



Legionnaire

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For God and Country

June 2014

U study tracks hunger

One in four Iraq, Afghanistan vets don't have consistent access to sufficient food

By Al Zdon

A new study by the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis VA has found that a high percentage of returning Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans have problems in getting enough food.

The study showed that 27 percent of those veterans don't have consistent access to sufficient food. The national average in the United States is 14.5 percent.

"We have fought two very expensive wars over a decade. It's unconscionable that a sizable percentage of these war veterans have food insecurity," said Dr. Rachel Widome, who led the study at the University. "It's a bit of a hidden problem. Nobody wants to talk about not having enough to eat. It's embarrassing in America."

Widome, an assistant professor in the School of Public Health, said the study originated a couple of years ago when researchers were talking informally to returning veterans, and finding that many of them made references to simply not having enough food.

"There hadn't been any research or reporting done on this aspect at all," Widome said. "We wanted to see if this went beyond just the anecdotes."

The results showed that better than one

in four returning veterans reported food insecurity in the past year, and 12 percent of the total reported very low food security, meaning there were multiple instances of not having enough food.

The survey showed a strong correlation between low food security and other increased levels of health concerns in younger veterans such as smoking, binge drinking and generally poor health.

Widome said the study was not done on a timeline, and so it's difficult to say which problem has led to another problem. "We don't know what came first, but we can see how it all fits together."

There was also a strong correlation in the marriage status of those who had no food problems and those who did. Sixty-three percent of those who did not have food security issues were married or partnered, while 42 percent of those with low food security were married, and only 29 percent of those with very low food security were married or partnered.

There was a similar correlation between employment and food security.

Widome said there are several local and national food programs that could help veterans with low food security. She said the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

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Shinseki resigns

Secret list at Phoenix VA prompts multiple investigations

Minnesotan involved in Legion study

Eric Shinseki, Secretary of the federal Veterans Administration, resigned in late May under pressure from Congress and veterans groups.

The American Legion was the first major voice of veterans to call for Shinseki to step aside.

The Legion's National Commander Dan Dellinger said Shinseki needed to quit following the revelation of a secret list at the Phoenix VA Hospital that hid actually waiting times for veterans.

A cable news story said that as many as 40 veterans died while waiting for health care at Phoenix.

Shinseki was replaced by Sloan Gibson as acting Secretary. Gibson, former head of the USO, has been Shinseki's deputy for the past three months.

The American Legion also sent a "System Worth Saving" team to Phoenix to conduct a town meeting, and to interview staff at the hospital to determine the root of the problems there.

The team was headed by Tom Mullon of Eagan, the chairman of the Legion's

Health Administration Committee, and a former director at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center.

Mullon and the team created a report on the Phoenix health care system that

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ERIC SHINSEKI
VA Secretary resigns under pressure

Rochester gets ready for 2014 convention

With the Department of Minnesota convention just six weeks away, the host city of Rochester is gearing up to host the Legion, Auxiliary and SAL delegates and guests.

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.

Two 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

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MAYO CIVIC CENTER

State Legislature winds up 2014 session

For veterans, the 2014 Minnesota legislative session was chock full of smaller accomplishments rather than the big blockbusters of prior years.

The 2013 session had finished off with major funding for the final phase at the Minnesota Veterans Home at Minneapolis.

In this session, just completed in May, there were no major bonding victories, but dozens of bills that will help groups of veterans here and there.

"We weren't asking for a lot, and we didn't get a lot," said Mike McElhiney, legislative director for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. "They called this the 'unsession,' and

they wanted agencies to trim back and look at outdated laws. But the MDVA didn't have much of that."

In the end, though, McElhiney said there were maybe 50 bills that dealt with veterans in one way or another, and many of them succeeded.

Two notable bills that did not succeed were a measure by Rep. Jerry Newton, DFL-Coon Rapids, that would have created a priority list for entrance into the Minnesota Veterans Homes. The bill would have given precedence to disabled veterans, Purple Heart recipients and others, and would have put spouses of veterans at the bottom of the list.

The Minnesota American Legion opposed the bill, saying that all veterans and spouses should be treated equally.

Another bill that failed to get passage was the Honor and Remember Flag. State buildings would have been recommended to fly the flag at certain times of the years. Again, the Legion and other service organizations opposed the bill saying, among other arguments, that the U.S. Flag already served to honor and remember deceased veterans.

Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl agreed with McElhiney on the character of the session. "There were a lot of little things -- nothing really big, nothing earth shaking."

Tesdahl said the tier system for the veterans homes and the Honor and Remember flag were two key issues. "What

Continued on Page 3

102-year-old new Legion member at Blue Earth

Blue Earth Post 89 signed up a new member at last month's post meeting.

And he brings with him more than a century of life.

Lea Vern Hanson, often called "Stub," will turn 103 this fall.

Hanson decided to join the Legion after the Veterans of Foreign Wars post in the community moved to a nearby town.

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LEA VERN HANSON

74 missions in a P-47 Thunderbolt during World War II



Pages 10-12

102-year-old recruit is newest member of Blue Earth Post 89

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Harold Lea Vern Hanson was born in Dodge County, Wisconsin in 1911, the same year that Ronald Reagan and Roy Rogers were born.

William Howard Taft was president, and Roald Amundsen became the first human to reach the South Pole in 1911.

Hanson moved to Renville when his father, who was a carpenter, found more work in the Minnesota town.

Hanson only spoke Norwegian at home, and so school was hard until he made the adjustment.

In the 1930s, Hanson tried to follow in his father's footsteps as a carpenter, but work was so short that he took part in both the WPA and CCC programs.

Although the pay was meager, and most of that was sent home to his family, he said it was a great time of his life because of the companionship.

Hanson never married, and has lived alone most of his life.

He drove his Ford sedan out west in 1942, hoping to find work in the booming defense industry, but nobody would hire him because he was of draft age.

So instead he joined the Navy and trained at San Diego. He became a gunner's mate, and was assigned to the merchant fleet.

His travels took him all over the world as he followed the convoys of Allied

ships. He sailed both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

On one passage, both the ship behind and the one in front were torpedoed and sunk. He became ill with sand flea fever, and while he was recovering at a hospital in the Carribbean, his

ship was also sunk.

He moved to Blue Earth from Baudette several years ago, and decided to join the Legion when the VFW post

in Blue Earth was no longer there.

(Thanks to A.B. Russ for information in this story.)



STUB HANSON AS A YOUNG MAN



Hanson is shown in two different pictures working for the Civilian Conservation Corps in northern Minnesota.

Rochester Convention

Continued from Page 1
Suites has rooms for \$89 and reservations can be made at the same number.

A registration form is on page 2 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 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 con-

ventions. There will be shuttle service throughout the week from the post to the hotels and convention sites.

The hospitality rooms on Friday night will be at the Windsor Hall in the basement level of the Kahler hotels. A parade route for Friday night has not yet been determined but the parade will feature competition for color guards, drill teams and patriotic floats.

The Auxiliary special guest will be National Northwest Division Vice President Pat Steranka of Colorado.

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

Legion Post # _____ SAL Sqdn. _____ Auxiliary Unit _____

District _____

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Address _____

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- Delegate Alternate Guest
 Delegate at Large (Auxiliary)
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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.

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by Tom Seemon

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Mullon leads task force

Continued from Page 1
will be released soon.

"We usually look at a variety of factors, the budget, the recruitment, the facilities. At Phoenix, we had to focus on scheduling."

Mullon, who had done about 45 or 50 site visits representing The American Legion, said the daylong visit at the hospital was preceded, as all System Worth Saving visits, by a town hall meeting.

The tenor of that meeting was very anti-VA, Mullon said. (Excerpts from that meeting can be watched on the Legion website: www.legion.org.)

Mullon said officials at the VA Medical Center denied there was a secret waiting list as many reports and whistle blowers have indicated.

"As the Legion, we have no ability to search their records. We have no subpoena power. That's something the inspector general will have to sort out."

Mullon said the claim that 40 had died while waiting for care also needs to be examined with better information than the task force had access to.

"But it should be noted that the VA hospital in Phoenix had emergency room care, 24/7, 365 days a year. So there might be some culpability on part of the individual. If they needed emergency care, it was there."

One thing the task force did find was that the Phoenix VA Medical Center had some difficult issues.

First of all, its traffic is strongly affected by the mass of snowbirds who winter in Arizona and want to use the facility. This increases the waiting list times.

Secondly, the hospital has asked for additional space for ambulatory care, but has not received federal funding as yet. The measure passed the House, but the Senate has not passed the VA bill for this year.

Mullon's team also found instances that may indicate deeper problems at the facility.

"They have over 100 unfair labor practice claims pending. That would be an indication that something is going on there."

Mullon summed up by saying that it was his impression that while the

Phoenix hospital does have administrative problems, the quality of care at the hospital seems to be very good.

"They have an overload, and they simply have not been able to come up with the answers. There are indications that they've been lying to the secretary."

Mullon said he strongly opposes changing the VA to allow veterans to use private health care.

"Privatization keeps coming up over time. What you have to understand is that the VA overall is an excellent care system. It has a 90 percent satisfaction rate, which is far higher than the private sector.

"And they specialize in care to veterans. The VA deals with disabilities from war that the private sector has not seen."

Mullon said any shift to privatization will likely cost more too. The VA has a good record of cost-effective care, including the ability to seek competition in drug prices.

"And if you think you've got waiting lists at the VA, the private sector also has lists, big lists."

Mullon said studies have shown the VA to be the best hospital system in the United States. "That's why we call it a System Worth Saving. The Legion has fought for years to protect the VA system. We shouldn't quit now."

Veterans bills passed

Continued from Page 1

we did that was most important was keeping at bay some things that were not completely thought out."

Tesdahl said it would be nice if state legislators consulted with the veterans service groups in a similar way to how federal lawmakers do.

"Just call us on the phone. Ask those whom the law is going to affect. Come to the table with us."

Among those measures that did pass:

-- A time extension was granted to surviving spouses of veterans to claim a property tax benefit for totally disabled veterans from five to eight years.

-- National Guard pay will now be exempt from income taxes, just like all other active duty military pay.

-- There will be expedited licensing for veterans and spouses for certain occupations. It will apply to veterans leaving the service for up to two years. There will also be temporary licenses available while their permanent license is being processed. For military policemen, there will be easier to qualify for state testing to become a peace officer.

-- \$250,000 was allocated to conduct housing needs studies around the state to seek information on various types of veterans needs and how the state can deal with it.

-- All honorably discharged veterans will be able to get resident tuition rates at public universities and colleges, regardless of their resident status. This was already in effect at many Minnesota colleges, but it now is written into law.

-- In the bonding bill, the state veterans homes will get \$2 million for repairs and maintenance, and another \$700,000 to repair a leaky deep tunnel at the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

-- The Hmong-Lao veterans got \$450,000 to construct a memorial at the state Capitol grounds to honor veterans of the war in Laos who were allied to American forces.

-- Money was also allocated for veteran memorials in North St. Paul and Edina and for renovation of the Brooklyn Park Armory.

-- There will be license plates to recognize women veterans, and a motorcycle license plate to honor combat wounded veterans.

-- Veterans-owned small businesses can now register at the state level for state preference on contracts, rather than at the federal level. McElhiney notes that this was one of the Commander's Task Force initiatives this year. "Funding to make this an efficient process will need to be sought in the next budget year."

-- A Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail was given \$1.7 million. It will link to the Sioux Line and Crow Wing trails.

-- A \$400,000 grant to the Let's Go Fishing of Minnesota will be partially used for programs that affect veterans.

-- \$26,000 was granted to Stearns County for group residential housing services. It is thought this money is aimed at the Eagle's Healing Nest in Sauk Centre.

"It was a fast and short session, and we're still looking at some of the bills that were passed," McElhiney said.

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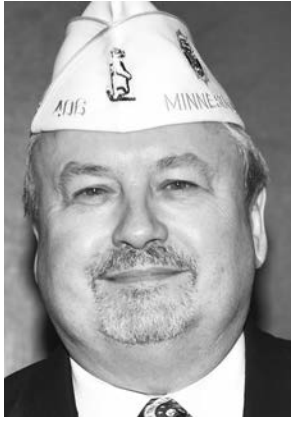
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COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Mike Ash



The Testimonials and District Conventions are in full swing – this signals a changing of the guard, but not the mission. We need to continue our outstanding work helping our veterans receive the benefits they earned by service to their country. We have to strive to make the transition between our current officers and newly elected leaders as smooth as possible. How did we approach membership? What worked and what didn't? What projects have been started, how far along are we, and what needs to be done to tie up any loose ends? Which programs were extremely successful in our posts or district and which ones could use a little boost? It is up to us who went before to make sure our successors have the very best year they can and to make our post and/or district the very best it can be.

I just finished reading an article in the Star Tribune concerning the legislation to change the admission requirements into Minnesota Veteran Homes. The representative who tried to force it through the first time was knocked on

Mail Call

Watchdog Role

To the Editor:

In probably the worst scandal in Veterans Affairs since Warren G. Harding was President, we now see veterans being deprived of timely health care and some even dying as a result. In 1921 President Harding created the Veterans Bureau, (the predecessor to the Veterans Administration) and appointed a decorated WWI veteran, Charles R. Forbes as its first Director. Forbes promptly began ripping off the Bureau and selling everything that was loose for his own profit. The infant American Legion was quick to raise the red flag and call for the ouster of Forbes, and a cleansing of the Veterans Bureau. Now, more than 90 years later we see VA leadership creating secret lists to skew the numbers in order to obtain bonus's for themselves.

A couple of things are apparent: 1. The VA needs to be cleansed from top to bottom. Anyone found guilty should be punished and made to make restitution of any bonus obtained fraudulently, and sent to prison if it is warranted. (The resignation of Dr. Robert Petzel was meaningless.) All bonus's should be eliminated immediately, and permanently. It is an insult to all veteran's for government employees to receive a bonus for serving those who have "Borne the Battle".

2. It should be obvious to anyone paying attention that The American Legion is as important, necessary, and relevant today as it has ever been at any time during its history. The American Legion is the strongest watchdog over the rights and benefits of all veterans and their families. We can all stand and be proud of what The American Legion is doing, and we MUST all remain vigilant and determined to keep our American Legion strong.

Lyle R. Foltz
Apple Valley

Bowling Thanks

To the Editor:

John Torma, Secretary for the 67th Annual Minnesota American Legion Bowling Tournament hosted by Moorhead Post 21 and Sunset Lanes, was very satisfied with the outcome. He would have liked to have had more outstate teams entered from the 9th District. One hundred thirty teams participated with over 530 bowlers entered in singles, doubles and team events.

Thanks to everyone who helped out with the bowling, the shuttle and everything else.

Gary Olson
Moorhead

Good stories

To the Editor:

I have been a member of the Sauk Rapids Legion since the early 80s. After retiring from the Army in 1995, my family and I stayed at my last assignment in North Carolina. My family ties to Minnesota are deep and I never canceled my Minnesota membership.

I love reading the articles in the Legionnaire. The articles on Minnesota veterans who served in World War II are well written and are a part of personal accounts of those who served who will soon be gone. Thanks for doing such a

great job in sharing historical stories of our veterans. his butt by the reaction he got from "the guys in the hats" as he called us (those who come to hearings with American Legion and VFW hats on). Although the MDVA Commissioner, as well as his Deputy Commissioner and the president of the CVSOs stated very succinctly why it was a bad idea, he (Rep. Jerry Newton) is bound and determined to bring it up again. He'll meet with the same reaction – and from the same people, the Commanders from the 9 congressionally chartered veterans organizations (known as the Commanders Task Force), standing in lock-step, to fight to do what is right for veterans. During the legislative year, there are times we need additional "hat power" – get on the list of the NEC or Legislative Committee and if you can come and support the cause.

Legionville is still looking for help from our members. Of course, funds are always gladly accepted, but they could really use a hand in painting. If you can spare a few hours or a few days, please contact Roy Kruger, Camp Manager, and let him know you'd like to lend a hand to get our new educational facility ready when the students start arriving (hint – it's going to be REAL soon!). Meanwhile, watch the Legionnaire for news on the grand re-opening and dedication of the new "barn."

The Consolidated Post Reports are coming in at a very slow pace – we need to get those turned in and turned in now. With so many of our Legionnaires doing so very much for their post, community, state and nation – we must insure they get the credit they so richly deserve. One of the best ways to do this is to turn in a Consolidated Post Report – these reports not only help at our local level, but they give our National folks facts and figures to lay in front of the U.S. Legislature, to show we continue to walk-the-walk. Remember: The American Legion does these things not because it can, but because it's who we are.

great job in sharing historical stories of our veterans.

Dave Wright
Fletcher, N.C.

Nonsense article

To the Editor:

I am a lifetime member of the Legion and a Marine Corps veteran from the Korean era plus the Vietnam era.

Not only I, but, I'd guess, a large group of Legion members will be highly upset by the letter to the editor this past month called "Brewery Affiliation."

Who is this person who is trying to turn the Legion into an old ladies coffee shop?

Also, why did you publish such garbage?

The Legion would lose a large number of present and future members and also lose a lot of revenue.

I have been a member of Richfield Post 435 for 33 years. As long as I lived in south Minneapolis, I used to go with friends to the Legion three days a week to enjoy the bar and the dining room. I also enjoyed the live bands for dancing and entertainment. We did that for pleasure, but also to support the Legion financially.

We did that for many, many years and enjoyed every minute of it. I do miss it very much and have fond memories of those days.

Fred Rossbach
Virginia Beach, Va.

Great memories

To the Editor:

Thanks to Boys State for the recent note from Director Mike Bredeck and the 2013 yearbook. It brought back a lot of great memories. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity of participating in Boys State. The lessons I acquired have already proven useful now, and for sure into the future.

All the staff that I encountered from the moment I stepped off the bus could not have been more supportive and professional. Please feel free at anytime to contact me to be a public supporter of Boys State at any level. I will be heading to the United States Coast Guard Academy at the end of June, so the knowledge that I acquired will come in handy on yet another level very soon.

Ryan H. Condon
Rosemount

Reunions

USS Sphinx, ARL 24, All Crews, will meet September 8-11 at the Box Car Willie Hotel in Branson, Mo. Contact Dennis Klein, 215-542-2283 or email: dckdck@aol.com.

USS Mount McKinley Association will meet in Colorado Springs, Co., from Sept 17-21. The reunion will be for veterans and associate members from all branches of the military who served on the amphibious force flagship.

Contact: Dwight L. Janzen, Secretary, at 509-534-3649 or email: djanzen4@msn.com.

Chaplain's Corner

By
Richard Wog



We are moving into summer, but that means we start to do all the outside work; trying to get caught up on the projects we didn't finish last year. Then there are graduations and confirmations and also a lot of weddings to attend. Wherever events take you; be safe and enjoy this wonderful time of the season. Spring has been slow in coming. Maybe we won't have one. I know the farmers are getting a late start. When they finish planting then the waiting game starts. Will there be enough rain for the crops? It is all up to Mother Nature. It is like I have been saying, prayer does work. If it seems like prayer didn't work the first time, try again. But not just for the rain. Anybody that watches the news knows of some of the troubles that are taking place in the world. Each of us needs to include people in those troubled areas in our prayers.

Memorial Day is behind us and soon the fourth of July will be here. The fourth is another time to give thanks for what we have today. The Fourth of July is better known as Independence Day for the United States of America. There is so much history about that great day. Some even say it was July 2nd. John Adams wrote a letter to his wife Abigail saying, "The second day of July 1776 will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I'm apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, gun, bells, bonfires, and with illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more." In 1779, July 4th fell on a Sunday, but it was celebrated on Monday, July 5th. That showed me that their God and what Sunday stood for was more important to them at that time. Some things have changed, have they not?

The Ten Commandments are what we are to live by. God gave them to Moses not just for his people, but for all to live by. Each commandment pertains to how we are to live our lives. I have to say, there are times I go back to my confirmation days; we had to learn the commandments and the meaning of each one. The fifth commandment stands out for me. Why you may ask? We just celebrated Mother's Day and soon we'll celebrate Father's Day on June 15th. Fathers have been a very important part of our lives. They are mentors. A father is the person you know you can confide in. He, as your mother, is always there for you. The fifth commandment says "Honor thy father and thy mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you." Let's not forget our fathers on Father's Day.

Cheryl and I had the honor of attending our grandson's induction into the High Court of Honor Eagle Scout. The ceremony was at his church. I learned so much about the Boy Scouts that I didn't know. I have always had the greatest respect for them and what they do and for what they stand for. When the speaker introduced Travis, everyone was standing and applauding. We did the same with a smile and a tear or two. A big thank you goes out to all of the scouts; they are a big part of the four pillars.

I was asked how I like being Department Chaplain and if I would do it again. I said I loved it and I would do it again in a heartbeat.

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Al Zdon, Editor

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What's Happening

Legal Clinics

A series of legal clinics for veterans has been set up by the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. The clinics will provide counseling on child support, employment, benefits, expungement, debt collection and wills.

The clinic will feature attorneys, MACV staff, county veterans service officers, and others.

The clinics include:

-- Tuesday, June 10, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis in the Flag Atrium Balcony Room. Parking is free.

-- Thursday, June 19, at the Anoka County Government Center, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

-- Tuesday, June 24, at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, Auditorium Building 8, 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

-- Thursday, June 26, at the Fillmore County Office Building in Preston, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Korean War Veterans

A free book on the contribution of Korean War Veterans is available. For those veterans in Minnesota, please send a check for \$5.60 to cover the cost of mailing, to Ed Valle, 1410 Foster St., River Falls, WI, 54022.

Also, the Korean War Veterans will be celebrating their national convention in Rochester, Minnesota, this year. It will be held Oct. 15-19 at the Kahler Grand Hotel. For reservations, call 1-800-533-1655.

Minnesota's Chapter 1 will be the host.

Moving Wall

The Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall will be at Veterans Memorial Park in Cleveland, Minn., from Thursday, July 24 to Monday, July 28.

There will be a welcoming ceremony on Saturday, July 26, at 10 a.m.

There will be a Motorcycle/Classic Car Ride on Saturday, June 21, at the church on the west side of Cleveland parking lot from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is \$25 per driver and \$15 per riders, and everyone must pre-register. Contact Chris Thomas at 507-420-2973.

The proceeds will be used to finance the Moving Wall. The ride will end at the Cleveland Post with brats, beans and chips to be served.

Support the Troops Golf

The annual Support the Troops Golf Tournament will be held Saturday, June 21, at the Ponds Golf Course in St. Francis. The tourney will raise money for Pets Loyal 2 Vets.

It will begin at 10 a.m. with a shotgun start. Registration begins at 8 a.m. It's a four-person scramble format and the sign up deadline is June 14. Call Nicole at 763-795-6235.

The \$95 per person fee includes the golf, cart, dinner and gift bag. There will be a raffle and silent auction.

Rep. Nolan Forums

Rep. Rick Nolan, D-Minn., will be hosting a series of forums relating to veterans issues. The upcoming schedule includes:

-- June 13, 10 a.m., Morrison County Government Center in Little Falls.

-- June 13, Brainerd, Crow Wing County Land Services Building, 2 p.m.

-- June 16, 3 p.m., Chisago County Government Center in Center City.

-- July 2, 1 p.m., Servicemen's Quarters in the Hibbing Memorial Building.

All Airborne Days

The 19th annual All Airborne Days will be held at the Minnesota Air National Guard Contact Club at Fort Snelling on Aug. 23, Saturday, from noon to 6 p.m.

The colors will be posted at noon. The pig roast picnic will follow at 1 p.m. with many additional buffet items.

Reservations are required by Aug. 17. The cost is \$15 per person. Checks can be sent to the Midwest All-Airborne Alliance, Box 583131, Minneapolis, MN 55458.

The Air Guard museum will be open and vintage street rods will be on display.

Hangar Dance

The Rochester Veterans Round Table will host a hangar dance on Saturday, June 21, at Hangar C, General Aviation, Rochester International Airport.

The dance will begin at 6 p.m. and will feature a live, big band, a free swing dance lesson, and vehicles on display. The cost of the event is \$20 in advance at www.mvesm.com or \$23 at the door. Starting at 10 a.m., the vintage aircraft, including the B-25 Miss Mitchell will be on display.

U study looks at vets and food

Continued from Page 1

Program (SNAP) offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture was one source along with local food shelves and state programs.

"The big picture is that it's important to work on ways to help the veteran overall. It has to do with employment, lower wages, and just having enough resources to insure a steady food supply."

The study polled 1,200 men and 800 women who had had at least one day of outpatient care at a VA facility. The response rate was about 52 percent, considered very high for a mail survey.

"We're not sure why it was so high, but we think it's maybe because it was returning veterans who might be more conscientious. And because it was done in Minnesota where you might have that Minnesota personality. We were very pleased with the response rate."

The survey was published in the journal Public Health Nutrition this past month. It was done by Widome and Minneapolis VA Health Care System researchers Agnes Jensen, Dr. Steven Fu, and Ann Bangerter.

There were also correlations that were not found in the survey. For instance, it didn't seem to matter how many deployments a veteran had served, and having a service-connected disability did not affect food security needs.

The study emphasized that a living wage was often a key for veterans. "Future work should focus on connecting veterans with employment that can provide a livable wage and food assistance for veterans in need," the final report said.

Widome said, "We hope this research prompts discussion on how to help veterans currently struggling to access food."

Category	Food Security Level		
	High/Marginal	Low	Very Low
Overall Nationally	85.5%	8.8%	5.7%
Post 9-11 Veterans	62.8%	15.1%	12.1%
All results below are for Iraq/Afghanistan veterans			
Female	72.1%	15.8%	12.1%
Male	74.1%	13.8%	12.1%
Marital Status			
Single	24.4%	34.6%	31%
Married/Partnered	63%	42%	29%
Divorced/Separated	12.5%	22.8%	40%
Correlations			
Using Tobacco	31.5%	44.9%	60%
Binge Drinking	50.7%	60.1%	58.6%
Hours of Sleep	6.7 hours	6.2	5.9
Fair or Poor Health	11.6%	27.6%	24.8%

The University of Minnesota/Minneapolis VA study on access to food for veterans revealed some new information. Nationally, about 14.5 percent of Americans report low or very low food security levels. For veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, that figure is about 27 percent. The study also showed strong correlations between food security and other areas of life including marriage status, tobacco use, drinking, hours of sleep and general poor health and food security.

Veterans 4 Veterans helps buy ADC bus

The Minnesota Veterans 4 Veterans recently approved a grant for \$20,000 to assist in the purchase of a \$66,000 bus that will serve the Adult Day Center at the

Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis.

Funding also came from the Disabled American Veterans of Minnesota Foundation.

The bus will transport

veterans who use the center from their home to the center and back.

The purchase fulfills a major need at the center, which opened this past year.



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- Travel Accident
- Emergency Assistance Plus™

Taps

Ronningen, Sidney A., 94, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died May 25, 2014. He was stationed in New Guinea. He was a member of Zumbrota Post 183.

Miller, Harland M., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 7, 2014. He was a member of Granite Falls Post 69.

Haukom, Curtis Blaine, 92, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died May 4, 2014. He was a nose turret gunner and bombardier on a B-24. He flew 34 missions over Europe and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was a member of Hayfield Post 330.

Olson, Delmer, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died May 7, 2014. He served in Europe with the 13th Armored Division. He was a member of Paynesville Post 271.

Brekke, Vivian E., 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 2, 2014. She served in the WAVES. She was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Halvorson, Morris L., 70, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 6, 2014. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Mounsdon, Lamont R., 91, Army veteran of World War II, died April 11, 2014. He was a staff sergeant and served in the Pacific. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Poirier, George Stuart, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 16, 2014. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Lutterman, Delmer Joseph, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 11, 2014. He earned the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star in Korea. He was a member of Granite Falls Post 69.

Anderson, Wayne Eugene, 79, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 11, 2014. He was a member of Hayfield Post 330.

Schmidt, Richard A., 87, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 20, 2014. He served in Japan. He was a member of Mora Post 201.

Wittmer, Aubrey D. "Bud," 82, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died May 25, 2014. He earned a Purple Heart in Korea and was a founding member of the Metro Marines. He was a member of Champlin Post 600.

Kadlec, Elgin E., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 20, 2014. He was a member of Mora Post 201.

Kaderlik, George Charles, 62, Air Force Reserves veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 11, 2014. He was a member of Lonsdale Post 586.

Rosenberg, Raymond, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 13, 2014. He was wounded in Korea and received a Purple Heart. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Schave, Roger, 66, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 15, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Doerr, Harvey, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 26, 2014. He served in the Signal Corps. He was a member of Gaylord Post 433.

Olson, Earl I., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 10, 2014. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Ogilvie, Roger P., 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died May 4, 2014. He was a member of Blue Earth Post 89.

Sobiech, Casimer P., 93, Army veteran of World War II, died May 5, 2014. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

Stumpf, Leo E., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 7, 2014. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

Lubinski, Roman R., 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died May 2, 2014. He served for 25 years, including duty on submarines and the battleship Oklahoma. He retired as an officer, having risen from the ranks. He was a past post commander of Winona Post 9.

Katzner, Albin, 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War,

died May 7, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Arends, Wallace A., 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 30, 2014. He was a cook and served in the Panama Canal Zone and later aboard the carrier USS Bonhomme Richard. He was a member of Ellsworth Post 196.

Bock, Wilton, 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 25, 2014. He served as a tank commander in Korea. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

Jorgenson, Donald, 86, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 8, 2014. He served on the USS Vogelgesang and the USS Boise in the Atlantic. He later served in the National Guard. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Simon, Harold, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died May 1, 2014. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Lockwood, Harold L., 90, Army veteran of World War II, died April 29, 2014. He was a member of Chandler Post 338.

Schwartz, Jerome Conrad, 68, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War. He served in Okinawa and Thailand. He was a member of the Wood Lake Post 556.

Remington, Lucias Francis "Lute," 93, Army veteran of World War II, died April 4, 2014. He served in the Pacific. He was member of Elysian Post 311.

Quarfot, William L., 72, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 4, 2014. He served in the 4th Marine Division, and was stationed in Okinawa, Japan and the Philippines. He was a member of Paynesville Post 271.

Dorsch, John George, 80, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 28, 2014. He served at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. He was a member of Challenger Post 521.

Wagner, Ray C., 89, Army veteran of World War II, died April 26, 2014. He was a paratrooper and earned a Purple Heart at the Battle of the Bulge. He was a member of Lakefield Post 4.

Nykamp, Henry J., 80, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 18, 2014. He was a mechanic in Germany. He was a member of Edgerton Post 42.

Koelewyn, Frank, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 26, 2014. He was stationed in Alaska at Eielson Air Force Base. He was a member of Edgerton Post 42.

Fosness, Harland L., 88, Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died May 2, 2014. He was an amphibious tractor operator and served in the invasions of Iwo Jima and the Volcano Islands. He was a member of Claremont Post 422.

Waldrep, Lloyd A., 86, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 22, 2014. He was a member of Hopkins Post 320.

Gabrielson, Kenneth C., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 3, 2014. He earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. He was a member of Litchfield Post 104.

Jones, Harold A., 93, Army veteran of World War II, died April 17, 2014. He was a corporal serving in the Pacific.

Gasca, Abad, 89, Army veteran of World War II, died April 12, 2014. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Jacobson, Donald E., 96, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 12, 2014. He served in the Hospital Corps. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Schroeder, Clarence J., 93, Army veteran of World War II, died April 18, 2014. He was a B-26 pilot who flew 56 missions in Europe. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Domeier, Ted, 68, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 13, 2014. He was a member of Fairfax Post 205.

Van Ort, Burton, 89, Army veteran of World War II, died April 21, 2014. He was a member of New London Post 537.

Lindquist, Howard A., 82, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died April 21, 2014. He was a member of Lakefield Post 4.

Reierson, Milton J., 89, Army veteran of World War II, died April 19, 2014. He was a spotter for artillery in Europe. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

VonderHaar, Carl F., 100, National Guard veteran of World War II and Korea, died April 27, 2014. He served in Africa, France, the Philippines and Korea. He was involved in the construction of the main gate at Camp Ripley. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Marsolek, Verlyn LeRoy, 80, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April

29, 2014. He was a sergeant in the 70th Armed Field Artillery. He was a member of White Bear Lake Post 168.

Olsen, Chester, 89, Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died April 17, 2014. He was a member of Litchfield Post 104.

Birkemeyer, Richard E., 80, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 18, 2014. He was a member of Litchfield Post 104.

Momsen, JoAnn, 87, wife of former Department Adjutant and National Adjutant Frank Momsen, died May 6, 2014.

Maas, Leroy E., 96, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 10, 2014. He was a pharmacist's mate. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Drescher, Marvin A., 89, Army veteran of World War II, died May 10, 2014. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Bryson, L. Richard, 83, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died May 9, 2014. He served in the medical lab of a MASH unit. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Ulve, Keith D., 86, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 15, 2014. He served on Guam. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Thisius, Merlyn N., 90, Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died May 27, 2014. He fought on Tarawa, Saipan and Tinian. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Gustafson, Dennis E., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died May 26, 2014. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

Jury, Earl W., 89, Army veteran of World War II, died May 20, 2014. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

Marshik, Virgil, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 24, 2014. He was a member of Hillman Post 602.

Krauth, Vernon Paul, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 24, 2014. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

Veterans Advocate Durbin Keeney of Duluth, dead at 65

Durbin M. Keeney Jr., 65, Duluth, a longtime advocate for veterans, died May 4, 2014.

Keeney was an Air Force veteran who served in Vietnam.

He founded the northern chapter of Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans in 1998. He was also active in the Northland Vietnam Veterans of America, and he was a past commander of Duluth Post 71 of The American Legion.

He was involved in dozens of veterans projects in the Duluth area including a Vietnam veterans memorial, and a Dignity Thru Unity Vietnam exhibit at the Duluth Depot.

He was responsible for a \$2.5 million Duluth Veterans Place project through MACV.

He also planned Memorial Day and Veterans Day events, and helped build memorials to Tuskegee Airman Joe Gomer, and Vietnam War prisoner David Wheat.

He retired from MACV



DURBIN KEENEY

in 2011, but his work for veterans never stopped.

"He was passionately devoted to helping others, especially his fellow veterans," Duluth Mayor Don Ness said. "He, and his vast contributions to our community will always be remembered."

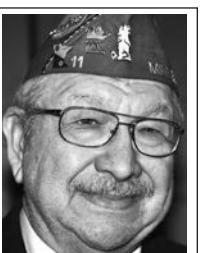
Membership Chart

As of May 28, 2014

District	2014 Goal	Total 2013	Total 2014	Percent of Goal	Same Date '13
1	10,370	10,312	9,832	94.81	10,323
2	8,528	8,443	7,976	93.53	8,428
3	12,927	12,862	12,320	95.30	12,859
4	2,686	2,663	2,495	92.89	2,619
5	3,112	3,089	2,932	94.22	3,076
6	13,192	13,121	12,587	95.41	13,146
7	7,545	7,467	7,117	94.31	7,456
8	5,049	5,008	4,700	93.09	4,992
9	7,659	7,594	7,325	95.64	7,573
10	11,741	11,688	11,104	94.57	11,687
At-large	1,733	1,748	2,305	133.01	1,745
Totals	84,542	83,995	80,693	95.45	83,904

Sons of The American Legion

By John W. Affolter



Sons of the American Legion Commander John W. Affolter suffered a stroke this past month. He is recovering and is in good spirits. Cards and notes can be sent to John Affolter, Ecumen Pathstone Living, Room 3502, 718 Mound Avenue, Mankato, MN 56001.

World War II Round Table at Fort Snelling

Big Red One helped lead assault on D-Day

The First Infantry Division, the “Big Red One,” was one of America’s toughest fighting units in World War II.

Because of the division’s experience in amphibious assaults in both North Africa and Sicily, it was chosen, along with the 29th Division, to lead the assault on Omaha Beach during the D-Day landings.

But it wasn’t just the division’s experience, said historian and author John McManus at the May World War II History Round Table at Fort Snelling.

It was their attitude.

“The Big Red One had a distinct personality. They had the reputation at the senior levels as a go-to outfit. But they were also known as a hard drinking, fighting, tempestuous, and proud division. And they were suspicious of outsiders.”

McManus said that some members of the division took it so far that they didn’t believe they had to take orders from officers outside the division.

The First ID had gone through some trauma in 1943 when its longtime commander, Gen. Terry Allen, and his second in command, Gen. Theodore Roosevelt Jr., were relieved of duty by Gen. Omar Bradley. Allen was immensely popular with the troops, and his brash, aggressive, discipline-free attitude was emulated by his men.

“They considered the U.S. Army as the First Division and 10 million replacements.”

Allen was replaced by a by-the-book disciplinarian Gen. Clarence Huebner. “He was the direct opposite of Allen. He felt the division needed more discipline and he was a stickler for orders. The troops thought he was a mean-spirited old guy.”

Huebner believed in training and more training, and he personally led the troops on the obstacle course and at the firing range. His nickname became, “the coach.”

McManus said Huebner’s theory of leadership was, “You can start as an SOB and become a good guy. But you can’t start as a good guy and then become an SOB.”

By the spring of 1944, as the division got ready for the invasion of France, Huebner had earned the grudging respect of his proud division.

Under Huebner’s emphasis on detail, every position in the Higgins Boat landing craft was assigned. “The lieutenant was in front as the leader. Follow me. The top NCO was in the back of the boat pushing the men off the boat and letting them know they had no other choice.”

The First Division was assigned to the left side of Omaha Beach, a two-mile stretch that was guarded by 500 heavily-armed and well entrenched Germans. “There wasn’t a lot of German manpower, but it was a quality outfit.”

The American bombardment of the beach had little effect on the defenses. There were three “draws” leading from the beach – valleys that led inland. They would be the most heavily defended.

The strict timetable for the landing soon gave way to mass confusion as landings were delayed and then arrived at the wrong place. A plan to have “swimming tanks,” equipped with floatation devices, failed badly in the rough seas, and 27 of the 32 launched sank in the waves. Many crewmen were killed.

McManus said the five that did get ashore did major damage to the German positions. “But there were so many troops and wounded and dead, it was hard for the tanks to maneuver on the beach.”

The individual soldiers had a bad time also. “Most of them were seasick from being on the ships all night. They were weighed down with 80 pounds of gear. Their uniforms were impregnated with a chemical that was supposed to fend off a gas attack, but they stunk like sour milk. The GIs called them skunk suits.”

Once ashore they were confronted with 400 to 600 yards of open beach that was being hammered by a withering German fire. Many tried to reach a low embankment called a shingle bank. “It was made up of smooth stones that were slippery. And when they were hit by a mortar, it magnified the effect.”

Some units took 45 percent casualties in the first hour of the assault.

McManus told stories about many individual efforts to fight across the beach, and quoted one soldier: “You have no idea how scared I really was.”

“The after action reports say the water was reddened with their blood. The medics had to drag the wounded forward so they wouldn’t drown as the tide came in. It’s one of the few battles in U.S. history where the medics dragged people toward the enemy.”

McManus said in all the horror of the attack, there were still moments of humor. One soldier from the south had earned the nickname, “General Lee.” When the Higgins Boat was approaching the beach, he peeked over the gunwale. His sergeant went over to him, saluted, and said, “What did you see, General Lee?”

The soldier was so incensed about being taunted and so upset with the salute, which he thought would cause the German sharpshooters to take aim on him, that he, in true First Division tradition, assaulted his sergeant.

Engineers used explosives and other tools to clear a path



Soldiers from Company E, 16th Infantry, First Infantry Division, step off the landing craft and wade ashore on the morning of June 6, 2014. They landed at the Fox Green section of Omaha Beach. During the initial landing, two-thirds of the company became casualties.

through the barbed wire and mines. A key to the operation was to get the men off the beach and into the hills and valleys beyond. “If you were on the beach, you were a target. If you got off the beach, you were a hunter.”

The officer in charge of the 16th Infantry Regiment, Gen. George Taylor, roamed the beach telling his men, “There are two kinds of people on the beach. The dead and those about to die.”

By late morning, the beach was fairly secure, and by mid-afternoon, the leading elements were heading up the draws going inland. “By the end of the day, there was not a front line as such, but a series of perimeters.”

Why did the invasion succeed? “I think it was the combat experience,” McManus said. “There were a lot of flaws in the plan, but in the end there was enough leadership to triumph over adversity.”

Two combat veterans joined McManus on the panel. Jerry Nauss was with the First Signal Company of the First Infantry Division. Bill Tiede was an anti-aircraft gunner with the 459th AAA Battalion, which was attached to the 29th Infantry Division.

Nauss went overseas as a replacement, not assigned to any one unit. As D-Day approached, the tension began to build. “I was delivering mail to the 18th Infantry of the First Division. I knew something was happening.” And, he was issued French francs a few days before the invasion. “I kind of knew where we were heading.”

Nauss went ashore on D-Day plus 6. “The front door opened, and we headed out in shoulder and chest deep water. I could see a lot of dark spots in the sand on the beach. We went right up the bluff. It was all marked off. It was a clear path.”

One of his most vivid memories was seeing a German spotter plane shot down and the pilot bail out. “They were shooting at the guy as he was coming down, finally they did collapse his parachute and down he went.” Welcome to war.

Nauss still was not assigned to a specific unit. “They lined up all the replacements and then they counted down by twos. If you were a ‘1’ you went to the First Division and if you were a ‘2’ you went to the Second Division. That was clever, wasn’t it?”

Nauss was a ‘1’ and he headed inland on a truck, which promptly stopped at a bar in a French village. “I had my first taste of calvados (a French apple brandy).”

He said he was fairly well treated by the grizzled veterans of the Big Red One, but he did overhear a sergeant telling a corporal, “Don’t tell the kid anything.”

Bill Tiede recalls training for the invasion during practice landings at Slapton Sands in southern England. “That beach was supposedly the same as the beach at Normandy, but it wasn’t.”

Before going ashore, the men had to waterproof their vehicles so they could navigate the water at the landings. They put pipes leading up from the exhaust and the air

intake, and smeared Cosmoline all over the rest of the engine to waterproof it.

Tiede landed on D-Day plus 4. As the door of the LST opened onto the beach, Tiede recalls thinking, “What am I getting into?” Once ashore, there was no artillery, “But I could hear small arms fire in the distance.”

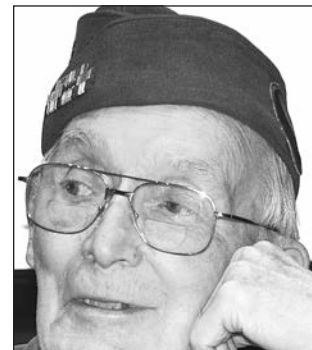
“We had a dry landing, and I remember we weren’t in a hurry. The engineers had cut a road up through the Vierville draw, but we had to wait. They said they had to clear the Germans out of the place where they wanted us to set up our guns.”



Members of the 16th Infantry Regiment take a breather after reaching the shelter of cliffs at Omaha.



JERRY NAUSS



BILL TIEDE



JOHN McMANUS

Legionville readies for new campers



The exterior of the education center is nearly done, but much work remains inside.



Air ventilation pipes wait to be installed in the large room of the new education center. The pipes cannot be hung until the taping and painting is done. Volunteers are needed to tape, sand and paint the interior of the building. When sessions at Legionville Camp, on North Long Lake near Brainerd, begin in June, the large room will not be in use. Classrooms in the building, however, will be used.



Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl measures out some tape in one of the interior spaces at Legionville's new education center. If you would like to volunteer, contact Camp Director Roy Kruger at 218-829-3094.

Outdoor stuff for state veterans



Assistant Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller tries his luck at Veterans on the Lake Fishing Trip for Disabled Veterans.



Hank Ebert shows off his prize at the Disabled Vets Turkey Hunt at Camp Ripley.



Dick and Jerry show off their catch at Ely.



Mark Courts and his fishing truck and boat are shown at Ely along with Adjutant Randy Tesdahl, DSO Tom Newman and ADSO Jeremy Wolfsteller.



Department Commander Mike Ash is interviewed for The Outdoor Report.



Commander Mike Ash, cat lover, received some edible Kitty Litter at his testimonial from Gene Olsword.



Since the Blue Collar Comedy Team was out of town, the Blue Capper Comedy Team took their place, roasting Commander Ash at his testimonial at the Rosetown Post 542. From left are Tom Conway, Larry Ryan and Mark Mitzuk.

Commander Ash's Testimonial

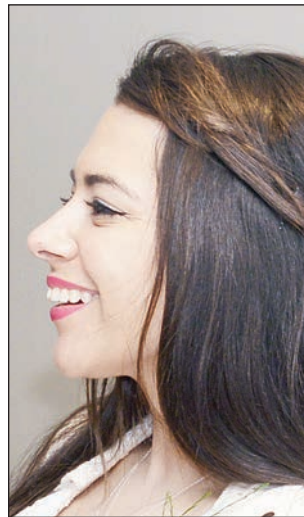
Photos by Lisa Ghylin



Commander Ash received a carved granite momento from his team of officers. It was presented by Membership Director Tom Fernlund.



Amanda England, Mike's daughter, placed the POW/MIA flag at the empty table.



Dignitaries brought greetings for the commander. From left: SAL Detachment Commander John W. Affolter; Honorary Junior President Kaitlin Fernlund; NECman Ray DeZurik; Auxiliary President Shirley Frederick.



And when it was all over, there was still one hug left for the exhausted commander -- with wife Teresa.



Featured Speaker Don Pankake brought his special kind of humor to the evening.

74 Missions in a P-47 Thunderbolt

Al Lieberman grew up in North Dakota. He joined the Army Air Corps and learned to fly the P-47 Thunderbolt, America's workhorse fighter. He got through 74 missions and always had the feeling that someone or something was looking out for him -- including the time a German 88 blew a hole in his wing but failed to explode.

Al Lieberman asked the writer not to put in the story that he did a barrel-roll over his airfield in Europe when he returned from shooting down two German fighters in 1945.

He thought there might be repercussions. "It was the stupidest thing I ever did," he said.

And so you didn't hear it here. Al Lieberman did not do a perfectly executed barrel-roll at considerable speed over a U.S. fighter base in April, 1945. Did he get in trouble for this maneuver?

"No, no one said a word."

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Alvin H. Lieberman grew up in North Dakota, the son of a Jewish immigrant who operated stores in Washington State, Montana, and Oakes and Valley City, N.D.

"My father grew up in Lithuania, and young men were being grabbed at an early age and shoved into the Army. His family didn't want him to become cannon fodder, and so he was sent to family members in Louisville, Kentucky."

The elder Lieberman stayed in Louisville for a year, going to school and learning English, and then joined a friend in opening a men's store in the small town of Concrete, Washington, in the upper northwest corner of the state.

Lieberman later owned two stores in Montana before operating a store in Oakes, North Dakota, where his son Al Lieberman was born. When Al was in the fourth grade, the family moved to the larger town of Valley City, just west of Fargo.

"We weren't rich, and it was still a struggle during the Depression. I worked in a gas station for a little while, but mainly I worked for my dad. I vacuumed the carpet in the store every night, and I cleaned the plate glass window at the front entrance. I hated it, but I did it."

He graduated from Valley City High School 1941 and headed off to the University of Minnesota. "I had read an article in the Saturday Evening Post about an atom smasher right at the U. I knew I wanted to be a physicist.

"I realized partway through, though, that physicists were mostly introverts, and I was an extrovert. I was a salesman type of person. So I switched to chemical engineering."

He was living in the Jewish fraternity on University Avenue in December, 1941. "I was at the frat house on a Sunday morning when the world learned what the Japanese had done."

Lieberman was told that he could probably get a deferment while in school, but that wasn't what he wanted to do. "I decided to enlist. I was only 17, and so I had to take the train back to Valley City to get my parents' permission."

He joined the Army Air Corps with the intention of being a pilot. The Army let him stay in school for another month before giving him orders to Camp Shanks, Missouri, where he spent a couple of weeks. There was a tremendous influx of young men who wanted to be pilots, and so Lieberman had to cool his heels for a while at Beloit College in Wisconsin in a college training detachment.

"They took us up in Piper Cubs at Beloit." The pilot let Lieberman take the controls, and he didn't do so well. "It was the most awful thing that ever happened to me. I wondered if facing a bayonet might not be so bad."

Finally he got orders. "I took a train to Chicago and then on to Los Angeles. I was assigned to Santa Ana Army Air Base."

Santa Ana had just been opened and it was designed for basic training – no airplanes, no runways. "They tested us for weeks. They tested everything from our toenails to our hair follicles. I did pretty well on the physical testing – I could really slither up those ropes."

Lieberman's background as a Boy Scout and as a member of the ROTC at the University of Minnesota stood him well in the Army environment. "They had us do a lot a close order drilling, and I was a whiz at it. I loved it. I drank it up."

The screening process was intensive. "Guys were washing out left and right. It was always a cloud over us. Nobody wanted to go into the infantry. In my case, I had to be cautious about what I said. I didn't want to wash out for being a smart ass."

On one test, the students were asked to list what they wanted to be and the choices were pilot, navigator or bombardier. "I just put down pilot, pilot, pilot. I was hoping they'd take that the right way."

One day, he was relaxing with his comrades when a sergeant told him to report to a certain Lt. Landsburg.

"I had to walk all the way across the base, and Santa Ana was a big base. I finally got to the right building and I went inside. A secretary told me to go right in. There was a lieutenant sitting at a desk and he stared at me.

"I came to a brace and saluted and said, 'Lieberman, A.H., reporting as ordered, sir.' He just looked at me, and finally he said, 'Relax, Al, I'm your cousin. I'm married to Ruth Goldberg.'"

It turned out that the lieutenant and his wife were from Fargo, and Lieberman as a youngster had spent many holidays at the Goldburgs. She was working as a clerk at the base, and had come across Lieberman's name on a document and told her husband.

"He sat me down and talked to me, and then said he would arrange to sign me out for the weekend for a visit." The connection went a long way toward relieving Lieberman of his fears of washing out. "I've always said there's somebody watching out for me."

Lieberman worked his way through primary, basic and advanced training, flying the Boeing Stearman bi-plane trainer and the Voltec BT-13 Valiant, known among the troops as the Voltec Vibrator for its performance in the air.



He was assigned to Rankin Field near Tulare, California. It had been operated by Tex Rankin, a famous barnstormer, and it was like a private flying school. "I loved the Stearman. It was one heck of a plane. I could do anything in that plane you could dream of. I was the first one in my class to solo."

One potential problem Lieberman had to solve was the fact that if he rode in the back seat of a car, he always got carsick. "But I never got sick when I was flying."

He got his wings on March 12, 1944, after advanced training in the AT-6 Texan at Luke Field in Phoenix.

He was assigned to the 362nd Fighter Group, the 379th Fighter Squadron. The pilots were flown on a transport to England, and they settled in at a base near Shrewsbury. They were flying the P-47 Thunderbolts, one of the two main fighter aircraft used by the Army, and considered a



AL LIEBERMAN
At home in a Minneapolis suburb



AL LIEBERMAN
As a fighter pilot during World War II