World War I to be featured in new display at the History Center

Visitors to the exhibit will have a chance to see artist David Geister paint a mural.

World War I, the Great War, the War to End All Wars, brought many things to America: Enhanced international clout, women’s rights, industrial growth, a migration of black people to the northern states, and a major flu epidemic.

The end of the war also brought the soldiers and sailors home, and the creation of The American Legion.

That war, so important in our history and so little studied in America, will be the subject of a new exhibit, “WWI America” at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul beginning April 8.

“The war impacted everything in America,” Exhibit Curator Brian Horrigan said. “America walked through that door in April 1917, when we entered the war, and we’ve never been the same.”

The opening of the exhibit will commemorate the 100th anniversary of entrance of America into the Great War in April 1917. The display will run through Sept. 4.

“It’s a complicated story,” said Randal Dietrich, program specialist at MHS.

“The focus of the exhibit will be more on what was happening over here rather than over there.”

Dietrich said the war had tremendous impact in the U.S. “The making of modern America was shaped by the World War I experience.”

One of the features of the exhibit will be a huge mural, eight feet high by 30 feet long, that will be actually be painted while people are viewing the exhibit this summer. It will be done by Minnesota artist David Geister.

DEC establishes new state committee to promote training

LEGIONVILLE – The Department of Minnesota Executive Committee has established a new statewide committee to deal with training.

The three person committee will focus on the education and training of the leadership of the Minnesota American Legion at the Department, district, county and post levels.

The new group, called the Education and Training Committee, will begin its work immediately with appointments made by Department Commander Denise Milton. One appointment will be for three years, one of two years and one for one year.

Future commanders will make appointments as terms expire.

The resolution that was passed unanimously by the DEC, meeting at Legionville, cited the change in leadership each year, the new technology and the need for an informed leadership to move the organization ahead.

The resolution was brought to the floor by a three-person ad hoc resolutions committee made up of Bill Barbknect, Sy Fix and chairman Mike Maza.

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Continued on Page 2

PNC John Brieden will speak at Milton Testimonial

Past National Commander John Brieden, who served from 2003-04, will be the keynote speaker at the testimonial for Department Commander Denise Milton.

The testimonial will be held at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahnomen on Saturday, May 6.

Brieden is a native of Texas, growing up in Corpus Christi. He served in the Army for five years, and was discharged as a captain in the 75th Ranger Regiment (Airborne).

In recent years, Brieden was elected Judge of Washington County, a position he still holds. He is also an agent for the State Farm Insurance Co.

He now resides in Brenham, Texas.

Rooms have been set aside at the casino for those who

Continued on Page 6

National Commander’s Tour

National Commander Charles Schmidt spoke at McGregor, one of 10 stops he made in Minnesota. More photos on pages 10-11.

Charles Schmidt visits 10 posts in Minnesota swing

National Commander Charles Schmidt traveled nearly a thousand miles, visited 10 posts and greeted about 735 Legionnaires and others along the way in early February.

Schmidt, who hails from Oregon, traveled with Department Commander Denise Milton and Membership Director Mark Dvorak on a swing through the Gopher State that began in the far north and ended in the Twin Cities.

“Make something good happen in the American Legion,” he told those gathered at Bagley. “That’s what we do, we make something happen.”

The second day of the tour meant travel through a heavy snowstorm as the van went from one side of northern Minnesota to the other.

He urged Legionnaires, Auxiliary members, SAL and Riders to make an impact. “Leave your footsteps on this organization. You are important, this is where the rubber meets the road,” he said.

At Hibbing he noted that membership has been on a steady decline for many years, but it was time to stop the slide. “As we say in the Air Force, grab the stick, pull it back, let’s go up again.”

Continued on Page 6
Milt Schoen, dean of state’s CVSOs, retires from Hennepin Co.

By Al Zdon

Milt Schoen, before his recent retirement, might have been considered the dean of Minnesota County Veteran Service Officers.

Schoen, 68, had been a CVSO for 32 years, the last 24 as the head of the Hennepin County office. He has been active in the statewide CVSO organization, The American Legion, and in dozens of projects through the years to help veterans.

“The veterans service officer now gets much more training, and that’s so important,” Schoen said. “But the main thing for a good CVSO is to care about the people standing in front of you.”

Schoen said the Minnesota CVSO system is regarded as one of the top three in the nation.

“As I look back, I think of veterans who had addictions and never had a chance in the world, who got straightened up and never had a chance in the world, who got straightened out and had good lives. I think of others battling with PTSD who were able to get treatment and follow their dreams.

“Being a CVSO is honorable work, noble work, very rewarding work. You can change a lot of lives.”

Schoen grew up in Duluth and moved to Robbinsdale when he was 15. He graduated from Robbinsdale High School and went on to two years of college before being drafted during the Vietnam War.

After the war, Schoen held various jobs, worked with non-profits, and in 1984 became an assistant CVSO with the Berlin Brigade that was on the front line of the Cold War. Germany as part of a clandestine unit called Detachment A.

During the Vietnam War, Schoen volunteered to become a paratrooper. He was assigned to a unit that spent nearly two years in Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

Schoen said his years working as a veterans service officer was a continuous learning experience. “I learned from the best: Hank Sadler, Duane Kruger, Bob Davis just to name a few.’’

One of the biggest accomplishments Minnesota made during his years, particularly in the post-911 era, was the reintegation of state soldiers back to civilian life after a deployment. The state sent teams of CVSOs and others to Camp McCoy and other places to meet the troops as they came home and make sure they understood their benefits.

“Partly because of that effort, over 98 percent of returning National Guard veterans were enrolled in the federal Veterans Administration medical system.

“The key was that nobody was defending their turf, they just wanted to get the job done for these veterans. One of the problems veterans still in the Guard or other services is that they are reluctant to seek help, sometimes for professional reasons. “Having a mental health condition is not a career enhancer. Others thought that by admitting any problem, they were letting their buddies down. They had a warrior mentality.”

Schoen said his years working as a veteran service officer was a continuous learning experience. “I learned from the best: Hank Sadler, Duane Kruger, Bob Davis just to name a few.’’

“Over the years I’ve seen so many veterans in their late 50s who have had three or four divorces, three or four DWIs, a series of jobs. They’re life has been hell. If somebody had just been there, they could have had a decent life.”

Another success was the introduction of the Veterans Court into Hennepin County and other places in 2010 and thereafter.

“Guards was not the issue for veterans who had gotten in trouble with the law or whatever. We needed to get to the underlying behavior. If they were an addict, we needed to treat them. If they were angry all the time, we needed to get them into anger management.”

Another success was in the number of units of homeless veteran housing that have been built in Minnesota in recent years, including over 100 units sponsored by Hennepin County. “It gives veterans a place to go to rest their lives.”

Schoen said his years working as a veterans service officer was a continuous learning experience. “I learned from the best: Hank Sadler, Duane Kruger, Bob Davis just to name a few.’’

“The professionalism of the CVSO system has also been a success story.”

“The grants program authorized by the state

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“The grants program authorized by the state
WWI exhibit

Continued from Page 1

The MHS has selected 100 key people who created post-World War I America, to be shown in the mural, and the public will have a chance to vote on where they should be placed in the piece of art. One of those figures is Harry Colmery, The American Legion Past Commander who authored the GI Bill during World War II.

Dietrich said the mural is modeled after the “Pantheon de la Guerre,” a French mural that stretched some 400 feet and was painted during the war. A surviving section of that mural, about 100 feet, is still on display at the World War I Museum in Kansas City.

The mural will not just be a celebratory thing, it will show modern America for what it is. For instance, one of the people in the mural is Al Capone, the gangster. The war was complicated and messy. History is usually pretty messy.”

“There will be a chance to see the production of the mural and watch the artist create it,” Dietrich said.

The war also set the stage for World War II, and most of the major leaders in that war had their origins in World War I. “All the major characters of World War II – Patton, Truman, Eisenhower, Hitler, Mussolini – participated in World War I, they just had a different rank.”

The Spanish Flu, which did not come from Spain but originated probably in China, was one of the worst epidemics in world history. The first case in the United States was at a Kansas training camp in March 1918. The war helped spread the disease world-wide, and by the end of the year it killed an estimated 50 to 100 million people, more than the war itself.

Admission to the World War I exhibit is included in the regular admission fee to the history center’s galleries: $12 for adults, $10 for seniors and college students, $6 for children over five. Active military and veterans get a $2 discount.

“It was one of the great turning points in our history,” Horrigan said. “It changed who we. The American Legion came out of that war.”

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Minneapolis is hosting the 100th national convention in 2018. Our great state was the site of the 1 convention and will now host this historic event. The National Convention Corporation of Minnesota is inviting all Legionnaires and guests to say “FOR THE AMERICAN LEGION, I WILL” and contribute towards our Beginning the Second Century of Service Campaign. Gifts can be directed towards Minnesota’s hosting responsibilities for the convention or The American Legion Minnesota Foundation to support programming throughout our state. For more information, please visit www.mnlegion.org and click on 100th National Convention Information.

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Greetings Fellow Legionnaires.

I want to thank all who attended our Sweetheart Rally in New Prague – what a success. Great food, wonderful company and a fantastic venue. What an amazing ballroom with plenty of room for visiting, dancing and friendly auctioning. A review of the 2016 National Oratorical and Boys Nation winners reminded us of the wonderful programs we provide for the youth of our nation. Listening to them I am convinced that America will be in good hands.

To top it off we had almost 1,200 membership turns up for the rally. Way to go. As Membership Director Mark reminds us, it is a commitment to duty stations whose needs will be met. Your jobs are necessary. More of the same. It ain’t over yet. Then on to AIT, maybe Army Green Washington D.C.

On behalf of Congressman Kline, and all of his staff over the years, I would like to thank you for your role in his successes. I look forward to seeing everyone at Legionville for the Appreciation Rally which is a time to acknowledge an outstanding service commander from each district.

We have a history program that we are putting together in video format, a presentation at this year’s national convention in Reno showcasing the history program. Commander Milton wants 100% participation in this.

The history program is much more important than has been generally recognized. This is not a project we can do if we don’t record it. We have to record it so that if we don’t record it, history and the military commitments.

What can do in by continuing to work together as a team. Thank you for your continued hard work.

“Accentuate the Positive” was the recurring theme throughout National Commander Charles Schmidt’s visit to Minnesota. For those of you that attended one of the scheduled stops please share his inspirational message with your fellow comrades. Every one of us is a stakeholder as a member of The American Legion. We all have a vested interest in wanting to remain the largest V0G in the world. National Commander Schmidt is asking each of us to sign up one new member. Just think of it; that would mean over four million members. Let’s stop the slide. He reminded us to “make something good happen.”

Commander Schmidt quoted Mahatma Gandhi, “the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

History Books

To the Editor:

My fellow Department of Minnesota American Legion members; we are halfway through our membership year already. I am sure all the Post and District Historians are busy compiling the history books for the year. This should not be a surprise to anyone. Just a quick note from myself to all of you. When I assumed duties as Department Historian, I said the history contest would be well attended with many entries. The format is in the Officer Manual, pages 147-156. This year’s contest is triple tiered. First, is the Post contest-best entry wins. Second is the District contest. Our local District history books win, and finally the, District with the highest percentage of entrants will win.

This year’s contest is much more important than has been run in the past. How can we have a good record of all our accomplishments and actions serving our fellow veterans and our organization if we don’t record it? We can and we will. If you know and tell new prospects and new members of what we are about. The history leads to public relations, which is vital to our mission. We established the fact we are a vibrant, living veterans service organization that serves America and most importantly our fellow veterans and families. Wouldn’t we have a much stronger argument for overcoming objections when recruiting and retaining members?

Finally, posts need to get registered on the Centennial page. Commander Milton wants 100% participation in this. We are all sitting on aisles that pass pictures of their post and any memorials you might have, along with a short narrative and send them to www.postpics@mnlege.on. We are putting together, in video format, a presentation at this year’s national convention in Reno showcasing our posts and all the great memorials that the great state and department of Minnesota American Legion family has. Questions may be directed to me at Schneekloth@gmail.com or by cell 507-438-6319.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as Department Historian.

Ralph Schneekloth

Mabel

Kline Departs

To the Editor:

As you may know, Congressman Kline will be retiring from Congress. As you can imagine, the competition of the 2nd Congressional district for 14 years. As he finalizes his serv- ice and we continue operations, I wanted to reach out one last time.

Throughout his time in Congress, your feedback as a veteran and military stakeholder has been invaluable. With your help, Congressman Kline fought for Minnesota veterans, servicemen and servicewomen of the Minnesota National Guard, and all of those serving in active duty here in the United States and all over the globe. Serving fourteen years as an active and dedicated Member on the House Committee on Armed Services, Congressman Kline supported our men and women returning from deployments by expanding the successful Minnesota Yellow Ribbon service member reintegration program nationwide, ensured returning veterans had access to employment services and training, supported our servicemen and servicewomen who are called to serve in the middle of their college careers aren’t unfairly harmed due to their military commitment.

This sampling of achievements represents a small fraction of the efforts undertaken by Congressman Kline that were meaningful in helping our nation’s veterans.

On behalf of Congressman Kline, and all of his staff over the years, I would like to thank you for your role in his efforts. We appreciate your feedback, expertise, and input on policy issues that affect you.

Conner Lentz, Legislative Assistant

Washington, D.C.

Army Green

To the Editor:

Citizens volunteer at the nearest recruiter. If they choose the Army, they’ll be a “green sinner.” Sign the pledge and change your life. Don’t make a career project, it isn’t a career.

The drill sergeant is yelling, he’s feeling just fine. Got your attention, didn’t he?

Oh, my Tee hee. Tee hee. Off to the barber or hair salon if you prefer. Look in the mirror. You no longer look like who you were. On to the barracks with your new buddies.

Commander Milton wants 100% participation in this.
Kottom Testimonial

The testimonial dinner for Department President Carol Kottom will be held at the Buffalo Post 270 on Saturday, March 25. Social hour will be at 5 p.m. with the program at 6. Karaoke will follow.

Tickets are $16 per person with a choice of entrees: stuffed pork chop or stuffed chicken breast. RSVPs can be made to Marilyn Miller, 404 Division St., Buffalo, MN 55313, phone 763-682-4796. Please indicate choice of dinners and number, name, phone number and amount enclosed. Checks can be payable to ALA Unit 270. Tickets will be at the door. Deadline is March 18.

Olwold Testimonial

The testimonial dinner for SAL Detachment Commander Gene Olwold will be at Redwood Falls Post 38 on Saturday, April 22. The social will be at 5 p.m. with dinner at 6 and the program to follow. The meal will be a turkey dinner for $15.

RSVPs can be sent to Vida Bacon, 110 N. Payne Street, New Ulm, MN 56073, phone 507-276-8538, or to Jeanette Mertens, 100 Industrial Drive, Redwood Falls, MN 56283, phone 507-828-7666. Please indicate number attending, name, and address. Checks should be payable to Redwood Falls Post 38. Deadline is April 8, and tickets will be available at the door.

Round Tables

The Civil War Roundtable will meet March 27 at the Lowell Inn for a dinner meeting. The subject will be “The Hughes Family of Hudson, and the 4th Wisconsin Regiment.” Michael Hughes will speak.

For more information call Steve, 715-386-126-6. There will also be a Civil War Symposium on Saturday, April 8, beginning at 9:15 a.m. at the Fort Snelling History Center. Registration is $20 per person with advanced registration recommended. Lunch will be $15. Write to TCCWRT at 5540 Sable Drive, Minnetonka, 55343 for a registration form.

Topics include Gen. Longstreet, Sgt. Richard Kirkland, and Fort Snelling.

The World War II History Round Table will have a program on Minnesota native Gen. Lesley J. McNair, who was responsible for training U.S. troops in the war, by Mark Calhoun. The program will be March 23 at 7 p.m. at the Fort Snelling History Center. Admission is free. Students are free as are World War II veterans.

Legion Day at Twins

The annual Legion Family Day at the Minnesota Twins will be Friday, May 19, at 7:10 p.m. at Target Field. The game will feature the Twins vs. Kansas City Royals. Tickets are $23 in the Home Plate View section.

Commander Denise Milton will throw out the first pitch. All posts at the game will have their name on the scoreboard.

To get tickets, call 1-800-32-Twins and hit the 0 to speak to an attendant. Ask for the special American Legion promotion. Credit cards are acceptable with a $5 service charge for each order. Tickets will be mailed. If you have a group of 25 or more, or any questions, call Nick Corcoran at 612-659-4083.

Turkey Hunt

The annual Physically Disabled Veterans Turkey Hunt will be held May 9-11 at Camp Ripley. It is sponsored by the state’s veterans service organizations, the National Guard, and the DNR. Applications are available up to March 20 and may be found on the Legion’s website, mnlgeon.org. For more information, call 320-380-4569.

Military Appreciation Night

A ceremony to honor the nation’s military will be held as part of the Twin Cities Auto Show at the Minneapolis Convention Center on Tuesday, March 14, sponsored by SuperAmerica. The program will include color guards from the Legion and VFW, and the 34th Division Band.

For more information, go to twincitiesautoshow.com.

Drop-in Legal Clinics

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans will sponsor a series of free drop-in legal clinics for veterans. They will include info on housing, employment, benefits, wills, debt collection and family law. For more information, call 651-200-4750. The clinics include:

Legion Family Day at the Minnesota Twins

High percentage leaders at the end of the rally were: Legion, 6th District, 93.76 percent; Auxiliary, 6th District, 89.09 percent; SAL, 5th District, 100.27 percent.

Legends Run Planned

The Minnesota American Legion Riders Legacy Run dates have been slated for this year. The first run will be held from July 28-30 and the second run will be Aug. 4-6. There will be a kick-off party on July 27.

For more information, call 218-270-8293 and leave a message. Information on stops will also be available on MNLegacyRun.org.

Training Program

The Department of Minnesota will have a training program on June 23 at the Brainerd Post and also at Legionville School Patrol Training Camp, just north of Brainerd.

The program will be aimed at leaders at the Department, district, county and post level. But all those who are interested in the Legion and becoming a leader are encouraged to attend. The training will be fun and informative. For more information, contact Jeff Gay at 507-933-4576.

8th District Change

The 8th District has changed the dates of its district convention from June 3 to Saturday, April 22. It is being held at West Duluth Post 71.

WWI vet info sought

Information is being sought on Private Theodor Holanbeck of Rutledge. He was killed in France on Sept. 30, 1918. He served in the 54th Infantry.

A group in the Alsace part of France is planning a commemoration ceremony for Americans killed in that region for September 2018. Holanbeck will be one of those honored. Holanbeck had relatives in Pine County, and he enlisted at Kettle River.

If you have any info please contact Hubert Martin at martinhub.wanadoo.fr.
DEC establishes training committee
Commander Milton told the DEC that a statewide training conference is needed for Business Agents, which is needed before June 23-25. The annual card pickup for districts will be held at the same time.

In other business, the DEC:
— Heard from Lt. Committee Chairman Barkknecht that it’s likely the free accidental death and dismemberment policy the insurance company offers to Legion members may be increased to $2,500 in the near future.

— Was told by Legionnaire Manager Roy Kruger that the camp is now being used by area recruiters to help get recruits ready for boot camp. He said a military fair was going to Mound Post 398 to share the dining room.
- February was rather a quiet month compared to some of my previous months on the road. Of all visits, the highlight of these visits was going to Mound Post 398 to share the dinner every Wednesday with our veterans and their sisters in arms.

Please renew your membership if you have not already done so and for those of you that have renewed-thank you. Unlike the dues of The American Legion, ours are still very reasonable for the benefits we provide yet we still have the same benefits. One of the main benefits of being an SAL member is the benefit of the American Legion Hospital Association. Of your annual dues, we take 25 cents for up to a $3,000.00 benefit for you. But in order to receive this, you have to have been a member for at least one year and a current member in good standing. Minnesota is the only state in the Nation to have such a program. What a great benefit this alone is. Tie this in with the other programs that the American Legion gives your family forefathers for their sacrifices they had not done this, we may not have this Great Nation we have today. I try to make as many as possible. If I don’t make it to yours don’t feel left out it is just as disheartening to me when I have to pick and choose where to go. If only we had more weekends on the calendar.

The National Commander blew through Minnesota on a whirlwind tour. I had the pleasure of having dinner with Commander Chuck in Mound. I presented him with a Department of Minnesota Riders coin. In return I received a program from the National Riders that is going to be on the site of having a national meeting of being number one in the nation once again when we step on stage in Reno with our donation the Legacy fund.

I really cannot emphasize this enough. Your continued membership is vital to the success of our mission. I really wanted to mention to you every day. I look forward to bringing you more information about the American Legion.

Greetings American Legion Family,
I'm pleased to inform you of the annual American Legion Legacy ride recently held its second meeting. It was great to see such a large turnout. A number of the overnights have been established yet there are plenty of room for stops along the way. A big question brought up was the processing of donation checks. If you don't receive one please check out to American Legion Foundation and on the memo line put fund 84. They can be mailed to: American Legion Department 145, 1101 17th St., Suite 1500, St. Paul, MN 55155-2000. Or you can present your donation at any one of our meetings. A third option is to give it to one of the Riders at a post or in your area and they will get it to the proper location. All donations are welcome, there is no limit to the size big or small. Our next meeting will be Saturday, March 4th high noon at Legionville, hope to see you there.

I see a number of Riders have gotten their bikes out taking advantage of the unsanely warm weather we had in February, great start. I am very optimistic that we will have a strong membership in 2018.

Another district recently completed its organization getting its SOP approved by their district executive board. Job well done Fifth District. The Second District is working on their SOP and should have theirs in place soon.

Please keep all of your Chapter activity event requests coming in. Often times I have had to tell folks that I don’t have the time to meet with folks that do not fill out the form on the same day as the chapter. A lesson that I try to make as many as possible. If I don’t make it to yours don’t feel left out it is just as disheartening to me when I have to pick and choose where to go. If only we had more weekends on the calendar.

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American Legion Riders
By Chuck Stone
Department Director
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Another district recently completed its organization getting its SOP approved by their district executive board. Job well done Fifth District. The Second District is working on their SOP and should have theirs in place soon.

Please keep all of your Chapter activity event requests coming in. Often times I have had to tell folks that I don’t have the time to meet with folks that do not fill out the form on the same day as the chapter. A lesson that I try to make as many as possible. If I don’t make it to yours don’t feel left out it is just as disheartening to me when I have to pick and choose where to go. If only we had more weekends on the calendar.

The National Commander blew through Minnesota on a whirlwind tour. I had the pleasure of having dinner with Commander Chuck in Mound. I presented him with a Department of Minnesota Riders coin. In return I received a program from the National Riders that is going to be on the site of having a national meeting of being number one in the nation once again when we step on stage in Reno with our donation the Legacy fund. Together we will do this.

Keep the chrome side up and the rubber side down.
Eagan meeting last spring and walked out as the post’s new commander. After having coffee with several members, he figured out areas that needed improvement.

“The first thing I realized when I took this responsibility was, we have no presence,” Flynn said.

There were communication issues, along with a bank balance of just $263. Flynn, who is semi-retired, began calling local members of the statewide American Legion and asking them to join the Eagan post instead.

The calls drew about 70 new members from the Vietnam War-era along with five new Korean War veterans, one World War II veteran, about 15 new recruits from the Persian Gulf wars and other Mideast conflicts. Those numbers include members who have signed up but not paid, Flynn said.

Flynn also met with city leaders and visited local businesses — gas stations, restaurants, and a Tires Plus — to share information and drop off brochures. His efforts took 70 hours a week last summer and fall, he said.

Because the post doesn’t have a commercial office, Flynn decided to gather the members every two months at a bowling alley.

“I didn’t want to go to a bar because I was afraid our mission would turn into tequila sunrises,” Flynn said.

Not having the responsibility of running a bar and restaurant can actually benefit some posts, Tesdahl said, adding it’s not unusual for posts to be without a home base.

The three meetings so far have been well-attended and members have organized a number of service activities, including distributing 100 flag etiquette books to first-graders, packing food for the food shelf and raising money to sponsor the Eagan American Legion youth baseball team. They’ve also started programs to supply new flags to the community and properly dispose of tattered ones.

Plans include recruiting high school seniors who enlist in the military and developing a color guard to represent Eagan.

Paul Kovach, an Eagan High School teacher who served in the Marine Corps Reserves from 1983 to 1989, is the last veteran in the area to belong to the Legion. He had some of our members and VA benefits.

Despite the Legion’s history and upcoming Centennial will be a reason for posts to look at their history.

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At Buffalo on the fourth and final day, he greeted Department President Carol Kottom in her home unit. “The Auxiliary has never walked behind us, they have always walked beside us,” he said.

At both Buffalo and Richfield, Schmidt also had questions and answer periods where he addressed such topics as member eligibility and VA benefits.

“The First World War did a lot of harm both physically and mentally to our doughboys. We’ve been helping veterans ever since. That’s what we do.”

The tour concluded with a dinner meeting at Mound. He turned to Milton and said that the minute Minnesota makes membership goal this year, she should call him. “I’ll be waiting for that call from Denise, and I know I’m going to get it.”

The driver for the five days was Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl. Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl’s aide Dirk Levy was also part of the entourage.

The first two stops on the planned tour, in East Grand Forks and Thief River Falls, had to be canceled when the national commander was called to a meeting in Texas.
Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona, welcomed The American Legion to Washington D.C. by saying, “You have come here to do the work of God in the city of Satan.”

After his speech, McCain received a national award from the Legion for his work on veterans’ issues through the years.

“Veterans need The American Legion today more than at any other time,” McCain told the “Know before You Go,” session at the Washington Hilton, held just before the delegations from various states headed to Capitol Hill to lobby their elected representatives.

A group of about 35 from Minnesota met with every representative and senator, or their aide, and presented a list of veterans issues the Legion considers important. (See the list on page 9.)

McCain cited a “breakdown in the world order and an attack on the founding principles of democracy” as a major test in America’s resolve.

He noted that the Veterans Choice bill, which allows veterans to seek care outside the VA system in certain circumstances, has been controversial, but it is still needed. The bill expires this summer.

“We want our veterans to have immediate care. No one should be on a waiting list for days, weeks or months.”

New VA Secretary David Shulkin also talked about Veterans Choice, and said it needs to be extended, but also changed. “Choice needs to be streamlined. It’s too complicated. I think it’s time for Choice 2.0, a program that’s not based on mileage or wait times.”

Shulkin told the Legion Family at the session that VA facilities are aging, and money is needed to keep them up to modern standards.

He said the VA in general needed streamlining. “We’ve had enough studies and commissions. We need to get on this task and do it quickly.”

The VA system is unique, he said, and it must remain in place because no other medical system has the expertise to deal with the special needs of veterans, particularly PTSD and traumatic brain injury.

Shulkin said the best practices of private providers and the best practices of the VA need to be combined to “do what is best for veterans.”

The session started with a talk by National Commander Charles Schmidt who urged Congress to pass a flag protection amendment this year. “People have told me we should quit bothering Congress with this request. I say, pass the bill, and we’ll quit bothering you.”

Schmidt was followed by Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tennessee, the chairman of the House Veterans Committee. He said he thought the VA has enough resources, but needed to do a better job of managing those resources.

Roe said the VA needed legislation to make it easier to fire bad employees. “If some of these employees did that kind of work in the private sector, the door would hit them on the backside on their way out.”

Roe, who is a doctor, said that patients much be in charge of their care. “The patient and not the insurance company must make the decisions. In the VA we have the best health care provided by anyone in the world.”

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Montana, who serves on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, also said that Veterans Choice needed to be extended, but improved.

“The third party companies that administer the program need to shape up or ship out.”

Tester also said he favors legislation that will give the VA more power to weed out bad employees. “We need the ability to act quickly and to show them the door.”

Tester urged better care for women veterans. “Women have unique barriers to care. We must improve their privacy and their access to private care.”

He said the VA needs more funding. “I’m sick and tired of Congress shaking its fist at the VA without giving them the resources they need.”

Rep. Tim Walz, D-Minn., talked over veterans issues with a Minnesota delegation in his office in Washington D.C. He announced that he would co-sponsor a bill that would have the U.S. Mint create a gold coin for The American Legion for its centennial. Past Department Commander Bill Goede is at right.

The Minnesota American Legion presented Walz with a plaque honoring his commitment to promoting legislation that benefits veterans.

Past National Commanders Dan Dellinger, Virginia, Dan Ludwig, Minnesota, and Jake Comer, Massachusetts, take in the ‘Know before You Go’ session at the Washington Conference.
Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona, received a Distinguished Service Award from The American Legion for his lifetime achievement in the military, in Congress and as a supporter of veterans rights. It was presented in Washington by National Commander Charles Schmidt.

Members of the Minnesota Auxiliary prepare for going up on the Hill. From left: Shirley Frederick, Rayleen Tolzmann, Sharon Thiemecke, Jean Walker and Margee Keller.

Newly appointed VA Secretary David Shulkin outlined his plans for the agency.

Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tennessee, Chairman of the House Veterans Committee, spoke to the Legionnaires.


Legion priorities for federal legislation

Gender-specific care for women

Women veterans face remarkably different experiences than their male counterparts when transitioning in and out of combat roles, in between services and back to civilian life. VA must ensure an improved quality of life for women veterans with gender-specific health care.

Reclassify cannabis for research

Studies show great promise that medical cannabis is a viable solution for treating pain, inflammation, seizures, mental health disorders, autoimmune diseases, multiple sclerosis, Crohn’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease and even cancer.

Support caregivers

There are 5.5 million caregivers who go unnoticed while they care for America’s wounded. Military caregivers suffer higher rates of depression and health problems than others.

Mandatory reservist exams

Active-duty servicemembers have the right to physical examinations when separating. After all, servicemembers retiring from active duty are required to have such examinations. This same right to an end-of-service exam is not authorized for reserve component servicemembers.

Veterans and widows offsets

Many military retirees must forfeit some of their retirement pay to receive their VA service-connected disability compensations. It is equally outrageous that VA survivor benefits (DIC) are offset from military Survivor Benefit Plan annuities.

Fully fund national defense

Today’s war on terrorism continues to overcome threats to America’s security and national interests at home and abroad. It is critical to maintain a well-funded national security strategy to ensure a strong national defense to protect America and its allies from enemies such as the Islamic State, China and North Korea.

Limit VA Outsourcing

Continued focus is needed to ensure VA can meet challenges in delivering high-quality, timely benefits and health care to veterans. In 2017, critical policy choices must be made, primarily the future of the Veterans Choice Program, which expires in August.

Reform VA claims appeals process

The current VA appeals process is broken and is providing a frustrating experience for veterans. The status quo isn’t acceptable. Congress must pass appeals modernization legislation that would provide veterans with a simple, fair and transparent appeals process in which the vast majority would receive a final appeals decision within a year of filing an appeal.

Defend veterans education benefits

As the creator of the original GI Bill, The American Legion continues to focus on the sustain-ability of this important earned benefit, while ensuring that veterans receive the most benefit possible.

Re-employment rights

Passed by Congress in 1994, the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act protects the rights of servicemembers to be re-employed after returning from active duty, including reserve or National Guard members. The American Legion wants to prohibit employers from pressuring veterans into waiving their veterans employment rights and protections.

Support veteran small businesses

Businesses owned by disabled veterans are required to receive 3 percent of federal contracts.

Continue homelessness funding

To fully implement VA’s pledge to eradicate veterans homelessness, Congress must continue making responsible investments in affordable housing and programs such as Supportive Services for Veterans Families that move veterans and their families off the streets and into stable housing.

Protect the American Flag

The American Legion strongly believes the flag is a symbol of our nation’s freedom and all that we hold in common as Americans, secured by the servicemen and women who sacrificed so much for all citizens. That is why The American Legion continues to urge Congress to approve an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would allow Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the American flag. Our belief is not to silence those who protest perceived injustices. The American Legion is not alone in its belief that our nation’s symbol should be protected from desecration.
National Commander Charles Schmidt of Oregon greeted Bagley Post 16 member Peter Thompson. Thompson, a member of the Ojibway people, was awarded six Purple Hearts during his service in Vietnam.

An awareness walk planned for Elk River was canceled because of cold weather, but Commander Schmidt and Department Commander Denise Milton led an abbreviated walk through the post home.

Schmidt greeted Past National President Evelyn Starr during a stop at West Duluth Post 71.

Duluth Mayor Emily Larson talked over veterans issues with Eighth District Commander Ken Oliver and National Commander Charles Schmidt.

Greeting the National Commander in Bena was a youth drum group from the Leech Lake Reservation.

A t-shirt at Bagley made a statement.
Commander Schmidt spoke at Richfield Post 435 in front of a huge Legion logo.

National Executive Committeeman Marland Ronning introduced Schmidt at several stops along the way.

Commander Schmidt looks through the family scrapbooks of Medal of Honor recipient Dale Wayrynen who was killed in Vietnam. His brother, John, looks on.

Membership Director Mark Dvorak was the emcee for the 10 stops on the tour through Minnesota.

Schmidt greets Hibbing member Al Johnson. Johnson is a longtime member of the color guard that presents the flag at Hibbing hockey games.

The audience at Pine City listened to the National Commander talk.

Princeton Union-Times Associate Editor Debbie Griffin interviewed Schmidt at a stop in Elk River.

Department President Carol Kottom welcomed Commander Schmidt to her home post/unit in Buffalo.

Those who did the awareness walk in Elk River posed for a group photo with their walk tee-shirts.
George Emerson Leach was born into a military family.

Two of his great grandfathers fought in the Revolutionary War. His father fought in the Civil War. Leach himself fought in World War I with the famous Rainbow Division in France.

Leach traced his family history back to 14th century England where one of his direct ancestors, John Leach, was a surgeon for King Edward III. In the 17th century, the Leach Family emigrated to America. His father was orphaned at seven, but was taken in by a farm family. At age 14, William became the new school teacher in his town “because he could whip any of the boys who had run the former teacher out.”

George Leach’s mother, Mary, was born in Michigan in 1945, and his father, William, was born in New Hampshire in 1834. His father was orphaned at seven, but was taken in by a farm family. At age 14, William became the new school teacher in his town “because he could whip any of the boys who had run the former teacher out.”

Leach went to Central High School in Minneapolis, but he barely graduated as he devoted most of his time to athletics. He enrolled at the University of Minnesota, and tried to get an appointment to West Point. He was the alternate on two occasions, but never made the final cut.

As the years went by, Leach, like his father, took on a variety of jobs. One of those was inspecting grain elevators in Minnesota and the Dakotas for an insurance company. Because there were few railroads, Leach rode his bicycle from town to town.

“I didn’t consider it a good day’s work unless I rode my bicycle for 100 miles and climbed to the top of 40 or 50 elevators.”

Leach became an insurance agent, and then got into the banking business in South Dakota. At first, with the land speculation and booming economy, the banking business was lucrative, and at one time Leach owned 26 quarter sections of land. In the end, hard times came to the prairie and Leach was forced to sell his banks and land.

In 1902, he married Pearl Van Vorous, but the marriage took a bad turn in 1910 when she moved to the Bahamas to open a tea room. She never came back, and the two were finally divorced in 1923, although Leach said they always stayed close friends.

In 1905, at age 29, Leach joined Battery B of the First Minnesota Artillery, a National Guard outfit. “From then on, my whole life was wrapped up in the National Guard, and although I had to make a living on the side, it was my first love.”
The men served for no pay, and, in fact, had to chip in 25 cents a week dues just to keep the battery going. Leach moved up from second to first lieutenant his first year, and was made captain in 1908.

The battery bought a stable, but it didn’t work out. “The venture of owning our own horses was not a success, and to save the battery from going into debt, Phil Brooks and I bought the stable and the horses and we started a riding school.”

There were ups and downs in the horse business, he said, “and mostly the latter.” He was eventually forced to sell the stable and farm that he owned.

In 1916, Poncho Villa began making trouble on the Mexican border, and Leach’s unit, which was now called the 151st Field Artillery, was called up and sent to Texas for training. Leach was promoted by Minnesota Gov. Burnquist to colonel, commanding the battalion.

After nine months of hanging around in Texas, the unit was sent home in February of 1917. Leach had a sense that America’s entry into World War I was imminent, and he struggled to keep the National Guard unit together, paying for their meals at a St. Paul Greek restaurant out of his own pocket. The strategy worked when Leach’s unit became the first federally recognized unit in the United States in April when America officially entered the war.

“We were back at Ft. Snelling with the government, not me, feeding the men.”

When President Wilson decided to create a national division, comprised of 26 Guard units and four regular Army regiments, Leach’s 151st Field Artillery was chosen as one of the three artillery regiments. The 42nd Division was given the name “Rainbow Division” because, as Gen. MacArthur said, “It stretched like a rainbow from one end of America to the other.”

The first movement for the 151st was from Ft. Snelling, marching down the same road Leach’s father had marched down at the start of the Civil War. Leach took 1,260 men to Camp Mills, N.Y. In October, the division left for France, and was one of the first American divisions to reach the battlefield.

As the division embarked on a ship called the President Lincoln for transport, Col. Leach was told by the Army that he could not take his band instruments. Leach made a secret agreement with the captain of the ship to stow away the instruments, and they arrived with the regiment in France. “The result was that for months we had the only band in France.”

World War I soldiers were instructed not to keep diaries, lest they fall into the hands of the enemy, but once again Leach ignored the order and kept a thorough diary of his war experience. He said he was convinced by the experience of his father, who did not keep a diary and regretted it, that the men under his command deserved a history of their service.

The diary has over 500 entries, and they tell a story of the 151st and the Rainbow Division over the 19 months they spent overseas.

After spending several weeks in France, the unit finally got its guns, French 75s, on Nov. 18th and began training at Guere.

Leach became brigade commander on Dec. 21 and later became regimental commander. On the 24th, a gun blew up and killed two men. “The men killed were blown to pieces. The destruction was so complete I could not determine the cause, but it was not the fault of the gun crew.”

On the 28th of January, Leach got his first chance to go up in an observation balloon, used extensively in World War I for spotting for the artillery. “I never had to call on so much nerve before. I put on a fur lined suit and had the parachute strapped on me and climbed into the basket about four feet square and started up. The sensation was terrific.”

The balloon ascended to 2,000 feet. In mid-February, the regiment began moving toward the front. On February 20, they arrived at Luneville. “At 7 a.m. I heard my first of the guns.” By the 26th, Leach was involved in placing his guns. “Returning on the road to Pexonne, we had a close call from a shrapnel shell. This has been my first experience under fire, and it is not as bad as I thought it would be.”

The regiment, about three kilometers behind the trenches, began exchanging fire with the German batteries, using forward observation from hilltops and from periscopes along the trench line. On March 4, Leach escorted Col. Douglas MacArthur, who at that time was the division’s chief of staff, through the gun emplacements.

That same night, the Germans attacked the Rainbow Division’s lines and 20 men were killed. The attack failed, and the Germans were driven off. The next day, March 5, there was heavy shelling all along the line, with several wounded. “This has been a bad day.”

On the 6th, Leach was resting in the hay loft of the barn that was his quarters when a sentry informed him that a “general officer” wanted to talk to him. Leach descended the ladder and turned around to find himself face to face with Gen. Pershing, the leader of the American forces.

Leach came to attention, and Pershing immediately asked him what he had done to prepare himself to be a leader of a battalion of artillery. Leach stammered out the

A battery in the 151st Field Artillery load a cannon. (US Army photo)
In a remarkable photo from the end of World War I, Gen. Jack Pershing, left, awards a Distinguished Service Cross to Gen. Douglas MacArthur. Awaiting their decorations are Col. George Leach and Col. William Donovan, later known as "Wild Bill" Donovan, head of the OSS during World War II. All three served in the 42nd Division.

rounds at the enemy. Under intense fire, four artillery pieces were brought to bear on those defenses, each was overwhelmed by the heroism of his men. "I could not mention the name of a man in the regiment today that was not a hero.

The battle continued as the Allies went on the offensive near Chateau Thierry. Leach spent the night of July 25 in a French farmhouse "where I caught the best assortment of cooties I ever had." Leach explained that the French were careful savers of manure for their fields, and kept the pile near the house so they could watch it. "Just as we had prepared for the first day, a German regiment broke in our line in the center of the pile, with results too disagreeable to mention."

The Allies were driving the Germans back at a rate of about two kilometers a day, and the countryside was littered with the bodies of the two armies. "The smell of the dead was overwhelming." In addition to the German artillery, the regiment faced daily attacks from the German air force, which controlled the skies. The American guns were about to be replaced by newer models.

On Aug. 2nd, Leach received a direct order from MacArthur: "Advance with audacity." On August 3rd, the regiment found the grave of Quentin Roosevelt, the son of the former president. Leach wrote to Theodore Roosevelt, and he later wrote back thanks for locating the grave. The personal conditions for the soldiers were awful. "The flies are terrible. It is almost impossible to eat without including them and the unbaked dead make a very badsituation from a sanitary standpoint. I am covered with cooties and very uncomfortable.

The regiment was finally relieved on Aug. 10 after 26 straight days of combat. They spent nearly a month recuperating.

On Sept. 7, Gen. Pershing formally presented Leach, and 36 other officers with the Distinguished Service Cross. Leach would also earn the Distinguished Service Medal and the Purple Heart during the war.

The ceremony was held on the eve of a great American attack in the war. Gen. MacArthur confided to Leach that the assault could cost many of the 75,000 casualties.

On Sept. 12th, the attack on the Saint-Mihiel Salient began with the 42nd Division in the center, supported by three other American divisions. The division was also supported by the 30th Division. By September, the troops advanced across No Man’s Land and began pushing the Germans back toward the city of Eloy. It was Leach’s duty to keep his artillery up with the advancing infantry. In just over a day, the Americans had pushed the Germans back 19 kilometers and captured seven towns, a thousand prisoners and great stores of ammunition.

There was a brief respite after the battle, but by early October, the 151st Field Artillery was in the thick of it again. On Oct. 8th, the regiment poured 6,000 shells into the German front lines in several hours. On Oct. 10th, Leach described the area: "The desolation of the battlefield is beyond description. Americans and Germans everywhere. Dead horses along every road. Every building and every tree destroyed and the ground one mass of muddied shingles and dead bodies."

This battle marked the loss of perhaps the Rainbow Division’s most famous soldier. The poet Joyce Kilmer was killed in the Saint-Mihiel Salient. Leach and his men went six straight nights without sleep hammering the enemy positions. When they finally got a night to sleep, on Oct. 16, nothing could bother them. “My P.O.W. had a meal all night with artillery fire, but we were too tired to care.”

The German lines were slowly breaking all along the Minneapolis as a Republican. Politics were somewhat aggressive in Minneapolis in those days, and Leach received phone calls that if he continued his quest for the seat, his house would be burned down. His wife was dead, and he was apparently lonely reeling.

On Oct. 27th, Leach was able to change clothes for the first time in six weeks. On the 31st, the regiment marked its first year in France, having spent 203 of those days in combat.

On Nov. 1st, the regiments supported a Marine attack, and on Nov. 4th, the 42nd Division began an advance. The division advanced to the Meuse River and pushed the Germans to the other side. The city of Sedan was captured.

On Nov. 10th, Leach wrote, "There are many tumours of the area, but they are for the most part not very large nor very disgusting."

The next day, Nov. 11, 1918: "The Armistice is signed and at eleven A.M. the firing ceased. Nothing impressed me so much as the absolute silence."

The division earned a splendid reputation during the war, and when the war ended it penetrated the furthest point into the German lines. On Nov. 15th, Leach received a letter stating: "The 151st Field Artillery has performed its duty gloriously and splendidly."

On Oct. 15th, Leach arrived back in Minnesota on May 8th, and was honored with parades in both Minneapolis and St. Paul. Throngs lined the streets and hung out of windows. "How shall I describe what I felt in that moment? What I felt, I am sure, every one in the Regiment felt. The vivid sense of relief — the thought of home — childhood memories — pride over what we had done; every word of gratitude to the people of my own town, every one of whom at that moment seemed a friend."

After the war, Leach eventually returned to civilian life. "I stayed in the regular army as long as I could stand it." In 1921, he was convinced that he should run for Mayor of Minneapolis as a Republican. Politics were somewhat aggressive in Minneapolis in those days, and Leach received phone calls that if he continued his quest for the seat, his house would be burned down. Leach by 15,000 votes, and the day after the election his house was burned to the ground.

In 1922, he journeyed with a Minnesota contingent to Chicago for The American Legion national convention. At the convention he proposed support for universal service, an issue that became part of the Legion’s platform for many years.

In 1924, he married again, this time a dancer and physical education instructor he had met while in France. She had been a prostitute in St. Petersburg.

In 1929, like many Americans, he was heavily invested in the stock market, and when it collapsed, he owed $34. He was urged to take bankruptcy, but like his father before him, he instead worked to pay off his debt, which he finally did in 1935. He stayed mayor until he was defeated in 1929. He became Chief of the National Guard Bureau in Washington from 1931 to 1935, and then returned to Minneapolis where he served as a mayor and state senator until 1941. He stayed in the National Guard and commanded the 151st for many years, and he later commanded the 59th Field Artillery Brigade of the 34th Division until 1946. He died in Los Angeles in 1955 at age 79. He is buried in Fort Snelling National Cemetery.
Posts at Goal during the 2017 National Commander’s Tour

PINE CITY BUS -- National Commander Charles Schmidt poses with the Pine City Post 51 honor guard in front of the post’s new mini-bus.
March is Legion Birthday month. Hopefully you have a great celebration planned which includes finishing up with all your renewals. The revitalization we had in January went well. We did some mailings in conjunction with that and are now seeing some good returns with transfers as well as resigning past members. Thanks to Wabasha County Commander Randy Bastyr for putting forward a proposal to eliminate or reduce the burden for Veterans organizations on their property. He has been working with several members of the House who now have the bill (SF 555) which will be included in tax Omnibus Bill. There is also a companion bill in the Senate SF 568. Be sure to get with your representatives and show your support of these bills.

Happy St Patrick’s Day to everyone and Happy Birthday American Legion. God Bless.

THIRD DISTRICT
Mike Maxa Commander

Half way through our year. Mid-winter winter conference in the books and thank you Post 79 Montgomery for the great hospitality. As promised we changed the program up a bit for all you young Legionaries. They want to be a part of the family. They will help when they can. We encourage them to keep asking. Don’t give up on them and don’t forget to stay with the Family and to not judge certain things. As this Family we do need to work together not separately. Please contact me if you can help.

GREETINGS from the Roaring Ninth District. After a successful mid-winter in January, the focus of February was membership. We used the lists provided by National via MyLegion.org to solicit those members of Post 1982 with email addresses and gained some new names into Posts. Also, several Posts have been using the new mailing campaign relating to bringing at-large members into Posts and in some cases, we are getting those whose memberships have lapsed to return. I want to congratulate our Vice-Chief Commander of the year Arlo Rude for the fantastic job he has done. I was not able to be there to see him get his award due to the ND Air National Guard Outstanding Airman of the Year banquet being the same day. I am also happy to report that the Ninth District will be submitting applications for Outstanding Enlisted of the year, a feat that has not happened in several years. On March 18th, we will hold a membership rally in Barnsville and continue to push our numbers up.

To the February 15th, we have 12 Posts at goal and as a District we will make the 90% goal for March 8th.

SEVENTH DISTRICT
GaryLee Davenport Commander

Well, it’s already March. I hope that everyone survived Valentines Day without too much trouble. Congratulations to all of our Post’s that are at 100% and to the Posts that are below, we have a few weeks left to get them up to standard, as the first of the month is at hand. As I write this newsletter, the 7th district was in 6th place in the state at 98%. We have some work to do to try and move back up in the rankings. This will also help the Department of Minnesota stay on top of the rankings in the nation.

Just a little reminder, it is not too late to get a Revitalization done. If there are any Posts that would like to do one, please contact myself or the 7th District membership director, Richard Wog.

My project this year is to raise funds for the Brain Science Foundation. This really hits home for my family. My cousin’s husband was shot by a sniper in Iraq. The bullet went in through his mouth and exited behind his ear. He did survive his wounds, but he no longer has any short term memory, which has caused a lot of problems. If anyone would like to visit your post for a meeting, please give me a call.

FIRST DISTRICT
Sylvan Fix Commander

March is Legion Birthday month. Hopefully you have a great celebration planned which includes finishing up with all your renewals. The revitalization we had in January went well. We did some mailings in conjunction with that and are now seeing some good returns with transfers as well as resigning past members. Thanks to Wabasha County Commander Randy Bastyr for putting forward a proposal to eliminate or reduce the burden for Veterans organizations on their property. He has been working with several members of the House who now have the bill (SF 555) which will be included in tax Omnibus Bill. There is also a companion bill in the Senate SF 568. Be sure to get with your representatives and show your support of these bills.

Second District testimonial will be held on Saturday April 15th. Social will be at the Round Lake Post on Saturday April 15th. pancake and sausage breakfast at 8:00 a.m. This is another fundraiser for our district project. Our Testimonial Dinner will be April 15th at Post 91. More details are to follow.

Our next Hospital Visitation will be March 5th at 2:00 p.m.

NINTH DISTRICT
Eric Wilken Commander

Greetings to all members of the Fabulous Fourth. We had a very successful February in the Ninth District. We have more than 20 Posts at 100% and the weather has been very good for us. We have rescheduled our revitalization to Thursday March 23 from 1-5 p.m., Friday, Mar. 24 from 4-8 p.m. and Saturday March 25 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Location is the Mound 398 Post, 2333 Wilshire Blvd., Mound MN 55364. We can use volunteers to help with the phone calls. Please call me if you can help.

March is a very busy month with membership rallies, executive board meetings, St. Patrick’s Day and a great get away to Young American Legion March 15, 2017. We still have a lot work ahead of us to reach our goal for membership. Continue recruiting and renewing and Keep Storm’n for membership.

EIGHTH DISTRICT
Kenneth Oliver Jr. Commander

First a little housekeeping. The 8th & 10th membership rally will be held on April 1st at the West Duluth Post 71 and will begin at 10 am. The 8th District Legion/SAL and Auxiliary Convention date has been changed to April 22nd and the 10th District Convention is at 10 a.m. Remember the District doesn’t run itself and we need participation from posts and units. The convention is where we elect district officers to do what we need people willing to hold those offices. If you are interested in holding a District office, please submit your endorsement letter to the District Adjutant or Auxiliary Secretary as soon as possible.

Next let’s talk membership. If you haven’t sent in your 2017 membership dues please do it immediately and yes, I’m talking to our Legion, Sons and Auxiliary Members. I know what you’re thinking. She’s sounding like a broken record, I know. We believe that it is important to talk about membership every article, but the truth is without membership our programs will languish and die and our mission is far too important to let that happen.

Finally let’s talk about Boy and Girls State. Remember to get those registration fees in everyone. The 2017 sessions will be held earlier than we expected.

-- Jennifer Havlicek, Past Commander

TENTH DISTRICT
Bonnie Hanson Commander

Here we are going into March 2017. I can’t believe the weather is going to be in the 60. But we know that can change. Just wanted to say what a fun time it was meeting the National Commander at those 3 stops in our 10th District and the weather was great for his visit.

We have rescheduled our revitalization to Thursday, March 23 from 1-5 p.m., Friday, Mar. 24 from 4-8 p.m. and Saturday March 25 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Location is the Mound 398 Post, 2333 Wilshire Blvd., Mound MN 55364. We can use volunteers to help with the phone calls. Please call me if you can help.

March is a very busy month for, I think, everyone, but can I just put a footnote here. My motto is “Family First.” As this Family we do need to work together not separately. We need to stay as perfect a Family as we can. We need to stay as a Family and not judge certain things. How does it affect the family unit? Ok enough of my foot note.

Good morning everyone, and God Bless you all. Stay safe in all your travels.
Anderson, Alice, 95, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Feb. 4, 2017. She was Department Historian in 1985-86, 1989-90, 1991-92, and 1995-96. She was a member of the St. Cloud VFW. She was a past commander of Robinsdale Post 251.

Davis, Herbert A., 97, Marine Corps veteran of World War II, died Feb. 9, 2017. He served on Guam and Iwo Jima. He was a past commander of Post 251. He was a past member of St. Cloud American Legion Post 1.

Anderson, Paul, 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 31, 2017. He played on an Army football team before being stationed in Germany. He was Nonius Post 1977, Sixth and Ninth District Adjutant, 2000-03. He was a member of St. Cloud American Legion Post 216.

Stinson, Bruce B., 90, Army veteran of World War II, died Feb. 5, 2017. He was a member of Orange Post 442. He was a past commander of Bayport Post 491.

Kahl, Clarence A., 85, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Jan. 27, 2017. He was also a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Decker, Wallace, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Jan. 27, 2017. He was a member of Bagley Post 16. He was also a member of the U.S. Air Force.


Lingle, David T., 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 4, 2017. He served in Vietnam. He was also a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Jorgenson, Rudie Vallee, 86, Army veteran of World War II, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was a corporal. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

Carlson, Wayne, 70, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Feb. 4, 2017. He served in Vietnam. He was also a member of St. Cloud American Legion Post 625.

Anderson, Alice, 95, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died Feb. 4, 2017. She was Department Historian in 1985-86, 1989-90, 1991-92, and 1995-96. She was a member of the St. Cloud VFW. She was a past commander of Robinsdale Post 251.
The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 17-8

President Carol Kottom

Department Headquarters, Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155  651-224-7634

March 2017

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

March 2017

Minnesota Legionnaire

Page 18

The 54th Annual Department Junior Conference will be held Saturday, April 8th at the Forest Lake American Legion Post 225, hosted by the Third District. We are hoping to have a large number of Junior members attend and participate. If your Juniors have never attended a Department Junior Conference, plan to join us this year. Junior members will enjoy a “fun night” on Friday, April 7th, the night before the opening of the Conference. The 3rd District and Junior Activities Chairman Pam Hoshall have been working hard to make this a special evening for the Junior members.

On Saturday the Conference will be called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Kiana Coleman-Woods, 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.

KIANA COLEMAN-WOODS

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

Our Department Convention is coming up fast and will be held July 13-15, 2017 at the Shooting Star Casino/Hotel in Mahnomen, hosted by the Mahnomen American Legion Family #31. 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 want to make your hotel reservations. Call 1-800-453-7827 and give them the booking code 1738 to get the proper rates.

Don’t forget the Poppy contests that will be held at the Department Convention. They are Table Center Piece and tri-fold education board on poppies, history, what your Unit has done, etc. (Please check the Trophy & Awards for all specifics) Entries must be at the Department Convention on Thursday, July 13th. Both of these contests are easy to participate in. Get your thinking caps on and start creating.

“HAPPY BIRTHDAY”

“Happy 98th birthday” American Legion, Units, make sure to plan something fun to recognize your Post and wish them 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.

2018 DIRECT BILLING

All Units received a request for information on your Unit’s 2018 dues. This information is due in the Department office by March 15th. If your Unit has not yet responded, please send in the information. The form is on the main website under the Forms tab and select 2018 Unit Data Form Direct Billing. When setting your 2018 dues please keep in mind the National and Department dues of $300.00 per person so your Unit dues should be geared towards that so that you have some working capital in your Units. If we haven’t received your form, a second notice will be in the next Unit mailing. Also, please be sure and get your 2017/2018 Officers list to the Department Office as soon as possible.

2017 POPPY UPDATE

Poppy time is fast approaching. To date, 341 out of 440 Units have ordered their 2017 small and/large Poppies. To date, 257 out of 440 Units have ordered additional Poppies. A few shipment of Poppy orders began as orders were received, processed, and Poppies were available. We are shipping orders based on the “needed by” date reported by the Unit when the Poppies were ordered. Be certain to check your order upon receipt and contact the Department office if there are any discrepancies. A Unit may order additional Poppies at any time, right up to Poppy Day.

Keep in mind who assembles these poppies. They are made by our Veterans, many of which have disabilities. If the poppies you receive aren’t as perfect as you would like, remember where they came from. Let people know who assembles these. I think you will be surprised at how many individuals don’t know.

GIRLS STATE

Remember to apply for the reservation and your $300.00 registration fee be received by March 31st to reserve a place for your American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State citizen. If your Unit has not yet sent this in, please take care of it immediately. Reservations with the payment of the $300.00 registration fee for each candidate will be accepted on a “first-come-first-served” basis. Upon processing your Unit’s reservation fee you will receive the necessary registration packet for each citizen you are sponsoring. American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State can accommodate 445 citizens.

A Unit may send as many young women to American Legion Auxiliary Girls State as they wish to. The candidates must be a Minnesota resident, attend a Minnesota school or home school.

The 2017 session of American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will be held at Bethel University in St. Paul, June 11-17. We look forward to the 71st annual American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State week and another educational and successful session.

PRESIDENT’S PROJECT

Department President Carol Kottom appreciates your support of her special Department’s Projects this year. Her projects are raising funds for a 6 passenger golf cart for the St. Cloud VAHCS. Carol is pleased to announce that the Michigan boys have raised enough to purchase the cart and it has been ordered. That doesn’t mean her work is done. Any funds received in excess of the cost of the golf cart will be split between the two schools. The golf cart will be held at the school where the students, balloons and even some stuffed animals were purchased. Thank you to The American Legion for sharing the proceeds.

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.

ANNUAL REPORTS

All those Annual Reports. Annual report time is fast approaching. All Units should be preparing their reports covering the time period April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. The white and all yellow copies of all reports must be mailed to the Department office on or before April 15th. Please mail the blue copies to your District President. 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 and National reports. You have all received your forms - let’s have a 100% turn in this year.

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
March is Children and Youth month

This year the focus of the American Legion Auxiliary Children's and Youth Program emphasizes protecting, caring for and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans and military families.

There are a wide range of opportunities that can be utilized by Units and their members to bring awareness to children's needs.

Support Children and Youth in your community: Present Purple Up for Military Kids day. Support veterans' children and youth: Homeless veterans' children-Klinger’s Story of honor and hope; Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is affiliated with the American Legion Family. Ideas for members and units: contact the Department Office and we will set something like this up for you.

SECRETARY SANDIE’S NOTES

Not quite what happened to February but it has flown by—so much for our “quite time” in the Department Office. Last week we were busy—from the Washington DC Conference — President Carol talked about it in her article. Our last formal membership rally was yesterday, March 4. It is always so much fun to attend these rallies. You get to see so many members of the entire American Legion Family and meet new friends. Everyone is so eager of you to attend at least one in the 2017/2018 Auxiliary year.

As you can see from the article on Fundraisers, I sure did promise you a big ‘Battleground’ update! The snow has melted or will melt soon and we can get down to business in earnest. I’m sure you know by now that the Legislature was given the tiniest of the 4 bill requests we proposed— frustrating, we know! But we will be getting some with 13 tiles to make the bracelet smaller, just not sure what tile will be taken out at this time.

UNIT MENTORING

A meeting was held on Saturday, February 18 at the Montevideo Post 59 for the purpose of a new idea of mentoring of one Unit with another that is having problems keeping their Unit active. The Montevideo Unit, which has just reorganized themselves in the past couple of years stepped up to the plate to help Granite Falls Unit 69 get up and running again. Department President Carol, 7th District President Betty, 7th District Membership Chairman Karla Minnick and Department Office met with members of both Montevideo and Granite Falls to put together a plan to keep Granite Falls active. It was a very educational event. All units brainstormed a session and they have already been given to Montevideo Unit 59 President Denise Turk for putting all of this together and taking the time to help one of her sister Units. If there are any other Units out there that need help in getting their members active again, please contact the Department Office and we will set something like this up for you.
**National Parks, Utah and Arizona**
May 12-23, 2017

- 3 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 14 meals: 10 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 52 mile Durango/Silverton Train ride
- Tour the San Juan Mountains and Rockies Mountains
- Admission to Redlands, Mount Rushmore, Painted Desert, Petrified Forest, Grand Canyon, Zion National Park and Bryce Canyon

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

- Also available: Housing with Services, Nursing Home Subsidized Rent, Homemaker Services

**Alaska Tour & Cruise**
August 4-16, 2017

- 3 Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- Round trip Delta Flights from Minneapolis
- 7 Night southbound cruise on the ISLAND PRINCESS
- Cruise Gratuities
- All sightseeing/entrance fees
- All meals & entertainment aboard the ISLAND PRINCESS
- All transfers to and from the airport, hotel & pier
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

*Starting at $4,299.00 Per Person Double Occupancy*

**Heart of Alaska**
July 14-21, 2017

- 3 Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- Round trip Delta Flights from Anchorage
- 7 nights accommodations
- 12 Meals
- Denali Park Natural History Tour
- Alaska Railroad between Talkeetna & Denali Park
- 7 Night Princess Cruise
- Gold Dredge #8
- Blue River Gold Dome Tour
- Matanuska Glacier
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

*Starting at $3,299.00 Per Person Double Occupancy*

**Mexican Riviera Cruise**
November 4-11, 2017

- 3 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Avery
- Round trip Delta Flights from Minneapolis to Los Angeles
- 7 Night pre-cruise at the Los Angeles Marriott
- 7 Night cruise on the Emerald Princess
- All meals and entertainment while aboard the Emerald Princess
- All transfers to and from the airport and pier
- Cruise Gratuities
- Luggage handling on the ship

*Starting at $3,999.00 Per Person Double Occupancy*

**Great American History Tour**
September 19-26, 2017

- 3 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- 7 nights accommodations
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 10 Meals: 7 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners
- Admission to all museums, battlefields, & National Parks
- 4 Guided Tours
- Historic Train Ride
- Chicago Gangster Tour
- Luggage handling for one suitcase

*Starting at $4,425.00 Per Person Double Occupancy*

**Mediterranean Cruise**
August 31-September 10, 2017

- 3 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Avery
- Round trip Delta Flights to Athens & return from Barcelona
- 18 days/17 nights in the Mediterranean
- 7 Night cruise on the ROYAL PRINCESS
- Cruise Gratuities
- All meals and entertainment aboard the ROYAL PRINCESS
- All transfers to and from the airport, pier, and hotel
- Luggage handling on the ship for one suitcase per person

*Starting at $5,499.00 Per Person Double Occupancy*

**New York City & New England/Canada Cruise**
September 15-24, 2017

- 3 Seasons Tour Director, Sue Barber
- Round trip Delta Flights from Minneapolis to New York City
- All transfers from airport, hotel and pier
- 2 nights stay at the Millennium Hotel in Times Square
- Circle Line Cruise of Manhattan with lunch
- 24 miles drive to the Dollywood Amusement Park
- 9/11 Memorial Museum
- 7 night cruise on the Crown Princess
- Cruise Gratuities
- Luggage handling at hotel and on cruise

*Starting at $3,199.00 Per Person Double Occupancy*

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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

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**MIN IS**
5 FANTASTIC WAYS TO EXPLORE WWI AMERICA

**EXPLORE WWI AMERICA**
On opening day, veterans and active military receive FREE admission to the WWI America exhibit, courtesy of Xcel Energy. See the exhibit, then enjoy costumed reenactors, live music, and more. Sat., April 6, Minnesota History Center, St. Paul.

**WWI LIVE STAGE SHOW**
Purchase your tickets now for The War That Changed Us: Songs & Stories from WWI America, Fri., April 7, Fitzgerald Theater, St. Paul.

**SEE THE WWI MURAL**
Created before your eyes, our giant WWI America mural depicts 100 key individuals who influenced post-WW1 America. See the mural on display April 8-Sept. 4 at the Minnesota History Center, St. Paul.

**ATTEND THE ROUND TABLE**

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**MINNESOTA LEGIONNAIRE**
March 2017

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**ADVERTISE FOR THE FORT**
Ask your state legislators to support funding for Historic Fort Snelling and thank Gov. Dayton for his support at mnhs.org/HP32020.