



Past National Commander Dan Ludwig talked it over with Department Commander Redepenning at Anoka.



While Commander Reistad and his aide Ken Knight were taking pictures of the Duluth Harbor, Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl climbed a snowbank to take a picture of them.



The food was colorful during the tour's stop in Brainerd.



Reistad faced the press in Duluth.

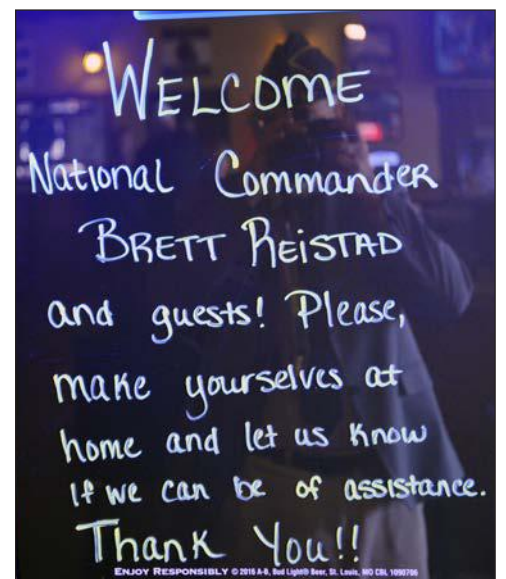


Michael Fernlund took off his hat and entertained for a bit during a stop at Pequot Lakes.



The tour even managed to squeeze in a quick tour of the Legionville School Patrol Training Center.

Below: Signs greeted the National Commander wherever he went.



Mailman in New Caledonia

By Al Zdon

Jim Trench wanted to be an officer in World War II.

Instead he wound up being a mailman in the South Pacific. And that was okay with him.

Trench grew up on a farm near Denison, Minnesota, about eight miles from Northfield. His father and grandfather before him had worked the land on a 320-acre farm that was first homesteaded in 1864.

"We raised cattle, but we also grew a little corn, wheat and alfalfa. But beef cattle was where my dad made money for the family. We also had 18 cows that had to be milked every day. We never owned a tractor, even up to when my parents sold the farm in 1944. We never had running water. We never had electricity."

The family had two wells, the main one powered by a huge windmill. "One day, the mill broke. I volunteered to climb up there, but I couldn't fix it. Then my brother went up there, but he couldn't fix it. Then my dad went up there. He got it fixed."

The cattle business was good until 1930 as the Great Depression set in, and then it disappeared. "You simply could not sell cattle any more. We had them, but we couldn't sell them."

Trench's mother helped support the family as the postmaster in Denison, highly unusual for a woman in those years. "She had three things against her from being appointed. She was a woman. She was a Catholic. And probably the worst thing of all – she was a Democrat." Nevertheless, she got the job and held it for 20 years.

Trench was born in 1922 and never left the farm until the war. He attended a farm school near his home, and the school in Denison, and finally high school in Northfield.

One of his passions was baseball. By the time he was 16, he was playing on the town team, and by age 20, he was managing the team. His younger brother, Bob, also played on the team.

The team would mainly play on Sundays, and baseball was a major event in that part of the state. When Trench got to Northfield High School, he also played on the school's softball team and ran track.

Trench's uncle Martin was one of the success stories in the family. He had graduated from Annapolis where he captained the Navy football team, and he had become captain of the battleship North Dakota.

Young James had notions of following in his uncle's footsteps, and for a while it seemed he might. "I had the appointment. Our congressman told my father, 'If Jim wants to go to either academy, I'll appoint him.' But in the end, I didn't have 20-20 vision, and in those days you had to in order to be appointed."

A big break in Trench's life came when he was selected to do the U.S. Census in Denison and the surrounding township in 1940. "I worked pretty hard at it, and I did a good job. It was the first time in my life I had any cash money."

Otherwise, Trench rented himself out to other farmers. "If you got a dollar a day, you were doing good. I plowed, I shocked grain, I thrashed, I cut corn. I also shoveled coal at the local elevator. That was the worst job of my life."

In February 1941, Trench tried to enlist in the Army, but a doctor in Cannon Falls who gave him his physical, rejected him. He couldn't afford college, and it looked like his options were getting thin.

Then in the fall of 1941, his aunt told him that she had taken a job running a sorority house at the University of

Minnesota. She had a job for him working at the house if he wanted. The job provided enough for room and board and the \$81 tuition at the university.

He settled in at the U, and was a starter on the Gophers freshman baseball team. "I was good enough to play varsity, but freshmen couldn't play in those days."

On Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, both Trench brothers were at home visiting their parents. "We got in the car that morning and drove Bob back to Shakopee where he was living and then they took me to 50th and Bryant in Minneapolis, and I took the street car back to the university.

"When I got to the rooming house, one of the guys there said to me, 'We're at war.' None of us even knew where Pearl Harbor was."

Trench did not rush down to the recruiting station. "One of my professors told us guys to take it easy. I wasn't even registered for the draft yet."



Jim Trench, home on furlough, stands in front of the post office in Denison, Minnesota, where his mother was the postmaster. Trench was a postal worker in the South Pacific at New Caledonia.

Jim Trench, who later became an attorney in Minneapolis, was accepted for Officer Candidate School three times, but it never seemed to work out. He found an important job delivering the mail to soldiers in the South Pacific.

In April 1942, Trench did travel to Red Wing to register, and to ask for a deferment for the spring quarter. They granted it to him.

On July 2, he arrived at Fort Snelling to begin his military career. This time the physical was no problem. Trouble was, the fort was having trouble processing the thousands of Minnesota draftees, and they sent Trench home for two weeks.

Part of that two weeks, he worked for his mother at the Denison Post Office, a job he had done off and on for several years.

His free time over, Trench was off to Camp Robinson in Arkansas to do infantry basic training. While there, he applied for Officer Candidate School and was accepted.

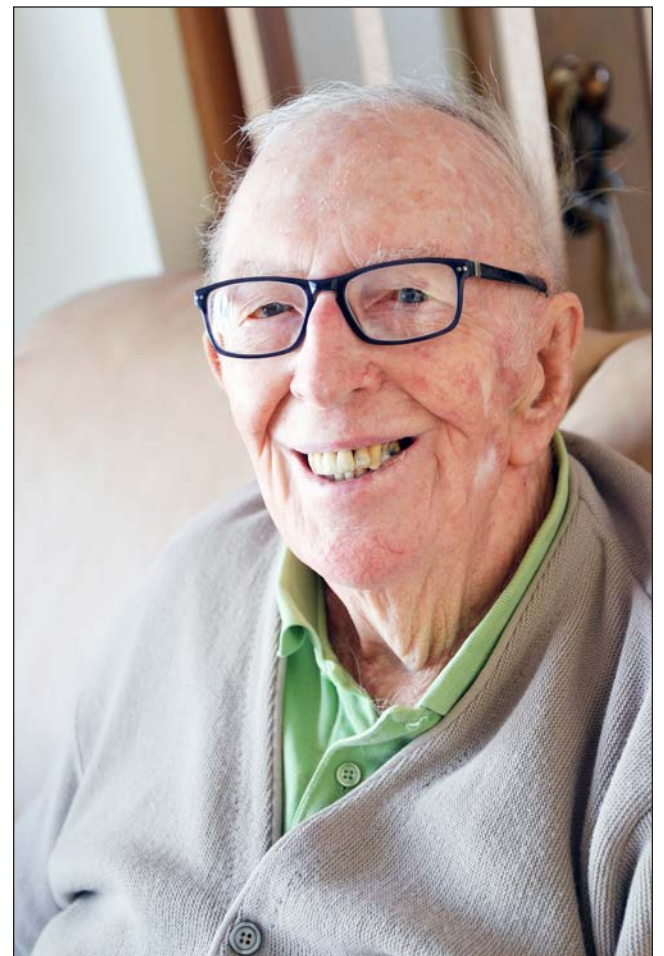
"But at the same time, because I worked for my mother, I was also qualified for the Army Postal Service. I was transferred to New York City. That was absolutely outstanding. A kid from the farm gets to go to New York City."

With his interest in sports, Trench was having the time of his life. "We went to the final game of the World Series, with the Yankees playing the Cardinals. We saw football games. We saw plays on Broadway. We saw hockey games, and we never had to pay for anything."

"I sure had a good time in New York City. It was the height of my military career."

Again Trench applied for OCS, and again he was accepted.

And again he was transferred before any orders came in for the officer's school. "Forty-four of us from New York were sent to Oakland, California." They arrived on



JIM TRENCH
At home in Richfield

Christmas Day, 1942.

Again, he liked the assignment. "We worked at the Army Post Office in San Francisco. I got to go to the East West Shrine Game on New Year's Day."

While there, he went over to the Presidio to have a medical exam for officer's school. "I was color blind, but they let me pass anyway. It was confirmed that I would be going to Fort Benning for officer's school in two weeks.

"In less than two weeks, I was on a ship headed to the South Pacific."

Didn't he raise some heck with the army about his missed opportunity? "In those days, the Army didn't pay much attention to you."

Eight days out of port, Trench came down with pneumonia. "I was really, really sick. I spent 12 days in the Navy hospital aboard the troop ship."

He was finally released, but was still weak. "They would get us up every morning and have us stand on the deck with our life preservers nearby. We were zig zagging, and they were afraid we'd get hit by a submarine. But I was so weak, I thought I'd fall in the water."

After 23 days at sea, the ship docked five miles out of the port at New Caledonia. "There was so much ship traffic, we couldn't get into the port. We had to climb down ropes to get on smaller boats that took us to the base."

Trench was assigned to the 502nd Army Post Office on New Caledonia. Within a few days, he had a relapse of the pneumonia, and he was back in the hospital for 14 more days.

With his health restored, Trench began work at New Caledonia, which at that point of the war was one of the largest U.S. bases in the Pacific. "We would go out and meet the ships at the dock to collect their mail. Then we would take it back to the post office building and sort it."

Trench recalls that all the mail sent home by the GIs was heavily censored. "My parents never knew where I was during the whole war."

The postal workers slept in tents. "It was all right. One thing about life growing up on a farm, I didn't mind the army."

He was sent around the island working at different post offices, and eventually settled in at Noumea, the capital. He rose to corporal and then Tech 4.

"I got to play a lot of baseball and softball, and that was an outstanding deal for me. I flew around the island from one base to another playing ball. I was a left fielder and I had a great year, hitting over .300 with a lot of line drives. And I was pretty fast in the outfield. I recall in an all-star softball game, I hit a homerun."

He enjoyed his work as a mailman. "Mail was very important to the soldiers, and we had a big job to do. I've always worked hard. I was obsessed with it."

One day when he was stationed at the air base in the northern part of the island, a piece of mail arrived and it was open. "It was the secret bombing plans for Rabaul and New Britain. I gave them to the lieutenant, and he took care of them."

Once he got to New Caledonia, Trench put aside his goal of officer's school because OCS was not an option for those stationed overseas. Finally, in April 1945, that option was opened up and Trench once again was accepted.

"But they wanted me to extend my service time for a year and a half after the war. I turned it down. We all wanted to get out."

New Caledonia was never under attack during the war, and Trench's most serious encounter with danger came from his comrades in arms.

"A friend of mine and I were walking along a road one time, heading back to the base, and we were about a half mile from a Marine base. Suddenly we were attacked by three Marines from behind. I'm sure they were drunk. I was fighting two of them and my buddy was fighting the other one. I got a black eye and a broken nose and a broken rib.

"Later, we went to the entrance to the Marine base and asked who had come in that night, and they said nobody. Sure."

One of the sidelights of the attack was that the postal workers always wore sidearms. "But that night, we had turned them in. If we had had those sidearms, we would have been the ones convicted."

The relations between the branches of the service were never great, Trench said. "It wasn't long after that when a couple of Marines wandered onto our base, and they got beat up."

In the spring of 1945, Trench, who had served 28 months overseas, was granted a 45-day furlough. He was given the choice of going to Australia, New Zealand or the United States. He chose home.

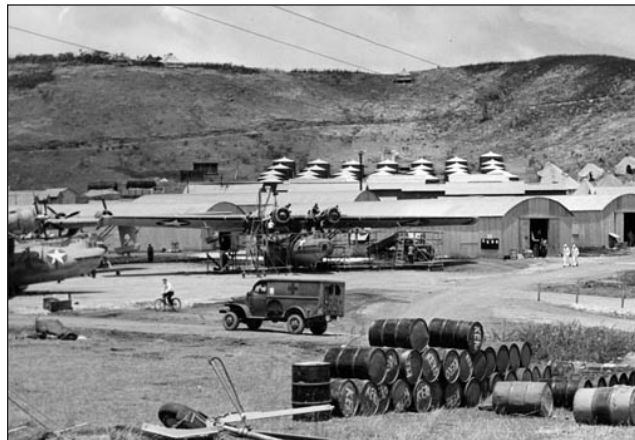
"It took 16 days to get to San Francisco and another five days on the train to get home to Minnesota. I arrived on July 2, 1945, exactly three years after I had joined the Army." The travel time was not deducted from his furlough.

Trench was enjoying his extended vacation when he went on a family picnic near Red Wing. "All of a sudden I became violently ill and was throwing up. My foot was really swelling up. I must have gotten bit by something."

He saw a couple of doctors, and one did surgery on the foot to relieve the swelling. He was finally sent to Fort



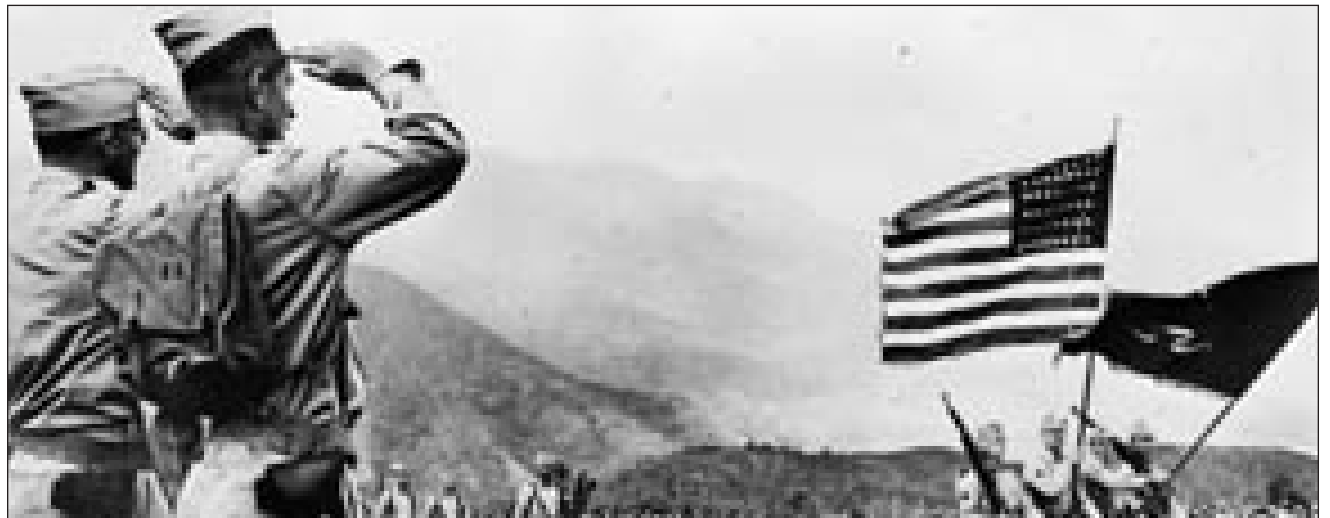
At one time, New Caledonia was America's principal base in the South Pacific. Over 50,000 personnel were stationed there at one point. The harbor was busy with ships coming and going in November of 1942.



Weapons of war were stored in New Caledonia as the U.S. began the large task of defeating the Japanese empire.



Army strategists keep track of the enemy's movement in the South Pacific at the command center in New Caledonia.



Troops were on parade in New Caledonia during the war. The Americal Division trained there before being deployed in the South Pacific.



New Caledonia was a French colony and relations between the U.S. military and the French government were not always cordial. Here, Americans move airplanes through Noumea, the capital of the colony.

Listening Post

News from around the State



SECOND DISTRICT DONATION — Second District Commander Cindy Brunk and Vice Commander Jim Hunt show off the donation to the Shop, Ship, and Share program from Monogram Meats in Chandler. The 1,500 bags of jerky were sent to soldiers deployed overseas.



SAVAGE UNIT HELPS AT VETS HOME — Savage Unit 643 delivered Christmas cards, socks, hats, toiletries, puzzles and activity books to residents at the Minnesota Veterans Home at Minneapolis.



BACKUS DONATION — Backus Post 368 presented a check for \$2,000 to the Backus Fire Department and First Responders. The money came from a fish fry sponsored by the SAL. From left: Jim Bartholomay, Pete Sherrard, Jason Smith, Andy Skinner, Eugene Gagnon, Bill Taylor, John Wieber.



SWANVILLE SERVES VETERANS — Swanville Post and Unit 313 served veterans Christmas dinner at the Eagle's Nest in Sauk Centre.



WOODBURY WALL OF THANKS — Woodbury Post 501 Commander Tom Grezik and Vice Commanders Dale Johnson and Bob Dolan pose in front of the Wall of Thanks. The effort raised \$2,800 for local charities.



BRainerd BENCH — Brainerd Post 255 Riders donated a bench to the Minnesota Veterans Cemetery near Little Falls. It honors the heroes of the Benghazi attack.

Jim Trench

Continued from preceding page

Snelling so that his furlough would stop ticking off. "I was given so much penicillin that I became allergic to it."

He was there a couple of weeks when the U.S. dropped the atomic bombs on Japan and the war ended. Meanwhile, his postal unit in New Caledonia had been sent to the Philippines.

"I spent 20 days in the hospital, and then I was sent to Camp McCoy to be processed out. I got out of the service on Nov. 17, 1945."

Then it was back to school. "The GI Bill was the greatest thing in my life." He went back to the University of Minnesota and signed up for pre-law. His tuition was paid for, plus he got \$65 a month in spending money and his books paid for.

He considered trying out for baseball again. "But I was 25 years old by then, and I was pretty serious about my studies." He graduated from the University in 1948.

"I was thinking of going to Arizona for law school, but then I went to a party and met my wife Carol. That was the end of any thoughts about Arizona." The two were married and had three children.

Carol taught at Richfield High School, and wrote a book on microwave cooking that sold 12,000 copies. Carol died eight years ago after 63 years of marriage.

Trench worked days at State Farm Insurance and went to law school at night at the Minneapolis School of Law.

He went into private practice and worked with several combinations of lawyers. He was the attorney for the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District for 40 years. For the last 14 years of his practice, he became a public defender for Hennepin County. He loved to do trial work, and he said one of his strengths was picking juries.

He's had to give up golf in recent times because of leg problems, but at 97, he's very active and still drives. "I work out a half an hour everyday, bending and stretching."

He makes his home in Richfield.



BEMIDJI HONOR — Second Vice Commander Bill Pagel presents Russ Jackson of Bemidji Post 14 with a 50-year membership certificate.

Listening Post

News from around the State



WHEATON DONATION — Wheaton Post, Unit and SAL 80 recently donated over \$2,000 worth of jeans, belts, sweatshirts, socks, underwear and other items to the Minnesota Veterans Home at Fergus Falls and the St. Cloud VA. From left: Doris LaFayette, Betty Beal and Deanna Mounts.



HIBBING COLOR GUARD — The Mid-Range Color Guard out of Hibbing Post 222 recently celebrated 50 years of working hockey games and other events. From left: Bill Kochevar, Mike Stavnes, Barb Hemenway, Chuck Findley.



EAGAN BAGS IT — A crew from the Eagan Post and Auxiliary 594 participated in the annual Open Door Bagging Event at Cub Foods. The volunteers worked four-hour shifts at the checkouts and also solicited sales of pre-packaged food bags.



MONTICELLO SCOUTS — The Legion Riders at Monticello Post 260, Boy Scout Troop 270, Cub Scout Pack 272, and the Auxiliary worked together to put on the annual Bowl Game Pancake Breakfast at the post.

53 contestants head to Indy for annual Oratorical Contest finals

Fifty-three high school orators are headed to Indianapolis April 6-8 to compete in The American Legion's 82nd annual National Oratorical Contest to speak on the U.S. Constitution and compete for \$48,000 in scholarships.

Olivia Flack of Lake Crystal will represent Minnesota.

The competitors won their respective American Legion post, district and state-level Oratorical Contest to earn a spot at the national level.

The contest will get underway April 6 at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel with the young orators competing in the quarterfinals; the top nine contestants will advance to the semifinals. The contestants will present a rehearsed eight- to 10-minute oration on an aspect of the Constitution in front of judges, as well as a three- to five-minute speech on an assigned topic discourse — a phase of the Constitution selected from its Articles and Sections. The top three semifinal contestants will advance to the championship finals.

The championship finals will be held Sunday, April 7 at 10 a.m. EDT, and will be streamed on Facebook Live at www.facebook.com/americanlegionhq.

Of the 53 competitors, eight are returning from 2018. They include Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, New York and South Carolina.

STATE	CONTESTANT NAME
Alabama	Gary Thomas Ward III
Alaska	Seth Hanson
Arizona	Cassandra Lawson
Arkansas	Jackson Minnick
California	Daniella Wilson
Colorado	Kidus Zelalem
Connecticut	Mariam Kish
Delaware	Dorothy McCormick
District of Columbia	Ryan Smith
Florida	Chad Stephens
France	Victoria Marie Geehreg
Georgia	Mattilyn Winburn
Hawaii	Cassandra Carlyle
Idaho	Alayna Lopez
Illinois	Caleb Maue
Indiana	Isaac Bock
Iowa	Patrick Junker
Kansas	Mark McAllister
Kentucky	Lydia Hicks
Louisiana	Noah Howard
Maine	Marina Long
Maryland	Utopia Diabe
Massachusetts	Erin Csmeli
Michigan	Hayden Kibbey
Minnesota	Olivia Flack
Mississippi	Daniel Laudadio

Missouri	Marissa Gertz
Montana	Sierra Dilworth
Nebraska	Audrey Worthing
Nevada	Perla Molina
New Hampshire	Olivia Halle
New Jersey	Ayokunnumi Oluwakuyide
New Mexico	Sarah Morgan-Smith Myers
New York	Melissa Barnosky
North Carolina	David Bainbridge Jr.
North Dakota	Madison Barndt
Ohio	Honor Persing
Oklahoma	Clayton Ward
Oregon	Anwasha Mukherjee
Pennsylvania	Selena Rose
Puerto Rico	Kevin Caraballo-Irizarry
Rhode Island	Owen McCadden
South Carolina	Jessica Scannell
South Dakota	Keilly Gunther
Tennessee	Eden Carnes
Texas	Tanner David
Utah	Josh Christensen
Vermont	Avery Carter
Virginia	Nya Miles
Washington	Sarah Crosby
West Virginia	Trevor Swiger
Wisconsin	Timothy Davis
Wyoming	Hailey Moss

Rolling Thunder registrations are now open through Post 177

Since 2012, American Legion Post 177 in Fairfax, Va., has hosted American Legion Riders from all over the nation who have traveled to the Beltway for Rolling Thunder activities. That isn't changing this year, with registration already open for 2019's Rolling Thunder activities.

But 2019 may have a nostalgic feeling to it. The national organization, Rolling Thunder Inc., has publicly stated that 2019 will be the last "Ride for Freedom" into the Pentagon, and that it will no longer be coordinating a national event over Memorial Day Weekend in Washington, D.C. A December 2018 letter signed by Rolling Thunder Inc.

National Executive Director Artie Muller and National President Joe Bean stated that starting in 2020, state Rolling Thunder chapters will coordinate similar demonstrations at the local level over Memorial Day Weekend.

National American Legion Riders Advisory Committee Chairman Bob Sussan said the end of any national Rolling Thunder event won't deter Legion Riders from continuing to bring awareness to the POW-MIA issue.

Meanwhile, American Legion Riders Chapter 177 Director Bruce Mersereau said his post is planning events like it has in past years. That includes the annual Friday

night dinner and POW ceremony, the escorted ride to the candlelight vigil at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a wreath-laying at Arlington National Cemetery and the Ride to the Thunder on Sunday morning. The post also will have vendors and host special guests throughout the weekend, including Gold Star families.

Post 177 is asking all Riders to register. There is no registration fees, but a \$10 option is available to help defray costs.

For updates or for more information go to: <http://www.alrrollingthunder.com/>

World War II History Round Table

Air power in Europe during World War II

By Al Zdon

Thousands of British and American bombers roared over Europe dropping millions of bombs in World War II in an attempt to destroy Germany's ability to wage war.

Looking back, historians grapple with the question of whether it was all worth it.

Historian Rich Muller of the Air Force Air University in Alabama, tackled that big question at the March meeting of the World War II History Round Table at Fort Snelling.

Muller spoke on the Combined Bomber Offensive, the attempt by the British and American air forces to severely cripple the German manufacturing and transportation sectors, and also to draw the Luftwaffe, the Nazi air force, away from supporting the battle fronts.

Muller, who teaches at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, was later joined by two veterans of the Army Air Corps.

Using air power to win a war was first tried in the Great War. "They wondered if there was a better way to fight a war than the human slaughter in the trenches?"

All the sides in World War I were ramping up their air power when the armistice was declared. "The war ended before any of this could have much of an effect."

Both in Great Britain and the United States, though, the notion of strategic bombing continued to gain favor in the 20 years or so before World War II began.

When the Second World War did erupt, Winston Churchill leaned heavily on air power to save England from Nazi conquest. "He thought air power would weaken Germany eventually."

But Britain's first forays into this new type of warfare were disastrous. "They flew missions during the day with no fighter escorts." The British planes were easy pickings for the German fighters and the ground anti-aircraft fire.

Britain switched to bombing at night. "It was safer, but finding the targets was very, very difficult." A major report done in 1941, using intelligence data, showed that only one of five British bombs got within five miles of the target.

"One British official said the British bombing effort was like daily exporting 200,000 tons of metal in a general direction."

America began sending planes to England soon after it entered the war in 1942, but its first forays into bombing the German war machine were also horrific. With the British bombing at night, the Eighth Air Force took over the daylight attacks, and just like the British, the cost was enormous.

"They set a limit for U.S. crews of 25 missions to give them some kind of a target, but with eight or ten percent losses on every mission, the crews could see that the odds against them were almost insurmountable. One of the hardest jobs of the war was a bomber crewman."

A major problem was that the fighters protecting the missions from the Luftwaffe didn't have enough range to follow them all the way to the target.

By 1943, America and Britain had united on the Combined Bomber Offensive, which emphasized harming the German ability to make airplanes.

In July, 1943, the American and British attacks on Hamburg created the first bomber-induced firestorm in history. The blaze swept across the German city, destroying it and killing over 40,000 civilians. Later historians compared the terrible effect of the bombing on the German civilian population to the Holocaust, the Nazi plan that killed six million Jews and others.

German leadership reacted quickly to the strategic bombing by reorganizing its own air force and equipping its planes with effective air-to-air weapons such as rockets and heavy cannons.

By late 1943, Germany's air attack had almost completely switched from offensive, helping the soldiers on the battle fronts, to defensive, taking on the Allied bombers. This was what the Allies were hoping would happen.

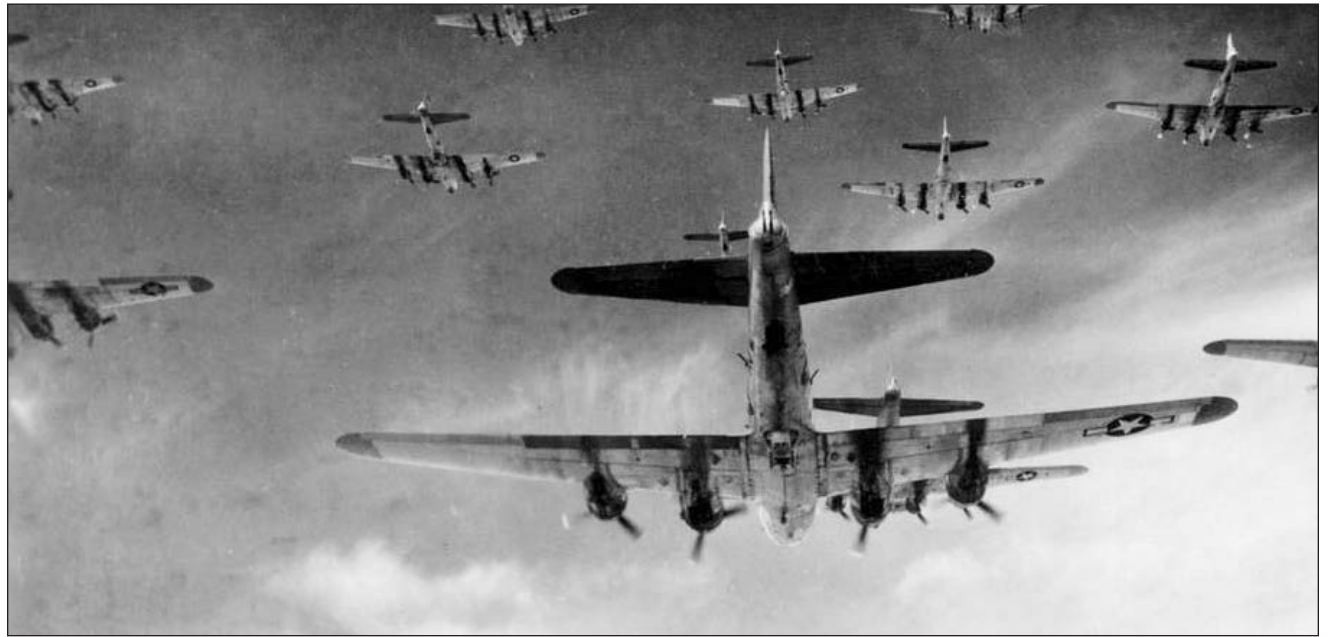
Anti-aircraft fire also increased. "The pilots often remarked that the flak was so thick you could walk on it. The heavy flak was not so much to make the bombers crash, but to make the bombers miss."

Muller said the horrendous losses the American bombers were taking began to ease toward the end of 1943 with the development of longer range fighters, such as the P-47 and the P-51, that could stay with the bombers all the way to the target.

The effort at this point was to make the enemy engage with the Allied fighters and thus increase their losses. The plan worked.

"The Luftwaffe lost its front line, two times over," Muller said.

The Germans were cranking out aircraft at a huge rate, a boost in production that peaked out in late 1944, but was having more and more trouble finding pilots. Experienced German pilots flew missions until they were shot down, and their replacements had little training due to the lack of aviation fuel.



American B-17s fly in formation en route to bombing German industries during World War II.

And all of what Germany had left was used in a desperate attempt to stop the bombing, and very little was used for close support of the ground troops.

While the U.S. could build enormous aircraft factories, like Willow Run in Michigan where a bomber would come off the line every hour, the Germans, because of the bombing offensive, had to build its aircraft at many smaller factories and somehow try to get the parts to a central location on a damaged transportation system.

When the Allies prepared to land on Normandy in June, 1944, Eisenhower told the troops, "When you see aircraft overhead, they will be ours." Indeed, Muller said the Germans had only two aircraft at the D-Day landings.

"Another saying during the war was that if you saw an aircraft and it was painted, it was British. If it had the natural metal, it was American. If it wasn't there, it was German."

In the end, the effect of the bombing on German production, transportation and morale were deadly. "Germany had not gambled on a multi-year war against three of the largest industrial powers in the world. The bombing put a lid on production, especially in the industrialized Ruhr."

What were the ethical questions still remaining? "The moral questions are significant," Muller said. "Most of the casualties, especially from the British raids, were civilians."

Iver Jorgensen joined the Army Air Corps and was sent to weather school in Grand Rapids, Michigan. "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it," he joked.

In the 12-week class, the students learned to gather information about the weather and compile it. The Army used the Grand Rapids civic center for the classes and the students went to the city parks to gather meteorological information.

Training was moved to Colorado Springs where the young students learned how to read a weather map.

They studied what had led up to a weather event. "Backcasting is a hell of a lot more accurate than forecasting."

It was then on to Denver where he became part of the 23rd Weather Squadron. "The information we gathered there was used all over the country."

Late in the war, he was sent to Iceland where he served with the 8th Weather Squadron. "Our weather station was on top of an 800-foot lava mound. The Brits had a radio tower up there. Every day, they would drive up the hill in American cars and trucks. And we would walk."

Bob Holmstrom served in a clandestine World War II group called the Carpetbaggers. The unit would use black-painted B-24s to deliver all kinds of supplies to the underground movement in France and other countries.

Holmstrom described some of the training they did in Idaho where the bombers would fly at 500 feet in the dark through the Idaho mountains. "It was kind of treacherous. I think we lost more planes in Idaho than we did overseas."

Holmstrom was assigned to the 406th Squadron, an adjunct of the Office of Strategic Services, or OSS. "They called us the Leaflet Squadron." But the planes would drop anything anybody thought could help the war effort including leaflets, fake passports, counterfeit money, weapons, bicycles, motorcycles, ammunition, clothing, and secret agents. "We never dropped a bomb during the war."

The unit traveled overseas on the massive Ile De France, the world's second largest ocean liner. "The food was done by the Brits. It was bad. It was terrible. We lived on Hershey

bars."

There were 8,000 troops on the ship. "It was really crowded."

When the ship pulled into Scotland and the submarine nets were pulled aside, a German submarine snuck in right behind the troop ship. "They found that sub and they sunk it. That's when I knew that our training was over, and we were in the war."

When the squadron first went to England, they were at one base, "but Axis Sally would come on the radio each day and talk about where we were going. I don't know how the spies got in there, but eventually they moved us to another base."

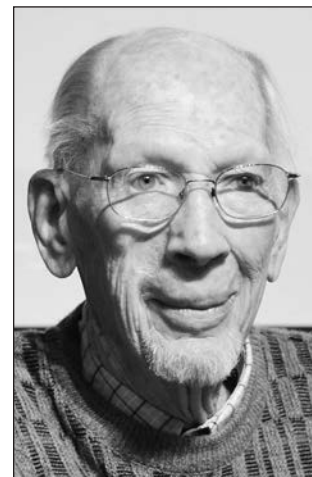
One shipment they often brought was pigeons. "We'd put them in an oatmeal box, and there would be a small parachute attached to it. They had three days of food." Once they were in the hands of the resistance fighters, the partisans could write a note about what supplies they needed and send it back to London with the pigeons.

The Carpetbaggers would fly about 15 days a month.

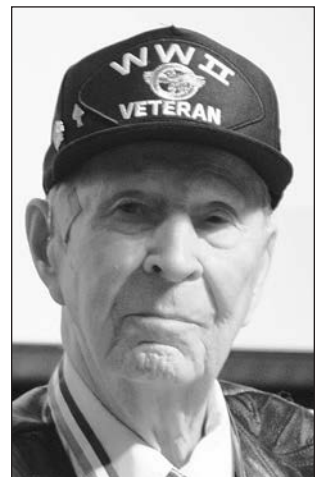
"Bicycles were important. A lot of the resistance fighters were women. The men were either in the Army or too old. The women could move around on the bicycles. We also brought motorcycles made in England. They folded in half."

When the war was over, the Carpetbaggers had to take another oath. "We flew back to the Zone of the Interior which is what they called the United States. They took us into a big room and had us raise our right hands and swear not to tell about our experiences for 40 years."

Holmstrom has written a book, along with S. Fabian Butalla, called Warbirds in the Cloak of Darkness, available through Amazon and other outlets.



IVER JORGENSEN



BOB HOLMSTROM



RICH MULLER

Membership report for the Minnesota American Legion, March 20, 2019



TOUR STOP — At the National Commander's Tour stop in Pequot Lakes, the leadership for the Legion posed with National Commander Brett Reistad. From left are Department Commander Darrel Redepenning and Department President Jean Walker.

District	2019 Goal	Total 2018	Total 2019	Weeks Gain	Total Posts	Goal Posts	% Of Goal	
District 1	8,553	8,495	7,834	60	58	9	91.59%	8,279
District 2	6,793	6,709	6,233	34	84	8	91.76%	6,597
District 3	11,262	11,197	10,523	25	65	17	93.44%	10,830
District 4	2,281	2,263	2,074	8	18	4	90.93%	2,177
District 5	2,340	2,318	2,146	7	22	6	91.71%	2,209
District 6	11,342	11,271	10,490	32	71	24	92.49%	10,966
District 7	6,089	6,013	5,569	19	76	19	91.46%	5,872
District 8	3,998	3,958	3,620	14	40	4	90.55%	3,843
District 9	6,482	6,417	5,912	20	65	13	91.21%	6,204
District 10	9,539	9,485	8,717	33	54	9	91.38%	9,187
District 11	2,009	2,084	1,816	9	2	0	90.39%	1,992
Totals	70,688	70,210	64,934	261	555	113	91.86%	68,156

Same Date Last Year

2018 Legion financial report

**INCOME STATEMENT
SEPTEMBER 30, 2018**

Department Income	
Department Dues Income	\$ 903,255
Less: MN Legionnaire Portion	\$ (244,967)
Revenue Enhancement Program	\$ 210,417
Grants	\$ 166,385
Investment Income	\$ 68,607
LIT Insurance - (Royalties)	\$ 117,169
Donations / Contributions	\$ 1,835
In-Kind Rent	\$ 81,357
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 24,258
Total Department Income:	\$ 1,328,316

**STATEMENT OF BUDGET EXPENSE
SEPTEMBER 30, 2018**

Headquarters Expense	Budgeted	Disbursed
Administration Salaries	\$321,500	\$315,930
FICA Expense	\$25,000	\$23,556
FUTA Expense	\$400	\$293
SUTA Expense	\$380	\$336
Group Health & Life Ins.	\$65,200	\$62,599
Employee's Ret. Fund	\$29,050	\$28,293
Unbudgeted Expense	\$0	\$1,500
Audit Expense	\$8,900	\$8,670
Investment Management Fees	\$8,900	\$10,088
Furniture & Fixtures	\$1,000	\$0
General Office Expense	\$50,600	\$46,164
Elect. Equip., Maint. & Mod.	\$26,330	\$25,496
Insurance (Other)	\$10,841	\$11,026
Travel Expense	\$16,000	\$21,539
Emergency Fund	\$500	\$0
Telephone	\$10,000	\$9,998
Misc. Expense	\$0	\$3,010
Prior Year Voided Cks	\$0	\$264
Loss on Sale of Assets	\$0	\$439
In & Out	\$0	(\$135)
Total Headquarters Expense	\$574,601	\$569,066

Unbudgeted Annual Expense

Depreciation Expense	\$0	\$18,673
Rent Expense	\$0	\$81,357

Total Unbudgeted Annual Expense	\$0	\$100,030
Special Budget		
Citizens Flag Alliance	\$0	\$0
National Emergency Funds Disbursed	\$1,000	\$823
Legal Expense	\$1,000	\$0
Operation Comfort Warrior	\$1,000	\$1,326
Total Special Budget Expense:	\$3,000	\$2,149
Rehab Expense		
Salaries	\$104,500	\$104,794
FICA Expense	\$8,040	\$8,017
FUTA Expense	\$150	\$84
SUTA Expense	\$200	\$124
Group Health Insurance	\$18,850	\$18,875
Employee Retirement Fund	\$10,900	\$11,381
General Office Expense	\$8,000	\$6,444
Claims Office Expense	\$7,000	\$15,674
CVSO Travel & Training	\$12,000	\$9,077
Hospital & Vet Assistance	\$6,500	\$3,278
Veteran Event Support	\$9,500	\$6,380
DSO & ADSO Travel	\$16,000	\$16,271
Rehabilitation Committee	\$8,000	\$7,380
Total Rehab Expense:	\$209,640	\$207,779
Committee Expense		
Americanism	\$6,800	\$4,261
Blood Program	\$250	\$0
Chaplain's Fund	\$600	\$91
Children & Youth Comm.	\$3,000	\$1,518
Commander's Budget	\$33,000	\$33,000
Convention Corporation	\$3,500	\$5,856
Dpt. Convention Comm.	\$4,000	\$2,484
Dpt. HQ Conf. & Conv.	\$27,000	\$26,735
Department Treasurer	\$3,600	\$3,600
Employment Committee	\$1,300	\$1,217
Energy & Cons. Comm.	\$250	(\$1,408)
Executive Committee	\$26,500	\$22,806
Exec. Cm. Contg. Fund	\$1,500	\$0
Finance Committee	\$4,000	\$3,350
Historian	\$1,000	\$735
Ins. Trust Committee	\$1,000	\$878
Judge Advocate	\$5,000	\$5,000
Law & Order Committee	\$1,000	\$172
Legislative Committee	\$4,300	\$2,893
Membership (Inc. Vice Cmdr.)	\$40,000	\$38,096
Marching Dept Color Guard	\$1,500	\$1,500

NEC	\$4,000	\$4,000
Nat'l. Conv. Delegates	\$22,100	\$22,100
Nat'l. Sec./Foreign Rel.	\$6,500	\$4,629
Operation Post Home	\$300	\$0
Post Dev. Committee	\$1,000	\$1,186
Public Relations Comm.	\$16,000	\$11,110
Res. Assign. Comm.	\$800	\$759
Servicemen's Center	\$300	\$239
L.I.T. Advertising	\$3,400	\$3,375
Legion Riders	\$500	\$256
USAA Expense	\$3,400	\$3,375
Strategic Planning Committee	\$1,500	\$1,156
Credentials Committee	\$1,000	\$643
Sergeant-at-Arms	\$500	\$174
Alternate NEC	\$1,000	\$1,000
Education and Training Committee	\$3,000	\$268
Total Committee Expense	\$234,400	\$207,054
GRAND TOTAL Budget vs. Actual	\$1,021,641	\$1,086,078

Total Undesignated Revenue	\$ 1,328,316
Total Undesignated Expense	\$1,086,078
Change in Net Assets	\$242,238



Membership Director Mike Maxa presided over the meetings during the National Commander's Tour.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 19-9

President Jean Walker

April 2019

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

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

The President's Column

By Jean Walker



Spring is here and I hope April's weather is better than March. First off, I would like everyone to keep our American Legion Family members in your prayers with the flooding that is happening in the surrounding states including ours. We are family and let us help take care of our family.

March has been a busy month for me traveling around the state. Started with a Venison Dinner at the Minneapolis Veterans Home. Then, onto the High School Oratorical Contest at the Anoka Post and I had the honor of being a judge for the contest. All the students did an excellent job. Then, onto the Oslo Unit 331 for one of the first 100th birthday parties for our American Legion. From there to Pequot Lakes Post to meet our American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad. Then, to more birthday dinners at the Anoka Post and Stewart. My next outing was to our Capitol for "Veterans Day on the Hill". This is an excellent opportunity for us to speak to our Senators and Representatives about our priorities and how to protect Veterans benefits. From there, I attended a birthday dinner at my home Post of Warren. I have a few more visits scheduled for March but this article is due before I attend them so I will report on those next month. Thank you once again to all the Posts and Units for the hospitality I have received.

We have a busy month ahead of us. We will be having our rescheduled Membership Rally at the LeCenter Post 108 on Saturday, April 13th. Our DEC meeting will begin at 9:30 A.M. Our Department Junior Conference is the same weekend of April 12-13th at the Richfield Post and we will do our best to support our Juniors this weekend also. We must remember that our Juniors are our future leaders. Bring them to the conference. They do not have to be in an organized Junior Unit to attend for the day.

April is Children and Youth Month. What is your unit doing for our children in your community? As we all know, April 15th is the date that the Annual reports are due to the Department Office along with your award requests. Let us have 100% reporting this year. Don't forget to toot your horn about what your unit is doing for our children, our veterans, and our communities. It is very important to report your hours and dollars donated. This is what we take to Congress to show how much is done by our members.

As always, thank you for all you do for our Veterans, their families and our communities.

Until next month, I would like to wish our American Legion Family a Happy Easter!

God Bless all of you and God Bless America.

Schedule announced for National President's Tour

The American Legion Auxiliary National President Kathy Dungan will be visiting Minnesota from May 13-16. As her stay is short, we will be conducting a mini-tour of our state. Following is a daily itinerary that we will be following.

Our group includes, along with National President Kathy, our own President Jean Walker, Department

Membership Chairman Robin Dorf, National Executive Committeewoman Raleen Tolzmann and Chauffeur and Baggage Handler Extraordinaire Secretary Sandie.

Our National President is coming here to meet our Minnesota American Legion Family so please attend one of the functions to support President Kathy's mission for our organization.

Monday, May 13, 2019

Location	Time	Event	Phone	email
Litchfield American Legion	5:30 p.m.	Social	320-693-9074-Post	
222 No. Sibley Ave, Litchfield.	6:00 p.m.	Dinner & Program		
Barb Koelln			320-877-7530	

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Morris American Legion	11:00 a.m.	Social		
507 Pacific Ave., Morris,	11:30 a.m.	Lunch	320-589-2040-Post	
Pam Gades			320-589-2147	pgadesala@gmail.com
Fergus Falls Veterans Home	2:00.	Tour		
Park Rapids American Legion	6:00 p.m.	Social		
900 1st St E, Park Rapids,	6:30 p.m.	Dinner	218-732-5238-Post	
Lynn Spilman			320-333-6522 or	lspilman@unitelc.com

Wednesday, May 15, 2019

Sauk Centre American Legion	11:00 a.m.	Social		
67 12th St. So, Sauk Centre	11:30 a.m.	Lunch	320-352-9931-Post	
Bev Huot			320-351-1206	
Camp Ripley Veterans Cemetery & Museum		Tour		
Waite Park American Legion	5:30 p.m.	Social		
17 2nd Ave No., Waite Park,	6:00 p.m.	Dinner	320-252-7880-Post	
Marsha Bible			320-492-8977	320-252-3864 or marsha.bible@gmail.com

Thursday, May 16, 2019

Haven for Heroes	9:30 a.m.	Tour		
Chanhassen American Legion	11:00 a.m.	Social		
290 Lake Dr E, Chanhassen	11:30 a.m.	Lunch	952-934-6677-Post	
Kim Carlander			952-934-5995	kim.carlander@hotmail.com
Hastings Veterans Home	2:30-3:30 p.m.	Tour		
Montgomery American Legion	5:30 p.m.	Social		
102 Elm Ave SW, Montgomery	6:00 p.m.	Dinner	507-364-7779	
Jean Keogh				trixie@frontiernet.net

DEC, RALLY RESCHEDULE

The Department Auxiliary Executive Committee Meeting has been rescheduled for Saturday, April 13 at the American Legion Post 107, Le Center, Minnesota.

Following our 10:00 a.m. meeting the Appreciation Rally will be held with dinner being served between noon and 1:00. Please try to be there - I can't promise that the weather will be great this time either. I remember driving to pick up the National President last year on April 15 in a blizzard.

JUNIOR CONFERENCE

The Department Junior Conference will be called to order by Harley Donnelly, the Department Honorary Junior President on Saturday, April 13th, at the Richfield American Legion Post 435 and hosted by our 5th District.

We are hoping many Juniors will attend their very own Conference.

On Friday, April 12 starting at 6:00 p.m. the 5th District is hosting a "fun" night at the Richfield Legion Club for all Juniors. Please come and enjoy the weekend.

July 11, 2018, Auxiliary Membership

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year 3.21.2018
One	4,907	3,880	79.07%	4,255
Two	4,924	3,947	80.16%	4,224
Three	4,422	3,716	84.03%	3,845
Four	720	566	78.61%	628
Five	788	557	70.69%	639
Six	6,032	5,030	83.39%	5,280
Seven	3,934	3,164	80.43%	3,375
Eight	1,628	1,251	76.84%	1,362
Nine	4,344	3,365	77.46%	3,625
Ten	5,129	3,947	76.95%	4,208
1982	160	173	108.13%	153
Totals	36,988	29,596	80.02%	31,594

Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

GIRLS STATE

Registration fees for the 2019 session of American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State were due on March 31st. We are still taking reservations so get your \$300.00 in soon. Units may send as many girls as they choose to from the same high school. Your American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State citizens must attend a public, charter, parochial, private or home school in Minnesota or be a resident of Minnesota. Reservations are taken on a first come, first served basis. We are still taking reservations and would like each Unit to participate. The 2019 session will be held June 9 - 15 at Bethel University in St. Paul.

2019 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

Our 100th annual Department Convention will be held July 11-13, 2019 at the Willmar Conference Center, hosted by the Willmar American Legion Family #167. A word of thanks to the Auxiliary Chairman and committee members for all they are doing to ensure a successful convention.

Hotel reservations are to be made directly with the hotel this year. The registration fee is \$15.00. Please use the registration form which is in this copy of the Legionnaire. You will also find the hotel information in the Legionnaire as well. President Jean Walker has made this such a memorable year for us – let's attend to support her and our organization. There will be Resolutions to vote on so make sure your delegation is covered. All pending Resolutions will be posted on our website under the About Us tab, 2019 Department Convention as they are received in the Department Office.

Don't forget the Poppy contests that will be held at the Department Convention. This year Chairman Shaaron Barnes has come up with two wonderful categories; Potted Plant or Terrarium and a Stuffed Animal both using President Jean's theme "Veterans Are Our Stars and Heroes". More than one entry is welcomed; there will be three places awarded and a People's Choice Award. Entries must be at the Department Convention on Thursday, July 11th by 9:00 a.m. Please read your Trophy and Awards packet for details and rules.

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE APRIL 15th

Annual report time is fast approaching. All Units should be preparing their reports covering the time period April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019. The white copy is all that needs to be returned to the Department Office by April 15. It is important that your Unit report your activities each year and send them in. The information received on the reports is then compiled into a Department report that is sent onto our National organization. These reports become part of the American Legion Auxiliary record for the 2018-2019 year. Our National organization gives the information to The American Legion and they use the information when they

April is Children and Youth Program Month

The Children & Youth program emphasizes protecting, caring, for and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veteran's and military families. We need to support the children and youth in our communities.

This year we're working the "Star Spangled Kids" program. This program is to educate children and youth on the history of the United States from the aspect of patriotism, Americanism, and the U.S. Constitution. Work with local schools, find a teacher to connect with to support the American Legion Auxiliary programs, this will make your efforts so much easier. Units are hosting many other events for children and youth, for that I thank you.

Youth Hero Awards/Good Deed Awards are a way the American Legion Auxiliary can recognize youth in the communities who demonstrate good citizenship, either through a brave physical act or a good deed. Work

with local schools, church's, and youth groups to make them aware of the Youth Here/Good Deed Awards. Make sure to leave unit contract information with them.

GI Josh dog is an American Legion Family alliance, GI Josh is a plush dog and accompanying storybook used to help ease separation fears for the military children. There is also a book you can purchase Klinger, a story of Honor and Hope, from TAPS with the companion plush horse for children who are grieving the loss of a military parent or loved one. If you need more information check out children&youth @ALAFORVETERANS.ORG.

Lastly we need to report what we do for Children and Youth by filling out the Annual Reports. Annual Reports reflect the program work of the units in the department, and may result in a department or national awards. I am always here to help you and your unit.

Sandy Wersal, Department Chairman



SANDY WERSAL

report to Congress each year. Forms are also on our Department website. For those computer guru's, just save those forms to your computer, fill them out and email them to us. How easy is that?

Trophy and Award entries are also due by April 15th unless otherwise stated in the rules. Be certain to label each entry with the name of the award you are applying for. Follow this year's rules. A separate entry is needed for each award unless the Department winner is forwarded for National competition. Any Unit may apply for any award whether your Unit has reached its membership goal or not unless that is a requirement stated in the rules.



SECRETARY SANDIE'S NOTES

I can't believe I got Al's email yesterday – deadline time is tomorrow for the Legionnaire. It seems I just finished the last one. Time flies when you are having fun. My shout out this month goes to a lady I just love – Carol Kottom. She has been visiting us in the Department Office and helping us out tremendously with Jan and I being alone. We can't thank her enough. I attended the Veterans on the Hill Day this past week and it was again amazing this year. There were three World War II Veterans in attendance. We received the "rah-rah's" from the Governor and Legislators – let's hope they come through with the bills they are working on. Our Veterans deserve all the benefits that are possible and more. Shorty and I got

to Texas the end of February and we had a fantastic time with all the kids and grandkids. We drove this time and actually didn't kill each other on the long trip. I am keeping this short this month – too much work to do in the office. From our house to yours – have a wonderful, blessed Easter. Always remember to make sure those little chocolate eggs that the bunny leaves are chocolate.

Administrative Assistant

There is an immediate opening for an Administrative Assistant for the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota. Seeking strong customer service skills. Must have experience in Word, Excel and telephone skills. Must be able to work independently in a very busy office environment. Please send resume to Sandie@mnala.org or call 651-224-7634 for more information. Salary based on experience.

American Legion Auxiliary
Department President Jean Walker
Testimonial

Saturday, May 18, 2019

Social Hour 12:00 pm
Meal Served at 1:00 pm
Program to follow

American Legion Post 27
424 N 1st Street
Warren, MN

Meal: Roast Beef, Mashed Potatoes, glazed carrots, roll and dessert

Cost \$15.00
Please RSVP by May 4, 2019

Send reservations to: Virlynn Hanson, Warren Unit 27
403 S Progress Street, Warren, MN 56762
218-745-5456 or 218-201-0035

Name(s): _____

Unit/Post: _____

Number of Reservations _____

Amount Submitted _____

Make checks payable to: Warren Unit 27

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\$1,669.00 per person double occupancy

Summer on the Mississippi June 24-27, 2019

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Vacations Tour Director, Cindy Peterson
- 3 night accommodations
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 7 Meals: 3 Breakfast, 1 Lunch, 3 Dinners
- Luggage handling for 1 suitcase per person
- Day-long cruise on the Mississippi aboard the Celebration Belle
- Tours of the John Deere Pavilion and Isabel Bloom Studio
- Visit History Channel's American Pickers' Antique Archeology
- Irving Berlin's Shear Madness at Circa 21 Dinner Theater

\$679.00 Per Person Double Occupancy

NYC, New England Fall Colors Canada Cruise

Tour Includes:

- Services of 4 Seasons Tour Director, Tammi Haney
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis to New York
- All transfers to and from the airport and pier
- 2 nights stay at the Millennium Hotel in Times Square In New York
- Circle Line Cruise of Manhattan w/lunch
- A Broadway performance
- Welcome Dinner @ Carmine's Times Square
- A 5 night cruise on the Regal Princess
- Cruise Gratuities
- Luggage handling at hotel and on cruise

October 24-31, 2019

\$2,999.00 Balcony double occupancy

New York Your Way June 25-29, 2019

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Alvey
- Delta Airlines flights, MSP to New York City
- Transfers
- Hotel in Times Square
- Lunch at VIRGIL'S BBQ

2,599.00 per person double occupancy

Pella Tulip Festival & Bridges of Madison Country

Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Vacation Tour Escort Linda Andersen
- 3 nights accommodations
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 7 meals: 3 breakfasts, 2 lunch, 2 dinners
- Pella Historical Village
- Pella Community tour
- Pella parade w/ grandstand seating
- Quilt show
- Pella Opera House show
- Scholte House Museum & Garden tour
- Iowa quilt Museum in Winterset, IA
- John Wayne Birthplace & Museum
- Covered Bridges Winery (wine tasting)
- Guided tour of Covered Bridges of Madison County
- Madison County Historical complex

\$629.00 per person double occupancy

Monuments of Washington D.C. May 17-21, 2019

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Director, Tammi Haney
- Round trip Delta Airlines flights Minneapolis to Washington D.C.
- 4 nights accommodations in the Washington D.C. area
- Evening Guided Memorial and Monuments Tours
- 4 Breakfasts, 4 Dinners
- Tram ride through Arlington National Cemetery
- Admission to George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Garden
- Two full-day guided tours of Washington D.C.
- WWII Memorial, Capitol Hill, Embassy Row, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Smithsonian, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, and much more!

\$1,649.00 Per Person Double Occupancy

Heart of Alaska July 11-18, 2019

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Tammi Haney
- Round trip Delta flights between Minneapolis & Anchorage
- 13 Meals (including an Alaska Salmon Bake)
- Iditarod Trail Headquarters
- Denali National Park Natural History Tour
- Riverboat Discovery Cruise
- Chena Indian Village
- Travel the Alaska Railroad between Talkeetna & Denali National Park
- Sled Dog Demonstration
- Pan for gold at the Gold Dredge #8
- Prince William Sound Cruise
- Mears Glacier
- Luggage handling for one suitcase per person

\$3,499.00 Per person double occupancy

The Best of Italy September 17-28, 2019

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Director, Tammi Haney
- Round trip deluxe motor coach to Minneapolis airport
- Round trip Delta Airlines flights Minneapolis to Rome
- 10 nights accommodations in superior hotels
- Full breakfast buffet daily, 5 three-course dinners
- Local expert guides all along the way in 11 magical cities
- VIP access to must see sights and headsets throughout the tour
- Transportation included deluxe motor coach, private boat rides in Venice (optional gondola serenade), jettfoil boat, funicular railway, open top taxi and boat cruise in Capri

\$5,399.00 Per Person Double Occupancy

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