



**ROSIES GALORE** — The room was full of Rosie the Riveters when the Auxiliary presented a musicale that presented its first 100 years in history, song and period costumes at the Fall Conference.

## Department hires public relations firm

By Al Zdon

The Department of Minnesota will purchase \$30,000 in public relations help over the next year following action by the Department Executive Committee.

SnowGlobe Public Relations was hired to work 12.5 hours a month for the Legion, or \$2,500 per month. The money for the contract will come from the general fund and from the Board of Publications equally.

SnowGlobe is made up of two main employees, both with military backgrounds. Kevin Olson headed up public affairs for the Minnesota Air and Army National Guard, and Anna Long, who is still serving, headed up communications for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs.

The two made a presentation before the committee and said some of their other clients include the Minnesota Disabled American Veterans, the Minnesota Assistance

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## National appointments named for 2019-2020

National appointments are out, and Minnesota will have two chairmanships, three vice chairmanships and two national commander's representatives on American Legion commissions, committees and councils.

Thomas Schottenbauer of Minnetonka will be chairman of the Conventional Armed Forces Committee, with Charles Kruger of Byron serving on the same panel. Kruger is a former chairman of the committee.

William Goede of Plainview will be chairman of the National Guard and Reserve Forces Committee.

Peggy Moon of Walker will be vice chairman of the Committee on Children and Youth.

Donald Walsler of Hutchinson will be vice chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Richard Janssen of Richmond will be the national commander's representative on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Don Pankake of Hutchinson will be vice chairman of the Membership and Post Activities Committee.

Dr. Carl Moon of Walker will be the national commander's representative on the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, and Steven Kleinglass of North Venice, Florida, will be a consultant to the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

Curtis Norenberg of Roseville will be a consultant to the Aerospace Committee.

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## Facts and myths about veterans' suicide discussed at Fall Conference session

By Tim Engstrom

Suicides among veterans is a tough topic. Let's begin with a few cold, hard facts:

- Eighteen percent of all deaths by suicide among American adults are veterans.
- Nearly 70 percent of veteran suicide deaths involve a firearm, higher than the general population.
- Twenty-five percent of veterans who die by suicide had a history of previous attempts.

Tammy Monsebroten, suicide prevention coordinator for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Fargo, said she is not a veteran but talking about private and often difficult topics with veterans is, to her, a privilege. She is a licensed clinical social worker.

"We don't like to talk about death in general," she told a room of American Legion members at the 2019 Fall Conference in Mahanomen, "and suicide makes it that much harder."

She shared a few other numbers. Twenty veterans die by suicide daily, and six of them typically are in VA care. About one or two are active duty.

It is estimated that close to 1 million people in the United States make a suicide attempt every year — one attempt every 35 seconds. Women attempt suicide three times more than men, but men die by suicide four times more than women.

But Monsebroten's message wasn't about the numbers. It was about dispelling myths.

One such myth was talking about suicide could lead to the person taking his or her life.

The reality is when a person hints at suicide it gives permission for others to talk about it, she said.

Another myth was there are talkers and doers, that some people only bluff at actually killing themselves because they want attention.

"If someone wants attention, take it seriously every single time," Monsebroten said.

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## State Historical Society gathers input for potential name change

By Tim Engstrom

**FORT SNELLING** — The unorganized territory called Fort Snelling is owned by many entities: The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, Boy Scouts of America, Minnesota National Guard, Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Historical Society.

No one, the Historical Society wants people to understand, is proposing to rename the entire Fort Snelling complex.

The society is asking Minnesotans whether the 23-acre part it owns and operates — the land around the original 1819 diamond-shaped fort — should have a name reflecting the broad span of history. Presently, those 23 acres go by the name Historic Fort Snelling.

The primary Dakota word proposed for the society's area is "Bdote," meaning confluence. If changed, says MNHS Deputy Director of Learning Initiatives Kevin Majjala, the diamond would still be called Fort Snelling.

Continued on Page 2



**NEW VISITOR CENTER** — These cavalry buildings, built in 1904, along with a nearby ordnance warehouse from the 1870s, will host the new visitor center once a capital campaign is finished.

# MNHS gathers comments from veterans, Native Americans

Continued from Page 1

Input meetings across the state have revealed strong emotions for and against a name change. Some favor “Bdote,” Dakota for confluence, while others favor keeping “Historic Fort Snelling. Some prefer a combination such as “Fort Snelling at Bdote” and, in another twist, some dispute the term “Bdote.”

The Minnesota Historical Society held six input sessions around the state. One of them was on Monday, Oct. 14, at the Boy Scouts of America’s Base Camp just west of Historic Fort Snelling. About 70 people attended.

Majjala noted that, ultimately, any naming decision rests with the Legislature. Two state senators and one representative were at the Oct. 14 session. Others have appeared at the other sessions.

Like most historical preservation societies, the Minnesota Historical Society, at all of its sites, seeks to “deepen and enrich” its portrayal of a place by showing history over a broad reach of time, up to the modern, rather than a singular moment, said Rachel Abbott, the society’s manager of interpretive programs.

At Historic Fort Snelling, for instance, there are exhibits ranging from native activity prior to and during white settlement to Japanese-Americans breaking codes at the Military Intelligence Service Language School during World War II.

And meanwhile, Snelling is going through a capital project. The visitor center, built in the mid-1980s, is dilapidated and has water damage. The revitalization plan aims to build a new visitor center inside the 1904 cavalry barracks and the 1870-1880 ordinance warehouse at a cost of \$34 million, with \$19.5 million from the Legislature and the rest from pledges. It is slated to be completed in 2022.

The idea is instead of mothballing the historic barracks, repurpose them. Plus, it would allow year-round programming. Presently, the fort is open April to October.

“We know this can be confusing,” said Kyle Parsons, manager of inclusion and community engagement for MNHS.

He said the input sessions are one way of gathering feedback. The main way is the online survey, and other factors are key stakeholders, visitors and the society’s own strategic priorities. He said the task force gathering the input is not favoring one way or the other for a final result and is open to any possibility.

“It could absolutely be Historic Fort Snelling,” Parsons said.

## Comments

At the session, feedback was about equal for both sides. Some said they felt changing the name covers up history or rewrites history. About as many felt a need to be inclusive, but near the end, people heard another take.

Ed LaBelle, a Dakota born 86 years ago on the Sisseton reservation in South Dakota and a Twin Cities resident since World War II, spoke Dakota and English at the Base Camp meeting, noting the holiday, “By the way, Happy Columbus Day,” and mentioned the connection among all who live in the region, “Dakota means alliance.”

He said “Bdote” is not a word in Dakota language. He said “Bdo” means white potato. He said the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers is spiritual to the Dakota, reminiscent of how a man and a woman form a child.

“This is one of our great beliefs,” he said.

He offered alternatives in Dakota language for Holy Earth. LaBelle served in Korea and his father fought in World War I.

Historian Bruce Glasrud said Historic Fort Snelling “is not a very elegantly inclusive name” and added “Bdote is historically not what it was called,” noting the band that lived nearby called it “Mdote.”

“If we really are bent on changing the name, let’s use something that is accurate,” he said.

Tom Dimond, who wore a veteran hat to the input session, disliked changing the name. He felt the society’s efforts focus too much on the stone fort and not enough on the entire complex in telling stories and in repair efforts — existing fort buildings, not re-made ones.

Pointing toward the Upper Post, then the old stone fort, he said, “Those are Fort Snelling just as much as that is Fort Snelling.”

Michelle Tonozzi grew up at Fort Snelling after it was decommissioned in 1946. She said it was a perk for Veterans Affairs employees to live in the former officer quarters. Today, she lives nearby in the Macelester Groveland neighborhood of St. Paul and walks Pike Island and Fort Snelling.

She said when she was a child, they knew nothing of the history of native peoples at the site. She favored “Fort Snelling at Bdote” or “at Mdote,” whichever is proper.

Margret McCue, society member and a fifth-generation Irish-American, said she takes great pride in marching in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade. She said, like with the Irish, there is room in the Twin Cities to share cultures.

“It is not an either-or. It can be both,” she said.



**VARIETY OF HISTORY** — A sign outside the original fortress describes programming available within. Completed in 1825, Fort Snelling was originally called Fort St. Anthony and was renamed in 1825 in honor of Col. Josiah Snelling to honor the architect and commander of the 5th Infantry Regiment that built it. Today, it is based in Alaska and is the third-oldest unit in the Army.

## Language questions

The input session left people with questions about the term “Bdote.” The Legionnaire reached out to Kate Beane, director of Native American initiatives for the Minnesota Historical Society and a member of the Flandreau Santee Sioux.

She said it is well-documented that Dakota called the confluence Bdote or Mdote. She said the orthography — the way spoken words are written into letters — differs based on dialects, as happens in any language. In any interpretation, she said, it is a soft B that is almost an M.

“All are correct is the interesting point,” Beane said.

She said Dakota and Lakota are part of the larger Siouхан language, and people from various dialects can understand one another. Often, however, the words might not fit precisely into the English-pronounced alphabet.

She noted the Stephen Riggs dictionary as one documentation of the geographic use. The Dakota dictionary written in 1852 by Riggs, a Christian missionary who lived among the Dakota starting in 1937, is available for anyone to see at [archive.org](http://archive.org). The book does not offer “Bdote” but has an entry for “Mdote.” The entry, which employs a geographic explanation in parentheses, says: “n. the mouth or junction of one river with another (a name commonly applied to the country about Fort Snelling, or mouth of the St. Peters; also the name appropriated to the establishment of the Fur Company at the junction of the rivers, written Mendota): the outlet of a lake.”

The St. Peters is the Minnesota River. The Riggs dictionary explains the book’s orthography. It says B and M have

the same sounds they do in English. However, Riggs added: “Some Dakota, in some instances, introduce a slight b sound before the m.”



**TALKING IT OVER** — Dakota member Ed LaBelle, right, speaks with a woman interested in his viewpoint on the term “Bdote” after the Oct. 14 session.

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# Endorsements

## Knutson runs for Sgt.-at-Arms

Pederson-Tripp Post 357 of Ashby has endorsed Dean Knutson for the position of Department of Minnesota Sergeant-at-Arms for the 2020-2021 membership year.

Knutson is a 31-year continuous Paid up for Life member and is eligible for membership through his 29 years of service in the United States Army.

He served from 1974 through 2003 with an honorable discharge.

Knutson has served at post level as Commander, 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander and Service Officer.

Knutson has served at District Level as Commander (twice), Vice Commander at Large, Membership Director and Area A Vice Commander (twice).

Knutson has served at Department level as District 2 and District 7 Vice Commander and Sergeant-at-Arms.

Knutson has served at National on the Americanism Commission for five years.



DEAN KNUTSON

## Eiden endorsed for vice-cmdr.

Arthur and Leonard Falldin Post 555 in Minneapolis endorsed Ray Eiden for Vice Commander, Fourth and Fifth Districts, Department of Minnesota for 2020-2021.

Eiden is a past Membership Director of his Post and is currently serving as Adjutant and Finance Officer.

At the district level he has served as Chaplain, Vice Commander and Commander. He is currently serving his second term as Adjutant.

Eiden is also Chairman of the Fifth District Hospital Visitation and the Blood Program.

At the Department level he is on his third year on the Post Development Committee.

Eiden served in the United States Army from 1970 to 1972. He served 14 months in Bitburg, Germany.

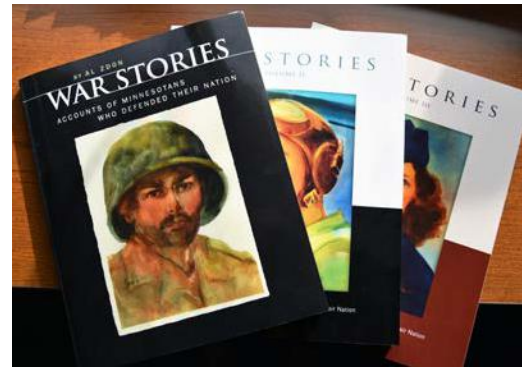
He was employed with the State of Minnesota, Department of Employment and Economic Development, for 34 years in programming retiring as a senior systems analyst.

He and his wife Connie currently reside in Northeast Minneapolis.



RAY EIDEN

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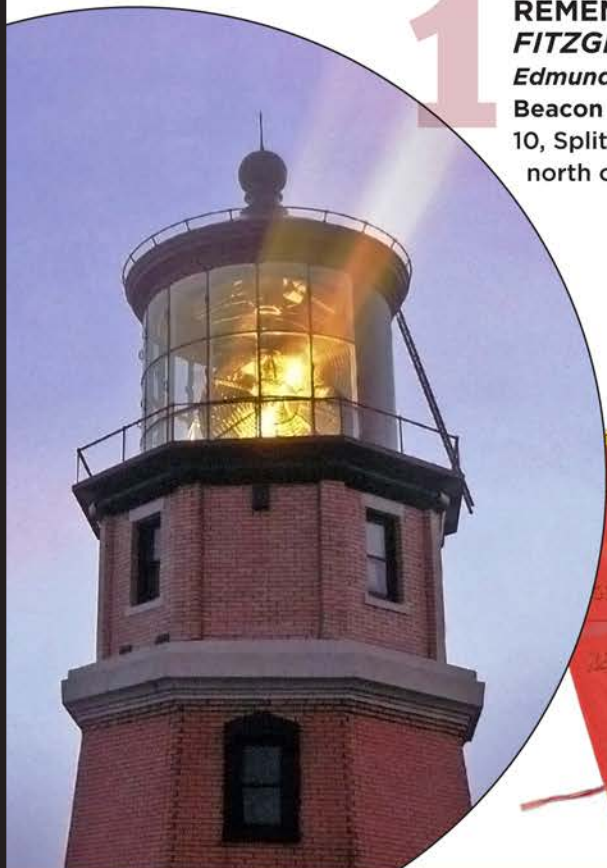


**3 HEAR FROM MINNESOTA VETERANS**  
Explore the Vietnam Era Oral History Project, which features 95 interviews documenting the experiences of Minnesotans during the Vietnam War era. Listen online at [bit.ly/95interviews](http://bit.ly/95interviews).

**2 EXPLORE THE CIVIL WAR**  
Learn about the battle flags, art, memorials, and Minnesota's role in the Civil War during the **Capitol Civil War Tour**, Sat, Nov 16, Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul.



**4 GATHER FOR THE HOLIDAYS**  
Celebrate the season with MNHHS! From **A Victorian Christmas** at the Alexander Ramsey House, and a **WWI Christmas** at the Charles Lindbergh House, to the **Christmas Traditions Tour** at the James J. Hill House and more, you'll find great events around the state at [mnhs.org/holidays](http://mnhs.org/holidays).



**COMMANDER'S COLUMN**

**By Mark Dvorak**



Greetings Minnesota American Legion Family.

District Training In A Box – Phase One is now available through Legion.org/training. Go to “Tools and Resources” section and click on “District Training In A Box.” These may be downloaded and revised to fit your training requirements at the post or district level.

Statewide training for MyLegion.org is in process of being developed. Additional information on this vital training will be forthcoming. Posts will be encouraged to attend this training. The tentative plan is to have several different sites around the state to provide hands on training.

The Commanders Task Force (CTF) has met twice since

# Guest editorial

**‘Shoot, communicate and move on out’**

**By Tim Engstrom**

I used to jump out of perfectly good airplanes.

When people learn that, they often comment I must be crazy. Perhaps, I say, but then I add the truth is most jumpers are a bit scared each time, like anyone else. If we aren’t, then we know we have achieved crazy. To me, what makes the paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division extraordinary is they can muster courage in a short time to overcome challenges, whether it is jumping from planes, hiking 12 miles in under three hours with full gear or deploying abroad without even the chance to say farewell to loved ones.

As a result, these soldiers go, go, go. I worked with telecommunications, and our 82nd Signal Battalion used to sing: “Shoot, communicate and move on out.”

Years later, long after I left the U.S. Army, I still find I have that “go” mentality. I like the feeling of getting things accomplished. I like a sense of teamwork and caring about the work and the people. As the years passed, I appreciated it more and more when others have those qualities. Eventually I knew I wanted dearly to work with other veterans, which led me to this position.

I am Tim Engstrom. I am the new communications director for The American Legion Department of Minnesota. You probably already know that Al Zdon is retiring. He asked that I introduce myself.

The main team I play for, of course, is my family. My

# Editorial

**The Big Change**

There may be some dismay or trepidation out there as the Minnesota American Legion begins a period of transition.

Both the adjutant and the communications director will be retiring as of the first of the year. The Department’s finance officer will follow in the coming year.

That’s about 55 years of experience walking out the door, or maybe it’s tottering out the door, in a short time. There is no doubt there will be times when that experience will be missed.

But this should not be a time of concern, it should be a time of celebration. These Department employees are going to a richly deserved point of their lives where there is no time clock, no rush hour commute, no more answering the call of an unhappy member.

More than that, though, this is an incredible opportunity for the staff at the Legion to recreate itself.

Those 55 years of experience may have kept the ship on a steady keel, but the experience that their replacements are bringing to the job might mean that the ship will gather some wind in its sails and head off to parts unknown.

Organizations must change. As Vince Lombardi used to say, “If you’re not moving ahead, you’re going backwards.” Staff changes like this provide a splendid opportunity for change, innovation, a fresh perspective and new ideas.

The Legion is at a critical point, and not because of the staff transition. It’s at a crisis because our membership is declining at a steady but alarming rate, and because many of our posts are losing their relevancy in their communities.

The membership problem is unlikely to change, although there are some signs that there might be a light at

July and will be meeting on a monthly basis. The following nine Veteran Service Organizations make up the CTF: The American Legion, VFW, Order of The Purple Heart, Marine Corps League, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Jewish War Veterans, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans and Vietnam Veterans of America.

We come together to represent one voice on veterans issues to formulate a strategy going into the legislative year. We also act as an advisory board to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs on State veterans issues. In a future article, I will be listing our legislative priorities.

Posts should be working on their Oratorical contest! If your post does not have an Oratorical contest, please discuss the possibility of starting one with your membership. Each district has an Oratorical Chairman, call him or her and discuss the process to start your own contest.

I’ve witnessed several contests over the years and the kids that participate are amazing and have a sincere appreciation for our Constitution.

Happy Thanksgiving to all. Keep all our veterans in your thoughts and prayers each day, but especially on Veterans Day, November 11th. Let’s all be thankful for all who took an oath to defend our country in the past and the young men and women that continue to take the oath and put their lives on the line each day for us.

For God and Country.

wife’s name is Lisa, and we have two sons: Forrest, 12, and Jasper, 7. We reside in Bloomington. Lisa is a preschool teacher. I cannot find the words to describe how much we love our boys.

Some of you might know me from my newspaper career. I grew up in rural Iowa and got my journalism degree from Iowa State University after my Army stint. I was a reporter for a few years before becoming the managing editor in Ellensburg, Washington, in 2001.

In 2006, I came to Minnesota, working as the managing editor of the Albert Lea Tribune. We wanted to live in this state to be near relatives. (Many of my Iowa relatives now live in the Twin Cities; hers are all in the Chicago area.) I was at the Trib for nine years before getting promoted to publisher of the Fergus Falls Daily Journal, which was part of the same company at the time. I did that for two years before we moved to the metro, again to be near relatives. For another two years, I edited both the Eden Prairie News and the Lakeshore Weekly News.

I look forward to being here a long time. It’s a perfect fit. I also look forward to visiting posts all over Minnesota, especially ones in my former communities, and dedicated members such as Arnie Mulso of Post 56 in Albert Lea and Jim Fish of Post 30 in Fergus Falls.

My newspaper career came at a time when news outlets established and very much grew their websites and social media presences. Basically, I have one foot in conventional print media and another in the new electronic media, and I look forward to bringing these skills to our fine organization.

the end of the tunnel, and hopefully it’s not another train. The VFW gained members this past year. That could be an indicator of possibilities.

But if you just follow the numbers, the Minnesota American Legion will probably end up at some point with as many members as it had prior to World War II, or about one-third the size it had at the all time high in the early 90s.

The question then becomes how do we maintain our really terrific programs like Baseball, Boys State, and Legionville with a smaller base of membership? The answer is that we need to work very hard to make sure those programs are also changing, evolving, getting better every year. Another part of the answer is that we might have to lop off some of our programs that do not get the bang for the buck.

We probably need to streamline down to about 10 committees and make sure those committees have members who are interested in being there. An old guru on the top of the mountain was asked what the key for success is. He said, “Find something you love, and work your butt off to make it better.”

We have too many committees and too many committee members who are dead in the water.

If the concern is that if we don’t have a bunch of committees, we won’t have call-ins for our major meetings, there’s probably some creative ways to solve that issue.

And many other issues. That’s why this change of command is such a great opportunity to re-create the organization where change is the norm and not the exception. We can’t stay the same and fulfill our mission to veterans, our communities and our youth. We look forward to new people, new ideas, new enthusiasm.

Five years down the road, the Minnesota Legion can

**Chaplain’s Corner**

**By Betty Jass**



**Give Thanks and Remember**

This month’s article is a reminder of our upcoming holidays during the month of November for which we celebrate both Veteran’s Day and Thanksgiving as we show appreciation for all our blessings.

Each year on November 11th we give our many thanks to all veterans that have served our country preserving our freedoms from all enemies, foreign and domestic. Many of us veterans spent time away from our families within the United States and around the world. All veterans swore an oath when they enlisted. The oath is below:

“I, (NAME), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the State of (STATE NAME) against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the Governor of (STATE NAME) and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to law and regulations. So help me God.”

So, thank you to all our Veterans for your hard work defending and keeping our country safe. We are thankful for our Veterans and for all that God has provided us throughout the year. Many families get together with their relatives and gather to praise God for their bounty.

God asks that we give thanks to Him for whatever blessings we receive from Him.

It is easy for us to become mechanical in our prayers of gratitude, often repeating the same words but without the intent to give our thanks as a gift of the heart to God. We are to “give thanks ... in the Spirit” so we can feel real gratitude for what God has given us.

The tradition of giving thanks to God is continued today in many forms, most notably the attendance of religious services, as well as the saying of a mealtime prayer before Thanksgiving dinner.

Many houses of worship offer worship services and events on Thanksgiving themes the entire weekend before and after Thanksgiving. At home, it is a holiday tradition in many families to begin the Thanksgiving dinner by saying grace (a prayer before or after a meal). Before praying, it is a common practice at the dining table for “each person to tell one specific reason they’re thankful to God that year.

While grace is said, some families hold hands until the prayer is finished. I know my family always enjoyed getting together with family and friends no matter where we were stationed in the Air Force.

Our November holidays serve to give us, the American citizens an opportunity to say thank you to all Veterans for their sacrifice while protecting our country.

Each veteran swore a solemn oath to insure our freedoms. This Thanksgiving my family will again, thank God for our freedom and bounty.

look back and point to this time and realize how it set the stage for the organization’s revival.

# The Minnesota Legionnaire

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**Al Zdon, Editor**

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# What's Happening

## WWII medals

World War II veterans who did not receive a medallion during the dedication of the World War II Memorial at the State Capitol in 2007 can receive one at 11 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 10, at the Fort Snelling Chapel. Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Larry Herke will give the awards. Veterans must be present to receive one.

If other World War II veterans are interested to receive the state medallion and cannot attend, they can contact retired Don Patton at 612-867-5144. Be ready to give full name and service number.

## Montgomery Thanksgiving

Montgomery Post 79 is set to hold its Klondike Days on Friday, Nov. 22. The meat raffle starts at 6 p.m. and turkey and ham bingo is at 7 p.m. The post will have its annual homemade Tom and Jerry and Bloody Mary cocktails starting at 8 a.m. Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28. It will be the last hurrah for hosts Shorty and Sandie Deutsch.

Thanksgiving dinner is slated for 1 p.m. Please call Post 79 at 507-364-7779 to make reservations.

## Concert to help vets

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans will host an afternoon of live music, food, drinks and a giant silent auction. Proceeds go to help MACV end veteran homelessness in Minnesota.

Called Turkey Jam Musical Festival, the event is 2 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 2, at 350 Maryknoll Drive North, Stillwater.

The music lineup is James Regan, John Gangl, Todd Olson, Randy Ralston, Lori Loftson and Mike Kimmel. There is a \$10 donation to enter. Children under 12 are free. Tickets can be purchased at the door or online.

## Job fair for veterans

Twenty area businesses seeking to fill job openings with veterans will attend the veterans job fair on Thursday, Nov. 14, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the St. Cloud VA auditorium (Building 8), 4801 Veterans Drive, in St. Cloud.

The job fair is open to all veterans, without any need to register. The job fair is hosted by the St. Cloud Area Veteran

Employment Connection Group.

## Round Tables

Navy F-4 Phantom "back seater" David Wheat was shot down over North Vietnam in October 1965 and held prisoner for seven and a half years. He was held in various prisons, including the Hanoi Hilton. He will speak at the Vietnam War Roundtable at 7 p.m. Nov. 18 at Concordia University in St. Paul. Admission is free.

Dr. Mark Stoler, author of "Allies and Adversaries," will speak at the World War II History Round Table at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 12, at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. He will explore the struggle between commands and staffs among the allied coalition to achieve victory. His talk is titled "Difficulties of Coalition Warfare." Admission is free, but parking is \$6.

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Roundtable features Karl Frederickson as its speaker. His program is titled "The Liberators of the 9th Minnesota." The group gathers for dinner at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater. A social period is at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 25, followed by dinner at 6 and a program at 7. Make reservations by calling Steve Anderson at 715-386-1268.

## Free legal clinic

There will be a free legal clinic for low-income veterans between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 12, at the VA Medical Center Flag Atrium Balcony Room 2S 114. Attorneys will be available through the day to assist veterans with questions, legal forms and counsel. Topics listed on the flier are housing, employment, benefits, debt collection, expungement and family law to include child support. Staff from the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans will be on hand, along with county veterans service officers.

## Veterans Day St. Cloud

The St. Cloud Metropolitan Veterans Council is sponsoring a Veterans Day program at 1:30 p.m. Nov. 11 in Building 8 at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center. A reception follows. Veterans, their families and members of the public are invited. Parking is available north and east of Building 8.

## Appointments

Continued from Page 1

Alan Davis Sr. of Princeton will serve on the Americanism Commission.

Phillip Bellefeuille of Callaway, James Copher of Mound, Sylvan Fix of Brownsville, Victor Gades of Morris, Wayne Gilbertson of Zimmerman, Carl Hendrickson of Cloquet, Richard Wog of Willmar, Arthur Tobkin of Bagley, Marland Ronning of Maple Grove and Gary Weaver of La Crescent will serve on the Americanism Council.

Mark Dvorak of Le Center will serve on the National Convention Resolutions Assignment Committee. Thomas Fernlund of St. Cloud will serve on the Media and Communications Commission. Michael Ash of St. Paul and Wayne Hammon Jr. of Le Roy will serve on the Media and Communications Council.

Ryan Hill of Brewster, Robert Haugen of Moorhead, James Kellogg of Taopi, Harold Meyer of Lynd, Kenneth Meyer of Pequot Lakes, James Munson of Burnsville, Lloyd Ricker of Dawson, Michael Schaffer of Fulda, Wes Thompson of Sartell and Calvin Van Horn of Morris will serve on the National Security Council.

Tom Conway of Argyle, Patrick Logan of Bloomington, Denise Milton of Bagley, Donald Skow of Lindstrom and Jeremy Wolfsteller of Minneapolis will serve on the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Council.

Paul Hassing of Montgomery, Bruce Kottom of Buffalo and Darrel Redepening of Fridley will serve on the Veterans Employment and Education Council. Bishop Dan Williams Sr. of Vadnais Heights will serve on the Veterans Employment and Education Commission.

Wilson Spence III of Duluth will serve on the Employment and Veterans Preference Committee.

## New director elected for Minnesota American Legion Baseball

The Minnesota American Legion Baseball Committee has a new director.

Randy Schaub of Danube is a member of the Sons of the American Legion affiliated with Post 186 in Olivia.

"It's a big change to not have a true veteran in there," Schaub said.

He noted his father was an F6F Hellcat pilot in World War II and his brother was in artillery in Vietnam. He had uncles and other relatives serve in the military, too.

"I am well-versed in the military aspects and have an appreciation for veterans and will never forget that's who this program represents," Schaub said.

## DEC hires PR firm

Continued from Page 1

Council for Veterans and the County Veterans Service Officers Association.

Long said the company does a variety services for clients ranging from helping them tell their story in a positive way, crisis communications, helping with social media, special events and producing annual reports.

Getting exposure for the Legion will be a goal, Long said. "Kevin and I have spent a career building relationships."

Olson said, "You don't just get the two of us, you get those relationships."

The Legion can also buy additional services as the year goes by including graphic design, video productions, and annual reports. Long called the services "affordable."

After the committee approved the expenditure, Commander Mark Dvorak said this kind of help was greatly needed. "We've been fighting public relations for years and not getting anywhere."

Gary Miller of the First District asked if there were other bidders for the services. Dvorak said there was no other company that does what SnowGlobe does for veterans.

In other business:

— The committee passed a series of motions to accomplish the hiring of Mike Maxa as the new Department Adjutant, replacing Randy Tesdahl who is retiring at the end of the year. The first motion created the position of assistant adjutant for Maxa until the end of the year. The second motion hired Maxa to fill the position. The third motion hired Maxa to fulfill the remaining two years and 10 months of Tesdahl's term.

— A resolution was passed that transfer the duties of the

Department of Minnesota Commander Mark Dvorak appointed Schaub to a two-year appointment as a vice director. The baseball program has three vice directors, from which the committee elects a director to a one-year term. Schaub was elected at the fall meeting on Oct. 11.

Schaub replaced Mike Perry, who served as director since October 2012.

Schaub is a retired teacher. He and his wife, Shari, have three grown children. Kelsi, who is married, resides in Blaine. Daughter Madison lives in Chaska and son Griffin in Olivia.

Vice directors are Jeff "Slick" Miller and Brandon

## St. Thomas Academy

St. Thomas Academy welcomes the public to attend its Veterans Day ceremony highlighting World War II and posthumously honoring two alumni who served in the war with the Fleming Alumni Veterans Award.

The ceremony runs from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Nov. 11 at Flynn Hall, 949 Mendota Heights Road in Mendota Heights. The keynote speaker is retired Gen. Joseph Votel, recent commander of U.S. Central Command.

## State Veterans Day program

The official Veterans Day ceremony for the state of Minnesota happens Nov. 11 at the Veterans Memorial Community Center in Inver Grove Heights.

A free breakfast starts things off between 8:30 and 9:30 a.m., followed by the program at 10.

The program is sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and the Minnesota Commanders' Task Force, which comprises the American Legion and other veterans service organizations.

## Ludwig to speak in Hastings

Dan Ludwig, former national commander of the American Legion, will speak at the Veterans Day program at the Veterans Home in Hastings on Friday, Nov. 8. U.S. Air Force Midwest Winds is to perform. The home is at 1200 18th St. in Hastings.

## Snowmobile ride

All veterans are welcome to enjoy a day of snowmobiling in northern Minnesota. The Veterans Appreciation Ride takes place Saturday, Jan. 12, in Two Harbors, and it includes one night of lodging and three free meals.

Participants are encouraged to bring their own snowmobile, helmet and clothing, but if they don't have those items, they will be provided, said retired Master Sgt. Larry Shepherd of Anoka Post 102.

He said registration ahead of time is required. Go to [mnvetsnowmobileride.org](http://mnvetsnowmobileride.org) and download the form.

Fund for Hospitalized Veterans to the Department's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee. The committee will be discontinued for the 2020-21 fiscal year, and the duties turned over to VA&R.

— Dvorak informed a questioner that the vote to replace Maxa as vice commander by Pat Logan was held by email and passed unanimously.

— The committee heard from Past 4th District Commander Lane Stunkel who thanked the Legion for support and prayers during a recent medical crisis. "Your prayers save my life. I love this organization and I love every one of you."

— Elections were held for two openings on the Board of Publications. Darryl Redepening of Coon Rapids was elected to a one-year position on the board replacing Bob Locker of Fridley. Also nominated were Luther Dorr of Princeton, Gary Olson of Moorhead and Brian Medinnus of Austin. Paul Edwards of Brainerd was elected to a three-year term on the board running unopposed. He will replace Pat Logan of Bayport. Both Logan and Locker became Department vice commanders and by the rules cannot hold two elected positions in the organization.

— Acting Finance Committee Chairman Ray DeZurik of Breezy Point said the organization is anticipating about a \$40,000 loss for this year in a \$1.3 million budget. He said the main cause is the retirements of Tesdahl, Communications Director Al Zdon and Finance Liaison Laura Weber. In each case, replacements are being hired ahead of time to ease the transition.

Raymo. Jim Peck is the Junior Director. Miller oversees Division I baseball, Raymo Division II and Peck the Junior level.

Peck also will be liaison to the state director.

Committee assignments, with chairmen listed first, are:

•Division I Advisory: Mike Gort, Gail Kalata, Bruce Young.

•Division II Advisory: Mike Arvidson, Tom Coombe, Vern Kitzberger.

•Junior Legion Advisory: Brandon Raymo, Scott McCready, Kyle Nutting.

•Three-class Proposal: Young, Arvidson, Peck.

## Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By  
Jeremy Wolfsteller



### Mission Act update

By now veterans are becoming aware of VA's new Mission Act legislation that was signed into law on June 6, 2018. This legislative change is VHA's largest transformation in history and stands for Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION). A major piece of this legislation's intent was to consolidate all VA's community care programs under one authority, provide better access to care in the community and establish a third party network of providers. VA has successfully implemented its Veterans Community Care Program on June 6, 2019. The transformation is expected to provide veterans with more choice in their health care providers and timely access to care.

VA's third-party administrator for its new Veteran's Community Care Program (VCCP) is TriWest Healthcare Alliance up until early 2020 when Optum, a platform of UnitedHealth Group takes over. VA is hoping that its network will expand even more when it shifts to Optum, but for now TriWest is well established with providers nationwide. Recently while VA has been struggling to meet Congresses' deadlines and the intent of the law change, they've updated their electronic health information sharing

privacy options to improve care coordination and continuity of care. VA is implementing their changes using Veterans Health Information Exchange (VHIE). In the past if a veteran was approved for care in the community VA would ask the veteran if they could share their medical records pertaining to the visit. Now veterans have to opt out of sharing their medical records versus opting in.

VA's VHIE website: VA electronically shares the right information at the right time with participating community care providers who treat you, in order to help you and your health care team make the most informed treatment decisions. This instant exchange of information can dramatically improve patient safety, especially during emergency situations. VA is committed to protecting veteran privacy. VA only shares Veteran health information with specific community providers when a Veteran is seeking medical care. Only community providers and organizations that have partnership agreements with VA and are part of VA's approved trusted network may receive VA information.

Veterans can opt out by simply filling out VA form 10-10164 and turned into your VA's Release of Information Office, where you can access the form. VA Systems will begin opting all Veterans into health information sharing in or after January 2020.

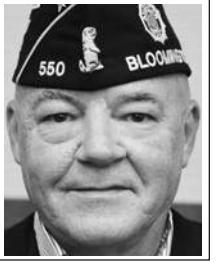
<https://www.va.gov/VLER/about-vler-health.asp>

Now that VA has rolled out its community care program, the next major law change in the Mission Act requires VA to expand its Comprehensive Care Giver Program to all eras of veterans, this includes a monthly stipend, travel pay and access to free healthcare. I'll be covering this in December's Column.

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

## American Legion Riders

By Paul Hassing  
Department Director



Hello Legion family:

One of the hardest things about writing these articles is seeing into the future. As I write this, we haven't been to Fall Conference yet. We don't know if the weather will stay warm enough for more riding, or if we are done for the year.

Today we had a great day to ride. We rode around to different American Legions, and had a great time.

We had some new riders that were new to the Legion Family. Seeing the look on their faces when walking into a Legion they had never been to before, and being greeted by the friendly faces was priceless. It reminded me of when I first joined, and didn't know anyone. Every face was a new face, and I remember how great everyone was. Everyone is still great, but we tend to take it for granted when we see the same faces.

It's very easy to get in a rut. We go to our own post, and talk to the same people. We don't see how others are doing things.

We forget how many people are out there doing things for The American Legion family as a whole. We like to stay in our own little bubble, and think that we are doing it the best way. We all have things to offer. Imagine how much better our posts would be if we took a little bit from the best of all the posts.

I urge all of you who read this to get out to other posts. Go see how the others are doing their pancake or omelet breakfasts.

See what they are doing on certain holidays. More importantly, meet new members of the Legion family. When you meet someone, ask them how long they have belonged to that Legion. If they aren't a member, get them an application.

Sometimes we see the same faces for so long, we just assume they are a member. I have talked to people in Legions that have never been asked to join, but they are there for every pancake breakfast.

I can't see into the future, but with the people we have, it can't help but be bright.

## Minnesota American Legion Membership Chart

District	2020 Goal	Total 2019	Total 2020	Weeks Gain	Total Posts	Goal Posts	% Of Goal	
District 1	8,149	8,091	5,065	224	58	1	62.15%	4,961
District 2	6,497	6,413	4,142	215	84	1	63.75%	4,300
District 3	11,021	10,956	7,157	175	65	1	64.94%	7,236
District 4	2,136	2,118	1,403	60	18	0	65.68%	1509
District 5	2,346	2,325	1,295	20	22	0	55.20%	1446
District 6	10,891	10,820	6,868	275	71	3	63.06%	7,259
District 7	5,778	5,702	3,762	139	76	2	65.11%	3,816
District 8	3,788	3,748	2,305	96	40	0	60.85%	2,363
District 9	6,124	6,059	3,759	148	65	4	61.38%	3,899
District 10	9,108	9,054	5,666	263	54	0	62.21%	5,878
District 11	3,655	1,897	1,119	43	2	0	30.62%	1148
<b>Totals</b>	<b>69,493</b>	<b>67,183</b>	<b>42,541</b>	<b>1,658</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>61.22%</b>	<b>43,815</b>

# Minnesota Sons of the American Legion News

## Sons of The American Legion

By  
Dave Vulcan



Hello from your Sons of the American Legion. It has been a busy month since I last wrote. The John Zgoda Memorial SAL Disabled Veterans Deer hunt was held the first weekend of October. We had five hunters and 17 volunteers helping out. Two does and one buck were harvested. Memories were made and a good time was had by all, even with the rain. Thank you to all who participated and made a successful and memorable hunt.

I went to the Fall National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting a week later and attended Commander School. That was a learning experience. I enjoyed attending the class and picked up skills that will help me be a better commander. I also received a new copy of the Commanders and Adjutants book. These will be made available for those who would like a copy at Fall Conference and after.

After that we have preparation for the Pearl Harbor Rally along with Midwinter conferences. All the while we need to continue to work on getting our membership turned in. The numbers have been coming in slowly, but as we continue to contact our members the renewals should increase.

We should also be aware and recruiting based on the membership changes as a result of the Legion Act. I know we have SAL members who are now eligible to join The American Legion. Join as a dual member. And as we recruit new members to The American Legion, there is opportunity for the growth of the Sons of the American Legion.

I hope you have a great Thanksgiving, and I look forward to seeing you all at the next rally.

Cdr. Dave Vulcan: [dhvulcan@gmail.com](mailto:dhvulcan@gmail.com)  
Adjutant Dennis Henkemeyer:  
[dennish56621@hotmail.com](mailto:dennish56621@hotmail.com)  
Website: [www.mnsal.org](http://www.mnsal.org)



**ZGODA VOLUNTEERS** — Sons of the American Legion volunteers gathered at Legionville for the annual John Zgoda Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt. Five hunters participated.

October 9, 2019 Membership Report						
Department of Minnesota Membership Bulletin No. 3					National Goal Department Goal 11,596 Current Membership 2,789	
District	2020 Goal	Total 2019	Total 2020	Week's Gain	Total Squads	% Of Goal
District 1	1,789	1,801	464	163	41	25.94%
District 2	1,334	1,332	313	257	34	23.46%
District 3	2,066	2,035	663	191	36	32.09%
District 4	375	368	29	13	7	7.73%
District 5	382	386	98	5	7	25.65%
District 6	1,578	1,549	465	185	33	29.47%
District 7	1,016	1,018	132	86	22	12.99%
District 8	554	544	175	45	16	31.59%
District 9	846	829	128	45	18	15.13%
District 10	1,653	1,648	318	114	34	19.24%
District 11	3	2	4	0	2	133.33%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11,596</b>	<b>11,512</b>	<b>2,789</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>24.05%</b>



FALL CONFERENCE SPEAKER TAMMY MONSEBROTEN OF THE FARGO VA MEDICAL CENTER

## Myths and facts on veterans' suicide

Continued from Page 1

She noted cases where people communicated time and again but eventually followed through with it.

Another myth is if someone wants to die by suicide, there is nothing others can do about it.

Monsebrotten is convinced there are ways to prevent it. She said she has heard people say they would never shoot themselves and do not need a gun lock. She responds by asking if they have done regrettable actions when not themselves due to intoxication, depression or perhaps medication. Most people have a few incidents in their past.

She brought along 100 gun locks to give away.

The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry showed that 75 percent of suicidal crises last 10 minutes or shorter, far outnumbering other time ranges. A lock, a phone call, a song, a nap, a cigarette, a knock at the door — all are things that can delay attempts and often save lives, she said.

The truth is that most suicidal ideas stem from treatable disorders. Monsebrotten said people must get over the stigma of suicidal thoughts as selfish, weak or crazy or that it will send its victims to hell. People should avoid euphemisms — she told a tale of a person saying, “Don’t do something stupid” when leaving a house, to which the victim said, “I won’t” — and choose tough words, like “kill yourself.”

She said people in general must recognize that depression, alcoholism and other afflictions can take a person from OK to “the world would be better off without me” and back to OK.

Ask the questions directly: Are you thinking of suicide?

Have you had thoughts about taking your own life? Are you thinking of killing yourself?

When talking with a veteran at risk of suicide, remain calm, listen more than you speak, maintain eye contact, act with confidence, avoid arguing, use open body language, limit questions, give encouraging comments and be honest, she said.

SAVE is an acronym to help people remember steps for addressing suicide:

Signs of suicidal thinking. Ask questions. Validate the person’s experience. Encourage and expedite treatment.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255. If the caller presses 1, they get the veterans crisis line. Monsebrotten said the staff will first determine how suicidal the caller is and whether police and ambulance are needed immediately. If not, the staff will talk out the situation.

American Legion Department Service Officer Jeremy Wolfsteller added that any VA will accept any veteran dealing with suicidal thoughts.

### Signs of suicidal thinking:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there is no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family and friends



CHAPLAIN BETTY JASS

## Chaplain Betty Jass tells her own story

There were several calls to arms to fight the epidemic of veterans’ suicide at the fall conference, but perhaps none so powerful as when Department of Minnesota Chaplain Betty Jass took the podium to tell her own story.

Jass noted that she had recently returned from the national chaplain’s school, and that she would be sharing what she learned about veterans’ suicide with other chaplains in the state.

Her own story took place 16 years ago after she had been in a serious car accident that left her in constant pain.

“I was driving home one night. I was withdrawn, I was in pain, and I hadn’t had any sleep. My tunnel vision was as big as a pin hole.”

Jass said she was thinking about a rope she had in the garage and how it could end all her problems.

Instead, she stopped at a friend’s house seeking help. After listening to her story, though, the friend simply said, “Oh, you’re tough, Betty. You’ll figure it out.”

Jass said that was not what she needed at that point. Still reaching out, she stopped at another friend’s house. “They said, ‘Oh, Betty, what can we do to help?’ They listened, they didn’t judge.”

“If someone comes to you, never leave them alone. Take some kind of action.”

The action the friend took was to get her to a doctor. “The doctor told me it takes a bit of guts to seek help. We’re all trained to be self-reliant. I’ve always wanted to help others, but I was the one who wound up asking for help.”

She spent five days in the doctor’s care and learned much about what she was going through, including the fact that she had some PTSD from her military career.

“I found out my problems came from three or four things. It was a combo deal. But I also found out that somebody really did care about me. There were people at that time who adopted me as their veteran.”

Jass said this is such a touchy problem that people don’t want to talk about it. “But it’s such an important topic. It’s somebody’s life. I was in that deep, deep, dark valley, and I sought help. Nobody judged me.

“I love life, I love the Legion, I love helping people.”

Jass also stressed that we need a spiritual foundation in our lives. “We need God in our lives so he can help us protect this country.”

## 2019 Fall Conference notes

— Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke opened the Fall Conference with review of activities in the state veterans department. He said veterans’ suicide was a top priority for the state, and “We need your help.” Herke noted the opening of the new state veterans cemetery at Duluth, and that another one at Redwood Falls is still in the planning stages but did not get federal funding this year. He also said about half the planning for the three new veterans’ homes in the state is done. The homes will be at Preston, Bemidji and Montevideo. He also talked about veterans’ homelessness and the effort to get it to “functional zero” in Minnesota. He said a major problem is the lack of apartments particularly in the Twin Cities.

— Doug Buchanan, the administrator at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Fergus Falls, said the outside ratings for the vets’ homes in Minnesota is very high. There are 769 beds in the state for veterans.

— Annette Kuyper spoke on Minnesota’s Yellow Ribbon program and said there were 93 networks in the state. The organization helps the families of veterans who have been deployed. One thing she cautioned about was the over abundance of “Care” packages sent by people and groups back home. “They are a burden to the chaplains and others. A lot of them don’t get opened, or get burned.” She said Minnesota recently sent a Guard contingent of 700 overseas. “They don’t need care packages, they need help for their families like snow shoveling or child care.”

— Jim Kellogg noted that Nov. 11 has been declared

“American Legion Day” in Minneapolis. The Legion and city are working together to install a new plaque at Peavey Plaza in downtown Minneapolis. The plaza is the site of the first national convention in 1919, and two plaques already there mark that convention and the birth of the Auxiliary. The new plaque will commemorate the 100th convention in Minneapolis in 2018.

— Legionville benefitted from several large donations at the conference including \$15,000 from Bloomington Post 550 and \$5,000 from St. Louis Park Post 282.

— Andy Garvais spoke on the state veterans’ cemeteries in Minnesota and said the life of most veterans cemeteries is being extended because more veterans families are choosing cremation rather than casket burial.

— National Vice Commander Bruce Fueurbach of Iowa noted that Minnesota was in second place in the nation in membership. He said, nationally, over 19 million veterans are eligible for Legion membership.

— Computers are getting faster before people have time to catch up, and Maj. Dan Sly of the 119th Wing of the North Dakota Air National Guard was present at the 2019 Fall Conference to speak about it. He is the communications flight commander and is in charge of information technology. He said cyber is changing how, why and where the military flies. It’s the concept of “asymmetric warfare.” “Anyone with the proper skills now has the ability to cause catastrophic damage,” Sly said. Phishing, ransomware and other malware target not merely high-profile places like the Department of Defense but also schools and hospitals, he

said. He said America needs “educated cyber citizens” and needs an engineering shift from computers as a convenience to embracing them for security. He also told people to prepare for machine learning — artificial intelligence.

— Paul Dillard, a candidate for national commander and past commander for the Department of Texas, described growing membership as the key challenge for this generation of The American Legion. He said not enough people are making personal contacts with potential new members and with existing members who haven’t renewed. “Personal contact is what we’ve lost.” He said the doughboys who launched The American Legion following the First World War didn’t have the internet. Many didn’t have phones. They reached out to people in person. They saw the need.

— The 2020 Fall Conference is slated to take place Oct. 22-24 at Breezy Point Resort on Pelican Lake, about 20 miles north of Brainerd. Nisswa Post 627 hosts. Pat Logan of Bloomington resigned from the Convention Corporation Committee. The committee named Phil Bellefeuille of Callaway the chairman and Tom Schottenbauer of Minnetonka as vice chairman. Bellefeuille said he would like to hear from posts interested in hosting future conferences and conventions. His email is pdadbelle@yahoo.com, and his phone is 218-847-3648. The 2020 Department Convention is July 16-18 at Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel in Redwood Falls.



Leading Candidate for National Commander Paul Dillard of Texas takes in a meeting of the Department Executive Committee prior to the Fall Conference. Sitting with him, from left, are candidate for Department Commander Tom Fernlund of St. Cloud, NECman Bill Barbknecht of Battle Lake, National Vice Commander Bruce Feuerbach of Iowa, and Past National Vice Commander Al Davis of Princeton.

# Fall Conference at Mahanomen



Tess and Al Davis were chosen co-Legionnaires of the Year by the Sons of the American Legion.



Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl, who will retire at the end of the year, shared his final thoughts with the Fall Conference audience.



Country star Connie Lee and her band were the entertainment at the hospitality event on Friday night.



The Fifth District honored the Auxliary on its 100th birthday during the Auxliary musicale.



Legion Rider Steve Sullivan was honored for directing the Legacy Run, gathering over \$1 million, for the last ten years.

# Legion military awards were presented



**SGT. DAVID M. CLEARY**  
Army National Guard, HHC/7 136 Infantry  
Reiles Acres, ND, nominated by Moorhead Post 21



**PDMST2 KIRSTIN L. EAKER**  
Coast Guard Reserve, Marine Safety Det. St. Paul  
Cloquet, nominated by Falldin Post 555



**SGT. MITCHELL M. SMITH**  
4th Law Enforcement BN, Ft. Snelling  
Hugo, nominated by U of M Post 548

Those who also received the Outstanding Enlisted Person of the Year Awards from the National/Security Foreign Relations Committee, but unable to attend, were:  
SSG Nicholas S. Romie, Moorhead, nominated by Moorhead Post 21.  
SrA Shane D. Stede, Forest Lake, nominated by Minneapolis Post 99  
PO-E01 Austin D. Hawk, nominated by Moorhead Post 21.  
SGT Alexander D. Huntimer, Branden, SD, nominated by U of M Post 548.  
SMSGT Catherine A. Lammers, Apple Valley, nominated by U of M Post 548.



Richard Oelschlager helps the 10th District distribute hotdogs at the hospitality event.



Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Larry Herke spoke on the activities of the MDVA.



National Vice Commander Bruce Feuerbach of Iowa spoke of the importance of membership.



Riders Steve Sullivan and Chuck Stone were honored for their long service to the Legion Riders by Past Detachment Commander Shawn Davis.

# SOME PROBLEMS AT UTAH BEACH

*2,500 soldiers crowded into the hold of the transport ship Susan B. Anthony during the D-Day landings at Utah Beach in Normandy. One of those was a young Minnesotan who had made staff sergeant during his first six months in the Army. And then the ship hit a mine and started to sink.*

By Al Zdon

**U**SS *Susan B. Anthony* had a good record of service.

The transport ship (AP-72) had begun life as an ocean liner, *Santa Clara*, in 1930 and had sailed the oceans for a decade before World War II began and Uncle Sam welcomed the ship into the fleet.

While still a civilian ship, *Santa Clara* had transported Walt Disney and his staff to Chile for the making of "Three Caballeros."

It was reconfigured into a transport ship and renamed *Susan B. Anthony* after the American suffragist, one of the few Navy ships named after a woman.

The ship participated in Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa, in late 1942, and then the invasion of Sicily in 1943. In between, she hauled soldiers and supplies across the Atlantic.

The ship's luck ran out on June 7, 1944, off Utah Beach in the D-Day plus-1 landings at Normandy.

In her hold that day was a young soldier named Jack Schramm from Minneapolis. As he waited with his comrades for the landing, a massive explosion rocked the large ship.

It began to sink.

It was Schramm's first taste of war, and the ship was still 10 miles from the beach.

**J**ack W. Schramm was born in the bustling city of Villard, Minnesota, population 300, in 1919.

He was a town kid, and his father owned the bank in Villard. It was a time of relative prosperity in rural Minnesota.

The young Schramm even had his own business.

"From age 6, I was selling magazines in town. Collier's sold for five cents, Women's Home Companion sold for 15 cents, and The American sold for 25 cents. I would go door to door, but there were three stores where I would leave copies to sell. The farmers would come in to buy something to read. My business was going pretty good."

The stock market crash of 1929 brought an end to that prosperity.

"The bank closed and so did everything else in town. My father lost everything and started selling insurance."

When his grandfather died, the family moved to 19th and Park Avenue in Minneapolis to the apartment building where his grandfather had lived. "Most of the tenants in those apartments were relatives. I remember there was a grocery store in the basement."

Schramm graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1938 in a class of about 400.

Asked if he worked during high school, Schramm smiled and said, "I played around." Then he did recall one job. "When I was a sophomore, I delivered telegrams for 16 cents an hour."

People could see the war clouds on the horizon, Schramm said. "We all knew about Hitler."

One job he had after high school was driving a guy around in his new Packard for a dollar a day. "Seven days, seven dollars. I'd drive him to his Kiwanis meeting and while he was there I'd drive the car around. It was a great car. It was a pretty good job."

After that he worked at grocery stores. "I was working at Johnson's Big 10 when one day the delivery guy said to me, 'Come on outside, I want to show you a new pickle we got in. I went outside, and he told me about an opening for a manager at a delicatessen. I was hired and I worked there for a while.'"

One Sunday morning, he got a call from a high school classmate. "He said he was coming right over. When he got there he said the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. I said, 'Where?' Nobody knew where Pearl Harbor was."

At about the same time, his mother and father had purchased a delicatessen on Lake Street. "I felt I needed to be around to show them how to run the store, and so I waited for the Army to draft me."

He didn't have to wait long. On March 31, 1942, he got his greetings from the federal government.

"They sent me to Camp Barkeley in Texas for basic training. The Army was making the transition from World War I to World War II." The structure was changing, the weapons were changing, and the preparation for war was changing.

He was assigned to Company F, 359th Regiment of the 90th Division. The division was originally from Texas and Oklahoma, and the T-O became the division's nickname, the "Tough 'Ombres."

**H**is civilian experience as a storekeeper helped and with the aid of a supply officer from Minnesota, he was taken on as a supply person. What they wanted, though, was a supply sergeant and he was promoted to buck sergeant not long out of boot camp.

"I had gone from buck private to buck sergeant and some people didn't like that. One guy said to me, 'Hey, you've got to go through the ranks like everyone else.' But then the Army decided that the NCO in charge of supplies had to be a staff sergeant, and so I became a staff sergeant. It was still 1942."

The division did maneuvers in Louisiana and in California. "We got to play in the sand out there."

Then it was on to Fort Dix in New Jersey. "We went into New York for a weekend, and it was great. We were planning on going back to New York the next weekend, but instead we were on ship going to England."

The ship was in a convoy, and despite the perilous waters of those days, it made it to Scotland unscathed. "It was an English ship and they were saving their food for the English



people. So we had toast and orange marmalade for 14 days. I don't eat orange marmalade anymore."

The division ended up near Amesbury, England, and began training some more. "We set up our camp on a hill, and you could sit on that hill at night and watch the Germans bombing London."

They were sent to Ireland to catch their ship, *USS Susan B. Anthony*, for transport to the beaches at Normandy.

The area off the coast of France had been swept for mines, all except one.

"We hit it, and it just blew us out of the water."



**JACK SCHRAMM**  
At home in Anoka



**JACK SCHRAMM**  
In the Army in 1942

Schramm was in the hold with all his gear waiting for the word to transfer over to the Higgins boats for the final trip to the beach when the mine hit. "I had a buddy on the ship right behind us and he saw the mine hit. He said it lifted my ship out of the water enough so he could see the propellers turning on the bottom of the ship."

In the hold, there was deep consternation. It was dark, and the ship was beginning to tilt to one side.

"Then they told us to drop our gear and get on deck. They opened the hatches, and I think I was the first one to make it to the deck."

The ship had lost all power and the rudder jammed in a hard left turn. By 8 a.m., the ship had taken on a great deal of water and was beginning to settle. There was an eight-degree list to the port side.

The captain of the ship, Commander T.L. Gray, wanted to get the ship back to an even keel to see if it could be saved.

"They had all 2,500 of us move to one side of the ship." The human ballast worked, and the ship leveled out, but it was too late.

"There was just too big a hole in the bottom of the ship."

At 8:22 a.m. the fleet tug USS Pinto came alongside with the intention of bringing Anthony to shallow water. But fires broke out in the engine and fire rooms, and the captain decided to abandon ship.

Pinto and two destroyers came alongside. "They were so close that you could just jump from one ship to the other."

It was something of a miracle, but all 2,689 troops and crew on *Susan B. Anthony* were rescued. By 9:05, nearly everyone had left the ship, and the decks were awash as the ship slowly sank.

"We watched it go down."

Schramm's new temporary ship was a British destroyer. "All of a sudden, at a certain hour, they announced tea and crumpets, and that's what we had, tea and crumpets."

The stay was short, and on June 10 the men were loaded into Higgins boats to try again to reach the beach.

"We put on our life savers. They told us to strap them on as high as possible under our armpits. If you put it on too low, you could flip in the water and your feet would be sticking up."

On the way to the beach, they got another greeting. "The Germans flew over and were shooting, but nobody got hit."

The men left the Higgins boats in chest high water and waded into Utah Beach. "On my way out, I saw something in the bottom of the boat and I grabbed it. It turned out to be a package of Old Golds and a hand grenade. I gave away the cigarettes, but I kept the hand grenade."

Many of the troops had left their rifles and other gear aboard the transport. "At first they gave some of the guys Japanese rifles. I don't know where they got those. Then the next day, we all got American rifles."

The regiment was sent into the St. Mere Eglise area where many paratroopers and gliders had landed. "Somebody didn't work it out very good. The gliders were supposed to land in open fields, but instead they landed in the woods. A lot of boys got killed."

Some of the gliders also caught fire. "I was on a detail to get bodies off the gliders. It was like at a medical office, the skin was all burnt off and it was just muscle and bones left. We were very careful with the dog tags to make sure they were attached to who they belonged to."

Some days later, the division earned its reputation in capturing Hill 122 from the German army. Part of the division captured the hill and found itself surrounded by Germans, who demanded their surrender. Instead, the division fought on and kept the hill, suffering over 5,000 casualties. "There was some furious fighting."

It was on to Perriers in late July and Schramm's unit was pinned down by three German tanks.

"There was a lot of shooting, and our boys were shooting bazookas at the tanks, but they ran out of ammunition. I went back and got some bazooka shells. You could only carry two at a time.

"I was heading back to get more when I got hit."

Schramm was hit by shrapnel from an artillery shell that landed near him at 2 p.m. on July 26. The shrapnel hit him in the throat and jaw and also in the back. "You don't feel any pain because the shrapnel is red hot when it hits you. It cooks the meat." The hot fragment cauterized the wound.

"I was helped from the field by the medics. One of the medics put some stuff in the wound to stop the bleeding. I don't know if I got morphine, but I suppose I did.

"I had a friend, Tony, who was a sergeant in the medical corps, and when he saw me he said, 'You're not walking anymore.' And they brought up a stretcher that got me to ambulance.

He was taken to the 102nd Evacuation Hospital where he stayed overnight. "The next day they put me on an airplane. These were the same airplanes they had dropped the paratroopers with. Already they had converted them by putting beds in them. I was wondering if we were going to make it. It was my first airplane ride in my life."

Schramm was safely deposited at a hospital near London.

He spent some weeks in the hospital, and the neck wound was healing well. "They were looking for guys to



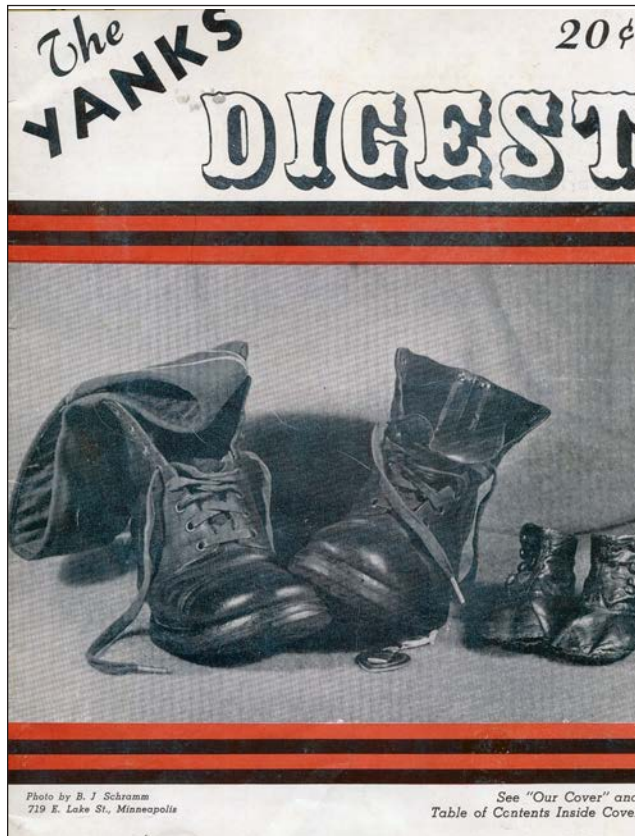
The 90th Division was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey, to get ready to board a troop ship for England. F Company posed for a photo at the fort. For what it's worth, Schramm is in the front row, eighth from the left.



After getting wounded in France, Schramm's account was written up in a couple of Minnesota newspapers.



Schramm is shown in Europe in 1944.



Jack's father, B.J. Schramm, was an amateur photographer. This photo was submitted to The Yank's Digest and was selected as their cover photo. The big boots, Purple Heart and the hat are Jack Schramm's. At the time he was stationed at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, where he was a supply sergeant. His father ran a delicatessen on Lake Street in Minneapolis.



In the early 1920s, Schramm as a toddler.



USS *Susan B. Anthony* in North Africa in 1943. It was a civilian passenger liner converted to a troop ship.

get them back to the front lines, but I told them I couldn't lift my arm. I couldn't hold it up. They said there must be shrapnel in there yet and they'd have to take it out."

After another surgery, he was put on a hospital ship that took him to Charleston, South Carolina. "It was a nice trip, although we got into a little rough weather."

**H**e was back in the United States in mid-December, just in time to miss the Battle of the Bulge.

Next was a hospital train to an Army Hospital in Clinton, Iowa. "I was hospitalized for a couple of weeks and then they sent me home to recuperate and told me to come back in two weeks. And then they told me to come back in two weeks, and so on."

By May, he was healed and assigned to Hot Springs, Arkansas. "I didn't have any job, so I just hung around at this nice hotel. We'd go down to dinner, and it would be served by all these guys in white clothes."

Next it was on to Camp Claiborne where he was assigned to a cadre of training engineers. Schramm was in charge of supplies. He was given his discharge in November. "I had quite a few points by then."

Schramm went back home and worked at his parents' delicatessen. He married Martha in April 1947, and they had three children. He held several jobs, and lived in Lake Crystal for many years running a food store.

"I could see that it was the food brokers who were making the money, though. We were just scraping by at Lake Crystal. So we moved back to the Twin Cities, and I became a broker." He retired in 1984.

On December 5, he will celebrate his 100th birthday. "My favorite thing to do is sleep," he said with his sly smile. But he also finds time to work on the computer, and he has done extensive genealogy research through the years. He also was an amateur photographer and he collected stamps.

He and Martha live in a Methodist community in Anoka. "You want to know the secret to live to be 100 years old?" he asked.

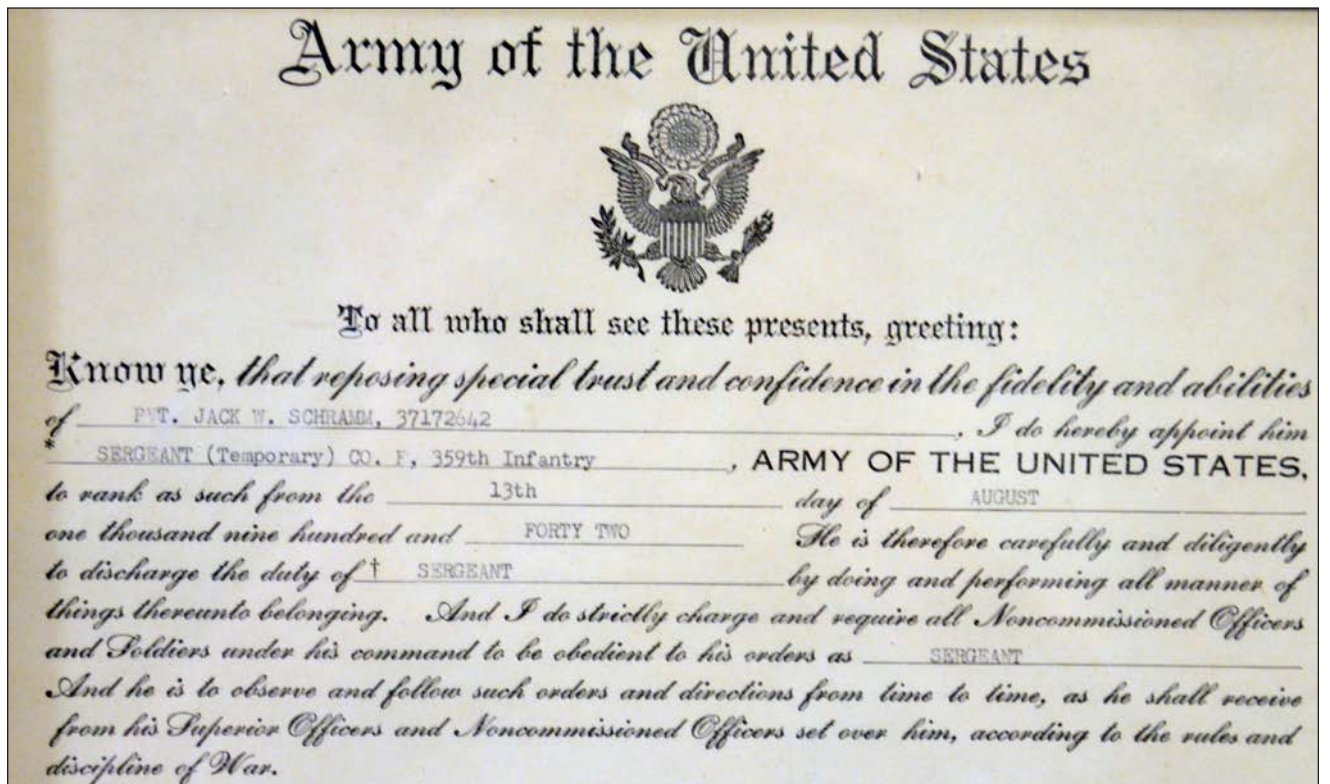
"Keep breathing."



Schramm attended the dedication of the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.



Schramm received his Bronze Star in 1987.




In April of 1942, he was in boot camp. When this document was prepared in August of 1942, he had been promoted to sergeant. The Army valued his civilian storekeeping skills.



**ANNUAL TUTS MEETING** — The King Tuts, made up of past department commanders of the Minnesota American Legion, met recently and inducted two new members. Retiring Adjutant Randy Tesdahl was welcomed as an honorary Tut. Past Department Commander Bud Redepenning initiated his son, Past Department Commander Darrel Redepenning. From left, front: Tesdahl, Bud Redepenning, Lloyd Ricker, Dennis Henkemeyer, Department Commander Mark Dvorak, Al Davis, Marland Ronning, Denise Milton. In back: Darrel Redepenning, Cal Van Horn, Bill Barbknecht, Chuck Kruger, Mike Schaffer.

NOTICE TO ALL LEGION FAMILY MEMBERS:

**RETIREMENT PARTY FOR AL ZDON**



**23 YEARS OF STORYTELLING**

Nov. 15, 2019  
5-6 p.m. social hour  
6 p.m. dinner, program to follow  
Anoka Post 102  
400 W. Main St., Anoka, MN 55303  
763-421-0883  
\$30 per person

(Clip and submit with check)  
Mail to: The American Legion, 20 W. 12th St., Rm. 102, Anoka, MN 55303

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Deadline is Nov. 6 for reservations. Please call Jennifer, 651-291-1800 at the Department Headquarters.

Closed: \_\_\_\_\_

# Listening Post



**DAY OF FISH** — Day of Fish held by Dent Post 148 is an event where the Legion members invite veterans from the Fergus Falls Veterans Home for a day of fishing and eating.



**DEDICATION** — Hokah Post 498 announced the completion of a veterans memorial in the Hokah City Park. The memorial is in memory of men and women who have served in the armed forces. In observance of Veterans Day, the 75-year-old post will dedicate the memorial at the park at 1 p.m., with cake and coffee afterward at the Hokah Fire Station.



**FRANKLIN PROJECT** — Franklin Legion Post 308 participated in the Dictionary Project by presenting Cedar Mountain Elementary third-, fourth- and fifth-grade students with their own personal dictionary.



BERT MARTH



THERESA RUDNICKI

## Hospital Association elects two members

The American Legion Family Hospital Association re-elected a member and elected a new one at its annual meeting in Mahanomen in October.

Albert Marth of New Ulm was re-elected to her position representing the American Legion.

In the other election, Theresa Rudnicki of Waite Park was elected unopposed to an Auxiliary position. She is replacing Sharon Thiemecke who has completed a three-year term.

The board heard a report from its claims coordinator Roger Myren.

The association had an increase in the number of claims this past fiscal year with 33 total. That compares with 14 the year before, 18 the year before that, and 38 in 2016.

Likewise, the amount of expense for the association went up, reflecting the claims. This past year, there was \$49,000 in expenses compared to \$31,000 last year.

Total income for the association was \$50,000, compared with \$49,000 last year.

Donations received stood at \$15,000, the same amount as last year.

Dues income was at 27,500 this year, compared with \$28,000 the year before, probably reflecting the fewer number of members in two of the three supporting organizations, the Legion and the Auxiliary. The other organization is the Sons of the American Legion.

Medical expense for the association was \$48,678 this year, compared to \$17,000 last year.

The association's assets now stand at \$250,000 compared to \$269,000 the prior year, \$251,000 in 2017 and \$247,000 in 2016.

The Family Hospital Association pays off medical bills that Legion Family members may be having trouble dealing with.

The three organizations pay dues into the hospital association.

## Bowling tourney will be held in Dayton

The Minnesota State American Legion Family Bowling Tournament is set for March 21 to April 18, 2020. The tournament will be at Sundance Lanes in Dayton.

Singles and doubles begin at noon Saturdays and 9 a.m. Sundays. Four-person team bowling is at 3:30 p.m. Saturdays and noon Sundays.

The tournament is open to all members 18 years of age or older of The American Legion, Sons of the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary. The entry fee is \$22 per person per event, plus an optional \$2 for all events. All participants must carry a current membership card.

Forms are available at [mnlegion.org](http://mnlegion.org). All requests for reservations, information and otherwise should be directed to Cari Lamb, tournament secretary. Her address is 3217 19th Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55407. Her cellphone is 612-968-4839. Her email is [crlmb74@gmail.com](mailto:crlmb74@gmail.com).

Lamb suggests making hotel reservations in the Osseo-Maple Grove area early.

Participants who had reservations in last year's tournament must send entries and all fees to her postmarked by Dec. 31. Failing to meet the deadline opens time slots for requesting teams.

On any given date, entries can be taken for up to one hour prior to bowling if opening are available, but she requests teams to make requests two weeks in advance.

The entry form says the 10-pin rule is in effect. The 10-pin rules says if your average is 10 pins higher in league bowling after 21 games than your last year's average, you must report this average as the average to be used in the tournament.

Bowlers may enter both singles and doubles or can bowl in the singles or doubles event only, but they must inform Lamb.

Division I is the Legion division, and Division 2 is the Auxiliary division.

## World War II History Round Table

## Roosevelt, Churchill started the planning that ended in D-Day

By Al Zdon

At a crucial moment in history, during World War II, the Allies were faced with a number of huge decisions.

How would they invade Europe?

Who would be privy to the secrets of the planned atomic bomb?

Could America and the United Kingdom agree on a unified strategy?

How could we get enough troops and supplies overseas to mount an invasion?

With these and other history-changing decisions up in the air, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt did what he thought was best. With the future of the world at stake, he carefully chose his next move.

He went fishing.

Author Philip Padgett outlined the history of that time at the October meeting of the World War II Round Table at the Minnesota History Center. He was joined later by two crew members of B-29 bombers who told some amazing tales about their service and lives.

Padgett spent most of his working career advising national security and international negotiations at the highest level. A native Marylander, he spent several years researching his first book, *Avocating Overlord*, which takes a look at the behind the scenes back and forth that led to the invasion of Europe on June 6, 1944.

Roosevelt and Winston Churchill had met in Casablanca in January 1943. "They had decided on three priorities: beat the U-boats, work together on the bombing of Europe, and do joint planning on how to re-enter the continent."

There was another issue behind the scenes regarding sharing information about the atomic bomb the U.S. was developing. "Should we share this terrible weapon?"

Britain's scientists had done much critical work on the bomb, but soon realized they didn't have the resources themselves to create a bomb in time for the war. Their bomb initiative was called the Tube Alloys Project.

But as the U.S. pushed forward with the Manhattan Project, the British were left behind. Roosevelt only made vague assurances about future involvement, and Churchill was not happy.

Meanwhile a group with the acronym COSSAC, a joint British and American team, began planning the invasion. "But they didn't know the Allied goal, they didn't know where to land, they didn't know how many ships and troops it would take and there was no Allied strategic commander for the planning."

Padgett showed an early map of the invasion which showed three beach landings on the Normandy Coast.

The planning was contingent on three factors. "They would not proceed if it was determined there were more than 12 German divisions in France, or if the Allies didn't have air superiority, and it depended on whether artificial harbors could be created."

So, in the midst of all this furious planning, negotiating and intrigue, a meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt was planned.

"On Friday, July 30, 1943, with the whole world in crisis, FDR decided to go fishing in Canada. They didn't tell anyone. They knew that after a while people would notice that the president wasn't in the White House and then the rumors would start."

Padgett quoted Roosevelt after several days had gone by with no mention of his absence in the press, "We sure gave them the slip good this time."

The reason for the trip to Birch Island was probably more than fishing, although Roosevelt reported catching bass, walleyes and northerns and getting tan. Army Chief of Staff George Marshall had provided with him the plans for the invasion, and the president had a chance to study them in peace and quiet.

The scene then changed to Quebec for the meeting with Churchill. "There was a feeling on both sides that they needed to start trusting each other."

The Prime Minister had been hoping for a Mediterranean invasion, but the meeting ended with agreement on a landing in northern France. "FDR and Churchill also made a secret agreement that the two nations would share the secrets of the atomic bomb, but there would be no sharing with other countries."

Overlord moved into high gear, and it needed to. "By late summer of 1943, we were short 1 million troops that needed to be in England. They had eight months to move those troops and supplies across the Atlantic."

By May of 1944, the Allies had actually exceeded their goal and had 1.5 million troops ready to land.

"On D-Day itself, 156,000 troops landed on five beaches and there were 9,000 casualties, including 3,000 killed. After that it became a logistics battle with the Allies trying to build up troops and supplies faster than the Germans could respond."

At the same time, the Manhattan Project was in full



The Quebec conference featured Canadian PM Mackenzie King, Roosevelt and Churchill.

swing, and would eventually cost the U.S. the equivalent in today's currency of \$100 billion. The British know-how and technology were a key to completing the project.

Harold Gifford grew up near Comfry, Minnesota, during the Great Depression. "When the farming went to pieces, we moved into town."

As World War II approached, Harold's brother Quentin was in the Navy, and in the summer of 1940, he came home on leave.

"I had dropped out of school, but when Quentin got home he made me promise to go back to high school."

Quentin went back to the Navy and was killed at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. True to his word Harold went back to school, and it wasn't until late in 1942 that he became an Army Air Corps cadet.

After 15 months he earned his wings as a fighter pilot. By the time he was ready to go overseas, though, the U.S. had enough fighter pilots and he went back to school to learn to be a third pilot on a B-29, a super bomber that was mainly used to bomb mainland Japan.

He arrived in the Pacific just in time for the war to end, but he did fly missions that brought food and supplies to American troops in POW camps in Japan. He and his plane later were part of the armada of thousands of aircraft that flew over Toyko harbor as the Japanese signed the surrender in August 1945.

"It was pointed out that my brother was killed on the first day of the war, and the last day of the war I was flying over the USS Missouri as the surrender was signed."

Gifford said his B-29 got to Tokyo a half an hour early and had a chance to fly over the Japanese countryside. "We flew low to see what was going on. I'll tell you it was a mess."

Gifford told one more story about his post-war flying career. In 1960, he was the co-pilot on a DC-3 that was the private plane of the Minneapolis Lakers basketball team. There were 23 on board, including nine team members and the coach. The plane was scheduled to fly from St. Louis to Wold-Chamberlain Airfield in the Twin Cities.

"I had tried all day to get hold of the pilot. When he showed up, I tried to talk him out of going. The weather was just too bad."

The captain made the decision, though, and after they had been in the air for a while the plane suddenly lost power. The cockpit and cabin went into total darkness, and most of the instruments quit.

"I always carry a flashlight, and so I could shine it on the controls." They headed north, trying to get past the storm, and climbed to stay above it. "I think I got it up to 17,000 feet. The guys in the back were pretty much complaining."

They decided to get below the storm and try to find a place to land. By this time, although they had no fuel gauge, they calculated they were running out of gas.

"We brought it down to 500 feet to try and see the ground, but there was a snowstorm. They went lower, to about 150 feet. "That's where my days as a crop duster paid off."

They found a road, but Gifford was concerned about the power lines, which couldn't be seen in the snow. He argued with the pilot about landing in a cornfield, and Lakers' Coach Jim Pollard joined in the argument, also favoring a cornfield.

The pilot finally agreed, and they descended into a cornfield. "It was pretty quiet in the back of the plane as we made our approach. You could hear the ears of corn hitting the bottoms of the wings. When we landed and came to a stop, it was all cheering and hollering. Elgin Baylor told me it was the smoothest landing he ever knew."

You can read the whole experience in Gifford's book, "The Miracle Landing."

Bob Michelsen was a gunner on a B-29 and flew 10 missions over Japan. As they neared the target on that last mission, engine number two caught fire. The pilot continued the bombing run, but then ordered the crew to bail out.

"As I was coming down in my parachute, I saw a bunch of soldiers gathering in a circle below me. But then I saw they were pointing their guns at the crowd." The B-29s had wreaked so much destruction in Japan, the crews were considered war criminals by the military and could be attacked by civilians if the military didn't protect them.

The interrogation started the next day and the first two sessions were pretty easy. But then the questions got harder and the interrogators wanted answers. "I guess you could say torture was involved. They were asking about the bomb bay doors and if I'd ever seen them modified. And then they asked what I knew about a large bomb."

The Japanese were trying to find out about the atomic bomb, which the B-29 crews knew nothing about.

"I finally told them about the blockbuster bombs they were using in Europe. That must have satisfied them because the torture stopped."

He was kept in a converted horse stall, about eight by ten feet, where 22 prisoners were squeezed. "One day they asked that everyone with the initials A through H come forward and they were going to move them to another prison with better food and medicines. Sixty-two guys were taken away, and nobody ever heard from them again."

Michelsen weighed about 100 pounds by the time the war ended. "They said we were about three or four weeks away from starvation."

Other B-29s, like the one Gifford helped fly, dropped food to the prisoners. "Yes, we needed that."



Author Philip Padgett



Veteran Panelists Bob Michelsen and Harold Gifford.

## Vietnam War Roundtable

# Medics and medevacs saved many lives during the Vietnam War

By Al Zdon

One of the crucial difficulties in fighting the jungle war in Vietnam was treating and rescuing wounded American soldiers.

The October meeting of the Vietnam War Roundtable featured a medic and a medevac helicopter pilot who told of their harrowing experiences during the war.

Bill Struzinski went to Hill High School in St. Paul and then on to Mankato State University in 1964. "I got sick and had to drop out of school in 1966, and that wasn't a good thing." He was immediately re-classified 1-A by the government and was drafted.

Struzinski trained at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, and one of his choices for an Army career was to be a medic. "I thought I'd learn all this emergency first aid and I could use that the rest of my life."

He went through advanced infantry training, and of his class of 500, 490 were sent to Europe. Ten, including Struzinski, were sent to Vietnam.

His medical training was only 10 weeks. "They told us that they couldn't train us for combat. We'd have to go there and find out for ourselves. The Army is big on on-the-job training."

He was assigned to the First Infantry Division, the Big Red One, and became part of Company A of the 26th Regiment. He said he got about an hour's orientation from a medic in Vietnam. "He told me to wear plenty of suntan lotion."

"The first few days were nerve wracking. The other guys wanted to know how I'd react under fire. I didn't know myself. But I settled in, and things worked fine after that."

He said that everyone in the patrols he accompanied had a responsibility. "But when they called, 'Medic!' that's when I had to go to work."

He soon learned how tight the brotherhood was on a combat team. "The firefights were frequent, but these men all had my back, and I would do anything for them."

In addition to dealing with their combat wounds and injuries, he found out that the medic also becomes something of a therapist, drug counselor, family counselor and comforter when a soldier got a Dear John letter. "I was 20 years old in the jungle giving advice, and I'd never had sexual relations myself at that point."

Struzinski said he developed his own plan of survival for when his services were required. First, he tried to ensure that the enemy wasn't still firing at the place he had to go, and, second, he would take along a machine gunner to lay down a field of fire.

He said his job often ended with calling in the helicopter medevac, or "dust off" to take the wounded soldier out.

"The first one I did was at night, and they handed the microphone to me and said I should guide the chopper in. It was dark and when the medevac got right above me, he turned on his spotlight. It was blinding. I told him to shut it off, but he said he couldn't. He had to see the terrain."

"I knew the statistics, and that if I got the wounded man on the helicopter he had a 90 percent chance of survival. Once I saw that helicopter take off, that's when I could relax and have some water and a cigarette."

Struzinski said that while he was bringing a soldier to safety one time, he lost his M-16 rifle. He went and asked for another one, but, after being chewed out by a supply guy, was told he could only have a .45 pistol and two hand grenades.

"That brought my total of hand grenades to four, but then I was using hand grenades so much that they gave me back my M-16. They thought I would hurt someone."

The job wasn't all about gunshot and shrapnel wounds, though. "I had to treat a man who sat on a pit viper, and so you can imagine where he was bit. One time I killed a cobra. I was lucky that I was a little quicker than he was."

Not all his efforts saved the wounded soldier. "I was a 20-year-old doing what I could do. I couldn't call for help. Sometimes it was pretty traumatic."

"It set the stage for later. You learn how to make decisions and you stick with it. You do the best you can. I've done that the rest of my life."

He said he never got a scratch during his year of combat although there were numerous close calls including having his helmet shot off his head.

Just before he was sent home, he was moved to a safer base. "One day, they needed a medic in the field, and I said I would go. But another medic said, 'No, you've only got a few days left, I've got four months left. I'll go.'"

"The helicopter crashed. That could have been me."

His homecoming in California did not include bands and parades. "They threw stuff at us, eggs and tomatoes. I thought, 'This is something different.'"

He said there was no one he could talk to until he got back to Mankato State and was able to share experiences with other veterans.



**MEDEVAC** — Once medics had treated the wounded soldier on the ground, they were often transported to hospitals on Huey helicopters.

Jim Williamson, who grew up in Brownston and now lives in the Bemidji area, spent time in the Naval Reserve and on active duty, and finally applied for a commission in the Army where he learned to fly helicopters.

He trained on the UH-1 Iroquois, usually known as the "Huey." "I knew I was going to be a medevac pilot."

In Vietnam, he was part of the 93rd Evacuation Hospital and served the 173rd Airborne, the 9th Division and the 4th Division.

"We knew that most of the soldiers were from 18-20 years old. If we could just get there expeditiously, even if they were seriously wounded, the probability was that they would live. They might lose an arm or a leg, but they would live."

He said the experienced pilots taught the new pilots their jobs. "No Army manual teaches you how to fly in combat."

One technique he used was to come in high and ask the radioman on the ground what the best approach would be. He would come in with the doors open, and load from both sides.

The Huey had two pilots, a medic and a crew chief, who often doubled as a medic. "You just do whatever you can to keep them alive."

He said two of his crew members were shot during mis-

sions, and that one patient took a round in the neck.

Williamson said he wanted to pay special tribute to the nurses. "I have tremendous admiration for the nurses in Vietnam. They were all volunteers."

He noted that officially the United States was not allowed to fight the war in Cambodia, a neighboring country where the North Vietnamese trained and staged their armies. "They would give us coordinates to fly to the Cambodian border, and then they'd say, OK, just a little further west."

In two tours in Vietnam he earned two Silver Stars and a Distinguished Flying Cross.

Williamson spent 28 years in the Army and retired as a colonel. He later was an administrator of a nursing home near Bemidji.

Williamson's full story is in War Stories III, a compilation of veterans' stories available through the Minnesota American Legion.

The Vietnam Roundtable was moderated by Doug Bekke and hosted by Randall Dietrich. It is a joint program of the Minnesota Military Museum, Twin Cities Public Television and Concordia University in St. Paul where the meetings are held on the third Monday of the month.



The October panel included medic Bill Struzinski, moderator Doug Bekke, and medevac pilot Jim Williamson.

## Many questions answered at Mahnommen gambling seminar

Can a post give gambling funds directly to an American Legion member suffering from poverty, homelessness or a disability? Yes.

Can you give gambling funds only to members of the American Legion or related organizations? No. Be sure to spread charitable giving among members of the community.

Virginia Cote, a Fergus Falls-based compliance specialist with the Minnesota Gambling Control Board, answered these and other questions Thursday, Oct. 24, at the 2019 Fall Conference.

She also noted to avoid giving to “benefit” funds. It’s better to pay the struggling person or family directly. Even better, she noted, is to pay for something they need, like groceries or the electric bill, so funds cannot be misused.

Fiscal year 2018 marked the ninth year in a row with increased charitable gambling receipts — up 16 percent over the prior year. With \$2.3 billion in gross receipts, 2019 is about 15 percent over the prior year.

Electronic pull-tabs came on board in 2012, but they really caught on in 2015, she said. They now are more than \$580 million.

Here are other gambling-fund reminders she shared with 25 or so gambling managers who attended her session:

- Posts giving to nonprofits must not have more than 49 percent shared officers — or 49 percent members in common — and the posts cannot receive anything in return for donating.

- Posts indeed can donate to units of government, but they cannot donate to law enforcement agencies.

- Posts can pay honor guard members from the gambling fund, but no more than \$50 a day per person plus mileage reimbursement, regardless of how many ceremonies are performed in a day. It is wise for posts to retain funeral home bulletins in their records. The present maximum mileage rate is 58 cents a mile.

- Scholarships ought not be limited to or give preference to members of the posts and their families, and posts cannot discriminate based on race, gender, religion, national origin, marital status, disability or age.

- Posts can be fined if their officer information is not up to date. The CEO and treasurer cannot be the same name. Usually, organizations send updates around July 1, using forms LG200B and LG1015. If there is a mid-year change, send the update within 10 days.

- Bingo callers cannot play while working, but they can otherwise. However, that’s not the case with an electronic version.

- Anyone involved in the conduct of pull-tabs, tipboards or paddlewheels cannot play at that site. Conduct means selling tickets, redeeming winners, auditing games, making deposits and checking inventory. Technically, that means officers such as the CEO can play, but Cote noted it looks bad ethically.

- Checks must be signed by two active members and not the organization’s treasurer except for a situation of distress (such as a house burned down and the family needs shelter and clothing immediately), in which case only one signature is needed. The gambling checking account must be at a separate Minnesota bank, credit union or savings and loan



Attendance was good for the Mahnommen seminar.

than the post’s regular account.

- Gambling funds may be used to pay property taxes for the premises where the gambling occurs. In other words, typically, this means the funds can pay the taxes for the post but not, say, a campground the post owns across town.

- Gambling funds also can pay for utilities at the premises. If the post owns only a share of the building, the funds can only pay for up to that percentage.

- If a post wishes to donate but doesn’t know the precise amount, approval may be “up to” a set amount, then the actual amount is presented at the following meeting.

Cote urged people to continue their education online by taking the three classes at [www.mn.gov/gcb](http://www.mn.gov/gcb). They are: “New Statutes and Rules 2019,” “Sports Tipboards” and “What Every Pull-tab Seller Should Know.”

## Taps

**Altermatt, Harold**, 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died Sept. 16, 2019. He served aboard the hospital ship USS Hope and was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

**Amundgaard, Gerald**, 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died Sept. 18, 2019. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

**Arsers, John A.**, 93, Merchant Marine veteran of World War II, died Sept. 18, 2019. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

**Beiko, George P.**, 88, died Sept. 27, 2019. He was a member of Chisholm Post 247.

**Brueske, Roy N.**, 67, veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 6, 2019. He served in Company B, 2nd Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment in Germany. He was an armor crewman. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

**Elbinger, Richard James**, 78, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam era who served two years in England and two in France, died Oct. 10, 2019. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Fasching, Melvin “Mel,”** 85, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 1, 2019. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

**Ferguson, Ivan O.**, Navy veteran of World War II and Korea, died Oct. 19, 2019. He served as a communications technician. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**Fransen, John Clayton, Sr.**, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 8, 2019. He was a member of Milaca Post 178.

**Gustafson, Richard D.**, 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 20, 2019. He was a member of the Princeton Post 216.

**Hall, Cecil E.**, 91, Army veteran who served during the Korean War, died Oct. 10, 2019. He served on the executive board and memorial honor guard for Litchfield Post 104.

**Hamerlinck, Donald C.**, 90, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 5, 2019. He was a member of St. Cloud Post 76.

**Haney, Wallace “Wally” L.**, Army veteran of World War II and recipient of the Purple Heart for action in Okinawa, died Sept. 30, 2019. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**Harrington, Verner “Bud” J.**, 95, Navy veteran from 1942 to 1946 who served in the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea and the D-Day invasion, then in the Pacific Ocean by the end of World War II, died Sept. 29, 2019. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

**Hasara, Mark Andrew**, 67, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War who served 20 years and retired as a senior chief petty officer, died Sept. 15, 2019. He was a member of Round Lake Post 461.

**Haugen, Merlyn**, 69, Army veteran of Vietnam War, died Oct. 19, 2019. Haugen was the sole survivor of his platoon. He was a member of Argyle Post 353.

**Hemp, Sylvester “Buddy,”** 75, National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 22, 2019. He was a member of Middle River Post 444.

**Hess, Terrence “Terry,”** 76, 25-year Army Reserve veteran who served during the Vietnam era, died Oct. 17, 2019. He was a sergeant first class at retirement. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

**Hildestad, Arlan**, 83, Army veteran of 1956-58 who served as an intelligence specialist, died Oct. 4, 2019. He

was a member and past commander of Eyota Post 551.

**Hortman, James Allen**, 80, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 25, 2019. He was a member for over 50 years in Texas and most recently Coon Rapids Post 334, where he served two terms as vice commander.

**Jansen, Bernard J.**, 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 11, 2019. He was a member of Hamline Post 418 in St. Paul.

**Johnson, Charles F.**, 73, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 9, 2019. He served aboard the USS New Orleans, which recovered the astronauts aboard Apollo 14. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Johnson, Curtis**, 82, Navy veteran of Vietnam and serving on Coronado Island near San Diego, died Oct. 1, 2019. He also served in the National Guard. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**Johnsrud, Richard “Dick,”** 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam era, died Oct. 3, 2019. He was a member of Ashby Post 357.

**Julien Lloyd D.**, 85, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 14, 2019. He served as a military police officer. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

**Kaupila, Eugene**, 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Sept. 24, 2019. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

**Kelly, Thomas Willard**, 85, Army and Army Reserve veteran of the Vietnam era, died Sept. 20, 2019. He was a member of South St. Paul Post 481.

**Klicker, Dean C.**, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 22, 2019. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Lev, Richard Dale**, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 27, 2019. He was a member of Jackson Post 130.

**Matson, Quentin**, 73, Navy veteran of Vietnam, died Oct. 20, 2019. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Matz, Theodore**, 99, Army veteran of World War II, died Sept. 22, 2019. He was a member of Waseca Post 228.

**McCuskey, Harry A.**, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 16, 2019. He was a member and past commander of Cloquet Post 262.

**McNeil, Maurice**, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Oct. 17, 2019. He served as a meteorologist. He was a member of Glencoe Post 95.

**Nichols, David Wayne**, 71, Army veteran who served in the 82nd Airborne, died Oct. 11, 2019. He was a member of Nielsville Post 336.

**Nosie, Joe Robert**, 93, Air Force veteran who served in the Air Force during World War II, died Sept. 27, 2019. He was a member of Chisholm Post 247.

**Oevering, Lawrence J., Sr.**, 85, Army veteran of Korean War, died Oct. 6, 2019. He was a 31-year member of Winona Post 9.

**Preisinger, Richard J.**, 77, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 1, 2019. The airman first class was a supply troop and was stationed at Tachikawa Air Base in Japan. He was a member of Comrades of Valor over 30 years and past commander. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

**Prins, Alan Dean**, 70, Navy veteran of three years, with three months on SSBN-630 submarine, died Oct. 1, 2019. He was a member of Chandler Post 338.

**Ranney, David Thomas**, 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 8, 2019. He was a member and past commander of Wheaton Post 80. He played the bugle at many funerals.

**Reilly, Everett E.**, 79, Navy veteran of the Vietnam era who served on nuclear submarines as nuclear repair engineer 1962-1992, died Sept. 11, 2019. He served as Post 104 commander for three terms and served as District 7 oratorical contest chairman and a part of the Veterans Ritual & Memorial Squad. He was a member of Litchfield Post 104.

**Rohlik, Gregory “Greg,”** 66, Army veteran, died Oct. 6, 2019. He was a member of Wabasso Post 263.

**Ruesch, Larry**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 5, 2019. He was a member of Worthington Post 5.

**Schoenecker, Robert J.**, 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died Sept. 18, 2019. He was a 62-year member of Eden Valley Post 381.

**Shubert, Jeffery**, 66, Army veteran who served two years in Germany, died Oct. 13, 2019. He was a member of Cosmos Post 126.

**Sirovy, William Fay II**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Sept. 28, 2019. He was a member of Jackson Post 130.

**Spear, Byron Glenn**, 95, Army veteran of World War II, died Oct. 4, 2019. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Stratte, Alf K., Jr.**, 91, veteran of the Korean era, died Oct. 13, 2019. He was a member of Cambridge Post 290.

**Tucker, Lael Owen**, 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War. He died Sept. 20, 2019. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

**Verdict, James H.**, 81, Army veteran of the Korean War, died on Oct. 17, 2019. He was a member of Jackson Post 130.

**Weber, Harry A.**, 91, Army veteran of Korean War, died Sept. 22, 2019. He was a 58-year member of Eden Valley Post 381.

**Weckwerth, Frederick L.**, 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 17, 2019. He was a member of Arlington Post 250.

**Zarn, Henry “Hank” Edward**, 94, Army veteran who joined in 1945, served in the Philippines with the 7th Infantry Division in World War II and was with the occupational forces in Korea, died Sept. 1, 2019. He was a member of Lakefield Post 4.

### Corrections

**Marsh, Loren**, 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 22, 2019. He earned the Purple Heart and was awarded the Bronze Star. He was a member of Worthington Post 5.

**Meier, Francis**, 87, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 19, 2019. He was a past commander and school safety patrol officer of Worthington Post 5.

**King, Carl**, 94, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 17, 2019. He was a member of Worthington Post 5.

**Pederson, Jon Russell**, 69, Marine veteran of Vietnam, died Aug. 29, 2019. He was a member of Raymond Post 420 and was commander for 11 years.

# District Commanders

## FIRST DISTRICT

Dale Wellik  
Commander



Greetings to The American Legion Family from the mighty First District.

We are well into the new membership year. We are working the program, rallies and revitalization in the local legion posts armories and on college campuses and the 1982mn and 1982ad lists.

We have changes in eligibility and benefits some don't know about. Have a veteran service officer come and speak at your membership dinner, rally or have a special event for this to happen. Have membership forms and people ready to help you fill out the forms. Do not put them off if they are ready to sign up.

Veterans Day is real close. Many programs, event and dinners in your local areas to attend and support and honor all the veterans.

November 10, is the 100th birthday of the American Legion Auxiliary. Happy Birthday to all. Thank you for all of the support you give to the veterans.

The holidays are coming up soon. Support our deployed and their families.

Pray for all deployed troops whether here or over seas defending our freedoms. Veterans thank you for service.

## SECOND DISTRICT

Brad Pagel  
Commander



Greetings fellow Legion Family.

Veterans Day is almost upon us. Do you have a program that you put on or someone in your community does? If so, invite all the area veterans to your program, include them by doing a buddy check on them. All it takes is that one person to care and make them feel welcome. Ask them how they are doing, take the time to listen to them. As veterans, we all have been there, did that at one time or another. With the buddy check you don't have to just stop with Veterans Day, check on them every week, as that is all it may take for them to become an American Legion Family member if they are not one already. Moving forward towards the end of the year and the holidays coming up, this can be a very difficult time for some of them, invite them to a meal or social gathering. Show them who we are as Legion Family, and what we can do to help them. If we don't invest in ourselves and show others what we can accomplish, who is going to do it? Still Serving America.

## THIRD DISTRICT

Linda Dvorak  
Commander



Hello from the Thundering Third

Fall Conference is behind us. If you attended, please share what you learned with your posts. There is quite a bit of information given out at these conferences that the posts should be made aware of. There are updates on several of the programs.

One such item is the upcoming MyLegion.org training that will be started hopefully sometime in December. This will be a hands on training and will be held at various locations around the state. If anyone is looking to increase their knowledge on this program, watch for more details.

Oratorical is another program that the posts and districts should be working on now. The Department contest will be February 29, 2020.

As everyone has heard the Department Office is going through some major changes in personnel. Please be patient while everyone figures out their place in the office.

Veterans Day is fast approaching. Are you doing something special to honor the area veterans? Is your Post? Please keep all veterans in your thoughts and prayers, not just on Veterans Day, but every day.

## FOURTH DISTRICT

Joe Jansen  
Commander



Fellow veterans, the next 4th District wide meeting is scheduled to begin at 19:00 hrs. or 7:00 p.m. for those who have forgotten military time. The location will be at the Arcade Phalen Post 577 on November 13. Street address is 1129 Arcade Street. Please feel free to come and enjoy suggesting things we can do to grow the "Mighty Fourth." By now you should have seen the Vice Commanders (Area 1 is

David Dahl, Area 2 is Jeffery Proud, and Area 3 is Deon Ford) at your post meetings.

They are there to observe how your post interacts with the community it is physically located in and how your post plans events to help veterans in your community.

The Fourth District just finished the formal part of the revitalization effort at North St. Paul Post 39 last weekend. I say the formal part because many of us have lists where we called and spoke with veterans who asked us to send them a letter about the post in their area. So we have homework to do for follow up efforts. The Department headquarters even sent over two employees to assist our efforts. While I only had one positive transfer in I'm still working on a few. Others who were there or took their list home have reported better results.

If you can please join us on the 3rd Sunday of the month at the VA Medical Center at 1 p.m. in the meeting room just off the main rotundra. We then go up to the rooms and give the patients a few items and find out how the VA is treating them and wish them well.

## FIFTH DISTRICT

Andrew Rose Sr.  
Commander



We seem to linger at the bottom of the barrel, when it comes to signing up new members and membership renewals. As I said before this should only be a temporary condition.

Our membership revitalization is slated for November 7th, 8th and 9th, at Richfield Post 435. And we should see quite an increase in our membership. All Veterans are welcome to participate in our efforts.

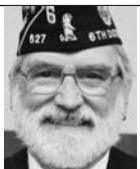
Post 5222 will be dedicating their Post and installing officers on November 14th at Cardinal Bar and Restaurant, 2920 E. 38th St., Minneapolis. RSVP to Commander Teresa Huberty 612-261-9844.

Don't forget about the Commanders Project, "Every Third Saturday."

And please don't forget what a hospital visit on 1st Sunday, means to our hospitalized Veterans.

## SIXTH DISTRICT

Paul Edwards  
Commander



Greetings to the American Legion Family.

One thing I have learned as I travel around the Sixth District attending membership dinners is that there are an amazing number of ways for people to make chicken taste good. I am also learning that there are an amazing number of great people in this district.

On the membership front, I see several posts who are already at 100% and several more who are at the 80-90 percent range. Keep up the good work and as you are recruiting, don't forget to talk about the LEGION Act.

The E-board approved the appointment of District Adjutant Susan Edwards, Sgt at Arms Jim Lucas, ALR Liaison Officer Leslie Kruft and Boy's State Chairman Don Smith. Thank you to one and all for stepping up.

We are having some good successes in the area of improving communication in the district by using direct email, a Sixth District Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MNSixthDistrict/>, and most recently, the establishment of a district website at <http://www.mn6thdistrict.org/>

At a recent District Executive Committee meeting, the district confirmed the district-level endorsements of Tom Fernlund for Department Commander and Susan Edwards for Department Chaplain for the 2020-21 term of office.

I want to take the time to wish the entire American Legion Family a Happy Thanksgiving. I hope everyone can spend the day with people you love and people who love you.

## SEVENTH DISTRICT

Dean Knutson  
Commander



The year is off to a good start with membership either staying steady or growing slowly. When we accept the responsibility of the office that we are asked to serve in, we need to remember that you do not serve alone in that position, but you have a team of officers to work with you. As we work for the good of the veterans within our community and the American Legion Family let us all work together and use the information that we get from each other to work for all of us. I have found it easier and easier to talk to people and ask them about The American Legion each time I ask. The key is just being able to start a conversation and

communicate to them the benefits of our great organization. Let us always remember to "Keep Veterans First."

## EIGHTH DISTRICT

Anne Koskinen  
Commander



Greetings from your Commander.

November being the month we celebrate all those men and women who wore the uniform of our Country, past and present; there are so many events happening for us to attend. Check with your school and community for times, and make it to as many as you can. Show them that Legionnaires are out there working with and for people. Let them know who we are, and keep our brand visible to the public.

Make visits to our older veteran friends in the nursing homes and care facilities. Show your love, concern for their welfare, and appreciation for their past service.

With the passage of the LEGION Act, members are encouraged to talk amongst your veteran friends to offer membership in the Legion now. We truly need these veterans to be among our ranks for their valuable insight.

Let me know when your Post is meeting, and I will try to attend meetings that I am able. I also encourage our rank and file members to contact me with suggestions and comments about Legion and veteran issues. There are many things going on, and up-coming. I'm sure the rank and file are interested and have some input.

Legionnaires are encouraged to attend Legion events, and especially regular Post meetings; greater attendance provides more context in discussions.

## NINTH DISTRICT

Lowell Philp  
Commander



Greetings from the 9th district.

I'd like to thank Al Zdon for his years of service as editor of The Minnesota Legionnaire.

Veterans Day is November 11th. Many posts will be observing this holiday. I hope that you can participate in honoring our veterans.

The information for Education Week should have been received. The dates are November 18-22. Your involvement is important.

Thank you to everyone in the 9th District for their efforts in the membership drive. We are over 65%. Our next cutoff of 75% is December 11th.

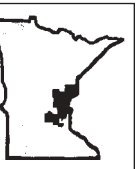
Our troops and their families, both here and abroad, remain in our prayers. Don't forget the veterans in our nursing homes. Recognize them and thank them for their sacrifices.

Keep our farmers in your thoughts and prayers as they try to salvage their crops.

Happy safe hunting.

## TENTH DISTRICT

Tom Allen  
Commander



Legion Family,

Another month gone by, get rid of the pumpkins and start hunting for the turkey.

First, I would like to thank Bob Locker 8 & 10 Vice Commander for the good information on membership at Fridley on October 19th. I learned a lot, I hope all who attended did also.

Thanks, Bob.

The Fall Conference was also very good the meetings, knowledge, camaraderie, and especially the food at the open houses.

The Veterans Day parade is Sunday the 10th of November at 1 p.m. starting at the library. The Veterans Day program is Monday November 11th at 1:30. Also looking for colors for the program.

The next gathering for our 10th district is November 16th at Milaca at noon.

Hope to see you all there.



# The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 20-1

President Mary Hendrickson

November 2019

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

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

## The President's Column

By  
Mary  
Hendrickson



It's hard to believe that November is here. The months since my installation have just flown by. I hope you got all the Halloween candy you wanted and are now looking forward to the upcoming holiday season and time spent with family and friends.

My October calendar was packed with many special outings and Auxiliary events. Our 100th Anniversary Committee under the leadership of Chairman Karla Otterness are hard at work planning special events to celebrate this milestone.

We had a long teleconference call in early October and lots of emails preparing for our special presentation at Fall Conference on Thursday night. The video on our 100 years of service followed by the trivia contest and Cupcake Party was well received by the members who attended. A special thank you goes out to Zandra Kessler who guided us "tech dinosaurs" through the audiovisual portion of our presentation.

I hope you noticed the announcement in the Unit Mailing about the American Legion Auxiliary 9 Pin "No Tap" Bowling Tournament. It will be held on Saturday, November 16th at Sundance Bowl in Maple Grove and is another 100th Anniversary celebration event. Karla Otterness and Pam Hoshal have a special day planned with cash prizes, door prizes, food specials, etc. I hope my doctor will allow me and my new hip the chance to participate.

In this month when we spend some time remembering what we are thankful for, I'd like to send a special thank you out to my husband, Carl, who has been my chauffeur for many of the events I've attended this Auxiliary year.

A perfect example would be Saturday, October 5, when he dropped me off at Rosetown Unit 542 for a Luncheon/Style Show, roamed around St. Paul for almost three hours, then picked me up for our trip down to a Membership Dinner at the Waseca Post. He drove us all the way back to Cloquet after the conclusion of a very filling dinner and fun program.

Another Membership Dinner in October found us having a great evening at Brainerd Post 255. We appreciate the opportunity to greet old and meet new American Legion Family members.

**ATTENTION UNITS:** At their October 16 committee meeting, the American Legion NEC authorized all Auxiliary units to make a word change in our Preamble effective immediately. Instead of "during our association with the great wars" we will now say, "during our association with ALL WARS."

I'd like to thank Auxiliary members from the Department of Minnesota who drove all the way to Sioux Falls, South Dakota for a one day Mission Training session on Saturday, October 19th.

The session was led by several National leaders of our organization including National Vice President Kathy Daudistel from the Department of Kentucky. Minnesota was also represented by a large group of our Juniors who attended the Junior Meeting.

I heard lots of boisterous singing coming from their meeting room and I know they really enjoyed the hotel's water park.

Juniors are our future. It's wonderful when they have an opportunity to meet and work with Juniors from other departments.

I'd like to wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving. Count your blessings, not your problems.

Happy 100th to the American Legion Auxiliary on November 10th. Celebrate.

## Silent auction at conference raised over \$4,300 for AEF

The 87th annual Fall Conference was held in Mahanomen on October 25-26. The Conference was hosted by the Bagley American Legion Family #16. Joanie Krantz and her crew ran our annual Fall Conference Silent Auction which the proceeds goes to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. This is an Auxiliary program where the Auxiliary helps their members in times of emergencies. Thanks to the entire American Legion Family for making this a success. Our donations exceeded \$4,300. Heartfelt thanks for our American Legion Family for supporting our program.

Please let the representatives know if you would like to volunteer at any of the facilities. It is a very rewarding experience.

### SECRETARY SANDIE'S NOTES

Wow – Fall Conference was so great (except for the casino part). President Mary did a wonderful job leading us through our programs. The Chairmen all did a great job with their boards and program information. A few years ago I told Sandy Fredrickson, when she was our President, that we needed to start doing something fun. We started getting some live music in conjunction with the hospitality tables and this year surpassed any fun night I have been at.

It was so wonderful to see our entire family, along with the Voluntary Service Directors, have the best time ever. If you ever get a chance to see the Connie Lee Band, do so, they are tremendous. Even Adjutant Randy displayed his singing skills. It was a little bittersweet for me as this was my last Fall Conference as your Executive Secretary – never fear, I will be here for a while yet. You can't get rid of me that easy.

I want to put a plug in for my own Post 79 in Montgomery. Shorty and I will be bartending for the last time at our annual Thanksgiving Bloody Mary and homemade Tom and Jerry celebration on Thanksgiving morning. If you are around Montgomery, stop in – we have such a good time and if you have no dinner plans, Darlene and the gang will be having a Thanksgiving dinner starting around 1 p.m.. Call the Post for reservations and costs. We also have a "Turkey Bingo" night and this will be on Friday, November 22 starting at 6 with a meat raffle and 7:00 the bingo begins. Come have some fun in Montgomery.

My heart is a little (lot) broken as my two brothers Randy Tesdahl and Al Zdon will be retiring very soon – I will miss them both so much. We really have a great time working as a team. I look forward to working with Tim and Mike as well.

### PEARL HARBOR RALLY

The Pearl Harbor Membership Rally will be held at the Rosetown Memorial Post 542 on Saturday, December 7th, with turn in from noon until 1 p.m.. Lunch will be at 1 and the program will follow. The Auxiliary is still using these get-togethers as a Membership Rally so make sure and bring many along.

### CHRISTMAS GIFT SHOP

The Department Office and the Hospital and Home Representatives want to give a big thank you to the Units and Posts that have contributed funds to our Gift Shop program. Again this year, the veterans at the four (4) VA Medical Centers and the five (5) Minnesota Veterans Homes will be selecting gifts for their loved ones through our Gift Shop program. About 2,000 veterans participate in this program. A huge change this year for the Gift Shop is the amount that was approved by the Department Executive Committee to spend on our Veterans at the Gift Shop.

The Gift Shop committee has been busy shopping for the gifts and would appreciate your Unit's financial support of this program. Please include a generous cash donation in your Unit's annual budget and send it to the department office earmarked Gift Shop. Let's support our own Auxiliary programs first.

Donations to the Gift Shop are accepted all year. You may use Poppy funds and Gambling funds for this program. The Gift Shop is available to all veterans who are in the various facilities at the time of the Gift Shop including regular day care patients. The Gift Shop is chaired by Vida Bacon and her Committee Member is Linda Deschene. They are both giving much of their time to make this a very successful event.

### GIFT SHOP DATES

Our representatives have announced the date(s) of their Gift Shop at their respective facility.

Fargo VAMC	December 2
Minneapolis VAMC	December 3 & 4
Sioux Falls VAMC	December 2 & 3
St. Cloud VAMC	December 2-4
Fergus Falls VA Home	December 9
Hastings VA Home	December 10
Luverne VA Home	December 12
Minneapolis VA Home	December 4 & 5
Silver Bay VA Home	December 12



**NOT ALL WORK** — Zandy Kessler and Mary Kuperus having some fun at the Conference.

## Walker endorsed for Alternate NECwoman

American Legion Auxiliary Warren Unit 27 and the Ninth District Executive Committee endorsed Jean Walker for Alternate NEC for the 2020-2022 Auxiliary years.

She has been an active member of Warren Unit 27 for 26 years. Her eligibility is through her late father, Joseph Penk a World War II veteran. She is a Paid Up For Life member.

At the unit level, she has held many positions including President. On the

District level she has been District President, 2nd Vice President, chairman for several of the committees including, Membership, Americanism, Education, Finance Chairman, Past President Parley, Legislation, District Advisor and History.

On the Department level, she has served as chairman for Memory Book, Americanism, Leadership, Girls State Counselor, Membership, VA&R, Legislation,

Northwestern Division AEF Chairman, Department President and this year Girls State Chairman and the Northwestern Division Education Chairman. Jean has attended many conventions.

She and her husband, John, have been married for 27 years and live in Warren. They have one son. Jean is retired and John is a dispatcher-jailer with the Marshall County Sheriff's Office. Jean is very active in her community.



**JEAN WALKER**



It was audience participation time as the head table held up placards during the Leadership Committee report by Mary Kuperus.

## October was Auxy Education month

By Pam Gades, Department Education Chairman

The Education Program promotes the American Legion Auxiliary's role in providing quality education for children and adults through classroom activities, literacy programs, scholarship promotion and support education beyond high school, with a special emphasis on children of veterans and servicemembers.



PAM GADES

### National Programs Action Plan

(Please watch for detailed information and reminders on these in the Unit Mailings).

Enhance respect for the sacrifices of our military heroes among Veterans in Community Schools programs at local schools. Details were included in the September-October Unit Mailing.

Promote American Legion Auxiliary scholarships, and award local scholarships at the department and unit levels. Scholarship applications are available for download on the national website ([www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships)). Do not forget the Department of Minnesota Education Scholarship as your unit prepares your annual budget. Please budget funds for this, to support eight \$1000 scholarships.

Support Give 10 to Education, American Education Week and Teacher Appreciation Week.

Assist and support veterans pursuing higher education and vocational education.

Assist and support military children with educational opportunities.

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Join the facebook group: ALA Education Program ([www.facebook.com/groups/1489034401420831/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/1489034401420831/))

## Past President's Parley shares ideas

As we celebrate our 100th American Legion Auxiliary Anniversary let's involve our Past Presidents of our organization. Our Units, districts, and department all have Past President's. This is the year to take pictures and tell your stories. You may be surprised as to hear some insight from those who helped build this organization. You may gain new ideas from their old ideas.



SANDY FREDRICKSON

As we know the purpose of the Past Presidents Parley is to focus on these members as mentors and have them share their knowledge. Past Presidents are here to help build a stronger future for our organization and make a difference in the life of our organization and members. We are not here to tell you how to do it.

Focus on President Mary's theme, "Remember, Honor, Serve."

The important things the Parley does and represents are: knowing about the Department PPP Scholarship, enter in the unit Woman of the Year contest, and the Salute to Servicewoman Award.

Every unit should have a parley. If not, try something new this year and establish one. You may be surprised of members that haven't participated in a long time. They may enjoy hearing from you and you may open new doors.



President Mary Hendrickson welcomes SAL Commander Dave Vulcan to the convention.

## Busy months ahead for VA&R Program

The next two months are very busy for Minnesota's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Program. November 11th is Veterans Day. Are you planning something to honor and thank the veterans in your community for their service to God and Country? Our Gift Shop elves, Mary French (651-455-1841) and Lynn Olson, have been very busy shopping. Distribution will be at North St. Paul on November 18th. Please give Mary a call if you wish to help with the distribution, extra hands are always welcome. The dates for the Gift Shops at the Homes and Hospitals are:

Fargo VAHCS - Dec 2

Minneapolis VAHCS - Dec 3 & 4 - they have set up on Dec 2

St. Cloud VAHCS - Dec 2, 3, 4

Minneapolis Veterans Home - Dec 4, 5

Hastings Veterans Home - Dec 10

Luverne Veterans Home - Dec 12

Silver Bay Veterans Home - Dec 12

Fergus Falls Veterans Home - Dec 9

Sioux Falls VAHCS - Sioux Falls - Dec 2 & 3

Extra elves are always appreciated at the facilities. Hope

you can join one or even all of the Gift Shops. December is Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation month. National is encouraging us to plan an event to do something to make a difference in the lives of our veterans and their families. The sewing patterns will be published in the next Unit Mailing, something new is being added. The patterns will be labeled as to which facility uses them. Storage space is limited at all of the facilities, please contact the Rep to be sure they are in need of items before using your precious time to make the items.

Linda Kropuenske



LINDA KROPUENSKE

October 25, 2019, Membership				
District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year 10/29/18
One	4,177	2,133	51.07%	2,176
Two	4,191	2,351	56.10%	2,530
Three	4,064	2,264	55.71%	2,370
Four	624	405	64.90%	356
Five	603	383	63.52%	345
Six	5,393	3,082	57.15%	3,382
Seven	3,369	1,756	52.12%	1,779
Eight	1,363	744	54.59%	687
Nine	3,618	2,136	59.04%	2,261
Ten	4,304	2,316	53.81%	2,214
1982	178	141	79.21%	106
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31,884</b>	<b>17,711</b>	<b>55.55%</b>	<b>18,206</b>

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<p><b>The Monuments of Washington D.C.</b>  <b>May 15 - 19, 20</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Seasons Tour Director Tammi Haney</li> <li>• Roundtrip Delta flights</li> <li>• 4 nights accommodations</li> <li>• 8 Meals: 4 breakfasts, 4 dinners</li> <li>• Guided Memorial and Monument Tours</li> <li>• Tram ride through Arlington National Cemetery</li> <li>• Admission to George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Garden</li> <li>• Two full day guided tours of Washington D.C.</li> <li>• WWII Memorial, Capital Hill, Embassy Row, Korean War Veterans Memorial, The Smithsonian, Martin Luther King Jr National Memorial, Lincoln Memorial</li> <li>• Luggage handling</li> <li>• <b>\$1,599.00 per person double occupancy</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Rhine River Cruise</b>  <b>June 17 - 27, 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Seasons Tour Director Tammi Haney</li> <li>• Roundtrip Delta flights</li> <li>• 2 nights accommodations at Superior hotels</li> <li>• 7 night southbound cruise on the Vista</li> <li>• All meals and entertainment onboard the Vista</li> <li>• All transfers to and from the airport, hotel and ship</li> <li>• All sightseeing/entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary</li> <li>• Luggage handling on the ship</li> <li>• <b>\$6,899.00 per person double occupancy</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Route 66</b>  <b>June 19 - 26, 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Seasons Tour Director Cindy Peterson</li> <li>• Deluxe motorcoach transportation</li> <li>• 7 nights accommodations</li> <li>• 15 Meals: 7 breakfast, 5 lunches, 3 dinners</li> <li>• Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum</li> <li>• Lincoln Home National Historic Site</li> <li>• Meramec Caverns</li> <li>• Will Rogers Memorial</li> <li>• National weather Center</li> <li>• Luggage handling</li> <li>• <b>\$2,199.00 per person double occupancy</b></li> </ul>

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