

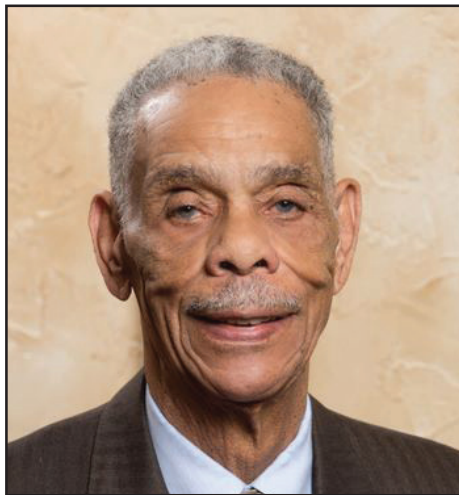
GOPHER OVERSEAS

Volume 76, NO. 3

Official Publication of the Veterans of Foreign Wars - Department of Minnesota Celebrating over 100 Years

October 2022 - January 2023

Gordy Kirk "You are all my Family"



Gordon Kirk will soon be turning 100 years young.

He was born March 23, 1923 in Helena, MT. The family (parents, brother and sister) moved to St. Paul, MN in 1933.

Gordy joined the US Army February 22, 1943 and bravely served on the front lines as a Quartermaster with the 3rd Army, 4th Armor Division (Patton's Vanguard) in the European Theater from 1943-1945. During this time, U.S. service members were segregated.

He landed on the beaches of Normandy, and was involved in campaigns in Northern France, the Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge), Rhineland, and Central Europe. He was kept busy hauling men and supplies to the front line wherever it happened to be. During the Battle of the Bulge, he spent three cold nights sleeping under his truck. As a result, he suffered frostbite to both of his hands. He remembers the scene as he arrived at the Dachau Concentration Camp one day after it had been liberated.

After being discharged on December 19, 1945 he returned to St. Paul where he got married and had

KIRK - Cont. on Page 2

Midwinter Conference January 13-15, 2023 By Cheryl Burton, Department Office Manager

The Department of Minnesota's Annual Midwinter Conference has a great deal in store for all members that attend. If you have never been to a Midwinter Conference, this would be the year! Whether you come for the whole weekend or just a day.

The event will be held Friday, January 13 through Sunday, January 15, 2023. Remember we have moved the venue from Marriott Downtown to the Marriott NW in Brooklyn Park (free parking). If you have not purchased your banquet ticket or reserved your room, please do this at your earliest convenience as time is going by quickly and the Conference will be here before you know it. We will have four \$50 Raffle drawings during the Banquet, please fill out your raffle ticket when you register at the Northland Foyer for both VFW and Auxiliary.

During the Conference, the VFW will welcome Past Commander-in-Chief, Paul Spera and the Auxiliary will host the National Chaplain, Lois Callahan.

Thank you to everyone who filled out a Fall Conference Survey and we heard you. There will be three new seminars introduced on Saturday and will be added to future Fall Conferences. For those who missed the "Dashboard" training during the Fall Conference, you will have an opportunity to attend a "Dashboard" seminar on Saturday Morning with State Adjutant/Quartermaster Dewey Hermanson.

One of the new Seminars held on Saturday morning with State Inspector Larry Grindland and Darrin Ewing "What I should know as a Post Trustee?" Trustees are elected auditors, the "Watchdogs" of the post or district. They make certain no one has their fingers in the till and the assets of the post and district are safeguarded and protected. Trustees' duties extend to all operations of the post and districts, including the

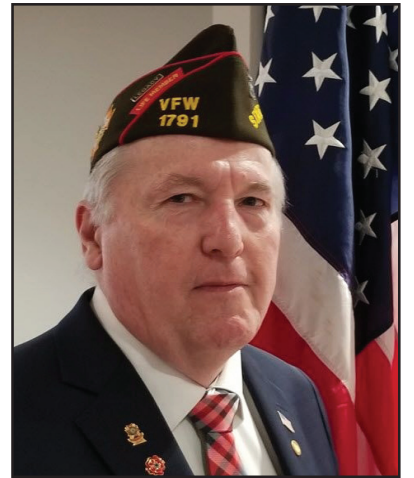
bar rooms, the bar, bingo or any other source of income or financial transactions.

We have two new seminars in the afternoon "Veterans in Nursing Homes Need YOU: How You Can Change a Veteran's Life" taught by MN Ombudsman, Marie Kessler. Learn how volunteering just 1.5 hours a week can improve the quality of life for our veterans living in nursing homes. Volunteers of Minnesota's Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care help solve problems, provide vital support, and work with paid regional Ombudsmen staff to ensure the health, safety, and rights of those living in MN nursing homes. This is a JOINT Seminar for VFW and Auxiliary.

The last new seminar for the day, "What is my role as a Post and District Quartermaster?" with the State Quartermaster/Adjutant Dewey Hermanson. The Quartermaster is accountable to the Post, Department, and the National Organization for all the monies, securities, vouchers and property of the Post. Attend this seminar if you want to know your role and responsibilities are as a Quartermaster.

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

Friday will bring the MN VFW Charitable Association meeting, Gambling Seminar, Auxiliary meeting and more. The day will end with both VFW and Auxiliary Council Meetings. During the meetings the Councils will conduct program, financial and other official business. Attendees will get a good feel for what takes place in overseeing the Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars and it's Auxiliary. The **MIDWINTER - Cont. on Page 12**



2022-2023 State Commander Dale Hoogeveen

Member of
VFW Post 1791
Chaska, MN

Why does the Veterans of Foreign Wars exist? The VFW had humble beginnings in 1899 when veterans of the Spanish-American war and the Philippine Insurrection banded together to provide for fellow veterans in need. Our mission has not changed since our founding, and I am proud to command a Department recognized as one of the most generous in the VFW for the value of the money we donate and the hours of community service we perform.

To date we have been credited with 420,590 hours and monetary donations valued at \$2,079,159.00. Our posts have done an exceptional job in membership exceeding 92% with 22 posts at 100% or greater as I write this the first week in November! That is simply outstanding, and I thank everyone who has contributed to those successes. Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland set a goal of 102% for membership this year as we work to get back to being a 1-million-member organization. Please continue to recruit, retain, and reinstate as Minnesota needs approximately 2,800 (or 12 per day through June 30) more comrades to achieve that goal. Commanders and Quartermasters should be

COMMANDER - Cont. on Page 10

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Save The Date!! Upcoming VFW Events

Midwinter Conference January 13-15, 2023 Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park	Minnesota Veterans Day on the Hill March, 2023 (Day TBD)	State Convention & Training Schools June 7-11, 2023 Crowne Plaza, Plymouth
National Legislative Conference March 5-9, 2023 Washington, D.C.	VFW State Hockey Tournament March, 2023 Elk River	VFW State Baseball Tournament August 2-6, 2023 St. Cloud

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

Top News

PDC Joseph E. Jeanette 1921 - 2022



Born February 23, 1921, in Duluth, Minnesota, passed away on October 1, 2022, in Columbus Ohio at the age of 101. Joe entered the United States Navy on June 17, 1940, at the age of 19 as a Boatswain's Mate Second Class on the USS Paducah. He served in the American Defense - North Atlantic, American Theater, European Africa and Casablanca - Iran during WWII.

Joe received the Purple Heart Medal, Victory Medal and Good Conduct Medal prior to being Honorably Discharged from service on May 18, 1945. He was a Life Member of VFW Post 137, Military Order of the Purple Heart # 56, Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Cooties Pup Tent 5, American Legion #71, Knights of Columbus #447 and B.P.O.E Elks #133 in Duluth, Minnesota.

Joe served as the State Commander of the Purple Heart in Minnesota from 1963-1964 and the MN VFW State Commander from 1983-1984.

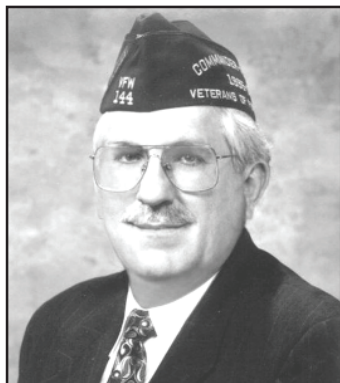
Joe built a cabin in Cotton, MN on West Bass Lake with the help from family and friends. He loved to take his boat out to fish with his children. His winters were spent in Clearwater, Florida. He was a longtime resident in Tucson, Arizona from 1997-2018.

The funeral service was held at Dougherty Funeral Home, Duluth MN.

Interment was at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Duluth.

National Reps Visiting at Midwinter Conference

**Paul Spera
Commander-in-Chief
1995-1996**



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

Spera, an Army veteran, earned his eligibility in Nha Trang Vietnam from 1965-1966. Upon returning home, he was stationed at Fort Ritchie, MD, where he was part of an equipment installation team, until his discharge.

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

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

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

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

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

**Lois Callahan
National Chaplain**



Lois Callahan of Little Rock, Arkansas, was elected to the office of National Chaplain of the VFW Auxiliary at its 109th National Convention in Kansas City, Missouri. She is now in the third of five offices leading to the National Presidency, which she is expected to hold in 2025-2026.

A Life Member of Thaddeus H. Caraway Auxiliary 2278 in Hot Springs, Arkansas, she has served the organization in many capacities including Auxiliary, District and Department President, National Youth Activities Ambassador and National Legislative Ambassador.

She joined on the eligibility of her father, Ruben Tamariz who served in the U.S. Army in Korea and Vietnam. Lois has been a member

KIRK - Cont. from Page 1

3 children. He proudly still lives at home where his daughter checks up on him daily.

Gordy was instrumental in creating the Twin Star VFW Post 8854 on February 10, 1964. Rising through the chairs at the post, district and department levels, he became the first Minnesota VFW Department Commander of African-American decent 1995-1996.

He is currently a life member of Brooker-Edmund Post 724 in St. Paul. Serving as the VFW's Hospital Representative from 1997 to 2019, he advocated for veterans who needed assistance at the VA Medical Center.

Gordy was elected to be the Chair of the Big 10 Conference from 2000-2001.

He enjoyed golf most of his life and describes himself as a "fair golfer" who could hold his own on the links. The clubs were finally put away for good in 2019.

Gordy is described as a "leader and advocate for the Veteran community and the state he calls home."

of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary since 1990.

Lois retired after a 26-year career as a pediatric occupational therapist. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening, cooking and baking, and DIY home improvement projects. She is a Life Member of the VFW National Home for Children, a member of the University of Central Arkansas Alumni Association and Rock Creek Family Church.

Lois and husband Terry's family includes two adult children and four grandchildren.

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Webpage: www.vfwmn.org

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

Auxiliary Headquarters :

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

Minneapolis VA

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

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Ken Schroepfer, editor

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Department Headquarters News

Senior Vice Commander

By Dan Meyer, State Senior Vice Commander

Greetings comrades of the Department of Minnesota.

I have had the opportunity to travel across this great state and go to numerous VFW events and one of the best things I get to do is meet the people of this organization and its auxiliary. The people of this organization have an interesting story, and I get to hear some of these stories. This is what the VFW is really about its members. We as an organization need to take the time to get out and visit with the members not only in our post but at the district and the state level.

What an opportunity we have to get involved and help our community and post by sharing your story or listening to their story is very gratifying. Remember, all of the stories are history. This is the history that you can't get out of a book. Every member we have has a talent or a gift that you should share with our organization.

Getting involved helping others

is so gratifying. I do know that time is precious. We do not want to waste it but helping others is more precious than you can imagine.

With the upcoming Midwinter Conference we will have the opportunity to see and listen to our nine district VOD and Patriots Pen winners. This certainly gives one a sense of pride and hope for the future. If you listen to these young students you will be able to tell that this next generation does get it. We will be in good hands in the future.

As I travel around the state and visit various posts and districts, I want to find out what you would like to learn about this organization. How should we help make you a better leader or member in general? We need to work together to help make the Department of MN VFW bigger and better.

I look forward to seeing many of you at this the coming Midwinter Conference.

Stay safe and healthy.

Junior Vice Commander

By David Staehlin, State Junior Vice Commander

With winter arriving, our programs for the year are in full swing. It's enjoyable to visit the District meetings, hear the committee reports, and know that our programs are in good hands. We are grateful to our Comrades—and our Auxiliary Sisters and Brothers—for the work they do at each level of our great organization.

It's at the committee level that much of the work gets done. Whether you are the chairman of a committee or one of the chairman or member of a committee comprised of many members, please understand your duties and the importance of your position. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief (3rd ed.), chapter 19 covers the importance and responsibilities of a committee chairman and member.

For both our seasoned and newer members, I encourage you to become involved to the extent that you have

the time and interest. Fulfilling our mission takes effort and as the saying goes, many hands make light work. We have many opportunities to use your existing skills or to develop new ones. Besides elected and appointed officer positions, we have committees at all levels, we have the Board of Directors of the Department of Minnesota Charitable Association, and we have opportunities available in the Military Order of the Cootie.

In fact, if you're active in the VFW and you aren't a member of the Military Order of the Cootie (MOC) or its Auxiliary (MOCA), find a Cootie and ask about it. (Hint: They may be wearing a bug pin on the back of their collar.) If you've been in leadership roles in the VFW, then you will very likely receive an invitation to become a Cootie. You can also give me a call at 651-261-5802 if you have any questions.

Adjutant-Quartermaster

By Dewey Hermanson, Department Adjutant-Quartermaster

Greeting to all.

There are several items which I wish to remind post officers and members:

1. All Officers should obtain a current 2023 copy of the Podium Edition V.F.W. Congressional Charter/Bylaws/Manual of Procedure/Ritual Book. They are now available through www.vfwstore.org or by calling the VFW Store at 1-833-VFW-VETS.

2. As a reminder, Sections 219 and 704 of the Manual of Procedure outline the various things for which the Post Relief Fund can be used. Several years ago, the phrase, "To foster true patriotism through historical and educational programs," was added to this section. This allows the post to use the relief funds for the Voice of Democracy program or other Americanism programs that are educational. This does not include post building projects, hall remodeling, color guard uniforms or any other expenditure that does not follow these guidelines.

3. BONDING: It is in the Post's best interest to Bond their Quartermaster (and for many, their Commander as well). The Quartermaster should be Bonded up to any and all funds they would have access to in checking and savings. You may even want to consider bonding for investments, CDs, etc. You may think you have sufficient signature requirements to access funds, but you cannot control what an individual bank teller may be lenient on during

a transaction. Insufficient bond amounts can open your post to losing most or all of the funds you have worked so hard to earn and save. The decision of the post bond amount is completely up to your post membership, but it would be in YOUR best interest to cover your assets to the fullest so that you can continue to follow your mission as a VFW Post. It's a terrible thing to wish you had complete coverage after an embezzlement has occurred.

4. All Posts that closed their books on June 30, 2022 and had a gross income of \$50,000 or more, must file a 990 IRS return on or before the 15th of November. Posts that have gambling must file a 990T return because this is considered "unrelated business income and taxable". Failure to file has a penalty of \$10.00 per day, with a maximum penalty of \$5,000. The Department has a group exemption number of GEN-1068 under Section 501-C-19. Posts should use these numbers on their return. NOTICE: All Posts grossing under \$50,000 MUST file an e-postcard (990 N). The 990N is a short question and answer form and is FREE thru the IRS. Do not pay for this. There are websites out there that look like the IRS and ask for a payment to file. Again, you DO NOT have to pay for a 990N filing. Posts failing to file a 990 are in danger of losing their Tax Exempt status!!!!

ADJ/QM - Cont. on Page 10

Judge Advocate

By Ed Keogh, State Judge Advocate

Greetings from the Department of MN VFW.

By now you should all been informed of the recent changes in the National Bylaws during the National Convention. One change was that all Posts, Districts and Departments shall have bylaws. The wording was changed from "may" have bylaws to "shall" have bylaws. You can view these changes in sections 202, 402, and 502 of the Nat'l Bylaws. Please make sure your post has bylaws. If you need help creating bylaws you can use the template on the National VFW website at www.vfw.org under "my VFW", VFW Training & Support. Department can also assist you if needed.

Another change was that the position of chaplain has changed from an elected position to an appointed position. This change was made due to smaller posts not having enough members to fill all of the elected positions. This change is located in Sec. 216 of the Nat'l Bylaws.

Always remember that Department and District Officers work for you, so if you need

assistance or have questions, please contact the appropriate officers.

I have been attending district meetings throughout the state and found that some posts are not attending district meetings on a regular basis. Per the National Bylaws Section 218, every post must have representation at every district meeting. We do not want to have posts being reprimanded for not having representation. We would rather have all posts represented at district meetings, Department Conferences and the Department Conventions.

As I stated in my previous article, attendance at these functions is a great way to receive instruction, education, and guidance for your district and post. It is also a great opportunity to network, get new ideas, meet new people and renew friendships.

You may contact me by phone call/text 952-334-2128 or email, ekeoghvr24@gmail.com.

Let's continue to support our veterans, communities, schools, and active military by being active at your post and district levels.

Chaplain

By Scott Hanson, State Judge Advocate

My door is always open, my phone always on.

If you have any prayer requests, are in need of spiritual guidance, or have any other chaplain requests, feel free to contact me at chaplainmnvfw@gmail.com.

If you are struggling and need immediate assistance, please call the

Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 or dial 988 and then press "1".

In closing, I'll leave you with my favorite inspirational scripture; "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.) Joshua 1:9

Minnesota Auxiliary News



**STATE PRESIDENT
VFW Auxiliary**

Sonia Tatge

Member of
VFW Post 141 Auxiliary
Kenyon, MN



VFW and Auxiliary Members:
The past four months have been filled with establishing our National Programs and focusing on membership. Auxiliaries and districts have challenged their members to submit required information to Department and National Headquarters. That work continues. Fall Conference in Plymouth was well attended and very successful. The next few months bring new opportunities.

December brings out the creativity in our poppy program with contests in many districts. We all look forward to seeing these entries at Midwinter Conference January 13-14, 2023, in Brooklyn Park. Plan to attend Friday night's Department Auxiliary Council of Administration meeting. Saturday, the Department VFW Auxiliary will continue with our business, training and hear from

our National Representative Lois Callahan. She is the 2022-2023 National Chaplain.

During our Midwinter Conference there will be a "Parade of Checks" for the Hospital Green Shower. Also, we will be honoring all district and auxiliary presidents on Saturday. There will be another parade of checks at the banquet for the Commander and President's Special Project, please come and share your gift to help fight veteran homelessness in Minnesota.

Finally, we look to the Midwinter Conference Banquet to honor the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen students. This is always an exciting evening as we hear from the students and find out the winners of both contests. Please join us!

America's Heroes

Forever Remembered

National District Council

By Frankie Bill, Member Area E

Comrades and Members, the 2022/2023 VFW and Auxiliary Program year is well underway. Many joint program deadlines for youth activities and scholarships' requirements have expired. Now, the anticipation is building for results of the winners and recognition of key individuals doing great things across our communities. I am looking forward to Minnesota's Midwinter Conference in Brooklyn Park where Minnesota students, educators, and community leaders will be awarded.

At the national level, continuous improvements are happening to help all members across all levels of the organization. For example, MALTA has undergone some enhancements and they are being released in phases. Phase 1 included moving core content or key links behind the login menu. Members are able to access Program Resources, the National Bylaws & Ritual, and Cancer Grants once logged into MALTA from the VFW Auxiliary website. Please be aware, members must have a MALTA account. If you do not have an account, follow the easy-to-follow online instructions.

- All members may select the link for cancer grants to view and print the form, as well as request a cancer grant. The form must include the original signatures of both the doctor and the member (or a copy of the death notice, if deceased). As a result, the cancer grant is not designed to be a fillable form.
- All members may select the link for member resources where they can access the Program Book, Family Freedom Festival, and Building on the Auxiliary Foundation materials. On the left-hand side of the page or screen, there is a list of all the programs and miscellaneous resources. Check them out for awards and citations to be used at

your Auxiliary, District, and the Department level.

Phase 2 will focus on moving the Treasurer Resources behind the MALTA login.

Other improvements include building new accounting software for the organization. The VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters will partner again with Condado Group to expand the MALTA software. They will build Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) compliant accounting software. This software will be integrated with MALTA and the VFW Auxiliary will own the code. Following implementation at National Headquarters, a scaled down version will be available to local Auxiliaries through MALTA. It will be optional, but may be easier for local Treasurer's to perform their duties. The new accounting software will not be available for at least one year, beginning with National Headquarters.

Finally, the VFW Auxiliary Magazine has gone digital. Starting in January, the magazine will no longer be mailed to members' homes. All members will be able to access the magazine on the VFW Auxiliary website. The cost to print and mail the magazine is extremely high and rising annually. By moving to an electronic format, members can get instant access. In addition, past editions are accessible online. Ensure your email address is added to your MALTA profile, so you can also receive the National e-Newsletter.

Please reach out if you have any questions regarding these improvements and changes. They are intended to improve your overall experience and help reduce organizational costs.

Enjoy the holiday season with friends and family. Thank you veterans and members for being YOU!

Treasurer/Secretary Chair

By Laurie Dale

Greetings everyone.

For this issue, I am going to put on my Chief of Staff hat. We would hope that every Post would want an Auxiliary to share in the mission. Here I am sharing some of the reasons why it's a good idea to have an Auxiliary, some frequently asked questions and how to get started in setting up an Auxiliary for your Post. Please feel free to reach out to our Department VFW Auxiliary HQ Office for more information. You can call 651-291-1759 or email secretary@vfwamn.org.

Top 10 Reasons for Your Post to Have an Auxiliary

1. Offers valuable assistance with event preparation.
2. Assists with "Buddy"® Poppy drives.
3. Opens the door to potential members.
4. Assists in recruiting and retaining members to strengthen the Veterans of Foreign Wars.
5. Provides events and volunteer opportunities for veterans' family members.
6. Boosts the post's visibility in the community by being involved in more local activities and events.
7. Increases program participation and helps spread the word on scholarship and youth programs.
8. Presents an opportunity to serve more veterans, active-duty military, and their families.
9. Increases the number of advocates to fight for veterans' rights and benefits.
10. Positively reinforces the values and beliefs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Are You Ready to Add an Auxiliary to your Post?

- In accordance with the Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a notice is to be mailed or emailed to each post member advising them that members will be voting on having an auxiliary and that the vote will take place at a specific meeting.
- In accordance with the VFW Bylaws, a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the post members present is required to set into action the formation of a new auxiliary to that post.
- Inform the Department President of the approval and the Department President will then assign an Auxiliary Organizer who will work on obtaining the required number of charter members (15) and filling out the necessary paperwork.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does it cost the Post anything?

The VFW Auxiliary Charter Kit fee is \$100.00. The Post and/or Department and/or the interested, eligible applicants may pay the Charter fee. The Charter fee accompanies the completed Charter application.

How long does it take to start?

From the time your Post votes to have an Auxiliary, it could take from two (2) to four (4) months to get an Auxiliary up and running.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our Comrades, Sisters, and Brothers!

MN Auxiliary Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 8am - 4pm
Phone: (651) 291-1759

email: treasurer@vfwamn.org or secretary@vfwamn.org
Please do not use our personal emails or personal phone numbers for auxiliary business

Claims and Service Office Report

Jon Gohn, Claims Director

Claims Office Update

For those of you who were unable to attend the Fall Conference, I feel it is necessary to get this information out to all members. First and foremost, I would be remiss if I did not give the fiscal year update. For the second year in a row we were the highest grossing VFW Claims Office nationwide. We were able to procure \$538,635,995 for Minnesota veterans and their families. That is an increase of nearly \$30,000,000 from last year. A huge thanks goes out to all of our claims office employees for accomplishing that feat yet again.

Our office has been busy as usual. In September, we attended the County Veteran Service Officer training in Nisswa at the Grandview Lodge. We thank Commander Dale Hooegeven and Adjutant Dewey Hermanson for their attendance. There were many amazing comments that the County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) had about our professionalism, knowledge, and customer service. Those are all welcoming things to hear, and validation to what we do.

In July, Jon Gohn was the recipient of the VFW National Service Officer of the Year. This is true testament to all the team efforts in taking care of our veterans. During the MACVSO conference's banquet, The Minnesota VFW Claims Office was awarded the MN CVSO Partner's of the Year. It was a great surprise and again it shows the passion and dedication of Your VFW Claims Office.

Here are a few brief updates of what has been going on in the VA. As I'm sure you all are aware by now, the Honoring our PACT Act was passed. This allows for numerous more presumptive conditions for SW Asia Veterans, Vietnam veterans and certain veterans exposed to radiation in locations not previously recognized. It also expanded health care and recognized numerous other

locations for herbicide exposure. We are happy to answer any questions any of you have. Please feel free to contact our office. All information for contact is on the MN VFW website. Also be aware that if you have filed any claims under the PACT Act, those will not be actively worked until January 2023.

As usual, we have been asked to participate on a few new programs. One such program was to assist in additional functionality in the VA's appeals management system. We participated in educating new employees at the Debt Management Center. Also, there was a project that our NVS staff recommended we specifically participate in. That is ongoing and our assistance will help in future development of VA operating systems.

Jeff Cowell and Elissa Selleck attended National VFW Training and represented our office as consummate professionals. They both had exemplary scores and we continue to hold average test scores in the high 90's. That is surely something to be proud of.

Our partners at Humana donated scholarship money this year to allow CVSOs who are accredited with us to apply for a scholarship. There were ten available slots. Due to the diligence of our office and recommendations from Jon, we were granted four slots. The most across the nation. We would like to congratulate the following CVSOs who were accepted and attended VFW NVS Training:

- Renae Schuch, Pipestone Co.
- Mark Roemhildt, Le Sueur Co.
- Michael Tschudi, Sherburne Co.
- Robert Thoen, Houston Co.

All came back and reported that it was the best training they have had regarding veteran's benefits.

VFW Works with Bergmann & Moore to Assist with Camp Lejeune Claims

November 9, 2022

WASHINGTON —For nearly a decade, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the law firm of Bergmann & Moore have worked together to provide effective legal representation for veterans with VA disability benefit appeals before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Through a renewed agreement, the VFW is entrusting Bergmann & Moore with guiding and assisting its members in navigating the Camp Lejeune Justice Act (CLJA).

"Ensuring veterans harmed in the line of duty are made whole has been a guiding principle for the VFW since our founding more than 123 years ago," said VFW National Commander Tim Borland. "We are honored to expand our association with Bergmann & Moore to ensure veterans and their families who benefit from filing a lawsuit are represented by someone who has their best interest at heart."

In August, the VFW-championed SFC Health Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 was signed into law. Along with the most significant expansion of health care and benefits in more than a century, Section 804 of the PACT Act, known as the Camp Lejeune Justice Act, authorizes veterans and military families who were exposed to toxic water at Camp Lejeune from August 1953 to December 1987 to file a federal tort claim for harm caused by such exposure.

"Since the PACT Act added another recourse for veterans and their families suffering the effects of toxic exposure at Camp Lejeune, getting the right legal advice is crucial," added Borland. "That's why we turned to our long-trusted relationship with Bergmann & Moore to provide the best counsel possible for those we assist."

The VFW cautions its members and supporters to avoid predatory law firms advertising endlessly on television and other media. To assist those who wish to join the Camp Lejeune Justice Act lawsuit determine if a law firm has their best interest at heart, the VFW has

established six guiding principles. Bergmann & Moore has a proven track record of treating our members honestly and fairly and has agreed to (1) cap attorney fees at a reasonable rate, (2) no upfront costs, (3) work with the VFW to ensure veterans explore their earned Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, (4) counsel claimant on the impact of the offset included in the Camp Lejeune Justice Act before accepting an award, (5) encourage VFW membership to eligible veterans, and (6) provide resources to support the VFW Service Officer Program.

"The goal of the agreement between VFW and Bergmann & Moore is to ensure VFW members who file a Camp Lejeune claim receive the greatest benefit and understand what they may be giving up as a result of any offset," said Glenn Bergmann, Bergmann & Moore's Managing Partner. "The Camp Lejeune Justice Act contains broad offset language that no one is talking about. Understanding whether an award under the CLJA will result in an offset of VA care or benefits will allow VFW members to make an informed decision before they accept the one-time benefit."

To date there are differing opinions on the meaning of the offset language. The VA is expected to release regulations related to this in the coming months. The VFW continues to encourage its members and supporters to consult with a VFW-Accredited Service Officer to determine whether filing a lawsuit is the right step for them. This includes determining how the offset required by the law impacts their VA benefits and any possible award from a Camp Lejeune Justice Act claim.

The Camp Lejeune Justice Act potentially offers historic benefits to veterans and their families. However, these benefits need to be carefully evaluated by a firm that understands VA disability benefits. The VFW encourages anyone who served or lived at Camp Lejeune from Aug. 1, 1953, to Dec. 31, 1987, to visit vfw.org/CampLejeuneHelp or call 800-898-9450.

Those ads that you see on your TV are predatory legal schemes that can take as much as 50% - 60% of any claim settlement. This is on top of significant legal fees.

Accredited VSOs and CVSOs will assist you in filing a claim **for no charge**. They are specially trained to provide this assistance.

Veterans Claim Service

Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Bldg.
1 Federal Drive, Room G900, Saint Paul, MN 55111
Phone: (612) 970-5669 FAX: (612)970-5404

email: vfw.vbaspl@va.gov

We'll Help with YOUR Veteran Benefits

Free Gun Locks

MN Dept. of Veterans Affairs is partnering with VA Healthcare System to distribute FREE gun locks in effort to reduce suicide amongst veterans. To request a gun lock email: SuicidePrevention.MDVA@state.mn.us.

Information provided will not be shared; requests are confidential.

Message From Your National Council Member

By Tom Hanson,
National Council Member

Help A Hero Message

Lynn Rolf, III, VFW Director of Programs at VFW National Headquarters in Kansas City recently sent out this call for help:

Team VFW, we need your help. This call to action is to support our own VFW program. We have awarded over 2,300 student veteran scholarships for more than \$10.6 million dollars thanks to our incredible partners at Sport Clips. I award around 130 scholarships a semester every year. We receive more than 600 applicants every semester. Our goal this year is to raise \$1.7 million. We can do this as a team and not rely on Sport Clips to do the heavy lifting. This scholarship is the largest impact-wise student veteran scholarship in the world. My ASK is for our Posts to go down and thank them first, then see how we can work together and raise a ton of money. We should be in the fight with them and not just collecting the money. PLEASE ASSIST!!

Share Your #StillServing Story

Every day, men and women who have bravely defended our freedom continue to serve in ways outside of the military. America's veterans and service members are actively involved in their communities. We know our veterans are #StillServing. I am unsure if any of our VFW members from the Department of Minnesota have submitted their story. However, one thing I AM certain of is that without question we have a large segment that are #StillServing everyday! We have been advocating that inasmuch as we do this, we need to tell the world about it because we seldom do. Here is an opportunity to "blow your own horn" - seize the opportunity!

If you, or a veteran you know, has stepped up to help others and your community, please take a moment to let us know what you're doing.

We want to share your stories and maybe even inspire others across the country to do the same. Thank you for your service — and thank you for #StillServing!

Submit Your Story

Your service transcends the military.

Take a moment to share the ways you're #StillServing by sending your stories to www.vfw.org.

VA Announces New Homeless Grant Programs

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recently announced the

MN VFW National Legislative Report

By Nathan Morgan, National Legislative Chairperson

Now that elections are over we look at what direction we can go with our National Legislative goals, in regards to the 118th Congress. In Minnesota, as many of you I am sure know, we have had no change. All of our incumbents won their reelection. This means we are able to pick up where we left off.

While our representatives were on the campaign trail, I was able to meet with some of them and attempt to get some traction with the two bills we want to get passed in the House.



HR. 8736 GUARD VA Benefits Act.

During Our last convention, I brought this up in the Legislation class. This is the bill that would impose fines and penalties on what we refer to as "Claim Sharks." Since then, we have moved from zero co-sponsors of the bill to 101 co-sponsors. Two of these co-sponsors are Congresswoman Angie Craig (2nd district) and Congressman Brad Finstad (1st District). This is what we want to see. Hopefully now that elections are done we can get this pushed through.

MN VFW State Legislative Report

By Jennifer Shumaker, State Legislative Chairperson

MN Commanders Task Force Legislative Priorities 2022

- Increase the state grant given to veteran's service organizations.

The annual grant for veteran service organizations has been decreasing over the past several years and has not been updated since 2009. We urge lawmakers to increase it to \$1 million for the sake of bolstering our nonprofit and effective efforts to help veterans in our communities statewide.

- Pay a bonus to post-9/11 veterans, much like Minnesota did for veterans of other wars.

The state of Minnesota has paid bonuses to veterans of previous wars but has not yet paid veterans of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We feel 2022 would be within the same after-action timeframe the other bonuses to other veterans were paid. We propose paying combat veterans \$1,000, in support veterans \$500, and next of kin of service members who died as a result of military action \$1,500. This would show our state's appreciation for their service over the preceding 20 years of war. ~APPROVED

- Give property-tax relief for post homes.

State and county tax entities claim different interpretations of the property tax laws. Meanwhile, posts are closing as a result of heavy property tax burdens. Zero tax would remove any confusion. Post homes for The American Legion, VFW, and

development of three grants to help veterans who are homeless or are at risk of losing their homes.

The grants are for the federal budget year that starts Oct. 1, 2023.

The Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program provides services to quickly rehouse veterans

and their families who are homeless, prevent the imminent loss of a veteran's home or find new, more suitable housing options for veterans and their families. Grants will be awarded to eligible organizations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin

other veteran service organizations donate so much time, money, and building space in their communities while at the same time they struggle to remain open. The CTF would like the state to give 100 percent property-tax relief to posts who own buildings available to their communities.

- Reduce the cost of hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses for disabled veterans.

We are working hand-in-hand with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to reduce the cost of hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses for service-connected disabled veterans. We advocate for the Minnesota Legislature to approve the result of this proposal, as it would likely increase net license revenue for the DNR and give Veterans the health benefits that come from the great outdoors.

- Modify the definition of a veteran.

This proposal modifies existing language to include former service personnel of the Armed Forces of the United States who were granted service-connected disabilities by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs but, under current language, do not qualify for Minnesota state-level veteran's benefits.

- Require county recorders to document discharge papers for all branches of the military.

As it stands, state law requires county recorders only to document discharge papers for service members

who left the Army, Navy, and Marines. This corrective legislation would add Coast Guard, Air Force and Space Force.

- Eliminate 2-year rule for DIC recipients.

The current exclusion reads that the application for exclusion must be made by the surviving spouse within two years of the death of the veteran. This limited language doesn't allow for cases where the VA may take more than two years to make the proper decision for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). It also excludes the vast majority of surviving spouses made eligible by the recent changes to Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans who may have passed away while being denied all benefits.

- Provide a percentage-based change to Homestead Market Value Exclusion.

This proposal is a two-part initiative to improve the current benefit for those receiving it and to expand the benefit to more of our service connected disabled veterans in Minnesota. Part one is to make the benefit based on the percentage of the rated service connected disability proportionate to the maximum benefit. Example a 70% service connected would receive 70% of the maximum exclusion, so \$210,000 of the maximum \$300,000. The second part is to expand the benefit to all veterans 50% service connected or greater.

Islands.

Two other grants are available through the department's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program. These grants will pay for "transitional supportive housing

COUNCIL - Cont. on Page 9

Midwinter Conference - January 13-15, 2023



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS - DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA



VFW MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

January 13-15, 2023

Marriott NW, 7025 Northland Dr. N, Brooklyn Park, MN

(Rev. 12-02-2022) Tentative

Convention Committee News

FRIDAY, January 13

6:30 am	Breakfast hotel buffet
9:00 – 9:30 am	Pre-Con Meeting (Arbor Lakes)
10:00 – 11:00 am	VFW Internal Affairs Committee (Lake Michigan)
Noon – 6:00 pm	Registration and Banquet Tickets (Northland Foyer)
1:00 – 2:00 pm	VFW Finance Committee Meeting (Lake Michigan)
1:00 – 4:00 pm	VFW Claims Open Office Hours (Arbor Lakes)
2:00 – 3:00 pm	VFW Charitable Association Meeting (Lake Huron)
2:30 – 3:30 pm	Auxiliary Hospital Reps & Deps Meeting (<i>Invitation Only</i>) (Lake Michigan)
3:00 – 4:30 pm	Gambling Seminar (Elm Creek Room)
3:00 – 6:00 pm	Displays and Vendors (Hallway in front MN Ballroom Lobby)
6:00 – 8:00 pm	VFW Council Meeting (Minnesota Ballroom)
6:00 – 8:00 pm	Auxiliary Council Meeting (Northland Ballroom)

SATURDAY, January 14

7:00 am	Breakfast hotel buffet
7:00 – 9:00 am	Register Poppy Displays (Hallway from Hotel Lobby to Northland Foyer Area)
8:00 – 10:00 am	Convention Committee Meeting (<i>Invitation only</i>) (Arbor Lakes)
8:00 – 2:00 pm	Registration and Banquet Tickets (Northland Foyer)
8:00 – 3:00 pm	Displays & Vendors (Hallway in front MN Ballroom Lobby)
8:00 – 10:00 am	VFW Committee Meetings VFW By-Laws Committee (Lake Michigan) Legislative Committee (Lake Huron) VFW Riders (Lake Erie)
9:30 – 2:30 pm	Auxiliary Meeting (Northland Ballroom)
10:15 – 11:15 am	“Dashboard Training and Q&A” with Adj. Dewey Hermanson (Arbor Lakes) “What I should know as a Post Trustee” with Inspector Larry Grindland and Darrin Ewing (Hennepin Salon3)
11:30 am	LUNCH BREAK
1:00 – 2:00 pm	“Veterans in Nursing Homes Need YOU: How You Can Change a Veteran’s Life” Learn about the role of the MN Ombudsman with Marie Kessler (JOINT SESSION) (Hennepin Salon 3) “What is my role as a Post and District Quartermaster?” with QM Dewey Hermanson (Arbor Lakes)
2:00 – 3:30 pm	District VOD Winners Party (Hennepin Salon 1)
2:30 pm	Buddy Poppy Chairmen Meeting (Minnesota Ballroom)
4:00 pm	Catholic Church service (Lake Michigan) Everyone welcome to join Catholic Service/no protestant service
5:30 pm	District VOD Winners Reception (Arbor Lakes)
5:30 pm	Banquet Reception (Cash Bar) (Atrium)
6:30 pm	Banquet Doors Open and line up for the Procession
6:45 pm	Grand Banquet (Grand Ballroom) Procession begins

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

7:00 am	Breakfast hotel buffet
9:00 am	VFW Council of Administration (Minnesota Ballroom)

Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park is very excited to host our Midwinter Conference.

Book your rooms NOW.

The absolute final date to make reservations at the reduced rate is **December 22**. See the information in the lower left corner of this page.

Banquet Tickets

The highlites of this dress-up event are the announcement of the winners of the Voice of Democracy, Patriot’s Pen and Teachers of the Year and the Parade-of-Checks for the Joint Commander’s & President’s Project - MACV.

The Reception starts at 6 PM Dinner with Dinner and awards promptly at 7PM.

Tickets are \$36.00 per person. See the information in the lower right corner of this page.

A quick but important reminder of why we have a banquet. Yes, we all know it’s fun to get together and have a good meal with friends, but

the banquet is an integral part of the entire cost of our conference. With every contract comes food and beverage minimum costs. By attending the banquet, you help us keep the cost of the entire weekend as low as possible. As you all know, post-pandemic and supply chain issues are driving costs up on absolutely everything. The dollar cost of the banquet is not a direct correlation to the cost of the food.

Research from other departments has shown that banquets can cost upwards of \$75 throughout the US. The Convention Committee has worked very hard to keep room rates and food to the most affordable pricing possible. It is getting harder every year to find locations at the prices we want for you -our members.

We urge you to make your reservations and buy your banquet tickets today. We all know inflation impacted everything and the VFW Midwinter Conference is no exception.

2023 Annual Midwinter Banquet
Saturday, January 14th, 2023
Reception 5:30pm to 6:30pm
Doors open at 6:30pm
Tickets \$36/person (No Refunds)

Deadline: Tuesday December 27, 2022

Menu:

Mixed greens with shaved carrots, beets and watermelon radish drizzled with citrus vinaigrette.

The entree is a thick, succulent, braised short rib with mushroom jus and golden Yukon mash, roasted carrots and green beans, and fresh baked rolls.

For dessert, a chocolate torte or New York style cheesecake. There will be five chocolate tortes and five New York style cheesecake on each table of ten. Bon Appetite!

HOUSING RESERVATIONS

Friday, Jan. 13 -- Sunday, Jan. 15
Marriott NW
7025 Northland Dr. N.
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

For Reservations call 877-303-1681

Room Block: **2023 Annual
Midwinter Conference**

Room Rate: \$119/night + tax
(Standard King OR Two Double Beds)
Check in: 4pm Check out: 11am

DEADLINE
December 22, 2022

**After deadline date,
you pay full room price**

You must say “2023 Annual Midwinter Conference” or the reservation desk will tell you there are no rooms. You can reserve your room online at vfwmn.org/news/midwinterconference

**Assigned seating and tickets will be available at the
Registration Desk**

Fill out the form below:

.....
• Mail and Make Checks Payable to: **Dept. of MN - VFW**
• **PO BOX 17146**
• **St. Paul, MN 55117**

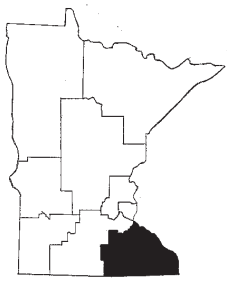
• Please Reserve _____ Tickets at \$36/person.

• Name: _____

• Phone: _____ Email: _____

• Post/Auxiliary # _____ District # _____
.....

News from YOUR District Commanders and Presidents!



**Samuel Landon, Commander
First District**

Greeting from the First District. Fall Conference again was a great learning experience with much information put out. The relaxed barbecue banquet format was super and hope that is a trend going forward.

We're up and running with our Fall programs. VOD/Patriots Pen entries have closed, we are expecting many entries this year and a three-peat state winner from the 1st District in the VOD competition.

Teacher of the Year has closed also and the district is hoping for a state winner also.

Post inspections are underway. The goal is to have the inspections done by Midwinter Conference.

Membership at this time puts us at 5th place in the state, not that far behind the frontrunners. We have 5 Posts that are 100% or better with 17 others that need 10 or fewer members. We need to get out and get the past members that have went through the cracks and get them reengaged.

My wife and I had the pleasure of again attending Owatonna Post 3723's annual fundraiser for "Pheasants for Hospitalized Veterans". We've been attending this event for the past 5 years and it never gets old. If your ever in need of something new to do, attend this event and support the cause. You won't be disappointed.

Oronoco Post 9647 does a breakfast at their post home the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month. Stop down if you get a chance and enjoy some good home cooking.

Our next District meeting will be held in Mabel on December 3rd. It is nice to have a small Post step up and host a meeting. This is also our District Poppy contest. I'm hoping for many entries.

Looking forward to the Mid-Winter conference for continued comradeship and attending the banquet to be there to congratulate the winners of the VOD/Patriots Pen and Teacher of the Year contests.

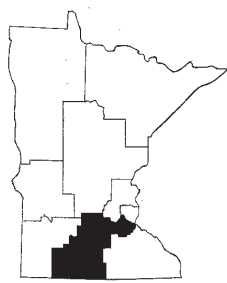
Have a safe and enjoyable holiday season!



**Jean Keogh, Auxiliary
President Second District**

The Second District Auxiliary is off to a great start. Membership currently stands at 86.07%. Congratulations to Auxiliaries 1783, 4743, 5338, and 9232 for meeting or exceeding 100%.

Please participate in your local Veterans programs. November 11 is a



**Leon Grack, Commander
Second District**

Hello from the 2nd District and Happy New Year to all.

Although it's a new calendar year, the first half of the VFW year has passed swiftly. I am guessing the rest of the year will go just as fast.

The great season of slips and falls is upon us and most are staying inside to stay warm and toasty. Please remember to reach out to friends just to check up on each other as we travel less during the winter months.

I myself enjoy this time of the year as I get to play in the snow and on the ice. Fishing tournaments are in full swing and can be a great place to meet others. Meat raffles, bingo and other activities are also going strong and a warmer place to meet up.

I want to thank everyone for doing a great job so far this year. I know you will continue to do your best and keep the 2nd District Solid.

day to stand united in respect for our veterans' patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good. If your community does not have a program, organize one! Be sure to report your events to your district program chairs who are anxious to hear about all the good you are doing for our veterans and our communities.

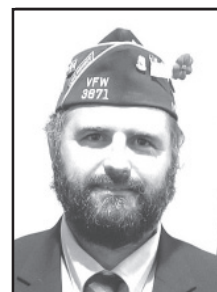
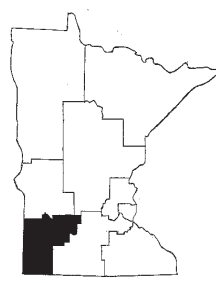
The Big 10 Conference was held in Milwaukee a few weeks ago. Being a first-timer, I found it a great networking event. We were treated to some very entertaining membership skits. The 2023 conference will be in Itasca, Illinois.

As you make donations to many worthy veteran causes, please remember our joint district project - Veterans on the Water, Arlington, MN. Operating in District Two since 2016, they provide a free fishing experience exclusively to all veterans, regardless of disability status. Check out their website www.veteransonthewater.com for all the details.

Our October meeting was very well attended. Thanks to Wells VFW and Auxiliary 1778 for the wonderful job in hosting. Our next meetings will be on January 7 in Montgomery, March 11 in Chaska, and Loyalty Day Convention April 29 in Hastings. Be sure to have a representative of your auxiliary attend to bring back new and important information to share with your members.

My personal thanks to all who have ever worn the uniform of the United States Armed Forces.

Thank you for all you have done to secure our liberty.



**Matthew Martin, Commander
Third District**

Greetings from the 3rd District.

I would like to wish everyone a happy Veteran's Day. I'm looking forward to the upcoming programs. There is not much going on in the district right now.

I was very pleased with participation at our last district meeting especially without having a notice sent out. We had a good meeting and got our district inspection done.

In November and December, our district inspectors will be working hard to get all post inspections done.

On a last note, I was very proud of our color guard in Granite Falls Post 3871, and Legion Post 69 for presenting the colors at home football games. All but one home game had the color guard there. The one thing that I received that made me proud that our color guard was there was a card saying thank you. It was signed, and had a short message hand written from all the players.



**Jean Opatrny, Auxiliary
President Fourth District**

Greetings from the 4th District Auxiliary.

The committee has finished the officer guideline manual. This will help members see what each position is responsible for. This will help members who are interested in holding an office in the district. The committee did a great job. Thank you for time to complete this project.

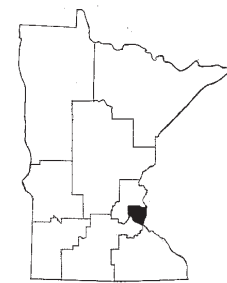
The official visits are completed. All programs are being worked on by each auxiliary. All auxiliaries should be making contact with unpaid members to make sure the dues are paid before December 31, 2022 to remain an active member.

Everyone in the district is anticipating the announcement of the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen winners at the District Banquet December 6 at the Roseville Anderson Post Home.

I would like to see more district auxiliaries participate in the Poppy Contest at Midwinter January 13-15, 2023 at the Marriott NW. Brooklyn Center. You no longer have to enter your entry on the district level. I hope to see many 4th District members there.

Our next district meeting will be January 21, 2023 at 9:00 AM at the N. St. Paul Post Home.

The officers and members of the 4th district wish everyone a happy, and healthy Christmas and Holiday season.



**Michael Lindvall, Commander
Fourth District**

I want to thank the White Bear Lake Post 1782 for hosting a Veterans Gathering and Stand Down on October 27, 2022. They focused on themes of Suicide Prevention Awareness, as well as Domestic Violence Awareness months (September and October).

As veterans we are obligated to look out for our comrades. Suicide is not a victimless event because it leaves family and friends wondering why we didn't see this coming. Our Chaplain Chris Kneen did an outstanding job. All posts are encouraged to host similar events.

I mentioned before that the 4th District had achieved 100% membership last year. However, the year is over, and we start again. North Saint Paul, Post 1350, is on the right track. They held a membership dinner on November 5th and had outside resources there as well. Taking care of veterans goes a long way on getting new members and retaining the ones we have. Great job North Saint Paul.

Veterans Day is great time to hold events and bring veterans together. I'm very proud of the posts in our district that are holding such events. Once again it shows our community that we are here and doing an outstanding job for veterans.



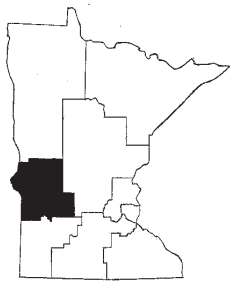
**Sarah Escamilla, Auxiliary
President First District**

Greetings from the First District! What an honor it was to be able to host National President Jane Reape at the Kenyon VFW this past August. We enjoyed a lunch and meet and greet with may auxiliary and post members from the First District. Afterwards we met at the Kenyon Veterans Memorial where Department President Sonia Tatge and National President Jane placed flowers in honor of our Veterans. I want to thank the Kenyon Auxiliary and Post for their hospitality and all of the members that came out to meet with National President Jane.

We have been busy finishing up judging our Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entries. I want to congratulate each and every student that entered and wish our district winners. Good Luck as they advance to State. Here's to another big win at Department and Nationals for the First District!

For the Veterans and Family

DIST. 1 AUX. - Cont. on Page 9



**Michael Gearmann, Commander
Fifth District**

Greetings from the 5th!

District activities are progressing well and post inspections will be completed by Midwinter Conference. All of the posts are doing their best to sign up new members. Our next district meeting will be on January 8th at 2 p.m. at the Willmar VFW Post 1639.

I'd like to share with everyone some ideas put forth by Madison's Veteran's Day speaker Terry Ferdinandt. Pull out your DD-214 and look over your military history, your ribbons or medals. Then share it with those you love, parents, spouses, kids, grandkids, or even great-grandkids if you've got them. Wear your veteran status proudly whether it's your service branch apparel or VFW/Legion/DAV or other veteran's group. Let people know you served. Many of you may know Terry as he was a VSO in both Brown and Stearns county.

I hope everyone has a safe and happy Holiday Season and I look forward to seeing you at our Midwinter Conference.



**Caitlin Amundson, Auxiliary
President Fifth District**

Hello Department of Minnesota!

We have been staying busy here in District 5. Official visits were completed and I am so proud of what the auxiliaries of the 5th are doing for our veterans, their families, and their communities! Special thank you to Paige Amundson and Pam Berends for helping me complete the visits!

District meetings have been in full swing with our first being in Madison at the beginning of October. We have an upcoming meeting in Willmar in January and back to Madison on April. I hope meetings will be well attended!

Our auxiliaries have been so busy with fantastic events and projects. I am so proud to be District President, and more importantly, a member of District 5!

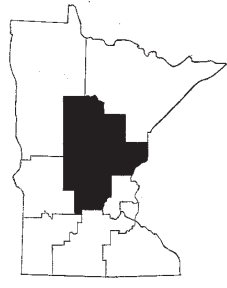
I am excited to see everyone at Midwinter!



**Carol Penning, Auxiliary
President Third District**

I went on the District 3 official visits and was very pleased to see that all of the auxiliaries are supportive of United to Combat Hunger. They will be watching for the information needed and will start collecting for their local food shelves.

See you all at Midwinter.



**Ryan Johnson, Commander
Sixth District**

Dear Comrades,

The Fighting 6th District is working hard to keep up with the excellence that we have provided in the past. I know every post is working diligently to bring our post up to the 100% and above in membership. Our district officers are trying hard to ensure that all of our inspections are completed by the beginning of the year.

It was quite an honor to join the Commander of the 6th District of the American Legion and speak at the unveiling of the new Workman Township. Veterans Monument. I think it goes a long way in preserving the memories and honoring the brave men and women of the past, present, and future.

I would also like to recognize the Long Prairie VFW Auxiliary as they put on a fundraiser for veteran suicide. This is a cause that has always hit home for me due to the number of veteran suicides that happen every day. I love seeing things come together to help detour any veteran that maybe in need of help.

Going forward we hope to keep everything going in the right direction and look forward to seeing everyone at Midwinter Conference.



Rita Reikofski, Auxiliary

Greetings from the 6th District.

All the Auxiliary visitations are well under way and going great.

Our sock drive is doing well. We still have a long way to go before we break last year's count of 1,519 pairs of socks.

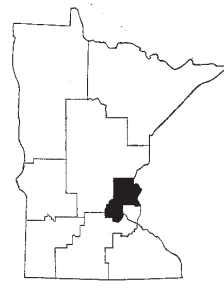
Our second district meeting was great we had our annual auction with so many different donations. Everyone had a great time bidding.

Hope to see everyone in January at Midwinter Conference.

DIST 1 AUX. - Cont. from Page 8

Services Program, we are working to partner with the Hastings Veterans Home to adopt a few veterans and show our appreciation for their service. I have encouraged our district to seek out a partnership with other community organizations in favor of our Community Outreach Program. I have already heard of a couple auxiliaries working hard at accomplishing this task.

Our next district meeting will be held in Mabel on December 3rd and following that is the Midwinter Conference, January 13-15th, 2023 in Brooklyn Park. I encourage all to attend it. The Conference is not only a great opportunity to learn about



**Jarrod McReynolds, Commander
Seventh District**

Greetings from the 7th District.

By the time you read this, we will have completed our first return to the Minneapolis VA Home for Veterans Day. It is a great feeling to be able to get out from under COVID and get back to doing some of the great things that we are meant to do. I can't wait to see all of the residents at the home, and spend some time with them.

With Voice of Democracy and Patriot Pen wrapping up at the post and district levels, the 7th District is in the process of working on inspections, and having some fun with our upcoming District Bowling Tournament. In the past this has been a great event to get members from across the district out for fun, and a great time. For those in the district that have not gotten teams together there's still time, check out your District General Orders for more information.

Over the past week I have had the honor of joining several of the posts within the district at their members dinners. It has been a pleasure to attend, and meet with so many of the great brothers and sisters of the posts and auxiliaries. It truly is the members of this great organization that make this it so great.



**Doris Anderson, Auxiliary
President Seventh District**

Hello Sisters, Brothers, and Comrades.

We are ending our fall season. We know what is coming next. Good old winter. Oh well, we are tough Minnesotans and we can handle it. It won't be long and it will be time for Midwinter. We meet new friends and have a good time visiting with each other.

I am going to keep this short. Hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving as we all have much to be thankful for.

Midwinter is all about our youth and the VOD/PATRIOTS PEN essay contest. Special thanks to all the auxiliaries and posts who promoted the contest and to those students who participated. Good luck to our nine district winners at Midwinter.

Looking forward to seeing you at Midwinter Conference in Brooklyn Park.

SEASONS GREETINGS to all.

our organization and programs, but to honor our VOD and Patriot's Pen students and our Teachers of the Year nominees.

I wish everyone a wonderful Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!

DISTRICT MEETINGS

- First District**
Feb. 4 Rochester #1215 @ 9:30 AM
 - Second District**
Jan. 7 Montgomery #5340 @ 1 PM
 - Third District**
Jan. 7 Granite Falls #3871 @ 10 AM
 - Fourth District**
Jan. 21 N. St. Paul #1350 @ 9 AM
 - Fifth District**
Jan. 8 Willmar #1639 @ 2 PM
 - Sixth District**
Feb. 4 Sauk Rapids #6992 @ 1 PM
 - Seventh District**
Feb. 4 Hopkins #425 @ 10 AM
 - Eighth District**
Feb. 4 Gilbert #1720 @ 9 AM
 - Ninth District**
Mar. 11 New York Mills #3289 @ 1 PM
-
- MOC**
Feb. 25 Hopkins #425 @ 10 AM



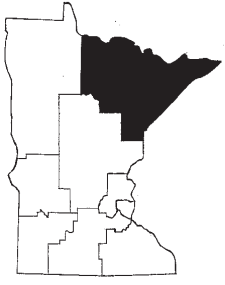
Don't forget to change your address when you head South for the winter.

COUNCIL - Cont. from Page 6

beds or service centers" or provide apartment-style housing for veterans, who can keep the units as their permanent homes when they complete the program. By and large the fact this money isn't available for close to a year, there may be changes and whatever else the new Congress wants to add or subtract to the program. Our advice - stay tuned!

UNMET NEEDS

BURGER KING® franchise restaurants each year has continued to help raise funds to support the VFW's Unmet Needs program. The latest campaign was held on November 11. Now in its 16th year, the annual campaign encourages BURGER KING® customers to donate at the drive through by rounding up to the nearest dollar or donate \$1 or more in the inside dining room. Since 2007, BURGER KING® franchisees have raised more than \$6.9 million in support of the program. 700+ BURGER KING® franchisee locations are participating in this year's campaign. Veterans would like to thank participating BURGER KING® restaurants for their generous participation in the past, as well!



Joseph White, Commander
Eighth District

Comrades and Friends.

The 8th District is busy conducting post inspections and VOD, Patriots Pen and Teacher of the Year contests.

We are in the process of consolidating Virginia Post 1113 with Gilbert Post 4456. It has been a pleasure working with both posts to accomplish this task. Their membership has worked well to keep the district numbers and to continue to ensure Virginia has a covering for VFW functions.

My Commanders Challenge for this year is: if all our posts meet 100 percent in membership, the post who has the most new members added above the 100 percent mark (minimum of two new members), I will personally donate \$1000.00 to that post's charity.

Grand Rapids Post 1720 continues to have great community events along with Hoyt Lakes Post 8144. They have hosted burger days and most recently a fish fry.

As we continue to advance as a district in using social media, you really get to see how many great activities the VFW has.

I believe that we are seeing a transformation of our VFW Department. We are getting the word out and showing how much we truly contribute to our communities throughout the state. We have great leadership at the state who are truly in touch with the needs of the department. There are some great efforts to increase our membership numbers statewide and to work together to help our great organization continue to grow and not decline. These are some exciting times here in District Eight.

I am proud of all our post and thank you commanders for all your hard work.

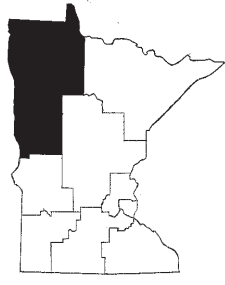


Marlaina Hart, Auxiliary
President Eighth District

Greetings from District 8 Auxiliary.

Our official visits are almost finished, just a couple left. We have been busy at the local level judging of the Americanism Contests at the schools. The local winners are being sent to the district chairperson to be judged and passed along to the department level. Looks like the participation has been great. Thank you to all the teachers that encouraged the students.

Local auxiliaries are getting ready for their Veteran's Day events. A lot of different events are being



Richard Gabe, Commander
Ninth District

Greetings from the 9th District.

Summer is over and the crops are in. And yes, we have had our first sign of winter - snow. It didn't last long, but we know up her in the northwest more is soon to come. Warm up your snowblowers.

This year the auxiliary president and I have decided to do a joint project, PAD or Patriot Assistance Dogs. Since its conception in 2011, Patriot Assistance Dogs has certified 250 service dog teams. To date, they have over 190 active teams and as of 2022, have not lost a single veteran to suicide once receiving a service dog. They are located in Detroit Lakes MN. To learn more about this wonderful program, go to patriotassistancedogs.com or email them at info@padmn.org. If you would like to donate to our project, please email us at: plrbgabe@aol.com or amandaweller@rocketmail.com.

Also, with the future opening of the Bemidji Veterans home in 2023 we are already giving our support to it. The new home will increase our support to our aging veterans in the northwest and taking some pressure from the Fergus Falls facility.

The next 9th District will be in East Grand Forks on the 10th of December. I promised our members I will not have a minor heart attack like I did for last year's winter meeting.

Enjoy the winter (you bet!). I hope to see everyone at the Midwinter Conference.

planned. Many are having dinners for the local veterans to enjoy. Some have made thank you cards for the veterans to be distributed locally and at Silver Bay.

On November 6th, there was a Quilts of Valor presentation at the Silver Bay Veteran's Home. Ten quilts were presented to the WW II and Korean Veterans living at the home. All of the quilts were made locally by several quilting guilds from Virginia, Tower and Ely. An honor guard group was there to help present them.

Just a reminder, don't forget the veterans in local nursing and assisted living facilities in your area this Thanksgiving and Christmas as well as those veteran's in the veteran homes around the state.

Has your post hosted a blood drive lately ??

If not, why not ??

If never, why not now !

COMMANDER - Cont. from Page 1

using the Find Unpaid/Relocated and Unpaid/Expiring reports available in MemStats to conduct membership drives. If you're not familiar with those reports, please contact Department Headquarters for assistance.

Time is passing quickly with numerous special events to attend in September, October, and November. Fall conference at the Plymouth Crowne Plaza was a great success as we were honored to have Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento join us. He brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm as the national representative - his remarks at the banquet were both entertaining and informative. The training sessions were excellent, providing relevant information on everything from our programs to veteran benefits. I thank all presenters for their efforts in making the conference a success.

The Saturday evening banquet was held in a more casual atmosphere than you experienced in the past and was well attended. Your presence at

the banquet during our conferences and the state convention is vital to meeting our contract terms with the host hotel - thank you for attending and I encourage you to continue to do so! Post membership dinners are always enjoyable - thank you for the wonderful hospitality shown to my wife and myself.

I attended the Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt at Camp Ripley and spent 2 days sitting in a blind with my shooter. The events hosted at Camp Ripley for our disabled comrades are just superb in terms of opportunity and execution - please continue to be generous with your donations.

Raffle calendar distribution has exceeded past years - now we need you to get them all sold and return the ticket stubs to the Charitable Association. Good luck to all who purchased calendars!

We've accomplished much since June, please continue to administer our programs and be a valuable resource to your community.

"Be The Reason"

ADJ/QM - Cont. from Page 3

- Post quartermasters are urged to re-check their post roster and send in corrected addresses for those members listed as "Undeliverable". These members will not receive a dues notice, V.F.W. Magazine or Gopher Overseas until the post provides an address! Furthermore, VFW National Headquarters will eventually drop them from your post roster...this includes Life Members!
- Please note the "Warning" to post commanders, quartermasters



Amanda Weller, Auxiliary
President Ninth District

Greetings from the Mighty 9th District!!!

The year is off and running smoothly. We held our first district meeting in Thief River Falls and had a wonderful turnout! The auxiliary had three wonderful presentations for a school of instruction. Our next meeting is in East Grand Forks with three new chairman doing another school of instruction.

Official visits are almost complete and with snow coming right around the corner we are happy of that.

Commander Richard and myself are happy to say that fundraising for our joint project, Patriotic Assistance Dogs, is well on its way. We've also had the privilege to attend some membership dinners.

The 9th District newsletter turned out AWESOME. It's on our Facebook page as well. Articles are being submitted as we speak for the next one due out November 19th!

Looking forward to all the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen Essay winners to be announced as well as attending a few Different Veterans Day events!

and trustees. In the case of unpaid federal payroll taxes, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will go after the "Chief Financial Officer" (Quartermaster), before going after the "Corporation" (post).

7. A reminder to all post adjutants that they are required to report their post's participation in the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen or Smart/Maher Citizenship Education Teachers Award Programs on National's Dashboard to receive credit with National. You must have an entry to receive credit.

8. The Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars will NOT be held accountable for any business transactions, activities, or employee issues that transpire or arise in any post club or canteen in Minnesota. Each post shall be responsible to see that all city, state and federal laws are adhered to and enforced in all areas of their clubs and canteens. Failure to do so, shall be at the Post's liability.

9. Membership - We're on a roll so let's keep it going! Thanks to all who have helped so far. But as in the past, the first 90% comes easy ... now the real work begins. We expect to lose 3 to 4 per cent of our membership due to death, moving out of state, etc. In order to ensure a membership increase, every member is asked to help recruit new and reinstated members (at least 1,500 needed on or before December 31st). We recommend you take extra time and make personal contact with your unpaid members. The Department has a number of Recruiting tools to help with this. Just give us a call for assistance at 651-291-1757.

I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Veterans Day 2022



The Cloquet Post 3979 Honor Guard (shown above) joined with the American Legion Post 262 and the DAV Chapter 18 color guards to celebrate Veterans Day in Cloquet with the Fon Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The Band provided a meal along with native drums and dancing.

Cmdr. Joseph White, 8th District would like to recognize the Cloquet Post 3979 and that all who made this Veterans Day so special. This is a great example of everyone working together

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The new Workman Township Veterans Monument unveiled under the eyes of Palisade VFW Post 1721 and McGregor VFW Post 2747 and the Aitkin American Legion Post 86.

Pictured front row from right to left MN Dept. of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Larry Herke, 6th District American Legion Cmdr. Harry J. Lucas, 6th District VFW Cmdr. Ryan Johnson.

The Wall That Heals Returns to Minnesota



The Wall That Heals (The Wall) is scheduled for a return engagement in Minnesota on May 26-29 when it comes to visit in Mendota Heights.

As the nation begins the yearlong recognition of the 50th anniversary of the close of the Vietnam War, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) has announced The Wall That Heals national tour schedule for 2023. The exhibit includes a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial along with a mobile Education Center. The 28th season of The Wall will begin on March 16th, 2023 and visit 31 communities during the year. The traveling exhibit honors the more than three million Americans who

served in the U.S. Armed Forces in the Vietnam War and it bears the names of the 58,281 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam.

Since its debut in 1996, the exhibit has been on display in more than 700 U.S. communities. It is a program and traveling exhibit of VVMF, the nonprofit organization that built the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. in 1982. Two VVMF staff members lead volunteers on site, educate visitors and students, and ensure the reflective atmosphere of The Wall.

For more information visit www.vvmf.org/The-Wall-That-Heals/

Tomb Trek 2022

By Len Gudmunson, MOC Grand Commander

I had the high honor to represent the MN Military Order of the Cooties Grand at Tomb Trek in Washington, DC. For those that don't know about Tomb Trek, let me explain. The first weekend in November the Supreme gets together and has a business meeting on that Saturday. On Sunday morning, we meet for a memorial service. Then we all get on buses that take us to Arlington National Cemetery.



Pictured above the MOC Grand Commanders presenting wreaths to be placed on tomb by the MOC Supreme



Pictured above the MN Supreme Color Guard. From left to right: Todd Roberts, Steve VanBergen, Dewey Gustafson, Doug Doerfler, Ed Eibon and Bruce Hunter.

The past two years we gathered at the site of the General John Pershing Memorial, and we laid wreaths from the various state grands, pup tents, and auxiliaries.

This year we presented 213 wreaths. It is a very solemn and moving ceremony. What an honor to be surrounded by the hero's that have served our country.

Those of you that have had the privilege of going to Arlington know exactly what I'm talking about.

102 Year Old Veteran a WWII Army Nurse

Even as a very young girl growing up in Spragueville, Iowa Marcy Korda (Schlemma) knew she wanted to be a nurse. She was born February 22, 1921 and enjoyed her young years in the small town where her parents had a grocery store.

Career choices for young ladies were slim back then: teaching, secretarial work or nursing. Once she turned 18, she signed up for the nursing program in Burlington, Iowa.

She was in her last year of training when the U.S. entered World War II. At that time, the Army Nurse Corps had less than 1,000 nurses on its rolls.

The Red Cross stopped at her school to recruit nurses for the Army. Since Marcy didn't have a nickel to her name and hospitals were paying \$60 a month compared to the \$90 offered by the Army, the choice was simple. Marcy jumped at the opportunity and joined the Nurse Corps.

Initially assigned stateside duty, she realized this was not what she expected! No pencil pushing for this gal. She traded in the nurse's starched white uniform for a helmet and combat fatigues.

In 1943 she was off to the 95th Evacuation Hospital in North Africa then on to Sicily and Italy following the troops. Army field and evacuation hospitals were always near the front lines and faced the same hardships as the soldiers. The 95th was a 400 bed mobile hospital with 40 doctors, 40 nurses and 220 enlisted men. Tents were home, helmets wash basins and they were always susceptible to bombing. Marcy likened her experiences to those shown in the TV



program M.A.S.H. She served as a surgical nurse and helped treat many shrapnel wounds especially to the stomach and eyes.

It was while the 95th was located in Anzio, Italy that Marcy met Dr. Henry Korda while working in surgery. Love blossomed. The two were married in France in 1945 and returned to Pelican Rapids, MN where Dr. Korda opened his private practice. Five children rounded out the family. They grew up, left home, and started their own lives and families.

Henry eventually joined the VFW but Marcy could only join the VFW Auxiliary. It wasn't until 1991 that the VFW clarified that women who had served in combat areas could join as members of the VFW.

Marcy was immediately made a life member of Gilmore Weik Post 5252 in Pelican Rapids.

Henry has passed on. But Marcy, on the other hand, continues to live fiercely independent by herself in a two-bedroom condo in Pelican Rapids.



By Dan Jordan, Project Coordinator

Greetings,
Summer has rushed in and slipped out the back door and on to fall.....

Midwinter Conference is just around the corner and nothing would make me happier than to see a long line for the parade of checks for MACV.

I have not received any requests for help on fundraising so I hope everyone has viable options if you don't have a gambling account.

I want to take this time to thank Commander Hoogeveen

for this appointment and also two commanders Tom Hanson and Curt Hermanson.

I enjoy the fundraising part of this and the joy of seeing the big check at the end plus knowing the great job the VFW is doing to support veterans.

I believe the VFW truly does more than any other group and would hope others feel the same way.

Please help where you can and if you need help please reach out to me at jord007@live.com or 612-281-7371.

Quilts of Honor

By Al Johnson, Adjutant Post 4258,

The Quilts of Honor program was started by Army Veteran, Gail Belmond in California and is now expanding nationwide. Gail played taps at funerals of comrades who gave the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam. The purpose of Quilts of Honor is to honor all veterans and active service personnel for their contributions to our nation.

On October 17th, Quilts of Honor were presented to 37 past and present members of the Color and Honor Guards for the Pine City, MN American Legion Post 51 and the Pine City VFW Post 4258. The program was coordinated by Lyn Johnson and the quilts were made by four



Quilt Makers: Lyn Johnson, Barb Heljm, Gladys Enzenauer and Leone Nyers

ladies from the area.

The VFW quilts were presented by the Auxiliary President Carol Belko and the American Legion quilts were presented by American Legion Auxiliary President Linda Setterlund. This is an outstanding example of the American Legion and the VFW working together for the benefit of the community.

The Pine City High School Choir sang our National Anthem, "The Stars Spangled Banner", "Salute to the Armed Forces" and "America the Beautiful".

To close out the program, Country Western guitarist and singer, Tim Hadler, performed Lee Greenwood's "Proud to be An American".



Quilt recipient Vietnam Navy veteran Ed Sauter and his wife Shelly

New Ulm Vets Memorial



On Thursday, October 13, the New Ulm Veterans Memorial was dedicated. Over 100 Vietnam era veterans attended the event in New Ulm's German Park. Hundreds more participated in the dedication. This was the culmination of a nearly 50 year effort by former New Ulm resident Bruce Lambrecht (vest and , blue stocking cap).

MIDWINTER - Cont. from Page 1

VFW Council of Administration will reconvene Sunday morning at 9:00 am to conclude their official business at the Midwinter Conference.

On Saturday morning there are three VFW Committee meetings that any member is welcome to attend. You can choose from the By-Laws, Legislative, and the VFW Riders.

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

Midwinter brings the opportunity to use the Buddy Poppies leftover from the Spring Poppy Distribution efforts. Posts and auxiliaries create displays that fall into one of four different categories: 1) Memorial, 2) Promotional, 3) Decorative, and 4) Corsage & Center Piece option. The first and second place winners in the three main categories are eligible to compete at the VFW National Convention in July.

The highlight of the Midwinter Conference is always Saturday's Grand Banquet. During the Banquet

we will receive greetings from the VFW and Auxiliary National Representatives Paul Spera and Lois Callahan. Thank you to every 2023 Award Sponsor in giving towards this event.

The awards are the favorite part of the evening. We honor our three State Teacher of the Year winners, categories K-5th, 6th-8th, and 9th -12th grade. We continue the evening by listening to the Patriot's Pen (6th-8th grade) winner's speech "My Pledge to Our Veterans". The winner will compete at the National level competition for a \$5,000 top award.

Lastly, the announcement of the nine District Voice of Democracy winners. The First-place winner will give their speech on this year's essay theme "Why is the Veteran Important"? The State Voice of Democracy winner will be presented with a lovely trophy and a check for \$2,000. They earned a free trip to Washington D.C. competing for a \$35,000 scholarship.

If you attended in the past, then you know all the information, activities and social opportunities that await you. So, invite fellow members and plan to attend the Department of Minnesota's Annual Midwinter Conference.

MN VFW Members Receive National Appointments

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER!

Every year, each Department Commander has the option to recommend to the VFW National Commander Tim Borland members of the MN VFW for consideration to National VFW Appointments for the year 2022-2023.

These recommendations are made to recognize individual members that have toiled in the background on behalf of the VFW and may never have been recognized for their efforts. They are as follows:

National Deputy Chief of Staff

Robert Friesen, Post 4582
Curtis Hermanson, Post 4452
Howard Lundin, Post 5833
Kenneth Schroepfer, Post 7
Lee Stock, Post 4097
David Thul, Post 3723

National Assistant Inspector General

Robert Cook, Post 1403
James Dalziel, Post 4847
Darrin Ewing, Post 9024
Lawrence Grindland, Post 295
Edward Lozinski, Post 5334
Michael Meyer, Post 3723

National Special Aide-de-Camp

David Benoit, Post 6992
Richard Gabe, Post 5252
Arlyn Lamb, Post 760
Todd Roberts, Post 8731
Allen Rusch, Post 2759
Mary Thompson, Post 8144

National Aide-de-Camp

Tim Arnold, Post 9625
Danny Brinker, Post 1757
Cheryl Burton, Post 6208
Glen Carlton, Post 11543
Gary Christiansen, Post 1287
Thomas Flatau, Post 1648
Shannon Frost, Post 4297
David Good, Post 806
Robert Gindorff, Post 1782
Sean Gustafson, Post 7555
Larry Huhn, Post 2735
John Jerzk, Post 5334
Jesse Johnson, Post 4452
Gary Klemetson, Post 2793
Chris Kneen, Post 7555
Ronald Kopacek, Post 4097
Jeffrey Kronback, Post 950
Maria Maldonado, Post 1791
Larry Nelson, Post 3839
Melissa Phinney, Post 8752
Gary Provo, Post 5833
Jason Reed, Post 1223
Gregory Rausch, Post 1112
Rodney Sankey, Post 5833
Janet Schaak, Post 3915
Loren Swenson, Post 1296
Jennifer Shumaker, Post 1215
Vernon Wehlage, Post 724
Scott Wiechmann, Post 1216
Patricia Wing, Post 1647



Veterans / Youth Activities

The State of Hockey

67 Year VFW Tradition Continues

by Jim Hesselgrave, VFW State Hockey Chairman

On March 10 – 12, 2023, The Department of Minnesota VFW will celebrate its sixty-seventh (67) year of sponsoring and hosting VFW Bantam Hockey. This tradition pre-dates any ‘organized’ youth hockey in Minnesota. When the VFW Hockey Program started, it was the ONLY organized youth hockey in the State!

Two years ago, due to dwindling VFW post sponsorship and an ‘extended’ Minnesota Youth Hockey Program... The Department of Minnesota VFW moved from a district play-off format to an Invitational VFW Bantam Hockey Tournament. This tournament accepts eight (8) A and eight (8) AA Bantam Hockey Teams. This year’s tournament is being promoted as a “Year-End” Tournament and will appeal to those bantam teams that may not make the Minnesota Youth Hockey State Tournament.

For the second year in a row, the VFW State Invitational Bantam Hockey Tournament will be held in Elk River, Minnesota and hosted by the Elk River – Rogers VFW Post 5518. The Furniture and Things Event Center is a facility that is starting its third year of operation and is an ideal arena for the VFW Hockey Tournament Program.

Some things a sponsoring VFW Post should know:

1. Both your sponsored VFW hockey team and the post, must complete an Intent to Participate Form and get it to the VFW State Hockey Chairman as soon as possible.
2. If your hockey team is accepted, your VFW post will have to send a check for \$1,000. This ‘donation’ will cover hockey ice time for your VFW team. (You will receive instructions on this procedure.)
3. For VFW Hockey Rules, Intent to Participate Forms and other VFW hockey information, please contact: Jim Hesselgrave, VFW State Hockey Chairman via email at: vfwmn@aol.com Or, call and leave a message at: 612-599-9149. If you need help contacting a local hockey team or association, please contact the VFW State Hockey Chairman at the above email.

We hope to see your VFW team in the VFW State Invitational Hockey Tournament and by all means, we would also like to see members of your VFW post at the VFW Hockey Tournaments!



Girls with Hockey Sticks

With the urging of Past State Commander Barry Henricksen and current State Commander Dale Hooegeven... at the 2022 State Fall Conference, the State Youth Activity Committee voted to sponsor a U-15A Girls State VFW Invitational Hockey Tournament. In past years, there have been attempts to create a Girls Hockey Program, but it never got off the ground. The U-15A VFW Girls State Invitational Hockey Tournament will be held March 17 – 19, 2023 in Elk River, Minnesota at the Furniture and Things Event Center. It will be hosted by the Elk River – Roger VFW Post 5518.

This tournament is also promoted as a “Year-End” Tournament. The Department of Minnesota VFW will invite eight (8) U-15A Girls Hockey Teams to participate.

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Veterans in Nursing Homes need You. Volunteer and Change a Veterans Life!

Volunteering just 1½ hours a week can improve the quality of life for our veterans living in nursing homes. Volunteers of Minnesota’s Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care are a voice for those who may not have the strength or courage to voice their concerns.

The volunteer corps is highly trained. They regularly visit their assigned nursing home, talk with residents and help them resolve complaints or concerns. The volunteers provide vital support and empowerment through resident rights education. They work closely with paid regional Ombudsmen staff to ensure

VETERANS UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Visit www.vfwmn.org for Updates

Archery
2023 & 2024
Open for Bids

Bean Bag
2023 & 2024
Open for Bids

Bowling
March 25-26 and April 1-2, 2023
Hosted by South St. Paul #295

Cribbage
2023 & 2024
Open for Bids

Trap Shooting
2023 & 2024
Open for Bids

Fishing
2023 & 2024
Open for Bids

Golf
August 4-6, 2023
August 9-11, 2024
August 1-3, 2025
Hosted by Coon Rapids #9625

Horseshoes
2023 & 2024
Open for Bids

Pistol
2023
Hosted by Palmer Lake #3915

YOUTH UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Visit www.vfwmn.org for Updates

VFW STATE BASEBALL VFW STATE HOCKEY



August 2-6, 2023 State Tournament
Hosted by St. Cloud Eastside #4847

Boys Bantam Invitational State Tournament
March 10-12, 2023
Hosted by Elk River/Rogers #5518

Girls under 15 Invitational State Tournament
March 17-19, 2023
Hosted by Elk River/Rogers #5518

Want to Sponsor a Team ??
For information on how your post can sponsor a youth team contact:
Hockey - Jim Hesselgrave at vfwmn@aol.com
Baseball - Scott Wiechmann at scottwiechmann@hotmail.com



the health, safety and rights of those living in Minnesota nursing homes are upheld. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minnesota Ombudsman Volunteer Program lost over half its team. Today they do not have even one Certified Ombudsmen Volunteer in any of the Minnesota’s Veterans Homes. That needs to change that!

Please join Marie Kessler on Saturday, January 14th from

1pm -2pm at the VFW Midwinter Conference to learn more about the Certified Ombudsman Volunteer Program. Learn how easy it is to join their team and make a difference in the lives of veterans in nursing homes. Part of the discussion will be what the Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care offers Minnesota nursing home residents and their families.

To learn more now, visit <https://mn.gov/ooltc/volunteerwithus/> or contact Marie Kessler, Volunteer Coordinator at 651-890-6308 or marie.l.kessler@state.mn.us



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 _____

Minnesota VFW Riders

By Todd "Tiny" Roberts



Comrades and Auxiliary members,

It is my pleasure to report some of the work our VFW Riders have done this past summer. Monticello Riders hosted their Summerfest Ride again in August with the Department Commander addressing the crowd at the start. I am very happy with the work the VFW Riders do to support our veterans. Monticello made enough money to donate \$1300 dollars to four different organizations, Magnus Foundation, Eagles Healing Nest, VFW National Home, and 23 to Zero. This is why I am so proud to be a part of this organization, these riders really work hard for the VFW Mission.

In September, ten riders from Monticello joined me on a ride to Thief River Falls to address the 9th District about starting a group up in

that area. It was very well received and the commander from New York Mills is looking for members to help with that start up.

Monticello also had many of the riders show up at 2 Trunk or Treat events to help the post do community service and meeting more people in the community. Many applications were passed out for VFW Membership and very well received by those veterans.

Unfortunately, it is that time of year that our bikes are in the process of being winterized and stored away. That however is not going to stop the work we do for the veterans. We will be planning and organizing events for the winter and next riding season.

Remember, the VFW Riders will have our committee meeting at Midwinter Conference on Saturday morning, I hope to see a full room.

Merry Christmas from the Staff of the Gopher Oversea'r



Purple Heart awarded 104 Years Later

By Ken Schroeffer, editor Gopher Oversea'r

Just days before Veterans Day, the family of Army Private Charles Shepherd received the Purple Heart that was due him.

Born in 1893, Shepherd enlisted in the Army during World War I when he was 23 years old. Four months later, he was assigned to Company H, 317th Infantry of the 80th Division and found himself part of the MUSE Argon offensive in France.

Pvt. Shepherd was wounded five days before Armistice Day while helping other soldiers.

While stationed in France, he along with several others were carrying a fellow soldier on a stretcher when a German soldier shot him through the forearm.

On the way to the medical aid station, they had to take cover in a French town during a gas attack. Pvt. Shepherd protected his lungs by breathing through a handkerchief filled with dirt. Unfortunately, the



wounded soldier did not survive.

When Shepherd was discharged, he return home to Montana, became a postmaster and, along with his wife, raised three children.

His son Larry related how his father, like many veterans, never talked about the war or how he was injured. Shepherd did suffer from severe bouts of PTSD.

If it had not been for an article his father wrote in a home town newspaper, no one would have known what happened so many years ago.

Larry, a Vietnam Veteran, did a little digging through some paperwork and discovered his father had never received a Purple Heart.

A quick call to Sen. Klobuchar's office helped to get the paperwork moving and resulted in the award being made.

On November 10, in the State Capitol, Sen. Amy Klobuchar presented Pvt. Charles Shepherd's Purple Heart to his family. She said "We tell the world who we are as a state and as a country by remembering to recognize our heroes. Part of how we do that is by making sure that we don't forget courageous soldiers like Pvt. Shepherd because his story, and this medal will be held in their family forever."



U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar presented overdue Purple Heart to Pvt. Charles Shepherd's son Larry

Cootie Korner

By Len Gudmunson

Commander of the Grand of MN

Greetings
from the most lowest of
them all.

The Military Order of the Cooties was initially organized on Sept. 17, 1920 and recognized at the 1923 National Encampment (Convention) as a subordinate unit of the VFW.

Its mission is to bring a bit of humor to the VFW through its work in various social missions. The MOC founded the VFW National Home for Children at Eaton Rapids and many of its initial structures. Every year, it sponsors the Cootie Christmas Party at the Home. Ever since WWII, it has been involved with the Veterans Administration Volunteer Services through the MOC program titled: "Keep 'Em Smiling' in Beds of White." Through this program, a bit of cheer is brought to hospitalized veterans through visitations, donations, cards and activities.

The MOC is always looking for members that would like to join our ranks. Won't you spare a bit of your time to help bring joy to our veterans and their families?

We are starting a new Pup Tent in Chaska. If you are interested, please feel free to contact me or any of our officers. God bless all our veterans and active duty personnel.

**KEEP THEM SMILING
IN BEDS OF WHITE**

Timely Tidbits

WWII Vet Served as Admiral's Personal Guard

When World War II started, Bernard "Bernie" Brula answered the call.

Bernie was born and raised in a log cabin in Ely, MN. Right after he finished high school, he enlisted in the US Navy.

Following his training, he was assigned to the USS Wasatch (AGC-9), an Amphibious Force Command Ship under the command of Capt. Alford M. Granum. Its home port was Shanghai, China. Thus began Bernie's tour of the Asiatic-Pacific Theater. The Wasatch was involved in Western New Guinea, Luzon, Leyte and Borneo operations amphibious and landings.

Later, he was transferred to the USS Blue Ridge (AGC-2), another Amphibious Command Ship. The Blue Ridge became the flagship of Rear Admiral Albert G. Noble, Commander Amphibious Group One.

To this day, Bernie has no idea how he was selected to be Admr. Noble's personal guard. He will admit though that Noble was a nice guy.

April, 1946 found Bernie mustered out and home to Ely he went. He joined Ely VFW Post 2717 and has been a member for over 70 years.

Jobs were hard to find so he moved to Chicago where he went to school and eventually started his own HVAC business in Franklin Park. He started a business and raised a family there 65 years ago.

Bernie and his wife Virginia had five children: Bernice, Dianne, Kathleen, John and Mattie. He kept a family cabin in the Ely area on Wolf Lake for many years. Eventually he sold it when his wife died some years ago.

Bernice stayed in Ely, Dianne still lives in Babbitt and Kathleen in Chicago.

Bernie joined the Franklin Park American Legion post many years ago and even became its post commander. He still lives in the same city near his son John.

Another of the Greatest Generation!!



★★ **WANTED** ★★

Photos, captions and articles
honoring our Century Veterans

The Gopher Oversea'r will include articles
honoring the contributions of our Century
Veterans in their service to our country.

The editor and staff of the Gopher Oversea'r
are extremely pleased to publish any
information as provided by a VFW post, friend
or family member.

Send pictures, captions and stories to the
VFW Office, Rice Street Station, PO Box 17146,
St. Paul, MN 55117
or by email to Oversear@vfwmn.us

Photos will be returned upon request.

WORD SEARCH #13

Other Names for Santa Claus



BABBO NATALL
DED MOROZ
DUN CHE LAOREN
FATHER CHRISTMAS
HOTEIOSHO
JOULAVANA
LOULUPUKKI
JULEMANDEN

JULENISSEN
JUULIMAAQ
KERSTMAN
KLEESCHEN
MIKULAS
MOS CRACIUN
NOEL BABA
PAI NATAL
PAPAI NOEL

PATER NATALIS
PERE NOEL
SAINT NICHOLAS
SAXTA BABA
SINNTERKLAAS
SWIETY MIKOLAJ
VIEJO PASCUERO
WEIHNACHISMANN

THANK
YOU
FOR
YOUR
SERVICE

The MN VFW Charitable Association Raffle Calendar is Now Available



This Calendar features photos of various National Monuments and Memorials Honoring the different branches of our Military

They sell for only \$20 each and your Post or Auxiliary will receive \$5 back for each Calendar sold...

To purchase a Calendar see your nearest VFW Post or call 651-291-1757
Calendar sales end December 15, 2022

Poppy Days 2023



Order Now!! There is still time to place your post's poppy order for 2023.

Poppy days are:

May 20-21, 2023

Veterans
Linkage Line™
your link to experts

minnesotaveteran.org | **1-888-LinkVet**
(546-5838)

Looking for a Program that's Educational AND Entertaining?

Fundraising for THE BOYS OF '61!

Minnesota's Civil War Veterans Memorial

If you are looking for program opportunities for special events at your Post, consider having Historical Experiences bring a history program to your membership.



These entertaining programs are educational and patriotic. You can choose from a number of topics including:

- The Continental Soldier in the American Revolution
- The Soldier of the American Civil War
- The American Doughboy of WWI
- The GI of WWII
- The GI in the Korean Wars
- The Grunt in Vietnam
- Operation Overlord: The Normandy Invasion
- The First Minnesota Regiment at Gettysburg and MORE!

The cost of each program is a \$600 donation to the BOY'S OF '61, plus mileage to your post and back from the speaker's residence in Mankato, MN. (Current IRS mileage rate is \$.545 per mile.) This fee will be donated to the BOY'S OF '61, which is Minnesota's memorial to the men from this state who went off to war to save the Union. The BOY'S OF '61 is a non-profit organization dedicated to the building of a memorial to all of Minnesota's Civil War veterans. For more information on programming to go to the website at...

historicalexperiences.org

or contact the presenter at...

arnkind@historicalexperiences.org

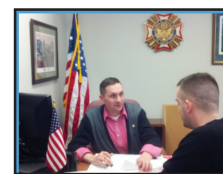
For more information on THE BOYS of '61 see:
<https://www.minnesotaboysof61.org/>

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

MINNESOTA VFW CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION

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

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



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

Using the form attached, Donate to the VFW Charitable Association.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

_____ VFW Outdoor Fund _____ Veterans Service _____ VFW Programs