

light with us because then you become a target. I radioed back to the station what was going on and gave them my location.”

A second Coast Guardsman was sent through the woods to a spot on the other side of the mysterious beach visitor. As he approached the spot from the opposite direction, his horse also stopped and wouldn't move.

By this time, all 15 of the shore patrollers were involved. “The rest of the guys went through the woods and were trying to look through the sand dunes to see what was on the beach. It was about 2 in the morning, and we just waited for daylight.”

When the first rays of dawn illuminated the beach, the wary patrollers hoped they could finally see what had halted their horses and kept them up all night. They strained their eyes, and they could finally see it. It was big. It was green.

It was a turtle.

“It was this huge sea turtle, several feet across, and she had come up on shore to lay her eggs.”

(Nature fans, please skip over the next sentence in this story.)

“The cook came down and killed the turtle, and we had turtle soup for days.”

Anderson next was assigned to a wooden cutter in Savannah that had previously been used to chase down smugglers. “It was a beautiful boat, all wooden, with mahogany all over. It still looked like a yacht, but it had two depth charge racks on the stern. When we patrolled the harbor each day, we'd go by a shrimp boat and they would give us a five-gallon pail of shrimp.”

His next job was to operate a small boat that took a harbor pilot out to ships leaving the harbor. When the ship was clear of the harbor dangers, Anderson's boat would pick the pilot up again. Anderson manned the engine and the steering, and the other Coastie was in charge of throwing the line to the ship and helping the pilot in and out of the boat.

Anderson took a test at this time to see if he could get into the Coast Guard Academy. His scores weren't good enough for the academy, but they did land him in one of the branch's elite schools for sonar training in New London, Connecticut.

After school, he finished his East Coast duty with a tour in Key West, Florida, doing anti-submarine patrol using sonar. “You could tell on the Doppler whether a sub was moving towards you or away from you.”

One day, a French submarine that had escaped Nazi control in France came into Key West. “We got permission to go aboard, and we tried to talk with one of the French crewmen. He offered us some wine, and we said ‘Sure.’ He got out the wine and his cup. Before he poured the wine, he tapped the cup against the bulkhead to get the cockroaches out. We said, ‘No thanks.’”

With the war winding down in Europe, Anderson was sent to Oakland, California, and then took a transport ship to Leyte in the Philippines. Soon, he was part of a patrol operation up and down the west coast of the Philippines.

“The canteen on the base was open to both petty officers and officers. I was in there one day and I ran into an officer from my hometown. He suggested that we go out and have a beer together. I said I couldn't do that because I couldn't get into the officer's club. He said that would be no problem. We went back to his room. We were about the same size, and I just put on one of his uniforms. So there I was having a beer in officer khakis with ensign bars on my collar.”

By this time, Anderson had earned enough points to be sent back to the United States. He finished his duty in Washington D.C. in the legal department at Coast Guard Headquarters. He also served on the national Coast Guard color guard.

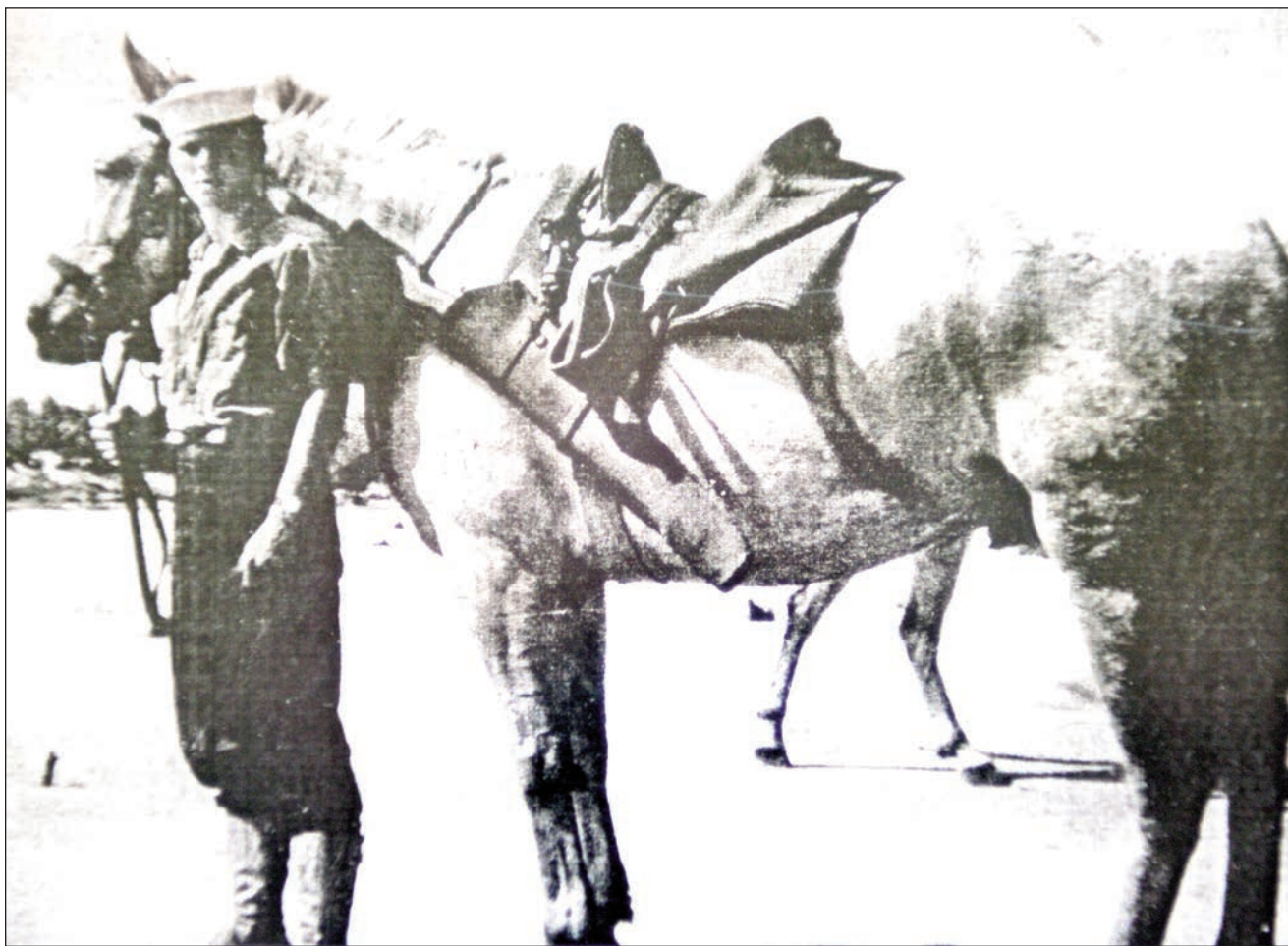
His sister came out to the Nation's Capital to work and live, and when he was visiting her he met a woman named Elaine who was the part-time caretaker of the apartment complex where his sister lived. She was also in the service. “She was a first class yeoman and I was a second class sonar man so she outranked me. But I asked her out to dinner, and she accepted. She became my wife.”

Anderson left the Coast Guard, but in April 1947 he joined the Naval Reserves as a sonar man. “When the Korean War came along, I asked the officer who would be activated first, the older petty officers or the young guys we were training. He told me it would be the young guys. He was wrong.”

Anderson found himself on active duty stationed aboard the USS Sproston (DDE-577) a vintage World War II destroyer the Navy was just taking out of mothballs to beef up the Pacific Fleet because of the war.

“We left San Diego and went up to Long Beach to pick up ammunition and then to Hunter's Point. We knew something was up because we had a bunch of spooks aboard – Navy intelligence. I think they just wanted to see what kind of a crew we were. When we got to Hunter's point, they left the ship.”

When Sproston left the harbor and went under the San Francisco Bay bridge, it was one of four destroyers escorting a seaplane tender the USS Curtis (AV-4). As the ship passed the bridge, the captain came on the speaker and announced their orders. They were heading to Eniwtok in



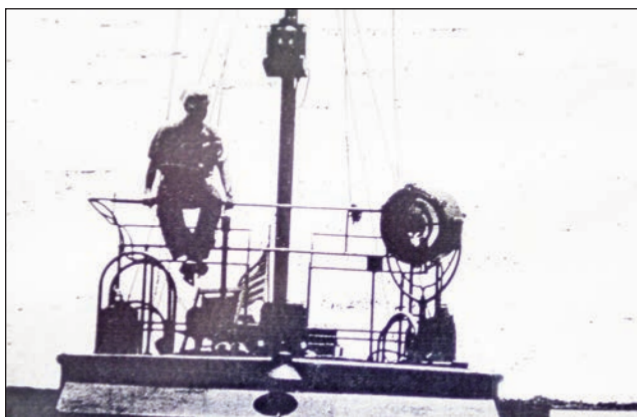
Iver Anderson and his horse “Bill” at Hunter Island off the South Carolina coast.



Anderson and his machine gun on Hunter Island.



Anderson poses with his pistol on the Carolina shore.



Anderson perches on a railing aboard a Coast Guard patrol boat in Savannah harbor.



Anderson, at left, is shown with the Coast Guard honor guard in Washington, D.C.



The U.S. Coast Guard Mounted Patrol on Hunting Island in South Carolina. Anderson is at right.

the Marshall Islands as part of Operation Greenhouse.

Greenhouse was the United States' fifth in a series of atomic bomb tests, scheduled to take place in April and May of 1951. The Soviet Union had tested its first nuclear bomb a year and a half earlier, and the U.S. was doing a group of tests to try and keep the upper hand in the arms race.

"We all had to sign a piece of paper that said we would not talk about what we were doing for 25 years."

Anderson's job as a sonar man was to be on the ship's bridge and instruct the captain about any information from the ship's sonar team. He wore earphones connected to the sonar room.

"We knew that Russian subs had followed us as we crossed the Pacific."

During the four tests, Sproston was stationed 13 miles away, at the edge of the horizon. Earlier, while patrolling for the Russian submarines, the ship got close enough to the island where the test was being conducted so Anderson could see the setup.

"It was just like a water tower, but on top of it was the atomic bomb."

On the day of the test, the men were issued thick goggles. "We'd put on the goggles, and then they'd tape all around them. Then a sailor with a five-cell flashlight would come up and shine it in your face and ask if you could see anything. I couldn't see a thing.

"But when that bomb went off, it was just like looking at the sun through those goggles." Once the explosion itself was over, the men on the bridge could take off their goggles and look at the column and then the mushroom cloud form.

On one of the four tests, the men could see ripples coming across the water. "We were wondering what the hell that was. But when they reached the ship, it was like all our five-inch guns going off at once. That was a hell of a noise. Those ripples we saw were caused by the sound waves coming at us."

Anderson recalls that the government would construct various types of buildings on the islands to see how they stood up during the explosion. "The only building that survived was a dome."

The men on the bridge were tested with a Geiger counter after the blasts, but only one time did it register radiation. "I had to wash my hands three times and there was still radiation. They wanted to make sure we didn't have radiation on our hands before we ate anything.

"On another test, they sent up a balloon to check the upper winds. The balloon started moving toward us. The skipper ordered the ship to move at flank speed in the opposite direction. We didn't want to be under that wind."

When the four tests were completed, the four destroyers

escorted Curtis back to the United States. Anderson spent the rest of his active duty time in the Atlantic, patrolling the north Atlantic. "One time we got so far north that the ship was just encrusted with ice. The waves were crashing above the bridge. They ordered us into Halifax until the ice melted."

Homeport for Anderson at the end was Norfolk, Virginia. I just remember those signs on the stores and cafes that said "Sailors and dogs are not allowed."

Anderson held a variety of jobs, retiring as a chief security officer at the IDS Tower in Minneapolis. He and Elaine had four children, eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Elaine died in 2003.

In 2007, Anderson traveled with the Waconia Lions Club to Washington DC to see the World War II Monument.

Anderson lives in an apartment in Bloomington that is stuffed with memorabilia from a long lifetime. At age 93, he has had cancer removed from his face and an operation on his nose, also to remove cancer.

"I went to the VA and told them I was an atomic veteran, but they told me the cancer was just because I got sunburned when I was a kid."



Iver Anderson as a sonar man in the Navy.



A patch was created for Operation Greenhouse, part of the U.S. program to test atomic weapons.



Anderson met his wife, Elaine, when they were both stationed in Washington DC. She outranked him.

# 2014 Minnesota American Legion financials

## INCOME STATEMENT SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

### Department Income

Department Dues Income	\$830,712
Less: MN Legionnaire Portion	\$(244,149)
Revenue Enhancement Program	\$112,923
Grants	\$-
Investment Income	\$94,819
LIT Insurance - (Royalties)	\$144,633
Donations / Contributions	\$2,319
In-Kind Rent	\$71,015
Miscellaneous Income	\$16,771
<b>Total Department Income:</b>	<b>\$1,029,043</b>

## STATEMENT OF BUDGET EXPENSE

Headquarters Exp.	Budgeted	Disbursed
Administration Salaries	\$291,500	\$288,061
FICA Expense	\$22,300	\$22,670
FUTA Expense	\$400	\$317
SUTA Expense	\$950	\$364
Grp. Health & Life Ins.	\$50,306	\$44,934
Employee's Ret. Fund	\$29,150	\$32,789
Unbudgeted Expense	\$0	\$0
Audit Expense	\$8,300	\$8,300
Inv. Management Fees	\$4,400	\$6,803
Furniture & Fixtures	\$1,000	\$230
Gen. Office Expense	\$54,500	\$55,805
Elct. Eq., Mint & Mod.	\$81,120	\$34,289
Depreciation Expense	\$0	\$27,507
Insurance (Other)	\$11,133	\$11,133
Program Promotions	\$1,000	\$472
Travel Expense	\$15,351	\$8,212
Emergency Fund	\$500	\$0
Rent Expense	\$0	\$71,015

Telephone	\$7,990	\$8,435
NEF Disbursed	\$2,000	\$2,000
Misc. Expense	\$0	\$3,024
<b>Total HQ Exp.</b>	<b>\$581,900</b>	<b>\$626,359</b>

### Special Budget

Citizens Flag Alliance	\$450	\$423
Legal Expense	\$2,000	\$0
<b>Tot. Spec. Budg. Exp.</b>	<b>\$2,450</b>	<b>\$423</b>

### Rehab Expense

Salaries	\$111,000	\$106,786
MDVA Salary Offset	\$0	\$0
FICA Expense	\$8,492	\$7,642
FUTA Expense	\$200	\$126
SUTA Expense	\$450	\$146
Group Health Ins.	\$24,100	\$26,505
Emp. Ret. Fund	\$11,600	\$4,442
General Office Exp.	\$6,000	\$4,651
Rehabilitation Comm.	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Rehab Expense:</b>	<b>\$161,842</b>	<b>\$150,298</b>

### Committee Expense

Americanism	\$7,000	\$5,642
Blood Program	\$250	\$235
Chaplain's Fund	\$1,600	\$1,054
Child. & Youth Comm.	\$3,000	\$3,519
Commander's Budget	\$31,500	\$32,500
Conv. Corporation	\$4,500	\$1,945
Dpt. Conv. Comm.	\$4,300	\$3,401
Dpt. HQ Cnf. & Conv.	\$26,000	\$31,942
Department Treasurer	\$3,600	\$3,600
Emp. Committee	\$1,200	\$1,000
Energy & Cons. Comm.	\$1,500	\$1,501
Executive Committee	\$30,000	\$27,329
Exec. Cm. Cntg. Fund	\$3,000	\$0
Finance Committee	\$3,200	\$2,878
Fund for Hosp Vets	\$800	\$220
Historian	\$1,400	\$963

Ins. Trust Committee	\$2,000	\$1,153
Judge Advocate	\$4,000	\$4,000
Law & Order Comm.	\$1,000	\$629
Leg Ins. Trust Scholar		\$176
Legislative Committee	\$3,500	\$1,970
Memb. (Inc. Vice Cdr.)	\$50,000	\$44,009
March. Dept Color Gd.	\$3,000	\$0
NEC	\$4,000	\$4,000
Nat'l. Conv. Delegates	\$35,000	\$35,200
Nat'l. Sec./Foreign Rel.	\$8,000	\$7,894
Operation Post Home	\$300	\$0
Post Dev. Committee	\$4,000	\$1,641
Public Relations Comm.	\$21,000	\$12,511
Res. Assign. Comm.	\$1,000	\$900
Servicemen's Center	\$300	\$300
SAL Advisors		\$53
L.I.T. Advertising	\$3,500	\$3,425
Trophies & Awards	\$1,000	\$445
Legion Riders	\$700	\$522
USAA Expense	\$3,400	\$3,375
Strat. Planning Comm.	\$5,000	\$1,695
Credentials Committee	\$1,000	\$974
Sarent-at-Arms	\$500	\$500
Alternate NEC	\$2,000	\$2,000
<b>Tot. Comm. Expense</b>	<b>\$277,050</b>	<b>\$245,101</b>

<b>GRAND TOTAL Budget vs. Actual</b>		
	<b>\$1,023,242</b>	<b>\$1,022,182</b>
<b>Total Undesignated Revenue</b>		<b>\$1,029,043</b>
<b>Total Undesignated Expense</b>		<b>\$1,022,182</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>		<b>\$6,861</b>

### Auxiliary Note:

The Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary has decided not to publish its financials in the Minnesota Legionnaire. When the Auxiliary audit is completed, the financials will be sent out in a unit mailing.

# District Commanders

## FIRST DISTRICT

**Myron Ehrich  
Commander**



The month of March has been a busy one, thus far for me. On March 2nd, I attended a supper held for the National Auxiliary President at the Plainview Legion Post. It was well represented by the 1st District.

On March 3rd, I headed to Owatonna Legion Post 77, to celebrate the Legion's birthday. It wasn't a fun day for traveling due to nasty weather. On March 4th, I attended Veterans On The Hill in the Twin Cities. It was very well attended. On March 5th, I went to the Blooming Prairie Legion Post 52 for yet another birthday celebration.

On March 6th, I attended a fish fry for past district commanders that was held in Austin at their Legion. The meal was very good. On March 7th, I headed to Royalton to attend the Vice Commanders Appreciation Rally. Congratulations to Les Shaunce on receiving the award.

Now on the 21st of this month, I will be headed to Walker for Department Commanders Testimonial that will be held at the Northern Lights Casino.

Please put my testimonial on your calendars. It will be held on April 11th at Dodge Center Legion Post #384. It will start at 5 p.m. with a social hour.

The meal will be served at 6 p.m. The \$15 will consist of Windsor pork chop, baked potato, cream corn, coleslaw and a roll.

RSVP to Roger Kabage at (507)413-2121 or 18034 Co Hwy 34, Dodge Center, Mn 55927.

## SECOND DISTRICT

**Jennifer Kafka  
Commander**



Before I go any further I would like to say congratulations to the American Legion Riders Department of Minnesota. I wish you the best in your upcoming Legacy Rides.

As I sit here and think about what I want to say this month, all that comes to mind is all the great men and women I have had the privilege and honor to have met. I think of how all over the state testimonials will be going on to say thank you to officers that have said "I will help The American Legion be the best it can be".

I would like to take this time to express my pleasure in serving with such amazing men and women. I have learned so much from so many and I couldn't have been effective without the other 9 District Commanders, you gentlemen have been a great importance in my year and I thank you for all you do. Department officers and staff have been amazing and patient with me and have helped make this year doable.

I wish I could be at everyone's testimonials but unfortunately that isn't possible. So I say thank you, you gave your time and that is the most important gift there is.

I would also like to say thank you to all who give their time each and everyday. Without you, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing.

## THIRD DISTRICT

**Duane Anderson  
Commander**



Greetings from the Thundering Third

Is spring really here? I've had a difficult time finding words to put in this month's Legionnaire Commanders article. It's been another month of Legion activities and rallies as usual but also was a month of some unexpected life happenings.

About six weeks ago, my wife Jane was diagnosed as having uterine cancer while she was vacationing in Mesa Arizona. The rest of last month is a bit of a blur as one might expect. I made a fast trip to Arizona and we drove back for treatment at Mayo in Rochester. Jane has now had surgery and we are told that the cancer has been removed and her prognosis is extremely good.

I wish to thank all the folks of this American Legion Family for all the prayers, well wishes, and support given by you during this time. I think we are back on track and looking forward to continuing with life as we know it.

The Third District is still at work trying to finish up on this year's membership renewals and still looking for new members to help keep our numbers strong. If you have an acquaintance or friend that is a veteran and is receiving help or benefits from a County Service Officer or the VA and is NOT a Legion member you should be able to point out a couple of reasons why they should become one.

Embrace Change/Maintain Mission

## FOURTH DISTRICT

**Dan Williams  
Commander**



This time of year many observe Passover, Resurrection and yet others take time to simply reflect and plan. Take a moment to consider the sacrifices down through the years.

President Abraham Lincoln concluded his speech at Gettysburg with the following words "... that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

As members of this great organization, The American Legion, we must always remember our purpose which is summarized within our Four Pillars: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism and Children & Youth.

This causes us to remember those who paid the full measure, those still missing and those unable to serve any longer. Remembering this distinguished group becomes a driving force to ensure our Four Pillars are visible within our cities every day. Let's continue to do the good work of the American Legion.

Calendar; April 8th District meeting @ Arcade Phalen Post 577 7:00 PM; April 19th VA Visitation at 1:00pm; April 24th Joint District Testimonial at Arcade Phalen Post 577 5:30 Social / 6:00 PM Dinner. Contact Shelly (651) 777-7104 shelly.putz@yahoo.com for details-We hope you can join us; April 25th Department Spring Round-Up Rally at Duluth Post 71.

Keep those memberships coming in.

## FIFTH DISTRICT

**Wayne Glanton  
Commander**



Greetings from the fighting 5th. At the Appreciation Rally the fifth district has moved up one space and is now out of the bottom.

Good going to all the membership chairmen. Commander's project is going along fine and we are looking to finish this project soon. Please consider a donation to this project.

Our visit to Veterans Hospital on the first Sunday is a very worthwhile project. Some of the veterans are a long way from home and need someone to talk to about their experiences in the service.

There are about 25 regular Legionnaires who come every first Sunday which provides a very rewarding experience. Our next rally is April 25th, the Spring Rally in Duluth at Post 71.

Hope to see you there. Lastly the 5th District oratorical contest winner Issac Winnes finished second in the state. My congratulation to him. And to Andrew Rose Sr. oratorical director.

## SIXTH DISTRICT

**Carl Moon  
Commander**



It was a pleasure for the Sixth District to host the Appreciation Rally held at the Royalton Post on 3/7/15. Once again, we did it. All Districts exceeded the 90% Rally Goal. Way to go team. I especially want to congratulate the Eighth District and Commander Spence for getting their Big Bats up to the plate and hitting the Grand Slam. Our bats were a little sluggish, especially after working so hard getting to First Place, but the \$100 earned for hitting the Triple will go towards my project; Legionville.

Congratulations to our Vice Commander from the North Irv Tooker for being selected as the District Vice Commander of the Year. Irv stepped up to the plate when ever asked and never took his eye off of the ball. Thanks for all your help Irv and keep up the great job that you are doing for our District and your fellow Veterans.

As I mentioned, again, in last month's article, our District Revitalization is slated for April 9-11 at the Brainerd and Little Falls Posts. I will let you all know how it went in next month's article.

At the Washington Conference, in one of our break-out sessions, I was inspired by Past National Commander Rehbein's comments about how important the Four Pillars are to our organization but more importantly that those Pillars are only as good as the bedrock they are built on; i.e. membership.

## SEVENTH DISTRICT

**Victor Gades  
Commander**



Greetings from the Mighty 7th

April is Children and Youth Month. Individual Posts should be working with their respective Auxiliary on coordination of Children and Youth activities. Working together is what we can do to be more effective. This is the time to start completing a Post officer candidate list and remember that once your officers are elected. The Department needs a Post Officer list submitted. You do need to submit a Post Officer list even if they are the same as the previous year.

Consolidated Post Reports should have been received by now. Let's have one hundred percent participation this year, these reports are not to be taken lightly. They are vital to The American Legion and the information contained shows just how involved we are. You may be a small Post and you do one or two events. They may seem insignificant, but they add up to a surprising amount of work.

Let's not forget Boys State Candidates. This is a good program and we need all the participants we can send. I have not heard a negative word from anyone who has attended.

## EIGHTH DISTRICT

**Wilson Spence  
Commander**



We have certainly have had a very good winter this year for northeastern Minnesota.

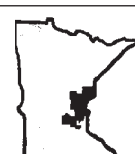
A research team at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center has developed a wheelchair for veterans who can not walk, that allow the veteran to stand up and move around while standing. The wheelchair prototype would allow the wheelchair bound veteran to greet someone at the door while standing and shake the person's hand while standing just like any of us do when someone comes to the door. The wheelchair would allow the veteran to stand while cooking at the stove and move across to the cabinet to obtain the salt or other spice to add to the pot. The research team has developed this wheelchair prototype from a grant from the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). The team has sent their plans to VA Central Office for permission to continue to develop this project. This would be an exciting improvement in the quality of live of many of our paralyzed veterans.

Attention to all District Eight women veterans: On May 16, 2015, a Salute to Women Veterans is scheduled at Cragun's Resort. All ages, eras and branches of military women are welcome to this free retreat. Our Department Commander Peggy Moon is the featured speaker. Please make every effort to attend. To register call Jennell Stai at 612-970-5787.

At the last membership the Eight District hit a home run in membership and received \$150.00 and the only district to receive this amount at this rally. Please keep up your hard work in asking others to join this great organization. I thank you for all you do for your community and the American Legion family.

## TENTH DISTRICT

**Tom Sanders  
Commander**



This year has been just rolling on by and I know I don't have many columns left to write. So I wanted to express my gratitude to all of the "Mighty" 10th American Legion Family for the support in making my year as District Commander very fun and memorable. Congratulations to Gloria Burt on your 10th District Vice Commander of the year. She comes from Osseo Post 172 and is your North Hennepin County Vice Commander and is well deserving for her hard work and so are the rest of the Vice Commanders.

The 10th Districts combined project "Helping Paws" has and still is going great. On behalf of American Legion Family of the "Mighty" 10th District and all who have generously donated to the project our thanks to you. If you have an interest in our project you can talk to any of the District Officers, whether Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of the Legion, or American Legion Riders, they will help you with information and how to donate.

The first weekend in May will be busy with President Robins Testimonial at Monticello Post 260 on Saturday the 2nd and my Testimonial on Sunday the 3rd at Anoka Post 102. At the beginning of the year President Robin and I knew this was going to be tough for one weekend to do, but we wish the American Legion Family well and hope to see you all at our Testimonials.

# Rally at Royalton



**VICE COMMANDERS OF THE YEAR** -- The honorees at the annual Appreciation Rally at Royalton Post 137 were the 10 district Vice Commanders of the Year. From left, front: Gary Lee Davenport, Seventh District; D. Marvin Hill, Eighth District; Commander Peggy Moon, Irv Tooker, Sixth District; Eric Wilkins, Ninth District; Gloria Burt, Tenth District. In back: Les Shaunce, First District; Larry Helland, Second District; Mike Maxa, Third District; Micky Ostrum, accepting for Randy Bastyr, Fourth District; Ray Eiden, accepting for Gary Martin, Fifth District.



**ANOTHER BAT** -- Sixth District Membership Director Jim Lucas won another bat honoring the district for first place at the rally. Sixth District Commander Carl Moon and Membership Director Pat Logan presented.



**ENTERTAINMENT** -- Tim Williams provided the music at the Royalton Rally.



**AUXY REPORT** -- Legion Membership Director Pat Logan stayed warm with a blanket given him by the Ninth District's Tom Norgaard while Membership Chair Judy Ackerman gave her report.



**SHALL WE DANCE?** -- SAL Detachment Commander Dennis Henkemeyer asks his wife Denise Milton for a dance at the rally. She agreed.

# Hill Day at the Capitol



A National Guard band played patriotic music during the event at the Armory at the Capitol. The Hill Day had to be moved from the Capitol Rotunda because of the construction work.



Rep. Bob Dettmer, R-Forest Lake, chair of the Veterans Affairs Division, supported veterans bills that are now before the Legislature.



Sen. Tom Saxhaug, DFL-Grand Rapids, chair of the State Departments and Veterans Division, spoke.



Commander Peggy Moon met with the press at the conclusion of the rally.



Commander Moon, representing the Commander's Task Force which she chairs, addressed the 150 or so at the Hill Day.

World War II History Round Table at Fort Snelling

# Battle of Leyte was a tough, costly action

By Al Zdon

One of the most dramatic pictures that emerged from World War II showed Gen. Douglas MacArthur wading ashore at Leyte in the Philippines.

He was fulfilling his promise to the Filipino people that "I shall return."

Few people ever knew, though, said historian and author Nathan Prefer, that the original plan was for MacArthur to land at a pier and not get his feet wet. Unfortunately the pier was blown up during the landings, and the general had to wade ashore.

Certainly it made for a better and more dramatic picture. Prefer, talking to the April meeting of the Fort Snelling World War II Round Table, brought up the famous picture as an interesting piece of trivia, but his main lecture was on the costly and decisive Battle of Leyte – a battle that is little known to Americans, even war historians.

Prefer and a panel of veterans who fought at Leyte brought light to a battle that claimed over 15,000 American casualties.

The United States, Prefer said, had several options in mid-1944 as it slowly advanced toward Japan through island hopping and invasions. One option was to invade China and establish a foothold there. The idea was to have forward bases for the eventual attack on the Japanese mainland.

"Roosevelt met with MacArthur and Nimitz (admiral in charge of the Pacific Fleet) in Hawaii in July of 1944. MacArthur, how should I put it, was at his theatrical best arguing for an invasion of the Philippines. He said, 'I have promised the people of the Philippines I will return.' Nimitz just said, 'Well, Okay.'"

Now it had to be decided where to attack, and when. The first choice was Mindanao, the southernmost large island in the Philippines.

"But Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet was flying missions over the Philippines, and they said that resistance in Leyte was non-existent," Prefer said. "He was wrong, but it wasn't his fault."

Leyte became the target and the date for the invasion was set for Dec. 15. It was then changed to October, then back to December, and finally set for Oct. 20 as the logistics of the attack worked themselves out.

The U.S. force was mainly the Sixth Army, and they landed at 10 a.m. on the appointed day. By the end of the day, they had pushed a mile deep and controlled a section of beach five miles long.

During the afternoon, MacArthur made his dramatic splash on the shore.

Prefer told the story of Capt. Francis Wai, a Chinese-American from Hawaii and a member of the 24th Infantry Division.

"Wai had recently received a message that his wife had a baby. This bothered him because he hadn't been home in 12 months."

When the advance at one of the beaches was stalled by Japanese machine gun fire, Wai personally attacked the Japanese positions through the rice paddies. "He never took cover."

He led attacks on several pillboxes, and was killed while trying to overcome the last one. He received a Distinguished Service Cross that was upgraded to a Medal of Honor 40 years later.

Prefer said that one of the Japanese strategies in the war was to fight the "decisive battle" that would change the course of the war in their favor. "They tried it at Midway, but it didn't work out very well."

The Japanese commander in the Philippines, Tomoyuki Yamashita, had only been in charge of the defense forces for nine days before the landings, but he was committed to a massive counter-attack that would throw the U.S. back into the sea. "He had no idea what he was getting into."

Over the next few weeks, the Japanese brought in thousands of new troops to bolster the 20,000 or so that were already at Leyte. "The U.S. was completely unaware of the buildup. They were too busy clearing beaches."

The Japanese also brought in what was left of their Pacific fleet to try and fight a "decisive battle" at sea. The Battle of Leyte Gulf was the largest naval battle of the war, and it was a major U.S. victory.

Meanwhile, the U.S. forces pushed across the island, from east to west, and captured a major port on the west coast of Leyte. Around this time, MacArthur announced a victory at Leyte, and said the battle was now a "mopping up operation."

"It was just a few weeks in, and the battle would go on for three more months."

The Japanese kept building up forces at Leyte until they had achieved a nearly one-to-one ratio of soldiers with the U.S. The forces were kept in jungle areas while planning went ahead for the massive counter-attack.

"Suzuki (commander of the Japanese 35th Army on Leyte) even had plans for the surrender ceremony."

MacArthur was finally persuaded to bring in fresh divisions, and he did so. Fighting moved from the valleys into the mountains, and both sides had to endure typhoons and constant rainfall. The airbases the U.S. had captured were almost useless because the wet soil could not support the heavier American aircraft.

The battles of Breakneck Ridge and Kilay Ridge were intense in the mountainous terrain. "There were no replacements. American units were fighting shorthanded, often with 20 in a platoon or 100 in a company."

The Battle of Shoestring Ridge, the name reflecting the supply situation, in mid-November and the Battle of the Ridges in early December pushed the enemy back, and another American division, the 77th, was landed on the west coast of Leyte on Dec. 7.

By the end of the year, the organized Japanese forces had been destroyed, although stragglers continued to fight until May of 1945. "Suzuki gave up the counter-attack when he found he had no army left."

The U.S. had 3,500 killed and 12,000 wounded in the battle. The Japanese lost about 70,000 killed in action at Leyte.

Five veterans of the battle told their stories at the Round Table. The session was moderated by Mark Wiens.

Don Dencker, a Minneapolis native who served in the 96th Infantry Division, got his start in the Army in the ASTP program, where the Army sent soldiers to college for specialized training.

When that program ended, he became an infantryman and landed on Blue Beach 1 on Leyte during the invasion.

"We were on our way to Yap Island, but when we were halfway there, we landed at Leyte. We went ashore in LVTs (Landing Vehicle Tracked) and the Japanese had prepared some defenses. There were coconut logs with sharpened points facing outwards. When they dropped the ramp on the LTV, I got my feet a little wet."

The Japanese had also prepared an anti-tank ditch on the shoreline, and the LTVs that got past the coconut logs got stuck in the ditch. "But the tanks got across by going on the tops of the LTVs."

Once ashore, Dencker investigated a pill box by sticking his head inside. "A Japanese soldier started reaching for his rifle so I had to shoot him. I never tried that again."

He recalled another incident where his unit was stuck in a swamp. "We were there three or four days and we didn't have any drinking water. I looked up and saw a coconut, and I shot it several times. The juice started coming down and I caught it in my canteen. That solved the drinking problem."

Bob Siefert, from Chisholm, was also in an ASTP program before joining the 96th Division.

He said the landing was fairly quiet, but on the second day Japanese bombers started coming over the beachheads. "I was using my bayonet to clean a coconut when one of the attacks came over. I dove into a foxhole, and I had the bayonet in the palm of my hand, and the blood just came spurting out."

"I went to an aid station where they patched me up. The guys said he was going to write me up for a Purple Heart

and I said, 'Oh, no, you're not.' I didn't want a Purple Heart for cleaning a coconut."

Siefert said there were only two types of terrain on Leyte. "You were either up to your neck in water or you were on top of some ridge."

Once, in a banana grove, he tried taking shelter behind a banana tree. "I found out you can stick your finger through a banana tree. It wasn't very good protection. There were pieces of green flying all over me."

Lawrance Johnson, Le Seuer, was a Browning Automatic Rifleman in the 24th Infantry Division. The weapons would fire 20 shells to a clip, and the BAR soldiers provided much of the fire power for a squad. "We had a good time," Johnson said.

The weapon also weighed 29 pounds. "I had an assistant to carry the ammo, but he got hit and I had to carry it myself."

He remembered one soldier who had to use the latrine. "Just then a Japanese machine gun cut loose. When it got quiet, we could hear him yell, 'Does anybody have an extra pair of pants?'"

In the foxhole, he said, the GIs would lay their grenades on the edge of the hole. "If we thought the Japanese were coming, we'd pull the pins. But if nothing happened, we'd have to put the pins back in, and that wasn't easy. Then they came out with the three-second grenades. They'd often go off before they hit the ground. You had to be fast."

Richard Menken, Jeffers, grew up on a farm in a family of 10.

At Leyte, he took a truck from the beach toward the front. "The truck went as far as it could go, and I was starting to jump off the back. There were two GIs there, and they were both pretty scroungy looking. One of them came up to me and said, 'Don't I know you?' It turns out, he was another kid from Jeffers. We were 5,000 miles from home, and we ran into each other."

Menken was trained in anti-tank warfare, but he said he never saw a Japanese tank on Leyte.

One day after he attended church, he ran into a buddy and found out the friend was driving a truck and going out on a patrol. "I said that I'd ride with him if I could, and I'd ride shotgun. Just then a group of officers came up and one of them asked me what I was doing there. I told them I had offered to go along and ride shotgun."

"The officer said, 'No, you're staying here.' I didn't want to argue with him because he was getting a little huffy."

"The truck went down the road a ways and came to a T where it had to slow down. A Japanese machine gun opened up. Everybody was killed but the driver. I would have been a goner."

Jim McDougall, a Navy veteran, was a machine gunner on a PBY Catalina just before the landings on Leyte. His plane was assigned the job of getting the plans from MacArthur's headquarters in New Guinea to the Third Fleet at sea.

"We took the plans to Palau in our Black Cat (a PYB sea plane painted black for camouflage). We had an escort of Navy fighters, which was good because a Catalina was pretty slow. Our only defense was to take it down just above the water so that nothing could fly under us. We met with a whale boat and got rid of the plans. The sailors were going to take them to Halsey's fleet."

"On the way back they told us we wouldn't have an escort. We complained, but they told us our choice was to fly back or to taxi the PBY back. We decided to fly."

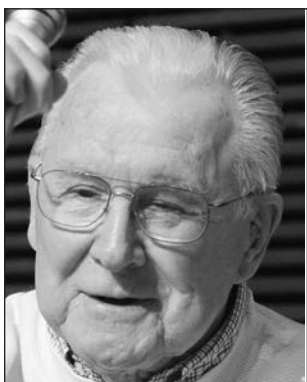
He also told a story about how his plane landed in a harbor in the Philippines, and three canoes came out to do some trading with the Americans. The sailors thought they were driving a hard bargain.

The Filipinos were using pesos issued by the Japanese occupying army to barter with.

"Pretty soon they had all our blankets, our parachutes, everything, and all we had was this worthless paper. They were pretty shrewd traders."



NATHAN PREFER



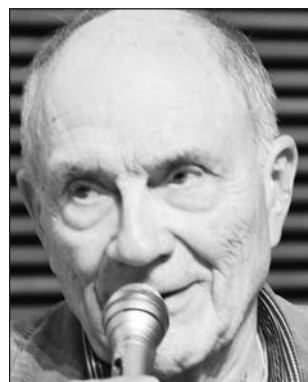
BOB SIEFERT



RICHARD MENKEN



DON DENCKER



JIM McDUGALL



LAWRANCE JOHNSON



# The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 15-9

President Chris Ronning

April 2015

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

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

## The President's Column

By  
Chris Ronning



March started out with our American Legion Auxiliary National President Janet Jefford's visit to Minnesota. Plainview was our first stop for a delicious dinner and visiting with the members. That evening, we stayed overnight and headed off to New Ulm for a luncheon. The weather was not very nice and it kept many members away from a fun afternoon. We stopped at a very unique German store for a little snooping (shopping) and then on to Faribault for another dinner at their Post, again a fun evening and a nice dinner. Weather still could have been a little better, but it is Minnesota. After a good night's sleep we went to Minneapolis where we visited our VA Facility, including the Brain Science Center, onto the Fisher House and the Veterans home, where we also got to tour the Adult Day Care Center, which is one of my projects.

That evening we had our last dinner at the American Legion Post in Osseo with great food and entertainment.

The next morning with Marland in tow we headed for the Armed Forces Center at the airport where we delivered bags with goodies for servicemen and women when they come through our airport. That's when things got ugly. President Janet's flight was canceled due to bad weather in New York, so we found the nearest airport hotel for her and went out for pizza. What a delightful lady, I wished everyone could have had the chance to meet her.

That was my excitement for the beginning of March. Lots of birthday dinners and an extra pound here or there - it finally caught up with Marland. Yes, Peggy keeps up with her miles driven, I keep up with my pounds gained. Ugh.

We had a great Department Rally, which was very well attended and we also had a good Executive Committee meeting that morning. Our American Legion Auxiliary is going strong, but we could do a lot better if our membership would pick up. You all know that without our membership our programs will suffer, so this is my plea to you, please, please help Membership Chairman Judy reach goal.

I attended along with Marland, Department Commander Peggy's Testimonial, what a great evening. Great company and great food, as you notice the word food follows me everywhere. Congratulations, Peggy, you are a very special lady and a great Commander. We are all so proud of you.

April will bring some Testimonials and I wish I could attend all of them but some of my other duties are still calling me.

April is also Children and Youth month. Our Juniors are holding their Department Junior Conference on April 10th and 11th hosted by the Stewartville Unit. I am so excited to attend and listen to these young ladies and what they have done during their year. Our Honorary Junior President Jules Efta has done a great job and I want to congratulate her on a job well done.

I actually have an installation in Nisswa this month, a spring gala in Wayzata, a Spring Fling in North St. Paul and a mother/daughter banquet in Rochester. I think I will leave Marland home for that.

Unit Reports, yes ladies don't be rolling your eyes, it is already this time of the year and I hope we have 100% reporting. Please take the time to report about your programs and don't forget to write a little summary about what you did.

Don't forget our volunteers, they bring a smile and lots of sunshine in our Veterans faces. These ladies work behind the scene in our VA Hospitals and Veterans home and sometimes get unrecognized. So next time you see a volunteer in one of these facilities make sure you thank them for what they do. A thank you goes a long ways.

Marland and I would like to wish each and every one of you a very Happy and Blessed Easter.

## Department Convention set for Redwood Falls July 16-18

The 96th annual Department Convention will be held July 16 - 18 at the Jackpot Junction Casino in Morton hosted by the Redwood Falls American Legion Family #38. A word of thanks to the Auxiliary Chairman and committee members for all they are doing to ensure a successful convention.

Housing information will be out in the May Unit mailing. Hotel reservations are to be made directly with the hotel this year. The registration fee is \$15.00 for pre-registration and \$18.00 after July 1. They are to be sent to Carrie Werner, American Legion Post 38, PO Box 354, Redwood Falls, MN 56283. Make your checks out to AMERICAN LEGION POST 38 and put "Dept. Convention" on the memo line. Please use the registration form. President Chris Ronning has made this such a rewarding and fun year - let's all honor her by attending her Convention.

Don't forget the Poppy contests that will be held at the Department Convention. This year there will be two categories; Butterfly Garden Basket and a Bouquet in a Vase using our Department President's theme and should include the programs of the American Legion Family. More than one entry is welcomed; there will be three places awarded and a People Choice Award. Entries must be at the Department Convention on Thursday, July 17th by 9:00 a.m. Please read your Trophy and Awards packet for details.

### JUNIOR CONFERENCE

The Department Junior Conference will be called to order by Jules Efta, the Department Honorary Junior President on Saturday, April 11th, at the Stewartville American Legion Post 164 in Stewartville, hosted by our First District. We are hoping many Juniors will attend their very own Conference.

On Friday, April 10 starting at 6:00 p.m. the First District is hosting a "fun" night at the Post for all Juniors. Please come and enjoy the weekend.

### 2015 POPPY DAYS

Poppy Days will soon be with us. If your Unit has not ordered its 2015 Poppies we would appreciate hearing from you soon. We have 68 Units that have not yet ordered. Let's have 100% participation in our Poppy Program. If you cannot locate an order form just write your order on a plain piece of paper and send it along with your check to the Department office.

We do have poppies available for any Unit that wishes to order more. The Department does not carry the Poppy cans many Units use on Poppy Days. They must be ordered from National Emblem Sales. Also, we do not have any more of the Poppy Cards. Emblem Sales also has a card that is available directly from them.

Governor Dayton has been asked to proclaim May as Poppy month. A suggestion to all Units is to present a poppy to your government officials and ask them to wear the poppy on Memorial Day.

Please remember to promote and display our Poppies all year round.

### GIRLS STATE

Registration fees for the 2015 session of American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State were due on March 31st. We do still have openings so don't feel that because March 31 has gone by that you still can't register. Units may send as many girls as they choose to from the same high school. Your American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State citizens must attend a public, charter, parochial, private or home school in Minnesota or be a resident of Minnesota. Reservations are taken on a first come, first served basis. We are still taking reservations and would like each Unit to participate. The 2015 session will be held June 7 - 12th at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul.

The enrollment card, information sheet, pledge and order form for a Capitol Day polo shirt are due into the Department office no later than May 1st. Your American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State citizen is not considered registered until these items are received. Each American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State citizen who is completely registered will receive a mailing from the

Department office around May 15th which will give her all of the necessary information she needs concerning items to bring, the health certificate form, etc. that are required to bring in June. Please remember that there are no refunds being given this year.

We look forward to the 69th annual American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State week and another educational and successful session.

### "RENEW-RECRUIT-REJOIN"

The last membership rally of our Auxiliary year, Spring Round Up Rally, will be held at the West Duluth Post 71 on Saturday, April 25. Turn in will be from 2 - 3 p.m. with the program following at 3:30 p.m. Our membership on the National level has been dropping and we need to turn that around. Please make plans to come to Duluth - what a beautiful part of Minnesota to spend a weekend. Let's help President Chris climb back to the top.

### DIRECT BILLING INFORMATION

All Units received a request for information on your Unit's 2016 dues. A second notice went out in the April Unit Mailing to those Units that haven't responded to the first request. This information was due in the Department office by March 15th. It is critical that this information gets forwarded on to National. If your Unit has not yet responded, please send in the information as soon as possible. If we do not receive this information before mid-April, National will be printing the information they have from last year on the dues notices. We still are waiting on 203 Units to return the forms.

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH MONTH

April is Children and Youth month. Plan a special program and invite your community to attend. Let them know of your involvement and concern for the youth of our nation. There are a number of programs you can present to your community. Keep in mind that our children are our future. We need to get them involved in our programs and let them know how appreciated they are.

### ANNUAL REPORTS DUE APRIL 15th

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 copy is all that needs to be returned to the Department Office by April 15. It is important that your Unit report your activities each year and send them in. The information received on the reports is then compiled into a Department report that is sent onto our National organization. These reports become part of the American Legion Auxiliary record for the 2014-2015 year. Our National organization gives the information to The American Legion and they use the information when they report to Congress each year. Every activity your Unit has participated in is important. Be proud of your accomplishments and activities and share them. Reports are due in April 15th. We realize that many of you are unhappy with the reporting system this year and your comments will be passed forward. Thank you all for letting me know how your Units like this new format.

### TROPHIES AND AWARDS

Trophy and Award entries are also due by April 15th unless otherwise stated in the rules. Be certain to label each entry with the name of the award you are applying for. Follow this year's rules. A separate entry is needed for each award unless the Department winner is forwarded for National competition. Any Unit may apply for any award whether your Unit has reached its membership goal or not unless that is a requirement stated in the rules.

### 2015 NATIONAL CONVENTION

The National Convention this year will be held in Baltimore, Maryland. This year the Parade will be on Sunday August 30, 2015 in Baltimore. When we Minnesotans go to the National Convention we bring with us our national colors from our Posts, Units, Squadrons and our AL Riders join us. When we do this, we typically take up an entire city block or more of just Minnesota's atten-

# Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

dees all carrying their US colors. We often are on the front page of the newspaper in that city's morning issue the following day. Let's make the headline in Baltimore big time this year and show the friendly state of Maryland how proud us Minnesotans are of our veterans. Picture the image of hundreds of United States flags marched 4 abreast stretching for several blocks? What a sight to see.

More information will be forthcoming regarding the National Convention.

## SECRETARY SANDIE'S NOTES

The Department Office has been extremely busy getting ready for Junior Conference, Girls State, Annual Reports, Department Convention, National Convention - never a dull moment around here. We had a great time on the National President's Tour, what a wonderful lady we have leading our organization this year. I have always thought when you hear "National President" of anything it is this person that is almost untouchable - how untrue that is. I have personally met and gotten to know the past four National Presidents and what wonderful women they all are and how dedicated they are to our organization. If you ever get the chance to attend any event when they are in Minnesota, be sure not to miss the opportunity. Easter is right around the bend and I, along with Jan and Julie and our families would like to wish every one of you a very Happy and Blessed Easter. I hope the bunny leaves you colorful goodies and be careful of the little brown "eggs" - those probably aren't so good! Have a wonderful month and hope to see many of you in Duluth at the Spring Round Up Rally.

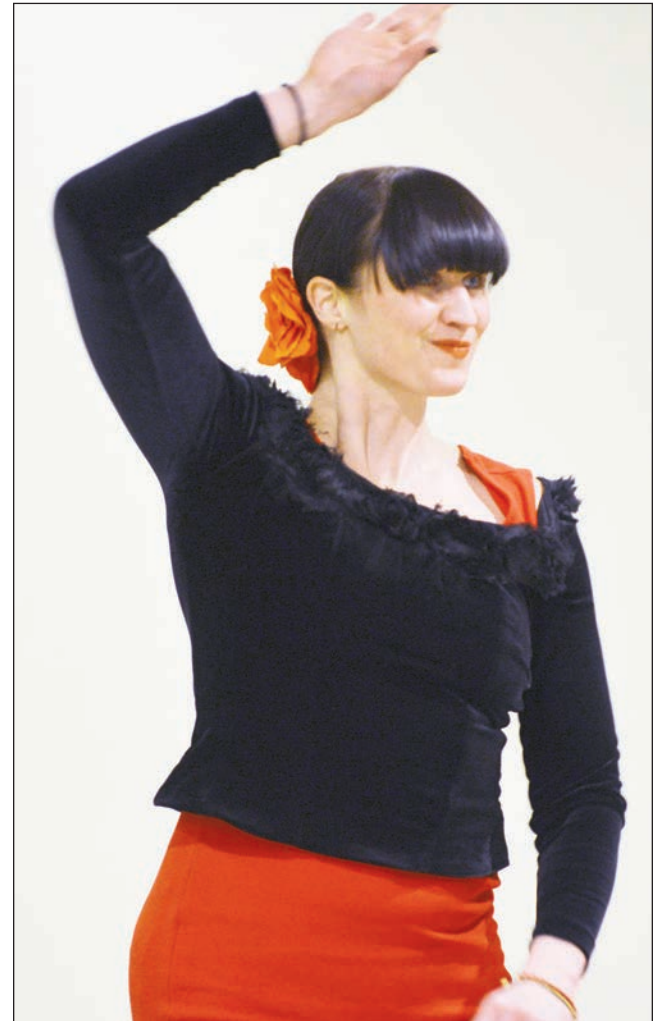
# National President Jefford visits state



National Auxiliary President Janet Jefford talked to the audience during a visit to Osseo. She also visited Plainview, New Ulm, Faribault, the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis, the Fisher House and the Serviceman's center at the airport during her tour.



Among other Minnesota gifts, Department President Chris Ronning presented Jefford with some Loon Poop.



The entertainment at Osseo was Flamenco guitar playing and dancing.

## Mar. 24, 2015, Auxiliary Membership

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year
One	5,847	4,864	83.19%	5,085
Two	5,693	4,783	84.02%	4,984
Three	5,019	4,264	84.96%	4,321
Four	870	719	82.64%	736
Five	1,019	814	79.88%	935
Six	7,072	5,872	83.03%	6,085
Seven	4,565	3,858	84.51%	3,993
Eight	1,956	1,586	81.08%	1,698
Nine	5,060	4,160	82.21%	4,414
Ten	6,022	5,042	83.73%	5,210
1982	174	129	74.14%	149
<b>Totals</b>	<b>43,297</b>	<b>36,091</b>	<b>83.36%</b>	<b>37,610</b>



Jefford and Ronning tried their hand at Spanish dancing during the stop at Osseo.



During a stop in Plainview, Jefford posed with Ronning, left, Plainview Post 79 Commander Adam Welke, and Unit President Cheryl Nymann. (Plainview News photo)



Tenth District Junior Honorary President Kiana Coleman-Woods presented the National President with a gift.

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