

GOPHER OVERSEA'R

Volume 72, NO. 3 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Official Publication to More Than 45,000 Members of the Department of Minnesota October 2018 - January 2019

Minnesota Loses Past National Commander-In-Chief Staum

John S. Staum, Age 87, longtime resident of Blaine, passed peacefully on September 23, 2018. Preceded in death by parents, Nels and Lydia; sister, Phyllis Peterson. Survived by loving wife of 64 years, Bernadette; children, Mark and Nancy; grandchildren, Lindsey, Jake, Nils and Lars; and great-granddaughter, Clare.

John is a 1948 graduate of Central High School in Minneapolis. He attended St. Olaf College. John worked in Construction, Sales and Management.

Serving in the United States Marine Corps, John earned his eligibility for the Veterans of Foreign Wars during the Korean War.

John served through the



chairs of Coon Rapids VFW Post 9625, becoming Post Commander in 1961 – 1963. He went through the chairs of Minnesota's Seventh District, attaining District

Commander in 1966 – 1967. John then served through the Department Chairs and was elected as State Commander for the 1970 – 1971 year. He then made a run for National Commander-in-Chief and was elected to that position for the 1985 – 1986 year. Obviously, John served on many State and National Committees, where he shared his expertise and experience.

Some people accomplish their goals and get their accolades with a lot of 'noise and pats on the back'... John Staum did not work that way... John lead by example. He Dedicated a very large part of his life to the Veterans of Foreign

Continued on Page 5



2018-19 State Commander

Tom Hanson



Member of VFW Post 1639 Willmar, MN

GREETINGS:

By the time this edition of the Gopher Oversea'r goes to press, Thanksgiving will be in our rear view mirror and we'll be looking forward to celebrating Christmas, or whatever other events you choose to recognize during the Holiday season.

This time of year we are reminded once again of our brothers and sisters that were unable to come home and toast with us. During this Holiday period a large number of families will sanctify the loss of a loved one to our National cause. We too lament and share their heartbreak. Moreover we take pause to understand and remember why we belong to a veterans service organization like the Veterans of Foreign Wars. One of our ideals and purpose for existence is to honor our fallen comrades and to perpetuate their memory. We must never forget that this duty and the honor we share to carry this out, is essential!

I am pleased to acknowledge

Continued on Page 10

PDC Vetter Passes Away

Jim passed away on Saturday, November 17, 2018 with his family at his side while under the respectful care of the Fargo Veterans Hospital and Community Living Center.

James Duane Vetter was born November 6, 1939 in Mosinee, Wisconsin to Bruno and Grace (Cannady) Vetter. Jim attended school in Marathon, Wisconsin graduating from Marathon High School in 1957. He attended college in Stevens Point, Wisconsin before entering the United States Air Force on February 5, 1958. His Air Force isolated tours included



Morocco, North Africa; Fort Yukon, Alaska; and Viet Nam (where he earned his eligibility for the Veterans of Foreign Wars). Jim served as a radar controller when stationed in Wadena, Minnesota; Baudette, Minnesota; and Friesing, Germany; a recruiter in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin; and two tours in Duluth, Minnesota working with NORAD forces. Jim retired from the U.S. Air Force on September 1, 1979 after 21 ½ years of service.

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Midwinter Conference January 18-20... Details on Page 12

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Save The Date!! Upcoming VFW Events

Midwinter Conference January 18 - 20, 2019 Minneapolis Marriott	Watch the General Orders or visit www.mnvfw.org	VFW State Hockey Tournament March 22-24, 2019 Thief River Falls
National Legislative & Voice of Democracy Conference March 2-7, 2019 Washington, D.C.		State Convention June 12-16, 2019 Saint Cloud

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

Top News



Quartermaster News

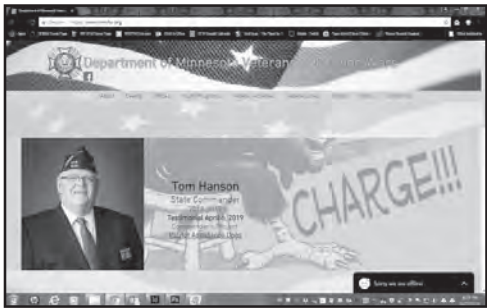
~FROM THE DESK OF JERRY BRLETICH, DEPARTMENT QUARTERMASTER

ATTENTION QUARTERMASTERS & TRUSTEES

CHANGE in Submitting Post Audits:

- ALL Quarterly Audits submitted MUST be ORIGINAL Audit Forms with ORIGINAL Signatures ONLY. NO Photocopies will be accepted from now on. NO Emailed Audits will be accepted from now on. ORIGINAL Hard Copy Audits, with original Ink Signatures, MUST be MAILED via United States Mail to State Headquarters. Starting in December, ANY Audits not following these guidelines WILL BE REFUSED.

New Department Website



Our New Website
is well underway!

Visit
www.mnvfw.org
to see more

We are continuing make changes
and add content so
check back often.

General Orders Survey

Minnesota VFW Department Headquarters is
considering some changes to the monthly General Orders.
(Don't know what the General Orders are... See page 15 in this paper.)

Posts and randomly selected officers or members
may receive a phone call, email or letter
from Headquarters staff asking a few questions
about your experience with the monthly General Orders.

Please Note- We will NOT ask any personal information.

All questions will be related to
your understanding of the General Orders and
how your Post utilizes them at your monthly meetings.

Aspects of the GOs that you find helpful
and areas that could be improved.

We will keep the questions brief and would appreciate your responses
should you be contacted.

If you have ANY questions, please contact Minnesota VFW State Headquarters at
651-291-1757 or email vfwmnoffice@gmail.com

Stillwater Vet Receives Highest French Honor

Stillwater WWII Veteran Robert Webber,
age 95, was honored with the French
Legion of Honor Award for his efforts
during Operation Dragoon.

Mr. Webber served in the U.S. Army 517th
Parachute Infantry Regime. In 1944, as
part of Operation Dragoon, he parachuted
behind German lines.



Guillaume Lacroix, Council
General of France for the
Midwest Region, presented
Robert Webber with France's
highest honor.

To right: Webber's collection
of Military ribbons, honors
and more.



Minnesota VFW Office Locations

Department Headquarters:

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Jerry Brletich, Quartermaster
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Webpage: www.mnvfw.org

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Jon Gohn, Claims Director
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Scott Sutherland
VFW Hospital Representative
Minneapolis VAMC - 4G Room 109D
Phone: (612) 725-2000 ext. 4448

GOPHER OVERSEAS'R

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Tom Hanson, Commander; Chad Solheid, Sr. Vice Commander;
Curt Hermanson, Jr. Vice Commander; Barry Henriksen, Judge Advocate.

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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 Chad Solheid, State Senior Vice Commander

Greetings Comrades

The year has been a busy one so far and we're not done yet! Not long after the June convention I attended the Camp Ripley motorcycle ride, the Council of Administration in Sauk Rapids and then right into the National Convention in Kansas City, MO. As soon as I got back it was time to get out to some of the Districts and see what they've been up to and to get reports from them about their activities.

Fall Conference was an informative time and a lot of new information was put out. The members that attended seemed to have positive feedback about the training and programs. Some of the recommendations have been addressed already for next year. The Big Ten Conference was held in St. Louis, MO in October where the national officers provided program training and round table discussions. Congratulations to newly installed Big 10 President Char Guse, who also serves as the Auxiliary President of Spring Lake Park.

District inspections have gone well. I found time to help my family during Thanksgiving and we were able to volunteer at a church that provided a Thanksgiving meal for the community. I also participated in the Membership Convoy and somehow managed to travel 830 miles and stop at 6 different posts, all in 2 days- what an adventure!

Midwinter Conference is on the horizon in January and I would like to congratulate all the winners of the various programs and scholarships awarded through the VFW. I hope to see you all there.

Please remind your annual members to get their dues in for this year and encourage them to become Life members and not have to worry about dues. I would also encourage the Life members to look into becoming Legacy Life Members, as this will also benefit your post in the long run. Happy Holidays and safe travels to all.

Buddy Poppy

By Barry Henriksen, State Judge Advocate and Poppy Chair

All posts should have their Poppy's ordered by Midwinter Conference. It is part of your post inspection. Help make your district the first district to be 100% in ordering and 100% in total purchased. Order 250 more than last year to get your Commander maximum points toward All State status.

Make sure you stop by and see all of the great Poppy displays at Midwinter. They are sure to be memorable.

Membership

By Dale Hooegeveen, State Membership Chair

Congratulations and thank you to the Posts achieving 100%! As of December 16th, we now have 30 posts in the Department that have earned a cash award for this outstanding achievement and have 67 posts within 5 members of achieving 100% with another 50 posts within 10 members. Total needed to get all 117 posts to 100% is 610, current unpaid members in those posts is 833. Let's contact those members and renew them for another year! Excellent effort by all districts that also resulted in the Department achieving 92.60% in November and earning QM Brletich the award of a Henry rifle from National Headquarters.

District 1 - Chatfield 6913
District 2 - Lakeville 210, Montgomery 5340
District 3 - Redwood Falls 2553
District 6 - Watkins 5460, Browerville 8391

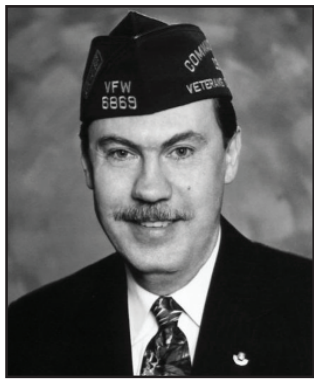
District 7 continues to lead the Department at 96.22% with District 6 retaining second place at 95.57% (District 1 is close behind at 95.22% and District 3 at 95%). While recruiting, remind veterans the benefits they currently enjoy are the result of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and other veteran's organizations efforts to persuade Congress to adequately fund healthcare, to protect the benefits earned by honorable service, and to be diligent in working to obtain those earned benefits for all qualifying veterans. Additionally, many of those same veterans will have children and grandchildren who will serve in the Armed Forces. It is our and their responsibility to ensure future generations are also cared for.

The Membership Caravan conducted on November 17-18 saw three teams led by Commander Hanson, Sr Vice Commander Solheid and Jr Vice Commander Hermanson comprised of VFW and Auxiliary members travel approximately 2000 miles visiting thirteen posts to distribute membership recruiting materials and share ideas to increase success. Many lessons were learned and will be applied to future efforts. Applications for nine new members were given to the team, thank you to Posts 906, 7662, and 950 for the great recruiting work! Thank you to the participating posts and comrades for your hospitality. A second Membership Caravan is tentatively being planned for Spring 2019, details will be presented at Mid-Winter Conference.

Reversing the annual decline in membership in the State of Minnesota is achievable. We all need to continue to be aggressive in our efforts to recruit, retain and reinstate!

Gory to God on the Highest,

AND ON EARTH PEACE, *good will toward men.*



**VFW National
Representative**

**George R.
Cramer**

**Past National
Commander-in-Chief
1993-1994**

George R. Cramer was elected VFW Commander-in-Chief at the 94th VFW National Convention in Dallas, Texas in August 1993.

Prior to entering the military, Cramer earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in education from Loyola University in Chicago, Ill.

Following graduation he entered the U.S. Army, serving in Vietnam from October 1967 through December 1968 as an artillery surveyor with the 6/14 Artillery, 1st Field Forces. During his tour he was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal, the Air Medal and the Bronze Star for meritorious service.

Cramer joined the VFW in 1969 and is a Legacy Life Member of Post 3873 in Naperville, Ill. Cramer earned All-State Post Commander in 1972-74 and again in 1989-90, an All-American District Commander in 1976-77, a 100% Department Commander in 1982-83 and

All-State Post Quartermaster 1976-1985; 2003-08. He is currently serving as the 19th District Quartermaster where he has earned All-American honors.

In addition, he has served as District and Department budget chairman and as National Chief of Staff in 1985-86, as well as serving on the National Council of Administration in 1989-91. He was selected as the Combined Veterans' Association Person of the Year.

Cramer retired as the Special Assistant to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, serving as the Secretary's national veterans' service organization liaison. Prior to this appointment, he was the VSO liaison for the VA Chicago Health Care System and VISN 12 (Hines, Ill.), communications officer for the department's Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services program. Cramer previously served eight years as assistant director for the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs.

During his year as national commander, the VFW partnered with the VA to co-sponsor the National Veterans Golden Age Games. He traveled extensively during his term of office, including Normandy for the 50th anniversary of D-Day, where he placed a wreath at Omaha Beach in honor of those who died there.

Cramer is active in many civic and fraternal organizations including the Selective Service Board, American Legion, AMVETS and the Disabled American Veterans. He also serves on the advisory board at the Abraham Lincoln National VA Cemetery.

He and his wife Linda, son Scott, and daughter Cheryl make their home in Naperville, Ill.

Minnesota Auxiliary News



STATE PRESIDENT VFW Auxiliary Patches Presfield

Member of
VFW Post 4847
St Cloud, MN



Well, this year is about half over...where has the time gone. It has been sad times the last few months. We have had to say farewell to several of our Past National, State and Department Leaders.

My program is Project Healing Waters and it does wonders for our veterans with PTSD and mental health concerns. I have seen its accomplishments first hand as I had the opportunity to help out a veteran that graduated out of the program and transitioned into his own apartment. But he is just one...there are many more and they need funding to continue the good work for our veterans. So don't forget my President's Special Project – Project Healing Waters at the St. Cloud VA Hospital.

Almost all of the inspections are done and we even have a prospect for a new auxiliary.

The Mid-Winter Conference is just around the corner and I look forward to seeing all the wonderful Poppy Displays. With the talent in our state; we should have some displays that will be winners at the National Convention. But let's not forget, we will also be honoring the Voice of Democracy winners and Patriot Pen winner.

Save the date on your calendars: March 23rd, Jack and Jim's in Duelm...my Testimonial Dinner

With our Department, the toughest hurdle to overcome is membership. I am proud to say that by the end of November, we were over 90%...2nd place in the Big 10 Conference...2nd place in Division 5 on the National Level. Way to go team!! But, we can't stop now; we must push on for 100%. I am very confident that "We Can Do It".

1998-1999 Past State President Violet "Vi" Wagoner Passes at Age 88



Violet "Vi" Wagoner, Age 88, of Bayport, Formerly of Oak Park Heights and Lake Elmo, Passed away peacefully on November 19, 2018. Violet was and Air Force Veteran, Past Auxiliary President, Past District President, and Past Department President of the VFW Auxiliary, 2-Term member of a longtime volunteer at the VA Hospital.

On June 21, 1998 at the Department Convention in Moorhead, MN Violet Wagoner was installed by Bertha Anderson as President of the Ladies Auxiliary, Veterans of Foreign Wars as the 75th President of the Department of Minnesota.

Vi chose the Whale as her symbol. Her theme was "With Honor and Loyalty Ever", Her color was VIOLET, and of course her flower was the VIOLET. Vi's special project was Homeless Women Veterans.

At her National Convention in 1999 in San Antonio TX, Minnesota received first place Awards/Plates in Hospital & VAVS, Historian, Publicity and Youth Activities. Vi had the honor of instituting a new Jr. Unit at Forest Lake Post #4210.

Preceded in death by husband, Neville "Cap"; and daughter, Ellen Mitchell. Survived by children, James Bidler, Elizabeth Wagoner, and David Bidler; grandchildren, Jessica, Tessa, Patrick, Keith and Adam; extended family and friends.

Vi was thankful for all the wonderful opportunities and memories with her VFW and Auxiliary friends from Lake Elmo Post #5725, the 4th District and all throughout Minnesota. Memorials are preferred to the DAV.

Membership

By Sonia Tatge, State Membership Chair

We all know that membership is the life of our organization. As we serve our Veterans, active-duty military, and their families, we look forward to the future by recruiting and retaining our membership.

Let potential members know that "it is an honor to have a veteran in their family who makes them eligible for the VFW Auxiliary. Not everyone can join, and their veteran's service and sacrifice can be honored through their membership."

To get those new members, current VFW Auxiliary members must feel confident in approaching and recruiting potential members. Share successful recruiting campaign tips with others and promote training with members on recruiting within your Auxiliary. Auxiliary Membership Chairmen, this is your chance to help your Auxiliary and win a National Award, also.

Resources are an important tool and the VFW Auxiliary Podium Edition of the National Bylaws, Booklet of Instruction and Ritual is just that. Having a good understanding of the Auxiliary is necessary to be able to explain what we do. Other key resources are the National website, Facebook, blog, and many more.

All of us must now get out and RECRUIT, RETAIN, AND REJOIN those potential members. BELIEVE WE CAN DO IT!!

Auxiliary National Representative Carla Martinez National Guard 2018-2019



Carla Martinez of Layton, Utah, was elected National Guard of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) Auxiliary at its 105th National Convention in Kansas City, MO., on July 25, 2018. She is now in the first of five offices leading to the National Presidency, which she is expected to hold in 2023-2024.

A Life Member of Miller-Frazer VFW Auxiliary 8307, she has served the organization in many capacities, including Auxiliary, District and Department President. She also served as Department

Chief of Staff in 2017-2018.

On the National level, Carla served as National Certified Recruiter Trainer for the state of Utah from 2016-2018 and as the National Western Conference Chairman for the Scholarships program in 2017-2018.

She joined on the eligibility of her father, Harry Creel, who served in the United States Air Force for 23 years, and also served in the Vietnam War.

Carla is employed at WCF Insurance and has been there for 20 years. She is a Lifetime Member of the Military Order of the Cooties, a Lifetime Member of the Fleet Reserve Association and is a Gold Legacy Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). She is retired from the United States Navy and also spent 13 months in Korea.

In her spare time, Carla enjoys volunteering at the VA Hospital, recruiting with her VFW membership team, co-chairing her Auxiliary's Youth Group, setting out crosses for Memorial Day and helping with "Buddy" Poppy events.

Plan Ahead For A Stronger Auxiliary!!!

DUES ARE NOW DUE!!!

Get your
Membership Teams Together,
Assign a Recruiting List
to your Auxiliary Recruiting Team.
Check with your Post and
Auxiliary Members
for Eligible male members.



National Commander-In-Chief &
1985-1986 Past State Commander

John S. Staum
Passes at Age 87

Wars and worked tirelessly for a ‘stronger’ Organization. John knew many people... some in ‘high’ places... and he never hesitated to call on anyone of those people when the success of the Organization was paramount.

John was very aware of the activities (successes and failures) at his Post, the District, the Department and at the National Organization. After his service as Commander-in-Chief, John returned home to help his Post (on a daily basis as Post Quartermaster). John attended all of his District meetings and all of the Department functions. His Dedic-

tion was unequalled. He was only a phone call or sometimes a visit away. (I know John was always looking over my shoulder and was always there to correct my mistakes.)

John Loved his Family. With all of his commitments to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and his job, John always found time to share in all of their Family experiences.

It goes without saying, that John S. Staum will be missed. There is already a felt ‘emptiness’ at all District and Department functions. Hopefully, John is ‘still looking over our shoulders’... helping us where he can.



Dear VFW & Auxiliary Friends,

We would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude for all of the visits, phone calls and greeting cards that everyone sent while John was ill.

Hearing from his VFW friends always brightened his day. All of the prayers and kindness shown during this difficult time means more than you know.

Thank You,
Bernadette Staum & Family

1993-1994 Past State Commander

Jim D. Vetter
Passes at Age 79

While stationed in Wadena, MN, Jim met and married his devoted wife, Anna Mae Rebeck. They were married on November 19, 1960.

Following retirement from the U.S. Air Force, Jim managed the Perham Liquor Store.

Jim was an active member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, working diligently through Post 4020, Ninth District Commander (1988-89), and was elected State Commander in 1993. Obviously, he served on numerous VFW State and National Committees.

Jim was among five people responsible for the establishment of the Veterans Home in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. An accomplishment that he talked about with pride.

Jim loved his family and enjoyed his grandchildren’s visits and activities. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, making sausage, smoking salmon and caring for his beautiful flower gardens. A Wisconsin native, Jim remained an avid Packer fan.

Jim is survived by his loving

wife, Anna Mae; four daughters: Teri, Laure, Mary and Kelly, grandsons: Aaron, Andrew, Matthew, Isaac, Ryan and granddaughter, Megan; sisters: Sara and Lynnette; brother, Tom; sisters-in-law: Margaret and Rae Marie; brother-in-law, Marvin; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, and VFW Comrades.

Jim was preceded in death by his parents: Bruno and Grace Vetter; siblings: Everett, Don, Judy, Ruth, Patricia, Susan and precious granddaughter, Mariah Brooke Nissen.

Jim was a quiet man. Sometimes unassuming and always reassuring. He never shied away from a ‘challenge’... As State Commander, Jim faced a couple of major challenges which reinforced the strength of the Department of Minnesota VFW. He stood ‘Strong’!

As it is with most of our Past State Commanders, Jim Vetter was there at the RIGHT time. His contributions to the Veterans of Foreign Wars will not be forgotten.

Capital Hill Press

By Tommy Johnson, Legislative Chairman



As we enter the holiday season, it is important to remember our Brothers and Sisters that are struggling. “Happiest time of the year”? Not for all; for far too many the holidays are anything but that. Especially for those that have no place to call home; no place to “hang their stockings with care.”

Specifically, I’m talking Homeless Veterans, and more specifically, I’m talking Homeless Veterans in Hennepin County. 65 communities in over 30 states have ended Veteran Homelessness and have the systems/policies/procedures in place to have any future homeless veterans in a place of their own within 90 days; these communities have reached what is called “Functional Zero.” Sadly, Hennepin County is not on the list of those that have ended Veteran Homelessness and achieved Functional Zero.

The goal was to end Veteran Homelessness in 2014 - <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/08/27/young-reporters> Then it was 2015. Then it was 2016 - <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/01/28/minnesota-veterans-homelessness> It is now almost the end of 2018, and the newest goal I can find is by 2020 - https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/minnesota-action-plan-18-20_tcm1053-328234.pdf

At some point, people in positions of authority need to be asked: “What are you going to do differently because what you’ve been doing isn’t working.”

The VFW believes it should be something that has been talked about for years; most notably at the August 2015 Homeless Veterans Summit at the Minneapolis VA Medical Facility: Veteran Preference.

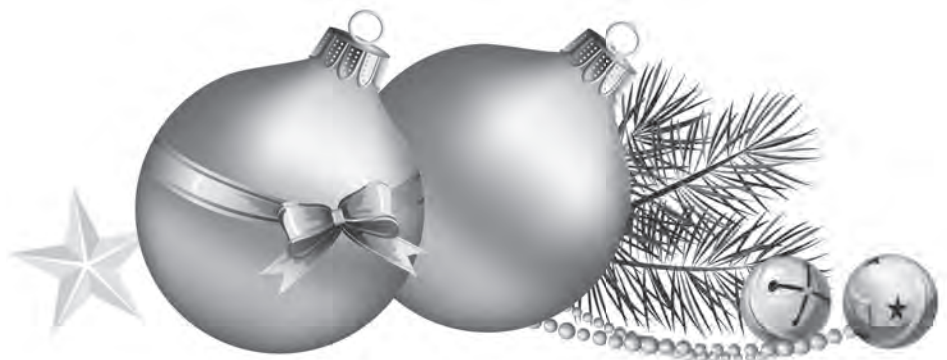
This tool was discussed at this Summit by Eric Grumdahl, the Governor’s Special Advisor to End Veteran Homelessness and working through the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs. This tool was never adopted by Hennepin County; this tool is opposed by Hennepin County Commissioner Jan Callison, who serves as the Co-Chair of Hennepin County’s effort to end homelessness.

To ensure that the Veteran Preference tool is put in place, your VFW is working with all 9 Congressionally-chartered Veteran Services Organizations – the American Legion, AmVets, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Jewish War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart (MPOH), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), and the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) to pass legislation in St. Paul that requires that any state homeless funds must include a Veterans Preference.

Please contact your State Representative and State Senator and let them know you support a Veterans Preference. Ask them for their support for state legislation mandating a Veteran Preference for all state expenditures for homelessness. You can find your State Representative and State Senator here: <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/districtfinder> or by calling House Information at (651) 296-2146 or 1 (800) 657-3550 – those numbers will give you your State Representative and State Senator phone numbers. Please email the gist of your response(s) from your State Representative and State Senator to: Tommy@UptownVFW.org.

Our Brothers and Sisters that served our country and are homeless deserve better. The goals of ending Veteran Homelessness in 2014 – in 2015 – in 2016 - etc. have not been met and it’s not going to happen this year. Let’s make sure it is met next year. Please make these calls or send the emails and show up at Veterans Day On The Hill in St. Paul in March 20, 2019 (Tenatively in the afternoon) to talk to your State Representative and State Senator in person.

Start today planning a carpool or bus trip to the Minnesota Veterans Day on the Hill and let’s show them that we want to be heard.



Claims and Service Office Report

By Jon Gohn, Claims Director

VFW Urges VA: Add Hypertension, Agent Orange to Presumptive List

National Academies Link Hypertension, MGUS to Agent Orange Exposure
VFW urges VA to swiftly add both diseases to presumptive list
November 15, 2018

WASHINGTON —

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is calling on the Department of Veterans Affairs to add hypertension and a precursor to multiple myeloma to the current list of 14 presumptive diseases associated with contact with chemical defoliants used in Vietnam, Thailand, and along the Korean DMZ.

The VFW’s case is bolstered by a new report just released by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. The report, entitled Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 11 (2018), found that sufficient evidence exists that links exposure to at least one of the hazardous chemicals with hypertension and MGUS, or monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance. The hypertension finding is an upgrade from their 2014 report and MGUS is a newly considered condition.

Said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence, “There is no

doubt in anyone’s mind that Agent Orange made veterans sick, it made their children sick, and it brought pain and suffering and premature death to many. Even though it’s been a half century since they were exposed, the results of that exposure is something they continue to live with daily,” he said.

“The VFW thanks the National Academies for continuing to honor the charter that Congress gave them, and we now call on VA Secretary Robert Wilkie to use his authority and recognize the science in the report to swiftly add these two illnesses to the presumptive list so that these veterans can finally receive the

assistance they earned and deserve,” said Lawrence.

The VFW will continue to monitor the progress of the potentially two new presumptive illnesses. In the meantime, the VFW

encourages all veterans who served in Vietnam, in Thailand or along the Korean DMZ to contact a VFW Service Officer to discuss whether they are eligible to file a VA claim for Agent Orange exposure. Click here to find a VFW Service Officer nearest you. For the list of 14 presumptive diseases, click here.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
“Swiftly add these two illnesses... so Veterans can finally receive the assistance they earned and deserve.”

~ B.J. Lawrence,
VFW National Commander



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: ●
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Exploring VA’s Oversight of Contract Disability Examinations

Exploring VA’s Oversight of Contract Disability Examinations
November 15, 2018

*Statement of Michael Figlioli,
Deputy Director National Veterans Service,
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States*

*For the Record
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Veterans’ Affairs
Subcommittee on Disability Assistance
and Memorial Affairs With Respect To
“Exploring VA’s Oversight of Contract
Disability Examinations”*

WASHINGTON, DC-

Chairman Bost, Ranking Member Esty, and members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and its Auxiliary, thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments on the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) oversight of contract disability examinations (CDEs).

Over the last 20 years, VA has more frequently contracted with private health care providers as a way to provide sound medical opinions with the intent to quickly and accurately adjudicate veterans’ disability benefit claims. This contracted system has proven to be beneficial to both veterans seeking benefits and VA in ensuring veterans can receive timely and correct benefit decisions. The VFW fully supports VA’s efforts to provide veterans with contract disability examination options for a variety of reasons. The most significant of which is that we believe, and veterans confirm, that private providers can furnish a largely objective opinion in evaluating a veteran’s claimed medical condition.

Moreover, we hear frequent positive comments about contract exams and the outcomes for veterans. Unfortunately, since VA executed its latest contract for disability examinations in 2016 and extended work to two new vendors, Logistics Health, Inc. (LHI) and MSLA, a Medical Corporation, the VFW has seen new problems emerge which impelled us to join our partners in the veterans service organization community to call for a hearing so that this subcommittee can better assess the situation.

Under the most recent contract, VA instituted new, incredibly rigid timelines for contractors to complete exams and return records to VA. Though the recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report

notes that VA allows 20 days for vendors to conduct routine exams, in reality the vendors tell the VFW that this leaves them a window of only about one business week in which to conduct the exams. This is an unreasonable expectation. These standards in no way reflect the needs of the veteran, nor are they favorable to VA which has a well-documented shortage of examiners at both the full-time employee and contract levels. When we ask VA about these timelines, the usual response is that VA believes veterans want their benefits completed quickly. We concur. However, VA cannot sacrifice accuracy and a positive customer experience for the sake of speed. It does not matter how quickly a veteran receives a rating decision from VA if the decision is wrong.

Since 2016 — and amid multiple disputes about the validity of VA’s contract; extensions of bridge contracts; termination of one of VA’s new vendors; and the solicitation of new bids — the VFW has seen a growing list of problems with VA’s contract exam system. This summer, in light of these problems, we asked VA for a report on quality for the current contract examination system. After dragging its feet for more than a month, VA finally replied that they could not share this information unless the VFW filed a Freedom of Information Act request. After reviewing the GAO report, the VFW believes that the leadership of the Mandatory Disability Exam Office did not want to admit that they had not completed a quality review report for any period in 2018. With all of these factors affecting veterans’ access to accurate and timely benefits, this hearing comes at a very critical time.

The VFW can summarize the problems we have seen with the current contract exam system as follows:

- Late notification of exams.
- Lack of options for veterans to reschedule exams.
- Lack of availability of adequate examiners with reasonable distance to the veteran.
- No adequate review of a veteran’s claim file prior to the exam.
- Inadequate time with provider due to volume and turnaround.

Late Notification of Exams

The VFW has learned from our field

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VA Rates 70 Percent of Its Nursing Homes as Failures: VFW, Legion Demand Immediate Action

VA Rates 70 Percent of its Nursing Homes as Failures VFW, Legion national commanders demand immediate action

November 14, 2018

WASHINGTON —

The national commanders of the nation's two largest veterans organizations are demanding that Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie bring immediate attention to his nursing home program that currently has 70 percent of its 132 homes receiving failing grades by the VA's own rating system.

The call by Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. National Commander B.J. Lawrence and American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad is in response to a series of

scathing articles by two USA Today and Boston Globe reporters who documented substandard and negligent care at the VA nursing home in Brockton, Mass., which is one of 45 nursing homes that received the VA's lowest rating of one star. Forty-seven homes received two stars, 16 homes three stars, and 15 homes four stars. Only nine nursing homes received the VA's top five-star rating.

"While much of the media's attention has been on the proper implementation of VA healthcare legislation, we cannot forget about 46,000 mostly senior veterans who reside in these nursing homes," said the two national commanders, who collectively speak for more than 4.6 million members and their auxiliaries.

"The media reports about sub-

par care, patient neglect and safety violations at VA nursing homes are more than just disturbing," said the Legion's national commander. "Legionnaires, our friends in the VFW, and anybody who respects veterans should be angered by this," said Reistad. "These are not just patients in a home, these are people who in the prime of their lives risked their lives, and made enormous sacrifices on behalf of our country. America's veterans deserve better. We not only expect VA to fix these problems immediately, but we want transparency. Those who sleep on the job and ignore the best interests of their patients need to find a different employer."

Echoing his counterpart, the VFW national commander said

"These veterans earned the right to receive high quality care in a fully-staffed and well-managed facility. Their families deserve to know that their loved ones — their heroes — are not being abandoned or abused, and America needs to be reassured that the VA is honoring our nation's promise to those who have borne the battle," said Lawrence. "The VA must improve its delivery of quality care at these facilities. It must recruit and retain only the best healthcare professionals and support staff, and it must hold all employees accountable for their actions or inactions. It is not a right but a privilege to work for America's veterans, and anything less is unacceptable."

VA EXAMS- Cont. from Page 6

staff and locally in the Military District of Washington about dozens of instances where veterans were not notified in a timely manner that VA had scheduled exams. In one example from Georgia, the veteran was contacted by VA's vendor, LHI, on a Thursday afternoon for an exam scheduled on Monday morning. When the veteran tried to reschedule with LHI, he was guilted into rearranging his schedule for the Monday appointment and essentially forced into calling out of work and rearranging other health care appointments out of fear that his benefits would be adversely affected. When the VFW reviewed the veteran's claim file, we noticed that not only had VA sent the exam request to LHI less than a week before the exam was scheduled, VA also failed to include accurate contact information for the veteran, which was readily available in the veteran's records.

Under the old contract, veterans were afforded more time to get their affairs in order to attend contract exams. Even the legacy contractors have complained to the VFW that the new contract makes it harder for veterans to attend exams, resulting in higher no-shows and returned exam requests to VA, either further delaying delivery of earned benefits, or worse, resulting in erroneous denial of benefits.

Lack of Options to Reschedule

Given the new compressed timeline, we hear from veterans that if they cannot make the appointments assigned to them by the contractor, they are offered only three options: attend your appointment regardless

of conflicts; be reported as a no-show and VA will likely deny your benefits; or have the contractor return the appointment request to VA as a cancellation with the hope that VA issues another exam request soon. Each of these options is bad for veterans. Under the old contract, the legacy contractors were reasonably flexible with veterans, ensuring exams could be completed in a matter of weeks. The VFW received very few complaints before 2016, and even collected positive stories about the contract exam experience.

Unfortunately, under the new contract, we have seen negative outcomes for veterans and some potentially concerning business practices when it comes to rescheduling or cancellation requests. The most glaring example of this came from a veteran in Maryland who is assisted by the VFW staff here in Washington, D.C. According to the veteran's claim file, VA ordered a series of exams from LHI on October 17, 2018. On October 18, 2018, the veteran was listed in the Veterans Benefits Management System as a no-show for her exams. This obviously caught our attention and we contacted the veteran to learn what happened. The veteran told us that she was called by LHI on October 18, and asked if she could reschedule. LHI told her she could not, and they would have to return the exam request to VA. Veterans seeking benefits should not have to be concerned about contractor penalties due to their inability to properly notify them or obtain a timely exam.

In spite of this, what concerns the VFW most about this situation is that the veteran was reported as a no-show. Our understanding of the contract is that this means that LHI is

still paid for the exam, even though no exam was ever completed. Again, VA's contract exams office has not been transparent with the VFW on contract exam issues, so we have no way to verify this, other than posing it as an assumption to the subcommittee in this forum. Regardless, at the very least it seems that contractors are incentivized to cut corners in an effort to meet VA's unreasonable expectations.

Lack of Availability of Examiners

Another persistent issue we have heard from offices around the country is that to meet the timeliness goals of the contract, each of the contractors is forced to schedule veterans wherever they can find an available doctor. This leads to unreasonable travel times and unrealistic appointment expectations for veterans.

In Arkansas, one elderly veteran was scheduled for a contract exam in Oklahoma, more than three hours away from his home. In Washington state, another veteran in the Seattle area was scheduled for an exam more than three hours away in Oregon. In Washington, D.C., we have seen veterans sent to Gettysburg, Pa., for exams.

Another glaring example came from California, where a San Francisco-area veteran was scheduled for one exam at 3:30 p.m., more than 20 miles outside of the city, with a second exam scheduled at 4:15 p.m. back in San Francisco, making it logistically impossible for the veteran to attend both.

Fortunately, in each of these cases, the VFW's service officers have caught these unreasonable requests and worked with VA to re-

solve the issue. However, we must question the structure of a contract that forces a vendor to make these kinds of decisions.

No Adequate Review of Claim File/ Inadequate Time with Provider

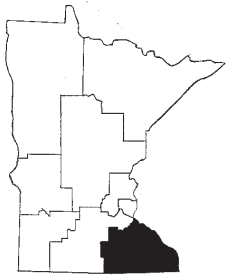
The VFW believes the final two issues are linked. We continue to hear concerns about the adequacy of a contract examiner's review of the veteran's claim file and the time that veterans receive with providers. These have been issues that the VFW has raised prior to the 2016 contract, but these problems persist, and we believe they have been exacerbated by the new timeliness requirements of the contract.

When contract providers fill out Disability Benefit Questionnaires (DBQs) for veterans, they must verify whether or not they have fully reviewed the veteran's file. They usually affirm that they have and then go on to render an opinion. However, we have learned that the vendor selects which specific files to share with a provider ahead of the exam, meaning they likely never fully review the file. We have also heard reports that some contract providers solely rely on the claimant's pre-exam worksheet to evaluate the historic record of a condition, rather than the official claim file documents. To the VFW, both scenarios render the exam unacceptable and inadequate.

Next, we have also heard conflicting information from veterans about the time spent with providers and the attention given to their issues. We hear anecdotes that veterans see providers for only a matter of minutes and that certain

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News from YOUR District Commanders and Presidents!



**Nathan Pike, Commander
First District**

Greetings First District Comrades and Auxiliary Members!

Happy fall and winter 2018! Okay I have been educated on the length of my previous article and being respectful of space allowed. Moving forward to my favorite time year, fall and winter, for those who take to the field for hunting, I wish you all success in your harvest. For those who work the ground, I wish you a successful harvest of crops. I also trust all of you have enjoyed your Thanksgiving and celebrated with family and friends to find the many things we, as VFW & Auxiliary members, are thankful for. I will also trust that everyone was able to participate in our civic duty and voted on Election Day.

As a district we are inching our way forward on membership moving from sixth place to fourth place at time of my article. Keep moving forward in recruiting, retaining and gaining membership to our great organization and YOUR Post. I know a few Posts have attained one-hundred percent in membership

and for those Posts it pays, just ask Keyon Post 141, Wanamingo Post 186 or Owatonna Post 3723. I am sure by our next District meeting on December 1st at Lake City more Posts will have attained one-hundred percent in membership.

Reflecting on Veterans Day 2018, I heard many Posts participated in community events around our district and even a few Posts got Buddy Poppies distributed. I also learned that several communities participated in the ringing of bells at the eleventh hour on Veterans Day. A special thanks to a few VFW Auxiliary members from Spring Valley and one from Lake City who helped feed disabled veteran deer hunters at the Chester Woods Park disabled veteran deer hunt.

Post inspections, they are happening as I type away on this article. You know my thoughts on this process: the inspections are an annual event and there should be no surprises. Order your Buddy Poppies, complete your community service reports and conduct your quarterly audits.

President Karen and I have been very fortunate to attend several membership dinners throughout the district and many thanks to the Posts that have extended the invitations. We are enjoying our time together during this year and have found great friendship and camaraderie as our year progresses.

Special thanks to district senior vice commander Tom French who attend the membership round-up dur-

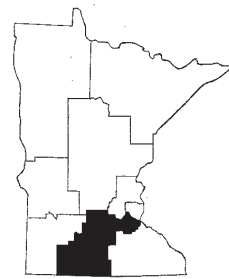
ing the weekend of November 17th and 18th. Many Posts within the First District are just a few unpaid members from being one hundred percent in membership, get those few unpaid members and earn some money for your Posts!

Okay, I mentioned keeping the article short...here is the take away:

- 1) Post membership- keep working on gaining and retaining your Post members. Many of YOUR Posts simply need to get a few of your unpaid members paid-up and YOUR Post is one-hundred percent in membership. Do not do this for me, do this for YOUR Post to keep YOUR Post relevant as veteran service organization within YOUR communities.
- 2) Buddy Poppies- I am looking forward to the first district Buddy Poppy displays at our December district meeting and really looking forward to our district leading at Department Poppy displays during Midwinter! The First District has placed at past national conventions.

Shoot, move and communicate. This is a team effort; your team is YOUR Post membership and Auxiliary membership. Work together for the common good of the organization. Be relevant and active within your communities. Keep moving forward together. The year is not a sprint but a test of endurance and relevance. Be both.

To The Last Man, Follow Me!



**Roy Bressler, Commander
Second District**

There have been several thing happenings in the 2nd District since the last newsletter. So St Paul Post 295 has sold their building. They have a new location in So St Paul at 1401 Thompson. They are out of the bar business and will have space for Post & Auxiliary meetings. The suspension has been lifted from Post 5462 in Waconia. The Post and Auxiliary will be holding their meetings and the Post is working out the details of opening their bar.

With that being said, I cannot stress the importance of the Post Trustees doing a good job of reviewing the records of Disbursements and Expenditures in all aspects of the activities of the Post and Club business. It is easy for the QM to fill out the Audit and the trustees just sign it. The trustees should be reviewing the Books monthly. They should be filling out the quarterly audits and signing them prior to sending them on to Department.

There are several Posts in the district that have 10 members or less to achieve 100%. It would be great to have these Posts make it to 100% by Mid-Winter. It would be great if all the Posts would make 100% by Mid-Winter.

Our next District meeting will at VFW Post 1778 in Wells, MN, 25.5 So Broadway. After lunch we will be holding a joint meeting at 12:30 to award the District VOD and Patriots Pen winners. Separate Post and Auxiliary meetings will follow at 1:00 PM or closely thereafter.



**Karen England, Auxiliary
President First District**

The Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Preston, Minnesota, is located in the First District and was dedicated in 2015, opened on Veterans Day (November 11th) 2015, and officially opened on Memorial Day in 2016. It is located off of Highway 52 in Preston. It is only the second official Veterans Cemetery in the State of Minnesota, and it sits on 169 acres of beautiful property which was donated to the State of Minnesota by Fillmore County.

State Veterans Cemeteries differ from VA National Cemeteries, but both have a common goal of providing eligible Veterans and their spouses with military burial honors within 75 miles of their home. Thus, Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin Veterans may be eligible for burial at our Preston Cemetery.

Burial at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery is open to all Veterans who have been discharged from active military service under any condition, other than dishonorable. Their spouses, minor children, and some unmarried adult children may

also be eligible for burial on the property as well. The Cemetery is able to hold 35,000 souls, and the first phase has room for about 3,500. There are already almost 400 who have been laid to rest and 700 pre-planned for the Preston Veterans Cemetery to be their final resting place. To locate your loved one, you can enter his/her name into the electronic registry on the premises, and it will tell you the location.

Burial is provided to eligible veterans at no cost – ZERO – no matter which burial option is chosen. The options include burial in casket, cremation (in-ground), or cremation (columbarium). The options of a Gravesite or columbarium niche, a pre-placed Grave Liner, a headstone or a Niche Cover, and perpetual care are included for NO COST to Veterans. Military Honors may be arranged at the Cemetery, which could include rifle volley, taps, flag folding, and flag presentation. The family, or a representative of the family, may choose their own clergy for their individual service. For a spouse or eligible dependent of the Veteran, the cost is only \$745 for all burial options.

Committal Services are held on Mondays through Fridays on a

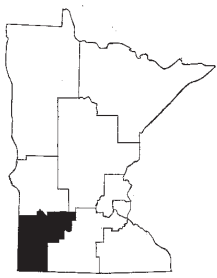
first-come, first-serve basis. The cemetery is able to perform up to seven committal services each day, beginning on the top of the hour from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Committal Services are held in the shelter, which is located in a focal position in the Cemetery grounds. Then the remains are transported to the gravesite and are never left unattended.

There are planned Memorial Day Services which will be held at the Cemetery every year on the Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend. This day was chosen so that most, if not all, military and VFW and Auxiliary Members may attend these beautiful services.

Please feel free to come and visit. This place is so peaceful, and is a beautiful resting place to Honor our deceased Veterans! The grounds are open during daylight hours, seven days a week. Administrative hours are from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. For more detailed information, please phone: (507) 765-7320, or email: info.Cem-PR@state.mn.us

May you have a peaceful holiday season surrounded by loved ones! See you at Mid-Winter Convention in Minneapolis.

*Only two defining forces
have ever offered to
die for you,
JESUS CHRIST
and the
AMERICAN G.I.
One died for your soul,
the other for your freedom.*



**Buck Underwood, Commander
Third District**

Greetings from the 3rd district.

I will start off by thanking all the Posts for attending our District meeting. Hope to see you all again in Worthington on January 5th.

All of our inspections and VOD and PP should be in by now. I am proud of our Post That are at 100% or close to it, keep up the great work.

We had a great turn out for the Pheasant Dinner, Thanks to all who were at the Luverne Vets Home to make this a great event Our meeting with the Recruiting Team from the Department went well, a lot was shared between us. Hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving and a very good Christmas.



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

Greetings form the 3rd district,

Fall has been such a busy time with all the inspections, membership drives and youth scholarship activities but that is all pretty ;much behind us now and we feel that we have accomplished many goals and now it is on to the holidays and more winter activities.

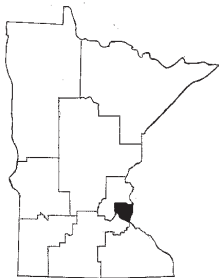
We are looking forward to our next district meeting, January 5th at 10 am at Worthington and of course the Mid-Winter Conference January 18th-20th in Mpls.

Also all keep watch for April 13th activities in Canby as we will be having our district meeting there and also celebrating 100 years of the posts existence. Plans are being made for entertainment and eating!



**Cleo Bonham, Auxiliary
President Fourth District**

The 4th District Auxiliary meeting was on Saturday, November 17th. We had an RN from the VA clinic in downtown Minneapolis come and speak about the Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC.) It was very informative to learn what services the VA is using to try to end veteran homelessness. We collected warm gloves, hats, sweatshirts and socks at this meeting. We will be doing that once again at our next meeting. We also had a very large donation of warm clothes from the White



**Paul Lindahl Commander
Fourth District**

Greetings from the 4th District as we approach winter, recognizing that individuals have different opinions on how excited they are with that situation.

We conducted our last District meeting on 17 November at Cottage Grove Post 8752, which also served as the start of the Central Route Department Membership Roundup and Caravan. Department Commander Tom Hanson led a discussion, distributing important information (handouts), regarding membership recruitment and retention, specifically providing valuable comments relative to recruiting younger veterans into our organization. Since the Roundup/Caravan followed our District meeting, Commander Hanson was able to reach leadership from several of our posts, as well as our District leadership in one stop.

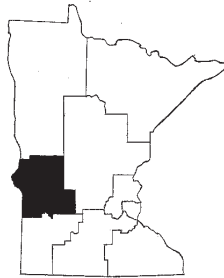
Many of our posts, and/or members, participated in various Veterans Day programs and activities including Prayer Breakfasts, High School Veterans Day Programs, and some members spoke at school functions, talking about Veterans Day and military service experiences.

Our District Voice of Democracy and Patriotic Pen Awards Banquet will be, or was (depending when you read this), conducted on 9 December.

I continue to visit post meetings and have been pleased to hear that posts are allocating funds to maintain and update their post buildings. Posts are repairing buildings, painting, updating security systems (physical security and electronic systems security) etc., investing in improvements and protecting their assets.

Our next District meeting is scheduled on 12 January 2019 at North St Paul Post 1350. Happy Holidays and Best wishes for 2019.

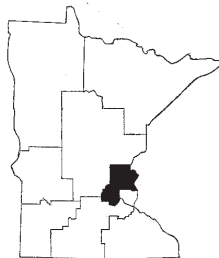
Bear Lake Auxiliary for the residents at the Hastings Veterans' Home. We had a Buddy Poppy contest of holiday displays at our last meeting. Our next District meeting will be before Mid-winter conference so we will have our Buddy Poppy displays brought to that meeting for judging before the Department judging. Our next meeting is January 12th at the North St. Paul VFW Post. The meeting is at 9AM. After the meeting, we will have a potluck lunch and work together on our district sewing project. We will be making weighted lap blankets for the Minneapolis Veterans' Home.



**Ann Hanson, Commander
Fifth District**

Hello All,

Just want to say Happy Holidays!! I would like to take time to be thankful for the year I have had. I have met so many new friends through the VFW. I ask all to remember those who are not with us today and all that are deployed. Take time to enjoy family and friends. Have a great holiday!!



**Pat Bjur-Johnson Auxiliary
President Seventh District**

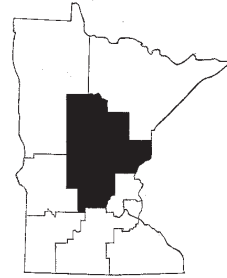
Greetings from the 7th District!

The 7th District has been very busy with inspections, membership dinners, Veterans Day programs, and the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen scholarship entries. Time is flying by and half of our year is almost over. We had 47 auxiliary members at the District meeting in Isanti in September. The Fall Conference in Wilmar was also well attended and the Poppy Contest was a success.

Our Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entries have been judged at the Post levels and the finalists have been turned in to the district for further judging. Good luck to all the entrants!

Midwinter Conference is in January 2019, which is fast approaching. Our December meeting will be on the 8th in Coon Rapids and we will have a Bake and/or No Bake Sale at that time.

I hope you all had a wonderful year and thank you for all you do. Happy Holidays and New Year to all!



**Aron Lambrecht, Commander
Sixth District**

Greetings Comrades:

The fighting 6th District is doing what it does best. Our numbers are strong and we are recruiting what feels like new members every single day. Thank you to those who everyday strive to make the VFW the best Veterans Organization it can be.

We are almost half way through our year, and I know for me personally I feel we should be many members closer to 100% than what we are. Please do your part to get your annual members paid up for the year, and make attempts to entice annual members to become life members so we don't have to go through this year after year.

Our last District meeting was December 1st, and we had one of the best showings for posts and officers that we have seen in a long time. Thank you again to those who showed up in Wadena. I look forward to working with each and everyone of you over the remainder of my term.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas an lets finish out the 2018 calendar year with a few more new members to set us up for success in 2019.

DISTRICT MEETINGS

(Subject to Change)

First District

February 2
Austin #1216 @ 9:30 AM

Second District

January 5
Wells #1778 @ 1:00 PM

Third District

January 5
Worthington #3958 @ 10 AM

Fourth District

January 12
N. St Paul #1350 @ 9 AM

Fifth District

February 9
Alexandria #936 @ 2:00 PM

Sixth District

February 2
Sauk Rapids #6992 @ 1:00 PM

Seventh District

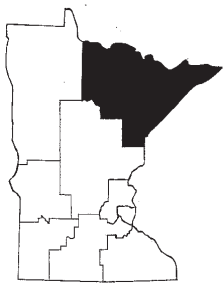
February 9
Richfield #5555 @ 10:00 AM

Eighth District

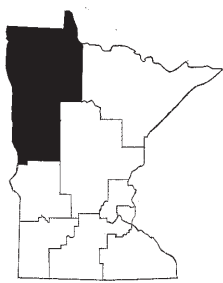
January 16-17
Cloquet #3979 @ 9:00 AM

Ninth District

March 2
Crookston #1902 @ 10 AM



Harley Droba, Commander
Eighth District



Norm Huth, Commander
Ninth District

Comrades,

I never tried new coke in 1985, in fact I have no memory of life before Coca Cola Classic. This change was a public relations disaster that blossomed the company to new heights. Coke yearned for change but ultimately chose to go back to the original formula. This my friend is the conundrum we find ourselves in along with other non-profits. How do we embrace our history while attract the next generation and still be relevant to our mission in the future. The answer is VFW Classic.

We need to get back to the basics. The heart and soul of VFW Classic is our programs. Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen embrace our heritage and commitment to service. Sadly, we are getting less and less participation annually. I think some of us feel it is someone else’s job to promote these programs. That type of thought is NOT VFW Classic. Can you imagine members of the past hoping someone else does programs. VFW Classic honored our community members in Teacher of the Year and others with EMT, Fire Fighter, Law Endorsement, and Bus Driver safety awards. What a wonderful way to be relevant in your community.

Let’s all look back at what made our organization great. Today we more inclusive than ever before. These new members need to be mentored by our classic members. Show them the value and reward of service to community.

District Eight is striving to be VFW Classic. Auxiliary member Jean Harkins and I filtered through some great submissions for Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen. We believe both will represent the State of Minnesota. Keep up the good work and remember if someone should be doing something in your community, you are a someone!

Comrades.. I have some bad news, Jim Vetter passed away Saturday the 17th of November..he will be missed.

On a better note 9th district is getting closer to 100%. December 8 district meeting in bemidji, hope to see you there, all so don’t forget Midwinter January 18 to the 20th.

Keep up the good work with membership. Have a great Christmas and if traveling, be safe..



Bill Cassavant, Auxiliary
President Ninth District

Hello Everyone.

The Holiday season is upon us. This year I have been so lucky to have all of you in my life. Without your friendship and support, it just would not have been the same. The 9th District is doing very well and that is solely because of your dedication to our organization. Granted we have ups and downs but we do it together. The hand of fellowship has been extended throughout our auxiliaries and all I can say is: THANK YOU.

Our Winter District 9 Auxiliary Meeting was in Bemidji on December 8th. We enjoyed a great day and great attendance. Our School of Instruction was conducted by Maranda Pula, Keliher’s VFW Auxiliary President, who shared information about a great project to honor our Vietnam Veterans. Midwinter Conference will be in January and it would be great to see the 9th well represented. In the mean time, enjoy your Christmas and have a safe New Years.

“Let Freedom Ring”!



Leave Your Legacy!

Life members of the VFW are eligible to take part in our Legacy Life program, an endowment that not only provides perks and benefits to you as a member, but sets up an annuity that pays out to your Post even after you’re gone - truly leaving a lasting legacy to the VFW!

CMDR- Cont. from Page 1

the fact the Department of Minnesota remains in tenth place Nationally in Membership. This is not surprise due to the large number of life members that belong in a Post in our State (speaking of Christmas, a life of legacy membership in the VFW is a great gift idea!). However, we all know that the remaining numbers are traditionally the most difficult for us to pick up. I ask each and every member to do what you can to help us with membership. Don’t be afraid to ask it someone has the credentials to be one of us- it’s your duty as a member! An old saying of our organization remains befitting: “It’s not the price you pay to belong, it’s the price you paid to become eligible.”

I look forward to our forthcoming Midwinter Conference. The Conference is scheduled, as usual, at the Marriott City Center Hotel in downtown Minneapolis from January 18-20, 2019. I wish to extend an invitation to every member to attend this, and all Conferences and Conventions of the organization. The business sessions conducted at these events are the steering mechanism that drives the outfit. The Midwinter Banquet is the “Grand Daddy of them all” as Keith Jackson use to say. This event is where the winner of our State Voice of Democracy is

crowned and we honor our Patriot’s Pen winner. The Organization will also pay tribute to our Teacher of the Year at the banquet. The festivities will conclude with a parade of checks for the Commanders project of Veteran Patriot Dogs. Posts with Poppy displays will enter them into competitions vying for recognition and further engagements. Additional seminar sessions are planned on varying subjects that should be of interest to many. Obviously, a star studded event- hope to see everyone there!

In early March your Department Officers will descend on our Nations Capital for the annual VFW Washington Conference. This allows us an opportunity to meet with our elected officials to share our legislative mandates with them. It is vital that we make it clear to them that our veterans deserve nothing but first class entitlements- that they have earned with blood. Our National leadership[will provide testimony to a joint session of congressional members on these same legislative initiatives. While at the Conference our delegates will be led by our Department Legislative Chairman, Tommy Johnson, who does a marvelous job for us. I’ll end with a heartfelt congratulations to our former Legislative Chairman, Tom McLaughlin, for being selected to serve on the transition team of Governor-elect Tim Walz.



VA EXAMS- Cont. from Page 7

required measurements or evaluations are never actually conducted, though they are reported as such on the DBQ. We have no way to verify this independently, but the volume of complaints that we hear from our service officers in the field and directly from veterans once again force us to raise this issue with this subcommittee.

The VFW does support and believe in the contract disability examination concept. We have seen it work. In Wisconsin, we continue to see very positive outcomes for veterans, and our service officer even reports that when it comes to accuracy, he believes contract exams more closely match the veteran’s reported experience than exams conducted internally by VA. This reinforces the VFW’s core belief that unaffiliated third parties are well suited to render

objective opinions. However, even Wisconsin reports that they have seen scheduling problems for veterans they serve. We are very concerned that VA is not adequately tracking quality and customer experience for its contractors, meaning there is no real way for VA to monitor the efficacy of the contract for the veterans they serve. This is why we are left to resort to anecdotes and trends that we see around the country for our clients.

VA has a unique opportunity now as it seeks to enter into a new contract for CDEs. The new contract must factor in veteran experience, measure quality outcomes, and report transparently on these outcomes. Without this, we will continue to see erroneous denials, reported no-shows, and contractors cutting corners to try and meet unrealistic objectives.

BECOME A LIFE MEMBER TODAY!

No More Worrying About Dues!

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

Keep Supporting Your Post!

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

Learn More About Your Membership Options:

Contact a Post Quartermaster or Call State Headquarters at 651-291-1757

In Other News...

Veterans / Youth Activities

Forms and Updates posted in General Orders & on www.mnvfw.org



From the Grand Commander
Bruce Hagstrom
MOC Commander
 Grand of Minnesota 2018-2019

This has been an eventful Fall for me personally, to say the least. As many of you know I have strived to get accepted for a program that would allow me to be the recipient of a lung transplant. After some disappointing efforts, I have finally be approved for the procedure at the Seattle Veterans Health Care System. I have been going through a battery of tests and will continue to do so. But, enough about my situation.

Let me talk about Veterans serving Veterans in the VA Medical Facilities in Minneapolis, St. Cloud, and Fargo. As well as the five Minnesota State Veterans Homes in Minneapolis, Hastings, Silver Bay, Fergus Falls and Luverne. Our Order has been doing just that for a Century!! Did I say a Century? That is right, the Military Order of the Cootie is turning 100 years young and still going strong.

With Pup Tents around the State of Minnesota, across the breadth and width of America, and around the World, we continue our mission to Keep'em Smiling in Beds of White. We enjoy the work and fellowship we gain by helping those not as fortunate. Think about it, it might be you someday and our presence can change a patient's perspective on life.

Think about joining us. After you have and we've sized you up, we might just ask you to join. That's right, you have to be asked. Sounds familiar doesn't it?

While I am out of State for a while, Grand Sr. Vice Commander Dewey Hermanson will be handling the reins.

VETERANS UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Bowling
April 6-7 & 13-14, 2019
 (27-28 Alt. Dates IF weather issues)
 Hosted by Cannon Falls
 Post #4452

Cribbage
March 30, 2019
 Hosted by Hastings Post #1210

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

Pistol competition
February 23, 2019
 Dual-Hosts
 Brainerd Post #3839
 Jenkins Post #1647

YOUTH UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

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



2019 State
Tournament
**March 22-24,
2019**

Hosted By
 Thief River Falls
 Post #2793

2020 Host: Thief River Falls

VFW STATE BASEBALL

2019 State Tournament
August 8-11, 2019
 Hosted by Brainerd Post #1647



VFW & Auxiliary Contests & Scholarships

**WINTER
2018-2019**

Gold Medal Safety Awards

Law Enforcement - EMT - Fire Fighter

Entries Due to VFW Department by January 1st, 2019

...

Auxiliary Middle School Creative Art Contest

Due to Local Auxiliary by January 15th, 2019

...

Auxiliary Continuing Education Scholarship

Due to National VFW Auxiliary by February 15th, 2019

Bus Driver of the Year

Due to VFW Department by March 1st, 2019

...

Scout of the Year

Due to Local Post by March 1st, 2019

...

Auxiliary Young American Creative Patriotic Art Scholarship Contest
 Due to Local Auxiliary by March 31st, 2019

...

Auxiliary Marcella Arnold Nursing Scholarship

Due to Department Auxiliary by April 1st, 2019

**Spring
2019**

On Deck... Midwinter Conference 2019

The Department of Minnesota Midwinter Conference is perhaps the most comfortable event of the year as we return once again to the familiar, Minneapolis Marriott City Center Hotel. Located in the heart of downtown, the Marriott provides our group unparalleled service. We will enjoy their Hospitality during the Midwinter Conference taking place January 18-20, 2019.

We have a variety of purposes for the Midwinter Conference: organizational business, educational opportunities and, perhaps most importantly, the Grand Banquet where we award the State student essay and teacher of the year winners. Whether you thrive on details and formality or creative whimsy, there is something for everyone at the conference... not to mention the opportunity to catch up with VFW and Auxiliary friends from around the state.

BUSINESS FIRST

The weekend starts on Friday with the Minnesota VFW Charitable Association meeting as they discuss fulfilling their mission to support Minnesota veterans and the programs of our great organization. Anyone interested in getting involved with the MNVFW Charitable Association is welcome to visit. VFW Finance Committee also meets after lunch. During this time the Auxiliary Hospital and Budget meetings will take place, so if you are on those committees, please plan for these.

Friday afternoon, the Gambling Seminar will take place for those that assist their Post with gambling activities such as Pull-Tabs and Bingo.

Friday evening, both the VFW and Auxiliary Council Meetings begin. Be sure to grab a bite to eat prior to this by visiting the Hotel Restaurant or visiting one of the many local dining establishments ranging from casual food like Panera to upscale dining such as the Capital Grille (you may need reservations)... all within walking distant of the Marriott.

At the Council meetings, they will begin the business for the weekend including program reports, membership efforts, updates from the National Organization, and more. These meetings follow the meeting ritual process and parliamentary procedures. The VFW Council of Administration will meet Friday evening and Sunday morning ending well before lunch time.

The Auxiliary Council will meet Friday evening and conclude their official business on Saturday. Auxiliary members, be sure to bring your membership card as it WILL

be checked before you can enter the meeting room for your Friday and Saturday meetings. If you've never attended an Auxiliary meeting, you may enjoy viewing the 'Floor Work' performed as the procession of American Flags and Officers open the meeting.

Saturday morning will also include committee meetings including Legislative, Youth & Veterans Activities, By-Laws and Finance. Members are welcome to attend these special interest meetings if they'd like to become more involved or simply to find out more. Reports of the committees will also be shared at the Sunday morning Council of Administration meeting.

Ward. Trivia fact- the gun from the U.S.S. Ward is mounted outside the Veterans Service Building on the Capital Ground in St Paul... just steps away from State VFW Headquarters.

To find out more about the Historical Experiences Presentation Opportunities or to book a speaker for your next Post event, check out the back page of this newspaper as they are offering their services to benefit the Boys of '61 Memorial designed to honor all of Minnesota's Civic War Veterans. Speaking opportunities range from the American Revolution through Word War II. You can also visit the Boys of '61 booth in the Midwinter Display area Friday and Saturday of the Conference to find

MIDWINTER MUSTS:

Buddy Poppy Display Contest

State Commander's Project Parade of Checks

Saturday Seminar Sessions:

Parliamentary Procedure: Motions & Member Participation

STOLEN VALOR & FRAUD AWARENESS

VFW & Working with the Media

Healthy Brain...

Tools to Keep Your Brain Active Through the Years

~Special Presentation~

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

MANY Displays, Resources and More!

*Updates will continue to be added in the
January GOs and our website at www.mnvfw.org*

EDUCATION ALWAYS

In an ongoing effort to provide opportunities to learn more about the VFW mission to serve veterans, their families and our communities, we work to find various speakers that can share their expertise with our membership. This Midwinter is no different and provides variety in the sessions offered for ALL of the Midwinter Conference attendees.

Special Presentation:

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

This entertaining session is being presented by Arn Kind, an excellent speaker from Historical Experiences (historicalexperiences.org). Mr. Kind is a proficient speaker who is able to address, in a most engaging way, many topics related to America's Historical Wars.

During the Midwinter Conference we have asked him to share the history of the U.S.S. Ward of Minnesota. Learn all about this historic time in Minnesota History as Mr. Kind brings you through this key event and the actions of the U.S.S.

out more about their non-profit organization.

Stolen Valor and Fraud Awareness

This is a session NO member should miss... We will be visited by the Inspector General, Jason Grusendorf, of the Veterans Affairs Office at Fort Snelling and his associates. His critical message regarding "Stolen Valor" will be eye opening. Learn how to identify red flags and potentially fraudulent military records that could spell trouble for your Post, District or beyond. In addition, the Inspector will share how to proceed with reporting suspected fraud before any further criminal activity can be perpetuated.

Parliamentary Procedure:

Motions & Member Participation

Properly conducting meetings and addressing the business of the organization requires a functioning knowledge of parliamentary procedure; The VFW's official program is Robert's Rules of Order. In this session, Department Parliamentarian David Staehlin will

strive to cover two primary topics: The Six Steps of a Motion and Member Participation.

Learn how to establish an organized and productive meeting where all in attendance are able to contribute in a respectable fashion. Using Robert's Rules of Order not only organize your meeting's business, it facilitates efficient time management which may allow your business to be conducted in record time. Speaking of which- if this session flows well, Mr. Staehlin may even be able to impart other important parliamentary notes. Copies of the recommend manual will be available for sale during this session if you are in need of one.

VFW & Working with the Media

Minnesota's VFW Posts are among the best in the country when it comes to community service and assisting our veterans, but how are you getting that word out? Do people in your community KNOW who you are.... And not confuse you with other organizations? We don't always like to 'toot our own horn'. However, by spreading the word about WHAT we do and WHO we serve, we bring the opportunity to serve even more.

State Publicity Chairman Jarrod McReynolds will be sharing techniques to garner the 'Press Coverage' your Post and Auxiliary needs and probably deserves. Learn how to write press releases, structure a public relations program and develop a partnership with local media. This can be a tricky process, but Mr. McReynolds will help break the process down to a manageable and understandable scale so you can ultimately share all of the great things you do with your community.

Healthy Brain:

Tools to Keep Your Brain Active

Part of the HUMANA Programs in a Box, this session is described as follows... 'Dementia and Alzheimer's disease can be scary, but there are things you can do to keep your brain healthy. Find out how staying active, being social, training your brain, and eating a healthy diet can help.' HUMANA has many session options available, so if this type of session is of further interest, we can continue to schedule various topics at future events.

CREATIVE POPPY DISPLAYS

Every Midwinter, Minnesota VFW Posts & Auxiliaries show off their creative abilities by creating displays using the VFW Buddy Poppy. Displays are made primarily

Continued on Page 13

MIDWINTER- Cont. from Page 12

utilizing Buddy Poppies to express each entrant’s idea in one of three contest categories: Memorial, Promotional or Decorative. The top three places are awarded with ribbons and can be seen throughout the day Saturday. Entries will also be on display during the Banquet Socials so be sure to share these amazing works of art with any guests you are with. All entries must have competed in their District Poppy Contest prior to Midwinter. Top winners at Midwinter will receive an invitation to enter their work at the VFW National Convention next July in Florida.

DISPLAYS

We have invited many groups to join our display area at this Midwinter Conference in addition to our Minnesota Veterans Homes that we enjoy visiting with at all of our conference. We are continually seeking out non-profit and community based organizations in hopes of providing connections between them and our VFW Posts and Auxiliaries. This is a great opportunity to facilitate a special project or find resources for yourself and others. In addition, we have selected several veteran related businesses that have shown to be of interest to our members. Display will be open Friday afternoon and most of the day Saturday.

We are always open to other organizations and business and welcome referrals. If you know of a great veteran related group or business that might be a fit for our Midwinter Displays, please share their information with VFW Headquarters at vfwmnoffice@gmail.com or calling VFW State Headquarters at 651-291-1757. (Note: Department Officers will review all suggestions and may or may not require Council approval for participation.)

GRAND BANQUET

The highlight of the weekend will be the Midwinter Grand Banquet on Saturday Evening. Here we award the winners of the Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Competition for High School Students, the Patriot’s Pen Essay Competition for Middle School Students and the Teacher of the Year Competition. Entrants from throughout the state have been narrowed down to the amazing award recipients, but their journey is not over... During the Grand Banquet we will honor the State Patriot’s Pen Winner and the outstanding Teachers

in the categories of K-5, 6-8 and High School.

The evening will culminate in the announcement of the Minnesota Voice of Democracy winner who will present their speech to all in attendance. After that, their journey is just getting started as they join other State Winners at the National Voice of Democracy gathering and awards in Washington D.C. in March. They will also enjoy the opportunity to visit with these new friends again next summer at the Freedom Foundation Spirit of America Youth Leadership Conference.

You won’t want to miss this special evening as the 1st Place Patriot’s Pen Winner presents their speech addressing this year’s theme “Why I Honor the American Flag” and the Voice of Democracy speaks to “Why My Vote Matters”. Seating goes quickly so order your tickets now (form available in this paper).

Our Past State Commanders and Presidents will be the State Commander’s distinguished guests at the banquet. If you’re looking to meet new people, two receptions will be available prior to the banquet- one for the Student and Teacher participants, along with their families as well as their Post & District Officers and Chairmen. A general reception will be held in the Atrium outside of the Ballroom.

ODDS & ENDS

Rise & Shine Workouts

Are you a morning person? Looking for some active, social time? Join us for these early morning workouts (held on Saturday mornings at all of our conferences). At Midwinter, choose from a morning group walk or visit the Marriott fitness center to “workout separately- together”. See the Conference Registration Desk for details.

Church Services

Round out your weekend by taking in a VFW provided church service presented by guest clergy and hosted by the VFW Department Chaplain. Saturday afternoon there will be church services available in the late afternoon. These are typically non-denominational, but watch for signs or announcements at the Conference for specifics.

For more information about the Midwinter Conference explore this newspaper, the Minnesota VFW website at www.mn-vfw.org, watch for the January General Orders, or call VFW Headquarters at 651-291-1757.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS - DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

January 18-20, 2019

TENTATIVE Friday- Sunday Midwinter Schedule as of 12/17/18

FRIDAY – JANUARY 18:

12:00 P.M. VFW Charitable Association Meeting
12:00 - 6:00 P.M. Registration and Banquet Tickets
1:00 P.M. Auxiliary Hospital Round Table
V.F.W. Finance Committee
2:30 P.M. Auxiliary Budget Meeting
2:30 - 4:30 P.M. Gambling Seminar
3:00 - 4:30 P.M. Convention Committee
3:00 - 5:00 P.M. Claims Staff Open Office
3:00 – 6:00 P.M. Displays & Vendors
6:00 P.M. VFW Council Meeting
6:30 P.M. Auxiliary Council Meeting

SATURDAY – JANUARY 19:

6:30 A.M. Rise & Shine Workouts TBD
(Pre-Registration Friday Recommended)
7:00 - 9:00 A.M. Register Poppy Displays
8:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M. Registration and Banquet Tickets
8:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. Displays & Vendors
8:00 – 9:00 A.M. VFW Committee Meetings
VFW Finance Committee
Legislative Committee
Youth & Veterans Activities
By-Laws Committee
8:30 A.M. - 3:30 P.M. Auxiliary Meeting
9:15 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. Seminars & Displays
11:30 A.M. District Officers Bag-A-Member Lunch (Invitation Only)
12:00 Noon Past Department President's Luncheon (Invitation Only)
1:00 – 3:30 P.M. Seminars & Displays
2:00 – 3:30 P.M. District VOD Winners Party
2:30 P.M. Buddy Poppy Chairmen Meeting
Poppy Displays Remain up through Grand Banquet Reception-
takedown afterward
4:00 P.M. Church Services
6:00 P.M. District V.O.D. Winners Reception
6:00 P.M. Banquet Reception (Cash Bar)
7:00 P.M. Grand Banquet

SUNDAY – JANUARY 20:

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

MIDWINTER BANQUET MEAL:

Grilled Sirloin with Red Wine Veal Jus
Roasted Red Potatoes & Green Beans
Romaine & Artisan Green Salad with Tomatoes, Grapes,
Radish & White Balsamic Vinaigrette

Alternating Desserts:

Tiramisu with Whipped Cream
Apple Pie with Caramel Sauce

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA
MIDWINTER CONFERENCE HOUSING RESERVATIONS
Minneapolis Marriott City Center January 18-20, 2019

Name _____
Phone _____ Post # _____ District # _____
Address _____
Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____
Room Rate (per night): King @ \$99 Two Double Beds @ \$99
(Please Note that Daily Parking Fees are Additional)
Requests: _____
Sharing room with: _____
Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____
Credit Card Information:
(Reservation will not be made without a guarantee)
Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____
Name on Card: _____
OR Check # _____ for one (1) night made out to the Minneapolis Marriott
City Center
DEADLINE DATE: December 27, 2018

Mail Housing Reservations to:

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

MIDWINTER
CONFERENCE BANQUET

SATURDAY, JAN 20, 2019

Minneapolis Marriott
City Center

PLEASE RESERVE

TICKETS at \$32 each

Enclosed is

Check # _____ for \$ _____

Name(s): _____

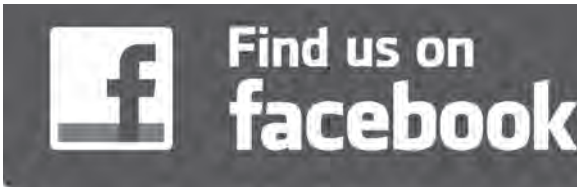
Phone #: _____

Email: _____

POST/AUX # _____ DIST # _____

**Deadline to Order:
January 4, 2019**

Mail BANQUET
Reservations to:
Dept of MN V.F.W.
Rice Street Station
PO Box 17146
St Paul, MN 55117



Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Minnesota

CAN YOU PLAY SANTA THIS YEAR?



Letters to the Editor

Dear Friends,
We are continually grateful to you for helping us provide the love, care and support that the families of our nation’s war heroes deserve. You’ve always been there to ensure that the National Home is ready to respond whenever a military or veteran family needs help.

With the holiday season upon us, I’m hoping that we can also count on you to purchase an item or two for the National Home through our Christmas Wish List on Amazon.

As you know, the little things matter at the National Home and maintaining an 80-acre campus, 365-days-a-year takes a whole lot of them. Supplies of all kind are needed to maintain our 42 single-family homes, day care center, gym, community center, guest lodge, playgrounds, bathrooms, kitchens and much more. These include...

- Paint brushes for children to use in our arts and crafts room. Set of 15 brushes: \$16.95
- Recycling baskets for locations throughout campus. 12.5 gallon Rubbermaid: \$23.14 each
- Picnic tables for outdoor family picnics and lunches for the children: \$210.06 each
- Ladybug stickers for day care center recognition and fun: 1 pack: \$5.99
- Mattress covers for the many beds in our single-family homes: \$22.99 each
- Snow tube for winter fun with the children: \$27.99 each

Anything you purchase for us from our Christmas Wish List would be greatly appreciated. The items on our list may seem small, but they have a big impact on all that we do here.

Thank you for your generosity...and Merry Christmas from all of us at the National Home!



Patrice Green
Executive Director
VFW National Home for Children

Visit the VFW National Home Christmas Amazon Wish List:

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/CEPQBFHDZG2>

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. Attending Post, District and State Meetings is a GOOD place to start.

“No One Does More for Veterans”
VFW Members...
Posts... Auxiliaries
We want to hear what YOU are doing for Veterans!
Email or mail us a short story about the person, activity or other noteworthy details, along with a picture and contact information if we need to follow-up.

HASTINGS

For questions or information on donating, please contact Sue Register at (651) 539-2442.

Special Funding Opportunities
Recreation Fund \$18,000 a year
Television/Cable T.V. Fund \$3,600 a year
Bingo Sponsors \$50.00--\$70.00 per event
Wireless/Internet \$1,200 a year
Laundry Soap \$2,400 a year
Macy/Therapy dog \$600.00 a year
Mental health activities \$ 900.00 a year
Special Projects \$36,000 (T.V. and Day Room Furniture - \$5,000 per room)
Recreation room upgrade and renovation - Call for more information

Personal Needs Items & In Kind Gifts
Deodorant Room Air freshener
Body Wash Irons with auto shut-off
Efferdent New briefs (All sizes)
New T-shirts (All sizes) Stamps
Poligrip - red box Alarm clocks
Surge protectors with long cords
Electric Razors Flip Flops/Shower Shoes

Recreational Activities
Fishing trips Baseball & Football games
Breakfast & Supper Outings Bowling
Community Outings Picnics
Entertainment (Music) Zoo outings
Woodworking & Crafts
National eagle center

Special Events
Patriotic Programs / Holidays
Seasonal Holiday Parties Fair Days
Pheasant Dinner (American Legion)
Venison Dinner (Military Order of the Cootie)
Fish Fry Luncheon(Dakota County Elks)
Volunteer Luncheon

LUVERNE

For questions or information on donating, please contact Duane Mabon at Volunteer Services at (507) 283-6237.

Special Funding Opportunities
Resident Birthday Celebration Fund \$ 4,250 annually
General Recreation Fund \$ 1,000 monthly
Gardening Fund \$ 600 annually
Eden Alternative Fund \$ 500 a month
Flag Maintenance/Replacement Fund \$ 400 for a set of nine flags
Television/Cable Fund \$ 300 a month
Mystery Trip Fund \$ 300 per trip
Flag Case/Memory Box Fund \$ 50 each
Resident Computer Usage Fund \$50 a month
Bingo Sponsoring Fund \$30-50 per event

Project Needs
Specialty Wheelchairs \$ 3,200 each
Stand Up Gardens \$ 1,500 each
Large Lift Chair Recliners \$ 1,000 each
Variety of Wheelchair Cushions \$ 200 (+) each
Veterans Memorial Walkway \$100 per paver

Personal Care & Miscellaneous Items
CD players Deodorant (Roll On)
Cotton Sweat Suits (Tops & Bottoms) XL & Bigger
Denture Cleanser & Adhesive
Diabetic Socks Sensitive Toothpaste
New Briefs - Large & Bigger
New Undershirts - XL & Bigger
Norelco Electric Shavers Toothpaste
Phone Cards Postage Stamps

Recreational Activities
Adopt-A-Grandparent Program
Bingo Daily Social Gatherings
Casino Trips Worship Picnics
Creative Chef Game Night
Meal Outings Musical Entertainment
Scenic Bus Trips Shopping Trips

Special Occasion Events
Cabin Fever Week Classic Car Show
Fall Festival Fishing Trip Fun Day
Harvest Moon Dinner & Dance
Nursing Home Week
Patriotic Remembrances/Holidays
Pheasant Dinner Scarecrow Festival
Seasonal Holiday Celebrations
Sweetheart Dinner Venison Dinner
Volunteer Appreciation Week

SILVER BAY

For questions or information on donating, please contact Ward Wallin at (218) 226-6321.

Special Events
Scenic Rides Pontoon Fishing
Lake Superior Fishing
Picnics & Parties Entertainment

Activities
Music Programs Sporting Events
Dining Out Bingo Baking

Special Project Funding Opportunities
Band Shell \$ 30,000
Fish House \$ 10,000
Vets on the Lake Trip \$ 3,000
Adopt A Room \$ 2,500
Portable Awning \$ 2,000
Concerts with the Vets \$ 1,000

Miscellaneous and Personal Items
Deodorant Shirt Protectors (Dark)
Denture Cleanser Telephone Cards
Stamps Terry Cloth Robes
CD Players Toothpaste

MINNEAPOLIS

For questions or information on donating, please contact Sandy Larson at (612) 548-5993.

Recreation Fund
Daily recreation programs for 341 Residents \$6,000/month \$17/Resident/month
Portable boomboxes with CD and radio capability - 10 total \$25 each
Sponsor a BBQ (small group of Residents) or an off campus Resident trip (e.g. the Guthrie or Arboretum) Your suggestions welcome \$400
Sponsor a special Holiday gathering such as New Year’s, Valentines, or St. Patrick’s Day \$500 - \$800
Holiday decorations (e.g. trees, garlands, lights) for Building 22 indoor/outdoor replacements \$2,000
Succulent house plants (live) Varies
8x10, 5x7 and 4x6 frames Varies
Diffusers \$15-\$30 each
Selection of essential oils \$25.00

Resident Needs - New Items Only
Men’s white tube socks
Men’s polo shirts, any color (sizes XXL, 3XL, and 4XL)
Electric shavers - Norelco preferred
EZ Models - metal or plastic, snap or glue together. Planes/trains/auto iTunes gift cards
Sheets or rolls of Forever postage stamps
Blue Ray DVD players

Special Projects Fund
Artwork for Buildings 21 and 22
This will be an ongoing project until Resident common space looks and feels like Home *Donations of dollars only*

FERGUS FALLS

For questions or information on donating, please contact Deanna Mounts at (218) 321-2507.

Special Funding Opportunities
Recreation Fund \$35,000 / Yearly budget
Shadow Boxes \$65.00 each
Flag Replacements \$600.00 / Yearly budget
Memorial Wall Annual Engraving \$2,000 a year
Television/Cable Service Fund \$5,000 a year
Holiday Fund \$3,000 a year
Bingo Sponsors \$50.00--\$70.00 per event

Personal Needs Items / In Kind Gifts
Twin size quilts (68x95) (New Residents receives a beautiful quilt as welcome gift)
Body-pillow cases (19x62)
Cotton/Polyester dinner napkins/ Navy blue or black/ (22x22)
New pajamas New briefs
New T-shirts Crest Mouthwash
Brylcreem Gold Bond Lotion - green
Groom N Clean Poligrip red box

Recreational Activities
Fishing & Hunting trips Bowling
Baseball & Football games Picnics
Pontoon Rides YMCA / Swimming
Scenic Rides Community Outings
Breakfast & Supper Outings
Entertainment (Music)
Woodworking & Crafts

Special Events
Patriotic Programs / Holidays
Seasonal Holiday Parties Fair Days
Stars & Stripes Parade Golf Classic
St. Patrick’s Day Parade
Theme Week Celebration
Pheasant Dinner Venison Dinner
Fish Fry Luncheon Hero’s Luncheon
POW/MIA Run

Timely Tidbits

?

WHAT...

Are ‘GENERAL ORDERS’?

DEFINED:

A general order, in military and paramilitary organizations, is a published directive, originated by a commander and binding upon all personnel under his or her command. Its purpose is to enforce a policy or procedure unique to the unit’s situation that is not otherwise addressed in applicable service regulations, military law, or public law.

VFW Department General Orders

Monthly published directives from State Headquarters. They relay ALL important News, Requirements and Activities for the State. *They currently consist of 3 sections:*

Coversheet:

State Commander’s OFFICIAL directive to all Posts & Districts in Minnesota

Program Updates:

State Chairman reports and timely news in a newsletter format

Attachments:

Documents, Flyers, and Registration Forms either due soon/of current interest.

Who Gets them?

EVERY POST

Either by email or USPS to Post Commander (or designated officer)

What Should be Done with Them?

Coversheet of the State Commander should be read at EVERY meeting.

Program Updates and Flyers should be AVAILABLE AT THE MEETING for members to view and determine if they are interested in any of the news.

If YOUR Post is NOT doing this... ask them WHY at the next meeting.

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Open Letter to our VFW ‘Members-at-Large

Our thanks to those many ‘members-at-Large’ who renewed their dues this year. Your continued loyalty and support of our great organization greatly [assists us to accomplish our membership goals].

You can further assist us by reaching out and re-joining one of our many VFW Posts located throughout the state. So this letter is also and ‘open invitation’ to all ‘Members-at-Large’ to do just that. It’s as easy as filling out an application, signing it and sending it in. We would be happy to assist you in locating a Post near you, sending you the application and answering any questions that you may have.

We know there are many reasons why you have remained a Member-at-Large (MAL) and, possibly, one of them is because you weren’t ever asked to join. Wed are asking now! Please join us as a Post member! You have become an MAL due to any of a number of other reasons. It could have been due to personal-ity conflicts, disillusionment with your Post, constraints on your time or, more than likely, due to your Post closing and the loss os your charter, in which case and unless you request it, the members automatically become Members-at-Large. Whatever the reason, now is the time to join a Post! We all know that there is strength in numbers and we hope, that you could become an active member, at least to the extent that your schedules would allow, but join a Post!

When our National Commander-in-Chief goes before Congress to speak for or against legislation affecting veterans, know that he is speaking for all of the VFW Membership and there is *strength in numbers!* Our motto is ‘No one does more for Veterans’ and we live up to this motto every day through all of the activities we are involved with or sponsor. The many programs, scholarships given, community service done, helping many of our veterans with their claims for disability and compensation, the amount of monetary contributions made to a myriad of causes. The list goes on and on!

We all do our part and we hope that you will assist us by considering transferring to one of our Posts. Another motto we go by is: ‘If not us, then who’! Let’s make the VFW voice so strong that no one will ever doubt our cause or diminish our name! Please contact us of we can assist you in any way.

Editor’s Note: *The following message carries a sentiment carried by all Minnesota VFW Officers. We extend an invitation to all Minnesota Members-at-Large to become members of a local Post and enjoy the camaraderie and benefits that come along with belonging to a Post. This article was reprinted from the Massachusetts VFW News, September 2018 with permission from Jeff Najarian, State Sr. Vice Commander of the VFW Department of Massachusetts.*

WORD SEARCH #3

Get Involved in the V.F.W.

W R S A W B S R Y E E U C S O F P Y F B A L P Y O M O V E G

H R H A D B U L L O T R S O S X T K U W O K O R A L O E H O

X S A U L S L K G O K E A C M L O O N R G U M W P L H E Q X

P V H P J D P N S Z N E O C S M M O D C T A P P U U E L S E

M F D E I R B V H E R U E E U W U C R H O F V N W T X I V P

Q C O M M E M O R A T E Y G W E S N A C Z M T A A B C E F I

T W L N H F N A H I C R O A Q C T F I G S E R R Y T Y L F J

E N D K A O W S N D P U P B U L V P S C E F O A P C T Y Z G

K Q O M R A T G J O M V U B U K N K I R A C G N D Z Y E H A

C Z I Y E K C O H N D O B I M B O S N H E T Y Z B E U G N W

L L A B E S A B G A T Y L R J L P Q G D S W E I U M R H J D

Y N R A E L B V X T T M I C G E K A B L F R L T H M M Y Q Z

B U D G E T I N G E V S C N S U P P O R T J E Q E I X B C N

Z H F Z L L D I J B P I I J C L W M M U U R A B Y P F H L E

G N I L W O B H X D T T Z N T R A V E L U Y I T M V M V H O

Q E P R J R F C Q M O O E E I F Q D S I M A K A B E I O V O

T S B O Y X P V U O Q I V F O A T J Z I P L S U P V M S C N

Z D L X H W M L H A Z R Q N I U L Y U K E P L L D E F V I C

X Y H L T K M S O U R T L L H A H P Q U P S K W O B R Z H T

V Y O O E H P W V I Z A T F S N L Y A S X I L N O E T S X K

M K L L M A U M I N L P A T P K U D T H O D B K Q P R L W G

E R E T R E D W J X E T R K L D X X F B C J Z U F K P A W O

N N G T E V L P B M Q O M E Y S Z Y M I J N T A U L P Y R R

V A V I M T Y E X I P A G Z T W A J E Z X G B S Q O A Q I G

U O X R W W N P S S N I Q V E O Y U E E I M X X F X L Y T A

K P Z X G G X I V S S G Q Y F L J O V T N E M Y O L P M E N

D I S A B L E D A L N V O H A A X R R X Y B U E Q W B R I I

K C O W N S N B A P U U W K S O L I E V B T E A C H T K C Z

E T J P W Q Y T H M M X C G X A E D S H Z X C T N V C R F E

Q H Q C T R I S N M Y F S V L R X A Y E Q B D X S P D O T E

E F V D O V H D K M B P Z A W Z W V M M M Q G R R Y R R Q M

X C U T E V Q V X U A H F Z E P X F Y J U G W Q I E I Y D S

N M S X M E B A B A X M W H N R I U L U O R J O W F V M H V

B I A Y E M N W U Q G H V U E N E Y Q U A V F Q W R E L R M

H R Y O N I N Y K U Y I K U J Z Z U E I C L G X B B Z W E G

T E F L M L B I Y B H O N H E L P P Z Z O W R K R M D M R U

D X G S S M Z N O J J L N H I S P R P G T S U S W O F I O E

L T B K T B W B X O P P L Q O H U U Y C X H V R I F O F Z L

F C Y H X U W Q N C U S K N N W D X T D N O M D S U B Q T E

K E O S B O U G D O C O T K Y C E I S N W P M Z Z D B C B P

Merry Christmas

Art

Attend

Awareness

Bake

Baseball

Bingo

Bowling

Budgeting

Care

Chaplain

Commemorate

Communicate

Compete

Comradery

Cook

Cribbage

Decorate

Disabled

Display

Donate

Drive

Employment

Essays

Family

Fundraising

Golf

Help

History

Hockey

Homeless

Honor

Lead

Learn

Legislative

Membership

Organize

Paint

Patriotism

Publicize

Repair

Safety

Scouting

Serve

Sew

Share

Shop

Sports

Support

Teach

TrapShooting

Travel

Visit

Volunteer

Write

Youth

ATTENTION POST COMMANDERS

Program Opportunities for you!



Fundraising for THE BOYS OF '61!

(Minnesota's Civil War Veterans Memorial)

If you are looking for program opportunities for special events at your post, consider having Historical Experiences bring a history program to your membership. These entertaining programs are educational and patriotic. You can chose from a number of topics including:

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

THE U.S.S WARD: MINNESOTA FIRES THE FIRST SHOT IN WWII

The cost of each program is a \$550 donation to the BOY'S OF '61, plus mileage to your post and back from the speaker's residence in Mankato, MN. (Current IRS mileage rate is \$.545 per mile.) This fee will be donated to the BOY'S of 61, which is Minnesota's memorial to the men from this state who went off to war to save the Union. The BOY'S OF '61 is a non-profit organization dedication to the building of a memorial to all of Minnesota's Civil War veterans. For more information on programming to go to the website at...

historicalexperiences.org

or contact the presenter at...

arnkind@historicalexperiences.org

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

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

Benilde- St. Margaret High School & V.F.W.



**Partnership
Benefits V.F.W.
State Commander's
Project:**



Patriot Assistance Dogs

The school, along with the Boy's and Girl's hockey teams will be dedicating the January 17th games to honor our military and raise money for this important project.



SAVE THE DATE:

January 17, 2018

St. Louis Park Rec Center

Game Times: Girls 5pm/Boys 7pm

***Their goal is to raise \$5000 and need support
from the community to make that happen!***

Along with seeing some great High School hockey, the hockey programs will be conducting a Raffle, Chuck-A-Puck and providing Food for all of the spectators.



For twenty-five (25) years, the Major Veterans Organizations have been working with Camp Ripley and the Department of Veterans Affairs in an effort to offer Disabled Veterans the opportunity to Hunt and enjoy the Outdoors.

The original Program was an Annual Deer Hunt. Within the past ten (10) years, an Annual Turkey Hunt and Fishing (Trolling for Troops) events have been added. These three (3) Outdoor Events have offered over three-hundred Disabled Veterans and Military the opportunity to Hunt, Fish and enjoy the Outdoors in a 'safe' and 'friendly' environment.



environment for or Disabled Veterans is not cheap -- and its all about Helping Our Fellow Veterans!

That's where we can use YOUR Help! If you or your Post can afford to donate to the VFW Outdoor Fund, it would be deeply appreciated. Please keep in mind that no Officer or person is paid to put these three events on. ALL the people involved are VOLUNTEERS!



Please use the Form below to send your Tax-Deductable Donation to:

MN VFW Charitable Association
Veterans Service Building - Room B5
20 W. 12th St.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Earmark Donation: **VFW Outdoor Fund**

Remember, the MN VFW Charitable Association is registered as 501-c-3 Non-Profit Organization under IRS Code.

For More Information about the MNVFW Charitable Association:
Email mnvfwcharitable@gmail.com
or call 651-291-1757 to leave a message



MINNESOTA VFW CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION

*Giving Our Veterans the Opportunity to
Enjoy the Outdoors through the Disabled
Veterans Hunts at Camp Ripley.*

You Can Help That Process Continue!

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: _____

The following are some of Designated Funds within the
MN VFW Charitable Association:

Camp Ripley Outdoors Fund: \$ _____ Veterans Service Fund: \$ _____

State Commander's Project: \$ _____ General and Memorials: \$ _____

Donations to these Funds will help to further ALL VFW Programs and to
Veterans and Military Families

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____