

# GOPHER OVERSEAS

Volume 73, NO. 3 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Official Publication to More Than 45,000 Members of the Department of Minnesota October 2019 - January 2020

## 117th Midwinter Conference... National Speaker, Blood Drive & Gold Star Mom

The Department of Minnesota's 117th Midwinter Conference has a great deal in store for all members that attend. The event will be held January 17-19, 2020, at the Minneapolis Marriott City Center Hotel... Our Midwinter "Home" for roughly 30 years now where we're treated like family.

As always, we try to provide a well rounded weekend with something for everyone... This year is no exception. Friday bring our first Blood Drive in over a decade. In addition to our VFW and Auxiliary National Representatives that join us for the weekend, we are bringing in some special speakers and opportunities that you won't want to miss!

### Special Guests

During the Conference, the VFW will welcome National Representative and Past National Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera (1995-1996) and the Auxiliary will host the current National Ambassador of Leadership/Mentoring Jane Ziebarth. You can find their Bios elsewhere in this paper.

In an effort to provide a supportive topic that is relevant to ALL of our Posts, our Department Officers have invited Lynn Rolf, VFW National Director of Programs. Mr. Rolf will address the VFW attendees in a Saturday morning session about how to Conduct & Sustain VFW Programs. VFW Programs are the

heart of what we do to help Veterans and their families... not to mention a key to how our communities view our Organization. You will learn about the 'must-have' programs, how to effectively pursue them and how to quantify & evaluate your efforts. This session should be attended by any and all VFW members.

The MNVFW Charitable Association is bringing in Gold Star mother, speaker and author Jill Stephenson. This presentation will be available to both VFW and Auxiliary members Saturday afternoon. Jill Stephenson's only child, Army Ranger CPL Ben Kopp was KIA in 2009. Ben saved six of his

Continued on Page 12



2019-20 State  
Commander

Chad Solheid

Member of  
VFW Post 7  
Minneapolis, MN

Hello Comrades, my family and I would like to wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas. Midwinter Conference is fast approaching and I hope to see all of you there in January. This will be a time to meet the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen winners and find out who will be going to Washington D.C. in March 2020. The students have put a lot of hard work into this and deserve a big congratulations.

The Department line officers and chairman have been very busy helping those posts and districts that have asked. We have had several training sessions in different districts with great results. In the years I've been attending the various district meetings, this is the first time that 100% of the Post Commanders were in attendance- Congratulations to the 4th District! There is no reason that all nine districts can't reach this goal every time.

We are falling behind on membership. We are behind by over 3,000 members from this time last year. At this rate we will fall below 30,000 members by the end of June.

Continued on Page 10

## Past State Commander Braun Passes at Age 94

Past State Commander Ralph Braun, 94, of Sauk Centre, passed away peacefully on August 27, 2019 at Sauk Centre Centra Care Nursing Care Center in Sauk Centre.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church in Sauk Centre. Interment with Military Honors, took place at Calvary Cemetery, Sauk Centre.

Ralph was born on February 16, 1925 to Edward and Katherine (Wengler) Braun in Elrosa, Minnesota. Ralph married Mary Ann Wiebolt on October 13, 1947. Ralph owned and operated Albany Home Bakery and later, Ralph's Home Bakery, Sauk Centre until his retirement in 1985.

Ralph joined the Navy in



PDC  
Ralph Braun  
(1971-1972)

1943 and Proudly served his Country during World War II. During his service in the Navy, Ralph learned the Art of Pastry Cooking, sort of by accident. He was assigned to other duties on the ship, when there was an opening in the ships Bakery. After the Navy, the skills Ralph acquired paid big dividends toward his civilian career.

Ralph served through the Chairs of Sauk Centre VFW Post 2853, the VFW Sixth District and the Department of Minnesota VFW. He served as VFW State Commander in 1971 - 1972.

Ralph was an active member of the Jaycees, American Legion Post 67, Stearns County HRA, the Lions

Continued on Page 5

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## Save The Date!! Upcoming VFW Events

Midwinter Conference  
January 17 - 19, 2020  
Minneapolis Marriott

National Legislative  
& Voice of Democracy  
Conference  
March 1-5, 2020  
Washington, D.C.

Watch the  
General Orders  
or visit  
[www.mnvfw.org](http://www.mnvfw.org)

MN Veterans  
Day on the Hill  
April 2020

VFW State Hockey  
Tournament  
March 20-22, 2020  
Thief River Falls

State Convention  
June 3-7, 2020  
Plymouth

\*\*Red Events are Department Events\*\*

## Top News

### Department Partners with American Income Life

#### **\$3,500 FREE BENEFIT**

The Council of Administration has approved the Department to enter into a partnership with American Income Life (AIL). We had previously worked with them and are again pleased to provide Minnesota VFW Members with a FREE Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefit valued at \$3,500 available to everyone as of September 24, 2019.

Over the coming months, AIL will be sending out information to our members announcing this coverage. Members will also have the opportunity to purchase additional coverage by replying to these mailings. Members are under NO obligation to discuss or purchase additional coverage.

Members should note that arrangements such as this DO NOT involve the provision or selling of your information. The Department of Minnesota VFW retains direct control of all membership information.

#### *A Message from American Income Life:* **New Member Benefits at No Cost for the Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars**

Through a partnership with American Income Life Insurance Company, new benefits are being provided to all Department of Minnesota members.

Please look for a letter in your mailbox that has more information. Make sure to return the reply card.

Benefits include a group Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefit, Health Services Discount Card and Child Safe Kits.

An AIL representative will contact members who return the reply card to arrange a convenient time to deliver their benefits and review other supplemental insurance benefits that may be available.

**Learn more at [www.aillife.com/benefits/sgoig](http://www.aillife.com/benefits/sgoig)**

The American Income Life Insurance Company Public Relations Representative is Erica Dalager, Cell: 605-228-4234

### MN VFW 100th Anniversary: Planning Underway

The Veterans of Foreign Wars- Department of Minnesota celebrates its Centennial Celebration on January 17, 2021. In order to honor all of the great work our Department has done over the last 100 years, we have begun planning for a year of celebration when 2021 rolls around. The process began at the 2019 Fall Conference and will continue through the next twelve months and into our Anniversary year.

Members of our VFWs and Auxiliaries have been meeting and compiling some great ideas. Concepts range from community celebrations to District events and from famous guest entertainment to statewide community proclamations naming January 17, 2021 as "Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars Day".

Now we are at the point where we need committees and volunteers to bring these ideas to fruition. Please look for announcements in THIS newspaper, future General Orders and at your District Meetings as we search for helpers, historical information and resources.

Current tasks include an open meeting 3:15 pm, Friday afternoon at the Midwinter Conference for anyone interested in helping. Everyone is welcome whether you want to chair a committee or simply listen. Please see the AD in this newspaper for meeting details.

The other item on our agenda right now is to establish a logo that will represent the Minnesota VFW and our 100 years of serving Minnesota Veterans, their Families and our Communities. For information on the 100th Anniversary Logo Contest, please see page 14.

We are very excited about all of the opportunities ahead of us and hope that everyone is able to take an active part in the celebration!

### VFW/AUX National Officers Set to Visit Minnesota

December 29, 2019

**National Commander-in-Chief William "Doc" Schmitz** will be attending Post 295 South St Paul's 100th Anniversary Celebration

SAVE THE DATE: March 6th, 2020

**National President Peggy Haake** will visit Minnesota... Details to be Announced

### Minnesota VFW Office Locations

#### **Department Headquarters:**

Ken Schroeffer, Adjutant  
Jerry Brletich, Quartermaster  
Melody Shryock, Office Manager  
B5 Veterans Service Building  
20 West 12th Street  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
Phone: (651) 291-1757  
Fax: (651) 291-2753  
Email: [vfwmnoffice@vfwmn.us](mailto:vfwmnoffice@vfwmn.us)  
Webpage: [www.mnvfw.org](http://www.mnvfw.org)

#### **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

#### **Auxiliary Headquarters :**

Veterans Service Building  
20 West 12th Street- 3rd Floor  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
Phone: (651) 291-1759  
Fax: (651) 291-7932

#### **Minneapolis VA**

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

*Have a Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!!!*

## January Blood Drive

### VFW Department of Minnesota Hosting Blood Drive



**January 17th, 2020**  
11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



at  
**Midwinter Conference**

Deer Room- 4th Floor  
Minneapolis Marriott City Center  
30 South 7th Street, Minneapolis 55402

**Volunteers are NEEDED the day of to help with donor check-in...**  
Please call VFW HQ to volunteer.

#### **Pre-Register Online:**

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive>  
or Call VFW State HQ 651-291-1757

**Help Us Save Lives During this Critical Time of the Year**

## GOPHER OVERSEAS'R

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#### **Publications Committee:**

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

The Gopher Overseas'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 March 25, July 25, and November 25, 2020

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

As of this writing we are about halfway through our year and things are going well.

Our next upcoming event will be the Midwinter conference at the Minneapolis Marriott City Center Hotel on January 17th -19th.

I'd like to address some of our programs that are already underway for this year. The end of October saw the deadlines for Teacher of the Year, Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen. I hope that everyone took the opportunity to get the word out promoting these programs and submit their entries.

I would also like to make mention of the Safety Program; this program is a great way for us to honor our local Firefighters, Police and Bus drivers by nominating those individuals who perform above and beyond the call of duty for their communities.

Additionally, I want to remind everyone to promote the Poppy Program and keep in mind all that it stands for. Remember; every day can be poppy day.

I mention these programs because they are a vital part of our organization. They promote awareness not only amongst ourselves but to the members of our communities this draws attention to the good works that we do and encourages everything from participation to membership.

This past weekend Barry Henderson and I attended the 133rd Air Guard Holiday Dinner and signed up 11 new members. It really is as easy as starting a conversation with other members of your communities and at local events to find eligible and interested people to join us. As of this writing we are currently 88% for membership so far this year. Bear in mind that membership is our most important lifeline in this organization, without it we could not exist and consider that if every member could sign up just one new member that would double our numbers.

Best wishes to everyone and a happy holiday season!

## Junior Vice Commander

By Barry Henriksen, State Senior Vice Commander

It has been a lot of fun traveling around the state visiting posts and districts. The hospitality has been fabulous. What has really stuck out has been the post membership dinners that I have attended. Brooklyn Park, North St. Paul and Blaine had fabulous events. The food was excellent and so were the programs. All three posts recognized their volunteers and awarded pins to their members for membership of up to 50 years. Both North St. Paul and Blaine had their Mayor's present for the program. They both spoke which was a great way to show the relationship between the post and the city. I encourage every post to have a membership event and involve the community.

At Midwinter I look forward to seeing as many members as possible. We will have some great breakout sessions with important information and camaraderie. And please attend the Midwinter Banquet. These gifted Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen students have done a wonderful job and deserve a full room.



**VFW National  
Representative**

**Paul A. Spera**

**Past National  
Commander-in-Chief  
1995-1996**

Paul A. Spera of Attleboro, Mass., was elected Commander-in-Chief at the 96th national convention in Phoenix, Ariz. on Aug. 25, 1995. He was the seventh native of the Bay State to be elected to this high office.

Spera, an Army veteran, earned his eligibility in Nha Trang Vietnam from 1965-1966. Upon returning home, he was stationed

at Fort Ritchie, Md., where he was part of an equipment installation team, until his discharge.

Joining in 1966, while still in Vietnam, he remains a member of Post 144 in Boston, Mass., and currently serves as the Post Quartermaster.

Upon discharge, he attended Northeastern University where he studied business administration. He then went to work for the Department of Labor's Jobs for Veterans program. He also was assistant service officer for the Department of Massachusetts from 1977-79.

He was named the "Outstanding Veteran of the Year" by the National Alliance of Businessmen and served on the Massachusetts and Attleboro memorial committees.

In 2001, he received a Presidential appointment as a special assistant to then Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Anthony Principi. He is currently retired from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.

He and his wife Joanne have five children and four grandsons.

## Immediate Call for Donations:

### ***MN National Guard Helicopter Crash Victims***

Minnesota V.F.W. and the MNVFW Charitable Association are calling for donations to assist the families of the Minnesota National Guard Helicopter crash that occurred Thursday, December 5th.

According to a Minnesota press conference, three (3) soldiers from the Minnesota National Guard were killed when a UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter from the Minnesota National Guard Army Aviation Support facility downed southwest of St Cloud.

**All Members, Posts, Districts and others are encouraged to send donations by**

**January 31st, 2020**

**Make Checks Payable to:**  
*Minnesota VFW Charitable Association*

**Please earmark donations:**  
*'Help Families 1252019'*

**Mail to:**  
Minnesota VFW Charitable Association  
Veterans Service Building, Suite B5  
20 West 12th Street West  
St Paul, MN 55155

**All contributions will be sent to the families of the crash victims.**

Prayers go out to the families and those affected by this devastating accident.

Sincerely,

~Department of Minnesota VFW Line Officers

~MNVFW Charitable Association Board Officers

## WWII Veteran Honored

By Ken Schroeffer, State Adjutant

On December 8, 2019, Wilton Rasmussen, 100 year old WWII veteran and member of VFW Post 1296, was presented with a commemorative WWII medal and the Norway Defence Medal by Norwegian Ambassador Kåre R. Aas.

He served with the US Army as part of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), predecessor to the CIA, in a Norwegian operational unit known as NORSO II. Wilton, a demolition expert, along with other OSS troops blew up bridges and roads to impede the Germans' pursuit of obtaining heavy water, a crucial ingredient in the production of a Nazi atomic bomb.

To read more about Wilton's exploits, visit the Mpls. Star Tribune at <http://www.startribune.com/norwegian-ambassador-honors-100-year-old-ww-ii-veteran-in-fridley/565954101/>



# Minnesota Auxiliary News



**STATE PRESIDENT**  
**VFW Auxiliary**  
 Francesca  
 "Frankie" Bill

Member of  
 VFW Post 3915 Auxiliary  
 Brooklyn Park, MN



Comrades and Members, here we are midway through the 2019/2020 program year. As the expression goes; "Time flies when you're having fun!" The Department of Minnesota Auxiliary has been hard at work helping each of the 150 Auxiliaries across the state to recruit, rejoin, and retain members. We remain steadfast and have shifted the membership focus to invite, include, and invest. This means everyone is inviting others to join and including all members. This way, we are investing in our membership and the future of the organization right here in Minnesota.

My special project has raffle tickets available to help fund 23rd VETERAN. This is a chance to win huge, cash prizes at \$25 apiece and sponsor a great Veteran's program. Tickets are printed four (4) to a sheet or \$100. Your donation may be sent to Department Treasurer, Laurie Dale. A 'Parade of Checks' will be held during the Midwinter Conference Banquet to support 23rd VETERAN, a non-profit Veterans' organization whose mission is to help rehabilitate Veterans suffering from PTSD. Thanks to the Department of Minnesota, VFW for allowing the Auxiliary this opportunity to be a part of their event at both the Mid-Winter Conference and Department Convention banquets. Please make checks payable to the Department of Minnesota, VFW Auxiliary and earmark your donation "23rd VETERAN."

The Department Office has upgraded the Minnesota VFW Auxiliary website. Department Computer Advisor, Dave Scofield will provide an overview during the Midwinter Conference. We look forward to your feedback on the new security features where each member can access key information relevant to MN, i.e., rosters, program book, yearend reports, inspection calendar.

Please join me at the Mid-Winter Conference in Minneapolis. We will hear an update from each of the 11 program chairs, recognize Auxiliary Presidents, and conduct ongoing business imperative to our Department Auxiliary activities. *"Together, with Vigor and Might"*

## New National Program: Illustrating America

The National VFW Auxiliary announced a NEW program starting during the 2019-2020 year: The Illustrating America Art Contest. This program facilitates artistic and patriotic exploration in students from kindergarten through eighth grade.

### Minnesota Art Initiative

While this is a newly launched program on the National level, it echoes a Minnesota initiated effort... The Patriotic Art Explorers Contest. In 2013, 7th District Auxiliary Youth Activities Chair Melody Shryock proposed a state-wide art contest for middle school students. Shryock observed that there were Americanism drawing and collage activities for Grade School Students and the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Program for High School Students. "However," she noted, "there was a critical connection missing during the very formative middle school years."

The VFW writing contests provide the middle school Patriot's Pen Contest to facilitate written and oral skills, preparing students for the Voice of Democracy Scholarship Competition in high school. "It only makes sense that we continue to encourage artistically inclined youth during middle school as well," Shryock stated. Supported by then State Auxiliary President Laurie Dale (2013-14) and Department Youth Activities Chair Jaimie Cassavant, Shryock founded the Patriotic Art Explorers Program to provide continuity in Auxiliary programming. Since its inception, it serves not only as a 'feeder' program for the High School contest, but facilitates patriotic expression on all levels throughout Minnesota.

### National's New Art Contest

This past fall, National Auxiliary Programs announced the NEW Illustrating America Art Contests. A patriotic art contest for elementary and middle/junior high school students that encourages students' artistic abilities and rewards their hard work. As the application notes, "It's fun to see how our youth see the world through their drawings and paintings." The contest consists of three entry divisions: K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. National will present awards to the top three entries in each of these contest levels. This is in addition to awards that will be provided on the local Auxiliary, District and Department levels.

### A Vision Realized?

Minnesota has run their Patriotic Art Explorers Program since 2013 with the ultimate goal of having the contest instituted throughout the Country as a National VFW Auxiliary Program. Could the new Auxiliary Illustrating America Contest be this objective coming to fruition? We don't know for sure... but one thing is certain, now students of ALL ages throughout the Country have the opportunity to explore their patriotism through art!

## Together, with Vigor and Might



Department President, Frankie's special project, 23<sup>rd</sup> VETERAN assists Veterans in their transition from military to civilian life. Through their innovative and positive reconditioning program, they help them live happier, healthier lives. This cash raffle is one of many activities being held this year to focus on furthering their vision to 'drastically improve the negative symptoms of PTSD including depression, substance abuse, homelessness, divorce, and suicide.' 23<sup>rd</sup> VETERAN is a nationwide non-profit corporation, which started in Minnesota by a Veteran.

## \$\$\$ Cash Raffle \$\$\$

Donate to this amazing program. Raffle tickets are available until sold out. Check or cash are payable to the **Department of MN, VFW Auxiliary**, earmarked with '23<sup>rd</sup> VETERAN.' Tickets are \$25 apiece. Each Auxiliary has been challenged to purchase one, full sheet (4 tickets per sheet for \$100) or more! Contact Department Treasurer, Laurie Dale, for more information. The drawing will be held during Department Convention next June.

**1st place = \$1500; 2nd place = \$750; and 3rd place = \$500**



**Auxiliary National  
 Representative**

Jane Ziebarth

**National Ambassador  
 Leadership/Mentoring  
 2019-2020**

Jane Ziebarth of Princeton, MN, currently serves the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary as the 2019-2020 National Leadership/Mentoring Ambassador.

A Life Member of Princeton Auxiliary 806, she joined on the eligibility of her father, who served in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1945. She has served the organization in many capacities, including Auxiliary, District and Department President.

On the national level, she served as Chief of Staff/Extension Director, Director of the Voice of Democracy Program and National District Council Member.

In her spare time she enjoys watching football and auto racing, needlework, crocheting, quilting and traveling with her husband Larry, especially to the Hawaiian Islands. She is a member of the MOCA and the VFW National Home for Children.

## Community Service

By Duane Hermanson, State Community Service Chair

Comrades,

I would like to say Happy Holidays and Happy New Year! As we approach the back half of the VFW year, I would like to say we're doing a great job on community service. Since the first six months, the numbers have doubled in money donated, a little behind in volunteer hours and number of members. Good job, and keep up the good work.

The following are yearend totals for 2018-19 for community service reporting:

- Total money donated: \$2,752,245.02
- Total volunteer hours: 539,902
- Total member: 91283

The following are the totals for the first six months of this year, for community service reporting:

- Total money donated: \$1,394,644.75
- Total volunteer hours: 204,627
- Total Members: 39,615

Out of the 9 districts there have been a total of 182 for community service, 175 reports for Americanism, 97 reports for safety and recognition, and 117 reports for youth programs. Great job, but let's keep up the great work!!



## In Other News...

### Veterans Cemetery in Sioux Falls

By Lori Sorenson, Rock County Star Herald

November 7, 2019

There are more than 40,000 veterans living in the tri-state area, but the nearest veterans cemeteries are in Sturgis, South Dakota, or Fort Snelling in St. Paul.

*"This is a project for veterans by veterans"*

*~Buck Underwood, Commander-  
Sioux Falls Chapter of the Purple Heart*

veterans cemetery to South Dakota. It was their passion for this project that kept the momentum going and made the dream a reality."

The city of Sioux Falls gifted the state more

"This makes it very difficult and expensive for those living in this region to have a military burial," said Vietnam veteran Buck Underwood, Luverne.

That's why he and other local veterans are pleased by a current construction project only 30 miles away to establish a new state veterans cemetery north of Sioux Falls.

It will be built in 10 to 12 phases to provide for 7,320 preplaced crypts, 13,179 in-ground cremains sites, 7,920 columbarium niches and 100 memorial wall markers.

All totaled, the new cemetery will have the capacity to honor 28,519 soldiers. The sites will be free for veterans and \$750 for spouses.

"Now they won't have to go to Sturgis or St. Paul to be buried in a military cemetery," said Underwood, commander of the Purple Heart Sioux Falls Chapter, which is among many organizations supporting the project. Veterans service organizations, legislators, lobbyists, local leaders, and the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs worked together during the 2018 South Dakota Legislative Session to pass a bill into law that provides funding from the National Cemetery Administration.

"This is a project for veterans by veterans," Underwood said.

"Many veterans spent over a decade working to bring a state

than 60 acres of land just north of the I-229 and I-90 interchange, and the federal Department of Veterans Affairs awarded the state a \$6.9 million National Cemetery grant to round out funding.

Groundbreaking was Sept. 9 for Phase 1, which will provide 610 preplaced crypts, 999 cremains sites, 660 columbarium niches and 50 memorial wall markers.

The first phase will develop nearly 13 acres with a main entrance, avenue of flags, administrative building, maintenance facility, roads, assembly area, committal shelter, scatter burial area, memorial walkway, landscaping and supporting infrastructure.

Journey Construction is the primary contractor and will work with the VA to keep the project on scope, on time and on budget.

Senate Bill 91 also authorized the South Dakota Veterans Council to establish an endowment fund for the veterans cemetery. The council partnered with the South Dakota Community Foundation to establish a perpetual fund to accept tax-deductible donations.

"This cemetery will be a tribute to patriots," Underwood said, recognizing those who worked to make it happen. "It will immortalize the sacrifices that have been made for our freedoms."

### PDC Braun- Cont. from Page 1

Club, Sauk Centre School Board, the Stearns County Nursing Board, Food Service Committee for the Home School and active member of the Honor Guard for over fifty (50) years. Needless to say, Ralph loved his Community and Served it every day.

Ralph enjoyed his free time. He liked to travel. His family always came first. He enjoyed golfing, fishing, playing cards, dice, Bingo, watching the Minnesota Twins, Timberwolves and the Sauk Centre Mainstreeter teams. Ralph also liked his morning coffee with the 'boys' at the local Truck Stop.

Ralph loved the Veterans of Foreign Wars, he attended the majority of the District and State events until his health limited those trips. Ralph was a Mentor to many young Vietnam Veterans... taking the time to educate them in the ways of the VFW. He was always there for a Membership Pick-up or to lend

his expertise. Ralph was a Gentle Leader, always there to 'right the ship', without causing waves... He was always available for a phone call and invited you to 'stop by' Sauk Centre or his Bakery when you headed up I-94. One of our 'Greatest Generation' State Commanders... Obviously, there are not many left... Ralph's quiet demeanor and advice will be missed... He was always there for us, now he is gone...

Ralph is survived by his children, Sandi Radzak of Sartell, Roger (Mary) Braun of Willmar, Jean Carruthers of Lewisville, TX and Cindy (John) Fischer of Rice; 12 grandchildren; 25 great grandchildren; siblings, Linus (Carol), Richard (Marlene), Duane (Lois), Ron, and Joan (Bill) Moening; and brother-in-law, Bernie Wiebolt.

Preceded in death by his wife, Mary Ann; son-in-law, David Carruthers; parents; 5 sisters and 1 brother.

Committee Chairs

Advertising

Interviewers

Public Relations

Sponsorship Outreach

Writers

Decorators

Research

Archival Reading

Event & 'Day of' Volunteers

Graphic Design

Distinguished Guest Outreach

### Veterans of Foreign Wars - Department of Minnesota

Our 100th Anniversary is January 17th, 2021

This is only one year away and we've got work to do!

100th Anniversary

### Planning Meeting:

January 17 at 3:15- 4:15 pm

Midwinter Conference- Minneapolis Marriott City Center

Please attend and let us know how YOU can help!

Photographers

Donation Requests

Entertainment

Fundraising

Special Projects

Filling Goodie Bags

Photo Scanning

Photocopying

Serving food

Event Set-up

Event Take-down

Photographic Slide Conversion

**We are in need of everyone's help... and there are jobs for everyone!**

# Claims and Service Office Report

By Jon Gohn, Claims Director

## VFW Surpasses \$8B in Benefits for Our Veterans Nationwide

**“This is a true testament to the dedication and service our VFW Service Officers have for every veterans”**

November 05, 2019

WASHINGTON —

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Service Officers recovered more than \$9 billion in benefits for veterans for the first time this past fiscal year.

Veteran in active duty hat walks into VFW service officers were responsible for the recovery of a total of \$9,059,726,902 for veterans, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

“This is a true testament to the dedication and service our VFW service officers have for every veteran he or she comes in contact with,” said VFW National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz. “Our veterans deserve nothing but the absolute-best customer service experience that our organization has proven to deliver day-in and day-out.”

This year, as part of the VFW’s Century of Service, leaders issued a challenge to its Department service officers nationwide to assist as many veterans possible who required help in filing benefits and compensation claims with the VA.

“The VFW’s global network of professional veterans’ advocates should be incredibly proud to have reached this milestone in our 100th year of helping veterans,” said Ryan Gallucci, director of VFW National

Veterans Service. “This demonstrates the hard work of our advocates who meet face-to-face with veterans every day. The founders of our humble benefits assistance program would be proud of the legacy that the VFW has built, proving that ‘No One Does More For Veterans.’”

VFW Service Officers are trained experts, helping veterans develop their case with ease by reviewing and applying current law, pertinent legislation, regulations, pension and death benefits, and employment and training programs. Service officers are also prepared to present oral arguments on behalf of veterans when needed.

Schmitz explained that veterans who come to the VFW for help in filing claims receive nothing short of positive results.

“Veterans rely heavily on our expertise in assisting them in receiving the benefits and compensation they have earned and our professionals continue to answer that call with dynamic results,” said Schmitz. “Our outstanding service officers are amazing stewards and dedicated professionals who pride themselves on serving every veteran who needs help in the claim process and will not stop until every veteran’s individual need is met.”

If you are a veteran who seeks help in filing a claim, visit the VFW website and click on the Assistance tab. The VA Claims and Separation Benefits section will help you find a service officer in your area.

## VFW Witnesses Landmark Presidential Signing of the POW MIA Flag Act

**‘This is a historic victory for every man and woman who courageously defended this nation and remain unaccounted for’**

November 07, 2019

WASHINGTON —

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) stood in solidarity with fellow members of the Veterans Service Organization (VSO) community as President Donald Trump signed the National POW/MIA Flag Act into law today.

“This is a historic victory for every man and woman who courageously defended this nation and remain unaccounted for,” said VFW National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz. “Today’s presidential signing and the daily display of the POW/MIA flag at all prominent federal properties now serves as a daily reminder that these heroes, and their families, are forever etched in our DNA.”

Law now requires the POW/MIA flag to be displayed whenever the American flag is displayed on prominent federal properties, including the White House, U.S. Capitol, World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, every national cemetery, the buildings containing the official offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, office of the Director of the Selective Service System, each major military installation, each Department of Veterans Affairs medical center, and each U.S. Postal Service post office.

The National POW/MIA Flag Act was initially introduced by U.S. Rep. and Marine Corps Lt. Gen. (ret.) Jack Bergman and U.S. Rep. Chris Pappas March 7, 2019. The bipartisan bill received endorsement from the VFW, the National League of POW/MIA Families, and other veterans service organizations.

“Over 82,000 men and women who’ve served our nation in uniform are unaccounted for or listed as POW/MIA, including many Michiganders,” said Congressman Bergman. “Flying this flag at federal properties 365 days a year is just a small way that we can ensure their sacrifice and devotion to our nation is never forgotten.”

Pappas added that the POW/

MIA flag is a symbol of courage and sacrifice that our armed forces have given on behalf of this nation.

“I have seen how important the flag is to demonstrate that these heroes are not forgotten,” said Congressman Pappas. “By putting the flag on full display outside of prominent federal buildings, memorials, and national cemeteries, we are reaffirming our commitment to the more than 82,000 service members who remain unaccounted for.”

Prior to today’s landmark signing, the POW/MIA flag was only required to be displayed by the federal government on certain prominent federal properties only six days per year to include Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day, and Veterans Day.

The National League of POW/MIA Families is the reason the POW/MIA flag exists today. The organization’s mission supports our POW/MIAs and killed-in-action from the Vietnam War by obtaining the release and return of all prisoners, the fullest possible accounting for the missing, and the repatriation of remains of those not yet recovered.

Evelyn Grubb, former national coordinator of The National League of POW/MIA Families, oversaw the development of the POW/MIA flag and campaigned to gain its widespread acceptance and use by the U.S. government in 1972.

B.J. Lawrence, executive director of the VFW Washington Office, expressed his sincere appreciation for today’s signing because it only furthers the relationship the VFW has with both The National League of POW/MIA Families and the DPAA.

“The VFW continues to stand firm on its relationship and dedication with both The National League of POW/MIA Families and DPAA,” said Lawrence. “Today is a huge step in the right direction. Our nation’s leaders made a pledge to account for every service member who did not come home. This is a pledge which also holds true for today’s servicemen and women. We must always ensure that if they do fall in battle, they are not forgotten and our nation will do everything in its power to bring them home.”



### 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 \_\_\_\_\_

### Need Help with your Veterans Benefits and Entitlements?

**CALL the VFW Claims Service Office at:**

**612-970-5669**

## VFW- Supported Burn-Pit Introduced to House

**‘This important legislation would make individuals eligible for hospital care, medical services and nursing home care’**

November 21, 2019

A bill introduced to the House could provide veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars who were exposed to burn pits the same VA medical care as Vietnam War veterans exposed to Agent Orange.

The VFW-supported Jennifer Kepner Healthcare for Open-Air Burn-Pit Exposure (HOPE) Act, H.R. 4137, was introduced to the House by Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-Calif.) in August.

A member of the Air Force tosses items into a burn pit in Balad, Iraq. Air Force Master Sgt. Darryl Sterling, of the 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, tosses unserviceable uniform items into a burn pit in March 2008 in Balad, Iraq. The obituary of Jennifer Kepner, the namesake of the Jennifer Kepner HOPE Act, states she died from pancreatic cancer “due to the open exposure burn pits” while serving in Balad, Iraq, in 2004.

If passed and signed into law, H.R. 4137 would add vets exposed to toxic fumes from burn pits to the VA’s priority group 6, meaning it would allow veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars the same treatment as veterans exposed to toxic chemicals. VFW National Legislative Director Carlos Fuentes said Ruiz also is working on a separate bill that could provide compensation benefits for

conditions that are known to be associated with burn-pit exposure.

“This important legislation would make individuals eligible for hospital care, medical services and nursing home care, provided the individual served as a member of the armed forces in support of a contingency operation and was based or stationed at a location where an open air burn pit was in use after Jan. 1, 1990,” Fuentes said. “The eligibility for care would be open even for those who have insufficient medical evidence to conclude that a disease or disability is associated with burn pit exposure.”

The bill is named in honor of Air Force veteran Jennifer Kepner, of Cathedral City, Calif. She died from pancreatic cancer “due to the open exposure burn pits” while serving in Balad, Iraq, in 2004 as a medic, according to her obituary from The Desert Sun in Palm Springs, Calif.

“Jennifer Kepner was a hero who courageously battled pancreatic cancer while fighting for her fellow veterans suffering from pulmonary conditions and rare cancers linked to burn-pit exposure,” Ruiz said. “I am humbled to introduce the Jennifer Kepner HOPE Act in her memory, legislation that will ease the financial burden on sick veterans who have served and sacrificed for our nation by reducing their health care costs from the VA.”

*This article was featured in the November/December 2019 issue of VFW magazine.*

## Capital Hill Press

By Tommy Johnson, Legislative Chairman



The Minnesota Legislature goes back in session on Tuesday, February 11th, 2020. There is unfinished work for them to honor our Nation’s commitment for those that served, including family. It is up to us to insist the Legislature honors that commitment.

At Midwinter we will be going over the “to do” list. The top three priorities are: 1) ensuring widows can sell their home, buy a lesser-valued home, and keep the property tax reduction their disabled spouse earned (the Widow’s Property Tax Trade Down); 2) passage of the Veterans Restorative Justice Act, which will help Veterans with documented service-connected medical conditions – especially mental health, such as PTSD, TBI, and MST – that because of these issues, become 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, rural areas do not. The justice a Veteran receives should not be dependent on a county line; and 3) ensuring a fully funded Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. This includes funding, by bonding, for our five Minnesota Veterans Homes and our state Veterans Cemeteries in Duluth, Little Falls, and Preston. Fully funding MDVA is an expectation; if the Legislature does not fully fund MDVA then the Legislature did not do its job.

In November 2019, 800 of Minnesota’s Citizen-Soldiers were deployed for service in the Middle

East; 900 more will be deployed in the spring of 2020. It is the Legislature’s responsibility to ensure services are there for them when they return; it is the Legislature’s responsibility to ensure services are there for those that went before them. It is our responsibility to politely but firmly remind the Legislature of their duty. Please write, call, and/or email your State Representative and State Senator and politely but firmly remind them of their sacred obligation.

If you are unsure of who your State Representative or State Senator is, use this link and enter your address: <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>

Please put Monday, April 20th, 2020 on your calendar for Veterans Day on the Hill at the Capitol in St. Paul. This day is sponsored by three groups: The Commander’s Task Force – “CTF” – and United Veterans Legislative Council – “UVLC” – and the Minnesota Association of County Veteran Service Officers – “MACVSO.”

April 20th is the latest date we’ve had for Veterans Day on the Hill. By going with this late date, we can make it clear that by holding Veterans Day on the Hill this late we would gladly make it into a celebration if our State Representatives and State Senators get their work done for Veterans within the first three months of session. If they decide to keep Veteran’s issues moving, and above the predictable partisan fighting, they can all enjoy a day of being cheered for a job well done. However, if the more likely scenario happens where politicking is taking the place of progress, this later date will have us positioned to make a strong call for our officials to “Get it DONE for our Veterans.”

It is amazing what the Legislature can accomplish when given the proper motivation: letters, calls, emails, and a strong presence at the Capitol for hearings and at Veterans Day on the Hill.

Let’s get it done! As always, please contact me at 952-451-7088 or [TwoPuttTommy@gmail.com](mailto:TwoPuttTommy@gmail.com) with thoughts and questions and feedback.

## BECOME A LIFE MEMBER TODAY!

### Limited Time Offer!

Our Commander-in-Chief is offering a new Life membership incentive program. All members who either join the VFW as a new Life member, reinstate as a Life member, or upgrade their existing annual membership to Life beginning Sept. 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, will earn a \$50 store credit. This credit must be used prior to Aug. 31, 2020. Upgrade, pay off or reinstate your Life membership today [oms.vfw.org/QuickRenew.aspx?srcid=275](https://www.vfw.org/QuickRenew.aspx?srcid=275).



### Keep Supporting Your Post!

Every year, VFW Posts receive an annual payout for every Life member on their roster, so you can take pride in knowing that your Life membership still goes directly towards supporting your VFW Post and our mission to help our fellow veterans in local communities.

### No More Worrying About Dues!

As a Life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, receiving dues notices is a thing of the past! Your membership is permanent, allowing you to enjoy the benefits of belonging to the nation’s largest organization of combat veterans without needing to worry about renewals.

### Check Out Our Legacy Life Video!

Go to [vfw.org](https://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.

### Learn More About Your Membership Options:

Contact a Post Quartermaster or Call State Headquarters at 651-291-1757  
NOTE: Some Posts may have Life Membership Payment or Assistance Programs.  
*Ask Your Quartermaster Today!*

## Minnesota Veterans Day on the Hill

### April 2020

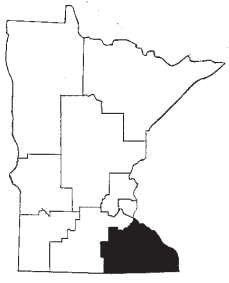
Day to be announced soon!

Watch the General Orders and [www.mnvwf.org](https://www.mnvwf.org) for updates

~ Start Planning to Attend ~

Show OUR Representatives  
We CARE about  
Veterans Legislation!

# News from YOUR District Commanders and Presidents!



**Tom French, Commander  
First District**

*Sr Vice Dave Thul writing for Cmdr Tom French~*

While the 1st District is currently at 5th place for membership in the department, we are working hard to move up the ranks. I had the honor of seeing Rochester Post 1215 welcome a new member at their last meeting- Air Force Veteran John Nook served in Vietnam, who had a beaming smile when his membership was approved.

One area that the 1st District is leading the Department of Minnesota is in the use of technology at our district meetings- our meetings have been available via live video conferencing for almost 2 years now, and we have 1 or 2 members join us each time. Not a lot yet, but it is a simple and easy way to reach out to younger members.

My sincere appreciation to the comrades for the 1st District for their help in keeping things running smoothly while Tom French is recuperating from surgery- we look forward to having him back in action at the Midwinter Conference in Minneapolis.

Lastly, since I am writing on Tom's behalf, I will swallow my pride and write what Tom would- "Go Navy Beat Army".



**Linda Henry, Auxiliary  
President First District**

I want to thank the VFW for allowing us to have the opportunity to have space in this newspaper. District One has completed all but one of our inspections. Our next District meeting will be in Preston on Saturday, December 7th. I hope to see many auxiliary members there.

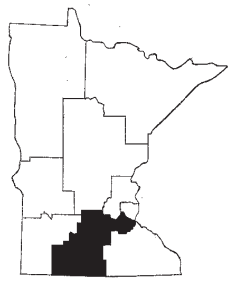
It is so hard to believe it is almost Thanksgiving and Christmas. I hope everyone has happy holidays and a healthy new year.



**Johanna Rowe, Auxiliary  
President Second District**

We had a great turnout at our first District 2 meeting in Mankato, MN at Post#950. I would like to thank all the members who attended and Department Guard, Karen England.

District 2 has been working hard on our inspections with our last



**Patrick Schipper, Commander  
Second District**

Greetings:

November is a fantastic month, and it's almost over. It's a month that ends with Thanksgiving Day, but it starts off celebrating and supporting veterans and their families. Our programs are well under way and the chairs are finalizing those results with the participating posts. It is a month where it lets the VFW shine within their communities.

District 2 post inspections are being conducted, and should be completed before Midwinter. Those posts that have not been inspected yet, we have a month to complete. Let's finish the year off strong and start the new year even stronger.

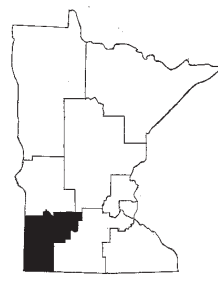
I had the honor of attending the 3rd Annual Saluting Community Heroes in Hutchinson on the 13th of November. It's an organization that works with the area military organizations and cities first responders. This alliance' sole purpose is to take care of the returning vets. The key note speaker was Taya Kyle. Her message from her second book, "American Spirit", were profiles of several individuals overcoming hardships. I would like to thank VFW Post 906 Commander, Pete Stoltenow for the invitation. I will be bringing this book at the district meeting, if someone would like it.

I know every community has these events. I would like to have you share those stories with the district. A perfect way is to use the District's Facebook page. Let's celebrate by promoting our posts and the VFW. The next District meeting is the first Saturday in January. It will be held in Arlington and hosted by VFW Post 6031 and Auxiliary. Department expectations are every post will be represented. Its centrally located, ride share if you have too, but I hope to see everyone there.

My Christmas wish is for everyone to have a safe and happy holiday season.

one planned for November 18, 2019. Let's celebrate all veterans this Holiday season by donating your time and money. You can donate to Veteran's Homes in the State of Minnesota directly or volunteer your time. You can also adopt-a-veteran and give them a gift directly.

I would like to have every auxiliary be 100% in membership this year; so I hope that annual dues are paid by the December 31st deadline. Auxiliaries are expected to continue



**Buck Underwood, Commander  
Third District**

Members of the Third District;

Once again thank you for helping me as Commander, I could not do it without your support.

By the time this comes out we would have celebrated our Pheasant Dinner at the Luverne Vets Home. Thanks to all that support this program. Our Post inspections are under way, so Post Officers please have your records ready for the inspectors.

Now one of my pet peeves, all Posts please pay all your required dues to the Department on time and also your community reports. It is not a difficult task. If you need help, I would be glad to assist you, just call.

One more thing, all veterans within a 100 mile radius from Sioux Falls S.D. are eligible for burial in the new Veterans State Cemetery being built there. Hope everyone had a great Veterans Day.



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

District 3 has completed all official visits and is now working hard on memberships with two auxiliaries already at 100%. Way to go Fairfax and Wilmont! Exceptional PP and VOD essays have come in and judging will be completed this week and sent on to State competition.

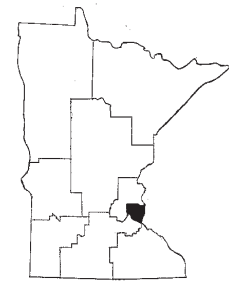
Veteran's Day programs honoring our Veterans were held throughout the district on Veterans Day with some including our student VOD and PP essays. Christmas events are being planned for veterans and auxiliary members in Veterans homes and care facilities.

Looking forward to a great year of 2020 "Together with Vigor and Might".

working on their membership all year and maybe get new ones or rejoins.

Our next District 2 meeting is planned for January 4th, 2020 in Arlington, MN with Department President, Francesca "Frankie" Bill being our Department Representative. I hope for a great turnout.

I am wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year's.



**David Staehlin, Commander  
Fourth District**

As the current administrative year continues, the 9 Posts of the 4th District continue to work the programs, serve their members, all veterans, and our communities.

Veterans Day and Member Appreciation events were held at many of the Posts in the District. I was honored to attend Post 1350's excellent Membership Appreciation dinner on August 10 at North Saint Paul and the Veterans Day dinner at Cottage Grove Post 8752. Posts are encouraged to invite the Commanders (and ideally, members) of other Posts to their events when possible. This can increase camaraderie among our Posts and allow us to share best practices.

Our Posts continue to work on renewing memberships and recruiting new members. We hope to meet or exceed last year membership performance where 6 of 9 Posts in the 4th District and the District as a whole exceeded 100% membership. Let's not ease off on working to reach or exceed our membership goals.

The District leadership exists to support our Posts. Don't hesitate to reach out to us for assistance or advice. You're not in this alone, Comrades!



*Only two  
defining  
forces  
have ever*

*offered todie for you,*

**JESUS CHRIST**

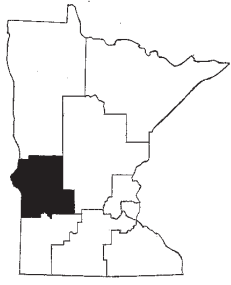
*and the*

**AMERICAN G.I.**

*One died for  
your soul,  
the other for  
your freedom.*







**Ann Hanson, Commander  
Fifth District**

Comrades,

Here we are again ! We are pushing through the days now thanking the lord for all we have and wondering where it all has gone!

Well I hope this finds you all as well as you can be! Hopefully your Holiday's are going to be fruitful and joyous ! Looking forward to see you at the next conference!! Have a great Holiday be thankful for what you have! *Thank you for your Service!!!*



**Sue Wiersgalla, Auxiliary  
President Sixth District**

Greeting from the Sixth District:

Our year is well underway with officers and chairman working hard on our programs. The Official Visits are almost done with just a couple to be done in the next few days.

Jr Vice Rita has collected lots and lots of "Fun Sox". I am not sure how many we have but it has been fun doing it. They will be passed out before Christmas.

Our next District meeting will be hosted by Granite Post 428 in St Cloud on December 7th. Lunch will be served at 11:00 am. At noon, our Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Winners will be announced and honored.

The Auxiliary will be having their Annual Cookie Walk Fund Raiser after the District meeting. Members are asked to bring donation of 3 dozen cookies. The cookies will be on sale by the pound after the meeting.

The Poppy Display contest will also be held at the December meeting. Please be sure to have your display entered as it must be entered in the district contest before going to Department contest at Mid-Winter.

To all who have been ill, we wish you a speedy recovery. Our Deepest Sympathy to those who have lost a loved one.



## DISTRICT MEETINGS

*(Subject to Change)*

### First District

February 8  
Austin #1216 @ 9:30 AM

### Second District

January 4  
Arlington #6031 @ 1:00 PM

### Third District

January 4  
Wilmont #2603 @ 10 AM

### Fourth District

January 11  
Roseville #7555 @ 9 AM

### Fifth District

December 15  
Willmar #1639 @ 2:00 PM

### Sixth District

February 1  
Sauk Rapids #6992 @ 1:00 PM

### Seventh District

February 1  
Blaine #6316 @ 10:00 AM

### Eighth District

February 15-16  
Babbitt Municipal Bldg. @ 9:00 AM

### Ninth District

March 7  
Pelican Rapids #5252 @ 1:00 PM



**Shelley Solheid Auxiliary  
President Seventh District**

Greetings Members!

As of this writing, the 7th District Auxiliary is at 90.60% in membership. We have a group of members working on the department at large list and we are always inviting new members to join our auxiliaries. Keep up the good work and I just know we will hit that 100% mark!

Our auxiliaries have been very busy this year with membership dinners, blood drives, sewing projects, family freedom festivals, Veterans Day programs and many other events. VFW Post #246 even celebrated their Centennial this year and VFW Post #6316 celebrated their 60th Anniversary- Congratulations to them and their Auxiliaries for maintaining great posts over so many years.

I attended the Big Ten Conference in Nebraska and had a good time. The membership skits were fun to watch, and Minnesota was

well represented. Congratulations to Char Guse on her term as President and having a great meeting and installation of the new Big Ten officers.

The work continues on the bridge at the Minneapolis Veterans Home, and the latest update is projecting completion and re-opening by the end of the year. This is wonderful news as this historic bridge has been in repair for a long time and we are excited to have it open again.

The Smart/Maher Teacher of the Year, Voice of Democracy, and Patriots Pen judging will have been completed at the District level and on to the Department judges for final decisions. Congratulations to all the entrants for your hard work and we are excited to see who wins at the Mid-Winter Conference in January.

Auxiliary Official Visits are complete, and, on behalf of the visiting officers, I would like to thank you all for your hospitality and your continued dedication to our veterans and our communities.

Happy New Year to all and I'll see you soon!



**State Commander  
Chad Solheid's  
TESTIMONIAL**

**May 9, 2020  
White Bear Lake, MN**

*Location:  
Rudy's Redeye Grill*

*Watch for Details in the General  
Orders & at [www.mnvfw.org](http://www.mnvfw.org)*

## How Many Cootie Bugs Can You Find in This Issue?

Answer on Page 15



### CMDR- Cont. from Page 1

The Veterans that call Minnesota home number 380,000. We have over 11,000 National Guard members here as well. Most of these members have been deployed and some several times. I am asking you to get out in your communities and show that the VFW supports the community and its Veterans.

At Midwinter Conference we will have some new formatting as well as some new faces to promote VFW programs, Veterans initiatives, community projects, and great comradeship. If you miss this one you will be missing out on some very important information and fun.



## Cootie Corner

**By Dewey Hermanson**  
Minnesota Grand Commander 2019-2020



As your MOC Grand Commander along with the MOCA Grand Sr. Vice President Paty Thron, It was a great privilege to represent the Minnesota Cooties at the 85th annual Tomb Trek at Arlington National Cemetery. We both had the honor of laying a wreath from the MOC and MOCA Grand of MN at the Argon Cross WWI Memorial.

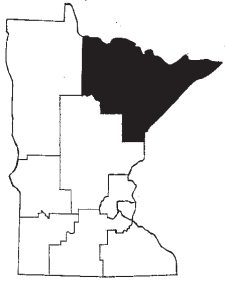
It's hard to believe how fast the year is going. We have a long way to go for our year though, don't forget to get your audits done and in on time, don't wait. Have you signed up any new members yet? When was the last time you asked one of your fellow members to join the Cooties. I am tasking each Pup Tent to sign up at least one new member.

Have you visited a hospitalized veteran or home bound veteran lately? If you have, did you report it to your Pup Tent so the hospital chairman can complete the hospital report and send it to the Grand hospital chairman?

Have you made a donation to the Grand Commander and Grand President's joint project? Our project is to raise money for the Minneapolis Veterans home for outdoor yard games. You can send your donation to Grand President Pat Bjur-Johnson, 869 DeSoto St., St Paul, MN 55130 or to Grand Commander Duane Hermanson, 107 1st St N, Cannon Falls, MN 55009, and earmark Grand Commander/Grand President project.

Dates to remember; Next Grand scratch will be February 8th 2020 hosted by PT 51 Bloomington MN. I am currently working on blocking rooms at the Holiday Inn. We will also be having a joint testimonial lunch following our scratch's- more information to come.

May 15 & 16, 2020 our Grand Convention will be hosted by PT 62 St Cloud. They have a block of rooms set aside for the convention at the County Inn & Suites, so watch for more information.



**Rick Stoehr, Commander  
Eighth District**

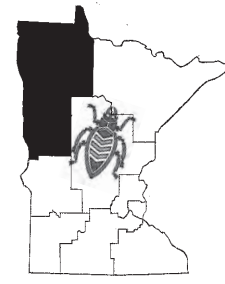
Greetings from the 8th District. At our Fall District meeting with the blessings of Department Commander Solheid and under the watchful eyes of Quartermaster Brletich we tried an experimental inspection procedure, having those Posts willing to participate bring their documentation for inspection with them to complete their inspections after the business meeting concluded. We completed 9

of the 10 Posts that participated, but we only had 2 inspectors available and unfortunately one Post wasn't able to stay due to time constraints. With my sincere apologies to that Post, and with the positive feedback from those that participated I think with the inclusion of another inspector or 2 it'll certainly speed up the inspection completion time and save lots of miles (3500 miles to complete the all inspections in the 8th) and time for the inspectors and it's Posts. Quartermaster Brletich also held a Quartermaster School, giving new as well as incumbent Quartermasters an opportunity to ask any questions they might have and the opportunity to do so was greatly appreciated.

An Open House was held by the 6th Judicial Veterans Treatment Court of St Louis County on September 6th to celebrate the graduation of 2 students from the program. The Court is presided over

by 6th Judicial District Judge Dale Harris. A Veteran himself, Judge Harris brings his experience as a Navy judge advocate and a reserve judge on the Navy-Marine Corps Court of Appeals to the program. Veterans in the program receive help and are provided the tools needed to deal with chemical and mental health issues, housing, family and any other issues while holding the Veteran accountable for their actions and recovery.

The new Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery-Duluth dedication was held on September 21. Dignitaries included Governor Tim Walz, Congressman Pete Stauber, US Department of Veteran Affairs Undersecretary Randy Reeves, Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Larry Herke and a host of Veterans including former POW David Wheat who introduced those dignitaries in attendance and spoke as well.



**Rick Bugbee, Commander  
Ninth District**

It seems it was just Fall Conference and now we are approaching Thanksgiving and Christmas. We in the Ninth are working on trying to get all posts in line with the required information to national and the Department. I am sure all the districts have similar problems with some of their posts. I do not understand why the same posts continue to have the same problems. They do not have to reinvent the wheel every year as the required documents are needed every year.

Our inspectors are out trying to get all inspections done before the snow covers us up and our roads get ugly. We are doing a district fund raiser and giving away a Henry Military Tribute rifle along with a bunch of cash prizes. The drawing will be done the middle of January. If you want to donate to a great cause with a chance to win, contact one of the posts in the ninth district or an officer.

**Don't Go It Alone!!!  
THERE'S HELP!!! JUST CALL!!!**



**Karen Haugen, Auxiliary  
President Ninth District**

Holiday Greetings from the 9th District

We are having a wonderful year, membership is going strong. We have 5 Auxiliaries that are at 100% in membership and 12 that are 90% plus. We only need 187 members for the district to be at 100%.

Our Inspections are done, it is great to get out and meet with the Auxiliaries and hear all the wonderful things they are doing. Many of them held programs at their schools for Veterans Day. The Ada Auxiliary created a coloring contest for the youth for Veterans Day.

They are all busy planning Holiday events from baskets for the shut-ins to cookie and candy trays for the public employees that work on the Holidays. Many are busy making gifts to take to the patients in the Homes and the Hospitals. It is a great time of the year to spend an hour at a local nursing home or hospital, just to visit and have a cup of coffee.

I am looking forward to our next District meeting, Dec. 7 in Fergus Falls. It is always great to get together with all the 9th Post and Auxiliary members. I hope to hear from our VOD and Patriots Pen winners.

Hope to see many of you at the Mid-Winter conference  
*Thanks for all you do!*



**Julie Stoehr Auxiliary  
President Eighth District**

Greetings and Salutations

Whew....what happened to the last three months? Seems like it was only yesterday that we were at Mahnomen for the Fall Meeting.

Glad to say inspections are all complete for the 8th. It seems that we all are having a few problems, but with respect and teamwork we will prevail! Auxiliaries continue to struggle with aging and small membership, but through it all, their main goal is supporting the Veterans! I am very proud of the Auxiliaries of the 8th District VFW! Thank you for supporting our Veterans in so many ways. It has been a pleasure seeing all members again and I hope to visit each Auxiliary before June is here.

The Commander and myself attended the Halloween and Bingo Party at the Silver Bay Veterans Home, a great time was had by all. Fun costumes and yes we dressed, I was a witch and the Commander was supposed to be Captain Jack Sparrow but looked like an old hippie.

We also attended the Pheasant Dinner, good food. Joyce talked about things going on at the home, new types of treatments to work with the dementia residents. Wonderful information given by employees that work with dementia residents. Give the home a call and ask for Joyce Scott and she can share what the

Veterans need as Christmas is coming soon. Please give generously if you can, remember what our Veterans have done for us!

The Commander and myself attended a dedication for the new Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery, Duluth, MN. Attending dignitaries, Governor Tim Walz, Congressmen Pete Stauber, US Department of Veterans Affairs Undersecretary Randy Reeves, Commissioner of the Minnesota Veterans Affairs Larry Herke and many Veterans, the Honor Guard which included VFW, American Legion and DAV and Auxiliary members. If I have missed anyone, I apologize. Former POW David Wheat introduced the dignitaries in attendance and gave a speech as well! The dedication was well attended even though there was thunder, lightning and heavy rain in the am.

I had the pleasure of standing by Congressman Stauber during the ribbon cutting ceremony, and of course what good women can resist telling someone how to cut a ribbon! I did my due diligence members, and Congressman Stauber took it all in stride.

The 6th Judicial Veterans Treatment Court of St Louis County held an open house on September 6th to honor their first two graduates of the program, which Commander Stoehr and myself attended, along with the VFW Honor Guard from 137 Duluth. This program assists Veterans in the program with health issues, chemical and alcohol dependency,

housing, family and other issues. During the program the Veterans are held accountable for their actions and their recovery. The 6th Judicial Judge Dale Harris presides over this program. Judge Harris is also a Veteran as a Navy Judge Advocate. This program also includes a large group of mentors, psychologists, social workers, parole officers and numerous other volunteers that have come together to help our Veterans in need! What a great program!

The Commander and I attended the 244th Marine Corp Birthday Party at Cloquet VFW 3979 and Auxiliary on the 16th of September, what a great time! Good food and good friends, gathering together to honor the Marine Corp. Rich and Susan Chasse (with camera) and crew did an excellent job arranging this fun event. And of course Lil LaVoy took pictures and instructed us how to pose, gotta love her!

Lastly, the Commander and I along with the Honor Guard from 1757 Cook, Mn visited Northwoods School on Veterans Day. I read the history of the Poppy and the 11th day, 11th hour, and the 11th Day. Auxiliary member Pat Lamwers assisted by placing the Poppy the correct way on the Commander. Post, Auxiliary and the essay winners gave out over 600 Poppy's to students and attendees. I also presented the VOD and PP awards. The First graders colored Poppy pictures, also grade school students presented handmade Thank You cards to all Veterans present.

**Auxiliary Submission:**

Woodbury VFW Auxiliary 9024 presented Patriotic Citizenship Awards. Eight (8) Businesses and three (3) Individual Home Owners were acknowledged.

The Certificate Given to One of the Businesses (Lake Elmo Bank) Reads:

*"Given in grateful appreciation for unsolicited inspirational service in the community through the Daily Display of our National Flag."*

Pictured left to right: Cynthia F - Auxiliary President, Dan R. - President of Lake Elmo Bank, and Emily U. - Auxiliary Conductress.



**Keep Up to Date on  
ALL VFW & Auxiliary  
Programs through the  
Monthly General Orders,  
Local & District  
Meetings, and on our  
websites at  
www.mnvwf.org and  
www.mnvwfauxiliary.org**

# Foley Takes 2019 Baseball

By Bob Bernier, Department Baseball Chairman



65th Annual Minnesota VFW Baseball Tournament Brainerd Mn. 1st Place August 7-11 2019 District 6 Sauk Rapids Post 6992

Another great baseball season has come to a fantastic finish, fittingly at Memorial Park in Brainerd, MN.

Once again, Brainerd Post 1647 did a great job with all the arrangements. It started with a keynote address by Brainerd Sports legend Tony Veith, who played VFW Baseball before being drafted by the Chicago Cubs organization. It is exciting to think about the possibility of some of the players in this year's tournament going on to great things as well.

As always, the games were fun and competitive. Highlighted by a remarkable comeback victory by last year's champions, Chaska, in extra innings to move on to Saturday's play. In the end though, no one was able to stop Foley, sponsored by Sauk Rapids Post 6992, as they marched

on to win the Championship game on Sunday.

State Commander, Chad Solheid, was on hand to hand out the trophies and awards. Recipients of this year's awards were; 4th place to Chaska (Post 1791), 3rd place to Mounds View (Kraus-Hartig 6587), 2nd place to Buffalo (Montrose Post 1901), and as noted, Championship to Foley (Sauk Rapids Post 6992).

My thanks to all the teams that competed, along with the coaches, parents, and Posts that made this tournament and season a success.

A special thanks goes out to Bob Marsh and his daughter Dawn for all their hard work in putting on this tournament for the second year in a row. We look forward to next years tournament in St Cloud.

# Veterans / Youth Activities

Forms and Updates posted in General Orders & on [www.mnvwf.org](http://www.mnvwf.org)

## VETERANS UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

**Bowling**  
**April 2020**  
Hosted by Cannon Falls Post #4452

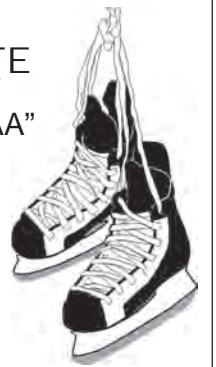
**Cribbage**  
**Spring 2020**  
Hosted by Austin Post #1216

**Golf**  
**August 2-4, 2019**  
Hosted by Austin Post #1216

**Pistol competition**  
**March 23, 2020**  
Hosted by Elk River- Rogers Post #5518

## YOUTH UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

**VFW STATE HOCKEY**  
Bantam "A" / "AA"



2020 State Tournament  
**March 20-22, 2020**

Hosted By Thief River Falls Post #2793

2021 Host: Dilworth Post #1223

## VFW STATE BASEBALL

2020 State Tournament  
**August 6-9, 2020**  
Hosted by Brainerd Post #1647



## Golfers Enjoy Great Day on the Green!

Submitted by Scott Weichman, Tournament Chair



### State Golf Tournament Results

Held August 2-4, 2019 Hosted by Austin VFW Post #1216  
93 VFW & Auxiliary Members Participated

**Men's Champion:** Larry Bedzinger- Coon Rapids Post #9625

**Lady's Champion:** Sue Geisler- Coon Rapids Auxiliary #9625

**Senior Champion:** Denny Ferch- Owatonna Post #3723

**Team Champions:** Austin Post #1216

Ryan Wiechmann  
Joey Miller  
Justin Hutchinson  
Travis Coyle

State CMDR  
Chad Solheid  
Enjoyed  
the Links



### Notable Items:

Cash pay outs to flight: \$3,000.00

Cooties Putting Contest: \$200.00 to Pup Tent 19

VFW Post 1216 Auxiliary received \$250.00

\$1200.00 Grand Prize Golf package

went to Joey Miller of Austin Post #1216

\$500.00 was earned for the State Commanders Project

# On Deck... Midwinter Conference 2019

## MIDWINTER- Cont. from Page 1

fellow Rangers on the battlefield and four more upon his death when he became an organ donor. To honor his legacy, Jill travels around the country advocating for veterans, Gold Star families and educates the public about organ donation. Through her adversities she has found the hidden blessings and made it her mission to instill positivity, motivation and hope to all who experience hardships. You won't want to miss this heartfelt presentation.

Humana has been a steadfast partner of the VFW and Auxiliary members. In this tradition, they have an entire 'Tool Box' of timely and educational topics that are available to groups. At this Conference, local Humana Representative Mary Touve-Kackman will present "Fall Asleep- Stay Asleep". Addressing that often elusive restful sleep that so many veterans long to attain, attendees will find suggestions to help toward finally getting a good night's sleep.

### Red Cross Blood Drive

For the first time in over a decade, our Midwinter Conference will be hosting an American Red Cross Blood Drive. This life-saving opportunity will take place on Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Whether you've given blood before or will be a first time donor (like some of us at the Department Headquarters), this is a valuable service project that nearly everyone can take part in. Even if you are not able to donate blood at this time, we will need many volunteers during this blood drive.

Red Cross staff noted that if we fill all of our donor time slots, we will be saving over 100 lives through our donations! Therefore, we have elected to not only have this event available to VFW and Auxiliary members, but the public as well... so share this with friends, family and others that would be interested in donating blood on Friday, January 17th at our Conference. Pre-Registration is required and can be done through the American Red Cross Website at <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive>.

If you're not sure whether you can donate blood or are looking for more information, the American Red Cross Website provides many FAQs including who is eligible to donate blood, what to expect for your first time and how to establish a "Rapid Pass" to help your on-site donation go quicker. Visit [www](http://www).

[redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) More details regarding the blood drive will be available at District Meetings, in the January General Orders and on the Department website.

### Business

While we have many special things going on at the Midwinter Conference, we still need to be diligent in conducting the business of our organization. Throughout the weekend we will hold various committee and program meetings.

Friday will bring the MNVFW Charitable Association meeting, Gambling Seminar, Auxiliary Hospital Round Table and more. The day will end with both the VFW and Auxiliary Council Meetings. During these meetings the Councils will conduct program, financial and other official business. Attendees will get a good feel for what takes place in overseeing the Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars and it's Auxiliary.

The Auxiliary will resume their Conference meeting Saturday morning. The agenda will include program information, special presentations and more. They will take a lunch break and resume meeting until 2:30. Then all members should plan to attend the Gold Star Mother's moving presentation in the afternoon.

In order to conclude their official business of the Midwinter Conference, the VFW Council of Administration will reconvene Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m.

### VFW Committees & Seminars

Throughout the day Saturday, the schedule reflects a number of VFW Committee meetings that any member is welcome to attend. In the morning you can choose from the By-Laws, Legislative or Youth & Veterans Activities Committee meetings. Motorcycle enthusiasts may wish to attend the VFW Riders session to participate or learn more about the program.

Saturday morning's late morning brings a REQUIRED, ALL VFW member session with the National Director of Programs Lynn Rolf, followed by a lunch break where you can check out many of the local restaurants or grab a bite at the Marriott's Restaurant... their Wild Rice soup and pretzel rolls are a must have!

After lunch return for several special interest sessions including a Quartermaster Q & A quick class, Humana's "Fall Asleep- Stay Asleep" program, and the Community Service

## Special Guest Speaker:

### **Jill Stephenson**

Gold Star Mother- Speaker- Author

*Sponsored by  
MNVFW Charitable Association*

**Midwinter Conference  
Saturday, January 18th, 2020  
2:45 p.m.**



Birch Lake Room, 4th Floor  
Minneapolis Marriott City Center  
30 South 7th Street, Minneapolis

Jill Stephenson is the granddaughter of a WWII veteran and the Gold Star Mother of U.S. Army Ranger, CPL Benjamin Kopp. Her grandfather earned a Purple Heart during his service, forging the way for his only off-spring to follow in his footsteps to the Infantry of the United States Army.

Ben joined the service first and foremost out of reverence and admiration for his great grandfather, and second, to avenge the deaths of all who died during the terrorist attacks of September 11th. He was thirteen when he declared he was going to become an Army Ranger, find Osama Binladen and make him pay for the innocent lives lost on that awful day.

Ben made good on that promise and became a Ranger just seven months after he joined the Army. He was assigned to the 3/75 Ranger Battalion at Ft. Benning, Georgia. During his third deployment in Afghanistan, he was shot by a sniper while called forward to save a team of six of his brothers in arms who were pinned down by a Taliban sniper. He underwent surgery to repair the wound and arrived at Walter Reed Army Medical center four days later. Unfortunately, Ben was declared brain dead and removed from life support eight days after he was shot. Ben saved lives on and off the battlefield by becoming an organ donor upon his death. He directly saved the lives of four people with the donation of his heart, kidneys and liver. Fifty-five more lives were enhanced with the donation of his bone, skin and tissue. His heart is still beating today in a woman from suburban Chicago.

Bill Lunn learned of Ben's story two years after his death and formed a friendship with Jill. His oldest son joined the Minnesota National Guard in 2014 and graduated basic training at Ft. Benning, Georgia, the same place as Ben. While attending the ceremony, Bill felt called to write a book about Ben's life. Heart of a Ranger came to fruition three years later.

Jill has spent the last ten years traveling around the country advocating for organ donation, veterans and Gold Star families. Through her adversities she has found the hidden blessings and made it her mission to instill positivity, motivation and hope to all who experience hardships. She has vowed to honor her son for the rest of her life; to do what he would have done had he come home.

*More information about Jill, how to book her for speaking engagements and where to purchase Heart of a Ranger can be found on her website: <https://www.iamjillstephenson.com>*

**Recording & Recordbook Workshop** where you can learn how to create a Post Community Service Recordbook for the annual Recordbook contest... it's not just for 'scrapbookers' anymore!

After all of these breakout sessions, all attendees will meet for the Gold Star Mother's presentation to finish out the afternoon.

### Displays & Vendors

The Marriott has a wonderful space that allows us to spread out and expand our activities. During Midwinter, we strive to provide various displays and vendors that will be of interest to everyone in attendance... Everything from Vets Homes to community Services.

### Ultimate Poppy Displays

Midwinter brings the opportunity to use the Buddy Poppies our Posts may have left from the Spring Poppy Distribution efforts. Posts and Auxiliaries create displays that fall into one of four different categories: Memorial, Promotional, Decorative and a Corsage & Center Piece option (the last being a Minnesota only category). All entries at the Midwinter Conference, must have been entered at a District Meeting prior to Midwinter.

Displays range from fun to awe inspiring and are judged on the use of poppies and the overall concept

**Continued on Page 13**

## MIDWINTER MUSTS:

### Buddy Poppy Display Contest

State Commander's Project Parade of Checks

### Saturday Seminar Sessions:

Quartermaster Q & A Quick Class

### CS Recording & Recordbook Workshop

### Humana Tool Box: "Fall Asleep- Stay Asleep"

~National Presentation~

Lynn Rolf, VFW National Director of Programs  
"Conducting & Sustaining VFW Programs"

~Special Presentation~

### The U.S.S. Ward: Minnesota Fires the First Shot in WWII

MANY Displays, Resources and More!

Updates will continue to be added in the  
January GOs and our website at [www.mnvwf.org](http://www.mnvwf.org)



### MIDWINTER- Cont. from Page 12

of the project. The first and second place winners in the three main categories are eligible to compete at the VFW National Convention in July.

### Awards...Awards...Awards

The highlight of the Midwinter Conference is always Saturday's Grand Banquet. During the Banquet we will receive greetings from the VFW and Auxiliary National Representatives Paul Spera and Jane Ziebarth.

Perhaps the part everyone looks forward to the most are the awards. Here we honor our three State Teacher of the Year winners in each of the K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 grade categories. We also listen to the Patriot's Pen (6-8 grade) winning student present their speech addressing "What Makes America Great". They will compete at the National level of the competition for a \$5,000 top award.

The end culminates with the nine (9) District Voice of Democracy Winners and announcement of the

State first place winner. The winner will give their speech on this year's essay theme "What Makes America Great". If events on the TV and radio news get you down, hearing the essay winner's speech at our banquets each year is sure to put some promise into your outlook for our future!

The State Voice of Democracy winner will be presented with a lovely trophy and a check for \$2,000. They also earn a free trip to Washington D.C. where they will find out how they did at the National level... competing for a \$30,000 scholarship.

### Round-Out the Experience

If you've never been to a Midwinter Conference, this would be the year! Whether you come for the whole weekend or just a day, there is plenty to see and do.

If you've been before, then you know all of the information, activity and social opportunities that await... so grab some fellow members and plan to attend the Department of Minnesota's 117th Midwinter Conference.



Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Minnesota



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS - DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

### MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

January 17-19, 2020 TENTATIVE as of 12/6/19

#### FRIDAY - JANUARY 17:

9:00 A.M. Auxiliary Standing Rules Meeting  
11:00 A.M. VFW Charitable Association Meeting  
11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. Red Cross Blood Drive (Pre-Register)  
12:00 - 6:00 P.M. Registration and Banquet Tickets  
1:00 P.M. Auxiliary Hospital Round Table  
V.F.W. Internal Affairs Committee  
2:00 - 3:00 P.M. Convention Committee  
2:30 P.M. Auxiliary Budget Meeting  
2:30 - 4:30 P.M. **Gambling Seminar**  
3:00 - 3:34 P.M. Auxiliary Pre-Convention Meeting  
3:00 - 5:00 P.M. Claims Staff Open Office  
3:00 - 6:00 P.M. Displays & Vendors  
3:15 - 4:15 P.M. 100th Anniversary Planning Meeting  
6:00 P.M. **VFW Council Meeting**  
6:00 P.M. Auxiliary Council Meeting

#### SATURDAY - JANUARY 18:

6:30 A.M. **Rise & Shine Workouts** (Pre-Commitment Friday Encouraged)  
7:00 - 9:00 A.M. **Register Poppy Displays**  
8:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. Registration and Banquet Tickets  
8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Displays & Vendors  
8:00 - 9:00 A.M. **VFW Committee Meetings** ♦VFW By-Laws Committee ♦VFW Riders  
♦Legislative Committee ♦Youth & Veterans Activities  
8:30 A.M. - 2:30 P.M. **Auxiliary Meeting**  
9:15 A.M. - 11:15 P.M. **VFW National Speaker "Conducting & Sustaining VFW Programs"**  
**Presented by Lynn Rolf, VFW National Director of Programs**  
11:30 A.M. District Officers Membership Lunch (Invitation Only)  
12:00 Noon Past Department President's Luncheon (Invitation Only)  
1:00 - 2:15 P.M. **Seminars** ♦Humana Health Topic "Fall Asleep- Stay Asleep"  
♦CS Recording & Recordbook Workshop ♦Quartermaster Q & A  
♦Historic Fort Snelling Public Input Session  
2:45 - 3:30 P.M. **Guest Speaker-**  
**Jill Stephenson, Gold Star Mother & Author "Heart of a Ranger"**  
2:00 - 3:30 P.M. District VOD Winners Party  
2:30 P.M. **Buddy Poppy Chairmen Meeting**  
4:00 P.M. Church Services  
6:00 P.M. District V.O.D. Winners Reception  
6:00 P.M. Banquet Reception (Cash Bar)  
7:00 P.M. **Grand Banquet**

#### SUNDAY - JANUARY 19:

9:00 A.M. V.F.W. Council of Administration

### MIDWINTER BANQUET MEAL:

Spring Greens Salad with Pears, Dried Cherries, Goat Cheese, WALNUTS & Balsamic Vinaigrette, Fresh Rolls  
Grilled Pork Chop with Bourbon Jus, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Baby Carrots & Green Beans  
Alternating Desserts:  
Dulce de Leche Mousse w/ Whipped Cream  
& Vanilla Bean Cheesecake Mousse w/ Malted Crumble

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA  
**MIDWINTER CONFERENCE HOUSING RESERVATIONS**  
**Minneapolis Marriott City Center January 17-19, 2020**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Post # \_\_\_\_\_ District # \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_  
**Room Rate (per night):** \_\_\_ King @ \$104 \_\_\_ Two Double Beds @ \$104  
(Please Note that Daily Parking Fees are Additional)  
**Requests:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Sharing room with:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Arrival Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Departure Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Credit Card Information:**  
(Reservation will not be made without a guarantee)  
Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_  
OR Check # \_\_\_\_\_ for one (1) night made out to the **Minneapolis Marriott City Center**  
**\*\*DEADLINE DATE: December 26, 2019\*\***

**MIDWINTER CONFERENCE BANQUET**  
SATURDAY, JAN 18, 2020  
Minneapolis Marriott City Center  
**PLEASE RESERVE**  
\_\_\_ TICKETS at \$32 each  
**Enclosed is**  
Check # \_\_\_\_\_ for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
POST/AUX # \_\_\_\_\_ DIST # \_\_\_\_\_  
**\*\*Deadline to Order: January 6, 2020\*\***

#### Mail Housing Reservations to:

Minneapolis City Center  
30 South 7th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

**Mail BANQUET Reservations to:**  
Dept of MN V.F.W.  
Rice Street Station  
PO Box 17146

~ATTENTION CREATIVE MEMBERS~

We are in search of a design for our 100th Anniversary Logo!



# 100th Anniversary Logo Design Contest

**WHO Can Submit:** All VFW & Auxiliary Members

**WHAT To Submit:** Submit Your Logo Design Concept  
Submissions can be hand or computer drawn, a compilation of pictures... whatever you are capable of doing. Entries will be judged on overall concept (not 'quality' of artistry) so that ANYONE with an idea can submit. Winning design concept will be used to create a final, copy ready Logo that will be used throughout our 100th year celebration... from letterhead to freebies.

**WHEN To Submit:** Entry Deadline December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019  
All entries will be judged by the Department Officers. Winner will be announced at Midwinter with an unveiling of the final Logo.

**WHERE To Submit:** vfwmnoffice@gmail.com OR  
VFW- Department of Minnesota  
Rice Street Station, PO Box 17146  
St Paul, MN 55117

Questions? Contact Melody at VFW Headquarters 651-291-1757

WINTER 2019-2020

### Gold Medal Safety Awards Law Enforcement - EMT - Fire Fighter

Entries Due to VFW Department by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

### Auxiliary Continuing Education Scholarship

Due to National VFW Auxiliary by February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### Bus Driver of the Year

Due to VFW Department by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

### Scout of the Year

Due to Local Post by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

### Auxiliary Young American Creative Patriotic Art Scholarship Contest

Due to Local Auxiliary by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020

### NEW- Auxiliary Illustrating America Art Contest

Due to Local Auxiliary by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Spring 2020

## Overseas'r Flash Back: October 1979

### "MINNESOTA Is In First Place (SO What Else Is New?)"

Minnesota V.F.W. is Number One in the nation with 65.67 percent of 1979 members having already paid their 1980 membership dues. In addition, the Ladies Auxiliary is Number One among all the State Auxiliaries...

### "In Grand Rapids: 2,500 Attend Fall Conference"

V.F.W. and Auxiliary members from all around Minnesota journeyed to Grand Rapids to take part in the annual Fall Conference.

### "V.F.W. State Golf Tourney"

256 participated in the 1979 annual VFW Golf tournament at Green Lea Golf Course in Albert Lea in August.

### "Voice of Democracy Prizes Increased By 40%"



Commander-in-Chief Howard Vander Clute announced a \$9,000 increase in the National VFW Voice of Democracy Scholarship Awards... First Place was increased to \$14,000 (formerly \$10,000).



## WHAT... is the 'VFW National Home'?



### DEFINED:

The VFW National Home for Children was founded in 1925 in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. It was established as a place where the families left behind by war -- mothers and children, brothers and sisters -- could remain together, keeping the family circle intact even when their serviceman didn't come home.

Today's families face different challenges -- reintegration, post-traumatic stress, high unemployment and rehabilitation from battlefield injuries, among others -- and the National Home has evolved over our decades-long history to meet those changing needs.

The idea for the National Home was first planted in 1923 when the Military Order of the Cootie presented the concept to the VFW at its national convention. Members of the VFW embraced the idea of a home for the children and families of veterans, and the VFW National Home for Children was born as a non-profit corporation separate from the VFW itself.

Since its founding, the VFW National Home for Children has grown from an old frame farm house to a sprawling campus with playgrounds, park areas, and multiple buildings, including single-family homes, a community center and gymnasium, child care facility, guest lodge, chapel and administrative offices.

Over the years, the National Home has evolved to meet the changing needs of America's military and veterans' families. Through it all, one thing has remained constant: the National Home's commitment to honor our nation's veterans and active-duty military by providing help and hope for their children and families.

### Mission:

"The Veterans of Foreign Wars National Home for Children will provide children, youth and families of veterans, active-duty military and members of the VFW and its Auxiliary opportunities for growth and development in a nurturing community, and by doing so will serve as a living memorial to all veterans."

### Who Do They Help?

The National Home's community is open to the families of active-duty military personnel, veterans and relatives of VFW and VFW Auxiliary members. The family can be one or both parents with one or more children.

In accepting families to our program, we ask only one thing of them: They must be committed to making changes in their lives. To remain at the National Home, they are expected to demonstrate consistent progress toward family goals. Together, in partnership with the whole family, we are dedicated to helping each family reach its full potential.

### What Do They Offer?

Families are welcomed to our small-town community where they may live for up to 4 years. They work to identify what they need and want to accomplish. Families may accomplish significant life goals by participating in our program. We offer:

**Housing-** A single family home in our community for up to four years with no cost.  
**Education-** Tutoring, classes, secondary financial assistance and more to help accomplish goals.

**Daycare-** Licensed childcare while at work, school or for respite.

**Basic Needs-** Food, health care and clothing, if needed.

**Recreation-** Opportunities to help with becoming whole and healthy.

**Case Management-** A caring professional dedicated to providing the expertise, compassion, support and guidance needed for the family to succeed.

**Military and Veteran Family Helpline-** A free service that offers information, creates connections and gives hope to struggling military and veteran families.

### What About the Housing?

The VFW National Home has 42 Single Family Homes.

They are sponsored and named for the state the sponsor is from, named after the sponsor or named to honor someone or an organization(s). Home sponsors include nearly every VFW/AUX State Headquarters in the Country (Including Minnesota), the Military Order of the Cooties, VFW Departments of Europe and others.

### How are They Funded?

The VFW National Home for Children is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization supported solely by contributions from private individuals and organizations - no government funding.

You can give with confidence knowing the National Home meets Better Business Bureau Wise Giving standards. We are pleased to display this seal of approval from the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance, confirming that we meet the Alliance's 20 Standards for Charity Accountability.

### Ways to Support the VFW National Home

- Donate (either individually or as a Post, District, Department or other entity) •
- Fundraise Become a Life Member or Associate Member •
- Tell Others about the National Home • Tribute Bricks •
- Recruit new Life or Associate Members • Tribute Park •
- Go to Amazon.com, Search "VFW National Home For Children Wish List" for items to purchase and donate to the Home •

### To Learn More:

<https://www.vfwnationalhome.org/>  
1-800-424-8360

### VFW National Home For Children:

3573 S Waverly Road  
Eaton Rapids, MI 48827

### Editors Note:

The above information was taken from the VFW National Home for Children website.

# Timely Tidbits

## VFW has Free Estate Planning Resources

VFW National Headquarters Bulletin, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI VOLUME 44, NO. 5 DEC. 2019

Did you know more than HALF of American adults do not have an estate plan or will in place? Most people know the importance of one, but the process often feels “too big” to start. So the VFW is providing a FREE Personal Estate Planning Kit, which you can download at [vfw.org/plannedgiving](http://vfw.org/plannedgiving). This kit will help you easily walk through the process of getting your plans ready. Once you have made sure your family and loved ones are taken care of, we invite you to consider a gift to the VFW in your will. It only takes a few words to offer continued support for our future generation of veterans. Learn more by contacting the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or email [plannedgiving@vfw.org](mailto:plannedgiving@vfw.org).

**Editors Note:** Minnesota Members may wish to consider the MNVFW Charitable Association for Planned Giving. Contact them at [mnvfwcharitable@gmail.com](mailto:mnvfwcharitable@gmail.com) or visit <https://www.mnvfw.org/charitable-association> or by calling 651-291-1757.

## Hackers Target Job-Hunting Service Members and Veterans

VFW National Headquarters Bulletin, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI VOLUME 44, NO. 5 DEC. 2019

Service members and veterans seeking employment need to be aware of a scam circulating the web. The website, “Hire Military Heroes,” prompts users to download an app that contains malicious malware that allows hackers to access a significant amount of personal information, according to cybersecurity researchers at Cisco Talos. The phony site shared a similar URL to the site “Hiring Our Heroes,” an employment site the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation launched. It is unknown at this time who may be the culprit behind the cyberattack.

Learn more here <https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2019/10/10/hackers-target-job-hunting-service-members-veterans-with-sham-employment-website/>

## VFW Friends of Freedom

VFW National Headquarters Bulletin, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI VOLUME 44, NO. 5 DEC. 2019

VFW Friends of Freedom – If you are not already a member of the VFW’s online community, please visit [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) and look for the gold banner that says “Find Out What’s Happening” to sign up. As a member of the VFW’s Friends of Freedom, you will receive special emails with breaking VFW news, legislative alerts and unique opportunities to help the VFW in assisting our nation’s veterans, service members and their families. You may also visit [vfw.org/vfwatwork](http://vfw.org/vfwatwork) and click on “Read VFW success stories” to learn how the VFW is fighting for veterans’ rights, assisting veterans in need, educating our youth and aiding military families across the nation. Check back often to see newly posted stories!



Visit the **VFW National Home** Christmas

**Amazon Wish List:**

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/CEPOBFHDZG2/ref=cm\\_go\\_nav\\_hz](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/CEPOBFHDZG2/ref=cm_go_nav_hz)

*Glory to God on the Highest,*  
AND ON EARTH PEACE, *good will toward men.*



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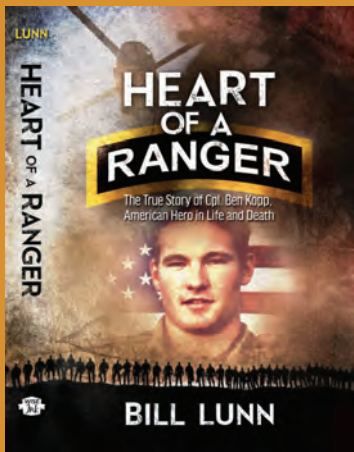
## WORD SEARCH #6

V.F.W. National Home

- |                        |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Active Duty            | Housing         |
| Basic Needs            | Legacy          |
| Board of Trustees      | Life Membership |
| By Laws                | Meals           |
| Chapel                 | Michigan        |
| Children               | Minnesota House |
| Clothing               | Mission         |
| Community              | Museum          |
| Community Center       | National Home   |
| Cootie Fire Department | Non Profit      |
| Counseling             | Parents         |
| Daycare                | Recreation      |
| Donors                 | Resources       |
| Education              | Tribute Park    |
| Families               | Veterans        |
| Free Housing           | WWII Memorial   |
| Hiking Trails          |                 |



**Minnesota House at the VFW National Home for Children**  
 Sponsored by the VFW Dept. of Minnesota and its Auxiliary  
 Built in 1935, 1,933 Square Feet, 3 Bed, 1 1/2 Bath



~MIDWINTER CONFERENCE~  
Saturday Only!

**Guest Speaker:**  
Gold Star Mother Jill Stephenson

Visit the Display Area 10 am- 2 pm  
Jill will be selling and signing

**“Heart of a Ranger”**  
**\$20 each**

Don't miss her presentation at 2:45!

Ben's death had been recorded on paper more than twenty-four hours previously. But in the very late hours of July 19, 2009, Ben finally no longer had a pulse. The heart of a Ranger was still but alive and awaiting its next mission.

When Jill Stephenson received the call that her twenty-one-year-old son, Cpl. Ben Kopp, had been shot in the leg while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom, her fear was that he would lose his leg. But soon her fears would be realized in more devastating ways than she ever expected. Due to complications, Ben went into a coma, and eight days later he was pronounced brain dead. Cpl. Ben Kopp, an American hero who was credited with saving the lives of six of his fellow soldiers on the battlefield, was struck down defending his country; he died a Ranger, a warrior, and a patriot. And his heroism would not stop at death.

Through the donating of his organs, bone, skin, and tissue, the mischievous and fun-loving kid from Rosemount, Minnesota went on to save the lives of four Americans and benefited the lives of more than sixty. After reporting Cpl. Kopp's story, broadcast journalist Bill Lunn couldn't forget it, referring to it as the most compelling story of his career. In Heart of a Ranger, Lunn follows Ben's life from his childhood in the Midwest, to the battlefields of southern Afghanistan, to the chest of his heart donor recipient in Chicago. Through interviews with loved ones, service members, and Ben's heart recipient, Heart of a Ranger captures the true story of American bravery and sacrifice. In these pages and in reality, the impact of Ben's life beats on.



**MINNESOTA VFW CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION**

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? (please circle one) YES NO

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Earmark for one of the following: \_\_\_ General Undesignated

\_\_\_ VFW Outdoor Fund \_\_\_ Veterans Service \_\_\_ VFW Programs

Looking for a Program that's Educational AND Entertaining?

Program Opportunities for you!



**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 choose from a number of topics including:

- THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**
- MINNESOTA IN THE CIVIL WAR**
- MINNESOTA IN THE GREAT WAR (WWI)**
- MINNESOTA IN WORLD WAR II**

**THE U.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 dedicated 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](http://historicalexperiences.org)

or contact the presenter at...

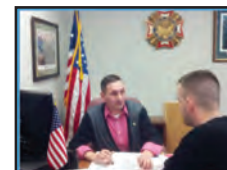
[arnkind@historicalexperiences.org](mailto:arnkind@historicalexperiences.org)

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!**

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 of ways that you can Preserve the Memory 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](mailto: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