

# GOPHER OVERSEASER

Volume 75, NO. 3

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

October 2021 - January 2022

## Midwinter Conference Jan. 21 - 23

By Cheryl Burton, Department Office Manager

The Department of Minnesota's 119th Midwinter Conference has a great deal in store for all members that attend. If you have never been to a Midwinter Conference, this would be the year! Whether you come for the whole weekend or just a day,

The Conference will be held Friday, January 21st through Sunday, January 23rd, 2022. This will be the last time we will gather at the Minneapolis Marriott City Center Hotel. It has been our Midwinter "Home" for roughly 30 years and where we were treated like family. The hotel has been renovated and is beautiful inside with an open feel to it. If you have not purchased your banquet ticket or reserved your room, please do this at your earliest convenience as time is going by

quickly and the Conference will be here before you know it. We will have four \$50 Raffle drawings during the Banquet, please fill out your raffle ticket when you register at the registration desk.

During the Conference, the VFW will welcome National Council of Administration Member, Thomas Hanson and the Auxiliary will host the National District Council Member Area E, Francesca "Frankie" Bill.

VFW Programs are the heart of what we do to help Veterans and their families, not to mention how our communities view our Organization. For those who missed the "Dashboard" training during the Fall Conference, you will have an opportunity to receive a quick review during a Saturday morning

session with our State Adjutant/Quartermaster Dewey Hermanson. After the "Dashboard" seminar, State Judge Advocate, David Staehlin will give an abbreviated session on Decorum in Debate. Learn the practices and customs observed by speakers and other members to assist in having debates in a smooth and orderly manner.

In the afternoon, with Department Publications and Public Relations Chairman Jarrod McReynolds and VFW Claims examiner, Elissa Klein will instruct on Social Media and Publicity Outreach and what the VFW is doing to get the word out about our programs. It is essential that members begin submitting content of interest to veterans, their



2021-2022

State Commander

**Barry Henriksen**

Member of  
VFW Post 1782  
White Bear Lake, MN

Winter is coming and so is the Midwinter Conference. I hope you all will join us for our final Midwinter at the Minneapolis Marriott City Center. Last year we had to cancel due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The year before that the hotel had a major remodel going on. Now it is complete, and it should be a great weekend! Once you are in the facility it is perfect for our conference. The hospitality rooms being all on the same floor makes it very convenient. Please come up to the Presidential Suite on Friday night after the C of A for Coney Dogs and refreshments! Please don't miss our signature event of the year, the Midwinter Banquet. Come and honor our fabulous Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen students, along with our Teachers of the Year.

As I write this, I am finishing 7 consecutive weekends of travel. It has been a lot of fun! The year is flying by as I drive around the state.

Here are the highlights:  
**Friday Sept. 10** - State Golf tournament in Cannon Falls. A beautiful but very tough golf course.  
**Saturday Sept. 11** - I attended the State 9/11 20th anniversary program on the capital grounds. It was a

**COMMANDER - Cont. on Page 10**

## VFW National Convention

By Dale Hoogeveen, State Senior Vice Commander

Do you know how the business of this organization is conducted at the National level? How do resolutions and bylaw changes get passed, ultimately impacting every post, district, and department around the world? Who sits on the National Council of Administration and what do they do?

The National Convention in 2020 was scheduled to take place in Reno, Nevada but was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In similar fashion, the National Convention in 2021 was scheduled to take place Baltimore, Maryland but was rescheduled on very short notice and moved to Kansas City, Missouri. Although the convention was abbreviated to minimize the possibility of spreading COVID-19, the staff at National headquarters did



Pictured above State Commander Barry Henriksen and Buddy Poppy Child Aurora from the VFW National Home for Children.

a phenomenal job of pivoting their efforts to Kansas City.

Training opportunities were numerous as workshops were presented for membership, chaplaincy, legislative affairs, post bylaws, veterans and military support and VFW programs. Committee meetings covering National By-laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, Finance and Internal Organization, General Resolutions, National Security and Foreign Affairs and National Veterans Service Resolutions provided insight into how our organization transacts business. Each year, Department Commanders are given the opportunity to recommend comrades for appointment by the Commander in Chief to these various committees.

**NAT'L CONV - Cont. on Page 12**

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

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## Save The Date!! Upcoming VFW Events

<b>Midwinter Conference</b> January 21-23, 2022 Minneapolis Marriott City Center	<b>Minnesota Veterans Day on the Hill</b> March, 2022 (Day TBD)	<b>VFW State Baseball Tournament</b> August, 2022 Dilworth & Fergus Falls
<b>National Legislative Conference</b> Feb. 27 - Mar 3, 2022 Washington, D.C.	<b>VFW State Hockey Tournament</b> March 10-13, 2022 Elk River/Rogers	<b>State Convention &amp; Training Schools</b> June 8-12, 2022 St. Cloud

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

# Top News

## MN VFW Makes Major TAPS Donation

The 2020-2021 found Commander Curt Hermanson and President Paige Amundson with some challenges due to COVID-19. The amazing VFW Posts and Auxiliaries met these challenges head on and raised over \$60,000 for their joint project Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS).

Curt and Karianne Hermanson, Paige Amundson, Gail Brekke and Dan Jordan were invited to the TAPS Gala held on November 16, 2021 at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. The gala was attended by Military members, families who have been helped by the TAPS program and many TAPS staff.

2021 TAPS Senator Ted Stevens Leadership Award was given to Captain Nathaniel Lee, USSF. Captain Lee lost his father in a training accident in 1997. TAPS was there to help this family to connect with other families experiencing the loss of a loved one who served.

2021 TAPS Military Mentor of



Pictured above: Gail Brekke, Past President Paige Amundson, TAPS President and Founder Bonnie Carroll, Past Commander Curt Hermanson, Karianne Hermanson, and MN TAPS Chairman Dan Jordan

the Year was given to Master Sergeant Melissa Simpson, USAF(Ret.). She was introduced to TAPS in 2013 and served as a Military Mentor at a campout event. She was able to help connect family members of a co-worker and friend to the TAPS family where they have found hope, comfort and support.

TAPS held an Open House at their National Office in November 17, where Commander Curt and President Paige were able to present them with the \$60,000 check. TAPS President and Founder Bonnie Carroll gave us a tour of their office and explained how they want their offices to feel like home. The walls and offices have quotes of families that have been helped. She said, "TAPS is home. It's a warm embrace in a lonely world. Like a true constant friend, TAPS always remembers."

What an honor to have been invited to see the workings of this amazing program.

Thank you to all of the VFW Posts and Auxiliary members for their donations to help us to raise money for this amazing program.



Pictured above: MN TAPS Chairman Dan Jordan, General Daniel Hokanson, Chief, National Guard Bureau, Past Commander Curt Hermanson and Past President Paige Amundson attending the TAPS Gala.

## MN VFW Contracts with North Star Digital Media

Hello Comrades!

My name is Elissa Klein from Post 1791. I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself. Working with veterans is a passion and meeting the veterans is so inspiring.

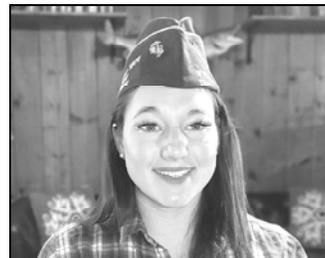
As CEO of North Star Digital Media, it is my privilege to be the digital media manager for the Department of MN VFW.

I will be utilizing our social media accounts in order to spread our message, engage with our membership, teach about the different roles within the VFW, and recruit new membership to the VFW. I am very excited about this!

Through the course of this pandemic, our members haven't been able to gather and communicate like we normally would. Our Department Officers have recognized that social media can be a great way to keep our membership together and well informed. It will also be a great tool in reaching out to younger Veterans and inviting them to join.

If you or your post has newsworthy events, milestones, or content that you would like to share please reach out and let me know.

You can message us on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. You can also email us at: [northstardigitalmediamn@gmail.com](mailto:northstardigitalmediamn@gmail.com) and text or call (612) 466-0999.



The Department of Minnesota has contracted with North Star Digital Media to manage our social media platforms. For this venture to be successful, we need you to submit content of interest to veterans, their families and our local communities featuring events at your post, your district and information promoting VFW programs, i.e. Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, Teacher of the Year, etc.. Honor a post member with an article about their service, be creative!

Please take advantage of this opportunity and let the rest of the world know just how great your Posts and our Department are.



Pictured above: Elissa loves working with veterans especially her Grandpa Bryan.



## Social Media Platform Deadline Dec. 31, 2021

National VFW is wanting all Posts and Departments to have a social Media platform installed by the end of this year. You can have one or more platforms per post/Department. But you must have at least one platform established, i.e. website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

To attract new members, Posts need to manage a Social platform that post/department information is accessible not only to the members but to the community as well. Below are ways to create Facebook pages, Website pages and Instagram pages.

More detailed information was distributed in the December Department General Orders which can also be found on the Departmental webpage at [www.mnvfw.org](http://www.mnvfw.org).

## Minnesota VFW Office Locations

### Department Headquarters:

Dewey Hermanson, Adjutant/QM  
B5 Veterans Service Building  
20 West 12th Street  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
Phone: (651) 291-1757  
Fax: (651)291-2753  
Email: [vfwmnoffice@gmail.com](mailto:vfwmnoffice@gmail.com)  
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

## GOPHER OVERSEASER

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Publications Committee:  
Barry Henriksen, Commander; Dale Hoogeveen, Sr. Vice Commander;  
Dan Meyer, Jr. Vice Commander; David Staehlin, Judge Advocate;  
Ken Schroepfer, editor..

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# Department Headquarters News

## Senior Vice Commander

By Dale Hoogeveen, State Senior Vice Commander

Greetings comrades, brothers and sisters.

We continue to return to our "normal" environment for conducting the business of this organization and I thank all those who attended Fall Conference in Willmar. Host post Finstad-Week 1639 did an outstanding job as did the hotel staff. We were honored to have National Senior Vice Commander in Chief Tim Borland join us and to benefit from his extensive success as a recruiter as he shared his thoughts in our membership seminar. SVCiC Borland was also an active participant in numerous seminar training sessions providing perspective from the senior leadership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and I thank him for joining us.

October was a busy month as Department Commander Henricksen, past Department Commander Curt Hermanson and I completed the second leg of our 100 year Anniversary tour. Thank you to Hoyt Lakes Post 8144 Commander Mary Thompson and her staff for hosting an outstanding social followed by dinner. We were honored to be joined by a number of retired U.S. Navy chiefs who contribute their skill to the Veterans on the Lake resort with cabin renovations and other needed repairs. The comrades of Hoyt Lakes and its auxiliary represent our organization and their community in the true spirit of the VFW! Mid October found your line officers in Rapid City, South Dakota for the annual Big 10 Conference. Like many events, the conference was cancelled last year so it was good to be able to attend in person and renew old friendships while also meeting other fellow comrades for the first time. The Big 10 Conference will be nominating the candidate for election to National Jr Vice Commander in Chief next October and had the opportunity to hear from the four candidates - Jerry Gorski from Michigan, Carol Whitmore from Iowa, Chris Johnston from Missouri and our Past Department Commander Chad Solheid. Campaigning for this office requires a significant amount of time and effort to complete. If

you have the opportunity, please thank these candidates for being willing to undertake such an arduous task. We wrapped up the month as I joined Commander Henricksen in recognizing Kimball-Watkins-Eden Valley Post 5460 for 50 years of service to their communities. A significant milestone for any organization to achieve and one to be celebrated!

I will be joining the comrades, brothers and sisters of Post 1210 in Hastings to commemorate Veterans Day. All veterans should feel a true sense of honor and gratitude for the opportunity to serve our country. When I think of the heroism and patriotism of those who have served, I am truly humbled by their selfless actions and the sacrifices made by their families as well. I recently watched a program honoring Congressional Medal of Honor winners and was awed by not only their courage but also their love of their fellow service members. Be proud of your honorable service and share that pride with your community!

Your department recently contracted with Northstar Digital Media and Elissa Klein to manage and promote our social media platforms. All commanders should have received an e-Blast informing you of this excellent opportunity to promote your members, the events you host or participate in, and our VFW programs. It is our hope that an increased and relevant presence on social media will attract new members, encourage current members to actively engage in decision making at the post, district and department levels, and increase public awareness of the good work you're doing in your communities. For this endeavor to be successful, we need input from elected officers and program chairpersons. Please make contributing as routine as submitting your monthly community service reports. We need to reverse our trend of declining membership!

Please make plans to join us at our Midwinter Conference in January as we bid farewell to the Minneapolis Marriott City Center Hotel.

Stay safe!

## Junior Vice Commander

By Dan Meyer, State Junior Vice Commander

Comrades it seems to me that just last month we were installed as department officers, but as you know, that is not true. If you stay busy and have fun time flies by.

We have done a lot and need to do more. At the Midwinter Conference, please stop me and give me your thoughts on what we need to bring to Washington DC. Everyone knows that no one has done more for this country than the veterans that fought

for our freedoms. Now, let's hold them accountable for their actions.

Your line officers are your best advocates in helping veterans so ask us how we can help you and your post. We can not help if we don't know what you need or what is broken. I am not a mind reader but maybe the state commander is, so let us know what you need.

Have a great winter and hopefully I can talk with you at Midwinter.

## Judge Advocate

By David Staehlin, State Judge Advocate

Comrades, since you elected me your State Judge Advocate at our state convention in June, I have traveled the state representing the department at district meetings and other events. I've been to many parts of our state and have driven through many towns for the first time. It's been fun to recognize the names of towns I pass through and often, it's because the VFW Post and Auxiliary in that town have received multiple awards at the state level for their work, frequently for many years in a row. It's obvious to me that many of our most successful, active posts are in smaller communities statewide.

Wherever your post is in the state, you and your post have an opportunity to be an important resource for the community, not just for our members and other veterans and their families, but for the whole community. Please continue to work our key programs and partner with local government, other veterans service organizations, and other community groups to serve veterans and our communities.

As I continue my journey as a state line officer, it's been a pleasure meeting Comrades and Auxiliary members throughout the state and to see all that we do. We have an amazingly varied group of VFW and Auxiliary members who are stepping up every day for veterans.

As your State Judge Advocate, I encourage all officers and members

to be familiar with our National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. These are available along with our Congressional Charter and Ritual in one manual as the Podium Edition. These are our guiding documents and along with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 12th edition. They can answer many questions you may have about our organization and how we operate. The latest edition, 2022, includes bylaws and other changes adopted at our 2021 national convention.

The Podium Edition is available in a spiral bound version (\$7.25) through the VFW Store ([vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org)) and should be available at Amazon.com. A Kindle version is available at Amazon (\$5) allowing you to always have the Podium Edition with you as long as you have your smart phone.

I'm pleased to share that the Podium Edition is also now available for FREE in PDF at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org). Log in as a member and then select Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates under Member/Post Resources. Note that the Kindle edition is easier for searching using words and is only \$5, but the PDF version works well if you're looking for a free option.

At the district and department levels, we're here to help make your VFW Post and Auxiliary successful. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or thoughts.

## Community Service

By Dan Meyer, Department Community Activities Chairman

We are out in our communities doing what the VFW does the best, taking care of veterans. Remember no one does more for veterans. We have and are currently doing some very great things. However, every post has not submitted a Community Service Report and I know every post or auxiliary has done something in their community to make it a better place.

You just need to report it. If you

need help on filling one out, just ask. Someone can help you do it. We just want to help get the word out on the great things the posts are doing.

By letting someone know what you are doing, I feel it will help in membership because people want to help. There are potential members out there who want to join the VFW just to help their fellow veterans.

Thanks and keep up the good work.

## Chaplain of the Year

By Len Gudmunson, Department Chaplain

Below are the criteria for Chaplain of the year:

1. Performance of Duties: A. Exemplary character and conduct: e.g., A person of upmost integrity, professional execution of duties, dependability, punctuality, and timely submission of reports, etc. B. Exemplary performance above and beyond the normal expectations of the position and duties.
2. Personal attitude which is positive and professional in all contacts
3. Commitment to the ministry and duties of the Chaplain, as reflected by service to comrades and their families and responsiveness to needs.
4. A member of the VFW in good standing with the Post, District, and Department.  
Please submit your entries to me by March 1, 2022. Please submit the entries by email to [lenimpls@gmail.com](mailto:lenimpls@gmail.com).

# Minnesota Auxiliary News

STATE PRESIDENT  
VFW Auxiliary



**Jamie  
Cassavant**

Member of  
VFW Post 1902 Auxiliary  
Red Lake Falls, MN



## National District Council

By Frankie Bill, Member Area E

Comrades and Members

May this time of year find you safe and well. 'Tis the season for yearend gatherings whether it is with family, friends, Veterans, or loved ones. This year may still look a bit different, but whatever option works or can be done safely, I wish you time well spent with others. It is also the midway point of the VFW and Auxiliary Program year. The Department Chairmen continue to promote creative and unique ways to further support our Veterans, families, and communities. Of note, the Mentoring for Leadership Program was combined with the Chief of Staff Program this year. Each Auxiliary has the option to run these independently or combine them by appointing one or two people.

National President, Jean Hamil, has sponsored a special project during her term called 'Fund the Future.' The project's mission is to increase both the VFW Auxiliary's Patriotic Art and Continuing Education Scholarship Funds which are both rooted in the Scholarship Program.

There are two (2) goals:

1. Increase the number of Patriotic Art Scholarships awarded at the National level from 12 to 20.
2. Increase the award amount of the Continuing Education Scholarship from \$1,000 to \$2,500.

**Resolution #4 – Section 101** - Regarding the fact that members of the VFW Auxiliary must be citizens of the United States. It has been changed to the following: the words "Members must be citizens of the United States" are to be deleted from Article 1 Membership, Section 101 – Eligibility, first paragraph, last sentence of the By-Laws and Ritual of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

**Resolution #5 – Section 210** - Regarding use of video conferencing or teleconferencing in meetings. Paragraph six (6) has been changed to the following: Video conferencing or teleconferencing is permitted for members unable to attend a meeting. The Auxiliary Secretary shall designate in the Minutes members attending by way of video conferencing or teleconferencing and ensuring that at least five (5) members in good standing are present by teleconferencing with mandatory attendance at the meeting site of at least the auxiliary President and/or the designee if unable to attend, such as Sr. Vice, Jr. Vice, etc. Furthermore, an additional bullet to read Video Conferencing or teleconferencing when used to form a full quorum shall be utilized for extenuating circumstances to meet

There are three (3) ways we can all help support her in this endeavor:

1. Donate online in MALTA.
2. Mail a check earmarked either Patriotic Art or Continuing Education to National Headquarters.
3. Establish a named Patriotic Art scholarship. If any member, your Auxiliary, District, or the Department of Minnesota is interested, review the "Establishing a VFW Auxiliary National Patriotic Art Scholarship" flyer on the Resources page of the VFW Auxiliary website for more information and funding amounts.

How fitting this special project aligns with the students who will be celebrated for their participation in the VFW Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen scholarship programs, as well as honoring teachers who stand out in the Teacher of the Year Award. The Midwinter Conference will be the place to be during this midway point of the program year.

I am excited for both Commander Barry and President Jaime as they host a very special evening for these talented youth from across our great state of Minnesota.

I look forward to seeing everyone there.

the required minimal ten meeting dates; or a member vote that needs immediate attention.

**Resolution #6 – Section 810A** – Regarding attendance of auxiliaries at District Meetings and Conventions. It has been changed to the following: An added bullet point under section 810A to read: Assure that the President or their representative attend all properly called District Conventions and Meetings.

If you have questions on these or any of the other Resolutions passed at National Convention, please feel free to contact the Department office at 651-291-1759 or email [treasurer@vfwamn.org](mailto:treasurer@vfwamn.org).

Happy Thanksgiving & Merry Christmas to all VFW Auxiliary members and our VFW Comrades!

THANK  
YOU  
FOR YOUR  
SERVICE

Dear VFW and VFW Auxiliary Members:

### Thoughts and Prayers for Family and Friends:

Our VFW Auxiliary family has lost two of our Past Department Presidents this year.

Dorothy Sell served as Department President from 1961-1962. Dorothy was a member of Auxiliary #8459 in District 3.

Terri Fenn served as Department President from 2008-2009. Terri was a member of Auxiliary #1782 in District 4.

### In Loving Memory of Our Special Friends

You always had a smile to share, time to give and time to care.

A wonderful nature, warm and true. To our very special friends -- we really miss you!

### Midwinter Conference: January 21-23, 2022

Midwinter is coming fast so we are in the planning stages. We will be holding a Council of Administration Meeting on Friday at 6:30 p.m. Saturday we will start our meeting at 8:30 a.m. Our very own Francesca "Frankie" Bill is our National Representative for Midwinter Conference. As time allows, Saturday afternoon is being planned for training sessions for all our members. We will again hold these sessions in one room – our meeting room and have a Q & A at the end of the day.

We are working with Folds of Honor, Commander Barry's and my Joint Special Project, to be in attendance at Midwinter. I am really looking forward to the Buddy Poppy Contest at Midwinter. Your posters at

Fall Conference were so amazing. I can't wait to see what will be judged at Midwinter. I always look forward to the banquet to hear our Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen essay winners and celebrate all our young men and women who participated.

**National Mid-Year/CAFÉ:** January 29 – February 3, 2022 Melbourne FL  
Information is on National's site if you are interested in attending.

**Continuing Education Scholarship Applications:** Applications are due to National VFW Auxiliary Headquarters by February 15.

**VFW VOD/PP & Legislative Conference:** February 27 – March 3 Washington, D.C.

Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen scholarship contest winners are announced. The first place national winners reads their winning essay before conference delegates and are presented with their winnings. The Legislative Conference provides an opportunity for VFW leaders from each state to personally lobby their respective lawmakers and watch as the VFW's current Commander-in-Chief testifies on Capitol Hill before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees on behalf of veterans.

### Auxiliary Inspections:

The Districts are busy completing Auxiliary inspections which need to be completed in December. These are great opportunities for auxiliaries and districts to find out more about each other and to ask questions, share ideas and concerns.

Enjoy the Holidays and Continue Serving Our Heroes and Their Families!

## Treasurer/Secretary Chair

By Laurie Dale

Greetings everyone

All Resolutions adopted at the National Convention in Kansas City in July are posted on the National VFW Auxiliary website [vfwauxiliary.org](http://vfwauxiliary.org) and were included in the November mailing/emailing, but I wanted to point out some of the most important ones here for all of you in case you have not heard about or seen them.

**Resolution #1 – Section 604** - Regarding the Quorum required for the transaction of business at a Department Convention. Previously it was one (1) Delegate from a majority of the Auxiliaries in the Department. It has been changed to the following: "The minimum number of Delegates required to constitute a quorum shall be not less than one (1) Delegate/Voting Member from 40% of the Auxiliaries in the Department."

# Claims and Service Office Report

Jon Gohn, Claims Director

## Numerous VA Changes

This article will concentrate on numerous changes with the VA. Our MN VFW Claims Office is operating great as we still adjust to the new normal of most Veterans Affairs regional office employees continue to work remotely. Over the past nearly two years, we have had to adjust the way we do business. The use of new modalities allows us to be in touch with people all over the US. It is not the same as the daily face-to-face discussions as in the past. With all of that said, we have been able to adapt and overcome to maintain operations as normal as possible.

In the recent months we have been inundated with appeals from the board, higher level reviews with Decision Review Officers and a continued abundance of claims coming in. My employees have handled the additional operations tempo with professionalism, dedication, and grit. You should all be extremely proud of the work they have and continue to accomplish. One reason for the increased appeal workload is due to the Board of Veterans Appeals working hard to

clear all the old remaining legacy appeals that still hang out there. They are averaging about seven to eight hearings every week. That is impressive.

I would like to announce that we do have a new employee. Elissa Klein has been with us for a few months now and continues to be a very valuable and energetic asset to our team. Many of you may have had the chance to meet her during our Fall Conference when she stepped up and conducted the C of A and training in my absence. Elissa is a Marine Corps veteran and came to us with experience as a Carver County Veteran Service Officer. If you have a chance, call our office, and welcome her aboard.

As always if you need any help or have any questions that you believe we can assist with, do not hesitate to reach out to your claims office. Thank you all for your continued charge in promoting us. We have had numerous referrals from our body and continue to ask you send them our way so we can get them the best possible help and representation they deserve.

## VA Extends Presumptive Period for Persian Gulf War Veterans

October 27, 2021

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs has extended the presumptive period to Dec. 31, 2026 for qualifying chronic disabilities rated 10% or more resulting from undiagnosed illnesses in Persian Gulf War Veterans to ensure benefits established by Congress are fairly administered.

If an extension of the current presumptive period was not implemented, service members whose conditions arise after Dec. 31, 2021 would be substantially disadvantaged compared to service members whose conditions manifested at an earlier date.

Limiting entitlement to benefits due to the expiration of the presumptive period would be premature given that current studies remain inconclusive as to the cause

and time of onset of illnesses suffered by Persian Gulf War Veterans.

VA presumes certain medically unexplained illnesses are related to Persian Gulf War service without regard to cause, including, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, functional gastrointestinal disorders. Also included are undiagnosed illnesses with symptoms that may include but are not limited to abnormal weight loss, cardiovascular disease, muscle and joint pain, headache, menstrual disorders, neurological and psychological problems, skin conditions, respiratory disorders and sleep disturbances.

Persian Gulf War Veterans who are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above and other unexplained medical issues are encouraged to file a claim.

## VA Debt Notifications, Relief Available

VA resumed debt notification as of Oct. 1, 2021. If you have a new or existing VA benefit debt that was deferred because of the COVID-19 pandemic, you will receive a letter from VA with information on timelines and next steps. If you can't pay your debt right away,

relief options are available. Check the status of your VBA benefit debt online and explore options to resolve it. To review any debt options you can review the VA Debt Management's webpage at <https://www.va.gov/manage-va-debt/>

## VA Processing Claims for Certain Conditions Related to Particulate Matter

July 6, 2021

VA will begin processing disability claims August 2 for asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis on a presumptive basis based on presumed particulate matter exposures during military service in Southwest Asia and certain other areas – if these conditions manifested within 10 years of a qualifying period of military service.

VA conducted the first iteration of a newly formed internal VA process to review scientific evidence to support rulemaking, resulting in the recommendation to consider creation of new presumptions of service connection for respiratory conditions based on VA's evaluation of a National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine report and other evidence.

The process concluded that particulate matter pollution is associated with chronic asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis for Veterans who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations beginning Aug. 2, 1990 to the present, or Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Syria or Djibouti beginning Sept. 19, 2001 to the present. VA's review also concluded that there was sufficient evidence to presume that these Veterans have been exposed to particulate matter.

"I announced my intent to initiate rulemaking on May 27 to consider

adding respiratory conditions to the list of chronic disabilities," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough. "Through this process I determined that the evidence provided was sufficient to establish presumptions of service connection for these three respiratory conditions. This is the right decision, and VA will continue to use a holistic approach in determining toxic exposure presumptions moving forward."

The Southwest Asia theater of operations refers to Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the airspace above these locations.

VA will conduct outreach to impacted Veterans and survivors to inform them about their eligibility and will provide information on how to apply. Veterans and survivors who believe they may be eligible for the newly established presumptive conditions are encouraged to apply. They should file a VA Form 21-526EZ if applying for the first time or a VA Form 20-0995 if they are reapplying for these conditions. For more information on the new presumptive conditions, visit our website at Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures – Public Health ([va.gov](http://va.gov)).

## VA & Heroes Foundation Create Employment Opportunities for Vets

November 8, 2021, 10:30AM

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veteran Affairs recently partnered with the Daniel and Salvador Montoya Heroes Foundation to facilitate corporate hiring opportunities for Veterans and transitioning service members.

The partnership, effective Sept. 15, also aims to educate corporate employers about VA resources that can help improve Veterans' health and wellbeing such as benefits, community Veteran engagement boards, Veteran Community Partnerships, and Compensated Work Therapy.

The Veterans Health Administration and Heroes Foundation will work to improve the quality of Veterans' lives by providing opportunities for economic stability, employment, and health literacy.

Most importantly, it will raise employer awareness of the risk factors of suicide and VA suicide prevention tools for Veterans. This is vital, as research shows that lack of employment and low income can contribute to poor Veteran health outcomes, including suicidal ideation and suicide attempts.

"Unemployment rates among Veterans spiked to 11.9% in April 2020 as the coronavirus pandemic caused widespread job loss," said VA National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships Nurse Executive Tracy L. Weistreich, Ph.D. "While Veteran unemployment rates have since leveled out, partnerships like this help employers hire and retain more Veterans while being sensitive to their unique experiences."

### 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 Tom Hanson,  
National Council Member

In my efforts to try to keep the members of the Minnesota VFW and Auxiliary abreast of what is on the table at the National level I will impart some information in each edition of the Gopher Oversea'r but as always, some of the information may be stale or even archaic. For that I apologize in advance and hope you'll acquiesce.

I represented Minnesota at the VFW National Council of Administration meeting conducted in Kansas City back in mid-September to conduct the business mandates of our organization. They meet periodically throughout the year as outlined in the National By-Laws. There were several matters to be discussed and brought to the floor for action.

One of the issues dealt with the unfortunate demise of a number of Life Members that continue to be carried on the Life Member rolls. As much as we'd all wish those members were still with us, the Council agreed with the staff that a cleansing of the Life Member list would bring us a clearer picture of our "living" Life Members. The National Organization will contract with a private firm to accomplish this "wash". Please note that every Post Quartermaster will be advised of any changes to their roster. This effort includes 1.2 million records so it won't be done in a short period of time. This will also allow Departments and Posts an opportunity to get up-to-date addresses, phone numbers and email addresses for all their legitimate life members.

The Council was addressed by Director of Operations, Jonathan Duncan who offered a great rendition and brief overview of the changes to Article 9 of the National By-Laws. As you know there were a number of amendments made at the National Convention to this area of the By-Laws that deals with disciplinary action. These are contained in the new podium edition of the National By-Laws available for sale through VFW Emblem and Supply.

General Counsel, John Muckelbauer lead a discussion regarding "Claims Shark legislation". You may have seen recent editions of the VFW Magazine and other periodicals that offer representation by an attorney in the VA claims process. A large number of veterans are unaware that organizations such as the VFW offer this representation to any veteran, member or not. The fact is the VFW service officers are more thoroughly trained in this process than any attorney in the Country. I know when I was employed

# MN VFW Legislative Report

By Jennifer Shumake, Legislative Chairperson

Happy Holidays to all!

## 1. VA Healthcare and Telehealth

VA care is being rapidly outsourced, particularly via mental health Telehealth to Community Care Providers. This despite VA being the leader in Telehealth, having started in the 1960's. Yes the 1960's. VA has invested billions into Telehealth infrastructure and "requires its in-house providers to be trained in Telehealth. This unlike Community Care Providers, which has no training requirements. VA also has in-house tech staff to help its providers with problems encountered with Telehealth. Within the 2018 Mission Act, Telehealth appointments were to count as VA appointments. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic VA administration (saw fit to change this. Meaning, if you were to have a VA Telehealth appointment, and lived outside the distance and drive time rules you had to be offered/suggested a Community Care Program appointment (even though the CCP Telehealth appointment could be the same distance or further away). This has led to a significant increase in outsourced care. This arbitrary rule could be changed back to what the Mission Act intended. The question is how to build pressure to achieve this change back? Lobbying, op-ed letters, call/email your Congress member & Senators VSO pressure on congress and the VA. As it stands now, we could be nearing layoffs at VA and or program reductions.

## 2. Vet Centers for Mental Health

I'm excited to report that last week the office of U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar announced it will be co-sponsoring the Senate companion bill to the H.R. 5543 Vet CENTERS for Mental Health Act of 2021. In short, the bill would require 10 additional states, including Minnesota, to create at least one new Vet Center to provide mental health counseling to veterans, survivors of military sexual assault, and Gold Star families.

## 3. VFW National PENDING LEGISLATION

- **S. 1296, Daniel J. Harvey Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act**  
Service member and veteran suicide prevention continues to be a top priority for the VFW. Recent research indicates that suicide risk is increased after transition from the military. Additional research shows that risk is also heightened in individuals with mental health diagnoses. Accordingly, it is appropriate to educate and support transitioning service members with connections and resources to ensure risk factors are identified and care is given. The VFW supports this legislation, which would create a five-year pilot program to educate transitioning service members on reintegrating into civilian life and factors related to suicide risk. We do recommend that Congress ensure subsection (b)(1)(B)
- **S. 2089, Burial Equity for Guards and Reserves Act of 2021**  
The VFW supports this legislation which would ensure that VA grants to state veteran cemeteries do not restrict states from burying veterans who served in the National Guard and Reserve with honorable discharges. Currently, only certain veterans are eligible for burial at cemeteries managed by VA's National Cemetery Administration (NCA). This includes service members who died on active duty, those who served on active duty and received another than dishonorable discharge, and those who served in the National Guard or Reserve for at least twenty



of this legislation occurs in a private, HIPAA-compliant setting. Furthermore, the VFW also suggests that the Department of Defense (DOD) ensures appropriate processes and resources are in place to accommodate medical record requests and submissions to VA as outlined in subsection (b)(3).

- **S. 1664, Department of Veterans Affairs Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Processing Claims Improvement Act of 2021**

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur after a person experiences or witnesses a traumatic event such as military sexual trauma (MST), combat, severe accident, natural disaster, and serious violence or injury. A veteran can file a disability benefit claim for PTSD as a service-connected injury. An Office of Inspector General (OIG) report from December 2020 indicated that sixteen percent of processed claims were not in accordance with VA regulations and procedures. The OIG recommended training staff in the process of how to gather evidence and verify stressors required for PTSD claims, and to track results.

The VFW supports this proposal to improve PTSD disability claim processes by updating the current training programs, ensuring participants complete required training, analyzing all claims processing error trends, and creating an annual study to guarantee consistent and current national training.

- **S. 2089, Burial Equity for Guards and Reserves Act of 2021**

The VFW supports this legislation which would ensure that VA grants to state veteran cemeteries do not restrict states from burying veterans who served in the National Guard and Reserve with honorable discharges. Currently, only certain veterans are eligible for burial at cemeteries managed by VA's National Cemetery Administration (NCA). This includes service members who died on active duty, those who served on active duty and received another than dishonorable discharge, and those who served in the National Guard or Reserve for at least twenty

years and received another than dishonorable discharge. Service members of the National Guard and Reserve who serve for less than twenty years and have no time on active duty, even if discharged under honorable conditions, do not qualify. Service members of the National Guard and Reserve, many of whom also have access to VA health care, education benefits, and VA home loan eligibility, should have the right to be buried in a state veterans cemetery. States that choose to broaden the eligibility of veterans beyond what the NCA currently allows should not be restricted from the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program.

- **S. 2513, Brian Neuman Department of Veterans Affairs Clothing Allowance Improvement Act of 2021**

Veterans may qualify for the VA Clothing Allowance when they have prosthetics, orthopedic devices, or skin medicine that affects their clothing. Veterans must reapply for this benefit each year even though, in many cases, the circumstances which qualify them for the benefit will not change over time. The VFW supports this legislation that would require a veteran to apply for the clothing allowance only one time. Once granted, these payments would continue each year until VA determines that the veteran is no longer eligible for the benefit. This would remove the burden from the veteran of having to reapply each year.

- **S. 2794, Supporting Families of the Fallen Act**

The Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) maximum payouts have remained at \$400,000 for the last sixteen years. The VFW supports this legislation which would increase the maximum payout to \$500,000 to adjust for inflation. Service members and their families should have peace of mind when selecting either of these insurance policies for the maximum amounts, anticipating what their needs might be in the event of the individual's passing while considering overall rising costs over time due to inflation.

- **S. 3094, Reaching Every Homeless Veteran Act of 2021**

The VFW supports this legislation which would provide grants toward homeless reintegration programs and enhance outreach to areas that may lack awareness of employment and training programs available for veterans in need. As housing security and employment security can be a vicious cycle with each relying on the other, homeless veteran reintegration programs that provide job training, counseling,

LEGISLATIVE - Cont. on Page 14

# Midwinter Conference - January 21-23, 2022

## CONF. - Cont. from Page 1

families and our local communities featuring events at your post, your district and information promoting VFW programs: Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, and Teacher of the Year, Scouting, Hockey, Baseball and other Youth activities. This year we have recognized and celebrated at the post level, two Centenarians, both are VFW life members, with certificates.

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

Friday will bring the MN VFW Charitable Association meeting, Gambling Seminar, Auxiliary Hospital Round Table and more. The day will end with both the VFW and Auxiliary Council Meetings. During the meetings the Councils will conduct program, financial and other official business. Attendees will get a good feel for what takes place in overseeing the Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars and it's Auxiliary. The VFW Council of Administration will reconvene Sunday morning at 9:00 am to conclude their official business at the Midwinter Conference.

On Saturday morning there are four VFW Committee meetings that any member is welcome to attend. You can choose from the By-Laws, Legislative, Youth & Veterans Activities and the VFW Riders. The Marriott has a wonderful space that allows us to spread out and expand our activities. During Midwinter, we strive to provide various displays and vendors that will be of interest to everyone in attendance. Everything from Vets Homes to community Services.

Midwinter brings the opportunity to use the Buddy Poppies leftover from the Spring Poppy Distribution efforts. Posts and Auxiliaries create displays that fall into one of three different categories: 1) Memorial, 2) Promotional, and 3) Decorative.

The highlight of the Midwinter Conference is always Saturday's Grand Banquet. We will receive greetings from the VFW and Auxiliary National Representatives Thomas Hanson and Francesca Bill.

Thank you to every 2022 Award Sponsor in giving towards this event.

The awards are the favorite part of the evening. We honor our three State Teacher of the Year winners, categories K-5th, 6th-8th, and 9th -12th grade. We continue the evening by listening to the Patriot's Pen (6th-8th grade) winner read their winning essay titled "How Can I Be a Good American". The winner will go on to compete at the National level competition for a \$5,000 top award.

Lastly, the announcement of the nine District Voice of Democracy winners. The first place winner will present their speech on this year's essay theme "America: Where



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS - DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA



## VFW MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

January 21-23, 2022

Marriott City Center, Minneapolis MN

(Rev. 11-17-2021) Tentative

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 21

9:00 am Pre-Con Meeting  
 9:00 am Auxiliary Standing Rules Meeting  
 10:00 am VFW Internal Affairs Committee  
 Noon VFW Finance Committee Meeting  
 Noon Registration and Banquet Tickets  
 1:00 - 2:00 pm Auxiliary Hospital Meeting  
 1:00 - 4:00 pm **VFW Claims Open Office Hours with Director Jon Gohn**  
 2:00 - 3:00 pm VFW Charitable Association Meeting  
 2:30 - 3:30 pm Auxiliary Hospital Reps & Deps. Meeting (*Invitation Only*)  
 2:30 - 4:30 pm Gambling Seminar with Christopher Mau  
 3:00 - 6:00 pm Displays and Vendors  
 6:00 pm VFW Council Meeting  
 6:30 pm Auxiliary Council Meeting

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 22

7:00 - 9:00 am Register Poppy Displays  
 8:00 - 2:00 pm Registration and Banquet Tickets  
 8:00 - 3:00 pm Displays & Vendors  
 8:00 - 10:00 am **VFW Committee Meetings**  
 VFW By-Laws Committee; Youth & Veterans Activities; Legislative Committee; VFW Riders.  
 8:30 - 2:30 pm Auxiliary Meeting  
 10:15 - 11:15 am **Two Seminars: "DASHBOARD" with Adj. Dewey Hermanson; "PARLIAMENTARY" with Judge Advocate Dave Staehlin**  
 LUNCH BREAK  
 11:30 am Past Department President's Luncheon (*Invitation Only*)  
 11:30 am **Social Media Seminar with Jarrod McReynolds & Elissa Klein**  
 1:00 - 2:00 pm District VOD Winners Party  
 2:00 - 3:30 pm Buddy Poppy Chairmen Meeting  
 2:30 pm Catholic Church service  
 4:00 pm Non-Denominational Church Service  
 4:00 pm District VOD Winners Reception  
 6:00 pm Banquet Reception (Cash Bar)  
 6:00 pm Banquet Doors Open  
 6:45 pm Grand Banquet  
 7:00 pm

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 23

9:00 am VFW Council of Administration

Do We Go from Here". The State Voice of Democracy winner will be awarded a lovely trophy and a check for \$2,000. They also earn a free trip to Washington D.C. competing for a \$30,000 scholarship.

If you attended in the past, then you know all of the information, activities and social opportunities that await you. So grab some fellow members and plan to attend the Department of Minnesota's 119th Midwinter Conference.

**Tom Hanson**  
 National Council  
 Member to represent  
 National VFW



**Francesca "Frankie" Bill**  
 National District Council  
 to represent National  
 VFW Auxiliary



### Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Minnesota MIDWINTER CONFERENCE HOUSING RESERVATIONS Minneapolis Marriott City Center - January 21-23, 2022

Use this form to receive special VFW rate. OR register online at  
<https://www.marriott.com/events/start.mi?id=1629981575472&key=GRP>

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

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Post# \_\_\_\_\_ District # \_\_\_\_\_

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

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sharing Room With? \_\_\_\_\_

Please Reserve:  Standard King \$112 + Tax  Two Double Beds \$112 + Tax

Parking: Sun-Thurs @ \$26/day; Fri-Sat @ \$15/day at the City Center Ramp, 10 S. 7th Street

Credit Card Information: Reservations will not be made without a guarantee

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_

CVV: \_\_\_\_\_ Name written on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send email Confirmation

**DEADLINE NLT DECEMBER 27, 2021**

Mail Housing Reservations to:  
 Minneapolis City Center  
**ATTN: VFW Midwinter Conference**  
 30 South 7th Street  
 Minneapolis, MN 55402

### Midwinter Conference Banquet Saturday, January 22, 2022 Banquet at 7 PM; Reception at 6 PM Minneapolis Marriott City Center

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ Tickets @ \$34/ea.

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Menu:** Salad, dried cherries, smoked bacon caramelized walnuts; Thick, succulent grilled boneless pork chop with apple syrup; red bliss potatoes; green beans; carrots; fresh baked rolls; Dessert: Chocolate decadence w/caramel sauce or Pound cake, strawberry sauce and whipped cream

Enclosed payable to: Dept of MN, VFW

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Post/Aux; \_\_\_\_\_ Dist. \_\_\_\_\_

Special Dietary Requests \_\_\_\_\_

**DEADLINE TO ORDER: Jan. 3, 2022**

**Mail Banquet Reservation to:**  
 Veterans of Foreign Wars, Dept of MN  
 Rice Street Station  
 PO Box 17146  
 St. Paul, MN 55117

# News from YOUR District Commanders and Presidents!



**Thomas Brown, Commander  
First District**

Greetings from the First District. The Fall colors are fading fast from our landscape, and I'll take a chance and predict that soon all will be white. I hope those of you that are hunters had a successful season seeking your chosen prey. At this writing I've only seen a small six-point buck.

With the holidays close upon us, prepare to enjoy the holiday celebrations. Hopefully we can get together with family and friends. Not like last year. Unfortunately, even now precautions should still be observed. If you plan to party hardy, please have a sober driver. "Play it Safe."

Even as this is a time of joyful celebration, it is also a time that can leave some folks feeling left out, isolated, alone and depressed. So, give a phone call to someone or an invite to a get together. Do whatever you can to keep in touch with one another. Please reach out for help if you need to, it's a phone call away.

Looking forward to hopefully seeing many 1st District Post Commanders at our Midwinter Conference in January. Bring along your gambling manager if they need their continuing ed credits. That session will be Friday afternoon, the hospitality room will be open.

Keep our troops in your thoughts and prayers. We've all been there. Stay safe, stay strong, look out for one another and have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



**Linda Henry, Auxiliary  
President First District**

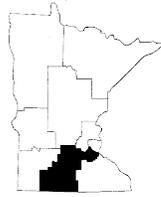
Hello from the First District!

Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy judging is currently going on and will be at the District and Department level before long. I hope District One does well again this year. Last year the National winner came from our district and originally my post in Rochester.

I am looking forward to our upcoming District meeting on Saturday December 4 in Rochester. Also, Midwinter is coming up in January and I hope to see many of you there.

I am trying to focus on membership this year. Maybe, everyone could try to recruit one new member, so we could do even more for our veterans.

I wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!



**Edward Keogh, Commander  
Second District**

This Fall the 2nd District was busy working on Youth, School and Community programs. We have greatly improved our participation in all programs. Auxiliary President Jean and I visited many Posts in our District in the past few months. It is exciting to see how active our Posts are in the 2nd District! We were invited to Prior Lake Post 6208 for their Membership Dinner where we encouraged all in attendance to recruit members for both the Post and Auxiliary. President Jean and I attended Farmington Post 7662 and its Auxiliaries' Diamond Jubilee celebration. I presented Ron Ersfeld a Citation of Achievement for his Distinctive Service as Post Commander for 22 years, 1998-2019.

The 2nd District Commanders/Presidents Project. "Sailing together to support our traveling Active Service Members" contributions to the Armed Forces Service Center are exceeding expectations. As of 10-31-2021 Contributions totaled \$13,355.00. To make a contribution please make checks payable to Armed Forces Service Center, 4300 Glumack Drive LT-A-2021, Minneapolis/St Paul Int. Airport, St Paul MN 55111-3003. We would like to see all Posts in the State of MN contribute to this great center.

The 2nd District continues to communicate all pertinent information to members and Posts of the 2nd District. This has resulted in improved reporting to the Department from all Posts.

Our next District meetings will be in Montgomery on January 8th, Hastings on March 5th, and Glencoe on April 30 2022. Please plan to attend District meetings where you will be well informed on important information along with meeting members of other Posts and enjoying their comradeship.

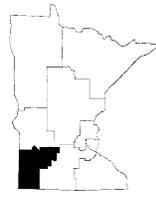


**Jean Keogh, Auxiliary  
President Second District**

Greetings from the Second District Auxiliary,

It's been a busy few months. Commander Ed and I have truly enjoyed getting to meet many of you. We were honored to be invited to membership dinners at Prior Lake Post 6208 and Farmington Post 7662. A certificate recognizing the Farmington Auxiliary's 75 years of dedicated service was presented to

**DIST. 2 AUX. - Cont. on Page 12**



**Bill Brockberg, Commander  
Third District**

Greetings Comrades and friends. I sincerely hope all of you participated in and/or attended events celebrating Veterans Day and recognizing and honoring our fellow veterans during this time of year.

I attended the dedication of the fourth Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Redwood Falls last month. It was a very well-attended event with the Governor Tim Walz, US Senator Amy Klobuchar, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Director Larry Herke and a large handful of Government and Veterans' Organizations' leaders and dignitaries.

I request that all District Committee Chairman review their responsibilities and events which they are in charge of. Let's all get events scheduled and reported on in a timely manner. Communication among District Officers and Post Commanders and Officers is key.

I encourage Posts to take an active role in supporting their communities by sponsoring events and programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in their local towns and communities. Positive exposure in our communities will allow us as VFW Comrades to interact with fellow veterans who we may then invite to be a part of our great VFW Organization.

Lastly, I read an article online that stated in regard to "Veteran Suicide," that buddy calls work to prevent such sad happenings. Call at least three veterans per month each just to say, "Hi, and briefly discuss what's going on and how are you doing?" For God, Country, Veterans, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.



**Carol Penning, Auxiliary  
President Third District**

Well our last few months have been very busy.

Our inspections are done and as a newbie at this, I found them very enlightening and enjoyable. I met auxiliary sisters I probably would not have otherwise. Judging of our contests is moving along.

We are getting ready for our annual Veterans Day Potluck on Sunday Nov 14, at 12:00 noon at Wilmont Post 2603. This year we are honoring Gold Star Families that we are aware of in our VFW area. We have purchased Gold Star Family banners and will have a short program that afternoon. Many in my district are planning on doing something to

**DIST. 3 AUX. - Cont. on Page 12**



**Michael Lindvall, Commander  
Fourth District**

As we head into the New Year we need to take a hard look at membership. All of us veterans have earned benefits for our past service. These benefits are always in danger of being taken away or not being fully funded. When the VFW has strong membership we carry a heavy bat up on Capitol Hill. Politicians listen to those groups that have large numbers and are vocal. So we need to be large and loud.

The trend for our numbers is heading in the wrong directions. No commander wants to be part of the process for a Post turning in its charter. When we work together without worry about whether a potential new member joins your post or a post that's closer to their home, we are doing what's right. It's great to have friendly competition, but let's do what's best for the new member and the VFW.

We all joined the military to be part of a team. As we served we looked out for each other. Let's go out and find those veterans who may be missing the comradeship that the VFW can provide. With every new member we have a battle buddy that we can look out for and someone who can look out for us. Put a couple of applications in your glove box and when you find a likely member ask them if want to join.



**Jean Opatry, Auxiliary  
President Fourth District**

Greetings from the 4th District Members.

Everyone is looking forward to the Voice of Democracy & Patriot's Pen District Banquet to hear the winning speeches. Thank you to the Posts and Auxiliaries that participated in any way. I am also excited to view the creations of the Buddy Poppy displays that same night.

Inspections are complete. The auxiliary members of the Cottage Grove Auxiliary voted to retain their charter. The members that attended the meeting are willing to step up to make the Auxiliary active again. Thank you. The District officers will be there to help if needed.

Our next district meeting will be January 15, 2022 at the Arthur O. Haukland Post 1350 (North St. Paul) at 9:00am. The District Convention will be April 23, 2022 at Anderson-Nelson Post 7555 (Roseville). Memorial service will be at 8:30am with the meeting following at 9:30am.

**DIST 4 AUX. - Cont. on Page 12**

# GOPHER OVERSEA'R

## 75th Anniversary Remembering the Past

### When it All Started

By Ken Schroeffer, editor Gopher Oversea'r

February, 1947 saw the distribution of the very first issue (Volume I, Issue 1) of the Gopher Oversea'r to 53,000 members of the Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Let's jump aboard the "wayback machine" and go back in time to the 1946 Department Encampment (Convention). The Council of Administration met to discuss items pertinent to the members. A motion was made and passed to create the Gopher Oversea'r.

Minnesota at the time had radio stations. There were 847 AM band radio stations throughout the US in 1940. This jumped to 2,144 stations in 1950. The "new" FM band came on the scene in 1947. (Wikipedia)

There were no television stations in Minnesota. "KSTP-TV was the first television station in Minnesota, signing on the air April 27, 1948, from the Prom Ballroom. It was the first NBC affiliate not owned by the network. The transmitter, located at the executive offices at 3415 University Avenue, had a 571 foot tower and an effective radiated power of 24,700 watts." (Pavek Museum of Broadcasting, [www.pavekmuseum.org](http://www.pavekmuseum.org))

Every town of any size had a local newspaper. Of course, the major cities' newspapers had distributions to some of the near communities.

For the first 2 years of distribution, the Gopher Oversea'r was printed monthly as full sized newspaper. A copy of the front page of the first issue can be found on pages 2 and 3 of this special edition.

Within this issue (page 2), there is an article addressing the birth of the Gopher Oversea'r. The following is from that article:

With this issue of the Gopher Oversea'r, the Department of Minnesota enters a new era in VFW history. Never before has the Department been able to reach every one of its members through the medium of an official publication.

The Gopher Oversea'r will bring into the homes of more than 53,000 members of the organization news about their comrades throughout the state. It will tell them what is happening in the important field of veterans welfare and veterans legislation, not only in Minnesota but in the nation as well. It will keep members informed on methods of procedure and regulations concerning the many services which the VFW has obtained on behalf of the veteran, his dependents, widow and orphans.

**Establishment of the Gopher Oversea'r was mandated by the Department Encampment (Convention) and came into being after hours of hard work by the Publications Committee: Jack Greenwood, Minneapolis, chairman; Charles Mayer, Young America; Glenn Semple, Ironton; John P. McPartlin, Bemidji and Fendall G. Lyon, St. Paul.**

Publication offices were established at 610 Andrus Building (512 Nicollet Ave.) in Minneapolis and a staff of three newspapermen, all members of the VFW, employed to take charge of the newspaper. It is the staff's aim to give complete coverage to post and district activities throughout Minnesota and the advertising manager will be in the field constantly to solicit advertising from local business firms and to publicize the work of the VFW.

All posts are encouraged to appoint news reporters to write up activities and submit them to Gopher Oversea'r offices in Minneapolis prior to the 20th of each month.

The original staff was comprised of:

Stan Cann, editor, Greeder-Hinds-Comfort Post 323, Stillwater;  
James F. Korbus, editorial assistant, Star Spangled Banner Post 1149, Minneapolis; and  
Bill Krog, Jr., advertising manager, Riverside Post 1697, St. Paul

Included in this initial issue were congratulatory letters from:

Louis E. Starr, National VFW Commander-in-Chief;  
Luther W. Youngdahl, Governor of Minnesota; and  
Hubert H. Humphrey, Mayor of Minneapolis.

### What's Inside

February, 75 years (three quarters of a century) is a long time for newspaper to exist. It is the result of a high level of dedication by a small select group of individuals that has provided 75 years of news and information to the members of the Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars.

To celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Gopher Oversea'r, the Publications Committee agreed that a Special Edition be created and distributed as an insert to a regular edition of the Gopher Oversea'r.

In this Special Edition, you will find three articles: How the Gopher Oversea'r began; a brief history of the Department of MN VFW; and who actually did the work and kept the Oversea'r "alive" for the past 75 years.

A trip was made into to the archives of the Gopher Oversea'r to resurrect some of the back issues. This was a journey not for the faint-of-heart. Deep within "the bowels" of the Department VFW Office where all things old and dusty can be found, a small selection of back issues was made.

The front pages of these issues were scanned and are included for the enjoyment of the reader.

The publications Committee hopes that this Special Edition will show you how much things have changed over the years and how, to a degree, they remain the same.

### One Hundred Years of Accomplishments

By Jim Hesselgrave, Past State Adjutant Quartermaster

The Department of Minnesota VFW, has always been a leader in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In this article, we will tell you about just a few of these Accomplishments.

Before the Department of Minnesota even got its charter, there were a number of VFW Posts that received their charters. Most notable, are A.R. Patterson VFW Post 7 (January 3, 1902) and M.M. Carlton VFW Post 5 (March 1, 1905). Both of these posts still exist today and are doing very well. Obviously, because of the numbers, one would think that Post 5 was Chartered first. That is not so. Actually, Post 5 formed their post and actually hosted a Veterans of Foreign Wars National Encampment (Convention) before 'officially' submitting their Charter Application. During those early years, a lot of systems were not in place. In the meantime, Post 7 submitted their 'official' Charter Application and became the FIRST OFFICIALLY Chartered VFW Post in Minnesota. Both Posts have yielded Past State Commanders. Post 7 in recent years has had two – Clint Bucher and Chad Solheid.

**January 17, 1921**, the Department of Minnesota was issued its charter. That same year on August 10, 1921, the Department held its First Encampment (Convention) in St. Paul. There were a number of statewide events held before the Department was officially chartered. Most notable was the Grand Banquet. The Grand Banquet later became the Midwinter Conference and Banquet.

**January 23, 1925**, three years after the Department received its charter, the (Ladies) Auxiliary was granted their charter with thirteen units. As we all know in recent years, the Auxiliary accepted male members and had to drop the word Ladies from their title.

**November, 1945**, the Department opened the first VFW Claims/Service Office in the old Commerce Building. Under the professional directorship of leaders like Ray Hansen, Thomas Hanson and currently Jon Gohn, the

# GOPHER

# OVERSEA'R



LET'S MAKE  
1947  
A BANNER YEAR

"WHERE WE LAND ... WE SERVE"

GOPHER OVERSEA'R  
SALUTES  
OUR NEW COMRADES

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

Vol. I

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, FEBRUARY, 1947

No. 1

# MINNESOTA VFW ON THE THRESHOLD OF NEW ERA

## MEMBERSHIP JUMPS 30,000 IN YEAR

### Bonus Issue Tops State VFW Legislative Slate

#### Civil Service

#### Probe, Housing Aid Demanded

Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars are standing pat on an encampment mandate for cash payment of adjusted service compensation to World War II service men. Fight for the state bonus will reach its climax during the present session of the legislature in St. Paul and the VFW is prepared to marshal an army of facts and figures proving the state's obligation and its ability to pay without recourse of a sales tax or property tax increases against the people of the state.

The legislative committee has prepared proposals asking passage of a measure similar to those enacted on behalf of veterans of the Spanish-American war and World War I. It will ask that VFW-approved proposals be incorporated in any bonus bill submitted for final action.

The Department of Minnesota, at its June encampment in St. Paul, was mandated to fight for adjusted service compensation of \$15 per month for domestic service and \$20 per month for overseas service.

No maximum has been set by the VFW.

Because it believes the great majority of members of the VFW in Minnesota oppose a sales tax as a means of raising revenue to pay adjusted service compensation and because it believes that sufficient revenue can be raised without placing the burden of the bonus debt on the people of the state, the

#### Let's Get Together, Joe ... DO YOU WANT A BONUS?

Do you want a cash bonus from the state of Minnesota? Delegates to the Department encampment in St. Paul last June went on record favoring a cash payment of adjusted service compensation to Minnesota veterans of World War II. That mandate was later reaffirmed at the national encampment in Boston and stands today as the official legislative goal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Department legislative committee is now preparing a measure for consideration by the state legislature based upon the encampment minutes.

Considerable controversy has developed over the bonus question; recently many voices have been raised throughout the state both for and against the proposal.

If the department committee is to make any kind of a showing before the legislature on its measure, it must know the attitude of the rank and file of members on the matter of cash payment of adjusted service compensation. It must back up its request with facts and figures; in our organization, the members must speak up.

**THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY!**

Department Commander Murphy says: "Because of the many conflicting expressions of opinion in the public press during the past few weeks, it is imperative that I be informed of the attitudes of the membership of my department regarding a cash bonus. If this bonus question is of any interest to you, supply me with the ammunition I need to present your opinions. Do it now!"

Fill out the form printed below. And send it to J. A. Murphy, Department Commander, VFW, 610 Andrus Building, Minneapolis 2, Minn.

#### DO YOU FAVOR A CASH BONUS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Member of Post No. \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ Minn.

You need not sign this form. We desire your post number and location only so that we may make your attitude known to your own representatives in the state legislature. In addition to the individual ballot, posts may help the bonus cause by solution of bonus resolutions and obtaining signed petitions from members by their request.

(You are hereby giving the above ballot and send in the copy if you desire to keep this first issue of the Gopher - Post No. 1 - as a memento.)

### 20 Veterans' Bills Get VFW Priority Tag

Twenty legislative proposals dealing with veteran welfare have been placed on the priority list of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for action during the 80th Congress.

The twenty measures on which the VFW will concentrate are based on resolutions from among those adopted by the last National Encampment. They were selected by the VFW National Legislative Committee as being of the most immediate importance to the nation's veterans.

"Our office organization, from the national office down to individual post members, will concentrate on this 'bonus' legislation, and Department Commander Murphy will be directed by our representatives in Washington, with the support of Legislative Action Committees in each state and Congressional district. Through these committees we will let our Senators and Representatives know how the folks back home want them to vote.

"The power of our 2,000,000 members will be coordinated as never before and we expect to achieve important gains for veterans in the 80th Congress," he emphasized.

Included in the VFW list of "must" legislation are the following:

1. Universal military training and extension of the draft.
2. Adjusted service pay for veterans of World War II.
3. Establishment of Economic Development Corporation to finance self-liquidating enterprises giving employment priority in veterans' camps.

Top figures in Department of Minnesota VFW circles as the pioneer veterans organization to the membership appear on page 4 of this issue.

### Northfield Post Petes Beloved 'Mom' Phillips

One of the outstanding jobs assigned to persuade colleges for one-

### Seek a Million New Members in Starr-Year Drive

One million new members is the goal set by national headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in a ten-month intensive campaign now underway.

Every post in the nation is being asked to participate in the drive which will end on the 50th birthday of Commander-in-Chief Louis E. Starr, March 17.

Entry blanks and honor roll forms are being sent out to each post by H. W. Irwin, director of extension with the VFW National posts sign up at least 100 new members as a birthday gift to the chief.

The entry form should be filled out and returned to the Extension Department, National Headquarters, Broadway and 34th, Kansas City 2, Mo.

This entry form will indicate to the national extension department willingness of each post to set a goal for the "Starr Year" birthday campaign.

The honor roll will be an attractive scroll upon which each member who will pledge himself to obtain at least 20 new members during the campaign.

### Ask Truman to Restrict Building

The VFW will ask President Truman to issue an order discontinuing all unnecessary commercial building construction in order that materials can be channeled into the construction of housing units for veterans.

Action to speed the nation's housing program through White House intervention was recommended by members of the National Housing Conference.

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### Rehab Program Wins Praise In First Year

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U. S. is an organization founded and built on service to the overseas veteran, his dependents, widows and orphans. It places first on its list of functions the rehabilitation and welfare of the veteran and his family and through the VFW National Rehabilitation Service thousands of claims in behalf of disabled veterans are handled.

Membership during 1945 reached an all-time high of 50,422 as of December 31 and early returns of 1947 per capita tax indicate that the post of 75,000 may be reached before the end of another year.

By mandate of its members at Department encampment: It provides a Rehabilitation and Welfare department second to none in the nation and its Claims Service has assisted in processing \$5,582,577 in claims work for all veterans of the state against the Veterans Administration.

New blood and new ideas contributed by veterans of World War II plus wise counsel and well-grounded fundamentals of organization, administration and vital contributions by the "old Spaniards" and World War I members makes an unbeatable combination in rendering service to all veterans and their loved ones.

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committee is ready to carry its fight for the veterans' bonus back to the people of the state if necessary.

While bonus legislation has stirred considerable controversy in the state during the early days of the legislative session, the VFW is not concentrating on this phase of the program only.

The department legislative committee will press for an interim investigation of the present state Civil Service law and for an enabling act by the state to assist in linking the current housing shortage. It will also ask changes in the county service officer system and support legislation to obtain a more favorable fare rate for students commuting daily between the Twin Cities.

Members of the department legislative committee include George McParthin, chairman; John E. Erickson, Isador Rosen, J. M. Johnson and Edward Nelson.

In mapping plans for its program, the committee emphasized need for a general probe of civil procedure and for establishment of absolute veterans' preference in state employment. At present there are more than 650 classified positions in the state civil service system, yet during the past seven years examinations have been held to establish registers in only 75 of these positions.

"Civil Service, as operated in Minnesota, is a farce; it does not work on merit except in the lower bracket positions and in spite of attempts of the administration to classify employees and regulate the civil service as intended, employment is still on the spoils system and prejudicial to the veteran," the committee said in a statement.

## East Grand Forks Host to District

Red River Valley Post No. 3817, VFW, will be host to the Ninth District VFW rally in East Grand Forks Sunday, March 30. The Counties of Pop. Tent No. 22 East Grand Forks, will hold their district party Thursday, March 29, on the eve of this rally.

At its first meeting of the new year the post voted to cooperate in the Polk County rally drive to aid the Lester Kenny foundation. Four new members were initiated into the organization.

## Rules Committee Opens Way For Admission of Women

If women are ever admitted to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U. S., they may look back on the week of January 19-25, 1947 as a period of historical significance.

Because in Minneapolis during that week, the National Rules and Procedures committee initiated action which may eventually pave the way for admission of women to the task governing organization.

In its first session the committee recommended an amendment of the VFW constitution, which if approved, would make possible admission of women through vote of the membership without asking Congress to amend the national charter.

Sitting on the committee in Minneapolis were representatives from the four extreme limits of the nation. John E. Erickson, committee chairman, is a Minnesota man; T. H. Bingham, Department Adjutant-Quartermaster of Louisiana, E. Ryan, from Rutland, Vt., and Past Department Commander Dick Newhall from San Francisco. In addition, C. A. Ginn, Department Quartermaster from Pennsylvania, Past Commander-in-Chief Max Singer of Kansas City, Mo., and E. L. Jenkins, National Executive Assistant, Kansas City, gave the conference a true cross-section of VFW opinion.

Purpose of the session in Minneapolis was to streamline and simplify rules and procedure of the order and to devise a manual which can be used by VFW officials on all levels as a guide to proper conduct of organization affairs.

Following the meeting in Minneapolis Chairman Erickson and Secretary Ryan carried recommendations to a meeting of the National By-Laws committee convening in Philadelphia this week. These activities of the two groups will be coordinated and recommendations prepared for presentation to the Council of Administration.

Among recommendations of the Rules and Procedure committee is one to eliminate county councils and increase the strength of District organizations.

A new law will permit blind veterans to operate vending stands in new Veterans Administration offices throughout the country.

job training.

5. Indemnification of former prisoners of war.
6. Cash payment of terminal leave bonds.
7. Establishment of one major veterans committee in the senate.
8. Income tax exemption for World War II veterans.
9. Investigation of non-essential building.
10. Reorganization of the veterans' pension system.
11. Halting of all immigration for 10 years.
12. Program for national security.
13. Extension of hospitalization and out-patient care for veterans.
14. Requiring aliens seeking American citizenship to agree to bear arms in defense of the nation.
15. Pensions for World War I veterans on the same basis as granted to Spanish-American veterans.
16. Granting authority to the Civil Service Commission to enforce its rulings.
17. Elimination of the "passage oath" for veterans seeking hospitalization.
18. Crediting promotions, leaves, etc., to former prisoners of war.
19. Reasonably and uniform rates for federal housing rental to student trainees under Public Laws 16 and 246.
20. Payment of cash in lieu of terminal leave for personnel discharged to veteran hospitals from Army and Navy hospitals.

Starr Here Mar. 1

Commander-in-Chief Louis E. Starr has informed Department headquarters he will attend the annual Department banquet at Hotel Levee, St. Paul, on March 1. This will be Starr's first visit to Minnesota since becoming national commander.

Education Benefits for Huge Army of Veterans

The number of veterans who have applied for World War II education and training benefits nearly equals the total of men in the armed forces during World War I.

A total of 4,549,654 have applied for such benefits. Of this number, 4,042,121 applied under the GI Bill and 507,533 under the provisions of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act for disabled veterans.

Commander-in-Chief Louis E. Starr has informed Department headquarters he will attend the annual Department banquet at Hotel Levee, St. Paul, on March 1. This will be Starr's first visit to Minnesota since becoming national commander.

Minneapolis was host city to its first VFW national meeting during January when the Rules and Procedure committee assembled here to draw up recommendations for streamlining the organization. Pictured here as they studied a troublesome paragraph in the curriculum-by-laws are seated (l. to r.) Charles E. Ryan, Rutland, Vermont; John E. Erickson, Minneapolis, committee chairman and member of the National Council; and T. H. Bingham, New Orleans, La. Standing, Max Singer, Past Commander in Chief, Kansas City; Dick Newhall, San Francisco and C. A. Ginn, Harrisburg, Pa.

strikes in the history of Minnesota.

VFW was sponsored by Eugene Triax post of Northfield in January when it honored Mrs. Nellie Phillips for her activity on behalf of servicemen and women of the community.

"Mom" Phillips wrote personal letters to every man and woman from Northfield who entered service; conducted a service column in the newspaper there and played hostess to her "boys" at coffee parties when they came home on leave or separation.

In appreciation, members of the Eugene Triax post presented Mom with the VFW Citizenship medal at a community gathering in her honor.

In addition, they handed her a round trip ticket to California and a substantial cash contribution to make her vacation more enjoyable.

Department Commander Murray was the principal speaker and comrades Arthur W. Crawford, H. B. Kump, George Zammler, Courtney Cleland, Edling Larson and Post Commander Myron Ellingnes took part in the public program. Members of the committee, including Don Lohberg, Willard T. Nelson, Lawrence F. Samme, Zammler, Larson, Crawford and Cleland.

Supreme Rights Studies Seniority Rights Act

Washington—The supreme court is pondering whether the Draft Act was intended to protect veterans' seniority rights beyond their one-year guarantee of re-employment.

The question was threshed out before the high tribunal in a three-cornered argument involving the government, an employer, and a CIO union. In an unusual appeal, Local 359 of the CIO auto workers union joined with the Trathem Co., of Cincinnati, to urge limitation of employees' seniority protection to the one year period.

They listed at a concerted drive to discharge veterans after their year is up if the law is interpreted as interfering with normal collective bargaining procedures.

The government took the opposite view in behalf of the Trathem Co. and the government's mobile employee Lawrence Whites, a veteran whose seniority status a Circuit Court of Appeals ruled must remain unchanged for the life of the draft act.

Government counsel contended that congress meant the Draft Act to provide protection indefinitely against unfavorable changes in veterans' employment conditions.

The Department of Minnesota's Rehabilitation Welfare and Service Division during its 12 months of existence has become a model upon which many other states are establishing similar divisions, and it has been highly complimented by Col. George E. Hjams, National Rehabilitation Director and Johnny Walker Jones, National Chairman of Rehabilitation.

Minnesota's Rehabilitation Welfare and Service division was created through executive mandate by Comander John McNeerney named five members to a committee to set up the service and employ necessary personnel. The committee included John E. Erickson, Eddie Volstad, Gordon Cummings, Rex Pickett and George Merow, with Erickson as chairman and Merow as secretary.

The Department appropriated \$16,000 to carry on the work and this, together with \$1,800 allowed by the national organization and an appropriation by the state of Minnesota of \$7,500 for the first year, gave the division about \$25,300 to work on. Representative Valstad was responsible for the State appropriation of \$15,000 for the two-year period.

Immediately the service was established and named by trained, qualified personnel. There was a (Continued on Page 5)

Through efforts of the VFW, more than 30 waivers of physical standards have been obtained up to press time and other cases are pending.

When disabled veterans employed by the Minneapolis post office were threatened with loss of employment rights through technicalities in civil service procedure, the VFW went to bat for them by protesting to the postmaster and civil service authorities and lining up other veterans organizations for a hearing on the subject.

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January, designated as "Minny Murphy Month" and brought 3,500 new members and 22,000 renewals of 1947 dues.

Membership jumped 30,000 in one year after declaration of peace and Department officials confident to anticipate that well-established posts and recently instituted ones will retain present membership levels and extend the hand of comradeship to a majority of the 200,000 Minnesota veterans eligible for VFW.

Minnesota stands eighth among the Big Ten of the nation in membership and ranks fourth in renewals.

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## Stranded Comrade Finds VFW Here Extends Helping Hand

(A True Story)

Comrade Bill, of Denver, had heard that Minneapolis was a swell town, and decided to see for himself. On arriving, it seemed to be everything that he had heard. Shortly thereafter, however, some skunk lifted Bill's case with his discharge and most of his money, and Bill began to wonder.

Naturally, he sought out his comrades in his trouble, and Comrade Murphy who arranged for a hotel room until Bill was able to shift for himself. The entire process took less than thirty minutes.

During the course of his first half day in Minneapolis, Bill had found that true comradeship really works in the VFW, fast, sincere and efficient. Bill says Minneapolis is a swell town, and the Cross of Malta the finest possible introduction in distress.

(Note: Bill got the job.)

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During the course of his first half day in Minneapolis, Bill had found that true comradeship really works in the VFW, fast, sincere and efficient. Bill says Minneapolis is a swell town, and the Cross of Malta the finest possible introduction in distress.

(Note: Bill got the job.)

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# GOPHER OVERSEA'R

"WHERE WE LAND ...



... WE SERVE"

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION, DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

Volume 12

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, DECEMBER, 1958

No. 11

## Operation Greyhound Complete Success

### Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas



From Department Commander and Auxiliary President

### A Thanksgiving Day Story

By LOWELL EASTLUND

This little drama took place in Minneapolis. It was the day before Thanksgiving. It didn't make the new columns because it wasn't unusual. The same thing was happening in hundreds, probably thousands, of other places at the same time—throughout Minnesota and throughout the United States.

A car drove slowly down a side street in one of the poorer sections of town. The frosty breath of the driver mingled with the little whirlwinds of dirt and snow whipped up by the chill November wind as he peered out the open window. The rusty house numbers were almost undiscernible against the imitation-brick asphalt shingles of the run-down buildings. The car came to a stop before what was originally a private home but now apologetically displayed a wooden sign "Apartments."

A man and woman emerged from the car and walked to the house, the man carrying a grocery box and the woman a paper bag. They stopped at the entrance and checked the four names penciled on a plate next to the door, then advanced up the stairway and knocked at a door marked "3."

The door opened hesitantly. The woman wore a faded house dress. She held to the door as if for support. A little boy peered from behind her skirts. She said nothing.

The man held the box and shuffled his feet. His companion held out the paper bag and said "We're from the V.F.W. We've brought something for you."

The woman still said nothing but she moved aside as the couple placed their packages on the floor. As they walked back to the hall, the man broke his silence. "Happy Thanksgiving," he said.

As the door closed, the woman sank to a chair, sobbing through the hands held over her face. Her "thank you" was barely whispered. The three-year-old voice carried through the closed door: "Mama, is all this for US?"

Some time later, the telephone rang in the Headquarters' office of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in St. Paul. The voice on the other end of the line was excited.

"This is Mrs. E——, are you the people who brought the Thanksgiving basket this morning?"

"It wasn't us, but it could very well have been one of our posts or auxiliaries."

"They brought it this morning and I'm so ashamed. I didn't ask who it was from. I'm afraid they didn't think I was grateful. I want to write and thank them but I don't know who they were."

"I'm sure that they understand. If they had wanted thanks they would have told you who they were."

The voice broke a little. "I don't know how they found out about us. We didn't think anyone knew. We've been getting along fine since my husband died but I had a stroke and I haven't been able to work for months. The Welfare Department has been taking care of us but there was nothing special for the kids for Thanksgiving. . . . The voice trailed off— . . . if you could tell all of them for me 'God bless you for what you've done'."

We've chosen this way to pass on her message. And, while we're at it, we'd like to pass a little of the blessing on to the hundreds of thousands of people throughout Minnesota who also helped—even if they didn't know it. We mean the people who bought the little V.F.W. Buddy Poppy last May when it was offered to them on the street. This is where a part of their money went.

Next year when Poppy Day again comes around, we hope you'll tell them this little story. We hope you'll also tell them about the men who are being compensated for their wartime injuries because the money from the Poppies helped finance the establishment of their claims; and about the orphans at Eaton Rapids, Michigan, whose lives they have made brighter.

And we hope that your own post and auxiliary members will remember it when they are asked to donate some of their time to sell Poppies.

### Don Otte Reports

The Department Membership Program appears to be rocketing along at this writing. Our Operation Greyhound is now history and to all the posts who participated, "Thanks a Million." Likewise, all the Department Officers who so graciously gave of their time to head the tours, "Many Thanks."

Our Steverson wound up in Minneapolis Sunday evening and there comrade Owen Regentz and his committee really applied the finishing touch ranging from proper escort to music and color and proper publicity from all media. Star Spangled Banner Post with the leadership of Commander Robert Holmes and his committee sent us all home with a satisfied appetite and a wet whistle. To all of you fine comrades who participated in the wind-up, "Thank You."

During this month the Seventh District conducted their membership rally. District Commander Harry Olson certainly had his committees working and all did a fine job. Ballantine Post and Commander Carl Abrahamson proved the perfect hosts to provide a most fitting and entertaining rally finale. Thanks to all of you comrades for your membership efforts.

It would be impossible to mention all the fine comrades by name who are so earnestly applying their efforts to move this membership program this year. The two previously mentioned examples certainly were outstanding, but are indicative of the prevailing attitude in regards to membership throughout the State of Minnesota.

We have a long way to go to reach our ultimate goal, but each day new membership schemes are mailed into Department Headquarters. Incidentally, Comrades, do not overlook the time proven policy of bringing these comrades to your post meetings, introducing them to the membership and making them feel at home. Sell them our

(Continued on Page Nine)

### Dept. Recruiters' Awards

In spite of an unprecedented membership drive which found recruiters active in nearly every post, only a few applications for Department Star Workers and Outstanding Recruiter awards had been received at Department Headquarters at press time. It must be assumed that most of them were too busy getting members to take time out to make application for the awards.

The Department Star Worker award is given to members who have recruited 10 or more new or reinstated members for the 1959 year. The award is a "Star for '59" pin and courtesy card. The Outstanding Recruiter award, consisting of a special pin bearing the outline of the State of Minnesota, is given to those who collect dues from 25 or more new, reinstated or continuous members. Awards are presented at district meetings.

#### STAR WORKERS

FIRST DISTRICT: Carl Krebsbach, James Cahill and Warren Thomsen, Post 1216, Austin.

SECOND DISTRICT: Wilbur H. Zoller, Post 1778, Wells.

THIRD DISTRICT: Arthur Burrows and Andrew Kollar, Post 117, Canby; Clarence M. Blumhofer, Post 8459, Fairfax.

FIFTH DISTRICT: Les Pollard, Post 5039, Morris.

EIGHTH DISTRICT: Alfred J. Briggs, Post 6204, Silver Bay.

NINTH DISTRICT: Lloyd A. Kindseth and Maurice B. Nornes, Post 6891, McIntosh.

#### OUTSTANDING RECRUITERS

FIRST DISTRICT: Donald Morrison, Post 878, Blooming Prairie; Frank Cerny, Carl Krebsbach, Donald Krebsbach, Dale Ramlo and Warren Thomsen, Post 1216, Austin.

SECOND DISTRICT: Wilbur H. Zoller, Post 1778, Wells.

THIRD DISTRICT: Arthur Burrows and Elmer Engel, Post 117, Canby; Harold D. Trapp, Thomas Heidenreich, Donald Malmgren, Lloyd Peterson and Clarence Beck, Post 3958, Worthington; Edwin P. Walz, Wallace J. Smith and Clarence M. Blumhofer, Post 8459, Fairfax.

FIFTH DISTRICT: Les Pollard, Post 5039, Morris.

SEVENTH DISTRICT: Henry J. Jacobson, Post 246, Minneapolis.

EIGHTH DISTRICT: Alfred Joseph Briggs, Post 6204, Silver Bay.

NINTH DISTRICT: Emil R. Boyum, Post 3858, Grygla; Ole Ben Olson, Post 4628, Barnesville; Lloyd A. Kindseth and Maurice B. Nornes, Post 6891, McIntosh.



### Inspection System

By QUENTIN WERPY  
Department Inspector

The New Department Inspection System seems to meet with the approval of all Deputy Inspectors that have been approached so far. For some reason we have not heard from some District Commanders as planned. We expect they are going full speed ahead in order to finish all inspections in the month of December. We have received two reports from National Headquarters listing the discrepancies of some posts. These posts will be notified in the very near future and we trust they will correct these errors and have the satisfaction of having everything in good order. May we please have a report from District Commanders listed below that have not reported so far: The First District has reported two posts inspected; the Second District, none; the Third District, eighteen; Fourth District, none; the Fifth District, eight; the Sixth District, six; the Seventh District, none; the Eighth District, none; and the Ninth District has reported seventeen inspected and a report yet to be turned in.

Our slogan this year is "Work Like H— for Eldon Sell" so come on District Commanders and Deputy Inspectors; let's live up to our slogan.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

# HONOR AMERICA

June 14 through July 4

## Flag Day to Independence Day

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

### Commander Braun Raps Political Failure to Aid Vietnam Bonus

The State Democratic, Farmer, Labor party platform committee received a broadside firing from Department Commander Braun over the past weekend. Braun was irked over a report in the May 31 Minneapolis Star telling of the proposed plank to be presented at the DFL Convention in Rochester, June 9 through 11.

The news report read as follows: "The proposed platform endorses three constitution-amendment proposals on the November election ballot, but is silent on a fourth calling for a bonus to be paid Vietnam War Veterans." "Such a bonus, most committee members reportedly felt, should be paid for by the federal government."

Because of this attempt to make a political pawn of the Vietnam Veteran, Commander Braun has written to each Post Commander asking to rally every veteran in

support of the Vietnam Veteran and start talking to legislators, prospective legislative candidates and especially the DFL and GOP delegates to the State Conventions. Commander Braun also directed letters to DFL State Chairman Richard Moe and GOP State Chairman Dave Krosgeng, with copies to the Governor and the majority and minority leaders of the Minnesota Legislature.

The letter read as follows: "Dear Sir: It was alarming to learn that a State Platform Committee was quoted in the Minneapolis Star of May 31, 1972 as being silent on Constitutional amendment No. 4 which would authorize a bonus for Vietnam Era Veterans.

The same platform committee recommended endorsements of the first three Constitutional Amendment proposals.

Being silent on Amendment No. 4 is the same as calling for a failure to vote and that equals a "NO" vote.

Bonuses have been provided after every war in which Minnesota Veterans have participated. The bonus is but a token of appreciation as neither Minnesota or the Federal Government would be financially unable to compensate or reimburse a veteran for his military service, in the Vietnam War or any war.

On March 6 and 7, seventy-five members of the Minnesota VFW visited Washington, D.C. and during meetings with the Minnesota Congressional delegation, we were assured unanimous support of Constitutional Amendment No. 4.

The returning Vietnam Veteran has been made the scapegoat of a war bred by politicians, now some of these same politicians want to deny these veterans any expression of appreciation for honoring the call of their country to serve in the armed forces. Yet some of the same politicians are suggesting amnesty and pardon for those who defied laws and refused to serve their nation.

We have never been involved in politics, but if the party platform discriminates against the Vietnam Era Veteran, I will recommend to

### Bids Due

The 1971 Department Convention in Bemidji mandated that all bids for DEPARTMENT CONVENTIONS AND FALL CONFERENCES be submitted in writing to the Department Commander before the July Council meeting.

The Bids for the 1974 Department Convention and the 1973 Fall Conference are due in writing in Department Headquarters on or before Friday, July 21, 1972. Details are available at Department Headquarters on request.



# Gopher Overseas



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION,  
DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS,  
OF THE UNITED STATES

Circulation to More Than 75,000 Veterans

Volume 26, No. 6

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55101

June, 1972

### AT INTERNATIONAL FALLS

## Department Convention Expects 4,000 People

Patrick E. Carr, Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief from Metairie, Louisiana, will be the National representative at the Department Convention in International Falls.

Comrade Carr recently returned from a two month tour of the Far East including a considerable amount of time in Vietnam after the North Vietnam Forces began the recent attack on South Vietnam. He also visited with the leaders of all the free nations during the trip.

The Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He flew as a gunner on a B24 in Italy with the 484th Bomb Group, 778 Bomb Squadron. He was shot down on August 9, 1944 over Budapest, Hungary and was a

prisoner of war until April 26, 1945.

He will be the guest speaker at the Department Convention Banquet on Thursday evening, June 22. Being an outdoorsman and a devoted fisherman, there is no doubt that his early arrival at the Falls will signal some time for getting a line wet.

If the future Commander-in-Chief isn't out on the lake on Wednesday morning, June 21, he'll have an opportunity to greet our hiking Department Commander who will pound the pavement for the last five miles into International Falls. This is the result of a bet that was won by Sixth District Commander Jerome Toenies in getting the District over 100 per cent before Commander Ralph's birthday on February 15.

(Continued on Page 7)



PATRICK E. CARR

## Viet Bonus Proposal Presented to Legislative Subcommittee

A Vietnam bonus that would provide a maximum payment of \$400 to those holding the Vietnam Service Medal has been recommended by the Minnesota United Veterans Committee, the legislative arm of the state's major veterans organizations

The bonus proposal was presented May 19 to a joint meeting of the House Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs and Vietnam Bonuses and the Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs by Al Loehr of St. Cloud, chairman of the Vietnam bonus subcommittee of the United Veterans Committee.

The proposal calls for each eligible veteran to be paid a bonus at the rate of \$15.00 per month for

foreign and-or domestic duty, with a minimum payment of \$100.00 and a maximum payment of \$300.00, with those holding the Vietnam Service Medal to receive an additional \$100.00.

Eligible for the bonus would be Minnesota veterans who have had at least 90 days of honorable service in the Armed Forces between August 4, 1964, and the end of the Vietnam Conflict. Not included would be persons who were on continuous active duty for four or more years immediately prior to August 4, 1964, and those on active duty training for six months or less.

The total estimated cost of the bonus through February 29, 1972, was put at \$41,974,400. The ad-

ditional cost per month until the end of hostilities was estimated at \$403,200.

In his presentation, Loehr pointed out that state bonuses have been provided after every war in which Minnesota veterans have participated and emphasized that bonuses are not intended in any way to compensate the veteran or reimburse him for military service, but are a token of appreciation.

Loehr also noted that the United Veterans Committee is in agreement that there can be no substitute for a Vietnam bonus, since the substitution of some plan of educational assistance would discriminate against those Minnesota veterans (nearly 50 per cent) who do not enroll in institutions of higher learning.

In his closing remarks, Loehr emphasized "that in asking the citizens of Minnesota to vote for the constitutional amendment granting this Vietnam Era Bonus, we are not seeking a declaration of anyone's feelings on the conflict itself. . . . We are all aware that we are paying tribute to the servicemen and women, not the hostilities involved."

The United Veterans Committee represents The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, United Spanish War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Minnesota Collegiate Veterans, the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officer, Marine Corps League, Veterans Council of State Employees and World War I Veterans of America.

### July 1 Right Turn on Red



RIGHT TURN ON RED will be okay on July 1 according to Department Safety chairmen Frank Stanton and Lyle Baker. Both Baker and Stanton were quick to point out a couple "ifs" along with the new law. "The new state law will allow vehicles to make a right turn against red lights, after yielding to the cross traffic, unless the intersection is posted forbidding this turn." They also added a few cautions for both pedestrians and drivers. Pedestrian will have to be on the lookout for the turning drivers even though the pedestrian has the right of way it is for his benefit to exercise extreme caution. "The pedestrian has the right of way in the crosswalk with the green light. The driver with the red light and permission to turn right after yielding to cross traffic must also yield to the pedestrian crossing his path. Parents are asked to instruct their children of the new law as most schools will have been closed and we can't leave it up to the teachers. If everyone will "walk and drive to survive" we can have "Mobility without Mayhem."

Veterans of Foreign Wars  
73rd NATIONAL CONVENTION

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP  
DRUM AND BUGLE CONTEST  
PARADE STADIUM - Minneapolis, Minnesota  
7:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, AUG. 23, 1972

ADMISSION \$2.50    013001    013001

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP  
 DRUM AND BUGLE CONTEST  
 WED. AUG. 23, 1972 7:00 P.M.  
 PARADE STADIUM, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.  
 ADMISSION \$2.50  
 DATE TICKETS SOLD: 13,444

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
 73rd NATIONAL CONVENTION  
 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP  
 DRUM AND BUGLE CONTEST  
 PARADE STADIUM, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.  
 WED. AUG. 23, 1972 7:00 P.M.  
 ADMISSION \$2.50

Your ticket to the 1972 National Convention Million Dollar Pageant of Drums at the Minneapolis Parade Stadium, Wednesday, August 23, 1972. You can't miss this once in a decade opportunity. Tickets will be available through your Post Quartermaster, Department Headquarters, The Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce and at the National Convention VFW and Auxiliary Headquarters Office. Because of the limited capacity (15,000 seats) in the parade stadium, we recommend that you get your tickets early. Last year, over 25,000 people watched the St. Paul Scouts perform in the Cotton Bowl at Dallas.



## Minnesota VFW Officers At Commissioning of New Sub

By DEL LAMBRECHT

State Commander Joseph Jeanette, Fourth District Sr. Vice Commander Richard Carroll and I left the Washington Conference by auto to attend the commissioning of the submarine SSN-708, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul at Groton, Connecticut on Saturday, March 10, 1984.

We visited the Coast Guard Academy, Fort Giswold and VFW Post 594 in Norwich.

On arriving in Groton, we met up with nearly forty Minnesotans, mostly members of the Submarine Veterans and of course, City Councilman Hugo Mazanz. He is a Navy veteran of World War II and Korea and a member of Rice St. Post 3877.

While in Groton, we learned that the SSN means submarine ship — nuclear. The Minneapolis-St. Paul is 360 feet long, 33 feet wide, on the surface it displaces 6,900 tons, and submerged it displaces 6,927 tons.

They have a crew of 13 officers and 114 enlisted. The Minneapolis-Saint Paul is the latest addition to the Los Angeles Class, the Navy's newest class of nuclear-powered attack submarines. They are the most advanced overseas vessels of their type in the world. Their mission: to hunt down and destroy enemy surface ships and submarines. Despite rumors presented by those who opposed the naming of the submarine, including the Mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the submarine is not fitted with nuclear weapons. They are, however, armed with sophisticated Mark 48 anti-submarine torpedoes and the Harpoon guided missile.

Also attending the commissioning were Senator Dave Durenberger and Mrs. Durenberger, General John W. Vessey, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, (also a member of James Ballentine Post 246 in Minneapolis). General Vessey is a native of Lakeville, Minnesota. Commanding Officer of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul is Captain Ralph Schlichter, USN. Captain Schlichter was born in Germany, attended High School in Fort Pierce, Florida and graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1964.

Since the news media in the Twin Cities continually refer

(Continued on Page 8)



April 10-13, 1984

## C. C. Olsen to Tour State With Commander Jeanette

Commander-in-Chief Clifford G. Olson will be making his official call on Minnesota this month.

State Commander Joe Jeanette plans on taking the Chief on a whirlwind driving tour of Minnesota.

The schedule is as follows: Tuesday, April 10, leave the Twin Cities for Duluth where a dinner and reception will be held at Post 137. Wednesday, April 11, noon luncheon at Grand Rapids Post 1720 and an evening reception at Bemidji Post 1260. Thursday, April 12, noon luncheon at Willmar Post 612 and an evening banquet and reception at Willmar Post 1639. Friday, April 13, noon luncheon at Post 2757 in Luverne and the evening will be taking part in the 2nd District testimonial for their Commander Joe Mach at Lakeville.

Commander-in-Chief Olson will leave the Twin Cities on Saturday, April 15 enroute to the Far East and meeting with military leaders in Japan, Okinawa and Taiwan.

## Minnesota V.F.W. Went to D.C.

Over 100 VFW and Auxiliary members visited Washington, D.C. as part of the annual VFW Legislative Conference. In addition to briefings on National Security, Foreign Affairs, Veterans Benefits, Legislation, there were meetings on many of the VFW Community Service and Membership program.

Highlight of the conference was the appearance of U.N. (Continued on Page 8)



Senator Boschwitz discusses veteran related issues with the Minnesota delegation, only part of the nearly 70 member group can be seen in the meeting that had earlier met with Senator Durenberger. On the extreme left is State Commander Jeanette, behind him are two of the Senator's staff, others in the group John Erpelding, Sam Jacobson, Bernie Melter, Sue Wiersgalla, Jim Lund, Dick Zahn, Gene Odette, Joe Gewerth.



**Buddy Poppy Card  
In April  
Buy & Wear A  
Buddy Poppy  
In May**

April is the month that our Posts throughout the state will be selling the Poppy Display Cards to the merchants of their area. It is a month when Buddy Poppy Proclamations are signed by the Mayors of many communities and even the Governor of the state. April is the month in which we begin to remind ourselves of Memorial Day . . . when we pay tribute to those Comrades who paid the supreme sacrifice for our freedom. It is suggested that you, as dedicated and interested Comrades and Sisters, contact your Post and/or Auxiliary Poppy Chairmen and offer your assistance assembling and distributing the Buddy Poppy Display Cards throughout your community to advertise the Memorial Day Sale of Buddy Poppies. Find out when your Post and Auxiliary are planning to meet with the Mayor to sign a Poppy Proclamation and be present to show your support. If you know a merchant or are a merchant yourself, please encourage the purchase and display of the 1984 V.F.W. Poppy Display Card. Display Cards go on sale April 13, 1984.

## CiC Olson Charges V.V.A. of POW/MIA Efforts SNAFU

After reading the recent news letter of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, National Commander-in-Chief Clifford G. Olson, Jr., Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States sent the following letter to the Executive Director of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Dear Mr. Muller:

The March 13 news letter of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia reports that the Vietnamese communists may turn over the remains of three Americans to the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). Their report further states "The family of the only individual whose remains have been identified is adamantly opposed to VVA's involvement and has requested that VVA step aside." "However," the report continues, "the Vietnamese express willingness to turn the remains over directly to U.S. officials without VVA involvement if VVA withdrew from the process. The Vietnamese position is that their word has been given to VVA and unless relieved of their pledge by the VVA, they would have to honor their agreement."

In the first place, it is shamefully dishonorable for an organization representing veterans of that conflict to be dealing directly with the communist government of their former enemies. Such activities dishonor the brave men and women who endured that conflict.

In the second place, the league's report outlines how VVA's involvement with the Vietnamese communists is a clear hindrance to speedy recovery of remains and resolution of the POW-MIA issue. I strongly urge you to step aside and permit the Vietnamese to turn over the remains of the identified American to the U.S. government in accordance with his family's request.

I further urge you to terminate this hindering relationship with the Vietnamese communists and to join, in full support, with the National League of Families and the U.S. government effort to resolve the issue of our POW-MIA's as quick as possible.

July 7 in St. Paul Park

## VFW To Sponsor 2nd Annual Special Olympics

On July 7th in St. Paul Park, starting at 9 A.M., the St. Paul Park VFW Post 4450 will host the 1984 VFW Special Olympics Softball Tournament.

Any team may sponsor a team, if you don't have one in your community, please contact Department Headquarters. Sponsorship includes providing transportation to and from the tournament, meals enroute and other incidental expenses.

Any Post or Auxiliary can be part of the Special Olympics by being a volunteer or by sending a contribution will help pay for the special "T" shirts and caps that are given to each participant.

We need people to come and watch and cheer on the players, many who will be coming from all parts of the State. If you haven't taken part in the Special Olympics, you haven't lived.

Contributions may be sent to VFW State Headquarters, Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155. Make your check payable to Minnesota VFW, note on the check "use for Special Olympics."

On May 12, 1984

## Detroit Lakes & Frazee To Honor President Donna Quart

The members of Jess Omundson VFW Ladies Auxiliary 1676 of Detroit Lakes will sponsor a Testimonial honoring State President Donna Quart on Saturday, May 12, 1984 at the White Pine Room, in Frazee.

Social hour will be held from 3:00-5:00 at the VFW Club in Detroit Lakes and from 5:00-6:00 at the White Pine Room. The Banquet will start at 6:00 P.M., followed by program and dance.

Tickets for the Testimonial Banquet are available through

(Continued on Page 3)

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St. Paul, Minn.

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**Veterans of Foreign Wars**  
STATE VETERANS SERVICE BUILDING  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155



October 19-23, 1997

## Membership Caravan Set for Twenty-Four Stops

State Senior Vice Commander Jack LaVoy and National Junior Vice Commander John Smart will visit twenty-four VFW Posts in the State of Minnesota between October 19-23, 1997. The purpose of this Caravan is to add a personal touch to picking up Membership. This annual Caravan offers an opportunity for Post Officers and members to personally meet some of the VFW's State and National Officers.

As in past years, it is hoped, that the Caravan will pick up the majority of the 1997-98 Membership. Many Posts have attained their 100% during this Statewide visit and pickup.

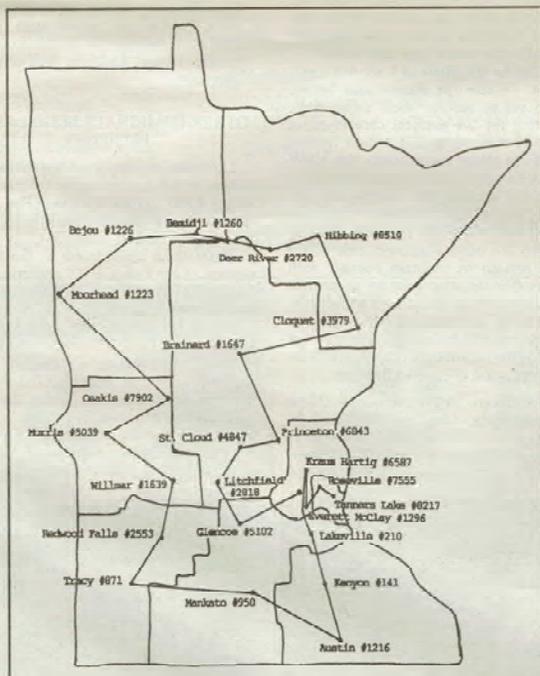
LaVoy and Smart will be joined by the Senior Vice from the Grand M.O.C. and Senior Vice President from the Ladies Auxiliary. At least two stops per District are planned. (See map for stops and times.) With State Adjutant-Quartermaster Les Orton at the wheel of his van, they expect to meet many VFW and Auxiliary members at every stop. Post Commanders and Quartermasters are asked to bring a transmittal with them to the stop nearest their Post or community.

All members are invited to come out and meet State Membership Chairman

Jack LaVoy, National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Smart, M.O.C. Senior Vice Bill Manor and State Senior Vice President Violet Wagoner. This is a great opportunity to share your thoughts and concerns about the VFW, M.O.C. and the Ladies Auxiliary. All four State and National leaders, teamed with State Quartermaster Les Orton, are very knowledgeable in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Veteran related issues.

LaVoy is very dedicated to making the Department of Minnesota, VFW 100% in Membership. Like all concerned Veterans, Jack LaVoy and John Smart are convinced that our Veterans Entitlements are kept intact through Strong Membership. This can only be done by members paying their Annual Dues or taking out a Life Membership. LaVoy suggests that every dedicated member sign-up at least one of their eligible Buddies this year. "Help that Buddy learn about the VFW, bring him or her to the Membership Caravan," says LaVoy. Orton said, "New and Reinstates are the 'life-blood' of the Veterans of Foreign Wars... sign one up today."

All members are asked to become involved in the "Courage Under Fire" and the "We/Me" Team.



### Scheduled Stops:

SUNDAY, October 19, 1997	TUESDAY, October 21, 1997	THURSDAY, October 23, 1997
Tanners Lake #217 1:30 PM	Morris 5139 9:00 AM	Litchfield 2818 9:00 AM
Rossville 7555 3:00 PM	Oaokis 7902 10:45 AM	Glencoe 5102 10:30 AM
Everett McClay 1296 7:00 PM	Moorhead 1223 (Lunch) 1:00 PM	Minneapolis 12:00 PM
Kraus-Hartig 6587 9:00 PM	Bejou 1226 3:30 PM	
	Bemidji 1260 5:00 PM	
	Deer River 2720 (Overnight) 6:30 PM	
<b>MONDAY, October 20, 1997</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY, October 22, 1997</b>	
Lakeville 210 9:30 AM	Hibbing 8510 9:00 AM	
Kenyon 141 10:00 AM	Cloquet 3979 (Lunch) 11:30 AM	
Austin 1216 11:30 AM	Brainerd 1647 2:30 PM	
Mankato 950 (Lunch) 1:00 PM	Princeton 6843 4:15 PM	
Tracy 871 3:45 PM	St. Cloud 4847 (Overnight) 6:00 PM	
Redwood Falls 2553 5:15 PM		
Willmar 1639 (Overnight) 6:45 am		



## GULF WAR VETERANS CAN APPLY FOR STATE BONUS

Starting October 15, 1997 Minnesota veterans of the Persian Gulf War era can claim a service bonus approved for them by state voters.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs announced bonus applications are available at county courthouses and government centers through the County Veterans Service Offices.

Voters amended the state constitution in 1996 to pay the bonus and the Minnesota Legislature established the eligibility criteria and set the amounts payable during its last session. Military veterans who were on active duty between August 2, 1990 and July 31, 1991 can receive \$600, if they served in the combat zone and earned the Southwest Asia Service Medal, or \$300, if they were stationed any place but Minnesota. The bonus provisions also apply to Minnesota National Guard personnel and military reservists who were activated at the time.

Designated beneficiaries of armed forces personnel killed in action in the war zone or who died from being wounded there are eligible for a one-time survivor benefit of \$2,000 from the state.

According to Veterans Affairs commissioner Bernie Melter, as many as 45,000 state Persian Gulf War era veterans may be eligible for either bonus amount, and there were approximately nine Minnesota casualties. He said

Minnesota is one of five states so far known to honor Gulf War veterans with a bonus. The other states are Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts and South Dakota.

Melter said applicants do not qualify for the Minnesota program if they were paid a Persian Gulf War bonus by another state, and all claimants must prove they were state residents when they entered active duty. Also, beneficiaries must show those they lost were then Minnesota residents.

Veterans must include honorable discharge papers (DD-214) with their application, and National Guard and Reservists who were activated need their service records. Based on a Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs test program, the department's experience with past war era bonus application processing, and best administrative estimates, Melter said qualified individuals can anticipate receiving their bonuses approximately two months after the documentation is received and verified by the state agency.

For information, contact the County Veterans Service Office (see list of County Veterans Service Offices in VFW Claims article in this Gopher Overseas), or the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, St. Paul, 612-296-2952.

## 1997-1998 DATES TO REMEMBER

### 1997

October 10-11	National Auxiliary President's Visit
October 17-19	VFW Big 10 Conference, Brooklyn Park, MN
October 19-23	Statewide Membership Caravan
November 11	Veterans Day

### 1998

January 16-17	VFW Midwinter Conference Minneapolis Marriott City Center
February 27- March 4	VFW Legislative Conference Washington, D.C.
June 17-20	VFW State Convention Moorhead, MN
August 29 - September 3	VFW National Convention San Antonio, TX

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Minnesota VFW Claims Office has become one of the BEST in the Country. They oversee approximately 100,000 active Claims for Disability and Pension every year.

**June, 1952**, the Department of Minnesota VFW established the Handicapped Scholarship Fund. For decades, this fund helped provide handicapped scholarships to children attending Camp Courage Summer Camps. The fund was later expanded to three other Handicapped Children's Camps. In recent years, there has been a decline in the use of these Camps and the Fund was converted to the VFW National Home for Children.

**August, 1954**, the VFW State Junior Baseball Program was created. The first VFW State Baseball Tournament was held in 1955 and was hosted by West St. Paul Post 4462. This program has enjoyed a lot of success over the years and has provided a great place for the youth of our state to play Baseball. It is organized and run by the Department of Minnesota, VFW.

**February, 1956**, the Department of Minnesota VFW started the VFW Bantam Hockey Program. The first tournament was held in conjunction with the Minnesota Winter Carnival. From there, it traveled to various host VFW Posts. For decades, the VFW Bantam Hockey Program was the only organized hockey program in the state. In the late 1980s – early 1990s, the Minnesota Youth Hockey Association was formed. Since then, the VFW Bantam Hockey Program has co-existed with Minnesota Hockey in a 'modified' form.

**September 20, 1959**, the VFW Cancer Research Center was presented to the University of Minnesota. This event came after years of the Department of Minnesota VFW raising the necessary funds to construct the building. The project was driven by then Past State Commander Robert E. Hansen. The history and story behind the VFW Cancer Research Center is worth a read. The building is now gone – it no longer exists.

**December, 1962**, the VFW Youth Center opens at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. The VFW Posts in the State raised the necessary funds to make this possible. Obviously, this Center went away with the construction of the current VA Medical Center and reallocation of space for other entities like MACV (Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans).

**June, 1966**, the Reception Center at Camp Courage is dedicated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. This was possible after a fundraising effort on behalf of the Department and VFW Posts throughout the State.

**1977 – 1978**, Posts and Auxiliaries raised \$200,000 for the Cancer Research at the University of Minnesota. From this effort, a Cancer Research Fund was setup through the Department. This fund collected donations through the early 2000s and was affiliated with the VFW Cancer Research Center. In the early years, free cancer screenings were offered the VFW and Auxiliary Members at the Research Center.

**June, 1979**, a cabin for the Handicapped was built and opened at Camp Courage North. This was one of the first established State Commander's Projects headed up by State Commander Robert Eliason. During his year, Posts and Auxiliaries raised about \$50,000 to build the cabin at Camp Courage North.

**1981 – 1982**, during State Commander John Quint's year, the Department formed a partnership with Minnesota Heart Association. The VFW Heart Research Scholarship Trust Fund was established. It offered scholarships to medical students seeking careers in heart research. The fund remained active for about two decades.

**July, 1983**, the Department of Minnesota VFW partnered with Minnesota Special Olympics and conducted the first annual VFW (Special Olympics) Gifted Softball Tournament. The VFW continued to conduct this annual tournament into the late 1990s. The program was a huge favorite of many VFW and Auxiliary Members and there was never a shortage of volunteers. It was piloted by a few great Youth Activity chairmen like Chuck Loftus, Chuck Sasse and Tommy Nichols.

**July, 1984**, after working with the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association, the Department of Minnesota VFW conducted its first VFW State Junior Soccer Tournament. This was an invitational tournament for boys and girls under the age of 16. The last tournament was held in 1996.

**July, 1988**, Posts and Auxiliaries raised \$235,000 for the Early Childhood Center at the Minneapolis Children's Hospital. The fundraising effort was spearheaded by 1989-90 State Commander Mike Brainerd. This program is still helping the Children's Hospital to this day.

**July, 1989**, a National Voice of Democracy Scholarship Endowment Fund was established on behalf of the Department of Minnesota VFW. It was named the William Halsey Memorial Scholarship. Each year, this donation to the National Voice of Democracy Program generates a \$2,000 to \$4,000 Scholarship for a selected VFW State Voice of Democracy winner.

**July, 1990**, State Commander Joe Mach established his State Commander's Project as the Endowed Chair for the Elderly at the University of Minnesota Pharmaceutical College. This program conducts research on the effects of certain drugs on elderly patients. A commitment of \$500,000 was made to the Endowed Chair. Unfortunately, the Department of Minnesota VFW did not reach that goal until the year Steve O'Connor was State Commander in 2002-03. This commitment hung over the heads of a number of State Commanders. Fortunately, this research program is 'healthy' and functioning very well --- Thanks to the efforts of the VFW Posts and Auxiliaries in the State of

## Thank you They Kept it Going

by Ken Schroepfer, editor Gopher Oversea'r

Thank you goes out to all of the past editors, writers and photographers for their hard work and diligence to ensure that the Gopher Oversea'r was there to keep the members of the Department of Minnesota VFW informed of veterans issues over the past 75 years.

The following are the dates and names of the editors as well as the number of issues per year and pages per issue.

Years	Editor(s)	Issues/year	No. of Pages
1947-1951	Stan Cann	12	8
1951-1953	Stan Cann, Bill Krog & Ruth Ramsey (VFW Auxiliary)	12	8
1953-1954	Forrest Jenstad	12	8
1955-1958	Basil Gordon	12	8
1959-1966	Lowell Eastlund	11	8
1967	Roy Plankers	11	8
1968-1976	John O'Neill	11	8
1977-1979	John O'Neill	10	8
1980-1987	John O'Neill	8	8
1988-2003	Jim Hesselgrave	6	12
2004-2009	Jim Hesselgrave	4	12
2010-2013	Jim Hesselgrave	3	8
2013	Jim Hesselgrave & Lee Bojarski	3	8
2014	Lee Bojarski	3	12
2015	Lee Bojarski & Melody Shryock	3	12
2016-2019	Melody Shryock	3	16
2020	Melody Shryock & Ken Schroepfer	3	16
2021	Ken Schroepfer	3	16

Anyone wishing to conduct research involving past issues of the Gopher Oversea'r for articles, books, or background on individual posts should contact the Office Manager or the editor at 651-291-1757 or by email to vfwmnoffice@gmail.com.

Minnesota.

**July, 1991**, the Veterans on the Lake Endowment Fund was established as the State Commander's Project for then State Commander Frank Volk. During Frank's year, VFW Posts and Auxiliaries raised \$100,000 for this fund. It has paid the annual interest to Veterans on the Lake since 1993. This fund still exists today.

**September, 1999**, the National Youth Essay Scholarship Fund was established on behalf of the Department of Minnesota VFW. It was made possible with a donation from the estate of Warren Tressler. It was aptly named the Warren Tressler Memorial Scholarship. The fund still exists today and the interest from the account pays for the annual State Patriot's Pen Awards and prizes.

**July, 2001**, the State Voice of Democracy Endowment Fund was established. The interest from this fund helps to pay for the annual State Voice of Democracy Awards and prizes. It was made possible by a substantial donation from the estate of Mytle Winslow. Over the years, with the efforts of Past State Commanders Robert Eliason and James Vetter, this fund grew to over \$125,000.

**May 22, 2012**, the Department of Minnesota VFW formed the Minnesota VFW Charitable Association. The Association is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization and it was created to assist the Department with fundraising and funding VFW Programs. Additionally, the Association helps Veterans, Military and their Families.

**June, 2013**, the Ride for Healing Welcomed Home Vietnam Veterans with a 'Statewide' Motorcycle/Classic Car drive around the State. The Ride started at the Veterans Service Building in St. Paul with five separate 'legs' and ended in Brainerd. It was the State Commander's Project for then State Commander Lee Ulferts. All total, the Ride raised about \$50,000. Of that, over \$30,000 was donated to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. A great event that touched 'many' hearts and minds.

These are but a few great accomplishments of the Department of Minnesota VFW over the past one hundred years. Most of this History and MORE is documented in the achieves at Department Headquarters. Much of what is printed here, is from the memory of one person.

Again, the Department of Minnesota VFW has been blessed with some Great Leaders - State Commanders, State Adjutant Quartermasters and most of all GREAT MEMBERS!!!



Michael Gearmann, Commander  
Fifth District

Greetings from the 5th District, I hope everybody is getting the most out of our mild fall weather while it lasts.

Post inspections are currently underway and I anticipate there being no problem in having them all done by Midwinter Conference.

Currently, the 5th District is in second place for membership at 89.97% with Starbuck Post 4582 leading the way for us. There's still a long way to go. With all the posts pitching in, I think we can make a run at 100%.

Our next district meeting will be January 9th at 2pm at the Starbuck post. This meeting will be Zoom enabled. I expect to have a good attendance.

I look forward to seeing each and every one of you at this year's Midwinter Conference.



Jonathon Durst, Commander  
Sixth District

Greetings All!

I hope everyone is remaining safe and healthy as we move into winter.

The district Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, and Teacher of the Year awards are completed. We are halfway through the year. It might be tempting to think the year is over and just cruise through the rest of 21-22 on autopilot with your eyes on Midwinter and upcoming elections. Don't forget, we still have 6 months to push ourselves and achieve and exceed our membership goals.

The District did a **tremendous job** last year during the most unprecedented and difficult period in recent VFW history. I'm confident that we can lead the way again this year and continue to build on our success.

As we move forward, I want to remind everyone that each post needs a representative at each district meeting. They are announced in the General Orders so there's plenty of time to line someone up. If you cannot attend, notify me and we'll be good. If you require a video conference through Zoom for the meeting, you MUST reach out at least a week BEFORE the meeting so we can line up infrastructure. If there's a last-minute change, contact me and we can work on figuring something out. The District can't help if we don't know you need help!

I look forward to seeing everyone at Midwinter and at future events. Stay safe and keep charging forward.



Rita Reikofski, Auxiliary  
President Sixth District

Greetings from the 6th District

Our auxiliary inspections are well under way. We have been getting great feedback for the inspectors. Our last District meeting was held at Wadena Post 3922. Thanks to the post and auxiliary for the great hospital. We held our annual auction at our last district meeting. We had so many great donations for our fund raising auction. I would like to thank Twyla Bauck-Scofield from the 5th District for being our auctioneer.

Our next District meeting will be held at Browerville Post 8391. Lunch will be served at 11am with meeting to be held at 1pm. We will be holding our annual cookie walk after our meeting. Those of you wishing to bring cookies for the cookie walk, please bring three dozen or more. Cookies will be sold by the pound.

Our fun sox's project is well under way so far we have about 400 pair. We collected 1,186 pair last year. Let's see if we can beat what we collected last year. We will be collecting socks till February 2022 district meeting.



Charles Hawkins, Commander  
Seventh District

Greetings from the Mighty 7th District

We are about to start our second half of the year and there have been a few changes in the 7th District. The year started with a few posts that needed to be rejuvenated. They have been working hard and improvements are being made! Some changes in command in some posts have boosted morale and strengthened the comradery of its members.

Our auxiliaries have been working very hard this year with their food drives, flea markets, craft fairs, and style shows. In their membership drives, they are trying to get younger members to keep their ranks alive and kicking. Now it's time for the Christmas trees to go up for the mittens.

Membership is going very well, we have one post at 100% at this time. Other posts are pushing to reach 100%. We are having close to a full house for our district meetings. Our programs are doing great! The post inspections are coming to a close and should be completed by the Midwinter Conference.

Veterans Day, in our district, was the major highlight of the year. SOS was back on many veterans' plates. The Creamed Beef was absolutely outstanding!!

To all of you Jarheads out there, Happy Birthday.



Char Guse, Auxiliary  
President Seventh District

Greetings from the 7th District.

It's hard to believe that we are almost at the half way point for our Program year. Where does the time go? I know my chairmen have all been very busy working and promoting their programs.

Our Midwinter Conference scheduled for January 21 - 23, 2022 at the Minneapolis Marriott City Center is coming up fast. The highlight of the weekend is always the naming of the 1st place Voice of Democracy winner at the Grand Banquet Saturday night. Plan to attend and cheer on your district's winner. Attend the Council meetings, visit the booth area and greet the promoters, talk with the respective Department Chairman, check out all of the fabulous Buddy Poppy displays, catch up with old friends or

We are also collecting baby items for the baby shower held at the St. Cloud VA Hospital in the spring.

I am looking forward to see everyone at Midwinter Conference in January.

## DISTRICT MEETINGS

### First District

Feb. 5 Austin #1216 @ 9:30 AM

### Second District

Jan. 8 Montgomery #5340 @ 1 PM

### Third District

Jan. 8 Granite Falls #3871 @ 10 AM

### Fourth District

Jan. 15 North St. Paul #1350 @ 9 AM

### Fifth District

Jan. 9 Starbuck #4582 @ 2 PM

### Sixth District

Feb. 5 St. Cloud #428 @ 1 PM

### Seventh District

Feb. 12 Hopkins #425 @ 10 AM

### Eighth District

Feb. 5 Hoyt Lakes #8144 @ 9 AM

### Ninth District

Mar. 12 Detroit Lakes #1676 @ 1 PM

### MOC

Feb. 12 Blaine #6316 @ 10 AM

## Nat'l President to Visit this Spring



VFW Auxiliary National President Jean Hamil will be making her official visit to Minnesota on April 22 - 24, 2022. Complete details will be sent out as they become available. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend one of the events that are being planned in her honor.

make a new friend. Whatever you do will only make for a more successful and enjoyable year for everyone.

Our 2021-2022 7th District meetings are: December 11th at #3915 Palmer Lake in Brooklyn Park, (Pot Luck lunch to follow the meeting - all are welcome to join), February 12th at #425 George R. Wolff in Hopkins, and our District Convention is April 9th at #3915 Palmer Lake in Brooklyn Park. If you are in the area, please feel free to stop in and visit one of our meetings. All members are welcome to join us and have some fun with the 7th District members.

May the season's best and brightest be yours. See you next year!



Caitlin Amundson, Auxiliary  
President Fifth District

Hello to the Department of Minnesota!

District 5 has been busy with our official visits, and as I write this we only have a couple left to complete. I want to thank my great inspectors who were able to get the visits done quickly! We have two meetings yet to come, one on January 9th at Starbuck Post 4582, and the other April 24th at Osakis Post 7902. Our meeting at Willmar Post 11639 went very well, and I was able to recognize all current Auxiliary presidents, past District presidents, and past Department presidents in attendance. It was the first meeting I had led, and I think everything went well!

I am looking forward to Midwinter and seeing everyone again! I always enjoy the banquet with our awesome students and teachers getting recognition for the awesome things they do!

I hope this finds everyone in good health, and I look forward to seeing everyone at Midwinter!



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



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

Greetings and Best Wishes to all from the 8th!

Things have been going pretty good up here in the 8th. I want to thank those post and auxiliary members who have continued to be involved with their posts. It has been great seeing our post-Vietnam veterans showing up and helping at their Posts.

It was wonderful to see many of you in Willmar at the Fall Conference for the training classes. For those who could not make it there, join me in Minneapolis at the Midwinter Conference for some. There will be some very interesting committee meetings and a couple of classes. Trust me when I say that there is always something new to learn.

Our next district Meeting will be held at Post 8144 in Hoyt Lakes on February 5, 2022.

I want to keep this short and sweet, so I wish all of you a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



**Kelly Booge, Commander  
Ninth District**

Hello Comrades,

I want to take this opportunity to wish all of our veterans a Happy Veterans Day. Thank you for your service to our country, and for the services you continue to provide as a member of the VFW.

Hard to believe how quickly time is flying by. We are already several months into our current fiscal year. Be sure to keep on top of things that need to be completed by a certain date.

One of the things we should continue to work on is membership. We need to continue to work hard and be diligent about talking to eligible vets, and having membership paperwork always handy so we don't take the chance of missing an opportunity to secure another member of our organization. Continuing to always have this at the forefront of our mind will produce rewards of having new members join. Please keep up the good work. It will pay off.

Our Community Service Reports need to continue to be of great importance. Be sure to keep track of all you do in volunteer work within your communities, and be sure to report it by the deadline each month. There are many things we do all the time that have at least a component of volunteer work in them. Be conscious of these things, and get them reported.

Unfortunately COVID-19 is still a very present danger in our lives. As illnesses are continuing to expand, it is important that we check in on our fellow vets. Set up a schedule to call a certain number of vets each week to make sure things are going OK. And always remember to keep yourselves as safe as you can. We can come through this pandemic and get back to a "new normal" if we just remain diligent.

Some Posts in our District are getting back to holding events. It is our hope that these events are very successful and meaningful. Please follow all guidelines when holding an event.

For Posts that have an active Auxiliary, I encourage you to have the Post and Auxiliary work closely together in all possible ways. Please be sure you are working as a team, and tapping into the great resource of an active Auxiliary. Working as a team will make you stronger, and will also help you cover more options for working with our vets.

I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving, and hope you will have time to spend with your families, and our vets. I ask that you schedule a time of silence on December 7th for Pearl Harbor Remembrance

**COMMANDER - Cont. from Page 1**

moving program highlighted by the best flyover I have ever experienced. The F-16's appeared to just miss the top of the capitol and took our breath away in their wash. That evening I had the opportunity to make remarks at the Palmer Lake Post 3915 in Brooklyn Park. They had a great turnout and another flyover. Great job by Scott Hanson to coordinate the program.

**Sunday Sept. 12** - I drove up to Nisswa for the State County Veterans Service Officers Conference.

**Wednesday Sept. 15-19** - Kris and I took a brief vacation. We spent the weekend in San Diego at the Coronado Naval Lodge celebrating our 25th anniversary. We toured the Midway Aircraft Carrier for our third time. It never gets old paying tribute to our country's heroes.

**Friday Oct. 1** - Attended the 8th District Meeting at the Gilbert Post 4456.

**Thursday Oct. 7** - The last leg of the 100- year Road Trip. The Fall leg of the road trip took place in the 8th District in Hoyt Lakes. Commander Mary Thompson put on a great event hosting past commander Curt Hermanson, myself, and Sr. Vice Dale Hoogeveen. The spread of food that she prepared by herself would put everyone's Thanksgiving meal to shame. She did this for 50 people! 8th District Commander Rick Stoehr and his wife Julie also attended. The leadership from Vets on the Lake was there and we had a great conversation. They invited our state leaders to come up to Vets on the Lake to see what they do up there. I told them that we would take him up on that offer. Nine retired Navy Sr. Chiefs were up at Vets on the Lake working on some projects. They joined us for the event. Their pride in making a difference was evident. One of the Chiefs grew up with my dad who also served in the Navy. He saw my name on my shirt and made the connection to my dad. I had not seen Don Stephenson in nearly 50 years. I called my parents, and they were blown away by the coincidence. It truly is a small world.

**Thursday Oct. 14-17** - The Big Ten Conference in Rapid City. Kris and I stopped at Mount Rushmore before checking in for the conference. The visitor center was open, and we could walk up to the observation overlook.

Day. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your family. I hope to see all of you at Midwinter Conference in January.



**Melissa Krosko, Auxiliary  
President Ninth District**

Hello from the Mighty 9th District.

I hope everyone had a good summer. Now it is time to get ready for winter and the holidays. As for the 9th District our next meeting will be December 4th in Dilworth. We will

The trails were closed due to several inches of snow on the ground. It was still great to see this iconic monument for our second time. It was also fun to see and talk to the leadership of our fellow Big Ten Departments. However, no real business was conducted at the conference. With limited resources is this conference a good use of our funds? I brought up in the good of the order that a bylaw change should be drafted to give a virtual option. Necessary business could be conducted without the expense. A hybrid option could be adapted also, where you would have the option of in-person or virtual conference. This gets complicated because the host state needs to know in advance how many are attending due to hotel rooms and meeting space. Stay tuned for further updates on this.

**Thursday Oct 21-24** - Attended an absolutely GREAT meeting at Monticello Post 8731. You'll find out why during the Parade of Checks at the Midwinter Banquet! On Friday I went to Minneapolis Marriott City Center along with my Chief of Staff Dave Adams and Office Manager Cheryl Burton. We tasted our meal options for Midwinter and were blown away by the boneless pork chop option. We are confident you will also be very pleased. Saturday it was off the 4th District Meeting at Cottage Grove Post 8752. Sunday was spent at the 50th anniversary celebration at Watkins Post 5460. They had a great turnout and a great program.

Before all these events I had the honor of being on hand as the Governor signed the Veterans Restorative Justice Act (VRJA) on August 10. It was a great moment. But, we are now in a new legislative year, and we must continue to be vigilant.

To help us get the word out about all that we do veterans and the community we have contracted with Elissa Klein as our social media specialist. She will do a great job. However, she needs your help. Please send her information on the great things that your posts and districts are doing. She will be the combat multiplier. The publicity will raise our awareness and provide us with the opportunity to recruit new members and get back former members.

be having another district meeting on March 12th in Detroit Lakes then next meeting will be April 30 in Bemidji and that will be our Loyalty Days where the District Commander and I will hold a Joint Testimonial. Currently we are at 91.73%, we all work hard at keeping our current members and recruiting new members. Also, we are working hard to keep all the current auxiliaries. Inspections are going well hoping that we will be all done in November.

My project for the year is Honor Flight of ND/MN. This has been a long-time passion of mine since

**DIST. 9 AUX. - Cont. on Page 11**

**THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
SERVICE**

## VFW Membership

by David Staehlin, Membership Chairman

Every member strengthens us.

We are grateful to each member of the Department of Minnesota, VFW. Even when members are not currently in a place in their life to be actively participating, each membership matters. Our full-time legislative team in Washington DC testifies before Congress multiple times a year and works to support legislation that benefits veterans and their families and works to oppose the reduction of benefits. It's important that we have substantial numbers of members when we meet with a Representative or Senator and we're asked, "how many veterans do you represent?" The funding for our State veterans claims office is also funded primarily on our membership numbers.

How members can help:

1. **Pay annual dues in July each year.** Renew as soon as possible after July 1 each year at [vfw.org/renew](http://vfw.org/renew). Regardless of when a membership actually expires, the membership will be extended one year from that expiration date. Additionally, when a member renews early, it saves the VFW the expense of mailing dues

notices. Those saved funds can be used to assist veterans.

2. **Upgrade to life member.** If an annual member expects to be a member for another 8 to 10 years, then a life membership is a good financial decision compared to continuing to pay the annual membership rate. Paying a life membership upgrade in installments is an option. Members can visit [vfw.org/renew](http://vfw.org/renew) or call the VFW Member Service Center at 833 VFW VETS (833.839.8387).

3. **Life members upgrade to Legacy life.** Legacy life members contribute \$400, \$800, or \$1,200 to the VFW legacy life program to earn Bronze, Silver, or Gold legacy status. The Department and Post receive an annual payout that continues even after the member has passed. Members can go to [vfw.org/life](http://vfw.org/life) for details or contact the VFW Member Service Center at 833 VFW VETS (833.839.8387). There's no obligation or pressure to upgrade. Spreading the payment over 4 months is an available option.

## VFW MN Employer of the Year

Last year, People's Energy Cooperative, Oronoco, MN received the 2020 VFW Employer of the Year Award for their commitment to improve the quality of life for Minnesota veterans and their families through the hiring of veterans.

The Cooperative was nominated by Oronoco Post 9647. In the past 25 years, four organizations have been recognized for employing veterans in Olmsted County.

The award was presented to the Cooperative and the six veteran employees in July 2021 by State Adjutant Dewey Hermanson who said, "It is with much appreciation we recognized People's Energy Cooperative for their continued

support and efforts in employing veterans and recognizing the benefits and skills veterans bring to their organization."

President and CEO Mike Henke replied, "We're incredibly humbled to be recognized with this award and acknowledge the incredible contributions made by the veterans on our team." Henke continued, "It's only fitting that people who served our country would work for an organization whose mission is to serve."

People's is sincerely grateful all veterans for their service to our country. Remember to take the time to thank a veteran for their sacrifice and service.



Pictured above (l to r) State Adjutant Dewey Hermanson, Peoples Energy Cooperative CEO Mike Henke, Oronoco Post 9647 Quartermaster Ross Parker, Commander K'la Sorquist, Adjutant Ryland Eichorst

## VFW National Home Board of Trustees

by Steve Van Bergen, Board President

The VFW National Home for Children Board of Trustees is heading into the future with regards to how the National Home Life members will soon be voting as well as receiving communications from the National Home. To help the National Home to make sure that they have an accurate email address for all Life Members, all Life Members are being asked to update or add their current e-mail address with the National Home.

Please submit your email address as follows to:

- On the National Home website, select the "Contact" tab.
- Under "Why would you like to contact us?"
- Select "Change your address

or email". Enter your "Old" information on the top of the form, and then scroll down the page and enter in your updated information as requested and please include your current address if you are only adding an email address. Once you have done this, please select "SUBMIT" to complete the process.

If you should have any problems for concerns, please feel free to contact Department of Minnesota Headquarters at 651-291-1757. Please remember that going forward, if you should change your email or physical address, please notify the National Home to make sure that you don't miss your voting or communications opportunities.

father from the plane and walk him to his family waiting in the terminal. I had tears in my eyes as I knew that I helped him live his dream of being on Honor Flight.

So, I am very bad at writing these articles I did start writing about how and why I joined the VFW Auxiliary in my last article so I figure I would like to finish. My husband is a life member of VFW and he joined while he was still over in the First Iraq War. Before he served in Iraqi Freedom the extended tour, he continued to work at Camp Ripley, first as a gunsmith and then as a mechanic.

I would like to thank my husband for being my support, having my back and helping me be better at what I am doing for our veterans. He has been my cheerleader and my editor on the articles I have been writing.

### DIST. 9 AUX. - Cont. from Page 10

I heard about it after I joined 9 years ago. I have organized many fundraisers (with help from many others). Honor Flight is a great organization that gets our Veterans to Washington DC to visit all the memorials that are dedicated to them. My dream one day is to go on a flight so I can be part of the experience, I have heard so many stories from different veterans and helpers that have gone on the flight. I remember one gentleman, a 99 year old WWII Veteran that wanted to go on the flight but would not go unless his son could join him, so we held a fundraiser to help the son go. His son was a Vietnam Veteran. We did raise enough money, so he was able to join his father. The best part was when they returned, I was able to escort the

The Minnesota Employer of the Year Award is given each year in recognition to employers whose policies and achievements in hiring, promoting, and training of veterans, with special emphasis on disabled veterans, is outstanding.

Any individual, corporation, or agency with an exceptional record of employing veterans is eligible.

Any individual may nominate a candidate for this award. Application forms and the criteria for each category has been distributed to each post through the Department General Orders and is available by contacting the Department of MN VFW Office. **Completed entry forms are due at Department Headquarters February 1, 2022.**

## Redwood Falls Veterans Day

by Dan Meyer, Jr. Vice Commander



Pictured above (l to r) VFW Post 2553 Officer of the Day Duane Frank, Congresswoman Michelle Fischbach, Jr. Vice Commander Dan Meyer, and VFW Redwood County Post 2553 Commander Jerry Ludwig.

The Redwood Falls VFW Post 2553 sponsored a wonderful Veterans Day event at the Redwood Valley High School.

They had a numerous participants included in their program from the high school band and choir to the Redwood Falls Legion Color Guard and the Redwood Falls National Guard.

The guest speaker was the VFW State Jr. Vice Commander

Dan Meyer. He thanked everyone for attending and reminded all how important it is to stay positive and do your best to show how thankful you are for all of our veterans.

The closing remarks were given by Congresswoman Michelle Fischbach. She spoke about the importance of our veterans and the need for our youth to go forward and help make America great.



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**facebook**



# FOLDS OF HONOR

By Nathan Pike, Project Coordinator

Folds of Honor is the joint Commander's and President's project for their year. It is a non-profit organization that provides educational scholarships to spouses and children of America's fallen and disabled service-members.

Folds of Honor's educational scholarships support private education tuition and/or tutoring for children in grades K-12 as well as higher education tuition assistance for spouses and dependents.

Cmdr. Barry provides the crucial mission statement in the five-paragraph operations order:

"raise money for Folds of Honor. We (VFW & Auxiliary) meet the commander's intent of the mission statement and everything else is golden. Yes, it would be awesome to fill a couple of canvas parachute cargo bags (or sea bags for you naval types and Marines, have another crayon...) full of money and present that large amount of money at convention, however I would simply be happy to see another parade of checks during the Midwinter Conference this

January at the banquet right before the VOD and Patriots Pen event that evening. I do know there has been about \$25,000.00 raised thus far. I would be truly humbled and proud to see that money doubled by the State Convention. I believe our organization can make that happen. Let's keep going forward on this mission and raise money. The parade of checks during Midwinter is time honored tradition and was my first state event I attended so many years ago. I look forward to seeing everyone at Midwinter and presenting checks."

Another quick thought-Liberty Creek wines. If you enjoy good wine with a meal or with good friends next time you are looking for a great wine grab a bottle of Liberty Creek. Liberty Creek wines is also assisting in our mission to raise money for Folds of Honor.

The takeaway- bring a check to VFW Midwinter Banquet to support the Folds of Honor joint project for the CDR and President. Grab a bottle of Liberty Creek, enjoy in moderation and let's move the \$25,000.00 closer to the \$50,000.00 goal.

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

That appointment puts you in a position to represent our Department and have our views heard by the committee prior to voting on the recommended course of action. If you have interest or expertise in a particular area and plan to attend the National Convention in 2022, notify Department Headquarters so you can be considered for this unique opportunity!

The order of business is defined in our National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. As a comrade in good standing, you should be able to attend a post, district, department, or national meeting anywhere in the world and feel right at home as the order is the same at all levels. One of the most significant bylaws passed at this year's convention, which could have originated on the post floor of any one of our 5,934 chartered posts, eliminated the requirement to be a U.S. citizen to be eligible for membership. Please share this information at your post and continue to recruit, retain and reinstate all eligible veterans.

Our National Council of Administration is comprised of 63 comrades, one each from the 52 departments and 11 elected or appointed comrades representing our National leadership. The Department of Minnesota gave past State Commander Thomas Hanson the privilege of representing us for a four-year term when we elected him to at the State Convention in June 2019. The Council is responsible for

conducting all necessary business of the VFW during the months between National conventions. Considering the size of our organization and the budget required to support our business operations and programs, the council's experience and expertise are critical to our success. The newly elected members were installed to their positions and also attended orientation training to prepare them for their duties.

The convention culminated with the election of Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic from Illinois and the Big 10 conference to the office of National Commander in Chief, Tim Borland from Arizona and the Western Conference to the office of Senior Vice Commander in Chief and Duane Sarmiento from New Jersey and the Eastern Conference to the office of Junior Vice Commander in Chief. I returned to Minnesota reinvigorated to continue the mission of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to serve veterans, our active forces, their families and our communities. National Convention in 2022 will return to Kansas City, hopefully fully operational and attended by thousands. I encourage everyone to attend, especially if you have not had the opportunity to attend a National convention in the past. The drive is of reasonable length, you will leave knowing more about this great organization and better equipped to make a real difference in your community. Please join us in representing the Department of Minnesota!

## COUNCIL - Cont. from Page 6

as your Department Service Officer I'd routinely get calls from attorneys seeking advice in the logistics of things within the process. Sadly, these unsuspecting veterans are promised big wins by these sharks, but in the event of success they were required to sign a contract wherein the language obligates them to surrender a large portion of any retro payments they receive to that firm. The VFW offers this more proficient claims representation at no cost, which really makes the choice a "no brainer". The National Organization is on this issue and we too need to be on our Congressional members to ensure this practice is put to death.

A number of other issues were raised at the Council meeting and were met with less discussion. The majority of the items were what are often referred to as "housekeeping" things, such as a continuing review of the organization's annual budget; a review of the National Travel Policy, and reports from the Adjutant General, Quartermaster General, Executive Director of the VFW Washington Office, and Directors of VFW Legislative Service and National Veterans Service.

Speaking of the Executive Director of our VFW Washington Office; we were advised earlier this week that former Commander-in-Chief B.J. Lawrence, current Executive Director has tendered his resignation for the purpose of retirement effective at the end of the year. Current Commander-in-Chief Mihelcic has accepted his resignation effective immediately in order that B.J. may adjust or prepare for his new way of life. Former Executive Director, Robert Wallace will fill in until a permanent replacement has been appointed. Our very best wishes and a huge thank you to B.J. as he departs employment with the VFW.

Have you heard about the "STILL SERVING" program your VFW is promoting? I hope you have and are participating! If not let me share a few points with you. This is an opportunity for you or other members of your Post to share stories of how they continue to serve the Community or veterans since our release from active duty. A few points are Develop your story. Share Stories, Encourage veterans you know to do the same and Create and share #StillServing photos. Request a decal. Download the program materials from the VFW website. Request a #StillServing T-shirt through the website. If your story is simply FANTABULOUS it may get published in the VFW Magazine! Go to VFW.Org for the intimate details.

The National Council of Administration will reconvene as a part of the VFW Washington Conference in late February and early March. I will offer specifics of the highlights from those proceedings in the next edition of the Gopher Oversea'r. If any individual has a question or comment that I can respond to, please contact me at [thomashanson52@gmail.com](mailto:thomashanson52@gmail.com)

## DIST 2 AUX. - Cont. from Page 8

Auxiliary President Kelly. We have also been doing a few inspections and visiting your meetings when possible. There is so much amazing work going on for our Veterans in the Second District. Your kindness and respect for each other truly speaks to putting our Veterans first.

The next Second District meeting will be January 8 in Montgomery, Post 5340. If you have not attended a district meeting in a while, now is the time. Come hear the district Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen winners. A tentative agenda will be sent out in our newsletter the first week of December. Future meetings are March 5 at Hastings Post 1210 and April 30 at Glencoe Post 5102.

Please send auxiliary and/or post events that you would like promoted district-wide on or before February 15 for the District 2 March newsletter edition. If you would like to receive our District 2 newsletter, please send your email address and/or US mail address to [jkeogh234@gmail.com](mailto:jkeogh234@gmail.com) or to me at 203 N Circle Dr, Montgomery, MN 56069.

Thanks to all for your extremely generous support of the Second District joint project: the Armed Forces Service Center. There is still plenty of time to make that donation if you have not done so already. Remember, individuals are welcome to contribute along with Auxiliaries and Posts. "Sailing Together to Support our Veterans"

## DIST 3 AUX. - Cont. from Page 8

honor our Veterans on Veterans Day. It makes me very proud of all the good work we keep trying to do. We might be a small District but we do great things.

Prayers to all the Veterans in all of our Hospitals and Nursing Homes. Covid-19 is taking its toll. We can't wait until this pandemic is passed and we can be a part of the activities the hospital and nursing homes offer for the wonderful veterans they care for.

Each Auxiliary in our District purchased Psalm 91 bandanas to give to all the children at the National Home for Children. We ordered them from "Not Afraid" These are bandanas worn by our soldiers while serving overseas.

The Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays are approaching, please keep all of our Veterans in your thoughts and prayers. God Bless

## DIST 4 AUX. - Cont. from Page 8

I hope to see a good attendance at both meetings.

I wish you all a wonderful Holiday Season and a Blessed New Year.

I thank everyone for all that you do for our veterans, their families, youth, the community and the VFW Organizations.

# Veterans / Youth Activities

## 2021 State Baseball Champions Grand Rapids Post 1720

by Scott Wiechmann

Comrades

I hope everyone in our VFW family is doing well and looking forward to a new year. We completed the 2021 VFW Baseball season. Congratulations to Grand Rapids winning the State Championship sponsored by VFW Post 1720.

There were 68 teams playing VFW ball with 1496 players participating in the program. Ten teams competed for the state title representing Districts 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8. There were around 500 fans in attendance.

Since 2010, the VFW Baseball Program participation has dropped in half. There are many reasons for this and we are looking at what changes to make to improve the program. District Chairman, Coaches and VFW League organizers are working on a list of recommendations. These recommended changes will be voted on at the Midwinter Conference C of A. They will be implemented for the 2022 season.

Thank you to VFW Post 1216 Members and Auxiliary for taking on the 2021 tournament on short notice. Look for more information in upcoming General Orders.



Pictured above (l to r) State Baseball Chair Bob Bernier, Coach and players of the 2021 State Baseball Champions and State Youth Activities Chair Scott Wiechmann

## 10th Annual DAV Deer Hunt

by Jennifer Shumaker

The 10th Annual Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Deer Hunt was held on November 11-14 at Chesterwoods Park, outside of Rochester, MN.

The hunt was sponsored by DAV Mayo SE Chapter 28, DAV MN, Olmsted County Veteran Services, and Olmsted County Parks.

There were 28 veterans and 4 dependents hunting this year.

This completely supported hunt gives Veterans the opportunity to do what they love, including those who might not otherwise be able to participate due to disabilities.

To make this event accessible to all Veterans, set-up of deer stands and blinds, guides, assistance with racking, and four disability track chairs were provided. This allowed wheelchair bound veterans to go out into fields and rough terrain. A partnership was formed with a local gun agency in Rochester who ran the vetting and supplied guns to the hunters.

The event wrapped up on Sunday night with a banquet and raffle, complete with hunting knives, guns, clothes, shooting range passes, etc.

Thanks to passionate and dedicated Minnesota DAV members, Olmsted county employees and volunteers, this event has been in the works for almost a full year. Jennifer Shumaker, Olmsted County CVSO, DAV Chapter 28 service officer and DAV MN Outdoors Committee Chair said, "This hunt is what the DAV is really about, supporting Disabled Veterans. Some veterans may have thought that they could never hunt again due to their disabilities. What better way to support them than to give them another chance to do an activity that they love."



## VETERANS UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

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

### Archery

2022  
Open for Bids

### Fishing

2022  
Open for Bids

### Bean Bag

2022  
Open for Bids

### Golf

2022  
Hosted by Cannon Falls #4452

### Bowling

2022  
Hosted by Sauk Rapids #6692

### Horseshoes

2022  
Hosted by Monticello #8731

### Cribbage

2022  
Hosted by Austin #1216

### Pistol

February 13, 2022  
Hosted by Brooklyn Park #3915

### Trap Shooting

2022  
Open for Bids

## YOUTH UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

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

### VFW STATE BASEBALL VFW STATE HOCKEY

#### August 2022 & 2023 State Tournament

Co-hosted by Fergus Falls #612  
and Dilworth #1223

#### March 10-13, 2022 State Tournament

Hosted by Elk River/Rogers #5518

#### 2023 State Tournament

Open for Bids

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

## Halpaus Recalls Close Calls in WWII



Harvey Halpaus of Lake City turned 100 years old on August 25, but he still has vivid memories of his trip around the world almost 80 years ago.

During World War II, Halpaus worked as a U.S. Merchant Marine, helping to supply U.S. armed forces fighting overseas. Cargo vessels were appealing targets for enemy submarines.

The danger was elevated at choke points like the Strait of Gibraltar. "I was standing watch on the bow of the ship and a torpedo went by about 10 feet in front," he said.

Often the ships traveled in convoys of 50 to 100 ships with U.S. Navy escorts, he said, but sometimes they found themselves alone.

Halpaus said during the war, "Thousands of merchant seamen were killed." In the run-up to the D-Day invasion of Normandy, Halpaus said his ship was anchored off England. He thought they were going to participate in the invasion but they were pulled out a few days before. "I was pretty lucky to get through the war," he said.

After the war Halpaus worked many jobs - at a bookstore, a tannery, welding, breeding cows ("What a job that was," he said) - before joining Prescott Schools where he was head custodian for 20 years.



# Timely Tidbits

## Year-End Community Service Books

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

Simply use the handy **Event Tracking Form** each time an event is run, to record the details of the event. Place the completed form in a binder that can then become the basis for an outstanding **Post Community Service Record Book** contest entry... It's just that easy!

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

### IMPORTANT NOTES:

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

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

## Contests for Winter 2021-22

### VFW:

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

due at District: December 15, 2021

### AUXILIARY:

**Young American Creative Patriotic Art (Grades 9-12)**

**Illustrating America (Grades K-8)**

Watch for Details in the Monthly General Orders

and on the Department Websites:

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

## Honored by an Old Friend



Joseph Berklich, born February 24, 1921, in Hibbing, MN joined the Civilian Conservation Corps at age 15.

He and his three brothers all received their draft notices in 1943. Joe served in the Pacific Theater as a member of the Army's 23rd Infantry (Americal) Division. He was involved in operations at Bougainville, Leyte, Mindanao and Boho and served as staff sergeant and platoon leader.

Joe and all of his brothers returned safely from the war. As a result of their service, their widowed mother (of Croatian descent) was granted US citizenship.

He was employed for over 40 years with U.S., Steel first as a mechanic working with heavy equipment and later as a foreman. In that capacity, he traveled across the states working with vendors of mining equipment.

On September 15, 2021, his friend, Brigadier General Ron Hein (Ret.), helped organize an event and researched the information so that Joe could receive the medals he had lost in a house fire including the Bronze Star which he had never received.

If your Post has a Veteran from WWII, (a member of "the Greatest Generation"), the Gopher Oversea'r would love to hear about it.

Write a short story about your Veteran and include a photo ( see the sample article above) . We would be more than happy to publish it.

Send stories and photos to [vfwmnoffice@gmail.com](mailto:vfwmnoffice@gmail.com)

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Gopher Oversea'r Staff**

## Holiday Cookies Around the World

# WORD SEARCH #12

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

- |                  |               |               |               |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| ALMOND RUSKS     | KRUMKAKE      | PFEFFERNUESSE | SPRINKLE      |
| ALMOND GINGER    | LEBKUCHEN     | PINWHEELS     | STRUFOLI      |
| CUCCIDATI        | LEMON         | PIZZELLES     | SUSPIROS      |
| DOUBLE CRUNCHERS | LINZER TORTE  | PRYANIKI      | SWEET POTATO  |
| FLORENTINES      | STARS         | REGANADAS     | SPICE         |
| HORN             | MACARONS      | ROSETTES      | TEA CAKES     |
| KHRUSTYKY        | MANDELBROT    | RUGELACH      | TORCETTI      |
| KOLACZKY         | MELOMAKARONA  | SANDBAKKELSE  | WEDDING CAKES |
| KOULOUAKIA       | NUT PINWHEELS | SHORTBREAD    | ZIMTSTERNE    |
| KOURAMBIETHES    | PEPPARKAKOR   | SPECULAAS     |               |

## Beware

### 'Tis the Season for Scammers

The Department Office has been made aware of a fraudulent veteran's assistance request in the metro area. A veteran was claiming to be a US Marine Master Sgt. with an Honorable Discharge. After taking the VFW Post for almost \$2,000.00, it was discovered that he was using a false name, was a Pvt. E-2 and had received a Dishonorable Discharge. This veteran's details were all verified by Claims Office Director Jon Gohn.

Claim Office Director Jon Gohn reminds us to verify DD214 details to make sure you are working with a real veteran. Any County Service Officer should also be able to verify a veteran's DD214 as well.

This time of year can bring out some very unscrupulous people. Please beware not only at your post homes, but in your personnel life as well.

As the saying goes - "Trust, but VERIFY!"



your link to experts

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

## Poppy Days 2022



Order Now!! There is still time to place your post's poppy order for 2022.

Poppy days are:  
**May 21-22, 2022**





## MINNESOTA VFW CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Earmark for one of the following: \_\_\_\_ General Un-designated  
\_\_\_\_ VFW Outdoor Fund \_\_\_\_ Veterans Service \_\_\_\_ VFW Programs

### Looking for a Program that's Educational AND Entertaining?

## Fundraising for THE BOYS OF '61!



Minnesota's Civil War Veterans Memorial

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

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

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

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

**historicalexperiences.org**  
or contact the presenter at...  
**arnkind@historicalexperiences.org**

For more information on THE BOYS OF '61 see:  
**https://www.minnesotaboys61.org/**

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

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.



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



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.

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