



Here's a Man  
you should  
know



**'AL' THOMAS**

## Al Thomas, a Cold Case Solved

by Marty Luebke,  
Post 23 Member

Our American Legion Post 23 will have a 100 year celebration on July 6th 2019. It was just 50 years ago when Frank Koens collected photos of past Post Commanders (and kept adding to every year). He has made various unsuccessful attempts to locate the one missing photo of Commander Albert Thomas 1953-4. Thanks again to all those who helped in this search. Interestingly there were at least 3 vets with the name Albert Thomas living in our area during that time.

Up until last week I thought we would have to 'create' a story by putting together sketchy bits and pieces of what a very few folks remembered about Al. It seemed he was a rather quiet individual and most did not recall much about him. We thought he perhaps arrived in Garretson because of his friendship with Dave Galliher. Memories of long ago lessen with time and no one recalled a wife or family. Some recalled the new dry cleaning store that Dave built on Main St. and Al operated his shoe shop in the front (now the Exercise Place).

After many hours of searching, Frank struck pay dirt in Sanders Printing archives of bound Garretson Weekly newspapers. I can see why 'cold case' detective work could be addictive. Thanks to Bob's records and Frank's persistence we now have some real facts. Albert Thomas (he preferred being called Al) served 42 months during WWII (likely with Dave Gal-

liher). He lived in Hutchinson MN and was married with 2 daughters. After his honorable discharge he took vocational training in Minneapolis and did a 2 year internship as an "Orthopedic Mechanic". He specialized in custom building shoes for people with foot problems, including deformities. In one ad he refers to his store as "A One Stop Hospital for all foot troubles". We suspect that he did not have a lot of 'orthotics shoe income' as he also did all other types of leather and canvas work. To make ends meet during hard times Al also worked for the street department, the WPA and started a housing insulation business. It appears he tried to set regular shoe shop hours for customers, and when gone posted a sign that said "Save your soles for tomorrow when I will be back."

Newspaper records show Al opening his business on February 28, 1948. He immediately became active in the community, serving as Sec/Treasurer of the Commercial Club. He was also active in the American Legion and served as Adjutant before becoming Commander. He was a member of the Color Guard which was very active, marching in many community parades in SD and MN. Dean Lerdal is the only surviving member who recalls serving with him.

"We had no standard uniforms but all wore our military class A's. We looked very sharp and were one of the best posts around." It appears Al left Garretson in the fall of  
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## Flooding not as bad as expected, re-zoning gets a 'thumbs down'

By Dave Baumeister  
County Correspondent

SIOUX FALLS – Minnehaha County Emergency Management Director Jason Gearman was quick to mention the help that was received during the recent threats of flooding at the county commission meeting on Tuesday, March 26.

Gearman noted that the main help in reducing the impact of the flooding came from the weather. He said that cooler temperatures at night and the lack of expected spring precipitation kept the waters of area rivers from going as high as previously predicted.

But still helping out, just in case, were over 2,000 volunteers that aided with sandbagging and other tasks around the county.

While Sioux Falls and the area in southern Minnehaha were spared from the ultra-high water levels that had been expected, areas to the north, like Renner and Dell Rapids, did see more flood conditions.

Gearman also complimented the sheriff's department and the South Dakota Highway Patrol for "pro-ac-

tive" work done ahead of the expected flooding

Although water levels didn't rise as much as expected, they are still very high, and at the meeting, Gearman said they were expected to stay high for another 10 days.

He also mentioned that when the water goes down, all of the towns and townships need to take photos and document any damages before making repairs, in case any disaster relief funds would be available to help.

Shannon Schultz, assistant highway department superintendent, also talked about the flooding, as it pertained to the county roads.

He showed commissioners a brief video that highlighted some of those conditions.

Commissioner Cindy Heiberger added to post-flood warnings about driving on roads that had been flooded, after the water goes away.

"Once the roads dry," she said, "people think 'I can just drive around the barricades,' and that causes more damage to the road which is coming out of tax dollars to fix the roads."

Both Heiberger and Schultz

talked about how going around barricades can do more damage to roads, even if they look dry.

Prior to these discussions, the meeting opened with the Dell Rapids City Council to vote on the first of three re-zoning issues at this meeting. The Dells council and the Minnehaha commissioners voted unanimously to rezone an area near the Interstate 29 exit to Dell Rapids from A-1 agricultural to I-1 light industrial.

While the land in question is outside of Dell Rapids, it is close enough under the Joint Jurisdiction agreement with the county, which required the city council to vote on the re-zoning matter, also.

Later in the meeting, the commission also approved a rezoning just on the outskirts of Brandon from A-1 to I-1, which brought a small area of land in line with the zoning around it.

However, commissioners gave a "thumbs down" to a requested rezoning at 327 1st St. in Lyons.

The rezoning was calling for a change from residential to  
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## O So Good Featured on KSFY's Morning Munchies

Monday Morning Munchies is a regular segment of the KSFY morning show anchored by Shawn Cable and Kamie Roesler. This week, on April 1st, they sent reporter Jill Langland to Garretson's O So Good. No foolin'!

They interviewed restaurant co-owner and executive chef Omar Thornton in four segments, and featured four of his dishes from the restaurant, his mushroom melt, his jerk chicken, and a chef challenge based on his salmon entrée. Langland gave O So Good glowing reviews. If you missed the show, you can watch it all on KSFY's website here at: <https://www.ksfy.com/content/news/Monday-Munchies-O-So-Good-Restaurant-in-Garretson--507939831.html>

Thornton has appeared on KELO & KSFY in the past and continues to wow them with both his food and genuinely good hearted and savvy demeanor, attracting more business to Garretson.