

The Minnesota American Legion and Auxiliary

Legionnaire



Volume 98, Number 8

For God and Country

August 2016

Milton wins election as 2016 Commander

Denise Milton, Bagley, was elected 2016-17 Commander of the Department of Minnesota at the convention in Rochester.

Milton defeated Richard Wog of Willmar. The election totals were not announced, but the final vote was Milton, 374, Wog, 288.

Milton becomes the second female commander of the 80,000-member organization in the past three years.

She was installed at the conclusion of the convention by Minnesota's first woman commander, Peggy Moon of St. Joseph.

The commander position was expected to be the only contested election at the convention, but instead there were three.

Bill Brockberg, Worthington, defeated

Steve Klinkner, Madelia. Again, no vote totals were announced, but the vote total was Brockberg, 588, Klinkner, 60.

Klinkner had been nominated from the floor at the convention.

The selection of delegates-at-large to the National Convention at Cincinnati also became a contest when five contenders were nominated for the three positions.

Richard Skillestad, Jim Lucas, Ferdie Haberman, Darrel Redepinning and David Heidebrink were nominated. Heidebrink withdrew before the election.

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2018 state dues increase passes on the convention floor

A resolution for a \$3 dues increase slated for the 2018 membership year was expected to run into major opposition at the Department Convention, but instead passed with hardly a vote against it.

The resolution was passed as part of the Finance Committee report. There was an objection from the floor that the resolution had not been read, but it was ruled that only the resolved clauses need be read, which was the case.

Another resolution, Number 6 from the Sixth District, which called for a moratorium on the dues increase until the Department went into deficit spending, was then rejected on the floor.

One resolution that did incur controversy on the floor was Resolution 1 from the 10th District.

The resolution would have changed the constitution to allow district com-

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DEC learns about Department income and spending history

Members of the Department's Executive Committee got a historical update on Department finances during the meeting at the Department Convention in Rochester.

With a resolution on the convention's agenda to increase dues by \$3 in 2018, Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl presented a slide show on both the income and expenses of the Department over time.

One slide showed the expenses and spending as two lines on a graph. In 2015, for the first time in a decade, those lines came together.

"What that means is that we either have increase income or cut spending," Tesdahl said.

The largest source of Department income is membership, and the continuing decline in membership has brought that income to an eight-year low. In 1998, membership dues

brought in \$904,000.

That number steadily declined until 2008 when there was a dues increase and annual income rose to \$1 million. Last year, that income had declined to \$813,000, the same as spending.

Another major source of income is direct mail solicitation including such things as calendars and mailing labels. That income reached an all-time high in 1999 at \$230,000 and this past year reached an all-time low at \$80,000.

Tesdahl, who gave a similar report two days later to the convention itself, said that the Department left its previous mail solicitation company this year and entered into a contract with Resource 1, a company that provides the same service to the national organization. Revenue is

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National confab set for Cincinnati

The 98th National Convention of The American Legion will be held in Cincinnati this year.

The convention will open on Tuesday, Aug. 30, and go through Thursday, Sept. 1.

It will be held at the Duke Energy Convention Center. Minnesota's delegation will be staying at the Millennium Hotel, near the convention center.

Minnesota has reserved 90 rooms with a room rate of \$157 a night. Reservations should be made through Department Headquarters.

Parking at the hotel is by valet only for \$22 a night.

The hotel also serves as headquarters for the American Legion Auxiliary and as partial headquarters for the national Legion.

A Minnesota Party is being planned for Monday

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SWORN IN -- Denise Milton, Bagley, was sworn in as the 2016-17 Department Commander at the Department Convention in Rochester. Her motto will be "Victory for Veterans."



GEORGOPOULOS HONORED -- Dr. Apostolos Georgopoulos, Brain Sciences Chair at the VA Medical Center and the University of Minnesota, accepts a gift from the Department, honoring his 25 years of directing the Brain Sciences Center.

Milton wins 2016 Department Commander post at Rochester

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Voting by districts, the convention elected Skillestad, Lucas and Redepening. Haberman was named as the alternate.

Milton told the convention that her theme for the year would be Victory for Veterans, and she said a major priority for her one-year term would be the plight of homeless veterans.

Milton has served as post commander, district commander twice and has held a number of Department level positions such as membership director, chaplain, vice commander, and chairman of various committees.

She serves on the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Council.

She is married to Dennis Henkemeyer, who is a Past Department Commander and who is now serving as a national Sons of the American Legion vice commander.

She noted that two children were watching the convention from Germany while serving in the armed forces.

Milton paid tribute to her mother as an inspiration in her

life.

Milton selected Mark Dvorak of Le Center as membership director.

Dvorak said that The American Legion promotes values in the nation. "When we provide leadership, veterans who are not members pay attention and they will join our great organization."

He said it was time, "to stop the decline in membership and start growing again."

Other officers elected at the convention included the five Department Vice Commanders: Richard Skillestad, Eyota, Harley Wahl, Slayton, Curt Norenberg, Minneapolis, Jim Lucas, Pine River, and Wilson Spence, Duluth.

Ralph Schneekloth, Mabel, was elected historian, Dennis DeLong, Bloomington was elected Sergeant-at-Arms and Pat Logan, Bloomington, was elected to a three-year term on the Board of Publications.

The convention was held at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester. The annual parade was cancelled because of the hot weather.

National Convention slated for Cincinnati

Continued from Page 1

evening, Aug. 29. It will be held at a nearby Legion post that has a 10-lane bowling alley.

The admission will cover the cost of the bowling and bowling shoes.

Commander Jim Kellogg said bowling shirts would be appropriate wear.

Cost is \$25 per person and includes bowling, burgers and hotdogs, and keg beer until gone. There will also be a cash bar.

Tickets are available through Department Headquarters.

The National Commander's Banquet will be held on Tuesday night, Aug. 30, in the convention center. Tickets are \$46 each and are available through Department. The Gatlin Brothers featuring Larry Gatlin will perform at the banquet.

The States Dinner, the following night, will also be at the convention center. Tickets are available through the Auxiliary office.

The national parade will be held Sunday at 4 p.m. There

will be a patriotic religious service at the convention center on Sunday at 11 a.m.

Registration for Minnesota delegates will be from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 26, and Saturday from 8-noon. No room has been announced yet.

There will be a Minnesota caucus at the hotel on Monday, Aug. 29, from 8-10 a.m.

Cincinnati is Ohio's third largest city and is just across the river from Kentucky.

Sights to see include the waterfront, historic downtown Cincinnati, the American Sign Museum, Jungle Jim's International Market, Newport on the Levee located in Kentucky, the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens. It is the second oldest zoo in the nation.

Cincinnati is also home of the Cincinnati Reds baseball team and the Cincinnati Bengals Football Team. There will be a chance to see a pre-season football game on Thursday, Sept. 1, at Paul Brown Stadium vs. the Indianapolis Colts.

The Reds will be out of town for the entire length of the national convention.

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Endorsements

Olson endorsed for 2017-18 Commander

The Melvin E. Hearl American Legion Post 21 of Moorhead and the 9th District have endorsed Gary H. Olson as a candidate for Department Commander for 2017-2018.

At the post level, Olson was commander twice. He chaired a classic car show eight years. He has chaired the Fargo AirSho volunteer program fundraiser for three events. He has served on the Post 21 Color Guard since 2010.

He joined Wheaton Post 80 in 1968 and Roseau Post 24 in 1971 before joining

Post 21 in 1978.

At the District level, he has served as commander, 2010-11 and as membership director.

He has served the eight years as District Chairman for the Servicemen's Support Center at the Minneapolis airport.

At the Department level he served as Chaplain for 2011-12, Sergeant At Arms for 2013-14 and Historian for 2014-15. He served on the Brain Science Committee for 2015-16.

At the National level he has served as National

Assistant Sergeant At Arms for five years.

He served 37 years of military service, including eight years in the North Dakota Air National Guard and 29 years in the Air Force Reserve retiring in 1993.

In his personal life, he and his wife Becky live on a family farm near Moorhead.

They have three sons and six grandchildren. Gary has a insurance agency and Becky has a business as a seamstress in downtown Moorhead.



GARY H. OLSON

Schaffer endorsed for Dept. Commander

Mike Schaffer has been endorsed by Currie Post 322 and the Second District for Commander of the Department of Minnesota for the 2017-18 year.

Schaffer is eligible through his service in the Air Force from 1970 to 1974 serving in Alaska and the Philippines. Mike is a 44-year member of Currie Post where he has served as Commander, Finance Officer and is currently the Post Adjutant.

On the District level he served as Commander, Vice Commander, Adjutant and

seven years as Membership Director.

On the Department level Mike served as Department Membership Director 2007-08, Vice Commander 2nd & 7th 2009-10, Sgt-at-Arms 2001-02. Chairman of Children & Youth, Chairman of Trophy & Awards.

On the National level he has served on the Distinguished Guests Committee and currently serves on the National Security Committee.

Schaffer is a member of the Sons of the American

Legion, AMVETS, A.N.A.V.I.C.U.S., the N.T.T.B.N.T.I.'s, and Forty & Eight serving as Grand Chef 2015-16. He also belongs to Knight of Columbus, Fulda Lions Club, and St. Gabriels Catholic Church.

Mike retired in 2015 with over 23 years of service as a Rural Mail Carrier for the US Post Office.

He and his wife Nina have been married 38 years and reside in Fulda. They have three children and four grandchildren.



MIKE SCHAFER

DEC gets explanation of Department \$\$\$

Continued from Page 1

expected to get better.

Two insurance companies that have a business relationship with The American Legion also provide money. In 2015, Legionnaire Insurance Trust provided about \$100,000 in revenue and USAA provided about \$40,000.

A final source of revenue, about \$160,000, comes from the Legislature through the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, but much of that money is immediately turned around to support the Legion's claims department, run jointly with the MDVA. Legion claims handles over half of all the veterans claims in the state.

So where does the money go? The largest chunk is the Administration budget, including salaries and the cost of running the office, amounting to \$500,000 this past year. The all-time high was \$600,000 in 2009.

The Department spent \$170,000 on rehabilitation programming, \$238,000 on the Minnesota Legionnaire, and \$238,000 in committees.

Tesdahl pointed out that in 2002, over 90 percent of the income came from dues. By last year, that number had dropped to 74 percent.

Tesdahl noted that over the past decade the Department has lowered costs in salaries, committee expenses, and other areas.

Commander Jim Kellogg thanked Tesdahl for putting together the presentation. "We need this kind of education and this kind of information. Digest it, take it back.

"We need to clear the air and spend our time signing up members from the great state of Minnesota."

After the presentation, the discussion in the DEC turned to the proposed dues hike.

Past National Commander Dan Ludwig noted that Minnesota at one time had 137,000 members, but now has less than 80,000. "That means we've lost over a half million dollars in revenue. If we had that money, we wouldn't be having this discussion right now."

Ludwig noted that the \$3 dues increase would amount to about seven cigarettes or two cans of soda. "It's a small price to pay to continue to do the good things we do."

Ludwig said, "Nobody likes a dues increase."

Past Department Commander Peggy Moon pointed out that National just raised its dues \$5 this year, and now Minnesota members will have to face another hike in two years.

"It's only two cans of Coke, and I understand why we need it, but tell that to the retired people who can't afford two cans of Coke."

Tenth District Commander Bill Johnson said his biggest

concern was that why the state had waited so long, "and why we have to raise it so dramatically." He said a letter should be sent out to the membership to show why the Department needs the money.

Ludwig responded to Moon's concern about those who can't afford the increase by saying, "We can help those senior members that carried this organization for so many years."

The vote on the dues increase was held two days later, and it passed.

In other business, the DEC:

-- Approved a working agreement between the American Legion Riders and the Department.

-- Was told that the next convention will be in Mahanomen and the 2018 will be hosted by Rochester. The Fall Conference will be held this fall in Marshall and in 2017 in Willmar. Convention Corporation President Pat Logan said the committee is negotiating for future convention and fall conference locations.

-- Canceled three charters from the 4th District. District Commander Dan Williams said all efforts to revitalize the posts had failed and all members had been transferred to other posts. The posts departing the Legion rolls are Abraham Lincoln Post 634, George Grui Post 572, and Jacobson Memorial Post 487.

Department wins four National Press Assn. awards

The Department of Minnesota won four awards in the annual National American Legion Press Association contest.

Paul Hassing won a second place for best guest editorial for a piece he wrote on younger Legion members. Randy Tesdahl won a first place award for videography.

Al Zdon won a first place award for editorial writing and also a second place award for photography.

The awards, along with other awards to Minnesota winners, will be presented at the National Convention in Cincinnati in late August.

The National American Legion Press Association conducts the contest to enhance the quality of Legion publications and electronic media.

A Minnesota American Legion Press Association was inaugurated at the Rochester Convention. For more information, contact Ralph Schneckloth at schnecklothr@gmail.com

Resolutions debated at state convention in Rochester

Continued from Page 1

manders to take office at the choice of the district and not at the conclusion of the state convention as is required in the Minnesota Legion constitution.

Al Davis, Princeton, said the change would allow the districts flexibility and would make sure the new commanders would have control over the membership materials that come out in June.

The resolution had been rejected in committee, but Davis requested on the floor that it come before the entire convention.

Bill Johnson, Maple Grove, and 10th District Commander, opposed the resolution saying it would cause confusion on who served on the Department Executive Committee meeting held at the convention. He also said the wait allowed district commanders to get ready for their year.

On a voice vote, Department Commander Jim Kellogg ruled that the resolution had failed.

A show of hands also indicted the resolution had failed.

Tess Davis and Al Davis objected saying the delegates were not clear on whether they should vote aye or nay.

Another vote was held to re-vote the resolution, but it failed again on a voice vote.

The convention passed other resolutions.

A resolution that allows those who are on other committees to be appointed to an ad hoc committee was passed.

A resolution that would require members gained by revitalization to immediately be transferred and credited to a local post was passed. It will be sent on to the National Convention for consideration.

A resolution that would have established a formal relationship between post service officers and County Veteran Service Officers was rejected by committee.



DEC MEETING -- Adjutant Randy Tesdahl and Commander Jim Kellogg conferred over the agenda at the Department Executive Committee.

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COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Jim Kellogg



This is my first article for the Legionnaire and I would be remiss in not thanking all of you, the entire American Legion Family, for your support and belief in me during my travels throughout the state while campaigning. I don't take my duties lightly and I promise to do the very best that I can.

THANK YOU AMERICAN LEGION FAIMILY.

My goal is to remain a strong Legion Family, and we can do this by open communications and communicating often. We share a common goal and that is to continue to serve our veterans, their families, our communities and our Country.

Having been a nurse for 45 years with many of those years spent directly with the care and welfare of veterans, my project will be veterans homelessness under the MAC-V program as they are able to reach veterans throughout our state.

"Victory for Veterans" not only for homeless veterans, but for all needs of our veterans.

One of the most important first duties as commander is reviewing the committee appointments and appointing members who have the commitment and drive to make our organization relevant and ready to serve today's veterans. I will announce and present for ratification the list of appointees at our first department executive committee meeting on 13 August 2016 at the Anoka American Legion Post. The meeting will start at 11 am. Prior to this meeting at 9 a.m. there will be a membership meeting where our new Department Membership Chairman Mark Dvorak will

American Legion Riders

By Steve Sullivan
Legacy Run Chair



OK here are the plans for the 2016 Minnesota Legacy Run:

August 4th,

Kick off party to be held in Austin.
The hotel in Austin for Thursday night, 4 August:
Days Inn, Austin,
Reservations phone #: (507)433-8600
Group name: American Legion Riders
Group code/type: amlr/group tour

August 5th, Friday

Austin - Kickstand up at 0800
Wells
Madelia
New Ulm
Redwood Falls

Friday overnight -- Jackpot Junction, 800-946-2274 under American Legion Riders, RSVP by July 5.

August 6th, Saturday

Redwood Falls - Kickstand up at 0800
Fulda

Luverne Veterans Home
Pipstone
Marshall
Montevideo

Saturday overnight -- The Crossings 320-269-8000

August 7th, Sunday

Montevideo - Kickstand up at 0800
Benson
Willmar
Spicer
Litchfield
Howard Lake
Buffalo
End of Not So North weekend

Thursday Night August 11th,

East Grand Forks, Fairfield Inn 218-399-3030

August 12th

East Grand Forks - Kickstand up at 0800
Thief River Falls

roll out his program for the 2016-2017 year. This meeting is open to everyone in the department, but it is of utmost importance that each district commander and membership director be in attendance. This is your opportunity of obtain first-hand the details of the new membership year and ask questions. Mark and his team have developed an exciting plan for the coming year and we look forward to seeing as many members there as possible.

The excitement is building as The American Legion Riders have finalized their plans for the 7th annual Minnesota Legacy Scholarship Run throughout our great state. There is one major change this year as it not only benefits children that have lost a parent on active duty since 9-11, but children of a veteran that is 50% or greater service connected disability are eligible as well. They have two runs the first two weekends in August. You can view their schedule at mnlegacyrun.org. Please put this on your agenda as it is truly a worthy cause. They bring excitement and commitment to our great organization that will rub off on you and is catchy.

The end of August will find many of us heading to Cincinnati, Ohio, for our 98th National Convention. Please remember to bring your home post/unit/squadron American Flags along for the parade. It is a sight to behold as the Minnesota American Legion Family members proudly march with massed colors along the parade route. I would like to see everyone participating in the parade wearing Khakis (short or long pants) and our Minnesota Gopher Gang shirt. Thank you.

Don't forget the Minnesota State Fair for this year as we have a new location that should give us more visibility to the general public. Also, we will have the capability of signing up new members on the spot.

As I begin this year I ask for your continued support to make The American Legion relevant and ready for a new generation of veterans.

In closing, I want to congratulate newly-elected Department President Carol Kottom and newly elected Sons of the American Legion Detachment Commander on your respective accomplishments and I look forward to joining hands with both of you as the Minnesota American Legion continues to grow.

For God and Country.

Middle River
Mahnomon
Bagley
Cass Lake
Walker - Friday overnight -- Walker Inn 218-547-2200

Saturday August 13th

Walker - Kickstand up at 0800

Bovey
Hill City
Aitken
Pequot Lakes
Brainerd/Legionville
Little Falls
Saturday overnight = TBD or at your own choosing?

Sunday August 14th

Little Falls - Kickstand up at 0800

Milaca
Pine City
Harris
Forrest Lake
Fridley
Last stop, kickstands are down -- Fridley American Legion
End of the 2016 MN ALR Legacy Run

All vehicles welcome, just remember if you are in a car or truck to stay behind the chase vehicle. Also if you would like to make a donation to The American Legacy Scholarship Fund and be recorded to the Department of Minnesota before being sent off to National American Legion, please make Donation checks Payable to: MN American Legion Foundation and In The Memo put Fund 84.

Vietnam vet photos sought

The St. Cloud VA Health Care System plans to display photographs from Vietnam veterans at the St. Cloud Medical Center and at the VA clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria.

Participation is voluntary and a written consent is necessary.

Forms and submission materials are available online at: <http://www.stcloud.va.gov/news/index.asp>.

Do not send original photos, only copies. They can be emailed to jackie.stevenson@va.gov or mailed to:

St. Cloud VA Health Care System
Veteran and Community Service
4801 Veterans Drive
St. Cloud, MN 56303

Chaplain's Corner

By
Bill Brockberg



Am I available?

I am honored to be elected to serve the American Legion, Department of Minnesota as Chaplain. Congratulations to Department Commander Denise Milton, her membership chairman Mark Dvorak, as well as congratulations to all the Department Vice Commanders, Officers and District Commanders and Officers. I look forward to working with you all this coming year. This start to this American Legion Membership year is new and a first for me like all of our newly elected Officers. Like I once heard from a favorite movie series of mine, this is "Genesis." Of course, "Genesis," from the movie "Star Trek II" was described as life from lifelessness, I look forward to this year as the dictionary version of Genesis, which is the beginning, the origins, the creation of Man. Our beginning this year, as in many years past, has followed a long line of American Legionnaires stepping forward with a purpose to serve veterans and our communities based on the four pillars of the American Legion. How many of us have ever been in a situation in our involvement with the American Legion where we have felt frightened? Overwhelmed? Unqualified? Pushed into a position against our will? Despite any apprehension, Legionnaires have stepped forward to serve their fellow veterans, to support their Country and Government in times of strife, to promote a culture and sense of pride in America and to promote programs and education for the Youth of America. In this vein, we must stand up and say, "I'm here, send me."

All Legionnaires have at least once, taken an oath which begins with, "for God and Country, I do solemnly swear to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America..."

"Do you accept responsibility to do things others ask of you; what the Legion asks of you?" In terms of my local Post, and with my father's permission, and dad's best friend and fellow Legionnaire's persuasion, and long-time family friend and later, mentor, I was in a position hearing from the American Legion like Isaiah was in the bible when he was challenged by God. Isaiah wrote, "And I heard the voice of God, and he said, 'whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me.'"

As children of God, as subordinates to a divine power, and as Legionnaires, we need to step forward and ask ourselves, "Am I available?"

Often, we don't want to accept responsibility to do things others ask of us. This apprehension to serve was also true in biblical times. Moses didn't want to go to Egypt to be the spokesman for leading the people out of their Egyptian captivity. Gideon questioned why God would choose him when he came from such a poor tribe, to head up the means for freeing his people from their oppressors. Jonah ran away from the responsibility God called him to. When it was time to anoint Saul King, they found him hiding in the baggage.

God is looking for available people to do his work. God said the harvest was full, but the laborers are few. When it comes to investing our time, talent and treasure for a life that will echo into eternity, whether for our God or the American Legion, we need to ask ourselves, "Am I available?"

The Minnesota Legionnaire

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Al Zdon, Editor

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What's Happening

STATE FAIR

The Minnesota American Legion and the other state veterans service organizations and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs will have a different type of state fair booth this year.

The booth will be under the grandstand in a high fairgoer traffic area, and the various service groups will take turns manning it. The Legion will be in charge of the booth on Sept. 1 and 2 and must man it for the 12 hours of each day.

As opposed to previous years, the Legion will be allowed to sell memberships at the booth.

Volunteers are being sought for the booth, and emphasis will be placed on having younger veterans, female veterans, those who are very conversant with Legion programs, and those who like to sell memberships.

For more information contact Al Zdon or Randy Tesdahl at Department Headquarters.

RIDE FOR VETS

The Sixth annual Ride for Vets will be held Saturday, Aug. 20, at Walker sponsored by Chapter 134 of the American Legion Riders. (In last month's Legionnaire, the date was reported incorrectly.) Benefits will go to veterans' causes. The registration will be from 8:30 to 10:45 at the Walker Post. Kick stands up at 11 a.m., rain or shine. Cost is \$25 per bike and \$15 per passenger. Non-riding participants are also \$15. There will be breakfast in the a.m. and a meal after the ride. For more information go to [HYPERLINK "http://www.walkerlegionriders.org"](http://www.walkerlegionriders.org) www.walkerlegionriders.org.

VIETNAM VETS

The Minnesota Veterans Home at Hastings will be having a 50th Anniversary Vietnam Era Commemoration event on Sept. 2 at 6:30 p.m. It will include the dedication of a POW/ MIA plaque, live music, speakers, a color guard, refreshments. Every Vietnam vet will receive a pin.

For more information, call Sue at 651-539-2442. Those who would like to bring treats, or color guards who want to participate should call also.

VENDORS NEEDED

Vendors are needed for the Fall Flea Market at the Apple Valley Post on Sept. 24. Organizers are looking for a variety of crafts, wood products, furniture, tools, antiques, keepsakes and gems. For more information, call Marlene at 651-

423-2493.

WOOLSON DINNER

An Albert Woolson Remembrance Dinner, commemorating his life and legacy on the 60th anniversary of his passing, will be held in the Great Hall of the St. Louis County Heritage and Arts Center in Duluth. Woolson was the last surviving Union soldier of the Civil War, serving in the First Minnesota Heavy Artillery Regiment. The event will be a fund raiser for Veterans Memorial Hall and tickets are \$20.

There will be a rededication of the Woolson statue at 4 p.m. with reenactors. At 5, there will be social hour and free admission to the railroad museum, and at 6 a dinner followed by the program. The Zenith City Post 28 is a sponsor of the event.

For more information, call 218-733-7586.

CONCERT IN ROCHESTER

"Echoes of 9/11," a concert to honor the heroes and commemorate the tragedies on the 15th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attack will be held Saturday, Sept. 10, at 2 p.m. in the Mayo Civic Center Auditorium. The event is free, and will feature the Rochester Symphony Corale and the 34th Division Band.

CAMP-O-REE

The 47th annual Camp-O-Ree will be held at Legionville on North Long Lake, just north of Brainerd, on Sept. 7-11.

Thursday will feature the First District Steak Fry. On Friday, there will be a Sons of the American Legion Breakfast, an SAL Lunch, and the 10th District Pork Roast Dinner. On Saturday, there will be an SAL Breakfast, 6th District Fish Fry for lunch, Harvest Rally Dinner (by ticket only) and SAL Hot Dog and Hamburger Dinner.

Sunday will feature an SAL Omelet Breakfast.

Admission and camping fees include: Wednesday, free; Thursday and thereafter, \$10 per person per day with a \$75 family maximum; Saturday, active military reservists, Guardsmen and families are free; Age 3 and under, free.

Those attending can bring their own camper or tent or stay in the camp's dormitories. Bring your own linens and blankets.

There will be kids games, pull-tabs, bingo, and raffles. The Harvest Membership Rally will be held on Saturday. All proceeds go to Legionville. This year's event is

being organized by the Sons of the American Legion.

LONG PRAIRIE ATTRACTION

Veterans and families are invited to see the Long Prairie Memorial Wall and Park. The park is located in downtown Long Prairie and several battle scenes have been sculpted, soaring five stories high. Flags of all branches are on display. A memorial wall is in the park. There are summer concerts on Thursdays.

BRAINERD LAKES OPTIONS

Enrollment in the VA Health Care system will be easier at the Brainerd VA Clinic. Walk-in applications will be accepted on Aug. 9 and 16 from 9:30 to 3 p.m. Veterans should bring their DD-214, or for World War II veterans, both sides of their discharge certificate, and copies of insurance cards.

Veterans can also apply at VA hospitals or by visiting their County Veteran Service Officer.

For more information, call 320-255-6353.

RETIRED MILITARY

All retired military, all branches can attend the Joint Retiree Appreciation Day to be held at Mystic Lake Casino in Prior Lake on Saturday, Sept. 24.

The seminar will be open for registration from 7 a.m. and will open at 8. Advance registration is \$17 and includes benefits information, Tri-Care and more. For more information call 612-713-4664. It is sponsored by Metro JRAD.

BUSINESS HELP

A group of small business associations is sponsoring two two-day seminars for veterans who are starting or growing a veteran-owned business. The class provides an overview of small business ownership. Following the class, those participating can take an eight-week class on the foundations of enterprise.

The first two-day class will be Wednesday and Thursday, August 10-11 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the University of St. Thomas, Terrance Murphy Hall. The second will be Sept. 14-15 at Camp Ripley near Little Falls.

For more information, call 612-370-2356. Chief sponsor is the Small Business Administration.



DUELING PHOTOGRAPHERS -- Incoming Historian Ralph Schneekloth, left, and outgoing Historian Dennis DeLong have the center aisle covered during the annual convention in Rochester in July. (Michelle Leonard photo)



FLAG WAVERS -- Legionnaires and Auxiliary Members, SAL and Riders joined in to celebrate a patriotic song done by the Ninth District Band at the convention in Rochester.

Schedule for WWII Round Table listed

The 2016-17 World War II Round Table meetings at the Fort Snelling History Center have been announced:

Sep 8 Escaping the German Holocaust to serve in US Army - Ernest Wertheim, author of *Chasing Spring* will tell of the ingenious escape to the U.S. and his service in Army Intelligence in the Pacific. Sponsored by Bachman's.

Sep 22 Pacific Diplomacy in 1930's - Events leading to hostilities in Pacific.

Sidney Pash, author of *The Currents of War* will connect the events from the turn of the 20th Century in the Pacific that led to the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor.

Oct 13 11th Airborne from Philippines to Occupation - Jerry Devlin, author of *Back to Corregidor* along with Veterans of the 11th Airborne Division will reveal the Vertical Assaults in Philippines and early security in Japan.

Oct 27 Germany during 1930's - Rise of Nazis in Germany. Henry Gole, author of *Exposing the Third Reich* from observations by Colonel Truman Smith as Military Attaché in Berlin to expose the upcoming threat of Nazi actions

Nov 10 The Harold C. Deutsch Lecture - Sentencing at Nuremberg - Greg Peterson, Founder of the Robert Jackson Institute, will discuss the International Tribunal and the Sentencing as a commemoration of the end of the Trials in 1946.

Dec 7 75th Anniversary Pearl Harbor - Events at Minnesota Historical Society in St Paul 10:00 Ceremony at USS Ward Gun on the Capitol Grounds
1:00 Presentations on Pearl Harbor in 3M Auditorium

WWII vets needed

The World War II History Round Table is seeking veterans to appear on different panels throughout the year. The list includes:

- 11th Airborne Veterans in Philippines and Occupation in Japan.
- Involvement with Holocaust or Trials at Nuremberg or other locations
- Attack at Pearl Harbor
- Invasion of Philippines and Bataan
- POW in Pacific
- POW in Europe
- Workers in Defense Plants to build military equipment
- Airmen in 8th, 9th, 12th, and 15th Air Forces in Europe
- Participated in Battle of Bulge in any role

Those who would like to volunteer can contact Don Patton by cell or email, 612-867-5144, coldpatton@yahoo.com.

3:30 - Marc Wortman, author of *1941*, will discuss events leading up to Pearl Harbor

7:00 - Dave Kenney, author of *Minnesota Goes to War*, will highlight the home front

Dec 8 75th Anniversary of Battle of Bataan and Corregidor. Colonel John A. Adams, author of *The Fighting Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor*, along with Veterans of Philippines will discuss the attack of Japanese and Bataan.

Jan 12 Battle of Koenigsberg - Forgotten Battle of Eastern Front. Dennis Showalter, author with Harold Deutsch of *If the Allies had Fallen and Veterans of War on Eastern Front* will discuss the often overlooked struggle by Russians

Feb 9 Nazi Hunters - Seeking Justice for perpetrators of the Holocaust. Andrew Nagorski, author of *Nazi Hunters* will discuss the search for Nazi Criminals that evaded capture at the end of the War and sought sanctuary outside Europe

Mar 9 Mobilization of U.S. Industrial Machine - Fighting a Global War.

Maury Klein, author of *Arsenal of War and Workers in Minnesota Defense Industries* will present the transformation of peacetime companies into a Military Goliath.

Mar 23 Minnesota-Born Unsung Architect of Army Doctrine. Mark Calhoun, author of *General Lesley J. McNair* will discuss the little known contributions of a true Hero who transformed a fledgling fighting force to Victory.

Apr 13 Last Mission of "Jerk's Natural" - with the 93rd Bomb Group. Gregg Jones, author of *The Last Mission and Veterans of European Air War* will discuss the dangers of the bomber missions to destroy German armaments

May 11 Final Major Battle in Western Europe - Battle of Bulge. Hal Winton, author of *Corps Commanders of Bulge and Veterans of Battle of Bulge* will discuss critical decisions and mistakes that resulted in a hard fought Victory

Staff Ride 23 May-7 June: Market-Garden, Eban-Emal, Remagen, Waterloo, Huertgen, Battle of Bulge,



25 YEARS -- Dr. Apostolos Georgopoulos is congratulated by Past National Commander Dan Ludwig, who introduced him at the Rochester Convention, and by Sue Nunnelee, the Auxiliary representative on the Brain Sciences Foundation. Commander Kellogg presented Georgopoulos with over \$37,000 in donations.

Brain Sciences Chair honored for 25 years of research work

Dr. Apostolos Georgopoulos was honored by the Minnesota American Legion for his 25 years as Brain Sciences Chair at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and the University of Minnesota.

He received a cut-glass bowl from the Legion for his work and longevity.

Georgopolous was introduced by Past National Commander Dan Ludwig, who led the fund drive for the Brain Science Foundation that culminated with a \$1 million donation to establish the chair back in 1991.

Ludwig's introduction included: "Way back in June of 1944 in Patras, Greece, a young lad was born. He graduated from the University of Athens, School of Medicine as a medical doctor in 1968 and got his PhD in physiology the next year. He served in the Greek Army at the Medical Research Center from 1969 to 1971.

"He became an assistant professor at the University of Athens, Department of Physiology, in 1972 and became a research associate and then an associate professor or neuroscience and physiology.

"In 1986, he moved to the United States and became a professor of neuroscience at Johns Hopkins University. In 1991, after a nationwide search, he was chosen to be the American Legion and the University of Minnesota Chair in Brain Sciences.

"The Brain Sciences Chair was created in the late 1980s and the early 1990s by the

Minnesota American Legion and Auxiliary -- Raising over \$1 million for the position. It came at a time when so many American veterans were suffering from brain injuries and disorders.

"The Brain Sciences Chair demanded a dynamic trailblazer who could lead a department in cutting-edge medical research into the mysteries of the brain. In addition to the Chair, Dr. Georgopolous was also named Director of the Brain Sciences Center, and Professor of Physiology at the University of Minnesota Medical School.

"Dr. Georgopolous began pulling together a team. His own special project was research into ways that veterans could operate a prosthesis simply by using a command from the brain.

"In 2001, a major event happened at the Brain Sciences Center at the VA hospital. It acquired through a federal grant a magnetoencephalography neuroimaging instrument.

"Exciting breakthroughs for veterans have been published in major medical journals around the world. The research has been extraordinary. Dr. Georgopolous himself has published 192 papers in medical publications."

Georgopolous said the support of the Legion through the years has made his research possible.

Notes from the 2016 Minnesota American Legion Convention

The final report of the Credentials Committee delivered by Chair Lynn Nottage included:

District	Posts	Delegates	Voting Strength
1	23	47	107
2	16	18	59
3	22	48	116
4	7	24	32
5	8	17	37
6	14	30	76
7	12	24	53
8	4	7	24
9	11	18	55
10	19	43	99
Total	136	276	658

-- Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Shellito said that the Claims Office administered jointly by The American Legion and the MDVA handles over half of the disability claims filed in the state each year, and it handles 74 percent of the successful appeals.

-- NECman Marland Ronning said the three upcoming candidates for National Commander are Charles Schmidt of Oregon, Denise Rowan of Wisconsin, and Brett Reistad of

Virginia. He said the next national conventions will be held at Cincinnati, this year, followed by Reno, Minneapolis, Indianapolis, Louisville and Phoenix.

-- National Vice Commander Al Davis thanked the people of Minnesota for their support during his year in office. "It was an honor to represent you all."

-- Secretary of State Steve Simon said the state is endeavoring to make it easier for servicemen and women to vote absentee ballots. He said he also is working on allowing easier at-home balloting for all citizens. For nine straight elections, he said, Minnesota led the nation in percentage of voters, but in 2014 the state slipped to 6th place.

-- Bill Barbknecht, chair of the Legionnaire Insurance Trust committee, said that this past year the LIT donated \$169,000 to Minnesota -- the second highest source of revenue outside of membership dues for the department coffers.

-- Wayne Gilbertson, President of the Legionville Corporation, said that two Boy Scouts are doing their Eagle projects at Legionville this year. One is planting over 1,500 trees at the camp and the other is planning to finish the paver project.

-- The Sons of the American Legion are taking over the Camp-O-Ree gathering this year at Legionville

-- The Americanism Awards went to: St. Charles Post 190
Slayton Post 64

New Germany Post 601
North St. Paul Post 39
Viking Post 493 in Bloomington
Deerwood Post 557
Granite Falls Post 69
Nashwauk Post 307
Crookston Post 20
St. Louis Park Post 282

-- Membership Director Jim Lucas reported that at convention time, the department was at 95.38 percent, or 77,257 of the goal of 81,000.

-- Baseball Director Mike Perry said Minnesota has 326 teams, the largest number of any department in the nation for the third straight year.

-- National Historian Jim Copher thanked Minnesotans for their support, and Dan Ludwig for helping his appointment to the position. He paid tribute to Alice Anderson, past Department Historian, for being his mentor.

District Commanders

FIRST DISTRICT

Sylvan Fix
Commander



Wow. How honored I am to be Commander of the 1st District. I will do my very best to represent you. I need to thank Mabel Post 299 for hosting our convention and Stewartville Post 164 for hosting change over and packet pick-up. Both did a superb job.

Our District Picnic will be Aug. 14th starting around 12. It will be held at Pine Lawn Park two miles east of Grand Meadow. Make sure you bring your kids for fishing, play ground etc. Meat will be provided so bring a dish and your own utensils and refreshment. Jim Kellogg will once again be our chef.

I need to thank a couple of folks for being a part of me being Commander. Gary Weaver for letting me hang on to his coat tails when he was District Commander and the discussions we had when riding together. And Bill Goede for getting me involved in things that I never knew I would ever be considered for. For that reason my theme for the year is Mentor Your Membership. Look for someone that could be a future leader and take the time to work with them. We will talk more about that along with my project and, the Americanism pillar throughout the year.

God Bless One and All.

SECOND DISTRICT

Mark Coney
Commander



Greetings Second District. I am excited to be named to assume the role of your District Commander for this coming year. My name is Mark Coney and I am from the Arthur Moeller Post in Hardwick. I have been a Legion member for 12 years and am a Life member with D.A.V.

I would like to introduce my membership team to you. This year, returning as Vice Commanders are: Cindy Brunk from the Dundee Post; Betty Jass from Sleepy Eye; and Brenda Syverson from Blue Earth. We have two new members joining our team. I would like to welcome our 1st Vice Commander Randy Olson from Winnebago and Stacy Foster from Wells. But most importantly, Mike Schaffer has returned to be my membership director for another year. I feel very lucky to have such talent and enthusiasm surrounding me and I would like for you to welcome them as they come around to your Posts. We are here to serve you, so feel free to talk to us.

Change-over for the District will take place on July 31st at St. James American Legion Post at 11 a.m. with dinner. The price of the dinner is \$15. If you plan on attending, please contact the post at 507-375-5990 to ensure they will have enough for everyone. I look forward to a great and rewarding year.

THIRD DISTRICT

Mike Maxa
Commander



Welcome to the 2017 American Legion Membership year. First let me thank you for your vote of confidence in electing me your Commander for the 2017 year. I look forward to our year and I am confident it will be a great year for the "Thundering Third." Our officers that you elected for the year are excited, energized, and willing to help our posts excel. The third district is here to help, as we will not be successful if The American Legion posts are not successful. The posts are where the rubber meets the road and where membership begins. This past year we had 435 new members join The American Legion in the third. We led the state in new members and one of my many goals is to have 650 new members recruited by mid-winter conference. Why 650? There are 65 posts in the third district. If each post signs up ten new members we have met the goal, 650 new members. This brings me to my theme, "Ask" a Veteran to join and the Legion family will grow. I have experienced that many of our Veterans have never been asked to join the American Legion. What a simple concept, ask and most will join, they just want to be asked.

My project for the year is a continuation of past Commander Don's project, the fishing pier and handicap access to the pier at the Vets Camp on Big Marine Lake. This is a huge project and we are going to do it right. Past Commander Don has done most of the leg work. Getting permits, DNR approval, county approval and all the other bureaucratic stuff, plus raising funds needed for this project. This is needed to provide a safe access to fish, for our Veterans and our disabled Veterans and their families. We have a busy year ahead of us. Watch our Third District website for updates and events.

FOURTH DISTRICT

Randy Bastyr
Commander



Greetings to the Fabulous Fourth.

I would like to thank you all for your vote of confidence in allowing me to be your Commander for the coming year. I look forward to meeting and working with everyone at all of your Post events and District programs.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the 2016/2017 District Executive Committee and Program Chairpersons for volunteering to help keep the Fabulous Fourth on the straight and narrow. Past Commander Dan Williams left me some very big shoes to fill. Thank you Dan for all you were able to accomplish in the past two years. I can only hope to maintain the growth in membership we have been able to obtain. With Membership Chair Mickey Ostrum at the helm for a third year, maybe he can pull off a miracle and keep the District in first place in the Department, 100% three years running.

August brings the National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, on August 26th to September 1st. I appreciate the opportunity to represent you all on a national level. I will bring back as much information as I can absorb. Upcoming District events: August 10th - RCCC at NSP Post 39, Exec

FIFTH DISTRICT

Ray Eiden
Commander



Greetings from the Fighting Fifth

I wish to congratulate all my new officers and executive committee members along with those from the ALR, SAL and Auxiliary Unit. My appointments for the various committees and program chairs have been made and I look forward to working with everyone in serving our Veterans. A special thank you to Commander Martin for his guidance and leadership this past year. I am honored to be the 100th Commander of the 5th District. We have had great leadership over the years and I hope to continue that tradition.

I am planning on having a good membership year. The packets are in the hands of the Posts and dues are starting to arrive. I'll be setting a District membership revitalization date and reach out to all Posts to help in this effort.

My Commander's project this year will involve doing something for the Mpls. Veteran's Home as we have done in the past. I look forward to working with Bonnie Brenna and the Auxiliary in our fundraising efforts.

I enjoyed the annual picnic we had with the 4th District at the Disabled Vets Camp on Big Marine Lake. We'll do it again next year.

Congratulations to all the new District Commanders. Coming up: District Hospital Visitation - Aug. 7 at 2 p.m.

Remember "Keep Focused and Look to the Future".

SIXTH DISTRICT

Vernonica Fernlund
Commander



I am honored to be elected 6th District Commander and very excited to see what awaits this year. Judi Ficek from Little Falls has taken the very important role of District Membership Chairman. She is bringing excitement to our membership program and already has the year off to a good start by working to make sure we are off the goose egg. Thank you to all our officers and chairman who stepped up to take positions in the great 6th District.

It was amazing to see all the Posts in our District work together to get the membership year started. We have two district training sessions scheduled. The first session will be Tuesday August 16, 2016 at St. Augusta Post 621 at 6:30 pm and the second will be Wednesday August 17, 2016 at Pequot Lakes Post 49 at 6:30 pm. The training is open to anyone who wants to learn and share information on The American Legion. Post commanders and adjutants are encouraged to attend one of these sessions. My theme this year is "United We Stand, Now & For Our Future". To keep our organization strong we need to work together as a family, not just at the District level, but at all levels. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Annual Camp-O-Ree at Legionville, Sept. 7-11, 2016.

SEVENTH DISTRICT

Garylee Davenport
Commander



Greetings Mighty 7th District

I would like to thank everyone for electing me as your District Commander. I am looking forward to working with everyone this year. We have a lot of work to do on membership this year and if we all work together, we can make the Mighty 7th the #1 District in the state.

EIGHTH DISTRICT

Kenneth Oliver Jr.
Commander



I want to thank all that went to convention in Rochester. A great time was had and I want to thank those that have helped me in the transition to the District Commander I'm still in the learning process. We need to focus on our membership and also have all the officers reports turned so that we can get every Post off the Goose Egg. I still haven't picked a Commanders Project yet. I'm hoping by the next time of this writing to have it in place. Enjoy the summer.

NINTH DISTRICT

Eric Wilkens
Commander



Greetings from the Roaring Ninth District

I am very excited as we begin the 2017 membership year. We have a great slate of officers to lead the district this year. We have some familiar faces in new roles and a few new faces have joined us. This time of year brings many fun and exciting events with opportunities to recruit new members, the initial rush of membership renewals, ALR Scholarship runs, local Posts participating in community parades and other outreach events. Take each moment to promote the excellent work we do in The American Legion and celebrate this great organization.

The Membership team is already hard at work in moving us towards 100%, a goal we have not been able to make for several years. I have faith in all the Area Vice Commanders, Membership Director, Post Officers and members that we can make that goal.

This year I am teaming up with the District Auxiliary President for a joint project. We are raising money to help furnish the new Women Veterans Waiting and Lactation Room at the Fargo VA. It is important that we never forget our women veterans and continue to raise awareness about the sacrifices they make.

I look forward to serving as the new Ninth District Commander and serving all 65 Posts in the communities we live.

TENTH DISTRICT

Bonnie Hanson
Commander



I want to thank you 10th District for having faith in me to be your District Commander 2016-2017. I hope to live up to your confidence in me. We are hoping to have fun and be serious at our rallies.

Membership is one of our goals as is everyone else's. Remember it is "Just Asking" ones that you meet when you are out and about.

The 10th District has the first rally coming on July 31 at St Francis Post 622 at 1 p.m. I hope we will have all the Legion posts in the 10th bring in as many memberships from the posts in their sub-districts. Getting off the Goose Egg is the first thing in our goal to make the 100%. We want to show the districts that we are still the Mighty Tenth. We have started and we have many other things planned. I will let you all know each month where and when the rallies will be.

My motto is going to be "Family First" and I want to thank Carroll Partridge who was the 4th District Commander for 2012-2013 for giving me the idea for it. This is something that we all believe in and is very important in the American Legion Family.

Again thank you 10th District and remember, "Family First."

Taps

Martin, Robert "Fuzz," 86, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died June 29, 2016. He was the longtime chairman and vice chairman of the Pheasants for Hospitalized Veterans Committee, serving the program for over 50 years. He was a member of Owatonna Post 77.

Kuntz, Ronald P., 80, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 13, 2016. He was a career Navy man who served in Korea, Vietnam, Kodiak Island, Greece and Italy. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Fladeland, Edward Jr., 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 25, 2016. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Freihammer, Thomas O., 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 9, 2016. He served in the First Cavalry Division. He was a member of Rice Post 473.

Bloomquist, Harold E., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 9, 2016. He served as a military policeman. He was a member of Trimont Post 373.

Kleis, Jerome J., 79, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died July 7, 2016. He was a member of Eden Valley Post 381.

Schmidt, Verlyn J., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 4, 2016. He was a member of Eden Valley Post 381.

Carlisle, Robert, 91, Naval Air veteran of World War II, died June 28, 2016. He flew the SBD Dauntless Dive Bomber in the war. Later, in the Naval Reserve, he became a helicopter pilot and retired with the rank of commander. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Ness, Harold Daniel "H. Dan," 78, Air Force Reserve and Minnesota National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died July 1, 2016. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Matson, Walfred Henry, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 7, 2016. He was a member of Sandstone Post 151.

Johnson, Gordon Emmanuel, 97, Army veteran of World War II, died June 24, 2016. He served in the Philippines. He was a member of Clarissa Post 213.

Arlt, Adrian "Addie," 95, Army veteran of World War II, died June 21, 2016. He was wounded in the Pacific. He managed Legion baseball for 14 years and was the post commander of Chaska Post 57 five times.

Nachreiner, Edmund, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died June 18, 2016. He was a staff sergeant. He was a member of Fairfax Post 205.

Egan, Msgr. Eugene E., 87, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 25, 2016. He joined as a chaplain when he was 37 years old and served for 20 years including postings in Korea, Vietnam, Germany and the U.S. He was Second District Chaplain in 1998-99. He earned a Bronze Star in Vietnam. He was a member of Luverne Post 196.

Hanson, Roland Wayne, 88, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 27, 2016. He was a member of Trimont Post 373.

Hop, Dennis, 70, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 22, 2016. He was a member of Bertha Post 366.

Marsolek, John Joseph Jr., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 29, 2016. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Egan, Beverly Louise, 87, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died June 30, 2016. She served in London, Hawaii and the U.S. She retired after 20 years as a radioman first class. She was a member of Hackensack Post 202.

Stanger, Ron, 81, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died June 8, 2016. He was a member of New London Post 537.

Hagen, Ivan Lowell, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War and Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 24, 2016. He served in Canada, Greece, Johnston Island, Thailand, England and the U.S. He was a member of Madison Post 158.

Johnson, Dale A., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 22, 2016. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Riley, Maurice D., 86, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died July 1, 2016. He was a member of Amboy Post 276.

Jacobson, Kenneth Donald, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died June 13, 2016. He was a member of Hazel Run Post 559.

Haikio, John A., 92, Army veteran of World War II, died June 23, 2016. He was a member of Cloquet Post 262.

Gillogy, Wendell E., 91, Army veteran of World War II, died June 25, 2016. He was a member of Cloquet Post 262.

Johnson, Harry C., 95, Army veteran of World War II, died June 15, 2016. He was mortar gunner in the Third Army, 79th Division, Company A, Second Platoon, 315th Infantry. He earned a Purple Heart and landed on D-Day. He was a member of Watertown Post 121.

Gray, James William, 91, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died July 8, 2016. He trained as a pilot and in gunnery on a B-17 bomber. He was a member of Graceville Post 297.

Fuhrman, Donald, 91, Army veteran of World War II, died June 30, 2016. He played in the Army Victory Band. He was a member of Graceville Post 297.

Russell, Luverne, 84, Air Force veteran of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, died July 14, 2016. He served for 22 years and retired as a master sergeant. He served in Korea and Vietnam. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Jones, Kenneth C., 92, Army veteran of World War II, died June 12, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Riemann, Harold F., 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 13, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Hoes, Donald G., 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 4, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Springborg, Roy, 76, Navy and Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 8, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Knutson, Elmer, 88, Army veteran of World War II, died July 5, 2016. He served in occupied Japan. He was a member of Fairfax Post 205.

Nachreiner, Edmund, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died June 18, 2016. He was a member of Fairfax Post 205.

Schmidt, Francis Raymond "Fritz," 96, Air Force veteran of World War II, died July 5, 2016. He served in India

and China. He was a member of Morris Post 29.

Scheil, Leland, 86, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died June 29, 2016. He was a member of St. Joseph Post 328.

Bruce, Robert Laverne, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 30, 2016. He played in an Army band and also a jazz/swing band. He was a member of Madison Post 158.

Mundt, Robert Marcus, 89, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 5, 2016. He served in the South Pacific. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Miller, Thomas F., 97, Army veteran of World War II, died July 10, 2016. He served in the Aleutian Islands and in Europe. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Justin, Wilfred, 88, Army veteran of World War II, died June 4, 2016. He was a former gambling manager, membership director, adjutant and commander of St. Stephen Post 221.

Doom, William, 72, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 13, 2016. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Nelson, Ronald, 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 1, 2016. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Buchholz, Leonard, 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 12, 2016. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Kristo, George, 92, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died July 8, 2016. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

Schultz, Dale W., 90, Army veteran of World War II, died July 4, 2016. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

Grieder, Roy E., 95, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 19, 2016. He was an officer in the Seabees and served at Pearl Harbor. He was a member of Rosetown Memorial Post 542.

Kill, Lawrence Michael, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 18, 2016. He was a member of Morris Post 29.

Tell, James, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 2, 2016. He was a member of North Branch Post 85.

Gerling, Gordon, 94, Army veteran of World War II, died July 14, 2016. He served in the Pacific. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Dahlback, Robert Eugene, 74, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 15, 2016. He served in the color guard of Austin Post 91.

Hruska, Dean E., 73, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 20, 2016. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Halvorson, Gerald C., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 13, 2016. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Rieger, Herbert J., 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 14, 2016. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Marcus, Stanley C., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 17, 2016. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Engler, Fred G., 90, Army veteran of World War II, died June 30, 2016. He was a member of Rush City Post 93.

Legion town hall meeting reveals needs of rural veterans

Attendees at the American Legion's System Worth Saving town hall meeting in Walla Walla, Wash., on July 19th expressed sentiment concerning care received at the local Veterans Affairs medical center (VAMC).

Long before recent calls to privatize the Veterans Affairs Department (VA) began to surface, the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VAMC in Walla Walla, Wash., faced possible closure of campus facilities following a transition in services from inpatient care to outpatient treatment – supplemented by additional community care options.

Walla Walla VAMC Director Brian Westfield addressed concerns unique to the rural facility's medical center and outlined current plans to enhance the campus and the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN). "We are a completely different facility compared to how we were. We are much more engaged in community care," he said.

Westfield shared how difficult it has been to get local veterans to enroll for health care at the facility as he addressed the crowd of concerned veterans. Out of the nearly 63,000 military veterans residing in the area, only approximately 20,000 former service members are enrolled in the system and using the VAMC for their primary care needs, he stated. The director also placed emphasis on programs and agreements in place that benefit under-served veterans in surrounding communities, including Native Americans, homeless veterans and veterans seeking care for substance abuse.

Veterans at the town hall all echoed the same sentiments, expressing how appreciative they are of the top-notch level of care they receive at local VA facilities. They also shared the same angst regarding the closure of the

walk-in clinic.

Perry Roeder, a Marine Corps veteran and local VA employee at the local call center, said it is hard to help veterans with issues they are having – especially with the Choice Program – while also advocating for his own health care needs. "Years ago we had a 24-hour clinic. If you were sick, you were able to get care right away. Now, we don't want to go to the local hospital because it comes out of our pocket."

Third generation Army veteran Johnathan Wyatt said one of his first priorities after concluding his military service was to enroll at the VA. He added how a seamless transition to the VA and the great care that he receives made easy to readjust to civilian life because he has one less thing to worry about.

"It distresses me to hear about maybe doing away with this facility," said Ken Anderson, a veteran who served in the Navy before transitioning to and retiring from the Army. "The veterans need it. We need it!" Although Anderson never enrolled with VA for health care, he felt that it was important to attend the town hall meeting. With tear in his eyes, he voiced his frustration with proposed plans to privatize VA. "I know many veterans who need VA health care. It makes me cry. I don't want to see it go away," he somberly expressed.

Congressional staffers from the offices of Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) assured local veterans that their offices were working hard to ensure current and future legislation drafted on Capitol

Hill would reflect the needs of those who rely on the services they receive at the VA.

Tuesday's town hall meeting was followed Wednesday by a System Worth Saving visit at the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VAMC. During their meeting, VA leaders discussed the intricate challenges facing the system, including budget constraints, issues with the Choice program, and difficulty recruiting and retaining staff. Westfield identified the ever-changing roster of medical professionals as its main issue for veterans receiving care. These patients often slip through bureaucratic cracks while waiting for a new provider. Rural areas seem to have more difficulty hiring qualified physicians compared to their counterparts in other geographic locations, added Westfield.

Legion representatives plan to meet with the VAMC's women veterans program manager and military sexual trauma coordinators Thursday and will conclude their SWS visit following trips to two local homeless shelters, presenting donations on behalf of Operation Comfort Warriors.

The American Legion is the largest wartime veterans service organization with 2.2 million members in more than 13,000 posts in communities across in America. The Legion, established by an act of Congress in 1919, was instrumental in getting the original GI Bill through Congress and the creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Hospitality



With the Ninth District Band providing the music, Darlene Wondra joined on the "Funky Chicken."



Hot dogs were a hot item at the hospitality event on Friday night at the convention.



During the Thursday night Auxiliary reception, a conga line got things moving. (Michelle Leonard photo)



The Ninth District Band was tuneful at the event.

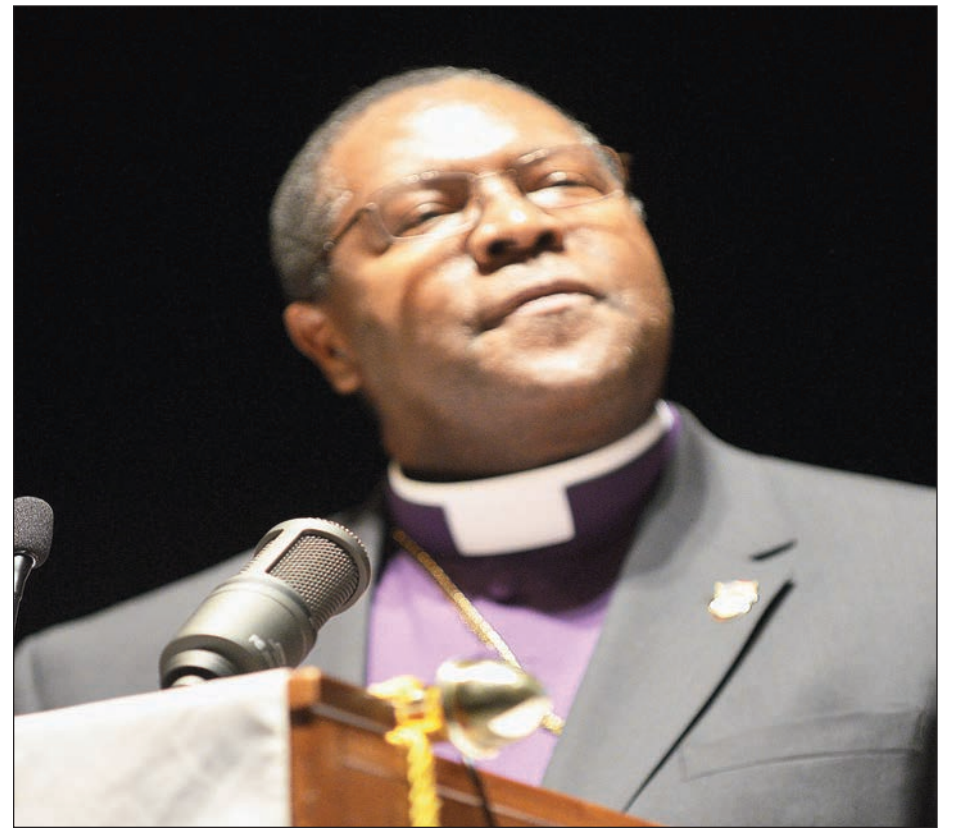


Paul Hassing is deployed, but Jodi Hassing brought a cut-out of her husband to the party.

Memorial Service



President Sandy Fredrickson and Commander Jim Kellogg led the procession.



Bishop Dan Williams delivered the memorial oration at the service.



Soloist Angie Killested sang Amazing Grace.



Candles were lit during the service, Gene Olsword lights a candle as Steve Sullivan looks on.

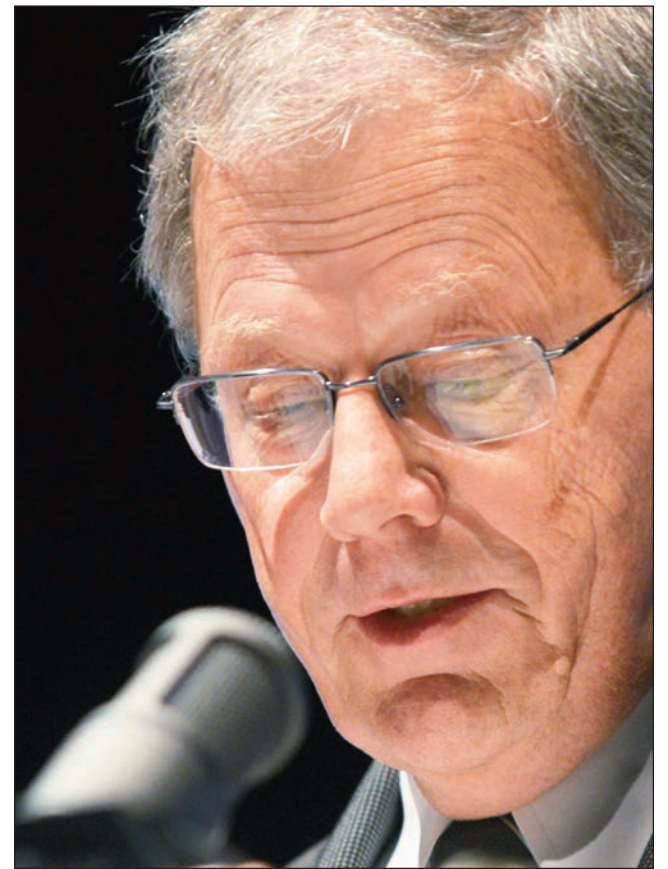


Incoming and outgoing Chaplains Richard Wog and Bill Brockberg saluted the colors.



The 2016-17 leadership team had its official photo taken at the conclusion of the convention.

2016 State Convention at Rochester



State Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Shellito spoke to the delegates on opening day.



With an election impending, members of the Third District gathered for a caucus to go over the district's voting strategy.



Jean Walker's granddaughter Arietta got her flag ready for the Auxiliary Convention. (Michelle Leonard photo)