

SALUTING OUR SOLDIERS ON VETERANS DAY

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO

Thief River Falls
Times

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017

Honoring Our Brave Veterans

As our Armed Forces fight to protect our freedom abroad, we're reminded of the sacrifice made by so many brave soldiers before them. On Veterans Day, we pause to recognize and thank all of the veterans who have served our country. We are eternally grateful for their dedication and service.



VFW POST #2793 THIEF RIVER FALLS
Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 1 a.m.
Happy Hour 4 - 6 p.m. Monday - Friday
Band or Karaoke on Friday

Texas Hold'em & Ladies Night 7 p.m. Wednesday
Bar Bingo 5 p.m. Wednesday & Saturday
Progressive Jackpot Bar Bingo 5 p.m. Thursday & Friday
Pull-Tabs 12 p.m. - 12:30 a.m. Monday - Friday
Saturday 11 a.m. - 12:30 a.m.
Gaming License #A-00404 ☎ (218) 681-1211

Honoring, All Who Served

Thank you Veterans

On Veteran's Day, we pause to reflect on the service and sacrifice of the men and women of our Armed Forces. We honor the memory of those who lost their lives protecting our nation's freedom, and we salute all those who have served in our military past and present. Their selfless dedication reminds us that freedom is not free, and we will never forget their courage and extraordinary contribution to our country.



American Legion

Ecklund-Holmstrom Post No. 117
(218) 681-1341
Thief River Falls, MN

**Monday - Friday 3:00 P.M. - 12:30 A.M.
Saturday 10:00 A.M. - 12:30 A.M.**

**HAPPY HOUR MONDAY - SATURDAY 3:00 - 6:00 P.M.
BINGO MONDAY AND THURSDAY 7:30 - 9:30 P.M.
SATURDAY BURGERS AND FRIES 11:00 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.**



As one approaches the Veterans Memorial Garden at the Minnesota State Capitol grounds in St. Paul, at first glance the display looks like a bunch of scattered rocks. [At Minnesota District 1B Representative Deb. Kiel's request, this photo was taken by Annie Paruccini, executive assistant to Speaker Kurt Daudt.]

Minnesota Military Family Tribute on State Capitol Grounds

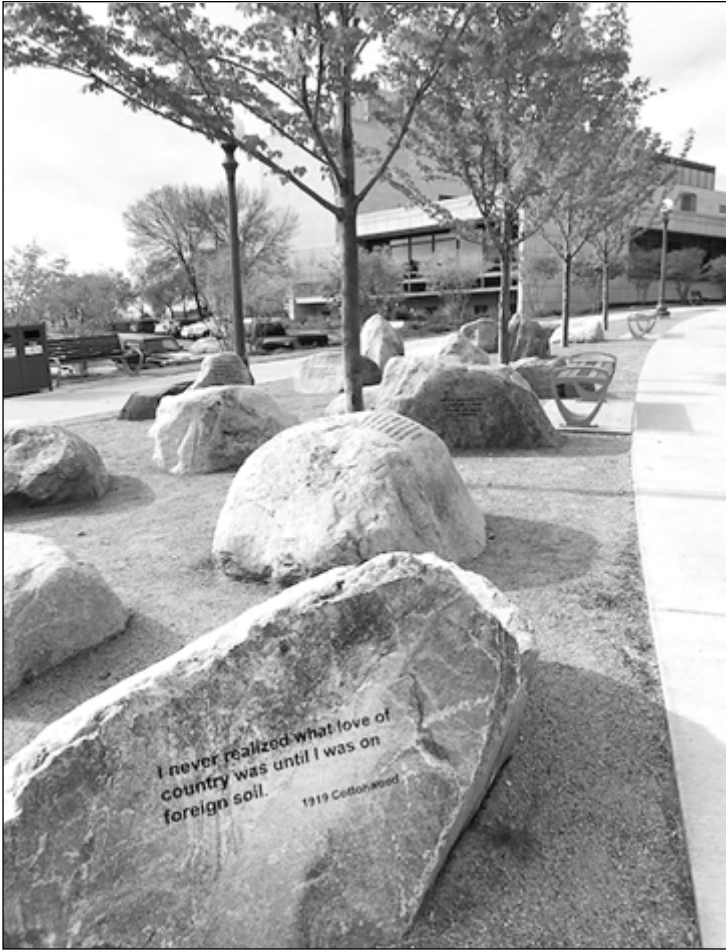
by Donna Myhrer

The next time you are visiting the Minnesota state capitol in St. Paul, if you have a little spare time, a sight well worth seeing would be the Military Family Tribute there. This feature of the capitol grounds was completed and dedicated in June 2015 and include three parts. The west portion contains a “Gold Star Family Table,” and central portion a promenade area with red maple trees and plants, to highlight the theme “Remember Everyone Deployed (RED)” and the eastern end of the tribute contains a “Story Stone” exhibit. The Tribute can be found in the southern half of the Capitol Mall and honors the spouses, significant others, children, parents, and other family members who have supported those in the service. The Minnesota Military Family Tribute covers an area of one and a half acres, a portion of the 18-acre mall that also contains the Minnesota

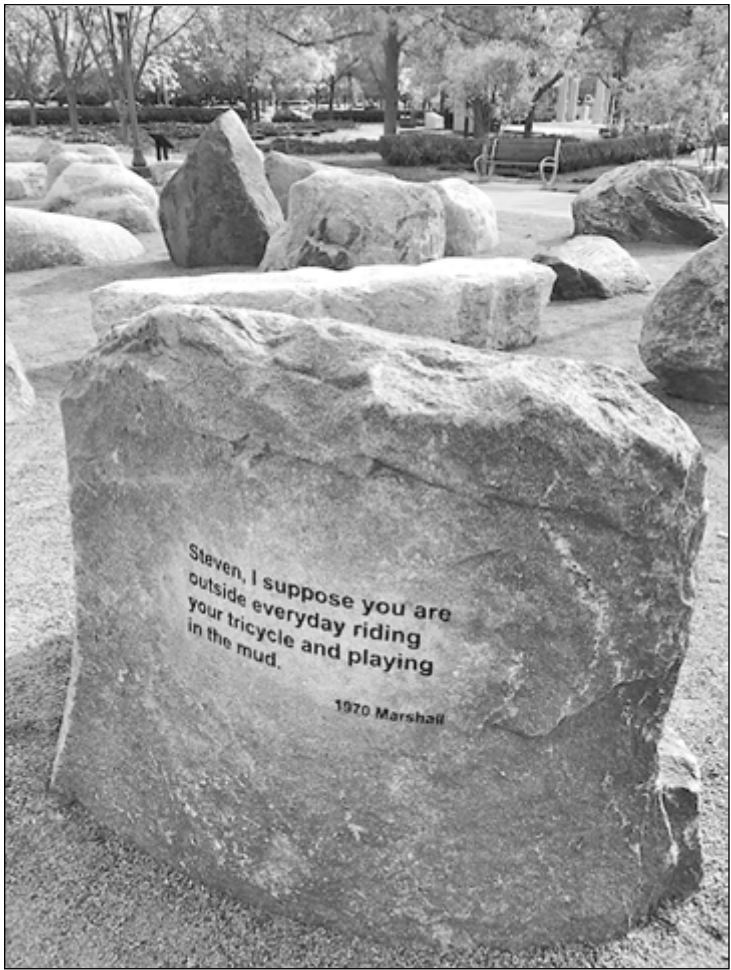
World War II Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial and other monuments viewed by thousands of visitors every year.

The 87 stones each represent one of Minnesota's counties and each has a selected line from correspondence between military personnel and their families from the Civil War to the present. The stones were put in place by Margolis Co. and engraved by Stone & Steel Design. The project was the result of a vision of William J. “Bill” Popp of Popp Communication, who worked with the Capitol Area Architectural Planning Board, beginning in 2009, to design and build the Tribute, which is the first of its kind in the United States.

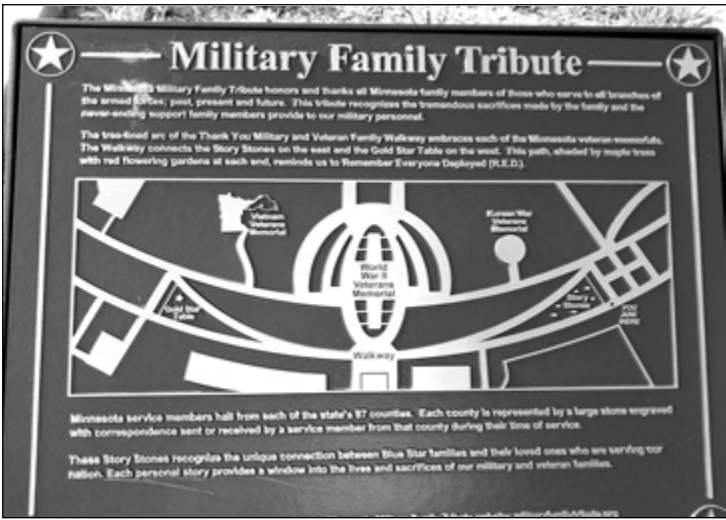
The purpose of the Tribute is to stand as a “thank you” to Minnesota's military families and provide a window into their experiences through the quotes etched into the stones.



But first glances can be deceiving; each stone has been embossed with excerpts from letters from military personnel from the past century, the messages coming from residents of the same counties as the stones. [At Minnesota District 1B Representative Deb. Kiel's request, this photo was taken by Annie Paruccini, executive assistant to Speaker Kurt Daudt.]



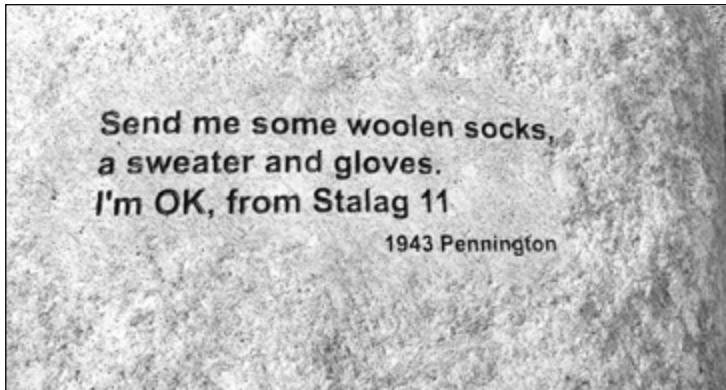
Marshall County's Story Stone at the Veterans Memorial Garden in St. Paul shares a message from the Vietnam era. [At Minnesota District 1B Representative Deb. Kiel's request, this photo was taken by Annie Paruccini, executive assistant to Speaker Kurt Daudt.]



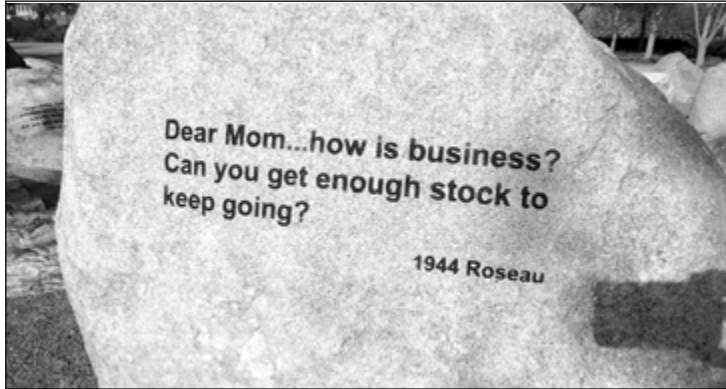
The Story Stones are one part of the Veterans Memorial Garden: an amazing window into past correspondence between military personnel and their families. [Photo courtesy of Minnesota District 1A Representative, Dan Fabian.]



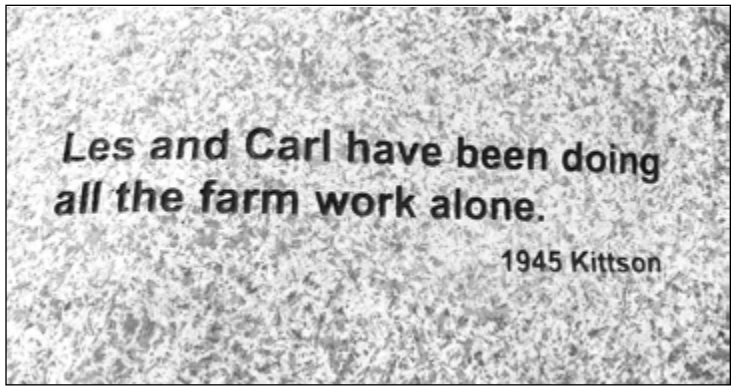
The Polk County Story Stone shares a request that is one of the most common there is: home baked cookies! [At Minnesota District 1B Representative Deb. Kiel's request, this photo was taken by Annie Paruccini, executive assistant to Speaker Kurt Daudt.]



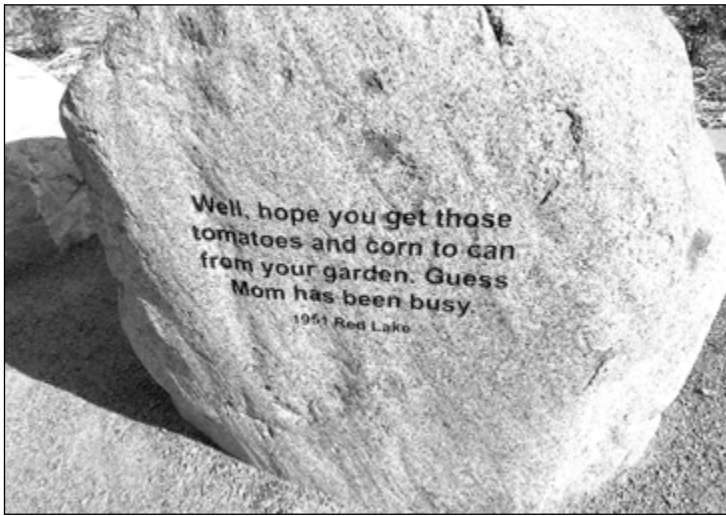
A Story Stone from Pennington County shows a request from a WW II prisoner of war at Stalag 11 in Germany. [Photo courtesy of Minnesota District 1A Representative, Dan Fabian.]



The Roseau County Memorial Stone shows a portion of a letter home in 1945. [Photo courtesy of Minnesota District 1A Representative, Dan Fabian.]



Kittson County's Story Stone at the Veterans Memorial Garden in St. Paul appears to display a message to a service person from his home in 1945.[Photo courtesy of Minnesota District 1A Representative, Dan Fabian.]



The Red Lake County Story Stone brings an excerpt from the Korean War period. [Photo courtesy of Minnesota District 1A Representative, Dan Fabian.]

The Following Businesses Wish To Salute Our Veterans

ACE HARDWARE
ALTRA CARE
AMERIC INN
AMERICA'S BEST VALUE INN & SUITES
AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE
AMERICAN LEGION POST 117
ANDERSON REALTY
B&B AUTO RECYCLING
BACKWOODS CUSTOM WELDING
BENTON SAFRANSKI & CO LLP
BERGAN TRAVEL
BIFF'S KITCHEN
BIG JOHNS MUFFLER AND AUTO SALES
BLACK CAT SPORTS BAR & GRILL

BORDER STATE BANK
BRADY MARTZ
BRAY GENTILLY INSURANCE
BREDESON OFFICE SUPPLY
BRODIN SHEET METAL
BRUCE KELLER CPA
BUDGET
BUILDERS FIRSTSOURCE
C'MON INN
CHS AG SERVICE
CREATIVE CLIPPERS
DAIRY QUEEN
DAVIDSON CONSTRUCTION
DIAMONDS & DESIGNS
DIGI KEY CORP
DISCOVERY PLACE
DON'S SEW & VAC
DR. KENTON KAINZ
EAGLES CLUB

ERICCO
ERL'S
EVANS SCRAP AND STEEL
EVERGREEN EATING EMPORIUM
EVERGREEN IMPLEMENT
FALLS CINEMA
FALLS LIQUOR
FALLS RADIATOR
FARMERS CO-OP GRAIN & SEED
FARMERS UNION INSURANCE
FARMERS UNION OIL
FISHER ELECTRIC
FLEET
FORSBERG INC
FYNBOH CONSTRUCTION
GALE E. SCHMITZ CPA
GCR TIRES AND SERVICE

GENEREUX REALTY
GOODRIDGE MUNICIPAL LIQUOR STORE
H&H SALES
HERITAGE CENTER
HUBERT'S OUTDOOR POWER
HUGO'S
HUNTERS OUTLET
INSURANCE BROKERS ON MN
IRON MAN EXTERIORS
JEFF'S KITCHEN
JIM DAGG INSURANCE
JOHNSON FUNERAL SERVICE
KAYS, LUNDGREN, ST. GERMAIN & CO PLLC
KM TRANSMISSION
LEE PLUMBING AND HEATING

History of the TRF American Legion Post 117

In 1972, Mrs. M.R. (Catherine) Levorson, an active member of the American Legion Auxiliary in Thief River Falls, prepared this history of American Legion Post 117 of Thief River Falls. It covers the first half-century of the American Legion presence in Thief River Falls and gives a little different perspective to how we local residents might see this organization.

by Mrs. Martin R. (Catherine) Levorson, 681-4560; American Legion Post 117: 1972 History of the Organization

As the veterans of World War I returned to Thief River Falls with \$60 discharge pay, no educational opportunities, no veterans' preference, no jobs, no veterans' hospitals or compensation, it was inevitable that they should band together as other veterans were doing throughout the nation.

Pennington County Post 117, State of Minnesota, was born with an application for charter being made on Aug. 25, 1919.

Charter applicants were: Henry Froseth, Raymond L. Johnson, Frank McGinn, Arthur R. Berg, Harry Bakken, H. McMahan, Tellef Valdrin, Bernard Burggraf, L.C. Nelson, J.J. McCann, W.H. Lawrence, Carl Gulrud, Hardy Bothum, Clarence M. Johnson, Raymond M. Hanson, Halby T. Halvorson, H.O. Chommie, F.T. Scanlon. The charter was signed Sept. 2, 1919 by State Chairman Harrison Fuller.

The first officers chosen were: Commander J.J. McCann; Senior Vice Commander L.C. Nelson; Junior Vice Commander Bernard Berggraf; Quartermaster Theo Tandberg; Adjutant G. Howard Smith; Staff Officers H.O. Chommie, Myles Jackson, Alvin Ronning, and Peter Hustad.

The name of the Post was changed and a new charter issued on May 10, 1921 to Elmer J. Ecklund Post 117, in honor of the first Thief River Falls boy to give his life in World War I. Elmer was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Anton Ecklund and a brother of Lawrence Ecklund. After World War II, it was again changed. The name chosen then was Ecklund-Holmstrom Post 117 honoring another first, Kenneth Holmstrom, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Holmstrom and brother of Edward Holmstrom. Following the Korean War and now the Vietnam War, these veterans have been added to be eligible for membership.

In infancy following the war and during the Depression, these energetic and ambitious young men volunteered their time, labor, and very often their money to build an organization of service to the veteran, as well as the community, state and nation, which has been carried on willingly with the addition of the new veterans.

One of the first major activities of the young Legion Post, was sponsoring the Department of Minnesota convention Aug. 10-12, 1925. This was the first convention to be held in the far north. With no paved roads, travel was a problem, as well as time consuming. Special trains were scheduled, two on the Soo Line and one on the Great Northern.

The community co-operated 100 percent with finances, workers, and backers. In order to

increase membership, a concentrated effort was put forth by all. A non-veteran, Dr. G.A. Penney, asked to serve as county membership chairman. In his opening statement to the newspaper, he stated "Unfortunately, I cannot become a member and must confine myself to giving such support and encouragement as I can from the outside. To my mind, there is no organization that can compare with the American Legion." This seems to be the consensus of opinion as the backing by the community was outstanding. Eating places were kept open 24 hours a day, with a carload of meat kept on the railroad tracks for their use. Residents opened their homes for sleeping accommodations.

A Community Pep Fest was held in May, with Kern Olson as chairman. The slogan was "Wake Up Thief River Falls." Department Adjutant Stafford King was guest speaker. A number of Legionnaires were appointed to assist the local police to weed out undesirables, pick-pockets, bootleggers, gamblers, and convention hangers-on.

As the convention opened, the Legion and the City of Thief River Falls were well organized under Commander Hans O. Chommie and his committees. It was estimated that over 4,000 marched in the parade, with bands, drum corps, drill teams, colors and color guards and members from all parts of the state.

A staunch supporter of the Legion, Mrs. J.M. Bishop, was elected as second vice president of the Department of Minnesota Auxiliary. It was at this convention that the Junior Legion Baseball program was adopted by the Department. The three days were declared most successful and orderly with praise and appreciation of the manner in which everyone conducted themselves. As one lady remarked, "Of course many of the fellows had a good time. They were like a bunch of kids."

On Aug. 12, a contingent traveled to Winnipeg by car and special trains where they were royally entertained and feasted by the city for two days.

Prior to the Department Convention, the Post hosted the Ninth District Convention in 1922. They have held eight District Conventions since then with numerous Rallies, Child Welfare Schools, and Mid-Winter Conferences.

During the past 52 years, the Post has been honored by having six members elected as Ninth District Commanders: Anton Ingve, W.T. Curran, Oscar R. Smith, Oscar C. Paulson, Harold M. Johnson, and James Cuppett. Several members have served as vice commanders and M.R. Levorson has served the past three years on the National Law and Order Committee. Mr. and Mrs. Harold M. Johnson served the Ninth District at the same time as Commander and President.

Child Welfare, one of the main objectives of the American Legion, has as its slogan "A Square Deal for Every Child." The workload of welfare was heaviest during the Depression years of the 1930s, but is still carried on wherever needed. Holiday food baskets, clothing, toys, and extras have made the days happier for many children whose fathers were ill or out of

work. This, along with paying doctor or dentist bills for needy veterans' children throughout the years, has fulfilled that obligation.

The first Boy Scout troop was sponsored in 1924 and this program was carried on for many years.

In 1953, the Post spearheaded a drive to remove the doors of all abandoned iceboxes and refrigerators as so many children were suffocated while playing in them.

The School Patrol was first established in Thief River Falls in 1936. At the closing of the Central School it was not considered necessary any longer, so was discontinued. In 1945, the Patrol was revived and in 1955, it was given additional incentive by the furnishing of new flags and parkas.

Each year, several boys and girls were sent to attend Legionville School Patrol Camp for a week of training with members of the Minnesota Highway Patrol as instructors with the Legion furnishing the counselors, sports teachers, and staff.

Starting in 1930, the awards were given to the outstanding boy in the eighth grade at Central and St. Bernard's schools. With the changing of the school system, it is now being given to a senior in each of the Lincoln and Goodridge high schools.

Boys State was first proposed in 1936 but was not adopted until 1949. Each year, Ecklund-Holmstrom Post 117 sponsors a junior student from Lincoln and Goodridge schools to attend sessions held at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter for a week in June. During this week, the boys take an active part in government, city, county, and state. They campaign and elect officers who conduct the office to which they have been elected. Prominent men give talks on the proper procedure of elections and on the legislative and judicial functions as well as many other parts of government.

Each year, a forgotten boy at the Red Wing Training School is remembered at Christmas with a gift.

Sons of the Legion was organized in 1936 but was discontinued in 1942 when many of these sons entered the service in World War II.

The national American Legion joined with the National Education Association in December 1921 to establish National Education Week, thus to focus attention on the schools and their needs. This program was accepted by the Post in 1922 with an apple for the teacher. During these later years an appreciation dinner has been served in November to all teachers in the school system.

In 1970, Ecklund-Holmstrom Post established a scholarship for a graduate of Lincoln High School who enters the ROTC Program.

In 1930, the first skating rink for hockey was built by the Legion in Alex Campbell's back yard. The following year they built an outdoor rink, in conjunction with the 40 et 8 between First and Second streets on Knight Avenue. This was the real beginning of hockey in Thief River Falls. The Legion sponsored an adult team with local and Canadian players as well as a youth group. After the building of the downtown hockey arena, the Hockey Association took over in

1938 along with the high school.

Other sports sponsored through the years were basketball, bowling, baseball, curling, Kiddie Car Polo, boxing and wrestling, and donkey basketball.

American Legion Junior Baseball was the first baseball for the youth in Thief River Falls. Many Legionnaires have given untiringly of their time with this program since its beginning in the early 1930s, but special mention should be given to Leonard Hanson and Irvin Wilson for their years as managers.

Auto shows were started by the Legion with the cooperation of the local merchants in 1927 and continued for over 10 years. This was a three-day showing of automobiles, home appliances, and other merchandise. Entertainment was furnished by style and stage shows, dances, refreshments, and the awarding of prizes. A car was raffled off each year. This show was held in the city auditorium and drew many spectators and customers from miles around the area.

A bandstand owned by the Girl Scouts was presented to the Legion and this was moved to the fairgrounds. In 1932, the building was enclosed and used as a food stand until 1969.

Eighty American flags and 160 street flags in the amount of \$880 were purchased by the Post for use on the streets on holidays and during special occasions. The Legion assumed the responsibility of setting up and taking down the flags and they were first used on Memorial Day in 1956. They have also assisted the city with the purchase of Christmas lights.

Substantial donations have been given to the building of the St. Luke's and Northwestern hospitals and the American Legion Hospital Association in Rochester.

The "Gift of Life" program was originated in 1969 and was well received in Thief River Falls, with many people registering to donate one or more of their organs for transplant after their deaths.

The Legion started a band in 1925 which carried on for a few years. Since that time, they have had several smaller ones and "Little German Bands." The present Legion-Municipal Band was organized by the Legion in 1946 and is co-sponsored by the city. They were substantial backers of the Auxiliary Drum and Bugle Corps and are now backers of the "TRFinettes." At one time, they also had a Men's Quartet.

September 2-4, 1939, Thief River Falls held its first IWVA convention. The International War Veterans Alliance, comprised of Legionnaires from northern Minnesota, eastern North Dakota, Winnipeg, and the surrounding area, was organized with the object of prompting Good Fellowship and Friendship across the border. Since World War II, other organizations have been admitted.

Many state and Legion dignitaries were present including Minnesota Governor Stassen, Department Commander Allen Briggs and Winnipeg's Mayor John Queen.

The convention spirit was dampened by the fact that on September 3 Britain and France declared war on Germany and many reservists had to return to

Canada immediately. There were over 500 men and women, besides the many bands, bugle corps and drill teams, that marched in the parade from the city auditorium to the fairgrounds where a very solemn Memorial Service was held.

It was at this convention that the nationally known local Auxiliary Drum and Bugle Corps under the direction of Mrs. Emmett (Jeanette) Wright made its last appearance. For almost 10 years they had been great ambassadors of goodwill for Thief River Falls.

Many IWVA conventions have been held in Thief River Falls since that time, and a picture of Queen Elizabeth II and the Canadian Flag hangs in the Legion Club along side of the American flag and a picture of the President of the United States.

In 1948, a large delegation of Legionnaires and businessmen from Thief River Falls attended the convention held in Winnipeg along with floats, marching units, and musical groups.

A first-time for the Thief River Falls area was recorded on Sunday, Feb. 5, 1967, when clergymen from four different faiths appeared on the same program. The event was a memorial service by the Legion for the four chaplains who gave their life jackets to soldiers on the Troop Carrier Dorchester, then perished as the ship sank off the coast of Greenland on Feb. 3, 1943. Clergymen taking part were Rev. Merrill Harris, Community Methodist Church, Rev. R.A. Wangberg, Trinity Lutheran Church, Rabbi Joseph W. Wiesenberg, United Synagogue of America, Minneapolis, and Rev. James Ditzler, St. Bernard's Catholic Church and Post Chaplain who promoted the program, each representing one of the four chaplains.

The Post has always taken an active part in the funerals of veterans, the busiest years being 1943-44 and 1945 with Memorial Services as well as funerals. Memorial Day was first observed by visiting and having services at Greenwood and St. Bernard's Cemeteries. Later, this was changed to the Elks Park and is now being held in the Friendship Park on the south edge of the city.

In 1939, Alex Cloutier and M.R. Levorson assumed the responsibility of decorating the graves of veterans in Greenwood, St. Bernard's and other cemeteries throughout the county. During the late 1940's, it became necessary for Alex to resign, due to the pressure of his job and other activities. Mr. Levorson, the Legion representative, was then joined by Hjalmer B. Rafteseth of the VFW, and they are still on the job. This year, there were 30 cemeteries visited with approximately 400 flags placed. They have had the cooperation of three mail carriers from Goodridge, two men from St. Hilaire and one from Holt as well.

On Sept. 21, 1945, a large Victory Dance was held in the city auditorium in celebration of the end of World War II.

When the Constitution of the Legion was changed in 1942 to admit World War II veterans to membership, the Post set up an educational program to inform the returning veterans of their rights and benefits. After the passing of the G.I.

Bill in 1944, a very successful rally was held in the city auditorium with Department Commander Hubert Cave as speaker. Veterans, families of men still in the service, as well as survivors were especially urged to attend.

With the enrollment of World War II veterans, a very impressive initiation for 114 was conducted on May 16, 1946 in the city auditorium with the assistance of the East Grand Forks Legion Initiation Team. Speaker was Ninth District Commander John Franklin of Roseau. M.R. Levorson was given special recognition for having signed up 300 new members.

Meetings of the Legion were first held in the Community Club rooms in the city auditorium, later moving to the basement of what is now the Union State Bank. When the new city auditorium was completed in 1934, a room was dedicated to all servicemen. This room was presented to the American Legion by Mayor E.L. Tungseth at a very impressive ceremony. The city clerk's office is now using this room.

With the increase of membership prospects in 1943, the Legion began to think of a permanent location and the lots north of the Carnegie Library were purchased. This was sold when the present property at 119 S. Main Avenue was purchased in 1949. Remodeling of the building began at once, with many of the members doing a great deal of the work. Improvements have been made throughout the years, so that today it is considered one of the nicest Legion posts northwest of the Twin Cities. The Post has since purchased the parking lot on the south and the house on the north side of the club for further expansion.

At the dedication of the club held in November 1949, with Bill Dahlquist as Master of Ceremonies, there were several speakers including Mrs. J.H. Bishop, Past Department President of the American Legion Auxiliary. On the wall of the banquet hall are three pictures painted by Mrs. Henry Ahltoff and presented to the Post as a Memorial.

Orvis Oien was the first World War II veteran to serve as Post Commander; Loren Borsheim the first Korean veteran; and this year the First Vietnam veteran has been elected for the coming term, Calvin Bradley.

The first Life Membership of Ecklund-Holmstrom Post 117 was present to M.R. Levorson on March 20, 1965 for 46 years of outstanding and continuous service to the American Legion. Since that time, Myles Jackson, Charles Rodekuhr, Frank Tunberg, Martin Gulbranson, Dr. A.E. Jacobson, Harry R. Lund, James Cuppett and Ellsworth Jorgenson have received similar awards.

In honor of the Legion's 50th Anniversary in 1969, the Auxiliary presented the Legion with the "Flame of Freedom," which is being installed on the Legion property. This Flame will burn continually in memory of all veterans.

Thus the Legion Post here has had 52 years of success in service to God and Country, Community, State, and Nation with the cooperation of the newspaper, radio, and the fine people of Thief River Falls.

The Following Businesses Wish To Salute Our Veterans

LEGENDS SPORTING GOODS

LES'S SANITATION

MN GREENLEAF

NAPA AUTO PARTS

NELSON EQUIPMENT

NORDIN REALTY

NORTH RISK PARTNERS-THUNE DIVISION

NORTH WINDS CHIROPRACTIC

NORTHERN GUN & PAWN

NORTHERN MOTORS

NORTHERN STATE BANK

NORTHERN STATE INSURANCE

NORTHWEST BEVERAGE

NORTHWEST EYE CENTER

NW POWER SYSTEMS

OAKLAND PARK COMMUNITIES

PAINT AND GLASS INTERIORS

PENNINGTON FAST LUBE

PENNINGTON MAIN & PENNINGTON SQUARE

PETERSON LUMBER

PETRO PUMPER/FALLS STAY N PLAY

PHILLIPS IRON & METAL

POPPLER'S HOME FURNISHING

PREMIER ESTATES

PURDY'S SHOE STORE

RAIN CARE CO

RED LAKE COUNTY COOP

RED LAKE WATERSHED

REED REALTY

RUSTY NAIL

RON MCKERCHER AUCTIONS

RV SPORTS

S&S REHAB PRODUCTS PLUS

STATE FARM SALLY WOLFF INS. AGENCY INC.

SANFORD HEALTHCARE ACCESSORIES

SCHOONER BAR & GRILL

SEARS

SEVEN CLANS CASINO

SHELDON'S USED AUTO

Early Department Convention for American Legion in MN took place in TRF

by Donna Myhrer

The American Legion will be celebrating its 100th year of existence next summer, dating it from the first National Convention, held in Minneapolis, in 1918, to organize it. The Legion received its national charter the following year.

The Minnesota Department of the American Legion holds department conventions every year, generally during the summer months. The gatherings must take place in communities that can accommodate an influx of several thousand visitors for nearly a week of meetings and socializing, according to Arlo Rude, Commander of Post 117 in Thief River Falls. Thief River Falls has only hosted such a convention once, in 1925.

Following is an edited version of two of the newspaper articles which described the 1925 event. The first is taken from the August 6, 1925 Thief River Falls Times and the second from August 13, 1925 of the same paper.

City Ready to Receive Minnesota Buddies

Record Attendance Expected at State Legion-Auxiliary Convention Here August

10-12 Committees Taking Every Precaution to Properly Care for All Visitors

Decorations “Dress Up” City for Big Event

Rodeo, Parade, Stunt Night Program, Band-Drum Contests Are Features

“With every member of every committee practically day and night getting everything in readiness for the seventh annual convention of the Minnesota Legion and Auxiliary here Monday to Wednesday, August 10, 11 and 12, indications are that the meeting will be one of the most successful in the history of the organization.

“The city is already dressed up for the occasion, nearly all the business places being decorated and all the streets spanned with streamers of flying colors. The decorations committee, headed by Henry Froseth, Oscar Paulson, and E.O. Mogenson, have been at work since Monday and are still busy making the city as attractive as possible.

“Indications are that a record attendance will be registered here, but with well laid plans and the cooperation of the entire citizenry, assurance is given that the visitors will be cared for

to their entire satisfaction. The Legion housing committee under George Russell is distributing about 1,000 cots in homes throughout the city. Extra precautions are being taken by the bakeries, butcher shops, and grocery stores to have a sufficient amount of stock on hand to supply the necessary ‘eats.’

Convention Arrangements Praised by Visitors

Convention in This City is Great Success

Delegates and Visitors from All Parts of State Unanimous in Praise

Appreciate Citizens Cordial Hospitality

Ninth District Towns Send Large Delegations

“That the convention in this city was a great success was the unanimous verdict of all delegates and visitors, Legionnaires and auxiliary members. Many visitors, including the Department leaders, said that it was the best convention ever held by the Minnesota Department and an event for which this city, community, the Ninth District and the entire state may well feel proud.

“Every little detail had been looked after,’ said one of the officers in speaking of the splendid manner in

which all arrangements had been taken care of by the local Legion and auxiliary committees, assisted by other citizens. ‘They deserve praise and credit for their excellent work.’

“Many of the committee

members worked practically day and night preceding and during the convention, their efforts being repaid by the satisfaction of the visitors.

“The cordial spirit with which Thief River Falls

greeted their convention guests was an outstanding phase of the event and contributed much to place this city high in the estimation of visitors from every community of the state.

(Continued on Page 7)



The above photograph, from the collection of the Pennington County Historical Society, donated to its archives by Bernice LaFrenz, is believed to be a representation of a parade through the downtown area of Thief River Falls in August 1925, to celebrate the Department Convention of the American Legion in Minnesota which was held here. The newspaper’s account, headed “Many Bands Coming” described the

plans for the parade: “At 6 p.m. Tuesday the parade will start uptown, each district being organized according to posts and units, led by the bands, drum corps, and floats. The parade will wind up at the fair grounds, where the band and drum corps contests will take place. Approximately 15 bands and 12 drum corps will be entered, according to word from headquarters, \$12,500 in prizes being offered.”

American Legion Ecklund-Holmstrom Post 117



Jean Adams
Paul H. Adams
Adam Aehlert
Jerry Altendorf
Rockford E. Ammerman
Gerald Amundgaard
Roger A. Amundson
Cecil B. Anderson
Gary Anderson
John T. Anderson
John V. Anderson
Ronald P. Anderson
Vernon H. Anenson
Scott Asleson
Kenneth J. Asp
Everett L. Ault
Darren Bakke
Cody Bannert
Brian J. Barry
Raymond A. Barthold
Michael S. Baumann
Haze A. Beito
Michael Beito
Shon Beito
Robert Berggren
Shon Bertg
Scott A. Besserud
Tom Biller
Richard L. Bjerken
Billie Blankenfeld
Robin R. Blankenfield
Jerry S. Blazek
Richard Bluemke*
Sydney F. Bonaima
Dennis J. Bondy
Rodger C. Borgen
Orville A. Botner*
Darrell D. Brandon
Ronald L. Bratton
Gregory L. Brekke
Norman D. Brenna
Lynn D. Brosseau*
Tom J. Brouse
Dwight J. Bruggeman
Randall Bruggeman
Curtis Bruzek
Carroll Buck
Neil Bugge
William Bulger
Arthur J. Buringrud
Robert Burstad
Neil R. Carlson
Clinton Castle*
Joseph L. Caswell
Clyde C. Christensen
Russel W. Christianson
Dale Comstock*
Charlie B. Cornell
Jerome Cota
James L. Counter
Terry Courneya
Russel L. Culkins
Paul J. Cuppett
Fred C. Dablow
Dennis Dahl*
Stuart L. Dahl
Stuart L. Dahl, Jr.
Galen D. Dahlen
Richard M. Dahlin
Howard P. Dalager
Frederick W. Dallmann*
Duane A. Danelson
Robert Davidson
Gerard A. DeHaan
Douglas K. Dehnert*
Harvey J. Delage

Roger DeLap
Glenn B. Delude
William F. Desrocher
Robert A. Dicken
Dale Dillon
Vernon D. Dokkin
John P. Doppler
Tony Dorn Sr.
Donald H. Dosser
Stephen J. Drury
Edward L. Duke
Harold Dupree, Jr.
Lloyd Dyrdal*
Lynn N. Egenes
Javen M. Eidsmoe
John M. Eisbrener
Ron L. Ellingson*
Arnold Engelstad*
Jerome Engen
Gary Engstrom
Dennis W. Erickson*
John D. Erickson
Leland Erickson
Gregory A. Evenson
Harry D. Farris
Jerry D. Feragen
Laverne K. Filpula
Gary R. Finke
Allen G. Finney
Sean R. Fitzgerald
Robert H. Fladeland
Leroy V. Flickinger
Dale M. Folger
Glen Follett
Joe Forberg
Robert S. Forberg
David M. Forsberg
Larry E. Forsberg
Roger Forsberg
Kenneth W. Fort
Jon D. Fosholm
Donavon Foss
Earl F. Frazer
Ken Froschheiser
Raymond Fuller
Andrew M. Gallagher
Kenneth L. Garceau
Earl D. Gibson
Roy E. Gilbert
Ron Gilbert
Neil J. Gillespie
James R. Goldesberry
Keith L. Grandstrand
Thomas M. Greelis
Rodney D. Greene
Ron Griffin
Ames E. Grisanti
Donald Grochow
David L. Grovum
Arlen R. Gustafson
Floyd C. Hageman, Jr.
William Hagen
Philip J. Haider
Terry Hall
Norman P. Halsa
Michele M. Halverson
Paul B. Halverson
Andrew E. Halvorson
Helen Halvorson
Mark D. Halvorson
Morris L. Halvorson
Francis Hamerlinck
LaVerne V. Hamre
Dean L. Hams
Mitchell Hams
William E. Hannan

Dennis A. Hanson*
Eugene Hanson
James L. Hanson
Jason D. Hanson
Jeffrey L. Hanson
Lyle I. Hanson
Orville M. Hanson
Emil Harbott, Jr.
Jerry C. Hasnedl
Mark A. Haugen
Richard E. Haugen
Kenneth J. Hedlund
Robert Helgeland
Daniel H. Helle
Clark L. Hendrickson*
Gene I. Henrickson
Phillip D. Hess*
Ronald D. Hink
Arthur A. Hinrichs
Kenneth Hockert
Salvinus Hoffert
Edward G. Holmes
Richard L. Holmes
Dean H. Holmstrom
Orville Holt*
Cole Holthusen
Davis Holthusen
Robert Homme
Thomas Homme*
Emery C. Horien
Robert E. Horien
Roger A. Hovet
Curtis Howe
Donald D. Howe
William R. Hume
Ralph T. Hunt
William C. Hunter
Larry F. Hurst
Marvin Hutchinson
Alan Hyland
Jerry J. Imgrund
Ronald Ireland
Peter T. Iverson
Robert P. Jablinske
Mark Jenkins
Donald J. Jensen
Kendall D. Jensen
Richard A. Jensen
Alan R. Johnson
Bruce C. Johnson
Floyd L. Johnson
Irwin R. Johnson*
Ivan L. Johnson
John Johnson
Lawrence D. Johnson
Leon C. Johnson
Marvin E. Johnson
Marvin F. Johnson
Richard M. Johnson
Robert J. Johnson
Ronald A. Johnson
Sherman Johnson
Stan A. Johnson

Theodore C. Johnson
Willis Johnson
Clayton E. Johnsrud
Andrew L. Joppru
Richard W. Jorde
Roy A. Jorgenson
Mark C. Josephson
Frank Jung
Kenneth R. Kain
Dennis L. Kainz
Larry R. Kaiser
Victor Kalinoski*
Timothy Kasa
Donald Kaspari
Gene Kauppila
Luther Kaushagen
Harold E. Kelly
David Kirkeby
Harley D. Knutson*
Francis J. Koehmstedt
Kenneth D. Kohler
Marvin C. Koop
Myles A. Koop
John B. Kopari
Gerald B. Kostrzewski
Jack Kramer
Wallace Krueger
Donald W. Laidley
James Lambert
Llewellyn D. Lane
Irvin G. Larson
L. J. Larson
Lowell F. Larson
Paul A. Laugen
Donald L. Laursen
Lawrence E. Leach
Marvin Leach
Kenneth E. Lee
Kent D. Lemoine
Thomas P. Lewis
Duane Liden
Wayne Liden
David J. Likes
Jack L. Limanen
Craig W. Lindahl
Luverne C. Lindahl
Robert E. Loeffler
Jon C. Looker
John P. Lovly
LeRoy V. Lund
Roger Lundstrom
Darrell E. Magner
Luke D. Maidment
Maynard M. Manke
Raymond P. Masloski
Donald A. Mattson
Robert L. Mattson
Richard McCloskey
Dennis McCullough
Jamie K. McEnelly
Duane McFarland
Michael McLean
Michael L. Melby

Allen R. Melbye
Keith E. Melvie
Virgil Mercil
Emily K. Meyer
Charles Meyers
Thomas L. Miller
Gerhard Molskness
Mike Mongoven
Lyle Morken
Gerald Morkrid
Harlan A. Mostrom
Jerrold R. Moyer
Patrick G. Munt
Kenneth D. Murphy
Marlowe A. Myer
Harold B. Myers
Charles Naplin
Arnold Narverud
Bruce A. Nelson
Howard S. Nelson
James S. Nelson
Roger D. Nelson
Alan M. Newton
Zachary A. Nicklin
Gerald Odegaard
Larry Odegaard
Sean Odegaard
Douglas F. Olson, Jr.
Gene Olson
James J. Olson
John W. Olson, Sr.
Myles O. Olson
Omer A. Olson
Raymond S. Olson
Robert G. Olson
Eldor Ornquist
Royal Osborne
Joe T. Ose
Royal Oyster
Gary Page
Raymond L. Paulson*
Gaylord E. Pederson
William L. Pederson
Margo Peterson
Edward J. Pettersen
David Joe Philipp
Ronald F. Pilcher
Larry Pittman
Kenneth L. Poole
Lawrence Poole
Munro N. Poole
Mervin Prestebak
Robert B. Protz
Joseph Pueringer
Ferrl Ranum
Kenneth L. Ranum
David Rasmussen
Ricky J. Reese
David C. Reeve
Doug Reierson
Garret Reierson
Loris Reierson
Millie J. Reierson
Stephen R. Rhineberger
Paul W. Rondorf
Arlo L. Rude
Robert Rugland
Warren Saetre*
Bradley S. Saint George
Kayla A. Salber
John V. Sampson
John E. Sannes
Ken Santl
Irvine Schmitke
Delwin J. Schob
Orrin L. Scholin

Gerald A. Schuster
Donald Scott, Jr.
Richard O. Scramstad
Richard Sculthorp
Gregory D. Settelmeyer
Kenneth N. Shaw
Ronald L. Shervold
George R. Simenson
David K. Sisler
Wally Sjaaheim
David A. Sjostrand
Harry Sjulson
Orville Skadsem
Mark Skibicki
Wesley M. Skibicki
Franklin Skogen
Ross R. Sloan
Terry W. Soine
Mike Solsten
Jerome A. Sorenson
James A. Sorter
Arlen Sorum
Paul Spielman
Michael Srnsky
Greg Stauss
Allan D. Steenerson
Clifford Steinhauer
Maurice W. Stenseth
Cyril Stensrud
Dan Stensrud*
Owen J. Stenvik
Michael A. Stickler
Clayton W. Stigen
Bernard Stinson
Theodore Stoltman
Stephen J. Stone
Robert Stroble
David A. Stroh
John G. Stromberg
David K. Strong
Dennis M. Sullivan
Lenord Swanson
Oliver C. Swanson
Dale Swenson
Warren D. Syverson*
Lynn Teie
John W. Thorstad
Donald Thune
John A. Tofte
Craig Torkelson
Wallace Torkelson
Donald K. Treitline
Roger Tunberg*
Wallace L. Vagle
Edward VanDeStreek
Emil R. Vanyo
Dean Vatthauer
Donald Vatthauer
Todd R. Vedbraaten
Norman F. Vevea
LeRoy Vigen
Lester Vigness
David A. Vraa
Donald S. Wahlbeck
Alton G. Walseth
Wally B. Walseth
Maynard T. Wedul
John Weigelt
David Weleski
Gerald A. Wigness
Stanley Wik
Leslie K. Wilde
Ronald WINTER
Arnold R. Wiskow

*Deceased

The VFW serves members, country and community

by David Hill

Veterans make up a large segment of the Thief River Falls community. One of the organizations that serves veterans and their communities is the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Erik Beitel, senior vice commander, said that according to what he'd learned, there are 1,300 veterans, or nearly 10 percent of the population of Pennington County. Millions of dollars in benefits flow into the county because of these veterans.

The VFW is a non-profit veterans service organized comprised of eligible veterans and military services members from active, guard and reserve forces. It traces its roots back to 1899 when veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902) founded local organizations to secure rights and benefits for their service.

Many in the community are familiar with the programs and services offered by the VFW. The VFW, for example, sponsors sports activities for youth in the community, and it provides honor guards for various events and school programs.

There are, however, many activities and programs that sometimes seem hidden. The VFW, for example, sponsors the Voice of Democracy program, a premier scholarship program that encourages high school students to compete for scholarships and incentives by writing and recording essays on an annual patriotic theme.

Tom Biller, commander of VFW Post 2793, said the VFW sponsors blood drives and Special Olympics, and helps members navigate claims and application processes. It's very active in the community. The VFW and auxiliary, of course, is committed to its veterans. It provides transportation to veterans who have appointments at the VA, whether its in Fargo, Grand Forks,

St. Cloud or Fergus Falls. "If they have an appointment, we do it," said Gary Klemetson, quartermaster.

The VFW also provides military funeral services to veterans and their families, and visits veterans in area nursing homes. The local VFW also has a Veterans in Distress Fund, which is used to help veterans experiencing emergencies.

The club, located in downtown Thief River Falls at Second Street and Horace Avenue, is also shared with other organizations. The Elks Club uses its facility to conduct its meetings and activities. The VFW also offers its facilities for use by individuals conducting fundraisers. The VFW prides itself on never turning down an organization to use the facility for any kind of benefit.

Currently, there are over 380 continuous or life members. Last year, the VFW Post in Thief River Falls consolidated with the post in Grygla. In 2005, the Club consolidated with the post in Warren. Last year, the VFW Auxiliary, which is also dedicated to improving the lives of veterans, active-duty military and their families and communities, expanded opportunities for residents to be a member. The Auxiliary is no longer just for women, it now includes men and women.

On Friday, Oct. 27, the Club held a free meal for its members, in hopes that many will chose to renew memberships and or join this organization.

Membership is important, not only for the individual and the community, but for Veterans throughout the country.

Beitl said there are so many activities and civic organizations in the community, many people worry about not being able to commit time to the veterans. But it's not just a one-way street. Simply being a member of the VFW allows the VFW to advocate for such things as the GI Bill and improving the VA claim

process, which benefits all veterans.

The VFW also tries to help attract business to the community. In 2019, the local VFW hopes to bring the State VFW Bantam A Hockey Tournament to Thief River Falls. That normally involves eight to 10 teams. In other words, it'll bring hundreds of people to the community.

Klemmetson said that if they do a good job, they may get to do it again in 2020.

One of the activities and events sponsored recently by the VFW was Humor for Heroes.

On Nov. 2, Humor For Heroes Tour visited the VFW in Thief River Falls. This is a fundraising comedy tour in support of the Lone Survivor Foundation that features the fun antics of "The That Pack."

Marcus Luttrell's "Lone Survivor," the 2007 #1 New York Times best-selling book, tells the harrowing, emotionally raw account and motivational story of his survival and the deaths of his comrades-in-arms in Operation Redwing, a mission to gather intelligence on Taliban leadership in Afghanistan. Marcus' NEVER QUIT attitude was

key to his survival and his recovery at home.

Based upon first hand experiences of what is needed to provide holistic treatment beyond standard government programs, while honoring his lost comrades from Operation Redwing, Luttrell established the Lone Survivor Foundation in 2010.

The VFW never stops asking itself what it can do for veterans and their community. Sometimes, however, they wonder what the community can do for veterans.

Some said they'd like to see a community event that brings all veterans together, whether they're a member of the American Legion or

VFW - like a pancake breakfast. It'd be a wonderful opportunity to show residents just how many veterans live in their community, and at the same time show their appreciation to all veterans for what they've done for their country and communities.



During a recent Membership Dinner at VFW Post 2793 in Thief River Falls, the Missing Man Table or Fallen Comrade Table was place on the stage at the Post in a position of honor. The table is set in memory of fallen, missing or imprisoned military service

member. Pictured from left are Gary Klemetson, quartermaster, Norm Houth, chaplain, Tom Biller, commander, Erik Beitel, senior vice commander, and Brian Holmer, mayor of Thief River Falls.



The annual Membership Dinner attracted a crowd at VFW Post 2793 in Thief River Falls.

Sons of the American Legion

Jason H. Aarestad
Kevin D. Anderson
Roy A. Anderson
Kyle A. Arveson
James T. Barry
John P. Barry
Jonathon J. Barry
Michael J. Barry
Tim J. Barry
Mike D. Beedy
Robert D. Bendickson
Tom S. Bendickson
Brian Bertilrud
Mark D. Bieganeck
John L. Bjerken
Scott Blankenfeld
Curt Bottem
Dale Branstner
Joel R. Bren
Robert Bruggeman
Robert P. Calder
Marv Carlson
Pete Carlson
Mike K. Cerny
Brexon T. Cuppett
Paul J. Cuppett
Ryder Cuppett
Robert W. Dahlen
Gordy Delap
Barry Dowers
Mike Dowers
David C. Dupree
Jeffrey D. Feragen
Walter J. Forney
Brian F. Fredrickson
Dalton Fredrickson
Richard T. Greisen
John H. Halsa
Gary Hamness
Warren L. Hanestad
James D. Hellie
Michael T. Hemmestvedt

Lance Henrickson
Austin Hjelle
Wayne J. Hjelle
Ronald D. Holmstrom
Steven A. Hook
Darin Hurst
Myron D. Jesme



Wade L. Johnson
Glen Kajewski
Mark Lehrer
Jeff Liden
Darrin R. Looker
Mike Looker
Terry L. Lubitz
Blake Melbye
Chris Melbye
Duane Molstad
Wayne S. Nomeland
Rory Nordheim
Charles Odegaard
David M. Olin
Anthony Olson
Chad Olson
Mike Olson

Sons of the Legion Officers

Commander ~ Paul Storhaug
First Vice Commander ~ Jim Barry
Second Vice Commander ~ Glen Kajewski
Treasurer ~ Tim Barry
Chaplain ~ Roger Reitmeier
Sergeant At Arms ~ Mike Hemmestvedt
Adjutant ~ Mike Beedy
Membership Chairman ~ Jim Barry

Color Guard

Tom Biller
Charlie Cornell
Howard Dalager
Orville Ellingson
John Erickson
Joe Forberg
Andrew Gallagher
Earl Gibson

Mark Halvorson
Orville Hanson
Mark Haugen
William Hume
Ken Hockert
Floyd Johnson
John Lovly
Charles Meyers

Arnold Narverud
Zack Nicklin
Gerald Odegaard
Kenneth Poole
Mollie Reiersen
John Sampson
Robert Stroble
Emil Vanyo

Carter Onkka
Dave C. Onkka
Nick Onkka
Phillip Onkka
Greg Ornquist
Lawrence S. Panek
Brian Peterson
Eric Peterson
Tim B. Peterson
Brent Philipp
Lance Reiersen
Rick Reiersen
Roger D. Reitmeier
Kevin J. Sanders
Nathan Sedlacek
Noah Sedlacek
Carl Seed
Darin J. Stanley
Cody J. Stenberg
Mike P. Stennes
Mark Stenseth
Paul A. Storhaug
Steven T. Storhaug
Justin W. Sundvall
Keith W. Thode
Daniel S. Thorstad
Paul J. Vigen
Dennis P. Wilkens
Tom Williams
Steven H. Wilson

American Legion Ecklund-Holmstrom Post 117

Legion Officers

Commander ~ Arlo Rude
First Vice Commander ~ John Olson
Second Vice Commander ~ Gerald Odegaard
Third Vice Commander ~ Greg Brekke
Chaplain ~ Ron Pilcher
Sergeant At Arms ~ Charles Meyers
Adjutant ~ Tom Brouse
Publication Chairman ~ John Sampson
Manager ~ Wendy Mattson

Committee Chairmen

Americanism ~ Al Melbye
Legislature ~ Steve Stone
American Legion Baseball ~ Greg Brekke
S.A.L. Advisor ~ Greg Brekke
National Security ~ Arlo Rude
Boys State ~ Al Melbye
Installation Officer ~ Jerry Odegaard
Oratorical ~ Arlo Rude
Children & Youth ~ Al Melbye
Sergeant At Arms ~ Charles Meyers

Club Committee

Commander ~ Arlo Rude
Second Vice Commander ~ Jerry Odegaard
Adjutant ~ Tom Brouse
Member (1 Year) ~ Jerry Feragen
Member (2 Year) ~ Greg Evenson
Club Manager ~ Wendy Mattson
Auxiliary Representative ~ Lynn Carr
Sons of the American Legion ~ Mike Hemmestvedt
40et8 ~ Jerry Feragen

Executive Committee

Commander ~ Arlo Rude
Adjutant ~ Tom Brouse
Finance Office ~ E. Gus Holmes
First Vice Commander ~ John Olson
1st Immediate Past Commander ~ Gus Holmes
2nd Immediate Past Commander ~ Greg Evenson
Director 1 Year ~ Emil Vanyo, Ron Pilcher
Director 2 Year ~ Jerry Feragen, Al Melbye
Club Manager ~ Wendy Mattson
Gambling Manager ~ Greg Brekke

TRF Legion Post Property Corporation

Chairman ~ Greg Brekke
Secretary-Treasurer ~ Orville Hanson
Arlo Rude, Gus Holmes, Ron Pilcher



40et8 Members

Greg Brekke
Randall Bruggeman
Robert Burstad
James L. Counter
Howard Dalager
Jerry Feragen
Phil Haider
Gus Holmes
Roger Hovet
Alan Hyland
Donald J. Jensen
Merle J. Jesme
Ormond Johnson
Larry R. Kaiser
William F. Landman
Craig Lindahl
Arnold Narverud
Gerald Odegaard
Ron Pilcher
John Sampson
Charles Simpson
Robert Stroble
Virgil Dean Wagner

40et8 Officers

Chef De Gare
~ Jerry Feragen
Chef De Train
~ Gus Holmes
Correspondent
~ Ron Pilcher
Commissaire
Intendant
~ Ron Pilcher
Aumonier
~ Al Hyland
Activities Director
~ Gus Holmes
Nurses Training
Director
~ Larry Kaiser
Child Welfare
Director
~ Gus Holmes
Youth Sports Director
~ Howard Dalager
Public Relations
~ Al Hyland
Ritual Director
~ Larry Kaiser

Pennington County Stories to Be Added to MNopedia

by Donna Myhrer

Thanks to a grant from the Minnesota State Historical Society to an association of the county historical societies in this part of the state, Minnesota Historic Northwest, several northwest Minnesota county historical societies and independent museums are taking part in a project to collect and publish experiences and stories surrounding World War I online. The stories will ultimately be used in a Minnesota Historical Society project known as MNopedia.

According to the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS), its online encyclopedia, known as MNopedia, is a “free, curated, and authoritative resource about our state.” This collection of articles have been (and continues to be) prepared by historians, consulting experts, and professional writers, who have been “vetted” by MNHS. The project is continually adding to its archives, which are aligned with state educational standards, to encourage its use by students of Minnesota history.

The service was designed to be easy to use, update, and share. MNopedia’s mission is to collect articles and images which will “share current, reliable, and rele-

vant information about significant people, places, events, and things in Minnesota history.” The project is funded through the Legacy Amendment’s Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

To accomplish this mission the Society:

- Collaborates with a variety of expert contributors.
- Aligns its content with state education standards.
- Enlivens the entries with images, audio, and video.
- Maintains a user-friendly Web site.
- Takes advantage of the latest tools and technologies.
- Continues to add new entries and resources.

Each article in MNopedia is a package of information that introduces a subject and points to valuable related material. Packages are composed of a narrative text, related media and articles, a “turning point or overview,” a chronology of related dates, a bibliography and other related resources.

The content covers a variety of eras, which have been organized with the 2011 Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies, in mind:

Before European Contact: Pre-1585
Colonization and

Settlement: 1585-1763

Revolution and a New Nation: 1754-1800

Expansion and Reform: 1792-1861

Civil War and Reconstruction: 1850-1877

Development of an Industrial United States: 1870-1920

Great Depression and World War II: 1920-1945

Post World War II United States: 1945-1989

The United States in a New Global Age: 1980-Present

Some of the topics include Agriculture, the Arts, Business and Industry, Cities and Towns, Immigration, Sports and Recreation, Technology, War and Conflict, and Women. The topics are covered in the categories of events, groups, people, places, structures, and things.

Pennington County, which will continue, through the county historical society and others, to add to the MNopedia collection, may be proud to see this story about our veterans as its first contribution to the project.



Dr. Herman W. Froehlich was the examining physician for many of the young men who were being called for military service from Pennington County in World War I.



E.M. Stanton, a local attorney, served as legal counsel for the draft board.



W. Jesse LaBree, the first sheriff of Pennington County in 1910, was chairman of the local draft board in 1917-19.



Ray Pope was one of the assistants for T.P. Anderson in the work of the draft board.

Pennington County

The Formation of American Legion Post 117 in Thief River Falls

by Donna Myhrer

On June 25, 1919, the Thief River Falls Times reported: “TEN SHUN! Discharged soldier, sailor, marine and nurse! The Pennington county organization of the American Legion will be formed at a meeting in the Thief River Falls auditorium, Saturday evening, June 28, at 8:30.” The article added that the purpose of the organization was to “in every way guard and enforce the rights and privileges conferred upon service men and their relatives and dependents.” It also made a strong statement of the potential power of this group, when it said that “when General John J. Pershing is discharged from the service, he will be eligible for membership in the Legion. His voice in the Legion will bear no more weight than that of the Doughboy or Gobb.”

It was a popular move, both because it served the veterans (Times, October 14, 1920: “Through the efforts of the local post of the American Legion, returned service men will now be able to secure their bonus money from the state without having to wait. The Legion persuaded local banks to pay out this money, without delaying to wait for the government to send the money to them first.”), but also because of the many ways the Legion has served the community in the intervening years.

One of the first major activities of the young Legion Post, was sponsoring the Department of Minnesota convention in August 1925. The community co-operated with finances, workers, and backers. Eating places were kept open 24 hours a day, with a carload of meat kept on the railroad tracks for their use. Residents opened their homes for sleeping accommodations.

A Community Pep Fest was held in May with the slogan was “Wake Up Thief River Falls”. Legionnaires were appointed to assist the local police to weed out undesirables, pick-pockets, bootleggers, gamblers, and convention hangers-on. It was estimated that over four thousand

marched in the parade, with bands, drum corps, drill teams, colors and color guards and members from all parades of the state.

Mrs. Leverson reported that “This was the first convention to be held in the far north. With no paved roads, travel was a



problem, as well as time consuming. Special trains were scheduled, two on the Soo Line and one on the Great Northern.”

The local post started a Boy Scout troop in 1924 and, in 1925, hosted the state Legion convention. Fund-raisers, such as a cookbook printed by the Legion auxiliary, poppy sales, and home-talent plays and vaudeville acts were common in the early years. The member serve in color guard units for funerals and local parades, donate to community projects, athletics and educational scholarships. Some of the most recognized programs supported by the American Legion include the follow-

ing: a high school oratorical contest, the Heart Research Foundation, Veterans’ hospitals, Children and Youth programs, the Brain Science Center and Foundation, a blood program, the Armed Forces Service Center, the American Legion Foundation, Boys State and American Legion Baseball.

The post was named for Pvt. Elmer J. Ecklund of Co. L, 28th Infantry, previously from the 32nd division of the 1st division, a part of the regular army. He was “hit by an artillery shell and died instantly” according to a fellow soldier, Frank Parkman, in a letter to Ecklund’s sister, Eva. Parkman added that Ecklund died on July 18, 1918, at Soissons on the first day of the “big Allied drive”. Approximately 12,000 Americans were killed in that battle. Ecklund is buried near Soissons.

According to a speech by Legionnaire John V. Sampson of Thief River Falls, “the American Legion, through the four pillars of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Children’s Welfare, and Americanism, will continue to fulfill Lincoln’s promise “to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan” in the eloquent words of Abraham Lincoln in the Gettysburg Address.”

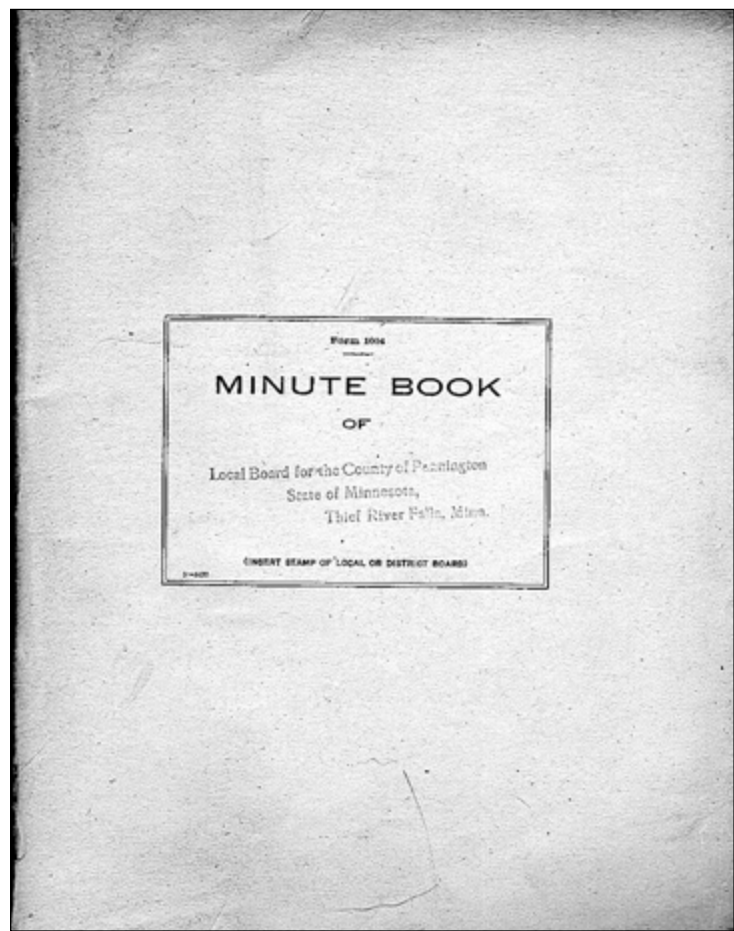
The American Legion Post 117 of Thief River Falls will soon be represented by this article about the organization of the post and its naming.

Myhrer named guest editor of Veterans Day supplement

Donna Myhrer has been named guest editor of the Veterans Day Supplement. Myhrer lives in St. Hilaire and writes the history and

Times for Toddler’s columns that appear in the Thief River Falls Times newspaper each week.

On September 26 and 27, 1918, the local members of the draft board were sending out questionnaires and registering men for military duty, as shown here.



This unassuming paper-cover book was discovered in a box of historical material recently at the American Legion Post 117 office.

Thief River Falls Draft Board Minutes Book from 1917 discovered

by Donna Myhrer

In an effort to organize several boxes of historical material for the American Legion Post 117 of Thief River Falls during the past year, an amazing discovery was made. In one of the boxes of newspaper clippings, photographs, correspondence, and other documents, a plain-looking brown book was found. On the cover were the words “Form 1004 Minute Book of Local Board for the County of Pennington, State of Minnesota, Thief River Falls, Minnesota”. Upon examination, it turned out to contain the records and minutes of the local draft board for World War I with the first entry on December 28, 1917.

The United States had tried hard to stay out of the war in Europe when it first began in 1914, but after the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915, popular opinion began to shift toward a more aggressive posture toward Germany. War was declared on April 6, 1917. This was quickly followed, on May 18 by Congress passing the Selective Service Act of 1917. According to various historical sources, one of the major changes in this “modern” conscription law, unlike the last one passed for service in the War Between the States (or American Civil War), was that a man who was “drafted” was no longer allowed to pay someone else to serve in his place. This had been the case in the 1860s and was used by some wealthy families to protect their children.

Throughout the country, records show that about 24 million men registered for conscription for the “Great War” or “War to End All Wars,” what we now refer to as “World War I.” A total of 300,000 volunteered after war was declared by the United States, although some U.S. citizens had already enlisted in the Canadian armed forces, or Great Britain, or in a few other countries. Ultimately, about 2.7 million men were drafted in the U.S. during 1918 and 1919, and served in a military capacity.

Three local gentlemen organized the board at its first meeting and served throughout the following two years, until the war ended on November 11, 1919. (It was reported that the Armistice was signed at 11 a.m. on that date, “the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of the year.”) The local draft board included W. Jesse LaBree, who served as chairman, T.P. Anderson, who was named “chief clerk” of the

organization, and Dr. H.W. Froehlich.

William Jesse LaBree was born September 1, 1876 in Rice Lake, Wis. He moved with his parents and siblings to Thief River Falls in 1880, when his father, John Baptiste LaBree, took over a homestead here and founded the new community of Thief River Falls. He married Alice Carey in 1899. W. Jesse LaBree was the first sheriff of Pennington County in 1910 and later became a real estate agent and speculator in Thief River Falls. He had two sons, Gordon and Milford, and three daughters, Adlynn, Madge and Louise. He died on April 3, 1947, at the age of 70, in Thief River Falls.

T.P. (Tollof or Tellof) Anderson was born December 13, 1867 in Tvedestrand, Norway. He immigrated with his parents at the age of 13 to Iowa, and later moved to Badger to homestead in 1896. He married Kittie E. York and they moved to Thief River Falls in 1912. He worked as the manager of the Farmers Co-op Store for two years and served as Pennington County Auditor from January 1, 1915 to December 14, 1929. At that time, he resigned to become postmaster of the Thief River Falls Post Office, retiring from that position in 1933. He had two sons, Leigh and Forrest and four daughters, Harriet, Shirley, Ersyla, and Audrey. He died on August 25, 1946 at the age of 78, in Thief River Falls.

Herman W. Froehlich was born in about 1883 in Minnesota from German immigrant parents. His wife’s name was Winifred and they had two sons, William H. and Clifford P. He was a physician and surgeon, whose office was in the Scandia Block on Third Street in Thief River Falls. In the 1920s, Dr. Froehlich served on the Thief River Falls School Board for several years. In 1934, he and his wife moved to Minneapolis, where he died on June 14, 1937, at the age of about 54.

E.M. Stanton, a local attorney, attended several of the meetings of the draft board, probably when there were legal issues to consider.

Ray Pope and Bernard Knutson were hired to assist T.P. Anderson with the volumes of paperwork. This appears to include filling out forms about each man who was registered for conscription, mailing out and receiving questionnaires regarding their fitness to serve, and sending out notices to those who were to be “entrained” and

sent to a Basic Training Camp or Fort. A “military clerk,” Clifford Logan, arrived to work as an assistant to the board, on September 16, 1918.

According to the minute book of the board, a total of 1,484 cases were “examined” and 414 men were “examined.” A total of 310 men were “entrained” or sent to various camps and bases for military training. The largest number from Pennington County went to Camp Dodge, Des Moines, Iowa, at 98 soldiers. Camp Grant, Rockford, Ill., got 83 local men. A unit of 25 men went to Camp Wadsworth, Spartanburg, S.C. Camp Funston, Ft. Riley, Kan., got 10 from Pennington County. Nineteen men were sent to Camp Cody, Deming, N.M. and Camp Lewis, American Lake, Wa., got another 19.

Special training was provided for five at the Dunwoody Institute, one at Ft. Snelling, and nine at the University of Minnesota. Also, two were sent to Indianapolis, Ind.; two to Syracuse, N.Y.; 10 to Columbus, Ohio; four to Vancouver, Wa.; nine to Jefferson, Mo.; and 14 to Pittsburgh University, Pa.

Other notes from the minute book told of a few cases of “hardship” deferments for elderly people who were financially dependent on a son and asked that he be exempted from service because he was their only support, and a notation that members of the draft board attended the funerals of two local men who “died at the camp,” Pvt. Robert Dempsey and Casper Hanson. Dempsey is buried in the St. Bernard’s Catholic Cemetery in Thief River Falls, and Hanson at Landstad Cemetery in Sanders Township.



T.P. Anderson, Pennington County Auditor, served the draft board as “chief clerk.” [Picture of T.P. Anderson from his granddaughter, Janet Lindquist of TRF]

Form No. 100-P, M. G. O.
(See Sec. 11, A. S. C.)

Date of meeting Feb 73 Convened _____ M. Adjourned _____ M.

Present (members of board and examining physicians, if any):
[Signatures] ARRIVED _____ M. LEFT _____ M.

BUSINESS TRANSACTED:
Classification: Number of cases examined _____ Number of cases classified _____
Physical examination: Number of men examined _____ Number of cases decided _____
Notification: Number of notices prepared _____
Mobilization: Number of men ordered to report _____ Number of men entrained 73
Miscellaneous: Camp Dodge Iowa
Call 7th 20

Chief Clerk

Form No. 100-P, M. G. O.
(See Sec. 11, A. S. C.)

Date of meeting Feb 21 Convened _____ M. Adjourned _____ M.

Present (members of board and examining physicians, if any):
[Signatures] ARRIVED _____ M. LEFT _____ M.

BUSINESS TRANSACTED:
Classification: Number of cases examined _____ Number of cases classified _____
Physical examination: Number of men examined _____ Number of cases decided _____
Notification: Number of notices prepared _____
Mobilization: Number of men ordered to report _____ Number of men entrained 2
Miscellaneous: Call 7th 20 Camp Dodge Iowa

Chief Clerk

The first two groups of men sent to “basic training” for World War I, in February 1918, went to Camp Dodge, Iowa.

Thief River Falls, Minnesota
June 29th 1918

The Local Board of Pennington County Minnesota met in the office of the Clerk in the City of Thief River Falls, at 8 o'clock P.M. Members present W. J. La Bree H. W. Fröhlich, and T. P. Anderson,

The purpose of the meeting was to go over the classification list and ascertain if any of the registrants have had any change of status since the classification,

The Clerk presented a list of names to the Board for their consideration and after due study a total number of 9 was ordered transferred from Class 3 to class 1 the number of 9 was ordered to be recommended for transfer from class 2 to class 1 5 was ordered transferred from class 5 to be re-examined and if found physically fit to be placed in class 1

Two limited service men were ordered re-examined and if found to be fit for service to be placed in class 1

The matter of going out in the country and investigate some cases where there seems to be some contention about was taken up by the Board and it was understood that if any thing further was reported that the Chairman and the Clerk and if possible the Gov appeal Agent should go out and look into matters,

With a full knowledge of the workings of the draft the Board adjourned their meeting until some future call and with the full agreement that the work was satisfactory.

W. J. La Bree Chairman
T. P. Anderson, Clerk

In a few cases, the minutes of the meetings of the local draft board were typed instead of hand-written, such as the meeting held on June 29, 1918, shown here.



American Legion Auxiliary

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Barbara Ammerman
Lois M. Amundgaard
Carol A. Amundson
Maryel K. Anderson
Viola Anderson
Patricia A. Anenson
Cherrie A. Asleson
Ruth G. Austad
Alfreda Bach
Anne Barnick
Gladys Barron
Rebecca M. Barry
Carole L. Beedy
Marlene Beedy
Bette Beich
Audrey Berard
Lois R. Bergland
Peggy Bergsnev
Arlene Besserud
Mavis Besserud
Kristen Bjerklie
Liza R. Bjerklie
Vickie Bjorgaard
Susan K. Blodgett
Theda Booren
Sharon Brahosky
Edie Brandli
Marilyn Branstner
Susan Brekke
Melodee Brown
Cynthia Bruggeman
Debra Bruggeman
Ferne Bruggeman
Judith Bruggeman
Vivian Bruggeman
Virginia M. Buringrud
Lois Burstad
Betty Carlson
Lori Carpenter
Lynn M. Carr
Kittie Cornell
Elvera Cullen
Mary Cullen
Angelica Cullen
Annabelle Cuppett
Chris A. Cuppett
Haley M. Cuppett
Joanna Cuppett
Marchelle Cuppett
Terri L. Cuppett
Marion Dablow
Ursula Dahl
Gayle Dahlen
Margaret Dalager
Julie Desrocher
Bette J. Downs
Marcella Dunrud
Dorene Enge
Bernadette Erickson
Jana M. Erickson
Janae A. Erickson
Janaka L. Erickson
Kelly Erickson
Mattea Erickson
Mattlyn M. Erickson
Bertha Ernst
Deborah Ernst
Taunya Ernst
Judy A. Evenson
Roseanne F. Feragen
Connie Ferber
Doris Finstad
Arleen Folger
Eleanore Forberg
Ava Fredrickson
Becky Fredrickson
Karla M. Fredrickson

Michaela M. Fredrickson
MaryAnne Fuller
Mildred Furuseth
Clarice A. Galliher
Deloris Genereux
Frances Gerszewski
Loreen B. Gibson
Joy Gillespie
Olive Goldsberry
Ione Gonsorowski
Maude L. Grabowski
Paula Greelis
Cali L. Green
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Victoria Guillemette
Patricia L. Gunderson
Vonda L. Haapoja
Janet Hagen
Connie J. Hamre
Gloria M. Hams
Judy L. Hams
Julie A. Hansen
Alvina M. Hanson
Kathy Hanson
Marjorie Hanson
Shelly Harbott
Stacy Hartmann
Ruth Hasnedl
Holly Haugen
Penny Haugen
Jean Hellie
Freda Hemmesch
Melissa Hendry
Talasie Hendry-
Robinson
Janice Henrickson
Audrey Hermanson
Stefany A. Hermanson
Tayla J. Hermanson
Dolores Hirst
Vonnice J. Hoglo
Colleen Holen
Mary E. Holmes
Shari Holmes
Deloris Holten
Barbara Horien
Mildred Horien
Vera E. Hovet
Debra Howe
Eilene J. Hutchinson
Sharon Iverson
Margie Jarshaw
Diane F. Johnson
Esther L. Johnson
Jeanelle Johnson
Linda A. Johnson
Mary Johnson
Melissa Johnson
Pearl O. Johnson
Sharon Johnson
Janet R. Johnston
Ann Joppru
Kristi Joppru
Pamela Joppru
Rhonda Joppru
Sharon Jorde
Melrene Kaiser
Kimberly Kalinoski
Lila H. Kalinoski
Marion Kappes
Betty L. Kezar
Karen Kirkeby
Retta M. Klemisch
Margaret Kne
Vivian Knutson
Shirley Koop
Donna Kotaska

Janet Kramer
Patricia Kruta
Agnes Kujanson
Melba Laidley
Carol Lambert
Eileen L. Larson
Elaine Laursen
Gloria Lee
Elaine Lendobeja
Ellen Jorde-Lindseth
Bernice Looker
Karen Looker
Roberta Looker



Carol A. Lovly
Florence Lykken
Mildred Magnan
Brenda Marben
Vivian Markstrom
Grace Matter
Mary Matter
Sarah Matter
Esther J. Mattson
Cheryl McCleahan
Louise C. McLean
Fern C. Melbye
Joan Melgaard
Marge Miller
Abigail B. Molstad
Kaitlyn E. Molstad
Sharon K. Molstad
Dorothy Morehouse
Rosalie Mozinski
Wanda M. Murphy
Donna Myhrer
Abigail Nabben
Gladys Narverud
Kay A. Nelson
Vernice Nelson
Darlene Newland
Shawn Newland
Devonna Noreen
Marlene Odegard
Sharon Odegard
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Delores Olson
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Susan J. Olson
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Bonnie Ornquist
Gail R. Oyster
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Marjorie A. Panek
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Sonya Pederson
April Peterson
Sandra Peterson
Carole J. Pilcher
Renae C. Pilcher
Rhonda Pilcher
Judy A. Pinkerton
Loretta Pittman
Ione Poole
Riley M. Poppitz
Nancy Prichard
Connie F. Prickett
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Amy M. Reiersen
Gloria Reiersen
Mary Reiersen
Lylian Richards
Molly L.M. Roller
Tamara Rude
Beverly Sampson
Idella Samuelson
Enid Sande
Ronda N. Sangrait
Susan R. Schneider
Wanda V. Schuster
Cheryl Scott
Lisa Sedlacek
Peggy D. Seed
Ella Sletten
Jana Sletten
Mara Sletten
Sherry L. Sorenson
Patricia Spicer
Linda Spyhalski
June Steiger
Jill M. Stenberg
Lois Stensrud
Virginia Stensrud
Barbara J. Storm
Loretta B. Stowe
Doris Stromberg
Violet Sullivan
Margaret L. Syverson
Karen M. Thygeson
Martha A. Torgerson
Ardis Tunberg
Bonnie Tunberg
Janet L. Vanek
Theresa R. Vanyo
Gentrie Vatthauer
Gracie Vatthauer
Kathy Vatthauer
Cynthia A. Vennes
Jodell Vigness
Rosemary Voecks
Marion Vraa
Yvonne Wahlbeck
Virginia R. Wander
Judy Weleski
Elaine Wentzel
Marilyn E. Wigness
Lisa Wilhelmi
Fern Williams
Kara Wilson
Lilianna M. Wilson
Rebecca D. Wilson
Deloris E. Winter
Eunice Wiskow
Ann Wold
Betty J. Wold
Marion Wold
Helen R. Wysoski

Auxiliary Officers

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Sharon Odegard
1st Vice President ~
Karen Thygeson
2nd Vice President ~
Judy Hams
Secretary ~ Lynn Carr
Treasurer ~
Esther Johnson
Sergeant-At-Arms ~
Linda Johnson &
Theda Booren
Executive Board ~
Annabelle Cuppett
& Elvira Cullen

Early Department Convention for American Legion in MN took place in TRF

(Continued from Page 4)
“It is estimated that about 4,000 persons attended the convention, delegations beginning to pour into the city Saturday and continuing until Tuesday evening, when it is estimated that the city’s population was increased by about 10,000. Communities of the Ninth District were particularly well represented, in an effort to make a good showing for the first Legion convention held in the district. Towns in this section were practically deserted by Tuesday, according to reports.

“Commander Lindell arrived Sunday morning by airplane, piloted by Lieut. Russel A. Olson of the 109th air squadron.

“Traveling by five special trains over the Great Northern and Soo Line and many coming by car, they began arriving here Saturday. The special rate offers by all railroads made the trip especially attractive.

“Registration of delegations began Saturday, the registration headquarters being crowded with buddies eager to attend the convention and meet their wartime friends to exchange reminiscences. Registration was handled very systematically, an army of helpers being engaged by the convention officials.

“Pelican Rapids won the \$25 for a rather realistic showing of the warfront zero hour guns going off and doughboys going over the top with fixed bayonets.

“A night session followed the program at the fairgrounds Tuesday evening, the convention voting to ask the board of control to appoint an assistant to the

state welfare agent to act as liaison officer of the Veterans bureau.

“The Legion sessions proper opened Monday morning with delegates from practically all of the Minnesota posts crowding the auditorium.

“The visitors were heartily welcomed to the city by Mayor J.S. Arneson and Commander H.O. Chommie of the local post.

“Col. R.H. Webb, mayor of Winnipeg, extended an invitation to participate in the excursion to Winnipeg on the closing day of the convention.

“Greetings were received from Commander W.T. Scram of the Civil War veterans, Vice Commander Wm.T. Coe of the United States Spanish War veterans, A.G. Reimer of Winnipeg of the Great War Veterans of Canada, and Vice Commander John Stokke of Veterans of Foreign Wars.”



Hans O. Chommie, a World War I veteran and local attorney, was commander of American Legion Post 117 in 1925, when the Department Convention was held in Thief River Falls.

Auxiliary Committee Chairmen

Americanism ~ Judy Hams
Children and Youth ~ Judy Hams
Community Service ~ Sharon Odegard
Education ~ Sharon Odegard
Girls State ~ Elvera Cullen
Gold Star ~ Gloria Lee
House Committee ~ Sharon Odegard
Junior Auxiliary ~ Linda Johnson
Leadership ~ Karen Thygeson
Legislation ~ Karen Thygeson
Music ~ Annabelle Cuppett
National Security ~ Lynn Carr
Past President ~ Lynn Carr
Parliamentarian ~ Karen Thygeson
Poppy ~ Lynn Carr
Membership ~ Sharon Odegard
Service to Veterans ~ Cathy Radil
Public Relations ~ Lynn Carr
Historian ~ Louise McLean
Constitution & Standing Rules ~ Karen Thygeson
Veterans Affairs & Rehab ~ Shannon Olson

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Richard V. Anderson
Rickie W. Anderson
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Michael A. Baird
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Dwight J. Bruggeman
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Arthur J. Buringrud
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David G. Christinson
David R. Clough
Bryon C. Cloutier
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Sam V. Cowart
James P. Cwikla

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Ernie W. Mostrom
Jerrold R. Moyer
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Loren Ness
Floyd W. Neuschwander
Alan M. Newton
Rodney G. Newton
Mark P. Norman
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Joshua Whitlow
Leslie K. Wilde
John R. D. Wilkinson
Gary N. Wilkinson
Sterling Williams II
Ron H. Winter
Allan K. Young
James Yutrzeuka

*Deceased

Post Officers

Commander - Tom Biller
Sr. Vice Commander - Erik Beitel
Jr. Vice Commander - Larry Eurek
Quartermaster - Gary Klemetson
Chaplin ~ Norm Huth
Post Surgeon ~ Larry Eurek
Judge Advocate ~ Keith Iverson
Post Adjutant~ Zack Lee
Trustees ~ Vern Dokkin, Chet Aubol, Gary Page
Gaming Manager ~ Dave Forsberg



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