Changes made to Nat’l Commander’s Tour schedule

There have been two subtractions and one addition to this year’s National Commander’s Tour.

The addition is a Walk for Veterans with National Commander Charles Schmidt of Oregon that will take place at Elk River on Wednesday, Feb. 8, at 4 p.m.

The walk will start at the Elk River Post at 525 Railroad Drive, cross Highway 10 into downtown Elk River, and then return to the post.

The walks raise awareness of veterans issues and of the American Legion Family.

Special yellow awareness walk T-shirts will be available at the post for $20 before the walk that day.

The two subtractions are the first two stops that were planned for the tour. The National Commander had to change his schedule, and he will not be arriving in northern Minnesota until Monday afternoon.

The breakfast meeting at East Grand Forks and the lunch meeting at Thief River Falls have been canceled. It is hoped that those who had planned to attend those meetings would instead join Schmidt at Bagley for dinner.

The tour will continue across northern Minnesota before heading south toward the Twin Cities. The tour will conclude with dinner in Mound on Thursday, Feb. 9.

A complete tour schedule and contact list is on page 2 of this Legioinaire.

Key veterans projects before Legislature

By Al Zdon

Some big chunks of spending for the veterans community will be dealt with in one way or another in this session of the Minnesota Legislature.

They include money for major projects at the Minnesota Veterans Homes, for fixing the truss bridge at the home in Minneapolis, for a new veterans cemetery in Duluth, and possibly for building a new veterans home or homes in the state.

Of particular interest to the Minnesota American Legion is a bill that would allocate money from the Minnesota Legacy Fund to both Legionville Safety Patrol Camp and to the Veterans Rest Camp at Big Marine Lake.

The joint request would bring $222,000 to Legionville, where the money would be spent on improvements to the dining hall.

The rest of the half million dollar request would go toward creating a new administration building at the Veterans Rest Camp.

Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl said the money at Legionville would be used for a heating and air conditioning unit for the dining hall, new flooring, fire safety

Continued on Page 2

Get a yellow card? Yes, it’s legit

By Al Zdon

If you received a yellow post card, an email or a telephone call about a new Legion member publication, yes, it is legitimate.

The publication, being done by Publishing Concepts (PCI), is a Texas company, would include membership and biographical information on Legioinaires for a book that will be published in about a year.

The project is a fund raiser for the Minnesota American Legion.

If you do not choose to participate, simply discard the postcard, ignore the email, or tell the telephone solicitor no thanks.

The base price for the books is $59, but other packages of you.

The project is a fund raiser for the Minnesota American Legion.

It's kind of like urgent care,” VAMC Director Patrick Kelly said. “Except it’s better in some ways. If you go to urgent care, you probably won’t know the care team. If you come here, we will try to have your primary care team see you.

The fast-track access is not for normal medical care. If you need an appointment for a hearing test, it still may take 30 days. If you need an eye exam, it still will take up to 40 days for an appointment.

But if you’re sick and you need care right now, the door is open.

“We will have a medical officer available to evaluate patients. If he or she is busy, maybe because they’re seeing another veteran, we’ll have a backup in place,” Kelly said.

The fast-track access is not for normal medical care. If you need an appointment for a hearing test, it still may take 30 days. If you need an eye exam, it still will take up to 40 days for an appointment.

But if you’re sick and you need care right now, the door is open.

“We will have a medical officer available to evaluate patients. If he or she is busy, maybe because they’re seeing another veteran, we’ll have a backup in place,” Kelly said.

Kelly said same-day service has been a staple at the 13 Community-Based Outpatient Clinics around the state. The big change has been to bring it to the primary care and mental health care parts of the medical center in Minneapolis.

Kelly cautions that for normal care, appointments are still necessary. “Our concern is that a veteran will just say, ‘Gee whiz, I’ll just swing over to the VA to see my doctor.’ That won’t work. We would be glad to make an appointment to handle that.

“But if you’re sick and you can’t wait, we’re here for you.”

The program went into effect in December, and during the first month, 2,100 patients were seen on a same-day basis in the health care system, including 935 patients at the Minneapolis hospital.

Continued on Page 2
Veterans seek funding from State Legislature

Continued from Page 1

improvements, refrigerators, freezers, kitchen equipment and possibly a new roof.

As work on the construction of the learning center, the Legion will stretch that $222,000 as far as we can through donations and in-kind services."

The House bill, HF232, was introduced by Rep. Bob Dettmer, R-Forest Lake. It has cleared the veteran's committee and now must go before the Legacy Committee. No Senate version has been introduced as yet.

“It’s a perfect fit for the Legacy Fund,” Tesdahl said. “The camps are family-oriented in an outdoor setting.” The Legacy Fund is aimed at preserving wetlands, rivers, trails, parks and to help the state’s arts and cultural heritage.

Another major initiative before the lawmakers is a request from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs for $500,000 per year to staff the new veterans cemetery near Duluth.

The request is part of a larger plan to create a system of four state veterans cemeteries in Minnesota. The cemeteries at Little Falls and Preston are up and running, the Duluth cemetery recently began clearing ground, and a cemetery at Redwood Falls is in the planning stages.

The federal government will provide $8.4 million to construct the Duluth cemetery with the agreement that the state will staff and run the facility thereafter. The Duluth cemetery is expected to open in the summer of 2018.

Ben Johnson, the legislative director for the MDVA, said the agency is also seeking $5 million for asset preservation at the veteran homes. The money will be spent on fire doors at Luverne, a boiler replacement at Silver Bay, roof replacement at Hastings and tunnel and air conditioning/ heating work at Minneapolis.

In a stand-alone request, the MDVA is seeking $7.85 million to restore the truss bridge at the Minneapolis home to operating condition. The MDVA in 2015 received a $650,000 grant to do the preliminary design and architectural work on the bridge.

Johnson said the bridge is essential because without it there is only one entrance to the veterans home, and if that entrance is blocked for any reason, emergency vehicles will not be able to get in, and people will not be able to get out.

The money for the bridge was in last year’s Senate bonding bill, but the entire bonding bill died at the end of the legislative session. No bill has been introduced in either house this year.

Johnson did not have figures on how many veterans have the 50 percent disability rating, but he did say that the number of Minnesotans with a 100 percent rating is about 90,000 while the number who have a 10 percent disability rating is about 90,000.

The MDVA is also seeking money from the legislature to help fund a project by Twin Cities Public Television to do a special show on Minnesota’s participation in the Vietnam War. It would be a companion piece to next year’s Ken Burns PBS special on the Vietnam War.

Overall, Johnson said, the legislative climate is good this year. “The MDVA has been fortunate through the years to have bipartisan support for veterans issues, and fantastic support from the governor’s office. There are several legislators out there who have a passion for veterans’ interests.”

Johnson said no bill has been introduced yet, but it’s possible that like last year there will be requests to build a sixth or seventh veterans home in the state. Contenders he’s heard of so far this year include Montevideo, Brainerd, and one in Fillmore County at Springfield or Preston.

Last year, Bemidji and Montevideo had a combined request to build a home in each city. Minnesota is limited by the federal government as to how many nursing home beds it will support for veterans. About 140 beds are currently allowed. Bemidji and Montevideo would have split that allocation.

But that’s not the major problem, Johnson said. There is a shrinking amount of federal money available for new veterans homes. “New home construction is a challenge.”

Even if the state were to approve its 35 percent share of the money for a new home, that’s a relatively small amount compared to what’s being asked for. There is no guarantee that the federal government would come through with its 65 percent share. Last year, the government spent $86 million on veterans homes across America, but much of that money went to health and safety issues and not new construction.

There are several other measures before the legislature that have been endorsed by the Commander’s Task Force, a consortium of the state’s veterans service organizations. Legion Department Commander Denise Milton is the chairman of the CTP this year.

That list includes:

— Permanent homestead market value exclusion for surviving spouses of veterans if the veteran had 70 percent disability. Currently the law allows the tax exclusion for eight years. The new law would make it permanent as long as the spouse didn’t sell the house or remarry.

— Extend the uses of the Minnesota GI Bill to include more on the job training and apprenticeship training.

— Provide tuition assistance for 100 percent disabled veterans.

One other bill that has been introduced would call for a plaque honoring World War I veterans in the Court of Honor on the Capitol Mall.

National Commander’s Tour has changes

Continued from Page 1

Executive Committee meeting held at the time of the Fall Convention is also making a major change because of action on the proposal, but the Department Finance Committee later approved the project.

The National American Legion has also signed a list protection agreement with PCI. None of the information obtained by the company will be used for any other purposes than the book. It will not be shared in any way.

The fundraiser is part of an effort to continue Legion programs and projects. At a time when the Department’s budget is shrinking due to declining membership and higher costs. “We have to look to alternative sources of raising funds for operational purposes,” Adjutant Randy Tesdahl said in a letter to the fundraiser that is available on the Legion’s website: m legion.org. The member publication should not be confused with two other Legion publishing efforts coming on the market. A third War Stories book will be coming out this year, and a book on the centennial of the Minnesota American Legion will be published in 2019.

Yellow post card is Legion fundraiser

Contact:
218-209-8676, Dennis or 218-694-6125, Richard
218-780-0920, Patrick
218-283-5754, Bill
218-393-0079, Carl
218-426-4298, Andy
320-629-2021, Jack or Tammy
763-441-3150, Jack
763-234-8400, Tom
763-682-4796, Marilyn
612-915-0435, Post
952-472-9582, Kathy or 952-201-6918, Kathy’s cell

*The Bena breakfast will be at the Northern Lights Casino.

#The Hibbing meeting will be in the Memorial Building.

Independent Home Living

Senior apartments for elderly and those with disabilities. Safe, convenient, comfortable, and affordable rural living in Southeast Minnesota.

Contact: Samantha 507-864-7714 or www.goodshep-rushford.org

Funeral Plans for Veterans

As a veteran you may qualify for certain funeral benefits. Dignity Planning offers one of the best end-of-life planning tools available. Through documenting your final wishes and purchasing a final need plan, you will:

— Provide for your family from any financial burdens in time of grief.
— Gain peace of mind by knowing your funeral care is taken care of.

Yes, I would like to know more about:

☐ Traditional Funeral Cost
☐ Cremation Cost
☐ Payment Plan Options
☐ Discount Plans

For a free consultation on Funeral Pre-planning Costs and a review of New VA Burial Benefits, return this coupon to:

Jerry Albright, 1516 Manitou Rd. NE, Pet Lake, MN 55372 or call (952) 226-6491. Absolutely No Obligation!

Name:
City:
Address:
State:
Zip:
Phone:
Birth Date:

Minneapolis VA offering same day service for veterans

Continued from Page 1

The VA, Kelly said, is learning day-by-day about how this program will work, including seeing what training is needed for staff, and what impact it will make on the emergency room.

The MyVA Access program was put into place in April of last year, with the goal of having all the VA health systems on board across the country by the end of the year.

The program not only includes same day service, but also includes a new smart phone app that allows veterans to view, schedule and cancel appointments. The app should be available throughout the system early this year.

The VA is also working on a website enhancement that will allow veterans to check on wait times wherever they live.

The MyVA Access initiatives were introduced by then Under Secretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin. Shulkin has since been nominated for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs position and he is expected to be confirmed soon.

"Dr Shulkin believes that vets need to be seen right away if their pain needs have to be evaluated," Kelly said.

Kelly said the latest information on national and local wait times show that the Minneapolis VA is doing well. The wait time for primary care is 5.5 days nationally and 6 days in Minnesota. The wait time for specialized care is 10 days nationally and 8.5 days in Minnesota, and the wait time for mental health care is 4.3 days nationally, and two days here.

He notes, though, that that is only an average, and many specialties, for example, have much longer wait times, just as they do in the private sector.

He said the Minneapolis VA, though, is hitting its 30-day wait time target 94 percent of the time.

Schmidt has two commander's projects

American Legion National Commander Charles E. Schmidt received a check for $5,000 when he visited Post 291 in Newport Beach, Calif., early last month. The donation was in support of his fundraising project – $1 million for Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) and $1 million for the Legion's service officer training program.

"Our post motto is veterans first, so we believe in Commander's Schmidt's project of supporting TFA and service officers," said Doug Nye, Post 291 commander. "His fundraising project hits home because we have a lot of vets here in California that need our help.

Upon his election as national commander during the 98th National Convention in Cincinnati, Schmidt announced his fundraising project would support service officer training and the TFA program, which provides cash grants to children of eligible veterans who we are and a great example of that is through our Temporary Financial Program."

Following his election last September, Schmidt visited Post 356 in Panama City, Fla., and was presented a donation check for $1,000. Post 356 Commander Sam Spice said he has assisted 51 veterans over the past several months with VA benefits.

"We have a giving heart, and we want to take care of veterans and their families," Spice said.

Post 43 in Hollywood, Calif., hand-delivered a check for $1,000 to Schmidt during its Walk for Veterans in December. And Post 396 in Geneva, N.Y., made a donation of $600 because "it's a very important thing to do," said Post 396 Commander Dale VanDeViver. "It's for the good of the Legion, and it's for a good cause."

Employment forum on tap for D.C. trip

An employment forum on Feb. 24 is scheduled in conjunction with The American Legion Washington Conference at the Washington Hilton, 1919 Connecticut Avenue NW.

Events include workshops on financial literacy and resume building; a networking lunch; and a hiring fair sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s Hiring Our Heroes.

Minneapolis is hosting the 2018 National Convention this summer. Our great state was the site of the 9th convention and will once again host this year’s event. The National Convention Corporation of Minnesota is looking at landmarks and sites to host your 2018 National Convention. The site can be directed to one of Minnesota’s host cities for the convention. The American Legion Minneapolis Foundation will sponsor programming throughout the state. For more information, please visit www.minnesotalegion.org and click on 2018 National Convention Information.

There are sponsorship, advertisement and giving opportunities for businesses. If you know of a company that may want to take part in the 2018 convention, please contact Michael Day at (612) 345-6550 or mday@minnlegion.org.
Greetings Fellow Legionnaires

We just witnessed a change of command in our nation—the inauguration of our new President. There will be a period of transition as our new elected and appointed leaders adjust to their new jobs and responsibilities. As members of the largest non-partisan service organization of our veterans, their families and our communities, we support our veterans and provide comfort to the families of the deceased veteran. As to receiving reimbursement that is another matter. The Form 1164 has not been used for a few things? Think about getting your committee people to escape the doomed ship. Many had forgotten their life to send them on the right path toward the lifeboats.

The chaplains quickly moved among the bewildered men, calming them, directing them to life rafts, urging them to summer that Bagley will be able to accommodate you. The information.

The tremendous explosion threw soldiers from bunks and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. The four chaplains quickly moved among the bewildered men, calming them, directing them to life rafts, urging them to life jackets close at hand. They were only 150 miles from life jackets. They were only 150 miles from the stricken ship listed to starboard, sinking.

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” John 15: 13

For God and Country.
Post Centennial Activities

Minnesota posts who are interested in hosting activities during the 2018 National Convention in Minneapolis are encouraged to notify the Minnesota Convention Committee. Individuals or posts should provide their name, number, point of contact, phone number, email address and a short narrative of what kind of events the post would be interested in hosting.

Responses can be sent to JeffBall1208@gmail.com. The deadline for getting the notification to the chairman is June 1.

Vet’s Day on the Hill

The annual Veterans Day on the Hill has been scheduled for Monday, March 20. The rally will be held in the Capitol Rotunda and will begin at 10 a.m. Vet’s Day on the Hill is an opportunity for veterans to participate in the rally and afterwards to visit with their legislators on veterans issues. There will be a House veterans committee meeting at 1 p.m. in the Senate wing of the Capitol. Peggy Deeds members of the Legions Family from across the state to come to the day on the hill. “We would like to see carloads of veterans coming to St. Paul.”

Town Hall

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will hold a Town Hall meeting on March 29 at the VFW Post in North St. Paul. The meeting will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. It is open to veterans, spouses, VA stakeholders and the general public.

Kotter Testimonial

Buffalo Unit 270 is holding a testimonial for Department Commander Denise Mihm at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahomen, on Saturday, May 6. A group of rooms has been blocked at the Shooting Star Hotel. The Hotel Group Code is 73729. Past National Commander John Brienen will be the featured speaker.

Round Tables

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Roundtable will feature “Swords of the Union,” with speaker Tim Bauer. The meeting will be Monday, Feb. 27, at the Lowell Inn in Stillwater. It will begin at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will feature a presentation by John Anderson at 715-386-1268.

The World War II History Round Table at Fort Snelling Veterans Hospital will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 9, and it will feature “The Nazi Hunters,” with speaker Andrew Nagorski who has written about the search for criminals after the war. The cost is $5, free for students and World War II veterans.

Tree Planting Program

The Department Energy and Conservation Committee will once again be selling trees. Available are Norway Spruce, Blue Spruce, White Spruce, Red Pine, Scotch Pine, Black Hills Spruce, Glossy Black Chokeberry, Tamarack and White Pine. They will come in bundles of 20 each and cost $18 including shipping. Also available are Red and Silver Maple and Red Splendor Crab, in bundles of 10 for $14.

To order, go to the Department website: mvl legion.org for an ordering form.“Resources” and click on “Energy and Conservation Tree Order Form.” Trees can also be ordered for Legionville.

Fertility Counseling

The VA has announced that it is amending its regulation regarding fertility counseling and treatment available to veterans and spouses. The new rule will allow IVF for disabled veterans who are unable to procreate. For more information contact your local VA health care system.
In the last week of January, we have had some pretty remarkable nice weather for a good January thaw. Thank you District 10 for hosting the District’s Mid-Winter Conferences has been awesome with these temperatures and good roads.

I was able to attend six of the nine Mid-Winters out of nine scheduled. They were all well attended and very informative. I want to thank those Districts for the warm reception I received.

A special thanks to Districts 1-4-10 for singing Happy Birthday to me when I attended theirs on my birthday January 3. District 4 also surprised me with a cupcake cake. Thank you for making my birthday special. I am very proud to say, “I am a member of the Minnesota American Legion Family.

We still have a number of squadrons around the state who have not turned in any memberships for this membership year.

We are six months into this membership year and there should not be any on the “goose egg.” We are currently working with many of these squadrons to eliminate the zeros.

Now, on the bright side of this, many squadrons are close to being at goal and there are those who are at or above goal. This is awesome.

What this means is there are new members being added and it is now our duty to welcome all these new members and work with and maybe get some involved within these squadrons.

Let them know how much we appreciate their member- ship and mentor them.

We also continue to add new squadrons to our database. Three new squadrons are currently being processed and I know of two or three membership kits now in posts wanting to get a squadron started.

As you can see, we are a growing organization here in Minnesota. More good news is we continue to meet and go above National’s goals they send out. Let’s continue to work on the renewals and making our organization stronger with these new members.

This year, I want to see Minnesota get the “Triple- Nickel” Award. To do this, we need 5 new squadrons, 100% membership and 95% renewals. We are well on our way, so let’s make it happen this year.

New squadrons really help in making the 100%. Let’s do this way or we will be very close on this. This is the year. One thing that is lacking at Department events, mem- bership rallies, conventions along with district functions, etc. is phones. I tell them over and over again that when you are in a crowd, show them how to access membership reports on MyLegion, mailing upon returning home.

I know family involvement enters in along with other personal events but many times we know of these happenings. Let them know how much we appreciate their member- ship so work with that information. Put someone on the phone and get personal,” said Laurel Clewell, a

A special thanks to the Sons of the American Legion for participating in the Minnesota American Legion’s Associate membership program.

American Legion Riders

“Riding is a way to show pride in your country and your flag,” said American Legion Riders national vice commander and Minnesota American Legion Riders state commander Nick Miller. “We are the voice of the local riders and we are here to help in so many ways.”

American Legion Riders provide a membership outreach program that offers needed resources to post members. Many riders are unsure of how to write a letter, send a gift or share a personal story. Riders are willing to share their personal stories of their military service and those of their family members with the goal of reaching out to new members.

“Riders are the eyes and ears of the American Legion,” said Miller.

The American Legion Riders Program is a member resource program that is under the American Legion Riders Program. The program is designed to help post members reach their membership goals. Riders are encouraged to participate in the American Legion Riders Program by writing letters, sending gifts or sharing personal stories. Riders are encouraged to write to any post member in the Department of Minnesota, as well as any other post member in the state of Minnesota, and share their personal stories of their military service and those of their family members with the goal of reaching out to new members.

The American Legion Riders Program is a membership outreach program that offers needed resources to post members. Many riders are unsure of how to write a letter, send a gift or share a personal story. Riders are willing to share their personal stories of their military service and those of their family members with the goal of reaching out to new members.

American Legion Riders provide a membership outreach program that offers needed resources to post members. Many riders are unsure of how to write a letter, send a gift or share a personal story. Riders are willing to share their personal stories of their military service and those of their family members with the goal of reaching out to new members.

The American Legion Riders Program is a member resource program that is under the American Legion Riders Program. The program is designed to help post members reach their membership goals. Riders are encouraged to participate in the American Legion Riders Program by writing letters, sending gifts or sharing personal stories. Riders are encouraged to write to any post member in the Department of Minnesota, as well as any other post member in the state of Minnesota, and share their personal stories of their military service and those of their family members with the goal of reaching out to new members.

The American Legion Riders Program is a membership outreach program that offers needed resources to post members. Many riders are unsure of how to write a letter, send a gift or share a personal story. Riders are willing to share their personal stories of their military service and those of their family members with the goal of reaching out to new members.

American Legion Riders provide a membership outreach program that offers needed resources to post members. Many riders are unsure of how to write a letter, send a gift or share a personal story. Riders are willing to share their personal stories of their military service and those of their family members with the goal of reaching out to new members.
FRIDLEY QUILTS -- The Fridley Unit 303 presented 13 Quilts of Honor to Fridley Post members. A total of 26 quilts were made by President Bonnie Eells with the rest presented to veterans in their homes.

GRANT COUNTY MEMORIAL -- Clint Grove organized the American Legion posts in Grant County to do the planning and fund raising for a Grant County Veterans Memorial. The memorial is located on Highway 79 on the east side of Elbow Lake. There has been continued interest in purchasing pavers for the memorial and an expansion is being planned. For more information, contact Byron Gilbertson, 24367 130th Street, Herman, MN 56248.

NORTH BRANCH NEWEST MEMBER -- Lloyd Haroldson, a 90-year-old World War II Navy veteran, decided it was high time he joined The American Legion. He was an aviation ordnance technician who flew in PBYs hunting German submarines in the Atlantic. He was welcomed by Patience Lind, Membership Director Ron Rollins, Commander Darcy Doble and Past Commander Jim Johnson.

BIGELOW LONGTIMERS -- Bigelow Post 496 held a membership rally supper and honored members whose membership totaled 276 years. From left, front: Denny Meester, Roger Larson, John Sikma, Dennis Boneschans, Arnie Kruse and Tom Peters. In back are District Commander Mark Coney and Vice Commander Cindy Brunk.

ROSETOWN BINGO -- For over 40 years, Rosetown Auxiliary 542 has been presenting bingo for the residents of the Lake Owasso Residential Care Facility. Guests are treated to cookies, ice cream, and a beverage. From left: Connie Anderson, Betty Davidson, Marge Maule, Lynn Olson and Bingo Caller Marge Machgan.

APPLE VALLEY APPLES -- Apple Valley Post and Unit 1776 distributed apples for teachers at local schools. The post has been delivering apples during National Education Week for over 40 years. All district employees get the apples, a total of over 4,400 this year.

4TH DISTRICT SPEAKER -- Douglas Boldt, National Vice Commander from Nebraska, was a featured speaker at the 4th District Mid-Winter. (Photo by Lou Michaels)

GRANITE FALLS HUNT -- Minnesota Heartland Preserve and Chippewa Pheasants Forever teamed up for the fourth year in a row to give veterans a free pheasant and chukar hunt. There were 51 hunters.

Byron Gilbertson, 24367 130th Street, Herman, MN 56248.
Bobby Budde had a love of aviation since he was a child. In the Air Transport Command he was able to fly every plane the Army had, plus a few Navy and Marine Corps planes. He didn’t quit flying until he was in his 90s.

By Al Zdon

Few people in World War II flew as many different aircraft as Bobby Budde.

“I flew every Army plane and quite a few of the Navy and Marine planes. I flew single engine, four-engine, three-engine, everything. That’s what we did.”

Budde was part of the Air Transport Command, a group of pilots who ferried planes to where they needed to be. Another part of the ATC brought supplies to the battle fronts.

For Budde, it meant flying everything from small planes to massive bombers and transport planes. It meant flying all over the United States and one memorable trip from Florida to the island of Corsica in the Mediterranean.

And then there was that assignment toward the end of the war when he had to fly “a big brown egg” from Washington to Ohio. The Army never did tell him what that cargo was. He said it wasn’t glowing.

Bobby Budde was born in Ontario, in western Wisconsin, in 1920, the second child in a family of seven. “We lived in a small house on the edge of town, next to the creamery.

During his childhood and teen years, the family moved often as his father did what he could to find work in the Depression. The often lived on dairy farms, and his father also hauled manure into horse-drawn carts and at one point worked on the railroad.

Did he know growing up the nation was in the midst of the Great Depression? “I had no grasp of that. I learned later on that there must have been some hard times. But we worked hard and we ate well and kept the machines running.”

In one childhood memory, Budde said he was two years old when he and his sister, who was five, decided to go see how their Uncle Len was doing while plowing a field on the other side of a small river.

“There was kind of a homemade bridge across the river, and my sister wanted to see how deep the water was.” Her method was to dip her brother into the water from the bridge as far as she could to see if his feet would touch.

“I don’t know what happened, but I slipped out of her reach and went under. My Uncle Len came running at full speed from the field and got there just in time to see me coming up on the other side of the bridge. He got the water out of me so I could breathe again. He must have done a good job because I’m still breathing.”

For a while, the family lived in Milwaukee while the dad worked as a perishable freight inspector. “He walked along the tops of the cars, and then looked down inside to see if the ice was melted. If it was, he had to replace the ice.”

In the 1930s, he had to drop out of school often to help the family. But the family managed. “We’d have to buy salt, pepper, sugar, kerosene and flour. Pretty much everything else we could get from the farm. “The bus cost $2 a week, and Deke would give us the money to go to the dance on Saturday night.”

Once they got it running, they could go to school in style, and they picked up their pal Slayton along the way. “The cost $2 a week, and Deke would give us the money instead. Then my brother, Deke and I would use the money to go to the dance on Saturday night.”

Budde participated in football until he was kicked off the team. “They’d hike it to the quarterback and I’d cut in front and catch the ball and run. The coach told me not to do it, but then I did it again. He said, ‘Give me back my uniform.’ I guess I wasn’t smart enough and I couldn’t listen well enough.”

Budde said it wasn’t glowing.

Bobby Budde had a love of aviation since he was a child. In the Air Transport Command he was able to fly every plane the Army had, plus a few Navy and Marine Corps planes. He didn’t quit flying until he was in his 90s.

When he was 14, they moved to a nearby farm with 45 head of cattle. “We just needed a bigger ranch and more of a chance to earn income. The family was growing. So I did my share of milking. It was pinch tits and shovel manure. We’d spread it in the field. You’d sling a few shovelfuls and then go dump them. Sling some more, and go dump them again.”

He said there were only a few things the family couldn’t get from the farm. “We’d have to buy salt, pepper, sugar, kerosene and flour. Pretty much everything else we could raise.”

Budde began to go into Sparta on the school bus to attend high school. “One of the kids we’d pick up along the way was Deke Slayton.” Slayton went on to become one of the original Mercury 7 astronauts.

By 1939, Budde was a senior at Sparta High School. During the 1930s, he had to drop out of school often to help his father on the farm. “My dad couldn’t have both the older boys go to school at the same time.” He was 19 when he finally graduated.

“That year my brother and I bought a Model T Ford. My dad loaned us the money. It was $25. The tires were flat and frozen, and we had to haul it back to our farm. But it just slid all the way on top of the snow.”

Once they got it running, they could go to school in style, and they picked up their pal Slayton along the way. “The cost $2 a week, and Deke would give us the money instead. Then my brother, Deke and I would use the money to go to the dance on Saturday night.”

Budde participated in football until he was kicked off the team. “They’d hike it to the quarterback and I’d cut in front and catch the ball and run. The coach told me not to do it, but then I did it again. He said, ‘Give me back my uniform.’ I guess I wasn’t smart enough and I couldn’t listen well enough to play football.”

He did earn a spot on the wrestling team and the boxing team. “I was pretty good.”

His first interest in airplanes came when he was still little and he spent some time on his grandfather’s farm. The farm was in the direct route of the mail plane that went from Chicago to Minneapolis every day.

“The first time, my grandfather said to me, ‘Do you hear that?’ We could hear a rumble in the distance. It kept getting louder and louder, and then we could see the plane coming over the trees. My grandfather said, ‘That’s called an airplane, and there’s a man inside there flying it’ I was amazed. That’s how I got interested in airplanes.”

In school, he got every book he could on aviation and read them from cover to cover. One of his teachers saw Budde’s interest and got more books for him and then they discussed what he had read.

Budde knew two brothers in Sparta who were pin setters at the local bowling alley. “They made enough money to...”

At home in Clear Lake

BOBBY BUDDE

Bobby Budde at home in Clear Lake

As a pilot during World War II

BOBBY BUDDE
A
ter high school, Budde immediately tried out for
a basic aviation program that the state had begun
nearby. “We had to go three nights a week for
two months. We learned about mechanics, health, naviga-
tion, pilot requirements, just about everything. I asked a lot
of questions. A lot of guys thought I was pretty dumb to be
asking so many questions, but I learned early on that if you
illustrated your ignorance, people will teach you what you
don’t know!”

There were 50 young men in the course, and Budde fin-
ished in the top three. The other two were college graduates.

He was promoted to a flight school in nearby Angelo,
Wisconsin, with the goal of earning his private pilot’s
license. “My car was gone by then, and I had to walk eight
miles to the school. We started school on Dec. 27, 1939, and
it was really cold outside. We had to crank and crank and
crank that trainer, but we finally got her going. But we only
stayed up for a few minutes because the oil wouldn’t warm
up.”

Once training finally did get going, Budde got his
chance to solo. “It was very gratifying. It was a wonderful
gift from the Lord. I just said thank you to God. I was up
there all alone. I had total control. I just felt like I could do
it and do it right.”

Graduation from flight school was a big affair with a
large dinner and notable speakers. “My mother said I had to
put on a tie, so I did. At the banquet, they announced all the
awards and then they named the best pilot in the group,
‘Bobby Budde.’ I could have swallowed my gum.”

It was announced at the banquet that another level of
training was now available that would allow the students to
earn a commercial pilot’s license. Budde enrolled right
away.

The training, which started in September 1941, was in
White Bear Lake, Minnesota. The instructor was Tom
North, a Northwest Airlines pilot. Budde can’t quite
remember what plane they used, but it may have been a
Stearman trainer.

“That was a lot of power for us student pilots. We’d fly
during the day and do ground school at night. We were
busy.”

On Dec. 7, 1941, he was flying. “When I landed, I found
that a war had broken out.”

A few weeks later he got a notice to appear before the
draft board in Sparta. “I told them that I was in flight
school, and that the Army was looking for instructors. They
told me to go into another room. So they cussed and dis-
cussed it. When they called me back in, they said, ‘Okay,
we’ll keep your gun for now. You’ve got 30 days to finish
that school, and if you don’t we’ll have to give you your
gun back.’”

Budde and the instructor were able to work out an accel-
erated schedule, and he reported back to the draft board in 30
days with his commercial pilot’s license. “Then they told
me I had 30 days to find a flight instructor’s job. God all
Friday.”

Budde and three other pilots began a road trip marathon
that took them first to Chicago and then to other Army train-
ing schools as they headed south. None of the schools need-
ed instructors.

“But then we got to Stanford, Texas. They said they
needed six instructors and they hired all four of us. I
showed up at 9 a.m., and at 1 p.m. I was in the air with my
first student.”

Budde stayed in Stanford for a year and half, mainly fly-
ing the P-19 Fairchild trainer. He trained hundreds of pilots,
but he remembers one in particular.

“I got this guy up, and I wanted to teach him how to get
out of a spin. I showed him how to do it several times, and
then let him try it. But he couldn’t do the recovery. I had to
bring him out. We tried again, and the same thing. I got up to
12,000 feet and put us in a spin. By the time I got us out, we
were below the tree top level.”

Budde was convinced the young man was a good pilot,
but just couldn’t master that maneuver. He finally got him
to pull out of three spins in a row.

“So we landed, and I said, ‘Okay. I want you to go up
and do three recoveries from the left and three from the
right.’ I said, ‘If you can’t recover from a spin, you’ll wash
out and be in the walking army.’ ”

“So he took the plane up, and I sat on a bench and
smoked a cigarette. He was doing pretty good. Pretty soon
some officers came by and they asked what I was doing. I
told them a student was working on his recoveries. They
said that I should wash him out. I told them if they washed
the kid out, they should wash me out at the same time. He
was a good student.”

Not long after, Budde read where the Army Air Corps
was looking for experienced pilots on the West Coast to
tarry airplanes. He and a friend headed west in a Buick.
“We had to carry a couple of five gallon gas cans because
send away for a Pietenpol airplane kit. You built it yourself
and then put a Model A Ford engine in the front. I got to go
for a ride in it. That was living, I’ll tell you.”

Budde used his own money from picking strawberries,
three cents a box, to get him and his brother a ride in a
World War I training plane that was barnstorming through
the community. “The pilot said, ‘If you both can fit in, I’ll
take you both. It was only a five minute ride around town,
but, my God, what a thrill.’ ”

An Air Transport Command C-47 navigates its way above the pyramids in Egypt. Budde was stationed in
Khartoum with the job of bringing supplies to the front lines. (U.S. Army photo)
they ended up at the headquarters for the Air Transport Command on the West Coast in Long Beach, California. He was told he needed to get checked out on a DC-3. He had never flown anything like a DC-3 before. They figured it was as good as any other multi-crew aircraft including B-17 and B-14 on orientation, to learn how to salute or something."

At one point, he got to ferry a DC-3, a larger commercial aircraft. He was supposed to fly the other pilots in on other multi-crew aircraft including B-17 and B-14 on orientation, to learn how to salute or something. Budde got a direct commission from the Army Air Corps as a second lieutenant. He had no officer’s training or basic training. "I think they sent us to a few schools on orienta-
tion, to learn how to salute or something."

One of his routes was to Calcutta and beyond to where they were airlifting supplies for the Chinese over the Hump, a route over the Himalayan Mountains. Budde was able to catch one of those flights and sit in the observer’s seat in a B-24. "They would take off and just circle until they had enough altitude to get over the mountains. Then on the other side, they do the same thing in reverse. Then I hitched a ride back. The big boys who were running the plane were upset I’d done that."

He got orders to transport a cargo plane back to the states to Montana. Budde retraced his route back to Montana and ended up at Stockton in California. His next assignment was in Washington State. "They told us we were to transport material from Washington to Ohio. They said we couldn’t use any of the roads because of the radiation. They were afraid we’d get stuck in the middle, it had all skid marks all the way to the fence on the other side."

On that fence, they had written, ‘That’s all, brother.’ The squadron got to Africa and made several hops across northern Africa. Just one flight began, Budde’s special concern was in Washington State. "I think they sent us to a few schools on orienta-
tion, to learn how to salute or something."

Budde recalls when the Women Air Force Service Pilots began ferrying planes, freeing up the ATC pilots to go overseas. "I remember one in particular. She was a beautiful little lady, just a sweetheart. I was in love with her, but the whole world was in love with her. I didn’t stand a chance. She took off one day from the Long Beach airport and crashed. It was very sad." Then one day, he got orders to the East Coast. "They have more weather on the East Coast, and I wasn’t too happy." He needed to worry, though, because he didn’t spend much time there. "I got there, and they said, ‘Here’s your pilots. Take them to Corsica.’"

Budde was assigned to lead a full squadron of pilots and crews to deliver about 18 B-25 bombers to the Mediterranean Island of Corsica. "I’d never heard of Corsica."

"So I was piloting the lead plane. I had a radio on a spe-
cial frequency that the other planes didn’t have."

The group started out in Florida, went to Cuba, then made three stops across the top of South America finally getting to the Pacific Coast in California. The next was across the Atlantic to the island of Ascension off the coast of Africa. "I got the guys lined up before we took off for Ascension and I told them they had followed me here, and they were going to follow me the rest of the way. I told them to ask questions if they were thinking they were being held too. They were not going to do that."

The problem was that the airstrip at Ascension, called “Widzewsky Field” after a local bird that made noise all night long, was very short. "It started on one side of the island at the water’s edge, went over in the hump in the middle with skid marks all the way to the white fence on the other side of the island at the water’s edge."

There was a white board fence at the beginning of the runways there. It was new, and there was no machine. In it, I could see the marks on the runway just on the other side of the fence, and I put my wheels down on those marks. I told the other pilots to come in at one mile per hour more than stall speed. The first guy just crossed the middle, it had all skid marks all the way to the fence on the other side.

On that fence, they had written, ‘That’s all, brother.’ The squadron got to Africa and made several hops across northern Africa. Just one flight began, Budde’s special concern was in Washington State. "I think they sent us to a few schools on orienta-
tion, to learn how to salute or something."

Budde was talking to the instructor who said he had to get training to be pilots. He and his brother also got into the crop dusting business and owned two airplanes. He tried to get on with the airlines, but he was one of thou-
sands of ex-military fliers who were flooding the market. After several years, he learned of a meeting in St. Paul being held to look at potential pilots. He passed the first phase and was sent to Chicago for more testing and inter-
views. "We started with 50 or 60 applicants, and now it was down to five of us left."

He was sent to Denver to learn to be a co-pilot on a DC-
3. Budde was talking to the instructor who said he had about 60 hours on the plane. "I told him I had about 450 hours. He said we could probably cut the training short."

Budde had a 30-year career with United, and ended up flying Boeing 737s. He was forced to retire when he turned 60. But that didn’t end his flying career. He became interested in air racing and continued to enter races until he was 91. "In September 2001, I was in Reno and I had taken my plane up to practice with the pylons. There was another guy up there practicing with me. I could see them waving a red flag down below, and so I finally came down. The guys said, ‘Don’t you know they’re flying airplanes into the World Trade Center?’ Every plane in America is grounded. You’re the last one to be in the air.’"

With his eyesight failing, Budde was actually able to keep his pilot’s license longer than he could his driver’s license. In the end, he had to give up both.

In his hangar, out back from his house in Clear Lake, Budde still has four airplanes, all classics from yesteryear. He owns a vintage Taylorcraft, a Pietenpol Scout that uses a Model T engine, a 1931 Cessna Air Master, and a Piper PA-20, which is for sale.

Budde met his wife, Ruth, at a dance hall in La Crosse in the late 40s. "There was this beautiful little girl all by her-
self. My friend went over and asked her to dance, but she wouldn’t. So, later I went over and she said okay. I don’t know if she liked my looks or the music, but after that she didn’t want to talk to me anymore. She’s still as good looking as ever, and she’s the biggest blessing in my life.”

Ruth and Bobby have five children, ten grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Their son, Bobby III, was also a pilot in the Air Force, and their grandson, Bobby III, also serves in the Air Force.

The Buddes live in a house on a lake, with a private air-
port across the road. “It was just right for us,” Ruth said. “He got to be near his airplanes, and I got to go fishing.”

Budde flew for United Airlines for 30 years. Budde never did find out. Hanford, Washington, of course, was where the Army was creating plutonium for atomic bombs. Material from Hanford was used in the first atomic device at Trinity site in New Mexico and in the bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki.

Budde got out of the service in 1945 and took a train back home. "I got on the tractor and started helping my dad on the farm.”

He got a job as a flight instructor for GIs who were coming home and wanted to use their GI Bill to get training to be pilots. He and his brother also got into the crop dusting business and owned two airplanes. He tried to get on with the airlines, but he was one of thou-
sands of ex-military fliers who were flooding the market. After several years, he learned of a meeting in St. Paul being held to look at potential pilots. He passed the first phase and was sent to Chicago for more testing and inter-
views. "We started with 50 or 60 applicants, and now it was down to five of us left.”

He was sent to Denver to learn to be a co-pilot on a DC-
3. Budde was talking to the instructor who said he had about 60 hours on the plane. “I told him I had about 450 hours. He said we could probably cut the training short.”

Budde had a 30-year career with United, and ended up flying Boeing 737s. He was forced to retire when he turned 60. But that didn’t end his flying career. He became interested in air racing and continued to enter races until he was 91. “In September 2001, I was in Reno and I had taken my plane up to practice with the pylons. There was another guy up there practicing with me. I could see them waving a red flag down below, and so I finally came down. The guys said, ‘Don’t you know they’re flying airplanes into the World Trade Center?’ Every plane in America is grounded. You’re the last one to be in the air.”

With his eyesight failing, Budde was actually able to keep his pilot’s license longer than he could his driver’s license. In the end, he had to give up both.

In his hangar, out back from his house in Clear Lake, Budde still has four airplanes, all classics from yesteryear. He owns a vintage Taylorcraft, a Pietenpol Scout that uses a Model T engine, a 1931 Cessna Air Master, and a Piper PA-20, which is for sale.

Budde met his wife, Ruth, at a dance hall in La Crosse in the late 40s. “There was this beautiful little girl all by her-
self. My friend went over and asked her to dance, but she wouldn’t. So, later I went over and she said okay. I don’t know if she liked my looks or the music, but after that she didn’t want to talk to me anymore. She’s still as good looking as ever, and she’s the biggest blessing in my life.”

Ruth and Bobby have five children, ten grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Their son, Bobby III, was also a pilot in the Air Force, and their grandson, Bobby III, also serves in the Air Force.

The Buddes live in a house on a lake, with a private air-
port across the road. “It was just right for us,” Ruth said. “He got to be near his airplanes, and I got to go fishing.”

Budde flew for United Airlines for 30 years.
Greetings from the Fighting Fifth.

This month’s article will be short and sweet as I have had an unexpected extended “Vacation.” I had originally planned on flying home on December 26th, but after spending 25 days in the hospital in Manila, I am preparing to fly home next week to see if I will have surgery or not. I have had appointments when I return home next week to see if I am prepared to fly home. I had originally expected to have my surgery in the next revitalization. I had originally expected to have my surgery on April 22, 2017 at my home Post in North St. Paul, Post 39. We will get the details and tickets out soon.

The Fourth District Joint Testimonial dinner will be held on February 21st at my home Post in North St. Paul, Post 39. We will have a delicious dinner starting at 5:00 p.m. with lunch at noon. Call the Richfield Post to reserve a lunch ticket.

The American Legion National Commander will be visiting the 10th District to collect memberships and bring them to the mid-winter conference. It was a very good conference with national commander Charles E Schmidt here in the 10th District. Those that have made Goal will get a picture with him. Those currently serving and those who will follow in our footsteps need to look for new members and call those who are not interested. We all need to look for new members and call those that have left one member or another. Maybe they came on hard times and maybe with the help of your Post or a few members, you might be able to help them get their membership up to date.

The 4th District Joint Testimonial dinner will be held on April 21st at my home Post in North St. Paul, Post 39. We will get the details and tickets out soon.

Upcoming district events: February 4th – Sweetheart Rally in New Prague; RCCU – February 8th at Rosemount American Legion Post 45 for their general meeting @ 7:00 p.m.; February 19th - VA Hospital visitation @ 12:30.

This is the time of year that membership slows down and those last few remaining become harder to reach. We need to continue to contact those who have not renewed and reach out to the members of Post 1982 and ask them to transfer into your Post. Over the next few months we will be having several revitalization events in the district and working diligently to increase our membership numbers.

Hello from the 10th District.

Hello 8th District Legion Family

The American Legion National Commander will be visiting the 10th District on February 7th at HIBbbing for lunch at Post 222 in Hibbing and then dinner at Post 71 in West Duluth. Let’s make sure he feels welcome.

On February 20th our Legion membership is at 87.98%, our Sons is at 70.76% and our Auxiliary membership is at 71.13%. New members are needed. We need to have no membership turned in and one Auxiliary unit who has not turned in any membership, so let’s get on it. Remember do not hold membership. If you have received membership dues from a member you must send it to Department immediately. Our power to lobby for and help veterans and their families comes from our membership. I know we can make 100% in the 8th district family we just need to focus and get it done. OK enough lecturing, now get out there and enjoy our above normal temperature.

Respectfully, Jennifer Havlick, 8th District Past Commander.

February 2017 Minnesota Legionnaire Page 11

Greetings to all members of the Fabulous Fourth. We had a very successful revitalization on January 12-14th. We gained around 30 members; however, only a handful of Posts came and worked the lists. Thank you to all that were there. We all need to look for new members and call those that have left one member or another. Maybe they came on hard times and maybe with the help of your Post or a few members, you might be able to help them get their membership up to date.

The 4th District Joint Testimonial dinner will be held on April 21st at my home Post in North St. Paul, Post 39. We will get the details and tickets out soon.

Upcoming district events: February 4th – Sweetheart Rally in New Prague; RCCU – February 8th at Rosemount American Legion Post 45 for their general meeting @ 7:00p.m.; February 19th - VA Hospital visitation @ 12:30.

Thank you all for this opportunity to serve the Fabulous Fourth District.

First place in the nation and the 7th District has slipped and as the Commander-in-Chief we have followed their orders. We continue to serve as members of The American Legion. As our Preamble so notably states, “For God and Country we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America.” We must continue to grow our great organization and ensure that government at all levels knows, understands and keeps the promises they made to our Veterans.

Greetings to all members of the Fabulous Fourth. We had a very successful revitalization on January 12-14th. We gained around 30 members; however, only a handful of Posts came and worked the lists. Thank you to all that were there. We all need to look for new members and call those that have left one member or another. Maybe they came on hard times and maybe with the help of your Post or a few members, you might be able to help them get their membership up to date.

The 4th District Joint Testimonial dinner will be held on April 21st at my home Post in North St. Paul, Post 39. We will get the details and tickets out soon.

Upcoming district events: February 4th – Sweetheart Rally in New Prague; RCCU – February 8th at Rosemount American Legion Post 45 for their general meeting @ 7:00p.m.; February 19th - VA Hospital visitation @ 12:30.

Thank you all for this opportunity to serve the Fabulous Fourth District.

Greetings to all members of the Fabulous Fourth. We had a very successful revitalization on January 12-14th. We gained around 30 members; however, only a handful of Posts came and worked the lists. Thank you to all that were there. We all need to look for new members and call those that have left one member or another. Maybe they came on hard times and maybe with the help of your Post or a few members, you might be able to help them get their membership up to date.

The 4th District Joint Testimonial dinner will be held on April 21st at my home Post in North St. Paul, Post 39. We will get the details and tickets out soon.

Upcoming district events: February 4th – Sweetheart Rally in New Prague; RCCU – February 8th at Rosemount American Legion Post 45 for their general meeting @ 7:00p.m.; February 19th - VA Hospital visitation @ 12:30.

Thank you all for this opportunity to serve the Fabulous Fourth District.

Greetings to all members of the Fabulous Fourth. We had a very successful revitalization on January 12-14th. We gained around 30 members; however, only a handful of Posts came and worked the lists. Thank you to all that were there. We all need to look for new members and call those that have left one member or another. Maybe they came on hard times and maybe with the help of your Post or a few members, you might be able to help them get their membership up to date.

The 4th District Joint Testimonial dinner will be held on April 21st at my home Post in North St. Paul, Post 39. We will get the details and tickets out soon.

Upcoming district events: February 4th – Sweetheart Rally in New Prague; RCCU – February 8th at Rosemount American Legion Post 45 for their general meeting @ 7:00p.m.; February 19th - VA Hospital visitation @ 12:30.

Thank you all for this opportunity to serve the Fabulous Fourth District.
Obituaries of members of the Legion Family will be published in the Minnesota Legionnaire in a monthly column under the heading “Taps.”

Obituaries must be recent, within the last two months prior to the publication of the new edition of the Legionnaire. For example, the February edition would only contain obituaries from January and December.

While the obituaries are brief, the Legionnaire does seek certain information for our readers:

1. Complete name of deceased.
2. Age at death.
3. Branch of service and war or wars the veteran served in.
4. Exact date of death.
5. Additional information about the veteran’s service background, including unit, type of service, place of service, medals, etc.

The post, unit or squadron the deceased belonged to.

Background including unit, type of service, place of service, and in.

Correction

LaTuff, Edward Forrest “Buster,” 83, Marine Corps vet-

ern of the Korean War, died Nov. 17, 2016. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

LaBounty, Donald A., 86, Marine Corps veteran of the

Korean War, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaRochelle, Donald E., 66, Air Force veteran of the

Korean War, died Dec. 29, 2016. He served as a pararescueman in the 82nd Airborne, serving for six years. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaTuff, Edward Forrest “Buster,” 83, Marine Corps vet-
ern of the Korean War, died Nov. 17, 2016. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

LaBounty, Donald A., 86, Marine Corps veteran of the

Korean War, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaRochelle, Donald E., 66, Air Force veteran of the

Korean War, died Dec. 29, 2016. He served as a pararescueman in the 82nd Airborne, serving for six years. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaTuff, Edward Forrest “Buster,” 83, Marine Corps vet-
ern of the Korean War, died Nov. 17, 2016. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

LaBounty, Donald A., 86, Marine Corps veteran of the

Korean War, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaRochelle, Donald E., 66, Air Force veteran of the

Korean War, died Dec. 29, 2016. He served as a pararescueman in the 82nd Airborne, serving for six years. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaTuff, Edward Forrest “Buster,” 83, Marine Corps vet-
ern of the Korean War, died Nov. 17, 2016. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

LaBounty, Donald A., 86, Marine Corps veteran of the

Korean War, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaRochelle, Donald E., 66, Air Force veteran of the

Korean War, died Dec. 29, 2016. He served as a pararescueman in the 82nd Airborne, serving for six years. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaTuff, Edward Forrest “Buster,” 83, Marine Corps vet-
ern of the Korean War, died Nov. 17, 2016. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

LaBounty, Donald A., 86, Marine Corps veteran of the

Korean War, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaRochelle, Donald E., 66, Air Force veteran of the

Korean War, died Dec. 29, 2016. He served as a pararescueman in the 82nd Airborne, serving for six years. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaTuff, Edward Forrest “Buster,” 83, Marine Corps vet-
ern of the Korean War, died Nov. 17, 2016. He was a member of Redwood Falls Post 38.

LaBounty, Donald A., 86, Marine Corps veteran of the

Korean War, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

LaRochelle, Donald E., 66, Air Force veteran of the

Korean War, died Dec. 29, 2016. He served as a pararescueman in the 82nd Airborne, serving for six years. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.
The battle took place at about the same time as the Battle of Stalingrad, Simer said. Army Group Center was shattered. Soviet troops taking on about 800,000 German troops. Called Operation Bagration and it included 2.3 million soldiers.

The Germans had great flexibility to one micro-managed by Hitler who had no strategic plan. It fueled the destruction of countless German troops.

By May, Soviet forces were in Berlin and the war was over.

Konigsberg held on until April. On April 6th the Soviets began their final assault, in many cases going house to house. “The Germans were fighting with the remnants of Army Group Center, the volkssturm (militia), police, naval forces. In three days, the city fell. About 90 percent of it was destroyed. Meanwhile, the civilian population, which had been forced to stay at the beginning of the battle, were now in full retreat down the Baltic coast. Many took to ships, and one of them, MV Wilhelm Gustloff, was sunk on Jan. 30 with 9,000 drowned including 5,000 children. By May, Soviet forces were in Berlin and the war was over. The sad lot of the Germans in East Prussia, though, was far from over. “East Prussia ceased to exist. It was the largest ethnic cleansing in history.” The entire German population was eventually moved and the territory became part of the Soviet Union and Poland.

Konigsberg, once a historic and cultural German center, is now Kaliningrad and few traces of the old city remain.

By the summer of 1944, the German army was reeling back into their home country desperately trying to halt the Soviet onslaught. Simer made the point that the fighting quality of the two armies had totally reversed over those three years. “In 1941, the Soviet top leadership was slow to react, the army was poorly trained and poorly equipped, and the officers were politically chosen. The Russians had to use strong discipline to keep the panic away.” “The Germans, on the other hand, had perfected the blitzkrieg style of warfare, had total air superiority and a great officer corps.”

The Germans also left in their wake a record of terror and atrocity among the civilian population of the Soviet territory it conquered. By 1944, the Russian officer corps had matured and learned, the army was well equipped and hardened after three years of fighting, and the Soviets now had total air superiority. The Germans by this time had gone from an army that had great flexibility to one micro-managed by Hitler who gave out “no retreat” orders again and again. “It fueled the destruction of countless German troops.”

The Germans were forced to bolster their shrimp with army with older men, younger boys, and volunteers in the national guard. They were not top line troops. A big factor was that there was a vengeance motivation on the part of the Red Army for the suffering that had occurred in Russia.

In the summer of 1944 the Soviets began a massive offensive at German’s Army Group Center. The attack was called Operation Bagration and it included 2.3 million Soviet troops taking on about 800,000 German troops. Army Group Center was shattered.

There were more prisoners taken in Bagration at Stalingrad on a house by house basis.

The attack on East Prussia, the part of Germany closest to the Soviet Union, was the first incursion on German soil. “Germany had essentially lost the war by the end of 1944, but they were still putting up a furious resistance.”

Simer quoted one Russian soldier as saying that, “They fought like trapped wolves the closer we got to Berlin.”

The attack on East Prussia and Konigsberg, began on Jan. 12, 1945, and was aimed mainly at protecting the Red Army’s right flank as the main army headed for Berlin. The attack would also to trap German army units along the Baltic coast.

The Soviet effort at first stalled, but then picked up momentum as the German lines of resistance gave way one by one. “Up to this point Konigsberg had not been part of the war. It had been bombed in August. But the German military was still controlled by the propaganda people, and they were saying that the Russians would never enter German soil. The civilians didn’t know what was coming their way.”

Once the battle began, though, many Germans wanted to flee the Soviet army, but those who tried to escape were considered traitors. “Arm-in-arm with the Russians while fighting the Army by that time, and they executed civilians who tried to get away.

The Soviets did have vengeance on their mind. Simer showed a series of Soviet posters that illustrated the revenge intended for what Germany had done in the Soviet states. “The Soviets had a 15-1 man advantage in some cases,” Simmer said. “The Germans were fighting to keep the escape routes open. The German nut was very difficult to crack.”
Minnesota has been very busy under the leadership of Chairman Sandy Fredrickson in getting the Department of Minnesota’s future in order. The National organization started a large number of a construction month and they are able to of our 100th anniversary. Minnesota was very lucky to have both Kris Nelson and Lori Skilfeder in the beginning stages to help us get organized. It has been a struggle but with Sandy’s leadership and the hard work of the 5 goal Champions, Jean Walker, Karla Otterness, Robin Dorf, Judy Ackerman and Danielle Leonard, light is showing up in the tunnel. The following was received from National President Mary Davis via her Facebook page:

Don’t forget to come join us and get involved with our National’s Centennial Strategic Plan, and in an effort to promote leadership skills throughout the American Legion Auxiliary, I will be recognizing those women who are nominated by their fellow members for having implemented or having displayed leadership qualities that help us build a strong organization.

My first shout out as #AmericanLegionAuxiliary National President goes to Robin Dorf, Michelle Leonard, Jean Walker, Judy Ackerman and Karla Otterness for their leadership on our National’s Centennial Strategic Plan. Just look at the amazing leadership qualities they have displayed as shared by their friend and Centennial Strategic Planning Chairman, Sandra Fredrickson:

Minnesota has a great team of champions. We are on track with our goals and moving forward in strengthening our department. We should know soon if our initiative in raising funds for public relations equipment becomes a reality. Our team is responsive and they are active! We are working to add more strategy members; we just have to keep working at it! Their work on the Centennial Strategic Plan can be summed up in one word — outstanding. They are all great leaders.

Join me in congratulating these #ALARockStars.

The Department of Minnesota now has all of the information regarding our Strategic Plan on our website at mala.org. Every District and Unit in Minnesota needs to join in on this plan to ensure continued growth and survival of the organization. If anybody would like more information or assistance on how to find information, please contact the Department Office.

The purpose of the National Salute to Veteran Patients Program is to:

-- Pay tribute and express appreciation to Veterans;

-- Increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center;

-- Encourage citizens to visit hospitalized Veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

The week of February 14 each year is your opportunity for closed territories, starting at 12:01 a.m. and their Americanism programs.

This year the reports have again been reformatted to make it easier to read. There are many you attend you learn something new. The best part though, is that you meet someone new. Bruce and I went to the Auxiliary’s Washington DC conference starts the end of the month. It is a great opportunity for us to voice our concerns and opinions with our Senators and Representatives regarding issues pertaining to our veterans. Please let me know if you have any concerns that you would like brought up.

Washington DC conference starts the end of the month the Legion will be holding the Sweetheart Rally and I hope to see a lot of you in New York. Happy Valentine’s Day to all of you.

The week of February 14 each year is your opportunity to:

-- Pay tribute and express appreciation to Veterans;

-- Increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center;

-- Encourage citizens to visit hospitalized Veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

The week of February 14 each year is your opportunity to:

-- Pay tribute and express appreciation to Veterans;

-- Increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center;

-- Encourage citizens to visit hospitalized Veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

Americanism is February month. Work with the schools on the essay contests. We'd love to have Minnesota win at our schools. We'd love to have Minnesota win at the Department of Minnesota, inclusive for closed territories, starting at 12:01 a.m.

Americanism is February month. Work with the schools on the essay contests. We'd love to have Minnesota win at the Department of Minnesota, inclusive for closed territories, starting at 12:01 a.m.
MINNESOTA GIRLS STATE

The American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State session has been set for June 11 - 17, 2017 at Bethel University in St. Paul. Now is the time to send your $300.00 fee to reserve a place for your American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State citizen(s). Cut-off for reservations is March 31. Upon receipt of your reservation fee ($300.00 per girl) you will receive the needed registration packet(s).

Enrollment is limited to the first 445 applications received. The name of the girl, information sheet, enrollment card, pledge and order form for the citizen’s Capitol Day polo-shirt must be into the Department office by May 1.

There is no restriction as to the number of delegates a Unit may send to American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State from their high school(s). The delegate must be a Minnesota resident, or attend a Minnesota school. Please note that there will be NO refunds given this year. Once we receive your registration fee and you do not have a girl to sponsor we will use it for a deserving girl who wants to attend but has no sponsor.

Each high school principal has received a mailing pertaining to American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State. Contact your high school now and let them know if you will be sponsoring a girl. High schools may not register a girl on their own. All American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State citizens must be sponsored by an American Legion Auxiliary Unit.

SECRETARY SANDIE’S NOTES

Well, back to having to use my brain to come up with something to write – I always hated Mass Media in high school but here I am writing articles for you. A real sweet guy whom I hadn’t seen in quite a while came up to me at the Montgomery Legion and said, “I do read your article every month.” Well Kyde, thanks for the support. I am now up to about 15 people who read it. I do remember some of the mischief you and your bowling team got into, especially with Shorty right in the thick of things. Some memories are best to be left at that.

By the time this is out Mid-Winters should be over with. I sure hope everyone learned lots and will pay the knowledge forward. I know President Carol ran herself silly trying to make it to everything. She is such a trooper. Here at the office we are off and running starting to plan the Department Convention. It will be held in Mahnomen this year at the Shooting Star Casino. Yes that’s right, Sandie has to go to another casino for convention. It is such a burden to have put upon me, but as you know I can handle it. Right at this moment I am throwing each of you a huge Valentine’s kiss – I hope you caught it.

I am using Lady Liberty this year to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship. What can you do?

Be knowledgeable on flag history, etiquette, proper disposal methods, and promote the observation of patriotic holidays so your community will look to the ALA for information and leadership. Make door hangers about flying the US Flag and get out in the community to educate them about the proper way to display and when to replace the flag.

I encourage units to support the Legion Oratorical contest, Legion baseball, and Junior shooting sports programs. Remember, it’s more fun to work as a family. Wear your ALA logo clothing and have a blank membership application for the Legion family with you at all times. Support our Blue Star and Gold Star families with a banner for their window or visit. Work with Operation Military Kids and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration.

Its time to work on the Americanism Essay Contest. Get the information out to children. The theme this year is “How does learning about government and our America help you become a future guardian of the liberties of our country?”

Let’s increase this year’s participation by partnering with your school to make this years contest a big success. Entries must include the Americanism Essay Contest cover sheet. Encourage your children and grandchildren to participate in the essay contests.

I am using Lady Liberty this year to promote Americanism as she is now 130 years old. And she will be at Girls State this year so the girls can take pictures with her. Keep up the good work this year.

FRIDLEY TRAINING -- Auxiliary leadership gathered at the Fridley Post for leadership training in January. It was led by Robin Dorf.

Program of the Month: Americanism

By Sandy Wersal

The Americanism program is promoting patriotism and responsible citizenship. What can you do?

Be knowledgeable on flag history, etiquette, proper disposal methods, and promote the observation of patriotic holidays so your community will look to the ALA for information and leadership. Make door hangers about flying the US Flag and get out in the community to educate them about the proper way to display and when to replace the flag.

I encourage units to support the Legion Oratorical contest, Legion baseball, and Junior shooting sports programs. Remember, it’s more fun to work as a family. Wear your ALA logo clothing and have a blank membership application for the Legion family with you at all times. Support our Blue Star and Gold Star families with a banner for their window or visit. Work with Operation Military Kids and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration.

It is time to work on the Americanism Essay Contest. Get the information out to children. The theme this year is “How does learning about government and our America help you become a future guardian of the liberties of our country?”

Let’s increase this year’s participation by partnering with your school to make this years contest a big success. Entries must include the Americanism Essay Contest cover sheet. Encourage your children and grandchildren to participate in the essay contests.

I am using Lady Liberty this year to promote Americanism as she is now 130 years old. And she will be at Girls State this year so the girls can take pictures with her. Keep up the good work this year.

AMERICANISM CHAIRS -- Dee Dee Buckley, Northwestern Division Americanism Chair and Sandy Wersal, Minnesota chair, are shown with Lady Liberty.
Anxiety, PTSD, Depression Related to Military Service

Former VA Decision Review Officer, VA Disability Appraiser, Accredited Appeals Appraiser since 2010 Specializes in Mental Health Compensation

Jon Brown
952-201-1799
www.lets1bl.com
JonBrownAppeals@gmail.com

800-777-7538
e-mail: vetlake@frontiernet.net
www.veteransonthelakeresort.org

RESORT FOR DISABLED VETERANS, ACTIVE DUTY AND ABLE BODIED VETERANS, DISABLED GENERAL PUBLIC AND FAMILIES.

Ely, Minnesota

Attention Veterans!
This is your northern Minnesota resort. Barrier-free and open 12 months a year. Gateway to the BWCA.

800-777-7538
e-mail: vetlake@frontiernet.net
www.veteransonthelakeresort.org
All cabins have a lake view.

Reverse Mortgages

Call for a free consumer guide and personal quote.
-- Must be 62 or older.
-- Never make a monthly mortgage payment again.
-- Receive a lump sum of cash, credit line or monthly payments.
-- See how much you could qualify for today.

Let a retired active duty veteran you can trust show you how you may benefit from a Reverse Mortgage.

Mike Kraus
Loan Officer
NMLS ID #283509
7365 Kirkwood Court North, Suite 300 Maple Grove, MN 55369
763-355-8540
mkraus@mulhome loans.com