



Legionnaire

Volume 99, Number 2

For God and Country

February 2017

Changes made to Nat'l Commander's Tour schedule

There have been two subtractions and one addition to this year's National Commander's Tour.

The addition is a Walk for Veterans with National Commander Charles Schmidt of Oregon that will take place at Elk River on Wednesday, Feb. 8., at 4 p.m.

The walk will start at the Elk River Post at 525 Railroad Drive, cross Highway 10 into downtown Elk River, and then return to the post.

The walks raise awareness of veterans issues and of the American Legion Family.

Special yellow awareness walk T-shirts will be available at the post for \$20 before the walk that day.

The two subtractions are the first two stops that were planned for the tour. The National Commander had to change his schedule, and he will not be arriving in northern Minnesota until Monday afternoon.

The breakfast meeting at East Grand Forks and the lunch meeting at Thief River Falls have been canceled. It is hoped that those who had planned to attend those meetings would instead join Schmidt at Bagley for dinner.

The tour will continue across northern Minnesota before heading south toward the Twin Cities. The tour will conclude with dinner in Mound on Thursday, Feb. 9.

A complete tour schedule and contact list is on page 2 of this *Legionnaire*.



Meet and Greet

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Shellito, right, welcomed legislators and others during a meet and greet session at the Capitol Ridge Hotel as the legislative session got underway. From left are DAV State Commander Mick Aguirre, American Legion Department Commander Denise Milton, Paralyzed Veterans President Ken Klein, and MDVA Legislative Director Bob Johnson. The mixer gave legislators a chance to meet key veteran leaders.

Get a yellow card? Yes, it's legit

If you received a yellow post card, an email or a telephone call about a new Legion member publication, yes, it is legitimate.

The publication, being done by Publishing Concepts (PCI), a Texas company, would include membership and biographical information on Legionnaires for a book that will be published in about a year.

The project is a fund raiser for the Minnesota American Legion.

If you do not choose to participate, simply discard the postcard, ignore the email, or tell the telephone solicitor no thanks.

The base price for the books is \$99, but other packages the company is selling go for as much as \$400. Again, this is strictly voluntary for members.

The agreement with PCI allows two post cards, which have now been sent, three emails and telephone calls.

The company will also be working with the Legion on helping renew members whose memberships have lapsed. Since November, PCI has renewed over 100 members at no cost to the Legion.

The fund raising project was presented at the
Continued on Page 2

Key veterans projects before Legislature

By Al Zdon

Some big chunks of spending for the veterans community will be dealt with one way or another in this session of the Minnesota Legislature.

They include money for major projects at the Minnesota Veterans Homes, for fixing the truss bridge at the home in Minneapolis, for a new veterans cemetery in Duluth, and possibly for building a new veterans home or homes in the state.

Of particular interest to the Minnesota American Legion is a bill that would allocate money from the Minnesota

Legacy Fund to both Legionville Safety Patrol Camp and to the Veterans Rest Camp at Big Marine Lake.

The joint request would bring \$222,000 to Legionville, where the money would be spent on improvements to the dining hall. The rest of the half million dollar request would go toward creating a new administration building at the Veterans Rest Camp.

Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl said the money at Legionville would be used for a heating and air conditioning unit for the dining hall, new flooring, fire safety

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New Minneapolis VA program promises same-day service for vets when needed

By Al Zdon

If you're veteran enrolled in the VA and you need help today, not tomorrow, the Minneapolis VA wants to take care of you.

The medical center has announced its implementation of a program called "MyVA Access," a nation-wide effort to improve care.

Under the new plan, if a veteran is sick and needs care, either primary care or mental health care, they will get it

that same day if they go to a VA provider during regular business hours.

"It's kind of like urgent care," VAMC Director Patrick Kelly said. "Except it's better in some ways. If you go to urgent care, you probably won't know the care team. If you come here, we will try to have your primary care team see you."

The fast-track access is not for normal medical care. If you need an appointment for a hearing test, it still may take 30 days. If you need an eye exam, it still will take up to 40 days for an appointment.

But if you're sick and you need care right now, the door is open.

"We will have a medical officer available to evaluate patients. If he or she is busy, maybe because they're seeing another veteran, we'll have a backup in place."

Kelly said same-day service has been a staple at the 13 Community-Based Outpatient Clinics around the state. The big change has been to bring it to the primary care and mental health care parts of the medical center in Minneapolis.

Kelly cautions that for normal care, appointments are still necessary. "Our concern is that a veteran will just say, 'Gee whiz, I'll just swing over to the VA to see my doctor. That won't work. We would be glad to make an appointment to handle that."

"But if you're sick and you can't wait, we're here for you."

The program went into effect in December, and during the first month, 2,100 patients were seen on a same-day basis in the health care system, including 935 patients at the Minneapolis hospital.

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Veterans seek funding from State Legislature

Continued from Page 1

improvements, refrigerators, freezers, kitchen equipment and possibly a new roof.

"As we did with the construction of the learning center, the Legion will stretch that \$222,000 as far as we can through donations and in-kind services."

The House bill, HF232, was introduced by Rep. Bob Dettmer, R-Forest Lake. It has cleared the veteran's committee and now must go before the Legacy Committee. No Senate version has been introduced as yet.

"It's a perfect fit for the Legacy Fund," Tesdahl said. "The camps are family-orientated in an outdoor setting." The Legacy Fund is aimed at preserving wetlands, rivers, trails, parks and to help the state's arts and cultural heritage.

Another major initiative before the lawmakers is a request from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs for \$500,000 per year to staff the new veterans cemetery near Duluth.

The request is part of a larger plan to create a system of four state veterans cemeteries in Minnesota. The cemeteries at Little Falls and Preston are up and running, the Duluth cemetery recently began clearing ground, and a cemetery at Redwood Falls is in the planning stages.

The federal government will provide \$8.4 million to construct the Duluth cemetery with the agreement that the state will staff and run the facility thereafter. The Duluth cemetery is expected to open in the summer of 2018.

Ben Johnson, the legislative director for the MDVA, said the agency is also seeking \$5 million for asset preservation at the veterans homes. The money will be spent on fire doors at Luverne, a boiler replacement at Silver Bay, roof replacement at Hastings and tunnel and air conditioning/heating work at Minneapolis.

In a stand-alone request, the MDVA is seeking \$7.85 million to restore the truss bridge at the Minneapolis home to operating condition.

The MDVA in 2015 received a \$650,000 grant to do the preliminary design and architectural work on the bridge.

Johnson said the bridge is essential because without it there is only one entrance to the veterans home, and if that entrance is blocked for whatever reason, emergency vehicles will not be able to get in, and people will not be able to get out.

The money for the bridge was in last year's Senate bonding bill, but the entire bonding bill died at the end of the legislative session. No bill has been introduced in either house yet for the bridge this year.

"It's a health and safety issue," Johnson said. "It would provide a second access to the Minneapolis home, which is the largest of the five homes in the state. The goal would be

to get the bridge back to the ability to handle vehicular traffic."

The agency is also behind, with the governor's support, a measure that would give free fishing and hunting licenses to veterans who have at least a 50 percent disability rating from the federal VA.

"It has been shown that outdoor activities help disabled veterans deal with life. It's a form of therapy and it's a benefit," Johnson said.

But to offset the money the Department of Natural Resources would lose, \$350,000 for each of the next two years is being requested to be allocated to the DNR.

Johnson did not have figures on how many Minnesotans have the 50 percent disability rating, but he did say that the number of Minnesotans with a 100 percent rating is about 7,000 while the number who have a 10 percent disability rating is about 90,000.

The MDVA is also seeking money from the legislature to help fund a project by Twin Cities Public Television to do a special show on Minnesota's participation in the Vietnam War. It would be a companion piece to next year's Ken Burns PBS special on the Vietnam War.

Overall, Johnson said, the legislative climate is good this year. "The MDVA has been fortunate through the years to have bi-partisan support for veterans issues, and fantastic support from the governor's office. There are several legislators out there who have a passion for veterans' interests."

Johnson said no bill has been introduced yet, but it's possible that like last year there will be requests to build a sixth or seventh veterans home in the state. Contenders he's heard of so far this year include Montevideo, Brainerd, Bemidji, and one in Fillmore County at Springfield or Preston.

Last year, Bemidji and Montevideo had a combined request to build a home in each city. Minnesota is limited by the federal government as to how many nursing home beds it will support for veterans. About 140 beds are currently allowed. Bemidji and Montevideo would have split that allocation.

But that's not the major problem, Johnson said. There is a shrinking amount of federal money available for new veterans homes. "New home construction is a challenge."

Even if the state were to approve its 35 percent share of constructing a home at one or more of the proposed sites, there is no guarantee that the federal government would come through with its 65 percent share. Last year, the government spent \$86 million on veterans homes across America, but much of that money went to health and safety issues and not new construction.

There are several other measures before the legislature

that have been endorsed by the Commander's Task Force, a consortium of the state's veterans service organizations. Legion Department Commander Denise Milton is the chairman of the CTF this year.

That list includes:

- Permanent homestead market value exclusion for surviving spouses of veterans if the veteran had 70 percent disability. Currently the law allows the tax exclusion for eight years. The new law would make it permanent as long as the spouse didn't sell the house or remarry.

- Extend the uses of the Minnesota GI Bill to include more on the job training and apprenticeship training.

- Provide tuition assistance for 100 percent disabled veterans.

One other bill that has been introduced would call for a plaque honoring World War I veterans in the Court of Honor on the Capitol Mall.

National Commander's Tour has changes

Post	Event	Day	Contact:
Bagley	6 p.m. dinner	Feb. 6	218-209-8676, Dennis or 218-694-6125, Richard
Bena*	8 a.m. breakfast	Feb. 7	218-760-0920, Patrick
Hibbing#	noon lunch	Feb. 7	218-263-5754, Bill
West Duluth	6 p.m. dinner	Feb. 7	218-393-0079, Carl
McGregor	8 a.m. breakfast	Feb. 8	218-426-4298, Andy
Pine City	noon lunch	Feb. 8	320-629-2021, Jack or Tammy
Elk River	6 p.m. dinner	Feb. 8	763-441-3150 or 763-234-8400, Tom
Buffalo	8 a.m. breakfast	Feb. 9	763-682-4796, Marilyn
Richfield	noon lunch	Feb. 9	612-915-0435, Post
Mound	6 p.m. dinner	Feb. 9	952-472-9582, Kathy or 952-201-6918, Kathy's cell

*The Bena breakfast will be at the Northern Lights Casino.

#The Hibbing meeting will be in the Memorial Building.

Yellow post card is Legion fundraiser

Continued from Page 1

Executive Committee meeting held at the time of the Fall Conference in Marshall. The Executive Committee took no action on the proposal, but the Department Finance Committee later approved the project.

The National American Legion has also signed a list protection agreement with PCI.

None of the information obtained by the company will be used for any other purposes than the book. It will not be shared in any way.

The fundraiser is part of an effort to continue Legion programs and projects during a time when the Department's budget is shrinking due to declining membership and higher costs. "We have to look to alternative sources of raising

funds for operational purposes," Adjutant Randy Tesdahl said in a letter about the fundraiser that is available on the Legion's website: mnlegion.org.

The member publication should not be confused with two other Legion publishing efforts coming up. A third War Stories book will be coming out this year, and a book on the centennial of the Minnesota American Legion will be published in 2019.

Minneapolis VA offering same day service for veterans

Continued from Page 1

The VA, Kelly said, is learning day-by-day about how this program will work, including seeing what training is needed for staff, and what impact it will make on the emergency room.

The MyVA Access program was put into place in April of last year, with the goal of having all the VA health systems on board across the country by the end of the year.

The program not only includes same day service, but also includes a new smart phone app that allows veterans to view, schedule and cancel appointments. The app should be available throughout the system early this year.

The VA is also working on a website enhancement that will allow veterans to check on wait times wherever they live.

The MyVA Access initiatives were introduced by then Under Secretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin. Shulkin has since been nominated for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs position and he is expected to be confirmed soon.

"Dr Shulkin believes that vets need to be seen right away if their pain needs have to be evaluated," Kelly said.

Kelly said the latest information on national and local wait times show that the Minneapolis VA is doing well. The wait time for primary care is 5.5 days nationally and 6 days in Minnesota. The wait time for specialized care is 10 days nationally and 8.5 days in Minnesota, and the wait time for mental health care is 4.3 days nationally, and two days here.

He notes, though, that that is only an average, and many specialties, for example, have much longer wait times, just as they do in the private sector.

He said the Minneapolis VA, though, is hitting its 30-day wait time target 94 percent of the time.

Schmidt has two commander's projects

American Legion National Commander Charles E. Schmidt received a check for \$5,000 when he visited Post 291 in Newport Beach, Calif., early last month. The donation was in support of his fundraising project – \$1 million for Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) and \$1 million for the Legion's service officer training program.

"Our post motto is veterans first, so we believe in Commander's Schmidt's project of supporting TFA and service officers. And we believe in what The American Legion does," said Douglas Nye, Post 291 commander. "His fundraising project hits home because we have a lot of vets here in California that need our help."

Upon his election as national commander during the 98th National Convention in Cincinnati, Schmidt announced his fundraising project would support service officer training and the TFA program, which provides cash grants to children of eligible veterans who need assistance with maintaining basic needs such as shelter, utilities, clothing, food and medical care. Since 1925, TFA has awarded more than \$15 million in cash grants to veterans with minor children at home.

"Today, The American Legion represents nearly 800,000 veterans seeking benefits. It is essential that our more than 2,000 accredited service officers have the latest and best training so they can represent veterans as well as they repre-

sented us," Schmidt said. "That means staying current on VA policies and state and federal laws.

"And it is our job to take care of veterans and take care of their families. Touching the lives of veterans and their families is who we are and a great example of that is through our Temporary Financial Program."

Following his election last September, Schmidt visited Post 356 in Panama City, Fla., and was presented a donation check for \$1,000. Post 356 Commander Sam Spice said he has assisted 51 veterans over the past several months with VA benefits.

"We have a giving heart, and we want to take care of veterans and their families," Spice said.

Post 43 in Hollywood, Calif., hand-delivered a check for \$1,000 to Schmidt during its Walk for Veterans in December. And Post 396 in Geneva, N.Y., made a donation of \$600 because "it's a very important thing to do," said Post 396 Commander Dale VanDeViver. "It's for the good of the Legion, and it's for a good cause."

Historical photos



PAST TENTH DISTRICT NATIONAL OFFICERS -- Four Tenth District members who once held national office gathered for a photo recently. From left: Jim Copher, Past National Historian; Al Davis, Past National Vice Commander; Tom Schottenbauer, Past National Sergeant-at-Arms; Mike Ohnstad, Past National Chaplain.



LEGION DIGNITARIES -- In a photo from June of 1987, future Department Commander Bill Barbknecht and future National Chaplain Mike Ohnstad flank George Washington Bentley, who a few years later became the longest surviving founder of The American Legion. At the time, Ohnstad was the Director of Rehabilitation for the Department. Bentley was at the Paris Caucus where the Legion was created.

Employment forum on tap for D.C. trip

An employment forum on Feb. 24 is scheduled in conjunction with The American Legion Washington Conference at the Washington Hilton, 1919 Connecticut Avenue NW.

Events include workshops on financial literacy and résumé building; a networking lunch; and a hiring fair sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes.

BEGINNING THE SECOND CENTURY OF SERVICE

Minneapolis, Minnesota on August 24-30, 2018

"For The American Legion, I Will"

Minneapolis is hosting the 100th national convention in 2018. Our great state was the site of the 1st convention and will now host this historic event. The National Convention Corporation of Minnesota is inviting all Legionnaires and posts to say "For The American Legion, I Will" and contribute towards our *Beginning the Second Century of Service* Campaign. Gifts can be directed towards Minnesota's hosting responsibilities for the convention or The American Legion Minnesota Foundation to support programming throughout our state. For more information, please visit www.mnlegion.org and click on 100th National Convention Information.

Do you know of a company that may financially support the 100th Convention through sponsorship, advertising or giving?

There are sponsorship, advertisement and giving opportunities for businesses. If you know of a company that may want to take part in the 100th convention, please contact Michael Davy at (612) 247-9960 or mdavy@mnlegion.org.

National Convention Corporation of Minnesota
BEGINNING THE SECOND CENTURY OF SERVICE

CHAIR | Jeff Olson

HONORARY CHAIRS | Bud Grant | Senator Bob Lessard | Brigadier General Dennis Lord | Brigadier General Curtis Norenberg | Brigadier General Dennis Schulstad | Major General Larry Shellito

COMMITTEE | Mike & Teresa Ash | Roger Ball | Joe Bayer | Jim Copher | Ray Dezurik | Bill Goede | Tom Lannon | Dan Ludwig | Lynne Nottage | Roger Olson | Robin Picray | Marland Ronning | Larry Ryan | Tom Schottenbauer | Donald Schroedl | Randy Tesdahl | Don Weber | Dan Williams

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COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Denise Milton



Greetings Fellow Legionnaires

We just witnessed a change of command in our nation – the inauguration of our newly elected President. There will be a period of transition as our new elected and appointed leaders adjust to their new jobs and responsibilities. We as members of the largest non-partisan service organization will support whoever is in office as our main goal is to serve our veterans, their families and our communities.

We will soon be going to Washington D.C. to lobby our senators and congressmen and this is our opportunity to let them know where we stand on veteran's issues. This is our time to let them know that veteran's benefits, our military and national security are important to us and we will continue to let them know. Make sure to contact your local representatives to let them know about our concern for veterans. Locally, we have "Vets on the Hill" coming up on March 20 in St. Paul. Your Commanders Task Force has been working hard to organize our day "on the hill." You will receive information from our legislative chair Peggy Moon soon. The DAV will have busses again this year for transportation. We will present a unified front that will be hard to ignore, so let's see as many Legion Caps at the State Capitol as possible.

Our National Vice Commander Doug Boldt of Nebraska paid a short visit to Minnesota mid-January. We stopped at the 1st District and 4th District Mid-Winters and a 3rd District membership rally. He also spent part of a day with a young Iraqi veteran at her Post, a local school and the Minneapolis VA where she works. He also attended a local Post meeting in Adrian (100% goal) and the Luverne Veterans Home. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate and we had to cancel a few other scheduled stops due to the snow. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who were so generous with their time and hospitality while National Vice Commander Boldt was here – he was quite impressed with Minnesota Nice. Also, my apologies to those that we had to cancel due to the weather.

Already half of the year has gone by; so, take this time to review the goals that you set for your Post and see if they are indeed being accomplished. Do you need to change a few things? Think about getting your committee people together to see what yet needs to be accomplished. The consolidated post report (CPR) is now available online at mylegion.org. Remember a large report consolidated by

national headquarters representing all Posts is submitted to congress once a year. I have to believe that all Posts have members that have done something that deserves to go on the report. Bring it to a meeting and ask your members for input. Department Chair Art Tobkin has a goal this year of receiving a CPR from every post.

We are still doing well in membership as evidenced by the national reports. We continue to remain in the top three nationally dogging it out with Wisconsin and Nebraska. A number of reports this year including this week's report have us in first place. All this membership success is because of you. You know the importance of being a member of The American Legion and for that I say thank you. Now I am asking each of you to ask someone you know who is an eligible veteran and isn't a member or someone who has not paid their dues to do so. As the old saying goes...Just ask. Our last membership report from department headquarters puts us over 68,000 members paid for 2017. So, if everyone that has paid their dues asks someone, we could conceivably be at 136,000 members – wouldn't that be awesome?

Boys State applications will be mailed out soon, so please contact your local schools and let them know what a great opportunity awaits their students. Also, Legion baseball registration forms and information can now be found at legion.org. I look forward to some great ball this summer.

Speaking of games, Legion Day at the Timberwolves is 12 February 2017 at the Target Center. I look forward to a good game and hope to see a lot of you there. Check this issue of the the *Minnesota Legionnaire* for additional information.

The National Commander's Tour starts on Monday, Feb. 6 at my home Post in Bagley with a dinner. Due to unexpected changes to the National Commander's schedule, we will not be stopping in East Grand Forks or Thief River Falls. So please adjust your schedules accordingly as I am sure that Bagley will be able to accommodate you. The remainder of the schedule remains unchanged and is in the *Legionnaire*. I do want to mention that we are having a Veterans Awareness Walk in Elk River on Wednesday, Feb. 8 at 4 p.m. Come early, buy a t-shirt and walk with National Commander Charles Schmidt. Then join us for dinner at the Elk River Post. The proceeds from the sale of t-shirts will go to support the Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) and VSO training and education. The event will take place on Main Street.

Don't forget my project - MAC-V and homeless veterans. Winter isn't over yet and it is hard to live here with little or no heat or a roof over your head. MAC-V encompasses all 87 counties in Minnesota and has three offices located in Duluth, Mankato and the metro area. When writing out your check please keep in mind that you need to make it payable to "American Legion Foundation" and then on the memo line please print "Commander's Project Fund 82." Gift cards are also needed for fast food restaurants, department stores and gas stations. Thank you to all those that have already donated. We will succeed to our goal of finding a home for all our veterans.

For God and Country.

now our supporting an adjacent county. I appreciate they have time to spend with the family of the deceased, but our squad also has other personnel/employment obligations and does not have the time to spend with the immediate family. If the deceased veteran is a Post Member, we attend the funeral, then perform honors and all or some may stay for lunch with the family. I hope this assists in getting appropriate reimbursement and do thank them for caring to provide Military Honors for our deceased veterans. P.S.: Their County Veterans Service Officer should also be able to provide assistance. God Bless.

Marv Garbe, Honor Guard Leader
Montevideo

Resolution 16

To the Editor:

As a member of the Minnesota American Legion, I would like to thank everyone involved in passing Resolution 16 about respecting the flag. I believe every service organization should do the same. I was also happy to see the Civil War paintings will stay where they belong at the Capitol.

James Jirava
Detroit Lakes

Corrections

There were several corrections in the story about Ray Pittman, "Tank Driving in Vietnam," published in the January issue.

The base camp at Loc Ninh is 50 miles north or northwest of Saigon, and not south.

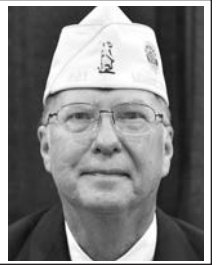
An RPG is a rocket-propelled grenade.

Fort Leonard Wood is in Missouri, not Texas.

In all cases, the errors were made by the writer and not the veteran.

Chaplain's Corner

By
Bill Brockberg



The Four Chaplains

On January 23, 1943, the USAT Dorchester left New York harbor bound for Greenland carrying 902 officers, servicemen and civilian workers. The Dorchester was escorted by three Coast Guard cutters. On February 2, one of the cutters detected the presence of a submarine, but failed to find the submarines position. The Commanding Officer of the Dorchester ordered the men to sleep in their clothing with life jackets close at hand. They were only 150 miles from Greenland and daylight would bring air cover from the American base.

Down in the converted cruise ship's stifling hold, four U.S. Army chaplains circulated among the frightened young men, some lying wide-eyed in their bunks, others nervously playing cards or shooting dice. Those chaplains were Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Jewish; Lt. John P. Washington, Catholic; and Lt. Clark V. Poling, Reformed. Chatting with the troops, the chaplains eased tensions, calmed fears and passed out soda crackers to alleviate seasickness.

Early in the morning of February 3 the chaplains were still up just before 1:00 when a torpedo struck. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying the electric supply and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. The tremendous explosion threw soldiers from bunks and lights went out as the stricken ship listed to starboard, sinking fast.

Those not trapped below rushed topside. Amid the shriek of escaping steam and frantic blasts of the ships whistle, dazed men stumbled about the dark, crowded decks. Some gripped the rails, too struck with horror to head toward the lifeboats.

The four chaplains quickly moved among the bewildered men, calming them, directing them to life rafts, urging them to escape the doomed ship. Many had forgotten their life jackets. The chaplains located a supply in a deck locker and passed them out. When the bin was empty, they pulled off their own and made others put them on.

The four chaplains remained on the ship's slanted aft deck, standing together, arms linked, head bowed in prayer, as the Dorchester slipped beneath the waves. Their sacrifice would be remembered as one of the most touching stories of World War II, and their legacy continues to this day.

"One survivor and witness, Private William B. Bednar, found himself floating in oil-smeared water surrounded by dead bodies and debris. "I could hear men crying, pleading, praying," Bednar recalled. "I could also hear the chaplains preaching courage. Their voices were the only thing that kept me going."

"It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven," said John Ladd, another survivor who saw the chaplains' selfless act. Ladd's response is understandable. The altruistic action of the four chaplains constitutes one of the purest spiritual and ethical acts a person can make. When giving their life jackets, Rabbi Goode did not call out for a Jew; Father Washington did not call out for a Catholic; nor did the Reverends Fox and Poling call out for a Protestant. They simply gave their life jackets to the next man in line.

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15: 13

Mail Call

Honor Guard Stipend

To the Editor:

This is in response to the writer that was concerned about not receiving the Honor Guard Stipend. I fully appreciate that they perform Military Honors for the funerals for our veterans and provide comfort to the families of the deceased veteran. As to receiving reimbursement that is another matter. The Form 1164 has not been used for a number of years. They need to go to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs website: www.mn.gov/mdva/ and click on Memorials and Burials, then click on Military Funerals and Honors in the left column. There you need to scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Reimbursement Resources. There are two items there that you have to comply with, under forms, go to the third page and see the instructions. The instructions will also tell you to get a SWIFT Vendor Number. If you have questions, they have phone numbers for individuals to contact. I have been in charge of American Legion Post 59 Honor Guard since 2005 when we formed an Honor Guard. We have received reimbursement for every funeral with the exception when there was not enough funds in the State budget. Transportation, meals and other costs are not covered and are at your expense. Our Post, American Legion Post 59, Montevideo, is fortunate that we can afford a bus to transport our squad. I take exception to the statement that the National Guard Honor Squad not being up to par. I do not know if he is talking about a local National Guard Unit (there are none near Gaylord) so assume he is talking about the State Honor Guard Squad. They perform at numerous funerals throughout the year and we have at times assisted them with portions of the funerals, such as the Firing Squad as they did not have enough personnel for that particular day. From my observances, they perform in an outstanding manner, even winning honors at Fort Meyers, VA. Our Honor Squad did 23 funerals this past year and

The Minnesota Legionnaire

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Al Zdon, Editor

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PHONE: 651-291-1800, 866-259-9163, **FAX:** 651-291-1057
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WEBSITE: www.mnlegion.org

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What's Happening

Post Centennial Activities

Minnesota posts who are interested in hosting activities during the 2018 National Convention in Minneapolis are encouraged to notify the Minnesota Convention Corporation Chairman Jeff Olson. Posts should provide their name, number, point of contact, phone number, email address and a short narrative of what kind of events the post would like to host.

Responses can be sent to jefftal1208@gmail.com. The deadline for getting the notification to the chairman is June 1.

Vet's Day on the Hill

The annual Veterans Day on the Hill has been scheduled for Monday, March 20. The rally will be held in the Capitol Rotunda and will begin at 10 a.m.

Legionnaires are encouraged to participate in the rally and afterwards to visit with their legislators on veterans issues.

There will be a House veterans committee meeting at 1 p.m. that day. Legislative Chair Peggy Moon urged members of the Legion Family from across the state to come to the day on the hill. "We would like to see carloads of veterans coming to St. Paul."

Town Hall

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will hold a Town Hall meeting on March 29 at the VFW Post in North St. Paul. The meeting will be held from 6:30 to 8 p.m. It is open to veterans, spouses, VA stakeholders and the general public.

Leaders from the Minneapolis VA Health Care System and others will be on hand to respond to questions.

Vietnam Era Recognition

A veterans' town hall will be held at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 8, at the Buffalo American Legion Post 270. There will be two purposes to the meeting. One will be to recognize Vietnam veterans from Wright County and the surrounding areas. The second will be for those in attendance to express concerns about VA care. VA officials from the St. Cloud VA Health Care System will be on hand.

The Vietnam Era recognition is for all veterans who served during that time no matter where they served.

County Honor Rolls

County honor rolls of World War II veterans are now available online thanks to a joint project of the Minnesota Military Museum at Camp Ripley, St. Cloud State University and the Minnesota Digital Library.

Thirty-five such honor rolls are now available. The books are similar to high school yearbooks, except the photos and stories are about Minnesotans who served in the Great War.

It will be a resource for those doing research on World War I relatives.

To access the county books, go to reflections.mndigital.org and search for Minnesota Military Historical Society holdings.

Olsword's Testimonial

The testimonial for Detachment Commander Gene Olsword will be held April 22 at Redwood Falls Post 38. The social hour will be at 5 p.m. with the dinner to follow at 6 and the program following. Tickets are \$15 and the meal will be turkey with all the fixings.

Contact Vida Bacon to reserve tickets, vbpic@newulm-tel.net, 507-276-8538 or Jennette Mertens, jmertens3868@gmail.com, 507-828-7666. Tickets will be picked up at the door of the testimonial.

Lodging is at Redwood Valley Motel or Jackpot Junction.

Reinitz Fundraiser

Sgt. Reinitz recently returned from Afghanistan, but his wife has an aggressive form of lung cancer that is into her bones. A go-fund-me page has been set up to help the family through these difficult times. Go to: gofundme.com/medical-bills-for-military-family.

North St. Paul Event

North St. Paul Auxiliary 39 is having an antique sale and flea market on Saturday, Feb. 18, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. Food will be available along with a bake sale. For more information, call 651-777-5552.

Fertility Counseling

The VA has announced that it is amending its regulation regarding fertility counseling and treatment available to veterans and spouses. The new rule will allow IVF for disabled veterans who are unable to procreate. For more information contact your local VA health care system.

ESGR seeks Chair

The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is seeking applications for the Minnesota ESGR chairperson. Those interested should send a CV, explanatory letter and other supporting materials to kimberley.d.brouillet.ctr@mail.mil. Questions can be directed to Bob Boone at 762-227-3507.

St. Cloud Art Show

Artwork by veterans will be on display at the Veterans Art Show on Wednesday, Feb. 8, 12:30-6:30 p.m. and Thursday, Feb. 9, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Building 8 at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center. There will be about 60 pieces on display. The show is open to the public. It is a competitive event for veterans who are receiving care at a VA facility. For more information, contact Barry Venable, 320-255-6381 or barry.venable@va.gov.

Drop in Legal Clinics

Two free legal clinics are available to veterans coming up. Each will have attorneys, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans staff and others there to assist veterans with questions.

The first will be at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis in the Flag Atrium Balcony Room from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 7. Free parking.

The second will be at the Anoka County Government Center on Thursday, March 2, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Fargo Seeks Caregivers

The Fargo VA Health Care System is seeking skilled caregivers within 60 miles of the Fargo-Moorhead area to share their home with a veteran. The VA Medical Foster Home program seeks to help veterans with health needs. There is a competitive income. Home study, references and inspections are required. To find out more, call Loni Larson at 701-232-3241, extension 9-4394 or email loni.larson@va.gov.

Military Museum Program

The Military Historical Society of Minnesota has established a relationship with the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Belgium. There are 192 Minnesota veterans buried in the cemetery, and the goal of the project is to collect information on each veteran. Such information could include military records, photos, news clippings, family stories and more.

To see the names on the list, go to mmilitarymuseum.org, click on veterans and go to the Henri-Chapelle project. For more information, contact Kyle Ward at kwarddoss@hotmail.com.

Apple Valley Event

Apple Valley Auxiliary 1776 will hold its annual Valentine's Omelet Breakfast and Bake Sale on Sunday, Feb. 12 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the post, 14521 Granada Drive in Apple Valley. Omelets are made to order and served with hash browns, toast, fruit cups, orange juice, milk and coffee. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Call 952-431-1776 for more information.

Seabee Ball

The 75th annual Seabee Ball will be held March 11 at the Bloomington Hilton, 494 and France Avenue. There will be a social hour starting at 5:30 p.m., dinner and program at 7 and DJ and dancing at 9. Tickets are sold on a scale depending on military rank. For more information, contact seabeeballmpls@gmail.com. Tickets are available at tinyurl.com/jmgkuxg.

Timberwolves Game

The annual Legion Family Day at the Timberwolves will be Sunday, Feb. 12, at 2:30 p.m. vs. the Chicago Bulls. The

Schmidt commends patriotism of Iowa flag protectors

American Legion National Commander Charles E. Schmidt praised the patriotism of a young FedEx driver and another man who confronted flag-burning protesters recently in Iowa City. The driver, Matt Uhrin of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, used a fire extinguisher to douse smoldering flags and angrily rescued at least one from demonstrators at a pedestrian mall in downtown Iowa City.

"We have been told that a flag-protection amendment to the Constitution is unnecessary because no one burns flags anymore," Schmidt said. "In recent weeks, we've all seen that's far from accurate. Mr. Uhrin and another young man who stepped in to stop the flag burners in Iowa City clearly understand that deliberate destruction of our nation's most

state color guard from Waite Park will present the colors prior to the game.

To purchase tickets (\$59, \$28, or \$22) to to timberwolves.com/groupoffers and use the promo code MNLegion. Or contact Ellie Revenaugh at 612-673-8448 or ellie.revenaugh@timberwolves.com.

Creative Arts Festival

The Fargo VA Medical Center will host a veterans Creative Arts Festival on Feb. 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the third floor auditorium. The festival will showcase the artistic talent of area veterans. For more information, call 701-239-3700 extension 92094 or extension 93260.

Rosetown Omelets

Rosetown Post 542, County Road C between Victoria and Dale in Roseville, will hold an omelet breakfast on Sunday, Feb. 19, from 9 a.m. to noon. Omelets are to order and the meal includes hashbrowns, toast, juice, jelly, etc.

Kottom Testimonial

Buffalo Unit 270 is holding a testimonial for Department President Carol Kottom. The event will be held at the post on Saturday, March 25. The social hour will begin at 3 with the program at 4 and dinner at 5. Karaoke will follow.

Attendees will have a choice of stuffed pork chop or stuffed chicken breast. Cost is \$16 per person.

Checks payable to ALA Unit 270, should be sent to Marilyn Miller, 404 Division Street, Buffalo, MN 55313. Her phone is 763-682-4796. Include name, number and choice of dinner options, phone number. Tickets will be picked up at the door.

Lodging options include the Country Inn and Super 8 in Buffalo, Grandstay in Delano and Best Western, Super 8 and Americinn in Monticello.

Commander's Testimonial

The Testimonial for Department Commander Denise Milton will be held at Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen. on Saturday, May 6.

A group of rooms has been blocked at the Shooting Star Hotel. The Hotel Group Code is 3729.

Past National Commander John Brieden will be the featured speaker.

Round Tables

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Roundtable will feature "Swords of the Union," with speaker Tim Bauer. The meeting will be Monday, Feb. 27, at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater. It is a dinner meeting. For more information, call Steve Anderson at 715-386-1268.

The World War II History Round Table at Fort Snelling Visitor Center will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 9, and it will feature "The Nazi Hunters," with speaker Andrew Nagorski who has written about the search for criminals after the war. The cost is \$5, free for students and World War II veterans.

Tree Planting Program

The Department Energy and Conservation Committee will once again be selling trees. Available are Norway Spruce, Blue Spruce, White Spruce, Red Pine, Scotch Pine, Black Hills Spruce, Glossy Black Chokeberry, Tamarack and White Pine. They will come in bundles of 20 each and cost \$18 including shipping.

Also available are Red and Silver Maple and Red Splendor Crab, in bundles of 10 for \$14.

To order, go to the Department website: mnlegion.org for an ordering form. Click on "Post Resources" and click on "Energy and Conservation Tree Order Form."

Trees can also be ordered for Legionville.

profound symbol of unity is both a violation of logic and an insult to all who have served our country in uniform. As leader of the nation's largest organization of wartime veterans, I commend them for stepping up in defense of our nation's colors."

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in 1989 that flag burning is a legal act of free speech protected under the First Amendment. The American Legion, the Citizens Flag Alliance and the majority of the U.S. public disagree and continue to work with Congress to pass a constitutional amendment giving it the power to prohibit physical desecration of the U.S. flag.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By
Jeremy Wolfsteller



Camp Lejeune

Marine Base Camp Lejeune located in Jacksonville, North Carolina, was established April 1942 and named in honor of the 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps, John A. Lejeune.

With roughly 156,000 acres, 14 miles of beach and 48 tactical landing zones capable of supporting amphibious assault operations, Lejeune had become a perfect place for Marines to train.

Unfortunately Camp Lejeune gained mass attention in the early 2000s for contaminated water which wasn't made public for two decades. Service-members and their families living on base used this contaminated water for drinking and bathing.

It was first identified around 1970 by base officials that contaminants were dumped several times near the camp's underground wells. In 1982 volatile organic compounds (VOC's), trichloroethylene (TCE), a metal degreaser, perchloroethylene (PCE), a dry cleaning agent, benzene and vinyl chloride were found in Lejeune's drinking water supply. (VOCs) can cause birth defects along with numerous health effects in pregnant and nursing mothers.

In 2012 lawmakers passed legislation that would offer veterans along with family members that were stationed at Lejeune for at least 30 days from January 1, 1957, and December 31, 1987, some relief. Through the Veterans Health Administration, veterans would receive free health care for any of the 15 qualifying conditions.

The same qualifying conditions apply for family members to receive a reimbursement only after what was paid by their health insurance.

These conditions are esophageal cancer, breast cancer, kidney cancer, multiple myeloma, renal toxicity, female infertility, scleroderma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, lung cancer, bladder cancer, leukemia, myelodysplastic syndromes, hepatic steatosis, miscarriage and neurobehavioral effects. This legislation is known as "Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012."

With the VA under pressure from Veteran Service Organizations and Congress to offer service connected compensation to those veterans affected, in January 2017 the Veterans Benefits Administration added eight presumptive diseases associated with Camp Lejeune's contaminated water supply.

Now, not only active duty but also reservists and National Guard members who served at Lejeune for at least 30 (cumulative) days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987 can file for service connected disability compensation through the VA.

These conditions are adult leukemia, aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, liver cancer, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and Parkinson's disease.

Aforementioned above, these condition entitlements are not limited to active duty military. VA also presumes exposure for reserve and National Guard components.

For more information on the new presumptive conditions and filing a claim, please contact your local County Veterans Service Office or contact The American Legion.

For information on the family member health care reimbursement contact the VA at 1-866-372-1144.

jwolfsteller@mnlegion.org

Sons of The American Legion

By
Gene Olswold



In the last week of January, we have had some pretty remarkable nice weather for a good January thaw. Traveling around the state attending the District's Mid-Winter Conferences has been awesome with these temperatures and good roads.

I was able to attend six of the nine Mid-Winters out of nine scheduled. They were all well attended and very informative. I want to thank those Districts for the warm reception I received.

A special thanks to Districts 1-4-10 for singing Happy Birthday to me when I attended theirs on my birthday January 7th. District 4 also surprised me with a cupcake cake. Thank you for making my birthday special. I am very proud to say, "I am a member of the Minnesota American Legion Family."

We still have a number of squadrons around the state who have not turned in any memberships for this membership year and this is of a concern for me.

We are six months into this membership year and there should not be any on the "goose egg." We are currently working with many of these squadrons to eliminate the zeros.

Now, on the bright side of this, many squadrons are close to being at goal and there are those who are at or above goal. This is awesome.

What this means is there are new members being added and it is now our duty to welcome all these new members and work with and maybe get some involved within these squadrons.

Let them know how much we appreciate their membership and mentor them.

We also continue to add new squadrons to our Detachment. Three new squadrons are currently being processed and I know of two or three membership kits now in posts wanting to get a squadron started.

As you can see, we are a growing organization here in Minnesota. More good news is we continue to meet and go above National's goals they send out. Let's continue to work on the renewals and making our organization stronger with these new members.

This year, I want to see Minnesota get the "Triple-Nickel" Award. To do this, we need 5 new squadrons, 105% total membership and 85% renewals. We are well on our way, so let's make it happen this year.

New squadrons really help in making the 105%. Let's do it this year. We were very close last year. This is the year. One thing that is lacking at Department events, membership rallies, conventions along with district functions, etc. is the participation of the Sons of the American Legion.

I know family involvement enters in along with other personal events but many times we know of these happenings well in advance.

I would like to see more participation of the Sons so mark your calendars so I can see a big contingent of Sons at these Department and district functions.

You all are a part of this great organization so help the Detachment by attending and showing our colors.

Until next month, safe travels.

V4V lists grants

The Veterans 4 Veterans Trust Fund approved two

grants in its most recent cycle.

The American Legion 4th District was granted \$4,000 for its Shop, Ship and Share program to purchase items and pay for postage to send Christmas parcels to veterans serving overseas.

The American Legion Auxiliary in Minnesota was granted \$10,000 for its holiday gift program at the medical centers and veterans homes. Each veteran receives a \$20 gift card or a gift valued at \$20. Last year, over \$42,000 in gifts were given out.

V4V also participated in buying a new bus for the Minnesota Veterans Home at Hastings. The American Legion Foundation also contributed to that fund drive.

American Legion Riders

By Chuck Stone
Department Director



Greetings American Legion Family:

I would like to congratulate Eagan and Moorhead as new chapters recently chartered in the Department of Minnesota. It is nice to see growth.

The first organizational meeting for the Minnesota Legacy ride was recently held. We have a number of posts requesting us to visit this summer on our annual ride but still need a few more. If you would like to see us in your town please let us know soon. While we are on the subject of the Legacy Run, I would like to challenge each rider to contact five businesses in their area asking for support. Remember we not only accept cash, although cash is nice, but we can also accept donations in the form of goods or services. These items can be used at our kick-off or stand-down celebrations.

The Donnie Smith Bike Show will be upon us soon, 25-26 March at the St. Paul Excel Center. If you would like to be a part of the awesome event contact either myself or Sully. We will get the information to you and what it is we would like you to do.

Just because Mother Nature has been very nice to us in recent weeks, don't let the fever get the best of you. I have seen a couple of motorcycles out and about and one of them had a very long ride home on a trailer. There is still sand, snow and ice out there.

Keep the chrome side up and the rubber side down. Keep a prayer in your heart for all of our service personnel and their families.

Wisconsin provides hands-on station for membership tools

The American Legion Department of Wisconsin provided its mid-winter conference attendees with a hands-on membership station that offered the necessary tools for recruiting and retaining members.

As attendees walked through the department's membership resource center, tables housed membership resources such as DVDs, brochures and door hangers. And department leaders manned three computers to help Legionnaires log on to their MyLegion.org account to access members who are expired, new in their area or in a holding post. Once a membership list was generated, it was printed along with automated letters asking headquarters post members to transfer and mailing labels of expired members.

"It was a one-stop shop for Legion members to get all the necessary tools to recruit and retain members," said David Kurtz, Department of Wisconsin adjutant. "When post Legionnaires come to the state convention or mid-winter conference, their enthusiasm is at a high - they come, they're inspired, and their enthusiasm is at a high point when they return home. We wanted to capitalize on that and make sure they were going back with all the tools necessary to be successful."

With transfer letters and membership renewal mailing labels in hand, Legionnaires ventured to another station to fold and place the letters in an envelope, and stick the labels on postcards. One Legionnaire printed 100 transfer letters and stuffed them in an envelope, ready for a stamp and mailing upon returning home.

"Members need hands-on resources. The biggest feedback I received was actually sitting down with somebody and having them show all the membership tools available on MyLegion.org and printing out those transfer letters," said Darla Porter, Department of Wisconsin's Membership Committee chairman. "And everybody liked the door hangers; they are something to easily leave at homes instead of brochures."

The department had 5,000 Legion-branded door hangers available for members to take, customize with their post information, and use to recruit potential new members at home - even if they are not there. Attendees were also shown how to access membership reports on MyLegion, and an area with phones was available for Legionnaires to make membership recruiting and renewing calls from their printed contact lists. A telephone script was provided as a conversation starting point, "but you have to be able to pick up that phone and get personal," said Laurel Clewell, a department vice commander. "You have information (military branch, war era, etc.) about that member or potential member so work with that information. Put someone on the phone that can relate with them; everybody is sold differently."

"We wanted members to see that there are so many things out there that they can actually use for their membership," Clewell said.

Membership Chart

As of January 19, 2017

District	2017 Goal	Total 2016	Total 2017	Percent of Goal	Same Date '16
1	9,380	9,322	8,221	87.64	8,791
2	7,572	7,488	6,825	90.13	7,134
3	11,977	11,912	10,730	89.59	11,047
4	2,592	2,572	2,162	83.41	2,208
5	2,679	2,657	2,221	82.90	2,504
6	12,109	12,038	10,801	89.20	11,293
7	6,695	6,619	5,843	87.27	6,359
8	4,417	4,377	3,886	87.98	4,110
9	7,015	6,950	6,126	87.33	6,657
10	10,611	10,557	9,098	85.74	9,860
At-large	1,953	2,710	2,127	108.91	2,315
Totals	77,000	77,202	68,040	82.49	72,278

Listening Post

News from around the State



FRIDLEY QUILTS -- The Fridley Unit 303 presented 13 Quilts of Honor to Fridley Post members. A total of 26 quilts were made by President Bonnie Eells with the rest presented to veterans in their homes.



GRANT COUNTY MEMORIAL -- Clint Grove organized the American Legion posts in Grant County to do the planning and fund raising for a Grant County Veterans Memorial. The memorial is located on Highway 79 on the east side of Elbow Lake. There has been continued interest in purchasing pavers for the memorial and an expansion is being planned. For more information, contact Byron Gilbertson, 24367 130th Street, Herman, MN 56248.



NORTH BRANCH NEWEST MEMBER -- Lloyd Haroldson, a 90-year-old World War II Navy veteran, decided it was high time he joined The American Legion. He was an aviation ordinance technician who flew in PBYS hunting German submarines in the Atlantic. He was welcomed by Patience Lind, Membership Director Ron Rollins, Commander Darcy Doble and Past Commander Jim Johnson.



BIGELOW LONGTIMERS -- Bigelow Post 496 held a membership rally supper and honored members whose membership totaled 276 years. From left, front: Denny Meester, Roger Larson, John Sikma, Dennis Boneschans, Arnie Kruse and Tom Peters. In back are District Commander Mark Coney and Vice Commander Cindy Brunk.



ROSETOWN BINGO -- For over 40 years, Rosetown Auxiliary 542 has been presenting bingo for the residents of the Lake Owasso Residential Care Facility. Guests are treated to cookies, ice cream, and a beverage. From left: Connie Anderson, Betty Davidson, Marge Maule, Lynn Olson and Bingo Caller Marge Machgan.



APPLE VALLEY APPLES -- Apple Valley Post and Unit 1776 distributed apples for teachers at local schools. The post has been delivering apples during National Education Week for over 40 years. All district employees get the apples, a total of over 4,400 this year.



4TH DISTRICT SPEAKER -- Douglas Boldt, National Vice Commander from Nebraska, was a featured speaker at the 4th District Mid-Winter. (Photo by Lou Michaels)



GRANITE FALLS HUNT -- Minnesota Heartland Preserve and Chippewa Pheasants Forever teamed up for the fourth year in a row to give veterans a free pheasant and chukar hunt. There were 51 hunters.

HE FLEW EVERY PLANE THEY HAD

Bobby Budde had a love of aviation since he was a child. In the Air Transport Command he was able to fly every plane the Army had, plus a few Navy and Marine Corps planes. He didn't quit flying until he was in his 90s.

By Al Zdon

Few people in World War II flew as many different aircraft as Bobby Budde.

"I flew every Army plane and quite a few of the Navy and Marine planes. I flew single engine, four-engine, three-engine, everything. That's what we did."

Budde was part of the Air Transport Command, a group of pilots who ferried planes to where they needed to be. Another part of the ATC brought supplies to the battle fronts.

For Budde, it meant flying everything from small planes to massive bombers and transport planes. It meant flying all over the United States and one memorable trip from Florida to the island of Corsica in the Mediterranean.

And then there was that assignment toward the end of the war when he had to fly "a big brown egg" from Washington to Ohio. The Army never did tell him what that cargo was. He said it wasn't glowing.

□□□□□□□□□□

Bobby Budde was born in Ontario, in western Wisconsin, in 1920, the second child in a family of seven. "We lived in a small house on the edge of town, next to the creamery."

During his childhood and teen years, the family moved often as his father did what he could to find work in the Depression. The often lived on dairy farms, and his father also hauled freight in horse-drawn carts and at one point worked on the railroad.

Did he know growing up the nation was in the midst of the Great Depression? "I had no grasp of that. I learned later on that there must have been some hard times. But we worked hard and we ate well and kept the machines running."

In one childhood memory, Budde said he was two years old when he and his sister, who was five, decided to go see how their Uncle Len was doing while plowing a field on the other side of a small river.

"There was kind of a homemade bridge across the river, and my sister wanted to see how deep the water was." Her method was to dip her brother into the water from the bridge as far as she could to see if his feet would touch.

"I don't know what happened, but I slipped out of her reach and went under. My Uncle Len came running at full speed from the field and got there just in time to see me coming up on the other side of the bridge. He got the water out of me so I could breathe again. He must have done a good job because I'm still breathing."

For a while, the family lived in Milwaukee while the dad worked as perishable freight inspector. "He walked along the tops of the cars, and then looked down inside to see if the ice was melted. If it was, he had to replace the ice."

By 1932, the family had moved to Cataract, a little town north of Ontario, when his father began working with a government program to build roads. They later moved to nearby Sparta and settled on a farm with 20 head of cows.

There was plenty of work for a 12-year-old. "We had to haul the manure every day. There was a rail on the ceiling of the barn and a container hung from it. We would load the manure into the container and push it along and dump it in the manure spreader. Then we'd do the other side of the barn.

"One day the wheel came off the rail and came down and hit my finger. We didn't have any money for a doctor, so my mother just splinted it up. She told me not to lift anything heavy." Budde's right index finger still bends in the wrong direction.

When he was 14, they moved to a nearby farm with 45 head of cattle. "We just needed a bigger ranch and more of a chance to earn income. The family was growing. So I did my share of milking. It was pinch tits and shovel manure. We'd spread it in the field. You'd sling a few shovelfuls and then giddyup. Sling some more, and giddyup again."

He said there were only a few things the family couldn't get from the farm. "We'd have to buy salt, pepper, sugar, kerosene and flour. Pretty much everything else we could raise."

Budde began to go into Sparta on the school bus to attend high school. "One of the kids we'd pick up along the way was Deke Slayton." Slayton went on to become one of the original Mercury 7 astronauts.

By 1939, Budde was a senior at Sparta High School. During the 1930s, he had to drop out of school often to help his father on the farm. "My dad couldn't have both the older boys go to school at the same time." He was 19 when he finally graduated.

"That year my brother and I bought a Model T Ford. My dad loaned us the money. It was \$25. The tires were flat and frozen, and we had to haul it back to our farm. But it just slid all the way on top of the snow."

Once they got it running, they could go to school in style, and they picked up their pal Slayton along the way. "The bus cost \$2 a week, and Deke would give us the money instead. Then my brother, Deke and I would use the money to go to the dance on Saturday night."

Budde participated in football until he was kicked off the team. "They'd hike it to the quarterback and I'd cut in front and catch the ball and run. The coach told me not to do it, but then I did it again. He said, 'Give me back my uniform.' I guess I wasn't smart enough and I couldn't listen well enough to play football."

He did earn a spot on the wrestling team and the boxing team. "I was pretty good."

His first interest in airplanes came when he was still little and he spent some time on his grandfather's farm. The farm



was in the direct route of the mail plane that went from Chicago to Minneapolis every day.

"The first time, my grandfather said to me, 'Do you hear that?' We could hear a rumble in the distance. It kept getting louder and louder, and then we could see the plane coming over the trees. My grandfather said, 'That's called an airplane, and there's a man inside there flying it.' I was amazed. That's how I got interested in airplanes."

In school, he got every book he could on aviation and read them from cover to cover. One of his teachers saw Budde's interest and got more books for him and then they discussed what he had read.

Budde knew two brothers in Sparta who were pin setters at the local bowling alley. "They made enough money to



BOBBY BUDDE
At home in Clear Lake



BOBBY BUDDE
As a pilot during World War II

send away for a Pietenpol airplane kit. You built it yourself and then put a Model A Ford engine in the front. I got to go for a ride in it. That was living, I'll tell you."

Budde used his own money from picking strawberries, three cents a box, to get him and his brother a ride in a World War I training plane that was barnstorming through the community. "The pilot said, 'If you both can fit in, I'll take you both. It was only a five minute ride around town, but, my God, what a thrill.'"

After high school, Budde immediately tried out for a basic aviation program that the state had begun nearby. "We had to go three nights a week for two months. We learned about mechanics, health, navigation, pilot requirements, just about everything. I asked a lot of questions. A lot of guys thought I was pretty dumb to be asking so many questions, but I learned early on that if you illustrated your ignorance, people will teach you what you don't know."

There were 50 young men in the course, and Budde finished in the top three. The other two were college graduates.

He was promoted to a flight school in nearby Angelo, Wisconsin, with the goal of earning his private pilot's license. "My car was gone by then, and I had to walk eight miles to the school. We started school on Dec. 27, 1939, and it was really cold outside. We had to crank and crank that trainer, but we finally got her going. But we only stayed up for a few minutes because the oil wouldn't warm up."

Once training finally did get going, Budde got his chance to solo. "It was very gratifying. It was a wonderful gift from the Lord. I just said thank you to God. I was up there all alone. I had total control. I just felt like I could do it and do it right."

Graduation from flight school was a big affair with a large dinner and notable speakers. "My mother said I had to put on a tie, so I did. At the banquet, they announced all the awards and then they named the best pilot in the group, 'Bobby Budde.' I could have swallowed my gum."

It was announced at the banquet that another level of training was now available that would allow the students to earn a commercial pilot's license. Budde enrolled right away.

The training, which started in September 1941, was in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. The instructor was Tom North, a Northwest Airlines pilot. Budde can't quite remember what plane they used, but it may have been a Stearman trainer.

"That was a lot of power for us student pilots. We'd fly during the day and do ground school at night. We were busy."

On Dec. 7, 1941, he was flying. "When I landed, I found that a war had broken out."

A few weeks later he got a notice to appear before the draft board in Sparta. "I told them that I was in flight school, and that the Army was looking for instructors. They told me to go into another room. So they cussed and discussed it. When they called me back in, they said, 'Okay, we'll keep your gun for now. You've got 30 days to finish that school, and if you don't we'll have to give you your gun back.'"

Budde and the instructor were able to work out an accelerated schedule, and he reported back to the draft board in 30 days with his commercial pilot's license. "Then they told me I had 30 days to find a flight instructor's job. God all Friday."

Budde and three other pilots began a road trip marathon that took them first to Chicago and then to other Army training schools as they headed south. None of the schools needed instructors.

"But then we got to Stanford, Texas. They said they needed six instructors and they hired all four of us. I showed up at 9 a.m., and at 1 p.m. I was in the air with my first student."

Budde stayed in Stanford for a year and half, mainly flying the P-19 Fairchild trainer. He trained hundreds of pilots, but he remembers one in particular.

"I got this guy up, and I wanted to teach him how to get out of a spin. I showed him how to do it several times, and then let him try it. But he couldn't do the recovery. I had to bring us out. We tried again, and the same thing. I got up to 12,000 feet and put us in a spin. By the time I got us out, we were below the treetop level."

Budde was convinced the young man was a good pilot, but just couldn't master that maneuver. He finally got him to pull out of three spins in a row.

"So we landed, and I said, 'Okay, I want you to go up and do three recoveries from the left and three from the right.' I said, 'If you can't recover from a spin, you'll wash out and be in the walking army.'"

"So he took the plane up, and I sat on a bench and smoked a cigarette. He was doing pretty good. Pretty soon some officers came by and they asked what I was doing. I told them a student was working on his recoveries. They said that I should wash him out. I told them if they washed the kid out, they should wash me out at the same time. He was a good student."

Not long after, Budde read where the Army Air Corps was looking for experienced pilots on the West Coast to ferry airplanes. He and a friend headed west in a Buick. "We had to carry a couple of five gallon gas cans because



Budde as a flight instructor in Texas.



Home on leave, Budde poses in front of his house.



One of the routes the Air Transport Command flew was over the hump, between Burma and China. Budde managed to talk his way onto one of these flights on a C-46 during his time overseas. (U.S. Army photo)



An Air Transport Command C-47 navigates its way above the pyramids in Egypt. Budde was stationed in Khartoum with the job of bringing supplies to the front lines. (U.S. Army photo)

with the rationing it was hard to find gas. But we made it.”

They ended up at the headquarters for the Air Transport Command on the West Coast in Long Beach, California. He was told he needed to get checked out on larger planes, and so the two drove east looking for a school that had larger aircraft. They finally found one in Arizona.

“We got checked out and raced back to Long Beach. Our first job was to deliver a BT-13, two of them. So we did that and took a bus back to Long Beach.”

That began a long period of flying planes all over the country. “We’d fly anything they’d give us, then we’d have to catch a bus or a train back. This was during the war, of course, and you often had to stand up all the way.”

Budde got a direct commission from the Army Air Corps as a second lieutenant. He had no officer’s training or basic training. “I think they sent us to a few schools on orientation, to learn how to salute or something.”

At one point, he got to ferry a DC-3, a larger commercial airliner, and that opened the door for other multi-engined aircraft including B-17 and B-24 bombers. He also flew every fighter the Army had and also some from the Navy and Marine Corps.

“We flew some P-38s to Hawaii. We had to follow a B-24. He had to throttle all the way up to full speed, and we had to throttle way down just to stay behind him.”

Budde recalls when the Women Air Force Service Pilots began ferrying planes, freeing up the ATC pilots to go overseas. “I remember one in particular. She was a beautiful little lady, just a sweetheart. I was in love with her, but the whole world was in love with her. I didn’t stand a chance. She took off one day from the Long Beach airport and crashed. It was very sad.”

Then one day, he got orders to the East Coast. “They have more weather on the East Coast, and I wasn’t too happy.” He needn’t have worried, though, because he didn’t spend much time there.

“I got there, and they said, ‘Here’s your pilots. Take them to Corsica.’”

Budde was assigned to lead a full squadron of pilots and crews to deliver about 18 B-25 bombers to the Mediterranean Island of Corsica. “I’d never heard of Corsica.”

“So I was piloting the lead plane. I had a radio on a special frequency that the other planes didn’t have.”

The group started out in Florida, went to Cuba, then made three stops across the top of South America finally getting to Natal on the eastern coast. The next leg was over the Atlantic to the island of Ascension off the coast of Africa.

“I got the guys lined up before we took off for Ascension and I told them they had followed me here, and they were going to follow me the rest of the way. I told them to ask any questions they could think of because I wanted them to be damn sure they knew what they were doing.”

The problem was that the airstrip at Ascension, called “Wideawake Field” after a local bird that made noise all night long, was very short. “It started on one side of the island at the water’s edge, went over a hump in the middle where they had removed a ridge, and ended on the other side of the island at the water’s edge.”

“There was a white board fence at the beginning of the runway that said ‘Welcome.’ As I came in, I could see the marks on the runway just on the other side of the fence, and I put my wheels down on those marks. I told the other pilots to come in at one mile per hour more than stall speed.”

“Once you got over the hump in the middle, it was all skid marks all the way to the white fence on the other side. On that fence, they had written, ‘That’s all, brother.’”

“We all got down safely. I asked one of the airbase guys how many planes had gone through that fence and into the water. He said, ‘Hundreds.’ I asked how many they had recovered. He said, ‘None of them.’ The water was 200 feet deep.”

The squadron got to Africa and made several hops across northern Africa. Just as one flight began, Budde’s special radio gave him the message that they were heading into a major sandstorm. He was advised to take his planes south to a French Foreign Legion airfield.

“I got on the regular radio and just said, follow me. I did tell them that the field we were going to was a little short. And I told them to pick up speed so we could burn some gas.”

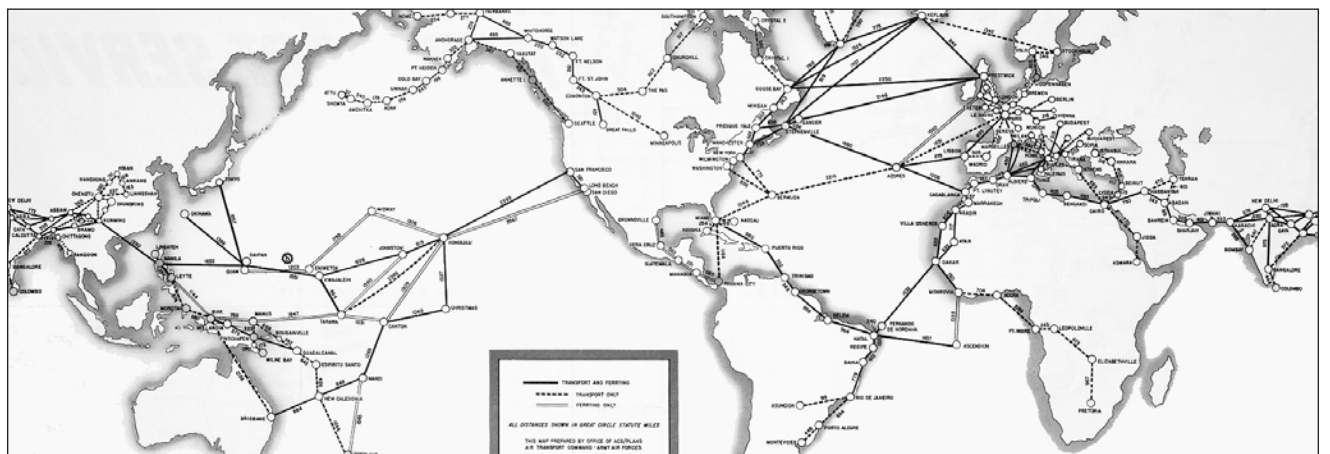
“It was kind of a crude field, and as we started landing the sand storm began to hit us. It was blowing pretty good. We got them all down and then spent the night in a hell of a sandstorm. You couldn’t see 10 feet. We couldn’t tie down the B-25s and we just hoped they wouldn’t blow away.”

“We had to put guards on the planes so that none of the locals would stow away.”

The convoy of planes reached Marrakech in Morocco and laid over for a day, getting a chance to watch a camel race. They worked their way to Cairo, and then made the hop to Corsica.

“We went way south and then north to the island. We had to work our way around the German-controlled airspace.”

On the nearby island of Elbe, the Germans had a squadron of fighters, and they would often send one over at about 10 feet of altitude to bomb or strafe the Allied field on Corsica.



A U.S. Army Air Corps map shows the routes flown by the Air Transport Command in 1945.



Budde, in the red plane, loved air racing and participated until into his 90s. In the rear plane is his childhood friend, Deke Slayton, who became an astronaut.

“We spent two nights sleeping in the slit trenches. They bombed the barracks one day and killed a bunch of people.”

His ferrying duty over, Budde caught a DC-3 bound for Naples. “Before the flight one of those fighters came over and strafed the DC-3. It had 27 bullet holes in it, but they deemed it airworthy and off we went.”

For the next eight months, Budde’s duties shifted from ferrying planes to bringing in supplies all over the Mediterranean and Near East theater. He was based in Khartoum in Sudan.

One of his routes was to Calcutta and beyond to where they were airlifting supplies for the Chinese over the Hump, a route over the Himalayan Mountains. Budde was able to catch one of those flights and sit in the observer’s seat in a B-24.

“They would take off and just circle until they had enough altitude to get over the mountains. Then on the other side, they do the same thing in reverse. Then I hitched a ride back. The big boys who were running the place were upset I’d done that.”

He finally got orders to transport a cargo plane back to the states to Montana. Budde retraced his route back to America, and ended up at Stockton in California. His next assignment was in Washington State.

“They told us we were to transport material from Washington to Ohio. They said we wouldn’t be using any of the normal air routes. I asked why because I was thinking of the radios. But they said they wanted to move it quickly.”

He was sent to Pendleton, Oregon, just across the river from Hanford, Washington. “They had a DC-3 on the runway. It looked like it had a couple of flat tires. They had a big door carved out of one side, and they had put in special beams to add strength.”

Budde’s only task on that visit was to observe the experienced crew that was going to fly the plane and its special material.

“They pointed out that a truck was approaching with the cargo. We could see the truck was about a mile away, and it took ten or 15 minutes to get there. It was barely moving. Then when they unloaded the cargo, the truck moved away slowly and then gunned it up to about 60 miles an hour like they were trying to get away. We were looking at each other saying, ‘What the hell?’”

The cargo was a huge metal oval. “Inside the truck, it was sitting on a bed of foam rubber. They got it into the plane and got it situated. There was a floor cushion there too. It was just a big, brown egg. When it was in the plane, they set up a chair in the hold between the egg and the cockpit and a guard sat there with a machine gun.”

Budde was sent back to Stockton to pick up a plane, and then it was back to Pendleton.

“We slept overnight and then went back to the airbase. I looked the DC-3 and the tires were almost flat. I said that we’ve got to pump those up, and the officer told me that they were all right, that it was a requirement.”

Budde took his precious cargo to Columbus. “I never knew what it was. It could have been cow manure or gold. We made several of those trips. They told us never to say anything about what we were doing or where we were going. We suspected they were making something special with it.”



Budde flew for United Airlines for 30 years.

Budde never did find out. Hanford, Washington, of course, was where the Army was creating plutonium for atomic bombs. Material from Hanford was used in the first atomic device at Trinity site in New Mexico and in the bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki.

Budde got out of the service in 1945 and took a train back to Wisconsin. “I got on the tractor and started helping my dad on the farm.”

He got a job as a flight instructor for GIs who were coming home and wanted to use their GI Bill to get training to be pilots. He and his brother also got into the crop dusting business and owned two airplanes. He tried to get on with the airlines, but he was one of thousands of ex-military fliers who were flooding the market.

After several years, he learned of a meeting in St. Paul being held to look at potential pilots. He passed the first phase and was sent to Chicago for more testing and interviews. “We started with 50 or 60 applicants, and now it was down to five of us left.”

He was sent to Denver to learn to be a co-pilot on a DC-3. Budde was talking to the instructor who said he had about 60 hours on the plane. “I told him I had about 450 hours. He said we could probably cut the training short.”

Budde had a 30-year career with United, and ended up flying Boeing 737s. He was forced to retire when he turned 60.

But that didn’t end his flying career. He became interested in air racing and continued to enter races until he was 91.

“In September 2001, I was in Reno and I had taken my plane up to practice with the pylons. There was another guy up there practicing with me. I could see them waving a red flag down below, and so I finally came down. The guys said, ‘Don’t you know they’re flying airplanes into the World Trade Center? Every plane in America is grounded. You’re the last one to be in the air.’”

With his eyesight failing, Budde was actually able to keep his pilot’s license longer than he could his driver’s license. In the end, he had to give up both.

In his hangar, out back from his house in Clear Lake, Budde still has four airplanes, all classics from yesteryear. He owns a vintage Taylorcraft, a Pietyenpol Scout that uses a Model T engine, a 1931 Cessna Air Master, and a Piper PA-20, which is for sale.

Budde met his wife, Ruth, at a dance hall in La Crosse in the late 40s. “There was this beautiful little gal all by herself. My friend went over and asked her to dance, but she wouldn’t. So, later I went over and she said okay. I don’t know if she liked my looks or the music, but after that she couldn’t get rid of me. She’s still as good looking as ever, and she’s the biggest blessing in my life.”

Ruth and Bobby have five children, ten grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Their son, Bobby, Jr., was also a pilot in the Air Force, and their grandson, Bobby III, also serves in the Air Force.

The Buddes live in a house on a lake, with a private airport across the road. “It was just right for us,” Ruth said. “He got to be near his airplanes, and I got to go out fishing.”

District Commanders

FIRST DISTRICT

Sylvan Fix
Commander



Thanks to Glenville for hosting our mid-winter conference as well as our Oratorical contest. Congratulations to Ricky Erpelding as he was our District winner. I am amazed the work these young folks go through to participate. We were also honored to have Commander Denise Milton, Membership Director Mark Dvorak, and National Vice Commander Douglas Boldt. We learned much from each of them.

We had our revitalization the 13th 14th and 15th at Rochester Post 92. Thanks to Mark and Linda Dvorak for coming down on Friday to help get us started and assisting with paper work. We did quite well but the true results won't be realized for a couple weeks when we hear from those who were unavailable. We learned much from this process and realized what could be done differently for the next revitalization.

I would hope that by now all the Posts have an idea whom they want to lead their Posts for the coming year. Finding leaders is always an ongoing thing by finding someone, mentoring them and then supporting them once they are in office. We must also let them spread their wings, give them a chance to bring in new ideas and let them try those ideas. After all I think we have all been there when we first got active and heard "this is the way we have always done it." Unfortunately we have to admit that we are an aging organization. The younger Veterans need to feel not only wanted but needed.

SECOND DISTRICT

Mark Coney
Commander



This month's article will be short and sweet as I have had an unexpected extended "Vacation." I had originally planned on flying home on December 26th, but after spending 27 days in the Hospital in Manila, I am prepared to fly home on the 29th. It will feel great to be home again, even though it will be cold while I have enjoyed wearing shorts here for the past few weeks. I am slowly on the mend and I have appointments when I return home next week to see if I will have surgery or not.

I would like to thank all the posts that have reached 95% of goal as of this date. So far as of the date of this writing, we have 41 out of 83 Posts that are at 95% of goal and another six that are less than 1 % from achieving that goal. This means that just one more membership should put the Post over the 95% goal. This is a tremendous achievement that could only be made from the posts on up.

THIRD DISTRICT

Mike Maxa
Commander



We have entered into the toughest segment of our membership year, the last ten percent to meet our goal of one-hundred-percent. The Thundering Third is around ninety percent and we have the talent and drive to conquer this last hurdle to achieve our goal. Now is the time to make the extra effort to have our current members renew and retained. Make the effort to contact and remind our members why they joined and our four pillars; Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth. Also take the time to brag about all the great programs we support, Boys State, Legionville, Boy Scouts, Legion Baseball, Voter Registration, Blood Drives, Scholarships, GI Bill, VA Care and so much more. Explain we are about more than just Legionnaires but a family with the Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and Legion Riders all working for the same programs. Also use these points to recruit new members: that being a part of the largest Veterans Organization gives us a voice in Washington DC and our local governments keeping our programs alive and moving forward. Let them know they don't have to make every meeting, fund raiser or function, but we do need you to make an effort to be an active member of your post and the American Legion. Pick and choose when and what you can help out with and have some fun. We are only as strong as our membership.

FOURTH DISTRICT

Randy Bastyr
Commander



Greetings to all members of the Fabulous Fourth. We had a very successful revitalization on January 12-14th. We

gained around 30 members; however, only a handful of Posts came and worked the lists. Thank you to all that were there. We all need to look for new members and call those that have left for one reason or another. Maybe they came on hard times and maybe with the help of your Post or a few members, you might be able to help them get their membership up to date.

The 4th District Joint Testimonial dinner will be held on April 21st at my home Post in North St. Paul, Post 39. We will get the details and tickets out soon.

Upcoming District events: February 4th – Sweetheart Rally in New Prague; RCCC – February 8th at Rosetown Memorial Post: Eboard @ 6:30 General meeting @7:00 ; February 19th - VA Hospital visitation @ 12:30.

Thank you all for this opportunity to serve the Fabulous Fourth District.

FIFTH DISTRICT

Ray Eiden
Commander



Greetings from the Fighting Fifth.

The new year started out with our annual Post Hop. A number of officers and auxiliary members visited four different Posts engaging in camaraderie and enjoying the hospitality each Post offered. On Jan. 15th we joined with the 4th District for our Hospital Visitation. It was well attended and we had many good visits to the various wards. I encourage our Posts to put their history out on the centennial website, www.legion.org/centennial. It would make for a good showing when we host the 100th Convention. Our own district website is up. It is in the early stages and much work is yet to be done. You can check it out at www.mnfightingfifth.org.

We need to work harder on our memberships. We are behind last year's pace and we need to increase our percent of goal. Our next goal is 85% by Feb. 8th.

Our Oratorical contest will be held on Feb. 18 at the Richfield Post 435. We are in need of contestants. Reach out to the schools in your area and see if there is any interest. If so contact Dick Ward, our Oratorical chairman. National Commander Charles Schmidt is coming to the Richfield Post 435 on Feb. 9th for lunch. Social hour starts at 11:00 a.m. with lunch at noon. Call the Richfield Post to reserve a lunch ticket.

Our next Hospital Visitation will be Feb. 5th at 2:00 p.m.

SIXTH DISTRICT

Vernonica Fernlund
Commander



February the shortest month is here which means spring is right around the corner. The 6th District Midwinter went well. Thank you to all who attended and to Brainerd Post 255 for all their hard work. Mentioning spring, the 6th District Commander's Testimonial dinner is scheduled for Saturday April 22, 2017 at the Waite Park American Legion Post 428. This is a joint testimonial with 6th District Auxiliary President Theresa Rudnicki. The 6th District Oratorical Contest is scheduled for Saturday February 25, 2017 at Legionville. Keep Storm'n for membership. Feb. 8, 2017 is the next target and renewal cut-off date. Members not renewed by this date will be receiving another renewal notice around the end of February, early March.

SEVENTH DISTRICT

Garylee Davenport
Commander



Greetings Mighty 7th:

It is hard to believe that is already February. I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season with family and friends. I would like to say thank you to everyone that attended the Mid-Winter conference, it was nice to see a good turnout.

On January 14th, we held a revitalization in Tracy for the Tracy, Balaton, Garvin and Marshall posts. I would like to thank everyone that helped with this project, especially our Department Membership Director Mark Dvorak.

If any post would like to do a revitalization, please contact my Membership Director, Richard Wog or you can contact me directly. We would be more than happy to help you with this.

Speaking of membership, I last checked at the time of this writing this news letter, the State of Minnesota was in First place in the nation and the 7th District has slipped down to 7th place in the state. We have a little work to do, but I think that we can get it done.

Still serving Veterans.

EIGHTH DISTRICT

Kenneth Oliver Jr.
Commander



Hello 8th District Legion Family

The American Legion National Commander will be visiting this month. He will be in the District on Feb. 7th for lunch at Post 222 in Hibbing and then dinner at Post 71 in West Duluth. Let's make sure he feels welcome.

Now let's talk membership. As of January 20th our Legion membership is at 87.98%, our Sons is at 70.76% and our Auxiliary membership is at 71.13%. Now we still have Sons Squadrons with no membership turned in and one Auxiliary unit who hasn't turned in any membership, so let's get on it. Remember do not hold membership. If you have received membership dues from a member you must send it into Department immediately. Our power to lobby for and help veterans and their families comes from our membership. I know we can make 100% in the whole 8th district family we just need to focus and get it done. OK enough lecturing, now get out there and enjoy our above normal temperatures.

Respectfully, Jennifer Havlick, 8th District Past Commander.

NINTH DISTRICT

Eric Wilkens
Commander



Every four years we observe the graceful transfer of power as a new President takes office. Whether you agree or disagree with the person in the office, as Veterans, we have all taken an oath to defend and uphold the constitution and as the Commander-in-Chief we have followed their orders. We continue to serve as members of The American Legion. As our Preamble so notably states, "For God and Country we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; ". We must continue to grow our great organization and ensure that government at all levels knows, understands and keeps the promises they made to our veterans. This includes those who have come before us, those currently serving and those who will follow in our footsteps.

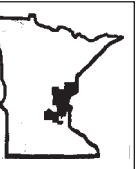
On January 14th we held our Mid-Winter Conference in Detroit Lakes with a great turnout from across the district and great updates from the tremendous work our committee chairpersons are doing. These programs truly are the work of our organization and we all need to be proud of that.

This is also the time of year that membership slows down and those last few remaining become harder to obtain. Please continue to contact those who have not renewed and reach out to the members of Post 1982 and ask them to transfer into your Post. Over the next few months we will be holding several revitalization events in the district and working diligently to increase our membership numbers.

For God and Country

TENTH DISTRICT

Bonnie Hanson
Commander



Hello from the 10th District.

Here we are going into February. Most of the Districts have had their Mid-Winter's. We had I think a very good Mid Winter and thank you to the Anoka Post for the great job they did. We had some very nice visitors that came. Next we are having our Snowmobile Rally the end of January where we go to many of the Post in the 10th District to collect memberships and bring them to the Sweetheart Rally. First week in February we are having National Commander Charles E Schmidt here in the 10th District. Those that have made Goal will get a picture with him. Something you can hang at the Post. Be proud of who we are and what we have done.

Our revitalization is going to be 23rd, 24th and 25th of February at the Mound Post. Hope to get as many volunteers as we can. Membership is hard to get this time of the year but if we call and ask them in these areas we can fill some of the empty slots. Getting those memberships is what will keep us alive with all the programs that we have. Remember the 4 Pillars of the American Legion: Americanism, Children and Youth, Rehabilitation and National Security. Of course, we need to keep working on our current members and that is the job of our membership officers of the Posts, Units, Squadrons and Riders.

God bless and stay safe.

Taps

Blom, Dick A., 93, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 14, 2017. He served in the occupation army in Okinawa, building airports. He was a member of Edgerton Post 42.

Olsen, Vernon, 88, Army veteran of World War II, died January 4. He was a member of Chaska Post 57.

Beck, Thomas J., 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 22, 2017. He served for 14 years. He was a member of Waconia Post 150.

Elsenpeter, Greg, 64, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 20, 2017. He was a past commander of St. Paul Park Post 98.

Vacura, Joseph Martin, 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 18, 2017. He served on the USS Stephen Potter DD-538 as a gunner. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Wobschak, Wallace, 96, Army Air Corp veteran of World War II, died Jan. 18, 2017. He served in North Africa, Italy and India. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Smith, Joseph Neil, 93, Merchant Marine veteran of World War II, died Jan. 18, 2017. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Bogges, Darrel, 80, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 13, 2017. He served for six years. He was a past Historian of St. Paul Park Post 98.

Duggan, Norman J., 70, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 9, 2016. He took officer training at Ft. Benning and served in Korea. He was a member of Blue Earth Post 89.

Hearn, Lee A., 68, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 9, 2017. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Gulso, Wayne Andrew, 71, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 2, 2017. He was a member of North Branch Post 85.

Lindstrom, Wallace Berger, 81, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 7, 2017. He was a member of North Branch Post 85.

Johnson, Earl D. "Dewey," 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 11, 2017. He was a member of North Branch Post 85.

Wandrei, Dennis Carl, 76, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 30, 2016. He served in Korea. He was a long time Honor Guard commander. He was a member of Glencoe Post 95.

Kellogg, Richard D., 82, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 12, 2017. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

DeJong, Dennis A., 78, National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 9, 2017. He was a past commander of Willmar Post 167.

Foss, Syvert W., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 14, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Sorenson, Mike, 73, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 4, 2017. He was a member of New London Post 537.

Carlson, Lloyd Jr., 80, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 8, 2017. He was a member of New London Post 537.

Wangen, James O., 97, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 7, 2017. He participated in D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge. He was a member of Lanesboro Post 40.

Harding, Joseph H., 86, veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 19, 2016. He was a member of Round Lake Post 461.

Sorenson, Milo L., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 10, 2017. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Cerny, Donald M. "Fuzz," 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 12, 2017. He served in the Pacific. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Larick, Donald Edward, 80, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 7, 2017. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

McCann, William, 70, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 22, 2016. He served 27 years in the Army Reserve. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Steyer, Orville, 89, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 22, 2016. He served with the 7th Cavalry as a tank operator in the military police. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Babcock, Warner, 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 30, 2016. He also served in the Army National Guard. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Johnson, Donald O., 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 24, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Rudolph, Allen J., 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 29, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Fuller, Leo E., 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 20, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Warner, George J., 72, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 20, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Zander, Loren Burdette, 94, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II and Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 4, 2016. He served in the 20th Air Force, 73rd Bomber Wing, 498th Bomb Group, 875th Squadron. He

was a B-29 pilot stationed in Saipan. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was a member of Howard Lake Post 145.

Nelson, Roger Elmer, 75, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 8, 2016. He was in the Seabees for five years. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Flynn, Michael D., 80, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 5, 2017. He was stationed at China Lake. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Goebel, William Lambert, 89, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 4, 2016. He was a gunner in the South Pacific serving on the USS Carter Hall, the USS Duluth and the USS Los Angeles. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

Hanson, Jerome, 95, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 21, 2016. He served in the 94th Infantry Division in Europe and earned a Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts. He belonged to Maple Plain Post 514.

Ebner, Dale A., 79, Naval Reserve veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 16, 2016. He was a member of LaCrescent Post 595.

Bahe, William Ernest, 82, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 12, 2017. He was a staff sergeant in the 312th Armament and Electronics Maintenance Squadron working as an aircraft radio repairman. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Erickson, Dennis W., 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 10, 2017. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Boonstra, Stanley, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 13, 2017. He served in Germany. He was the service officer for Raymond Post 420 and also served on the Kandiyohi County Veterans Board.

Stopka, Raymond, Sr., 89, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 5, 2017. He was a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne, serving for six years. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Ohlson, LeRoy Raymond, 71, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 20, 2016. He served in Alaska as a personnel specialist. He was a past commander of Hazel Run Post 559, and organized the annual golf tournament.

Hage, Robert R., 88, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 16, 2016. He served in Japan on Gen. MacArthur's color guard. He was a member of Hector Post 135.

Hagen, Llewellyn "Punky," 87, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 15, 2016. He earned a Purple Heart in Korea. He was a member of Wood Lake Post 556.

Castle, Clinton, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 29, 2016. He served in Germany. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Liebswager, Gifford, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 5, 2016. He served in Germany. He was a member of Milroy Post 274.

Jensen, Norman L., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 5, 2016. He served in the Philippines as an auto mechanic. He was a member of Princeton Post 216.

Wiese, Fred William, 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 13, 2016. He was an electrician and studied in the V-12 program. He was a member of Lakefield Post 4.

Ronquist, Richard, 85, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 17, 2016. He was a member of Cloquet Post 262.

Goskesen, Quentin Morland, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 3, 2017. He served in the South Pacific. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Rector, Charles L., 86, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 6, 2017. He enlisted when he was 15 years old. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Felton, William R., 83, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 2, 2017. He served in Korea. He was a member of Hackensack Post 202.

Hepner, Arnold Leroy, 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 28, 2016. He was a member of Hackensack Post 202.

Bell, John P., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 1, 2017. He was a member of Cold Spring Post 455.

Mahoney, Robert, 68, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 30, 2016. He served in the 131st Engineer Battalion. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

Brau, LeRoy, 66, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 1, 2017. He was a crew chief for a C-130 aircraft. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

Bunge, Herman O., 100, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 30, 2016. He was assigned to Gen. Patton's personal tank squad for nearly a year. He was a member of Caledonia Post 191.

Scheel, Stanley W., 91, Coast Guard veteran of World War II, died Dec. 27, 2016. He was a member of Bayport Post 491.

Mills, Ori E., 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 26, 2016. He was a member of Benson Post 62.

Pederson, Lee, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 18, 2016. He was a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne. He was a member of Herman Post 378.

Ebertowski, Alex L., 88, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Jan. 2, 2017. He served in the

Philippines. He was a member of Brainerd Post 255.

Norrgard, Raymond, 95, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 1, 2017. He was an aviation boatswain's mate, and served on the USS Hancock, an aircraft carrier. He was a member of Brainerd Post 255.

Goodew, Steven Allen "Scooby," 62, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 26, 2016. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Holthaus, Paul A., 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 25, 2016. He was a member of Augusta Post 621.

Wolff, Roy, 89, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 18, 2016. He was a member of Chaska Post 57.

Brau, Harold, 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 27, 2016. He was a member of Chaska Post 57.

Olson, Clayton H., 89, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Jan. 23, 2017. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Smith, Leland P., 84, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 26, 2017. He was a member of Anoka Post 102.

Fett, Francis Donald, 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 13, 2017. He served in England and France. He was a past commander and color guard member at Windom Post 206.

Aldredge, James Kent, 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 10, 2017. He served on the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt in the Mediterranean. He was a member of Dodge Center Post 384.

Burgeson, Russell A., 90, Army veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Jan. 18, 2017. He was a member of Round Lake Post 461.

Carlson, Robert P., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 5, 2017. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Hukki, James H., 92, Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died Jan. 17, 2017. He was a machine gunner and served at Iwo Jima and the occupation of Japan. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaBounty, Donald A., 86, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Nelson, Einar W., 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 24, 2017. He served at Okinawa and Korea. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

Christenson, Theresa, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 4, 2017. She served at Walter Reed Hospital and in Germany. She was a member of Lowry Post 253.

Hauschildt, Rodney A., 73, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 22, 2017. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Vnuk, Donald V., 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 25, 2017. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Correction

LaTuff, Edward Forrest "Buster," 83, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 17, 2016. He served in Korea and earned three battle stars. He was a past commander of Anoka Post 102.

Obituary policy

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.

World War II History Round Table

Battle of Königsberg not well known in U.S.

By Al Zdon

Okay, a show of hands, how many of you know about the Battle of Königsberg? Okay, both of you put your hands down.

Even Americans who take an interest in World War II know very little about the war that went on between the Soviet Union and Germany, which is sometimes called the Eastern Front. Königsberg and the battle for East Prussia were a major part of that war, but have been studied very little in the United States.

Historian Chris Simer, a lecturer at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, was the main speaker at the January meeting of the World War II History Round Table at Fort Snelling. He was joined by a Russian veteran who fought at Königsberg.

The battle took place at about the same time as the Battle of the Bulge was happening on Germany's other front.

Simer gave a recap of the German-Soviet confrontation which began when Germany staged a surprise attack on the Soviet frontier in June, 1941, about a half year before Japan attacked the U.S. and pushed America into the war.

Germany at first had good fortune, pushing its blitzkrieg forces deep into Russia, surrounding Leningrad and capturing vast amounts of territory in Eastern Europe. But as the war went on, the Red Army's size and the ability of the Soviet Union's factories to turn out war materials turned the tide.

By the summer of 1944, the German army was reeling back into the home country desperately trying to halt the Soviet onslaught.

Simer made the point that the fighting quality of the two armies had totally reversed over those three years.

"In 1941, the Soviet top leadership was slow to react, the army was poorly trained and poorly equipped, and the officers were politically chosen. The Russians had to use strong discipline to keep the panic away.

"The Germans, on the other hand, had perfected the blitzkrieg style of warfare, had total air superiority and a great officer corps."

The Germans also left in their wake a record of terror and atrocity among the civilian population of the Soviet territory it conquered.

By 1944, the Russian officer corps had matured and learned, the army was well equipped and hardened after three years of fighting, and the Soviets now had total air superiority.

The Germans by this time had gone from an army that had great flexibility to one micro-managed by Hitler who gave out "no retreat" orders again and again.

"It fueled the destruction of countless German troops."

The Germans were forced to bolster their shrinking army with older men, younger boys, and volunteers in the national guard. They were not top line troops.

"And a big factor was that there was a vengeance motivation on the part of the Red Army for the suffering that had occurred in Russia."

The summer of 1944 saw the Soviets begin a massive offensive at Germany's Army Group Center. The attack was called Operation Bagration and it included 2.3 million Soviet troops taking on about 800,000 German troops. Army Group Center was shattered.

"There were more prisoners taken in Bagration than at Stalingrad," Simer said.

The attack on East Prussia, the part of Germany closest to the Soviet Union, was the first incursion on German soil. "Germany had essentially lost the war by the end of 1944, but they were still putting up a furious resistance."

Simer quoted one Russian soldier as saying that, "They fought like trapped wolves the closer we got to Berlin."

The attack on East Prussia and Königsberg, began on Jan. 12, 1945, and was aimed mainly at protecting the Red Army's right flank as the main army headed for Berlin. The attack would also to trap German army units along the Baltic coast.

The Soviet effort at first stalled, but then picked up momentum as the German lines of resistance gave way one by one. "Up to this point Königsberg had not been part of the war. It had been bombed in August. But the German media was all controlled by the propaganda people, and they were saying that the Russians would never enter German soil. The civilians didn't know what was coming their way."

Once the battle began, though, many Germans wanted to flee the Soviet army, but those who tried to escape were considered traitors. The German SS was in control of the Army by that time, and they executed civilians who tried to get away.

The Soviets did have vengeance on their mind. Simer showed a series of Soviet posters that illustrated the revenge intended for what Germany had done in the Soviet states.

"The Soviets had a 15-1 man advantage in some cases," Simer said. "The Germans were fighting to keep the escape routes open. The German nut was very difficult to crack."



Red Army troops advance into Königsberg in April, 1945. The battle for East Prussia was the first Soviet incursion onto German soil during World War II.

Königsberg held on until April. On April 6th the Soviets began their final assault, in many cases going house to house. "The Germans were fighting with the remnants of Army Group Center, the volkstorm (militia), police, naval forces. In three days, the city fell. About 90 percent of it was destroyed."

Meanwhile, the civilian population, which had been forced to stay at the beginning of the battle, were now in full retreat down the Baltic coast. Many took to ships, and one of them, MV Wilhelm Gustloff, was sunk on Jan. 30 with 9,000 drowned including 5,000 children.

By May, Soviet forces were in Berlin and the war was over.

The sad lot of the Germans in East Prussia, though, was far from over. "East Prussia ceased to exist. It was the largest ethnic cleansing in history."

The entire German population was eventually moved and the territory became part of the Soviet Union and Poland. Königsberg, once a historic and cultural German center, is now Kaliningrad and few traces of the old city remain.

□□□□□□□□

Yakov Grichener, 92, was a member of the Red Army who participated in the battle for Königsberg until he was wounded.

He was born in Moldova, a country in Eastern Europe bordered by Romania and the Ukraine.

"They were mobilizing the young people in 1940," Grichener said. "When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, I was drafted right away. I was 17 years old."

He said they were taught to be soldiers in the infantry. He recalls one incident where he decided to speak up during training. "I said, 'In my opinion.' But the officer immediately said, 'Stop, we don't want your opinion.' I understood right away."

He was promoted after training and became a machine gunner. "I was good at it. They put me in charge. I didn't speak very good Russian, but they respected me."

Grichener was asked if being from a little country and also being Jew caused him problems. "Not then. We were all Soviets. We were all fighting together. The problems came later, after the war."

He was sent to the defense of Leningrad where he became part of the Soviet forces guarding the city during a three-year siege. In January of 1944, the siege was ended and Grichener's unit once again joined the main Soviet Army as it advanced on Germany.

He spoke glowingly about how American Lend-Lease brought in tons of supplies to Leningrad. "I went aboard an American ship and they told me to help myself. I said I didn't know what that meant. They said, 'Eat!' And so I had the first meat I'd had in a long time. It was Spam."

Grichener was wounded on Jan. 14, 1945, just as the offensive on East Prussian and Königsberg began.

"I got hit by an artillery fragment in the right shoulder, and other places. I was all blood. I was losing a lot of blood. I finally fell down. I could see a piece of bone sticking out of my arm."

"When I woke up, there was nobody around except for other wounded. When they finally came around after the third attack, the medic looked at me and saw that my wound was in my shoulder. He said, 'Leave him alone. He's still got legs. He can walk.'"

The medics put German coats under him and over him and then left. He lay there for 25 hours. "I remember at night I saw the stars. I could see my mama and papa up there."

The next day, a specially trained dog that was searching for those still alive found him. "I said, 'help me.' They took me on a horse to a hospital. There were seven levels of bunks, and I was on top. I could see the surgeries."

He remembers one surgeon who, between drags on his cigarette, would mark where an amputation would be. "A nurse would give the patient chloroform. They would take out a saw and it would be zzzzzz, zzzzzz, zzzzzz and the leg was gone."

Then it was Grichener's turn. "When I woke up, the surgeon said they had saved my arm. I was in a cast."

He was in recovery for over six months, and by that time the war was over.

Moderator Doug Bekke asked about his encounter with a lady after the war. "That was no lady," Grichener corrected. "She was a colonel."

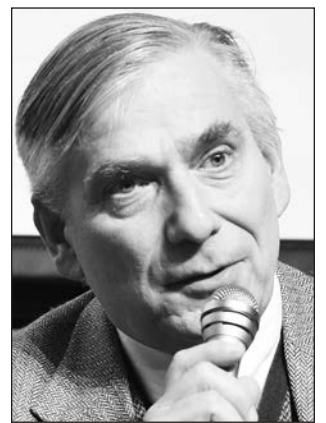
Because of his war record, Grichener was given an opportunity to go live in Moscow, get a house and a job. But he elected to go back to Moldova.

But it was a bittersweet return to his homeland. "There was no mama and no papa. They told me they been taken away to Poland to work."

He trained to be a teacher and met his wife. Years later, Soviet Premier Brezhnev signed a pact with the United States where America would send wheat to the Soviet Union, and Soviet Jews would be allowed to emigrate to the U.S. He and his family ended up in Minnesota.



YAKOV GRICHENER



CHRIS SIMER



DOUG BEKKE



DON PATTON



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 17-7

President Carol Kottom

February 2017

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

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

The President's Column

By Carol Kottom



The mid winters have been really great. No matter how many you attend you learn something new. The best part though, is that you meet someone new. Bruce and I went to the Arcade Post in St Paul, and the following posts: Glenville, Detroit Lakes, Olivia, Redwood Falls and on to Montgomery. The members have been very gracious and, other than the fog, driving has been good. There have been strategic planning goals at almost all of the events and they have done a great job in presenting the initiatives that have been set. We are counting on the Units to carry through which will help us to grow.

February is Americanism month. Work with the schools on the essay contests. We'd love to have Minnesota win at National.

This month the Legion will be holding the Sweetheart Rally and I hope to see a lot of you in New Prague. Happy Valentines Day to all of you.

Washington DC conference starts the end of the month. It is a great opportunity for us to voice our concerns and opinions with our Senators and Representatives regarding issues pertaining to our veterans. Please let me know if you have any concerns that you would like brought up.

National Salute to Veterans is the week including February 14th. I hope you all have or plan to do something special for our veterans. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs states the following:

The purpose of the National Salute to Veteran Patients Program is to:

- Pay tribute and express appreciation to Veterans;
- Increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center;
- Encourage citizens to visit hospitalized Veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

The week of February 14 each year is your opportunity to say thank you to a special group of men and women, more than 98,000 Veterans of the U.S. armed services who are cared for every day in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, outpatient clinics, domiciliarys, and nursing homes.

So please, check with the VA Hospital or Home and sign up to volunteer. Not one close to you? I'm sure there's a nursing home that would appreciate a volunteer. It is a fantastic way to spend a little time every week.

Until next time,
Thank a Veteran – all gave some, some gave all.

Department dives head first into National's 5-year plan

Minnesota has been very busy under the leadership of Chairman Sandy Fredrickson in getting the Department of Minnesota's future in order. The National organization started the plan in 2014 in conjunction with the celebration of our 100th anniversary. Minnesota was very lucky to have both Kris Nelson and Lori Skallerud in the beginning stages to help us get organized. It has been a struggle but with Sandy's leadership and the hard work of the 5 goal Champions, Jean Walker, Karla Otterness, Robin Dorf, Judy Ackerman and Michelle Leonard, light is showing up in the tunnel. The following was received from National President Mary Davis via her Facebook page:

As part of Goal 3 of the ALA's Centennial Strategic Plan, and in an effort to promote leadership skills throughout the American Legion Auxiliary, I will be recognizing those women who are nominated by their fellow members for having implemented or having displayed leadership qualities that help us build a strong organization.

My first shout out as #AmericanLegionAuxiliary National President goes to Robin Dorf, Michelle Leonard, Jean Walker, Judy Ackerman and Karla Otterness for their leadership on the Department of Minnesota's Centennial Strategic Plan. Just look at the amazing leadership qualities they have displayed as shared by their friend and Centennial Strategic Planning Chairman, Sandra Fredrickson:

Minnesota has a great team of champions. We are on track with our initiatives and moving forward in strengthening our department. We should know soon if our initiative in raising funds for public relations equipment becomes a reality. Our team is responsive and they are reactive! We are working to add more strategy members; we just have to keep working it! Their work on the Centennial Strategic Plan can be summed up in one word — outstanding. They are all great leaders.

Join me in congratulating these #ALARockStars.

The Department of Minnesota now has all of the information regarding our Strategic Plan on our website at mnala.org. Every District and Unit in Minnesota needs to join in on this plan to ensure continued growth and survival of the organization. If anybody would like more information or assistance on how to find information, please contact the Department Office.

JUNIOR CONFERENCE

The 54th Annual Department Junior Conference will be held Saturday, April 8th at the Forest Lake American Legion Post #225, hosted by the Third District. We are hoping that a large number of the Junior members are able to attend and participate. If your Juniors have never attended a Department Junior Conference, plan to join us this year. Junior members will enjoy a "fun night" on Friday, April 7th, the night before the opening of the Conference. The 3rd District and Junior Activities Chairman Pam Hoshal have been working hard to make this a special evening for the Junior members.

On Saturday the Conference will be called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Kiana Coleman-Woods, the Department Honorary Junior President. This is a day when the Juniors become reacquainted with each other, make new friends, learn how to conduct a meeting and participate in it. This meeting is a JUNIOR Conference and the JUNIOR members run it. They are very capable young women.

AMERICANISM MONTH

February is Americanism month. Chairman Sandy Wersal is a wonderful resource to have so please contact her with any of your needs regarding the Americanism program. All members should strive to be a patriot through Unit involvement in community events. Encourage and get involved with your youth to teach them the importance of Americanism. Work closely with The American Legion and their Americanism programs.

POPPY CARDS AND POPPY DAYS

Poppy Card Distribution Days will be held April 21-30, 2017, inclusive for closed territories, starting at 12:01 a.m.

on April 21. Beginning April 20 Poppy Cards may be distributed anywhere right up until Poppy Day. Poppy Cards may be distributed within the confines of one's own Post home to members and patrons only on Thursday evening, April 20 – if the Cards are hung on the wall of the Post Home and NO distributed Cards leave the building on Thursday evening.

Poppy Days will be May 19-20, 2017, beginning at 12:01 a.m. on May 19. Closed territories are in effect until noon on Friday, May 19.

This "gentlemen's" agreement involves the VFW, VFWA, the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary Posts and Units. Everyone's cooperation is necessary to ensure a successful Poppy program. Please do not distribute any Poppy Cards and/or Poppies prior to these dates. This applies to all Posts and Units in the seven-county metropolitan area (Ramsey, Hennepin, Washington, Dakota, Carver, Scott and Anoka counties).

POPPY ORDERS

Shipping of 2017 Poppy orders began last fall as orders were received and Poppies were available. All orders are shipped according to the "need by" date indicated when the order was placed. Orders are shipped by first class mail. Upon receipt of your Poppies please check it carefully. Contact the department office with any discrepancies. If your Unit has already ordered Poppies, but needs more, please order again. Units may place as many Poppy orders as they want to.

If you haven't placed your Poppy order yet, please do so. We need to finalize the number of Poppies needed for this year's Poppy distribution so we can plan accordingly. Let's have 100% Unit participation in the Auxiliary Poppy program. Right now out of 438 Units 314 have placed orders. Remember our Poppies are made by our veterans and they receive a small compensation for their work. Let's support their efforts. It will help the Department Office tremendously if you get your orders in now and not wait until the last minute. That will ensure that we have the inventory to handle all orders.

Don't save your Poppies just for Poppy Day. Use them throughout the year. Let's make this a Poppy year in recognition of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice to keep America free.

2018 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Gosh, it seems that these months go by so fast — in the December/January Unit mailing, every Unit received a notice asking for the amount of your Unit's 2018 Senior and Junior dues, and the name and address of the person whose name should appear on your Unit's 2018 dues' notices. Please make sure this information gets back to Sandie at the Department Office by March 15. There are no increases in dues at either the National or Department level this year.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Just a reminder all applications for any Department and National scholarships must be received in the department office by March 15. Let your schools know they are available and provide them with the application forms. They are also posted on our website for your convenience. If additional copies are needed, you may duplicate those you have received or contact the Department office.

UNIT ANNUAL REPORTS

Unit Annual Reports have been mailed to each Unit in January. All reports, instruction sheets and history papers will be in one envelope. If you don't receive this envelope, contact the department office immediately. Please note: The Unit reports cover the period from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017.

This year the reports have again been reformatted because of the feedback we received from the Units. We have made the Unit reports like those in the past. When our Units ask for better ways of doing things we do everything in our power to come through.

All Unit reports are due on or before April 15. Reports are important. Let's hear from every Unit.

Jan. 26, 2017, Auxiliary Membership

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year
One	5,000	4,062	81.24%	4,292
Two	4,924	3,928	79.77%	4,305
Three	4,411	3,488	79.08%	3,727
Four	720	559	77.64%	562
Five	824	601	72.94%	698
Six	6,042	5,057	83.70%	5,257
Seven	3,934	3,157	80.25%	3,398
Eight	1,628	1,181	72.54%	1,332
Nine	4,350	3,577	82.23%	3,771
Ten	5,159	3,956	76.68%	4,194
1982	160	125	78.13%	135
Totals	37,152	29,691	79.92%	31,671

Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

MINNESOTA GIRLS STATE

The American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State session has been set for June 11 – 17, 2017 at Bethel University in St. Paul.

Now is the time to send your \$300.00 fee to reserve a place for your American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State citizen(s). Cut-off for reservations is March 31. Upon receipt of your reservation fee (\$300.00 per girl) you will receive the needed registration packet(s).

Enrollment is limited to the first 445 applications received. The name of the girl, information sheet, enrollment card, pledge and order form for the citizen's Capitol Day polo-shirt must be into the Department office by May 1.

There is no restriction as to the number of delegates a Unit may send to American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State from their high school(s). The delegate must be a Minnesota resident, or attend a Minnesota school. Please note that there will be NO refunds given this year. Once we receive your registration fee and you do not have a girl to sponsor we will use it for a deserving girl who wants to attend but has no sponsor.

Each high school principal has received a mailing pertaining to American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State. Contact your high school now and let them know if you will be sponsoring a girl. High schools may not register a girl on their own. All American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State citizens must be sponsored by an American Legion Auxiliary Unit.

SECRETARY SANDIE'S NOTES

Well, back to having to use my brain to come up with something to write – I always hated Mass Media in high school but here I am writing articles for you. A real sweet guy whom I hadn't seen in quite a while came up to me at the Montgomery Legion and said, "I do read your article every month." Well Kyde, thanks for the support, I am now up to about 15 people who read it. I do remember some of the mischief you and your bowling team got into, especially with Shorty right in the thick of things. Some memories are best to be left at that.

By the time this is out Mid-Winters should be over with. I sure hope everyone learned lots and will pay the knowledge forward. I know President Carol ran herself silly trying to make it to everything. She is such a trooper.

Here at the office we are off and running starting to plan the Department Convention. It will be held in Mahnommen this year at the Shooting Star Casino. Yes that's right, Sandie has to go to another casino for convention. It is such a burden to have put upon me, but as you know I can handle it. Right at this moment I am throwing each of you a huge Valentine's kiss – I hope you caught it. Have a wonderful Valentine's Day, don't forget to do something special with your one and only and all those you care about.



On the other hand, do something real special for someone you may not care about – you could start a lifetime friendship! Remember our veterans as well. Take care – spring is right around the corner.



FRIDLEY TRAINING -- Auxiliary leadership gathered at the Fridley Post for leadership training in January. It was led by Robin Dorf.

Program of the Month: Americanism

By Sandy Wersal

The Americanism program is promoting patriotism and responsible citizenship. What can you do?

Be knowledgeable on flag history, etiquette, proper disposal methods, and promote the observation of patriotic holidays so your community will look to the ALA for information and leadership. Make door hangers about flying the US Flag and get out in the community to educate them about the proper way to display and when to replace the flag.

I encourage units to support the Legion Oratorical contest, Legion baseball, and Junior shooting sports programs. Remember, it's more fun to work as a family. Wear your ALA logo clothing and have a blank membership application for the Legion family with you at all times.

Support our Blue Star and Gold Star families with a banner for their window or visit. Work with Operation Military Kids and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration.

It's time to work on the Americanism Essay Contest. Get the information out to children. The theme this year is "How does learning about government and our America help you become a future guardian of the liberties of our country?"

Let's increase this year's participation by partnering with your school to make this year's contest a big success. Entries must include the Americanism Essay Contest cover sheet. Encourage your children and grandchildren to participate in the essay contests.

I am using Lady Liberty this year to promote Americanism as she is now 130 years old. And she will be at Girls State this year so the girls can take pictures with her. Keep up the good work this year.



AMERICANISM CHAIRS -- Dee Dee Buckley, Northwestern Division Americanism Chair and Sandy Wersal, Minnesota chair, are shown with Lady Liberty.



MIDDLE RIVER BIRTHDAY PARTY -- Middle River Unit 444 celebrated the 97th birthday of the American Legion Auxiliary. From left, front: Emma Anderson, Eleanore Rantanen, First Vice Mary Ann Lunsetter, Marvel Dahl and Sharon Wagner. In back: Carol Hemp, Bonnie Wagner, Bunny McKeever, Delores Westerlund, Janet Kujava and Cindy Campbell.



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Alaska Tour & Cruise

August 4-16, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- Round trip Delta flights from Minneapolis
- 7 Night southbound cruise on the ISLAND PRINCESS
- Cruise Gratuities
- All sightseeing/entrance fees
- All meals & entertainment aboard the ISLAND PRINCESS
- All transfers to and from the airport, hotel & pier
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

Starting at **\$4,299.00** Per Person Double Occupancy

Mediterranean Cruise

August 31-September 10, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta flights to Athens & return from Barcelona
- 1 night pre-cruise in Athens with a 4 hour tour of Athens
- 1 night post-cruise in Barcelona with a 4 hour tour of Barcelona
- A 7 night cruise on the ROYAL PRINCESS
- Cruise onboard gratuities
- All meals and entertainment onboard the ROYAL PRINCESS
- All transfers to and from the airport, pier and hotels
- Luggage handling on the ship for one suitcase per person

Starting at **\$4,499.00** Per Person Double Occupancy

Minnesota Twins Spring Training in Florida

March 2-12 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 10 nights accommodations including 3 nights in Cape Coral, FL and 2 nights in Nashville, TN
- 18 Meals: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 7 dinners
- Anheuser Busch Brewery Tour, St. Louis, MO
- Coca Cola Factory Tour, Atlanta, GA
- 2 Spring Training baseball games or have a shopping day on the beach
- Best of Nashville Guided Tour
- Luggage handling for one suitcase per person

\$1,699.00 Per Person Double Occupancy

Heart of Alaska

July 14-21, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- Round trip Delta flights Minneapolis to Anchorage
- 7 nights accommodations
- 12 Meals
- Denali Park Natural History Tour
- Alaska Railroad between Talkeetna & Denali Park
- Riverboat Discovery Cruise
- Gold Dredge #8
- Prince William Sound Cruise
- Meares Glacier
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

\$3,299.00 per person double occupancy

Great American History Tour

September 19-26, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy
- 7 nights accommodations
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 10 Meals: 7 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners
- Admission to all museums, battlefields, & National Parks
- 4 Guided Tours
- Historic Train Ride
- Chicago Gangster Tour
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

\$1,425.00 Per Person Double Occupancy

National Parks, Utah and Arizona

May 12-22, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- 10 nights accommodations
- 14 meals: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 52 mile Durango/Silverton Train ride
- Tour the San Juan Mountains and Rocky Mountains
- Admission to Badlands, Mount Rushmore, Painted Desert, Petrified Forest, Grand Canyon, Zion National Park and Bryce Canyon

\$1,499.00 Per Person Double Occupancy

Mackinac Island & Door County

July 9-15, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 6 nights accommodations
- 13 meals: 6 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 3 dinners
- Guided tours of Door County & Mackinaw City
- Carriage ride on Mackinac Island
- Lunch at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island
- Soo Locks Cruise Tour
- Fish Boil in Door County
- Gordon Lightfoot Musical Show
- Great Lake Shipwreck Museum
- Pictured Rocks tour on Lake Superior


\$1,109.00 Per Person Double Occupancy

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