

GOPHER OVERSEAS

Volume 74, NO. 1 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Official Publication to More Than 45,000 Members of the Department of Minnesota February 2020 - May 2020

VFW #1720 Grand Rapids Loses Post Home to Fire

By Hugh Quinn, Commander of Post #1720



On 7 March 2020 an electrical fire, that started in the basement of the adjoining building, took out Ponti-Peterson Post 1720 of Grand Rapids, Mn. The fire started out small and what appeared to be a quick job for area firefighters turned into a long defensive fire fight that in the end required the assistance of 7 additional companies. Over the course of 15 hours the building where the fire originated was nearly completely gutted by the fire, and the VFW Post lost its entire second floor with the fire creeping down the second floor walls.

Roof rafters and roofing almost completely burned and what didn't burn collapsed onto the floor. While the blaze was kept to the 2nd floor of the post, the water damage that occurred is catastrophic.

The local public utilities measured over 700,000 gallons of water poured into the two buildings

and an unmeasured amount came from the Blandin Paper Company through a 6 inch hose.

The response from the community was amazing. Before the fire had been put out, city officials, local businesses, non-profits, and individuals had already pledged their support to rebuild. Within three days, the community had two fundraisers organized and the boys from the club had rented a new temporary home three doors down from their old one.

As of today's date, we are on-line in a rented space two doors down from the old club. Due to city codes we are unable to do much of anything in the space and because its designated mercantile, we are now a T-Shirt retailer. We have been allowed back in the building, and started the process of recovery and

FIRE - Cont. Page 10



2019-20

State Commander

Chad Solheid

Member of

VFW Post 7

Minneapolis, MN



Greetings Comrades! I hope this finds you well. Amid the recent events, with the disruptions the COVID-19 virus has caused and the constant changes that seem to be happening daily, we will get through this. I want to thank you all for your patience and flexibility. Communication will be the backbone of completing our business and maintaining our level of care for Veterans. We must be creative and find ways to get the job done. This is uncharted territory and we will overcome this together.

Thank you to all - This has been a good year. We have 3 more months and a lot of work to do. Who could have guessed a pandemic was about to happen? We still need to focus on membership and the duties at hand. Please get your reports in and contact those members that are due for this year and the reinstated members. If you have any questions, please contact your District or the Department.

I want to thank all the posts
CMDR - Cont. Page 3

PDC "Jimmy" Connolly Meets His Maker at Age 76

By Jim Hesselgrave, Past State Adjutant Quartermaster

Jimmy passed away peacefully on January 30, 2020 at the age 76. He was preceded in death by his brothers, Denny and Mark, and stepdaughter, Leandra Wende. Survived by his wife, Joyce Trembley; children, Adam and DeElta; sisters Peggy McCarthy (Larry) and Colleen Strom (Don); sister-in-law Becky Connolly; stepson Eddie Zepeda; loving grandchildren, great-grand children, nieces, nephews and friends. Jimmy was laid to Rest with a Private Interment at Fort Snelling.

Jimmy was born in Yakima, Washington on September 27, 1943. At age four, his family moved to Minnesota. He grew up in the St. Paul area and attended St. Thomas and Sibley High Schools.

In 1960, Jimmy joined the



Jim Connolly
Past State Commander
1994-1995

United States Marine Corps. He saw Foreign Service during the Cuban Missile Crisis, in the Dominican Republic and a few tours in Vietnam. Jimmy was a 'career' Marine, but after fourteen years, he was Medically Discharged due to combat wounds received in Action. During his career with the Marine Corps, he received numerous Awards, including the Combat Action Ribbon, Air Wings, four Purple Hearts (possibly more), two Air Medals, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Vietnam Service Medal and a Presidential Unit Citation.

Following his Military Career, Jimmy served the Department of Minnesota VFW for twelve years as the Veterans Administration

CONNOLLY - Cont. Page 14

State Convention

June 4-7, 2020

See Page 7

Save The Date!!
Upcoming VFW Events

State Convention
June 4-7, 2020
Crowne Plaza
Plymouth

National Convention
July 18-23, 2020
Reno, NV

Please watch for
Veterans Activity
Dates in the
General Orders
or on the State
VFW Web Page
www.mnvfw.org

VFW State Baseball
Tournament
Aug. 6-8, 2020
St. Cloud

Fall Conference
Sept. 25-27, 2020
St. Cloud

Red Events are Department Events

Department of Minnesota, VFW
20 W 12th St
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Twin Cities, MN
1580
Permit NO.
PAID
U.S. Postage
Non-profit Org.

Please use the form on the reverse side to note any address changes

Top News

Official Notice:

Proposed By-Laws & Resolutions

These proposed changes to the Department of Minnesota By-Laws will be voted on at the State Convention in Plymouth June 6-7, 2020.

Department By-Laws

- B-1** Article IX -- Committees, Section 2(a) Finance Committee, paragraphs 3 and 4
- B-2** Article IX -- Committees, Section 2(b) Internal Affairs Committee, paragraph 1
- B-3** Article IX -- Committees, Section 2(b) Internal Affairs Committee, new paragraphs 4-9

CANCELED

CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19

- April MN Veterans Day on the Hill
- State Commander's Testimonial

POSTPONED

- Many District Conventions (See Page 9)
- Many Post Meetings & Elections (Check with your CMDR)

WATCHING (TBD)

- Poppy Distribution Days
- State Convention & Trainings (See Page 7)

VFW COVID-19 UPDATES

Watch the following Resources:

www.mnvfw.org

MN VFW E-Blasts

**Phone Calls, Mail & Emails
from your District & Post Officers**

REMEMBER:

**When in doubt, follow stay-at-home
& gathering guidelines set forth by the
State & Federal Governments**

MN VFW STATE OFFICE HOURS

Headquarters Office

April 2020 (May TBD)
Office closed to walk-ins
Office Staffed M-W-F 8 am- Noon
Phones Answered
Weekdays 8 am- 4 pm
Emails checked regularly

Claims Office

April 2020 (May TBD)
Office closed to walk-ins
Office Staffed Weekdays 7-11 am
Phones Answered
Email Inquiries should go to:
VFW.vbaspl@va.gov

Attention: Commanders & Quartermasters COVID-19 Financial Assistance

This COVID 19 has hit us all in one way or another. Harder for those who have post homes with payrolls, canteens and the like. We all have to continue to pay the gas, electricity for the buildings we own. We as a 501(c)19 are included in the \$350 billion dollar Small Business Administration (SBA) loans available that the government just approved.

Here are some loans you can apply for and do it quickly. Just GOOGLE them!!

PPP – Paycheck Protection Program

Announced by the Small Business Administration (SBA)-This is a program that can provide a 100% federally guaranteed loan to businesses with less than 500 employees. If employers maintain their payroll, the loans would be forgiven, and ultimately become a grant to the applying organization. Only approved by your bank and guaranteed by the government – **do not go to the SBA web site – Go to your Bank.**

Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) & Emergency Economic Injury Grants

This program provides an emergency advance of up to \$10,000 to small business and most non-profits harmed by COVID-19. An organization must first apply for an EIDL and then request the advance. The advance does not need to be repaid under any circumstances. Other terms apply.

MN DEED (MN Employment and Economic Development)

website <http://mn.gov/deed> they have a link to some of these loans.

I will forward all information that comes into us for help and assistance to the District Commanders and Quartermasters.

If you need help call me- Jerry Brletich, 612-554-6466

Minnesota VFW Office Locations

Department Headquarters:

Ken Schroepfer, 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@gmail.com
Webpage: www.mnvfw.org

Auxiliary Headquarters :

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

Department Claims Office:

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

Minneapolis VA

Scott Sutherland
VFW Hospital Representative
Minneapolis VAMC - 4G Room 109E
Phone: (612) 725-2000 ext. 4448

GOPHER OVERSEAS'R

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

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 July 25, November 25, and March 25

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

Please Note the below address change: (Please Print)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State and Zip: _____

Post Number: _____

Department Headquarters News

Judge Advocate

By Dale Hoogeveen, State Judge Advocate

I enjoyed the privilege of travelling to Washington, D.C. for our annual National Legislative Conference and the awarding of scholarships to our State Voice of Democracy winners and the National Patriots Pen winner. These are outstanding young students and I congratulate our Department of Minnesota winner, Elizabeth Link, for earning a \$2000 scholarship. We were fortunate to meet personally with U.S. Representatives Jim Hagedorn, Angie Craig, Dean Phillips, Betty McCollum, Tom Emmer, Collin Peterson, Pete Stauber and U.S. Senator Tina Smith.

From my perspective as Department Judge Advocate, this had been a relatively quiet year regarding disciplinary actions until recently. We currently have a number of posts placed on suspension and post commanders being relieved of their duties for failing to comply with our National By-Laws. Please think about that – all elected officers at the post, district and department level swear an oath upon being installed to office to uphold those same by-laws.

Our State Commander is charged with enforcing those by-laws on behalf of the National Commander in Chief – expecting Commander Solheid to ignore that responsibility by overlooking

those violations merely insults his position and leadership. It is critical to elect officers at all levels who are committed to upholding the oath of office. Commanders, Quartermasters and Trustees have unique responsibilities in our organization, I urge you to choose wisely. For those comrades who are not active in their post, I ask you to get involved by attending post and district meetings, familiarize yourself with National, Department, District and Post By-laws and hold your elected officers accountable for upholding their oath of office.

Your Department Commander and his officers appreciate the great work being done by the overwhelming majority of our posts. Without you, the Veterans of Foreign Wars cannot succeed.

For Posts that are struggling, it is not a sign of weakness to ask for help. Rather, recognizing your post needs help and asking for it reflects great leadership and concern for the good of our organization. To those officers and chairpersons leaving their positions at the conclusion of the state convention, I ask you to consider taking on similar responsibilities at a higher level. Your experience is invaluable and we need you to continue to serve!

Membership

By Curt Hermanson, State Senior Vice Commander

Membership is the one of the most vital parts of the VFW without the continuance of our members we will diminish to nothing.

It is now time to step up to the plate and find a new member we are currently hovering around 94 percent and 100 percent is highly attainable. We were able to reach 100 last year so I know this can be done, our department currently has around 36,000 members and all it takes is each member to sign up one new or reinstate a member and just think what our membership could be. We would be back to a great strength.

Now more than ever do our fellow veterans need our help and this could be a great opportunity to reach those new or past members by doing a buddy check, calling our past members in this time of need can

really show them that we care about them and that they are just not a number but more important than that. I'm not saying this is an easy task to take on with all that is happening in the world at the moment but as we know we are tough in Minnesota and we can prove that it can be done.

With that I would also like to state that we need to also be safe in this process and keep yourselves and your family as healthy as you can. Please contact me if needed and we can provide a list of past members and you can create a call group and reach out to the past or expired members of our department. We have also setup a three member team to including myself, Barry Henriksen, and Dale Hoogeveen who are also able to help with membership.

Community Service

By Dewey Hermanson, State Community Service Chair



for community service are through March 3rd. They include 91,060 members doing 498,719 hours and \$2,592,284.00 in donations, great job. Congratulations and thank you to all the posts in achieving 100% reporting for our Department. Let us always remember we can't get credit for something we don't report.

With my new soon appointment as the Department of Department of MN VFW Adjutant, I will be stepping down as your Community Service Chairman; it's been a pleasure working with all of you over the past 3 years. Next year's Community Service Chairman is Bruce Flaten and I know you will support him also as you have me.

I would also like to thank Commander Chad for this appointment.

Greetings, Comrades, Brothers & Sisters:

Wow! Where has this year gone? It has zoomed by very fast. Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Community Service Chairman this past year. I want to personally extend my gratitude to those responsible for submitting the information required in putting together our "Community Service Reports" each month. The numbers

CMDR- Cont. from Page 1

and auxiliaries that donated to the families of three soldiers that died in the helicopter crash. I am very impressed by Minnesota and how we stepped up. This is an example of what we do and what we can do. The need will always be there and that is why it is imperative to continue the support of the VFW Charitable association.

Our trip to the Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. was very productive. It was an honor to escort our VOD winner Elizabeth

Link of Inver Grove Heights. She won a \$2000 scholarship award. We visited all but one of our representatives from Minnesota. We put on a lot of mileage with all the walking we did, some more than others. I was happy to log over 11,000 steps only to be beat out by our Jr. Vice Barry- I think he was over 25,000 that same day. Hats off to him!

With the coming days please stay safe and healthy. I look forward to seeing you all at the State Convention in June. If circumstances change, we will modify as needed. Improvise, Adapt and Overcome.

MNVFW

Charitable Association

By Barry Henriksen, Assoc. President & State Jr. Vice Commander

The Charitable Association has been very busy since Our Midwinter Conference. We have received nearly \$54,000 from our posts and auxiliaries for the three families that tragically lost their service members. By the time you read this the families will have received checks for \$18,000 each. Thank you so much for your generosity.

The Charitable Association approved a donation to the Minnesota Veterans Home- Minneapolis toward a project that will display the emblems of the five branches of service. They will also leave room for the sixth branch Space Force.

The Association also approved a donation to support bringing "The Wall that Heals" to Hibbing June 23-28. This 3/4 scale replica will draw people from all over the state. The United Way of

Northeast Minnesota is sponsoring the event. For more details please go to www.unitedwaymn.org.

And, the Charitable Association has agreed to accept funds to help restore the Grand Rapids VFW. Their post home was destroyed by a fire in March. Please send your checks to the:

MN VFW Charitable Association
In the remarks put
"Grand Rapids Restoration"

As State Junior Vice Commander I hope that by the time we go to press with this edition of the Oversea'r that we are in a much better place with Coronavirus. We have had to postpone or cancel many events. Our post homes are closed. Our members at risk. Please look after our members that are at high risk. Remember "no one does more for veterans than the VFW". I hope to see all of you soon.

Per VFW National General Orders No.9 Item #2

~ Post Election Reports ~ DUE No Later than JUNE 1st

Minnesota Auxiliary News



**2019-2020
STATE PRESIDENT
VFW Auxiliary
Francesca
"Frankie"
Bill**



Member of VFW Post 3915, Brooklyn Park, MN

Comrades and Members, we have arrived at the final quarter of the 2019/2020 program year. The Department of Minnesota Auxiliary Chairmen and Chairwomen have been working hard summarizing all the amazing work of approximately 150 Auxiliaries across the state. I want to thank all of our members for their volunteering hours and creative activities reported on the yearend reports. Each program chair has a unique and special job of capturing and preserving the amazing work performed at the local and district levels. Thank you for your service and time to these vital programs supporting Veterans, their families, and the community.

2020 has ushered in unprecedented times for all of us globally and right at home. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven we are able to adapt and overcome the unknown and focus on caring for each other, as well as protecting our Veterans and members. While we monitor the situation and work with our government officials, we

will continue to focus on safety of members first. While we hope to stay on schedule, regular business meetings and District Conventions may either be postponed or cancelled. Regardless, we will work "Together, with Vigor and Might." The Department Office staff will continue to provide frequent communication updates via email blasts, monthly General Orders, the Department of Minnesota Auxiliary website, and the Department of Minnesota Auxiliary Facebook page.

Should there be an all clear by the beginning of June, please join me at the Department Convention in Plymouth. We will conduct business imperative to our Department Auxiliary activities, issue awards for each of the 11 programs, and elect and install the officers for 2020/2021. Thank you for all you do each and every day. This past year has not only been humbling, but also an honor to serve as the Department of Minnesota, Auxiliary President.

"Together, with Vigor and Might"

Words From Your National Council Member

By Tom Hanson, Minnesota's National Council Member

In my efforts to try to keep the members of the Minnesota VFW and Auxiliary abreast of what is on the table at the National level I will impart some information in each edition of the Gopher Oversea'r but as always, some of the information may be stale or even archaic. For that I apologize in advance and hope you'll acquiesce.

Most recently I attended the VFW Washington Conference with the Minnesota delegates. The National Council of Administration met as a part of the Conference where several matters were discussed and brought to the floor for action. One of the most thoroughly discussed issues proposes an overhaul of the ceremonial aspects of the present Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen program. Rather than bringing all the State winners into Washington as a part of the Legislative Conference, the organization would recognize the top 5 winners at the National Convention and then invite all the State winners to the Spirit of America Leadership seminar put on by Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge, PA. This trip is currently offered but paid for by the Departments. Under the proposed change the cost of this trip would be borne by the National Organization. The other State winners would be recognized at a Department event by the National representative. Even after absorbing the cost of this tour the proposal would save the organization close to \$232,000. The

motion to adopt this recommended change was tabled until the meeting scheduled for July at the National Convention.

A number of other issues were raised at the Council meeting and were met with less discussion. The majority of the items were what are often referred to as "housekeeping" things, such as a continuing review of the organization's annual budget; a review of the National Travel Policy, and reports from the Adjutant General, Quartermaster General, Executive Director of the VFW Washington Office, and Directors of VFW Legislative Service and National Veterans Service. Additionally, reports were given by some of the program directors and other Committee Chairmen.

As I mentioned earlier the council will meet again at the National Convention in Reno in July. Please get in touch with me if there is anything you might like me to bring to the Council floor. I serve this Department as your Representative on the Council and I need to hear from you if you have questions or inquiries relative to the National Organization or action taking place at that level. I can be reached through VFW State Headquarters or thomashanson52@gmail.com.

I had the opportunity along with our State Commander, and the other Minnesota VFW delegates,

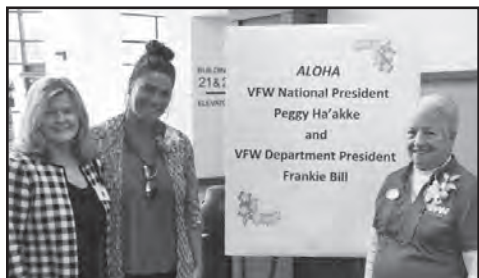
COUNCIL - Cont. Page 10

National President Visits MN

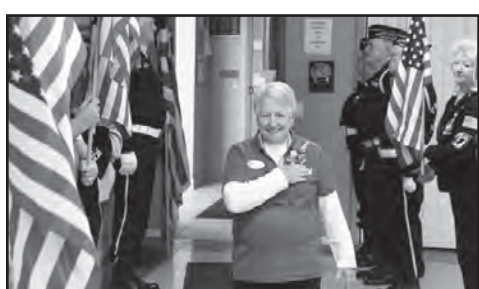


March 6, 2020

Auxiliary National President Peggy Haake made a stop in Minnesota after attending the National Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. She was treated to Brunch at Everett-McClay VFW #1296 in Bloomington, a tour of the Minneapolis Veterans Home, two Aisle of Honor Flag processions and a 'Minnesota Style' Luau Fish Fry at Minnesota President Frankie's home Post #3915 Palmer Lake. We were happy to provide some mild Minnesota March weather before she left for her home in Hawaii.



President Peggy was greeted by Sandy Larson, Mpls. Veterans Home Public Affairs Director. She was given a tour of the homes Distribution Center by Doris Anderson, Auxiliary Member and Minneapolis Veterans Home Chairman, who runs the center.



She was presented with an Aisle of honor at the Palmer Lake and Bloomington Posts. State President Frankie Bill and State Commander Chad Solheid, along with their line officers showed the National President a little Minnesota Hospitality during her visit.



See Page 15

How Many Cootie Bugs Can You Find in this Issue?

Answer on Page 15



Cootie Corner

By Dewey Hermanson, Minnesota Cootie Grand Commander '19-'20

The Cooties who are the Cooties? I heard you ask, I will explain them to you, it's no task, and they are the Veterans of Foreign Wars, "THE HONOR DECREE". Also the active workers of the V.F.W. and all Cooties are always there, ready to answer the call. Their little red hat, they proudly wear, in an outfit, that's based on fun. A dedication to which they will ever stick, to visit their buddies, the disabled and the sick. The Cooties practice their motto, with all their might, to always "KEEP 'EM SMILIN' IN BEDS OF WHITE". NOW you know and can clearly see, just why a Cootie has received, "THE HONOR DECREE"

Are you a member of the Cooties and would you like to belong to a Pup Tent? Here is a listing of the

Pup Tents and location: Pup Tent 2, VFW Post, Minneapolis, Pup Tent 3, VFW Post 2766 Breckenridge, Pup Tent 5, VFW Post 137 Duluth, Pup Tent 11, VFW Post 6316 Blaine, Pup Tent 15, VFW Post 425 Hopkins, Pup Tent 19, VFW Post 1216 Austin, Pup Tent 34, VFW Post 1223 Dilworth, Pup Tent 42, VFW Post 2793 Thief River Falls, Pup Tent 45, VFW Post 8663 Roseau, Pup Tent 51, VFW Post 1296 Bloomington, Pup Tent 54, VFW Post 1782 White Bear Lake, Pup Tent 62, VFW Post 4847 St Cloud, Pup Tent 66, VFW Post 3915 Brooklyn Park, Pup Tent 71, VFW Post 6587 Spring Lake Park, and Pup Tent 99, VFW Post 2735 Isanti.

REMINDER- Due to the COVID-19 concerns, our Cootie Convention has been cancelled.



Claims and Service Office Report

By Jon Gohn, Claims Director

VFW Demands Congress Hold VA Accountable for Failure to Grant Benefits, Post 9/11 Veterans Suffering Toxic Exposures

'It's time for Congress to change the framework for providing benefits to individuals who suffer from conditions associated with toxic exposures'

March 04, 2020

WASHINGTON –

Veterans of Foreign Wars National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz called for “accountability for failure to grant benefits to Vietnam and Post-9/11 veterans suffering from toxic exposures” during a special joint hearing of the Senate and House Veterans’ Affairs Committees today.

The VFW expressed its frustration with the Department of Veterans Affairs’ lack of urgency in providing benefits to individuals who suffer from conditions associated with toxic exposures, especially when there is science to back up veterans’ claims.

VFW National Commander William Doc Schmitz testifies before joint hearing of House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

VFW National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz testifies before a joint House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee on March 4, 2020.

“The VFW proposes a permanent, comprehensive, and evidence-based framework of granting presumptive benefits for toxic exposure,” said Schmitz. “Veterans who were exposed to burn pits and now suffer from pulmonary conditions and rare cancers should

not have to wait decades for benefits – like Vietnam veterans did.”

The VFW proposed process of granting benefits would require VA to acknowledge the existing research linking these conditions to their service and establish benefits if supported by the science.

“It’s important to ensure veterans who suffer from adverse health conditions related to toxic exposure receive benefits, but acknowledging the science also ensures VA can improve the care that nearly 80 percent of VFW members use and prefer,” said Schmitz.

Vietnam veterans diagnosed with bladder cancer, Parkinson-like symptoms, hypertension and other conditions that scientists have said are connected to Agent Orange remain without health care and benefits.

“It’s unacceptable that the list of conditions presumed to be associated with Agent Orange exposure does not include bladder cancer, Parkinson-like symptoms, hypertension, and other conditions that scientists have said are connected to military service,” said Schmitz. “The VA keeps making excuses for not acknowledging it. As a Vietnam veteran, I will not sit idle as my comrades struggle to survive without the care and compensation they deserve.”

Schmitz reminded committee members that the VFW has led or played a major role in every reform or expansion of veterans benefits since the institution of the VA.

Defense Act Ends ‘Widow’s Tax’

‘This is a momentous victory for the more than 65,000 military spouses who endured the tragic loss of their husband or wife who paid the ultimate sacrifice’

March 09, 2020

President Donald Trump’s signing of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020 on Dec. 20 terminated the long-standing “widow’s tax” of surviving spouses of troops.

The law (P.L. 116-92) allows surviving spouses of military troops who died during active-duty service or retirees who died from a service-connected cause to keep all compensation from the government. Prior to the new law, surviving spouses who received a Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) paid a dollar-for-dollar offset from their Military Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP).

Veterans, congressional leaders and spouses impacted by the widow’s tax celebrate the passing of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020 on Dec. 20 at the VFW Washington Office on Capitol Hill. Veterans, congressional leaders and spouses impacted by the widow’s tax celebrate the passing of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020 on Dec. 20 at the VFW Washington Office on Capitol Hill. The law eliminates the dollar-for-dollar offset of survivor benefit payments, a long-standing VFW priority goal.

“This is a momentous victory for the more than 65,000 military

spouses who endured the tragic loss of their husband or wife who paid the ultimate sacrifice,” said VFW Commander-in-Chief William “Doc” Schmitz. “Without these extraordinary spouses fighting in the trenches with us, the termination of the widow’s tax may not have been possible.” For many survivors, the offset completely eliminated their SBP payments and threatened their financial security.

“There is no justifiable reason why money should have ever been stripped away from our military spouses,” Schmitz said.

In May 2019, VFW led the first roundtable discussion with other veterans’ service organizations, congressional staffers and surviving spouses affected by the offset to create a legislative campaign to eliminate the widow’s tax.

VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Kyle Kalman said the signing of the 2020 Defense budget “rights a wrong” for military widows and widowers, who were “forced to endure” an offset of survivor benefit payments, as well as other types of compensation.

“We commend the leadership in Congress and the coalition of veterans and survivor organizations that fought alongside us for their commitment to the 65,000 surviving military spouses,” Kalman said. “Our military widows and widowers deserved this victory.”

~This article is featured in the March 2020 issue of VFW magazine.

VA Publishes Proposed Regulations to Improve the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

March 4, 2020, 03:37:00 PM

WASHINGTON–

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will publish a proposed rule in the Federal Register March 6 that would improve and standardize VA’s Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) and ensure the program regulations reflect changes required by the VA MISSION Act of 2018.

A component of the Caregiver Support Program, the PCAFC was established in 2011 to provide additional benefits including a monthly stipend for qualifying family caregivers of eligible Veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

In the proposed rule, VA seeks to standardize eligibility by expanding the definition of serious injury to include any service-connected disability- regardless of

whether it resulted from an injury, illness or disease- defining what it means to be in need of personal care services, and ensuring that the eligibility criteria capture the personal care service needs of Veterans and Servicemembers with cognitive or neurological impairment or mental health conditions, among other things.

Additionally, VA is proposing changes to the stipend payment methodology, definitions for financial planning and legal services and procedures for revocation and discharge, to include advance notice requirements aimed at improving communication between VA and PCAFC participants.

“We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to caregivers who work tirelessly to provide critical support for our nation’s Veterans,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “This proposed regulation would improve the assistance we provide to help

ensure our most vulnerable Veterans can stay in their homes with their loved ones for as long as possible.”

VA’s Caregiver Support Program is the first of its kind and addresses the complexity and expense of keeping loved ones out of institutions and at home with their families who provide personalized care. The program offers unparalleled support services including training, peer mentoring, respite care, a telephone support line and self-care courses for caregivers of all Veterans enrolled in VA health care who need personal care services.

The regulations are part of a broad effort to strengthen PCAFC in advance of a planned expansion under the MISSION Act which expanded eligibility for PCAFC to eligible Veterans from all eras, beginning with those who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975. Two years after the first phase

of program expansion, PCAFC will include eligible Veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty between May 7, 1975 and Sept. 11, 2001. Prior to expanding, VA must fully implement an information technology (IT) system required by the MISSION Act.

In October 2019 VA launched a commercial off-the-shelf IT system and expects to complete deployment in late summer or early fall of 2020. The department also standardized operating procedures for the Caregiver Support Program, provided new training for staff and caregivers and is boosting operational capacity through hiring of additional staff. These changes are necessary as VA prepares to expand PCAFC.

Learn more about support services available for caregivers of Veterans or call the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274.

Capital Hill Press

By Tommy Johnson, Legislative Chairman

America's Veterans have long enjoyed popular support, and for good reason – we've earned it. In today's troubled times we have a unique opportunity to show why that support is justified. We do that by our actions; we do that through setting an example. In an era when too many believe that those that do not agree with them, up and down the line, are the "enemy" we can and must make a difference.

Our veteran community is comprised of every demographic in America – rural, suburban, and urban; religious from and of every faith – and non-religious as well as this great country of ours allows and protects; from our Native Americans who have served so well (would the battles of the South Pacific have been won without our Code Talkers?) to hyphen-Americans from virtually every region and country across the world; immigrants yearning to be free, shedding the hyphen, and melting in the pot to become Americans. Gays? Yes. Straights? Yes. Conservatives, Moderates, Liberals and Independents? Yes. You name the demographic, and they are our Brothers and Sisters that answered the call of duty and earned the title: "Veteran."

Veterans have shown time and time again that diverse people with purpose and training can adapt and improvise and overcome and complete objectives and missions. We are people from all walks of life that united for purpose in uniform. We have united as Veterans of Foreign Wars for the purpose of bettering ourselves, our families, and our communities.

While the respect for Veterans has remained constant since WWII, the public's perception of benefits Veterans receive has not. After WWII, according to Gallup, 53% of the public felt veterans benefits were adequate, 32% felt inadequate, and 15% did not know. In 2012, as reported by Roper, only 23% felt benefits were adequate, 58% felt inadequate, with 14% responding don't know. As Veterans, we all know they are not adequate, for if they were, we would never have a conversation about Blue Water Navy Veterans, who still have not been taken care of and won't until all presumptives are covered. As VFW



Members, we know the benefits are not adequate for if they were, we would have no need for National, Department, District nor Post Legislative Officers or programs.

I write this whilst social distancing at home, not knowing when my Post will again schedule meetings nor open its doors, nor when District, Department, and National events will occur. We do not know when the state legislature will reconvene nor what changes will result from this crisis. What I do know is that more than ever, a phone call or an email is important. Our Elected Representatives need to hear from us, and they need to hear now. The message they hear from us needs to be delivered with the respect we've been given. We need to be respectful while being insistent that Veterans, and our families receive what we have earned and deserve.

We also need our members to make our voices heard in our communities. While at home practicing "social distancing" or, if it comes to it, sheltering in place, take the time to write a thoughtful and respectful letter to the editor of the local paper about an issue confronting Veterans and our families. Follow it up with a phone call. Need some suggestions on what to write? Call or email! I urge all members, all veterans, to be respectful in all our activities, especially on social media and especially if you hold an elected or appointed position. These are trying times, and now, more than ever, is the time to show leadership through respect.

TwoPuttTommy@gmail.com / 612-424-0482

- CANCELED - MN VETERANS DAY ON THE HILL

Washington Conference

March 1-5, 2020

We had productive meetings with both Senators' offices and seven out of the eight Representatives' Offices. It is unfortunate the work we accomplished has taken a back seat to the Covid-19 pandemic that threatens this great country. We look forward to the day when Congress can focus on Veterans and our Families once again.



Pictured above: MN VFW National Council Member Tom Hanson, State Commander Chad Solheid, State Judge Advocate Dale Hooegeveen, State Chief of Staff Gary Anderson, MN 7th District Congressional Representative Colin Peterson, Auxiliary Past District President Karianne Hermanson, State Sr. Vice Commander Curt Hermanson and State Surgeon Dr. Jim Tuorila.



Pictured above: MN VFW State Surgeon Dr. Jim Tuorila, State Chief of Staff Gary Anderson, Auxiliary Past District President Karianne Hermanson, State Jr. Vice Commander Barry Henriksen, 4th District Congressional Representative Betty McCullum, State Judge Advocate Dale Hooegeveen, State Sr. Vice Commander Curt Hermanson, State Commander Chad Solheid and State Legislative Chairman Tommy Johnson.



Pictured above: MN VFW National Council Member Tom Hanson, State Judge Advocate Dale Hooegeveen, Auxiliary Past District President Karianne Hermanson, State Sr. Vice Commander Curt Hermanson, State Jr. Vice Commander Barry Henriksen, State Auxiliary Secretary/Treasurer Laurie Dale, State Commander Chad Solheid, MN State Voice of Democracy winner Elizabeth Link, State President Frankie Bill, State Chief of Staff Gary Anderson and State Legislative Chairman Tommy Johnson.

36th ANNUAL OFFICER'S TRAINING INSTITUTE (O.T.I.)

WHO: POST OFFICERS AND ALL Interested MEMBERS
 WHAT: OFFICER'S TRAINING SCHOOL... Choose CMDR & QM Classes
 WHEN: JUNE 4, 2020 TIME: 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.
 WHERE: Crowne Plaza, 3131 Campus Drive, Plymouth, MN
 COST: \$75.00 per person by May 25, 2020 – includes lunch, registration, flash drive

 MEMEBER REGISTRATION Post # _____ District # _____
 Complete Name _____
 Primary Phone # _____ Position Title _____
 Email Address (or Mailing Address) _____
 Enclosed is Chk # _____ for \$75.00 Make checks payable to "Department of Minnesota, V.F.W."
 MAIL FORM TO: Department of Minnesota, V.F.W.; Rice Street Station,
 PO Box 17146; St Paul, MN 55117
 SCHOOL ATTENDING (Circle One): Commander OR Quartermaster
 Flash Drive Included Print Materials Requested

Auxiliary Training Seminar (A.T.S.)

WHO: AUXILIARY OFFICERS & MEMBERS
 WHAT: PROGRAM, BYLAWS & LEADERSHIP TRAINING
 WHEN: JUNE 4, 2020 TIME: 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
 WHERE: Crowne Plaza, 3131 Campus Drive, Plymouth, MN
 COST: \$40.00 per person by May 15, 2020 – includes lunch, registration, National Program Book

 MEMEBER REGISTRATION Auxiliary # _____ District # _____
 Complete Name _____
 Primary Phone # _____ Position Title _____
 Email Address (or Mailing Address) _____
 Enclosed is Chk # _____ for \$40.00 Make checks payable to "Department of Minnesota, V.F.W."
 MAIL FORM TO: Department of Minnesota, V.F.W.; Rice Street Station,
 PO Box 17146; St Paul, MN 55117
 DEADLINE MAY 15, 2020

State Convention - June 4-7, 2020

COVID-19 Status State Convention, OTI & ATS

As of the printing of this paper...

ALL June events are **STILL** Happening

Please continue to register for Training, Hotel & Saturday Dinner
This helps us plan enough materials and space for a successful event

May 4th Decision Day

Department Officers will announce any changes to our events
Watch all of the MN VFW Information Sources for Updates

Should events be canceled

All registrations/reservations will be refunded

State Convention

Crowne Plaza, Plymouth, MN

Our VFW year ends by wrapping up our business, celebrating our accomplishments and planning for the year to come.

This year, our Convention will return to the Crowne Plaza in Plymouth. This a comfortable property with plenty of space to meet up with old and new friends alike. Upon arrival you can take advantage of the \$5 valet parking and enjoy the on-site restaurants.

THURSDAY

The busy weekend starts off with training/learning opportunities for ANYONE interested. The VFW will hold it's 36th Annual Officers Training Institute (O.T.I.) where attendees can choose from two classes: Commander-covering leadership, programs and procedures OR Quartermaster- detailing financial procedures, audits and policies. The Auxiliary will hold their Auxiliary Training Seminar (A.T.S.) where they will detail programs, Bylaws and Leadership.

In the evening, the VFW and AUX Council of Administration meetings will be held to wrap up any of the 2019-20 business... be sure to watch for the Year End Chairman Report Books for a great view of the year.

FRIDAY

Perhaps everyone's favorite day of Convention- we celebrate the accomplishments of our organization with a morning Joint Awards Session. Find out who is tops in all of the great VFW programs. Special awards will also be announced including the AUX Hospital Volunteer of the Year, All-State Post Quartermasters and the TOP honor... All-State Post Commander.

In the afternoon, the Auxiliary opens their Convention to start planning for the new year/ VFW Committees will meet, a Gambling session will be held for anyone interested and don't forget to pre-register for the American Red Cross Blood Drive- donations are desperately needed. Visit <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html>/ find-drive to register.

Friday evening ends in the annual Memorial Service that brings a great speaker and the opportunity to honor VFW and Auxiliary members we have lost over the year. This is always a memorable event.

SATURDAY

VFW and AUX Conventions head into full swing, conducting the official business of the organization. This will include nominations for 2020-21 State Officers and discussion of Bylaw proposals for the upcoming year as well as National By-Laws and Resolutions. Decisions made at these meetings will not only direct our organization locally, but guide our State Officers as they head to the National Conventions in July.

NEW Saturday will be an Adjutant Dashboard Training Session (Open to ANY VFW members) that will go over how to access National's system to input all of the great work your VFW Post is doing. This is a new process and we hope to help everyone become more comfortable with it.

Saturday wraps up with a new twist- the traditional banquet will be a casual BBQ Dinner Event including a great meal, music and if the weather permits- and indoor/outdoor venue where you might be able to catch a game of Bean Bags!

2020 State Convention Schedule

WEDNESDAY, June 3:

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM Early Registration for OTI

THURSDAY, June 4:

7:00 AM - 9:00 AM OTI & ATS Registration (Aux Times May Vary)

OFFICERS TRAINING SCHOOL:

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM VFW Officers Training Institute
Quartermaster Class AUX Training Seminars (Aux Times May Vary)

9 AM - 7 PM Convention Registration
2:00 - 7:00 PM Veterans Home Displays

STATE CONVENTION BUSINESS:

3:30 - 4:30 PM MN V.F.W. Charitable Assoc. Mtg
4:30 - 6:00 PM Finance Committee Meeting

6:00 - 8:00 PM V.F.W. Council of Administration
6:00 - 9:00 PM Auxiliary Council of Administration

FRIDAY, JUNE 5:

6:00 AM - 7:00 AM Rise & Shine Workouts
7:00 AM - 4:00 PM Veterans Homes Displays
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM Registration (Aux Times May Vary)

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM V.F.W. & AUX Joint Awards
11:45 AM Past State CMDRS and PRES Luncheon

1:00 - 2:00 PM V.F.W. COMMITTEE MEETINGS (Open to all VFW)
1. National Security/Foreign Affairs/POW
2. Bylaws/Ritual/Rules
3. General Resolutions/Extension-Membership
4. Finance/Internal Affairs
5. Legislative/Vets Service/Employment

1:30 - 4:30 PM Opening Auxiliary Convention
2:00 - 3:30 PM Adjutant Training Session (Open to all VFW)

2:30 - 4:30 PM Gambling Meeting

6:00 - 7:00 PM Memorial Service (Joint VFW/AUX)

SATURDAY, JUNE 6:

6:00 AM - 7:00 AM Rise & Shine Workouts
8:00 AM - 1:30 PM Registration (Aux Times May Vary)

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM Veterans Homes Displays

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM Open VFW Convention
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM AUX Convention Session
12:00 Noon Recess

1:15 PM - 3:15 PM VFW Caucuses
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Adjutant Dashboard Session (Open to all VFW)

4:00 - 5:00 PM Church Service(s)

6:00 - 7:00 PM Social
7:00 PM Dinner Event (Order Tickets Today!)

SUNDAY, June 7:

7:30 AM - 9:30 AM VFW Registration

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM Reconvene VFW Convention
9:00 AM - 11:30 AM AUX Convention Session

12:00 - 12:45 PM Joint Installation of Officers

12:45 - 1:00 PM VFW Council of Administration Brief 20-21 Mtg
1:00 - 2:00 PM Joint Reception

Hotel Reservations for State Convention:

CALL Crowne Plaza to Reserve: 763-559-6600

'VFW 2020 Convention' Room Block OR

Reserve On-Line: <https://book.passkey.com/e/50042045>

STATE CONVENTION CAN'T MISS!

HUMANA & VFW Food Drive
Bring Donations to Convention
"Unite to Combat Hunger" See Page 15

**MNVFW Charitable
Association Silent Auction**
Saturday, June 6th

Blood Drive
June 5th, 10am- 4pm
Reserve Your Donation Time Today!

Saturday Dinner event
Reserve Tickets Today!

Adjutant Training
NEW 6/6/20! Anyone Welcome
Nat'l Dashboard, Responsibilities etc.

SUNDAY

The end to a busy Convention, we will wrap up with Election of VFW and AUX Officers that will lead us into the new year. The Officers will be Installed after the Convention Sessions. Please stay and support them during their Installation and then Celebrate with them at the Joint Reception afterwards!

EDITORS NOTE: Please continue to register for the Convention Activities- Refunds will be given if anything is canceled.

BANQUET MEAL:

BBQ Baby Back Pork Ribs AND Fried Chicken, Baked Potato Halves w/ Sour Cream & Butter, Boston Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Fresh Fruit Medley, Roll, Apple Crisp & Peach Cobbler

DINNER EVENT RESERVATIONS

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2020
Crowne Plaza, Plymouth, MN

~Indoor/Outdoor Casual BBQ Buffet~
Watch for more event specifics

PLEASE RESERVE
___ Tickets at \$30 each

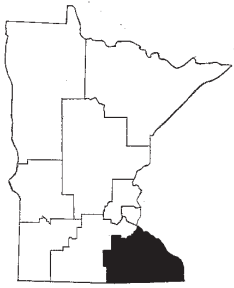
ENCLOSED is
Check # _____ for \$ _____

Name: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Post/AUX # _____ DIST# _____

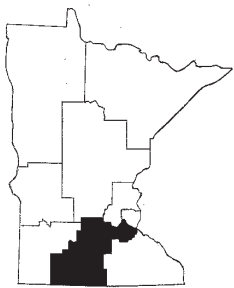
****DEADLINE MAY 27****

Mail Reservations to:
Dept. of MN Veterans of Foreign Wars
Rice Street Station
PO Box 17146
St Paul, MN 55117

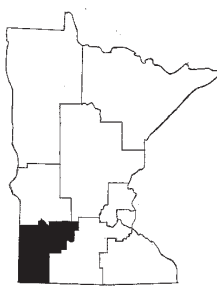
News from YOUR District Commanders and Presidents!



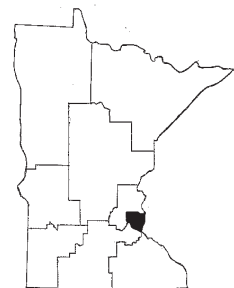
**Tom French, Commander
First District**



**Patrick Schipper, Commander
Second District**



**Buck Underwood, Commander
Third District**



**David Staehlin, Commander
Fourth District**

St. Vice Dave Thul writing for Cmdr Tom French~

Huge thanks to the Austin Post 1216 for hosting our February meeting and Memorial Service, at which time we remember each member of the VFW and Auxiliary from each post in our district. The service was broadcast on Facebook Live and we also had the local Austin news cover the event.

District Loyalty Days will be held May 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Friday's golf tourney will be in Chatfield in honor of district commander Tom French. The rest of the weekend's events will be held at Rochester Post 1215- if you haven't seen their new post home, come take a look.

In 2018, the 1st District was the first district in Minnesota to authorize electronic meetings as allowed by Robert's Rules of Order and the National by Laws. At the time it was a small step in the process of recruiting and getting new members active.

Now, with the virus outbreak bringing unprecedented change to our daily lives, the ability to hold meetings while keeping our comrades safe may be crucial to keeping our VFW's up and running.

I pray that all of our VFW and Auxiliary members will stay safe during these troubling times, and that our VFW organization will emerge stronger on the other side.



**Linda Henry, Auxiliary
President First District**

I hope everyone is staying safe and feeling well with all of the COVID-19 going on.

Midwinter Conference went over well. I want to congratulate our Patriots Pen 1st place winner from District One who also took 1st place at the Department level.

I have received several year-end-reports and am expecting more at the writing of this article.

District One is expecting to have our Loyalty Days the weekend of May 1st - 3rd in Rochester at Post 1215. I hope the state will be in a healthier place by this time.

Please stay safe and healthy, so we are able to continue to take care of our veterans.

Greetings

I hope everyone is well and being safe in trying times. Now, more than ever, we need to watch over each other. I have had several reports that they're shopping for house ridden comrades and helping others in need. These are the times that people step up and help, and I feel that this organization shines the brightest.

We held our District meeting in Belle Plaine on the 7th of March. I would like to thank Post 6202, their commander, Larry Ruehling and its Auxiliary for hosting us. I would also like to thank Department Jr. Vice Commander, Barry Henriksen, for attending.

The district is sitting at 93.44%. Yes, we're sitting at fifth place, but we are a mere 2 percentage points behind first. But, if everyone does their best, that's all I can really ask for. Some post stand outs, 4 posts at 100% or better. Shout-outs to Posts; 6202 / 107.89%, 5340 / 101.54%, 1791 / 101.42% , and 3842 / 100%. I can't forget that we have a few more that are in the hunt to attain 100%. The district has fifteen posts within five or less and three posts with ten more to attend 100%.

We have a few more accolades to celebrate. We are 100% in Community Service! 100% in the Activity Report. We're one post short to attain 100% in the poppy report. We sent two Scout of the Year to Department for consideration. A few more shining moments. The Second had two outstanding candidates in the Teacher Of the Year and Voice Of Democracy.

Our next meeting will be on May 2nd and will be hosted by S. St Paul Post 295. I have been talking with Terry Pieper, on the venue. I will report further if the times change due to COVID-19. The meeting could be shorted. We still need someone to be nominated as Jr Vice. If you haven't already, please contact Terry Pieper for that and possible Chairman openings.

The Department Convention / OTI is the first week of June. The dates are 3rd through the 7th. One important class will the Dashboard class. More info coming out on that. Please consider sending your Adjutants and Commanders to this one. Of course, everyone should attend so we, as a district, to vote for Department officers.

Greetings Third District,

First I want to thank all the members of the 3rd for your past support.

Our District Officers serve a two-year term, so please continue your support for my upcoming last year as commander.

Thank you all getting our inspections done on time, and finishing your monthly reports on time. Please stay safe and healthy, thank you.



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

Our auxiliary members have been busy the last few weeks with completing year-end reports, judging and follow-up with Youth("Illustrating America"), Scholarship(Creative Patriotic Art) and also our district's sewing project. We have had great participation from some schools in our district! Members of 4 different auxiliaries are completing the sewing project which was a request of cover-ups from the Luverne Veterans Home.

Our district commander has notified us that the district meeting scheduled for April 25 at Luverne has been cancelled because of the COVID-19. We will be following all rules and regulations from National and will be notifying our auxiliaries when and where we will do the important business of our district including district officer elections, audits and all necessary transactions.

We are still hopeful that our State Convention will be taking place June 4-7 in Plymouth. Meanwhile we can uplift our veterans, families and others with positive phone calls, e-mails, messaging and skyping. Most of all help to do what you can to keep you and your loved ones safe.



**Johanna Rowe, Auxiliary
President Second District**

Thanks to all the auxiliary members in District 2 who have attended the District 2 meetings this year. I enjoyed interacting with members at these meetings and also meeting with members at my official

Comrades,

We're three-quarters of the way through the administrative year and the nine Posts in the District and your District leadership team have all been busy carrying out our mission.

Naturally, SARS-CoV-2 and the resulting COVID-19 disease and the Governor's emergency declaration have been a challenge to our members, families, Posts, and communities. Our April 4 District Convention will be rescheduled. When it's held, our Convention may follow a contemporary format and quickly work through the few items that are critical: adopting the minutes of our prior meeting, the Quartermaster's and Trustees' reports, and the election and installation of District officers. The memorial service may be scheduled for a later date, once operations return to normal.

For your Post meetings, please follow any directions or guidance from the Department Commander and Commander in Chief. If your District officers can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to call us. My number is 651-261-5802 and my email address is david@staehlin.us.

Take care of yourselves, your Comrades, and families.



**Cynthia Fritsche, Auxiliary
President Fourth District**

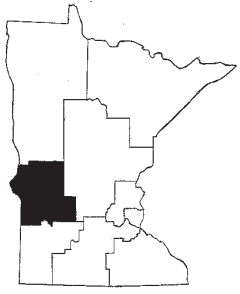
Not much going on in the 4th District. Being as everything is at a standstill.

However, I would like to thank my Line Officers and Chairmen for being there for me when I needed them.

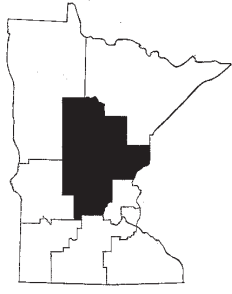
visits this year. I had an enjoyable time on these official visits as I learned about all the hard work you have done.

I had a great time visiting with the National President on her official visit to Minnesota on March 6th, 2020. I have enjoyed my year being the District 2 President and hope to see many of the auxiliary members at our Loyalty Days which is planned to be held on May 2nd, 2020 in Rosemount, MN at the Rosemount VFW Post #9433 and hosted by Post and Auxiliary #295, South St. Paul. I also hope to see

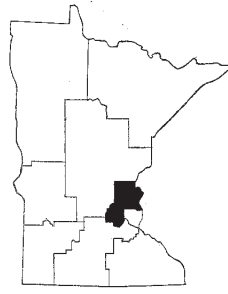
2ND PRES - Cont. Page 10



**Ann Hanson, Commander
Fifth District**



**Aron Lambrecht, Commander
Sixth District**



**Scott Hanson, Commander
Seventh District**

**More District Reports
on Page 10**

**Commander-in-Chief
Executive Order No. 1**

March 17, 2020

"Pursuant to the authority under Section 618(a)(4), effective immediately and until rescinded, we ask that Posts, Districts and Departments, if possible and within the requirements of mandated State Declarations, make the attempt to elect officers. For such Posts, Districts or Departments that are not able to elect officers as a result of COVID-19, all current officers shall continue to function within their capabilities until new officers are elected. It is further stipulated that no Post, District or Department be sanctioned as result of the inability to properly function, as mandated by state or local government declarations, as a direct cause of COVID-19."

By order of:

William "Doc" Schmitz, Commander-in-Chief
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Official: Kevin C. Jones, Adjutant General
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Hello Comrades,

Here we are again! I hope this finds you all feeling good and in great spirits. Well at this time I am saddened with the passing of a great soldier, friend, mentor, CW2 Joe Ruether has passed away from cancer. He was a great human being. See him on the other side. Well this year the 5th District has been do well we are in 1st place for Membership but assuming it won't take long for that to change. I have to say Thank You!!! To Osakis!!! They are at 100 percent again!!!

Just want to make sure you all come to Post 4955 in Appleton on April 19th at 14:00 for the Elections. If you want change come join in!!! See you at the Convention in June!!!

Greetings:

First and foremost, on behalf of the officers of the 6th district I want to thank all members and post officers for their hard work and dedication this administration year.

We started this year off on a very high note, obtaining not only 100% in membership, but our commander being awarded and named, All American, in the previous/very beginning of 2019.

As the year has gone by we have faced some of the greatest struggles that any post or district could be asked to endure. We are showing our community and nation they don't call us the fighting 6th district for nothing! Thank you again for all your hard work! As we currently face pandemic and have been ordered to halt our operations, our posts and members are still taking care of our fellow members and the communities we serve.

We are still planning on hosting the 6th district election and Loyalty Days on May 2nd at post 4847. Please ensure your post is represented at this meeting. As a reminder department and National convention are in June/July this year, and more info will be available soon regarding those events. Again thank you all for your hard work and dedication through the current struggles.

The District Meeting has been postponed and we are looking at a couple dates in May. The meeting may be shortened and cover important business, elections, and installation (abbreviated). We'll communicate any updates with the Post's as our plans are made.

While this is a very challenging time its great to see the country coming together to fight COVID-19. Please do your part by adhering to the governments social distancing policies, but we should not forget about blood drives. They are now more important than ever, so please considering donating if illegible.

For those Post's that host blood drives, please do your best to continue doing them. Also, if you have a relief fund, please reach out to those in your community that have been affected. Together, we'll get through this!
www.district7mnvfw.org



**Twyla Bauch-Scofield,
Auxiliary
President Fifth District**

Greetings from the 5th District.

We are all staying safe and have tried to do our best getting our business and our projects done with out gathering.

We would wish that everyone is careful and safe as the world goes through this time, praying for all our veterans and military families are safe and our extended family the post and Auxiliaries are all being safe.

The fifth is starting to pick up material and things to start our sewing projects and pre-assembling the poppy display's for June's conversation hopefully we'll be able to be out and about again.

My wish is that everyone stay strong. Pray for the world and all our people and stay safe. God Bless.



**Sue Wiersgalla, Auxiliary
President Sixth District**

Wow, where has the year gone? The next couple months were scheduled with lots and lots of plans only to come to a stand still in order to try and keep everyone safe and healthy. The things listed below are planned at this time but may be postponed or canceled.

A Testimonial for Commander Aron and myself is planned for April 25th at the Browerville Community Center. Social Hour Noon to 1:00 pm. Country Style Rib Meal is planned. Very possible it will have to be postponed. Our Loyalty Day Convention will be hosted by Eastside Post & Auxiliary 4847 on May 2nd, meeting to begin at 9:00 am. Election of officers will take place. Hopefully

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

we can present our awards and have a regular meeting. More information as soon as we can.

The 6th District has plans to do a "Light up for Veterans" at the Eagles Healing Nest in Sauk Centre on May 30th. We will make Luminaries to honor the Veterans. We will light the candles as soon as it gets dark. Department Convention is set for June 3rd - 7th. Everyone is encouraged to register for the Convention and Officer Training.

As of this writing, the Sixth District membership is at 97.28%. We need 90 more members to be 100%. Please check that list and see if you can't find another member or two. Stay safe in these uncertain times. Watch out for each other. To all who have been ill, we wish you speedy recovery. Our Deepest Sympathy to those who have lost a loved one.



**Shelley Solheid, Auxiliary
President Seventh District**

Greetings Auxiliary Members!

Spring is in the air and I hope you all are healthy and ready to enjoy our beautiful Minnesota weather! As I write this, the 7th District Auxiliary is at 96.27% in membership and getting better every day. Thank you to those that work so hard throughout the year on this important part of our organization.

May will see the election and installation of new officers and I wish them well during their term. This has been a trying time to hold meetings and conventions and run the business of the auxiliary.

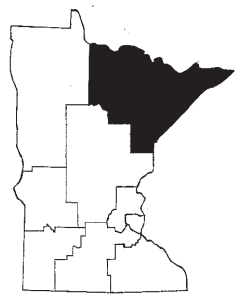
Our members are amazing and their ability to get things done is inspiring. Year-end reporting isn't always fun, but it is a requirement and a huge thank you to all involved. June will bring our State Convention in Plymouth and the election and installation of our Department Officers. It is always a fun time to catch up with friends and learn a thing or two. If you haven't registered yet please get that done as soon as possible.

Keep up the great work Minnesota- our veterans count on it!

~As of April 3, 2020~

DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

- First District**
May 2 Rochester #1215 @ 9:30 AM
- Second District**
May 2 S. St Paul #295 @ 8:00 AM
- Third District**
Postponed- Watch for Further Information from Your District
- Fourth District**
Postponed- Watch for Further Information from Your District
- Fifth District**
Postponed- Watch for Further Information from Your District
- Sixth District**
May 2 East Side St Cloud #4847 @ 9:00 AM
- Seventh District**
Postponed- Watch for Further Information from Your District
- Eighth District**
Postponed- Watch for Further Information from Your District
- Ninth District**
May 2 Dilworth #1223 @ 8 AM



**Rick Stoehr, Commander
Eighth District**

they and the appropriately named "Greatest Generation" experienced as they slowly continue to slip away. They literally saved the world and I wish all of them 'Fair Winds and Following Seas'".

Grand Rapids Post 1720 recently lost their Post Home to a devastating fire with the building being a total loss. Thanks to the quick action by some members who happened to be in the Club at the time most of their memorabilia was saved. Support from the community has been incredible and the membership has been very busy making plans, weighing the options and have already established a temporary Post Home just few doors down from where they were. With their dedication and a bit of luck, we may soon see a Phoenix rise from the ashes.

With the daily changes in our lives being made we are all facing difficulty in moving forward with our day to day operations of our Posts. In the last year we in the 8th had opted to establish a central meeting location for District meetings, did a trial run of doing a mass inspection at one of our District meetings where the Post brought their inspection documentation with them, received some Q & A training for our Post QM's from Department QM Jerry Brletich, (Thanks Jerry it was much appreciated) and have been looking at anything we could do to simplify operation of our Posts and encourage attendance at District meetings. At this point we may not be able to do what we hoped to do as planned in the coming year so we are looking at the possibility of establishing a teleconference network as soon as we can.

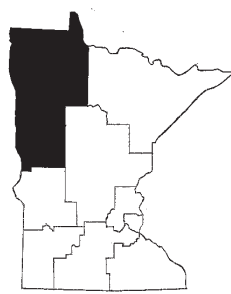
Bottom line, about all we really can do at this point is keep a positive attitude, keep thinking about the needs of our Posts, cross our fingers and continue to support our Comrades as best when we can.

very ill that day, so sad to see. Sadly Arleigh passed away February 25th, 2020, just 25 hours before his 100 year birthday. God speed Arleigh you have earned your wings, you represented The Greatest Generation well!

During February we had our District meeting in Babbitt, MN at Post and Auxiliary 1539, also had our VOD and PP banquet, our 1st place winners from both contest gave their speeches, we have some great talent coming up. Never seems to fail, this meeting is February it either storms or is brittle cold, well Mother Nature didn't fail us, I believe it was -20 give or take, who cares at that point, just dang cold.

It was a great dinner for the students and a great meeting. My chairs for all the programs gave a school of instruction on filling out the year end reports, first time for this, I believe it went rather well, I had 2 Presidents come to me that had brought their year ends reports with them and said we need to put more on our reports.....WOOHOO! Visiting us that weekend from Department was our Junior Vice President Jamie

8TH PRES - Cont. Page 14



**Rick Bugbee, Commander
Ninth District**

We are what we are, we make what we make. We make our own problems. Now is the time to use the common sense you born with or have developed. It is NOT a time to panic.

I have to admit I am not in the cold like most of you reading this. My wife retired in January so we decided to spend a few weeks in Texas. It might reach 100 degrees next week!

Our March meeting was held in Pelican Rapids; Junior Vice Commander Kelly Booge acted in my absence. He did a great job. On May 2nd, Dilworth will host Loyalty Day. The Biggest change is that we are going from a two day event to a one day event. We will start at 8 AM and the Testimonials for Karen Haugen and myself will start at 7 PM. We would love to see about 200 members there (if the current health crisis allows).

The schedule for the day has been sent to all Posts in the District. Elections will be held during this time too. If you have any questions, contact John Lopez, our Adjutant.

Please do not forget about convention in June as there will be many important resolutions to act on that effect the whole state.



**Laren Haugen, Auxiliary
President Ninth District**

Our year is almost over. Our final District meeting, Loyalty Days will be held in Dilworth on May 2nd.

Year-end reports are a challenge this year; we are doing them via the phone, email and text. We are doing our best to not hold any unnecessary meetings. I am always amazed when I read the year-end reports. I am very proud of the District 9 members. Our members have gone above and beyond to support our Nation's Hero's.

We have 11 Auxiliaries that area at 100% or more in membership and several that only need a few. Great Job! We all continue to work hard to recruit new members.

At our District meetings we had wonderful Schools of Instructions for our members, thanks to everyone for stepping up and helping. I am so very proud all the Chairman of the programs. I look forward to District 9 Auxiliaries receiving awards at the Department Convention in June.

Thanks to all the Line Officers for a great year!

COUNCIL - Cont. from Page 4

while in our Nation's Capital too to visit with our elected officials and share with them the VFW Legislative priorities for the forthcoming session. I must say most of our Representatives and our Senators tell us they support veterans legislation, and the record shows most of them do. However, we must stay vigilant and continually monitor their performance to ensure they vote favorably. I might add that our Minnesota Legislative Chairman, Tommy Johnson, does an outstanding job coordinating the schedule and ensuring someone is at each office at the time they should be.

I'm sure by the time this issue goes to press COVID 19 will either still be an active issue or will be acutely fresh in the mind of everyone. I trust every Post took or is taking measures to protect their members and any employees they may have. Unfortunately this is an issue that certainly has had a major impact on everyone's life and may influence some of the VFW events scheduled for the future. Elsewhere in this edition you may find information alluding to this. Please watch for this or go to vfw.org for details.

FIRE- Cont. from Page 1

inventory.

There are two potential plans moving forward. In the event that the insurance company's structural engineer says the building is still sound, we may end up tearing off the second floor, gutting the building to the studs and rebuilding.

In the event the building is condemned, we are looking at building new at a cost of \$225-\$250 per square foot. We'll need a minimum of 4500 square feet and we'll be keeping it to one floor. We have decent insurance but we will still need to raise up a good chunk of money.

EDITORS NOTE- To find out how you can help the Grand Rapids Post, please see the MNVFW Charitable Association Article on Page 3 of this issue.

2ND PRES - Cont. from Page 10

many of the District 2 members at our Department Convention which is scheduled to be held in Plymouth, MN at the Crown Plaza in June 2020.

You have all worked diligently on membership with District 2 being in 3rd Place in Membership for the State of Minnesota as of March 7th, 2020 with 97.19%. Please continue your hard work by getting Annual Dues paid, by getting New Life Members, and reaching out to Members-At-Large to transfer into your Auxiliary. Also reach out to Lapsed members so they will get their dues paid before June 30th, 2020 so they will not be dropped from the rolls all together. Please continue to Recruit for new auxiliary members.

Continue working together with "Vigor and Might" while "Doing Unique Deeds So We Will Never Forget Them".

Greetings from the 8th!

Needless to say we are living in some strange times, hopefully we will all safely weather this pandemic storm with our families staying healthy, ourselves wiser for the experience and soon see our lives returned to the way they were.

On February 25, 2020, Pearl Harbor survivor Arleigh Birk from Aurora Post 8144 passed away just 25 hours within his 100th birthday. Arleigh was aboard the USS Honolulu during the attack and could very well have been the last known Pearl Harbor Survivor in Minnesota. Coastguardsman Bruce Atwater Bruce Atwater Bemidji Post 1260 preceded Arleigh, Bruce passing away on January 10th 2020. And now I see that Richard Thill, the last member of the First Shot Naval Vets passed away on March, 3rd 2020. For those of you that don't know of the 111 enlisted members of the crew of the USS Ward DD139, 88 were members of 47th Division of the Naval Reserve based in St. Paul. Ward and it's crew earned the status of being First Shot Vets when on December 7th 1941 Ward fired on and sank the Japanese mini sub that was attempting to enter the channel to Pearl Harbor roughly 1 hour before the main attack.

With the loss of these Heroes goes the history, the stories of what they saw and endured, and sacrifices

Greetings from the Great 8th

Scary times we are going through! Hope everyone is staying safe and healthy. Where to start, so many things to write about.

December 7th, Pearl Harbor, we spent the morning with Gilbert Post and Auxiliary 4456, and Arleigh Burke, a Pearl Harbor Survivor, what a very special sweet man. Sadly, we could see that he was failing, wasn't the same man as last year, but his last statement when he was leaving the Post with his family, "I hope to see you next year." The next stop that day was where Arleigh was now residing, In Aurora Mn at the Nursing Home where we had cake and chatted with Arleigh and family. On February 15th the Commander and myself attended a party for Arleigh for his 100th Birthday, with our guests Jamie Cassavant and her husband Bill, also present was Barry Henriksen Jr Vice who presented a plaque from the VFW, Department of Minnesota for recognition of Arleighs service and his birthday. Arleigh was

Midwinter Banquet Highlights



State Patriot's Pen Winner Thea Bothun, 8th Grade, escorted into the Midwinter Banquet by Rochester President Nancy Pike and Commander James Crawley.

**CONGRATULATIONS
to our National Entrants**

**MN State Voice of Democracy Winner
Elizabeth Link**
Was Awarded the \$2,000
Department of Wisconsin Wally Hogan/Tom Tradewell Commander-in-Chief Scholarship

**MN State Patriot's Pen Essay Winner
Thea Bothun**
was Awarded the \$500
Dept. of South Carolina & Auxiliary Award



State Voice of Democracy Winner Elizabeth Link, 11th Grade, delivers her speech after receiving her award.



6th-8th Grade Teacher Winner John Wabbe, escorted into the Midwinter Banquet by Prior Lake President Charlene Skluzecek and Commander Jay Leitzow.

Listen to Elizabeth's speech and those from other states by visiting:
<https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/youth-scholarships>



We missed some of our out-state honorees and members who were unable to attend due to a snowstorm.



State Commander Chad Solheid received donations for his Commander's Project- MNVFW Charitable Association. Here Terry Pieper, 2nd District Sr. Vice Commander, presents a check.



9th-12th Grade Teacher TJ Pelanek, escorted into the Midwinter Banquet by 9th Dist. Quartermaster/Fergus Falls Sr. Vice CMDR Lynette Dornbusch and Dist. President Karen Haugen.

**2020 - 2021 Voice of Democracy Theme
"Is This the Country the Founders Envisioned?"**

**2020 - 2021 Patriot's Pen Theme
"What is Patriotism to Me?"**

Entries are Due to Local V.F.W. Posts by October 31st, 2020



State President Frankie Bill received donations for her President's Project- 23rd Veterans. Here Michelle Keller, President of Long Prairie #1140, presents a check.

AWARD SPONSORS

We would like to THANK everyone that took on the request for sponsorships. These valuable scholarships & awards are being presented to recognize students and teachers outstanding achievement in these national scholarship and recognition competitions.

Special Thanks to the Minnesota V.F.W. Charitable Association for their contributions toward the student jackets and awards and Brooker-Edmund VFW Post #724 for their Contribution to the Saturday Winners Party.

1st place.....\$300.00 Patriot's Pen Scholarship
Provided by the Department of Minnesota
Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars
Thea Bothun, 8th Grade
Sponsored by Whitlock-Sonnenberg VFW #1215 & AUX, Rochester- 1st District

2nd place..... \$200.00 Patriot's Pen Scholarship
Provided by the Department of Minnesota
Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars
Joseph Gendreau, 8th Grade
Sponsored by Maple Lake VFW #7664- 6th District

3rd place..... \$100.00 Patriot's Pen Scholarship
Provided by the Department of Minnesota
Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars
Miriya Nguyen, 7th Grade
Sponsored by Keep Zimmer VFW #1782 & AUX, White Bear Lake- 4th District

K-5th Grade Teacher of the Year.....\$300.00
Nelson-Scofield VFW Post #4452 Honor Award
Beth Hansen, K-3 Music Teacher
Sponsored by Canby VFW #117 & AUX- 3rd District

6th-8th Grade Teacher of the Year.....\$300.00
Tony Gozola Memorial Scholarship provided by the West Metro VFW Post #7051, Crystal, MN.
John Wabbe, 8th Grade Global Studies Teacher
Sponsored by Prior Lake VFW #6208 & AUX- 2nd District

9th-12th Grade Teacher of the Year.....\$300.00
Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars Honor Award
TJ Pelanek, 9th-12th Grade Band
Sponsored by Fergus Falls VFW #612 & AUX- 9th District

1st place.....\$2,000.00 V.O.D. Scholarship
Provided by Department of Minnesota
Veterans of Foreign Wars Charitable Association Award went to:
Elizabeth Link, 11th Grade
Sponsored by Gallagher-Hansen VFW #295 & AUX, South St. Paul- 2nd District

2nd place..... \$1,000.00 V.O.D. Scholarship
Elk River- Rogers VFW Post #5518 Scholarship Award went to:
Lucy Leither, 11th Grade
Sponsored by Coon Rapids VFW #9625 & AUX- 7th District

3rd place..... \$600.00 V.O.D. Scholarship
Betty Ann Heuer Memorial Scholarship provided by her Loving Husband Don Heuer went to:
Hannah Burg, 11th Grade
Sponsored by Cottage Grove VFW #8752 & AUX- 4th District

4th place..... \$500.00 V.O.D. Scholarship
Provided by Charles McLaughlin VFW Post #906, Hutchinson, MN went to:
Lileigh Nguyen, 9th Grade
Sponsored by Hugo Matejcek VFW #3723 & AUX, Owatonna-- 1st District

\$100.00 V.O.D. Scholarship (in no particular Order)
Provided by Prior Lake VFW Post #6208, Prior Lake, MN went to:
Darien White, 12th Grade
Sponsored by Babbitt VFW #1539 & AUX- 8th District

\$100.00 V.O.D. Scholarship (in no particular Order)
Provided by Olaf B. Damm VFW Post #1216, Austin, MN went to:
Anna Erickson, 10th Grade
Sponsored by Harold T Swenson VFW #612 & AUX, Fergus Falls- 9th District

\$100.00 V.O.D. Scholarship (in no particular Order)
Provided by 4th District VFW Auxiliary went to:
Caleb Dalhoff, 10th Grade
Sponsored by Starbuck VFW #4582 & AUX-- 5th District

\$100.00 V.O.D. Scholarship (in no particular Order)
Provided by Prior Lake VFW Post #6208, Prior Lake, MN went to:
Brandon Nims, 11th Grade
Sponsored by Elmer Goche VFW #3922 & AUX, Wadena- 6th District

\$100.00 V.O.D. Scholarship (in no particular Order)
Lois Herman Memorial Scholarship provided by her Loving Husband Don Herman went to:
Elizabeth Nemitz, 10th Grade
Sponsored by Clark-Hansen VFW #117 & AUX, Canby- 3rd District

BUDDY POPPY

**- WATCHING POPPY DAYS-
COVID-19 MAY Require Date Changes**



Congratulations to all Posts that Entered the Mid-Winter Poppy Display Contest

Displays were done this year...
Remember 2021 is the MN VFW 100th Anniversary
so plan to enter next year!

The following were judged to be the State Winners:

Category I Public Promotion of Poppies

1st- #380 Montevideo- Dist 5
2nd- #9625 Coon Rapids- Dist 7
3rd- #8391 Browerville- Dist 6

Category II Memorial or Inspirational

1st- #1639 Willmar- Dist 5
2nd- #3723 Owatonna- Dist 1
3rd- #3289 New York Mills- Dist 9

Category III Artistic or Decorative

1st- #3915 Palmer Lake- Dist 7
2nd- #8731 Monticello- Dist 6

THANK YOU to Judges
Kathy Fystrom, Darlene Jackson,
Ryan Olson, Carl Schenk,
Susan Chasse

Martin County Memorial Site Receives Famous Bell Cobra Attack Helicopter 327

January 10, 2020

MINNSOTA-

Martin County's Veterans Memorial Site will permanently display an actual Bell Cobra-Fixed Wing Attack Helicopter, AH-1-66-F-15327. U.S. Army records show this very helicopter is internationally famous for serving the U.S. Army in both Vietnam and Laos from 1986 to 1971. Even though five states were vying for the acquisition of this Cobra, due to the hard work of Minnesota State and Local Veterans and Volunteers the Cobra was awarded to Martin County.

Many Veterans remember how the Cobras saved their lives when they were outnumbered by the enemy. Our local Veterans have lived the story. In Vietnam on various dates, Cobra-327 was hit by enemy fire at least twelve times. Bell's armor plating saved the flight crew from mortal inflictions. Missions included: Armed Escort, Recon Missions & Battle Support.

In 1971, Cobra 327 saw service in Laos at the Battle of Lam Son 719, one of the deadliest battles of the war <https://www.businessinsider.com/uncovering-the-story-of-one-of-the-vietnam-wars-bloddiest-battles-2015-1>. Flying this helicopter were Members of the U.S. Army, 7th Squad, 17th Calvary, C Troop. Cobra 327 was mortally shot, and it was a ride the pilot will never forget. Yes, the pilot made it back alive to this day. The Gunner unfortunately died from Agent Orange at age 37.

When the U.S. Army received new helicopters, the Cobra 327 was retired to public service for the Kern County Fire Department in California to fight night fires because it could see through the smoke with its military infrared scanners and locate people. The Cobra has the nickname THE SNAKE, because of its maneuverability. Burn marks are still visible from the fires where it landed, which shows how close to the fires the Cobra could maneuver.

Martin County's Veteran Memorial Committee is currently restoring this Cobra in Fairmont, MN., returning it to the likeness of 1971. This detailed restoration work has been in progress since the fall of 2019. We invite you to visit the restoration process, in all the various stages by contacting any MCVM Committee Members.

The Dedication Ceremony is set for August 1, 2020 featuring a parade, many VIP's, Military Personnel (both active and retired), and family members of those serving on this very helicopter.

For more information please visit www.MCVM.org or contact any of the following members of the committee.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Steve Chase (Dedication Chairman)
Cell: 612-799-3367
Email: sdchase234@q.com
Terry Anderson (MCVM Chairman)
Cell: 507-236-4653
Email: terry@tdanderson.net
Scott Higgins (MC Coordinator)
Cell: 507-236-1497
Email: scott.higgins@co.martin.mn.us

VA Launches Medication Disposal Program

From Sandra Roy
Public Affairs Specialist
Minneapolis VA Health Care System
612.467.2102

MINNEAPOLIS-

The Minneapolis VAHCS is pleased to announce a new safety initiative to help veterans, their families, and VA staff safely dispose of unwanted and unneeded medications. Beginning Friday, January 24, the main medical center will have an onsite a receptacle for the disposal of controlled substance medications such as opioids, non-controlled substance prescription medications, and over-the-counter medications.

Increasingly prescription drug abuse is recognized as a public health problem in the United States. Over 6% of people aged 12 and older have misused prescription medications in the last year. Misuse of medications such as opioids, anti-depressants, anti-anxiety medications, stimulants, and other medications can lead to serious behavioral and other health problems, addiction, and even death.

According to the VA's National Center for Medication safety:

- 62% of teenagers who abuse prescription drugs abuse them because they are easy to find around a family member's house
- More than 1/4 of people who started abusing drugs in the past year began by abusing prescription medications
- 78 people die every day of opioid-related overdoses
- Unintentional death from prescription medication overdose

has surpassed deaths from motor vehicle accidents in the US

Medication take-back programs such as the one at the Minneapolis VAHCS can help reduce the risk for these and other serious consequences of prescription medication misuse and abuse. Medication take-back programs such as the one at the Minneapolis VAHCS can help reduce the risk for these and other serious consequences of prescription medication misuse and abuse. As suicide is an important public health problem, suicide rates are linked to the availability of lethal means. As part of this model there is increasing support for reducing the availability of lethal means to prevent suicide. The installation of a medication disposal receptacle is just one intervention designed to support means reduction.

The Minneapolis VAHCS program for onsite medication take back is free to our veterans, their family members, and our staff. We hope it will be well used!

Note: For patients receiving care at our CBOCs or sites outside of the main medical center, other options are available. TakeAway envelopes are available through pharmacy and at our CBOCs for mailing back unwanted or unneeded medications. Take-back receptacles are also located at many community sites. To find nearby community sites for medication take-back receptacles search the internet for "drug take back locations FDA" or go to <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-drug-take-back-locations>.



From the Desk of
Ken Schroefer
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT
NOTES:

- * Learn how to input Post activities into National's Dashboard!
 - This is a NEW responsibility for Adjutants on ALL levels
 - GO TO TRAINING held at State Convention and District Meetings
 - Provides an accounting of what our Posts do
 - Helps create national totals that the Organization can use when promoting all that the VFW does
 - Helps the Post Commander and Quartermaster toward their All-State and All-American goals
- Take ACTION TODAY!!

Find us on
facebook
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Department of Minnesota

Veterans / Youth Activities

VFW State Pistol Competition Runs Out of Time

By Jim Hesselgrave, VFW Post 5518

FEBRUARY 22, 2020

With over a year of planning and anticipation, the new three-tier VFW State Pistol Competition was upon us. Unfortunately, a lack of experience and coordination with the Range uncovered a major problem --- TIME!

On February 22, 2020, Elk River – Rogers VFW Post 5518 invited all Participants of the Competition to a Reception at their VFW Community Center in Otsego, Minnesota. Although the turnout was small, everyone enjoyed themselves and many stories were shared.

At 8:00 AM on Sunday, February 23, 2020, registration for the Competition opened at Target Sports in Rogers, Minnesota. A total of twenty-eight (28) ‘shooters’ signed in for the three levels of competition. A large number of participants elected to shoot more than one level. There were eighteen (18) shooters at the .22 Caliber level, twenty-one (21) shooters at the Open level and only four (4) shooters at the Optics or Assisted level. Coffee and Rolls were available.

Range Orientation began at 9:00 AM. Post Commander Dennis Maddox welcomed everyone and introduced State Commander Chad Solheid and State Senior Vice Commander Curt Hermanson. Representatives of Target Sports briefed all participants on the Rules of the Range and how the Competition would be conducted.

The .22 Caliber level began shortly before 9:30 AM – ten shooters on the Range per cycle. After two cycles, the Open level began their firing sequences. This is where we ran out of time! We had reserved the Range from 8:00 AM to Noon. It was almost Noon when the Optics/Assisted level entered the Range to compete. Noon was also the time that Target Sports opened their doors to the public – we were ‘trapped’!

At 11:00 AM, lunch was served in the Classroom to those participants that were not on the Range. At Noon, we lost the Classroom to another group. So, we had to move our Awards and Door Prizes into the Lobby of Target Sports (a ‘cluster’ to say the least –flying hatchets and all).

WINNERS

.22 Caliber Class

- 1st John Metzdorf- Post 5145 (847)
- 2nd Joel Zimmerman- Post 4452 (846)
- 3rd Steve Swanson- Post 1676 (830)

Open Class

- 1st Jim Hovda- Post 6992 (844)
- 2nd John Metzdorf- Post 5145 (814)
- 3rd Tom Heinrich- Post 3915 (801)

Optics/Assisted

- 1st Dennis Maddox- Post 5518 (763)
- 2nd Jerry Brletich- Post 9625 (690)
- 3rd John Giesen- Post 5145 (605)

BEST OVERALL(Men)

John Metzdorf of Post 5145



BEST OVERALL(Ladies)

Julie Gutz of Auxiliary 1260



Ready-Aim-Fire!



Don't Forget the Swag!



There's Nothing Wrong with a Little Showing Off!

YOUTH UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

VFW STATE BASEBALL

2020 State Tournament
August 6-8, 2020
Hosted by St Cloud East Side
Post #4847

VFW STATE BANTAM 'A' and 'AA' HOCKEY


2021 State Tournament
March 19-21, 2021
Hosted by
Dilworth Post #1223

VETERANS UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Cribbage
**April Event Postponed...
WATCH FOR NEW DATE**
2020 Hosted by
Austin Post #1216

Golf
July 30- August 2, 2020
2020 Hosted by
Cannon Falls Post #4452

Watch Future for Events
Pistol Competition- Winter 2021
Bowling- Spring 2021
Cribbage- Spring 2021



VFW RIDERS
POST 8731 * MONTICELLO, MN

3rd Annual Blessing of the Bikes

Saturday May 16, 2020

Monticello VFW Post
713 S Cedar St. Monticello, MN

Please join us for our annual Blessing of the Bikes.

10:00 Blessing by Pastor Nichols
10:30 Ride Leaves
11:30-12:00 Ride Returns

**\$15 per bike
for the ride**

Price includes 1 lunch ticket
Additional lunch tickets \$5

Lunch includes: pork chop,
apple sauce, potato salad,
baked beans, and chips

Voice of Democracy Washington Trip

By Elizabeth Link, 2019-20 MN Voice of Democracy Winner

My trip to Washington D.C. with the VFW Voice of Democracy was a once in a life time experience. We saw numerous museums and memorials, which were incredibly impactful. Seeing the memorials, especially the Vietnam Memorial, the US Marine Corps War Memorial, and the World War II Memorial helped me to reflect on the immense sacrifice the millions of veterans who have served our country. Another memorable part of the trip was meeting kids from across the country and making so many new friendships in just a few days. We discovered many similarities as well as differences in our hometowns and schools. I am so grateful to the VFW, especially to the 2nd District of Minnesota and to Post 295, for this incredible opportunity. This trip was truly unforgettable.



New Friends



Site Seeing



National
Parade of Winners



THANK YOU
VFW!

Veterans Homes Need Help During COVID-19 Crisis

Our Minnesota Veterans Homes continue to be in need during this crucial time. While many of us may have regularly visited or volunteered at the homes, social distancing requirements do not allow this. So perhaps it is time to find other ways to serve veterans living in our veterans homes throughout the state.

When asked what their needs are during this critical time, they all were very appreciative and excited to be able to share the needs of their residents and programs. **Please consider some of the needs listed below or contact your local Veterans Home to find out what you can do to help.**

Minneapolis VA Health Care System, Voluntary/Community Resource Service:

Please contact Voluntary Service at 612-725-2050 or at vhaminvol@va.gov to ask about items accepted for coronavirus precautions.

- Grocery store gift cards and gas/fuel gift cards are in great need to assist Veterans who are struggling financially. These are used by Social Workers and Patient Advocates to fill a gap when other funds or services are not available. This need will grow significantly in the coming weeks.
- Gift cards in \$20 to \$50 value are helpful from any major grocery or gas retailer.
- Metro Transit cards, and Visa or Mastercard gift cards are also welcomed as donations.
- Monetary donations are accepted to the following funds:
- GPF 8003 General Patient Fund, GPF 8148 Patient Recreation, GPF 8221 Mental Health Rehabilitation, and 8209 Fisher House.

Mail donations to: Voluntary Service (135), MVAHCS, 1 Veterans Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55417.

All donations to Minneapolis VA Health Care System (MVAHCS), including CBOC's, Vet Centers, the CRRC, and Minneapolis Fisher House are coordinated through Voluntary/Community Resource Service. Please contact vhaminvol@va.gov or 612-725-2050 with any questions, to schedule a donation appointment, or to receive the current needs list.

Thank you,
Voluntary/Community Resource Service
Minneapolis VA Health Care System

Minneapolis/Recreation/B16 DOMS/Adult Day:

- Adult Day is busy putting activity kits together for Veterans/spouses to do at home during this time they are closed. Family can call ahead of time to let them know when they will be arriving. Staff delivers a kit to the trunk of their vehicle. Items for the kits - \$150.00
- Both Recreation and B16 DOMS would like to have pizza parties. B16 DOMS - \$250, Recreation - \$500

Total request for the above would be \$900.00

I can't tell you enough how much we appreciate any help you can provide ~
Sandy Larson/Public Affairs Director
Minnesota Veterans Home-Minneapolis
5101 Minnehaha Ave. So
Minneapolis, MN 55417
Sandy.Larson@state.mn.us
612-548-5993

St. Cloud VA Healthcare System:

First, I would like to reassure you that we are doing the absolute best that we can to keep our Veterans safe from harm. This is a new event for all of us and we are learning and taking additional precautions everyday.

In facility news, our Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program is seeing lower numbers than usual and we are focusing efforts on our outpatient capabilities. Our Community Living Center (long-term care) remains in a restricted status, while staff are working on new procedures to provide access to the outdoors and other recreational activities.

At this time, we are seeking:

- Individual activity items, such as puzzle books
- Newer DVDs (no war movies, please) and music CDs
- Other items that might brighten a Veteran's Day

*If you are interested in a larger project, please call us to discuss options.

All donations can be brought to the Building 48/49 overhang on the north side of campus during business hours. Please call extension 6225 on the house phone and ask for donation assistance. One of our team members will be along with a cart to assist.

Thank you for your thoughts and continued support for our Veterans as we all work through these trying times. If you have questions or suggestions, please call the Voluntary Service office at 320-255-6365.

Daniel Ball/ Voluntary Service Officer
St. Cloud VA Health Care System
4801 Veterans Drive| St. Cloud MN 56303|(320)255-6365

Homes For Our Troops By Gary Fredrick, MN CORE Ambassador

The national nonprofit Homes For Our Troops (HFOT) will be building specially adapted custom homes for two severely injured Veterans in Minnesota. HFOT's mission is to build and donate specially adapted custom homes nationwide for severely injured post-9/11 Veterans, to enable them to rebuild their lives.

Marine SSgt Dominic Fernandez's home will be built in Lakeville; Army SPC Lucas Schmitz's home will be built in Perham. HFOT has built nearly 300 homes nationwide and currently has over 80 projects underway. HFOT is a top-rated military charity, with nearly 90 cents of every dollar spent going directly



toward program services. Find out more about the Minnesota builds at www.hfotusa.org/mn.

If interested in a presentation of the HFOT mission, please contact Gary Fredrick, MN CORE Ambassador for HFOT at fred6gm9@com-cast.net.

8TH PRES - Cont. from Page 10

Cassavant and her husband Bill, who were also celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. It was great visiting with them and sharing ideas. My husband the Commander also celebrated his birthday on the 16th and the Secretary Barb Hemingway and Conductress Marie Pierce from the Auxiliary surprised him with a cake. So nice of them.

At this meeting the Post voted on having a centralized meeting and it did pass. So now all meetings will be held in Hibbing at the Memorial Building. There will be more information passed on at our next District meeting, which was to be held at Cook MN VFW Post and Auxiliary 1757, but with the virus it is on hold for the time being. Nothing rescheduled as of yet.

Keep Grand Rapids VFW

1720 Post and Auxiliary in your thoughts and prayers, it was totally destroyed by a fire that started in the building next to it. Great community support. Hopefully soon they will be building a brand new home.

If you get up Baudette way, VFW Post and Auxiliary 723, stop in and see their remodeling and addition, very nice, also they have food there which is very tasty. It was great to be there, I hadn't visited since 2004. It was well worth the long ride.

Lots of changes coming, new things to be learned. We need to keep our minds open to the changes, it's the way we learn, we need to keep growing to support our Veterans! Work together as a team! Be kind and patient, you will never know the impact you have on a Veteran or on an Auxiliary member.

God Bless and take care!

CONNOLLY- Cont. from Page 1

Hospital Representative. In 1990, the Minnesota Military Order of the Purple Heart had him to serve as their State Adjutant and Hospital Representative. Although he continued to work with Veterans, Jimmy 'sort of' Retired to a 'quiet' life at Marine on the St. Croix Veterans Camp.

Jimmy was a Life Member of Vasatka-Goers VFW Post 6690 in Mendota, Minnesota. He served as their Post Commander from 1981-1983 with All-State Post Commander Honors in 1982. He served as the Fourth District Commander in 1987 -88 with All-State District Commander Honors. He was the State Chief of Staff in 1988-89. At the 1991 State Convention in East Grand Forks, Jimmy was elected as State Judge Advocate. He worked through the State Chairs and was elected as State Commander at the 1994 State Convention in Rochester.

He was a member of the American Legion, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Marine Corps League, Masonic Lodge and a Zurah Shriner.

Like a former Claims Director (and his Boss for a number

of years) said, "Jimmy wore his Heart on his sleeve". Jimmy, at times, had a somewhat 'abrasive' personality. Some called him a 'little banty roster'. Obviously, Jimmy (sometimes) rubbed people the wrong way... Encounters with Jimmy were sometimes intense - if not demanding. A few people got to know the REAL Jimmy Connolly. He argued intensely and Loved Deeply! He was dedicated to his fellow Marines... His fellow Veterans... Jimmy was known to jump from his helicopter in a 'hot LZ' and 'fireman carry' a wounded Marine to the safety of that helicopter. He had the same dedication to his Veterans - he would NEVER LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND!

This article is difficult to write... Jimmy was a Great Friend, someone with whom I spent 'treasured' time with (and some embarrassing moments)... Unfortunately, like all things in this world today... one thinks there is always tomorrow. I only wish we could have had more time... You will be missed, you have left a 'void' that few can fill. Rest in Peace my Friend - God knows you have EARNED your place in Heaven...

Timely Tidbits



2020: A CALL TO ACTION

NOTE: MN VFWs are encourage to partner with HUMANA from June 8 through July 18. We'll kick the project off at State Convention- so bring food items to donate. Posts that would like to conduct a Food Drive in partnership with HUMANA, Please contact VFW State Headquarters.

VFW NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS 2020-

The VFW and Humana need your help in our important fight against food insecurity, which is defined as the state of being without reliable access to affordable, nutritious food. This is a problem that effects 1 in 8 Americans and 1 in 4 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

The goal of our 2020 campaign is to provide 500,000 meals!

In the spirit of the VFW's proud tradition of community service, we are calling on you to join us in meeting this challenge. This is a grassroots effort as its success relies entirely on concerned and caring Americans like you.

Joining our ranks to feed the hungry is simple!

1. Discuss and organize the UTCH campaign with your Post/Auxiliary.
2. Visit www.vfw.org/utch for materials and resources.
3. Reach out to your local Humana office to partner with their employees.
4. Find the nearest Feeding America affiliate food bank at feedingamerica.org/find-yourlocal-foodbank.
5. Coordinate a food drive campaign with your local feeding America food bank affiliate and Humana office. Sign up to host a campaign here: surveymonkey.com/r/WP9CZDY.
6. Promote the food drive on social media and encourage community members to participate.
7. Collect non-perishable food or donate financially.
8. Participate in the potato sorting event at the VFW National Convention in Reno
9. Questions? Contact the VFW Foundation at 816.968.1124 or foundation@vfw.org.

Together we can make a meaningful and positive difference. Your involvement directly strikes a knock-out blow against hunger.

TV Show 'Bar Rescue' Features a V.F.W.

Amidst everything going on right now, I was flipping channels on the TV to find something light to watch. I stumbled across Bar Rescue and they were doing an update of VFW Post 6216 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

<https://www.barrescueupdates.com/2020/03/bar-rescue-vfw-post-6216-albuquerque.html>

They did some interesting things to update the bar/restaurant without doing the normal name change. The host (John Taffer) said that it could be used as a model to update an older bar to draw in new members. More info on this specific show can be found by Googling "Bar Rescue VFW".

Your Department Adjutant.... *Ken Schroepfer*

Hutchinson Post #906 Donates \$42,000

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs would like to extend a sincere thank you to the Hutchinson Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post #805. They were kind enough to donate \$6,000 to each of our five Minnesota Veterans Home to use as they see fit. This generous gift will go a long way in supporting our Veteran Residents! Thank You VFW Post #906!



STATE PRESIDENTS TESTIMONIAL

MAY 23, 2020 2- 6 P.M.



Palmer Lake V.F.W. #3915
2817 Brookdale Drive, Brooklyn Park, MN



\$32 per ticket (Includes a Caribbean inspired meal)

Make Checks Payable to: PLVFW AUX- Frankie's Testimonial

Reservation Deadline May 1st

How Many Cooties Did You Find? 17



State Commander's Testimonial Canceled Due to COVID-19 Safety Concerns



Dear Comrades, Brothers and Sisters,

With our current environment, and the ever-changing directives designed to protect us, we have made the heartbreaking decision to cancel VFW State Commander Chad Solheid's Testimonial scheduled for May 9, 2020.

Even if the restrictions are lifted at the end of April, we know that many will not feel safe or comfortable being in a group setting so soon and we don't want anyone to feel that way. We want you to stay healthy and return to your normal lives at your own pace.

All checks will be returned to those that have sent them in and we are truly thankful for such an overwhelming response to date. Although we have cancelled the block of rooms that were reserved, if you made a reservation to stay at the hotel please call 651-429-5393 for confirmation of your cancellation.

At some point, we may have an informal "stop by and say hi" sort of thing, but that will be decided later as our country moves forward and we all get through this together.

Again, thank you for all you do for our veterans and thank you for your support this last year. Please stay safe and healthy and continue to help those in need.

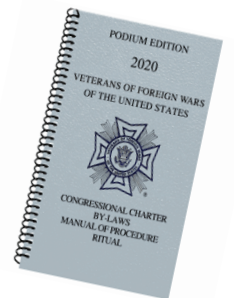
Yours in Comradeship,
VFW State Commander Chad Solheid, Shelley and Laura

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

WORD SEARCH #7

VFW & Auxiliary Information Sources

- ATS
- Auxiliary Magazine
- Auxiliary Training Session
- Bylaws
- Chairmen
- Email
- Entry Forms
- Facebook
- Fall Conference
- General Orders
- Gopher Oversear
- Internet
- Manual of Procedure
- Manuals
- Meetings
- Midwinter



- Newsletters
- Officers
- Officers Training Institute
- OTI
- Previous Chairmen
- Program Book
- Report Forms
- State Convention
- State Headquarters
- Teamwork
- Telephone
- VFW Magazine
- Websites



VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans -
***Do you* have unused or expired medications around your house?**

Dispose of your unwanted medications at the medication container located next to the Security Desk at the Outpatient Entrance.

Questions? Contact the Minneapolis VA Police Services: 612-467-2007



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Message from the Commissioner

A Reminder to Minnesota Veterans

If you have these symptoms:

101°F Fever Cough Shortness of Breath

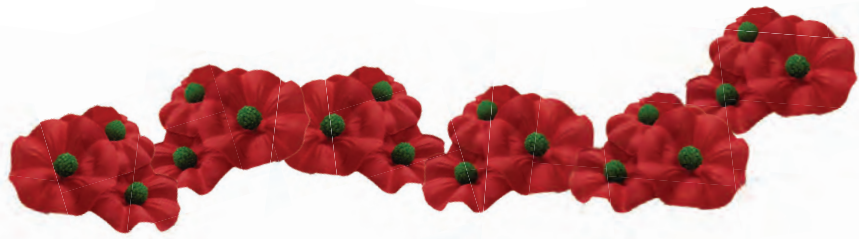
The VA Health Care System asks that you call FIRST if feeling ill:

- Minneapolis: 612-467-1100
- Fargo: 701-239-3700 extension 2319
- St. Cloud: 320-252-1670 or 800-247-1739
- Sioux Falls: 605-336-3230 or 605-336-5001

The medical staff will advise you on next steps based on your symptoms. In a medical emergency, call 911.

STAY HOME MN

Stay Healthy and #StayHomeMN!



Purple Cross SM

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!**

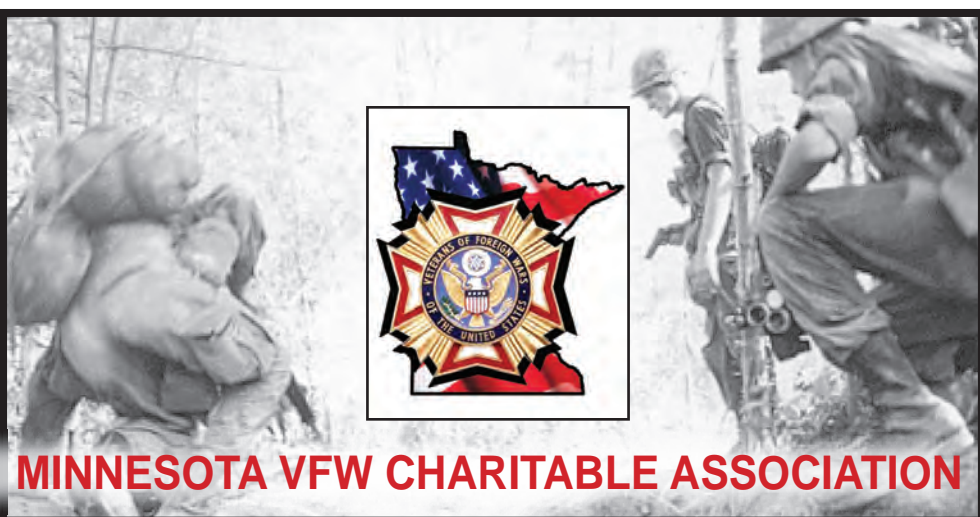
Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State: _____
Phone: _____ Birth Date: _____

2021 MNVFW Charitable Association Raffle Calendars

ARRIVE in JUNE!

POSTS:
Watch for Pre-Order Forms in the Monthly General Orders

Members: Check with Your Local Post to Help with Calendar Sales or to Purchase Your Calendar

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? _____ (Yes or No)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

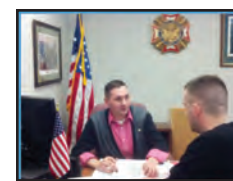
Earmark for one of the following: _____ General Un-designated
_____ VFW Outdoor Fund _____ Veterans Service _____ VFW Programs

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.



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



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

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

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

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

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