



## Auxiliary, SAL now have access to Legionnaire

National Commander Denise Rohan, when she took office this year, emphasized her theme of "Family First."

"We need to 'purple up,'" she told the national convention in Reno. And she picked purple, the color you get when you blend all service branches' colors together, as her color for the year. It's not because she's a Vikings fan.

The Minnesota Legionnaire will be Purpling Up beginning this month by offering electronic subscriptions to all Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion members.

Members of the Auxiliary and the SAL simply need to go to the Minnesota Legion website, mnlegion.org, to sign up. Those interested can click on Legionnaire Publications

in one of the blue boxes, and then click on "Sign up to receive the Legionnaire in PDF format." An ID number will be needed.

The opportunity to join the entire Legion family together with one newspaper was approved by the Legionnaire Board of Publications at its annual meeting.

"The board felt it was more important than ever to unite the Legion Family, and make sure everybody has access to the Legionnaire," said Al Zdon, editor and manager of the newspaper.

"The technology these days to provide a newspaper electronically has opened some doors for sharing the news,

events calendar, columns, and feature stories with everyone in the family," Zdon said.

Up to this time, the newspaper was only available to dues paying members of The American Legion, to unit officers in the Auxiliary, and to those who subscribed for \$10 a year.

"The American Legion Auxiliary members of the Family are very excited about this new opportunity to receive the Legionnaire," Department President Donna Arends said. "I have heard often, for Auxiliary members who have recently lost their Legionnaire, they are missing this monthly news-

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## Legion National appointments have been announced

National Appointments by Commander Denise Rohan have been announced involving Minnesota Legion members.

The following list only includes new appointments and reappointments, but not those whose terms are ongoing.

Minnesota will have several chairs and vice chairs in the 2017-18 appointments including:

Mike Bredeck, Madison, will chair the Committee on Youth Education.

Marland Ronning, Maple Grove, will chair the National Security Commission Liaison Committee.

Chuck Kruger, Byron, will chair the Conventional Armed Forces Committee.

Bill Goede, Plainview, will chair the National Guard and Reserve Forces Committee.

Peggy Moon, St. Joseph, was appointed vice chair of the Committee on Children and Youth.

Donald Walser, Hutchinson, will be the vice chair of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

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## Future of Bog now moves on to 'Plan W'

As a giant bog lingers off the shore of the Legionville Safety Patrol Camp on North Long Lake near Brainerd, there was Plan A, Plan B, Plan C and many more plans to deal with it.

But now it appears there will be Plan W.

Wait.

Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl said in the end there was no way to coordinate moving the bog this year before the lake ices over.

"We're going to delay until spring, shortly after the ice out," Tesdahl said. "We're hoping for a lot of snow this winter and a high lake level. And a southerly wind."



The floating bog encroaching on Legionville Camp has its own tamarack forest.

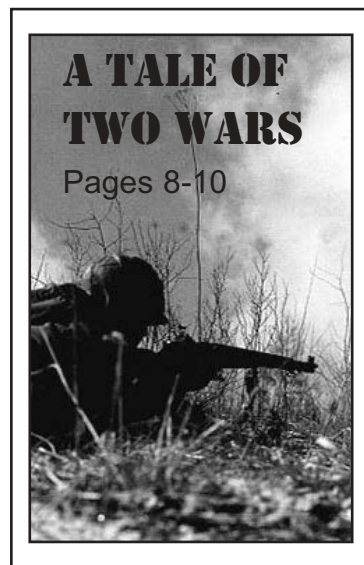
The bog became a problem in October when it broke loose from its home adjacent to the wetlands portion of the Legionville property. It floated across

the Merrifield Bay and then floated back again.

This time it took hold directly in front of the Legionville camp, blocking access and isolating the

swimming and canoeing beach. In the meantime, it had destroyed several docks on the lake.

To keep it from mov-  
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## Christmas in General Washington's Army

By Al Zdon

James Hackett burrowed deeper under his new blanket.

Not long before, the sergeant had told the men to go back to their tents and try and get some rest because tonight they would be marching.

It was Christmas day, 1776, and Private Hackett and his comrades were camped on the west side of the Delaware River in Pennsylvania, just across from Trenton, New Jersey.

Despite the new, warm blanket, which the troops had received just the day before, Hackett couldn't have been more miserable.

Most of his friends that he had fought beside for a year were gone. Some of them had come to the end of their enlistment and some had simply packed up and gone home. Many had gotten sick and never came back. Some were buried near battlefields across the north.

But it was more than loneliness that troubled Hackett. It seemed to almost everybody except maybe a few officers that the war was lost.

General Washington's Army had lost nearly every battle and had been pushed out of New York and clear across New Jersey. The spirit that had seized him and caused him to enlist was long gone. It seemed the ragtag American Army, which he was so proud of, really couldn't defeat the professional soldiers from England and Germany.

He was cold, he was tired, he was hun-

gry, he was demoralized – and it was Christmas.

Hackett reached into his satchel next to his cot and pulled out a piece of paper and an envelope. These two items and his Bible had been his main source of strength over the last few days.

The first item was just a scrap of a newspaper where he had written down some words that Gen. Washington had his officers read to the men a few days earlier. They were written by a fellow named Thomas Paine and his essay was called "The American Crisis."

In Hackett's small but clear penmanship, he had written the opening words of the pamphlet from where it had been posted in the camp. "These are the times that try men's souls: The

summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

Hackett sat up and read further. "Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph."

He had read those words a dozen times in the last few days. At first they had buoyed him up, but now the reality of the cold hard winter of defeat was dragging him down again.

Hackett put the scrap back in his bag, and opened the letter. It was from his wife of just over a year, Mary Elizabeth. They had been married only a few weeks before he had left their farm in Virginia and headed up to Boston to join the Continental Army. She had promised to visit him, but war and distance had kept them

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## Christmas Fiction





**SOLDIER'S WISH** -- Members of the Rosetown Post 531, Fourth District and Department staff gathered to help Soldier's Wish present Sheila Lacher, center in green, with her wish. Soldier's Wish is a Tulsa-based non-profit that grants wishes to veterans in need. Lacher, a Marine veteran of Gulf War era, recently had cancer surgery, and the wish will pay her co-pays, fly her mother in for a month, and provide a car during her recovery. To the left of Lacher is 2nd Lt. Meghan Sykora representing the Marine Recruiting Command. Soldier's Wish has worked closely with The American Legion through the years.

## Auxiliary, SAL can subscribe to Legionnaire

Continued from Page 1  
 paper. "This is wonderful news," Arends said. "The Auxiliary is once again proud to be a part of our Family and proud and thankful for our veterans." Shawn Davis, Detachment Commander of the Sons of the American Legion, said commu-

tion is the key. "Communication has been one issue that has come up again, and again as long as I have been a member," Davis said. "And it hits a nerve with every part of the American Legion family I talk to. The tools change, but we have to keep trying to share our message in every medium we can.

"Having the Legionnaire be shared with the entire American Legion Family, communicating what we have done and are doing, to the entire family will not only result in a more knowledgeable family member, but a stronger family working together," Davis said. Past National SAL Commander Joe Mayne agreed.

contributes \$28,000 to the Legionnaire. The rest of the funding for the \$300,000 annual budget for the newspaper comes from the Legion membership dues and advertising sales. The newspaper comes out monthly. It dates back to 1920 when it was first published as the Hennepin County Legionnaire.

"I believe that this effort will have greater benefits than we know. Greater communication is not the end in itself. Its the benefits of best practices. Seeing how Squadrons are helping the Posts and Veterans and communities state-wide and replicating those efforts to serve better is the win," Mayne said.

Department Commander Mike Schaffer said the opportunity to reach more members of the SAL and Auxiliary will keep us all better informed and tied together. "And it's at zero cost to you," Schaffer said.

Only an electronic version will be available. Those who sign up will receive a PDF format version of the Legionnaire as an email each month. Those who are not Legion members and want a paper copy mailed to them will still have the opportunity to subscribe with the \$10 covering postage and printing.

In addition, in the future, the SAL will increase its presence in the Legionnaire from a column by the Detachment Commander to a half page. The Auxiliary will still have its two full pages each month.

The Sons of the American Legion, at the Fall Conference, voted to allocate \$4,000 a year to the Legionnaire to help keep the non-profit newspaper financially strong.

The Auxiliary annually

## New secretary hired to run the Legion bowling tourney

Cari Lamb, Minneapolis, has been hired as the new secretary for the Minnesota American Legion Bowling Tournament.

Lamb will take over for John Torma, who ran the tournament for several years.

The paperwork for the tournament should be out soon. Check with your local post as the mailings are sent to the posts.

Her contact info: Email, crlmb74@gmail.com; Phone, 612-968-4839; Address, 3217 19th Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55407.



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## Help for veterans and families



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

<p><b>Posts of Distinction (\$5,000 and up)</b></p> <p>Merton-Dale Post 80                  North St. Paul Post 39                  Rudolph Priebe Post 172</p> <p><b>Posts of Patriotism (\$1,000 to \$2,499)</b></p> <p>American Legion 113                  Austin Post 91                  East Grand Forks Post 157                  Ecklund-Holmstrom Post 117                  Everett H. Hale Post 68                  Frank Lundberg Post 282                  Hamline Post 418                  John Bridges Post 15                  Nelsan-Horton Post 104</p> <p><b>Supporting Posts (Below \$1,000)</b></p> <p>Alvarado Post 35                  Beatty-Humphries Post 323</p>	<p>Bigelow Post 496                  Billie Brown Post 627                  Campbell-Williams Post 258                  Charles Borak Post 45                  Dan Patch Post 643                  Dovin-Wilcox Post 313                  Edward B. Cutter Po                  Elwood Monroe Swenson 445                  Eugene Earley Post 121                  Foster-Bernhardt Post 373                  Glenville Post 264                  Gopher Post 440                  Gust F. Holden Post 253                  Hackensack Post 202                  Harris Post 139                  Joseph A. Gates Post 78                  Kaleb E. Lindquist Post 24                  Kanthak-Matthies Post 441                  Kramer Berg Post 507                  Le Center Post 108</p>	<p>Lee Goldsmith Post 201                  Lee-Osborn Post 59                  Madison Lake Post 269                  Mc Veigh-Dunn Post 60                  Melvin Daskam Post 38                  Monticello Post 260                  Odegaard-Quade Post 401                  Peter Leuze Post 420                  Prudent Van Risseghem 395                  Public Safety Post 449                  Richard Howard Ferrell 46                  Richmond Post 292                  Silver Star Post 428                  St. Paul Post 8                  Truman Blakesley Post 432                  White Bear Lake Post 168                  Wm. T. Lewis Post 12                  Wold-Chamberlain Post 99</p>
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We ask posts that want to give to make a check out to the National Convention Corporation of Minnesota and send to MN American Legion State Headquarters : Third Floor, Veterans Service Building: 20 W. 12th Street, Room 300A : St. Paul, MN 55155-2000.

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

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





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**COMMANDER'S COLUMN**

By Mike Schaffer



Thanksgiving is by now past. I trust it was a good one for you as well, with lots of family and friends as Nina and I had. Welcome to the Holiday season Legion family. The holiday season is upon us ready or not, so here's wishing you and your family a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy, and Healthy New Year from my wife Nina and myself.

Do you have deployed soldiers in your community? How about having your post adopt them for the Christmas Season by giving them the fixings for a Christmas dinner, then see to their needs as much as possible while the soldier is gone on deployment. It's soldiers taking care of soldiers pure and simple.

How's the membership coming at your post? It's time to finish signing up those last few renewals from your membership rosters, hope you got all those snowbirds renewed before they headed south for the winter, if not best hurry. Let us not forget that if you want your post to grow and continue into the future you'll need to have new members, and yes they are out there. Should you see someone wearing something that indicates they are a veteran, ask them if they are a Legionnaire, then be prepared to sign them up in your post.

We could not have accomplished the things we did in the past years on behalf of all veterans active duty or discharged veterans if it wasn't for your being a Legionnaire.

# Mail Call

## 1944 Christmas Poem

To the Editor

Attached is a poem written at Christmastime in 1944 by a soldier who was a family member of Karel House a member of Brainerd American Legion Auxiliary Unit 255.

Karel asked me to forward the poem to you on her behalf for possible publication in the "Legionnaire" magazine.

Susanne Fussy  
Brainerd

## The Night before Christmas

By MSG Joe Franklin 1944

Twass the night before Christmas and all thru the Camp Uncle Sam's soldiers were tired and damp From the pace of a long distance double time march. We're tired of left or right flank "March."

They say "Keep them busy so minds will not roam To sweet little wives and children left home. But no matter how busy or tired that we are You can see by our eyes that our thoughts are afar.

While the rest of the world sings "Good will to all men," We are learning the fine art of bayonetting them. So as one of these soldiers I must march along 'Til all of us "humans" can sing the same song.

We'll be home next Christmas if things come out right And the choice of good people shall rule over might. May Jesus please answer the sweet baby prayers And fill up with Daddies those big empty chairs.

So next Christmas we'll kneel and softly sing them "Peace on Earth and good will toward all men.

## Promise Keepers

To the Editor:

After World War I, soldiers, sailors and Marines fought, were injured and came home. After World War I, veterans soon discovered promises made were not always promises kept. For far too many there was a street corner to sit at, a tin cup, and a sign: "Help Me, I'm a Disabled Veteran.

Since that time, your American Legion has worked to ensure promises made are promises kept – even though at times it takes a "little while" to ensure what was said is delivered.

Through decades of fighting for what was promised and needed, we have learned the hard way that those promises are often not delivered out of the kindness of politician's hearts; it is delivered because our member's vote.

I often tell prospective new members that if they like the benefits they have earned and they want to see the next generation of Veterans keep the same benefits – they need to join The American Legion. They may be younger, and may

There are plans being made by the Commanders Task Force (the heads of the nine recognized veterans organization in Minnesota), and our Legislative Committee and others to come up with a list of veteran legislative issues we as veterans organizations want to pursue during this upcoming session of the Minnesota legislature starting in February. There are plans being made for a "Day on the Hill" this coming March, with plans being put into motion for transportation to bring you to the Capital for that event. We need you there legionnaires, please keep mid March available. More on a specific day when it and all plans are finalized.

The Rehabilitation Committee is charged with overseeing that the Veterans Homes and VA Hospitals are doing a good job caring for the veterans staying there. They visit each place during the year and recently they were at the Sioux Falls VA and reported that the VA Hospital was upgraded from a four star facility to five which is the highest rating I believe. The wait time for an appointment went from 8.44 days to 6.40 days and the number of female veterans this past year increased from 1200 to 1640. They've recently completed renovations to the Woman's Clinic. They have two providers each in this Woman's Clinic and Primary Care area.

Among the many places I've visited this past month was Little Falls Post 46. They held a "Post Everlasting" ceremony that honored their deceased members. Included was the families of the deceased veteran. The ceremony transferred their deceased members from this past year to Post Everlasting, it was a beautiful ceremony to see. I mention it because it's the first time I'd ever seen or been part of such a beautiful way to give a final farewell to post members.

You've heard several times what my Commanders project(s) are for the year, namely Boys State & Veteran Suicide Prevention. Funds are slowly coming in with close to \$3,800 to date. When your Post makes their final donations for the year please consider my projects to donate to, after all our organization was founded in part to care for those that "Bore the battle" and the care of the children left behind. Please be as generous as possible Make those checks out to: Minnesota American Legion Foundation Fund 82.

not have a lot of time due to jobs, family and a hectic schedule, but it does not take a lot of time nor money to join and be counted in the ranks of American Legion members.

While we like and need active members, the bottom line is this: We need members. All of the functions we do work together to give veterans a reason to join us. Legislative accomplishments help membership recruitment efforts; new members help legislative efforts. Community involvement helps membership recruitment; new members can help make community activities better because many hands make little work.

Luis Campero  
Legislative Chair, 10th District American Legion

## Boys State

To the Editor

I hope the Boys' and Girls' Staters from your area have had the opportunity to present at a post meeting. Continuing with the run-down of a week at Boys' State:

Wednesday's schedule is basically filled with time at the State Party Conventions. The conventions are run by the delegates, with advisement when necessary from Counselors. An election of Chairman of the party is first on the agenda, followed by appointments needed for running the convention. Planks from the County Convention are discussed and approved or removed.

In the evening, elections take place for County Auditor, County Treasurer, District Judge, County Recorder, Court Administrator, County Attorney, Sheriff, and 3 County Board Members. Counties are made up of two cities.

Also elected are 3 State Senators and 6 members to the House of Representatives from each city.

Thursday's schedule was presented last month.

Friday's events include more business in the State Legislature, as well at county board meetings. To start the day, however, voting for the State offices occurs with results presented just prior to lunch. Excitement builds as the winners of each office are presented. Some years it seems as the top vote-getters follow a party line. Other times it might be a county's candidates may draw the most votes.

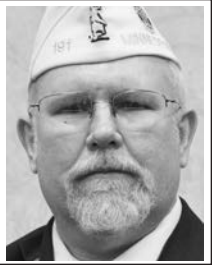
Following lunch, the legislators get back to action on their bills. They push the pace, hoping to get as many bills passed as possible for the Governor's approval or veto. Occasionally there is time to try to overturn a veto. Most bills are passed on common sense, rather than party lines.

At the county level, the boards act on local issues, with the possibility of trials also taking place. After supper is a rousing concert put on by the band and choir, both practicing daily for this week-concluding display of talent. The newly elected governor and the governor just ending his term give speeches to the body of Boys' Stater, parents, and distinguished guests. An alumnus of Boys' State gives the commencement address.

Neil Kruse  
Spring Lake Park

## Chaplain's Corner

By  
Ralph Schneekloth



December and the end of 2017 are fast upon us. I hope that all had a great Thanksgiving, and remembered all who are in harm's way and pray that all come home safe. Also, let us continue the good works that we should be doing and ensure those in need get help and especially in the holiday season, a meal.

Let us also pause and remember, as President Roosevelt said, "The day that will live in infamy" the attack on Pearl Harbor, 07 December, 1941, as it is a critical moment in our nations history. Let us also remember all the battles of all the wars, as each deserve their spot as well.

Merry Christmas to you all, happy Hanukkah to the Jewish members, and have a nice Kwanzaa to any who might celebrate this day. For myself Advent and Christmas time are very special times of the year. Advent, the time of preparation, prepare your heart for the Lord. The celebration of Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus and reconciling man to God through his sending of the savior of the world. He came first as a babe in a manger, but the next coming will be on a cloud full of glory, and at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow.

The American Legion service to God and country program has three spiritual objectives:

Regular public worship: Many Americans believe in God yet reject or neglect public worship. Freedom of religion is not freedom from religion. The American Legion encourages all families to attend and participate in public worship of their God, that they may enjoy a closer relationships with Him and each other. Regular worship also provides the spiritual strength necessary to resist the daily temptations of greed, lust, hate, selfishness, anger, and conceit. The American Legion respects the personal relationship between individual and his or her God. However the objectives of organized religion in this instance and those of Americanism coincide. The Legion and organized religious groups walk side-by-side in promoting the public worship of God, the author of all rights and liberties.

Daily family prayer: It is often said, "The family that prays together stays together." Families are the most basic building block of society; in fact they are the only natural unit of society. Prayer is the foundation of a partnering of faith, hope, tolerance, and mutual love, sustaining and keeping the family strong. We should remind parents that nothing spiritually enriches the life of the family like the habit of regular family prayer.

Religious training of children: Youth who know God and are trained in the tenants of their faith will grow to appreciate, understand and respect more fully such principles of law, government, and justice. On the other hand, if they are not taught the truth's of the supreme authority, God, they cannot be expected to seek His divine counsel and guidance throughout their lives. Again Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah and a good Kwanzaa, and whatever other holidays that are out there that I may have forgotten, with the help of the Almighty Lord may 2018 be better than 2017 was.

We should also end this year with prayers for the nation, that we may have leaders who are good and morally upright people, humble before the people and the Lord, knowledgeable but not prideful, true servants of the nation, not of themselves.

# The Minnesota Legionnaire

Official Publication of and Owned Exclusively by  
The American Legion, Department of Minnesota

Al Zdon, Editor

First published in 1920 as the Hennepin County Legionnaire, the Minnesota Legionnaire is now in its 98th year of publication. It is published monthly by The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, Room 300A, 20 West 12th Street, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000. Periodicals postage is paid at St. Paul, MN, and at additional mailing offices. The Legionnaire is a member of the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the National American Legion Press Association.

**SUBSCRIPTION:** \$10 for non-members. Members receive the Legionnaire as part of their dues.

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# What's Happening

## Legion Bowling Tournament

The 71st Minnesota American Legion Bowling Tournament will be held at Sundance Lanes in Dayton, hosted by Osseo Post 172.

The tournament will run from Feb. 24, 2018, to April 8. Those eligible are Legion members, SAL members and Auxiliary members. All must be over 18.

Entry forms have been sent to all posts in Minnesota, and interested bowlers should obtain them there. For more information, call Bowling Secretary Cari Lamb, 612-968-4839 or email: [crlmb74@gmail.com](mailto:crlmb74@gmail.com).

## St. Ansgar party

The annual Christmas Party at the St. Ansgar Legion Post will be held Saturday, Dec. 9, with doors open at 8:30 a.m. It is free for all, and there will be cookies, coffee, a polka band, a pizza lunch, and "share a story" beginning at 10 a.m. For more information, call Phil Fleischer, 641-736-2346.

## Twins Game in July

The annual Minnesota American Legion Family Day at the Twins will be held Friday, July 13, at Target Field. Tickets will be in \$21 plus fees and will be in the Diamond View section. Commander Mike Schaffer will throw out the first pitch and Legion members will be doing the American and Twins Territory flag raisings.

Tickets will not go on sale until late February or early March, but mark your calendars.

## Incentive Program rescinded

A membership incentive program that promoted a sweepstakes, announced by the national American Legion, has been rescinded and terminated.

The Legion's legal department ended the program

# Taps

**Turek, Dr. Arthur F.**, 95, Army veteran of World War II, died Oct. 25, 2017. He served in the Philippines as a dental officer for 17 months. He was a past Third District Commander, 1957-58, of the Minnesota American Legion and he was a Department Vice Commander, 1960-61. He was a member of Le Center Post 108.

**Wolter, Alfred**, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Oct. 9, 2017. He served in the 27th Portable Surgical Hospital in the Philippines. He was a member of Litchfield Post 104.

**Lee, Donald V.**, 71, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 18, 2017. He was a member of Litchfield Post 104.

**Hinrichs, Louis Bernard**, 93, Marine veteran of World War II, died Oct. 24, 2017. He was with the 5th Marine Division and served on Iwo Jima, where he saw the flag being raised. He was a member of Clara City Post 485.

**Rosin, Kenneth**, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 16, 2017. He was a member of Gaylord Post 433.

**Dietz, Alvin**, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 26, 2017. He was a member of New Prague Post 45.

**Bartusek, Elmer J.**, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 14, 2017. He served at Iwo Jima. He was a member of New Prague Post 45.

**Solarz, Herman Paul**, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 11, 2017. He served in Manila in the Philippines. He was a member of Holdingford Post 211.

**Kochtop, Phillip**, 70, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 10, 2017. He was a member of Hoffman Post 393.

**Hagen, Elmer L.**, 90, Marine Corps veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Nov. 2, 2017. He was a member of Hoffman Post 393.

**Triggs, Gerald Adrian "Joe,"** 73, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 15, 2017. He served on an ammunition ship in the 7th Fleet. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Henry, Frank J.**, 89, Army National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 17, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Berg, Gordon A.**, 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 25, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Lorentz, Robert T.**, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 26, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Klyve, Harry S.**, 98, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 4, 2017. During the war, he made five beach landings and served at the Battle of the Bulge. He earned two Purple Hearts, and spent three months in an English hospital. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Altman, Louis T.**, 90, Merchant Marine veteran of World War II and Army veteran of the Korean War, died

because the sweepstakes portion would have to comply with all 50 states' laws on sweepstakes. Some states allow such a program, and others do not.

The program was promoted in the Dispatch newspaper, and in the national magazine.

## Drop-in Clinics

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans is sponsoring two upcoming legal drop-in clinics. The clinics have legal and professional staff available to deal with housing, employment, benefits, expungement, wills, debt collection and family law. The clinics are:

-- Tuesday, Dec. 12, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis, Flag Atrium Balcony Room.

-- Wednesday, Jan. 10, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. the Depot-Great Hall, 506 W. Michigan Street, Duluth.

## Rally Time Changes

The Pearl Harbor Rally at Duluth Post 71 on Dec. 2 will have time changes for events. The membership turn-in will be from 2-3:30 p.m. and the dinner will be at 4 with the program to follow.

## Round Table

The next World War II History Round Table will be held at the Historic Fort Snelling Visitor Center auditorium at 7 p.m. on Dec. 14. The topic will be "Victory in the Battle of the Bulge."

Authors Martin King and Michael Collins, who wrote *Voices of the Bulge*, will present and will be joined by veterans of the battle.

## Keys Missing

If anyone has found a set of keys with a dog tag #204291263, please send them to David Gabriel, 37373

Hanson Road, Bigfork, MN, 56628.

## Veterans Appreciation Ride

The 10th annual Veterans Appreciation Ride, sponsored by the Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association and MSEAF will be held Saturday, January 13, at Paynesville.

All veterans are welcome to enjoy a day of snowmobiling, including one night's lodging and meals. Bring your own sled, or, if you don't have equipment, there will be snowmobiles, helmets and clothing available.

Pre-registration is required. Call 866-811-7669 or email [mnveteransride@gmail.com](mailto:mnveteransride@gmail.com). The website address is [mnavet-snowmobileride.org](http://mnavet-snowmobileride.org).

## Pearl Harbor Remembrance

A Pearl Harbor Remembrance Program will be held at the Historical Fort Snelling Visitors Center auditorium at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 7. It will be the 76th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II.

This year's speaker will be Bill Lund of KSTP. The program is sponsored by the Visitor Center, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and the Fort Snelling National Cemetery Rifle Squad.

Refreshments will be served following the program.

## Flag History Talk

TRUST VETS will present "240 Year History of the American Flag" by former West Pointer Richard Middleton at the Century College East Campus in Mahtomedi.

The event is open to the public, but RSVPs are required because of limited seating.

To register, go to [trustvets.com](http://trustvets.com) and click on events.

The organization connects the public to veterans in business. For more information, email to [info@trustvets.com](mailto:info@trustvets.com).

Nov. 8, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Van Der Pol, Alden**, 76, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 11, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Hedum, Arthur G.**, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 9, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Ulrich, Herbert**, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 9, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Knutson, Gerald T.**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 20, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Johnson, Howard D.**, 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 9, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Schou, Donald D.**, 93, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Nov. 2, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Cochlin, Raymond J.**, 87, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 11, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Westurn, Richard D.**, 85, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 11, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Strunk, George Jr., "Judd,"** 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 10, 2017. He served in Korea for two years. He was a member of Jaynesville Post 281.

**Dietz, Alvin**, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 26, 2017. He was a member of New Prague Post 45.

**Thomas, Martin M.**, 80, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 11, 2017. He was a past chaplain, commander and member of the executive board of St. Cloud Post 76.

**Brown, Joseph**, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 21, 2017. He served on a submarine both in the Atlantic and the Pacific. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

**Datlag, Albert Weseloh**, 96, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 5, 2017. He was pilot who flew off aircraft carriers and participated in the Battle of Okinawa. He stayed in the Naval Reserve for 20 years and was a flight instructor. He was a member of Hutchinson Post 96.

**Hoglo, John**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 2, 2017. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**Truesdell, Almond**, 97, Navy veteran of World War II, died Nov. 2, 2017. He flew F6F Hellcat fighter planes during the war. He was a member of New Ulm Post 132.

**Walquist, Leonard**, 72, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 29, 2017. He was a member of New London Post 537.

**Storey, Loy W.**, 96, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Nov. 10, 2017. He was a radio operator. He was

a member of Jeffers Post 401.

**Kettner, Robert Wayne**, 73, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 24, 2017. He was a member of Pine Island Post 184.

**Dynda, Gary Frank**, 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 3, 2017. He served in Italy. He was a member of Lowry Post 253.

**Schmidt, Roger F.**, 83, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Oct. 29, 2017. He served in Germany. He was a member of the firing squad of Holdingford Post 211.

**Lonchar, Gordon "Gojko,"** 91, veteran of World War II, died Nov. 6, 2017. He was a member of Chisholm Post 247.

**Rustad, Stanley C.**, 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died Oct. 21, 2017. He was a member of Waconia Post 150.

**Wussow, Kenneth M.**, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 10, 2017. He was a member of Millerville Post 527.

**Stoll, Louis W.**, 86, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 25, 2017. He was a member of Dent Post 148.

**Lewis, Steven R.**, Army veteran of the Grenada/Lebanon War, died Oct. 6, 2017. He served in the 82nd Airborne. He was a past commander of member of the color guard of Roseau Post 24.

**DuFault, Jerome**, 84, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 30, 2017. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**Becker, Royce E.**, 82, Army National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 26, 2017. He was a member of the honor guard for Ellsworth Post 196.

**Wendt, Gerald A.**, 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 15, 2017. He was a member of Zimmerman Post 560.

**Kahnke, Alvin**, 90, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 18, 2017. He was a member of Janesville Post 282.

**Ufkes, Delbert LeRoy**, 86, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 19, 2017. He was a member of Hector Post 135.

**Telander, Henry**, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 14, 2017. He was a member of Mora Post 201.

**Roberts, Richard**, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Nov. 15, 2017. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

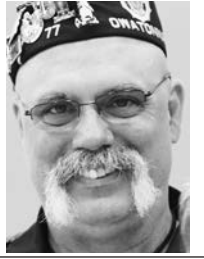
**Rose, John**, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 16, 2017. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

**Beavers, Harvey B.**, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 21, 2017. He was a member of Granite Falls Post 20.

**Jackson, David**, 85, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Oct. 27, 2017. He was a corporal. He was a member of Motley Post 124.

## American Legion Riders

By Chuck Stone  
Department Director



Greetings American Legion Family.

I hope everyone had their fill of turkey and fix'ins on Thanksgiving, but most of all you shared the day with family and friends. Hopefully you had a chance to take part in an event on Veterans Day to honor Veterans. Due to the countless events, I was only able to take in a couple as most seemed to be happening the same day and almost the same time.

The 2018 Legacy Ride Committee held their first meeting this past month. A number of items were discussed. A few phone calls are being made to a few posts that have showed interest in hosting our Kick-off party, Stand-down party, an overnight or post visit. We have many openings, so if your post would like to see the Riders please let Sully or Dianne Sullivan, Paul or Jody Hassing, Shawn, Jill, Lee or Joanne Davis, or myself know. Our next meeting will be in mid January so you have plenty of time to bring it up at your December meeting. Even if you are remotely interested and need more information, please give one of us a call. We would love to hear from from you.

As many of us are getting ready to celebrate Christmas and New Years with family and friends, keep those out on the front lines protecting our freedom and way of life in your hearts and prayers. Also remember there are many homeless veterans and families with very little that could use a little Christmas cheer. I am reminded of just how giving one can be by a recent Toys for Tots auction. One individual seeks donations of goods which in return are auctioned to raise the much needed monies to help those families get a toy for their child or children when otherwise the children would go without. Yes, we truly live in a very blessed country.

From my family to yours, may you have a merry Christmas and a happy new year. And as always, keep the chrome side up and the rubber side down.

## National Appointments

Continued from Page 1

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

Roger K. Olson, Hutchinson will be the vice chair of the National Convention Resolutions Assignment Committee.

Tom Schottenbauer, St. Louis Park, was appointed the vice chairman of the Conventional Armed Forces Committee.

Other appointments include:

Al Zdon, Mounds View, was reappointed to the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee.

Jeff Olson, Green Valley, AZ, will be the National Commander's representative on the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

Steven Kleinglass, North Venice, FL, will be a consultant on the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

William Barbknecht, Battle Lake, will serve on the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

Floyd Kumerow, Lambert, was reappointed to the National Security Committee.

Randy Tesdahl, Elk River, will serve as a member of the Convention Commission Advisory Board.

Richard Janssen, Richmond, will be the National Commander's representative on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Curt Norenberg, Roseville, will be a consultant on the Aerospace Committee.

Don Hayden, Le Center, will be a member of the Internal Affairs Commission.

Many Minnesotans were named to American Legion councils including:

Americanism Council – Phillip Bellefeuille, Callaway; James Copher, Mound; Mark Dvorak, Le Center; Sylvan Fix, Brownsville; Wayne Gilbertson, Zimmerman; Carl Hendrickson, Cloquet; Richard Wog, Willmar.

Media and Communications Council – Michael Ash, St. Paul; Wayne Hammon Jr., Le Roy; Robin Picray, St. Paul.

National Security Council – Don Amundson, Blue Earth; Richard Gosse, Wabasha; Robert Haugen, Moorhead; Steven Johnson, Moorhead; Jim Kellogg, Taopi; Jim Munson, Burnsville; Lloyd Ricker, Dawson; Mike Schaffer, Fulda; Wilson Spence III, Duluth; Wes Thompson, Sartell; Calvin Van Horn, Morris.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Council – Bill Brockberg, Worthington; Tom Conway, Argyle; Denise Milton, Bagley; Dr. Carl Moon, St. Joseph; Orville Olterness, North Branch.

Veterans Employment and Education Council – Bruce Kottom, Buffalo; Darrel Redepening, Fridley.

## Sons of The American Legion

By Shawn Davis



As I write this, Mother Nature is trying to decide if it should be fall or winter. For the rest of us, the calendar year end is in sight. We are all busy with preparations for the holidays: shopping, family gatherings, and work. The work of the Sons of The American Legion (nor the rest of The American Legion Family) is not done.

Sons from the Detachment of Minnesota are still busy with meetings, fundraisers, preparing holiday surprises for veterans, families, and communities. From Wayzata Squadron 118 holding their broasted chicken dinner as part of a fundraiser for fallen Wayzata Police Officer Mathew's Family, to Golden Valley Squadron 22 running the kitchen and meal during Turkey Bingo at their Post, to Montevideo Squadron 59 donating money to their local Shop With A Cop program.

The work and good deeds that the members, Squadrons, and Districts of the Detachment of Minnesota do is varied, and widespread. Its positive impact is felt not only within the Post, but also throughout their communities. But so much of the good that we do (and this goes for the entire American Legion Family) goes unsung, unshared beyond the immediate post family.

That needs to change.

One of my themes this year has been communication. I am proud to announce (if you have not read it already in this newsletter) that the Legionnaire will now be available as an email subscription to all members. We have many tools to communicate with, and the Legionnaire is an important one that covers the entire State of Minnesota, and with this change will be able to be shared with the entire family. If you want a hard copy subscription mailed to you, it is available at a cost of \$10 per year. Share this within your districts, within your Squadrons, Posts, Units, and Chapters. Let us make sure that every member of the family is connected and in the know.

Additionally, at Fall Conference, it was voted on that the Detachment will contribute to the cost of the Legionnaire, and will have a larger presence within the publication as a result. But that means we need to know what the Districts and Squadrons are doing. So look around, consider what you are doing and share it.

As for my Commanders Project, thank you all who have donated so far. Consider a year-end donation to my Commanders Project since it covers one of my other themes (Education) through The American Legion Legacy Scholarship, and the ROTC Scholarship, as well as helping each of us out with The American Legion Family Hospital Association.

And my other theme, membership. The numbers from November 15th are here, and we are doing well. We are ahead of last years pace, and seeing great results from the additional recruiting being done. Thank you. It humbles me to hear from those of you who share when you have been able to recruit 5 new members into the family. If we could all do that, think of the difference we could make!

So I will sign off for this month by wishing you all the warmest seasons greetings for what ever you celebrate. Keep up the good work, and remember, 5 for Minnesota! Merry Christmas!

## Plan W for the bog

Continued from Page 1

ing again, the North Long Lake Property Owners Association staked the bog down so that the next winter wouldn't start a new journey around the lake.

It's not tiny. The bog is about three football fields in size. It's made up of plant materials and even has a line of tamarack trees running across it.

The plan for next spring, Tesdahl said, will be to pivot the bog to the northeast, pulling it away from the camp, and then attaching it to the shoreline not far from where it had started its wandering.

"We hope to pin and cable it into place."

Plans now call for help from the Evinrude Corporation which would supply the boats and horsepower to swing the bog around. Evinrude could film the project and use it to promote the company's products.

The Lake Association has promised volunteers to help with the project.

Tesdahl said the Department of Natural Resources has been very cooperative, and will leave the permit on the bog open until the problem is solved. "They just asked us to keep them informed what we're doing."

In the meantime, Tesdahl simply asks that people stay positive about the bog and the project to move it. "Everyone in this community should share a spirit of unity and goodwill. That will really help."

In other news from Legionville, bids have been received on upgrading the facility's dining hall. Money had been authorized from the Minnesota Legislature to use on the

## Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By Jeremy Wolfsteller



### Nothing is forever, or is it?

It's April 1917, America is entering into WWI, joining this mission is a man that will change the face in which America takes care of its veterans once they return home. Harry Colmery from Braddock, Pennsylvania, was determined at a young age to succeed. That motivation provided for a path to receiving a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1916. Shortly thereafter Colmery was admitted to the bar association after moving to Utah in 1917. His career in law was shortly lived because of his entry into the Army Air Service in 1917 as an instructor and pursuit pilot during WWI. He was later discharged in 1919 and returned a short time to Utah to start a family and then moved to Topeka, Kansas to continue practicing law.

Harry's time in the service made an impact and inspired him to advocate for his fellow veterans. Using his legal knowledge, Colmery joined the newly established American Legion at the local, state and eventually serving as the National Commander in 1936. After time as the National Commander, Colmery returned to Topeka and remained an active member assigned to the Legion's National Legislative Committee before, during and after WWII. Between WWI and WWII he began working on changing regulations that would allow non-service connected veterans to receive care at Veteran's Hospitals.

One of his highest priorities and concerns during WWII was how to assist the millions of veterans that would be returning to the workforce at the end of the war. In fear of returning back to the great depression, Colmery became involved in debates on this issue. While he was at the Washington Mayflower hotel for five months he began to hand-write on hotel stationary what would become the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, more popularly known as the G.I. Bill of Rights. Congress would draft legislation used from Colmery and had its adoption in 1944 signed by then President Franklin Roosevelt. In 1947, it is estimated that veterans accounted for 49% of college students.

With the September 11 attacks on the United States, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan started, which deployed approximately 2.5 million Americans. Many of these deployed were young men and women who would need a good education benefit when they returned home. Recently with the help from The American Legion, the signing of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 was signed into law by President Donald Trump. This legislation is truly the most comprehensive educational benefit to be signed into law.

There were many changes made but I'm just going to share some of the most prominent ones. First off, for those who ever served their country, you would know there has always been an expiration date on your GI Bill. An example, Vietnam veterans had 10 years from separation to use their benefit before it expired; Post 9/11 veterans had 15 years before their GI Bill expired. Now for any veterans who left active duty after January 1, 2013, have an education benefit that will never expire. I personally think this was long overdue.

Another change will allow those Reservists who were entitled under the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) and lost it due to it expiring are now entitled to the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Now for some offsetting the Government did to pay for these changes are in the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance, which changed from 45 months to 36 months of entitlement which goes into effect for those who enroll after August 1, 2018. Another offset will reduce the amount of Basic Allowance for Housing stipend enrollees receive while attending an institution of higher learning. Prior to these changes (BAH) was based off DOD's BAH rates of an E-5 with dependents, now they are called "DOD's reduced basic housing allowance for monthly housing rates".

All in all these changes to the GI Bill were to entitle more service-members and allow for maximizing the use of the benefit. For more information on the Forever GI Bill visit, <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/jwolfsteller@mmlegion.org>

building, and the bids include such work as heating and air conditioning, replacing the roof, buying a new freezer, refrigerator and other kitchen equipment, and doing a new floor.

The Minnesota Department of Administration must approve the bids before it will release the \$230,000 allocated for the project.

Legionville is a full-service youth camp that, in cooperation with the Minnesota State Patrol, provides school crossing training and other safety training for kids. The Minnesota AAA is also a major sponsor of the camp.

# Christmas in General Washington's Army

Continued from Page 1

apart.

"Dearest James, my love and my strength. I hope God and General Washington are keeping you safe," he read, the words pretty much memorized although he had only received the letter a few days earlier.

He read again about how things were at home. It had been a good harvest, helped out by James' father and younger brothers taking over his duties on the farm.

"I cannot tell you how much I miss you," Mary Elizabeth wrote, "and how much I'm looking forward to the completion of your enlistment at the end of the year. You've been gone too long, and our new nation will have to do without you. I may have to come up to get you, just to make sure that you come home and don't have any notion of re-enlisting."

Hackett winced at the words. He was torn, ripped up by the decision he must soon make. Nearly all his friends that he had joined with had been killed or had gone home. Most of the Virginia men he talked to everyday were dead set on going home on January 1st, the end of their enlistment.

But Hackett wasn't so sure. He wasn't a quitter. He hadn't given up everything – his farm, his family, and his beautiful bride – just to give up before the job was done. But right now, hunkered down in his tent, with the war seemingly lost, he thought going home might be the only sane thing to do. And he missed Mary Elizabeth so.

He put the letter away and began to get ready for parade and the evening meal. It might be their last hot food for some time. They had been issued three day's rations for their haversack. Each soldier had also been issued a new flint for their musket. "That's one great Christmas present," Hackett thought to himself, shaking his head.

At 4 p.m. the troops were turned out for evening parade. Each man was given 60 rounds of ammunition for his musket and told they were going on a "secret mission."

The men marched eight abreast down to the ferry landing, and were told to keep absolutely silent. A steady drizzle had been falling, but as the sun went down the rain turned to sleet and then to snow.

Hackett and his comrades clambered aboard a large boat that had Durham Iron Works etched on the side. It was a flat-bottomed boat that had been used to haul iron across the river. It was propelled by men with long poles.

Hackett noticed as the men boarded that even the musicians had been issued rifles for this mission. It was a sign that the generals thought this might be a tough outing.

Most of the soldiers, including Hackett, could not swim. The crossing of the river went smoothly for a while, and then the boat began to be rocked by large chunks of ice floating down the river. Hackett watched as an officer in an adjoining boat was knocked into the water, but quickly fished out, wet and shivering.

By 3 a.m., the men had been assembled on the far bank. Now they had to march nine miles south to Trenton to try and arrive before dawn and surprise the Hessian troops occupying the city. It was hoped that the German soldiers had spent the night celebrating Christmas and would not be ready for a surprise attack.

Tramping the nine miles in the dark seemed to go quickly, and the activity kept him warm. Hackett was one of the fortunate ones who still had boots, ragged as they were. Many of the men had simply wrapped rags around their feet.

The path through the snow was dark red with blood.

About a mile from the city, the troops attacked Hessians at one of their outposts. Hackett watched Gen. Washington himself gallop by on a horse, leading the attack.

The Americans pushed their way into the city as the enemy fell back slowly, returning the fire, moving from house to house. But the Continentals moved swiftly and blocked all the exits from the town. The Hessians were trapped, and had to fight.

Three Hessian regiments formed up for battle, and even tried to counter-attack, but were quickly driven back by the American fire power.

Hackett was on the north side of Trenton and was directly in the way of the final Hessian attack. The enemy managed to recapture their cannon. Hackett and five others were ordered to retake the artillery pieces.

The musket balls were whizzing by and slamming into houses nearby as Hackett crouched low and ran toward the cannons. About 75 feet away, he dropped to his knees and fired his musket at the group of Hessians protecting the cannons. He thought he saw one go down.

And then he was off running again, yelling as he went. As he and the others approached the artillery, the Hessians turned and ran. Hackett and his comrades quickly turned the cannons around, and within minutes they were being fired back at the Hessian position.

The cannon balls broke the enemy resolve and they began to scatter. General Washington, who seemed to be everywhere, was once again beside the men lifting his



*The Battle of Trenton* by Hugh Charles McBarron Jr. of the U.S. Army Center of Military History

sword and yelling, "March on, my brave fellows, after me!" The battle was soon over.

The Continentals captured a large store of ammunition, muskets and other goods and brought them back across the Delaware.

The officers announced at parade the next day that there had been over 100 Hessian casualties and nearly a thousand had been captured. There had been just two American deaths in the battle, and both from frostbite. Five Americans had been wounded including Hackett's fellow Virginian, James Monroe.

Hackett was glad to be back in his tent, but his comfort was soon disturbed by a corporal seeking him out, yelling his name. Hackett emerged from his tent and told the corporal who he was.

"You'd better get down to headquarters right now. There's an officer who wants to see you."

Getting summoned to headquarters was a scary prospect, but Hackett hustled to the stone house where the officers stayed.

"Ah, Hackett," said a young lieutenant. "Just the man we wanted to see."

Hackett looked at him inquiringly.

"First of all, your conduct at the battle has been duly noted."

"My conduct, sir?"

"Yes, when you and the others recaptured those cannons, it helped turn the tide of the battle. It was a brave act. Your sergeant has recommended that you be promoted to corporal."

Hackett was surprised. "Thank you, sir."

"But that isn't the reason we called you down here today, Hackett. We have a much more important reason." The lieutenant had a gleam in his eye.

"Sir?"

"Yes, Hackett, it seems you have a visitor. It seems that she's come all the way from Virginia in a snowstorm. Mrs. Hackett will you please come out."

From the other room, a beautiful young woman stepped out. Hackett, who the day before had charged a battery of enemy cannons without hesitation, now nearly fainted. "Mary Elizabeth!"

The two embraced, although somewhat formally with the lieutenant looking on. Hackett could not take his eyes off his wife.

"Now, Hackett, I'm going to give you a pass for the rest of the day. You take your wife down to the tavern and get her a good meal and whatever else. But we're going back across the river tomorrow, and we're going to need some brave corporals to lead the way."

James and Mary Elizabeth walked arm in arm through the camp and down the road toward the tavern. The questions were fast and furious, interspersed with a kiss along the way, as they caught up on a year's worth of being apart.

At the tavern, they sat staring into each other's eyes across two hot cups of coffee.

"James," she finally said. "I told you I would come up here to get you. Your enlistment is done. You've done your duty. You must come home with me."

Hackett stirred uneasily in his seat. He grasped her hand.

"Mary Elizabeth, if you would have asked me that question on Christmas, I don't know what I would have said. But don't you see? We just won the battle, we've proved that we can stand up against the English and their Hessians. Maybe we don't have boots or warm clothes or enough of anything, but we did it. We're going to win this war."

She smiled, but her voice was firm. "You've done your duty. You've fought for your country. You're my hero. But now is someone else's turn."

Again, Hackett thought for a long moment before responding.

"I don't know how to explain it to you. But this war has really just started, and we've got a long way to go before that Declaration of Independence means anything. I don't want to be a summer soldier. I love my country and I need to do what I need to do. And it's killing me to know that we have to be apart."

Mary Elizabeth waited a long time and then smiled. "Of course I knew you were going to say that. Don't you think I know the man I married? The last thing anyone could call you is a sunshine patriot."

"I will wait for you as long as it takes, and you must always know that I love you and support you and yearn for you. James Hackett, you must give us a free country we can raise our children in."

"Oh, Mary Elizabeth, you're the best Christmas present a man could ever have."

# A TALE OF TWO WARS

*Art Gruenberg did something not too many Marines did. He was a China Marine, then a prisoner of war for nearly all of World War II. He lost an eye in a Japanese prisoner camp, but still re-enlisted in the Corps. In Korea, serving in the famous Fox Company at the Chosin Reservoir, he was wounded by a grenade, but chose to go back to his unit rather than go home.*

By Al Zdon

It might be hard to imagine even for history buffs these days what it was like to be captured at Corregidor in the opening months of World War II, to spend two and a half years in captivity in the Philippines, to travel on a “hell ship” to Japan, and to work as a slave laborer in a Japanese coal mine.

It’s also hard to imagine what it was like to be member of Fox Company, one of the most decorated Marine units in the Korean War, as it held off thousands of Chinese at the Toktong Pass near the Chosin Reservoir to allow over 8,000 trapped Marines to escape.

Art Gruenberg doesn’t have to imagine those scenes. He can remember them. He was there.

He may be the only Marine who ever was a Japanese prisoner during World War II and later fought in one of the most crucial battles of the Korean War.

When a listener to Gruenberg’s tales observes that he must have had incredible grit to have survived those trials, he only smiles.

“Naw, I’ve never been a tough guy.”

□□□□□□

Arthur H. Gruenberg spent the first 16 years of his life growing up in Manhasset, New York, a small town just east of New York City on Long Island.

From the civilized East, the family then moved to the wild West, buying a ranch in Colorado.

“We had 238 acres and 10 white-faced Herefords. It was a lot of work. I had to round up the cows every day, clean the barn and help with the milking.”

Gruenberg’s father got sick in the late 1930s, and his son quit his education to help keep the ranch going. By 1940, as a 19-year-old, Gruenberg was well aware that a draft was going on.

“I didn’t want to be drafted, so I tried to get in the Navy, but they wouldn’t take me. Then a buddy and I went down and signed up for the Army. They told us we’d be sent to artillery training in Texas, and then they turned down my friend because he had high blood pressure. I wasn’t happy about either of those things.”

Gruenberg was sent down the hallway to be sworn in, but instead he told the officer he was done with the Army, and he went home.

A week later he signed up with the Marines. “I got my draft notice right then. The Army guy must have turned my name in, but I was already in the Corps. And not long after that I heard from the Navy. Now they wanted me.”

Training at San Diego was brief, and he soon got his orders. “My platoon was selected to go to the Asiatics.”

He was soon on a Navy transport, the USS Chaumont, on his way to the Far East. “I think it took about 60 days to get across. We stopped at Pearl Harbor, Midway, Guam, the Philippines and finally Peking and Shanghai.”

Gruenberg was assigned to the 4th Marine Regiment expeditionary force, about 2,000 strong, as a China Marine. The regiment’s job was to protect American lives and property in China. “We helped out with the international police force there.”

He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, A Company. “We did guard duty mainly, and once a week we did a five-mile hike in the morning. Our trucks had quarter-inch steel plating on them. It was good duty and we lived like kings. I spent most of my free time at the Navy YMCA or the foreign YMCA swimming. I loved to swim.”

As his year there went on, the Americans noticed how aggressive the Japanese were getting. “We stood guard on the Su Chon Crick, and the Japanese were on the other side. Then one day, the Japanese took over the bridge completely and they were in position right next to us.”

Gruenberg said he had no personal animosity toward the Japanese, and had grown up in New York knowing several Japanese families.

On Nov. 27, the troops were taken to the harbor to be moved to the Philippines. “There was no room for us on the transport, so an American freighter had to come and get the rest of us. All I had was a shelter half and my blanket. We were in an open hold with no cover, and we nearly froze.”

As the ship headed south, though, the weather improved, and by the time it got to Olongapo in the Philippines, it was warm.

Gruenberg’s main memory of those few days was that of being very, very sick. “I volunteered to try out a new vaccine for typhus. Instead of protecting me, I came down with it full blast. My temperature got up to 105 and a half degrees.”

He was taken to a Filipino dance hall that had been converted into a hospital. “I was there when they told us the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. They didn’t tell us how bad it was. It was an eerie feeling, especially when you’re so sick.”

It didn’t take long for the war to come to the Philippines. “The next day the zeroes dropped bombs all around the dance hall, but they didn’t hit it. They couldn’t move me, so



they just put mattresses on top of me and on the sides to protect me.”

Gruenberg had to get well in a hurry, and he accompanied his mates as they first moved to the Mariveles Naval Base on the Bataan Peninsula and then to the fortress Corregidor.

“Just as we landed there, here came the Japanese bombers.”



**ART GRUENBERG**  
In the Marine Corps during World War II



**ART GRUENBERG**  
At home in Eden Prairie

He was assigned as a communications man working at the command post under a water tower outside the Corregidor tunnels.

A major problem for the Marines and everybody else on Corregidor was lack of food. "We got one meal a day, because that's as often as the Marines wanted to gather the men together because it was too dangerous with the shelling. I can tell you it was an inadequate amount of food. And then the Japanese across the bay cut off our water pipe, so we had no fresh water.

"I went out one day and climbed to the top of a mango tree. If the Japanese had shelled right then, I would have been gone. I picked a half a gunny sack of mangos and brought them back down. An officer took the sack from me and took them down into the tunnel. I never even got to eat one of them."

Bataan fell on April 9, resulting in the infamous Bataan Death March, but Corregidor hung in there for another month.

The constant bombing and shelling resulted in vast clouds of choking dust around the Marine positions. "One day it was so bad I just couldn't breathe so I put on my gas mask just to survive. An officer really chewed me out for that, but in a nice way."

In early May, Gruenberg was called into the commanding officer's office. "He gave me a letter that I was to bring to General MacArthur. He told me to take no chances, and that the letter had to go through, and it had to be personally delivered to MacArthur.

"I went down the hospital tunnel, and then into Malinta tunnel where the command center was. When I got there I asked where Gen. MacArthur was, and they pointed at a tall officer across the room. I went over and handed him the letter and he snapped it out of my hands."

Gruenberg realized at this point, that the tall officer was not MacArthur, but was Gen. Wainwright who had taken over after MacArthur had escaped on a PT boat.

"I realized I had not followed orders. Wainwright read it and didn't ask any questions. Of course I hadn't read it, but I assumed it said that our outposts were falling.

"Wainwright called for us to stack arms and surrender."

When the chaos of the surrender had settled down, the Marines were moved by boat to Manila and then put on a train to Cabatuan, the home of a notorious group of prisoner camps. Gruenberg was sent to Camp 3.

"At first the camp was guarded by old Japanese soldiers, and they were very friendly. Well, they couldn't have friendly guards, so they were soon all replaced."

Gruenberg remembers a Filipino guerilla attack on the camp one night. "The Japanese retaliated by killing all the civilians who lived in the area."

Later, he was transferred to Camp 1. "This was the worst camp. I think there were 6,000 prisoners there and about 3,000 died. It was made up mostly of the guys who had been on the death march, and they were in bad shape."

The food consisted mainly of rice or a watery rice soup. "Now and then they let us kill a water buffalo. The Japanese got the good parts, but we all got some meat for a few days."

Gruenberg's job was to go out into the forest a mile or two every day and cut wood for the cook stoves and haul it back.

As time went by, probably because the diet was so poor in vitamins, Gruenberg developed serious eye problems, so serious that he was sent to the eye ward at the camp's hospital. There were 40 or 50 other prisoners suffering from eye problems.

"There was an Army doctor there and he said he only had enough Vitamin A, which is what I needed, for one man. So he gave it to a guy who played guitar for the other prisoners. I guess entertainment was important."

Gruenberg's condition worsened so that even the least amount of light was extremely painful.

He finally came under the care of another doctor. "He was a Jewish doctor, Dr. Bloom. He was very good. I had already lost the sight in my left eye, but he saved my right eye."

Gruenberg said another part of the hospital was called the Zero Ward, because the chances of anybody leaving that ward alive were zero. One of Gruenberg's friends, a B-17 mechanic named Richard Clark got diphtheria and was sent to the Zero Ward.

"When they tried to haul him to the grave, they found out he was still alive. They brought him back to the hospital and asked me to take care of him. He got better little by little. I fed him, and I taught him how to walk again.

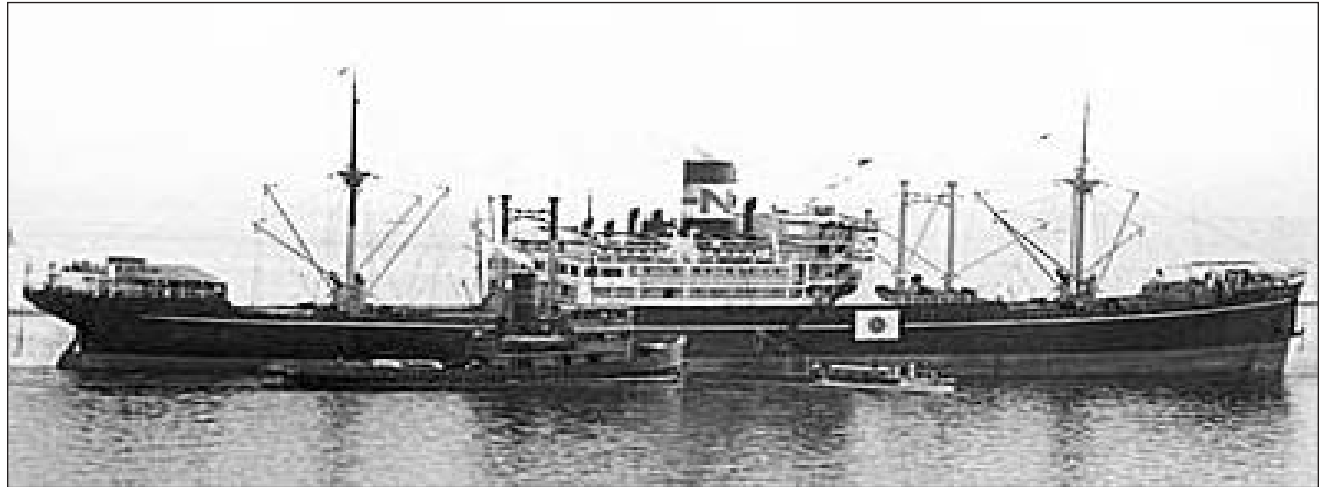
"I saw him after the war, and he had become a test pilot for the Army and helped develop their helicopter program."

As soon as Gruenberg's good eye was stabilized, he was sent back to work, this time working a garden patch for the Japanese. "They told us never to eat anything, but I found I could steal some sweet potato shoots. When you boiled them up, they were full of everything good under the sun."

One time Gruenberg was ordered to pick some okra. "I guess the guard didn't like the looks of me. He started yelling and screaming and hitting me. I almost lost my cool, but I'm glad I didn't because that would have been the end of me. If you touched a guard, the commander would behead you."



Drawn by a prisoner, this sketch gives some idea of the conditions at one of the Cabatuan POW Camps.



The Nissho Maru, a Japanese freighter, was one of what came to be known as "hell ships." The ships carried Allied prisoners from the Philippines to Japan and other places. Over 21,000 Americans died on these ships, mostly from American submarine attacks. Nissho made its voyage safely.



The Futase POW Camp in Japan housed about 550 prisoners, mostly Dutch and American. The prisoners worked in the nearby coal mines.



American prisoners at the Cabatuan prisoner camp in the Philippines.



Marines from the First Division take on the Chinese near the Chosin Reservoir in the Korean War.

After two and a half years at Cabatuan, the Japanese, fearing an American invasion of the Philippines, began sending prisoners to the Japanese mainland and other places.

"They gave us new blue denim pants and jackets and new tennis shoes." The men were put aboard a ship for transport to Japan. These ships, because of the horrible conditions on board for the prisoners and because they were frequent prey to American submarines, became known as "hell ships."

Gruenberg's ship was the Nissyo Maru, a sugar freighter. The convoy was attacked, but the Nissyo was not hit.

Conditions were horrendous aboard the ship, crowded with 1,600 American prisoners. The heat was unbearable, and the men had almost no water.

"There were so many men in the hold that you couldn't lay down. We had to sleep by lying on top of one another, lying between the guys legs with your head on his chest, and then the next guy had his head on your chest. It was pitch dark, and so when guys got up at night to go to the bathroom, you could hear all this hullabaloo and noise. It was a mess."

After two weeks at sea in July 1944, the freighter stopped at Okinawa to pick up sugar, and then it was on to Japan.

They landed in Japan and were taken to the Futase Camp, about 40 miles north of Nagasaki, housing about 550 prisoners, many of them Dutch. The main feature of the camp was a coal mine.

"Everybody surged to the head of the line hoping to get a good job, but the Japanese went to the back of the line where I was and took four of us for a different duty." Gruenberg spent several months building air raid shelters around a hospital.

"Actually I didn't give a hoot what work I did. I wasn't feeling very well by that time. But the outdoor work probably helped, and the people in the town were very friendly with us."

One day Gruenberg was lifting a log and it slipped causing a cut on his left arm. In a few days it became infected and began to swell up. He was taken to a hospital.

"The doctor came in and he spoke perfect English. It turned out he had been studying at the University of Michigan. He came home to visit his family and the war broke out. He was trapped."

Eventually Gruenberg was sent to the coal mine and began his slave work with a pick and shovel on the small coal seams that were left in the played-out mine.

Malnutrition and sickness finally took its toll.

"One day, they were getting ready to blast, and I just sat down next to the wall they were going to dynamite and I wouldn't move. I told them I just wanted to die. The guard was furious with me, and smacked me and hauled me out of the mine."

But the desperation move worked, and Gruenberg was given a job hoeing weeds out in the open air.

On Aug. 9, 1945, the prisoners at Futasi heard a terrific explosion. "It was hazy, and so we didn't see the flash or the mushroom cloud. But what we heard was the atomic bomb being dropped on Nagasaki."

Six days later, the war ended. "A U.S. officer and sergeant came to the camp and told us we'd have to wait while they arranged transportation. In the end, we waited 30 days, and then they put us on a train that went right through Nagasaki. The city was leveled, just like ground zero. It was gone."

They boarded a Navy transport in the Nagasaki harbor and went to Okinawa and then to Guam and then to the United States.

Gruenberg was sent to St. Albans Hospital in New York with hopes of getting a corneal transplant, but it didn't happen.

"I could have gotten out, but work was hard to find in those days. The big war machine was shut down. I wanted to stay in and I signed a waiver saying I was capable of doing anything I had to do."

The next few years were good for Gruenberg. He got good duty, and he met his future wife, Dorothy, in Washington D.C. She was an Austin, Minnesota, girl.

One of his jobs was escorting the remains of soldiers, sailors and Marines back to the families in the United States. "It could be very emotional. One time the mother of a soldier looked at me, pointed to the casket, and said, 'Why couldn't that be you?'"

Another job was training officers at Camp Lejuene in North Carolina. Gruenberg said it was easy working with the officers. "When I told them to do something, they did it. There was no hesitation."

Gruenberg's wife had joined him at Lejuene, and all was good, except for bad housing at the base. But then, on June 25, 1950, the North Koreans invaded South Korea and his world changed again.

First of all, the Marines put him on a troop train for California and did not allow him the opportunity to take his wife back to Minnesota in their car, a slight that Gruenberg never forgot.

At Camp Pendleton, he was put on a troop ship and in September made the landing at Inchon, South Korea.

"I had never trained for that, and we had to climb down these ropes to get into the landing craft. It was a long way

down with a full pack and a rifle and ammunition. I was pretty strong, but I wasn't ready for that. One slip and it was a long way down."

He was now assigned to the First Marine Division, Seventh Marines, 2nd Battalion, Fox Company.

The unit first fought north of Seoul. "We made our way across the hills and mountains north of Seoul, trying to find the North Korean artillery installations. When they did find an enemy battery, they would call in the Marine planes.

"Those Corsairs would come straight down on us, right on top of us. It scared the daylights out of me."

One night, the company dug in on a ridge. "I told the runner to dig a foxhole, but he didn't do it. There were North Korean mortars on the ridge facing us, and we couldn't reach them with our machine guns. That 120 millimeter mortar was a wicked weapon for them."

A series of mortar shells rained down on the American position. "One came down right next to me. It was so close that it burned the back of my neck, the only part of me exposed in that fox hole. It was just like a severe sunburn.

"When the attack was over, I looked at the guy who hadn't dug a hole. He was killed and the mortar had blown part of his skull off. It was a horrible sight."

As they pushed the enemy back, Gruenberg's platoon captured a North Korean 88 millimeter artillery piece. "I put a hand grenade down the barrel, hoping it would do enough damage to make the piece inoperable."

That night, the men were alerted to a sound. "It was the putt, putt, putt of a truck coming to get that 88. I guess they didn't know we were there." The North Koreans hooked the artillery piece to the truck and began to drive away when the Marines opened fire with a machine gun.

The four soldiers in the front of the truck were killed immediately, but the nine or ten in the back of the truck jumped out and began to run.

"They went right by me, they almost stepped on me, and hid themselves in a ditch nearby. I sent for our translator who was a 16-year-old kid who didn't speak English very well. I was trying to get him to ask these guys if they were communists, but the translator thought I was calling him a communist. It was a mess."

Luckily one of the North Koreans spoke a little English, and a surrender was arranged. "It turned out these guys had all kinds of information about the North Koreans being in full retreat, and it was very valuable to us."

The First Marine Division was taken off the line and put on a ship that took them all the way around the Korean peninsula where they eventually landed at Hungnam on the east coast. They began a push north.

It should be noted that from his days on Corregidor to the Korean War, Gruenberg did not have a high opinion of General MacArthur, who by now was in charge of U.S. forces in Korea.

"They say that generals are not born for the job, they are made. Well, MacArthur was born into it. His dad was a general. MacArthur knew that publicity and daring stunts would get him promoted faster."

Gruenberg thinks that MacArthur should not have pushed deep into North Korea knowing that it would cause the Chinese to commit troops to the fighting. "Truman told him not to go north, but he did."

On their march north, the company captured an enemy soldier who turned out to be Chinese. "He was advanced reconnaissance. That's how we knew the Chinese were in the war."

Fox Company had Thanksgiving dinner in 1950 in a town called Hagaru-Ri, just at the southern tip of the Chosin Reservoir. Temperatures in some areas were hitting 30 below zero.

The next day they boarded trucks and headed up to the Toktong Pass, on the west side of the reservoir. They dug in.

"We kept our feet in good shape with our shoe packs. There was a felt pad in the bottom of the boot and every

night you'd take that one out and put in the one you kept under your belt all day. We kept our feet dry, and kept us from getting frostbite."

That night, the air was filled with the sound of bugles, whistles and drums as the Chinese made their first attack.

The rest is stuff of legends as the 233 men of Fox Company held off Chinese attacks that included thousands of well-trained soldiers. The mission of Fox Company was to keep the pass open so the troops to the north could move through and escape.

"We dreaded the nights because that's when they would attack." The brunt of the attacks came on the east, north and south sides of what later came to be known as Fox Hill, and Gruenberg's platoon was defending the south side.

"I had one awfully close shave. I was leaning against a tree, and a bullet hit the tree right at eye level, just inches from my head. The sniper hadn't calculated the windage right or I would have got it right between the eyes."

Another time a bullet hit Gruenberg's pack and broke the entrenching tool in it. "I thought one of my guys was poking me to get my attention, but when I turned around there was no one there. That's when I figured out it was a bullet."

The company held its ground for five nights and four days. "When the darkness came we all wondered if we'd see daylight again."

Three Marines earned Medals of Honor on Fox Hill.

The company moved south, but the fighting went on. "We came to this hill and the enemy held it. The officers told us to fix bayonets, we were going up the hill.

"I don't know if it was a rifle grenade or a grenade in a booby trap that got me."

Gruenberg took a large piece of shrapnel in his ankle.

"It felt like someone had hit me with a baseball bat. The corpsman came and cut my boot off, and it was full of blood. He put some wool socks around my ankle to protect me, and I was put in a Jeep ambulance. I told the fellows I'd be right back."

He was taken to an aid station at Koto-Ri, south of Hagaru-Ri. Along the way he saw an American convoy that had been destroyed by Chinese fire.

At the hospital, the shrapnel turned out to not be his biggest problem. He had severe frostbite because his foot was exposed to the elements. "The shrapnel is still in there, but it doesn't give me any problems."

Once he recovered, he did something not many did. He volunteered to go back to his unit. "But by this time Fox Company was up by the DMZ somewhere."

The fighting by this time was starting to stagnate along a line, but there was still plenty of action going on. Gruenberg was made a gunnery sergeant and he put in another four months on the line. His enlistment, which had been extended a year at the start of the war by Congress, finally expired.

He headed back to the States on a ship filled with wounded Marines who had not chosen or had been unable to go back to their units. "It was the loneliest trip I ever made in my life. No one would talk to me. Maybe they were embarrassed."

He was discharged after 12 years of service. After the incident where the Marine Corps had not let him drive his wife home, he had no intention of staying in.

He worked in Colorado for many years, owning his own heavy earth moving equipment, and then moved to Seattle where he continued in the heavy equipment business. He retired in the late 70s.

He moved to Minnesota two years ago to be closer to one of his two daughters. His wife had died in 1980.

Two years ago, he traveled to Japan as the guest of the Japanese government, part of an ongoing effort to continue to heal the wounds of war. He said the trip was sensational, and the nine ex-POWs were treated like kings and got to have dinner with American Ambassador Caroline Kennedy.

Unlike so many former prisoners, Gruenberg has never held a grudge against his former captors. "Heck, I drive a Toyota Avalon. It's a great car. I guess because I grew up

## Membership Chart, as of Nov. 26, 2017

District	2018 Goal	Total 2017	Total 2018	Weeks Gain	Total Posts	Goal Posts	% Of Goal	
District 1	8,953	8,895	6,965	211	58	5	77.80%	7,236
District 2	7,272	7,188	5,616	150	84	8	77.23%	6,015
District 3	11,712	11,647	9,035	205	65	5	77.14%	9,422
District 4	2,420	2,402	1,821	80	18	1	75.25%	1,896
District 5	2,486	2,464	1,759	34	22	1	70.76%	2,043
District 6	11,811	11,740	9,316	248	71	8	78.88%	9,574
District 7	6,398	6,322	4,966	143	76	3	77.62%	5,251
District 8	4,252	4,212	3,205	42	40	2	75.38%	3,386
District 9	6,729	6,664	5,117	194	65	10	76.04%	5,352
District 10	10,066	10,012	7,710	204	54	4	76.59%	7,998
District 11	401	2,358	1,608	81	2	1	401.00%	1,807
<b>Totals</b>	<b>72,500</b>	<b>73,904</b>	<b>57,118</b>	<b>1,592</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>78.78%</b>	<b>59,980</b>

Same Date Last Year

# Listening Post

# News from around the State



**FOREST LAKE LIFE MEMBERS** -- Forest Lake Post 225 hosted an honorary life member banquet. Seated, from left: Jack Peterson, El Ewert, Howard Sergeant, Terry Larson, Richard Doyle, Keith Hegstrom. Standing: Don Kotchen, Dwight Dupey, Richard Mckernon, Krista Goodyear, Barb Olson, Ron Miller, Don Quigley, Greg Schwintek, Don Skow.



**DENT OUTING** -- The 21st annual fishing outing, hosted by Dent Post 148, brought veterans from the Fergus Falls Veterans Home to the lake for a day of socializing, fishing, and a fish fry. The Auxiliary helped out.



**LAKE CITY HONORS** -- Lake City Post 110 presented a 70-year membership plaque to Dave McKenzie. He served in the Navy from 1942-46 on a minesweeper in the Pacific.



**EAGAN COLOR GUARD** -- Eagan Post 594 Color Guard recently participated at the grand re-opening of the Eagan Walmart.



**HANSKA FALL DINNER** -- Hanska Post 365 honored its 70 year members at its annual Fall Membership Dinner, served by the Auxiliary. From left, Arlo Bryo, special guest 2nd District Vice Commander Roxanne Zoet, Irving Hagen, and Post Commander Larry Stoesz.



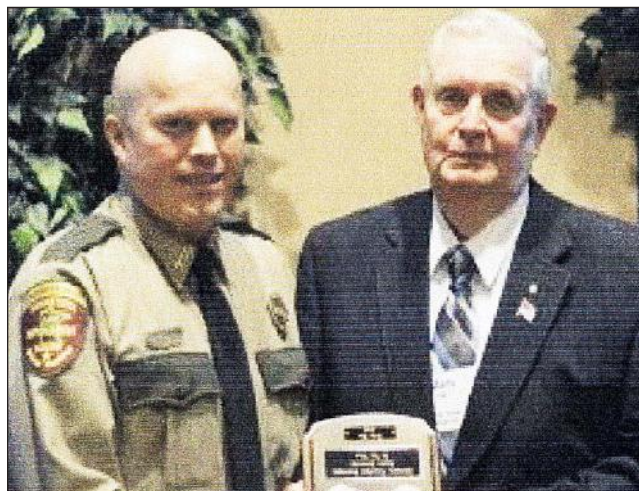
**DENHAM HONOR GUARD** -- Denham Post 361 gathered around the flag on Memorial Day. The post has 66 members.



**TRUMAN TRIBUTE** -- The Trimont Area Veterans Tribute Committee dedicated a Veteran's Tribute this past summer. Dick Pope, a Legionnaire from Trimont Post 373, was the chairman. Amy Anderson won the design contest.



**LANESBORO HONOR** -- The Lanesboro Post 40 surprised Otto Kitzmann at his home to present him with a 70 year certificate. From left: Rich Schnauer, Robert Thompson, James Haugen, Dewey Hungerholt, and Rick Darling. Kitzmann is front and center.



**HILL HONORED** -- Duane "Marvin" Hill, Virginia, a past 8th District Commander, was named the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Volunteer Snowmobile Instructor of the Year. Presenting was Officer Bruce Lawrence.



**CLARISSA DONATION** -- Val Peterson, left, of Clarissa Post 213, was joined by Jim Theiler and Dave Weber of the VFW Post 6318 in presenting a \$1,300 check to Melony Butler of Eagle's Nest of Sauk Centre.

## World War II Round Table

## Operation Torch was first massive landing

*Editor's Note: This Round Table took place in October, but space limitations kept the story out of the November issue.*

By Al Zdon

Operation Torch was America's first major foray into the fighting across the Atlantic in World War II.

The invasion of North Africa was the largest amphibious assault the world had ever seen to that point, and it was mostly a mess.

Vincent O'Hara, the author of *Torch: North Africa and the Allied Path to Victory*, gave the historical perspective of the offensive, and he was later joined by two veterans of the invasion and another historian.

O'Hara noted that Torch was the first time the British and Americans tried working together on a major project.

"It involved hundreds of ships, multiple divisions and over a thousand miles of coastline. Nothing like this had ever been attempted before."

By late 1942, the war in Europe was still very much up for grabs, with the Russians and Germans duking it out over a huge front and the U.S. still in the beginning stages of gearing up for the war.

The massive nature of the landings was a challenge for the planners. "Operation Torch was a risky throw of the dice in amphibious warfare."

The only thing for sure was that the British were eager to open a second front against Germany, and America's Russian allies were demanding a second front. But where?

"The only choice left was French North Africa."

The United States, under Gen. George Marshall, picked a "nobody" to be the Allied leader of the invasion – Dwight Eisenhower. "But he turned out to be the right man for the job because he understood what 'combined' meant," O'Hara said.

The U.S. trained hard for the invasion on the East Coast and in Scotland and England. "In one practice invasion in Maryland, only one landing craft made it to the right beach, despite the fact that the beach was marked by a flashing lighthouse. It was a sign of things to come."

O'Hara said the planners hoped that the French resistance to the attack would be mostly symbolic, but there was bad blood between the Free French and the British because the United Kingdom had attacked the French fleet some months earlier and killed thousands of French sailors.

The Vichy French still had a formidable Navy and eight army divisions in North Africa.

All kinds of behind-the-scenes negotiations were going on, including one clandestine visit to a French general in North Africa where Gen. Mark Clark had to paddle a kayak ashore from a submarine.

In the end, still not knowing whether the French would fight, the Allies began the landings on Nov. 8 at three major points: Algiers, Oran and French Morocco.

There were 240 transports and six aircraft carriers in the armada, and hundreds of landing craft. "Nothing on this scale had ever been attempted before."

The ships came from both the United States and from Britain. Many of the ships had to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar, tipping off the Germans about the invasion, but the Germans thought the invasion probably was aimed at Egypt.

O'Hara displayed maps of the invasion with bent arrows showing the landing craft veering off miles from their targets.

Once ashore, the resistance was greatly different. "In Algeria, the landings were generally a mess with strong currents, winds and map errors, plus a strong dose of inexperience. Resistance was very spotty, and a cease fire was called on the first day."

In Oran, the landing went a little better, but met with much stronger resistance. The ceasefire was called by the French after three days. In Morocco, the resistance was very strong.

"It was touch and go for a while. The cease fire after three days came just in time."

The cease fire left the sides in a confused state. "The French and Americans didn't know whether to be enemies or friends, but after the ceasefire, they reluctantly became friends."

For those three days, part of the French fleet caused major damage to the invasion force, but in the end most of the French ships were sunk or disabled. "It was the largest naval battle in the Atlantic in World War II."

O'Hara said in one sense, Operation Torch was a failure because few of the goals were met. It also did not open up the Mediterranean area to Allied dominance as had been hoped for.

"But it was a template for a joint and combined warfare," he said. "It brought the French back into the fold. We tend to forget how risky Torch was, and how much was at stake."

Two veterans joined the discussion at this point. Both Fred Topel and George Farmer served in the 34th Division, mainly made up of Minnesota and



Allied troops come ashore on a beach near Algiers. In all, Operation Torch including the landings of over 100,000 British and American troops. It involved 350 warships and 500 transports.

Iowa National Guard members. The division earned high marks during the war, and served more time in combat than any other division.

The 175th Field Artillery, in which both men served, had over 700 days in combat during the war.

Farmer was from Minneapolis and his job was a surveyor, an expert on where to put the guns to have maximum effect. Topel was from Wadena, and he was a forward observer.

Farmer was sent with his outfit to Fort Dix in New Jersey to catch a ship overseas. "Twice they sent us to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and both times there was no room on the ship and we had to go back."

Farmer finally boarded the USS Mexico. "I think it was the smallest ship in the whole fleet."

He was a sergeant of the guard, and could move freely about the ship, "but not on deck. The light from a cigarette could tell the Germans where we were."

The men were not told where they were going, but they arrived sometime later in Scotland where they trained. "We had Scottish officers and they taught us how to make an invasion. We got a lot of exercise. We'd have to run to the top of this mountain every morning as fast as we could, and there were plenty of 15-mile hikes."

One training exercise was to run to a ship, climb the rope ladders, run across the deck and then climb down on the ropes to a landing craft. "We did that an awful lot of times."

As the invasion approached the men were put on ships again, and again had no sure idea what their destination might be. When they got to North Africa, as they practiced, they got on the landing craft.

"The navy took us ashore. It was the wrong shore, but they got us to a shore."

Farmer landed near a French town. "They were the friendliest people. This one lady had a horse and a cart, and she gave anybody a ride."

But it wasn't all fun, as German planes strafed the Americans. "A bomb went off near me, but my gun had jammed, and I was so wrapped up in getting it going that I didn't even hear it."

Fred Topel spent his voyage across the Atlantic below decks, landing in Western Ireland and then moving to Scotland for training. "They told you what to do, and you did it."

The guns they practiced on were British 25 pounders. "They were good guns."

The men boarded a Polish ship with a British crew for the trip to Africa. "We were briefed enroute about where we were going, and we had classes on the invasion."

Topel said during the entire invasion, he had an abscessed tooth and he was in great pain. "When we were ready to go ashore, I just got behind someone and followed them in. I was so miserable. It was five days before I could see a dentist."

His job, once the guns were in place, was to be out in front and direct where the guns should be aimed. "I'd radio back to headquarters, and headquarters would tell the gun controller."

Did being out front bother him? "We did it so much, it just got to be where it was just work."

Tim Brady, a St. Paulite has written a book about Gen. Ted Roosevelt Jr.

In World War II, General Roosevelt, a founder of The American Legion, was assigned to his old World War I division, the 1st or "Rainbow" Division. "He was 54 years old and very arthritic, so the training was very demanding for him."

The First Division landed in Oran. "The ships had metal

ladders that were wet. There was no easy method to get down."

When the First landed, "The beach was festooned with cabanas which had been set up for the tourist season." The password was "Hiyo Silver," and the response was "Away."

Brady said the whole invasion "was a seat of the pants" operation with only a couple of months to make the Torch plan work.

He told the story about the capture of the Port Lyautey fighter base, which was held by the French. The U.S. wanted to use the base as soon as possible after its capture, and so the Army and Navy had to immediately bring ammunition and aviation gas to the base.

The problem was that the waterway leading to the base was very shallow. The Allies finally found a boat back in England, the Contessa, which had been a banana boat sailing in the rivers of South America.

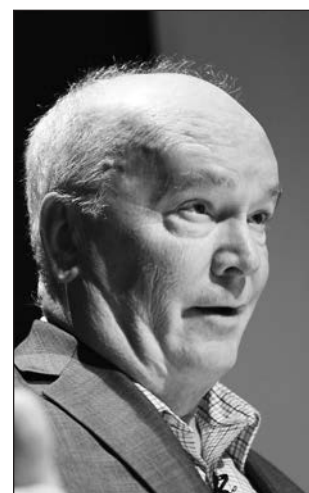
"The sailors on board had already made 12 crossings of the Atlantic by that time in the war, and they were looking forward to having a good time in Norfolk."

When the ship was pressed into service, it was found that 24 of the ship's crew were missing -- ashore having a good time.

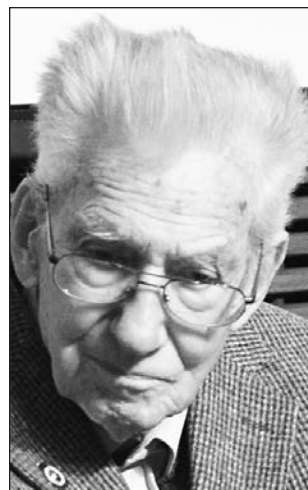
"The Navy did what it had to do and pressed into service 20 sailors who were sleeping it off in the Norfolk brig. The Contessa completed its mission with 20 ex-inmates helping run the ship."



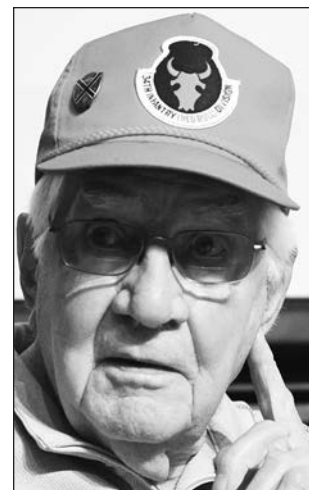
VINCENT O'HARA  
Author and speaker



TIM BRADY  
Author and speaker



GEORGE FARMER  
34th Division



FRED TOPEL  
34th Division

# District Commanders

## FIRST DISTRICT

Les Shaunce  
Commander



Greetings from the First District:

Department Fall Conference is history. Willmar did a very good job of hosting the conference. We had a decent turn out but we should and need to have more representation.

Membership is above our December 18th cut off percentage of 75%, but we are close to 3,000 members behind last year at this time. We all have to work harder to make goal at years end.

Because Veterans Day fell on a weekend this year events were spread over several days. Most veterans spent Friday visiting various schools and then Saturday attending public, District and Department events.

I had the honor of attending the Pheasant Dinner at the Veterans Hospital November 16th.

The dinner and program was great. I think it would have been nice to dine with some of the patients of the hospital.

What beautiful weather to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday. I hope everyone had a great day visiting with family and friends. I hope everyone extended a warm welcome to those that are not as fortunate as we are. We will be gathering in Duluth, December 2nd, for the Pearl Harbor Rally. It's been a while since we have there. It would have been nice to be there earlier in the year but we'll make do.

Remember what the holiday is all about. Let's open our hearts to everyone. Especially remember our troops at home and overseas. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## THIRD DISTRICT

Eugene Leifeld  
Commander



Attended the Fall Conference at Willmar, Minnesota October 27th and 28th. It was a very informative conference. Youth leaders spoke about three youth activities: Oratorical, Boys State, and Baseball. Guest speaker Major Alan Duff (Retired) spoke on politics on Friday afternoon's conference very interesting subject and speaker.

Department of Minnesota bulletin number 20 Membership in the 3rd district is at 75.39%. The goal was to be at 65% by December 13, 2017. Membership is doing great. The 3rd district has five posts at goal: Henderson Post 74, Elysian Post 311, Victoria Post 1995, Eagan Post 594, and Kenyon Post 78. Thank you to Vice Commanders, Post Commanders, Membership Directors and membership for all you're doing for the 3rd District and The American Legion Department of Minnesota. Congratulations to the 2nd District Commander Randy Olson and his Membership Director Cindy Brunk and their team on the Kaisersatt membership award.

I had the opportunity to attend several 3rd District Veterans Day celebrations. I attended Lonsdale Post 586 at Lonsdale Public schools, Northfield American Legion Post 84 and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Northfield Middle School, Bellechester Post 598 Veterans Day dinner and program and Post 54 Red Wing, MN. Present and past veterans were honored. Have a great holiday season and safe travels.

## FOURTH DISTRICT

Lane Stunkel  
Commander



The 4th District held its Revitalization on November 3rd and 4th - picked up 30 plus new and transferred memberships into the District - nice work all who helped out. According to Bulletin 20, we are a mere 5 points from 1st place; we can make that with new memberships, transfers and getting each of our current members to renew their memberships.

Please reach out to your Vice Commanders; they are available to work with you on membership and other topics of interest that each Post may have. I attended a recent Post meeting and I learned a lot. This Post teaches/shares information with each other. The topic that day was Arlington National Cemetery.

All hands on deck to help out with Shop, Ship & Share, there will be several members unable to help out, so please if you can stop by Maplewood Mall December 1st and 2nd please do, we need your help.

Bell Ringing for the Salvation Army - December 9th around Maplewood Mall and Sam's Club, thanks to all who signed up for this great cause.

Thank You, God bless each and every one of you for all the volunteer work you do, and finally Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to the 4th District American Legion Family.

## FIFTH DISTRICT

Walt Lyndsley  
Commander



Greetings from the fighting fifth. We had the pleasure of attending the pheasant luncheons, one being at the Mpls Veterans Home and the other at the Mpls Veterans Hospital. Kudos to the chefs. It was delicious. We appreciated being invited and found it rewarding to meet other Legion, Auxiliary and SAL members throughout the state.

We attended a potluck membership for the 4th district at Rosetown Legion. I hear that some of the recipes were from the new cookbook that the Auxiliary published. We will be assisting the 4th district with Shop, Ship and Share on Dec. 1st and 2nd and from there we travel to Duluth for Pearl Harbor membership rally.

Thank you to Andrew Rose, Wade Larson and John Austin for their willingness and fortitude in calling unpaid Legion members to renew their memberships. Also a thank you to Joe Bayer and Jim Munson for attending a Kenwood Elementary School and introducing flag folding to the class. They demonstrated goodwill by giving the class insight into what the American Legion entails. Happy Holidays to all and see you in 2018.

## SIXTH DISTRICT

Ken Johnstone  
Commander



Greetings to everyone in the great state of Minnesota! With "Old Man Winter" giving us a taste of what is to come, I still hope everyone was able to take in a few Veterans Day programs and enjoy a few fine meals. However, just because November 11th is set aside as a day we thank our veterans of this great United States of America, we should not limit our gratitude to just one day. Let us express thanks to them, as well as keep them in our thoughts every day, for what they have done, and for what our military members continue to do for us daily.

As I write this article, we still have Thanksgiving coming up very shortly. I hope you all have a nice Thanksgiving, and are able to spend time with your family and friends.

Besides the imminent arrival of the holidays in December, there will be a lot of activity in the Legion Family, including membership rallies, post meetings, Christmas parties, and ending the month, New Year's celebrations.

We cannot forget membership: Yes, it is true that I did "win" the "Leg" from the Ninth District at the Sixth/Ninth Membership Rally, but the Sixth District still has the upper hand, as we are still in first place within the Department, as well as achieving 70 percent. We are now the first district to be over 75 percent, before the Pearl Harbor Rally.

Have a safe holiday season, and please do not drink and drive. Your family needs you, and the Legion needs you as well.

For God and Country.

## SEVENTH DISTRICT

Richard Wog  
Commander



I want to start by saying thank you to all of the legion family members that attended the fall conference in Willmar. I truly hope each of you enjoyed yourself and that it was a meaningful conference. There was a lot of information given the three days of the conference to take back to your district and post. Veterans day has come and gone and the day we honor those who have served and those who are still serving. It is the one official day our veterans are honored, but we should honor them every day, which we as the American legion family are proud to do. Taking care of our veterans is our mission and also one of the four pillars.

Thanksgiving has come and gone. It is time we each reflect on the blessings we receive every day; family, friendships and most of all the freedoms we enjoy. Christmas will be here soon and I know we think, where did the time go? It just slipped away because we are all so busy with our own lives and we live in such a fast moving world. Christmas is a special time for families to spend together and to share gifts. For some it is the happiest time of the year and a time of giving. But remember there are those who do not have what we have. Some are alone and I ask that we take the time to reach out to them as well. I want to wish all of you a very blessed and Merry Christmas. Thank you for all that you do. Please remember the 7th District Midwinter Conference will be here soon.

## EIGHTH DISTRICT

Donovan Goblirsch  
Commander



Happy Holidays 8th District Legion Family. Well we are well into the holiday season which means lots of family, friends and fun. Please take a few moments to remember our men, women and their families currently deployed both home and abroad. Without their sacrifice we would not be free to celebrate the holiday of our choice. Now onto membership, our Legion District is currently at 74.39%. Our Auxiliary District membership is currently at 61.09%. I apologize to our Sons family, I do not have your numbers. We have about a month left in 2017 and I would love our entire Legion family at 100% of our 2018 membership goals. Let's get our membership lists out and start calling our members. I really believe if we make personal contact with our members we will be at 100% of membership by the end of the year. I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand. -- Jennifer Havlick

## NINTH DISTRICT

Tim Haugen  
Commander



Greetings from the Roaring Ninth.

I hope everyone had a nice Thanksgiving with family and friends. It's hard to believe that I'm half way through my year as Commander and it has been a great year so far and I'm looking forward to the last 6 months.

What a busy month November was. I attended two Pheasant Dinners, one at the Fargo VA and the other one at the Fergus Falls Veteran's home. Both meals were awesome. I also attended the Veteran's Day Dinner in Thief River Falls and was the Guest speaker at the Barnesville HS for their annual Veteran's Day Program.

Our upcoming American Legion Family Christmas party is on December 9th in Waubun. All are welcome.

I want to thank everyone in the 9th for working very hard on membership. We have already achieved the December National goal (75%) and are currently at 76.04 (with 10 Posts already reporting 100%) and need only 266 renewals/new members to reach January's goal (80%) by December 13th.

Until next month, I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Safe and Happy New Year. God bless our Troops & their families and our Veterans.

## TENTH DISTRICT

Paul Hassing  
Commander



Hello Mighty Tenth.

Thank you everyone for everything you do for your fellow veterans, and their families. I hate to think of where this country would be without the American Legion Family around to take care of them, and their communities.

We are still hanging around sixth place for membership. We can do better. We are not that far out of first place. We have a few posts that are struggling. Please let us know what we can do to help.

For any of you that know someone that is sitting on the fence about joining this great family, consider buying them a membership for Christmas. Once they are members, get them to take The American Legion extension course Boot Camp. It is a great course that really teaches some great things The American legion does. The history of The American Legion alone should be enough to let them know what a great gift it was.

There is a Department Rally in Duluth on the 2nd of December, and our District rally is in Wayzata on the 16th of December. I hope to see all of you there.

I am so proud to be your Commander,

## V4V funds outdoor programs

The Veterans 4 Veterans Trust Fund granted \$33,000 to the Disabled American Veterans to use for housing veterans in the Ely Fishing Trip, Turkey Hunt, Trolling for the Troops, and Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt.

The American Legion is a partner in these activities.

V4V also gave \$2,500 to Nation Eagle Watch at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and \$5,000 to Eagles Healing Nest to provide housing for veterans.



# The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 18-5

President Donna Arends

December 2017

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

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

## The President's Column

By Donna Arends



Greetings Everyone.

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving.

A huge thank you to all Dept Chairman and all of those responsible for Fall Conference. I was very pleased.

My travels since my last letter have been to Osseo Post 172, Montevideo Post 59, LaCrescent Post 595, Rosetown Post Roseville and a delicious Pheasant Dinner at the Minneapolis Veterans Hospital.

Everyone was very welcoming and all food was of course delicious. I am looking forward to Gift Shops now in December.

Membership Mary is doing a fantastic job as all your District Membership Chairmen are, however we all need to work on that. No Goose Egg Units. Please.

Enjoy your Holidays and I will see many of you at Dept Rally in Duluth.

## Silent Auction was a big success

We would like to thank everyone who donated items for the 2017 Silent auction for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Whether you donated items or money or bid on various items — We cannot thank you enough for helping us help our auxiliary members in need.

There were many wonderful items donated including: blankets, quilts, afghans, holiday items, books, crochet slippers, hats and mittens. There were 47 theme baskets that many people bid on. The variety of items was unbelievable. Chairman Cindy Nelson would have been proud of all of these donations.

Thank you to the following people who helped with the Silent Auction on Thursday October 26th for setting up the auction, Friday October 27th for set up and watching over the auction until it closed: Joanie Krantz, District 9; Jean Walker, District 9; Sharon Lanctot, District 9, Alice Hiltner, District 9; Dorothy Hyvonen, District 10; Laura Wendt, District 10; and Sandie Deutsch, District 3. We really appreciated all of your help to make this auction a big success.

Pam Hoshal, District 10 and Margee Keller, District 9  
Co-chairmen for 2017 AEF Silent Auction

### Silent Auction Results

Silent Auction:	\$ 3294.00
Food Sale:	\$ 30.00
Doll & Scarf Sale:	\$ 18.00
Grab Bags:	\$ 99.50
(Miscellaneous items, books, material, dish cloths, etc.)	

Donation wall using President Donna's Lighthouse:

District 1	\$250.00
District 2	\$ .00
District 3	\$175.00
District 4	\$55.00
District 5	\$10.00
District 6	\$540.00
District 7	\$150.00
District 8	\$125.00
District 9	\$385.00
District 10	\$100.00
Total	\$1,790.00
Silent Auction Grand Total:	\$5231.50

## Information on 2018 Girls State will be mailed shortly

Information needed to reserve a place for your Girls State citizen(s) for the 2018 session of the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will be included in the January/February Unit mailing. Please make sure and go through all the information. The Committee has made some very exciting and positive changes to this year's session! It will include an American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State informational brochure, a cover letter from the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Chairman and a reservation form. After the department office receives your reservation form and your registration check of \$300.00 per girl, a packet will be sent to the Unit. This packet will include a set of registration forms for each girl you will be sponsoring. It will include the enrollment card, information sheet, pledge, brochure, dress code, order form for the polo shirts, etc. The packet will be sent to the person who signs the reservation form. The registration materials must be returned to the department office on or before May 1. If you have any questions, please contact the department office. This year the Girls State week will be held at Bethel College in St. Paul.

### SAMSUNG SCHOLARSHIPS

Out of more than 5,300 applicants, the Samsung American Legion Scholarship for 2017 awarded 10 national scholars with \$10,000 and 10 runners-up with \$5,000 for undergraduate study. And 79 department finalists each received \$1,250.

The recipients earned the award based on several criteria, including participation in American Legion Boys State or Auxiliary Girls State and being a direct descendant of a wartime veteran eligible for American Legion membership.

We are so excited to report that Margaret Kleiman who was sponsored by Hutchinson Unit 96 was one of the \$10,000.00 scholarship winners and Ryan Albrecht was one of the runners up receiving a \$5,000.00 scholarship. Ryan attended the Minnesota Boys State session.

### PRESIDENT'S PROJECTS

Department President Donna Arends has chosen as her President's Project donations to be divided by the 5 Veterans Homes and the Armed Forces Center. Donna is hoping to raise \$26,000.00 for her project. Please make sure and be generous. Donna is doing a fabulous job so far this year representing the Department of Minnesota.

### MAILING LABEL FUNDRAISER

According to my vendor and a few members I have found out that the first batch of mailing labels have been sent to our members. They started out by sending to 15,000 members and the balance of the membership will receive theirs right after the first of the year. This is a huge effort to try and raise funds for the Department Office so we can continue to give you the best customer service possible and continue to update our equipment and efforts. Please be generous. You will know it is the Department mailing labels as there is a letter from President Donna Arends included. Jan, Julie and myself thank you in advance for supporting this fund raiser.

### MEMBERSHIP

Our big push is to get everyone off the proverbial goose egg. We are now down to 8 Units not having turned in membership — please make sure and get your dues paid. The Department can win an award if all Units are off the zero mark by March 17, St. Patrick's Day. Let's work together and get er done.

### DONATIONS

Please see the Unit Guide for a list of those programs the Department Executive Committee has approved for the solicitation of funds. Please keep in mind those showing an \* by them are our own Auxiliary programs within the Department of Minnesota. We need to support these causes — no one else does. If your Post is donating funds from their gambling accounts, please make sure they make the checks payable to the American Legion Foundation, Fund 83. If they aren't written out that way, we have to return the

checks and have them reissued. We can really use some donations in the Gift Shop category. We want to make sure this is a memorable Christmas for our Veterans and their families.

### POPPY POSTER CONTEST

Please encourage your schools to participate in the Poppy Poster Contest. There are classes for all grades. All of the rules will be in the January/February Unit Mailing included in the Trophy and Awards packet. All of this information is also on our website mnala.org. This is a great way to teach our youth all about the Poppy, our Memorial Flower. Being sponsor of the contest we must get into our schools and promote this wonderful contest. We have many very talented children in our schools. In the past few years entries have been dwindling. Make an effort to boost this great program.

### HAPPY HOLIDAYS

On behalf of the office staff at the American Legion Auxiliary, Sandie, Jan and Julie, we want to wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and hope Santa brings you everything you ask for. We are sure you have been good all year. Enjoy quality time with family and loved ones. If you can, do something special for those that are in need.

### GIFT SHOP DISTRIBUTION DAY

Vida Bacon, Department Gift Shop Chairman and Committee Member Linda Deschene assembled their crew to sort and distribute all of the Christmas Gifts for our Veterans and their families to be given out at all nine VA facilities during their Gift Shop days at the Osseo American Legion Post. The gifts that were purchased by Vida and Linda were all very nice and we are sure the Veterans will be pleased. Even with membership continuing to decline, our Finance Committee and Executive Committee took a very big leap of faith and again approved no decreases to this budget. Our veterans are what our organization is all about and this small act of kindness at the holiday season is very important. Please keep those donations coming in. Thank you so much for your help in making this program a success. A special thank you this year to the Pheasant Dinner program and the Fund for Hospitalized Veterans for their very generous donations to our program this year.

Here is a reminder of the Gift Shop Dates:

- Fargo VAMC - December 5
- Fergus Falls Veterans Home - December 11
- Hastings Veterans Home - December 7
- Luverne Veterans Home - December 14
- Minneapolis Veterans Home - December 5 & 6
- Minneapolis VAMC - December 6 & 7
- Silver Bay Veterans Home - December 14
- Sioux Falls VAMC - December 12
- St. Cloud VAMC - November 27 - 29

### SECRETARY SANDIE'S NOTES

Another year is rapidly coming to a close and I can't remember better times at the Department Office. Jan and Julie have stuck with me in the office and we have a wonderful routine here — things just flow smoothly. Again my family is celebrating Christmas the day after Thanksgiving so as you are reading this, my stressful Christmas will be history. This will be our first Christmas with a baby in 9 years so our entire family is really excited. The past year has been so much fun for me, even though it is considered a job. The entire American Legion Family is a blessing to work with. We have our little disagreements but those are few and far between. My heart just grows bigger when we have conferences, conventions, rallies, etc., at the way I am so welcomed by all. (hopefully it won't burst) You are truly the best and I hope the friendships continue forever.

From Shorty and myself we want to wish you a very Merry, Blessed Christmas and a Happy, Prosperous New Year. Make sure and remember those less fortunate, especially this time of year.

# Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

This little picture is for my good friend Mike Maxa (Merry Christmas)



### Upcoming Notable Dates

- December 2 – Pearl Harbor Rally
- December 10 – Articles for the January/February Unit Mailing
- December 22 & 25 – Department Office Closed for Christmas
- December 29 & Jan 1 – Department office Closed for Christmas

# December is VA&R Month for Auxiliary

December is Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Month. Divisions under the VA&R Program include Service to Veterans under the direction of Chairman Bonnie Wagner and the annual Gift Shops held at our 5 veterans homes and 4 VA Medical Centers. Chairman Vida Bacon and her assistant Linda Deschene have done an excellent job of shopping and organizing this year's contributions. The purpose of the VA&R Program is to enhance the lives of veterans, military and their families. This is a commitment and a promise Auxiliary members have made in their preamble, mission and vision statements.

The National VA&R Plan of Action encompasses 7 broad areas of potential service. No Unit can work each and every one of them, but should choose those projects and areas of service which "fit" their Unit and its members. The 7 areas emphasized in our national plan include (1) encouraging members to volunteer at a VA health care facility; (2) serve veterans in your home area; (3) assist veterans in accessing VA benefits by connecting them with the local American Legion Post Service Officer; (4) help homeless veterans; (5) support rehabilitation and healing of veterans through arts, crafts and hobbies; (Minnesota's own Bobby

White was a recent Gold Medal Winner at the National Creative Arts Festival for his literary work.) (6) promote job fairs for veterans and their families; (7) assist and support caregivers of veterans.

What are some projects we can do to promote the VA&R Program? The potential list would take up several pages! Here are a few ideas: collect clothing for our medical and veteran home facilities (warm winter jackets, shirts, pants, underwear, etc.), sew items for these facilities, help local veterans with transportation needs, work with the Family Services Coordinator at a National Guard Armory to assess



MARY HENDRICKSON

needs (school supplies, help with holiday parties), talk to your County Service Officer about helping a veteran in crisis who needs assistance (gas cards, grocery basket, Christmas gifts for their children), volunteer at Stand Downs, collect small toiletries for hygiene kits, sew Quilts of Valor. Assistance given to veterans, military and their families is greatly appreciated at any time of the year, not just the holidays.

## Report from the Sixth District

By Vicki Bibeau

6th District ALA has been very busy with our programs, membership and leadership training.

The Junior Conference will be held on March 3rd in Kimball. Our annual bowling event will be in Brainerd on Feb 17th.

The VA&R Chairman is highlighting our 5 Minnesota Veteran Homes in our monthly bulletin which is filled with information, ideas and suggestions for our programs.

We are promoting the district project of new winter coats for the St. Cloud VA and colored pocket t-shirts for all veterans in the 5 MN Veteran homes.


At our Mid-winter conference in Melrose on February 10th, we will be going over how important our annual reports are and encouraging units to promote all the things they do for our veterans, their families and our communities. A fun reminder of a twenty-five cent charge to our members for "selling" poppies, calling our Legionnaires 'men' and not having a membership application on you. Spread "Goodwill On Earth" as you celebrate Christmas and the New Year & wear a Poppy.



VICKI BIBEAU

### Nov. 27, 2017, Auxiliary Membership

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year 11-23-2016
One	5,000	3,232	64.64%	3,307
Two	4,924	3,281	66.63%	3,332
Three	4,411	2,952	66.92%	2,998
Four	720	460	63.89%	497
Five	824	447	54.25%	489
Six	6,042	4,039	66.85%	4,300
Seven	3,934	2,503	63.62%	2,671
Eight	1,628	1,012	62.16%	984
Nine	4,350	2,883	66.37%	3,022
Ten	5,159	3,021	58.56%	3,344
1982	160	108	67.50%	112
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37,152</b>	<b>23,938</b>	<b>64.44%</b>	<b>25,056</b>



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From Past Department President Lori Skallerud -- Viet Nam veteran Stan Bjorgan, rural Madison, who is a member of the American Legion made this display and puts it up every spring along Co. Rd 19 at his farm near Louisburg. He is proud of his service and reminds each of us who drives past it, of the sacrifices made by our military daily, and to continue to remember all who have served.

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**Minnesota Twins Spring Training in Florida**  
 March 15-25, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

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

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

**Monuments of Washington DC**  
 April 27-May 1, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

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

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

**Savannah & Charleston**  
 April 13-20, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

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

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

**Panama Canal Cruise**  
 March 23-April 9, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis
- 1 night pre-cruise in Minneapolis
- 1 night pre-cruise in Ft. Lauderdale
- 15 day cruise on the ISLAND Princess
- Visit 6 port of call including Ft. Lauderdale & Los Angeles
- Cruise Gratuities
- Luggage handling on the ship
- All meals and entertainment while aboard
- All transfers to and from the airport and pier

Starting at **\$4,699.00** Per Person Double Occupancy

**New Orleans & Baton Rouge**  
 May 10-15, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

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

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

**Alaska Tour & Cruise**  
 August 3-15, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis to Fairbanks and return Vancouver to Minneapolis
- Accommodations at superior and deluxe hotels
- A 7-night southbound cruise on the CORAL PRINCESS
- All meals and entertainment aboard the Coral Princess
- Cruise Gratuities
- All transfers to and from the hotel, airport and pier
- Luggage handling for 1 suitcase per person

Starting at **\$4,499.00** per person double occupancy

**Northern Rocky Mountain National Parks**  
 September 5-17, 2018

**Tour Includes:**

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 12 nights accommodations & 20 meals
- Mount Rushmore National Memorial
- Scenic cruise on Lake McDonald in Glacier Park
- Glacier Parks Going to the Sun vintage Red Bus Tour
- Historic Stanly Hotel Tour
- Buffalo Bill Museum
- Scenic byways and highways

**\$2,159.00** per person double occupancy

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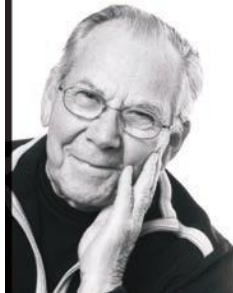
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