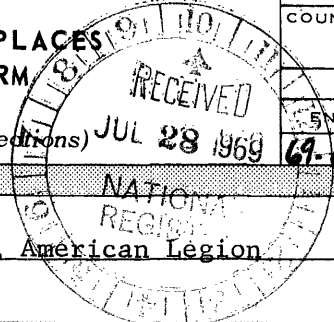


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <u>Wyoming</u>	
COUNTY: <u>Niobrara</u>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER <u>69-09-49-0015</u>	DATE <u>9-30-69</u>



1. NAME

COMMON:
Ferdinand Branstetter Post No. 1, American Legion

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Lots 1 & 2, Block 8, T. 31 N., R. 60 W., Section 17

CITY OR TOWN:
Van Tassell

STATE <u>Wyoming</u>	CODE <u>49</u>	COUNTY: <u>Niobrara</u>	CODE <u>027</u>
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input type="checkbox"/>	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Building <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In Process <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Structure <input type="checkbox"/>				No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>				

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Service</u>	
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>organization</u>	

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
Ferdinand Branstetter Post No. 1, American Legion

STREET AND NUMBER:
Lots 1 & 2, Block 8

CITY OR TOWN:
Van Tassell

STATE: <u>Wyoming</u>	CODE: <u>49</u>
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Niobrara County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Lusk

STATE: <u>Wyoming</u>	CODE: <u>49</u>
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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: .25 acres

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Wyoming Recreation Commission, Survey of Historic Sites, Markers and

DATE OF SURVEY: 1967-1969 Federal State County Local Mon.

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Wyoming Recreation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Cheyenne

STATE: <u>Wyoming</u>	CODE: <u>82001</u>
	<u>49</u>

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:
COUNTY:
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input type="checkbox"/>		Unaltered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moved <input type="checkbox"/>		Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The structure that originally housed the Van Tassell American Legion Post is no longer in existence. At present the site consists of a vacant lot which interested members of the American Legion in Niobrara County are attempting to purchase.

Adjacent the site a plot of land has been purchased for the erection of an interpretive sign which will be erected and dedicated in the summer of 1969. At some date in the future restoration of the Post may be accomplished by members of the American Legion organization.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century

15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1919

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/>	Education <input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning <input type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic <input type="checkbox"/>	Industry <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Social and service organization</u>
Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	Invention <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Art <input type="checkbox"/>	Landscape <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Commerce <input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Communications <input type="checkbox"/>	Literature <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Conservation <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
	Music <input type="checkbox"/>	_____

(Note: A circular stamp is overlaid on the form, containing the text: RECEIVED JUL 23 1969, with various categories like Religion/Philosophy, Science, Sculpture, Social/Humanitarian, Theater, and Transportation.)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

Ferdinand Branstetter Post No. 1 of Van Tassell has not only the distinction of being the first American Legion Post organized in Wyoming but this little post was the first to be organized in the United States. Van Tassell, Denver, St. Louis and Washington D.C. were the first Posts organized and their Charters were signed the same day.

The first meeting of the Post was held June 28, 1919 and was called to order by State Chairman Alfred H. Beach. The Charter members of this first post were: Mitchell Ammons, Floyd Deuel, Edward C. Calhoun, Albert Chapman, Carl Dallam, Harry Heckert, Harrison Kellogg, Forest Porter, Don C. Taylor, George Ringsby, Nels Nelson, Harry Housh, Warren Jones, Joseph Wright, Ernest Hennebeck, Thomas Ammons, Oscar Miller, Hill Z. Boyles, Tula G. Winey, Otis M. Deeder, Andrew Garretson, Warren Waranock, Otto Hanaka, Stanley Peters, Clarence Kuttner, Ward B. Hill, Carl Hayes, Earl Alderman, Ivor Parker, John Zulinski, Haskell Best and O. B. Peterson.

The first officers elected to lead the new post were E. C. Calhoun, commander; Floyd Deuel, vice commander; Warren Jones, secretary; Carl A. Dallam, treasurer.

The motion was made and carried that the Post be named in honor of Ferdinand Branstetter. He came to Wyoming from Nebraska about 1914 and filed on a homestead south of Van Tassell. Inducted into the service he was one of the first to go across and was the first to fall in action from the Van Tassell area.

At the October 4, 1919 meeting the main order of business was the election of Edward Calhoun, Floyd Deuel and Warren Jones as delegates to the first State Convention of the Legion which was to be held in Douglas.

The Commander E. C. Calhoun was also sent as a Delegate to the first National Convention of the American Legion which was held at Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The minute book contains the following item November 1, 1919, "The existing situation in the state created by the coal strike was outline by the commander and all present signified their willingness to respond to the call of the governor should conditions arise making such a call advisable."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

_____, Minute book - Ferdinand Branstetter Post No. 1, Van Tassell, Wyoming.
 _____, Manuscript - Furnished by Mr. George A. Clarke, Secretary, Niobrara Chamber of Commerce; Lusk, Wyoming.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N 42° 39' 45"	W 104° 5' 36"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Bill Barnhart, Assistant Historian

ORGANIZATION: Wyoming Recreation Commission DATE: July 9, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:
 604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 49

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Paul H. Westedt
 Paul H. Westedt

Title: Liaison Officer P.L. 89-665

Date: July 9, 1969

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest Allen Connolly
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: Sept. 30, 1969

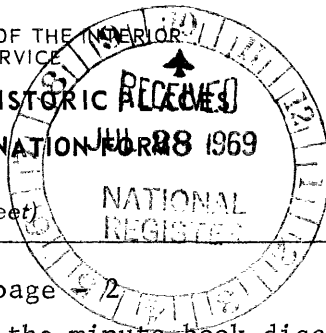
ATTEST:

William J. Montoya
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: SEP 20 1969

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM 1969



STATE	Wyoming
COUNTY	Niobrara
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

Ferdinand Branstetter Post No. 1
American Legion (Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance No. 8 - page 2

Besides discussing serious matters the minute book discloses that entertainment for the Van Tassell community was also on the minds of the members. The first meeting's minutes say, "Motion made and carried to give a dance for the purpose of raising funds. The commander appointed the following committee: Albert Chapman, Otis Deeder and Harry Housh. Moved and carried that the committee appointed to arrange for the dance be authorized to make necessary expenditures." At the next meeting a standing entertainment committee was appointed and through the years the Legion has been responsible for much of the entertainment in the Van Tassell community. The entire community has always been invited to the dances and the admission price has always been kept low.

Another function assumed by the early entertainment committee was a Legion sponsored party for each member of the Post when they were married. To these affairs all the friends of the bride and groom were invited. This custom started when the Post was new and was continued through the years and saw many couples entertained to their benefit and to the benefit of the whole community as each party included the entire community.

In 1920 a silk flag for the Post was purchased with \$45 raised by an industrious campaign to get \$1.00 donations. One of the best solicitors was Mrs. Roamy Cunningham.

Because of the Post's desire to provide entertainment for the community through their dances there came a time when a piano was badly needed. Funds were low but the problem was solved by Warren Jones and Andrew McMaster. At that time H. E. Zerbe had a hardware store in Van Tassell and one of his promotions was to give points for the purchase of some of the slower selling items. A phonograph was then given to the person who had accumulated the most points. Jones and McMaster pooled their resources and by buying only those items with the most points accumulated enough points to make the phonograph theirs. They then auctioned the phonograph and with the proceeds made the down payment on a piano.

This same piano found its way into many of the minutes. August, 10, 1923, "D. P. Davis offered to rent the piano at \$1.50 per month and pay fire insurance premium for use of same. The promotion was approved by the meeting." February 20, 1925, the minutes read, "Motion made by E. S. Hennebeck that the Athletic Club be offered the use of the piano in exchange for two nights a week use of the hall."

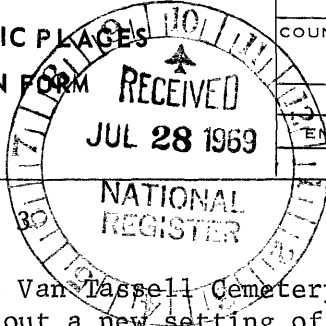
In 1921 the Van Tassell Post held Memorial Day Services and through the years many impressive ceremonies were conducted by the members of the Post. Post No. 1 assumed the caretaker responsibilities for the Van Tassell Cemetery for many years. The membership established the custom of gathering at the cemetery each year shortly before Memorial Day to clean and fix up the cemetery. From the minutes many of these work days were discussed and in 1926 the minute book says, "Motion made by Kallam that we consider means

president, Mrs. Bertha Bancroft; treasurer, Mrs. Mamie Deuel; secretary, Mrs. Clara Doolittle; chaplain, Mrs. Louise Kallam; sergeant-at-arms,

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Ferdinand Branstetter Post No. 1
American Legion (Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Wyoming	
COUNTY	
Niobrara	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE



(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance No. 8 - page - 30

to erect a windmill and reservoir on the Van Tassell Cemetery to water trees which are planted there and also to put out a new setting of trees."

The Post through the years although small in number has been responsible for many improvements in the Van Tassell area. In 1936 a safety sign was erected in Van Tassell. In 1947 the Post made and installed roadside signs which gave the direction and distance to Van Tassell, to Prairie Center School and to each of the nearby ranches. During the war years the Post gave small gifts to the young men in the community as they enlisted or were inducted into the service, helped with community war bond drives and scrap drives.

The Van Tassell Legion Post has a commendable history and one that it has taken perseverance on the part of a few to maintain. As the population of Van Tassell declined so did the membership in Post No. 1. At one time the Post dwindled to only four active members and at least one meeting the possibility of giving up the Charter was discussed. In December, 1923, the minutes state, "Meeting called to order by Commander A. B. Peterson to see if continuance of Post No. 1 was desired by the members. It was decided that we continue the Post and do all we can to perpetuate the cause of the Legion."

The desire to maintain the small Post was aided with the return and membership of the World War II veterans. The honor of belonging to the first Post in the country has kept many names on the roll through the years of members who now reside in other communities but the efforts of the few active members has enabled Van Tassell to retain its No. 1 Post designation.

At a meeting of Post No. 1 January 31, 1920 it was voted to apply for a Charter for an Auxiliary to the Post. The Charter was issued and signed March 19, 1920. No record can be found of the members who applied for this charter nor of any minutes of meetings held but the Charter is on file. Later in 1922 a Charter was applied for under the National Auxiliary organization. This Charter is dated August 1, 1922 and lists the following Charter members: Mrs. D. E. Billman, Mrs. Jennie Bass, Mrs. Bertha Bancroft, Mrs. Mamie Deuel, Mrs. Louise Dallam, Mrs. Clara Doolittle, Mrs. M. E. Kallam, Mrs. E. L. Fenner, Mrs. Eva Heckert, Mrs. E. E. Hennebeck, Miss Marie Heckert, Mrs. Marguerite Parker, Miss Mary Patricia Parker (6 months old), Mrs. Anna Rice, Mrs. Genevieve McMaster.

The first meeting was held at the McCabe Drug Store February 18, 1922 with the following officers elected: president, Mrs. Genevieve McMaster; vice president, Mrs. Bertha Bancroft; treasurer, Mrs. Mamie Deuel; secretary, Mrs. Clara Doolittle; chaplain, Mrs. Louise Kallam; sergeant-at-arms, Mrs. Anna Rice.

Mrs. McMaster was sent as a delegate to the Casper Caucus which was called to form a permanent state organization.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Ferdinand Branstetter Post No. 1
American Legion (Continuation Sheet)

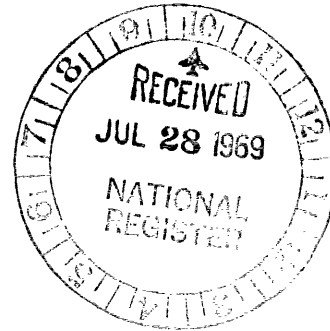
STATE	
Wyoming	
COUNTY	
Niobrara	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

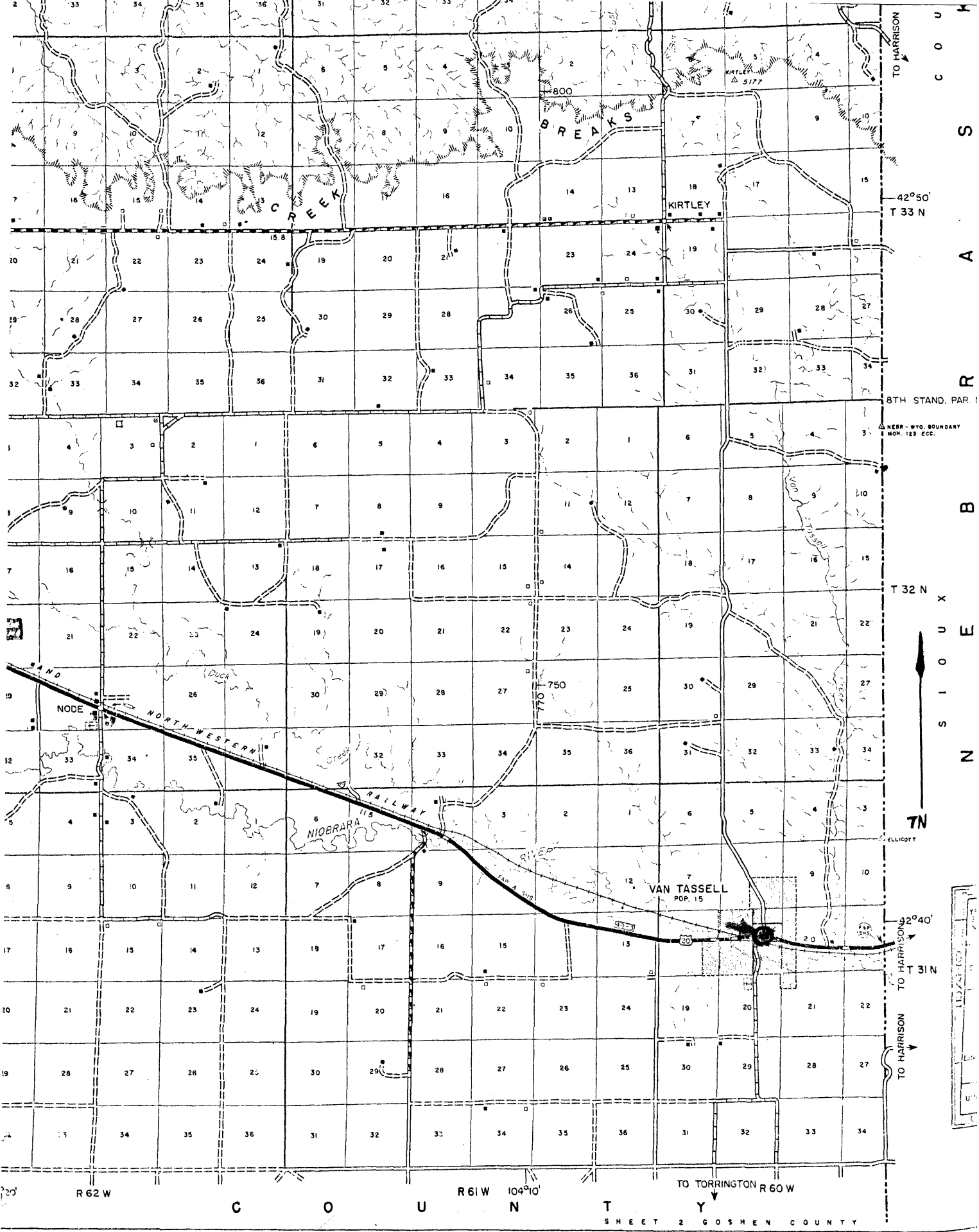
(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance No. 8 - page - 4

Through the years the Auxiliary has continued to function performing their obligations as Auxiliary members and assisting the Legion Post with its activities. Many of the meetings were held jointly with the members of the Legion Post with dinner being served or social hours following the meetings.

The Auxiliary has continued through the years to "acknowledge irrevocable jurisdiction and in all things subject to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary and the Department of Wyoming" as originally pledged.





HARRISON
C O U N T Y
A R R A N G E M E N T
S I O U X
T N
HARRISON
HARRISON
HARRISON
TO TORRINGTON R 60 W
SHEET 2 GOSHEN COUNTY