

## **Back from a Winter Vacation**

After spending the winter in southern Arizona, I expected our return to Moorhead to be a nice lazy few months. I was wrong, I've become busier. It almost appears that groups waited until we got back and then decided to ask for help. Saying No has become more difficult. Last week, I gave a presentation to the retired federal employees on the history and significance of Memorial Day. On Memorial Day, I will be honored to be the speaker at the Memorial Day celebration in Barnesville. On 22 May at the Moorhead Public Library, I am giving a presentation on Minority Soldiers During World War II. It is one I've done before and it very interesting. Using video clips from the Library of Congress collection of Veterans oral histories, I am able to show how minority soldiers survived and showed great courage in a segregated military. If you attend the presentation, you will learn how a Belgium priest thought Black soldiers had been let out of cages and that they had tails. You will learn about the Tuskegee airmen, Navaho code talkers and Japanese/American men who enlisted even though our government moved their families from the West Coast to camps in Wyoming. On Thursday 23 May, I will be helping with Bonanzaville's annual Veterans Memorial Celebration which includes a free picnic for all who are interested. This year's guest speaker will be Joe Wallevand, Vietnam Veteran. Gates open at 3:00, picnic at 5:30 and speaker at 6:00.

However, the most interesting and challenging project is one with the Moorhead American Legion Post 21. The Post along with The Extra will be producing a commemorative glossy magazine to help celebrate the Legion's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The magazine will be finished in time for Post 21's community wide celebration on June 21-23, 2019. Included in the magazine will be a

history of the founding of the American Legion in 1919, following World War I, the founding of the Legion in Minnesota and Moorhead the same year – 1919. We will highlight each of the commanders of the Moorhead Legion with a photo and short bio. Many of the Legion's community programs will be described in the magazine. The National Legion was the major reason for the establishment of the GI Bill following World War II. Economic research shows that for every dollar spent on educating veterans, the U.S. economy eventually gets \$7 back. For instance, since 2000, the Moorhead Legion has contributed nearly a million dollars to charities, Veterans, Veterans organizations and youth groups in our area. A few of those are youth baseball, the Boys Scouts, Girl Scouts, boys and girls hockey, youth soccer, the VA hospital in Fargo, the Veterans Home in Fergus Falls and Boy's and Girl's State of Minnesota. Between my junior and senior year of high school, I had the honor of being chosen to attend Boy's State in St. Paul, MN held on the University of Minnesota campus.