

# GOPHER OVERSEAS'R

Volume 77, NO. 2

Official Publication of the Veterans of Foreign Wars - Department of Minnesota Celebrating 100 Years 1921-2021

June 2023 - September 2023

## Department Fall Conference Sept. 22-24

By Cheryl Burton, Department Office Manager

The 2023 Annual Fall Conference will be held at the Kahler Grand Hotel, Rochester MN from September 22-24, 2023.

This fall is a great opportunity to learn about all our VFW Programs and continue catching up with friends at the Kahler Grand Hotel and hospitality rooms. All VFW and Auxiliary members are encouraged to attend the Fall Conference. Of all the conferences organized by the VFW, this is by far the most educational. You do not want to miss it. If you have any questions about the VFW or the Auxiliary, or our Programs, this will be the place to get all the answers. In case you missed this last

year you will be able to attend this special session with Special Guest Speaker, Marie Kessler, Ombudsman LTC, "Volunteers Advocate with residents in MN Veterans Homes".

### REGISTRATION

Registration for the Fall Conference, will begin on Friday and Saturday in the Heritage Hall Foyer from Noon to 4:00 pm (Friday) and 7:00 am to 1:00 pm (Saturday). Don't forget to pick up your Dinner tickets at the registration table. There is no assigned seating for this Fall Conference, There is however a reserved table or two for the State Commander's Honored Guests.

### SCHOOLS OF INSTRUCTION AND SEMINARS

VFW and Auxiliary members can expect some very positive and creative ways of being educated about the VFW Programs of this great organization. In addition, several opportunities will be offered for the membership to gain a greater knowledge of a variety of VFW Programs. All Commanders, Presidents, Quartermasters, Treasurers, Chairmen and Members are urged to attend as many schools of instruction or seminars as

Convention - Cont. on Page 7



**2023-2024  
State Commander  
Dan Meyer**

Member of  
VFW Post 8459  
Fairfax, MN

Greetings comrades it is truly a honor to be your commander.

We have a lot to accomplish this year but with everyone pitching in we will be successful. My motto for this year is "Together We Can". If you take a minute to think about this motto, it's not just working with the post, district and department but also the auxiliary of post, district and department. It also includes joining forces with the other service organizations. We are all veterans and need to work together for a greater purpose.



**Pictured: State Cmdr. Dan Meyer with 2022-2023 Buddy Poppy Child Layla from the VFW National Home for Children**

COMMANDER - Cont. on Page 10



## National POW/MIA Recognition Day September 15, 2023

The 10th Annual POW/MIA Recognition Day will be held on Friday, September 15, 2023 at 5:30pm in the City of Greenfield at 7200 Greenfield Road.

All Post Ritual Squads/Color Guards are welcome to participate. Staging starts at 5:00pm. Posting of the colors and POW/MIA flags will be led by Hamel American Legion Post 394 and Hamel VFW Post 5903.

Dignitaries will remind those present to remember the sacrifices of those who were Prisoners Of War (POW) a well as those who are Missing In Action (MIA) and their families.

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

Thousands of VFW and Auxiliary delegates gathered at the Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, AZ July 22-27. They represent the organization's more than 1.5 million combined membership at the week long VFW National Convention. While there, the delegates approved new national priorities to guide our organization as we lobby Congress on issues important to the nation's veterans, service members and their families.

"Nothing makes me prouder than to have my home state host our national convention," said VFW National Commander Tim Borland, who is a Gold Legacy Life member of VFW Post 9972 in Sierra Vista, Arizona. "For the past two years, we held our convention close to our national headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri. It feels good to travel across this great land, celebrate all our accomplishments over this past year and remind all of us that every veteran counts."

In addition to remarks from VA Secretary Denis McDonough, this year's list of guest speakers included: USAACEO Wayne Peacock; Twisted X CEO Prasad Reddy; vice minister of the Taiwanese Veterans Affairs Council Wu, Chih-Yang; Deputy Director POW/MIA Accounting Agency Fern Sumpter Winbush and former Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and VFW National Ambassador SEAC (Ret.) John Wayne Troxell.

Numerous prominent individuals and organizations were recognized for their support of the veteran and military communities. Several Distinguished Service Award and VFW Gold Medal of Merit were presented including the VFW Distinguished Citizenship Award. This was awarded to celebrity Chef Robert Irvine, the first non-veteran to receive the honor

On the last day of the convention, delegates elected Duane Sarmiento, of Gibbstown, New Jersey as the

## 124th National Convention July 22-27, 2023

from www.vfw.org articles

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

Non-profit Org.  
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\*\*Please use the form on the reverse side to note any address changes\*\*

### Save The Date!!

<b>National VFW Fall Legislative Committee</b> September 11-14, 2023 Washington, DC	<b>Big 10 Conference</b> October 14-16, 2022 Milwaukee, WI	<b>Minnesota Veterans Day on the Hill</b> March, 2024 (Day TBD)
<b>Fall Conference</b> September 22-24, 2023 Kahler Grand Hotel, Rochester	<b>Midwinter Conference</b> January 12-14, 2024 Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park	<b>VFW State Hockey Tournament</b> March, 2024 TBD

**Upcoming VFW Events**  
\*\*Red Events are Department Events\*\*

# Top News

## MN Officers Receive All-American Honors

### CONGRATULATIONS!

2022-2023 All-American Department Commander Dale Hoogveen

2022-2023 All-American District Commander honorees from Minnesota:

- Samuel Landon, 1st District Commander
- Leon Grack, 2nd District Commander
- Jarrod McReynolds, 7th District Commander

2022-2023 All-American Post Commander honorees from Minnesota:

- Tim Kent, Isanti Post 2735
- Ed Keogh, Montgomery Post 5340
- David Boily, Elk River-Rogers Post 5518
- Dave Thompson, Prior Lake Post 6208
- Kent Emmert, Roseville Post 7555
- Paul Lindahl, Woodbury Post 9024

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

District All-American Criteria	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership greater than 102%.</li> <li>• Conduct two Membership recruiting events, submit report through the dashboard.</li> <li>• District Election Report must be submitted to National Headquarters.</li> <li>• Meet all of the following Program Participation Criteria:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Voice of Democracy - minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging</li> <li>- Patriot's Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging</li> <li>- National Citizenship Education Teachers Award - one entry advanced to Department judging</li> </ul>
District All-American Awards	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All-American District Streamer</li> <li>• All-American District Citation (cmdr.)</li> <li>• All-American Name Badge (cmdr.)</li> <li>• All-American Cap (cmdr.)</li> <li>• All-American Lapel Pin (cmdr.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top two District Commanders in each division will receive:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A \$1000 stipend used towards attending the VFW National Convention</li> <li>- Reserved seating at the VFW National Convention Joint Opening Session</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Post All-American Criteria	
* All-American Post candidates must meet all of the following criteria:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership greater than 102%.</li> <li>• Must conduct two Membership recruiting events, submit reports through All-American Dashboard.</li> <li>• Post Election Report must be submitted to National Headquarters.</li> <li>• Voice of Democracy - minimum of one entry advanced to District judging.</li> <li>• Patriot's Pen - minimum of one entry advanced to District judging.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a fundraiser with the proceeds going to Veterans &amp; Military Support Program Services, minimum \$100.</li> <li>• National Citizenship Education Teachers Award - one entry advanced to Department judging.</li> <li>• A Post must submit a community service report quarterly to their department for submission to the All-American Dashboard.</li> <li>• Buddy Poppy - Purchase three per member in the Post.</li> </ul>
Post All-American Awards	
* All posts that meet the Qualifying Percentage and the program participation criteria will receive an All-American Post Citation, Post Streamer and be recognized in the VFW magazine.	
* The top 50 Posts in each Division will receive:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledgment in <i>VFW</i> magazine</li> <li>• Acknowledgment during the All-American Awards Ceremony at the National Convention</li> <li>• All-American Post citation</li> <li>• All-American Post streamer</li> <li>• All-American citation - commander</li> <li>• All-American name badge - cmdr.</li> <li>• All-American cap (commander only)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All-American lapel pin (cmdr. only).</li> <li>• All-American Team Post member lapel pin (25 pack)</li> <li>• The top <b>five</b> commanders in each division will also receive:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending VFW National Convention</li> <li>- Reserved seating at the VFW National Convention joint opening session</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Vietnam Veterans WE WANT YOU

### MN State Fair Military Appreciation Day

This year's theme is Honoring Vietnam Veterans, to recognize the 50th anniversary of Vietnam veterans leaving Vietnam. The Minnesota National Guard is seeking 300 Vietnam and Vietnam Era Veterans to participate in a march during the State Fair's Military Appreciation Day on Tuesday, August 29, 2023.

Volunteers are available to assist with accessibility needs and pushing wheelchairs. Each veteran will receive one (1) complimentary State Fair ticket.

The march will be a leisurely stroll from Leinie's Lodge to Dan Patch Park (about 6 blocks). Report to Leinie's Lodge on the fairgrounds at 11am. The march begins promptly at 11:15am

Registration will remain open until a capacity of 300 veterans is



reached OR until August 18, 2023 whichever comes first.

If there are any questions, contact Amy Navrestad (651-243-7998) or at [amy.navrestad@va.gov](mailto:amy.navrestad@va.gov)

To sign up, go online to <https://tinyurl.com/VietnamVeteransMarch>.

## New Veteran Homes to Open

The new Preston Veterans Home will open September 11. It will serve 54 residents and is located at 1112 Overlook Drive, Preston.

Both the Bemidji and the Montevideo Veterans Homes will each house 72 residents. They are both scheduled for a Fall 2023

opening.

The Bemidji Home will be located at 920 Anne Street NW, Bemidji while the Montevideo Home can be found at 2190 William Avenue Montevideo.

More information can be found at: <https://mn.gov/mdva/homes/>

### Minnesota VFW Office Locations

#### Department Headquarters:

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

#### Department Claims Office:

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

#### Auxiliary Headquarters :

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

#### Minneapolis VA

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

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Publications Committee:  
Dan Meyer, Commander; David Staehlin, Sr. Vice Commander;  
Edward Keogh, Jr. Vice Commander; Charles Hawkins, Judge Advocate;  
Ken Schroepfer, editor

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

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

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

Please Note the below address change: (Please Print)

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# 2023-2024 Department Officers

## Senior Vice Commander

By David Staehlin, State Senior Vice Commander

Comrades, Sisters, and Brothers, it is my pleasure and honor to serve you as your State Senior Vice Commander. As we move forward through this administrative year, I'd like to take a moment to celebrate our successes from this last year.

The Department of Minnesota VFW, 7 of 9 districts, and 122 of 195 posts reached or exceeded 100% membership! Many other posts were within one or two members of 100%. Even better, 2 districts and 66 posts had 102% or higher membership, which was our real goal.

Congratulations to All-American Districts 1, 2, and 7 and our All-American Posts: 2735 Isanti, 5340 Montgomery, 5518 Elk River, 6208 Prior Lake, 7555 Roseville, and 9024 Woodbury! You make us proud!

Last year, VFW and Auxiliary members in Minnesota donated over \$13 million to charities in

cash donations and the value of our volunteer time. World-wide, your VFW and Auxiliary donated over \$208 million.

These are just some of the metrics documenting our success. These numbers don't even include the VA benefits that are received by veterans and their families in Minnesota due to the hard work of Jon Gohn and his team at our VFW Claims Office.

This year, 2023-2024, can again be a successful year. Let's continue the good work we do. We can work to reach and exceed our 102% membership goal, increase participation in our programs, and continue to refer veterans and their families to our Claims Office or to their County Veteran Service Officer.

Thank you for your membership and support of the VFW and Auxiliary here in the wonderful state of Minnesota.

## Junior Vice Commander

By Ed Keogh, State Junior Vice Commander

I am honored to be your Jr. Vice Commander for the great Department of MN VFW. I along with the other line officers are here to assist all districts and posts in MN. If you have questions and/or concerns, feel free to contact us.

Along with being your Jr. Vice Commander, I have been appointed the Department Community Service Chairperson. This year a huge change has been implemented in how Community Service will be reported. Posts will no longer be able to submit the excel or hard copy CSR to the Department. All CSR's will need to be reported on

All-American Dashboard located on the National website [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org). For the past year more post and district officers have received access to the All-American Dashboard. Now Commanders, Sr. Vice Commanders, Jr. Vice Commanders, Quartermasters, and Adjutants all have access to enter data on the All-American Dashboard. Another point to address is that the Community Service Report is a joint report between posts and their auxiliaries. If your post has an auxiliary, the auxiliary must submit the Auxiliary Community Service data to their post officers for submission of a joint

## Adjutant-Quartermaster

By Barry Henriksen, Department Adjutant-Quartermaster

Thank you to the Department of Minnesota for giving me the honor of being your Quartermaster. Thank you to our State Commander Dan Meyer for appointing me as Adjutant. I take these responsibilities as a sacred trust between every VFW member in Minnesota and myself.

I want to give special thanks to Duane "Dewey" Hermanson. He has

given his all to this Department over the last 15 years. He worked his way up through the chairs from Post 4452 Cannon Falls to the 1st District, and then the State, culminating as State Commander. While doing this he was also the Quartermaster of his post and district (except when he

**ADJ/QM - Cont. on Page 10**

## Judge Advocate

By Charles Hawkins, Sr., State Judge Advocate

Comrades

I want to tell you how very appreciative and honored I am to have been elected as the State Judge Advocate. As I have stated in the past, I didn't have time to undertake such a prestigious position as "The Judge." Now I have the time.

With Commander Meyer's Staff, present and past leadership of the Department of Minnesota, and the office staff, I am sure I will receive the training and guidance to have a successful year.

At this writing, I have received my 2023-2024 District Meeting

Schedule. I will now begin to explore the State of Minnesota at its finest as I visit the various Districts and Posts. It will be a strange new world of places I have never seen. Go forth, young man, and gain Knowledge.

Participating in the 124th National Convention as a line officer from the Department was a tremendous honor bestowed on me. With the training and knowledge that I have received, I am ready to take on the challenges of this position.

I am excited to share all that I have learned with every member of this Department.

## Minnesota VFW Council of Administration

## Auxiliary to the VFW Council of Administration

Officer	Home City	Home Post
Commander Dan Meyer	Fairfax	Post #8459
Sr. Vice Commander David Staehlin	Cottage Grove	Post #8752
Jr. Vice Commander Edward Keogh	Montgomery	Post 5340
Quartermaster Barry Henriksen	White Bear Lake	Post #1782
Adjutant Barry Henriksen	White Bear Lake	Post #1782
Judge Advocate Charles Hawkins	Coon Rapids	Post #9652
Surgeon Dr. James Tuorila	St. Cloud	Post #428
Chaplain Scott Hansen	Brooklyn Park	Post #494
Chief of Staff Gary Anderson	Circle Pines	Post #6587
Member at Large Barry Henriksen	White Bear Lake	Post #1782
Chief Inspector Darrin Ewing	Woodbury	Post #9024
Past Commander Dale Hoogeveen	Carver	Post #1791
Officer of the Day Donald Heuer	Litchfield	Post #9433
Nat'l Council MBR Dale Hoogeveen	Carver	Post #1791
MOC Grand Cmdr. Timothy Arnold	Fridley	Post #9625
1st District Cmdr. Colin Atkinson	Lake City	Post #1802
2nd District Cmdr. Len Gudmunson	Hastings	Post #1210
3rd District Cmdr. Matthew Martin	Sacred Heart	Post #3871
4th District Cmdr. Michael Lindvall	White Bear Lake	Post #1782
5th District Cmdr. Lee Christopherson	Osakis	Post #7902
6th District Cmdr. Ryan Johnson	Sauk Rapids	Post #6992
7th District Cmdr. Kenneth Schroepfer	Cambridge	Post #7
8th District Cmdr. Mary Thompson	Aurora	Post #8144
9th District Cmdr. Richard Gabe	Detroit Lakes	Post #5252

Officer	Home City	Home Aux
President David Scofield	Litchfield	Aux #2818
Sr. Vice President Karen Englund	Lake City	Aux #8729
Jr. Vice Julie Stoehr	Cook	Aux #1757
Secretary/Treasurer Laurie Dale	Kenyon	Aux #141
Chaplain Paige Amundson	Madison	Aux #1656
Conductress Nanci Bohmer	Circle Pines	Aux #246
Guard Jean Keogh	Montgomery	Aux #5340
Chief of Staff Jane Ziebarth	Princeton	Aux #806
1st District President Tammy Shell	Lake City	Aux #8729
2nd District President Dawn Kaping	Mankato	Aux #950
3rd District President Carolyn Penning	Wilmont	Aux #2603
4th District President Carol Kratz	White Bear Lake	Aux #1782
5th District President Judi Olson	Carlos	Aux #936
6th District President Deb Wieshalla	Cushing	Aux #8391
7th District President Doris Anderson	Blaine	Aux #6316
8th District President Marlaina Hart	Iron	Aux #4456
9th District President Jamie Cassavant	Crookston	Aux #1902
Past Department Presidents on Council:		
PDP Francesca Bill	Brooklyn Park	Aux #3915
PDP Paige Amundson	Madison	Aux #1656
PDP Jamie Cassavant	Crookston	Aux #1902
PDP Sonia Tatge	Kenyon	Aux #141

# Minnesota Auxiliary News



**STATE PRESIDENT  
VFW Auxiliary**

**Dave Scofield**

Member of  
VFW Post 2818 Auxiliary  
Litchfield, MN



## National District Council

By Frankie Bill, Member Area E

Comrades and Members, thank you for another opportunity to represent each and every member across the Department of Minnesota, VFW Auxiliary for the 2023-2025 term. Once again, this is an enormous honor to serve as Minnesota's National District Council Member for Area E.

As I stated during my campaign, I believe in the three P's: Purpose, Passion, and People. Purpose is all about driving our mission to continuously improve the lives of Veterans, families, and communities every single day. Passion is how I show up by networking with thought leaders and performing servant leadership to be mindful of and dedicated to our mission. People, like you and me, are multigenerational

ranging from those who are considered legacy members to the newest members. We must ensure every voice is included and recognize we each bring uniquely, diverse ideas in promoting our elite organization of dedicated members.

Congratulations to Commander Dan and President Dave as they buckle up for their joint year ahead. We are excited for both the Minnesota VFW and Auxiliary teams as these two leaders approach the 2023-2024 program year ahead. I know they will do great things together as they focus on growing membership and investing in core programs focused on the betterment of all Veterans, families, and surrounding communities.

I look forward to seeing everyone at Fall Conference in Rochester.

Greetings VFW and Auxiliary Members:

Minnesota is leading the way by electing me as the first male Department President for the state of Minnesota and the rest of the Big Ten! There have been other department presidents, but none that have gone through all the chairs as I have. I have been a member of the auxiliary since 2016 and before that was president of the Litchfield Men's Auxiliary before they were disbanded. I served as the auxiliary president for Litchfield for four years and was also District 6 President before running the department chairs. I also was the editor for the District 6 newsletter for 3 years.

As state president, my theme is "Together we Can". For the first time, the Commander Dan Meyer and I will share the same theme, shirts, pin, and state project. This will make us a team closer than any pair in history. We are in constant communication

and trying to make changes to involve both of us on both sides of the aisle. Our state project is for two local organizations that take veterans fishing. Veterans on the Water and Warriors and Walleyes outdoors. More information is available on our website. <https://mnvfw.org>.

I look forward to seeing everyone in Rochester at Fall Conference and hoping everyone will take advantage of the training that will be available.

Two fund raisers for our state project will be coming up soon. There will be a cornhole tournament on September 16th at the Willmar VFW and a Golf Tournament on September 2nd at the Mayflower Golf Course in Fairfax, MN. Look for times and details in the General Orders.

Another change is both General Orders will be available on both websites moving forward because this year

"Together We Can".

## Cynthia Tews 1949-2023



Cindy was an active member of the VFW Post 906 Auxiliary, the Silver Lake Legion Auxiliary and the Hutchinson DAV Auxiliary. She served as the VFW Post 906 Auxiliary President during 1997 and 1998, the 2nd District VFW Auxiliary President from 2006-2007, and as the VFW Auxiliary State President for the 2012-2013 term.

## Treasurer/Secretary Chair

By Laurie Dale

Greetings everyone

If your VFW Auxiliary has elected a new Treasurer, please make sure you send form 8822B to the IRS. This form lets the IRS know there has been a change in the "responsible party" for your VFW Auxiliary. The form is available in MALTA under the Duties tab in the Treasurer Resources section. You should also fill out this form if your Treasurer has a change in name, address, etc.

It is not necessary to send a copy of your bond to the Department Office if you are bonding through the National Organization.... only when using an outside company is it necessary for you to send a copy of your bond to the Department Office. Bonds purchased from a source other than National require Council approval. Bonds must be purchased in the amount of **DOUBLE** the amount of your Auxiliary assets. Bonds must be purchased no later than August 31, 2023.

990N e-postcards are due by November 15. A copy of your acceptance is needed in the Department VFW Auxiliary HQ Office. If your auxiliary files a tax return, you do not need to complete the 990N, but we need a copy of your return on file in place of the

990N. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO PAY ANYTHING TO FILE THE 990N ONLINE! If you are trying to complete the 990N e-postcard online and someone is trying to charge you a fee to do it.... you are on the wrong website! We are unable to file the 990N for individual auxiliaries. This is the sole responsibility of the Auxiliary.

We are receiving far too many Membership Applications that have to be returned. Please make sure that before you send any application to the office for processing you have it filled out completely. The most common problems we encounter are:

1. Missing Signatures – either the applicant or the Investigating Committee.
2. Eligibility – this must be complete or it will not be processed. Assure the VFW Membership number is included if they are affiliated - if they are unaffiliated, you must have the dates served, the location served (foreign) and the qualifying medals of the veteran.
3. Missing DOB (date of birth)
4. Missing Phone number
5. Missing or incorrect VFW Auxiliary number that they are joining.
6. Incorrect funds or no funds sent.

## All Post, District and Department Officers Dues

# MUST BE PAID

## by December 31

\*\*\*\*\*  
**ALL MEMBERS**

### REMEMBER TO PAY YOUR DUES

**Better yet,**

## Become a Life Member !!

### MN Auxiliary Office Hours

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

email: [treasurer@yfwamn.org](mailto:treasurer@yfwamn.org) or [secretary@yfwamn.org](mailto:secretary@yfwamn.org)  
Personal emails, phone numbers, messaging systems/apps of our Office  
Staff will not be used for Auxiliary business.

# Claims and Service Office Report

Jon Gohn, Claims Director

## Claims Office Update

There have been a few changes in the VFW Claims Office as of late. It is unfortunate, but we lost Steve Walker. He accepted the position of Carver County Veteran Service Officer. We wish him the best of luck and look forward to working with him in a different capacity. The veterans of Carver County are lucky to have a knowledgeable and passionate individual to help elevate their office to the next level.

Zac Lee was hired as our claims examiner. He was promoted to Veterans Service Officer to replace Steve Walker. Zac has already shown himself to be a great veterans advocate. He is learning quickly and is already an outstanding asset to our

office. Lynette Bonin, Jeff Cowell and I are still plugging along and are busier than ever.

We are all extremely busy. I attribute that to the PACT Act. The Department of Veterans Affairs has done an excellent job of getting the information out regarding the new change in law. Because of their efforts people are inquiring consistently and we have been able to help multiple veterans file new claims and re-open previously denied claims that now fall under the PACT Act. It is surely keeping us gainfully employed and although the work seems daunting some days, your claims office is doing a tremendous job to keep up with the additional workload. If anyone has

questions regarding the PACT Act, please email or call us. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Due to all the movement in the office, we will have a position open for a claims examiner. Please pay attention to any e-blasts that may be sent out in the near future. The current plan is to open the position on August 1st. It will be listed on our Minnesota VFW website. If any of you are interested or know of someone who would be a good fit regarding assisting veterans, I encourage anyone to apply once it is available.

In September Jeff and Zac will be attending VFW NVS training in Annapolis, MD. I am sure they will come back with loads of knowledge and new information that will only help us in doing an even better job representing our veterans than we already have.

Lastly, I would be remised if I did not give accolades to our County Veteran Service Officers throughout the state. Without their knowledge, tenacity and boots on ground availability we would not be able to represent the amount of worthy individuals that we do. Their partnership is crucial to our success and the success of our clients.

If you have never visited our office or called to even chat, I really encourage you all to do so. It is imperative to know the amount of work we do to assist our most well deserving folks out there.

I do thank all of you for all of the support that we receive in your claims office. From our finance committee, internal affairs committee, our line officers and our commander I know that I get more support than most VFW Claims Offices across the nation. For that I am extremely grateful.

## VFW asks SECDEF to Award new AF Expeditionary Medals

July 17, 2023

WASHINGTON — With President Joe Biden's executive order issued July 14, approving the mobilization of select reservists of the Armed Forces to active duty to support Operation Atlantic Resolve, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) National Commander Tim Borland is renewing his call for the Department of Defense to award the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to those service members deployed to defend NATO's eastern flank.

"Operation Atlantic Resolve is now a named contingency operation and the troops directly supporting this crucial mission deserve proper recognition," said Borland. "The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal was created for just this reason."

First authorized by Executive Order 10977 signed by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal is awarded for participations in U.S. military operations, operations in direct support of the United Nations and for U.S. operations of assistance to friendly foreign nations. The DOD previously approved 36 operations eligible for the award. The characteristics of the various operations include assurance, deterrence, peacekeeping, and reinforcement in support of allies, including ongoing NATO operations in former Yugoslavia.

During a Pentagon press briefing on July 13, DOD News reported Joint Staff Director of Operations Lt. Gen. Douglas A. Sims II said Operation Atlantic Resolve is designated as a contingency operation. According to Title 10, the definition of the term

"contingency operation" is "a military operation that is designated by the Secretary of Defense as an operation in which members of the Armed Forces are or may become involved in military actions, operations, or hostilities against an enemy of the United States or against an opposing military force."

"This new designation benefits troops and families with increases in authorities, entitlements and access to the reserve component forces and personnel," said Sims.

"By exercising his authority with this simple, yet meaningful gesture," said Borland, "Secretary of Defense Austin has the opportunity to show U.S. service members how much he appreciates what they are doing to support our NATO allies in eastern Europe."

During Congressional testimony in March, Borland first addressed the need to recognize service members serving in eastern Europe to support NATO after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Borland observed the need for proper recognition after visiting American troops serving in Poland in February. He said that the global security situation demanded that U.S. service members be quickly sent to the defense of NATO allies, and recognizing those serving in a forward operational capacity with a medal is the right thing to do.

"The VFW calls on the DOD and Congress to properly recognize the immense contributions of those who served and are serving on the eastern flank of NATO by awarding them the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for deterring Russian aggression," said Borland.

## VA Launches Nat'l PACT Act Summer VetFest

June 27, 2023

WASHINGTON — In July, VA will kick off PACT Act Summer VetFest to inform Veterans, their families, and survivors about the PACT Act and encourage them to apply for the health care and benefits they have earned. The PACT Act, which President Biden signed into law on Aug. 10, 2022, is the biggest expansion of Veteran health care and benefits in generations.

Throughout July, VA will host 50+ Summer VetFest events across all 50 states, DC, and Puerto Rico. The events will be casual summer gatherings featuring Veterans, their families, Veteran advocates, and the VA health care and benefits professionals who serve them. At the events, VA staff will be ready to help Veterans apply for PACT Act-related benefits (or submit an intent to file), enroll in VA health care, get screened for toxic exposures, and more.

VA encourages all eligible Veterans and survivors to file a claim — or submit their intent to file a claim — for PACT Act-related benefits now. Veterans who do so by Aug. 9 may have their benefits, if granted, backdated to Aug. 10, 2022, the day that President Biden signed the bill into law.

"There are millions of Veterans

and survivors across America who are eligible for new health care and benefits, and we will not rest until every one of them gets what they've earned," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "That's what this Summer VetFest is all about: educating Veterans, their families, and survivors — and encouraging them to apply today."

Since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law, VA has delivered more than \$1.4 billion in PACT Act benefits to Veterans. Additionally, more than 665,000 Veterans have applied for PACT Act-related benefits, more than 3.7 million Veterans have received the new toxic exposure screenings, and more than 287,000 Veterans have enrolled in VA health care (this is 40,000 more enrollments than during the same timeframe last year, and it includes 94,000 enrollees from the PACT Act target population).

The PACT Act Summer VetFest is just one component of VA's nationwide PACT Act Veteran outreach campaign, which is the largest coordinated outreach campaign in VA history. The campaign has one goal: ensuring that every eligible Veteran and survivor gets the PACT Act-related health care and benefits they have earned.

### Veterans Claim Service

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

email: [vfw.vbaspl@va.gov](mailto:vfw.vbaspl@va.gov)

*We'll Help with YOUR Veteran Benefits*

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

By Dale Hoogeveen,  
National Council Member

Our National Council of Administration consists of all elected National Officers (7), the Adjutant General, Chief of Staff, Inspector General, the immediate past Commander-in-Chief and one representative from each Department (52) for a total of 63 members.

The duties of the Council include administering the affairs and transacting the business of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in the intervals between our annual national conventions. It also approves and adopts the annual budget prepared by the Quartermaster General as well as establishing the salaries of all officers and employees of the VFW. The Council is responsible for ensuring the records of the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General are audited annually, for authorizing all real estate transactions, and amending the Manual of Procedure as needed. It is the board of directors responsible for oversight of business transactions for the VFW.

The VFW is comprised of 52 Departments assigned to four conferences – Minnesota belongs to the Big 10 Conference. Each year, the term of office for the representatives from one of the four conferences expires and newly elected representatives are installed. Our first official meeting was held one hour after the installation of all elected officers with Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento presiding.

I was elected to represent the Department of Minnesota at our state convention for a four-year term commencing with my installation to the council on July 27, 2023, at the conclusion of the 124th National Convention held in Phoenix, Arizona.

I offer my thanks to outgoing National Council Member Tom Hanson for his mentorship and insight regarding the Council. Tom kept the Commander and line officers well informed about National events and business impacting our department.

If any comrades have questions about the Council of Administration, please ask. I am honored to have been given the privilege of representing the Department of Minnesota and I thank my fellow comrades for giving me the opportunity!

**THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
SERVICE**

## **YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

By David Staehlin, State Membership Chairperson

Your membership in the VFW or VFW Auxiliary matters. We couldn't fulfill our mission without members like you. Our active members have the greatest positive impact on our programs, but every member counts, literally. Our VFW Minnesota Claims Office is partially funded by a grant from the State of Minnesota. That funding allocation is partly based on our membership numbers. The higher our membership count, the higher our funding. With your

membership alone, you are helping Minnesota veterans and their families.

When the VFW and VFW Auxiliary advocate for veterans, military servicemembers, and their families at the State Legislature or before Congress, our numbers matter. Legislators will listen to a larger group compared to a smaller group.

If you are not a life member,

consider converting to life membership. We have the assurance of your membership continuing and you have the convenience of avoiding your membership expiring or facing dues increases. Life membership rates are very reasonable. Veterans go to [vfw.org/renew](http://vfw.org/renew) and get a personal quote on a life membership or contact your Post Quartermaster. Auxiliary members can upgrade through MALTA at [vfwauxiliary.org](http://vfwauxiliary.org) or contact your Auxiliary Treasurer.

## **Convention Committee Report**

By Scott Bill and the Convention Committee Team

Hello comrades and auxiliary members, I hope you had a fun, safe and relaxing Independence Day break.

As I write my first new update from the Department Convention committee, I would be remiss if I did not take the time to thank Commander Meyer for the appointment. Additionally, I must recognize a comrade and close friend past State Commander Dave Adams for his coaching and mentoring over the years. His years of leadership and experience with the committee are extensive. I am grateful for his knowledge transfer and friendship. Thank you Dave from all of us here in MN.

The Fall Conference Banquet will be held Saturday, September 23, 2023. Complete details can be found on the Fall Conference agenda and Banquet Order Form on page 7 of the Gopher Overseas'r.

Please Note if you need handicap arrangements or services or have specific dietary needs on the Housing Reservation Form.

### **An important reminder of why we have a banquet**

Yes, we all know it's fun to get together and have a good meal with friends, but the banquet is an integral part of the entire cost of our conference. With every contract come drinks and food minimum expenditures. By you attending the banquet, you help us keep the cost of the entire weekend as low as possible. This also applies to booking room nights. We negotiate our best prices when we fulfill our room night commitments and banquet hall. So thank you to those who consistently attend. If you don't typically attend, please consider attending moving forward.

The Convention Committee works very hard to keep room rates and food to the most affordable pricing we can. But it is getting harder every year to find locations at the prices we want for you -our members. So please buy your tickets and rent rooms today.

### **Hospitality Rooms**

We have three rooms currently on hold for the 2023 Fall Conference. They are the Centennial, Regency and Viking Rooms located in the Kahler Gand Hotel. We have the hospitality rooms on hold from Thursday, September 21, 2023, through Saturday, September 23, 2023. See VFW Department website for more details under "News/Fall Conference."

### **Note for Midwinter 2024 at the Marriott NW Brooklyn Park**

The hotel is excited and prepared for our conference. The facility has had some staff turnover, but the leadership team has been working very hard to ensure we have what we need for a safe and successful conference in Brooklyn Park. Parking is free and plentiful.

Lastly, thank you to those who took time to fill out the survey at convention. We are working through them and I will update on the next published newsletter.

## **How to Conduct Better Meetings**

By David Staehlin, State Parliamentarian

No one enjoys attending long, disorganized meetings. If your VFW or Auxiliary meeting regularly takes over an hour, there are almost certainly opportunities to streamline the meeting. When meeting chairs—Commanders and Presidents—and members understand parliamentary procedure, meetings can be smooth and productive, in many cases, achieving more.

A great resource for both members and presiding officers is Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief (3rd edition). This easy to read and understand book can help any meeting chair or member follow proper meeting procedures.

The Parliamentary Procedure training sessions at our 2023 VFW Officer Training Institute (OTI) and Auxiliary Training School (ATS)

were informative and fun. If you want to test your parliamentary knowledge, visit [300questions.org](http://300questions.org). This site has testing in parliamentary procedure which can help you hone your meeting skills.

Consider attending monthly parliamentary procedure study sessions hosted via Zoom by the Northern Lights Parliamentarians or by the St. Paul Unit. Contacts are Mike Orr ([orrx12@umn.edu](mailto:orrx12@umn.edu)) for NLP and Carrie Roach ([catherine.roach@usfamily.net](mailto:catherine.roach@usfamily.net)) for the SPU.

Consider also having a parliamentary procedure training session in conjunction with your District meeting once a year.

Here are two true or false questions to test your parliamentary knowledge:

1. T or F: A member in an assembly may make a main motion or speak in debate without obtaining the floor.
2. T or F: A long and complicated motion, or a resolution, should be prepared in advance and put in writing.

Answers:

1. False. A member must be recognized by the chair before making a motion or speaking in debate.
2. True. A long or complicated motion or resolution should be written in advance and copies provided to the chair, the secretary (Adjutant), and, if any, the parliamentarian. When a motion or resolution is made without being written in advance, the chair may require it to be written before being moved.

# Fall Conference - September 23-25, 2022

## CONF. - Cont. from Page 1

possible. Attendance at all these schools of instruction and seminars are important to the success of our VFW and Auxiliary programs for the coming year. Please encourage a member of your Post or Auxiliary to attend all the meetings and have them share the information with your Post and Auxiliary members who were unable to attend. A complete schedule of schools of instruction and seminars are available in your Department and Auxiliary General Orders, on the VFW Department Web Page at: [www.vfwmn.org/New/FallConference](http://www.vfwmn.org/New/FallConference) and in a QR Code at the event. There will be some great classes on all our key programs. The best way to have a successful year is to get a great start and the Fall Conference will help you launch into your new year.

## COMMITTEE DISPLAYS AND EXHIBITS

The Display and Exhibit Area will be open from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm on Saturday, September 23rd in Heritage Hall Room 1 & 2. All members will have ample opportunity to visit these displays and exhibits to pick up samples of all the available program information. All VFW and Auxiliary Programs will be exhibited here as well as our Veterans Homes and other related programs. All Post Commanders and Quartermasters wishing to have a chance at ALL-STATE honors should locate the Membership Display Area and sign-in on the sheets provided at the entry way.

## CASUAL DINNER (Motorcycle Theme/Casual Attire)

This year, the Annual Fall Conference Dinner will be a casual and fun event. State Commander, Dan Meyer and State President, Dave Scofield want everyone to relax and enjoy a good meal and fellowship with friends. Seating is not assigned but there will be tables reserved for honored guests. Don't worry, there will be plenty of seating for everyone with ten people at a table. It is open to all VFW and Auxiliary members. Additional information including the menu is on the order form that has been printed in this issue of the Gopher Oversea'r and you can find it online at [www.vfwmn.org/News/FallConference](http://www.vfwmn.org/News/FallConference).

## SUNDAY COUNCIL MEETING

Please stay and join us for our Council of Administration meeting on Sunday. At this meeting, you will listen as the Department of Minnesota, VFW wrap up the final business of the 2023 Fall Conference and Youth Activities Programs Bidding. The VFW Council meeting starts promptly at 9:00 am.

**THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
SERVICE**



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS - DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA



## VFW FALL CONFERENCE

September 22-24, 2023

Kahler Grand Hotel, 20 SW 2nd Ave, Rochester, MN

(Rev. 7-17-2023) Tentative

### FRIDAY, September 22, 2023

9:30 - 10:00am	Pre-Convention Committee	Directors Boardroom
10:30 - 11:30am	Internal Affairs Committee	Directors Boardroom
NOON - 4:00pm	<b>Registration</b> VFW & Aux	Heritage Hall Foyer
	Pick up program book & Banquet Tickets	
1:00 - 2:30pm	Finance Committee	Directors Boardroom
2:30 - 4:00pm	Gambling Meeting	Heritage Hall 1 & 2
	No one assigned to date	
3:30 - 4:30pm	MNVFW Charitable Association	Directors Boardroom
6:00 - 8:30pm	VFW Council of Administration	Heritage Hall 1 & 2
6:00 - 8:30pm	Auxiliary Council of Administration	Marriott Ballroom 1 & 2
After Meetings	Hospitality Rooms	Kahler Grand Hotel
	(Centennial, Regency, Viking)	

### SATURDAY, September 23, 2023

7:00 A.M. - 4:00pm	<b>Registration</b> VFW & Aux	Heritage Hall Foyer
8:00 A.M. - 3:00pm	<b>Seminars/Hands-on Instruction</b>	Windsor Hall 1, 2, 3
		Heritage Hall 1
		Elizabethan Ballroom
8:00 A.M. - 3:30pm	<b>Program Exhibits/Poppy Contest</b>	Heritage Hall 2 & 3
	Exhibit set up from 7 - 7:45 am	
	Dept. Chairs please staff your Displays from 2 - 2:45pm	
4:30 - 5:30pm	Catholic Mass	Windsor Hall 1
6:00 - 6:45pm	General Reception	Heritage Hall Foyer
7:00 - 9:30pm	Banquet/Casual Dinner/Casual Attire	Heritage Hall 1 & 2
	Doors open at 6:45pm	
	Hospitality Rooms Closed during Banquet	

### SUNDAY, September 24, 2023

9:00 - 11:00am	VFW Council of Administration	Heritage Hall 1 & 2
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**Fall Conference Casual Dinner Event  
Saturday, September 23rd, 2023  
Tickets \$36/person (No Refunds)  
Reception 6pm Dinner 7pm**

**Deadline: Friday September 1, 2023**

Menu: Sliced Roast Beef with a truffle Glaze, Herb Baby Red Potatoes, Flash Seared/Seasoned Broccolini, Rolls & Butter, Carrot Cake, Coffee Regular or Decaffeinated.

Banquet/Dinner Tables seat 10 people  
Motorcycle Attire Theme/Casual Attire

**No assigned seating except for the State Commander's Honored Guests' Tables**  
(Tickets will be at Registration Table in the Heritage Hall Foyer)

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

Please Reserve \_\_\_\_\_ Tickets at \$36/person Fall Conference Casual Dinner.

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Post/Auxiliary # \_\_\_\_\_ District # \_\_\_\_\_

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

.....

## Nat'l IG Mascetti to Visit Fall Conference



Peter J. Mascetti was appointed National Inspector General of the VFW on July 27, 2023, at the 124th VFW National Convention. He served in the United States Army from 1975 to 1997, earning his VFW eligibility by serving in Operation Desert Storm.

Peter joined the VFW in 1993 and currently maintains his Life membership at Post 27 in Wiesbaden. He has served in elected and appointed positions at the Post, District and Department levels, culminating with his election as the Department of Europe Commander from 2001 to 2002.

Peter is the top membership recruiter with over 4,000 members signed up and was named VFW National Recruiter of the Year in 2006 and 2008.

He has served on the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual Committee, Finance and Internal Organization Committee, and is currently serving on the National Council of Administration Committee. Peter is a member of the Military Order of the Cootie and the National Home for Children.

## HOUSING RESERVATIONS

VFW Fall Conference 2023  
Friday, Sept. 22 -- Sunday, Sept. 24  
Kahler Grand Hotel  
20 SW 2nd Ave.  
Rochester, MN 55902

For Reservations call 800-533-1655

Room Block: **MN VFW Fall Convention**

Room Rate: \$125/night + tax  
(Standard King OR Two Double Beds)  
Check in: 4pm Check out: 11am  
(Parking \$8/day)

**DEADLINE  
September 7, 2023**

Reserve online at [vfwmn.org/news/FallConference/](http://vfwmn.org/news/FallConference/)  
click on hotel link

# News from YOUR District Commanders and Presidents!



**Colin Atkinson, Commander  
First District**



**Len Gudmunson, Commander  
Second District**



**Matthew Martin, Commander  
Third District**



**Michael Lindvall, Commander  
Fourth District**

Greetings from First District!

I want to begin by saying that I experienced a phenomenal Department Convention. This year's convention was filled with learning, camaraderie, and patriotism.

For me, the highlights were the Commanders and Quartermasters School sessions regarding navigating and submitting information on the VFW dashboard, parliamentary procedure, flag etiquette, and being more visual and vocal in my community regarding Veteran's issues. As always First District received many accolades, certificates and White hats.

What a thrill, as a Harley rider, to see the VFW Riders come roaring into the convention!

Congratulations and best wishes to all the Officers in the Department, District and Posts for this coming year.

These past few weeks I have been contemplating my goals for the year. I have four goals that I will dutifully fulfill, number one being membership. Now is not the time to take a break. Let's always be on the look for potential members and always carry a membership application in our wallet to help keep MN VFW strong.

My second goal is to petition you all to help convert all continual members to Lifetime Members.

Goal three is post inspections. They are right around the corner this fall. Get together a folder with all the items needed for inspection.

Lastly, goal four is education. Let us all teach and assist members, incoming officers and appointed comrades how to stay organized so all future comrades can do the best for our Veterans.

My fellow comrades, make sure you attend your district meetings and department conventions this year.

I am very excited for the great things to be achieved by First District! First District leads the way because we are Strong as Steel!



**Tammy Shell, Auxiliary  
President First District**

Greetings from the First District Auxiliary.

My name is Tammy Shell, I am truly humbled to have been elected to the position of District President. Although having been a District secretary for a couple of years I thought that was a hard job. I am

**DIST. 1 AUX. - Cont. on Page 12**

Hello my fellow comrades.

I wish to extend a hearty congratulations to all of the All-American Commanders. Especially those representing the 2nd District, State Commander Dale Hooegeven, District Commander Leon Grack, and Montgomery Commander Ed Keogh.

A quick update from the Nat'l Convention in Phoenix. The temperature during the day has not been lower than 111 degrees. Oh, but it's a dry heat! On Tuesday was the Patriotic Rally, it started with a parade of Departments. We all march around the meeting hall right past the Commander-in-Chief and the National Auxiliary President. There was a musical group entertaining us most of the time. On Wednesday was the nomination of officers, and other dignitaries. Thursday was the election of officers, with a speech from the incoming Commander. It's very similar to our state convention but on a much bigger scale.

I do intend to visit every post in the District. I will notify the Commander a week in advance. My goal for the year is to encourage all posts to make their dashboards green.

I do hope that each post will send a delegation to the Fall Conference in Rochester, information can be found in the General Orders.

Our first District Meeting will be on September 30th at Jordan. Lunch at 11:00, joint meeting at 12:30 and separate meetings at 1 PM. Get to the schools and learn about the VOD/PP Programs and Teacher of the year, NOW.



**Dawn Kaping, Auxiliary  
President Second District**

Greetings from District 2!

My name is Dawn Kaping and I am the newly elected District 2 President. I am a Life Member at Morson-Ario-Strand in Mankato and joined the auxiliary under my dad, Henry Kaping, a WWII Marine Veteran. I remember helping as a young girl with fish fry's and brat stands and am proud to continue in his footsteps.

I want to thank my district for placing their trust in me for this upcoming year and look forward to making new friends and a successful year.

Since this year is pretty new, we are still in the planning process for many things. We will have our first meeting, a planning meeting, in

Hello from the 3rd district.

I hope everyone is having a good summer trying to stay cool in these hot days. I suppose everyone's summer is busy just as mine. I would like to take a moment to welcome our new members into our family.

Congratulations to our newly elected officers in the state, districts and post, and hope their year goes great and a lot can get accomplished.

I hear that the VFW National Convention went well and that members who attended had a wonderful time and represented Minnesota well.

There are a lot of things going on with our posts in the 3rd district: county fairs, town celebrations, motorcycle ride events, and VFW/Jr. Legion baseball. June brought flag day ceremonies with Wilmont post 2603 having a program in which they gave away 2 bicycles for kids. I know other posts had programs as well. There were 4th of July events throughout the district and posts participated in many summer parades. That pretty much summarizes the summer events.

I am excited to see everyone at the Fall Conference in September.

Have a great rest of the summer and stay cool.



**Carol Kratz, Auxiliary  
President Fourth District**

Greeting to all,

I entered the US Air Force in 1972 and spent my 19th birthday in boot camp. After serving 3 years, I finished in the Air Force Reserve with an Honorable Discharge.

I lived outside of Minnesota for over 12 years and settled in Seattle for 8 of those years. I joined Keep-Zimmer VFW Auxiliary #1782 in 1989 under the eligibility of my father, Charles Kieffer, who served in WWII. He was Post Cmdr. in 1949. My Mother Shirley also helped lead the way as Past Aux Pres 1967.

I was Fourth District President in 1995-96 and again in 2016-17. Then

Mankato on August 19th. Our first district meeting will be Sept.30th in Jordan. I hope to see some new faces and welcome friends of the past.

I will be working with my Commander, Len Gudmunson, on a joint project, benefiting the Hastings Veterans Home.

I look forward to a fantastic year supporting our veterans and families.

I want to thank the posts in the 4th District that achieved 100%. Post 9024, Woodbury set the standard by achieving 124%. St. Paul Post 1171, North St. Paul Post 1350, and Roseville Post 7555 also went over 100%. Outstanding efforts by great members of the Posts being led by competent and capable officers. As one knows, membership drives practically everything. Veterans have been successful at getting omnibus bills passed at the State level because we have numbers. Let's continue to keep our numbers up and keep the omnibus streak going.

I want to reach out to past commanders at any level to help our current leadership be the best that they can be. All great leaders had the benefit of being mentored and educated by their predecessors and peers. It's rubbish to think they were born that way. Great posts/districts/departments have great officers. By helping our leadership, we are paying it forward. Each successive leader becomes better, and our members enjoy the benefits of exceptional leadership.

I would like to thank the 4th District for another year as commander. I look forward to a great year with Commander Dan and his team.

came the State Secretary in 1995-96 and the State Treasurer from 2008 to 2016. This will be an exciting auxiliary year.

My first newsletter was sent out on June 27. It listed all of the upcoming meeting dates of the district and department, along with contact information of our officers and chairmen.

I'm going to stay with the motto of our Dept. President, "Together We Can". My symbol is the Poppy and I will celebrate each member who attends a district meeting throughout the year.

Our first district meeting is set for August 26th at Mendota World War II VFW. A contest will be held at each meeting, for whichever auxiliary brings the most members. I look forward to a great year.

**Veteran's Day  
is  
November 11**

**Is your Post prepared to  
honor those who served  
their country in war or  
peace - living or dead?**



Lee Christopherson, Commander  
Fifth District

Greetings from the 5th!

First off, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and honor for being the commander for the 5th District. I look forward to working with all the Post commanders and Department officers in the coming year.

District community activities are going strong with the Memorial Day Programs, Flag Retirements, 4th of July activities, all the local parades and not to mention of all the activities at the Posts.

All the posts in the district are doing their best to sign up new members by doing membership drives to make and exceed our goal of 102%.

Our District meeting schedule is: Starbuck VFW Post 4582 on October 1st at 2pm, Willmar VFW Post 1639 on Jan 7th at 2pm and rounding off our year at Osakis VFW Post 7902 on April 14th at 10am. I encourage that you be at the meetings in person but I will try to make Zoom accessible, I am not as technical proficient in the zoom world as the past district commander. I would like to thank Mike and Jen Gearmann for doing the zoom meetings it was a good way for myself to be involved in the district meetings, seeing my location was Iraq.

Let us have a great year and I hope everyone has a safe summer and I look forward to seeing you all in the future.



Deb Wieshalla, Auxiliary  
President Sixth District

Greetings from the 6th District.

I am honored to be this year's 6th District President, as I continue to serve our veterans and promote the VFW Auxiliary. Going with the Department Commander and Department Auxiliary President's theme of "TOGETHER WE CAN", I look forward to working with 6th District Commander Ryan to make our organization stronger.

The 6th District President's Project will be supporting the Veterans Outdoor program at Camp Ripley. This will include both archery and firearm hunts.

I have had the opportunity to attend a couple of Freedom Festivals, as well as area parades. It is wonderful to see our members working so diligently on recruitment, promoting Patriotism, and educating the public about the VFW and its Auxiliary programs. My heart swells with pride!

Our "Official Visits" will be starting soon, so watch for the notifications. I'm looking forward to



Ryan Johnson, Commander  
Sixth District

Comrades,

I would like to start off by saying thank you to the 6th District for finding trust in me, and electing me as your District Commander for the second year. It has truly been an honor leading one of the finest Districts around.

We are coming off of an outstanding year. The hard work and dedication that this district has shown is unbelievable. This year we are looking to keep building off of what we did last year to bring the district to even bigger heights. I plan on being preemptive in reaching out to posts that may fall behind, along with letting the posts know how well they are doing. We have a long year ahead of us but I know we can do great things.

In closing I just ask that we keep up the hard work and if anyone needs a hand please reach out to the District as we are here to help.

meeting and visiting with many of you.

This year's National Americanism Ambassador asks us to remind everyone that a POW/MIA is an acronym, a Prisoner of War is a number, someone who is Missing in Action is a person. They are someone's loved one. Set a Little White Table, hold a Memorial Service, talk to service groups or students in the classrooms. Above all keep them in your hearts until they all are returned home!



Doris Anderson, Auxiliary  
President Seventh District

Hello Sisters, Brothers, and Comrades,

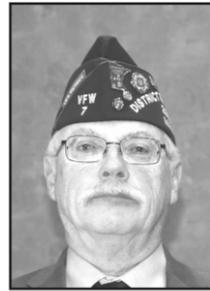
Greetings from the 7th District Auxiliary. Congratulations go out to President Dave, Commander Dan, their officers and chairman as we look forward to working with them this year.

Our auxiliaries have been busy enjoying the summer festivities with parades, 4th of July celebrations, graduations, and family gatherings.

The first District Auxiliary meeting will be September 9th at Sgt. John Rice in Blaine. This will begin as a joint meeting where we will introduce the VFW and Auxiliary Officers and Chairman as they present their programs for 2023-2024. Immediately after this we will begin our regular auxiliary meeting.

Have a safe summer and enjoy the MN State Fair

See you at Fall Conference.



Kenneth Schroeffer, Commander  
Seventh District

Greetings from the 7th District

Thank you so much for putting your trust in me that I can lead you in the coming year.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank each post and post commander for their hard work in achieving 100% by the end of June! Outstanding effort! What a wonderful way to end the year. Congratulations to Posts 230, 246, 323, 2735, 5518, 5424, 7051 and 11543 for breaking 102%. Special thanks go to Posts 5903 and 6692 for nearly making 110%.

This year's goal is 102% for all posts. There are still plenty of local community activities where posts can set up information and membership booths. Contact District Staff if you need help staffing your booth. We are more than willing to be there with you.

Communication will be main focus for this year. District Staff will be visiting each post to offer encouragement with the VFW Programs and membership. Together we can make the coming year even more successful than last year.

Following the theme of Commander Dan and President Dave of "Together We Can", District President Doris and I will be coordinating many district activities throughout the coming year.

Certainly hope that you had an opportunity to watch at least one game of the VFW State Baseball Tournament.

Our first District Meeting will be a joint Auxiliary and VFW held on September 9 at Blaine VFW Post 6316. I am looking forward to seeing a full meeting room at 10am.



## MNVFW Charitable Association

By Ken Schroeffer, Association President

Greetings from the VFW Charitable Association. Has your Post ordered their calendars for the 2024 year yet?

Remember, your post will receive a refund check in the amount of \$5.00 for every calendar that it has sold. The post can use these funds anyway they want.

One great opportunity to sell calendars is at post events. Additionally, some posts receive requests for donations from youth groups. You may want to offer the group the opportunity to sell the VFW Calendars and earn the \$5.00 per calendar sold as their reward. In this situation, remember, the Charitable

### DISTRICT MEETINGS

<b>First District</b>		
Dec. 3	Northfield #4393	@ 9:30 AM
<b>Second District</b>		
Sept. 30	Jordan #2854	@ 1 PM
<b>Third District</b>		
Oct. 7	Wilmont #2603	@ 10 AM
<b>Fourth District</b>		
Aug. 26	Mendota #6690	@ 9 AM
<b>Fifth District</b>		
Oct. 1	Starbuck #4582	@ 10 AM
<b>Sixth District</b>		
Oct. 7	McGregor #2747	@ 1 PM
<b>Seventh District</b>		
Sept. 9	Blaine #6316	@ 10 AM
<b>Eighth District</b>		
Sept.30	Cloquet #3979	@ 9 AM
<b>Ninth District</b>		
Sept. 16	TRF #2793	@ TBD
<b>MOC</b>		
Aug. 19	Austin #1216	@ 10 AM

### JR. VICE - Cont. from Page 3

report

Commander Dan and President Dave's slogan is, "Together We Can". This applies to CSR reporting. I have step-by-step instructions for accessing and reporting Community Service on the All-American Dashboard. Please contact me if you would like a copy of them.

During my travels throughout the State of MN visiting posts and districts I found that not all posts and auxiliaries meet on the same date and/or at the same place. How can you work together if you do not meet and communicate with each other? Please change your meetings to meet at the same time and place and hold a joint meeting prior to your respective business meetings.

Association will send that refund check payable to the VFW Post not the group selling the calendars. It is the responsibility of the post to pay the group.

Even though a post has placed an order, they can always order more calendars.

They are going fast, so please reach out to us and get your order in. The Order Form is included in the Department General Orders for your convenience. We will make arrangements to get them to you at Fall Conference or sooner. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us as Department HQ.



Mary Thompson, Commander  
Eighth District

Hello from Up North!

The 8th District has a great team in place with new faces taking on bigger leadership roles! As we try to increase our membership, and get our programs out into the community, this team will be on hand and readily available to help our posts in any way that we can. On the calendar in our District are some great events taking place at each of our posts to help veterans and be more involved in our communities.

With community service reports going electronic to Dashboard, I will make sure I do my due diligence in helping our posts navigate this system. It is my intention to visit each of the posts within the District and get a grasp on where our strengths and weaknesses are, and build from there.

It will be my goal this year to ensure communication of information to our members in the 8th District. Communication will keep us going strong, and we can continue supporting our veterans, active duty military and their families, and supporting and engaging in our communities.

Thank you to the "same five people" who are always showing up at their post meeting to have a quorum. To the rest of the Post members, please show up for these "same five people" and at least show them you support them. They are doing the work! Just show the support and thank them for keeping your post going. One hour, once a month is not a tall order. Trust me, they will appreciate it.

Check in on your comrades regularly. Make sure they are okay. Show our fellow veterans that the VFW is an organization they can trust and appreciate and will be there for them. Also, put any petty differences aside which you may have with your comrades and remember why we all chose to be part of this great organization. Let's make a difference! We work better together as a team.



Marlaina Hart, Auxiliary  
President Eighth District

Hello Minnesota!

Greetings from District 8. I have been voted in as President again this year. Thank You for the confidence!

District 8 is getting up and running for this next year. We have a new Commander in Mary Thompson and I look forward to working with her on different things this year. Our Commander's and President's Project is joint again this year. We are raising



Richard Gabe, Commander  
Ninth District

Greetings again from the Ninth District which I have often referred to as the Northwest Territory.

I wasn't supposed to write his but fate had other plans. Due to health reasons our Senior Vice wasn't able to ascend to the Commander position. So in good military fashion I was railroaded into serving as commander again this year. This was done to allow for the normal progression in the other chairs. Or it may be that some figured I needed more practice.

All is quiet here in the northwest part of the state. The fields are green and surprising not to many mosquitoes. Everyone is enjoying the warmth after a cold winter. Activities in the District will start up September 16th with our fall meeting in Thief River Falls. With the pandemic behind us I am hoping for a great turn out.

Well, like I said before I don't ramble on just for the sake of repetition and hearing my own voice. Until we meet again at the Fall Conference, I say continue enjoying the summer.

**Has your post hosted a blood drive lately ??**

**If not, why not ??**

**If never, why not now !**

funds for Veteran's on the Lake in Ely to continue the renovations to the Lodge Apartment.

We have unfortunately lost an auxiliary this year, but are excited that one post and auxiliary have moved to a new building. They are busy organizing it and getting ready to open. This new location has been in the works for awhile.

District meetings are in the planning stages at this time. The Fall meeting will be in Cloquet on Sept. 29-30. The Winter meeting will be in Gilbert with the District 8 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen winners sharing their speeches.

Volunteers are once again allowed in the Silver Bay Veteran's Home. We are coordinating some events for our wonderful volunteers. A few events are Bingo, Casino Night, the Big Halloween Party and other events. We "Took A Vet Shopping" in June when a van of veterans came down to the Range to shop at Walmart. A great time was had by all and lunch was served at the Gilbert Post before heading back to Silver Bay.

I look forward to another year serving our District and our Veterans!!

**COMMANDER - Cont. from Page 1**

We are coming up on our Fall Conference. This is the one conference where we have the opportunity to learn about the VFW programs and networking with other members. The wheel has already been invented. We don't need to come up with new ideas. We just need to work with other members to see what works and what doesn't. Everything will not be the same but let's figure out what works for your post.

If we want to be a better stronger organization we need to learn and grow together. That will help everyone. The time we spend with our fellow members will help us

**ADJ/QM - Cont. from Page 3**

was commander). In addition, he has done an exemplary job as Poppy Chair, Community Service Chair, and VOD/Patriots Pen. He has done it all, and always well. He has also spent numerous hours over the last few months helping me in my new role.

I first met Dewey in 1987 when I was an Army Reserve Lieutenant reporting for duty in Cannon Falls. He was the civilian Unit Administrator at the Reserve Center. For 36 years he has been my comrade and friend. I look forward to him continuing to help in his new role as "Adjutant/Quartermaster Emeritus".

As our new year begins, I want to remind everyone to make sure they are reading their General Orders. There is a lot of great information that needs to be passed down to our



Jamie Cassavant, Auxiliary  
President Ninth District

Dear VFW and VFW Auxiliary Members.

Welcome to the 2023-2024 VFW and VFWA year. My name is Jamie Cassavant and I am serving as the 9th District President this year. Our theme this year is: "Together We Can Make a Difference For Our Veterans and Families!"

We will be working together with the District 9 VFW to raise funds for the Bemidji Veteran's Home which will be opening soon.

Our 9th District VFW Auxiliary Goals are:

1. To communicate with our auxiliary members through regular phone calls, Facebook, e-newsletters and e-mail
2. To work on mentoring our members by using our time at District Meetings to teach and to learn from each other. This goal should help us revitalize our current members and gain new and excited members for our auxiliaries.

learn and reflect on our experiences. This will make us a stronger and better organization.

If you need help at the post/district or personal level, just ask. That goes for everyone and everything. It doesn't matter if it's help with post/district issues or personal problems. I may not have the answers for every problem but I am sure I can help find the help you may need. If you are having personal problems, I hope you realize you are not alone. Please reach out for help. That doesn't mean you are weak it's just a reminder that you are human and there is help out there for everyone.

With that, I hope to see a lot of post and auxiliary members at the Fall Conference.

membership. Not just the first page. All of it is important.

I also want to encourage everyone to attend our State events. The Fall Conference provides great training on our programs. Plus the camaraderie is second to none. We will have an informative class on the Dashboard. As everyone should know by now all community service reports are input on the Dashboard. After you've done it once it's easy to do. We will also have seminars on Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and all our key programs.

I look forward to serving all our members throughout the state. We have a great team at the office. Cheryl Burton and Char Guse do a great job and they have helped me tremendously over the last couple of months! Feel free to call or email anytime. My door is always open.

3. To encourage active participation in our programming areas by planning and implementing projects, events, donations and volunteer hours.
4. To help our auxiliaries enjoy their volunteerism ... to have fun and share their successes within the 9th District.

Our District Meetings are set -- September 16th in Thief River Falls, December 9th in Fergus Falls, March 9th in East Grand Forks and April 27th Loyalty Days in Pelican Rapids.

Our Organizational Meeting this summer will be a bit different. We are going to have 2-3 options to attend and each one will be in a different area of District 9. Our goal is to make it easier for auxiliaries to attend.

I want to thank all those who have stepped up in the 9th to work with our auxiliaries and help them reach their goals, share ideas and accomplishments. You are appreciated and we are very grateful to have you part of the 9th District.

Together We Can Make a Difference For Our Veterans and Families!

**As a Member of the VFW, you should take an Interest in the Dealings of YOUR Organization on the Post, District, Department and National levels. Attend Post, District, State Functions. Attending Your Post Meetings would be a GOOD start.**

# State Contest Winners

## POST PUBLICATIONS CONTEST

### CATEGORY I (250 and Less)

#### First Place

Harold Baggenstoss Post 1260 and Auxiliary Bemidji  
Editor John Naastad

#### Second Place

Neville-Lien Post 1287 and Auxiliary Winona  
Editor Mel Bailey

#### Third Place

Paul F. Donart Post 2853 and Auxiliary Sauk Centre  
Editor John Steffes

### CATEGORY II (251 & greater)

#### First Place

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

#### Second Place

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

## BEST FEATURE STORY

#### First Place

Redwood County Post 2553 Redwood Falls  
Published in the Redwood Falls Gazette  
September 8, 2022

#### Second Place

Mahlum Hanson Post 1647 and Auxiliary Brainerd  
Published in the Brainerd Dispatch  
April 3, 2022

## MINNESOTA'S MOST OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE POSTS

Woodbury Post 9024 and Auxiliary Woodbury



**Law Enforcement of the Year**  
Mark G. Chambers  
Law Enforcement Officer  
Olmsted County Sheriff Department  
Sponsored by: Swanson-Owen Post 9647

## SAFETY AWARDS

### Emergency Medical Technician of the Year

Tom Svihel  
Paramedic  
Riverview Medical Center  
Sponsored by: Le Sueur Post 4297  
Le Sueur

### Firefighter of the Year

Andrew Vik  
Firefighter  
Burnsville Fire Department  
Sponsored by: Glen C. Turner Post 5833  
Burnsville

### Dispatcher of the Year

Megan Kampa  
911 Dispatcher  
Stearns County Dispatch  
Sponsored by: Granite Post 428  
St. Cloud

### Bus Driver of the Year Award

Donald Engstrom,  
Bus Driver  
Rogers High School  
Sponsored by: Elk River-Rogers Post 5518  
Elk River

**Dept. of MN Traveling Safety Award**  
1st place Hugo Matejcek Post 3723 and Aux.  
2nd place Kraus-Hartig Post 6587 and Aux.  
3rd place Conrad Osthum Post 141 and Aux.



**National Outstanding Community Service Award 2022-2023**  
Woodbury Post 9024 and Auxiliary



**Scout of the Year**  
Thomas J. Hoffman  
Eagle Scout  
Sponsored by: Heinzen-Ditter Post 5903  
and Auxiliary, Plymouth



### Chaplain of the Year

Kevin Kehn  
Hastings Post 1210  
Presented by Scott Hansen, Dept. Chaplain

## BEST SOCIAL MEDIA SITE

#### First Place

Roseville-Anderson-Nelson Post 7555 and Auxiliary, Roseville  
Social Media Managers: Jim Hannegan

#### Second Place

Mahlum Hanson Post 1647 and Auxiliary, Brainerd  
Social Media Manager: Mark Persons & Sue Sterling

## MINNESOTA'S COMMUNITY SERVICE RECORDBOOK

### CATEGORY I

#### First Place

Woodbury Post 9024 and Auxiliary, Woodbury

#### Second Place

Montgomery Post 5340 and Auxiliary, Montgomery

#### Third Place

Rum River Post 2735 and Auxiliary, Isanti

### CATEGORY II

#### First Place

Prior Lake Post 6208 and Auxiliary, Prior Lake

#### Second Place

Roseville-Anderson-Nelson Post 7555 and Auxiliary, Roseville

## OUTSTANDING POST YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

### CATEGORY I (less than 101 members)

#### First Place

Warroad Post 4930 and Auxiliary, Warroad

#### Second Place

Wabasha County Post 1802 and Auxiliary, Zumbro Falls

#### Third Place

Magdlin-Gilbertson Post 6893 and Auxiliary, Preston

### CATEGORY II (101 to 300 members)

#### First Place

Eugene H. Truax Post 4393 and Auxiliary, Northfield

#### Second Place

Olaf B. Damm Post 1216 and Auxiliary, Austin

### CATEGORY III (greater than 300)

#### First Place

Kraus-Hartig Post 6587 and Auxiliary Spring Lake Park

#### Second Place

Hugo Matejcek Post 3723 and Auxiliary Owatonna

## RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

### Top Recruiter by District

Dist. 1	<b>Wallace Banks</b>	Post 8729
Dist. 2	<b>Peter Stoltenow</b>	Post 906
	Dist. 3	
Dist. 4	<b>Sean Gustafson</b>	Post 7555
Dist. 5	<b>John Loch</b>	Post 936
Dist. 6	<b>Dennis Hennen</b>	Post 428
Dist. 7	<b>James Richter</b>	Post 494
Dist. 8	<b>Russell Bentley</b>	Post 1221
Dist. 9	<b>Kenneth Just</b>	Post 4628

### VFW National Top Recruiter in Division 7

**Russell Bentley**  
Hibbing Post 1221

## All-State Commanders

Captain of the All-State Commanders: Paul Lindahl, Post 9024



Back row (l to r): Jim Tuorila, Post 428; Lois Vosen, Post 9073; David C. David, Post 4258; Troy Stegora, Post 8731; Jason Oxley, Post 6992; Dave Thompson, Post 6208.

Front row (l to r): Joseph White, Post 8144; Jerry Sanborn, Post 1221; Paul Lindahl, Post 9024; Bruce Malterud, Post 1260; Tim Kent, Post 2735; Ed Keogh, Post 5340; State Cmdr. Dale Hoogeveen.

Missing: Dennis Phelps, Post 5098; Colby Mickolichcek, Post 906; William Simonette, Post 1803; Tracy Closson, Post 4393; Shannon Frost, Post 4297; Tim Dennison, Post 210; Scott Koennicke, Post 3289; Jim Mathias, Post 4086; Reagan Lattimore, Post 6424

## All-State Quartermasters



Back row (l to r): Jim Wetzler, Post 1222; Kelly Bogge, Post 1260; Ed Speiker, Post 6208; Jim Richter, Post 494; Larry Huhn, Post 2735; Kevin Phelps, Post 4393; Robert Cook, Post 1403; Russell Bentley, Post 1221.

Front row (l to r): State Cmdr. Dale Hoogeveen; Colin Atkinson, Post 1802; Jim Murtaugh, Post 1210; Ken Schroepfer, Post 7.

Missing: Ron Widell, Post 8731; Len Groom, Post 2717; Douglas Fabre, Post 9880; Bryan Anderson, Post 6992; Robert Stirling, Post 6424; Elman Becker, Post 3289; Krystal Schmidt, Post 7555; Peter Stoltenow, Post 906; Graham Gustafson, Post 9073



By Jeff Kronback, Project Coordinator



This year's Commanders' Project is a joint effort with Department of Minnesota VFW Commander Dan Meyer and VFW Auxiliary President Dave Scofield.

Their joint fund-raising project will benefit two organizations: "Veterans on the Water" and "Warriors and Walleyes Outdoors."

**Veterans on the Water** mission is to provide a **FREE** fishing experience filled with excitement, fun and laughter for our veterans. They own 16-foot Lund boats and pontoons with wheelchair accessibility. All of them have been rebuilt with custom designs. They provide single-day fishing trips and some extended weekend fishing trips on various lakes in Minnesota at not cost to Vets. For more information, visit: [www.veteransonthewater.com](http://www.veteransonthewater.com).

**Warriors and Walleyes Outdoors** believes that all Veterans and any Service Member of any branch of service who served their country deserves a weekend on the lake. Well known professional fishermen and others will guide a Veteran/Soldier and guest for two days of fishing on Lake of the Woods. For more information, visit [www.warriorsandwalleyes.org](http://www.warriorsandwalleyes.org).

All donations raised between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024 will be split equally between these two organizations.

Checks should be made out to the "Minnesota VFW Charitable Association". Write "Commanders Project" in the Memo area.

The MN VFW Charitable Association is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization.

### DIST 1 AUX. - Cont. from Page 8

from Auxiliary 8729 in Lake City, and I have held many positions and chairmanships from local to department.

We are about to have our first meeting on August 5th in Zumbro Falls, MN. The post home of our Commander Colin Atkinson. I am excited to get this year started. The slogan for this year is "Be true to our cause. To serve our Veterans" with a symbol of a bee. I am looking at our district as a community or a "hive" if you will. The importance of all of us working as one will only strengthen all of us as individual Auxiliaries. As

a district our Hospital Chair is already working on a district wide sewing project. I am excited about that project. I know there will be many of our Auxiliaries participating.

We are trying something new by having a portion of our auxiliary presidents at each meeting present about their auxiliary. I am hoping we all learn from each other and become a stronger community by knowing more about each other. The line officers and chairman for this year are all wonderful individuals who each bring their own special talents and skills.

## Cmdr. Dan & Pres. Dave in Forest Lake Parade



Dist. 7 Aux Pres. Doris Anderson; Aux Pres. Dave Scofield; Twyla Scofield; Erika Ellestad; VFW Cmdr. Dan Meyer, VFW Qtr/Adj Barry Henriksen; Dist. 7 Cmdr. Ken Schroeffer

### NAT'L CONV - Cont. from Page 1

115th Commander-in-Chief.

Sarmiento, who is of mixed Filipino and Italian heritage, is the first person of color elected to lead the 124-year-old organization. He has served in elected and appointed position at the post, district and department levels culminating in being elected as Department of New Jersey Commander from 2018-2019. A retired township police officer, Sarmiento is also a member of the Delaware Military Order of the Cooties, Ky-Yi Pup Tent #1.

His remarks were delivered to those attending in person at the Phoenix Convention Center as well as those watching via livestreaming video.

During his acceptance speech Sarmiento said, "Today, I humbly stand here as a testament to the limitless potential of our great nation and a product of the American dream."

As a kid from New Jersey, I never imagined I would be standing here to accept such a prestigious position in one of the most prestigious institutions in our country."

Sarmiento joined the VFW in 1990 at Post 5579 in Gibbstown, New Jersey, where he maintains his Gold Legacy Life membership. He has served in elected and appointed positions at the Post, District and Department levels, culminating with his election as the VFW Department of New Jersey Commander from 2018 to 2019. Nationally, he served as the VFW Inspector General from 2019 to 2020, as well as on several national committees,

Inclosing, he said, "Regardless of your pecking order in this organization, keep this in mind – you don't need a title to lead. You just need to care. People would rather follow a leader with a heart than a leader with a title."

## Fort Snelling National Cemetery Carillon

The existing veteran's carillon at Fort Snelling National Cemetery was commemorated in 1986, but has been silent over 20 years due to an excavation error in 2003.

Currently there are over 210,000 veterans buried at Fort Snelling, and their tombstones remain a lasting symbol of the cost of freedom. Additionally, over 200,000 visitors visit the cemetery annually.

The Fort Snelling Carillon is one of 93 carillons at American Cemeteries in the US, Europe, North Africa and the Pacific. It was installed in 1986 as part of the AMVETS Carillon Program (<https://amvetsnsf.org/carillon/>).

American Legion Post 580, Chanhassen, MN volunteered and was vetted by the Department of Veterans Affairs on February 13, 2023 to initiate a fund-raising project for repairs to the existing carillon. On May 19, 2023 *Minnesota Veterans 4 Veterans* (a 501c19 organization) established an account for all carillon donations. This organization and account satisfy the gambling commission requirements for receiving gambling funds as a donation.

The carillon system will include new speakers for the existing carillon tower; underground speaker conduit from the administration building to the tower; a digital control system; and office installation. The total funds necessary for this effort are approximately \$90,000. All funds raised will be solely for the new carillon and will be utilized only when the mission amount is raised. Any amounts raised but not used will be returned to American Legion Post 580 for philanthropic use.

It is estimated that in the next twenty years, 4 million loved ones



and visitors will once again hear the carillon playing inspirational, reverent, and patriotic music honoring the veterans' service to our country.

Checks should be made payable to "MN Veterans 4 Veterans Carillon Fund" and sent to American Legion Post 580 Carillon Fund, 290 Lake Dr. E, Chanhassen, MN 55317.

If you have any questions regarding the carillon and this patriotic mission, please contact Richard Middleton at 952-944-4064.

Your support in honoring our heroes of the past and future generations will be greatly appreciated.

# Veterans / Youth Activities

## Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen

by Ken Schroepfer

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

The themes are: "What Are the Greatest Attributes of Our Democracy?" for Voice of Democracy and "How Are You Inspired by America?" for Patriot's Pen.

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

The Rules and Eligibility as well as the Entry Forms for both Programs can be found on the VFW MN website at [www.vfwmn.org](http://www.vfwmn.org).

And remember as in the past, Student Entry Deadline is October 31, 2023.

## VETERANS UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

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

**Archery**  
2023  
Open for Bids

**Bean Bag**  
2023  
Open for Bids

**Bowling**  
2023 and 2024  
Hosted by South St. Paul #295

**Cribbage**  
2023 & 2024  
Open for Bids

**Fishing**  
2023 & 2024  
Open for Bids

**Golf**  
2023 thru 2025  
Coon Rapids #9625

**Horseshoes**  
2024  
Open for Bids

**Pistol**  
2024  
Open for Bids

**Trap Shooting**  
2023 & 2024  
Open for Bids

## YOUTH UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

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

**Baseball**  
August 2024 & 2025  
Open for Bids

**Hockey**  
Girl's March 2024  
Elk River-Rogers 5518

Boy's March 2024  
Open for Bids

### 2023 - 2024 Voice of Democracy Theme

**"What Are the Greatest Attributes of Our Democracy?"**

### 2023 - 2024 Patriot's Pen Theme

**"How Are You Inspired by America?"**

Entries are Due at Local V.F.W. Posts by October 31st, 2023

## FALL CONTESTS

### SCHOLARSHIPS COMMUNITY



#### Senior High Scholarship (Grades 9-12)

#### Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Competition

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

**AWARDS:** \$30,000 National Winner & Free Trip to Washington D.C.; \$\$ and MPLS Hotel stay for District Winner; \$\$ for Local Winner

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

#### Middle School Scholarship (Grades 6-8)

#### Patriot's Pen Essay Competition

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

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



#### Citizenship Education Teacher Award

(See Your VFW Post or VFW General Orders for Details)

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

(See Nomination Form for Details - VFW General Orders or [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org) under the Programs drop-down)

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

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

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

## VFW State Baseball Tournament

There was some terrific baseball played at the 2023 State VFW Baseball Tournament in St. Cloud. This year's event was held August 2-6 and hosted by Post #4847.

The tournament featured the 10 best teams out of 73 that played statewide at the various District.

Each District was represented by their winner and the host district was permitted to have a second entrant.

Congratulations on a wonderful season to all teams that participated in this year's district and state tournaments.

Thank you to each post that sponsored a team in this year's

tournament.

Here are the final standings and sponsoring posts:

1st	Mankato	Post 950
2nd	Owatonna	Post 3723
3rd	Forest Lake	Post 4210
4th	Little Falls	Post 1112
5th	St. Cloud East	Post 4847
6th	Rock Ridge	Post 1172
7th	Rochester	Post 1215
8th	Totino Grace	Post 494
9th	Osseo	Post 172
10th	St. Cloud Blue	Post 428

Special thanks to Denny Kunkle and Tom Vogel of St Cloud Post 4847 for their great work organizing the tournament.



1st Place: Mankato East  
sponsored by Mankato Post 950

# Purple Cross™

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Minnesota VFW Riders

By Todd "Tiny" Roberts



Hello fellow Comrades and Auxiliary,

I am very proud to be serving as the VFW Riders Chair again this year. It is now mid-riding season and the VFW Riders are steadily growing. Many plans have been made for recruiting and fundraiser events. I am very happy with the turn out for our 1st annual ride into convention in June, now named The Gordy Kirk

Ride. This will be an annual event at each Department Convention. It was very heartwarming to see the reception we received from the VFW and Auxiliary as we rode into the hotel. I do believe the members are starting to realize what the Riders can bring to this organization. I would also like to thank the Hamel VFW Post 5903 for hosting us as we prepared for the start of the ride.



Gordy Kirk Patch

Moving on to upcoming events, the Monticello Group will be hosting their annual Summerfest Ride on August 19th, and the Rochester Group will be hosting the Fall Riders Gathering on September 15, 16, & 17, as we work on more recruiting and exposure to our communities to further educate of what we are all about. I want to put it out again, if you know someone who

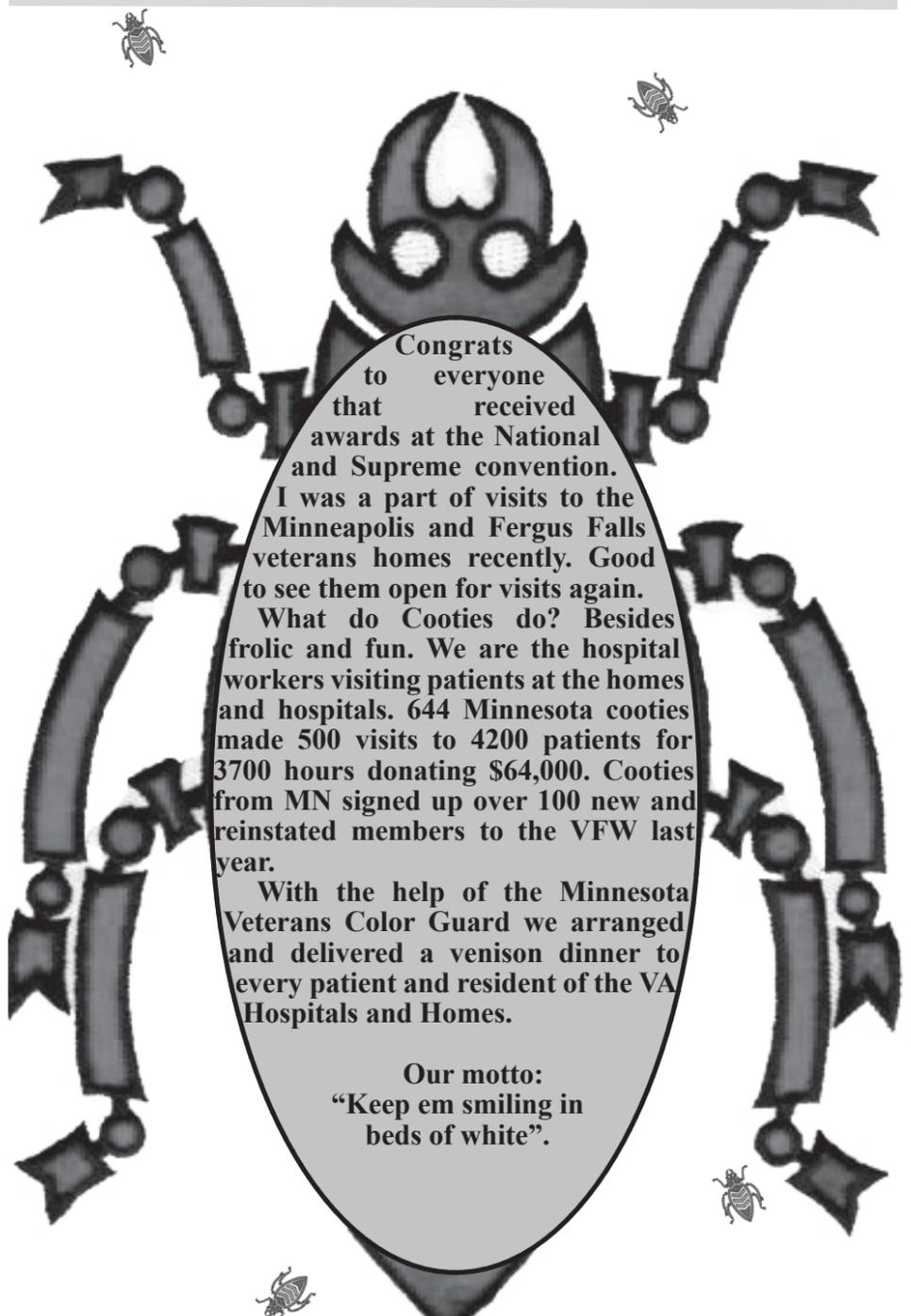
rides and would like to join us the qualifications are: if you are eligible to be in the VFW or Auxiliary, we require that membership, if not you can join as a Supporter and help us with our cause, helping Veterans and our communities while supporting the VFW and Auxiliary. Looking forward to seeing all of you soon.

Please contact me if you have any questions. [Toddroberts10@tds.net](mailto:Toddroberts10@tds.net) or 651-303-2474 (text or call).

## Cootie Korner

By Tim Arnold

Commander of the Grand of MN



Congrats to everyone that received awards at the National and Supreme convention. I was a part of visits to the Minneapolis and Fergus Falls veterans homes recently. Good to see them open for visits again. What do Cooties do? Besides frolic and fun. We are the hospital workers visiting patients at the homes and hospitals. 644 Minnesota cooties made 500 visits to 4200 patients for 3700 hours donating \$64,000. Cooties from MN signed up over 100 new and reinstated members to the VFW last year.

With the help of the Minnesota Veterans Color Guard we arranged and delivered a venison dinner to every patient and resident of the VA Hospitals and Homes.

Our motto:  
 "Keep em smiling in beds of white".

## Community Service

By Ed Keogh, State Community Service Chair



The CSR is a joint report between Posts and their Auxiliaries. Auxiliaries will not have access to the All-American Dashboard. If your Post has an Auxiliary, the Auxiliary will need to submit their Community Service to an officer of their post who will be in charge on entering Community Service on the All-American Dashboard.

The August issue of the Department General Orders included detailed instructions on how to enter information to the CSR on the Dashboard.

If you need assistance please contact me.

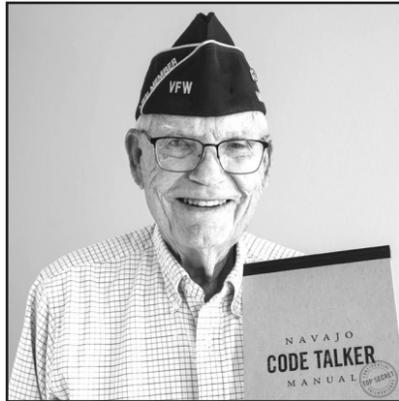
You can continue to use the paper forms to help gather the date at your post and auxiliary meetings. Then use those forms to enter the information on the Dashboard at any time. Potentially, the best time might be a day or two after your post meeting.

There is a change in the way to report Community Service. Starting this membership year all Community Service Reports (CSR) must be entered on the All-American Dashboard. The following have been authorized to submit entries on the All-American Dashboard: Post Cmdrs., Sr. Vice Cmdrs., Jr. Vice Cmdrs., Quartermasters and Adjutants.

# Timely Tidbits

## Behind the Lines with Code Talkers

from an article by Mark Persons



Harry Meyer was born on a farm in 1926, a few years before his family moved to Red Lake Falls, MN. At the age of 13, he took an interest in building radios. He enjoyed playing music on the radio (AM band) to his friends until he was visited by two Federal Communications Commission Inspectors who confiscated his equipment. Apparently, his signal managed to travel all the way to Oklahoma, as AM signals do at night. He was causing interference on a local licensed radio broadcast station.

When the US entered WWII, Harry signed up at the age of 17. He was shipped off to the Naval Training Station in Farragut, ID and then sent to Long Beach, CA, because he had "radio aptitude." While there, he learned Morse Code and radio maintenance.

Only 12 out of 40 who started in his class finished the course. After returning from leave one day, he found a note telling him to report to the Dana Point Marine Base.

There, Harry learned to provide radio communications for a bunch of Marines from New Mexico and Arizona - the Navajo Code Talkers. Then it was off to Hawaii by ship. Issued a camouflage uniform, he was paired with a Code Talker and sent off to Japanese held islands.

They would sneak ashore on islands like Okinawa. They had to evade Japanese to get close-up visuals on potential targets before invasions and also to call in artillery strikes later. They stealthily traveled on foot thru the jungle to avoid Japanese.

Before the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, he was undergoing training for surveillance missions to Japan.

After the war, Harry was sent to Guam to update the communications systems, which are still in use today.

When released from active duty in 1946, he went back to finish his high school education.

His communications experience got him a job at Northwestern Bell/AT&T (the phone company back then). He spent 40 years maintaining microwave communications towers from the Canadian border to the Twin Cities with Brainerd in the middle.

Now he is a resident at the

Northern Lakes Senior Living facility in Baxter where residents love to hear stories from his excellent memory.

A VFW life member, Harry served two years as Commander of St. Cloud, MN, East Side VFW Post 4847 in the 1960's. He still attends local veteran events at Brainerd VFW Post 1647.

## ★★ WANTED ★★

Photos, captions and articles honoring our Century Veterans

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

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

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

Photos will be returned upon request.

# WORD SEARCH #13

## The Best Bass Fishing Lakes in MN

Source: <https://www.lifeinminnesota.com>

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

Find the following words in the puzzle. Words are hidden ↑ ↓ → ← and ↘ .

- |                   |            |                 |
|-------------------|------------|-----------------|
| AUBURN            | PRIOR      | WEST BATTLE     |
| BIG STONE         | RAINY      | WHITEFISH CHAIN |
| LEECH             | SHAGAWA    | WOMAN           |
| MILLE LACS        | SNELLING   |                 |
| MINNETONKA        | VERMILLION |                 |
| MISSISSIPPI RIVER | WASHINGTON |                 |

Don't Go It Alone!!!

JUST CALL!!!



THERE'S HELP!!!

Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988, press 1

## The MNVFW Charitable Association Raffle Calendar is Now Available



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

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

Order your Calendars now- Email: [mnvfwcharitable@gmail.com](mailto:mnvfwcharitable@gmail.com) or Call 651-291-1757

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

Looking for a Program that's Educational AND Entertaining?

## Fundraising for THE BOYS OF '61!

Minnesota's Civil War Veterans Memorial

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



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

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

The cost of each program is a \$600 donation to the BOY'S OF '61, plus mileage to your post and back from the speaker's residence in Mankato, MN. (Current IRS mileage rate is \$.545 per mile.) This fee will be donated to the BOY'S of '61, which is Minnesota's memorial to the men from this state who went off to war to save the Union. The BOY'S OF '61 is a non-profit organization 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](http://historicalexperiences.org)

or contact the presenter at...

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

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

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



## 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SUMMERFEST SATURDAY AUGUST 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2023

The 6th Annual VFW Riders Summerfest will be hosted by Monticello VFW Post 8731 at 713 S. Cedar St., Monticello, MN.

Registration open from 9:30am until 10:50am. Riders depart at noon and return at 4:00pm. A meal will be provided upon return.

Pre-registration available at [www.tinyurl.com/vfw8731SF](http://www.tinyurl.com/vfw8731SF)

The event is open to the public after the ride. Entertainment includes: Silent Auction, Farmers Daughters Acoustic Band, Fender Bender and food and games.

Proceeds to be donated to the Magnus Veterans Foundation and Operation 23 to Zero.



## MINNESOTA VFW CHAR-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_ VFW Outdoor Fund \_\_\_\_\_ Veterans Service \_\_\_\_\_ VFW Programs

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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