

# Post, unit pictures sought for contest

With the Centennial of The American Legion approaching, this year's calendar photo contest will have a new theme: historic post or unit or SAL pictures.

The National organization is encouraging all posts to create their own post history in the next couple of years as part of the 100th birthday of the Legion.

The contest will follow the centennial theme. The contest will be judged on the quality of a photograph from a post's history. Emphasis will be on both those photos that reach back into a post's history or to recent events.

An entry could be a post or unit or SAL event, a talent contest, a drum and bugle corps, a parade, a picnic, a charter signing or anything else that portrays the post's history in a serious or humorous way.

The winner will receive \$300 for first prize. The second place will be \$200 and third place will be \$150. If the entry comes from the post, the post will win the prize. If it comes from an individual, that person will win the prize.

All 12 winners will have their photo in the 2016 Department calendar.

Entries are due by July 1.

Entrants can submit up to three pictures. Those entering must be a paid-up member in the American Legion Family: Legion, Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion.

As in past years, entrants should not submit original photos. They should be scanned. No photos will be returned.

All photos that are submitted electronically should have a resolution of at least 200 dpi. The technical quality of the photograph will be part of the judging.

The winners will be announced in the August issue of the Legionnaire.

The rules include:

1. All photos must concern the history of a specific post, unit or squadron. Family members can submit photos from an

immediate family member, as long as the person submitting is a current member of the Legion, Auxiliary or Sons of the American Legion. For instance, a Legion Family member can submit a photo taken by a grandfather several decades ago. Photos can be submitted by a current member, even though the photographer is unknown.

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

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

4. All entries must be postmarked by June 30, 2015, or have been emailed by July 1, 2015.

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

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

7. Photographs may be from any time frame, but older photos will be given priority judging.

8. The limit per person or post is three photographs.

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

10. The person who took the photo should be identified if possible.

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

## Minnesota 'Voices from Vietnam' exhibit soon at Military Museum

CAMP RIPLEY, MN – "Minnesota Voices from Vietnam" 50th Anniversary Vietnam Exhibit will be opening July 18 at the Minnesota Military Museum.

There will be a program from 11 a.m. until noon.

The public is invited to participate in the exhibit opening or to visit the museum anytime over the next four years to view this exhibit.

Curator Doug Bekke said, "The exhibit will tell the story of the war through the artifacts, words and photographs of the Minnesotans who served." The exhibit will give a brief overview of the history of Vietnam and the rise of Ho Chi Minh and include a timeline of significant events in the war. The main body of the exhibit will be a series of short veteran's stories covering our earliest involvement to our ending involvement, to include General John Vessey's involvement in the 1980's and 90's on MIA recovery.

The exhibit will include stories of Minnesotans who were involved in Vietnam from the end of WW II when a Minnesota member of an OSS

Operational Team parachuted into Hanoi, to the son of a Vietnamese officer who as a 9 year old was evacuated by helicopter from our embassy in 1975 and now teaches in Minnesota.

Bekke said, "The exhibit will focus on more than just combat and will portray the stories of the mechanics, cooks, clerks, logisticians and other support troops from all branches."

The event will start with a program at 11 a.m. with guest speakers and presentations. There will be food, equipment displays, period reenactors and a used book sale. Minnesota authors who have written books on their experiences in Vietnam will be available for book signings. There will also be a traveling exhibit sponsored by the Mobile Riverine Force Association. The mobile exhibit is dedicated to the soldiers of the 9th Inf. Division and sailors of Navy Task Force 117 as well as all Navy & Coast Guard Units in the Mekong Delta and other areas of Vietnam from 1966-70.



**LEGIONVILLE WORK** -- The painting is done and much of the finishing work is being completed at the education center at Legionville School Patrol Camp near Brainerd. The camp will open, using the new education building, on June 14. A grand opening event is scheduled for the Camporee this September.

## Air Force: 'We are stretched'

As a delegation of Legionnaires, including the National President of The American Legion Auxiliary, toured Ramstein Air Base today, one concern was mentioned by Air Force leaders repeatedly: Sequestration is jeopardizing readiness. "It is frustrating to see the best military judgment be ignored, but I am convinced that sequestration will not go away – even though it is the worst law that I can remember," Lt. Gen. Noel "Tom" Jones told President Janet Jefford and American Legion Department of France National Executive Committeeman John Miller in a meeting.

Jones, who is the vice commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe -Air Forces Africa, said that Europe is completely different than when he served during a previous tour here in the 1980s. "By every measure our op tempo has increased, but we are 75 percent smaller than what we were a

couple of decades ago," Jones said.

"This is an important message, because if you are not here, you don't appreciate the magnitude of the cuts that we have had in Europe. Thanks to Mr. Putin and Russia, people are now starting to pay attention."

Brigadier Gen. Patrick Mordente, commander of the 86th Airlift Wing, mirrored many of Jones' concerns. "When I first came to the airlift, the Berlin Wall came down," Mordente said. "We kept hearing about the 'peace dividend,' yet since 1990 airlift requirements have quadrupled. We are not only very close to Putin's Russia, but ISIS and Boko Haram are also threats in our area.

There are so many possibilities about the future that you cannot afford to cut Europe anymore."



**CHECKS PRESENTED** -- Bill Barbknecht, chairman of the Legionnaire Insurance Trust Committee, presented two checks totaling \$98,000 to Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl. The LIT annual pays back part of its earnings from Minnesota Legion members who buy the company's products.

## Membership Chart

As of June 1, 2015

District	2015 Goal	Total 2014	Total 2015	Percent of Goal	Same Date '14
1	9,976	9,918	9,511	95.34	9,850
2	8,110	8,026	7,672	94.76	7,990
3	12,486	12,421	12,028	96.33	12,323
4	2,554	2,530	2,512	98.36	2,502
5	2,959	2,936	2,792	94.36	2,933
6	12,698	12,627	12,341	97.19	12,571
7	7,245	7,167	6,885	95.03	7,129
8	4,768	4,727	4,565	95.74	4,707
9	7,443	7,378	7,132	95.82	7,332
10	11,243	11,189	10,854	96.54	11,121
At-large	2,340	2,338	2,632	83.34	2,326
<b>Totals</b>	<b>81,822</b>	<b>81,257</b>	<b>78,924</b>	<b>95.52</b>	<b>80,784</b>



Grave markers were decorated for Memorial Day at the Minnesota Veterans Cemetery at Little Falls.



Department Commander Peggy Moon and Alternate NECman Marland Ronning escorted The American Legion wreath at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.



The choir at Little Falls sang the National Anthem.

# Memorial Day Little Falls and Minneapolis



It was a wet day for both man and beast at Little Falls.



A parade of colors was advanced at Little Falls led by Waite Park Post 428.



Women veterans were chosen to present the wreaths at Little Falls.



Commander Moon was driven to the reviewing stand by an Air Force mini-Jep at Minneapolis.



Umbrellas were the order of the day at the Minnesota Veterans Cemetery.



Richard Thill, who served on the USS Ward during World War II, participated in the Fort Snelling ceremony accompanied by a naval cadet. The Ward fired the first shot in the war for the United States.

# Recollections of a young lad in a WWII camp

*Bob Friederichsen's parents were missionaries in the Philippines in 1942 when the family was put into an interment camp by the Japanese Army. They faced hardship and near starvation until their camp was liberated in February 1945.*

Editor's note: The story about Bob Friederichsen is interspersed with quoted material from two sources. Friederichsen's mother, Kay, kept a comprehensive diary during the family's time in the Philippines up to the time of capture. And Kay and Rev. Paul Friederichsen wrote a book in 1972 titled "Like Them That Dream" about their time in the interment camps. The material from those sources is in a different type font throughout the story.

By Al Zdon

Most young boys in the 1940s grew up in a world of street baseball, playing cowboys and Indians, going to the movies, and hanging out with friends.

Bob Friederichsen spent his early youth in a Japanese interment camp.

The son of missionaries in the Philippines, Friederichsen was two-and-one half years old when his parents took God's word to the people on the island of Panay in 1939. He was nearly six when the family was imprisoned. He was eight when his family was liberated from the St. Tomas Interment Camp in Manila.

Friederichsen was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His father was the son of a pastor, and his mother was the daughter of missionaries and had spent her first 17 years in China. He had a brother, Doug, who was three years older.

The family arrived on Panay Island in the central Philippines about three years before the outbreak of war. The father was to help teach native Filipinos at a seminary in the large city of Iloilo.

"I was very young, but I have some sharp memories of those times. I know we got a monkey as a pet, but then we found out that monkeys aren't that trainable, and we got rid of it pretty fast."

The family settled into a house near the Bible school. "My father must have known that the Philippines were on the Japanese agenda because he built a bomb shelter under the front steps."

The war in the Philippines began on December 8, 1941, when the Japanese Army invaded the U.S. Territory.

"When we heard a plane come over, we'd go down to the bomb shelter. Sometimes a few people on the street would join us."

One afternoon just as we were getting ready for mid-day siesta, we heard the sound of airplanes coming overhead. Paul and the children rushed out into the garden to watch them when suddenly there was a mighty roar of bombs and the bang, bang and boom of explosions. Shouting, they made a dash for the small air raid shelter we had built under the cement steps in front of the house, and I ran out to join them after I had gotten the first aid kit. By then the motors roared overhead like thunder. I will never forget the white faces of the children. I crawled into the shelter and we sat for a while shaking with fright. When things seemed quiet again, we came out. Just then the planes returned to machine gun the town and we hustled back into the shelter with many people from the street crowding in with us. They were shaking and sobbing with fear.

Friederichsen's father decided that Iloilo would soon be captured by the Japanese. "We decided to pack up and go into the mountains. In a village called Pasi, a sugar plantation town, we rented a house. All the houses were built on stilts and the farm animals would be below. The floors were bamboo, and the natives would spit their betel juice between the slats.

"My father was always able to see into the future and plan ahead. One thing he did was to lay in store a quantity of canned goods, mainly canned milk. They were stored in these galvanized metal boxes. We always had a little bit of backup."

The family later moved further inland into the mountains, this time to a smaller village. It was an arduous journey over cliffs, through foot-deep mud, and scrambling over rocks. They finally found their new home, rented by a fellow missionary for them. It also was on stilts, like most Filipino houses, and about 20 by 14 feet. They named their new home "cockroach center."

The cockroaches were impossible - in everything and everywhere, big and little, brown and black, fat and flat - they certainly ran the roost! We tied our clothing in bags and put books and food into wooden boxes fastened to the walls with netting over the front, but still they got in - into our beds, our clothes, our food, our water! We certainly ran a close second to the ten plagues. Roach droppings were everywhere - on the table, on dishes and in our hair.

The cockroaches were joined by rats and fleas in the house. Outside were wild boar, snakes, and large lizards.

The family continued its missionary work, and would hold meetings at the house. Most of the people had never been exposed to any religion and were very superstitious.



Hiding in the mountains to avoid capture by the Japanese, the Friederichsens made their home in a traditional Filipino house on stilts. (All drawings are by Kay Friederichsen.)

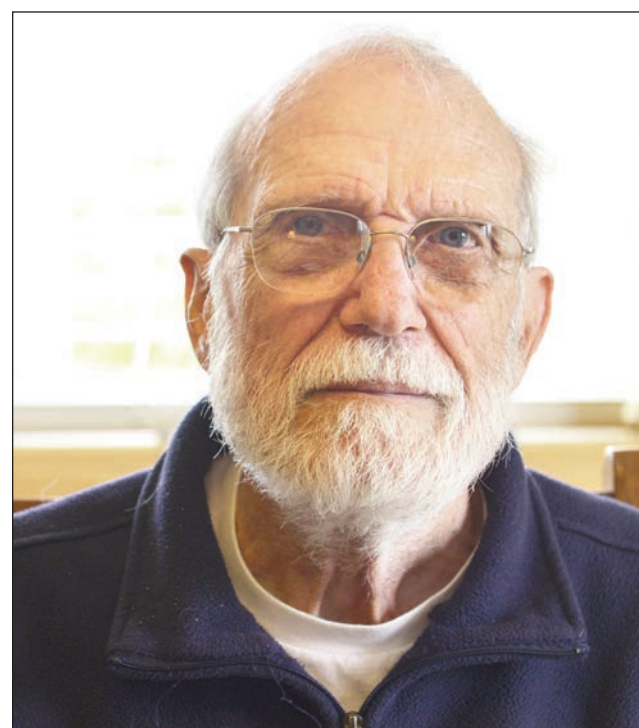
In April 1942, the Japanese came to the island.

So much has happened and we are daily counting our hours until we are either killed or taken prisoner. The Japanese have come into our island now and are making fast progress towards us here. We will not try to escape them and will go into concentration camp if they take us. But we hear of terrible treatment of the Americans who were caught in Iloilo (killed and mutilated) so we are hoping this will reach you even if we are gone to our Home in heaven.

Rev. Friederichsen had to make a choice. "My father said we could either try to keep hiding, or we could turn



**BOB FRIEDERICHSEN**  
Just before the outbreak of World War II



**BOB FRIEDERICHSEN**  
At home in Buffalo, Minnesota

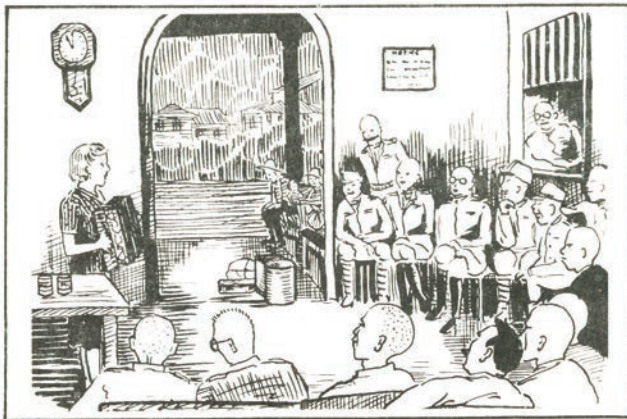
ourselves in. We found out that in some cases the Japanese weren't taking any prisoners." On April 21, with the Japanese Army close at hand, the family chose to return to the lowlands and surrender.

"On the way down, I had an experience that gave me nightmares for a long time. My father had hired a Filipino carrier to carry me on the long walk. When we got to a village, the carrier went ahead. He wanted to show me off to the villagers. I don't think they had ever seen a white child. I was so afraid they were going to leave me there. Of course, they never would, but I still had those nightmares."

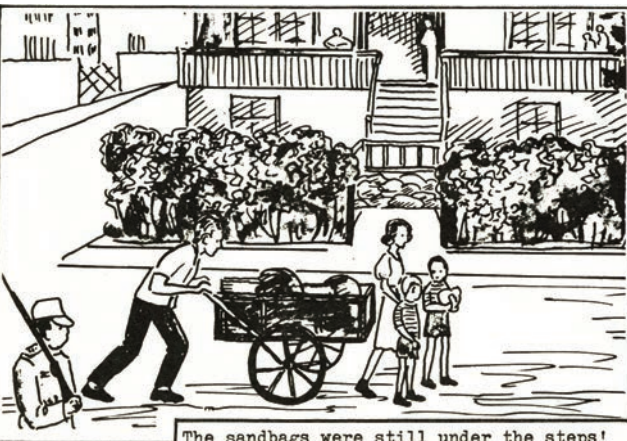
Still not knowing what the correct decision was, they continued to hide out. In late June, however, word was out that all Americans must turn themselves in by the end of the month. They turned themselves in at a local village.

The Japanese put them up the first night at the mayor's house in the village. "I don't think they knew what to do with us. I remember that the mayor had a real bed. We hadn't slept in a bed for six months."

That night the mother played the accordion for the Japanese captors until 11 p.m. She was negotiating with the soldiers to return some tins of milk that had been taken so she could give it to the children. When the concert was over, the Japanese finally relented and even threw in a can of salmon.



Kay Friederichsen played a concert for the Japanese captors in exchange for being allowed to keep some cans of milk for her children.



Reverend Friederichsen pushed a cart with the family's belongings through the streets of Iloilo on their way to an interment camp in the city. Along the way, they passed their old house, with the bomb shelter still in place.

The next day, a truck took the Friederichsens back to Iloilo, and the father was made to push a cart through the town with all their earthly possessions in it.

"In Iloilo, we walked past the house where we had lived, and the bomb shelter was still there."

The family spent a year in a prisoner camp on Panay. "There were about 100 of us or so. There were Americans, but mostly it was British who ran the sugar plantations. It was at a former school. The men were in one section and the women in another. I was with my mother, and my brother was with my father."

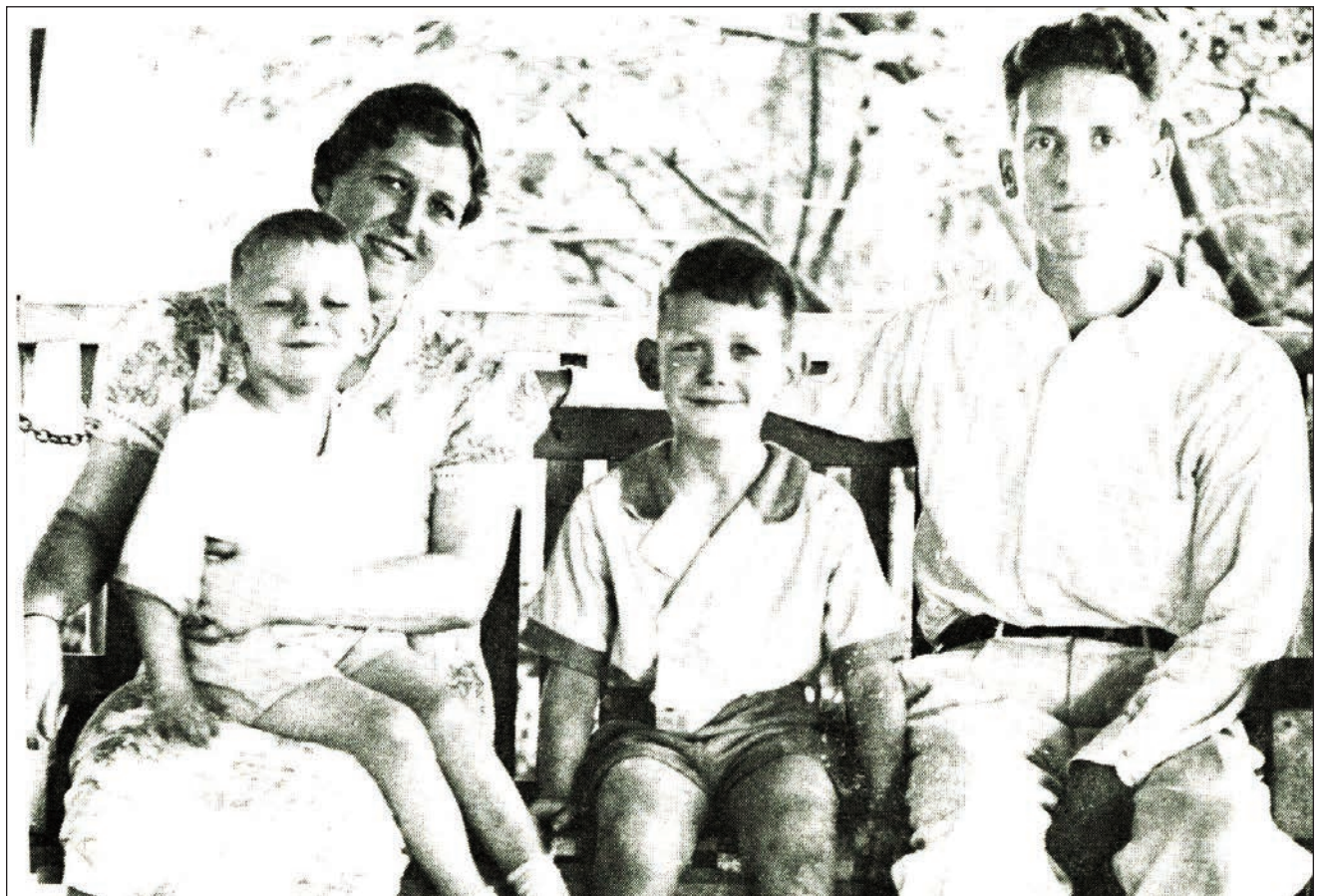
At a point in 1943, the Japanese decided to consolidate all their camps on all the islands and bring all the civilian prisoners to Manila. The family was given two hours to pack their belongings and board the ship that took them to their new home. The camp was at the former University of St. Tomas. Over 4,000 were interned in the camp.

Along the way, Friederichsen contracted tuberculosis. "They wanted to make sure I didn't spread the TB, so they gave me a little extra nourishment. I got an extra egg every day. It must have worked because by the time the war was over, I was cured."

The ailment, though, kept Friederichsen close to home, and he didn't have the run of the camp like other children.

Most families were housed in the buildings and dormitories on the walled-in campus, but conditions were crowded and many others, especially those with money, built shacks on the grounds.

When Friederichsen was diagnosed with TB, he was not allowed to stay in the dormitory. His father borrowed money and bought a dilapidated shack which he refurb-



The Friederichsens enjoyed a warm day on the porch of their house in Iloilo prior to the beginning of the war. From left are Bobby, Kay, Doug and Paul.



Kay Friederichsen earned money for the family by sewing for other families. (Paul Friederichsen photo)



The prisoners stood in chow lines for hours to get their daily rations. (Paul Friederichsen photo)



U.S. Army nurses were held in the camp. (U.S. Army photo)



Women at St. Tomas used a bathtub to wash their hair. (U.S. Army photo)



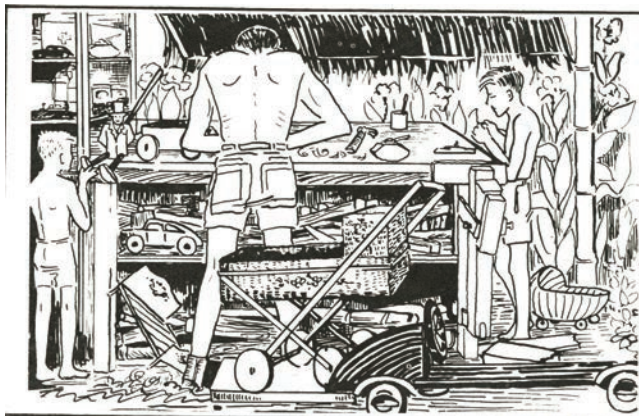
The family lived in this shack on the right during their lengthy stay at the interment camp at St. Tomas University in Manila. (Paul Friederichsen photo)

bished. "We stayed together as a family in that shack."

But above all, this was a sanctuary of peace where prayer and Bible reading and meals and homework and games could be enjoyed in normal and comparative privacy... It was on that double decker bed that Bobby lay for a whole year with his cough and fever. The only cure was good food and rest. The rest was available, but starvation was soon upon them and food was not available.

His father was a camp carpenter, and later worked in the hospital in the camp washing dishes. "He was able to scrape the tops of the pots that the rice had been cooked in, and he would bring that home."

The father also made toys, shoes and other consumer items that he sold to other families for food or money.



For other rations, the families would have to stand in line. "The children got the same amount as the adults. The Japanese figured it out by the amount of calories per person. That's probably why the kids fared better in the camp than the adults."

Each family in the camp was supposed to get a Red Cross package every month. "In the three years we were there, we got one package. We didn't know for sure where they were going, but we could see the guards were smoking Lucky Strike cigarettes, and so we had a feeling where they went."

When the Friederichsens did get their own package, the father was able to trade the cigarettes in the package for milk.

The United States landed in the Philippines on Leyte Island in late October of 1944. The camp was allowed to get censored news each day, but on that day the news reader finished his pre-approved script by saying, "Better late than never." Except that he pronounced the word "late" as "Leyte." The internees broke into cheers, and the camp commandant demanded to see the script again to figure out why the internees were cheering. He was unable to do so.

After the invasion, in the months prior to the liberation, conditions at the camp got much worse, particularly with shortages of food. "The Japanese soldiers in the Philippines had killed all the water buffalo for meat, and so the Filipino farmers weren't able to work their farms. There was no food for anybody."

By late 1944, internees were down to 1,100 calories a day. Gardens were planted in every square inch of the camp.

Another means of survival was raiding the Japanese garbage cans. "They would peel their sweet potatoes and thrown away the peelings. We would steal them and eat them. The Japanese finally put a halt to that because people were fighting over who would get the peelings."

At one point, his father engineered a deal in the black market where he agreed to buy 11 pounds of rice for \$700, with the payment to be made when the war was over. "And we did."

Another source of food came from killing the pets in the camp. "We killed a cat and shared with five other people. We said that cat had nine lives. There was a guy in a shack across the road who had a dog. We always thought he was a collaborator because he would fry bacon up every morning. He'd make us so mad. He had a dog, but somehow the dog got away."

Those who could borrow money dashed from one end of the camp to another trying to buy up the last remaining canned goods. Staple rations were cut, servings became smaller and smaller and tempers were brittle. By this time, about 10 people were dying a day. No one was allowed to go to the grave except the armed guard.

Helping the family survive, Friederichsen said, was its strong reliance on God. "My dad always had a strong faith. When something happened, he'd just say, 'Thank you, Lord.' It made it easy for us. It was good to grow up knowing how God is able to see you through circumstances."

Outside of the lack of food, Friederichsen said conditions in the camp were generally tolerable. "Unless somebody got out of line. For instance, after the Americans land-

ed, if you were caught watching the airplanes fly over or get in dogfights. They didn't want to give us any reason to improve our morale. We'd watch the dogfights, and we felt bad because if a Japanese plane was hit, he had someplace to land, but if an American was hit, he didn't have that luxury.

"If they caught you looking at the planes fighting, they would take you to the gate of the camp and make you look at the sun for four hours."

The American Army pushed to the perimeter of the camp. "One night the sky was suddenly lit up by flares and tracer bullets." Friederichsen and his mother and brother took shelter in the large educational building on the campus. "The guard came over and told us to stay in the building, but my mother said, 'I don't think this is a good idea.' So when the guard wasn't looking, we went back to our shack. It turns out the Japanese wanted to have as many hostages as possible to negotiate with."

The U.S. Army entered the camp on Feb. 3, 1945, but the Japanese military held out in the main building, threatening to kill 200 hostages. Negotiations went on all night, and the Japanese finally agreed to release the hostages and the guards were marched into Manila where they were released.

"We don't know what happened to them. We heard that another American division, that wasn't familiar with the negotiations, killed all of them. We also heard they got away. We really didn't care because we were rid of them."

The internees later found out that the Japanese had put barrels of gasoline under one of the buildings in order to burn the prisoners. They also learned that if the liberation had come one day later, it could have been a catastrophe.

The plan had been to round up everyone for roll call and then have some fun sticking the men and making them squeal before machine gunning them; and keeping the women and children as hostages to deter MacArthur from taking Manila.

"The Japanese had all their knapsacks loaded on a truck that night, ready to go. My brother and father went out in the compound and took many of the knapsacks off the truck. They weren't stealing them, they were appropriating them."

The contents of many of the liberated knapsacks included cigarettes from Red Cross packages, which Rev. Friederichsen was able to trade for a camera. He wanted to record the conditions in the camp as quickly as possible.

In years to come, he used those photographs as part of a lecture he gave at churches to raise money for missionary work.

The internees were kept in the camp as the fighting raged on in Manila. "Food was not a problem at that point, but they told us not to eat too much."

The misery for the internees was far from over. For the next month, they were kept in the camp as the bloody battle for Manila went on. The Japanese took to shelling the camp. The Friederichsens took shelter in the Education Building.

"We would go into the library because it was thought the books on the shelves would provide us some protection."

There was another whistle - and a bang! Screams and confusion were all around and the wounded were lying on the floor with doctors administering first aid; one beautiful young girl was carried by unconscious with her nose cut off. Bang! Bang! Bang! with regularity they hit, directly on target.

In all, 390 internees died in the camp, a death rate of about 10 percent, mainly from starvation or related illnesses. Others died in the shelling. The average adult in the camp lost 53 pounds before liberation.

After 30 days, the Friederichsens were finally able to catch a plane to Leyte and to go aboard a troop ship headed for the United States. "When we were on the ship, we were told that Roosevelt had died. I didn't even know who Roosevelt was."

It was at this point, when the family was finally able to establish communication with the world, that his mother found out that both her parents had died while she was in the camp. "She was so sad. It was very traumatic. She was finally liberated and she didn't have anybody to go home to."

After the war, the two boys were put in boarding school in Florida for three years while the parents returned to do missionary work in the Philippines. Later they lived in Illinois, and then California. Friederichsen graduated from Oakland High School and then went to San Francisco State for two years. He transferred to Bethel College in St. Paul to complete his degree and then did two years of seminary study at Bethel.

Friederichsen taught art and graphic design at Penn State University for five years, and he then taught at Augsburg in Minneapolis for 25 years. He wound down his career by running a dog kennel for several years.

He and his wife, Cleo, have three children, and they live in Buffalo in a house that Friederichsen designed himself.



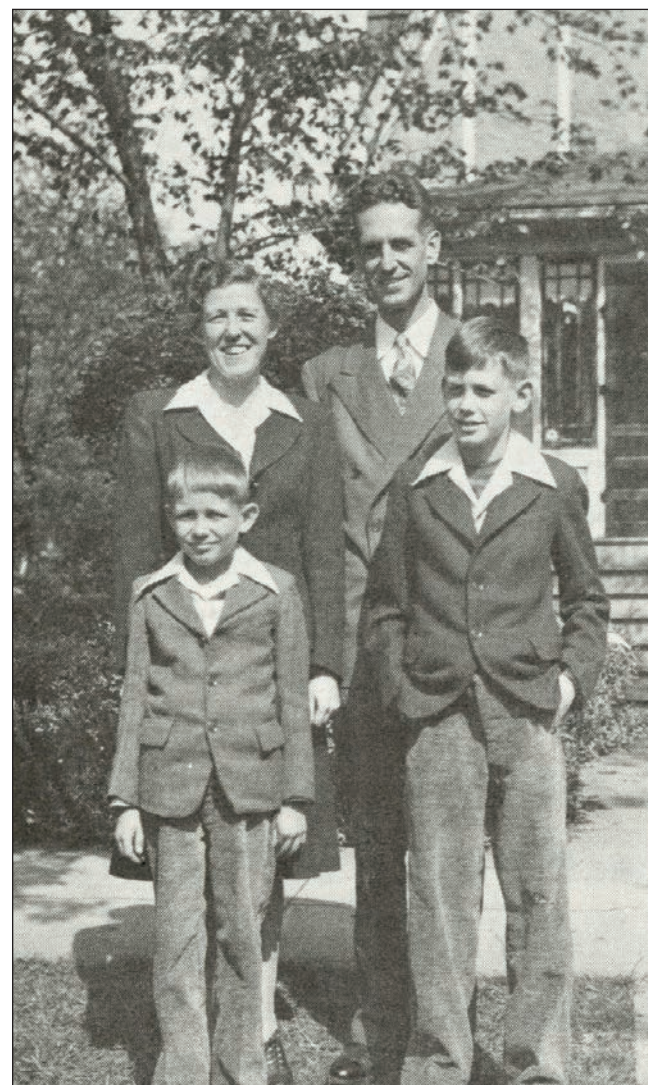
Shacks were constructed in the courtyard of the main building at St. Tomas. (U.S. Army photo)



Men showed the effects of the starvation diet at St. Tomas. (U.S. Army photo)





A month after liberation, the family was loaded in a truck to leave the camp. From left are Doug, Bob and Kay Friederichsen. (Paul Friederichsen photo)



Back in the United States in 1945, the Friederichsens posed for a family portrait.

# District Commanders

**FIRST DISTRICT**  
**Myron Ehrich**  
 Commander

By now, or soon to be, all ten districts will have a new Commander. I wish those new Commanders the best for this next year. I know that you all will make it the best that you possibly can.

I had a great year as Commander. I am looking forward to working with our new First District Commander, Roland Hanson, as well as his slate of officers.

Memorial Day and all of its activities are now behind us. I think back to the past and of the many veterans that have given their lives for our Country. And summer is truly here. As always, keep our servicemen and women in your prayers. God Bless America.

**SECOND DISTRICT**  
**Jennifer Kafka**  
 Commander




In order to bring greater awareness to the issue of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the United States Senate designated June 27th as National PTSD Awareness Day. In addition, June has been designated as PTSD Awareness Month by the National Center for PTSD (NCPTSD). Vietnam veterans have been instrumental in pushing for PTSD awareness among the military hierarchy, government officials and civilian communities. For veterans, understanding the symptoms and seeking early treatment is critical for successfully living with the disorder. Studies have shown that nearly 1,900 military veterans are thought to have taken their own lives in 2014 alone.

Why did I open with this you might be asking as you are reading this column? Because we are losing too many of our brothers and sisters to their own hands, the numbers show there are 22 veterans a day who feel hopeless and this is the last resort because of the invisible wounds that go untreated. We as an Legion family and community members have the opportunity to speak to our fellow veterans and listen to their stories. We can reach out to families who are at a loss and may not understand what their veteran is going through.

We need to show that this is not a stigma, that there is hope and no matter how dark it might be for them there is hope, and people who care for them with no judgment. This is the least we can do for our heroes and comrades.

**THIRD DISTRICT**  
**Duane Anderson**  
 Commander




Time rolls around quickly for another newsletter communication. The Legion year is rapidly drawing to a close to the end for 2014-2015 and we will be installing new officers and committee chairpersons for the challenges that are in front of us. I have just returned home from spending a weekend in Hutchinson attending the Third District Convention. I feel it was a rewarding and successful convention.

It is always a good time connecting with old friends and fellow comrades at these annual events. We had a fair turn out of convention participants but I do wish more Legionnaires and posts would try to increase their participation to attend this type of Legion activity. It can be a very informative and fun event to be part of. This year we had only one World War II veteran in our delegation. His name is Charlie Halberg and attended from the Bayport Post 491.

Charlie is a gracious, friendly and dedicated American Legion Comrade at the young age of 95. Charley was recognized with a standing applause from convention attendees. Thank you again for attending, Charley, and I hope to see you at the convention next year.

The Third district elected a new District Commander Don Skow from Forest Lake to direct our charge for the coming year along with four new Vice Commanders and James Entinger a third year repeat Vice Commander from Glencoe. I see good things coming from the Third in the coming year and beyond.

**FOURTH DISTRICT**  
**Dan Williams**  
 Commander




The 2014-2015 year was "Fabulous" for the "Fourth." We have an energized team continuing to serve veterans, service members, families and the community. Thank you, Fourth District Legion Family, for the privilege to be a

member of this special team during the 2014-2015 year. We have many memories and fond new relationships developed throughout the term.

One hallmark memory for me has been, and will continue to be, the genuine concern and care we have provided to one another and to those approaching us for help. We are looking forward to an even better 2015-2016 year.

At the Department level our membership theme has been all things baseball. With this in mind, we have been able to field a Championship Team comprised of the entire American Legion Family. Within this family every member of every post, unit, squadron, club etc. has proven to be crucial to the success of the district. The team concept coupled with being results oriented enabled us to provide a high level of service to the community, state and nation.

Calendar: June 6th, District Convention 9 a.m., Post 39; June 13th, Flag Retirement Ceremony noon, Disabled Vets Camp; June 14th, Flag Day; June 20th, Joint 4th and 5th District Picnic, Disabled Vets Camp; June 21st, Father's Day; June 21st VA Hospital Visitation 1 p.m.

**FIFTH DISTRICT**  
**Wayne Glanton**  
 Commander




We are trying to raise enough money to pay for the commanders project and have just about completed the money raising part. The money will be turned over to the hospital. They will complete the project and purchase the equipment. The project is an EVA Electric Support Walker.

We are now getting ready for our own convention at the Holiday Inn in Bloomington. The group that is putting it together is doing a great job for all the details that goes into this convention. Thank you to the convention group.

The trip to Duluth was a nice day for driving and we enjoyed stopping at several casinos. Since it was my birthday, they gave me breakfast and one free chance on the machines. At the rally in Duluth, I was the only World War II veteran there.

The VA is working a low cost dental plan for all veterans who need it. The state convention will be here before you know it get your room and register now at Jack Pot Junction.

**SIXTH DISTRICT**  
**Carl Moon**  
 Commander




Wow, what a year. As I reflect upon this past year, I am amazed at how fast it actually has gone by. It was great to meet all of my new Legionnaire Family friends who are dedicated to keeping this organization the number one veteran's organization that we are.

As a point of personal pride I feel honored to have served our Department Commander and my favorite Legionnaire Peggy Moon. Almost everyone I have met through my work at the St. Cloud VA, throughout our Department, and those I have met at National feel that she has exemplified what a Commander should be: a public relations spokesperson who not only understands the organization she represents but the audience that she is addressing. Way to go Commander.

I have asked my District Membership Team to keep on working to try and sign and retain as many members that we can from now until the end of the year. Speaking of my district, I want to thank all of our district posts and their officers for the time you have given to your Legion programs and fellow veterans. I keep thinking that I have only a couple of months left of my obligation as District Commander to do the best job that I can for our organization but I know that my responsibilities will not stop just because I won't be commander.

I want to congratulate Commander Dan Williams and the Fourth District for doing an outstanding job in membership this year. I am a little jealous but very proud of what you and your team has accomplished.

I hope that everyone has a wonderful and relaxing summer. I am really looking forward to getting a few things done around our home and relaxing on our deck.

**SEVENTH DISTRICT**  
**Victor Gades**  
 Commander




Here it is June and already we are wondering what happened to the time. Easter is just a memory, Memorial Day has passed.

You all have your Consolidated Post reports submitted and your Post Officer forms sent in. Wait a minute.

Now I will chew a bit, because some of us have it com-

ing. I keep receiving emails that the Consolidated Post Reports are only 20% submitted, and we have not even seen that percentage of Post Officer Forms.

Now I know what happened to Spring; We were in such a hurry - we forgot to submit reports (the lifeblood of the National offices). It is the pulse of The American Legion, It tells us and everybody we talk to how effective and engaging we are to the needs of our Veterans, their families, and our communities.

If Department does not know who the officers are at the local Posts how can they send updates or contact local Posts? I know you say that your Post officers list did not change, but how is the the Department aware? Phone numbers change and addresses change. Would your spouse allow you to move or change of address without telling family? I don't think so. We are the American Legion family and we are brothers and sisters united and bonded together for life. Without cooperation of all, we will cease to be a viable organization. So lets go forward, pitch in and show everybody our true strengths. The American Legion is a powerful and strong organization helping Veterans, their families and communities -- making America strong.

**EIGHTH DISTRICT**  
**Wilson Spence**  
 Commander






I would like to thank all of you who contacted your state legislature concerning the importance of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs budget. During the final dash by the legislature, the ten million dollars was put back in their budget. This action saved the Minnesota Veterans Home from being closed and the veteran residents do not have to be placed on the street. We must be kept informed and diligent when this kind of legislation peeks its ugly head. Thank you for your concern and willingness to act.

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides a Veterans Identification Card (VIC) for veterans to use at VA medical facilities. The VIC is issued only to veterans who are eligible for VA medical benefits and only for the purpose of identification and check-in for VA medical appointments. The new card protects personal privacy by not showing Social Security Numbers or dates of birth on the front of the cards. If you are receiving VA provided health care, Eight District members may obtain VIC's, at the VAMC Minneapolis or at a CBOC on certain dates. The dates for the CBOC are following: Hibbing Clinic—July 1, August 5, September 2, October 7, November 4, December 4, 2015; Twin Ports Clinic—July 30. Veterans must schedule an appointment through the VA call center at 612-467-1100. The appointments start at 8:30 AM through 3:15 PM. Veterans must bring an appropriate ID verification. Hope this helps for those who need a VIC.

If you have a concern in your post, give me a call, email, or letter.

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

**TENTH DISTRICT**  
**Tom Sanders**  
 Commander

Greetings from the "Mighty" 10th District, My fellow Legionnaires, of the great state of Minnesota, it has been an honor to serve all of you this year. As I wind down my year I wanted to make sure I thank all of you "Bluecappers" for the support you have given me. I also wish to thank all the American Legion Family of the "Mighty" 10th District, for supporting me and making my year as your District Commander fun and memorable. Special thanks to the "godfather" of the "Mighty" 10th, Bud Redepinning for being my Master of Ceremonies at my testimonial, and the Anoka Post 102 American Legion Family for hosting it. To all the District Officers and Chairman that have served for me this year, it has been a pleasure and an honor working with you all of you. Thank you for taking your positions and serving the "Mighty" 10th District.

The combined District Project "Helping Paws" has been so overwhelming. As I write this column, with the help from Mark Kipp and his amazing canine Ripken, the project has had donations of over \$30,000, and are still coming in. We (Tom, Robin, Jeremy, Jody and Kiana) from the "Mighty" 10th District American Legion Family, thank you for all who have donated.

To the District Membership Director Bill Johnson "Caps off" to you for keeping the "Mighty" 10th as one of the top contenders in membership all year. As Bill says "it's not over until it's over", so watch out 6th and 4th. As I write the "Mighty" 10th has a solid 3rd place in Department standings. This could change by Department Convention in July at Redwood Falls. As always, thank you "Blue Cappers" for what you do for your American Legion Family and your local communities.

# Camp Ripley Turkey Hunt



Veterans pose with their guides and their turkeys after a successful hunt at Camp Ripley. The Northern Turkey Federation also contributes to the event.



Over 50 disabled hunters took part in the Disabled Vets Turkey Hunt at Camp Ripley. The American Legion, DAV and VFW and the state DNR provide help.

# Veterans on Lake Fishing Outing



Professional fishermen bring their boats to give the veterans a taste of pro fishing.



About 30 fishermen from the St. Cloud VA Health System gathered at Veterans on the Lake for a fishing outing. Several veterans groups are involved.



They can't all be lunkers.



Hungry fishermen chow down at Veterans on the Lake



Pontoons provide a stable platform for fishing.

# Tree Town Music Festival



The American Legion is a major sponsor of the Tree Town Music Festival in Iowa. Past National Commander Dave Rehbein presented prizes during the event.



Minnesota Department Service Officer Tom Newman manned a booth at the festival to help veterans with benefit questions and problems.