant. I said, no, I was was Baptist."

"In the end, we got down on our knees and kissed his ring."

Later Glanton bought 10 rosaries that had been blessed by the pope. "Some guys were buying hundreds of them. I sent them home to my mother and she gave most of them to Catholic priests."

In contrast to his voyage over to Europe, the trip home took only three and one-half days. He was mustered out at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin.

Did segregation change in the Army during his three years of service? "It didn't change. It was just like when they outlawed discrimination in the South. It didn't change

nothing. It didn't change people's minds or hearts. It took a long time for things to change in the Army."

Back home, he used the GI Bill to complete his studies at Dunwoody and got into the construction business. But he soon heard of an opening at Hennepin County as a surveyor.

"They were losing all their surveyors because they could make more money other places. I went down and applied and after some tests the guy said that I'd do all right and he hired me. On Monday, I showed up for work, and a different boss said, 'What the hell are you doing here?' I told him I'd been hired as a surveyor. He said that, no, I hadn't been hired and that he was firing me."

"I looked at him and said, 'The only guy that can fire me is the guy who hired me. Listen, I just got out of the Army, and I've been trained to kill people with my bare hands.' I never had trouble with those people anymore."

His next job was with the gas company selling conversion kits for those who wanted to convert from oil or coal to natural gas. "That was quite a job. My wife told me that one day they were going to put me in jail because I was making so much money."

Eventually he started his own construction business. He did hundreds of projects around the Twin Cities, and perhaps the biggest of them was preparing the landscape for Interstate 394 through Minneapolis and the western suburbs.

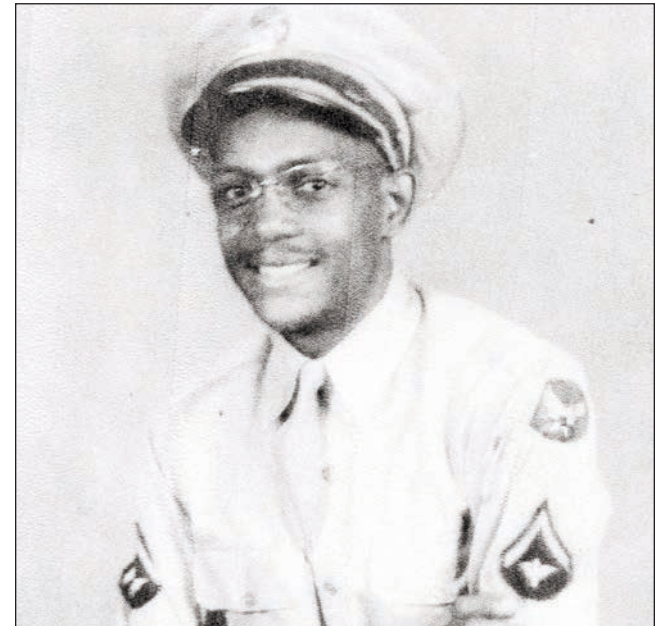
Glanton retired some years back, but has stayed active in volunteer projects. At his home in south Minneapolis, the walls and shelves are lined with plaques and certificates honoring his service. He was an active Mason for many years.

He has a birthday greeting from President and Michelle Obama for his 90th birthday. He also has a plaque from Dunwoody honoring him for lifetime achievement.

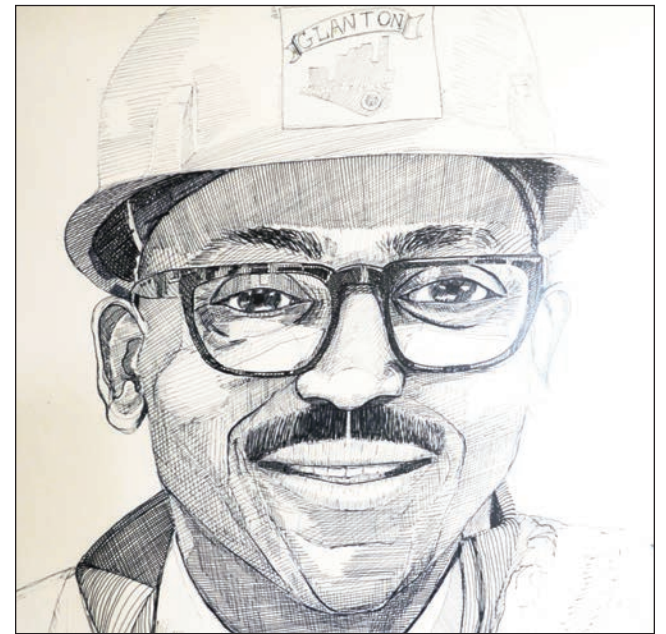
His latest endeavor is district leadership in the Minnesota American Legion. He was elected Fifth District Commander last year, perhaps the oldest district commander, at age 92, ever elected in the state.

Why did he wait so long? "I ran 40 years ago, but I ran into some opposition. I told them back then that I'll just wait until they were all dead, and then I'd run again. Here I am."

Wayne and his wife, Clodeal, were married for 62 years before her death last month. They had three girls, six grandchildren and five great grandchildren.



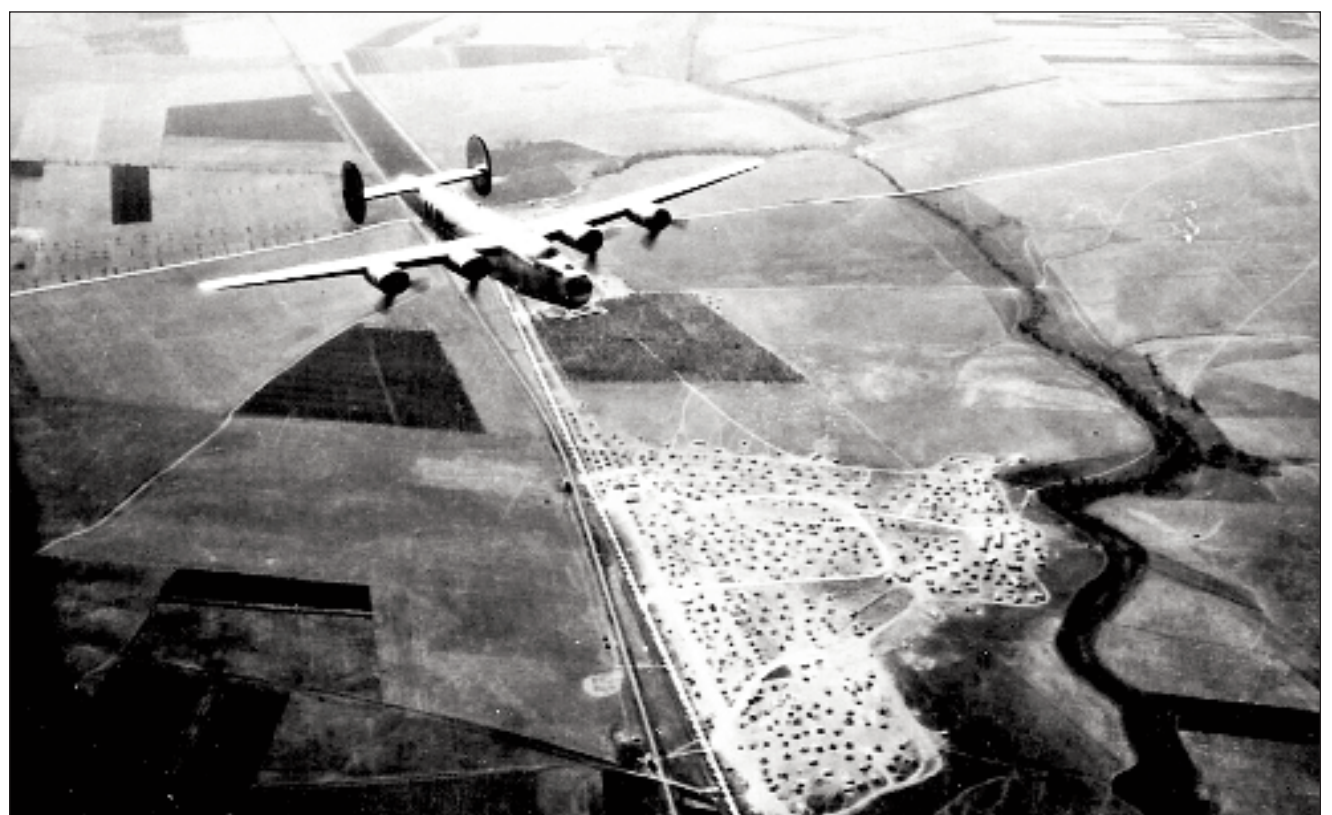
Glanton finished his Army career as a corporal.



An sketch shows Glanton as a construction boss.



A B-24 is parked at the Spinazzola Army Air Base in Italy. Glanton helped build the base.



A Liberator flies over the Spinazzola Army Air Corps base in Italy.



The Rosetown Memorial Post 542 color guard waited for the start of the program when National Commander Mike Helm visited. From left are Arden Hanson, Anne Eide and Don Menier.



The Department of Minnesota presented National Commander Mike Helm with a membership baseball jersey with his name on the back. Helping present the jersey was John Lenvik of Apple Valley Post 1776 who himself was given a special membership award for his work with the post's ongoing all-time high.

National Commander's Tour



When Commander Helm was visiting Colorado, he was presented with a blanket and asked to give it to a veteran along the way. The gift came full circle when Helm presented it to Frank Brda of East Grand Forks during a stop at the Fargo VA Hospital. At center is Department Commander Peggy Moon.



At Detroit Lakes Post 15, Commander Helm wasn't the only red hat in the room. He was joined by Louanne Gerdes, an auxiliary member.



At St. Peter Post 37, Helm was interviewed by Mankato Free Press reporter Nate Gotlieb. The national commander spoke with 17 journalists along the way.



Department Membership Director Pat Logan was at the wheel as the National Commander's van was given a police escort into North Branch.



National Commander Mike Helm took a picture of the North Dakota Legion Band as they entertained before breakfast at Moorhead, the first stop on the 12-post tour.



Department President Chris Ronning showed off her "I have a German attitude" button during a stop at New Ulm. Department Membership Director Pat Logan had an Irish attitude.



Commander Peggy Moon spoke to the crowd at Walker.



Trying to take a picture of something on the wall at Grand Rapids, Helm took advantage of a nearby table.



Commander Helm spoke to a full house at Redwood Falls.



Commander Helm was delighted to find one of his 82nd Airborne comrades at Brainerd. Ralph Yeager spun some good stories about his time during World War II.



Past National Vice Commander Don Hayden welcomed Helm to Le Center.

Posts at Goal during the 2015 National Commander's Tour



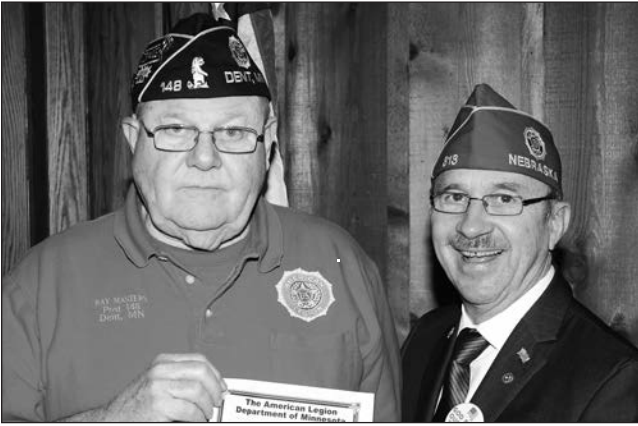
HAWLEY POST 382



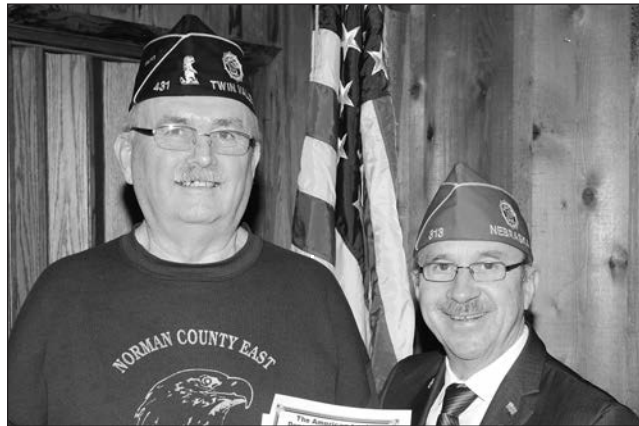
BAGLEY POST 16



DEER CREEK POST 283



DENT POST 148



TWIN VALLEY POST 431



ULEN POST 412



BACKUS POST 368



LEECH LAKE POST 2001



LAPORTE POST 462



HILLMAN POST 602



HOLDINGFORD POST 211



MCGREGOR POST 23



ST. JOSEPH POST 328



RICHMOND POST 292



ZIMMERMAN POST 560



BRUNO POST 563



MOUND POST 398



3M POST 599

Posts at Goal during the 2015 National Commander's Tour



NORTH END POST 474



TRI-CITY POST 513



ELYSIAN POST 311



MONTGOMERY POST 79



BLUE EARTH POST 89



EYOTA POST 551



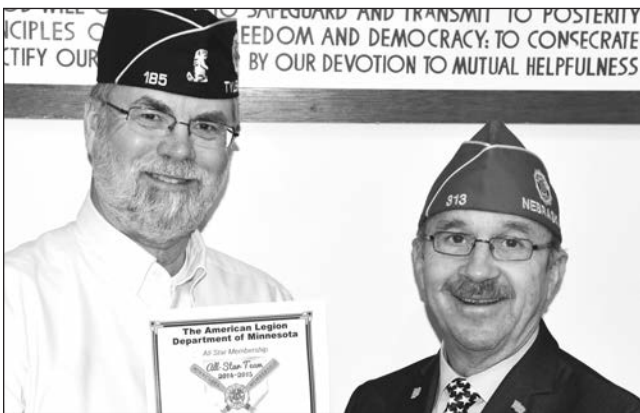
WEST CONCORD POST 295



MILROY POST 274



WALNUT GROVE POST 267



TYLER POST 185



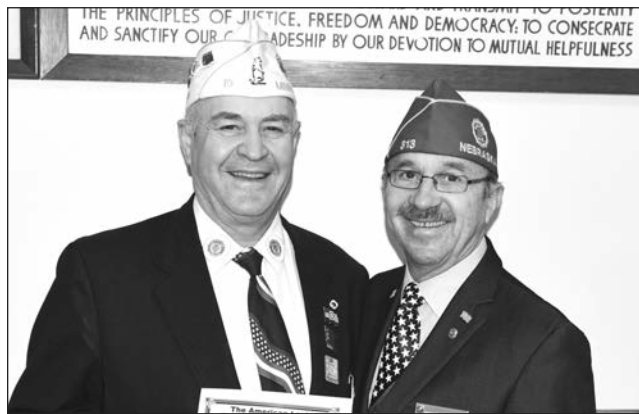
VESTA POST 306



BELVIEW POST 309



IVANHOE POST 194



MADELIA POST 19



APPLE VALLEY POST 1776

Legion supports New Jersey judge who ruled for "under God"

New Jersey State Superior Court Judge David F. Bauman recently ruled that saying "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance at Matawan-Aberdeen schools is not a violation of the state's constitution. Prior to the ruling, The American Legion filed a "friend-of-the-court" brief supporting that position.

In 1954, when Congress passed a bill to add the words "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance, then-President Dwight Eisenhower praised the move. "From this day forward, the millions of our school children will daily proclaim in every city and town, every village and rural school house, the dedication of our nation and our people to the Almighty... In this way, we are reaffirming the transcen-

dence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way, we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource, in peace or in war."

For the last 60 years, the addition of "under God" to the pledge has been under fire, both publicly and in the courts from groups like the American Humanist Association. It had long been accepted, and the Supreme Court had agreed, that no student or citizen need either stand for the recitation, or include the words "under God." Supreme Court Justice Richard H. Jackson, in a case from the 1940's dealing with allowing children of the Jehovah's Witness faith to remain seated during the pledge, stated that "if there is any fixed

star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein. If there are any circumstances which permit an exception, they do not now occur to us."

The American Legion's friend-of-the-court brief in the New Jersey case stated that, "participation in the Pledge is completely voluntary, and as the statute makes undeniably clear, any student who has any 'conscientious scruples' may decline to recite the pledge. And although a student's decision not to participate may be noticed, the school is not required to explain the decision to anyone."

District Commanders

FIRST DISTRICT

Myron Ehrich
Commander



It is amazing to me at just how fast my year of service is flying by. Seems like I just started yesterday. It has been a pleasure to meet as many new people as I have and to travel as much as I have. It just proves to me what a great country we live in and what great people Legion members are.

I went to the National Commanders Tour of Minnesota stop that was held in New Ulm. The First District was well represented by having five members in attendance. We were accused of sneaking in the back door by Pat Logan, Department Membership Director. The back door must mean something different over there. Mike Helm, the National Commander, gave a great speech.

I also attended the Sweetheart Rally that took place on February 7th in Chanhassen. It was an awesome turnout as not an empty seat was to be found. We had an amazing guest speaker that kept everyone in stitches.

I am looking forward to this weekend as we have another fun and exciting event planned. It is the annual 1st and 3rd Ice Fishing contest.

Once again, as we close out this month, please keep our service men and women in our prayers as well as their family members.

SECOND DISTRICT

Jennifer Kafka
Commander



There is a change in the weather ahead for all posts. It is one being shaped and swirled by the changing winds and tides of human demographics and markets. It will affect every post - and will threaten the very survival of many. We will, quite literally, need all hands on deck if our programs are to survive. We've got to face the challenge of embracing diversity and change.

We have always taken great comfort from the fact that the American Legion family is like a well-designed ship. The community is its ocean, with all the currents, tides and swells and occasionally the Bermuda triangles. A well designed ship will have everything on board fastened and functioning to the best of its ability. It will navigate well to take advantage of the winds and the elements can offer it. Like a good ship it will sail, with the wind, its crew all knowing their function and their duties.

Each crew member is an individual, yet they will pull together knowing that their similarities and goals are far more important than their differences. Their pride in their voyage and their skill and their destination and even their journey together is something that they will tell with relish. They will listen to and learn from each other. They know they are not here through luck, but through skill and determination. They understand that any ship not taking full advantage of the winds will lag behind and even perish. The backers know this too, they pick a wise experienced captain who knows how to get the best from his or her team. This will be a captain and officers who on a long voyage are open to the new. They will be able to improvise and appoint. That team will by its nature be diverse. Its skills will be different yet complimentary. They will understand and even look upon their voyage in different ways. Yet no one doubts the value of such diversity. It is what life is made of. We must act as facilitators to allow this diversity to happen in our own posts if we want to succeed and survive.

THIRD DISTRICT

Duane Anderson
Commander



I am sure this publication will have plenty of information on the past visit of our National Commander Helm so will only say that it was an honor to be able to spend some time with him as he visited posts in the 3rd District.

Commander Helm did stress the importance of maintaining a large membership in the Legion. I have decided to recap a response published by the Burn Pit blog regarding an article in the Washington Times referencing why young returning veterans are not joining the American Legion and the VFW. The article failed to mention many things that these two service organizations have and are still accomplishing for our country and veterans. The American Legion is, indeed, a service-oriented organization. Last year alone it hosted or sponsored more than 1,000 veteran job fairs nationwide. American Legion service officers are now working on the VA claims of more than 700,000 veterans of all ages, and fighting to protect VA benefits every day in Washington. What would be missing from the fabric of our nation if not for The American Legion and VFW?

Missing would be the Department of Veterans Affairs, GI Bill, livable wages for military personnel, recognition that veterans were poisoned by Agent Orange during the Vietnam War, and relevant education benefits built to serve the 21st-century student veteran. Missing would be national and government awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder. Missing would be tens of thousands of youth programs, from baseball to Junior ROTC, from Boys State to scholarships for the children of service members who have given their lives for our country since 9/11. The list could go on and on but Legion membership past, present and future is needed to keep it going and effective.

FOURTH DISTRICT

Dan Williams
Commander



The Minneapolis VA Medical Center has a wonderful program. The Chronic Pain Rehabilitation Program (CPRP) is one of only two within the entire VA system. The CPRP is just one year old at the Minneapolis Campus, and has brought great success into the lives of several veterans living with chronic pain for years. Of course, the details of particular cases are confidential and fall under applicable privacy laws. As one of the patients currently going through the four week program, I've been able to do things I've not done for almost two years. In 2013 I was diagnosed with a mild Traumatic Brain Injury. I had great results after one week.

If you are a veteran dealing with Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD) or long-term chronic pain from other injuries, I urge you and your provider to look into this as a possibility for relief. There is a well-honed candidate screening and selection process. What is there to lose...Pain? Contact your primary care provider.

Calendar: March 11th, District Meeting Arcade Phalen Post 577, hosted by Post 1975. March 14th District Rally at North St. Paul Post 39 - 5:00 PM. March 21st Department Commander's Testimonial at Northern Lights, Walker, MN - 6:00 PM. March 26th - 28th District Revitalization with representatives from National 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM at North St. Paul Post 39.

FIFTH DISTRICT

Wayne Glanton
Commander



At this time, I'd like to thank all the members of the 5th District for all your condolences, cards, phone calls, prayers, well wishes and donations towards my wife, Clodeal's, memorial service at Calvary Baptist Church. I'd like to add, God bless everyone.

SIXTH DISTRICT

Carl Moon
Commander



I want to congratulate all of my fellow District Commanders and their Membership Directors for exceeding the 85% goal for the Sweetheart Rally that was held on 2-7-15. I am hoping that all of us can keep up the pace and get Minnesota and more importantly, my favorite Legionnaire, Commander Peggy back in first place Nationally. I also want to congratulate the 5th District for hitting the Grand Slam at the Rally. Way to go Commander Wayne.

As I mentioned in last month's article, the 6th is having a Revitalization Program at the Brainerd & Little Falls Posts on April 9, 10 & 11th. I would like to invite any District Commanders, membership directors or incoming Commanders to sit in for the training that will be conducted by our National Membership Director Billy Johnson on the morning of the 9th at the Brainerd Legion. There should be a lot of good information that you could gain and use for future Revitalization programs in your Districts.

I have been informed by my Post that my Testimonial (or as they are calling it "Roast/Deep Fat Fry the Commander) Dinner is going to be on Saturday April 11th; 5:30 Social, 6:30 Dinner. Menu will be will be Chicken & Ribs w/ potato salad & baked beans. Cost is \$15 before April 1st and \$18 after the 1st. Reservations can be sent to: ALP 560, P.O. Box 123, Attn: District Commanders Dinner, Zimmerman, Mn. 55398. I look forward to seeing you and it sounds like it will be rather entertaining.

Please keep our troops and their families in your prayers. Help to keep those memberships coming in. Remember the III's: Inform-Invigorate and Involve for both yourselves and those potential new members.

SEVENTH DISTRICT

Victor Gades
Commander



We are doing well with membership totals. Keep up the good work. We have some posts exceeding goal by a far amount. They have gone the extra mile in effort. A shout out to them for outstanding work.

One of National Commander Helm's message at Redwood Falls was his 4x4 program --- \$4 million in fundraising for American Legion and Auxiliary charities and 4 million members combined among the Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion. Sometimes we feel this is a unattainable goal, but there are 369,149 veterans in Minnesota and of that amount, the Minnesota American Legion has a goal of 82,626. There appears to be a large number of Veterans in Minnesota to be tapped for membership.

We are looking for nominations for "Firefighter Of The Year" and "Law Officer Of The Year". Let's get these applications out into your communities. I am sure there is at least one individual in each Department that has met the criteria for this award. Remind individual police and fire department heads that this is a way to encourage and recognize an individual within the department.

We are looking for applications for Boys State. The deadline is April 1 and it is on a first come basis to a max of 500 participants.

Remember April is Children and Youth month. The American Legion has a strong dedication to supporting our Nation's youth. As you all know Children & Youth is one of the Legion's four pillars. Let's get out there and support our youth.

EIGHTH DISTRICT

Wilson Spence
Commander



During our Mid Winter meeting in Virginia everyone received greetings from Department of Minnesota Commander Peggy Moon and two past Department of Minnesota Commanders, Past Commander Al Davis and Past Commander/ Alt. National Executive Committee Marland Ronning. We were very fortunate to have our National Commander Mike Helm and Department Commander Peggy Moon visit the Eighth District in Grand Rapids. We had very good conversations and photo opportunities. I would have liked to have had more posts represented at both the Mid Winter and Commander Helm's visit. Please consider attending our next meeting of the Eighth District where we can discuss issues affecting the members and posts of the Eighth District. We serve together in one family of Legionnaires.

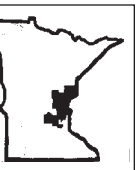
Membership remains the lifeblood of our organization. The Eighth District was on goal with membership at the last rally, as was every other district. Thank you for all you do for membership but do not let up on recruitment of new members. Do your best to ask you neighbor, friends, and the people you meet to ask them to be a member of this great organization. We are veterans helping veterans!

If you have a concern or need for yourself or your post, give me a call, email or letter.

Thank you for all you do for your fellow veteran. For God and Country The American Legion gather.

TENTH DISTRICT

Tom Sanders
Commander



This month of March we celebrate a couple of Birthdays. Happy Birthday to The American Legion. May its' programs find their way to success at all our Posts and the rest of the American Legion Family. For all the Irish, Happy St. Patrick's Day.

The 10th Districts' combined project "Helping Paws" has been an overwhelming success. With the donations received so far the program will be able to help several veterans with PTSD. President Robin Dorf, SAL Commander Jeremy Copher, ALR Director Jody Hassing, Jr. President Kiana Coleman Woods and I are very proud of what we have accomplished. It has been such a pleasure to work with all these good people and having so much fun doing it.

As membership renewals go, we are now delinquent. So we need to ask or get on the phone and reach out to someone. Anyone doing membership for the District American Legion Family don't be afraid to ask your fellow members for help in getting those last ones on your membership rosters. Thank you "Blue Cappers" for all you do. Until next month, For God and Country.

Fort Snelling World War II Round Table

Fighting in Italy was some of the toughest in World War II

By Al Zdon

One of the critical confrontations in the Italian Campaign during World War II for the Allies was the Battle of San Pietro in December, 1943.

St. Paul author Tim Brady told the World War II Round Table audience at Fort Snelling History center in February about the battle, and was later joined by two Minnesota veterans of the war in Italy.

Brady, author of *A Death in San Pietro: The Untold Story of Ernie Pyle, John Huston, and the Fight for Purple Heart Valley*, noted that the fighting in Italy, which was some of the toughest the American Army encountered in the war, is today largely forgotten.

"The war in Italy could never be as triumphant as Normandy," Brady said. In part, the war was the idea of the British allies who wanted to keep the Germans occupied while the invasion of France was being planned.

The main plan was to have the British land on the west coast and the Americans on the east coast of Italy, and then have the forces unite and push the Germans northward.

"One of the principal objectives of the invasion was to force Italy out of the war," Brady said. Sure enough, on the eve of the invasion, Italy surrendered. "It confused many of the Americans, and they thought the invasion might be called off."

No such luck. The Germans had put 600,000 troops in northern Italy and were ready to defend it with some of their best divisions.

The American 5th Army, led by the 36th Division made up mainly of Texas and Oklahoma National Guardsmen, landed at Salerno on Sept. 9, 1943. The commander of the army was Mark Clark, whose perceived arrogance, Brady said, led to a nickname among subordinates as "Marcus Clarkus."

The Allies thought they would reach Rome by Christmas. "That was very optimistic thinking as it turned out," Brady said.

He said that besides the ferocious defense by the Germans, the Italian terrain of mountains and flooded rivers made the going tough for the Allies. The Germans also had time to establish a series of "nail-hard" lines of defense up the length of Italy. "The Germans decided to contest every inch of highway on the way to Rome."

By late 1943, the Allies had advanced to about 50 miles from Rome, but were stopped at the "Winter Line," one of the German's reinforced defense lines. A plan was proposed to advance through the Liri Valley, and the town of San Pietro was a key position.

Brady told part of the battle through the life of Captain Henry Waskow, a company commander in the 36th Division. He told of Waskow's background growing up in rural Belton, Texas.

Waskow's company occupied the summit of Mount Sammucro overlooking San Pietro on Dec. 11, 1943, and they withstood several German counterattacks on the high ground. On Dec. 14, German shells rained down on Waskow's company. At the last second, hearing a shell approaching, he pushed his executive officer away and "a hot slug tore into his chest, killing him instantly." He had saved the life of the other officer.

Brady then takes up the story of famed wartime journalist Ernie Pyle, who happened to be at the scene of the battle. Pyle, Brady said, "wrote about the day-to-day tasks and preoccupations of the American soldier, not about the glory and heroes, just the lives of the sons of America."

Pyle heard about Waskow from the officer whose life he had saved, and the correspondent waited at the bottom of the mountain for the mule that would bring Waskow's body down. He observed the reverence and honor paid to the fallen captain by his men.

In the end, Pyle wrote for his newspaper column, "The Death of Captain Waskow." The story was syndicated, ran in Time Magazine, and was read on the radio by Arthur Godfrey. It later won the Pulitzer Prize.

Brady read the entire piece to the Round Table gathering. It concluded with Waskow's men, one-by-one, going up to the body and saying their farewells.

"The first man squatted down, and reached down and took the dead hand, and he sat there for a full five minutes, holding the dead hand in his own and looking intently into the dead face, and he never uttered a sound all the time he sat there.

"And finally he put the hand down, and then reached up and gently straightened the points of the captain's shirt collar, and then he sort of rearranged the tattered edges of his uniform around the wound. And then he got up and walked away down the road in the moonlight, all alone."

After brutal fighting and a large number of casualties, the Allies captured San Pietro. But it was still a long and bloody road to Rome, which finally fell in early June of 1944.

One of the most discussed documentaries to come out of the war, John Huston's "The Battle of San Pietro" was based on the battle. The film's grim realism, including showing dead soldiers, was criticized at the time, but was

later accepted as powerful filmmaking.

The film can be viewed at https://archive.org/details/battle_of_san_pietro.

□□□□□□

Jack Vessey grew up in Lakeville, Minnesota, and joined the National Guard when he was 16 by lying about his age.

"A friend of mine said if I went down and enlisted I could become a motorcycle rider. Plus it was during the Great Depression and it paid 21 and one-half cents an hour and a dollar a drill."

Vessey said the training was rigorous with World War I veterans showing the way. "We were well trained, but not for the war we had to fight."

His unit was federalized in the late 1930s. "You knew in advance that it was going to happen because you saw other units called up. It seemed obvious that we would be involved."

The 34th Division spent six months on maneuvers, and when war broke out, they were shipped overseas in a large convoy. "It was an exciting trip. You could hear the depth charges being dropped in every direction every night. We lost a few ships."

He became a first sergeant by the time he was 20 years old. "It was hard work, but it was work that needed to be done. I had been on the boxing team, and I thought I could handle myself."

The 34th Division landed in North Africa and came up against an enemy that had been fighting for several years. "The Germans had better leadership and they had better equipment. When you heard an airplane, you didn't look up because you knew it was a German airplane."

Vessey said that in Africa water was scarce, and the GIs were often only allotted one cup per day. "You had to decide if you wanted to use some of that to shave."

At the landing at Salerno, "We came in on DUKWs. If you want a really bad boat, get a floating two-and-one-half ton truck."

The slog north in Italy was made difficult by record rainfall. "You were just wet all the time. As an NCO I had to sit everybody down once a day and make sure they had dry socks. But a few hours later, they'd be wet again."

Vessey had one more sock story. When the division was training in Northern Ireland, they were visited by Eleanor Roosevelt. The men complained that their socks weren't very good, and not as good as the British socks. "After that, we were issued British socks. We called them 'Eleanors.'"

Moderator Doug Bekke asked Vessey if he thought the controversial bombing of the Monte Casino monastery was necessary. "All it did was destroy an important building. It was no help in the war."

In the battle around Monte Casino, the troops had to move at night because the Germans had the high ground. "You moved with great fear and trepidation."

At about the time of the landing at Anzio, Vessey was told he was being promoted to second lieutenant. "They didn't ask me if I wanted to be an officer, and I was reluctant to take it. We all knew that second lieutenants in the artillery became forward observers. I thought my chances to survive were a little chancier as a forward observer than as a first sergeant in a headquarters unit."

Vessey said he once asked his wife why the Army kept promoting him even when he didn't want it. She replied, "You lied about your age to get in the Army, and now God

is punishing you." Vessey eventually became the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

□□□□□□

Arthur Anderson of St. Paul was drafted in April of 1942 and, after training, was sent overseas on the Queen Mary. There were 17,000 soldiers on board. "We made it to Scotland in five days. The ship was too big to pull into port, and so big boats would come out and get 500 men at a time. When they had enough men for one port, we'd move on to another."

He was sent to a replacement depot in England and was assigned to the 34th Division. He and others were replacing men who had volunteered for the Rangers.

On their way to North Africa, Anderson's troop ship was struck by another ship in the dark. "It opened up a hole in our ship about 15 or 20 feet deep and about two feet wide. The worst part was that the hole went two feet below the waterline. The captain of the ship shifted the ballast, and the ship listed enough so that the hole wasn't underwater anymore. The convoy took off, and left one destroyer behind to guard us. We were towed into the port of Oran."

Anderson agreed that the water in Africa was scarce and not very good. "Some of the water came in old 55-gallon drums and it had the same color as orange soda pop."

Anderson had better luck on his second landing, this time in Italy. "Our landing craft hit a sandbar about 20 yards from shore, and they dropped the ramp. We all jumped in, and it came up to our hips. We were all wearing these life belts, but they told us to drop them when we got to the beach. I found some of those lifebelts five miles inland. The guys were so excited, they forget to take them off."

Anderson said he was determined to keep his socks dry, and he would take off the wet ones and put them under his shirt next to his body. "The heat from my body would dry the socks out in time."

His company was assigned to capture a bridge across the Volturno River. "We found an asphalt road, and when we got to the river we were told to bear right. We could just barely see the outline of the bridge in the dark, and all of a sudden a motorcycle came roaring out of the area of the bridge. A few seconds later, the bridge blew up in our faces. There were rocks and stones flying everywhere."

Later, while crossing a valley at night, the men kept hearing explosions, but there was no artillery. "We finally figured out it was guys stepping on the mines."

"I went past a farmhouse in the dark, and when I was past it, a German stepped out with a machine pistol and fired at me. Luckily he missed. Somebody else threw a hand grenade at him, and he didn't shoot anymore."

Anderson and his unit were taking the high ground. "I was about halfway up the mountain when I stepped on a land mine, and things just blew up all around me. I was hit by shrapnel in the right leg, hand, chest and my left eye. I was carrying a new testament in my shirt pocket and I later found there were holes in the book. I suppose that stopped a few pieces of lead from getting into me."

Anderson never lost consciousness. He started down the hill on his own power and when a couple of buddies tried to help him, he told them not to touch him because of the pain. They showed him where the aid station was.

"They put a needle in me, and I went to sleep for a while." He was treated in Naples and North Africa and finally sent back to the States. Even though he had lost his left eye, he stayed in the Army until the end of the war.



TIM BRADY
Featured speaker



Gen. Jack Vessey and Round Table Moderator Doug Bekke confer during the panel session at the Fort Snelling History Center.



ARTHUR ANDERSON
Italian campaign veteran



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 15-8

President Chris Ronning

March 2015

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

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

The President's Column

By
Chris Ronning



Happy 96th Birthday to The American Legion. Who would have known that this would be the start of the largest and greatest organization to help our veterans and their families? The American Legion Auxiliary wants to congratulate you and thank you for giving us the opportunity to become one of the largest patriot women's organization in this country and to stand side by side to speak out about our Veterans issues.

February was a busy month with Sweetheart dinners and visiting with National Commander Mike Helm. What a delightful man and excellent speaker.

The weather has not been very nice to us; lacking snow the arctic air moved right in and decided to stay a while. But no complains here as we could live out east and be digging out from under all that snow. One cannot help but think of all the homeless, many of them are Veterans, that fought for us not ever imagining that they would be living on the streets.

Well I made it back in one piece from Washington DC but not without some obstacles, which I call another adventure in the life of Chris.

We headed for the airport on February 26th, parked the car, checked in at the ticket counter and everything seemed ok. Oh boy were we wrong. Our flight was canceled to a later flight due to a snow storm in Washington. The flight was rescheduled; got on the phone to change our shuttle in Washington. It was kind of fun to people watch until our flight was canceled again, again a phone call, and my battery was running low on my phone and the charger was in suitcase. I settled down in a comfortable airport chair. This is not fun anymore; flight now is leaving the next day at 6 am, again changed shuttle service and canceled the hotel for the night. Some of us went to a hotel, oh no, not me.

Marland thought it would be ok to stay at the airport, hmm. I didn't see any humor in that but we stayed along with Bill and Marie Goede and a few other people we didn't know. Needless to say I didn't sleep and I took the opportunity to take pictures of everyone sleeping. I watched a little boy chasing a mouse with a camera in his hand which entertained me for a while. Around 2 am everyone woke up and we decided to find our gate. The rest of our travelers arrived and we finally headed for Washington.

We were tired, but glad to be at our destination. We checked into our room and settled in for the next few days.

After picking up our packets we boarded a bus which took us to the World War II Memorial where National President Janet Jefford laid a wreath and we all found our state and laid flowers on top.

That evening we attended the joint opening session, which featured a presentation by Benjamin Patton, grandson of General George Patton.

Monday started out at 8:30 a.m. with our Washington DC Conference session. We attended the Public Spirit Award luncheon. This year's recipient was Home Depot.

Our Minnesota Delegates met that evening to talk about our Hill walk and what we should talk about when we meet with our members of Congress. Some of us visited the offices of Senators Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken.

On our last day some attended the Commanders Testimony on Capitol Hill and some attended 9/11 Veterans in Media at the hotel.

What a whirlwind trip, one none of us will forget and I am pretty sure everyone was glad to board their planes to head home. Some of the other Delegates from other states were not as lucky, some didn't make it home that day, due to storms in the south. Hope they didn't have to wait too long.

Hope you enjoyed my little adventure with me.

2015 Department Junior Conference set for Apr. 10-11

The 52nd Annual Department Junior Conference will be held April 10th and 11th at the Stewartville American Legion Post 164, Stewartville, Minnesota, hosted by the First District. We are hoping that a large number of the Junior members are able to attend and participate. If your Juniors have never attended a Department Junior Conference, plan to join us this year. Junior members will enjoy a "fun night" on Friday, April 10th, the night before the opening of the Conference. The 1st District has been working hard to make this a special evening for the Junior members.

On Saturday the Conference will be called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Jules Efta, the Department Honorary Junior President. This is a day when the Juniors become reacquainted with each other, make new friends, learn how to conduct a meeting and participate in it. This meeting is a junior Conference and the junior members run it. They are very capable young women.

The "Call to Conference" was included in the January Unit mailing, giving you all the details. Junior Activities Chairmen, please obtain this information from your Unit President so you can make your plans to have your Juniors attend. You do not need to have an organized Junior group to participate. All Juniors are welcome. The information is also posted on our website mnala.org

Hotel reservations must be made by March 13, 2015. All reservations should be made with the Americinn Rochester, 7320 Airport View Drive, Rochester, Minnesota 55902. The direct telephone number is (507) 536-7000 Block name: American Legion Auxiliary Juniors

The Department Honorary Junior President Jules has chosen to raise monies to make activity bags for children while their parent(s) are at doctor's appointments. These will be put in the VA Medical Centers and Veterans Homes. Please bring your donation to the Conference so Jules can finalize her project.

LEGION BIRTHDAY

"Happy 96th birthday" American Legion. Units, make sure to plan something fun to recognize your Post and wish them a "Happy Birthday?" We, of the Auxiliary, are proud to serve with you for the purposes upon which our organizations were founded. March is also Community Service month.

MEMBERSHIP

We are still hanging pretty close to the top. This seems to be the time of the year when Minnesota drops very quickly to the bottom of the list. I challenge every Unit member to step up to the plate and help your Membership Chairmen by making one phone call to a member who hasn't renewed her membership, ask a former member to rejoin or sign up a new member. Always remember to have one of those application forms handy in your purse "just in case". Let's make President Chris very proud and get our membership back to the top.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

Our Department Convention is coming up fast and will be held July 16-18 at Jackpot Junction Casino in Morton, Minnesota, hosted by the Redwood Falls American Legion Family 38. Further information will be forthcoming. Our appreciation is sent, in advance, to all the Legion and Auxiliary members who will be serving on the convention committee for their efforts to ensure another outstanding Department Convention. Circle these dates on your calendar and plan to attend.

Don't forget the Poppy contests that will be held at the Department Convention. They are Butterfly Garden Basket & Bouquet in a vase; that best describes "Our Veterans, Past, Present and Future". (Please check the Trophy & Awards for all specifics) Entries must be at the Department Convention on Thursday, July 16th. Both of these contests are easy to participate in. Get your thinking caps on and start creating.

DIRECT BILLING INFORMATION

All Units received a request for information on

your Unit's 2016 dues. This information is due in the Department office by March 15th. If your Unit has not yet responded, please send in the information. The form is on the mnala.org website under the Forms tab and select 2016 Unit Data Form Direct Billing. When setting your 2016 dues please keep in mind the National and Department dues of \$18.00 per person so your Unit dues should be greater than that so you have some working capital in your Units. If we haven't received your form, a second notice will be in the next Unit mailing.

LET'S NOT FORGET THEM

Sometimes in our rush we overlook some important people who need us - our own Auxiliary members. There are many of our members who cannot attend meetings or Unit functions, can't leave their homes due to illness, weather or age and would appreciate a visit from an Auxiliary member. In our efforts to serve others, let's not forget our own members who need us and contact them only when their "dues are due". Make an effort to do something special for them.

2015 POPPY UPDATE

Poppy time is fast approaching. To date, 375 out of 444 Units have ordered their 2015 small and/or large Poppies. To the remaining 69 units, please place your orders now.

Shipment of Poppy orders began as orders were received, processed, and Poppies were available. We are shipping orders based on the 'needed by' date reported by the Unit when the Poppies were ordered. Be certain to check your order upon receipt and contact the Department office if there are any discrepancies. A Unit may order additional Poppies at any time, right up to Poppy Day.

Let's hope it won't be long before every Unit has ordered its 2015 small Poppies and becomes involved in one of the oldest and most widely recognized programs of the American Legion Auxiliary.

GIRLS STATE

Will your Unit be sponsoring a candidate to the 2015 session of American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State? Plans are in progress with many changes for the upcoming session. Have you contacted your local high school to begin the selection process? They are waiting to hear from you. Units should work together to make certain every school in their area is contacted and has the opportunity to have someone participate in Girls State.

Consider personal interviews, essays or speeches as ways to make your final selection. It is the Unit's responsibility, not the school's, to choose the girl who will be attending.

Remember your application for reservation and your \$300.00 registration fee must be received by March 31st to reserve a place for your American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State citizen. If your Unit has not yet sent this in, please take care of it immediately. Reservations with the payment of the \$300.00 registration fee for each candidate will be accepted on a "first-come-first served" basis. Upon processing your Unit's reservation fee you will receive the necessary registration packet for each citizen you are sponsoring. American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State can accommodate 445 citizens.

A Unit may send as many young women to American Legion Auxiliary Girls State as they wish to. The candidate must be a Minnesota resident, attend a Minnesota school or home school.

Thank you

We would like to send a message of appreciation for all the expressions of sympathy after the death of our father, Harold Goepferd. Our American Legion Family was always special to Harold and he enjoyed visiting with people as he took their blood pressure. The Legion Family continues to be special to the entire family.

Norma and Al Tramm
Cindy Goepferd
Wayne and Cathy Goepferd
and families

Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

The 2015 session of American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will again be held at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, June 7-12. We look forward to the 69th annual American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State week and another educational and successful session.

PRESIDENT'S PROJECT

Department President Chris Ronning appreciates your support of her special Department President's Projects this year. Her projects are raising funds for patio furniture and a grill for the Adult Day Care Center for Veterans at the Minneapolis Veteran's home; she also would like to raise \$10,000.00 for the Creative Arts Festival at the St. Cloud and Minneapolis VA's to help Veterans attend the Creative Arts Festival which is held annually in different states. She also would like for every District to collect items, which can be paper products, nonperishable items, gas cards, cards for Target or Walmart for their personal needs. Many stay beyond one or two months at a time and need our help with items that the Fisher House can't provide. If you haven't contributed to her project yet, there is still time.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications for all scholarships awarded by the Department are due by March 15th. Announcement of the recipients will appear in this column when the judging is completed. Make sure and follow all of the rules on the application. We don't want our students disqualified because something isn't signed.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual report time is fast approaching. All Units should be preparing their reports covering the time period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. The white and all yellow copies of all reports must be mailed to the Department office on or before April 15th. No matter how much or how little your Unit has been able to contribute in time, energy, resources and talent to our programs, it is important that everything be included in your reports. Your reports make up our Department and National reports. You have all received your forms - let's have a 100% turn in this year. The Department Office has listened and changed the Unit forms back to the old form of reporting. We hope this will encourage more Units to fill them out.

Department citations will be awarded to all Units that have attained their Unit membership goal and have filed a complete set of annual reports by April 15th.

Certificates of Merit will be awarded to Units by various Department Chairmen based on the Unit annual reports. Membership goal is not required to be considered for a certificate of merit.

REPORTING INDIVIDUAL HOURS

Included in the Annual Reports packet there were forms to report individual members hours under Service to Veterans. This is the combination of Home and Field Service. You no longer have to try and figure out which hours go where. Be sure to complete these forms and return them to the Department office when you send in your annual reports. The permanent records for each individual's hours are updated from these forms, not the report forms.

A special information sheet was included in the instructions describing the various types of hours and what program they should be credited to.

If any instructor has held a leadership orientation course this year, be certain you have sent in the names of those taking the course to the Department office so our records can be updated. When sending in any individual member's hours for leadership, please include the member's ID #, her Unit # and location, as well as her complete address. We need this information to credit the hours to the proper person.

SECRETARY SANDIE'S NOTES

By the time you read this we will have completed our National President's tour. I took over for President Chris' chauffeur Marland and drove the group to all the stops. It was a very memorable experience and it was wonderful to see so many turn out to see National President Janet. She is truly a wonderful, dedicated member of our organization.

My office staff is going gangbusters here - Jan is getting into bookkeeping, Julie is answering questions on her own and I am working diligently on our Girls State Program. We keep real busy here but still like to hear from you now and then. Don't hesitate to call if you have any questions - if we don't have the answer we will dig until we find them.

A very cordial "Happy St. Patrick's Day" to all of you Irish and honorary Irish like myself. I wish The American Legion a very Happy Birthday as well.

Children and Youth

The Children and Youth Program emphasizes protecting, caring for and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans' and military families.

The Children and Youth Program is a Legion Family Program with each of the different parts of the Legion Family supporting it and working it.

In every community there are children of all ages and from all walks of life, each one of them need the support and protection that the Auxiliary members can give.

Auxiliary members support this program by teaching our Children and Youth about the importance of our Constitution, what patriotism is and why it is so important.

The "Star Spangled Kids" program does this. Units can develop Citizenship Certificates, distribute Pocket Constitutions to school children, and put on skits.

Auxiliary members help sponsor Operation Military Kids camps or host "Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2."

Units can increase the awareness of Veterans Children, and help the communities understand the special needs to our Military children. Working with other organizations in your community helps everyone to get the word out and in the progress of helping our Military Children and Youth you help all the Children and Youth in the community.

Some of the ways to support the Children and Youth Program are: American Child Welfare Foundation, Forgotten Children's Fund, Legionville and OMK (Operation Military Kids)

Awards for our youth are: Youth Hero Award, Good Deed Award, both of these any unit can submit names for.



RALEEN TOLZMAN
Chairman

Community Service

Community Service is one of the strongest programs in the American Legion Auxiliary and a favorite of many of our members. For the last several years, National stressed supporting our mission statement by asking us to emphasize caring for Veterans as well as active duty military members and their families in our community service work. I received a letter from Nebraska's Virginia Nelsen, Northwest Division Community Service Chairman, with the news, "This year we are going back to the way we used to do it." In other words, we will receive full credit on our annual reports for any of our community service efforts. I know Auxiliary ladies are volunteering at blood banks, food pantries, free community meals, public libraries, senior care facilities, planting flowers in city parks, participating in fundraising walks.

Another new aspect of the American Legion Auxiliary Community Service Program encourages us to cooperate in community projects with other civic groups. A photograph sent by NW Division Chairman Virginia showed Auxiliary ladies, members of the Rotary Club, Catholic Guild members and high school students working together at a blood drive. The Auxiliary ladies wore Auxiliary shirts and their Auxiliary pins. When you wear your ALA gear while volunteering, others will ask about it.

I appreciate all the units who have sent me information and photographs showing community service projects. Consider passing around a notebook at your meetings where members can record their volunteer activities and hours. This will make filling out your community report much easier. Thank you, Auxiliary angels. Remember: Each volunteer activity is a blessing to the individuals served and makes your community a better place to live.



MARY HENDRICKSON
Chairman

Feb. 17, 2015, Auxiliary Membership

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year
One	5,847	4,670	79.87%	4,909
Two	5,693	4,556	80.03%	4,837
Three	5,019	4,085	81.39%	4,192
Four	870	669	76.90%	708
Five	1,019	776	76.15%	904
Six	7,072	5,650	79.89%	5,935
Seven	4,565	3,696	80.96%	3,908
Eight	1,956	1,502	76.79%	1,626
Nine	5,060	4,027	79.58%	4,315
Ten	6,022	4,799	79.69%	4,999
1982	174	123	70.69%	142
Totals	43,297	34,553	79.80%	36,475

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- 4-Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- Delta Air Flights between Minneapolis & Anchorage
- 7 Nights Quality Accommodations
- 12 Meals including an Alaskan Salmon Bake
- Iditarod Travel Headquarters
- Travel the Alaska Railroad between Talkeetna and Denali Park
- Denali Park Natural History Tour
- Riverboat Discovery Cruise
- Chena Indian Village
- Sled Dog Demonstration
- Pan for gold at the Gold Dredge #8
- Prince William Sound Cruise
- Mears Glacier

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Alaska Tour and Cruise August 7-19, 2015



Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Tour Director, Jenny Gilbertson
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis to Fairbanks and return from Vancouver to Minneapolis
- Accommodations at superior and deluxe hotels
- All sightseeing/entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary
- A 7-night southbound cruise on the Coral Princess
- All meals and entertainment while aboard the Coral Princess
- Cruise gratuities
- All transfers to and from the airport and pier

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Branson June 15-19, 2015



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- Deluxe Motor Coach Transportation
- 4 Nights accommodations
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New York City Theater June 24-28, 2015



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- Escorted by Glen Parsons and 4-Seasons Tour Director, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis to New York City
- 1 night pre-departure hotel accommodations in Minneapolis
- 3 nights accommodation at Row NYC
- Lunch at Carmine's on Broadway
- Manhattan Island city tour
- Broadway performance, "Aladdin"
- Broadway performance, "Lion King"
- 9/11 Memorial and Museum
- Harbor Cruise with lunch

\$2,279.00 per person double occupancy

Autumn in New England September 29-October 7, 2015



Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- Roundtrip Delta Airline flights between Minneapolis and Boston
- 8 Nights quality accommodations
- 15 Meals
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