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

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

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

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

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

She also served as Department Auxiliary Chaplain. In 2011 she was elected National President at the national convention held in Minneapolis. She served with National Commander Fang Wong of New York.

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

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

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

“She was an absolutely excellent board member. She had great ideas, and she listened to other’s ideas. She helped make sure our final decisions were the very best. “She was also an active and effective spokesperson for Veterans issues on 2016 legislative agenda

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

Bill for two new state veterans homes has chance this session

By Al Zdon

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

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

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

Historical Society seeking funds for Fort Snelling projects

By Al Zdon

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

Rochester to host convention

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

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

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

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

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

The Legion will have a Department Executive Committee meeting on Wednesday, July 20.

On Thursday, July 21, there will be a gambling seminar put on by the state Gambling Control Board at 2 p.m. Convention sessions for the Legion will be at the Mayo Civic Center and sessions for the Auxiliary will be at the Kahler Grand Hotel.

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

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

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

The annual Department parade will be held Friday evening of the convention on a route downtown Rochester.
OLD BARRACKS – Built in 1904, the cavalry barracks near the old Fort Snelling, are shown here as they looked in 1909.

**Ft. Snelling plans $46 million improvement**

Continued from Page 1

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

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

The state has spent much money in re-roofing, tuck-pointing and other improvements — including a better telling of the story of the sandstone bluffs, the fort and the remarkable history that took place there.

That history includes:

- Native Americans gathered at the confluence of Minnesota’s two major rivers to hunt, fish, talk things over, celebrate and trade. Archeologists have found artifacts there that go back at least 8,000 years, and they suspect human life was present long before that.
- Explorer Zebulon Pike found the spot in 1805 and made an unauthorized treaty with the Dakota people to acquire land there. Pike then moved on to explore much of the West.
- Henry Leavenworth, an army officer who later founded Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, arrived to build a fort, called Fort St. Anthony, in 1819.
- That work was taken up by Col. Josiah Snelling the following year, and it was completed in 1825 when the Army rewarded Snelling for his efforts by naming the fort after him.
- The fort protected the trading interests of the young nation in that remote area, and sent a message to the British, who were also trading in Minnesota, to stay away.
- Many of the officers who served at the post had slaves. In 1837, the fort’s surgeon had a slave named Dred Scott. Scott later sued for his freedom because he had lived in free territory, but in the Dred Scott Decision in 1857, he was denied. The decision inflamed abolitionist fervor in the territory, but in the Dred Scott Decision in 1857, he was denied.
- In 1861, Minnesota was the first state to promise the Dakota side of the history, the Dred Scott decision, the language school during World War II and other historic sites,” Elliot said. “We have to take care of these historic sites, the language school during World War II and other threads in the historical fabric.
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Endorsements

Norenberg endorsed as vice commander

The University of Minnesota, American Legion Post 548 and the Fifth District have endorsed Curtis Norenberg for Department Vice Commander for the Fourth and Fifth Districts. He is a ROTC graduate receiving a commission in the Army and served two years on Active Duty during the Korean Conflict. He served in the Army Reserve for 39 years and he has been a Legion member continuously for 59 years.

At the post level, he was a board member, vice commander three years and commander plus adjutant for six years. On the district level, he was Commander, Vice Commander three years, and is presently Judge Advocate. At the district level, Norenberg is presently Chair of the Department NS/FR Committee, ROTC on CAP scholarship committee, delegate for the past 25 years to the convention, legislative liaison and MAG. Nationally, he was appointed to National Security Commission - Aerospace Committee, has attended 10 Washington Conferences, and was a delegate to eight conventions. Other Activities: Life member of ROA, VFW, MMAO, ANAVICUS, ESGR Emeritus, BTVR Committee, 40 & 8, SAL, Professor Emeritus University of Minnesota.

DeLong endorsed as Sergeant-at-Arms

Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435 and 5th District American Legion have endorsed Dennis De Long for the position of Minnesota Department Sergeant-At-Arms for 2016-2017. DeLong has served as 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander, Executive Board Member, Finance Officer, Property and Finance Member and Holding Corporation Member at Minneapolis-Richfield Post 435. At the district level he has served as District Commander, 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander, 3rd Vice Commander, Adjudant, Employment Committee Chair, Finance Committee, and Constitution & Bylaws Chairman. At the district level he has served as Department Vice Commander (4th & 5th District), Department Historian twice and Foundation Board Member.

American Legion Riders

By Bob “Benji” Benjamin

District 3 Director

Right now it is snowing and it is about 4” deep in my yard. We are doing good in the Thundering Third. As the director we are trying to set up a meeting for the 3rd district riders at the May convention so we can get some kind of communication between our chapters. If you can send someone, that would be great. Chaska chapter is coming together very nicely. We will be having our third meeting with about 20 members. Chanhassen has about 15 members but are having some problems with doing rides out of the post. Shakopee has 20 members and their meetings are on the first Saturday of the month with a ride after the meeting. Nicollet chapter has their rides put together. You can go to their web site to learn more.

Third District Riders will continue supporting our community, our Legion Family and our nation. Ride smart, ride safe and have fun.

OFFICIAL CONVENTION PRE-REGISTRATION

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

Registration at the door will be $18.

Mail to:  
Bill Born, American Legion Post 92 Office, 403 East Center St., Rochester, MN 55904
Legion Post #  
SAL Sqdn.  
Auxiliary Unit  
District  
Phone  
Name  
Address  
City, State  
Zip  
Delegate  
Alternate  
Guest  
(Please check one of the above.)

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

Please, only one registration blank per person.

Ensure the legacy of membership.

Your Honorable service means that you are eligible for USAA membership — and that your children and grandchildren can become eligible as well, no matter what age. Begin your USAA legacy with an auto or property insurance policy, and take advantage of USAA’s commitment to serving you and your family for years to come.

Kris Nelson

Continued from Page 1

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

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

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

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

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

Memorials are preferred to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

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Editorial

Support Snelling project

Perhaps no other place in Minnesota can capture the story of our men and women going off to war better than Fort Snelling. From the farm boys and clerks who volunteered for the Minnesota regiments in the Civil War to the tens of thousands of Midwestern men and women who went through the fort in World War II, Fort Snelling really is a major part of the history of the Minnesota veteran.

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

If the state can spend $400 million to build a shrine to football in downtown Minneapolis, certainly the amount of money is spent flowers, gifts and dinners on Mother’s Day...etc.

No one is going to tell us. When you have let our home towns know what the American Legion Family can learn from it.

Support Snelling project

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

We are moving toward another important event we observe every year to honor those who have given so much to our great country. We call it Memorial Day. It was started in May 1868 after the Civil War ended. The head of an organization of union veterans, The Grand Army of the Republic, established Decoration Day as a day to decorate the graves of those who died during the war with flowers. Major General John A. Logan declared that Decoration Day be observed on May 30th. It was not until after World War I that it was expanded to honor those who have died in all wars in which Americans have fought. In 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by an act of Congress. Memorial Day is observed by many, but unfortunately for some it is just another day off work. For those who observe this day, we are in a time to say, “Thank you.” As I drive around this great state I see many memorials. I stop when time permits and read the names of those who have given their lives for our freedom. When I leave a flag, I lay it where it deserves. It was not long ago I was invited to attend the ground breaking ceremony of the Paynesville post for their new memorial. It is truly an honor and a humbling experience to be there with the members and their families. There were smiles and tears, but as we walked away from that spot I looked back and said, “They will never forget.” General Logan’s order for his post to decorate the graves in 1866, “We should commemorate the brave and generous sacrifices of our forefathers...” Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no neglect, no ravage of time, efface the memory of our dead. The Memorial Day holiday is one of rest and reverent visitation—we let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners.

One Day is over

As veterans and those still serving as well as their families are we thank you for our freedom. When I leave this hall of our legislature—let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no neglect, no ravage of time, efface the memory of our dead. Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners.

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Legion Day at Twins May 24
The 16th annual American Legion Family Day at the Twins will be held on Friday, May 20, at 7:10 p.m. in a game with the Toronto Blue Jays.
Stay tuned to Minnesota Corn and Jim Kellogg will throw out the first pitch. Tickets are $23, and there will be scoreboarding recognition for all posts attending. Tickets, call 1-800-33-TWINS and hit 0 to speak at an attendant. Reference the special Legion discount. Or call 612-659-4083.

Vietnam vets to be honored
There will be a St. Cloud VA veterans town hall meeting at TVW Post 956 in Alexandria on Tuesday, May 17, at 5 p.m. Vietnam veterans and their families will be honored at the meeting. County Veterans Service Officers will be on hand an hour before the meeting to provide help on benefit programs.

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

Scoping Tours of the Twin Cities
There will be a free drop-in legal clinic on Tuesday, May 10, at St. Paul’s Lakeville Medical Center in the Atrium Balcony from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Attorneys, MACV staff, veterans service officers and others will be on hand to assist veterans. For more information, call 651-200-4750.

Silver Bay Fishing Trip
The annual Minnesota Veterans Home at Silver Bay Lake Superior Fishing Trip will be held Monday, June 27. Veterans from the Cloquet, Duluth, Minneapolis, Hastings and Fergus Falls veterans homes will leave at dawn from the Knife River Marina. Over 60 residents were on hand last year. Donations from Legion posts are being solicited for the trip. For more information, call 218-353-8700.

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

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

Certification for Businesses
The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and the Minnesota Department of Administration have announced a Recognition Certification for veteran owned businesses. Certified businesses can gain a six percent preference on state purchases and contracts bids. For more information, go to the MDVA website and clicking on resources, employment, Veteran Business Owners.

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

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

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By James Miller

American Legion Claims Division Field Operations

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Field Operations Division seeks to identify and serve Veterans of all social and economic backgrounds including those who are unable to seek assistance due to physical or geographical location. We act as a liaison and personal advocate to those seeking State benefits such as subsistence, dental, burial, housing, and home care. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Field Operations is the mobile unit of the MDVA Claims Division with flexibility to travel to those in the field. It’s a unique position to assist Minnesota Veterans.

Our Division is based out of Central Minnesota and has 12 advocates spread across the state. We work with Veterans on the local, county, and federal levels. In addition, we work closely with County Veteran Service Officers to assist them with resources they need to advocate for the Veterans in their area.

One of the focuses this year has been assisting the Ending Homelessness Intuitive. Wendy Sederstrom and Eric Meline, who work out of the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, have been devoting time and expertise in aiding the Department in this. Their efforts are being assisted by case managing Veterans who are currently or are in danger of becoming homeless. They are working with Veterans on the homesteading team and have applied for the benefits they have earned.

The Field Operations Division stands ready to assist Minnesota Veterans in navigating the increasingly complex Veterans benefits system. Please contact your local County Veteran Service Officer to discuss your VA benefits or come by our office at 612 970 5662.

Sons of The American Legion

By Gene Olswold

Greetings from the Detachment of Minnesota.

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

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

As the old saying goes, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.”

Sons of the Legion are a group of Sons who have not yet renewed their membership for this year, please contact your squadron to remain in good standing and pay your 2016 dues.

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

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

I hope to see many of you at your district’s convention to say “Hi” and shake your hand.

May 30th, we will be honoring our dead on Memorial Day.

Let’s not forget the many service men and women who laid down their lives and paid the ultimate price in all the great wars to keep the freedoms we still enjoy today.

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

Another event coming up is Boy’s State the week of June 12th in Minneapolis.

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

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

This is your voice as to who you want to be your leaders. I hope to see many of you there.

Remember in your prayers the many service personnel that never made it home and whose names are inscribed on their loved ones. God Bless our troops around the world and God bless America.

Endorsement

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

Thank you

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

Judy Stein

Membership Chart

As of April 20, 2016

District 2016 Total Total Percent Same Goal Same Goal Date ’15
1 9,627 9,574 9,173 95.28 94.69
2 7,779 7,705 7,366 98.79 94.69
3 12,165 12,116 11,743 96.53 94.69
4 2,561 2,560 2,447 95.55 95.00
5 2,829 2,788 2,617 95.24 95.55
6 12,415 12,415 11,862 98.80 95.55
7 6,997 6,926 6,536 93.44 94.05
8 4,630 4,593 4,262 92.05 94.62
9 7,332 7,172 6,843 94.62 94.05
10 10,964 10,917 10,388 94.75 95.00
At-large 3,734 3,261 2,651 71.00 93.69
Totals 81,000 79,427 75,888 93.69

Endorsement

The Second District Sons of the American Legion at its recent meeting endorsed Gene Olswold for his second term as Detachment Commander for the SAL for the year 2016-17. Olswold is presently serving as the state commander.
A good time was had by all at Commander Jim Kellogg’s Testimonial at Adams Post 146. From left: Brenda Kellogg, Kellogg, Tom Schottenbauer and Jimmy Foster.

Commander’s Testimonial

The Forte Milers provided the entertainment at the event.

National Vice Commander Al Davis spoke.

Past National Commander Dan Ludwig shared some serious thoughts.

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

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

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

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

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

Commander Kellogg responded at the end of the testimonial.
Mel Dahlberg joined the Airborne because he liked the boots and he wanted to see some action. The action he saw included close calls when a mortar shell that landed right next to him didn’t explode, and later when he slept in a building that blew up moments after he walked out the front door. Along the way, he was chosen to be a scout, the first person to head into enemy territory.
first combat. “I had been a made a scout right away. I was a pretty good shot and a fast runner, but I don’t know why they made me a scout.

“During the night I was leading the way in pitch dark-ness up a hill when I heard a voice saying ‘Dummkopf.’ I learned later it meant, ‘Dumbbell.’ I dropped down, but he threw a hand grenade in my direction. It hit a little ways away, and a piece of shrapnel hit my hand. It was no big deal, but I still have the scar.”

Dahlberg was patched up by a medic, and he never left the front lines.

“The next morning we could see the Germans off in the distance, with the Americans chasing them.”

After some additional days of fighting, the 517th in late June 1944 began to get prepared for Operation Dragoon, the invasion of southern France. The Allies had invaded northern France on June 6, but a second invasion was planned to capture southern France and also to involve the French army.

The troops, of course, didn’t know their destination. “We didn’t know for sure where our jump would be, but rumor had us going into France.”

The Allies wanted a large force of Airborne units in the invasion because while the Germans only had 30,000 men guarding the beaches, they had another 200,000 not far away. The Airborne would be used to disrupt the German plans and keep the reinforcements away from the beachheads.

The 517th would attack in 180 C-47 aircraft. “With the seven bandoliers of machine gun ammunition wrapped around me and my leg pockets filled with mortar rounds and all the K-rations and the rest of my gear, I bet I weighed over 300 pounds.”

On August 15, the transports took off from bases in Italy. “The pathfinders went in at 2:30 a.m. but they were so spread out and the cloud layer was so low that that the pilots of the main force never saw their beacons. As a result, a lot of the jumpers ended up far from the drop zone.”

The 517th took off at 2:30 a.m. and were dropped about 4:30 a.m. In the airplanes, the men discussed the fact they were wearing Mae Wests, a nickname for life preservers. “We knew that we were flying over water, but they were just an extra burden, so most of us just took them off and left them on the airplanes.

“But then after I jumped I looked down and it looked like they had dropped us right over the water. I got my knife out and I was getting ready to cut my parachute free.”

It turned out, though, that the water Dahlberg saw was actually just the cloud cover. “I drifted through the cloud and the ground was right there. I went crawling through a tree and hit some rocks. I hurt my ankle pretty badly. I didn’t take off my boot for two weeks because I knew it would swell up and I’d never get it back on.”

Also on impact, Dahlberg’s M-1 rifle was damaged and rendered useless.

Part of the job for the paratroopers was to secure the area so that the glider planes, which would come in at daylight, would not be attacked.

“I saw the first glider pilot come in at about 8:30. He crashed right into an olive tree and it was like hitting a stone wall. I went over to take a look. The glider had been carrying mortar rounds, and it had all shifted forward and crushed the pilot. I also noticed that he was wearing a .45 sidearm.

“I didn’t have a weapon, so I took it. I kept it with me the rest of the time I was in the war. You couldn’t have too many weapons. I knew guys who carried German Mausers.”

Dahlberg examined the holster that contained the pistol. “It said on it, ‘Lt. Johnson, Minneapolis. ’ I always thought I’d try to look up that family when I got back, but did you ever look in the Minneapolis phone book for the name Johnson?”

The troopers took to the road, trying to find their way. “We hadn’t gone very far when we were approached by an Associated Press photographer. We were looking for Germans and instead we found an AP guy, or he found us. He had apparently jumped in with us. He had us all get down in the ditch like we were protecting the road and he took our picture. I saw the picture later, and you can see me grimacing with pain holding my .45.”

Suffering greatly from the pain in his ankle, Dahlberg first joined up with some British paratroopers. Eventually, the members of the 517th gathered at their rendezvous point in St. Roseline Chateau, the site of a major French winery.

Once assembled, the 517th began to drive the Germans north. “They called it the ‘Champagne Campaign.’ The townspeople along the way were so grateful to us for chasing the Germans out. They went into their basements and brought out the best wine for us.”

Dahlberg said, though, that the fighting was often intense. “I lost a lot of friends. We were on the line for 94 straight days, and I think that’s still a record for the U.S. Army.”

One action he remembers clearly is the taking of Hill 1098. “We were on one side of the hill and the Germans were on the other side and we were lobbing mortars at each
me and the bed out into the street. Yes, they were celebrat-
hut and I wanted to stay in bed. But all my buddies carried
Part of his job was also to drive a colonel around in a Jeep.
charged with keeping track of all the day reports for the 8th.
dies ever again. We were like brothers, and we'd trained and
England.”

Dahlberg had been severely concussed by the shell. In
more severe symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It had been lurking beneath the
Dahlberg began to have
us we were going to start training to be sent to Japan.”

When V-E Day happened, I was in bed in the Quonset
a terrible time. The only time you could relieve yourself was
next day we were re-armed, all new rifles in the
Cosmodine again. They put us all in two-and-a-half ton
truck drivers jump down and just start running.”

We got to a point west of Bastogne and joined the 82nd
Airborne. Our company got off the trucks okay, but some of
the other guys had to fight their way off the trucks. I saw
truck drivers jump down and just start running.”

Dahlberg immediately went back to work leading patrols
into the woods. “I remember we came on one cabin with
smoke coming out of the chimney. We opened the door and
looked inside and the table was set for Christmas dinner. The
food was in the pots on the stove. It sure smelled good,
looked inside and the table was set for Christmas dinner.

On Jan. 3, 1945, the 517th was ordered to move out. “I
went to a point west of Bastogne and joined the 82nd
Airborne. Our company got off the trucks okay, but some of
the other guys had to fight their way off the trucks. I saw
truck drivers jump down and just start running.”

Dahlberg was again in the lead. “The Germans had dug
these big holes in a cemetery we had to go through. We did
’t understand what they were, but we think they had those
holes zeroed in with their mortars. When the guys would
drive into the holes for safety, they would be hit with the
mortars.

Dahlberg and the company commander were leading the
way, and had moved passed the field. “I’ll never know what
it was, an artillery shell or a mortar or whatever, but it came
down right on top of us. The company commander was
killed instantly. I didn’t get a scratch on me.”

But I didn’t wake up until February in a hospital in
England.”

Dahlberg had been severely concussed by the shell. In
the end, he was moved to four different hospitals in England
for treatment. “My mind was affected. It was very difficult
to focus.

By April, he was okay and released from the hospital but
was declared a non-combatant. Rather than send him back
to the 517th, which was now in Germany and again getting
ready to be sent to Japan, Dahlberg was sent to the 8th Air
Force.

That disappointed me because I would not see my bud-
dies ever again. We were like brothers, and we’d trained and
fought together for over two years.”

During the war, the 517th suffered 1,576 casualties includ-
ing 252 men killed.

B ut then a funny thing called the Battle of the Bulge
happened. “We heard about it on Dec. 16, and the
next day we were re-armed, all new rifles in the
Cosmodine again. They put us all in two-and-a-half ton
trucks with canvas over the top, and we drove through a huge
snowstorm.

We got to a point west of Bastogne and joined the 82nd
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ing 252 men killed.

A t an 8th Air Force base at Burtonwood, he was
assigned to the 31st Statistical Control Unit
where he and others, including WACs, were
charged with keeping track of all the day reports for the 8th.
Part of his job was also to drive a colonel around in a Jeep.

“When V-E Day happened, I was in bed in the Quonset
but I wanted to stay in bed. But all my buddies carried
me and the bed out into the street. Yes, they were celebrat-
ing, I can tell you.”

In December he went back to the United States on the
Queen Mary, suffering through some terrible weather. “But
when we pulled into New York Harbor and saw the Statue
of Liberty, I don’t think there was a dry eye on the whole
ship. That was quite a sight.”

Dahlberg was mustered out at Camp McCoy and went
right back to work at the bank, where he stayed for 41 years.
Although he never had any formal accounting training, he
became an auditor and bank examiner for First National,
L.U.S. Bank.

In addition, he moonlighted a second career in show
business. For 51 years he was a wardrobe dresser for all the
theaters in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Along the way he met
Carol Burnett, Mickey Rooney and hundreds of other major
and minor show biz personalities.

“Steve Allen was the worst I ever dressed. He brought
his show to St. Paul, and it was an awful week. He was
never happy. And in the end, he never tipped me a dime.”

Dahlberg still proudly carries his International Alliance
of Theatrical State Employees gold card.

He met Mae at the bank and they had a daughter, Mary.
Mel and Mae have four grandchildren and five great-grand-
children.

In 2003, after watching the Band of Brothers series,
Dahlberg began to have more severe symptoms of Post
Traumatic Stress Disorder. It had been lurking beneath the
surface all those years. “I’m better now, but I still don’t
have any finger nails because I bite them.”

The Dahlbergs live in a spacious home near a river in
Jordan.

This story was based on an interview, but parts of it
came from an interview Dahlberg gave for a book on the
517th some years ago.
By Al Zdon

Could it be that a personality conflict between generals Eisenhower and Devers cost many American lives in the Battle of the Bulge?

Guest speaker James Scott Wheeler, the author of a book on Gen. Jacob Devers, the leader of the invasion of southern France, makes an argument along that line.

He was joined by two veterans of Operation Dragoon at the first April meeting of the World War II History Round Table at the Fort Snelling History Center.

The Allies had landed in northern France at Normandy in June of 1944 and began a push toward Germany. Meanwhile, southern France remained in German hands.

The idea of a southern invasion, some historians say, began with Gen. George C. Marshall, the top military leader in the U.S. Many others opposed the idea because it would divert military resources and troops away from other places where they could be better used, such as Italy or the Normandy invasion.

British leader Winston Churchill opposed the invasion, andlegend has it that the name was changed from Operation Anvil to Operation Dragoon because Churchill said he was “dragooned” into agreeing with it.

A key element in the invasion was that it would rely heavily on French troops. Wheeler noted that “France is our oldest ally.”

Wheeler called Devers “Eisenhower’s forgotten general,” and said the two had very different upbringings and outlooks on life: Eisenhower was known for his terrible temper, while Devers (rhymes with nevers) was an eternal optimist.

The main object was the capture of the French ports at Marseille and Toulon. The northern ports captured on D-Day were not sufficient to supply the Allied advance toward Germany.

The invasion was preceded by a massive bombing attack that destroyed many bridges and hurt the German effort to bring in reinforcements. And, at the same time, large airborne drops and glider landings were carried out 18 miles inland.

The invasion was also helped by French resistance fighters throughout the area.

At 8 a.m. on August 15, 1944, three American divisions and a French armored division landed near the city of Draguignan. The next day, four French divisions began pouring ashore.

“They expected a really tough fight with the Germans, but the Germans didn’t expect us to strike where we did,” Wheeler said.

The landing of the French troops was accelerated. “They were anxious to kill Germans.” Many of the French troops were from the North African nations that were part of the French empire.

“The invasion wasn’t as big as Overlord or Sicily, but it was a big operation. By this time of the war, we were getting pretty damn good,” Wheeler said.

He noted that some called it the “Champagne Carpet” because the Germans were driven back 480 miles in less than a month.

By October, the advance had become a stalemate. “We had lost any logistical space. We had to rebuild railroads. We were out of ammunition. For our 105 mm howitzers, we were down to six rounds per tube per day. You can’t win a war that way.”

Eisenhower was promoting a broad front, which other commanders thought was a mistake. The biggest mistake might have been in Hurtgen Forest along the German border where eight U.S. divisions were decimated because of strong German resistance and impossible terrain. Some thought Eisenhower should have engaged the enemy at other places and left the Hurtgen alone. “It was totally avoidable and stupid.”

By Nov. 19, the Allied forces in the south had reached the Rhine. The liberation of Strasbourg in the contested area of Alsace was a high point for the French forces.

Devers, Wheeler said, had anticipated reaching the Rhine and had done much planning on how to get across the river and into the German heartland. He had 256 DUKWs or “ducks,” amphibious vehicles, and a huge supply of bridge building equipment.

Devers’ patrols found the area on the other side of the river nearly empty. “It was an incredible opportunity,” Wheeler said.

A visit from Eisenhower, though, put the kibosh on the southern invasion of Germany. Not only did Eisenhower stop Devers from crossing the Rhine, he took a corps away from him. Devers argued in a lengthy meeting, but Eisenhower prevailed.

Wheeler wonders if Eisenhower was acting for objective reasons, or if his antipathy for Devers was at the base of his decision.

Wheeler also wonders what would have happened if Devers had been able to cross into Germany and force Germany to shift forces to the south. On Dec. 16, Germany was able to assemble enough troops to mount a major attack in what became the Battle of the Bulge.

“They see people as it a real mistake, I see it as blindness,” Wheeler said of Ike’s decision not to allow Devers to cross the Rhine.

Wheeler spent the rest of his presentation restoring the reputation of Devers, sometimes at the expense of Eisenhower. For instance, Devers had over 14 years of actually leading soldiers while Eisenhower spent less than a year.

He summed up the two generals’ personalities. “Devers talked too much and was a congenital optimist. Eisenhower always take it personally.”

“Don’t get me wrong. We won the war and Eisenhower was a great, great leader. But he made a couple of costly, costly mistakes.”

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“Don’t get me wrong. We won the war and Eisenhower was a great, great leader. But he made a couple of costly, costly mistakes.”

Martty Romano grew up in New Jersey, and in 1943 was inducted into the U.S. Navy. After training, he volunteered to be a crewman on a motor torpedo boat. “I didn’t know what a motor torpedo boat was, but it sounded good.”

He was assigned to Squadron 15, later Squadron 22, based in Italy, and was on the crew of PT-306. PT stood for Patrol Torpedo.

Romano was asked if he knew about the impending Operation Dragoon, the invasion of southern France. “I went on 60 or 70 missions, and I never knew where the mission of the day was going. When we got out to sea, the skipper would sometimes tell us where we were going.”

However, PT-306 did train one day on launching rubber boats. “We did it for maybe an hour, hour and half.”

On Aug. 10-11, 1944, the whole base was shut down with nobody allowed to enter or leave. Romano was an engineer on the boat, mainly expected to troubleshoot the engines. There were three other engineers in the crew. Everybody on the crew was trained on every job.

“There were these three aircraft engines in this small space. It was so loud, if you came down to the engine room, I’d hand you a pencil and paper.”

Preceding the invasion, the boat left the base in the early afternoon. “We had not only a full crew but people I didn’t know aboard.” Those people were French commandos.

He said the invasion fleet was “an awesome site” and the PT-306 roared through it at high speed to get to the front. His group was commanded by the movie actor Lt. Cdr. Douglas Fairbanks Jr.

When they got to the beach, they launched the rubber boats “because we were so highly trained.”

The commandos reached shore, but one of them tripped a mine, and the rest were killed by the alerted Germans.

Romano ended the war in the other ocean, stationed near the Philippines.

After the war, he moved to Minnesota and was an engineer and a designer. He designed the Lowry Hill tunnel in downtown Minneapolis and the Iong Bridge between Duluth and Superior.

The other veteran at the Round Table was Mel Dahlberg, and his story is on page 8.

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Greetings Thundering Third,

The final article of our Legion year; our 3rd District Convention will be in Forest Lake on May 20 – 22nd. Now is the time to get all the yearend reports completed and back to District and Department. The most important being the Consolidated Post Report. This is the Legions report card so every post needs to have it to Department by June 1st. The last renewalnotice for 2016 due's is sent out the last week of April so one more push to get that last45.

At the end of the May we have Memorial Day, a day that has signified the start of summer for most people. For the family of a veteran who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, the day doesn’t get old and the price is very high. We as the American Legion Family need to be there for them. Memorial Day should be a reminder we try to live throughout the year, the honor and respect we owe to these families must go beyond one day of ceremonies. When one of these people needs to tell a story, we need to listen. Our children and their children need to know the price that was paid for the opportuni ties that are given to the citizens of this great Country of ours.

Thank you all for that you do and remember “Attitude is Everything.”

Greetings from the Fifth District.

First of all let’s complete contacting the unpaid members of your posts. This is the most challenging part of membership, getting the job done.

The Fifth District Joint Family Testimonial will be May 21 at Minneapolis Post 1, 2507 25th Avenue South, Minneapolis. Social will be at 5 p.m. and dinner to follow at 6. Becky Nelson at 612-722-8861 for reservations by May 13.

Our Fifth District Family Convention will be held June 3 and 4 at the Bloomington Holiday Inn off 1-35W and 94th Street. Legion Family Memorial Service Friday at 7 p.m., with fellowship to follow. Legion and Auxiliary Convention sessions begin 9 a.m. and SAL at 10 Saturday morning. Installation of new officers immediately after the convention. Banquet social at 5 p.m. and dinner seating at 6. Post Commanders and Adjutants have received the Convention Call.

Nominating Committee headed by Jim Munson is looking for officers for 2016-2017. Please get your endorsements in.

Greetings from the Mighty Seventh.

As May approaches and the end of our year, I think we are all looking forward to nice weather and the highlights of a lot of our Legion Programs. As I go around the District I see the planning, hard work and dedication of our American Legion programs in our communities. It is an exciting time of the year.

Testimonials and installation of new Post officers are showing up on the calendar. It has been an honor to attend these events and the hospitality and comradeship has been wonderful.

Don’t forget some things don’t change and that is how Americans feel about our veterans. They love us by and for their willingness to fight and die for that. So in a lot of ways these young men and women are not really different from the older generation. We remember all of them this Memorial Day 2016. Take some time with your family to attend not just your Post observances but also other community events remembering the fallen. Remember those veterans at the VA Hospital during the long weekend by stopping by to cheer up our veterans who are temporar ily down and out. It only takes a few minutes of your time. The result is priceless. God bless our POW-MIAs.

God bless our troops and God bless our Gold Star families. God bless this great Nation.

Greetings Roaring Ninth District.

To finish up your Consolidated Post reports, they go to Department Executive Committee(s) will meet on Friday night after the First Session of our Convention. This is the time to get the remainder of your members who have not paid their dues for 2016 and get them a chance to renew. The 2016 Convention will start at 9 a.m. on June 10-11. Check out our district newsletter and planning, execution and the benefits of our American Legion.
LISTENING POST

PINE CITY RE-DEDICATION -- The Pine City Veterans Memorial will hold a rededication program on May 21 at 10 a.m., sponsored by Pine City Post 51.

THREE GENERATIONS AT BOYS STATE -- Three generations of the Wick family have attended Boys State, all sponsored by different posts. From left: Grandfather Bruce Wick, 1951, sponsored by Le Center Post 108; Son Bob Wick, 1979, sponsored by Waseca Post 228; Grandson Ross Wick, 2014, sponsored by Lakeville Post 44. Bruce Wick’s wife attended Girls State. "It’s a great experience for any boy/girl to attend Boy’s/Girl’s State," he said.

WAITE PARK HONORS MEMBER -- Waite Park Post 428 presented a 50-year membership certificate to Dennis Borud.

WAITE PARK HONORS LONG TIMERS -- Long serving members at Waite Park Post 428 were honored recently. From left: Warren Opp (70 years), Melvin Butz (50); Walter Kosei (60), Clarence Butkowski (50); Harold Young (50); Robert Johnson (70).

BACKUS DONATES -- Backus Post 368 donated $6,000 from its gambling program to food shelves in the area. From left: Don Van Vorst, adjutant and gambling manager; Jodi Perry, Pine River Area Food Shelves; Eugene Gagnon, commander; Bill Taylor, first vice commander. The post also gave $2,000 to the Hackensack food shelf.

LAKE CITY HONORS MEMBERS -- Lake City Post 110 Commander Emery Fick, left, presented longtime members Merlyn Kohrs and Don Ludwig with certificates honoring their long-time membership.

REDWOOD FALLS TOP MEMBERS -- Redwood Falls Post Commander Jerry Ludwig, left, named Dennis Kissner as the post’s Legionnaire of the Year. His wife, Darlene, was presented with a certificate of appreciation by Auxiliary President Jeanette Mertens.

BARRY BAHL

Barry Bahl retires as director of St. Cloud VA Health System

Barry I. Bahl today announced his retirement as Director of the St. Cloud VA Health Care System after more than 40 years of federal service.

Initially serving as the Acting Health Care System Director beginning June 3, 1996, Bahl was appointed as Health Care System Director in 1998.

In a statement released to employees earlier today, Bahl said: “After 40 years in the VA, I am at a point in my life where I would like to spend more time in the sun, with friends and family. I am looking at June 3, 2016, as my retirement date. This is certainly a time of mixed emotions for me. I am so proud to be working with so many exceptional folks. You have put St. Cloud up top in the VHA in quality and efficiency. Daily I hear testimonials from our Veterans that are so impressed with our organization. Truly WOW indeed! I am going to miss all of you wonderful folks.”

As Director, Bahl provided leadership and strategic guidance to a health care system with 388 multidisciplinary beds providing treatment in psychiatry, general medicine and extended care. The St. Cloud VA serves a 27-county area in central and west central Minnesota and includes the VA medical center in St. Cloud and three VA clinics located in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria.

Bahl oversaw the St. Cloud VA during a period of tremendous growth and change as increasing numbers of Veterans sought care.

In 1996, when he was appointed Acting Director, the St. Cloud VA treated 8,716 Veterans. At the end of the last fiscal year, the health care system treated 38,603 Veterans.

During his 20 years in the Director’s role, Bahl focused efforts on modernizing and expanding the health care services needed by today’s Veterans, and transformed the St. Cloud VA from a small inpatient hospital to a dynamic and growing regional health care system focused on the delivery of a comprehensive array of services, including primary and specialty medicine, mental health, and extended care.

During his tenure, three VA clinics in oulting communities were established, and numerous Veteran-centered service enhancements and capital improvements were completed. A partial list of the improvements made include: construction and expansion of an outpatient mental health clinic; expansion of primary and specialty care clinics; expansions of the Dental, Audiology and Respiratory Care clinics; upgrades and expansions of the Pharmacy and Laboratory; expansion of the Imaging Clinic and addition of MRI services; construction and addition of an Ambulatory Surgery Center, a remodeled and expanded Urgent Care Clinic; and the construction of a new Rehabilitation Center and Acute Psychiatry building.

Ongoing improvement activities include the construction of a new Food Service building, the complete remodeling of a Community Living Center building, and a 20-bed expansion of the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program.

St. Cloud VA Health Care System currently employs 1,741 employees and has a total budget of $272 million for this fiscal year.

A native of Montevideo, Minnesota, Bahl served in the U.S. Army from August, 1969 to September, 1971. He received his B.S. in Pharmacy from the University of Minnesota in 1977. Mr. Bahl is married to the former Kristina Sare of Montevideo, Minnesota, and they have two children, Jennifer and Brian.

Mr. Bahl is a member of the American College of Health Care Executives, Minnesota Pharmacists Association, Moose Club, Pan Towners, VFW, American Legion, DAV, VVA, and AMVETS.

A successor has not been named.

BARRY BAHL

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A successor has not been named.
The Auxiliary loses Kris Nelson, a great mentor and friend

Bryce Solits, Department Honorary Junior President, of Waite Park Unit 428, called the 53rd Annual Department of American Legion Family conference on behalf of the Department American Legion Family.

Kris had the vision to see what needs to be worked on to forward our organization. The American Legion Auxiliary are the winning entries for the poppy contests and scrapbooks. The Junior Conference is for our Juniors, and is run by our Juniors. They serve on the credentials, nominating, resolutions, and awards committees. Honorary District Presidents gave their reports of the district Junior members and the work they did this past year. Senior members are in attendance to support and mentor our future leaders. The Junior programs have been successful and they used Honorary Junior President Bryce’s theme, “Juniors Blossoming the Lives of Veterans,” throughout the year.

Sandy Fredrickson, Department President and Gene Olson, Detachment Commander brought greetings and congratulations to the Juniors for their hard work this past year on behalf of the American Legion Family. Honorary Junior President Bryce had a special guest, Charles Kapser, the commissioned artist for the monument at the MN State Veterans Cemetery north of Little Falls. This is Honorary Junior President Bryce’s project this year and as of the conference has raised over $2,800.

Kiana Coleman-Woods, Lino Lakes 566 of the Tenth District, was elected by the Junior members as the 2016-2017 Department Honorary Junior President. Kiana’s theme is “Juniors are the Key-Opening Doors to the Future,” with her symbol being the key. If approved, the special project for the Juniors this year will be to collect socks and undergarments for homeless and hospitalized veterans. Congratulations Kiana.

A big highlight of many is the poppy contests and the beautiful use of our poppy by our Juniors. The following are the winning entries for the poppy contests and scrapbook contest:

### Poppy Corsage/Boutonniere Contest
- Class I First Place: Madelyn Haas, Bernjui 14
- Class I Second Place: Kaylee Bauer, Westport 638
- Class II First Place: Elizabeth Spoden, Kimball 261
- Class II Second Place: Markelle Pederson, Warren 227
- Class III First Place: Kylee Swanson, Warren 27
- Class III Second Place: McKenna Nelson, Forest Lake 225

### Poppy Centerpiece Contest
- Class I First Place: Kaylee Bauer, Westport 638
- Class I Second Place: Katelyn Range, Sartmore 286
- Class II First Place: Brooklynn Hoshal, Delano 377
- Class II Second Place: Markelle Pederson, Kimberly Barnaby, Delano 377
- Class III First Place: JoLo Welter, Stewartaeville 164
- Class III Second Place: Amelia Welter, Stewartaeville 164

### Poppy Memory Day Wreath
- Class I First Place: Kaylee Bauer, Westport 638
- Class I Second Place: Kori Oskenson, Westport 638
- Class II First Place: Hannah Pederson, Warren 27
- Class II Second Place: Brooklyn Hoshal, Delano 377
- Class III First Place: Amelia Welter, Stewartaeville 164
- Class III Second Place: Jolo Welter, Stewartaeville 164

### Poppy Junior Membership Recruitment Board
- Class I First Place: Harley Donnelly, Northrop 522
- Class I Second Place: Kimberly Johnson, Westport 638
- Class II First Place: Jolo Welter, Stewartaeville 164
- Class II Second Place: Foster-Bernhardt, Trimont 373
- Class III First Place: Warren, Warren 27

The day’s activities concluded with President Sandy Fredrickson and First Vice President Carol Kottom installing the 2016-2017 Department Honorary Junior President. Honorary Junior President – Kiana Coleman-Woods, Lino Lakes 566

- Honorary Junior Vice President – Courtney Rogut, Bloomington 550
- Honorary Junior Second Vice President – Madison Soves, Minneapolis 1
- Honorary Junior Treasurer – Harley Donnelly, Northrop 522
- Honorary Junior Chaplain – Dayanna Johnso-Garst, Two Harbors 109
- Honorary Junior Sergeant at Arms – Desirea Brown, Two Harbors 109
- Honorary Junior Secretary – Ashley Bruzek, Delano 377
- Honorary Junior Historian – Emily Suess, Monticello 260

Thank you to all unit and district members, who have mentored, educated, involved Junior members in your activities. These young women are future leaders of our Auxiliary and we inspire each of us to be better members and role models.

**JUNIOR PRESIDENT’S PROJECT**

Department Honorary Junior President Bryce’s special project this year was to raise funds to help complete the murals at the Veterans Cemetery at Camp Ripley. Bryce made a presentation already in the amount of $1,500.00 and has raised another $1,300.00 which will be presented at the end of our fiscal year.

Thank you to all the Units and members of The American Legion Family that provided funds in support of Bryce’s Department Honorary Junior President’s Project.
SECRETARY SANDIE’S CORNER

This has not been the best of months as I lost two very dear friends within our American Legion Family. The passing of our National President Kris Nelson and also Donnie Kropuenske have shaken me to the core. May they both rest in peace and watch over us.

The Department is running right wild right now with Annual Reports, Poppies, Girls State, Budget Planning, Trophies and Awards and yes Department Convention. Never a dull moment around here. Regarding poppies if any veteran has an interest in making poppies for us, please contact the Department Office. Veterans do receive a stipend for each one made. I have had to purchase poppies from other Departments and would love to have veterans from Minnesota be the ones to supply our Department next year.

My shout out this month goes to dear Richard “Diccie” G. from Montgomery Post 79, love you to pieces.

POPPIES

Governor Mark Dayton has proclaimed May as Poppy Month. Have you organized your Poppy distribution? We hope all Units are planning to place special emphasis on our Poppy program during May, educating the public on the meaning and purpose of the Poppy, and to actively participate in Poppy Day.

We will have shipped out 711 dozen large poppies and over 318,000 small poppies to our Units and Posts in Minnesota this year.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

The annual Department Convention will be held at the Kahler Grand Hotel in Rochester on July 21-23. The Convention is being hosted by the Rochester American Legion #92 Family. All Auxiliary sessions will be held at Kahler Grand Hotel.

Will your Unit be represented? A pre-registration is available in this issue of the Minnesota Legioneer. District caucuses will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday. The parade will be held on Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. in Rochester.

There will be two Poppy Contest this year - they are as follows:


Anonymous Poppy Art: Make any item that you can wear using poppies. Some of the possibilities are: a cap, hat, scarf, jewelry, shoes, boots, vest or anything else. The entries will be judged by a judge chosen by our members. Please use the “Auxiliary Emblem” on your entry. It can be a patch, sticker, your Auxiliary pin, from a magazine or computer, any copy or size is acceptable.


Dress a Doll or Teddy Bear: Using poppies decorate and dress a doll or teddy bear (any size). Use Department President and Auxiliary President for judging. They will be judged on;


- Costume
- Originality
- Creativity

All contest entries will be worn into our hall to be shown off by our Minnesota this year.


The 2016 session of ALA Minnesota Girls State will be held June 12 - 18, 2016. This year the event will be going back to Bethel University in St. Paul. All Girls State registrants (cards, information sheet, pledge and Capitol Day t-shirt order form) are due into the Department Office by May 1st.

Included in this last mailing were two delegate and two alternate cards for our Department Convention as well as a chart to help you determine your Unit’s delegate strength based on your Unit’s membership. Thirty days prior to the convention, June 21, the additional cards will be available upon request.

Please note: The Department does not have the delegate/alternate cards for District conventions. These must be obtained from your District.


The last Unit mailing of this Auxiliary year has been sent out. Though annual reports have been sent in there are still three months left of activities and programs in this year of “Serving Those Who Served.”

Included in this last mailing were two delegate and two alternate cards for our Department Convention as well as a chart to help you determine your Unit’s delegate strength based on your Unit’s membership 30 days prior to the convention. June 21. The Additional cards are available upon request.

How time flies. All Units will soon be electing their 2016-17 officers. As soon as they are elected, please complete the form (2 copies) sent to each Unit in the last Unit mailing. One copy should be returned to the Department Office as soon as possible. The other copy is for your District President-Elect. The due date for this information is June 12, earlier if possible. This form is not the same one you sent in for the 2017 direct billing last winter. We will send your 2017 membership supplies and cards to your 2016-17 Membership Chairman. The information you send in now. This form can also be found on our website, mnala.org. You can fill it out and email it to the Department Office. One new item this year is that all membership packets will be available at Department Convention this year for your Unit to pick up.

We are asking for the names/addresses of your Unit President, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Chairman for the 2016-17 year. Be certain the address for each officer is her current address. This form can be found on the Auxiliary website www.mnala.org.

RESOLUTIONS TO BE PRESENTED

As the Department Office receives Resolutions to be presented to the Department Convention in Rochester this summer, they will be posted on our website www.mnala.org under the ABOUT US tab - RESOLUTIONS. We are doing this in order to allow our Units to read the Resolutions and discuss them within your Units so you can have questions answered before they come up for a vote. We want all members to understand the reasoning behind the Resolutions. So if there are any questions prior to the Convention, please contact one of the Department Officers, Karen Thysgen, Department Constitution and Standing Rules Chairman or the Department Office.

FUND RAISING – Arlene Grover, Staples Unit 70 came to the Department Office to turn in thousands of stamps and many post cards which will generate funds for our Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Program. Sandie Deutsch is at right.
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