

# Peggy Moon

## Department Commander

### 2014-2015

Peggy Moon was installed as The American Legion Department of Minnesota Commander in July, 2014. She is 98th commander of the Department and the first woman.

Moon is a veteran of the United States Air Force, 1971-74, during the Vietnam War. She has been a member of Zimmerman Post 560 for 36 years, and is a past commander.

She has been adjutant and commander of the Sixth District, and at the state level she has served as Department Vice Commander, Membership Director, and has served on the Employment Committee, Post Development Committee, Internal Affairs Committee, Public Relations Committee, Strategic Planning Committee and the Convention Corporation.

Moon was the Minnesota representative to the dedication of the Vietnam Women's Memorial, and she has been a longtime volunteer at Boys State and the Oratorical Contest.

At the national level, she is currently the vice chairman of the Committee on Children and Youth and she is vice president of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. She has also served on the Distinguished Guests Committee and she is a life member of ANIVICUS.

Moon served as chairman of the Minnesota Gambling Control Board for 10 years. She is an alumna of Minnesota Girls State.

She and her husband, Dr. Carl Moon, live in St. Joseph. Carl is the commander of the Sixth District this Legion year.

Moon's theme for the year is "Celebrating Courage."



# Chris Ronning

## Department President

### 2014-2015

Chris Ronning is a 24 year member of the American Legion Auxiliary and is a member at the Osseo-Maple Grove American Legion Auxiliary. Her eligibility is through her husband, a Vietnam era veteran and her son, Craig, a combat wounded Desert Storm Veteran.

She has been an active member of the American Legion Auxiliary serving in most offices and served as unit president two times. She went on to become District President in 2002-2004 and lead her District achieving their Membership Goal. Chris also served on the rural County Council holding several positions including President two times. She has also been active in the 40&8 and held the office of Grande President de Minnesota.

Ronning held several Department Chairmanships, including Legislation three times, VA&R, Leadership, Home Service and Membership Chairman.

She also served as Department Second Vice President, First Vice President and went on to become Department President for the year 2014-2015.

Ronning retired after 28 years as a Corporate Travel Consultant and lives with her husband Marland in Maple Grove

Ronning loves to read in her spare time, which is very seldom and is an avid fan of NCIS. She enjoys helping with steak fries, bake sales and anywhere they need help at the American Legion Post in Osseo.

She was born in Heidelberg Germany and came to this country at the young age of 19, where she raised one son and two daughters and now Chris and Marland have a combined family of 5 children, 14 grandchildren and 16 great grand children.

Her symbol is the poppy and a butterfly and her theme is: Our Veterans -- Past, Present and Future.





Minnesota's massed colors were once again a highlight of the national parade held in downtown Charlotte.



President Obama promised changes in the VA health care system.

# National Convention Charlotte



Minnesota's leadership teams from this year and last year were challenged to the ALS ice bucket challenge at the Charlotte Sheridan.



The convention hall exploded in applause when Commander Mike Ash announced that the Minnesota American Legion Riders had brought in \$87,000 for the National Legacy Fund.



The Ninth District Band performed outside the hotel during the convention.



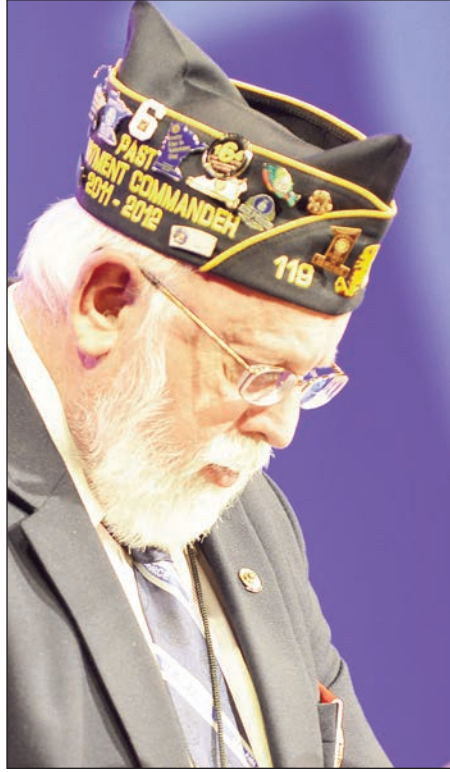
Minnesota received the prestigious Lenker Trophy for outstanding rehabilitation services.



The Minnesota Party had a Jimmy Buffet theme, including parrots and colorful shirts. Past Commander Mike Ash and Past President Shirley Frederick dressed for the occasion.



Past National President Kris Nelson of Baxter read a poem during the installation of officers.



Chuck Kruger, Byron, read the resolutions of the Conventional Armed Forces Committee which he chairs.



Bill Goede, Plainview, gave the final report of the National Guard and Reserve Forces Committee.



Ferdie Haberman, Brewster, marched in the parade. It was his 49th national convention.



Honorary Junior President Jules Efta, left, danced with her sister, Lexus, at the National Commander's event.



Department Commander Peggy Moon and husband Carl posed at the National Commander's Banquet.



Department President Chris Ronning and husband Marland enjoyed the National Commander's Banquet.



Mike and Teresa Ash do a selfie during the Minnesota Party. Over 100 Minnesotans attended.



Dr. Donald Jenkins of the Mayo Clinic received The American Legion's Distinguished Service Award for his work in helping returning veterans. He is chief of Trauma, Critical Care and General Surgery at the clinic and a member of Rochester Post 92.



Harold Bergstrom and Mel Buessler sat with incoming National Commander Mike Helm at the Triple



Members of Past Department Commander Roger Olson's Third District team posed at the National Convention. The four served together when Olson was Third District Commander. From left: Past National Vice Commander Don Hayden; Past Department Commander and Judge Advocate Tom Lannon; Olson; National Vice Commander and Past Virginia Department Commander Richard Neville.



Past Commander Mike Ash passed the gavel to Commander Peggy Moon at the Minnesota Caucus at the convention.



Phil Bellefeuille, left, and Tom Fernlund, right, were inducted into the ANAVICUS honor group at the convention. They posed with Past National Commander Dan Ludwig, who is vice president of the group.

# A medic from D-Day to the Bulge

*Ken Axelson grew up in southern Minnesota on a farm. Despite his love of guns, the Army in its wisdom made him a medic. Unhappy at a field hospital, he volunteered for the Airborne, and he was captured at the Battle of the Bulge.*

By Al Zdon

He might have stayed home on a farm deferment. He might have stayed in a nice, safe Army field hospital posting. He might have avoided joining the Airborne and being captured by the Germans at the Battle of Bulge. But in the end, Ken Axelson of Wanamingo experienced his share of World War II history first hand. Axelson, who turned 90 this year, was in high school when the war started, and he didn't join the Army until 1943. But in the next year and one half he managed to land on Omaha Beach on D-Day, do his duty at Bastogne, and spend his remaining months in the service as a guest at two different German stalags.

Albert Kenneth Axelson grew up during the Great Depression on a farm near Welch, about 10 miles west of Red Wing, Minnesota. The fifth of six children, he milked cows and did just about every other farm chore as he grew up. "I never thought we were poor, but then everybody was poor. The highlight of the week was Saturday. My dad would go to the tavern, but when he came home he'd bring a tub of ice cream. He'd wake us up, and we'd all get spoons and dig in."

When it was time to leave the little one-room school house in Welch, he was forced to live with a cousin in Red Wing while he went to high school. "I didn't like that a hoot, so I dropped out after one year."

The following year, though, Red Wing instituted school buses, and Axelson was back at school, graduating with the class of '43. "They had classes to get you ready for war like aeronautics, where you learned to identify enemy aircraft – not that it helped a great deal."

When he graduated, he was offered a job as a farm laborer on a neighboring farm, a choice that would have given him a deferment from the draft, but he chose the Army instead.

He wanted to be a pilot, "but I guess they needed medics more than pilots, and so they sent me to school at Camp Barkley in Abilene, Texas. Here I was, a gun nut all my life, and they make me a medic."

In November, he was on his way overseas on the RMS Aquitania, a trip across the Atlantic that took nine days. In England, he was assigned to a replacement depot.

"They'd have us out marching on the parade ground, but the fog was so thick that when the unit did 'about face' I'd just keep going and go back to the barracks."

He made a good friend, Fernley Bush of Mankato, at the depot. As D-Day approached, both got their orders: Axelson to the 393rd Medical Collection unit then stationed in Wales, Bush to the 29th Infantry Division. Both landed on Omaha Beach at Normandy on D-Day.

Axelson was not happy with his assignment. "It wasn't pleasant at all. It was a chickenshit outfit. It was run by doctors and not by soldiers. Plus, they were all from Ohio and Kentucky, and if you weren't from there, you were nothing. Plus, as a replacement, I got all the bad jobs."

Axelson remembers being transported to the south of England, and being sequestered for a week waiting for the

invasion. "We were in the same camp as the 1st Division, and they had been at Anzio. In the chow line, I could observe that these were pretty sober guys. There was very little BS-ing. They knew what was coming because they'd been there."

On the great day, Axelson and his comrades were loaded on an LCT – Landing Craft, Tank – for the journey across the English Channel. "There were two cranes on board and a bulldozer that was carrying crates and crates of TNT."

The LCT came in about noon on D-Day to Omaha Beach. "I remember in high school, we use to debate about where the invasion would be. And now here I was looking at it."

There was still plenty of shelling on the beach, but little small arms fire at that moment.

"The two cranes never made it to shore. The bulldozer made it to the beach, but then it was hit by artillery and with all that TNT on board, it just disappeared."

The tide was out, and the water was only ankle deep. "As I made my way ashore, I went past the wreck of a Higgins Boat, and I saw three 45s and holsters hanging from the wall. I just grabbed them as I went by. I gave two to my buddies, and kept one. I never used it in combat, but I liked having it. Now and then we'd just go out shooting for fun. There was plenty of ammunition. I ended up selling it for \$20."

The conditions with the medical unit, which had been set up on Omaha Beach and stayed there for three months, didn't get better. "There was shakedown after shakedown. I really think they were looking for those 45s. But we hid them in our gas mask containers, and they never found them."



The sleeping arrangements also weren't top notch. "The officers got one 16-man tent to themselves. They even had wooden floors. We were out in pup tents sleeping in the rain."

"One day, one of the guys, probably he was drunk, went into an officers tent and went to sleep in his sleeping bag. When the officer came back, it wasn't a great scene. But not long after that, they moved us into the bigger tents."

After about 10 days on the beach, Axelson saw some



**KEN AXELSON**  
In the Army during World War II



**KEN AXELSON**  
At home in Wanamingo

paperwork on his friend, Bush, that said he was wounded and being moved through the 393rd. "But he never arrived. He died before he got there."

Axelson's work was mainly as a stretcher bearer. "We were just grunts all summer. We worked seven days a week, all day long. We had German prisoners that didn't work as many hours as we did."

After Operation Market Garden in September, the American Airborne units had a need for medics. "My buddy worked in the office, and he saw a flyer come through that the 101st Airborne needed volunteers. All three of us replacements signed up, and we all got transfers."

"It was different from the day we got there. These guys wanted to be friends with us. We were somebody when we were there. We had a little status in combat."

The men were sent to the 101st Airborne base in England for training. "It was only two weeks, but it was very intense. I had become a little soft being with the 393rd, so it was a struggle, but I stuck it out."

The finale of the training was for the would-be paratroopers to jump out of an airplane five times in one day. Yes – five times in one day.

"Everybody wonders if they'll be able to go out that door. On the first jump, I was the second guy in the stick, the second guy out the door. Sure enough, the guy in front of me froze. He wouldn't go. So there I was stuck behind him. But Sergeant Pinky, that's what we called him, just kicked me in the leg and said 'Let's go.'

"And out the door I went. It was a good feeling to see that canopy puffed out above me. I thought, 'This isn't so bad.'"

Axelson, who has a vivid memory of the war, said he frankly doesn't remember the other four jumps that day. But he was awfully proud and happy at the end of the day to get his jump wings.

He was assigned as a medic to the Second Battalion of the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Meanwhile, paratroopers from the 101st were slowly filtering back to England. Eventually, the whole unit was withdrawn from Holland and everyone was reunited at Mourmelon, France, for rest and recuperation.

"We were in a French barracks, four to a room. One of the guys in my room had performed a tracheotomy on a soldier on the battlefield and had earned a Silver Star."

After only a few days in Mourmelon, Axelson was working CQ "Charge of Quarters" and was sitting near the telephone. News started filtering in about a breakthrough in the Ardennes. "I remember an officer asking me if I'd ever seen any combat. I said, well, I'd been on Omaha Beach on D-Day."

On Dec. 17, 1944, the day after the Battle of the Bulge began, the men of the 101st got ready. "We showered and got new clothes. On the 18th, we got into trucks and headed north. They were big grain trucks, and we just walked up the ramp and they closed it behind us. No top. It was colder than all get out."

The 101st arrived near Bastogne just at daylight.

"When we got off the truck, and a Belgian told us we were already surrounded. The machine gunner had too much to carry and he dropped a couple of magazines. I didn't have that much, and so I picked them up. I think those 500 rounds came in handy later."

"We were dropped off between Champs and Longchamps, just north of Bastogne. We walked about a half mile into Longchamps and set up an aid station. That was our home for the next two weeks."

Axelson's duties were much different than being a grunt with the 393rd. As a combat medic, he had to sprint to rescue soldiers who had been hit, and administer aid when he got there. At the aid station, he also was entrusted with medical duties.

**A** rmy food could sometimes be supplemented with some scavenging. "I snuck into a farmer's barn one day and I milked his cow into my helmet. I brought it back to the station and the officer chewed me out for drinking raw milk. All the farm boys got a kick out of that. We had Germans all around us, and he was worried about raw milk."

The aid station was somewhat removed from the main perimeter. "We didn't have soldiers in foxholes around us, so we would send out a patrol every hour to go to Champs and back. On Christmas morning, the news was not good. German soldiers were seen on the road."

There were only a handful of troopers at Longchamps, and the officer in charge split them into two squads of about nine men each, and a medic was sent with each squad.

"We were the only medics available. We dug in on the side of the woods. This was about three in the morning and it was pitch black. All night we watched the machine guns on both sides. The American tracers were red, and I thought the German tracers were green, but I was later told they were silver."

"In the morning, the Germans wanted to cross the road and get into the woods behind us. But our machine gunner kept them back. The Germans sent a guy with a light machine gun to come around on our machine gunner from the side, but he was picked off before he could fire a shot."

The U.S. was dumping mortar shells on the German position, and they were forced to withdraw. "All night long we could hear them talking and digging in among the rocks,



The building where the aid station where Axelson worked near Bastogne still stands. Axelson has been back to Belgium to visit some of the sites where he spent the war.

but now it was quiet. They were gone."

The little squad held its position all day, and then returned to the aid station just before dark.

On January 3rd, 1945, the Germans brought 18 tanks up the road. "We could see them coming. I was out bringing in the wounded. I tried getting into a foxhole, but it was only half dug. I could only get my legs into it. And I had to take off my two medical bags to fit in the hole at all."

**W**ithin moments the position was surrounded by the tanks. "There was nothing our officer could do but put his hands up. They took us away, and I forgot those two medical bags. I really regretted that. I could have used that stuff later. Plus, I'd just got six chocolate bars and I'd only eaten one of them."

The men were marched alongside the German tanks for a ways. "One of the tanks fired its cannon while I was right next to it. It blew my helmet right off."

The Germans had in prior days committed a war atrocity at Malmedy, shooting 84 American prisoners. Word of the massacre had filtered through the American ranks.

"The same day we were captured, we had heard about Malmedy. That changed everything in the Battle of the Bulge. Guys didn't want to get captured after that. And the Germans who were captured didn't fare too well either."

"When we got to where we were going that day, they took my wristwatch and went through my pockets and took what they wanted. I didn't have much."

Marching the next day, an American artillery shell came in and hit the little column of prisoners of war. "It cut one of our guys right in half. I guess they call that friendly fire."

Escaping didn't seem like a good idea. "It did cross my mind, but being a prisoner isn't something you train for. It seemed like a better idea to just stay alive and stick it out. You could see the Germans weren't long for the war. They were delivering supplies with horses and with trucks pulling trucks. We were delivering supplies with airplanes."

Plus, Axelson's medical skills were needed for his fellow prisoners, three of which had been shot – one of them through both buttocks. "I had my Red Cross brassard on, and I think it saved me from a few lumps, maybe. Mostly the German troops just ignored me."

Along the way, Axelson was interrogated. "It was by a German officer, and he sat behind a desk. He was all spiffed up, and a good looking guy. I told him that I was a non-combatant and by the Geneva rules, I should be sent to Sweden or Switzerland for the duration of the war."

"He laughed and said he had been to Sweden many times, and it was a beautiful country. 'Too bad you'll never see it.'"

There were two guards with a small group of prisoners. "One of them threw a snowball, and he said that was all the fighting he planned on doing. I got into a truck before him, and he handed me his rifle while he climbed up. But then they put him in another truck. So the whole time I was in the truck I was holding his rifle. It was a semi-automatic like I'd never seen before. I took it apart and put it back together as we rode along. I wanted to find out how it worked."

By January 6th, the prisoners had been marched to a stockade in the woods, and Axelson just remembers how cold it was. "I jogged all night just to keep my feet from freezing."

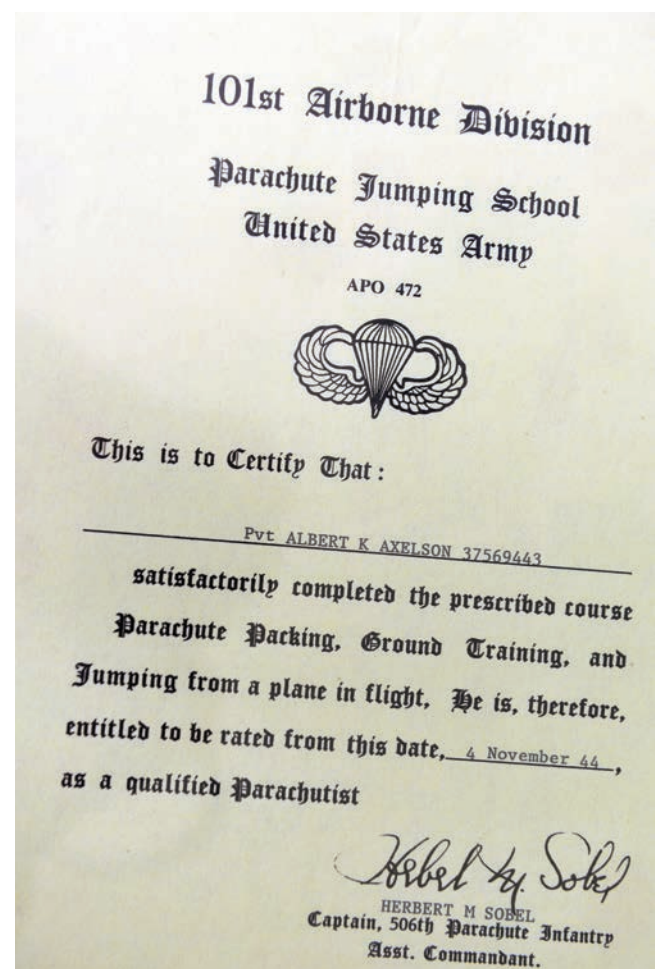
The next night was in a large warehouse. "They fed us some barley soup, and I thought it was really bad. I didn't know that would be the best food I'd have for the next few months."

Some of the prisoners were giving a guard a hard time, and to show his authority he fired his rifle into the air. "The rifle just blew up, and the action just fell on the ground. Now he was unarmed just like us."

One night along the march in a crowded building, Axelson was overcome with a need to urinate. He had to wend his way through the sleeping bodies in the pitch dark to get to the bath tub the men were using as a facility. "I



Axelson and his family posed for this photo in 1945, after he had returned from the prisoner of war camp. He is at lower right.



Axelson saved the document that officially proclaimed him a parachutist after his two-week training in England. Note that the certificate is signed by Captain Herbert Sobel who was a featured character in the HBO mini-series "Band of Brothers."



Stalag 9B, considered one of the worst prisoner camps in Germany in the war, was home for Axelson for the final weeks of the war. It was liberated on Axelson's 21st birthday, April 2, 1945.

finally got to the tub, and I kicked it to make sure. I must have kicked right between the guys legs who was sitting on it.”

As Axelson relieved himself, the occupant of the space was not very happy. “I think he swore for five minutes and never repeated himself.”

At one point, the prisoners were locked into boxcars meant to hold 40 men or eight horses. “There were 90 of us. It was packed and it was cold, and the doors were wired shut. Sometimes we’d just sit for a day in a train yard.”

By foot, truck and train, the prisoners finally made it to Stalag 12A at Limberg. “Our barracks was pretty bare. There wasn’t even a box to sit on. There was a stove in the middle of the room, but there was no wood. The sanitary facility was a hole in the floor.”

Axelson worked with a German doctor to help those who needed medical care. “The only thing they had for bandages was crepe paper.”

Food consisted of a thin soup and a piece of black bread, about an inch thick, once a day.

After a few weeks at 12A, one of the prisoners came down with meningitis. The prisoners were offered the chance to move to a new camp. It coincided with the German effort to relocate the prisoners deeper into Germany.

The prisoners were marched 25 miles a day by young guards, sometimes only 16 years old.

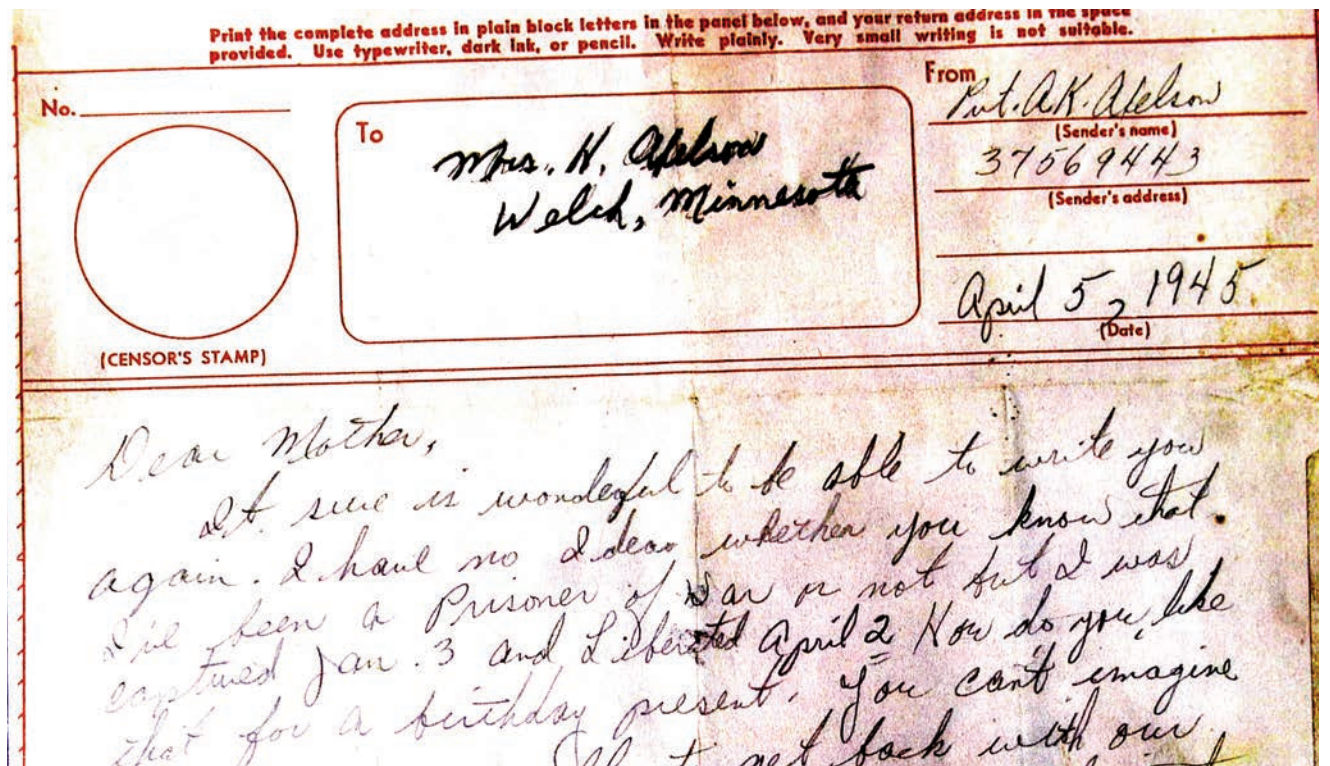
One day on the march, Axelson could see that one of the young German guards was eyeing his jump boots. “I pretended not to notice him, but he finally came up to me and indicated he wanted my boots. He put his finger on the muzzle of his rifle and pointed to my head. I convinced him to let me wear them all day and I’d give them to him that night.

“When we got near the village where we were supposed to spend the night, though, one of our planes came in and bombed the village just before we walked through it. There were some regular German soldiers there, and they chased our guards away because I think they wanted to kill us.

“One of them yelled, ‘You Yank sons of bitches, I’m going to kill you if I can get my hands on you.’ None of us said a word. He was pushing us and yelling at us, trying to pick a fight so he could kill someone. But we didn’t respond.

“The upshot was that the young guard who wanted my boots was gone, and I got to keep them.”

The prisoners were hoping for a better situation as they reached the stalag. “We had been told that the camp we



Part of a V-Mail letter Axelson sent to his mother after he was released from the POW camp.

were headed for was a new camp and very nice. That was a lie. It was one of the worst camps in history.”

The new quarters for the Americans was Stalag 9B at Bad Orb. It was overcrowded and considered one of the worst camps in the war. The one good thing was that as the days went by the prisoners began to sense the war was almost over.

“One of the guards had a radio, and he’d tell us that the Americans had been repulsed, but they were 50 miles closer. The next day, they’d be repulsed again, but they’d be 50 miles closer again.

“Then one night we could see tracers in the distance and we could hear the sounds of war. One morning, we woke up and the guards had disappeared. It was an exciting week.

“Some wanted to escape, but it seemed like a better idea to stay put and let the Americans come to us.”

On April 2, 1945, the day after Easter, tanks from the 44th Infantry Division smashed through the gate. It was

Axelson’s 21st birthday.

“The guy on the lead tank rode on top with his arm around the 37 millimeter cannon. And just like that, it was over.”

The liberators brought C-rations to the prisoners, which they were eager to gobble up. “It was pretty heavy stuff and everybody got sick. We just couldn’t hold it down.”

By April 5, the men were in La Havre and were soon on a ship headed home. Axelson got 30 days leave in Minnesota, and then spent the rest of the war at Fort Benning with the others in the Airborne units.

Back in Welch, he got a job in a grocery store, but then set off on a career that ended as a building inspector. He married Billie in 1950 and they had six children, 13 grandchildren “and I’ve lost count of the great grandchildren.”

Axelson lives in Wanamingo. He is active on the computer, and recently made his own Power Point presentation about his war years.

# Taps

## Affolter,

### John Walter, 70,

Past Detachment Commander of the Minnesota Sons of the American Legion, 2013-14, died Aug. 11, 2014. He was also Second District American Legion Adjutant (1999-2000) and he was a member and former commander of Mankato Post 11. He served in the U.S. Army Reserve for many years. Affolter will be remembered in part for the large white van he drove to hundreds of Legion and SAL events through the years.



JOHN AFFOLTER

**Harth, John Chris, 90,** Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 7, 2014. He was in the infantry and served in France and Germany including the Battle of the Bulge. He was a member of Hinckley Post 388.

**Cuperus, Burnerd, 83,** Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 2, 2014. He served in the 519th Field Artillery Battalion in Germany. He was a member of Graceville Post 257.

**Sandahl, Robert Kortbek, 94,** Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died July 16, 2014. He served in the 446th Bombardment Group. He was a member of Askov Post 243.

**Korth, Elroy C., 93,** Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died July 23, 2014. He served in France and Germany. He was a member of Breckenridge Post 53.

**Parsons, Glenn S., 63,** Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 10, 2014. He was a past commander and served on the exec committee of North Branch Post 85.

**Fridgen, Joseph A., 90,** Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died July 21, 2014. He served at Guam. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

**Helgerson, Arnold E., 88,** Navy veteran of World War II, died July 3, 2014. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Shidler, Robert C., 77,** Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 14, 2014. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Myrom, Allen R., 88,** Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died July 20, 2014. He was a B-29 flight engineer. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Johnson, Raymond William, 82,** Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 28, 2014. He was a member of Lanesboro Post 40.

**Schuldt, William, 92,** Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Aug. 4, 2014. He flew 40 missions as a front nose gunner on a bomber in the Pacific. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Rue, Bernard Warren, 96,** Army veteran of World War II, died July 2, 2014. He was a member of Lakefield Post 4.

**Anderson, Willard Curtiss,** Navy veteran of World War II, died July 29, 2014. He was a quartermaster. He was a member of Monticello Post 260.

**Spindler, Forrest, 93,** Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Aug. 2, 2014. He served in the Pacific and Middle East. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Michelson, Marvin, 91,** Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died July 29, 2014. He was a member of Buffalo Lake Post 469.

**Helgerson, Stanley Gordon, 97,** Navy veteran of World War II, died July 26, 2014. He served on the cruiser New Orleans. He was a member of Hopkins Post 320.

**Gamme, Roger L., 81,** Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died July 29, 2014. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

**Schumacher, Leon H., 74,** Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 26, 2014. He was a member of Eden Valley Post 381.

**Ost, Melvin C., 85,** Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 25, 2014. He was a member of Parkers Prairie Post 219.

**Breitwieser, Roy, 96,** Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 9, 2014. He served in Africa and Europe. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Youso, Walter P., 89,** Navy veteran of World War II, died recently. He was a member of Hopkins Post 320.

**Kucera, Valentine J., 97,** Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 29, 2014. He was a member of Lonsdale Post 586.

**Farrell, John, 81,** Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 14, 2014. He was a member of Fairfax Post 205.

**Frank, Alvin Frank, 82,** Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 21, 2014. He was a past commander and historian of Blue Earth Post 89.

**Henke, Harland A., 93,** Navy veteran of World War II, died Aug. 16, 2014. He served on the USS Suwannee (CVE-27) in the Pacific. He was a member of Blue Earth Post 89.

**Retrum, Wallace, 92,** Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 21, 2014. He served in the Philippines and New Guinea. He was a member of Breckenridge Post 53.

**Holmgren, Harold John, 89,** Army veteran of World War II, died July 17, 2014. He served in Italy. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

**Baumann, William John, 89,** Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Aug. 2, 2014. He was a staff sergeant. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

**Wood, Lyle Levon, 93,** Army veteran of World War II, died July 30, 2014. He was a platoon sergeant and stationed in Alaska. He was a member of Windom Post 206.

**Rohlfesen, Wilbert G. "Wally," 99,** Army veteran of World War II, died July 21, 2014. He was a company commander for an artillery unit and spent three years overseas. He was a member of Windom Post 206.

**Kick, Harold Paul, 90,** Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died July 25, 2014. He was a fighter pilot and flew 50 missions in a P-51B Mustang named “Chinese Laundry.” He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

**Engman, Clayton Peter, 73,** Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 14, 2014. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

**Gilchrist, David, II, 92,** Army veteran of World War II, died July 29, 2014. He served in Panama, France, and Germany. He was a past commander of Olivia Post 186.

**Storlie, Oscar O., Jr., 93,** Navy veteran of World War II, died Aug. 24, 2014. He was a member of Waseca Post 228.

**Cardwell, Dwane Franklin, 79,** Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 24, 2014. He was a former member of the drill squad at Springfield Post 257.

**Lang, Michael Ewald, 87,** Merchant Marine veteran of World War II, died July 28, 2014. He was a member of Worthington Post 5.

## Correction

**Wiedemann, Kenneth Frederick, 93,** Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died June 24, 2014. He trained as a twin-engine pilot and later served as an instructor. He served as a second lieutenant. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

# District Commanders

## FIRST DISTRICT

**Myron Ehrich  
Commander**



Greetings from the Big Red First,

The First District picnic was on August 17th at a park in Stewartville. There was a good turnout. If you were there Thank You for coming, if not hope to see you next year.

Mighty First is up to bat, so lets get hits so we can get on base. As first District Commander my projects will be: the new Veterans Cemetery in Preston and the Eagles Cancer Telethon in Rochester.

Lets have a good Labor Day weekend! I'll see many of you at Legionville, Saturday Sept. 6th, for the Harvest Rally. Come and join the fun and all of the activities.

Membership supper plans are being made at all posts. If you like to have me at you membership supper just let me know when and where so I can make plans to attend as many as I can.

I am here to serve you as your District Commander!

## SECOND DISTRICT

**Jennifer Kafka  
Commander**



Greetings from the 2nd District, as I sit and write this I am getting ready to head to my first National Convention I am excited to learn from the trainings and from the font of information Legionaries from across this great nation of ours will be bring with them. I hope to bring back information, ideas and a fresh outlook for 2nd District.

With the membership year off and running I would like to share a couple stories that I hope will help all who read this. First story, as change over ended and I stayed in the empty room as the bartender cleaned up he spoke with my husband and myself. After a little bit we learned he was a veteran, and then I asked if he belonged to the American Legion. He said no didn't have time and with his GI Bill he'd be going back to school. I mentioned without the members of the American Legion he wouldn't have that GI Bill, he was surprised and eventually thru the conversation he said he would join if even to be a number for now until he has more time to support veterans. This young man served our change over and no one asked if he was a veteran. Second story I was visiting a few members from a post and a guest arrived and was listening to the conversation and she asked to voice her opinion on the topic and what we discovered was she had no idea that the American Legion Auxiliary was for The mother, wife, daughter, sister, granddaughter, great-grand-daughter, or grandmother of members of The American Legion. She thought it was only the wife of the Legionnaire who could join. She said so for 60 some years I just didn't know. The gentlemen did tell her to come back the next day and they would get her signed up with the post President. I hope this will remind us not everyone knows who we are and what we do, we are the voice of the American Legion Family.

## THIRD DISTRICT

**Duane Anderson  
Commander**



Greetings from the Thundering Third.

The first couple of weeks as being District Commander has been busy and rewarding, as I'm sure the rest of the year will be. Some of my activities this last month include attending the funeral of long time Legion Member and Commander of Hutchinson Post 96 Wayne Pettis. On August 5th I attended the 2014 Veterans Stand Down at the Boy Scout Base Camp Fort Snelling. This was organized by the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. The Stand Down was very well attended and well organized. Many veterans from a large area were given assistance at this event. There will be several other Stand Downs scheduled in Minnesota yet this year. If you hear of one in your area be sure to try and attend. During the Department Executive Committee Meeting held in Osseo on August 9th, the constitution for the Minnesota American Legion Riders was rejected. The action, I believe, was taken because of concern of liability issues for the Department. The American legion Riders in Minnesota will continue operating under Resolution 35 of the National Charter which indicates that the Riders will continue to operate at the individual Post level as they were established. I sincerely hope that this can be done and that the Riders will continue the outstanding contributions and dedication to their cause as has been done in the past. As we are seeing in the present Legacy Run the Legion Riders have already been able to raise over \$68000.00 in donations for children of Fallen Veterans.

## FOURTH DISTRICT

**Dan Williams  
Commander**



Congratulations Commander Peggy Moon on your election to lead our Department. We are excited about the 2014-2015 year. Now is the time to mark your calendar. This year, Shop, Ship and Share will be held at Maplewood Mall. This is a different location from the past few years. Shop, Ship and Share will be Friday, November 21st, 12 Noon until 5:00 PM and Saturday, November 22nd 10:00 AM until 6:00 PM. Shop, Ship and Share is the event where and when we send gifts to Minnesota troops who are deployed. This allows our troops to have a touch from home during the holiday season. We are partnering with The Maplewood Mall, The U. S. Postal Service, local schools and Minnesota businesses to ship packages to our troops. We need your help now and on the days of the event. To help now, support with postage. To help now, you may send a donation to: Fourth District Headquarters, North St. Paul Post 39, 2678 East 7th Avenue, North St. Paul, MN 55109. On the event days please join us at Maplewood Mall (3001 White Bear Ave, Maplewood, MN 55109). We anticipate The Vikings Cheerleaders, Crunch (Timberwolves Mascot), TC (Twins Mascot), Goldie (Gophers Mascot) and many more.

## SIXTH DISTRICT

**Carl Moon  
Commander**



Since my last column, we held our training sessions that covered My Legion.org, Reports, and Membership. What great attendance we had at both sessions. The first was held at the Royalton Legion where we had 42 participants representing 20 Posts. The second was held at the Walker Legion where we had 34 participants representing 15 6th District Posts and we even had the 9th District Commander in attendance. Thank You to all who took time out of their very busy schedules to attend and a very special Thank You to the presenters: Ray DeZurik, Tom Fernlund, and our beloved Membership Director, Jim Lucas.

If you like great food, fun activities, seeing old friends, and getting to know new ones; plan on coming to the 45th Annual Legionville Camp-O-Ree September 4th, 5th, 6th & 7th. The camp is located north of Brainerd on beautiful North Long Lake. Come up for a day or bring your camper and stay. For information on camping fees and activities call: 218-963-7750. All proceeds go to the Legionville School Safety Patrol Training Center. In conjunction, the Fall Department Membership Rally will be held on Saturday the 6th at 4:30. Since this is being held in the 6th District, good luck to any other Districts trying to match or beat our turn-in.

Tuesday September 16th has been declared by Governor Dayton as American Legion Day, in Minnesota. I encourage all Posts to host a special event to let your communities and fellow Veterans know what the American Legion is really about; the assistance and support we have to offer those in need. Please wear your Legion caps proudly.

## SEVENTH DISTRICT

**Victor Gades  
Commander**



Keep those memberships coming in. Vice Commanders, keep up the good work.

A common topic lately has been about our dwindling numbers. How can we better address this? If you have a Auxiliary unit or Sons squad, they can be a great asset to you. They may be aware of potential new members for the American Legion family.

Membership dinners should have all of the Legion family invited. I know their respective membership timelines are not the same as the Legion, but a slight adjustment of meeting date can give everybody a feeling of camaraderie. Bringing together of the separate entities can foster common goals.

Coming at the end of September is the Fall Conference at Mahnomens. This is a great opportunity to create new friendships and foster old one, see how we work together as a organization. Learn about what new directions we may be taking: Many state that they cannot find the time to attend. Phooey. Our ancestors built this organization with sheer willpower. They did not have the modern conveniences that we enjoy today, yet they found the time to attend and be involved. Not everyone has to be a Commander. Maybe their talents lie elsewhere. Find them, let them help us as an organization and above all help fellow Veterans and their families.

## EIGHTH DISTRICT

**Wilson Spence  
Commander**



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

The 2014/15-year greets us with some challenges. The posts of the 8th District and I plan to take the challenges and make them opportunities. Our nation's veterans were faced with a challenge prompted by the Veterans Administration Medical System.

The American Legion turned that challenge into an opportunity to set in motion a system of tasks to improve the VA Health Care System by forcing a change in management and forcing Congress to make changes. We had a sitting United States president to want to come to our national convention to address us on changes to the VA, and to assure the American Legion of his commitment to improve the nations care of its military veterans.

The president's actions were a direct result of the challenge turned opportunity by the members of the American Legion. When we work together, there is nothing we members cannot accomplish.

Membership is a bright spot in the 8th District. The 8th District has more members today than this time last year. The 8th District officers and members are committed to increasing membership this year.

Membership in the American Legion is a power and we want to share the power.

## NINTH DISTRICT

**Thomas Norgaard Sr.  
Commander**



This is being written from the Super 8 motel in Asheville, TN.

August has been very hectic starting with a picnic in Dent, the 6th District Organizational meeting, the 9th District Organizational meeting, purchasing a different van, getting insurance and financing set up, a 6th District Commanders and Adjutants School of Instruction, driving to the National Convention in Charlotte, NC ( a 3000 mile test drive of our van). When I get back home on August 31st, I will have about 3 1/2 days to unpack and repack the tent and supplies before leaving for Legionville on September 4th.

After Legionville, there are 2 Membership suppers to attend, then October with the Department Fall Conference.

Anyone want to be 9th District Commander next year !!

Until I get back, may God Bless all our troops, all our veterans and also God Bless this wonderful land we call the United States of America.

## TENTH DISTRICT

**Tom Sanders  
Commander**



10th District Commanders Column September 2014

Greetings, American Legion Family of the 10th District and the Great Department of Minnesota. As we roll along into another month, now where does the time always go?

When I say roll on, I'm talking about the great American Legion Riders and the Legacy Run. What a fantastic group. We need to give a huge thanks to everyone involved with the run. Their tally wasn't complete as I write this column. It was over \$68,000 at Coon Rapids where the riders ended there two weekend ride for the children of our fallen. Again "Go Riders".

The District Membership Director, Bill Johnson has set some intermediate goals for the Post of the District. We want the Post's in the "Mighty Tenth" to be able to reach these goals. They are very attainable. The Officers of the District are all very knowledgeable with communication, contact and information. So be afraid to ask anyone.

Now that National Convention is over, the "Mighty Tenth" can enjoy a great "Camporee" at Legionville. Pig Roast on Friday night and a Fish Fry on Saturday. The proceeds are given back to Legionville, to continue what they do for our youth and safety.

I'm already seeing the time go by faster. Putting on the miles and having a lot of fun doing it. Thank you "Mighty Tenth" and all you "Blue Cappers" that make all the "Magic" happen! For God and Country



# The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 15-2

President Chris Ronning

September 2014

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

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

## The President's Column

By  
Chris Ronning



As our Butterflies flutter over our Veterans, we honor "Our veterans, past, present and future."

I already have attended a few functions, my first parade was at Hopkins in the Raspberry Parade, perfect weather and had a delicious luncheon before. Marland and I attended the Riders' Kickoff Party at the Richfield Post. What a bunch of dedicated Legion family members. Of course I had to open my billfold to purchase some of their silent auction items.

Then off to the Junior Fun Weekend where we had 33 young ladies in attendance along with our Auxiliary chaperones. Fun was had by everyone, but not without learning about Americanism. We had two female veterans with us and the girls had a lot of questions for them. The juniors learned the meaning of the Preamble, had time to swim, and the weekend ended with a movie night. I think the adults had as much fun as the girls munching on popcorn. I attended the 10th District Picnic Rally in Coon Rapids and I made it just in time to eat, as always a delicious potluck.

Remember September is Junior Activities month. We need these young ladies as they are our future Auxiliary leaders.

On August 5th Marland and I attended the Stand Down at Fort Snelling, what a heartwarming experience. I had a chance to visit with Mark Ritchie and several other dignitaries.

Now the work begins. Our workshop was well attended. I attended the Girls State committee meeting. It was so nice to see all of the Chairmen attending. I hope everyone went home full of ideas and took them back to their Districts and Units. All of us went to dinner at the Coyote Moon for a delicious meal and I got my liver pâté fix. We had our Executive meeting on Sunday and each Chairman presented their program. The Finance and Budget committee were also busy at work.

As I am writing my article, I am planning for my trip to the National Convention and hope to come back with much knowledge and plans of what our National President and her team have in mind.

Our first Membership Rally will be at Legionville in conjunction with our annual Camp-O-Ree on September 6-7. Let's bring lots of membership and bring Minnesota back to the top.

Fall Conference will be held in Mahanomen, sponsored by the Bagley American Legion Family. As always, we will learn from our Chairmen and I hope many of you will attend. We have a special Workshop planned this year and the topic will be on how to fill out your Annual reports, and a program on National Security.

Our National President Janet Jefford will come to Minnesota in March for a tour of Minnesota. More information will come out at a later date.

I hope your Units will still order the educational books that Past Department President Shirley promoted last year.

Don't forget, you can find all the information on each program, all you have to do is go to:

[www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)  
and click on links to each program. Our Department website is [www.mnala.org](http://www.mnala.org).

Hope to see many of you throughout the year, as we work together for Our Veterans, Past-Present and Future.

## Ronning chooses theme for upcoming Auxiliary year

Department President Chris Ronning has chosen "Our Veterans - Past, Present and Future" as her theme for this year of service to our veterans, our communities and our nation through the programs and activities of the American Legion Auxiliary. Her symbol is a butterfly. She asks every Unit to make your programs and activities meaningful to those we serve as well as to your members.

The first Unit mailing of the year is soon to be on its way to all Unit Presidents. It should be in the mail around September 8. It contains a wealth of information you need to develop your plans and get them underway. Information was included for many of your program chairmen as well as special instruction sheets that should be helpful to your Unit Secretary and Treasurer. Presidents, when you receive these mailings, please distribute the information to the appropriate people. Unit mailings are for all your Unit members and are not the property of any one person. Your Chairmen are waiting for ideas and suggestions so they may develop their programs in a meaningful manner for your Unit.

Also remember that you may choose to receive your Unit mailing via email, all you need to do is contact the department office with your email address. Keeping in mind that if you receive it via email you can in turn share it with more people in your Unit. All Unit Mailings will be posted on our ALA website. The address is: [www.mnala.org](http://www.mnala.org) and any member can pick and choose articles to download and print. An added item this year is that the Unit Mailing pages will also be posted to the Program page that it is in reference to.

Further program suggestions and specific what to do and how to do it will be forthcoming in the Unit Guide. Program planning and execution of your Unit's plans are critical not only to the success of our Auxiliary programs, but serve to attract and retain active members. President Chris has asked each Chairman to come up with an article regarding their program in the month the program shares. Programs should be carried on throughout the year, with special emphasis placed on each program during its special month. The program calendar for the year is:

August - Start of the New Auxiliary Year - Plan Your Activities  
September - Junior Activities  
October - Education - Constitution and Bylaws  
November - Past Presidents Parley; American Legion Auxiliary's 94th Birthday  
December - Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation  
January - National Security; Legislation  
February - Americanism  
March - Community Service; American Legion Birthday  
April - Children and Youth  
May - Poppy  
June - Girls State  
July - Department Convention

Thank you to all who are giving of your time, talents and enthusiasm as you assume the responsibility for a program in your Unit and/or District. The success of the programs is up to you. By working together the Auxiliary will have a successful year not only for those we serve but for our own members as well. Let's really step up for our Veterans this year and help our Department Chairmen make all of these programs a success.

### PRESIDENT'S PROJECT

Our Department President Chris has chosen the following as President's projects for the 2014/2015 year. She will work on raising funds to provide outdoor furniture and grilling equipment for the Adult Day Care Center and the Minneapolis Veterans Home. She will also be raising funds to go to the Creative Arts Program at both the Minneapolis and St. Cloud VA Hospitals. Any further funds that come in will go to support Legionville.

President Chris would like each of the 10 Districts to put together gift baskets for the Fisher Houses. There are many family members staying there and they could use a small gift card, toiletries, and things that many of us take for granted.

### PRESIDENT'S VISITS

If you would like to have our Department President attend a function or meeting of your Unit, please invite her. She has dedicated this year to serving the American Legion Auxiliary, its programs, and working with you, our Unit members, in a meaningful and helpful manner. President Ronning would like the opportunity to work with each of our Units and Districts and is more than happy to join you, schedule permitting.

Invitations should be directed to the Department President and sent to Sandie Deutsch, Department Secretary, American Legion Auxiliary, State Veterans Service Building, 20 W. 12th St., Room 314, St. Paul MN 55155. Please do NOT send invitations to her home address. An invitation form will be included in the first Unit Mailing.

### "RENEW, RECRUIT, REJOIN"

Under the leadership of our Department Membership Chairman Judy Ackerman, we will begin to fly through the air as butterflies into the new membership year. Judy has an exciting and fun membership program for this year.

Judy is focusing her program on renewing members this year. She stresses that all Units need to make membership a "fun" program. Everyone should work together to bring in membership. Think of new ways to make your Unit exciting. Have a membership rally in your Unit or at one of your Unit meetings, take a few minutes, have everyone grab their cell phone and call unpaid members and ask if there is anything they can do to get their membership paid.

National is again offering a button for recruiting one new member this year. If a current member signs up just one new member they can apply for a button from the National President. The rejoin 1 award is again being offered this year, which is "Rejoin 1" to bring a former member back into the organization. This member must not have paid her dues after 2012.

Our Fall Conference hosted by the Bagley American Legion Family will be held at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen. Please read the poster that is on our pages regarding the Silent Auction. Last year the donations were simply wonderful. Make sure to come and see this very entertaining event.

Target dates for our membership race are: 1) 25% of goal by September 6 at the Harvest Rally, 2) 55% by October 1, 3) 65% by Fall Conference on October 24, 4) 75% by the Pearl Harbor Rally on December 6, 5) 85% at Sweetheart Rally by February 7, 6) 90% at the Appreciation Rally on March 7; 7) 95% at the Spring Round Up Rally on April 25 and 7) 100% on May 8, 2015. Let's win the race to 100%!!

### DUES NOTICES

Dues notices will be sent out by the National organization on September 15; please remember dues are due now. Make that personal contact with your members reminding them to pay their dues now. Members don't have to wait for the National notice before paying their dues.

### 2015 MEMBERSHIP PACKETS

Every Unit should have received its 2015 membership packet. It was sent to your 2014-15 Unit Membership Chairman (Unit Treasurer if no Membership Chairman was listed), as reported on your Unit's 2014-15 officers' list. If your Unit has not received its 2015 membership packet, please check with the Department office. Remember that if we haven't received a 2014-2015 officers list, your packet is still in the Department office. We are still in need of 24 Unit Officer Lists - ladies please get those lists in.

### FALL CONFERENCE

Fall Conference will be held Friday and Saturday, October 24-25, hosted by our Bagley American Legion Family 16, Ninth District. It will be held at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen. Housing and pre-registration information are included in this issue of the Minnesota Legionnaire. The Auxiliary will hold its meetings at the

# Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

Shooting Star Conference Center. This is also the Conference Headquarters. Please call the Shooting Star Casino at 218-936-2621 to make your room reservations now. Tell them you are making reservations under The American Legion block code #632397.

On Friday and Saturday each Department Chairman will share program ideas and suggestions on what Unit members can do, and how to make a successful program. There will be a question and answer time following the various presentations when you can ask your questions of the Department Chairmen.

Fall Conference is a time for each of us to become better informed about our programs. It is for all members, not just the officers. We hope every Unit will be represented at this Department school of instruction. All members are invited to attend. There will be training sessions on Thursday, October 23 for National Security and due to popular demand there will be a training session on Annual Report writing. The session will begin at 7:00 p.m. There will be signs to tell which room the training will be held. Please make sure and attend - it is such a wonderful time to learn about our programs.

## SILENT AUCTION/BAG SALE

A silent auction will be held at our Fall Conference with the proceeds going to support the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. This has become a tradition at Fall Conference, giving each of us the opportunity to help. The Chairman is asking for new or gently used items to be used in the Silent Auction. All items will be very welcome. There will be a "Celebration Bell" District donation wall along with a jam, jelly and cookie sale. Remember bidders can be all members of The American Legion Family. All items should be brought Thursday evening or early Friday morning. Bidding will be on Friday only. Be sure to attend and place your bids - the items last year were simply wonderful.

We need to continue to support the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. What better way than the "silent auction" at our Fall Conference. It is our way of helping our own members who find themselves in need.

## BUDGET PLANNING

Each year we hear many comments about the number of programs and projects the Auxiliary undertakes that require monetary donations. Many Units find themselves in financial straits as they are supporting a number of projects that are not part of the Auxiliary's program for the current year.

The Department Executive Committee has approved the following solicitation of funds by our Department Chairmen for this year:

- Auxiliary Emergency Fund
- American Legion Auxiliary Foundation
- Forgotten Children's Fund
- Legionville
- Armed Forces Service Center
- Family Hospital Association
- Department Scholarship Fund
- Past Presidents Healthcare Scholarship Fund
- American Legion Auxiliary Hospital Prog.
- American Legion Auxiliary Girls State
- Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
- Minnesota Creative Arts Program
- \$5.00 Dollar Bill Shower
- Brain Science Foundation
- Gift Shop
- Operation Military Kids
- Department President's Project
- Department Honorary Junior President's Project
- Child Welfare Foundation
- Fisher House
- Children of Warriors National Presidents Scholarship

Support of your District President's Project is also needed. Those donations need to be sent directly to your District President.

Remember all donations should be sent to the Department Office earmarked for the program(s) of your choice.

Donations may be included in one check with a note indicating how you want the donations credited and the amount to each program. Make your checks payable to the American Legion Auxiliary. Your help is appreciated. Treasurers, see the Unit mailing for further details.

If your Unit wishes to make a donation to a program that is not on the list above, the Unit must send that donation directly to the organization they are supporting, NOT the Department Office.

## JUNIOR FUN WEEKEND 2014

The 2014 Junior Fun Weekend was held August 2-3 at Legionville. Junior Activities Chairman Patti Coleman, Department President Chris Ronning and Department Honorary Junior President Jules Efta kicked off the weekend with 32 Juniors and 24 Seniors in attendance. Chairman Patti reported that 4 out of the 5 goals from

National were achieved by the Junior Group during the weekend. Over 100 children's bags for the VA Facility waiting rooms were put together and delivered, which is Honorary President Jules' project for this year. A great time was had by everyone. Plan on attending next year - what a great way to spend time with your daughters and/or granddaughters and learn about our wonderful country, along with enjoying the Legionville facility and all it has to offer.

## CHAIRMEN - CORRECTIONS

Department Secretary Sandie wants to extend her apologies to the following; Donna Redepening who was appointed as the Department Historian for 2014-2015. Karen Thygeson was appointed the Constitution and Standing Rules Chairman and Marsha Bible is the Department Parliamentarian this year. All three of these ladies are very hard-working members and have always given more than 100% to make our organization the success it is.

## AUGUST WORKSHOP

2014 August Workshop was held August 9th & 10th. On Saturday morning all of the Department Chairmen met at the Best Western Kelly Inn in St. Cloud for an all day training and learning session. The meeting was called to order by President Chris Ronning and the work began. New information for the year, program information and resource information was the topic of the day. Chairmen worked on their budgets, met with the Finance Committee and made their plans.

On Sunday morning, the Executive Committee met at the Best Western Kelly Inn and each of the Department Chairmen presented her program and solicitation requests. There was also a meeting of all of the District Membership chairmen with Membership chairman Judy Ackerman. In the afternoon these two groups joined their meetings to cover the plans and awards for the 2015 Membership year.

All of the Chairmen have come up with new and exciting plans and ideas for this Auxiliary year.

## SECRETARY SANDIE'S NOTES

I think "Notes" sounds better than a corner so that's what I am going with. Under the helm of President Chris Ronning, we made it through our first major Executive Meeting without a hitch. It was really great to hear the new Chairmen go over their programs at the August Workshop. The new and fun ideas that they will be promoting, hopefully will be used by all the Units. By the time you read this I will be back from the National Convention in Charlotte. It is a long 8 days to be away from home but I genuinely encourage more of our Minnesota members to attend in the future. You really get a big picture of what our organization does and what it plans to do in the future. You meet so many new people from throughout the country as well. Also, please plan on attending Fall Conference in Mahanomen at the Shooting Star Casino - if you all know me, it couldn't be held at a better venue (ha). Dan and his crew at the Shooting Star are simply wonderful to work with and make us feel right at home. I just can't wait for the Silent Auction - the items for bidding are beautiful and my husband just "can't wait" to see what I bring home. I just love to "win" items at a silent auction. Everyone have a wonderful month and hopefully the bad weather will hold off until March.

Many of you asked for a copy of the poem that Bobby White wrote and presented at the Department Convention in Rochester. Bobby is a Veteran who has participated in the Minnesota and National Creative Arts Program and Festival and was invited to speak at our Auxiliary Convention. He wrote this poem in the morning as a tribute to the Auxiliary, in his room while waiting to come on stage - what a talented man.

## FOR GOD, FOR COUNTRY AND FOR YOU

You support our military; serve Veterans and their families too,

You help Veterans cope and recover and I respect that in you.

You're passionate in your service, dedicated to the end, You share your money, your heart and your time helping Veterans mend.

Your challenge is great, but you always get 'er done, Who's a true American patriot? It's you, you are the one. You bring unexpected blessings and peace into our life; You help ease the pain and soothe the constant and total strife.

You promote the creative arts, helping Veterans rehabilitate and heal,

You thank us for our service - yes your love is real. For all that you have done, and for all the things that you do,

You're the reason why we served...For God, For Country and for YOU!!

May God bless each and every member of the American Legion Family across our great nation.

*A proud and grateful Veteran,  
Bobby White (2014)*

# Program of the month is Juniors

We have begun our new year with Department Honorary Junior Auxiliary President Jules Efta, from Argyle, Minnesota. Our Junior members are excited. "Juniors are Gems Serving Veterans" is her theme and our Juniors started showing the "gems" that they are at our Annual Junior Fun Weekend that was recently held Aug. 1-3. They planted flowers outside of the new barn and in front of one of the cabins at Legionville, and made children's activity bags for the children of veterans who visit VA facilities throughout Minnesota. The activity bags are the Dept. Honorary Junior President's special project this year. Units can support Jules' project by making bags and collecting items to keep children busy. These bags can be brought to the Department Junior Conference in April or you can donate them directly to a VA facility, hospital, home or CBOC in your area. Please let me know how many bags you donate and to which facility for reporting purposes.



**PATTI COLEMAN**  
Chairman

The Junior Fun Weekend also included getting to know each other and getting to learn more about the American Legion Auxiliary and our programs. They learned about raising and lowering the Flag, the meaning to the Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary, and they played Junior Jeopardy.

In the Junior Activities program this year let's set our sights in becoming "rich" by adding more "gems" to our collection. Our "wealth" will be determined by our numbers, and how well we educate, mentor and promote our Junior program. They are the ALA volunteers of the future.

Support your Junior members in service projects for veterans, active military, their families, children and the community. Lead by example and show them their true "value". Make the extra effort to include them in your Unit activities. They have great ideas to share with enormous energy and enthusiasm to help. Keep in mind we are one organization. The Junior Auxiliary is not a separate entity.

Encourage participation in the Junior Patch program. There are three age group levels so members 3-18 can participate. The complete programs can be found at [alaforveterans.org](http://alaforveterans.org) under Resources and the Junior Activities program. If you need to have printed copies, please contact our Department Office and they will be happy to send them out.

In the year that we join together for service to "Our Veterans Past, Present and Future" remember the value and wealth that our Junior members, our "gems", can contribute to our programs and uncover the hidden treasure in all that they do.

**DAV**  
OF MINNESOTA

"FULFILLING OUR PROMISES TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED"

<p><b>CLEAR CLUTTER FOR A CAUSE</b></p> <p>WE NEED your new or gently used clothing, shoes, small household items!</p> <p>We offer FREE home pick-ups or visit our website <a href="http://davmn.org">http://davmn.org</a> for drop-off locations</p> <p>Call 1-855-789-0993 or visit our website today!</p>	
<p><b>VEHICLES FOR VETERANS</b></p> <p>DAV MN accepts vehicles, boats, and campers</p> <p><a href="http://WWW.VEHICLESFORVETERANS.ORG">WWW.VEHICLESFORVETERANS.ORG</a></p> <p>PHONE: 866-371-2514</p> <p>We accept all vehicles running or not! Free statewide Pick-up!</p> <p>ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE</p>	

**Attention Veterans!**

This is your northern Minnesota resort. Barrier-free and open 12 months a year. Gateway to the BWCA.

800-777-7538  
email: [vetlake@frontiernet.net](mailto:vetlake@frontiernet.net)  
[www.veteransonthelakeresort.com](http://www.veteransonthelakeresort.com)  
All cabins have a lake view.

**VETERANS on the LAKE RESORT**

RESORT FOR DISABLED VETERANS, ACTIVE DUTY AND ABLE BODIED VETERANS, DISABLED GENERAL PUBLIC AND FAMILIES.

