



Legionnaire

Volume 98, Number 6

For God and Country

June 2016

Which is the oldest post in the state? It depends...

By Al Zdon

So which post is the oldest post in Minnesota anyway? As The American Legion centennial approaches in 2018 with a national convention in Minneapolis, many posts are looking at their histories.

The logical choice for the first post would be Minneapolis Post 1, right? Well, according to a list provided by the national organization on when posts received their temporary charters – the first official date for that post in national’s eyes — Minneapolis Post 1 is actually 17th in seniority.

The oldest post in the state, according to temporary charters, is St. Paul Post 8 who received its charter on May 7, 1919.

The second oldest post in the state is Fergus Falls Post 30 which received its temporary charter on May 10, 1919.

So why did Post 8 get the number 8, and Fergus Falls get the number 30 while Minneapolis got number 1?

Good question.

The *Legion 50* book by Ben Gimmetstad, a history of the first 50 years of the Minnesota Legion, offers some insights.

First of all, when the Great War ended in 1918, soldiers and sailors began streaming back into the United States, and many wanted to form clubs to continue their camaraderie. The Grand Army of the Republic, the Civil War veterans organization, did not want younger vets, and so the new guys were on their own.

Across Minnesota, soldiers and sailors clubs and other veterans groups sprang up like wild flowers.



State Convention 1925

After the Paris Caucus in March 1919, word spread quickly that there would be a national organization called The American Legion. Minnesota veterans got together and elected a group to send to the St. Louis Caucus in May.

In Minnesota, the clubs and groups began sending in applications for a temporary charter to a hastily set up office in the Plymouth Building in Minneapolis. George Chapin was hired for \$100 a month to handle the onslaught of paperwork. He had to pay the office rental out of that salary.

Gimmetstad reported an incident in which a member of a post went to Chapin and asked where his charter was.

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10 oldest posts based on temporary charter date

There are many ways to determine which was the first post in Minnesota. A historian could trace a post back to its roots as a soldiers and sailors club back in early 1919. Or you could go by the post numbers, with Minneapolis Post 1 earning the honors. You could study when a post applied for a charter, but those records have not been kept. The only official record, according to The American Legion national organization, is when a post was officially given a temporary charter, the first step toward getting a permanent charter. According to that list, here’s the top 10 oldest posts in the state:

1. St. Paul Post 8, May, 5, 1919.
2. Fergus Falls Post 30, May 10, 1919.
3. Lakefield Post 4, May 23, 1919.
4. Worthington Post 5, May 23, 1919.
5. Crookston Post 20, June 1, 1919.
6. Roseau Post 24, June 1, 1919.
7. Warroad Post 25, June 1, 1919.
8. Sleepy Eye Post 7, June 2, 1919.
9. Adrian Post 32, June 6, 1919.
10. Moorhead Post 21, June 14, 1919.

Would you like to know if your post is a Centennial Post, those that received a temporary charter in the first year of The American Legion? Go to mnlegion.org and click on “Centennial Posts.”

Peace officer, fire fighter of year picked

Officer Anthony Dean
St. Paul

Anthony Dean, a patrol officer for the city of St. Paul, has been chosen by the Law and Order Committee as the 2016



ANTHONY DEAN

Minnesota American Legion Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer.

Dean, 33, was nominated by North End Post 474 in St. Paul.

Dean graduated from the St. Paul Police Department Academy in 2014, and he has been assigned to the department’s Central District since then.

Prior to that he was employed by Ramsey County Sheriff’s Department as a corrections officer and jailer.

Prior to that, he served in the Marine Corps from 2003 to 2007.

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Firefighter Ross Gramling
Virginia

Ross Gramling, a firefighter and paramedic with the Virginia, Minn., Fire Department, has been chosen as the Outstanding Firefighter of the Year by the Minnesota American Legion’s Law and Order Committee.

Gramling previously worked for the Cook Fire Department as a firefighter and ambulance driver.

He is a native of Cook, and attended Mesabi Range College in Virginia.

He has three years of service in Virginia, and has been strongly involved in the community.

Gramling also serves as

a member of the St. Louis County SWAT team to assist SWAT officers to

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ROSS GRAMLING

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Rochester gearing up for Department Convention in July

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Seventh Legacy Run being planned

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Complete 2016 state bowling results listed

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Navy Seals had origin back with OSS in World War II.

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Past NEC Virgil Persing dies

Virgil Persing, Minnesota’s National Executive Committeeman from 2005-09, died April 29, 2016. He was 85.

Persing held a variety of offices during his many years of service for The American Legion. He served as Department Vice Commander, 1988-89; Department Commander, 1995-96; and Alternate NECman, 2001-2005.

He was serving on the Department’s Board of Publications at the time of his death.

Persing grew up on the family farm in Montrose, South Dakota, and later lived in Sioux Falls. He joined the Air Force and served in Korea as an aircraft mechanic.

He and Mary, his wife of 62 years, operated the Miracle Café in Columbia Heights and he later worked for Onan Corporation.

He joined Minneapolis Falldin Post 555 and

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VIRGIL PERSING



A gunner at a few ‘beach parties’
Page 10



TWINS RADIO SPOT -- The Minnesota American Legion will broadcast several advertising spots over Memorial weekend on the Twins Radio Network. The advertisements will be heard all over the state during games and during pre-game and post-game programming. Commander Jim Kellogg records the spot with Twins broadcaster Mark Genosky assisting on the left.



MILITARY RADIO SPOT -- The Minnesota American Legion has purchased a year's worth of advertising on Minnesota Military Radio. Past Department Commander Peggy Moon records the message for May and June at the iHeart Radio studios in St. Louis Park. The program is broadcast on over 30 stations across the state.

Which is the oldest post in the state?

Continued from Page 1

Chapin pointed to a large stack and said new ones came in everyday and were added to the stack. He was working on them from top to bottom.

In other words, exactly when a post sent in its application may have had little to do with when the state and later the national organization actually acted on it.

Gimmestad said that by the end of June, 19 temporary charters had been authorized. By August, 40 posts had received charters.

The first 19 included, according to Gimmestad: Ada, Adrian, Bagley, Bemidji, Crookston, Detroit Lakes, Henning, Lakefield, Mahnomon, Moorhead, Pelican Rapids, Pipestone, Red Lake Falls, Roseau, Sleepy Eye, Minneapolis, Warroad, Winona, and Worthington.

You may have noticed that neither St. Paul Post 8 nor Fergus Falls Post 30, who are listed by National as the first two in the state to get charters, are on this list. It probably indicates the level of confusion regarding who was first in line.

Gimmestad does point out that the number assigned to posts has little to do with when they applied for a charter or when they got one. For instance, Shakopee Post 2 didn't actually get a temporary charter until August 5, three months after St. Paul Post 8.

Much of the work of organizing the infant American Legion in Minnesota was done in the Twin Cities. On May 22, 1919, a meeting of the Minneapolis Legionnaires was called, and one of the decisions of that meeting was that Minneapolis Theodor Petersen was named the first post in the state.

If you trace Petersen post's history back to the formation of the Loyal Legion club in the early part of the year, it may

indeed have a claim as the first post, but that claim can probably be challenged by dozens of other posts who were also organizing as soldiers and sailors clubs back in those days.

So which is the first post?
The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind.

Persing

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served as post commander and later as Fifth District Commander.

He was a state Legion bowling champion.

Persing is survived by his wife, five children and 11 grandchildren.

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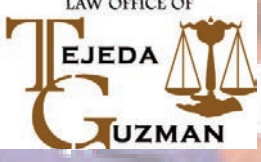



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Plans for 7th annual Minnesota Legacy Run underway

By Al Zdon

In six years of Legacy Runs in Minnesota, the American Legion Riders have raised \$340,000 for the national Legacy Scholarship program.

Just the thought of that brings a big smile to the face of Steve "Sully" Sullivan, who has been the primary organizer of the runs through the years. And the memory of being on the stage at national this past year presenting a check from Minnesota for \$103,000 makes Sullivan's smile even broader.

Sullivan is hoping to again pass the \$100,000 mark this year and help present that check at the Cincinnati national convention.

The money is used for scholarships for children of those who have died as military or emergency workers since 9-11. The national goal for the Legacy Scholarships is \$20 million.

This year again the ride will take place over two weekends in order to accommodate Riders who work.

The first weekend will feature a kick-off event at the Austin Post on Thursday, August 4. At 8 a.m. the next day, the Riders will hit the road and visit Wells or Faribault, Madelia, New Ulm, and spend the night at Redwood Falls.

All stops at this point are still considered tentative.

The next day on what is listed as the "MN ALR Not So North Run," the motorcyclists will stop at Fulda, Luverne Veterans Home, Pipestone, Marshall, and overnight at Montevideo.

On Sunday, they will visit posts at Benson, Willmar, Spicer, Litchfield, Howard Lake and Buffalo.

The "North Run" will begin at East Grand Forks on Friday, Aug. 12, and make stops at Thief River Falls, Middle River, Mahnomen, Bagley, Cass Lake, and overnight at Walker. On Saturday, the Riders will stop at Bovey, Hill City, Aitkin, Pequot Lakes, Brainerd

(Legionville) and stay over at Little Falls.

On the final day, the route will take them to Milaca, Pine City, Harris, Forest Lake and kickstands down at Fridley, probably between noon and 1 p.m.

Every year's run is a challenge to plan, Sullivan said. He expects there will be upwards of 100 riders throughout the two weekends of the Legacy Run. The riders will be accompanied by a "chaser" vehicle with a trailer to take a broken motorcycle to a fix-it shop.

He said that the small frictions that occur during a run are helped by the fact that he tells everybody to blame him for whatever goes wrong. "Whatever happens is my fault. It keeps everybody in a happy mode."

In fact, many Riders wear a "Blame Sully" patch on their vests.

He is also head of the complaint department. "If you want to complain, it costs \$5 a minute with a five minute minimum."

This year on the Run, two children will be along help raise money with a "cuss bucket." If the kids catch a Rider using impure language, the offenders will have to contribute to the bucket.

The idea of the run is to take in money at every stop. Posts are told ahead of time when to expect the Riders. "Through the years, people have just been phenomenal at being supportive," Sullivan said. "When the checks are presented, there's a lot of hootin' and hollerin'. It's cool stuff."

But money can also be sent to the Department with a check made out to the Minnesota American Legion Foundation, Fund 84.

And sometimes the money comes spontaneously. "We've been at a gas station filling up, and people come up to us and just hand us money."

The Riders pay their own way for the rides, and also chip in a \$30 fee to handle group expenses.



RUN ORGANIZER STEVE "SULLY" SULLIVAN

The trips cover about 1,000 miles over the weekend. "We try to stay off of freeways. The National organization does all their rides on freeways, but we're the bad boys. I tell them I like to see the scenery and not just the butt of the Rider in front of me."

The Legacy Run has strict safety rules that are followed. "We start each day with a safety meeting and a prayer."

One of the rules is that there is no drinking until the kickstands are down for the night. "We try to always remember that we're riding in respect to our veterans."

"I ride a trike now, and there's no kickstand. So they presented me with a kickstand so I can put it down at the end of the day. I take it with me on the rides."

Sullivan said the Riders program has been a boon to membership of the Legion, with many members signing up just to be a Rider and then getting involved in the Legion activities. A Rider must own a motorcycle and must be a paid up member of the Legion, Auxiliary or Sons of the American Legion.

Does he think the rides have topped out in fund raising? "I tell everybody that when the national convention comes to Minneapolis in 2018, we're going to raise \$250,000. They think I'm nuts, but I know we can do it."

Department Convention set for Rochester

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 below.

The Rochester Post 92 has announced that there will be transportation between the convention site and the hotels from Wednesday night to Saturday night.

The post will have registration from 3-8 p.m. Wednesday night.

The post will have burger night with karaoke on Thursday. There will be quick food at noon.

On Friday there will be quick food a noon and dinner and Karaoke at night.

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

Rochester.

The hospitality event on Friday night after the parade will be held at Windsor I and II in the Kahler Hotel basement.

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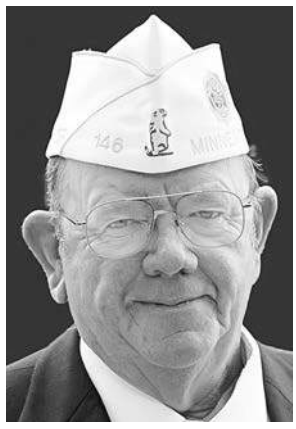
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If additional pre-registrations accompany this request, this pre-registration form should be photo copied for each person. The \$15 registration fee should be enclosed for each person.

Please, only one registration blank per person.

COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Jim Kellogg



Summer has arrived. With Summer comes the exciting season of District Conventions. Thank you to all who volunteered this past year to serve on committees and those of you who filled the various offices in your Post and District.

Your job is not finished as I see it. I feel when you have helped your successor do a better job than you did then your job is finished. I am not saying be a meddling pain in the you know where but share the knowledge you have gained. Together we can build a better American Legion for the future generations. I hope you have had as much fun as I am having serving this great organization.

Our outdoor disabled veterans programs are in full swing. I have had the privilege of seeing first hand the difference we make. When these veterans gather, the common

bond they share comes alive. Their love of their Country and the time they spent serving are shared. Their open dialogue and dedication to God and Country are heard and shared with all. I hope you have the chance to share as I have had in some of these events. When you see the smile on the face of a 93-year-old veteran as he shows off the turkey he has harvested, the look is priceless. The same look is on the face of the 25 year old veteran who stands beside him and also shows off his turkey.

Baseball season is upon us and with that comes Legion ball. Please take time this summer and support your local Post team. Minnesota has a premier program. There are no losers in Legion ball. All who participate are winners in my book. Thank you to all those who give of their time and money to help make this the program it is today.

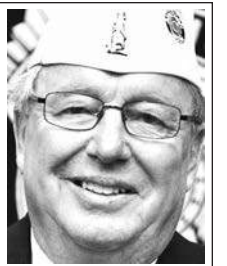
I hope you all had a reverent Memorial Day. My weekend was made special with the dedication of the new veterans cemetery at Preston. What a beautiful setting it is. When you are in the area of bluff country take time to visit.

I plan on being at all of your District conventions this year. I look forward to seeing you there and meeting the new leadership you have chosen. I hope many of you are planning on coming to our Department convention in Rochester. We are planning a fun and eventful convention. We are in need of entries for the parade. Remember the District competition \$\$\$. Please continue to give support to your new leaders. Together we can make a difference in the lives of our Veterans.

Safe travels to all and may God bless.

Chaplain's Corner

By Richard Wog



Looking outside our dining room window, I see our bird feeders, and this one squirrel that just keeps trying to get into one particular feeder, trying whatever it takes to get at the food. As I chase it away, it climbs up the tree and talks back to me. I wonder if it's saying "you chased me away but I'm coming back," which it does, so I just throw up my hands and say "if you want it that bad you must be hungry, so eat." It is part of God's creation and I am sure the birds don't mind sharing.

If one really thinks about it, people at times are like that, wanting to be fed the word of God, and something or someone tries to chase them away. But they come back because we as a Christian nation need to be fed also the word of God, to nourish us to make us strong in faith, word and deed.

There are countries that do not have what we have, even though there are missionaries trying to spread the word of God. It is a calling they have that I have the greatest respect for them and what they are doing. Please put them in your prayers.

In God we trust. The usage dated back to the Civil War, when religious sentiment was on an upswing and the American people wanted the world to know what their country stood for. I found it very interesting. By the turn of the century, however, the war's memory had faded. President Theodore Roosevelt considered the mingling of God and Country and Mammon to be vulgar and he ordered the phrase removed from the newly designed gold coins in 1907, but the American people forced Congress to back-track. By the mid-1950s, the concern with piety in Washington had apparently deepened and in 1955 ordered the same phrase to appear on all paper currency. This motto appeared on currency beginning in 1957 and since then numerous legal actions have sought to remove it from currency and strike "Under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. We the people of the great nation must never allow that to happen. For the men and women who have fought to give us this freedom, we owe it to them and the generations who will follow. There will always be those who will try. We must always be on watch to make sure it does not happen on our watch. Or better yet never. Why am I saying this? When I was in Indianapolis for the Americanism Commission, this subject was brought up at that meeting. The American people can take things for granted when caught off guard.

Summer will soon be here. The fields are planted, the rains have come and the crops are growing. We have to be thankful for the farmers and their hard work and the time they put in to provide the food that appears on all our tables. No matter the event, be it dinner, picnic, barbeques or reunions, they have produced it with the help of God.

May 7th, Cheryl and I attended a funeral. It was a wonderful service. A lot of Legionnaires, friends and family. May 14th we attended a wedding, the start of a new life together. And on Sunday a Baptism in our church, a new life brought into the family of God, all by the grace of God and his love. 1st Corinthians 13:13 talks about love "and now abide faith, hope, love, these three. But the greatest of these is love."

For God and Country.

Editorial

Volunteers

Sometimes it's easy to forget that nothing happens in The American Legion unless somebody does it. We are a volunteer organization.

When the young men and women came home from World War I, they wanted to preserve their comradeship by starting a new organization that would continue their service to America.

Nearly a hundred years later, The American Legion is still serving America because our members still believe what they do is important.

The baseball program in Minnesota, for example, does not happen through sheer momentum. It happens because over a thousand coaches, managers, district directors, state directors and others put in countless hours to make it happen. We have over 330 teams in Minnesota, and each one takes the field because people volunteer to coach, tend the field, teach the game and lead by example.

Legionville benefits from the people who help get the camp ready each year.

Boys State and Girls State are the premier summer government programs in Minnesota because dozens of volunteers give up a week each summer to live in dorm rooms and guide our youth in learning about democracy.

And beyond our great programs, there is the simple exercise of just keeping our posts alive and vigorous. It doesn't happen by accident. It happens because plain folks are willing to go to meetings, cook hamburgers on Friday night, make sure the cemetery looks good for Memorial Day, and visit our comrades in hospitals and nursing homes.

We should never forget how important our organization is in our Minnesota communities.

But each day we need to start over. We need to reaffirm our willingness to give our our time, talent and treasure to make Minnesota better, to ensure that veterans get the benefits they deserve from a grateful nation, and to make sure that patriotism is part of our national character.

A philosopher once said that America is great because America is good. When America stops being good, it will stop being great. The goodness the Legion provides starts and ends with volunteers.

American Legion Riders

**By Dennis Lewison
District 1**



Greetings from the seven chapters here in our district. May is here and the weather should start to be great. I am sure everyone has their bikes and trikes checked over, polished and ready to ride.

The first activity of the season in our district was a "Ride & Show" hosted by the Winona ALR Chapter 9 on Saturday, May 7th.

The growth of the 1st District ALR has been accomplished by the hard work and many hours put in by our first ALR director, Scuffy Paulson, Paul Spyhalski and many others.

Our constitution & By Laws were passed by the chapters at the District ALR convention. From there it went to the First District Legion convention. It took a few years to get final approval however, they were approved and we are working together to make this a success. The support from our "First District American Legion Family" continues to grow strong.

Thank you

I would like to thank the members of the Legion Family for all your support in the loss of my husband, Harold, a true patriot. Thanks to all who came to Harold's memorial service in Crosslake on May 7. It was awesome. I will continue to support the Legion and any memorials for Harold will be donated to the Crosslake/ Fifty Lakes Post 500 building fund. Thank you.

Pat Bergstrom

We have chapters in Adams, Austin, Owatonna, Rochester, Rushford, Stewartville and the most recently formed chapter in Albert Lea. The Albert Lea Chapter held their first meeting on Monday, March 28th with officers from the First District ALR performing the installation of officers. It was a good opportunity to meet and visit with the group. They will be starting out strong with close to 30 members from area Legion posts. They were able to sign up two new legion members as they wanted to participate in the ALR group.

Last year, we held the "Tour of the First District" to raise money for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship". We had a wonderful turn out and great time at the American Legions that we visited. Plans are in the works for the ride again this year. Mark your calendar for July 9-10, 2016 and join us. We will be leaving from Kasson Post #333 at 9 a.m. on Saturday.

Rushford will host the "Thunder in the Valley Ride" on Saturday, June 11th, 2016. We will attend the Department Legion Family convention that will be hosted by Rochester Post 92. Many are already excited for the Department ROMP in September.

In closing, be safe on the road and take time to attend the activities that ALR chapters are hosting.

Correction

A front page story in the May issue of the Minnesota Legionnaire stated that there have been two national presidents of the The American Legion Auxiliary from Minnesota, Kris Nelson and Evelyn Starr.

There actually have been four national presidents from Minnesota.

Tess Carlson of Willmar was the first to represent Minnesota as the national leader from 1934-35. Carlson had served as Department president in 1928-29. She was Seventh District president three times.

Ruth Hutton of Excelsior served as national president from 1947-48. She had been Department president from 1940-41 and had served three terms as 10th District president.

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Al Zdon, Editor

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What's Happening

Superior Trip

The 24th annual Lake Superior Fishing Trip for veterans from Minnesota veterans homes in Silver Bay, Hastings and Fergus Falls will be held Monday, June 27. Veterans will board 15 to 17 charter boats and spend a day fishing the great lake. Last year, over 60 residents fished, and later had their catch cooked by the Silver Bay home staff and volunteers. About 30 volunteers help out. The Silver Bay Veterans Home is soliciting donations for the event. Call Ward Wallin, 218-353-8703.

Gambling Seminar

A gambling seminar will be held at the 2016 Department Convention by the Minnesota Gambling Control Board. It will be held Thursday, July 21, at 2 p.m. in the Presentation Hall of the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester. The topic will be "Compliance Reviews and Site Inspections." The seminar will be presented by Kristine Koesling, compliance specialist.

Band to Represent State

The Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sundberg Marching Band will represent Minnesota at the 75th anniversary ceremonies at Pearl Harbor in December. The band must raise over \$200,000 for the trip. It is a great honor for the school and band members. For more information, call (320) 264-1411.

Legion College

Applications are being accepted for The American Legion National Leadership College which will be held in Indianapolis on Oct. 23-28. Minnesota will nominate one Legionnaire to attend and candidates must be in the Lebanon/Grenada/Panama or Gulf War/War on Terror war eras. If that slot is filled, Minnesota may be allowed to submit a candidate from an earlier war era. For more information, contact Randy Tesdahl, 651-291-1800 or email rtesdahl@mnlegion.org.

Golf Jobs Available

Interlachen Country Club is seeking veterans to work at the golf course as part-time staff members. For more information, call Nathan Ollhoff, golf professional, 952-924-7422.

Second Division Recruiting

The Second Indianhead Division Association is seeking members from those who have served in the division. The association seeks to preserve memories and honor members of the division through the years. For more info, go to www.2ida.org.

Veterans Jobs Fair

The Minneapolis VA will host a Job Fair for Veterans from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the auditorium at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. No registration is required. Veterans should be prepared for a potential interview. Businesses will include: US Bank, UPS, Cargill, the VA Medical Center, Delta, and many more.

Service Center volunteers

The Armed Forces Service Center at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport is seeking volunteers to work in the center which serves veterans 24 hours a day as they travel through the airport. The center is seeking those willing to do four-hour shifts. A background check is required and on-the-job training will be provided. If interested, go to www.mnafsc.org to learn more and click on "volunteers" to get an application.

Traveling Wall

The Veterans Council of Willmar will be hosting the Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall on June 30 through July 4. It will be on display at Robbins Island, across from the National Guard Armory. There will be an opening ceremony

at 7 p.m. on Friday, July 1. State VA Commissioner Larry Shellito will speak. The event is free for all. For more information, contact Ron at 320-894-7840 or Jon at 320-212-2978.

Golf Classic

The first Veterans and Friends Golf Classic, a four-person scramble, will be held Friday, June 10 with a 1 p.m. shotgun start at the North Links Golf Course in North Mankato. The cost is \$50 per player and there will be cash prizes and contest prizes. One mulligan is allowed per player and there will be a putting contest after the golf. For more information, call 507-947-3355. If you don't have a team, you will be placed on a team.

Free Legal Clinics

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans will offer free drop-in legal clinics in June. The clinics will have attorneys, CVSOs, and other to assist veterans with questions, legal forms and counsel.

-- Thursday, June 9, Anoka County Government Center, Room 237, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

-- Tuesday, June 21, St. Cloud VA Auditorium, Building 8, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

-- Tuesday, June 14, Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Flag Atrium Balcony Room, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For more information, call 651-200-4750.

Veterans Voice

The Minnesota Humanities Center is accepting nominations for the 2016 Veterans Voice Award. The award recognizes and honors Minnesotans who have honorably served and are making extraordinary contributions to their communities.

For more information, go to www.minnesotahumanities.org/vets. Nominations are due by June 3.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By

Ron Quade II
Claims Division Director



Education & Experience

Your American Legion (AL) Claims Divisions have a variety of services based on a combination of education, experience and accreditation. In previous segments we welcomed you to the Claims Divisions, this month you will learn more about the education, training and experience your Representatives receive.

In 2005 our Claims and Outreach Divisions (Fargo & St. Paul) were comprised of 7 Claims Representatives and four Office and Administrative Staff. At the time, our education, although on point and lengthy, was dependent upon the Federal Veteran Administration Regional Office (VARO). Our staff participated in what the VA calls, "Rater Board Training", which consisted of several weeks of in class training alongside VA employees who would eventually become decision makers or "Raters". Rater board training was a review of the Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 3 & 4, with explanation of the code and expectation of the rater. This and on the job training was the norm in Power of Attorney (POA) Offices.

In that same year, the VARO discontinued its offer to POA offices due to overcrowding of classes, causing a great need to organize and execute independent interagency and extensive training. Our first version of training was modest yet included all the fundamentals of a solid and basic training program. Since, and for the past nearly decade, we have built an extensive new employee and ongoing training program. Our education system is six months long and based on the implementation of training coordinators, mentorship, supervision approval, text and Code review, testing and of course integration of personal interaction with you, the claimants we serve. Ongoing training is held on an annual and monthly basis in annual training and monthly symposiums. Great opportunities for staff to become more knowledgeable about their work, responsibility and new and exciting changes in the world of VA. In addition to the extensive training, our staff are nationally accredited and biannually educated by The American Legion National Office. Information is regulated by the National Veterans Legal Services (NVLS) group.

Currently the Claims and Field Operations consists of 39 Claims Representatives and Office Administrative Staff working hard to represent you. The experience in your Minnesota American Legion Claims office now equals over 100 plus years of experience. We have grown with demand

and our desire to provide the most educated and experienced representation possible.

Four excellent AL Claims Divisions providing specialty service to the four corners to the great State of Minnesota. Please contact your local County Veteran Service Office to discuss or contact us directly at 612 970 5662. I look forward to bringing you more information about the Claims Divisions directly from the Supervisors and Staff who are on the ground working hard for you every day.

Sons of The American Legion

By

Gene Olswold



As I sit down to write this June article, I look back and wonder just where this year as gone. It seems as only yesterday I was sworn in as the 2015-2016 Detachment Commander at Legionville. But, if you have a good team that works with and for you, time passes quickly and the results are just phenomenal besides everyone having fun doing it.

Looking back at the results of this year, here is just a quick recap of what we did as The Sons of The American Legion. Last November, I started a Detachment Conference Call which enabled us to stay in close contact each month with each other, helping each other and having questions and concerns taken care of. This alone has benefited the Detachment. And in membership, four new squadrons have been started around the state strengthening those posts with the 5th new squadron waiting to be chartered at National. Our retention rate, as I write this, is well over 85% and going higher as renewals keep coming in. We are still looking for another ATH (All Time High) this year with a goal of 12,026. I know we can reach this.

May was busy traveling the state to the various district conventions and this month is going to be just as busy attending the rest of the district conventions as well as other events around the state. Attending all these conventions is a great time for me as it gives me the opportunity to visit with the Sons from the various squadrons and for them to meet me and ask any questions they may have. One of the highlights for me will be to present the Charter to the new Alumni Boys State Squadron on June 13th at Marshall during Boys State Week.

Our Campout and Convention is fast approaching at Legionville on June 24-25. If you would like to attend this great weekend the registration can be found at mnsal.org. This is a fun time with evening social life and many roaring campfires. Come on Thursday or Friday for relaxing evenings with your fellow Sons. I hope to see you there.

Federal VA has phone number for resolving Veterans Choice bill issues

WASHINGTON – Veterans can now work directly with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to resolve debt collection issues resulting from inappropriate or delayed Choice Program billing. In step with MyVA's efforts to modernize VA's customer-focused, Veteran-centered services capabilities, a Community Care Call Center has been set up for Veterans experiencing adverse credit reporting or debt collection resulting from inappropriately billed Choice Program claims. Veterans experiencing these problems can call 1-877-881-7618 for assistance.

"As a result of the Veterans Choice Program, community providers have seen thousands of Veterans. We continue to work to make the program more Veteran-friendly," said Dr. David Shulkin, Under Secretary for Health. "There should be no bureaucratic burden that stands in the way of Veterans getting care."

The new call center will work to resolve instances of improper Veteran billing and assist community care medical providers with delayed payments. VA staff are also trained and ready to work with the medical providers to expunge adverse credit reporting on Veterans resulting from delayed payments to providers.

VA is urging Veterans to continue working with their VA primary care team to obtain necessary health care services regardless of adverse credit reporting or debt collection activity.

VA acknowledges that delayed payments and inappropriately billed claims are unacceptable and have caused stress for Veterans and providers alike. The new call center is the first step in addressing these issues. VA presented The Plan to Consolidate Community Care in October of 2015 that outlines additional solutions to streamline processes and improve timely provider payment.

For more details about the Veterans Choice Program and VA's progress, visit: www.va.gov/opa/choiceact. Veterans seeking to use the Veterans Choice Program can call 1-866-606-8198 to find out more about the program, confirm their eligibility and schedule an appointment.

World War II History Round Table

Navy SEALs had its origin in OSS unit

By Al Zdon

On Dec. 19, 1941, just 12 days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into World War II, on the other side of the world a group of Italian frogmen sank two British battleships in the harbor at Alexandria, Egypt.

The Decima Flottiglia MAS, a unit of Italian commandos, penetrated the British defenses and attached mines to the HMS Valiant and the HMS Queen Elizabeth. Both ships capsized in shallow water.

The brazen attack sent a message to the Allies about the potential devastation that could be caused by a small group of highly trained commandos.

The United States soon organized the Office of Strategic Services Maritime Unit, which many consider the true ancestor of the Navy SEALs.

Author Patrick O'Donnell, who wrote *First Seals, The Untold Story of the Forging of America's Most Elite Unit*, was the featured speaker at a meeting of the World War II History Round Table.

"It started an underwater arms race," O'Donnell said of the Italian raid. "The U.S. didn't have any SEALs, any special forces or any underwater demolition teams. It was all built on technology we didn't have."

O'Donnell said the challenge was turned over to the OSS, America's spy organization during the war. "The OSS was the most extraordinary organization ever created in America."

O'Donnell said William "Wild Bill" Donovan, the leader of the OSS, had an extraordinary vision of what the spy organization could do. "They had a willingness to try and a willingness to fail. It was an organization that thrived on chaos. It was all built around extraordinary individuals."

The OSS used the work of Christian Lambertsen, a medical student and expert diver who had developed an underwater breathing device called the LARU or Lambertsen Amphibious Respiratory Unit.

The LARU used pure oxygen and a carbon dioxide filter so that divers could reuse the same air. There were no bubbles, making it ideal for underwater sabotage.

Lambertsen, called the "Father of the Frogmen," first showed his invention to the Navy, who rejected it. But on Nov. 17, 1942, in the Shoreham Hotel swimming pool in Washington D.C., he demonstrated the LARU to the OSS who immediately adopted the device. The swimmer in that trial was Jack Taylor, a dentist from Los Angeles who had been brought into the OSS, and H.G.A. Wooley, a British commando expert.

Wooley eventually was placed in charge of the Maritime Unit.

Lambertsen graduated from med school in 1943 and was recruited into the OSS where he led missions. After the war, he coined the name SCUBA for self-contained underwater breathing apparatus.

A major breakthrough with the LARU was at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba where OSS divers in a practice mission called "Operation Cincinnati," broke through Navy defenses and blew up an old barge.

Jack Taylor, then 33-years old, became a leader of the Maritime Unit and conducted 14 missions in the Mediterranean, some of them quite successful. "He set up an entire base of operations," O'Donnell said. "They were running supplies, inserting agents."

When Italy surrendered in 1943, part of its very successful and highly trained underwater commando team stayed with the German Army, while another part joined the Allies.

The OSS and the Italians worked together well. "They moved massive amounts of war material to the Yugoslav partisans."

One of those who worked in that operation was a young Marine officer named John Hamilton. His real name was Sterling Relyea Walter, but he was better known by his screen name: Sterling Hayden.

Hayden earned a Silver Star for his courage in the Yugoslav supply operation and for other heroic acts in the Mediterranean.

The Maritime Unit, O'Donnell said, "was 20 or 30 years ahead of its time."

In 1944, Taylor was one of four spies parachuted into Austria as part of something called the Dupont Mission, working behind enemy lines.

"Unfortunately their radio was dropped into a lake, and they had no communication. That's not good for spies."

"Eventually the Gestapo found Taylor and bitterly tortured him." He was eventually taken to Mauthausen extermination camp. He was scheduled to be executed, but a friendly Czech had removed the execution order and destroyed it.

When the camp was liberated, Taylor stayed on. "He spent another month in the camp gathering evidence. He found a bull whip that was used. He took down accounts from witnesses. He brought it all down on the men who were his captors at the Nuremberg trials and in other trials."

Meanwhile the Maritime Unit continued to fight in Europe and later in the Pacific.



Dr. Jack Taylor, a dentist from Los Angeles, became one of the OSS Maritime Unit's most fearless and successful operatives. He was later captured in Austria behind enemy lines and narrowly escaped execution.



Dr. Christian Lambertsen was a med student when he invented the LARU, or Lambertsen Amphibious Respiratory Unit. His underwater breathing device produced no bubbles and thus was good for sabotage.



A diver tries out an early version of the LARU which recycled the air and produced no bubbles.

When the war was over, the OSS was dissolved, along with its Maritime Unit. Again the spy activity of America was splintered among the branches of the service and various government agencies.

Also on the Round Table program was Lee Tallakson, Edina, who was serving in the Navy in 1961 when the SEALs were formed.

Tallakson served in COMPHIBLANT or, translating Navy parlance, Commander Amphibious Force, Atlantic. "I was a young officer in the readiness and training sector. The Cold War was at its height."

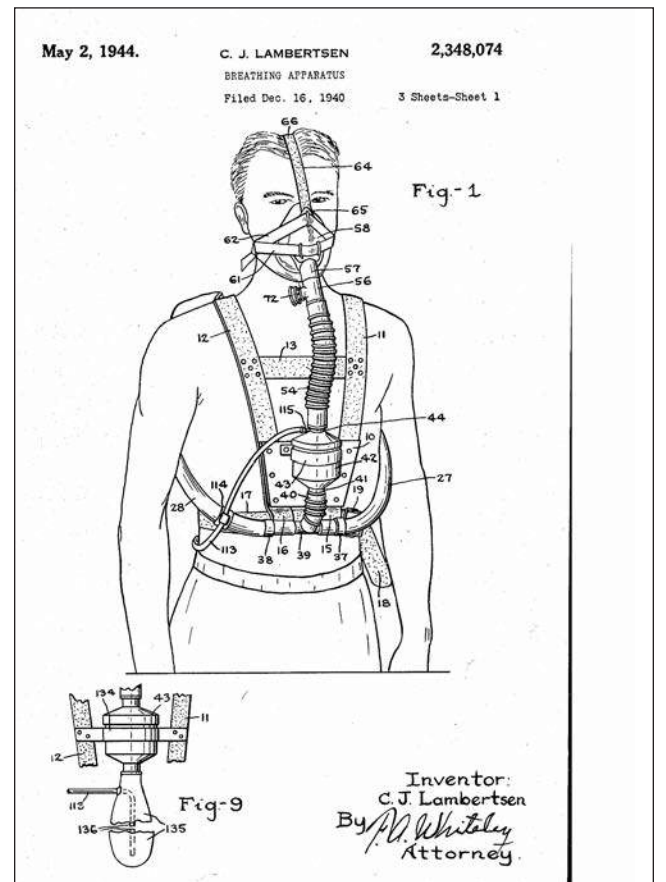
In November of that year, five officers and several enlisted personnel were present when it was announced, "We're going to have a new force and we need a name. They threw out what the new force would deal with such as explosives, Ranger training, airborne training and underwater demolition."

Looking back at his notes from the meeting, Tallakson said some of the names that were suggested were "FAS" or "BLOC," although he doesn't remember what the acronyms stood for.

"Someone suggested that we put together Sea, Explosives, Air and Land and call them SEALs. The captain said, 'That's pretty good.' It got passed up chain of command to the Navy Department, and that's when the SEALs took that name."

Tallakson said, "The funny thing is that I never heard of SEALs for the next four years I was in the Navy. But then, afterwards, when I was in the Naval Reserve, I heard that name again."

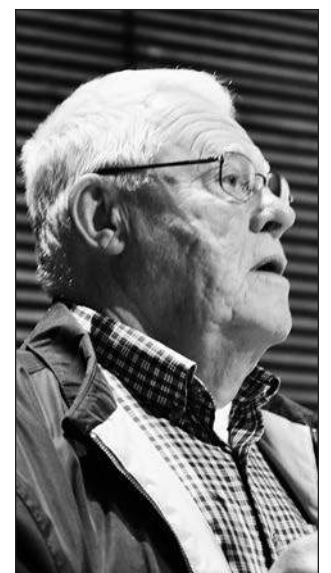
Tallakson, who serves on the committee for American Legion Boys State gave a short explanation of Boys State and encouraged young men to attend.



Lambertsen's patent application for the LARU



PATRICK O'DONNELL



LEE TALLAKSON

Call to Meeting

**THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55165**

CALL FOR THE 98th ANNUAL DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

The 98th Annual Convention of The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, is hereby called in conformity with provisions of the Department Constitution and By-Laws, and by action of the Department Executive Committee, sponsored by Rochester American Legion Post 92 and held at Mayo Civic Center, Rochester, Minnesota, July 21, 22, 23, 2016.

PURPOSE OF CONVENTION

The Convention is called for the purpose of electing officers for the ensuing year, amending the Constitution and By-Laws, and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it.

REPRESENTATION AT CONVENTION

The Department Convention shall be composed of delegates from each Post, members of the Department Executive Committee, the Department Chaplain, Treasurer, Historian, and the District Adjutants, but only delegates from Posts shall be entitled to vote at such Convention, (Sec.2, Article Five, Department Constitution). Each Post shall be entitled to two delegates and to one additional delegate for each hundred members or major fraction thereof, whose Department dues have been received by the Department Treasurer and whose District dues have been paid to their respective District officers, 30 days prior to the

Convention for which they are chosen. The final voting strength of each Post shall be determined 30 days prior to the Convention. Each Post shall choose its own delegates, who shall be members in good standing of such Post. In addition, each Post may choose alternate delegates to serve in the absence of the principal delegate, (Sec. 3, Article Five, Department Constitution). Delegates or alternates must register in order to vote.

GAMBLING SEMINAR MEETING

The Gambling Seminar will be at 2:00 PM on Thursday, July 21, 2016 in Presentation Hall, Mayo Civic Center, Rochester, MN.

DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Department Executive Committee has been called and will be held at 7:00 P.M on Wednesday, July 20, 2016, in Rochester, MN at the Marriott, Ballroom 1 as specified in the upcoming Call to Meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Standing Department Committee Meetings will be held at the Marriott or Kahler in Rochester, Minnesota, in the meeting rooms to be determined. These rooms will be confirmed in each committee's Call to Meeting.

AMERICANISM 4:00 P.M., Wednesday, July 20, 2016 TBD

CHILDREN AND YOUTH 4:00 P.M., Wednesday, July 20, 2016 TBD

NATIONAL SECURITY 4:00 P.M., Wednesday, July 20, 2016 TBD

REHABILITATION 4:00 P.M., Wednesday, July 20, 2016 TBD

GENERAL SESSIONS Presentation Hall, Thursday, Friday, Saturday

HOUSING AND REGISTRATION

For the 2016 Department Convention, hotel reservations will be done "on your own" directly with the Kahler Grand Hotel, Kahler Inn & Suites, or Rochester Marriott. Please call the hotel directly. *Kahler Grand Hotel and *Kahler Inn & Suites - 1-800-533-1655. *Rochester Marriott - 1-877-623-7775. A registration fee of \$15.00 for each Delegate/Alternate and/or Guest must be sent to: Attention: Bill Born, American Legion Post 92 Office, 403 East Center Street, Rochester, MN 55904. This check should be made payable to "Post 92 Convention Fund." Registration will be \$18.00 at the door.

DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS OFFICE

A temporary Legion Department Headquarters office will be at the Mayo Civic Center in a room still to be determined starting Thursday, July 21, 2016 for convention service and business during convention business hours only. Meetings will start ON TIME as scheduled unless otherwise announced.

James Kellogg

Department Commander

ATTEST: RANDY TESDAHL

Department Adjutant

Dated at St. Paul, Minnesota, this 1st day of May, 2016

Convention Rules

The Rules Committee submits the following proposed Rules for the Convention to be held at Rochester, Minnesota, July 21, 22, 23, 2016.

1) With the following modifications, Robert's Rules of Order, revised, be adopted for this Convention.

2) (a) That the speech of any Delegate, recognized by the Commander, shall be limited to three (3) minutes and no more.

(b) Where a motion is made to table a resolution, the sponsor shall be entitled to speak to the Convention for three (3) minutes on the subject, and three (3) minutes rebuttal be granted to the maker of the motion to table before the motion is put.

3) That the Floor be permitted but once to any individual on any subject, except with the unanimous consent of the Convention.

4) (a) That all resolutions, with the exception of those prepared by Convention Committees, must be presented in writing signed by the author thereof, not later than 9:00 A.M. the first day of the Convention, to the Department Adjutant who shall refer them to the Resolutions Assignment Committee without debate. Each District Delegation Chairman or Secretary will meet with the Department Resolutions Assignment Committee at 9:00 A.M. of the first day of the Convention to be informed as to the resolutions assigned to each Convention Committee, then provide copies of those resolutions to the representatives they have appointed to said Convention Committee. The Resolutions Assignment Committee is responsible for receiving, registering and accounting for all resolutions forwarded to it by the Department Adjutant and all committee originated resolutions.

(b) Resolutions containing matters of legislation shall be cleared by the Convention Legislative Committee.

5) On matters where voting has been by roll call vote, when the poll of any Post Delegation is demanded by the Delegate of any Post, the Secretary of the Convention shall poll the vote of that Delegation by Delegates, without debate or discussion.

6) That on Roll Call, the Chair or Acting Chair of each Delegation on the Floor shall announce the vote of this Delegation.

7) No person, not duly accredited, shall participate directly or indirectly in debate on any subject before the Convention, but Past Department Commanders and members of the Department Executive Committee shall have the privilege of speaking from the Floor, but not of voting, except as Delegates.

8) That no Delegate be permitted on the Convention Floor unless certified by the Delegate's Post as Delegate or Alternate and that every Delegate or Alternate, to be duly accredited, must be registered.

9) That the published program be approved by this Convention.

10) No person or Delegate shall act by proxy for any Post. No Post shall vote unless at least one registered and accredited Delegate or Alternate be present on the Convention Floor.

11) The voting shall be by acclamation, except when a Roll Call is demanded by the Chair or Acting Chair of at least three Delegations; and except for elections which shall be as follows:

(a) The election of Department Officers, NEC positions, and the Member of the Board of Publications shall be by written ballot unless there is but one candidate or, in the case of election of Vice Commanders, there are but five candidates.

(b) The election of candidates for other positions shall be by District as set forth in Rule 14 below. Candidates receiving the highest number of votes in one round of voting shall be elected to the positions.

If there are more than five candidates for Vice Commander, those five receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. Cumulative voting shall not be allowed.

The printed ballot shall include the names of all candidates who have notified the Department Office of their candidacy at least 30 days prior to the first day of the Convention.

For the election of Department Officers and NEC positions, the

Tellers shall issue to the Delegation Chair of each registered Post the number of written ballots equal to the delegate strength of that Post. Said Chair shall sign for the ballots.

Ballots shall be issued and the polls shall be open during the following times:

(a) Friday, for one half hour after recess of the Convention.

(b) Saturday, from 8:00 A.M. until 9:00 A.M.

No ballots shall be counted before Saturday morning. No ballots shall leave the polling place.

The District Commander of each District shall appoint a Teller. Tellers shall elect among themselves two Tellers from the Districts which have no candidate for Commander. These two Tellers, and the Judge Advocate, shall tabulate and total the election results. The result of each contest shall be confidential and shall be placed in a separate envelope and delivered to the Commander.

If there is a written ballot contest which has not resulted in a majority vote (except for Vice Commanders), the Commander will be informed immediately. Then, written ballots for that contest shall be distributed immediately in accordance with these Rules and be cast within one-half hour of completion of the distribution. Tabulation and reporting shall be in accordance with these Rules.

Results of the vote count shall be reported to the Convention. All ballots and results shall be destroyed immediately following the close of the Convention, unless there is a motion to preserve.

12) Nominations for Department Officers and NEC positions shall be held on the afternoon of Friday of the Convention. Nominations shall be made from the Floor on Roll Call by Districts, in ascending order starting with the District whose number matches the last digit of the year of the Convention; each District may present as many candidates as it chooses. Thereafter, nominations may be made from the Floor.

13) Nominating speeches for Department Officers shall be limited to five (5) minutes. There will be no seconding speeches allowed for any candidates.

14) When the convention has adopted a Motion to suspend the rules and vote on a matter by District, each District may vote its entire voting strength. If the matter is the election of individuals for any open positions (such as Department Delegate at-Large), each District may vote its voting strength times the number of open positions, but shall not vote more than its voting strength for any one individual. The call for District votes shall be in ascending order starting with the District whose number matches the last digit of the year of the Convention.

15) In the event more than two candidates are nominated for any office, the balloting shall continue until one candidate shall have received a majority of the votes cast. In elections where there are more than two candidates, the candidate receiving the fewest votes in each round of voting shall be eliminated.

16) No personalities or partisan politics shall be discussed or indulged in on the Convention Floor, and the Department Commander shall prohibit such indulgences.

17) (a) Rules Committee approves the following list of Convention Committees to be chosen at this Convention, each District to choose one representative on each Committee:

Americanism	National Security/Foreign Relations
Children and Youth	Public Relations
Constitution-By-Laws	Recreation-Sports
Employment	Rehabilitation
Energy and Conservation Resolutions	
Legislative	Safety-School Patrol
Membership	

(b) The following Department Standing Committees are approved as Convention Committees:

- Finance
- Next Meeting Place (Convention Corporation Committee)
- Resolutions Assignment
- Credentials

18) The order of business of the Convention shall be in accordance with the printed program, except that the election of

officers shall be a special order of business, to be held in accordance with Rules 11 and 12. The order of election of Department Officers shall be as follows:

- Commander
- Five Vice Commanders - without numerical designation
- Chaplain
- Historian
- Sergeant at Arms
- Member of Publication Board - for three-year term
- Delegates-at-Large to the National Convention
- Five Alternates-at-Large to the National Convention
- National Executive Committeeman and Alternate National Executive Committeeman (when appropriate)

19) The Committee Chairman shall inform the Department Commander when he is ready to present his report, and the Department Commander shall recognize it as an order of business. The committees reporting action on Resolutions must read all approved Resolutions. It is sufficient to report all rejected Resolutions by number, unless requested by a Delegate to set a Resolution aside for separate consideration.

20) All printed reports, which shall have been handed to the Convention Committees, shall be referred to the proper Convention Committee for action.

21) No Band, Drum Corps or other musical organization shall be permitted in the Convention Hall without the invitation of the Department Commander.

22) (a) Any Guests who are not on the official program as speakers shall be introduced by the Department Commander only, and shall be limited to an address of not more than three (3) minutes.

(b) The Commander is to adhere as nearly as possible to the printed program so that guests, and others to be honored, are presented without undue delay.

23) No elective political office holder shall be permitted to speak during the Convention except the Chief Executive of the State of Minnesota, and the Chief Executive of the Convention City, or such persons as are on the official printed and published program.

24) All major speeches shall be limited to fifteen (15) minutes and all others not to exceed five (5) minutes.

25) No intoxicating liquors shall be sold or dispensed in the building of the Convention meeting, except as authorized by the Convention Corporation.

26) The Roll Call of Posts shall be called in numerical sequence in accordance with Post numbers assigned, including the city or town, beginning with Post No. 1, except in odd numbered years the order of call will be reversed, but only those Posts having one or more duly registered and accredited Delegates or alternates accredited prior to 9:00 a.m. as confirmed by the Credentials Committee, shall be included in the Roll Call at any time.

27) Posts challenging exclusion from the Roll Call shall consult with the Credentials Committee for resolution of the problem.

THE COMMITTEE: (Members Present)		
DISTRICT	MEMBER	HOME TOWN
First	Roland Hanson	Austin
Second	Ryan Hill	Brewster
Third	Don Skow	Lindstrom
Fourth	Dan Williams	Vadnais Hgts.
Fifth	Gary Martin	Minneapolis
Sixth	Dwayne Collins	Brainerd
Seventh	Karen Welander	Sunburg
Eighth	Jennifer Havlick	Two Harbors
Ninth	Denise Milton	Bagley
Tenth	Bill Johnson	Maple Grove

Military retirement tax break is passed

A bill that will remove income tax requirements for the pensions of military retirees passed the Minnesota Legislature.

Veterans had been supporting the legislation for at least 10 years. Minnesota was one of five states left in the nation that still taxed military pensions.

It was thought that the tax burden influenced many military retirees to locate to other states after their service.

Two other bills that the veterans community had been watching -- the creation of two new veterans homes in the state and creating a new visitor's center at Historic Fort Snelling -- did not make it through the tumultuous final hours of this year's session.

And, a bill to fix the bridge at the Minnesota Veterans Home at Minneapolis was also not included.

The veterans homes would have been built in Bemidji and Montevideo and would have cost the state \$21 million, plus a commitment to support the homes into the future.

The \$21 million would be matched by a federal grant for building nursing homes. Minnesota, under federal law, is allowed about 150 more beds, and the two homes in the bill would split that amount.

Minnesota would have to compete with other states for the matching money, and there is not guarantee that Minnesota would get it.

The Fort Snelling project would have cost \$36 million for rehabbing a 1904 barracks into a new visitor's center, replacing the current underground center which has serious water table leakage problems.

The Historical Society was planning on raising \$12 of its

own for the project.

The Legislature did not pass either a transportation bill or a bonding bill.

Reports indicate that the Fort Snelling project was not included in the final version of the bonding bill.

Gov. Dayton has not yet decided, as this issue went to press, on whether to call a special session to deal with the transportation or bonding bills.

The military retirement bill was sponsored by Rep. Bob Dettmer, R-Forest Lake, in the House.

The bill to remove the tax from military retirement pay will include members of the Minnesota National Guard and other reserve components.

It also applies to all those who served on active duty in any branch of the service.

Ross Gramling

Continued from Page 1

ensure public safety.

He is involved in the Virginia Mucular Dystrophy Association's Fill the Boot program.

"Not only does he work here, but he puts his heart and soul into every shift, training session and call that he is on," said Kevin Poffs, battalion chief with the Virginia Fire Department.

Gramling was named Firefighter of the Year by his peers at Virginia this past year.

He was nominated by Virginia Post 239.

Anthony Dean

Continued from Page 1

Although Dean has only been on the beat for a short time, he has been recognized for outstanding police work, including locating a car used in connection to a homicide investigation.

He has also been noted for his community service work including helping youth through the Upward Bound program, and also the the Department's Autism Response Program.

Dean was the subject of a story in the St. Paul Pioneer Press when he represented the city in Washington D.C. to tell congressional leaders the value of federal programs like Upward Bound.

Dean and his wife have two children.

"In my opinion, Officer Dean is a special officer to me because of his compassion and desire to help people," said Commander Kurtis Hallstrom of the St. Paul Police.



NAVY CEREMONY -- The recruiting command for the U.S. Navy for Minnesota recently held a change of command ceremony at the USS Ward gun on the grounds of the Minnesota Capitol. The Ward fired the first shot of World War II for the United States at Pearl Harbor. This year will mark the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and both the Minnesota Historical Society and the World War II History Table are planning events around the Dec. 7 anniversary this fall.



FAGEN'S FIGHTERS NEW EXHIBIT -- Fagen's Fighters World War II Museum in Granite Falls recently had a dedication of a World War II boxcar and Holocaust exhibit. The museum is home to a collection of World War II aircraft and vehicles along with fine art, sculptures, interactive multi-media displays, and a library. The new exhibit features a boxcar that was used to transfer prisoners during the war. For more on Fagen's Fighters, go to fagenfighterswwiimuseum.org.

New Jersey program works with Legion to help those in jail

Serving as a local policeman and later as a county sheriff, James Plousis said it always saddened him to see a veteran in the county jail. "He didn't get the helping hand," Plousis said. "I saw it firsthand. These guys don't really belong in jail. There's got to be a better way."

As chairman of the New Jersey State Parole Board, Plousis has created several initiatives -- some working with The American Legion Department of New Jersey -- to limit the number of veterans finding themselves incarcerated or on the way to becoming so.

A former U.S. marshal, Plousis was named parole board chairman in August of 2010. After realizing there was a lack of programs within his agency specific tailored to the needs of veterans, he created his multi-faceted Veterans Offender Reentry Initiative

"It's amplified now with our (veterans) coming back from Afghanistan and Iraq," Plousis said of the need to develop a program for veterans. "The multiple deploy-

ments, we all know, add mental stress on these guys and gals. It was the right thing to do, and it was a positive thing."

Plousis said coming from a local law enforcement background and seeing veterans in the penal system allowed him to look at the situation at the state level from a unique perspective.

"I saw there was nothing specific for veterans to capture who was a veteran in the system, and were we making sure that we were helping them get the benefits that they were awarded," Plousis said. "I did some homework, and I found out at the county jail level nobody was tracking who was a veteran there. We weren't tracking who was a veteran at (Department of Corrections)."

A member of the Sons of The American Legion Squadron 524 in Ocean City, N.J., Plousis knew the Legion had contacts and posts in communities throughout the state. "My thought was, 'If I partner with The American Legion, I'll have people everywhere that can help the guys when

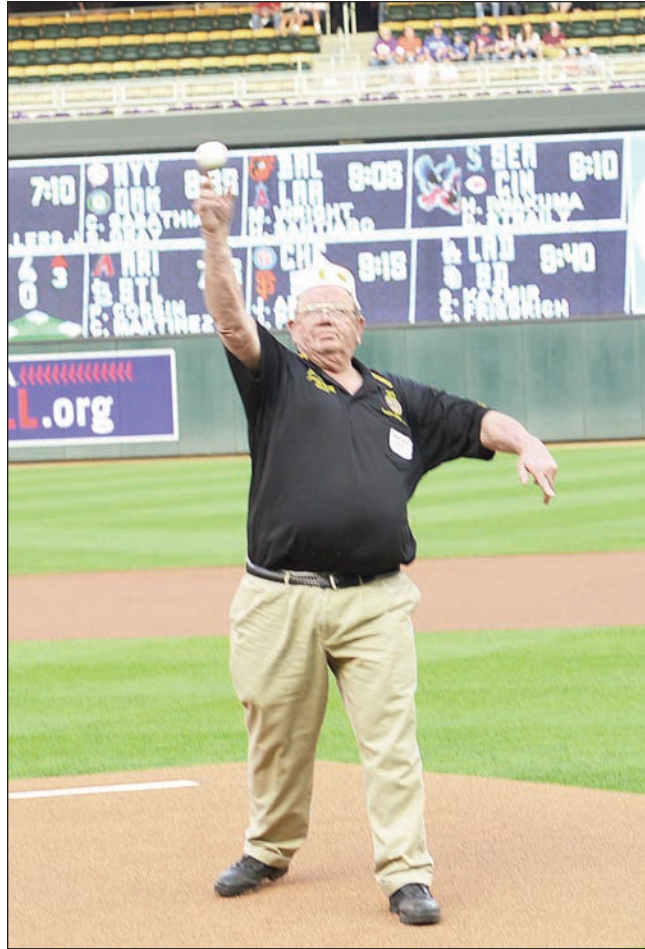
they get out (of jail).'"

Then-American Legion Department of New Jersey Commander Bob Looby was in Trenton at the department headquarters when Plousis reached out to the Legion in December of 2010.

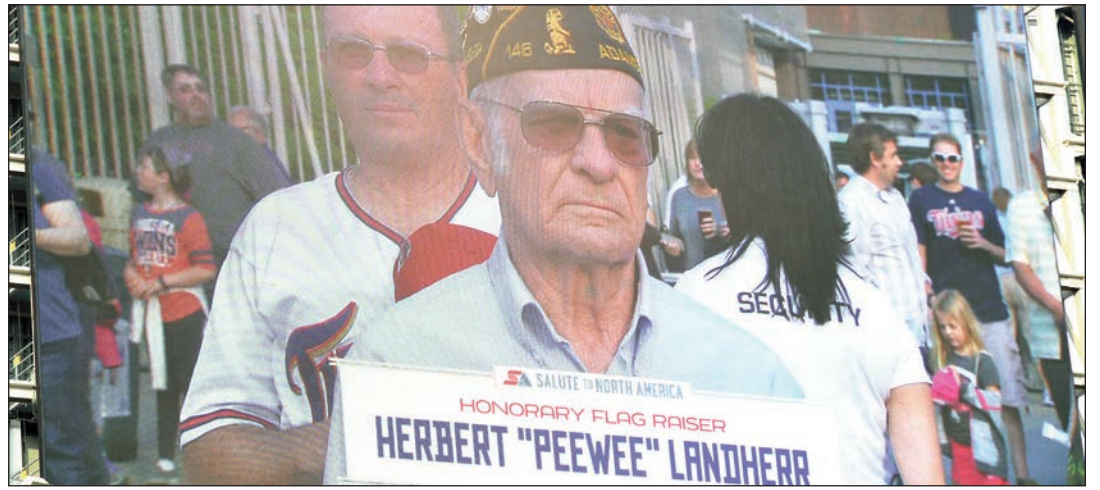
"He engaged us right away, and the immediate answer was 'yes, we're going to work with you,'" Looby said. "And we got a resounding endorsement (from the department) for a formal partnership. We engaged posts right away to get parolees to volunteer so they can say on their résumé that they've been doing work for the community. We knew we were going to help vets. It was that simple."

The idea, Plousis said, was to refer parolees to a local Legion post "and maybe they could get a mentor there. They could get help with housing, help with employment. Part of the agreement was they'd give them free membership the first year."

Legion Day at Twins



Department Commander Jim Kellogg lofts a mighty throw to the plate for the first pitch of the game.



Honorary flag raiser for the game was Pee-wee Landherr of Adams Post 146, a Korean War veteran and longtime Twins fan. He was videoed for the Jumbotron.



The commander's family joined him for the first pitch event on the field. From left, wife Brenda, Jim, granddaughter Sydney Slavin, daughter Luann, grandson Jarek Slavin and granddaughter Ruby Kellogg.



Luann Kellogg took a photo of the kids with Twins mascot TC Bear.



Prior to the game, Commander Kellogg joined the Adams group at the flag poles. From left: Kellogg, Dennis Mullenbach, Al Huntley, Cliff Kiefer and honorary flag raiser for the game Pee-wee Landherr.

Turkey Hunt at Ripley



TURKEY SUCCESS -- Those helping and hunting at the annual Disabled Vets Turkey Hunt displayed a large turkey. From left: Tom Holthaus, past director of the VA Medical Center in St. Cloud and an originator of the turkey hunt; Eugene Crandall; Bud Grant, former Vikings coach; and Jim Kellogg, Department Commander.



V4V SUPPORTS OUTDOORS ACTIVITIES -- The Veterans 4 Veterans Trust Fund granted \$90,000 over three years to support outdoor programs offered by the Minnesota service organizations. From left, Col. Scott St. Sauver, garrison commander at Camp Ripley; Don Pankake, Legion representative on the V4V, and Dennis Erie, coordinator of the outdoor programs for veterans.



FLAG PRESENTATION -- The American Legion presented a flag signed by Vikings Hall of Famer Bud Grant to Camp Ripley at the opening of the turkey hunt. From left: Adjutant Randy Tesdahl, Grant, Camp Ripley Garrison Commander Col. Scott St. Sauver, Department Commander Jim Kellogg. The flag will be displayed at the Viking Club at the camp.

'ALL I DID WAS WORK A FEW BEACH PARTIES'

By Al Zdon

Burt Falk survived the war under an assumed name. He didn't want it that way, and he fought against it, but you can't fight city hall or the U.S. Navy.

It actually started with his father, who was a veteran of World War I. Due to a mixup, the Army was convinced the family name was spelled "Folk," replacing the "a" with an "o."

When Burt Falk was born on Jan. 8, 1924, his father's discharge papers were used as an official document. So young Burton's legal name was Folk, although he grew up and went to school using the correct name, Falk.

When he joined the Navy in 1942, the government used his birth certificate for enlisting him, and that was that. No amount of reasoning could change the Navy's mind about his real name. "I told them it was wrong, but that didn't mean nothing to them. You might as well talk to the moon."

Falk even had to learn to sign his name "Folk" during those years to keep everybody happy.

Three and one-half years later, after advancing to gunner's mate first class and seeing the war up close up at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, Burt Falk was able to go home to Minneapolis and use his real name again.

Burton E. Falk was born at his parent's apartment near downtown Minneapolis. "We didn't have any money for any hospitals."

The family later moved to the North Side near 47th and Aldridge. His father was a truck driver, and earned money on the side by repairing cars in the family garage.

"I went to Jenny Lind Grade School, which was across the street from the workhouse (city jail) field. We used to watch as the guards with shotguns would take the men out to work in the field. It was very interesting."

He said much of the North Side was made up of dirt roads with only a few paved roads as the main thoroughfares. These were hard times, and he sometimes encountered hard or desperate people, even in elementary school.

"In class one day, they had a drawer inspection, and they found in this one girl's desk everybody's pen in the class. She had every one of them. She was a thief-plus."

Falk has been into the printing profession since he was 12 years old, and one time at Patrick Henry Junior High school he printed the school newspaper's last edition of 16 pages all by himself. "Most schools had their own presses at that time, but Henry was getting rid of theirs and so that was the last edition printed at the school. I did the whole thing."

To continue his education in printing, he enrolled at Vocational High School in downtown Minneapolis. He attended classes in the morning, and had a job at a printing shop in the afternoon. "I did all the dirty work."

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, Falk was ready to enlist the next day. "My grandfather had served, my father had served, and I wanted to serve. I wanted to do my part. I was ready."

But since he was 16 years old and a junior in high school, he was forced to wait. He turned 17 in January 1942, but he still needed his parents' permission. "I knew my mom wouldn't sign the papers until I finished 11th grade."

In July, he walked over to the federal building with his parents' signatures and his erroneous birth certificate and joined the Navy.

Boot camp was at Great Lakes, and then he was off to Gunnery School at Michigan City, Indiana. When that school closed, he went back to Great Lakes to finish his gunnery training. Out of 200 young men in his class, only eight were selected to leave the school as third class gunner's mates, and Falk was one of them.

"Taking tests didn't bother me, maybe because I was so young and still in school. It seemed like the older guys had more problems. I don't think I was any smarter than anybody else."

Next stop was Norfolk, Virginia, at the Navy's proving grounds for its guns.

"We would load an experimental projectile into a gun and then step behind a protective wall to pull the lanyard and fire the weapon. I suppose they didn't know if it was going to blow up or not. I remember that we had a 16-inch thick steel barrier set up and we would fire 16-inch shells at it and they would go right through."

Falk moved on to Guantanamo Bay where the Navy had a large base. "It was our job to calibrate the range finders on the ships. Whenever a new destroyer came out, it would go to Guantanamo to get its range finder set up."

One of Falk's few regrets about his service time came at Guantanamo. "They asked me to dive into a swimming pool and swim a length underwater. I swam one length, turned around and swam back without coming up. I was a pretty

Burt Falk had to wait until he was 17 to join the Navy in World War II. He became a gunner's mate first class and served aboard the USS Darke, an attack transport ship. He served at both Iwo Jima and Okinawa, bringing troops and supplies to the shore and to other ships. And he did it all with the wrong name on his dog tags.

good swimmer and I had good wind. I could have done another length."

The Navy immediately offered him a job in a new unit. "They wanted me to go to mine warfare school. But I thought it had to do with serving on mine sweepers, and I thought that would be boring. I was young and dumb."

It turned out the Navy was trying to convince him to sign up for underwater demolition (UDT) training. "I would have loved to do that, but I didn't understand."

By now, Falk, who had been so eager to get into the fighting, had been in the Navy for almost two years and had never gone to war. "Guantanamo was tough duty. It was a lot of dirty work and it was miserable. I was glad to get sea duty."

"They chose 25 of us and assigned us to Washington State to be gunners on the new transport ships the Navy was coming out with."

Falk was sent to a base just north of Seattle and became part of the original crew of the USS Darke (APA-159), a Haskell-class attack transport ship. It was a large ship, over 450 feet long, with plenty of work for gunner's mates.

To project the ship, there was a five-inch gun on stern, four twin 40mm guns, one quad 40mm gun, and ten 20mm guns. The guns were being installed when Falk reported aboard.

Darke proceeded to San Diego to pick up her 26 landing craft.



BURT FOLK (FALK)
As a gunner's mate first class in World War II



BURT FALK
At home in Maple Grove