



# Legionnaire

Volume 98, Number 9

For God and Country

September 2016

## DEC approves two ad hoc committees for 2016-17 year

Commander Denise Milton made her appointments to standing Minnesota Legion committees at the August Department Executive Committee, but also created two ad hoc committees for the year.

One committee will oversee training and education and the other will look at helping Minnesota participate in the 100th anniversary of the Legion.

The training committee will be a continuation of an ad hoc committee from last year, looking at ways to train Legion volunteers in such things as membership, protocol, and the ins and outs of the organization.

Milton named Barry Madson of Eden Prairie, Al Davis of Princeton and Jeff Gay of Marshall to the committee.

The Centennial ad hoc committee will deal with Minnesota's participation in the 100th anniversary.

Milton noted that only a handful of Minnesota posts have chosen to do their post histories, a Centennial project, on the national website.

She named Past Department Commanders Jim Kellogg of Taopi and Ray DeZurik of Breezy Point to the committee, representing the north and south parts of the state.

The committee will not do the same work as the Convention Corporation Committee which is planning Minnesota's participation in the 2018 National Convention in Minneapolis. The work of that committee will be aimed at planning for the convention, while the work of the ad hoc committee will be aimed at getting Minnesota posts involved in the celebration.

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## Jack Vessey, state's highest ranking soldier, dies at 94

John W. Vessey, who rose from a Minnesota National Guard volunteer to become the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff, died at age 94.

Vessey's 46-year military career started prior to World War II and continued through the Reagan presidential years, when as the top military person in the nation, he oversaw a tremendous build-up in U.S. military force that led to the conclusion of the Cold War.

Vessey, a member of Brainerd Post 255, remained active until recently, both in state projects and as an advisor to the Army.

Vessey was featured in the Legion's book *War Stories II*, and his rise to the top was chronicled.

He was born in 1922, and grew up

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## Out at home



Rochester Patriots catcher Joey Devlin tags out Eastview's Ryan Zellmer during action at the Minnesota Division I Baseball State Tournament at Delano. (Photo by John Sherman)

## Woodbury, Giantvalley win state baseball tournaments

Minnesota's two baseball champions this year are Minneapolis Giantvalley in Division II and Woodbury Blue in Division I.

Woodbury was unable to advance to the national regional, however, because it didn't have enough players to meet the national requirement of 12 on the roster.

Instead, the two teams representing Minnesota at the regional in Bismarck, N.D., were second place finisher Forest Lake and the third place team Wayzata. Neither

team advanced to the World Series in Shelby, N.C.

In the Division II regional in Waupun, Wis., Minnesota's second entrant in the tourney, Glenwood-Lowry made it to the championship game but fell to Viroqua, Wis.

In the Division I tournament held in Delano, sponsored by Delano Post 377, 16 teams vied for the state title and the right to advance to the regional.

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**TEARS OF JOY** -- American Legion Riders Legacy Run coordinator Steve Sullivan shows his emotions when the total amount, over \$117,000, raised on this year's run was announced at the final stop. More pictures of the Legacy Run on Page 3. (Photo by Michelle Leonard)

## State university to study Minnesota American Legion

By Al Zdon

If you go into your local American Legion club-rooms some day and see a couple of women sitting at a table sipping a light beer and taking notes -- you may be part of a study.

And if you approach the table and want to talk to these ladies, they'd be glad to do so. But they will also hand you a consent form.

Minnesota State University at Mankato, with the permission of the Minnesota American Legion, is conducting a study on the influence of community organizations, in particular, The American Legion.

Toward that end, two MSM professors will be traveling around the state observing what goes on and how people interact in Legion halls.

The two sociologists, Dr. Emily Boyd and Dr. Carol Glasser, both professors in the Sociology Department at Mankato, will share their findings when their study is complete.

Glasser said American Legion posts can provide a

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**Legion Post 113 Fall Conference  
412 W. Main St.  
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**Pre-registration sliding fee per postmark:**

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# DEC conducts business meeting

Continued from Page 1

In other business, the DEC:  
 -- Elected Randy Tesdahl, Elk River, to a new three-year term as Department Adjutant.  
 -- Elected Dennis Henkemeyer, Bagley, to a three-year term as a member of the Board of Publications.  
 -- Heard from the commander on her project for the year, which is to support the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans in dealing with homeless veterans in Minnesota. Donations can be made to Fund 82 in the dedicated funds of the Minnesota American Legion Foundation. Milton's theme for the year is "Victory for Veterans."  
 -- Heard from SAL Detachment Commander Gene Olsword who said the state unit has reached its all-time high for the second year in a row. Membership is now at 11,469, or 100.15 percent of goal with six new squadrons. He said his theme this year will be "Stay the Course with the SAL" and his project will be the Child Welfare Foundation. He noted that the SAL has taken over the Camp-O-Ree program beginning this year, and that planning is going strong.  
 -- Learned that this year's membership goal will be 77,000. Membership Director Mark Dvorak said his slogan for the year will be "Oak Strong," and growing stronger. He said Minnesota must increase its penetration of eligible veterans in the state. He said each year the state loses 3.5 percent of its members to death and another eight percent to those who don't renew. "That means we need to go out and recruit 8,878 members." He said there will be a renewed effort to sign up those who have never belonged, and that National Guard armories will be targeted.  
 -- Was told by NECman Marland Ronning that the National Commander's Tour this coming year will be Feb. 6-9. The stops have not yet been determined. He also said he was running again for NECman this coming year.  
 -- Heard from Tesdahl that his personal phone has now been connected to the office headquarters phone (651-291-1800) so calls can be transferred through.  
 -- Learned from Tesdahl that Alumacraft had donated \$19,140 to the Trolling for the Troops fishing program for veterans. He said such programs are attractive to younger veterans.

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# Fall Conference will be held in Marshall

This year's school of instruction, the Fall Conference, will be held in Marshall on Oct. 28-29.

The conference will again combine the Legion and Auxiliary for some sessions, but final details and meeting spaces are still being discussed.

The Legion meeting will be held in the Marshall Red Baron Arena, 400 Tiger Drive.

The main hotel for the Legion will be the Ramada Inn.

Registration will begin on Wednesday at 5 p.m. for two hours at the post. Registration will then move to the Ramada Inn for the Auxiliary and the Red Baron Arena for the Legion and will be held Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Thursday, same hours, and Friday, 7-9:30 a.m.

The conference will be sponsored by Marshall Post and Unit 113. Jeff Gay is chairman of the Legion conference.



**SUPPORT FOR FISHING PROGRAM** -- AlumaCraft donated \$19,140 to the Trolling for the Troops program. The American Legion is a sponsor and organizer of the program that provides a fishing experience with professional fishermen for veterans at Camp Ripley. The DAV, VFW, MOPH, and PVA are also sponsors. From left: Commander Denise Milton, Adjutant Randy Tesdahl and PDC Jim Kellogg.

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 • All prices are before taxes are added

# Endorsements

## Ronning endorsed for NECman

Marland Ronning has been endorsed by the 10th District and Osseo Post 172 for re-election as National Executive Committeeman for 2017-19.

Ronning served in the Army from 1959-1967. He has served Osseo Post 172 in all offices.

He has served the Tenth District American Legion as Historian, Judge Advocate, Adjutant, Americanism, Children & Youth and District Vice Commander. In 1986-87 he was the Tenth District Commander.

Ronning was Department Commander in

2004-2005. Other positions he served as include Sgt-at-Arms, Vice Commander, and Membership Director. He is Treasurer of the "V4V" Board.

He has served at the National level on the Membership & Post Activities Committee, National Aerospace Committee, Americanism Council, currently serves on the Veterans Employment & Education Council

He and his wife, Chris, have a blended family of five children, 13 grandchildren, and 18 great grandchildren.



MARLAND RONNING

Marland is retired from IMI Vision as a Senior Global Lab Technician in their R&D Lab.



LEGACY RUN 2016 -- American Legion Riders stretch out into the distance near Forest Lake on this year's Legacy Run. The North and Not So North runs raised money for the Scholarship Fund that will be presented at national convention.

## R. Niesen endorsed for VC

Waconia Post 150 and the Third District have endorsed Rosemary Niesen as a candidate for Department 1st and 3rd Vice Commander for 2017-18.

She is a member of Waconia Post 150 and has held offices such as historian, executive office and presently the adjutant.

She is active in the Third District and had served as adjutant, vice commander and commander and was the blood chairman. She is presently the Armed Forces

Service Chairman. At department level she is presently serving on the Brain Science Committee as secretary. She is a member of the VFW 5462, Am Vets Post 13, Cabane 415 and the DAV.

She served for over 20 years with the 133rd Civil Engineering Squadron in the Minnesota Air National Guard. She is married to husband Joe for over 60 years. They have a family of three boys, nine grandchildren, and 13 grandchildren.



ROSEMARY NIESEN



ARRIVING IN STYLE -- Commander Denise Milton arrived in Forest Lake with 10th District Auxiliary President Linda Deschene. (Photos by Michelle Leonard)

## Brockberg endorsed for VC

Round Lake Post 461 has endorsed Bill B. Brockberg for Vice Commander Districts 2 and 7, for 2017 - 2018.

Brockberg is a past Commander, Vice Commander, adjutant and membership director of Pipestone Post 6 and past Commander and vice-Commander of the Second District.

In his current American Legion Post, Brockberg serves as the second Vice Commander.

He is retired from the Army with 24 years in the Army and Army Reserve.

At the District level, Brockberg has served as Chairman of the Rehabilitation and Public Relations committees. Currently he is the Second District Historian.

Brockberg is the County Veterans Service Officer for Nobles County.

Brockberg is this year's Department Chaplain. He has served on the Post Revitalization, and Legislative committees, he is presently on the Department Rehabilitation Committee and is a graduate of The American Legion National College.



BILL BROCKBERG

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## Niesen endorsed for Sgt. at Arms

Waconia Post 150 and the Third District have endorsed Joseph B. Niesen for Department Sergeant at Arms 2017-2018.

He is the Chaplain for his Post and was

Commander 1998-1999.

At District level he has held the office of Vice Commander, Membership Director and Commander.

He served as Law and Order Chairman, Energy

and Conservation chairman.

At Department he served on the Fund for Hospitalized Veterans and Energy and Conservation.

He retired from the Minnesota Air National Guard having served over 20 years with the 133rd Civil Engineering Squadron. He and his wife Rosemary reside in Cologne.



JOE NIESEN

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**COMMANDER'S  
COLUMN****By Denise Milton**

Wow, it has been a busy first month. The national membership training is complete – what an exciting few days to learn about The American Legion. You get an opportunity to meet every department and exchange ideas, brain storm and make challenges. Our region, the Midwest, has eight departments and five of the commanders are women. Finally, we are beginning to think of ourselves as veterans also. Only thing is now I have to wait in line for the bathroom. But that is a good thing.

Our bid for a goal of 77,000 members for 2017 was agreed upon at National. This is a doable goal and we can accomplish it by working as a team. We do have two stipulations to this goal – the National Commander requests to be called once we obtain 100% and be on stage next year at the national convention to receive recognition for achieving 100% goal on CPR's. These are both attainable goals working together. We can do it.

We had our first DEC meeting and Department Membership Director Mark Dvorak rolled out his plan – "Oak Strong." Training and education will be emphasized to increase membership and leadership in Minnesota. We have a lot of exceptional veterans in our great state. A focus on post level open houses and revitalizations will be accomplished this year. Thank you to all who have agreed to serve on a committee at your post, district or department.

Our 7th Annual ALR Legacy Run was held the first two weekends of August. Thanks to the phenomenal fundraising skills of the American Legion Riders the legacy scholarship funds are now available to children of a parent who has a 50% or greater service connected disability serving

since 9-11. I had the privilege and distinct honor to be a part of that fantastic group. Much preparation is done prior to kickstands up, with safety always a number one priority and raising lots of money for the kids. The sheer dedication and enthusiasm of the ALR members is catchy. No donation is too small and after riding almost 2,000 miles it was announced \$117,000 had been collected. The final tally won't be disclosed till we stand on stage at the national convention in Cincinnati – stay tuned.

I want to thank all of the riders for the hospitality and generosity that was extended to me and a special thanks to Bob Benjamin, Paul Edwards and Linda Deschene for letting me hitch a ride. It is an awesome site and feeling to see all those bikes streaming down the road with Old Glory fluttering in the breeze.

I hope to see many of you at Legionville Camp-O-See from around the 6th of September and concluding on the 11th. It will be managed this year by the Sons of The American Legion and they have many new things planned for this year. It is always a fun weekend and also includes the Department Harvest Rally Membership Rally on Saturday afternoon.

Finally, my project this year is taking care of our homeless veterans here in Minnesota. We will be assisted by MACV (Minnesota Assisted Council for Veterans). We will focus on homeless veterans and those teetering on the brink of homelessness. I chose MACV because they encompass the entire State of Minnesota and all 87 counties receive assistance. There are three regional offices (Duluth, Mankato and Metro) and there are nine StandDowns scheduled for the coming year. When making donations from gambling funds, please make the check payable to "American Legion Foundation Fund 82" or bring items on the MACV wish list to the department rallies this year. Items on the wish list include: white towels and wash clothes, hand and foot warmers, small flashlights, warm socks (men and womens), white t-shirts (men and womens) and winter hats and gloves, travel size toiletries (shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, soap and lotion), toothbrush and toothpaste. Also gift cards are welcome for Holiday, Cenex, SA and Kwik Trip-gas only!, Target/Walmart, fast food- McDonalds, Subway and Burger King and for haircuts at Great Clips and Fantastic Sams

American Legion Day is September 17th and I encourage you to get the word out to your community. We are almost 100 years old and going strong.

Till next month – Victory for Veterans.

**Chaplain's  
Corner****By  
Bill Brockberg**

**We will not falter, we will not tire and we will not fail.**

As we move into this month of September we will be reminded of the worst attack against Americans on our soil through memorial tributes on the 15th Anniversary of those 9-1-1 attacks.

As Legionnaires, our remembrances, prayers, memorial ceremonies and acts of consolation will be largely directed toward those killed in the attacks and for their families and loved ones. We will remember too, the police and firemen who rushed in to save people from the World Trade Center Towers, but perished in their efforts.

As an American Legion family, we band together in support of one of our four main pillars, that of National Security. Shortly after the attacks on 9-1-1, Americans all across the Country banded together in a show of Patriotism and unity in defense of America. Just days after the attacks, President George W. Bush addressed a joint session of Congress and broadcasted to the American people of the intention to strike back and bring our aggressors to justice. In that upcoming endeavor the President proclaimed, "We will not falter, we will not tire and we will not fail," to a loud and raucous standing ovation. The United We Stand initiative took hold all across the Country and Americans were praying for grace and consolation to the victims, for safety for our citizens and for justice for the American People. However, as children of God, when we call upon divine intervention to support us in any endeavor or initiative, how does that "square" with the almighty? Does God choose us over our enemies? Or does God command us to love others as ourselves and to pray for others; even our enemies?

How, then, do we as Legionnaires "square" with God when we pray for the safety of our citizens while we simultaneously pray for justice, or should I say, vengeance, against our aggressors? Evangelist and author Corrie Ten Boom with her parents, sisters and brother were part of a Dutch underground who helped Jews hide and escape from Nazi storm troopers in Holland during World War II. While imprisoned, Corrie Ten Boom wrote of how she prayed for her captors and how she prayed for everything sent her way, good or bad, every day. She even thanked God when she came down with lice. As soon as her Nazi captors discovered she had lice, they stayed away from her and left her alone. No more cruelty or punishment.

In this same way and as Legionnaires we may call for guidance in our endeavors, and for God's grace to be shown upon the friends and families of all those who perished on 9-1-1. Without asking God to take sides, but rather to give us all peace and unity, we may pray for ourselves, our friends and family, and even our enemies. "Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart," wrote Corrie Ten Boom. We may ask God to relieve and remove the anguish of our aggressors, and become united in peace. Many are the wonderful works of God as written in Psalm 40 and God's love calls to all people of every tribe, language, race and nation as written in Revelation.

Our memorial services and events can unite us and bring grace and peace to those who lost loved ones. In God, may we not falter, not tire, and not fail.

**Editorial**

It seems like whenever we look out our window, the American flag is at half-staff.

It's coming to the point where this symbol of national grief is so redundant that it has lost its meaning.

If the flag is flown at half mast a few times a year, it is a powerful acknowledgement of our shared sorrow following the loss of a leader or a terrible national calamity.

If the flag is in this position several times a week, well, who cares?

The president of the United States and the governor of Minnesota need to re-evaluate their overuse of this gesture. The orders they issue may seem to come from good motivation, but the cumulative effect dulls the impact of lowering the flag. It almost becomes a political nod, motivated

not by true grief or anguish, but in an effort to placate a certain political bloc.

Maybe we can find other ways to express ourselves over distant terrorism attacks or the anniversary of events in history. Maybe a memorial service. Maybe a proclamation is enough. Maybe a rally on the Capitol steps.

The flag should not be a yo-yo.

The American flag is meant to wave proudly at the top of the flag staff, a heartfelt symbol of an ascendant nation. It should not be used as a symbol of a nation that seems to be in perpetual mourning.

It's time to use some common sense in determining what actually merits an executive order to lower our flag to half-staff.

**From the Adjutant's desk****By Randy Tesdahl**

First off, I want to thank the Executive Board for their trust and confidence in me as the Department Adjutant shown by re-electing me to another three-year term at the August Department Executive Committee Meeting. I love my job and am looking forward to a great year with Commander Milton and her team.

As an Adjutant no matter whether one is at the Department, District, County, or Post, you are the primary keeper of the official records at that level. That means that you are the Chief Administrator.

You will work with the commander to make their year the best it can be.

It means working with other groups. At the Department level that includes the County Veteran Service Officers, the other VSO Commanders, The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, the heads of the VA Hospital, VA Claims, and VA Cemeteries offices. Also we must be connected with the veterans homes and Yellow Ribbon coordinators, and the Veterans Employment representatives, as well as those facilities that work to help and support homeless veterans.

You need to stretch and grow your respective area of responsibility by seeking new "out of the box" opportunities to get your Post District or Department involved out in the community whether it be a 5K Fun Run, a fishing event for vets, a golf tournament, a wall climbing or BMX event. These events are important to raise money for your programs, and increase your imprint in the area.

It is not a 9 to 5 job for sure. And I am used to that. Depending on the size of your Post, District or Department you very well can be on call 24/7. It is not uncommon to work, travel or even just answer calls and emails late into

the night or on weekends, yes, even Sundays and Holidays.

As you can see it would not make sense to change the Adjutant every year or two without some sort of just cause. Or if that serving Adjutant was no longer wanting the job. The Idea is "continuity" in the position at all levels.

A Little history:

The State or Department of Minnesota has had 13 Adjutants since we started in 1919. From 1919 through 1925 five different men held the position. In 1926 the Adjutant served the next four years, 1926-1930, and they began to realize early on the importance of continuity in that role.

Then C.A "Chic" Zwiener served 16 years from 1931 until 1947. In 1948 Carl Granning served the next 18 years until 1966. Frank C. Momsen served 12 years from 1966-1978. In fact he went onto serve as National Adjutant for a period of time.

Then Chuck Ferguson followed with 15 years, 1978-1993. Al Davis and Lyle Foltz both served proudly taking us to 2009. Then I was elected in 2009 after serving as the Department's Service Officer from 2004-2009 under Lyle Foltz and the Department Rehab Committee.

As you can see through the history of the position here at the Department, the continuity is obvious and necessary for a smooth operation. I am sure most Districts and Posts reflect the same type of continuity in the position of Adjutant.

Again I want to say thank you to all Legionnaires out there. I am proud to serve the Department Commanders and all the members of the Department of Minnesota as your Adjutant.

**The Minnesota Legionnaire**

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**Al Zdon, Editor**

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# What's Happening

## Round Table

The World War II History Round Table will meet at Historic Fort Snelling twice in September. The first meeting, on Thursday, Sept. 8, at 7 p.m. will be "Deception in the ETO -- Fooling the Enemy." It will feature Jonathan Gawne, the author of *Ghost of the ETO*.

On Sept. 22, the program will be "Pacific Diplomacy in the 1930s, Events leading to hostilities in the Pacific." The author will be Sidney Pash who did *Currents of War*.

There is a \$5 admission. All programs start at 7 p.m.

## Waconia Dinner

There will be a Veteran Appreciation Dinner on Thursday, Nov. 3, at the Waconia Ballroom. Proceeds will go to the Carver County Veterans Memorial and Registry. The speaker will be Travis Mills, a quadriplegic veteran who served three tours in Afghanistan. For more info, go to [www.ccvmr.org](http://www.ccvmr.org).

## Vietnam War Anniversary

Hastings will mark the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War with a series of events. On Friday, Sept. 2, a community commemoration will be held at the Hastings Veterans Home. There will be free golf over the weekend at Hidden Greens Golf Course. A historic "cruise-in" will be held in downtown Hastings on Saturday from 5-9 featuring a monster truck. For more info, call 438-2208.

## Rosetown Fall BBQ

The Rosetown Fall Barbeque will be held at the post on Sunday, Sept. 18, from noon until 5, with ribs, chicken and the "fixin's" until its gone. There will be prizes, silent auc-

tion, raffle, games. For more information call 651-483-3535.

## Legal Clinics

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans is sponsoring several events coming up. The free drop-in legal clinics offer veterans help on housing, benefits, debt collection, expungement, and family law. Attorneys will be available. Clinics will be held at:

-- St. Cloud VA Auditorium, Building 8, on Tuesday, Sept. 20 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

-- Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Flag Atrium Balcony Room 2S 114 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 13.

-- Anoka County Government Center, Thursday, Sept. 8, from 9 .m. to 3 p.m.

## SAL Disabled Deer Hunt

The SAL Disabled Deer Hunt at Legionville has been slated for Friday, Sept. 30, to Sunday, Oct. 2. The SAL is looking to expand to add two more hunters this year. The SAL is seeking a 243 rifle and additional volunteers for the hunt. Donations are accepted from posts, auxiliaries or SAL squadrons. For more information, contact Dave Vulcan, 507-380-5095, or Steve Bilderback, 612-220-1333.

## Fall Bomber's Moon Ball

The Commemorative Air Force will sponsor the Fall Bomber's Moon Ball Hangar Dance on Saturday, Sept. 10, with the Roseville Big Band. Dance lessons will begin at 7 with dancing at 8 p.m. There will be food and drink, and prizes for best WWII era dress. Tickets are \$12.50 online or \$15 at the door.

Go to [cafmm.org](http://cafmm.org) for info or tickets.

## Military Appreciation Day

The St. Francis Post 622 will honor veterans on Saturday, Sept. 10, from noon until 8 p.m. with music, food, kids' activities and military events. There will be a flag retirement, military recruiters, boot camp obstacle course, face painting, raffle and a live band.

## 9/11 Spaghetti Fundraiser

There will be an observance of the 9/11 attack on Sunday, Sept. 11, at the McConnell-Modeen VFW Post in Duluth on West Michigan Street. It is co-sponsored by the American Legion and other groups. It will begin at 2 with a social hour and the meal will be served at 3:15 p.m. The program is at 4. The cost is \$10 and reservations should be made by Sept. 7 by calling Ralph at 218-591-5610.

## Flea Market/ Antique Sale

North St. Paul American Legion Auxiliary will hold a Flea Market and Antique Sale on Saturday, Oct. 1, at the post at 2678 East 7th Avenue in North St. Paul. There will be a bake sale and food available. All proceeds support Auxiliary programs. For more information, call Betty at 651-777-5552.

## Medal of Honor Convention

The official public welcome ceremony for the Medal of Honor Convention in Minnesota will be Wednesday, Oct. 5, from 10-11 a.m. at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis. The event is free. No bags are allowed. The Commander's Task Force, including The American Legion, are sponsoring the event. For more information call 763-607-0245.

# Taps

**Goodwin, Leslie O.**, 74, Air Force veteran of the Persian Gulf War, died July 11, 2016. He served for 33 years including tours in Germany. He was the oldest and highest ranking command sergeant major in the Air Force when he retired. He was serving as Polk County Veterans Service Office. He was a member of Winger Post 200.

**Holland, Gary Lee**, 77, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 22, 2016. He served in Okinawa and Laos. He was a member of Chisholm Post 247.

**Schuknecht, Archie Herman**, 91, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 16, 2016. He served on three Navy ships. He was a member of Lakefield Post 4.

**Dauffenbach, Robert Joseph**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 21, 2016. He was a member of Lakefield Post 4.

**Langer, Elmer Anthony**, 97, Army veteran of World War II, died July 11, 2016. He served as an interpreter in Europe. He was a member of Pierz Post 341.

**Schulz, Dale W.**, 90, veteran of the Korean War, died July 4, 2016. He was a member of Austin Post 91.

**Schoneck, John B.**, 75, Marine Corps Reserve veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 30, 2016. He was a member of Amboy Post 276.

**Abbott, George William III "Buck,"** 85, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died July 20, 2016. He was stationed at Newport. He was a member of Hackensack Post 202.

**Leigh, Dr. James A.**, 89, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 26, 2016. He also served in the National Guard during the Korean War. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**Paal, William**, 77, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 16, 2016. He was a drill instructor and served 20 years. He was a member of Chaska Post 57.

**Zeimet, Warren G.**, 81, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died July 5, 2016. He was a member of St. Paul Park Post 98.

**Rathbun, Jack H.**, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 4, 2016. He was a sergeant in the Third Army and helped liberate the Buchenwald Death Camp. He was a member of Sauk Rapids Post 254.

**Yetzer, Wilfred**, 99, Army veteran of World War II, died July 29, 2016. He was a medic in Europe assisting doctors in surgery. He was a member of Waconia Post 150.

**Ellison, John Smith**, 92, Army veteran of World War II, died July 29, 2016. He served in France and earned a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. He was a member of Monticello Post 260.

**Newman, James**, 81, Army and National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 26, 2016. He served 20 years in the Guard. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

**Rose, Donald W.**, 88, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 4, 2016. He served in Korea as an electronics technician. He also worked on the Early Warning System in Alaska. He retired as a lieutenant. He was a member of Dent Post 148.

**Haugan, Sigurd T.**, 97, Army veteran of World War II,

died July 29, 2016. He served in Aleutians. He was commissioned through the OCS program. He was a past adjutant of Minneapolis Business and Professional Post 450.

**Jubie, Orville Frances "Pete,"** 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 23, 2016. He served in Korea with Company C of the 12th Infantry. He was a member of Barnum Post 415.

**Halls, Allan Oliver**, 87, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died July 6, 2016. He was a member of Brooten Post 288.

**Nohrenberg, Orville Lowell**, 87, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 6, 2016. He served in the 369th Engineering Boat Battalion. He was a member of Madison Post 158.

**Boyd, James H.**, 84, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died July 4, 2016. He flew search and rescue missions. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Forsberg, Gerald F.**, 81, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 6, 2016. He was a radio technician. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

**Quarstad, Harold M.**, 95, Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 7, 2016. He served in the Pacific in the Philippines and New Guinea. He was a member of Lanesboro Post 40.

**Nygaard, Robert**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 23, 2016. He was a radar and missile technician. He was a member of East Grand Forks Post 157.

**Booth, Robert Harold**, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 12, 2016. He was a past adjutant and member of the color guard of Rush City Post 93.

**Jensen, Elwood D. "Red,"** 88, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 28, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Johnson, Peter A.**, 73, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 5, 2016. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

**Garard, James Francis**, 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 4, 2016. He was a helicopter mechanic. He was a member of Hackensack Post 202.

**Louwagie, Maurice**, 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 30, 2016. He served as an electrician's mate on USS YF621 around the Philippine Islands. He was a member of Cottonwood Post 503.

**Bahn, Duane**, 74, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 3, 2016. He was a past commander and member of the color guard of Marshall Post 113.

**Cochran, David**, 67, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 9, 2016. He was an aviation mechanic and a crew chief for medical evacuation planes. He was a past commander of Marshall Post 113.

**Schyma, Thomas Jr.**, 80, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 22, 2016. He was a member of Hillman Post 602.

**Bujarski, Vernon**, 71, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 23, 2016. He was a member of Hillman Post 602.

**Swanberg, Robert J.**, 88, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 16, 2016. He was a past commander of Willmar Post 167.

**Holmgren, Alden L.**, 94, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 29, 2016. He was a member of Willmar Post 167.

**Pearson, Oscar Iver**, 93, Navy veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Aug. 7, 2016. He was a member of Red Wing Post 54.

**Walton, Roger**, 73, Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 31, 2016. He was a member of Brainerd Post 255.

**Cook, William O.**, 95, Coast Guard veteran of World War II, died Aug. 14, 2016. He was a radarman second class. He was a member of the University of Minnesota Post 548.

**Krueger, Donald Herman**, 92, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 30, 2016. He was a hospital corpsman stationed in Attu, Alaska, and in Washington D.C. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

**Willner, Herbert M.**, 70, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 5, 2016. He served one tour in Vietnam. He was a member of Eden Valley Post 381.

**Roos, Elmer**, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 4, 2016. He was a member of Paynesville Post 271.

**Sybrandt, Harold L.**, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 29, 2016. He was a member of Rush City Post 93.

**Drager, Mark J.**, 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 14, 2016. He was a member of Zimmerman Post 560.

**Delong, Darrell**, 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 13, 2016. He was a member of the color guard of New London Post 537.

**Lenk, Donald James, Sr.**, 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died Aug. 5, 2016. He served as a guard on the demilitarized zone.

**Rasmussen, Garrett Lee**, 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died Aug. 14, 2016. He served in Hawaii. He was a member of Chisago City Post 272.

**Moerer, Ewald Ludwig**, 96, Navy veteran of World War II, died Aug. 14, 2016. He was a member of Wheaton Post 80.

**Erickson, Arvid A.**, 97, Army veteran of World War II, died Aug. 14, 2016. He served in the 407th Medical Battalion as a medic and he served in New Guinea and the Philippines. He was a member of Granite Falls Post 69.

## Obituary Policy

All obituaries must be within two months of the issue they are published in. For instance, for this September issue, all obituaries must be from August or July. June obituaries will not be used.

Obituaries should contain the full name, age, branch of service, war era, exact date of death, any information about the veteran's service, and any information about the veteran's involvement in the post, such as past commander.

# District Commanders

## FIRST DISTRICT

Sylvan Fix  
Commander



It was good to meet many of the District and Department officers at the Training session and Exec. Board meeting in Anoka. I am looking forward to an exciting and successful year. Our District picnic on the 14th was a great success. Thank you Grand Meadow for being the sponsor this year. You did a terrific job. And by the way, you also have a very nice Veterans Memorial in your park.

Mentor your membership is my theme this year. It is extremely important that we find that unique individual who may have the ability to take on a project or get more active within The American Legion. Mentoring someone does not happen overnight. It could take several months to a couple years. Patience is the way to success. Pushing one to hard could scare them away. The person being mentored doesn't even have to know that he is being mentored. It wasn't until a couple years ago that I realized that I was being mentored for 2 to 3 years prior. So seek that individual. Have casual conversation with them. Learn what you can without being pushy. Hopefully you find something within that individual that can be honed for the good of your Post, District, or even Department and will give that person the wow factor after realizing what they have accom-

## SECOND DISTRICT

Mark Coney  
Commander



The new year is off to a great start for the Second District. We are off the Goose Egg for the second year in a row. Thank you to all the posts, membership directors, and to my vice commanders for all of their hard work and effort.

The county fairs are keeping everyone busy at this time and soon it will be time for the Minnesota Homecoming, also known as the State Fair.

The Second District Legion Riders just finished their Legacy Run on the 14th of August. It has been another successful year for the riders. Although the totals have not been tallied as this writing, I was told that the 1st, 2nd, and 7th Districts donated a whopping \$61,000. That's quite an accomplishment from all that were involved. I want to thank all of you for all of your hard work.

On Saturday, September 24, the Legion Riders will be hosting an organizational meeting from 12 noon until 3 p.m. This will take place at the Hardwick Legion at 111 E. Main in Hardwick. All are welcome who wish to start the 3rd chapter in the District.

On September 12th, The Clay County Fair in Spencer, Iowa will have it's Veterans appreciation day allowing all Veterans in for free.

## THIRD DISTRICT

Mike Maxa  
Commander



First a big thanks to the Third Herd for getting the district off the goose egg. The goose egg sets the tone for our membership year and once again the "Thundering Third" is serious about membership.

This month I want to visit our committees and the responsibilities our committee chairman have volunteered for. In the district we have 28 committees with committee chairs. They are responsible for collecting information and reporting the activities of the district programs. Our chairmen have the responsibility to not only help you with your program, they also have the responsibility to collect what you have accomplished and report it.

National and Department present this data before our government to make their case to support our Veterans and our programs. Our programs are challenged every year for either elimination or reduction. This is why it's so important to take the time and complete the reports that will tell our story of what we Legionnaires do, day after day. The American Legion has made it so easy with the "CPR" consolidated post report to tell our story.

Our first rally is in the books and what a great exchange of ideas we had. I posed the question on "How can we get more participation and attendance from our posts?" This will be the focus going forward. How can we as a Legion Family do better and grow. I challenged my Vice Commanders for the remaining four rallies to bring the whole family together and come up with topics that will make us grow. These rallies or meetings belong to you, the posts, and we can discuss any subject you want. At the next rally/meeting we will have input from our Auxiliary, SAL, and Riders. "Ask" a Veteran to join and the Legion Family will grow.

## FOURTH DISTRICT

Randy Bastyr  
Commander



Greetings to all of the members of the Fabulous Fourth. Summer is coming to an end and the kids are back in school. The days are getting shorter, and soon the leaves will turn color and begin to fall.

Speaking of Fall, the Fall Membership Rally will be held at Legionville on September 10th. Please send your membership renewals into your Post so they can get them turned in at the Rally. Membership Chairman Mickey Ostrum wants to continue his streak of 100% membership for a third year in a row. Let's help him achieve this.

The Shop, Ship and Share Committee is working hard on this year's event, to be held at the Maplewood Mall on December 2nd & 3rd. We are looking for names and addresses of Minnesota service men and women that will be deployed over Christmas and New Year's. If you know of someone we could send a care package to, please forward their name, company and address to me at:

r-bastyr@comcast.net

Upcoming District events: September 14th - RCCC at No St Paul Post 39, Exec at 6:30 and Membership meeting at 7:00; September 18 - Hospital visitation at 1:00 and September 20th -Shop, Ship and Share meeting at NSP Post 39 at 6:30.

## FIFTH DISTRICT

Ray Eiden  
Commander



I wish to congratulate Denise Milton on being elected our new Department Commander. Also our own Curt Norenberg to Department Vice Commander for the 4th and 5th Districts and Dennis DeLong to Department Sgt-at-Arms. It was a pleasure meeting all the other District Commanders at the Convention and I hope they have a successful year.

I look forward to our first District Assembly on Sept. 6 at Post 1. My Commander's Project this year will involve the purchase of one or two clavinos for the Minneapolis Veteran's Home. The estimated cost of each is \$2,200.00.

An Ice-Cream Social/Antique Car Show was held Aug. 13 at the Minneapolis Veteran's Home. An SAL Commander from one of our posts belongs to an old car club and the residents greatly appreciated those who came to share their vehicles and enjoy in some conversation.

Our posts continue to bring in memberships. I encourage them to get off to a fast start and stay on top of their renewals. I am anxious to see what new ideas our Department Membership Director Mark Dvorak has regarding membership and revitalization.

Congratulations to the American Legion Riders for raising over \$17,000 for the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

Coming up: District Hospital Visitation - Sept. 4 at 2 p.m. and Harvest Rally in Legionville - Sept. 10 at 3 p.m. As always "Keep Focused and Look to the Future."

## SIXTH DISTRICT

Vernonica Fernlund  
Commander



Congratulations to our new Department Commander Denise Milton. The 6th District will do its best to help make this a successful year.

We recently held two Schools of Instruction. Thank you to St. Augusta Post 621 and Pequot Lakes Post 49 for their hospitality and to everyone who attended. Valuable information was shared and we had great participation.

The Camp-O-Ree is scheduled for Sept. 7-11, 2016 at Legionville. Legionnaires from around the state will be getting together to camp and have a great time. Saturday Sept. 10 there will be a fish fry, followed by the 6th District membership rally at 2 p.m. and then the Department Harvest membership rally, all at Legionville.

If anyone has not been to Legionville, this is a great opportunity to visit and meet with the new District and Department teams.

The Department provided each District with a public relations tool kit which has a pop-up sign, table top skirting and brochures. The kit is great for bringing attention to any event and is available to everyone in our District.

Sept. 16 is the next cutoff to have membership turned-in to National or expect a renewal notice mailing after Oct. 7. The 6th & 9th Dist. Membership Rally is Oct. 8, Little Falls Post 46. All 6th District Posts please help so we can keep the Leg in the 9th District.

## SEVENTH DISTRICT

Garylee Davenport  
Commander



I hope everyone is enjoying the summer. But now it's time to get to work. We still have a couple of posts that have not yet turned in there officers report for the year. This needs to be done every year even if the post officers don't change. If this is not updated the post will not get any correspondence from Department. So please get this done.

We still have a couple of posts that are still on goose egg. The cutoff for the goose egg was August 3, so please get this corrected ASAP.

On another note I am still trying to fill two committees: Oratorical and Boys State. If anyone is interested please contact myself or Jeff Gay, the Seventh District Adjutant.

We have two rallies coming up: October 1st in Montevideo at 10 a.m. for areas B&D and October 15th in Glenwood at 10 a.m. for areas A&C.

And just a quick reminder that September 14th is the early bird 50% cut off date and September 10th is the harvest rally at Legionville.

And one last note please keep all of the members of our armed forces around the world in your thoughts and prayers.

## NINTH DISTRICT

Eric Wilkens  
Commander



Membership is off to a great start with the Ninth being off the Goose Egg for the first time in many years. A big thanks to the membership team in the Ninth for their hard work and dedication.

Our first membership rally will be on September 24 at the Thief River Falls Post starting at 2 pm. As this membership year continues to gather steam, I encourage everyone to make use of mylegion.org and if you have Posts that have not used it, offer to help get them started.

In addition, the key to growing membership is working the AD-1982, MN-1982 and the expired list form the Post. In the 1982 Posts the member has already joined, so let's get them local and make those numbers work for us. Membership Directory Mark Dvorak mentioned in his training that we should try to get into the National Guard bases and armories.

You should be able to call the National Guard location near you and request a time to come and promote membership. For example, the best time to promote to the North Dakota Air National Guard would be over the lunch period during their monthly drill. Don't forget we as Legionnaires are the best recruiters we have and our programs sell the value of membership.

## TENTH DISTRICT

Bonnie Hanson  
Commander



It has started to be a very good year. Had my first rally at the end of July and had a really good group and I made it through it. Then these last two weekends when to the Legion Rider kick-off for the Legacy run and that first weekend when they pulled into Buffalo with 51 bikes roaring into town sight to be seen and the money they collected was almost half of what they were looking for and then we had the next weekend where I really rode behind Bob on his 3-wheeler from Forest Lake to Fridley which was done on the best Sunday for everyone and seeing the landscape. And then getting to Fridley and hearing the amount of money that both weekends brought in. Different things that I could write about but I will leave that for another District to tell you.

Need to talk about the Camporee up at Legionville the weekend after Labor Day also known as the Harvest Rally. The 10th District will be roast up a pig for your Friday night feed so hope to see you all then. God Bless everyone and remember my motto "Family First." Take care until next time.

## Thank you

Carol and I want to thank everyone for all the phone calls, texts, cards and other messages in recent days. I am in a cast and I have a cracked shoulder, but I'm feeling better every day. I can't tell you how much I appreciate The American Legion Family.

Bill Barbknecht  
Battle Lake

## DEC okays Milton's appointments to state committees

Appointments to the Department of Minnesota standing committees were approved by the Department Executive Committee in August.

Commander Denise Milton announced the following list:

(Those already serving on a committee are not listed, only those appointed this year. Some committees have annual appointments while others have multi-year terms.)

Floyd Kumerow, Lambertson, was reappointed to a new five-year term on the Finance Committee. Ray DeZurik, Breezy Point, will chair the committee this year.

Tess Davis, Princeton, will serve a three-year term on the Americanism Committee. Tom Hallett of Mankato will serve as Boy Scout chairman, Bob Locker of Fridley as Community Service chairman, and Don Skow of Lindstrom will be Education chairman.

Thomas Nelson, Tracy, will replace longtime Boys State Director Mike Bredeck of Madison. Bredeck will serve as vice chairman. Leon Dahle, Morristown will serve as chairman of Junior Shooting Sports.

Debra Norman of Northfield will chair the Oratorical Contest, and Linda Dvorak will be vice chair. James Blakesley of Aitkin will be the Safety School Patrol chairman.

Joe Jansen of Arden Hills will be the representative to the Armed Forces Service Center.

Tom Sanders of Pine City will be the chair of the Blood Program. Terry Buraas will chair the Children and Youth Committee and Karen Welander will serve as vice chair.

Jennifer Kafka of Blue Earth will chair the Citizens Flag Alliance.

Ken Meyer of Pequot Lakes was appointed to a five-year term on the Convention Corporation. David Bode of Nicollet will be parade coordinator.

Virgil Wagner of Middle River was appointed by Milton to a new three-year term on the Credentials Committee. Carl Moon of St. Joseph will chair the Employment Committee. Joe Niesen of Cologne will chair the Energy and Conservation Committee.

Tom Mullon, Eagan, will represent the Legion on the Fort Snelling Cemetery Association.

Mike Maxa, Le Center, will chair the Fund for Hospitalized Veterans Committee, and he will be joined by Wes Thompson, Sartell; Roland Hanson, Austin; and Eugene Olsword of New Ulm.

Tom Conway will chair the Law and Order Committee and he will be joined by Richard Abraham of Lake Crystal and Jeff Brokaw of Winona.

Paul Hassing of Montgomery will be the Legion Riders liaison, but while he is on deployment, the interim liaison will be Ron Rollins of North Branch.

Bill Barbknecht of Battle Lake was appointed to a new three-year term on the Legionnaire Insurance Trust Committee and will serve as chairman. Roger Myren of Eagan will be the Department representative on the Legionville Board of Directors.

Peggy Moon was named chair of the Legislative Committee and will be joined by Mike Ash, St. Paul, Gary Larson of Stillwater and Bob Hart of Oak Park Heights.

Mark Dvorak will be the membership chairman, as announced at the state convention.

Gary Olson, Moorhead, and Richard Janssen, Richmond, were re-appointed to three-year terms on the Brain Science Foundation. Richard Magraw of Spring Park will be a consultant and Dan Ludwig, Red Wing, will serve as the commander's advisor.

Don Walser of Hutchinson will continue as liaison to the Heart Research Foundation.

Dennis DeLong of Bloomington was named to a five-year term on the Minnesota American Legion Foundation.

Jim Kellogg, Taopi, was appointed to a five-year term on the National Security/Foreign Relations Committee. Curt Norenberg of Roseville will replace Denise Milton for a four-year term. Kellogg will chair the committee.

Glenn Mueller of St. Charles will chair Operation Post Home. Chuck Stone of Owatonna will chair the Pheasant Dinner Committee. Arnie Troe of Emmons will be vice chair.

Tom Norgaard of Fosston was appointed to a five-year term on the Post Development Committee. Carl Hendrickson of Cloquet was appointed to a four-year term to replace Bill Stein who passed away.

Tim Burley of Hutchinson was appointed to a three-year term on the Public Relations Committee.

Jack Russell, Sartell, was appointed to a five-year term on the Rehabilitation Committee.

Al Davis, Princeton, was appointed to a three-year term on the Resolutions Assignment Committee. Jeff Olson of Green Valley, Arizona, will serve as chairman.

Ray Ozmun of Northfield will continue as advisor to the Sons of the American Legion. The vice chair for the south will be Gary Weaver, LaCrescent and the vice chair for the north will be Walt Folendorf, East Grand Forks.

Mike Gort, Marshall, was re-appointed to a three-year



**TESTIFYING** -- Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff John Vessey confers with Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger during Congressional hearings.

## Vessey won DSC in fighting in Vietnam

Continued from Page 1

in Lakeville when it was still a small town. His father was a railroad man, and a World War I veteran.

He moved to Minneapolis in the ninth grade and attended Roosevelt High School where he was captain of the swim team.

Despite being too young, Vessey enlisted in the Minnesota National Guard in May, 1939.

His unit was federalized in February of 1941 as the 34th "Red Bull" Division, and Vessey left his job as a package wrapper at Sears Roebuck to become a full-time soldier.

At first he was a surveyor, but he changed jobs to become a radio operator because it paid more. When the sergeant in charge of the radio unit failed a test, Vessey was given a radio field manual to study.

They told him if passed the test on Monday morning, he would be a sergeant. If he failed, he'd be a private first class. He passed.

Vessey was assigned to the headquarters unit of the 59th Field Artillery Brigade, and soon was promoted to first sergeant. At age 20, he may have been the youngest first sergeant in the Army.

The 34th Division was sent overseas, first to Northern Ireland, and in February of 1943, to North Africa.

In the summer of 1943, Vessey and the 34th landed at Salerno in Italy and later joined the invasion at Anzio.

At Anzio, he was called into a headquarters office and offered a promotion to second lieutenant.

"There didn't seem to be any way to say no," Vessey told the *Minnesota Legionnaire* in 2003. "By this time, we'd been at war for a couple of years. I knew that second lieutenants were pretty much cannon fodder. I thought it was okay to be an officer, but it wasn't like I'd just won the lottery."

He was right about the new danger in his promotion as he was immediately assigned as a forward artillery observer. "The casualty rates for forward observers were pretty high, but there wasn't any work in Italy that wasn't dangerous."

Vessey survived the war, but was never promoted

because of a standing rule that second lieutenants who had received battlefield promotions should stay that way.

In April of 1946, he was finally promoted first lieutenant. He had gone from being the youngest first sergeant to perhaps the most senior second lieutenant in the Army.

From that point, though, it was a rapid rise through the ranks.

In 1967, he was a lieutenant colonel in Vietnam leading a 300-soldier artillery unit. The unit was attacked by a force of 2,000 enemy soldiers, and, at one point, Vessey grabbed a grenade launcher and from an exposed position, took out three enemy rocket launchers. He earned the Distinguished Service Cross.

By 1970, he was a brigadier general serving in Thailand and Laos. He got his fourth star in 1976, commanding all U.S. forces in Korea, and in 1979 became the Army Vice Chief of Staff.

In 1982, as he was set to retire, he was chosen by President Reagan to chair the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the highest military position ever achieved by a Minnesotan.

Under his watch, America went through the largest peace-time build up of military strength in its history. The arms race was a major factor in the financial problems and eventual breakup of the Soviet Union.

When he finally retired in 1985, he had served for 46 years, longer than any other person in the Army at that time.

He later led a U.S. mission to Vietnam seeking the return of serviceman killed there.

In 1992, he was awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Bush, the nation's highest civilian honor, for his work in Vietnam.

He served on the commission that chose the design of the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C.

He retired to a rural home near Garrison, Minnesota, but also had a residence north of St. Paul. He and his wife, Avis, had two sons and a daughter.

Vessey was a frequent panelist at the World War II History Round Tables at Fort Snelling.

## North Dakota's 'Sparky' Gierke III died August 7

Past National Commander H.F. "Sparky" Gierke III of North Dakota died Aug. 7, 2016. He was 73.

Gierke grew up near Williston, N.D., in what is now the heart of the new oil drilling industry, and earned his juris doctor degree from the University of North Dakota Law School.

He entered the Army's Judge Advocate Corps and served in Vietnam as a trial judge. He was state commander of the American Legion from 1983-84 and in 1988 was elected national commander.

He served on the North Dakota Supreme Court and in 1991 was appointed by the president to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. He was chief judge from 2006-08.

Gierke is survived by four children, nine grandchildren and three step grandchildren.



Vessey was appointed by President Ronald Reagan.

term on the Baseball Committee. Bob Mace, Waite Park, will chair the Bowling Committee, and John Torma of Brooklyn Park and Irv Tooker, Walker, will also serve on the committee.

Jim Lucas of Pine River was appointed a five-year term on the Strategic Planning Committee. Richard Wog of Willmar will serve as chairman.

Marland Ronning of Maple Grove was appointed to a two-year term as representative from the Legion on the Veterans 4 Veterans Committee.

The DEC approved Milton's selections, and also voted to give her permission to make new appointments to fill any vacancies.



**DENISE MILTON**  
Bagley  
COMMANDER



# Minnesota's 2016 - 2017 Leadership Team



**RICHARD SKILLESTAD**  
Eyota  
VICE COMMANDER



**HARLEY WAHL**  
Slayton  
VICE COMMANDER



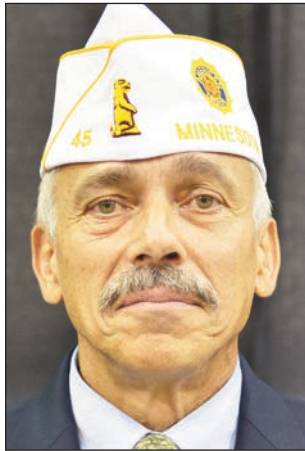
**CURT NORENBURG**  
Roseville  
VICE COMMANDER



**JIM LUCAS**  
Pine River  
VICE COMMANDER



**WILSON SPENCE III**  
Duluth  
VICE COMMANDER



**MARK DVORAK**  
Le Center  
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR



**RALPH SCHNEEKLOTH**  
Mabel  
HISTORIAN



**BILL BROCKBERG**  
Worthington  
CHAPLAIN



**DENNIS DeLONG**  
Bloomington  
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS



**SYLVAN FIX**  
Brownsville  
DIST. 1 COMMANDER



**MARK CONEY**  
Hardwick  
DIST. 2 COMMANDER



**MIKE MAXA**  
Le Center  
DIST. 3 COMMANDER



**RANDY BASTYR**  
Oakdale  
DIST. 4 COMMANDER



**RAY EIDEN**  
Minneapolis  
DIST. 5 COMMANDER



**VERONICA FERNLUND**  
St. Cloud  
DIST. 6 COMMANDER



**GARYLEE DAVENPORT**  
Atwater  
DIST. 7 COMMANDER



**KEN OLIVER**  
Duluth  
DIST. 8 COMMANDER



**ERIC WILKENS**  
Detroit Lakes  
DIST. 9 COMMANDER



**BONNIE HANSON**  
Rockford  
DIST. 10 COMMANDER