



# Legionnaire

Volume 96, Number 4

For God and Country

April 2014

## Beer company makes pitch to state Legion

The Executive Committee of the Minnesota American Legion in March got an update from a beer company trying to partner with posts in the state.

Founding Fathers Brewing Co. executives told the Legion executives that they expect to start making beer by May 1.

The company in recent weeks had agreed to a partnership with the national American Legion that would give 50 percent of the profits of Founding Fathers beer sold in Legion posts back to The American Legion.

Bob Stephenson, the head of sales for the brewery, and Phil Knutsen, the CEO, said the exact split between National, Department and the local posts has not yet been determined, but they predicted that if 250 posts in the state serve the beer, \$60,000 annually would be donated to The American Legion.

Knutsen said contact was being made with the bar managers at the posts, and he encouraged Legionnaires and post officers to request that their posts carry the beer.

He compared the company to Newman's Own, a company that makes high quality products and then turns over the profits to charities.

Stephenson noted that the top 10 selling beers in  
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## Washington Conference



Minnesota American Legion Legislative Chairman Bob Hart, left, and Sen. Al Franken, right front, talk veterans' issues at Franken's office in Washington D.C. Included in the Minnesota delegation were, from left in back: Hart, Kris Nelson, Ray DeZurik, Shirley Frederick, Chris Ronning, and Mike Ash. Randy Tesdahl is seated next to Franken. More pictures and a story on page 11.

## Rochester will host Legion convention

This year's Minnesota American Legion and Auxiliary Conventions will be held in Rochester, home of the world-famous Mayo Clinic.

The conventions will be held July 17-19. The Legion meeting will be at the Mayo Civic Center and the Auxiliary will convene at the Kahler Grand Hotel.

Three hotels have been designated for the convention, and delegates and others must make their own reservations. The Kahler Grand Hotel has rooms for \$79, \$89, \$129 and \$299. For reservations, call 1-800-533-1655. The Kahler Inn and Suites has rooms for \$89 and reservations can be made at the same number.

The Marriott has a standard room at \$129, and very few rooms are still left. The number is 1-877-623-7775.

A registration form is on page 3 of this issue and there is a \$15 registration fee per person. That will go up to \$18 at the door.

There is complimentary parking in the Kahler Grand and Center Street ramps.

On Wednesday, July 16, there will be registration at Post 92 in Rochester. The post will also host a burger night on  
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## Marshall student is Eagle Scout of Year

Troy Timmerman, a senior at Marshall High School, has been selected as Eagle Scout of the Year by the Minnesota American Legion.

He was eligible for the award through the service of his grandfather, Edward Engelken.

Timmerman is in the top 96 percent of his class. He received his Eagle at the end of 2012.

His Eagle project was to build eight primitive campsites at Garvin Park. The project included surveying, building eight pic-



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**TROY TIMMERMAN**

## Exiting Gallucci: 'I told them I was a frank person'

Former MDVA Deputy Commissioner Mike Gallucci likes to tell it like it is.

He believes the Minnesota Veterans Homes, under his watch, have done well and will continue to improve. He also had some harsh words for the Minnesota Legislature.

Gallucci has left his position in March after a two-year stint for personal reasons, in part to take care of his aging father back in Florida. No replacement has been announced at this time.

"We're really in excellent condition. Before I got here, there was a huge focus on health care, and rightfully so. I think we've sustained and exceeded in that area.

"My challenge was to put a structure

into what we do on a daily basis. We are a much more coherent team, we talk to each other as a team, and the employees are empowered to do their job. We allow them to think outside the box and be creative."

While each of the five state veterans homes has its own identity, he said, an effort has been made to have the 1,100 employees work together.

He pointed to a centralized pharmacy that has both benefitted veterans and saved money as an example.

The state is also moving forward, he said, in allowing veterans to use Medicare and Medicaid if they wish to help with expenses. The new nursing facilities at the Minneapolis home will be certified for federal benefits, and a  
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**MICHAEL GALLUCCI**  
Former Deputy Commissioner of the MDVA



**Glider Pilot made three landings in WWII combat**  
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# Gallucci

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process is going on at Silver Bay to make that facility certified. The other homes in Fergus Falls, Luverne and Hastings will follow.

And he pointed to the new Adult Day Center at the Minneapolis campus as a huge breakthrough in veterans care.

Gallucci admits things have sometimes been rocky under his watch. "I don't think it's ever going to be smooth."

The ongoing relationship with the Minnesota Legislature, he said, "has been one of the biggest challenges."

"We need the acknowledgement and respect of the Legislature. They need to step out from the past."

The past includes severe problems at the Minneapolis home that resulted in a series of investigations and led to a commission report in 2007 that called for replacement of much of the home's aging infrastructure.

Gallucci said that the problems experienced in the last decade at the Minneapolis Home have, for the most part, been overcome. "But there are certain people who don't know or don't care to know the improvements we've made. And that's a lack of respect to the employees of the homes and to the entire agency."

He cited the opposition to the funding for Phase III, part of a large plan to replace 300 beds at the Minneapolis facility with state of the art infrastructure. The funding for the final phase of the project was in jeopardy up to the last few hours of the 2013 session, and legislators cited the high cost per room of the \$115 million-plus project.

Gallucci was surprised at the opposition since two of the leading lawmakers had served on committees that approved the overall project several years ago.

Gallucci said the Legislature must not just focus on immediate challenges, but also on the long term. "The important questions revolve around a new generation of veterans who will be using state systems for the next 40 or 50 years. We can't think of just what we're doing now, but we need to properly position ourselves for the future."

He said that one legislative plan would be to build "little homes" across the state that would serve 10-12 veterans. "It looks nice on paper, but whose going to oversee them? What will be the ultimate cost?"

Gallucci cited one other recent example where he said he was explaining to a legislative chair that patients at veterans homes only get \$90 a month in spending money, an amount fixed in 1997. Gallucci asked that the amount be raised to \$125 a month.

"The legislator asked me what they would be spending it on. She wondered if they were going to spend it on beer. We're talking about 80 cents a day, and she's wondering if these veterans are going to spend it on beer?"

During his tenure, Gallucci was accused by a former employee of the MDVA in a letter to Governor Dayton of being "intimidating and adversarial."

The former Army command sergeant major smiled at the label. "When they hired me, I told them I was a frank person. I'm not a yes man. I'm the guy in the room who will tell you that the baby is ugly."

"But I also acknowledge good work. The first thing I did when I got here was to reinstate the employee service awards. It's important that we tell employees that they're important."

What advice does he have for his replacement?

"There are challenges ahead, and one of them is dealing with the knee-jerk Legislature. It doesn't matter what the issue is: veterans, schools, taxes, the Viking Stadium. Everything is knee-jerk. I don't believe they think through the entire process."

"I would tell my successor that your job is to take care of the veterans and make sure you support the employees. Everything after that is negotiable."

Gallucci said the job of the Veterans Homes is to take care of "our living heroes. But the employees are also heroes because they're taking care of the veterans. Every day they need to do their job better than they did the day before."

Summing it up?

"It's been a great job – everything I hoped it would be. In these last two years, we've seen great steps taken. We have a great team, a solid team."

No timetable has been set for hiring Gallucci's replacement. In the meantime, the homes will be overseen by Robin Gaustad, the senior director of veteran's health care at the MDVA.



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# Eagle Scout

Continued from Page 1

nic tables, installing eight fire rings, and eight site markers. The project took 241 man hours. Over 35 people helped in the project. The project cost \$3,686.

In the community, Timmerman belongs to the Sons of the American Legion, Pheasants Forever, and he was a delegate to Boys State this past year.

At school, he has been in marching band, Business Professionals of America, Pep and Jazz bands, Math team, theater and he is the class treasurer. He is the team captain for Knowledge Bowl and vice president of the National Honor Society.

He is the leader of the trumpet section in the band, he has played taps at the funerals of veterans.

He attends Holy Redeemer Parish and has been a lector, altar server, and trumpet player for special masses.

Timmerman's goal is to get a degree in chemical engineering and develop fuels and polymers from biomass.

He is a cousin of Jason Timmerman, a Minnesota National Guard Member who was killed in Iraq in 2005. "Jason is a hero and in my life my goal is to be like him. I want to serve others, be a leader, love our country and have faith in God like he did."

## Minneapolis VA doctor wins national recognition

Timothy J. Wilt, M.D., M.P.H., is the recipient of the 2014 VA Under Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research, which looks at the quality of care and how it is delivered.

Dr. Wilt is a staff physician at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System and professor of medicine at the University of Minnesota Medical School; he's also a core investigator with Minneapolis VA's Center for Chronic Disease Outcomes Research (CCDOR).

Dr. Wilt received his medical degree from the University of Illinois, completing his Internal Medicine residency at the University of Minnesota, where he also earned his Masters in Public Health degree in Epidemiology. Since 1987, Dr. Wilt has worked in General Medicine at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center.

Dr. Wilt has conducted research, particularly in synthesizing the evidence to provide clarity on several important issues. For example, he identified high-value diagnostic and treatment approaches for individuals with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); established a more targeted role for antiviral therapy in

individuals with chronic Hepatitis B infection; and ascertained an absence of evidence to support routine-screening for delirium in hospitalized adults.

Dr. Wilt's work has led to the development of national

practice guidelines to implement high-value, cost-conscious healthcare, particularly in the area of screening. For example, his Prostate Cancer Intervention Versus Observation Trial (PIVOT), published as the lead article in the July 25, 2012 issue of The New England Journal of Medicine, demonstrated the lack of benefit and increased harms associated with radical prostatectomy for many men with localized prostate cancer compared to observation.

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# Beer, Exec

Continued from Page 1

America are all owned by foreign companies. Founding Fathers will be targeting that market, and will produce amber, light and pale beers.

The company is based in Minnesota, but has access to breweries across the nation.

The company will start with kegs and bottles and will introduce 16 ounce cans in early summer.

In other business:

-- Brain Science Chairman Jim Kellogg, Taopi, said the Minnesota American Legion has been invited into the Trustee Society for the University of Minnesota. The Brain Science Foundation, which has about \$2 million in its fund has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to the University to maintain the Brain Sciences Chair at the University. The Brain Sciences Center is located at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. Kellogg said the Brain Sciences Center was working on cutting edge research into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Gulf War Veterans Illness, health aging in women veterans, resilience to trauma, and a new study of biomarkers or PTSD and resilience in women veterans.

-- A report was read on the progress at Legionville, where a new training center building is being completed. The electrical systems have been installed and the heating and air conditioning systems should be done shortly. Volunteers are needed for putting up the sheet rock and taping in the next few weeks. Contact Wayne Gilbertson or Roy Kruger for more information.

-- Bill Barbknecht, Underwood, gave a report on Legionnaire Insurance Trust and USAA insurance programs. He said in the last year, \$280,000 has been donated by the two companies to the Minnesota American Legion.

-- A report on Veterans 4 Veterans was given by Marland Ronning, Maple Grove, one of the Department's representatives on the V4V board. He said that the V4V is seeking legislative approval for changing its bylaws to allow the committee to remove a member with a two-thirds vote. The state commander of the organization the board member came from would then appoint a new member. The V4V has eight members, two each from the Legion, VFW, DAV and Military Order of the Purple Heart.

-- The Strategic Planning Committee report was given by Dan Williams, St. Paul. He said there was an effort being made to work with the Minnesota State High School League to create a week early in the summer where sports camps would not be held so that programs like Boys State and Girls State could be held without losing participants.

-- Department Service Officer Tom Newman, Hugo, said his office processes 150-200 veterans inquiries every month.

-- Membership Director Tom Fernlund, St. Cloud, said the state has made all its goals thus far, but is still running about four percent behind last year's membership. "We have a lot of hard work to do."

# Rochester Convention

Continued from Page 1

Wednesday at 5 followed by karaoke or a band at 7. Thursday, there will be a light lunch at noon and a band or karaoke at 7. The schedule will be the same on Friday, and on Saturday there will be the new commander's and new president's receptions following the close of the conventions.

There will be shuttle service throughout the week from the post to the hotels and convention sites. The schedule will be announced later.

An executive committee meeting will be held in conjunction with the convention.

## OFFICIAL CONVENTION PRE-REGISTRATION

A registration fee of \$15 for each person attending, whether a delegate, alternate or a guest, must accompany this form. Make this check payable to POST 92 CONVENTION FUND. No credit cards will be accepted.

Registration at the door will be \$18.

Mail to:  
Bill Born, American Legion Post 92 Office, 403 East Center St. Rochester, MN 55904

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Delegate  Alternate  Guest

Delegate at Large (Auxiliary)

(Please check one of the above.)

If additional pre-registrations accompany this request, this pre-registration form should be photo copied for each person. The \$15 registration fee should be enclosed for each person.



**SPEAKING OUT** -- Past National Commander Dan Ludwig of Red Wing took the floor at the Executive Committee meeting at Richfield Post. He praised the work of the Brain Science Foundation in being honored by the University of Minnesota.

-- Legislative Chair Bob Hart, Stillwater, said it looked like it would be a simple legislative session, "but now we have 30 different veterans issues coming from different directions. It's an election year, and there's a certain amount of grandstanding going on." Hart said the Department was opposed to a plan that would tier the admissions to state veterans homes to allow disabled veterans priority. "Make no mistake about it, it's a grab for federal funds."

-- Public Relations Chair Teresa Ash, St. Paul, said the Department-wide effort to increase the Legion's use of social media, such as Facebook, has been a great success. Each district this year was given an I-pad to help produce news for district and state Facebook pages.

-- The revocation of a charter for Darfur Post 549 was

## Minnesota Legion helps find veteran in Arizona

Department Commander Mike Ash led a multi-department effort to find a missing uncle.

It all began when one of Ash's co-workers at the Minneapolis Schools said that her family had lost track of their Uncle Bud

Pederson in Arizona. He was a World War II Navy veteran, and the co-worker wondered if the American Legion could help.

Ash contacted the commander for the Department of Arizona, Judith Beischel, and asked if the Arizona Legion could help. The family knew the uncle was in Tuscon.

A member of a Tuscon post went to a nursing home herself and located Uncle Bud.

It turns out that he was in good health and good spirits but lacking certain clothing items.

On a subsequent visit a nurse was brought along.

Uncle Bud wasn't wearing his usual glasses, and the Lions Club was contacted. They agreed to get him new glasses and a hearing aid.

A local eye doctor volunteered to go to the nursing home and do a check up on Uncle Bud.

"I wrote an email to the Department Commander in Arizona and a miracle happened. The only thing missing was Jimmy Stewart," Ash said.

"I have never been prouder to be a member of the American Legion than I am today," Ash wrote to the Arizona people who visited and helped Uncle Bud.

"Weith one simple email from Minnesota asking for a visit to a veteran feared forgotten, and the flood gates of kindness opened in Arizona."

accepted by the Executive Committee. The Department was still go through a process to see if the post can be saved, and a final action will probably be taken at the next committee meeting.

-- Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl, St. Francis, reported that the Convention Corporation is still working on a plan to centralize the Fall Conference into one place, such as St. Cloud or Brainerd. He said the Department may be moving to a new era were districts and not posts host conventions and conferences.

-- Tesdahl also reported that an after-parade gathering may be held this year in cooperation with other states who are in the same hotel at the National Convention in Charlotte.

-- Past Department Commander Roger K. Olson, who sits on the National Resolutions Assignment Committee, said Minnesota needs to do a better job in creating and passing resolutions to send to the national convention for consideration. "Apparently everything is great for our veterans in Minnesota. If they're not, we need to get involved." Department Commander Mike Ash said, "If we don't care, we'll get exactly what we didn't work for. If we don't go up there and fight for our rights, we'll lose them."

-- The next Executive Committee meeting will be at the state convention in Rochester.

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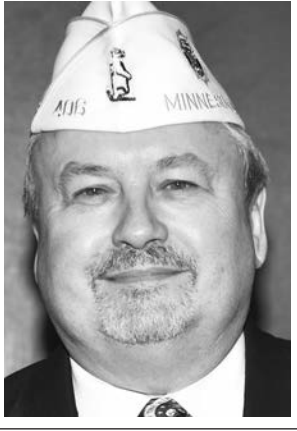
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## COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Mike Ash



March was a busy month. Along with the celebrations for the 95th birthday of the American Legion, the political season also kicked into full gear. I want to thank all the posts that invited me to their American Legion birthday dinners – they were all good times and Legionville came out ahead at a number of them.

I got to testify on “the hill” in front of the Veterans Affairs Committee to oppose a change on the entrance requirements into Minnesota’s veteran’s homes. Currently, after the deputy commissioner reviews and approves the request for entrance into the home, the veteran or spouse is placed on a waiting list (in other words, first come/first served) – this is the fairest method around. However, a select committee was formed last year, looked at how other states were using other standards for admitting veterans and recommended a priority system, much like the VA Hospital. The highest group would be those veterans who received a federal per diem, which means the state would be able to collect that per diem, thus reducing their budget and helping to balance the state budget on the backs of veterans. Furthermore, it would place the spouses on the very bottom of the list, effectively removing another spouse from ever entering a veteran’s home. The current system is fair and supports the contention that a veteran is a veteran. Furthermore, it pays the proper respect to spouses, who were often left alone during our deployments or uprooted and placed in foreign locations to provide support for the family.

## Editorial

### Why we oppose the Honor and Remember flag

I am writing regarding the Honor and Remember Flag and House File 68/ Senate File 208 in the Minnesota Legislature. This is a very sensitive issue and very emotionally driven. No one is lessening that in any way. We are only asking that logic be used in how this legislation is treated.

The American Legion certainly honors the service and sacrifice of all who have served -- especially those, and the families of those, that have given the last full measure in combat.

The past few years there has been a movement to legislate a flag specifically to recognize them, the Honor and Remember Flag. A resolution to support the flag was brought to the American Legion’s national convention, was heard, debated and did not prevail. It is my understanding that a similar resolution met the same result with the National Convention of the VFW.

The two overwhelming issues of opposition have been:

First, every service member, at time of enlistment takes an oath to serve and defend our nation, with our right hand raised before the Stars and Stripes.. We all served under that flag, some fought under that flag and, unfortunately, some died under that flag. All veterans are buried under that one flag, Old Glory. Supporters of the Honor and Remember Flag attest that they do not intend to diminish that in any way. However to legislate a second flag in fact does just that.

The second issue is about business. One company owns the copyright to the Honor and Remember Flag. There is

## Mail Call

### Remembering Patton

To the Editor:

Read your March Legionnaire issue and noted the Eisenhower/Bradley/Patton entry.

Like thousands of others, never met but knew of them when serving in the ETO. Was in a 14th Armored Division combat engineer unit at a pontoon bridge when a medium tank convoy got stopped. Don't remember the river. There was Patton, pearl handled six guns and all.

He was ticked because the tanks had welded-on sand bag supports to protect against panzer-fausts. Extra weight slows the tanks and wastes gas -- therefore the reason for his anger. He ordered the racks be taken off before moving

I also attended the Washington Conference to attend National Commander Dan Dellinger’s testimony to Veteran’s Affairs Committee and speak with our representatives in D.C. After speaking with them, I’m convinced more than ever that we must follow-up on the lip service of all our representatives. After you speak with any legislative representative, I ask that you follow-up to see how that individual voted on the issue. Far too many times, veterans and those that support veteran’s issues are disrespected directly by politicians who tell us one thing and do another. Remember, we are a non-partisan organization, but because lying is not the singular property of any party, follow the advice of former President Ronald Reagan who said “Trust but verify.” As National Commander Dellinger said when asked “Who do you blame for the government shutdown, Republicans or Democrats?” He said in a totally non-partisan response “I don’t blame the left or right. I blame the House, the Senate and the President for failing to do what they were sent to Washington to do.”

My project at Legionville (the completion of the new Education Building) is moving along and the camp is looking forward to a “Grand Re-opening” in the coming months. With the plumbing and electrical roughed-in, after hanging/taping/painting of the sheetrock and a little trim work, they should be up and running for the first eager crew of School Safety patrol and other students this summer. Please remember to donate when you can – also, if you’ve always had a secret desire to help hang sheetrock or paint, contact Camp Manager Roy Kruger and he may be able to make those dreams come true.

I want to encourage you to get a copy of your military service records (at least a copy of your DD214 or discharge papers from military service). I just worked with a family that was working to get a deceased family member buried at Fort Snelling, they were able to obtain the records, but only after some work and they were charged to have them printed and mailed (\$25+). A veteran can obtain a copy of his or her records for free. So for the peace of mind for your family and to save a couple of bucks, think about going online to <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records> and requesting a copy – or if you don’t “do computers” check with your county veterans service officer or one of our outstanding Department Service Officers.

concern as to profit and or gain. If legislation encourages state and federal offices to fly the flag, and encourages that the flag be presented to the families of those who die in combat operations, is it right that one company should control the rights to that flag?

This is unlike the POW/MIA flag that is recognized under public law and like the U.S. Flag -- neither of which are controlled by one corporate entity.

No one would ever question or raise concern if the Honor and Remember Flag was given to a Gold Star family at a service if requested by the family. I have been to funerals where a Harley Davidson banner was displayed off to the side in respect for that person’s love and dedication to riding. It is not a question of respect and honor; by all means make available what the family asks for at the service as long as it follows respect and a certain degree of decorum. If a family wants to have an Honor and Remember flag at a funeral, that is their choice. But legislating this is just not right. How many other companies would love the state legislature to pass similar legislation for their products? We only ask that logic and common sense be used on the two issues we have brought up. First, we only have one national flag, and nothing should diminish the honor and respect that flag deserves. Second, legislation that supports one company, no matter how good the motives might be, is wrong and sets a dangerous precedent.

Randy Tesdahl  
Department Adjutant

on. What made it worse was one of the units was towing a captured German command car that got hung up on a mid-stream pontoon. Patton gave a “get traffic moving or else order” and the command car got pushed over the down-river side. I was attached to his Third Army when he started the push toward Berlin until ordered to stop. Was at the crossing, a T, shortly after he was killed. Don't remember the town.

Bill Everling

## Chaplain's Corner

By  
Richard Wog



By the time this gets to you the long cold winter will be gone and another season will be beginning. I always marvel at how I look forward to a new season, especially spring because it starts the planting season. Farmers are busy, people planting gardens or seeding their lawns, getting ready for summer when we kind of stand back and watch things grow. It is also a time to enjoy spending time with your family and friends. I have to think about other family also. Part of the Legion family comes to my mind. It starts with the four pillars. They are so important, but family always comes to my mind. I know just how important family is to each of us. Family is always first. We are coming to another time for all, Easter. For some, including me, it is not the meaning but the time. Sometimes Easter is late and sometimes it’s early; so I thought I would Google it up. (It sounds like I know what I’m doing, but not really.) When I did Google Easter, I ended up shutting it down. There are so many ideas and facts, as they would say. I used another book to find out some of the answers. I looked the meaning of Easter up in the Webster Collegiate Dictionary. It read, “A Christian festival commemorating the resurrection of Christ. The day on which this festival is celebrated is the Sunday immediately after the first full moon that occurs on or after March 21st”. The Bible Dictionary read almost the same but it also added in the early centuries the annual observance was called Pascha, the Greek work for Passover and focused on Christ as the Paschal Lamb. Easter is a time for family to be together and a time to give thanks to your God; for the sacrifice that was made for each of us so that our sins may be forgiven. As a family, let each of us be forever grateful for what we have been given through Him. As a child, I remember getting up Easter morning and my brother and I would search for Easter eggs and then we would go to church. Sometimes we would be with extended family, but there were times we were not able to be together. Being with extended family was not as important, because my brother and parents and I were together as a family and to my parents that was very important; the same as today.

It seems that there is so much strife and problems in the world today. I have always asked in my prayers that we as a world would be able to live in peace and harmony with each other. But it seems like others want what others have and will use force to get what they want; not thinking what harm it is doing to the people of their country. How will their children grow up? This past year there has been a lot of unrest which brought uprisings and overthrowing or trying to overthrow governments, so that life may be better for them and their children. Maybe, just maybe, it will come to be. One can only pray it will happen. As we come to this blessed time of Easter, may each of us reflect on what we have and the sacrifice that was made for you and for others.

I want to thank the Hutchinson post for their invitation to speak at their Legion birthday dinner, seeing the awards and pins given out was outstanding. I also want to thank Eden Valley post for the wonderful breakfast. It was good to see old friends and meet new ones. It is always great to talk to the Veterans about the wars they were in. As always, pray for our soldiers as they serve for our freedom. Have a very blessed Easter.

## The Minnesota Legionnaire

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

Al Zdon, Editor

First published in 1920 as the Hennepin County Legionnaire, the Minnesota Legionnaire is now in its 95th year of publication. It is published monthly by The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, Room 300A, 20 West 12th Street, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000. Periodicals postage is paid at St. Paul, MN, and at additional mailing offices. The Legionnaire is a member of the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the National American Legion Press Association.

**SUBSCRIPTION:** \$10 for non-members. Members receive the Legionnaire as part of their dues.

**PHONE:** 651-291-1800, 866-259-9163, **FAX:** 651-291-1057  
**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to The American Legion, 20 W. 12th Street, St. Paul, MN, 55155-2000. (USPS No. 013-679.) (ISSN No. 1644270)

**ADVERTISING RATES:** Contact Al Zdon, 651-291-1800

**E-MAIL:** [azdon@mnlegion.org](mailto:azdon@mnlegion.org)

**WEBSITE:** [www.mnlegion.org](http://www.mnlegion.org)

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# What's Happening

## Legion Day at Twins

The 14th annual American Legion Family Day at the Twins will be held at Target Field on June 7. The game is against the Houston Astros at 1:10 p.m. To purchase tickets, call the Twins at 1-800-33-TWINS, hit "O" to speak to an attendant, and tell them you want the American Legion Day discount. Tickets are \$20 in the Skyline View section.

Department Commander Mike Ash will be throwing out the first pitch and the Legion will also have the U.S. Flag raiser at the game. The first 10,000 fans that day will receive a Gardy Gnome.

## Vietnam Reunion

A Vietnam and Era Reunion will be held in Deadwood, S.D., on May 2-4 sponsored by VVA Chapters 463 and 1039. The event will feature a social, banquet, dance, auction, and memorial service. For more information contact Virgil at virgil@rushmore.com. Registration is \$50.

## Second District Convention

The Second District Convention has been changed to June 6-7. It will be held in New Ulm

## Veteran's photo sought

The last person to leave the Arizona on Dec. 7, 1941, was Alvin Dvorak of Minnesota. He later died of burns on a hospital ship. Researchers are seeking a photo of Dvorak. He lived in Park Township in Pine County near Bruno in 1940. If you have information, call Al Wolter, 320-384-6989.

## MACV Standdown

There will be a StandDown at the Fergus Falls Armory on April 24, 2014 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with all veterans welcome. The event will include a legal clinic, StandDown Court, meals, clothing, benefit information, claims and services, employment assistance, etc. For more information, call MACV at 218-722-8763.

## Military Ball

The 10th annual Military Ball will be held April 12 at the Fest Building in Spring Grove. It will include dinner, a ceremony, entertainment, displays, photo portraits and more. Cost is \$27 per person. For more information, call 507-206-6701 or email: houstonmilitaryball@yahoo.com.

## Commander's Testimonial

The testimonial for Department Commander Mike Ash will be held Saturday, May 22, at the Rosetown Memorial Post. The featured speaker for the evening will be Past National Commander Butch Miller. Tickets are \$25 per person and can be obtained by calling Connie Anderson at 651-483-1597 or emailing at jimandconniea@msn.com. Checks should be made out to Christe DeParcq Post 406. Checks can be mailed to Connie at 2921 Payne Ave., Little Canada, MN 55117. There is limited seating.

## Poetry Contest

Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., is sponsoring the third annual poetry contest for Minnesota students. The theme this year is "Celebrating the Veteran in My Life." The contest is open to the children of military families in Minnesota, grades K-12. There will be three age categories, K-6, 7-9 and 10-12 grades. Deadline is April 18. Send entries to poetry@franken.senate.gov or by mail to Sen. Al Franken, c/o poetry Contest, 60 Plato Blvd., East, Suite 220, St. Paul, MN 55107.

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## Golf Tournament

Chanhasen Post 580 and the Minnesota Military Family Foundation will have a 4-person scramble golf tournament on Monday, May 19. It will be held at Deer Run Golf Course and will feature drawings, social hour, auction, dinner, program and awards. Entry is \$500 per team. For more information contact hospcoordinator@americanlegion580.com or call 952-934-6677.

## Owatonna Round Table

A new veterans open round table has been started in Owatonna. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, April 8, at 7 p.m. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Owatonna. The program will feature Jennifer Sanneman who was an abandoned child in Korea during the war. For more information, contact Gene at gene.milang@mygait.com.

## VUMS seeks members

The Veterans of Underage Military Service is seeking members in Minnesota. The organization started in 1991 to honor veterans who joined the military under the age of 17 for men and 20 for women. For more information go to: john499@ptd.net. Or call 888-653-8867 in Pennsylvania.

## Purple Up

April 15 has been designated as a day for people to show support for military-connected youth by wearing purple. An event will be held that day at the Capitol Rotunda in St. Paul at 9 a.m. Those children attending can sign up to receive a letter from the governor recognizing the sacrifices youth make as being part of a military family.

## Sioux Falls Council

The Sioux Falls Health Care system, which serves part of Minnesota, is seeking outpatient veterans who wish to be members of the Veterans Advisory Council. For more information, contact Charlotte McGrath at 605-336-3230, ext. 7747.

## Albert Lea Grand Opening

The new Albert Lea VA Clinic will hold a grand opening on Friday, April 25, from 1-4 p.m. There will be a program at 1, followed by tours and an open house. It will be held at the Skyline Mall, 1665 West Main St. in Albert Lea. It will be the newest CBOC in the state.

## Legion Series on TV

The 2014 championship game of The American Legion World Series in Shelby, N.C. will be broadcast on ESPNU. Earlier games will be featured on the internet service

ESPN3. The tournament format will change to pool play to accommodate the TV coverage.

## Riders Seek Hosts

The Minnesota American Legion Riders have done Legacy Runs in the state for the past four years, raising money for the national Legacy Scholarship. Over \$90,000 has been raised. For 2014, runs will be held on the weekends of Aug. 1-3 and Aug. 8-10. Posts, units, squadrons and chapters are being sought for hosts during the event. Contact Shawn Davis at salshawndavis@gmail.com or call 763-560-5941.

## Clothesline Project

The St. Cloud VA will hold a Clothesline Project on April 22-24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily in the VA Auditorium of Building 8. Those who have been a victim of military sexual trauma, sexual assault or sexual abuse can express their emotions by decorating a shirt. The shirts will then be displayed on a clothesline to be viewed by others. For more information, contact Joy Finkelson, 320-252-1670, ext. 6398. Free shirts are available.

## Palm Sunday Dinner

The 56th annual Palm Sunday Legion Dinner will be held on Sunday, April 13, at the Zumbrota VFW. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$11 at the door. Children 12 and under are \$4 at the door. Pre-schoolers eat free. There will be flag drawings. The meal will be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and tickets are available at several area stores. There will be baked ham and roast beef with pie for dessert.

## Round Tables

The World War II History Round Table at Fort Snelling will feature the "Battle for Rabaul, the Pearl Harbor for the Japanese." The speaker will be Bruce Gamble an expert on the battle and veterans who were there. The meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 10.

The Rochester Round Table will feature "Surviving an Air Raid in Germany: A Young Girl's Story," with Marianne Vrieze, Clyde Taylor, and Bob Richardson. The group will meet on April 14 at 7 p.m. at the Rochester Assembly of God Church.

The St. Croix Civil War Round Table on April 28 will have "Conspiracies and the Murder of Abraham Lincoln" with Dean Urdahl. Call Steve Anderson, 715-386-1268, for more information.

## From Bootcamp to Veteran

The 2014 From Bootcamp to Veteran will be held April 26 on a Saturday from 9-5. All military women past and present are invited for a day of celebrating, socializing and education. It will be held at the Minnesota Humanities Center, 987 Ivy Avenue, St. Paul. The event is free and includes breakfast, classes, yoga, Mary Kay facials, wellness training, and lunch with comedian Jason Schommer. For more information or to register go to www.mnhum.org/bootcamptoveteran.aspx.

## Fort Snelling Rifle Squad invited to Arlington event

The Ft. Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad has been invited to participate in the 2014 Memorial Day Service at Arlington National Cemetery.

The Department of the Army is recognizing the squad's 35th anniversary, the longest and most active record of any similar rifle squad in the nation. Over the years, the squad has performed at over 65,000 burials.

Ten members of the squad will be traveling to Washington DC. They will meet with the commanding general of the event and be orientated on the squad's role in the Memorial Day wreath presentation.

The group will have reserved seating at the Memorial Amphitheater at Arlington and will be recognized for their service.

The Memorial Rifle Squad will then be escorted to a vantage point of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier for the wreath ceremony.

The squad consists of several teams that alternate for funerals at the Minneapolis national cemetery. They perform in all kinds of weather including sub-zero temperatures.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the expenses of this trip should contact Tom Mullon at 651-683-9880.



**OPERATION COMFORT WARRIOR** -- Blaine Robinson, who received a traumatic brain injury Ft. Riley, Kansas, is now a patient at the polytrauma unit at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. Assistant Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller was able to obtain a new I-Pod and new I-Pad for the veteran through the American Legion's Operation Comfort Warrior program. Also shown are the veteran's mother, Cindy Robinson, left, and Erik Stalhandske, the associate director of the VAMC, right.

# Taps

**Terrell, Lee R.**, 89, Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died Feb. 25, 2014. He earned two Purple Hearts on Iwo Jima. He served as Second District Commander from 1991-92 and as Department Vice Commander from 1993-94. He was active in veterans affairs. He was a member of Eagle Lake Post 617 where he was past commander.

**Euteneuer, Donald A.**, Army veteran of World War II, died March 2, 2014. He served as Sixth District Commander from 1971-72 and he held many district chairs. He was a past commander and adjutant of Waite Park Post 428.

**Lindholm, C. Paul**, 88, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Feb. 1, 2014. He was instrumental in the founding and was a past president of the American Legion Heart Foundation. He was commander at Maple Plain Post 514 for 16 years.

**Kluever, Carl**, 65, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 7, 2014. He served in Germany. He was a member of Round Lake Post 461.

**Rosdahl, Robert Owen**, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died March 3, 2014. He served in the Philippines. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

**O'Toole, James B.**, 84, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died March 17, 2014. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Palashewski, Leonard J.**, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 17, 2014. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Mary B. Wuellner**, 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died March 13, 2014. She was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Knowles, Melvin**, 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 15, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Trunk, Edward A.**, 85, Army and Air Force veteran of World War II, died Feb. 21, 2014. He was a past commander and honor guard member of Princeton Post 216.

**Burroughs, James A.**, 77, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died March 4, 2014. He served in England. He was a member of Princeton Post 216.

**Mattila, Wayne V.**, 72, Army and Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 4, 2014. He was in a tank division, and he later was a heavy equipment operator in the Seabees. He served three tours in Vietnam. He was a past commander and member of the honor guard of Deer River Post 122.

**Schlark, Lester E.**, 87, Army veteran of World War II, died March 9, 2014. He served in the Pacific, and with the occupation forces in Japan. He was a past commander of New Richland Post 75.

**Pearson, Francis L.**, 88, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 21, 2014. He served with the 101st Airborne at the Battle of the Bulge. He was shot in the leg and became a POW. He earned the Purple Heart. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

**Cox, John C.**, 79, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 3, 2014. He was a member of McGregor Post 23.

**Raab, Charles Benton**, 67, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 9, 2014. He was a member of Hopkins Post 320.

**Rahn, Eldor**, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 27, 2014. He operated a crane in San Francisco, loading ships bound for the Pacific, and he later served in Guadalcanal and the Philippines. He was a member of Lanesboro Post 40.

**Scroggs, Kenneth Ray "Butch"**, 70, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 1, 2014. He served on the USS Hancock CVA-19. He was a member of Lismore Post 636.

**Slater, David**, 65, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 25, 2014. He served two tours in Vietnam as a flight mechanic. He was a member of Hackensack Post 202.

**Jessen, Jacob**, 89, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 28, 2014. He was a crane operator loading ammunition in Juneau, Alaska. He was a member of Hayfield Post 330.

**Ruesh, Lloyd C.**, 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 26, 2014. He served in Korea and was a prisoner of war. He was a member of Clara City Post 485.

**Ribbe, Orrin R.**, 85, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 28, 2014. He served with the occupation forces in Japan. He was a member of New Richland Post 75.

**Bratager, Kenneth S.**, 88, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 14, 2014. He served with the 11th Evacuation Hospital. He was a member of Winger Post 200.

**McRoberts, Walter Edward**, 97, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 20, 2014. He served in the 24th Infantry Division and participated in the invasions of New Guinea and the Philippines. He was severely wounded in the Philippines and spent much time in the hospital. He married an Army nurse. He was a member of Herman Post 378.

**Zehms, Duane Joseph**, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 17, 2014. He served 30 years in the Army National Guard. He was an honor guard member at Pine

City Post 51.

**Bottem, Larry O.**, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 23, 2014. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

**Olson, DeWayne**, 89, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 7, 2014. He was a member of New London Post 537.

**Ihlang, Clinton "Beach"**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 23, 2014. He was decorated during the war. He was a member of New London Robert Ihlang Post 537.

**Geer, Hugh**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 25, 2014. He was a member of New London Post 537.

**Duncan, Robert**, 96, Army veteran of World War II, died March 4, 2014. He served in the cavalry before the war, and then on a tank destroyer in Europe during the war. He served in the Army Reserves until 1974. He was a Hackensack Post 202.

**Savoy, John**, 95, Army veteran of World War II, died March 2, 2014. He landed on D-Day at Utah Beach. In Europe he received three battle stars and a Bronze Star. He was a member of Breckenridge Post 53.

**Dalen, Roger "Pat"**, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb. 27, 2014. He served in Attu, Alaska. He was the Isanti County Veterans Service Officer for 36 years. He was a member of Cambridge Post 290.

**Zupon, Gilbert**, 92, Army Air Force veteran of World War II, died Feb. 24, 2014. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

**Swanson, Myron "Mike"**, 70, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 2, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Day, Royce**, 86, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb. 26, 2014. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Moses, Daryl**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 24, 2014. He served in Korea. He was a member of Gaylord Post 433.

**Omamm, Dennis**, 62, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 18, 2014. He was a member of St. Stephen Post 221.

**Hilgers, James L., "Champ"**, 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 1, 2014. He was a member and past chaplain of Waconia Post 150.

**Schmidgall, Howard**, 89, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 24, 2014. He served in the 82nd Airborne Division in the 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion. He was a member of Morris Post 29.

**Matzke, Ervin William**, 81, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 18, 2014. He was stationed on the East Coast. He was a member of Pine Island Post 184.

**Swarthout, Clifford William**, 81, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 16, 2014. He served on Okinawa. He was a member Pine Island Post 184.

**Maidment, Keith C.**, 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 13, 2014. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

**Bemmels, Kenny Lee**, 64, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 5, 2014. He was a member of Fairfax Post 205.

**Grunke, Winnel Ernest**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 17, 2014. He was a member of Fairfax Post 205.

**Timm, Fred Charles**, 86, Navy veteran of World War II, died March 21, 2014. He was a member of Fairfax Post 205.

**Mimm, William A. Sr.**, 95, Navy veteran of World War II, died March 24, 2014. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

**Kerber, Art**, 78, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died March 32, 2014. He was a member of Chanhassen Post 580.

**Barta, Raymond J.**, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 5, 2014. He was a member of South St. Paul Post 481.

**Harris, Donald C.**, 78, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 7, 2014. He also served in the Army Reserve and retired as a staff sergeant. He was a member of Hackensack Post 202.

**Dorn, Joseph H.**, 80, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died March 3, 2014. He was an aircraft mechanic and served on the USS Randolph. He was a member of Parker's Prairie Post 219.

**Tienter, Gordon Burdette**, 87, Army veteran of World War II, died March 14, 2014. He was a cook and served in the Philippines and Korea. He was a member of Millville Post 579.

**Hornick, Clarence Jr.**, National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 6, 2014. He was a member of Villard Post 175.

**Brown, Dean**, 86, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died March 17, 2014. He was a member of Eden Valley Post 381.

**Pavlik, Gaylord**, 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 18, 2014. He was a member of Maple Lake Post 131.

**Loken, Arnold R.**, 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died March 14, 2014. He served on a liberty ship. He was a member of New Richland Post 75.

## More delegates sought for Boys State this year

Hundreds of American Legion Posts participate in Boys State each and every year but program leaders would love to see more.

A total of 375 delegates came to Southwest State in June last year and program leaders hope to top that number in 2014. Legion Minnesota Boys State Director Mike Bredeck said he's proud of the program and invites more posts to send young leaders.

"Boys State is truly a once-in-a-lifetime program that goes far beyond what any other youth program can offer in our state and around the nation," Bredeck said.

"We have made great strides to hire excellent staff, offer outstanding accommodations, make the learning experience superior and make the week enjoyable for every young man that participates."

The Minnesota Boys State program has become a top leadership and Americanism opportunity for high school juniors in the nation.

Several Minnesota delegates have won national monetary or recognition awards over the last few years, and each year two delegates go to the White House to meet the President. In addition, participation has begun to come back after a decline began around 2005.

The curriculum of local and state government, patriotism, and civic engagement has never been stronger, with top speakers, government officials, law enforcement and military members all participating during the week in June. Boys State is held June 15-21 at Southwest MN State University in Marshall.

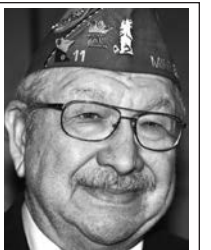
Bredeck would like to invite all Legionnaires to attend Boys State's "Legionnaire Day" where they can tour the SMSU campus, witness delegates in the midst of their political process, and attend the week's final program with performances by the Boys State Band and Choir and a top speaker.

Even if a Post has not sponsored a boy but would like to witness the program firsthand, they are welcome. More details are still to come, but the date will be on Friday, June 20 (the last evening delegates are in Marshall).

Posts can make reservations to send delegates to Boys State through April 1 (the fee is \$300 per boy to sponsor) and should visit [www.MNBoysState.org](http://www.MNBoysState.org) to learn more about the program.

### Sons of The American Legion

By  
John W. Affolter



Our Detachment (state) Spring Conference was held March 14-15, 2014 at Eagle Lake Squadron 617, successfully hosted by Ron Wolff & Waseca Squadron 228. SAL National Vice Commander (Central), Randy Eicher of Ohio was in attendance. The weekend was dedicated to the life and memory of Lance Cpl. Caleb Erickson USMC from Waseca and his family. He was killed while serving in Afghanistan. He was seated in the gunner's turret on the last truck in the convoy when it was attacked by a suicide bomber Feb. 28 2014. A large donation was collected in his memory.

Immediately after the spring conference I went to Anoka for their American Legion birthday dinner. Detachment VC 4/5 Bruce Kuiper represented me and the SAL at the Mar 8 membership rally at Richfield due to some temporary back issues. I'm glad to travel where needed to represent the Sons of the American Legion, contact me.

Future Spring Conferences were set for 2015 in Anoka and 2016 in Morris. Please make plans on attending them and our Campout and Convention at Legionville on June 27-29, 2014 hosted by the 4th and 5th Districts.

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 9,183 as of Mar 18 at 85.376% in 15th place nationally, 2nd in the 1st place central region (the Apr 9 goal is 90%). Send in your memberships now to have their names printed on next year's cards or bring to The Spring Round-Up Rally Saturday, April 26, 2014 at Montevideo Post 59. Membership turn in from 2-3 p.m., program at 3:30 p.m., Dinner to follow. We are 5th nationally in retention at 80.38% but we still need to reach out to our 2,269 un-renewed last year's members.

Legionville is my Commander's 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.

# Rally in Richfield



Department Commander Mike Ash at first couldn't get his talking bunny, a gift from Sandy Fredrickson, to talk. But in the end, the bunny spoke to Ash.



Membership Chair Barbara Klehr presented a membership goal gift to Jessie Hoppe who represented Backus Unit 368.



Department President Shirley Frederick showed off her talking bunny.



The two membership gurus, Barbara Klehr and Tom Fernlund, shared the podium at the Appreciation Rally at Richfield Post 435.



Vice Commander Micky Ostrum and Department Commander Mike Ash presented certificates and checks to the 10 district commanders, all of whom reached the 90 percent goal for March. The presentation was made on the stage at Richfield Post 435 during the Appreciation Rally.

## Membership Chart As of April 2, 2014

District	2014 Goal	Total 2013	Total 2014	Percent of Goal	Same Date '13
1	10,370	10,312	9,687	93.05	10,109
2	8,528	8,443	7,862	91.98	8,351
3	12,927	12,862	12,090	93.31	12,641
4	2,686	2,663	2,459	91.25	2,585
5	3,112	3,089	2,855	91.36	3,032
6	13,192	13,121	12,292	92.92	12,913
7	7,545	7,467	7,009	92.55	7,364
8	5,049	5,008	4,616	90.91	4,894
9	7,659	7,594	7,209	93.86	7,446
10	11,741	11,688	10,916	92.78	11,526
At-large	1,733	1,748	2,273	130.64	1,731
<b>Totals</b>	<b>84,542</b>	<b>83,995</b>	<b>79,268</b>	<b>93.48</b>	<b>82,592</b>

# Veterans on the Hill



Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Shellito spoke at the legislative rally.



Rep. Bob Dettmer, R-Forest Lake, was among a group of legislators who spoke. The governor could not attend the Veterans on the Hill Day.



Department Commander Mike Ash, center, was among the crowd of about who attended the annual Veterans on the Hill Day at the Capitol.



Sen. David Senjem  
R-Rochester



Rep. Jerry Newton  
DFL-Coon Rapids



Rep. Mary Murphy  
DFL-Duluth

# Three glider landings and still around at 95 to talk about it

By Al Zdon

The first part of a glider flight, being towed to the landing zone, can be fairly uneventful – or at least it should be. It's those last two minutes, after the tow rope is dropped, that can be really exciting.

Kermit Swanson, a World War II glider pilot, made three landings in Europe during the war, and each one had its moments of high anxiety. The fact that Swanson was able to stay cool under extreme pressure is evidenced by the fact that at age 95, he is still around to reminisce about it.

Swanson has lived his entire life on the same farm, about six miles south of Dassel in central Minnesota.

In fact, the farm has been in the family since his great grandfather, Engval Hegland, a Swedish immigrant, homesteaded the property in the 1850s.

"I mow the whole front yard, and in August, when the grass is browning out, you can see the foundation of the original log cabin. Imagine homesteading here. It was all woods. It was six miles from town, and there were no roads."

Swanson was born in 1919 and grew up helping his dad on the farm. He graduated from Dassel High School in 1938.

"In 1939, one of my neighbor buddies got caught up in the first draft for the war they had in Meeker County. I was talking this over with my friend, and we decided we should join up while we had some choices."

For Swanson, the choice was aviation.

"Ever since I was a kid, I wanted to be in aviation. I remember listening to Lindberg's flight across the Atlantic on our old Chrysler radio."

He joined a local flying club and learned to fly a Piper Cub. He couldn't be a military pilot, though, because he didn't have the requisite two years of college. The next best thing to flying would be to work on airplanes.

"I had a motorcycle and I drove it down to Chanutte Field in Illinois. I knew that's where they trained the mechanics for the Air Force."

After months of training in airplane mechanics, he was assigned to Texas where much of the pre-war Army Air Corps was located. But before taking on his new job, he got a furlough to spend time back home. The trouble was that he had this motorcycle.

"I wanted to have it down in Texas, but that meant I had to ride it back to Minnesota in early November. It was already snowing in Illinois that day."

Pretty soon, it was snowing everywhere. Swanson's journey happened to fall during the great Armistice Day blizzard on Nov. 11, 1940.

"It really got bad as I got close to Minneapolis. There were drifts over the highway, and they had to open them up with shovels. I had on a pilot's flight suit which was sheepskin lined, so I wasn't cold."

Somehow, through the 20 inches of snow, Swanson made it home on his bike. Two weeks later he was at Randolph Field near San Antonio. Later he was transferred to Goodfellow Field at San Angelo in West Texas.

"The winters were terrible there. All there was out there was snow, cactus and rattle snakes."

And blowing sand. The sand played havoc with the instruments in the planes, and after he had worked as a mechanic for some time, he was sent back to Chanutte to learn how to fix the instruments in the planes.

"I still had dreams of being a pilot. I joined the flying club in San Angelo and earned my private license. Of course, that didn't mean much to the Air Force."

After the attack on Pearl Harbor in late 1941, the Army changed its standards as it geared up to train thousands of pilots. A soldier could now take an equivalency test for the two years of college, and, if he passed, could get into flight training. Swanson did just that.

"But this is where it gets complicated. I was on the waiting list for flight training at Kelly Field, but they were asking for instrument mechanics to go to North Africa because the sand was ruining their instruments. And they were also asking for glider pilots."

Swanson waited patiently for his turn to come for pilot school, but the list just kept getting longer. He was also told that North Africa had higher priority. In fact, he narrowly avoided the first call for instrument men when the commanding officer put Swanson's and his co-worker's name in a hat. The loser would go to Africa. The other guy lost.

"I never heard from him again. He's probably still sitting in the sand dunes."

As more time went by, it was clear that pilot school wasn't happening. The Army was looking for anybody who could fly to be a glider pilot. "I wanted to fly something that had an engine, but the commander told me I shouldn't wait any longer."

Two weeks later he was in Spencer, Iowa, learning to fly gliders. "You would just go up in a Piper Cub and then cut the engine and make a dead stick landing at a certain spot. We did that for quite a while."

Training moved to New Mexico and involved real gliders. "But I was back to living with rattle snakes again." They trained for both night and day landings, and the night efforts were guided by little kerosene lamps on the ground. "You got pretty good at it. You'd just kick that last flare over as you landed."

The trip to England was on a French troop ship. "I remember we turned every seven minutes because supposedly the German U-boats needed longer than seven minutes

*Kermit Swanson wanted to be a pilot, but with the long lists of others wanting the same Army job, he settled for being a glider pilot. He landed the motorless aircraft three times -- on D-Day, at Market Garden in Holland, and Operation Varsity, near the end of the war. All three landings had their terrifying moments.*



to sight in on you."

The gliders also came over on ships. They were in large boxes, maybe 40 feet long and 10 feet wide. "I know when we got to England, we lived in a glider box for a while."

Swanson was assigned to the 84th Troop Carrier Squadron, part of the Ninth Air Force, at Nottinghamshire in January, 1944. Once the gliders were assembled, they did about five more months in training, getting ready for D-Day.

The art of glider attack is fairly simple. Two gliders are connected to a twin-engined C-47 Skytrain with long lengths of cable. The transport plane would head down the runway, dragging the two gliders behind. The gliders would go airborne at about 50 miles per hour or so, reducing the drag on the plane and allowing it to take off.

Each glider had a different length cable so that they would not bang into each other on the journey. If the cables got tangled, that was a possibly lethal situation. Both the C-



**KERMIT SWANSON**  
at home in rural Dassel



**KERMIT SWANSON**  
During World War II