

GOPHER OVERSEA'R

Volume 79, NO. 2

Official Publication of the Veterans of Foreign Wars - Department of Minnesota Celebrating 104 Years 1921-2025

June 2025 - September 2025

Fall Conference September 19-21, 2025

By Cheryl Burton, Department Office Manager

The 2025 Annual Fall Conference will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Plymouth, MN from September 19-21, 2025.

This fall presents a fantastic opportunity to learn about many of VFW's key programs while reconnecting with friends at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and its welcoming hospitality rooms. All VFW and Auxiliary members are encouraged to attend the Fall Conference, widely regarded as the most educational event of the year.

Whether you're looking to deepen your knowledge of VFW and Auxiliary programs or have questions you've been meaning to ask, this is the place to get answers and connect with fellow members. Don't miss out on this valuable and enriching experience!

NEW for 2025 Fall Conference

OTI will be held on Saturday, September 20th from 8 am to 3 pm.

The entire OTI class schedule takes place in one room with everyone attending the same sessions. No more missed information due to overlapping classes. Everyone gets the same content at the same time. Same goes for the Auxiliary, but their ATS is from 9 am to 3 pm.

REGISTRATION

Registration for the Fall Conference will begin on Friday from Noon to 5 pm and Saturday from 7 am to 1 pm in the Fireside Lounge. Reminder, NO preregistration. For OTI Registration, pay at the door \$10/ person to receive a Flash drive with both Commander and Quartermaster materials. Everybody is welcome, OTI is not just for Commanders and Quartermasters. Don't forget to pick up your "Casual Buffet Event" tickets at the registration table, no assigned seating for this Fall Conference except a reserved table on the floor for the State Commander and for

those posts who purchase tables.

Schools of Instruction and Seminars

VFW and Auxiliary members can look forward to engaging, creative, and informative sessions designed to provide a deeper understanding of the many important programs offered by our organization. The Fall Conference will feature a variety of schools of instruction and seminars, giving members valuable opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills.

All Commanders, Presidents, Quartermasters, Treasurers, Chairmen, and Members are strongly encouraged to attend as many of these sessions as possible. Your participation is vital to the success of our VFW and Auxiliary programs in the year ahead. We also encourage every Post and Auxiliary member to send at least one representative

Fall Conf. - Cont. on Page 7



**2025-2026
State Commander
Ed Keogh**

Member of
VFW Post 5340
Montgomery, MN

I am very honored to be your Department Commander. If we all work together, we can achieve great things. If you have an Auxiliary please work with them on VFW programs, supporting our Veterans, Active Military and your Communities.

I would like to thank everyone who played a part in our Department, reaching over 102% for the 2024-2025 membership year. You went above and beyond to recruit, reinstate and renew members of this great Veteran's organization. Now that we are in the new membership year, please start early to achieve the 2025-2026 membership goal of 101%. By starting early, we will not have to scramble in the month of June. As you travel ask anyone you meet if they are a Veteran. If they are, ask them if they are a VFW member. If they are not, and they are eligible, please sign them up on the spot. Do not just give them a membership application and hope that they sign up. Always have the VFW membership application with you or use your electronic device to sign them up.

All Posts must have representations at District meetings. By attending District meetings, you and your Post members will be

COMMANDER - Cont. on Page 10

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans

By Karen England, Past Department Auxiliary President

The end of the Vietnam War was 50 years ago - in May 1975.

Vietnam won its independence from France in 1954 and shortly after was divided into 2 countries, communist and democratic. The United States' involvement began on November 1, 1955, when President Eisenhower deployed our Military Advisory Group to assist in training the South Vietnam Army in their fight against the communists in North Vietnam.

The United States entered the war to support the South Vietnamese government from a communist takeover. Under President Kennedy, our military presence grew from 900 to 16,000.

On November 2, 1963, the President of South Vietnam (Ngo Dinh Diem) was assassinated. Twenty days later, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson then assumed the Presidency. He later put "boots on the ground" on May 8, 1965.

During the Vietnam conflict, for the first time, coverage of war horrors appeared on our nightly news. The fighting continued through another term of President Johnson, and then President Richard Nixon. The war continued and President Gerald Ford was the 5th United States' President to serve during the Vietnam War years.

The first protests against the war started in 1964. Draft Cards were burned, and many fearing the draft fled to Canada and elsewhere. Almost 70% of the U.S. deaths occurred between 1967 and 1969. The Paris Peace Accords were signed on January 27, 1973, but the fighting continued until 1975.

On March 29, 1973, the last U.S. combat forces left South Vietnam. At that time, only 50 U.S. military personnel remained in Vietnam.

In April 1975, two Marines were killed on Vietnam soil, one day before the fall of Saigon. Off the coast of Cambodia, the last 41 U.S. servicemen were killed. This

Vietnam - Cont. on Page 6

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

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

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

Save The Date!!

**National Fall
Legislative Conference**
September 8-11, 2025
Washington, DC

Fall Conference
September 19-21, 2025
Crowne Plaza
Plymouth, MN

Big Ten Conference
October 17-19, 2025
Bettendorf, IA

Midwinter Conference
January 15-19, 2026
Marriott Northwest
Brooklyn Park, MN

**VFW State Hockey
Tournaments**
Boys Bantam AA, A
and Girls U15A
Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2026
Moorhead, MN

Upcoming VFW Events

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

Top News

MN Officers Receive All-American Honors

CONGRATULATIONS!

2024-2025 All-American State Commander: David Staehlin

2024-2025 All-American District Commanders: 2nd Dist. Maria Maldonado
3rd Dist. Merle Rabenberg
4th Dist. Sean Gustafson
5th Dist. Lee Christopherson
7th Dist. Dennis Maddox

2024-2025 All-American Post Commander honorees from Minnesota:

- Jerry Ludwig, Redwood Falls Post 2553, a Top 15 Post in its Division
- Paul Lindahl, Woodbury Post 9024, a Top 15 Post in its Division

- Jeffrey Cooper, Canby Post 117
- Timothy Dennison, Lakeville Post 210
- Dr. James Tuorila, St. Cloud Granite Post 428
- Rick Godfrey, Crystal Posy 494
- David Good, Princeton Post 806
- Jerry Sanborn, Hibbing Post 1221
- Steve Maukstad, North St. Paul Post 1350
- Christian Borle, Brainerd Post 1647
- Robert Krominga, White Bear Lake Post 1782
- Billy Luetkahans, Chaska Post 1791
- Tim Kent, Isanti post 2735
- John Olmscheid, Sauk Centre Post 2853
- Jordan Vore, Owatonna Post 3723
- Jarrold McReynolds, Brooklyn Park Post 3915
- David David, Pine City Post 4258
- Tracy Closson, Northfield Post 4393
- Erin Friesenborg, Cannon Falls Post 4452
- Digger Phelps, Westbrook Post 5098
- David Boily, Elk River-Rogers Post 5518
- Jacob Roach, Prior lake Post 6208
- Corky Olson, Blaine Post 6316
- Ronald Scheevel, Preston Post 6893
- Mark Schutta, Roseville Post 7555
- Troy Stegora, Monticello Post 8731
- Matthew Kaszas, Cottage Grove Post 8752
- David Thompson, Winsted Post 9232
- James Chambers, Rosemount Post 9433
- Nathan Morgan, Coon Rapids Post 9625

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

All-American Criteria

All-American District Criteria	
All Districts that have met the following criteria as of June 30, 2026 will be named as All-American Districts:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">At least 101% in membership, based on adjusted prior year totals.District Election report must be submitted to National Headquarters.Must meet the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2026:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Voice of Democracy - minimum of one entry advanced to Department judgingPatriot's Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging
All-American District Awards	
All Districts that meet the listed criteria will receive an All-American District Streamer, an All-American District Commander Citation, recognition in the VFW magazine.	
In addition, the top ten Districts in each membership division will receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none">All-American District Cmdr's CapAll-American District Cmdr's BadgeAll-American District Cmdr's Lapel Pin	The top two District commanders in each division will also be reimbursed for up to \$1,000 of travel/lodging expenses for the 127th VFW National Convention. The top two District Commanders in each division will be named as Captain and Co-Captain of the All-American Team, and their caps will bear a special designation.
These awards for the top 10 District Commanders will be presented on stage at the 127th National Convention.	
All-American Post Criteria	
All Posts who have met the following criteria as of June 30, 2026 will be named as All-American Posts:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">At least 101% in membership, based on adjusted prior year totals.Must have a Post election report submitted and be in good standing.Must meet the following Program Participation Criteria by Jan. 31, 2026:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Voice of Democracy - minimum of one entry advanced to District judging.Patriot's Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to District judging.Donate to Veterans & Military Support Programs Services, minimum of \$125.Must participate in the VFW Day of Service event held during the month of May and registered at todaysvfw.org/day-of-service/ no later than May 15th.	Participation may count as community service for All-American quarterly requirements. The event must meet certain criteria aimed at making a meaningful difference in the community. The criteria and more information can be found here: https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service-faq/ <ul style="list-style-type: none">A Post must submit a community service report quarterly to their department for submission to the All-American Dashboard. The quarters are July-Sept., Oct.-Dec., Jan-Mar, and Apr.-June.Must purchase a minimum of 500 Buddy Poppies.
All-American Post Awards	
All Posts that meet the listed criteria will receive: An All-American Post Streamer, a Post Home Citation, and will be recognized in the VFW magazine. In addition, the top 15 Posts in each membership division will receive:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">All-American Post Cmdr's CitationAll-American Post Cmdr's CapAll-American Post Cmdr's Badge.All-American Post Cmdr's lapel pin.	The top five Post Commanders in each division will also be reimbursed for up to \$1,000 of travel/lodging expenses for the 127th VFW National Convention. The top two Post Commanders in each division will be named as Captain and Co-Captain of the All-American Team, and their caps will bear a special designation.
These awards for the top 15 Posts will be presented on stage at the 127th National Convention. and reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session.	

Minnesota VFW Office Locations

Department Headquarters:

Barry Henriksen, Adjutant/QM
B5 Veterans Service Building
20 West 12th Street
St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: (651) 291-1757
Fax: (651)291-2753
Email: adjutant@vfwmn.us
Webpage: www.vfwmn.org

Department Claims Office:

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

Auxiliary Headquarters :

Veterans Service Building
20 West 12th Street
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



Comrades,
You're all invited to the 12th Annual National POW/MIA Recognition Day Event at Central Park in Greenfield, MN on Friday, September 19, 2025 at 5:30 PM. Central Park is located at 7200 Greenfield Road, Greenfield, MN 55373.

ALL Post Ritual Squads and Color Guards are encouraged to participate.

We must never forget our prisoners of war and those missing in action.

Every military installation flies the National League of Families' POW/MIA Flag in remembrance of the 83,000 Americans who remain missing.

GOPHER OVERSEAS

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

Publications Committee:
Edward Keogh, Jr. Commander; Charles Hawkins, Sr., Sr. Vice Cmdr.
Mary Thompson, Jr. Vice Cmdr.; Todd Roberts, Judge Advocate,
Ken Schroepfer, editor

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

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

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

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

Please Note the below address change: (Please Print)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State and Zip: _____

Post Number: _____

2025-2026 Department Officers

Senior Vice Commander

Charles Hawkins Sr.



We are beginning a new VFW year. I have the honor of being the State Senior Vice Commander and am looking forward to the challenge. Last year, I had the opportunity to visit some of the Districts and was informed that some of the Posts don't have an Aux, or they don't meet on the same day or in the same place. It's a good idea to have a consolidated meeting at some point so that everyone is on the same page. There may be questions on both sides of the house. And you can receive extra help with your programs. We have just had an outstanding year of membership, and now is the time to start working on this year, 2025 - 2026. Get your membership team together and get the ball rolling

again. When you are working on your program, don't forget to talk to your Aux about their program. Make sure that the recruiting works both ways. Inform them that they can enlist members for both sides of the house. Show them how to fill out the necessary forms and put their membership number on the form. They can get credit! If you are having a county or city event in your District and you would like for any of us to help you, just let the Department know and it will be taken care of. If you have any questions about our Membership Program, feel free to contact me charlesahawkinsr@yahoo.com or call 763 257 7085.

Junior Vice Commander

Mary Thompson



Greetings, I am incredibly honored and humbled to have been elected as your State Junior Vice Commander for 2025-2026. Thank you for your support, your confidence, and for everything you do every day for our veterans, our communities, and our great organization. I am committed to the success of our VFW and look forward to working with Commander Ed Keogh to ensure Minnesota has a great VFW year! As I step into this role, I am also proud to serve as the Department Chairperson for Community Service and Public Affairs & Publications, as well as the Assistant Chairperson for Membership. These aren't just titles—they're opportunities.

Opportunities to connect with each of you, support your Posts and Districts, and work together to build a stronger, more visible, and more vibrant VFW across Minnesota. You'll see me on the road—visiting Posts, attending events, and listening to the challenges and successes you face. My commitment is simple: to be there, to roll up my sleeves, and to help however I can so that every Post in our state not only survives—but thrives. From promoting the incredible community service work you do, to helping drive membership, to ensuring we tell the story of the VFW with pride and purpose—I'm ready to get to work, and I'm excited to serve beside you.

Adjutant/ Quartermaster

Barry Henriksen



First, Congratulations go out to so many people for a great year in 2024-25! In my 20 years of membership in the Department of Minnesota VFW I have never seen so many All-American Posts! 30 Posts achieved the lofty status of All-American. We also had 5 Districts, and the Department achieve All-American. The complete list is published on page 2 of the Gopher Oversea'r. All our All-Americans will be recognized at the Fall Conference. Please attend the Conference to receive your awards or congratulate the awardees.

This years Fall Conference will be different from any other. On Saturday not only will we provide instruction on our traditional programs, we will also do a condensed Officers Training Instruction (OTI). And we will do it all in one room! No more deciding which of four different seminars to attend. You can do it all! Veterans and Youth Activities do have their own separate session. We are very excited to try something new. We hope to have many new faces to go

ADJ/QM - Cont. on Page 6

Judge Advocate

Todd Roberts



Greetings, I would like to thank all of you members for having faith in me to serve as your State Judge Advocate this year. Congratulations to all the newly elected officers. It is truly an honor to accept this responsibility, and I am committed to upholding the values and integrity of our organization. As we embark on this new chapter together, I look forward to working alongside each of you, drawing on our collective wisdom and dedication to furthering our shared mission. Let us continue to support one another, ensuring that

our traditions and principles remain strong for generations to come. I want to ensure every Post that I am here to help in any way possible, whether it be bylaws, inspections, training or whatever, if I do not have the answer to what you need, I will use my resources to find whatever it is you need. I know we hear about membership all the time, but without recruiting the younger members we will fade away and not be able to help fight

JUDGE - Cont. on Page 6

2025-2026 Minnesota VFW Council of Administration

Officer	Home City	Home Post
Commander Edward Keogh	Montgomery	Post #952
Sr. Vice Commander Charles Hawkins	Coon Rapids	Post #9652
Jr. Vice Commander Mary Thompson	Aurora	Post #8144
Quartermaster Barry Henriksen	White Bear Lake	Post #1782
Adjutant Barry Henriksen	White Bear Lake	Post #1782
Judge Advocate Todd Roberts	Monticello	Post #8731
Surgeon Dr. James Tuorila	St. Cloud	Post #428
Chaplain Scott Hansen	Brooklyn Park	Post #3915
Chief of Staff Curt Hermanson	Wadena	Post #3289
Member at Large Barry Henriksen	White Bear Lake	Post #1782
Chief Inspector Darrin Ewing	Woodbury	Post #9024
Past Commander David Staehlin	Cottage Grove	Post #8752
Officer of the Day Donald Heuer	Litchfield	Post #9433
Nat'l Council Mbr. Dale Hoogeveen	Carver	Post #1791
MOC Grand Cmdr. Jarrod McReynolds	Brooklyn Park	Post #3915
1st District Cmdr. Troy Helget	Racine	Post #8980
2nd District Cmdr. Cheryl Burton	Minneapolis	Post #6208
3rd District Cmdr. Merle Rabenberg	Wilmont	Post #2603
4th District Cmdr. Sean Gustafson	Roseville	Post #7555
5th District Cmdr. Lee Christopherson	Osakis	Post #7902
6th District Cmdr. Donald Lohse	Backus	Post #1647
7th District Cmdr. Dennis Maddox	St. Michael	Post #5518
8th District Cmdr. Charles Cossette	Makinen	Post #8144
9th District Cmdr. Curtis Anderson	Bemidji	Post #1260

2025-2026 MN VFW Auxiliary Council of Administration

Officer	Home City	Home Aux
President Julie Stoehr	Cook	Aux #1757
Sr. Vice President Paige Amundson	Wheaton	Aux #1656
Jr. Vice President Jean Keogh	Montgomery	Aux #5340
Secretary/Treasurer Laurie Dale	St. Paul	Aux #141
Chaplain Ron Vaughn	Monticello	Aux #8731
Conductress Nanci Bohmer	Circle Pines	Aux #246
Guard Tammy Shell	Lake City	Aux #8729
Chief of Staff Frankie Bill	Brooklyn Park	Aux #3915
1st District President Kris Kohn	Spring Valley	Aux #4114
2nd District President Becky Selleck	Waconia	Aux #5462
3rd District President Diane Rabenberg	Wilmont	Aux #2603
4th District President Deb Courts-Brown	White Bear Lake	Aux #1782
5th District President Cindi Nelson	Alexandria	Aux #936
6th District President Denise Biggs	Browerville	Aux #8391
7th District President Peg Snoke	Minnetonka	Aux #5555
8th District President Marlaina Hart	Iron	Aux #4456
9th District President Shirley Quist	New York Mills	Aux #3289
Nat'l District Council Sonia Tatge	Kenyon	Aux #141
Past Department Presidents on Council:		
PDP Jamie Cassavant	Crookston	Aux #1902
PDP Sonia Tatge	Kenyon	Aux #141
PDP Dave Scofield	Litchfield	Aux #2818
PDP Karen England	Lake City	Aux #8729

Minnesota Auxiliary News

STATE PRESIDENT VFW Auxiliary



Julie Stoehr

Member of
VFW Post 1757 Auxiliary
Cook, MN



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

Greetings Comrades, Auxiliary Brothers and Sisters, my very first article in the Gopher Overseer, it's been just over a month that I was elected President and everyday I'm learning. As they say, you're never too old to learn something new. Also, thank you all for what you do for our Veterans, Military and their families!

Minnesota VFW Auxiliary continues to celebrate our 100th birthday of serving Veterans. I think of the past, our Veterans who have left us, our Auxiliary Members who have left us, the ones remaining and what a legacy they started and we continue to uphold. Thank you!

National Convention is late this year, it will be held in Columbus, Ohio, August 9-13. Looking forward to seeing all, exciting times for sure. We get home on the 14th and then we will be getting ready for our National President Lois Callahan's visit to our great state. Lois arrives on August 20th. We will be staying at the AmericInn Blackwood's Event Center in Proctor. Please see the Auxiliary General Orders for details and plan on joining us for Lois's visit! The itinerary includes the Glensheen Mansion in Duluth and Split Rock Lighthouse, there may be other stops (TBD). VFW Post 137 and Auxiliary in Proctor will be serving a pasta buffet on Thursday evening. Anxious to see their new Post Home as they have a brand-new building with a new addition. So very honored to have National President Lois do her first visit of the year in Minnesota.

Currently we are getting ready for Fall Conference being held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Plymouth September 19 - 21. We have some exciting things planned and it will be a little different than the regular ATS. Be sure to bring your podium books and notebooks. It will be free this year, and you will be on your own for lunch. Be prepared for some fun!

My project this year is the Magnus Veterans Foundation, located in Dayton, Minnesota. I feel strongly about this foundation, and I am happy that the money raised will be kept in Minnesota for our Veterans and families. The Foundation is the

most comprehensive approach to veteran and veteran family health and wellness. It is located on 37 beautiful acres, the campus includes a medical and psychological health clinic, a gym with equipment, and mindfulness and artistic spaces. They not only provide life-saving care for the members who need it but also get to know the members to create an atmosphere of inclusion with a sense of belonging, honoring the Veterans and families. I urge you to research this wonderful foundation under the leadership of Dr. Shawn Alderman, MVF Founder & President. Dr. Alderman is a retired Lt. Col. U.S. Army Special Forces Doctor and Family Physician; Special Forces Group with 31 years of service time. His Pillar Program Staff includes a Physical MD, Mental Health MD, Medical PA-C, two Mental Health MSW, LICSW, and Medical FNP-C, again I urge you to research the foundation, amazing people helping our amazing Veterans and families. Please make your check payable to the Department of Minnesota VFW Auxiliary and earmark your donation Magnus Foundation!

My theme is “Be the Anchor to our Veterans Hearts”, my pin is an anchor with the POW/MIA logo at the top, Buddy Poppies on one side of the anchor and a heart dangling from the other side, representing love, strength and endurance. My color is Kelly Green, Commander Keogh's favorite color and my flower is Baby's Breath in honor of my mother Evelyn who was a life member of the VFW Auxiliary for 60 plus years.

Currently the VFW Auxiliary webpage is being upgraded, and our Facebook page, which was removed is being recreated. I say patience is a virtue with computers and websites and glad I'm not helping.

I look forward to working with Commander Keogh and the VFW this year, hope to see many at the Fall Conference. There will be much shared from our Program Chairman with new information from the National Ambassadors.

“Be the Anchor
to our Veterans Hearts”

National District Council

By Sonia Tatge, Member Area E

During the Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars State Convention in Saint Cloud on June 8, 2025, I was elected to serve as the National District Council Member Area E to represent the Auxiliaries in Minnesota on the National level for the 2025-2027 term. In just a few short weeks I will be officially installed at the National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

Over the past 15 years, I have regularly attended National District Council meetings at National Conventions and National Mid-Year Conferences. I have been able to participate in discussions with current and former National Council members, current National Line Officers, and Past National Presidents with regard to the matters facing the National Council and the

organization as a whole. Now, I will have a “voice” as a representative of all the members here in Minnesota.

I have been an Auxiliary member of Conrad Osthum VFW Post 141 in Kenyon for 60 years. During that time, I served as Department President in 2022-2023, was District 1 President in 2010-2011, President of Auxiliary #141 in Kenyon for over 12 years and presently serve as Auxiliary 141 treasurer.

I look forward to the National Convention and the official installation to begin this new experience and commitment as Minnesota's representative on the National Council. My first National Council Meeting will be August 14 where one of our first items of business will be offering Legacy Life Memberships in the VFW Auxiliary.

Treasurer/Secretary Chair

By Laurie Dale, Treasurer/Secretary MN VFW Auxiliary

Greetings everyone,

Dues Reminders should be going out now for the 2026 Membership Year. Treasurers and Secretaries have the ability to print the Dues Renewal Letters from MALTA. You will find these letters for every unpaid member of your auxiliary under the Duties tab – REPORTS section. Look for the Dues and Membership area and there you will find the Dues Renewal Letters. Each of these letters is customized to your auxiliary with the proper dues amount and they have the members name and address (as entered in MALTA) so that you can fold and place in window envelopes for quick and easy mailing.

There always seems to be confusion with regard to our Dues/Membership year, so basically here is the breakdown. Our Membership year runs from January 1 – December 31 each year.... but we begin collecting dues for that year in July. So, for the January 1 – December 31, 2026 year we are beginning to collect the dues July 1, 2025. A member that has not paid their dues by December 31 is no longer in “good standing” – until their dues are paid. If a member has not paid their dues by June 30, they cease to be a member. There is no longer the ability to “reinstate” a former member; any member whose membership ends, must apply for membership again just as a new member would.

If your VFW Auxiliary has elected a new Treasurer, please make sure you send form 8822B to the IRS. This form lets the IRS know there has been a change in the “responsible party” for your VFW Auxiliary. The form is available in MALTA under the

Duties tab in the Treasurer Resources section. You should also fill out this form if your Treasurer has a change in name, address, etc.

If your Auxiliary has changed banks, please make sure you update that information in the MALTA system so that appropriate withdrawals/deposits may be made into your account from National HQ.

It is not necessary to send a copy of your bond to the Department Office if you are bonding through the National Organization.... only when using an outside company is it necessary for you to send a copy of your bond to the Department Office. Bonds purchased from a source other than National require Council approval. Bonds must be purchased in the amount of DOUBLE the amount of your Auxiliary assets. Bonds must be purchased no later than August 31, 2025. President Julie would like everyone to have this done well before the deadline.

990N e-postcards are due by November 15. A copy of your acceptance is needed in the Department VFW Auxiliary HQ Office. If your auxiliary files a tax return, you do not need to complete the 990N, but we need a copy of your return on file in place of the 990N. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO PAY ANYTHING TO FILE THE 990N ONLINE! If you are trying to complete the 990N e-postcard online and someone is trying to charge you a fee to do it.... you are on the wrong website! You can find the 990Guide for filing in MALTA under Treasurer Resources – step by step and easy to follow.

MN Auxiliary Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 8am - 4pm

Phone: (651) 291-1759

email: treasurer@vfwamn.org or secretary@vfwamn.org

Personal emails, phone numbers, messaging systems/apps of our Office

Staff will not be used for Auxiliary business.

Claims and Service Office Report

By Jon Gohn, Claims Director

VFW Monitors VA's Deployment of EHR

July 8, 2025

In late March, VA officials announced that nine additional facilities will implement the new, state-of-the-art federal Electronic Health Record (EHR) system, increasing the total number of locations going live in 2026 to 13.

The announcement was issued after VA Secretary Doug Collins decided to move the process forward. Originally, the project was anticipated to resume in mid-2026, with an 18-month training period for implementation.

Doctor electronic health records "America's veterans deserve a medical records system that is integrated across all VA and DOD components, and that is exactly what we will deliver," Collins said in a press release issued by VA. "We can and will move faster on this important priority."

With the new federal HER system enhancing data exchange between the VA and the Department of Defense, veterans and VFW service officers in those states, which include Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Alaska, hope for improved customer service and convenience.

For VFW National Veterans Service (NVS) Director Michael

Figlioli, this is a small step toward VFW's ultimate goal of an optimized system where every veteran's record is developed and maintained.

"We are encouraged to see the continued evolution of the EHR development," Figlioli said. "Veterans have earned the right no only to the best available health care but to corresponding support and administrative services that help deliver that care."

Amassing a network of about 2,000 service officers worldwide, NVS has helped more than 590,500 veterans recover \$14.62 billion in benefits last year. Figlioli says VFW remains adamant about its vision and will reinforce its stance until all veterans using the VA system reap the benefits.

"We will continue to insist that VA improve its governance and change management protocols of this critical program," Figlioli said. "Our goal is to continue to advocate for the successful development of every single record."

VA officials expect to fully implement the new EHR system at every VA facility by early 2031.

This article is featured in the July/August issue of VFW magazine, and was written by Ismael Rodriguez, Jr., Associate Editor for VFW magazine.

VA Processes Over 2M Disability Claims

June 24, 2025

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced today that it processed more than 2 million disability benefits claims for Veterans in fiscal year 2025, faster than ever before.

VA achieved this milestone more than a month faster than the all-time record reached in FY 2024. At this pace, VA will surpass the previous record number of completed disability claims by more than 14% this year. VA had already awarded more than \$120 billion in compensation and pension benefits to Veterans and survivors in FY 2025.

Since President Trump took office, VA has reduced the inventory of backlogged disability claims by

more than 74,000. Veterans are also getting their claims processed more quickly--the average wait time for a Veteran's claim to be processed fell from 141.5 days on Jan. 20, 2025 to 131.8 days on June 21, 2025.

"VA has reduced the claims backlog and has processed these claims faster than ever for a simple reason: we're focused on getting results for Veterans," VA Secretary Doug Collins. "We are just getting started in our mission to help Veterans, families, caregivers and survivors get the care and benefits they've earned."

VA encourages all Veterans to visit [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov) to learn more and apply for the care and benefits they deserve.

VA to Reduce Staff by Nearly 30K by end of FY 2025

July 7, 2025

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced it's on pace to reduce total VA staff by nearly 30,000 employees by the end of fiscal year 2025, eliminating the need for a large-scale reduction-in-force.

While VA had been considering a department -wide RIF to reduce staff levels by up to 15%, employee reductions through the federal hiring freeze, deferred resignations, retirements and normal attrition have eliminated the need for the RIF. The numbers break down as follows:

- VA had roughly 484,000 employees on Jan. 1, 2025 and 467,000 employees as of June 1, 2025 -- a reduction of nearly 17,000.
- Between now and Sept. 30, the department expects nearly 12,000 additional VA employees to exit through normal attrition, voluntary early retirement authority or the deferred early resignation program.

VA has multiple safeguards in place to ensure these staff reductions do not impact Veteran care or benefits. All VA mission-critical positions are exempt from the DRP and VERA, and more than 350,000 positions are exempt from the federal hiring freeze.

Meanwhile, VA performance continues to improve. Under President Trump and Secretary Collins:

- VA's disability claims backlog is already down nearly 30%, after it increased 24% during the Biden Administration.
- VA is processing record numbers

of disability claims, reaching 1 million claims processed for FY 25 on Feb. 20 and reaching 2 million claims by June--both achievements were done in record time.

VA has brought more than 60,000 VA employees back to the office, where we can work better as a team to serve Veterans.

"Since March, we've been conducting a holistic review of the department centered on reducing bureaucracy and improving service to Veterans," said VA Secretary Doug Collins. "As a result of our efforts, VA is headed in the right direction--both in terms of staff levels and customer service. A department-wide RIF is off the table, but that doesn't mean we're done improving VA. Our review has resulted in a host of new ideas for better serving Veterans that we will continue to pursue."

VA is currently exploring a number of additional reforms to improve operational efficiency and service to Veterans, including:

Today, the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration and National Cemetery Administration all run duplicate and costly administration functions that can be centralized or restructured so they can each focus on their core missions of health care, benefits and burial services, respectively.

VA operates 274 separate call centers that are not connected to one another. A centralized call center with modernized systems would lead to quicker and better service for veterans and could be run with fewer staff members.

VA Announces \$42M in Grants to fight Homelessness

June 11, 2025

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced the availability of \$42 million in grants to eligible organizations to assist homeless Veterans and those at risk of homelessness with various legal services.

Grant applications are due by 4 pm ET, July 7. Organizations can apply for grants worth up to \$500,000, which will fund operations for a two-year period beginning Oct. 1, 2025, through Sept. 30, 2027.

The funds are being made available through VA's Legal Services for Veterans Grant Program and are designed to help Veterans in several ways, including:

- Providing Veterans with representation in landlord-tenant disputes to prevent eviction.
- Assisting with court proceedings

for child support, custody or estate planning.

- Helping Veterans obtain benefits like disability compensation.
- Defending Veterans in criminal cases that can prolong or increase their risk of homelessness, such as outstanding warrants, fines, and driver's license revocation.

"Services to help Veterans obtain benefits, maintain access to housing and navigate other common legal issues can make a huge difference in preventing or resolving homelessness," said VA Secretary Doug Collins. "These important grants will help us make a positive difference in the lives of thousands of Veterans."

Learn more about the grant program eligibility and award process online or by emailing lsv@va.gov.

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

Message From Your National Council Member

By Dale Hoogeveen,
National Council Member

The Department of Minnesota concluded 2024-25 in grand fashion at our annual State Convention hosted by VFW Post 428 in St. Cloud. We were honored to have Commander in Chief Al Lipphardt and his wife, Carol, join us and share the benefit of his experience as an infantry officer in Vietnam and an accomplished leader in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It was my honor to emcee the banquet, thank you Commander Staehlin for the invitation!

I congratulate Commander Staehlin and his officers for achieving the prestigious All-American award. Additionally, five district commanders and 30 post commanders will also be recognized as All-American, congratulations to them and to the comrades who made it happen. Although this level of success was unprecedented in our department, there is no reason it cannot become the standard.

Commander Ed Keogh and his officers have been busy attending VFW and community events to further our mission to serve veterans, their families, and our communities.

To our post elected leaders and the comrades in our posts, we don't work to achieve awards and recognition, they are merely the result of what we do every day to meet the needs of the veteran community, to educate our youth regarding the sacrifices that have been made on behalf of all Americans, and to celebrate our communities.

Thank you to all outgoing leaders and to those elected to lead in 2025-26. I encourage you to become familiar with the All-American dashboard at www.vfw.org to ensure program submission deadlines are met and to ensure your post is being credited for the good work each of you do.

Curt Hermanson and I continue to represent the Veterans of Foreign Wars as board members for the Veterans 4 Veterans Trust Fund. We have awarded approximately \$215,000.00 in grants this year, every dollar will be spent to the benefit of Minnesota veterans. Visit www.mnv4v.org for more information.

We anticipate history will be made at the 126th VFW National Convention in Columbus, Ohio when Sr Vice Commander in Chief Carol Whitmore from the Department of Iowa is elected Commander in Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I am so proud of the Big 10 Conference for its part in electing the first female veteran to lead our organization and look forward as a member of the National Council to working with her. Let's ensure the Department of Minnesota makes a large contribution to the success of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in 2025-2026!

Vietnam - Cont. from Page 1

officially ended the war on May 15, 1975.

Three quarters of the troops fighting in Vietnam enlisted to serve, rather than being drafted. The United States had 58,220 soldiers, and South Vietnam had 224,000 killed. North Vietnam and the Viet Cong had 1.1 million fighters.

The United States and South Vietnam technically won the war, but Saigon fell to the communists in April 1975.

There were 2,709,918 military members who served in Vietnam. Another 693,182 served "in-theater", meaning assignments off-shore or in the air, and there were many more service members who were trained to serve and did not leave the continental United States.

There were 58,220 service personnel killed in action, including 8 female nurses, and a recorded 1,626 Missing in Action. Additionally, the United States recorded 304,000 wounded, 75,000 of them severely.

In 1973, 591 American Prisoners of War were released. In total, less than seven hundred U.S. Prisoners of War returned home alive. Depending upon which source you believe, it is estimated that roughly 1,350 to 1,575 Americans are still Prisoners of War (POW) or Missing In Action (MIA) from the Vietnam War.

There were approximately 68,000 Minnesotans involved in the Vietnam War, and only 1,077 of them are engraved on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C.

Tragically, the Vietnam War is still claiming U.S. servicemen's lives due to Agent Orange and PTSD, and an unknown number of servicemen to suicide. The effects of the war continue to be ongoing for all of those who served!

THANK YOU to all of you veterans and your families who have served this great country of ours! Especially this year, to those of you Vietnam Veterans who returned to what (sadly) was a less than grateful nation. You deserve the respect and thanks that all other veterans of all of the other conflicts received!

On this, the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, we need to continue to remember your service and sacrifice! We respectfully say a long overdue: "Thank you for your service!" and we also wholeheartedly Thank You, and need to tell you: "WELCOME HOME!"

ADJ/QM - Cont. on Page 3

along with the more familiar. Please encourage your post members to attend. And we are only charging \$10 for registration (Includes a flash drive). No more \$75 OTI cost!

I hope that every post and district has seen the information on our new advertising program. These ads in our Conference and Convention books help support our programs. The prices are very reasonable. It's your chance to tell the rest of the Department about all the great things that your post and district are doing! Please send your ads and checks into the HQ office.

See you at the Fall Conference as we get another great year underway!

Legislative Report

By Barry Henriksen, Legislative Chairperson



I'd like to thank Past State Commander Dave Staehlin for the appointment as State Legislative Chairman. And I would also like to thank our current line officers for the appointment as both the State and National Legislative Chairman. Doc Tuorila is joining me on the National Legislative Committee. Doc brings a wealth of experience to the table. We will be in Washington DC September 8-11. We will get up to speed with the VFW National Legislative priorities

and meet with members of Congress. We will bring this information back to the Fall Conference and give a briefing on Saturday afternoon.

In the recently concluded Minnesota State Legislative session the anti-claim shark bill failed to pass. This will be a top priority again in the upcoming session. The Commanders Task Force will select the top priorities for the 2026 session over the next couple of months. At the Fall Conference we will review the past year's priorities and look at this upcoming years priorities.

I would like to have a list of members that I could contact at short notice to come to the State Capitol and attend hearings that are in the interest of our membership. This past session the House Subcommittee on Veterans met on Tuesday mornings from 8:15-10am. The Senate met on Thursday afternoons at 3:30pm. The session runs from January through May. Please let me know if you are interested. Space can be limited depending on the topic.

JUDGE - Cont. from Page 3

for our veterans' rights. Please ask if you want to discuss new ways of recruiting and figuring out ways to get them involved.

Your voices, ideas, and participation are what make our organization vibrant and resilient. I encourage you to reach out—share your perspectives, your concerns, and your inspirations. Together, we can identify new opportunities for growth, foster a spirit of camaraderie, and navigate any challenges that may arise.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the Fall Conference and recommend very highly that all of you newly elected officers show up for Officer Training. A lot of information will be provided to help

you succeed in your position.

Let us approach the coming year with determination, compassion, and a renewed sense of purpose. Each of you brings unique strengths to our organization, and together, there is little we cannot accomplish. I challenge every member to stay engaged, remain curious, and be proactive in seeking solutions and forging connections—both within our posts and throughout our broader community.

Let's continue to honor our traditions while forging new paths that will inspire both current and future members. As your Judge Advocate, my door is always open—whether you have a question, a concern, or an idea you wish to explore. Let's make this year one of meaningful progress, lasting friendships, and shared accomplishments.

Convention Committee Report

By Scott Bill and the Convention Committee Team

Dear Comrades and Auxiliary Members,

Happy summer! What an incredible turnout we had at the recent convention, with many deserving awards handed out—thank you for making it such a memorable event.

As we shift our focus to the upcoming Fall Conference, we're excited to return to the Crowne Plaza in Plymouth. Mark your calendars!

- Dates: September 18–22, 2025
- Location: Crowne Plaza, Plymouth, MN
- Friday Night Bonfire: The fire pit is reserved from 7–11 PM—join us for fireside fellowship!

We are actively seeking new conference locations across the state. Multiple RFPs are out, and we're

awaiting responses to determine which venues best suit our future needs.

Upcoming Events:

- **Midwinter Conference 2026**, Marriott Northwest, Brooklyn Park, MN, Jan 15–18, 2026.
- **Summer Convention 2026**, Crowne Plaza, Plymouth, MN, June 16–20, 2026.

We can't wait to see you back at the Crowne Plaza and share a Saturday bonfire—fall in Minnesota wouldn't be complete without one (weather permitting of course).

On behalf of the entire Convention Committee, we appreciate your ongoing participation and support.

2025 Fall Conference - September 19-21, 2025



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS - DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA



VFW FALL CONFERENCE
September 19-21, 2025
Crowne Plaza Northwest, 3131 Campus Drive
Plymouth, MN 55441
Tentative (6-27-2025)

FRIDAY, September 19

NOON - 5:00pm	VFW Registration Pick up program book & Banquet tickets	Fireside Lounge
8:00 - 1:00pm	AUX Registration	Fireside Lounge
8:00 - 3:30pm	DISPLAY/PROGRAM EXHIBITS	Europa/Copenhagen
1:00 - 2:30pm	VFW Finance Committee	Boardroom 1
2:30 - 4:00pm	Gambling Meeting -- Instructor TBD	Scandinavian
3:00 - 5:00pm	Claims Office Hours - Jon Gohn	Conf. Room B
4:15 - 5:30pm	MN VFW Charitable Association	Boardroom 1
6:00 - 8:30pm	VFW Council of Administration	Scandinavian
6:00 - 8:30pm	AUX Council of Administration	Regency

** After meetings, Hospitality Rooms are Open **

SATURDAY, September 20

7:00 - 1:00pm	VFW Registration	Fireside Lounge
8:00 - 1:00pm	AUX Registration	Fireside Lounge
8:00 - 3:00pm	VFW OTI Sessions	Scandinavian
8:00 - 3:00pm	Display/Program Exhibits/Poppy Contest Exhibit set up from 7:00 - 7:45am	Europa/Copenhagen
9:00 - 3:00pm	AUX ATS Sessions	Regency
11:30 - 1:00pm	Lunch	
4:30 - 5:30pm	Non-Denominational Services	Conf. Room C
	Catholic Service	Conf Room B
6:00 - 6:45pm	General Reception	Atrium
7:00 - 9:30pm	Casual Dinner Event	Scandinavian

VFW OTI Sessions - SATURDAY, September 21

8:00 - 8:50am	Commander's Leadership Session taught by State Commander Ed Keogh - Membership (National & State Programs) - Post Issues (Disciplinary Actions, etc.) - Consolidation vs Surrendering Post Charter	Scandinavian
9:00 - 9:50am	Adjutant/Quartermaster OTI Session taught by Adj/Qm Barry Henriksen - How to do an Audit/Audit Issues - What is a Bond? It's not your Post Insurance - Assessments: Why do Posts have to Pay? - Dashboard - OMS	Scandinavian
10:00 - 10:50	ScholarsApp - Duane Hermanson	Scandinavian
11:00 - 11:45am	Inspections - Darrin Ewing	
11:45 - 1:00pm	Lunch Buffet (\$20/person) Garden salad with choice of dressing; Beef Burger and Hot Dogs; Toppings: sauteed mushrooms and onions, sliced tomato, sliced cheese, pickles, mayo, mustard, bbq sauce, shredded lettuce, and ketchup; Served with french fries and potato salad; and Assorted cookies and bars.	Hotel Restaurant
1:00 - 2:00pm	Let's Talk about Programs (Joint) - Commander's Project/National Home by Jim Dalziel - Legislative by Barry Henriksen - Community Service by Mary Thompson - Buddy Poppy by Charlie Cossette	Scandinavian
1:00 - 3:00pm	Veterans & Youth Activities Program Explanation and Bids	Conf Room D Main Floor
2:10 - 3:00pm	Let's Talk about Programs (cont'd) - Safety by Duane Frank - Scouting by Chris Trebelhorn - Teacher of the Year by Jim Swanson	Scandinavian
3:00 - 5:00pm	Claims Office Hours - Jon Gohn	Conf. Room B

SUNDAY, September 21 - VFW OTI Sessions

8:00 - 11:00am	VFW Council of Administration	Scandinavian
----------------	-------------------------------	--------------

HOUSING RESERVATIONS

VFW Fall Conference 2025
Friday, September 19 -- Sunday, September 21
Crowne Plaza Hotel
3131 Campus Drive, Plymouth, MN 55441
For Reservations call 763-559-6600

Room Block: MN VFW Fall Convention
Room Rate: \$119/night + tax
(Standard King OR Two Double Beds)
Check in: 3pm Check out: 12pm

DEADLINE -- August 27, 2025

Reserve online at vfwmn.org/news/Fall_Conference/click_on_hotel_link

Fall Conf. - Cont. from Page 1

who can bring back and share what they've learned with those unable to attend.

A full schedule of seminars and instructional sessions can be found in the Department and Auxiliary General Orders or on the VFW Department website: www.vfwmn.org/New/FallConference, and will also be accessible via a QR code at the event.

There will be outstanding classes covering all our key programs. The best way to ensure a successful year is by starting strong and the Fall Conference is your chance to do just that!

Committee Displays and Exhibits

The Display and Exhibit Area will be open from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm on Friday, September 19th and 8:00 am to 3:00 pm and on Saturday, September 20th in the Europa/Copenhagen rooms. All members will have ample opportunity to visit these displays and exhibits to pick up samples of all the available program information. All VFW and Auxiliary Programs will be exhibited here as well as four of our Veterans Homes and other related programs and vendors. All Post Commanders and Quartermasters wishing to have a chance at ALL-STATE honors should locate the Membership Display Area and sign in on the sheets provided at the entrance.

Fall Conference Casual Buffet Event

This year's Annual Fall Conference Buffet Dinner promises to be a casual, enjoyable evening filled with good food and great company. State Commander Ed Keogh and State President Julie Stoehr invite all VFW and Auxiliary members to come, unwind, and enjoy time with friends and fellow members.

Seating will not be assigned,

allowing everyone to choose where they'd like to sit. Tables will be set for eight people, with reserved seating only for honored guests' there is space for everyone! The dinner is open to all VFW and Auxiliary members. Table will be reserved for Posts who purchase tables of eight. For full details, including the menu and how to order tickets, please refer to the order form printed in this issue of The Gopher Oversea'r or visit us online at www.vfwmn.org/News/FallConference. We look forward to seeing you there for an evening of food, fellowship, and fun!

Sunday Council Meeting

We invite you to stay and attend the Council of Administration meeting on Sunday morning. This important session will conclude the business of the 2025 Fall Conference and include the bidding process for the Veteran and Youth Activities Programs. The VFW Council meeting will begin promptly at 8:00 am Your participation is encouraged as we wrap up key discussions and decisions for the year ahead.

Ads for our Program Book are under new management

The Department is trying a new approach by creating the ads for the program book directly. This will help keep costs down by eliminating the middleman. Costs of ads have been drastically reduced so we are asking Posts and Vendors to commit \$900 for a one-year subscription for each ad. Half page is \$200/year and \$100/year for a quarter page. Deadline to get your ads into the department is August 25, 2025, at 4 pm. Send your high quality artwork in JPEG, PNG, TIFF or PDF to officemanager@vfwmn.us. You can see our advertisement at vfwmn.org/news/fallconference.

Fall Conference Casual Buffet Event
Saturday, September 20th, 2025
Tickets \$50/person (No Refunds)
Reception 6:00pm Dinner 7:00pm

Deadline: Tuesday, September 9, 2025

Menu: Traditional Pot Roast or Champagne Chicken, Mashed Potatoes with Vegetables, garden salad, Dinner Rolls/Butter, Assorted Desserts, Coffee Regular or Decaffeinated and Water.

Banquet/Dinner Tables seat 8 people

No assigned seating except for the State Commander's Honored Guest Table; Posts who purchase complete tables. (Tickets will be at the Registration Table in the Fireside Lounge)

Mail & Make checks payable to:

Dept. of MN - VFW
PO Box 17146
St. Paul, MN 55117

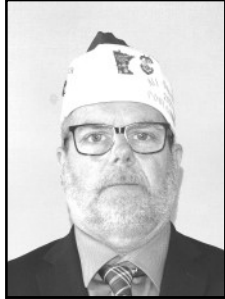
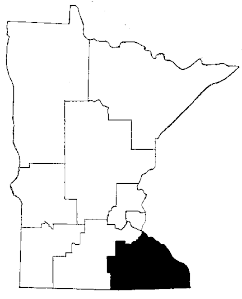
Please Reserve _____ Tickets at \$50/person Fall Conference Casual Dinner.

Name: _____

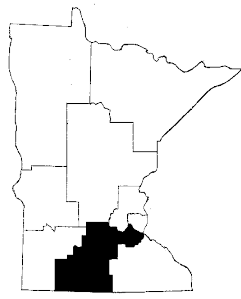
Phone: _____ Post/Auxiliary # _____ District # _____

Email: _____

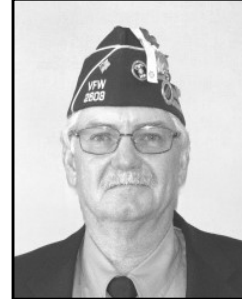
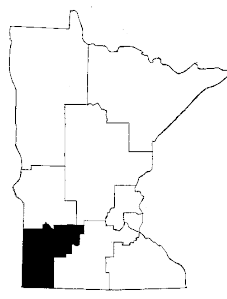
News from YOUR District Commanders and Presidents!



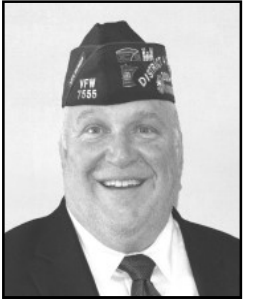
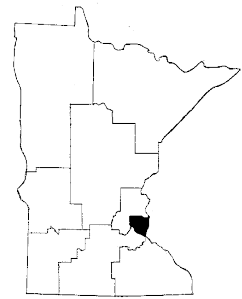
Troy Helget, Commander
First District



Cheryl Burton, Commander
Second District



Merle Rabenberg, Commander
Third District



Sean Gustafson, Commander
Fourth District

Greeting from the 1st District.

Thank you goes out to all members of the District who have put their trust in me to lead them for the coming year. With your help, I know that we can reach the goal of 101% in membership. Remember, potential new members are out there. You just have to ask them to join.

Our first District meeting of the year will be on August 2, 9:30am at the Stewartville Post 8980.

Don't forget to get your reservations made for the Fall Conference, January 19-21 at the Marriott NW in Plymouth. The Annual OTI Training sessions run all day Saturday. Post Officers need to be there to receive the most current information.

See you at the Fall Conference!



Kris Kohn, Auxiliary
President First District

As we begin the new program year, members of District 1 are focusing on 3 main goals:

Learning: We will be spending intentional time during all District meetings for education. District Officers will be providing education to our members in areas such as protocols, Robert's Rules, audits, MALTA and much more. Our members have asked for more information and education, and we are listening. We want our District meeting time to be used to provide our members with more and better tools to continue their mission at the local level.

Growing: As a District, we will focus on growing our local Auxiliaries. This includes both growing in our size through recruitment as well as growing our current membership in skills, knowledge and confidence to move through this year and go further than ever before.

Serving: Finally, we will never forget that we are first and foremost a service organization. We will be looking to continue the service we provide to our veterans, their families, and the community as well as looking for new and growing ways to continue the VFW Auxiliary's tradition of exceptional service.

We are excited to start this year and see just how far we can go. District 1 is up for the challenge and we look forward to seeing just how much positive impact we can make this program year.

Greetings, comrades of the Second District.

Thank you for the honor of serving in the year ahead. Our success depends on the dedication of every comrade, officer, and leader. I appreciate each of you for stepping up to serve. I urge you to review your duties and seek ways to improve how we operate and not to criticize, but to grow. Let's also work together to encourage and support future district leaders. Many capable comrades just need a nudge to step forward.

Every comrade deserves to have their vote counted, and share ideas, but that only happens through active participation. District 2 can improve this easily by showing up. I hope to see more of you at our meeting on August 23rd at Post 1210 in Hastings. We will still conduct Zoom meetings as well during this year.

OTI will be held during our Fall Conference instead of Convention. Fall Conference is from Friday, September 19 – Sunday, September 21, but you can attend just the OTI, which will be held on Saturday, September 20th. It's not going to be the same old OTI.

Post inspections are starting soon, if not already underway. Be prepared with all required documents to keep the process smooth. If you're struggling to meet bylaw requirements, ask for help because suspension or charter revocation is a last resort.

Every year, membership remains a challenge, with National setting a goal of 101%. As of now, it's unclear if there will be amnesty this year. Let's rally behind State Commander Ed Keogh, a fellow District 2 comrade, and show what Minnesota is made of by making this a strong year for our posts and district. No matter who receives the awards, it's the Posts that make it all possible.

I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations 2024-2025 District Commander Maria Maldonado, on earning the title of All-American District Commander. This incredible achievement is a testament to your dedication and leadership.

Special congratulations also go out to the 15 Posts that went above and beyond reaching 102% membership, outstanding work!

To the 12 Posts that came so close to that mark: your efforts have not gone unnoticed, and you should be proud of the dedication and commitment you've shown. Congratulations to each one of you!

Announcements: A Celebration

DISTRICT 2 - Cont. on Page 10

Greetings from the Third District

We have had AWESOME spring new-member recruiting, with the Third District having met the 102% goal. Redwood County VFW Post 2553 was our leader with an amazing 124% and Minnetonka-Taunton VFW Post 5334 in a close 2nd. Our remaining 10 Posts added to our recruiting numbers and we could not have reached our goal without everyone doing their best. I am very proud of each and everyone one of our Post members.

Redwood County VFW Post 2553 Commander Jerome Ludwig and Quartermaster Roger Zollner both earned All-American post honors. They were awarded their white hats at the Minnesota Spring State Convention in St. Cloud April 5-8 2025.

Pacholl-Moser VFW Post 2603 (Wilmont) had their annual flag burning ceremony on the 11th of June. Everyone received Root Bear floats plus, 10 lucky children got bicycles/trikes. It has been a big hit for the community. The bike giveaway draws the younger generation so we can show them the proper way to retire the Stars and Stripes.



Diane Rabenberg, Auxiliary
President Third District

Greetings from District 3!

It is an honor to represent our District again this year as President. We had a great year and are looking forward to an awesome 2025-2026!

Our summer has been filled with local celebrations and parades and we look forward to supporting the VOD and PP programs this fall. As always, we will be focusing on membership and ways to help our members stay



Deb Courts-Brown, Auxiliary
President Fourth District

Greetings

My name is Deb Courts-Brown, aka DCB, and I am the new President of the District 4 Auxiliary. A member of Post 1782 VFW Auxiliary, in White Bear Lake, I joined under the eligibility of my husband, George Brown. He was a Naval Aviation Engineer in Vietnam.

This is a time to look forward to my year and consider what we can

Greetings Fighting Fourth!

Thank you all for an amazing year and for trusting me again to help helm the best District in MN. Tremendous gratitude and appreciation for his years of hard work from all of us to outgoing District Quartermaster Vern Wehlage who has left us set up for continuing great success after 13 years of dedicated, outstanding service.

Congratulations to ALL OF US for exceeding the membership goals last year. It was a tough year, but you all shined. EVERY SINGLE POST finished over 102% of their goals with Woodbury Post 9024 over 120% and Kipp White Post 1171 over 118%. You all were key parts of making the Fourth NUMBER ONE in Minnesota (over 107% of our goal) and one of the top Districts in the Nation!

We have so many advantages here in the Capitol District, please take some extra time this year to plan and focus on inviting eligible area Veterans to join our great organization and fabulous Auxiliary.

What an amazing year it was under our own Department Commander David Staehlin. We all raised almost \$90,000 for the Commanders/Presidents Project of Believet Canine Service Partners for Veterans with PTSD, wow!

Finally, I'm really looking forward to working with District President Deb Courts-Brown, getting out and seeing so many of you at your Post homes and meeting places, and helping all of us live up to our motto "no one does more for Vets than us!"

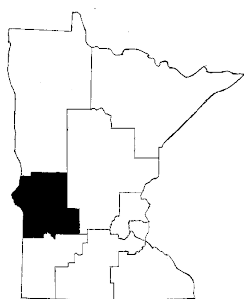
accomplish in service to our veterans.

Our first District meeting will be August 23 in Mendota where we will have schools of instruction from our Historian/Media Relations program chairperson and our Youth program chairperson.

My president's project this year will be Believet, based on all I learned about them when they were the Commander's and President's joint project last year.

Our official visits to the district auxiliaries will be completed by December 1. I am interested to see how the other auxiliaries run their meetings and what we can learn from them.

We have a great team of officers and program chairpersons this year. I look forward to learning from and working with each of them to achieve the goals we set. I am excited for the new year with our team under President Julie Stoehr.



**Lee Christopherson, Commander
Fifth District**

Greetings from the 5th!

First off, I would like to thank everyone for electing me as you district commander again.

It is going to be a busy year with programs and a big push for new member recruitment.

I would like to acknowledge the members of the 5th District for the assume job of making the district "All American" this year, it is a great feel and honored to be part of a great team, Thank You.

I would like to say thank you to a few great members in our district, from both the VFW and Auxiliary:

- Commander Earl Cline for his drive to keep Post 5039 still in operation,
- Starbuck Post 4582 for the members stepping up and continuing the legacy of Bob Freisen,
- All the wonderful members of the District Auxiliary and VFW Members for their support when I needed help at Convention and Conference, and
- My sidekick and district partner the amazing District Auxiliary President Cindi Nelson.

Cindi does many great things for the Veterans and Veterans families, I could not ask for a more powerful and dedicated district partner, Thank You Cindi.

I could go on and on about the great members in my district but truly I believe that the VFW has some great people and I am honored to be among them.

Our next District meeting is scheduled for October 5th at Alexandria VFW Post 936 at 2 PM.

I highly encourage the members of the 5th District to be at the meeting especially Post Commanders and as always there is an open invite for any other members from other districts that would like to attend, we will greet you with open arms.

In Closing, I am looking forward to seeing all of you at the Various VFW functions.



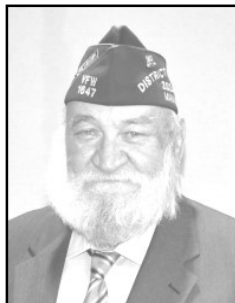
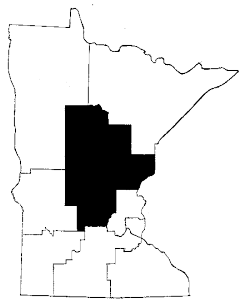
**Becky Selleck, Auxiliary
President Second District**

Greetings from the 2nd District!

I want to begin by saying thank you to everyone who accepted a position within your local Auxiliaries this year. Your willingness to serve makes all the difference, and I'm grateful to work alongside such a committed group as we begin our 2025-2026 year.

Our first District meeting will be held on August 23rd in Hastings, and

DIST. 2 AUX. - Cont. on Page 14



**Donald Lohse, Commander
Sixth District**

Greetings all.

It has been a very busy season, following the Midwinter Conference. The February District meeting was a great success. April brought about the District Convention in Browerville, with Loyalty Days observance, followed by nominations and election of new officers for the upcoming year. A motion was made, seconded, discussed and approved to drop the February District meeting going forward, putting the District meetings in line with District bylaws, for the foreseeable future.

We note the passing in May, of Avon/Holdingford Post 5160 Commander Eugene Breth. Also, in July, the passing of Al Abear, Post 3839 Jenkins, chaplain.

Ongoing efforts by Post 2762 Isle and 955 Onamia towards Consolidation of Posts, has been voted on, and approved by the membership of both posts. They are awaiting approval of National to proceed with a joint meeting to elect new officers of the consolidated membership.

Wat-Kim-Valley Post 5460 and Cold Spring Post 6915, are in the initial stage of Consolidation negotiations. Consolidation of Posts keeps membership at a local level, unlike turning in a charter, which could lead to membership at large, unless members elect to transfer their membership to another post.

We just had our first District meeting at Wadena Post 3922 on August 2. The 2026 budget was discussed and we had a very brief OTI for new and returning post Commanders and Quartermasters.

The next District meeting will be in Little Falls, Post 1112 on October 11, lunch at 11:00am followed by the meeting at 12:30.

December 6, the District meeting will be hosted by post 428 St. Cloud. Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen scholarship awards will be presented to District winners. Lunch at 11:00, meeting to follow about 12:30.

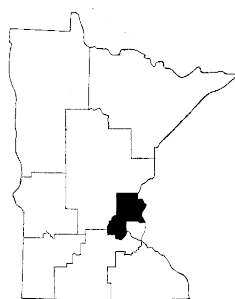
I will be completing my second and final year as District Commander. I will not accept a nomination for a third year. It has been a challenging year medically for me. I need to focus on family and health.



**Denise Biggs, Auxiliary
President Sixth District**

Hello from the 6th District!

Another Sixth District poppy display is going to the National Convention. We are very honored to take the display to Columbus, Ohio. Last year our display took 1st place at the National Convention.



**Dennis Maddox, Commander
Seventh District**

Greetings from the 7th District.

Thank you for re-electing me to be your District Commander. It continues to be an honor to be your lead representative!

THANK YOU to all the District members for their efforts in helping District 7 achieve an All-American! Congratulations to the All-American Commanders of Posts 494, 2737, 3915, 5518, 6316 and 9625. The All-State Commanders of Posts 494, 2735, 6587 and 9625. The All-State Quartermasters of Posts 494, 2735 and 9625. Awards that were well deserved; wear your hats proudly!

We also had many Posts win awards and certificates at the State Convention. Congratulations to ALL the Post members that worked hard, as a team, to make their Posts successful!

Again, this year as it was last year, my primary focus will be increasing our membership. As we are all aware, our organization will cease to exist if membership continues to decline. As always, please continue to work on converting your Annual members to Life Members and your Life Members to Legacy Life Members!

Please make a solid effort to attend your District Meetings, Department Conferences and Department and District Conventions. The next event is Fall Conference September 19-21 in Plymouth, MN.

Many Posts had parades and events to celebrate Independence Day. I was honored to once again participate in the Forest Lake Parade. Thank you Post 4210 for the invite!

I have asked the District Officers to strive to attend as many Post meetings in the District as possible. I feel it's important for the District members to know who represents them.

Our first District Meeting was held on Saturday, July 19 at Kraus-Hartig VFW Post 6587 (Spring Lake Park) at 10 am. At this meeting District Sr. Vice Cmdr. Kyle Morton conducted ScholarsApp training to all present.

See you at the upcoming Fall Conference.

Our next meeting will be October 11 during which we will have our fund-raising auction.

The President's Project this year is called Muskie Mission. They take a group of veterans out to fish for muskies on Leach Lake in September. All equipment is supplied, and they go home with that equipment. They can then go Muskie fishing on their own. "Healin' through fishin'" is one of their sayings.

On Veteran's Day, the Browerville Post and Auxiliary set up luminaries for Light up for Veterans. This year

DISTRICT MEETINGS

First District

Dec. 6 Waseca #1642 @ 9:30 AM

Second District

Aug. 23 Hastings #1210 @ 1:00 PM

Third District

Oct. 4 Minneota #5334 @ 10:00 AM

Fourth District

Aug. 23 Mendota #6690 @ 9:00 AM

Fifth District

Sept. 28 Osakis #7902 @ 10:00 AM

Sixth District

Oct. 11 Little Falls #111 @ 12:30 PM

Seventh District

Dec. 20 Bloomington #1296 @ 10:00 AM

Eighth District

Oct. 4 Int'l Falls #2948 @ 9:00 AM

Ninth District

Sept. 13 Roseau #8663 @ 1:00 PM

MOC

Sept. 6 Owatonna #3723 @ 10:00 AM



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



**Peg Snoko, Auxiliary
President Seventh District**

Brothers and Sisters of the Auxiliary and Comrades.

The 7th District is off to a busy start to this new year.

Officers have been elected, installations are done and everyone is beginning to work the programs for the new year.

There were Memorial Day events and 4th of July parades, picnics and other fun summer events for the veterans.

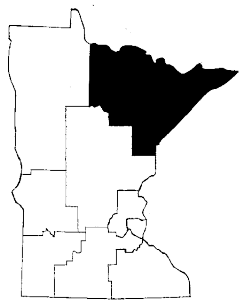
As with every year we need to keep recruiting members so that we will continue to succeed in support of our Veteran brothers and sisters.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the coming Fall Conference.

we will reach 1500 luminaries. Set up starts at 4pm, with a ceremony at 6pm and the lighting of candles immediately after. Lunch is being provided after. Please come see this wonderful sight. If you do come, dress appropriately, the weather is unpredictable at that time of year.

Our December meeting brings more information on how auxiliaries are serving veterans and information from our chairman AND the cookie walk.

I am looking forward to a great year of serving veterans.



**Charles Cossette, Commander
Eighth District**

Greetings Comrades of the 8th District,

I am honored to be elected as your District 8 Commander and am looking forward to a great year serving you. My plan is to visit all of our posts and meet each of their members.

One of my goals this year is to ensure the communication of information and events to our members in the 8th District. It is the key to our success for camaraderie and community relations. I will be sharing information about events on our Facebook page (MN VFW 8th District) to ensure the widest dissemination of information as possible and hopefully maximize participation of our members.

I ask that each of you check in on your comrades and see how they are doing. Even if it is as simple as a text message. A simple phone call or text message could make a huge difference in your comrades day. Remember why we joined this organization, to be together and support each other. Also, remember you are not alone, we are here to help and support you.

I want to share a quote from my grandfather "Someone can't do everything, but everyone can do something." I keep that quote in the back of my mind and want to share it with you to help us remember everything we do can help make a change in the lives of our fellow veterans and family members.

Finally, I want to thank all of you for your support and continued service to our comrades, family members, and the community.



**Marlaina Hart, Auxiliary
President Eighth District**

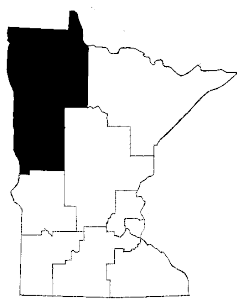
Greetings from District 8,

I want to once again thank District 8 membership for their confidence in me to elect me as your President for 2025-2026. I will try work hard for everyone!

Auxiliary elections and installations are all complete and look forward to our year helping Veterans. WE hope to get more school children involved in the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's contests. Here's to hoping we have an overwhelming amount of entries to judge locally to send on to District and Department.

The fall District 8 meeting will be held October 4 in International Falls Post 2948 at 9am.

We are so proud to have the 2025-2026 Department President from District 8! Julie Stoehr, from Post & Aux 1757 Cook, was voted in and installed at the June Convention



**Curtis Anderson, Commander
Ninth District**

Aloha, 9th District!

I'm truly honored to serve as your District Commander this year. Your dedication last year was outstanding—our District reached 100.74% in overall membership! Twelve Posts achieved 100% or more, with four exceeding 102%. Eight more Posts were within just three members of reaching 100%. That's something we can all be proud of!

As we begin the new membership year, I encourage everyone to start reaching out to annual members now. Early engagement helps us maintain momentum and prevents last-minute pushes come June.

I'm also grateful to work alongside our 9th District Auxiliary President, Shirley Quist. The Auxiliary continues to be a vital partner in supporting veterans, their families, and our communities.

Past District Commander Kelly Booge and I will continue visiting as many Posts as we can throughout the summer and fall. I truly appreciate the warm welcome I've received during these visits. It's always a privilege to connect with you, hear your ideas, and support the great work being done.

Looking ahead, our Department Fall Conference is just around the corner. I strongly encourage all Post officers to attend—especially the OTI training sessions. The training offers valuable tools and insights, and the conference is a great chance to learn from other Posts across the state.

Thank you to every Post and Auxiliary member for your dedication and service. Your work is what drives our mission forward and makes a difference in the lives of those we serve.

as Department President.

We are looking forward to the National President Lois Callahan coming to District 8 for her visit to Minnesota. The dates she'll be here are August 20-22. Planned activities are centered around Proctor, Duluth and the North Shore. A tour of Glensheen Mansion, dinner in Proctor, bus ride to Split Rock Lighthouse (as the Lighthouse is Lois' symbol), and a Banquet at the Proctor VFW & Aux 137 Thursday evening. We would love to see as many District 8 members there as possible to visit with our National Auxiliary President. This is a once in a lifetime event in District 8. Come join us!!

Independence Day parades, fireworks and family fun events were held all around the District. Local VFW's and Aux led many parades with our American, Post and Auxiliary flags.

COMMANDER - Cont. from Page 1

kept abreast of current information regarding National, State, and District programs, events, and legislative issues. You and your Post members will gain new friendships and enjoy the comradeship of other members.

I am looking forward to having a great year by meeting with you, your Post and Auxiliary meetings as I travel through the state. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Department staff. Also please read the monthly General Orders which may have all the answers you need.

Lewis Receives Vehicle from LaMettry's Collision

2025 marks the 15th year that LaMettry's Collision, through their Military Family Vehicle Donation program, has donated a vehicle to a veteran who has demonstrated the need for a reliable vehicle. Together with AAA-The Auto Club and LaMettry's vendor partners, a totaled-out vehicle is restored to like-new condition. This year that vehicle was a 2023 Toyota RAV4.

This year's recipient is Dane Lewis, a resident of rural Willmar who grew up in the Litchfield area.

He enlist in the United States Marine Corps in 2020 as a Landing Support Specialist. In 2022, he deployed on the USS Gunston Hall and was honorably discharged in 2024.

Dane spent the next 6+ months chasing stable employment. One prospective job required travel over to 200 miles away using the family vehicle. His current job at



**Shirley Quist, Auxiliary
President Ninth District**

Greetings from the Mighty Ninth District VFW Auxiliary!

Summer has finally found us. That means our Post and Auxiliary members and families are attending and participating in local parades and events representing the VFW. It was an honor to carry the Ninth District VFW and VFW Auxiliary colors with District Commander Curt Anderson, in the Fergus Falls Veteran's Home Stars and Stripes parade. The Grand Marshals of the parade were the Women Veterans who call the Fergus Falls Veterans Home, home.

A successful State Convention was held in June. Auxiliaries were recognized for the work they did

Sewing groups all around the District are busy making quilts, items for Veterans in nursing homes and layette items for our new babies in Veteran Families. District 8 makes up layettes for families at the 148th Fighter Wing Unit in Duluth, along with requests from local Veteran families.

Come join us on a Classic Car Cruise to Silver Bay Veterans Home

DISTRICT 2 - Cont. from Page 8

of Life for Past District Commander John Anderson was held on June 29th at the Rosemount VFW Post 9433.

The District Commander and President's Project is "Every Third Saturday". The services offered are designed to promote that sense of community which allows ETS to meet each Veteran where they are and assess needs on an individual basis. ETS supplies clothing and hygiene items free, provides space for groups to meet, offers an empowerment course called Warrior's Return, employs Veterans through an internship, and connects Veterans to other services as needed.



**Dane Lewis, wife Marlaina, son and
Sr. Vice Cmdr. Ed Keogh stand in
front of the 2023 Toyota RAV4**

a local sanitation company allows him valuable family time while volunteering to help local veterans with his handy man skills.

March, 2025, Dane reinlisted in the MN National Guard.

He was nominated by Trisha Appeldorn, Kandiyohi County Veterans Service Officer.

to support the VFW Programs. Community Service and Veterans and Family Support are a large part of what the Auxiliary does using our time, talents and treasures.

To continue to do this work, membership is important. There were 12 of the 13 auxiliaries who reached 100% or more paid, however, due to the loss of members, the current year end percent was 96.31% in District Nine. We have work to do!

We are happy to announce that the Ninth District Commander and President's project target was met. Sufficient funds were raised to install walking trail benches and chairs at the Bemidji Veterans Home for the use of the residents and their family.

Thank you, Veterans, for your sacrifices serving and protecting our country - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.

on Aug. 20th. We meet at Timber's Edge on the corner of Hwy. 53 and Cty. 16, leaving at 9am. Then drive on to the Split Rock Lighthouse parking lot in Two Harbors where we meet with other cars for the drive up Hwy. 61 to Silver Bay for a show for the Veterans.

I look forward to reporting all we are doing for our Veterans in District 8 for 2025-2026.

State Contest Winners

NATIONAL AWARDS

Best Feature Article

"Vietnam Vet plays TAPS every day with Boy Scout Bugle"

Published in the Montgomery Messenger, November 14, 2024
Managing Editor - Jarrod Schoenecker
Nominated by: Montgomery Post 5340
Montgomery

Community Service Contest

CATEGORY I (250 and Less)

First Place

Rum River Post 2735
and Auxiliary, New York Mills

Second Place

Eugene H. Truax Post 4393
and Auxiliary, Northfield

Third Place

Charles D. Center Post 3289
and Auxiliary, New York Mills

CATEGORY II (251 - 500)

First Place

Keep-Zimmer Post 1782
and Auxiliary, White Bear Lake

Second Place

Bernard Flesche Post 8729
and Auxiliary, Lake City

Third Place

Sgt. John Rice Post 6316
and Auxiliary, Blaine

CATEGORY III (Over - 501)

First Place

Coon Rapids Post 9625
and Auxiliary, Coon Rapids

Second Place

Charles R. Knaeble Post 494
and Auxiliary, Crystal

Third Place

Lyle Russell Post 1210
and Auxiliary, Hastings

MINNESOTA'S MOST OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE POST

Keep-Zimmer Post 1782
and Auxiliary, White Bear Lake

RECRUITER OF THE YEAR

Dr. Jim Tuorila
Granite Post 428, St. Cloud

NATIONAL SAFETY AWARDS



Firefighter of the Year

Paxton Kriske
Cloquet Fire Department
Sponsored by: Hebert Kennedy Post 3979
Cloquet

Dispatcher of the Year

DeAnn Heinen
911 Stearns County Sheriff's Dispatch
Sponsored by: Granite Post 428
St. Cloud



Bus Driver of the Year

Steve Peterson
Rogers High School
Sponsored by: Elk River-Rogers Post 5518
Elk River

OUTSTANDING POST YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

CATEGORY I (less than 101 members)

First Place

Eugene H. Truax Post 4393
and Auxiliary, Northfield

CATEGORY II (101 to 300 members)

First Place

Kraus-Hartig Post 6587
and Auxiliary, Spring Lake Park

CATEGORY III (over 300 members)

First Place

Coon Rapids Post 9625
and Auxiliary, Coon Rapids



Law Enforcement of the Year

Sydney Haugen
Patrol Officer, Hibbing Police Dept.
Sponsored by: Johnson-Messner-Roche
Post 1221, Hibbing

Emergency Medical Tech of the Year

Jennifer Hovick
EMT/Firefighter, Ridgeview Medical
Center
Sponsored by: Le Seuer Post 1221
Le Seuer

CHAPLAIN OF THE YEAR

Pastor Eric Schwirian

Pelican Rapids Post 5252, Brainerd
Presented by Scott Hansen, Dept. Chaplain

VETERANS & MILITARY SUPPORT

Five posts that donated at least twice more than the required \$125

Keep-Zimmer Post 1782	
White Bear Lake	\$250
Coon Rapids Post 9625	
Coon Rapids	\$250
Granite Post 428	
St. Cloud	\$300
Oscar & John Soberg Post 210	
Lakeville	\$320
George R. Wolff Post 425	
Hopkins	\$1,000



Scout of the Year

Liam Dewanz
Eagle Scout Troop 39
Sponsored by: Nelson-Scofield Post 4452
Cannon Falls

POST PUBLICATIONS CONTEST

CATEGORY I (250 and Less)

First Place

Neville-Lien Post 1287
and Auxiliary, Winona
Editor: Mel Bailey

Second Place

Harold Baggenstoss Post 1260
and Auxiliary, Bemidji
Editor: John Naastad

Third Place

Swanson-Owen Post 9647
and Auxiliary, Oronoco
Editor: Les Leamons

CATEGORY II (251 & greater)

First Place

Charles R. Knaeble Post 494
and Auxiliary, Crystal
Editor: Lesley Kurke

Second Place

Sgt. John Rice Post 6316
and Auxiliary, Blaine
Editor: Mary Lou Michels

BEST FEATURE STORY

First Place

Curtis-Olson Post 9073
Randall
Published in the Morrison County Record
September 8, 2024
"VFW Suicide Awareness Walk Helping
Keep Promise Alive"

Second Place

Redwood County Post 2553
Redwood Falls
Published in the Redwood Falls Gazette
August 8, 2024
"VFW Post 2553 Welcomes First New
Member of 2025"

Third Place

Harold Baggenstoss Post 1260
Bemidji
Published in the Bemidji Pioneer
December 21, 2024
"Bemidji Teacher MacKenzie Burnham
named VFW Post 1260 Teacher of the
Year"

MINNESOTA'S MOST OUTSTANDING POST SAFETY AWARD

Redwood County Post 2553
and Auxiliary, Redwood Falls

All-State Commanders

Captain of the All-State Commanders: David Thompson, Post 9232



Back row (l to r): Jerry Ludwig, Post 2553; Theodore Mavencamp, Post 7664;
Robert Krominga, Post 1782; Paul Lindahl, Post 9024; John Naastad, Post 1260;
Nathan Morgan, Post 9625; Troy Stegora, Post 8731; Tom Kent, Post 2735.
Front row (l to r): Davin Thompson, Post 9232; Tracy Closson, Post 4393;
Jordon Vore, Post 3723; Rick Godfrey, Post 494; James Altmann, Post 7050;
David C. David, Post 4258; Billy Luetkahans, Post 1792; Jerry Sanborn, Post 1260.

Missing: David Anderson, Post 3922; Erin Friesenborg, Post 4452; Mitch Johnsrud, Post 4582; Jacob Roach, Post 6208; Bob Wiltse, Post 6587; Mark Schutta, Post 7555;

All-State Quartermasters



Back row (l to r): Michael Meyer, Post 3723; Roger Zollner, Post 2553;
Maria Maldonado, Post 1791; Ron Widell, Post 8731; Dave Thompson, Post 6208;
Russell Bentley, Post 1221.
Front row (l to r): Ross Parker, Post 9647; Herbert Smith, Post 7664; Jim Richter, Post 494;
Curtis Thompson, Post 1260; Jerry Brletich, Post 9625; Robert Daniels, Post 724.
Missing: William Jessen, Post 1350; Larry Huhn, Post 2735; James Schloegl, Post 2853;
Jesse Johnson, Post 4452; Krystal Schmidt, Post 7555; Kristopher Lemm, Post 8391;
Dave Geiley, Post 9232; Ghislain Devlaminck, Post 9433.

Nat'l Life Saving Award

Cheyenne Parker, 8th grader at Redwood Valley Middle School, was awarded a Life Saving Award by VFW National Cmdr. Al Lipphardt for her efforts to save a man that was choking back in March, 2025.

VFW Post 2553 of Redwood Falls awarded a VFW Commendation to coincide with the National Commanders award. Jerry Ludwig, VFW National Aide-de-Camp and MN VFW Safety Chairman Duane Frank presented the awards to Cheyenne with her family at the end of the school year awards ceremony.



Cheyenne Parker proudly shows her award with her parents Stephanie Wandersee and Nicholas Parker

Post 7664 is 80 Years Old



(L to r) Dennis Maddox, 7th Dist. Cmdr.; Cathy Osterbauer, Post 8731 Cmdr.; Cheryl Burton, 2nd Dist. Cmdr. & Dept. Office Mgr.; Ron Widell, 6th Dist. Jr. Vice Cmdr.; Ted Mavencamp, Post 7664 Cmdr.; Todd Roberts, Dept. Judge Advocate; Jean Keogh, Dept. Aux. Sr. Vice President; Ed Keogh, Dept. Cmdr.; Mary Thompson, Dept. Jr. Vice Cmdr.; Barry Henriksen, Dept. QM/ADJ

Maple Lake Post 7664 held a celebration event on July 12 honoring their 80 years of service to the community and their local veterans.

Cmdr. Ted Mavencamp admitted that he was surprised when their celebration was “crashed” by dignitaries from the State and District

VFW Offices.

The State officers had just concluded their July Council of Administration meeting when someone announced that Maple Lake was celebrating their 80th Anniversary. Time for a “Road Trip.”

Minnesota VFW Riders

By Dan Jordan, member Monticello Riders



Getting ready for the Parade

The Monticello VFW Riders along with the Monticello Post 8731 Honor Guard and Post and Auxiliary members, participated in the Monticello Riverfest parade on Sunday, June 13. It was a blast to see all the kids smiling faces

Every Wednesday, the Riders leave Post 8731 at 6pm for a dinner ride. They have ridden to the Muddy Cow in Litchfield (July 9) and Jack & Jim's Restaurant (July 16). Contact the Riders at vwriders8731@gmail.com to find out where they are going next.

The annual Summerfest event to raise money for the Children's Hospital was scheduled for July 26th.

There will be a number of riders participating in the National VFW Riders Howard Vander Clute ride into the National Convention in Columbus, Ohio on August 14th. The VFW Riders Program will be reviewed and revamped at the Convention.

Coon Rapids Post 9625 is in the process of standing up a riders group in the next few months.



The Bikes are lined up

Post 1210 Supports Hastings Family Service

By Terry Sieben, Post 1210 Jr. Vice Cmdr.

Following VFW National Core Values - “Serve Our Communities” and “Promote a Positive Image of the VFW”, Post 1210, located in Hastings monthly provides Post members to the community-supported, nonprofit agency, Hastings Family Service (HFS).

HFS provides food assistance and supportive services to those who are hungry, homeless or unable to provide for their basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, or transportation. It is in its 55th year, and is an incorporated Minnesota nonprofit that provides various items to the less advantaged people in the Hastings area.

Post 1210 answered the call for help years ago, and has provided between 5-8 volunteers monthly sorting donated food items in a two-hour shift. The VFW's Food Rescue Sorting Volunteers check incoming donated food for dates and quality, and sort accordingly.

Three local supermarkets (Walmart, Cub Foods and Colborn's) are Food Rescue Partners and one convenience store (Kwik Trip) provide the surplus food Monday-Friday.

Two mornings a week, one additional Post member, drives



(l to r) Jim Murtaugh, Dave Angerman, Larry Grindland, Jim Kelly, and Denny Clark on site at

the HFS Food Rescue Pick-Up Van, collecting the donated food items and delivers it to the Food Rescue Sorting crew for processing. Once the donated meat, bread & other bakery items, dairy, fruits, vegetables, canned and packaged food items, to include various dried goods, are collected and processed it is distributed to needy people.

Another Post member regularly drives for the Meals on Wheels Program which delivers hot and frozen meals to program participants while performing a welfare check and a friendly face!

Besides the monthly personnel support, the VFW Post 1210 makes annual donations to HFS and is proud to partner with them while we “Continue to Serve”.

Golf Classic Raises \$65,000 for Women Vets

from mac-v.org/category/feature-story



The 12th annual Salute to Service Women Charity Golf Classic was one for the books.

Held at the stunning Prestwick Golf Club in Woodbury, Minnesota, the day brought together a powerful mix of golfers, Veterans, volunteers, and supporters—all with one mission: to uplift and support women Veterans, especially those who have faced homelessness.

This year's event was organized by a newly formed planning committee, whose fresh energy and dedication helped bring new ideas and momentum to the tradition.

The day kicked off with a moving opening ceremony that set the tone. We paused to reflect on the strength, resilience, and service of women Veterans in Minnesota—and recommitted ourselves to making sure they

receive the support they've earned.

Throughout the day, teams hit the course for 18 holes of fun, friendly competition, and connection. Off the greens, the excitement continued with an incredible silent auction packed with items donated by generous businesses and individuals. From golf gear and getaways to local favorites, there was something for everyone—and all for a great cause.

Thanks to the generosity of attendees, sponsors, and donors, the event raised over \$65,000—funds that will directly support women Veterans receiving services from MACV. These critical dollars will help provide stable housing, employment support, and access to the resources needed to rebuild their lives.

Veterans / Youth Activities

Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen



Comrades and Auxiliary members, the themes have been announced. Now is the time to start two of the VFW's most important programs, Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen. This year every post needs to visit with the your local schools and their teachers and students to let them know that both programs are alive and well. Inform them that we want their thoughts to be captured for this year's themes on a recording and on paper.

The Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen topic is the same for both this year: "How are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?"

Please do not hesitate to contact parents of Home School students as well. They have shown to be more than worthy entrants in these two premier programs.

The Rules and Eligibility as well as the Entry Forms for both Programs can be found on the VFW MN website at www.vfwmn.org.

Students shall submit their Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entries utilizing the ScholarsApp Platform, an electronic scholarship entry and tracking platform.



2025 - 2026 Voice of Democracy Topic
and
2025 - 2026 Patriot's Pen Topic

**"How are You Showing Patriotism
and Support for Our Country?"**

Entries are Due at Local VFW Posts by October 31st, 2025

FALL CONTESTS

SCHOLARSHIPS COMMUNITY

Senior High Scholarship
(Grades 9-12)

**Voice of Democracy
Audio Essay Competition**

ENTER: Students write & record a 3-5 minute essay addressing this year's theme. (See Application for Details - VFW General Order or at www.vfwmn.org under the Programs drop-down)

AWARDS: \$35,000 National Winner & Free Trip to Washington D.C.; \$\$ and MPLS Marriott Hotel NW stay for District Winner; \$\$ for Local Winner

DEADLINE: Entries due to local VFW Post by October 31 each year

Middle School Scholarship
(Grades 6-8)

**Patriot's Pen
Essay Competition**

ENTER: Students write a 300-400 word typed essay addressing this year's theme. (See Application for Details - VFW General Order or at www.vfwmn.org under the Programs drop-down)

DEADLINE: Entries are due to the local VFW Post no later than October 31 of each year.

**Citizenship Education
Teacher Award**
(See Your VFW Post or VFW General Orders for Details)

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

(See Nomination Form for Details - VFW General Orders or www.vfwmn.org under the Programs drop-down)

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

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

DEADLINE: Entries are due to the local VFW Post no later than October 31 of each year.

VETERANS UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Visit www.vfwmn.org for Updates

Archery
2026
Open for Bids

Bean Bag
2026
Open for Bids

Bowling
2026 & 2027
Open for Bids

Cribbage
2026
Open for Bids

Fishing
2025 & 2026
Open for Bids

Golf
2026, 2027 & 2028
Open for Bids

Horseshoes
2026
Open for Bids

Firearms
2026
Open for Bids

Trap Shooting
2026
Open for Bids

YOUTH UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Visit www.vfwmn.org for Updates

Baseball
2026 & 2027
Open for Bids
(2 year obligation)

Hockey
Boys Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2026
Hosted by Dilworth #1223

Girls U15A Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2026
Hosted by Dilworth #1223

Disabled Veterans Hunting

MN Veterans Outdoors

Minnesota Veterans Outdoors is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit organization working with the Minnesota state veteran service organizations and other community partners who come together to offer outdoor programs and activities for veterans.

The Disabled Veterans Deer Hunt is open to all Veterans with disabilities residing in the state of Minnesota. The Deer Hunt takes place annually in October. Hunters are partnered with a volunteer, placed in mobile blinds throughout Camp and allowed to use Archery, Black Powder, or shotguns with slugs.

Your Responsibilities:

- MUST be a resident of Minnesota
- Must be a veteran of the US Armed Services
- Must provide your own transportation
- Must provide your own valid hunting license
- Application MUST be received before August 23, 2025



What they do:

- Provide free meals and lodging
- Screening committee reviews all applicants
- Disadvantaged veterans have priority, others applicants will be placed in the general lottery
- All applicants will be notified by mail after September 1, 2025

This is a Tuesday - Thursday event
Visit their website at www.mnvetsoutdoors.org for more detailed information and the application form.
Questions concerning this event should be directed to MN Veterans Outdoor Coordinator Thomas Kramin at 320-292-5996 or Email: mnvetsoutdoors@gmail.com

Commander's/President's Project 2024-2025

By Sean Gustafson, Project Coordinator

What an incredible year! Together, we raised nearly \$90,000 for Believeit Canine Service Dogs. On behalf of David Staehlin, Karen England, all the folks at Believeit, and all the Veterans who have or will benefit... Thank you!

While the year of being Commanders/Presidents Project has now completed, please keep

Believeit in your Post's donation plans for the months and years to come. Their contact and donation info is always available at www.believeit.org.

Special thanks to Comrade Staehlin, Ms. England, Deb Courts-Brown, Tim Haugen and everyone who helped this amazing non-profit this year. We helped saved Veteran lives!



Believeit awarded just under \$90,000 at State Convention (l to r) Trainer Scott Listberger with service dog Ali, Founder Sam Daly with service dog Taffy, VFW Auxiliary President Karen England and VFW Commander David Staehlin

Commander's/President's Project 2025-2026

By Jim "Fatman" Dalziel, Project Coordinator

This year, Commander Ed has chosen a project that is worthy of a Great Department like the Department of MN. This year we will be raising funds for the MN Cottage at the VFW National Home.

The Minnesota Cottage was erected in 1934. They have taken care of our comrades families since then. We have done an OUTSTANDING Job maintaining our Home and supporting the VFW National Home.

This year we will be stepping it up a bit. As the current residents get ready to leave our Cottage, it will be time for upgrades:

- New Flooring
- New Window Dressing
- Painting
- Duct Cleaning

Along with any other issues that will be found during this maintenance to a 92-year-old house.

Our funds will also go to help upgrade the National Home Resident Convenience store. They will be used to purchase coolers, freezers and shelving. This is so they do not have to go several miles to the nearest store.

And finally for the National Home Veteran and Family Resource Center. This provides the support and guidance for those Families and the National Home.

So right now, you are thinking, how do I support this Outstanding Project.

1. Send your donations from you and your Post directly to the

National Home

- "Earmarked" 2025-2026 VFW Minnesota Commanders & Presidents Project.

- Address - VFW National Home, 3573 S. Waverly Rd, Eaton Rapids, MI 48827

2. Online at <https://vfnationalhome.org/donate/>

- Enter Donation and Post/Individual info
- In Comments Section Enter "2025-2026 VFW Minnesota Commanders & Presidents Project"

Then, we will be issuing each District a "National Home Bank". We will ask that this bank is brought to every District meeting or Cootie Scratch, you Cooties came up with the idea. Jim" Fatman" Dalziel will be setting up with each Dist. Cmdr. with a bank. Please look at how often you can fill it. Challenge other Districts at who can raise the most.

We are looking for any donations, dollars, quarters, dimes and nickels. At Fall C of A we will have a large Bank looking to be filled up at our booth. We will have some items from the National Home, pamphlets about their good work.

Remember NO Donation is too small. If each Member of the MN VFW donated just .25 cents a day, we would be able to accomplish our goals.

If your Post has Gambling this is a 501(c)(3) Organization.

Questions can be sent to me at jamesdalziel@yahoo.com

Cootie Korner

By Jarrod McReynolds

Commander of the Grand of MN

Recently I was honored to spend a day fishing with Veterans from the Silver Bay VA home, Hastings and Minneapolis domiciliary. It was a firsthand experience in the results of the work that we do. The MOC is dedicated to supporting the VA Homes, and activities like this fishing trip is the results of that work.

The Grand is welcoming a new Pup Tent this year at the Coon Rapids post, we all believe that this will be a lousy group, and we look forward to welcoming them.

If you are not a Cootie, please find our table at the Fall Conference and learn how to join the Cooties.

Lastly, if you are going to be joining us at Tomb Trek, make sure to get your hotel reservations ASAP.

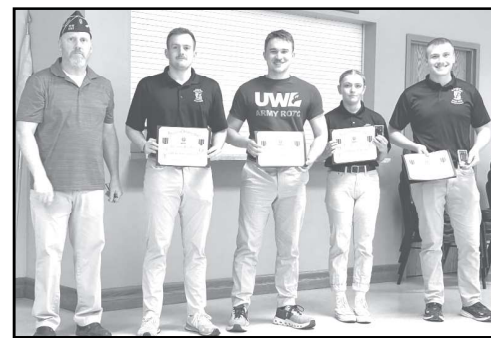


Post 1287 Awards Certificates to Regional ROTC Students

By Fred Orlowske, Veterans Service Officer Post 1287

Winona's VFW Post 1287 Post Commander recognized ROTC students assigned to the UWLAX ROTC, Eagle Battalion, 3rd Brigade, US Army Cadet Command for outstanding performance during a recent awards ceremony. Certificates and medals were issued to individuals for their outstanding performance in programs ranging from participation in extracurricular school activities to athletic achievements.

These awardees are currently enrolled at Viterbo University, University of Wisconsin La Crosse, and Winona State University. Upon successful completion of their studies, these students will be Commissioned Officers in the Army's National Guard/Reserve or Active Duty in the US Army.



(L to r) Al VanGuilder, Cmdr. Post 1287; Cadets Nicholas J. Westerman, William R. Katz, Kaitlyn P. Iverson and Colton G. Rothfork

DIST. 2 AUX. - Cont. from Page 9

I look forward to seeing many of you there. District meetings are a great way to share updates, learn from each other, and continue building the strong connections that make our District successful.

This year, I'm honored to work on a joint President's Project with our District 2 Commander in support of Every Third Saturday. This amazing organization is dedicated to "Fostering Hope and Supporting Post

Traumatic Growth for Veterans." Their vision is to "pursue a culture centered on community, where every veteran feels seen, supported, and connected, replacing hopelessness and isolation with purpose and belonging." I hope you'll join me in supporting this mission throughout the year.

Thank you again for all you do in service to our Veterans, their families, and our communities.

Honoring the Past,
Shaping the Future

Timely Tidbits

Chatfield Flag Retirement

By Troy Helget, Commander District One

Flag Day, June 14, 2025 was a fantastic day for a flag retirement ceremony at the Chatfield VFW Post 6913. Commander Gary Eisenman and Post Auxiliary, to include the Chatfield American Legion Post 0197 were all in attendance.

The program started at 1700 hours with Commander Eisenman reciting the ceremony script and the trumpet player, Michael Hrstka, performing Taps. Roughly 200 American flags were retired.



Randall July 4th Parade



Randall Post 9073 proudly participated in the local July 4th parade with their Post Color Guard and a float with their Auxiliary.

July 4th at Stewartville

By Troy Helget, Commander District One

Myself, along with two of my sons, were asked to participate in the annual 4th of July parade. What an impressive Color Guard combined with Stewartville VFW Post 8980 and Stewartville American Legion Post 164. My sons, Jackson and Jesup, along with myself were the Flag Bearers for this detail. Very proud father!

My wife Jill and I have 4 children in the Armed Forces: Jesup, 13 years in Air Force; Jocelyn, 6 years Marine; Jackson, 4 years Army Reserves; Tristan, 1 year Navy Sea Bee.



(L to r) Jackson Helget, US Army Reserve; Troy Helget, Cmdr. Dist. One; Jessup Helget, US Air Force

VFW Discount at Big Sandy

Big Sandy Lodge & Resort is thrilled to announce that the VFW Partnership is officially **LIVE**. VFW members can now enjoy 15% off reservations at Big Sandy Lodge & Resort.

When booking your stay, please use the exclusive reservation code: "VFW".

Big Sandy Lodge and Resort is a peaceful getaway, offers a group retreat, or a family escape. Big Sandy offers the perfect setting for creating lasting memories.



Annaleigh 'Anna' Manee, mgr.
Office: 218-426-5040
Cell: 218-398-7072

★ ★ WANTED ★ ★

Photos, captions and articles honoring our Senior Veterans

The Gopher Oversea'r will include articles honoring the contributions of our Senior Veterans (90+) 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, attn. Oversea'r Editor or by email to Oversear@vfwmn.us

Photos will be returned upon request.

2025 VFW State Baseball Champions

Congratulations to VFW Post #8731 Monticello our 2025 State Champions.

There were 54 teams participating in VFW Baseball this year representing over a 1000 players and coaches. Teams from the 1st, 2nd, 6th, 7th and 8th District had teams playing for the State Championship.

The Tournament was held in St Cloud July 31st-August 3rd. Over 1000 spectators witnessed some truly great baseball.

Congratulations go out to the 8 teams who made the State Baseball Tournament. Thank you to each post that sponsored a team in the Tournament.

Next year's 2026 Tournament will be held in St Cloud.

Special thank you goes to all of the District League organizers who

make VFW Baseball the success it is.

A special thank you to Denny Kunkel, our 2025 Tournament Director, Al Kiefer State Registration Administrator and the city of St Cloud for making this a really great tournament.

Here are the final standings and sponsoring posts:

1st	Monticello	Post #8731
2nd	Cold Springs	Post #6915
3rd	Winona	Post #1287
4th	Blaine	Post #6316

5th-8th place not in the order they finished

Rochester Mayo	Post #1215
Marshall	Post #742
Andover	Post #9625
Grand Rapids	Post #1720



2025 VFW State Baseball Champions
Monticello sponsored by Post 8731

**VETERANS
ON THE LAKE
RESORT**

Thank You for Your Service!

Serving the recreational needs of disabled and able-bodied Veterans, Active-Duty Military, Family and Friends, as well as the general public.




- 1, 2, 3, and 5-bedroom cabins, RV sites
- Lodge with Dining Hall, Kitchen, Conference Room, Gift Shop
- Handicap Accessible Pontoons, Fishing Boats, Golf Carts
- Fully Accessible Fishing Pier, Sauna, Walking Trail and more.

www.veteransonthelakeresort.org

Email: veteransonthelakeresort@gmail.com
Phone: 218-365-6900 Address: 161 Fernberg Rd, Ely, MN 55731



Minnesota VFW members, consider getting a VFW license plate the next time you have to renew your vehicle’s license plate. To qualify, you must be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and, at the time of application, must submit a copy of your membership card.



MINNESOTA VFW CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION

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

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

_____ VFW Outdoor Fund _____ Veterans Service _____ VFW Programs

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has been ‘fighting’ for Veterans since 1899. We have worked endlessly to gain the Benefits and Entitlements that Our Veterans deserve. The members of the VFW 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 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 and 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.

Letters and Donations can be sent to: MN VFW Charitable Association, Rice Street Station, PO Box 17146, St. Paul, MN 55117



SALUTE THE TROOPS!

Sutton Ridge Farm invites you to the sixth annual
Military Appreciation Day at the Farm

Saturday, September 6, 2025
10am – 3pm (gates open at 9:30am)

Join us at this outdoor event to honor all military members and to support Veteran-Owned Businesses

SUTTON RIDGE FARM
1500 West 200th Street • Jordan, MN 55352



- WWII B25 Bomber fly-over
- Vietnam Era Huey Helicopter fly-over and landing
- Flag raising ceremony by the Patriotic Heritage Allegiant Honor Guard
- Giant inflatables for the kids
- Live music by country western band **NORTH OF DODGE**
- Farm animals and hay wagon rides

- Pete Hegseth signed books featured in exclusive raffle
- WWII Rifle Grenade demonstration
- Featured speakers
- Food concessions for purchase
- Live remote by KCHK radio
- Silent Auction proceeds to DAV of MN

Register at: everythirdsaturday.org/salutethetroops
Registration deadline August 28th

Cost: Free to Military & Veterans (includes lunch - must register and show proof of service)
General Public - \$12 each / Children (6-17) - \$6 each / Children 5 & Under - Free
Lunch available for \$13 a plate / Free parking on-site

Service dogs welcome. Event proceeds donated to ETS, directly benefiting Veterans and their families.



REGISTER HERE

AD rates for the Oversea’r

The Gopher Oversea’r is the only way to reach 100% of this Departments membership. It is the official newspaper of the Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars. We publish our paper three times a year to nearly thirty thousand Veterans in Minnesota. Our paper is four columns wide and fifteen inches deep/tall. Please see rate chart below:

	Column Width	Column Depth/Height in Inches				
		one	two	three	four	five
1 column	2 1/4 “	\$40	\$80	\$120	\$160	\$200
2 column	4 3/4 “	\$80	\$160	\$240	\$320	\$400
3 column	7 1/2 “	\$120	\$240	\$360	\$480	\$600
4 column	10“	\$160	\$320	\$480	\$640	\$800

How To Provide Us With Your Ad

The Gopher Oversea’r is published electronically on our computers in-house. Our editor imports your electronic file directly into the newspaper. We prefer you to send all ads in TIFF or PDF format.

All necessary font and graphic files relating to the ad must be included with your file. Image resolution needs to be no less than 300 dots per inch (dpi). PDF files, please embed complete fonts (not subsets) and graphics. Please do not enable any password protection or security block when creating a PDF. Convert all RGB or CMYK color to a Grayscale format unless otherwise agreed on.

All ads must be “Camera Ready”. If they are not you will be charged an additional forty dollars.

****Before you send us any money be sure to talk to the Editor and make sure space is available and your Ad meets the requirements above****

The Deadlines for Ads in this years Papers are:
March 15, 2025* July 15, 2025* November 15, 2025*

*All dates are subject to change

The MN VFW Charitable Association 2026 Raffle Calendar is Now Available



**MINNESOTA VETERANS MEMORIALS
2026 CALENDAR**

This year’s calendar features photos of various Veterans Memorials located throughout Minnesota. This is the last calendar featuring Veterans Memorials.

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

Order your Calendars now- Email: mnvfwcharitable@gmail.com or
Call the VFW Office at 612-291-1757
to purchase a copy for yourself, contact your nearest VFW Post