

The Minnesota American Legion and Auxiliary



Legionnaire

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For God and Country

May 2016

Kristine "Kris" Lee Nelson, 1952-2016

Kristine "Kris" Lee Nelson, 63, a past National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, died of brain cancer on April 20 at the Cuyuna Regional Care Center in Baxter, her hometown.

Nelson was one of only two Minnesotans ever elected National President. She also served as state president.

"It's so sad to see her die so young," said Past National Commander Dan Ludwig. "She contributed so much, and she still had so much to give. She always made good things happen."

Nelson was involved in the Auxiliary for over 30 years from the grassroots to the national leadership. She and her husband, Terry, began a Halloween party at the Brainerd Post which annually drew over 800 children.

She served as unit president twice, as unit secretary seven times and as membership chair twice. Nelson was District 6 President in 1992-3, and was Department President in 2001-02.

She also served as Department Auxiliary Chaplain.

In 2011 she was elected National President at the nation-

al convention held in Minneapolis. She served with National Commander Fang Wong of New York.

She was currently serving on the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation as vice president and she was involved in the Centennial Strategic Planning Committee.

"After working for the Auxiliary for the past five years, I found a true mentor and more importantly, a very close friend," said Sandie Deutsch, Department Secretary. "I, as well as the entire Auxiliary, will miss Kris more than some people will ever know. Rest in peace my dear friend."

Ludwig said his first encounter with Nelson was when she was named as one of three women to the first Brain Science Foundation committee around 1990. The group raised over \$1 million to endow a chair at the University of Minnesota.

"She was an absolutely excellent board member. She had great ideas, and she listened to other's ideas. She helped make sure our final decisions were the very best.

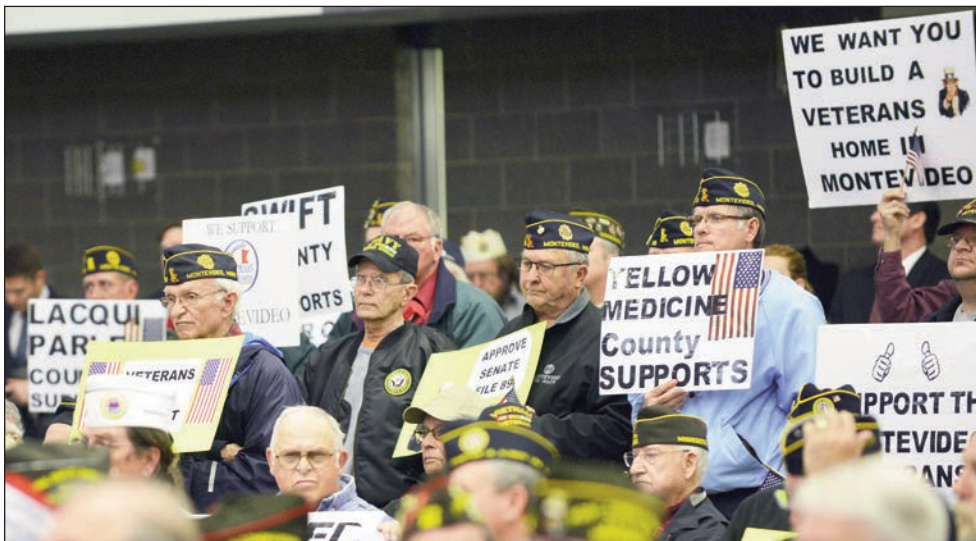
"She was also an active and effective spokesperson for

Continued on Page 3



PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENT KRIS NELSON

Veterans issues on 2016 legislative agenda



Veterans from Montevideo lobbied at the Veterans on the Hill rally in St. Paul.

Bill for two new state veterans homes has chance this session

By Al Zdon

Still facing a tough uphill climb, efforts to establish new veterans homes in Montevideo and Bemidji seem to be gaining traction this year.

Both the Minnesota House and Senate have bills to provide the state's share of construction funding for the new homes, which would have about 70 beds each.

Legislators who sponsored the bills say they are optimistic about getting them through this session. The state would provide \$21.5 million for the new veterans homes, or 35 percent of their cost. The rest of the money would come from the federal government.

Continued on Page 6



A 1904 barracks could be turned into a new visitor's center at Fort Snelling.

Historical Society seeking funds for Fort Snelling projects

By Al Zdon

Fort Snelling and the rocky promontory where it stands between the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers has been a meeting place for perhaps 10,000 years.

The Minnesota Historical Society wants to continue to make it an important destination far into the future.

Toward that end, the society is hoping the Minnesota Legislature agrees and approves \$34 million in bonding during this session. The remainder of the \$46 million project will be raised through private donations.

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Rochester to host convention

Rochester, the home of the world-famous Mayo Clinic, will be the host of the 2016 Minnesota American Legion and Auxiliary conventions.

The events will be held July 21-23. A registration blank is on page 3 in this issue of the Minnesota Legionnaire.

The official hotels for the convention are the Kahler Grand Hotel, Rochester Marriott and the Kahler Inn and Suites. Those attending should make their own room reservations.

Phone numbers are: Kahler Grand and Kahler Inn and Suites, 1-800-533-1655 and the Marriott, 1-877-623-7775.

Please state that you are part of the Legion or Auxiliary conventions.

The Legion will have a Department Executive Committee meeting on

Wednesday, July 20.

On Thursday, July 21, there will be a gambling seminar put on by the state Gambling Control Board at 2 p.m.

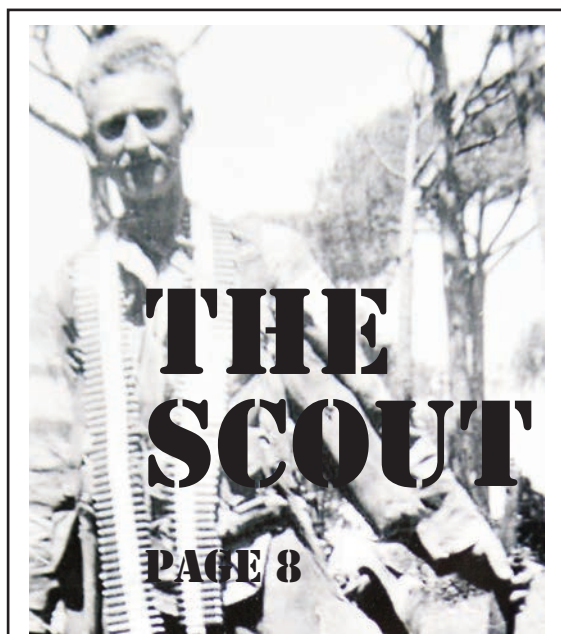
Convention sessions for the Legion will be at the Mayo Civic Center and sessions for the Auxiliary will be at the Kahler Grand Hotel.

Registration is \$15 per person or \$18 at the door.

The conventions are being hosted by Rochester Post 92 and Auxiliary.

The conventions are the annual business meetings of the Legion, and there will be an election of officers and consideration of resolutions from the districts and posts.

The annual Department parade will be held Friday evening of the convention on a route near downtown Rochester.





OLD BARRACKS -- Built in 1904, the cavalry barracks near the old Fort Snelling, are shown here as they looked in 1909.

Ft. Snelling plans \$46 million improvement

Continued from Page 1

“As a state, we invested quite a bit into Fort Snelling in the 1960s and 1970s,” said MHS Director Steve Elliot. “It’s time to make another investment.”

The project is aimed at completion in 2020 in order to celebrate the bi-centennial of Fort Snelling.

The money would be used to build a new visitor center and make other improvements — including a better telling the story of the sandstone bluffs, the fort and the remarkable history that took place there.

That history includes:

-- Native Americans gathered at the confluence of Minnesota’s two major rivers to hunt, fish, talk things over, celebrate and trade. Archeologists have found artifacts there that go back at least 8,000 years, and they suspect human life was present long before that.

-- Explorer Zebulon Pike found the spot in 1805 and made an unauthorized treaty with the Dakota people to acquire land there. Pike then moved on to explore much of the West.

-- Henry Leavenworth, an army officer who later founded Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, arrived to build a fort, called Fort St. Anthony, in 1819.

-- That work was taken up by Col. Josiah Snelling the following year, and it was completed in 1825 when the Army rewarded Snelling for his efforts by naming the fort after him.

-- The fort protected the trading interests of the young nation in that remote area, and sent a message to the British, who were also trading in Minnesota, to stay away.

-- Many of the officers who served at the post had slaves. In 1837, the fort’s surgeon had a slave named Dred Scott. Scott later sued for his freedom because he had lived in free territory, but in the Dred Scott Decision in 1857, he was denied. The decision inflamed abolitionist fervor in the North.

-- In 1861, Minnesota was the first state to promise troops to the U.S. government as the Civil War began. Over 24,000 troops were trained or processed at the fort.

-- In 1862, the U.S.-Dakota War resulted in the incarceration of about 1,600 Dakota people in a stockade at the base of the fort. As many as 300 died over the winter. Later, two chiefs who had been leaders in the uprising were hung at the fort.

-- The fort continued to serve as a military base, and helped in the processing and training of soldiers in the Spanish-American War and in World War I.

-- When the draft began in 1940, Fort Snelling became a huge processing center for the Army and thousands of Midwesterners passed through the fort on their way to war. It also served as a Japanese language school where Japanese-Americans trained to help in the war effort.

The fort was decommissioned in 1946, but still has an active military presence in the state. In the past several years, some of the old buildings have been converted to other uses including housing for homeless veterans. Dozens

of other buildings remain vacant and boarded up.

MHS Director Elliot said the plan calls for taking one of those abandoned buildings and converting it into a new visitor center.

The first visitor center was opened in the early 80s, but it has become a maintenance problem at the site.

“There was kind of a love affair with underground buildings at that time, but we’ve had a continual problem with water penetration since then. In wet times, it’s really bad,” Elliot said.

One office at the visitor’s center had to be closed permanently, and a tarp had to be put over other offices to direct the water flow.

“An engineer told us that we’d have to invest \$5-7 million in the coming years, but that doesn’t correct the problem, it only provides maintenance.”

In 1904, two large buildings were constructed and connected near the old, 1820s portion of the fort to house cavalrymen.

“When the visitor center was built, it was thought these buildings would be torn down,” Elliot said. Instead, they became historically significant in themselves, and the state has spent much money in re-roofing, tuck-pointing and otherwise preserving the buildings for future use.

The society is hoping that future use will be now. “The best way to preserve an old building is to give it a new use.”

One building would be converted into a visitor’s center and the other building, not part of the funding for this project, could later be converted into exhibit space to help the visitor understand the significance and history of Fort Snelling.

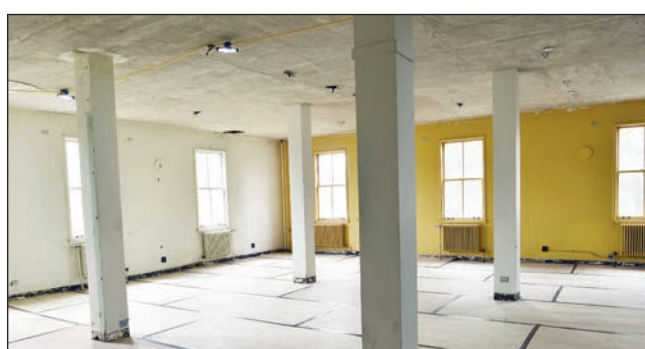
The old visitor center will be demolished at some point. The Legislature last year granted \$500,000 to do pre-design for the project. Governor Dayton has included the MHS request in his budget for this year.

“We have the responsibility for the stewardship of historic sites,” Elliot said. “We have to take care of these places.”

Of the \$12 million the society will try to raise in private donations, Elliot said \$4 million has already been promised.

And at the same time, he said, it’s important to the society and to Minnesotans to broaden the story of the fort to include the Dakota side of the history, the Dred Scott decision, the language school during World War II and other threads in the historical fabric.

The fort annually draws about 75,000 visitors including about 25,000 school children. “I think we have significant potential to increase that,” Elliot said.



BARRACKS TODAY -- The buildings have been preserved, inside and out, hopefully to find a new use.

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Endorsements

Norenberg endorsed as vice commander

The University of Minnesota American Legion Post 548 and the Fifth District have endorsed Curtis Norenberg for Department Vice Commander for the Fourth and Fifth Districts.

He is a ROTC graduate receiving a commission in the Army and served two years on Active Duty during the Korean Conflict. He served in the Army Reserve for 39 years and he has been a Legion member continuously for 59 years.

At the post level, he served as a board member, vice commander three years and commander plus adjutant for six years.

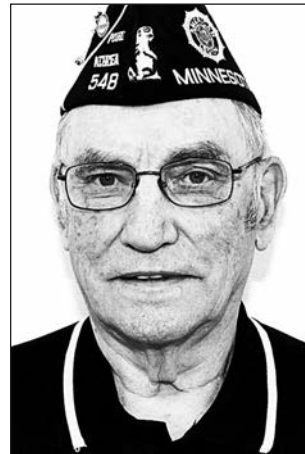
On the district level, he was Commander, Vice Commander three years, and is presently Judge Advocate.

At the Department level, Norenberg is presently Chair of the Department NS/FR Committee, ROTC on CAP scholarship committee, delegate for the past 25 years to the convention,

legislative liaison and MAG.

Nationally, he was appointed to National Security Commission - Aerospace Committee, has attended 10 Washington Conferences, and was a delegate to eight conventions.

Other Activities: Life member of ROA, VFW, MMOA, ANAVICUS, ESGR Emeritus, BTYR Committee, 40 en 8, SAL, Professor Emeritus University of Minnesota.



CURT NORENBERG

Kris Nelson

Continued from Page 1

the project. She had the same attributes that caused her to rise to the highest offices in the state and the nation."

Minnesota's other National President was Evelyn Starr of Cambridge. 1986-87.

Nelson is survived by her husband, Terry, son Troy and his wife, Angie, daughter Sarah and her husband Kent Swenson, six grandchildren; brothers and sisters, Rick, Rob, Patti and Angie.

She had taken part in the recent christening of her twin baby granddaughters, McKenna Kristine and Aria Lee, named after their grandmother.

Services were held through the Nelson-Doran Funeral Home and the mass of Christian burial was said at St. Andrew's Catholic Church in Brainerd.

Memorials are preferred to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

DeLong endorsed as Sergeant-at-Arms

Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435 and 5th District American Legion have endorsed Dennis De Long for the position of Minnesota Department Sergeant-At-Arms for 2016-2017.

DeLong has served as 1st Vice Commander, 2nd

Vice Commander, Executive Board Member, Finance Officer, Property and Finance Member and Holding Corporation Member at Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435. At the District level he has served as District Commander, 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice

Commander, 3rd Vice Commander, Adjutant, Employment Committee Chair, Finance Committee, and Constitution & Bylaws Chairman.

At the Department level he has served as Department Vice Commander (4th & 5th District), Department Historian twice and Foundation Board Member.



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American Legion Riders

By Bob "Benji" Benjamin
District 3 Director



Right now it is snowing and it is about 4" deep in my yard.

We are doing good in the Thundering Third. As the director we are trying to set up a meeting for the 3rd district riders at the May convention so we can get some kind of communication between our chapters. If you can send someone, that would be great.

Chaska chapter is coming together very nicely. We will be having our third meeting with about 20 members. Chanhassen has about 15 members but are having some problems with doing rides out of the post. Shakopee has 20 members and their meetings are on the first Saturday of the month with a ride after the meeting.

Nicollet chapter has their rides put together. You can go to their web site to learn more.

Third District Riders will continue supporting our community, our Legion Family and our nation.

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OFFICIAL CONVENTION PRE-REGISTRATION

A registration fee of \$15 for each person attending, whether a delegate, alternate or a guest, must accompany this form. Make this check payable to POST 92 CONVENTION FUND. No credit cards will be accepted.

Registration at the door will be \$18.

Mail to:
Bill Born, American Legion Post 92 Office, 403 East Center St., Rochester, MN 55904

Legion Post # _____ SAL Sqdn. _____ Auxiliary Unit _____

District _____ Phone _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip _____

Delegate Alternate Guest
 Delegate at Large (Auxiliary)

(Please check one of the above.)

If additional pre-registrations accompany this request, this pre-registration form should be photo copied for each person. The \$15 registration fee should be enclosed for each person.

Please, only one registration blank per person.

COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Jim Kellogg



Our American Legion Family has lost a special lady. Keep the Kris Nelson Family in your prayers.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for all the hospitality shown my wife and I as we celebrated the Legion's Birthday this past month all over the great Department of Minnesota. And, to all who made my testimonial a night I will never forget, a special thanks to you. Times like this show what Minnesota nice is and what our legion Family is all about.

It is the time of year to get our reports done. We need to let our home towns know what the American Legion Family does besides provide a place for socializing. If we don't tell our story no one is going to tell it for us. When you have finished filling our your consolidated post report make a copy and take it to your local newspaper. In the past we

have tried to encourage all posts to report and again I am asking each of you to report to your post what you have done this past year. I know every post did something this past year please take the time to tell your story so all of us can learn from it.

We started out this Spring with an uncommon warm spell which gave us the chance to begin planting. Now the rains have come and we wait for our next chance. Soon our convention season will begin. I call it a time to reflect and a time to elect. As Legion members, we need to approach this time with a new-found energy. Just as we farmers do each spring. We need to plant the seeds of growth and a positive attitude. This is an exciting time of year. When you are asked to serve think of all the fun you can have and the difference you can make.

Last month I asked you to help with membership. Thanks to all of you who responded. As of this writing we need some more help. We stand at 93.5% of our goal. I know working together we can reach our goal. We need to finish the job. A field planted at 93.5% will not reach its full potential. Please help us finish and we can all watch our Legion Family grow and prosper.

May brings us to that special time of year Memorial Day. This is the time we all stop to remember all of those who have gone to Post Everlasting. Once again we have lost some great leaders of our Minnesota American Legion Family. We shall not forget them or all they have given us. Their memory will not die.

I hope all of you have a safe spring and I look forward to seeing you at your District Conventions. Until we meet again, remember "Can't" never did anything. May God bless.

Chaplain's Corner

By Richard Wog



As we move into another busy time of our lives we should look around us and realize what we have to be thankful for. As members of The American Legion we should be thankful for the leadership we have received from all of our officers, no matter the level of their leadership. The year is not done and they are working hard for us. In fact, the Bible says in Proverbs 11:14, "Without wise leadership a nation is in trouble." There are two simple words that can be used to show our appreciation, "Thank you."

We are moving toward another important event we observe every year to honor those who have fallen and those who have given so much to our great country. We call it Memorial Day. It was started in May 1868 after the Civil War ended. The head of an organization of union veterans, The Grand Army of the Republic, established Decoration Day as a day to decorate the graves of those who died during the war with flowers. Major General John A. Logan declared that Decoration Day be observed on May 30th. It was not until after World War I that it was expanded to honor those who have died in all wars in which Americans have fought. In 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by an act of Congress. Memorial Day is observed by many, but unfortunately for some it is just another day off work. For those who observe this day, we are taking the time to say, "Thank you." As I drive around this great state I see many memorials. I stop when time permits and read the names of those who have given their lives for our freedom. When I leave I salute them as they deserve. It was not long ago I was invited to attend the ground breaking ceremony of the Paynesville post for their new memorial. It was truly an honor and a humbling experience to be there with the members and their families. There were smiles and tears, but as we walked away from that spot I looked back and said, "They will never be forgotten." General Logan's order for his post to decorate the graves in 1868 urged, "We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance—let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no neglect, no ravage of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic."

Mother's Day is another day we will celebrate soon. As grown children we know how important a mother's love was to each of us. If we had a problem, who did we talk to? It was our mother. It would be hard to put a dollar amount on the love a mother gives to her children. There is not a day that goes by that I do not think of my mother and I'm sure you're the same. A mother gives love and expects nothing in return. I Corinthians 13: 4-7 says, "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude, it does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things." A lot of money is spent flowers, gifts and dinners on Mother's Day but they are worth it. There is nothing greater than a mother's love.

To all veterans and those still serving as well as their families and to our heavenly Father who gave us the greatest gift of all I use these words, "Thank you."

For God and Country

Editorial

Support Snelling project

Perhaps no other place in Minnesota can capture the story of our men and women going off to war better than Fort Snelling.

From the farm boys and clerks who volunteered for the Minnesota regiments in the Civil War to the tens of thousands of Midwestern men and women who went through the fort in World War II, Fort Snelling really is a major part of the history of the Minnesota veteran.

The Minnesota Historical Society has asked the Minnesota Legislature for \$34 million to build a new visitor's center at the Fort, and to otherwise improve the experience for the thousands of annual visitors. The society will raise another \$12 million for the project from private donors.

If the state can spend \$400 million to help build a shrine to football in downtown Minneapolis, certainly the amount the MHS is asking to preserve our memories of Minnesota service people seems paltry in comparison.

Up through World War II, it would be hard to find a family in Minnesota that didn't have some connection with the fort. And, during the Second World War, the fort had national significance as the training center for Japanese-American translators who played a critical role in the Pacific campaign.

But Fort Snelling is much more than strictly military history. The majestic bluffs that rise up from the confluence of

the Mississippi River and the Minnesota River have been a gathering place for people for perhaps 10,000 years. The place is part of the creation story of the Dakota people.

Prior to the Civil War, a slave named Dred Scott lived at the fort and later sued for his freedom because he had lived in free territory. He lost his case, but the Supreme Court decision was a powerful influence in bringing on the War between the States.

During that war, after the quelling of the Dakota uprising in western Minnesota in 1862, the fort became part of Minnesota's own "Trail of Tears" as 1,600 Dakota people, mainly women, children and the elderly, were marched to a stockade at the base of the bluffs. As many as 300 died over the winter.

There are many other stories to tell. The fort is the home of Minnesota's first European-style structures. It was the center of the fur trade early in our history. It was the outpost of U.S. civilization for decades in this remote wilderness.

And, it was the place where soldiers trained and where they were processed into our military services. The fort has many compelling stories to relate, and one of them is about our Minnesota veterans. It's a story we should never forget, and this project will help preserve that history.

We urge all veterans to contact their local legislators and urge them to support the project. It will be money well spent for the future of Minnesota.

Mail Call

Soldier comes home

To the Editor:

A member of The American Legion in Minnesota, Marvin Hill, requested that I contact you with information, possibly for an article, about the recovery of my uncle Pvt. John Sersha from WWII. He also suggested the national magazine. Following is information I sent to them yesterday.

I have been researching John's military service since 2005 when I saw a photo of a panel on the Wall of the Missing with his name on it at the Margraten American Military Cemetery in the Netherlands. John was killed in action on September 27, 1944 in the Market-Garden Operation in Holland. He was in the 82nd Airborne Division, 325th Glider Infantry Regiment and was towed in on September 23 landing in the Groesbeek area. It was thought that his remains had never been found. John has one living remaining brother, Paul Sersha, 97, who also served in WWII and one living sister, Julia, 93.

On November 2, 2013 a memorial paver was placed in his honor in the Veterans Memorial in Virginia, Minnesota. At that time I thought my research was completed and could write up all of my findings to pass on to my children, grandchildren, etc. that his sacrifice never be forgotten. The following day, November 3, 2013 my cousin in Duluth received a call from Danny Keay in Germany. My cousin referred him to me and I was given information that John's remains may have actually been found in 1948 but were declared Unrecoverable (could not be positively ID'd) in 1950. Armed with the IDPF and X Files, I was convinced,

as was Mr. Keay, who is retired from the military, that the remains in fact were John's. New forensic and circumstantial evidence was sought, DNA samples submitted, and appeal made for disinterment in Neuville, Belgium where the remains were buried. In December, the Secretary of the Army signed the disinterment request and remains were sent to Offutt Air Force Base for further analysis. I was notified that in fact the remains were that of Pvt. John Sersha on Monday, March 28 – the day after Easter Sunday.

John will be returned to Minnesota on May 27 or 28 for burial next to his mother and father in the Eveleth, Minnesota cemetery on Memorial Day weekend, hopefully on Memorial Day, with full military honors.

Dick Lohry
Angora, MN

Upcoming meetings listed

Fall Conference:

- 2016, Marshall
- 2017, Willmar
- 2018 and 2019, open

Department Convention:

- 2016, Rochester
- 2017, open
- 2018, Rochester

National Convention:

- 2016, Cincinnati; 2017, Reno; 2018, Minneapolis; 2019, Indianapolis; 2020, Louisville.

The Minnesota **Legionnaire**

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Al Zdon, Editor

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What's Happening

Legion Day at Twins May 24

The 16th annual American Legion Family Day at the Twins will be held Friday, May 20, at 7:10 p.m. in a game with the Toronto Blue Jays.

Department Commander Jim Kellogg will throw out the first pitch. Tickets are \$23, and there will be scoreboard recognition for all posts attending.

To order tickets, call 1-800-33-TWINS and hit O to speak to an attendant. Reference the special Legion discount. Or call 612-659-4083.

Vietnam vets to be honored

There will be a St. Cloud VA veterans town hall meeting at VFW Post 936 in Alexandria on Tuesday, May 17, at 5 p.m. Vietnam veterans and their families will be honored at the meeting. County Veteran Service Officers will be on hand an hour before the meeting to provide help on benefit programs.

StandDowns, Legal Clinics

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans will sponsor at StandDown on Tuesday, May 24, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Rochester at the Graham Arena on Fairgrounds Avenue. There will be free services including meals, claims assistance, clothing, housing, legal assistance, haircuts and chaplaincy. A welcoming ceremony will be held at noon. For more information, call 507-345-8258.

There will be a free drop-in legal clinic on Tuesday, May 10, at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center in the Flag Atrium Balcony from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Attorneys, MACV staff, veterans service officers and others will be on hand to assist veterans. For more information, call 651-200-4750.

National Day of Prayer

The annual Rice, Minnesota, National Day of Prayer will be held on Thursday, May 5, 2016, at the Shepherd of the Pines Lutheran Church. There will be a meal at 5:30 p.m. and the event at 6:30. The event will feature area clergy, the Rice American Legion and Auxiliary and Gold Rush, a bluegrass band. The event is free.

Prayer Breakfast

A prayer breakfast, free to veterans, will be held on Friday, May 20, at the Prom Center in Oakdale from 7-8:15 a.m. The speaker will be John Morris, the former commander chaplain of the 34th Division. He will speak on "Faith Under Fire." To register, email mail@searchmn.org or call 952-929-0628.

Hunting, fishing on-line

Application forms for the Trolling for Troops fishing outing for veterans, the Veterans with Disabilities Fishing Trip and the Disabled Vets Turkey Shoot are available at the Minnesota American Legion website: mnlegion.org.

Vets Cemetery Dedication

The new Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery at Preston will have a dedication ceremony on Sunday, May 29, at 715 Highway 52 at Preston. There will be a concert at 1:30 p.m. and the program will follow at 2 p.m.

New book introduced

There will be a reading and sale of a new book "Yes, Sir, Yes, Sir, Three Bags Full" at the Turner Room of Richfield Post 435. The author is Vietnam War pilot Jerome Hall about his experiences during the war. He flew over 300 combat missions on three tours. Hall died of lung cancer linked to Agent Orange in 2015. His wife Kay will make the presentation along with other family members.

Silver Bay Fishing Trip

The annual Minnesota Veterans Home at Silver Bay Lake Superior Fishing Trip will be held Monday, June 27. Veterans from Silver Bay, Minneapolis, Hastings and Fergus Falls veterans homes will leave at dawn from the Knife River Marina. Over 60 residents were on hand last year. Donations from Legion posts are being solicited for the trip. For more information, call 218-353-8703.

Charm School

A Charm School for veteran small business owners will

be held at the 3M Innovation Center in St. Paul on Sept. 12 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The school will provide training and information on conveying info to buyers, preparing handouts, and working through the contract award process. The school will prepare veterans for the National Veterans Small Business Conference on Nov. 1-3 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. For more information, go to www.ausaveteranevent.com.

Gambling Seminar

A gambling seminar, put on by the Minnesota Gambling Control Board, will be held at the Department Convention in Rochester. It will be held Thursday, July 21, at 2 p.m. at the Mayo Civic Center, Presentation Hall. Topics will include compliance reviews and site inspections.

Traveling Wall

The AVTT Traveling Vietnam Wall will be set up at the Eagles' Healing Nest at Highway 71 North in Sauk Centre. Events and programs will be held each day. For more information on the wall, go to www.americanveteranstravelingtribute.com.

Certification for Businesses

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and the Minnesota Department of Administration have announced a new state-level certification for veteran-owned businesses. Certified businesses can get a six percent preference on state procurement and construction bids. For more information, go to the MDVA website and clicking on resources, employment, Veteran Business Owners.

Round Tables

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Roundtable will have a dinner meeting on May 23 and hear from Doug Dammann on 1st Wisconsin Regiment. For more information, contact Steve Anderson at 715-386-1268.

The World War II History Round Table will meet at the Fort Snelling Visitor Center on Thursday, May 12, and hear from author Micael Neiberg on "Potsdam -- Agreement to settle Allied Victory in WWII." Admission is \$5 and the program starts at 7 with a pre-program at 6 p.m.

Taps

Hogeveen, Harry James, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died April 10, 2016. He served in the 15th Air Force stationed in Italy and was a ball turret gunner on a B-24 and was shot down over Yugoslavia in 1944. He was a member of Raymond Post 420.

Gilbert, Dorothy E., 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 5, 2016. She was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

LaBlanc, Gary, 71, National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 25, 2016. In a 37-year career in the Guard, he rose from private to brigadier general and was deputy adjutant general of the Minnesota National Guard. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Safe, Richard, 69, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 26, 2016. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Suket, Kenneth F., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 15, 2016. He was a member of Cold Spring Post 455.

Brown, Charles W., 89, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died April 2, 2016. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Schroeder, James Frederick, 97, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 5, 2016. He was a storekeeper in the South Pacific. He was a member of Monticello Post 260.

Janson, John Joseph, 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 10. He was in the military police and stationed in Germany. He was a member of Monticello Post 260.

Lyon, Gale C., 83, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died April 8, 2016. He was a member of Blue Earth Post 89.

Kea, Clement A., 94, Army veteran of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, died April 10, 2016. He was in the First Special Service Force, a U.S.-Canadian special forces unit in World War II and earned a Congressional Gold Medal. He earned a Purple Heart in Vietnam. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

Bever, Gary C., Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 10, 2016. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

Stacy, Darrell H., 82, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died April 29, 2016. He served in the security service. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Qunell, Robert, 72, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 4, 2016. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Bleloch, Donald, 79, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 3, 2016. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Buyse, Gustaff, 96, Army veteran of World War II, died April 9, 2016. He was in combat on the island of Guam. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Hanegmon, Anthony E., 68, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 13, 2016. He was a Huey helicopter door gunner in Vietnam serving with the 191st Assault Helicopter Company, 1st Aviation Brigade, out of Can Tho. He was a member of Chisholm Post 247.

Trowbridge, Leslie B., 84, Marine veteran of the Korean War, died March 31, 2016. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Bennett, Leland L., 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 6, 2016. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Knapper, Chris D., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 8, 2016. He served in Korea. He was a member of Waconia Post 150.

Anderson, Elroy, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died March 4, 2016. He was a member of Hoffman Post 393.

Schmitz, Emmet L., 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died March 22, 2016. He was a member of Waconia Post 150.

Stearns, John L., 95, Navy veteran of World War II, died March 26, 2016. He was a fireman on the USS Richmond. He was a past commander of Bearcat Post 504.

Cordt, George, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 2, 2016. He was a member of Cold Spring Post 455.

Taylor, Tom, 68, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 26, 2016. He was stationed in Germany. He was a member of New London Post 537.

Gravley, Mark, 67, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 27, 2016. He was a member of New London Post 537.

Dronen, Dennis L., 68, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 30, 2016. He was a member of Sandstone Post 151.

Jenkins, Kenneth F., 93, Army veteran of World War II, died March 31, 2016. He served as a field lineman in Europe. He was a member of Bigelow Post 496.

McDonald, Ruth, 95, Army veteran of World War II, died March 17, 2016. She was in the nursing corps, serving as a lieutenant. She earned the Bronze Star. She was a member of Millerville Post 527.

Sponberg, Darrol H., 84, Army veteran of the Korean

War, died March 25, 2016. He was a member of New Richland Post 75.

Young, Elmer J., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died March 15, 2016. He served in Italy and was seriously wounded, earning a Purple Heart. He was a member of Freeborn Post 552.

Stangl, Edward Joseph, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died March 10, 2016. He was a member of Pierz Post 341.

Hard, Robert W., 83, veteran of the Korean War, died March 4, 2016. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

Teich, Ervin H., 88, Army veteran of World War II, died March 7, 2016. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

Robbins, Gerald H., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 9, 2016. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

Erickson, Robert, 88, Army veteran of World War II, died March 26, 2016. He served in the Philippines. He was a member of Granite Falls Post 69.

Larson, Rocky A., 62, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 16, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Broskoff, James M., 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 25, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Kirchner, DuWayne G., 78, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 30, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Heilman, Dale K., 89, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 8, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Klinger, Irvin, 98, Army veteran of World War II, died April 20, 2016. He served in the Pacific and earned two Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts. He was a member of Dent Post 148.

Lundberg, Robert, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 21, 2016. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Anderson, Homer, 83, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died April 20, 2016. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Sartorius, Raymond John, 87, National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died March 27, 2016. He also served in the Navy aboard the USS Rowan. He was a member of Windom Post 206.

Heaser, Donald, 84, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died March 8, 2016. He was a crew chief on bombers in Korea. He was a member of Eyota Post 551.

Sons of The American Legion

By
Gene Olsword



Greetings from the Detachment of Minnesota.

With only two months left in this 2015-2016 membership year, we are still holding our own and making our national goals.

As everyone knows, these last months are the toughest months for renewals, however, we are committed and keep striving forward by contacting all the squadrons within the state and knocking on doors to get those final few renewals.

As the old saying goes, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." If you are a Son who has not yet renewed his membership for this year, please contact your squadron to remain in good standing and pay your 2016 dues.

National has sent out the last renewal notices for this year and will start printing the membership cards for the membership year 2016-2017. I want to make sure your new card is among them. Our last national goal of 100% is May 11th so your renewal is important.

May is the typical month for all 10 Districts to have their conventions so I will be on the road much of the time for the Friday and Saturday conventions. This is the time when the new officers for the coming year are elected and installed within the districts.

I hope to see many of you at your district's convention to say "Hi" and shake your hand.

May 30th, we will be honoring our dead on Memorial Day. Let's not forget the many service men and women who laid down their lives and paid the ultimate price in all the great wars to keep the freedoms we still enjoy today.

Many communities will be having Memorial Day services so plan on attending one nearest you. I will be the guest speaker at one of these services in a small community in southwest Minnesota. What an honor for me to be doing this.

Another event coming up is Boy's State the week of June 12th in Marshall. The new Alumni Boys State Squadron will be having their first meeting with the election and installation of new officers for this coming year. What a truly great event this will be and I am looking forward to being one of the participants for this event.

This squadron is either the 2nd or 3rd Boys State Squadron in the Nation.

A reminder also is the Sons campout/convention coming up at Legionville on the June 24th and 25th. Registration for this campout/convention will be coming out shortly so be sure to get your registration in if you plan on attending. This is your convention where you have an opportunity to elect your state officers for this coming year. This is your voice as to who you want to be your leaders. I hope to see many Sons at this convention.

Remember in your prayers the many service personnel that remain in harm's way for their safety and return home to their loved ones. God Bless our troops around the world and God bless America.

Endorsement

The Second District Sons of the American Legion at its mid-winter meeting endorsed Gene Olsword for his second term as Detachment Commander for the SAL for the year 2016-17. Olsword is presently serving as the state commander.

New veterans homes face uphill battle

Continued from Page 1

If the projects can survive the legislative hurdle, the federal hurdle may be even greater.

Minnesota has five veterans homes at this time, located in Fergus Falls, Silver Bay, Minneapolis, Hastings and Luverne.

The people of Montevideo have been working to create the sixth home for over 10 years. This past month, a group of about 35 veterans from Montevideo showed up at a veterans' legislative rally with signs and placards promoting the new home.

"Montevideo has put a lot of elbow grease into their proposal," said Rep. Bob Dettmer, R-Forest Lake, chair of the Veterans Affairs Division in the House. "Both proposals would be in good locations, and the strength of both is that the communities are strongly involved."

In both areas, local money has been set aside to purchase the land the new homes would be built on.

Holding up the process for the past several years has been the huge project at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis. The project, now in its third phase, has included demolishing buildings, building new state-of-the-art buildings and replacing hundreds of beds at the facility. The Legislature was not eager to begin any new projects until Minneapolis was fully funded, which happened last year.

"This project predates my time in the Legislature," Rep. John Persell, DFL-Bemidji, who has served for eight years, told the Bemidji Pioneer. "But we were waiting for the Minneapolis veterans home to get fully funded."

Even with that roadblock out of the way, much still needs to happen.

The Legislature not only must approve the bonding for the construction, it also must assure the federal government that the state will pay for the operation of the homes.

In the Senate bill, \$10 million has been promised for 2018 and 2019 for the operation of the homes. These "tails" as they are called, show the feds that the state will run the homes if they are built.

With money promised for both 35 percent of the construction and for running the homes, an application can then be made to the federal government for the remaining 65 percent of the construction cost.

At this point there is some disagreement on how much the cost of building the homes will really be. One projection says it will cost \$85 million total, which would mean the state share should be more like \$30 million. But not all agree with that projection, saying construction costs are lower in rural areas.

But even with state support, this is where the going gets sticky.

According to Ben Johnson, the legislative director for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, Minnesota's request would then be considered in Washington, but it would be in competition with requests from the other 50 states.

In 2014, the federal government had about \$280 million to build or repair veterans homes across the country. A total of 19 projects were funded. "Every state in the nation has veterans funding needs," Johnson said. "All those needs go on the same list."

Analysts in Washington would look at the Minnesota application and prioritize it. Those high on the list would get funding, while those at the bottom would not. A major factor in how applications are prioritized is whether there are "health and safety" issues involved – as there were at the Minneapolis home.

The problem with the Montevideo and Bemidji proposals is that they would be new construction and there would be no health and safety issues, thus a lower priority.

And, Johnson said, it's not like a proposal will continue to move up from year to year if it is not funded. Each year,

it will have to start over and compete not only with the existing applications but with the new applications that come in from across the country.

"The state legislators understand this. They have been briefed," Johnson said.

In the end, the solution for applications that don't ever advance would simply be that Congress would have to put more money into the pot, Johnson said.

The first step, though, will be to get the state funding in order so that the federal application can be made. It's possible that the Legislature could, in conference committee, decide to only fund one of the projects this year.

It's also possible that at some point, the state could take on all the construction cost and not seek the federal two-thirds. While that's possible, Johnson said, it's not likely at this time.

The projects, he said, would have a tremendous benefit not only for the veterans who would use the homes, but there would be an economic impact for the areas where they are built. In just salaries and benefits, each community could see as much as \$8 million a year coming into the local economy.

And, he said, there is a growing need for more homes where veterans can get the unique services and camaraderie that they seek. In Minnesota, about seven percent of the population are veterans, but 24 percent of people 65 and older are veterans.

"The groundswell of support in Montevideo and Bemidji will be instrumental in getting the bill passed," Johnson said.

The legislators who represent the areas where the homes would be built are confident that this is the year.

"We're on our way, but ask us on the 23rd of May," Sen. Tom Saxhaug, DFL-Grand Rapids, said.

"We're going to have to knock on wood pretty hard before we can say it's definitely going to happen," said Rep. Persell. "But doing nothing is not an alternative. The state

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By
James Miller

American Legion Claims Division Field Operations

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Field Operations Division seeks to identify and serve Veterans of all social and economic backgrounds including those who are unable to seek assistance due to disability or geographical location. We act as a liaison and personal advocate to those seeking State benefits such as subsistence, dental, optical, counseling, and Federal benefits from the USDVA. The Field Operations Division is the mobile unit of the MDVA Claims Division with flexibility to travel to those in need while offering professional service and advocacy.

Our Division is based out of Central Minnesota and has 12 advocates spread across the state. We can be found in both St. Cloud and Minneapolis VA Medical Centers, area Vet Centers, CVSO Offices, Native American Reservations, and other various locations in the state. We work closely with County Veteran Service Officers to assist them with resources they need to advocate for the Veterans in their area.

One of the focuses this year has been assisting with the Ending Veterans Homelessness Initiative. Wendy

Sederstrom and Eric Meline, who work out of the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, have been devoting time and expertise in aiding the Department in this endeavor. They assist by case managing Veterans who are currently or are in danger of becoming homeless. They continuously work with Veterans on the homeless registry to ensure they have applied for the benefits they have earned.

The Field Operations Division stands ready to assist Minnesota Veterans in navigating the increasingly complex Veterans benefits system. Please contact your local County Veteran Service Office to discuss or contact us directly at 612 970 5662.

Membership Chart

As of April 20, 2016

District	2016 Goal	Total 2015	Total 2016	Percent of Goal	Same Date '15
1	9,627	9,574	9,173	95.28	
2	7,779	7,705	7,366	94.69	
3	12,165	12,116	11,743	96.53	
4	2,561	2,560	2,447	95.55	
5	2,829	2,788	2,617	92.54	
6	12,485	12,415	11,862	95.01	
7	6,997	6,926	6,536	93.44	
8	4,630	4,593	4,262	92.05	
9	7,332	7,172	6,843	94.62	
10	10,964	10,917	10,388	94.75	
At-large	3,734	2,661	2,651	71.00	
Totals	81,000	79,427	75,888	93.69	

Thank you

To all of our Legion Family members who sent prayers, concerns, flowers and gifts on the passing of Bill, I extend a very sincere thank you. My family was amazed at how many came to the services and the many flowers, and the Honor Guard attending the funeral and giving the salute and taps. It was an amazing show of affection for a man who truly loved the American Legion Family. He served the Wayzata Legion as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Membership Director for the Sons of The American Legion for many years. On the 10th District level, he was Judge Advocate and on the Department level, served on the Post Development Committee and was Judge Advocate for the 10th District SAL and 8th and 10th Vice Commander for the Detachment of Minnesota. He also drove the vehicle for 6 years as Chaser for the Legacy Fund and was a proud Legion Rider. He was co-chairman of the Disabled Deer Hunt each year at Legionville. Wherever he could be of service, he was there and always ready. He's going to be deeply missed by all of us. Again, thank you American Legion Family.

Judy Stein



A good time was had by all at Commander Jim Kellogg's Testimonial at Adams Post 146. From left: Brenda Kellogg, Kellogg, Tom Schottenbauer and Jimmy Foster.

Commander's Testimonial



Commander Kellogg responded at the end of the testimonial.



The Forte Milers provided the entertainment at the event.



National Vice Commander Al Davis spoke.



Steaks and fried chicken made for some happy diners at the Adams Post.



Among the many gifts for the commander was this young pig, wheeled in by Richard Skillestad.



Past National Commander Dan Ludwig shared some serious thoughts.



Past National Commander Jimmy Foster of Alaska was the keynote speaker.



Champagne and a small glass were presented by Auxiliary President Sandy Fredrickson.

Granddaughter Aria Kellogg had a front row seat for the festivities.



THE SCOUT

Mel Dahlberg joined the Airborne because he liked the boots and he wanted to see some action. The action he saw included close calls when a mortar shell that landed right next to him didn't explode, and later when he slept in a building that blew up moments after he walked out the front door. Along the way, he was chosen to be a scout, the first person to head into enemy territory.

By Al Zdon

When Mel Dahlberg was a young man, a friend of his father's came to visit at the house in Minneapolis. The visitor was a master paratrooper stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia.

"I saw that uniform and I saw those boots and I said, 'Boy, that's what I want to do,'" Dahlberg said.

And when he got the chance, that's what he did.

Dahlberg was born at Anchor Hospital in St. Paul in 1924 only days after his family had arrived from Sweden.

They lived in an apartment above the Hamline Theater in St. Paul, and then moved to the Prospect Park area in southeast Minneapolis where Dahlberg attended Sydney Pratt Grade School.

"When I was in kindergarten, I had to cross the tracks to get to school, but one day there was a train in the way. I didn't want to go all the way around it, so I crawled under it. It wasn't moving."

Unfortunately a railroad detective saw the move, and canvassed the neighborhood to find the family who had a young lad who would crawl under a railroad train.

"My mother met me about halfway home from school. That was the biggest whipping I ever got in my childhood. I never went under the train again."

It wasn't his only adventure, though. "I was kind of a rambunctious kid and I liked to do a lot of things. I really enjoyed ski-jumping and I did a lot of that. We would go down to a bridge over the Mississippi River and tie a rope on the girders underneath the bridge. Then I would fly way out over the river."

The family moved to Northeast Minneapolis and Dahlberg attended Minneapolis Edison for three years. "I had a paper route delivering the morning Tribune. All of Columbia Heights was my route. Those winter mornings were something else."

After his family moved back to southeast Minneapolis, he graduated from Marshall High School in January 1942, just over a month after Pearl Harbor, and got a job at the First National Bank in downtown Minneapolis. He was mainly a messenger for the bank.

Dahlberg knew at some point that he would be drafted, and Uncle Sam did call on him in June of 1943. He immediately volunteered for the Airborne.

While he was waiting for his orders, Dahlberg worked as a secretary at the fort. His sergeant liked his work so much, he tried to convince Dahlberg to stay. "I could have spent my whole military career at Fort Snelling. I told him, 'No way.'"

He was soon on his way to Camp Toccoa for basic airborne training. He and other volunteers were interviewed to see if they had the stuff it takes to be a paratrooper.

"I learned to say certain things that would satisfy them. I couldn't say that I wanted the extra money because they'd boot me right out." Paratroopers were paid an extra \$50 a month.

"Every morning at 5 a.m. we would run to the top of Currahee Mountain. I was kind of a lanky kid who had worked in a bank and I wasn't in real good shape. But I sur-

vived. A lot of guys who couldn't take the training dropped out."

Dahlberg also trained at Camp McCall in North Carolina, and did his jump training at Fort Benning, Georgia.

"The first two jumps I was just numb. I was so nervous, I was just in a fog. Somehow you get out of the plane and you look up at silk above you and it's a wonderful feeling.

"By the third jump you're starting to get it, and by the fifth jump we were all getting out of the airplane pretty fast."

He trained as part of the 17th Airborne Division, part of which became the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment. That unit then became the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team when it added artillery and engineer battalions. Dahlberg was assigned to F Company.

The unit was known as the "Battling Buzzards" but sometime other troops referred to them as the "battling bastards" because they served with so many different units during the war. "I didn't like that very much."

After some arduous maneuvers in Tennessee, the combat team was ready for war. "We went up to Newport News and got on board the Santa Rosa, a Grace Line ship. We left on May 17. The 517th left on 5-17.

"There were about 500 WACs on board the ship and that caused a lot of problems. They tried to keep the WACs separate, but why they wanted to put a bunch of WACs in with a bunch of young paratroopers I'll never know. There were many instances that I won't go into."

The ship reached Naples on May 30. "We got our weapons out of the Cosmoline and trained for about 10 days." The unit was waiting for its artillery and vehicles to



show up.

The 517th was slated to land on the beach at Anzio to help out in the mopping up operations following the deadly battle, but instead the landing ships were sent further north to Civitavecchia.

"Our job was to get to the Germans coming away from Anzio and to stop them from going further north." The 517th was sent to Grosseto where they experienced their



MEL DAHLBERG
As a paratrooper during World War II



MEL DAHLBERG
At a recent World War II History Round Table