DEC told that state gains a post and also loses a post

By Al Zdon
The Minnesota American Legion gained one and lost one following action by the Department Executive Committee in April.

The meeting had been postponed due to a snowstorm in Montgomery in March.

A new post will be formed at Nowthen, a small community in the northern suburbs of the Twin Cities, a few miles north of Anoka and Ramsey.

With a population of 4,700, Nowthen is in one of the fastest growth areas of Minnesota.

Paul Orson, 10th District Commander, told the DEC that the paperwork for the post is now at the National organization and the goal is to have the post up and running by the time of the state convention.

The post number will be 2018.

At the same time, the committee voted to revoke the charter of the Minneapolis Business and Professional Men’s Post 332.

Fifth District Commander Joe Bayer said many of the members of the post had moved out of state, and the post will be dissolved.

Continued on Page 2

Historical Society creates veteran outreach position

The Minnesota Historical Society has a new outreach program.

And it’s for veterans.

Chris Belland has been named the program and outreach manager for veterans at the state historical society, and will work out of the Fort Snelling historical site to create programs for veterans.

Belland has worked for the society for a number of years at Fort Snelling and he has a military background.

Belland has been in the Minnesota National Guard since 2006, was commissioned in 2010, and has served deployments in Kuwait and Egypt. He is presently the public affairs officer for the First Brigade of the 34th Infantry Division.

He said part of his new role at the society will be to help veterans tell their stories in various ways.

“Veterans have always been very important to the historical society and they always will be,” he said.

Special events for veterans are being planned. On Aug. 3 there will be a special event on military and citizen service.

Belland said that over the years, the Fort itself has become a destination for many veterans. Interpreters explain what life was like at the fort, and the historical significance of different episodes.

The visitor center to the old fort will be seeing some improvements in the summer.

“The visitor center to the old fort will be seeing some work out of the Fort Snelling historical site to create programs for veterans,” Belland said.

Continued on Page 2

Bemidji Post reaches across border to help a grieving Canadian community

When Bemidji Post 14 leadership learned of the tragedy in Humboldt, Saskatchewan, where 16 junior hockey players were killed and 13 badly injured in a bus accident, they decided to do something about it.

They invited the Humboldt AA Pee Wee hockey team to the Paul Bunyan International Hockey Tournament. In a project called “Help Humboldt Heal,” the post raised funds to cover the expenses for the team to spend four days in Bemidji. “This was felt to be the best way to show our support in a tangible way,” organizer Jim Haskell said.

The tournament, the Humboldt parents took out an ad in the Bemidji newspaper and said, “Over the four days in Bemidji, our team and parents shared in the excitement, laughter and friendship. From the moment we stepped off the bus... Bemidji’s citizens greeted us with open arms, demonstrating that the hockey we know and love in our country has no borders. We are more than opponents, we are friends who share a love of the game. The trip, in fact, did lift our spirits. Thank you Ralph Gracie Post 14. Your thoughtfulness will never be forgotten.”

Above, the players and hosts posed for a photo at the opening welcome at the tourney.

101st Convention will be held in Willmar

There are still motel rooms available for the state convention. There were reports that Legionnaires had called and been told that the rooms were all taken.

Convention Corporation President Pat Logan, however, told the Department Executive Committee that there were rooms. Those who are having trouble booking a room, after they have called the hotel directly, should call Laurie Harpness 320-444-9480.

The 2019 Department of Minnesota Convention, the 101st since the founding in 1919, will be held in Willmar on July 11-13.

It is the official business meeting of the Department, and elections will be held.

The Department Executive Committee will meet at 7 p.m. on July 10.

The official hotels for the convention will be the Best Western Plus and the Holiday Inn Express. Those planning on staying in Willmar should make their own reservations.

The phone number for the Best Western is 320-235-6060 and for the Holiday Inn is 320-231-2601.

The Auxiliary will also be holding meetings at this time.

Commander honored at testimonial

Commander Darrel Redepenning received a standing ovation at his testimonial at Anoka Post 102. Clapping are Past National Commander Dan Ludwig and Donna Redepenning, the commander’s wife.
Continued from Page 1

The DEC also learned that an effort was underway to revive the Dayton-Rogers Post 531 and that a meeting was planned to pursue a revival.

Mike Maxa, Department Membership Director, said the Dayton-Rogers example was not unusual. “There are a lot of posts teetering in Minnesota these days.”

In other business, the DEC:

— Adopted a recommendation of a resolutions committee that said a resolution sent to the DEC needs to be returned to its originator for more clarification. The resolution resolved that electronic communication should be a legal form of communication for the Department. Commander Darrel Redepenning said it could be brought back at the next DEC committee.

— Legionville Safety Patrol Camp already has 500 registered for this summer. The camp had to be closed last year because of a bog blocking the swimming beach. Wayne Gilbertson, the president of the Legionville Corporation, said the camp was developing a new sports utility building. Tom Sanford is the new camp director.

— Chairman Dan Williams of the Strategic Planning Committee, said a draft version of the committee’s plan for sustained membership growth is available on the committee’s Facebook page.

— National Executive Committeeman Marland Ronning said the U.S. Mint coins honoring the 100th birthday of The American Legion were selling well, with 67,000 sold so far.

— Gary Munkholm, a member of the Rehabilitation Committee, reported that facilities that serve veterans are having trouble hiring and retaining mid-level nurses, health assistants and LPNs.

— Membership Director Maxa informed the DEC that Minnesota had missed the 95 percent goal. He noted that between 2005 and now, Minnesota had lost 42 percent of its membership. He said that there are over 2,400 members in the national post that should be brought into local posts. Maxa scolded the membership team saying everyone needs to get off their rear ends to make membership succeed. “If you don’t want to work, don’t wear the white cap. Don’t have to function within the law.” Ludwig said the National Judge Advocate will be invited to the Fall Conference. Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl said that it’s time to stop the baloney in the Legion organization. “If you know something’s being done wrong, tell somebody.”

Tesdahl told the committee that the Minnesota delegation at the National Convention in Indianapolis will be housed at the JW Marriott Hotel and rooms would be $154 per night plus tax. Parking will be $44 or $49 valet per night. Ludwig said it’s possible a local Indianapolis post will offer cheap parking and rides to the hotel. There will be a Minnesota party, probably at the hotel. Tesdahl said there was an effort to keep the cost at $25 per person with a cash bar. There will also be a post-parade party with two kegs of beer. The room will be locked until the marchers from the parade arrive at the room.

Minnesota Legion Foundation scholarships announced

The 2019 Minnesota American Legion Foundation Scholarships have been announced. They include:

- Chandler Ecker, Comfrey, South Dakota State University, sponsored by Comfrey Post 244.
- Sonya Schroeder, Rochester, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, sponsored by Rochester Post 92.
- Ashley Wagner, Heron Lake, Minnesota West Community and Technical College, sponsored by Heron Lake Post 224.

Veterans outreach

Continued from Page 1

changes in the next several years. The visitor center now being used will be shut down after Labor Day, and then demolished at some point after that.

A new visitor center will then be constructed in Building 18, one of the old Fort Snelling building adjacent to the historic fort.

Belland was asked about the fact that some veterans have objected that the emphasis on the telling of history at the fort seems to be shifting from strictly a military interpretation to one that favors Native Americans.

For instance, the fort is now official called Historic Fort Snelling at Bdote, the Native American name for the area around the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers.

“Everybody has a place. Everybody has their story to tell. The space sits on nearly 10,000 years of history. The Minnesota Historical Society has a responsibility to tell all the stories there. Having said that, the veterans are very important the Minnesota Historical Society.”

In the future, he said the society hopes to do a better job of telling the veterans story. For instance, Fort Snelling quit being an Army installation after World War II, and much of the history ends there.

However, the Fort continued to be an Army Reserve center for many years after that, and, Belland said, that story needs to be told.

Veterans will continue to receive discounts at Historic Fort Snelling.

On Memorial Day, all veterans get a free admission to the grounds. On any other day, veterans receive $2 off the regular admission price.

New acting director named at St. Cloud VA system

ST. CLOUD — VA Midwest Health Care Network Director Robert P. McDevitt has announced the appointment of Martina Malek to the role of Acting Health Care System Director, St. Cloud VA Health Care System, effective May 6.

Malek currently serves as the Associate Director/Chief Experience Officer for the Minneapolis VA Health Care System. Malek began her VA career at the Minneapolis VA in 2007.

Membership chart for April 26, 2019

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SOT grants announced

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs announced today the recipients of the competitive (2018 Cycle II) Support Our Troops (SOT) license plate fund grant program. The grantees are:

- Fishing for Life, Inc.: $20,000
- Middle River Veterans Outdoors, Inc.: $20,000
- Honor Flight Twin Cities: $50,000
- 23rd Veteran: $89,920
- Region Five Development Commission: $92,400

These grants allow organizations to apply for funding through a competitive process.

WAR STORIES

Our preamble calls for us to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars. The War Stories trilogy captures over 100 stories of Minnesotans who went to war. For our children and their children, let’s preserve this history of our veterans.

Send to The American Legion
Room 300A, 20 W. 12th St. St. Paul, MN 55155

Amount enclosed

You can also order online at mnlegion.org

Does your library have these books?

FANTASTIC WAYS TO EXPERIENCE MNHS

1. TOUR SUMMIT AVENUE

2. REMEMBER NORMANDY
   World War II Round Table: Remembering the 75th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings, Thu, May 9, Historic Fort Snelling, St. Paul.

3. CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF LOCAL MUSIC
   First Avenue: Stories of Minnesota’s Mainroom, opening May 4 at the Minnesota History Center, St. Paul. Attend the exhibit opening celebration to hear local DJ sets and live music.

4. VISIT FREE ON MEMORIAL DAY
   On Memorial Day, May 27, veterans and active military receive FREE admission to Historic Fort Snelling, featuring military demonstrations and a “living timeline” of America’s military past.

PLAN YOUR VISIT OR PURCHASE ONLINE • MNHS.ORG • 1-844-MNHSSTORY
Mail Call

Elk River is a veteran-friendly city

To the Editor:

Recent events concerning a flag in a downtown park have generated interest and members remember the impressive ceremony of The Elk River Color Guard. It started with the Elk River American Legion Post wanting to move their Memorial Day Day program to Rivers Edge Commons Park in downtown Elk River. The park does not have a flag pole so the Legion Commander went to the Park and Recreation Commission to request that one be put up. The Commission discussed the request and said that they would not put up a flag pole until they had studied proper placement. They also encouraged the St. Cloud downtown business to purchase a flag pole and labor to install it in their 2019 budget. They said they wanted to see how the Legion event went the first time through and then the flag will get strong consideration in the 2020 budget.

This response prompted a Letter to the Editor of the Elk River American Legion Post 222 Color Guard Members Al Johnson, Curt Kmett & Bill Kochevar. There is also a new flag pole at the Hibbing High School with Barb & Chuck. We would hope that this letter would inspire other Legion organizations to do the same practice if able for their events. If not hockey, something else. (For hockey, get cleats for your shoes.)

Bill has a few back up people: Mike Stromes, Brian Tammini, Larry Pocrnich. These women could be called if needed as they just agreed to help. Tracie Ohren and Marie Pierson, American Legion Auxiliary members.

To the Editor:

American Legion Post 222
Barbara Hemenway
President, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 222

Alphabetize Obituaries

To the Editor:

I’ve been reading this magazine for many years and always pay close attention to “Taps.” I find it difficult to locate individuals I might be interested in. The sixty-six names in the March 2019 issue were especially difficult. I have a suggestion that would be helpful to list them alphabetically or numerically by post, exampled by: POST 473 then the info if done numerically. I suspect they are listed in the order they came to the editor. Many members have great interest in this part of the paper and look specifically for individuals or to see if any of their comrades in a post is listed. Please help make this easier reading.

James A. Hovda
Adjutant, Post 473, Rice

Editor’s Note: Yes, they are listed in the order they came in. Well that depends. I’m not sure how you wish them listed but because the program we use cannot distinguish between the post number, the age, or other numbers that could be used, the obtainer of the obituary will list by last name and we’ll give that a try this month. Let us know if you think it’s an improvement.

Thank you

Thank you to all those who sent cards, emails and notes of condolences. It was much appreciated. And thank you to all those who came to Carol’s service. There’s no family like the American Legion Family.

Bill Barbkaehnke and Family

Greetings Legion Family.

At the time of this writing I’ve just finished my testimony in a bumbling administrative experience. Once again my Anoka Legion Family did an outstanding job hosting the event and I thank them all and one. Past Department Commander Don Panke in M.C.’d the event. For a guy who told me several times that he didn’t tell jokes, he managed to keep the audience laughing thru the whole program. I was Don’s Membership Director in 2012-13 and we’ve been good friends ever since. Past National Commander Dan Ludwig was the guest speaker and he reminisced about an important appointment as the Brain Science Chairman that the one and only, Bill Goede, was Department Commander. Dan also spoke on issues of declining membership in The American Legion. In a previous article I had asked that attendees not bring anything to the event. We gave all those given disordered eyes and gave me touching mementos and cards. All three of my counterparts were also in attendance. So thank you Chuck. The post’s task is not only for being there, but for being such great people to serve with.

We were also able to keep the father/son emotional roller coaster going thru the whole program. One of the highlights was several times this winter that I wasn’t sure if dad would be at my testimonial and I just couldn’t imagine doing it without my dad. It turned out that dad had a very bad cold and mom and mom. There were a lot of laughs during the time that I wasn’t sure if dad would be there at my testimonial. What a fabulous and humbling experience.

As we look to the onset of spring weather with more Testimonials and District Conventions, let’s not forget an important day at the end of this month, Memorial Day. As a child I looked forward to the three-day weekend and kick-off of summer and I was a proud member of the name on the Vietnam Wall that were friends of mine. Memorial Day changed forever for me. It’s a time to remember and honor the sacrifices made for our country. If we as veterans don’t honor those sacrifices, who will? I feel we are duty bound to honor our fallen comrades. Remember what Memorial Day really is. God bless and thank you for all you do.

Al Zdon, Editor

The Minnesota Legonnaire

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What’s Happening

Free train rides The Ohtela and St. Croix Valley Railway will be offering free coach rides for military veterans and families during Armed Forces weekend, May 18-19. Veterans will need a DD-214 or DD-214A or other document to show their service.

The trains depart from Osceola at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Saturday and noon and 2:30 p.m. on Sunday. For more information contact Andrew Tighe, director@trainride.org.

New Exhibit in Mankato
The Blue Earth County Historical Society has opened a new exhibit, "Beyond the Beach: D-Day Through the Eyes of The American Legion." It will be on view until June 1. The exhibit highlights the history of Legion, the men and women who served, and the sacrifices made. Visitors will be able to explore the history, community service and camaraderie that have shaped the century of the American Legion. For more information call 507-345-5566 or go to www.blueearthcountyhistory.com.

Legion Day at the Twins
The 19th annual Legion Family Day at the Twins will be Friday, June 14, in a game with the Kansas City Royals at 7:10 p.m. Two types of tickets are available at $22 and $38. There will be a scoreboard recognition of each post attending. Commander Redepenning will throw out the first pitch. Tickets can be purchased by going to https://groupmat- ic.events/event/americanlegion561 or calling 800-33-3TWINS. Reference this promotion.

Round Tables
The World War II History Round Table will be held Thursday, May 9, at the Historic Fort Snelling Visitor Center at 7 p.m. The program will be “Remembering the 75th Anniversary of D-Day:英雄s Among Us,” with author Stephen Allan Bourbon, author of Beyond the Beach. Veterans of D-Day will discuss their service.

The Vietnam War Roundtable will be held Monday, May 20, at Concordia University in St. Paul at the Buetow Auditorium at 7 p.m. The program will be on the “Vetnex Project: Healing the Battle of Saigon.” Twenty Minnesota veterans fought in the battle in 1967, including the base commander Lt. Col. Jack Vessey. Retired Maj. Gen. Rick Nash and Army veteran of the Vietnam War, Morris, will speak. Veterans will discuss their participation.

The St. Croix Valley Civil War Roundtable will meet Monday evening at the Red Wing History Center with dinner at 6 p.m. and the program at 7 p.m. The program will be “Military Units from the St. Croix Valley in the Iron Brigade with Colonel Hampton.” Call Steve Anderson at 715-330-1268 for dinner reservations.

The Stearns History Museum Civil War Roundtable will meet Monday evening at the museum in St. Cloud. The program will be George Romano who is an expert on the Wood Lake Battle during the Dakota Uprising.

Taps
Allen, Ronald Clifford, 63, Army veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, died April 19, 2019. He served for 31 years in the Air Force. He was a helicopter pilot. He was a past commander of Red Wing Post 54.

Anderson, Arthur A., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 16, 2019. He served as a field radio operator in Japan. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Andert, Kenneth, 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 19. He was a member of New London Post 537.

Arvon, Anthony, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 12, 2019. He served in Alaska. He was a member of Springfield Post 257.

Barlow, Noel Keith, 85, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 22, 2019. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Boat, David L., 92, Army veteran of World War II, died April 7, 2019. He was a Tech 5. He was a member of St. Peter Post 37.

Brooks, Thomas M., 89, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 24, 2019. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Buckley, Robert Leland, 92, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died April 24, 2019. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Byrne, Robert, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 28, 2019. He was a member of California Post 191.

Burklla, Leland “Boyce,” 87, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died April 11, 2019. He was a member of Adrian Post 35.

Cannon, Paul W., 92, Army veteran of World War II, died April 7, 2019. He was a Tech 5. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Cariveau, Paul A., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 17, 2019. He served as a helicopter pilot. He was a past commander of Red Wing Post 54.

Christie, Bruce M., 88, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 22, 2019. He was an aircraft mechanic. He was a member of Lowry Post 253.

Clark, Richard, 72, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 28, 2019. He served on the aircraft carrier Enterprise. He was a member of Lake City Post 110.

Conway, Walter “Jack,” 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 13, 2019. He served overseas. He was a member of St. James Post 33.

Desch, Donald J., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 19, 2019. He was a member of Milaca Post 178.

Ehret, John C., 92, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 16, 2019. He was a member of Holdingford Post 211.

Gross, Alfred, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 22, 2019. He served three years in Germany. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Hage, Wilbur Henry, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 13, 2019. He was a member of Lakefield Post 4.

Hansen, Paul Leo, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 17, 2019. He was a member of Winona Post 9.

Hensel, Donald A., 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 5, 2019. He was a member of St. James Post 33.

Hernes, Lester Orris, 78, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died March 20, 2019. He served at the Duluth Air National Guard Base. He was a member of Ashby Post 357.

Hoppe, Aloys P. “Pete,” 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died April 5, 2019. He was a member of Paynesville Post 271.

Iveson, Floyd, 70, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 22, 2019. He was a member of Little Falls Post 66.

Johnson, Milton W., 85, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 29, 2019. He was a past commander of Lonsdale Post 586.

Johnson, Gary W., 74, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 3, 2019. He was a member of Tyler Post 185.

Kienlen, Raymond, 91, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 18, 2019. He was a longtime member of the Honor Guard of St. Paul Post 37.

Krause, William O., 92, Navy veteran of World War II and Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 24, 2019.

Larson, David M., 49, Army veteran of the war on terror, died April 4, 2019. He was deployed five times into Afghanistan and Iraq. He served for 26 years. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Larson, Paul, 74, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 23, 2019. He was a member of Thief River Falls Post 117.

Leshlein, Robert J., 93, Marine veteran of World War II, died March 22, 2019. He was a member of Marine Corps. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Koepsle, William R., 80, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died April 5, 2019. He was a member of Anoka Post 101.

Kuhler, Raymond Herman, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 7, 2019. He was a member of Gaylord Post 433.

Larson, David D., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War and Navy Reserve veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 17, 2019. He retired as a senior chief. He was an active member of Alexandria Post 87.

Larson, Irvin G., 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 23, 2019. He was a member of Anoka Post 101.

Larson, Robert A., 77, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died April 2, 2019. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

Lecce, Anthony, 87, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 17, 2019. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Ludtke, William R., 92, Army veteran of World War II, died April 4, 2019. He was a member of Anoka Post 102.

Majewski, Michael, 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 22, 2019. He was a member of Spring Grove Post 249.

Stone, David W., 65, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 30, 2019. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Thielges, Myron, 88, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 30, 2019. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Torkelson, James Harold, 78, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 14, 2019. He served in Germany. He was a member of Lowry Post 253.

Twito, Jacob H., 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died April 11, 2019. He served aboard USS Shenandoah (AD-26) in 1945. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Underdahl, Elton, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died March 9, 2019. He was a member of Millville Post 579.

Wasson, Wayne, 86, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 30, 2019. He was a member of Deerwood Post 557.

Weimerskirch, John, 71, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died March 20, 2019. He served as a commissioned officer for 25 years in the Navy and Navy Reserve. He retired as a commander. He was a member of Winona Post 9.
The Veterans Administration’s Origins

By Jeremy Wolfsteller

For more than 100 years, The American Legion through its number one pillar, VALDR, has been the nation’s leading advocate for proper care and earned entitlements for America’s veterans. In fact, The American Legion was influential in creating the Veterans Administration in 1930, and a keen supporter of its rise to cabinet status under President Ronald Reagan when it became the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 1989. But before we discuss The American Legion’s role, let’s take a step back into history to figure out how the VA got to where it is today.

Around 1920, there were three different federal agencies that provided compensation, life insurance and vocational benefits for disabled Veterans. Around the same time, the nation was looking to establish a permanent relationship with the then one Vets Center and Minnesota Assistance Council. In 1924, the Congress established the U.S. Office of Veterans’ Affairs by passing a bill to consolidate existing agencies administering veterans benefits. The first pension law provided a pension to disabled veterans. As a result of Hine’s success within the Bureau’s direction, the Department remains of the highest priority within our national structure.

In Minnesota, the Department has one the most active Cemetery, one Vets Center and Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, (MACY). The committee provides services and sacrifices. Later in the year will be a day in which living veterans and those serving will be honored. The hard part is deciding which one or two ceremonies all of us as leaders must step up. Reach out to all of your friends, hold a bbq, please take some time to honor their services and sacrifices. Later in the year will be a day in which living veterans and those serving will be honored. The legionaries of the American Legion will be honored.

As you gather at your convention to reflect on the past year and look to the future ask yourself what have you done to help the Legion Grow. There is a saying “Lead, follow or get the heck out of the way.” Everyone in the American Legion Family has followed their leadership through a great many changes. A large number have chosen to lead. Both have done their best to make a difference. As for the ones that have chosen to “get out of the way” it is up to those of us to get them involved. Bring some to convention who has never been.

The American Legion Riders
By Chuck Stone

Greetings American Legion Family. Spring is finally here and we are entering the motorcycling season. A few rides have already taken place with a great many yet to come. The 2019 Department of Minnesota Ride is coming together and the schedule will be finalized and released soon. Look for the Riders to visit your post or a post near you.

The annual spring lineup of testimony dinners is almost part of the history book. Testimonials are not only a celebration of the leadership of the whole American Legion Family’s accomplishments. No leader is successful without a hardworking team and no team is successful without good leadership.

Memorial Day will be here in a few weeks. This is a special day for which we will remember all whom have served the final call. There are a large number of ceremonies all around the state. The hard part is deciding which one or two to attend. While many go to the lake, gather with family and friends, hold a bbq, please take some time to honor their services and sacrifices. Later in the year will be a day in which living veterans and those serving will be honored. Many district conventions will be called to order soon.

As you gather at your convention to reflect on the past year and look to the future ask yourself what have you done to help the Legion Grow. There is a saying “Lead, follow or get the heck out of the way.” Everyone in the American Legion Family has followed their leadership through a great many changes. A large number have chosen to lead. Both have done their best to make a difference. As for the ones that have chosen to “get out of the way” it is up to those of us to get them involved. Bring some to convention who has never been.

Keep the chrome side up and the rubber side down.
2019 District Vice Commander Awards
1st Dale Wellik Kason Post 333
2nd Jim Hunt Lake Wilson Post 285
3rd John Flynn Eagan Post 594
4th Jim Anderson Rosetown Post 542
5th Andrew Rose Johnnie Baker Post 291
6th Karen O’Bar Bertha Post 366
7th Dean Knutson Ashby Post 357
8th Carl Hendrickson Duluth Post 71
9th Wayne Krantz Karlstad Post 445
10th Al Lund Osseo Post 172

Appreciation Rally Turn In
Eighth District
New Member Award
Third District

Past National Commander Dan Ludwig was the keynote speaker. He spoke about the future of The American Legion.

Redepenning and his wife, Donna, shared some humor at the testimonial.

Department Vice Commanders Dick Ward, Jennifer Havlick, Tom Fernlund and Wayne Hammond Jr. presented a gift to Commander Redepenning.

Past Commander Bud Redepenning paid tribute to his son, Darrel Redepenning at the Commander’s Testimonial in Anoka.

Department Bookkeeper Jan Lauby, AKA Vanna White, passes out the stars for the Auxiliary membership winners at the rally. She is flanked by Brandi Christensen, 10th District Membership Chair, and Mary Hendrickson, Department Second Vice President.

RALLY AT LECENTER

Winners of the District Vice Commander Awards line up with Commander Darrel Redepenning at the Appreciation Rally held at LeCenter.
Floyd Ruggles earned that nickname from his fellow Marines in Vietnam because trees were his specialty. Especially blowing them up.

Ruggles served in the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. When his team would be done with their patrol, they would need to be extracted from the jungle by helicopter. This was often a problem because the landing zone was obstructed by large trees.

“If we needed to find out where we were, I’d shinny up the tree to get to the top the biggest tree I could find.”

When the helicopter was approaching, Ruggles would do his magic and reduce a few trees to smithereens to clear the LZ. But when he wasn’t blowing them up, Ruggles found another use for the trees. He would climb them.

“So they started calling me the Lumberjack. We all had nicknames.”

Floyd Ruggles grew up on the near North Side of Minneapolis, in a neighborhood that would soon be torn down for a freeway.

“I was always in scrapes at school. My dad taught me how to box right from the get go.”

At North High School, he was a wrestler, or rather a “rassler” as Ruggles says it. “I made it to state but then I rassled a kid, he was a real animal from Washburn High School. He just picked me up and slammed me down. He went on to win the state title.”

Ruggles, who tipped the scales at about 130 lbs., also tried out for football. “But my pants kept falling down. That’s why I tried rassling. They wore tights.”

In his spare time, he did three paper routes to earn spending money and buy clothes. He also worked at the Lyric Theater in downtown Minneapolis as an usher. “They put us in little penguin suits.”

Ruggles was the eldest of eight children, and he was the first one in his extended family to graduate from high school. “I never missed a day. I was determined. But I have to admit that I always had an attitude. The Marine Corps tamed that a bit.”

After a year working at a factory, it became clear to Ruggles that his draft number was coming up. “I didn’t want to be drafted, and I didn’t want to join the Navy, so I joined the Marines. My mother and father immediately wrote me off. They figured I’d be dead.”

He signed up on Dec. 7, 1967, and was sent to San Diego for boot camp. “They called me the ‘house mouse.’ It meant I was the personal slave of the drill instructor. I was kind of a scrapper, and he took me under his wing.”

As it was, he arrived on July 8, 1968. He remembers stepping off the plane in Vietnam. “The heat kind of comes right through you.”

“Within 24 hours, I had to report to Bravo Company, 1st Recon. In that time I went from thinking I was going to win this war all by myself to pure panic.”

Ruggles arrived seven days after a recon patrol had been completely wiped out, the seven members of the patrol and four helicopter crew all killed in a crash. “They were all dead. My first letters home said I was in hell.”

Second Platoon, Bravo Company, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, First Marine Division was located at Camp Reasoner near Da Nang. It was also known as Hill 327.

The battalion was comprised of 28 officers, 750 enlisted men, and 38 Navy Corpsmen.

The Marines would fly small recon units into enemy territory in South Vietnam and drop them off in the jungle. They would become the eyes and ears of the Marine Corps, and after five or seven days or more, the Marine helicopters would come and extract them.

The units usually had 6-8 men and would include a point man, a patrol leader, two radio operators, others carrying rifles or grenade launchers, and the guy who watched for trouble from the rear, “tail-end Charlie.” “We would like to take a corpsman with us, but there weren’t that many of them. Sometimes we’d have an officer, but sometimes we were so low on men that a corporal would be the patrol leader.”

The mission would begin with two helicopters, usually Ch-46 Sea Knights, often called the “Phrog” by the troops.

Once established, the little group would move from Point A to Point B over several days, hoping to arrive at the extraction point at the right time. “It’s part of the Marine training. You encounter an obstacle. You figure it out. You

By Al Zdon

They called him the Lumberjack, and it wasn’t because he was from Minnesota.

Floyd Ruggles said he had an ‘attitude’ while growing up on Minneapolis’ near North Side. The Marines in Vietnam were a good place to put that attitude to work for his country.
move on. You learn as you go.”

Along the way, they would gather whatever information they could of the enemy’s movements or strength. Sometimes their sole job was to take a prisoner for interrogation.

“If we got into trouble, we had tremendous fire power from that small team and from other places. The enemy really didn’t like us and they put a bounty on us. We’d see posters and cards strewn through the jungle. They wanted the recon guys dead or alive.”

After a mission, Ruggles said he liked the fact that they would always come back to a secure base, and they each had their own area inside the hootch. “I had all my own stuff there.”

Not that they could ever relax too much. “If a patrol team got into trouble, they would send out a rescue team. You had to be ready in 30 minutes. Sometimes they’d send 30 of us in to do a rescue.”

At first, Ruggles carried an M-79 grenade launcher out on patrol, but then got the job of being the point man for the group and switched to the lighter M-16 rifle. He also toted a .45 pistol. On an early mission, a bullet ripped into the butt plate of his M-16 and split the stock.

“I finally had to turn it in, but I kept the firing pin as a souvenir.”

About six weeks into his 13-month tour, Ruggles and his team found a cave. While the rest of the group was exploring the enemy tunnel, Ruggles was given the job of sitting on a rock and watching out for the enemy.

“I was still pretty new. I was watching out, trying to see if anything was moving. I was sitting on the rock with my M-16 in my lap. But then I day dreamed for maybe half a second. I looked up and there were heads peering at me from the top of the grass.”

“I jumped up with my M-16 spraying bullets into the air. As soon as I discharged my weapon, the entire team came out and the enemy had disappeared.”

On another early mission, he and his pal, Herman, were sent to guard the perimeter on a hilltop outpost at night. “We kept hearing this sound. The Marines when they were finished with their C-rations would throw the cans down the cliff to make it harder for the enemy to sneak up on us without making noise.”

“Well, something was rustling in those cans. Herman and I had a whole box of grenades, and we threw them all down the hill. In the morning, we could hardly wait to see all the bodies down there. But there was nothing.”

It turned out that enemy soldiers were really rock apes that were scavenging through the cans. “They were smart enough to know there was a delay on the grenades, and they would just clear out for a while. I heard that later in the war they got smart enough to throw the grenades back.”

“So there we were throwing grenades all night. I’m sure the rest of the guys on the team were just laughing at us.”

Another time, a patrol surprised some enemy soldiers and they took off running down the path as fast as they could fly. “I followed them down the path, and I found four Ho Chi Minh sandals in the path. None of them matched. They had run so fast, they just ran out of their sandals. I still have them.”

One event he recalls most sharply was when he wasn’t on a mission.

“My buddy, Herman, had gone on R&R in Sydney, Australia, and had become engaged to a woman there. He wanted me to go on R&R with him to meet his girlfriend. “You got two R&Rs during your tour in Vietnam, but I was saving my money for a car. I knew exactly what car I wanted, even the color. I didn’t want to waste my money on an R&R.”

But his buddy prevailed, and Ruggles signed up for the vacation. It was all he could have hoped for, he met the girl-friend, and he had fun.

Arriving back at the base, though, he was greeted with a shock. “My team was gone. They went out on patrol, and another guy took the point. He set off a booby trap and it killed the first two guys in line and took the legs off the third guy. Later, they just broke up the rest of the team and sent them to other teams.

“I always wondered if I had been on point if I would have found that trap. That was my job, to get them from Point A to Point B, and I wasn’t there. I’ve carried that burden with me for all those years.”

“After that, I never had a team. I just bounced around with different teams. It wasn’t the same.”

It was during that time he earned his “Lumberjack” nickname. “I liked to blow things up. I would attach the C-4 to the trees. I later found out that I could do it with Claymore mines strapped to trees. I could cut an LZ in a few minutes.”

If a landing zone could not be created, helicopters would drop a “Jacob’s ladder” or rope ladder through the canopy and the Marines would be hauled up, one at a time, to relative safety.

Ruggles said that the Marines sneaking through the jungle always knew where they were, sort of. “When we got lost, I would go to the top of the trees and try to figure out where we were.”

He said that he had forgotten that nickname until more
another patrol he recalled had him running the point. “We used hand signals because we couldn’t talk. I could see a river below and then I saw a couple of North Vietnamese going down a path by the river.” Ruggles put up his closed fist to stop and everybody hit the deck.

After a while, the enemy had passed, and the officer in charge of the patrol asked Ruggles and a sergeant to go down to the river and look for a place to cross. “I’m thinking, what did we just see here? Didn’t we just see the North Vietnamese Army go down this path?”

Obeying orders, though, he and a sergeant moved about 25 yards through the elephant grass toward the river when suddenly a whole battalion of the enemy came down the path.

“We hit the ground and tried to be invisible. But the sergeant had thrown himself on the ground and trapped his leg underneath himself. He was trying to straighten that leg out and there was an audible noise, like stepping on a stick in the forest.

“About 15 years away, a group of the North Vietnamese heard the sound and they stopped. We were so close, I could see their eyes. I thought they were looking at us, but then I could see that they were looking over us.”

Ruggles said his greatest fear was that one of the men in the patrol behind them would open fire, probably a bad idea considering the odds. The enemy battalion passed without incident.

Out on patrol, the Marines would have to carry everything with them, sometimes for 10 days. “Those packs would sometimes weigh 70 pounds. On one patrol, we got caught in a monsoon, and a helicopter couldn’t come to get us. We finally just ran flat out of food. At that point you’ll eat almost anything. Those centipedes tasted just like Tootsie Rolls.”

One of the things that kept Ruggles balanced during this traumatic time was that he cultivated a set of pen pals throughout the country. Some letters came from family, some from friends, and some from people who had signed up for pen pal programs.

“I had 26 pen pals and I wrote to all of them all the time. One guy would send me apple pies. All the other guys called her the Apple Pie Lady and wondered when she would write again.

As time went on, Ruggles found there were two types of Marines he didn’t like patrolling with. One was someone who had signed for a second tour. “I figure you only had so much luck over there, and these guys were pushing their luck.”

The other group was new guys. “They were dangerous to be around. They made mistakes. Not that I didn’t make mistakes. I made plenty of them.”

The tremendous noise of warfare finally caught up with Ruggles. “Maybe it was blowing up those trees. Or there were times when we’d come into a landing zone and they’d start firing at us. So everybody in the helicopter would be firing back, all in that confined space.”

In any event, with just a couple of weeks left in his tour, Ruggles turned himself into the medics. He was stone deaf in his left ear. He was afraid his hearing loss would affect his effectiveness on the point.

He had completed 30 missions.

He spent three weeks in a hospital in Yokohama, Japan, and his hearing slowly returned, but never all the way.

The Marines gave him an honorable discharge in August of 1969, and he was back home a few days later. To his dismay, he found that his younger brothers had assumed he’d be killed in Vietnam, and had sold off much of his personal property before he got home. “I marched home, sweeping off the ground the items his brothers had sold for a couple hundred dollars.”

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News played a large role in Vietnam War

By Al Zdon

In war in American history was covered more thoroughly by the press than Vietnam.

And perhaps no war was as influenced by the American people’s reaction to that news coverage as Vietnam.

Three Vietnam veterans who had communications experience during the Vietnam War spoke at the monthly Vietnam War Roundtable at Concordia University in St. Paul.

Conrad Leighton was an army journalist who served with the 1st Cavalry Division in 1970-71.

“What we did was propaganda, basically. It was public relations for the military. We had to show that we were all good people,” Leighton said.

“The news had a big slant. We downplayed the violence. We just toned it down. It was basically human interest stories.”

He remembered one other story he did on jungle diseases. “It was all about boils, jungle rot and ringworm. I thought those were the three big ones. That story was killed in a hurry.”

Another story that never was told was the use of drugs by the soldiers. “There was a huge drug culture in Vietnam by the time I was there. A lot of soldiers weren’t happy about being there.”

Leighton was asked if he tooted a weapon in the war. “If I did, I’m not sure if it worked.” He said it turned out he carried a .45 pistol. “Earlier they had me carry around an M-16, but that was pretty awkward. I would have fought if I had to, but luckily I never had to.”

Leighton was asked about Agent Orange and its wide use. He said that nobody at that time had any idea that it would cause health problems for the soldiers or the civilians.

One of the unintended consequences of defeating the jungle, though, he said, was that a very thick underbrush quickly replaced the forest canopy, making it even more difficult for American soldiers to operate or get through.

Don Shelby, who later became one of the best known news anchors in Minnesota at WCCO, said he went directly from Air Force boot camp to working at the Pentagon, and then later served in southeast Asia with the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service. Shelby said he was still under a secrecy act and could not tell exactly where he was or what he did.

But he said there was a heavy lid on what military reporters could divulge. “If you sought out information, and it conflicted with the military line, that was insubordination. It could mean time in the brig if you reported it.”

He said the staff at his unit had access to all the major newspapers in the United States. “Every day there was one story that came off the DoD wire, and the story we read in the newspapers. The stories were totally different. The DoD simply put propaganda. It was often not accurate or true.”

Shelby said the soldiers in the field would shake their heads at the military reports that showed great success. “They wondered what we were winning.”

He said he learned a lifelong lesson from being a military journalist. “I never, ever believe anything the government tells me. That attitude has served me well as a military journalist. “I never, ever believe anything the government tells me. That attitude has served me well as a military journalist.”

Shelby said that one story that was never reported was the huge presence of the Central Intelligence Agency in the remote battlefield, and it would be in the newspapers and on TV the next day in the United States.

Terry Wolkerstorfer, who served in Vietnam as a combat officer in 1966-67, got out of the service and returned to Vietnam as a reporter for Associated Press, had a different viewpoint.

“Yeah, but I’m not sure if it worked.” He said at times he could not tell exactly where he was or what he did.

Wolkerstorfer said the press had unprecedented access to the war, and he attributed some of that to the fact that journalists had been in Vietnam right from the start. “It’s hard to remember why we got involved in Vietnam. ‘It was all about communism. It was all about a global communist conspiracy. We were obsessed with communism.’

In retrospect, he said, allowing a unified Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh might have been the best way to stop China’s influence in the area.”

The Vietnamese and Chinese had been enemies for a thousand years.”

Wolkerstorfer said the press had unprecedented access to the war, and he attributed some of that to the fact that journalists had been in Vietnam right from the start. “It’s hard to go back and re-write the rules later.”

He compared it to World War II where the reporting was heavily censored, and to the Gulf Wars, where reporters had limited access.

In addition to having free access to the battlefields, Wolkerstorfer said getting the news back to America with out censorship was also standard policy. By the time of Vietnam, electronic transmission had improved to the point where a reporter could file a story and pictures from a remote battlefield, and it would be in the newspapers and on TV the next day in the United States.

He said even with the access, it was difficult sometimes to get at the truth. “We had a report one time that we had killed 173 of the enemy, but then the report said we had captured only three weapons. We knew that wasn’t right.”

There were over 500 reporters in Vietnam from around the world at the height of the war. Many of them, he said, simply stayed in Saigon and reported what the military told them and used military video. “The report and the film were often not of the same battle.”

Other reporters, though, got out in the field and did their best. “The AP Saigon Bureau was one of the great journalistic teams of all time.”

Wolkerstorfer said many of the reporters had sources in the military and elsewhere, and he used a source one time to break a story that the U.S. had set up an assassination team to go into towns and take out enemy leaders.

The problem was that South Vietnamese leaders were using the program to assassinate their political rivals. “Not only was the program morally dubious to begin with, but then it was being misused.”

Reporters, he said, did have two self-imposed rules. They would not reveal troop movements nor impending battles. “The leaders in the military were often appalled at the reporting. ‘I remember one general telling us, ‘Get on the goddamn team.’”

“Terry Wolkerstorfer as a reporter for AP.”

“And there was plenty that we missed. We didn’t find out about the My Lai Massacre until two years later.”

In the end, the reporters did the best they could. “We told people what was happening, and if they didn’t like it. ‘Parents were hearing from the news media and from their sons coming home.”

“A major change in America’s acceptance of the war was the Tet Offensive, Wolkerstorfer said. The scale of the fighting and the heavy losses convinced many that the war was unwinnable.”

The program was moderated by Dave Borton, a Vietnam veteran. The Roundtables are sponsored by the Minnesota Military Museum, Twin Cities Public Television and Concordia University.
You can’t win the war without logistics

By Al Zdon

I
t doesn’t matter how great your strategy is during a
war, if you can’t get the bullets and gasoline to the
front, the cause is lost.

Author Hank Cox told the April World War II History
Round Table that the U.S. Army entrusted getting supplies
to the soldiers in Europe to a little-known lieutenant general
named John C. H. Lee.

Lee, who was hated by many of his colleagues, kept
the position throughout the war, and, Cox said, earned high
marks for getting the job done under trying circumstances.

Lee, a native of Kansas, graduated near the top of his
class at West Point in 1909. He was a classmate of George
Patton, and he served with honor in World War I, earning a
Silver Star and the Distinguished Service Medal.

He had various postings between the wars and, as an
Army engineer, oversaw many large public works projects
during the Great Depression.

As the war wound into high gear, Cox said, Russia’s
request and Lee did it right.”

The materiel for the invasion of Europe began to arrive
in England, but the shipping was chaotic to say the least.

“North Africa was a successful mission and Lee did it right,”
Cox said. “They say that tactical brilliance is death to the people in logistics, and
Lee was the guy who had to get the food and fuel to an army
that every day was 30 or 40 miles further away.”

Lee established the Red Ball Express, a round-the-clock
truck operation in a desperate attempt to keep up with
Patton’s army and the rest of the Allied forces.

As the war progressed, Bradley and other generals asked
Eisenhower to fire Lee. Eisenhower’s answer always was,
“And replace him with who?”

“The felt that we were winning the war, and why should
he disrupt his command structure?”

Cox said a huge challenge for Lee was when Germany
counter-attacked in late 1944 in what became known as the
Battle of the Bulge. “Hitler had one more arrow in his
quiver, and he attacked the weakest point in the U.S. lines.”

The key to Germany’s plan was to capture Allied sup-
plies, particularly gasoline, and eventually take the port of
Brest, which had become the major Allied port supplying
the war effort.

“For Lee this was the high point of his career. He was
able to move all the critical supplies out of the German
path. What they couldn’t move, they blew up. Germany was
prevented from getting these resources.”

“At the same time, he kept moving supplies to either side
of the German salient, making sure the Allies had what they
needed. He got high marks for his effort.”

As the war got into 1945, the U.S. began running out of
soldiers, and many in the supply chain were transferred to
combat units. Lee was instrumental in creating a plan for
black soldiers to enter combat units, if they agreed to give
up their rank and become privates. Over 2,500 volunteered.

The plan met with huge resistance from many in the
Army, “but Lee stood tall. And in the end there were fewer
problems than anybody expected.”

One of the major complaints about Lee, from his peers
who hated him, was that he didn’t supply the army with
enough heavy artillery. Lee responded that they had plenty.

“When the war was over, it was found that the Army had
only used 30 percent of the heavy artillery it had been
supplied. The officers were simply lying about it to get Lee
fired.”

In the end, Lee stood his ground. “There is no record of
Lee ever responding in kind to the criticism. He was aware
of it, but he didn’t let it distur him. It might have been
a product of his strong religious faith.”

When the war was over, Eisenhower put Lee in charge of
the military government in Italy. “The veterans were going
home, and it was all younger soldiers who had not been
through the war. They wanted a disciplinarian running the
Army in Italy,” Cox said.

Lee retired from the Army at the end of 1947 and spent
his remaining years leading a lay organization in the
Episcopal Church.

His efforts at running the supply chain were generally
reviewed positively, and Eisenhower said his “strong hand”
was needed. Historian Stephen Ambrose simply called Lee
“the biggest jerk in the ETO.”

He is buried at Arlington.

Mountains of gear flooded into England during World War II, and the supply guys had to get it to the front.
Hello American Legion Family.

I trust each post commander got my recent letter and acted on it. I cannot stress enough to read the 2nd District Newsletter, the Legionnaire Paper and the National Legion Magazine.

2nd District Convention is scheduled for June 7-8 in Pipestone. Please get your registration forms sent in. We have a lot of decisions to make and we need your help. The agenda includes New Officers, Delegates to Department and National Convention, 2nd District Newsletter, Resolutions, just to mention a few highlights. Each post should have someone there representing them. Thank you.

Consolidated Post Reports are due July 1st. All Posts must send in their Officers Report. Every post, every volunteer who filled out completely and clearly, typed or printed, so the updates can be made correctly. If your officers stayed the same you still need to fill one out and send it in. Lots of Events are planned for the year! Check over your uniforms, new covers, flags that should be replaced and get your orders into Emblem Sales early. As always, plan the events and look for fun. Thank you.

Sunday, July 28, at 2 p.m., Luverne Veterans Home will have an unveiling of the Ice Cream Machine. Everyone welcome.

Look to see all of you at my testimonial May 5th, 4:30 p.m. at the Brewhouse Legion Post.

Thank you all for your service.

Carla Tappanner

Commander

THIRD DISTRICT

SpringGreetings to all.

I hope everyone had a blessed Easter and got to spend time with friends and family. This is always my favorite time of year with all the trees budding and the flowers peeking out of the ground.

I hope you all had a great day. I was at my son’s graduation and it was a beautiful day. I hope everyone had a great day.

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I am the fourth generation to serve in the American Legion. My grandfather served in World War I, my father served in World War II, and my brother served in the Vietnam War. I am proud to follow in their footsteps.

I want to thank you all for your service.

Paul Orson

Commander

TENTH DISTRICT

Arlo Rude

Commander

SEVENTH DISTRICT

Jeffrey Gay

Commander

FIFTH DISTRICT

Joe Bayer

Commander

SIXTH DISTRICT

Richard Cross

Commander

American Legion is the greatest family a person could have. I encourage you to go out to your local rest homes and contact the veterans that live there. I know that they would appreciate a visit from a fellow veteran. Sit down with them and play some cards or just chat.

Always remember.

The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportionate to the way in which the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation.

George Washington

Fourth District Testimonial will be held on May 4th at Minneapolis Post #1. Our post 42 will make it a fun evening. Thank you to our sister District for working with us this year. I am looking forward to our picnic on June 9th. I hope all of you can attend our new Dick Ward for being named Vice Commander of the year at the Appreciation rally at LeCenter.

It’s that time to get those reports in and get credit for all of the hard work you’ve all put in. It’s also time to look at next year and see who will take those positions in the next District Convention. Are you leaving your good hands in good hands? Our future is determined by who will take those positions in the next year and see who will take those positions in the next year.

I want to thank the 5th District for all of the great things you have done this year. The programs you’ve worked and the time spent on getting them done. We’ve done well this year in membership reaching third place at Department at one point. Congratulations on a job well done.

We have seven ‘Goal Posts’ with several others within reach before District Convention. Please remember to get your district lists to the District Chaplain as soon as possible and register for our District Convention.

We are still looking for nominations for District Officers and ‘Legionnaire of the Year.’ Nominations for ‘Legionnaire of the Year’ go to Gary Martin.

Our 5th District testimonial will be held on May 4th at Minneapolis Post #1. Our post 42 will make it a fun evening. Thank you to our sister District for working with us this year. I am looking forward to our picnic on June 9th. I hope all of you can attend our new Dick Ward for being named Vice Commander of the year at the Appreciation rally at LeCenter.

My post 42 is very happy to introduce our new District Commander, Jeffery Gay. Jeff is a great addition to our District and we are all looking forward to working with him.

Thank you to all of our District Commanders, Rev. Gary Miller, Paul Orson, and Jeffery Gay for all that you do.

Spring is upon us. The flowers are blooming and so are the Poppies, show your support of the Auxiliary and purchase a beautiful poppy and/or card.

Memorial Day is a busy weekend for many of us, our posts and you the American Veteran. Please take time during the Memorial Day weekend to stop by the rest homes and nursing homes to visit with those who have passed away this past year. Many Posts have two or more ceremonies that they are part of each year. Wear your hat and attend one of these events.

Time to walk off your Easter candy and go knock on doors of members who have not paid their dues within the past five years. National has the tools to get this accomplished. If we get even 50% of these members, we will reach our goal. Our 10th District sits in 6th place with 92.97% renewed and just 0.06% out of 5th as of the April 17 Bulletin #42.

The combined District Testimonial for Commander Orson and President Lockert is Saturday, May 4th, at Fridelity Post 303. Hope to see you there.

St. Louis Park Post 282 hosts this year’s Past District Commanders and Presidents Dinner on Saturday, May 11, with 4th District Social and 5 p.m. meal. Tickets are available from past President Jodi Hassing.

Fridelity Post 303 is hosting the 2019 District Convention on Saturday, June 1st, with banquet on Friday night. Registration packets were sent out to post commanders and adjutants. Remember to get your posts registration in so you can reserve your seats.

The remaining Department reports are due in May. Make sure each post gets yours turned in. Even if the report is not filled out, please put your name and post number on the report. This is especially important and is available online at my legion.org. You can fill out a copy after you have completed the report fields. This is the national compiles and uses when they head to our Nations the Capitol.

We have all winter to lay back and have our meetings. Now the three seasons, Spring, Summer and Fall, are here and ripe with opportunities for us to grow our Posts.

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The 56th Annual Department Junior Conference was held on Saturday April 13, hosted by the Fifth District at Richfield American Legion Post 435. The newly elected Honorary Junior President Harley Donnelly led the conference with lots of pride. New officers for 2019-2020 were elected and installed by Jean Walker, Department of Minnesota President. The newly elected Honorary Department Junior Officers are:

- **Honorary President**: Emily Suess, Monticello Unit 260, District 10
- **Honorary 1st Vice President**: Eva Burket, Belview Unit 309, District 2
- **Honorary 2nd Vice President**: Honorary Treasurer: Ashley Stai, New London 537, District 7
- **Honorary Junior Treasurer**: Elizabeth Spoden, Kimball Unit 261, District 6
- **Honorary Chaplain**: Hailey Dunaway, Unit 225, Forest Lake, District 3
- **Honorary Sergeant-At-Arms**: Isabelle Villette, Cold Spring Unit 455, District 6
- **The appointed officers are**: Secretary: Sydney Borntrager, Trimont Unit 373, District 2
- **Honorary Historian**: Kiana Coleman-Woods, Lino Lakes Unit 566, District 10

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HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES

I normally don’t put items like this on your pages but I made an exception this time as it is very near and dear to my heart. Our Department of Minnesota has lost two of its members this year that were both mentors to me as well as friends. They were also very active in our organization and both held the title of Department President. They are Carol Holmgren and Carol Barkknecht. All of our blessings and prayers go out to their families. They will be so missed by the entire organization.

SECRETARY SANDIE’S CORNER

I am looking forward to our upcoming National Presidents Tour and hopefully God will not bring a snowstorm this year. We had the best time ever last year – hope to top the good times this year. I don’t have much to say this month as I just don’t have time to type much. Jan and I are having the time of our lives keeping (trying) up with everything. The search is on for a new Julie – if anyone is interested in working in the best office ever, give me a call. I am also looking forward to President Jean’s testimonial in May. Shorty and I are making it a weekend in paradise, so to speak along with our very good friends Hawk and Sue. Just can’t wait. Shooting Star, watch out, here we come! I best get back to work now – thank you to those who were at Le Center for the Membership Rally – that is my shout out this month. I was okay with the Membership portion filling in for Robin but was then called again to bring greetings from President Jean, well we had a few laughs anyhow, never a dull moment when I have a mile in my hand.

UPCOMING AUXILIARY EVENTS

The month of May is Poppy Month – Governor Tim Walz has issued a proclamation and all Units have received a copy in the last Unit Mailing.

American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State – will be held June 9 - 15, 2019 at Bethel University in St. Paul – we still have room for girls to attend.

Department Convention – July 11 - 13 at the Willmar Conference Center – a reminder to all members that Resolutions that are being brought to the Convention are posted on our website mnala.org under Department Convention. Please go in and review these, discuss them with your Units and tell your Delegates your feelings on them.

National Convention – August 23 - 29 in Indianapolis – watch for details.

POST WINS RAFFLE — Auxiliary members Marlis Durose, left, and Jeanette Kane pose with a new Toro snowblower won for the Savage Post 643. The two won it in a Toro giveaway on behalf of the post, and it will be used to clear post walkways for veterans.

April 24, 2019, Auxiliary Membership
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