



Zandra Kessler, Two Harbors, and Jody Hassing, Montgomery, did a selfie during the Minnesota Party.



National Vice Commander Al Davis and Tess Davis sat in front at the National Commander's Banquet.



Department Commander Denise Milton and husband Dennis Henkemeyer took part in the National Commander's Banquet.



Past Commander Jim Kellogg, Junior Honorary President Bryce Soltis, and Past President Sandy Fredrickson were ready to roll at the Minnesota Party.



The Ninth District Band marched in the National Parade at Cincinnati.



Margee Keller, Crookston, Jean Walker, Warren, and Sharon Thiemecke of Bemidji chow down at the Minnesota Party.



National Commander Dale Barnett, right, salutes the color as the Minnesota Delegation passes by at the National Parade.



National Historian Jim Copher was in VIP seating at the National Commander's Banquet.



National President Sharon Conatser greeted Legionnaires at their convention.



Ferdie Habermann of Brewster recuperates after the parade. It was his 51st National Convention.

Each of his 3 jumps was an adventure

By Al Zdon

Elvin "Speed" Homan is one of the last living Americans who made combat parachute jumps in both World War II and Korea.

Each of his three jumps had its own unique quality. The first was on D-Day where he touched down miles from where he was supposed to be.

The second was at Market Garden, where he flew on the notorious "Clay Pigeon" C-47 and was one of seven airborne troops to survive the jump out of 18. He almost immediately became a prisoner of war.

The third jump convinced him it was time to quit jumping and go home.

Elvin Otto Homan was born in Brownton, Minnesota, in 1924, and he grew up as a town kid. His mother died when he was very young, and he was raised by his father who had a drinking problem.

Young Elvin, who was nicknamed "Speed" by his dad, usually stayed at home during the week, but on an uncle's farm on the weekends because his father was unable to take care of him.

At Brownton High School, Homan lettered in football, baseball and basketball.

He was a junior in high school when World War II began, and he joined the Army in March 1943. "I quit school and went down to the courthouse and signed up. A bus came by and took us to Fort Snelling."

Only a few hours into his military career, he had his first adventure. "The bus driver stopped at Norwood at a liquor store. That was a big mistake. Everybody on the bus bought a bottle.

"When we got to Fort Snelling, the sergeant took one look at us and just shook his head. He just said, 'Enjoy the night, but reveille is at 6 a.m.'

"When reveille came, we all had sore heads, but the sergeant got us going. He said, 'I don't want to see anything but assholes and elbows until you get this place clean.' There were bottles and cigarette butts and everything else all over the place."

On Monday, they got their military clothes, and Homan was called in to discuss his options. "The guy said, 'What branch did you want to be in?' I said, 'Navy.' He said, 'Nah, you've got the Army.' And that was that."

Training was in Camp Roberts in California, and after the 13 weeks were complete, the drill instructor addressed the men. "He said he was going to Georgia to join the paratroopers, and he asked if anybody else wanted to go. So I signed up. Most the guys I trained with were going to the South Pacific, and I didn't want to go there."

He trained at Fort Benning, did his four jumps and earned his wings. When people asked him why he joined the Airborne, he would reply, "Because I don't want to walk to work."

The training was grueling at Fort Benning. "They'd get us up in the morning and we'd have to climb that damn hill before breakfast. It was five miles of running. We were in good condition.

"The instructors were really strict. We had two sets of clothes, and we'd have to wash one of them every night and dry them. Then at noon the next day, we'd change clothes.

"We'd take our boots to town and this guy would burn wax into them. They'd just shine. We never wore those except for inspection.

"The hardest part for me was that we had to climb this rope, and if you couldn't make it to the top, you washed out. I never could make it. I got one more chance, and the guy in charge said I'd never make it. That made me mad. I gave

it all I had, and I made it."

After training, he was sent to Fort Bragg in North Carolina, where he joined the 101st Airborne Division, the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Company C.

(Company E of the 506th has become immortalized through Steven Ambrose's book and the HBO series as the "Band of Brothers." Homan said he probably talked with guys in Easy Company, but generally the paratroopers stuck to their own companies.)

Next stop was Camp Shanks, New York, where the 101st was loaded onto an English vessel for a voyage to England. "All they had to eat was the damned fish. Fish, fish, fish. It was terrible. I slept down in the hold in a hammock for a while, but then I went up and started sleeping up on the deck. I couldn't stand the swinging back and forth all the time."

The convoy zig-zagged to avoid German submarines and arrived safely in Liverpool. In England, it was back to more training, this time near the English town of Ramsbury, about 50 miles from London.

Homan was an ammo carrier for a mortar gunner. He carried the shells on his chest and the bottom plate for the mortar attached to his leg. He had been trained that when he approached the ground on a jump, he was to release the heavy plate which had its own parachute.

"We slept in the stables and the officers slept in the manor house. There were two men to a stable. By the time we left, that cobblestone floor was shining like new. We really took care of it."

In late May, the 101st was moved south to a marshalling area in the south of England. "All we did, all day long, was look at sand tables (3-D depictions of the area they were supposed to land in.) We knew that terrain like the back of our hand."

On June 5th, they were ready to go, but the weather caused the drop to be canceled. They got ready again the next day, and at 2 a.m. they took off for Normandy. "They gave us motion pills, so we were pretty relaxed on the flight. The trip over didn't take long.

Speed Homan said he joined the Airborne because he didn't want to walk to work. He had three jumps -- D-Day, Market Garden, and in Korea. Each had its own problems, including when he was captured in Holland and spent months in a German POW camp before being freed by the Russians.



Each man, when ready to jump, attached his ripcord to a static line, 15 feet long. When the soldier jumped, the line would automatically open the chute when the jumper was clear of the plane.



ELVIN HOMAN
After training for the Airborne



ELVIN HOMAN
At his home in Hutchinson

“It was a young pilot, and as soon as we got the anti-aircraft fire, he veered off to the right and turned on the green light (telling the soldiers it was time to jump.) We landed out on the Cherbourg Peninsula, four days away from where we were supposed to be. So much for studying the sand tables.”

Homan estimates that when they jumped, they were no more than 300 feet in the air, a dangerous altitude because the chutes don't have time to fully deploy and slow a paratrooper down.

“I thought I was going to land in a river, that's what it looked like in the dark. It turned out to be a highway. They trained us well to look to the horizon and don't look down. If you look down, you'll probably tense up and really hurt yourself. If you're looking away, you don't know when you'll hit and so you're more relaxed. Just hit and roll.”

Despite landing on the asphalt surface, Homan was all right. An officer, who landed nearby on the highway, had broken his leg. “I helped him down to a culvert where he could be hidden. The lieutenant told me to leave him, and so I did.”

He encountered no other paratroopers that night. “I was scared. When the sun came up I saw my first German. He was dead, and he had turned green. I didn't eat for 30 hours. I just couldn't stomach anything. I was by myself with nobody to rely on.”

Eventually, he found some comrades. Small clusters of men began to gather together, miles from their drop zone. Homan hooked up with men from the 82nd Airborne, and later with men from the 4th Infantry Division, which had landed on Utah Beach, the first Americans to hit the beach on D-Day.

“At one point, we were in a barn and we were surrounded by Germans. We could hear them outside talking. We were basically prisoners in that barn. But then the 4th Division came up and started machine gunning the area. We got out of the barn.”

After four days, the men reached St. Mere Eglise where Homan was pressed into duty as a machine gunner for a time. “We were dug in and one of the guys said he had seen a brewery in the town. Another guy said he knew where the medics were. So we filled up gas cans with beer and put a gallon of denatured alcohol into it that we got from the medics. Truthfully, I don't remember that night on the line.”

A day or so later, his position was attacked by six German tanks. “There were a lot of German soldiers behind them. We just fired and fired and fired. It was a real scrimmage. I was lucky I never got hit.”

Homan kept trying to find his unit. “I kept asking where the 101st was, and people would say go this way or go that way. I did a lot of walking.” Finally, he was reunited with his division and his company.

After 14 days in combat, the men were relieved and sent back to England on LSTs, landing ships for troops.

The 101st trained and studied sand tables again, but Patton's Third Army was advancing so fast that missions kept getting scrubbed because the landing zones were already in control of the Americans.

The next action the 506th saw was Operation Market Garden, the ill-fated attempt to attack Germany by going through Holland. The jump was set for Sept. 17.

Charlie Company boarded its planes – there were 1,438 C-47s being used that day – and headed for Holland in broad daylight. The name of their aircraft was the “Clay Pigeon,” which ended up being too aptly named.

“Before the jump, our planes had tried to get rid of the anti-aircraft guns, but the Germans had moved a couple of them back into a corn field. We were hit three times.”

The first blast hit amidships and set the transport on fire. It instantly killed the officer in charge of the jump group.

“We were standing up and ready to go when the first blast hit. It took our officer right out the door.”

The men fought their way through the fire as the airship took two more anti-aircraft hits. Some were killed on the plane. “We had to step around the bodies to get to the door.”

Some of the soldiers jumped, only to have their chutes catch fire as they were deployed by the static lines.

“We found out later that the bottom of the plane was carrying bangalore torpedoes. Somehow the ack-ack came right through the explosives with setting them off. That would have been quite an explosion.

“The pilot and co-pilot rode the plane to the ground and somehow survived. The local people tried to hide them. But the Germans got them.”

Of the 18 paratroopers, only seven made it to the ground alive.

Homan was one of the lucky ones, at least until he hit the ground. “I came down hard, and my Thompson submachine gun hit me in the head. I came to looking up into the face of an SS trooper.

“He saw I was carrying the ground plate for the mortar and he asked where the ammunition was. I didn't tell him nothing.”

The Germans rounded up four of the paratroopers, two of them wounded, and took them to an apple orchard nearby. Again they were interrogated.

“All four guys told different stories, and the sergeant that was interrogating us was pissed off. He was getting ready to eliminate us, when his commander stepped in. He told the



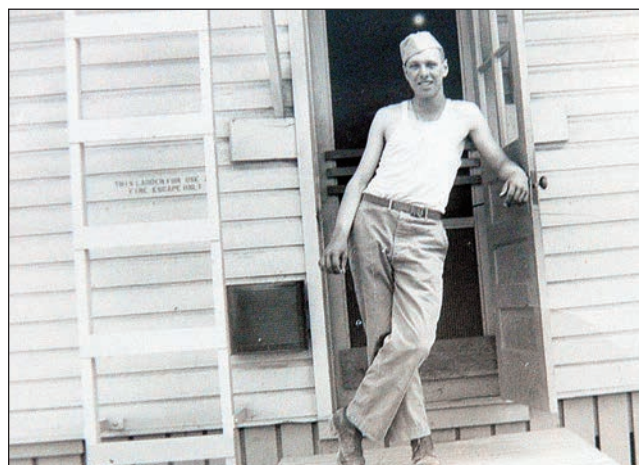
Homan, third from left, top row, and his mates during mortar training in England.



The well-named “Clay Pigeon” transported Homan and his group to Holland. It was shot down short of the landing zone.



Homan works on his parachute in England



Homan relaxes outside his barracks during training.



Homan also trained on the machine gun, a skill that was put into use just after D-Day when he was separated from his unit and fought with the 82nd Airborne at St. Mere Eglise.

sergeant that we were POWs. That saved us.”

Homan and the others were moved to a chapel in a nearby town. “The priest there took down all of our names. He promised to give them to the American troops when they came through.”

The men were loaded aboard a truck. “Our guard was an old guy. He said he was in the ‘volks mach’ or homeguard. When we stopped in a town, he left his rifle in a corner of the truck. We could have taken off, but we didn’t want to leave the two wounded guys. The German went into a pub and bought us all a beer.”

The paratroopers were taken to Stalag 12A at Limburg, Germany, which was used as a transit camp.

There they were interrogated again. “The officer asking us questions said we’d better not lie because he knew exactly where we came from and who our parents were. How the hell would he know that?”

The next stop for Homan was Stalag 3C near Alt Drewitz bei Kustrin located on the far side of Germany. “On the way, we went through Dachau. The ovens were shut down that day, but we got to see them. They deloused us there and put us in a 40/8 boxcar. When we went through Berlin, the people stoned us.”

At Stalag 3C, the conditions were primitive. “It was colder than hell up there. The commandant of the camp was a guy who had gone to school at Harvard, and then come home to the fatherland when the war started. He had been sent to the Russian front and got his arm shot off. He was very kind and very knowledgeable. There were no atrocities in that camp.”

That didn’t mean things were ideal. “We had straw for bedding and we slept body to body, and that’s how we kept warm. We had a little pot bellied stove, but very little wood to burn in it.”

While at the camp, the men were offered additional food and other privileges if they would go outside the camp and work. “I told them no. Why should I help them out?”

Homan made a friend at the camp, a French soldier, who took advantage of the outside work plan because he wanted to escape. “They brought him back to the camp in a body bag.”

Homan was in the camp for five months. His weight dropped from 140 pounds to 90 pounds.

“One night all the lights came on and they ordered us to fall out. The officer told us to look up at the guard towers. There were nothing but machine guns up there ready to mow us down.”

It was Jan. 31, 1945. The men were formed up and began marching down the road. The Russian Army was at the doorstep of the camp.

“We only went about five miles when all hell broke loose. It was a Russian tank outfit with a woman commander and they opened up. It was just boom, boom, boom and then the guards were gone.”

The men returned to the camp. “We raided the potato bins and other food supplies.”

The Red Army offered the prisoners the chance to join their army and march to Berlin. “They said they’d give us new clothes and food and ammunition and guns. But we said, ‘The hell with that.’ Three of us just took off. We had no weapons, no nothing.”

The three first made their way to Poland. “The people there were so good. They shared what little food they had. When we got to Warsaw, there wasn’t a building left standing. I didn’t see one roof in Warsaw.”

The former POWs often shared quarters with the Russian Army, which controlled Poland by that time. “I remember that the Russian women and men shared the same showers. There was no modesty at all. And the women were just as built as the men. I certainly didn’t want to tangle with either the men or the women. They were tough and they were mean. But of course, I was only 90 pounds and I wasn’t ready to tangle with anyone. We just did what they told us.”

At one point, the Russians had liberated a sausage factory and some vodka. “If a Russian offered you a drink, you drank it. Otherwise they’d be insulted. And that vodka was a lot more potent than what you see these days.”

In Poland, the three men were pointed toward a house owned by a former American who now lived in Poland. “He wrote a letter for us in Russian and Polish, saying that we were in the American Army and should be treated okay.”

With that letter in hand, the men were able to board a train to Odessa in the Ukraine. There they were able to hop an English ship that took them to Istanbul, Turkey. From there they took another ship to Naples, Italy, where they finally came under American control.

“The first thing I did was buy an egg. I paid a dollar for it. Boy, did it taste good.”

The American Army got the three prisoners new clothes. “We felt just like new people.” And they were put aboard a liberty ship to America.

“We were just coming into New York and passing the Statue of Liberty when we were told that President Roosevelt had died.”

They were first sent to Fort Benning, and then got leave to go home. While on leave, he married his high school sweetheart, Rosa. They went on to have five children and “26 or 27 grandchildren, something like that.”

Back at Benning, Homan waited out his time until he had enough points to get out. He was excused from the Army on

Oct. 30th 1945.

Homan said it was no fun being in a POW camp. “But if I’d stayed with my unit I would have been at the Battle of the Bulge. I lost most of my buddies there.”

He got a job and started his family with Rosa, and even built his own house from the foundation up. “I’d work all day at my job, and then work on the house at night. It took me two years.”

But Homan’s service to his country was not over.

In the summer of 1950, he received a letter saying he should get his affairs in order because the Army needed paratroopers in Korea.

You mean you signed up to be in the Reserves? “Yes, I signed that damned piece of paper.”

He was called up on Sept. 26. The war had started in June when North Korea invaded the south and nearly pushed the U.S. and South Korean forces into the sea. By the fall, the U.S. had pushed back, and by mid-September, MacArthur had landed on Inchon.

Homan first went to Fort Lewis where he got processed back into the Army. He was assigned to the 11th Airborne, the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, the “Rakkasans.”

He traveled through Alaska, the Aleutians, and Japan before getting on an LST that took him and his comrades to Inchon. “When we go there, they gave us overcoats and sleeping bags and guns, but no ammo. What the hell were we going to do with guns and no ammo?”

His first duty was to drive a Jeep for a captain. “I was only a corporal, but they made me a staff sergeant. When we drove into Seoul, we could go to the hospital there and

take showers.

For a time, he was in charge of getting parts for all the trucks in his unit.

“But I made one jump in Korea. The Marines had been cut off, and we did a night jump. We jumped into Munsan-Ni with a black Ranger outfit. We cut a hole through the enemy for the Marines to get through.

“Then they wanted us to get all the wounded off this mountain top. Korea is nothing but mountains, hills and ravines and rice paddies. And we landed in a rice paddy. And it’s colder than hell.”

When Homan got back to the base, he was done with war. “I just knew my time was coming. One more jump would be one too many.”

“I went up to my sergeant and told him, ‘That’s it. I’m never going to jump again. I’ll take whatever punishment you give me.’ Well, he blew his stack, as you can imagine.”

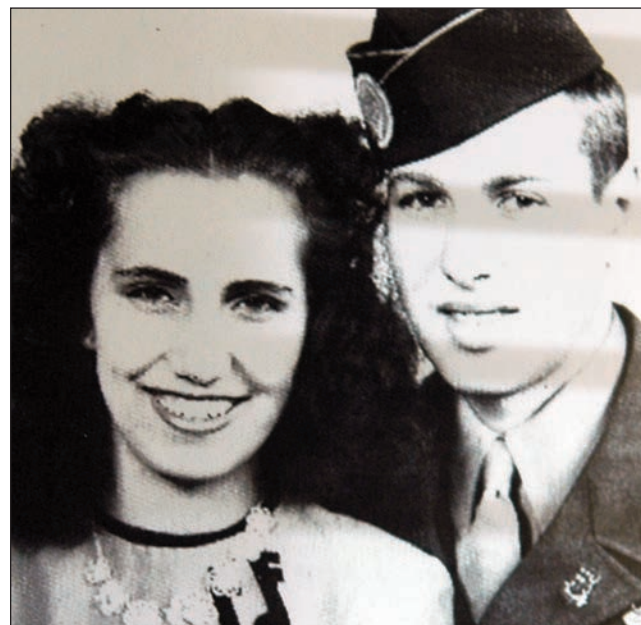
At the same time, Homan’s family was also working to get him home. As it turns out, with three children, Homan should never have been called up in the first place. One day, he got word through the Red Cross that he was being sent home on a hardship discharge.

“I took a C-47 back to Japan. I left my Jeep and everything, everything I owned in Korea.”

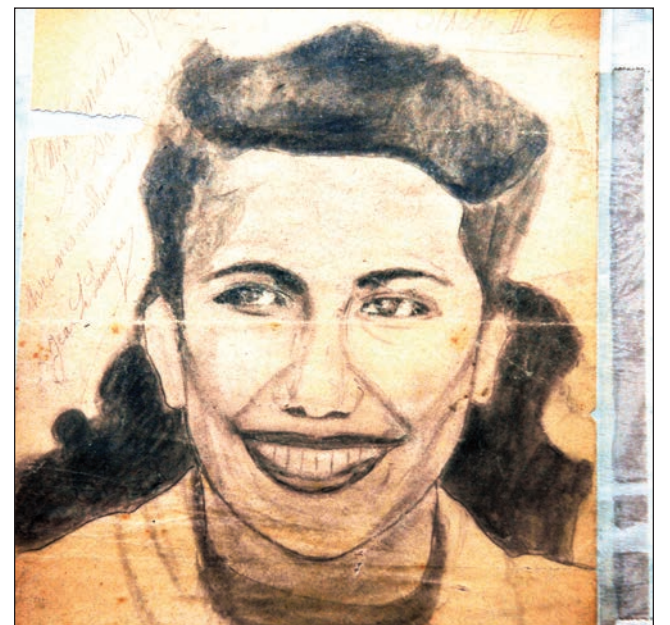
He ended his career with 13 jumps, three in combat. He earned the Bronze Star for his service in Normandy.

Homan retired many years ago, and now lives in a retirement home in Hutchinson. He’s 92 years old. Rosa died in 2002.

His hobby is painting pictures by number, and he’s won five first places at the McLeod County Fair for his artistic prowess. “It takes a lot of time, but I really enjoy it.”



Speed and Rosa were married when Homan was home on leave after being liberated from the camp.



While in the prisoner camp, Homan drew this portrait of Rosa from memory.



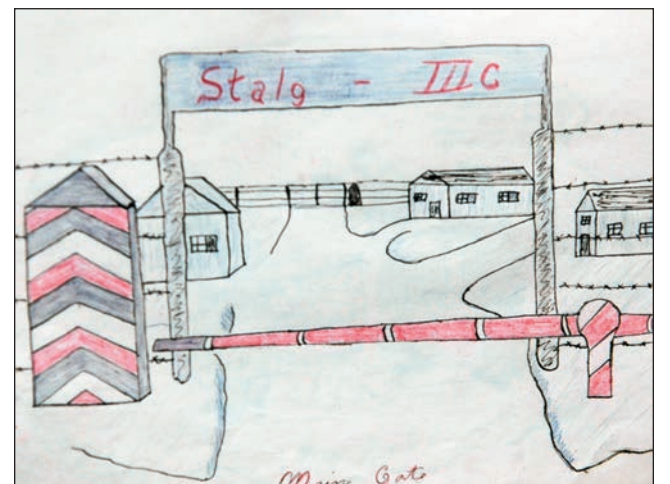
Homan, center, posed with three of his POW comrades. He lost 50 pounds in the German camp.



Homan has won five county fair awards for his paint by number renditions.



Homan, lower right, posed with his Airborne buddies including his friend Charlie Honecker, upper left.



Homan purchased a notebook from a guard while in camp and filled it with drawings and poems that he wrote. This is the main gate of Stalag 3-C.

Ft. Snelling Cemetery earns Historic Places recognition

Continued from Page 1

when it was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"It's not the beautiful grounds or the building or even the gravestones that make this place sacred," Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) said at the ceremony to mark the historic listing. "It's the lives of those who are buried here."

The first burials at Fort Snelling probably date back to the 1820s when the fort was being built on the high limestone bluffs overlooking the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers.

A post cemetery was established in 1870 for soldiers who died while stationed at the fort, but it wasn't until the 1930s that local people began lobbying Congress to locate a national cemetery at the site.

A group of citizens from St. Paul created a petition for a national cemetery, and in 1937 Congress approved, setting apart a portion of the fort to be used for that purpose.

Mallon's burial was on July 5, 1939. Shortly after that, the 680 soldiers who had served and died at Fort Snelling from 1820 to 1939 were reinterred in the new national cemetery.

Fort Snelling National Cemetery was one of seven new cemeteries authorized by Congress in the 1930s. Over 6,000 people attended the dedication in 1939.

In 1960, 146 acres of land were transferred to the cemetery from the Air Force Station, and a year later, another 177 acres were added. The cemetery now encompasses 436 acres.

The original structures at the cemetery were created by the federal Works Progress Administration beginning in 1937. The cemetery was built around a central drive with alleys of trees and rectangular burial sections.

About 40 acres were developed in the 1930s and in 1941 a new phase was begun. In 1946, an amphitheater and chapel were approved by Congress, but they were never built.

In 1979, the Fort Snelling Rifle Squad was formed and the group has been honoring veterans ever since.

Many famous people have been buried at the cemetery including baseball announcers Bob Casey and Halsey Hall, heart surgeon Dr. C. Walton Lillhei, hockey coach John Mariucci, original Iwo Jima flag raiser Chuck Lindberg, Heisman Trophy winner Bruce Smith, and football coach Cal Stoll.

The cemetery contains 75 memorials on the grounds. The featured speaker at the ceremony was Diana Ohman, executive director of the National Cemetery Administration, Midwest District. She was the source of much of the historical information above.

A plaque has been placed on the Public Information Building at the cemetery.



DEDICATION CEREMONY -- A large crowd was on hand as Fort Snelling National Cemetery was put on the National Register of Historic Places.



PLAQUE ON WALL -- A generic plaque was unveiled on the visitor's center building noting its new designation.



RIFLE SQUAD CEREMONY -- The Fort Snelling Rifle Squad showed the proper way to fold the American flag at the ceremony.



SAL DEER HUNT -- Hunters and SAL members gathered for the annual John Zgoda Deer Hunt at Legionville. From left, front: Mark Caink, Chester Hrdlicka, Tom Leads, Mel Kaehni, Mort Tullis, Pat Wolney, Doug Hendley. Middle row: Commander Denise Milton, Mike Schaffer, SAL Commander Gene Olsword, Lloyd Schaeffer, Walt Folendorf, Jasen Hruza. Back row: Jim Kellogg, Justin Borden, Gary Richardson, Dave Bilderback, Larry Ripplinger, Steve Bilderback, Rollie Hanson, Dave Vulcan.



WISCONSIN WINNER -- Commander Jim Kellogg paid off a membership bet to Wisconsin Commander Dale Oatman. Oatman won a cheesehead.



ANAVICUS -- Wayne Hammon Jr. joined the ranks of ANAVICUS at the national convention. He was joined by PNC Dan Ludwig and Alt.-NEC Bill Barbknecht.



KING TUTS MEETING -- Senior King Tut (Past Department Commander) Harlan Buck welcomed the newest Tut, Jim Kellogg, to the fold.



Recreational units filled the Legionville grounds during the annual Camp-O-Ree and Harvest Rally.

Harvest Rally and Camp-O-Ree

For the first time, the Sons of the American Legion took on the responsibility of running the Camp-O-Ree this year. The Legionville grounds were filled with trailers, campers, tents and fire pits.

Money was raised for Legionville activities throughout the year.

A highlight of the event was the Harvest Rally on Saturday, held in the Legionville education center.

In the results of the membership turn-in, the Auxiliary's top district was District One with 11.3 percent.

The SAL winner was the Fourth District with 31.11 percent so far this year.

The Legion top district at the rally was the Eighth District with 53.43 percent.



Kids had fun playing Marco Polo.



An anonymous donor gave a firearms safe to the SAL for their annual deer hunt. Commander Denise Milton and Past Commander Jim Kellogg unwrapped the gift.



Steve "Sully" Sullivan drove a group of SAL volunteers around the Legionville grounds.



Peaceful activities were part of the Camp-O-Ree.



President Carol Kottom presented the first place award for a district newspaper. Karla Otterness had won at NALPA during the national convention.



SAL Commander Gene Olswold showed off the awards the Detachment had received at the recent national convention.

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District Commanders

FIRST DISTRICT

Sylvan Fix
Commander



Another busy month has come and gone. The Harvest Rally at Legionville from the 8th thru the 10th was a great time: Campfires, food, music, bingo, camaraderie and a successful membership turn in. Then it was participating in the Watermelon Days parade at Kellogg on the 11th where that small town with a big heart hospitality did indeed show. The organizational meeting of the National Security Council from 16th through the 18th at Camp Ripley was in of itself quite an educational experience. With the tour of the base that we were given, the chance to officially meet and visit with the rest of the District Commanders, as well as going through the military museum, were the icing on the cake. The next function was participating in the Applefest Parade in La Crescent on the 18th. It is amazing how a city of 5,000 can swell to over 10,000 on a parade route.

Have you found anyone yet that you could mentor? If not, be on the lookout for that one particular person that you feel can make a difference if they have the support needed to be your next Post or District Officer or Chairperson. And for those who want to be in one of these positions? Let someone within the leadership know. It is never too late to get started. God Bless.

SECOND DISTRICT

Mark Coney
Commander



Welcome to October fellow Legionnaires. The State Fair has had another successful year, the kids are back in school, and the temperatures are starting to cool off. First of all I would like to thank the entire Second District for all of their hard work and effort in turning in memberships. Your efforts are paying off and I thank each and every one of you. As we begin this month I am looking forward to the Fall Conference in Marshall on October 28-29. This year, Past-Commander Kellogg is in charge of the Centennial project for all the Posts. Please go to the following address to register your Post: www.centennial.legion.org. Those Posts that have registered by Fall Conference and attend the conference will be in a drawing for some give-aways. Past Commander Kellogg has informed us the prizes are very good. But please go to the website and start the story of your Post as it will be utilized next year in Reno as we ramp up for the convention and in the 100th Convention in 2018. So I am asking all the Posts in the Solid Second to do this so we can show our Minnesota Pride for the centennial.

Upcoming events include October 15, - Membership Rally at Sleepy Eye Post at 2 p.m. Everyone is welcome. October 28-29 - Fall Conference in Marshall, and October 7-8 and 14-15 - Octoberfest in New Ulm. It won't be long before everyone is back in the fields for the harvest. Please

THIRD DISTRICT

Mike Maxa
Commander



Greetings "Thundering Third." What a month this has been. The National Convention is behind us and we have a new National Commander. I know he will be a great commander as he is Air Force, "Fly, Fight, Win." His speech outlining his year shows he is going to have a busy year and a challenging one. The convention showed me that this American Legion machine has a lot of moving parts promoting our four pillars and the stance that we take as Legionnaires. I knew we had posts around the world, I didn't know we have fifty-five departments and one post operating in exile. The fifty-five departments are from each of our states plus District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Philippines, and France where the American Legion began, and one post operating in exile, China Post One exile. What an amazing story this post has and you can read their story at www.chinapost1.us. The speeches by our Boys Nation President, Oratorical winner, shooting champions, and our Eagle Scout of the year showed me the future of our country is going to be in good hands! We as Legionnaires need to continue with our message of taking care of our country, being leaders in our community's, and staying true to our four pillars. Our work is paying off and I am proud to be a part of the American Legion Family.

FOURTH DISTRICT

Randy Bastyr
Commander



Greetings to all of the members of the Fabulous Fourth. September was a very busy month. It seems like I just got home from the National convention, then off to Legionville for the Camporee and the Harvest Membership Rally. Next I headed to Camp Ripley for the National Security/ Foreign Relations Conference and now we are into October.

Last month we were in 7th place in the membership race. Please send your membership renewals into your Post so they can be sent it. Membership Chairman Mickey Ostrum wants to continue his streak of 100% membership for a third year in a row. Let's help him achieve this.

The Shop, Ship and Share Committee is working hard on this year's event, to be held at the Maplewood Mall on December 2nd & 3rd. We are looking for names and addresses of Minnesota service men and women that will be deployed over Christmas and New Year's. If you know of someone we could send a care package to, please forward their name, company and address to me at:

r-bastyr@comcast.net

Upcoming District events: October 12th - RCCC at Arcade-Phalen Post 577, Executive Board @ 6:30 and Membership meeting @ 7:00; October 16th - Hospital visitation at 12:30 and October 17th -Shop, Ship and Share meeting at NSP Post 39 @ 5:30.

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

FIFTH DISTRICT

Ray Eiden
Commander



Greetings from the Fighting Fifth

I just returned from the National Security Conference at Camp Ripley with my District Chairman Curt Norenberg. It was my first exposure to Camp Ripley and I was impressed. Our meetings were informative and I enjoyed being in the company of all the other District Commanders. There is a plan for each District to contact an armory within their District for the purpose of joining with them and giving them exposure to the American Legion Family.

I attended the opening ceremony at the State Fair on Military Appreciation Day. It was hosted by Annette Kuyper of Beyond the Yellow Ribbon. She talked about the history of the program. There was a flyover of WWII aircraft after the ceremony. I also visited some of the more than fifty booths that were setup.

Our Richfield Post 435 had a flag retirement ceremony on Sept. 17th. Music and a pig roast followed. Proceeds will be used for providing services to our veterans, families and communities. Our District is exploring the possibility of developing its own website. Our public relations committee will be looking into this.

It is encouraging to see that we met the first membership goal of 50% by Sept. 14th as did all the other Districts. PUFLS were included in the report. We need to keep moving forward and increase our renewals.

Coming up: District Hospital Visitation - Oct. 2 at 2:00 p.m. "Keep Focused and Look to the Future."

SIXTH DISTRICT

Vernonica Fernlund
Commander



The Camp-O-Ree held at Legionville was another success. The Detachment SAL and all their volunteers did a great job with the event. Jay and Yvonne Beebe organized the Camp-O-Ree for many years and they need to be commended for all their years of hard work and dedication. I had the privilege to attend the national security weekend held at Camp Ripley near Little Falls. The weekend was very informative and provided the opportunity for all the district commanders to get together. A reminder to all 6th District Posts, the 6th & 9th District Membership Rally is Oct. 8, at Little Falls Post 46. We do not want "The Leg" back in our district, it has been well taken care of in the 9th. Our 6th District Membership Director Judi is doing a great job "Stormin' for Membership." Her membership theme is very appropriate with the amount of rain filling our buckets lately, but she wants to remind everyone to dump out the water and keep those buckets full with membership. I have a lot of visiting still planned for our district posts and want to thank everyone for all the special hospitality provided. I encourage all Legionnaires to attend the Fall Conference in Marshall Oct. 28-29, 2016. This is an informative conference and a great chance for learning and sharing about our great organization.

SEVENTH DISTRICT

Garylee Davenport
Commander



Greetings Mighty 7th. Well, it's already October.

Our membership numbers are looking good, but they could be better. We need to keep the momentum going into Fall Conference. I look forward to seeing all of you at the Conference and hope for a good show of support for the Marshall Post as they will be hosting the Fall Conference in the 7th District from October 27th through the 29th.

EIGHTH DISTRICT

Kenneth Oliver Jr.
Commander



Greetings, Our Commander Denise Milton has chosen for her commander's project helping homeless veterans. For my Commanders Project I'm selecting Veterans on the Lake. We are having our 8th District Fall Conference there as well. This is only going to be a one-day meeting. I'm also trying to get every post off the Goose Egg. All posts should have their officers list sent down to department by now.

We are going to have another Revitalization program. I'll keep everyone informed of the times & dates. Veterans on the Lake is the Fall Conference. I hope to see some new faces at the conference as we discuss the business of the 8th District. I hope all the adjutants are looking at the mylegion.org as a learning tool for your Posts.

Marshall is the Department Fall Conference. I hope to see many of our District members there.

NINTH DISTRICT

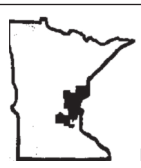
Eric Wilkens
Commander



Greetings from the Roaring Ninth. Congratulations to all the Districts for making the first goal of the year 50%. Credit for the PUFLS has been given to each Post and now is the time to hit the membership drive again as the next mailing should be out around the time you read this. I had a great time with the National Security/Foreign Relations Committee, District Commanders and District Chairpersons at Camp Ripley. It was a great learning experience for this Air Force guy from learning about some of the past, the present and the future. I am looking forward to several upcoming events across the District and getting out to many more Posts as the Fall membership dinners take place along with other events across the district. Membership will be on the spot on October 8th as the 6th and 9th have their annual rally with the loser taking home the infamous leg. As we get closer to the November election I encourage each person to take some time and look at the candidates for all races and make an informed decision on election day. This is our opportunity to help shape the future of our community, state and nation. Until next month keep our service members in your prayers and keep working for our veterans.

TENTH DISTRICT

Bonnie Hanson
Commander



Hello from the 10th District. Well, hope everyone got back safely from the National Convention. In 2018 we will be celebrating the 100th year Anniversary of The American Legion here in Minnesota. Going to these can really give you an idea of who we are and why we support the programs that we promote to the Legionnaire's and the Families. Hopefully next year we can get the newer members to go to the Department and National conventions to talk and see how everyone can learn about the Four Pillars and how to get members. It is very interesting to learn new ways. Membership is what we have to learn on how to get them. We are a Family and have the Legion, Auxiliary, SAL and the Legion Riders. I am sure everyone knows someone that would fit in one of these areas. We will be having some revitalizations in our area, first one will be in Cambridge on the 19th and 20th of October. Hope we can get volunteers to help out. We need to make our meetings, rallies and conventions interesting so that we can reach out to the Family to enjoy them. Just a footnote my projection is "Helping Paw's" and my Motto is "Family First".

I need to add that we have lost a very fine member of The American Legion and SAL. Dick Amundson and his celebration of life will be at the Delano Post 377 on 15th October 2016. God Bless.

World War II Round Table

Deception was part of fighting the battles

By Al Zdon

Part of the strategy in World War II was to convince the enemy that we had combat divisions where none existed.

Jonathan Gawne, author of *Ghosts of the ETO: American Tactical Deception Units in the European Theater, 1944-1945*, was the featured speaker at the first September meeting of the World War II History Round Table at Fort Snelling.

"Deception in war is as old as anything," Gawne said. "In the 20th Century it just got more complex. The idea is to make the enemy think you're weak where you're strong, and strong where you're weak."

Gawne's talk was mainly on the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, an 1,100-man unit created in 1944.

The 23rd and its various branches would use fake arm patches, radio traffic, sound effects, dummy tanks and other means of deception to try and convince the Germans that there was a division when really there was not.

Gawne paid tribute to Gen. Dudley Clarke of the British Army for his role in developing the British and later the American efforts at deception in the war. "He was the father of World War II deception, and he deserves all the credit he can get."

And Gawne lauds American Gen. Jacob Devers, the commander at one point of the ETO, who formally asked for a deception unit in the war, spurring the creation of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops.

Named to head the new unit was Col. Harry Reeder. "Everyone wonders how he was picked," Gawne said he wasn't that popular.

"But he had a lot of experience, and he was an expert at mechanization."

The 23rd's officer staff consisted of 25 percent West Point graduates, far above the normal distribution of elite officers. "They sent some really good people there."

There were different specialties in the 23rd including fake radio transmissions handled by the signal company. It was called "Spoof Radio" and created phony traffic.

"The Germans were great at radio intelligence gathering, and we used that against them."

Gawne noted that each radio operator had his own personality and way of transmitting. When a division moved, and the 23rd wanted to simulate that it was still there, the operator who replaced the real operator would have to imitate his style or "fist" in sending the messages.

"They would use the same fist, the same equipment, and they would make the Germans think that a unit had not moved."

Another part of the 23rd was the 603rd Engineer Camouflage Engineers, many of whom were recruited out of East Coast art schools.

"At first they tried a tubular framework for the dummy tanks, but it was too heavy and too complicated. Then they tried inflatables."

The artists were determined to make the dummy tanks and guns and trucks seem real. "They knew that tanks would never go into battle without a tank carrier so they had inflatable tank carriers."

Inflatables were also difficult to maintain. "The crews had to constantly check on the air pressure in the decoys. It



LOOKS PRETTY REAL -- The American and British armies tried to confuse the Germans about where their troops really were. Inflatable tanks, such as this dummy Sherman Tank, were used to try and convince the enemy that a division might be located where it was not. The army specialists who placed the dummy tanks in strategic areas had to use just enough camouflage to make it look real, but not enough to really hide the fake

was time consuming."

They also had to dig authentic tank positions, position expended shells, and use real camouflage netting. "They had to perfect the art of bad camouflage. It had to be real enough to look real, but allow the Germans to see the dummy tanks."

The 23rd was first headquartered in England, but then moved to France right after D-Day.

The 3132 Signal Service Company, part of the 23rd, was the master of phony sound. "There's a science of sound, based on how far away you want it to seem. You can't just crank up the volume, because it won't sound right."

They used what were called "sonic cars," halftracks equipped with gigantic speakers and wire recorders, the latest in sound reproduction. "They recorded every possible sound they could think of, even down to men building a bridge and swearing."

The sonic cars were equipped with a fuse under the driver's seat that could be used to blow up the cars if one was about to fall into German hands. Later the unit used tanks with the gun turret removed to carry a speaker.

Gawne said the 23rd did 23 separate operations "that we know of."

The first was to convince the Germans that Normandy was not the site of D-Day.

In Operations Bodyguard, the deception effort by the

Allies aimed at keeping the German Army away from Normandy, a variety of tricks were used including miniature, dummy parachutists. A major effort was made to convince the enemy that the invasion was at Calais.

"It held the Germans at Calais until long after June 6. They kept reinforcing there instead of sending troops to Normandy."

Gawne did want to clarify one popular misconception. "There were no rubber or inflatable tanks used on D-Day." Although, they were used many times after that.

Part of that Pas de Calais deception was Operation Quicksilver, which was the creation of an entire fictional Army Group under the command of Gen. George Patton. The First U.S. Army Group, or FUSAG, had its own patch, its own fictional divisions, and enough radio traffic to convince the enemy that it was the real invasion force, and that the Normandy invasion was only a diversion.

The 23rd could simulate four fake divisions at a time, including uniforms, patches, signs, call signals. As the war moved into France, "They would send guys into bars so they would be seen by local people who might report it to the Germans. They knew that the Army always had a lot of military police, so they had fake MPs all over the place wearing appropriate patches."

One operation simulated the crossing of the Rhine River at a different place from where the Allies would actually cross. "They had real anti-aircraft batteries, but they were instructed to miss so that the German spotter planes could report back on the deception."

At other times, they created fake air strips. "But the problem was that real Allied pilots would try to land on them."

In the end, it's hard to say what the exact effect of all these deceptions was. "Some worked and some didn't. But even if something wasn't 100 percent effective, if you managed to draw off some enemy resources for a time, it had value."

And, Gawne said, the deceptions units suffered very few casualties.



SOUND DECEPTION -- Halftracks loaded with gigantic speakers could be used to trick the enemy into thinking troops were nearby. The Ghost Army had hundreds of recordings of the kinds of sounds that an army makes, including bridge builders swearing as they worked.



AUTHOR JONATHAN GWANE