Expressive writing may help some veterans with reintegration

Are you a veteran? Sit down for 20 minutes and write about resuming civilian life after your military deployment. Put your deepest thoughts into it. And then do it three more times.

Sound simple? It is, yet this expressive writing exercise has been shown to help – not a lot, but a little bit – veterans who have had problems reintegrating or who have experienced PTSD.

The Center for Chronic Disease Outcomes Research, part of the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Healthcare System, recently announced the results of a study of 1,300 veterans in the U.S. Veterans who did the expressive writing exercise experienced greater reductions in physical complaints, anger, and distress compared with a control group who did not write expressively. And, compared to veterans in the study who did not write at all, there were greater reductions in many areas including PTSD symptoms and reintegration.

The study dates back to 2004 when researchers at the CCDDR applied for a federal grant to study the benefits of expressive writing.

“We wanted to reach veterans no matter where they were in the help range of problems,” said Dr. Nina Sayer, a clinical psychologist. “The study was aimed at veterans who have had some difficulties being back home, but who didn’t want to seek access to professional care.”

The idea that expressive writing can somehow help people dates back to 1986 and the work of James Pennebaker, a social psychologist.

“The premise is that keeping emotions about a difficult life event to one’s self has a negative result,” Sayer said. She said the theory is similar to much current thinking in treating PTSD where veterans are encouraged to talk about their problems. “If they talk to family and friends, it opens a pathway to social support.”

The study involved first getting a list from the federal government of all returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. With the list in hand, Sayer and her colleagues randomly

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A Christmas Story

A guiding light back home

By Al Zdon

Lt. Pete O’Dwyer climbed into the cockpit of his Hellcat and went through his check list. It was Christmas day, 1943. O’Dwyer would have been content to hang around the wardroom with his fellow pilots and enjoy the holiday. But, no, it was a work day for the Navy.

An invasion in the Bismarck Archipelago was planned, and the Navy had been ordered to attack the port city of Kavieng in New Guinea to support the attack on the Japanese positions.

O’Dwyer was also unhappy to be taking off this late in the afternoon. There should be plenty of time to get back to the aircraft carrier USS Bunker Hill before dark, but he didn’t like pushing the envelope. He had only done a couple of night landings, and it was a thrill he didn’t need.

“How’s it going, lieutenant?” boomed a big voice next to him. It was Eddie Porinsky, his crew chief, usually known simply as “Ski.” He was standing on the wing of the aircraft.

“Looks okay, Ski. Were you able to get some more air in that tire?”

“Yeah, it’s all set, Lieutenant. We put a brand new tire on. This one shouldn’t leak. The airplane looks to be in good shape. I gave her the once over myself.”

“Thanks, Ski.”

“Too bad about you having to fly on Christmas. The Navy has no heart.”

Holiday fiction

Okinawa Diary

A Marine tells his story - day by day

Continued on Page 7

Legion Day at U of M

Hoops December 23

American Legion Family Day at the University of Minnesota Gopher Basketball will be held Wednesday, Dec. 23. The game will feature the Gophers vs. Milwaukee at 7 p.m. at the historic arena. A special ticket price of $15 has been established by the Gophers.

An American Legion color guard will present the colors at the beginning of the game.

To purchase tickets go to The American Legion website on mllelion.org and click on the Legion Day at Gopher Hoops.

When in the Gopher site to order tickets, unclick the “best available” and click on the $15 option.

Or, ticket buyers can buy tickets from the Gophers directly by calling Steve, 612-626-1592.

Minnesotans are picked for national appointments

Minnesotans have been appointed to several national committees and commissions, including three chairmanships and three vice chairmanships. Appointments, including those already serving on committees, include:

Chuck Krueger of Byron will serve as chairman of the Conventional Armed Forces Committee.

William Goede, Plainview, was appointed chairman of the National Guard and Reserve Forces Committee.

Mike Redhead, Madison, was named chairman of the Committee on Youth Education.

Roger K. Olson, Hutchinson, was named vice chairman of the Conventional Armed Forces Committee.

Chuck Krueger of Byron will serve as chairman of the Conventional Armed Forces Committee.

Robert K. Olen, Hutchinson, was named vice chairman of the National Convention Resolutions Assignment Committee.

Peggy Moon, St. Joseph, was named vice chairman of the Committee on Children and Youth. Moon will also serve as vice president of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

Daniel Ludwig, Red Wing, will be on the Advisory Committee to the National Commander.

Marland Ronning, Maple Grove, will serve as a member of the Resolutions Subcommittee of the National Executive Committee. Ronning was also appointed a member of the
A Christmas Story

A guiding light back home

Continued from Page 1

“That’s the way it goes. I just wish I wasn’t flying this late in the day. I might miss out on the fireworks in the wardroom.”

Ski took out his rag and gave the windscreen a quick polish. “Don’t worry, I’m sure they’ll save you some. Have a great flight, Lieutenant. We’ll see you in a few hours.”

O’Dwyer completed his checklist and gazed down the long length of the flight deck. Three planes were ahead of him, and then it would be his turn. His thoughts for a moment went to his family at home. Mom and dad would probably have a pretty good crowd over. The O’Dwyer home was usually the hub of the holidays for relatives and friends. They might be gathered in the living room now, singing some carols. Oh, wait, he thought. What about the dateline? Was Christmas in Minnesota yesterday or would it be tomorrow? I never could figure that out.

Now it was his turn to give the bombers a safe ride to Kavieng. It was 240 miles to the target, probably an hour and a half for a few wheels up, good.

O’Dwyer settled back in his seat. His eyes were glued to the instruments and to the aircraft around him, but his mind was drifting back to Christmases past. It was always his favorite holiday. You could buy a tree in town, but his dad always liked to head to the woods with a sled and cut down his own tree. He let young Pete do the cutting. Mom would always liked to head to the woods with a sled and cut down their own tree. She would ooh and aah about the wonderful tree they had chosen. Once it was up and in the living room, it was time for hot apple cider.

The radio squawked, and brought O’Dwyer back to reality.

“Red three,” the skipper barked. “Forming up with the other Hellcats. The fighters are off to the left. They’re coming at you from the right. Three o’clock. Break off, break off.”

“Okay, okay, news, it seems to be flying just fine.”

Just then a small flame licked out from under the control panel, and then three. O’Dwyer frantically grabbed for the fire extinguisher, again wiping the blood from his eye. He aimed it at the flames and tried to get the blast of white chemicals under the panel. For a time, the flames seemed to be winning over the retardant, but as the fire extinguisher belched its last, the flames also seemed to die.

Holy cow, what’s next?

Okay, let’s start that reassessment again. The plane is flying well. No problem. It sure is breezy in here, though.

He glanced to his right and saw a considerable portion of the canopy was gone. Blown away. He counted three, four, five bullet holes in the wind screen. There was no smoke coming from the engine, but the control panel was still smoldering. He started to check his gauges. Air speed indicator, zero. Altimeter, not working. Fuel gauge, also showing zero. Radio, dead.

One by one he looked across the panel. Nothing was functioning. The cockpit had no electricity and several of the gauges and switches had been destroyed by bullets.

Okay, you don’t need instruments to fly this plane. You just need to know where you’re going. Holy crap, where am I going?

He pulled his chart out from his leg pocket and looked at the route he had penciled in to Kavieng.

So where am I now? I flew right over Kavieng and now I must be in the big bay behind it. O’Dwyer brought the plane around, and he could see in the distance the smoke still bellowing up from the harbor.

Well, I can’t go back that way. I’ve got to go around Kavieng and then somehow get on a course back to the Bunker Hill.

He steered to the left, staying over the ocean, avoiding Kavieng by about 25 miles and flying the water to avoid any stray Zeros. He got out the medical kit and tried to tie a bandage around his head. The bleeding had almost stopped, but a drop seemed to find its way into his eye now and then.

Flying without instruments was a challenge, but so far so good. I’ll be fine. I’ll be fine, as long as I can see where I’m going. His heart almost stopped with that thought. Already the eastern sky was getting dark. The sun was now just touching the western horizon.

My only chance is to have a pretty good bead on the ship and then try to find her in the dark. He knew the ship would be running without lights, especially after the attack on Kavieng had revealed her approximate position to the enemy.

He was still in a steep, banking rendezvous with the surf, but oh so painfully and slowly, the plane began to respond to his controls. This is going to be close. Geez, this is going to be way too close.

With one last effort, he pulled the Hellcat out of its flight pattern with gravity, and got it inching upwards. The plane finally bottomed out about 50 feet above the deck, and began a slow ascent.

“Oh, thank you Jesus,” he shouted out.

To himself, he thought. Stay cool. Stay calm. Time to reassess. What’s wrong and what’s right. What’s left of my airplane?

Okay, good news, it seems to be flying just fine.

Continued on next page
that was a green area in the water, sort of a phosphorescent sky — it was in the ocean below. And it wasn't a bright time, he opened his eyes and stared out into the abyss through his broken windshield.

It was the only sound he heard was the clicking of the switch. The USS Bunker Hill got its course straight, and then a Hellcat around in a landing pattern, he flipped the switch to get the Hellcat lined up correctly and in trying to get his speed right. Even with mechanical guides, this was difficult. Without the gauges, it was foolhardy. Every ounce of his experience from hundreds of carrier landings would come into play.

The ship seemed to rise up to meet him. The Landing Signal Officer was waving his paddles, and O’Dwyer adjusted his course accordingly. He realized he was going too fast, but he managed to set the moving plane down on the moving ship lightly enough so that it was a skid instead of a crash. Sparks flew on the ship’s island once more, this time to show them he had no way he was going to find the ship. There really had been no chance from the beginning. Hope had driven him to where he now served as Sergeant-at-Arms. Since he would have been no chance to get something awful big to create this kind of green strip. It would have to be really big. Like an aircraft carrier. This he aimed the Hellcat where the sun was now about halfway into the ocean.

O’Dwyer kept to his course the best he could. But as each second passed, by his heart sank lower and lower. There was no way he was going to find the ship. There really had been no chance from the beginning. Hope had driven him to where he now served as Sergeant-at-Arms. Besides his work with the Post and the district where he was instrumental in starting the local Sons of the American Legion, (SAL) Squadron 113. He has been a member, holding numerous positions in those organizations, since its inception and has gone forward to become a member of the District Commanders (2008-2010), and all of the SAL chairs in the district. He has served as District 7 Commander, District 7 Membership Director for the district. Maxa is also the Chairman for the Hospitalized Veterans Fund for the Department of Minnesota American Legion and a member of the American Legion. O’Dwyer is retired from the United States Air Force after a twenty-year career active duty. He and his wife, Nancy have been married 37 years and have three children and three grandchildren.

O’Dwyer shouted with joy. “Oh, I know, sir. But I’ve already got my present this year. God sent me a star, well, not exactly a star...”

...a guiding light back home...
Mail Call

The Case for Veterans Service Organizations Membership

To the Editor:

American Legion is an organization that helps veterans find their way back to the community. Although not all veterans have a place to go, many do. Many veterans have no idea that there is a place for them in the community. It is a place where they can find other veterans to help them. American Legion helps veterans find a place to go. It is a place where they can meet other veterans. It is a place where they can find a way back to the community.

Many people are aware of the important role of VSO’s and that is the lobbying activities on veterans and service member’s issues. While remaining apolitical VSO’s maintain focus on lobbying continuing efforts. We have much more effective lobbying activities at both the State and Federal Level. The American Legion has won national awards for cost effective and successful lobbying. These lobbying activities while less than 100% effective have helped provide increased support for service members and veterans in spite of the partisan legislative gridlock that has seemingly paralyzed the recent legislative process. When the legislative session ends, the lobbying activities continue. We want to thank everyone for these wonderful times we have but until you participate something in common—we are all Veterans”. We can provide these, “I’ve missed something all these years”, “what a great experience” and the one I like the best is “we all have these”, “I’ve missed something all these years”, “what a freedom of speech and the pursuit of happiness. It is all family and every family that has a veteran has gone through something today.” I believe what he is also saying in his reply is that without God he is nothing.

We are coming to the time of Christmas. It is a time for family to be together and to show their love for each other. Not just by giving gifts. There is more to Christmas than gifts. It is the time to show love for our families and each other. We love our country, we love our God. Let us pray for peace in the world and ask for his blessing on all mankind. Please pray for each other. Merry Christmas to all and Safe travels to all and may God Bless. 

FRED W. CAMPBELL, Commander, Westphal American Legion Post 251
Robbinsdale

Columns

Sons of the American Legion

By Gene Olswold

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving, spent with either family, friends or both. As for me and Vickie, we spent with friends at a local church where they serve a community Thanksgiving Dinner with all the trimmings. We had invitations with family, however, Vickie had to work that day so the community dinner worked the best for us. We had a time to share what Thanksgiving meant to us and what we were thankful for. What a nice way to get to know your friends better with this sharing. I hope you had this experience we had in sharing what you were thankful for also. The top of this list by almost everyone is how thankful we are living in this great Nation and enjoying the many freedoms we have but yet sometimes take advantage of as we seem to take them for granted. County United States, come on a few.

November was a busy month for me traveling around the state attending the various dinners for Veterans Day functions and other American Legion activities. I want to thank everyone for the invitations and all the great meals I had. I would be remiss if I didn’t mention seeing my old friends again but all the new friends I met at my American Legion family continues to grow. This shows the bonding we experience with the veterans organizations when we participate at the various functions especially the Membership Dinners when the “blue caps” are in attendance. We need to see more of these dinners and other meetings so we can create more good memories like the one given at this past November meeting of Past SAL Detachment Commander John Burt, Slayton. Please try to attend to Department and make the member section Detachment Commander’s Project. All donations are greatly appreciated and I thank you all for your support for this project.

When Christmas and the holidays come around it is always a special time of year and please party responsibly as you bring in 2016.

Chaplain’s Corner

By Richard Wog

There are times when I want to start this letter and I look at all the empty sheets of paper wondering “where do I start? Where do I begin?” At a Veteran’s Day Dinner, Cheryl and I sat with and had the chance to talk to so many other veterans. During this meal I was honored to have the opportunity to meet several of the Branch Officers and to have the opportunity to serve to start. He started with the Navy, but of course the Army let him know in a very nice way, that the Army was first. We were the ones that got the Marines. The person across from me, his first name is Gary, was the only Marine there. Gary looked around and seeing no other Marines said, “It only takes a few more men.” I thought that was great.

Every person should know that only one percent of our population has served in the military and is still serving, but also that one percent serving we have the Legion Family. Not just the post but the Auxiliary, the Sons and Legion members. We all work for the same reason, to support our veterans and the four pillars, starting with family and you.

Family comes first. If that were only true for others. There are families that have problems. At times families forget that it happens every day. This about all the family events that have happened and the ones still to come. But there are those that need family and no one is there. Sometimes I am sorry to see people at themselves first and family second. This also holds true for religion. It is also put to back burn.

There is a story I want to share with you. It a story about a man who wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. He wrote, “I’ve gone to church for thirty years and have heard around 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me I cannot remember one of them.” He went on to say, “I think I am wasting my time.” This started a real controversy in the letters to the editor. 

I am wasting my time.” This started a real controversy in the letters to the editor.

The soldiers before us and the soldiers still serving have fought for this right, just as each of you. The freedom to worship your God where and whenever you choose and the freedom of speech and the pursuit of happiness. It is all about God and country. We are coming to the time of Christmas. It is a time for family to be together and to show their love for each other. Not just by giving gifts. There is more to Christmas than gifts. It is the time to show love for our families and each other. We love our country, we love our God. Let us pray for peace in the world and ask for his blessing on all mankind. Please pray for each other. Merry Christmas to all and safe travels to all.
What's Happening

Calendars are out

The 2016 official Minnesota American Legion Calendar has been mailed. Legionnaires may receive this calendar in the fund raising mailing, but it is available to all who want it. The calendar features photos of Minnesota American Legion Posts from bygone years.

To obtain a calendar contact Jennifer Kelley at jkelley@mnlegion.org or Al Zdon at azdon@mnlegion.org or call 651-291-1800.

Pearl Harbor Day

A tribute to Americans who fought at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, will be held at the Minnesota National Guard Armory at the Capitol in St. Paul on Monday, Dec. 7, at 10 a.m.

The event previously was held at the Veterans Service Building.

It will be sponsored by the Minnesota Disabled American Veterans and the Ft. Snelling National Cemetery Memorial Rifle Squad.

Richard Thill, a survivor of the attack and part of the Minnesota contingent on the USS Ward that day, will be the guest speaker. Thill is one of the last survivors of the Ward.

The ship fired the first shot of World War II for the United States.

Band at Pearl Harbor

The Kerkhoven/Murdock/Sunburg High School Marching Saints will be the only band to represent Minnesota at the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

They will be part of a mass band that will commemorate the beginning of World War II.

Legion posts are being asked to contribute to the cost of sending the band to Hawaii. Donations can be sent to IKM Murdock, 103 W. 2nd St, Kerkhoven, MN 56252 or go to www.kms.k12.mn.us.

Veterans Town Hall

There will be a Veterans Town Hall meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 9, from 4-6 p.m. at the Whipple Federal Building at the Fort Snelling Upper Post.

Veterans are encouraged to attend to voice their comments about the Veterans Administration or other subjects.

Aitkin Vietnam Photo Exhibit

The Jaques Art Center in Aitkin will host a photography exhibit starting at the end of February next year called “Vietnam, a Window to War.” The photographer is James R. Thompson, a Vietnam veteran and a native of Aitkin.

Vietnam vets and others are invited to submit photographs. More details will be announced later. Tickets are not yet on sale.

Local Clinics

Free drop-in legal clinics will be held:

– Tuesday, Dec. 8, at the St. Cloud VA Auditorium from 10 a.m. to noon.
– Thursday, Dec. 10, at the Anoka County Government Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The clinics offer professional help in housing, employment, benefits, debt collection, expungement, family law including child support.

Round Tables

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Roundtable will next meet on Jan. 25, and the subject will be American-British diplomatic relations during the Civil War with Doug Johnson. For more information, call Steve Anderson at 715-386-1268. These are dinner meetings are held at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater.

The World War II History Round Table at Fort Snelling History Center will feature “Early Naval Aviation Operations” with Stephen Moore, an author who wrote “Pacific Payback.” He will be joined by veterans of Navy and Marine aviation. The meeting will be held on Thursday, Dec. 10, at the history center. A 5$ donation will be accepted.

The World War II History Round Table also announced changes to its program for March since the previous announced date was scheduled for October will be held on April 28. It will feature author Pat O’Donnell speaking on OSS Maritime units, and work into the beginnings of the CIA.

The Round Table will also be changing its program for March 10. The new program will feature Douglas Waller on the history of the directors of the CIA that came out of World War II’s OSS.

The January program is now in flux also, and a replacement program will be announced soon.

The Rochester Veterans Roundtable will be held Monday, Dec. 14, and will feature “A Country Doctor Goes to War” with Tammy Thayer. The meeting starts at Autumn Ridge Church at 7 p.m. and a $5 donation is accepted.

Pets Loyal 2 Vets

The Pets Loyal 2 Vets program will hold its second annual Wine, Craft Beer and Fine Spirits tasting on Saturday, April 30, at the Flying Cloud Airport in Eden Prairie. Several World War II planes will be on display.

The goal is to raise $10,000 to provide service dogs for veterans with disabilities.

For more information, go to www.petsloyal2vets.org.

Gold Dog Tags

The Minnesota Military Museum is offering a Christmas gift idea. The museum will provide a veteran with a remembrance gold dog tag and place a second gold dog tag on the Veterans Support Wall at the museum at Camp Ripley.

For more information about veterans registry, contact the museum at www.mnmilitarymuseum.org or call 320-616-6050.

The museum is open from 9-4 on Thursdays and Fridays in the winter.
Not everyone can say they’ve sacrificed a part of their own life for the purpose of America’s freedom. Serving your country will be one of life’s greatest and most honorable achievements. Most of us signed the dotted line because we believed in a country that is free because of the brave and it’s a “system worth saving.”

The American Legion was founded after World War I by veterans who had another common interest other than serving Old Glory. They wanted to ensure our nation’s veterans had an opportunity for service for their sacrifices. In August 1921, The Legion’s efforts resulted in the creation of the U.S. Veterans Bureau, forerunner of the Veterans Administration. Years later, in June 1944, Legionnaires had drafted and pushed through Congress the greatest piece of legislation known as “The GI Bill of Rights.” This bill became law and provided veterans with education benefits, home loans and employment opportunities, while boosting the economy with hope. These great benefits were administered by the U.S. Veterans Administration.

As we take a look at where the Department of Veterans Affairs, as we now call it, is today, we need to remember that it is a, “system worth saving.” It’s a system that we the veterans helped create.

Yes the VA has a tremendous responsibility in front of it and as long as our country’s citizens to serve this great nation then the VA must be ready to serve this great nation the veterans helped create.

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Minnesotans named to national panels for the coming year

Continued from Page 1

National Security Commission Liaison Committee.
Steven Kleinglass of Mendota Heights was named a consultant to the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

Tom Fernlund of St. Cloud will serve on the Media and Communications Commission.

Don Pankake of Hutchinson was named to the Membership and Post Activities Committee.

Linda Dvorak, of LeRoy, and Robin Picray, St. Paul, were named as members of the Media and Communications Council.

Minnesota will have 11 members on the National Security Council. They are: Don Amundson, Blue Earth, Richard Goss, Wahaska; Tim Haugen, Moorhead; Steve Johnson, Morton; James Kelling, Taopi; Lloyd Ricker, Dawson; Michael Schaffer, Fulda; Don Schroedl, Minneapolis; E. Jerry St. Michel, Grand Rapids; Wes Thompson, Saukell, and Cal Van Horn, Morris.

Jeff Olson, formerly of Stillwater and residing in Green Valley, AZ, will be the National Commander’s Representative on the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

Barb Knechel of Battle Lake will also serve on the commission.

Tom Lannon, Prior Lake, was appointed to the Veterans Benefits Committee.

There will be five Minnesotans on the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Council: Jim Blakesley, Atkins; Clinton Burt, Slayton; Tom Conway, Argyle; Denise Milton, Bagley; Orville Otterson, North Branch.

Thomas Sanders of Pine City and Darrel Redepenning, Fridley, were named to the Veterans Employment and Education Committee.

Tess Davis of Princeton was named to the Americanism Committee.

Ray DeZurik of Breezy Point was appointed to the Employment and Veterans Preference Committee.

Floyd LaCore was named to the Internal Affairs Commission as a consultant.

Richard Janssen of Richmond was named to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee as the National Commander’s Representative. Don Walser, Hutchinson, also serves on the committee.

Curtis Noreen of Roseville will be a consultant on the Aerospace Committee.

Al Zdon, Mounds View, will continue to serve on the 100th Anniversary Observation Committee.

Floyd Kumerow will continue to serve on the National Cemetery Committee.

EXPRESSIVE WRITING -- Dr. Nina Sayer of the Center for Chronic Disease Outcomes Research at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System was the principal researcher in a study that showed that veterans who wrote expressively about their reintegration experience received some benefit both in reintegration and in dealing with PTSD. Photo by April Eilers.

Writing deepest thoughts may help vets

Continued from Page 1

selected 20,000 veterans across the country and sent them a letter asking if they would participate.

Veterans had to fill out a form and mail it back. “We asked for veterans who believed they had a little or more than a little reintegration difficulty.”

The researchers wanted the study to be easy for veterans to participate in, without any clinical involvement. Over 8,000 sent back the form, but 4,000 were eliminated immediately because they said they had no reintegration problems. Another four percent were culled out because they said they had severe depression.

In the end, about 1,300 used the internet to do the test. About 500 others were asked to write factually about various VA subjects. Another 200 were not asked to do any writing at all.

Standardized testing was done before the exercise, three months later and six months later.

Sayer said the change in the veterans was small, but positive. She said because the exercise is so easy to administer, it would be easy for future efforts to reach a wide population of veterans.

And, Sayer said, the results showed no negative results from writing expressively about reintegration. “There seem to be no risks or harms, no indicators of negative reaction.

We also saw that the results were the same for men and women.

Expressive writing might be helpful even for those seeking professional help.

“The benefits found in the study were small, but it seemed to be a helpful intervention for those going through a major life transition.”

She noted, though, that the study only asked the respondents to write about their reintegration problems and not about whatever trauma they might have faced in the military or elsewhere.

The study was published in the Journal of Traumatic Stress in October 2015. Now that the study is done, Sayer said she is interested in digging into the data again to find out more.

“I’d like to talk to vets. I’m curious to know what veterans might think about this. I’d like to know more about who would benefit, or what we could do to make the effect stronger.”

Sayer is a native of New York and has a clinical psychology degree from New York University. She has been employed by the federal government for 23 years and has worked with helping veterans with PTSD. Several years ago, she decided to pursue a career of doing research full time.

Third District Adjutant Linda Dvorak honored by Air Guard

Linda Dvorak, who served in the Minnesota Air National Guard from 1976 to 2002, was recently honored by being brevetted to Chief Master Sergeant.

Dvorak has been active in The American Legion. She was adjutant for New Prague Post 45 and later served as Financial Officer. In 2013 she was selected as Adjutant for the Third District.

The ceremony was held at the National Guard Armory at the Capitol in November.

The brevet was recommended by Brig. Gen. Robert Cayton (Ret.) and by Capt. Kurt Steinmetz, and was approved by Adjutant General Richard Nash and by Governor Mark Dayton.

In the military, a brevet honors a person for long and devoted service. A breveted officer or enlisted person is often to honor a person for long and devoted service.

Dvorak joined the Air Guard in 1976 and had held many positions including personnel systems manager, training specialist, career advisor and personnel affairs technician.

Her work in revising the Excellence in Training Award had an impact on the entire National Guard Training Community.

She was hired onto the Joint Forces Headquarters Air Staff in 2004 and has been the consistent go-to person at JFHQ Air Personnel.

Dvorak was pinned at the ceremony by Col. James Wentzlaff.

Dvorak and her husband, Mark, live in Le Center and have six children. Mark is also active in The American Legion and is a past Third District Commander and now serves as Department Sergeant-at-Arms.

A reception was later held at McGovern's.
**Carlyle Knaus of Kimball was drafted into the Marines in 1943. He was sent to Okinawa in April 1944 and fought there until the island was secured. His diary shows both the lighter, day-to-day side of the Marine Corps and the awful brutality of war.**

The following story is taken from Carl, A Marine & His Comrades, *The Diary of Carlyle Knaus, 1945*. The diary was published by his family after his death.

**Edited by Al Zdon**

Carlyle Knaus was 27 years old with two children when he got drafted into the Navy in April 1944. He was one of 1.5 million young American men who were drafted that year.

Knaus had grown up in Kimball, Minnesota, in the family’s residence above the Knaus Meat Market. He was the youngest of 10 children. His nickname was Abbie.

While he was lined up for his induction in Minneapolis, a Marine recruiter came into the room and announced that the Marines were two men short for that day. Perhaps it was Knaus’ strong physique, or maybe it was his broad, handsome face that made him look like a Marine, but he was one of the lucky two.

A few days later, he was in San Diego at Marine Corps boot camp.

On Sept. 11, he was sent overseas. As the new year began, Knaus was stationed somewhere in the Pacific, probably Pavuvu. As a gift, his wife Laverne “Sunshine” gave him a diary. He was faithful about making daily entries, and his candor and writing reveal a true and clear picture of what it was like for a Marine in the final, brutal months of the war.

**Jan. 1 [1945] –** Since I got this diary book from my Darling Wife, I know no better time to start filling the pages with the most important events of my life than this first day of 45.

**Jan. 3 –** I spent practically the whole day peeling potatoes.

**Jan. 5 –** I put in an awful rugged day today. I got in about four loads of food today. I talked to Lt. Harper to give me a working party to give me a lift, which I got.

**Jan. 6 –** I got transferred today as a B.A.R. [Browning Automatic Rifle] man in the second group. I was the assistant B.A.R. man to the best man in the company, Ski.

**Jan. 7 –** Went to church today as usual at 10:30… Nale and I went to the show and saw “Cover Girl” which was very good.

**Jan. 8 –** Got five letters today from my darling wife, and nothing could happen that could make a person feel better than letters from home.

**Jan. 11 –** This evening Nale and I went to the Red Cross, not only to see the females, but to shoot the breeze with them. After eating a half dozen or so of donuts and the same amount of chocolate we went and played beano. Believe it or not, I won the first game. I thought I was going to get a Red Cross nurse, but all I got was two packs of cigarettes. Better luck next time, Abbie, better luck.

**Jan. 13 –** I was plainly informed that I was demoted to the fellow that slings the chow to the chow-hounds once again. I told the sergeant that he couldn’t do it, and I was going to see the chaplain. Ha, ha.

**Jan. 15 –** Everybody is in a mess this evening. We are going on a five-day bivouac, and we are drawing all kinds of gear. We had an inspection and one fellow had all his gear, a pair of silk shorts, and bow-tie on, and a cigar.

**Jan. 19 –** We went out in ducks [amphibious landing vehicles] and then circled around in the water for about an hour before we made our beach landing. As usual, everything and everybody was all fouled up, but in order to make a beach landing the Marine Corps way, that is the way it must be done. So it was classified as successful.

**Jan. 20 –** My clothes stink so bad from perspiration that they almost make me sick.

**Jan. 22 –** Bring on the Japs, because the sooner we get them, the sooner we go home.

**Jan. 23 –** Today at the mess hall, we served ice cream. The sergeant made us mess men eat last, and by that time there was no ice cream left or anything else. We went on strike: no chow, no work. Snowball went and told his lieutenant and the lieutenant went and got the cooks out of the shower, bath and the sacks to make us chow. The excitement lasted for about an hour before all the sergeants and lieutenants and us mess men came to peaceable terms.

**Feb. 6 –** The land crabs are on the move again. The crabs are about the size of a saucer dish with two large pinchers. At night they move. They crawl up the mosquito nets and get in bed with you; that is a terrible scare… It is nothing to kill thirty to forty every morning in our tent.

**Feb. 11 –** I decided to drink my beer today, which is a

**Feb. 1 –** P.S. I am getting damn tired of C-rations.

**Feb. 4 –** We were swimming all day today and about 20 of us grab-assing on shore, all bare naked. And to our surprise a Jeep came up and turned around just in front of us. The Jeep contained two officers and three blushing Red Cross nurses.
total of a case and so by now, I am starting to feel rather pickled... I got in a little crap game. Ten dollars was the least you could bet. I came out OK. The winner won $490 and the game was then busted.

Feb. 13 – I noticed on the bulletin board today that I finally made PFC. About all it amounts to is $4.80 a month, but I guess I can always use a little extra money, even if I am in the bead making business. It takes me about two hours to fully complete a string of beads and I get from $15 to $20 a string. I have been making a string a day for the last nine days.

Feb. 14 – Freundt and I took McGuire to Mass with us this evening which completed our nine-day novena. The priest advised us not to give up shows or smoking [for lent] because our entertainment is already very limited.

Feb. 15 – The accident happened this morning by a fellow who lives only about 200 yards from us. While he was going to shoot the bazooka, it went off in the weapon instead of going out, instantly blowing him to pieces, and wounding six others.

Feb. 22 – Blitz time is very near, hence everybody is in a trance, because there is so much work to do.

Feb. 24 – We had a lecture today on our next operation, and it sounds pretty rugged. [Knaus was in the First Marine Division.]

Feb. 28 – [On board ship] We fellows are sure getting fed good for a change... The nice clean mess hall with the music they play is certainly a treat to us marines.

March 1 – Life aboard ship is rather dull unless you can always keep your mind occupied. Freundt, Pelesky, Barnes and I have been playing 500 practically all day.

March 2 – We disembarked into Higgins Boats and then we went around and around for three hours. The fellows driving the boats must have been amateurs because they would run into each other and hit waves and most everything else.

March 5–6 – We went ashore on the Canal [Guadalcanal] today and we landed where the Marines and Japs had done some heavy fighting. We found wrecked Jap transport ships and submarines and smaller boats on the shores. Lying all around were bones and skulls, so we were convinced the fox holes and other devices the Japs built were not strong enough to hold the Marines off.

March 10–11 – [At sea] According to the radio reports, the Marines were slowly securing the island of Iwo Jima. So far, the number of Marines killed is rather high, so as we travel on this trip many things are going through our minds. We are going to perform one of the most daring stunts ever pulled in the South Pacific. We realize that it will be much worse than Peleliu or Iwo Jima, so sometimes our conversation isn’t any too merry.

March 22–23–24 – Today we reached our first destination of the journey. It is hard to explain the number of ships in the rendezvous area, but it was a ghastly number.

March 25 – One finally begins to realize the dangers that are in store for us. I wrote a long letter to my wife and mother today, and that winds up all the letter writing until after the blitz.

March 30 – We were issued our ammunition today, so we had to fill our belts. A person has to carry 35 to 40 pounds of gear into combat.

March 31 – We had a big, thick steak banquet this evening and we are now getting all set for the Easter parade that takes place in the morning.

April 1 – [Just off Okinawa] We had early reveille at 2:30 this morning and then ate chow. We watched the destroyers bomb the island and shoot down Jap Zeros until we made our successful debarkation. We marched through the destroyed city of Lovs. About 4 o’clock we dug in for the night on top of the cemetery.

April 2 – Last night we were spotted by a few Jap Zeros. Several were knocked out, and one just went directly over us which was very low. Ski gave it a bloody go with his BAR. We advanced about two miles today and after we were dug in, Freundt and I went souvenir hunting. We made a good haul and I got a Jap flag, coins, pictures and a Jap wristwatch.

April 3 – We started on the march early this morning, and were held up only a few times by snipers. About 4 o’clock we reached the front lines and we were scattered on the road when we were fired on by heavy Jap guns. My gear was on the road plus the machine gun. The bullets were zooming only a few inches above us so we had to get out without our gear. We then threw a smoke grenade there, and Chuck Stenert and I got our gear.

Private Lane, nineteen years old from Oklahoma, was killed today. His fox hole was only about 10 feet from Freundt and me, and he was with his buddy, Lacking, when the accident happened. He will always be remembered by all the fellows in the third platoon as a curly red-haired happy-go-lucky fellow.

April 4–5 – We flanked the town and with the help of many planes we had the Japs headed for the hills. It was a hunter’s paradise, the Japs were running up the hills like rats, they were even trying to swim the river but with no success. The mudberrypatches that we were in were covered with dead japs. The battle lasted only about one hour and back to the area we started. I was completely exhausted so I crapped out for the day.

April 6 – Today we marched back to about the center of...
just getting dark when we got there. It was necessary to relieve one man at a time because of the many snipers that were firing upon us. It is surprising how fast a man can run and dive for cover and dive for cover and dive for cover.

May 15 — It doesn’t take you long to learn to keep low. We have to eat, sleep, sit and even [unravel and delicate] in our foxholes. One of the new fellows, Walter, was hit in the shoulder this morning.

May 16 — Today was Zinkan’s lucky day. A sniper got him right in the face with a shot, cuttin’ grin on his face, he said, “I got it.” Doc fixed him up and high-tailed it to the C.P. [command post] sixty miles an hour, takin’ his Jap souvenirs with him.

May 17 — Korns was rather proud because he got his first nip and, of course, he told me all about it. He also gave me a Jap pipe that they use to smoke opium in.

May 18 — We were standing by today to go on bloody pinnacle. Finally they gave the all clear and, of course, we didn’t take long before I realized why they called it. It was rather exciting to be so close to the nips that you could hear their respirations and their walk. After the top was reached we would throw handgrenades over and also into the pillboxes and sometimes the Japs would throw them back plus a few potato mashers [Japanese grenades].

May 20 — We went down to the stream and washed and shaved for the first time in three weeks. We also got a clean issue of clothes and a meal of 10-1 rations.

May 27 — Mud, mud every place you look is mud. Everything you touch and eat is mud, and by the looks of it the clouds will get worse. We offered them water and food, but instead they wanted to be shot in the stomach.

June 4 — We crossed three ridges early and when we tried to reach the fourth we were stopped by a deep and swift flowing river and machine gun fire. While we were held up, our squad had to mop up a village close by. It was necessary to kill a few civilians, and we also got nip soldiers. Barnes and I saw a small baby pulling on its dead mother’s leg. It was necessary to kill a few civilians, and we also got nip soldiers. We were forced to use smoke and many W.P. [white phosphorus] grenades to get back out of the valley.

June 5 — All night we were fired upon by machine gun fire, so after midnight Barnes and I were forced to move and dig a deeper fox hole.

June 7 — This morning early, a Jap came out of a cave directly in front of us and started for the hills. Barnes got a BAR and while he was trying to sight in, I grabbed my M-1 and squeezed one off and he immediately fell to the ground. My name now is “Dead Eye Abbie.”

On the way over, my group had to clean out several caves. One had civilians in it and the only way I could get them out was to go in after them.

June 8 — We passed a building where a mother and father were watching over their two dead girls, a dead son, and a sick boy. They were sitting there and we gave them water and food. Barnes and I saw a small baby pulling on its dead mother’s leg. It was necessary to kill a few civilians, and we also got nip soldiers. We were forced to use smoke and many W.P. [white phosphorus] grenades to get back out of the valley.

June 10 — I was only on guard about a half hour when I heard two nips whispering that sounded like only a few feet in front of me. I then saw the head of one of them coming towards me. I shot one, I jumped on top of little ledge that I was hiding under, and then shot again. By that time, most of the squad was down to help me. All you could hear then were two moaning nips. In the morning we found two dead nips about 10 feet in front of me.

June 14 — After eating C rations for the past 75 days, it’s getting to be rather tasteless and the sickening smell of the dead nips don’t increase one’s appetite. About noon today, several pieces of Japanese artillery fell in our area killing two and wounding three in our platoon.

June 19 — We got word this morning to get your gear on to mop up this big coral hill, Finnsh Ridge. We are all passed off because we were supposed to be relieved.

Being a squad leader carries a lot of responsibility. More than I have ever anticipated. I worried more about my twelve men than I had ever of myself.

June 21 — Island secured at 1:15 p.m.

Barnes was killed on top of the ridge and while he went by a big chunk of coral, a nip threw a grenade at him but it was a dud. Barnes let him have it with his tommy. In several of the caves you could hear grenades going off which sounded like they were committing haraery. The patrol lasted for four hours and we accounted for 14 nips, my squad getting five.

June 22 — We went out on another patrol today and we went through the cane fields hunting nips like we used to hunt rabbits back home. Willy ran fast enough to get out of the danger zone. We got seven nips before our patrol was over.

June 23 — Last night about five o’clock we were issued four eggs, two oranges, rolls and butter and we sure feasted. We spent another Fourth of July fire fight last night and our squad got six nips.

June 25 — We got back about noon and just in time to get a new issue of clothes that we needed so badly. We got in another big pineapple game today, the only ones we took away from us by playing poker.

July 1 — We received ten in one ration plus a green half full of 180 proof alcohol. We finished the night by singing.

July 7 — We went out on patrol today and our platoon got seven nips. My squad got six of them. The only trouble of killing nips is we have to bury them.

July 15 — We had our dedication of the First Marine Cemetery today and it was a very colorful event. There is a good 1,500 white crosses each with its flag fluttering briskly. [The division lost 1,655 men on Okinawa.]

July 17 — Our first sergeant gave us a very snappy talk and informed us that the little blitz is over and we again get very GI.

Aug. 14 — A lot of scuttlebutt has been going around that the Japs have surrendered, and about four o’clock this afternoon the Army fellows that are just aside of us started shouting and jumping up and down and yelling that Japs have really surrendered. Of course, we are all excited but none of us are overly happy because as yet we can’t quite believe it.

Aug. 31 — It was reported that Sunday will be the end of censoring mail in the Pacific. It sure will be a relief to be able to write a letter to my wife and know that my lieutenant hasn’t read it first.

Sept. 2 — On my way to church this morning the radios were going full blast and so we listened to the Japanese surrender which was taking place on the battleship Missouri.

Knaus’ diary continued until the end of the year. The First Marine Division was sent to China, and Knaus was finally discharged in early 1946. He eventually returned to Kinbali where he owned the family meat market. He and Laverne had seven children. Carlyle Knaus died on Jan. 28, 2006, and he had a Marine color guard for his funeral.
Hello brave warriors, every December 5th, the American Legion of Minnesota is calling for December 5th to remember those who fought for our country, and we must never forget their sacrifices.

As Commander of the 8th District, I would like to thank you for your continued support of the American Legion. This year, we have been working hard to ensure that our organization continues to thrive.

Membership efforts have been a challenge, and we are working to improve this. We are currently over 80% as of November 18th. Our membership remains strong, and we need to continue working hard on membership, as the December deadline is fast approaching for dues increases.

I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Let’s ring in the New Year at the top of the charts.

I look forward to attending the Pearl Harbor Rally on December 5th in Faribault, and Christmas Parties at Maple Lake and Cokato.

A special thank you to Deanna Mounts for the invitation to the annual Pheasant dinner at the Fargo Falls Veterans Home. As usual, the food was good. Speaking of the FFVH, I will have a basket at the 9th District Mid-Winter for the collection of Hotel sized toiletries for distribution at the Home. I am asking all posts to please encourage our members to bring whatever they can.

The 8th District has its first-ever post revitalization during the Pearl Harbor Rally. For myself, I look forward to attending the Pearl Harbor Rally on December 5th in Faribault, and Christmas Parties at Maple Lake and Cokato.

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On December 14th, at 5 p.m., we will be having our annual Christmas Rally, featuring Santa Claus, Christmas Carolers, and our second annual Ugly Tie and Sweater Contest.

This is always the most enjoyable rally of the year. It is a time of good cheer and fellowship for our entire Legion Family.

For myself, I look forward to attending the Pearl Harbor Rally on December 5th in Faribault, and Christmas Parties at Maple Lake and Cokato.

A special thanks goes out to the Clearwater, Anoka, Fridley, Delano Post for allowing me to attend dinner at their Post. Unfortunately, I had to miss the Pumpkin Carving Contest at the Wayzata Post, and the Silent Auction at the Plymouth Post.

Next month in January we will be hosting our Mid-Winter conference on January 16th, at the Anoka Post, and an open program at the St. Cloud VA on Sunday January 24th from 2 – 5 PM. Even if you are not a member of the 10th, you are more than welcome to join us.

I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year. I know it rings hollow in this time of sorrow, and turmoil, but we must never give up hope.
**Listening Post**

**POST 1 DONATION** – Minneapolis Post 1 recently made a major donation to the Armed Forces Service Center at the International Airport. The post will donate $25,000 over the next three years to the center. From left: AFSC Assistant Director Fred Crawford, Legion Representative to the AFSC Joe Jansen, Post 1 Commander Bob Meyer, and Post 1 members Joyce Rose, Del Rose, Larry Schoppe and Herb Hastings.

**SILVER LAKE MEMORIAL DEDICATION** – Silver Lake Post 141 recently had a dedication ceremony for its new veterans memorial at the Silver Lake Park. The memorial was paid for from donations by a host of veterans and civic organizations. Personalized bricks were also sold, and those interested in buying one can call 320-327-2404.

**POST 1 RIDERS CHAPTER** – Minneapolis Post 1 has established an American Legion Riders Chapter, the third one in the Fifth District. This year on the Legacy Run, the post was honored to ride with the oldest chapter in the state, Deer River Post 122.

**MONTICELLO HONORS COUPLE** – Monticello Post 260 honored Cindy and Gordy Hoglund, owners of Hoglund Transportation, for their contribution of a van and expenses to transport the post’s honor guard to the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery at Little Falls. At right are Art Duran and Post Commander Ted Farnam.

**LAKE CITY POSTERS** – Lake City Post 110 has installed a series of historic war posters in its clubrooms.

**TYLER FUND RAISER** – Tyler Post 185 and the Russell/Tyler/Ruthton High School History Club pose during their joint organization pancake fund raiser. The history club is planning a 15-day World War II and Western Front European tour this coming year.
Listening Post

News from around the State

**Goodrich dedicates memorial**

Goodrich, a community near Thief River Falls, this summer dedicated its veterans memorial, a project that began four years ago. The memorial, seen in an aerial shot above, has a walkway, memorial flag poles, marble benches, another brick walkway and a bandshell with a patriotic art tableau. About 240 black granite blocks are in the walkways commemorating local veterans.

**DENT FLAG DISPOSAL** -- Members of Dent Post 148 had a session teaching local grade school students how to properly dispose of a worn-out flag.

**COAST GUARD REUNION** -- Veterans who served in the Coast Guard from 1942-46 were part of the Third Annual Minnesota Coast Guard Reunion held in Hopkins recently. The next reunion is planned for June 25, 2016. Seated, from left: John Seiberz, Harold Neuman, Hugh Van Hatten, Bernie Reistad, Iver Anderson, Bob Barthel, Donald Hecker, Tom Duffy, Russ Olson.

**ALEXANDRIA HONOREES** -- Alexandria Post 87 honored longtime continuous members recently. From left are Bill Beery, 70 years; Commander Allan Gerlach; and George Ketter, 60 years.

**EDEN VALLEY VETERANS** -- Eden Valley Post 381 held its membership dinner recently. From left are Adjutant Jim Haag, Dave Braegelman, 50 years; Paul Anderson, 45 years; Mike Dockendorf, 40 years; Post Commander Steve Schmitt.

**Aitkin names field for veterans**

The Aitkin Football Association named its field Veterans Field in a ceremony held recently. Members of the Aitkins Gobblers celebrated a win that night in front of the new sign at the field, left. At right, veterans and others formed an American flag tunnel to welcome the teams on the field the night the venue was dedicated to veterans.

**Aitkin**

The Aitkin Football Association named its field Veterans Field in a ceremony held recently. Members of the Aitkins Gobblers celebrated a win that night in front of the new sign at the field, left. At right, veterans and others formed an American flag tunnel to welcome the teams on the field the night the venue was dedicated to veterans.
December has many special programs for our veterans

December is Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation month. There are a number of special programs the Auxiliary is involved with this month, such as Gift Shop, our $5.00 Bill Shower, Christmas parties, etc. These are in addition to the regular activities our Hospital/Home Representatives and their many volunteers sponsor at their respective facilities. Is your Unit planning on doing something special for our veterans? If you are able to help out, please contact one of the hospital reps. They will let you know when they need any help with the annual Gift Shop. It is a very humbling and rewarding experience. Don’t forget the hospice care, home health care, or the local hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities as well as those who are shut-in in your community. Make December a special month for them.

Volunteers are needed. Our veterans answered the call when our country was in need. Won’t you answer the call when they are in need? Become a volunteer at one of the VA Medical Centers, a Field Service volunteer or a Home Service volunteer. There are many opportunities. They need you. Contact the Department Office if you are interested in volunteering.

American Legion Hospital Program
We have nine facilities in which the Auxiliary carries on extensive programs for our hospitalized veterans. This takes funding as we provide many of those extras to veterans. Your financial support is needed. Please send your contributions to the Department Office earmarked “$3.00 Bill Shower” and “American Legion Auxiliary Hospital Program.” Thank you for your support. Please call the Hospital Home Reps to see what their needs are at this time.

MINNEAPOLIS VAMC
Our hospital representative Mary Ann Davis wants to let everyone know that she does not need non-stick slippers, as the hospital now hands those out. She has quite a few in her inventory and doesn’t need any more. If anybody knows of a facility that could use these slippers, please contact the Department Office and we will get them there.

GIRLS STATE INFORMATION
Information needed to reserve a place for your Girls State citizen(s) for the 2016 session of the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will be included in the January Unit mailing. Please make sure and go through all the information. The Girls State Committee has made some very exciting and positive changes to this year’s session! It will include an American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State informational brochure, a certificate from the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Chairman and a reservation form. After the department office receives your reservation form and your registration check of $300.00 per girl, a packet will be sent to the Unit. This packet will include a set of registration forms for each girl you will be sponsoring. It will include the enrollment card, information sheet, pledge, brochure, dress code, order forms for the polo shirts, etc. The packet will be sent to the person who signs the reservation form. The registration materials must be returned to the department office on or before May 1. If you have any questions, please contact the department office. This year the Girls State week will be held at Bethel College in St. Paul.

Arends endorsed for First Vice President

Willmar Unit 167 and the Seventh District American Legion Auxiliary have endorsed Donna Arends for First Vice President for the year 2016-2107. She has been an active member of Unit 167 for 27 years. Her eligibility is through her father, William Sommerville, a veteran of WWII. At the Unit level, she has held many positions including President. On the district level, she has been 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Executive Committee Member, chairman for U.Di.R., V.A&R., Honor & Membership, and was a Girls State Committee member for three years. She was a Girls State Chairman in 2013 and 2014. She is currently serving as 2nd Vice President and 2015-2016 Girls State Chairman for the Children & Youth Program. She has two daughters, 1 son, and six grandchildren. Arends is retired from the Willmar hospital and is currently working part time as a resident assistant at Copperleaf Sr Living in their Memory Care Unit.

DONNA ARENDS

Fredrickson endorsed
Glencoe Unit 264 has endorsed Sandy Fredrickson for Alternate National Executive Committeewoman for 2016-17.
Fredrickson has held many positions at the unit, district and state level, and is currently the Department President.

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Information needed to reserve a place for your Girls State citizen(s) for the 2016 session of the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will be included in the January Unit mailing. Please make sure and go through all the information. The Committee has made some very exciting and positive changes to this year’s session! It will include an American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State informational brochure, a certificate from the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Chairman and a reservation form. After the department office receives your reservation form and your registration check of $300.00 per girl, a packet will be sent to the Unit. This packet will include a set of registration forms for each girl you will be sponsoring. It will include the enrollment card, information sheet, pledge, brochure, dress code, order forms for the polo shirts, etc. The packet will be sent to the person who signs the reservation form. The registration materials must be returned to the department office on or before May 1. If you have any questions, please contact the department office. This year the Girls State week will be held at Bethel College in St. Paul.

Arends endorsed for First Vice President

Willmar Unit 167 and the Seventh District American Legion Auxiliary have endorsed Donna Arends for First Vice President for the year 2016-2107. She has been an active member of Unit 167 for 27 years. Her eligibility is through her father, William Sommerville, a veteran of WWII. At the Unit level, she has held many positions including President. On the district level, she has been 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Executive Committee Member, chairman for U.Di.R., V.A&R., Honor & Membership, and was a Girls State Committee member for three years. She was a Girls State Chairman in 2013 and 2014. She is currently serving as 2nd Vice President and 2015-2016 Girls State Chairman for the Children & Youth Program. She has two daughters, 1 son, and six grandchildren. Arends is retired from the Willmar hospital and is currently working part time as a resident assistant at Copperleaf Sr Living in their Memory Care Unit.
This is Veterans Affairs and Rehab Month

So December is Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation month. That’s a hard concept for me. I consider every month to be Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation month, don’t you?

Spirits are high this time of year. Thanksgiving and all that fabulous food and gathering of families and friends is a Christmas with the gifts and smiling faces all around us. What a great time of the year. For most of us.

We are in a rush for the gambling seminar and it was cold. Bruce and I went for about a 10 block walk to a store we love. I was so bundled up I couldn’t believe it. Hats, gloves, wool coat. Long coat hooded over my head. It was windy and it was cold. I couldn’t help but wonder how many veterans were out there with no place to go. No shelter, a blanket or food. None of the things that we take for granted. This is a difficult time for some of our veterans and I wish it could come and go for our home. This veterans that is a trying time emotionally. Then comes Christmas. We are all very busy shopping, sending cards, taking time to see our family and friends for the big day. Church services on Christmas Eve and gift exchanges with friends and families. But what about our veterans?

Be sure to include at least one extra gift on your shopping list to help a veteran in your area. Your church may know of a veteran’s family in need; the Human Resources Department or Service Officer in your County may have information regarding families in need. Make a conscious effort to help the veterans and their families in your area who may not be as comfortable as you are.

Have you been able to visit one of the Veterans Affairs Health Care Centers or Homes yet? Now is a great time to stop by and see the individuals that are there to love you and your daughter, son or grandchild. VA Hospitals and Homes will be holding the $5 bill shower and the annual gift shops. Is your Unit doing anything special for the local facilities and shut-ins this year? Please make it a point to do so. Our veterans and their families need you.

Our Service to Veterans Chairman this year is Vida Bacon. Remember, this part of the program used to be Field Service and Home Service. Your visits to the VA homes or local nursing homes, sewing and baking fall under this part of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation. Hospital and Home representatives for the Auxiliary are Fargo VAHCS, Carolyn Albertson; Minneapolis VAHCS, Mary Ann Davis; St. Cloud VAHCS, Jan Benson; Sioux Falls VAHCS; Gloria Larson; Minneapolis VAHCS, Donna Lafayette; Hastings, Darlene Wondra; LaVerne, Judy Kumerow; Minneapolis Home, Sandy Gibson; and Silver Bay, Phyllis Mealey. Thank you to those who have been doing a great job and for our veterans, and are fantastic volunteers to work with.

As you go about your normal routine this holiday season, remember not only our veterans and their families, but also those who lost friends and family members in Paris in your prayers. France, as did the United States after 9/11, has had the greatest number of people in history signing up for military duty. Terrorism is a horrible “disease” that has afflicted many nations and affected many families. We can only hope and pray that we have seen the worst of it.

CAROL KOTTON

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Dear Sandy,

As you are reading this, the Deutsch Christmas is already in the record books as we celebrated with all our veterans, disabled general, active duty and able bodied veterans, and are fantastic volunteers to work with.

As you go about your normal routine this holiday season, remember not only our veterans and their families, but also those who lost friends and family members in Paris in your prayers. France, as did the United States after 9/11, has had the greatest number of people in history signing up for military duty. Terrorism is a horrible “disease” that has afflicted many nations and affected many families. We can only hope and pray that we have seen the worst of it.

CAROL KOTTON, Chairman

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Letter from St. Cloud

The following was sent to Department President Sandy from BJ Gross, who brought a few veterans to perform at our October Fall Conference at Breezy Point.

The judges for the contests were: Annette Bray, Bonnie Wagner, Cathy Newman, Anna Ellis, Wanda Prescher, Mary French and Sharon Voltz.

We had a Poppy Hat Parade with members from the American Legion Family modeled. The men that partici- pated were: Steve Sullivan, Darrel Redepenning, Cliff Newman, Rick Oelschlager and Jim Lucas. They looked so great in the costumes, it was quite a show, with everyone having a good laugh.

We were able to sell 300 wreaths and the proceeds from the sale will go to the South Dakota Honor Flight.

Last year we had a very disappointing turn out. This year the entries were very good. We have many talented children – let’s do our best to promote the contest at our schools. Let’s make every effort to get this back into our schools.

As you go about your normal routine this holiday season, remember not only our veterans and their families, but also those who lost friends and family members in Paris in your prayers. France, as did the United States after 9/11, has had the greatest number of people in history signing up for military duty. Terrorism is a horrible “disease” that has afflicted many nations and affected many families. We can only hope and pray that we have seen the worst of it.

CAROL KOTTON

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
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