The USS Ward, a Navy destroyer manned by Naval Reservists from St. Paul, was discovered off the coast of the Philippines in December. The ship fired the first shot of World War II for the United States on Dec. 7, 1941, and exactly three years later was sunk by a kamikaze attack on Ormoc Bay on the west side of Leyte Island. The photo shows the wheelhouse of the ship, found at 650 feet under water.

Continued on Page 12

**Centennial Convention nearing**

Just seven months away, the pace of the planning picks up

When Minnesota found out it would be the site of the 100th National Convention of The American Legion, it seemed like a long ways off. That’s not the case anymore.

“I can’t believe how quickly it’s finally come around,” said Randy Tesdahl, Department Adjutant. “It’s coming along great. It’s going to be a fun and educational experience for all who attend.”

The convention will be held at the Minneapolis Convention Center beginning the weekend of Aug. 24. Many committee meetings will be held that weekend. The memorial service at the convention will be held Sunday morning at 11 a.m. featuring the Minnesota Boys Choir.

The annual parade will be held Sunday later in the afternoon, and it will start at 5th Avenue and travel south down the Nicollet Mall. That will be the same street the parade was held on at the first American Legion convention in 1919.

Parade Chairman Tom Schottenbauer said because the

Continued on Page 10

**Bands wanted**

Applications for high school bands will be accepted after January 1 for the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis.

It is hoped that the national parade will feature a number of Minnesota’s top high school bands.

Posts are encouraged to urge their local bands to participate. It has been determined that charitable gambling money can be used for this purpose, to provide support to the school to offset the cost of sending the band.

Also, the Convention Corporation of Minnesota at a recent meeting voted to provide an additional $500 stipend to the first 10 bands that apply to march in the Parade.

In addition to that, the national American Legion will provide a $200 stipend for every band that partici-

Continued on Page 12

**Patients have more options at VAMC**

By Al Zdon

In the last few years, traditional medicine has been joined by a host of non-traditional ways to help your body and mind.

Veterans who get their care through the Minneapolis VA Medical Center can now take advantage of these whole person treatments such as Yoga, acupuncture, Tai Chi and using food as medicine.

The Center for Integrative Health and Healing opened its doors at the medical center in December.

Laurie Kubes, the co-director of the new center, said planning has been going on for the past two years.

“We’ve spent a lot of time listening to veterans, what they would like to have offered to them. And we talked a lot to staff, what they would like. There’s been a lot of prep-

ration for the opening,” Kubes said.

The center doesn’t focus on any one area like chronic

Continued on Page 12

**Historic USS Ward found at bottom of sea**

By Al Zdon

A ship primarily manned by Naval Reservists from St. Paul — that fired the first shots of World War II — has been located on the ocean’s floor just off the coast of Leyte in the Philippines.

The USS Ward, a destroyer that sank a Japanese midget submarine just before the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, was located by a research team led by Microsoft founder Paul Allen in Ormoc Bay on the west side of Leyte Island.

The research vessel Petrel, which had previously found five other U.S. warships near the Philippines, found the Ward on Dec. 5, just two days before the 76th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack.

The Ward, which had been sunk after a Japanese kamikaze attack exactly three years after Pearl Harbor, was found in 650 feet of water using sonar and an underwater drone.

The Ward earned her

Continued on Page 2

**National Cmdr.’s Tour will travel south this year**

Minnesota will welcome our neighbor to the east during her National Commander’s Tour on Feb. 6-8.

National Commander Denise Rohan of Wisconsin will visit Minnesota just after the Super Bowl, making stops at nine Minnesota posts.

The tour this year will take a southern swing through the state. It will start in Bayport for breakfast on Tuesday, Feb. 6, followed by lunch at Spicer Post 45 and dinner at Faribault Post 318.

On Wednesday, Rohan will visit Winom Post 206, Litchfield Post 104 and Lake Crystal Post 294. On Thursday, the tour will conclude with stops at Waseca Post 228, Wayzata Post 118, and Osseo Post 172.

A complete schedule of stops, times, events, and contact people is on page 2 of this issue. Meal reservations should be made by calling the contact people listed. All Legion Family members are welcome.
USS Ward found

Continued from Page 1

Gun 1 was the first to respond. Located on the bow of the Ward, its gun crew fired the first round — the first shot of the war — and missed.

Gun 3, on the starboard side of the ship, fired the second shot of the war from about 50 yards and made a direct hit on the conning tower. The 80-foot subma-

rine slipped beneath the waves.

As the Ward sped past where the sub had been, it dropped four depth charges. The submarine, according to the crew, came to the sur-

face, rolled over, and sank. It was found at the bottom of the harbor in 2005 by another research vessel.

The Ward immediately sent a radio message to Fleet headquarters: “We have attacked, fired upon and dropped depth charges upon submarine operating in defensive sea area.”

The message was sent at 6:45 a.m., more than a full hour before the surprise Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbor. Despite the warn-

ing, the naval authorities took no defensive action, and the Japanese attack was a total surprise.

The Ward continued to steam towards the outer har-

bor throughout the morning dropping its remaining depth charges on sonar readings that may or may not have been the other four Japanese midget subs assigned to the attack.

Two Japanese planes attacked the Ward, and the destroyer was unable to fight them off because the ship’s guns could only ele-

vate to 45 degrees. Later in the day, the Ward was allowed toPearl Harbor to pick up more depth charges and crew members, were able to see the terrible aftermath of the attack.

Some jumped in the water, others were able to scramble into small boats. Orville Eithier, a crewman on the Ward, told the Minnesota Legisla-

turer that despite three years of train-

ing, the effort to get off the ship was “mainly chaos.”

When all the men were accounted for, the fleet admiral gave orders to fire on the Ward and sink the burning ship. The USS O’Brien, another destroyer, was tasked with the job.

The O’Brien’s commanding officer gave the order to sink the Ward. “The O’Brien’s skipper? W.W. Outerbridge. The Ward, despite its dangerous duty, only lost one man in three years’ of war. A sailor from Chisholm fell overboard during a routine replenishment.

And now, 73 years later, the location of the ship is once again known, and photos have been taken.

“I think it’s great that they found her,” said Dick Thill of St. Paul, who may be the last remaining mem-

ber from the original crew from 1941. “We always knew where the Ward had been sunk.”

Thill, a cook, was on board during the Pearl Harbor attack, helping man a gun on the west side of the ship. “We knew that a war was starting on the other side of the world.”

Thill, 94, had left the ward four months before the ship was sunk. “We were down by New Guinea, and they offered me the position of chief commis-

sary steward, but I didn’t want it. So they sent me on 30-day’s leave.”

After leave, Thill went to firefighting school in Newport, Virginia, and was then assigned to the USS Savannah, a light cruiser with a strong war record fighting in the Mediterranean. Again he was offered the position of chief commissary steward, and again he turned it down.

“I told them to send me to chief commissary steward school in Florida, and they did. I was there when the war ended and the Navy kicked me out. I had so many points. I never made chief, even though they offered it to me twice.”

The Petrel is a 250-foot research vessel owned by the Allen Foundation. Allen is one of a few ships in the world that can explore up to 3.5 miles down.

Previously, Allen-led expeditions had found the cruiser USS Indianapolis, and a Japanese battleship, and the ship’s bell from the USS Hood.

V/P Petrel began search-

ing for the Ward on Dec. 1 using naval documents that recorded where the ship had been sunk. It located the destroyer four days later.

The destroyer, which earned nine battle stars during the war, rolled over, and sank, covered with green vegetation.

SOLDIER’S WISH GIFT — Soldier’s Wish, a non-profit group that helps veterans, made four large donations in Minnesota in December. Above, Soldier’s Wish exec-

utive Mark Ochsebein presented the Minnesota National Guard with $18,000 in Walmart gift cards. The 900 cards were distributed to the troops. Other donations helped a woman veteran work through her cancer surgery, and another went to the Minnesota Assistance Council for veterans to help provide quality meals at Standdowns. That grant was presented at Target Field where MACV and the Twins combined to provide a meal to veterans.
HOT OFF THE PRESS!

MONTGOMERY COMPLETES SET – Montgomery Post 79 completed the set of War Stories books donated to the Montgomery Public Library by giving the library War Stories III. Post Adjutant Harvey Kierzek presented the last book of the trilogy to Librarian Nancy Noffke.

War Stories III is out. 31 stories of Minnesotans who went to war. Hundreds of photos and maps. You can also order online at mnlegion.org

All books are $29 each including shipping.

Send to Department HQ Room 300A, 20 W. 12th St., St. Paul, 55155

Name ________________________________________________________________
Address ________________________________
Number of copies __________________________ Amount enclosed $________
War Stories I ________
War Stories II ________
War Stories III ________

mnhs ad
American Legion was founded on almost 100 years ago, caring for the soldier that bore the battle and their family.

Legionnaires, the next 100 years of our organization is before us, and it will be up to each one of us to create the next generation of legionnaires. Talk to those non-members, ask those veterans in your community what they need and expect of your post and the American Legion in general. Then please remember to listen and follow through on what they tell you.

In January we start the many Mid-Winter Conferences. Plan to attend and listen to the chairman as they make their reports about the many programs we the American Legion have. Much of the information we have come to expect year after year has been sent out to each post so far. Most deal with children and youth. What you learn can and should be brought back to your next meeting and shared. Also, if you have membership to send in, why not bring it to the Mid-Winter since the chairman will be attending anyway. Right.

"Day on the Hill" is now set for March 12th at the State Capitol Rotunda, sometime late morning. There are plants in place to use those Park and Ride sites around the Twin Cities as staging locations. You need only get there and shuttles will transport you to the Capitol for the Day on the Hill event. Please start making your plans to attend. Some of the veteran issues we plan to stress are: Lifetime Homestead Market Value Exclusion, Military Benefits Protection, Veterans Courts, Reduced cost of hunting, fishing licenses for disabled veterans.

The yearly National Commanders Tour is set for February 6-8 with the sites listed elsewhere in your Minnesota Legionnaire. Sure hope you can attend and listen to our National Commander Denise Rohan speak about her plans for the remainder of her year as Commander. Please, attend if possible.

Outgoing District Commander Dennis Henkemeyer, Indianapolis

To sell your community, it needs to be seen as a place to call home. If you think of hometown, you will see that we are too old, we are too white, and we are too male. Also, if you look at the executive committee and board of directors of the organizations you see in your community, they are too male. Also, if you look at the executive committee and board of directors of the organizations you see in your community, they are too male. The theme that is referenced above was heard time and time again. It wasn’t until 20 years later that the Women’s Caucus, including National Commander Denise Rohan’s initiative and the incredible advocacy of our American Legion Auxiliary, will, and the Legion Rider programs to obtain knowledge and the wherewithal to care for our veterans and their families. How to combine these efforts for a better America, always being mindful that we are one “Nation under God.” We need to get this ball rolling, and let’s hope that when we place our trust in you we are assured of Your Blessing. We know, Lord, all things are possible with You. Help us to be worthy as we claim this blessing.

Getting back to service to Country: Not only must we prevent national spiritual decay, we must instill in our citizens a spirit of positive Americanism, with respect for the law, reverence for authority, and awareness of our God given rights and freedoms. This, in turn, reaps a spirit of service to community and Country.

Citizenship imposes responsibilities. As American citizens, every Legionnaire (or Legion Family member) should provide at least one example of integrity, self-sacrifice, hard work and a life of faith. Devotion to mutual helpfulness means service to community and Country. No one is an island, each post and Legion Family member should be eager to help their community be a good place to live, and to serve the community.

Isaiah 59: 20-21 says “The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,” declares the Lord. “My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever,” says the Lord. Again, God bless all and may we have a Happy New Year, God’s blessing on each legate and those suffering physical and mental duress in our country. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Chaplain.

I also intend to do a short Four Chaplains Ceremony at the beginning of our meeting, and then we will let everyone reflect on what we can all do as Chaplains to consider doing one as well. Four Chaplains Sunday is the first Sunday in February.

Greetings, and Happy New Year to all.

May 2018 he awesome. It is my fervent hope that all had a rewarding and successful year. With the subject of the new year, the opportunity for renewal and resolutions to make things better, do we resolve to be better Legionnaires and Legation Family members going forward? Are we resolve enough, i.e. committed, to the idea of being successful? Do you have a personal commitment to solving problems we face within the first month? There are many reasons, but most is we are just not committed enough to being successful, it is in the law. For example, does your family, do you know that when we place our trust in you we are assured of Your Blessing. We know, Lord, all things are possible with You. Help us to be worthy as we claim this blessing.

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Round Tables
The World War II Round Table will meet at Historic Fort Snelling Visitor Center on Thursday, Jan. 11, at 7 p.m. The topic being discussed will be “The Holocaust.”

Veterans Day on the Hill
The annual Veteran’s Day on the Hill for 2018 will be held Monday, March 12.

World War I Data Base
Minnesota families are encouraged to contribute to the World War I Centennial data base. Families who have information about a family member who served in World War I can go to worldwar1centennial.org, click on Commemorating

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Taps
Gustafson, Clifton Axel Jr., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 30, 2017. He was Fourth District Commander, 1986-87, and Department Vice Commander, 1995-96. He served as district adjutant for 20 years, and he ran for Department Commander. He was a notary public at the courthouse and a Civil War re-enactor. He was a member of Minnesota Post 271.

Surma, Jerome Francis, 83, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 7, 2017. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1956 to 1958 and then worked for the City of St. Louis. He was married to Patti and had two children, James and Kevin.

Smith, Neil J., “Jack,” 81, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 8, 2017. He was a member of Le Sueur Post 55.

Brinkman, Dwayne, 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 28, 2017. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Nielson, Donald “Pat,” 75, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Dec. 8, 2017. He was a member of Little Falls Post 68.

Hageman, Raymond A., 93, Army veteran of World War II, died Dec. 12, 2017. He was a member of Cloquet Post 262.

Petron, Gale C., 80, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Nov. 25, 2017. He was a weapons mechanic. He was a member of Rice Post 473.

Femlee, Dale L., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 23, 2017. He was a member of Le Sueur Post 55.

Babst, John, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 3, 2017. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Barbour, Robert, 90, Navy veteran of World War II, died Nov. 8, 2017. He was a member of Eagan Post 594.

Ferguson, David Gordon, 86, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died Dec. 6, 2017. He served on the submarine USS Queenfish. He was a member of Cleveland Post 207.

Donahue, Daniel, 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died Nov. 8, 2017. He was a member of Eagan Post 594.

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Four veterans of the battle and an author who has written extensively about the Battle of the Bulge told their experiences in a Fort Snelling History Center program as part of the World War II History Round Table.

The 10th Armored Division launched 13 infantry divisions and seven armored divisions through the Ardennes Forest at a weakly held Allied position. Opposing them were six infantry divisions, including two divisions that had just arrived and never seen combat, and two armored divisions.

Wayne DeHeaven, who wrote the story for Life magazine, said part of the CCB went north, part went east and the rest went southeast around the city. Team Desory was forced to withdraw to the west, and its leader, Major William Desory, was wounded and captured. The Germans moved north and south around Bastogne and on Dec. 21, the city was surrounded.

On Dec. 22, a message from the Germans was brought to Gen. Anthony McAuliffe, commander of the 101st Airborne, asking about a surrender. "There was confusion at first. The Americans thought the Germans wanted to surrender."

When it was finally determined that the Germans were asking for a surrender, McAuliffe issued his famous reply, "Nuts!"

"Of course, the Germans had no idea what that meant," Collins said. "That became the 'Nuts' spread across the entire CCB sector."

Because of the cloudy weather, the Americans did not have a good view of where the wounded couldn't get out and the supplies couldn't get in.

On the 24th, the skies cleared and a huge air drop of supplies was made. No supplies were made to Bastogne. The city was also attacked by air by the Germans.

Collins outlined the stories of several heroes of the siege, including nurses Augusta Chovy and Renee LeMaire. LeMaire was featured in the HBO series Band of Brothers, but Collins said that she and a combat medic for Easy Company never actually met. LeMaire was killed in the bombing of an aid station.

Christmas passed with the Americans still surrounded, but on the 26th, Patton's 4th Armored Division opened a corridor into Bastogne on the southwest side. "The Germans had said they didn't need Patton," Collins said. "Well, they did." The second part of the story, Collins said, was the slow and deliberate process of pushing the Germans back to their original line, which took many weeks.

Collins concluded his talk by urging veterans and their families to record their stories "so that future generations will know."
Shop, Ship and Share

AL DHAFRA AIR BASE -- Some of the Shop, Ship and Share packages found the United State Air Force in Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates. "We can’t thank you enough. Packages like this make our time here so much more enjoyable." Over 1,000 packages were shipped this year by the Fourth District and friends.

GROUP SHOT -- Volunteers at Maplewood Mall made the Shop, Ship and Share program work. The group included Viking cheerleaders, 4th and 5th District Legion Family, postal employees and many more. Somehow a red piggy on a carousel got involved in sending the packages to service people overseas.

Commander Mike Schaffer helped label a package at the Maplewood Mall.

Rally in West Duluth

The Legion Family gathered at West Duluth Post 71 for the Pearl Harbor Rally in December.

A large crowd gathered at West Duluth Post 71 for the annual Pearl Harbor Rally. Topping the Sons of the American Legion at the rally was the Fifth District with 70.35 percent. The total for the year for the SAL thus far was 53.8 percent.

Leading the way for the Auxiliary was the 6th District with 71.55 percent. Overall, the Auxiliary was 67.44 percent which was good for 7th best nationally and 4th best in the Northwest Division.

The champion of the Legion was the 6th District also, racking up 81.81 percent. Overall, Minnesota was at 81.04 percent, good for third in the nation.

Minnesota was still trailing Wisconsin in the contest between the two states. There was a side bet involving NFL teams between the membership gurus for each state. Membership Director Larry Ryan proclaimed, "I will not wear a Packers’ jersey and sing, ‘Go, Pack, Go,’ at the National Convention."
Dan Notley spent 15 months in Vietnam, much of it walking the point for a recon unit. The work was so dangerous, that he advanced from E-2 to E-6 in 10 months mainly because of casualties in his platoon.

Danny Spencer Notley grew up all over Oklahoma. “My father was a school administrator and the way you advanced was to move. I never lived in one place more than four years, and that only happened once.”

His mother was an English teacher and later a school librarian. Notley graduated from Skiatook High School, not far from Tulsa, in 1965, the only year he lived there. He played football, basketball and baseball in high school. He moved on to the University of Oklahoma in Norman and continued his education.

“I didn’t know how I felt about Vietnam. I remember lying in bed one night listening to the radio when they passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. I wondered what it all meant.”

He stayed at Oklahoma until his junior year in 1968. “Those were tumultuous times, especially if you were in college. There was a lot of confusion, and I was really wrestling with it.”

“I didn’t even declare a major until they made me. Here I was racking up all this college loan debt. I didn’t know about that war in Vietnam, but I knew I was a patriot.”

Notley’s father had been a Seabee in World War II, serving on Okinawa, and later served in Korea when his National Guard unit was called up. Notley quit school and headed north to Minnesota to live with a friend for a while. “I knew the draft board would find me sooner or later, and sure enough my mom called me and said I needed to come back to report.”

He reported in August of 1968 and was sent to Fort Polk, Louisiana, which was also called “Tigerland.” More soldiers went to Vietnam from Fort Polk than any other military base. Its climate and foliage were similar to Vietnam.

While there, Notley took the usual tests and did well. He was offered helicopter pilot training. “I told them ‘No.’ They said, ‘What?’ I said I wanted infantry. They said, ‘Well, we have one of those jobs available.’”

As the new guy, Notley was issued an M-79 grenade launcher. “I objected, but they said, ‘You’re the new guy and you get the grenade launcher. You’re at the bottom.’”

Notley carried the weapon for the next three or four months as his unit did reconnaissance work along the coast, and also in the mountains to the west. “Nobody liked the coastal areas because there were so many civilians and so many Viet Cong. You couldn’t tell one from another. We spent most of our time in the mountains. There was no question there whether somebody is friendly. You knew they were the enemy.”

One thing Notley learned about his grenade launcher was that if you put the butt on the ground, you got more range out of it. “It was almost like a mortar.”

His platoon set up one night on a mountain top. “What we didn’t know was that it was where the North Vietnamese had their guns registered. The first round they shot came right into our camp and killed our first sergeant.”

Time went by, and one day a new guy showed up and they gave him an M-16. “I said, ‘No, no, no.’ I told them if they gave me the M-16, I’d walk the point. So I walked the point for the next six months.”

Walking the point meant being the lead man in the platoon heading down trails or through the jungle. “I knew it was dangerous, but it was sort of like how you feel safer sometimes driving than being the passenger. I could trust my instincts.”

But it didn’t start well. “My first day on point, I headed out and just caught a glaem on the dew of a trip wire. I hadn’t gone a hundred feet. It turns out it was one of our own trip wires. Our guy had put it out the night before and forgot about it. I said, ‘Dude, you’re going to get me killed.’”

The platoon got past the trip wire and not far up the path Notley suddenly came face to face with a VC soldier. “We were both surprised. I opened up but he disappeared into the bush. That was my first hour in walking the point.”

By Al Zdon

There were two ways to handle the real threat to one’s life while patrolling the countryside in Vietnam. “Well, you could use fear and caution,” said Dan Notley, who spent 15 months in-country in 1969-70. “Or you could be more aggressive. You could have the attitude that ‘We are invincible.’ There’s a saying and it’s called ‘run to the chaos.’ That’s what some of us did, and I think it was a better survival technique. ‘Oh yeah, it’s dangerous for sure.’

Notley quickly learned that he didn’t have to worry about being unwelcome. “‘Well, we have one of those jobs available.’”

The work was so dangerous, that he advanced from E-2 to E-6 in 10 months mainly because of casualties in his platoon.
he said he learned quickly to use his peripheral vision. “You can see movement out of the corner of your eye better than straight ahead sometimes.”

Other senses had to be also fully attuned. “You had to have situational awareness. In a human being, your senses are meant to be much more awake. But living in America, you don’t pay attention to anything.”

One sense they used was smell. “We were up in the mountains where the air is fresh, and you could smell their cook fires or the fish they ate. One of our guys was a logger from northern Wisconsin, and he used to say, ‘I can smell a gook.’ Sure enough, about 10 minutes later we’d run into something or be ambushed.”

Another key was to slow down and take it all in. “Yeah, you pay a price at some point for that high level of continuous attunement and expenditure of adrenaline. Your body has a fight or flight mechanism, but it’s meant to be temporary, not on all the time. The eventual result I suppose is PTSD.”

Soldiers in combat, Notley said, rarely feel fear after the first few seconds. “After that it’s pure adrenaline. And it can be addictive. Guys would sign up for another tour just to get that adrenaline high.”

His platoon would go out for a day or two sometimes, and then go out for two weeks. They carried whatever they needed. “I always erred on the side of carrying too much ammunition rather than food. You can survive a while without food. One time we got into a situation where we ran out of ammo. That wasn’t good. A helicopter finally arrived and they didn’t dare land, they were just dumping boxes of grenades out the door.”

Notley had arrived in Bien Hoa in February of 1969 as an E-2, or private. By October, he had advanced to E-5, or sergeant. “Stuff happens. People get wounded or killed and you just move up.”

At the same time, he was brought back to base camp to take over tactical ops command, or the job of securing the perimeter of the base each night. “I’d be up all night just monitoring radios.”

He lasted about a month on the job. “I hated being in the rear echelon. You have to dress right and act right. And I didn’t like the politics back there. I wanted to be with my guys out in the field.”

“By Thanksgiving, I was back in the field. By December I made E-6.”

He had two R&R vacations during that first year, one to Australia and one to Hong Kong. By January, his year was up. “The clerk was a friend of mine, and I asked him where they were going to send me. He told me it was Fort Benning and they were going to make me a drill sergeant. All that spit and polish, I couldn’t stand it. I hated the Army, but I figured I’d take my chances.”

At that time, soldiers could extend their time in Vietnam to get out of the Army sooner, and Notley chose that option. He would stay in country until March, but then he would get out several months early.

To the end, he spent about 15 months in combat. Did he have any close calls?

“One time we were heading back to Duc Pho, and it turns out they were firing rockets into the base. They wanted us to go on this mountain top and report where they were firing from so we could call in the artillery.”

The platoon loaded into three Huey helicopters and headed for the mountain top.

“We were in the first helicopter and we were just coming in for a landing when the pilot veered off. So the second chopper landed and then the third. The men on those choppers secured the perimeter. And then we came around again.”

The Huey Notley was in was about 10 feet in the air and just about to land when a very large bomb blew up, killing or wounding most of the men in the platoon and destroying the helicopter.

“I was not next to the door, my buddy was, and he took most of the shrapnel. But I got sprayed all up and down my right side. Our helo dropped like a rock and burst into flames. I dragged my friend away and I went around looking for others. By this time the enemy had opened up with small arms fire.”

What Notley found was not good. “Our platoon sergeant had just come back two days ago from R&R with his wife. I found his torso hanging from a tree, and the rest of him was in two or three pieces here and there.

“And then I found our officer, and he had a bullet hole right in the middle of his forehead. There were only three or four of us who were still able to do anything.”

Meanwhile the men hustled to get everyone away from the helicopter. “When that JP4 (aviation gas) begins to burn, it’s something. All that was left of the Huey in a few minutes was the engine and the tips of the rotors.”

Later the Army figured out that it was probably a 250-pound bomb that had been triggered by the enemy just as the third chopper was set to land. “Guys were just sitting there in shock. It happened so quick.”

American gunships were in the vicinity and quickly laid down a fire around the mountain top, and other choppers
The dogs barking. though, and took off. "But we could follow their position by where we had been. It just rained down." haven't gone far when machine guns and RPGs hit the spot knew we were there. We told the lieutenant that we couldn't just outside a village" VC from anybody else. One night we began to set up camp called in the artillery.

On one other occasion, the South Vietnamese called in a...
MARSHALL SUPPORTS SCOUTS -- Marshall Post 113 recently presented a check to the Marshall Cub and Boy Scouts to help with their fall recruiting. The check was presented by Post Commander Ken Versaevel, at right.

WHEATON HONOR FLIGHT -- Veterans from Wheaton Post 80 took part in the November Honor Flight from Fargo to Washington D.C. From left: Marvin Bach, Wallace Johnson, Harry Fischer and Robert Johnson stand in front of the Korean War Memorial.

EAGAN FLAG RETIREMENT AT BCBS -- Eagan Post 594 Color Guard conducted a flag retirement ceremony at Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Minnesota. The ceremony was attended by employees, post members and police. From left: Air Force Bugler Johnny Holiday, Frank Caldwell, Jerry Skala, BC/BS Vice President Kelly Bengston, BC/BS CEO Michael Guyettee, Frank Russomanno and Dan Seanoa, and BC/BS Vets ERG Jody Hassing, who coordinated the event.

SPRING GROVE MEMORIAL -- The Spring Grove Area Veterans Memorial Group recently dedicated a new memorial honoring over 1,000 veterans, living and dead. The Spring Grove Post 249 and the City of Spring Grove were partners. Over 750 attended the dedication, including eight World War II veterans.

BRICELYN CONTRIBUTES -- Bricelyn Post 165 Commander Lars Helland and SAL Commander Scott Gebel present checks totaling $1,500 to Blue Earth Post 89 Rider Scott Phillips for the Legacy Run.

BASEBALL POST OF YEAR -- Montevideo Post 59 accepted the American Legion Baseball Post of the Year Award, presented by Director Randy Schaub, left. From right are Post Commander Marv Garbe, Baseball Assistant Doug Broich, and coaches Tim Epema, and Brandon Raymo.

ALEXANDRIA FLOAT -- Alexandria Post 87 took part in the 62nd annual Glenwood Waterama Parade by pulling their float "They Do it For Us."

STEARNS FAIR VOLUNTEERS -- Legionnaires from the area volunteered at the Stearns County Fair. From left: Sauk Centre Post members Bruce Heg, Dave Donbrava and Jeff Quistoff and Melrose Post 101 member Rick Cross. Cross is a Sixth District Vice Commander.
New Center opens

Continued from Page 1

pain of PTSD. Co-Director Judy Wagner said, but instead just focuses on the patient’s health in general. She said, though, that some therapies may have an obvious benefit, such as yoga for lower back pain.

She noted that many of the therapies used at the center are not new, but have been around for thousands of years and have proven their efficacy.

“We want to be clear that this does not replace a veteran’s treatment,” Wagner said. “It has benefits, that’s fantastic. But it does not take the place of good medical treatment.

“It might just mean a patient might have a little less pain, or might be able to sleep without pills.”

Any veteran interested in integrative health should first talk to their doctor about it. Only referrals are accepted at the center.

Wagner and Kubes said it’s important the veteran’s doctor be part of the process.

Once a patient has been referred, they must attend a 90-minute class to get an overview of the integrative health program. The class at this time is offered twice a week.

The class goes over all seven programs now being offered, the context, and all that it’s up to the veteran to sign up for the class or classes he or she wants.

Wagner said it’s possible other treatments could be offered in the future, but these are now based on input from the interviews with veterans and staff. She said the center is limited by its own space and staff restrictions.

The seven treatments include:

- **Whole Health Group**: A series of 8 classes designed to guide you in creating optimal health. Attend one 90-minute group weekly for 8 weeks.
- **Tai Chi**: Slow, guided movements designed to increase flexibility, ease pain, and improve balance and agility.
- **iRest Yoga Nidra**: A practice and development of mindfulness based skills for use in daily life.
- **Acupuncture**: Acupuncture to address a variety of conditions as well as overall wellness, in a group setting, fully clothed, seated in chairs.
- **Mindfulness**: Practice and development of mindfulness based skills for use in daily life.
- **Sons of The American Legion Riders**

American Legion Riders

By Chuck Stone
Department Director

Greeting American Legion Family.

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year. Hopefully with all the festivities the past couple of weeks everyone had a Merry Christmas.

Now that the new year is here we have much work to do as the excitement builds towards the kickoff of the American Legion’s centennial celebration. This will be taking place right here in Minnesota at the National Convention in August. Now is the time to start getting your motorcycle ready.

I would like to see as many of the Minnesota Riders in the National Parade with American flags. The flags can be mounted on the motorcycle and/or the passenger can be holding the flag. Minnesota is known for having a very large number of folks marching in the parade with American flags. Scoot along and add to the count.

To borrow a quote from the late John F. Kennedy and slightly modified, “I don’t ask what the American Legion can do for you, but what can you do for the American Legion.”

You may be wondering just what can I do for the American Legion? The answer would take more space then what I have room for here. Each and everyone of us is a salesperson for the American Legion. By telling people what the American Legion is about we are selling the Legion. In the process we just might recruit a new member, bring back an old member or even get a donation for one of our many programs.

Sometimes we don’t have to say anything. An example would be the vet we all know that I had come up to me and say “I read about you guys in the paper and I think what you are doing is wonderful, please accept this donation.” As they had me a few dollars. Make your presents know and be ready to explain, people out there who want to know about us.

Okay, the cat is out of the bag. Our goal on the Legacy Run this year is $250,000. I challenge each Rider to ask no fewer then five business for a donation.

If everyone asks and receives something from one or more of the places they visit we will easily achieve our goal, maybe even surpass it.

Hope to see you at an upcoming mid-winter or the Sweetheart Rally. Keep the chrome side up and the rubber side down.

Bands needed

Continued from Page 1

pats – up to 25 bands.

Bands who wish to march in the national parade should go to mldva.org/convention and click on the yellow box, “view information.”

In the 1994 national parade in Minneapolis, there were high school bands from Irondale, Litchfield, Monticello, Pipestone, Anoka, Princeton and Bloomington Kennedy.

“We want to see the many high schools as possible,” Convention Corporation President Jeff Olson said. “We want this to be the best parade in recent memory.

 Olson noted that Minnesota has a reputation for having some of the best high school bands in the nation.

Sons of The American Legion

By Shawn Davis

Happy New Year. Welcome to 2018. This New Year will be a big one for the SAL and the whole Minnesota American Legion. We will celebrate 100 years of the American Legion and the National Convention will be back in Minneapolis this fall. We’ll have a great time and you are all welcome to the celebration! But a lot of work has been between the years as well.

With the New Year, our membership targets each month get more aggressive. December’s target was 45%, but January’s got us up to 60% by April 1st, and 90% by April 11th. So while we have done well for our goals so far, I have roll up our sleeves, and start making this phone calls to members who have not renewed, or send out that personal letter inviting the member to renew now. Additionally it has been noticed that all the squadron targets agreed to at that meeting did not get entered into the membership roster, so we will be updating that since our goal is 12,000 members. Something I know we can do if we all work together.

And speaking of membership how is the new recruiting going? Has your squad brought in 5 new members? If you have brought in 5 new members for the American Legion Family? If you brought in 5 new SAL members, have you submitted your pin request?

This time of year is also time for midwinters. I and/ or Membership Chair Dave Vulcan will try to attend as many as we can. But to be successful, be sure to invite as many members from your district to attend as well. This is the event to help educate your members on what the District does, how the District can help them, and also see who might be interested in helping grow into the District leadership of tomorrow. Send out that mass mailing, those emails and flyers, and fill up those midwinters.

My Commanders project is going well. Thank you to Squadrions from Maple Grove/Osseo, Fridley, and everyone else who has donated to my command project. I also see who might be interested in helping grow into the District leadership of tomorrow. Send out that mass mailing, those emails and flyers, and fill up those midwinters.

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Greetings from the 1st District

I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Can we believe 2017 is already over? Every year seems to go by quicker. It must be the age.

We have a great turn out at Duluth for the Pearl Harbor Rally. It is nice to be able to host these events.

Our District Midwinter Conference is going to be held in Albert Lea, January 6th. Our District Oratorical Contest will be held on Saturday February 3, 2018. Our District membership is coming in at a steady rate. We continue to be in second place but edging close to first.

This article will be published by February 3rd which is the date for our annual Sweetheart Rally. This year the rally will be held at North Saint Paul Post 39. Please plan to attend this rally. Bring lots of memberships so we can surpass Wisconsin.

God Bless America and God Bless our Troops.

Greetings from the 3rd District

we have snow here; now we have to contend with the snow and the cold.

As of Bulletin 24, the 4th District membership is at 78.4% and we are 5 points behind the 6th District, last month we were 5 points behind, that number is getting smaller, let’s keep the pressure on, next month 3 points behind. Please reach out to your Vice Commander and Membership Director Mickey; they are available to work with you in your membership. Congratulations to Dayton’s Bluff for making goal – 100%

Consolidated Post Reports – last year every Post in the District submitted a CPR, let’s do the same thing again this year, if your Post needs help please reach out to your District Vice Commanders or myself, we are all here to help out.

To all the Volunteers who helped out with Shop, Shop & Share, I thank you – once again a tremendous success, at last count 97% of our 100% goal was met and shipped, and that number is still growing. The letters that we have received back with pictures really shows the appreciation the service members and their families show.

To all of the Volunteers who help with Bell Ringing for the Salvation Army – another great year for a great cause – thank you all and also to the JROTC Cadets.

God bless each and every one of you and may the New Year bring you happiness, prosperity and good health to all members of the 4th District American Legion Family and please think of our ailing members in your prayers.

Greetings from the 6th District

I hope our Legion Family has/had a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Where has the time gone? We want to thank everyone for their contributions to help our programs this last year. We have made a difference in the lives of our veterans and their families. I couldn’t be more proud of all of you. Thank you all for your support.

The New Year starts soon. It’s now time to stop procrastinating paying your Legion Membership. We will March on Capitol Hill Soon and every last member is needed to be able to help with the needs of all of our Veterans! Please renew now or ask those that haven’t to. We need you.

Don’t forget the Oratorical Contest is January 6th at St. James. The District Mid-Winter conference is at the American Legion at 9:00 a.m. Call your Schools in your Districts & ask them to send their representatives there. If they need rides or a Legion to sponsor them, you can call me and I will arrange it.

Greetings from the Sixth District!

By the time you get this article, Winter will officially be here, along with Pearl Harbor Day, the ending date of the Iraq War, Christmas and the end of 2017. I hope everyone had time to spend with friends and family. It has been a good year for me, being able to get around and visit with many of our Local Posts. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their hard work.

At the Pearl Harbor Rally, I could visit with some members from the other nine districts. I believe it was a very successful rally, with the Department of Minnesota moving into second place. Good job, everyone. Now, let us set our efforts to achieve first place. I know we can and will do it.

January is setting up to be another busy month. I will be attending more post functions, getting ready for our Mid-Winter Conference and preparing for what the new year will bring us.

Once again, I hope everyone had a safe and wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year. In closing, keep your thoughts and prayers for our military personnel, who were not able to be with their family for the holidays.

For God and Country

Greetings from the Ninth

Hello to all Legion Members!

A new year is upon us. Midwinter meetings are in the works. The 8th district midwinter is Saturday, January 27. The meeting is in Hibbing, MN. Start time is 9 a.m. at the Hibbing Memorial Bldg. Our adjourned Car is sending out a format of the day. Vice Commander Larry is making food preparations. All committee chairmen will make presentations. The membership is coming along. Keep signing up the memberships in to department when you receive them.

Remember to visit the veterans in the hospitals and the homes. Also, if a local Post needs you to ride to the clinics or the shopping areas, please offer your services. Note our Department Commander, Mike Schaffer may be here to visit during our midwinter. All members please come and enjoy our one-day midwinter.

Thank you, Jennifer Havlick, for writing this column when I was indisposed due to illness and hospitalization.

The whole 8th District team has been nothing but helpful and supportive during this time. I am deeply appreciative.

Greetings from the Ninth American Legion Family!! I wish you all the very best in 2018. Now that 2017 is in your rear view mirror we need to continue to promote our Legion programs and continue to work on membership and achieve our goals.

In December we held our annual District Christmas party and I want to give a big shout out to the Waubun Auxiliary as well as other Auxiliary members for the outstanding job in making it another successful event. What a great turnout we had.

I had the opportunity to attend Breckenridge Post 153’s Christmas party along with Dept Commander Schaffer and his lovely wife.

Our Mid Winter conference will be held on Saturday January 27th with meetings starting at 9 am at the Thief River Falls Post 117.

Membership is going extremely well, we have surpassed all of our National target dates. I would like to extend a big thank you to the posts that have already reached 100% goal. Argyle, Strandquist, Hitterdal, Eucild, Gully, Beltz, Ulen, Henning, Deer Creek and Rotbell.

Until next month, I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year. God bless our Troops & their families and our Veterans.
January 2018

By Donna Arens

Merry Christmas & Happy 2018 to all of our American Legion Family.

I have had a very eventful 2017. It started by losing two of my very favorite Harmony members in March and one in April. With my American Legion Family immediate and friends, I have survived.

I was fortunate enough to join the ranks of many of my peers to have the distinction of being in a leadership position of this great organization.

My companions in the Leadership Team, Commander Mike, Detachment Commander Shawn, The Riders Director Chuck and Honorary Junior President Courtney have been very special people in my life. These friendships and memories, God willing will last a lifetime.

What a wonderful month. Again great food and comradery at the Annual Legislative Retreat. Special thanks to Secretary Sandy for the wonderful job in overseeing the event. The Auxiliary Family.

This is an experience you can only live to appreciate fully. January 2018, will bring Mid Winters and I am so looking forward to those.

The President’s Column

By Donna Arens

Junior Conference will be held at North St. Paul in April

Saturday, April 14th is the date for the 55th Annual Department of Minnesota Junior Conference to be held at North St. Paul American Legion Post 39 with the Fourth District serving as our hosts. A fun evening has been planned for Friday, April 13th. Attend a Minnesota public, charter, parochial, private, home-school, or be a resident of Minnesota. All reservations will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis. Any person, business or organization may provide the fee to sponsor a girl but this must be run through a Unit.

This year the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will be held at Bethel University. The session will be held June 10-16.

2017/18 POPPY ORDERS

Poppy orders are still being accepted in the department office. As of this writing, we have received orders from 246 Units. Please get your order into the Department Office. We need to know how many poppies are needed so we can plan accordingly. If you have already ordered and need to place a second order, please do so.

We have received Poppy orders. It is time to begin our annual Poppy Mailings. We want to make sure that we have enough poppies for all of our Veterans. We have been told by the American Legion that they are running short of poppies. Please make sure that you order enough poppies for your Unit and the veterans in your community.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual reports along with Trophy and Award information have been sent to all Unit presidents in the January/February Unit Mailing packet. Please make sure and go through the reports and instruction sheets. If your Unit doesn’t participate in all of the programs be sure to fill out the forms to show your participation in and return them. If your Unit is inactive and doesn’t participate in any of the programs, please send them back stating “do not participate” on the form.

SECOND DUES NOTICES

The National organization will be sending out a second dues notice around January 15, 2018 to all Senior members whose 2018 dues were NOT received and recorded by the National organization by December 10. That means some of you may receive this second notice though you recently paid your dues.

If you have already paid your dues and receive another notice, please disregard it. We know that some of the dues and the dues notices cross in the mail.

Reminder: Any member who has not paid her 2017 dues by January 31 is considered delinquent and loses her rights, privileges and benefits of membership. Payment of her 2017 dues reinstates her as a member in good standing.

January 2018

Auxiliary Programs

In reviewing the contributions to the various approved Auxiliary programs that need our financial support. These are listed on page 9 of this issue. Those marked with an * are our own Auxiliary programs, namely: Junior Activities, Department Scholarships, Girls State, Past Presidents Health Care Scholarship, American Legion Auxiliary Hospital Program, $5.00 Bill Shower, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and the Christmas Gift Shop. These programs cannot be carried on without the financial support of our Units and those Posts that have so kindly supported our programs.

Our Units are having difficulties financially. Every Unit should look carefully at what they are donating to. Many, many letters of solicitation come to the Unit from other organizations. Some Units feel that they “must” support these other organization in order to be carrying out the programs of the ALA. That is not the case. Too, some Units are supporting programs we are no longer involved with financially or that have been completed.

Scholarships

Question: What has your Unit done with the copies of the scholarship applications sent to you last fall? Are they sitting in your Unit’s files, or have you taken them to your local schools and shared them with the students who are searching for ways to finance their education? If you are in need of additional copies for distribution, you may duplicate those you received or contact the department office for additional copies.

All scholarship applications are due into the department office by March 15, 2018. Let your school and community know that these scholarships are available! The American Legion Auxiliary Scholarship, American Legion Auxiliary Hospital Scholarship, Girls State, Past Presidents Health Care Scholarship, American Legion Auxiliary Hospital Program, $5.00 Bill Shower, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and the Christmas Gift Shop are programs that are available throughout the year.

Thank you Volunteers

There is a very special group of people who serve our hospitalized veterans throughout the year. These are our Hospital/Home Representatives and the volunteers who work with them. Each month is busy for them as they make the stay of our hospitalized veterans a bit more pleasant and comfortable. During the month of December they are exceptionally busy with the Christmas Gift Shop and $5.00 Bill Shower programs. Our appreciation and many thanks to all our representatives and the volunteers who serve with them.

Sandra Wersal, Hastings

Thank you ladies for all you do.

Secretary Sandie Deutch

I have begun a new project to benefit all members who have their emails on file with the Department Office. You are receiving the transactions on no cost via email every month if we have your email address on file. It is a perfect right time to go through these emails and see if there are any items you are interested in.

I have a few questions to ask as to what are our own Auxiliary programs; what are not. I would like to thank all of the Auxiliary members for supporting the fund-raisers that have been put into place in order to raise money for scholarships, hospital programs, and many other programs.

AUXILIARY PROGRAMS

SECRETARY SANDIE’S NOTES

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Auxiliary Bulletin
Continued from Preceding Page

into action. The 100th Anniversary Cookbooks were received so well that we have ordered another 250 books. There is an order blank in the Legionnaire so don’t hesitate to get your books ordered. They make wonderful gifts. We still are selling the military bracelets and also the Auxiliary Emblem magnets. We have plenty of those in the office, so please call and order as you need. The last fund-raiser is the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota mailing labels. The first 15,000 members received their labels already and the balance will be mailed out shortly. Please be sure and support this fund-raiser.

Another year has passed and we are all still here enjoying our jobs immensely. It has been a great year, finishing up with President Carol and starting out with President Donna, both of whom are incredible assets to our organization. We are still struggling with membership but the slide seems to be lessening each year. Mary Kuperus has brought the fun back in to membership – thanks Mary.

On a personal note, my year couldn’t have been better. We were blessed with baby Elizabeth in May and she has become the star of the family. I haven’t seen a happier baby in my life. Our children and grandchildren are all happy and successful and we can’t ask for more than that. I have made many more friends over the year within the American Legion Family. You are all incredible. I have gotten to know that leader Mike’s wife Nina better and what a hoot she is. She is also a very warm and loving person – glad to call her my friend. With the New Year here Shorty and I have started up to a real vacation to Mesa and then off to Texas in the spring. We will become ranchers for almost a week, watching the grandkids and tending to the animals – haven’t done that in years, just can’t wait. After that we are back into another Convention and then the big National Convention in Minneapolis. Make sure and take the time to come and see the National Parade which will be on August 26 on the Nicollet Mall. Minnesota will be hugely represented.

My wish is for everyone to have a very Happy, Blessed New Year with only good things happening. Until next month, Sandy.

Seventh District report
As that favorite children’s book, “The Little Engine That Could”, have you in your adult life, ever reflected upon that story? When it’s going up that hill, pulling and chugging along, hoping to make it to the top. That story has come and gone in my mind these last few months, as 7th District President. For the fact that, you are always learning what you can do to better the life of our Veterans, experiencing things that are out of your comfort zone, and enjoying the great benefits of being part of our Legion Family.

Now as we are almost to the top of that hill (1/2 way thru the year). Getting ready for Mid-Winter Conference, the time will seem to whiz by.

So with that let us keep our Veterans always on the top of that priority list, and within our prayers. Remember our American Legion Family.

KARLA MINNICK

Eighth District report
The 8th District would like to thank all the Auxiliary members that came to the Workshop on the 2nd of December. Thank you to Sandy Wersal – Leadership Chairman, Mary Kuperus – Membership Chairman, & Robin Dorr – Public Relations Chairman for having their “first” workshop in the 8th District. A lot of great information was given to all.

As Auxiliary members we need to remember that when someone is taking care of a sick veteran be it at home or in the hospital we need to ask that person if they need any help. Would they like you to pick up their mail; let the dog out, sit with the person so they can have a few hours to get things done? The Veteran and their families are part of our Legion family and should be treated that way.

Important Dates to remember:
- The 8th District will have their Mid-Winter on January 27 at the Veterans Memorial Building in Hibbing. Meeting start time will be 10am, Executive meeting at 9am.
- The Commander and Presidents open house will be on April 7th at the McVega Post #60 starting at 1pm.
- In the 8th District lost two long time members Bill & Lou Hall from Moose Lake, our hearts and sympathies go out to the family and The American Legion and Auxiliary.

Three Department Leadership Workshops coming up
The Department Auxiliary will be sponsoring three Leadership Workshops coming up. They will be held Feb. 10 in New London, Feb. 24 in Waite Park and March 10 in Buffalo. They will run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Phone: ( ) Email Address:
Amount enclosed: $ Make checks payable to: Sandy Wersal
Mail to: 16667 Co Rd 9 NE, New London, MN 56273

AT NATIONAL FESTIVAL -- Bobby White of Minnesota was able to participate in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Buffalo, N.Y., with help from the American Legion Auxiliary. He participated in the creative writing seminar.

ANNA EULLS

Funeral Plans for Veterans
Purple Cross has been serving America’s Veteran since 1948 and continues to offer the best funeral plans available. With Funeral Preplanning you:
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