

2015 Resolutions (CONTINUED)

Division II annual state baseball tournaments beginning with the 2013 baseball season, and, be it finally

RESOLVED, that a copy be forwarded to the Department Convention held July 16,17,18, 2015 in Redwood Falls, MN for concurring action.

RESOLUTION 7

The following Resolution originated from Paul Dille Post 364 in Dassel, MN and was adopted by the 7th District and is submitted for consideration by the 2015 Department Convention, to be held in Redwood Falls, Minnesota, July 16-18, 2015.

CHANGE KOREAN CONFLICT ELIGIBILITY DATES

WHEREAS, the conflict between North and South Korea has never been declared to be over, and

Whereas, this conflict has been in a state of "truce" since June 27, 1953 yet no "final peaceful settlement" has ever been achieved, and

Whereas, other veterans service organizations have recognized South Korea as still being a designated "war" or "conflict" zone, thus enabling veterans who served in that country, to be eligible for membership in their respective organization, and

Whereas, The American Legion has a 'cutoff' date' for the Korean conflict established as January 31, 1955, yet we

have never set an ending date for gulf war veterans eligibility and

Whereas, by The American Legion National Headquarters changing the Korean war era eligibility to still being open and recognizing it as an ongoing conflict as they do the Gulf War, it would allow many other veterans to join our ranks, and allow them to enjoy the services and advocacy that other veterans now receive as members of our great organization; then therefore be it

Resolved, that The American Legion National Headquarters begin the process of approaching the congress of the United States to recognize the Korean conflict as still ongoing, and be it further

Resolved, that the ending date for American Legion membership eligibility for Korean War era veterans have its closing date changed to open, thus allowing thousands of veterans to join our great organization, and be it finally

Resolved, that it be forwarded to the 2015 Department Convention of The American Legion, to be assembled in Redwood Falls, Minnesota on July 16 -18, 2015, in regular session, for consideration and adoption.

RESOLUTION 8

The following Resolution originated from William T. Lewis Post 12 in Long Prairie, MN and was adopted by the 6th District and is submitted for consideration by the 2015 Department Convention, to be held in Redwood Falls, Minnesota, July 16-18, 2015.

THE AMERICAN LEGION BOOKLET IS NEEDED

WHEREAS, The American Legion was established with one of its four pillars – Americanism; and

WHEREAS, the pillar promotes the principles of a strong and free America; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Magazine published four great articles on the constitution, our military power, faith and capitalism, that we have assembled into an American Legion booklet; and

WHEREAS, our American Legion Post 12, Department of Minnesota, feels more than ever that our schools and public libraries strongly need to be informed of these principles; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the American Legion publish a booklet which can promote our constitution, our military power, faith and capitalism and that it be available for our post to purchase and distribute to our schools and public libraries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be forwarded for concurring action to the Department Convention which will be held, July 16, 17, 18, 2015, in Redwood Falls, Minnesota; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that, if approved, this resolution be forwarded for action to the National American Legion Convention which will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, September 1-3, 2015.

Taps

Mel Ohman, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died May 31, 2015. He served as Fifth District Commander from 1994-95, Department Vice Commander, 1996-97, and Department Historian, 2001-02, 2005-06, and 2007-08. He was a past commander of North Side Post 230 in Minneapolis. He served in Europe, and later joined the Army Reserve where he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. He was known as a military historian.

Binsfeld, Harbold N., 78, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 11, 2015. He was a member of Eden Valley Post 381.

Johnson, Loren, 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 12, 2015. He was a past sergeant-at-arms at North Branch Post 85.

Hanson, Clinton D., Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 22, 2015. He was a member of Pelican Rapids Post 17.

Etzel, Edwin H., 80, veteran of the Korean War, died June 6, 2015. He was a member of Hamel Post 394.

Kowitz, Kenneth F., 89, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 25, 2015. He served on the USS Meade. He was a member of Pierz Post 341.

Meyer, Clarence Math, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 1, 2015. He was a medic stationed in Germany.

Bauer, Floyd Duane Jr., 68, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 11, 2015. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Lembcke, Raymond "Pete," 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 29, 2015. He was a member of Morris Post 29.

Bitzan, Bernard N. "Bennie," 88, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died May 22, 2015. He served in Germany. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Hanson, Clinton D., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 22, 2015. He was a member of Pelican Rapids Post 17.

Tradup, John J., 80, Navy veteran of the Korea War, died June 4, 2015. He served aboard the USS Gunston Hall (LSD 50). He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Hardy, Dale E., 81, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 6, 2015. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Larson, Owen E., 86, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died June 12, 2015. He was a past commander of Willmar Post 167.

Lief, Gerald R., 71, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 21, 2015. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Norstad, Robert William, 69, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 19, 2015. He served in the Mediterranean on the carrier USS America (CVA-66). He was a member of Lanesboro Post 40.

Kaderlik, Albert G., 85, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died June 4, 2015. He was a past commander of Lonsdale Post 586.

Seftner, C. Patrick, 82, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died June 9, 2015. He was a member of Lonsdale Post 586.

Wagner, Donald Joseph, 87, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died June 16, 2015. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Gerhart, Edward Paul Jr., 79, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died June 4, 2015. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Iverson, Kenneth, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died June 9, 2015. He served in the Philippines with the 25th Infantry Division and earned a Purple Heart and Silver Star. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Meyer, Roland D., 82, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died May 29, 2015. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

Williams, Arnold Leroy, 76, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 11, 2015. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Chandler, John, 89, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 23, 2015. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Nelson, Roger E., 90, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II and Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died June 1, 2015. He was a member of New London Post 537.

Smevoll, Earl "Roy," 85, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died May 10, 2015. He was a past member of Mora Post 201 and a member of Rosetown Post 542.

Hanes, Paul B., 85, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died June 2, 2015. He was a past commander of Waconia Post 150.

Jacobs, Kenneth J., 76, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 8, 2015. He was a member of Waconia Post 150.

Lepinski, Clarence F., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 9, 2015. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Carlson, LuVerne L., "Monk," 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 9, 2015. He earned the Distinguished Service Cross. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Anderson, Norman H., 87, Army veteran of World War II, died June 3, 2015. He served in Korea. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Ziburski, Edwin E., 92, Army veteran of World War II, died May 26, 2015. He served as a radio operator on New Caledonia in the South Pacific. He was a member of Two Harbors Post 109.

Rusch, Gerald, 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died May 25, 2015. He served in Patrol Squadron 40 as a flight crew member. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

Arneberg, Olaf, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 28, 2015. He was a member of Winger Post 200.

Dougherty, Philip, 68, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 1, 2015. He was a member of Little Sauk Post 417.

Anderson, John Alfred, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 30, 2015. He was a member of Hazel Run Post 559.

Muzikar, Joann, 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died May 30, 2015. She was a first class petty officer. She was a member of Hamline Post 418.

Hall, Hugh L., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 1, 2015. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Gill, Dr. Theodore, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died May 10, 2015. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Held, Harold A., 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 24, 2015. He served aboard ships in the Atlantic and

the Pacific. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Hefte, Richard, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 31, 2015. He played clarinet in the Ninth District Legion Band. He was a member of Fergus Falls Post 30.

Higgins, Fred, 94, Marine Corps veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died June 2, 2015. He served in Tarawa, the Gilbert Islands and Okinawa during World War II and in Seoul, Kimpo, Wonsong and Yonpo. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Skone, E. Terry, 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died May 31, 2015. He was a member of Deerwood Post 557.

Ryall, James E., 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 26, 2015. He was a member of Zimmerman Post 560.

Delaney, James, 93, Army veteran of World War II, died May 27, 2015. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Belinski, Samuel, 96, Army veteran of World War II, died May 30, 2015. He served in the Signal Corps in Italy and Switzerland. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Merritt, Wayne Emero, 88, Army veteran of World War II, died May 20, 2015. He was a member of Hackensack Post 202.

Kramer, Richard, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died May 27, 2015. He was a member of Hackensack Post 202.

Wiering, Nick, 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died May 20, 2015. He served in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. He was a member of Paynesville Post 271.

Legionnaire's obit policy is listed

Updated: February 2006

Obituaries of members of the Legion Family will be published in the Minnesota Legionnaire in a monthly column under the heading "Taps."

Obituaries must be recent, within the last two months prior to the publication of the new edition of the Legionnaire. For example, the February edition would only contain obituaries from January and December.

While the obituaries are brief, the Legionnaire does seek certain information for our readers:

1. Complete name of deceased.
2. Age at death.
3. Branch of service and war or wars the veteran served in.
4. Exact date of death.
5. Additional information about the veteran's service background including unit, type of service, place of service, medals, etc.
6. The post, unit or squadron the deceased belonged to.
7. Additional information about Legion service including officer posts held.

The Legionnaire reserves the right to edit all obituaries for style and brevity.

District Commanders

FIRST DISTRICT

Myron Ehrlich
Commander



Here it is, almost a full year completed. Boy, what a ride it has been.

I would like to thank Commander Peggy Moon and her team for a great year with her at the helm! Also, a thank you goes out to my fellow District Commanders for a great year.

Soon, it will be time for us to attend the Department Convention in Redwood Falls. And after that, we will have to pack our bags for the National Convention that will be held in Baltimore. Both are sure to be a fun and exciting time.

So once again, thank you one and all that I have had the pleasure of meeting with this last year.

THIRD DISTRICT

Duane Anderson
Commander



Certainly it has been a rewarding, challenging, frustrating and informative year that has gone by quite rapidly. I have met and made new friends from the American Legion Family throughout the last few years and I am sure some of these friendships will last for many years to come. I would again like to take this time to thank my executive board members for their time and effort they have put in this year.

A big thank you also goes out to all the Past Commanders of the Third District for the mentoring and advice that made my job easier and more rewarding. I know that the incoming team is already in the process of making the next year a great one for the Third district. I had high hopes that the posts this year would do a better job on completing and sending in the Post Consolidated Reports but the last indication is that we did a very mediocre job of getting this done. It is one of my biggest disappointments for the year and I hope we could do much better next year. If we as Legion Posts do not take pride and credit for what we do for our veterans, communities, children and country, how is any one going to know?

On a more positive note, tomorrow I will be going to the Hastings Veterans Home to present a \$9077.96 check to Mike the wood shop supervisor. This was the total collected for my Commander's Project this year from Third District Posts and friends of the Legion. I and Hastings Veterans Home thank you all. It's time to get started with another Legion year and I hope to see many of you at the Department Convention at Redwood Falls.

FOURTH DISTRICT

Dan Williams
Commander



This year Forest Lake Post 225 hosted the annual Flag Retirement Ceremony at the Vets Camp on Big Marine Lake. There were more than 10,000 flags this year. One of the moving stories of the day, in conjunction with the ceremony, was that of Steve Houston and his personal involvement. Steve had a prior conversation with his mother and they decided to present the memorial flags from his father's burial as well as his brother's funeral service. The dignified final retirement and disposition of the flags brought memories, healing and closure for Steve, a member of Arcade Phalen Post 577. I'm sure each flag that was presented for this year's Retirement Ceremony had a special story to tell. Perhaps it was a flag from one of the great wars or our current war on terror. Maybe it was a flag flown over a company appreciative of the great country in which they do business. Maybe one of the flags was flown over the Pentagon or the home of a Blue Star or Gold Star Mom. We are, indeed, grateful for the story associated with every flag! We, The American Legion in Minnesota, are in transition. Commander Peggy Moon, Leadership Team and Staff; thank you for the leadership and service you have provided to the Department and National organization over the past year.

Calendar: July 13th Convention Prep 7 p.m. - Post 39; July 16th - 18th Department Convention; July 19th VA Hospital Visitation 1 p.m.

SEVENTH DISTRICT

Victor Gades
Commander



My year is coming to a close. Thank You for the opportunity to be your Commander.

There have been some hiccups along the way. I think of

these as challenges for myself and the 7th District. I foresee more to come as we adjust to the new technology as it arrives. We must use and take advantage of the new technology. Make no mistake, this is the future.

I would like to thank my wife for her support and understanding. Thank you to my District Officers for their support and work during the past year. Thank you to Sandy Wersal and her Auxiliary officers for their assistance. The Auxiliary had a great year with membership. It goes to show that they are a hard working group.

I also want to thank the Sons for their endless energy helping the Legion family.

Thank you to the Posts I had opportunity to visit during the year. It was a great experience to see you all. It was great to see the work that you do and your dedication to Veterans.

I see we are at 95% with membership. This does not mean we stop renewing and recruiting members. Keep the momentum going.

EIGHTH DISTRICT

Wilson Spence
Commander



Greetings from the Great Arrowhead 8th District of the Minnesota American Legion.

On 7 June, the Eighth District held its convention and elected new officers. Jennifer Havlicek was elected Commander for 2015-2016. Please join me in congratulating Jennifer on her election and in assisting her as she leads the Eighth District for the upcoming year.

The Department of Veterans Affairs and VA Secretary of Veterans Affairs has expanded the eligibility for veterans exposed to Agent Orange contaminated C-123 aircraft. Secretary McDonald said, "Opening up eligibility for this deserving group of Air Force veterans and reservists is the right thing to do."

Under this new rule, Air Force and Air Force Reserve flight, medical, and ground maintenance crewmembers who served on the contaminated Operation Ranch Hand C-123s are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides during their service, thus making it easier for them to establish entitlement for

VA disability and medical benefits if they develop an Agent Orange-related presumptive condition, and that their surviving dependents are eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation and burial benefits.

VA also encourages reservists who were assigned to flight, ground or medical crew duties at Lockbourne/Rickenbacker Air Force Base in Ohio (906th and 907th Tactical Air Groups or 355th and 356th Tactical Airlift Squadron), Westover Air Force Base in Massachusetts (731st Tactical Air Squadron and 74th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron) or Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, International Airport (758th Airlift Squadron) during the period 1969 to 1986, and developed an Agent Orange-related disability to file a disability compensation claim.

Please advise your post members of this new change in eligibility.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call or e-mail me. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your commander this past year. For God and Country, the American Legion gathers.

TENTH DISTRICT

Tom Sanders
Commander



Greetings from the "Mighty" Tenth District,

It is with sad heart that I write my last column for the Minnesota Legionnaire newspaper and for the "Mighty" 10th District newsletter. This last year really has gone by quickly. I can not express in words the friendship, the closeness to the American Legion Family and how fast the year goes when you are so busy doing the American Legion programs. I can't thank all of you (The American Legion Family) enough for the support and the learning experience's that you all gave me this past year. My "Caps Off" to you and what you do for our Veterans.

"Helping Paws" the combined District Project has gone over so well and I hope the other Districts in the state will use this Project in their future. There are so many Veterans that have PTSD and don't know it. Having these trained canines for these men and women that have served our country well, deserve to be taken care of and have a life they can lead on their own. I want to thank all that have donated to our project, you are fantastic.

As I write this column, the "Mighty" 10th District is in 4th place in membership at Department. This still can change by Department Convention this month. It is not over until it is really over. Thanks again to the 10th District Membership Director Bill Johnson out of Osseo Post #172 for such a great job in membership.

In closing my last column as the "Mighty" 10th District Commander, I wish to thank all that have served me and the District this year. I wish upon my successor Bill Johnson that you have as much fun and keep the "Mighty" in the "Mighty" 10th District. To all you "Blucappers" keep doing what you do to make this great organization, The American Legion Family, what it is for our Veterans of today and tomorrow. For God and Country.

Helm to Congress: Time to fix the VA

American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm expressed frustration over testimony on Capitol Hill that the Veterans

Health Administration is facing a \$2.5 billion budget shortfall this fiscal year.

At the same time, Helm reiterated the position of the nation's largest veterans service organization, that outsourcing is not a long-term solution.

"Veterans need the Department of Veterans Affairs, and The American Legion expects VA to provide quality health care in a timely manner to those who served our nation in uniform and earned that benefit," Helm said. "This budget

et shortfall, which can be attributed to higher-than-expected patient demand and increased resources to attempt to meet it, cannot prevent veterans from getting the care they need when they need it, regardless where we are in the budget cycle.

VA is going through its biggest adjustment since the troops came home from World War II. As VA, the administration and The American Legion did then, we must all work together to find long-term solutions."

Helm said the use of non-VA providers through the Veterans Choice Program - driven by an emergency funding measure passed by Congress last summer when the appointment-delay crisis fanned a media firestorm over VA access and leadership accountability - must remain a temporary fix while the bigger problem of properly resourcing and managing VA health-care facilities and services is resolved.

"Access to VA health care is a problem that can be solved. The patient is sick, and it's up to all of us to find the right treatment, not just turn the problem over to someone else."

Use of the Choice program, however, has been slower than VA anticipated.

Membership Chart

As of July 1, 2015

District	2015 Goal	Total 2014	Total 2015	Percent of Goal	Same Date '14
1	9,976	9,938	9,563	95.86	9,892
2	8,110	8,023	7,696	95.06	8,011
3	12,486	12,441	12,094	96.86	12,374
4	2,554	2,530	2,528	98.98	2,526
5	2,959	2,946	2,812	95.03	2,936
6	12,698	12,633	12,411	97.74	12,610
7	7,245	7,175	6,914	95.43	7,150
8	4,768	4,726	4,585	96.16	4,724
9	7,443	7,392	7,166	96.28	7,370
10	11,243	11,205	10,879	96.76	11,173
At-large	2,340	2,340	2,657	84.14	2,338
Totals	81,822	81,349	79,305	95.98	81,104

Trolling for the Troops



Fishermen try their luck at Mille Lacs Lake during the annual Trolling for the Troops outing in July. The event allows recently returned veterans, disabled veterans and professional fishermen to gather for a fun fishing outing based at Camp Ripley. It is sponsored by the National Guard, the Americal Legion and other veterans service organizations. To see a video of the event, go to YouTube at: https://youtu.be/_pskC5FTLo or by going to Youtube and searching 2015 Trolling for the Troops.



Fishermen and professionals gather at Camp Ripley for the annual Trolling for the Troops outing. Part of the group goes out on the Mississippi and another group goes out on Mille Lacs Lake.



The American Legion and Clam donated a screen house to be given away. From left: Clam rep and pro fisherman Dave Genz, OEF/OIF Marine veteran Eric Olson, the winner, and American Legion DSO Tom Newman.



Minnesota Paralyzed Veterans President Ken Klien and Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl show off a "twofer" on the Mississippi River.



Department Commander Peggy Moon discusses her year with Veterans of Foreign Wars Commander Duane Hermanson.

Veterans Home Time Capsule



A time capsule that will be opened in 2065 was sealed during a dedication ceremony at the Minnesota Veterans Home at Minneapolis. The capsule contains artifacts from the veterans homes, a DVD showing the history of the homes, newspapers, medals and much more. Helping seal the capsule were Minneapolis Administrator Cory Glad, Interim Deputy MDVA Commissioner Robin Gaustad and Commissioner Larry Shellito. Assisting was World War II veteran Armin Fiemeyer.



Commander Peggy Moon was part of tour of the construction of a new nursing facility at the campus.



Carey Everson, project manager for the new 100-bed facility where the time capsule will be buried, gave a tour after the dedication.

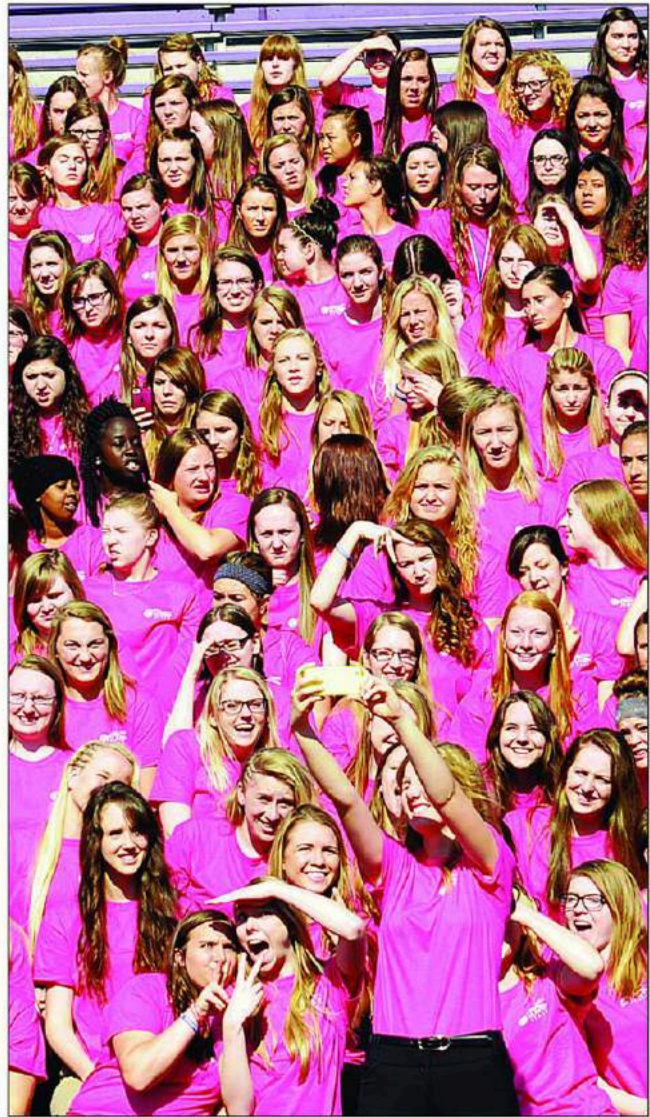


An artist's rendering shows what the campus will look like when the renovation is complete.



Girls Staters go through a flag folding ceremony as part of the Americanism instruction at Girls State.

Girls State



Getting ready for a group picture, one Girls State citizen did a selfie of herself and 300 others at the St. Thomas football stadium.



The annual candlelight service was held on Tuesday night on the St. Thomas Campus in St. Paul. Girls State is a week-long program that teaches about 350 girls from across the state about government and democracy. The girls are between their junior and senior years of high school.



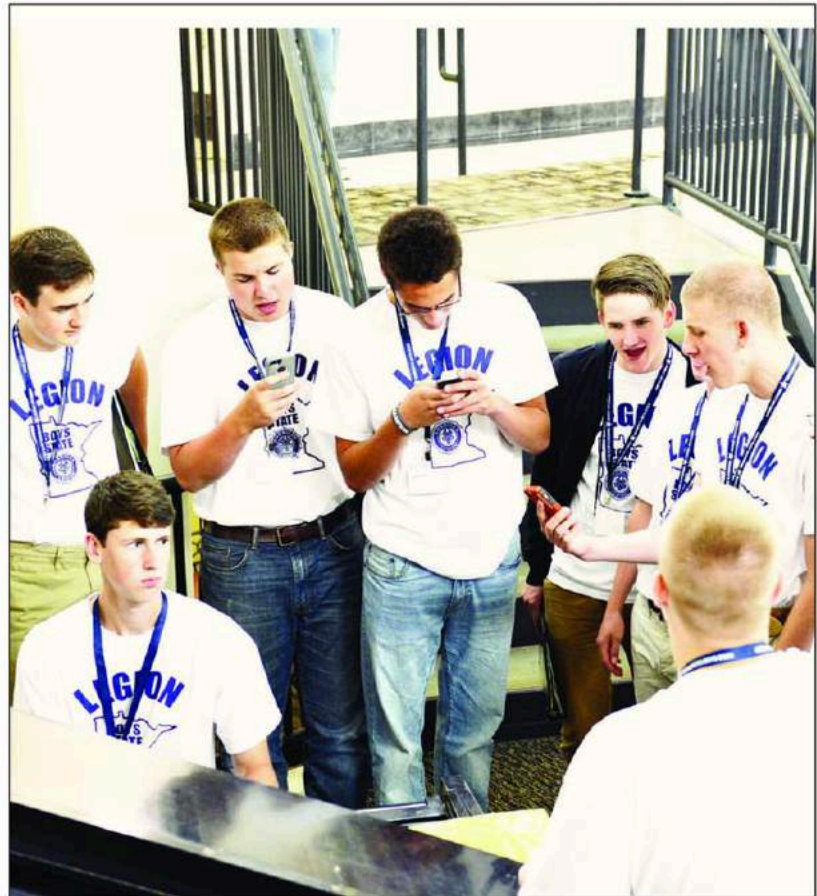
The POW table ceremony was enacted by Girls Staters.



New Girls State Governor Sarah Burch takes her oath of office from Supreme Court Justice Wilhelmnia Wright.



Congressman Tim Walz of Minnesota's First District spoke to Boys Staters on Sunday night at Southwest Minnesota State University at Marshall.



Between breaks in the Boys State program, boys from around the state gather around the piano in the student center at SMSU to belt out a few popular songs. They use their cell phones to have the lyrics handy.

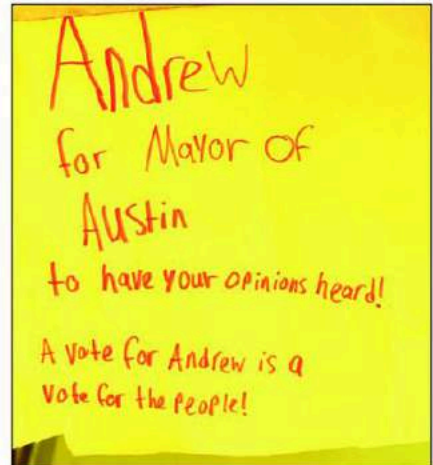
Boys State



A counselor explains the election process to his city. Over 350 boys from high schools across Minnesota give up a week of their summer vacation to experience Boys State.



A counselor talks to his city about what was coming up that day at the Marshall campus.



The first stage of learning about making a democratic government is at the city level. Posters are part of the election process.

Annual Reports

To the Convention of the Department of Minnesota The American Legion

Adjutant

This past year has been quite a year. I was absent from a couple major activities this year due to health issues but I am back now. Thank you all for the get wells and your support through it all.

Our programs touched the lives of veterans their families and youth from all across the state. We continue to grow in the things we do and how we impact our communities.

We provided direct assistance to many veterans at the VA Medical Centers that serve Minnesota's veterans through our on location Assistance Department Service Officer in the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and Veterans Hospital Representative in the St Cloud VAMC.

We provided honors to thousands of veterans as final respects were given at military funeral honors all across the state.

We continue to explore new ways to get our face and name out there thru promotional opportunities that incorporate our American Legion logo and relationships that bring the message of our organization to others in ways that we may have not explored in the past.

We helped provide an opportunity for many disabled, recently returned, and older veterans to get together in the great Minnesota outdoors at events such as the veterans Deer and Turkey Hunts and the Trolling for the Troops and Fly fishing events.

Our VA&R committee managed by our Department Service Officer Tom Newman met with the senior leadership at each state and federal VA facility that serves Minnesota veterans as they do each year. They ask the difficult questions relating to care, facilities and budget. They are respected in the veteran's community and work closely with all key stakeholders at the Local, State and National levels. They provided training to The County Veterans Service Officer (VSOs) thru our National offices and to State VSOs by taking them to Indianapolis and Washington DC to attend our in-house VSO training.

Minnesota's Youth remain one of our many focuses and many from all across the state participated in our American Legion Oratorical Contest where they prepared and gave oratory presentations on the Constitution of the United States of America. Several won scholarship money for their efforts.

We sent several hundred boys from all across the state to Boys State for one week where they learned firsthand from our state's leaders how our government operates. They formed city, county and state offices and drafted and moved legislation that ran those entities.

At Legionville the new training facility is outstanding thanks to the donations from dedicated Legion members all around the state. We along with The Minnesota State Highway Patrol and AAAA trained hundreds of boys and girls on road cross and school bus safety at our Legionville training center in the Brainerd Lakes area on North Long Lake. In eight, one week sessions thru the summer they came together from all across Minnesota to learn safety and enjoy a week in the outdoors.

Training and education scholarships were presented at recognition ceremonies in posts, high schools, colleges, and training facilities all across the state as our Posts, Districts and Department recognize the talented efforts of our youth and their desire to expand their horizons in the form of financial scholarships.

We worked together with our state legislature and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs to strengthen state veteran's benefits and entitlements in multiple ways.

We visited Washington DC as a delegation of Minnesota American Legion leaders and rallied Congress for the support for our veterans, their families, sounding the call for a strong national defense, protection against the degradation of our American Flag, the promotion of Americanism in our communities and to end the bureaucratic bickering in Washington.

My thanks to Minnesota's 80,000+ members of this great organization for all you do in your communities. And my heartfelt thanks to the staff of our Department Headquarters: Jennifer, Al, Misty, Tom, Laura, Jeremy, Lucas and Gerald. Your efforts to keep things rolling are so greatly appreciated.

Randy Tesdahl
Department Adjutant

Commander

What a year this has been! I knew going into this that the year would be very busy. I underestimated it! Add into this equation the fact that my husband, Carl, became the 6th District Commander, in addition to his duties as our Post's Gambling Manager, you can imagine what our sched-



2015

ule has been like. I told him that the biggest challenge has been that neither one of us had a wife at home to pick up the household needs. Tax season darn near killed us, as, in our "spare" time, I was trying to get our paperwork to the accountants, Carl was trying to get the Post's information together for the accountants, and neither one of us was home very often. Paperwork was spread all over the house! Needless to say, when I go back to being a "blue-cap Legionnaire", the first thing I need to do is full cleaning, spring cleaning, and summer cleaning! The yard also needs some serious attention.

Altogether, in looking over my schedule for the past year, it appears I have made 196 appearances for the Department of Minnesota to date. I still have another 15 or so to go until our Department convention. As near as I can tell, I have spent over 700 hours on the road! This also means I have spent about \$5,000 just on gas! Add to this, eight oil changes and two new tires! Needless to say, it has been a year I will never forget! Thank you for the great hospitality!

We tackled a few challenges this year, one of which was membership. In January, we realized there were too many errors in the membership submission to Department, and started to return those with mistakes. Unfortunately, by looking at the membership reports, this is still happening, as we are seeing many corrections from National. The Districts need to conduct training to help those Posts that are struggling. The Department staff has fixed these issues in the past, but with over 550 posts in Minnesota, it was getting too labor intensive. Each Post just has one Post to deal with, and it makes sense we fix the issues where they begin.

Legionville is looking great! The new educational building is ready for our summer campers! Thank you to Legionville General Manager Roy Kruger, who has put in many hours plastering, painting, sanding, staining and installing over the last few months. I'm positive that he has even broadened his vocabulary during the process. Thank you also to President Wayne Gilbertson, and the Legionville Board of Directors. Job well done. And Thank you to all who donated to this project! It amazes me what we can accomplish when we work together!

We also acknowledged the Minnesota American Legion Riders this past year by formally accepting their Standard Operating Procedure. Although there are still some growing pains, I know good things are yet to come. Congratulations to "Scuffy" Paulson who worked tirelessly on this project, and thank you to Paul Hassing, who has become our ALR Liaison.

Thanks also go out to our Department Vice Commanders: Glenn Mueller, Arne Gynild, Dennis DeLong, Mel Buesseler and Carl Hendrickson. They didn't hesitate to step up to the plate whenever I had conflicting requests. And also to our wonderful Membership Director, Pat Logan! He worked hard, made our rallies enjoyable, and was available to fill in whenever needed.

In closing, I can't say enough about our wonderful Department staff. First of all, our Department Services Officers, Tom and Jeremy, are everywhere! I can't believe the hours they commit to our Organization. They both go above and beyond to take care of our veterans. Laura kept me on budget (which is hard for anyone to do), Misty was always available to answer membership questions, Lucas is constantly updating our web page, and Jennifer tried to keep my schedule from completely falling apart. Adjutant Randy had a tough year between breaking his ribs, and later needing back surgery, but he was always in contact with me, and our office runs smoothly because of his managerial skills. I can't tell you the number of times I sought his advice! Then there's Al! What a tremendous job he does, not only on our Legionnaire, but in coaching for speeches, radio broadcasts, and even television appearances. Believe me he had his work cut out for him! Thank you all!

The final "Thank you" goes to all of our Legionnaires throughout this great State. Without you, there would be no need for any of us. You do the work in your community and in your schools. You take care of your veterans, and honor those we have lost. You are The American Legion! Thank you!

Peggy Moon
Department Commander

Vice Commander 1st and 3rd Districts

I would start by thanking everyone for their prayers and support this past year. It started out with loads of excitement and I am sure it will end the same way. Big thanks to both of the 1st and 3rd district membership directors. I know it was not the best year for us but we did a good job and your work is appreciated. There were many who helped throughout the year and I say thanks to all of you. Your support was helpful and useful. To all the members of the Minnesota American Legion, thank you for letting me service you this past year. It was an honor. Our state has one of the best membership teams and I made some great friendships. Also, one big thank you to the entire department vice commanders especially Mel for his persistent hard work on membership and going the extra mile.

The department rallies were a blast. Pat did a great job of keeping everyone laughing and upbeat. And it has been an honor to service with Commander Peggy. She is a special lady and works hard for all of our veterans.

I cannot say there was one event that stood out more than any other because all the events I attended had a special place in my heart and memory. I enjoyed all the opportunities to speak at all of the great post events such as the birthday dinners, membership dinners, and dedication of various memorials. I look forward to staying involved and would welcome any invitation.

Thank you once again members of the Department of Minnesota American Legion. Let's continue to work together and keep our memberships growing and helping our families.

God Bless Everyone and God bless the USA.

Glenn Mueller
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander 2nd and 7th Districts

This year has been the greatest experience of my life. The trip to Indianapolis was very educational.

The talking with Department and District Officers from all over the United States taught me how others do their membership duties.

In meetings in my Sister District 2, I learned a few new things which I can bring back to my District.

I attended the pheasant and venison dinners at the Laverne Veterans Home and had some nice visits with Veterans living there. At Commander Moon's request, I attended the Sioux Falls Veterans Administration Hospital - Honoring America's Heroes - celebrating National Salute to Veteran Patients week. I talked with many South Dakota Department Officers on how their membership was going. I also attended the American Legion Birthday Party at Round Lake. Had a great meal and was warmly welcomed.

I was unable to attend the Second District Commander's Testimonial but am looking forward to attending the Seventh District Commanders Testimonial.

Conventions are coming up and I'm looking forward to them. I want to thank the other four Vice Commanders for their input during the year. They are Glenn Mueller, Dennis De Long, Mel Busseler and Carl Hendrickson. I will cherish their friendship forever.

Arne Gynild
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander 4th and 5th Districts

I would like to thank all legionnaires for the great opportunity to serve as one of your five Department Vice Commanders for the 2014-2015 year. It has been a privilege to represent the 4th and 5th District in the Department of Minnesota. The support I received from 4th District Commander Dan Williams and Membership Director Mickey Ostrum and 5th District Commander Wayne Glanton and Membership Director Gary Martin has made this year very special for me.

Membership in the 4th and 5th Districts started out as well as prior years, but like the past years after the first of the year membership usually slows down for the 4th and 5th District, but this year the 4th District kept the pace going and at the last rally they were in 1st place with the highest percentage of goal. I believe that all the Posts worked the membership program very hard this year. Both the 4th and 5th Districts held a district membership revitalization at the same time in March, 2015. This will benefit in the next year with all of the transfers they picked up for the membership program.

Major accomplishments within the 4th and 5th Districts include the "Shop, Ship and Share" Program under the direction of the 4th District. The money raised for the two day event held at the Maplewood Mall helped to ship items that were donated for service members serving overseas. The 4th and 5th District marched with mass colors in the Winter Carnival Parade. The Memorial Day service at the Minnesota Veterans Home was sponsored by the 5th District and the Flag Disposal Ceremony at Veterans Campgrounds on Big Marine Lake was conducted by the 4th District.

It was truly an honor to breakfast at Rosestown Post 542, in Roseville, Minnesota, for our National Commander Mike Helm.

I give thanks to Commander Peggy Moon for her guidance and strong leadership during this past year. 4th District Commander Dan Williams and 5th District Commander Wayne Glanton for their hard work and continued service to the American Legion. Without the assistance of the Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl and his staff, our Districts would not have been able to accomplish what we did this year.

One final thank you to the backbone of the American Legion, the Blue Cap Legionnaire. Without them the American Legion would not exist and we could not do what we do as Legionnaires.

Dennis De Long
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander 6th and 9th Districts

Thanks to my home District for the confidence and trust you placed in me by electing me as Department Vice Commander! It was an honor to serve The American Legion as the Department Vice Commander representing the 6th & 9th Districts. Congratulations to Commander Peggy Moon on a very successful year and wish her the best on her future endeavors. Representing Commander Moon when necessary due to her busy schedule was very honorable and enjoyable.

This year started out going to Indianapolis to attend National Membership Workshop. It was an opportune time to develop a "team" approach. Thus the "baseball" theme was established by Department Membership Director Pat Logan! Both Districts worked very hard with the "baseball" membership theme and especially proud to have Commanders Carl Moon, 6th, and Tom Norgaard, 9th, with their membership teams, leading the Department ten (10) Districts during most of the year. Enjoyed the competition with my fellow District Vice Commanders, Dennis DeLong, Arne Gynild, Carl Hendrickson and Glenn Mueller. Yeah, there were some ups and downs, but the game is not over till 12/31/15! Keep up the great pitching and hitting to bring in some more runs.

Having the exposure of both Districts was a great learning experience making this a very enjoyable year. Overall, the Districts are doing a great job! However, I felt there should be more visits made to the Posts to provide guidance and assistance to them. There is a definite need to provide encouragement to the Posts to participate in the conferences and conventions. Many Posts are struggling to obtain/retain memberships and lack the enthusiasm to pursue this effort, therefore, more Post revitalizations are necessary.

Thanks to all the Legionnaires for their warm hospitality and camaraderie as I traveled throughout the Districts. Thanks also to the Department Staff for all their assistance.

Mel (Melvin L.) Busseler
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander 8th and 10th Districts

As another Legion year comes to a close, I look back to many wonderful experiences serving as the 8th and 10th Vice Commander. The October 11th 8th/10th Membership Rally at West Duluth Post 71 was well attended by both districts and a wonderful opportunity to greet old friends and make new acquaintances. 10th District Commander Tom Sanders, 10th District President Robin Dorf, 10th District SAL Commander Jeremy Copher and their membership chairmen were fun to work with.

Attending the 10th District Revitalization event at the Osseo Post in December and again in May was an enlightening experience. Working with Bill Johnson and his crew moving members from the "at large" list to local posts was very satisfying. More districts should take advantage of a revitalization event to boost their membership. Attending the January 10th

District Mid Winter Conference in Anoka and later that month going on the two day Snowmobile Rally (starting at the Wayzata Post) kept me busy. The last weekend of January found me back in the 8th District for their Mid Winter gathering in Virginia.

Thank you to 8th District Commander Wilson Spence III, 8th District President Zandra Kessler and 8th District SAL Commander Ken Oliver, Jr. for their cooperation and work they've done for the American Legion family this year.

It was an honor and a pleasure to serve as a Department Vice Commander under the leadership of Department Commander Peggy Moon. She was a visible presence and sage advisor at many 8th/10th events during the 2014-2015 year. I was proud to represent her at the Silver Bay Pheasant Dinner and at the opening of the American Legion Bowling Tournament. Best Wishes to the incoming 8th/10th Department Vice Commander.

Carl Hendrickson
Department Vice Commander

Treasurer

As Treasurer, I serve on the Department Finance Committee, Minnesota Legionnaire, and the Legionnaire Board of Directors. It has been my pleasure to serve you again this past year as your Department Treasurer.

The Treasurer is charged with the responsibility and administration of all Department funds and related financial affairs with direct responsibility to the Department Executive Committee. Some of the duties include overseeing accounting principles, and financial processes of the Department Headquarters, assisting the Department Finance Liaison, analyzing and prescribing financial reports, and investing the assets of the Department.

The following is an overview of the Department's investments between May 2014 and May 2015. Investment began the year with an allocation of 28% stocks and 72% bonds. Bonds in the account are primarily high grade bonds and CDs. These bonds and CDs are laddered between one and five years. The stocks are diversified between large, medium, and smaller companies with a heavier weighting toward larger companies. Interest and dividends paid out between June 1st, 2014 and May 31st, 2015 to the Department's checking account totaled \$39,163.02. Again, thank you for allowing me to serve as your Treasurer and I look forward to serving you in the future.

Richard Horn
Department Treasurer

Chaplain

When I was at the Department Convention in Rochester they were looking for someone to run for Chaplain. I was sitting with my Second District Family and was asked by Erv Prbyl and Harvey Noble why don't you run, it isn't a hard job to do and I was the Chaplain for Second District and the year is almost done. After the convention and my drive home I thought, what did I get into having to write an article for the Department Legionnaire paper and prayers for the Department meetings?

I must say preparing the Legionnaire Chaplain's Corner was one of my biggest assignments, trying to think of what to write and if I'm going to do a good job. I would hope and pray that those that read my articles would find a message and get something out of it. My basis for topics would come from interesting church bulletin messages from a very inspiring priest at the church the wife and I attend, the internet which is full of religious topics, and then there is just life in general. It was welcoming and interesting to hear from some of you that read the articles telling me your thoughts.

The trip to the Chaplains Conference was a real treat for the wife and me. We were able to tour the National American Legion office building and get to see the new Commander Mike Helm. He welcomed us into his office and visited with us and later we had the honor to have him sit with us at the Chaplain's dinner. The Chaplains Conference was a real help in explaining that a Chaplain's duties are, to not just care for the Veterans but also their families. And that prayer really does help for God will always hear you in your prayers. The Chaplain theme for the year was "FOR GOD AND COUNTRY"! We need to bring both back into our daily lives. It was not hard to write about "GOD AND COUNTRY." God did give us all a special gift and without our Veterans and those that are serving our Country now, we would not be able to have what we have today "FREEDOM!"

I attended all put one rally and that was during the time to put the crop in and what a beautiful spring it was. I really enjoyed the rallies and to see all the Districts compete for first place in memberships. The "Lets Go Out to the Ball Game" theme really must have worked as lots of memberships were always turned in. I always enjoyed doing the prayers for the rallies and praying for all of the Veterans, Families, and Caregivers. I did enjoy the travels all over our state even when there were times I thought that it was a long way to drive but my friend Harvey Noble was always ready to go along.

All that needs to be done now is to get ready for the Department Convention and get together with the Department Auxiliary Chaplain Erma Redden to plan the Department Memorial service. I am sure she will have most of it already in place and I thank her for helping me out when I was laid up with my health.

Now that my year as your Chaplain is almost done, I cannot say "THANK YOU" enough times for allowing me to serve you! With the help of God and each of you it was not hard at all, you just have to take the time. I am looking forward to seeing you all again down the road at the rallies and conventions.

May God Bless all Veterans and GOD Bless AMERICA!
Remember "FOR GOD AND COUNTRY!"

Steven Klunkner
Department Chaplain

Historian

It has been a pleasure to serve as your Department Historian this past year.

Department Commander Peggy Moon has been a treat to allow me to capture history in the making during her participation in membership rallies, Post membership dinners, hosting of the National Commander, District, Department and National Conventions. I will be completing the Commander's History Book and DVD's for her and her family to enjoy. If anyone has any photos they want to have included let me know. Need the event, names and dates. I will be including photos of the upcoming Department Convention at Jackpot Junction near Morton and the National Convention in Baltimore. The completed book/album will be presented to the Commander at the Minnesota American Legion Camporee.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve and your cooperation in doing so.

For God and Country
Gary H. Olson
Department Historian

NEC Man

What an exciting, fulfilling, and busy year this has been once again. It all started with the Charlotte National Convention and the election of Mike Helms, Nebraska, as our National Commander.

I have attended the Fall Meetings, Washington Conference, and Spring Meetings as your representative on the National Executive Committee. My other NEC assignments include serving on the NEC Sub-committee on Resolutions and as an NEC Liaison to the National Convention Commission.

Once again this past year, I have been summarizing the meetings that I have attended. I have been emailing them to those who have requested to receive them. I have also sent a copy of them to The Legionnaire where they are published when and where there is room available. I have also been forwarding other communication I receive from the National organization. If you are interested in receiving this information, please give me your name and email address.

I would like to congratulate Commander Peggy on a wonderful year. Her sense of humor, dedication, creative thinking, and hard work are the reasons Minnesota had another successful year. Thank you, Peggy both as a Commander and friend.

I want to thank Alternate NEC, Marland Rooning for his dedication and hard work as an advocate for our veterans and our organization. He is a great person to work with and someone I am proud to call a friend.

I want to thank Commander Moon's Legislative team, led by Bob Hart, for their hard work and leadership. With their strong leadership, they kept our legislators informed on the issues that supported our veterans.

Plans are in place to celebrate the 100th anniversary of The American Legion starting with the 2018 National Convention here in Minneapolis - right where it originally started. The year-long celebration will culminate with the 2019 National Convention in Indianapolis, home of our National Headquarters.

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your National Executive Committeeman. It has truly been an honor to represent you the past six years. Hopefully, we will continue to meet at the various American Legion functions. Waite Park Post 428 - thank you for your support these last 45+ years. Lastly, I want to thank my family, especially my wife Patricia for putting up with my busy schedule and for missing a number of family functions.

Ray DeZurik
National Executive Committeeman

Judge Advocate

The Department Adjutant, Treasurer and Judge Advocate are each elected to a three year term by the Executive Committee. These are staggered terms so that they all do not end the same year. The election takes place at the first Executive Committee meeting each year, after the convention.

My three year began with the Executive Committee meeting on August 9, 2014. This has been an interesting and learning year for me, being the first Judge Advocate not being in the legal profession. With the help of Adjutant Randy and the headquarters staff I managed to complete the conventions that arose timely. Together we got the SOP for the Legion Riders in place. Questions concerning membership, name usage and post charter decisions were addressed.

Tom Lannon
Department Judge Advocate

Americanism

I would like to thank Commander Peggy Moon for allowing me to serve as the Americanism Chairman for the Department of Minnesota of The American Legion; and wish you a successful convention in Redwood Falls, MN. I would also like to thank my Americanism Committee members Larry Poerniehl and Mel Busseler; Boy's State representatives Mike Brodiek and Lee Talkison; Community Service representative Bob Locker; Education representative Gary Weaver; Junior Shooting Sports representative Leon Dahle; Boy's Scout representative Tom Hallett; Oratorical representatives Tass Davis and Debra Norman; Safety - School Patrol representative James Blakesley; and the District Americanism Chairpersons for their hard work in promoting Americanism during the past year.

The Department Americanism Committee met at the 2014 Fall Conference. The Boys Scouts, Boy's State, Community Service, Education, Jr. Shooting Sports, Oratorical, School Safety Program representatives, five District Americanism Chairs, National Americanism Commission representatives, and five other interested parties attended the meeting.

Various Boys State topics were discussed. Tucker Pearson was elected the 2014 Boy's State Governor. Tucker Pearson and Rory Calabria were selected for Boy's Nation. Heidi Bau (Girls State), of Slayton, MN and Jonathan Mullen (Boys State), of Ansover, MN, were awarded national Samsung Scholarships.

The Boy Scouts American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year was Cody O'Halloran, of Olivia, MN and the Boy Scouts American Legion National Square Knot Award was given to Timothy L. Liffing, of Eagan, MN.

The 2015 Minnesota Department Oratorical Winner was Caroline Donaldson, sponsored by Wayzata Post 118. Caroline was a repeat winner from the 2014 Minnesota Department Oratorical Contest. After the 2015 Oratorical Contest competition, Caroline competed in the National Oratorical Contest, held in Indianapolis. Caroline was among the final nine contestants after the first round of competition.

Please see the individual committee reports for further information concerning these Americanism Sub-Committees.

The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, Americanism Committee continues to develop a Junior Law Cadet Program in Minnesota. There are a number of Departments that have started a Jr. Law Cadet Program. There are no established guidelines for these programs; each Department has their own guidelines. The Department of Minnesota will review these already established programs.

The Scholarship Selection Committee met in St. Paul in April. There were seven nursing scholarships, three Minnesota Legionnaire Insurance Trust scholarships, and six Memorial scholarships awarded this year.

Americanism is an ideal of loyal patriotism, religious tolerance, righteous freedom, fearless courage, honest integrity, abiding faith in the commanding destiny of the United States, and a faithless love for the principles that led our forefathers to found this country.

It is complete and unqualified loyalty to the ideals of government as set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. It is respect for, and ready obedience to, duly constituted authority and the laws of the land. It is freedom without license, religion without bigotry, charity without bias, and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty for our nation and for our posterity.

Art Tobkin
Chairman, Americanism Committee

Boy Scouts

I first want to thank Department Commander Moon for reappointing me as the Department of Minnesota Boy Scout Chairman. I next want to thank all ten District Boy Scout Chairmen for their support and dedication to the Boy Scout programs. They have been outstanding with their help and knowledge; we make a great team!

Your post's support of your local Scout packs, troops and councils is also greatly appreciated. From its birth, the American Legion has supported wonderful Scouting youth programs with both volunteers and financial assistance. Additional thanks go to all the posts that have donated to the Department Boy Scout Council Assistance Fund #81. Your donation certificates can be picked up at the Boy Scout booth. The fund's status as of May 31, 2015 stood at \$38,705.00. Please make a yearly contribution to this fund as we are striving to raise \$40,000 in order to give a yearly donation of \$1,000 to a Minnesota Scout Council project. Current records show that no donations have been received from the 5th, 8th and 9th Districts so far this year.

Once again, thank you, one and all, for supporting Scouting in all its programs to advance the cause of freedom and its dedication to 100% Americanism.

Tom Hallett
Department Boy Scout Chairman

Boys State

With this being our 67th year of the American Legion Boys State, we are very pleased to return to Southwest Minnesota State University for our ninth year.

The American Legion Posts, their adjutants and Boys State Chairs are to be commended in their recruitment efforts. Through your hard work and efforts we will have the same enrollment as last year. When the numbers are all tabulated, we might show a slight increase.

As I talk to many of the Legionnaires, they are pleased with the relationship the program has with the Boys State delegate and the sponsoring Post. Assure you each and every one of the delegates are grateful of your sponsorship.

Thanks to all of you that have worked so hard at recruiting the delegates to Boys State not only this year, but in the years past as well.

The work that Heidi Cook has done will be missed. She is moving out of state. Thanks Heidi as well as each and every one of you that have helped in so many ways from recruitment, driving the bus, donations etc.

Many, many thanks to the Sons of the American Legion for their continued support to the Boys State Program.

Registration by District:

District	Registered Delegates	Change from Previous Year
1	20	-12
2	36	+2
3	61	+12
4	7	0
5	7	+1
6	48	0
7	48	0
8	16	0
9	32	-6
10	77	+3

Thank you to the hardworking staff at the Department Headquarters-Jennifer Kelley, Laura Weber, Al Zdon, and Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl. Their hard work is greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank the Department Commander, Peggy Moon, for her continued support as Commander, but also as well as her many years of service to the Boys State Program.

This year marks a milestone for Dr. Bill Zweiner's 65 Years of Service. 10 years of service are recorded for Jim Copher, Tony Gunderson, and Chuck Koenig. Their continued support and experience add to the success of Minnesota Boys State.

Thanks to the many volunteers giving up a week of their time and some individuals giving up hundreds of hours of their time.

Thank you to the speakers and to all of you that give of your time and effort. We cannot thank you enough.

Visit us at our website www.mnbysstate.org for a complete profile of our program.

Finally, I would again like to thank Department Commander Peggy Moon for allowing me to take part in this capacity.

Mike Bredeck
Minnesota Boys State Director

Community Service

It is that time of year to look back and review what our American Legion Posts have meant to our communities. How do we do this is the question? Our post officers must summarize what our members have done this past year and report this back to their members and then get this to the Department of Minnesota who can summarize for our state and pass it on to National. Our members deserve this information as feedback. Nothing helps pull an organization together more than celebrating together what they have accomplished.

We can try to estimate what was accomplished at state and national levels by reviewing the reports that our posts did submit. This year we had 133 posts turn in a report, which is 24%, and the same as last year. A lot of these are smaller posts which shows how proud they are of their members commitments. But many posts not turning in reports are posts with over 250 members. The report summaries turned in for the year are as follows: Children & Youth: hours 4,862 and dollars spent \$258,426. Veteran Affairs: hours 21,447 and dollars spent \$284,213. Americanism: hours 23,347 and dollars spent \$513,394. Funeral: hours 36,161 and dollars spent \$386,982. Community Service: hours 19,936 and dollars spent \$505,029. This gives a total turn in of 103,754 Volunteer hours and \$1,948,043 dollars spent.

Over the past five years the numbers in all categories have varied widely and the number of posts reporting has varied from 131 to 164 which is more or less 25% of posts.

Although the number of posts reporting this year compared to last year is the same the total number of hours is approximately 16,000 more hours and approximately \$400,000 more dollars.

The winners will be announced at the Department Convention so plan on being there to accept for your members.

I want to thank Commander Moon for appointing me to this chair as I have found it very informative and it was a pleasure to work with her.

Bob Locker
Department Community Service Chairman

Education

The Scholarship Committee met on Thursday, April 16, 2015 at the American Legion Department Headquarters in St. Paul. Six American Legion Memorial Scholarships, three Minnesota Legionnaire Insurance Trust Scholarships and \$3,500.00 in Grants for Nurses Training were selected.

From an impressive number of applicants, the committee awarded six American Legion Memorial Scholarships as follows: Grace Banel of Rochester, Shannon Head of Blackduck, Rion Wendland of Madison Lake, Elizabeth Loken of Houston, Rachael Allen of Dexter and Riley Masie of Park Rapids.

The three Minnesota Legionnaire Insurance Trust Scholarships were awarded to Hayley Lhotka of Eden Prairie, Mia Scharber of Isanti and Jenna Blair of Lowry.

The Nurses Training grants were awarded as follows, \$500.00 to each of the following: Kaie Inveen, Mary McDonough, Mary McMahon and Danelle Sims from the Minneapolis VAMC; Jane Matejcek from the Fergus Falls VAMC; Velvet Link and Olena Colvin from the Fergus Falls Veterans Home.

I would like to thank the other members of the selection committee; they are Art Tobkin, Mel Buesseler, and Tom Newman. We congratulate all the recipients and wish them well in their continuing education. I also wish to Thank you Commander Moon for this appointment. It has been an honor serving the Department in this capacity.

Gary L. Weaver
Chairman, Education

Junior Shooting

The Junior Shooting Sports Program is alive and well in Minnesota. We are small in numbers, but have a high quality program, and manage to grow a little each year. The program uses both Sporter and Precision Air Rifles. The Sporter gun is limited to \$400 in cost. This allows beginning shooters to participate without incurring the high cost of Precision equipment. The matches are all shot at 10 meters (33 feet). Thus a air gun range can be set up anywhere you have 40 feet or more of space, and the expense of ventilation and inspection is not necessary.

Air Rifle and Air Pistol are Olympic Gold Medal Sports and one of the stated purposes of the program is to make the U.S. more competitive in Olympic competition. The program works well in winter months when outdoor activity is limited. There is a full plate of competition available including the National Headquarters sponsored American Legion match. We also compete in the USA Shooting sponsored Junior Olympic match, NRA Sectionals, and the US Army Junior match.

Anyone interested in starting a competitive shooting program, let me know and I will help.

Leon Dahle
Junior Shooting Sports Chair

Oratorical Contest

The 2015 Department High School Oratorical Contest was held at Anoka Post 102 at 1:00 pm, Friday February 13th. The Semi-Final Rounds were held at Osseo Post 172 and Coon Rapids Post 334.

Caroline Donaldson, a senior Home Schooler from Eden Prairie, sponsored by Wayzata Post 118 representing the 10th District was this year's winner. On April 5th she competed in the National Contest.

The format is as follows: Students compete in three rounds. All 54 Department winners competed in the morning with Nine Contestants in 6 rounds. The Nine winners move onto the afternoon Semi-Finals with the three winners competing Sunday morning for the First, Second and Third place titles. Caroline was an excellent representative from the Department of Minnesota; Caroline did advance into the Semi Final Round. She received a \$1500.00 scholarship from the Dept. of MN as well as \$3000.00 from the National Contest.

She has been invited to attend the Department Convention and subsequently she will speak there. We should all look forward to hearing this wonderful young woman.

Second Place winner from the 5th District was Isaac Winnes, he received \$1000.00 Third Place winner from the 6th District was Angela Gudahl, she received \$700.00. Fourth Place winner from the 1st District was Richard Erpelding, he received \$500.00.

Other District Champions competing were: 2nd District: Ethan Anderson, 3rd District: Miranda Hawkinson, 4th District: Rebekah Johnson, 7th District: Sarah Schmidt, 8 District: No Contestant, 9th District: Auraura Eckberg

I would like to thank all the Judges and Volunteers for their help this year, you folks are true and dedicated. I hope fun was had by all. Our contest could not be as successful as it is without you. I would also like to thank all of you that came to see these wonderful young people. It was nice to see a full house for the final. A very special thanks goes out to my assistant Chair Deb Norman!

Thank you Commander Moon for appointing me to this wonderful program.

Tess Davis
Chair, Oratorical

Safety Patrol

The Minnesota Twins are playing some very exciting ball this year. They are off to a wonderful season start and currently lead the division. There have been some very close games and the winning streak has been great baseball to watch. If you haven't treated your patrolers to a Twins game, consider doing it. The stadium is a great baseball facility to watch a game.

The Legionville Safety School Patrol Center is a valuable part of the Safety - School Patrol Program. It is the only facility ever developed for this purpose. The new barn is nearly complete. There are many finishing touches yet to be done. I hope many are able to attend the dedication set for September this year. The support of AAA Minnesota - Iowa has been appreciated. The new sign is in place and pavers are being placed. The camp is being readied for this summer's sessions. I encourage all Posts to participate in this most worthwhile project. I commend the board of directors for the tremendous job they have done in providing a safe camp for our school patrolers. The commitment to this program by the Legionnaires of this Department has been most encouraging and appreciated.

I also encourage Legion posts to promote safety programs in their local communities. There are many areas of safety education and they are best addressed at the local level. I am aware of many posts that are hosting safety programs and networking with other groups to provide safety training in many areas. There were 41 residential fire fatalities in 2014 in Minnesota; down from 44 in 2013 and 50 in 2012. The state's all-time low fire-death figure was 35 in 2009; the high was 134 in 1976. Install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Test them monthly and replace the batteries twice a year. Use flameless candles instead of real ones. Never leave food cooking on the stove unattended. Keep flammable materials at least three feet away from any heat source.

Preliminary reports show traffic fatalities are down slightly from last year as 370 people were killed compared to 387 deaths in 2013. This is the second lowest number since 1944 when 356 people lost their lives. Primary contributing factors continue to be drunk driving, seat belt noise, speeding and distracted driving. The deaths include: 17 pedestrians, down from 25 in 2013, five bicyclists, down from six in 2013, 45 motorcyclists down from 60 in 2013. About half of those killed were not wearing a seat belt. About one in five fatalities involved drunk driving.

Safety is not just for our youth. I encourage Posts to invite your district State Patrol Safety Officer to a meeting to present a program on this and other issues. Fire, police and other safety program professionals are available most times just for the asking. I encourage you to use them. Every community has its own safety concerns. I encourage Legionnaires to identify these areas of concern and implement programs of safety education.

As usual, the balance of my report will be given on the Convention floor at Redwood Falls.

Jim Blakesley
Safety-School Patrol Chairman

Armed Forces Service Center

The Center is looking forward to the One Millionth Service member to be served this summer.

An open house in honor of its 45th year of service to our military members is planned for November of 2015. This event is open to the public and an excellent opportunity for all our American Legion members to visit the center and consider becoming a volunteer.

Thanks to all the posts in Minnesota for your donations and please continue to remember the AFSC in the future.

Joe Jansen
Representative, Armed Forces Service Center

Blood

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Commander Peggy Moon for appointing me as Blood Chairman for 2014-2015. A thank you to the Department staff for their help and support. This year we had 100% reporting-way to go! A big thank you to the district blood chairmen for completing the reports and returning them in a timely manner. Some posts showed amazing creativity in promoting and having successful blood drives in their communities.

Two Legionnaires were identified for the number of units that they have donated and I would like to recognize them for their dedication to a great program.

D. Marvin Hill of Post 239 with a total of 90 units.
LeRoy Vonasek of Post 27 with a total of 141 units.

District 1: 1st place: Post 146 Adams, 2nd place: Post 56 Albert Lea, 3rd place: Post 161 Leroy
District 2: 1st place: Post 33 St. James, 2nd place: Post 6 Pipestone, 3rd place: Post 3 Sarnborn

District 3: 1st place: Post 79 Montgomery, 2nd place: Post 95 Glencoe, 3rd place: Post 311 Elysian

District 4: 1st place: Post 39 North St. Paul, 2nd place: Post 599 3M Post, 3rd place: Post 474 Northend

District 5: 1st place: Post 455 Riechfield, 2nd place: Post 1 Minneapolis, 3rd place: Post 129 Hellenie

District 6: 1st place: Post 101 Melrose, 2nd place: Post 49 Pequot Lakes, 3rd place: Post 12 Long Prairie

District 7: 1st place: Post 545 Spicer, 2nd place: Post 113 Marshall, 3rd place: Post 186 Olivia

District 8: 1st place: Post 262 Cloquet, 2nd place: Post 60 Grand Rapids, 3rd place: Post 241 Aurora

District 9: 1st place: Post 27 Warren, 2nd place: Post 114 Fosston, 3rd place: Post 219 Parkers Prairie

District 10: 1st place: Post 102 Anoka, 2nd place: Post 216 Princeton, 3rd place: Post 282 St. Louis Park

Denise Milton
Blood chairman

Children and Youth

I attended the annual Children and Youth Conference in September at Indianapolis. The FBI gave a briefing on how easy it is to get information from the postings our children do on face book and other accounts. A child will put many very little things about themselves that an adult would never do. In ten minutes a child abuser will have your home address, your children's school and the route that they take to school. It is important to monitor your children's postings to stop this. What was also of interest was that one of the people he had to arrest was a fellow FBI agent that had recently retired.

I would like to thank Tom Newman for his assistance this last year with a number of family assistance issues. Tom takes care of a lot of the major work for this committee. Thank you, Tom.

I have received the C&Y annual reports but sadly only about 35% are reporting. Of those over half do not do anything but report. They at least sign and send it to the district chairs so I get some type of report. In my district I call those that don't report so I can bring up the percentage of reports. Reporting is very important so the National office knows what this state has done.

Terry Buraas
Chairman, Children and Youth