



## The first 20 years

As we move closer to celebrating The American Legion Centennial, what was it like in those early days in Minnesota? The posts didn't have much money, but the buddies accomplished incredible feats

By Al Zdon

What would The American Legion in Minnesota be like if all its members were in their 20s and 30s?

What would it be like if all of its members had fought in the same war, and all of them had come home at about the same time?

What would it be like if the Legion operated in a state where the majority of people still lived in small towns and cities around the state, where the primary way to get things done was through civic organizations – and not government?

And what if that organization operated its first 10 years in an era known for jazz, flappers, speakeasies, new inventions, cars and planes, and prosperous times? And then operated in its second ten years during the nation's worst depression?

The first 20 years of The American Legion in Minnesota was a time of birth and growth, amazing community projects, and, finally, a maturing into an organization that has now reached its 100th national convention.

From 1919 to 1938, the Minnesota American Legion spawned the Hospital Association, the Poppy Workshop, a newspaper, Legionville, Legion Baseball, the Sons of the American Legion, and dozens of other great projects to help veterans, youth and their own communities.

About 115,000 Minnesotans served in World War I, known at that time as the Great War. When the war ended in late 1918, the veterans began to trickle home. But in the first months of 1919, that trickle had become a torrent

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VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE DEDICATION -- The tribute in Minneapolis to those soldiers and nurses who died in the Great War was dedicated in 1921. It was almost entirely an American Legion project.

## Commander's Tour will visit nine posts on a southern swing

Minnesota will welcome our neighbor to the east during her National Commander's Tour on Feb. 6-8.

National Commander Denise Rohan of Wisconsin will visit Minnesota just after the Super Bowl, making stops at nine Minnesota posts.

The tour this year will take a southern swing through the state.

It will start in Bayport for breakfast on Tuesday, Feb. 6, followed by lunch at Spicer Post 45 and dinner at Fulda Post 318.

On Wednesday, Rohan will visit

Windom Post 206, Litchfield Post 104 and Lake Crystal Post 294. On Thursday, the tour will conclude with stops at Waseca Post 228, Wayzata Post 118, and Osseo Post 172.

A complete schedule of posts, times, events, and contact people is on page 3 of this issue. Meal reservations should be made by calling the contact people listed.

All Legion Family members are welcome.

Membership Director Larry Ryan will host the tour.

## Dental clinic at vets home will be first of its kind in the nation

The Minnesota Veterans Home at Minneapolis will be the first vets home in the nation to have a dental clinic on its campus.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs announced the project recently and said the facility should improve dental care for residents.

The dental clinic will be funded by a unique three-way partnership. The Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation will provide \$100,000, the Veterans 4

Veterans Trust Fund will chip in \$60,000 and the Disabled American Veterans of Minnesota will provide \$50,000.

Construction has already begun, and the clinic is expected to open this spring.

"When we work together, all veterans win," said Larry Shellito, commissioner of Veterans Affairs.

In most veterans' home settings dental care is brought in through mobile units, but there are challenges to temporary

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35 missions  
over Japan  
Page 8

## Commander's Task Force lists its 2018 legislative priorities

The Minnesota Commander's Task Force, made up of the nine Congressionally chartered veterans organizations in the state, has agreed on its legislative priorities for the Minnesota Legislature.

The CTF, including The American Legion, can only recommend legislation by a unanimous vote.

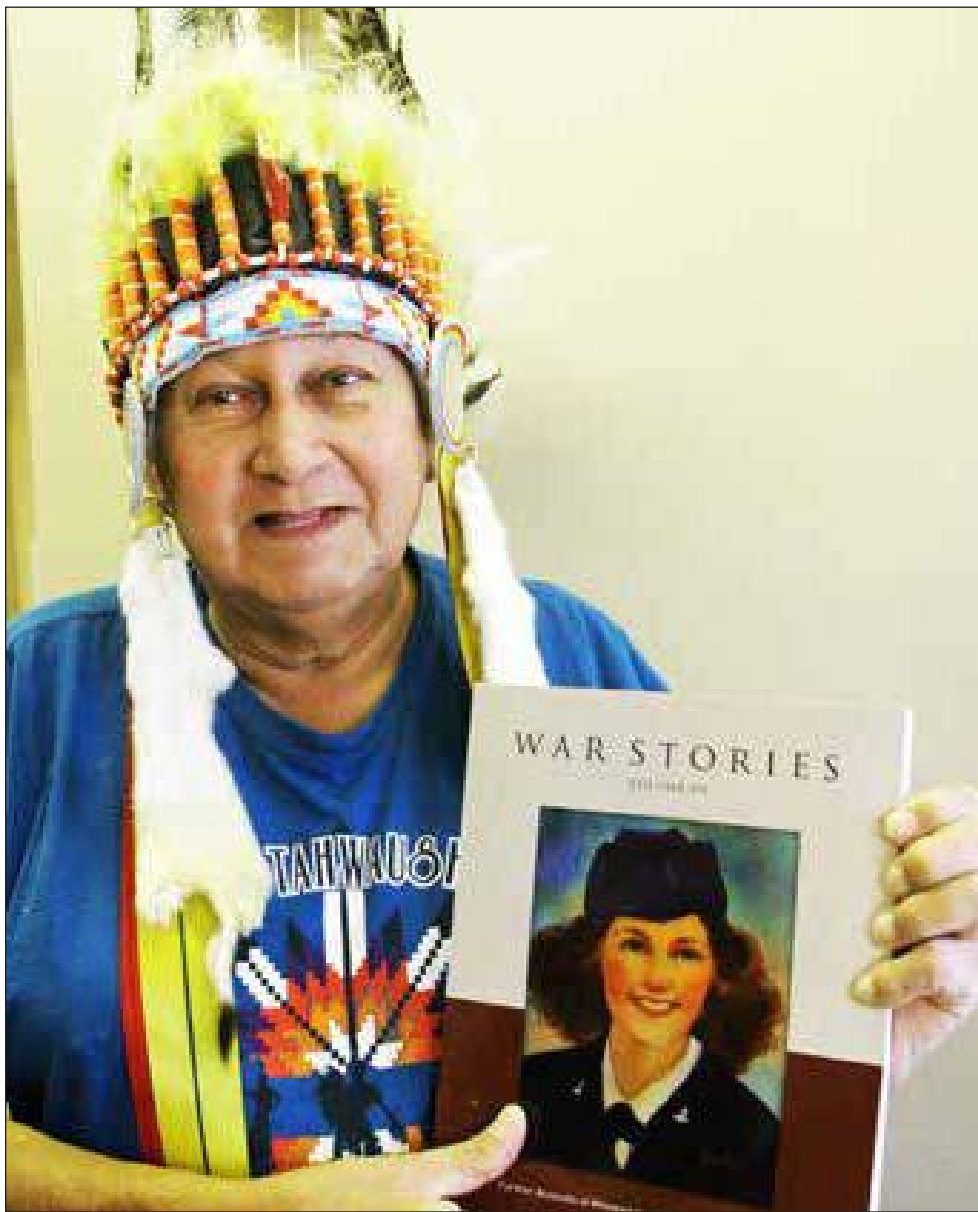
The priorities include:

**1. Lifetime Homestead Market Value Exclusion for Surviving Spouses** - Make the existing homestead market value exclusion for surviving spouses of a deceased Veteran permanent. Currently, the exclu-

sion expires 8 years after the death of the Veteran. This change would allow the surviving spouse to receive the exclusion until they remarry, sell, transfer, or otherwise dispose of the property.

**2. Military Beneficiary's Pay or Benefits Protections** - Legislation to prohibit a party from entering or attempting to enter into an agreement with a military beneficiary that assigns the beneficiary's pay or other benefits to another party in a manner that violates federal law.

**3. Support MDVA's request for Asset Preservation funding** - Support the  
Continued on Page 3



**PETER THOMPSON RECEIVES BOOK** -- Peter Thompson, who earned six Purple Hearts in Vietnam, is shown with a copy of War Stories III, published by the Minnesota American Legion. His story is one of 31 stories in the book about Minnesotans who defended their nation. Thompson is a member of the Ojibwe Nation, and is wearing a ceremonial headdress given him by the Dakota Nation. (Photo courtesy of the *Bagley Farmers Independent*.)

## HOT OFF THE PRESS!



Note: War Stories I is temporarily out of print.

War Stories III is out. 31 stories of Minnesotans who went to war. Hundreds of photos and maps. You can also order online at [mnlegion.org](http://mnlegion.org)

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**2 SPEAK UP FOR HISTORY**  
Talk to your legislators during **History Matters Day at the Capitol, Mar 8**. Or take action now with a phone call or email at [mnhs.org/historymatters](http://mnhs.org/historymatters).



**3 VIEW AMVETS POST #5**  
See portraits of local Mexican and Mexican American military veterans at **AMVETS Post #5: Photographs by Xavier Tavera**, on view now-Apr 22, Minnesota History Center, St. Paul.



**4 USE YOUR DISCOUNT**  
Veterans and active military always receive discounted general admission at MNHS historic sites and museums around Minnesota. Visit soon!

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# Endorsements

## Hammon endorsed for vice commander

American Legion Post 161 of LeRoy, Minnesota has endorsed Wayne Hammon Jr for the office of Minnesota Department Vice Commander for the 2018 – 2019 membership year.

Wayne is eligible for membership in The American Legion through his service in the US Army in Vietnam during 1969 – 1970 and is a dual SAL and American Legion member.

He has held several post offices including command-

er for 18 years and is currently the adjutant.

On the district level he has held Membership Director, County Commander, Vice Commander, SAL Advisor and Commander.

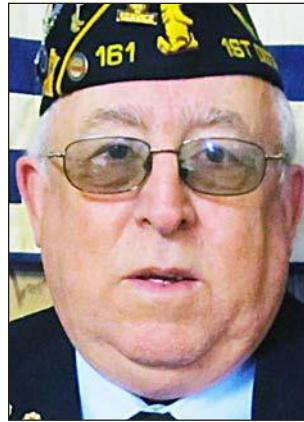
He is currently the First District Adjutant. He is currently on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota American Legion Foundation.

He is a member of the 40 & 8 Voiture 327 of

Rochester and DAV Chapter 27 of Austin where he serves as Junior Vice Commander.

He is also Finance Officer for the Mower County Veterans Council, and a member of ANAVICUS and NALPA

He has been married to his wife Sharon for 42 years. They have three children, three grandsons and one great granddaughter, all members of the American Legion Family.



WAYNE HAMMON JR.

## Vets home will get fixed dental clinic

Continued from Page 1

facilities including limited procedures, the cost of setting up and tearing down, adequate space, durability of equipment and infection control.

The dental clinic in Minneapolis will serve veterans in a setting they are comfortable in, and with better equipment and a dental staff that has experience dealing with the needs of a veterans population.

The clinic will not only serve the residents at the Minneapolis home, but also residents at the Hastings home. It will also serve veterans who are referred through the federal VA hospital system.

The MDVA is considering similar projects for the veterans homes at Silver Bay, Fergus Falls and Luverne.

The facility at Minneapolis has been under consideration for some time, and the Delta Dental commitment got the ball rolling.

The Minneapolis home dates back to the 19th century and was the home of Civil War veterans at one time.

## 2018 National Commander's Tour

Post	Event	Day	Contact:
Bayport	8 a.m. breakfast	Feb. 6	651-439-5463, Judy
Spicer	noon lunch	Feb. 6	320-894-9402, Tammy
Fulda	6 p.m. dinner	Feb. 6	507-329-0500, Jim
Windom*	8 a.m. breakfast	Feb. 7	507-830-1440, Fred
Litchfield	noon lunch	Feb. 7	320-693-2350, Deb
Lake Crystal	6 p.m. dinner	Feb. 7	507-726-6050, Carla
(call between 7 a.m.- 1 p.m. M-F)			
Waseca	8 a.m. breakfast	Feb. 8	
commanderpost228@gmail.com			
Wayzata#	noon lunch	Feb. 8	763-479-6405, Carol
Osseo	6 p.m. dinner	Feb. 8	763-425-4858, Michelle

\*The Windom breakfast will be at Jack Slade's Steakhouse.

#Deadline for Wayzata lunch RSVP is Jan. 25.

A social hour for all dinners begins at 5 p.m.



## Commander Task Force priorities

Continued from Page 1

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs' request for funding to address critical repair projects at the 5 Minnesota State Veterans Homes and Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries.

**4a. Free or Reduced Cost Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Licenses for Service-Connected Disabled Veterans** - CTF supports a reduction in the threshold level of disability rating from the current 100% for Veterans to be eligible for free or discounted deer hunting, trapping, small game and lifetime fishing licenses.

**4b. Expansion of Veterans Courts Statewide** - Provide for the creation/expansion of Veterans Courts (or related treatment and diversion programming) to all district courts in the state of Minnesota.

The Commander's Task Force will continue to meet throughout the session, which will convene on Feb. 20.

A Veterans Day on the Hill, where veterans can talk to their elected leaders, will be held at the Capitol on March 12.

## Legion supports efforts on homelessness

The American Legion submitted a statement for the record to the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittees on Health and Economic Opportunity following a joint hearing on Jan. 18 to learn what efforts that U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Labor (DoL) officials are taking to reduce veteran homelessness.

The hearing featured testimonies from leading representatives of local nonprofits including the Tristate Veterans Community Alliance, Easterseals, Inc., U.S. VETS, The Opportunity Center and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. Federal officials discussed various programs, from housing and health care to job placement assistance, that their departments provide for homeless and at-risk veterans.

"This is a subject that is heartbreaking," Economic Opportunity Subcommittee Chairman Jodey Arrington said. "When you look at the statistics on homelessness on the underlying issues that our veterans struggle with, many and maybe mostly on account of the burden that they bore for us and for our country and for our freedom, it's just gut-wrenching. There's not an issue that I don't believe is more important than to find ways to help and serve this segment of the veteran population."

To fully implement the VA's pledge to eradicate veterans

homelessness, The American Legion believes that Congress must continue making responsible investments in affordable housing and programs that move veterans and their families off the streets and into stable housing.

VA and HUD reported there were more than 40,000 homeless veterans on a single night in January 2017. The VA has since taken decisive action toward its goal of ending veteran homelessness by developing a plan to assist every individual willing to accept services; retain or acquire safe housing; provide needed treatment services; give employment opportunities; and provide benefits assistance.

Thomas Lynch, Veterans Health Administration's health deputy undersecretary for clinical operations, said in his written testimony that the VA and its partners "have developed systematic protocols for ending veteran homelessness. (Those protocols) include the identification of all veterans experiencing homelessness, the ability to provide shelter immediately and the capacity to help veterans swiftly move into permanent housing."

When it comes to addressing mental health concerns and substance use disorders, Lynch said the VA continues to integrate resources in the homeless program, with an emphasis on evidence-based treatment and suicide prevention. Efforts in support of this include mandatory suicide prevention training.

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MP2772 1/12

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## COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Mike Schaffer



I will start this month's column by going down memory lane a bit and revisiting things I've mentioned before. They were important then and I believe they are worthy of mention yet again.

I must start with my theme for this year, "learn, mentor, and prepare." We must list what our past post successes were, and the things that didn't work so well, then pass those good things on to our members, and non-members for a few more possibilities for the future. It's those non-members that will and can be the future of your post, please remember it's "your" post we're talking about here, and it's future is in your hands. I'm asking you to step up and take part in its future.

Then we, you and I, need to mentor the members of our post and share this info with any and all potential members. How else can we teach the next generation of leaders in your post? You do want a future for your post, don't you?

When you've taken the time to mentor the next officers of your post, please don't just abandon them, never to be seen at a post meeting again. Mentor them for a year or until they are comfortable in the office. You'll get better leadership in the bargain I do believe.

If you'll give your best effort to learn and mentor, then you can be pretty well prepared for a bright future for your Legion post.

## Mail Call

### Sentence cut off

#### To the Editor:

I enjoy reading the Legionnaire newspaper very much. This month's story about "A Tale of Two Wars," was really good. I really enjoyed it.

But the end wasn't there. I know you run out of space sometimes. It's happened before. But it's kind of hard not to know how the story ends.

But anyhow, thanks for the good reading. I feel really sorry for those who were in prison camps. My great aunt, who was a mission teacher, was in a Japanese prisoner camp in the Philippines. I also feel really sorry for the poor men and women who didn't come home. My dad's brother was one of those poor souls. He was killed in North Africa in 1942. There were nine relatives in dad's family who served in World War II and two of my mother's brothers were in the Navy. My mother's cousin was killed with Custer at the Little Big Horn. My great, great grandfather fought in the Civil War. I had two cousins that were career men in the Army and one of my nephews was in for 25 years.

I was in the Army for three years and the Minnesota National Guard for four years. Two other cousins were in the Marine Corps for four years. I am proud to have served and also proud of all my relatives that have served.

I am proud to be a Legion member too.

Glenn Dietz  
Granite Falls

Editor's note: The letter writer is correct that the last

## Editorial

### Scammers abound

There are people in the world who would like to separate you from your money, and the computer and other electronic devices are their best tools.

Two recent incidents that hit close to home illustrate a couple of these scams, and how easy it is to be misled.

The first incident happened on a home computer, where the user was searching the internet. All of a sudden, bang, there was a message across the whole screen warning of a virus in the computer. The message purportedly came from Microsoft and advised the user to call Microsoft for further instructions. The user was suspicious, and tried to activate his anti-virus program, but it would not function.

The person on the other end of the phone asked for remote access to the computer, and the user allowed it. Big mistake. Luckily, the computer he was using had no financial information or personal information in it. The caller asked for access to other devices in the house, saying that they too were probably infected. But by this time, the user

Just a reminder again concerning the upcoming "Day on the Hill" scheduled for March 12th at the Minnesota Capitol Rotunda. This is the day "we The American Legion" of Minnesota visit with our legislators on veteran issues, and talk with them about things that you and I feel need doing or correcting for our veterans. Please contact the state Legion headquarters at 651-291-1800 for further details on the day. Then begin to make plans to attend, if at all possible.

Much information has gone out to every post in the state about our programs to date. Just to mention a few recent, Blood Program, Education Week, Oratorical Contest, Boy Scouts, Boys State, Law and Order, plus a number of scholarships that can be applied for. For further details contact your post, district legion officers or state headquarters for details.

Just a word of thanks to all the posts that extended an invite to Veterans Day events: Osseo, Fairfax, Inver Grove Heights, Wabasso, Montevideo, and Slayton. Post Christmas party: Lester Prairie, Montgomery, Brownston, Fridley and Breckenridge. Thanks all from myself and wife Nina. We had a wonderful time and the cook did one fantastic job of preparing the meal. Wanted to see this state, got a good start so far. Does your post have something you'd like to have me at?

My travels have taken me and the bride to four of the five veterans homes so far, two changes of command, camp Ripley and the 34th infantry "Red Bull" division and several interviews for Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and Minnesota Military Radio shows. And I attended several disabled veteran hunting/fishing outings. It's been an absolute pleasure and honor representing you these first six months as commander.

Last, but certainly not least, is my Testimonial, which is set for April 21st at Jackpot Junction. I'm hearing rumbling about roasting me to a golden brown and beyond, that I'll be needing a livestock permit, etc. Promises to be fun "I think." We'll have Past National Commander Tom Bock from Colorado coming in as my guest speaker. Look at the events page of this *Minnesota Legionnaire* for complete details.

sentence of the story on Art Gruenberg in the December issue was cut off. Gruenberg was explaining why he carried little animosity toward the Japanese. The final sentence was "I guess because I grew up with Japanese, I never had anything against them."

Cutting off stories like that sometimes happens in the *Legionnaire* and other newspapers. However, it's usually not because of lack of space, but because in the computer program, a change on one page can affect the type flow on another page. Our apologies to Glen Dietz and others who contacted us about the missing words.

### Time to recruit

#### To the Editor:

Recruiting candidates from your local high schools can certainly begin for the 70th American Legion Minnesota Boys' State which will convene in June at St. John's campus in Collegeville.

Listening to speakers, campaigning, making educated decisions about voting, and serving as elected and appointed officers of city, county, and state governments are some of the activities in which these young men are involved.

Director Thomas Nelson and his staff are working to increase enrollment and appreciate your help in this process. Boys that are currently juniors in high school can visit [www.mnboysstate.com](http://www.mnboysstate.com) for more information.

Neil Kruse  
Spring Lake Park

realized he was a victim, and hung up.

A second scam involved a woman getting a message through Facebook from her cousin saying she had won \$100,000 and had noticed that the woman's name was also listed as a winner. The messaging went back and forth, and personal information was asked for, before the women realized it was a scam.

Here's a couple of lessons to be learned:

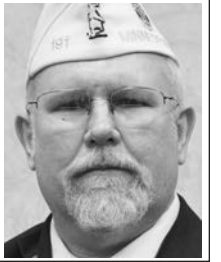
First, Microsoft does not come into your computer and block the screen with a message. The same is usually true of banks, Pay Pal, and other legitimate companies. If anybody ever asks for remote access to your computer, tell them no.

Second, if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is. Scammers can get the names of relatives, and make the messages sound like they came from them. But don't count on spending that \$100,000.

Older people in particular are being targeted by scammers. Just say no.

## Chaplain's Corner

By  
Ralph Schneekloth



We are already to February, which the first Sunday is Four Chaplains Sunday.

"Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?" Malachi 2:10. This inscription is at a school in York, Pennsylvania, where Rabbi Goode presided. There is a ceramic tile mural that bears the likeness of all four chaplains, with the identical inscription under each. One in Hebrew, one in Latin, and two in English.

The USAT Dorchester was hit by a torpedo at 12:55 a.m., 03 February, 1943, and sank in approximately 27 minutes later while enroute to Greenland, loaded with troops, civilian workers and supplies. The chaplains were Lt. Carl V. Poling, Dutch reformed, Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist, Lt. John P. Washington, Roman Catholic, and Lt. Alexander P. Goode, Jewish. Can you imagine the thoughts and actions that took place on the deck? The chaplains moved among the troops, urging calm, stilling the panic, along with helping many people to safely get off the ship. They passed out as many life jackets as were there, then gave their own away to save a few more. Lt. John Mahoney forgot his gloves. He later wrote "Chaplain Goode overheard me swearing at myself for my stupidity. When he saw me heading back to my cabin he called after me, 'Don't bother, Mahoney. 'I have another pair. You can have these.' He pulled off his gloves and gave them to me." He landed in a lifeboat that was awash and lasted for 8 hours. Without the gloves, he would have never made it. Two out of 40 in that lifeboat survived.

"Valor is a gift," Carl Sandburg once said. "Those having it never know for sure whether they have it until the test comes." That night, they passed life's ultimate test, and in doing so became an enduring example of extraordinary faith, courage, and selflessness. On 19 December, 1944, the next of kin were given the posthumous awards of the Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart by the commanding general of the Army Service Forces. A special Medal of Heroism, equal to the Medal of Honor and never before given and never to be awarded again, was authorized by the Congress and awarded by the President in 1961.

In February 1951, the Chapel of the Four Chaplains, an interfaith memorial chapel, was dedicated in Philadelphia. The opening was presided over by Reverend Daniel Poling, chaplain Poling's father with President Truman in attendance. Please support the Chapel of the Four Chaplains if you are able. Their story gives one hope, and their heroism and selfless sacrifice needs to be remembered.

A prayer for The American Legion, O God, our Heavenly Father, as we seek by Your grace to be good Legionnaires, help us to do justice in all our ministrations to the sacred memory of all veterans of all wars, but more especially to give our all to eliminate the necessity of their being in days to come—those greater scourges by which people are beset today: poverty, addiction, disease and indifference toward the things of the Spirit. For we pray in Your holy name. Amen

A final thought, it is said that we make time and assets available for that which we truly value. Get out of your comfort zone, overcome your normalcy bias and make a difference.

## The Minnesota Legionnaire

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The American Legion, Department of Minnesota

Al Zdon, Editor

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# What's Happening

## Commander's Testimonial

The Testimonial for Department Commander Mike Schaffer will be held Saturday, April 21, at the Jackpot Junction Casino and Hotel. It will feature Past National Commander Thomas Bock of Colorado as the featured speaker.

The organizers of the event will have 75 rooms blocked at the casino hotel. Call 800-946-2274 or 507-697-8000 for reservations. The cost is \$87 a night.

Tickets for the event will be \$30 each and the meal will include smoked ham, two sides and a dessert. Tickets can be picked up at the event.

Cut off for purchasing tickets is April 10. Please send names, address, phone number, post or unit, and total amount enclosed to Currie Post 322, Box 56, 121 Mill Street, Currie, MN 56123.

## Caribbean Night

North St. Paul Post 39 will sponsor a Caribbean-inspired evening with dinner and fun games, island music, and a silent auction. Cost is \$18.

It will be held March 24 with social hour at 5 p.m. and dinner at 6.

## Cannabis stories sought

Rep. Tim Walz, D-Minn., the ranking member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, has joined The American Legion in calling for the VA to study the effects of medical cannabis on veterans suffering from post traumatic stress and chronic pain.

Stories are being sought from veterans who have used medical cannabis to help them cope from the injuries of war. The office will also accept stories of veterans who have

used non-medical cannabis, and their identities will be protected.

It would be legal for the VA to study cannabis, but Secretary Shulkin refuses to do so. Over 90 percent of veterans and caregivers support VA medical cannabis research.

Stories can be emailed to griffin.anderson@mail.house.gov.

## Round Tables

The World War II History Round Table will be held Thursday, Feb. 8, and the subject will be the "Berlin Airlift, the First Allied Victory of the Cold War."

The speaker will be Author Roger G. Miller, and will feature veterans who participated. Cost is \$5. The event is held at the Fort Snelling History Center and will begin at 7 p.m.

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Roundtable will be held Monday, Feb. 26, at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater. It is a dinner meeting and reservations can be made by contacting Steve Anderson, 715-386-1268. The program will be "President Lincoln's 1861 Special Order and the 1862 Executions" with Corrine Marz.

## Legion Day at Twins

Mark your calendar for Friday, July 13, American Legion Family Night at the Twins. The game is against Tampa Bay. Tickets will be \$21 each in the Diamond View section. More info to come.

Commander Mike Schaffer will throw out the first pitch and the Legion will also have the U.S. Flag raiser and the Twins Territory Flag raiser for the game.

## Traveling Vietnam Wall

tor of Caledonia Post 191.

**Colmer, Keith B.**, 53, Army veteran of the Lebanon/Granada era, died Jan. 7, 2018. He served in Germany. He was a member of Claremont Post 422.

**Meyer, Robert J.**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 16, 2017. He was a member of Waseca Legion Post 228.

**Schutrop, Larry R.**, 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 23, 2017. He served in Korea. He was a member of New Richland Post 75.

**Best, Gerald Logan**, 66, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 19, 2017. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

**Dambowy, Andrew**, 86, veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 7, 2017. He was a member of Pierz Post 341.

**Olson, Ardie H.**, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 20, 2017. He served on the USS Anzio. He was a member of St. James Post 33.

**Minette, Arnold**, 92, veteran of World War II, died Dec. 30, 2017. He was a member of Paynesville Post 271.

**Jelinski, Leonard**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 9, 2018. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Karnowski, James**, 87, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 1, 2018. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Chell, Marvin D.**, 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 7, 2018. He served in the South Pacific on the USS Vulcan. He was a member of Hackensack Post 202.

**Peterson, Dennis Theodore**, 85, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 24, 2017. He was a member of Milaca Post 178.

**Pierzina, Ernest**, 96, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 26, 2017. He served at southwest Pacific bases. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Lamberty, Frank M.**, 93, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 18, 2017. He served in Japan. He was a member of Farmington Post 189.

**Hendel, George J.**, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 28, 2017. He was a member of Caledonia Post 191.

**Reiner, Raymond**, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 24, 2017. He served on the destroyer USS Litchfield and was also in the Submarine Service. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

**Skorheim, Harvey**, 101, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 2, 2018. He served at Pearl Harbor. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

**Duffy, Patrick J.**, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 4, 2017. He was a member of Apple Valley Post 1776.

**Winczewski, August "Mike,"** 88, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 3, 2018. He was a member of Sauk Rapids Post 254.

**Reller, Anthony E.**, 70, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 30, 2017. He was a member Sauk Rapids Post 254.

The American Veterans Traveling Vietnam Wall will be in Austin, May 17-20. It's an 80 percent scale model of the Washington D.C. Wall. The wall will be at the Mower County Fairgrounds.

## New Prague Fest

A Music Fest fundraiser for the New Prague Area Veterans Memorial will be held Saturday, Feb. 10, at the New Prague American Legion Park Ballroom. The first band will be at 1 p.m. and the last band at 9.

Cost is \$10 presale and \$12 at the door. There will be door prizes and a silent auction. Food will be available after 4 p.m. Kids, 12 and under, are free. Contact Mark Dvorak for more info or to purchase tickets, 952-873-6598.

## Antique Sale, Flea Market

North St. Paul Post 39 will have an antique sale and flea market on Saturday, Feb. 17. There will also be a free-admission bake sale. For more information, call Betty at 651-777-5552. All proceeds go to Auxiliary programs.

## Redwood Falls Guard

The Redwood Falls National Guard unit will have a Centennial Party on Saturday, Feb. 24, at the National Guard Armory. It will begin at 5 p.m. with a social hour with dinner at 6 followed by live music. Cost is \$15 per person. For information, call Jim Mertens, 507-430-2261.

## Drop in clinic

MACV will hold a drop in legal clinic at the Anoka County Government Center on Thursday, March 1, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

# Taps

**Sampson, John**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 17, 2018. He was Ninth District Commander from 2009-10. He was a past post commander of Thief River Falls Post 117, and served on the honor guard.

**Spidel, Harry Eugene**, 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 9, 2018. He served as a gunner's mate in the South Pacific. He was Second District Commander in 1984-85 and was Second District Adjutant from 1978-79. He was a member of the Lismore Post 636.

**Trunk, Robert J.**, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 6, 2018. He was awarded the Bronze Star. He was a member of the Princeton Post 216 honor guard.

**Blais, Tom**, 90, Navy veteran of World War II, and Army National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 15, 2017. He was a past adjutant of Long Prairie Post 12.

**Flatgard, Merlin "Johnny,"** 82, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 1, 2018. He was a member of Windom Post 206.

**Miller, Dale**, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 20, 2018. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Gross, Stanley J.**, 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 14, 2018. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

**Fischer, James E.**, 65, Air Force and National Guard veteran of the Panama/Grenada war era, died Jan. 19, 2018. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**McDowell, William**, 87, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 25, 2018. He was a member of Sauk Rapids Post 254.

**Gable, Donald L.**, 74, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 27, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Wild, Forrest D.**, 91, Army veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Jan. 4, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Johnson, Gene R.**, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 5, 2018. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Haddy, Joseph L.**, 76, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 12, 2018. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Leschke, Edward H.**, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 15, 2018. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Erickson, Lloyd E.**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 15, 2018. He was stationed in Germany. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

**Leibold, Thomas Frank**, 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 29, 2017. He was a vice commander and past adjutant of Arcade-Phalen Post 577. He was also a Rider.

**Bolkema, Kenneth**, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 4, 2018. He served in the Philippines during the battle of Luzon. He later served in occupied Japan. He was a member of Edgerton Post 42.

**Schroeder, Stanley**, 74, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 4, 2018. He was membership direc-

**Wright, Dale**, 89, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 29, 2017. He was a member of New London Post 537.

**Olson, Floyd B.**, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 26, 2017. He served in France as a clerk-typist and was on the sharp shooting team and honor guard. He was a member of the Roseau Post 24.

**Hansen, Oliver Alexander**, 83, Navy veteran of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, died Jan. 8, 2017. He served for 20 years. He was a member of Barrett Post 351.

**Braun, Donald**, 92, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Dec. 18, 2017. He flew 35 missions in Europe during the war. He was a member of Clear Lake Post 354.

**Matcha, Larry**, 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 1, 2018. He served in Tunisia, Southern France and central Europe. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**Kramer, Eugene Francis**, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 3, 2018. He helped build Desert Rock in Nevada, which was used for atomic testing. He was a member of Hector Post 135.

**Uren, Kenneth "Corky,"** 88, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 18, 2017. He was a Seabee stationed on Guam with the 103rd Naval Construction Battalion. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

**Bennett, Rodney "Monk,"** 85, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 23, 2017. He served in the 1st Marine Division at the Pusan Perimeter and later at the Chosin Reservoir. He got frozen feet and had to be evacuated. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

**Munns, Robert D.**, 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died Dec. 30, 2017. He was a member of Amboy Post 276.

**Nelson, Howard B.**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 4, 2018. He was a member of Mora Post 201.

**Borsheim, Earl J.**, 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 4, 2018. He served in the Americal Division in the South Pacific. He was in the 164th Infantry Regiment and fought at Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and the Philippines. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

**Nelson, Emery M.**, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 11, 2018. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

**Stiever, Robert**, 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 12, 2018. He was a member of Caledonia Post 191.

**Doran, Donald Norman**, 85, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 11, 2018. He served in Puerto Rico. He was a member of Monticello Post 260.

**Thompson, Arthur C.**, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 15, 2018. He was a seaman 1st class on the USS Rawlins. He was a member of St. James Post 33.

**Moonen, Gary "Ozzie,"** 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 18, 2017. He was a member of Waconia Post 150.

## Correction

**Christiansen, Arthur**, 81, Army National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 25, 2017. He was a charter member and color guard member at Sauk Rapids Post 254.

## World War II History Round Table

# Battle of Stalingrad was brutal, pivotal

By Al Zdon

What was the most important – or the most lethal – battle of World War II?

If you ask many Americans, the answer might be the Battle of the Bulge, the landing at Normandy, Okinawa or some other deadly confrontation.

If you ask a military historian, though, the answer probably would be the Battle of Stalingrad.

This titanic conflict between the German and Soviet armies not only was perhaps the costliest battle in the history of warfare, it was a major turning point in the war. It was a defeat of epic proportions for Hitler and the Nazi forces.

Just to give an idea of the scale of the battle, compare it to the Battle of the Bulge. The Bulge involved some one million troops and over a thousand tanks. Casualties for the U.S. were 105,000, and casualties for the Germans were 125,000.

At Stalingrad, over 2 million men fought on both sides, and over 6,000 tanks were employed. The casualties for the Soviet Union were 1.1 million and for Germany, 627,000 men.

Stalingrad was the subject at the January World War II History Roundtable at Fort Snelling, and the speaker was Jonathan House, who wrote the book “Stalingrad” along with David Glantz.

House, who is a retired colonel of military intelligence and a history professor emeritus at the Army’s General Staff College, gave a detailed background of the 1942 battle.

Germany had invaded Russia in June, 1941, and had driven deep into the Soviet Union before winter and the destruction of both armies caused a standstill in the fighting.

“By 1942, both sides were trying frantically to re-man and re-equip to get ready for the next round,” House said.

The Soviets had moved many of their factories to the Ural Mountains and were cranking out tanks and aircraft at a fast rate, much faster than the German industrial sector. “Germany simply could not replace its losses.”

Hitler and the high command decided to put its major resources into Army Group South because Germany’s goal was to reach the Soviet’s major oil fields in the Caucasus that year.

The Soviet Union was having one major problem, House said. They had super-sized the Army organization and bumped all its officers up into more important positions. This meant some growing pains.

Manpower was a prob-

lem for Germany. The Red Army had millions of reservists, trained and waiting to be called up, while Germany had none. Germany had to turn to its allies – Romania, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary – to fill out its manpower needs.

House said these non-German troops have been accused of being unmotivated and poorly trained fighters, but he said the main problem was lack of equipment. “Germany didn’t have enough to equip itself, how much do you think they were going to give to Romania?”

There were three campaigns early in the year, all German victories. The Germans won battles at Sevastopol and the Crimean Peninsula, and a Soviet offensive near Kharkov ended in failure and the capture of thousands of troops.

House notes that the German plan initially had little to do with Stalingrad. Army Group South was divided into two forces, with “A” heading south towards the oil fields in the Caucasus and “B” protecting the German army’s left flank.

“Oil was Germany’s logistical weakness. If they could get to the oil fields in Chechnya and Azerbaijan they would not only get the oil themselves, but they would deny the Soviets from that supply.”

The battle commenced on June 28, 1942, with the Germans encountering little resistance. “It was just like back in 1941 with the Germans roaring over the Steppes. The trouble was, they weren’t taking many prisoners like they had in 1941.”

Instead the Soviets had better strategy and were withdrawing smartly, knowing they would turn and face the Germans when the terrain got more mountainous.

“There were two factors. One was the tyranny of distance. From Karkov to Grozny (in Chechnya) is about a thousand kilometers. Plus it’s some of the harshest terrain imaginable.”

Meanwhile the B forces pushed east toward the Don River, where they thought they could make a stand against any Soviet attack on the flank.

In the end the plan began to bog down. “It was a case of many bridges too far. The Germans just did not have enough resources.”

But the Soviets also made major mistakes, often because of threats from the higher command. “It might make sense for an officer to stop and cut losses, but he might not be around at the end of the war to collect his pension.”

By the end of July, the

German B group had pushed the Soviets to the other side of the Don River and headed further east to the Volga. The A group was pushing into the Caucasus but had to slow because of the length of its supply lines.

Somewhere along the way, Stalingrad became a target. For the Germans, there could be great propaganda and morale value in taking a city named after the Soviet leader. For the same reason, protecting the city became increasingly important to the Soviets.

House said there were other reasons to attack Stalingrad. It was a major transportation center and a major industrial complex. But it took Group B six weeks to go the 40 miles from the Don River to the Volga.

“The German Army by this time was only getting about one fourth of the supplies they needed. Paulus and the Sixth Army were always waiting on the next train or the next ox cart for supplies.”

Both the Germans and the Soviets had run out of trucks by this time, and relied heavily on horse power to move equipment and supplies.

Group A finally got to the northernmost oil fields and found them burning, set afire by the retreating Red Army. Their furthest advance, by November, was about 115 miles from their goal of Grozny.

Meanwhile, at Stalingrad, the two leaders were Gen. Friedrich Paulus, on the German side, and Gen. Vasily Chuikov on the Soviet side. Paulus had never commanded an army in battle, while Chuikov proved to be a tenacious leader.

The fighting was soon from building to building and often only a wall separated the two armies. “The casualty rates were ferocious. Both armies were bleeding out.”

Chuikov started with 50,000 men, brought in 100,000 reinforcements, and still had 50,000 men as the battle progressed. “And Germany was just flat out of troops.”

The city was reduced to a pile of rubble.

By November, the Germans had captured 90 percent of the city and split the Soviet forces into two small pockets, but the Red Army grimly refused to give up. They fought for both love of country and because of the brutal measures used to keep them fighting. One estimate says 14,000 Soviet soldiers were summarily executed for not fighting at Stalingrad.

Meanwhile, the Soviets began massing troops to the north and south of Stalingrad for a counter-offensive. “It was the first

time in the war the Soviets took their time to get ready.”

On November 19, the Soviets launched Operation Uranus, attacking the German flanks on either side of Stalingrad. In both areas, the Germans had used Romanian units for defense.

By Nov. 23, the two Soviet attacks linked, and Stalingrad was surrounded. About 265,000 Axis troops were cut off.

Hitler was convinced by his air force that Stalingrad could be resupplied by air, and so he ordered the city be held. Hitler was promised that 300 tons of supplies could be brought in daily by air, a goal that was never reached. The average delivery per day was 85 tons.

House notes that even if they wanted to breakout immediately, the German army was relying on horses. “You can’t move heavy weapons or the wounded by horse.”

About 25,000 German troops were evacuated by air, but the siege went on and the Red Army tightened the noose around the city. An attempt to break through from the south by the Germans stalled and was abandoned.



A German soldier peeks around a pile of rubble at Stalingrad in 1942.

Meanwhile Group A in the south gave up its advance and began to retreat from the Caucasus.

The Germans in Stalingrad lost their airfields and the supply from above came to a halt. Their position shrank until they were pushed back to the banks of the Volga. They were split into two and then three pockets of resistance.

By the beginning of February, all three pockets surrendered. Only 91,000 German troops were still fighting and they had run out of food and ammunition.

“It was a case of Germany just trying to do too much. Once they got involved in Stalingrad, it was just too much.”

It was the worst defeat at that time for a German army, and it signaled the slow, agonizing defeat of Germany over the next two-and-one-half years.



JONATHAN HOUSE



### Please Join the Posts Below in Supporting the 100<sup>th</sup> National Convention

The National Convention Corporation of Minnesota would like to thank the Posts below for sponsoring our convention and invite those that aren't on the list to consider participating. Contributions to the convention will be directed towards the Minnesota Convention Corporation's hosting responsibilities and other ways to make this the best convention yet.

#### Posts of Distinction (\$5,000 and up)

Merton-Dale Post 80  
North St. Paul Post 39  
Rudolph Priebe Post 172

#### Posts of Patriotism (\$1,000 to \$2,499)

American Legion 113  
Austin Post 91  
East Grand Forks Post 157  
Ecklund-Holmstrom Post 117  
Everett H. Hale Post 68  
Fairmont Post 36  
Frank Lundberg Post 282  
Ham Lake Post 2000  
Hamline Post 418  
John Bridges Post 15  
Nelson-Horton Post 104

#### Supporting Posts (Below \$1,000)

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Aviation Post 511  
Beatty-Humphries Post 323  
Bigelow Post 496  
Billie Brown Post 627  
Campbell-Williams Post 258  
Charles Borak Post 45  
Dan Patch Post 643  
Dovin-Wilcox Post 313  
Edward B. Cutter Po 445  
Eugene Earley Post 121  
Foster-Bernhardt Post 373  
Glennville Post 264  
Gopher Post 440

Grand Meadow Post 140  
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Kramer Berg Post 507  
Le Center Post 108  
Lee Goldsmith Post 201  
Lee-Osborn Post 59  
Madison Lake Post 269  
Mc Veigh-Dunn Post 60  
Melvin Daskam Post 38  
Monticello Post 260  
Odegaard-Quade Post 401  
Peter Leuze Post 420  
Prior Lake Post 447  
Prudent Van Risseghem 395  
Public Safety Post 449  
Richard Howard Ferrell 46  
Richmond Post 292  
Silver Star Post 428  
Spicer Post 545  
St James Post 33  
St. Paul Post 8  
Truman Blakesley Post 432  
Waldorf Post 587  
White Bear Lake Post 168  
Wm. T. Lewis Post 12  
Wold-Chamberlain Post 99  
Woodbury Post 501

We ask posts that want to give to make a check out to the National Convention Corporation of Minnesota and send to MN American Legion State Headquarters : Third Floor, Veterans Service Building: 20 W. 12th Street, Room 300A : St. Paul, MN 55155-2000.

### Do you know a company that may financially support the 100<sup>th</sup> National Convention through sponsorship or advertising?

There are sponsorship and advertising opportunities for businesses. We want to thank the companies below for supporting the convention through sponsorships. If you know of a company that may want to participate through a sponsorship or advertisement in the Legionnaire, please contact Michael Davy at (612) 247-9960 or mdavy@mnlegion.org.



## Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By  
Jeremy Wolfsteller



### Feeling Used & Abused?

As honorable as it is to protect and serve your country's freedom, it can come at high costs; sometimes leaving you feeling chewed up and spit out.

What's funny is that a majority of us say we would do it again.

We all know the military is in the business of winning wars but what you don't know till after service is how it translates to wear and tear on your body both mentally and physically over the years.

Unfortunately we're seeing younger men and women taking an unexpected early retirement after their service because of military related health conditions. I remember joining the service as a young, healthy energetic person thinking I was invincible.

Two deployments to a combat zone later laid up in a hospital bed at Walter Reed Medical Center, I found out how quick that would change.

More often than not, service-members are being discharged from the service without the knowledge and understanding of the VA system.

For them, finding out what their rights are to access certain VA entitlements promised to them is often complicated and confusing.

Unfortunately the bureaucracy of the VA leaves the veteran feeling frustrated resulting in some just giving up. This is not helpful for them to move forward in life after the military, sometimes depression, and lack of motivation sets in.

For those who are granted disability compensation for service related injuries, it can be very uplifting knowing that if you can no longer work that you'll have income for you and your family. But for those that have their claim denied, they're left feeling betrayed. The Veterans Benefits Administration has seen claims magnified by growing complexity.

There has been a 200 percent increase over the last 10 years in original claims containing eight or more specific medical issues, or contentions. This means that the time it takes to develop and review a claim is that much longer also with greater chances of the VA making an error or incorrect decision adjudicating.

On August 23, 2017 the President signed into law the VA's Appeals Modernization Act.

This legislation directs VA to streamline an appellate process to provide veterans with the earliest possible resolution of their claim.

Currently in what VA calls the Legacy Appeals (claims that have been pending at the Board of Veterans Appeals) can take multiple years for a decision. Approximately 80,000 appeals are pending more than 125 days.

Since the signing of the aforementioned legislation the VA has rolled out a Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP). This is a temporary program for eligible veterans to voluntarily opt into.

This program will end Feb 2019 when VA plans to fully implement the Appeals Modernization Act. VA has begun to solicit or notify veterans of their option via mail. Currently VA is not notifying the veteran's power of attorney i.e. (The American Legion) when they mail out VA correspondence or notification of this RAMP program to their claimant. I'd recommend if you receive a letter from the VA about RAMP to contact your representative to make sure RAMP is best for you.

Loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage are the Army core values and you'd think if you lived up to your end of the deal, when you're discharged, the Government would live up to their end of the deal providing you with promised entitlements.

Transitioning service-members need a sense of hope filled with new goals and ambitions after the service, sometimes this new found motivation comes from knowing that you're being taken care of by the VA.

Quality and timely healthcare and disability compensation for your sacrifices can sometimes be the morale boost you need to set new goals for the future.

[jwolfsteller@mnlegion.org](mailto:jwolfsteller@mnlegion.org)

## American Legion Riders

By Chuck Stone  
Department Director



Greetings American Legion Family,

Our National Commander, Denise Rohan, will be making a few stops Minnesota soon. I challenge all Riders to make it to one of the many posts visits on the schedule. Wear your vest, enjoy a bite to eat and take in Commander Denise's message.

I see there are a number of events sponsored by Riders coming. It's nice to see events like ice fishing, Veterans home visits, spaghetti feeds just to name a few.

If you haven't heard, Legionville is in need of a few volunteer hours. There is grounds work to be done along with the notorious bog that moved in and took over the beach front. I have been told that the very day ice off occurs will the day moving the bog will take place. To borrow a command from the Navy, there will be a "All hands on deck" call sent out. Boats, rope and most important willing folks like yourself are needed to make this operation a success. Standby for further details or keep an eye on Adjutant Randy Tesdahl's Facebook for up to the minute news on the bog.

I apologize for this being short as I am dealing with a family medical emergency. Thank you one and all for your prayers and well wishes. God Bless one and all.

## Membership Chart, as of Jan. 29, 2018

District	2018 Goal	Total 2017	Total 2018	Weeks Gain	Total Posts	Goal Posts	% Of Goal	Same date last year
District 1	8,953	8,895	7,930	28	58	9	88.57%	
District 2	7,272	7,188	6,310	7	84	18	86.77%	
District 3	11,712	11,647	10,177	16	65	9	86.89%	
District 4	2,420	2,402	2,035	0	18	2	84.09%	
District 5	2,486	2,464	2,122	49	22	1	85.36%	
District 6	11,811	11,740	10,484	29	71	16	88.76%	
District 7	6,398	6,322	5,636	5	76	12	88.09%	
District 8	4,252	4,212	3,692	0	40	4	86.83%	
District 9	6,729	6,664	5,864	-1	65	15	87.15%	
District 10	10,066	10,012	8,703	-16	54	6	86.46%	
District 11	401	2,358	1,870	0	2	1	466.33%	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>72,500</b>	<b>73,904</b>	<b>64,823</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>89.41%</b>	

# Sons of the American Legion News

## Sons of The American Legion

By  
Shawn Davis



As I write this, I am in the middle of visiting as many midwinters as I am able, and I hope to have seen many of you at them. It is great to attend them and see the work getting done, and learning along the way.

Now is the time for all squadrons to begin to pull together their activities and begin to prepare to complete their Consolidated Squadron Reports (CSR). Actually we should have been tracking our activities all year, but it is not too late to gather and prepare. It would be great to have every squadron turn in their CSR report this year at Campout. 100% participation, would that not make the detachment great? Reach out to the squadrons in your district and make sure they are aware to send this report in.

As for membership, congratulations on doing a great job of bringing in 5 for Minnesota. We are in 8th place nationally for membership, and 2nd to Wisconsin in the Central Region with a membership total at National of 73.494%. Great work! We are actually 1,500 members ahead of where we were last year. Now our Renewal rate is 63.51% currently with 7,346 members having renewed. So that means we are making an impact on adding New Members! Which makes me think how are we doing on recruiting for our family as well? How many new American Legion or American Legion Auxiliary members have we brought in?

Bringing in family will help us grow as a family, but remember to include the new members in your activities, meetings, and training. They are only new so long, and we want them to renew as well!

So keep up the good work, and I will see you at the membership rallies, and on our monthly Detachment call.

## Detachment Spring Conference March 17

How can I get members to show up at our Squadron meetings? How can I get more volunteers at our events? What are some good fundraisers that work for other Squadrons? How can we get younger members involved? How do we tell the community what we do and what we stand for? How can we help more veterans? How can I get a full working slate of officers?

**Plan for Chaska for March 17, 2018.**  
**Chaska American Legion Post 57**  
**102 W 4th St., Chaska MN 55318.**

All Sons of The American Legion Members welcome. As is any member of the Legion family interested in the

SAL.

The Detachment Spring Conference is a time when Districts and Squadrons gather to hear about the progress in each of our Committees and share ideas on what's working all around Minnesota. Check out our website for details. Plan on spending the day with us in Chaska. Bring your questions. And bring examples of what's working for your Squadron.

And don't forget to bring donation items for the famous Child Welfare Auction. Contact Adjutant Doug at [saladjmn@gmail.com](mailto:saladjmn@gmail.com) for more info. We look forward to seeing you at the Spring Conference.

District	Total 2017	2018 Goal	total 2018	%	Same date last year
1	1,913	1,925	1,399	72.68%	1,102
2	1,311	1,342	1,095	81.59%	813
3	1,942	1,956	1,402	71.68%	1,124
4	381	388	295	76.03%	252
5	414	420	318	75.71%	298
6	1,458	1,457	1,115	76.53%	952
7	1,017	1,028	711	69.16%	566
8	565	580	336	57.93%	338
9	816	830	598	72.05%	424
10	1,741	1,760	1,233	70.06%	1,034
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11,567</b>	<b>11,697</b>	<b>8,502</b>	<b>72.69%</b>	<b>6,910</b>

### NEWS NOTES --

Any SAL member who would like to receive the Legionnaire electronically each month, go to [mnlegion.org](http://mnlegion.org) and click on Legionnaire publications and follow the prompts.

The Detachment is seeking a savvy webmaster to develop and maintain the SAL's website. If you are interested, email [JKoe@axtoninnovations.com](mailto:JKoe@axtoninnovations.com). Please provide your web experience. The job requires a passion for veterans and a few hours each week, patience with volunteers and a willingness to work. Compensation is open.

# 35 missions over Japan

*Dick Donaldson flew 35 missions over Japan in World War II in the B-29 Superfortress, one of the most lethal weapons the U.S. developed in the war. His last mission was flown just days before the atomic bomb was dropped.*

By Al Zdon

Growing up shoveling coal in Tracy, Minnesota, Dick Donaldson probably never thought he would be at the controls of perhaps the most destructive weapon in the United States arsenal during World War II.

No, he had nothing to do with the atomic bomb.

But the effort to create the B-29 Superfortress bomber that he flew cost the United States more than the Manhattan Project that developed the bomb.

Certainly the atomic bomb was the most terrifying weapon to come out of the war, but consider this comparison. The bomb that was dropped at Hiroshima devastated 4.7 square miles.

A B-29 raid on Tokyo early in 1945 wiped out 16 square miles.

And, by war's end, the bomber's ability to fly long distances and drop huge payloads of bombs was a key contributor to convincing the Japanese to surrender.

It has also raised questions about American policy in destroying large sections of Japanese cities by fire, and the meaning of total war.

"I still think about it every day," Donaldson said.

Richard Donaldson was born in 1923. His family lived a couple of miles outside of Tracy, a booming agricultural community in southwestern Minnesota, on land that Donaldson's grandfathers had settled after the Civil War.

"People always ask me if I've lived in Tracy all my life, and I tell them, 'not yet.'"

Both of Donaldson's grandfathers fought in the Civil War. They were allowed to homestead 160 acres of land, and they took the government up on the offer. They also obtained 160 additional acres by agreeing to plant trees on the second parcel.

"There were no trees in those days except along the river beds. The prairie fires would take them all."

Donaldson said farmers in the 1800s generally planted trees on the east and west sides of the farm house, leaving the southern exposure exposed. "It's probably where the old saying came from, 'There's nothing colder than the north end of a south wind.'"

Donaldson went to a country school, with one teacher being responsible for eight grades. "It was actually interesting for me because you could listen in on the other classes, and learn much faster – if you wanted to."

Besides farming, the two grandfathers got into the coal and wood business in Tracy, and Donaldson's father eventually bought them out and the family moved into town. It was the middle of the Great Depression and Donaldson was just entering fifth grade.

"Of course, I had to fight every kid in town to find out my place in the pecking order."

The other thing he did a great deal was shovel coal. "Oh, I shoveled a lot of coal when I was a kid." It must have helped his physique, because he later became captain of the Tracy High School football team.

One of the memories of growing up was traveling over to Walnut Grove when they had a horse sale. "They would sell these western broncos, and my grandfathers wanted them to sell. It was my dad's job to break them. I always said, that's where I learned to swear, listening to him try to break those horses."

Even with a business, the family didn't prosper during the hard times. "We were poor, but everybody was poor. We didn't lack for anything. We had plenty to eat and a place to sleep. Of course we didn't take a lot of vacations to other countries."

In school, he also played on the basketball team that went to the state tournament as Region 3 champions. They eventually lost in the consolation game to Chisholm.

In the summer, he played Legion Baseball. "The Legion

Post didn't have much, so all they could do is buy us a couple of bats and some baseballs. We didn't have any uniforms. I was the catcher, and all we had was the body protector. I'd have to borrow the shin guards and mask from the other catcher. We'd trade off every inning."

In his high school years, he got a job with a produce company that got local chickens and eggs ready to be shipped to Chicago and other big cities. "I was just glad that I didn't have to shovel coal all the time, but I still shoveled a lot anyway."

After graduation in 1941, he used his savings to attend Carlton College in Northfield. He studied economics, and to help pay his tuition he worked for the college.

"I was a waiter in the girl's dormitory. We had to wear white shirts and ties and white jackets, and always served food from the left side and beverages from the right. It was very classy. On Sundays, the girls wore high heels."

On December 7, 1941, he and his fellow waiters had just served the girls breakfast, and they were heading out of the dormitory. "All of a sudden a gal up on the fourth floor stuck her head out the window and yelled, 'The Japanese just attacked us at Pearl Harbor.'"

"We all knew what that meant. We all knew we were the right age to be involved."

Donaldson and a friend wanted to get into the war, and in particular, they wanted to get into the Army Air Corps. "I had seen the movies about World War I, and I didn't want anything to do with those trenches."

His chance came in November of 1942 when an Air Corps recruiter came to Carlton. Donaldson and a friend were at basketball practice, and they were sworn in in their sweatsuits.

It turned out he was too young to join up, though, and his parents refused to sign a waiver. So, his friend went in, and Donaldson stayed in Minnesota as part of the Air Corps reserve.

"My friend was also a waiter, and he wanted to make a notable departure. The day he was to leave for the Army, we served a meal. There were 16 girls at a table, and they each had two glasses. So my friend got all 32 glasses on a tray,

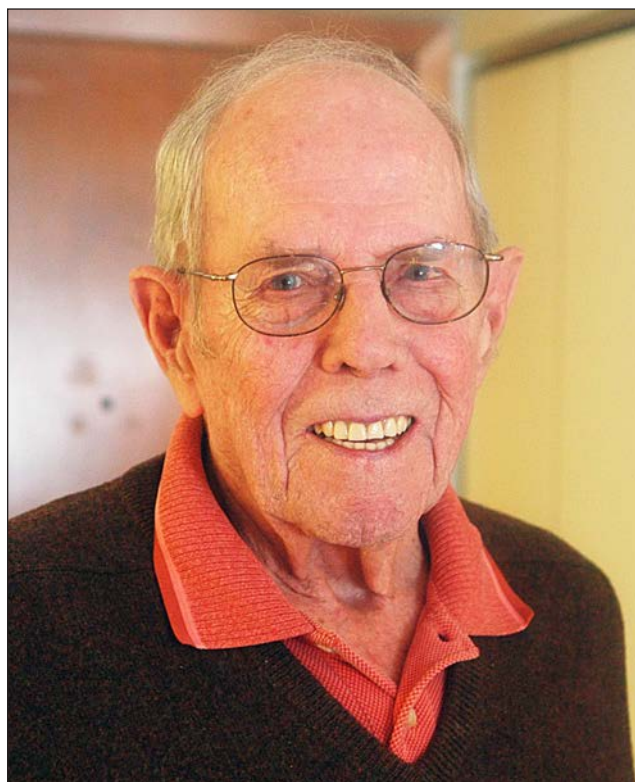


but instead of taking them to the kitchen, he smashed the glasses into the fireplace and went out the door making a grand exit."

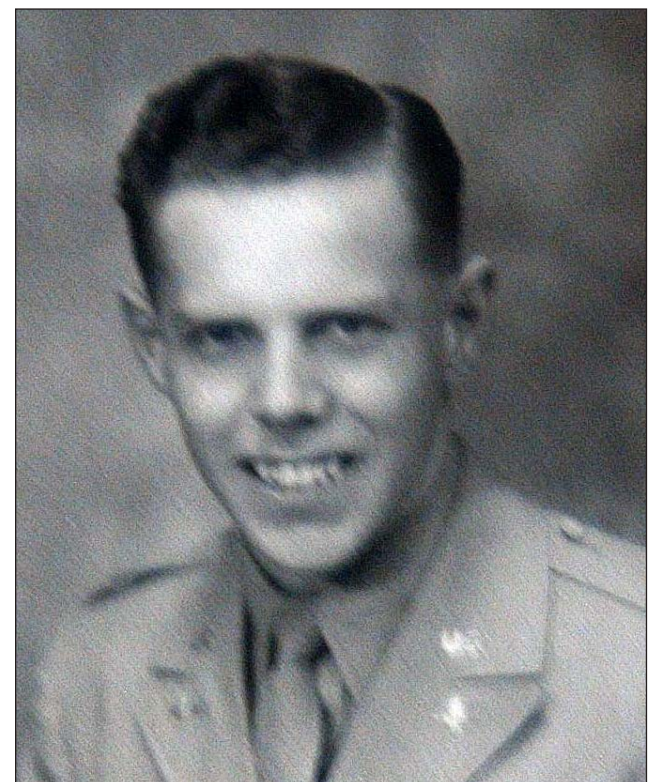
Donaldson stayed at Carlton, but was finally allowed to go active in February of 1943 – actually only a month later than his friend. He reported to the old Federal Building in Minneapolis and was put aboard a train for Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.

That winter in 1943 was one of the coldest on record. "We lived in a 16-by-16 foot hut with no windows, but it had these two-by-eight panels on each side, and the army made us keep two of them open every night. We'd wear our clothes and our overcoats to bed, and still freeze all night. There was a stove in the middle of the room, and a water bucket next to it for safety reasons. Every morning, the water in the pail would be frozen."

"In my platoon of 50 guys, two guys died from pneumo-



**DICK DONALDSON**  
At home in Tracy



**DICK DONALDSON**  
As a bomber pilot in World War II

nia.”

The Army still wasn't ready to train that many pilots, and so many of the recruits were sent to colleges around the country to continue their educations.

“I was sent to Washington University in St. Louis. They gathered 700 of us in the chapel to tell us the rules. But no one could hear a thing because everybody was coughing from being at Jefferson Barracks. We called it the ‘JB hack.’”

After five months at the university, the next stop was the West Coast for pilot training. Donaldson said there were 60,000 waiting at Santa Ana to be trained as pilots, navigators or bombardiers. The soldiers all took tests to see which direction they would go.

“I was on our unit's basketball team. The day of the championship, I had three wisdom teeth pulled, but I still played with those holes in my mouth. We won the base title.”

One of the classes was aircraft recognition. “They would turn out the lights and flash profiles of aircraft on the screen for like a tenth of a second. The trouble was that in a dark room, everyone got sleepy. So every now and then they'd flash a picture of a naked woman. That helped keep everyone awake.”

Donaldson did primary training in King City, California, on the PT-22 trainer made by Ryan.

“It was a civilian flying school, which was pretty nice. All the trainers were civilians, and the food was exceptionally good.

“Trainees usually got \$75 a month, but we would get paid \$225. Then we'd have to go down the line and pay for our food, our lodging and everything else. By the end of the line, we had \$75 left.”

At Chico for basic training, the instruction continued on the BT-13, known among the cadets across America as the “Vultee Vibrator.”

“The reason they called it that was when you brought the airplane to stall speed, like when you wanted to land, it would start to vibrate a lot. It was a dangerous airplane to fly.”

At about this time, the trainees were introduced to night flying. During one of the exercises, Donaldson said, one of the new pilots called in on his radio, “I need help, I'm all f——d up.”

Donaldson said swearing was never allowed on the radio. “The tower called back, ‘What is your name and number?’ And the trainee called back, ‘I may be f——d up, but I'm not that f——d up.’”

The pilots practiced night landings and were helped by their own landing lights plus flood lights, and the lights along the runway. “And then they made us turn off our lights and they got rid of the flood lights. They only way you could tell where the ground was, was by the spacing in the runway lights. That was a scary time.”

On one night flight, the trainees were flying by a huge ammunition building that had lights all the way down, similar to runway lights. “One of the guys decided that was the airfield and started to land on the building. Luckily, we had an instructor along on the mission, and he talked the guy out of it. That would have been a pretty good explosion.”

Along the way, did he ever feel like he might wash out of the program? Donaldson shrugged his shoulders. “You never knew where you stood. They held that washing out over your head for disciplinary reasons. Anyway, I made it. I always thought I was a competent pilot.”

Advanced training was at Stockton. “I wanted to either fly the P-38 or the A-20 attack bomber, but they told me that the United States was no longer in a defensive war, but we were in an offensive war. They didn't want fighter pilots anymore. They wanted bomber pilots.”

At Stockton, he flew the UC-78 Bobcat, a two-engined plane whose cockpit looked like a 1935 Chevrolet car.

Donaldson survived all the training, and was presented his wings on May 23, 1944. His parents came to see the ceremony, and by chance it was filmed for the movie “Winged Victory.” Donaldson says he still sees the movie, and his graduation, on television.

Donaldson moved on to B-24 school at Kirtland Field in New Mexico. The B-24 Liberator is a very large four-engined bomber. And then it was on to B-29 school at Great Bend, Kansas. He was assigned to the 19th Bomb Group, 314th Wing.

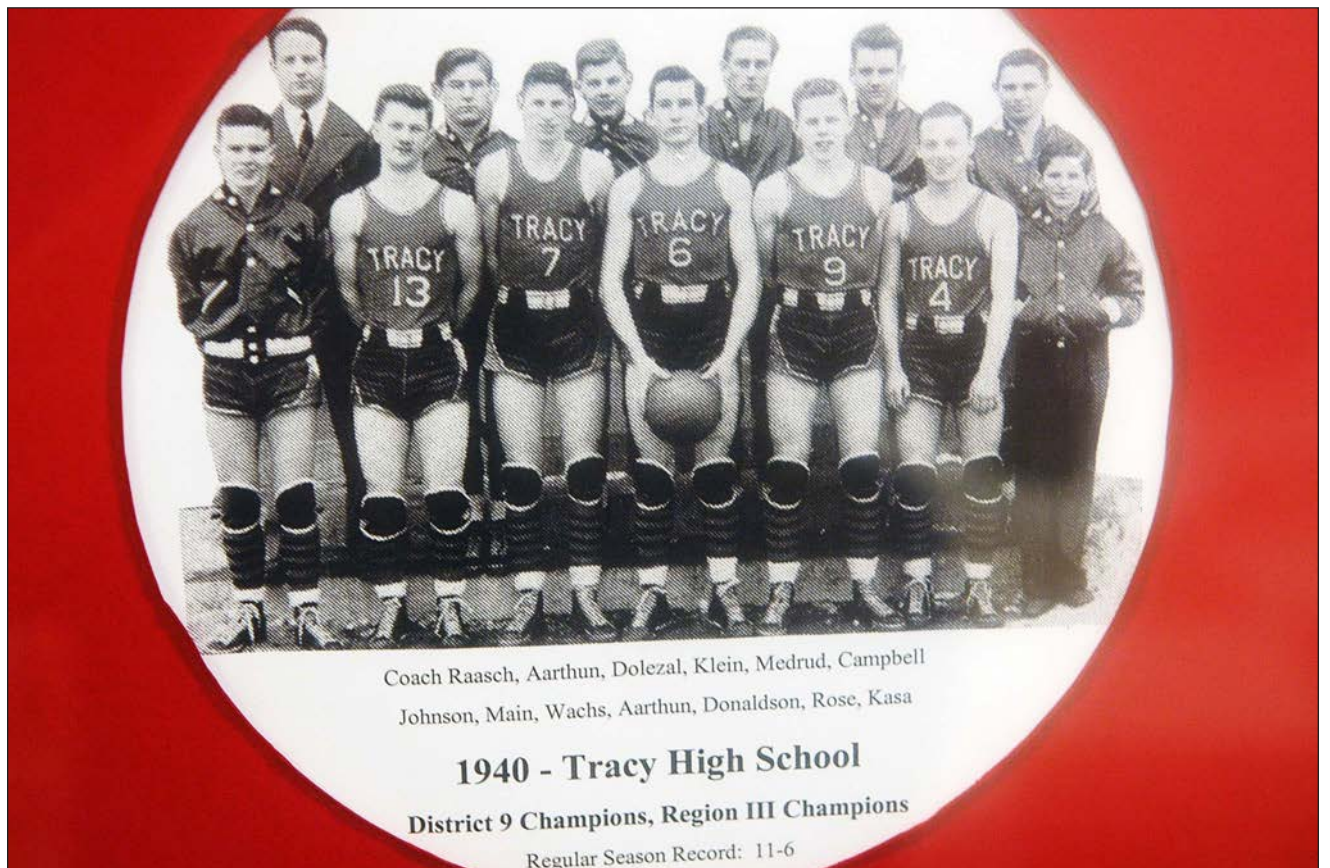
He did miss not being able to fly the fighters. “Being a bomber pilot is like being a truck driver. Just keep it steady and level. Know what you're doing. It's more of a head game than a skill game.”

**B**y this time, the end of 1944, the B-29s were finally coming on line after years of planning, design and testing. Just for comparison, the B-24 was 67 feet long, had a wingspan of 110 feet, and could carry 5,000 pounds of bombs on a long-range mission.

The B-29 was 99 feet long, had a wingspan of 141 feet, and could carry 12,000 pounds of bombs over 1,600 miles to the target.

The Superfortress also had the first completely pressurized cabin, advanced landing gear, and computerized firing systems for its machine guns.

The 11-man team that would work the big airplane was a veteran crew from all over the United States. The ship was flown by what was called an air commander, and



In Donaldson's senior year at Tracy High School, the basketball team won the region and went on to state. Donaldson is third from the right in the front row.



Donaldson's B-29, the City of Austin, photographed by another plane, probably over Guam.



Donaldson as a young lad showing off his catch. Note the Depression-era fishing pole.



This photo was taken by somebody on the City of Austin showing Mt. Fuji and the rest of the formation.



The City of Austin's crew in 1945. There's one extra person because a replacement had come for this flight. Donaldson is second from right, looking at the chart with the air commander.

Donaldson was the pilot, which was actually the co-pilot.

"You had to have over 1,000 hours of flying missions or being a flight instructor to be an air commander."

The new plane didn't get a pretty pin-up girl painted on the nose. "The bomb group commander was a Christian and he didn't want naked women painted on our airplanes, so we were all told to name them after cities. We became the City of Austin, because our pilot was from Texas."

While training with the new crew, Donaldson was recruited by the squadron commander to fly a B-17 to Little Rock so the commander could say goodbye to his family.

"We were able to bring back a quantity of Southern Comfort whiskey for the crew. We had to take turns guarding the B-29 at night because it had guns, and one of the crew guys took a bottle with him. It was a cold night, and he had the heater blowing on him and he was sipping that Southern Comfort. Well, he got sicker than a dog. He never touched Southern Comfort again."

The new crew also had to go to Cuba for a week to train on flying over water.

"During training there, our number four engine caught fire. We tried everything to put it out. We used the fire extinguishers. We dove the plane hoping the wind would put it out. We circled toward the engine hoping to starve the fire of oxygen. None of that worked. We thought at some point the fire would get to the fuel lines in the wing, and that would be the end of us. We were getting ready to bail out.

"All of a sudden, the bolts holding the engine to the plane gave way and the engine just dropped off the wing and fell into the Gulf. That was a close call."

While in Cuba, the crew did some future planning. "While we were there, we bought 38 cases of booze and had them shipped ahead with our other stuff to our new base overseas. When we got there we found out that we could buy booze on the base for a dollar a bottle. It had been an exercise in futility. But we used that booze we brought to trade for souvenirs. My family still has a Japanese sniper rifle."

The crew of 11 flew their Superfortress to Hawaii and then on to Kwajalein and then to Guam.

The new base was still being built and the crew stayed in tents with dirt floors. "I got the bright idea of putting palm fronds on the floor, but then they dried out. The jungle rats would run over them at night and sound just like a threshing machine."

They flew their first mission on Feb. 25, 1945, almost exactly two years since Donaldson had joined the Army.

"It was 1,565 miles to the target in Japan, and that was a big problem. We didn't know if we could make it there and back with a full bomb load. We carried a 500-gallon extra gas tank in the bomb bay, but when we didn't use it, they started putting bombs back there instead."

The B-29 had 6,700 gallon gas tank, and the pilots learned techniques on how to save gas during the 15-hour flights.

The skipper of the City of Austin was a good pilot who could manage the gas use to perfection. Donaldson's plane was the first to fly from Guam with a full load of 40 500-pound bombs.

Early on, the B-29 engines were a problem, and many B-29s crashed. "They were air cooled engines and the air had trouble getting back to the last few cylinders and they would overheat and cause the engine to catch fire.

"I had grown up near Lake Shetek, but I couldn't swim. When we'd take off, it was right over the Marianas Trench, the deepest place on the earth. But I figured it didn't matter much after the water reached eye level."

In the first missions, the B-29s would come in at 30,000 feet, an altitude they were designed to excel at. The Army liked the idea because the Japanese fighters couldn't get that high, and anti-aircraft shelling was not accurate at that height.

"That was when we learned about the jet stream. We found out that the winds could blow 240 miles up there. If you were flying against it, you could just barely move, or maybe you'd fly backwards. If you were flying with it, you were going so damn fast that you couldn't aim the bombs. And then there were layers of jet stream below us blowing in different directions."

The high altitude bombing was a shambles, with few bombs hitting the targets. The Army then switched to nighttime, low-altitude attacks using incendiary bombs against Japanese cities. It was a technique that had been used effectively in Europe, particularly by the British.

On March 9, 1945, Donaldson took part in a massive bomber attack against Tokyo. Over 16 square miles were burned to the ground, and a hundred thousand civilians were killed.

"I think about it all the time. We were a nation that signed the Geneva Convention that said civilians shouldn't be targeted. But all's fair in love and war. We were trying to survive and to win the war. I guess you do what's necessary.

"All modern warfare is aimed a civilians, right down to today's terrorists. You try to kill the incentive to wage war."

In all, Donaldson flew 35 missions. "The first mission we went on had 200 bombers. The last mission I flew on August 1, there were 800 bombers."

During the course of the war, 371 B-29s that flew out of the Marianas were lost.

There were no routine missions. "They often wouldn't tell us we were flying until late afternoon. You had time to



There were some who thought that Donaldson (insert) was a dead ringer for Terry of "Terry and the Pirates."

eat and get ready. We were tired before we even took off at midnight, or whenever. And then there were 15, sometimes 18 hours ahead of us.

"I was too nervous to sleep. I didn't even go to the john because I thought I'd be on the pot when something happened."

Donaldson said he was sure the crew dozed off at times. "But we didn't want them to. The pilots can't see the engines so we had to rely on the crew to keep a watch on them. You can't do that if you're sleeping."

Crew members could get benzadrine from the medics, but the problem was that when they got back from a mission, they were too wired up to sleep.

Oh, and then there was U.S. Navy's nasty habit of shooting at B-29s that flew over their ships. "At every briefing, they'd tell us to stay away from Halsey's Third Fleet. So we'd ask them where it was, and they'd say they couldn't tell us."

The Japanese did have one defense against the bombers that worked. "It was called a 'baka.' It was a rocket-propelled plane with just a pilot. It was really just a flying bomb, and they would fly it into the side of the B-29s. It was pretty effective."

As the missions against Japan increased, the Japanese got better and better at confronting the U.S. attacks, and many B-29s were shot down.

On one mission, another plane in Donaldson's group was knocked down by a Japanese fighter, and seven of the 11 crew members managed to parachute down.

"We were ordered to stay with them until the submarine came to pick them up. We dropped them a life raft, and began circling overhead.

"Then we saw that two Japanese fishing boats were approaching the raft. We didn't want them to get there before the submarine. But we were running out of gas and had to leave."

B-29 crewmen were not considered prisoners of war by the Japanese, but were designated as war criminals. Many were shot on the spot when they had to bail out of planes.

"So we decided to strafe the boats and keep them away. We made three passes at them with our machine guns and shot them up pretty good. But one of our guys said he thought he could see a sailor hiding behind the mast, and so we went back one more time."

The boats never reached the crew in the life raft, and the crewmen were rescued.

They later learned that the plane that had taken their place in the bombing formation when they left to protect the downed crewman had been hit by Japanese fighter and destroyed.

Later, on the nose of the City of Austin, the artist added two fishing boats to go along with the bombs that indicated missions flown.

There were other adventures in the Superforts. "When we bombed, there would be a tremendous fire. If you were toward the end of the formation, you could get caught in these incredible thermals. One time, we got lifted from 8,000 feet to 13,000 feet instantly. We went up so fast, our landing gear came down. Luckily we got it back in the airplane or we would never have got back to base."

The most dangerous mission he flew just barely got off Guam. The runway was 8,000 feet long and there was a gravel area beyond that, and then about two miles of forest and then a cliff. "If you got to the cliff, you felt good because you could drop down and try to build some air-speed."

With a full load of bombs and fuel, every takeoff was an adventure. "A full load was supposed to be 125,000 pounds, and we never took off with less than 145,000 pounds."

One day, it just didn't work. The City of Austin took off, but immediately flew into a cloud bank making it impossible to see the progress of the ascent. All of a sudden the bombardier, who sits in the front, shouted, "What the....." The airplane flew directly into trees.

"We just scraped the edge of the cliff. We had a tree limb in one wing, and another tree limb in the other wing. The

last four foot section of the right wing was smashed. There were coral nicks in the propellers. And you have to remember that all this was in the dark of night."

The airplane was still flying, but the encounter with the forest and the cliff had caused it to go into a right turn, and it was heading right back to the cliff. The crew was told to assume ditching positions.

Donaldson released the bombs, but the bombs in the forward bomb bay did not drop. It did give the plane enough lift, though, to clear the cliff.

"We just cleared the cliff on the way back, but we still had too much gas, so they made us circle for about an hour before they would let us land. The airplane was just vibrating like crazy."

They made a safe landing. The air commander was so happy to be back on solid ground, he did a backflip out of the airplane.

They had landed at a Navy base, and had to be transported back to their base. Just as they arrived, they witnessed a B-29 try to make an emergency landing and crash. All aboard were killed. "We could still hear the bombs going off when we were back in our tents."

It turned out later that the navigator on the crashed plane had been a classmate of Donaldson's at Carlton.

The whole crew on the City of Austin was glad to be alive.

"Both the pilot and I had to sign a piece of paper that we had destroyed a \$600,000 piece of government property." The plane never flew again.

Donaldson said it was remarkable how his service coincided with the war. He tried to join after Pearl Harbor Day. After two years of training, he flew from February to August of 1945. He completed 35 missions and headed home just as the war ended.

He went back to Carlton and got his bachelor's degree in economics, and then came home and ran a lumberyard in Tracy for 35 years.

He and his wife, Mary, then joined the Peace Corps for four years, serving in Barbados and Jamaica. Donaldson taught the basics of running a business.

Returning to Tracy, he worked in the special education department at the high school for 10 years and his wife worked in the school library. And, for 20 years, he covered the sports beat for the *Tracy Headlight-Herald*.

When his wife got Alzheimer's, Donaldson became her caretaker. Mary died in 2012. They have three children.

One postscript to the war was that the City of Austin finally came through. "All the planes in the 314th Bomb Group were named after cities, and we all wrote to our cities. Denver sent the crew of the City of Denver a week's paid vacation. Milwaukee sent her crew cases of beer. Austin sent us a letter saying, 'Keep up the good work.'"

A few years ago, a friend of Donaldson's heard that story and took up the cause. This time around, the City of Austin had a different response.

"They wanted us to all come to Austin for a vacation. But I was the only survivor of the crew. My whole family went down and they treated us royally."

Donaldson has written about his time in the service and his time in the Peace Corps and he's considering writing on what he calls "The John Deere Revolution," or the demise of family farming in America. "It's all made possible by big machines. There used to be whole families living in a quarter section, and now there's five people per square mile. They filled in all the ditches and pulled all the stumps, and now they don't have to turn that tractor around for a mile."

He has been an avid golfer through the years, and has shot his age on several occasions. He couldn't golf last year because of a bout with cancer, but a month ago he was judged to be cancer-free. He lives alone and still drives.

Donaldson is thinking about golf again this summer. He will be 95 years old.

*Some of this story was taken from Donaldson's wartime memoir "Reminiscences of World War II."*

# The first 20 years

## The early history of the Minnesota American Legion

Continued on from Page 1

across America as just over two million came back to their families and friends with their \$60 discharge pay in their pockets.

### 1919 to 1924

The young men and women in the military were proud of their service and they wanted to continue to serve, to maintain their fellowship and to help and protect their fellow veterans and their families.

Nationally, a caucus was held in Paris and then in St. Louis to organize this new veterans group, but in Minnesota the returning veterans just got busy organizing themselves. Across the state, soldiers and sailor's clubs, veterans clubs, buddy clubs and others were springing up.

During the spring, all these grass roots service clubs started efforts to become part of the national group, which was now called "The American Legion."

Statewide, a group of veterans chose delegates to the caucus coming to St. Louis in May, and elected Harrison Fuller, a newspaper editor from St. Paul, to be the first chairman. 39 delegates were picked from across the state.

By the end of May, a fledgling statewide Legion had been formed, and a secretary was hired. Within weeks, over 30 temporary charters had been applied for, and within two months, hundreds of applications were flooding the state and national headquarters.

Probably no one will know which post was first. Minneapolis Post 1 got the lowest number, but St. Paul Post 8 got its temporary charter on May 7, 1919, the first in the state. Second was Fergus Falls Post 30, a few days later.

The first state convention was held in St. Paul in early September, and Col. Theodore Roosevelt Jr., who had first organized The American Legion in Paris, was the featured speaker.

Wave after wave of applause roared through the St. Paul Auditorium as Roosevelt spoke, and he concluded with a phrase that John F. Kennedy would echo 50 years later: "Before the war, we asked, 'What does the country owe me?' Now we ask, 'What do we owe our country?'"

Delegates got to work and proclaimed the first name of the statewide organization: The Minnesota Branch of the American Legion." Harrison Fuller was elected the first state commander. Membership at this point was about 10,000 spread over 159 posts.

The state Legionnaires worked hard to get ready for the first national convention, to be held around Armistice Day at the Minneapolis Auditorium.

As the convention convened Nov. 10, a blizzard blew through western Minnesota and, in the Twin Cities, temps were in the teens and 20s. Nationally, by this time, there were 684,000 members. About 35,000 of those were from Minnesota spread over 360 posts.

The first national parade had 15,000 marchers, and proceeded south on Nicollet Avenue. There were 11 Legion bands in the parade led by the David Wisted Post of Duluth which was the first post band organized in the Legion. The Wisted Band was later named the official national American Legion band.

Many things were accomplished at the convention including the establishment of the Auxiliary, but what Minnesotans were hoping for – declaring Minneapolis as the permanent headquarters of the Legion – did not pass. The weather, no doubt, played a part.

The year concluded with a meeting of women in St. Paul to make plans for a Minnesota Auxiliary.

1920 was a year of settling in and getting busy. The number of posts rose to 470 and Department dues were raised from a quarter to \$1 – post dues were limited to \$2. The first Department budget was set at \$26,500.

The biggest development of the year was the emergence of the Women's Auxiliary, and there were 110 units by that fall. Dr. Helen Hughes Heilscher of Mankato was elected state president, and the first Department headquarters would be in her home.

The Minnesota Legion also undertook its responsibility of being a watchdog of veterans rights. The state bonus for veterans was not getting out in a timely fashion, and the Legion's Bonus Board of Review shook up the state machinery and many of the problems were solved.

Around the state, posts dealt with high unemployment amount returning veterans. Many posts created their own employment service for vets.

On Sept. 23rd, the Hennepin County Legionnaire emerged as a weekly newspaper for the veterans in the Minneapolis area. The first editor, E.J.D. Larson proclaimed, "No purpose could be nobler, no desire could be finer than the motives which have inspired its conception." The newspaper would eventually become the Minnesota Legionnaire.

In 1921, Stafford King became the Department Adjutant



Disabled veterans, probably suffering from tuberculosis from being exposed to gas during the war, make poppies at a Minnesota sanitarium in 1924. The Legion employed dozens of veterans in poppy workshops.

and would serve for four years. He later became Minnesota's State Auditor and served for 38 years.

The major event of the year was the dedication of Victory Memorial Drive on the north side of Minneapolis. The featured speaker for the event was National Commander F.W. Galbraith, but just after leaving Indianapolis for Minnesota, his car crashed and he was killed. His spot was taken by Hanford McNider of Iowa, who would later become a National Commander.

Several posts around the state started their own newspapers including the Duluth Legion, the Ortonville Legion Journal and the Rochester Legion Whizz-Bang. This was the Roaring 20s.

The first "Poppy Days" was established by the Auxiliary and the Legion and over 100,000 were sold bringing in \$13,000 for Legion programs. Blanche Scallen was named the secretary of the Auxiliary and their office was moved to Minneapolis.

Big Island was donated for veterans use, and the Minnesota Legion was heavily involved in getting it going along with other civic groups. A big dance was held at one session, and local women were boated to the island to be dance partners for the 200 disabled veterans enjoying a vacation.

Winona hosted the state convention, and one of the sessions was held aboard the steamer Washington. Over 3,500 delegates climbed on board for a day of sightseeing on the Mississippi and doing business.

The Legionnaire newspaper began listing the 400 draft dodgers in the state. The Legion called them "deserters."

By 1922, the Legion was still having growing pains, trying to figure out its role in Minnesota's life and culture. Rufus Rand, who would be elected Department Commander later that year, said: "The American Legion, like all oversized youngsters, is suffering from growing pains and many ailments are going to crop up before, after years of experience, we settle down to the powerful and beneficial influence we aspire to."

A major concern was the flood of veterans from all over the country to the Mayo Clinic for medical treatment of war wounds, the after-effects of being gassed, and what in those days was called "shell shock." The Clinic treated the veterans, but the former soldiers often had no place to stay, or money to buy necessities.

Rochester Post 92 stepped forward in a big way. In 1921, the post cared for 3,000 patients at the Clinic at a cost of \$15,600. In the first six months of 1922, over a thousand more were assisted at a cost of \$6,500. It was clear that the burden was too great for one post to handle.

The state Legion at first came forward with a grand plan to build a hospital for veterans at a cost of a half million dollars. It was later determined it would cost another \$100,000 per year to run the facility. The Legion looked for other ways to help the veterans at Rochester.

The Minnesota American Legion Hospital Association was created at the annual convention in Virginia, and by October it had taken over the aid to veterans from Rochester Post 92. The post was \$11,000 in debt by this time.

The association paid hospital bills, arranged housing, hired nurses and helped veterans with transportation home. Hundreds of Legionnaires stayed away from the Virginia Convention because of rumors of forest fires up north. The rumors were false.

A new Veterans Bureau hospital was planned for the region, and St. Cloud won out over Robbinsdale, Brainerd, Watertown, S.D., and Fargo.

In September, 1922, the Hennepin County Legionnaire changed its name to the American Legionnaire. The county still ran the newspaper.

And, at the National Convention in New Orleans, the Whiteside Post of Minneapolis, comprised of World War I nurses, led the parade.

In 1923, the Legion pushed for a new tuberculosis hospital and a new neuro-psychiatry hospital in the state. The federal government soon announced final plans for the new hospital at St. Cloud which would treat veterans suffering from shell shock and other brain disorders.

The new Hospital Association announced that it had served 100 percent of veterans who had asked for benefits at Rochester. The association also decided that Auxiliary members would have equal benefits with the Legion and put two Auxiliary members on the board.

The first state Legion bowling tourney was held in April.

Big Marine and Big Island veterans camps announced that they would now accept all veterans and not just disabled veterans. A spokesman for Big Island said, "No policing of ground or peeling of spuds will be expected from the guests." They were expected to make their own beds each day, however.

An explosion of radiators at the offices of the St. Paul Legion posts injured two Legionnaires at a meeting. If that wasn't bad enough, the next day the building caught fire and burned to the ground.

The race for Department Commander attracted three heavyweights. Luther Youngdahl, who would later become Minnesota governor, Jay C. Hormel of the meatpacking giant in Austin, and Ludwig Roe, one of the state's most well known newspaper editors, faced off and Roe was elected.

1924 brought the National Convention back to Minnesota with over 100,000 visitors expected in St. Paul. The parade went down Summit Avenue with over 50,000 marchers involved. Aerial combat displays using Great War aircraft entertained the conventioners.

Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, the commissioner of baseball, addressed the convention. Reporters later asked him about the shocking new style of women bobbing their hair. "It's okay if it's becoming to her," he answered adroitly.

Blanche Scallen was elected president of the National Auxiliary Secretaries, and the poppy was chosen as an American Legion symbol at the convention.

Lemuel Bolles, who grew up in Minneapolis, resigned as National Adjutant and Russell Creviston, who had been a member of Minneapolis Post 1, replaced him.

Across the state in 1924, Legionnaires planted thousands of trees along highways as part of a conservation program. St. Paul's Joyce Kilmer Post led an effort to clean up Big Marine camp, and also built four tennis courts there.

### 1925-1929

The Minnesota Legion continued to push for a new tuberculosis hospital, but the federal government finally announced in 1925 that it was instead going to build a general hospital. The new facility would cost \$1.2 million, have

400 to 500 beds, and would be built on 150 acres of land at Fort Snelling. One wing would be devoted to TB patients.

It was estimated that 1,800 veterans in Minnesota had tuberculosis, known at that time as the "white death." Most cases were attributed to being gassed during the war.

The convention was held at Thief River Falls, and a side-light was a trip to Winnipeg. The DEC held a meeting on the train in the baggage car. Three trainloads of Legionnaires trekked up to Canada, and marched down the main street when they got there.

Ed Lindell ended his year as commander and in September took over the adjutant's job. Lindell bought other past Department commander a lunch in what may have been the first meeting of the Order of King Tut.

The Hibbing Post found out that a Calumet veteran, who had been gassed during the war, had fallen on hard times and lost his farm. The post put on a boxing show and raised enough money to provide the family with food, a bed and gifts. They also sent a representative to the Veterans Bureau to arrange treatment for the vet.

In 1926, probably the biggest news of the year was when Commander Joseph O'Hara announced that he was resigning his post so he could run for McLeod County Attorney. He had been a tireless commander, visiting over 500 posts before cutting his year short. Martin D. Haferman of Lindstrom, first vice commander, was named by the Executive Committee as temporary commander.

A major development in 1926 was the birth of American Legion Baseball in Minnesota. The program had begun in South Dakota the year before, and Frank McCormick, who has been called "the father of Legion Baseball" convinced the 1925 Legion Minnesota convention to begin the program, and competitive play began in 1926.

The first tournament was held in Mankato and Crosby was the winner, but not without some drama. The Minneapolis team, which had gone 24-0 that year, was said to have players older than 17, the cutoff for junior baseball. The protest went all the way to the state convention, which was also meeting in Mankato, and Minneapolis was thrown out of the tournament.

While the protest was being considered by the Americanism Committee, though, a fistfight broke out between the Minneapolis and St. Paul players. It was broken up by coaches before it reached the level of a full-scale melee.

It was an inauspicious start to Legion Baseball, but the national pastime continued and eventually became one of the Legion's top programs.

A major change was made to the Department Executive Committee when district commanders became full voting members, both for the year they served and for the following year.

A new editor, Phil O'Toole, was hired as the Legionnaire editor, and an editorial policy board was established to determine what controversial stands the newspaper would take.

WCCO Radio hosted The American Legion Show, and talent from around the state performed. The acts included The St. Paul East Side Glee Club, the Hook 'Em Cow Quartet from South St. Paul, and Minnesota's oldest fiddler, E.P. Francisco of Lake City. After the show, Francisco said, "I can now die happy. I've played for the boys and done my bit." He died two weeks later at age 96.

"Friends of Freedom, Foes of Lawlessness" was chosen the winner in a slogan contest, and a 13-year-old girl won a metal trophy for the entry.

The hospital at Fort Snelling was opened and the Legion appointed a welfare and social services representative to serve the veterans at the facility.

The highlight of 1927 was the national convention, which was held in Paris, France. It was estimated that the cheapest a Legionnaire could manage the trip and have a room would be \$300 which was out of the reach of most.

Still the delegation from Minnesota was 350 strong. They took a train to Quebec and boarded a ship, the Montnairn, and arrived in Antwerp 11 days later. Also on that ship were the delegations from South Dakota, North Dakota, Washington, Montana, Wisconsin and Michigan.

Back home, the Hennepin County Legionnaires sponsored the boxer Gene Tunney, a former Marine, at dinner planned for Minneapolis. In the end, Tunney couldn't make it and the dinner was canceled.

The state convention was at Hibbing, and the city billed itself as "the little Paris of the North." The planners decided to have a latrine on every corner "to remind the boys of the AEF."

The Auxiliary decided to quit publishing its own newsletter and instead do an official bulletin in the Minnesota Legionnaire. An editorial in the Legionnaire said the ideal Auxiliary member had "brains, beauty, pep, personality and a capacity for leadership and hard work."

In Rochester, Post 92 announced plans for a 160-acre park in the city that would be called "Soldier's Field" and include a golf course, community park, bridge paths, a baseball diamond, a hockey rink and Great War memorial. The post thus far had invested \$4,200 in the project.

The Minnesota American Legion Foundation was established.

In 1928, the Legion began a new sign program where

local posts could by signs that said "Protect our Children." The signs could be posted around town and near schools. The signs would be made at the Poppy Workshop.

Minnesotans traveled to San Antonio for the national convention, and made a side trip to Laredo, Mexico, to see the sights. Legionnaire Howard Juni of Jordan came home with three spears that had been stuck in a bull at a bullfight.

In 1929, the stock market crashed, but the next issue of the Legionnaire after the crash stated, "Gopher Gang full of pep at Banquet."

Department Commander offered a \$5 gold piece for a good motto for Minnesota, but a winner was never picked.

In Crookston, Legionnaires mobilized and cleared the snow off eight local highways, much of by shovel.

On Feb. 27, the American Legionnaire finally became the Minnesota Legionnaire. The Minnesota Historical Society, with the Legion reaching its 10th birthday, asked posts to submit their post histories.

The Legion considered building a \$10,000 permanent building at the fairgrounds.

### 1930-34

By 1930, Post 8 in St. Paul added a new member, Jimmy Johnson, the national amateur golf champion.

The state convention, held in Crookston, included a train trip to Winnipeg. Over 1,000 delegates took the trip and marched down the city's main street and placed a wreath to the war dead.

In 1931, Ed Lindell, past commander and adjutant for the prior six years, resigned to go to work for the Rand Corporation, working for Rufus Rand, also a past commander.

Lindell made one last air trip around the state to collect memberships.

Chic Zwiener of Ortonville was named adjutant. He has previously run the baseball program.

The convention was at Rochester, and the state parade had 35 floats and 35 bands.

The Legion urged all towns to form school safety patrols.

In 1932, as the Great Depression settled in over America, the Minnesota Legion formed an unemployment committee. It included such state luminaries as Jay C. Hormel, William Hamm of brewery fame, Totton Heffelfinger, who later built Hazeltine Golf Course, and John Ordway, for whom the St. Paul arts center was named.

The plan was for Legionnaires to go house to house and find work for veterans.

All across the state were stories of posts creating work, starting food shelves and collecting clothing.

The state Conservation Committee announced a goal of planting 500,000 trees.

Past Department Commander Pat Cliff announced he would run for National Commander. He did not win at the national convention, but vowed to be back.

The Department created a Public Relations Committee.

As Franklin Roosevelt took office in 1933, he called on the Legion to help in getting American through the hard times.

The Fifth District opened a free medical clinic for veterans with four doctors available. Also, 28 Minneapolis attorneys volunteered their time to help veterans.

During a snowstorm, Eveleth Post members used skis and snowshoes to attend a meeting at Virginia.

A call was put out to form SAL squadrons around the state. Virginia claimed the honor of establishing the first Sons squadron.

St. Paul Post 8 hosted 64 orphans at a Christmas party.

Prohibition ended in America and the Legion newspaper had ads for Hamm's, Gluek's and Schmidt's.

The Depression continued in 1934, and Legion posts again were urged to establish work programs in their communities. Several CCC camps only for veterans were set up in Minnesota.

The Kasson Post collected 18 truckloads of wood to distribute to the poor.

Hutchinson established an emergency relief corps. The men were equipped with riot guns, rescue axes and wrecking bars, and 13 trucks were available for transportation.

The Springfield Auxiliary was trying to boost attendance at its meetings, and decided that all members should wear their husband's clothing at the next meeting. Over 40 showed up.

By June, nine Sons of the American Legion squadrons were up and running: Robbinsdale, Virginia, Rochester, Stewartville, Crookston, Hutchinson, Litchfield, Minneapolis Giantvalley and Minneapolis Navy-Marine all had squadrons, mainly made up of boys.

Rochester Post 92 and the city of Rochester honored the Mayo Brothers, and over 125,000 showed up, including President Roosevelt. Mayo was honored for its work with disabled veterans.

In Miami, at the National Convention, Tess Carlson of Minnesota was elected National President.

The membership team offered a cow to the district with the best percentage, and the 10th District won. The cow was

eaten at an event at Anoka.

### 1935-38

In 1935, The American Legion continued to lobby Congress to pay the World War bonus, which was due in 1945, now. Paying the bonus would cost the government \$3.4 billion, and President Roosevelt opposed it. The Congress finally did pass an early bonus payment, but Roosevelt vetoed it.

The Worthington Post bought 10 sheepskin coats, with the Legion emblem on the sleeve, for school patrol boys in the community.

At the state convention, Pat Cliff was endorsed for national commander.

The Moose Lake Auxiliary obtained 1,612 books for the local library to replace those destroyed in a fire. One of the books was donated by Eleanor Roosevelt.

St. Paul Legionnaires made sure every orphanage in town got a tree, candy, toys and clothing. They also provided hospitalized veterans in the state with gifts. Each vet got a half pound of tobacco, four packs of cigarettes, 10 cigars, and two packs of playing cards.

On May 31, 1935, Dr. Helen Hughes Hielscher died of pneumonia in Mankato. Heilscher had president at the first national convention of the Auxiliary. She was a legend in Minnesota, known by all as "Dr. Helen."

She was the first woman ever appointed to the Board of Health in Minnesota, and she started the Poppy Workshop which employed hundreds of disabled veterans through the years. Thousands attended her funeral.

1936 marked the first year for the Legionville camp. In May it was announced there would be a school patrol camp, and posts were requested to find two students to attend.

Time and location were yet to be determined. It was thought there would be three camps, but in the end there was only one, serving 150 boys. It was held at Ten Lake at a CCC Camp near Bemidji.

The boys -- who drank 210 gallons of milk and ate 370 pounds of beef -- also studied conservation, Americanism, and they formed their own city governments.

Elmer Benson, a past post commander from Appleton, took office as a U.S. Senator.

The Bonus Bill finally passed Congress which had to override President Roosevelt's veto. The bonus would be paid in \$50 bonds.

A new organization that would honor past post commanders would have a farm theme. The new group modeled itself after the King Tuts, and the new name chosen was the King Tits.

It was reported there were 1,100 Johnsons in the Minnesota American Legion, including 41 John Johnsons.

In 1937, the Legion's Conservation Committee urged Congress not to develop the Boundary Waters area.

It was estimated that 10,000 Minnesota veterans were unemployed.

The Legion's Spring Conference announced that it was considering creating a Boys State program, as had been done in Illinois, but no concrete plans were made. Legionville that year was held at Lum Lake near Brainerd. Cost was \$8 per boy and 215 boys attended the one session.

The Auxiliary topped 20,000 members for the first time.

The Lake Wilson Unit had an Armistice Day Supper, and 135 pounds of lutefisk was consumed.

In 1938, Wennel Post in Minneapolis continued its annual 10,000 Lakes Speedskating Contest and 30,000 attended. In earlier years, girls were requesting to be allowed into contest, and the post finally allowed two girls: Mary Dolan, who six years later became the U.S. speed skating champion, and Patty Berg who later won 15 national golf titles, a record that still stands.

The Ninth District Band was fundraising so the band could go to the National Convention in Los Angeles.

Plans were announced for Fort Snelling National Cemetery, which would serve 250,000 veterans and be considered the "Arlington of the Northwest."

In May, the Minnesota Legion announced it was going to war. The enemy? Marijuana.

Legionnaires were urged to scour the countryside and find the plant which was growing wild on farms and in ditches. The newspaper warned that the drug created "mental stupefaction and a breakdown in moral barriers."

Robbinsdale collected and burned three tons of the "dope weed," but couldn't hold a candle to Willmar which destroyed 300 tons of funny bush. Wisconsin Legionnaires announced they would take up the fight against Marijuana.

Minnesota Legion pioneer Ed Lindell was killed in a car crash on his way to Jackson to deliver an Armistice Day address. He had served in the war, earning a Distinguished Service Cross and three Purple Hearts.

The first 20 years of the Minnesota Legion saw the organization fight for veterans, build their communities, provide programs for youth, and fight the Depression one post at a time. The one common denominator was their energy, caring and can do spirit.

# District Commanders

## FIRST DISTRICT

**Les Shaunce  
Commander**



Our Midwinter Conference is history. We had a very good turn out in spite of the miserable weather. We were all together in the morning in a joint session. We split up in the afternoon to do our separate business. After lunch we had our District Oratorical Contest.

January 20th, was the 1st and 3rd District Fishing Contest. It was held at Montgomery Post 79. Not a very big turn out but had lots of fun and lots of prizes were given out. Thanks for a good meal and a wonderful time.

February 3rd, will be the Department Sweetheart Rally at North St. Paul Post 39.

Please plan to attend and bring plenty of memberships. Don't forget that little something for your sweetheart. Post 39 is always a great host.

February 3rd, is also our Four Chaplains Day. I hope every one will remember their sacrifice with some type of memorial program. Remember to fly the flag at half-mast.

## SECOND DISTRICT

**Randy Olson  
Commander**



With our Mid-Winter Conference in the minutes, I would like to thank everyone for the turnout we had. Bricelyn Post 165 American Legion, SAL Squadron, and Auxillary did an outstanding job.

Let me ask all of you to take a little different approach to membership, First of all everyone, yes everyone, ask the people we meet to join you to support our veterans both serving now and those that have served in the past. Just tell them they can do this by joining the American Legion Family.

If you know or even if you don't know if they are a veteran or a family member of a veteran ask them if they would like to honor them by joining our family. Remember most reply, "I've never been asked" or "I didn't know I could." Tell them how much it means to you and our veterans.

Deployments happen more frequently and it would be wonderful to be able to fully support all of our troops when they have to leave their families. I myself would like to see every soldier serving now become a member, so that we can be there to support them before, during, and after.

Sweetheart Rally Saturday February 3rd North Saint Paul Post 39. Bring in your renewals & new memberships.

## THIRD DISTRICT

**Eugene Leifeld  
Commander**



The National Commander's visit is February 6-8, 2018. There will be several locations at nine Minnesota Legion posts in the southern region that National Commander Denise Rohan will be visiting. Please see the schedule in this Legionnaire newspaper.

The Centennial Convention 100th Anniversary is being hosted at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The convention begins on Friday August 24 through Thursday August 30, 2018. The National Parade is on Sunday afternoon August 26, 2018. March with your American flags in the parade, and receive a special banner for your flags. Posts, ask your local bands to participate. Applications for high school bands are accepted after January 1, 2018. Charitable gambling can be used to offset the cost of sending the bands.

The Sweetheart Membership Rally is on Saturday February 3, 2018 at North St Paul Post 39. This will be a great event and remember to turn in memberships. We are at the critical time of the year when membership counts for all posts, units and SAL.

Through our American Legion Family Memberships is what makes our programs strong and involves many of our members. To mention some Scholarship programs, American Legion Baseball, Boys State, Girls State, SAL and Auxiliary programs.

## FOURTH DISTRICT

**Lane Stunkel  
Commander**



The days are finally getting longer, more daylight, but we still have the cold and snow to deal with for 3 more months.

As of Bulletin 29, the 4th District membership is at 84.09%, we are only 4 percentage points behind the 6th District, last month we were 5 points behind, that number is getting smaller, let's keep the pressure on, next month 3 points behind. Please reach out to your Vice Commanders and Membership Director Mickey; they are available to work with you on membership. Congratulations to St Paul Post 8 for making goal – 129%, we have several posts that are within four memberships of meeting goal. Let's work hard to find new members and retain our existing members.

Consolidated Post Reports – last year every post in the District submitted a CPR; let's do the same thing again this year. If your post needs help please reach out to your District Vice Commanders or myself. We are all here to help out.

To the members of the 4th and 5th District who walked in the Winter Carnival Parade – thank you. There is no RCCC meeting in February, the next RCCC will be March 14th at Arcade Phalen – special guest speaker, Jeremy Wolfsteller, the Department Service Officer.

## FIFTH DISTRICT

**Walt Lyndsley  
Commander**



We recently hosted our oratorical contest at the Richfield Post and heard from some very interesting and well versed candidates. I did not have the opportunity to attend as I have been fighting this cold/flu which is making everyone miserable. The AMA states that by February the outlook will be better. I say "bring it on."

We will be joining the 4th District to march in the St.Paul carnival parade. This is always a fun day and we enjoy the comraderie with the members of the newly reconstructed Arcade Legion. She's a beauty.

I would like to request that every membership chairman make a phone call to a member who hasn't renewed or ask a former member to rejoin or solicit a new member. In February there will be a turn-in at the Sweetheart Rally in North St. Paul. Let's see what we can get done before then.

Jim Larson, the 5th district baseball chair, had been hospitalized and is now in a rehab home located at 7500 W. 22nd St. S Louis Park. I understand he is facing a long and difficult recovery.

My van was recently broken into and my commanders hat was taken, among other things. I miss my hat and some of the pins I had went back 45 years. What good is it to steal a lid that says Walt Lyndsley on it. Yes, it can be replaced but come on.....

## SIXTH DISTRICT

**Ken Johnstone  
Commander**



January brought us into a new year and I continue to wish everyone a happy and fruitful year. It also brings us into a busy time of the year with mid-winter conferences, the Sweetheart Rally, and our starting to plan for the district conventions. My calendar for February is filling up fast, with Department, District, County Council and other groups meeting throughout the District. I look forward to meeting with everybody at the Sweetheart Rally in St Paul on February 3rd.

February also brings us Presidents Day, Lent Fish Fry events, Valentine's Day and yes, the Super Bowl.

Now to get down to the business of membership: The Sixth District is working hard to achieve the goal of 90 percent, set by Department, by the end of the Sweetheart Rally and the ultimate goal of 100 percent. I have faith in all of the members in my district that this will be accomplished. Everybody keep up the good work, for if it wasn't for you post members, my District officers and I could not do the job. We do thank you very much.

## SEVENTH DISTRICT

**Richard Wog  
Commander**



Thank you for working so hard on membership. As far as the race for the goal we need help from every post. If we keep pushing, we will try to pass the leaders in the race. If each post works to sign up more new members and keep what we have we will grow and that is the goal each of post has to have. I know this is the slower time for membership. From past experience now is the time for phone calls and to even go to the members houses and talk to them and ask for their membership. Sometimes they just put it on the back burner and forget and maybe older members may not have

the money to pay for their dues, so see if your post can help them and pay their dues for them. I know of posts that do just that and they are appreciated and we keep another member that way. For every member we lose it takes two to fill their shoes.

I am sorry I missed the Pearl Harbor Rally. From all the reports I received it was great. I had surgery on my right foot November 30th so could not be on my feet for a week and could not drive for a month. That drove me up a wall. I was told one should never talk about the weather but this winter has been cold and it slows things down and cabin fever sets in, but it is one more day closer to spring. March will be here before we know it. March in the Legion is not too early to start making preparation to celebrate the 100 years. Now is a good time to let the community know what your plans are and invite them in and share it with the community and members. Always remember our men and women who are serving our country and their families. When you see a veteran say thank you for your service.

## EIGHTH DISTRICT

**Donovan Goblirsch  
Commander**



February is here and time seems to be flying by. District and Post meetings are in process. Try to attend the meetings if you can. The flu bug is upon many of our members. Did you get your flu shots? They will make the flu easier to overcome. Keep sending you memberships in. The 8th is doing pretty well. Keep up the good work. District and Post nominations are coming up. It's time to get the nomination committee going for the next year. The Department convention is coming in July in Rochester. Try to come and enjoy the area Legion post in Rochester. The National Legion convention is in MPLS at the Minneapolis auditorium; stay tuned for the dates. Visit and help the Vets that need help. Keep talking up memberships for the Legion. Every member adds to the strength of our mission in the eyes of the public and the U.S. Congress.

## NINTH DISTRICT

**Tim Haugen  
Commander**



As I start to write this article we finally have a break in the weather and it's starting to warm up (Just a little). February is stacking up to be a fairly busy month. On the 2nd is our District Godfather's Rally at Gary Post 505, on the 3rd is the Department Sweetheart Rally at North St. Paul Post 39, on the 4th hopefully will be the Vikings will be in the Super Bowl (and finally win it), The National Commander's Tour is the 6th – 9th. February 14th is the National 85% cutoff for membership. We've met that goal and are only 220 away what we need to be over 90% by that date.

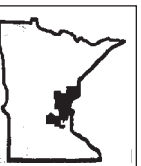
Our Mid Winter conference was held on January 13th in Thief River Falls and we were greeted with -25 degree temp (Wind Chill Temp was -39). What a great turn out from across the District. Our very own 9th District Band was also on hand to perform for us as well as practice for 2 to 3 hours in preparation for the Band competition at the 100th National Convention later this year in Minneapolis.

Membership is going extremely well, we have surpassed all of our National target dates. I would like to extend a big thank you to the 15 Posts that have already reached 100% goal and the 21 at 90% or better. 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.

Until next month, God bless our troops, their families and our veterans.

## TENTH DISTRICT

**Paul Hassing  
Commander**



Lately I have been hearing a lot of "not so nice" things from some fellow veterans. I want to take this opportunity to remind all of you that we are all veterans.

Remember back when you were in the military. The people you served with came from all walks of life. The one thing we had in common was a willingness to serve. We had our differences, but we came together for the good of the mission.

We, as Legionnaires, have a lot of missions to accomplish. We cannot afford to be excluding people who want to join, and serve others, just because we don't agree with their political ideologies, or gender, or color of skin, or whatever makes them different from you.

Thank you all for allowing me to rant. I look forward to seeing you soon.



# The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 18-7

President Donna Arends

February 2018

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

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

## The President's Column

By  
Donna Arends



Hello American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota.

My hope is that all your New Year's resolutions are still in play. This year with finally moving and getting settled in, I did not make any resolutions.

Again my hope would be for you all to get out and invite your neighbors, friends, family and strangers (friends you haven't met yet) to join our American Legion Family.

Membership Mary and I have attended Midwinters in the 1st, 4th, 10th and 2nd so far in January. We have the 3rd, the Winter Carnival Parade with the 4th and 5th and the Snowmobile Rally with the 10th to attend yet as I write this letter. We also have the 6th District coming up in February.

The 8th and 9th Districts we will visit in the spring.

At all of these events we have attended we have had very enjoyable experiences. I cannot put into words how very pleased and satisfied we have been with all of your District Chairman's reports. You are all doing a very good job this year. Please please please keep up the great work.

Membership Mary's Search and Rescue Hard Hats have been making the rounds. Some Membership people happy and some not so much with their hard hats. Please remember to bring them along to the Sweetheart Rally.

A very informational Leadership Training was held in the 6th District. Thank 6th District President Vicki Bibeau and 6th District Membership Sharon Thiemecke. Of course there are more Department Leadership Membership and Public Relations events planned for the rest of our Auxiliary year, so please try to attend one of those as well.

Everyone stay warm and safe. Our thoughts are with those of you in the Metro South and East part of the State that endured the recent blizzard. Please know your American Legion Family thoughts were with you.

In Willmar and in the north this time, we dodged that bullet, but as you know other times we have had the snow and wind also. So we feel your pain.

Patience, spring is on the way. Until next time.

## Gift shops bring a lot of veteran smiles

By Vida Bacon, Chairman

I have been privileged to be a part of three of our Gift Shops this year. I was able to present gifts to our Veterans at the VA Medical Center in Fargo. I helped Veterans select and wrapped gifts for them at the Veterans Home in Hastings. I also was able to wrap and distribute gifts to the Veterans at the Veterans Home in Luverne. What an honor! My committee person this year is Linda Deschene. She and I were able to shop for gifts for our Veterans and their family members. Thank you Linda, for a tremendous job well done.

We would also like to thank all the Units, Posts and Squadrons who have donated to the Gift Shop Program this year. Without your generosity we wouldn't be able to do any of this. The Veteran's smiles are worth more than anything!

Also, a special Thank You to: Lynette Andel, Fargo VAMC; Mary Ann Davis, Minneapolis VAMC; Doris LaFayette, Fergus Falls MVH; Darlene Wondra, Hastings MVH; Jeannette Mertens, Luverne MVH; Sandy Gibson, Minneapolis MVH; Phyllis Mealey, Silver Bay MVH; Naomi Hill, Sioux Falls VAMC; Jan Benson, St. Cloud VAMC. These ladies work many hours all year long to make sure our Veterans have the things they need that we can give them.

## Junior Conference to be held at North St. Paul Post

The 55th Annual Department Junior Conference will be held Saturday, April 14th at the North St. Paul American Legion Post #39, hosted by the Fourth 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 13th, the night before the opening of the Conference. The 4th District and Junior Activities Chairman Tammy Opland 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 Courtney Rogat, 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. You can find all of the registration materials on mnala.org.

### LEGISLATION

An omission was made in the January issue of the Legionnaire. January is Legislation Month and our Department Chairman Jean Walker never misses a beat. She had sent her article in and it was not forwarded to Al Zdon. To this, the Department Office offers Jean a sincere apology. Jean's article is on the next page.

### AMERICANISM MONTH

February is Americanism month. Chairman Joanie Krantz 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 DAYS

Poppy Card Distribution Days will be held April 20-29, 2018, inclusive for closed territories, starting at 12:01 a.m. on April 20. Beginning April 19 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 18-19, 2018, beginning at 12:01 a.m. on May 18. Closed territories are in effect until noon on Friday, May 18.

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).

Do keep in mind the The American Legion wants all of us to promote Poppies throughout the year – wear them and share them proudly.

### GIRLS STATE

The American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State session has been set for June 10-16, 2018, 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 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.

### POPPY ORDERS

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 287 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.

### 2019 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 2019 Senior and Junior dues, and the name and address of the person whose name should appear on your Unit's 2019 dues' notices. Please make sure this information gets back to Sandie at the Department Office by March 15. Please make sure and discuss the upcoming dues with your Units. Keep in mind that the National Organization has raised their portion of the dues from \$9.00 to \$12.00. The Department dues will still be \$9.00 for 2019 so the amount you will send in to the Department Office will be \$21.00 per member. Many Units currently only charge \$20.00 for dues, send \$18.00 to Department and keep \$2.00 for themselves. Remember, that won't work in 2019!! Also keep in mind the dues of the American Legion Auxiliary are some of the most inexpensive organizations to belong to. What we do and what we stand for should make everyone very proud to be a member.

### 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 paper 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, 2017 to March 31, 2018.

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.

### SANDIE'S NOTES

We were just talking in the office today about where and the heck time goes – as I am typing this it is already January 19. I promised Jan and Julie some quiet time to get things cleaned up in the office and for the 4th year in a row, the supposed "quiet time" has slipped away again. I have to write a note about my dear friend and our President Donna Arends. She absolutely loves visiting Units to see what everyone is doing. I encourage those that haven't invited her to your Unit meeting or function, please do so. She has days open on her calendar and would love to come see you. There is a form online or you can just call me with your request. I want to thank all of those who came to our Montgomery Post 79 Appreciation Day in December –

# Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

what a great time it was. I was honored to be the Celebrity Bartender, so Shorty said, but I know it was just very cheap labor!! And yes, thank you to Don Hayden who drove all the way from Le Center for one of our famous home-made Tom and Jerry's. It was colder than a witches' ... but people showed up. The free chili and chicken noodle soup was a hit and ran out quite fast. My little granddaughter (not the baby) Claire has become a very active member of our Auxiliary and I am so proud that she will be participating in the little Miss Poppy program. Mom already bought her dress and Grammie will be taking her to buy a crown - can't wait.

I want every one of you Legionnaires (male or female) to treat that very special person in your life to a memorable Valentine's Day - without them, where would we be? I am hoping my special Legionnaire reads this. Until next month, be safe, warm and enjoy life to the fullest.

## February means Americanism Month

By this time Units have received information to give to your local schools about the Americanism Essay Contest. February is "Americanism" month and this year's Essay Title is: "What can I personally do to promote Americanism in my school or community". The Americanism Essay Contest 2018 cover sheet must be used with each Essay and the American Legion Auxiliary Unit Chairman MUST sign the cover sheet. Essays are due at the Department Office by April 1st, 2018. Essays are then moved to the National Americanism Division Chairman by April 15th, 2018. Unit members please encourage your children and grandchildren to participate in the essay contest.

Units can publish flag etiquette tips in your newspaper and on social media, host a flag awareness event, communicate information in your schools, post home and public functions. Encourage local businesses to fly a flag, especially on patriotic holidays. Encourage your own members to fly the American flag in their yards, as well as educate proper flag display and respect. Purchase "The Flag Code" brochure and distribute in your schools and community (brochure can be ordered from Emblem Sales). Organize a Flag Disposal Ceremony and invite the community to be a part of

this special event. You could even serve bars and coffee afterwards.

March marches toward the month of April which is none other than ANNUAL REPORTS month ..... I am hoping that I don't receive any annual reports that say, "Did Not Participate". It's hard for a Chairman to believe your Unit "did not participate" because being an AMERICAN citizen makes you qualified to promote American patriotism, showing respect for your country and its flag. We have opportunities to set positive examples of living in the United States of America as a GRATEFUL patriotic citizen. Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance at your Unit meetings, singing the Nation Anthem at sporting events and flying an American fly, these pro-

# Legislative work very important

The American Legion Auxiliary supports the legislative priorities adopted by The American Legion. The American Legion's Legislative Division in Washington, D.C., keeps track of the current legislation related to veterans' benefits. Auxiliary members are encouraged to subscribe to the Legion's legislative ebulletins to keep the Legion Family aware of legislative issues and the official positions of The American Legion on those issues. Some other

resources available are The Dispatch, the Legionnaire, The American Legion website [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) /legislative and the American Legion Auxiliary website [www.alaforveterans.org/advocate/#legislative](http://www.alaforveterans.org/advocate/#legislative) these websites have a lot of information on current and upcoming legislation on veterans benefits. Our Minnesota Legion Legislative Chairman Peggy Moon and her committee is another resource we can use to get updates on issues concerning our

veterans as we work together as a Legion family.

So talk to your Legislators our elected officials and advocate for our veterans. Call them, email, write letters and let them know we want them to support legislation for our veterans.

Thank you for all you do for our Veterans and their families. God Bless America, our Veterans and God Bless You.

**Jean Walker,**  
Legislative Chairman



JEAN WALKER

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JOANIE KRANTZ

mote the spirit of patriotism and you have now participated. 100% reporting for Americanism.

As Americanism Chairman I will have the wonderful opportunity to attend the 2018 Girls State Week at Bethel University in the cities on June 10th-16th. A first time ever experience instructing approximately 400 young women how to love the United States of America and its freedom's. A reminder to all Units to get information packets to your schools about Girls State because of deadlines.

Bethel University will be under construction during Girls State week, so please give the information a little more attention as there are some "Do's and Don'ts".

**Americanism Chair**  
**Joanie Krantz**

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### Jan. 24, 2018, Auxiliary Membership

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year 1/26/2017
One	5,000	3,869	77.38%	4,062
Two	4,924	3,883	78.86%	3,928
Three	4,411	3,487	79.05%	3,488
Four	720	531	73.75%	559
Five	824	558	67.72%	601
Six	6,042	4,799	79.43%	5,057
Seven	3,934	3,110	79.05%	3,157
Eight	1,628	1,187	72.91%	1,181
Nine	4,350	3,360	77.35%	3,577
Ten	5,159	3,605	69.88%	3,956
1982	160	115	71.88%	125
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37,152</b>	<b>28,504</b>	<b>76.74%</b>	<b>29,691</b>

## Department leadership workshops coming

The Department Auxiliary will be sponsoring three Leadership Workshops coming up. They will be held Feb. 10 in New London, Feb. 24 in Waite Park and March 10 in Buffalo. They will run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The cost is \$10 for materials and lunch. A minimum of 12 attendees is necessary. Junior members are welcome. The deadline is Jan 15. Please fill out the form below to register.

Unit # \_\_\_\_\_ Unit Location \_\_\_\_\_ District # \_\_\_\_\_ Date you will attend \_\_\_\_\_

Member # \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Senior  Junior

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Make checks payable to: Sandy Wersal

Mail to: 16667 Co Rd 9 NE, New London, MN 56273

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- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 14 meals: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners
- 52 mile Durango/Silverton Train Ride
- Admission to Badlands, Mount Rushmore, Painted Desert & Petrified Forest, Grand Canyon, Zion National Park and Bryce Canyon
- Touring the San Juan Mountains & Rocky Mountains
- Luggage handling for one suitcase per person

Starting at **\$1,599.00** Per Person Double Occupancy

### New York City Your Way!

June 26-30, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

- 4 Seasons Tour Managers, Larry Alvey & Tammi Haney
- Roundtrip Delta flights Minneapolis to New York City
- Transfers to/from Airport to hotel
- Dinner at Carmine's
- 4 nights at the Millennium Broadway Hotel
- Daily Hospitality Desk in hotel to assist your day
- Luggage handling for 1 suitcase per person

**\$1,899.00** per person double occupancy

### Minnesota Twins Spring Training in Florida

March 15-25, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 10 nights accommodations
- 18 meals: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 7 dinners
- Anheuser Busch Brewery Tour, St. Louis, MO
- Best of Nashville Guided tour
- Coca Cola Factory Tour, Atlanta, GA
- 2 Spring Training baseball games
- Luggage handling for one suitcase per person

**\$1,799.00** per person double occupancy

### New Orleans & Baton Rouge

May 10-15, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta flight from Minneapolis to New Orleans
- 3 nights in New Orleans
- 2 nights in Baton Rouge
- Breakfast daily
- Mardi Gras World
- City Tours of New Orleans and Baton Rouge
- Natchez Mississippi River Cruise and lunch
- Dinner and Show in the French Quarter
- Luggage handling for one suitcase per person

**\$1,899.00** Per Person Double Occupancy

### Heart of Alaska

July 12-19, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta flights between Minneapolis and Anchorage
- 13 Meals (including an Alaska Salmon Bake)
- Iditarod Trail Headquarters
- Denali National Park Natural History Tour
- Riverboat Discovery Cruise
- Chena Indian Village
- Sled Dog Demonstration
- Prince William Sound Cruise

**\$3,379.00** Per Person Double Occupancy

### Savannah & Charleston

April 13-20, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 8 nights accommodations & 14 meals
- Anheuser Bush Brewery, St. Louis, MO
- Biltmore Estates, Asheville, NC
- Gospel Dinner Cruise
- Savannahs Historic Davenport House Tour
- Historic Savannah and Charleston Tours
- Jekyll and St. Simons Island
- Patriots Point Tour
- Luggage handling for one suitcase per person

**\$1,549.00** Per Person Double Occupancy

### Monuments of Washington DC

April 27-May 1, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta Air from Minneapolis
- 4 nights accommodations in the Washington DC area
- 4 breakfasts and 4 dinners
- Evening guided Memorial and Monuments tour
- Two full day guided tours of Washington DC
- Admission George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate
- WW II Memorial, Capitol Hill, Embassy Row, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Smithsonian, Lincoln Memorial
- Luggage handling for one suitcase per person

**\$1,499.00** per person double occupancy

### Alaska Tour & Cruise

August 3-15, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis to Fairbanks and return Vancouver to Minneapolis
- Accommodations at superior and deluxe hotels
- A 7-night southbound cruise on the CORAL PRINCESS
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