

North Dakota American Legion was very honored to host National American Legion Commander Charles E. Schmidt and his aide Don Weber, both from Oregon, to join in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade in Park River, ND. Their visit began at the Park River American Legion Club on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, with a BBQ supper, followed by greetings from the National Commander. Following the color guard, Commander Schmidt led the parade on the 4<sup>th</sup>, including many Legionnaires and Auxiliary members, walking the two mile parade. As the helicopter flew over, it was estimated between 12,000-13,000 adults and children were watching the parade. Past Department Commander, Harold "Bud" Goldsmith, Streeter Post 265, rode in a 'people mover' during the parade. Elsie Goldsmith, Past District 4 President rode in the back of a pick-up with Past Department President Diane Kraemer, newly elected Department President Mavis Goodroad, and Marlene Simundson, District 2 President, tossing candy to many children. Lunch was back at the club with entertainment by Chinese dancers from Winnipeg, Canada. They also danced in the parade. Also participating in the parade were Past Department Commanders Don Weible, Orletta Kilen and newly elected Commander Karen Meier.

On July 5<sup>th</sup>, those following Commander Schmidt's travels gathered at the International Music Camp for a demonstration of the new marimba. The marimba was the main fund-raising project when Bud Goldsmith was Commander. He was presented with a cup from the camp, and a big thank you and applause for this long wished-for instrument. Past Department Auxiliary President, Marlene Boyer, Carrington, donated some of her funds to the marimba as well.

The tour ended with the traveling party having a BBQ supper at the All Vets Club in Bottineau. Here, Commander Schmidt received a great North Dakota welcome and he shared some history of The American Legion, various projects and activities. He encouraged all Posts to participate with community activities and preparations for celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of The American Legion in 2019. He extended a big thank you to The American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of the Legion and the Legion Riders. Bud and Elsie were part of the traveling party.

*Submitted to local papers and website by Elsie Goldsmith*