Look ma, no hands

Rep. Walz featured speaker at DC rally

As they have several times before, the national American Legion employed Rep. Tim Walz to gear up the hundreds of delegates from across the nation who were in Washington D.C. to lobby their elected leaders.

Walz, a Minnesota Congressman from the First District, was a speaker at the “Know before you go” rally held during the Washington Conference. After the rally, Legionnaires from every state headed up the hill to visit with their congressmen.

Minnesota brought 35 delegates to the nation’s Capitol and the group spoke to both senators, two congressmen, and aides from every other district.

“If one veteran falls through the cracks, then our job is not done,” Walz told the rally at the Washington Hilton. “We will not settle for less.”

Walz said the VA health system is often hamstrung by

Barnett has quite a ride through Minnesota

By Al Zdon

National Commander Dale Barnett of Georgia had quite a time during his five days in Minnesota.

He walked on water for the first time.

He took his first ride on a snowmobile.

And he met with 900 Legionnaires and guests, was interviewed by 23 members of the press, and traveled nearly 1,000 miles while visiting 12 posts, one veterans’ cemetery and Herman the German.

Barnett has been traveling the country doing “awareness walks” in various states, trying to raise the public’s awareness of the Legion’s presence.

His walk in Minnesota, his 18th so far, was slightly different. He marched out of the Forest Lake Post 225 accompanied by about 40 Legionnaires, Auxiliary and others, and walked straight out on the ice.

A couple of blocks out on the frozen lake, Barnett got to drill his own hole and try his hand at fishing. Despite some expert advice from Past National Commander Dan Ludwig of Red Wing, Barnett was unable to reel one in. Mark Reinsberg, SAL finance officer, set up the fishing venue.

Later, Minnesota Department Commander Jim Kellogg commented, “The national commander not only walked on water, but when that ice was cracking beneath his feet, I think I heard him talking to God also.”

The bookend of the fishing adventure at the first stop was a snowmobile

Dates changed for state convention

The dates for this summer’s Department Convention have been changed to one week later.

The convention will be held in Rochester on July 20-23 and not a week earlier as has been announced.

Housing and registration details will be in the April Legionnaire.

Minneapolis youth wins state oratorical

Isaac Winnes, a home-schooled senior from Minneapolis, won the 2016 Minnesota American Legion Oratorical contest.

Winnes, who finished second in last years’ state contest, will represent Minnesota in the National Oratorical Contest to be held in Indianapolis on April 16-17.
National Commander’s Tour

Continued from Page 1

ride at the last stop, three days later, at Winona Post 9. American Legion Riders Kevin Barst of Rushford brought his snow machine to the post home, and Barnett — in borrowed hat, gloves and coat — gamely took it for a nighttime spin in the dark across the street.

In between, the national commander visited Princeton Post 216, Little Falls Post 46, Morris Post 29, Litchfield Post 104, Delano Post 177, Hutchinson Post 96, Wells Post 210, Adams Post 146, Stewartville Post 164 and Preston Post 146.

His talk varied from stop to stop, but Barnett often mentioned that he will be testifying before Congress in late February.

“We want to hold the VA accountable. We are trying to stand up for veterans and not promote ourselves. They fear us because we tell the truth.” Barnett also described his efforts to hold the VA accountable for two senior executives who had themselves transferred — one to St. Paul — and cost the taxpayers over $400,000 in relocation expenses as part of the deal.

“We are not against the VA, but we are against waste, fraud and abuse.” Congress called a hearing on the relocation, but the VA people, including the two executives and their boss, did not show up. The committee held a vote, with the motion made by a Democrat and seconded by a Republican, to subpoena the witnesses.

“If there’s one organization that can bring America together,” Barnett said. “It’s The American Legion. There is great power in this organization.”

The two were finally relocated again, and demoted, but the demotions were reversed in an appeals process. Their boss quit rather than face the Congressional hearing. Barnett said he will continue to seek accountability in the VA.

“You can’t change the world, but you can work as hard as you can to try.” Barnett mentioned several times that Minnesota was in the top five in the nation in seeking its membership goal. He reminded listeners that he was a high school football coach in Georgia.

“You’ll never hear a coach say, ‘We’re up now, let’s quit.’ No, it doesn’t mean anything if you don’t finish the game.”

Commander Kellogg had the same message. “As an old noncommissioned officer, completed 20 years of military service in 1994 as a chief legal officer.\n
Foster to speak at Kellogg Testimonial

Continued from Page 1

Foster served as National Commander from 2010-11. At that time his home was Anchorage, Alaska. He was born and raised in Oklahoma and graduated with a degree in Agriculture Education at Northeastern A&M College in Oklahoma.

Foster served in the Marine Corps and served at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego during the mid-70s. After he left the Marines, he joined the Army and completed 20 years of military service in 1994 as a chief legal noncommissioned officer.

He held many offices in Alaska, and served as Department Commander in 1999-2000.

Nationally, he served as a National Executive Committeeman and on several national commissions. He chaired the National Legislative Commission.

He and his wife, Rehta, have two sons and five grandchildren. Rehta was Department President of the Auxiliary in Alaska.

In recent times, Foster has been adjudant in Oklahoma, and now serves as Department adjutant in Kansas. Commander Kellogg was elected Department Commander this past July during the state convention in Redwood Falls. Kellogg is a farmer who lives near Taopi, Minnesota...
ORATORICAL FINALISTS -- District candidates from across Minnesota gathered in Osseo, Coon Rapids and Anoka for the semi-finals and state finals in the Minnesota Oratorical Contest. From left: Monica Timmerman, Marshall; Aurora Eckberg, Detroit Lakes; Elise Sopelle, Pequot Lakes; Isaac Winnies, Minneapolis; Erica Sundvall, Cambridge; Ricky Erpelding, Kasson; Kelli Frederickson, Forest Lake; Elysia Morris, Deer River. Winnies won the contest and will represent Minnesota at the national contest in April.

Minneapolis senior wins Oratorical Contest

Continued from Page 1

“Tournament still open...”

Minneapolis senior wins Oratorical Contest

Continued from Page 1

“I’m really looking forward to the national contest,” Winnies said. “I know it will be a lot of work, and I know the bar of competition will be raised pretty high.”

Winnies, 17, is the son of Lynnae and Donald Winnies and lives in south Minneapolis. His prepared oration at the state contest was on the duties of citizens according to the constitution. In his speech, he said, “Many people in our country today fail to grasp that at the root of being an American... is a choice. United States citizenship carries a tremendous responsibility. It’s a responsibility, he said, that not all people take seriously. ‘Yet not everyone chooses to fulfill these responsibilities. While many people are born Americans, not every person who is born in this country makes the decision to be an American.’

“What is fundamental to preserving our nation is recognizing our role in our nation. When we get frustrated with the course of our government, we so easily point fingers at Washington, but fail to realize that it is ‘We the People’ who hold the final authority. And ‘We the People’ are ultimately responsible for guiding the government’s path.’

He has an older brother and a younger sister, and he enjoys reading, hiking, spending time with friends, and following politics. “I like being informed about what’s going on.”

He has played high school soccer for Metro United home school league in Richfield. He attends Jubilee Community Church in Minneapolis. Winnies is considering a career in business or political science. He recently did an internship in a business setting, and at this time he is interning with a senator in the Minnesota Legislature during the 2016 session. He is considering the University of Minnesota or Patrick Henry College in Virginia. He has been active in a speech league for home schoolers, and he paid tribute to his speech coach, Marti Ackland. “I really enjoyed the contest last year, and I thought I’d try it again this year.”

Winnies was sponsored by Wold-Chamberlin Post 99, and he represented the Fifth District.

The second place winner was Aurora Eckberg of Rochert, sponsored by Detroit Lakes Post 15 and the Ninth District. She is a senior at Detroit Lakes High School. Third place was Elise Sopelle, a ninth grade homeschooher from Pequot Lakes. She was sponsored by Nisswa Post 627 and the Sixth District. In fourth place was Monica Timmerman of Marshall and a senior at Marshall High School. She was sponsored by Marshall Post 113 and the Seventh District.

The four finalist were determined during the preliminary rounds at Osseo Post 172 and Coon Rapids Post 334. The afternoon finals were held at Anoka Post 102.

Other contestants were Richard Erpelding, Kasson, First District, sponsored by Kasson Post 533; Adam Husby, Lake Crystal, Second District, sponsored by Lake Crystal Post 294; Kelli Frederickson, Scandia, Third District, sponsored by Forest Lake Post 225; Elysia Morris, Deer River, Eighth District, sponsored by Deer River Post 122; and Erica Sundval, Stanchfield, Tenth District, sponsored by Cambridge Post 290.

The Fourth District did not have a contestant.
Hello Minnesota Legionnaires. Well, our National Commander’s tour is now history. We visited 12 post homes and met with 900 plus Legion Family members. Thanks to all of you who made the effort to come out and support your local hospitals. We The National Commander was impressed with the number of posts represented at each stop. I am sure he will always remember his visit to the Gopher State. Commander Barnett can now truly say he has walked on water and driven a snowmobile.

I also want to thank all who made our chili cookoff and ice fishing Sweetheart Rally a success. This was our first Winter Department event at Legionville. We can all be proud of our new facility and I hope in the future we are able to use it more in the future. Our last combined Department Rally will soon be here. It is my hope that many of you can attend this event. We need to acknowledge the on-going support of our District Vice Commanders. These members are the final component of each post in our Department and relay your concerns to help us provide better leadership for you our Members. Please use these Districts and their representatives as your voice for any concerns you may have. Together we can make our Department one of the best in our entire organization.

Membership will be centered around a Minnesota Veterans Home. I can truly say he has walked on water and driven a snowmobile.

 Legion Legacy Scholarship.“ Facts about the last six years of the MN Legacy Run: We rode for 34 days, visited 187 American Legion Post Homes, and raised over $340,000.00, plus we visited 100 Fire stations; 5 Bar & Grill’s; 5 Golf Courses; 4 Living Centers, plus some more. See you on the road, with a smile.

American Legion Riders
By Steve “Sully” Sullivan
Director, Chapter 10

It’s my story, from the 10th District American Legion Riders, part of the 10th District American Legion Family. My name is Steve “Sully” Sullivan, ALR 10th District Director. In 2003-2004 some of us came home from the National American Legion Convention. Year learning about this cool thing that was ALR. We started kicking ideas round about it. We found out that Minnesota had a chapter, so it was in Deer River, MN. There were a couple of members from the Deer River ALR Chapter that meet a few of us in Milaca American Legion Post to learn more about what the American Legion Riders was all about. We decided how cool it would be to start a District level Chapter, so in the 2004-2005 American Legion year under their 10th District Commander Jerry Thompson from Coon Rapids we formed the 10th District American Legion Riders Family. So all of us, with the start of 8 members from 8 different American Legion Posts, all being members from The American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary/ Sons of The American Legion. Our 1st ALR Director was Rudy Van Hemert. Since then, the 10th District has grown to 21 ALR Chapters. They are all doing good things in their communities as well as the State and Nation helping with American Legion Programs. Which leads me into the next story. The American Legion Legacy Scholarship. The American Legion Riders offer support for the Legacy Scholarship Fund.” In Minnesota we have the Minnesota American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. The funds that the American Legion National Convention and turn in the funds for the “The American Legion Riders”

By Jim Kellogg

When I wrote the last Chaplin’s Corner I told the story of our Chaplains. However this week I want to talk to the soldiers that did not have any. Thinking not of them-selves they did it for the love of their fellow man and their God. Corinthians 13:13 says, “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

I want to spend some time on the Military Chaplain Corps. As long as the military has existed, military Chaplains have served alongside soldiers providing for their spiritual needs. When the American Legion Riders first approached the wounded. The Bible tells of the early Israelites bringing the priest with them. Pagan priests accompanied the Roman Legions during their conquest. As Christianity became predominant in the Roman Empire, Christian Chaplains ministered to Roman soldiers. In fact, the word Chaplain is derived from Cappa, the Latin word for cloak. The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps is one of the oldest and smallest branches of the army. The Chaplain Corps date back to 29 July 1775. No matter the branch of service the Chaplains of the active and reserve Corps are representing five major world religions: Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslims and Buddhist, and over 120 denominations. We are just talking military. I think of all the other Chaplains who minister to others. I am grateful for each of this. Also for the Chaplains of the American Legion. They do a wonderful job for us, for the others.

May you all have a happy Easter, safe travels, and may God bless.

Marvin E. Garbe
American Legion Post 59
Montevideo

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American Legion Post 59
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Guest Editorial

By Paul Hassing

Younger Veterans

By Paul Hassing

Guest Editorial

Editor’s Note: Paul Hassing gave this report at the 10th District Mid-Winter.

Younger Veterans

By Paul Hassing

St. Francis Golf Tourney

The 10th annual Support the Troops Golf Tournament will be held at the Ponds Golf Course in St. Francis on Saturday, June 18. It will be a four-person scramble. Cost is $95 per golfer and includes golf cart, dinner and a gift bag. For information call Nancy Giese, 763-795-6235.

Veterans Town Hall

A Veterans Town Hall will be held at the Shakopee Post 2, 1266 First Ave. E., on Thursday March 17 from 6-7 p.m. Leaders from the Minneapolis VA, the VBA Regional office and Fort Snelling National Cemetery will be on hand to answer your questions.

St. Francis Fair

The St. Francis Post will host the Area Health and Wellness Fair on Saturday, April 30, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be education, screenings, mammograms, blood pressure checks and more.

Rosemont Pizza Fundraiser

The Rosemont Beyond the Yellow Ribbon will have an all-you-can-eat Pizza and Pasta Fundraiser on Monday, Mar 21 from 5-8 p.m. at the Ashton Restaurant. Cost is $10, and kids under 5 are free. Free soda.

Round Tables

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Roundtable will meet Monday, March 28 “Three Paths To Glory. The 2nd and 5th Minnesota and the First Tennessee” will feature speaker Dean Urdahl. It is a dinner meeting at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater. Contact Steve Anderson, 715-386-1268.

Fort Snelling WWII Roundtable will have two programs. On March 10, Douglas Walker will present “From Congressional Medal of Honor to CIA director: The story of 1006” which will present “Birth of the New Age of War – Atomic Bombs and their impact on the armed forces” at the Central Library, with a $5 fee and are held at the Fort Snelling History Center.

The Rochester Veteran’s Roundtable will have “American Veterans in Vietnam accounts” on March 15 by John Ostrom and Joe Connell. The program will be on Monday, March 14, at the Autumn Ridge Church at 7 p.m.

Volleyball Tournaments

The New Brighton Tri-City Auxiliary 513 will have a volleyball tournament at the New Brighton Community Center on March 19. Cost is $15 per team. For information, call 763-796-7189.

Community Living Center.
The St. Cloud VA Hospital has implemented restrictions to its Community Living Center. The restrictions are aimed at preventing the spread if influenza-related illnesses. Visitors will be limited to immediate family members. Children will also be not allowed to visit.

Financial Banking Services

An evening of education and networking will be Thursday, March 10, Anoka County Government Center. The event will be held from 6:30 to 9:30. It is sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and Community Bank of Anoka. For information or registration, call 763-426-0620.

Visitor Restrictions

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Posts at Goal during the 2016 National Commander’s Tour

HAYFIELD POST 330

MAPLE PLAIN POST 514

WAVERLY POST 305

APPLE VALLEY 1776

BROWNTON POST 143

SILVER LAKE POST 141

KINGSTON POST 483

HILLMAN POST 602

HOLDINGFORD POST 211

LONG PRAIRIE POST 12

RICHMOND POST 292

ST. JOSEPH POST 328

ZIMMERMAN POST 560

LANESBORO POST 40

OSTRANDER POST 544

BAGLEY POST 16

FRIDLEY POST 303

RUSH CITY POST 93
Posts at Goal during the 2016 National Commander’s Tour

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

By Jeremy Wolfsteller

The Evolution of Thinking

As we grow older, sometimes our way of thinking changes. For some of us, high school and college academics weren’t very appealing when we were growing up. Rather, the thought of joining the service and donning the uniform was more exciting. For those who served old glory, they came home with experience that was unmeasurable compared to their counterparts who never served. With a new found appreciation for life, instilled with purpose, motivation and direction, veterans gain interest in learning and furthering their academic pursuit.

In Minnesota, the opportunity for veterans to pursue post-secondary education is more reachable because of additional education benefits beyond and beyond federal GI Bill benefits. The great state of Minnesota, offers an education benefit called “The Minnesota GI Bill,” which is funded through the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. If you are a resident of Minnesota, under the age of 62, have an honorable discharge, and are attending an institute of higher learning or an approved apprenticeship program, you may be eligible for this benefit. If you are attending college, the benefit is administered through the financial aid office by completing a simple application. Veterans and eligible dependents can receive up to $1,000 per semester, $3,000 per academic year and $10,000 over a lifetime, up to age 62. If you are in an approved apprenticeship or on-the-job training site, you can receive up to $1000 for every six months in training, up to $7000 maximum benefit. Employers also receive $1000 for hiring Veterans and an additional $1000 if the employee is retained for one year.

Now is the time to take advantage of this great benefit only for Minnesota veterans and eligible dependents. Don’t worry if your GI Bill has expired or if you’ve utilized it all because the MN GI Bill is an additional education benefit to help cover tuition expenses after you use your federal education benefit.

For more information please contact the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs or your college financial aid office.

Sons of The American Legion

By Gene Olswold

Here we are in March already. However, as I sit here writing this article we are still in February, and believe it or not it is raining and very windy. So, did March “Come in like a Lion, go out like a Lamb”? The answer next month.

Our National Minnesota Leaders of The American Legion Family, along with the other states National Leaders are descending on Washington DC for their annual Washington Conference. They will be meeting with Congress and a chance to meet with our elected officials to discuss legislative initiatives and priorities important to all our veterans whether they are Legion members or not. They are there in Washington working for us to let them know what we as Veterans need in benefits and our well being.

Why did I just write this last paragraph you ask? It is the strength of our membership in the American Legion Family that gives them the strength for Washington to listen to what they have to say. The more membership we have, the stronger is our voice to be heard. We are now in our 9th month of this year’s membership with only 3 months to go. If you haven’t renewed your membership for 2016, now is the time to get done. Get with your squadron and renew it now.

If you have a new son or grandson, make them a member at the same time. Remember, I said strength above and every renewal and new member adds to that strength. National sent out renewal notices at the end of January for all those members that haven’t yet renewed as a reminder to you.

Let’s get you back on the paid rolls for 2016. If you have a friend or relative who was a son and has not renewed in the past, contact them and let’s get them back on the active rolls also. An old recruiting poster shows Uncle Sam pointing his finger saying “I Need You”. As your Detachment Commander, “I Need You”.

Our normal renewal percentage is normally way over 85% and currently, as of February 19th, Minnesota is at 73.38%, so we have some work ahead of us. Just to let you know where we actually stand, from the same report date above, our National goal this membership year is 11,452 and we are currently at 9,204 new/renewed members or 80.37%. This is just awesome and I am very proud and happy to see this great figure. We are ahead of National’s goal of 75% at this time.

My personal goal for Minnesota is 12,030 members this year and very attainable and I know we can do it. The Sons of The American Legion is STRONG in Minnesota so let’s discuss legislative initiatives and priorities important to all our veterans whether they are Legion members or not. They are there in Washington working for us to let them know what we as Veterans need in benefits and our well being.

For more information on the Sons, I encourage you to keep in your prayers all our Service Men and Service Women that stand in Harm’s Way each and every day protecting our Great Nation for their safe return home to their families.
Minnesota sent 30 delegates to Washington DC to lobby for veterans rights. A group photo was taken at the Veterans hearing room at the Cannon Office Building.

WASHTON CONFERENCE

Rep. Tim Walz, D-Minn., was the featured speaker at the Legion’s rally in Washington, just before delegates visited their Congress people.

Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Minn., talks with members of the Minnesota group. From left are National Vice Commander Al Davis, Legislative Chair Bob Hart of Stillwater, Emmer, and Jason Jackson Frye, Emmer’s legislative director.

Past National Commander Dan Ludwig presents a check from Minnesota for Leading Candidate Charles Schmidt of Oregon for his campaign.

Legislative Chairs Bob Hart of Stillwater and Margee Keller of Crookston shown at the Cannon House Office Building.

Minnesotans were part of the overflow crowd to hear National Commander Dale Barnett testify before a joint veterans committee of Congress.
Legion lists its national priorities

Fully fund a superior national defense as the global war on terror continues

The global war on terrorism is continuing to pose a threat to America’s security and national interests. It is critical to maintain a well-funded Department of Defense to ensure a strong national defense to protect America and its allies from enemies such as the Islamic State and North Korea. Additionally, The American Legion strongly advocates for a good quality of life for troops and a sensible transition from military service to civilian life. The Legion vows to fight against those who seek to jeopardize the benefits promised to past, present and future servicemembers for short-term budget gains. The severity of sequester cuts has been lessened, however force reductions continue and the military remains in a recovery mode after absorbing dramatic cuts.

Ensure real accountability within VA

The American Legion believes it is wrong to spend millions of taxpayer dollars on a management and a review of VA management. In the aftermath of news coverage on VA mismanagement and patient waiting lists, the Legion believes that in order to restore trust and confidence in VA, there must be real accountability for employees and managers who violate the trust of veterans and the public. There must be consequences for poor performance and actions that hurt veterans. The men and women who served our nation with honor deserve to see justice to those who act against their interests.

Institute a 21st century health-care system

Veterans need to know that there will be a robust system built for them to care for their needs. The American Legion led the way in calling for reform in the midst of a crisis in patient access to VA health care. The Legion strongly opposes efforts to privatize care and diminish the VA health-care system.

Develop alternative help for veterans struggling with mental health issues and brain injuries

The American Legion has dedicated extensive resources to studying the devastating effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Veterans and servicemembers in need of treatment for brain injuries and mental stress deserve access to the best care and research in alternative and other forms of therapy.

Make sure transition programs are not adversely affected by sequestration

Sequestration cuts are having an impact on servicemen and women who are transitioning to the civilian world. The primary issue is that Transition Assistance Programs (TAP) face budget shortfalls as Department of Defense funds are being squeezed to accommodate security goals. At the same time, reductions in force strength are forcing more servicemembers out. Congress must act to reverse these cuts and ensure that transitioning servicemembers are able to make contributions in the civilian workforce.

Create opportunities for veteran business owners

Veterans who own small businesses hire a greater percentage of other veterans. These veteran-owned businesses represent a great tool in the fight against veteran joblessness. The Legion supports veteran-owned small businesses and encourages participation by veterans in government contracting.

Provide opportunities through post-9/11 GI Bill

As the founding author of the original GI Bill, The American Legion is continuing to press for legislation to help transitioning servicemembers receive quality education benefits. The Legion believes that veterans should be allowed to convert GI Bill education funds into capital for business start-ups. These grants would further the goal of growing the veteran-owned small business industry, which, in turn, would generate jobs for veterans.

End veteran homelessness

The American Legion believes that not a single man or woman who has defended our nation should be forced to sleep on the streets at night. While the goal of eliminating veterans homelessness by 2015 was not met, the Legion urges Congress to pledge any and all necessary resources to eradicate the problem immediately. The programs in place are working. It is essential that their funding continue unabated in order to eliminate veterans homelessness.

Reject any attempts to diminish benefits earned by veterans

As the founding author of the original GI Bill, The American Legion is strongly opposing any attempts to further dilute the promises made to the men and women who served, or are still serving, our nation. The Legion opposes any proposed deletions of the promised health care and benefits to retired servicemembers from when they enlisted.

Repeal unfair offsets that penalize disabled veterans and widows

VA disability compensation should not be offset from military retired pay regardless of the VA rating percentage, nor should VA survivor benefits (DIC) be offset from military Survivor Benefit Plan annuities. The American Legion supports legislation that would repeal those unjust offsets now.

Protect the American Flag

The American Legion remains committed to protecting Old Glory, and continues to support legislation that safeguards our nation’s flag from possible desecration. H.J. Res. 9, S.J. Res. 21.
National Commander’s Tour 2016

National Commander Dale Barnett has a lively exchange with the press at Little Falls.

Barnett presents a 60-year certificate to World War II veteran Charles Burich during a stop at Hutchinson.

Barnett learns all about Herman the German during a special stop in New Ulm, the hometown of National Sergeant-at-Arms Dan Zimmermann. At right are historian George Glatzbach and Mayor Robert Buessman.

The National Commander gets some much-appreciated fishing advice from Past National Commander Dan Ludwig when his awareness walk took him out on the ice at Forest Lake. It was the first time Barnett had walked on water. No fish were harmed.

National Historian Jim Copher of Minnesota introduced Barnett at Delano.
National Commander Dale Barnett got the whole room stirred up when he faced the TV camera at Adams. Past Department Commander Harlan Buck joined in.

Commander Jim Kellogg advised the membership team at Preston “not to take the plow out of the ground” until the state reaches 100 percent.

Barnett reminded the crowd at Litchfield that 100 percent of donations to The American Legion go to the programs for which they were intended.

Barnett received many gifts along the way including these hats at Wells and Winona.

Good friends Mike Bredeck of Madison and Barnett greeted each other at Morris. Both serve on the staff of Boys Nation. Bredeck is Boys State Director.

World War II vet Roy Reiser of Beroun was served a 90th birthday cake by Tess Davis at Princeton.

A major snowstorm made driving a challenge. Adjutant Randy Tesdahl drove all 969 miles of the trip.

Barnett was surrounded by Korean War vets from Rochester during a stop at Stewartville.

Membership Director Jim Lucas, who emceed all the stops, drew a crowd as he prepared the program at Wells.
Navigating B-25s in the Pacific

By Al Zidon

Ed Zins helped coach Edina and Edina East to five state championships in high school hockey. As the solitary assistant coach to legendary head coach Walt P. Bates at Edina, Zins was elected to the Minnesota High School Hockey Coaches Hall of Fame for his career. But long before he was a high school math and science teacher and coach, Ed Zins had another job.

"My dad was a railroad man, and when the yards moved from St. Paul to St. Cloud we moved too."

He attended St. Anthony Grade School and graduated from St. Cloud Technical High School. "I was very interested in athletics and I played a lot of softball, hockey and stuff."

In the summers he worked on the railroad, and was a pin spotter at a local bowling alley.

Zins went to college at nearby St. John's and made it to his sophomore year when the United States entered World War II. In the spring of 1942, he made up his mind.

"I wanted to go where I wanted to go, not where they sent me."

He entered what was called the Cadet Program which was drawing young men from across America, mostly college students, to begin training to become a pilot, a navigator or a bombardier – which at that time were all officer positions.

But the Army wasn't ready for Zins, and he kept going to school until February of 1943 when they called him up. He was sent to Moorhead State Teachers College for a five-month basic course in math and science. "But I already had done a lot of that course work, and so I finished it in three months."

Next stop was Santa Ana, California, for a rigorous bar - rage of tests done by the Army. "It was two or three weeks of nothing but testing: physical, mental, everything. You had to have 20/20 vision. Two-thirds of the men who were sent there didn't pass."

Zins had no problem. Now he had to choose which direction his Army career would take. "Like everybody else, I wanted to be a pilot, but I knew a lot of the pilots washed out. I thought being a navigator would be a cinch. I thought it was a sure thing."

Out of the 200 cadets in his group, only five signed up to be navigators. None signed up to be bombardiers. Many pilots, if they washed out, were sent to bombardier school. "There was a lot of bitterness there."

Pre-flight school at Ellington Field, Texas, was 12 weeks of learning the basic skills: Morse code, aircraft recognition, everything to do with airplanes. "I thought it was a fun time. Cadets are kind of a unique breed. We weren't officers and we weren't enlisted men. We had to chip in money out of our pay for our mess hall, but it was great. We had steak or shrimp every night. Nothing compared to the cadet mess."

Advanced training was at Hondo Army Airfield near San Antonio. "It was in a little bitty town with horses all over. It was a good old cowboy town."

The 19 weeks were spent learning how to get an airplane from one place to another. "Our classroom had great, big desks for the students – like office desks so you could lay out maps."

"There were 30 of us, and we were evaluated every week. When you came in on Monday, you always counted the number of desks that were left. When we graduated, there were only 15 desks left."

Students used simulators to fly 25 missions of four hours each. They also studied celestial navigation, using sextants during the day, and studying the stars at night. The next step was to navigate in a real airplane. Five students would go up with one of them actually plotting the course. The other students wouldn't say a word, but would make an estimate on where the plane would end up based on the lead student's work. The pilot also would keep silent, and just fly the plane where the lead student said to.

"There was a beacon at the airport we were heading for, and you could see it from about 40 miles away. If you were plotting the course, you were praying that that beacon would be straight ahead and not off to the side, or not visible at all."

If you got within three miles of the beacon, it was considered a successful navigation. "I lucked out, and I was one of the top students in the class."

On graduation, Zins got his navigation wings and his second lieutenant bars.

The new officers now had to wait to see what kind of aircraft they would be assigned to. It could be one of the huge bombers, like a B-24 or B-17, or a twin-engine medium bomber like a B-25 or B-26. "I wanted the B-25 because it had a better reputation for getting you home."

Zins got orders to bombardier's school at Roswell, New Mexico, which meant he would be flying a medium bomber. The smaller crews did not have separate navigators and bombardiers, but combined the job.

"The kids love arcade games, but we had the ultimate stuff."

The goal for the bombardiers was to hit within 120 feet of a target while bombing from 12,000 feet. "It was unbelievable how well the Norden bombsight worked."

"There were only 15 desks left." Zins graduated again in July of 1944, and got his second set of wings. "But nobody ever wore their bombardier wings."

But hang on, the training wasn't over yet. Zins now was sent to South Carolina where he was issued his overseas equipment, including his own sextant, and was given further training in how to fire a .50 caliber machine gun. The navigator/bombardiers joined their permanent B-25 crew...
which also included a pilot, co-pilot, and three enlisted men: a radio operator/gunner, engineer/gunner, and a tail gunner.

Then it was three more months of training. “We did a lot of flying. day, night, low-level, everything.”

At Savannah, Georgia, the crew picked up their airplane. “It was a brand new, shiny B-25.”

The crew flew the plane to California where it underwent modification so it could fly the 2,100 nautical miles to Hawaii, well beyond the range of the aircraft. A huge extra gas tank was put in the bomb bay, and another one was just behind it in the fuselage. The turrets were removed and put inside. They – the crewmen – were sent ahead by ship.

“We could only attempt the flight if we had a tailwind, and so we sat in a hotel in Sacramento for six weeks waiting. Every morning, we’d call in, and every morning they would say no. It was very boring duty.”

Finally one day, they got the word. “The flight took three and a half hours. When we landed in Hawaii, we had about 30 minutes of fuel left.”

Now the crew had to wait another five or six days while the B-25 was rebuilt. The crewmen rejoined the team, and they were off to the western Pacific by island-hopping across the ocean.

They flew to the island of Biak in New Guinea.

“That was the last we saw our shiny, new airplane.”

Zins recalls one incident from Biak. “There was this hot dog pilot who was always doing stunts. When planes were leaving Biak, sometimes the pilot would buzz the tower. Well, he buzzed the tower and then pulled back and sent the airplane straight up. The fuselage broke apart just behind the wings. The plane just broke in two. Everybody was killed.

“That was the day before we arrived at Biak.”

The crew was sent to Nadzab Air Base in New Guinea. After nearly two years of training, they were ready to do their jobs. “It was our first introduction into the jungle and the heat and humidity.”

The crew was assigned to the 69th Bomb Squadron, part of the 42nd Bombardment Group of the 13th Air Force.

After training together for months, the crew found out they would no longer be flying as a team. “You never knew who you were going to be flying with from day to day. The idea was to blend the less experienced guys in with the guys who had been around. I was assigned for my first mission to a veteran pilot. Boy, could he fly an airplane.

Another change was that the B-25s being used in New Guinea did not use the Norden bomb sight. “Every mission we flew was right on the deck. You didn’t need a bomb sight, the bomber was safer you were.”

Targets were usually Japanese bases along the coast.

“We would come in at about 2,000 or 3,000 feet on the jungle side. When we could see the target, the pilot would dump the nose and dive to top level. We flew so low that sometimes we’d come back with foliage in our bomb bay.”

The bomber would strafe the target with its .50 caliber machine guns and drop bombs that would skip along the ground. We’d sometimes drop at 10 feet and so you didn’t want those bombs going off right beneath you. They would be set on eight or eleven second fuses, and they would skip along until they detonated about 200 yards behind us.”

Even without a bomb sight, accuracy was still a major necessity. “We were coming in at 320 miles an hour, so one second could mean a big miss. But it was strictly by eye-sight. The lower you flew, the safer you were.”

Part of the two years of training that Zins went through was learning to navigate by the sun using a sextant.

The Mitchell B-25 medium bomber was used extensively in the Pacific to attack Japanese bases.

Zins had flown 43 missions and earned three air medals.

The Mitchell B-25 medium bomber was used extensively in the Pacific to attack Japanese bases.

Zins center top, with the crew of the B-25 started with in the states. They never flew together in the Pacific.

Army Air Corps cadets wore a special insignia. They were neither officers not enlisted men.

Zins mother pins his wings on him after he graduated from Navigator’s school.

B

By early 1945, as the war moved north, so did the 69th Bomb Squadron. Its new base was on Palawan, an island chain off the west coast of the Philippines.

Zins said he was often amazed at the skill of the pilots. “We were attacking this one cave that contained Japanese machine guns, and as we were coming in we started getting machine gun fire from an area to the side of the cave. The pilot hit the rudder, the plane slewed over a little bit, he shot at and took care of that other machine gun, and then nudged back and hit the cave. It was incredible.”

One of the 69th’s most important missions was to take out the Japanese oil refineries at Balikpapan on the island of Borneo. “It was a major Japanese source of oil, just a huge oil complex. It was a massive mission and it was nine hours from the base.”

The coordinated attack on Balikpapan started with a bombing run by the huge B-17s from 30,000 feet, followed by a strafing run done by P-38s. “We were next and the timing was just fantastic. We did it three times. The oil refineries were obliterated.”

Zins’ scariest mission was the day before the war ended.

“Usually we would take off over the water, but this time we took off toward the jungle. We were carrying a napalm bomb on each wing. This was a new thing, and it was dev- astating when dropped at a low level. There was one napalm tank on the end of each wing with a cable coming back to the cockpit where the engineer could let them drop.

“We were way overweight on takeoff, and about two thirds of the way down the runway, the right engine started acting up. We got off the ground just over the trees and the pilot was banking in a turn to get back to the airstrip.”

“We couldn’t release the napalm drop tanks because if one released and the other didn’t the plane would be so unbalanced we’d crash. The pilot did an unbelievable job to get us back to the runway, and we were just about to touch down when the right engine quit.”

“We were much faster than usual, maybe 120 miles an hour, and the airplane came in completely on the right land- ing gear. The tire blew right away and we went into a ground loop skidding toward the ditch. I don’t know how the pilot did it, but we ended up straddling the ditch with the nose on one side and the tail on the other. The napalm didn’t go off, and everyone was okay.”

“The guys on the tower told me later that they were sure we were going to hit the tower.”

“The next day the war ended.”

Zins had flown 43 missions and earned three air medals.
Taps

**Bergstrom, Harold Anderson,** 76, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 31, 2016. He served in Vietnam and Germany and was awarded a Purple Heart. He was a Sixth District Commander from 2011-12. He was a member of Crosslake Post 507.

**Dinkelsbier, Corwin George,** 94, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 16, 2016. He served in Europe. He later fought in Korea and retired as a second lieutentant colonel. He was a member of Montevideo Post 59.

**Flack, Chester J.,** 81, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 18, 2016. He landed in the first wave on Omaha Beach. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

**Zeis, Robert F.,** 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 17, 2016. He was a staff sergeant. He was a member of Holdingford Post 211.

**Borchers, Gerald,** 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 4, 2016. He was a pararescueman in the 101st Airborne. He was a member of Franklin Post 308.

**Roers, Harold A.**, 85, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 10, 2016. He was a member of Milaca Post 510.

**Nelson, Richard A.**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 10, 2016. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

**Murphy, Cornelius Joseph “CJ,”** 95, Navy veteran of World War II, died Jan. 18, 2016. He was killed in action during the Korean War and served as a master sergeant in the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment. He was a member of Roseau Post 24.

**Stenke, Leonard R.,** 81, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 24, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**H grassman, Philip J.,** 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 15, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Lombard, Arthur L.,** 78, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 19, 2016. He was a member of Marshall Post 143.

**Tupa, Joseph L.,** 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 13, 2016. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**Neale, Herbert S.,** 89, Marine Corps veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Feb. 12, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Steen, Leonard R.,** 81, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 24, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Tampa, Leonard R.,** 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 16, 2016. He served in Korea. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Callahan, Philip J.,** 91, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 15, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Gilbertson, Eleanor,** 91, Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died Feb. 9, 2016. She was a member of New Brighton Tri-City Post 513.

**Ottersen, Raymond N.,** 86, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 24, 2016. He served in Vietnam as an administrative non-commissioned officer. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Hollman, Byron G.,** 97, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 28, 2016. He was a staff sergeant and served in the 4th Armored Division. He was a member of Northfield Post 84.

**Roepp, John Thomas, 78, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 16, 2016. He served on the USS Frontier AD-366.** He was a machinist. He was a member of Hackensack Post 202.

**Holey, Bruce,** 77, National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 27, 2016. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Stengard, Richard Lee, 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Feb. 1, 2016. He was a member of Lakeshore Post 47.**

**Dimm, Harold J.,** 88, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 29, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Watson, Glen C.,** 85, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 8, 2016. He was a member of Brainerd Post 255.

**Moe, Paul R.,** 88, Army veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Jan. 24, 2016. He was in the Air Force during the Korean War and served as a master sergeant in the artillery. He was a member of Granite Falls Post 69.

**Bruce, Richard Clay, 79, Coast Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 12, 2016. He was a member of Long Prairie Post 12.**

**Casper, Gerald, 89, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 21, 2016.** He was a second class petty officer. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Lee, Virgil Howard, 76, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 28, 2016.** He was a member of Pine Island Post 113.

**Schlosser, Reynold Anton, 81, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 28, 2016.** He served in Germany. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Polley, Edward A.,** 83, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 1, 2016. He was a member of Crookston Post 262.
**World War II History Round Table**

**Liberators not ready for what they found**

By Al Zdon

It was a sub-camp of Buchenwald, and it wasn’t there just for a few days, it lasted a little longer than that, a couple of weeks, a month, maybe a little longer, Burgstahler said.

Like some other camps such as Auschwitz and Bergson-Helzen, built mainly to exterminate European Jews, Ohrdruf was populated mainly by political prisoners from various countries and Jews who were a minority inside its walls.

“They were building railroad tracks and digging tunnels. There was a plan that the German high command would re-locate them to Berlin for labor,” Burgstahler said.

In the days before the arrival of the American 4th Armored Division and the 89th Infantry Division, most of the prisoners were marched on death marches toward Buchenwald, the central camp.

“The U.S. troops began seeing bodies in the ditches. They found some half-dead survivors. At one place they found three dozen bodies stacked up execution-style. At Ohrdruf, it only got worse. ‘Near the parade ground in a field there were three dozen naked bodies with marks of brutality on them. They were dusted with lime to keep the stench of the bodies down.’ Many soldiers said they never smelled lime again without triggering that memory.’”

Not far away was a burial ground, but the German captors had been trying to cover up the evidence by exhuming the bodies in 14 minutes. Over 65,000 died at Buchenwald. They were known as concentration camps, or often as death camps. What they had in common were some of the worst atrocities of World War II.

The prisoners thought they were being poisoned.”

Eventually Fisch reached the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp, where they spent some time until that camp was evacuated. “We were walking again, and every night we’d sleep in a barracks. ‘At some point, you have no feeling whatsoever. All you care about is food. At Buchenwald, the food was marginal. It was the most incredible thing I ever had in my life.’ “

On May 4, 1945, the Americans liberated the prisoners. “I was the first one to see the ghastly fever. I had a high temperature. Within two days, a lot of people had it.”

Fisch saw shootings and at one point he was beaten with a rifle. “We had to walk many days, and any who tried to escape were shot by the guards. At one point, a civilian woman threw us an apple. She was shot on the spot.”

Eventually Fisch reached the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp, where they spent some time until that camp was evacuated. “We were walking again, and every night we’d sleep in a barracks. ‘At some point, you have no feeling whatsoever. All you care about is food. At Buchenwald, the food was marginal. It was the most incredible thing I ever had in my life.’ “

On May 4, 1945, the Americans liberated the prisoners. “I was so weak I couldn’t see. If they had come the following day, I wouldn’t be here.”

Reflecting back, Fisch said, “It’s incomprehensible what happened there. When people say they don’t believe it, I understand. It was unbelievable.”

“We need to learn humanity. The most dangerous people are those who are indifferent and allow extremists to do this sort of thing.”

Fisch has written a book, *Light from the Yellow Star: A Lesson of Love from the Holocaust.*

**March 2016**

**Minnesota Legionnaire**

**Page 15**
February did not start out to be a good month. On the 1st we lost a great friend and Legislator, Harold Bergrstrom. He was the Vice Commander for the East Sub. Our symphaty goes to his family.  

Membership in our main focus now at this time of year. The district is at 93% now. It would be nice to be able to make it to 95% by the department Appreciation Rally at Legionville on March 5th. Therefore encourage those of you who have not paid to have them do so. The Sweetheart Rally went very well and all had a great time. There was a chili cook off competition and the 9th district won the contest.  

Mid-Winter conference started out on a very cold start of -20 in the morning, but it went very well. The reports were great that where given, great food, and a great speakers in the afternoon and were done by 15:15. 

The National Commander made a visit to the Little Falls Legion on February 1st. Had a great visit with him. He said that he walked on water this in Minnesota, drilled a fishing hole, and rode a snowmobile. Nothing like that in Georgia. They served a great meal for him as well. The Consolidated Post Reports were due to the Department on April 1st. It's simple, just keep serving. 

Greetings Mighty 7th. I want to thank all of those who attended the National Commander Barnett events on February 2nd in Morris and Litchfield, especially those from other Districts. March is Community Service month. It shows the commitment The American Legion has for the good of our veterans and their families. The countless hours of volunteerism and commitment to our communities shows that The American Legion does more for our veterans then we ever envisioned when we joined this great organization. I encourage all Posts to work with your district vice commander and invite him to your post to attend a Post meeting, discuss activities at the Post and come up with new ideas to get members. For those who do not have a facebook page, scan our district website and look for things to post on your facebook page. Invite friends to see what’s going on with your Legion Post and all Legion activities. 

There are many rallies, meetings, and other activities coming in which we all have an opportunity to participate. Believe me these events are lots of fun so come. As a Family we can make great things happen. It’s simple, just keep serving.

Greetings Roaring Ninth District. 

February 1st. Had a great visit with him. He said that he walked on water this in Minnesota, drilled a fishing hole, and rode a snowmobile. Nothing like that in Georgia. They served a great meal for him as well. The Consolidated Post Reports were due to the Department on April 1st. It's simple, just keep serving. 

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There are many rallies, meetings, and other activities coming in which we all have an opportunity to participate. Believe me these events are lots of fun so come. As a Family we can make great things happen. It’s simple, just keep serving.

Greetings Roaring Ninth District. I can always tell when the end of winter is near - the seed catalogs have arrived in our mailboxes. They appear in the nick of time to remind us that spring is going to finally arrive. I love to look at all the new kinds of plants and plan and prepare for my garden. That is what we need to do now to gather the remainder of our membership for the year. We have met all the goals set before us, now comes the hard part-getting those last few. It is personal contact that plays an integral part in procuring them-make a few calls and yet make a personal visit for a cup of coffee and discuss the reasons why they should remain a member of the greatest VSO in the world. Make use of MyLegion app for members that are in post at large and contact them-it is only a matter of asking. Please contact myself or your area vice commander if you have any questions on the website. 

Consolidated post reports will be due soon, so start collecting and computing your data for credit for all do you for our veterans, community and children. I know that some of you that you don’t do anything, but that isn’t true. Stop and think how many of you visit a sick veteran, volunteer at your church, care for grandpa/grandma to school children, clean gravesides for Memorial Day, put flags up for holidays? It’s isn’t only monetary gifts that are counted on the report, even if it is only one item you fill out, do so, and mail it in. This is what we use when lobbying for veteran’s benefits in Washington D.C. Remember to keep our military, their families and our fellow comrades who struggle daily with their daily health, physically and emotionally in your prayers.

Greetings from the Mighty Tenth. As Commander I have had the opportunity to visit a number of Posts in my District. And I am here to tell you, the Tenth District Posts are playing a vital role in the communities, and serving the needs of their fellow veterans. Now that we are struggling for membership, I just need to point to the Post in Brinon, a town with a population of 80 people, and a Legion Post with 40 members. This little Post that almost turned in their charter a few years ago, grew to the size they are now, because of the commitment of a few members. Their Post Commander Robert Olson, was totally committed to saving the Post that carried his family name. So how do they do it? The answer is simple; they asked everyone they knew who was a veteran to join. A second Post is my home Post of Osseo/Maple Grove, who have become a real presence in their community. The Post provides numerous opportunities for community organizations to raise funds. Our Post Service Officer, Larry (Hoppy) Haapaja takes pride in helping his fellow vet- erans sign up for the VA system, by driving them to their appointments. So far he has done this for over 98 Veterans. So what does it take to make your Post grow? That you the individual member get involved, and that the Post stays involved with their community.

Greetings Therming Third. Congrats to everyone in the Third District on your membership efforts. We are still leading the Department but we need the 600 more members to meet our goal. Let's get this done as soon as possible. The Department Appreciation Rally will be held at Legionville on March 5th and Department Membership Director Jim Lucas wants 120 members from the Third District by then. We can get this done.

The Consolidated Post Reports will be mailed to your Posts soon. It is very important to get these completed and returned as a reminder to the members. Our goal this year is to have 100% reporting from the Third District. The Consolidated Post Reports will be due soon, so start collecting and computing your data for credit for all do you for our veterans, community and children. I know that some of you that you don’t do anything, but that isn’t true. Stop and think how many of you visit a sick veteran, volunteer at your church, care for grandpa/grandma to school children, clean gravesides for Memorial Day, put flags up for holidays? It’s isn’t only monetary gifts that are counted on the report, even if it is only one item you fill out, do so, and mail it in. This is what we use when lobbying for veteran’s benefits in Washington D.C. Remember to keep our military, their families and our fellow comrades who struggle daily with their daily health, physically and emotionally in your prayers.

Greetings from the Third District. 

Greetings from the Fifty Fifth District.

Greetings from the Fifth District. 

Greetings from the Ninth District.

Greetings from the Seventh District.
They weren’t exactly jumping out of the holes at the inaugural Department Fishing Contest held on North Long Lake prior to the Sweetheart Rally at Legionville. Commander Jim Kellogg keeps an eye on his line.

Sweetheart Rally and Fishing Contest

Don Amundson presents Diane Sullivan with a rose in honor of the Sweetheart Rally.

State American Legion Rider Director Scuffy Paulson presented Past Department Commander Peggy Moon with a special thank you for her efforts for the ALR.

The bets were hot and heavy at minnow races. There were some reports that some minnows were abused by being eaten.

Photos by
Dennis DeLong
Dept. Historian

The Second District’s Raleen Tolzmann and Darlene Breamer serve up some piping hot bowls of chili in the first annual chili contest.

Membership Chair Jean Walker and Membership Director Jim Lucas hold up a toy truck. The truck was a gift from Walker to Lucas, a former truck driver, whose theme is “Hauling in Membership.”

Membership Chart
As of February 24, 2016

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<td>76,047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let's start our planning for the finish. No, I said it—we need to start planning for the finish. Thank you for your kindness, support, and prayers thrown this challenging time for our son Scott. We ask that you continue to pray for him to have a full recovery with this back injury. If you can’t leave the hospital or Puyallup hospitals can do to a person—it throws your whole life into a whirlwind, including the family members. With God by our side and him walking with us, we will get through this bump. Now back to our Auxiliary.

Remember you need us—we need to make a change, a positive change with this organization. To see and hear the gratefulness our Veterans have for us is unclear. To know and hear we have made huge differences to give Veterans and their families tells me, we do have a positive influence in this organization. To see our Veterans again perform and a dinner at the Salute to Veterans in St Cloud was awesome. To do the walk through and be able to “thank” the Veterans for their service to all of us is beyond what we can express with words. We, the auxiliary, do great things and are appreciated by our Veterans.

How many units? How many members are interested in winning a PUFL membership??

How many members are willing to help me turn this department upside down with membership?? How many members are willing to take the bull by the horns and help change attitudes within our organization?? How many members are going to attempt to help their unit reach the membership they had last year—even grow it by one?? How many members are willing to speak with The Legion coordinated question if it’s their spouse, mother, daughter, granddaughter are members?? If The American Legion has 80,000 plus members shouldn’t we be 5 times that? How many members are willing to build pride back in our organization?? Ladies—it is up to us. You and I can make a difference.

The big payoff this year is for every Unit to reach goal by Convention their names will be placed in a hat. A drawing will take place for the winner of the PUFL. I believe your Membership Chairman Jean plans on doing this at Department Convention.

Membership membership is everyone’s responsibility. If you want the chance for your name to be in the drawing, help your unit reach its goal. Will your name be in the hat? Will you be the lucky member??

One other huge task for Units and Districts is our Strategic Planning. What have you done? How have you done it? How are you doing it? Have your Unit/District taken the initiative to look at your strategic plans for the next 5 years? Have you had conversations in your Unit/District to see what matters to the members? What difference does your Unit/District do for the Veterans? Their families?? The communities?? Where will your Unit or District be in 5 years? In 10 years? What are you doing now to reach these goals?

The Specialty is a very important project we need to keep up with. The merchandisers need our order forms for basic items we need to provide. Do you know the designated order form to send in the orders? It is very important to keep our membership up with what the Department’s mailings to the units are. We need to order our small and/or large Poppies. This is an effective way of raising money for our Auxiliary.

The 53rd Annual Department Junior Convention will be held April 8th and 9th at the Grace Lutheran Church in Byron, Minnesota, hosted by the Second District. We are hoping that a large number of the Junior members are able to attend and participate. If your Juniors have never attended a Department Junior Convention, plan to join us this year. Junior members will enjoy a “fun night” on Friday, April 8th, the night before the opening of the Convention. The 2nd District has been working hard to make this a special evening for the Junior members.

On Saturday the Convention will be called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Bryce Solits, the Department Honorary Junior President. This is a day when the Juniors become reacquainted with each other, make new friends, learn how to conduct a meeting and participate in it. This meeting is a JUNIOR Conference and the JUNIOR members run it. They are very capable young women.

The “Call to Conference” was included in the January Unit mailing, giving you all the details. Junior Activities Chairman, please obtain this information from your Unit President so you can make plans to have your Juniors attend. You do not need to have an organized Junior group to participate. All Juniors are welcome. The information is also posted on our website mnala.org.

Hotel reservations must be made by March 25, 2016. Special pricing was given by the Holiday Inn Fairmont, 1201 Torgerson Drive, Fairmont, MN. The direct telephone number is (507) 238-4771. Block name: American Legion Junior Auxiliary. There are also many other hotels in the area.

The Department Honorary Junior President Bryce has chosen to raise money to help complete the mural being painted at Veterans Cemetery at Camp Ripley. Please bring your donation to the Conference so Bryce can finalize her project.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy 97th birthday American Legion. Units, make sure to plan something fun to recognize your Post and wish your member a “Happy Birthday.” We, of the Auxiliary, are proud to serve with you for the purposes upon which our organizations were founded. March is also Community Service month.

MEMBERSHIP

We are still hanging pretty close to the top. This seems to be the time of the year when Minnesota drops very quickly to the bottom of the list. I challenge every Unit member to step up to the plate and help your Membership Chairman by making one phone call to a member who hasn’t renewed her membership, ask a former member to rejoin or sign up a new member. Always remember to have one of those application forms handy in your purse “just in case.” Let’s make President Sandy very proud and get our membership back to the top.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

Our Department Convention is coming up fast and will be held July 21 - 23, 2016 at Kahler Hotel in Rochester, Minnesota, hosted by the Rochester American Legion Family #92. Further information will be forthcoming. Our appreciation is sent, in advance, to all The Legion and Auxiliary members who will be serving on the convention committee for their efforts to ensure another outstanding Department Convention. Circle these dates on your calendar and plan to attend.

Don’t forget the Poppy contests that will be held at the Department Convention. They are Wearable Poppy Art and Dress a Doll or Teddy Bear; that best describes “Serving Those Who Served.” (Please check the Trophy & Awards for all specific entries). Entries must be at the Department Convention on Thursday, July 21st. Both of these contests are easy to participate in. Get your thinking caps on and start creating! Poppy contest entries were simply fabulous – let’s make this even better.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION WEEK

Has your Unit considered doing something special for those members who are active volunteers within your Unit, your community, or your District? April 10 - 16th is “National Volunteer Recognition Week.” a perfect time to
Auxiliary Bulletin
Continued from Preceding Page

recognize them for their many hours of volunteer service. A certificate, coffee and cookies, or guests at a pot luck dinner are several ideas of what your Unit could do to say “thank you” for the many hours and contributions your volunteers have given in service to others. The American Legion Auxiliary has the best volunteers of any organization.

PRESIDENT’S PROJECT

Department President Sandy Fredrickson appreciates your support of her special Department President’s Projects this year. Her projects are raising funds for the Minnesota Creative Arts Festival at the St. Cloud and Minneapolis VA’s to help Veterans attend the Creative Arts Festival which is held annually in different states. After her goals for the part of the project are met she would like to donate to the Journeys Program which helps PTSD outpatients and the Emergent Needs Fund at the Minneapolis VA. President Sandy has received many very kind donations but could still use more to reach her goals. She thanks each of you very much.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications for all scholarships awarded by the Department are due by March 15th. Announcement of the recipients will appear in this column when the judging is completed. Make sure and follow all of the rules on the application. We don’t want our students disqualified because something isn’t signed.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MONTH

April is Children and Youth month. Plan a special program and invite your community to attend. Let them know of your involvement and concern for the youth of our nation. There are a number of programs you can present to your community.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual report time is fast approaching. All Units should be preparing their reports covering the time period April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016. The white and all yellow copies of all reports must be mailed to the Department office on or before April 15th. No matter how much or how little your Unit has been able to contribute in time, energy, resources and talent to our programs, it is important that everything be included in your reports. Your reports make up our Department reports. You have all received your forms - let's have a 100% turn in this year. The Department Office has listened and changed the Unit forms back to the old form of reporting. We hope this will encourage more Units to fill them out. Department citations will be awarded to all Units that have attained their Unit membership goal and have filed a complete set of annual reports by April 15th. Certificates of Merit will be awarded to Units by various Department Chairmen based on the Unit annual reports. Membership goal is not required to be considered for a certificate of merit.

TROPHY AND AWARD ENTRIES

Entries for any trophy and award competition are due by April 15th, unless otherwise stated in the rules. Be certain to label each entry with the name of the award you are applying for. A separate entry is needed for each award unless the winning Department entry is being forwarded for National competition. See the rules for complete details. You may apply for any award, whether your Unit has reached its membership goal or not, unless that requirement is stated in the rules. Please apply for awards - let's get the members recognition for the hard work they do for our Veterans.

SECRETARY SANDIE’S NOTES

By the time you read this I will have returned from the Washington DC Conference. This is the first time I will be attending and hopefully will not have caused too much ruckus out there. I am thinking my help really couldn’t hurt! Not much new happening - just working, eating too much and sleeping. I dream of a vacation coming up, but won’t happen until June - again I will be sitting on the back of our Harley going to God knows where, some mountains won’t happen until June - again I will be sitting on the back St. Patrick’s Day and also a very Happy and Blessed Easter.

MONTGOMERY UNIT 79 NEW MEMBER INITIATION -- President Sandy Fredrickson joined the Montgomery Unit 79 for their annual Sweetheart Dinner which is put on by The American Legion Post 79 members to show their appreciation for all the Auxiliary does for them. Front row, from left: New Members Kayla Bartusek, Amanda Lutz, Nikki Wetlebracht, Shirley Pumper, Darlene Dietz. Back Row: Initiating Officers Jean Keogh, Jeanette Kukacka, Department President Sandy Fredrickson, Unit 79 President Darlene Wondra, Marilyn Prchal and Linda Ruhland.

DEDICATION AT VETS CEMETERY -- Honorary Junior President Bryce Soltis presented a $1,500 check to Little Falls Mayor Greg Zylka at the dedication of the new mural at the committal service building. The mural was her president’s project.

NEW MURAL -- Honorary Junior President Bryce Soltis met the artist of the new mural at the Minnesota Veterans Cemetary at Camp Ripley, Charles Kapsner.
Minnesota Legionnaire March 2016

Heart of Alaska
July 28-August 4, 2016
Tour Includes:
• Alaska Native Heritage Center
• Alaska Air Flights between Anchorage and Juneau
• 7 nights accommodations
• 12 meals: 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 1 dinner (including Alaska Salmon Bake)
• Southeast Alaska wilderness tours
• Travel the Alaska Railroad
• Denali Park National History Tour
• Riverboat Discovery Cruise
• Juneau Indian Village
• Prince William Sound Cruise
• Mount Saint Helen's

$3,499.00
For Four Person Package

New York City Tour
June 20-26, 2016
Tour Includes:
• 4 Seasons Tour Director, Larry Alyer
• Roundtrip Delta Airlines flights from Minneapolis to New York City
• 4 night stay at the Hotel at Times Square
• Two Broadway musicals, Aladdin and Wicked
• Statue of Liberty
• Metropolitan Opera House, Manhattan Island City Tour
• 9/11 Memorial and Museum
• Harbor Cruise with lunch
• Daily continental breakfast
• Luggage handling for one suitcase

$2,999.00
For Four Person Package

Alaska Tour & Cruise
July 21-August 4, 2016
Faitrade Classic National Park Package-Blackbird Glacier- Glacier Bay-Matanuska-AsaKake-Seward-Inside Passage-Transtariner
Tour Includes:
• Alaska Native Heritage Center
• Alaska Air Flights from Minneapolis to Fairbanks and return from Juneau to Minneapolis
• All sightseeing and transfers as outlined in itinerary
• Cruise Gratitude
• 6 night Alaskan cruise onboard the
day cruise
• Fish for salmon and halibut
• Stay for 7 nights in Fairbanks
• Stay for 4 nights in Juneau

$9,999.00
For Four Person Package

Mackinac Island & Door County
July 10-16, 2016
Tour Includes:
• 4 Seasons Tour Director, Joyce Langerud
• Deluxe motor coach transportation
• 6 nights accommodations
• 12 meals: 6 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 dinners
• Guided tour of Door County and Mackinac City
• Visits to Devil’s Lake, Sturgeon Bay, Door County Island
• Sun Lakes Cruise Tour
• Fish Boat in Door County
• Gordon Lightfoot Musical Show
• Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum
• Luggage handling for one suitcase

$1,099.00
For Four Person Package

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