

# GOPHER OVERSEAS

Volume 74, NO. 3 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Official Publication to More Than 33,000 Members of the Department of Minnesota October 2020 - January 2021

## Midwinter is Snowball of Firsts... Including 2021 Cancellation

By Melody Shryock, Department Office Manager

The Midwinter Conference is not happening in 2021. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Department of Minnesota will be taking the Midwinter Council of Administration and Committee meetings to a virtual platform for the first time ever. This isn't the only "First" that we have experienced throughout the history of Midwinter. This January would have been the 118th Midwinter Conference Banquet, but you may note that January also brings the 100th Anniversary of the Department of Minnesota-Veterans of Foreign Wars. So how are we at 118 Banquets?

Somewhere around 1902 the Department held its first Midwinter Banquet. According to historical editions of the Gopher Overseas, the winter event started out as a formal,



Midwinter Banquet, February 14, 1959

social banquet. The 1957 February edition of our newspaper notes that the Banquet was first started by the State's two oldest Posts. It was the "Outgrowth of a custom that began in 1904 when Camp Carlton No. 4 of St. Paul and Camp Patterson No. 1, Minneapolis- units of the Minnesota Society of the Army of the Philippines- alternated in

entertaining each other's members at a yearly banquet. The units are now known as M.M. Carleton Post No. 5 and A.R. Patterson Post No. 7 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars." (watch for more on Minnesota's first two V.F.W. Posts throughout 2021).

Traditionally held in hotels, 1956 was the first year the Banquet was held at an event center- the Arizona Ballroom in St Paul in order to accommodate increasingly larger crowds. These crowds reached a record high of 926 people at that time. In 1979 a record number 1,000 people attended the Midwinter Banquet.

Tying back to the Midwinter Conference "Firsts", the Conference was first held at the Minneapolis

**Midwinter - Cont. Page 12**



**2020-21**

**State Commander**

**Curt Hermanson**

Member of  
VFW Post 4452  
Cannon Falls, MN

Greetings Comrades,

There isn't much I can say about the trials the world has seen this year that hasn't already been said. COVID-19 is still going strong and we are still using every effort to continue to operate within the guidelines. This is not the year that we were expecting. Despite these fumbles we were able to hold our Fall Conference in St Cloud this year, masks and hand sanitizer were provided. However, we still saw a number of breakouts throughout the Department of MN. Thankfully as far as we have heard, everyone has successfully recovered.

Due to the ongoing pandemic many people are experiencing a trend in cancellations of their planned events and we are no different. At the time of this article's publication we have been notified by the Minneapolis Marriott that they have cancelled our Midwinter Conference. The Midwinter Conference is an important time for the VFW and not only because it is when we acknowledge our program winners for Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen. We are currently looking into alternative means of hosting this event and plan to continue even if

**COMMANDER - Cont. Page 10**

## Department Centennial January 17, 2021



The Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars has seen adversity over the years... whether it was supporting our country and communities through two World Wars or multiple pandemics. As we leave 2020 and the most current pandemic, we look to a brighter, continued future of our great organization!

Mark your calendars as the Department celebrates 100 years of service to our veterans, active duty military, their families and our communities. Chartered on January 17, 1921, we have come a long way and look forward to a year of celebration and ushering in another century of our great organization.

Within the new atmosphere of social distancing and our Midwinter

Conference Meetings going virtual for the first time, the ability to celebrate on our Anniversary weekend will not happen. In our effort to adapt, improvise and overcome, we are making plans to continue our commemoration mission long into 2021. We do not want to overlook this opportunity to not only celebrate this organization, but to honor those that saw the vision and created this tremendous service organization.

**CALLING ALL MEMBERS**

To that end, we are asking that all of our members, all Posts & Auxiliaries, and our Districts for HELP. Take this "down time" to lo and research details about your Post namesake, unique projects or events,

**CENTENNIAL- Cont. Page 14**

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## Save The Date!! Upcoming VFW Events

**Minnesota Veterans Day on the Hill**  
March 2021  
(Day TBD)

**VFW State Bowling & Pistol Competitions**  
April 2021  
(See Page 13)

**Fall Conference**  
September 24-26, 2021  
Willmar

**VFW State Hockey Tournament**  
March 19-21, 2021  
Thief River Falls

**State Convention & Training Schools**  
June 9-12, 2021  
Marriott Northwest  
Brooklyn Park

**Midwinter Conference**  
January 20-23, 2022  
Minneapolis Marriott  
City Center

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

# Top News

## Midwinter Virtual Meetings

### Midwinter meetings will be conducted via ZOOM.

The following schedule has been set for the VFW Midwinter Meetings:

#### Friday, January 15th, 2021

- 2:00 pm Finance Committee Meeting
- 3:00 pm Bylaws Committee Meeting
- 6:00 pm **AWARDS:** Announcing of Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen/Teacher of Year

#### Saturday, January 16th, 2021

10:00 am Council of Administration Meeting

*NOTE: Virtual attendees will be restricted to listening with no direct interaction.*

#### MEETING ACCESS:

To Receive the Computer & Phone Links to attend these meetings please E-mail or Call:

VFW State Headquarters

Provide Full Name, Post #, Meeting(s) Wanted

vfwmnoffice@gmail.com 651-291-1757

#### AWARDS Presentation Link Requests:

Open to VFW & AUX (Dept. will provide info to Dist. Winners)

**Please request links NO LATER than Wednesday, January 13th 4:30 p.m.**

## Poppy Program Changes

REV. 11/24/2020

#### 2020-21 DEPARTMENT POPPY CONTEST:

- Department Poppy Contest Changes: We understand Districts are experiencing difficulties in holding meetings due to the COVID-19 environment. Normally Displays are required to be judged at the District level prior to being entered at the Midwinter Poppy Contest. Therefore, the VFW Department Officers have made the following decision for the 2020-21 contest:
- Poppy Displays DO NOT need to be entered into a District level judging
- ALL Displays can go DIRECTLY to the STATE CONVENTION, June 9-12, 2021
- WATCH for details... MN VFW will be celebrating their 100th Anniversary in 2021 and might do some special things related to Poppies and/or the contest

#### 2020-21 ALL-STATE POPPY POINTS:

- All-State 2020-21 Points for Buddy Poppies: REV. 11/24/2020: Commanders will earn two (2) points by placing a poppy order in 2020-21. Commanders will earn five (5) points by purchasing poppies in 2020-21 in a quantity equal or greater than the post average number purchased in the immediate previous three years.

#### 2020-21 ANNUAL POPPY ORDERS:

- Please place your Poppy Orders early as National is experiencing shipping delays.
- Poppy Cards may be limited this year- please order EARLY

#### QUESTIONS?

Contact District Chairmen or VFW State Headquarters (651-291-1757)

## District & Post Meetings

National VFW Headquarters has re-issued Executive Order No 1 signed by Commander Harold "Hal" Roesch, dated July 29, 2020. It reads in part:

**Districts:** "Pursuant to Section 418(a)(1)(d) of the Manual of Procedure, District Commanders shall "insist that District business and activities are conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment on the District, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States."

"Therefore, District Commanders at their respective judgement and discretion may make such accommodations to conduct the fraternal business of the organization within COVID-19 federal, state, and local governmental ordinances and guidelines where COVID restrictions apply to include conducting such required meetings and conventions electronically."

**Posts:** "Pursuant to Section 218(a)(1)(c) of the Manual of Procedure, Post Commanders shall "insist that Post business and activities are conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment on the Post, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States."

"Therefore, Post Commanders at their respective judgement and discretion may make such accommodations to conduct the fraternal business of the organization within COVID-19 federal, state, and local governmental ordinances and guidelines where COVID restrictions apply to include conducting such required meetings and conventions electronically."

In summary, District and Post Commanders may conduct District and Post meetings with: all members physically present (following COVID distance and/or masked guidelines); all members participating electronically (by way of video conferencing and phone); or some members physically present and some members participating electronically.

## Minnesota VFW Office Locations

#### Department Headquarters:

Dewey Hermanson, Adjutant  
Jerry Brletich, Quartermaster  
B5 Veterans Service Building  
20 West 12th Street  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
Phone: (651) 291-1757  
Fax: (651)291-2753  
Email: vfwmnoffice@gmail.com  
Webpage: www.vfwmn.org

#### Auxiliary Headquarters :

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

#### Department Claims Office:

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

#### Minneapolis VA

Position vacant - Please contact Dept. Claims Office - see above  
VFW Hospital Representative  
Minneapolis VAMC  
1 Veterans Drive- Room 4G- 109E  
Phone: (612) 725-4448

## GOPHER OVERSEAS'R

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

#### Publications Committee:

Curt Hermanson, Commander; Barry Henriksen, Sr. Vice Commander;  
Dale Hoogeveen, Jr. Vice Commander; Dan Meyer, Judge Advocate.

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

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

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

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

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# Department Headquarters News

## Senior Vice Commander

By Barry Henriksen, State Senior Vice Commander

We are all extremely disappointed that the Midwinter Conference was cancelled. But the important work that occurs at the Conference still needs to get done.

Several Zoom meetings will be held. I urge our members that don't have Zoom to coordinate with members of their post that do so that you can participate in some of the business that will be conducted.

In these challenging times please look after each other. Reach out to

all of your members both current and past. Remember that "No one does more for veterans".

Please continue to work all of our programs including membership. I know that membership is never easy, especially this year. But eligible veterans are out there.

Hopefully we will be able to be together at the State Convention in June.

Please be safe and stay healthy.

## Judge Advocate

By Dan Meyer, State Judge Advocate

Greetings comrades we are living in a time of turmoil. We are not sure what is going to happen next. How are the VOD and Patriot's Pen awards going to be awarded?

Not sure, but what I do know is we must move forward and do the best we can with what we have!

One thing is for sure, and that is

we must work on our Bylaws to get them ready for convention. We have some issues that need addressing so with some time and patience we will succeed in every task we set our minds on.

Thanks for your time and stay safe.

## MN Posts of Distinction

It is a noteworthy time in the life of a Post when it gets to celebrate an important anniversary of its initial charter. All Post members should be proud of this accomplishment.

The following Posts celebrated their 100th Anniversary this past year:

Post	Charter date
Stillwater Post 373	February 1, 1920
Hopkins Post 425	June 30, 1920
Albert Lea Post 447	June 30, 1920

The following Posts celebrated their 75th Anniversary this past year:

Post	Charter date	Post	Charter date
Cloquet Post 3979	Jan. 7, 1945	Gilbert Post 4456	Oct. 3, 1945
Maple Lake Post 7664	Jan. 7, 1945	Cottage Grove Post 8752	Oct. 14, 1945
Ortonville Post 3964	Jan. 14, 1945	Barnesville Post 4628	Oct. 21, 1945
Perham Post 4020	Jan. 14, 1945	Lakefield Post 4743	Oct. 28, 1945
Shakopee Post 4046	March 11, 1945	Starbuck Post 4582	Nov. 11, 1945
Winthrop Post 4078	April 8, 1945	Appleton Post 4955	Nov. 18, 1945
Wabasha Post 4086	April 26, 1945	Cannon Falls Post 4452	Nov. 30, 1945
Olivia Post 4097	April 29, 1945	New Prague Post 5145	Dec. 6, 1945
Spring Valley Post 4114	May 6, 1945	Morris Post 5039	Dec. 9, 1945
Hinckley Post 4118	May 13, 1945	Glencoe Post 5102	Dec. 14, 1945
Forest Lake Post 4210	June 17, 1945	Westbrook Post 5098	Dec. 16, 1945
Pine City Post 4228	July 15, 1945	Pelican Rapids Post 5252	Dec. 16, 1945
Le Sueur Post 4297	July 20, 1945	Montgomery Post 5340	Dec. 23, 1945
Northfield Post 4393	Sept. 2, 1945		

The following Post celebrated its 50th Anniversary this past year:

Post	Charter date
Northome Post 3869	October 3, 1970

**Congratulations go out to all of the above named Posts.**

## Junior Vice Commander

By Dale Hoogeveen, State Junior Vice Commander

Greetings comrades, brothers and sisters.

Our year has been a challenge thus far dealing with the limitations imposed upon us by the coronavirus pandemic yet we continue to adapt and overcome just as we often had to during our active service days. Electronic meetings via Zoom Teams, Webex and other similar platforms have allowed us to continue conducting necessary training and business at all levels of this organization. Because it appears this option will continue to be necessary, I encourage each post to assess what it will take in the way of equipment and training to offer this option to our members.

I was scheduled to attend Jr. Vice Commander training in October at our National Headquarters in Kansas City which was converted to attendance via Zoom sessions. Similarly, the Big Ten Conference scheduled in Columbus, OH was also conducted via Zoom in October and your Department Headquarters is currently working on presenting our Midwinter Conference electronically as in person events have been suspended by Governor Walz. I will admit electronic meetings cannot replace in

person events providing the camaraderie and personal interaction that occurs at our conferences and convention. They do, however, enable us to continue to carry on the mission of advocating for veterans and their families. Please continue to reach out to your members to ensure they are well and having their needs met in some manner.

I had the opportunity to speak at a Veterans Day program and chose to present why I think it's important to celebrate Veterans Day. Many of the reasons I presented also apply to why the work of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is important. What we do, what we represent and those we honor sends a powerful message to those who have served, to those currently serving and to our young people who may volunteer to serve in our Armed Forces.

The Department is approaching 92% in membership, let's work hard in the next month to earn the Department Early Bird Incentive for Commander Hermanson and to infuse our posts with new members who will sustain this organization in the years ahead. We owe nothing less than our best effort!

## ZOOM Virtual Meetings

Because many Posts and Districts are using Zoom for their meetings as permitted by Executive Order#1 (see District & Post Meetings, page 2), The Department would like everyone to note the following:

- **Zoom allows people to "attend" meetings by both phone and computer.** Using your phone may be the best/only option if you do not have a computer, have dial-up internet, have slow up-load/down-load times via satellite, or other access concerns.
- The Department does not "endorse" any specific virtual meeting application. However, Zoom is widely used by many Posts and Districts because it is fairly user friendly. You are encouraged to use whatever method works for your individual Post or District.
- District and Post Commanders should, at least 7 days prior to a scheduled meeting, send by email, phone text message, or postal mail the video conference link, phone number and password to all members so that they may join the meeting.
- Remember, multiple members can participate in an electronic meeting while using one video access site.

## ZOOMING Tips

- District and Post Commanders should, at least 7 days prior to a scheduled meeting, send by email, phone text message, or postal mail the video conference link, phone number and password to all members so that they may join the meeting.
- Multiple members can participate in an electronic meeting while using one video access site.
- The organizer of the meeting will need a Zoom Account (Free & Paid options are available here: <https://zoom.us/pricing>)
- Attendees do not need an account. They will however need to have an Meeting Invitation that includes both access link or phone number and the meeting ID number.

See Page 13 for More ZOOM Tips

## MNVFW 100th Anniversary

Send articles, Post history, photos, memorabilia, etc. to:

VFW State Headquarters  
Rice Street Station  
PO Box 17146  
St. Paul, MN 55117

# Minnesota Auxiliary News

## STATE PRESIDENT VFW Auxiliary



Paige  
Amundson

Member of  
VFW Post 1656 Auxiliary  
Wheaton, MN



"We cannot change the circumstances, the seasons or the wind, but we can change ourselves." I found this quote on the internet, and thought what truer words are these. As many of us prepare our families for the rising numbers of COVID-19 cases in our communities, we are learning how WE can make things work.

Fall Conference was held in September in St. Cloud. It was good to finally be able to see VFW and Auxiliary members again. By putting plans in place we were able to keep many of us safe. The program chairman presented our members with the facts they need to know to make our programs run smoothly. It was a great weekend, and I enjoyed seeing everyone again.

We are sad to report that Past Department President Audrey Busse passed away October 16, 2020. She was Department President 1981-1982. She will be missed at our future conferences and conventions.

As you have already heard, the Midwinter Conference has been cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is my favorite conference, It is here that we are able to honor the youth who are the district winners for the Voice of Democracy, meet the winner of the Patriots Pen and award the Teacher of the Year for the three categories is always exciting. I always love seeing the proud families, Post and Auxiliary members in the crowd waiting nervously to hear who the winner is and finally being able to hear the winner share their essay with everyone. Minnesota has some very talented youth and teachers

spread out in our state. We need to recognize them and give them the credit they deserve.

Our Inspections are coming along and we hope to get them all wrapped up before too much snow hits the ground. We have had some posts and auxiliaries consolidating, some have held votes to surrender their Charter. We are working hard to help in each situation so an easy transition can take place. Getting our members into a new auxiliary is our number one goal.

The VFW Auxiliary has been selling tickets for a trip to National Convention for our Ways and Means Fundraiser. With the cancellation of many Auxiliary and District Meetings, and our Midwinter Conference, we feel that we need to cancel this raffle. Anyone who bought a ticket will get their money back. All tickets will be returned to the Ways and Means Committee or Department President Paige.

The cancelations of all these meetings does not give us an opportunity to sell all the tickets that we need to for making this fundraiser a success. Please know that we appreciate the support that has been given to this fundraiser at Fall Conference. At Department Convention in June, we will be holding a different fundraiser with the hope of making this crazy year end on a good note. We hope you will all come and buy tickets for our updated fundraiser for the VFW Auxiliary Ways and Means Program.

From my family to yours, we wish you a happy and healthy holiday season.

## Membership Chair

By Karen E. England

Greetings! As I write this and send this update to press, the Department of Minnesota Membership is right on-track to make our next goals. While we are busy supporting Veterans and their Families, we are serving our own Members. It feels good to share our wonderful mission with others and make new friends in this Organization. We need to remember that Membership is the lifeblood of our organization, and if we do not have active members, we cannot function.

Get out the end of the year report and make sure that you have accomplished each of the items on that report. If you haven't already, send out letters to your unpaid annual members by printing the letters through MALTA. It's easy! Call and follow-up with those last-minute stragglers and get them to pay-up their dues, and consider "Adopting" those members who are going through a financial hardship by

either individually or voting for your Auxiliary to pay their annual dues for them. Ask them to contribute where they can and thank them for continuing their membership.

Before the end of the year, think about the Gift of an Auxiliary Membership for your family members who also qualify. If your eligible VFW Member is the prospective new member's Spouse, Parent, Sibling, Son, Daughter, Grandfather, Grandmother, Grandson, or Granddaughter - with a step, adopted, or biological connection - they are eligible for Membership in the VFW Auxiliary.

Make sure that you continue to use the media (TV, radio, Newspaper Press Releases, Facebook, Fliers, etc.) to continue to bring attention to Membership. We need to do OWL we can to reach 101% in Membership this year!

We can do this! Keep up the great work, Minnesota!



## Palmer Lake VFW Post 3915 & Auxiliary & District 7 VFW Auxiliary



**Proudly Endorses Candidate:**

***Francesca 'Frankie' Bill***

**For the term: 2021-2023**

**National VFW Auxiliary**

***District Council Member, Area E***

## National District Council

By Gaile Brekke, Member Area E

With this pandemic it is hard to focus on our Programs as we are used to doing. Our meetings on Zoom have been going well. Our Department President Paige is now doing Facebook live every Wednesday on our programs with each Department Chairman being able to get information out to all of our members. They are all doing a great job with this.

We do have a new program this year which is Auxiliary Community Outreach and we are very fortunate to have Char Guse as our Department Chairman.

Our National President Sandi Onstwedder special project is Stars, Stripes and Support. This project helps military personnel combat

hunger. Please consider helping our military families with this and the money donated goes directly to the VFW Foundation and will then go out from VFW Unmet Needs Program.

Our thoughts go out to Department VFW Auxiliary President Paige and Department VFW Commander Curt with all that they are dealing with due to COVID. It is especially hard to see our Department President dealing with all of this as it takes 6 years to get to that position.

As hard as it may be we have to continue serving our veterans, service members and their families as well as helping in our communities.

Stay Safe and enjoy the holidays as much as you can and remember we are all in this together.

# Claims and Service Office Report

Jon Gohn, Claims Director

## VFW RECOUPED MORE THAN \$9.7B IN BENEFITS FOR VETERANS NATIONWIDE

November 05, 2020

WASHINGTON – Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) accredited service officers recovered more than \$9.7 billion in Veterans Affairs disability compensation benefits for nearly 550,000 veterans this fiscal year exceeding last year's recovery of \$9 billion.

VFW Service Officers were responsible for the recovery of a total of \$9,712,328,079 for veterans, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"Our VFW Service Officers remain the backbone of our organization dedicating their time and effort to helping America's veterans," said VFW National Commander Harold "Hal" Roesch II. "These selfless and hardworking men and women believe that every veteran deserves top-notch customer service and attention-to-detail and prove it daily with their impeccable record of recouping the benefits our veterans have earned."

Last year, VFW Service Officers were responsible for the recovery of a total of \$9,059,726,902 for veterans, according to VA.

Despite COVID-19 closures across the nation, VFW Service Officers diligently worked to assist veterans remotely, further demonstrating the VFW's commitment to transitioning service members, veterans and families.

"Our outstanding professionals adapted remarkably in the face of an unprecedented health crisis to provide our veteran clients with the one-on-one service they need to navigate the challenging VA claims process," said Ryan Gallucci, director of VFW National Veterans Service. "These dedicated men and women do this with little fanfare or thanks because they truly believe in

service before self."

VFW Service Officers are highly-trained experts, recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purpose of helping veterans prepare, present and prosecute their benefit claims before the agency. VFW Service Officers provide a "lifetime of advocacy" for their clients by reviewing and applying current laws and regulations to each veteran's individual benefit claim, ensuring veterans and their eligible dependents receive all the benefits to which they are entitled. This professional service is provided free-of-charge to any transitioning service member of veterans who has served honorably in the U.S military.

Roesch encourages veterans and transitioning service members to make the VFW their first call when navigating the complex VA benefits process.

"No veteran or transitioning service member pays a thing when they visit our team of professionals," said Roesch. "And no veteran or transitioning service member should have to pay for benefits they have earned – many at the hands of injury or illness. Our accredited service officers are the best-trained experts in the business and always place the needs of their clients at the forefront."

Of the VFW's nearly 550,000 veteran benefit clients, a little more than 110,000 filed a claim action with one of our service officers in fiscal year 2020, resulting in VA awarding more than \$1.4 billion in new benefits.

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

## Claims Office Update During COVID-19

Your VFW Claims Office remains fully operational in these strange new times we find ourselves in. We have moved to mainly a digital platform and have had employees both working from home and in the office. As state restrictions continue, we are very cautious as to who we will see face to face. Out of respect for the individuals who may be at greater risk for contracting COVID-19, we most likely will not be helping them in a face-to-face capacity. However, we make concessions where we can. We have met them outside to get their paperwork and helped them through electronic submissions to us.

Regarding our Board of Veteran's Appeals hearings, we have also

moved to mostly a digital platform. We have been able to assist veterans while they are comfortably in their own home by having a three-way virtual hearing with the law judge's. It has proven to be effective and results are timelier. Through this process we have many county service officers who have brought the veterans right into their offices if they aren't that technologically savvy.

If there is anyone out there that needs our assistance, I will tell you that it is best to email our collective VFW inbox. Many days we are here until the mail arrives and then continue to work from home.

As always thank you all for your service and stay safe out there.

## Volunteering for Coronavirus Research at VA

VA is conducting studies to test new COVID-19 vaccines, treatments, and to better understand how the virus affects people. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age, but do not have to be veterans or be enrolled in VA health care. Participants

will not be required to pay for care related to the study and will possibly be compensated for their travel and time.

For more information please reference <https://www.va.gov/coronavirus-research>

## ZOOM Help Links

**ZOOM:**

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-video-tutorials>

**ZOOM Help Center:** <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>

**ZOOM Quick Start Guide for New Users:**

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360034967471-Quick-start-guide-for-new-users>

## State Chaplain

By Billy Murphy

Comrades and Sisters,  
I hope this letter finds you and your families in good health.

As we enter the holiday season here in Minnesota, as our Governor says, we have turned the dials again. We are once again being asked to slow things down to help with the effects of this crazy pandemic.

2020 has definitely been a crazy and trying year for our organization. We have had to cancel meetings, and learned to do things more virtually. People are learning to work from home, or are not being allowed to work at all. I know that this can be hard on people emotionally, physically and mentally. That is why

we need to stay strong, be vigilant and do what we were trained and love to do.

Let's combat this together. Continue to do the work you do within your community in a new and safe way. Be an ear for someone to talk to who just may need to talk.

I want to wish all of you a very happy and blessed holiday season. I will continue to say my prayers for you, our great organization, all my fellow comrades, the marvelous auxiliary who supports us, as well as those who are currently deployed, especially those missing in action, and those who may be held as prisoners of war. God bless all of you.

## National Parks Free Entrance for Veterans and Survivors

Starting Veterans Day 2020, all veterans and Gold Star Families became eligible for free access to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests. In addition to receiving access to National Parks, the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest

Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have indefinitely waived entrance or standard amenity fees for veterans and Gold Star Families. For more information about how to access this new benefit, please visit the National Parks Service website at <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/veterans-and-gold-star-families-free-access.htm>

*Message  
From Your*  
**National  
Council  
Member**

By Tom Hanson,  
National Council Member

The VFW Foundation continues to accept applications for the VFW Foundation Post Pandemic Relief Grant. This one-time grant of up to \$2,500 is designed to help VFW Posts that are unable to cover specific expenses for mortgage payments, rent (if leasing a building), utilities (gas, electric, water, etc.), insurance or property tax, due to hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As of this writing, the Foundation has approved grants to 103 Posts totaling \$237,132. For more information or to apply please go to [vfw.org/grants](http://vfw.org/grants).

The first-ever virtual VFW Sport Clips Help A Hero Walk is in full swing. The event, which can be accessed at [vfw.org/VirtualWalk2020](http://vfw.org/VirtualWalk2020), offers supporters a safe and healthy way to engage in the Sport Clips' annual Help A Hero campaign which began in-stores on Oct. 12. Currently, more than \$227,000 has been raised, which includes approximately 163 online donors and 216 fundraisers, as well as in-store donations. When you need a haircut please visit your local Sport Clips location and tell them "thank you" for supporting this vital VFW program.

VFW's Burger King Unmet Needs campaign will be held throughout the month of November. BK customers are encouraged to donate \$1 or more during a meal purchase. Proceeds will help veterans, service members and their families with assistance for rent, mortgage, utilities, medical expenses, vehicle repairs and food/basic necessities. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic we still have 300 restaurants participating in the November 2020 Unmet Needs fundraising campaign. For a list of BK restaurant locations go to [vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants](http://vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants) and view the interactive map. Please visit your local participating BK and thank the restaurant manager for their ongoing support of this event.

I trust we haven't abandoned or lost sight of our commitment to our fellow veterans during these difficult times as a result of the viral epidemic and the uncertainty that seems to have encompassed everything as a result. As veterans we have endured hardship many times, yet never deserted our post or our comrades. We must continue this allegiance now more than ever. Most of our VFW Posts remain closed but this doesn't mean we stop

# MN VFWA Legislative Report

By Julie Stoehr, Legislative Chairperson

This year our National VFWA Legislator Ambassador Carmelita Jones hails from the great state of Idaho. The VFW and Auxiliary are 2 organizations that have one mission, one purpose and goal – ASSIST OUR VETERANS!

She stresses that to be involved in the Legislative process to assist our Veterans, one must be an Advocate, Be Informed, and Be Engaged. Know the VFW Priority Goals. Budget, Health Care, Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, Education, Employment and Transition Assistance, Military Quality of Life and National Security, Foreign Affairs and POW/MIA. These goals are released in January each year by the VFW. Sign up for VFW Action Corps Weekly, this publication comes out once a week and has news on Capitol Hill, Veterans issues and National Security. Education is also a goal, for members, the community, and schools. Involve all in the Legislative process by education. Teamwork, Collaboration, Leverage Best Practices, and Networking! Then Moving Forward with a plan. Also, GET OUT THE VOTE!

The VFW and VFWA websites have numerous articles and resources to help you navigate the Legislative program, please make use of them.

### Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation to every Auxiliary that trains members on the legislative process. Criteria and entry form (required) available at [www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources). Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Legislative



Chairman by March 31, 2021.

2. Most outstanding training of members on the legislative process. Entry form required. (See National Legislative program booklet) A citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding training of member on the Legislative process.

Many of you are aware of the failed vote for the Veterans Restorative Justice Act due to added amendments that would not bode well if passed with said Bill. A clean stand-alone bill was wanted, so it did not pass. Information has been passed to us that this bill will be brought up after the Election.

The good news is that the legislation on the Homestead Property Tax Exclusion Transfer did pass. This allows widows and widowers of disabled veterans to sell the family home and keep the property tax for different or equal or lesser valued home. Also passed, was increased pay for Personal Care

Attendants, some of whom care for our disabled Veterans.

Congress must pass the provision to add bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and parkinsonism to the list of presumptive conditions associated with Agent Orange in the final version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021.

HR 7879 – VA Telehealth Expansion Act, this awards grants for expansion of telehealth capabilities and provision of telehealth to Veterans through the VA and Veterans and the Veterans Community Care Program. This program is critical to Veterans in rural areas.

HR 5995 – Major Richard Star Act and S. 3393, which would enable Chapter 61 veterans discharges due to Combat-related injuries to be entitled to DOD longevity payment and VA disability compensated without offset.


Please read up on these bills for further explanation.

This next one is a huge win that was passed after the Legislative Conference! The House and Senate passed the S.785 – Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019 which will provide the VA the authority it needs to expand suicide prevention efforts and provide the opportunity to expand telehealth capabilities.

Auxiliaries remember to keep track of all you do for the Legislative Program for your yearend reports!

Remember – Teamwork, it makes us stronger for our Veterans and Families!

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



## MNVFW Charitable Association

By Dewey Hermanson, Association Treasurer

The V.F.W. Charitable Association is conducting a Calendar Raffle to assist the Department of Minnesota with various Program expenses. Please contact Department Headquarters for Raffle Calendars and details.

If you have any unsold calendars, PLEASE let the Charitable Association know. DO NOT SIT ON UNSOLD CALENDARS. (This Calendar Raffle should not

be confused with the Calendar that is mailed from V.F.W. National Headquarters.)

PLEASE RETURN ALL SOLD CALENDAR STUBS & CHECKS TO DEPARTMENT BY DECEMBER 15, 2020.

If you should need any more calendars for your promotion, please contact Dewey Hermanson and he will be happy to assist you. He can be reached at 651-600-8861.



# Department Convention Committee Report

By Melody Shryock, Department Office Manager

The Department Convention Committee has been busy planning for future conferences and fine tuning our event plans. We are in the middle of some uncertain times, requiring us to flex and change many event processes. This gives us time to explore where we might head moving forward.

## 2020 MIDWINTER

Prior to the needed cancellation of our Midwinter Conference, the Convention Committee made a visit to the Minneapolis Marriott City Center. Their renovations are now fully completed and represent the beautiful facility that we know the Marriott to be. All guest rooms now include a microwave and refrigerator and the new décor not only makes the rooms, but also the hallway, feel light and airy. We reviewed safety procedures at this downtown location and were satisfied with the procedures they have in place. As expected there were food handling and meeting room capacity restrictions that would need to be enforced due to social distancing requirements. Unfortunately, the more stringent COVID-19 restrictions implemented by the Governor in November have necessitated the cancelation of our event for January 2021. This was not only disappointing from a planning standpoint, but even more so this year as the Midwinter Conference was to be held on the Department of Minnesota VFW's 100th Anniversary weekend.

We have one more year left on our Midwinter contract with the Marriott City Center and plan to hold our 2022 Midwinter Conference there. Now we have heard from a variety of sources that we may wish to consider searching for other Midwinter Conference locations. As a bit of background... the Midwinter Conference has been held in downtown Minneapolis at the Marriott City Center for close to 30 years (with the exception of 1 year that was cancelled due to weather and 1 year we met in St Paul). We have a long partnership with the Marriott City Center, however we understand that membership concerns regarding safety in Minneapolis, city driving and the parking/building accessibility issues need to be addressed. Not to mention the lack of restaurants or amenities currently available downtown after 6pm weekdays and few places open on the weekends. Therefore, the Convention Committee is exploring other venues that may suit our member's needs. This is not to say we will no longer hold events at the Marriott City Center, but perhaps we rotate between them and one or two other locations in the metro or elsewhere.

## EVENT PROCESS

When it comes to running the Department of Minnesota Conferences and Conventions, you may notice that sometimes

Department staff may be conducting the event registration and other times a Post may be managing registration. Did you know that ANY Post and/or District can host Fall Conference or the State Convention? Traditionally, the Department Hosts the Midwinter Conference and Posts or Districts can host a Fall Conference or State Convention... in fact, these two events were always hosted by local Posts.

We have seen a significant decrease in others hosting the events over the last one to two decades. This could be due to several factors including lack of Post/Auxiliary volunteers to run the event, lack of available meeting facilities in some cities, or even the inability to find affordable lodging in some areas (think about a June Convention in a busy summer resort city). In addition, when considering to host a Department event, the Department provides a Document that outlines all of the responsibilities that would need to be assumed by the Post as part of their commitment to host... these can sometimes seem daunting or confusing.

Over the years, these requirements have needed to be modified as times change... we no longer need a typewriter to be provided for the Department staff to conduct business for the Officers during the Conferences! As you may know, the significant changes we have been experiencing during the COVID-19 Pandemic have also presented some new ways of operating by bringing virtual attendance to the forefront. As a result, the Convention Committee is working to modify, update and clarify the Fall Conference and State Convention Hosting Guidelines and bring them into better alignment with our current ways of operating. The goal is to have these ready for approval at the June State Convention.

## EVENT LOCATIONS

Our Conferences and Conventions have typically been on a rotation schedule that takes us to various locations around the State. This allowed us to run a 3-5 year rotation that provided not only a variety of event venues, but greater access for members that may not be able to travel to the other side of the State for some events. However, some of the impediments previously mentioned have brought us down to a rotation of 2-3 years and less location choices for the events.

In an effort to address this, the Convention Committee is currently creating a list of locations that may be a fit for our Organization's events. We are open to considering facilities anywhere in the State and would entertain any Post or District that would like to try hosting... just to throw it out there- Posts or Districts could also work together to host a conference too! Suggestions for future event locations are being gathered between now and February 15th.

# Centennial Post Pin

By Ken Schroeffer

The Department of MN VFW Charitable Association proposed a special pin recognizing those posts that achieved the century milestone.

The concept of a Centennial Post pin was discussed and a motion made and approved at the 2020 Midwinter Conference (January 17, 2020) that the Charitable Association purchase the pins at an estimated cost of \$3000.00.

The recommendation of the Charitable Association was that when each post reaches the 100th anniversary of their charter date, they become eligible to receive five (5) pins one each for their Commander, Sr. and Jr. Vice Commanders, Quartermaster and Adjutant. These pins would be presented either at the next district meeting or a special post ceremony commemorating the post's centennial anniversary.

Additional pins are available to each centennial post from the MN Charitable Association at a cost of \$2.00 per pin.

All agree that it takes a very special dedication by all members of a post to keep it active and viable in an ever changing world.



To date, the following posts have reached this vaulted status:

Post	Charter Date
A.R. Patterson #7	1/3/1902
Merwin M. Carleton #5	3/1/1905
James Ballantine #246	8/5/1918
Clark-Hanson #117	4/8/1919
Conrad Osthum # 141	5/5/1919
McConnell-Modeen #137	5/18/1919
Oscar and John Soberg #210	9/21/1919
Gallagher-Hansen #295	12/21/1919
Quamme #186	12/27/1919
Greeder-Hinds-Comfort #323	2/1/1920
George R. Wolff #425	6/30/1920
Freemond Madson #447	6/30/1920

## SITE VISITS

To that end, we are making site visits to potential conference locations to review our options. Part of this effort entails visiting cities we previously held within the event rotations. As we know, one thing is certain- CHANGE. So it seems reasonable that we take a look at some past locations including Rochester. This past November, we took a thorough tour of the Rochester Mayo Civic Center, the Double Tree Hotel and the Kahler Grand Hotel. The newly updated Civic Center provides plenty of flexible, state-of-the-art meeting facilities. It has certainly come a long way from the old Convention Center Auditorium that our group used to pack full many years ago!

Rochester continues to change and we saw a number of new skyways along with renovations of the Peace Plaza (the location where they close the road to traffic and hold their third Thursday community events). University Mall is 2 blocks from the Civic Center (adjacent to the Peace Plaza) and with all stores open it seems vibrant, even during the shopper occupancy limitations. We visited the Double Tree Hotel which is roughly a block and a half from the Civic Center. They have started some remodeling of common areas and plan to move into renovating the guest rooms... not sure that all of that is needed as the Hotel is very nice as it stands. The Double Tree does have a nice ballroom where a Council meeting could be held and can break up into four smaller rooms for multiple meetings at once. Rates may be within our range here, the largest drawback is the walk to the Civic Center where the bulk of our meetings would have to be held.

Our next visit was to the Kahler

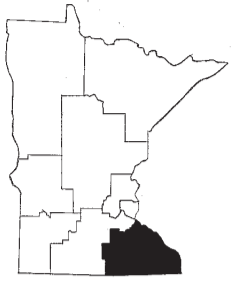
Grand Hotel located directly across from the Mayo Clinic (many of our Conference attendees have likely stayed here in the past). We viewed a number of their newly remodeled guest rooms that appreciated the modern feel, new windows and walk-in showers that are now in most of their rooms. The Kahler Grand has all of the meeting space we would need in the "subway" level of the Hotel so that is always a nice fit for our Organization. They plan to remodel their common areas and meeting spaces over the next few years. The drawbacks to the Kahler include a note that although remodeled, some guest rooms may still have somewhat smaller bathrooms due to the building's structural limitations and then there are the somewhat slow elevators. Parking is not the simplest at either Hotel since they are located in a downtown, so Valet might be a simpler option for some. One great plus includes the ability to take a skyway or just walk outside at street level where there are restaurant and shopping options available. The Convention Committee will follow through with Rochester, along with a number of other locations state-wide, in seeking out potential State VFW event locations.

## NEXT STEPS

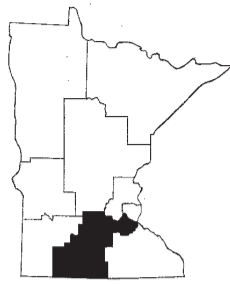
In March, we plan to send out Requests for Proposals (RFP) to event facilities and hotels that are on the list we are creating. At this time, we expect the RFPs might cover events being held from late 2022 and beyond. The intent of an RFP is to receive the best proposals and the best rates that the facilities can offer our Organization. Once all of the RFPs have been received at our Department Headquarters, the

**Conv. Report - Cont. Page 12**

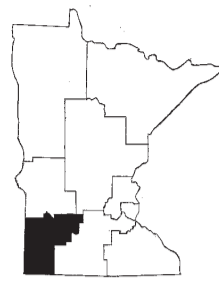
# News from YOUR District Commanders and Presidents!



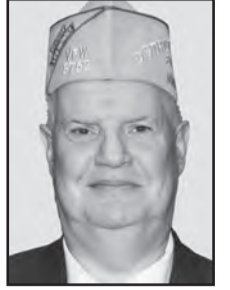
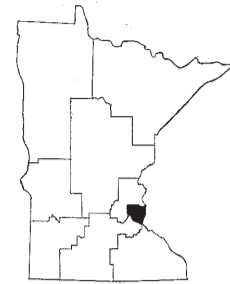
**David Thul Commander  
First District**



**Terrance Pieper Commander  
Second District**



**Buck Underwood, Commander  
Third District**



**David Staehlin Commander  
Fourth District**

The 1st District's December meeting will be virtual. We will have a proposal to form a VFW Riders group.

As 2020 winds to a close, we have seen disruptions in the 1st District as well as at Department in our traditional ways of doing things. Cancellations of conventions, conferences, and even post meetings.

This brings two points to mind. First, any time we can't do things the usual way is a great time to ask if we are doing things that still need to be done? What can we change and make better, as long as it fits within our organizations bylaws? Second, it is more critical than ever to remember the motto of the VFW- No One Does More For Veterans.

In every community across the country, veterans are struggling and suffering with this pandemic just like everyone else. What can we as the VFW do to assist the Veterans in our communities?



**Linda Henry, Auxiliary  
President First District**

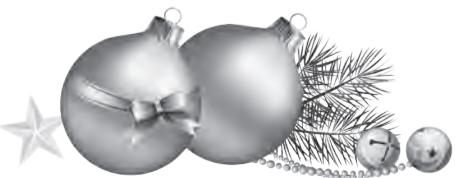
Greetings to all, I hope everyone is staying healthy.

Our inspections are complete at this time. We are working with a few auxiliaries on some difficulties. Most auxiliaries are doing well, thankfully.

We are continuing to move forward in the First District as much as possible. The Pheasants for Hospitalized Veterans Raffle and Auction in Owatonna went very well. They raised \$17,000.00 in sales and donations, it was a joint effort with the American Legion.

Our next District meeting is on Saturday December 5th in Zumbro Falls. We will also have the meeting available on Zoom for those unable to attend in person. So many things have been cancelled due to COVID-19, including Midwinter Conference.

Please stay safe and Healthy! Have a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, all other Holidays and let's hope for a better New Year!!



Greetings from the Solid Second District. As we head into our winter months I hope all is going well and all our members and auxiliary are safe.

COVID-19 continues to be at the forefront of all of us. In the 2nd District only one post has reported an infection which has been resolved. The post was temporarily closed to prevent spreading the virus and deep cleaning. That post has since reopened.

We have been wrapping up each of the posts inspections. We have been working with each post to complete the inspections while being mindful of concerns with having in person meetings. Many of the posts are up and running and following the state guidelines. Each post has been doing a good job with their reports but more still needs to be done to complete their community service requirements. I have been partnering with the Department Commander on a few posts that have had house cleaning issues but feel they are on the right track.

The next 2nd District meeting will be held at the Arlington Post 6031 on January 9th at 10AM. We are making alternative plans for our award presentations for our District Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy winners. Each post should have received the entries and should be ready to send their winners to District to be judged.

Finally I want to recognize 3 of our Posts who are celebrating their 75th Anniversaries. Hanson-Ward Post 4743 Lakefield, Shakopee Post 4046 and Winthrop Post 4078. Congratulations and continued success.

We will be handing out a number of 100% on time community service reports.



**Johanna Rowe, Auxiliary  
President Second District**

The Second District Auxiliaries have been working diligently on the National Programs especially Membership as they completely change the way they do things for the veterans in their communities.

We will be having our next District meeting on January 9th, 2021. This will be conducted physically in Arlington with us also having a virtual option. I hope to see a good turnout depending on the weather.

My inspection team has been conducting our official visits with

The Third district is still alive.

Our Posts are still having safe meetings and going ahead with Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy competition.

Great News, our own Bill Brockberg has been picked as the Department Aide-De-Camp for National VFW.

Keep up to date on all your reports.

Keep safe.



**Kathy Brockberg, Auxiliary  
President Third District**

Greetings from 3rd District.

We had a dedication ceremony here in Marshall for our new Veterans Memorial Park on October 15.

Our auxiliary handed out small American flags to the youths who attended. We also attended a shortened Veterans Day program at the park. One of the Auxiliaries sent cards to the Veterans in their area. Each Auxiliary did what they could to remember our veterans.

We are doing our youth contests now. Our winning entrants are being judged at District.

We work hard to continue with our monthly meetings during covid. Attendance is down. We are hoping to fit in a district meeting in January. It is hard to comply with all the rules and regulations, but we will try. Even with covid getting worse, we will continue to do all we can for our Veterans.

the plan to have these completed before December 31st. It has been interesting seeing all the ways these auxiliaries have been completing their work.

As of this writing, our Membership for the District is 84.03% with our goal to be 100% before December 31st. We appreciate all the hard work that are members are doing to try to achieve this high goal.

We are also working hard on our new program, Auxiliary Community Outreach. We want the communities to know who we are and why we are here.

It is with a saddened heart to inform the District that we are in process of losing the Shakopee #4046 Auxiliary. We hope that these members will transfer to another auxiliary in our District instead of becoming Members-At-Large.

Greetings to my Comrades, Sisters, and Brothers of the Fourth District. Our Posts have continued to serve veterans and the community as the economy picks up. Unfortunately, the number of COVID-19 infections has picked up, as well.

I encourage our Post and District leaders to continue to complete our mission using the same creativity and drive that we used when serving our nation.

Our November 21, 2020 District meeting was again held in person with an option to join via Zoom. Since we met at Cottage Grove Post 8752, we were able to spread out and physically distance in the large hall.

Unfortunately, this year's Midwinter Conference has been canceled. I encourage District 4 members to participate in any Zoom meetings that may be planned that substitute for the canceled breakout sessions. Watch for further information in Department General Orders and E-Blast emails and District General Orders.

As always, your District leadership is here to serve you. If your Post needs our assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.



**Cynthia Fritsche, Auxiliary  
President Fourth District**

It has been pretty quiet out here in District 4 because it is hard to get out and do things.

However, we are working on a Bakeless Bake Sale for a fundraiser for the 4th District.

All but one Official Visit (Auxiliary Inspection) is done for the 4th District. That will be completed by the end of December.

The 6 Auxiliaries in the 4th District are working on getting more members. That is about all.

## Bakeless Bake Sale

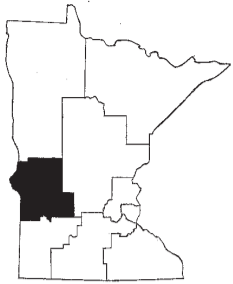
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Those with the inquiring minds have asked "What the heck is a Bakeless Bake Sale?"

Typically, a group (Auxiliary) hosts an event for the purpose of raising funds for the group.

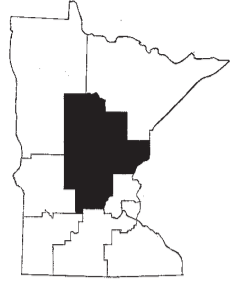
Normally baking materials are purchased, the oven is heated up and time is spent on baking items. For this event, "customers" are asked to place in an envelope enough money to cover the cost of a pie, cake or other baked treat or just make a donation.





Michael Gearmann, Commander  
Fifth District

Greetings from the 5th.  
I hope everyone is happy and healthy going into the lockdown.  
The 5th District post inspections are completed, and we are working on membership



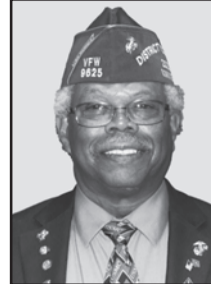
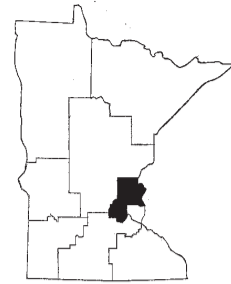
Jonathon Durst, Commander  
Sixth District

Greetings!  
I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy during these unprecedented times. This year is going to continue to be a challenge for everyone. I know we will be able to face those challenges head on.

As the pandemic surges and government responses continue to restrict our normal course of business we need to be sure to utilize all of our resources in order to make the '20-'21 year a success. Virtual meeting technologies make it possible to conduct all of our business remotely, ensuring safety and compliance with outstanding orders.

Make sure to solicit ideas from all your members, new and seasoned, to find ways to meet and exceed your goals this year. I am very proud of the work the district has done so far this year, and we aren't even halfway done.

I look forward to seeing everyone when we are able. For now, stay safe, stay strong, and keep your nose to the grindstone.



Charles Hawkins, Commander  
Seventh District

Comrades and Auxiliary  
Greetings from the Mighty 7th.  
I hope all is well at this time and that everyone is following the mandates set forth by the Governor.

Most Posts have done their cleaning and arranging their tables and chairs for social distancing, so maybe we can get down to business!

Some of our Posts have started to have their meetings on Zoom. The District's December 12 meeting will be an electronic meeting (Zoom and phone call-in) with the District Officers on deck. Notification will be sent out to all Post Commanders and Adjutants on how to participate.

I have been doing my Post Inspections with just the Post Commander, Quartermaster, and Adjutant and not at their post meeting.

We all have members of our Post that you don't get to see because of COVID-19. Check with your Post Commanders or other members to find out how your fellow Post members are doing.

Because of the restrictions on the Post we have canceled our VOD & PP Banquet until things get better. We will try to do something for them at a later date, so that they know we haven't forgotten them!

Never forget, our future is the children.

Poppies are still an on going program in our District. Afterall, it's our relief fund for our Veterans.



Nancy Kaenel, Auxiliary  
President Fifth District

Greetings from the 5th District.  
Thank you for the honor of being your President in 2020-2021.

During this pandemic, we are trying our best to stay safe and get our meetings and programs done.

Our district meeting will be held in Willmar on November 8th at 2:00pm. We will also be on Zoom. We will social distance and masks will be required.

Please remember to anchor "Aweigh for Our Veterans" so that we can do "Owl" we can for them.

God bless our veterans.



Michelle Keller, Auxiliary  
President Sixth District

Greetings from the 6th District.

Our year has been challenging so far due to COVID-19; thank you to all of the auxiliaries for their flexibility during this pandemic. Official visits have been going well and we only have a few left to complete.

Our next District meeting will be on December 5th at Eastside VFW 4847. Lunch will be served at 11:00AM followed by meeting at 1:00PM. Since our October meeting was cancelled, we decided to have our annual auction at this meeting and it will start at noon. Please bring new items or slightly used items for the auction. The cookie walk was to be held at this meeting but due to COVID-19, it was cancelled; any Auxiliaries wishing to send a

donation, please send to our District Treasurer Rosie Athmann, 37181 Spring Haven Rd., Melrose, Mn. 56352 and earmark it "Cookie Walk".

There will be not be a District Poppy Display Contest this year. Displays can be brought and entered into the State Contest at the State Convention in June.

Sr. Vice Rita is collecting "Fun Sox" again this year and will be given to our Veterans at the VA Hospitals and Homes. Please bring some colorful socks to donate to this most worthwhile project!! The veterans really enjoy them!!

Our February District meeting will be held in Sauk Rapids on February 5th; meeting will start at 1:00PM. Lunch served at 11:00AM.



Char Guse, Auxiliary  
President Seventh District

Greetings from the 7th District.

It seems that 2020 would never end, but the end is just around the corner. May 2021 bring renewed hope, health and energy to all of our members as we continue to work our programs and keep our veterans first and foremost in all we do.

We wish all of the Voice of Democracy students, Patriot's Pen Students, and Teacher's of the Year entrants the best of luck with their respective contest. I know that we are all looking forward to finding out how they have all placed.

COVID-19 has changed our lives in many ways this past year. One of the biggest issues most people are facing is social isolation. As we approach the holiday season, please keep your neighbors, family and

### DISTRICT MEETINGS

COVID-19 may cause changes.  
Watch General Orders for changes

#### First District

February 6 Austin #1216 @ 9:30 AM

#### Second District

January 9 Arlington #6031 @1:00PM

#### Third District

January 9 Granite Falls #3871 @ 10AM

#### Fourth District

January 23 N. St. Paul #1350 @ 9 AM

#### Fifth District

January 24 Appleton #4955 @ 2 PM

#### Sixth District

February 6 Sauk Rapids #6992 @ 1 PM

#### Seventh District

February 20 Crystal #494 @ 10 AM

#### Eighth District

February 6 Servicemen's Qtrs @ 9 AM

#### Ninth District

March 6 Bemidji #1260 @ 1 PM

#### MOC

February 6 Hopkins #425 @ 10 AM



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

friends in mind. A call, a holiday card, or a small gift will mean so much. I anticipate sending out a lot of holiday cards this season. C'mon writers cramps.

The 7th District is losing Auxiliary #5903 Hamel. If one of their members wishes to transfer to your Auxiliary, please make them feel welcome. They are a great group of hard working people.

Inspections are getting done. COVID and meeting cancellations make the task a little trickier, but we will prevail and get these done for President Paige.

I would like to thank the friends that called to check-up on me while I recovered from my bout with COVID-19. Your support meant the world to me.

Our next 7th District meeting is February 20th at #494 Crystal. Hopefully we can finally get to see each other!

May the seasons best and brightest be yours.

### 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

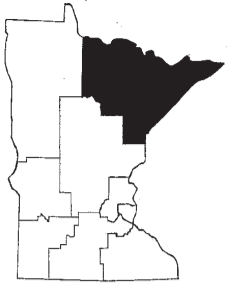
We'll Help with YOUR Veteran Benefits

Don't Go It Alone!!!

JUST CALL!!!



THERE'S HELP!!!



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

Greetings and Best Wishes to all from the 8th!

Up until this recent wave of COVID exposures we in the 8th District had been experiencing only isolated cases of exposure. Unfortunately that has changed and we are now seeing a rapid increase in numbers. It was inevitable.

So what do we do given the fact that the majority of our membership is Vietnam Era Vets? About all we can do is exactly what everybody else is doing, take advantage of the flexibility we've been given and promote the use of the technology we now have available to us.

Something I've been suggesting to our older Vets who are reluctant to get involved with the "demon computer" is to invite one of their grandchildren to bring their computer over and get Gramps/Gramma into the Zoom meeting. That way Grandpa/Gramma gets to attend the meeting and the Grandkid gets braggin' rights for teaching their Grampa/Gramma something for a change!

By virtue of sheer luck the 8th began doing monthly District GO's last year via email to augment Department GO's. This keeps our Posts updated with pending District meeting changes, Zoom notifications, legislative actions in St Paul and other information relevant to our Posts.

We're seeing some new faces in attendance in Zoom meetings which is encouraging and our email list continues to expand. We are a geographically large, mostly rural District and with that comes conductivity due to multiple internet providers. Not much we can do about that of course but we will continue to work with what we have to work with, encourage and promote the attendance of online meetings to keep our membership informed.

We wish a Happy and safe Thanksgiving to all!

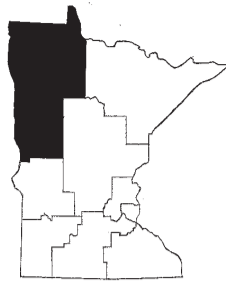


**Julie Stoehr, Auxiliary  
President Eighth District**

Greetings from the 8th District VFWA.

Auxiliaries here in the 8th are maintaining, even through there is a great struggle to have a meeting due to Covid. Where there is a will, there is a COVID-19, and we know our Auxiliaries remain strong for our Veterans.

Public Relations Coordinator and all-around great gal, Joyce Scott attended our October 8th District VFWA Virtual meeting on October 24th and gave an update on the Silver Bay Veterans Home. Currently, they



**Lynette Dornbusch, Commander  
Ninth District**

Hello from the 9th District.

Happy Veterans Day and Happy Birthday to all you Marines. Also, Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas, can you believe the holidays are right around the corner. I hope your holidays will be safe and healthy one. A lot of controversy out there on to mask or not to mask, but what ever precautions you take I hope you, your family, and Posts stay well.

I don't have much from the district with this Covid, most Posts are laying a little low. Participation at the Post level is a continuous battle. Our next District meeting is Dec 5th in Crookston. Please "Bring your mask". I Hope we have good travel weather and a good turn out from the district.

Teacher of the Year, Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy is still alive and doing well even with the school's changes happening. I'm hoping we will have some good competition again this year.

Sorry this is short and sweet. I'm hoping all goes well with the election and we have Peace.

Aim High and stay safe over the holidays.

Thank you.



**Tim Haugen, Auxiliary  
President Ninth District**

Holiday Greetings from the "Mighty" 9th District.

Well, this year is about half over...where has the time gone.

We are off to a great start to the year, and membership is going reasonably well. We've 3 Auxiliaries that are/were at 100%, Kennedy, Audubon, and Lengby. Several Auxiliaries are 90% plus, a few at

have 38 cases of Covid with 5 deaths. There are safety plans for Holiday visiting that are being worked on. We all miss are families but even worse for the Veterans in Homes that families are unable to visit due to the restrictions. They have also received a grant for a 116-gallon fish aquarium for the Memory Care Unit, this will be a great addition for them. It is so calming to watch fish swimming around. The Activities Department is also hoping to attend the drive through Bentleyville Christmas Light Display in Duluth, MN, but again it will depend on restrictions. They have increased activities at the Home and need puzzles 300-500 pieces, models for Veterans to put together and of course quarters

### CMDR- Cont. from Page 1

the only option is to host a virtual conference.

The strides being made to connect people virtually continues to expand. Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs successfully held their entire Veterans Day program via Zoom. We're seeing some changes and working to find a new normal right now. Virtual meetings are becoming a key part of that new normal and I feel that there are plenty of opportunities for the VFW to grow with these changes and continue to expand within the restrictions we must follow.

Despite being distant from our communities and social groups,

membership is still important. We want to encourage you to reach out to those you know. Call expired members. Talk with them about renewing their membership and help us to keep growing. We are still working to achieve our goals and we cannot do it alone. Our members are a key piece to the strength of our organization.

This is a tough year for all of us. Plagued with stunted efforts and cancellations we are still striving to uphold those values that make this organization what it is. Our strength and perseverance will help us to see this trial through and I look forward to the time when we can all meet in person once again.

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



### Visit the VFW National Home Christmas

#### Amazon Wish List:

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/CEPQBFHDZG2/?ref=cm\\_go\\_nav\\_hz](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/CEPQBFHDZG2/?ref=cm_go_nav_hz)

80% plus, and only one below 80% (by just 0.59%). We only need 160 members for the district to be at 95 % and 306 to be 100%.

We have 2 Auxiliaries that have closed this year, the Kelliher members have all transferred out, and Lengby members were all transferred to the Members at Large.

Our Inspections are still in process as we've had a few snags along the way (Snow and COVID-19), so hopefully, we'll have them all completed in December.

Many Veteran's Day and other local activities that the Auxiliaries

are usually busy with are all pretty much shut down to Covid. Still, we've got a few that are working outside the box.

I am looking forward to our next District meeting, December 5th, in Crookston. It is always great to get together with all the 9th District Post and Auxiliary members. We'll also zoom our Auxiliary meeting for those who wish not to attend due to Covid-19.

This year's Mid-Winter has been canceled due to COVID-19 pandemic.

for Bingo. Give Joyce a call the needs may change daily. Silver Bay Veterans Home staff have my utmost appreciation and admiration for what they do for our Veterans and families. Bless them!

Many Auxiliaries are attempting to hold a Veterans Day Appreciation ceremony, difficult to do with the restrictions, some are virtual, some being held outside, as I said earlier where there is a will, there is a way.

Membership is coming along nicely, hoping each Auxiliary remembers that they can pay for a member in need, and what a great gift for the upcoming Holidays. Keep working Auxiliaries for membership. Remember we are our Veterans

Voices; we must remain strong. Get those dues in!

Holidays are fast approaching, hoping all remember our Veterans in Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Facilities, Veterans at home, that are not able to get out and of course our Veterans Homes and Hospitals!

Our next meeting is February 6-7, 2020. Initially this meeting would have been at the Veterans Service Men's Quarters in Hibbing MN. This also would be our Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen Award banquet. Currently there are no plans for the banquet due to Covid. We are in hopes that it may change. The meeting at this time will also be held virtually on the 7th of February at 0900.

# Covid-19 Financial Assistance for Veterans

November 24, 2020

The Minnesota State Legislature voted to fund a special appropriation to assist Veterans who may be financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 Specific Programs have been activated specifically in response to mitigate the economic effects COVID-19 is having on our Veterans and their families. These programs can close at any time without notice due to the exhaustion of approved funding.

All of the grants are awarded on a first come, first serve basis, and the amount of grants awarded is limited to the length of existing funding.

Detailed information, forms and information of assistance can be found on this website: <https://mn.gov/mdva/blog/?id=1066-425565>.

## COVID-19 Disaster Relief Grant

The COVID-19 Disaster Relief Grant is to mitigate the negative effects and economic impact COVID-19 has had on Veterans and their families by providing a one-time financial relief grant in the amount of \$1,000.

Applications for the COVID-19 Disaster Relief Grant must demonstrate a financial loss on or after the date of the Governor's Emergency Executive Order, March 13, 2020. A closing date for the disaster relief grant has yet to be determined and will depend on the length of the peacetime emergency declared by the Governor of the State of Minnesota and the availability of funding.

To qualify for the COVID-19 Disaster Relief Grant, applicants must be:

1. A Veteran as defined by MN Statute 197.447, and
2. A Minnesota Resident, and
3. Have been negatively financial impacted by COVID-19.

*\* Note: Two Veterans married to each other are both authorized to apply for and receive the disaster relief grant.*

The Program is still open.

Applications can be accessed and submitted online at the above web address or through a County Veterans Service Officer.

## COVID-19 K-12 Distance Learning Support Grant

The purpose of the COVID-19 K-12 Distance Learning Support Grant is to mitigate the negative financial impact a family experiences by implementing their school district's distance learning or hybrid learning plans by providing a one-time grant in the amount of \$3,000.

Applicants for the COVID-19 K-12 Distance Learning Support Grant must demonstrate a negative financial impact on or after August 1, 2020. A closing date for the K-12 Distance Learning Support Grant will depend on the availability of funding, but not later than June 30, 2021.

To qualify for the COVID-19 Disaster Relief Grant, applicants must be:

1. A Veteran as defined by MN Statute 197.447, and
2. A Minnesota Resident, and
3. Have been negatively financially impacted by COVID-19.

Eligible applicants must be able to demonstrate meeting all the following requirements:

1. Have a child who is enrolled in the State of Minnesota in:
  - Grades K-8 or;
  - Grades 9-12 with an IEP (Individual Education Plan), Section 504 Plans are not eligible.
2. The child must attend a school that has implemented distance learning or a hybrid program or have newly enrolled (school year 2020-2021) in private school or homeschool option as an alternative to the implementation of distance learning or hybrid program.
3. Provide evidence that your family has experienced a negative financial impact as defined by



one of the following scenarios:

- Aparent had to reduce or eliminate work in order to accommodate the implementation of distance learning or hybrid program for the child.
- The child was newly enrolled in a daycare setting or similar business in order to accommodate their parent's employment and to facilitate the school district's distance learning or hybrid program for their child.
- The parent has newly employed a tutor, nanny, non-parental adult family member, or other similar arrangement to coach, mentor, and implement distance learning or hybrid program for their child.
- Newly enrolled in homeschool or a private school but was previously (2019-2020 school year) enrolled in a public school district.

*\*Note: Incurring "normal school expenses" such as school lunch costs, school supplies, etc. does not constitute a "negative financial impact" for the purposes of this grant.*

Applications must be submitted through a County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) or the MDVA Field Operations Representative.

An eligible applicant may obtain an application (MDVA-1B) from their CVSO.

Again, detailed information, forms and information of assistance can be found on this website: <https://mn.gov/mdva/blog/?id=1066-425565>.

## COVID-19 Special Needs Grant

The purpose of the COVID-19 Special Needs Grant is to provide one-time financial assistance to a Veteran or surviving spouse who needs assistance due to a COVID-19-related event. Any funding awarded from this grant would go directly to a vendor or creditor of the applicant, and no money awarded goes directly to an applicant or an applicant's family member.

Applications for the COVID-19 Special Needs Grant must be dated no earlier than March 13, 2020. A closing date for the COVID-19 Special Needs Grant is subject to the length of the peacetime emergency declared by the Governor of the State of Minnesota, and the funding available.

Items covered by the COVID-19 Special Needs Grant include:

- Utility Bills
- Auto Insurance
- Rent/Mortgage/Contract for Deed
- Security Deposits
- Medical Bills
- Auto Loan Payments
- Auto Repairs
- Furnace/AC Units
- Home Repairs (must be related to habitability)

To qualify for the COVID-19 Special Needs Grant, applicants must be:

1. A Veteran or the surviving spouse (who has not remarried) of a deceased veteran as defined by MN Statute 197.447,
2. A Minnesota Resident, and
3. Have been negatively financial impacted by COVID-19.

*\*Note: two Veterans married to each other are only authorized one COVID-19 Special Needs Grant.*

The Program is still open. Applications must be made through a County Veterans Service Officer.

# Minnesota Veterans Homes

Because of COVID-19, the Minnesota Veterans Homes have been operating at Level 1 visitation.

This means that there are visitor restrictions in place at all sites. Unless you are an immediate family member, only essential volunteers and vendors are allowed. Public events and entertainment have been postponed. Outdoor visits may be allowed if the Home is COVID-free. Then again weather is restricting outdoor visits at this time.

Individual Homes may be able to move to a Level 2, less restrictive visitation rating that allows for visitors if the following criteria are met:

- The individual Home completes a facility-wide COVID test within a window of time before opening.
- The individual Veteran Home has not had a COVID-19 exposure among residents and staff for the past 28 days. There is

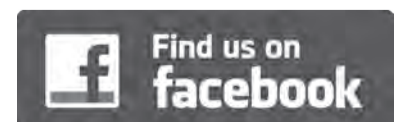
limited COVID incidence in the surrounding community.

As volunteers, what does mean we can do? First off, visit the MDVA Veterans Homes website at <https://mn.gov/mdva/homes/>. Click on the link for the nearest Veterans Home and then click on the "Contribute" button under than selected home.

Each Veterans Home has a slightly different list of Special Funding Opportunities, Project Needs, and individual resident needs.

Don't forget, this is the Holiday Season. The emphasis is on "giving".

Make this a memorable time for them by giving gifts. Remember, they are just as bored with the COVID-19 lockdown as we are.



Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Department of Minnesota



**TAPS**  
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

Daniel Jordan, Project Coordinator

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, (TAPS) is the joint special project of Minnesota VFW Commander Curt Hermanson and Minnesota VFW Auxiliary President Paige Amundson for the 2021-2021 year.

TAPS provides ongoing emotional hope, help, and healing for anyone grieving the loss of a loved one in military service to America, regardless of relationship to the deceased, geography, or circumstance of the death. TAPS meets its mission by providing peer-based support, crisis care, casualty casework assistance, and grief and trauma resources.

TAPS provides a variety of programs to survivors nation and worldwide. Our National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp has been held annually in Washington, D.C., over Memorial Day weekend since 1994. TAPS also conducts regional survivor seminars for adults and youth programs at

locations across the country, as well as retreats and expeditions around the world. Staff can get you connected to counseling in your community and help navigate benefits and resources.

Their staff members are primarily survivors of military loss who have grown up in the TAPS family and who have now made it their profession to pay it forward.

The goal is to raise \$50,000! Your gift is tax exempt and will create a lasting impact for the families and love ones dealing with grief.

Please make your checks payable to MN VFW Charitable Association with a note on the memo line "Commander/President Project 2020/2021".

If you would like posters or pamphlets that give greater detail on TAPS for your Post home, please contact Daniel Jordan (651-281-7371) and he will get them to you. To learn more about TAPS visit [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org)

## Memorial Flag Case

The Minnesota Veterans Homes provide many services for our veterans. The Hastings Veterans Home is host to a Veterans Woodshop.

The Woodshop allows the Veterans to learn woodworking skills, advance skills already learned and more importantly provides a therapeutic opportunity for them.

One of the most popular items is the Memorial Flag Case. It is available in either walnut or clear oak, individually handcrafted, with a hand rubbed Tung Oil finish and a glass front. They also come with an engraved name plate containing the name of the veteran and their branch of service.

The back is removable so that you can easily insert the veteran's memorial flag.

This is the perfect way to display, preserve and protect a memorial flag.



There are other items (plaques, signs, picture frames, etc.) that are available by contacting the Hastings Veterans Home by phone at 651-539-2486 or by email at [Michael.Kriel@state.mn.us](mailto:Michael.Kriel@state.mn.us).

To place an order please use the online order form at [https://mn.gov/mdva/assets/2020-10-05-woodshop-order-form\\_tcm1066-449234.pdf](https://mn.gov/mdva/assets/2020-10-05-woodshop-order-form_tcm1066-449234.pdf)

## Learn a New Skill & Increase Post Membership

Everyone will agree that COVID-19 has dealt our Posts, Districts and even the Department some serious blows. Post homes have had to shutter the doors. Posts and Districts have had to conduct virtual meetings. Social events have been shut down. VFW members have been testing positive for COVID-19 and have even been hospitalized because of it.

The whole concept of membership drives has been slammed and slammed hard. Things are looking pretty bleak. One can sense apathy in some corners of the State of Minnesota.

It's time that "we" do something about it. How, might you ask, can we do that? Learn how to build a Post website.

Our posts need new members. They are the life blood of each post. Without new members, a post is doomed to wither and die.

A good way that our posts can reach out and be "found" by new members is through a website or through social media.

One of the best examples of a post website is the winner of the MN Department's 2020 Social Media Site competition. Take a few minutes and visit the Brainerd VFW website at <https://www.brainerdvfw.org> and you will see what I am talking about.

What is a bit unique about this website is that it was created by a post member who had no training in website design. Mark Persons just wanted to tell the story of the Brainerd Post in a positive way. Anyone doing a Google search could discover the site, visit it and see what the post is like.

Mark has been working on this site for the past five years. It did not

happen overnight. He started out with a small simple site and it grew as his knowledge of web design grew.

You might think that Mark is some sort of internet geek. Far from the truth. Mark started on developing the website when he was 68 years old. It sort of negates the saying that "you can't teach an old dog new tricks."

Mark says that he currently spends between one and four hours a week updating and improving the website. According to Mark, "A post website needs to be current and informative. Outdated information gives a black eye to the organization."

Whether your post pays someone to develop the general structure of the website or a volunteer does it, the information cannot become dated. The National VFW has a Website Solution Program to help posts develop a website with a minimum of effort. Visit [www.VFW.org](http://www.VFW.org) for details.

Mark also says "The younger crowd doesn't look in a phone book to find a post. They Google using their smart phones. If your post is not on the web, then likely they won't find you. Worst yet, they might think you do not exist."

A post website is needed to attract new members and maintain credibility in the community.

Mark has written an extensive article titled "Writing and Maintaining a VFW Post Website." The following are some tips gleaned from his article. The complete article can be found at <https://www.brainerdvfw.org/web-writing.html>.

If Mark Persons can build a website with just a bit of training, so can you.

### Midwinter - from Page 1

Marriott City Center in 1990. The Conference has been at the Marriott EVERY year since, with the exception of 2009 and 2010 when we visited the Crowne Plaza Hotel on the St. Paul riverfront. There is a lot of history to Midwinter including when we started presenting Voice of Democracy awards at the Banquet and when meetings were officially combined with the Annual Banquet to become the Midwinter Conference we know today. With our 100th Anniversary on the horizon, we will continue to piece together more Minnesota firsts, historical tidbits and more!

*Author's NOTE: As we continue to research archived documents at the Department Headquarters, we have found several dates referring to the first year of the Banquet. As a result, we may or may not actually be in our 118th year... we have seen initial dates from 1902-1904. More to follow on this as we continue to explore!*

### Conv. Report - from Page 7

Convention Committee will review them, and narrow them down to the prospects that best address our meeting space, hotel room and, most importantly, our budget guidelines. It is important to note that the sending of an RFP to a location does not guarantee that they will reply with a proposal. In addition, if they reply, we do not have to commit to host an event with them. The final decisions are up to the Department Officers and the Department Council of Administration. We expect to have the Committee's final choices ready for presentation to and approval by the Council of Administration at the 2021 State Convention in June.

The Convention Committee meets at every State Conference and Convention; any member in good standing is welcome to attend. Between events, anyone with comments or suggestions are invited to contact VFW State Headquarters at 651-291-1757 or [vfwmnooffice@gmail.com](mailto:vfwmnooffice@gmail.com) or the Director of the Convention Committee, Dave Adams at 612-747-7740.

Current members of the Convention Committee include Director Dave Adams, members Scott Bill and Don Heuer, and Auxiliary Department Representative Nanci Bohmer. Other members of the Convention Committee per Department Bylaws Article IX, Section 1, include the Department Commander, Sr. Vice, Jr. Vice, Quartermaster, and Adjutant.

## CORRECTIONS

In the previous edition of the Gopher Oversea'r, the winner of the Best Social Media Site was mistakenly announced as:

Harold Baggenstoss Post 1260, Bemidji (9th District)

The winner of the Best Social Media Site should have been announced as:

Mahlum-Hanson Post 1647, Brainerd (6th District)

Congratulations Post 1647

# Veterans / Youth Activities

## Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen

by Frank Presfield

Each participating Post and Auxiliary has had the task of deciding entries into the years Voice of Democracy (VOD) and Patriot's Pen (PP) competition. The judging at the District level is always a difficult task of determining the winners for both. By now the finalists have been selected and the top VOD and PP winners are on their way to Department for final competition.

We want to congratulate the winners in each competition, but at the same time extend a special Thank You and well done to each Post that made the extraordinary effort to see that these most important programs garnered all the entries under the difficult situation we all face with the rampant pandemic.

Due to the cancellation of the Midwinter Conference and the Grand Banquet, Commander Hermanson and the Department Office Staff are working on the means to share the exciting news as to the placing of the nine District winners in VOD and the winner of PP.

Zoom seems to be a world that we all have had to or will become accustomed to this year. Let us hope and pray that the future will allow us to meet and share the excitement in person next year.

## State Awards Announcements

Friday, January 15th, 2021

**6:00 pm** **AWARDS:** Announcing of Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen/Teacher of Year

### MEETING ACCESS:

To Receive the ZOOM Computer & Phone Links to attend the Awards please E-mail or Call:

### VFW State Headquarters

Provide Full Name, Post/AUX #, State "Awards Link Request"

vfwmnoffice@gmail.com 651-291-1757

### AWARDS Presentation Link Requests:

Open to VFW & AUX (Dept. will provide info to District Winners)

**Please request links NO LATER than Wednesday, January 13th 4:30 p.m.**

## VETERANS UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Visit [www.vfwmn.org](http://www.vfwmn.org) for Updates

Archery  
2021 & 2022  
Open for Bids

Bean Bag  
2021 & 2022  
Open for Bids

Bowling  
April 10-11 and 17-18, 2021  
Hosted by Sauk Rapids #6992  
For REGISTRATION watch VFW State website or Call Al Eiyck (320-251-6193) to get Entry Forms

Cribbage  
2021 & 2022  
Hosted by Austin #1216

Fishing  
2021 & 2022  
Hosted by Austin #1216

Golf  
2021 & 2022  
Hosted by Cannon Falls #4452

Horseshoes  
2021 & 2022  
Hosted by Monticello #8731

Pistol  
April 18, 2021  
Hosted by Elk River-Rogers #5518  
For REGISTRATION watch VFW State website or Call Dennis Maddox (612-719-4381) to get Entry Forms

2022  
Open for Bids

Trap Shooting  
2021 & 2022  
Open for Bids

## YOUTH UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Visit [www.vfwmn.org](http://www.vfwmn.org) for Updates

VFW STATE BASEBALL VFW STATE HOCKEY

August 2021  
State Tournament  
Open for Bids

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

August 2022  
State Tournament  
Hosted by Dilworth #1223

2022 State Tournament  
Hosted by Dilworth #1223

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



## Funeral Plans for Veterans

Purple Cross has been serving America's Veterans since 1948 and continues to offer the best funeral plans available. With Funeral Preplanning - you:

- protect your burial funds from nursing home expenses
- Protect your family from financial burden in time of grief
- gain peace of mind by knowing your funeral is taken care of.

### Yes, I would like to know more about:

- Traditional Funeral Cost  Cremation Cost  
 Payment Plan Options  Discount Plans

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

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

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

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ZOOMING for Beginners

**Overview:** This quick start guide walks you through getting started with your new Zoom account, including essential steps like scheduling your first meeting, downloading the Zoom client, and updating your Zoom profile. Whether you just signed up for your own Zoom account or you have been invited to an existing account, read this quick start guide for a summary of your next steps.

### Joining a meeting

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193>

### Prerequisites

- Each meeting has a unique 9, 10, or 11 digit number called a meeting ID that will be required to join a Zoom meeting.
- If you are joining via telephone, you will need the teleconferencing number provided in the invite.
  - \* Open the Zoom desktop client.
  - \* Join a meeting following these steps
    - \* Click **Join a Meeting** if you want to join without signing in.
    - \* Sign in to Zoom then click **Join**.
    - \* Enter the meeting ID number and your display name
    - \* If you're signed in, change your name if you don't want your default name to appear.
    - \* If you're not signed in, enter a display name.
    - \* Select if you would like to connect audio and/or video and click Join.

### Telephone

1. On your phone, dial the teleconferencing number provided in your invite.
2. Enter the meeting ID number when prompted using your dialpad.

**Note:** If you have already joined the meeting via computer, you will have the option to enter your 2-digit participant ID to be associated with your computer. If you have not joined on your computer, simply press # again when prompted to enter in your participant ID.

## 2020 Police Safety Award Community Recognition

At the Robbinsdale City Council meeting on October 21, 2020, Robbinsdale Police Sgt. Chris Woodhall was presented the Minnesota J. Edgar Hoover Police Safety Award by a representative of Clarence LaBelle Post 217.

An Army and Air Force veteran, Woodhall was honored for his service to the community and his ability to calm down people that were depressed, visibly unhappy with themselves, others and the world in general and mad at him for apprehending them.

He has served the City of Robbinsdale for 17 years and was promoted to the position of patrol division sergeant in 2016. He was recognized that same year by Mothers Against Drunk Driving as a top driving while impaired law enforcer.

Woodhall comes from a family of veterans. His father is a Vietnam veteran and both of his grandfathers



were World War II veterans. When asked about his award, he replied, "The long history of the Woodhalls serving it (the armed services) makes this more of an honor for me, and I'm just humbled by the letter that (former Police) Chief Jim Franzen wrote and the honor that's been bestowed, so thank you all."

The audience of Woodhall's peers erupted in a round of applause after he received the award.

## 2020 Bus Driver of the Year Community Recognition



Senior Vice Commander Gene Haag (left) and Post Commander Paul Heibel (right) of the Wat-Kim-Valley V.F.W. Post #5460 presented the plaque for 2020 V.F.W. Bus Driver of the Year award to Robert Dean Mozena at his home Saturday morning, Oct. 3, with all of Dean's family there. Tri-County News Staff photos by Jean Doran Matua.

Published October 8, 2020

Tri-County News

By Jean Doran Matua, Editor

The announcement was made back in June 2020 that Kimball school-bus driver Dean Mozena was to be awarded the 2020 Veterans of Foreign Wars Bus Driver of the Year for Minnesota. Mozena was nominated by Gene Haag, Senior Vice Commander of the Wat-Kim-Valley V.F.W. Post #5460, and the application included commendations from his employer Hendricks Bus Service (all kept quiet, of course).

Normally, there would have been a big end-of-year party to celebrate Dean's retirement and his award, and there would have been celebrating on his last school bus ride of the year as well. But this is the year 2020, and things are different. Schools let out in March to shift to distance learning, and they didn't come back until this fall. Any celebration would have to be postponed, and it would take awhile.

On Saturday, Oct. 3, Dean's children and grandchildren gathered to watch him receive the plaque officially.

The day was made all the more significant because Dean, who is now retired at age 83, is battling esophageal cancer. The occasion presented both the opportunity to present the well-earned award in-person,

and a happy diversion for Dean and his family. Dean was born in Iowa and was 12 years old when his family moved to Kimball; he's been here ever since.

As best anyone remembers, Dean Mozena has driven school bus for 62 years. He started around 1958, driving for Hank Hendricks, Neal Loudon, Sherrill Smith, Dave Hendricks, and now Hendricks Bus Service. (Dean's wife Karen drove school bus for 12 years as well.) He has safely transported generations of Kimball students to and from school, and he is beloved by all. By our rough count, he has made more than 22,000 round trips with our kiddos over the years – not counting driving for sports or field trips. Dean has been involved in the community as well, particularly with the Kimball Lions and with his church.

The award goes to one individual in the state of Minnesota each year.

Dean is a hero and a role model for many. This plaque is only a public confirmation of the esteem in which he is held by his family and his community.

Thank you, Dean, for decades of transporting our kids safely, and for the love and support you show our community. We hope you can feel our love and appreciation back to you now.

## Cootie Corner

by Jim "Fatman" Dalziel  
Commander of the  
Grand of MN

Fellow VFW Comrades of MN

As we enter this Holiday Season, we must turn our attention to those Veterans who are residents at one of the many MN Veterans Homes and VA Hospitals. We must step up our efforts to help these individuals who may have a lonely Christmas without a helping hand. The Staff at these facilities are working hard to serve all the Residents, however there is always a needs list to provide help. A lot of the items are every day items that don't cost a lot and would provide a smile to someone as we start the long cold winter.

Our Membership is slowly approaching our goal for the year. HOWEVER, less than 2% of eligible Members of the MN VFW are Members of the Military Order of the Cooties. Our mission is to serve those who need a helping hand. Our yearly dues are not that much. Come join us and help us serve our Fellow Comrades. If you are interested in joining the Cooties, and do not know who to contact, send me an email at [jamesdalziel@yahoo.com](mailto:jamesdalziel@yahoo.com).

We are currently in our yearly fund raising for our Venison Program. If you don't know, we provide a venison dinner to those Residents in the MN Veterans homes. We are selling our raffle tickets at \$1.00. If you would like to purchase some tickets ask you local Cootie or send myself an email, I would be more than happy to deliver some to you.

## Safety Program

by Brian Gislason

Posts must submit their Safety Program entries to their District.

Each District is to submit **only one entry per award** to the Department for judging.

Here are the important dates for Safety Program:

- 12/15/2020 Law Enforcement, EMT and Firefighter entries due at District
- 01/01/2021 Law Enforcement, EMT and Firefighter entries due at Department Office
- 01/15/2021 Judging of Dept. entries done
- 02/15/2021 Bus Driver entries due at District
- 03/01/2021 Bus Drivers Entries due to Department

I would like to see all the Posts in the State have at least one Safety entry. This includes EMT, Fire Department, and Police Officer.

I know the Fire Department is a close knit group so nominate the entire Fire Department.

Entry forms and related information can be found in the Department General Orders and online at [www.vfwmn.org](http://www.vfwmn.org)



## Centennial - from Page 1

members of note, historic pictures, old VFW memorabilia... whatever you find interesting and fun. The Department Headquarters would like to capture all of these things in a 100th Anniversary Book we will create (target availability- Fall 2021) as well as perhaps displaying any special artifacts at a future event (perhaps State Convention in June).

Finally, we are also planning a few celebrates throughout 2021. They may not be as we expected originally, but we are going to make the best of it... even with social distancing! WATCH future announcements for details on a state-wide "parade" that EVERYONE can take part in, special

events at State Convention including a few fun challenges, and most of all, SEND us your stories, pictures and artifacts. DON'T WAIT- We want to hear from you TODAY and will be accepting submissions through at least Memorial Day. Thank You for your help... let's record our Centennial in a way that honors the Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars for all posterity!

### Information & Updates:

Monthly MNVFW General Orders

E-Blasts [www.vfwmn.org](http://www.vfwmn.org)

Facebook: Veterans of Foreign Wars

Department of Minnesota

Call: 651-291-1757

# Timely Tidbits

## Year-End Community Service Books

Use the 'Event Tracking Form' released by the Department this year. This option provides a SIMPLER WAY to record your Post/Auxiliary individual Community Service Activities!

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

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

### IMPORTANT NOTES:

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

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

## Contests for Winter 2020-21

### VFW:

**Law Enforcement - EMT - Fire Fighter - Bus Driver**

### AUXILIARY:

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

Watch for Details in the Monthly General Orders and on the Department Websites:

[www.vfwmn.org](http://www.vfwmn.org) & [vfwauxmn.org](http://vfwauxmn.org)

# The Names of Santa

Santa is known throughout the world by various names and in various forms. Here are some of the names according to <https://bestlifeonline.com/different-names-for-santa-claus/>



# Word Search #9

NOTE: ONLY words in BOLD are in the Word Search.

- America **Santa Claus**
- China **Dun Che Lao Ren**  
**Christmas Old Man**
- Denmark **Julemand** (Mischievous Gnome)
- England **Father Christmas**
- Finland **Joulupukki**
- Germany **Christkind**  
**Kris Kringle**  
**Weihnachtsmann**  
**Christmas Man**
- Greece **Agios Vasilios**  
**Saint Basil**
- Holland **Kerstman**
- Iceland **Jólasveinar** (Band of Trolls)  
**Yule Lads**
- Japan **Hoteiosho**  
**Santa Kurohshu**
- Latin America **Niño Jesús**  
**Papá Noel**
- Netherlands **Sinterklass**  
**Saint Nicholas**
- Norway **Julenissen** (Mischievous Gnome)  
**Christmas Gnome**
- Russia **Ded Moroz**  
**Grandfather Frost**
- Sweden **Jultomte** (Mischievous Gnome)





## The MNVFW Charitable Association Raffle Calendar is Now Available



This Calendar features the Minnesota VFW Auxiliary Young American Creative Patriotic Art & Illustrating America Artwork

Enjoy & Share the beautiful and moving artwork of our State level entries...

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](mailto:mnvfwcharitable@gmail.com) or Call 651-291-1757

To purchase a copy for yourself, contact your nearest VFW Post

Looking for a Program that's Educational AND Entertaining?

## Fundraising for THE BOYS OF '61!

Minnesota's Civil War Veterans Memorial

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



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

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

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

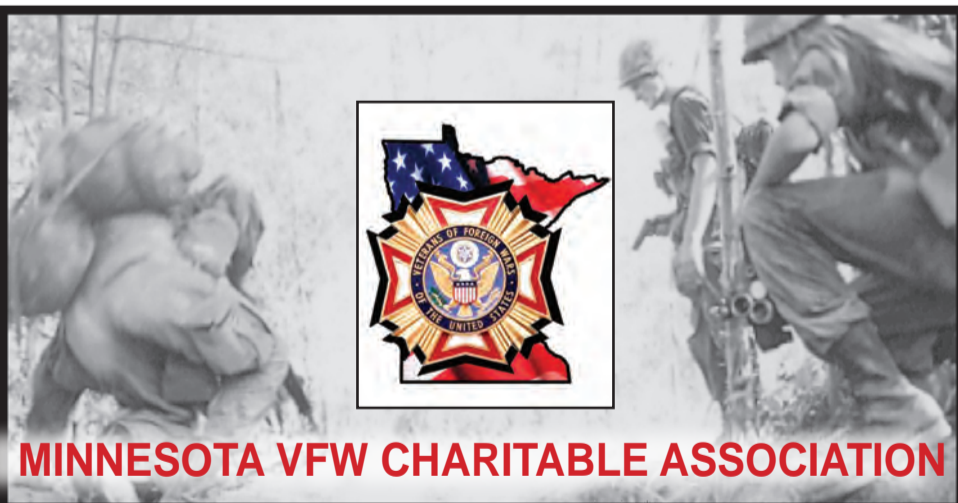
[historicalexperiences.org](http://historicalexperiences.org)

or contact the presenter at...

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

For more information on THE BOYS of '61 see: <https://www.minnesotaboys61.org/>

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



## MINNESOTA VFW CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Earmark for one of the following: \_\_\_\_\_ General Un-designated

\_\_\_\_\_ VFW Outdoor Fund

\_\_\_\_\_ Veterans Service

\_\_\_\_\_ VFW Programs

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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