Auxiliary, SAL now have access to Legionnaire

National Commander Denise Rohan have been announced involving Minnesota Legion members. The following list only includes new appointments and reappointments, but not those whose terms are ongoing. Minnesota will have several chairs and vice chairs in the 2017-18 appointments including:

- Donald Walser, Hutchinson, will be the vice chair of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.
- Peggy Moon, St. Joseph, was appointed vice chair of the Finance Committee.
- Chuck Kruger, Byron, will chair the Conventional Safety Committee.
- Marland Ronning, Maple Grove, will chair the National Appointments by Commander Denise Rohan.

The Minnesota Legionnaire will be Purpling Up beginning this month by offering electronic subscriptions to all Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion members.

Members of the Auxiliary and the SAL simply need to go to the Minnesota Legion website, mlnlegion.org, to sign up. Those interested can click on Legionnaire Publications in one of the blue boxes, and then click on “Sign up to receive the Legionnaire in PDF format.” An ID number will be needed.

The opportunity to join the entire Legion family together with one newspaper was approved by the National Board of Publications at its annual meeting.

“The board felt it was more important than ever to unite the Legion Family, and make sure everybody has access to the Legionnaire,” said Al Zdon, editor and manager of the newspaper.

The technology these days to provide a newspaper electronically has opened some doors for sharing the news, events calendar, columns, and feature stories with everyone in the family,” Zdon said.

Up to this time, the newspaper was only available to dues paying members of The American Legion, to unit officers in the Auxiliary, and to those who subscribed for $10 a year.

“The American Legion Auxiliary members of the Family are very excited about this new opportunity to receive the Legionnaire,” Department President Donna Arendes said. “I have heard often, for Auxiliary members who have recently lost their Legionnaire, they are missing this monthly news-

The Minnesota Legionnaire

By Al Zdon

A TALE OF TWO WARS

Pages 8-10

Christmas in General Washington’s Army

James Hackett borrowed deeper under his new blanket.

Not long before, the sergeant had told the men to go back to their tents and try and get some rest because tonight they would be marching. It was Christmas Day, 1776, and Private Hackett and his comrades were camped on the west side of the Delaware River in Pennsylvania, just across from Trenton, New Jersey.

Despite the new, warm blanket, which the troops had received just the day before, Hackett couldn’t have been more miserable.

Most of his friends that he had fought beside for a year were gone. Some of them had come to the end of their enlistment and some had simply packed up and gone home. Many had gotten sick and never came back. Some were buried near battlefields across the north.

But it was more than loneliness that troubled Hackett. It seemed to almost everybody except maybe a few officers that the war was lost.

General Washington’s Army had lost nearly every battle and had been pushed out of New York and clear across New Jersey. The spirit that had seized him and caused him to enlist was long gone. It seemed the ragtag American Army, which he was so proud of, really couldn’t defeat the professional soldiers from England and Germany.

He was cold, he was tired, he was hungry, he was demoralized – and it was Christmas.

Hackett reached into his satchel next to his cot and pulled out a piece of paper and an envelope. These two items and his Bible had been his main source of strength over the last few days.

The first item was just a scrap of a newspaper where he had written down some words that Gen. Washington had his officers read to the men a few days earlier. They were written by a fellow named Thomas Paine and his essay was called “The American Crisis.”

In Hackett’s small but clear penmanship, he had written the opening words of the pamphlet from where it had been posted in the camp.

“These are the times that try men’s souls: The...
Attention Veterans!

“This is wonderful news,” Arends said. “The Auxiliary is once again proud to be a part of our Family and proud and thankful for our veterans.”

Shawn Davis, Detachment Commander of the Sons of the American Legion, said communication is the key.

“Communication has been one issue that has come up again, and again as long as I have been a member,” Davis said. “And it hits a nerve with every part of the American Legion family I talk to. The tools change, but we have to keep trying to share our message in every medium we can.

“Having the Legionnaire be shared with the entire American Legion Family, communicating what we have done and are doing, to that entire family will not only result in a more knowledgeable family member, but a stronger family working together,” Davis said.

Past National SAL Commander Joe Mayne agreed.

“I believe that this effort will have greater benefits than we know. Greater communication is not the end in itself. Its the benefits of best practices. Seeing how Squadrons are helping the Posts and Veterans and communities state-wide and replicating those efforts to serve better is the win,” Mayne said.

Department Commander Mike Schaffer said the opportunity to reach more members of the SAL and Auxiliary will keep us all better informed and tied together. “And it’s at zero cost to you,” Schaffer said.

Only an electronic version will be available. Those who sign up will receive a PDF format version of the Legionnaire as an email each month. Those who are not Legion members and want a paper copy mailed to them will have the opportunity to subscribe with the $10 covering postage and printing.

In addition, in the future, the SAL will increase its presence in the Legionnaire from a column by the Detachment Commander to a half page. The Auxiliary will still have its two full pages each month.

The Sons of the American Legion, at the Fall Conference, voted to allocate $4,000 a year to the Legionnaire to help keep the non-profit newspaper financially strong.

The Auxiliary annually contributes $28,000 to the Legionnaire.

The rest of the funding for the $300,000 annual budget for the newspaper comes from the Legion membership dues and advertising sales.

The newspaper comes out monthly. It dates back to 1920 when it was first published as the Hennepin County Legionnaire.

You can also subscribe to the Legionnaire online at www.veteransonthelakeresort.org.
For Christmas, Give the Gift of Minnesota history

The final book of the trilogy about Minnesota veterans from all the wars. The book contains 31 stories ranging from a member of the Band of Brothers to a soldier who escaped from a “hell ship” in the Pacific. The perfect gift for the military historian in your family. Get the entire set.

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Back after a five-year national tour! Explore the year 1968, including combat stories from Vietnam War veterans. See the “Huys” helicopter reassembled with the help of 20+ vets who are also MNHS volunteers.
Exhibit opens Dec. 23, Minnesota History Center, St. Paul.

PLAN YOUR VISIT OR PURCHASE ONLINE • MNHS.ORG • 1-844-MNSTORY
December and the end of the year are fast upon us. I hope that all have had a great Thanksgiving, and remembered all who are far away and perhaps coming home soon. Also, please let us continue the good works that we should be doing and ensure those in need get help and especially in the holiday season.

Let us also pause and remember, as President Roosevelt said, “The day that will live in infamy” the attack on Pearl Harbor. We will not forget what happened on that day, especially for all the men and women of the military who served and lost their lives during the war. In just a few short weeks, we will also be celebrating the 75th anniversary of the end of the war. It is a time to reflect on what happened during the war, as each deserve their spot as well.

The American Legion service to God and country program has three spiritual objectives:

1. Regular public worship: Many Americans believe in God yet reject or neglect public worship. Freedom of religion is not freedom from religion. The American Legion believes that they may enjoy a closer relationship with Him and each other. Regular worship also provides a place to feed the four great temptations of greed, lust, hatefulness, selfishness, and conceit. The American Legion respects the public worship of their God, the author of all rights and liberties.

2. Daily family prayer: It is often said, “The family that prays together stays together.” As the church is the basic building block of society; in fact they are the only natural unit of society. Prayer is the foundation of a faithful, tolerant, and mutual love, sustaining and maintaining the family strong. We should remind parents that nothing spiritually enriches the life of the family like the habit of regular family prayer.

3. Religious training of children: Youth who know and God and are taught in the tenants of their faith will grow to appreciate, understand and respect more fully such principles as law, government, justice. On the other hand, if they are not taught the truths of the supreme authority, God, they cannot be expected to seek His divine counsel and take his righteous directions. Again Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah and a good Kwanza, and whatever other holidays are out there that I may have forgotten, with the help of the Almighty Lord may 2018 be better than 2017 was.

We should also end this year with prayers for the nation, that God will guide and be with each and every one of us in the years to come. Lastly, may we help and uplift people, humble before the people and the Lord, knowledgeable but not prideful, true servants of the nation, not of themselves.

Merry Christmas to you all, happy Hanukkah to the Jews, and a very Happy New Year to all.
Legion Bowling Tournament

The 71st Minnesota American Legion Bowling Tournament will be held at Sundance Lanes in Detroit, hosted by Osseo Post 172. The tournament will run from Feb. 24, 2018, to April 8. Those eligible are Legion members, SAL members and Auxiliary members. All must be over 18. Participants must be residents of all 57 counties in Minnesota, and interested bowlers should obtain them there. For more information, call Bowling Secretary Carl Lamb, 612-968-4839 or email crlbmt@gmail.com.

St. Ansgar party

The annual Christmas Party at the St. Ansgar Legion Post will be held Saturday, Dec. 9, with doors open at 8:30 a.m. Entry fees will range from $5 to $10, and there will be cookies, coffee, a polka band, a pizza lunch, and “share a story” beginning at 10 a.m. For more information, call Phil Fleischer, 641-736-2346.

Twins Game in July

The annual Minnesota American Legion Family Day at the Twins will be held Friday, July 13, at Target Field. Tickets will be in $21 plus fees and will be in the Diamond View section. Commander Mike Schaffer will throw out the first pitch and a Legionary will be doing the American and Twins Territory flag raisings.

Incentive Program rescinded

A membership incentive program that promoted a sweepstakes, announced by the national American Legion, has been rescinded and terminated.

The Legion’s legal department ended the program because the sweepstakes portion would have to comply with all 50 states’ laws on sweepstakes. Some states allow such a program, and others do not.

Drop-in Clinics

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans is sponsoring two upcoming drop-in clinics. The clinics have legal and professional staff available to deal with housing, employment, benefits, expungement, wills, debt collection and family law. The clinics are: -- Tuesday, Dec. 12, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis on the HVAC Room. -- Wednesday, Jan. 10, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Depot-Great Hall, 506 W. Michigan Street, Duluth.

Rally Time Changes

The Pearl Harbor Rally at Duluth Post 71 on Dec. 2 will have time changes for events. The membership turn-in will be from 2-3:30 p.m. and the dinner will be at 4 with the program to follow.

Round Table

The next World War II History Round Table will be held at the Historic Fort Snelling Visitor Center auditorium at 7 p.m. on Dec. 14. The topic will be “Victory in the Battle of the Bulge.” Authors Martin King and Michael Collins, who wrote Voices of the Bulge, will present and will be joined by veterans of the battle.

Veterans Appreciation Ride

The 70th American Legion Appreciation Ride, sponsored by the Minnesota Unit Snowmobilers Association and MSEAFL will be held Saturday, January 13, at Payneville. All veterans are welcome to enjoy a day of snowmobiling, including one night’s lodging and meals. Bring your own sled, or, if you don’t have equipment, there will be snowmobiles and helmets and clothing available.

Pre-registration is required. Call 866-811-7669 or email mnvvet-snowmobileride@gmail.com. The website address is mnvvet-snowmobileride.org.

Pearl Harbor Remembrance

A Pearl Harbor Remembrance Program will be held at the Historical Fort Snelling Visitors Center auditorium at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 7. It will be the 76th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and America’s entry into World War II.

This year’s speaker will be Bill Lund of KSTP. The program is sponsored by the Visitor Center, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and the Fort Snelling National Cemetery Rifle Squad. Refreshments will be served following the program.

Flag History Talk

TRUST VETS will present “240 Year History of the American Flag” by former West Pointer Richard Schellon at the Century College East Campus in Mahtomedi.

The event is open to the public, but RSVPs are required because of limited seating. To register, go to trustvets.com and click on events.

The organization connects the public to veterans in business. For more information, email info@trustvets.com.
Greetings American Legion Family,

I hope everyone had their fill of turkey and fixin's on Thanksgiving. Many of you started our Kick-off party, Stand-down party, or an overnight or post visit. We have many openings, so if your post would like to see the Riders please let Sally or Dianne Sullivan, Paul or Jody Hassing, Shawn, Jill, Lee or Joan Davis, or myself know. Our next meeting will be in mid January so you have plenty of time to bring it up at your monthly meeting. Even if you are remotely interested and need more information, please give one of us a call. We would love to hear from you.

As many of us are getting ready to celebrate Christmas and New Year’s, let’s remember the family and friends, keep those out on the front lines protecting our freedom and way of life in your hearts and prayers. Also remember there are many homeless veterans and families with very little that could use a little Christmas cheer. I am reminded of just how giving one can be by a recent Toys for Tots auction. One individual donated a couple of items in which it was auctioned to raise funds that helped not only the immediate family, but also the local community. Let us make sure that every member of the family is connected and part of the action.

Additionally, at Fall Conference, it was voted on that the Detachment will contribute to the cost of the Legionnaire, and will have a Christmas card with the publication as a result. But that means we need to know what the Districts and Squadrons are doing. So look around, consider what you are doing and share it.

As for my Commanders Project, thank you all who have donated so far. Consider a year-end donation to my Commanders Project since it covers one of my other themes (Educate). My two main goals are our American Legion Legacy Scholarship, and the ROTC Scholarship, as well as helping each of us out with The American Legion Family Hospital Auxiliary.

And my other theme, membership. The numbers from November 13th are here, and we are doing well. We are ahead of last year’s enrollment and seeing great results from the additional recruiting being done. Thank you. It humbles me to hear from those of you who share when you have been part of the American Legion and how it has positively changed you. So let us all do that, think of the difference we could make!

So I will sign off for this month by wishing you all the warmest of wishes for the holiday season. Keep up the good work, and remember, 5 for Minnesota! Merry Christmas!

Plan W for the bog

Continued from Page 1

ing again, the North Long Lake Property Owners Association staked the bog down so that the next wind wouldn’t start a new journey around the lake.

It’s not unusual for the wind to push lake fill sizes in field. It’s made up of plant materials and even has a line of tama- rak trees running across it.

The plan for the maintenance of the bog says that the Tesdahl said, be to pivot the bog to the northeast, pulling it away from the camp, and then attaching it to the shoreline not far from where it had started its wandering.

“We hope to pin and cain it into place.”

Plans now call for help from the Evirnude Corporation with weigh in the bog around. Evirnude could film the project and use it to promote the company’s products.

The Lake Association has promised volunteers to help with the project.

Tisdahl said the Department of Natural Resources has been very helpful, working with the Lake Association on the open until the problem is solved. “They just asked us to keep them informed on what we’re doing.”

In the long run, it is hoped that people stay positive about the bog and the project to move it. “Everyone in this community should share a spirit on unity and goodwill. That will really help.”

In other news from Legionville, kids have been receiving on upgraded the facility’s dining hall. Money had been authorized from the Minnesota Legislature to use on the building, and the bids include such work as heating and air conditioning, replacing the roof, buying a new freezer, refrigerator and other kitchen equipment, and doing a new floor.

The Minnesota Department of Administration must approve the bids before it will release the $230,000 allocated for this project.

Legionville is a full-service youth camp that, in cooperation with the Minnesota State Patrol, provides school group and youth camping experience for kids. The Minnesota AAA is also a major sponsor of the camp.
Continued from Page 1

apart. “Dearest James, my love and my strength. I hope God and General Washington are keeping you safe,” he read, the words pretty much memorized although he had only received the letter a few days earlier. He read again about how things were at home. It had been a good harvest, helped out by James’ father and younger brothers taking over his duties on the farm. “I cannot tell you how much I miss you,” Mary Elizabeth wrote, “and how much I’m looking forward to the completion of your enlistment at the end of the year. You’ve been gone too long, and our new nation will have to do without you. I may have to come up to get you, just to make sure that you come home and don’t have any notion of re-enlisting.”

Hackett winced at the words. He was torn, ripped up by the decision he must soon make. Nearly all his friends that he had joined with had been killed or had gone home. Most of the Virginia men he talked to everyday were dead set on going home on January 1st, the end of their enlistment. But Hackett wasn’t so sure. He wasn’t a quitter. He hadn’t given up everything – his farm, his family, and his beautiful bride – just to give up before the job was done. But right now, hunkered down in his tent, with the war seemingly lost, he thought maybe he might be the only sane thing to do. And he missed Mary Elizabeth so.

Hackett was on the north side of Trenton and was directly trapped, and had to fight. The Hessians were blocking all the exits from the town. The Hessians were himself gallop by on a horse, leading the attack. Many of the men had simply wrapped rags around their feet. The fortunate ones who still had boots, ragged as they were. The Hessians were ready for a surprise attack. Occupying the city. It was hoped that the German soldiers and arrive before dawn and surprise the Hessian troops now they had to march nine miles south to Trenton to try the crossing of the river went smoothly for a while, and the men marched eight abreast down to the ferry landing, and were told to keep absolutely silent. A steady drizzle had been falling, but as the sun went down the rain turned to sleet and then to snow.

Hackett and his comrades clambered aboard a large boat that had Durham Iron Works etched on the side. It was a flat-bottomed boat that had been used to haul iron across the river. It was propelled by men with long poles. Hackett noticed as the men boarded that even the musicians had been issued rifles for this mission. It was a signal that the generals thought this might be a tough outing.

The path through the snow was dark red with blood. About a mile from the city, the troops attacked Hessians at one of their outposts. Hackett watched Gen. Washington himself gallop by on a horse, leading the attack. The Americans pushed their way into the city as the enemy fled back slowly, returning the fire, moving from house to house. But the Continentals moved swiftly and blocked all the exits from the town. The Hessians were trapped, and had to fight.

Three Hessian regiments formed up for battle, and even tried to counter-attack, but were quickly driven back by the Americans’ gunfire. Hackett was on the north side of Trenton and was directly in the way of the final Hessian attack. The enemy managed to recapture their cannon. Hackett and five others were ordered to retake the artillery pieces.

The musket balls were whizzing by and slamming into houses nearby as Hackett crouched low and ran toward the cannons. About 75 feet away, he dropped to his knees and fired his musket at the group of Hessians protecting the cannons. He thought he saw one go down. And then he was off running again, yelling as he went. As he and the others approached the artillery, the Hessians turned and ran. Hackett and his comrades quickly turned the cannons around and within minutes they were being fired back at the Hessian position. The cannon balls broke the enemy resolve and they began to scatter. General Washington, who seemed to be everywhere, was once again beside the men lifting his sword and yelling, “March on, my brave fellows, after me!” The battle was soon over.

The Continents captured a large store of ammunition, muskets and other goods and brought them back across the Delaware.

The officers announced at parade the next day that there had been over 100 Hessian casualties and nearly a thousand had been captured. There had been just two American deaths in the battle, and both from frostbite. Five Americans had been wounded including Hackett’s fellow Virginian, James Monroe. Hackett was glad to be back in his tent, but his comfort was soon disturbed by a corporal seeking him out, yelling his name. Hackett emerged from his tent and told the corporal who he was. “You’d better get down to headquarters right now. There’s an officer who wants to see you.” Getting summoned to headquarters was a scary prospect, but Hackett hustled to the stone house where the officers stayed.

“Ah, Hackett,” said a young lieutenant. “Just the man we were looking for.” Getting summoned to headquarters was a scary prospect, but Hackett hustled to the stone house where the officers stayed.

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“Sir?”

“Ah, Hackett,” said a young lieutenant. “Just the man we were looking for.” Getting summoned to headquarters was a scary prospect, but Hackett hustled to the stone house where the officers stayed.

“If all of your conduct at the battle has been duly noted.”

“My conduct, sir?”

“Yes, when you and the others recaptured those cannons, it helped turn the tide of the battle. It was a brave act. Your sergeant has recommended that you be promoted to corporal.”

Hackett was surprised. “Thank you, sir.”

“But that isn’t the reason we called you down here today, Hackett. We have a much more important reason.” The lieutenant had a gleam in his eye.

“Sir?”

“Yes, Hackett, it seems you have a visitor. It seems that she’s come all the way from Virginia in a snowstorm. Mrs. Hackett will you please come out.”

From the other room, a beautiful young woman stepped out. Hackett could not take his eyes off his wife.

“My name is Mary Elizabeth.”

“I don’t know how to explain it to you. But this war has really just started, and we’ve got a long way to go before that Declaration of Independence means anything. I don’t want to be a summer soldier. I love my country and I need to do what I need to do. And it’s killing me to know that we have to be apart.”

Mary Elizabeth waited a long time and then smiled. “Of course I knew you were going to say that. Don’t you think I know the man I married? The last thing anyone could call me is a sunshine patriot.”

“I will wait for you as long as it takes, and you must always know that I love you and support you and yearn for you. James Hackett, you must give me a free country we can raise our children in.”

“Oh, Mary Elizabeth, you’re the best Christmas present a man could ever have.”
Art Gruenberg did something not too many Marines did. He was a China Marine, then a prisoner of war for nearly all of World War II. He lost an eye in a Japanese prisoner camp, but still re-enlisted in the Corps. In Korea, serving in the famous Fox Company at the Chosin Reservoir, he was wounded by a grenade, but chose to go back to his unit rather than go home.

By Al Zdon

It might be hard to imagine even for history buffs these days what it was like to be captured at Corregidor in the opening months of World War II, to spend two and a half years in captivity in the Philippines, to travel on a "hell ship" to Japan, and to work as a slave laborer in a Japanese coal mine.

It’s also hard to imagine what it was like to be member of Fox Company, one of the most decorated Marine units in the Korean War, as it held off thousands of Chinese at the Toktong Pass near the Chosin Reservoir to allow over 8,000 trapped Marines to escape.

Art Gruenberg doesn’t have to imagine those scenes. He can remember them. He was there.

He was the only Marine who ever was a Japanese prisoner during World War II and later fought in one of the most crucial battles of the Korean War.

When a listener to Gruenberg’s tales observes that he must have had incredible grit to have survived those trials, he only smiles.

"Naw, I’ve never been a tough guy."

Arthur H. Gruenberg spent the first 16 years of his life growing up in Manhasset, New York, a small town just east of New York City on Long Island.

From the civilized East, the family then moved to the wild West, buying a ranch in Colorado. "We had 238 acres and 10 white-faced Herefords. It was a lot of work. I had to round up the cows every day, clean the barn and help with the milking."

Gruenberg’s father got sick in the late 1930s, and his son quit his education to help keep the ranch going. By 1940, as a 19-year-old, Gruenberg was well aware that a draft was going on.

"I didn’t want to be drafted, so I tried to get in the Navy, but they wouldn’t take me. Then a buddy and I went down and signed up for the Army. They told us we’d be sent to artillery training in Texas, and then they turned down my friend because he had high blood pressure. I wasn’t happy about either of those things."

Gruenberg was sent down the hallway to be sworn in, and signed up for the Army. They told us we’d be sent to artillery training in Texas, and then they turned down my friend because he had high blood pressure. I wasn’t happy about either of those things.

"I got my draft notice right then. The Army guy must have turned my name in, but I was already in the Corps. And not long after that I heard from the Navy. Now they wanted me."

Training at San Diego was brief, and he soon got his orders. "My platoon was selected to go to the Asiatics."

He was soon on a Navy transport, the USS Chaumont, on his way to the Far East. "I think it took about 60 days to get across. We stopped at Pearl Harbor, Midway, Guam, the Philippines and finally Peking and Shanghai."

Gruenberg was assigned to the 4th Marine Regiment expeditionary force, about 2,000 strong, as a China Marine. "The regiment’s job was to protect American lives and property in China. “We helped out with the international police force there.”"

He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, A Company.

"We did guard duty mainly, and once a week we did a five-mile hike in the morning. Our trucks had quarter-inch steel plating on them. It was good duty and we lived like kings. I spent most of my free time at the Navy YMCA or the foreign YMCA swimming. I loved to swim."

As his year there went on, the Americans noticed how aggressive the Japanese were getting. “We stood guard on the Su Chon Creek, and the Japanese were on the other side. Then one day, the Japanese took over the bridge completely and they were in position right next to us."

Gruenberg said he had no personal animosity toward the Japanese, and had grown up in New York knowing several Japanese families.

On Nov. 27, the troops were taken to the harbor to be moved to the Philippines. “There was no room for us on the transport, so an American freighter had to come and get the rest of us. All I had was a shelter half and my blanket. We were in an open hold with no cover, and we nearly froze.”

As the ship headed south, though, the weather improved, and by the time it got to Olongapo in the Philippines, it was warm.

Gruenberg’s main memory of those few days was that of being very, very sick. “I volunteered to try out a new vaccine for typhus. Instead of protecting me, I came down with it full blast. My temperature got up to 105 and a half degrees.”

"He was taken to a Filipino dance hall that had been converted into a hospital. “I was there when they told us the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. They didn’t tell us how bad it was. It was an eerie feeling, especially when you’re so sick.”"

It didn’t take long for the war to come to the Philippines. “The next day the zeroes dropped bombs all around the dance hall, but they didn’t hit it. They couldn’t move me, so they just put mattresses on top of me and on the sides to protect me.”

Gruenberg had to get well in a hurry, and he accompanied his mates as they first moved to the Mariveles Naval Base on the Bataan Peninsula and then to the fortress Corregidor.

“Just as we landed there, here came the Japanese bombers.”

In the Marine Corps during World War II

In the Marine Corps during World War II

At home in Eden Prairie
He was assigned as a communications man working at the command post under a water tower outside the Corregidor tunnels. A major problem for the Marines and everybody else on Corregidor was lack of food. “We got one meal a day, because that’s as often as the Marines wanted to gather the men together because it was too dangerous with the shelling. I can tell you it was an inadequate amount of food. And then the Japanese across the bay cut off our water pipe, so we had no fresh water.”

“I went out one day and climbed to the top of a mango tree. If the Japanese had shedled right then, I would have been gone. I picked a half a gunny sack of mangos and brought them back down. An officer took the sack from me and took them down into the tunnel. I never even got to eat one of them.”

Bataan fell on April 9, resulting in the infamous Bataan Death March, but Corregidor hung in there for another month.

The constant bombing and shelling resulted in vast clouds of choking dust around the Marine positions. “One day it was so bad I just couldn’t breathe so I put on my gas mask just to survive. An officer really chewed me out for that, but in a nice way.”

In early May, Gruenberg was called into the commanding officer’s office. “He gave me a letter that was to bring to General MacArthur. He told me to take no chances, and that the letter had to go through, and it had to be personally delivered to MacArthur. I went down the hospital tunnel, and then into Malinta tunnel where the command center was. When I got there I asked where Gen. MacArthur was, and they pointed at a tall officer across the room. I went over and handed him the letter and he snapped it out of my hands.”

Gruenberg realized at this point, that the tall officer was not MacArthur, but was Gen. Wainwright who had taken over after MacArthur had escaped on a PT boat. “I realized I had not followed orders. Wainwright read it and didn’t ask any questions. Of course I hadn’t read it, but I assumed it said that our outposts were falling.”

“Wainwright called for us to stack arms and surrender.” When the chaos of the surrender had settled down, the Marines were moved by boat to Manila and then put on a train to Cabatuan, the home of a notorious group of prisoner camps. Gruenberg was sent to Camp 3. “At first the camp was guarded by old Japanese soldiers, and they were very friendly. Well, they couldn’t have friendly guards, so they were soon all replaced.”

Gruenberg remembers a Filipino guerilla attack on the camp one night. “The Japanese retaliated by killing all the civilians who lived in the area.” Later, he was transferred to Camp 1. “This was the worst camp. I think there were 6,000 prisoners there and about 3,000 died. It was made up mostly of the guys who had been on the death March, and they were in bad shape.”

The food consisted mainly of rice or a watery rice soup. “Now and then they let us kill a water buffalo. The Japanese got the good parts, but we all got some meat for a few days.”

Gruenberg’s job was to go out into the forest a mile or two every day and cut wood for the cook stoves and haul it back. As time went by, probably because the diet was so poor in vitamins, Gruenberg developed serious eye problems, so serious that he was sent to the eye ward at the camp’s hospital. There were 40 or 50 other prisoners suffering from eye problems. “There was an Army doctor there and he said he only had enough Vitamin A, which is what I needed, for one man. So he gave it to a guy who played guitar for the other prisoners. I guess entertainment was important.”

Gruenberg’s condition worsened so that even the least amount of light was extremely painful. He finally came under the care of another doctor. “He was a Jewish doctor, Dr. Bloom. He was very good. I had already lost the sight in my left eye, but he saved my right eye.”

Gruenberg said another part of the hospital was called the Zero Ward, because the chances of anybody leaving that ward alive were zero. One of Gruenberg’s friends, a B-17 mechanic named Richard Clark got diphtheria and was sent to the Zero Ward. “When they tried to haul him to the grave, they found out he was still alive. They brought him back to the hospital and asked me to take care of him. He got better little by little. I fed him, and I taught him how to walk again.”

“I saw him after the war, and he had become a test pilot for the Army and helped develop their helicopter program.”

A s soon as Gruenberg’s good eye was stabilized, he was sent back to work, this time working a garden patch for the Japanese. “They told us never to eat anything, but I found I could steal some sweet potato shoots. When you boiled them up, they were full of everything good under the sun.”

One time Gruenberg was ordered to pick some okra. “I guess the guard didn’t like the looks of me. He started yelling and screaming and hitting me. I almost lost my cool, but I’m glad I didn’t because that would have been the end of me. If you touched a guard, the commander would behead you.”

The Nissyo Maru, a Japanese freighter, was one of what came to be known as “hell ships.” The ships carried Allied prisoners from the Philippines to Japan and other places. Over 21,000 Americans died on these ships, mostly from American submarine attacks. Nissyo made its voyage safely.

The Futase POW Camp in Japan housed about 550 prisoners, mostly Dutch and American. The prisoners worked in the nearby coal mines.

American prisoners at the Cabatuan prisoner camp in the Philippines.

Marines from the First Division take on the Chinese near the Chosin Reservoir in the Korean War.
After two and a half years at Cabatuan, the Japanese, fearing an American invasion of the Philippines, began sending prisoners to the Japanese mainland and other places.

“They gave us new blue denim pants and jackets and new shoes. They also gave us our old boots back, and they are the boots I have to this day. I went to Japan to take these boots with me to transport to Japan. These ships, because of the horrible conditions on board for the prisoners and because they were transferred to American submarines, became known as ‘hell ships.’”

Gruenberg’s ship was the Nissoy Maru, a sugar freighter. The crew had to endure extreme conditions.

Conditions were horrendous aboard the ship, crowded with 1,600 American prisoners. The heat was unbearable, and the air was thick with smoke.

“There were so many men in the hold that you couldn’t lay down. We had to sleep by lying on top of one another, lying on top of each other, and my friend and I would get our legs with my head on his chest, and then the next guy had his head on your chest. It was so pitch dark, and so when guys got up at night to go to the bathroom you could hear all this hallucinosis and noise. It was a mess.”

After two weeks at sea in July 1944, the freighter stopped at Okinawa to pick up sugar, and then it was on to Japan.

They landed in Japan and were taken to the Futsu Camp to be exchanged for prisoners, many of them Dutch. The main feature of the camp was a coal mine.

“Everybody surged to the head of the line hoping to get a job. That’s what they called it. I went to the back of the line where I was and took four of us for a different duty.”

Gruenberg spent several months building air raid shelters and doing other menial tasks.

“Actually I didn’t give a hoot what work I did. I wasn’t feeling very well by that time. But the outdoor work probably did me some good, and the people in the town were very friendly with us.”

One day Gruenberg was loading a log and it slipped causin...

LAKE CITY HONORS -- Lake City Post 110 presented a 70-year membership plaque to Dave McKenzie. He served in the Navy from 1942-46 on a minesweeper in the Pacific.

DENT OUTING -- The 21st annual fishing outing, hosted by Dent Post 148, brought veterans from the Fergus Falls Veterans Home to the lake for a day of socializing, fishing, and a fish fry. The Auxiliary helped out.

HANSKA FALL DINNER -- Hanska Post 365 honored its 70 year members at its annual Fall Membership Dinner, served by the Auxiliary. From left, Arlo Bryo, special guest 2nd District Vice Commander Roxanne Zoet, Irving Hagen, and Post Commander Larry Stoesz.

DENHAM HONOR GUARD -- Denham Post 361 gathered around the flag on Memorial Day. The post has 66 members.

TRUMAN TRIBUTE -- The Trimont Area Veterans Tribute Committee dedicated a Veteran’s Tribute this past summer. Dick Pope, a Legionnaire from Trimont Post 373, was the chairman. Amy Anderson won the design contest.

LANESBORO HONOR -- The Lanesboro Post 40 surprised Otto Kitzmann at his home to present him with a 70 year certificate. From left: Rich Schnaufer, Robert Thompson, James Haugen, Dewey Hungerholt, and Rick Darling. Kitzmann is front and center.

HILL HONORED -- Duane “Marvin” Hill, Virginia, a past 8th District Commander, was named the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Volunteer Snowmobile Instructor of the Year. Presenting was Officer Bruce Lawrence.

CLARISSA DONATION -- Val Peterson, left, of Clarissa Post 213, was joined by Jim Theiler and Dave Weber of the VFW Post 6318 in presenting a $1,300 check to Melony Butler of Eagle’s Nest of Sauk Centre.
Operation Torch was America’s first major foray into the fighting across the Atlantic in World War II. The invasion of North Africa was the largest amphibious assault the world had ever seen to that point, and it was mostly a mess. Vincent O’Hara, the author of Torch: North Africa and the Allied Path to Victory, gave the historical perspective of the offensive, and he was later joined by two veterans of the invasion and another historian.

O’Hara noted that Torch was the first time the British and Americans tried working together on a major project.

“It involved hundreds of ships, multiple divisions and over a thousand miles of coastline. Nothing like this had ever been attempted before.”

By late 1942, the war in Europe was still very much up for grabs, with the Russians and Germans duking it out over a huge front and the U.S. still in the beginning stages of gearing up for the war.

The massive nature of the landings was a challenge for the planners. “Operation Torch was a risky throw of the dice in amphibious warfare.” The only thing for sure was that the British were eager to move against Germany, and America’s Russian allies were demanding a second front. But where?

“The only choice left was French North Africa.” The United States, under Gen. George Marshall, picked a “nobody” to be the Allied leader of the invasion – Dwight Eisenhower. “But he turned out to be the right man for the job,” O’Hara said. “He understood what ‘combined’ meant.”

The U.S. trained hard for the invasion on the East Coast and in Scotland and England. “In one practice invasion in Maryland, only one landing craft made it to the right beach, despite the fact that the beach was marked by a flashing lighthouse. It was a sign of things to come.”

O’Hara said the planners hoped that the French resistance to the attack would be mostly symbolic, but there was talk of a split between the Free French and the British because the United Kingdom had attacked the French fleet some months earlier and killed thousands of French sailors.

The Vichy French still had a formidable Navy and eight army divisions in North Africa. All kinds of behind-the-scenes negotiations were going on to try and get France to stand side by side with the Allies in a French general in North Africa where Gen. Mark Clark had to paddle a kayak kayak from a submarine.

In the end, still not knowing whether the French would fight, the Allies began the landings on Nov. 8 at three major points: Algiers, Oran and French Morocco.

There were 2,460 transports and six aircraft carriers in the armada, and hundreds of landing craft. “Nothing on this scale had ever been attempted before.”

The ships came from the United States and from Britain. Many of the ships had to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar, tipping off the Germans about the invasion, but the Germans thought the attack would be mostly symbolic, but there were plenty of 15-mile hikes.

“As the invasion approached the men were put on ships and aircraft carriers in the armada, and hundreds of landing craft. ‘Nothing on this scale had ever been attempted before.'”

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The Allied invasion of North Africa was a failure in terms of the beachings, winds and map errors, plus a strong dose of inexperience.

“Resistance was very spotty, and a cease fire was called on the first day.”

The massive nature of the landings was a challenge for the planners. “Operation Torch was a risky throw of the dice in amphibious warfare.” The only thing for sure was that the British were eager to move against Germany, and America’s Russian allies were demanding a second front. But where?

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Greetings from the First District: Department Fall Conference is history. Willmar did a very good job of hosting the conference. We had a decent turnout but we should and need to have more representation.

Membership is above our December 18th cut off percentage of 75. We are close to 3,100 members behind last year at this time. We all have to work harder to make goal at years end.

District Rally fell on a weekend this year events were spread over several days. Most veterans spent Friday visiting various schools and then Saturday attending pub- lic events. Thank you, God bless each event.

I had the honor of attending the Pheasant Dinner at the Veterans Hospital November 16th. The dinner and program was great. I think it would have been nice to dine with some of the patients of the hospital.

What beautiful weather to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday. I hope everyone had a great day visiting with fam- ily and friends. I hope everyone extended a warm welcome to those that are not as fortunate as we are. We will be gathering in Duluth, December 2nd, for the Pearl Harbor Rally. It is a day we should have been to have been to be there earlier in the year but we will make do.

Remember what the holiday is all about. Let’s open our hearts to everyone. Especially remember our troops at home and overseas. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Greetings from the fighting fifth. We had the pleasure of attending the 74th District Fall Conference which was hosted by the Veterans Home and the other at the Mpls Veterans Hospital. Kudos to the chefs. It was delicious. We appreciated being invited and the opportunity to see how the American Legion, Auxiliary and SAL members throughout the state.

We attended a potluck membership for the 4th district at Rogers High School, for what they have done, and for what our military members continue to do for us daily.

As I write this article, we still have Thanksgiving coming on. I hope that you all have a nice Thanksgiving, and are able to spend time with your family and friends.

Besides the imminent arrival of the holidays in December, there will be a lot of activity in the Legion Family, including membership rallies, post meetings, Christmas parties, and ending the month, New Year’s celebrations.

We cannot forget membership. Yes, it is true that I did “say” last month that the Ninth District at the Sixth/South Ninth Membership Rally, but the Sixth District still has the upper hand, as we are still in first place within the Department, as well as all other districts.

We are now the first district to be over 75 percent, before the Pearl Harbor Rally.

Veterans Home and the other at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and $5,000 to Eagles Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt.

The Disabled American Veterans to use for housing veterans in the state. The American Legion alone should be enough to let them know what a great gift it was.

Hello Mighty Tenth. Thank you everyone for everything you do for your fellow veterans and their families. It is on December 9th in Waubun. All are welcome.

I want to thank everyone in the 9th for working very hard. We have already achieved the December National goal (75%) and are currently at 76.04 (with 10 Posts already reporting 100%) and need only 26 veteran/non-veteran members to reach January’s goal (80%) by December 13th.

Until next month, I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. God bless our Troops & their families and our Veterans.
Silent Auction was a big success

We would like to thank everyone who donated items for the 2017 Silent auction for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Whether you donated items or money or bid on various items — we cannot thank you enough for helping us help our auxiliary members in need.

There were many wonderful items donated including: blankets, quilts, afghans, holiday items, books, crochet slipper patterns, hats and mittens. There were 47 theme baskets that many people bid on. The variety of items was unbelievable.

Chairman Cindy Nelson would be proud of all of these donations.

Thank you to the following people who helped with the Silent Auction on Thursday, October 26th for setting up and watching over the auction until it closed. Joanie Krantz, District 9; Jean Walker, District 9; Sharon Lambert, District 10; Alice Hiltner, District 9; Dorothy Hyvonen, District 10; Laura Wendt, District 10; and Sandy Deutsche, District 3. We very much appreciated all of your help to make this auction a big success.

PRESIDENT’S PROJECTS

Department President Donna Arends has chosen as her President’s Project donations to be divided by the 5 Veterans Homes and the Armed Forces Center. Donna is hoping to raise $26,000.00 for her project. Please make sure and be generous. Donna is doing a fabulous job so far this year representing the Department of Minnesota.

MAILING LABEL FUNDRAISER

According to my vendor and a few members I have found that the first batch of mailing labels have been sent to our members. They started out by sending to 15,000 members and the response rate is terrific and the publicity will continue as we go forward the best customer service possible and continue to update our equipment and efforts. Please be generous. You will know it is the Department mailing labels as there is a letter from President Donna Arends included. Jan, Julie and myself thank you in advance for supporting this fund raiser.

MEMBERSHIP

Our big push is to get everyone off the proverbial goose egg. We are now down to 8 Units not having turned in membership — please make sure and get your dues paid. The Department can earn an award if all Units are off the zero mark by March 17, St. Patrick’s Day. Let’s work together and get er done.

DONATIONS

Please see the Unit Guide for a list of those programs the Department Executive Committee has approved for the solicitation of funds. Please keep in mind those showing an * by them are our own Auxiliary programs within the Department of Minnesota. We need to support those causes – no one else does. If your Post is donating funds from their gambling accounts, please make sure they make the checks payable to the American Legion Foundation, Fund 83. If they aren’t written out that way, we have to return the checks and have them reissued. We can really use some donations in the Gift Shop category. We want to make sure this is a memorable Christmas for our Veterans and their families.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

On behalf of the office staff at the American Legion Auxiliary, Sandie, Jan and Julie, we want to wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and hope Santa brings you everything you ask for. We are sure you have been good all year. Enjoy quality time with family and loved ones. If you can, do something special for those that are in need.

GIFT SHOP DISTRIBUTION DAY

Vida Bacon, Department Gift Shop Chair and Committee Member Linda Deschenes assembled their crew to sort and distribute all of the Christmas Gifts for our Veterans and their families to be given out at all nine VA facilities during their Gift Shop days at the Osseo American Legion Post. The gifts that were purchased by Vida and Linda were all very nice and we are sure the Veterans will be pleased.

POPPY POSTER CONTEST

Please encourage your schools to participate in the Poster Contest. There are classes for all ages. All of the rules will be in the January/February Unit mailing included in the 2017 American Legion Boys State Trophy Newsletter.

SECRETARY SANDIE’S NOTES

Another year is rapidly coming to a close and I can’t remember better times at the Department Office. Jan and Julie have worked with the office and we have a wonder-ful routine here – things just flow smoothly. Again my family is celebrating Christmas the day after Thanksgiving so as you are reading this, my stressful Christmas will be history. This will be our first Christmas with a baby in 9 years so our entire family is really excited. The past year has been so rewarding for Jan and I even though it was a very big leap of faith and again approved no decreases to our Finance Committee and Executive Committee took a very big leap of faith and again approved no decreases to this budget. Our veterans are what our organization is all about and this small act of kindness at the holiday season is very important. Please keep those donations coming in. Thank you so much for your help in making this program a success. A special thanks to Linda and the Pheasant Dinner program and the Fund for Hospitalized Veterans for their very generous donations to our program this year.

Information on 2018 Girls State will be mailed shortly

Information needed to reserve a place for your Girls State citizen(s) for the 2018 session of the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will be included in the January/February Unit mailing. Please make sure and go through all the information. The Committee has made some members and this balance of the membership will all receive this session! It will include an American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State informational brochure, a cover letter from the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Chairman and a reservation form. After the department office receives your reservation form and your registration check of $300.00, a packet will be sent to the Unit. This packet will include a set of registration forms for each girl you will be sponsoring. It will include the enrollment card, information sheet, pledge, brochure, dress code, order form for the polo shirts, etc. The packet will be sent to the person who signs the reservation form. The registration materials must be returned to the department office on or before May 1. If you have any questions please contact the department office. This year the Girls State week will be held at Bethel College in St. Paul.
Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

This little picture is for my good friend Mike Maxa (Merry Christmas)

Santa showing the kids his tattoo

One kid, I get this when I was in the North Pole Air Force.

Upcoming Notable Dates

December 2 – Pearl Harbor Rally
December 10 – Articles for the January/February Unit Mailings
December 22 & 25 – Department Office Closed for Christmas
December 29 & Jan 1 – Department office Closed for Christmas

Nov. 27, 2017, Auxiliary Membership

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By Vicki Bibeau

6th District ALA has been very busy with our programs, membership and leadership training.

The Junior Conference will be held on March 3rd in Kimball. Our annual bowling event will be in Brainerd on Feb 17th.

The VA&R Chairman is highlighting our 5 Minnesota Veteran Homes in our monthly bulletin which is filled with information, ideas and suggestions for our programs.

We are promoting the district project of new winter coats for the St. Cloud VA and colored pocket t-shirts for all veterans in the 5 MN Veteran homes.

At our Mid-winter conference in Melrose on February 10th, we will be going over how important our annual reports are and encouraging units to promote all the things they do for our veterans, their families and our communities. A fun reminder of a twenty-five cent charge to our members for “selling” poppies, calling our Legionnaires “men” and not having a membership application on you. Spread “Goodwill On Earth” as you celebrate Christmas and the New Year & wear a Popp.

The National VA&R Plan of Action encompasses 7 broad areas of potential service. No Unit can work on each and every one of them, but should choose those projects and areas of service which “fit” their Unit and its members. The 7 areas emphasized in our national plan include (1) encouraging members to volunteer at a VA health care facility; (2) serve veterans in your home area; (3) assist veterans in accessing VA benefits by connecting them with the local American Legion Post Service Officer; (4) help homeless veterans; (5) support rehabilitation and healing of veterans through arts, crafts and hobbies; (Minnesota’s own Bobby White was a recent Gold Medal Winner at the National Creative Arts Festival for his literary work.) (6) promote jobs fairs for veterans and their families; (7) assist and support caregivers of veterans.

What are some projects we can do to promote the VA&R Program? The potential list would take up several pages! Here are a few ideas: collect clothing for our medical and veteran home facilities (warm winter jackets, shirts, pants, underwear, etc.), sew items for these facilities, local veterans with transportation needs, work with the Family Services Coordinator at a National Guard Armory to assess

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December is VA&R Month for Auxiliary

December 2017 Minnesota Legionnaire       Page 15
San Antonio Riverwalk
February 4-11, 2018
Tour Includes:
- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- 7 nights accommodations, with 2 nights on the Riverwalk.
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 12 Meals: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners
- Amour Hot Buffet Breakfast, St. Louis, MO
- Toasted Almond, Kansas City, KS
- Gospel Dinner Cruise
- Savannah Historic Dinner Theatre House Tour
- Private Dinner at Georgia’s House
- Historic Savannah and Charleston Tours
- Jekyll and St. Simon’s Island
- Patriotic Point Tour
- 2 Night Stay at the Atlanta, GA
- Spring Training baseball games
- $1,299.00
- $1,299.00 Per Person Double Occupancy

Minnesota Twins Spring Training in Florida
March 15-25, 2018
Tour Includes:
- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- Deluxe motor coach transportation
- 10 nights accommodation
- 18 meals: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 7 dinners
- Amour Hot Buffet Breakfast, St. Louis, MO
- Best of Nashville Guided tour
- Cool Cat Factory Tour, Atlanta, GA
- 2 Spring Training baseball games
- $1,799.00
- $1,799.00 Per Person Double Occupancy

Savannah & Charleston
April 13-20, 2018
Tour Includes:
- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Cindy Meany
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis
- 8 nights accommodations & 14 meals
- 3 Night Stay at the Embassy Suites, Newport News, VA
- Historic Savannah and Charleston Tours
- Jekyll and St. Simon’s Island
- $1,549.00
- $1,549.00 Per Person Double Occupancy

Alaska Tour & Cruise
August 3-15, 2018
Tour Includes:
- 4 Seasons Tour Manager, Larry Alvey
- Roundtrip Delta flights from Minneapolis to Fairbanks
- 9 nights accommodations & 12 meals
- Accommodations at superior and deluxe hotels
- A gentle wilderness cruise on the OCEAN PRINCESS
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Page 16 Minnesota Legionnaire December 2017
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