



**National Executive Committeeman Jerry Sebben**

Fellow Legionnaires, I would like to congratulate Mike Etzel, Marion Post 208, on being elected Department Commander and also the Department Vice Commanders for the upcoming year 2017-2018. I would like to encourage the legionnaires of Iowa to help make this year a successful one for these

fine officers. Congress has delivered some big wins this week, August 1 – 4, 2017, for veterans. Three major VA reform bills have cleared the Senate unanimously. Appeals Modernization (H.R. 2288), the Choice Program funding fix (S.114), and Colmery/Forever G I Bill (H. R. 3218). The latter two are

now on the way to the President's desk and should be signed by the time you read this. The Appeals Modernization is expected to clear the House in September for the President to sign.

S.1182: The American Legion 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act. All of Iowa's Senators and Representatives have agreed to co-sponsor or support this coin legislation. The House of Representatives and Senate are in recess until September so,

hopefully, by the time you read this it will be final. I want to thank all the legionnaires of Iowa for their letters and phone calls to our legislators these past few months on this legislation. We could not have accomplished this without your help.

The National Convention in Reno, Nevada, will be history when you read this. I wanted to tell you about our leading candidate for National Commander, Denise Rohan. If she is elected, she will

become the first woman elected to the high office of National Commander of The American Legion. She has worked very hard to accomplish her goals in the American Legion and, if elected, I look forward to working with her.

Alternate National Executive Committeeman Dennis Soppe and I are looking forward to visiting as many Fall District Conferences as possible. We hope to see you.

*For God and Country*



**Department Service Officer Gary Carter**

When things seem so hectic and chaotic you just have to take a step back and think of all of the positive progress that is being accomplished. Your Service Office could not be any busier and more proud of the efforts put into each veteran's claim. When the excellence of positive attitudes and confidence provided to each person that is represented it

is our testament to a great organization. The reputation built upon the experience, knowledge, and passion of everyone in your Service Office. It is easy to boast or show the monthly and yearly totals but the big difference and bottom line is each Veteran is given the same level of attention, support, and respect no matter what the conditions or circumstances brought them to the Service Office. It is

always a pleasure to hear so many experiences, stories, and tales of careers of doing the impossible and also the heartache of those who continue to live the pain and suffering of what they endured while serving. So all of the referrals, recommendations, and word of mouth is working very well and continue to spread that along to every veteran out there. So many have not received that word and we need to reach them and change their lives as well.

Recently at our Department Convention we recognized the Val Likens award winner, Nick Praska

of the Dallas County Veterans Affairs. Congratulations, Nick, on the outstanding work you are doing for our veterans in your county. With that being said I challenge all of you to nominate your folks who are going above and beyond helping veterans and their families. This award coming from the Department Service Office allows us to recognize the efforts and accomplishments that you achieve. I look forward to receiving those nominees and applications for next year to have the winner acknowledged at the Department Convention.

Your Service Office appreciates every one of you that supports our cause and efforts daily with prayers, a thank you, and 'hey I know someone could use your help, would you give them a call?' If we did not have the Legionnaires that do what we do and stand up to help those in need, programs for our families, sharing of careers and stories of our military career than we are just another organization. We are the ones who lead, care and support because of the quality and morals we stand for.

*For God and Country*



**Department Chaplain Dr. Dan McClure**

Calling all veterans, As you read this we are fast approaching the Autumn season. What does that term really mean, or maybe more appropriately, what does the use of the term Autumn versus Fall say about us?

We should know that the emphasis of seasons is somewhat unique to those who live in the temperate regions of our globe.

Those tropical or arctic regions experience two seasons mainly. The transitional seasons, Spring and Fall are real but less evident, resulting in less emphasis. Those of us in the temperate regions see more dramatic changes and longer transitions between the four seasons. To be accurate there are truly four seasons and they have their proof or origins in the position of the sun as science will try to explain.

Now why do we call the season between Summer and Winter Autumn or Fall? Americans tend to use Fall while England uses Autumn. Does that have anything to do with our desire to be independent? Basically, yes, but the word Fall is so much more poetic.

Now what does Fall mean? For some it is time to consider going south for the Winter to escape the cold of the Winter. For some it means time to drain the gas from the mower and get out the rakes. For some it means the end of outdoor water sports and other activities like grilling and picnics. For some this

season is a slow dying to the death of Winter. In Iowa it is the time of harvest and often a time of rejoicing and thankfulness.

Football starts up, hunting begins, ice fishing is fast approaching, skiing is looming, bugs no longer splat the windshields, no more mowing-oh the joys of Fall.

For those who become depressed by the prospects of Fall, name a season where leaves are as glorious, name a time when we see such dramatic seasonal changes that promise the rebirth of our earth or to be more practical. Name a time when the utility bill is so low.

Friends, name a time when we can honestly reflect on the state of our nation more than now. Some are saying our nation is about to fall, some say we as a culture are falling, some say that our religious fervor has fallen but as the seasons slow down nature's growth, maybe we can slow down and honestly reflect on what we have to improve so the depressed will once again join us, who are optimistic about our future. God knows our future but unless we serve both Him and the country, maybe we will fall not Autumn. Just my old man musing. *For God and Country...Chaplain Dan*



Well, here we go into a new year! I want to thank all the Squadrons for the hard work you have done and for the great work on membership. We made a little over 103% according to National goals.

I am writing this as I head to Reno for National Convention. The Detachment Fall Conference will be held on Sunday, October 29, at Department Headquarters in Des Moines, beginning at 9 a.m. I will set the District Fall Conference assignments when I return from National Convention.

I was re-elected to serve as your Detachment Commander for another year. My project remains the same... Soldiers Wish. Let's all have a great year and expect more in my next article.

**Freedom Rock Dedications . . .**

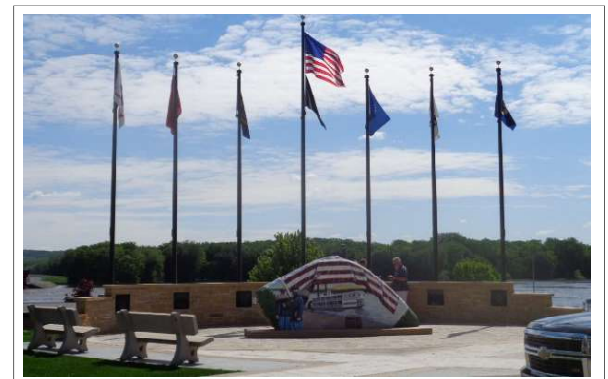
*Thanking our Veterans, one painting at a time*

The Freedom Rock, established in 1999, is a large, 60+ ton boulder located in rural Iowa that is repainted every year with a different *Thank You* for our nations Veterans to honor their service to our country. The artist, Ray "Bubba" Sorensen II, was inspired by the movie *Saving Private Ryan*, as well as, wanting to give veterans a unique recognition on Memorial Day.

Sorensen paints the original Freedom Rock with a unique, patriotic design, because of the tremendous support of family and friends. Sorensen is able to do so each year with the generous help of donations.

While painting murals across the country, Sorensen had the idea of spreading the message of The Freedom Rock to other small communities across Iowa. Only one county remains, Henry County, to schedule.

Currently on the 2017 Freedom Rock Tour, Sorensen and his family hopes to continue traveling the state of Iowa to put a unique version of the Freedom Rock in each Iowa county, similar to the one you see in the picture here in Bellevue.



**Bellevue Veterans Memorial Plaza**

Above, "a patriotic tribute to all veterans - a fitting location along the mighty Mississippi where family, friends and fellow soldiers can honor those who have served our country so honorably over the past two centuries," according to Bellevue's Telegraph-Herald newspaper. The Freedom Rock was dedicated on July 29, by members of Reveille Post #273, of Bellevue. The ceremony featured guest speaker St. Donatus native, Joey Frantzen, Captain, U.S. Navy. The new plaza is a project of the Bellevue American Legion, in conjunction and cooperation from the community of Bellevue. The sale of memorial pavers, which will help defray the cost of the project, is also officially underway this spring. The pavers are made of white granite and will have the name of veterans, as well as branch of service and years served engraved in them.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**  
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**Greenfield, Iowa 50849 - (641) 343-7110**  
**sorensenstudios@yahoo.com**

The Freedom Rock® is a registered trademark and is used with permission. Artist: Ray "Bubba" Sorensen II  
<http://www.thefreedomrock.com/>