

GOPHER OVERSEAS

Volume 73, NO. 2 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Official Publication to More Than 45,000 Members of the Department of Minnesota June 2019 - September 2019

MN VFW Membership Exceeds 100%, First Time Since 1992

By Dale Hoogeveen, State Membership Chairman 2018-2019



**2019-20
State Commander
Chad Solheid**

Member of
VFW Post 7
Minneapolis, MN

WE MADE IT HAPPEN!

Congratulations to the Department of Minnesota for exceeding 100% in membership for the first time since 1992! 118 of our 213 posts achieved 100% or greater with many others needing 5 or fewer members as the year ended on June 30. If you were paying attention over the course of the past year you know Past Commander-in-Chief B.J. Lawrence's theme for 2018-19 was "Make It Happen". This was the focus of his membership program because the Veterans of Foreign Wars last achieved 100% in membership in 1992. Chief Lawrence also had a vision and a desire of showing membership growth, which materialized.

Membership numbers impact the ability to influence Congressional leaders as we work to protect the benefits earned through military service and to ensure a quality VA healthcare system exists to serve veterans in need of medical services. How was this accomplished you ask? Our immediate Past State Commander Tom Hanson led the team through

actively supporting the membership program which was implemented superbly by our District and Post Commanders and Quartermasters. They played an integral role as shareholders of the membership team by ensuring applications were processed, unpaid member lists were reviewed and phone calls made to recruit, reinstate and retain members. Our goal of exceeding 100% in membership could not have been accomplished without each and every comrade who contributed by recruiting and welcoming new members into their posts!

The Veterans of Foreign Wars All-American program for Post Commanders, District Commanders and State Commanders "exists to recognize exceptional leadership, authentic accomplishment in membership growth and excellence in VFW core programs". Reflective of the outstanding achievements in membership and other programs this year, Past State Commander Tom Hanson, Past 2nd District Commander Roy Bressler, 6th District Commander Aron Lambrecht, and Past 7th Dis-

trict Commander Robert Bernier were named as All-American Commanders at our National Convention in Orlando, Florida last month! Congratulations to them and thank you for setting an example for all to emulate.

It was my honor and a privilege to serve as your membership chairperson for 2018-19 and I thank Commander Hanson for the appointment. I also thank all who supported the program by recruiting, retaining and reinstating comrades in our prestigious organization. Now, let's get back to work and continue to grow by increasing our membership over the year-end total of 37,724 members. Nationally, we are a 1.2 million member organization of exclusive combat veterans that share the common bond of honorable military service to our great nation as Veterans of Foreign Wars. Continue to be proud of your service as we pursue our foundation to ensure all veterans and their families are cared for and to perpetuate the memory of those that paid the ultimate price of freedom.

Greetings Comrades! I would like to thank everyone for your support as I get going on my year as the Minnesota State Commander. The line officers and I are working diligently together to keep Minnesota going strong. Congratulations on a job well done in getting the Department of Minnesota to 100% in membership and helping the national VFW to achieve 100% plus in membership. Let's all keep up the good work. My motto this year is "Continue the Mission" and that's exactly what we're going to do. We all need to let our legislators know how we feel concerning issues like the Blue Water Navy Bill and the Widows Tax. Veteran homelessness needs to end and health care for all military has to be improved. That's what the VFW is about and that's what we'll continue to fight for.

I just returned from the VFW's 120th National Convention in Orlando, Florida. I have to say it was hot and humid to say the least. It is nice to be back in Minnesota where the temperature is a little more flexible. It was exciting to return home and have a tornado touch down about a mile from our home an hour later. Maybe it's a sign that we are going to have a whirlwind year.

Fall Conference

Fall Conference brings us to northern Minnesota and the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen. September 13-15, 2019, VFW and Auxiliary members from across the state will gather for this annual event. The primary focus of the weekend will be learning about all of the amazing programs of the organization; From Community Service to Veterans Assistance there is something for everyone. While Mahanomen may be a bit of a drive for some, the \$85 room rates (which include a VFW only breakfast) make for an economical

visit for all.

Throughout this busy weekend, we will have the honor of hosting the VFW Senior Vice Commander Hal Roesch as our National Representative. In addition, the Auxiliary has the privilege of hosting Auxiliary National President Peggy Hakke at their Friday Meeting. Members will not want to miss this opportunity to welcome these dignitaries and share all of the outstanding things Minnesota does for veterans and out communities.

A BIT OF BUSINESS

The weekend will start with several business related meetings including the Finance Committee, Gambling Control Board Seminar and the Council meetings where all of the official business occurs. The VFW and Auxiliary Council of Administration Meetings will wrap-up Friday's business. Auxiliary members should note that this year the Auxiliary plans to complete all of their business on Friday evening...

CONV - Cont. Page 7

-Preserving and Extending Veterans Rights, Advocating a Strong National Defence, Promoting Patriotism and Serving Local Communities - Veterans of Foreign Wars Founding Principles

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Save The Date!!

Upcoming VFW Events

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p style="color: #00AEEF; font-weight: bold;">Fall Conference</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">September 13-15, 2019 Shooting Star Event Center, Mahanomen</p> | <p style="color: #00AEEF; font-weight: bold;">National Legislative Conference</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">March 1-5, 2020</p> | <p style="color: #00AEEF; font-weight: bold;">VFW State Hockey Tournament</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">March 20-22, 2020 Thief River Falls</p> |
| <p style="color: #00AEEF; font-weight: bold;">Midwinter Conference</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">January 17-19, 2020 Minneapolis Marriott City Center</p> | <p style="color: #00AEEF; font-weight: bold;">Minnesota Veterans Day on the Hill</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">March 2020 (Day TBD)</p> | <p style="color: #00AEEF; font-weight: bold;">State Convention & Training Schools</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">June 3-7, 2019 Crowne Plaza Plymouth</p> |

Red Events are Department Events

Top News

MN Officers Receive All-American Honors



CONGRATULATIONS! 2018-2019 All-American honorees from Minnesota: State Commander Tom Hanson and District Commanders: 2nd District Roy Bressler, 6th District Aron Lambrecht & 7th District Robert Bernier. All-American awards were presented by Commander-in-Chief B.J. Lawrence Monday, July 22 at the 120th V.F.W. National Convention in Orlando, Florida.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars All-American Program acknowledges exceptional leadership in helping their level achieve growth in membership and outstanding work in key V.F.W. scholarship programs.

| District All-American Criteria | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership greater than 100% Finish in the top 25 Districts in your division Voice of Democracy- minimum of one entry advanced to Department Judging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patriot's Pen- minimum of one entry advanced to department Judging National Citizenship Education Teachers Award- one entry advanced to Department Judging |
| District All-American Awards | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-American District Flag Streamer All-American District Citation All-American Name Badge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-American Cap All-American Lapel Pin |
| Department All-American Criteria | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership must be greater than 100% Must conduct two Membership Recruiting events prior to May 1, 2019 Hold a Commander's Round-Up prior to January 1, 2019 One new post or increase the membership of three posts of 50 members or less to over 50 members by July 1, 2019 National Legislative Service Monthly National Legislative Service committee member/ chairman reports submitted National Veterans Service Must have a State/Department service officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly National Veterans Services committee member/ chairman reports submitted Programs Voice of Democracy- An entry advanced to national judging Patriot's Pen- An entry advanced to national judging National Citizenship Education Teacher Award- Submit an entry to national in all three categories (K-5, 6-8, 9-12) Veterans & Military Support Programs- Must complete a State/Department fundraiser and proceeds must be donated to: Veterans & Military Support Programs, Kansas City, MO |
| Department All-American Awards | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-American Department Flag Streamer All-American Department Citation All-American Name Badge All-American Cap | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-American Lapel Pin \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending VFW National Convention Reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session |

Get Involved!

Help Plan Minnesota's 100th Anniversary

January 21, 1921

We are beginning to prepare for the 100th Anniversary for the Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars

Please join us for this initial planning session

Fall Conference
Saturday, September 14, 2019
9:15 A.M.

We will begin to brainstorm events and ideas to celebrate this memorable event.

Come to listen... come to participate

Exploring Department Re-Districting

This topic has been discussed many times over the years... It may be time to pick it up again.

Please join us for this initial discussion

Fall Conference
Saturday, September 14, 2019
3:45 P.M.

We will begin the conversation and see where it leads.

Come to listen... come to participate

CONGRATULATIONS!!
Hugo-Matejcek
Post #3723 & Auxiliary
Owatonna, MN

Recipients of
2019 VFW National
Poppy Competition:

DIRECTOR'S AWARD

"MOST CREATIVELY & EFFECTIVELY REPRESENTS THE PROGRAM"



Minnesota VFW Office Locations

Department Headquarters:

Ken Schroeffer, Adjutant
Jerry Brletich, Quartermaster
B5 Veterans Service Building
20 West 12th Street
St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: (651) 291-1757
Fax: (651)291-2753
Email: vfwmnoffice@gmail.com
Webpage: www.mn.gov/vfw

Department Claims Office:

Jon Gohn, Claims Director
Whipple Federal Building, G900
1 Federal Drive
St. Paul, MN 55111
Phone: (612) 970-5669
Fax: (612) 970-5404

Minneapolis VA

Scott Sutherland
VFW Hospital Representative
Minneapolis VAMC
1 Veterans Drive- Room 4G- 109E
Phone: (612) 725-4448

Auxiliary Headquarters :

Veterans Service Building
20 West 12th Street
St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: (651) 291-1759
Fax: (651) 291-7932

GOPIHER OVERSEA'R

Department of Minnesota, VFW, Editor
Rice Street Station, P.O. Box 17146, Saint Paul, MN 55117
Phone:(651)291-1757 - Fax:(651)291-2753
Email: melodymnvfw@vfwmn.us - Webpage: www.mnvwf.org

Publications Committee:

Chad Solheid, Commander; Curt Hermanson, Sr. Vice Commander;
Barry Henriksen, Jr. Vice Commander; Dale Hoogeveen, Judge Advocate.

The Gopher Oversea'r is the official publication of the
Department of Minnesota, VFW.

It is published three times a year out of the State Headquarters building at:
State Veterans Service Building, 20 W 12th St. Saint Paul, MN 55155.

Upcoming deadlines are July 25, November 15, and March 22

To: VFW National Headquarters
Data Entry Department
406 West 36th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111

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Department Headquarters News

Senior Vice Commander

By Curt Hermanson, State Senior Vice Commander

Greetings Comrades,

First and foremost, I would like to offer my sincere gratitude for all the support that the members provided to me this last year. Your trust and faith in me is so integral to my position; it means a great deal to me and I promise to carry on and do my best to uphold the duties of my position.

I recently attended our 120th national convention in Orlando, FL, it was wonderful to meet with and converse with all of our extended comrades. As we continue to strive for the betterment of both our orga-

nization and the enduring support of our nations veterans I am very proud to be a part of this process in a more hands on capacity. It is an honor to serve in my elected position and help represent our views at these farther reaching levels.

I also know that none of this would be possible without all of you and your support and I look forward to working with everyone as I continue at the department level and would like to offer my assistance to anyone with questions or seeking guidance, should they need it.

Community Service

By Dewey Hermanson, State Membership Chair



and all VFW and Auxiliary Recognition Programs (i.e. Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, etc.).

Community service, as defined by the National Community Service Trust Act "encompasses any human act serving the common good; in the interest of the community. "Elsewhere, community service is further defined as "a service that is performed for the benefit of the public or its institutions"

In addition, efforts performed for the benefit of the Post or Auxiliary's should not be considered Community Service. An example of this type of effort would be maintenance, upkeep or beautification of the Post home, cooking or serving a meal for a Post or Auxiliary fundraiser, or working on bingo night. Additionally efforts that are part of the normal requirements of a Post or Auxiliary

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Community Service Money: Actual money amount expended from Post or Auxiliary funds in support of community service projects; in-kind dollar value of donated items to non-members or use of Post home by a community service organizations, and the use of the IRS authorized \$.14 per mile for use of a volunteer's automobile for charitable work, are some important dollars to report. Please make sure you include hours and dollars for hospital work

Judge Advocate

By Dale Hoogeveen, State Judge Commander

Having just returned from our National Convention in Orlando, Florida, I was privileged to see Past State Commander Tom Hanson, Past 2nd District Commander Roy Bressler, Past 7th District Commander Robert Bernier and 6th District Commander Aron Lambrecht be awarded their All-American caps and pins reflecting the outstanding year our Department had, particularly in membership. The year ended with 118 posts achieving 100% or greater and the Department achieving 100% for the first time in 27 years! These awards reflect the good work done by many comrades across the state and demonstrate we can grow our organization when we make it a priority to do so. Let's have another great year in 2019-2020 and establish a positive trend we can continue to build on, it's never too early to start! Past State Commander Hanson was

also sworn in as our National Council Representative.

I thank each of you for the support I received as a candidate for the office of State Judge Advocate and I extend special thanks to Past Department Commander and National Council Representative Gary Anderson for his encouragement, guidance and assistance as I pursued this honor. I also congratulate Dan Meyer from the 3rd District for his competitive showing in the election and thank him for his willingness to serve. I'm excited for the opportunity that lies ahead to work with Commander Solheid, Sr. Vice Commander Hermanson and Jr. Vice Commander Henriksen in the coming year. The District meeting schedule has been completed and I'll be on the road across the state to attend at

Judge - Cont. Page 15

Junior Vice Commander

By Barry Henriksen, State Junior Vice Commander

Thanks to everyone for your continuing support as I begin my year as State Junior Vice Commander. I look forward to visiting all of the Districts and as many posts as possible this year.

Let's get off to a great start in all of our programs this year! The best way to do that is by going to the Fall Conference. You will get great information on how to have a successful year.

At the National Convention in Orlando it was great to be at the All

American recognition program and see our State Commander and three District Commanders be recognized for their accomplishments. But as we all know it takes a huge team effort to achieve these honors. However, we should have had more recipients. The reason we didn't is because of not executing our programs. Mostly Teacher of the Year. Once again the Fall Conference is a great place to find out how you can successfully complete these programs.

ATTENDING FALL CONFERENCE:

**VFW National
Representative**

Hal J. Roesch II

**Senior Vice
Commander-in-Chief
2019-20**



Hal J. Roesch II was elected Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. on July 24, 2019, at the 120th VFW National Convention in Orlando, Fla.

Hal served in the United States Air Force from 1982 to 2002. Hal earned his VFW eligibility by serving in Operations Desert Shield/Storm and Southern Watch. Hal is the recipient of the Meritorious Service medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation medal with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Achievement medal with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, and the Southwest Asia Service Medal with three campaign stars, as well as numerous other medals and awards.

He joined the VFW in 1991 at Post 3034 in Sumter, S.C., later transferring to Post 4542 in Spring Lake, N.C., then to Post 3219 in Phoebus, Va., where he maintains his Gold Legacy Life membership. He has served in elected and appointed positions at the Post, District and Department levels, culminating with his election as VFW Department of Virginia Commander from 2008 to 2009, in which he achieved All-American status and the designation of a Triple Crown Commander. On the national level, he served on the Council of Administration from 2010 to 2012, and as the Inspector General from 2016 to 2017.

Hal is currently a financial advisor with First Command Financial Planning. He received his Associate of Arts in avionics system technology from the Community College of the Air Force.

He is a life member of Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, American Legion, Military Order of the Cootie, and the VFW National Home for Children.

He has one daughter and son-in-law; Sara and Jason Tricker, and two grandsons, Max and Owen.

Hal is married to his beautiful bride, Beth, and they reside in Hampton, Va.

2019-2020 Department Officers

Minnesota V.F.W. Council of Administration

| Officer | Home City | Home Post |
|---|-----------------|------------|
| Commander Chad Solheid | Forest Lake | Post #7 |
| Sr. Vice Commander Curt Hermanson | Cannon Falls | Post #4452 |
| Jr. Vice Commander Barry Henriksen | White Bear Lake | Post #1782 |
| Quartermaster Jerry Brletich | Coon Rapids | Post #9625 |
| Adjutant Ken Schroepfer | Cambridge | Post #7 |
| Judge Advocate Dale Hoogveen | Carver | Post #1791 |
| Surgeon Dr. James Tuorila | Saint Cloud | Post #428 |
| Chaplain Len Gudmunson | Hastings | Post #5555 |
| Chief of Staff Gary Anderson | Circle Pines | Post #6587 |
| Member at Large Jerry Brletich | Coon Rapids | Post #9625 |
| Chief Inspector Lawrence Grindland | W. Saint Paul | Post #295 |
| Past Commander Thomas Hanson | Willmar | Post #1639 |
| Officer of the Day Donald Heuer | Litchfield | Post #9433 |
| National Council MBR Thomas Hanson | Willmar | Post #1639 |
| MOC Grand CMDR Dewey Hermanson | Cannon Falls | Post #4452 |
| 1st District Commander Thomas French | Chatfield | Post #6913 |
| 2nd District Commander Patrick Schipper | Mankato | Post #1648 |
| 3rd District CMDR Buck Underwood | Luverne | Post #2757 |
| 4th District Commander David Staehlin | Cottage Grove | Post #8752 |
| 5th District Commander Ann Hanson | Appleton | Post #4955 |
| 6th District Aron Lambrecht | Monticello | Post #8731 |
| 7th District Scott Hanson | Brooklyn Park | Post #3915 |
| 8th District Commander Robert Stoehr | Tower | Post #1757 |
| 9th District Commander Rick Bugbee | Fergus Falls | Post #1223 |

Auxiliary to the V.F.W. Council of Administration

| Officer | Home City | Home AUX |
|--|-----------------|-----------|
| President Patches Francesca Bill | White Bear Lake | AUX #3915 |
| Sr. Vice President Paige Amundson | Wheaton | AUX #1656 |
| Jr. Vice President Jamie Cassavant | Red Lake Falls | AUX #1902 |
| Chaplain Sonia Tatge | Kenyon | AUX #141 |
| Conductor Dave Scofield | Litchfield | AUX #2818 |
| Guard Karen England | Lake City | AUX #8729 |
| Chief of Staff Terri Fenn | White Bear Lae | AUX #1782 |
| Secretary/Treasurer Laurie Dale | Kenyon | AUX #141 |
| 1st District President Linda Henry | Rochester | AUX #1215 |
| 2nd District President Johanna Rowe | Arlington | AUX #6031 |
| 3rd District President Mary Ann O'Reilly | Canby | AUX #117 |
| 4th District President Cynthia Fritsche | Woodbury | AUX #9024 |
| 5th District PRES Twyla Bauch-Scofield | Litchfield | AUX #2818 |
| 6th District President Sue Wiersgalla | Browerville | AUX #8391 |
| 7th District President Shelley Solheid | Forest Lake | AUX #6316 |
| 8th District President Julie Stoehr | Tower | AUX #1757 |
| 9th District President Karen Haugen | Moorhead | AUX #1223 |
| Past Department Presidents on Council: | | |
| PDP Millie Lauer | Big Lake | AUX #4020 |
| PDP Kathy Fystrom | Sauk Centre | AUX #7902 |
| PDP Gail Brekke | Moorhead | AUX #1223 |
| PDP Patches Presfield | St. Cloud | AUX #4847 |

**Plan Ahead To Make Your
Auxiliary Stronger!!!
DUES ARE NOW DUE!!!**

Minnesota Auxiliary News



**STATE PRESIDENT
VFW Auxiliary**

Francesca
"Frankie" Bill



Member of
VFW Post 3915 Auxiliary
Brooklyn Park, MN

Comrades and Members, I have the greatest honor to lead the 2019/2020 Department of Minnesota, VFW Auxiliary. I will do my best to remain transparent and help grow and strengthen the VFW Auxiliary; all the while knowing you have placed your trust and confidence in me. I will lean on our Past Department Presidents for their coaching and mentoring and work with our VFW colleagues to always do what we can to support and protect our Veterans, families, and the community. I have selected 23rd VETERAN as my special project. '23rd VETERAN assists Veterans in their transition from military to civilian life. Through their innovative positive reconditioning program, they help Veterans live happier, healthier lives.' This project will focus on furthering their vision to 'drastically improve the negative symptoms of PTSD including depression, substance abuse, homelessness, divorce, and suicide.' This is a nationwide non-profit corporation, which started in Minnesota by a Veteran. Donations will be accepted all year long to offer the resources necessary for Veterans to have the opportunity to utilize rehabilitation services and education. Please see the enclosed flyer for a one-day fundraising event in late September. All are welcome! My slogan is "Together, with Vigor and Might." My symbol is a Shield which is derived from a Viking/Nordic theme known as the 'Helm of

Awe.' This conveys a community of great strength and good health rooted in the state of Minnesota. Inspections (official visits) began August 1st, 2019. The District President or the Inspector must notify the Auxiliary President of their planned visit. Only qualified inspectors will be visiting Auxiliaries between August 1st and December 31st, 2019. Guidelines were provided during ATS (Auxiliary Training Seminar). Please contact either me or Department Chief of Staff, Terri Fenn for more information. The Department Office is upgrading the Minnesota VFW Auxiliary website. We are very excited to offer a more interactive and secure format where each member can access key information relevant to MN, i.e., rosters, program book, yearend reports, inspection calendar. More information will be available in late summer. I am looking forward to seeing everyone during the Fall Conference in Mahanomen. There are 11 programs this year where you can obtain a deeper understanding and pick up tools and resources to be successful at the Auxiliary level. We will be hosting our National President, Peggy Haake on Friday, as she makes her visit to Minnesota during the same time. We would love a great turnout and a warm Minnesota welcome for Peggy, who is "Serving with Aloha." "Together, with Vigor and Might"

ATTENDING FRIDAY FALL CONFERENCE:

**Auxiliary National
President
Peggy Haake**

2019-2020



Peggy Haake of Kahului, Hawaii, was elected National President of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of the United States Auxiliary at its 106th National Convention in Orlando, Florida on July 24, 2019.

Peggy is a Life Member of Wilbert Wah Hu Tom Auxiliary 3850, which she joined on the eligibility of her husband, Richard, who served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam from 1970-1971. Since joining, she has served the organization in many capacities, including Auxiliary and Department (state) President, National Council Member and Western Conference Chairman for the Youth Activities program. She is a Life Member of VFW National Home, Camp Trotter in Michigan, the DAV Auxiliary and the VFW Veteran's Village in Florida.

Peggy retired after 34 years with the Bank of Hawaii. In her spare time she enjoys bowling, golfing, softball, gardening and volunteer work, as well as spending time with her dog, Brie.

Claims and Service Office Report

Jon Gohn, Claims Director

Blue Water Navy Act Now Law!

VFW-championed legislation will benefit tens of thousands of veterans and dependent children

June 26, 2019

WASHINGTON – The national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is saluting the president for signing the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 into law last night.

“Tens of thousands of Blue Water Navy veterans of the Vietnam War and dependent children born with spina bifida due to a parent’s toxic exposure will now benefit from this new law,” exclaimed VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence, “and the VFW is proud to have helped lead the charge to return these benefits to these deserving veterans and to expand existing benefits to dependent children. We look forward to the Department of Veterans Affairs publishing implementation guidance on their website very soon.”

The VFW-championed Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, or H.R. 299, restores VA benefits to thousands of Blue Water Navy Vietnam veterans who had their disability eligibility taken away in 2002 after arbitrary regulatory changes. It benefits veterans exposed to Agent Orange while serving along the Korean DMZ with an earlier start date to encompass the timeframe when various defoliants were tested — to Sept. 1, 1967, instead of April 1, 1968 — and expands benefits to children born

with spina bifida due to a parent’s exposure in Thailand, coverage that already exists for the children of Vietnam and Korean DMZ veterans. The new law also requires the VA to report on research being conducted on a broad range of conditions possibly related to service in Southwest Asia,

which is important for future legislative efforts to create a list of presumptive conditions for veterans seeking VA health care and benefits.

“The VFW is proud of the 116th Congress for ending this benefits inequity, and we salute President Trump for quickly signing H.R. 299 into law,” said Lawrence.

Though the following VA webpages have yet to be updated to reflect the new law, veterans and their families can learn more about benefits associated with:

Agent Orange exposure:
<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/>
Spina Bifida birth defects related to exposure:
<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/special-claims/birth-defects/>

For assistance in filing claims, find an accredited VFW service officer:
<https://www.vfw.org/assistance/va-claims-separation-benefits>

EDITORS NOTE:

In Minnesota, Contact our Accredited Claims Department in Saint Paul at (612) 970-5669 or get more information at www.mnfvw.org/claims-services

“The VFW is proud to have helped lead the charge to return these benefits to these deserving veterans...”

Ensuring Access to Disability Benefits for Veteran Survivors of Military Sexual Trauma

June 20, 2019

Statement of Gabriella Kubinyi, Legislative Assistant National Legislative Service Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

For the Record United States House of Representatives Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs

With Respect To “Ensuring Access to Disability Benefits for Veteran Survivors of Military Sexual Trauma”

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Chairwoman Luria, Ranking Member Bost, and members of the subcommittee, on behalf of the men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and its Auxiliary, thank you for the opportunity to provide recommendations on disability benefits for veteran survivors of military sexual trauma (MST).

Nearly 25 percent of women veterans who use Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care services report experiencing at least one sexual assault while in the military, compared to approximately 1 percent of male veterans. The Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military for the fiscal year (FY) 2018, which was released April 9, 2019, shows that about 6.2 percent of active duty women have experienced a sexual assault in the year before being surveyed. This is a statistically significant rise from the 4.3 percent who had reported previously. The rate for men stayed basically the same at .7 percent. The Department of Defense (DOD) reported that these percentages translate into roughly 13,000 women and 7,500 men, for a total of 20,500 service members, who have experienced some kind of sexual assault in 2018 — an increase from 14,900 service members in the previous report.

When DOD conducted its annual survey of the force, it found that the majority of sexual assaults happened to people who are 17-24 years old and people who work, train, or live near each other. The female respondents stated that their attackers are often a male they are either friends or acquaintances of, either the same rank or one higher. Women in grades E3 and E4 were the group with the most alleged incidents, which can result in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and can lead to a host of other issues.

The rate of sexual assault in the military directly affects the lives of service members once they transition out of the military. According to Dr. Maureen Sayres Van Niel, president of the American Psychiatric As-

sociation Women’s Caucus, “There is a clear correlation between the experience of sexual harassment or sexual assault for a woman and adverse effects on her life, be they physical or mental health consequences.” These health problems can include anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, and poor sleep. According to the RAND Corporation’s 2018 report entitled “Needs of Male Sexual Assault Victims in the U.S. Armed Forces,” male sexual assault victims experience depression, anxiety, nightmares, or problems with anger control. Both men and women have a higher rate of PTSD and other anxiety and depressive disorders than their peers who did not experience a sexual assault.

This is where VA can provide support for these veterans. How their claims are handled affects their ability to transition to civilian life as contributing members of society. When VA fails to do its job, veterans suffer needlessly. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) released a report in August 2018 detailing how VA erroneously adjudicated 49 percent of the PTSD claims for MST claimants.

MST claims are not easy to process. The DOD report states that only about one-third of MST survivors report their assaults. This means that for many veterans there is no mention of seeking treatment, or reports of the assault in their military files. Without a report of an event in service, it is hard to prove VA claims of PTSD and other mental health diagnoses. In 2011, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) implemented procedures to ensure veterans are provided every opportunity to prove their claim by easing the evidence needed for MST-related PTSD claims. These procedures are intended to ensure veterans who deserve benefits are not wrongly denied. Unfortunately, these controls were either overlooked or ignored in many of the sample cases OIG reviewed.

In 2012, VBA started its Segmented Lanes organizational model to address the claims backlog. In this model, there was a lane called Special Operations Lane. It was in this lane that MST-related claims were delegated to ensure they received the proper attention by specialized VBA staff. At that time, MST coordinators, Veterans Service Representatives (VSR), and Rating Veterans Service Representatives (RVSR) were given specialized training on how to rate MST-related claims. In FY 2016, VBA changed from the Segmented Lanes to the National Work Queue (NWQ). The NWQ changed how claims workload is distributed. Claims are now distributed daily throughout the regional offices based on the ability of the regional offices

Need Help with your Veterans Benefits and Entitlements?

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

Veterans Claims Service

Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Bldg
1 Federal Drive, Room G900, Saint Paul, MN 55111

Phone: (612)970-5669 Fax: (612)970-5404

We'll Help with YOUR Veterans Benefits

TRAUMA - Cont. Page 14

Message From Your National Council Member

By Tom Hanson,
National Council Member

First, I'd like to thank the members of the Department of Minnesota VFW for putting your trust in me by electing me as Minnesota's member to the National Council of Administration. I will try my best to fulfill the promise I made to keep the members aware of any developments or to share vital information from the National Council of Administration. At this juncture there really is little I can share as I will be attending my first Council meeting on August 23rd in Kansas City. However, I would like to share my email address so that any member may communicate with me to make an inquiry or suggestion that I can bring to the Council. My email address is thomashanson52@gmail.com.

I can share a couple items that may be of interest but will share more at the Fall Conference and in the next edition of the Gopher Overseas'r.

Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism? – Would you like to support the VFW's life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families and reduce the amount of mail you receive? The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis, as well as reduce expenses and eliminate the fundraising mail. It is called Partners in Patriotism. As a member of Partners in Patriotism, you choose a set dollar amount for your donation (minimum amount of \$10) that is either charged to your credit card or set up as an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) from your bank account. Once you join the VFW's Partners in Patriotism, you will only receive the Quarterly Supporter newsletters to keep you informed of the many efforts your monthly gifts are making possible. If you are interested in joining Partners in Patriotism, you may contact Donor Services in the VFW Development Department at 1.833.VFW.GIVE (1.833.839.4483), or email us at partners@vfw.org with "Partners in Patriotism Application" in the subject line.

LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP CHECK OUT OUR LEGACY LIFE VIDEO! Go to www.vfw.org, click on JOIN, scroll down to Legacy Life Membership and then click on the video on the right. This prestigious program is available to all Life members and is now available in memoriam for past Life members. There are three levels of membership, each offer their own package of exclusive member benefits. Financial contributions to the Legacy Life member program are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

Enrollment Cost Levels:
Gold- \$1,200.00
Silver- \$800.00
Bronze- \$600.00

Capital Hill Press

By Tommy Johnson, Legislative Chairman

District, Department and the 120th Veterans of Foreign Wars National Conventions are over and a new team is at the helm. It's important to remember why the VFW was formed in 1899 by those that answered the call to duty for service in the Spanish-American War: promises made were not promises kept. Today we face the same challenge; ensuring politicians honor their promises; pledges are fulfilled. Now is the time to do just that.

As you read this, Congress is on their annual August recess and the Minnesota State legislature is not in session. All of these politicians are back in their – and your – hometowns; hopefully holding Town Halls to hear concerns; certainly, showing up at city celebrations and County fairs. When the stand there and proudly proclaim (usually with a flag in the background) "We cannot do enough for our Veterans!" we need to remind them that is most certainly true – they cannot and are not doing enough for our Veterans.

At the National level, due to years of hard work, the Blue Water Navy bill was recently passed, only to have VA Secretary Robert Wilkie place a hold on delivery of benefits until January of 2020. This is not acceptable. After years of trying to get rid of the unjust Veterans Widow Tax, it has finally passed the House in the National Defense Authorization Bill and is now awaiting Senate Action. Failure of the United States Senate to take action and take care of widows of Retired and Disabled Veterans will be unacceptable.

At the state level, the 2019 Session that ended in May was disappointing. Many Minnesota Lawmakers are claiming that fully funding the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, which among other things operates our five Veterans Homes and Veteran Cemeteries, as an "accomplishment." Everyone needs to tell their elected officials that honoring promises is not an "accomplishment"; it is expected that MDVA is fully funded and has the resources to serve our Veterans, spouses, widows, and children.

For years, we have been trying to get the state legislature to make a permanent property tax exclusion for widows of disabled Veterans. This year, it passed and our state legislature should be thanked for that.



They also should be reminded that what was left undone was allowing Widows with the property tax exclusion to keep their exclusion if they "trade down" – sell their homestead and move into a lower-valued (typically smaller) home. Allowing widows to do just that is common sense. By putting a more expensive, higher taxed residence back on the taxroll while simultaneously taking a lower valued home off the taxroll not only improves the lives of our widows – it saves taxpayers money. We do not know why this did not pass; we do know that without pressure from our Post and Auxiliary Members at the local level, it will not pass.

Perhaps the most egregious bill that was not passed in St Paul last session was the Veterans Restorative Justice Act. This bill would have helped Veterans with documented service-connected medical conditions – especially mental health, such as PTSD, TBI, and MST – that because of these issues, became involved as a defendant in the Criminal Justice system. While Minnesota's most populous areas have Veterans Courts, which provide a path for a once highly functioning Veteran to become so again, too many Veterans in rural areas do not. This bill would extend this opportunity for restorative justice to all areas of Minnesota. This bill passed the Minnesota House; it was given one – and only one – hearing in the Minnesota Senate; it did not pass in the Senate. Because it did pass the House, this bill was included in the State Government Finance Conference Committee. To be included in the final bill, for the Governor's signature, both House and Senate Committee Members had to agree to include it. At the

Committee Hearing, four State Senators voted in an on-the-record, roll call vote against this bill, which is a VFW National Legislative Priority and was also supported by all nine congressionally chartered Veterans service organizations in Minnesota – from the DAV and Legion to the VVA. Not only would this bill benefit Veterans in rural Minnesota, it would have saved taxpayers \$1,307,000 in just the first two years.

Why didn't Minnesota Senate Leadership pass this bill? We don't know. Immediate Past President Tom Hanson wrote, and the Star Tribune published an Op/Ed on this issue. We still do not know as your VFW has not been able to secure a meeting with leaders of both parties in both the State House and State Senate. As of this writing, staff for the Senate Majority Leader has promised a meeting sometime in August; the Minority Leader has not responded to a request for a meeting. Staff for the Minority Leader in the House stated there was no need to meet unless there was a special session; staff for the Speaker of the House stated she was "fairly busy" and suggested we meet with the Veterans Committee Chair.

This is what we are up against: leadership of both chambers that do not see a benefit of meeting with the VFW Department Legislative Officer.

I ask veterans when they ask me why they should join: "Do you like your benefits? Do you want to keep your benefits? Do you want to make sure the next generation of Veterans gets the same, if not better, benefits as you? Then you need to join." All this is true, if – if – current Veterans tell their elected representatives what we need and why. This is the time to be talking to your local politicians; if they don't hear from you the message, they receive is that their party's leaders do not need to talk to your Department's representatives.

Please contact me with your thoughts and concerns; even better? Two things: 1) talk about your conversations at your Post and Auxiliary meetings during the Legislative Report or under Good Of The Order, and 2) – email me with what your elected representatives thoughts are on your thoughts and concerns.

Tommy Johnson
HopkinsVFW@gmail.com

As a Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, you should take an Interest in the Dealings of YOUR Organization on the Post, District, Department and National levels. Attending Post, District, State Functions, like your Post Meetings would be a GOOD start.



MNVFW Charitable Association

By Barry Henriksen, Association President

All posts should order their calendars prior to the Fall Conference so that they can pick them up in Mahanomen. Remember that \$5 of every calendar sold goes to your post or auxiliary. It's a great fundraiser! If the post wants the \$5 to go

to another organization for selling them the post may do so. But the Association will only send the check to the Post or Auxiliary.

Calendar sales are critical to the Charitable Associations ability to help veterans and their families.

Fall Conference - September 13-15, 2019

FALL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

September 13-15, 2019

Shooting Star Casino- 777 Casino Road, Mahanomen, MN 56557

Revised 8-7/19

FRIDAY, September 13, 2019:

8:00 -9 9:00 A.M. **BREAKFAST (For Thursday Night VFW Hotel Guests) – Bejou
10:00 A.M. Internal Affairs Meeting – VFW Office
12:00 Noon MN VFW Charitable Association Meeting – VFW Office
1:00 P.M. -6:00 P.M. Registration – Event Center Foyer
*BANQUET Tickets available from 4- 6:00 P.M.

1:00 P.M. Finance Committee – VFW Office
2:30 P.M. Internal Affairs– VFW Office
2:30 P.M. Gambling Meeting – Bealieu

4:00 -6:00 P.M. PROGRAM EXHIBITS – Richwood

6:00 P.M. Auxiliary Council of Administration – Pine/Elbow
6:30 P.M. VFW Council of Administration – Bealieu
After Meetings Hospitality & Social Time – Bejou

SATURDAY, September 14, 2019:

6:00 -6:30+ A.M. Rise & Shine Workout(s)
(Options TBD- Walk, Water Walk?)

7:30 A.M.-2:00 P.M. Registration- Event Center Foyer
*BANQUET Tickets available during Registration

7:00 -8:30 A.M. **BREAKFAST & KEY NOTE PRESENTATION – Bejou

8:00 A.M. Finance Committee – VFW Office
8:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M. PROGRAM EXHIBITS – Richwood
Chairmen will Staff their Displays from 2:45-3:30

8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M. SEMINARS (See Table of Seminar Options) – Richwood

4:30 P.M. Church Service – Pine Point
5:45 P.M. General Reception – Event Center Foyer
6:30 P.M. Conference Banquet – Bejou
After Banquet Hospitality & Social Time – Bejou

SUNDAY, September 15, 2019:

7:30 -8:30 A.M. **BREAKFAST & Slide Show "Conference Take-Away Tibits" – Bejou

9:00 A.M. VFW Council of Administration – Bealieu

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thereby eliminating the need for a Sunday morning Auxiliary meeting. VFW Members will finalize their official business Sunday morning at 9:00 A.M.

A LOT OF LEARNING

Saturday brings a full schedule of seminars for everyone. These Fall Conference sessions are the best opportunity to learn about every program our organization conducts.

Minnesota VFWs and Auxiliaries strive to serve active duty military, veterans, and their families. Toward this goal, Department chairmen will conduct seminars addressing Buddy Poppies, Veterans & Military Service, and National Security to name a few.

As part of our objective to promote patriotism within our communities, the Citizenship Education, Americanism, Scholarships, and Youth Activities sessions will be available.

For those that enjoy a hands-on approach to working within their communities, the Community Service, Veterans Activities, and Hospital Seminars will be of particular interest.

A LOT TO SEE

The Fall Conference experience isn't complete without a visit to the display area. Every program

of the VFW and Auxiliary will host a display a providing information, entry forms and timelines. The ample Shooting Star event facilities allow for extended display hours including Friday afternoon and all day Saturday. Watch the Conference Schedule for times when all chairmen will be at their display. This will provide an additional chance to ask questions of those running your favorite programs.

AND A LITTLE BIT OF FUN

In between sessions, relax and spend time with friends... old and new. This expansive Mahanomen facility provides for a large, joint Hospitality in a ballroom for all attendees to gather in the evenings. Other activities include the casino, lounge with live entertainment or simply relax in the pool or hot tub.

With great room rates (including breakfast for VFW hotel guests), a full day of educational opportunities, social activities and more... Fall Conference is the perfect place to learn more about YOUR VFW and Auxiliary. See you in Mahanomen!

For more information, find the schedule, banquet form and more on this page of the Gopher Oversea'r and on the new Department website at www.mnvw.org

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA**

**FALL CONFERENCE
Banquet Reservations**

September 14, 2019
Shooting Star Event Center
Mahanomen

Tickets \$25 each

Social 5:45 / Banquet 6:30 pm

Meal:
Minnesota Stuffed Chicken,
Mini roasted baby bakers,
Key West Vegetables, Salad and
Alternating Bread Pudding &
Chocolate Cake

*No tickets will be mailed out.
Please pick them up at the
Registration Desk.*

**Please reserve _____ tickets
at \$25 each.**

Enclosed is Check # _____ to
"Dept. MN V.F.W." for \$ _____

Name: _____

iPhone Number: _____

Email: _____

Post/Auxiliary # _____
District # _____
Special Dietary Requests _____

FINAL Deadline
September 1st, 2019

| | Richwood | Bealieu | Pine/Elbow | Pine Point | Callaway | Roy Lake | Rice Lake | Naytahwaush | White Earth | Waubun/ Ogema | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|--------------------------------|--|---------------------|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 6:00-6:45 | Rise & Shine Workouts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7:00-8:30 | Breakfast & Keynote Presentation "TBA" | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8:00-9:00 | DIS P L A Y S | Inspections: A Critical Job | MALTA | Being a Chaplain | Panel Discussion: Publicity, Publications & Historian | Veterans, Military & Family Support | HUMANA: Medicare Zero Premium Plan Explained | Event Planning Opportunity: Department 100 th Anniversary | Veterans Activities & Youth Sports | Round Table Discussion: Community Service/ Hospital | | | | | | | | |
| 9:15-10:15 | | | | | | | | | | | Service Officer, Employment, Homeless Vets | Just the Facts: Quartermaster Quick Class | Citizenship & Youth Programs | VFW/AUX Hospital Discussion Group | Legislative Advocacy | Parliamentary Procedure | Just the Facts: Scholarships | Round Table: Buddy Poppies |
| 10:30-11:30 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11:45-12:45 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1:00-2:30 | VFW Membership/ Recruiting | | Auxiliary Membership & Mentoring | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2:45-3:30 | Visit Program Displays & Chairmen Staffing their Booths | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3:45-4:30 | | | Technology & Outreach | Membership ABCs | VFW Committee Opportunity; Re-Districting Exploration | Just the Facts: HUMANA: Medicare Zero Premium Plan | Just the Facts: Buddy Poppy Program | Just the Facts: Community Service/ Hospital | Round Table: Scholarships | | | | | | | | | |

FALL CONFERENCE HOUSING RESERVATIONS
September 13-15, 2019
 Shooting Star Casino, 777 Casino Road, Mahanomen, MN 56557

\$85^{tax} per Night (Includes VFW Only Group Breakfast)
Call 1-800-453-7827, Press Option #1... Mention "BLOCK #1103"

News from YOUR District Commanders and Presidents!



**Thomas French, Commander
First District**



**Patrick Schipper, Commander
Second District**



**Buck Underwood, Commander
Third District**



**David Staehlin, Commander
Fourth District**

First off I am looking forward to the year ahead and thank everyone for the vote of confidence in electing me your District Commander for the year 2019-20.

What a great Loyalty Days celebration we all had in Spring Valley from the District golf tournament thru the election, installation, banquet and the parade. Congratulations to Post 4114 for a wonderful Loyalty days celebration. Plans are already underway for the 2020 Loyalty days celebration to be held at Post 1215 in Rochester.

On Saturday June 29th I had the pleasure of attending Conrad Osthum Post 141 of Kenyon in celebrating its 100 Birthday at the Post home. Actual Charter date is 15 May 1919. In attendance was Department of Minnesota VFW rep Judge Advocate Dale Hoogveen, Mayor of Kenyon Mike Engle, fellow Comrades of VFW Post 141, VFW Auxiliary members, the public and the many organizations. It included a social gathering at 4pm followed by a short program at 4:30pm and ended with a great dinner. The evening of July 1st I traveled to Oronoco Swanson-Owen Post 9647 to present Commander Donald Baker a WW2 veteran his white hat for obtaining 100% in membership and as an All State Post, congratulations Don!

We have chairman assigned

DISTRICT 1 - Cont. Page 11



**Linda Henry, Auxiliary
President First District**

My name is Linda Henry. In May I was honored to become the First District President. I became an auxiliary member in 1999, under my husband Mike Henry, a Vietnam Veteran. We live in Rochester, MN and belong to post 1215. Mike has been a member for 50 years but I held out until our children were all grown.

I am very excited about the 2019 -2020 year. Especially the new program Mentoring for Leadership. I feel like it is something we have been talking about within the auxiliary for a few years; but now as a program it will be used more by all auxiliaries. I am looking forward to reading the bulletins in general orders.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Fall Conference 9/13 thru 9/15 in Mahanomen. Also, I will be available to help all the auxiliaries of the First District when needed.

Greetings comrades

I would like to thank everyone for all your hard work and effort last year. In the final hour, we pulled through to achieve 100% membership. This achievement not only goes to the second district, but to the state and national as well. It ended a drought that goes back 27 years.

I was given the opportunity to attend the national convention this year. It was quite the eye opener. Despite the heat and humidity, everyone was happy and in a good mood. It was a fantastic week, topped off by witnessing three district commanders and our department commander receiving All-American! Districts four, six, and yes, our past commander from the second, Roy Bressler, along with Tom Hanson, got to walk the stage in Orlando to be congratulated. This award reflects all the work from everyone, not just from your hometown but across the nation. The next time you see the "Red/White/Blue hat, please congratulate them, but I bet they will also thank you. But that was last year. Let's continue the momentum and carry it on next year.

Fall Conference will be helpful in Mahanomen this year on 14-15 September. A few changes will be rolled out and will be beneficial for everyone. It's a drive but it will be worth the trip and I hope you will be able to attend.

Our first department meeting will be held in Mankato, VFW Post 950 on October 5th. Not only will the new programs be rolled out, Inspection schedules to take care of, and budget info will be shared. Last, but not least, I would like to personally meet every one of you. Again, thank you for this opportunity.



**Johanna Rowe, Auxiliary
President Second District**

Congratulations to the District 2 members who have been duly elected and installed for offices at all 23 auxiliaries in our District!!

We are overjoyed to welcome the new members and officers of Auxiliary #4046 in Shakopee, MN to District 2 and the Department of MN. The District 2 Auxiliary organizational meeting will be taking place on August 3rd in Wells, MN.

The first District 2 meeting

Hope we are all settled in by now. I am pleased to be your commander for another Two years, I feel I have a great trust between Posts and membership. Lets keep working together and helping each other out. If any of the Post or members need help or answers about anything please give me a call (507-449-0632) and I will do my best to help.

Keep up the good work and get your reports in on time. Like I said above I am here to help. Thank You.



**MaryAnne O'Reilly, Auxiliary
President Third District**

Greetings from 3rd district Auxiliary,

As we are beginning a new year we are looking forward to doing whatever we can do to honor and extend help to our veterans and their families throughout the year. This will be done by participating in all the programs and encouraging new membership.

Auxiliaries will soon be getting letters announcing the official visit to their meetings as these visits can begin after August 1. Our district meetings this year will be October 12, at Granite Falls, January 4 at Wilmont, and April 25 at Luverne all beginning at 10 am.

The president's project will be a need for the veterans at the Luverne Veterans Home.

A thank-you to all our members who participated in making last year a remarkable year and achieving our goals. This year we are looking forward to achieving more for our veterans through our strength of working together.

is going to be October 5th, 2019 in Mankato, MN at Post #950 where we will be bringing the information we learned at Fall Conference in Mahanomen, MN to the District 2 Post and Auxiliary members who were unable to attend.

My motto is "Doing Unique Deeds for Veterans So We Will Never Forget Them" with my flower being the pink lily which means remember me." My symbol is the unicorn. My color is pink.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at Fall Conference as we work "Together With Vigor and Might".

I'm honored to be elected your Fourth District Commander for 2019-2020. The District exists to serve our Posts. We're here for you. Don't hesitate to reach out to me at any time at david@staehlin.us or 651-705-6045.

We had an excellent year in 2018-2019 with 6 of 9 of our Posts achieving 100% membership and coming in first place in membership percent among the 9 Districts in the Department with 102.41%. I offer a special well done to Woodbury Post 9024 for an amazing 114.7% membership percentage and ranking 21st in Division 6. Most of our Fourth District Posts that reached 100% membership not only matched last year's membership numbers but, even with life member amnesty, grew in actual membership.

Thank you to Immediate Past District Commander Paul Lindahl for your superb leadership and to all 2018-2019 Post and Fourth District officers for your hard work. And Congratulations to All-State Post Commander Team Captain Michael Lindvall from Post 1782 in White Bear Lake.

To all our all newly elected and appointed Post and Fourth District officers and committee chairmen, congratulations. Let's get to work and have a great year in 2019-2020.



**Cynthia Fritsche, Auxiliary
President Fourth District**

My name Cynthia A. Fritsche, newly elected, 4th District President. We have 4 meetings a year:

- Sat. Aug. 17, 2019, 9:00 am at Post 6690 in Mendota
- Sat. Nov. 2, 2019, 9:00 am at Post 8752 in Cottage Grove
- Sat. Jan. 11, 2020 9:00 am at Post 7555
- Sat. Apr. 4, 2020 8:00 am at Post 1350 in North St. Paul Joint Memorial Service and at 9:00 am meeting start of meeting

No events scheduled at this time, however intend to have another Family Freedom Festival this year. Not much going on for us yet.



**Ann Hanson, Commander
Fifth District**

Hello Comrades,

Well it has been a wild year but we ended up with 100 percent membership. So I'm hoping that we stay there for a while. We are looking to expand our membership in the 5th District so if you know of anyone that is interested in joining please get the member signed up or give me a call and we will get it worked out.

Looking forward we need to get our membership back up way over 100 percent so we can maintain it. Well hoping to see you all at the District meetings Remember if you don't like something and want a change you need to get involved and you need to come to the meeting to voice your opinion!!!! Have an awesome day looking forward to seeing you all!!!!

Thank you for your time and thank you for all you do!!!



**Sue Wiersgalla, Auxiliary
President Sixth District**

Greetings from the Sixth District:

My name is Sue Wiersgalla and I am looking forward to working with our great organization to help our Veterans, their families, and our communities. Our District Officers have lots of great ideas that we hope to carry out and have some fun while doing them. Our first meeting will be hosted by Browerville Post/Aux 8391 at the Community Center on Aug 3. Lunch will be served at 11:00 with meetings to begin at 1:00 pm. My project will be "The disabled Veterans Outdoor Program in Cooperation w/Camp Ripley."

Jr Vice Rita is starting a collection of "Fun Sox" for veterans at the VA for Christmas. Let's put some fun in their day with some funky fun socks. More details at the August meeting.

I would like to thank Jackie Anderson for all the work she does



**Aron Lambrecht, Commander
Sixth District**

Greetings Comrades:

The Fighting Sixth District is off and running. Thus far this year, we have already recruited 3 new members, and have an excellent plan for transitioning annual members to life members. We had a stellar year in terms of membership for 2018-2019 by not only achieving over 100% in membership (first time in 12 years), but by also being named an All American District. This is a great award and every member of the 6th District should be proud of the accomplishments made. I want to thank everyone who has put in the efforts to see projects, membership and event reporting through to ensure the 6th district is supported.

So far this year we have also already held 1 District meeting, where we had one of our highest turnouts for attendance that we have had in many years, but we also hosted the St. Cloud VA Turkey(Chicken) BBQ. Thank you to the volunteers that came out to serve dinner to the residents at the St. Cloud VA. This was a wonderful event, and I hope as a District we can do more to support those currently residing at the St. Cloud VA. Myself and the rest of the District Officers are here to assist in any way possible.

with quilts for the veterans. I had the pleasure of helping her crew do some quilting at the Sew-In on July 13th. Those machines are great but sure don't drive where I thought they should!! Please people, we do need more volunteers for this project. The next one is Kit Cutting Day on Nov 23, 2019, 10:00 am at Grubers Quilt Shop 310 4th Ave NE Waite Park. She also plans to continue our layette project this year.

The Officers are setting up the "Official Visit" (formerly called inspection) from the District. You should be hearing from them soon. Auxiliaries are reminded that your bonds are due. It is recommended that you purchase a bond for twice the amount of your assets. Example: \$5000 in assets purchase a \$10,000 bond. Please be sure you are covered. This is for your protection.

I want to thank each of you for all the work you do. We forget to do that sometimes. Here's to a fantastic fun and fruitful year working for our Veterans, their families and our communities.



**Scott Hanson, Commander
Seventh District**

Congratulations to outgoing District 7 Commander Bob Bernier for achieving All-American District Commander. This award is a team effort and something we should all be proud of! As we kick off the 2019/2020 VFW year, I look forward to continuing the good work our District has been doing by achieving at least 100% in membership once again and growing Post participation in our programs.

Additionally, I'm excited to announce that the District President and myself our teaming up this year for our project, which is the Veterans Awareness 5k on September 21st in Brooklyn Park, MN. This event is hosted by my home Post, Palmer Lake VFW Post 3915 and is going into it's third year. Each year the event has grown and all proceeds go to 23rd Veteran, a non-profit, who's mission is to provide happier, healthier lives for veterans living with trauma. To make this event bigger and better this year we need your support! Please consider, donating, volunteering, or running/walking on September 21st. Visit <https://www.palmerlakevfw.org/5k> for more information.

www.district7mnvfw.org



**Shelley Solheid, Auxiliary
President Seventh District**

Hello from the 7th District Auxiliary! My name is Shelley and I am the District President this year. I joined the Auxiliary in 2008 under my husband Chad Solheid. I am also the Auxiliary President at Sgt. John Rice Post #6316 in Blaine and the Americanism Chairman for the Department of Minnesota Auxiliary.

Congratulations to the Minnesota VFW and the VFW Organization for attaining 100% in membership! Also a big congratulations to my husband Chad as the newly installed Minnesota State Commander! I know that with his group of line officers the VFW is in good hands and will continue the mission in assisting our veterans and their families.

Our auxiliary programs are up and running for this year and I am looking forward to bragging about all we do in the 7th District. The district meetings are set and the calen-

DISTRICT MEETINGS

First District

October 5 Rushford #5905 @ 9:30 AM

Second District

September 21 Mankato #950 @ 1:00 PM

Third District

October 12 Granite Falls #3871 @ 10 AM
(at American Legion)

Fourth District

Nov. 2 Cottage Grove #8752 @ 9:00 AM

Fifth District

October 6 Wilmar #1639 @ 2:00 PM

Sixth District

October 12 Princeton #806 @ 1:00 PM

Seventh District

October 5 Hopkins #425 @ 10:00 AM

Eighth District

October 12/13 Hibbing #1221 @ 9 AM
(at Vets Quarters Memorial Building)

Ninth District

October 5 TRF #2793 @ 1 PM



Don't forget to change your address back to Minnesota upon returning from the south.

dar is filling in fast. On August 23rd the Minneapolis Veterans Home has their State Fair at 10:00 a.m. Food and fun is guaranteed and I encourage everyone to attend.

Official visits by myself and the line officers to the auxiliaries are starting soon and Fall Conference and the Big 10 Conference aren't too far away either.

My President's Project this year is Veterans Suicide Awareness. My symbol is a Lighthouse and my theme is "Light the Way for Veterans". I encourage all of you to put the 1-800-273-8255 number in your phone so you are always prepared to help a veteran in crisis. Also, Objective Zero and PTSD Coach are two free apps available to download. They are both full of resources and assistance to veterans in need.

Our District Meeting is October 5th at Hopkins VFW at 10:00 a.m. and I am looking forward to all the chairmen reports and updates.

Don't Go It Alone!!!

JUST CALL!!!



THERE'S HELP!!!



**Robert "Rick" Stoehr, Commander
Eighth District**



**Richard Bugbee, Commander
Ninth District**

Comrades,

Greetings to all from the 8th District! As a relatively "Newbee" to the VFW I've managed to find myself in an office I never considered myself holding, and that is District Commander of the 8th District. This all dovetails nicely within our household as my wife Julie holds the office of Auxiliary President for the District. Another plus for me and the District is we've been able to pull together a well experienced and knowledgeable Staff of previous Post & District Commanders and Presidents to draw from for advice and guidance.

The 8th, as I suspect is the case with most Districts, is facing challenges in holding together the smaller Posts, in fact we are currently in the process of merging 8831 Pengilly with 5516 Keewatin. The end result of the consolidation will be the Keewatin Post doubling in size, creating a more vibrant Post and more members to draw from for Post activities. I believe they've created a win, win situation for both Posts.

I need to give credit where credit is due and the efforts put forth by Pengilly Post 8831 Quartermaster Dan Marshall to make this consolidation happen correctly and in a timely fashion need to be recognized. Dan has also has created a better understanding of a process that I personally believe we will be seeing more of as smaller Posts likely find themselves facing similar action in the not too distant future. On behalf of the District I'd like to say Thank You Dan!

As I've become involved with the consolidation of these Posts I've learned the importance of developing a relationship with all the Posts in the District and meeting as many Members of those Posts as I can. I have visited a few of our Posts at their monthly meetings and have begun contacting other Posts to possibly visit with them and see what I can offer them in the way of help with their Posts.

I look forward to the challenge before me and will endeavor to do my best for District 8!



**Julie Stoehr, Auxiliary
President Eighth District**

Greetings Auxiliary Brothers and Sisters! Here we are into a brand new year for the VFWA, and we have a lot of work ahead of us! We need new members and we need to retain our members. There is a great need to remind everyone of what being a member of the VFWA means

Yes, you read correctly, I am currently the Ninth District Commander. I previously held this position 18 years ago. I am pleased that my District has put their faith in me to elect me again.

Currently the officers are trying to get their feet on the ground and continue the great year that we just had under the leadership of Norm Huth. Thanks Norm for a great job. We are going to do a couple of things new to us this year, one is to hold a Community Service record Book training session at our October meeting. The other is to send out officers to assist posts in any problems they may be having I have encouraged posts to call on any problems. If we do not know about it, we can not help them. We definitely plan on being better in membership than we have been, I challenge our posts to do their best to obtain 100% in membership if they did not do it last year. The ones that did I hope to see you at the same level as last year, you are setting the pace for the other posts.

To all the posts in the District lets get the required assessments paid and also submit community service reports on a timely manner. You are doing the work why not get credit for it.

Lets go the Ninth and see if we can be the leaders in the state.



**Karen Haugen, Auxiliary
President Ninth District**

Greetings from the Mighty 9th.

We are excited, and ready for the new year. The Auxiliary Officers and Chairman had their organizational meeting.

Our first District meeting is October 5th in Thief River Falls. I am looking forward to hearing the reports from our Chairman and their new ideas for their programs.

Membership will be high on

and that is to support our Veterans and Families. Promote our programs, keep your ears open for Veterans and Families in distress, remember our Veterans Homes and Veterans Hospitals and those in private hospitals.

I joined the VFWA in April of 1978, became a Life Member Jan of 1987. I have been an VFW Auxiliary President for 2720, Deer River, MN 3 times and currently I am the President of VFWA 1757 Cook, MN and was District 8 VFWA President 2003-2004.

I am looking forward to this

CMR- Cont. from Page 1

We have many new and exciting opportunities this year. The Department officers will be out and about throughout the state helping the districts and posts with their needs. Community events are in the planning stages at the district levels. Training will be provided at district meetings and select posts. All posts will be invited to attend the additional training near them. The Department officers will assist the districts they have been assigned directly.

I want to congratulate Owatonna Post 3723 for the Poppies Di-

rectors award. The Auxiliary took some nice honors home as well, congratulations to Reva Swanson for VAVS Representative of the year, Twyla Bauch-Scofield for 3rd place outstanding performance award-Historian/Media Chairman, Gege Abraham for 3rd place Americanism, and Joyce Abers Best use of media. Congratulations to all of you.

This year is about Veterans and having fun. You need to enjoy what you are doing. I look forward to having a great year and working with all of you.

**Be Part of the Legislative Process to
Protect Veterans Rights and Entitlements....
PAY YOUR ANNUAL DUES or Better Yet,
Become a Life Member**

CMR- Cont. from Page 10

for all the programs. And have Posts that will be hosts for our District meetings; the first meeting will be on August 3rd at Post 6913 in Chatfield followed by the October 5th meeting in Rushford hosted by Post 5905. Our third meeting will be in Preston on 7 December hosted by Post 6893, this meeting will be the poppy judging. Our next meeting will be on 8 February at Post 1216 in Austin, this meeting will follow the Districts Memorial Services at 9AM. Our District convention & Loyalty days celebration will be on the 2nd of May at Post 1215 in Rochester. For the 29 posts

in the 1st District i look forward and expect every Post Commander to attend all District meetings. If the Commander is not able to attend please have another member of the post fill in, in your absence. Post inspections, they will begin in August after the District meeting. The inspections are an annual event and there should be no surprises. Order your Buddy Poppies, complete your community service reports and conduct your quarterly audits. Membership: Keep working on signing up those new/reinstated members and retaining your Post members. "That is all".

the priority list. We must all work to find new members. We will be working with posts to get members for both organizations. We have a couple of Auxiliaries in the 9th, where the membership is getting to a critical low point. We don't want to see them close.

My project this year is the Veterans Honor Flight. We will be raising money to take Veterans to Washington DC for a 2 day trip of a lifetime. The two-day trip starts at Arlington National Cemetery with the Changing of the Guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown. This is followed by a stop at the Iwo Jima

and the FDR Memorials. We do a drive-by the Air Force Memorial, Pentagon and the White House before travelling to the hotel for a banquet, and a good night's sleep.

Day Two starts with a breakfast followed by police escorts to the National Archives, Korean Memorial, Vietnam Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, WWII Memorial, DAV Memorial and the Navy Memorial. The final stop is the Air and Space Museum, if time allows.

year as District 8 President, numerous changes throughout the years, hopefully with the help of my Auxiliary Brothers and Sisters we can have a great year!

August 18th, 2019 is our first meeting at Cloquet Post and Auxiliary 3979. We plan on a picnic on the 17th starting at 1730 at the Veterans Memorial Park in Cloquet.

My Commander Rick Stoehr, and I are working towards buying 10 new life jackets for the Silver Bay Veterans Home, these life jackets automatically deploy when they hit the

water, it also has a manual deployment handle. This particular vest is quite compact and less cumbersome for the Veteran sitting in that wheelchair to wear. Also needed is a commercial popcorn machine, the old one quit. They also are looking into a digital sound system for the home for music. So, we start small and do what we can! One step at a time.

Remember to continue to thank our Veterans for their service, they gave their all in more ways than one!

State Convention Highlights

MINNESOTA'S MOST OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE POSTS

Post 3723 and Auxiliary Owatonna

Post 4452 and Auxiliary Cannon Falls

RECORDBOOK CONTEST

CATEGORY I

Posts with 250 Members or Less

Third Place Category I, Post 3289 and Auxiliary New York Mills

Second Place Category I – Post 8391 and Auxiliary Browerville

First Place Category I – Post 4452 and Auxiliary Cannon Falls

CATEGORY II

Posts with 251 – 500 Members

Third Place Category II – Post 6208 and Auxiliary Prior Lake

Second Place Category II – Post 7902 and Auxiliary Osakis

First Place Category II- Post 3723 and Auxiliary Owatonna

CATEGORY III

Posts with 501 or more Members

Third Place Category III – Post 5555 and Auxiliary Richfield

Second Place Category III – Post 1782 and Auxiliary White Bear Lake

First Place Category III- Post 9625 and Auxiliary Coon Rapids



POST PUBLICATIONS CONTEST

CATEGORY I

Posts with 250 Members or Less

Third Place

Post 5039 and Auxiliary Morris
"Charles Leuthard
Post & Auxiliary 5039"
Editor Helen Kill

Second Place

Post 2853 and Auxiliary Sauk Centre
"All Gave Some, Some Gave All"
Editor John Steffes

First Place

Post 1260 and Auxiliary Bemidji
"Harold Bagginstoss Post 1260"
Editor John Naastad

CATEGORY II

Posts with 251 Members & Over

Third Place

Post 494 and Auxiliary Crystal
"News & Views"
Editor Lesley Kurke

Second Place

Post 6316 and Auxiliary Blaine
"Sgt. John Rice VFW"
Editor Mary Lou Michels

First Place

Post 3915 and Auxiliary Brooklyn Park
"Palmer Lake VFW 3915"
Editor Pam Johnson

DISTRICT PUBLICATIONS CONTEST

First Place District
"Fighting 6th District News"
Sixth District VFW and Auxiliary
Dave Scofield Editor

Pictured Left to Right/Top to Bottom: J. Edgar Hoover Winner Patrol Officer Tyler Wakasugi- Brooklyn Park Police Department, Sponsored by Clarence La Belle VFW Post 217-Brooklyn Park; Department Poppy Chairmen Barry Henriksen & Carol Kratz have some fun presenting awards; Scout of the Year Hope Wiechmann Ambassador Scout (Sponsored by Winthrop Post 4078 & AUX); Owatonna Post 3723 President Stacy Burton & Commander Michael Vick accept the JM Jorgensen Poppy Trophy from Department Chairs Henriksen & Kratz; VFW Firefighter Awardee Luke Mille- City of Burnsville Fire Department, Sponsored by Glen C. Turner VFW Post 5833 St Paul, Receives Award from National Adjutant Kevin Jones; EMS Worker of the Year Mark Brandt- City of Burnsville Fire Department, Sponsored by Glen C. Turner VFW Post 5833 St Paul, Receives Award from National Adjutant Kevin Jones; Bus Driver of the Year Robert Friesen- Minniewaska Area Schools Sponsored by Starbuck VFW Post 4582, Receives Award from Safety Chairman Brian Gislason; Country Singer Connie Lee Entertained Banquet Guests at the Reception; St Cloud Mayor Dave Kleis Greeted Convention Attendees and Received a Plaque of Appreciation for Supporting Veterans- Presented by 2018-19 State Commander Tom Hanson & President Patches Presfield.



All-State Commanders

Captain of the All-State Commanders: Michael Lindvall Post 1782

| | | | |
|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| Bruce VanBeusekom | 9625 | Edward Keogh | 5340 |
| Michael Kral | 7902 | John Gohman | 4847 |
| Jay Lietzow | 7051 | Michael Harmon | 4097 |
| William Kettle | 246 | Scott Wiechmann | 1216 |
| Michael Vick | 3723 | Pete Stoltenow | 906 |
| Michael Martin | 6208 | Lyman Robinson | 4452 |
| Paul Lindahl | 9024 | William Simonette | 1803 |
| Ryan Johnson | 6992 | Chad Solheid | 7 |
| Bruce Malterud | 1260 | Treon Yost | 1720 |
| Bruce Heil | 8752 | William Kerzie | 4456 |
| Len Gudmunson | 5555 | Donald Baker | 9647 |
| Glen Skrivseth | 5919 | Donald Fernstrom | 494 |



All-State Quartermasters

| | | | |
|------------------|------|--------------------|------|
| Jerry Brletich | 9625 | Kenneth Schroeffer | 7 |
| John Lawrence | 6992 | Corey Kotek | 5340 |
| David Staehlin | 8752 | Michael Timm | 1816 |
| Wally Banks | 8729 | Herman Ebnet | 5160 |
| Duane Hermanson | 4452 | Donald Dufner | 5460 |
| Edward Speiker | 6208 | Earle Traxler | 1803 |
| Vernon Bolle S. | 5 | Mike Johnson | 7051 |
| Ross Parker | 9647 | Thomas Boris | 217 |
| Kelly Booge | 1260 | Frank Presfield | 4847 |
| Steve Kahnke | 1642 | Robert Daniel | 724 |
| Kevin Phelps | 4393 | Darrin Ewing | 9024 |
| Roland Spychalla | 8391 | David Rude | 1215 |
| Anthony Peterson | 871 | | |

State Convention Highlights Continued

BEST ARTICLE

First Place
Prior Lake VFW
Post 6208 and Auxiliary
"Veterans share experiences
at high school"
By Dan Holtmeyer
Published in the
Prior Lake American Newspaper
November 20, 2018

BUDDY POPPIES DISTRICT AWARDS

FIRST DISTRICT 100% REPORTING –
4th District

FIRST DISTRICT 100% SALES
1st District

DISTRICT WITH HIGHEST
PERCENTAGE –
123.01%
1st District

FIRST DISTRICT 100%
SALES & REPORTING-
4th District

POPPY BOOK CONTEST

Engraved J.M. Jorgensen Trophy -
Owatonna Post 3723 and Auxiliary

OUTSTANDING POST SAFETY PROGRAM

CATEGORY I

Posts with less than 100 Members

3rd Place
Post 7266 and Auxiliary
New Auburn

2nd Place
Post 4452 and Auxiliary
Cannon Falls

1st Place
Post 3289 and Auxiliary
New York Mills

CATEGORY II

Posts with 101- 300 Members

3rd Place
Post 6208 and Auxiliary
Prior Lake

2nd Place
Post 3723 and Auxiliary
Owatonna

1st Place
Post 7902 and Auxiliary
Osakis

CATEGORY III

Posts with 501 Members & Over

3rd Place
Post 3915 and Auxiliary
Brooklyn Park

2nd Place
Post 9625 and Auxiliary
Coon Rapids

1st Place
Post 1782 and Auxiliary
White Bear Lake

2019 DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA TRAVELING SAFETY AWARD

Post 1782 and Auxiliary
White Bear Lake

DONATIONS TO PHEASANTS FOR HOSPITALIZED VETERANS

Posts Donating \$500 and Up

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| Cannon Falls Post 4452 | \$500 |
| Hutchinson Post 906 | \$500 |
| Cloquet Post 3979 | \$1,000 |
| Lake City Post 8729 | \$1,000 |
| Crystal Post 494 | \$1,000 |
| Owatonna Post 3723 | \$7,000 |

OUTSTANDING POST YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

CATEGORY I

Posts with less than 100 Members

3rd Place
Post 4078 and Auxiliary
Winthrop

2nd Place
Post 1113 and Auxiliary
Virginia

1st Place
Post 6031 and Auxiliary
Arlington

CATEGORY II

Posts with 101- 300 Members

3rd Place
Post 7902 and Auxiliary
Osakis

2nd Place
Post 3289 and Auxiliary
New York Mills

1st Place
Post 4452 and Auxiliary
Cannon Falls

CATEGORY III

Posts with 301 Members & Over

3rd Place
Post 3915 and Auxiliary
Brooklyn Park

2nd Place
Post 6587 and Auxiliary
Spring Lake Park

1st Place
Post 3723 and Auxiliary
Owatonna

NATIONAL AWARD VETERANS & MILITARY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Post Certificates of Recognition
For Donations of \$100-\$1,499

VFW Post 9625 Coon Rapids Post
VFW Post 4452 Nelson-Scotfield Post

VFW Post 186 Quamme Post

VFW Post 6801
Leroy D. Holzwarth Post

VFW Post 7051 West Metro Post

VFW Post 8752 Cottage Grove Post

NATIONAL AWARD VETERANS & MILITARY SUPPORT SILVER CERTIFICATE

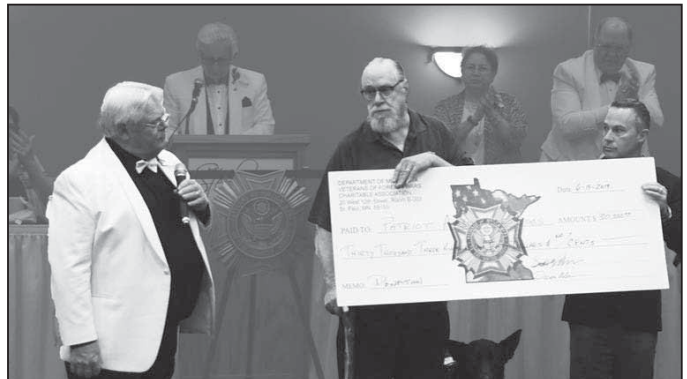
For Donations between \$30,000 -
\$59,999
Department of Minnesota



AUX HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER OF YEAR

Julie Urke
VFW Auxiliary 1403 - Benson

MNVFW Gifts \$30,000 to Patriot Assistance Dogs Program



Every year, the current State Commander chooses a program or organization to support and promote. During the 2018-19 year, then State Commander Tom Hanson chose an organization called Patriot Assistance Dogs (P.A.D.).

Throughout the year, the Department hosted various fundraisers and Parade of Check events where members, Posts and Auxiliaries could contribute to the cause.

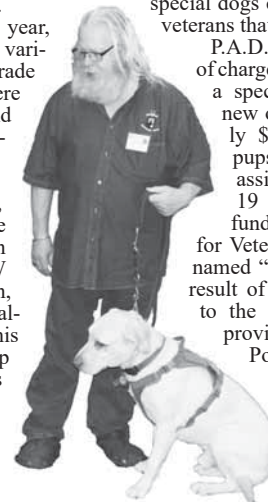
At the State Convention Banquet, June 15th, 2019, State Commander Hanson along with the MNVFW Charitable Association, presented a check totaling \$30,350; ranking this among some of the top grossing Commander's Projects to date.

Patriot Assistance Dogs is a Minnesota based organization whose Mission

Statement calls upon them to "provide highly trained, certified psychiatric service dogs to qualified U.S. Military Veterans." Those that have had the opportunity to interact with P.A.D., know the affect that these special dogs can have on the life of veterans that need assistance.

P.A.D. dogs are provided free of charge to veterans along with a special 'care' kit for the new owner. It costs roughly \$10,000 to train these pups for their honorable assignment. The 2018-19 Commander's Project funds will provide 3 dogs for Veterans. One pup will be named "U.S.S. Dochester" as a result of the \$10,000 donation to the Commander's Project provided by Monticello Post 8731.

To find out more about Patriot Assistance Dogs, visit their website at www.patriot-assistancedogs.org



Purple CrossSM

Funeral Plans for Veterans

Purple Cross has been serving America's Veterans since 1948 and continues to offer the best funeral plans available. With **Funeral Preplanning** -you: • protect your burial funds from nursing home expenses • Protect your family from financial burden in time of grief • gain peace of mind by knowing your funeral is taken care of.

Yes, I would like to know more about:

- Traditional Funeral Cost Cremation Cost
 Payment Plan Options Discount Plans

For a free **Funeral Preplanning Cost Estimate**, please return this coupon to Purple Cross, 15116 Manitou Rd NE, Prior Lake, MN 55372 or call Jerry Albrecht at 952-226-6393. **Absolutely no obligation!**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Phone: _____ Birth Date: _____

Veterans / Youth Activities

72nd Bowling Competition Results
April 6-7 & 13-14, 2019 Hosted by Cannon Falls Post #4452

1ST PLACE VFW TEAM

Post 8990 Stewartville
Actual 2380 HDCP 105
Total 2485

1ST PLACE SINGLES FOR VFW

Post 246- Ryan Neid
Actual 738 HDCP 0 Total 738

1ST PLACE DOUBLES FOR VFW

Post 246- Rick Neid & Todd Kaus
Actual 1349 HDCP 6 Total 1355

1ST PLACE IN ALL EVENTS FOR VFW

Post 8980- Brandon Gronwoldt
Actual 678 HDCP 676 674
Total 2028

1ST PLACE AUXILIARY TEAM

Auxiliary 6692 Sauk Rapids
Actual 1976 HDCP 630
Total 2606

1ST PLACE SINGLES FOR AUXILIARY

Auxiliary 6913- Cheyanne Baker
Actual 508 HDCP 174 Total 682

1ST PLACE DOUBLES FOR AUXILIARY

Auxiliary 6913- Dee Dee Himli & Debbie Finseth
Actual 1005 HDCP 225
Total 1230

1ST PLACE IN ALL EVENTS FOR AUXILIARY

Post 8371- Emily Kappel
Actual 575 HDCP 643 668

VETERANS UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Bowling April 2020
Hosted by Cannon Falls Post #4452
2021 Open for Bids at Fall Conference

Cribbage Spring 2020
Hosted by Austin Post #1216

Pistol March 23, 2020
Hosted by Elk River-Rogers Post #5516

2021 Bowling is Open for Bids at Fall Conference

Contact Your District Veterans Activity Chairman if your Post would like to Bid to Host an Event

YOUTH UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

VFW STATE HOCKEY

2020 State Tournament
March 20-22, 2020
Hosted by Thief River Falls #2793

2021 Hockey is Open for Bids at Fall Conference



FALL CONTESTS

SCHOLARSHIPS



Senior High Scholarship
(Grades 9-12)

Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Competition

ENTER: Students write & record a 3-5 minute essay addressing this year's theme "Why My Vote Matters" (See Application for Details- VFW General Order or at <http://www.mn-vfw.org/voice-of-democracy>)

AWARDS: \$30,000 National Winner & Free Trip to Washington D.C.; \$\$ and MPLS Hotel stay for District Winner; \$ for Local Winner

DEADLINE: Entries due to local V.F.W. Post by October 31 each year

Middle School Scholarship
(Grades 6-8)

Patriot's Pen Essay Competition

ENTER: Students write a 300-400 word typed essay addressing this year's theme "Why I Honor the American Flag"

(See Application for Details- VFW General Order or at <http://www.mn-vfw.org/patriot-pen>)

DEADLINE: Entries due to local V.F.W. Post by October 31 each year

COMMUNITY



VFW Teacher of the Year
(See Your VFW Post or VFW General Orders for Details)

This award contest recognizes three exceptional teachers for their outstanding commitment to teaching Americanism and patriotism to their students. Each year, a classroom elementary, junior high and high school teacher whose curriculum focuses on citizenship education topics.

(See Nomination Form for Details- VFW General Orders or <http://www.vfw.org/TeacheroftheYear/>)

AWARDS: In addition to local, District & State Awards, National Winners receive:

- A \$1,000 award for professional development expenses.
- A \$1,000 award for his/her school.
- Two award plaques: one for the teacher, the other for his/her school.
- An all-expenses-paid trip to attend a VFW national conference to receive their award.

DEADLINE: Entries due to local V.F.W. Post by October 31 each year

Contests for Winter 2019-20

VFW:

Law Enforcement - EMT - Fire Fighter - Bus Driver

Contests for Winter 2019-20

AUXILIARY:

*Young American Creative Patriotic Art (Grades 9-12)
NEW! Illustrating America (Grades K-8)*

*Watch for Details in the Monthly General Orders,
Winter Edition of the Gopher Oversea'r and on the
Department Websites:*

www.mnvwf.org & mnvfwauxiliary.org



2019 - 2020 Voice of Democracy Theme

"What Makes America Great"



2019 - 2020 Patriot's Pen Theme

"What Makes America Great"

Entries are Due to Local V.F.W. Posts by October 31st, 2019





WHAT...



Why Report Community Service Work?

DEFINED:

VFW & Auxiliary Community Service is the vehicle by which we pursue part of the Organizational Mission: "To serve our veterans, the military and our communities. To advocate on behalf of all veterans."

Why Perform & Track Community Service?

Community Service is the best source of positive publicity the VFW has.

By serving our communities we accomplish several goals:

- 1) We live up to our VFW Constitution
- 2) We provide valuable services to many areas of our community
- 3) We benefit from a favorable impression of our organization by the community
 - 4) We attract new members
 - 5) We build pride among our members
- 6) It's good for our health, people involved in Community Service are happier people and tend to live longer.

We can't conduct our programs without those members who generously contribute their time and talent; conversely if we don't live up to the goals and objectives of our own constitution, we have very little reason to exist as an organization.

Why Report Our Community Service Work?

EVERY Community Service Report Form that is sent into Department HQ IS READ and ALL hours, monies and volunteer counts ARE LOGGED.

This information is then provided to VFW National Headquarters.

The data collected from the Reports not only satisfy certain IRS requirements from which we benefit, but also helps us to quantify what we contribute to our communities. This not only helps us understand how we are completing our Mission, but can be helpful in other efforts including communicating what we do to our Legislators and even as data included in grants the Post may wish to pursue.

Who Should complete Community Service Reports?

EVERY Post should COMPLETE & RETURN a Community Service Report from to VFW Department Headquarters EVERY MONTH.

This report can and should include work performed by BOTH VFW Members & Auxiliary.

Completing Community Service helps our Communities, helps our Members, Helps our Organization and Honors those Veterans & Military that have fought for us to have the ability to do so.

CS - from Page 3

would not be considered community service. Example of this would be flying of the American Flag, and conducting Flag retirement programs (unless this is performed for the entire community).

TAKE SPECIAL NOTE:

HOURS: When the Post reports to the Department, they should list the hours of community service performed by the Post, affiliated Aux-

iliary and Military Order of the Coonies for that reporting period. Only volunteer service hours benefiting the community are to be reported.

Volunteer hours committed to projects and activities benefiting the Post and its affiliated units listed above cannot be reported.

MONEY: The money that should be reported are the dollars donated or expended by the members in the performance of the community service hours reported, plus \$.14 per mile for each mile driven by the volunteers.

TRAUMA - from Page 5

to deal with capacity, priorities, and special missions. With the switch to the NWQ, VA eliminated the specialized training and Special Operations Lanes. Doing so has caused dire consequences for veterans. The OIG report concurs with the VFW that VBA needs to process MST-related claims with a specialized group of VSRs and RVSRs.

A review of claims before they are finalized is another avenue that VBA can take to ensure that MST-related claims are being adjudicated correctly. VBA compensation services has Quality Review Teams (QRT) and Systematic Technical Accuracy Review (STAR) teams who exist to maintain quality control. Starting in 2011, STAR teams began reviewing MST-related claims. From 2011 through 2015 the error rate for these claims dropped and, as a result, the STAR teams stopped their reviews of MST-related claims in December 2015. The VFW has seen a correlation between the elimination of such quality reviews and an increase in error rates. This is why the VFW strongly believes that adding a layer of review before claims are finalized is absolutely necessary to ensure that MST victims are not victimized again by sloppy VA work products. The OIG concurs as they made the same recommendation.

Training of VSRs and RVSRs is imperative to proper implementation of VBA policy and new laws. VBA had four training modules on the topic of MST claims. However, the OIG found that the training had not been updated since 2014, even though VA had made changes to the Adjudication Procedures Manual. How are VSRs and RVSRs supposed to accurately adjudicate a claim when the information they have is outdated? The VFW believes they cannot effectively do their jobs when they are not given the proper tools. The VFW has stated before and will continue to press the fact that exact and consistent training will result in better claims outcomes for veterans and VA. It is important to note that errors in claims processing cost VA time and money—resources that VA does not have to waste.

MST coordinators play a vital role in the ability of veterans to provide all the evidence they may have in support of their claims. MST coordinators are supposed to contact the veteran via telephone when they file an MST-related claim. They do this to find out if the veteran ever reported the assault while they were still in the service, if they did report it, to find out where, and then determine how to collect that evidence. The OIG report found that 11 percent of the erroneously decided claims were because

the MST coordinator did not contact the veteran or the VSR did not send a letter asking for the same information.

Such inaction by MST coordinators and VSRs is unacceptable. The VFW does not believe that these coordinators just decided not to do their job. The VFW is concerned that MST coordinator positions are either vacant or are a collateral duty for VA employees. We found that the listed MST coordinator for Washington, D.C., is also the person the VFW's Washington staff is supposed to contact for our Personal Identity Verification cards. Since there is trauma with these types of claims, it is imperative that VA ensure MST coordinators are able to fully focus on that role.

The OIG report found that 49 percent of MST claims had been erroneously adjudicated. The question at hand is how will VA remedy the injustice of depriving claimants of benefits and causing them to suffer because of erroneous decisions? The VFW would like to see VA expeditiously review the claims that were erroneously decided and offer veterans the ability to have their claims adjudicated correctly. This process is called equitable relief, which is a legal remedy that authorizes the Secretary to correct an injustice. VA has not announced whether it will apply equitable relief to impacted veterans. It has done so in the past when more than 24,000 veterans were evaluated for traumatic brain injury by unqualified medical examiners, and it should do so for these veterans.

The VFW has been told that VBA will review these claims. The VFW has reached out to VBA to find out if this process has started, but has yet to receive an answer. Has VA even notified the incorrectly adjudicated claimants that their claims were erroneous? These veterans were traumatized at the time of their assaults and many were traumatized when filing their claims by having to relay the assault information. The VFW is concerned that inaccurate claims decisions related to MST may lead to additional psychological harm to MST victims.

The VFW is confident that VA has the ability to correctly adjudicate these claims. This is evident in the fact that claims errors were reduced when the STAR team was involved. It is encouraging to see that VA is working to modernize and update its disability claims process.

The VFW is aware of the challenges VA faces in taking care of our nation's veterans. This year VFW is celebrating 100 years of directly assisting veterans in obtaining their earned benefits, and looks forward to another century of working with VA to ensure that we take care of those who have worn our nation's uniform.

Remember those 'lonely' days during your Military Service...

Many of our Veterans are having those 'lonely days' in our VA Medical Centers and Nursing Homes...

Give them some of YOUR time. Visit a VA Medical Center or Nursing Home

Timely Tidbits

Year-End Community Service Book Contest Simplified

A NEW 'Event Tracking Form' has been released by the Department this year. This option provides a SIMPLER WAY to track your Post/Auxiliary Community Service Activities!

Simply use the handy EVENT TRACKING FORM each time an event is run, to RECORD THE DETAILS of the event. Place the COMPLETED FORM IN A BINDER that can then become the BASIS FOR AN OUTSTANDING CS RECORD BOOK CONTEST ENTRY... It's just that easy!

Beyond that, the form could be used to track your event planning, volunteer needs and expenditures so that any New Chairman for the event knows what was done in the Past and can continue the task successfully into the future. If you have any schedules, planning lists, tournament brackets or other documentation that may be helpful to others in the future,

please attach them when completing this form.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- 1) This does *NOT* replace the monthly Community Service Report Forms that should be completed.
- 2) A year's collection of these forms can quantify and detail all of your Post & Auxiliary Activities and can be submitted in lieu of the elaborate "Scrapbook" type books previously completed for the Annual CS RECORD BOOK CONTEST for Department Awards.
- 3) **HOWEVER, To be Considered for the NATIONAL Community Service Post Award** (two awarded to Minnesota), **you MUST prepare the Traditional Record Book** (Scrapbook) as outlined in the Contest Guidelines.

For More Information, please visit our website, watch your General orders or call VFW Headquarters.



Letters to the Editor

July 1st, 2019

To all: As of 12:01 am today the 2018-2019 VFW year officially ended. I wanted to take the opportunity to convey my thanks to each and every one of you for your efforts on behalf of the Department of Minnesota this past year. Without any one of you our successes wouldn't have become realities.

It has been said many times that a successful leader surrounds himself with great people, that is certainly true in this instance. I am so proud of this Department! It has been a long time since this Department has had 6 Districts at 100% in membership and obviously been a 100% Department! The Department achieved 100% in Community Service reporting, Poppy sales, and a number of other programs. The monetary recoveries by our Claims Service Office reached an all-time high along with the number of veterans and family members served.

I'm simply so grateful to have been a part of such a gratifyingly successful TEAM - you are all to be commended and I want you to be reassured your efforts didn't go unnoticed. I trust this is just the beginning of a new trend for the Department of Minnesota VFW and that you have set a mark for future administrations.

-Tom Hanson
Past State Commander 2018-19

Judge - from Page 3

least one meeting in each of our nine districts, please introduce yourself as I look forward to meeting everyone who is actively engaged in serving veterans and their families.

There were by-law changes passed at National Convention that will be incorporated in a new National By-laws and Manual of Procedure which will be available later this fall. I encourage each post and district to purchase the new version and familiarize yourself with those changes as well as confirming whether or not changes are needed with post and district by-laws to remain in compliance. As you prepare for your annual post and district inspections, please ensure you also have current copies of the Department By-laws, District and Post By-laws.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars adopted Robert's Rules of Order to govern parliamentary procedure. I encourage all Post Commanders and District Commanders to become familiar with Robert's Rules of Order as they pertain to the conduct of our meetings.



WORD SEARCH #5

Campaign/Service Medals

For a full list of campaign medals that qualify an individual for VFW membership, please consult Section 101 of the VFW Manual of Procedure or visit www.vfw.org/eligibility

R E D R O B D L O G Y R A N O I T I D E P X E E C R O F R I A
S M R N Y L R R Y L V N C H I N A N Z W L Z R L L N L Y B G X
S C J O X R R B T Z M Q Y A I S A T S E W H T U O S R R J Y D
B O Z Z P T A T L J G P T L T M D T T M Z Q L T Q A L R N D M
N M D E N E J N X Q R Q R M Y T X X Z M Q M G W N G Z K G D R
D B R D S J A B O Y J B M R T T M M R G Y M D O X N Q L Q T Y
E A R N Z N Y N N I Y P T M D C R Q B Y D V I R N J O B N L N
T T R L T J E M A Q T N A N K K O N Z Q M T J K L B R K R M D
E A B V Z J R F R F A I B S R N M M W W I W N G A G G G K L B
R C W R D N Y W E F R B D B I X Z L B D Z O N L Z A Q M R J Z
R T D D X D R D N D J I M E P A P W E A I G W M F M J B K J N
E I L L Y D R I Z X N T C Y P J T P B T T A Z G Q T L L D R T
N O M D Y B T I K R V A M A V X X I A T R M H K Q K J K J L Q
T N X L G A X N N N B N C Y N E E P C O L A E M T X W R M T K
P W D M B B V H W Z B L M I S M U Y N P N P N D D R Y Q R D
A Q X M P R W E R D R J P E R C I T V I A M D Y I B B R B D J
T B O P D N J R D T Y W C X C E E D S A Q C N W L C M N N M Q
R C T W T W L E D B K R G O Y R M T D B N L I D J G A L L G J
O W M J Q W N N B R O Y Y X R R A A M L K M Y F L J W L N P B
L X N D L M Y T K F T V Q O Z N D G X Y E L X J I J W T D G W
I L K D K J N R D O A B R Z Y R D M G N K E J Y L C D D L Q R
N T Y M J A P E T N R I K O R E A D U T Y N A C I R E M A T W
S M B Q E N M S M V S E Y N K X J J T M Q M O S Z R N Y G P L
I B B R M R T O Y M I Y A L J R J B R A T V L K T N L N L Q W
G N O K A J D L Q Y Q E M D Z M T V R M O Y T D B E J R Q G D
N K W Y N T J V T D B M T D E V N I X S R R R R L L R L G T P
I Q J B P Y Z E K N B R Z N V F L B O J Y Y Y P P R G N N Z R
A W G K L W M L Z L D Y V Q A Z E K N X Y K N Z V Q M R N K X
Y K R M Y D D R X J P L M P G M D N Q V B D N R D P M Z J B J
G Z V Z V N D T D B Y N T J D Y P N S R X X B M R B V Q K L R
G D N V G P Z L B T Y B Y J K R R J R E W L D K M T B L W G K

China
American Defense
European African Middle Eastern
American
Asiatic Pacific
Navy Occupation
Korean
Navy Expeditionary

Vietnam
Armed Forces Expeditionary
Southwest Asia
Kosovo
Combat Infantryman
Combat Medical
Combat Action
SSBN Deterrent Patrol Insignia

Korea Defense
Global War on Terrorism
Afghanistan
Iraq
Inherent Resolve
Korea Duty
Air Force Expeditionary Gold Border

Want To See Your Name In Lights?!?
Well, not exactly, but if you choose to Sponsor a winner's award for the Dept. of MN Voice of Democracy & Patriot's Pen contest...

We WILL highlight your Post's name in the Midwinter Conference Book and Midwinter Banquet Book

Prize Sponsorship Opportunities:
Available Levels of \$2,000, \$600, \$500, \$300, \$100 (3)

To Sponsor a Prize, please discuss this at your next meeting and then contact Department Headquarters to lock-in your Sponsorship level.
Contact Melody at VFW State Headquarters 651-291-1757

DEADLINE: December 1st to Sponsor Awards for Midwinter 2019

Fine Print: You may sponsor a full award or awards can be split between two awards. Only one award would be listed in the award list. Sponsorship of specific award levels will be on a first come, first serve basis. If you decide not to bid, we would like to assign you to the level immediately below your first bid level length of sponsorship. For example, if you sponsor \$500 for as long as your group finds comfortable... during 2-5 year commitments, however, 1 year commitments are also appreciated.

The VFW Charitable Association

Raffle Calendar is Now Available

This Calendar features the Minnesota VFW & Auxiliary Minnesota VFW & Auxiliary Programs Share the commitment and services we provide to our veterans, active duty, citizens and youth...

They sell for only \$20 each and your Post or Auxiliary will receive \$5 back for each Calendar sold...
Order your Calendars now- Email: mnvfwcharitable@gmail.com or Call 651-291-1757
To purchase a copy for yourself, contact your nearest VFW Post

Looking for a Program that's Educational AND Entertaining?

Fundraising for THE BOYS OF '61!
(Minnesota's Civil War Veterans Memorial)

If you are looking for program opportunities for special events at your post, consider having Historical Experiences bring a history program to your membership. These entertaining programs are educational and patriotic. You can chose from a number of topics including:

**THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
MINNESOTA IN THE CIVIC WAR
MINNESOTA IN THE GREAT WAR (WWI)
MINNESOTA IN WORLD WAR II
THE U.S.S WARD: MINNESOTA FIRES THE FIRST SHOT IN WWII**

The cost of each program is a \$550 donation to the BOY'S OF '61, plus mileage to your post and back from the speaker's residence in Mankato, MN. (Current IRS mileage rate is \$.545 per mile.) This fee will be donated to the BOY'S of 61, which is Minnesota's memorial to the men from this state who went off to war to save the Union. The BOY'S OF '61 is a non-profit organization dedication to the building of a memorial to all of Minnesota's Civil War veterans. For more information on programming to go to the website at...

historicalexperiences.org
or contact the presenter at...
arnkind@historicalexperiences.org
For more information on THE BOYS OF '61 see:
https://www.minnesotaboys61.org/

Schedule your program today and help build Minnesota's BOYS of '61 Memorial!

MINNESOTA VFW CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has been 'fighting' for Veterans since 1899. We have worked endlessly to gain the Benefits and Entitlements that Our Veterans deserve. For over 116 years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has spent millions of dollars and hours to Educate our Youth and build our Communities in the areas of Patriotism, Americanism and those things that are RIGHT for the United States of America. The members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars have placed their 'bodies and minds' between the enemies of this Great Nation to preserve the American way and the FREEDOM of not only the United States, but other nations as well.

With that said, the Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars Charitable Association (MN VFW Charitable Association) is asking that you remember this Sacrifice through your Gift Giving and Donations.

There are a number ways that you can Preserve the Memory of the Sacrifices of our Veterans for now and the future:

- Using the form attached, Donate to the VFW Charitable Association.
- * Establish a monthly or annual deduction to the MN VFW Charitable Association from your checking account or credit card.
- * Designate your Donation to a Charitable Trust in the name of the MN VFW Charitable Association.
- * Establish a Charitable Gift Annuity to the MN VFW Charitable Association.
- * Simply make a donation to the MN VFW Charitable Association.
- * Donate to the VFW Outdoor Fund.
- * Donate through the MN VFW Charitable Association Annual Raffle Calendar.

We certainly Appreciate the Consideration of the MN VFW Charitable Association in your Gift Giving Plans. Your Donation will ensure the future of the Programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

For more information, please contact the Treasurer of the MN VFW Charitable Association at 651-291-1757 or email us at mnvfwcharitable@gmail.com or by writing to: VFW Charitable Association, 20 W. 12th St., Room B-5, St. Paul, MN 55155

The MN VFW Charitable Association is a 501-c-3 Charitable Organization under IRS Code.

Mail your Donation to: MN VFW Charitable Association, Rice Street Station, P.O. Box 17146, St. Paul, MN 55117

Please send more information about the MN VFW Charitable Association, its purpose and Programs.

Please accept my Tax Deductible Donation of: \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other: _____

Would you like to be an ANNUAL Donor? _____ (Yes or No)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Earmark for one of the following: _____ General Un-designated

_____ VFW Outdoor Fund _____ Veterans Service _____ VFW Programs