

100th Anniversary of Auxiliary Unit 112

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 112 is 100 years old. In that time the Auxiliary members have witnessed numerous wars, a depression, measles, polio, good times and bad times. Throughout it all, the Auxiliary has played an important role not only in supporting American Legion Post 112 but also the veterans and community. While major changes have occurred in life styles, technology, entertainment, economic fluctuations and family structure & values, the Auxiliary maintains "Service Not Self".

"The mission of the Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace, and security."

The original Auxiliary Unit was founded in 1921 as Unit 191. The Legion's name was Paul Cody Davis Post No. 112. The first President was Frances Holzem (wife of Joe Holzem). Meetings were often held in member's homes or at various business establishments in the community. A name change to American Legion Auxiliary Unit Post No. 112 was completed on September 29, 1947. The Legion's name had already changed to Davis-Darrow-Meyer Post 112.

Dues were raised from \$2.40 to \$2.70 for the 1964-65 years and in 1972 they were \$4.00. And in 2021, \$30.00 will get one a membership to the Auxiliary.

Distribution of poppies was always an annual activity with ten dozen ordered in 1921. Each successive year has seen an increase in donations. In 1936, the poppies had sold out by noon so they ordered another 250 to be sent out by bus. 2000 poppies were ordered in 1986 which brought in over \$1000. The Covid Pandemic of 2020 prevented the distribution of poppies however 2021 saw a resurgence in donations resulting in approximately \$4500.

Fund raising is an intrinsic part of every Auxiliary Unit. In years gone by our Auxiliary held bake sales, afghan raffles, jewelry parties, hosted card parties, sold candy and vanilla flavoring, held sausage and Cabbage roll dinners, had craft sales, Senior Citizens dances and in 1984 had a "rifle raffle" that raised \$445.00. Many of these same activities are ongoing today. Monies raised were shared with many organizations and helped support needs at the St Cloud Veterans Hospital and for veterans at Fort Snelling. Today St. Cloud Stand Down has been added to the list receiving support for the many veterans they serve.

War years found members assisting the Red Cross by rolling bandages, packing kits for service men, packing tins of cookies to be sent overseas, and hosting blood drives to name a few tasks. 1932 found members distributing boxes throughout local businesses to collect toothpaste and shaving tubes along with other tin foil items. The proceeds were used for clothing for needy children.

In 1933 Measles were prevalent and the Auxiliary stepped up to assist with immunizations. They repeated these efforts in 1957 with Polio vaccinations.

Auxiliary involvement in the community ranged from producing plays in the early years and arranging for dances at local churches for the American Legion. One dance was held in St. Andrew's hall in February of 1938. During American Education Weeks, members delivered bags of goodies or apples to the teachers at the local Elk River Schools. Programs were held relating to patriotism and flag etiquette. The focus continues on essays, Americanism, and Girls State. Currently plans are being developed for more youth oriented activities.

Times have changed as has the needs of our military, veterans and their families. As members of Auxiliary Unit 112, we stand together to fulfill our duties and obligations as stated in our mission statement.

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A Life of Service



Our 2010 Americanism Award winner, Rose Primus has been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary for 61 years. As we spoke, Rose was really humble in regards to her service to the Auxiliary and Post. She made sure to voice that there is and has been many others that have served selflessly. That statement is very evident as the Auxiliary celebrates their 100th Anniversary. There is a lot of history of the Auxiliary in 61 years of membership when you really think about it. I have heard the Commander say that the Auxiliary is the backbone of the post, and after spending time with Rose I definitely agree.

Rose was born in the farming community of Urbank, MN and attended school in Alexandria. That was where her husband of 68 years, Ervin swept her off her feet when he returned from the service. They married in 1953 and resided there for a couple of years before moving to the Twin Cities area. They lived in MPLS and St Michael for 25 years before moving to Elk River 40 years ago. They raised 3 daughters, who blessed them with 5 grandchildren and now have 15 Great grandchildren. Rose said that they are all GREAT! Besides raising a

family and serving in the Auxiliary, she also held a career as a machine operator with Federal Cartridge for over 20 years. She machined ammo shells. Can I get a Hoorah?

Since joining the Auxiliary in 1961 at 24 years old, she has served in many capacities including treasurer and chaplain. Many know her for serving food or Ice Cream Sundays at post functions, dinners and events.

There is a great history with Rose and many others within the Auxiliary and Post 112. They have experienced the ups and down times of Post 112. Rose expressed how exciting it is with the recent changes and upgrades to the post. She absolutely loves the kitchen remodel and expressed her appreciation for the up and coming members that are assuming the duties and responsibilities. A passing of the torch per say. Thank you Rose for your life of service and commitment to the success of Post 112's Auxiliary.

Byson Family Legacy

When the Auxiliary was originally started, there were 39 Charter members. One of those members was Lillian Byson (husband Anthony). Her daughter, Ruth Flaherty (husband Joe) served as Auxiliary President for three terms, 1927-28, 1929-30 and 1937-38. Lillian's granddaughter, Mary Jane (Byson) Leistico was an Auxiliary member and the mother of Mike and Dan Leistico current SAL members. Mike's wife Vicki is also an Auxiliary member,

Faces from the Past

