



Commander Schmidt spoke at Richfield Post 435 in front of a huge Legion logo.



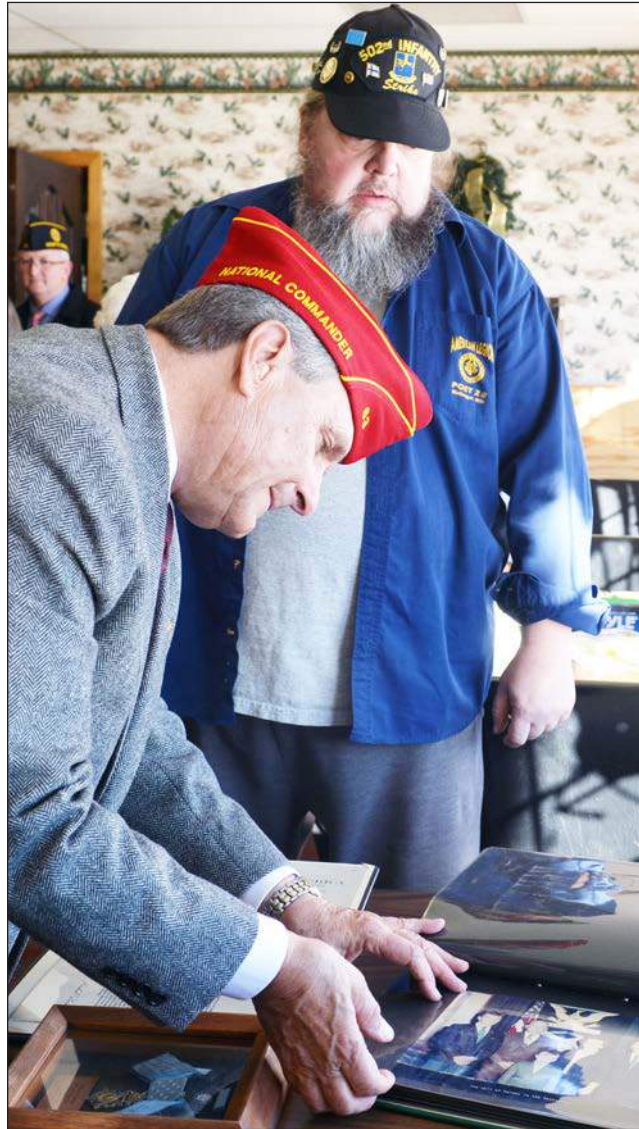
Schmidt greets Hibbing member Al Johnson. Johnson is a longtime member of the color guard that presents the flag at Hibbing hockey games.



The audience at Pine City listened to the National Commander talk.



National Executive Committeeman Marland Ronning introduced Schmidt at several stops along the way.



Commander Schmidt looks through the family scrapbooks of Medal of Honor recipient Dale Wayrynen who was killed in Vietnam. His brother, John, looks on.



Princeton Union-Times Associate Editor Debbie Griffin interviewed Schmidt at a stop in Elk River.



Membership Director Mark Dvorak was the emcee for the 10 stops on the tour through Minnesota.



Department President Carol Kottom welcomed Commander Schmidt to her home post/unit in Buffalo.



Those who did the awareness walk in Elk River posed for a group photo with their walk tee-shirts.



Minnesota American Legion Military Hall of Fame

GEORGE LEACH

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Editor's Note:

From time to time, the Minnesota Legionnaire will honor a Minnesota veteran in the Minnesota American Legion Military Hall of Fame. Previously, Thomas Gere, an officer in the Civil and Indian wars from Chatfield, Minnesota, who won the Medal of Honor; and Lesley McNair, Verndale, who organized the training of American troops during World War II and was later killed in France, have been honored. This is the third honoree.

By Al Zdon

George Emerson Leach was born into a military family.

Two of his great grandfathers fought in the Revolutionary War. His father fought in the Civil War. Leach himself fought in World War I with the famous Rainbow Division in France.

He later went on to serve for a dozen years as mayor of Minneapolis.

Leach traced his family history back to 14th century England where one of his direct ancestors, John Leach, was a surgeon for King Edward III. In the 17th century, the Leach Family emigrated to America.

George Leach's mother, Mary, was born in Michigan in 1945, and his father, William, was born in New Hampshire in 1834. His father was orphaned at seven, but was taken in by a farm family. At age 14, William became the new school teacher in his town "because he could whip any of the boys who had run the former teacher out."

William went to the University of Vermont, and eventually ended up in Minnesota where he passed the bar exam after spending a long, cold winter teaching himself from law books in a building where he was the janitor.

In 1861, William Leach was one of the first volunteers in the famed First Minnesota Regiment, and he was soon named the regiment's adjutant. He distinguished himself for bravery at Bull Run, and later served on the staffs of several Civil War generals.

After the war, William Leach led an interesting civilian life. He built and owned a grain mill in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and was making a good living at the business when a dam broke and the rushing water took the mill with it. Leach refused to accept bankruptcy and finally paid off his existing contracts just before his death in 1903.

In the meantime, he founded a newspaper, served in the Iowa legislature, served on the Iowa Superior Court, and was mayor of Cedar Rapids. He always told his son to stay out of politics.

The elder Leach moved to Minneapolis in 1884 when George was eight years old. The young lad attended a grade school in downtown Minneapolis, and getting to school each day was a slow process. "The street cars were pulled by mules."

Young George spent his summers working on his aunt's ranch in South Dakota, and when he was 14 he was present when the Lakota living at Wounded Knee rebelled in 1890. The local settlers had barricaded themselves in the local town, but Leach's aunt told George to take a bull they had just purchased back to the farm. He drove the bull to the farm, passing farmers who were deserting their farms for the shelter of the town.

Leach said he didn't arrive until just before dawn, and then slept on the kitchen floor, afraid of being killed in his bed. In the morning, he had to check on the bull, but he was terrified he would be shot as he left the house. "It was a hundred yards to the barn, and I bet I set a world's record in that 100."

Later that winter, the Wounded Knee Massacre occurred and over 300 Lakota were killed by soldiers.

Leach went to Central High School in Minneapolis, but he barely graduated as he devoted most of his time to athletics. He enrolled at the University of Minnesota, and tried to get an appointment to West Point. He was the alternate on two occasions, but never made the final cut.

As the years went by, Leach, like his father, took on a variety of jobs. One of those was inspecting grain elevators in Minnesota and the Dakotas for an insurance company. Because there were few railroads, Leach rode his bicycle from town to town.

"I didn't consider it a good day's work unless I rode my bicycle for 100 miles and climbed to the top of 40 or 50 elevators."

He became an insurance agent, and then got into the banking business in South Dakota. At first, with the land speculation and booming economy, the banking business was lucrative, and at one time Leach owned 26 quarter sections of land. In the end, hard times came to the prairie and Leach was forced to sell his banks and land.

In 1902, he married Pearl Van Vorous, but the marriage took a bad turn in 1910 when she moved to the Bahamas to open a tea room. She never came back, and the two were finally divorced in 1923, although Leach said they always stayed close friends.

In 1905, at age 29, Leach joined Battery B of the First Minnesota Artillery, a National Guard outfit. "From then on, my whole life was wrapped up in the National Guard, and although I had to make a living on the side, it was my first love."



The 151st, under George Leach, was part of the noted Rainbow Division.

The men served for no pay, and, in fact, had to chip in 25 cents a week dues just to keep the battery going. Leach moved up from second to first lieutenant his first year, and was made captain in 1908.

The battery bought a stable, but it didn't work out. "The venture of owning our own horses was not a success, and to save the battery from going into debt, Phil Brooks and I bought the stable and the horses and we started a riding school."

There were ups and downs in the horse business, he said, "and mostly the latter." He was eventually forced to sell the stable and farm that he owned.

In 1916, Poncho Villa began making trouble on the Mexican border, and Leach's unit, which was now called the Second Battalion of the 151st Field Artillery, was called up and sent to Texas for training. Leach was promoted by Minnesota Gov. Burnquist to colonel, commanding the battalion.

After nine months of hanging around in Texas, the unit was sent home in February of 1917. Leach had a sense that America's entry in to World War I was imminent, and he struggled to keep the National Guard unit together, paying for their meals at a St. Paul Greek restaurant out of his own pocket. The strategy worked when Leach's unit became the first federally recognized unit in the United States in April when America officially entered the war.

"We were back at Ft. Snelling with the government, not me, feeding the men."

When President Wilson decided to create a national division, comprised of 26 Guard units and four regular Army regiments, Leach's 151st Field Artillery was chosen as one of the three artillery regiments. The 42nd Division was given the name "Rainbow Division" because, as Gen. MacArthur said, "It stretched like a rainbow from one end of America to the other."

The first movement for the 151st was from Ft. Snelling, marching down the same road Leach's father had marched down at the start of the Civil War. Leach took 1,260 men to Camp Mills, N.Y. In October, the division left for France, and was one of the first American divisions to reach the battlefield.

As the division embarked on a ship called the President Lincoln for transport, Col. Leach was told by the Army that he could not take his band instruments. Leach made a secret agreement with the captain of the ship to stow away the instruments, and they arrived with the regiment in France. "The result was that for months we had the only band in France."

World War I soldiers were instructed not to keep diaries, lest they fall into the hands of the enemy, but once again Leach ignored the order and kept a thorough diary of his war experience. He said he was convinced by the experience of his father, who did not keep a diary and regretted it, that the men under his command deserved a history of their service.

The diary has over 500 entries, and they tell a story of the 151st and the Rainbow Division over the 19 months they spent overseas.

After spending several weeks in France, the unit finally got its guns, French 75s, on Nov. 18th and began training at Guere.

Leach became brigade commander on Dec. 21 and later became regimental commander. On the 24th, a gun blew up and killed two men. "The men killed were blown to pieces. The destruction was so complete I could not determine the cause, but it was not the fault of the gun crew."

On the 28th of January, Leach got his first chance to go up in an observation balloon, used extensively in World War I for spotting for the artillery. "I never had to call on so much nerve before. I put on a fur lined suit and had the parachute strapped on me and climbed into the basket about four feet square and started up. The sensation was terrific." The balloon ascended to 2,000 feet.

In mid-February, the regiment began moving toward the front. On February 20, they arrived at Luneville. "At 7 a.m. I heard my first of the guns." By the 26th, Leach was involved in placing his guns. "Returning on the road to Pexonne, we had a close call from a shrapnel shell... This has been my first experience under fire, and it is not as bad as I thought it would be."

The regiment, about three kilometers behind the trenches, began exchanging fire with the German batteries, using forward observation from hilltops and from periscopes along the trench line. On March 4, Leach escorted Col. Douglas MacArthur, who at that time was the division's chief of staff, through the gun emplacements.

That same night, the Germans attacked the Rainbow Division's lines and 20 men were killed. The attack failed, and the Germans were driven off. The next day, March 5, there was heavy shelling all along the line, with several wounded. "This has been a bad day."

On the 6th, Leach was resting in the hay loft of the barn that was his quarters when a sentry informed him that a "general officer" wanted to talk to him. Leach descended the ladder and turned around to find himself face to face with Gen. Pershing, the leader of the American forces.

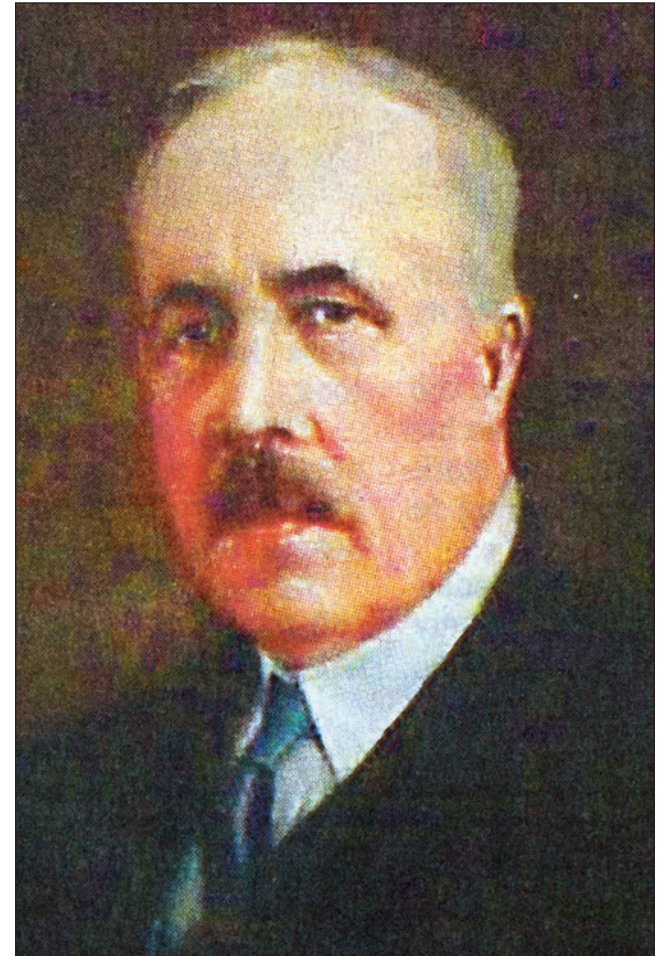
Leach came to attention, and Pershing immediately asked him what he had done to prepare himself to be a leader of a battalion of artillery. Leach stammered out the



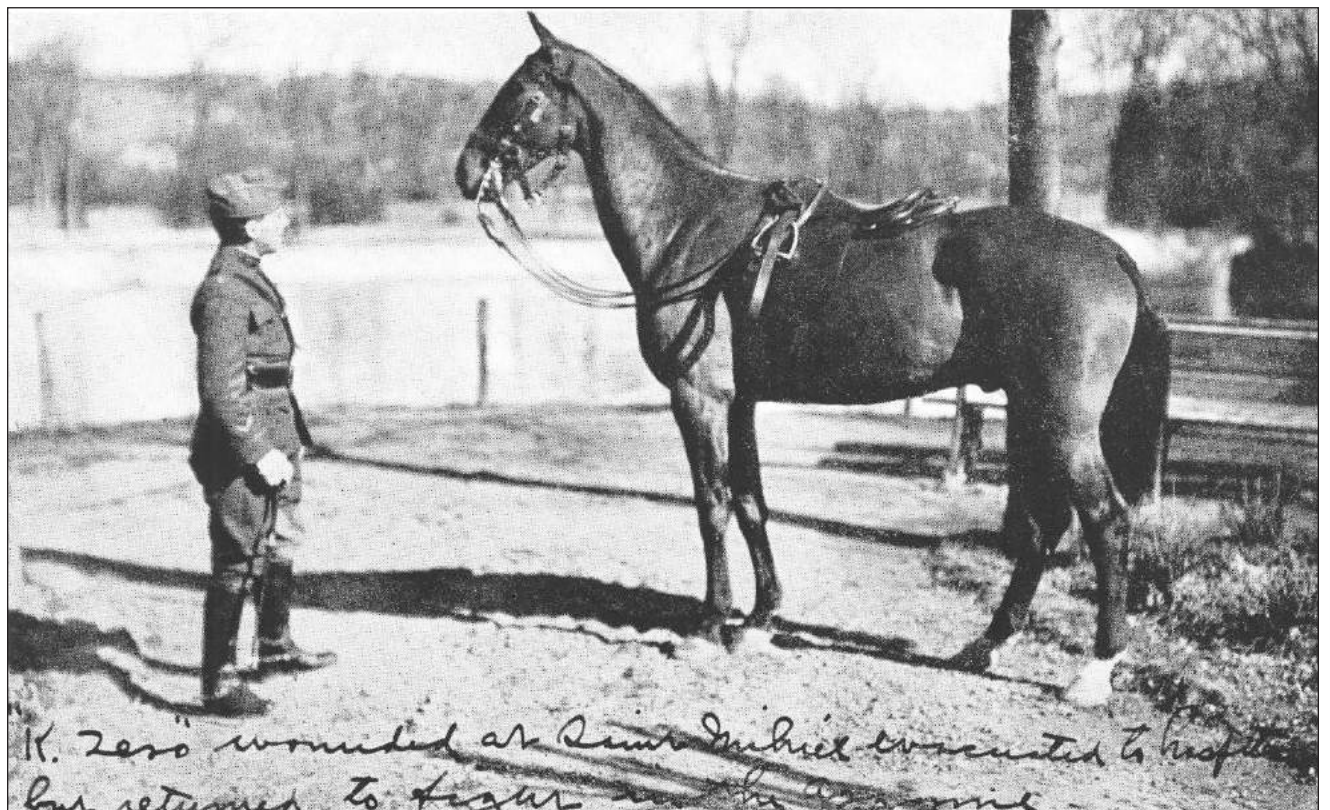
A battery in the 151st Field Artillery load a cannon. (US Army photo)



William Leach, George Leach's father, served as the adjutant for the famous First Minnesota Regiment in the Civil War. He later served on the general staffs of other units in the war.



A color portrait of George Leach during his time as mayor of Minneapolis. He served for 12 years as the mayor.



George Leach's horse during the war was K-Zero. The horse was wounded in the battle for Saint-Mihiel, but recovered and returned to service.

best answer he could in a minute's time. "If the general was impressed with my stated qualifications, he did not show it, but with as little ceremony as announced his arrival, he was gone."

The Division made its first attack on the German lines on March 9, and Leach's batteries fired 5,422 rounds in support of the advance. The regiment had 20 casualties from German shelling. The next day, Leach found out that 25 of his men had been gassed and were feeling the effects.

On the 15th of March, Leach was inspecting his positions when a German shell hit about 100 yards in front of his car. Because they were artillery men, they knew the next shell would be closer and they dove for the ditch. "The next shell struck the front of the car, cutting the steering post in two, and exploding in the back seat. As I lit in the ditch, one hand was evidently above the level of the road, and a piece of red hot shell hit me in the finger." The men lay in the ditch for 20 minutes while the Germans destroyed the car with more shelling.

The regiment withdrew from its position on March 22 after a month on the line. Leach spent much of the R&R simply walking in the French countryside. After the rest, the guns and men were returned to their former positions on March 30th. Leach now took on the responsibility of the division's trench mortars and five French batteries.

On April 4th, Leach went to brigade headquarters and got a pleasant surprise. "I read in the London Times that I had been cited for the D.S.C. (The Distinguished Service Cross, the Army's highest award for valor outside of the Medal of Honor) and it makes me very happy. In the first month of the war I received the highest award at the hands of the President and my number is sixth to be given in France. I don't deserve it and owe it to the bravery of my men. General McKinstry invited me to dinner in the evening to celebrate the occasion."

Leach explained in his diary that if the Germans hit one of their roads with five shells, the Americans would respond with 10 shells on one of their roads. In this way, the firing sometimes escalated into a general bombardment. At the same time, both sides had an understanding not to shell the small towns along the front. When the weather was cloudy and the Germans couldn't send up balloon or airplane observers, the 151st often had a band concert. In the distance, you could hear the German bands playing.

On May 23rd, Leach was inspecting Company E and found that the men were "tired and discouraged" and had not finished putting their guns in position.

Leach saw that the sand bags around the guns were not in place and he ordered them filled "against many protests." "Just before daylight one of their guns blew up and if the sand bags had not been filled, every member of the gun crew would have been killed. I was repaid for the tough discipline I had to administer the night before."

The artillery regiments took a hard shelling and a gas attack on May 19, and one unit lost 30 men. Leach's regiment had 14 wounded. "We kept up our firing all night and by daylight the gas concentration was very bad and the men exhausted. This was our worst night." It was nothing like what they would face in the future.

On June 14th, the Division again got orders to withdraw for rest. Leach rode horses and toured the countryside in the Moselle River Valley. By late June, the Division moved back toward the front at the Marne River.

On July 3rd, Leach wrote in his diary of his extraordinary luck thus far in the war. On this date he was out for dinner with other officers in the city of Chalon, and, although he had leave until morning, he had a hunch he should head back to his regiment.

He and his driver were barreling along in the dark, no headlights. "Without any warning that I can explain, I ordered the driver to stop at once, which he did with such force that we slid for eight or ten feet." The driver flipped on the headlights for a second, and there was a French infantry regiment lying down, resting in the road. "I shudder to think what would have happened."

Back on the road, roaring along again without lights, Leach thought he saw a darker shadow alongside the road. Again he ordered the driver to stop. This time it turned out to be a private from the regiment who had crashed his motorcycle and was unconscious. Leach found a message in the man's pocket, and it was orders to Leach to move the regiment before daylight. The motorcyclist had been heading to Chalon to deliver the orders.

On the 12th, Leach called on General MacArthur to congratulate him on his promotion. In the following days, the Americans braced for an expected attack by the massed German forces. On the 14th, a French colonel, finding out it was Leach's birthday, had a meal and party prepared. Captured prisoners said the German assault would begin at midnight, and at 10 minutes to 12, the party ended and Leach went to his command post. At midnight the bombardment began.

The Germans attacked with six divisions against two Allied divisions as the Battle of Champagne got underway. Four of Leach's guns were blown up in the terrific shelling of the night. By the 17th, the attack had been halted, but at a terrible cost.

"Practically all of the French and American soldiers in the front line were killed." Leach's regiment had 45 casualties and 65 horses killed. Leach's batteries fired 54,000



In a remarkable photo from the end of World War I, Gen. Jack Pershing, left, awards a Distinguished Service Cross to Gen. Douglas MacArthur. Awaiting their decorations are Col. George Leach and Col. William Donovan, later known as "Wild Bill" Donovan, head of the OSS during World War II. All three served in the 42nd Division.

rounds at the enemy. Under intense fire, four artillery pieces were brought up to replace those destroyed. Leach was overwhelmed by the heroism of his men. "I could not mention the name of a man in the regiment today that was not a hero."

The battle continued as the Allies went on the offensive near Chateau Thierry. Leach spent the night of July 25 in a French farmhouse "where I caught the best assortment of cooties I ever had." Leach explained that the French were careful savers of manure for their fields, and kept the pile near the house so they could watch it. "Just as we had prepared a simple supper, a German high explosive shell burst in the center of the pile, with results too disagreeable to mention."

The Allies were driving the Germans back at a rate of about two kilometers a day, and the countryside was littered with the bodies of the two armies. "The smell of the dead is very bad."

In addition to the German artillery, the regiment faced daily attacks from the German air force, which controlled the skies above France. At one point, a German aviator chased Leach and another officer around a tree, "so close that we had the opportunity to empty our automatics at him, but the necessity of dodging his machine gun bullets hindered our marksmanship."

On July 29th, Leach recorded that one French city, Sergy, was captured and re-captured 11 times over a period of several days. On the 31st, Leach wrote, "The blast of the artillery at my P.C. has been so bad since Sunday that I have the peculiar sensation of being loose in every joint."

On August 2nd, Leach received a direct order from MacArthur: "Advance with audacity."

On August 3rd, the regiment found the grave of Quentin Roosevelt, the son of the former president. Leach wrote to Theodore Roosevelt, and he later wrote back his thanks for locating the grave.

The personal conditions for the soldiers were awful. "The flies are terrible. It is almost impossible to eat without including them and the unburied dead make a very bad situation from a sanitary standpoint. I am covered with cooties and very uncomfortable."

The regiment was finally relieved on Aug. 10 after 26 straight days of combat. They spent nearly a month recuperating.

On Sept. 7, Gen. Pershing formally presented Leach, and 30 other members of the Rainbow Division, with the Distinguished Service Cross. Leach would also earn the Distinguished Service Medal and the Purple Heart during the war.

The ceremony was held on the eve of a great American attack in the war. Gen. MacArthur confided to Leach that the assault could cost as many as 75,000 casualties.

On Sept. 12th, the attack on the Saint-Mihiel Salient began with the 42nd Division in the center, supported by three other American Divisions. The division was also supported, for the first time in great numbers, by tanks. The troops advanced across No Man's Land and began pushing the Germans back through the city of Essey. It was Leach's duty to keep his artillery up with the advancing infantry. In just over a day, the Americans had pushed the Germans back 19 kilometers and captured seven towns, a thousand prisoners and great stores of ammunition.

There was a brief respite after the battle, but by early October, the 151st Field Artillery was in the thick of it again. On Oct. 8th, the regiment poured 6,000 shells into the German front lines in several hours. On Oct. 10th, Leach described the area: "The desolation of the battlefield is beyond description. Many dead Americans and Germans everywhere. Dead horses along every road. Every building and every tree destroyed and the ground one mass of muddy shell holes."

This battle marked the loss of perhaps the Rainbow Division's most famous soldier. The poet Joyce Kilmer was killed in the Saint-Mihiel Salient.

Leach and his men went six straight nights without sleep hammering the enemy positions. When they finally got a

night to sleep, on Oct. 16, nothing could bother them. "My P.C. (headquarters) was harassed all night with artillery fire, but we were too tired to care."

The German lines were slowly breaking all along the Western Front, and the 42nd Division went into stand-down for a few days. A new enemy was taking its toll however – sickness. The polluted water, unburied dead, and constant rain brought great misery to the Yanks.

On Oct. 27th, Leach was able to change clothes for the first time in six weeks. On the 31st, the regiment marked its first year in France, having spent 203 of those days in combat.

On Nov. 1st, the regiments supported a Marine attack, and on Nov. 4th, the 42nd Division began an advance. The division advanced to the Meuse River and pushed the Germans to the other side. The city of Sedan was captured. On Nov. 10th, Leach wrote, "There are many rumors of the armistice and there is surprisingly little rejoicing."

The next day, Nov. 11, 1918: "The Armistice is signed and at eleven A.M. the firing ceased. Nothing impressed me so much as the absolute silence."

The Division earned a splendid reputation during the war, and when the war ended it had penetrated the furthest point into the German lines. On Nov. 15th, Leach received a letter stating: "The 151st Field Artillery has fired accurately, rapidly and whenever requested. Its liaison with the infantry has been intimate, daring and most satisfactory. Its personnel is magnificent. The courtesy and professional attainments of its officers are exceptionally fine. It has been at all times abreast of the highest standard of gallantry and technical skill." It was signed by Gen. MacArthur who had just been named commanding officer of the Rainbow Division.

The division was part of the Army of Occupation of Germany, and after that service, it arrived back in the United States on April 26th, 1919. It had been overseas for a year and a half.

The 151st arrived back in Minnesota on May 8th, and was honored with parades in both Minneapolis and St. Paul. Throngs lined the streets and hung out of windows. "How shall I describe what I felt in that moment? What I felt, I am sure, every one in the Regiment felt. The vivid sense of relief – the thought of home – childhood memories – pride – sorrow – and chief of all, gratitude to the people of my own town, every one of whom at that moment seemed a friend."

After the war, Leach eventually returned to civilian life. "I stayed in the regular army as long as I could stand it." In 1921, he was convinced that he should run for Mayor of Minneapolis as a Republican. Politics were somewhat aggressive in Minneapolis in those days, and Leach received phone calls that if he continued his quest for mayor, his house would be burned down.

Leach won by 10,000 votes, and the day after the election his house was burned to the ground.

In 1922, he journeyed with a Minnesota contingent to Chicago for The American Legion national convention. At the convention he proposed support for universal service, an issue that became part of the Legion's platform for many years.

In 1924, he married again, this time a dancer and physical education instructor he had met while in France. She had been with a USO troupe.

In 1929, like many Americans, he was heavily invested in the stock market, and when it collapsed, he owed \$34,000. He was urged to take bankruptcy, but like his father before him, he instead worked to pay off his debt, which he finally did in 1935.

He stayed mayor until he was defeated in 1929. He became Chief of the National Guard Bureau in Washington from 1931 to 1935, and then returned to Minneapolis where he was elected mayor for two more terms, leaving office in 1941. He stayed in the National Guard and commanded the 151st for many years, and he later commanded the 59th Field Artillery Brigade of the 34th Division until 1940.

He died in Los Angeles in 1955 at age 79. He is buried in Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

Posts at Goal during the 2017 National Commander's Tour



ARGYLE POST 353



ELYSIAN POST 311



KARLSTAD POST 445



MIDDLE RIVER 444



BENA POST 2001



RICHMOND POST 292



KEEWATIN POST 452



BRUNO POST 563



ZIMMERMAN POST 560



HILLMAN POST 602



ST. JOSEPH POST 328



KINGSTON POST 483



3M POST 599



APPLE VALLEY POST 1776



NEW PRAGUE POST 45



WOODBURY POST 501



MAPLE PLAIN POST 514



PINE CITY BUS -- National Commander Charles Schmidt poses with the Pine City Post 51 honor guard in front of the post's new mini-bus.

District Commanders

FIRST DISTRICT

Sylvan Fix
Commander



March is Legion Birthday month. Hopefully you have a great celebration planned which includes finishing up with all your renewals. The revitalization we had in January went well. We did some mailings in conjunction with that and are now seeing some good returns with transfers as well as resigning past members. Thanks to Wabasha County Commander Andru Peters for putting forward a proposal to eliminate or reduce the tax burden for Veterans organizations on their property. He has been working with several members of the House who now have the bill HF 555 which will be included in tax Omnibus Bill. There is also a companion bill in the Senate SF 568. Be sure to get with your representatives and show your support of these bills. Happy St Patrick's Day to everyone and Happy Birthday American Legion. God Bless.

SECOND DISTRICT

Mark Coney
Commander



Thank you everyone for working so hard to get those memberships turned in as I know they are coming in at a slow trickle now and we need to work harder than ever to get each and everyone of them. We will have our District revitalization on March 31st and April 1st. The time for both days will be from 12:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. The locations are Adrian on the 31st, and Lake Crystal on the 1st. If you want to come and help either one of those days, please contact either myself or Mike Schaffer so we can anticipate how many will be there.

Come one, come all. The 2nd District testimonial will be at the Round Lake Post on Saturday April 15th. Social hour will begin at 5 p.m. with dinner and he program beginning at 6 p.m. The cost for the meal is \$10 and the menu includes: Pork Chop, Baked Potato, Green Beans, Cole Slaw, Dinner Roll, and Dessert. If you are interested in attending, please mail your reservations to the following address:

Larry Yeske, 33001 Ulrich Ave., Round Lake, MN, 56167. Please make checks payable to : Charles Flentje Post # 461 and in the comments line, put "Commander's Testimonial."

Upcoming event: March 19th - 2nd District jr. Auxiliary Convention, Belview beginning at 12 p.m.

THIRD DISTRICT

Mike Maxa
Commander



Half way through my year, Mid-winter winter conference in the books and thank you Post 79 Montgomery for the great hospitality. As promised we changed the program up and the posts in attendance had a voice. The Vice Commander's breakout sessions were a great addition and the feedback can be used by all Legionnaires. I felt the discussions were very engaging and great ideas formed. Here are the highlights: Ask to join and ask for help; explain Veteran benefits; advertise, tell our story, explain great programs we support; Make our Veteran's and their families welcome and don't disrespect. We are all war era Veterans and no war is more important than the other. We are all here for the same cause, Veterans-Youth-Security-Americanism; A family atmosphere with activities for the kids and spouses before the meetings; Yellow Ribbon partnership; Open to new ideas; Post to Post interactions and so much more, my space is limited.

Our young veteran's forum had a lot of input and we need to listen to our young Legionnaires. They want to be a part of the family. They will help when they can we just have to keep asking. Don't give up on them and don't forget them. "Ask." We need to mentor and bring them along at their pace. Don't forget they are chasing careers and raising families plus there are ten times more activities for these kids than our era.

FOURTH DISTRICT

Randy Bastyr
Commander



Greetings to all members of the Fabulous Fourth. We have moved up to 9th place in the Department membership race. Although it's better than 10th, it's not where I had expected us to be in March. We have only a few months to regain the lead and cruise to the finish line at 100 percent

for the third year in a row. Let's turn our attention to recruiting new members and follow up with those former members and see why they haven't renewed. Maybe they just need a nudge to come back. Also, check to make sure you too have renewed. We sometimes think we paid our dues only to find out we forgot. Let's go Fabulous Fourth, I know we can do this together.

The 4th District Joint Testimonial dinner will be held on April 21st at my home post in No St Paul, Post 39. Cost will be \$18 per person. Reserve your tickets now.

Upcoming District event: March 19th - VA Hospital visitation @ 12:30.

FIFTH DISTRICT

Ray Eiden
Commander



February was an eventful month with a visit from National Commander Schmidt to our Richfield Post 435. Richfield was a gracious host and we showed him what "Minnesota Nice" is all about. Commander Schmidt gave an inspiring talk and answered many questions. Our Oratorical contest was held Feb. 18th at the Richfield Post. A big thank you to Dick Ward who chaired this event and all the volunteers who helped to make it a success. We are currently at 85.85 % of goal for membership. Our next target is 90% by March 8th. I encourage our Posts to use the Commanders Membership Push under Post Reports when they go to MyLegion.org. They will be able to print unrenewed letters along with labels for collection of dues. This is a good tool and easy to use. We need to contact our unpaid members and this is a good way to do it.

A spaghetti dinner will be held on March 7th at 5:00 p.m. at the Wold-Chamberlain Post 99 before our district assembly. Half of the proceeds will go toward our district project. There will also be an election for finance officer at this meeting.

On April 2nd the Wold-Chamberlain Post will hold a pancake and sausage breakfast at 8:00 a.m. This is another fundraiser for our district project. Our Testimonial Dinner will be April 15th at Post #1. More details are to follow.

It is my honor to serve the Fighting Fifth and I look forward to the months ahead.

Our next Hospital Visitation will be March 5th at 2:00 p.m.

SIXTH DISTRICT

Vernonica Fernlund
Commander



The 6th District was honored to host three of the National Commander's tour stops in February. Leech Lake Post 2001, McGregor Post 23 and Elk River Post 112 provided outstanding hospitality for all who attended, great job. The 6th District Convention will be held in Park Rapids, June 2-3, 2017. Every Post in the District should have representation at the convention. Thank you to all who have donated to our joint project to raise funds for the St. Cloud VA Medical Center to purchase a new golf cart. The project is going well. March is a very busy month with membership rallies, executive board meetings, St. Patrick's Day and don't forget Happy 98th Birthday American Legion March 15, 2017. We still have a lot work ahead of us to reach our goal for membership. Continue recruiting and renewing and Keep Storm'n for membership.

SEVENTH DISTRICT

Garylee Davenport
Commander



Well, it's already March. I hope that everyone survived Valentines Day without too much trouble.

Congrats to all of our Post's that are at 100% and to the Post's that have made the March 5th 90% cut off. At the time of writing this newsletter, the 7th district was in 6th place in the state at 89.98%. We have some work to do to try and move back up in the rankings. This in turn will help the Department of Minnesota stay on top of the rankings in the nation.

Just a little reminder, it is not too late to get a Revitalization done. If there are any Post's that would like to do one, please contact myself or the 7th District membership director, Richard Wog.

My project this year is to raise funds for the Brain Science Foundation. This really hits home for my family. My cousin's husband was shot by a sniper in Iraq. The bul-

let went in through his mouth and exited behind his ear. He did survive his wounds, but he no longer has any short term memory, which has caused a lot of problems.

If anyone would like me to visit your post for a meeting, please give me a call.

EIGHTH DISTRICT

Kenneth Oliver Jr.
Commander



First a little housekeeping. The 8th & 10 membership rally will be held on April 1st at the West Duluth Post 71 and will begin at 10 am. The 8th District Legion/SAL and Auxiliary Convention date has been changed to April 22nd at West Duluth Post 71 with the Convention Convening at 10 a.m. Remember the District doesn't run itself and we need participation from posts/squads and units. The convention is where we elect district officers. To do that we need people willing to hold those offices. If you are interested in holding a District office, please submit your endorsement letter to the District Adjutant or Auxiliary Secretary as soon as possible.

Next let's talk membership. If you haven't sent in your 2017 membership dues please do it immediately and yes, I'm talking to our Legion, Sons and Auxiliary Members. I know what you're thinking. She is sounding like a broken record, and believe me I wish I didn't have to talk about membership every article, but the truth is without membership our programs would languish and die and our mission is far too important to let that happen.

Finally let's talk about Boy and Girls State. Remember to get those registration fees in everyone. The 2017 sessions will be here before we know it.

-- Jennifer Havlick, Past Commander

NINTH DISTRICT

Eric Wilkens
Commander

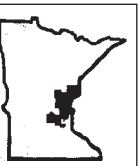


Greetings from the Roaring Ninth District. After a successful mid-winter in January, the focus of February was membership. We used the lists provided by National via MyLegion.org to solicit those members of Post 1982 with email addresses and gained some new members into Posts. Also, several Posts have been using the new mailing campaign available online to bring at-large members into Posts and in some cases, we are getting those whose memberships have lapsed to return. I want to congratulate our Vice-Commander of the year Arlo Rude for the fantastic job he has done. I was not able to be there to see him get his award due to the ND Air National Guard Outstanding Airman of the Year banquet being the same day. I am also happy to report that the Ninth District will be submitting applications for Outstanding Enlisted of the year, a feat that has not happened in several years. On March 18th, we will hold a membership rally in Barnesville and continue to push our numbers up.

As of February 15, we have 12 Posts at goal and as a District we will make the 90% goal for March 8th.

TENTH DISTRICT

Bonnie Hanson
Commander



Here we are going into March 2017. I can't believe the weather is going to be in the 60. But we know that can change.

Just wanted to say what a fun time it was meeting the National Commander at those 3 stops in our 10th District and the weather was great for his visit.

We have rescheduled our revitalization to Thursday Mar 23 from 1-5 p.m., Friday, Mar. 24 from 4-8 p.m. and Saturday, March 25 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Location is the Mound 398 Post, 2333 Wilshire Blvd., Mound MN 55364. And we could use volunteers to help with the phone calls. Please contact me if you can help.

March is a very busy month for, I think, everyone, but can I just put a footnote here. My motto is "Family First." As this Family we do need to work together not separately. We are all not perfect and when we start to air things that need to stay with the Family and to not judge certain things how does it affect the family unit? Ok enough of my footnote. Also, my project is "Helping Paws."

Have a good month and God bless you all. Stay safe in all your travels.

Taps

Anderson, Alice, 95, Army Air Corp veteran of World War II, died Feb. 4, 2017. She was Department Historian in 1985-86, 1989-90, 1991-92, and 1995-96. She was a member of ANAVICUS. She was a past commander of Robinsdale Post 251.

Davis, Herbert A., 97, Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died Feb. 9, 2017. He served on Guam and Iwo Jima, delivering supplies to the front. He was a past Fourth District commander, 1990-91. He was a member of St. Paul Tjernlund Post 451.

Anderson, Paul, 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 31, 2017. He played on an Army football team before being stationed in Germany. He was Ninth District commander in 2007-08 and Ninth District Adjutant, 2010-11. He was a member of Moorhead Post 21.

Malinski, Harold A., 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 21, 2017. He served in the Signal Corps. He was a past historian and member of the rifle squad at Litchfield Post 104.

Bartlette, Harris, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 29, 2017. He was awarded two Purple Hearts. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Lucas, Sheldon "Dewey," 72, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 27, 2017. He was a member of Keewatin Post 452.

Soukup, Joseph C., 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was a member of New Prague Post 45.

Krueger, Douglas Lee, 66, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 27, 2017. He was a corpsman. He was a member of Breckenridge Post 53.

Hess, Wallace L., 71, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 26, 2017. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

Quast, Milo W., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 30, 2017. He was a member of Arlington Post 250 and Gaylord Post 433.

Vogt, Leonard A., 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 4, 2017. He served in the Military Police. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Kahl, Clarence A., 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 7, 2017. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Inden, Joseph Paul, 96, Coast Guard veteran of World War II, died Jan. 13, 2017. He became a First Class Seaman and was stationed in the United States and Greenland. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

McLaren, Leo J., 86, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 1, 2017. He was stationed in Key West. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Matvick, Jerome J., 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 27, 2017. He was a member of Hillman Post 602.

Gjerstad, Russell, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 19, 2017. He was a member of Long Prairie Post 12.

Sanborn, Earnest E., 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 18, 2017. He was a member of Princeton Post 216.

Lingle, David T., 93, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Jan. 24, 2017. He was a member of Princeton Post 216.

Dahl, Vernon C., Jr., 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 29, 2017. He was a deep sea diver. He was a member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Hatlestad, Robert L., 88, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 22, 2017. He was a aerographer's mate aboard the USS Midway. He was a member of Glencoe Post 95.

Maiers, Stan H., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 6, 2017. He served as a cook in Germany. He was a member of Stewart Post 125.

Bridges, Frank W., 90, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 28, 2017. He served in Hawaii. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Decker, Wallace, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 5, 2017. He was a member of Bertha Post 366.

Hebig, Milton George, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 19, 2017. He was a member of Lismore Post 636.

Lorsung, Ronald E., 82, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 28, 2017. He was a member of Millerville Post 527.

Montonye, Vernon "Jack," 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 27, 2017. He was a member of Graceville Post 297.

Ellington, Ronald L., 96, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 27, 2017. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Johnson, Marlen D., 86, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 14, 2017. He was a corporal. He was a member of Rice Post 473.

Larson, Donald Stephen, 95, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was assigned to the 690th Airborne Anti-Aircraft Battery and served in Africa, Sicily, Anzio Beach and the Italian campaign. He later served with

the 536th Field Artillery. He was a member of Herman Post 378.

Miller, Dale L., 74, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 5, 2017. He was a member of Mora Post 201.

Koolmo, Jerome O., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 3, 2017. He was a member of Mora Post 201.

Harkins, John L., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 5, 2017. He was a member of Amboy Post 276.

Wollin, Hilton Clarence, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 8, 2017. He was a member of Keewatin Post 452.

Vettel, Lowell P., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 8, 2017. He was a communication line foreman. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Engelhart, Phillip, 87, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 9, 2017. He fought at the Chosin Reservoir and was one of the Chosin Few. He was a member of Bloomington Post 550.

Schlichting, Gerald J., 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 25, 2017. He was a member of Bloomington Post 550.

Hagen, O.H., "Buzz," 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 14, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Leland, Kenneth R., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 28, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Levisen, Arnold J., 97, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 4, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Simonson, Eugene E., 78, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 7, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Hively, Ray, 95, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Jan. 20, 2017. He was a sergeant. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Marolt, Joseph M., 96, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 15, 2017. He earned a Bronze Star at the Battle of the Bulge. He was a member of Brainerd Post 255.

Moengen, Wayne D., 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 14, 2017. He served on the USS Newport News during the Cuban missile crisis. He was a member of Monticello Post 260.

Hauck, Donald A., 81, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 7, 2017. He was a past commander and sitting post chaplain of Brainerd Post 255.

Guin, James W., 81, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War. He was a member of Brainerd Post 255.

Couchigian, William J., 84, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 13, 2017. He served in the 567th Operations Squadron as a teletype operator and received two Bronze Stars. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Mohr, Donald H., 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 5, 2017. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

Lucas, Hollis "Luke," 87, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 17, 2017. He was a club manager and baseball volunteer at St. Paul Park Post 98.

Stang, Emanuel, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 27, 2017. He was a member of Richmond Post 292.

Ressemann, Roman P., 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 9, 2017. He was a guard and an interpreter during the Nuremberg Trials. He was a member of Richmond Post 292.

Hansgen, Everett "Junior," 78, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 10, 2017. He was a member of Richmond Post 292.

Smith, Kurt S., 92, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Feb. 12, 2017. He was a member of Bloomington Post 550.

Johnson, Roy E., 85, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 13, 2017. He was a member of Janesville Post 281.

Jorgenson, Rudie Vallee, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 8, 2017. He was a staff sergeant. He was a member of Zimmerman Post 560.

Nelson, Eugene V., 90, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 23, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Krogfus, Donald W., 93, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 30, 2017. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Shannon, Glenn W., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 11, 2017. He was a past commander of Willmar Post 167.

Walsh, John J., 87, Air National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 26, 2017. He was a member of Bayport Post 491.

Stinson, Bruce B., 90, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 19, 2017. He was a radio operator. He was a member of Lake City Post 110.

Magnuson, Kermit L., 90, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 20, 2017. He was a member of Middle River Post 444.

Hunt, Orin R., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 1, 2017. He served with the 375th Mounted Police. He was a member of Middle River Post 444.

Peterson, Kenneth, 85, Army veteran of the Korean

War, died Feb. 11, 2017. He was a member of New London Post 537.

Powers, Howard, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 17, 2017. He was a member of New London Post 537.

Latchman, Charles Jr., 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 16, 2017. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Bastyr, Maynard, 87, Army Reserve veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 3, 2017. He was a past adjutant of Jordan Post 3.

Hensel, Walter, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 20, 2017. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Fischer, Wallace H., 92, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, and Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 8, 2017. He served in India in World War II. He retired from the Army Reserve as a first sergeant. He was a member of the St. Paul Business and Professional Post 450.

Hasse, Terry D., 68, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 20, 2017. He served on the USS Rich, DD-820, off the coast of Vietnam. He was a member of Blue Earth Post 89.

Martinson, Donald Marcellis, 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb. 20, 2017. He served with the Seabees on Okinawa. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Swenson, Raymond Roger, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 20, 2017. He served in the South Pacific and in Japan. He was a member of Alden Post 404.

Klejeski, Lewis, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 14, 2017. He was a member of Cloquet Post 262.

Wolf, James, 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 12, 2017. He was a member of Cloquet Post 262.

Chermak, Arthur Joseph, 87, Army veteran veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 12, 2017. He was a member of Lowry Post 253.

Staricha, James J., 86, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 2, 2017. He served in Korea. He was a member of Challenger Post 521.

Veldhouse, Dennis, 71, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 4, 2017. He was a staff sergeant and was an air crew medic on B-52s flying into Vietnam. He also served in Goose Bay, Canada, and Minot. He was a member of Herman Post 378.

Bodger, Richard A., 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb. 4, 2017. He was a retired chief judge of the 8th Judicial District. He was a member of Benson Post 62.

Snedden, Carl Stephen, 59, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 14, 2017. He was a member of Windom Post 206.

Carlson, Wayne, 70, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 4, 2017. He was a member of Windom Post 206.

Molitor, Gilbert, 96, Navy veteran of World War II, died Feb. 1, 2017. He served in the South Pacific with the Seabees. He was a member of Windom Post 206.

Nelson, Roger L., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 17, 2017. He served in the headquarters ordinance battalion in Germany. He was a member of Elysian Post 311.

Hanson, Arnold D., 80, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 3, 2017. He was a member of Faribault Post 43.

Kosevich, George M., 87, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 19, 2017. He was a member of Faribault Post 43.

Hunter, Robert K., 87, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 31, 2017. He was a member of Faribault Post 43.

Schweisthal, David C., 79, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 6, 2017. He was a former Rice County sheriff. He was a member of Faribault Post 43.

Kittleson, James D., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 19, 2017. He was a past commander of Faribault Post 43.

Schuenke, Roger W., 86, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 22, 2017. He was a past commander of Faribault Post 43.

Niner, Brian K., 56, Army veteran of the Iraq War, died Feb. 22, 2017. He was a member of Faribault Post 43.

Bach, Ronald, 69, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 5, 2017. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Merschman, Leroy Benedict, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 22, 2017. He served in the 77th Division on Okinawa. He earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. He was a member of Bagley Post 16.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 17-8

President Carol Kottom

March 2017

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

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

The President's Column

By
Carol Kottom



Hope everyone had a fun and loving Valentine Day. The rally in New Prague was wonderful and the crowd was great. What a post home they have. I certainly hope that everyone who belongs there appreciates the facility and all the work involved in maintaining it.

Thank you to The American Legion for sharing the National Commander with all of us. What a fantastic man. Bruce and I enjoyed traveling to three of the locations he was at. Of course, we didn't have to travel too far for the one here in Buffalo. He is an amazing man and I for one, do not have the endurance to travel for the miles and time he has come so far. He has already visited over 140 posts and isn't nearly done with his agenda yet.

The Grand of MN, Military Order of the Cooties, invited us to participate in their day at the Minneapolis VA Home. I visited the St Cloud VAHCS, and Bruce went with me to Sioux Falls VAHCS for the National Salute to Veterans celebration. The veterans received Valentine cards made by the school students, balloons and even some stuffed animals. It is always wonderful to visit the hospitals and homes where our veterans live and are so well cared for.

Montgomery had a wonderful Sweetheart dinner where the Legionnaires served the Auxiliary members. You know the Auxiliary is doing something right because the attendance was great. And I have been told that this same group attends their monthly meetings. Wonderful bunch of ladies. Thank you for the courtesies that were extended to us.

Ten Auxiliary members went to Washington DC for the Legislation Conference. The Auxiliary is here to support The American Legion in their efforts on behalf of our veterans and their families. In preparing for the "On the Hill" with our representatives and senators, we have heard some guest speakers. There were panelists offering information on Engaging America's Women Veterans, Caregivers and Working Together to Honor and Serve Veteran Families. We heard from Jane Meier Hamilton MSN, RN who published The Caregiver's Guide to Self-Care; Laura Bauer who is the national program director for Operator Family Caregiver at the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving; Melissa Comeau, a caregiver and the IT Systems and Online Peer Support Community director for the Military and Veteran Caregiver Network (MVCN); John Schall, who has bipartisan experience in senior positions with the Executive and Legislative branches of government; and Steve Schwab, the executive director of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. The second panelists presented on Working Together to Honor and Serve Veteran Families. Zachariah Fike, the founder of the nonprofit organization Purple Hearts Reunited, whose mission is to return lost or stolen military medals of valor to veterans or their families; Jim Knotts, the CEO of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund; Susan Mennenga, who serves as the WWI Centennial project manager and liaison for the Pritzker Military Museum.

We spent the day on the Hill Tuesday visiting with the Representatives and Senators and relaying the concerns of The American Legion for our veterans. I was privileged to be able to see Senators Al Franken and Amy Klobuchar. Then we all gathered to hear the President's address.

The Auxiliary Academy is REAL close to rolling out to our members. They have just completed a beta testing and are making some minor changes. Academy 101 provides an overview of the organizations mission as well as an understanding of the commitment ALA members make to veterans when they join. Check it out in the latest Auxiliary magazine. Then keep an eye open and schedule a time when you can take the class. Maybe your Unit can take the class as a group.

Annual Junior conference will be held at Forest Lake

The 54th Annual Department Junior Conference will be held Saturday, April 8th at the Forest Lake American Legion Post 225, hosted by the Third District. We are hoping that a large number of the Junior members are able to attend and participate. If your Juniors have never attended a Department Junior Conference, plan to join us this year. Junior members will enjoy a "fun night" on Friday, April 7th, the night before the opening of the Conference. The 3rd District and Junior Activities Chairman Pam Hoshal have been working hard to make this a special evening for the Junior members.

On Saturday the Conference will be called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Kiana Coleman-Woods, the Department Honorary Junior President. This is a day when the Juniors become reacquainted with each other, make new friends, learn how to conduct a meeting and participate in it. This meeting is a JUNIOR Conference and the JUNIOR members run it. They are very capable young women.



KIANA COLEMAN-WOODS

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

Our Department Convention is coming up fast and will be held July 13-15, 2017 at the Shooting Star Casino/Hotel in Mahanomen, hosted by the Mahanomen American Legion Family #31. Further information will be forthcoming. Our appreciation is sent, in advance, to all The Legion and Auxiliary members who will be serving on the convention committee for their efforts to ensure another outstanding Department Convention. Circle these dates on your calendar and plan to attend. Don't wait to make your hotel reservations. Call 1-800-453-7827 and give them the booking code 1738 to get the proper rates.

Don't forget the Poppy contests that will be held at the Department Convention. They are Table Center Piece and tri-fold education board on poppies, history, what your Unit has done, etc. (Please check the Trophy & Awards for all specifics) Entries must be at the Department Convention on Thursday, July 13th. Both of these contests are easy to participate in. Get your thinking caps on and start creating.

'HAPPY BIRTHDAY'

"Happy 98th birthday" American Legion. Units, make sure to plan something fun to recognize your Post and wish them a "Happy Birthday"? We, of the Auxiliary, are proud to serve with you for the purposes upon which our organizations were founded. March is also Community Service month.

2018 DIRECT BILLING

All Units received a request for information on your Unit's 2018 dues. This information is due in the Department office by March 15th. If your Unit has not yet responded, please send in the information. The form is on the mnala.org website under the Forms tab and select 2018 Unit Data Form Direct Billing. When setting your 2018 dues please keep in mind the National and Department dues of \$18.00 per person so your Unit dues should be greater than that so you have some working capital in your Units. If we haven't received your form, a second notice will be in the next Unit mailing. Also, please be sure and get your 2017/2018 Officers list to the Department Office as soon as possible.

2017 POPPY UPDATE

Poppy time is fast approaching. To date, 341 out of 440 Units have ordered their 2017 small and/or large Poppies. To the remaining 99 units, please place your orders now.

Shipment of Poppy orders began as orders were received, processed, and Poppies were available. We are shipping orders based on the 'needed by' date reported by the Unit when the Poppies were ordered. Be certain to check your order upon receipt and contact the Department office if there are any discrepancies. A Unit may order additional Poppies at any time, right up to Poppy Day

Keep in mind who assembles these poppies. They are made by our Veterans, many of which have disabilities. If the poppies you receive aren't as perfect as you would like, remember where they came from. Let people know who assembles these - I think you will be surprised at how many individuals don't know.

GIRLS STATE

Remember your application for reservation and your \$300.00 registration fee must be received by March 31st to reserve a place for your American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State citizen. If your Unit has not yet sent this in, please take care of it immediately. Reservations with the payment of the \$300.00 registration fee for each candidate will be accepted on a "first-come-first served" basis. Upon processing your Unit's reservation fee you will receive the necessary registration packet for each citizen you are sponsoring. American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State can accommodate 445 citizens.

A Unit may send as many young women to American Legion Auxiliary Girls State as they wish to. The candidate must be a Minnesota resident, attend a Minnesota school or home school.

The 2017 session of American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will be held at Bethel University in St. Paul, June 11-17. We look forward to the 71st annual American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State week and another educational and successful session.

PRESIDENT'S PROJECT

Department President Carol Kottom appreciates your support of her special Department President's Projects this year. Her projects are raising funds for a 6 passenger golf cart for the St. Cloud VAHCS. Carol is pleased to announce that there have been funds raised to purchase the cart and it has been ordered. That doesn't mean her work is done. Any funds received in excess of the cost of the golf cart will be split between the other VAHCS' and Veterans Homes. President Carol thanks each of you very much.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications for all scholarships awarded by the Department are due by March 15th. Announcement of the recipients will appear in this column when the judging is completed. Make sure and follow all of the rules on the application. We don't want our students disqualified because something isn't signed.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Ah those Annual Reports. Annual report time is fast approaching. All Units should be preparing their reports covering the time period April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. The white and all yellow copies of all reports must be mailed to the Department office on or before April 15th. Please mail the blue copies to your District President. No matter how much or how little your Unit has been able to contribute in time, energy, resources and talent to our programs, it is important that everything be included in your reports. Your reports make up our Department and National reports. You have all received your forms - let's have a 100% turn in this year.

TROPHY AND AWARD ENTRIES

Entries for any trophy and award competition are due by April 15th, unless otherwise stated in the rules. Be certain to label each entry with the name of the award you are

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applying for. A separate entry is needed for each award unless the winning Department entry is being forwarded for National competition. See the rules for complete details.

You may apply for any award, whether your Unit has reached its membership goal or not, unless that requirement is stated in the rules. Please apply for awards - let's get the members recognition for the hard work they do for our Veterans. To save yourself some postage, just mail these right along in your Annual Reports envelope.

MESSAGE TO UNIT TREASURERS

If you were one of the lucky Unit Treasurers to receive a statement from the Department Office with a 2nd Notice on it in red, it wasn't meant to be a nasty past due statement. All statements were sent out to the Unit Presidents in the September Unit mailing. Many times the information in the Unit Mailing doesn't get forwarded to the proper people in the Unit. It was decided to send to those Units that haven't paid their bonding fee to the Treasurers. Our method of madness worked, we have received many payments from that second mailing. Thank you Treasurers for getting this taken care of.

NEW FUNDRAISERS

Our Long Range Strategic Planning Committee has put together two fund raising projects that I am sure each and every one of you will be willing to donate to. Chairman Sandy Fredrickson is still requesting recipes for our 100th Auxiliary birthday cookbook. You can find the form on our website, mnala.org under Strategic Planning/Forms. Every Unit also received a form in the last Unit mailing. Send as many recipes as you want - make sure and put the person's name and Unit number the recipe is from.

The second fundraiser is one that is very close to Secretary Sandie's heart as she worked hard to get the proper permissions and also a company that would manufacture the items. We will be offering a bracelet similar to the ones you see on some wrists already. We have changed it up with putting every one of The American Legion emblems, a representation of each of the Armed Forces, the Poppy, POW, Poppy, United States Flag, the eagle and also a tile of the State of Minnesota. It turned out simply beautiful. We will be asking for a \$5.00 or larger donation for the bracelet. Right now there are 14 tiles on the bracelet and it fits me just right. It is pretty big for our smaller members, so I believe we will be getting some with 13 tiles to make the bracelet smaller, just not sure what tile will be taken out at this time.

SECRETARY SANDIE'S NOTES

Not quite sure what happened to February but it has flown by - so much for our "quite time" in the Department Office. We had a great representation from Minnesota at the Washington DC Conference - President Carol talked about it in her article. Our last formal membership rally was held at Legionville on March 4. It is always so much fun to attend these rallies. You get to see so many members of the entire American Legion Family and meet new friends. I challenge each of you to attend at least one in the 2017/2018 Auxiliary year.

As you can see from the article on Fundraisers, I sure did pump myself up didn't I? Just to let you know the committee did all of the initial work on these bracelets, especially Robin Dorf - I just finished up the project. We are hoping that each of you purchases one of these bracelets - if you would like to pre-order them, please call me at the Department Office any time and I will start a list.

Now, I have made a decision to quit keeping track of how many of you actually read my notes. My heartfelt thanks to all of you who take an interest in our organization. I love working here and love working with all of The American Legion Family members. My shout out for this month goes to Denny K - thanks for supporting our Omelet in a Bag breakfast in Montgomery. Also to Betty "Tiny" E. She called me to tell me she reads the Auxiliary news every month and also reads it to her members attending their monthly meetings - how great is that?

Countdown is on for Grandbaby #5 - Elizabeth Mary is set to make her entrance in mid-May. I am sure hoping my son makes it through this entire ordeal. He has always been the baby and never realized what happens to women when they are pregnant - can any of you relate to that? His last comment to me was, "Mom, it's one and done" no more tries to keep the family name going". Little does he know that both of their journey is just the beginning. One ALWAYS has children and you treasure them forever, especially when they leave the nest. No other news in my world, just ready for a "good time" night pretty soon - now that ice fishing is over - Vrzy, Dick and Susie, pick a date to make some new memories!! Until next month, God Bless all of you and God Bless our wonderful country.

UNIT MENTORING

A meeting was held on Saturday, February 18 at the Montevideo Post 59 for the purpose of a new idea of men-

toring of one Unit with another that is having problems keeping their Unit active. The Montevideo Unit, which has just reorganized themselves in the past couple of years stepped up to the plate to help Granite Falls Unit 69 get up and running again. Department President Carol, 7th District President Betty, 7th District Membership Chairman Karla Minnick and Department Secretary met with members of both Montevideo and Granite Falls to put together a plan to keep Granite Falls active. It was a very educational and worthwhile brainstorming session and thanks must be given to Montevideo Unit 59 President Denise Turk for putting all of this together and taking the time to help one of her sister Units. If there are any other Units out there that need help in getting their members active again, please contact the Department Office and we will set something like this up for you.

March is Children and Youth month

This year the focus of the American Legion Auxiliary Children and Youth Program emphasizes protecting, caring for and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans' and military families.

There are a wide range of opportunities that can be utilized by Units and their members to bring awareness to children's needs.

Support Children and Youth in your community: Star Spangled Kids, Youth Hero Awards/Good Deed Awards, etc. Some ideas for members and units: Offer to make a "Star Spangled" presentation to your local schools; contact local high schools to invite them to encourage their students to enter the American Legion Oratorical Contest, contact local schools, churches, and other groups to make them aware of the Youth Hero/Good Deed Awards; Identify children in your community who may be or are facing hospitalization for the first time and may benefit from Josh and friends dog and book.

Support military children and youth: Kids of Deployed are Heroes2 (KDH2); GI Josh is a plush dog and accompanying storybook used to help ease separation fears for the military children.

Ideas for members and units: Volunteer at a Family Readiness Group event where KDH2 "I'm a Hero 2 buttons/stickers can be distributed; give a GI Josh to the child of a deployed service member; wear purple on April 15 in honor of Purple Up for Military Kids day.

Support veterans' children and youth: Homeless veterans' children-Klinger's Story of honor and hope; Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is affiliated with the American Legion Family.

Ideas for members and units: contact your local churches, homeless shelters and food pantries to identify homeless veteran's children. Ask what their needs might be and offer them your services.

Offer a program on Homelessness - Invite other veteran related service groups, Girl and Boy Scout groups, 4-clubs, your community, etc.; purchase the book, Klinger, a Story of Honor and Hope, from TAPS with the companion plush horse for children who are grieving the loss of a military parent or loved one.

Additional Resources you can use

The American Legion children and Youth programs: www.legion.org/programs

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation: www.legion.org/cwf

Josh and Friends (American Legion Family Alliance): www.joshandfriends.com

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (an American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grant recipient for Klinger): www.taps.org

Print Pocket Constitution for school children: www.constitutionbooklet.com

Military Child Education Coalition: www.militarychild.org

I'm a Hero2 sticker's template and instructions can be found on the Children & Youth Program page at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

I have received permission to solicit funds this year for the following: Forgotten Children's Fund;

Child Welfare Foundation; Legionville; American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA);

Please earmark in the memo section on your check which program you would like your donations to go to as you send it into the Minnesota Department Office.

Any questions please contact:

Margee Keller, MN Dept. Children and Youth Chairman 2016-2017

301 Maple St, Crookston MN 56716- Cell 218.349.4566 - margeekeller@hotmail.com



MARGEE KELLER



GRANITE FALLS -- In front, from left: Denise Turk, President Montevideo Unit 59, Vicky Sandberg, Granite Falls Unit 69, 7th District President Betty Underthun, Department President Carol Kottom. In back: Renee Johnson, Montevideo Secretary, Dianne Shimp, Montevideo 2nd Vice and Membership, Delores Veden from Granite Falls, Denise Ryer, Montevideo 1st Vice, Department Secretary Sandie Deutsch and 7th District Membership Chair, Karla Minnick.



BRACELETS COMING -- American Legion Auxiliary bracelets will soon be on sale for a donation of \$5 or more. You can preorder by contacting the Department Office, 651-224-7634 or emailing sandie@mnala.org.



STARR POWER -- Past National President Evelyn Starr, who lives in Duluth, attended the National Commanders Tour stop at the West Duluth Post 71. In back are Unit members: Diana Oliver, Mary Hendrickson, Gail Welter and Una Privette.

March 4, 2017, Auxiliary Membership

District	Goal	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership Last Year
One	5,000	4,394	87.88%	4,556
Two	4,924	4,308	87.49%	4,550
Three	4,411	3,803	86.22%	4,018
Four	720	644	89.44%	652
Five	824	680	82.52%	752
Six	6,042	5,417	89.66%	5,669
Seven	3,934	3,393	86.25%	3,602
Eight	1,628	1,363	83.72%	1,449
Nine	4,350	3,828	88.00%	4,012
Ten	5,159	4,527	87.75%	4,739
1982	160	149	93.13%	151
Totals	37,152	32,506	87.49%	34,150

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- 1 night pre-cruise in Athens with a 4 hour tour of Athens
- 1 night post-cruise in Barcelona with a 4 hour tour of Barcelona
- A 7 night cruise on the ROYAL PRINCESS
- Cruise onboard gratuities
- All meals and entertainment onboard the ROYAL PRINCESS
- All transfers to and from the airport, pier and hotels
- Luggage handling on the ship for one suitcase per person

Starting at **\$4,499.00**
 Per Person Double Occupancy

New York City & New England/Canada Cruise

September 15-24, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis to New York City
- All transfers from airport, hotel and pier
- 2 nights stay at the Millennium Hotel in Times Square
- Circle Line Cruise of Manhattan with lunch
- A Broadway performance
- 9/11 Memorial Museum
- 7 night cruise on the Crown Princess
- Cruise Gratuities
- Luggage handling at hotel and on cruise

Starting at **\$3,199.00**
 Per Person Double Occupancy

National Parks, Utah and Arizona

May 12-22, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- 10 nights accommodations
- 14 meals: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 52 mile Durango/Silverton Train ride
- Tour the San Juan Mountains and Rocky Mountains
- Admission to Badlands, Mount Rushmore, Painted Desert, Petrified Forest, Grand Canyon, Zion National Park and Bryce Canyon

\$1,499.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

Alaska Tour & Cruise

August 4-16, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4-Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- Round trip Delta flights from Minneapolis
- 7 Night southbound cruise on the ISLAND PRINCESS
- Cruise Gratuities
- All sightseeing/entrance fees
- All meals & entertainment aboard the ISLAND PRINCESS
- All transfers to and from the airport, hotel & pier
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

Starting at **\$4,299.00**
 Per Person Double Occupancy

Great American History Tour

September 19-26, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- 7 nights accommodations
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 10 Meals: 7 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners
- Admission to all museums, battlefields, & National Parks
- 4 Guided Tours
- Historic Train Ride
- Chicago Gangster Tour
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

\$1,425.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

Mackinac Island & Door County

July 9-15, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 6 nights accommodations
- 13 meals: 6 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 3 dinners
- Guided tours of Door County & Mackinaw City
- Carriage ride on Mackinac Island
- Lunch at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island
- Soo Locks Cruise Tour
- Fish Boil in Door County
- Gordon Lightfoot Musical Show
- Great Lake Shipwreck Museum
- Pictured Rocks tour on Lake Superior

\$1,109.00
 Per Person Double Occupancy

Heart of Alaska

July 14-21, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- Round trip Delta flights Minneapolis to Anchorage
- 7 nights accommodations
- 12 Meals
- Denali Park Natural History Tour
- Alaska Railroad between Talkeetna & Denali Park
- Riverboat Discovery Cruise
- Gold Dredge #8
- Prince William Sound Cruise
- Meares Glacier
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

\$3,299.00 per person double occupancy

Mexican Riviera Cruise

November 4-12, 2017

Tour Includes:

- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis to Los Angeles
- 1 night pre-cruise at the Los Angeles Marriott
- 7 night cruise on the Emerald Princess
- All meals and entertainment while aboard the Emerald Princess
- All transfers to and from the airport and pier
- Cruise Gratuities
- Luggage handling on the ship

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1 EXPLORE WW1 AMERICA
 On opening day, veterans and active military receive FREE admission to the WW1 America exhibit, courtesy of Xcel Energy. See the exhibit, then enjoy costumed reenactors, live music, and more. Sat., April 8, Minnesota History Center, St. Paul.

2 ADVOCATE FOR THE FORT
 Ask your state legislators to support funding for Historic Fort Snelling and thank Gov. Dayton for his support at mnhs.org/HFS2020.

3 WW1 LIVE STAGE SHOW
 Purchase your tickets now for The War That Changed Us: Songs & Stories from WW1 America, Fri., April 7, Fitzgerald Theater, St. Paul.

4 SEE THE WW1 MURAL
 Created before your eyes, our giant WW1 America mural depicts 100 key individuals who influenced post-WW1 America. See the mural on display April 8-Sept. 4 at the Minnesota History Center, St. Paul.

5 ATTEND THE ROUND TABLE
 Hear author Mark Calhoun and others present at WW II Roundtable: Minnesota-Born Unsung Architect of Army Doctrine, Thu., March 23, Historic Fort Snelling, St. Paul.

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